

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY UPDATE
March 5 - 11, 2015

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1. [State's Nuland at Senate Foreign Relations Hearing on Ukraine \(03-10-2015\)](#)

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Menendez and members of this committee — thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today on the situation in Ukraine and for your personal investment in that country's future. As many of you know from your travels, your meetings and the establishment of the bipartisan Senate Ukraine Caucus last month, Ukrainians deeply appreciate this committee's support for their country's security, democracy, sovereignty and future prosperity.

Today Ukraine is central to our 25 year Transatlantic quest for a "Europe whole, free and at peace." My interagency colleagues and I are pleased to update you today on U.S. efforts to support Ukraine as it works to liberate the country from its corrupt, oligarchic past, chart a more democratic, European future, and bring an end to Russian-fueled violence. In my remarks, I'll focus on two areas: first, the work Ukraine is doing — with U.S. and international support — to reform the country, tackle corruption and strengthen democratic institutions; second, I will give an update on our efforts to support implementation of the February and September Minsk Agreements, including our readiness to impose further costs on Russia if the commitments Moscow made are further violated. My colleagues from DoD — Principal Deputy Under Secretary McKeon and Vice Admiral Pandolfe — will address our security relationship in greater detail. A/S Toloui will speak more to our macroeconomic assistance in coordination with our international partners.

First — a quick reminder of why we're here. Sixteen months ago, the Kyiv Maidan and towns across Ukraine erupted in peaceful protest by ordinary Ukrainians fed up with a sleazy, corrupt regime bent on cheating the people of their sovereign choice to associate with Europe. They braved frigid temperatures, brutal beatings and sniper bullets. The leader of that rotten regime fled the country, and he was voted out by the parliament — including most members of his own party.

Then, Ukraine began to forge a new nation on its own terms — signing an Association Agreement with the European Union; holding free and fair elections — twice — even as fighting raged in the east; and undertaking deep and comprehensive economic and political reforms.

Against the backdrop of Russia's aggression, the situation in the country remains precarious. Ukraine's leaders, in the executive branch and the parliament, know they are in a race against time to clean up the country and enact the difficult and socially painful reforms required to kick start the economy, and meet their commitments to their people, the IMF and the international community. The package of reforms already put forward by the government, and enacted by the Rada, is impressive in its scope and political courage.

Just last week:

- They passed budget reform expected to slash the deficit this year, and strengthen decentralization by giving more fiscal control to local communities;
- They made tough choices to reduce and cap pension benefits, increase work requirements and phase in a higher retirement age;
- They created a new banking provision to stiffen penalties for financiers for stripping assets from banks at the public's expense, a common practice among oligarchs;
- And, they passed laws cutting wasteful gas subsidies and closing the space for corrupt middlemen that buy low, sell high and rip off the Ukrainian people. These laws will also enhance corporate efficiency, incentivize domestic production, and use \$400 million in increased revenue from state-owned gas companies to help care for the poor including some of the 1.7 million people driven from their homes by the conflict.

With U.S. support — including a \$1 billion loan guarantee last year and \$355 million in foreign assistance and technical advisors — the Ukrainian government is:

- helping insulate vulnerable Ukrainians from the impact of necessary economic reforms;
- improving energy efficiency in homes and factories with metering, consumer incentives and infrastructure improvement;
- building e-governance platforms to make procurement transparent and basic government services cleaner and publicly accessible;
- putting a newly trained force of beat cops on the streets of Kyiv who will protect, not shake down, the citizens;
- reforming the Prosecutor General's Office (PGO) — supported by U.S. law enforcement and criminal justice advisors — and helping energize law enforcement and just prosecutions;
- moving to bring economic activity out of the shadows;
- supporting new agriculture laws — with the help of USAID experts — to deregulate the sector and allow family farms to sell their produce in local, regional and wholesale markets; and
- helping those forced to flee Donetsk and Luhansk with USAID jobs and skills training programs in places like Kharkiv.

And there's more support on the way. The President's budget includes an FY16 request of \$513.5 million — almost six times more than our FY14 request — to build on these efforts.

To turn the page, Ukraine's hard work must continue. Between now and the summer, we must see budget discipline maintained and tax collection enforced across the country — notably including on some of Ukraine's richest citizens who have enjoyed impunity for too long. We need to see continued reforms at Naftogaz and across the energy sector; final passage of agriculture legislation;

full and impartial implementation of anti-corruption measures, including a commitment to break the oligarchic, kleptocratic culture have has decimated the country.

