

OBAMA TO CONGRESS: OH, BY THE WAY, YOU JUST FUNDED THE IRAQ WAR

A number of people have closely scrutinized the latest entry in Obama's epistolary war – the one informing Congress he had escalated the war into Syria.

I especially like the way he doesn't even mention the strikes on Jabhat al-Nusra (aka Khorasan) explicitly, lumping them in instead with "these terrorists" who have invaded Iraq.

I have ordered implementation of a new comprehensive and sustained counterterrorism strategy to degrade, and ultimately defeat, ISIL. As part of this strategy, I have directed the deployment of 475 additional U.S. Armed Forces personnel to Iraq, and I have determined that it is necessary and appropriate to use the U.S. Armed Forces to conduct coordination with Iraqi forces and to provide training, communications support, intelligence support, and other support, to select elements of the Iraqi security forces, including Kurdish Peshmerga forces. *I have also ordered the U.S. Armed Forces to conduct a systematic campaign of airstrikes and other necessary actions against these terrorists in Iraq and Syria.* [my emphasis]

The antecedent to "these terrorists" is ISIL. Yet he effectively lumps his attack on Nusra – which really pissed off the "moderates" in Syria we claim to be fighting with and for – in with ISIL, even though they are totally different groups. As I said, I believe one reason he struck Nusra is to be able to invoke the 2001

AUMF marginally credibly.

I'm also interested in the timing of something noted by Josh Gerstein.

For the first time in his epistolary series of self-authorizations, Obama invoked AUMFs – both of them – to justify his war.

I have directed these actions, which are in the national security and foreign policy interests of the United States, pursuant to my constitutional and statutory authority as Commander in Chief (including the authority to carry out Public Law 107-40 [the Afghan AUMF] and Public Law 107-243 [the Iraq AUMF]) and as Chief Executive, as well as my constitutional and statutory authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States.

I was afraid it would come to this.

I'm particularly struck by the timing of this move. Obama waited until Congress authorized funding for this escalation before he told them he considers the escalation to already have been authorized by them – at a time when most of them weren't even in Congress (neither was Obama, of course).

I guess that's the easier route to take, in a democracy, to blame your war on people who've long ago retired.

This way, if Congress decides to do nothing to authorize this new war during the lame duck session, Obama can keep on operating with the "sanction" of Congress without anyone having to pay a political price for it.

For shits and giggles, here's a list of all the Senators who were not in the Senate (some were in the House) for the 2002 Iraq War vote. Just the AL, CA, IA, MI, and WA delegations remain the same as they were for the Iraq AUMF.

AK: Lisa Murkowski, Mark Begich
AZ: Jeff Flake
AR: Mark Pryor, John Boozman
CO: Mark Udall, Michael Bennet
CT: Richard Blumenthal, Chris Murphy
DE: Chris Coons
FL: Marco Rubio
GA: Saxby Chambliss, Johnny Isakson
HI: Mazie Hirono, Brian Schatz
ID: Jim Risch
IL: Mark Kirk
IN: Dan Coats, Joe Donnelly
KS: Jerry Moran
KY: Rand Paul
LA: David Vitter
ME: Angus King
MD: Ben Cardin
MA: Elizabeth Warren, Ed Markey
MN: Amy Klobuchar, Al Franken
MS: Roger Wicker
MO: Claire McCaskill, Roy Blunt
MT: Jon Tester, John Walsh
NE: Mike Johanns, Deb Fischer
NV: Dean Heller
NH: Jeanne Shaheen, Kelly Ayotte
NJ: Bob Menendez, Cory Booker
NM: Tom Udall, Martin Heinrich
NY: Kirsten Gillibrand
NC: Richard Burr, Kay Hagan

ND: John Hoeven, Heidi Heitkamp

OH: Sherrod Brown, Rob Portman

OK: Tom Coburn

OR: Jeff Merkley

PA: Bob Casey, Jr., Pat Toomey

RI: Sheldon Whitehouse

SC: Lindsey Graham, Tim Scott

SD: John Thune

TN: Lamar Alexander, Bob Corker

TX: John Cornyn, Ted Cruz

UT: Mike Lee

VT: Bernie Sanders

VA: Mark Warner, Tim Kaine

WV: Joe Manchin

WI: Ron Johnson, Tammy Baldwin

WY: John Barrasso