

Syria & Iraq: October 2014

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Foreword

I have posted an [annotated list](#) of my previous eleven essays on Syria. That webpage also includes links to historical documents on the Syrian civil war and a table of dates of removals of chemical weapons from Syria.

When I was a full-time student in universities during 1967-77, I learned not to write documents full of facts, without also explaining the significance of those facts and drawing conclusions from those facts. So, I include my opinions in this essay, to show the reader omissions, inconsistencies, propaganda, and other defects in the conventional wisdom or in journalists' reports. In science and engineering, we keep our opinions separate from facts, and in that spirit I label most of my opinions and my comments.

Copyright law allows an author to make brief quotations for purposes of scholarship, news reporting, or comment, but *not* to copy an entire article. (17 U.S.C. §107) That is why I do not quote most of an article by a news agency or newspaper. However, there is no copyright on works of the U.S. Government (17 U.S.C. §105), so an author is free to copy as much of a Government's work as the author wishes.

I am [aware](#) of "link rot" — the failure of links owing to a webmaster who either (1) moved old webpages to a new location, or (2) deleted old webpages. Such actions by webmasters frustrate users of the Internet, who depend on stable links. In writing this essay, I often cite multiple news sources, in the hope that at least one of those links will still function in the future. Link rot is a problem created by webmasters, and the solution to this problem lies with those webmasters.

I use Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) for events in Europe and Syria. Eastern Standard Time in Boston is -5 hours from GMT. Beginning 9 March, the USA was on Daylight Savings Time, Eastern Daylight Time in Boston is -4 hours from GMT. Beginning 30 March, England was on British Summer Time (BST), which is +1 hour from GMT. Iraq is *not* on Daylight Savings Time, so this summer Beirut and Baghdad have the same time, +3 hours from GMT.

Every day, I checked the websites of [All Iraq News](#), [The Daily Star](#) in Lebanon, the U.S. Central Command, and the Associated Press for news to summarize in this essay. When I found significant news, I attempted to find and cite the original source.

Spelling of Abadi's Name

On 11 August, a prime minister was nominated in Iraq. His last name is spelt in English: Abadi, Ebadi, or Ibadi.

1. The BBC, *The Washington Post*, the Associated Press, Reuters, *Rudaw* in Kurdistan, and the [White House](#) all spell his name with an A. On 10 Sep, Abadi took over the prime minister's website from Maliki, and there Abadi spells his name with an A,

which ends any dispute.

2. *All Iraq News*, *Iraqi News*, and *Al-Jazeera* spell his name with an *E*.
3. *Arab News* spells his name with an *I*.

Terse Summary of Syria Fighters

It is helpful to understanding the Syrian civil war to divide the opposition fighters into three groups of people:

1. The so-called "rebels" are moderates, many of whom are part of the Free Syrian Army.
2. The "jihadists" want to impose an Islamic government on Syria. The Islamic Front is the largest group of jihadists.
3. And two Al-Qaeda affiliated groups fighting in Syria: (a) the Nusra Front and (b) the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) — also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). On 3 Feb 2014, Al-Qaeda repudiated ISIL, but ISIL remains Al-Qaeda inspired.

On 29 June 2014, ISIL changed its name to "Islamic State", when it declared a caliphate. I continue to use the old name ISIL, for consistency with my previous essays. Moreover, using the term "Islamic State" appears to give legitimacy to their so-called "State", which is only a band of terrorists.

The USA and Western Europe would prefer that the rebels win, although military aid to the rebels has been withheld because of fears that donated weapons and munitions would eventually be acquired by either the jihadists or Al-Qaeda. The rebels are frequently described by two words: "fragmented" and "disorganized". Beginning in September 2013, the rebels are also frequently characterized as "disillusioned". Since October 2013, many smaller rebel groups have been leaving the Free Syrian Army and joining the jihadists.

While I use the words rebels, jihadists, and Al-Qaeda to indicate three different opposition groups, journalists routinely use the word "rebels" to refer to the entire opposition, or any part of the opposition. Thus, there is different word usage between my text and quotations from journalists. Worse, journalists commonly refer to the opposition as "rebels", "militants", or "extremists", without mentioning the name of the group. With the exception of the Free Syrian Army, *all* of the insurgents in Syria are some kind of radical Islamic extremist, so labels like "extremist" lack precision.

Government

The Arab nations, Western Europe, and the USA recognize the Syrian National Coalition, an exile group in Turkey, as the *only* legitimate government of Syria. However, there are hundreds of rebel or jihadist groups operating in Syria, and the Coalition represents only some of the rebel groups and none of the jihadists. As explained in detail in my [second](#) and [third](#) essays on Syria, the Coalition is unable to make decisions, and — in my opinion — has no credibility as a future government of Syria. However, the Coalition is the least

objectionable alternative government for Syria. Since October 2013, several commentators have noted that Assad is preferable to having Al-Qaeda control Syria. The topic of a future government for Syria is discussed in my separate [essay](#).

Chemical Weapons

On 7 Oct, the Syrian government admitted it forgot to declare three buildings where research and development on chemical weapons was done, and forgot to declare one building where chemical weapons were produced. [Associated Press](#).

Alleged Use of Chemical Weapons in Kafr Zeita on 11 April 2014

Introduction

The opposition says that Assad's government used chemical weapons at sunset on 11 April at the village of Kafr Zeita in Syria. Assad's government says that the Nusra Front used chemical weapons. Both the opposition and Assad's government agree that two people died and "more than 100" were affected by the chemical. Both sides agree that chlorine gas was the chemical weapon.

On 29 April, OPCW announced it would "soon" send a fact-finding team to Syria to investigate this alleged use chlorine gas in Syria. The team arrived in Syria on 3 May. The OPCW fact-finding team maintained a low profile — with zero press releases and no interviews with journalists. On 27 May, the OPCW team was attacked by insurgents in Syria while attempting to investigate chemical weapons use in Kafr Zeita. The team departed from Syria on 30 May.

My comments: The first use of chemical weapons at Kafr Zeita was on 11 April. There was a bureaucratic delay of 18 days before OPCW decided to investigate. The crime scene has now been amply contaminated, and there have been abundant opportunities for fabrication or tampering with evidence. That is why competent detectives immediately secure a crime scene and then promptly begin collecting evidence. The delay by OPCW compromised their investigation.

For details of the early history of chemical weapons use at Kafr Zeita, see my [sixth essay](#) on Syria, which chronicles events during April 2014.

My [ninth essay](#) on Syria discusses a 16 June report by the OPCW fact-finding team, which describes their failed mission and lack of facts.

There was no new information from this investigation during October 2014.

Alleged Use of Chlorine by ISIL in Iraq

On 23 Oct journalists reported that Iraqi officials alleged that ISIL had released chlorine gas on 15 September in an attack on Iraqi police in Duluiyah, 75 km north of Baghdad. *The Washington Post* says 11 policemen were taken to a hospital in Balad. The Associated Press says "about 40 troops and Shiite militiamen were slightly affected by the chlorine". [Washington Post](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [Al-Jazeera](#). I am suspicious of why Iraqi authorities waited more than one month to announce this use of chemical weapons, an announcement that has enormous propaganda value. Delaying for more than one month makes it very difficult to independently verify that chlorine gas was actually used by ISIL.

Alleged Use of Chlorine by ISIL in Syria

On 21 Oct, ISIL allegedly used chlorine gas to attack Kurds in Syria. Details are sparse. [Associated Press](#); [SOHR](#).

Syria

Why Peace Negotiations in Syria Futile

Disorganization of the Syrian National Coalition

& Politics of the Peace Process

My [previous essays](#) on Syria explain why I believe peace negotiations are futile with the current conditions in Syria. The following information continues this history of frustrated negotiations.

Diversions

There are at least seven major problems in the world that divert attention and resources from Syria:

- Beginning in mid-February 2014, there has been a crisis in the Ukraine, including the annexation of the Crimea by Russia. Why is the Ukraine crisis relevant to the civil war in Syria? Time that Obama/Kerry spend on the crisis in the Ukraine is time not spent on the crisis in Syria. The threats during the Ukraine crisis mean that further cooperation between Russia and the USA on the civil war in Syria is temporarily *unlikely*. By 30 May, the crisis in the Ukraine appeared to be winding down, as Russia had withdrawn most of their troops from the border. But on 28 June, the Ukraine government and pro-Russian separatists were again fighting a civil war. On 17 July, someone in eastern Ukraine shot down a civilian airliner. On 28 Aug, Russia sent troops into eastern Ukraine to aid rebels. On 5 Sep, another ceasefire began.
- a continuing civil war in the Central African Republic

more violence in South Sudan, as ceasefires are violated

- On 14 April, the Boko Haram Islamic terrorists in Nigeria, kidnapped more than 230 girls from a boarding school. Given the incompetence of the Nigerian government, foreign nations are involved in finding and rescuing the girls. Meanwhile, an Islamic bomb in Jos, Nigeria killed at least 130 people on 20 May. Approximately ninety people were kidnapped by Islamic terrorists on 21 June in Nigeria.
- On 18 May, a former Libyan general led an assault against the Libyan Parliament building, causing another crisis in Libya. Various parts of the government and military supported the general's anti-Islamist campaign. On 16 July, Islamic rebels attacked the airport at Tripoli, destroying airplanes and damaging the terminal building. On 31 July, Islamic extremist rebels seized control of Benghazi. On 23 Aug, Islamic extremists captured the airport at Tripoli.
- On 10 June 2014, ISIL — an Al-Qaeda inspired group that operates in both Iraq and Syria — captured Mosul, the second-largest city in Iraq. On 11 June, ISIL captured Tikrit. (See my essays for [June](#), [July](#), [August](#), and information [below](#).) The crisis in Iraq pushed Syria out of the news in Western newsmedia. Moreover, the capture of Mosul, Iraq by ISIL — as well as the declaration of ISIL's caliphate on 29 June 2014 — [changed](#) the Western view of the insurgency in Syria.
- On 12 June, palestinians kidnapped three boys in Israel and killed them. Their dead bodies were found in a field on 30 June. After terrorists in Gaza fired hundreds of rockets and mortar shells into Israel, the Israeli military began a military campaign in Gaza on 8 July. Despite the blatant provocations by the palestinians, the Arab newsmedia pushed Syria and Iraq out of the news in order to hysterically report the so-called "Israeli aggression" in Gaza. On 14 July, Egypt proposed a ceasefire in Gaza, which Israel accepted but Hamas in Gaza rejected. After more than 1300 rockets and mortar shells were fired from Gaza into Israel since 8 July, the Israeli Army invaded Gaza on the evening of 17 July. On 26 August, a ceasefire of indefinite duration was arranged in Gaza.

Death Toll in Syria

At approximately monthly intervals the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reports its count of the total number of dead people in the Syria civil war. This death toll is a useful reminder of the failure of insurgents and diplomats to end this civil war.

Beginning on 3 Sep 2014, the SOHR posted only a monthly death toll, *not* the cumulative death toll since the beginning of the Syrian civil war in March 2011. Here is their report for October:

SOHR documented the death of 5772 people, who were killed in October 2014, and they are as following:

- 1064 civilians, including 251 children under the age of 18 and 112 women.

- 1552 Syrian fighters from rebels and Islamic battalions and YPG.
- 3 dissident soldiers.
- 1342 Non-Syrian fighters from the IS, Jabhat al-Nusra, al-Mohajrin wa al-Ansar army, and Jund al-Aqsa.
- 876 soldiers from regime forces.
- 770 NDF, peoples committees and regime spies.
- 28 Hezbollah.
- 128 Non-Syrian fighters allied to regime forces, including Shiaa fighters.
- 9 unknown people.

We, in SOHR, believed that the real number of casualties on the fighting parties is more than 1500, because there is absolute secrecy on casualties and due to the difficulty of access to many areas and villages that have witnessed violent clashes and bombardment by all sides.

"About 6000 killed in October 2014," [SOHR](#), 1 Nov 2014. [Bulleted list added by Standler.]

I posted an HTML webpage that contains a [table](#) of death tolls announced by SOHR, beginning 31 Aug 2013, including the average death rate per 30 days. My webpage counts a total of more than 193,787 dead in the Syrian civil war at the end of Oct 2014.

U.S. Military Aid to Rebels in Syria

On 16 Oct the Associated Press reported on the search by the U.S. Government for ground forces in Syria.

Despite years of diplomacy and a CIA operation to vet and train moderate rebels, the U.S. finds itself without a credible partner on the ground in Syria as it bombs the Islamic State group. That's a potentially serious flaw in its strategy to ultimately defeat the militants.

Obama administration officials have long conceded that airstrikes alone won't drive IS from its strongholds across Syria and Iraq, but it also has ruled out the use of American ground troops. The U.S. strategy to crush IS rests on the use of local proxy forces, and hinges on plans to use \$500 million and a base in Saudi Arabia to build an army of moderate Syrian rebels.

The ground force component has always been seen as a challenge in Syria, but the difficulty has become clearer in recent days. Officials acknowledge that the U.S. doesn't trust any Syrian rebel groups enough to coordinate on the air campaign, despite attempts by some pro-Western fighters to pass along intelligence about IS positions.

The CIA has secretly trained and is paying more than 1,000 moderates to help achieve the administration's stated objective of overthrowing Syrian president Bashar Assad, U.S. officials have said.

Those fighters have been gaining ground against Assad in southern Syria and in some places are fighting IS, said Robert Ford, a former U.S. ambassador to Syria. The CIA-

funded fighters have proven reliable and have made modest gains, said a congressional aide who has been briefed on the matter. The aide spoke only on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive intelligence.

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"I am surprised at how fractious and disunified the Syrian opposition has been," said Michael O'Hanlon, a military strategy expert at the Brookings Institution. "They just haven't managed to find a charismatic leader or a single rallying point."

Ken Dilanian And Zeina Karam, "US still searching for credible allies in Syria," [Associated Press](#), 16:02 EDT, 16 Oct 2014.

On 25 Oct, General John Allen (USMC-ret), who Obama appointed to lead the Coalition against ISIL, gave an interview to *Asharq Al-Awsat* in which Gen. Allen said that the Free Syrian Army (FSA) would be used to attack ISIL, but would *not* attack Assad's military.

From Saudi Arabia, Gen. Allen is starting a regional tour that will include discussing preparations for the training and equipping of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) units that the coalition hopes can fight ISIS on the ground. In his first interview with an Arab language news outlet, General Allen explained to *Asharq Al-Awsat* that these FSA forces would not be expected to fight Syrian government forces, or to "liberate Damascus."

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QUESTION: But you don't see the FSA units that are being trained to fight ISIS as being those who will later fight the regime's armed forces?

ALLEN: No. What we would like to see is for the FSA and the forces that we will ultimately generate, train and equip to become the credible force that the Assad government ultimately has to acknowledge and recognize. There is not going to be a military solution here [in Syria]. We have to create so much credibility within the moderate Syrian opposition at a political level . . . that they earn their spot at the table when the time comes for the political solution. Now, there could be FSA elements that ultimately clash with the regime, that may well be the case, as they seek to defend themselves and those areas that they dominate and as they seek to defend their families and their ways of life . . . it could be an outcome. But the intent is not to create a field force to liberate Damascus — that is not the intent. The intent is that in the political outcome, they [the moderate Syrian opposition] must be a prominent — perhaps the preeminent voice — at the table to ultimately contribute to the political outcome that we seek.

Mina Al-Oraibi, "Exclusive: General Allen discusses coalition plans for defeating ISIS as regional tour starts," [Asharq Al-Awsat](#), 25 Oct 2014.

On 27 Oct, [Reuters](#) noticed this interview.

My comment: The FSA was created in 2011 to fight Assad. Now the USA arrogantly decrees that the FSA should concentrate on fighting ISIL, and ignore Assad's military. I wonder what our so-called "friends" in the Syrian National Coalition, or in the FSA, think

about abandoning their fight against Assad?

On 26 Oct, the Syrian National Coalition was publicly complaining about the lack of support for rebels in Aleppo (who are fighting against Assad's military) while the USA is supporting Kurdish rebels in Kobani (who are fighting against ISIL).

Mohammed Qaddah, vice president of the Syrian Coalition, criticizes the US-led anti-ISIS alliance's policy in Syria and its failure to provide the FSA with military aid in its battle against regime forces that are on the brink of encircling Aleppo. " The US-led anti-ISIS coalition's singling out of the city of Kobane to receive military support while ignoring the rest of Syrian cities is unacceptable and detrimental to Syria's national interests. Moreover, this selectivity in dealing with the situation in Syria, while aimed at serving specific international and regional interests, insists on ignoring the demands of the Syrian people for toppling Assad and building a state of law, justice and democracy," Qaddah said.

Syrian National Coalition News, "The Anti-ISIS Alliance's Selective Policy Will Harm Syria's National Interest," [SNC](#), 26 Oct 2014.

My comment: Qaddah, and the Syrian National Coalition, has apparently *not* noticed a change in U.S. strategy from (1) defeating Assad to (2) defeating ISIL. This subtle change occurred when the U.S.-led airstrikes in Syria began on 23 Sep. A conspiracy theorist might accuse the U.S. Government with a secret deal with Assad: the USA will not attack Assad's military in exchange for Syria not shooting at Coalition aircraft that are attacking ISIL inside Syria.

Syrian National Coalition

On 27 June 2014, the president of the interim Syrian government, Ahmad Tohme, disbanded the Supreme Military Council (SMC) of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and sacked the head of the FSA. Later the same day, the president of the Coalition (i.e., Jarba) reversed Tohme's two decisions. See my [eighth essay](#) on Syria.

On 22 July, the Coalition sacked the entire interim Syrian government, including Tohme. See my [ninth essay](#) on Syria.

But on 15 Oct, Tohme was re-elected as head of the interim Syrian government. [SNC](#).

This kind of inconsistency, petty bickering, and failure to address the major issues while concentrating on partisan fights makes the Syrian National Coalition unfit to lead Syria. As one example of a major issue that is being ignored is a reorganization of the Free Syrian Army and Supreme Military Council.

On 23 Sep, the Syrian National Coalition announced that it had dissolved the Supreme Military Council, and that a new Council would be formed "within a month." [SNC](#). But my search of the Coalition website on 1 Nov shows no further press release on this topic. The FSA, notoriously fragmented for more than one year, is now also leaderless for more than one month.

Recognition that Assad is Winning the Civil War

Beginning on 10 March 2014, journalists have been reporting that Assad is winning the civil war in Syria. Some of these reports by journalists are cited in my previous essays.

On 21 Oct, the chief of the Beirut bureau of the Associated Press reported:

Syrian President Bashar Assad is taking advantage of the U.S.-led coalition's war against the Islamic State group to pursue a withering air and ground campaign against more mainstream rebels elsewhere in the country, trying to recapture areas considered more crucial to the survival of his government.

As U.S. and allied jets swoop freely over towns and cities under control of extremists in northern Syria, the Syrian army has scaled back its air activity over areas of IS control, doing as little as possible there to avoid confrontation. Instead, Assad's troops are now focusing their energies on the country's two largest cities, Damascus and Aleppo.

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While few people think the American and Syrian militaries are actively cooperating or coordinating their operations, there appears to be a tacit alliance, ensuring at the very least that Syrian military operations would not come into conflict or friction with any American or allied aircraft.

The overall strategic picture of the war has hardly changed since the coalition strikes began in Syria and neighboring Iraq. Syrian rebels have intensified their operations in some areas, particularly south of Damascus, making noteworthy advances in Daraa and Quneitra provinces. But at least for now, Assad is successfully hanging on to areas where it counts for his survival, and rebels fighting to topple him are increasingly demoralized and mistrustful of U.S. pledges of support.

Zeina Karam, "Assad pursues withering campaign against rebels," [Associated Press](#), 20:45 GMT, 21 Oct 2014.

New U.N. Peace Negotiator for Syria

On 10 July 2014, the United Nations Secretary General, Ban, appointed Staffan de Mistura as the new peace negotiator for the Syrian civil war. After the appointment ceremony, de Mistura disappeared from public view, until 9-13 Sep when he appeared in Damascus, Syria.

On 7 and 10 Oct, de Mistura called for military intervention against ISIL in Kobani, as quoted [below](#). When the peacemakers and humanitarians begin calling for more military intervention, we know the situation is dire.

On 21 Oct, de Mistura met in Moscow with Russian Foreign Minister, Lavrov. [RIA-Novosti](#)

and [TASS](#) reported that Lavrov wanted *all* of Syria's neighbors (e.g., Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq) present at negotiations.

It is *not* clear whether de Mistura will continue to insist on the "transitional governing body" (TGB) specified by the Geneva1 conference in June 2012. I criticized the need for a TGB in my [essay](#), as one of the reasons why the Geneva peace negotiations in Jan/Feb 2014 failed.

On 17 July 2014, the U.N. Secretary General said he and de Mistura would "spare no effort to help stop the violence and achieve a Syrian-led inclusive political solution". [U.N. News](#). On 21 Aug 2014, the one-year anniversary of the biggest chemical weapons attack in Syria, the U.N. Secretary General issued a [statement](#) that said: "The United Nations, the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, will continue to do their utmost in pursuit of ... an end to this expanding conflict" in Syria. As of 31 Oct 2014, these diplomatic efforts appear weak and ineffective.

The real difficulty is that there is *no* opposition group that wants to negotiate a surrender, with Assad remaining in power. The Syrian National Coalition is firmly committed to the removal of Assad, furthermore the Coalition is increasingly irrelevant inside Syria. The jihadists, Nusra Front, and ISIL all consistently refuse to negotiate with Assad.

U.N. Security Council Resolutions 2139 and 2165

On 22 Feb 2014, the U.N. Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 2139, which required parties in Syria to allow humanitarian aid and to stop targeting civilians. Although this Resolution was effective immediately, *all* of the parties in Syria ignored it. The U.N. Secretary General, Ban, issued Reports in March, April, May, June, and July 2014, each of which recognized that Resolution 2139 had failed.

On 14 July, the U.N. Security Council passed Resolution 2165, to repair some of the defects in Resolution 2139. (See my [ninth essay](#) on Syria.)

24 Sep: Report

On 24 Sep, Ban issued his monthly report required by Resolutions 2139 and 2165. As noted in my previous essays, the U.N. document delivery system has been nonfunctional since 16 May 2014. On 2 Oct, I downloaded a copy of Ban's Report from [ReliefWeb](#).

Here are some paragraphs in Ban's Report that I find interesting or significant:

7. Government-controlled cities and towns continued to be subject to indiscriminate mortar attacks, shelling and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices by armed opposition, extremist and designated terrorist groups, notably in Aleppo and Damascus governorates. For example, in Aleppo city, extensive shelling in the Khalideah residential and commercial area at the beginning of September resulted in the deaths of eight civilians, including women and children.

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11. Parties to the conflict continued to target vital services and infrastructure. Reduced availability of water and electricity continued to be reported in various contested areas in Dar`a, Idlib, Hama, Deir ez-Zor and Rif Dimashq governorates. In Aleppo city, damage caused to the main water pumping station, Suleiman al-Halabi, by armed opposition groups on 2 June continues to result in water shortages for more than 700,000 people. While repairs to the pumping station in Aleppo have continued since 19 July, the water station pumping capacity remains low owing to electricity cuts and lack of fuel for generators. On 4 September, the armed opposition groups controlling Suleiman al-Halabi cut water supply to Aleppo for two days and are reported to have placed explosive devices in the immediate vicinity of the second pumping station. On 8 September, barrel bombs were reportedly dropped on Sakhour in Aleppo, resulting in extensive damage to the electrical transmission substation.

12. ISIL continues to increase its influence in the Syrian Arab Republic, predominantly along the main supply lines in rural central Homs, Hama, Rif Dimashq, Hasakeh and Aleppo and in areas with border crossings, natural resources and key infrastructure. During the reporting period, ISIL made advances in Deir ez-Zor, Raqqa and Aleppo governorates following clashes with government forces and armed opposition groups. In Deir ez-Zor, ISIL attacked and shelled opposition-controlled areas and government installations in the north, including Deir ez-Zor military airport and Kuweires airbase in eastern Aleppo. In Raqqa governorate, ISIL took over the Government's Tabaqa airbase on 24 August. In Hasakeh, ISIL reportedly fought the People's Protection Units in Jazeah town and surrounding areas (60 km south-east of Qamishli city), resulting in hundreds of families displaced. At the close of the reporting period, ISIL had made significant advances in the Ain al-Arab area, which, as at 22 September, has forced 130,000 people to flee to Turkey. This is the largest influx of Syrian refugees to Turkey in such a short period of time since the beginning of the conflict in 2011.

