

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2017

**Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Global Deployment of United States
Combat-Equipped Armed Forces**

June 6, 2017

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am providing this supplemental consolidated report, prepared by my Administration and consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93–148), as part of my efforts to keep the Congress informed about deployments of U.S. Armed Forces equipped for combat.

***MILITARY OPERATIONS IN SUPPORT OF UNITED STATES COUNTERTERRORISM
EFFORTS***

In furtherance of United States counterterrorism efforts, the United States continues to work with partners around the globe, with a particular focus on the U.S. Central and Africa Commands' areas of responsibility. In this context, the United States has deployed combat-equipped forces to enhance the counterterrorism capabilities and support the counterterrorism operations of our partners and allies. Specific information about counterterrorism deployments to select countries is provided below, and a classified annex to this report provides further information.

***Military Operations against al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, and Associated Forces and in
Support of Related United States Counterterrorism Objectives***

Since October 7, 2001, U.S. Armed Forces, including Special Operations Forces, have conducted counterterrorism combat operations in Afghanistan against al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, and associated forces. Since August 2014, these operations have targeted the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which was formerly known as al-Qa'ida in Iraq. In support of these and other overseas operations, the United States has deployed combat-equipped forces to a number of locations in the U.S. Central, European, Africa, Southern, and Pacific Commands' areas of responsibility. Such operations and deployments have been reported previously, consistent with Public Law 107–40 and the War Powers Resolution, and operations and deployments remain ongoing. These operations, which the United States has carried out with the assistance of numerous international partners, have been successful in seriously degrading al-Qa'ida's capabilities. If necessary, in response to terrorist threats, I will direct additional measures to protect United States citizens and interests. It is not possible to know at this time the precise scope or the duration of the deployments of U.S. Armed Forces necessary to counter terrorist threats to the United States.

Afghanistan. U.S. Armed Forces have transitioned the lead for security to Afghan security forces while striking significant blows against al-Qa'ida's leadership and preventing Afghanistan from being used to launch attacks against the United States. United States forces remain in Afghanistan for the purposes of, among other things, training, advising, and assisting Afghan forces; conducting and supporting counterterrorism operations against the remnants of core al-Qa'ida and against ISIS; and taking appropriate measures against those who directly threaten United States and coalition forces in Afghanistan or provide direct support to al-Qa'ida. The United States remains in an armed conflict, including against the Taliban, and active hostilities remain ongoing.

The mission to help train, advise, and assist the Afghan National Defense Security Forces and Afghan ministries and institutions continues through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)–led Resolute Support Mission. The United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2189, dated December 12, 2014, which welcomed the Resolute Support Mission and underscored the importance of continued international support for the stability of Afghanistan.

The Force Management Level for U.S. Armed Forces in Afghanistan currently is 8,448. (The actual number of United States military personnel may exceed the Force Management Level due to certain forces being excluded from counting against the Force Management Level; for example, incoming and outgoing forces that overlap during rotations of units do not count against the Force Management Level.)

Iraq and Syria. As part of a comprehensive strategy to defeat ISIS, U.S. Armed Forces are conducting a systematic campaign of airstrikes and other necessary operations against ISIS forces in Iraq and Syria. U.S. Armed Forces are also conducting airstrikes and other necessary operations against al-Qa'ida in Syria. In Iraq, U.S. Armed Forces are advising and coordinating with Iraqi forces and providing training, equipment, communications support, intelligence support, and other support to select elements of the Iraqi security forces, including Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga forces. Additionally, United States forces are deployed to Syria to help coordinate United States operations with indigenous ground forces conducting operations against ISIS. The Force Management Level for U.S. Armed Forces in Iraq currently is 5,262. The Force Management Level for U.S. Armed Forces in Syria is 503. Actions in Iraq are being undertaken in coordination with the Government of Iraq, and in conjunction with coalition partners.

On May 18, 2017, United States forces participating in the defeat-ISIS mission near At Tanf, Syria, were threatened by forces believed to be supporting the Syrian government. After employing appropriate measures seeking to de-escalate the situation, United States forces struck the forces in response to the threat to United States personnel.

Yemen. The United States military continues to work closely with the Government of Yemen and regional partner forces to dismantle and ultimately eliminate the terrorist threat posed by al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). Our efforts since the last periodic update report have included a number of airstrikes and two raids against AQAP operatives and facilities.

Jordan. At the request of the Government of Jordan, approximately 2,850 United States military personnel are deployed to Jordan to support defeat-ISIS operations and the security of Jordan and to promote regional stability. These forces will remain in Jordan, in full coordination with the Government of Jordan, until the security situation becomes such that they are no longer needed.

Turkey. United States forces, including strike and combat support aircraft with associated United States military personnel, remain deployed to Turkey to support defeat-ISIS operations and to support the defense of Turkey, at the Turkish government's request.

East Africa Region. In Somalia, United States forces continue to counter the terrorist threat posed by al-Qa'ida and its Somalia-based associated force, al-Shabaab, and ISIS-Somalia. United States forces also advise, assist, and accompany regional forces, including Somali and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) forces, during counterterrorism operations.

Additional United States forces are deployed to Kenya to support counterterrorism operations in East Africa.