As I said in my last appearance before this committee, the most lasting antidote to Russian aggression and malign influence in the medium term is for Ukraine to succeed as a democratic, free market state and to beat back the corruption, dependence and external pressure that have thwarted Ukrainians' aspirations for decades. For this to happen, we must ensure that the government lives up to its promises to the Ukrainian people, and keeps the trust of the international financial community. And, at the same time, the United States, Europe and the international community must keep faith with Ukraine, and help insure that Russia's aggression and meddling can't crash Ukraine's spirit, its will or its economy before reforms take hold.

Which brings me to my second point — even as Ukraine is building a peaceful, democratic, independent nation across 93% of its territory, Crimea and parts of eastern Ukraine are suffering a reign of terror. Today Crimea remains under illegal occupation and human rights abuses are the norm, not the exception, for many at-risk groups there — Crimean Tatars, Ukrainians who won't surrender their passports, journalists, LGBT citizens and others.

In eastern Ukraine, Russia and its separatist puppets unleashed unspeakable violence and pillage. This manufactured conflict — controlled by the Kremlin; fueled by Russian tanks and heavy weapons; financed at Russian taxpayers' expense — has cost the lives of more than 6000 Ukrainians, but also of hundreds of young Russians sent to fight and die there by the Kremlin, in a war their government denies. When they come home in zinc coffins — “Cargo 200,” the Russian euphemism for war dead — their mothers, wives and children are told not to ask too many questions or raise a fuss if they want to see any death benefits.

Throughout this conflict, the United States and the EU have worked in lock-step to impose successive rounds of tough sanctions — including sectoral sanctions — on Russia and its separatist cronies as the costs for their actions. In Crimea, we have shown through our investment sanctions that if you bite off a piece of another country, it will dry up in your mouth. Our unity with Europe remains the cornerstone of our policy toward this crisis.

And it is in that spirit that we salute the efforts of German Chancellor Merkel and French President Hollande in Minsk on February 12th to try again to end the fighting in Ukraine's East. The Minsk Package of Agreements — September 5th, September 19th and the February 12th implementing agreement — offer a real opportunity for peace, disarmament, political normalization and decentralization in eastern Ukraine, and the return of Ukrainian state sovereignty and control of its territory and borders. Russia agreed to it; Ukraine agreed to it; the separatists agreed to it. And the international community stands behind it.

For some eastern Ukrainians, conditions have begun to improve. Along long areas of the line of contact, particularly in Luhansk Oblast, the cease-fire has taken hold; the guns have quieted in some towns and villages; some weapons have been withdrawn; some hostages have been released. But the picture is very mixed. Since the February 15th cease-fire, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission has recorded hundreds of violations. Debaltseve, a key rail hub beyond the cease-fire lines, fell to the separatists and Russian forces six days after Minsk was signed and three days after the cease-fire was to come into effect. In Shchastya, in villages near the Donetsk Airport, in Shyrokyne and other towns around Mariupol the shelling continues, as verified by OSCE Special Monitor Authority.

In the coming days, not weeks or months — here is what we need to see:

- A complete cease-fire in all parts of eastern Ukraine;
- Full, unfettered access to the whole conflict zone including all separatist-held territory, for OSCE monitors; and
- A full pull-back of all heavy weapons — Ukrainian, Russian and separatist — as stipulated in the agreements, under OSCE monitoring and verification.

If fully implemented, this will bring greater peace and security in eastern Ukraine for the first time in almost a year. And with it, Ukraine will once again have unfettered access to its own people in the East, and the opportunity for dialogue and political normalization with them. That's what Minsk promises. Peace, then political normalization, then a return of the border. But first, there must be peace.

Russia's commitments under the Minsk agreements are crystal clear and again the choice is Russia's. As the President has said, we'll judge Russia by its actions, not its words. The United States will start rolling back sanctions on Russia only when the Minsk agreements are fully implemented.

But the reverse is also true. We have already begun consultations with our European partners on further sanctions pressure should Russia continue fueling the fire in the east or other parts of Ukraine, fail to implement Minsk or grab more land as we saw in Debaltseve.

Mr. Chairman, members of this committee, America's investment in Ukraine is about far more than protecting the choice of a single European country. It's about protecting the rules-based system across Europe and globally. It's about saying "no" to borders changed by force, and to big countries intimidating their neighbors or demanding spheres of influence. It's about protecting our 25 year American investment in the prospect of a Europe whole, free and at peace and the example that sets for nations and people around the world who want more democratic, prosperous futures. I thank this committee for its bipartisan support and commitment.