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14. In Idlib governorate, on 9 September, a bomb attack killed the leader of Harakat Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya, part of the Islamic Front, Hassan Abboud, along with up to 45 people, including several other leaders of the group. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack.

15. Although the United Nations does not have the means to independently verify numbers and origins, non-Syrian fighters, including designated terrorist groups, increasingly are participating in the fighting in the Syrian Arab Republic, on all sides of the conflict. Many analysts report that the number of foreign fighters has steadily increased since ISIL declared an Islamic caliphate and launched major offensives in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq over the past three months. Estimates range from about 200 to 300 new foreign fighters joining ISIL per month to up to 6,000 fighters in July alone. The territory encompassing the ISIL-declared Islamic caliphate is estimated to have a population of up to 9 million people.

16. There have been a number of local ceasefire agreements, as well as ongoing

negotiations, between the Government and armed opposition groups. In Damascus governorate, a ceasefire agreement was reached in the Qadam and Asal areas of Damascus city on 18 August. Following the agreement, essential services started to be restored and some 4,000 civilians returned to their homes. In Yarmouk camp in Damascus, the Government recently invited armed opposition groups to form a delegation and resume direct negotiations on the implementation of the cessation of hostilities agreement that was reached on 21 June, which has to date seen no progress towards its implementation.

17. Local ceasefire negotiations are also ongoing in Rif Dimashq and Homs governorates. In Rif Dimashq, a local agreement, including a ceasefire, has reportedly been reached in Wadi Barda. Elsewhere, the Syrian armed forces and a delegation from Daraya (western Ghouta) started direct negotiations in early August on a comprehensive agreement to allow civilians to return to their homes. The negotiations continue, particularly over the issue of detainees and the surrendering of medium-sized weapons. Negotiations on a ceasefire in the Waer neighbourhood of Homs city are ongoing, although hostilities have reportedly continued.

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22. In the same [report](#), the [independent international commission of inquiry] found that the armed groups named in the report, including ISIL, had committed massacres and war crimes, including murder, execution without due process, torture, hostage-taking, violations of international humanitarian law tantamount to enforced disappearance, rape and sexual violence, recruitment and use of children in hostilities and attacks on protected objects. Medical and religious personnel and journalists had been targeted. Armed groups had besieged and indiscriminately shelled civilian neighbourhoods, in some instances spreading terror among civilians through the use of car bombings in civilian areas. Notably, the commission found that, in addition to war crimes, members of ISIL had committed torture, murder, acts tantamount to enforced disappearance, and forcible displacement as part of an attack on the civilian population in Aleppo and Raqqa governorates, amounting to crimes against humanity.

23. During the reporting period, OHCHR continued to receive reports of arbitrary arrests and detentions carried out by government forces in Hama and Aleppo governorates, targeting activists. As at 11 August, the whereabouts of at least 25 activists, who were detained by government forces in July and August 2014 during door-to-door search campaigns in various parts of Aleppo governorate, remained unknown.

24. Women and children continued to be severely affected by the conflict during the reporting period. As at 17 September, about 130 of the 153 students abducted by ISIL on 29 May while travelling to Ain al-Arab, Aleppo, continued to be held by the group. Meanwhile, OHCHR received reports that a female dentist had her identification document confiscated at an ISIL checkpoint in Deir ez-Zor. According to activists, on 19 August 2014, nearly 10 days after her disappearance, ISIL said that she had been executed, but the whereabouts of her body remain unknown. While the reasons for her

disappearance remain unclear, the media has reported that she was targeted for treating male patients.

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26. In addition, according to various sources, ISIL executed dozens of individuals in Deir ez-Zor, Aleppo and Raqqa governorates on charges that varied from apostasy to aiding government forces. The victims reportedly included civilians, Nusra Front fighters, and government operatives who had reportedly infiltrated the armed group. On 28 August 2014, a video was released showing that, following the takeover of Tabqa airbase in Raqqa, ISIL executed at least 226 soldiers at the entrance of the airbase. The names and ranks were later published by ISIL.

27. ISIL targeting of media personnel continued. On 19 August, an American journalist was executed by ISIL, and an American-Israeli journalist was executed on 2 September. At least seven other media professionals are believed to be held captive by ISIL.

Ban Ki-moon, "Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014) and 2165 (2014)," United Nations Security Council, S/2014/696, copy at rbs0.com, 24 Sep 2014.

Note that:

- Both the Syrian government and opposition are shelling civilians. (§ 3, 7-9)
- Both the Syrian government and opposition are disrupting water supplies and electricity supply. (§ 11)
- Both the Syrian government and opposition are committing war crimes. (§ 21-22, 26)
- Both the Syrian government and opposition are besieging cities. (§ 40)
- There have been local ceasefire agreements. (§ 16, 64) Such ceasefire agreements began on 17 Feb 2014, as reported in my [fourth essay](#) on Syria.

The fact that both the Syrian government and the opposition (e.g., ISIL, Nusra Front, Islamic Front, Free Syrian Army, etc.) are engaging in the same kinds of misconduct (e.g., mortar and artillery fire on civilians, besieging cities, etc.) suggests to me that there is something in the Islamic or Arab culture that permits such activities, which are abhorrent to Christians or Europeans.

23 Oct: Report

On 23 Oct, Ban issued his monthly report required by Resolutions 2139 and 2165. As noted in my previous essays, the U.N. document delivery system has been nonfunctional since 16 May 2014. On 5 Nov, I downloaded a copy of Ban's Report from [Security Council Report](#).

Here are some paragraphs in Ban's Report that I find interesting or significant:

3. Conflict and high levels of violence continued throughout the Syrian Arab Republic during the reporting period, including in the governorates of Aleppo, Damascus, Dara, Deir ez-Zor, Hama, Hasakeh, Homs, Idlib, Quneitra and Raqqa. Explosive weapons

continued to be used, including in populated areas. Indiscriminate aerial bombings by government forces and indiscriminate shelling and attacks by armed opposition, extremist and designated terrorist groups[FN1] continued to result in death, injury and displacement. [Footnote 1: "On 30 May 2013, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the Nusra Front were designated as terrorist groups by the Security Council under resolution 1267 (1999). The two groups operate in the Syrian Arab Republic."]

....

8. Armed opposition and designated terrorist groups continued shelling government-controlled areas, including in populated areas, using mortars, small rockets and gas cannons, resulting in civilian casualties. On 21 September, armed opposition groups fired mortars that landed near two schools, a playground and the office of a non-governmental organization in the Al-Matar neighbourhood of Dara, killing three children and one adult and injuring more than 30 people. Mortar fire into Damascus also continued, resulting in numerous injuries.

....

13. ISIL efforts were concentrated in the northern Syrian Arab Republic, particularly in Kurdish areas. On 16 September, ISIL launched an offensive against the Kurdish town of Ayn al-Arab/Kobane in Aleppo governorate, resulting in the massive displacement of civilians, including into Turkey, and numerous deaths and injuries. More than 190,000 refugees have crossed into Turkey since the offensive began. ISIL fighters indiscriminately shelled villages and communities in the area surrounding Ayn al-Arab/Kobane City, including with heavy weapons and tanks, taking control of the majority of those villages, and launched rockets, including into Ayn al-Arab/Kobane City. OHCHR received allegations of at least nine executions of civilians carried out by ISIL during their advance between 16 and 26 September, including in the Kurdish village of Sharabani, Aleppo Governorate.

14. The international coalition undertook airstrikes against ISIL and other targets in the Syrian Arab Republic beginning on 23 September. Airstrikes in defence of Ayn al-Arab/Kobane were first launched on 27 September. As of 17 October, fighting for control of the town continued. Most civilians reportedly fled the city, but reports suggest that a number of people remained, with fighting ongoing. There are concerns about the safety of those who remain in the area, in the light of the violence and persecution by ISIL of religious and ethnic communities elsewhere in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq.

15. In response to coalition airstrikes, ISIL has threatened retaliation against those perceived to be collaborators, including civilians. This has heightened the insecurity of aid workers. ISIL, Nusra Front and other Islamist groups have accused the international coalition of fighting a war against Islam and have called for retaliation against the coalition.

....

17. Recruitment of fighters, including foreign fighters, has reportedly increased following the commencement of the international coalition airstrikes. In early October, the Aleppo division of ISIL released a video claiming that dozens of elements from Ahrar al-Sham defected and pledged allegiance to ISIL.

....

38. Some 241,000 people remained besieged, 196,000 in areas besieged by government forces in Madamiyet Elsham, eastern Ghouta, Darayya and Yarmouk, and 45,000 in areas besieged by opposition forces in Nubul and Zahral.

....

57. Tragically, in the month since the previous report, heinous attacks and atrocities against civilians have continued, committed by all sides in the Syrian conflict. The senseless killing of dozens of children and other civilians in Homs on 1 October is a grotesque reminder that this conflict and those fuelling it are robbing the Syrian Arab Republic of its future. It is one more shocking event in a reporting period that has witnessed continued indiscriminate use of weapons by all parties, including barrel bombing by Syrian government forces on a near-daily basis.

58. Given the very real implications for peace and security, the international community has rightly mobilized to counter the threat posed by terrorism, but a military campaign alone cannot resolve the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic or stem the spread of terrorism from the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq. It is a complex, protracted regional conflict that requires the international community to use all the tools at its disposal. A solely military response could also have the unintended consequence of further isolating groups that have been politically, culturally and economically marginalized in the Syrian Arab Republic.

59. The threat posed by ISIL raises serious additional protection concerns, as evidenced by the offensive on Ayn al-Arab/Kobane, which resulted in the massive displacement of civilians, including into Turkey, and large numbers of deaths and injuries. In the light of the gross and extensive violations of human rights and international humanitarian law the terrorist group has committed in areas that have fallen under its control in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq, I reiterate my urgent call on the international community to take immediate action to protect the people left in Ayn al-Arab/Kobane.

....

65. In each of my reports to the Security Council I have made the point that what is most needed in the Syrian Arab Republic is an end to the violence. This can come only through a political process, which is more urgent than ever, but that goal seems even further away today. The situation throughout the country continues to deteriorate rapidly. Many more people have been killed. Violations of international human rights

and humanitarian law are rife. Nearly 3 million children are out of school. Three quarters of the population is impoverished. The currency has plummeted and food prices have soared since the start of the conflict. Terrorist organizations such as ISIL will thrive, and violence will persist throughout the Syrian Arab Republic unless the deep-seated roots of the conflict are addressed through a process that brings together all sectors of Syrian society. My Special Envoy for the Syrian Arab Republic, Staffan de Mistura, began his mission with vigour last month. He will engage intensively with regional and Syrian actors, from whom support is essential in the search for new openings to launch a credible, comprehensive and inclusive political process. A solution must be found. We cannot continue to watch people die. The heightened risk of sectarian violence compels us all to work even harder for peace.

Ban Ki-moon, "Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014) and 2165 (2014)," United Nations Security Council, S/2014/756, copy at rbs0.com, 23 Oct 2014.

ISIL beheads Allen Henning

On 3 Oct, ISIL released video showing Allen Henning being beheaded by ISIL in Syria. Henning was a 47 y old citizen of the U.K. who drove trucks carrying humanitarian aid from Turkey to Syria. Henning was captured by insurgents in Syria on 26 Dec 2013 when he was driving a truck filled with medical supplies to a hospital. ISIL says they beheaded Henning in retaliation for airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq and Syria. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [Al-Jazeera](#).

As with each of the previous three beheadings of U.S. or U.K. citizens by ISIL, there was an emotional reaction in the USA and U.K. [The Telegraph](#) [The Guardian](#) [Evening Standard](#) [White House](#).

Debacle in Iraq

September/October 2014 Death Toll in Iraq

The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) released the casualty figures for Iraq during **September**: "A total of at least 1119 Iraqis were killed ... in acts of terrorism and violence in September", excluding Anbar province. The 1119 dead included 854 civilians and 265 Iraqi security forces. Note that these numbers include *neither* Anbar province *nor* areas controlled by ISIL. [UNAMI](#).

During **October** UNAMI says "a total of at least 1,273 people were killed ... in acts of terrorism and violence", excluding Anbar province. The 1273 dead included 856 civilians and 417 Iraqi security forces. [UNAMI](#).

I posted an HTML webpage that contains a [table](#) of monthly death tolls announced by UNAMI in 2013-2014.

Atrocities in Iraq

Back in June 2014, ISIL executed hundreds of Shiite soldiers in Mosul and Tikrit. (See my [eighth essay](#) on Syria.)

In July 2014, there were more reports of atrocities in Iraq, as described in my [ninth](#) essay.

In August 2014, there were still more reports of atrocities by ISIL — including a threatened genocide of Yazidis in Iraq; an attack on a Sunni mosque in Iraq on 22 Aug; and ISIL executed captured Syrian soldiers in Raqqa, Syria — as described in my [tenth](#) essay.

My [eleventh essay](#) chronicles more atrocities during September 2014.

UN says ISIL "staggering array" of atrocities

On 2 Oct the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) released a report on the accomplishments of ISIL in Iraq:

UNAMI/OHCHR has received reports of serious violations of international humanitarian law and gross abuses of human rights that have been perpetrated by ISIL and associated armed groups, with an apparent systematic and widespread character. These include:

- attacks directly targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure,
- executions and other targeted killings of civilians,
- abductions, rape and other forms of sexual and physical violence perpetrated against women and children,
- forced recruitment of children,
- destruction or desecration of places of religious or cultural significance,
- wanton destruction and looting of property, and
- denial of fundamental freedoms.

Members of Iraq's diverse ethnic and religious communities, including Turkmen, Shabak, Christians, Yezidi, Sabaeans, Kaka'e, Faily Kurds, Arab Shi'a, and others have particularly been affected by the situation. ISIL and associated armed groups intentionally and systematically targeted these communities for gross human rights abuses, at times aimed at destroying, suppressing or cleansing them from areas under their control. ISIL and associated armed groups also murdered captured soldiers and other security forces or government personnel. UNAMI/OHCHR notes that many of the violations and abuses perpetrated by ISIL and associated armed groups may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity.

....

Women have been dealt with particularly harshly by ISIL. ISIL attacked and killed female doctors, lawyers, among other professionals.

On 22 July, a candidate in the general election with the State of Law list was killed when ISIL stormed her house in Sderat village in Qayara sub-district in Ninewa. On 23 July, again in Sderat, ISIL gunmen broke into the house of a candidate in the last election for the Ninewa Provincial Council, killed her and abducted her husband. On the same day, a candidate in the last general election was abducted when ISIL gunmen stormed her house in the Sumer area of eastern Mosul.

It was reported that some female doctors went on strike because of the difficulty in doing their job with their faces covered. On 13 August, a female doctor was killed while resisting ISIL trying to take her away from her home in Tayaran, south of Mosul for having organised or participated in the strike.

UNAMI/OHCHR received information directly from some female doctors in Mosul indicating that ISIL is monitoring the implementation of their takfiri regulations at the hospital entrances and, on two occasions, female doctors were stopped and insulted. ISIL also inquired in hospitals into the marital status of the female doctors and stated that married women should wear black, while unmarried females other colours, so as to be easily distinguishable. On one occasion, a female doctor reported that she was stopped from attending to an urgent case because she was not covered properly; after a long heated discussion with the ISIL fighter, she was allowed to perform her duties. In another case — not related to the covering of the face — a male anaesthetist was prevented from providing anaesthesia to a female patient; after arguing that there was no female anaesthetist available and that the life of the patient was in danger, he was permitted to attend to the case.

According to the female doctors on strike, ISIL threatened them with the destruction or seizure of their houses and properties if they did not return to work. Following these threats, a number of women doctors informed UNAMI/OHCHR that they had no choice but to return to work and abide by the dress rules being imposed on them by ISIL. However, sources in hospitals in Mosul reported to UNAMI/OHCHR that the number of staff members working in health care facilities in the city and subsequently had dwindled.

"Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict in Iraq: 6 July — 10 September 2014," [OHCHR](#), 2 Oct 2014. (Indented list added by Standler.)

In a press release, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is quoted as saying:

The array of violations and abuses perpetrated by ISIL and associated armed groups is staggering, and many of their acts may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity.

....

I also note the detailed letter sent on 19 September to the head of the so-called ISIL

group by 126 leading Muslim scholars from all across the world. It clearly states that in Islam it is forbidden to kill the innocent, or to kill emissaries, ambassadors and diplomats — hence also journalists and aid workers; torture and the re-introduction of slavery are also forbidden, as are forcible conversion, the denial of rights to women and a multitude of other acts being carried out by this Takfiri group on a daily basis. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, [UNAMI](#) and [OHCHR](#), press release, 2 Oct 2014.

Also see reports by journalists at, e.g., [Al-Jazeera](#); [Reuters](#).

14 Oct: Report of Atrocities by Shiite Militias in Iraq

On 14 Oct, Amnesty International released a [report](#) that says Shiite militias in Iraq are murdering innocent Sunnis in retaliation for ISIL attacks on Shiites. Amnesty International claims that the Iraqi government is ignoring this sectarian violence. [Associated Press](#).

ISIL bombings in Iraq

On 30 Sep 2014, there were a series "of car bombings and other attacks" across Iraq, in which at least 47 people were killed. [Associated Press](#). Most of the victims were Shiite Muslims and the attackers are presumedly Sunni Muslim terrorists.

On 11 Oct, three suicide car bombers killed a total of 38 people in Shiite areas of Baghdad. [Associated Press](#).

On 12 Oct, three ISIL suicide bombers in the town of Qara Tappah, Diyala province, killed at least 58 people. [Associated Press](#).

On 14 Oct, an ISIL suicide car bomb at a checkpoint in Baghdad killed 25 people, including a member of the Iraqi Parliament. [Reuters](#); [Arab News](#)(AFP); [Al-Arabiya](#); [Associated Press](#).

On 16 Oct, there were a series of three car bombings in Baghdad, plus one mortar attack on a residential neighborhood in Baghdad, in which a total of at least 38 people were killed. There were two other attacks south of Baghdad and one other attack in downtown Baghdad, which brought the death toll to at least 50. The Associated Press reported: "Thursday's [16 Oct] explosions have brought the death toll from attacks since Sunday [12 Oct] to at least 162 people, mostly in Baghdad, according to an Associated Press tally." [Associated Press](#) at 14:04 EDT; [Reuters](#) at 13:53 EDT; [Al-Jazeera](#) at 11:31 EDT, all on 16 Oct.

On 17 Oct, car bombings at three locations in Baghdad killed at least 24 people. [Reuters](#).

On 19 Oct, a suicide bomber at a funeral service at a Shiite mosque in Baghdad killed at least 19 people. [Reuters](#); [Daily Star](#)(AFP).

On 20 Oct, a suicide bomber detonated at a Shiite mosque in Baghdad, killing at least

17 people. In Karbala, four car bombs exploded, killing at least 26 people. [Associated Press](#).

On 21 Oct, bombs at four restaurants in Baghdad killed at least 21 people. [Reuters](#).

On 27 Oct, an Islamic bomber drove a U.S.-made Humvee to a checkpoint 50 km south of Baghdad and detonated, killing at least 24 people. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). On the night of 27 Oct, a car bomb in downtown Baghdad killed at least 14 people. Reuters reports at least 42 dead: 27 killed by the bomb in the Humvee and 15 in downtown Baghdad. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

On 31 Oct, at least 15 people died in four separate Islamic bombings in or near Baghdad. [Associated Press](#).

My comments: Such attacks have become an almost routine part of life in Iraq since Saddam Hussein was deposed in 2003. Not only are there attacks, but also there seems to be no effort by the Iraqi government to find and punish the attackers — an indication that civilization has collapsed in Iraq.

ISIL execution of captured fighters

On 29 Oct, ISIL paraded 30 Sunni tribal fighters through the streets of Hit, Iraq and then shot them dead. [Associated Press](#).

On 30 Oct, a mass grave was found containing the bodies of 48 Sunni tribal fighters who had been rounded up by ISIL in Hit. It is emphasized that these 48 were separate from the 30 killed on 29 Oct. [Associated Press](#). [Reuters](#) reports that ISIL has executed a total of at least 220 Sunni tribal fighters, with 70 bodies in a mass grave near Hit and 150 bodies in a mass grave near Ramadi. All 220 bodies were from the Abu Nimr tribe, which had earlier been defeated by ISIL.

On 31 Oct, ISIL shot dead at least 50 unarmed people from the Abu Nimr tribe. [Associated Press](#). [Reuters](#) reports the 50 dead, plus 35 bodies in a mass grave near Ramadi. Reuters reported the "Islamic State has executed a total of more than 300 tribe members in the past few days".

Islamic Public Relations Problem

In response to the beheading of Alan Henning by ISIL in Syria on 3 Oct, Muslim clerics in the U.K. condemned this barbaric murder. [Reuters](#) notes "Britain's Muslim leaders have in the past been accused of being reluctant to publicly confront Islamic extremism."

On 17 Oct, The Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC), a group of Islamic clerics, publicly condemned ISIL for violating Islamic teachings. [The Nation](#) in Pakistan; [Arab News](#); [Express Tribune](#) in Pakistan.

On 27 Oct, General John Allen (USMC-ret.) urged Arab nations to do more to fight ISIL ideology. [Associated Press](#).

Back in August 2014 there was a burst of condemnation of terrorism by Islamic clerics. (See my [tenth essay](#) on Syria.) But in September and October 2014, muslim clerics dropped the ball, and stopped publicly denouncing terrorism. There needs to be a consistent and continuing condemnation of terrorism by muslim clerics, in part to discourage young muslims from joining Al-Qaeda and ISIL.

No Criminal Prosecution of Cowardly Iraqi Army Officers

Back on 10 June 2014, ISIL quickly seized Mosul. Although the Iraqi army significantly outnumbered the ISIL terrorists, the Iraqi army simply fled instead of fighting against ISIL. (See my [eighth essay](#) on Syria.) About a week later, there were news reports that Maliki had ordered the arrest of Iraqi army officers who deserted, instead of fighting ISIL. At the time, I was overwhelmed with reading and digesting the news from Iraq, so I ignored the criminal prosecution of these army officers.

On 17 June, [Reuters](#) reports that Maliki sacked four top army officers in Mosul, because they "failed to fulfill their professional and military duties".

On 18 June, [Reuters](#) reported that 59 officers will be tried in military court for fleeing from their posts. The same story also says on 17 June "Maliki dismissed four top generals and said they were being charged in military court for abandoning Mosul". Copy at [Daily Star](#) in Lebanon.

On 18 June, [Rudaw](#) in Kurdistan reports that the four dismissed officers are "Lt. Gen. Mahdi al-Gharawi, his deputy Maj. Gen. Abdul Rahman al-Handal Mahdi, and chief of staff Brigadier General Hassan Abdul Razzaq Ghazi", along with one Kurdish officer, Brigadier General Hidayat Abdul Karim. Rudaw reports that only the Kurd will be charged in military court, the other three were dismissed but not criminally charged.

On 19 June, [The Daily Beast](#) reports that Lt. Gen. Mahdi Al Gharawi, who commanded the Iraqi army in Mosul, was accused of torture when he commanded a police unit in Baghdad during 2005-2008. Maliki not only granted Gharawi immunity from prosecution, but also promoted him to head the Iraqi army in Mosul. Gharawi is a Shiite, Mosul is predominantly Sunni — this is one of the sectarian abuses perpetrated by Maliki. On 17 June 2014, as mentioned above, Maliki finally sacked Gharawi.

On 15 July, about a month after the order for a court martial of Gen. Karim, [Rudaw](#) published an interview with Karim. He is living in Erbil, avoiding prosecution. He claims his troops had no ammunition, and he did not learn about the fall of Mosul until a day after it occurred. "Karim said that 85 percent of the Iraqi army is dominated by Shiites, with Kurds and Sunnis treated with suspicion and as outcasts."

