

The President's Weekly Address

August 9, 2014

This week, I authorized two operations in Iraq. First, I directed our military to take action to protect our American diplomats and military advisers serving in the city of Erbil. In recent days, terrorist forces neared the city. Thursday night I made it clear that if they attempt to advance further, our military would respond with targeted strikes. That's what we've done. And if necessary, that's what we will continue to do. We have Americans serving across Iraq, including our Embassy in Baghdad, and we'll do whatever is needed to protect our people.

Second, we've begun a humanitarian effort to help those Iraqi civilians trapped on that mountain. The terrorists that have taken over parts of Iraq have been especially brutal to religious minorities: rounding up families, executing men, enslaving women, and threatening the systematic destruction of an entire religious community, which would be genocide.

The thousands—perhaps tens of thousands—of Iraqi men, women, and children who fled to that mountain were starving and dying of thirst. The food and water we air-dropped will help them survive. I've also approved targeted American airstrikes to help Iraqi forces break the siege and rescue these families. Earlier this week, one anguished Iraqi in this area cried to the world, "There is no one coming to help." Today, America is helping.

The United States cannot and should not intervene every time there's a crisis in the world. But when there's a situation like the one on this mountain—when countless innocent people are facing a massacre and when we have the ability to prevent it—the United States can't just look away. That's not who we are. We're Americans. We act. We lead. And that's

what we're going to do on that mountain. As one American who wrote to me yesterday said, "It's the right thing to do."

As Commander in Chief, I will not allow the United States to be dragged into fighting another war in Iraq. American combat troops will not be returning to fight in Iraq, because there's no American military solution to the larger crisis there.

What we will do is continue our broader strategy in Iraq. We will protect our citizens. We will work with the international community to address this humanitarian crisis. We'll help prevent these terrorists from having a permanent safe haven from which to attack America. And we'll continue to urge Iraqi communities to reconcile, come together, and fight back against these terrorists so the people of Iraq have the opportunity for a better future, the opportunity for which so many Americans gave their lives in Iraq in a long, hard war.

Today we salute our brave men and women in uniform, especially our courageous pilots and crews over Iraq. They're protecting our fellow Americans. They're helping save the lives of innocent people on a mountain, people who today know that there's a country called America that cares for them too and that is willing to stand up, not just for our own security, but for the dignity and freedom that belongs to all people.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:50 p.m. on August 8 in the State Dining Room at the White House for broadcast on August 9. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 8, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on August 9.

Remarks on the Situation in Iraq and an Exchange With Reporters

August 9, 2014

The President. Good morning. Over the past 2 days, American pilots and crews have served with courage and skill in the skies over Iraq.

First, American forces have conducted targeted airstrikes against terrorist forces outside the city of Erbil to prevent them from advancing