Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 27, 2014

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner:

As the principle cosponsors of the original and amended versions of H. Con. Res. 105 to require the President to seek Congressional authorization before deploying armed services engaged in combat operations in Iraq, we are writing to request that Congress debate and vote on such an authorization when the House reconvenes the week of September 8th.

We appreciate the lines of communication and dialogue that you initiated with us in July, and which directly resulted in the passage of H. Con. Res. 105, as amended, by a vote of 370-40. This was a genuinely bipartisan initiative, and it is our hope that Congressional action on an authorization for the increasingly diverse U.S. military missions in Iraq will happen in a similar spirit.

As you well know, over the month of August, the number of U.S. military personnel deployed to Iraq has increased significantly, along with the number of military airstrikes. There is open discussion by the Administration regarding the potential need to expand operations beyond Iraq into neighboring Syria. We all share concerns about the Islamic State's (IS) brutal tactics and further destabilization of the region. And as became clear during our conversations last month, we also all support the specific and limited mission to prevent potential genocide and protect U.S. personnel. But current military operations now underway in Iraq appear to be beyond the scope of these limited purposes and even greater expansion is under discussion. These are serious matters that require congressional debate and a vote on whether to authorize them.

We encourage you to use the time remaining before Congress reconvenes on September 8th to clarify with the Department of Defense and the White House what scope of authorization might be required and to instruct the House Foreign Affairs Committee to draft an authorization for debate and vote once the House returns on September 8th.

At the core of our conversations in July was the understanding that Congress has Constitutional and institutional duties when it comes to matters of war and peace. We now face a time when Congress must carry out these responsibilities. We respectfully request that you bring before the House of Representatives an authorization for such military operations in September.

Sincerely,

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

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