



**Statement of Lead Republican Michael McCaul (R-TX)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs**

*“Closing Remarks: 2002 AUMF Repeal”
January 30, 2020*

Closing Remarks as Delivered

"I think back to my Dad's war, Churchill warned Neville Chamberlain about the dark clouds of the Nazi regime on the horizon. He talked about weakness invites aggression. And then we saw Hitler take the stage, the world stage. And Reagan talked about peace through strength. These are the ideals I believe in. And these bills do not project that. They project weakness. Weakness with ISIS. Weakness with Iran. Weakness with our enemies. I'd like to close by stating the obvious. I think we all can agree here to some extent that the 2002 AUMF is outdated. It's almost 20 years old. I believe it's time to replace it with a new authority. That is tailored to the specific threats that we face today. The one thing that's been mischaracterized, that it only applied to Saddam Hussein, when in fact it says - the AUMF says - that poses a continuing threat to the national security of the United States, Iraq does, among other things, harboring terrorist organizations including organizations that threaten the lives and safety of the United States citizens. That, my friend, is ISIS. It's not just Saddam Hussein, it is ISIS. And we've seen ISIS too much. We owe an updated AUMF to our soldiers, I think, who are in Iraq risking their lives for our security.

"We owe that to our partners and the American people. But the problem, Madam Speaker, and the reason I oppose this amendment is because passing it does not make any progress toward that goal. A stand-alone repeal does not recognize the reality on the ground that our counterterrorism mission in Iraq is ongoing as we debate here on the floor right now, today. The Inspector General for the counter-ISIS mission just reported last quarter that, quote, "in Iraq, ISIS continued this quarter to solidify and expand its command and control structures." On the other



hand they said it had not increased its capabilities and increases where the coalition was actively conducting operations against ISIS.

"Madam Speaker, repealing the AUMF without a replacement shows ours soldiers, our partners, our adversaries, that we are undermining our important mission there to protect the homeland. That we are not committed to completing the mission. That we are not committed to a free and democratic Iraq. The last time the United States abandoned Iraq under President Obama, ISIS reared its ugly head and formed the caliphate. And just a few short years later they declared it - the caliphate, and kill and savaged thousands of people, and we all saw the videos that surged all across the world. At that time I was Chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, and in 2016 the threat briefings were absolutely terrifying. One external operation after another to kill Americans in the United States out of Iraq and Syria. None of us want to see the next ISIS rise. None of us in this chamber should allow that to ever happen again. So let's have a serious conversation about what an authorization of use of military force to defeat today's threats would look like. Instead of playing partisan politics. What else are the Democrats' partisan maneuvers costing us today?"

"They are exploiting the greatest generation. Our World War II Merchant Mariners whose brothers died at the hands of the Nazis on the high seas. World War II veterans are dying every day, yet this Majority is hijacking a bipartisan bill to honor their bravery in World War II as the vehicle for these two political measures. Rather than sending the President a Senate-passed version of this bill, to grant this long-overdue recognition, they are setting that effort back to square one where it'll require passage again by a Senate that's tied up with impeachment. Let me just say this, as a son of a World War II veteran, I am saddened and ashamed that the Majority would allow to play procedural games that set back this bipartisan bill that was on its way to the President's desk.



"They are forcing these elderly merchant mariners, World War II veterans, to wait even longer for the thanks from a grateful nation. So in closing, we owe it to our constituents to take action to replace this 2002 authorization of use of military force. But this, this, Madam Speaker, does nothing to meet that goal. And so with that, I urge my colleagues to oppose this empty and reckless gesture and vote no on the amendment."

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