

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY UPDATE
May 6 - 12, 2015

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1. [Military Airstrikes Hit ISIL in Syria, Iraq \(05-11-2015\)](#)

From a Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve News Release

SOUTHWEST ASIA, May 11, 2015 – 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 remotely piloted aircraft conducted nine airstrikes in Syria:

- Near Hasakah, six airstrikes struck one large and one small ISIL tactical unit, destroying three ISIL fighting positions, three ISIL vehicles, two ISIL mortar positions, four ISIL heavy machine guns and an ISIL supply point.
- Near Raqqah, one airstrike destroyed two ISIL vehicles.
- Near Kobani, two airstrikes struck an ISIL tactical unit, destroying an ISIL mortar position and an ISIL vehicle.

Airstrikes in Iraq

Attack, bomber, fighter and remotely piloted aircraft conducted nine airstrikes in Iraq, approved by the Iraqi Ministry of Defense:

- Near Beiji, two airstrikes struck two ISIL tactical units, destroying an ISIL vehicle.
- Near Fallujah, two airstrikes struck two ISIL tactical units, destroying four ISIL fighting positions and an ISIL vehicle.
- Near Haditha, one airstrike struck an ISIL tactical unit, destroying two ISIL fighting positions.
- Near Mosul, two airstrikes struck an ISIL fighting position and struck land features denying ISIL a tactical advantage.
- Near Ramadi, one airstrike struck an ISIL tactical unit, destroying an ISIL fighting position.
- Near Sinjar, one airstrike struck an ISIL large tactical unit, destroying four ISIL buildings and three ISIL heavy machine guns.

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.

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

Related Sites:

[Special Report: Operation Inherent Resolve - Targeted Operations Against ISIL Terrorists](#)

Related Articles:

[Airstrikes Hit ISIL Terrorists in Iraq](#)

2. Nepal Earthquake Relief Effort Named 'Operation Sahayogi Haat' (05-10-2015)

From a Joint Task Force 505 News Release

KATHMANDU, Nepal, May 10, 2015 – U.S. military earthquake relief efforts in Nepal led by Joint Task Force 505 have been named “Operation Sahayogi Haat,” which means “Helping Hand” in Nepali, by U.S. Pacific Command based out of Camp H.M. Smith, Hawaii.

JTF 505 has been working with the government of Nepal in support of joint humanitarian disaster relief operations to limit further loss of life and human suffering in response to the devastating magnitude-7.8 magnitude earthquake that struck central Nepal on April 25.

Supporting Disaster Relief Operations

The task force has been supporting ongoing disaster relief operations with a U.S. Air Force Contingency Response Group, three Marine Corps UH-1Y Huey helicopters, four Marine Corps MV-22B Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft, four Air Force C-17 Globemaster aircraft and two Marine Corps KC-130J Hercules aircraft, as well as various ground and aviation command and control capabilities since May 4.

To date, JTF 505 in tandem with the U.S. Agency for International Development has delivered approximately 49.9 tons of relief supplies, transported 273 personnel and has conducted more than 68.9 hours of flight time throughout affected areas of Nepal.

JTF 505 Forward consists of approximately 300 U.S. military personnel on the ground in Nepal currently supporting the multinational relief efforts.

JTF 505 Main in Okinawa, Japan, and an Intermediate Staging Base in Thailand consist of approximately 590 U.S. military personnel.

Related Articles:

[Joint Personnel, U.S. Marines Fly Critical Supplies to Nepal Earthquake Survivors](#)
[Pacific Command Aids Earthquake Recovery Efforts in Nepal](#)
[Joint Task Force Activates for Nepal Earthquake Relief](#)

Related Sites:

[U.S. State Department Fact Sheet: Nepal](#)
[Marine Corps Forces Pacific](#)
[3rd Marine Expeditionary Force](#)
[Nepal Earthquake Relief Video and Imagery](#)

3. Obama Salutes 'Greatest Generation' on V-E Day Anniversary (05-08-2015)

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, May 8, 2015 – “The world rejoiced in the hope of peace” upon the Allies’ acceptance of the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany’s armed forces during World War II, President Barack Obama said today, marking the 70th anniversary of the victory in Europe during his weekly address.

