

Statement by NSC Spokesperson Caitlin Hayden



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The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

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The Administration's Fiscal Year 2015 Overseas Contingency Operations budget request to Congress builds on the President's West Point Speech to seek the resources necessary to build, facilitate and strengthen the capacity of our partners to counter terrorist organizations, particularly across the Middle East and North Africa. These resources will be an important step forward in our efforts to defend U.S. interests and strengthen the capacity of our friends and partners.

As a part of our Counter-Terrorism Partnerships Fund, we are seeking \$1.5 billion for a Regional Stabilization Initiative to partner with Syria's neighbors – Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and Iraq – as well as the moderate Syrian opposition. In particular, we are seeking \$500 million for a proposed authority to train and equip appropriately vetted elements of the moderate Syrian armed opposition. These funds would help defend the Syrian people, stabilize areas under opposition control, facilitate the provision of essential services, counter terrorist threats, and promote conditions for a negotiated settlement. This funding request would build on the Administration's longstanding efforts to empower the moderate Syrian opposition, both civilian and armed, and will enable the Department of Defense to increase our support to vetted elements of the armed opposition.

While we continue to believe that there is no military solution to this crisis and that the United States should not put American troops into combat in Syria, this request marks another step toward helping the Syrian people defend themselves against regime attacks, push back against the growing number of extremists like ISIL who find safe-haven in the chaos, and take their future into their own hands by enhancing security and stability at local levels.