

Statement on Preliminary Assessments From Reviews Ordered on the Christmas Day Terrorist Attack

December 31, 2009

This morning I spoke with John Brennan about preliminary assessments from the ongoing consultations I have ordered into the human and systemic failures that occurred leading up to the attempted act of terrorism on Christmas Day and about our Government-wide efforts at continued vigilance on homeland security and counterterrorism efforts. In a separate call, I spoke with Sec. Napolitano to receive an update on both the Department of Homeland Security review of detection capa-

bilities and the enhanced security measures in place since the Christmas Day incident.

I anticipate receiving assessments from several agencies this evening and will review those tonight and over the course of the weekend. On Tuesday, in Washington, I will meet personally with relevant agency heads to discuss our ongoing reviews as well as security enhancements and intelligence-sharing improvements in our homeland security and counterterrorism operations.

Message to the Central Intelligence Agency on the Terrorist Attack in Khost Province, Afghanistan

December 31, 2009

To the men and women of the CIA:

I write to mark a sad occasion in the history of the CIA and our country. Yesterday, seven Americans in Afghanistan gave their lives in service to their country. Michelle and I have their families, friends and colleagues in our thoughts and prayers.

These brave Americans were part of a long line of patriots who have made great sacrifices for their fellow citizens, and for our way of life. The United States would not be able to maintain the freedom and security that we cherish without decades of service from the dedicated men and women of the CIA. You have helped us understand the world as it is, and taken great risks to protect our country. You have served in the shadows, and your sacrifices have sometimes been unknown to your fellow citizens, your friends, and even your families.

In recent years, the CIA has been tested as never before. Since our country was attacked on September 11, 2001, you have served on the frontlines in directly confronting the dangers of the 21st century. Because of your service, plots have been disrupted, American lives

have been saved, and our Allies and partners have been more secure. Your triumphs and even your names may be unknown to your fellow Americans, but your service is deeply appreciated. Indeed, I know firsthand the excellent quality of your work because I rely on it every day.

The men and women who gave their lives in Afghanistan did their duty with courage, honor and excellence, and we must draw strength from the example of their sacrifice. They will take their place on the Memorial Wall at Langley alongside so many other heroes who gave their lives on behalf of their country. And they will live on in the hearts of those who loved them, and in the freedom that they gave their lives to defend.

May God bless the memory of those we lost, and may God bless the United States of America.

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.