



Friends Committee on
National Legislation

A Quaker Lobby in the Public Interest

STATEMENT OF
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FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION
HEARING ON: “THE AUTHORIZATIONS FOR THE USE OF MILITARY
FORCE: ADMINISTRATION PERSPECTIVE”
SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE
October 30, 2017

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the Committee: I am honored to submit this testimony for the record on behalf of the Friends Committee on National Legislation.

FCNL urges members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to view these proceedings as merely the first step towards repealing the 2001 AUMF and making congressional control over war authority a reality. We urge leadership on both sides of the aisle to engage in open debate on war authorization.

Not only do we hope that members of this committee will ask weighty, insightful questions during the hearing itself, but we also hope that the hearing will inspire substantive action in the 115th Congress. By “substantive action,” we do not mean a non-binding resolution or request for more information from the President, but rather legislation exerting control over where, when, and against whom the President is authorized to use military force.

Further, any new legislation in this area must include meaningful limitations on the President’s war authority—including, most critically, a repeal of the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF). Some might view the very passage of a new AUMF as a clear affirmation of Congress’s ultimate power to determine when and where our nation uses military force. But Congress cannot claim to restore its Constitutionally-granted power to authorize war by granting the President unbounded authority to pursue virtually any opponent anywhere in the world.

As FCNL has noted many times, the 2001 AUMF is a deeply flawed, staggeringly overbroad piece of legislation, and it is past time for Congress to put it to rest. Passage of a new AUMF without repeal of the 2001 legislation would be particularly disastrous: by creating broad, potentially overlapping war authorities, such legislation could create endless confusion around the legal basis for military action and virtually eliminate effective restraints on the President’s war authority.

We urge all Senators, particularly those invested in Congress’s power to determine when and where our nation goes to war, to engage in a rigorous debate on war authority and to take the critical step of repealing the 2001 AUMF as soon as possible.