

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2018

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

December 7, 2018

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 United States Armed Forces equipped for combat.

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

In furtherance of counterterrorism efforts, the United States continues to work with partners around the globe, with a particular focus on the United States Central and Africa Commands' areas of responsibility. In this context, the United States has deployed United States combat-equipped forces to conduct counterterrorism operations and to advise, assist, and accompany security forces of select foreign partners on counterterrorism operations. 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, United States Armed Forces, including Special Operations Forces, have conducted counterterrorism combat operations 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 several locations in the United States Central, European, Africa, Southern, and Indo-Pacific Commands' areas of responsibility. Such operations and deployments have been reported previously, consistent with Public Law 107–40, Public Law 107–243, the War Powers Resolution, and other statutes. These ongoing operations, which the United States has carried out with the assistance of numerous international partners, have been successful in seriously degrading ISIS capabilities in Syria and Iraq. If necessary, in response to terrorist threats, I will direct additional measures to protect the citizens and interests of the United States. It is not possible to know at this time the precise scope or the duration of the deployments of United States Armed Forces that are or will be necessary to counter terrorist threats to the United States.

Afghanistan. Consistent with the strategy I announced publicly on August 21, 2017, United States Armed Forces remain in Afghanistan for the purposes of stopping the reemergence of safe havens that enable terrorists to threaten the United States, supporting the Afghan government and the Afghan military as they confront the Taliban in the field, and creating conditions to support a political process to achieve lasting peace. United States forces in Afghanistan are training, advising, and assisting Afghan forces; conducting and supporting counterterrorism operations against al-Qa'ida and against ISIS; and taking appropriate measures against those who provide direct support to al-Qa'ida, threaten United States and

coalition forces in Afghanistan, or threaten the viability of the Afghan government or the ability of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces to achieve campaign success. Although reconciliation efforts are ongoing, the United States remains in an armed conflict, including in Afghanistan and against the Taliban, and active hostilities remain ongoing.

Iraq and Syria. As part of a comprehensive strategy to defeat ISIS, United States Armed Forces are conducting a systematic campaign of airstrikes and other necessary operations against ISIS forces in Iraq and Syria. United States Armed Forces are also conducting airstrikes and other necessary operations against al-Qa'ida in Syria. United States Armed Forces are also deployed to Syria to conduct operations against ISIS with indigenous ground forces. In Iraq, United States 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 Security forces. United States Armed Forces also provide limited support to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization mission in Iraq. Actions in Iraq are being undertaken in coordination with the Government of Iraq, and in conjunction with coalition partners.

Arabian Peninsula Region. A small number of United States military personnel are deployed to Yemen to conduct operations against al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and ISIS 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 those groups. Since the last periodic update report, United States Armed Forces conducted a number of airstrikes against AQAP operatives and facilities in Yemen, and supported the United Arab Emirates- and Yemen-led operations to clear AQAP from Shabwah Governorate. United States Armed Forces are also prepared to conduct airstrikes against ISIS targets in Yemen. United States Armed Forces, in a non-combat role, have also continued to provide military advice and limited information, logistics, and other support to regional forces combatting the Houthi insurgency in Yemen; however, aerial refueling of regional forces' aircraft ended in November 2018. United States forces are present in Saudi Arabia for this purpose. Such support does not involve United States Armed Forces in hostilities with the Houthis for the purposes of the War Powers Resolution.

Jordan. At the request of the Government of Jordan, approximately 2,795 United States military personnel are deployed to Jordan to support Defeat-ISIS operations, enhance Jordan's security, and promote regional stability.

Lebanon. At the request of the Government of Lebanon, approximately 86 United States military personnel are deployed to Lebanon to enhance the government's counterterrorism capabilities and support the Defeat-ISIS operations of Lebanese security forces.

Turkey. United States Armed Forces, including strike and combat support aircraft and associated United States military personnel, remain deployed to Turkey, at the Turkish government's request, to support Defeat-ISIS operations and to enhance Turkey's security.

East Africa Region. In Somalia, United States Armed Forces continue to counter the terrorist threat posed by ISIS and al-Shabaab, an associated force of al-Qa'ida. Since the last periodic report, United States Armed Forces have conducted a number of airstrikes against al-Shabaab. United States military personnel also advise, assist, and accompany regional forces, including Somali and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) forces, during counterterrorism operations. Additional United States Armed Forces are deployed to Kenya to support counterterrorism operations in East Africa. United States military personnel continue to partner with the Government of Djibouti, which has permitted use of Djiboutian territory

for basing of United States Armed Forces. United States military personnel remain deployed to Djibouti, including for purposes of posturing for counterterrorism and counter-piracy operations in the vicinity of the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, and to provide contingency support for Embassy security augmentation in East Africa, as required.

Libya. Since the last periodic update report, United States Armed Forces conducted a limited number of airstrikes against al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (an associated force of al Qaeda) and ISIS terrorists in Libya. These airstrikes were conducted in coordination with the Government of National Accord.

Lake Chad Basin and Sahel Region. United States military personnel in the Lake Chad Basin and Sahel Region continue to conduct airborne intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance operations and provide support to African and European partners conducting counterterrorism operations in the region, including by advising, assisting, and accompanying these partner forces. Approximately 730 United States military personnel remain deployed to Niger. United States military personnel are also deployed to Cameroon, Chad, and Nigeria to support counterterrorism operations.

Cuba. United States Armed Forces continue to conduct humane and secure detention operations for detainees held at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, 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 are 40 such detainees as of the date of this report.

The Philippines. United States Armed Forces deployed to the Philippines are providing support to the counterterrorism operations of the armed forces of the Philippines.

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN EGYPT

Approximately 445 United States 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.

UNITED STATES AND NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION OPERATIONS IN KOSOVO

The United States continues to contribute forces to the Kosovo Force (KFOR), led by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in cooperation with local authorities, bilateral partners, and international institutions, to deter renewed hostilities in Kosovo. Approximately 530 United States military personnel are among KFOR's approximately 4,000 personnel.

I have directed the participation of United States Armed Forces in all of the above-described 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, Public Law 107–243, 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 congressional 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.

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

Subjects: Afghanistan : Afghan military and security forces; Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Armed Forces, U.S : Servicemembers :: Deployment; Cameroon, U.S. military detachment; Chad, U.S. military detachment; Cuba : Guantanamo Bay, U.S. Naval Base :: Detention of alleged terrorists; Egypt : U.S. military detachment; Iraq : Security cooperation with U.S.; Jordan : Security cooperation with U.S.; Kosovo : KFOR international security force; Lebanon : U.S. military detachment; Libya : U.S. airstrikes; Niger, U.S. military detachment; Nigeria, U.S. military detachment; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Philippines : Security cooperation with U.S.; Somalia : Al-Shabaab terrorist organization; Terrorism : Al Qaida terrorist organization; Terrorism : Counterterrorism efforts; Terrorism : Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization; Turkey : Security cooperation with U.S.; Yemen : Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) terrorist organization; Yemen : Civil war and sectarian conflict.

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