“On V-E Day, after the Nazi surrender, people swarmed the streets of London and Paris and Moscow, and the cloud of fear that had hung for so many years finally lifted,” Obama said in his address. “Here at home, from small towns to Times Square, crowds gathered in celebration, singing and dancing with joy.

“There would still be three more months of deadly fighting in the Pacific,” he continued. “But for a few hours, the world rejoiced in the hope of peace.”

Army Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower announced Germany’s surrender with little fanfare, noting simply that the Allies’ mission in Europe was fulfilled, the president said.

But Eisenhower's message "belied the extraordinary nature of the Allied victory -- and the staggering human loss," Obama said. "For over five years, brutal fighting laid waste to an entire continent. Mothers, fathers, children were murdered in concentration camps. By the time the guns fell silent in Europe, some 40 million people on the continent had lost their lives."

Paying Tribute 'to All Who Served'

Today on V-E Day, "we pay tribute to all who served," the president said.

"They were patriots, like my grandfather who served in Patton's Army -- soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, Coast Guard, Merchant Marines -- and the women of the WACs and the WAVES and every branch," Obama said. "They risked their lives, and gave their lives so that we, the people the world over, could live free."

Those who served to secure Allied victory during World War II, the president said, also included the "women who stepped up in unprecedented numbers, manning the home front, and -- like my grandmother -- building bombers on assembly lines."

The 'Greatest Generation'

This was the generation, he said, "that literally saved the world -- that ended the war and laid a foundation for peace. This was the generation that traded in their uniforms for a college education so they could marry their sweethearts, buy homes, raise children and build the strongest middle class the world has ever known.

"This was the generation," the president continued, "that included heroes like the Tuskegee Airmen, the Navajo Code Talkers and the Japanese-Americans of the 442nd Regiment -- and who continued the fight for freedom here at home, expanding equality and opportunity and justice for minorities and women."

Rededicate to Freedoms

The nation and world "will be forever grateful for what these remarkable men and women did, for the selfless grace they showed in one of our darkest hours," Obama said. "But as we mark this 70th anniversary, let's not simply commemorate history. Let's rededicate ourselves to the freedoms for which they fought."

It's important for Americans to "make sure that we keep striving to fulfill our founding ideals -- that we're a country where no matter who we are or where we're from or what we look like or who we love, if we work hard and take responsibility, every American will have the opportunity to make of our lives what we will," the president said.

He added, "Let's stand united with our allies, in Europe and beyond, on behalf of our common values -- freedom, security, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law around the world -- and against bigotry and hatred in all their forms so that we give meaning to that pledge: "Never forget. Never again."

(Editors note: Although May 8, 1945, marked Germany's exit from the war, the Japanese Empire would continue to fight on until its surrender in mid-August and the formal signing of the surrender documents Sept. 2, 1945.)

Related Sites:

[President's Weekly Address: Honoring the 70th Anniversary of V-E Day](#)
[Special Report: V-E Day Victory in Europe – 70th Anniversary](#)

Related Articles:

[Nation Honors WWII Vets on V-E Day Anniversary](#)
[Kerry on Europe Day](#)
[Kerry on 70th Anniversary of V-E Day](#)
[Amb. Baer at OSCE on 70th Anniversary of End of World War II](#)

4. Carter: Combat Training Begins for New Syrian Forces (05-07-2015)

By Cheryl Pellerin
DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, May 7, 2015 – Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced today that combat training has begun for nearly 90 fighters from the new Syrian forces and that a second group will begin training in the next few weeks.

Carter spoke alongside Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey during a briefing to the Pentagon press corps here.

