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Trump Expands Pentagon's War Authority

By Jason Ditz
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While most of the talk about the Pentagon's proposals for various wars to President Trump has focused on requests for more troops in more countries, a much less publicized effort has also been getting rubber stamped, one giving commanders in those wars increasing autonomy on operations.

Buried in the details of almost every proposal from Iraq and Syria to smaller operations like US troops in Yemen and Somalia, there is always a mention of commanders wanting to be able to conduct strikes at will, both airstrikes and ground raids.

This has been a change that the Pentagon has been quite eager to seek, after years of complaining about President Obama "micromanaging" the various US wars, but it appears they may be trying to get a much broader collection of grants of autonomy than they've ever been granted before.

While President Trump is eager to make such moves early on to show that he is "listening to the generals," granting so much autonomy to the military to fight its own wars without political oversight is risky business, since the president will ultimately be held responsible for what the military does.

The long term ramifications could be even more dangerous, as it further distances America's direct foreign interventions from politicians, and by extension from the voters, turning the details of major military operations into little more than bureaucratic details for career military brass.

These major changes are happening in almost complete silence, as while there have been mentions of the Pentagon seeking these new authorities, always as an afterthought to getting more troops, there is little to no interest in debating the question.