

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Global Deployment of United States Combat-Equipped Armed Forces June 11, 2015

Dear Mr. 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

In furtherance of U.S. counterterrorism efforts, the United States continues to work with partners around the globe, with a particular focus on the U.S. Central Command's and U.S. Africa Command's areas of responsibility. In this context, the United States has deployed U.S. combat-equipped forces to enhance the counterterrorism capabilities and support the counterterrorism operations of our friends and allies. Specific information about counterterrorism deployments to select countries is provided below, and a classified annex to this report provides further information.

Military Operations Against al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, and Associated Forces and in Support of Related U.S. Counterterrorism Objectives

Since October 7, 2001, U.S. Armed Forces, including special operations forces, have conducted counterterrorism combat operations in Afghanistan against al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, and associated forces. In support of these and other overseas operations, the United States has deployed combat-equipped forces to a number of locations in the U.S. Central, Pacific, European, Southern, and Africa Command areas of operation. Such operations and deployments have been reported previously, consistent with Public Law 107–40 and the War Powers Resolution, and operations and deployments remain ongoing. 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 rule in Afghanistan. If necessary, in response to terrorist threats, I will direct additional measures 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 terrorist threats to the United States.

Afghanistan. United States Armed Forces have transitioned the lead for security to Afghan security forces while striking significant blows against al-Qa'ida's leadership and preventing Afghanistan from being used to launch attacks against our homeland. As I previously announced, the U.S. combat mission in Afghanistan ended on December 31, 2014; however, a limited number of U.S. forces remain in Afghanistan for the purposes of training, advising, and assisting Afghan forces, conducting and supporting counterterrorism operations against the remnants of al-Qa'ida, and taking appropriate measures against Taliban members who directly threaten U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan or provide direct support to al-Qa'ida. The United States currently remains in an armed conflict against al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, and associated forces, and active hostilities against those groups remain ongoing.

Following the completion of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission at the end of 2014, the mission to help train, advise, and assist the Afghan National Security Forces and Afghan ministries and institutions continues through the follow-on North Atlantic Treaty Organization-led Resolute Support Mission. The United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2189, dated December 12, 2014, which welcomed the Resolute Support Mission and underscored the importance of continued in-

ternational support for the stability of Afghanistan.

Today, there are approximately 9,100 U.S. forces in Afghanistan, consistent with the Force Management Level of 9,800. (The actual number of U.S. military personnel in Afghanistan may exceed this Force Management Level due to, for example, overlap during rotations of units, and the continued presence of forces with the single mission of supporting the retrograde of U.S. equipment, both of which are excluded from counting against the Force Management Level.)

Iraq and Syria. In order to provide support and security to U.S. personnel and the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad and as part of a comprehensive strategy to degrade and ultimately defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), last year I authorized the deployment of U.S. Armed Forces to Iraq. These U.S. forces are conducting coordination with Iraqi forces and providing training, communications support, intelligence support, and other support to select elements of the Iraqi security forces, including Kurdish Peshmerga forces. Additionally, U.S. forces are conducting a systematic campaign of airstrikes and other necessary actions against ISIL forces in Iraq and Syria and airstrikes in Syria against operatives of al-Qa'ida, including members of the al-Qa'ida element known as the Khorasan Group, who are involved in al-Qa'ida's plotting against the West. The Force Management Level for U.S. Armed Forces in Iraq currently is 3,550 personnel. Additionally, on May 15, 2015, U.S. forces conducted a raid in Syria to capture a senior leader of ISIL known as Abu Sayyaf who was involved in directing the terrorist organization's illicit oil, gas, and financial operations, and his wife, known as Umm Sayyaf, who is also suspected to be a member of ISIL. The operation resulted in Abu Sayyaf's death and Umm Sayyaf's capture.

These actions are being undertaken in coordination with and at the request of the Government of Iraq and in conjunction with coalition partners.

Somalia. In Somalia, U.S. forces have worked to counter the terrorist threat posed by

al-Qa'ida and associated elements of al-Shabaab. United States forces conducted counterterrorism strikes in Somalia on December 29, 2014, and January 31 and March 12, 2015, against al-Shabaab operatives who are part of al-Qa'ida.

Yemen. The U.S. military has also been working closely with the Government of Yemen to operationally dismantle and ultimately eliminate the terrorist threat posed by al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), the most active and dangerous affiliate of al-Qa'ida today. Our joint efforts have resulted in direct action against a limited number of AQAP operatives and senior leaders in that country who posed a terrorist threat to the United States and our interests.

Djibouti. United States forces continue to partner with Government of Djibouti authorities, which have permitted use of Djiboutian territory for basing of U.S. forces. United States forces remain deployed to Djibouti, including for purposes of posturing for counterterrorism operations in the Horn of Africa and Arabian Peninsula.

Cuba. Combat-equipped forces, deployed since January 2002 to the Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, continue to conduct humane and secure detention operations for the approximately 122 detainees at Guantanamo Bay under the authority provided by the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (Public Law 107-40), as informed by the law of war.

Military Operations in Niger in Support of U.S. Counterterrorism Objectives

United States military personnel in Niger continue to provide support for intelligence collection and to facilitate intelligence sharing with French forces conducting operations in the Sahel and with other partners in the region. The total number of U.S. military personnel deployed to Niger is approximately 200.

MILITARY OPERATIONS RELATED TO THE LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY

United States military personnel with appropriate combat equipment remain deployed to

various countries in the central Africa region to serve as advisors to regional forces of the African Union Regional Task Force (AU-RTF) that are working to apprehend or remove Joseph Kony and other senior Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) leaders from the battlefield, and to protect local populations. The number of U.S. military personnel deployed to the central Africa region, including advisors deployed for this mission and personnel providing logistical and support functions to this and other missions, will fluctuate at a level up to approximately 300. Additional information about military operations related to the Lord's Resistance Army is provided in the classified annex.

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN EGYPT

Approximately 700 military personnel are assigned to the U.S. contingent of the Multinational Force and Observers, which have been present in Egypt since 1981.

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN JORDAN

As initially detailed in my report of June 21, 2013, at the request of the Government of Jordan, U.S. Armed Forces elements, including Patriot missile systems, fighter aircraft, and related support, command, control, and communications personnel and systems, are deployed to Jordan to support the security of Jordan and promote regional stability. The total number of U.S. forces in Jordan is approximately 2,200 U.S. military personnel. These forces will remain in Jordan, in full coordination with the Government of Jordan, until the security situation becomes such that they are no longer needed.

U.S./NATO OPERATIONS IN KOSOVO

The U.N. Security Council authorized Member States to establish a NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) in Resolution 1244 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 in cooperation with local authorities, bilateral partners, and international institutions. The principal military tasks of KFOR forces are to help maintain a safe and secure environment and to ensure freedom of movement throughout Kosovo. The U.S. contribution to KFOR is approximately 700 U.S. military personnel out of the total strength of approximately 4,600 personnel.

REGIONAL SECURITY OPERATIONS

United States Armed Forces previously deployed to Yemen to support the security of U.S. personnel and the U.S. Embassy departed Yemen in conjunction with the suspension of embassy operations and relocation of embassy staff out of Yemen in February 2015. Also, as most recently reported in the December 11, 2014, consolidated report, U.S. Armed Forces deployed to the Central African Republic in September 2014 to support the resumption of the activities of the U.S. Embassy in Bangui. Those forces departed the Central African Republic in January 2015.

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 and as Chief Executive (including the authority to carry out Public Law 107-40 and other statutes), as well as my constitutional and statutory 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 John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Orrin G. Hatch, President pro tempore of the Senate.