

Remarks Following a Meeting on Homeland Security

November 25, 2015

Good morning, everybody. I just had a chance to meet with my national security team, including my Secretary of Homeland Security, Jeh Johnson, my FBI Director, Jim Comey, and my Attorney General, Loretta Lynch, for a regular update on our security posture post-Paris and going into the holiday season.

I think all of us recognize how horrific and heinous what took place in Paris was. And as I said yesterday, for many of us, the events there touched a deep chord, given the connection between the United States and France, the degree to which Americans see in Paris a way of life that's so familiar to us here in American cities. And given the shocking images, I know that Americans have been asking each other where it—whether it's safe here, whether it's safe to fly or gather. I know that families have discussed their fears about the threat of terrorism around the dinner table, many for the first time since September 11. And it's understandable that people worry something similar could happen here. Watching the events in Paris made the threat feel closer to home.

So as we go into Thanksgiving weekend, I want the American people to know—is that we are taking every possible step to keep our homeland safe. First, we're going after ISIL wherever it hides. That's been our strategy for more than a year. I'll speak about this in more detail in the coming weeks, but let me remind the American people of what our coalition of some 65 nations is doing to destroy these terrorists and defeat their ideology.

So far, our military and our partners have conducted more than 8,000 airstrikes on ISIL strongholds and equipment. Those airstrikes, along with the efforts of our partners on the ground, have taken out key leaders, have taken back territory from ISIL in both Iraq and Syria. We continue to work to choke off their financing and their supply lines and their—counter their recruitment and their messaging.

And even as America is already supporting French airstrikes in Syria, yesterday President Hollande and I agreed that our countries are going to step up that coordination even further and do more of that work together. So we're stepping up the pressure on ISIL where it lives, and we will not let up, adjusting our tactics where necessary, until they are beaten. That's our first goal.

Second, we continue to do everything possible to prevent attacks at home and abroad, and to prevent foreign terrorist fighters from entering the United States or other nations. Since 9/11, we've taken extraordinary measures to strengthen our homeland security, in everything from aviation security to border security to information sharing. We've improved upon these actions over time. Any time there's an event, we learn something from it, and we continue to refine them. We continue to improve upon our approaches as we speak.

Now, right now we know of no specific and credible intelligence indicating a plot on the homeland. And that is based on the latest information I just received in the Situation Room. It is similar to the information that I—the briefing that I received on Saturday before I left on my trip last week.

So as Americans travel this weekend to be with their loved ones, I want them to know that our counterterrorism, intelligence, homeland security, and law enforcement professionals at

every level are working overtime. They are continually monitoring threats at home and abroad, continually evaluating our security posture. They're constantly working to protect all of us.

Their work has prevented attacks. Their efforts have saved lives. They serve every hour of every day for the sake of our security. They did so before Paris, and they do so now, without fanfare or credit and without a break for the holidays.

So the bottom line is this: I want the American people to know, entering the holidays, that the combined resources of our military, our intelligence, and our homeland security agencies are on the case. They're vigilant, relentless, and effective. In the event of a specific, credible threat, the public will be informed. We do think it's useful for people, as they're going about their business, to be vigilant. If you see something suspicious, say something. That's always helpful. But otherwise, Americans should go about their usual Thanksgiving weekend activities: spending time with family and friends and celebrating our blessings.

While the threat of terrorism is a troubling reality of our age, we are both equipped to prevent attacks and we are resilient in the face of those who would try to do us harm. And that's something we can all be thankful for.

Happy Thanksgiving, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:02 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President François Hollande of France. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Also participating in the meeting were National Security Adviser Susan E. Rice; and Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Lisa O. Monaco.

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