

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Global Deployments of United States Combat-Equipped Armed Forces *June 15, 2010*

Dear Madam 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 U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM OBJECTIVES

Since October 7, 2001, the United States has conducted combat operations in Afghanistan against al-Qa'ida terrorists and their Taliban supporters. It has also deployed combat-equipped forces to a number of locations in the U.S. Central, Pacific, European, Southern, and Africa Command areas of operation in support of those and other overseas operations. Operations and deployments remain ongoing. Previous such operations were reported consistent with Public Law 107-40 and the War Powers Resolution. 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 and brought an end to the Taliban's leadership of Afghanistan. United States Armed Forces are actively pursuing and engaging remaining al-Qa'ida and Taliban fighters in Afghanistan. The total number of U.S. forces in Afghanistan is approximately 87,000, of which more than 62,000 are assigned to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. The U.N. Security Council most recently reaffirmed its authorization of ISAF for a 12-month period from October 13, 2009, in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1890 (October 8, 2009). The mission of ISAF, under NATO command and in partnership with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, is to conduct population-centric counterinsurgency operations, enable expanded and effective Afghan National Security Forces, support im-

proved governance and development in order to protect the Afghan people, and promote sustainable security. Presently, 46 nations contribute to ISAF, including all 28 NATO Allies.

The United States continues to detain several hundred al-Qa'ida and Taliban fighters who are believed to pose a continuing threat to the United States and its interests. The combat-equipped forces deployed since January 2002 to Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, continue to conduct secure detention operations for the approximately 180 detainees at Guantanamo Bay under Public Law 107-40 and consistent with principles of the law of war.

In furtherance of U.S. efforts against terrorists who pose a continuing and imminent threat to the United States, its friends, its allies, and U.S. forces abroad, the United States continues to work with partners around the globe, with a particular focus on the U.S. Central Command's area of operations. In this context, the United States has deployed U.S. combat-equipped forces to assist in enhancing the counterterrorism capabilities of our friends and allies, including special operations and other forces for sensitive operations in various locations around the world. In addition, the U.S. forces headquarters element in Djibouti provides command and control support as necessary to U.S. forces in the Horn of Africa region. The United States is committed to thwarting the efforts of al-Qa'ida and its affiliates to carry out future acts of international terrorism and we have continued to work with our counterterrorism partners to disrupt and degrade the capabilities of al-Qa'ida and its affiliates. As necessary, in response to the terrorist threat, I will direct additional measures in the exercise of the right of the United States to self-defense and to protect U.S. 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 the terrorist threat to the United States.

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN IRAQ

Since the expiration of the authorization and mandate for the Multinational Force in Iraq in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1790 on December 31, 2008, U.S. forces have continued operations to support Iraq in its efforts to maintain security and stability in Iraq pursuant to the bilateral Agreement Between the United States of America and the Republic of Iraq on the Withdrawal of United States Forces from Iraq and the Organization of Their Activities during Their Temporary Presence in Iraq, which entered into force on January 1, 2009. These contributions have included, but have not been limited to, assisting in building the capability of the Iraqi security forces, supporting the development of Iraq's political institutions, improving local governance, enhancing ministerial capacity, and providing critical humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to the Iraqis. The U.S. contribution of forces to the Iraq mission fluctuates overtime, depending on the conditions in theater as determined by the commanders on the ground; the present U.S. contribution is approximately 95,000 U.S. military personnel in Iraq.

MARITIME INTERCEPTION OPERATIONS

As noted in previous reports, the United States continues to conduct maritime interception operations on the high seas in the areas of responsibility of each of the geographic combatant commands. These maritime operations are aimed at stopping the movement, arming, and financing of certain international terrorist groups.

U.S./NATO OPERATIONS IN KOSOVO

The U.N. Security Council authorized Member States to establish a NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) 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 and, with local authorities and international institutions, contributes to the maintenance of a safe and secure environment.

