

The President's Weekly Address

September 20, 2014

Over the past week, the United States has continued to lead our friends and allies in the strategy to degrade and ultimately destroy the terrorist group known as ISIL. As I've said before, our intelligence community has not yet detected specific plots from these terrorists against America. Right now they pose a threat to the people of Iraq, Syria, and the broader Middle East. But its leaders have threatened America and our allies. And if left unchecked, they could pose a growing threat to the United States.

So, last month, I gave the order for our military to begin taking targeted action against ISIL. Since then, American pilots have flown more than 170 airstrikes against these terrorists in Iraq. And France has now joined us in these airstrikes.

And going forward, we won't hesitate to take action against these terrorists in Iraq or in Syria. But this is not America's fight alone. I won't commit our troops to fighting another ground war in Iraq or in Syria. It's more effective to use our capabilities to help partners on the ground secure their own countries' futures. We will use our air power. We will train and equip our partners. We will advise, and we will assist. And we'll lead a broad coalition of nations who have a stake in this fight. This isn't America versus ISIL, this is the people of that region versus ISIL. It's the world versus ISIL.

We've been working to secure bipartisan support for this strategy here at home, because I believe that we are strongest as a nation when the President and Congress work together. We've been consulting closely with Congress. And last week, Secretary of State Kerry, Secretary of Defense Hagel, and military leaders worked to gain their support for our strategy.

A majority of Democrats and a majority of Republicans in both the House and the Senate have now approved a first, key part of our strategy by wide margins. They've given our troops the authority they need to train Syrian opposition fighters so that they can fight ISIL in Syria. Those votes sent a powerful signal to the world: Americans are united in confronting this danger. And I hope Congress continues to make sure our troops get what they need to get the job done.

Meanwhile, because we're leading the right way, more nations are joining our coalition. Over 40 countries have offered to help the broad campaign against ISIL so far, from training and equipment to humanitarian relief, to flying combat missions. And this week, at the United Nations, I'll continue to rally the world against this threat.

This is an effort that America has the unique ability to lead. When the world is threatened, when the world needs help, it calls on America. And we call on our troops. Whether it's to degrade and ultimately destroy a group of terrorists or to contain and combat a threat like the Ebola epidemic in Africa, we ask a lot of our troops. But while our politics may be divided at times, the American people stand united around supporting our troops and their families. This is a moment of American leadership. And thanks to them, it is a moment that we will meet.

Thanks.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 2:05 p.m. on September 19 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on September 20. In the address, the President

referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. H.J. Res. 124, Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2015, was approved September 19 and assigned Public Law No. 113-164. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 19, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on September 20.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Weekly addresses.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Hagel, Charles T.; Kerry, John F.

Subjects: Africa : Ebola outbreak, response and containment efforts; Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Deployment; Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Service and dedication; Congress : Bipartisanship; Defense, Department of; France : Counterterrorism efforts, cooperation with U.S.; Iraq : International assistance; Iraq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization; Iraq : Security cooperation with U.S.; Iraq : U.S. assistance; State, Department of : Secretary; Syria : International assistance; Syria : U.S. assistance; Terrorism : Counterterrorism efforts; Terrorism : Global threat.

DCPD Number: DCPD201400687.