

Obama on Iraq: “Now What we Need Is Ground Troops”

Democratic Senator: Obama doesn't have authority to send troops to Iraq

By [Steve Watson](#)

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In an interview with CBS on *Face the Nation*, the President refused to rule out sending greater numbers of troops to Iraq, and even admitted the need for boots on the ground.

Obama called the decision, [announced Friday](#), to double the number of “US military advisers” in Iraq “a new phase” in the campaign, denying that the original strategy to combat the IS terror group had been inadequate.

“The air strikes have been very effective in degrading ISIL’s capabilities and slowing the advance that they were making,” Obama said. “Now what we need is ground troops, Iraqi ground troops, that can start pushing them back.”

Obama added that the new phase signifies a shift from a defensive strategy to an offensive one. He also left open the possibility of sending more combat troops back into the country.

“You know, as commander in chief I’m never going to say never,” he told CBS.

The additional troops already slated for Iraq will operate under a noncombat restriction, the same as those already there, but they will be deployed closer to the front lines, according to officials.

“We needed to get a better handle on the Iraqi security forces and we needed to get a better intelligence picture,” a senior administration official told reporters Friday, adding that “The numbers are borne out of that analysis.”

Appearing on CNN’s *State of the Union*, Democratic Senator Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) criticized the President’s plan to deploy 1,500 more troops, saying that he does not have the power to do so and that it would only be a “temporary band-aid.”

“I do not think president has the ability under current authority to authorize 1,500 troops without Congress acting.” Murphy said.

Murphy noted that it has been over 60 days since Obama announced a strategy for sending an initial 1,400 troops to Iraq to help quell the rise of ISIS. The initial deployment cap had been set at 1,600. Murphy stated that under the War Powers Act, a separate vote in Congress is needed to authorize further deployments.

"I think a lot of us are going to be very reluctant to support this kind of infusion of group troops absent some suggestions," Murphy said, pointing to concerns over failed attempts to bolster the Iraqi government in the past.

"We had hundreds of thousands of troops inside Iraq over the course of a decade trying to train Iraqi armed forces. They got overrun in a period of weeks by a relatively unorganized force," he said.

In an appearance on the same program, Republican Senator John Thune reiterated the same sentiments, noting "I think at some point we are going to be debating an authorization on the use of military force."

In an appearance on ABC's "This Week," Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) argued that more troops are urgently needed in Iraq because the government there is "quite delusional" over its capability to retain power.

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"If we're to protect the gains we made against Islamic extremism, my Marines from Camp Pendleton and others are going to have to go back again," Issa, a former Army captain, said.

"The fact is we're already there. We've had to be there," Issa added.

Given that Republicans now control the Senate, and are seemingly eager to back Obama's plans to send more troops to Iraq, the foreboding warnings of former Congressman Ron Paul seem all the more prescient.

Republican control of the Senate = expanded neocon wars in Syria and Iraq.
Boots on the ground are coming!

— Ron Paul (@RonPaul) [November 5, 2014](#)

Steve Watson is a London based writer and editor for Alex Jones' [Infowars.com](#), and [Prisonplanet.com](#). He has a Masters Degree in International Relations from the School of Politics at The University of Nottingham, and a Bachelor Of Arts Degree in Literature and Creative Writing from Nottingham Trent University.

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