“The program is a critical and complex part of our counter-ISIL efforts,” Carter said, referring to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

The training for what the secretary called “highly vetted individuals” is led by very experienced trainers and taking place in a secure location, he said.

New Syrian Forces

Carter said the trainees have been in the program for quite a while, having gone through a process of being recruited and vetted.

“The training takes some time,” he added, “and then they would be inserted into operations, and the trainees coming in behind them. ... We hope this to be an ever-expanding program once it proves itself, which I think it will.”

The trainees are being trained and equipped specifically to fight ISIL, the secretary said.

“That is the purpose, and that is the basis upon which they're being vetted and trained,” Carter said, adding that it's not a goal of the U.S. program to have the new Syrian forces engage the forces of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

Engaging ISIL

The trainees are being fielded to engage ISIL, he said. “That will be their principal mission and that's one of the bases on which they would join our program in the first place.”

If Assad's forces undertook to engage the new Syrian forces being trained, the Defense Department "would have some responsibility toward them," the secretary said, but the extent of such responsibility and the rules of engagement have not yet been decided.

Carter said that along with the training, those who participate will receive compensation and small arms.

"We're figuring out what the best training is and what the best initial deployment is," the secretary added. "We expect that to be successful and therefore to grow, but you have to start somewhere, and this is where we're starting."

Growing the Program

Dempsey noted the program will be grown in a measured way.

"This ... program is very complex," the chairman added. "It won't be easy, but I'd emphasize that it's one part, one component, of a much broader approach."

The stability of the Assad regime could be a consideration as the training program proceeds, and Dempsey agreed that a destabilized regime would pose new challenges.

"Two years ago, Assad was at a point where we thought he was at a disadvantage and that the opposition was on the rise, and then that situation reversed itself for a period of time," Dempsey explained, "so we've been through the intellectual rigor of what this might mean."

Counter-ISIL Strategy

For Syria it might mean further instability if power were to transfer precipitously, the chairman said, and it could worsen the humanitarian crisis.

"For us and our counter-ISIL strategy, it wouldn't change the dynamic -- meaning that we still have the fundamental challenge of finding moderate Syrian opposition men to train to be a stabilizing influence over time," Dempsey said.

"On the side of our diplomacy and our diplomats, there's the issue of finding moderate Syrian opposition to establish a political structure to which the military force we're building can be responsive," he added.

The challenges wouldn't change for the Defense Department, he said, but it would make the situation for Syria more complicated.

Dempsey added, "I do think that the Assad regime's momentum has been slowed, and ... I do believe the situation is trending less favorably for the regime. And if I were him, I would find the opportunity to look to the negotiating table."

Biographies:

[Ash Carter](#)

[Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey](#)

5. Amb. Baer on Russia's Ongoing Violations, Defiance in Ukraine (05-07-2015)

Ongoing Violations of International Law and Defiance of OSCE Principles and Commitments by the Russian Federation in Ukraine

By Ambassador Daniel B. Baer to the Permanent Council, Vienna

Last week, we expressed concern over the escalating violence the Special Monitoring Mission observed in the areas around Shyrokyne and Donetsk. Since then, pro-Russian separatist attacks and violence have escalated, the security situation has deteriorated further, and the SMM has suspended patrols in several areas around Donetsk City.

As we have said before, separatist forces effectively function as an extension of Russian military power.

SMM reports clearly demonstrate that Russia-backed separatists continue to launch attacks beyond the ceasefire line and use heavy artillery that should have been withdrawn in accordance with the February 12 Minsk Package of Measures. On May 2, one of the SMM's armored vehicles was hit by small arms fire on its way to Shyrokyne. The same day, in Pisky, mortar shells impacted 100 meters from the SMM's location. On another occasion, SMM monitors had to take cover in an underground shelter due to shelling. These incidents illustrate the threat to the safety of SMM personnel, and demonstrate the continued failure of Russia and the Russia-backed separatists to implement the Minsk agreements.