When I searched Google News on 2 Sep and 19 Oct, I found few news stories about this

topic, and nothing on the arrest and trial of the officers. Apparently, the Iraqi military court is in no hurry to prosecute these deserters. That may be more evidence that Iraq is a failed nation, which no longer enforces its laws. Karim *may* be a victim of ethnic discrimination and now a scapegoat.

On 21 Oct, the Iraqi defense minister promised to investigate the failing of the Iraqi army and hold them accountable. [Daily Star](#)(AFP).

Meetings of Iraqi Parliament

On 1 Oct, [All Iraq News](#) reported that Parliament would resume on 14 Oct. The previous session of Parliament was on 24 Sep. Parliament urgently needs to approve several ministers (including the Defense and Interior ministers), pass a budget bill, pay the Kurds for oil sales, reform the Iraqi army, In contrast to the 19-day holiday for legislators, ordinary citizens have only a 6-day holiday (4-9 Oct). [All Iraq News](#).

14 Oct 2014: Parliament meets

On 14 Oct — after an irresponsibly long vacation — the Iraqi Parliament convened with "more than 210" members (> 64%) present. [All Iraq News](#).

16 Oct 2014: Parliament meets

At 14:10 Baghdad time on 16 Oct, [All Iraq News](#) reported that Parliament convened with 217 members (66%) present.

At 20:50, [All Iraq News](#) reported that Parliament adjourned until 18 Oct.

18 Oct 2014: Parliament approves ministers

At 14:58 Baghdad time on 18 Oct, [All Iraq News](#) reported that Parliament had voted to approve a Kurdish deputy prime minister. There was *no* report of when Parliament convened. There was *no* report of the number of members who were present. Over the next few hours, *All Iraq News* reported that Parliament had approved:

1. minister of the interior
2. minister of defense
3. minister of tourism
4. minister of immigration
5. minister of state
6. minister of women's affairs
7. minister of culture
8. minister of finance

I note that the constitutional deadline for naming these ministers was 10 Sep, 37 days ago.

The [Associated Press](#) reports 175 members voted for the defense minister, while 85 members voted against, which implies a total of 260 members (79%) present.

20 Oct 2014: Parliament meets

At 13:13 Baghdad time on 20 Oct, [All Iraq News](#) reported that Parliament convened with 205 members (62%) present. There was no report of when Parliament adjourned.

28 Oct 2014: Parliament meets

At 12:40 Baghdad time on 28 Oct, [All Iraq News](#) reported that Parliament convened with 183 members (56%) present.

At 17:35, [All Iraq News](#) reported that Parliament adjourned until 30 Oct.

30 Oct 2014: Parliament meets

At 12:21 Baghdad time on 30 Oct, [All Iraq News](#) reported that Parliament convened with 172 members (52%) present.

At 16:35, [All Iraq News](#) reported that Parliament adjourned until 1 Nov.

Daily News About Iraq & Syria

24 Sep: Obama speech

On 24 Sep, Obama gave a speech at the United Nations General Assembly, in which he declared that the war against terrorism would continue for a generation of people:

Ultimately, the task of rejecting sectarianism and extremism is a generational task — a task for the people of the Middle East themselves. No external power can bring about a transformation of hearts and minds. But America will be a respectful and constructive partner. We will neither tolerate terrorist safe-havens, nor act as an occupying power. Instead, we will take action against threats to our security — and our allies — while building an architecture of counter-terrorism cooperation. We will increase efforts to lift up those who counter extremist ideology, and seek to resolve sectarian conflict. And we will expand our programs to support entrepreneurship, civil society, education and youth — because, ultimately, these investments are the best antidote to violence.

Obama, "Remarks As Prepared for Delivery by President Barack Obama, Address to the United Nations General Assembly," [White House](#), 24 Sep 2014.

My comments: Obama just publicly admitted that the war against Islamic barbarians (e.g.,

ISIL and Al-Qaeda) is a "generational task" — something that might take more than twenty years.

26 Sep: U.K. Parliament votes for airstrikes in Iraq

The Parliament was recalled from vacation to vote on whether the U.K. military would conduct airstrikes. The vote on 26 Sep was 524 for airstrikes to 43 opposed. [BBC](#); [The Telegraph](#). The first U.K. airstrikes in Iraq were on 30 Sep, with airplanes based in Cyprus. [BBC](#). However, the U.S. Central Command first reported the U.K. airstrikes on 1 Oct.

30 Sep: State Department Press Briefing

At the Daily Press Briefing at the U.S. State Department, on 30 Sep there were 27 mentions of "Syria" and 58 mentions of "Iraq".

[MS. PSAKI:] Another item, and I will — bear with me because what I wanted to do here is kind of lay out a little bit of our history on ISIL and what the United States has been working on over the course of the last year, plus I know many of you pay attention to this, but I thought it was worth walking through.

In short, we've been tracking ISIL very closely, and over the course of the last year we have seen strength — the strength of the group grow, which this Administration and including myself have spoken to very publicly. And we've taken increasing measures to counter it through the Iraqi Security Forces and also by ensuring the Iraqi political process and national elections remain on track, and also, of course, through direct military action over the past couple of months.

AQI [Al-Qaeda in Iraq] has been around for more than a decade. Our military was able to quash AQI with the help of the Sunni tribes and the group was pushed back underground. But over the past couple of years, because of the conflict in Syria and the Syrian regime's unwillingness — or willingness, I should say, to look the other way, AQI reconstituted and was able to grow in strength again, in large part because foreign fighters were able to join the fight in Syria.

AQI then changed its name, as you all remember, to ISIL in April of 2013. AQI had already been designated, and then ISIL was designated as well as a terrorist organization by the United States Government. We have been speaking out about ISIL since last year. For example, last August, we put out a statement condemning what appeared to be ISIL's involvement in a terrorist attack in Iraq. We can get that all around to all of you, of course. We made clear publicly our serious concerns about the group's activities and the migration of its leader from Iraq into Syria.

In January [2014], ISIL moved its force into Anbar province, the city of Fallujah fell immediately, the city of Ramadi was about to fall. We worked immediately with tribes around Ramadi and with the Iraqi Security Forces to hold the line. This included a

surge in training assistance to the best Iraqi units, strategic command guidance from our top military leaders, and fulfilling weapons and equipment needs to Iraqi forces.

To this day, while the situation in Ramadi remains extremely serious, Ramadi has never fallen to ISIL. ISIL was also unable to fully consolidate its position in Anbar province, even despite constant fighting throughout the first half of this year.

So that brings us up to January. These efforts from January forward focused on strengthening the Iraqi Security Forces because that was the desire of the Government of Iraq, and it has been and remains our primary focus. We were engaged in this effort at all levels shortly after Fallujah fell. Deputy Assistant Secretary McGurk traveled immediately to Iraq to help coordinate a response, and we put out a detailed readout of those efforts.

We also spoke to — Secretary Kerry also has been speaking with Iraqi leaders for several months now as well. I'd point you to a readout we did in early January of a conversation he had where he discussed Iraq's efforts to combat ISIL in coordination with local police and tribes.

At the same time, during this period, as many of you know because you've traveled with us or you've followed this closely, we were intensely focused during this period on ensuring Iraqi elections scheduled for April 30th were well prepared and able to take place on time. This was essential to consolidating the political line of effort that we've always said would be essential to defeating ISIL. These elections did take place on time as scheduled with low violence and a 50 percent turnout, even in provinces like Anbar.

Within days of the collapse of Mosul, on the direction of the President, we immediately accelerated our efforts, building on what had been done to date. This included a dramatic increase in intelligence flights, establishing joint operation commands in Baghdad and Erbil, and conducting a complete field assessment by our special forces of Iraqi units across the country. These measures were essential to ensuring our future strike operations would be effective.

So this issue of strikes was on the table for discussion only after a request from the Iraqi Government in May, but this still required a couple of steps. One was developing the intelligence in joint platforms to enable such strikes to be both accurate and effective. And two, which we spoke about quite a bit this summer, was a political construct and a path toward a more inclusive government that would be considered legitimate by local Sunnis and through which U.S. airstrikes would be in support of a national Iraqi-led strategy and plan that could carry this effort forward. So to get these pieces in place, it was essential that Iraq carried out a national election, also move forward with efforts to increase intelligence platforms.

While these efforts were finalized through the course of the summer that enabled the airstrikes to launch with — there was an effort that was in place for months leading up to this. And I think that's sort of the point I'm driving at here.

Finally, obviously we're focused now on the mission going forward. You all are familiar with our effort to create — form an international coalition. General Allen and Ambassador McGurk will be headed out to the region soon. We'll have more details on that for you soon. But because there's been a lot of different reports out there, I thought I'd walk through that.

QUESTION: Well, that was a very extended defense of something that you weren't even asked a question about.

MS. PSAKI: I wouldn't look at it that way.

....

QUESTION: That was an excellent review of (inaudible) background. But also the break of the prison in July 2013 — al-Qaida was able to break into two prisons, Abu Ghraib and another prison. There were 500 top leading militants. Many of them were handed over by the United States to the Iraqi Government, which it failed in keeping them incarcerated, and that played a tremendous role in having the reconstitution of al-Qaida, correct?

MS. PSAKI: Well, we spoke about that at the time, Said.
Daily Press Briefing, [State Dept.](#), 30 Sep 2014.

My comments: Between an incompetent Iraqi government (including a cowardly Iraqi army) and Obama's unwillingness to get militarily involved again in Iraq, ISIL was allowed to capture 1/3 of Iraq during January to June 2014.

Turkey

2 Oct: Turkey Parliament votes to fight ISIL

On 2 Oct, the Parliament in Turkey voted 298 to 98 in favor of fighting ISIL in Syria and Iraq, and also to allow foreign nations to launch airstrikes against ISIL from airports inside Turkey. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [Hürriyet](#) in Turkey; [Today's Zaman](#) in Turkey.

One of the motivating factors was that more than 160,000 Syrians had recently fled to Turkey because of ISIL assault on the city of Kobani, which is also known as Ayn Arab. Another motivating factor is that Turkey shares a border with both Syria and Iraq, so unrest in Syria and Iraq spills over into Turkey.

History of Turkey vs. Kurds

The relationship between the Turkish government and the Kurds in Kobani is quite complicated. There has been a Kurdish insurgency inside Turkey since about 1984. The

Turkish government has labeled the Kurds terrorists, but negotiations between the two have been held, and there has been a cease fire since 2013. However, the refusal of the Turkish government to allow any relief for the Kurdish fighters in Kobani has caused a series of protests by Kurds inside Turkey last week, in which more than thirty protesters were killed. On 14 Oct, the situation deteriorated when the Turkish government had airstrikes against Kurds inside Turkey. [Washington Post](#); [Hurriyet Daily News](#); [Today's Zahman](#); all on 14 Oct 2014.

The Turkish government is a member of NATO, and is a so-called ally of the USA. However, on 31 Oct, the Turkish government still has not allowed the U.S. Military to use airbases in Turkey for attacks on ISIL. Moreover, Turkey is refusing to help the Kurds in Syria fight against ISIL.

More about Turkey and the Kurds is below in the section on [Kobani](#), at 19-20 Oct.

16 Oct: U.S. Government talking to PYD

At the Daily Press Briefing at the U.S. State Department on 16 Oct, Spokesperson Jen Psaki said: "So as you know, we have for some time had conversations through intermediaries with the PYD. We have engaged over the course of just last weekend [11-12 Oct] directly with the PYD." [State Dept.](#)

The PYD is a Kurdish political party in Syria. The PYD has a militia, known as People's Protection Units (YPG). The YPG appears to be the main group currently fighting against ISIL in Syria.

More Daily News

3 Oct: wait a year to liberate Mosul, Iraq

General John Allen, who Obama appointed to lead the coalition against ISIL, said the campaign to liberate Mosul from ISIL "will kick off within a year. I can't be more specific. It's not a single battle. It's a campaign." [Reuters](#).

6 Oct: Panetta blasts Obama

Leon Panetta, Obama's former director of the Central Intelligence Agency (2009-2011) and former Secretary of Defense (2011-2013), blamed Obama for creating a 30 year war in Iraq. "I think we're looking at kind of a 30-year war," he says, one that will have to extend beyond Islamic State to include emerging threats in Nigeria, Somalia, Yemen, Libya and elsewhere.

In his first interview about his new book, *Worthy Fights: A Memoir of Leadership in War and Peace*, Panetta argues that decisions made by President Obama over the past

three years have made that battle more difficult — an explosive assessment by a respected policymaker of the president he served.

....

... Panetta says Obama erred:

- By not pushing the Iraqi government harder to allow a residual U.S. force to remain when troops withdrew in 2011, a deal he says could have been negotiated with more effort. That "created a vacuum in terms of the ability of that country to better protect itself, and it's out of that vacuum that ISIS began to breed." Islamic State also is known as ISIS and ISIL.
- By rejecting the advice of top aides — including Panetta and then-secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton — to begin arming Syrian rebels in 2012. If the U.S. had done so, "I do think we would be in a better position to kind of know whether or not there is some moderate element in the rebel forces that are confronting (Syrian President Bashar) Assad."
- By warning Assad not to use chemical weapons against his own people, then failing to act when that "red line" was crossed in 2013. Before ordering airstrikes, Obama said he wanted to seek congressional authorization, which predictably didn't happen.

The reversal cost the United States credibility then and is complicating efforts to enlist international allies now to join a coalition against the Islamic State, Panetta says.

"There's a little question mark to, is the United States going to stick this out? Is the United States going to be there when we need them?"

Susan Page, "Panetta: '30-year war' and a leadership test for Obama," [USA Today](#), 09:13 EDT, 6 Oct 2014.

The [Washington Post](#) commented: "It's going to be a rough week for President Obama, thanks in part to his former CIA director and defense secretary, Leon Panetta, who in an interview published this morning [Monday, 6 Oct] said the president has 'kind of lost his way.' "

Michael Hayden, a retired Air Force general and former director of the CIA, agreed with Panetta's estimate of a thirty-year war. [Newsmax](#).

7 Oct: Turkey released 180 ISIL terrorists?

On 7 Oct, the [Times](#) in London, England reported that Turkey had released 180 terrorists from Turkish prisons in exchange for ISIL releasing 49 people taken hostage at the Turkish consulate in Mosul.

I looked at three English-language news websites in Turkey at noon EDT on 8 Oct, but there was no mention of this story. Journalists in Turkey are *not* free to embarrass their

government.

U.N. stopped pleading for embargo on munitions to Syria

During Dec 2013 to August 2014, the U.N. Secretary General *repeatedly* called for the cessation of shipment of weapons and ammunition to Syria. For example, see his monthly reports on the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolutions 2139 and 2165 and his speeches, chronicled in my previous essays.

The U.S. began airstrikes in Iraq against ISIL on 8 Aug 2014, and remarkably, the U.N. Secretary General did *not* condemn those airstrikes.

The U.S. and Arab allies began airstrikes in Syria against ISIL on 23 Sep 2014. Despite the fact that these airstrikes were a blatant violation of the sovereignty of Syria's borders, the U.N. Secretary General did *not* condemn those airstrikes.

On 17 Oct, the United Nations Security Council — in response to a series of deadly bombings by ISIL in Iraq — seemed to call for the U.S.-led coalition to *kill more* ISIL terrorists with airstrikes. This is a bit of a surprise to me, because the U.N. commonly calls for a cessation of hostilities. [Security Council Press Release](#); [U.N. News](#); [Reuters](#); [Kuwait News Agency](#); [Emirates24/7](#).

Kobani

Kobani — also spelled Kobane, and known in Arabic as Ayn al-Arab — is a Kurdish town in northern Syria, near the border with Turkey. Sometime around 18 Sep 2014, ISIL threatened to capture Kobani. By 2 Oct, more than 160,000 refugees had fled from Kobani into Turkey.

7 Oct: de Mistura calls for military intervention in Kobani

On 7 Oct 2014, the U.N. Secretary General's Envoy for Syria, de Mistura, openly called for military intervention in Syria to stop the ISIL assault on Kobani:

The world has seen with its own eyes the images of what happens when a city in Syria or in Iraq is overtaken by the terrorist group called ISIS or Da'esh: massacres, humanitarian tragedies, rapes, horrific violence. The city of Kobane on the northern border of Syria, close to Turkey, has been under siege now for three weeks. There were 400000 inhabitants. They have been defending themselves — they are all Kurds- they have been defending themselves with great courage. But they are now very close to not being able to do so. They are fighting with normal weapons, whereas the ISIS has got tanks and mortars. **The international community needs to defend them.** [Emphasis added by Standler.] The international community cannot sustain another city falling under ISIS. Turkey has been very generous in receiving more than 200000 of its inhabitants but what is needed now is concrete action. The world, all of us, will regret deeply if ISIS is able to take over a city which has defended itself with courage but is close to

not being able to do so. We need to act now.

"Note to Correspondents - Statement attributable to United Nations Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura," [U.N.](#), 7 Oct 2014.

Also see: [U.N. News](#) (Ban and OHCHR); [Associated Press](#); [Al-Jazeera](#); [Daily Star](#)(AFP); [Fox News](#), all on 7 Oct 2014.

In less than two months the United Nations has gone from (1) calling for an end to hostilities in Syria to (2) open endorsement of more hostilities — specifically attacks on ISIL in Syria and Iraq. In my view, liberals and humanitarians should be ashamed at their failure to defeat the ideas of radical Islamic jihadism (e.g., Al-Qaeda and its ISIL offspring), so that military annihilation is now the only solution to the terrorism problem. In my view, so-called hawks (e.g., Senators McCain and Graham, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Secretary of Defense Panetta, etc.) should be embarrassed that their calls for an earlier military intervention in Syria and Iraq were ignored, because of a lack of sound reasoning and convincing expression. Unfortunately, the hawks did not know that ISIL would capture most of northern Iraq during the first half of 2014, then capture large amounts of U.S.-supplied vehicles, weapons, and munitions that were abandoned by the Iraqi army near Mosul. This gift from the U.S. taxpayers indirectly to ISIL was a game changer.

Sadly, when the peacemakers and humanitarians begin calling for more military intervention, we know the situation is dire.

8 Oct: Kerry says Kobani is expendable

Beginning 1 Oct, U.S. aircraft have been bombing ISIL near Kobani in Syria, to attempt to prevent ISIL from capturing Kobani. However, as reported in the previous story, on 7 Oct it appeared that ISIL would capture Kobani.

QUESTION [by Elise Labott of CNN]: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. The U.S. intensified airstrikes overnight on Kobani. Has there been a decision now to save Kobani from falling? Because yesterday, your spokesman and other officials suggested that you had larger strategic priorities than saving Kobani or any particular city or town.

And I'd like to talk to you about the reluctance of Turkey. They have tanks at the border, soldiers at the ready, but this NATO ally has not done really much to save this town inches from its border. What did you ask the prime minister to do in recent conversations? The president has said that they won't do more unless you act to get rid of Assad. Is this an excuse, and — or are you deferring to Turkey here? Have you not been partnering with the Kurds, who have been battling ISIS for a year and are decidedly secular, to save the city? [Question for U.K. Foreign Secretary deleted.]

SECRETARY KERRY: Thanks. Thank you. Thanks, Elise. Well, we're deeply concerned about the people of Kobani, who are battling against ISIL terrorists. And indeed, we have talked to the leaders of Turkey. I talked with Prime Minister Davutoglu, I think, twice yesterday and the day before. We have conducted additional strikes in the region. We conducted strikes both Monday and Tuesday and now. **But as horrific as it is to watch in real time what's happening in Kobani, it's also**

important to remember that you have to step back and understand the strategic objective and where we have begun over the course of the last weeks. [Emphasis added by Standler.]

We're literally just coming out of the UN meeting at which we announced the coalition, literally have just been deploying the first efforts to liberate — as you know, a few weeks ago — Sinjar Mountain, the siege on Amirli, the Haditha Dam, the Mosul Dam, and we were very successful in those efforts. And the Iraqi forces within Iraq are standing up and have had some successes — some setbacks too — but some successes over the course of the last days.

But General Allen is literally only on his first trip right now in the region. He will be going to Turkey tomorrow. He is going to have long meetings through tomorrow and Friday in which we hope to determine exactly how Turkey will now enter this having resolved their hostage crisis. Clearly, on their border, this is of enormous concern to Turkey and they recognize that.

QUESTION: But where are they?

SECRETARY KERRY: These things have to be done in a thoughtful and careful way so everybody understands who is doing what and what the implications are of their doing it and where you go as a result. And I am absolutely confident that tomorrow, the discussions will take place directly with Ambassador McGurk and General Allen and CENTCOM. General Lloyd Austin is very much involved in directing those strikes now and in doing what he can within the framework of the current structure. But this is a structure that is evolving on a daily basis, and notwithstanding the crisis in Kobani, the original targets of our efforts have been the command and control centers, the infrastructure. We're trying to deprive the — ISIL of the overall ability to wage this, not just in Kobani but throughout Syria and into Iraq. So I think you will see over the next hours, days the fullness of that strategy evolving and decisions being made about the Turks and others as to exactly what role they're going to play.

"Remarks With U.K. Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond," [State Dept.](#), 8 Oct 2014.

I am appalled at Kerry's willingness to watch Kobani be captured by ISIL. Kerry is extraordinarily callous when he observes that protecting Kobani from ISIL is *not* part of our "strategic objective". Kerry wants to bomb ISIL's headquarters, their command and control centers, their oil refineries, and their weapons depots, *but not* ISIL attacks on cities. Kerry then digresses into irrelevant remarks about bombing in Iraq — which actually began on 8 August, *not* "a few weeks ago". Finally, Kerry says the battle in Syria must "be done in a thoughtful and careful way". Meanwhile, the brave Kurds who are defending Kobani will be massacred when ISIL captures that city. So I titled this section "Kerry says Kobani is expendable", even though Kerry did not use the word "expendable". I suggest that the U.S. Military dramatically increase its airstrikes on ISIL in the vicinity of Kobani, and also that the U.S. Military coordinate those airstrikes with Kurdish rebels in Kobani. (Journalists have reported that the U.S. Military is *not* communicating with the Kurdish fighters in Kobani, although journalists are able to communicate with the Kurds.) On 15 Oct, the Kurds announced they were communicating with the U.S. Military about targets for airstrikes, as

described [below](#).

On the morning of 9 Oct, *The Washington Post* reported:

Islamic State fighters were battling outgunned Kurdish fighters in the heart of Kobane on Thursday [9 Oct], a day after the Pentagon warned that U.S. airstrikes alone will not save the Syrian border town from being overrun by the militants.

The fresh push came amid rising tensions between the Obama administration and Turkey, a NATO ally, over who should take responsibility for helping to save the town.

The Islamic State made gains overnight despite stepped-up American airstrikes over the past three days, and senior administration officials have expressed growing exasperation with Turkey's refusal to intervene, either with its own military or with direct assistance to Syrian Kurdish fighters battling the militants.

"Of course they could do more," a senior official said Wednesday. "They want the U.S. to come in and take care of the problem." The administration would also like Turkey to be more zealous in preventing foreigners from transiting its territory to join the Syrian militants.

....

The Kurds say they do not want Turkish intervention but do want Turkey to permit weapons, ammunition and food to flow across its border to the 3,000 or so fighters defending the town.

Karen DeYoung and Liz Sly, "U.S. frustration rises as Turkey withholds military help from besieged Kobane," [Washington Post](#), 06:39 EDT, 9 Oct 2014.

In my opinion, the Turkish government is correct to keep their army on the Turkish side of the border, to avoid violating the sovereignty of the Syrian border. Also, the Turkish government has long considered the Kurds to be terrorists, because the Kurds sometimes fought for an independent government in the region containing parts of present day Turkey and Syria. A third consideration is that Turkey has been criticized for the porous Syrian-Turkish border, where Islamic terrorists and supplies cross from Turkey into Syria. Now the U.N. and the USA want Kurdish fighters to cross the border from Turkey into Kobani, but Turkey considers the Kurdish fighters to be terrorists. That explains the Turkish view of the crisis.

It also appears that the Turkish government is withholding cooperation about Kobani, to force the U.S.-led Coalition to also attack Assad. The Turkish government has long opposed the Assad government.

10 Oct: more alarm from de Mistura

On Friday, 10 Oct, de Mistura spoke again about Kobani, this time to forecast the massacre of at least 12,000 civilians when ISIL captures Kobani. I boldfaced a few phrases.

