

TIME TO END THE IRAQ WAR

In his speech on Thursday, President Obama said,

America is at a crossroads. We must define the nature and scope of this struggle, or else it will define us, mindful of James Madison's warning that "No nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare."

Talking about the way the choices we make about war affect the freedom on which our way of life depends, Obama called for tweaking and, ultimately, repealing the September 18, 2001 Authorization to Use Military Force.

I intend to engage Congress about the existing Authorization to Use Military Force, or AUMF, to determine how we can continue to fight terrorists without keeping America on a perpetual war-time footing.

The AUMF is now nearly twelve years old. The Afghan War is coming to an end. Core al Qaeda is a shell of its former self. Groups like AQAP must be dealt with, but in the years to come, not every collection of thugs that labels themselves al Qaeda will pose a credible threat to the United States. **Unless we discipline our thinking and our actions, we may be drawn into more wars we don't need to fight, or continue to grant Presidents unbound powers** more suited for traditional armed conflicts between nation states. So I look forward to engaging Congress and the American people in efforts to refine, and ultimately repeal, the AUMF's mandate. [my emphasis]

And yet ... he said nothing about the 2002 Iraq

War AUMF, the one he ran for President against in 2008.

Last we heard, remember, Rand Paul tried to repeal the Iraq AUMF just as the last US forces were being withdrawn in November 2011. That effort was voted down definitively, 67-30. 18 months later, that AUMF is still on the books.

A great speaker recently said said that "Unless we discipline our thinking and our actions, we may be drawn into more wars we don't need to fight, or continue to grant Presidents unbound powers." I'm all in favor of repealing the 2001 AUMF. But why not practice repealing AUMFs first, by formally ending the Iraq War that should never have been started?