

RAND PAUL AND I TOLD YOU SO

At least according to this snippet from WaPo, Jane Harman reported out after discussing war over “d’anjou pear salad and Chilean sea bass” that the President thinks he can rely on both his epistolary War Power Resolution letters and ... the Iraq AUMF to wage war against ISIS. (h/t Lemon Slayer)

The president “thinks he has the legal authority he needs” to increase U.S. military engagement in both Iraq and Syria, said Jane Harman, president of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, who attended the dinner with Obama. The White House’s belief that it has authority to act is based on the reports Obama has filed with Congress under the War Powers Act ***and the earlier congressional authorization for the war in Iraq.*** [my emphasis]

Back in 2011, Rand Paul had the batshit crazy idea that, since we were ending the war in Iraq, we ought to repeal the AUMF that authorized the war. You never know, after all, when someone might pull that cobwebby AUMF out of a drawer and start using it again.

Not many of Paul’s colleagues agreed with him about this basic matter of AUMF hygiene.

From time to time over the last several years, I’ve reminded people about that dusty old AUMF lying around like Chekhov’s gun.

In 2012, when Obama officially told Congress the, “responsible withdrawal ... 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,” had been completed, I suggested maybe

that marked a good time to repeal that AUMF.

When, last year, Obama said – referring exclusively to the 2001 Afghanistan AUMF –

–mindful of James Madison’s warning that “No nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare.”

[snip]

I intend to engage Congress ... in efforts to refine, and ultimately repeal, the AUMF’s mandate.

I suggested maybe we could do a twofer and actually repeal both the Afghan and Iraq AUMFs at once.

Earlier this year, people started catching on, and Caitlin Hayden even claimed to Yahoo that they wanted to repeal the Iraq War.

It looked, for a brief period, like Obama might prove Paul and I wrong.

Nope.

Chekhov knew a fair bit about narrative. And you just can’t leave a loaded AUMF lying around before some tragic person picks it up and shoots it.