

## Action Sheet: August 2021

*We seek a world free of war and the threat of war*

September 2021 will mark 20 years of seemingly endless wars all over the world. As we prepare to mark this solemn anniversary, Advocacy Teams are amplifying the message that 20 years of war have brought incalculable harm to the United States and the rest of the world. Our voices are more important than ever in urging Congress to reclaim authority over when our country goes to war.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has scheduled a briefing on S.J. Res. 10 to repeal the 2002 Iraq Authorization for Use of Military Force. They may vote in early August, and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said he wants to bring this bill to the floor. But to get to the floor, FCNL lobbyists say we need more Senators, both Democrats and Republicans alike, to publicly cosponsor the legislation – or to tell Senate leadership they will support a vote for passage.

Advocacy Teams learned in late July that one very conservative Senator is going to support the bill, although he will not cosponsor. The House has already voted twice to repeal the 2002 Iraq AUMF, and momentum on this issue is continuing to build in Congress.

In August, while Senators are home for the August recess, we encourage Advocacy Teams to ask your Senators to cosponsor S.J. Res 10 and call for Congress to reassert its constitutional authority in September. This legislation now has 28 cosponsors, 24 of whom met with Advocacy Teams before they signed on. Years of persistent advocacy have led us to this point. Now is the crucial moment to drive our campaign over the finish line!

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### Get the Facts: Ending the Endless Wars

#### The Constitution

The founders of the United States specifically placed the power to declare war in the hands of Congress. The 2001 and 2002 AUMFs have been interpreted by three presidents to give the executive branch the power to wage war without congressional approval.

#### The 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force

Three days after 9/11, Congress gave the president advance permission to use military force against anyone who planned, authorized, committed, or aided those attacks, or who harbored such groups.

By the authorization’s own language, that should have meant only al Qaeda, who were responsible for the attacks, and the Taliban, who harbored al Qaeda in Afghanistan.

But later, the Bush administration developed the concept of “associated forces” — a term that does not appear in the 2001 AUMF — which three administrations have now used to expand the war to more than half a dozen groups around the world that had no connection to the 9/11 attacks, including ISIS. This is not what Congress intended in 2001; ISIS didn’t even exist then. Congress didn’t intend to start wars against al-Shabaab in Somalia or al-Nusra in Syria, but that’s exactly what has happened.

### **The 2002 Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq**

The 2002 Iraq AUMF authorized the 2003 invasion of Iraq to defend the United States against the threat of weapons of mass destruction possessed by the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq. The Trump administration claimed that the 2002 Iraq AUMF also authorizes war against ISIS in Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere, saying it allows the president to fight any threat “to or emanating from Iraq.” Indeed, in January 2020, the administration asserted that the 2002 Iraq AUMF authorized the assassination of Iranian general Qassem Soleimani in Baghdad. [Read more.](#)

### **Bipartisan Support Exists**

Congress has twice voted to end U.S. military engagements abroad: first in April 2019, to end U.S. involvement in the Saudi-led war in Yemen, and second in April 2020, to terminate hostilities against Iran following the General Soleimani strike. The House has also twice voted, in 2019 and 2020, to repeal the 2002 Iraq AUMF. All these votes have been on a bipartisan basis. These actions demonstrate that there is bipartisan will in Congress to rein in presidential power and ever-expanding wars.

### **War Is Not the Answer.**

More war has not brought more peace. After nearly two decades of war, it is long past time for Congress to acknowledge that U.S. war policies have contributed to more instability and violence. They have failed to reduce the threat of terrorism or keep Americans safe. The world only becomes a safer place when lawmakers engage in robust debate prior to authorizing any military attacks, when we invest in peacebuilding, diplomacy, and other measures to prevent violent conflict, and when we learn lessons from our actions and reflect on what it means to truly protect American security.

## **» Take Action**

**Urge your senators to support [S.J. Res. 10](#), Sens. Tim Kaine (VA) and Todd Young’s (IN) bill to repeal the 1991 and 2002 Iraq AUMF. In August:**

- **Schedule a lobby visit with your Senators while they are home during the August Recess, or attend a virtual town hall gathering in your state.**
- **Set a date to organize a community event, like a vigil, a teach-in workshop, or a tabling action in the month of September to amplify our AUMF repeal campaign around the 9/11 anniversary.**