

Dear Mr. Danilow,

Thank you for contacting me in regards to the Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF). I appreciate having the opportunity to learn about your views on issues of importance to Northwest Florida and our Nation.

Since as early as President John Adams' Administration, Congress has enacted legislation authorizing the President to use military force in place of formally declaring war. In response to the horrific terrorist attacks on our Nation on September 11, 2001, Congress passed a joint resolution to authorize the use of the United States Armed Forces against those responsible for the attacks. The joint resolution, the Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF), was signed into law by President George W. Bush on September 18, 2001, and states, "The President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons."

I believe this Authorization for Use of Military Force is still relevant and required to protect the United States from terrorist attacks; however, I also believe that Congress has an enduring role to provide oversight into how this authorization is used. Therefore, in light of recent events, I support issuing a new AUMF specifically for our fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), also known as Daesh. Fighting Daesh with the existing AUMF was done in an extemporaneous fashion by the President and does not cover the specifics needed to legally and strategically meet national security needs.

In November 2014, then-Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey, testified before the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) on the President's strategy in fighting Daesh. President Obama and the White House National Security Team have repeatedly mismanaged the threat posed by Daesh, and I had hoped this would have been an opportunity to get clarification on how they intended on meeting their goal of destroying this incessant terrorist organization. Unfortunately, it was not very reassuring then that Secretary Hagel and General Dempsey seemed unaware the Administration's National Security Team was in the process of changing their strategy with Syria. This is not surprising, however, as even the President initially requested to repeal the AUMF against Al Qaeda and its' affiliates—the same AUMF used as justification for the growing mission and airstrikes against Daesh. In July 2014, the President's National Security Advisor, Susan Rice, stated that "the Iraq AUMF is no longer used for any U.S. government activities and the Administration fully supports its repeal. Such a repeal would go much further in giving the American people confidence that ground forces will not be sent into combat in Iraq." However, this request was never reviewed by the Department of Defense and ran counter to the Administration's interpretation of the existing AUMF.

In February of this year, the President proposed a new AUMF, and while the President was right to come to Congress, I have serious concerns with his proposal. At the end of February, I attended a House Armed Services Committee hearing on the President's proposed AUMF, where former U.S. Army Vice Chief of Staff General Jack Keane, USA (Ret.); Charles I. Francis Professor in Law Associate Dean for Academic Affairs Robert M. Chesney, University of Texas; and Governance Studies Senior Fellow Benjamin Wittes, Brookings Institution, shared their outside perspectives and concerns with the current draft, to include time, geographical, and ground combat troops constraints, as well as the role it would play with regards to the existing 2001 AUMF. Considering the global nature of the threat posed by Daesh, I agree with General Keane's concerns of the

geographical constraints within the President's proposed AUMF. Additionally, the President's decision to place a three-year moratorium on the AUMF fails to send a strong signal of U.S. resolve to both our enemies and allies.

While action must be taken, I remain concerned about exactly how his proposal will enable our military commanders to defeat this threat. The President must detail how the military can operate within the restrictions he has suggested, and explain to the American people why he is seeking to tie his own hands by limiting authority he has already claimed. Constrained, piecemeal implementation of forces may not achieve the necessary objectives, and hampering military commanders may place our servicemembers in additional and unnecessary danger while carrying out the mission. We must assure our allies and our enemies that we are committed to the fight against an evil unprecedented in recent memory. Any authorization for the use of military force against Daesh must provide the requisite tools needed by our military commanders, and political expediency must not dictate military strategy.

The history of the last half century shows us incremental augmentations of war without a clear strategic view can lead to painful and costly lessons. Adding to the danger, failing to clearly signal to both our allies and enemies what America will or will not stand for can also lead to catastrophic miscalculations by all entities involved.

Without question, given the weight of decision to send our troops into harm's way, it is crucial for Congress to exercise its constitutional duty, and to that end, these hearings afford members the opportunity to receive testimony from expert witnesses to carefully and fully examine the President's proposal. I look forward to additional hearings on this topic and on our overall strategy moving forward, and rest assured, I will continue to keep your thoughts and concerns in mind.

If you would like to receive further information on issues of importance to you, please log on to my website at <http://jeffmiller.house.gov/>. As always, please feel free to contact my office if you have any further concerns.

Sincerely,

Jeff Miller
Member of Congress