Djibouti. United States forces continue to partner with Government of Djibouti authorities, which have permitted use of Djiboutian territory for basing of United States forces. United States forces remain deployed to Djibouti, including for purposes of posturing for counterterrorism and counter-piracy operations in the Horn of Africa and Arabian Peninsula and contingency support for embassy security augmentation in East Africa, as required.

Libya. United States forces conducted airstrikes—beginning in May 2016—against ISIS targets in Libya, including in support of efforts by forces aligned with the Libyan Government of National Accord to recapture the city of Sirte from ISIS, until December 19, 2016. United States forces reinitiated airstrikes against ISIS targets south of Sirte for a limited period, from January 18 to January 19, 2017. These airstrikes were conducted at the request of and with the consent of the Government of National Accord.

Lake Chad Basin Region. United States military personnel in the Lake Chad Basin continue to provide a wide variety of support to African partners conducting counterterrorism operations in the region. In Niger, there are approximately 645 United States military personnel deployed to support these missions. In Cameroon, approximately 300 United States military personnel are also deployed, the bulk of whom are supporting United States airborne intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance operations in the region. These forces are equipped with weapons for the purpose of providing their own force protection and security, and they will remain in Cameroon, with the consent of the Government of Cameroon, until their support is no longer needed.

Cuba. Combat-equipped forces, deployed since January 2002 to the Naval Base, Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, continue to conduct humane and secure detention operations for detainees held at Guantánamo Bay under the authority provided by the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (Public Law 107–40), as informed by the law of war. There were 41 such detainees as of the date of this report.

MILITARY OPERATIONS RELATED TO THE LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY

Beginning in 2011, United States military personnel with appropriate combat equipment deployed to various countries in the central Africa region to serve as advisors to regional forces of the African Union Regional Task Force working to apprehend or remove Joseph Kony and other senior Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) leaders from the battlefield and to protect local populations. The United States military counter-LRA mission ended on April 26, 2017. United States military personnel remaining in Uganda, the Republic of South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Central African Republic are conducting retrograde activities. The number of United States military personnel still deployed to those countries in the central Africa region is approximately 410.

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN SYRIA

As I previously reported, on April 6, 2017, at my direction, United States forces in the Mediterranean Sea operating beyond the territorial sea of any state struck the Shayrat military airfield in Syria. These strikes were in response to the chemical weapons attack on Syrian civilians in southern Idlib Province, Syria, on April 4, 2017.

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN EGYPT

Approximately 700 military personnel are assigned to or supporting the United States contingent of the Multinational Force and Observers, which have been present in Egypt since 1981.

MILITARY OPERATIONS RELATED TO THE SECURITY OF UNITED STATES CITIZENS AND PROPERTY IN SOUTH SUDAN

My predecessor previously reported the deployment of United States military personnel with appropriate combat equipment to South Sudan to support the security of United States citizens and property in South Sudan, including of our Embassy in Juba. That military mission ended in late January 2017.

UNITED STATES/NATO OPERATIONS IN KOSOVO

The United Nations Security Council authorized Member States to establish a NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) in Resolution 1244 on June 10, 1999. The original mission of KFOR was to monitor, verify, and, when necessary, enforce compliance with the Military Technical Agreement between NATO and the then-Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (now Serbia), while maintaining a safe and secure environment. Today, KFOR deters renewed hostilities in cooperation with local authorities, bilateral partners, and international institutions. The principal military tasks of KFOR forces are to help maintain a safe and secure environment and to ensure freedom of movement throughout Kosovo. The United States contribution to KFOR is approximately 660 United States military personnel out of the total strength of approximately 4,080 personnel.

I have directed the participation of U.S. Armed Forces in all of these operations pursuant to my constitutional and statutory authority as Commander in Chief and as Chief Executive (including the authority to carry out Public Law 107–40 and other statutes), as well as my constitutional and statutory authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States. Officials of my Administration and I communicate regularly with the leadership and other Members of Congress with regard to these deployments and we will continue to do so.

Sincerely,

DONALD J. TRUMP

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Paul D. Ryan, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Orrin G. Hatch, President pro tempore of the Senate. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Categories: Communications to Congress : Combat-equipped U.S. Armed Forces, letter on global deployment.

Names: Kony, Joseph.

Subjects: Afghanistan : Afghan military and security forces; Afghanistan : Former regime; Afghanistan : NATO, role; Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Africa : Central Africa, Lord's Resistance Army insurgent group; Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Deployment; Cameroon, U.S. military detachment; Cuba : Guantanamo Bay, U.S. Naval Base :: Detention of alleged terrorists; Djibouti, U.S. military detachment; Egypt : U.S. military detachment; Iraq : Security cooperation with U.S.; Jordan : Security cooperation with U.S.; Kenya, U.S. military detachment; Kosovo : KFOR international security force; Libya : U.S. airstrikes; Niger, U.S. military detachment; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Somalia, U.S.

military detachment; Syria : Chemical weapons attack in Idlib Province; Syria : U.S. and coalition airstrikes; Syria : U.S. military detachment; Terrorism : Al Qaida terrorist organization; Terrorism : al-Shabaab terrorist organization; Terrorism : Counterterrorism efforts; Terrorism : Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization; Turkey : Counterterrorism efforts, cooperation with U.S.; Yemen : Security cooperation with U.S.; Yemen : U.S. airstrikes.

DCPD Number: DCPD201700381.