

*Administration of Barack Obama, 2011*

**Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Deployment of United States Combat-Equipped Armed Forces**

*December 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 93,000, of which more than 78,000 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 until October 13, 2012, in U.N. Security Council Resolution 2011 (October 12, 2011). 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. Forty-nine nations, including the United States and 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 2,500 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 countries within 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 as of October 28, 2011, was 36,011.

### *MILITARY OPERATIONS IN LIBYA*

As I reported on March 21 and June 15, and at my direction, consistent with a request from the Arab League, and as authorized by the U.N. Security Council under the provisions of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1973, U.S. military forces commenced operations on March 19, 2011, to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe and address the threat posed to international and regional peace and security by the crisis in Libya and to protect the people of Libya from the Qadhafi regime, which had made a lawless challenge to the authority of the Security Council. The initial phase of U.S. military involvement in Libya was conducted under 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 assumed a supporting role in the coalition's efforts. From April 4 through October 31, U.S. participation 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 the United States was no longer in the lead, U.S.

support for the NATO based coalition remained crucial to ensuring 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 and regional 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, and approximately 16 U.S. military personnel deployed under Chief of Mission authority to assist with re-establishment of U.S. Embassy Tripoli in September, the United States deployed no ground forces to Libya. The U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 2016 on October 27, 2011, which terminated the no-fly zone and civilian protection mandates effective October 31. NATO terminated its mission at the same time.

#### *MILITARY OPERATIONS IN SUPPORT OF U.S. EMBASSY CAIRO SECURITY*

On January 31, 2011, a security force of approximately 40 U.S. military personnel from the U.S. Central Command deployed to bolster the security of the U.S. Embassy in Cairo and its personnel. The force ended its deployment on July 4, 2011. This security force was separate from, and in addition to, the U.S. contingent of the Multinational Force and Observers, which have been present in Egypt since 1981.

#### *MILITARY OPERATIONS IN CENTRAL AFRICA*

On October 13, an initial team of U.S. military personnel with appropriate combat equipment deployed to Uganda to advise regional forces that are working to protect civilians, apprehend or remove Joseph Kony and other senior Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) commanders from the battlefield, and disarm and demobilize the remaining LRA fighters. During the next month, additional U.S. military personnel deployed to the region, including a second combat-equipped team and associated headquarters, communications, and logistics personnel. The total number of U.S. military personnel deployed for this mission, including those providing logistical and support functions, is approximately 100. United States forces are providing information, advice, and assistance to select partner nation forces. Subject to the approval of each respective host nation, elements of these U.S. forces have begun to deploy to forward locations in the LRA-affected areas of the Central African Republic to enhance regional efforts against the LRA, and similar movements are planned for the Republic of South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, these forces will not engage LRA forces except in self-defense. The deployment of these U.S. Armed Forces furthers U.S. national security interests and foreign policy efforts and is contributing to advancing peace and respect for human rights in central Africa.

#### *MARITIME INTERCEPTION OPERATIONS*

As noted in previous reports, the United States remains prepared 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, and also include operations aimed at stopping proliferation by sea of weapons of mass destruction and related materials.

#### *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 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.

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 6,240 personnel, plus a temporarily deployed Operational Reserve Force.

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 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 Daniel K. Inouye, President pro tempore of the Senate.

*Categories:* Communications to Congress : Combat-equipped Armed Forces, U.S., deployment, letter.

*Subjects:* Afghanistan : Afghan military and security forces; Afghanistan : Former regime; Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Deployment; Iraq : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Kosovo : KFOR international security force :: International assistance; Kosovo : KFOR international security force :: NATO, role; Kosovo : KFOR international security force :: U.S. military forces, deployment; Libya : No-fly zone :: International military forces; Libya : No-fly zone :: U.S. military forces; Libya : Political unrest and violence; North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); Terrorism : Al Qaida terrorist group; Terrorism : Counterterrorism efforts; Terrorism : Global threat; Uganda : Lord's Resistance Army insurgent group; United Nations : Security Council.

*DCPD Number:* DCPD201100950.