



The Left Is Changing Its Tune on Presidential Power to Attack Trump's Venezuela Operation

- In 2011, Congressional Republicans and Democrats stood together and affirmed the obvious: President Obama didn't need congressional approval to stop mass slaughter in Libya. **Now, those same liberals are contradicting themselves by saying President Trump's Venezuela operation is "illegal"** because Congress didn't approve it first.
- **The Constitutional authority to conduct small scale military operations belonged to the President in 2011 and it remains with the President today.** Even Chuck Schumer [acknowledged](#) in 2011 that Congress needed to "defer to the commander-in-chief."
- **The difference between then and now? The left doesn't like who's in charge.** Presidential powers are constant. They do not change based on who sits in the White House.

Here are just a few of the many Democrats who've flipped their positions to attack President Trump's Venezuela operation:

Minority Leader Chuck Schumer

- **THEN:** Congress "should defer to the commander-in-chief on short-term, immediate situations like [Libya]." ([3/13/2011](#))
- **NOW:** "Launching military action without congressional authorization [...] is reckless." ([1/3/2026](#))

Former Speaker Nancy Pelosi

- **THEN:** "The limited nature of this engagement allows the president to go forward. I'm satisfied that the president has the authority he needs to go ahead." ([6/16/2011](#))
- **NOW:** President Trump [...] continues today with his flagrant disregard for the Article One war powers of Congress which is essential to our constitutional system." ([1/3/2026](#))

Sen. Chris Van Hollen

- **THEN:** “The president was in a delicate position — if he had not acted quickly, people would be saying why hadn’t you acted sooner.” ([3/28/2011](#))
- **NOW:** “Congress must not abdicate its constitutional authority and allow control of the world’s most powerful military to fall into just one set of hands.” ([1/3/2026](#))

Sen. Adam Schiff

- **THEN:** Obama’s Libya intervention was “a risky thing” but “the right thing to do.” ([10/20/2011](#))
- **NOW:** “Congress must bring up a new War Powers Resolution and reassert its power to authorize force or to refuse to do so.” ([1/3/2026](#))

Sen. Michael Bennet

- **THEN:** “Congress needs to focus on what’s next in Libya” rather than Obama intervening without congressional approval. ([3/23/2011](#))
- **NOW:** “I have seen no evidence justifying the administration acting alone without Congressional authorization.” ([1/3/2026](#))

Sen. Amy Klobuchar

- **THEN:** “Well, you have here a madman who's basically been starving his country and bombing his own people. And so that is why we stood with the rest of the world.” ([3/20/2011](#))
- **NOW:** “I have strongly opposed sending American forces into harm’s way in Venezuela without authorization from Congress.” ([1/3/2026](#))

Sen. Jack Reed

- **THEN:** “If there’s a [war powers] proposal coming before Congress, I would have no difficulty in supporting [Obama’s] actions today. ([3/20/2011](#))
- **NOW:** “This has been a profound constitutional failure. Congress – not the President – has the sole power to authorize war.” ([1/3/2026](#))

Sen. Chris Murphy

- **THEN:** “The President has an obligation to bring Congress a detailed plan [...] if he is going to do more than provide support to a limited international mission.” ([3/21/2011](#))
- **NOW:** “Clearly, this is wildly illegal...The president cannot run a military operation of this size, cannot invade a foreign country without coming to Congress first.” ([1/4/2026](#))

Sen. Mazie Hirono

- **THEN:** “To not support the president in [Libya] would have been terrible.” ([8/18/2011](#))
- **NOW:** “Without any authorization from Congress or any clear plan for what comes next, Trump is plunging our nation into a conflict that could put American lives at risk.” ([1/3/2026](#))

Sen. Mark Warner

- **THEN:** “Sen. Warner supports the President’s ability to deploy forces in support of our national security interest.” ([6/17/2011](#))
- **NOW:** “Our Constitution places the gravest decisions about the use of military force in the hands of Congress.” ([1/3/2026](#))

Sen. Ron Wyden

- **THEN:** “I support the international effort to protect the civilians of Libya.” ([4/1/2011](#))
- **NOW:** “This is an illegal intervention in a country that poses no threat to the United States.” ([1/3/2026](#))

Sen. Chris Coons

- **THEN:** “I have so far supported U.S. military engagement [in Libya].” ([6/28/2011](#))
- **NOW:** “Our Constitution requires the administration to seek congressional approval [...] to commit U.S. troops or take military strikes against Venezuela.” ([1/3/2026](#))

Sen. Jeanne Shaheen

- **THEN:** “The Obama Administration deserves credit for working closely with our NATO allies to help bring about the end of the Qaddhafi regime.” ([10/20/2011](#))
- **NOW:** “[Congress is] left with no understanding of how the Administration is preparing to mitigate risks [...] we have no information regarding a long-term strategy.” ([1/3/2026](#))

Sen. Dick Durbin

- **THEN:** “Reports are positive about what we have done [...] this is a very wise course.” ([3/23/2011](#))
- **NOW:** “I disagree with President Trump’s use of U.S. military forces without Congressional approval.” ([1/3/2026](#))

Sen. Richard Blumenthal

- **THEN:** “I’ve supported this policy [...] I think we’re united in the President’s efforts to remove Qadhafi.” ([3/31/2011](#))

- **NOW:** “President Trump has never sought approval from Congress for war as the Constitution requires - and our military deserves.” ([1/3/2026](#))

House Foreign Affairs Ranking Member Gregory Meeks

- **THEN:** “The President made the right calls and the right decisions [on Libya].” ([9/6/2011](#))
- **NOW:** “Donald Trump used U.S. military force to invade a sovereign nation without authorization [...] Congress is not a spectator in matters of war.” ([1/6/2026](#))

House Armed Services Ranking Member Adam Smith

- **THEN:** “While the Administration could have done a better job of working with Congress in the days prior to taking action, it is clear that U.S. leadership prevented this humanitarian crisis from getting worse.” ([3/29/2011](#))
- **NOW:** “The President seems to be doing this without proper legal authority [...] We need to exercise oversight.” ([1/3/2026](#))

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass

- **THEN:** “I don’t think President Obama has done anything different [on war powers] than any other president.” ([3/29/2011](#))
- **NOW:** Removing “Nicolás Maduro risks chaos, violence, and entrenching the United States in a conflict that the American people did not ask for.” ([1/3/2026](#))

New York Governor Kathy Hochul

- **THEN:** No comment.
- **NOW:** “You’ve got to go to Congress. You’ve got to get authority. It’s kind of important to do things like that.” ([1/5/2026](#))

The Bottom Line: These political games harm America’s national security. The Senate has already soundly defeated a stunt to protect these adversaries from U.S. strikes. The American people need a commander-in-chief who can use our military to protect the homeland—especially against narco-terrorists in our own hemisphere.