

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON
TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCESPERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE
ON INTELLIGENCECOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND
GOVERNMENT REFORM

ASSISTANT MAJORITY WHIP

DISTRICT OFFICE:

120 WEST 3RD STREET
SUITE 305
DAYTON, OH 45402
(937) 225-2843**Congress of the United States**
House of Representatives**Washington, DC 20515**

November 17, 2015

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Following the tragic events in Paris late last week, you reaffirmed that it is the goal of the United States to “degrade and ultimately defeat” the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). However, it is apparent that your Administration has failed to formulate and employ an effective strategy to reach that objective. Your assessment that ISIL is “contained” within Iraq and Syria is false and contradicts information provided to Congress by your own national security experts. Now, perhaps more than ever, ISIL directly threatens the safety and security of American citizens here at home.

Radical Islamic terrorist organizations, such as ISIL, continue to grow in strength and expand their reach well into Europe, the United States, and around the world. In recent months, ISIL attacks have increased significantly in both their lethality and complexity. This year alone, ISIL has either claimed or otherwise been associated with at least seventy attacks in no less than fifteen countries, including the following:

1. Shooting at a kosher market in Porte de Vincennes, France (4 dead)ⁱ;
2. Shooting at the Bardo Museum in Tunis, Tunisia (19 dead)ⁱⁱ;
3. Simultaneous bombings at mosques in Sana'a, Yemen (137 dead)ⁱⁱⁱ;
4. Multiple car bombings in Benghazi, Libya (17 dead)^{iv};
5. Shooting outside an art exhibit in Garland, Texas^v;
6. Shooting on a public bus in Karachi, Pakistan (45 dead)^{vi};
7. Suicide bombing in al-Qadeeh, Saudi Arabia (21 dead)^{vii};
8. Multiple car bombings in Kobani, Iraq (146 dead)^{viii};
9. Bombing and beheading in Saint-Quentin-Fallavier, France (1 dead)^{ix};
10. Suicide bombing at the Imam Sadiq mosque in Kuwait City, Kuwait (27 dead)^x;
11. Mass shooting at a resort in Sousse, Tunisia (38 dead)^{xi};
12. Bombing at a pedestrian market in Khan Bani Saad, Iraq (~100 dead)^{xii};
13. Suicide bombing at a peaceful protest in Suruc, Turkey (32 dead)^{xiii};
14. Truck bombing at a market in Baghdad, Iraq (76 dead)^{xiv};
15. Car bombing in Baghdad, Iraq (57 dead)^{xv};
16. Suicide bombing at a peaceful rally near Ankara, Turkey (102 dead)^{xvi};
17. Bombings in Dhaka, Bangladesh (1 dead)^{xvii};

18. Suspected bombing of Metrojet Flight 9268 over Sinai, Egypt (224 dead)^{xviii};
19. Suicide bombing in Beirut, Lebanon (43 dead)^{xix}; and
20. Simultaneous attacks on civilians in Paris, France (129 dead)^{xx}.

In addition to these previous attacks, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director James Comey has made clear that ISIL is active here in the United States and that the FBI is currently investigating suspected threats in all fifty states. This past Thursday, a man was arrested in my home state of Ohio for supporting ISIL.

Since your statements appear to conflict with public reporting and information previously briefed to Congress, I request that you immediately provide the appropriate Congressional committees the evidence on which you base these claims. Specifically, your comments during a 12 November 2015 interview that ISIL is “contained” and not gaining strength, directly conflict with information that I have received during national security briefings over the past several months.

During that same 12 November 2015 interview, you said, “I have had access to all of the best military minds in the country and all of the best foreign policy minds in the country.” While you may have access to highly-qualified and credible resources, it is my sincerest hope that you are availing yourself of their expertise.

Based on all open source and classified reporting presented to me, it is clear that ISIL is not “contained,” and that the destruction of this organization demands a significant response from the United States and its allies. The 9/11 Commission Report called for a global strategy, consisting of all instruments of national power, to ultimately defeat radical Islamic terrorist organizations like ISIL. It is abundantly clear that your Administration has failed to follow the many recommendations included in that report. I encourage you to review that document in order to formulate a revised National Security Strategy.

Sincerely,



Michael R. Turner
Member of Congress

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