

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2021

Letter to Congressional Leaders on United States Military Operations in Syria and Iraq

June 29, 2021

Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Madam President:)

At my direction, on June 27, 2021, United States forces conducted targeted strikes against facilities at two locations in Syria and one location in Iraq near the Iraq-Syria border. These facilities were used by Iran-backed militia groups that have been involved in a series of unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) and rocket attacks against United States personnel and facilities in Iraq. These militia attacks have escalated in recent months. Recent rocket attacks have included ones on Balad Air Base on April 4, April 18, and May 3, 2021; the Baghdad Diplomatic Support Center near the Baghdad International Airport on May 2, 2021; and Al Asad Air Base on May 4 and May 24, 2021. Recent UAV attacks have included ones on United States facilities in Erbil on April 14, 2021; Al-Asad Air Base on May 8, 2021; Bashur Air Base on May 10, 2021; and United States facilities near the Baghdad International Airport on June 9, 2021. These attacks have injured and threatened the lives of United States and Coalition personnel. Additional UAV attacks have been attempted.

I directed the June 27 strikes in order to protect and defend the safety of our personnel, to degrade and disrupt the ongoing series of attacks against the United States and our partners, and to deter the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iran-backed militia groups from conducting or supporting further attacks on United States personnel and facilities. In support of these aims, the targeted strikes were directed at facilities used by groups involved in these ongoing attacks for weapons storage, command, logistics, and UAV operations.

I directed this discrete military action consistent with my responsibility to protect United States citizens both at home and abroad and in furtherance of United States national security and foreign policy interests, pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct United States foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. The United States took this necessary and proportionate action consistent with international law, and in the exercise of the United States' inherent right of self-defense as reflected in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. The United States stands ready to take further action, as necessary and appropriate, to address further threats or attacks.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93–148). Additional information is provided in a classified annex. I appreciate the support of the Congress in this action.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR.

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Kamala D. Harris, President of the Senate. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Categories: Communications to Congress : Syria and Iraq, U.S. Military operations, letter.

Subjects: Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Casualties; Iran : Regional involvement; Iraq : Insurgency and terrorist attacks; Iraq : Security cooperation with U.S.; Presidency, U.S. : Constitutional role and powers; Syria : U.S. and coalition airstrikes; Terrorism : Global threat.

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