

This is a moment of American leadership, and thanks to you, it is a moment that we are going to meet. And I will keep standing up for your interests and for our security and for the human rights and dignity of people wherever they live. And we're going to keep on working with our allies and partners to take out the terrorists who threaten us wherever they hide. Because in stark contrast to those who only know how to kill and maim and tear down, we keep on building up and offering a future of progress and hope. And like the generations before us, we're willing to defend this country we love. We're willing to help others on this planet that we share. We're protected by patriots like you. And for all those reasons, the United States of America will remain the greatest force for freedom that the world has ever known.

Thank you very much, everybody. I'm proud of you. God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:04 p.m. in the Short Fitness and Sports Center. In his remarks, he referred to Col. Daniel H. Tulley, USAF, commander, Sixth Air Mobility Wing, MacDill Air Force Base; CSM Christopher K. Greca, USA, senior enlisted leader, U.S. Central Command; CSM Chris Faris, USA, senior enlisted adviser, U.S. Special Operations Command; and Sgt. Maj. Matthew S. Lusson, USAF, chief master sergeant, 53d Wing, Eglin Air Force Base. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

## Statement on House of Representatives Passage of Legislation To Train and Equip Syrian Opposition Forces *September 17, 2014*

Today the United States House of Representatives took an important step forward as our Nation unites to confront the threat posed by the terrorist group known as ISIL. Last week, I spoke to the American people about what the United States will do with our friends and allies to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL. I made clear that we must pursue a comprehensive and sustained counterterrorism strategy, and a bipartisan coalition in the House voted to support a critical component of that strategy. As we continue to take targeted military action against ISIL terrorist targets, today's vote is another step closer to having the authorization to train and equip vetted elements of the moderate Syrian opposition so they can defend themselves against, and ultimately push back on, ISIL forces in Syria, while creating the conditions for the political solution necessary to solve Syria's crisis once

and for all. This training program will be conducted outside of Syria, in partnership with regional countries. There will be no U.S. military personnel in Syria as part of this program. We've learned over the last decade, and through our successful campaign to degrade Al Qaida, that it is more effective to use America's unique capabilities to take out terrorist targets in support of our partners' efforts on the ground to secure their own future. Countries in the region and around the world are coming together to confront ISIL. The United States can make a decisive difference. Today's House vote is a step towards making that difference, and I urge the Senate to pass this bill without delay.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.J. Res. 124; and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.