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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0918**

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Dear all,

During last week's presidential debate with ABC News, Vice President Kamala Harris erroneously claimed that under the Biden-Harris administration "there is not one member of the United States military who is on active duty in a combat zone in any war zone around the world, the first time this century."

As a veteran, I found this statement to be wrong and disrespectful to the service members that are currently serving in uniform in dangerous posts overseas. Fact-checkers have pointed out, "there are currently 2,500 U.S. military troops in Iraq and more than 900 U.S. military personnel in Syria who are on a mission to support local forces to prevent a resurgence by ISIS." Many of these troops are engaged in counter-terrorism missions against Islamic terrorist organizations that have left them open to attack.

Over the past year, we have seen repeated attacks against U.S. military personnel throughout the Middle East by Iranian-funded terrorist militias. Some estimates show there have been more than 170 rocket and drone attacks alone against U.S. military personnel and bases in Iraq and Syria alone. In January 2024, three U.S. soldiers were killed and 34 others wounded in a drone attack near the Syrian border with Jordan. Similarly, the U.S.-led campaign against the Houthi rebels has turned into the most intense running sea battle the Navy has faced since World War II, according to the Associated Press.

There is not a shadow of a doubt that American active-duty military personnel have served in combat and war zones during the Biden-Harris administration. This is not something to be shirked, ignored, forgotten, or swept under the rug for political gain. American service members put

themselves in harm's way every day and any claim otherwise is a slap in the face to American soldiers and American military families.

Outside of the insult to our troops, serious red flags were raised by the vice president's misleading comments about the presence of U.S. military personnel in combat and war zones abroad. These comments were particularly glaring as Vice President Harris has gone out of her way to portray herself as a partner for President Biden in the White House and often the "last person" in the room when major decisions are made. Since Mrs. Harris is second in the line of presidential succession, it is vital for Congress to know whether her comments during the debate were intentional misinformation, a brain freeze under pressure, or stem from being left out of pertinent intelligence briefings by the White House.


Given President Biden's cognitive decline — which resulted in the termination of his reelection bid — the vice president needs to be ready to step into the role of commander-in-chief at a moment's notice for the remainder of the Biden-Harris administration. That role comes with tremendous responsibility over the lives of our nation's men and women in uniform. Vice President Harris's comments at the ABC debate raise the specter that she is either not ready to undertake that responsibility or has been woefully underprepared by the current White House to do so.

Congress and our troops deserve to know the answer. As such, I ask that you furnish Congress with a classier briefing on the following:

- 1) When was Vice President Kamala Harris last briefed in detail about the presence, number, and status of American troops overseas in combat and non-combat zones?
- 2) Is the Vice President Kamala Harris receiving the same intelligence briefings and troop updates as President Biden?
- 3) What is the Biden-Harris administration's standard for determining what is a "combat zone" or "war zone?"

Thank you for taking the time to review these questions and I look forward to a timely response to this inquiry.

Brian Mast



United States Congressman

CC: President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris