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Letters of Marque and Reprisal

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Art 1 Sect 8 provides for Letters of Marque and Reprisal.

Didnt know what they were but found out they allow Congress to license specific privateers, as against Barbary Coast pirates in 1815. It occurred to me that Congress could allow private Americans to fight the modern-day Somali pirates this way. In fact, I found that then Cong. Ron Paul had made just such a suggestion in a bill he proposed. You may not be supporter of his but the idea is interesting. Whoda thunk the Constitution would have such stuff?

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-107hr3076ih/pdf/BILLS-107hr3076ih.pdf>

Here's the wiki site:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Letter_of_marque

Here's part of that:

21st-century American reconsideration of letters of marque

[Article 1](#) of the [United States Constitution](#) lists issuing letters of marque and reprisal in Section 8 as one of the [enumerated powers](#) of [Congress](#), alongside the power to tax and to declare War. However, since the American Civil War, the United States as a matter of policy has consistently followed the terms of the [1856 Paris Declaration](#) forbidding the practice. The United States has not legally commissioned any privateers since 1815, although the status of submarine-hunting Goodyear airships in the early days of [World War II](#) created significant confusion. Various accounts refer to airships *Resolute* and *Volunteer* as operating under a "privateer status", but Congress never authorized a commission, nor did the President sign one.^[31]

The issue of marque and reprisal was raised before Congress after the [September 11 attacks](#)^[32] and again on July 21, 2007, by Congressman [Ron Paul](#). The attacks were defined as acts of "air piracy" and the *Marque and Reprisal Act of 2001* was introduced, which would have granted the president the authority to use letters of marque and reprisal against the specific terrorists, instead of warring against

a foreign state. The terrorists were compared to pirates in that they are difficult to fight by traditional military means. [33] Congressman Paul on April 15, 2009, also advocated the use of letters of marque to address the issue of [Somali pirates](#) operating in the Gulf of Aden. However, the bills Congressman Paul introduced were not enacted into law.

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