2. Biden on Letter from Republican Senators to Iran (03-09-2015)

Statement by the Vice President on the March 9th Letter From Republican Senators to the Islamic Republic of Iran

I served in the United States Senate for thirty-six years. I believe deeply in its traditions, in its value as an institution, and in its indispensable constitutional role in the conduct of our foreign policy. The letter sent on March 9th by forty-seven Republican Senators to the Islamic Republic of Iran, expressly designed to undercut a sitting President in the midst of sensitive international negotiations, is beneath the dignity of an institution I revere.

This letter, in the guise of a constitutional lesson, ignores two centuries of precedent and threatens to undermine the ability of any future American President, whether Democrat or Republican, to negotiate with other nations on behalf of the United States. Honorable people can disagree over policy. But this is no way to make America safer or stronger.

Around the world, America's influence depends on its ability to honor its commitments. Some of these are made in international agreements approved by Congress. However, as the authors of this letter must know, the vast majority of our international commitments take effect without Congressional approval. And that will be the case should the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, China, and Germany reach an understanding with Iran. There are numerous similar cases. The recent U.S.-Russia framework to remove chemical weapons from Syria is only one

recent example. Arrangements such as these are often what provide the protections that U.S. troops around the world rely on every day. They allow for the basing of our forces in places like Afghanistan. They help us disrupt the proliferation by sea of weapons of mass destruction. They are essential tools to the conduct of our foreign policy, and they ensure the continuity that enables the United States to maintain our credibility and global leadership even as Presidents and Congresses come and go.

Since the beginning of the Republic, Presidents have addressed sensitive and high-profile matters in negotiations that culminate in commitments, both binding and non-binding, that Congress does not approve. Under Presidents of both parties, such major shifts in American foreign policy as diplomatic recognition of the People's Republic of China, the resolution of the Iran hostage crisis, and the conclusion of the Vietnam War were all conducted without Congressional approval. In thirty-six years in the United States Senate, I cannot recall another instance in which Senators wrote directly to advise another country—much less a longtime foreign adversary—that the President does not have the constitutional authority to reach a meaningful understanding with them. This letter sends a highly misleading signal to friend and foe alike that that our Commander-in-Chief cannot deliver on America's commitments—a message that is as false as it is dangerous. The decision to undercut our President and circumvent our constitutional system offends me as a matter of principle. As a matter of policy, the letter and its authors have also offered no viable alternative to the diplomatic resolution with Iran that their letter seeks to undermine.

There is no perfect solution to the threat posed by Iran's nuclear program. However, a diplomatic solution that puts significant and verifiable constraints on Iran's nuclear program represents the best, most sustainable chance to ensure that America, Israel, and the world will never be menaced by a nuclear-armed Iran. This letter is designed to convince Iran's leaders not to reach such an understanding with the United States.

The author of this letter has been explicit that he is seeking to take any action that will end President Obama's diplomatic negotiations with Iran. But to what end? If talks collapse because of Congressional intervention, the United States will be blamed, leaving us with the worst of all worlds. Iran's nuclear program, currently frozen, would race forward again. We would lack the international unity necessary just to enforce existing sanctions, let alone put in place new ones. Without diplomacy or increased pressure, the need to resort to military force becomes much more likely—at a time when our forces are already engaged in the fight against ISIL.

The President has committed to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. He has made clear that no deal is preferable to a bad deal that fails to achieve this objective, and he has made clear that all options remain on the table. The current negotiations offer the best prospect in many years to address the serious threat posed by Iran's nuclear ambitions. It would be a dangerous mistake to scuttle a peaceful resolution, especially while diplomacy is still underway.

3. Ambassador Power on Adoption of U.N. Resolution on Syria (03-06-2015)

We adopt this resolution today a year and a half after this Council adopted a binding resolution in the wake of a horrific, gruesome chemical weapons attack that left more than a thousand civilians and hundreds of children killed. Resolution 2118 required the Syrian regime to dismantle and destroy its chemical weapons program under international supervision. The UN-OPCW Joint Mission, with the assistance of numerous Member States, largely succeeded in this task. Yet significant discrepancies remain with Syria's declaration to the OPCW, and the Assad regime must cooperate, as per its obligations in resolution 2118, to resolve these.

