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Coalition Contributions to Countering the Islamic State

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The Global Campaign to Counter the Islamic State¹

On September 10, 2014, President Obama announced the formation of a global coalition to “degrade and ultimately defeat” the Islamic State (IS, aka the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, ISIL/ISIS or the Arabic acronym Daesh).² Subsequently, some 60 nations and partner organizations agreed to participate, contributing either military forces or resources (or both) to the campaign. In Brussels in December 2014, these sixty partners agreed to organize themselves along five “lines of effort,”³ (by contrast, the U.S. strategy involves nine lines of effort), with at least two countries in the lead for each:⁴

- Supporting military operations, capacity building, and training (led by the United States and Iraq);
- Stopping the flow of foreign terrorist fighters (led by The Netherlands and Turkey);
- Cutting off IS access to financing and funding (led by Italy, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States);
- Addressing associated humanitarian relief and crises (led by Germany and the United Arab Emirates); and
- Exposing IS’ true nature (led by the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States).

According to the U.S. State Department, participants in the coalition include: Albania, the Arab League, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, the European Union, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kosovo, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States.⁵ Each nation is contributing to the coalition in a manner commensurate with its national interests and comparative advantage, although reporting on nonmilitary contributions tends to be sporadic. Some illustrative examples of the kinds of counter-IS assistance countries provided as the coalition was being formed in September 2014 include: Switzerland’s donation \$9 million in aid to Iraq, Belgium’s contribution of 13 tons of aid to Iraq generally, Italy’s contribution of \$2.5 million of weaponry (including machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades and a million rounds of ammunition), and Japan’s granting of \$6 million in emergency aid to specifically help displaced people in Northern Iraq.⁶

¹ For more information on the status of efforts to defeat IS, see CRS Report R43612, *The “Islamic State” Crisis and U.S. Policy*, by Christopher M. Blanchard et al.

² Testimony from Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, House Armed Services Committee, June 17, 2015.

³ U.S. Department of State, “Joint statement issued by partners at the Counter-ISIL Coalition Meeting,” December 3, 2014. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2014/12/234627.htm>

⁴ Remarks by General John Allen, Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter-ISIL, Doha, Qatar, June 3, 2015. <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/events/2015/06/01-2015-us-islamic-world-forum/060315brookingsdoha.pdf>.

⁵ U.S. Department of State, Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL webpage, <http://www.state.gov/s/seci/>.

⁶ Sebastian Payne, “What the 60-plus members of the anti-Islamic State coalition are doing,” *The Washington Post*, (continued...)

Military Aspects of the Coalition

Operation Inherent Resolve, the military component of the global coalition to defeat IS, began on August 8, 2014. Subsequently, according to United States Central Command and open source reporting, some 22 nations have joined the military coalition. The military campaign has two primary elements - airstrikes and training and equipping of local forces—both of which are designed to empower Iraqis and Syrians to take on the Islamic State while minimizing the number of U.S. and coalition “boots on the ground.” According to the Department of Defense, the coalition has conducted upwards of 5,000 airstrikes,⁷ destroyed 7,655 targets, and as of July 15, 2015, the United States spent \$3.21 billion on counter-IS operations.⁸ Of note, in July 2015, Turkey expanded its participation in the coalition by taking direct military action in Syria and allowing other coalition planes to utilize Turkish airspace and bases to conduct strikes on the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. On 31 July, at the request of the Iraqi government, NATO agreed to launch a military assistance program for Iraq which will be based out of Jordan and Turkey, and “includes measures of support in seven priority areas: advice on security sector reform; countering improvised explosive devices, explosive ordnance disposal and de-mining; civil military planning; cyber defense; military medicine and medical assistance; military training; and civil emergency planning.”⁹

In terms of the legal basis for the coalition, several United Nations Security Council Resolutions—in particular, 2170, 2178 and 2199—call on U.N. member states to take a variety of steps (to include coalition activities such as countering terrorist financing, assisting with humanitarian relief, countering IS messaging and assisting with stabilization support), although these fall short of explicitly authorizing the use of military force against the Islamic State. Some coalition participants have cited the Iraqi Government’s letter to the United Nations Security Council requesting defense assistance and stating that Iraq faces threats from IS safe havens in Syria as a further legal basis for participating in the military coalition. With respect to the U.S. contribution to the military campaign, some observers have argued that a new authorization for the use of military force (AUMF) is required;¹⁰ the Obama Administration maintains that it already has the necessary legal basis to prosecute the campaign through the (2001 AUMF; P.L. 107-40), and the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 (2002 AUMF; P.L. 107-243).¹¹ Even so, U.S. Administration officials underscore that the military campaign is only one part of the overall effort to counter IS, asserting that success depends upon the ability to make progress in nonmilitary areas.¹²

(...continued)

September 25, 2014.

