

## Obama refused 'repeated requests' since August 2013 for drone strikes against ISIS

Marc Thiessen | July 23, 2014, 1:02 pm



Image Credit: shutterstock

Breaking on Capitol Hill is the news that Iraqi officials began requesting almost a year ago for the US to carry out drone strikes against ISIS – but the requests were shot down by the White House. That stunning revelation came during a hearing on the situation in Iraq this morning.

The Hill reports:

During a hearing on the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, House Foreign Affairs Chairman Ed Royce (R-Calif.) said the administration knew six months ago that the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS or ISIL) had established armed camps, staging areas and training grounds in Iraq's western desert and its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was threatening to attack the U.S.

"However, what the Administration did not say was that the Iraqi government had been urgently requesting drone strikes against ISIS camps since August 2013," Royce continued.

"These repeated requests, unfortunately, were turned down," he said. "I added my voice for drone strikes as ISIS convoys raced across the desert."

The New York Times previously reported that in May 2014 Prime Minister Maliki had "secretly asked the Obama administration to consider carrying out airstrikes against extremist staging areas" and that "Iraq's appeals for a military response have so far been rebuffed by the White House, which has been reluctant to open a new chapter in a conflict that President Obama has insisted was over when the United States withdrew the last of its forces."

2011.”

But the fact that Iraqis have been begging *for nearly a year* for the US to strike ISIS with drones – and that those requests were repeatedly denied by Obama – was not previously known.

Obama regularly authorizes drone strikes against terrorist targets in Pakistan, Yemen and the Horn of Africa. The White House even boasted that the president personally approves the “kill lists” himself.

Why on earth would he refuse to do the same in Iraq? Was he hoping the problem would just go away?

This places culpability for the current fiasco in Iraq squarely on Obama’s shoulders. We already knew that the rise of ISIS was made possible by Obama’s decision to withdraw all American forces from Iraq, against the advice of his military commanders. But now we know that as ISIS was preparing its current offensive, Obama was warned of the coming danger—and refused Iraqi requests to strike ISIS before they recaptured American-liberated cities across Iraq.

The incompetence of this administration is simply mind-boggling.

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