



Congressman Robert Pittenger

NORTH CAROLINA'S NINTH DISTRICT

224 Cannon House Office Building • Washington, D.C. 20515 • (202) 225-1976 • pittenger.house.gov

CONTACT: Jamie Bowers, 704-365-6234
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 28, 2013

CONGRESSMAN PITTENGER: PRESIDENT OBAMA MUST CONSULT CONGRESS BEFORE MILITARY ACTION IN SYRIA

CHARLOTTE – This afternoon, Congressman Robert Pittenger (NC-09) sent a letter to President Obama, reminding the President of his Constitutional obligation to consult Congress before committing the U.S. military to action in Syria.

Signed by more than 90 additional U.S. Representatives, the letter announces that Congress is ready to reconvene at the President's request.

As Chairman of the Congressional Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare, Congressman Pittenger is focused on containing and neutralizing Syria's large stockpile of chemical weapons and keeping these heinous weapons out of the hands of Al Qaida, Hezbollah, and Hamas.

While limited military action may be necessary following the recent use of chemical weapons by the Syrian military, Congressman Pittenger and his colleagues feel President Obama should first consult with Congress and our allies to ensure the action is targeted, surgical, and doesn't draw the United States military into the Syrian civil war.

The text of Congressman Pittenger's letter to President Obama is on the following page.

###

August 28, 2013

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We strongly urge you to consult and receive authorization from Congress before ordering the use of U.S. military force in Syria. Your responsibility to do so is prescribed in the Constitution and the War Powers Resolution of 1973.

While the Founders wisely gave the Office of the President the authority to act in emergencies, they foresaw the need to ensure public debate – and the active engagement of Congress – prior to committing U.S. military assets. Engaging our military in Syria when no direct threat to the United States exists and without prior congressional authorization would violate the separation of powers that is clearly delineated in the Constitution.

Mr. President, in the case of military operations in Libya you stated that authorization from Congress was not required because our military was not engaged in “hostilities.” In addition, an April 1, 2011, memorandum to you from your Office of Legal Counsel concluded:

“...President Obama could rely on his constitutional power to safeguard the national interest by directing the anticipated military operations in Libya—which were limited in their nature, scope, and duration—without prior congressional authorization.”

We view the precedent this opinion sets, where “national interest” is enough to engage in hostilities without congressional authorization, as unconstitutional. If the use of 221 Tomahawk cruise missiles, 704 Joint Direct Attack Munitions, and 42 Predator Hellfire missiles expended in Libya does not constitute “hostilities,” what does?

If you deem that military action in Syria is necessary, Congress can reconvene at your request. We stand ready to come back into session, consider the facts before us, and share the burden of decisions made regarding U.S. involvement in the quickly escalating Syrian conflict.

Sincerely,

Congressman Robert Pittenger