



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on April 4, 2011

Harry Reid Shuts Down Senate After Rand Paul Libya Maneuver

A "sense of the Senate" resolution by Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky., left) opposing President Obama's Libyan intervention using Obama's own words as a Senator has tied up the U.S. Senate as Democratic Party leaders avoid an embarrassing vote against the leader of their party. Paul's resolution had been offered as an amendment to the Small Business Reauthorization bill.



The Rand Paul resolution, co-sponsored by fellow Senate Tea Party Caucus member Mike Lee (R-Utah), says: "The President does not have the power to unilaterally authorize a military attack in a situation that does not involve an actual or imminent threat to the nation." Senator Obama used precisely that language in a [December 20, 2007 interview](#) with the *Boston Globe* when he was campaigning for the presidency. President Obama neglected to mention any actual or imminent threat to the nation in his [address to the American people on Libya March 18](#).

"This was very clear, what the President said," Paul said on the floor of the Senate March 30, referring to Obama's December 2007 remarks. "I agree with what Candidate Barack Obama said. We should not go to war without congressional authority. These are the checks and balances that give you a say, that give the people of America a say through their representatives. This allows us to say when we go to war through our Congress, not through one individual but through 535 individuals whom you elect."

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Since the Paul-Lee amendment was offered on the floor of the Senate March 30, there haven't been any floor votes. Senator Paul [told](#) Fox Business Channel's Judge Andrew Napolitano on his show *Freedom Watch* March 31:

Right now, my resolution has been basically taken off the table. For three days now, we've had no votes. And they're not going to vote again today, maybe because I think they don't want to vote on whether or not Congress should have this authority. They're embarrassed that the President took them to war precisely with the same kind of reasoning that they've always criticized up here.

Paul told Napolitano that not all Senators are sympathetic with defending the [requirement in the U.S. Constitution](#) that Congress has the exclusive power over war and the exclusive power to control the military. "There are two mindsets up here," Paul [told](#) Napolitano, including warmongers who want the



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President to take out Qadaffi without consulting Congress. But also:

There are some of us who have a respect for the Constitution who are worried about the precedent that is set by allowing a President to go to war with no debate, no discussion. He had time to go to the UN. He had time to go to the Arab League. He had the time to go just about everywhere in the world to ask for permission, except for down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Congress which the Constitution says he has to come here. And he went everywhere else but here.

Paul and Lee wrote a joint noting: "While we realize there are other matters the Senate had planned to work on, it is our belief that there is very little we are doing that rises to the level of a constitutional question regarding war."

Rand Paul's clever use of Obama's own words to oppose Obama's Libyan war has prompted both [recognition that he has quickly become a leader in the U.S. Senate by the influential Capitol Hill newspaper *The Hill*](#), and has apparently geared up the Democratic smear machine, this time in the form of MSNBC's Laurence O'Donnell. O'Donnell [claimed](#) on his show *The Last Word* that Rand Paul had actually voted to support Obama's military attack on Libya:

He joined the Senate's unanimous consent to support the resolution backing a United Nations-enforced no-fly-zone over Libya. In fact, that Senate resolution calls for everything — everything — that President Obama has done in Libya, and it called for those actions before President Obama decided to do it. Rand Paul voted for that. He's voted for everything that the President has done in Libya — he's voted in support of it, and he voted for it in the form of a resolution introduced by liberal Democrats like Chuck Schumer, Ron Wyden and self-proclaimed socialist senator Bernie Sanders. That's right, Tea Party Senator Rand Paul voted with the only socialist senator to support what the President is doing in Libya before the President did anything in Libya.

O'Donnell then went on to audiotape a Rand Paul aide in a phone call who claimed there was no vote to support military intervention in Libya. O'Donnell then [opined](#) that "I'm absolutely certain that the senior staff is lying to her."

Of course, the only one lying was Laurence O'Donnell. The resolution O'Donnell refers to ([S. Res. 85](#)) makes *no* mention of committing U.S. troops. The resolution does urge "the United Nations Security Council to take such further action as may be necessary to protect civilians in Libya from attack, including the possible imposition of a no-fly zone over Libyan territory." But nowhere in the resolution — a symbolic measure written to show generic support for people throwing off the Libyan dictator — does the resolution call for (or even mention) any use of force by the United States.

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