We applaud the SMM's efforts to monitor hotspots, broker ceasefires, propose disengagement plans, and foster dialogue while working under extremely challenging circumstances. We appreciate Deputy Chief Monitor Hug's May 5 briefing to participating States on the measures the SMM is taking to protect monitors and mitigate risks. The safety of the monitors must remain paramount.

During his briefing, Deputy Chief Monitor Hug stated that, despite the terms of the Minsk Memorandum and Protocol, the SMM still has no direct access to monitor the border areas within the separatist-controlled territory in Luhansk. SMM reports show that Russia-backed separatists have consistently failed to provide the SMM with the security guarantees it needs to fully access separatist-controlled territory. At every occasion, SMM officials have voiced their readiness to verify the implementation of the Minsk agreements, yet Russia-backed separatists continue to keep the monitors away from the areas they most need to access.

As it obstructs Ukraine's full control of the entire international border and the SMM's ability to monitor this area, Russia has been moving military equipment and personnel across Ukraine's border at will and without inspection.

It is dismaying to hear Russia thank the SMM for its work here in the Permanent Council or call for the implementation of the Minsk agreements, while thwarting the monitors' efforts on the ground in Ukraine and flouting its Minsk commitments.

Russia's blatant disregard for the Minsk agreements and OSCE principles and commitments does not stop there. Russians and the separatists are working together, training together, and operating with the same command and control systems. Combined Russian-separatist forces maintain a sizeable number of artillery pieces and multiple rocket launchers within areas prohibited under Minsk. Russia is building up its forces along its border with Ukraine. Russia also continues to send convoys into Ukraine in contravention of international law and without full and proper inspection by Ukraine or any international organization that might reveal the true contents of what Russia says

is humanitarian aid. Russia and the separatists it backs have yet to give ODIHR the security guarantees it needs to carry out work critical to the preparations for local elections in the special status zone. These actions remind us that the Minsk agreements remain unimplemented. Even more worrisome is that these carefully-forged peace initiatives are undermined by Russia and the Russia-backed separatists, that is to say, by several of Minsk's own signatories.

We welcome the news of the May 6 meetings in Minsk of the Trilateral Contact Group and the four working groups. We urge the working groups to begin meaningful efforts to implement the steps called for in the Minsk agreements. There must be more than talk: there must be action on the ground.

The Minsk agreements remain the best opportunity to achieve peace in eastern Ukraine, but they will not succeed if the signatories do not honor their commitments. We once again call on Russia, and the separatists it backs and controls, to immediately stop their attacks, enforce the ceasefire, withdraw heavy weapons in a verifiable manner, halt the flow of fighters and equipment from Russia into Ukraine, and end the training of separatists.

We call on Russia to cease its efforts to destabilize Ukraine and to respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We demand that Russia end its occupation of Crimea, which remains an integral part of Ukraine.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Related Articles:

[Amb. Baer at OSCE on Ukrainian Hostages Held by Russia](#)

6. Facts on New U.S. Humanitarian Aid for Yemen (05-06-2015)

United States Announces \$68 Million in Humanitarian Assistance to Yemen

Today in Djibouti, Secretary Kerry announced the United States is providing more than \$68 million to help humanitarian organizations meet the needs of nearly 16 million people in need of assistance in Yemen, including 300,000 newly internally displaced persons. The funds will support the activities of the World Food Program, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the UN Children's Fund, and other organizations, providing food, water, shelter, medical care, protection, and other assistance. With this announcement, U.S. funding for humanitarian assistance for Yemen in Fiscal Years 2014 and 2015 now totals more than \$188 million.

For further information, please contact Public Affairs Advisor Dan Langenkamp, State Department Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, at langenkampdb@state.gov, PRMpress@state.gov or (202) 453-9339, or visit <http://www.usaid.gov/crisis/yemen>.