Thank you. Good afternoon to everyone. Good to see you and my apologies for

keeping you waiting a little bit today and previous days but I was looking for this opportunity to meet you. At the same time, I was thinking it was going to be a normal opportunity but what happens regarding Syria, nothing is normal and therefore first things first and that's why I am giving you just a short concept of what could be the mission which the Secretary-General has entrusted to me and then go straight to what is the current event which perhaps can put to a test what we are trying to do.

So the broad line and I am just being, because it was expected to be anyway a broad line, at the beginning: at this stage we are not obviously talking about Geneva III or any type of major political momentum. What we are working on is listening, being in a listening mode, being in a position of understanding where is the current regional, global and national environment regarding possible political process, political process, if and when that can be started and facilitated by the UN. The second is to make sure that any type of action that the UN can be promoting or facilitating regarding the reduction of violence should be implemented and applied.

The next point is to make sure that whenever we can find any type of opportunity of reducing the suffering of the people and increasing their access on a humanitarian side, for the Syrian people have been suffering enough for the last three and a half years, we will try to do so. And last but not least, any opportunity, any opportunity, which may be given by the international community or by the local or regional environment to initiate or facilitate a political process — because as you all know, there is no military solution to this conflict — will be applied. I have been going to Damascus, I met President Assad, I have been talking to everyone I can in the region and I will continue doing so inside and outside Syria. And that is basically the starting point of a minimalistic if you want, but concrete and realistic approach, what the UN can do at this stage. But I can tell you the Secretary-General was very clear with me. He said any opportunity we have to take it grab it in order to make sure that what is being perceived as an ever-ending conflict should be assisted to be ending and meanwhile anything we can do reduce the suffering should be applied. That leads me to the issue of the day.

Kobani — Ayn al-Arab — used to have 400,000 people. It has been under constant attack by ISIL — Da'esh — for the last three weeks. It has been an announced attack. It has been an attack which has been constant and not like in Mosul which had caught everyone by surprise. Its inhabitants have decided to resist and they are resisting until now. The latest figures we have is that about 10,000 to 13,000 of them are in a certain border line area just outside Kobani — Ayn al-Arab — between the border of Turkey and Syria, nearby the city. They are there and there are at the same time about 500 to 700 mostly elderly people and civilians still inside the centre of the city. The coalition, which has been created on the basis of resolution 2170, has been increasingly hitting positions in at least 20 and more locations and occasions in order to deter the constant well-organized attack by ISIL. But they themselves recently have admitted that this may not be enough to save the city. The Turkish authorities have met with generosity and efficiency more than 200,000 people, refugees, into camps inside Turkey.

But all this may not be enough in order to avert a clear humanitarian tragedy or

catastrophe. We know, we have seen it, what ISIL is capable of doing when they take over a city. We know what they are capable of doing with their own victims, with women, children, minorities and hostages. After Mosul this time, it is announced and one reason more for actually looking at it in a different way. If Kobani — Ayn al-Arab — falls and this could happen, I will show you a map and here it is. You can see the areas which are this is based purely on our own analysis. It is not an official, a military analysis, it is the UN analysis. But based on what we are getting from our own reports, the areas which are circled are the areas which have been hit through the coalition airforce attacks in order to reduce the pressure on the city. The green area, what you see here, is what is currently still the perimeter of the city. But what you should be particularly looking at it is this. This is the last entry point or exit point, which you have for the city. And if you look at where the coalition has been hitting, you can see that since they have been trying to hit where ISIL is present, the city is literally surrounded except for this. If this falls, the 700 — plus perhaps if they move a little bit further — the 12,000 people civilians apart from the fighters **will be most likely massacred.**

You remember Srebrenica? We do. We never forgot. And probably we never forgave ourselves for that. I was in the area. I was not in Srebrenica but I belonged to the generation of UN secretariat staff who felt terrible when they realized they were focussing on Dubrovnik, on Sarajevo and Srebrenica fell. You remember Vukovar, you remember Rwanda. We have been telling ourselves, based on the principles that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has been more and more emphasizing, i.e. Human Rights Up Front, that when there is an imminent threat to civilians we cannot, we should not be silent. There is a lot of political reasons, strategic reasons, that may indicate that it is difficult to do something about it. But the Secretary-General has clearly made a statement saying anyone who can do anything should be. **Please take action to protect the civilians,** in this case of Kobani — Ayn al-Arab. Do we have an international scenario to justify any type of action? Well resolution 2170 speaks very clearly. Everyone who can should be doing what he can in order to control and hopefully stop this atrocious terrorist movement, especially when they are clearly indicating where they are going. There is humanitarian law. There is Srebrenica. There are the images that we don't want to see, we cannot see, and I hope you will not be seeing of people beheaded, of the defenders and civilians. This should in theory produce enough traction.

So the question is: what can be done? Well while respecting obviously, and the UN cannot say otherwise, the broad parameters of international law and integrity and sovereignty of Syria, because this is Syrian territory and the Syrian Government has actually come up publicly and said that they too support the Kobani citizens and would like them to be not under the terror and horror of ISIL. **We would like to appeal to the Turkish authorities in order to allow the flow of volunteers at least and their own equipment in order to be able to enter the city and contribute to a self-defence operation.** And if they can, to support the deterrent actions of the coalition through whatever means from their own territory. I know that Turkey has been going through very difficult times. It is a great country which has gone through enormous pressure because of the Syrian crisis. They have been extremely generous and active.

1.6 million people are every day being taken care of by them. And they are under enormous pressure due to the fact that all this is affecting them. And I understand and we heard they have important preconditions which need to be analysed not only by everyone but also in the international context and probably are being analysed and may require discussions in international fora. But this may require time and Kobani, in our own opinion, does not have enough time.

The request by the Secretary-General to all those who can **do something** to protect the civilians is still there. Hence our appeal to Turkey to take some specific additional actions to stop the advance of ISIL. We need that because otherwise all of us, including Turkey, will be regretting deeply that we have missed an opportunity of stopping ISIL and sending a signal that that cannot continue. If Kobani — Ayn al-Arab — falls, there will be close to 400 km of the Turkish border to be basically under control of ISIL out of the 900. And what would be next? Other villages? Even Aleppo? Apart from political considerations, that are there, and strategic considerations, our appeal is based on the principle that the UN will not after Srebrenica ever give up on which is Human Rights Up Front. Thank you.

Staffan de Mistura, "Note to Correspondents - Transcript of press conference by UN Special Envoy for Syria (SES) Staffan de Mistura," [U.N.](#), 10 Oct 2014. [Typographical errors corrected and boldface added by Standler.]

Note that de Mistura's remarks on 7 and 10 Oct were posted to the Internet at the U.N. Secretary General's website, which may indicate that the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Syria speaks for the Secretary General himself.

The following journalists also reported de Mistura's remarks: [U.N. News](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [Al-Jazeera](#); [Washington Post](#); [Daily Star](#); all on 10 Oct 2014.

12 Oct: Kerry

On 12 Oct, Kerry was in Cairo, Egypt, where he held a press conference. I have added boldface to some important phrases and sentences.

QUESTION [Brad Klapper of The Associated Press]: Thank you. Mr. Secretary, I'd like to pick up on your discussions you had today about the effort against the Islamic State. In Iraq, Anbar province could possibly fall, and already hundreds of thousands of Iraqis in Baghdad and its environs are living in fear. In Kobani, on the Syrian-Turkish border, the United Nations and others are warning of a massacre. And in both places, the ground — local ground troops that we're hoping can turn the tide are clearly not up to the task yet. What is — what will the United States and its allies do to change the dynamic, and urgently, because it looks as if, on the one hand, there's the threat of a major strategic defeat, and on the other, possible genocidal acts?

SECRETARY KERRY: Well, thank you. A very important question. First of all, obviously we are all very concerned about the reports of gains in Kobani, and we're closely monitoring the situation. In fact, we're doing much more than just monitoring it; we've been deeply engaged with strikes in the last days. Even today, there were more strikes. And there was news today that they are continuing to hold the town. It has

not been taken in completion, parts of it have. But we are in discussions with — I talked with President Barzani the other day. I've talked with Prime Minister Davutoglu a couple of times. And we're in conversations with our partners in this coalition.

But I want to make it clear that as they make decisions about what the options are, Kobani does not define the strategy of the coalition with respect to Daesh. **Kobani is one community, and it's a tragedy what is happening there**, and we don't diminish that, but we have said from day one it is going to take a period of time to bring the coalition thoroughly to the table to rebuild some of the morale and capacity of the Iraqi army and to begin to focus where we ought to be focusing first, which is in Iraq, while we are degrading and eliminating some of the command and control centers and supply centers and fuel centers and training centers for ISIL within Syria.

Now, that's the current strategy. And we expect, as we have said, there will be ups and there will be downs over the next days, as there are in any kind of conflict. But we are confident about our ability to pull this strategy together, given the fact that every country in the region is opposed to Daesh, without exception. And whether it's Iran or Lebanon or Syria itself or Turkey or Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, they're all opposed, and five Arab nations are involved in conducting attacks in Syria. So over time, we believe that the strategy will build, the capacity will build, Daesh will become more isolated. **But ultimately, it is Iraqis who will have to take back Iraq. It is Iraqis in Anbar who will have to fight for Anbar.** And we're confident that just as that happened before, that can and will happen again, though it will take some time to build that capacity in order for it to be able to be effective.

"Remarks With Egyptian Foreign Minister Shoukry After Their Meeting," [State Dept.](#), 12 Oct 2014. [Boldface added by Standler.]

My comments: Notice that Kerry said "Kobani is one community" as if they were just another expendable village. The Truth is that Kobani was a city of 400,000 people before ISIL threatened it sometime around 18 Sep. Then Kerry explains that it will take time to rebuild the *Iraqi* army. But Kobani is in *Syria*. Kerry should have said that it will take two years to train and equip the moderate Syrian rebels, so ISIL will continue to capture land in Syria until Oct 2016.

15 Oct: Pentagon

Beginning the night of 13 Oct, the U.S. Military dramatically increased the number of airstrikes near Kobani. In the 48 hours from early Monday night (13 Oct) to early Wednesday night (15 Oct), there were a total of 39 airstrikes near Kobani. Details are described [below](#).

On 15 Oct, the Pentagon press spokesman said:

We believe — and it's hard to give an exact number — but we believe that we have killed several hundred ISIL fighters, again, in and around Kobani.

....

I would also say — and I think it's important for people to understand — Kobani could

still fall. It could very well still fall.

Admiral Kirby, "Department of Defense Press Briefing by Rear Adm. Kirby in the Pentagon Briefing Room" [Pentagon](#), 15 Oct 2014.

On 16-17 Oct numerous commentators noted that *both* ISIL and the USA want to win in Kobani, for propaganda purposes. ISIL needs to show that it can still capture land despite U.S.-led airstrikes. The USA needs to show that its airstrikes are effective in stopping ISIL. [Associated Press](#).

19 Oct: Turkey refuses to arm Kurds U.S. airdrop of supplies to Kurds in Kobani

The president of Turkey said on 19 Oct that the Kurds in Syria (PYD) are the same terrorists (PKK) that have been fighting inside Turkey since 1984, and he refuses to send weapons and ammunition to the PYD in Syria. [Hürriyet](#); [Associated Press](#); both on 19 Oct.

At about 22:00 EDT on 19 Oct, the U.S. Central Command told journalists that the U.S. Military had dropped supplies to the Kurdish fighters in Kobani, as explained [below](#). It is expected that the government of Turkey will be angry with the U.S. aid to Kurds who Turkey considers "terrorists".

20 Oct: Turkey to allow Iraqi Kurds to enter Kobani

On 20 Oct, Kerry was in Jakarta, Indonesia, where he told journalists:
... [The Kurds in Kobane] are valiantly fighting ISIL.

And we cannot take our eye off the prize here. It would be irresponsible of us, as well as morally very difficult, to turn your back on a community fighting ISIL, as hard as it is, at this particular moment. And we talked with Turkish authorities — I did, the President did — to make it very, very clear this is not a shift of policy by the United States. It is a crisis moment, an emergency where we clearly do not want to see Kobane become a horrible example of the unwillingness of people to be able to help those who are fighting ISIL.

So, there is this momentary effort. But what we did say very clearly [to the Turkish government] is, "Help us to get the Peshmerga or other groups in there who will continue this, and we don't need to do that." And I think that's very much the objective, and I think that's very much the way we are going.

So, our hope is that, indeed, Kurds who have proven themselves to be very strong and valiant fighters will take this fight on, and it won't be necessary for us to have this kind of delicate reach, if you will, in terms of people's different interests.

John Kerry, [State Dept.](#), 20 Oct 2014.

My comments: This is another example of the Obama/Kerry strategy of "too little, too late". Supplying the Kurdish fighters in Kobani *should* have been done weeks earlier, to make them as effective as possible in the fight against ISIL. One day after the airdrops, the Kurds in Syria were already asking for more supplies. [Reuters](#).

Also notice a glaring inconsistency in Kerry's position. First, Kerry correctly says that that it would be "irresponsible ... morally very difficult" not to support a group that was valiantly fighting against ISIL. But then Kerry says our support of the Kurds is a one-time, "momentary" effort that would be unnecessary to continue, if Turkey would allow the Peshmerga from Iraq to enter Kobani. Taken together, Kerry says the USA only does responsible, moral acts as a "momentary" effort.

Response of Turkey: In a surprise, the foreign minister of Turkey announced on 20 Oct that Turkey would allow Kurdish peshmerga from Iraq to enter Kobani. But Turkey continues to consider Kurds from Syria as terrorists, who Turkey will *not* help. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [Hürriyet](#) in Turkey; [Washington Post](#). I note that on 10 Oct U.N. envoy de Mistura requested Turkey to allow reinforcements to enter Kobani.

On 22 Oct, the Kurdish Parliament "overwhelmingly" voted to send reinforcements with heavy weapons to Kobani. [Rudaw](#) in Kurdistan; [Associated Press](#).

23-31 Oct: slow arrival of reinforcements

On 23 Oct, the Turkish president, Erdogan, announced he would allow 200 Peshmerga from Iraq to enter Kobani. [Reuters](#). Erdogan later reduced this number to 150.

On 24 Oct, the Turkish president, Erdogan, announced he would allow 1300 soldiers from the Free Syrian Army (FSA) to enter Kobani. Reuters reports that the FSA will send "reserve fighters", to avoid detracting from FSA's fight against Assad's military. [Reuters](#).

On 27 Oct, the peshmerga had *not* arrived in Kobani, apparently because of vacillation by the Turkish president, Erdogan. The Kurds in Iraq are prepared to send approximately 150 peshmerga, along with heavy artillery, to Kobani. [Rudaw](#).

On 28 Oct, the Turkish prime minister made a clear statement of what was bothering the Turkish government: if ISIL is defeated in Kobani, Turkey wanted Kobani to be controlled by *neither* Syrian-Kurdish rebels *nor* Assad's forces. [Reuters](#). My comment is that it is *not* rational for Turkey to prefer ISIL to either Kurds or Assad.

On the morning of 29 Oct, approximately fifty FSA fighters entered Kobani. [Associated Press](#). These are the first reinforcements to arrive in the more than two-week ordeal to provide reinforcements to Kobani. In my opinion, Turkey is a problem, *not* an ally, in the fight against ISIL.

On the morning of 30 Oct, the 150 peshmerga from Iraq arrived in Suruc Turkey, about 12 km from Kobani. The peshmerga will began entering Kobani in groups of ten, to avoid

attracting attention of ISIL. The first ten entered Kobani at noon local time. [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#). Reuters reports only 200 (15%) of the 1300 FSA fighters promised by Erdogan have arrived in Kobani, but the Associated Press is reporting only 50 FSA fighters are in Kobani.

Strangely, Assad's government criticized the decision by Turkey to allow a few hundred fighters into Kobani as a "blatant violation of Syrian sovereignty". The Syrian government also claimed that "Turkey is continuing in its role of aggression against Syria". [SANA](#) in Syria; [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#); [Washington Post](#). I say this is strange, because Syria has no public objection to uninvited airstrikes that are an even bigger violation of Syrian sovereignty. A recent United Nations report says there are 15,000 foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq, all fighting for ISIL and Al-Qaeda. [Associated Press](#); [The Guardian](#). If Syria wants to complain about Turkey allowing foreign fighters into Syria, Syria should complain about the fighters for ISIL and Al-Qaeda, and *not* complain about the tiny group that wants to defend Kobani from ISIL.

On 31 Oct, the ten peshmerga who entered Kobani on 29 or 30 Oct returned to Turkey. The initial group of ten is now described as an "advance team" to plan and coordinate with the Syrian Kurds who have been defending Kobani for more than 40 days. [Rudaw](#).

At night on 31 Oct a convoy of peshmerga entered Kobani. [Reuters](#); [Associated Press](#). All 150 peshmerga — with their artillery, heavy machine guns, and anti-tank missiles — arrived in Kobani on the night of 31 Oct. [Associated Press](#).

Suggestions that Airstrikes *Not* Effective

There is a consensus amongst military leaders and commentators that airstrikes alone are *not* going to stop ISIL. An effective army on the ground is required to engage and defeat ISIL. Because of multiple problems with the Iraqi army (including cowardice, corruption, and incompetence), there is no effective army on the ground in most of Iraq. While Obama intends to train and equip so-called "moderate rebels" in Syria, that training will take *two years* for 15,000 rebels. So it is no surprise that the airstrikes are failing to stop ISIL in both Iraq and Syria.

On 7 Oct 2014, the Associated Press bureau chief in Baghdad reported dismal results from airstrikes in Iraq.

After two months, the U.S.-led aerial campaign in Iraq has hardly dented the core of the Islamic State group's territory. The extremist fighters have melted into urban areas when needed to elude the threat, and they have even succeeded in taking new territory from an Iraqi army that still buckles in the face of militants.

In neighboring Syria, days of airstrikes have been unable to stop militants on the verge of capturing a strategic town on the Turkish border.

The limited results show the central weakness of the campaign: There is only so much that can be done from the air to defeat an extremist force that has swept over much of

Iraq and Syria. The Islamic State fighters have proven elusive and flexible, able to reorganize to minimize the blows. And more importantly, there are almost no allied forces on the ground able to capitalize on the airstrikes and wrest back territory from the militants.

The exception: Iraqi Kurdish fighters, the most effective forces in Iraq, have made some modest gains the past week.

That only highlights how others have proven unable to do the same. The Iraqi military is undermined by corruption and command problems. A new Iraqi government has been trying to woo support from more Sunni tribesmen, whose fighters are seen as vital against the Sunni extremists, but so far there has not been a flood of support. In Syria, rebels supported by Washington are in no position to move against the extremists, and Syria's Kurds are not as well armed as Iraq's.

Vivian Salama, "AP ANALYSIS: US-led airstrikes produce few gains," [Associated Press](#), 15:13 EDT, 7 Oct 2014.

8 Oct: Press Briefing by Admiral Kirby

On 8 Oct, the Pentagon began explanations to prepare people for the eventual ISIL conquest of Kobani in Syria. Here is a quotation from a press briefing by Admiral Kirby at the Pentagon. I have boldfaced some important remarks by Admiral Kirby.

QUESTION: (off-mic) sorry. Looking at the situation in the town on the border between Turkey and Syria [Kobani], and given that the fighting is surprisingly getting longer and longer, many questions now around the efficiency of the air campaign. Do you think it has been efficient so far? And what would you ask of those who are completely recusing the air campaign, saying it's not efficient, it won't get us result, and probably the U.S. and others will need years there? And they're thinking basically ground troops are the option.

ADM. KIRBY: Yeah, I find this line of questioning really interesting, since **we've been saying since the very beginning that airstrikes alone are not going to be sufficient**. So let me just turn your question a little bit. You asked if they're efficient. I think the better way to — if I may, a better question to ask is, have they been effective? Because efficiency and effectiveness are completely two different things, at least in a military mind.

We believe they have been effective at what they are trying to achieve. And what we are trying to achieve from the air is two things. In Iraq, it's to support Iraqi and Kurdish forces on the ground as they — and this is an important point — as they take the fight to ISIL on the ground inside their country. They are the ground forces that matter most in Iraq. And so much of what we're doing inside Iraq from the air is helping them do that job, as well as to just routinely put pressure and try to set ISIL back on its heels a little bit more.

As you know, we've moved from — the first iteration of airstrikes in Syria were largely

defensive in nature, and now they are a little bit more offensive and more tactical, in our parlance, dynamic. In Syria, the purpose of the airstrikes largely is to get at this group's ability to sustain itself, to resupply, to finance, to command and control. They use Syria as the sanctuary and safe haven so that they can operate in Iraq.

Now, I understand it's not that clean. First of all, the border is not much of a border. They are operating in Syria, as well. But that is essentially the way it breaks down. They're using Syria as the headquarters, if you will. Iraq is where they're operating.

So in Syria, the airstrikes are principally designed and — and many of the strikes that we've taken — even as recently as a couple of days ago — are against fixed targets, facilities, ways in which they are using to headquarters themselves, sustain themselves, train.

That said, there have been dynamic strikes inside Syria. You saw another six overnight just in and around Kobani. So it's not like we've ignored the crisis around this town of Kobani. Not at all. And we have hit some dynamic targets, smaller, tactical targets there. And we do believe that they have had an effect on ISIL in and around that town.

ISIL does not own Kobani right now. They — there's mixed reporting about whether they've pulled back or whether they're still in. I mean —

{Journalist interrupts away from microphone.}

ADM. KIRBY: Yeah, well, that's one estimate. I heard a third, as well. I mean, I don't know exactly where they are inside. But we do believe some of them are inside there. But we also know some of them have left. Partly because of the pressure that they've been getting from the air.

The last point I want to make here — and this is a really important one — is that **airstrikes alone are not going to do this**. They're not going to fix this. They're not going to save the town of Kobani. We know that. And we've been saying that over and over again. And yet we continue to get questions of, well, why aren't you doing more? And how come they aren't more effective?

But what we've been very honest about, the limits of airpower here. The ground forces that have to — that matter the most are indigenous ground forces. **And we don't have a willing, capable, effective partner on the ground inside Syria right now**. It's just a fact. I can't change that.

That's why we're so eager to get the training and equip program up and running with our partners, Saudi Arabia now being willing to host the site, and that's going to take some time.

And if I could, I know I'm on a little bit of a riff here, but there's another point that I really want to make, and that is: Time matters here. Time matters. And, yes, airstrikes are dramatic. When you drop a bomb from the air, something blows up, somebody, you

know, gets stopped, and you have a tactical effect.

But I think we've forgotten — and I think we need to keep reminding people — that this is going to be a long, difficult struggle. It's not going to be solved through military power alone. And as dramatic as airstrikes can be and as effective on the battlefield as they can be, they're not the solution here.

What really has to happen long term and — is good governance, good governance in Iraq and good governance in Syria, options for people that don't — so they don't have to turn to the ideology of a group like ISIL. And that's not — that — so there's a — there's an element of strategic patience here that I think everybody needs to consider, all of us, all of you, the American people, everybody.

....

QUESTION: And also, would the Pentagon consider the fall of Kobani a strategic loss?

ADM. KIRBY: I don't know that we're going to characterize the fall of Kobani one way or the other. I think we all understand that that's a possibility, that Kobani could be taken. We recognize that. We're doing everything we can from the air to try to halt the momentum of ISIL against that town, but that airpower is not going to be alone enough to save that city.

....

ADM. KIRBY: But we're not — we know that this is going to be a long struggle. We know that ISIL is going to continue to grab ground. And there are going to continue to be villages and towns and cities that they take. We all have to recognize that reality.

So when we get up here and we say it's going to be a long struggle and it's going to be difficult, and when we get up here and say airpower — military power alone — let's take airpower off the table for a minute — isn't going to be enough to fix it, we really mean it.

And so we all need to prepare ourselves for the reality that other towns and villages — and perhaps Kobani — will be taken by ISIL. They have made no bones about the fact that that — to my answer to the gentleman's last question, that this is their goal, to govern, to have space and territory that belongs to them. So we just have to recognize that.

....

QUESTION: Are you preparing the public, in effect, for the fact that not just Kobani, but other Syrian towns may fall over the long haul of this air campaign until you have those competent forces on the ground?

