



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on July 11, 2009

Congress Rebukes Obama on Dictatorial Claim

The bipartisan [429-2 vote](#) was a direct result of Obama's assertion that he could ignore restrictions on how the \$106 billion loan guarantee to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) could be used. In his signing statement, Obama [claimed](#) that "provisions of this bill within sections 1110 to 1112 of title XI, and sections 1403 and 1404 of title XIV, would interfere with my constitutional authority to conduct foreign relations by directing the Executive to take certain positions in negotiations or discussions with international organizations and foreign governments, or by requiring consultation with the Congress prior to such negotiations or discussions. I will not treat these provisions as limiting my ability to engage in foreign diplomacy or negotiations."



The House vote rebuking Obama was on an [amendment](#) offered by Representative Kay Granger (R-Texas) that would add the [following language](#) to the Fiscal 2010 State-Foreign Operations appropriations bill (H.R. 3081): "None of the funds made available in this Act may be used by the Secretary of the Treasury to negotiate an agreement in contravention of [law]."

Representative Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) [explained the controversy on the House floor](#):

Last month through the 2009 supplemental bill, Congress provided an expansion of resources and powers to the International Monetary Fund as requested by President Obama. This included \$108 billion in new funding and approval for the IMF to sell 13 million ounces of gold to fund their internal operating expenses. As part of that bill, and consistent with its oversight role, Congress gave the administration clear guidelines on how an expanded IMF should function. On June 24, President Obama decided to disregard those congressionally mandated guidelines. Upon signing the 2009 supplemental into law, the President issued a signing statement that said he would ignore sections 1110, 1112, 1403 and 1404 of the supplemental.... This Congress, Democrats and Republicans, should not allow any administration to disregard a statutory mandate, especially on issues of transparency and accountability.

President Obama's ridiculous claim that he has "constitutional authority to conduct foreign relations... [and] engage in foreign diplomacy or negotiations" is pure hyperbole from a constitutional standpoint. The signing statement is a clear attempt to say that he can make his own law — without Congress — with regard to how money is spent, in this case how a \$108 billion loan guarantee would be conferred upon the International Monetary Fund. But the U.S. Constitution is unequivocal about who is in charge with regard to law-making, with [Article I, Section 1, Clause 1 of the Constitution](#) stating categorically: "All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States." Congress also has exclusive power over spending money, including even the current foolish gift to triple the size of the



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International Monetary Fund under [Article I, Section 9](#), which states that “No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law” and under Congress’ exclusive power to “To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations” under [Article I, Section 8](#) of the Constitution.

By way of contrast, the President’s power to conduct foreign relations is relegated to that of someone who is restricted by the will of Congress. The constitutional provisions granting the President power to represent the United States abroad are predicated upon the support of Congress at every turn in [Article II, Section 2](#):

He shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties, provided two thirds of the Senators present concur; and he shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls ... but the Congress may by Law vest the Appointment of such inferior Officers, as they think proper, in the President alone, in the Courts of Law, or in the Heads of Departments.

That Obama’s signing statement was a clear assertion of dictatorial powers was recognized by Republican and Democrat alike in Congress. Representative Barney Frank (D-Mass.) stressed that “we do this not on behalf of this institution, but literally on behalf of democracy, on behalf of the process by which people get elected and deliberate and do this. And there is a kind of a unilateralism, in an undemocratic, unreachable way, to these signing statements that is the opposite of what we do here.”

When even his fellow liberal Democrats are rebuking him with such strong language, stating that his actions are a threat to free government itself, then you know Obama has really gone off the dictatorially deep end!



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