

Obama faces Congressional Backlash for supporting Al Qaeda Syria Rebels

By [Global Research News](#)

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Jeremy Herb writing in The Hill examines how Obama's decision to fund the Al Nusrah has sparked a backlash in the US Congress from both side of the House. Three bills have introduced "that would restrict funds for arming to the Syrian opposition and prevent the administration from intervening without congressional approval. ... Two of the bills came from Republican Reps. Tom Rooney (R-Fla.) and Thomas Massie (R-Ky.), and one was bipartisan, with Reps. Michele Bachmann (R-Minn.), Chris Gibson (R-N.Y.), Peter Welch (D-Vt.) and Rick Nolan (D-Minn.):

The flurry of legislative activity represents a new urgency from intervention opponents in the wake of Obama's move to provide military support to the rebels.

"It's being spurred by the fact that things are developing quite rapidly in Syria... and now folks are sounding the alarm," said Adnan Zulfiqar, a fellow at the Truman National Security Project. "Up until now, the activity that you've mainly been seeing on the Hill has been really from the advocates for greater intervention."

Obama changed course earlier this month and said he would provide military support to Syria's opposition forces. McCain and Democrats like Senate Armed Services Chairman Carl Levin (Mich.) and Foreign Relations Chairman Robert Menendez (N.J.) cheered the move but urged him to go further by creating a no-fly zone in Syria.

The administration is trying to keep out of the crossfire as it makes the pitch to Congress for increased involvement. Vice President Joe Biden briefed the Senate Intelligence Committee on Syria on Thursday.

While the debate in Congress is focused primarily on what the administration should do in Syria, it is also impacting legislation that isn't explicitly aimed at limiting U.S. involvement.

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After a decade of war in Iraq and Afghanistan, there is public opposition to participating in another war in the Middle East. A Pew Poll released last week found 70 percent of respondents opposed the United States and its allies arming the rebels, while just 20 percent supported it.

A majority of those opposed said the U.S. military was already "overcommitted" and expressed concerns that the rebel groups would be no better than the Assad regime once in power.

Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), who joined his House colleagues at the press conference, said the U.S. is going to be providing weapons to those fighting on the same side as al Qaeda.

"The Use of Authorization of Force [AUMF] in 2001 said we could go after the Taliban, Al Qaeda and associated forces," Paul said. "Now we will be arming forces who are actually associated and fighting on the same side as Al Qaeda."

Many Democrats, meanwhile, have argued that U.S. military intervention will only make things worse and exacerbate the humanitarian crisis caused by the death of nearly 100,000 Syrians in two years.

"There is a humanitarian disaster. But that doesn't mean that what we do in arming the rebels will be effective in achieving the goal," Welch said. "It raises very serious questions about whether, in fact, we end up Americanizing a civil war."

To read the complete article:

http://thehill.com/blogs/defcon-hill/policy-and-strategy/308553-obama-faces-backlash-on-syria?utm_content=bufferd3a96&utm_source=buffer&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=Buffer#ixzz2XjYg6RnC

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