ADM. KIRBY: I think we all should be steeling ourselves for that eventuality, yes. "Department of Defense Press Briefing by Rear Admiral Kirby in the Pentagon Briefing Room," [Pentagon](#), 8 Oct 2014. [All boldface added by Standler.]

On 8 Oct, a press release from the Pentagon summarized:

Airstrikes against Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant terrorists will not be enough to end the siege of the embattled Syrian Kurdish town of Kobani, the Pentagon press secretary acknowledged today [8 Oct].

"Airstrikes alone are not going to do this," Rear Adm. John Kirby said. "They're not going to fix this. They're not going to save the town of Kobani." He spoke as battles between ISIL terrorists and Kurdish fighters were reported continuing in and around the town along the Syrian-Turkish border.

"We know that," Kirby said. "We've been saying that over and over again. And yet we continue to get questions of, well, 'why aren't you doing more? And how come they aren't more effective?'"

The admiral said the department has been very honest about the limits of airpower, pointing out that the key will be the training and equipping of indigenous ground forces.

"And we don't have a willing, capable, effective partner on the ground inside Syria right now. It's just a fact. I can't change that."

Saudi Arabia has offered to host training for Syrian rebels who would return to the country to battle ISIL terrorists, but Kirby said it will take months before they are properly trained and equipped.

"Spokesman: Airstrikes Only Part of the Strategy Against ISIL," [Pentagon](#), 8 Oct 2014.

Previous estimates, chronicled in my [eleventh essay](#) on Syria, is that it will take *one year* to train 5000 rebels, and that a total of at least 15,000 rebels will be needed in Syria. Obama and Kerry have chosen to train and equip a small, fragmented, and disorganized bunch of rebels to oppose the vastly superior army of Assad, as well as the superior forces of the Nusra Front (Al-Qaeda) and ISIL. The choice of Obama and Kerry to support these rebels — instead of supporting Assad in the fight against terrorism — is a recipe for disaster in Syria: it will prolong the sectarian civil war, increase the number of casualties, and possibly leave Islamic terrorists in control of Syria.

In response to Admiral Kirby saying the USA does *not* "have a willing, capable, effective partner on the ground inside Syria right now", the Syrian National Coalition made an incoherent reply.

Nora al-Ameer, vice president of the Syrian Coalition, said earlier that "President Obama's remarks made during the press conference held in Tallinn, Estonia, have not outlined a clear strategy for the fight against terrorism in Syria and the region. The American position still lacks stopping the killing machines of ISIS and the Assad regime against the Syrian people. President Obama's remarks lack a clear vision in

addressing the threat posed by the terrorism of ISIS and the Assad regime in the region due to the absence of political will in dealing with the conflict in Syria." Al Ameer also said that "the Obama administration should realize that stemming the tide of terrorism can only be achieved when both the Assad regime and ISIS are designated as targets for any possible military action. Moreover, fighting terrorism in the region is impossible bear fruit if the Free Syrian Army is not empowered, especially after it proved itself as a bulwark against terrorism that have swept the region."

"Syrian Coalition Regrets US's Ignoring of the Capable Syrian Rebels," [SNC](#), 10 Oct 2014.

Instead of attempting to refute Kirby's assertion, the Syrian National Coalition spent four sentences criticizing Obama. In their last sentence, the Syrian National Coalition vaguely calls for the Free Syrian Army to be "empowered". The title of this press release by the Syrian National Coalition mentions that the USA has "ignored capable Syrian rebels", but that is strangely *not* mentioned in the text of the press release. In my opinion, Kirby is correct. The Free Syrian Army is disorganized, fragmented, weak, and unreliable.

9 Oct: Journalist and Commentator

On 9 Oct 2014, the Associated Press reported that the initial airstrikes on 23 Sep 2014 against the Khorasan Group failed to destroy that group of terrorists.

The barrage of U.S. cruise missiles last month aimed at a Syrian terrorist cell killed just one or two key militants, according to American intelligence officials who say the group of veteran al-Qaida fighters is still believed to be plotting attacks against U.S. and European targets.

The strikes on a compound near Aleppo did not deal a crippling blow to the Khorasan Group, officials said, partly because many important members had scattered amid news reports highlighting their activities. Among those who survived is a French-born jihadi who fought in Afghanistan with a military prowess that is of great concern to U.S. intelligence officials now.

....

The limited effectiveness of the attack on the Khorasan Group is partly the result of a hazy intelligence picture that also has bedeviled the air campaign against Islamic State targets in Syria and Iraq.

The U.S. lacks the networks of bases, spies and ground-based technology it had in place during the height of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, officials say, or even the network of human sources it developed in Pakistan and Yemen.

....

News stories last month, including a Sept. 13 report by The Associated Press that first disclosed the group's significance as a terrorist threat, led some members to flee before the U.S. military had a chance to strike their known locations, U.S. officials said.

Ken Dilanian, "Strikes didn't end threat from Syrian terror cell," [Associated Press](#),

16:04 EDT, 9 Oct 2014.

On 9 Oct 2014, Dr. Charles Krauthammer, writing in *The Washington Post*, suggested that the airstrikes might be for show, rather than to defeat ISIL.

As designed, the outer limit of its objective is to roll back the Islamic State in Iraq and contain it in Syria. It is doing neither. Despite State Department happy talk about advances in Iraq, our side is suffering serious reverses near Baghdad and throughout Anbar province, which is reportedly near collapse. Baghdad itself is ripe for infiltration for a Tet-like offensive aimed at demoralizing both Iraq and the United States.

As for Syria, what is Obama doing? First, he gives the enemy 12 days of warning about impending air attacks. We end up hitting empty buildings and evacuated training camps.

Next, we impose rules of engagement so rigid that we can't make tactical adjustments. Our most reliable, friendly, battle-hardened "boots on the ground" in the region are the Kurds. So what have we done to relieve Kobane? About 20 airstrikes in a little more than 10 days, says Centcom.

That's barely two a day. On the day after the Islamic State entered Kobane, we launched five airstrikes. Result? We hit three vehicles, one artillery piece and one military "unit." And damaged a tank. This, against perhaps 9,000 heavily armed Islamic State fighters. If this were not so tragic, it would be farcical.

No one is asking for U.S. ground troops. But even as an air campaign, this is astonishingly unserious. As former E.U. ambassador to Turkey Marc Pierini told the Wall Street Journal, "It [the siege] could have been meaningfully acted upon two weeks ago or so" — when Islamic State reinforcements were streaming in the open toward Kobane. "Now it is almost too late."

Charles Krauthammer, "Bombing for show? Or for effect?" [Washington Post](#), 20:05 EDT, 9 Oct 2014.

I agree with Dr. Krauthammer's reasoning and his conclusions, except for one fact. Citing an *average* number of airstrikes during the past ten days (29 Sep to 8 Oct?) is misleading, because the number of airstrikes/day has recently increased. The average is small because the number of airstrikes/day was small or zero in the beginning. But the important point is that the airstrikes, regardless of their number, were *not* effective in preventing ISIL from capturing part of Kobani.

10 Oct: *The Washington Post*

On 10 Oct, the Beirut bureau chief of the *The Washington Post* reported on U.S.-led airstrikes in Syria.

The U.S.-led air war in Syria has gotten off to a rocky start, with even the Syrian rebel groups closest to the United States turning against it, U.S. ally Turkey refusing to contribute and the plight of a beleaguered Kurdish town [Kobane] exposing the

limitations of the strategy.

U.S. officials caution that the strikes are just the beginning of a broader strategy that could take years to carry out. But the anger that the attacks have stirred risks undermining the effort, analysts and rebels say.

The main beneficiary of the strikes so far appears to be President Bashar al-Assad, whose forces have taken advantage of the shift in the military balance to step up attacks against the moderate rebels designated by President Obama as partners of the United States in the war against extremists.

The U.S. targets have included oil facilities, a granary and an electricity plant under Islamic State control. The damage to those facilities has caused shortages and price hikes across the rebel-held north that are harming ordinary Syrians more than the well-funded militants, residents and activists say.

....

In Syria, the strikes have highlighted the absence of U.S. partners on the ground. Moderate rebels grouped in the Free Syrian Army were pushed out of the Islamic State's northeastern strongholds during fierce fighting over the summer and now have no presence in the areas that are the chief target of the coalition attacks.

Liz Sly, "U.S.-led air war in Syria is off to a difficult start," [Washington Post](#), 10 Oct 2014.

14 Oct: *Al-Jazeera*

On 14 Oct, *Al-Jazeera* published an analysis:

Fighters with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) scored another key victory in Iraq this week, overtaking the city of Heet in Anbar province as hundreds of local troops withdrew.

Meanwhile, ISIL fighters have continued to wage a fierce battle against Kurdish forces in the Syrian town of Kobane — even as a US-led coalition intensified its campaign of air strikes in the border region. While the aerial bombardment decimated an ISIL training camp and several groups of fighters, it has failed to halt the group's advances in Kobane, raising questions about how much the current US strategy can realistically achieve.

Indeed, with the world watching from the other side of the Turkish border, Kobane has become a symbolic battleground in the broader war against ISIL — and a litmus test for the efficacy of the US plan.

"The air strikes still did function, because the expectation was that sometime last week [Kobane] would fall. It didn't," Soli Ozel, an international relations expert at Turkey's Kadir Has University, told *Al Jazeera*. But air strikes alone will not be enough to end the crisis gripping Iraq and Syria, he added — particularly when the incoherent and ill-

equipped assortment of local ground troops cannot adequately take advantage of the openings created by the bombings.

"At some point there's going to have to be a [larger] ground war, but I don't think the United States is willing to do it," Ozel said. "If these so-called coalition forces do not want to put their boots on the ground, somebody else has to do the fighting."

....

"We shouldn't forget what ISIL is, and what ISIL is, is the world's richest terrorist organisation in history," [James] Denselow [a Middle East analyst and director of the New Diplomacy Platform] added, noting the group has extended its reach with oil smuggling, extortion and border controls. "It's got an estimated \$2bn worth of cash, it's got a huge amount of high-tech heavy weaponry, much of it American-made weaponry, that it seized when it humiliated the Iraqi military. This is not a fly-by-night organisation. The fact that it is now in direct conflict with the Americans has given it a boost in terms of people who would flock to join it or support it."

Megan O'Toole, "Analysis: Can US strategy defeat ISIL?" [Al-Jazeera](#), 14 Oct 2014.

17 Oct: General Austin

On 17 Oct, General Austin, head of U.S. Central Command, gave a press briefing at the Pentagon. He discussed both Kobani and the possibility that ISIL would capture Anbar province in Iraq.

We've conducted precision strikes, for example, targeting ISIL's communications equipment and hardware, their command centers, and their vehicle parks, and tanks and Humvees which were stolen from the Iraqi army, as well as oil refineries which are now under ISIL's control.

ISIL derives significant revenue from oil production, and so by striking these types of facilities, we reduce their ability to generate the funds and the fuel required to sustain their operations. And we are having the desired effects.

We're seeing evidence of this not only in our battle damage assessments, but more important, we're noting changes in the enemy's behavior and tactics that reflect his diminished capability and restricted — restricted freedom of movement. For example, we're no longer seeing them move around the country in large convoys. Now they're mostly traveling in civilian vehicles in smaller numbers. This is hindering their ability to mass and to shift combat power.

We've also seen them alter their methods of communication which is inhibiting their ability to coordinate and synchronize their efforts. And so we are having the desired effects, but this will take some time.

....

That said, I do want to emphasize that airstrikes — the airstrikes that we're conducting are just one element of the campaign to counter and ultimately destroy ISIL.

....

It — it — it's highly possible that Kobani may fall. And — but, again, I think the things that we have done here in — in the last several days are encouraging. And we're seeing the — the Kurds actually fight to regain territory that had been lost previously.

....

QUESTION [by Jim Miklaszewski, NBC] We're hearing a lot about ISIS advances in the Anbar province. Several towns reportedly have fallen just within the past week. Just what is the state of play there currently? And — and what threat do those forces there in Anbar province potentially pose to Baghdad, or even more importantly perhaps is — is the airport?

GEN. AUSTIN: I would describe Anbar as contested. It's been that way for some time. I would also say that unlike some of what you have heard in a number of places, we have not seen an appreciable increase of ISIL forces in Anbar from what we saw in the July-August timeframe.

....

QUESTION [Phil Stewart with Reuters]: Let me just follow up. I mean, what would you say to people who think — who are saying now that the strategy is fundamentally flawed because of a lack of support on the ground, partly because there's not enough use of U.S. forces that are capable?

GEN. AUSTIN: I think — you know, most everyone has been clear that, you know, this is not doable just from the air. They've also been clear that it will — the ground forces that we would look to use are the indigenous ground forces, you know, the Iraqi ground forces in Iraq and, you know, hopefully a force that we can train in Syria to help us in Syria when that — when we get to that piece.

But, you know, our role would be and is to provide enablers, to help them get the job done on the ground. And I do think that's doable.

"Department of Defense Press Briefing by General Austin in the Pentagon Briefing Room," [Pentagon](#), 17 Oct 2014.

23 Oct: airstrikes in Syria kill 553/month

On 23 Oct the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights announced that the U.S.-led coalition had killed a total of 553 people in Syria from the beginning on 23 Sep until 22 Oct. The total comprises 464 ISIL, 57 Nusra Front (Al-Qaeda), and 32 civilians. [SOHR](#); [Associated Press](#).

On 21 Oct, the Pentagon press spokesman estimated that the U.S. effort in Iraq and Syria *combined* cost US\$ 7.6 million/day. [Pentagon](#). Assuming that half of that is spent in Syria, it cost the USA approximately \$100 million to kill about 500 terrorists in Syria, or about \$200,000 per dead terrorist.

For comparison, Wal-Mart is selling 5.56 mm cartridges for \$179 per box of 420. Assuming it takes four shots to kill one terrorists, one could kill 500 terrorists for \$850.

31 Oct: airstrikes fail to deter foreign fighters

On 30 Oct, *The Washington Post* reported that airstrikes had failed to change the approximately 1000 foreigners who arrived each month in Syria to fight with ISIL or Al-Qaeda. These foreigners were apparently neither deterred nor encouraged by airstrikes. [Washington Post](#); copy at [Gulf News](#).

ISIL to capture Anbar province?

9 Oct: *The Washington Post*

On 9 Oct, *The Washington Post* reported that ISIL is near overrunning Anbar province in Iraq.

Islamic State militants are threatening to overrun a key province in western Iraq in what would be a major victory for the jihadists and an embarrassing setback for the U.S.-led coalition targeting the group.

A win for the Islamic State in Anbar province would give the militants control of one of the country's most important dams and several large army installations, potentially adding to their abundant stockpile of weapons. It would also allow them to establish a supply line from Syria almost to Baghdad and give them a valuable position from which to launch attacks on the Iraqi capital.

The Islamic State's offensive in Anbar has received less attention than its assault on the Syrian border city of Kobane, which has played out in view of news photographers standing on hills in nearby Turkey. But in recent weeks, Islamic State fighters have systematically invaded towns and villages in Anbar, besieged army posts and police stations, and mounted attacks on Iraqi troops in Ramadi, the provincial capital.

....

... Sunni tribesmen have said they feel threatened by the Shiite militias that are participating in Iraq's fight against the Islamic State.

In talks this week with retired U.S. Gen. John Allen, the administration's coordinator of the international coalition against the Islamic State, tribal leaders said that "they will not confront the Islamic State while Shiite militias exist in Sunni areas," tribal chief

Samir al-Muhammadi told the Saudi-owned London newspaper Al-Hayat. Erin Cunningham, "Islamic State fighters are threatening to overrun Iraq's Anbar province," [Washington Post](#), 11:00 EDT, 9 Oct 2014.

My comments: My initial reaction to this article in *The Washington Post* was surprise. I read the online English-language [All Iraq News](#) at least once a day since June 2014, and I had not seen any indication of the impending capture of Ramadi, Haditha, and the Haditha Dam. But my essay for [August 2014](#) listed hysterical exaggerations by the Iraqi government of the number of ISIL fighters killed by Iraqi forces, so the Iraqi news media are *not* trustworthy.

The conquest of Anbar by ISIL would be consistent with the [above](#) reports that airstrikes alone are ineffective, one also needs a competent army on the ground. Obviously, *neither* the Iraqi government *nor* the moderate rebels in Syria have a competent army.

Also note that, beginning in December 2013, the United Nations monthly [death toll](#) for Iraq has excluded Anbar province, because of lack of data from small towns in that province. In September 2014, Anbar province also failed to provide death data from the big cities in Anbar. That lack of data indicates that Anbar no longer meets standards set by the federal government in Baghdad.

Looking backward, on 8 Oct Admiral Kirby complained to journalists at a press briefing that journalists were focused on Kobani, and ignoring similar problems in Iraq.

I wouldn't say we've learned anything new, but I'd say that what we've seen — certainly in Kobani, but also in Iraq — I mean, it's not like — everybody's focused on this town in Kobani, and I get that. But there's still a lot of fighting going on inside Iraq. These guys [ISIL] have not given up a whole heck of a lot of ground inside Iraq.

....

We are not going to be able — you know, it's interesting. I mean, we're being asked about why we're not or why we won't or why we can't save Kobani. And we're not being asked those same questions about towns inside Iraq. And I don't know why that is, other than maybe there's real-time footage coming out of Kobani[,] or what the difference is.

Admiral Kirby, "Department of Defense Press Briefing by Rear Admiral Kirby in the Pentagon Briefing Room," [Pentagon](#), 8 Oct 2014.

Later, I found a news article from *Asharq Al-Awsat* in London England. I do not know whether the *Washington Post* or *Asharq Al-Awsat* article was published first, or whether they were independent and essentially simultaneous.

Iraq's restive western province of Anbar is on the verge of completely falling into the hands of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) unless urgent action is taken to address military failures, the Anbar Tribal Council warned on Wednesday [8 Oct].

The Anbar Tribal Council, the senior-most Sunni tribal organization in the province, is

backing central government attempts to combat ISIS but has complained to Baghdad about the appointment of Lt. Gen. Rashid Fleih as head of the Anbar Military Command, calling for him to be replaced. In comments to Asharq Al-Awsat, Anbar Tribal Council member Faris Ibrahim said “[Fleiidh] is unable to do anything.”

.....

International efforts to combat ISIS in Iraq have focused on central and northern parts of the country, where ISIS is actively advancing. The terrorist group had initially advanced into Iraq from Syria through the western province [Anbar], which had been the center of a Sunni-led protest movement against former Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki’s government over its perceived sectarian bias.

Hamza Mustafa, "ISIS on verge of seizing “complete control” in Anbar: tribal official," [Asharq Al-Awsat](#), 9 Oct 2014.

On Sunday afternoon, 12 Oct, the Associated Press reported:

On the western edge of Iraq's capital, Islamic State group militants battle government forces and exchange mortar fire, only adding to the sense of siege in Baghdad despite airstrikes by a U.S.-led coalition.

Yet military experts say the Sunni militants of the Islamic State group, who now control a large territory along the border that Iraq and Syria share, won't be able to fight through both government forces and Shiite militias now massed around the capital.

It does, however, put them [Islamic State] in a position to wreak havoc in Iraq's biggest city, with its suicide attacks and other assaults further eroding confidence in Iraq's nascent federal government and its troops, whose soldiers already fled the Islamic State group's initial lightning advance in June.

.....

The siege fears in Baghdad stem from recent gains made by the Islamic State group in the so-called Baghdad Belt — the final stretch between Anbar province, where the group gained ground in January, and Baghdad. The group has had a presence in the Baghdad Belt since spring, Iraqi officials say, but recent advances have sparked new worries.

Last week, Islamic State group fighters seized the towns of Hit and neighboring Kubaisa, sending Iraqi soldiers fleeing and leaving a nearby military base with its stockpile of weapons at risk of capture. The U.S.-led coalition recently launched two airstrikes northwest of Hit, U.S. Central Command said Saturday [11 Oct].

Perhaps most worrying, Islamic State group fighters now battle Iraqi forces in Abu Ghraib, the town home to the infamous prison of the same name that's only 18 miles (29 kilometers) from the Green Zone, the fortified international zone protecting Baghdad-based embassies and government office.

Vivian Salama, "Worried Iraqi capital sees militant push around it," [Associated Press](#), 15:24 EDT, 12 Oct 2014.

Earlier version of this story was posted by Fox News: "Despite airstrikes, ISIS forces draw nearer to Baghdad," [Fox News](#), 12 Oct 2014.

On Monday morning, 13 Oct, Agence-France Presse reported that the Iraqi army had on Sunday night withdrawn from the city of Hit, "leaving the city under full jihadist control". The AFP concludes:

Government forces have suffered a string of setbacks in Anbar in recent weeks, and officials have warned that their grip on the capital Ramadi was increasingly tenuous. "Iraq pulls troops from ISIS-held western city," [Daily Star](#)(AFP), 13 Oct 2014.

14 Oct: Obama

Military leaders of 22 nations gathered at Andrews Air Force Base near Washington, DC for a one-day meeting on 14 Oct. Afterwards, Obama gave a ten-minute speech, which included:

So far, we've seen some important successes: Stopping ISIL's advance on Erbil. Saving many civilians from a massacre on Mount Sinjar. Retaking the Mosul Dam. Destroying ISIL targets and fighters across Iraq and Syria.

Obviously, at this point, we're also focused on the fighting that is taking place in Iraq's Anbar Province, and we're deeply concerned about the situation in and around the Syrian town of Kobani, which underscores the threat that ISIL poses in both Iraq and Syria. And coalition airstrikes will continue in both these areas.

One of the things that has emerged from the discussions, both before I came and during my visit here, is that this is going to be a long-term campaign. There are not quick fixes involved. We're still at the early stages. As with any military effort, there will be days of progress and there are going to be periods of setback.

Obama, "Remarks by the President After Meeting with Chiefs of Defense," [White House](#), 15:31 EDT, 14 Oct 2014.

16 Oct: *The Washington Post*

On 16 Oct, *The Washington Post* again reported continuing advances by ISIL in Anbar province in Iraq.

About 14 miles from Baghdad International Airport, a mortar shell landed with a thud. A second followed, closer, and then a third struck across the Iraqi army's lines, as the Islamic State militants zeroed in on their target.

The volley of mortar fire outside the Baghdad suburb of Abu Ghraib this week was not unusual in itself; Islamic State fighters and the Iraqi army have regularly exchanged fire in this area for months. But now, officials worry that gains by the extremist group

in neighboring Anbar province will provide momentum for an assault on the outskirts of the capital.

Mortar shells fired by the Islamic State have already fallen in central Baghdad in recent weeks, and suicide bombings have picked up pace — a wave of blasts killed at least 50 people in and around Baghdad on Thursday [16 Oct], local media reported. While the army is holding its ground around the capital's perimeter, Abu Ghraib is seen as a weak point, and sympathy for the radical fighters is growing here, residents say, because of the heavy-handed actions of Shiite militias.

Loveday Morris, "On outskirts of Baghdad, Islamic State's advances raise tensions," [Washington Post](#), 16 Oct 2014.

21 Oct 2014

On the night of 21 Oct 2014, Reuters reported a scary portrayal of the inadequacies of the Iraqi army:

Now Anbar's largest airbase Ain al-Asad, the Haditha Dam — a critical piece of infrastructure - and surrounding towns are encircled by Islamic State to the west from the Syrian border and to the east from militant-controlled sections of Ramadi.

IS has grown so strong over the last year that "they are like an octopus stuck to your face," said a Baghdad-based foreign diplomat.

Within Islamic State's grasp: an open route from the Syrian border all the way to Baghdad.

Sunni tribal fighters fear they are outmanned and say the U.S. military and Iraqi government are not sending enough support. Weapons are insufficient and U.S.-led air strikes are not dependable, the fighters say - even once they have tracked down the right commander or politician to relay a request for help.

....

Iraq's main military divisions in Anbar - seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth and twelfth — have been badly damaged. At least 6,000 Iraqi soldiers were killed through June and double that number have deserted, say medical and diplomatic sources.

The picture is confused by the presence of ghost soldiers - enrolled men who do not turn up and fight but whose salaries go into the pockets of the commanders. The phenomenon has been associated with the shockingly fast collapse of the Iraqi army in the country's second-largest city of Mosul during the summer.

