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Taking a Stand: Recapping Proposals for an ISIS AUMF



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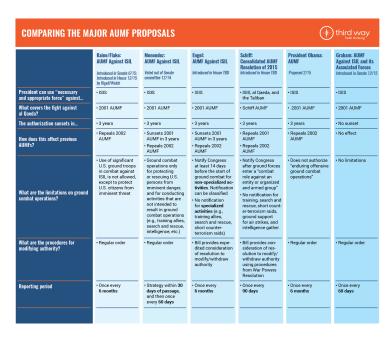
As the nation confronts the continuing threat from the terrorist group known as the Islamic State in Iraq and al Sham (ISIS), the President has repeatedly called for congressional authorization for the fight against ISIS. This would update the post-9/11 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) to protect the nation from terrorism, as well as the 2002 AUMF that applied to the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Those laws are over a decade old, and their language is increasingly inapplicable to terrorist groups like ISIS who are distinct from al Qaeda and operate outside of Iraq. A new AUMF specific to ISIS would be the strongest demonstration of congressional support and reflect the popular consensus that the United States is committed to the defeat of ISIS and its allies. Many members of Congress have expressed their interest in taking such action, and several have proposed options for a new AUMF to either supplement or replace the 2001/2002 AUMFs.

In this infographic, Third Way has collected the most prominent AUMF proposals and arrayed them from most constrained to broadest. The main issues at play are: (1) what groups the AUMF should target; (2) whether a new AUMF should cover the fight against al Qaeda; (3) when the AUMF should expire; (4) under what scenarios the President must notify Congress of the use of ground forces; (5) what procedures Congress can use to modify the AUMF; and (6) how often the President must report on activities carried out pursuant to the AUMF.

No proposal restricts authority to a particular geographic area, meaning the President could use any of these AUMFs to fight ISIS anywhere in the world. In addition, each proposal provides authority to target "associated forces" of ISIS.

All but one of these proposals have been introduced in either the House or the Senate, and the next step is for the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to take them up. The Kaine/Flake AUMF is the only bipartisan measure that has been introduced in both the Senate and the House, but has yet to be considered by any committee of jurisdiction. President Obama's proposed AUMF language has not been introduced in either chamber of Congress.

We urge Congress to take up its constitutional role in deciding whether to authorize armed conflict against threats to the United States. The American people deserve a robust debate and to know where their elected officials stand.



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