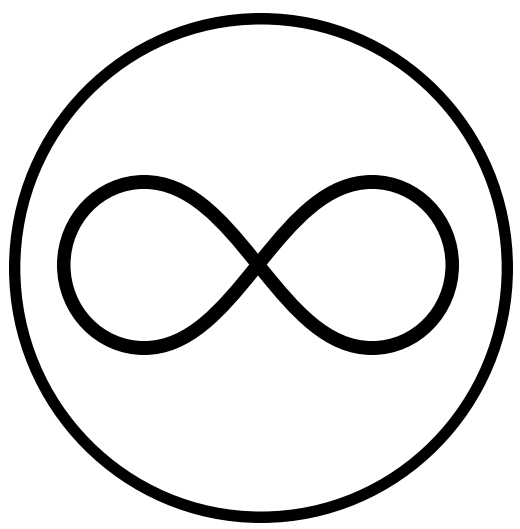


➤ ***Congress must repeal the 2001 and 2002 authorizations for the use of military force (AUMFs) to eliminate the president's blank check for endless war. Congress must also reevaluate U.S. counterterrorism strategy, moving away from a military-first approach that has only exacerbated the security challenge posed by violent groups that perpetuate terrorism.***

The 2001 and 2002 AUMFs are outdated, over-applied, and do not reflect the adversaries or wars the U.S. is currently fighting.

- The 2001 AUMF contains no time limits, no geographic constraints, and no exit strategy. It has effectively become a blank check for any president, at any time, to wage endless global war without congressional consent or oversight.
- Multiple presidents have claimed the authority granted by Congress in 2001 to wage war against adversaries that had nothing to do with the 9/11 attacks.
- The 2001 AUMF has been explicitly used to justify U.S. military action at least 41 times in 19 countries. U.S. counterterrorism operations as a whole have expanded to 80 countries, costing an estimated \$6.4 trillion.
- The 2002 AUMF has similarly been twisted to justify military actions in or against Iraq, Syria, and Iran that were not contemplated – let alone authorized – by Congress when the AUMF was passed, including Trump's dangerous assassination of Iranian Major General Qasem Soleimani.

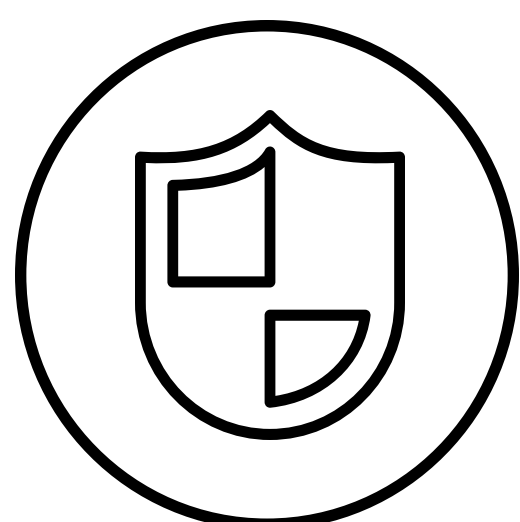
REPEALING ENDLESS WAR



Congress must repeal the prior AUMFs that have been used to wage endless war and, in any debate on the need for a new AUMF, decide whether the use of military force is the right tool to address the security challenges we face.

- An AUMF is only part of, rather than the driver of, a comprehensive U.S. strategy to address the security challenges posed by violent groups that perpetrate terrorism, the causes of which are often rooted in economic grievances and governance failures.
- To keep us safe, Congress must identify alternative tools related to conflict prevention, peacebuilding, diplomatic engagement, and empowering accountable governance.

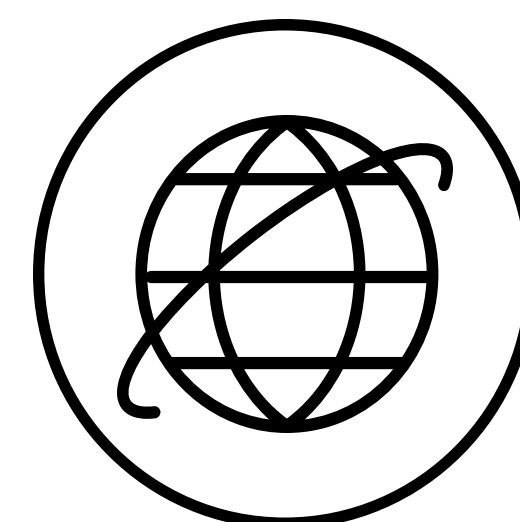
NO AUMF IS NEEDED TO DEFEND THE UNITED STATES



Without a new AUMF, our nation will not be defenseless, but rather will focus on defending against imminent threats and no longer engage in military misadventures that ultimately create more threats.

- The Constitution and corresponding statutes give the president, as Commander-in-Chief, all necessary legal authority to defend our nation against a truly imminent attack.
- The current AUMFs are now being used to engage in preventive war, a counterterrorism strategy that has abjectly failed over the past 19 years.

CONGRESS & THE PUBLIC WANT OUT OF ENDLESS WARS OF CHOICE



Polling shows that the majority of Americans want Congress to vote on whether the U.S. goes to war and only with clear strategic objectives and an exit strategy.

- When debating whether to send troops into a war, Congress must determine whether the use of force is the right option for the challenges we face and represents the interests of the American people.
- Public debate, rather than reliance on outdated authorizations, helps to ensure that we are only placing our troops in harm's way as a last resort.