7. Carter Urges Senators to Support Stable Defense Budget (05-06-2015)

By Cheryl Pellerin
DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, May 6, 2015 – Slashed budgets and high worldwide demand for U.S. military forces have created an unbalanced defense program that is taking on increasingly greater risks, Defense Secretary Ash Carter told a Senate panel this morning.

The secretary testified before the Senate Appropriations Committee's defense subcommittee on the Defense Department's fiscal year 2016 budget request. Joining him was Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

"Over the past three fiscal years the Defense Department has taken more than three-quarters of a trillion dollars in cuts to its future-years defense spending," Carter said.

The frequently sudden and unpredictable timing and nature of the cuts and continued uncertainty over sequestration have made the stresses greater, he added, forcing DoD to make a series of incremental, inefficient decisions.

A Tumultuous World

"Even as budgets have dropped precipitously, our forces have been responding to unexpectedly high demand from a tumultuous world," the secretary said.

Carter said he believes the result is an unbalanced defense program.

"We've been forced to prioritize force structure and readiness over modernization, taking on risks in capabilities and infrastructure that are far too great," he added.

"High demands on smaller force structure mean the equipment and capabilities of too many components of the military are growing too old, too fast -- from our nuclear deterrent to our tactical forces," Carter told the panel.

A Road to Nowhere

The secretary said that in recent weeks some in Congress have tried to give DoD its full fiscal year 2016 budget request by transferring funds from the base budget into DoD accounts for overseas contingency operations, or OCO -- funds that are meant to fund the incremental, temporary costs of overseas conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere.

"While this approach clearly recognizes that the budget total we've requested is needed, the avenue it takes is just as clearly a road to nowhere," Carter said, explaining that President Barack Obama has said he won't accept a budget that locks in sequestration going forward, as this approach does.

"And he won't accept a budget that severs the link between our national security and economic security," the secretary added, "so legislation that implements this budget framework will ... be subject to veto."

If the Defense Department and Congress don't find a different path by fall when a budget is needed, Carter said, the department will again have to make hasty and drastic decisions.

'Holding the Bag'

"The Joint Chiefs and I are concerned that if our congressional committees continue to advance this idea and don't explore alternatives we'll all be left holding the bag," Carter said, adding that the OCO approach does nothing to reduce the deficit.

"Most importantly," he added, "because it doesn't provide a stable multi-year budget horizon, this one-year approach is managerially unsound and unfairly dispiriting to our force. Our military

personnel and their families deserve to know their future more than just one year at a time -- and not just them.”

Defense industry partners also need stability and longer-term plans to be efficient and cutting-edge, Carter said, “and ... as a nation we need to base our defense budgeting on a long-term military strategy, and that’s not a one-year project.”

Such a funding approach reflects a narrow way of looking at national security, the secretary said.

Ignoring Vital Contributions

Year-to-year funding “ignores the vital contributions made by the State Department, the Justice Department, the Treasury Department and the Homeland Security Department,” he said.

And it disregards the enduring long-term connection between the nation’s security and factors like supporting the U.S. technological edge with scientific research and development, educating a future all-volunteer military force, and bolstering the general economic strength of the nation, Carter said.

“Finally, the secretary added, “I’m also concerned that how we deal with the budget is being watched by the rest of the world — by our friends and potential foes alike. It could give a misleadingly diminished picture of America’s great strength and resolve.”

A Better Solution

To create a better solution than the one now being considered, he said, “I hope we can come together for a longer-term, multi-year agreement that provides the budget stability we need by locking in defense and nondefense budget levels consistent with the president’s request.”

Carter pledged his personal support and that of the department to this effort, and, he told the panel, “I would like to work with each of you, as well as other leaders and members of Congress, to this end.”

Biographies:

[Ash Carter](#)

Related Articles:

[Dempsey: U.S. Aspirations Exceeding DoD’s Resources](#)

Related Sites:

[Submitted Statement -- Budget Request](#)

[Special Report: FY 2016 Budget Proposal](#)
