

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023

Letter to Congressional Leaders on United States Military Operations in Iraq
December 27, 2023

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Madam President:)

As I have reported previously, militia groups affiliated with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) have perpetrated a series of attacks against United States personnel and facilities in Iraq and Syria. These attacks, including the recent attack on the Erbil Air Base by Iran-affiliated Kataib Hezbollah and affiliated groups, have caused injuries to United States personnel and have placed under grave threat the lives of both United States personnel and Coalition forces operating alongside United States forces.

Previously, in response to these attacks and the threat of future attacks, at my direction, United States forces have conducted targeted strikes against facilities in Iraq and Syria used by IRGC and IRGC-affiliated groups.

On the night of December 25, 2023, at my direction, United States forces conducted discrete strikes against three facilities in Iraq used by Iran-affiliated groups for training, logistics support, and other purposes. The strikes were taken to deter future attacks and were conducted in a manner designed to limit the risk of escalation and minimize civilian casualties. I directed the strikes in order to protect and defend our personnel who are in Iraq conducting military operations pursuant to the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force. The strikes were intended to degrade and disrupt the ongoing series of attacks against the United States and our partners, and to deter Iran and Iran-backed militia groups from conducting or supporting further attacks on United States personnel and facilities.

I directed this 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 as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive and to conduct United States foreign relations. 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). I appreciate the support of the Congress in this action.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR.

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Michael Johnson, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Patricia L. Murray, President pro tempore of the Senate. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Categories: Communications to Congress : U.S. military operations in Iraq, letter.

Subjects: Constitutional roles and separation of powers; Iran, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC); Iran, regional involvement; Iraq, Kataib Hezbollah militia and affiliated groups; Iraq, U.S. airstrikes.

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