

Subject: Kucinich: President Had Time to Consult with International Community, Not Congress?
From: "Congressman Dennis Kucinich" <Kucinich.news@mail.house.gov>
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To: info@californiaskywatch.com

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PRESS RELEASE



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Nathan.White@mail.house.gov

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(202)225-5871

Kucinich: President Had Time to Consult with International Community, Not Congress?

Coincidental Timing of French, British War Games Points to Critical Lack of Information

Washington D.C. (March 29, 2011) – Congressman Dennis Kucinich (D-OH) today sent a letter to Members of Congress in support of his amendment to the next funding measure that would prohibit funds from being used for U.S. participation in the war in Libya. In the letter, Kucinich questioned how the Administration had a month to prepare for the war in Libya, consulting with the Arab League, the United Nations Security Council and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), but did not have time to come to Congress to ask for an authorization for the use of force pursuant to Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution. Kucinich raised questions about the lack of information provided to Congress concerning the war, citing the coincidental timing of a scheduled, French-British war game exercise and its similarity to the actual attack on Libya.

The full text of the letter follows:

Congress Must Protect Constitutional Authority as a Coequal Branch of Government, Cut off Funds for Libyan War

Dear Colleague:

As you consider supporting an amendment to cut off funds for the war in Libya, I want to call to your attention to the stark lack of information provided to Congress and the American people about the war.

Last night the President said it took one month to put together a response to the situation in Libya. During that time the President consulted with 28 member nations of NATO, 22 member nations of the Arab league and 15 members of the UN Security Council, ten of whom approved the resolution. There was also time for extensive coordination with France and Great Britain. **The President had time to consult with the international community, but had no time to come to the United States Congress?**

There is no question that the Administration should have followed the Constitution and received the approval of Congress before starting a war. Consulting with a few members is not the same thing as following the Constitutional requirements of Article 1, Section 8.

Further complicating the Administration's failure to come to Congress prior to ordering an attack is the fact that our primary partners in the war against Libya, France and Great Britain, had, according to a French military website, planned certain war games which now may have significance.

On November 2, 2010 France and Great Britain signed a mutual defense treaty, which paved the way for joint participation in a military exercise called 'Southern Mistral' (www.southern-mistral.cdaoa.fr). While war games are not uncommon, the similarities between 'Southern Mistral' and 'Operation Odyssey Dawn' highlight just how many unanswered questions remain regarding our own military planning for Libya.

The 'Southern Mistral' war games called for Great Britain-French air strikes against an unnamed dictator of a fictional country, "Southland." The pretend attack was authorized by a pretend United Nations Security Council Resolution. The 'Southern Mistral' war games were set for March 21-25, 2011.

On March 19, 2011, the United States joined France and Great Britain in an air attack against Muammar Gaddafi's Libya pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1973.

Scheduling a joint military exercise that ends up resembling real military action could be seen as remarkable planning by the French and British, but it also highlights questions regarding the United States' role in planning for the war. We don't know how long the attack on Libya has been in preparation, but Congress must find out. We don't know who the rebels really represent and how they became armed, but Congress must find out.

With so many unknowns, Congress' only path to protect both the Constitution and the institution of government of the people is to cut off funds for the war in Libya. A cutoff of funds would require the President to follow the Constitutional process with respect to going to war. He would have to seek Congressional approval.

Otherwise, we will have given our tacit consent to a policy that undercuts Congress' constitutionally-mandated role as a coequal branch of government. Moreover, since the Founders established Congress under Article 1 and the Executive under Article 2, Congress is first among equals, unless we refuse to be.

Please join me in cosponsoring an amendment to the next continuing resolution or omnibus appropriations bill that would prevent any U.S. funds from being used for the war in Libya.

Sincerely,

Dennis J. Kucinich

Member of Congress

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Lakewood Office | 14400 Detroit Avenue, Lakewood, Ohio 44107 | Phone (216) 228-8850 | Fax (216) 228-6465

Parmatown Mall | 7904 Day Drive, Parma, Ohio 44129 | Phone (440) 845-2707 | Fax (440) 845-2743

Washington Office | 2445 Rayburn HOB, Washington, DC 20515 | Phone (202) 225-5871 | Fax (202) 225-5745

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