One Iraqi intelligence officer in Anbar estimated that while as many as 60,000 soldiers may be listed on the books in reality there are no more than 20,000 across the province. Ahmed Rasheed, Saif Hameed, & Ned Parker, "Consumed by Islamic State, Iraq's Anbar province a key battleground again," [Reuters](#), 01:59 GMT, 22 October 2014.

30 Oct 2014: Hagel/Dempsey Press Briefing

On 30 Oct, Hagel and General Dempsey held a press briefing at the Pentagon. Recently Sunni fighters from the Abu Nimer tribe in Anbar province were fighting against ISIL. Not only did ISIL win that battle, but then ISIL subsequently executed hundreds of Abu Nimer fighters and police.

QUESTION: (off mic) speaking about the Abu Nimer tribe, tribal leaders tell us that 400 of their people were killed in the last 48 hours in addition to the 45 who ISIS photographed after they were killed and other found in the grave.

Iraqi forces, as I'm told, requested a humanitarian aid drop on Monday, which the U.S. delivered. Did Iraqi forces request any military support to protect this tribe, which has risen up against ISIS, which is exactly what the coalition wants. Did the request any air support?

And are you aware of any efforts by Iraqi security forces to take military action to protect this tribe, which was facing, really, a massacre?

GEN. DEMPSEY: Well, look, the Iraqi security forces in Al Anbar Province are in defensive positions and would be unlikely to be able to respond to a request for assistance for the Abu Nimer tribe.

We could, with our air power, if we had the proper ISR at the point when it was requested. I am not aware that they made a request of us. I can't speak to whether they made a request of the Iraqi security forces.

What I can say is that's why we need to expand the train-advise-and-assist mission into the Al Anbar Province. But the precondition for that is that the government of Iraq is willing to arm the tribes.

By the way, we have positive indications that they are, but we haven't begun to do it yet.

....

There's three components to the train-advise-assist mission. Initially, the Iraqi security forces, and I include in that the Peshmerga, so north and south, mostly oriented around Baghdad and Erbil, and then there's the issue of the tribes and trying to find a way to engage and power — or enable them.

And that's what we're now beginning to explore. We've got a program in place where we're beginning to restore some offensive capability and mindset to the Iraqi security forces. We need to think about how to do that with the tribes. We also need to make sure that the Iraqi security forces are not spread out in ways that prevent them from supporting each other.

Like, Al-Assad is sitting out there, somewhat isolated. 7th Division, 9th Division in Taji is somewhat isolated. So, we need to help the Iraqi security forces: help in the sense of help them plan and enable them to execute, to link these groups up who are currently isolated.

And then, I think that becomes a platform for reaching out to the tribes.

And then the third one is this national guard concept, which, if the Iraqi government takes a decision to form it and passes a law, it would probably begin to be implemented sometime in the new calendar year.

You need all three of those eventually. Right now, we're focused on the Iraqi security forces.

"Department of Defense Press Briefing by Secretary Hagel and General Dempsey in the Pentagon Briefing Room," [Pentagon](#), 30 Oct 2014.

My comments: General Dempsey is proposing a significant expansion of U.S. military presence in Iraq to train the Iraqi army, train fighters from tribes, and train a future Iraqi national guard. Although General Dempsey mentioned no numbers, we could be training a quarter-million fighters. (In 2011, there were 200,000 soldiers in the Iraqi army.) Such training will require significantly more U.S. personnel and more money from U.S. taxpayers. Worse, while we carefully plan future training for the Iraqi army, Iraqis are being slaughtered every day by ISIL.

Currently, the Iraqi army in Anbar province is defending the Haditha dam, defending a few strategic towns, and trying to prevent ISIL from reaching Baghdad. That means the Iraqi army is *not* available to prevent massacres of tribal fighters by ISIL.

On 1 Nov, [Reuters](#) reported "Albu Nimr had held out for weeks under siege by Islamic State, but finally ran low on ammunition, fuel and food." The tribal chief "repeatedly asked" the Iraqi government in Baghdad for supplies, but he was "ignored". Journalists are *not* reporting the excuses offered by the government in Baghdad for allowing the massacre of tribal fighters. This kind of unacceptably poor performance by the government in Baghdad will make it more difficult for Sunni tribes to trust the government. [Reuters](#).

More Daily News

9 Oct: State Department Press Briefing

The Turkish government requested that the U.S.-led Coalition also attack Assad's military. At the Daily Press Briefing at the U.S. State Department, on 9 Oct Jen Psaki explained the Coalition's role was *only* to defeat ISIL.

QUESTION: Jen, you said General Allen's conversations are going to be partly about how Turkey can contribute to degrading ISIL. The Turks have been very clear that they want to take the fight to Assad. Is that part of this conversation as well? Is that on or off the table at this point?

MS. PSAKI: Well, Turkey has made a range of public comments, including their interest in being — playing a more prominent role in the coalition, including taking military action as it relates to ISIL. So what we want to have a conversation with them about in person is what specifically they're willing to do. Our objectives and the focus of the coalition haven't changed. It's focused on ISIL, and that's the discussion we're having with countries in the region, including Turkey.

....

QUESTION: Is part of that conversation taking the fight to Assad, to the regime?

MS. PSAKI: That is not the focus of our international coalition and not the focus of our efforts by the United States.

Daily Press Briefing, [State Dept.](#), 9 October 2014.

17 Oct: State Department Press Briefing

At the 17 Oct Daily Press Briefing at the U.S. State Department, we were reminded of Obama's continuing obsession with removing Assad.

QUESTION: Okay. Today, the Russian Prime Minister Medvedev said in a radio interview — in fact, it was with ... [CNBC](#) radio that was carried on Russian radio — he's claiming that the United States is no longer insisting on the removal of Bashar al-Assad. Do you have any comment on that?

MS. HARF: Our position has not changed. We believe, and as the President has said repeatedly, Assad has lost all legitimacy a long time ago. There cannot be a stable, inclusive Syria under his leadership. There is not a role for him in the future of Syria.

QUESTION: The context of what he said is the following, that now the priority is really to fight ISIS and not to worry so much about Assad, who's actually on the same side —

MS. HARF: Well —

QUESTION: — in fighting ISIS.

MS. HARF: — that's a simplistic reading of the situation. We can go after ISIL, as we are doing in Iraq and Syria, and also make very clear that there needs to be a political, negotiated, transitional governing body going forward that is in the best interests of Syria, that gets to a government without Assad.

Daily Press Briefing, [State Dept.](#), 17 October 2014. I added a link to the interview with Medvedev.

By refusing to cooperate with Assad in the fight against ISIL, the USA has deprived itself of numerous advantages, as I explain in the [conclusion](#) to this essay. By honoring the Turkish

government's label of "terrorist" for the Syrian Kurds, the USA has deprived itself of effective troops on the ground in Syria. These two political decisions make the U.S. Military less effective in the war against ISIL.

20-22 Oct: ISIL again attacks Yazidi in Iraq

On 3 Aug 2014, ISIL invaded Sinjar and threatened genocide against the Yazidi. This threat of genocide motivated Obama to order airdrops to besieged Yazidis on a mountain, during 7-13 August. See my [tenth essay](#).

At dawn on Monday, 20 Oct, ISIL attacked the Yazidi in Iraq. The Yazidi again fled to the nearby mountain. [Washington Post](#); [Al-Arabiya](#); [Rudaw](#) in Kurdistan; all on 20 Oct. [Reuters](#); [Haaretz](#)(Reuters), both on night of 21 Oct.

On 20 Oct, the United Nations warned of impending genocide of Yazidis by ISIL. [UNAMI](#); [Associated Press](#); [Reuters](#).

Note that sending Kurdish peshmerga from Iraq to Kobani means there will be fewer peshmerga in Iraq to fight ISIL in Sinjar and save the Yazidi. The shortage of competent militias on the ground in both Syria and Iraq is a glaring defect in Obama's strategy. Obama talks about training, which could take more than one year, when we need competent fighters on the ground *now* to thwart genocide and other atrocities by ISIL.

21 Oct: UK to fly surveillance missions in Syria

On 21 Oct, the United Kingdom announced it would begin flying surveillance missions over Syria. [Reuters](#). This is the first time the U.K. has entered Syrian airspace. However, the U.K. has flown 38 "combat missions" in Iraq, beginning on 30 Sep 2014.

U.S. Airstrikes in Iraq & Syria, U.S. Military Policy

Escalation of U.S. Military Engagement in Iraq

I posted an HTML webpage that contains a [list](#) of significant escalations of U.S. Military involvement in Iraq.

1 Oct 2014: airstrikes

On Wednesday, 1 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported more airstrikes in Iraq and Syria:

U.S. military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria Tuesday [30 Sep] and today [1 Oct] using a mix of fighter and remotely piloted aircraft to conduct three

airstrikes. Separately, U.S. military forces and a partner nation used a mix of fighter and remotely piloted aircraft Tuesday and today to conduct five airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq.

In Syria, three strikes near Kobani destroyed an ISIL armed vehicle, an ISIL artillery piece, and an ISIL tank. All aircraft departed the strike areas safely.

In Iraq, three strikes northwest of Mosul destroyed two ISIL armed vehicles, destroyed an ISIL occupied building, and struck two ISIL fighting positions. One strike in the vicinity of Haditha Dam destroyed an ISIL armed vehicle while another strike northwest of Baghdad destroyed two armed vehicles.

To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy fighter aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. In addition, the United Kingdom also participated in the Iraq airstrikes. All aircraft departed the strike areas safely.

The strikes were conducted as part of the President's comprehensive strategy to degrade and destroy ISIL. The destruction and degradation of ISIL targets in Syria and Iraq further limits the terrorist group's ability to lead, control, project power and conduct operations.

"Oct. 1: U.S. Military, Partner Nation Conduct Airstrikes Against ISIL," [Central Command](#), 1 Oct 2014.

Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 1 Oct 2014.

Note the airstrikes near Kobani in Syria, where Kurdish soldiers are fighting to prevent ISIL from capturing the city of Kobani. This battle has caused more than 150,000 refugees to flee into Turkey.

2 Oct 2014: airstrikes

On Thursday, 2 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported more airstrikes in Iraq and Syria:

U.S. and partner nation military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria Wednesday [1 Oct] and today [2 Oct] using a mix of fighter, attack, bomber and remotely piloted aircraft to conduct four airstrikes. Separately, U.S. military and partner nation forces used a mix of fighter, attack, bomber and remotely piloted aircraft Wednesday and today to conduct seven airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq.

In Syria, one strike near Kobani destroyed an ISIL checkpoint. Another strike in Syria, north of Sinjar Mountain, damaged an ISIL tank. One airstrike west of Raqqah destroyed an ISIL tank, while one strike east of Aleppo struck multiple ISIL facilities. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. In addition, the United Arab Emirates also participated in these strikes. All aircraft exited the strike areas safely.

In Iraq, one strike northwest of Baghdad destroyed two ISIL armed vehicles and two

other ISIL vehicles. Two strikes northwest of Mosul destroyed an ISIL Humvee and damaged two others, destroyed three armed vehicles and damaged another, damaged another vehicle and damaged an ISIL building. One strike east of Fallujah destroyed an ISIL vehicle. Two strikes west of Ramadi damaged an ISIL building and destroyed an ISIL vehicle, while one strike northeast of Sinjar destroyed an ISIL vehicle. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. In addition, the United Kingdom also participated in these airstrikes. All aircraft departed the strike areas safely.

The U.S. strikes were conducted as part of the President's comprehensive strategy to degrade and destroy ISIL. The destruction and degradation of ISIL targets in Syria and Iraq further limits the terrorist group's ability to lead, control, project power and conduct operations.

"Oct. 2: U.S. Military, Partner Nations Conduct Airstrikes Against ISIL in Syria and Iraq," [Central Command](#), 2 Oct 2014.

Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 2 Oct 2014.

3 Oct 2014: airstrikes total of 248 airstrikes in Iraq and 86 in Syria

On Friday, 3 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported more airstrikes in Iraq and Syria: U.S. and partner nation military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria Thursday [2 Oct] and today [3 Oct] using a mix of fighter and remotely piloted aircraft to conduct six airstrikes. Separately, U.S. military forces used attack aircraft today to conduct three airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq.

In Syria, one strike south of Al Hasakah destroyed an ISIL garrison, while one strike southeast of Dayr Az Zawr destroyed two ISIL tanks. Two strikes north of Ar Raqqa struck two modular oil refineries and an ISIL training camp, while another strike northeast of Aleppo struck an ISIL occupied building. One strike against an ISIL artillery piece west of Ar Raqqa was not successful. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. In addition, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates also participated in the Syria strikes. All aircraft departed the strike areas safely.

In Iraq, one strike north of Sinjar destroyed two ISIL armed vehicles, while two strikes northeast of Fallujah struck ISIL fighters. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. All aircraft departed the strike areas safely.

The U.S. strikes were conducted as part of the President's comprehensive strategy to degrade and destroy ISIL. The destruction and degradation of ISIL targets in Syria and Iraq further limits the terrorist group's ability to lead, control, project power and conduct operations.

"Oct. 3: U.S. Military, Partner Nations Conduct Airstrikes Against ISIL in Syria and Iraq," [Central Command](#), 3 Oct 2014.

Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 3 Oct 2014.

On 3 Oct, the Pentagon acknowledged that airstrikes against ISIL had caused ISIL to change its tactics:

Operations against the so-called Islamic State continue apace with 334 airstrikes against the terror group, Pentagon Press Secretary Navy Rear Adm. John Kirby told reporters at the Pentagon today [3 Oct].

Those airstrikes, the admiral added, are causing the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant to change its tactics.

Kirby briefed on the situation in Iraq and Syria and the coalition that is building against ISIL. He said there have been, to date, 248 airstrikes in Iraq and 86 in Syria.

While U.S. forces are carrying the primary load now, more and more coalition nations are participating. Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott announced today his government has approved airstrikes against ISIL.

The Defense Department has launched a new web page on defense.gov that focuses on the operations against ISIL. It contains an interactive map which will detail continued airstrikes in Iraq and Syria, including mission objectives, number of airstrikes and aircraft utilized, the admiral said. The direct link to the page is www.defense.gov/counter-isil .

The airstrikes are having an effect and the ISIL terrorists are changing tactics, Kirby said.

"Not surprisingly, they have gotten better at concealment," the admiral said. "Before the airstrikes they pretty much had free reign. They don't have that free rein anymore, because they know we're watching from the air."

The terrorists have had to disperse, in part, because of the airstrikes inside Syria against fixed targets — headquarters buildings, command-and-control nodes, finance centers and oil refineries.

Though the terrorists are being degraded, they remain a potent and dangerous threat, Kirby said. The group continues to threaten areas in Fallujah and Ramadi in Iraq and areas in Northern Syria on the border with Turkey.

"We expect that they will continue to change their tactics, based on the increasing pressure they're going to get, not just from the air, but from the ground, with Iraqi security forces," Kirby said.

And, while the enemy changes, coalition forces will adjust, too, the admiral said.

“Everybody paints them as this great adaptive, capable, agile enemy,” Kirby said.
“We’re pretty adaptive, capable and agile ourselves.”
"Airstrikes Causing ISIL to Change Tactics," [Pentagon](#), 3 Oct 2014.

4-5 Oct 2014: airstrikes

At noon EDT on Sunday, 5 Oct, the most recent press release at the Central Command website is dated 3 Oct.

On 5 Oct 2014, the Pentagon reported more airstrikes in Iraq and Syria:
U.S. military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria yesterday [4 Oct] and today [5 Oct], using fighter aircraft to conduct three airstrikes.

Separately, in Iraq U.S. military forces used helicopters and attack, bomber, and fighter aircraft to conduct six airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq.

In Syria, one strike northwest of Al Mayadin destroyed an ISIL bulldozer, two ISIL tanks and destroyed another ISIL vehicle. Two strikes northwest of Ar Raqqa struck a large ISIL unit and destroyed six ISIL firing positions. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed fighter aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. All aircraft departed the strike areas safely.

In Iraq, four strikes northeast of Fallujah struck two mortar teams, a large ISIL unit and two small ISIL units. One strike southeast of Hit destroyed two ISIL Humvees. One strike northeast of Sinjar destroyed an ISIL Humvee. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed helicopters and attack, bomber, fighter aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. All aircraft departed the strike areas safely.

The U.S. strikes were conducted as part of President Barack Obama's comprehensive strategy to degrade and destroy ISIL. The destruction and degradation of ISIL targets in Syria and Iraq further limits the terrorist group's ability to lead, control, project power and conduct operations.

"U.S. Military Conducts Airstrikes Against ISIL in Syria and Iraq," [Pentagon](#), 5 Oct 2014.
Later posted at [Central Command](#), 5 Oct 2014.

6 Oct 2014: airstrikes

On Monday, 6 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported more airstrikes in Iraq and Syria:

U.S. and partner nations' military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria Sunday [5 Oct] and today [6 Oct] using fighter and remotely piloted aircraft to conduct three airstrikes. Separately, U.S. military forces used remotely piloted and rotary wing aircraft to conduct three airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq.

In Syria, one strike destroyed an ISIL tank near Taqba Airfield west of Ar Raqqa.

One strike destroyed two ISIL fighting positions south of Kobani. One strike southeast of Dayr az Zawr destroyed an ISIL tank. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed fighter and remotely piloted aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. All aircraft departed the strike areas safely.

In Iraq, two strikes northeast of Fallujah struck two small ISIL units and destroyed two ISIL mortar placements and an ISIL bunker. An airstrike west of Ramadi damaged an ISIL-held building. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed remotely piloted and rotary wing aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. In addition, the Kingdom of Belgium and the United Kingdom participated in these airstrikes. All aircraft departed the strike areas safely.

The U.S. strikes were conducted as part of the President's comprehensive strategy to degrade and destroy ISIL. The destruction and degradation of ISIL targets in Syria and Iraq further limits the terrorist group's ability to lead, control, project power and conduct operations.

"Oct. 6: U.S. Military, Partner Nations Conduct Airstrikes Against ISIL in Syria and Iraq," [Central Command](#), 6 Oct 2014.

Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 6 Oct 2014.

Reuters explained the significance of the "rotary wing aircraft" (i.e., helicopters) — and also the 5 Oct mention of helicopters:

The U.S. military is flying Apache helicopters against Islamic State rebels in Iraq for the first time, exposing U.S. troops to greater risk from ground fire as they help Iraqi forces battle the Islamist group that has overrun parts of the country.

U.S. troops flew helicopters against Islamic State fighters on Sunday [5 Oct] and again on Monday [6 Oct] as they struck at mortar teams and other units near Fallujah, said a spokesman for Central Command, which is responsible for U.S. forces in the Middle East.

"This was the first time rotary wing aircraft were used in coordination with and in support of ISF (Iraqi Security Force) operations," Army Major Curtis Kellogg said in an email. "The Iraqi government asked for support with this capability near Fallujah to push back (Islamic State)."

U.S. officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the helicopters that were used were Apache attack helicopters.

David Alexander & Phil Stewart, "U.S. uses helicopters for first time to hit Islamic State rebels," [Reuters](#), 6 Oct 2014.

There is a real possibility of ISIL shooting down a U.S. helicopter, because ISIL has already destroyed two Iraqi helicopters: one on 3 Oct and one on 8 Oct. ISIL used shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles, probably stolen from either the Iraqi or Syrian army. [Associated Press](#) on 3 Oct; [Associated Press](#) on 8 Oct.

7 Oct 2014: airstrikes

On Tuesday, 7 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported more airstrikes in Iraq and Syria:

U.S. and partner nation military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria Monday and today, using attack, bomber, fighter, and remotely piloted aircraft to conduct nine airstrikes. Separately, U.S. military forces used attack and remotely piloted aircraft to conduct four airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq.

In Syria, two airstrikes west of Al-Hasakah successfully struck multiple ISIL buildings, including an air observation building and staging areas. Another airstrike northeast of Dayr az Zawr successfully struck an ISIL staging area and an IED production facility. One airstrike south of Kobani destroyed three ISIL armed vehicles and damaged another; another strike southeast of Kobani destroyed an ISIL armed vehicle carrying anti-aircraft artillery. Two airstrikes southwest of Kobani damaged an ISIL tank; another airstrike south of Kobani destroyed an ISIL unit. One airstrike southwest of Rabiyah struck a small group of ISIL fighters. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed U.S. Air Force attack, fighter and bomber aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. In addition, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates also participated in these airstrikes. All aircraft safely exited the strike areas.

In Iraq, one airstrike destroyed an ISIL armed vehicle firing on Peshmerga forces northeast of Sinjar. One airstrike northeast of Sinjar destroyed two ISIL armed vehicles; another airstrike northeast of Sinjar destroyed an ISIL armed vehicle. A third airstrike northeast of Sinjar struck a small group of ISIL fighters. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed U.S. Air Force attack and remotely piloted aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. In addition, the Kingdom of Belgium also participated in these airstrikes. All aircraft exited the strike areas safely.

"Oct. 7: U.S. Military, Partner Nations Conduct Airstrikes Against ISIL in Syria and Iraq," [Central Command](#), 7 Oct 2014.

Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 7 Oct 2014.

I have omitted the stock final paragraph that begins "The strikes were conducted as part of the President's comprehensive strategy" The U.S. Central Command should not be a cheerleader for the "President's comprehensive strategy", especially after Obama did *nothing* during January-June 2014 to prevent ISIL from conquering about 1/3 of Iraq. Moreover, Obama's so-called "comprehensive strategy" currently lacks an effective ground force in both Syria and Iraq.

[Above](#), I have quoted some commentary on Kobani by U.N. officials and U.S. officials.

And [above](#), I have quoted some commentary on the lack of effectiveness of airstrikes against ISIL in both Iraq and Syria.

8 Oct 2014: airstrikes

On Wednesday, 8 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported more airstrikes in Iraq and Syria:

U.S. and partner nation military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria Tuesday [7 Oct] and today [8 Oct], using bomber, fighter, and remotely piloted aircraft to conduct nine airstrikes. Separately, U.S. and partner nation military forces used fighter and remotely piloted aircraft Tuesday and today to conduct five airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq.

In Syria, four airstrikes south of Kobani destroyed an ISIL armored personnel carrier, destroyed three ISIL armed vehicles and damaged a fourth, and destroyed an ISIL artillery piece. A fifth airstrike, southwest of Kobani, destroyed an ISIL armed vehicle; a sixth airstrike, at the southern edge of Kobani, destroyed an ISIL artillery piece. Two airstrikes northwest of Ar Raqqa successfully struck an active ISIL training camp and associated ISIL fighters. An airstrike northwest of Dayr az Zawr destroyed an ISIL tank. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed bomber, fighter and remotely piloted aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. In addition, the United Arab Emirates aircraft participated in these airstrikes. All aircraft exited the strike areas safely.

In Iraq, an airstrike east of Fallujah destroyed an ISIL checkpoint and an ISIL armed vehicle. An airstrike in western Ramadi destroyed three ISIL-held buildings and damaged two more, destroyed two ISIL anti-aircraft artillery pieces, and destroyed an ISIL unit. An airstrike northwest of Ramadi destroyed an ISIL checkpoint. An airstrike northeast of Sinjar Mountain destroyed an ISIL armed vehicle; another airstrike northeast of Sinjar against an ISIL vehicle was unsuccessful. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed fighter and remotely piloted aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. In addition, the United Kingdom and the Kingdom of the Netherlands aircraft participated in these airstrikes. All aircraft exited the strike areas safely.

"Oct. 8: U.S. Military, Partner Nations Conduct Airstrikes Against ISIL in Syria and Iraq," [Central Command](#), 8 Oct 2014.

Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 8 Oct 2014.

On 8 Oct, Admiral Kirby at the Pentagon prepared journalists for the eventual capture by ISIL of Kobani in Syria, see [above](#).

Later on 8 Oct, Central Command reported more airstrikes:

U.S. and partner nation military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria today using bomber and fighter aircraft to conduct nine airstrikes. Separately, U.S. military forces used attack and fighter aircraft today to conduct three airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq.

In Syria, eight strikes near Kobani destroyed five ISIL armed vehicles, an ISIL supply depot, an ISIL command and control compound, an ISIL logistics compound, and eight ISIL occupied barracks, plus damaged another. One strike southwest of Ar Raqqa destroyed four ISIL armed vehicles and damaged two more. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed U.S. bomber and fighter aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central

Command area of operations. In addition, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan participated in these airstrikes. All aircraft exited the strike areas safely.

