

PROPOSAL FOR THE NEW YEAR: TRAINING WHEELS FOR PEACE

As you may have been recently reminded by my Twitter stream, I have been [obsessing](#) for years about the Iraq AUMF lying around, [like Chekov's gun](#) waiting to be used, for years.

Which is why I'm rather chuffed that Yahoo News got Obama's National Security Spokesperson on the record [claiming](#) that the President supports getting rid of that loaded gun, even if that "symbolic act" isn't a priority.

"The Administration supports the repeal of the Iraq AUMF," national security spokeswoman Caitlin Hayden told Yahoo News, referring to the [Authorization for Use of Military Force](#).

Obama frequently cites the U.S. troop withdrawal from Iraq as one of his key foreign policy successes. He has repeatedly defended the pull-out, even as he pursues a strategy to leave only a residual force of maybe 8,000-10,000 troops in Afghanistan after 2014. His administration recently promised it would not [put boots back on the ground in Iraq](#) in response to the current bloody chaos that threatens its stability.

But leaving the Iraq military force authorization in place could probably come in handy if he, or a future president, wanted to send troops in.

[snip]

But "the Iraq AUMF is no longer used for any U.S. government activities and we therefore would fully support any move to repeal it," a senior administration official told Yahoo News Tuesday.

“However, we have not prioritized proactively seeking to repeal it, because the effect would be entirely symbolic and we have many more pressing priorities to take up with Congress.”

Of course, Presidential campaigns have been built largely on such “symbolic acts.”

Admittedly, Obama’s support for such a “symbolic act” would only be tested if Congress actually chose to repeal it (Yahoo notes that when the Senate defeated such a measure in 2011, the White House opposed attempts to repeal it).

So why not? This should be a no-brainer proposal both parties can back, repealing the authorization for a failed war that should never have been fought. Bipartisan lovey-dovey to end a war that started over a decade ago.

And you never know: Congress might discover it likes repealing wars. Start easy repealing an allegedly unused AUMF, then move onto bigger and better AUMFs.

Like training wheels to make peace.