



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Dear David:

Thank you for writing, and for your service and sacrifice. I have been meeting regularly with my national security team to discuss the situation in Iraq and the advances made there by ISIL, a terrorist organization operating in Iraq and Syria. ISIL poses a threat to the Iraqi people, to the region, and to our Nation's interests. I want to be clear: American forces will not be returning to combat in Iraq. Over the past decade, American troops have made extraordinary sacrifices to give Iraqis an opportunity to claim their own future. While we focus on keeping our citizens safe, we are providing assistance to the Iraqis as they take the fight to terrorists who threaten their country.

First, we are working to secure our embassy and personnel in Iraq. Second, at my direction, we have significantly increased our intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets so that we have a better picture of what's taking place there.

Third, the United States will continue our support to Iraqi security forces. We have created joint operation centers in Baghdad and northern Iraq to share intelligence and coordinate planning to confront the terrorist threat of ISIL.

In addition, we have advisors in Iraq through our embassy, and we sent a small number of additional military advisors to assess how we can best train and support Iraqi security forces going forward. We are also gathering more information about potential targets associated with ISIL, and, in consultation with Congress and leaders in Iraq and the region, we will be prepared to take targeted and precise military action if the situation requires it.

Finally, we are leading a diplomatic effort to work with Iraqi leaders and countries in the region to support stability in Iraq. Iraq's leaders must rise above their differences and come together around a political plan for their country's future.

All Iraqis-Shia, Sunni, and Kurds-must have confidence that they can advance their interests and aspirations through the political process rather than through violence.

Again, thank you for sharing your thoughts. Please know I will do everything in my power to protect the security of the United States and the safety of our people.

Sincerely,
Barack Obama