U.S. Central Command continues to monitor the situation in Kobani closely. Indications are that Kurdish militia there continue to control most of the city and are holding out against ISIL.

In Iraq, one airstrike northwest of Ramadi destroyed an ISIL checkpoint. One airstrike in Mosul destroyed four ISIL vehicles and damaged two others while another airstrike south of Kirkuk destroyed two ISIL fighting positions. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed U.S. attack and fighter aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. All aircraft exited the strike areas safely.

"Oct. 8: U.S. Military, Partner Nations Conduct Airstrikes Against ISIL in Syria and Iraq," [Central Command](#), 8 Oct 2014.

Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 9 Oct 2014.

9 Oct 2014: airstrikes

On Thursday, 9 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported more airstrikes in Syria: U.S. military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria Wednesday [8 Oct] and today [9 Oct] using bomber, fighter and remotely piloted aircraft to conduct five airstrikes.

In Syria, five strikes south of Kobani damaged an ISIL training camp, destroyed an ISIL support building and destroyed two ISIL vehicles. These strikes also struck one small ISIL unit and one large ISIL unit. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed U.S. bomber, fighter and remotely piloted aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. All aircraft exited the strike areas safely.

U.S. Central Command continues to monitor the situation in Kobani closely. Indications are that Kurdish militia there continue to control most of the city and are holding out against ISIL.

"Oct. 9: U.S. Military Conduct Airstrikes Against ISIL in Syria," [Central Command](#), 9 Oct 2014.

Later on 9 Oct, the U.S. Central Command reported more airstrikes in Syria and Iraq: U.S. military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria today using bomber aircraft to conduct nine airstrikes. Separately, U.S. military forces used attack aircraft today to conduct two airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq.

In Syria, six airstrikes south of Kobani destroyed two ISIL-held buildings, one ISIL tank, one ISIL heavy machine gun, and damaged an ISIL fighting position. These strikes also struck one large and two small ISIL units. Three airstrikes north of Kobani struck two small ISIL units and destroyed two ISIL-held buildings. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed U.S. bomber aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. All aircraft exited the strike areas safely.

In Iraq, an airstrike south of Sinjar destroyed an ISIL bunker and ammunition cache, and a small ISIL unit. Another airstrike, south of Sinjar Mountain, destroyed an ISIL armed vehicle and a small ISIL unit. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed attack aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. All aircraft exited the strike areas safely.

" Oct. 9: U.S. Military Conducts Airstrikes Against ISIL in Syria and Iraq,"
[Central Command](#), 9 Oct 2014.

Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 9 Oct 2014.

10 Oct 2014: airstrikes

On Friday, 10 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported more airstrikes in Iraq and Syria:

U.S. military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria Thursday [9 Oct] and today [10 Oct] using attack, bomber, fighter and remotely piloted aircraft to conduct nine airstrikes. Separately, U.S. military forces used fighter aircraft today to conduct one airstrike Thursday [9 Oct] against ISIL in Iraq.

In Syria, two airstrikes southeast of Kobani destroyed two ISIL training facilities, while four strikes south of Kobani destroyed two ISIL vehicles, struck two small ISIL units and damaged an ISIL tank. One airstrike northeast of Kobani destroyed an ISIL vehicle. An airstrike east of Dayr az Zawr destroyed an ISIL armored vehicle staging facility. One airstrike northeast of Al Hasakah struck a small ISIL unit. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed U.S. attack, bomber, fighter and remotely piloted aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. In addition, United Arab Emirates and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia aircraft participated in these airstrikes. All aircraft exited the strike areas safely.

In Iraq, one airstrike northwest of Baghdad struck a small ISIL unit and destroyed an ISIL building. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed fighter aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. All aircraft exited the strike areas safely.

"Oct. 10: U.S. Military Conducts Airstrikes Against ISIL in Syria and Iraq,"

[Central Command](#), 10 Oct 2014.

Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 10 Oct 2014.

11 Oct 2014: airstrikes

On Saturday, 11 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported more airstrikes in Iraq and Syria:

U.S. military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria Friday and today using bomber and fighter aircraft to conduct six airstrikes. Separately, U.S. and partner nation military forces used attack and fighter aircraft Friday and today to conduct three airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq. Also in Iraq Friday and today, U.S. military forces conducted multiple airdrops to help resupply Iraqi security forces at the request of the

Government of Iraq.

In Syria, four airstrikes north of Kobani struck an ISIL fighting position, damaged an ISIL command and control facility, destroyed an ISIL staging building and struck two small ISIL units. Two airstrikes south of Kobani destroyed three ISIL trucks. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed bomber and fighter aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. All aircraft exited the strike areas safely.

In Iraq, an airstrike north of Tall Afar struck a small ISIL unit and destroyed an ISIL armed vehicle. Two airstrikes northwest of Hit struck two small ISIL units. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed attack and fighter aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. In addition, the Kingdom of the Netherlands participated in these airstrikes. All aircraft exited the strike areas safely.

In addition, at the request of the Iraqi government, U.S. military forces conducted multiple airdrops in Iraq in the vicinity of Bayji Friday and today to resupply Iraqi security forces operating in the area. The airdrops were conducted from multiple airbases in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. The aircraft delivered 36 container delivery system bundles containing 7,328 halal meals, 2,065 gallons of water, and 16,000 pounds of ammunition. All aircraft exited the airdrop zone safely. The airdrops were intended to support the ISF, which continues to control Bayji. Areas external to Bayji, however, are contested as ISIL continues to conduct operations in the area.

"Oct. 11: U.S. Military Conducts Airstrikes Against ISIL in Syria and Iraq," [Central Command](#), 11 Oct 2014.

Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 11 Oct 2014.

12 Oct 2014: airstrikes

On Sunday, 12 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported more airstrikes in Iraq and Syria:

U.S. and partner nation military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria Saturday and today using bomber and fighter aircraft to conduct four airstrikes. Separately, U.S. and partner nation military forces used attack and remotely piloted aircraft to conduct five airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq.

In Syria, an airstrike northwest of Ar Raqqa destroyed an ISIL-held armored vehicle compound. Three airstrikes in Kobani destroyed an ISIL fighting position and an ISIL staging area. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed bomber and fighter aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. In addition, fighter aircraft from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates participated in these airstrikes. All aircraft exited the strike areas safely.

In Iraq, an airstrike southwest of Hit destroyed an ISIL armed vehicle; another airstrike southeast of Hit destroyed an ISIL armored personnel carrier. An airstrike on an ISIL checkpoint southwest of Kirkuk struck a small ISIL unit; another airstrike, south of

Kirkuk, struck a small ISIL unit. An airstrike northwest of Ramadi destroyed an ISIL armored personnel carrier. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed attack and remotely piloted aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. In addition, the United Kingdom participated in these airstrikes. All aircraft exited the strike areas safely.

"Oct. 12: U.S. Military Conducts Airstrikes Against ISIL in Syria and Iraq," [Central Command](#), 12 Oct 2014.

Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 12 Oct 2014.

13 Oct 2014: airstrikes

On Monday, 13 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported more airstrikes in Syria: U.S. and partner nation military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria Sunday [12 Oct] and today using bomber and fighter aircraft to conduct eight airstrikes.

In Syria, four airstrikes southwest of Kobani struck a large ISIL unit and a small ISIL unit, damaged an ISIL staging location and destroyed an ISIL heavy machine gun firing position. Three airstrikes northeast of Kobani struck a small ISIL unit, damaged two ISIL buildings and destroyed an ISIL staging location and three ISIL buildings. An airstrike northwest of Ar Raqqa struck an ISIL garrison. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed bomber and fighter aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. In addition, fighter aircraft from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia participated in these airstrikes. All aircraft exited the strike areas safely.

"Oct. 13: U.S. Military Conducts Airstrikes Against ISIL in Syria," [Central Command](#), 13 Oct 2014.

Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 13 Oct 2014.

14 Oct 2014: airstrikes

On Tuesday, 14 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported 22 airstrikes in Syria and one airstrike in Iraq:

U.S. and partner nation military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria Monday [13 Oct] and today [14 Oct] using bomber and fighter aircraft to conduct 22 airstrikes. Separately, U.S. military forces used attack aircraft Monday to conduct one airstrike against ISIL in Iraq.

In Syria, 21 airstrikes near Kobani destroyed two ISIL staging locations and damaged another, destroyed one ISIL building and damaged two others, damaged three ISIL compounds, destroyed one ISIL truck, destroyed one ISIL armed vehicle and one other ISIL vehicle. As part of these strikes, an additional seven ISIL staging areas, two ISIL mortar positions, three ISIL occupied buildings and an ISIL artillery storage facility were struck and initial indications are that these strikes were successful. One strike near Dayr az Zawr struck a modular oil refinery and initial indications are that this strike was successful.

These airstrikes are designed to interdict ISIL reinforcements and resupply and prevent ISIL from massing combat power on the Kurdish held portions of Kobani. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed U.S. fighter and bomber aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. In addition, fighter aircraft from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia participated in these airstrikes. All aircraft departed the strike areas safely.

U.S. Central Command continues to closely monitor the situation in Kobani. Indications are that airstrikes have slowed ISIL advances. However, the security situation on the ground there remains fluid, with ISIL attempting to gain territory and Kurdish militia continuing to hold out.

In Iraq, one strike southwest of Kirkuk destroyed one ISIL armed vehicle and one ISIL vehicle. All aircraft departed the strike areas safely.

"Oct. 14: U.S. Military, Partner Nations Conduct Airstrikes Against ISIL in Syria and Iraq," [Central Command](#), 14 Oct 2014.

Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 14 Oct 2014.

Notice the dramatic increase in the number of airstrikes near Kobani, beginning Monday night, 13 Oct.

15 Oct 2014: airstrikes

On 15 Oct, the U.S. Central Command gave the name "Operation Inherent Resolve" to the anti-ISIL coalition in Iraq and Syria that began on 8 August. [Central Command](#). In my opinion, this is a dumb name. "Desert Storm" in 1991 was a much better name. "Daesh Be Gone" comes to my mind, using the Arabic name for ISIL. (grin)

On Wednesday, 15 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported 18 airstrikes in Syria and 5 airstrikes in Iraq:

U.S. military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Iraq Tuesday [14 Oct] and today [15 Oct], using attack and fighter aircraft to conduct five airstrikes. Separately, U.S. military forces deployed bomber and fighter aircraft Tuesday and today to conduct 18 airstrikes against ISIL in Syria.

In Iraq, one airstrike near Haditha Dam destroyed one ISIL armed vehicle and one ISIL guard shack. Four airstrikes near Bayji destroyed an ISIL building, an ISIL Humvee, and an ISIL machine gun, and damaged an ISIL artillery piece. To conduct these strikes, attack and fighter aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations were employed. All aircraft departed the strike areas safely.

In Syria, 18 airstrikes near Kobani destroyed multiple ISIL fighting positions and successfully struck 16 ISIL occupied buildings. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed U.S. bomber and fighter aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. All aircraft departed the strike areas safely.

"Oct. 15: U.S. Military Conducts Airstrikes Against ISIL in Iraq and Syria,"

[Central Command](#), 15 Oct 2014.

Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 15 Oct 2014.

[Reuters](#) reports that the Kurds say they are giving information to the U.S. Military for use in selecting targets for airstrikes near Kobani. See also [Arab News](#).

16 Oct 2014: airstrikes

On Thursday, 16 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported 14 airstrikes in Syria:

U.S. military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria Wednesday and today, using bomber and fighter aircraft to conduct 14 airstrikes.

All 14 airstrikes took place near Kobani. Initial reports indicate the strikes successfully struck 19 ISIL buildings, two ISIL command posts, three ISIL fighting positions, three ISIL sniper positions, one ISIL staging location, and one ISIL heavy machine gun.

To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed U.S. bomber and fighter aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. All aircraft departed the strike areas safely.

These airstrikes are designed to interdict ISIL reinforcements and resupply and prevent ISIL from massing combat power on the Kurdish held portions of Kobani. Indications are that airstrikes have continued to slow ISIL advances, but that the security situation on the ground in Kobani remains tenuous. U.S. Central Command continues to closely monitor the situation.

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

"Oct. 16: U.S. Military Conducts Airstrikes in Syria in Support of Operation Inherent Resolve," [Central Command](#), 16 Oct 2014.

Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 16 Oct 2014.

My comments: One day after creating the name "Inherent Resolve" for the campaign, the U.S. Central Command stopped including the obsequious sentence: "The U.S. strikes were conducted as part of the President's comprehensive strategy to degrade and destroy ISIL." I criticized that sentence above on 7 Oct. It is now clear that there is a gaping defect in Obama's strategy: a competent army is *needed* on the ground *now* to push ISIL out of towns captured by ISIL, but there is no such army in either Iraq or Syria to coordinate with U.S. airstrikes. The U.S. Military has been very clear in saying that airstrikes alone will *not* defeat ISIL, see [above](#).

The best military in Iraq is the Kurdish peshmerga, but they are poorly equipped and they do not want to operate far from the Kurdish homeland. The Shiite militias in Iraq have a history of revenge attacks against innocent Sunni civilians, so those militias are unacceptable in areas

where Sunnis are the majority. Beginning in January 2014, the Iraqi army has repeatedly been unable to prevent ISIL from capturing towns in Iraq. The Iraqi army demonstrated stunning cowardice when ISIL seized Mosul in June 2014.

The U.S. Military intends to train and equip so-called moderate Syrian rebels, but that process will require *two years* to train 15,000 rebels. The U.S. government has refused to work with the Kurdish rebels in Syria because they are designated as terrorists by the Turkish government.

17 Oct 2014: airstrikes

On Friday, 17 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported more airstrikes in Iraq and Syria:

U.S. military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria Thursday and today using fighter aircraft to conduct seven airstrikes. Separately, partner nation military forces used fighter aircraft to conduct two airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq.

Six airstrikes took place near Kobani where initial reports indicate they successfully struck three ISIL buildings, destroyed two ISIL fighting positions, suppressed three ISIL fighting positions and destroyed two ISIL vehicles. One airstrike near Shadadi successfully struck ISIL oil collection equipment consisting of several "POL tanks" (petroleum, oil and lubricants) and a pump station, which represents part of the terrorist group's oil producing, processing and transportation infrastructure. This strike was intended to destroy a portion of ISIL's ability to operate oil tanker trucks at oil collection points. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed fighter aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations.

In Iraq, partner nation aircraft conducted one airstrike west of Bayji where initial reports indicate they destroyed both an ISIL artillery piece and an ISIL ammunition storage area. Another partner nation airstrike northeast of Bayji struck a small ISIL unit and damaged an ISIL vehicle. All aircraft departed the strike areas safely.

"Oct. 17: Military Airstrikes Against ISIL in Support of Operation Inherent Resolve," [Central Command](#), 17 Oct 2014.

Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 17 Oct 2014.

Notice that on 17 Oct the U.S. Central Command stopped identifying the partner nations which engaged in airstrikes in Iraq or Syria.

18 Oct 2014: airstrikes

Strangely, at 22:55 EDT on Sunday, 19 Oct, neither Central Command nor the Pentagon had posted at their websites a press release for either Saturday, 18 Oct, or Sunday, 19 Oct.

On Monday morning, the U.S. Central Command reported more airstrikes in Iraq and Syria on Saturday, 18 Oct 2014:

U.S. military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria Friday [17 Oct] and

today [18 Oct] using fighter and bomber aircraft to conduct 15 airstrikes. Separately, U.S. military forces used attack, fighter and bomber aircraft to conduct ten airstrikes against ISIL terrorists in Iraq.

Two airstrikes occurred near Kobani and suppressed two ISIL fighting positions. One airstrike took place southwest of Ain Aissa and damaged to an ISIL military camp. One airstrike took place southeast of Dayr Az Zawr and damaged an ISIL modular oil refinery. Seven airstrikes took place east of Dhiban and successfully struck an ISIL crude oil collection point consisting of crude oil collection equipment and a modular oil refinery. Three airstrikes took place northeast of Khusham and successfully struck an ISIL crude oil collection point. One airstrike took place east of Sharra and successfully struck an ISIL modular oil refinery. These airstrikes were designed to interdict ISIL financing by degrading and destroying their oil producing, collecting, storage and transportation infrastructure. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed fighter and bomber aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. All aircraft departed the strike areas safely.

In Iraq, five airstrikes occurred south and west of Bayji and struck two ISIL units, destroyed one ISIL armed vehicle, an ISIL heavy weapon, an ISIL machine gun position, an ISIL building and three ISIL guard shacks and damaged one ISIL guard shack. Five airstrikes occurred west of the Mosul Dam and damaged an ISIL building and destroyed an ISIL heavy machine gun, an ISIL HMMWV and struck three small ISIL ground units. To conduct these strikes, the U.S. employed attack, fighter and bomber aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. All aircraft departed the strike areas safely.

"Oct. 18: Military Airstrikes Against ISIL in Syria and in Iraq in Support of Operation Inherent Resolve," [Central Command](#), 18 Oct 2014.

This press release was *not* posted at the Pentagon.

19 Oct 2014: airdrop to Kobani

The news media reported on Sunday night, 19 Oct, that the U.S. Military C-130 cargo airplanes had dropped "weapons, ammunition, and medical supplies" in Kobani for use by the Kurdish fighters. This was the first time the USA had dropped supplies to the Kurdish fighters in Syria. [BBC](#) at 22:32 EDT; [Associated Press](#) at 22:53 EDT; [The Guardian](#)(AP) at 23:15 EDT; all on 19 Oct 2014.

On Monday morning, the U.S. Central Command reported the airdrop to Kurds in Kobani on Sunday night, 19 Oct 2014:

U.S. military forces conducted multiple airdrops tonight [19 Oct] in the vicinity of Kobani, Syria to resupply Kurdish forces on the ground defending the city against ISIL. The airdrops were conducted by U.S. Air Force C-130 aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. The aircraft delivered weapons, ammunition and medical supplies that were provided by Kurdish authorities in Iraq and intended to enable continued resistance against ISIL's attempts to overtake Kobani. All

aircraft exited the airdrop zone safely.

To date, U.S. forces have conducted more than 135 airstrikes against ISIL in Kobani. Combined with continued resistance to ISIL on the ground, indications are that these strikes have slowed ISIL advances into the city, killed hundreds of their fighters and destroyed or damaged scores of pieces of ISIL combat equipment and fighting positions. However, the security situation in Kobani remains fragile as ISIL continues to threaten the city and Kurdish forces continue to resist. As the U.S. Central Command commander has noted, Kobani could still fall.

These airdrops were conducted in support of Operation Inherent Resolve, the operation to degrade and defeat the terrorist group ISIL and the threat they pose to the region and the wider international community. This assistance is another example of U.S. resolve to deny ISIL key terrain and safe haven as well as our commitment to assist those forces who oppose ISIL.

"U.S. Military Conducts Aerial Resupply of Kurdish Forces Fighting ISIL," [Central Command](#), 19 Oct 2014.

Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 20 Oct 2014.

20 Oct 2014: airstrikes

On Monday, 20 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported more airstrikes in Iraq and Syria:

U.S. military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria Sunday [19 Oct] and today [20 Oct] using attack, bomber and fighter aircraft to conduct six airstrikes. Separately, in coordination with Iraqi ground forces, U.S. military forces conducted six airstrikes using fighter, bomber and remotely piloted aircraft against ISIL terrorists in Iraq. All aircraft departed the strike areas safely.

In Syria, six airstrikes near Kobani destroyed ISIL fighting and mortar positions, an ISIL vehicle, and one stray resupply bundle from a U.S. airdrop of Kurdish supplies that occurred earlier today (Syria time), which prevented these supplies from falling into enemy hands. All other resupply bundles were successfully delivered. To conduct these airstrikes, the U.S. employed U.S. attack, bomber and fighter aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. All aircraft exited the strike areas safely.

In Iraq, two airstrikes took place southeast of Fallujah and struck a large ISIL unit and destroyed three ISIL vehicles. Three airstrikes south of Bayji Oil Refinery struck a small ISIL unit, destroyed an ISIL building and three ISIL vehicles, and damaged another ISIL building. One additional airstrike also south of Bayji destroyed four ISIL boats and damaged at least four more. To conduct these airstrikes, the U.S. employed U.S. bomber, fighter and remotely piloted aircraft deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. In addition, the Republic of France and the United Kingdom participated in these strikes. All aircraft exited the strike areas safely.

"Oct. 20: Military Airstrikes Continue Against ISIL in Syria and in Iraq," [Central Command](#), 20 Oct 2014.

Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 20 Oct 2014.

21 Oct 2014: airstrikes

On Tuesday, 21 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported more airstrikes in Iraq and Syria:

U.S. military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria Monday [20 Oct] and today [21 Oct] using fighter and bomber aircraft to conduct four airstrikes. Separately, U.S. and partner nation forces conducted three airstrikes using fighter and attack aircraft against ISIL terrorists in Iraq. All aircraft departed the strike areas safely.

In Syria, four airstrikes near Kobani destroyed ISIL fighting positions, an ISIL building, and a large ISIL unit.

In Iraq, an airstrike destroyed an ISIL fighting position south of the Bayji oil refinery. Another airstrike southeast of Mosul Dam destroyed one ISIL fighting position and an airstrike north of Fallujah suppressed an ISIL attack. All aircraft exited the strike areas safely. Airstrike assessments are based on initial reports.

"Oct. 21: Military Airstrikes Continue Against ISIL in Syria and Iraq," [Central Command](#), 21 Oct 2014. Beginning on 21 Oct, Central Command included Syria and Iraq in the same paragraph. I split the text into two paragraphs, to separate the two nations.

Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 21 Oct 2014.

Also on 21 Oct, the Associated Press reported that one of 27 bundles of supplies dropped on the night of 19 Oct in Kobani had been seized by ISIL. That wayward bundle contained "hand grenades, ammunition, and rocket-propelled grenade launchers". [Associated Press](#). That is in addition to one wayward bundle that Central Command said it destroyed on 20 Oct.

On 22 Oct, the [Pentagon](#) admitted that one bundle had gone "astray" (possibly blown by wind) and been captured by ISIL.

22 Oct 2014: airstrikes

On Wednesday, 22 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported more airstrikes in Iraq and Syria:

U.S. military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria Tuesday [21 Oct] and today [22 Oct] using fighter and bomber aircraft to conduct six airstrikes. Separately, U.S. and partner nation military forces conducted twelve airstrikes Tuesday and today using fighter, bomber, attack and remotely piloted aircraft against ISIL terrorists in Iraq.

In Syria, six airstrikes near Kobani destroyed ISIL fighting positions, two ISIL vehicles, an ISIL building, and an ISIL logistical center.

In Iraq, twelve airstrikes took place in the vicinity of Mosul Dam destroying a large

ISIL unit, an ISIL mortar launching position, three ISIL vehicles, and multiple ISIL fighting positions. All aircraft exited the strike areas safely. Airstrike assessments are based on initial reports.

"Oct. 22: Military Airstrikes Continue Against ISIL in Syria and Iraq," [Central Command](#), 22 Oct 2014.

Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 22 Oct 2014.

23 Oct 2014: airstrikes

On Thursday, 23 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported more airstrikes in Iraq and Syria:

U.S. military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria Wednesday [22 Oct] and today [23 Oct] using fighter and bomber aircraft to conduct six airstrikes. Separately, U.S. and partner nation military forces conducted nine airstrikes Wednesday and today using fighter, attack and remotely piloted aircraft against ISIL terrorists in Iraq.

In Syria, four airstrikes near Kobani destroyed ISIL fighting positions, an ISIL vehicle, and an ISIL command and control center. East of Dawr Az Zawr, two airstrikes destroyed ISIL oil holding tanks.

In Iraq, four airstrikes south of the Mosul Dam struck four small ISIL units and destroyed an ISIL vehicle. South of Bayji, an airstrike destroyed an ISIL fighting position. Three airstrikes south of Fallujah destroyed an ISIL building and struck a large ISIL unit. Finally, near Fallujah, an airstrike destroyed an ISIL training facility. All aircraft departed the strike areas safely. Airstrike assessments are based on initial reports.

