

June 15 / Administration of Barack Obama, 2011

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Global Deployments of United States Combat-Equipped Armed Forces June 15, 2011

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 AGAINST AL-QA'IDA, THE TALIBAN, AND ASSOCIATED FORCES AND IN SUPPORT OF RELATED 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. 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. Previously such operations and deployments have been reported, 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 leadership of Afghanistan.

United States Armed Forces are also actively pursuing and engaging remaining al-Qa'ida and Taliban fighters in Afghanistan. The total number of U.S. forces in Afghanistan is approximately 99,000, of which more than 83,000 are assigned to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-led 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, 2010, in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1943 (October 13,

2010). 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 capabilities of the Afghan National Security Forces, support improved governance and development in order to protect the Afghan people, and promote sustainable security. Including the United States, 48 partner nations, including all 28 NATO Allies, contribute troops to ISAF. These combat operations are gradually pushing insurgents to the edges of secured population areas in a number of important regions, largely resulting from the increase in U.S. forces over the past 2 years. United States and other coalition forces will continue to execute the strategy of clear-hold-build, and transition, until full responsibility for security rests with the Afghan National Security Forces.

The United States continues to detain approximately 1,000 al-Qa'ida, Taliban, and associated force 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 170 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 members of al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, and associated forces, the United States continues to work with partners around the globe, with a particular focus on the U.S. Central Command's area of responsibility. 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. The United States is committed to

thwarting the efforts of al-Qa'ida and its associated forces 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 associated forces. As necessary, in response to the terrorist threat, I will direct additional measures against al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, and associated forces 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 this terrorist threat to the United States. A classified annex to this report provides further information.

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 (Security Agreement), 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, enhancing the capacity of the ministries of Defense and Interior, providing critical humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to the Iraqis, and supporting the U.S. diplomatic mission. The United States continues its responsible drawdown, in accordance with commitments in the Security Agreement, to withdraw U.S. forces from Iraq by December 31, 2011. The number of U.S. forces in Iraq at this time is approximately 45,000.

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN LIBYA

As I reported on March 21, and at my direction, consistent with a request from the Arab

League, and as authorized by the United Nations Security Council under the provisions of U.N. Security Council Resolutions 1970 and 1973, U.S. military forces commenced operations on March 19, 2011, to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe and address the threat posed to international peace and security by the crisis in Libya and to protect the people of Libya from the Qadhafi regime. The initial phase of U.S. military involvement in Libya was conducted under the command of the U.S. Africa Command. By April 4, however, the United States had transferred responsibility for the military operations in Libya to NATO and the U.S. involvement has assumed a supporting role in the coalition's efforts. Since April 4, U.S. participation has consisted of: (1) non-kinetic support to the NATO-led operation, including intelligence, logistical support, and search and rescue assistance; (2) aircraft that have assisted in the suppression and destruction of air defenses in support of the no-fly zone; and (3) since April 23, precision strikes by unmanned aerial vehicles against a limited set of clearly defined targets in support of the NATO-led coalition's efforts. Although we are no longer in the lead, U.S. support for the NATO-based coalition remains crucial to assuring the success of international efforts to protect civilians and civilian populated areas from the actions of the Qadhafi regime, and to address the threat to international peace and security posed by the crisis in Libya. With the exception of operations to rescue the crew of a U.S. aircraft on March 21, 2011, the United States has deployed no ground forces to Libya.

MILITARY OPERATIONS IN EGYPT

On January 31, a security force of approximately 40 U.S. military personnel from the U.S. Central Command deployed to Cairo. Although this security force was equipped for combat, this movement was undertaken solely for the purpose of protecting American citizens and property. A security force remains deployed to the U.S. Embassy in Cairo and will remain through July 4, or until the security situation becomes such that it is no longer needed, if earlier. This security force is separate

from, and in addition to, the approximately 693 military personnel that constitute the U.S. contingent of the Multinational Force & Observers present in Egypt since 1981.

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. A classified annex to this report provides further information.

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 and, with local authorities and international institu-

tions, contributes to the maintenance of a safe and secure environment.

Currently, 22 NATO Allies contribute to KFOR. Eight non-NATO countries also participate. The United States contribution to KFOR is approximately 800 U.S. military personnel out of the total strength of approximately 6,000 personnel. The principal military task of 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 carry out 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 John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Daniel K. Inouye, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Remarks at the Congressional Picnic June 15, 2011

Hello, everybody! Welcome to the White House. First of all, I take full responsibility for the weather. *[Laughter]* What a spectacular day for a congressional picnic. This is always one of the best events of the year for us, mainly because with all the work that we do with Members of Congress and their staffs, all too often, we don't get a chance to say thank you to the families.

And we understand that public service is tough on the families, in some ways tougher. You've got spouses who are away from home, moms or dads or grandpas or grandmas who don't get a chance to see you as often as they'd

like. And so this is just one modest way for us to say to all of you, thank you for the enormous contributions you make to the country. We are thrilled with everything that you guys do each and every day to make this country stronger and more secure and more free.

It is good to see a lot of familiar faces here. I hope everybody's getting enough to eat. We don't want to make a long speech, but I do hope that the spirit of community that is so evident on a day like today, that this carries over each and every day. We've got Democrats here and Republicans here, and we all have differences on issues at any given moment, but the