



Déjà Vu: Obama's Military Actions in Syria May Be Impeachable

On Wednesday, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Martin Dempsey told the Senate Armed Services Committee that the Obama administration would seek "international permission" before engaging in war in Syria. Besides the possibility that it is merely a ruse — as there is growing evidence that the United States may already be covertly involved in Syria's war — for the United States to seek permission from other nations to go to war is unconstitutional. For that reason, Representative Walter Jones (R-N.C., left) has just introduced House Concurrent Resolution 107, calling for the impeachment of the President if he declares war without congressional approval.



Jones's resolution, which calls upon the U.S. House — with the Senate concurring — to prevent President Obama from starting yet another war without Congress declaring war. House Concurrent Resolution 107 states:

Expressing the sense of Congress that the use of offensive military force by a President without prior and clear authorization of an Act of Congress constitutes an impeachable high crime and misdemeanor under article II, section 4 of the Constitution.

Whereas the cornerstone of the Republic is honoring Congress's exclusive power to declare war under article I, section 8, clause 11 of the Constitution: Now, therefore, be it Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that, except in response to an actual or imminent attack against the territory of the United States, the use of offensive military force by a President without prior and clear authorization of an Act of Congress violates Congress's exclusive power to declare war under article I, section 8, clause 11 of the Constitution and therefore constitutes an impeachable high crime and misdemeanor under article II, section 4 of the Constitution.

The Obama administration has openly rejected the constitutional requirement of seeking congressional approval for U.S. military engagement.

"Our goal would be to seek international permission and we would come to the Congress and inform you and determine how best to approach this," Panetta replied. "Whether or not we would want to get permission from the Congress, I think those are issues I think we would have to discuss as we decide what to do here."

The Obama administration has previously violated the Constitution in electing to involve the United States in an attack on Libya without congressional consent, prompting some members of the U.S. House



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to issue a resolution demanding that the President explain his reasons for such a decision. The resolution was ignored.

The *Ohio Democrat* told Raw Story, "President Obama moved forward [militarily against Libya] without Congress approving. He didn't have congressional authorization, he has gone against the Constitution, and that's got to be said."

Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) declared at the time that President Obama's approval of air strikes against Libya was officially an "impeachable offense."

Kucinich has been relatively consistent on the issue of unconstitutional wars, as he indicated his desire to impeach President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney for similar actions in leading the United States into war against Iraq.

Ironically, in 2007 Obama adhered to a philosophy similar to that of Kucinich, when as a Senator he declared, "The President does not have power under the Constitution to unilaterally authorize a military attack in a situation that does not involve stopping an actual or imminent threat to the nation."

Since taking office, however, President Obama's views of the so-called War on Terror seem to have changed dramatically. Yahoo's Associated Content observed:

Barack Obama has been obliged to renege on a number of his campaign promises surrounding the War on Terror. Besides keeping the prison at Guantanamo open, he has not made a precipitous withdrawal from Iraq, has actually increased troop levels in Afghanistan, and has stepped up drone strikes in the Waziristan region of Pakistan. The joke is that Obama has killed more terrorists in the two years of his presidency than George W. Bush did in all eight years of his.

In fact, critics note that President Obama has exhibited all the qualities worthy of a neoconservative's praise. Former Vice President Dick Cheney has hailed many of Obama's hawkish decisions, explaining, "I think he's learned that what we did was far more appropriate than he ever gave us credit for while he was a candidate. So I think he's learned from experience."

The discussion of a possible Obama impeachment was revisited following the targeted killing of American-born al-Qaeda leader Anwar al-Awlaki last September, with no charges being brought. Texas Congressman and GOP presidential contender Ron Paul has observed that because of the President's "flouting" of the law in the murder of al-Awlaki, impeachment is possible.

Ben Johnson of White House Watch wrote of the assassination of al-Awlaki:

Although federal agents have sought al-Awlaki since the Clinton administration, and the Authorization for the Use of Force passed following 9/11 allows the president to kill anyone he "determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11," al-Awlaki's birth in the United States has many debating the proper interplay between national security and civil liberties.

According to Rep. Paul, the assassination of an American citizen, regardless of the reason, "continues" and "accelerates" the "slip toward tyranny." He added, "I put responsibility on the president because this is obviously a step in the wrong direction. We have just totally disrespected the Constitution."

Paul warned attendees at a town hall meeting in Manchester, New Hampshire, that permitting targeted killings of American citizens without proper due process could set a dangerous precedent:

Al-Awlaki was born here. He is an American citizen. He has never been tried or charged for any



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crimes. If the American people accept this blindly and casually that we now have an accepted practice of the president assassinating who he thinks are bad guys I think it's sad. What would the people have said about Timothy McVeigh? We didn't assassinate him. We were pretty certain that he had done it. And they put him through the courts and they executed him.

Similarly, [blogontherun.com](#) wrote, "When the president of the United States can singlehandedly order the assassination of a U.S. citizen without charge or trial, we're not just on the slippery slope toward dictatorship, we're in free fall."

Paul added that virtually every U.S. President during his own terms in Congress had committed impeachable offenses. "I just said almost every President I've known I'd probably have to vote for impeachment, because there's very little respect for the Constitution, and certainly there's no respect for the Constitution [if they're] assassinating American citizens."

Ironically, Panetta called upon the Constitution in his defense of the President's decision to seek international approval for military intervention in Syria. "When it comes to the national defense of this country, the President of the United States has the authority under the Constitution to act to defend this country and we will," he declared.

He did not explain how U.S. military intervention in the Mideast country of Syria is acting in defense of the United States or where in the constitution authorization for such executive branch action is found.



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