

# YESTERDAY'S "SYMBOLIC" GESTURE IS TODAY'S LONG-HELD POLITICAL STANCE

Yesterday morning, the White House [explained](#) that it hadn't prioritized legally ending the Iraq War because doing so would be just a symbolic act.

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." [my emphasis]

Later in the day, Robert Gates' memoir came out, with the claim that he witnessed a conversation between Hillary and Obama in which the "President conceded vaguely that opposition to the Iraq surge had been political."

Which elicited [this defense](#), from Jay Carney, of Obama's consistent opposition to the Iraq War.

What I don't understand about that is, anybody who has covered Barack Obama, going all the way back to his race for the Senate, knows that he was opposed to the Iraq War. That was his view running for the Senate, it was his view as a Senator, it was his view as candidate for the Presidency, so it would be entirely inconsistent for him not to hold the position that he held with regards to the surge.

Carney's right: Obama has claimed opposition to the Iraq War since 2002.

So why would legally ending it be no more than symbolic?