GOING TO WAR IS SUPPOSED TO BE HARD

The Constitution's framers were deeply worried about the power to wage war being concentrated solely with the Executive, so they gave the power to declare war to Congress. The framers wanted the branch closest and most accountable to the people to decide on whether the nation should go to war, precisely because they knew it would be hard for Congress to agree – not in spite of it. **If a majority of Congress cannot agree that our nation should be taking military action, then the U.S. has no business engaging in that conflict.**



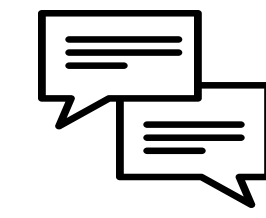
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONGRESS

Members of Congress must act to end the president's blank check for endless war by taking the following actions:



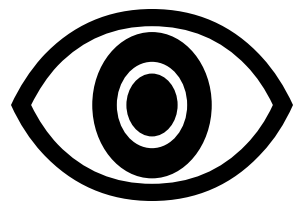
REPEAL THE 2001 & 2002 AUMFS

These AUMFs have outlived their original purpose and now only serve as a blank check for endless war. Members of Congress can cosponsor Rep. Barbara Lee's 8-month [sunset](#) of the 2001 AUMF and 2002 AUMF [repeal](#) in the House as well as the [bill](#) repealing the 1991 and 2001 AUMFs led by Sens. Tim Kaine and Todd Young. Members can also attach amendments repealing the AUMFs to must-pass authorization or appropriations bills.



DEBATE THE NECESSITY OF A NEW AUMF

During the 2001 AUMF sunset period, Congress must hold hearings and engage in other public debates about whether the threats we face have a military solution – rather than simply authorizing more war. The debate must start with a public review of the last 19 years of our military-first strategy to determine a new approach.



REQUIRE STRICT OVERSIGHT FOR ANY NEW AUMF

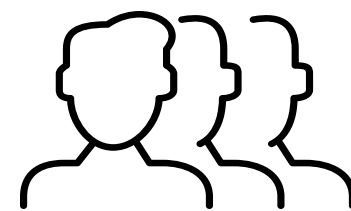
If Congress decides a new AUMF is necessary, any new authorization must clearly specify missions, objectives, enemies, and geographic scope; increase transparency through regular reporting; require compliance with international law; require the executive branch to seek authorization from Congress to add any additional group or geographic location to the authorization; and contain sunset clauses that require a public debate and vote to continue the war.

BETTER ALTERNATIVES TO MILITARY FORCE:



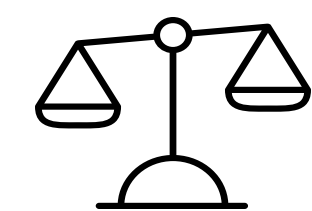
FOCUS ON CONFLICT PREVENTION & PEACEBUILDING

Violent groups that perpetrate terrorism capitalize on conflict, state collapse, and poor governance, as seen in Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, and Libya. Instead of perpetuating these conflicts through military force, the U.S. should prioritize diplomacy, inclusive peace settlements, and local peacebuilding to mitigate threats.



ADDRESS LOCAL DRIVERS OF CONFLICT

The United States' current counterterrorism strategy focuses on combating "ideology," failing to recognize that dangerous ideologies take root in conditions where people are denied basic rights. U.S. strategy to undermine the appeal of violent groups should help address local drivers of recruitment, like the lack of economic opportunity and accountable governance, rather than investing in militaristic tools that often exacerbate harm.



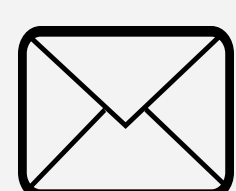
REBALANCE THE BUDGET

Waging endless war has cost an estimated \$6.4 trillion. Investing in war results in death and destruction, and contributes to the growth and spread of violent groups. The U.S. should defund these wars and reinvest resources here at home and in the State Department and USAID programs that specialize in conflict prevention, addressing state fragility, and building peace.

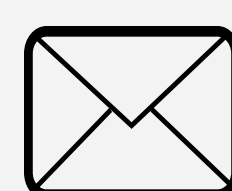
SELECT PAST LEGISLATIVE ACTION ON AUMF

- **Sept. 2017:** The Senate voted [61 to 36](#) to table an amendment seeking to repeal the 2001 AUMF and immediately withdraw U.S. Forces from Afghanistan.
- **116th Congress Actions on 2001 AUMF**
 - **FY2020:** H.R. 2500 was amended to make it the sense of Congress by a [237 to 183](#) vote that the 2001 AUMF has been misused and has served as a blank check for war.
 - **FY2020-FY2021:** The House included an 8 month sunset of the 2001 AUMF in the [FY20](#) and [FY21](#) Department of Defense Appropriations Acts.
- **116th Congress Actions on 2002 AUMF**
 - **FY2020:** H.R. 2500 was amended to repeal the 2002 AUMF by a vote of [242 to 180](#).
 - **Jan. 2020:** The House passed a standalone bill to repeal the 2002 AUMF by a vote of [236 to 166](#).
 - **FY2020-FY2021:** The House repealed the 2002 AUMF in the [FY21 DOD Appropriations Act](#).
- **March 2021:** House Foreign Affairs Committee passes the 2002 AUMF repeal bill H.R. 256 in markup by a vote of 28 to 19.

For further questions and additional resources:



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