"Oct. 23: Military Airstrikes Continue Against ISIL in Syria and in Iraq in Support of Operation Inherent Resolve," [Central Command](#), 23 Oct 2014.

Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 23 Oct 2014.

24 Oct 2014: airstrikes

On Friday, 24 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported more airstrikes in Iraq and Syria:

U.S. military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria Thursday [23 Oct] and today [24 Oct] using bomber aircraft to conduct six airstrikes. Separately, U.S. and partner nation military forces conducted twelve airstrikes Thursday and today using bomber, fighter and remotely piloted aircraft against ISIL terrorists in Iraq.

In Syria, six airstrikes near Kobani struck three ISIL units and destroyed an ISIL vehicle.

In Iraq, three airstrikes southeast and west of the Mosul Dam destroyed two ISIL vehicles and an ISIL mortar position. Three airstrikes south of the Bayji Oil Refinery

struck two small units and destroyed an ISIL vehicle. Two strikes near Bayji struck an ISIL training camp. Three airstrikes near Fallujah struck two small ISIL units and destroyed three ISIL vehicles. Finally, one airstrike near Zumar destroyed five ISIL buildings. All aircraft departed the strike areas safely. Airstrike assessments are based on initial reports.

The strikes were conducted as part of Operation Inherent Resolve, the operation to eliminate the terrorist group ISIL and the threat they pose to Iraq, 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 power and conduct operations. Among the coalition nations conducting airstrikes in Iraq are the U.S., France, United Kingdom, Australia, Belgium and the Netherlands. Coalition nations conducting airstrikes in Syria include the U.S., Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Jordan, and Bahrain.

"Oct. 24: Military Airstrikes Continue Against ISIL in Syria and Iraq," [Central Command](#), 24 Oct 2014.

Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 24 Oct 2014.

On 24 Oct, the U.S. Central Command began including a new final paragraph, quoted here, that mentions the names of all nations involved in the coalition. This routine mention of *all* the members of the coalition may do two things. First, it may compensate for the policy that began on 17 Oct, in which nations who actually participated in airstrikes are no longer mentioned. Second, it gives credit to nations who did *not* participate in the daily airstrikes, giving the false impression that every day, *all* of the coalition nations participated in airstrikes. Because it is *not* news, I omitted this final paragraph in quotations below.

25 Oct 2014: airstrikes

On Saturday, 25 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported 22 airstrikes in Iraq and one airstrike in Syria:

U.S. military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria Friday [24 Oct] and today [25 Oct] using bomber aircraft to conduct one airstrike. In Syria, one airstrike near Kobani destroyed an ISIL artillery piece.

Separately, U.S. and partner nation military forces conducted twenty-two airstrikes Friday and today using bomber, fighter and remotely piloted aircraft against ISIL terrorists in Iraq. In Iraq, three airstrikes near Bayji struck a large ISIL unit, a small ISIL unit, destroyed an ISIL building, damaged an ISIL building and destroyed two ISIL fighting positions. One airstrike southeast of the Mosul Dam struck a large ISIL unit while ten airstrikes west of the Mosul Dam struck four small ISIL units, one large ISIL unit, destroyed an ISIL building, six ISIL fighting positions and four ISIL staging locations. Four airstrikes near Fallujah struck two small ISIL units, destroyed an ISIL vehicle and destroyed an ISIL fighting position. Two airstrikes near Qurayat al Hajjaj struck a small ISIL unit and destroyed an ISIL building. One airstrike east of Hayy Al Arabi destroyed an ISIL building. Finally, one airstrike near Aynzalah destroyed an ISIL building. All aircraft departed the strike areas safely. Airstrike assessments are based on initial reports.

"Oct. 25: Military Airstrikes Continue Against ISIL in Syria and Iraq," [Central Command](#),

25 Oct 2014. (Sentences rearranged by Standler to be more coherent.)
Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 25 Oct 2014.

26 Oct 2014: airstrikes

On Sunday, 26 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported 12 airstrikes in Iraq and 5 airstrikes in Syria:

U.S. military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria Saturday [25 Oct] and today [26 Oct] using fighter and bomber aircraft to conduct five airstrikes. In Syria, five airstrikes near Kobani destroyed seven ISIL vehicles and an ISIL building.

Separately, U.S. and partner nation military forces conducted twelve airstrikes Saturday and today using fighters, attack and remotely piloted aircraft against ISIL terrorists in Iraq. In Iraq, six airstrikes west of the Mosul Dam area struck two small ISIL units, damaged an ISIL building and destroyed four ISIL vehicles and an ISIL artillery piece. Three airstrikes southwest of the Mosul Dam area struck a large ISIL unit and a small ISIL unit, and destroyed two ISIL vehicles and two ISIL buildings. Three airstrikes southeast of Fallujah struck two large ISIL units, a small ISIL unit and destroyed one ISIL building. All aircraft departed the strike areas safely. Airstrike assessments are based on initial reports.

"Oct. 26: Military Airstrikes Continue Against ISIL in Syria and Iraq," [Central Command](#), 26 Oct 2014. (Sentences rearranged by Standler to be more coherent.)
Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 26 Oct 2014.

27 Oct 2014: airstrikes

On Monday, 27 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported more airstrikes in Iraq and Syria:

U.S. military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria Sunday [26 Oct] and today [27 Oct] using fighter and bomber aircraft to conduct four airstrikes. In Syria, four airstrikes near Kobani destroyed five ISIL vehicles and an ISIL occupied building.

Separately, U.S. and partner nation military forces conducted seven airstrikes Sunday and today using fighters, attack and remotely piloted aircraft against ISIL terrorists in Iraq. In Iraq, three airstrikes west of the Mosul Dam area struck a small ISIL fighting unit. One airstrike southeast of Fallujah struck a large ISIL unit, destroyed an ISIL building and damaged an ISIL vehicle. One airstrike south of the Bayji Oil refinery struck ISIL fighters. One airstrike south of Bayji struck a small ISIL unit and destroyed an improved explosive device. Finally, an airstrike east of Zumar struck a small ISIL unit and destroyed two ISIL occupied buildings. All aircraft departed the strike areas safely. Airstrike assessments are based on initial reports.

"Oct. 27: Military Airstrikes Continue Against ISIL in Syria and Iraq," [Central Command](#), 27 Oct 2014. (Sentences rearranged by Standler to be more coherent.)
Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 27 Oct 2014.

28 Oct 2014: airstrikes

On Tuesday, 28 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported more airstrikes in Iraq and Syria:

U.S. military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria Monday [27 Oct] and today [28 Oct] using attack and fighter aircraft to conduct four airstrikes. Separately, U.S. and partner nation military forces conducted nine airstrikes in Iraq Monday and today using attack, fighter, and remotely piloted aircraft against ISIL terrorists.

In Syria, four airstrikes near Kobani destroyed four ISIL fighting positions and a small ISIL unit.

In Iraq, two airstrikes in the vicinity of Fallujah destroyed a small ISIL unit and an ISIL tank. Four airstrikes in the vicinity of Mosul Dam destroyed a small ISIL unit, an ISIL fighting position, an ISIL vehicle and an ISIL logistics base. One airstrike west of Baghdad destroyed an ISIL-occupied building and a small ISIL unit. One airstrike in the vicinity of Sinjar struck an ISIL fighting emplacement and destroyed six vehicles. One airstrike northwest of Haditha destroyed an ISIL-occupied building used as a staging area. All aircraft departed the strike areas safely. Airstrike assessments are based on initial reports.

"Oct. 28: Military Airstrikes Continue Against ISIL in Syria and Iraq," [Central Command](#), 28 Oct 2014.

Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 28 Oct 2014.

The Pentagon reported an airdrop of food for the Albu Nimr tribe in Iraq.

U.S. Air Force C-130 aircraft conducted an airdrop yesterday [27 Oct] near Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, to provide humanitarian aid for delivery by Iraqi security forces to members of the Iraqi Albu Nimr tribe, U.S. Central Command officials reported today.

In response to a request from the Iraqi government, the aircraft delivered more than 7,000 halal meals, Centcom officials said. Iraqi forces retrieved the meals and delivered them to the tribe, who recently relocated from their homes near Hit, Iraq, to flee aggression by Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant terrorists, they added.

The C-130 aircraft are deployed to the Centcom area of responsibility, and they left the airdrop zone safely, officials said.

"U.S. Airdrops Aid in Support of Iraqi Humanitarian Efforts" [Pentagon](#), 28 Oct 2014.

29 Oct 2014: airstrikes

At 19:45 EDT on 30 Oct, Central Command had *not* posted its news release for 29 Oct, so I used the version at the Pentagon.

On Wednesday, 29 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported more airstrikes in Iraq and Syria:

U.S. military forces continued to attack Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant terrorists

in Syria yesterday and today, using fighter and bomber aircraft to conduct eight airstrikes, U.S. Central Command officials reported.

Separately, officials said, U.S. forces conducted six airstrikes in Iraq yesterday and today using attack, fighter and remotely piloted aircraft against ISIL terrorists.

In Syria, eight airstrikes near Kobani destroyed five ISIL fighting positions, a small ISIL unit, six ISIL vehicles, an ISIL-occupied building and an ISIL command and control node.

In Iraq, three airstrikes near Fallujah destroyed three small ISIL units, and three others near Sinjar destroyed a small ISIL unit and two ISIL vehicles.

"Centcom Officials Describe Latest Inherent Resolve Airstrikes," [Pentagon](#), 29 Oct 2014.

30 Oct 2014: airstrikes

On Thursday, 30 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported more airstrikes in Iraq and Syria:

U.S. military forces continued to attack ISIL terrorists in Syria Wednesday [29 Oct] and today [30 Oct] using fighter and bomber aircraft to conduct twelve airstrikes.

In Syria, ten airstrikes near Kobani struck two small ISIL units and destroyed seven ISIL fighting positions and five ISIL-occupied buildings. Additionally, an ISIL headquarters building was damaged near Dayr Az Zawr and an ISIL security building was damaged near Ar Raqqa.

Separately, U.S. and partner nation military forces conducted two airstrikes in Iraq Wednesday and today using attack, fighter, and remotely piloted aircraft against ISIL terrorists.

In Iraq, one airstrike near Bayji struck a small ISIL unit and destroyed an ISIL vehicle. One airstrike west of Ramadi struck an ISIL checkpoint.

All aircraft departed the strike areas safely. Airstrike assessments are based on initial reports.

"Oct. 30: Military Airstrikes Continue Against ISIL in Syria and Iraq," [Central Command](#), 30 Oct 2014. (Sentences rearranged by Standler to be more coherent.)

Also posted at the [Pentagon](#), 30 Oct 2014.

31 Oct 2014: airstrikes

At 23:00 EDT on 31 Oct, Central Command had not posted that day's press release to its website, so I used the version at the Pentagon.

On Friday, 31 Oct 2014, the U.S. Central Command reported more airstrikes in Iraq and

Syria:

U.S. military forces continued to attack Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant terrorists in Syria yesterday and today, using fighter and bomber aircraft to conduct four airstrikes, U.S. Central Command officials reported. Separately, officials said, U.S. and partner-nation military forces conducted four airstrikes in Iraq yesterday and today, using fighter and remotely piloted aircraft against ISIL terrorists.

In Syria, four airstrikes near Kobani damaged four ISIL fighting positions and an ISIL building.

In Iraq, airstrikes near Fallujah and Bayji struck small ISIL units. An airstrike near Qaim destroyed an ISIL checkpoint and an ISIL vehicle, and an airstrike north of Tikrit struck a large ISIL unit and destroyed three ISIL-occupied buildings.

All aircraft left the strike areas safely, Centcom officials said, noting that airstrike assessments are based on initial reports.

"Airstrikes Continue Against ISIL in Syria, Iraq," [Pentagon](#), 31 Oct 2014.

On 1 Nov, [Central Command](#) posted this press release for 31 Oct.

Conclusions

I still agree with what I said in my Conclusion to my [eighth essay](#) on Syria that was written during June 2014.

The capture of Mosul, Iraq by ISIL on 10 June 2014 — as well as the declaration of ISIL's caliphate on 29 June 2014 — changed the Western view of the insurgency in Syria.

Western View of Insurgency in Syria *Before 10 June 2014*

Before 10 June 2014, the conventional wisdom in the London11 nations — including the USA — was that Assad was Evil, and the removal of Assad was the Nr. 1 goal in Syria. The Syrian National Coalition has a consistent and intransigent demand that Assad resign. The intransigence of the Syrian National Coalition has been encouraged by Obama and Kerry, with the frequent U.S. declarations that Assad has lost his legitimacy as leader of the Syrian government.

Obama's foreign policy on Syria is essentially an obsession with the removal of Assad. When Assad did not resign in 2011 or 2012 or 2013, Obama's foreign policy was increasingly divorced from reality.

One can summarize a series of events that exposed the futility of the plans of the London11 group of nations and the United Nations negotiations in Geneva:

1. The reality is that Assad is firmly in control of the Syrian government, Assad is

winning the civil war in heavily populated western Syria, and the insurgents are unable to force Assad to resign.

2. Assad did *not* resign, and the Geneva peace negotiations ended in failure on 15 Feb 2014. The Coalition's intransigent demand that Assad resign, and Assad's insistence on remaining in power, are *impossible* for compromise.
3. Not only are there no plans to resume Syrian peace negotiations in the foreseeable future, but also the United Nations negotiator (Brahimi) resigned in frustration on 13 May 2014.
4. Assad was re-elected for another seven-year term on 3 June 2014.
5. It is now obvious that neither side in the Geneva negotiations genuinely wanted to negotiate. The U.S. Government essentially forced the Coalition to attend the Geneva negotiations, and Russia forced Assad's government to attend.

Not all of these facts or events were known on 15 Feb 2014, when the Geneva negotiations ended. But all of these facts are known at the end of June 2014, and were documented in my previous essays. A more detailed analysis of the failure of the Geneva negotiations is found in my separate [essay](#). I suggest that the London11 group of nations — and the Syrian National Coalition — were so obsessed with deposing Assad that they did not recognize that their demand that Assad resign would cause the Geneva2 negotiations to fail. Not only was much diplomatic effort and expense wasted on Geneva2, but also the frustration caused the skilled U.N. negotiator, Lakhdar Brahimi, to resign on 13 May 2014.

Western View of Insurgency in Syria After 10 June 2014

After the capture of Mosul by ISIL on 10 June 2014, it was obvious that the big enemy in Iraq was ISIL. Because ISIL actively operated in *both* Syria and Iraq, the problems in the two nations were suddenly recognized to be intertwined. The U.S. Government's view was that terrorists in Syria had spilled into Iraq. The Truth is that ISIL was created in Iraq in 2004 under the name "Al-Qaeda in Iraq" and entered Syria in May 2013, when the terrorists took the name "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant" (ISIL).

Iran is one of the two major suppliers to Assad's government in Syria, and Iran is also active in influencing the Shiite government in Iraq. Suppose the U.S. Government continues its policy of demanding the removal of Assad, and continues its policy of supporting the government of Iraq. Then the USA would be in the awkward position of opposing Iran in Syria, and agreeing with Iran in Iraq. This awkwardness could be avoided if the U.S. Government would both (1) abandon its declaration that Assad must resign, and (2) focus on the defeat of terrorism (e.g., ISIL) in both Syria and Iraq. Once the USA makes these two changes, there can be an alliance between Syria and Iraq, with both Iran, Russia, and the USA contributing to this alliance against terrorism.

An important point to recognize is that Al-Qaeda in Iraq (the predecessor of ISIL) was

essentially defeated when the USA pulled its combat troops out of Iraq in Dec 2011. The weak and ineffective government of Maliki in Iraq allowed ISIL to capture much of western and northern Iraq from January 2014 through June 2014. There is an obvious lesson here. If the weak and ineffective Syrian National Coalition were to control Syria, ISIL would exploit that weakness. The result would be that ISIL would quickly seize control of Syria. In other words, we *need* a strong, decisive, experienced leader (e.g., Assad) in control of Syria, to limit the expansion of terrorists like ISIL, because ISIL is worse than Assad.

Here is a list of citations to some commentators who have recognized that we should be cooperating with Assad in the fight against ISIL and other terrorist organizations:

- David Wearing, editorial, "Bashar al-Assad's interests and the West's coincide over Iraq," [The Guardian](#), 28 June 2014.
- Leslie H. Gelb, op-ed, [NY Times](#), 1 July 2014 ("The greatest threat to American interests in the region is ISIS, not Mr. Assad.").
- Fred Kaplan, "Kaplan: Obama must work with the bad to defeat the worse," [Salt Lake Tribune](#), 21 Aug 2014 ("The fight isn't a cakewalk, but it doesn't have to be a huge struggle, if the Western politicians can get over their complexes about working with certain bad people in order to defeat even worse people.").
- Zeina Karam, "Syria opposition: Deadly chemical attack forgotten," [Associated Press](#), 14:59 EDT, 21 Aug 2014 ("... global disapproval has shifted away from Assad and toward the Islamic extremists who are fighting him and spreading destruction across Syria and Iraq. Calls for Assad's ouster are no longer made publicly by Western officials.").
- Sam Jones, "US and allies must join Assad to defeat Isis, warns British MP," [Financial Times](#), 21 Aug 2014 (Sir Malcolm Rifkind — a former U.K. foreign secretary, former U.K. defence secretary, and a current member of Parliament — said “ 'Sometimes you have to develop relationships with people who are extremely nasty in order to get rid of people who are even nastier,' ..., referring to working with Mr Assad's dictatorship.").
- Lizzie Dearden, "James Foley beheading: Former Army chief urges Britain to co-operate with Syria's Assad regime to combat ISIS," [The Independent](#), 22 Aug 2014 ("The former head of the Army has said Britain must work with the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to combat the Islamic State (ISIS). Lord Dannatt, the former Chief of General Staff, called on the West to reconsider its relationship with the leader, who was internationally condemned for a crackdown on civil liberties during the 2011 Arab Spring."). See also [The Telegraph](#) ("Britain must co-operate with President Assad, the Syrian dictator, in order to confront ISIL, the former head of the Army has said.").
- Max Abrahms, "The U.S. Should Help Assad to Fight ISIS, the Greater Evil," [NY Times](#), 18:27 EDT, 22 Aug 2014 (Assad does *not* threaten the USA; ISIL does threaten the USA. "But it's time for the Obama administration to pick its poison by prioritizing the safety of American civilians over the moral objection of helping out a

leader who massacres his own.").

- Rajeev Syal, "David Cameron must 'consider cooperating with Syria' to crush Isis," [The Guardian](#), 5 Sep 2014 (Lord Richards, former chief of the U.K. defence staff, urged the current U.K. prime minister to cooperate with Assad in defeating ISIL.).
- Ahmad Samih Khalidi, op-ed, "To Crush ISIS, Make a Deal With Assad," [NY Times](#), 15 Sep 2014 ("... the West appears to be primarily appeasing Arab Persian Gulf allies that have turned the overthrow of Mr. Assad into a policy fetish that runs against any rational calculation of how to defeat Islamist terrorism. the only real 'boots on the ground' capable of destroying ISIS are the Syrian Army and its local allies, including Hezbollah.").

On 23 Sep there was a change in U.S. strategy in Syria from (1) defeating Assad to (2) defeating ISIL. This change occurred when the U.S.-led airstrikes in Syria began. A conspiracy theorist might accuse the U.S. Government with a secret deal with Assad: the USA will not attack Assad's military in exchange for Syria not shooting at Coalition aircraft that are attacking ISIL inside Syria.

Conclusion for Syria

Obama needs to end his obsession with deposing Assad, and begin coordinating with Assad a strategy to defeat ISIL in both Syria and Iraq. It's past time for Obama to get with the program of defeating terrorism.

The refusal of Obama to cooperate with Assad has multiple disadvantages for the USA:

1. any U.S. airstrikes in Syria would be an illegal aggression against Syria.
2. unnecessary risks to U.S. pilots from Syrian anti-aircraft fire or Syrian fighter jets.
3. U.S. airstrikes will be less effective without Syrian intelligence on the ground
4. the airstrikes need to be coordinated with army action on the ground, and Assad has the best army in Syria (with the possible exception of ISIL).
5. it will be at least a year before we can train 5000 moderate Syrian rebels, while we would not need to train Assad's army — so we can attack ISIL in Syria sooner if we partner with Assad instead of the rebels.
6. helps keep Assad in power, which is good, because Assad is the strongest leader and most able to defeat terrorists.

Assad's military is currently stretched thin by fighting against the jihadists in the Islamic Front, against Al-Qaeda (i.e., Nusra Front), and against ISIL. It is conceivable that ISIL could eventually defeat Assad. Having Syria under the control of ISIL would be a much worse outcome for not only Syria, but also for surrounding nations. That is another reason why Obama should cooperate with Assad to defeat ISIL.

Here is how Obama painted himself into a corner. ISIL has been in Syria since May 2013, with an increasing number of atrocities committed by ISIL. ISIL began to invade Iraq in Jan 2014. Obama ignored the ISIL problem in both Syria and Iraq. But, on 7 Aug 2014, —

after ISIL threatened genocide of the Yazidis — Obama decided to help defeat ISIL in Iraq, by ordering airstrikes in Iraq. But eastern Syria is now a safe haven for ISIL, so Obama realized sometime around 21 Aug that ISIL would *also* need to be defeated in Syria. The logical plan would be for Obama to call Assad on the telephone and begin to arrange cooperation between the Syrian military and U.S. Military on defeating ISIL in Syria. But Obama will *not* do that, because of Obama's obsession with deposing Assad. As a result of the failure to cooperate with Assad, Obama's military campaign in Syria will be less effective, as explained in the previous paragraph. Ironically, *both* Assad *and* Obama need help from each other, but Obama is too stubborn to ask Assad, and it would be futile for Assad to ask Obama for help in defeating ISIL.

However, even *if* the U.S. Government were to support Assad's fight against terrorism, and *if* the moderate rebels rejoin the Syrian army, it will be a tough job to defeat the jihadists and Al-Qaeda in Syria. As of 31 October 2014, the possibility of peace in Syria looks grim for the foreseeable future.

Obama refuses to cooperate with Assad's military. Obama has refused to cooperate with Syrian Kurds, because the Turkish government considers the Kurds to be terrorists. Instead, Obama plans to train and equip the so-called "moderate rebels" in Syria, an effort that could take two years to train 15,000 rebels. Meanwhile, effective troops on the ground are needed *now* to prevent ISIL from capturing more cities and infrastructure. This lack of competent ground forces in Syria is a glaring defect in Obama's strategy.

Conclusion for Iraq

The Syrians have an effective government and an effective military. In contrast, the Iraqi Parliament slowly formed a new government (during an existential crisis) and the Iraqi army is unable to expel ISIL from towns and cities. Iraq — only slightly better than Yemen, Somalia, and Libya — is now a failed nation. These facts make the Iraqi government weaker than the Syrian government.

In my [webpage](#) on Iraq, I summarized the delays, infrequent meetings, and low attendance in the Iraqi Parliament. Clearly, the Iraqi Parliament made the problems in Iraq worse by failing to promptly form a new, inclusive, and competent government.

The criminal justice system in Iraq is apparently incompetent and dysfunctional. The Iraqi government is unable to prosecute army officers for desertion at Mosul on 10 June (see [above](#)), unable to find bodies of victims of a massacre by ISIL at Speicher Air Base on 11-14 June, and unable to determine who killed 70 people at a Sunni mosque on 22 Aug.

I conclude that the government of Iraq is dysfunctional and unworthy of assistance. But the Iraqi people do *not* deserve to suffer at the hands of the barbaric ISIL terrorists. Furthermore, ISIL in Iraq and Syria must be annihilated to protect neighboring nations from future invasion by ISIL terrorists, as ISIL expands their caliphate.

The Iraqi army has been exposed as at least partly cowardly, corrupt, and incompetent. It will take years to fix these defects in the Iraqi army, while effective troops on the ground are

needed *now* — truly were needed back in Jan 2014 — to prevent ISIL from capturing more cities and infrastructure. This lack of competent ground forces in Iraq is a glaring defect in Obama's strategy.

this document is at <http://www.rbs0.com/syria14.pdf>
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The annotated [list](#) of my essays on Syria and links to source documents.

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