



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on October 4, 2011

Ron Paul: Al-Awlaki Killing is “Impeachable”

Talk of an Obama impeachment reentered the political arena this week, this time for the targeted killing of American-born al Qaeda leader Anwar al-Awlaki. Texas Congressman and GOP presidential contender Ron Paul declared that because of the President’s “flouting” of the law, impeachment is possible.



Early last Friday, al-Awlaki — who had not been charged with or convicted of any crime — was killed by a U.S. drone in a joint CIA-U.S. military operation in Yemen.

Ben Johnson of the *White House Watch* [wrote](#) of the assassination:

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, is a movement toward “tyranny.” The longtime Texas congressman added, “I put responsibility on the President because this is obviously a step in the wrong direction. We have just totally disrespected the Constitution.”

Ron Paul’s statement came after the Obama administration announced the killing of the key al Qaeda figure. Paul has been particularly critical of this administration’s handling of the wars in both Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as military action taken in Libya, and has called for the complete removal of troops from foreign bases around the world.

Monday night, Paul [warned](#) a capacity crowd at a town hall meeting in Manchester, New Hampshire, that permitting targeted killings of American citizens without due process could set a dangerous precedent:

No, I don’t think that’s a good way to deal with our problems.... al-Awlaki was born here. He [was] an American citizen. He was never tried or charged for any crimes. No one knows if he killed anybody.

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](#) [noted](#):

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 recent U.S. President had committed impeachable offenses:



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I just said almost every President I've known I'd probably have to vote [to impeach], because there's very little respect for the Constitution, and certainly there's no respect for the Constitution [if the President is] assassinating American citizens.

Paul also said that the push for impeachment would and should depend on the political conditions in Washington.

Even the leftist American Civil Liberties Union has [criticized](#) the assassination of al-Awlaki:

The targeted killing program violates both U.S. and international law. As we've seen today, this is a program under which American citizens far from any battlefield can be executed by their own government without judicial process, and on the basis of standards and evidence that are kept secret not just from the public but from the courts.

The government's authority to use lethal force against its own citizens should be limited to circumstances in which the threat to life is concrete, specific, and imminent. It is a mistake to invest the President — any President — with the unreviewable power to kill any American whom he deems to present a threat to the country.

Similarly, [blogontherun.com](#) asserted that President Obama's behavior is "a violation of al-Awlaki's rights under the Fifth and Sixth Amendments." The blogger added, "Denying or conspiring to deny another citizen his civil rights is a felony. It was wrong when George W. Bush did it, and it's wrong now."

Earlier this year, the President's Democratic colleague Rep. Dennis Kucinich (Ohio) [declared](#) that Obama's use of military force in Libya was an "impeachable offense," adding:

President Obama moved forward without Congress approving. He didn't have congressional authorization. He has gone against the Constitution, and that's got to be said. It's not even disputable[;] this isn't even a close question. Such an action — that involves putting America's service men and women into harm's way, whether they're in the Air Force or the Navy — is a grave decision that cannot be made by the president alone.

Congressman Paul agreed with Kucinich's assertions when asked back in June if he believed Obama's actions were impeachable.

Meanwhile, Politico reports that Paul's recent statements could potentially impact his campaign:

The comments once again put Paul at odds with his Republican rivals over [foreign policy](#) and the war on terror in the latest indication of how his foreign policy views stray far from Republican orthodoxy even in a GOP that's taken on an increasingly isolationist bent. Candidates like [Michele Bachmann](#) and [Mitt Romney](#) — who included the president in a list of people he commended in a statement released Friday — have generally been supportive of the killing. No one else in the field has spoken out against it.

Paul speaks on behalf of his libertarian and constitutionalist constituency, from which there have been harsh criticisms for the killing of American citizen al-Awlaki without due process. Likewise, Paul has never been one to mince words in order to maintain popularity, a trait admired by his supporters.

Additionally, the Texas Congressman is not the only GOP presidential candidate to criticize the assassination of al-Awlaki. Gary Johnson, former Governor of New Mexico, the state where al-Awlaki was born, said, "I don't want to minimize at all the threat that he was posing to the United States. But he [was] a U.S. citizen ... and never before have we targeted a U.S. citizen for death."



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GOP presidential contender Herman Cain has flip-flopped on the issue. In May, he declared, "I don't believe that the President of the United States should order the assassination of citizens of the United States. That's why we have our court system, and that's why we have our laws." This week, however, Cain told his followers that he supported the killing of al-Awlaki.



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