Despite having acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Assad regime has again demonstrated its brutality by turning to chlorine as another barbaric weapon in its arsenal against the Syrian people. Today, this Council makes crystal clear that the use of chlorine as a chemical weapon is no less an evil than the use of any other chemical as a weapon. The Syrian regime's use of any toxic chemical as a weapon is prohibited by the Chemical Weapons Convention and constitutes a violation of resolution 2118.

The OPCW's Fact Finding Mission was not mandated to assign culpability for these chlorine attacks. It was not mandated to do so. Yet a couple of Council members are suggesting that the absence of finger-pointing, explicitly, is a form of absolution. Let's look instead at what the report actually said. The Fact Finding Mission concluded with high confidence that there is, "compelling confirmation that a toxic chemical was used as a weapon, systematically and repeatedly," in Syria between April and August of 2014.

Further, the third Fact Finding Mission report lists thirty-two witnesses who saw or heard the sound of helicopters over three opposition held villages — Talmenes, Al Tamanah, and Kafr Zita in northwest Syria — at the time of the attacks; the vast majority of interviewees either heard or saw barrel bombs falling. Twenty-six witnesses saw a yellow cloud or dust released from those barrel bombs upon impact, and twenty-nine smelled a chlorine odor. All of us, of course, know the smell of chlorine.

So, let's ask ourselves who has helicopters in Syria? Certainly not the opposition. Only the regime does and we have seen them use their helicopters in countless other attacks on innocent Syrians using barrel bombs.

In resolution 2118, this Council determined that, "the use of chemical weapons anywhere constitutes a threat to international peace and security." And today we have reaffirmed that any use of a chemical as a weapon — be it sarin or chlorine — is prohibited by this Security Council. As we approach the centenary of the first use of chemical weapons on a large scale at the Battle of Ypres, this Council must continue to uphold the standards and norms against chemical weapons use, and we must work individually and collectively to hold those responsible for such use accountable.

4. Amb. Power at U.N. Security Council Debate on Ukraine (03-06-2015)

We continue to believe that compliance with the September Minsk Agreements and the February Implementation Package provides a roadmap to peace in Ukraine.

For the first time since the Minsk Implementation Package was signed on February 12th, we have seen a reduction in violence. Of course no one forgets that Russia and the separatists they trained, armed, directed, and fought alongside, started violating their commitments in the Package from the first minutes and hours after the deal was signed – by laying siege to Debaltseve, a city dozens of kilometers beyond the contact line, with their deadly and indiscriminate pummeling. Violations started on day one, and violations of the ceasefire continue in a number of places, particularly outside Mariupol, where Russian-backed separatists have engaged in intense fighting attacking the village of Shirokyne in recent days.

Unfortunately, although the violence has decreased, there has been only partial compliance with the Minsk Implementation Package. As members of this Council know, the package calls for, "an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire," not a gradual and partial reduction in fire. It does not say that Russian-backed separatists can continue to shell, engage in sniper fire, or use barrel and rocket artillery – yet they have carried out all of these attacks in recent days. Since, February 20th, Russian

separatist attacks like these have killed 15 Ukrainian military personnel and wounded nearly one hundred more.

A second condition in the Minsk Implementation Package is full, unfettered access for OSCE monitors to the entire conflict zone. While there have been occasional instances when the SMM has been stopped at Ukrainian checkpoints, the restrictions on the SMM by Russia and the separatists are documented as widespread.

Just as Russia and Russian-backed separatists prevented the SMM from going to Debaltseve while these forces carried out their vicious attack, recent SMM reports chronicle repeated, persistent obstruction by Russian-backed separatists, obstructions that include even threatening to kill OSCE monitors.

To date, the separatists have granted OSCE monitors sporadic access limited to certain roads, when and where it suits them. As we have asked before, it bears asking again: Who obstructs an objective observer other than someone who has something to hide from an unbiased eye?

The Minsk Implementation Package also calls for the full pullback of all heavy weapons. That, too, has not happened. Shortly after the package was signed, the OSCE's Chief Monitor sent a letter to all of the signatories requesting that they provide information on what heavy weapons were present in eastern Ukraine, where they are, which routes will be used to withdraw them, and where they will be located after being withdrawn. Russia has not replied, as though by pretending it has no heavy weapons in Ukraine, we will forget all of the tanks, Grad missiles, and other heavy weapons we watched Russia send across the border.

