

» **Congress must repeal the 2001 and 2002 authorizations for the use of military force (AUMF) to eliminate the president's blank check for endless war. Congress must also reorient U.S. counterterrorism strategy away from a military-first approach that has only exacerbated the security challenge posed by terrorism.**

The 2001 and 2002 Authorizations for the Use of Military force are outdated, over-applied, and do not reflect the adversaries or wars the U.S. is currently fighting.

- The 2001 AUMF contains no time limits, no geographic constraints, and no exit strategy. It has effectively become a blank check for any president, at any time, to wage endless global war without congressional consent or oversight.
- Multiple presidents have claimed the authority granted by Congress in 2001 to wage war against adversaries that had nothing to do with 9/11.
- The 2001 AUMF has been explicitly used to justify military campaigns in 14 countries. U.S. counterterrorism operations as a whole have expanded to 76 around the world, costing an estimated \$5.9 trillion.

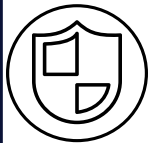
CONGRESS & THE PUBLIC WANT OUT OF ENDLESS WARS OF CHOICE



A bipartisan majority of the DoD appropriations committee passed a repeal of the 2001 AUMF by a voice vote in 2017, only to have then Speaker Paul Ryan strip the provision from the final bill to prevent a debate on the U.S.' use of force around the world. **Congressional leadership must allow debates on war and peace issues for Congress to exercise proper oversight of U.S. military engagements abroad.**

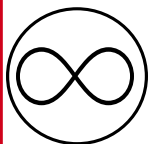
- Congress must determine whether the use of force is the right option for the challenges we face and represents the interests of the American people.
- Public debate ensures we are only placing our troops in harm's way as a last resort.
- Polling shows that the majority of Americans want Congress to vote on whether the U.S. goes to war and only with clear strategic objectives and an exit strategy.

NO AUMF IS NEEDED TO DEFEND THE UNITED STATES



- The Constitution and corresponding statutes give the President, as Commander in Chief, all necessary legal authority to defend our nation against a truly imminent attack.
- The reality is that AUMFs are used to engage in preventive war, a counterterrorism strategy that has abjectly failed over the past 17 years.
- **Without a new AUMF, our nation will not be defenseless, but rather will focus on defending against imminent threats and no longer engage in military misadventures that ultimately create more threats.**

REPEALING ENDLESS WAR



Congress must repeal the prior AUMFs that have been used to wage endless war and decide whether the use of military force is the right tool to address the security challenges we face.

- Any debate on the need for a new AUMF must focus on whether the challenges posed by terrorism – the causes of which are often rooted in economic grievance & governance failure – have a military solution.
- An AUMF is only part of, rather than the driver of, a comprehensive U.S. strategy to address the security challenges posed by terrorism.
- Congress must identify alternative tools to military force, including conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and diplomatic engagement.

GOING TO WAR IS SUPPOSED TO BE HARD

The Constitution's Framers were deeply worried about the power to wage war being concentrated solely with the Executive, so they gave the power to declare war to Congress. The Framers wanted the branch closest and most accountable to the people to decide on whether the nation should go to war, precisely because they knew it would be hard for Congress to agree – not in spite of it. **If a majority of Congress cannot agree that our nation should be taking military action then the U.S. has no business engaging in that conflict.**



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONGRESS

Members of Congress must act to end the president's blank check for endless war by taking the following positive actions:



REPEAL THE 2001 & 2002 AUMFs

These AUMFs have outlived their original purpose and now only serve as a blank check for endless war. Congress can: 1) introduce a stand-alone repeal of the AUMFs; 2) cosponsor Rep. Barbara Lee's Repeal of the Authorization for the Use of Force; 3) attach amendments repealing the AUMFs to must-pass authorization or appropriations bills.



DEBATE THE NECESSITY OF A NEW AUMF

Publicly review 17 years worth of evidence to confirm that our military-first strategy has failed and determine a new approach. Congress must publicly debate whether the threats we face have a military solution and Congressional leadership must allow debates and votes on war and peace issues.



REQUIRE STRICT OVERSIGHT FOR ANY NEW AUMF

If Congress decides a new AUMF is necessary, any new authorization must:

- Clearly specify missions, objectives, the enemy, and the geographic scope
- Increase transparency through regular reporting
- Require compliance with international law
- Require the executive branch to seek authorization from Congress to add any additional group or geographic location to the authorization
- Contain sunset clauses that require a public debate and vote to continue the war

BETTER ALTERNATIVES TO MILITARY FORCE:



FOCUS ON CONFLICT PREVENTION & RESOLUTION

Extremist groups capitalize on conflict, state collapse, and poor governance, as in Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, and Libya. Instead of perpetuating these conflicts through military force, **the U.S. should prioritize diplomacy, inclusive peace settlements, and local peacebuilding to mitigate threats.**



ADDRESS LOCAL DRIVERS TO CONFLICT

The Trump administration's current counterterrorism strategy focuses on combating "ideology," failing to recognize that dangerous ideologies take root in conditions where people are denied basic rights. **U.S. CT strategy should address local drivers to recruitment, like the lack of economic opportunity and accountable governance.**



REBALANCE THE BUDGET

Waging the endless war has cost an estimated \$5.9 trillion. **Investing in war results in death, destruction, and contributes to the spread of extremist groups.** The U.S. should defund these wars and reinvest resources here at home and in State Department and USAID programs that specialize conflict prevention and addressing state fragility.

For further questions and additional resources:



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