



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on September 13, 2014

## House Liberty Caucus Republicans Stand Strong Against Third Iraq War

Members of the U.S. House of Representatives' Liberty Caucus have become the sole congressional voice openly speaking out against President Obama's proposed third war in Iraq.

In a [Facebook posting](#) after Obama's September 10 speech, Michigan Representative Justin Amash strongly condemned the president's violation of Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution's reservation of the war powers to Congress: "The president boldly claimed, contrary to the Constitution, that he alone can order our Armed Forces into a protracted war. And he left unanswered the basic questions responsible Americans and their representatives must ask before going to war. Whom, specifically, will the mission target and what, specifically, is the threat to our homeland?"



The *Washington Post* [noted](#) on September 11 that "A group of younger libertarian doves sounded unhappy with their colleagues' embrace of the president's push for military action, and wondered aloud whether House Republicans were rushing to rally behind a campaign that could turn sour."

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The anti-war Left has faded into insignificance since the election of a president from the Democratic Party, but the anti-war Right has become more vocal and numerous since its halcyon days of the lone calls by Rep. Ron Paul (R-Texas) against war in Iraq in past decades. The anti-war remarks by Amash — chairman of the House Liberty Caucus — came just a day after a *Washington Post* [story](#) about a visit by former Vice President Dick Cheney — a perennial warmonger — to the House Republican caucus. Asked if Republicans should stop listening to neoconservative warmongers like Cheney, Amash told reporters "Yeah," adding: "His worldview is that we should be in countries around the world and have armed forces everywhere — and most Republicans don't agree with that."

Amash does not stand alone in his opposition to the war, as Ron Paul once did. Other members of the Liberty Caucus have openly questioned Obama's policy of arming [the Free Syrian Army, the same organization that first kidnapped U.S. journalist Steven Sotloff](#) and later sold him to the ISIS terrorists who beheaded him. "I disagree with the president," fellow Liberty Caucus member Rep. Thomas Massie (R-Ky.) [told](#) the *Washington Post* on the day after Obama's speech. Massie stopped short of calling for all-out war, noting that the ISIS/ISIL threat had been overblown by the media. "I don't think two beheadings justifies a war," Massie [told](#) Breitbart.com. "I think that justice is warranted, but I don't



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think a war is warranted over two YouTube videos.”

Fellow House Liberty Caucus member Mick Mulvaney (R-S.C.) likewise counseled a cooler debate in Congress on MSNBC’s *Morning Joe* before any war starts. Mulvaney suggested a debate before a decision to go to war, [telling](#) Obama administration spokesman Anita Dunn (who had accused him of seeking war): “When did I say that I wanted to go to war? I think that’s absurd. I think that Congress is actually asking for the opportunity now to take time to deal with this issue. I think that’s the right way to do it.”

Against this contingent of liberty-loving congressmen is the leadership of both parties in Washington. “He is the commander-in-chief; he made that decision. At this point in time, it’s important that we give the President what he is asking for,” Republican Speaker of the House John Boehner of Ohio said in a [press conference](#) after the President’s address.

The media propaganda effort toward war has even swayed the rhetoric of Amash’s closest allies in the U.S. Senate. Leading Senate Tea Party/liberty senators such as Rand Paul (R-Ky.) and Ted Cruz (R-Tex.) have backed the war, but unlike Boehner have insisted that the president follow the U.S. Constitution in pursuing his bombing campaign. Senator Paul [told Sean Hannity on Fox News on September 10](#) after the president’s speech that “I’m all-in for saying we have to combat ISIS.” But he also noted that Congress is required to approve all deployments of U.S. soldiers into harm’s way: “The Constitution is very clear. They debated this in the beginning. Hamilton as well as Madison are very explicit in the *Federalist Papers*. They say we gave the war-making power to Congress because we wanted to make it difficult to go to war. Now, this is an intervention, and I don’t always support an intervention, but this is one I do support.”

Likewise, Senator Ted Cruz favors airstrikes. “We should destroy ISIS altogether, using overwhelming airpower to ensure they cannot bring jihad to America,” [Cruz said](#) in a Fox News interview. However, in the same interview he also called for a congressional debate: “President Obama must come to Congress to receive authorization, as required by the Constitution. Tonight, he indicated the threat of ISIS is not imminent and that his plan could consume several years. Therefore, the Constitution requires that the President must come to Congress for authorization. It is not a luxury, or an option. It is required by the Constitution.”

The pro-airstrike position of Paul and Cruz has cheered neo-conservative warmongers. “The fact that Rand Paul is coming out so strongly for action is important, as is Ted Cruz calling for us to bomb them back to the Stone Age. There is a different tone and the ground has shifted,” the neoconservative Rep. Peter King (R-N.Y.) gloated in a *Washington Post* [interview](#) September 9. “Our members are hawkish.”

But AntiWar.com’s Justin Raimondo [labels](#) the Paul/Cruz strategy a case of “stealth anti-interventionism” because:

For all the rhetorical hawkishness, the Biden-esque “we’ll follow them to the Gates of Hell!” posturing, when it comes right down to it members of Congress know perfectly well the American people aren’t going to go for re-invading Iraq. So calling Congress back into session would’ve succeeded in limiting the President’s options, reining in the temptation to go in there guns blazing, and no doubt put a time limit on current operations in progress.

In essence, a call to go to Congress is a call for ending any idea of a ground invasion, and it would probably delay a ground invasion until the effects of the pro-war media yellow journalism has substantially worn off. Indeed, uncomfortable questions — such as why [American-made arms provided](#)



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[to the Free Syrian Army are turning up in the hands of ISIS/ISIL fighters](#) — would be asked during a congressional debate.

But the House Liberty Caucus members currently stand alone on Capitol Hill in openly trying to oppose war altogether.

*Photo: AP Images*

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