Obama Seeks Broad Powers to Wage Geographically Limitless War On ISIS

Analysts raise alarm at presidential proposal for congressional authorization, which would allow for further troop deployments and years of intervention

By [Sarah Lazare](#)

Global Research, February 11, 2015

[Common Dreams](#) 10 February 2015

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

President Obama pictured during his first visit to the Pentagon since becoming President January 28, 2009. (Photo: DOD/public domain)

President Barack Obama is seeking broad congressional authorization for the U.S.-led war on ISIS that would allow for further deployments of ground troops, years of intervention, and geographically limitless military operations, according to media reports on Tuesday.

The war has already been waged for six months without a congressional vote or meaningful debate. While Obama has [previously claimed](#) that such authorization is not required, he [appeared to diverge](#) from this line in his State of the Union address last month.

"I call on this Congress to show the world that we are united in this mission by passing a resolution to authorize the use of force against [ISIS]," he said in the speech. "We need that authority."

At a closed meeting on Tuesday, White House Chief of Staff Denis McDonough and White House counsel Neil Eggleston met with Senate Democrats to discuss the key stipulations of the war authority Obama is seeking, *ABC* [reports](#).

The information revealed to the media so far indicates Obama is pushing for broad—and potentially global—war-making authority.

Analysts are already raising the alarm over the potential implications.

"First of all, this crisis does not have a military solution, and it continues to be a shame that we are only having a debate about how much war to have," Stephen Miles of Win Without War told *Common Dreams*. "That said, it is important for Congress to learn from mistakes in 2001 and 2002 and avoid making war permanent and world-wide and avoid committing to another massive ground war in the Middle East."

According to [reports](#), the president is seeking authorization for at least three years of military intervention, at which point the next president could then seek reauthorization.

The proposal would not put any geographical limitations on the use of military force, similar to the 2001 AUMF, which was passed in the wake of the September 11th attacks and was used by both the Bush and Obama administrations to [justify](#) war and occupation in

Afghanistan, covert drone wars in Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia, military intervention in countries from Ethiopia to Iraq, indefinite detentions at Guantanamo Bay and Bagram prison, and more.

While the president is proposing a repeal of the 2002 AUMF, which authorized the 2003 invasion of Iraq and use of force against Saddam Hussein, he is seeking to leave the 2001 AUMF firmly in place. Raed Jarrar, Policy Impact Coordinator for the American Friends Service Committee, told *Common Dreams* that this would amount to "a blank check for war from 2001 and another blank check from 2015."

The proposal, furthermore, does not ban deployments of U.S. troops. While it calls for a prohibition on "enduring offensive ground operations," it is not clear exactly what this term means, and analysts warn that this vague wording could, in fact, open a back door to another ground offensive.

Josh Rogin writes in *Bloomberg* that the White House proposal regarding ground troops leaves room for numerous exceptions: "First, all existing ground troops, including the 3,000 U.S. military personnel now on the ground in Iraq, would be explicitly excluded from the restrictions. After that, the president would be allowed to deploy new military personnel in several specific roles: advisers, special operations forces, Joint Terminal Attack Controllers to assist U.S. air strikes and Combat Search and Rescue personnel."

The proposal vaguely defines the enemy, authorizing force against ISIS and associated forces, which could potentially include combatants fighting alongside ISIS. This, in combination with the lack of geographical constraints, could spread the war beyond Iraq and Syria.

"We are against authorizing a new war," Raed Jarrar, Policy Impact Coordinator for the American Friends Service Committee, told *Common Dreams*. "Unfortunately, what we know so far from the language that has been made public is extremely concerning, because it seems like it will not only legitimize the ongoing intervention in Iraq and Syria but will also prolong it and increase its scope."

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