

Statement on the Ghost Ship Warehouse Fire in Oakland, California

December 5, 2016

Today our prayers go out to the people of Oakland, California, in the aftermath of this weekend's deadly warehouse fire, one of the worst fires in the State's history. While we still don't know the full toll of this disaster, we do know that an American community has been devastated, and many people—including young men and women with their whole futures ahead of them—have tragically lost their lives. I want to thank the dedicated first responders who have been working tirelessly for

days to contain the situation, recover victims, and treat the wounded. My administration is in close contact with our State and local partners on the ground to make sure that authorities have everything they need as they continue response operations and investigate the cause of the fire. Oakland is one of the most diverse and creative cities in our country, and as families and residents pull together in the wake of this awful tragedy, they will have the unwavering support of the American people.

Statement on Releasing the “Report on the Legal and Policy Frameworks Guiding the United States’ Use of Military Force and Related National Security Operations”

December 5, 2016

From President Lincoln's issuance of the Lieber Code during the Civil War to our nation's leadership at the Nuremberg Trials following World War II, the United States has a long history of emphasizing the development and enforcement of a framework under which war can be waged lawfully and effectively, with due regard for humanitarian considerations, and consistent with our national interests and values.

Consistent with this long tradition, since my first days in office I have underscored the importance of adhering to standards—including international legal standards—that govern the use of force. Far from eroding our nation's influence, I have argued, adherence to these standards strengthens us, just as it isolates those nations who do not follow such standards. Indeed, as I have consistently emphasized, what makes America truly remarkable is not the strength of our arms or our economy, but rather our founding values, which include respect for the rule of law and universal rights.

Decisions regarding war and peace are among the most important any President faces. It is critical, therefore, that such decisions are made pursuant to a policy and legal framework that affords clear guidance internally, reduces

the risk of an ill-considered decision, and enables the disclosure of as much information as possible to the public, consistent with national security and the proper functioning of the Government, so that an informed public can scrutinize our actions and hold us to account. When I took office, our nation was already years into a new and different kind of conflict against enemies who do not wear uniforms or respect geographic boundaries and who disregard the legal principles of warfare. Recognizing the novelty of this threat and the difficult legal and policy questions it raised and continues to raise, the United States complies with all applicable domestic and international law in conducting operations against these enemies. And, over the course of my Administration, I directed my team to work continually to refine, clarify, and strengthen the standards and processes pursuant to which the United States conducts its national security operations.

This report details the results of these efforts. It describes, among other things, how my Administration has ensured that our uses of force overseas are supported by a solid domestic law framework and consistent with an international legal framework predicated on the concepts of sovereignty and self-defense