

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

August 11, 2015

The Honorable John A. Boehner  
Speaker of the House  
H-232 U.S. Capitol Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker,

Mr. Speaker, we urge you once again, in the strongest possible terms, to bring up an Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) for a debate and vote in the U.S. House of Representatives in September that clearly delineates the authority and limits, if any, on U.S. military engagement against the Islamic State in Iraq, Syria and the surrounding region. It has been seven months since the President sent his request for an AUMF to the Congress, and still the House has failed to hold a full debate on this serious matter. Over this period, the U.S. mission and our military engagement in the region has only continued to expand.

On Monday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, Pentagon officials confirmed that they are carrying out an expanded bombing campaign in Syria to defend the small group of U.S.-trained Syrian rebel units. This military campaign, according to media reports, is aimed not only against Islamic State (ISIS) forces, but against other insurgent factions and/or fighters allied with the Syrian government. The U.S. air support provided by our warplanes and drones to protect this handful of newly-trained Syrian rebels is part of the recently announced U.S.-Turkish plan to establish a "safe zone" in northwestern Syria. The U.S.-Turkish plan would use U.S. airstrikes and Western coalition-backed rebel fighters to remove Islamic State forces from territory south of Turkey's border with Syria. But Al Nusra Front and other Islamic groups also have a significant presence in this proposed safe zone. These actions raise serious questions: Just who are we fighting in Syria? To what purpose in Syria are we committing and using our regional military assets? Against the Islamic State? Against other militant Islamic forces? Against the forces of Syrian President Assad? And under what authority is the U.S. military carrying out these new attacks inside Syria?

According to the most recent Pentagon report, the U.S. has expended over \$5 billion in combating the Islamic State, most of that on military air strikes and airpower assets. And Congress has provided those funds and more without ever having debated an AUMF for the use of such funds.

On June 17<sup>th</sup>, the House debated and defeated a resolution we authored to withdraw U.S. forces from Iraq and Syria. One theme, however, rang clearly from all sides throughout the debate: The House needs to debate an AUMF on U.S. military engagement in Iraq, Syria and the region to address the threat of the Islamic State. House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman

Royce and Ranking Member Engel repeatedly asserted that they were prepared to draft such an AUMF were they directed to do so. It is well past time for you to exercise leadership, Mr. Speaker, and direct the committee of jurisdiction, the House Foreign Affairs Committee, to draft an AUMF and bring it to the House floor for serious debate in September.

It is the failure of the House to carry out its constitutional obligations that allows the Administration to expand the mission and level of engagement of U.S. Armed Forces throughout the region. Mr. Speaker, let us remind you of James Madison's vision that "the power to declare war, including the power of judging the causes of war, is fully and exclusively vested in the legislature." We strongly urge you to carry out your constitutional duty and bring an AUMF to the House floor in September for consideration and action.

Sincerely,



Walter B. Jones  
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress