

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

THE PROTECT DEMOCRACY PROJECT,
INC.,

Plaintiff,

v.

Civil Action No. 20-172 (RC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, U.S.
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, U.S.
DEPARTMENT OF STATE,

Defendants.

NOTICE REGARDING ESCALATING HOSTILITIES WITH IRAN

Plaintiff The Protect Democracy Project, Inc. hereby provides notice on the status of escalating hostilities between U.S. Armed Forces and the Islamic Republic of Iran in Iraq over the past week.

On March 11—as the U.S. House of Representatives deliberated on Senate Joint Resolution 68, which directs the removal of U.S. forces from hostilities against Iran—an Iranian rocket fired by Iranian-backed Kataib Hezbollah forces killed two U.S. service members and one British soldier at Camp Taji in Iraq.¹ A total of 30 rockets were fired at Camp Taji, and 14 people were wounded, including U.S., British, and Polish service members.

On March 12, the U.S. launched retaliatory airstrikes against Kataib Hezbollah facilities

¹ Alissa J. Rubin and Eric Schmitt, *Rocket Attack Kills Three U.S. Coalition Members in Iraq*, N.Y. Times (Mar. 11, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/11/world/middleeast/us-troops-killed-iraq-rocket-attack.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article>.

in southern Iraq.² The Department of Defense stated that the strikes were “in direct response to the threat posed by Iranian-backed Shia militia groups (SMG) who continue to attack bases hosting . . . coalition forces.”³ Following the U.S. attack, twenty-five more rockets hit Camp Taji on Saturday, injuring two Americans.⁴

In response to the ongoing threat, the U.S. is increasing its presence in the region. For the first time since 2012, it is stationing two Navy aircraft carriers, the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower and the USS Harry S. Truman, in the Gulf region. The U.S. is also moving Patriot air defense missile systems into Iraq as defenses against ballistic missile attacks.⁵ Marine General Frank McKenzie stated on Friday, March 13: “What should now be obvious to everyone is you’re not going to be able to fire those at a U.S. or coalition base, hurt or kill our people, and escape unscathed.”⁶ Gen. McKenzie emphasized that that the U.S. has to date exercised “restraint” in bombing weapon sites because strikes could kill “a lot” of civilians.⁷

² Dan Lamothe and Louisa Loveluck, *U.S. launches strikes in Iraq against Iranian-backed militias after attacks killed coalition troops*, Wash. Post (Mar. 12, 2020), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2020/03/12/pentagon-awaiting-decision-trump-how-respond-deadly-rocket-attack-iraq/>.

³ Press Release, U.S. Dep’t of Defense, Statement by the Department of Defense (Mar. 12, 2020), <https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Releases/Release/Article/2110827/statement-by-the-department-of-defense/>.

⁴ Missy Ryan, Louisa Loveluck and Mustafa Salim, *Fresh rocket attack wounds international troops in Iraq, potentially deepening U.S.-Iran tensions*, Wash. Post (Mar. 14, 2020), https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/rocket-attack-injures-troops-in-iraq-potentially-deepening-us-iran-tensions/2020/03/14/6ddf168c-65fa-11ea-912d-d98032ec8e25_story.html.

⁵ Associated Press, *US General: US Strikes Destroy Weapons Depots, More Remain*, U.S. News (Mar. 13, 2020), <https://www.usnews.com/news/politics/articles/2020-03-12/us-to-hold-attackers-at-iraq-base-accountable>.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: March 17, 2020

THE PROTECT DEMOCRACY PROJECT, INC.

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