All signatories to the Minsk Agreements and the Implementation Package – Ukraine on the one side, and Russia, and the so-called “DPR” and “LPR” on the other – are responsible for pulling back heavy weapons. The OSCE must have unfettered, unconditional access to verify the withdrawal.

Two days ago, Russia sent its 17th so-called humanitarian convoy into Ukraine, once again denying international observers and Ukrainian border guards the right to conduct a full and complete inspection of its contents. Russian convoys that should be coming out of Ukraine are instead going in. If these convoys are carrying humanitarian assistance, why not allow a full inspection? Colleagues, the ceasefire, weapons pullback, and OSCE verification – none of which are complete – are all among just the immediate steps in the Implementation Package. Further, all of the Minsk Agreements to date have called for the release of all hostages by all sides. Nadiya Savchenko and other Ukrainians being held in Russia are hostages, just as surely as those being kept in basements in Donetsk and Luhansk. Again, we call on Russia to release Nadiya Savchenko, who has been on hunger strike for over 80 days, and her Ukrainian counterparts. This is something Russia can do today.

As we've seen before, the separatists have an established track record of using a lull in the fighting to regroup, rearm, and resupply. Russia supports this process by providing an unlimited supply of guns and weaponry. The United States and the rest of the world hopes that that is not the case this time. We are carefully watching what happens in Shyrokyne, a town just east of the strategic port city of Mariupol, which many fear will be the next target of the separatists and Russian military. The devastating consequences of this conflict are brought into sharp relief by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' most recent report. More than 1.7 million people displaced. More than 5,800 people killed – a casualty count that does not include the hundreds of bodies found once Russian-backed separatists finished their deadly siege of Debaltseve.

An OCHA report from the end of last month said that 500 bodies had been found in houses and basements at the end of the siege – 500 bodies. Homes and basements where people took shelter from the endless barrage of Russian-made mortars and rockets as they rained down on the city’s residents – residents who could not escape. Weeks into the siege, at the end of January, the self-declared leader of the Russian-backed separatists had announced, “Anybody who leaves... will be in the interlocking field of fire of our artillery. From today, the road is under fire.” And so those inside were left with a choice: risk your life by staying, or risk your life by leaving. Civilians were killed doing both, and again, 500 hundred bodies found in homes and basements where people took shelter.

And the casualties and the displaced are one of the devastating consequences of this conflict. Another – and one we rarely speak about in this Council anymore – is the ongoing illegal occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea by a permanent member of this Council. Crimea is important not only because it constitutes the continuing violation of the territorial integrity of a sovereign nation – a violation orchestrated in Moscow, and dressed up in a sham referendum – but also because it offers a preview of the kind of rule that we can expect in the other parts of Ukraine seized by those who see themselves as part of Novorossiia.

Let me give just one example of what it’s like to live in that world, from the long list of repressive practices documented in the UN’s February human rights report – part of the relentless persecution of the Crimean Muslim Tatar minority. According to the report, on January 29th, 2015, the de facto authorities arrested Akhtem Chiigoz, the Deputy Chairman of the Tatar Mejlis, the Tatars’ representative council. He was charged under the Russian criminal code with having participated in a “mass disturbance,” for protesting against what was then the imminent Russian occupation, which ended in a clash with pro-Russian demonstrators. On February 7th, another Crimean Tatar was detained on the same charges.

Both men are charged with violating Russian law – even though Russian law had not even taken effect at the time that they participated in the protest. Yesterday the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media released a statement saying that media freedom in Crimea was at an all-time low.

Among other violations, she reported that, “Journalists from at least thirteen independent media outlets, freelance journalists, and bloggers have been threatened, assaulted, physically attacked, banned from entry, interrogated, and kidnapped; their equipment confiscated or damaged.” So, occupy territory, unilaterally attempt to annex it, and then retroactively and arbitrarily apply your laws to those who dared to question your takeover as it was occurring. It does not get much more Orwellian than that. And as anyone who has read the human rights report knows, this is just one in a long list of repressive tactics – including torture, enforced disappearances, and targeted political killings – that have defined Russia’s occupation.

It is to avoid an Orwellian world like this – where we talk of peace while undermining it – that we must ensure that Minsk is implemented. The Council members around this table must confront the situation on the ground as it exists rather than as we wish it were. Peace will not come from more words – and there have been so many words in this Chamber. It will come from the long-awaited and faithful implementation of the many agreements that have been entered into, and renewed respect for the territorial integrity of a Member State of the United Nations.

