

End the Illegal U.S. Military Presence in Syria

The mission in Syria is a perfect example of a military deployment that puts U.S. forces in harm's way without Congressional approval.

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While testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, a top Biden administration Pentagon official [confirmed](#) today that the illegal U.S. military presence in Syria would continue:

The Biden administration is committed to retaining US military presence in northeast Syria.

This is consistent with [reporting](#) from last month that said that U.S. forces would be staying there. The continued presence in Syria has the least justification of any mission in the region, and it has absolutely no legal authorization, so of course it is the one that will continue indefinitely. Officially, the approximately 900 troops in Syria are there to advise the Syrian Democratic Forces against the remnants of the Islamic State, but now that ISIS has been defeated they have no reason to be there. They also have no authorization to be there, and their mission has nothing to do with U.S. security. U.S. forces have been operating illegally in Syria for the [last seven years](#) ever since the Obama administration expanded the campaign against ISIS there, and every day that they remain in Syrian territory is another day that the U.S. proves that it has no respect for international law.

The mission in Syria is a perfect example of a military deployment that puts U.S. forces in harm's way without Congressional approval. Multiple administrations have stretched the 2001 authorization beyond recognition so that it now applies to fighting the remnants of a group that was created as a result of an illegal U.S. invasion of a country that had no connection to the 9/11 attacks. No one seriously believes that the 2001 AUMF applies to whatever is happening in Syria today, but that is the legal fig leaf that effectively lets the U.S. intervene wherever it wishes.

U.S. forces in Syria periodically exchange fire with [pro-government forces](#) and [Russian mercenaries](#), and on occasion they have [clashed](#) with the Russian military as well. The most recent incident involved [coming under fire](#) in response to the U.S. bombing of Iraqi militias. The U.S. has been lucky up until now that these exchanges have not resulted in American

fatalities, but U.S. forces in Syria are at risk every day they stay there. These troops are undeniably engaged in hostilities, and they are in danger of coming under attack at any time. This is exactly the kind of situation that Congress wanted to prevent by passing the War Powers Act, but strangely the illegal mission in Syria almost never comes up in discussions of reclaiming Congressional authority in matters of war. That needs to change. The U.S. military presence in Syria is illegal and puts Americans at risk for no good reason. Congress needs to force the issue and demand an end to the mission.

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Michel Chossudovsky

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