

Will Congress Sign On to Obama's Losing War on ISIS?

March 2—Six months into Obama's undeclared war against the Islamic State terror group, which is a spawn of his allies in Saudi Arabia, the President finally decided to ask Congress for an Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF). His legislation, offered on Feb. 11, asks for a three-year war against ISIS/ISIL and "any associated person or force," without territorial limitation, but without engagement in "enduring offensive ground combat operations."

Does this sound like the AUMF of 2001, which is still used by the administration to carry out a global "war on terror" of assassinations and drone strikes without limit? You're right. Obama's AUMF in fact *fails to repeal* the 2001 AUMF, and would have Congress sign on to a new one, with the same vagueness and lack of limitation. And, at the same time, the President is asserting that *he doesn't need the authorization* to carry out this war: He just thinks it would be nice to have.

A small group of Congressmen have stepped forward to challenge the President on this fraud, and to demand a full debate in which its ramifications can be discussed. The group is led by Representatives Walter Jones (R-N.C.) and Jim McGovern (D-Mass.), who issued an open letter on Feb. 6 demanding a full Congressional debate on the matter. Acting in parallel is Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), who filed his own proposed AUMF Feb. 12, which sunsets the 2001 authority in three years, and puts stricter limitations on U.S. action.

Call for a Full Debate

The Jones-McGovern letter, subsequently signed by 18 other Congressmen, was sent to House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio), urging him to "schedule adequate time for proper debate on the House floor," once the President submitted his AUMF. The crux of the argument is contained in the following paragraph:

"The last authorization for use of military force was brought to the House floor for debate on October 8, 2002. The House gave its full attention to this joint resolution and debated the contents for more than 26 hours over three full days. Ultimately, this bill became law on October 16, 2002. The dynamic and complex world we find ourselves in now demands that we give the same attention to a new request for military force. As James Madison said, 'The power to declare war, including the power of judging the causes of war, is fully and exclusively vested in the legislature.'"

In conclusion, Jones and McGovern ask that the "same amount of time for debate that as given in 2002" be provided for deliberation on Obama's AUMF on ISIS, but that more amendments be allowed (there were only two in that case).

Jones and McGovern, in collaboration with Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), have been fighting for this debate for more than six months. In fact, Congress passed Jones's H. Con Res. 105 last July, which specifically prohibited the deployment of U.S. Armed Forces in a sustained combat role in Iraq without Congressional authorization.

Yet, Congress has permitted Obama's deployment into Iraq and Syria to proceed, with now an acknowledged deployment of approximately 3,000 servicemen in various capacities.

Jones Rallies the Nation

On Feb. 24, Jones took the fight for Congress to take responsibility for the war policy already being carried out by the President, to the airwaves. He was interviewed on C-Span's "Washington Journal" for 45 minutes, during which he engaged in animated discussion with callers, who repeatedly praised his courage for speaking out, independent of party and in a principled way.

Jones began by reporting on his demand, with McGovern, for an open debate. After the host recalled that Jones had declared his vote in favor of the 2002 AUMF, which authorized the war against Saddam Hussein on the basis of the lying Blair-Cheney intelligence fraud, "one of the worst mistakes" he'd made in Congress, he asked Jones what he thought of the current AUMF.

Jones replied: "Obviously, that was a different administration and a different time. I sincerely believe that the previous administration had manipulated the intelligence to justify an unnecessary war. So I'm very cautious, and again, I'll use the word dubious. I know what the President sent to us was very vague..." He then cited one of his advisors, a former commandant of the Marine Corps, who told Jones that he saw "no end to this resolution," that it was "open-ended."

"At the end of the day, we are going to spend a good deal of money on something that is unclear in both mission, measures of effectiveness, in state and exit strategy. Haven't we been down this road before?"

During the discussion, Jones added that it is nations in the area, such as Jordan and Egypt, that have to take the lead against ISIS; that he agreed with Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) that the new authorization "does not put limits on the war and expands the definition of ISIL to associated forces"; and that even the most powerful military force can't win against a guerrilla force, because the crucial element is being able to "keep the peace," and that such a war simply leads to more and more war.

Jones spoke of the chaos and terrorism resulting from the war-making, interventionist, regime-change approach. "Until the day I die, I believe sincerely that, if Saddam Hussein was still in power, I don't think we would have all of these jihadists running around the

world.... Was he an evil dictator? Absolutely. I believe, had we not bombed Libya and taken out Qaddafi, I believe we would not have the terrorists living in Libya.... Diplomacy is the best way to try to maintain some type of order."

We are "not only killing the enemy," he said, "but also killing innocent people. When you are killing innocent people, their families will tell people for centuries that Americans killed their uncle or aunt."

Release the 28 Pages

The response to Jones from callers suggests that he's become something of a folk hero, especially for his fight against illegal wars by Presidents from both parties. But he has also come to prominence nationally for his leadership in the fight to get President Obama to release 28 classified pages of the Congressional Inquiry report on 9/11—the pages dealing with financing of the 9/11 attack, which were classified by the G.W. Bush Administration. President Obama, shortly after his election, promised 9/11 families to declassify the pages, but has since refused to do so. Jones is currently sponsoring H. Con. Res. 14, a resolution calling on the President to declassify the pages. It now has 13 co-sponsors, from both parties.

Praised by a caller for his role on the 28 pages, Jones reiterated the importance of their release. "I don't know how we can make foreign policy decisions unless these pages are declassified," he said.

While Jones and other Congressmen who have read the pages are not at liberty to disclose their contents, former Sen. Bob Graham, who was a co-chair of the Inquiry, has repeatedly indicated that they—and other evidence that subsequently came to light—point to the role of Saudi Arabia in funding the terrorists. Jones and Graham joined Rep. Stephen Lynch (D-Mass.) and 9/11 Families representatives in a widely publicized press conference on Jan. 7, titled "Declassify the 28 Pages of the Joint Congressional Inquiry 9/11 Report" (see the transcript in *EIR*, Jan. 16, 2015).

That very same Saudi Arabia is at the heart of the network that created ISIS—as investigative journalists, and knowledgeable figures in Iraq and elsewhere, have repeatedly pointed out—and still sustains it.

Congress had better get the 28 pages declassified before proceeding with *any* AUMF. As Rep. Jones has reiterated on numerous occasions, Congress—and American citizens—have a Constitutional responsibility to act.