



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on April 1, 2011

Clinton: Obama Will Ignore Congress on Libya War

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told a classified congressional hearing that the Obama regime would ignore Congress if it tried to rein in the unconstitutional war in Libya, but that the administration would send press releases to lawmakers, according to news reports.

When Rep. Brad Sherman (D-Calif.) asked Clinton during the briefing what the regime's response would be to Congress exercising its constitutional authority over war, the Secretary said Obama would proceed with the war anyway, according to a senior Republican lawmaker in attendance [cited](#) by *Talking Points Memo*. Apparently the regime has "legal opinions" that justify the "kinetic military action."



The Secretary's answer reportedly surprised even attendees because "Clinton plainly admitted the administration would ignore any and all attempts by Congress to shackle President Obama's power as Commander in Chief to make military and wartime decisions," TPM [reported](#). Other news reports citing lawmakers reported similar findings.

"They are not committed to following the important part of the War Powers Act," Rep. Sherman [complained](#) to TPM after the original piece was published, referring to the Act's time constraints on executive-branch wars. "She [Hillary Clinton] said they are certainly willing to send reports and if they issue a press release, they'll send that to us too."

Politico also [reported](#) on the regime's lawless attitude displayed during the hearings. According to attendees cited in the article, when Clinton was asked whether the administration had overstepped its constitutional authority by starting a war without congressional approval, she responded by asserting that White House lawyers approved it and that Obama had no plans to consult Congress for an endorsement.

"If they didn't need congressional authorization here in these circumstances, can you tell me under what circumstances you'd ever need congressional authorization if we're going into a war?" [wondered](#) Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-N.Y.). "Nobody answered [that] question."

Rep. Nadler also [attacked](#) the regime's claim that it had "consulted" leaders in Congress. "Briefing Congress is not the same as authorization," he told reporters. "Briefing is nice, but authorization is required under the law." Numerous legislators from both parties echoed the concerns.

Rep. Greg Walden (R-Ore.), for example, also [offered](#) a stinging rebuke of the regime's undeclared war. "I can't think of a time in our nation's history where we put our men and women in combat like this without an administration of either party coming to the Congress first," he [said](#). "If they had time to consult with the Arab League and they had time to consult with NATO, why in the devil didn't they have



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time to consult with us?"

At least two representatives at the briefing [cited](#) by *The Hill* — one Republican and one Democrat — charged the regime with starting the war while Congress was in recess as an excuse to forgo congressional approval. "Not consulting Congress is crazy," declared Rep. Dan Burton (R-Ind.), another critic present at the hearings. "Who's going to pick up the tab for all this?"

The Vietnam War-era [War Powers Act](#) as well as a United Nations resolution are cited by Obama as his source of authority to make war. Under the Act, Presidents purportedly have the power to commit American forces for up to 90 days without Congress if "hostilities" are "imminent." But [according](#) to attendees of the congressional meeting, the Obama regime does not intend to let even that minor constraint get in the way of making war. "The implication was very strong that [the administration] saw no need for any authorization at any time regardless of how long this were to continue," Rep. Geoff Davis (R-Ky.) [explained](#) to CNN after the hearing.

Of course, the U.S. Constitution restrains the President more than the War Powers Act does, and the Constitution is still supreme law of the land. Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution [delegates the power to declare war only to Congress](#) — not the President, the United Nations, the Arab League, NATO, or any other institution. The Founding Fathers all understood clearly that the executive branch was not allowed to initiate military action without the constitutionally required congressional declaration of war.

In fact, even members of the ruling executive-branch cabal — Clinton, Obama, and Vice President Joe Biden — [all understand that the war in Libya is unconstitutional](#). As reported by *The New American*, every one of them [admitted](#) as much prior to Obama becoming President.

Numerous legislators from both parties have also [acknowledged](#) that Obama's lawless invasion of another country without so much as congressional approval is illegal. Some have even called it an "[impeachable](#)" offense.

"The critical issue today is not the defense of Libyan democracy but the defense of American democracy," declared Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio), one of the Democrats who [stated](#) that the President could be impeached over the illegal war. Kucinich also pointed out that the Obama regime had "subverted Congress and the United States Constitution."

Media commentators blasted the regime's attitude as well, with even some establishment pundits also suggesting impeachment. "If the Obama administration is refusing even to abide by the War Powers Act, then the Congress really needs to vote to defund their adventurism at least or impeach them if it comes to that," [noted](#) Andrew Sullivan in *The Atlantic*.

Even in the United Kingdom observers were appalled at the news. "And so the Imperial Presidency marches on, unchecked and unsupervised and indifferent to quaint old-fashioned notions of constitutional propriety," [wrote](#) Alex Massie for the U.K. *Spectator*. "This too has been the case for many years so no-one should be surprised that the Secretary of State holds Congress in such contempt."

And Bryan Preston, writing for the conservative-leaning Pajamas Media, warned of another problem: "What we seem to have here is an administration and certain of its apologists showing far more interest in cementing the [UN's Responsibility to Protect](#) than in abiding by the US Constitution," he [wrote](#). "That's not good, to put it mildly."

Other regime functionaries attending the secret congressional briefing were Director of National



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Intelligence James Clapper, Admiral Mike Mullen, and Defense Secretary Robert Gates, the latter of whom [once played a key role in training, funding, and arming the Islamic extremists currently killing American soldiers](#).

During the classified hearings, news reports were coming out [claiming](#) that the regime was going even further than what had been announced. According to a Reuters article citing government officials, Obama [issued a secret order](#) purporting to authorize direct assistance to the Libyan rebels.

CIA agents are reportedly already in Libya. And even before the war was launched, the U.S. government was [organizing weapons transfers](#) to the rebels through Egypt and Saudi Arabia, according to media reports.

And on top of the illegality of the war and the assistance to Libyan rebels, lawmakers have another major concern, too. As *The New American* reported last weekend, [many of the rebels fighting the Libyan dictatorship are affiliated with known terrorist organizations including al-Qaeda](#). Of course, some of them are also apparently part of the establishment, too, as evidenced by [the rebel council's seemingly odd decision to set up a new central bank amidst the chaos](#).

The debate in Congress will undoubtedly continue. But whether the debate means anything is another question entirely. If the American people's representatives are willing to be slapped in the face — without doing anything about it — by an administration that acknowledges no limits on its power, they might just as well head home.

The lawless precedent set by this attitude toward Congress — even worse than what went on [under the Bushes](#), Clinton, and other past Presidents — will certainly have long-lasting consequences. Constitutionalsists hope that America's lawmakers will refuse to accept it lying down.

Photo: U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodam Clinton speaks during a news conference after the Libya Conference at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office in London on March 29, 2011.: AP Images

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