

TIME TO END THE WAR IN IRAQ

The War Powers Resolution 6-Month Report has gotten unusual attention because it officially announces we're at war in Yemen and Somalia (though I suspect the Administration has only finally officially announced we're at war against al Qaeda in Yemen precisely because we're not, just).

While everyone's looking, let's look more closely at this bit:

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN IRAQ

The United States completed its responsible withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq in December 2011, in accordance with the 2008 Agreement Between the United States of America and the Republic of Iraq on the Withdrawal of United States Forces from Iraq and the Organization of Their Activities during Their Temporary Presence in Iraq.

Jeebus pete. Can't we avoid propaganda like "responsible withdrawal" in even these bureaucratic communications? (Or "working closely with the Yemeni government to operationally dismantle ... AQAP"?)

Nevertheless, even dripping with propagandistic language as it is, this passage seems to be official notice to Congress that the war in Iraq is over, done, kaput.

So now can we repeal the Iraq AUMF?

As you'll recall, over six months ago, Rand Paul proposed an amendment to repeal the still-active Iraq AUMF. It failed miserably, 30-67. During the debate on it, a bunch of reasonable Democrats (and all the usual suspect unreasonable ones) stood up and blathered on about why we need an AUMF for a war that is over. If you asked now they'd probably point to

the bad crowd Iraq is hanging out with in OPEC circles.

Iran and Iraq are forming a strengthening alliance inside Opec, raising concerns among moderate Arab Gulf producers like Saudi Arabia and increasing the potential for discord in the oil producers' group.

[snip]

A particular bone of contention was a proposal by Venezuela – backed by other Opec hardliners like Iran, Iraq and Algeria – that the group should protest against the EU sanctions against Tehran over its nuclear programme. The move was rebuffed by Saudi Arabia and other moderates including Nigeria, Libya and Kuwait, who argued that such protests were the preserve of foreign ministers, not oil ministers.

(Yes, you read that right: Saudi Arabia is considered a “moderate” state in this context.)

Or they'd point to the series of bombings al Qaeda in Iraq has claimed credit for recently.

But the real reason they won't repeal an AUMF for a war that has officially ended is because that AUMF expands the authority to fight terrorism beyond simply al Qaeda to whatever “terrorist” groups the President claims is in armed conflict with and poses a threat to the US. Indeed, in Mark Udall's effort to “fix” the NDAA, he even suggested the Iraq War AUMF pertained to “covered persons” who could be detained indefinitely under that law.

I know it sounds funny, having to insist on ending a war the Administration just informed Congress is over. But it's not over.