

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 6, 2015

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan,

Among the issues that require urgent attention by the U.S. House of Representatives is the question of the extent of involvement by the U.S. military in the war against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. Given the recent announcement by President Obama of a deepening entanglement in Syria and Iraq, it is critical that the House schedule and debate an Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) as quickly as possible.

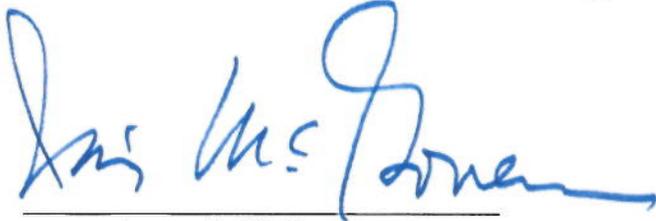
Last week, the president announced initiatives that escalate U.S. engagement in combat operations in Syria and Iraq. Specifically, the U.S. will deploy a U.S. Special Operations contingent into northern Syria to be embedded with and to advise opposition militant forces in that region; and U.S. military advisors and special operations forces already in Iraq will be embedded with Kurdish and Iraqi forces on the front lines of combat. Secretary of Defense Carter also stated that U.S. air operations in both Syria and Iraq will increase their bombing campaigns. Taken all together, these represent a significant escalation in U.S. military operations in the region and place U.S. military personnel on the front lines of combat operations.

We do not share the same policy prescriptions for U.S. military engagement in the region, but we do share the belief that it is past time for the Congress to fulfill its obligations under the Constitution and vote on an AUMF that clearly delineates the authority and limits, if any, on U.S. military engagement in Iraq, Syria and the surrounding region. U.S. bombing campaigns have been going on for more than a year, and U.S. troops on the ground have been increasingly close to or drawn into combat operations, including the recent death in combat of a special operations soldier in Iraq.

Consistent with your pledge to return to regular order, we urge you to direct the committees of jurisdiction to draft and report out an AUMF as soon as possible. We do not believe in the illusion of a consensus authorization, something that only happens rarely. We do believe the Congress can no longer ask our brave service men and women to continue to serve in harm's way while we fail in carrying out our constitutional responsibility in the area of war and peace.

As long as the House fails to assert its constitutional prerogatives and authority, the Administration may continue to expand the mission and level of engagement of U.S. Armed Forces throughout the region. We strongly urge you, Mr. Speaker, to bring an AUMF to the floor of the House as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Tom Cole
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



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~~John Starnes~~

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