5. Kerry on 45th Anniversary of Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (03-05-2015)

John Kerry, Secretary of State, Washington, DC

Statement on the 45th Anniversary of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

All countries share responsibility to confront nuclear proliferation. All countries benefit if nuclear weapons do not spread to additional countries. All countries also profit when there is smart, continuous action in the direction of nuclear disarmament. And all countries gain from cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

That is why the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has served the international community well for the past 45 years.

Simply put, it is the bedrock foundation for nuclear nonproliferation, disarmament, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. They include the areas of human health, food and agriculture, water resource management, and the environment.

There are many reasons for the success of the NPT, which entered into force on March 5, 1970.

The international consensus against the spread of nuclear weapons, embodied in the spirit and text of the Treaty, is strong and continues to be upheld. Overwhelming numbers of states have refrained from pursuing nuclear weapons and accept International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards as the standard for verification and peaceful nuclear trade. Several states that abandoned nuclear weapons efforts might have come to a different conclusion in the absence of a robust and widely supported NPT.

Today, as we mark this anniversary, we especially celebrate that more states are party to the NPT than to any other arms control or nonproliferation agreement. But there is more work to do, and we must recommit ourselves to this task.

NPT Parties share a responsibility to reinforce the global nuclear nonproliferation regime, in particular to overcome the challenges posed by a few countries that have violated their international nonproliferation obligations. This should be a concern of all states, as it is the future integrity of the nonproliferation regime that is at stake.

Our common security would be profoundly affected if additional countries crossed the nuclear threshold.

That is why President Obama and I have committed so much time and attention to seeking an agreement that will ensure Iran's nuclear program is peaceful, and that it will formally commit to it in perpetuity as a signatory to the NPT, and through a science-based, verifiable agreement with the P5+1 member nations and their partners.

We are also working with the international community to achieve the DPRK's complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization, and its return to the NPT and IAEA safeguards.

The United States is fully committed to continuing to fulfill its own Treaty obligations, as well as to strengthening the global nuclear nonproliferation regime.

Under the New START Treaty, we are reducing our deployed nuclear weapons to levels not seen since the 1950s, and we are prepared to negotiate further reductions. Through bilateral agreements

and through the IAEA, we also continue to advance peaceful nuclear cooperation with other NPT Parties. We also are proud of our record as the leading contributor of funds to assist such global development.

The Ninth Review Conference of the NPT will open in New York on April 27. The United States has been working diligently to implement the items in the Action Plan adopted at the 2010 Review Conference, and we seek to strengthen that Plan.

We look forward to working with all NPT Parties to achieve a constructive outcome of the conference.

Related Statements:

[Obama on 45th Anniversary of Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty](#)

6. [Military Airstrikes Continue Against ISIL in Syria, Iraq \(03-05-2015\)](#)

From a Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve News Release

U.S. and coalition military forces have continued to attack Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant terrorists in Syria and Iraq, Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve officials reported today.

Officials reported details of the latest strikes, which took place between 8 a.m. yesterday and 8 a.m. today, local time, noting that assessments of results are based on initial reports.

Airstrikes in Syria

Attack, fighter and bomber aircraft conducted seven airstrikes in Syria:

- Near Hasakah, an airstrike struck an ISIL tactical unit and destroyed an ISIL fighting position.
- Near Kobani, four airstrikes destroyed 11 ISIL fighting positions and an ISIL vehicle-borne improvised explosive device.
- Near Tal Hamis, two airstrikes struck two ISIL fighting positions and destroyed an ISIL staging area and an ISIL fighting position.

Airstrikes in Iraq

Attack, fighter and remotely piloted aircraft conducted five airstrikes in Iraq:

- Near Asad, an airstrike struck an ISIL tactical unit and destroyed an ISIL fighting position.
- Near Fallujah, two airstrikes destroyed an ISIL armored vehicle, an ISIL artillery piece and an ISIL vehicle.
- Near Haditha, an airstrike was conducted to help support friendly forces movement.
- Near Mosul, an airstrike struck an ISIL tactical unit.

Part of Operation Inherent Resolve

The strikes were conducted as part of Operation Inherent Resolve, the operation to eliminate the ISIL terrorist group and the threat they pose to Iraq, Syria, the region, and the wider international community. The destruction of ISIL targets in Syria and Iraq further limits the terrorist group's ability to project terror and conduct operations, officials said.

Coalition nations conducting airstrikes in Iraq include the United States, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Coalition nations conducting airstrikes in Syria include the United States, Bahrain, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.