Currently, 24 NATO Allies contribute to KFOR. Seven non-NATO countries also participate by providing military and other support personnel. The United States contribution to KFOR is about 1,074 U.S. military personnel, or approximately 11 percent of the total strength of approximately 9,300 personnel. The United States forces participating in KFOR have been assigned to the eastern region of Kosovo but also have operated in other areas of the country based on mission requirements. The principal military task of U.S. KFOR forces is to help maintain a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement.

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 (including the authority to carryout Public Law 107-40 and other statutes) and as Chief Executive, as well as my statutory and constitutional 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,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate.

Address to the Nation on the Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico *June 15, 2010*

Good evening. As we speak, our Nation faces a multitude of challenges. At home, our top priority is to recover and rebuild from a recession that has touched the lives of nearly every American. Abroad, our brave men and women in uniform are taking the fight to Al Qaida wherever it exists. And tonight I've returned from a trip to the Gulf Coast to speak with you about the battle we're waging against an oil spill that is assailing our shores and our citizens.

On April 20, an explosion ripped through BP Deepwater Horizon drilling rig about 40 miles off the coast of Louisiana. Eleven workers lost their lives; 17 others were injured. And soon, nearly a mile beneath the surface of the ocean, oil began spewing into the water.

Because there's never been a leak this size, at this depth, stopping it has tested the limits of human technology. That's why just after the rig sank, I assembled a team of our Nation's best scientists and engineers to tackle this challenge, a team led by Dr. Steven Chu, a Nobel Prize-winning physicist and our Nation's Secretary of Energy. Scientists at our national labs and experts from academia and other oil companies have also provided ideas and advice.

As a result of these efforts, we've directed BP to mobilize additional equipment and technology. And in the coming weeks and days, these efforts should capture up to 90 percent of the oil leaking out of the well. This is until the company finishes drilling a relief well later in the summer that's expected to stop the leak completely.

Already, this oil spill is the worst environmental disaster America has ever faced. And unlike an earthquake or a hurricane, it's not a single event that does its damage in a matter of minutes or days. The millions of gallons of oil that have spilled into the Gulf of Mexico are more like an epidemic, one that we will be fighting for months and even years.

But make no mistake: We will fight this spill with everything we've got for as long as it takes. We will make BP pay for the damage their company has caused. And we will do whatever's necessary to help the Gulf Coast and its people recover from this tragedy.

Tonight I'd like to lay out for you what our battle plan is going forward: what we're doing to clean up the oil, what we're doing to help our neighbors in the Gulf, and what we're doing to make sure that a catastrophe like this never happens again.

First, the cleanup: From the very beginning of this crisis, the Federal Government has been in charge of the largest environmental cleanup effort in our Nation's history, an effort led by Admiral Thad Allen, who has almost 40 years of experience responding to disasters. We now have nearly 30,000 personnel who are working across 4 States to contain and clean up the oil. Thousands of ships and other vessels are responding in the Gulf. And I've authorized the deployment of over 17,000 National Guard members along the coast. These service men and women are ready to help stop the oil from coming ashore. They are ready to help clean the beaches, train response workers, or even help with processing claims, and I urge the Governors in the affected States to activate these troops as soon as possible.

Because of our efforts, millions of gallons of oil have already been removed from the water through burning, skimming, and other collection methods. Over 5½ million feet of boom has been laid across the water to block and absorb the approaching oil. We've approved the construction of new barrier islands in Louisiana to try to stop the oil before it reaches the shore, and we're working with Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida to implement creative approaches to their unique coastlines.

As the cleanup continues, we will offer whatever additional resources and assistance our coastal States may need. Now, a mobilization of this speed and magnitude will never be perfect, and new challenges will always arise. I saw and heard evidence of that during this trip. So if something isn't working, we want to hear about it. If there are problems in the operation, we will fix them.

But we have to recognize that despite our best efforts, oil has already caused damage to our coastline and its wildlife. And sadly, no mat-