⁷ Jim Garamone, “Wormuth Stresses Whole-of-Government Approach to ISIL,” *DoD News*, July 13, 2015.

⁸ U.S. Department of Defense, “Operation Inherent Resolve: Targeted Operations against ISIL Terrorists,” available at: http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014/0814_iraq/. Accessed July 27, 2015.

⁹ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “NATO Secretary General Statement on Defense Capacity Building Package for Iraq,” July 31, 2015.

¹⁰ See, for example, Richard Fontaine & Vance Serchuk, “Can We Finally Get An AUMF Right? As Congress debates the war authorization against Islamic State, it should learn from past mistakes” *Politico*, February 15, 2015; Paul Kane, “Congress Split Over Ways to Face the Islamic State,” *The Washington Post*, February 22, 2015.

¹¹ For more information, see CRS Report R43760, *A New Authorization for Use of Military Force Against the Islamic State: Issues and Current Proposals in Brief*, by Matthew C. Weed.

¹² Jim Garamone, “Wormuth Stresses Whole-of-Government Approach to ISIL,” *DoD News*, July 13, 2015.






Challenges to Coalition Coherence
















Organizing and prosecuting a coalition campaign presents a variety of challenges in addition to the military task of defeating an opponent. In the first instance, without a single authority responsible for prioritizing and adjudicating between different multinational civilian and military lines of effort, different actors often work at cross-purposes without intending to do so. These coalition coordination challenges were demonstrated in recent military campaigns (and particularly in Afghanistan). Exacerbating matters, other actors in the region—some of whom are coalition partners—have different, and often conflicting, longer-term regional geopolitical interests from those of the United States or other coalition members. This, in turn, may lead nations participating in the coalition to advance their goals and objectives in ways that might contradict each other. Finally, different participants in the coalition have different tolerances for risk, and therefore will determine “rules of engagement” (ROE), or “caveats” that can constrain the ability of military commanders from employing military force as they see fit. While navigable, all these factors can make it considerably more difficult to consolidate gains and achieve campaign success.




This brief report offers two figures. The first is a chart depicting participants in the military campaign, and what specifically each country is contributing in terms of military forces, according to open source data compiled by CRS and information provided by United States Central Command at the time of writing. The second maps the training and capacity building bases across Iraq, and key nations operating out of those bases as reported by United States Central Command and supplemented with open source reporting.

This report will be updated quarterly, or as significant changes occur regarding the coalition’s composition.

Table 1. Contributions to the Military Coalition to Defeat IS, by Country and Capability

COUNTRY	TRAINING MISSION CONTRIBUTIONS		AIRSTRIKE CONTRIBUTIONS	
	FOR IRAQ	FOR SYRIA	FOR IRAQ	FOR SYRIA
 Australia	500 ^a	N/A	6 hornet fighters, a tanker aircraft, and airborne control plane	N/A
 Bahrain	N/A	N/A	N/A	Unspecified number of planes
 Belgium	35	N/A	Mission discontinued ^b	N/A
 Canada	69	N/A	530 personnel; 6 CF-188 Hornet fighter jets, 1 CC 150 Polaris Air Transport, 2 CP-140 Aurora surveillance aircraft	
 Denmark	140	N/A	7 F-16 aircraft	N/A

COUNTRY	TRAINING MISSION CONTRIBUTIONS		AIRSTRIKE CONTRIBUTIONS	
	FOR IRAQ	FOR SYRIA	FOR IRAQ	FOR SYRIA
 France	200	N/A	6 Dassault Rafale M multi role fighters, 6 Mirage 2000D aircraft, 1 Ravitaillement C135 aircraft, and 1 Atlantic 2 Maritime Patrol aircraft	N/A
 Finland	47	N/A	N/A	N/A
 Great Britain	275	N/A	630 personnel; unspecified number of Royal Air Force Tornado GR4 Aircraft	Unspecified number of planes ^c
 Germany	100	N/A	N/A	N/A
 Italy	280	N/A	N/A	N/A
 Jordan	N/A	Training grounds	Unspecified number of planes	20 F-16 aircraft ^d
 NATO	Unspecified number of troops	N/A	N/A	N/A
 New Zealand	143	N/A	N/A	N/A
 Netherlands	130	N/A	250 personnel, 6 F-16 aircraft (plus 2 reserve aircraft) ^e	N/A
 Norway	120	N/A	N/A	N/A
 Portugal	30	N/A	N/A	N/A
 Qatar	N/A	Training grounds	N/A	Unspecified number of planes
 Saudi Arabia	N/A	Training grounds	N/A	Unspecified number of planes
 Spain	300	N/A	N/A	N/A
 Sweden	35 ^f	N/A	N/A	N/A

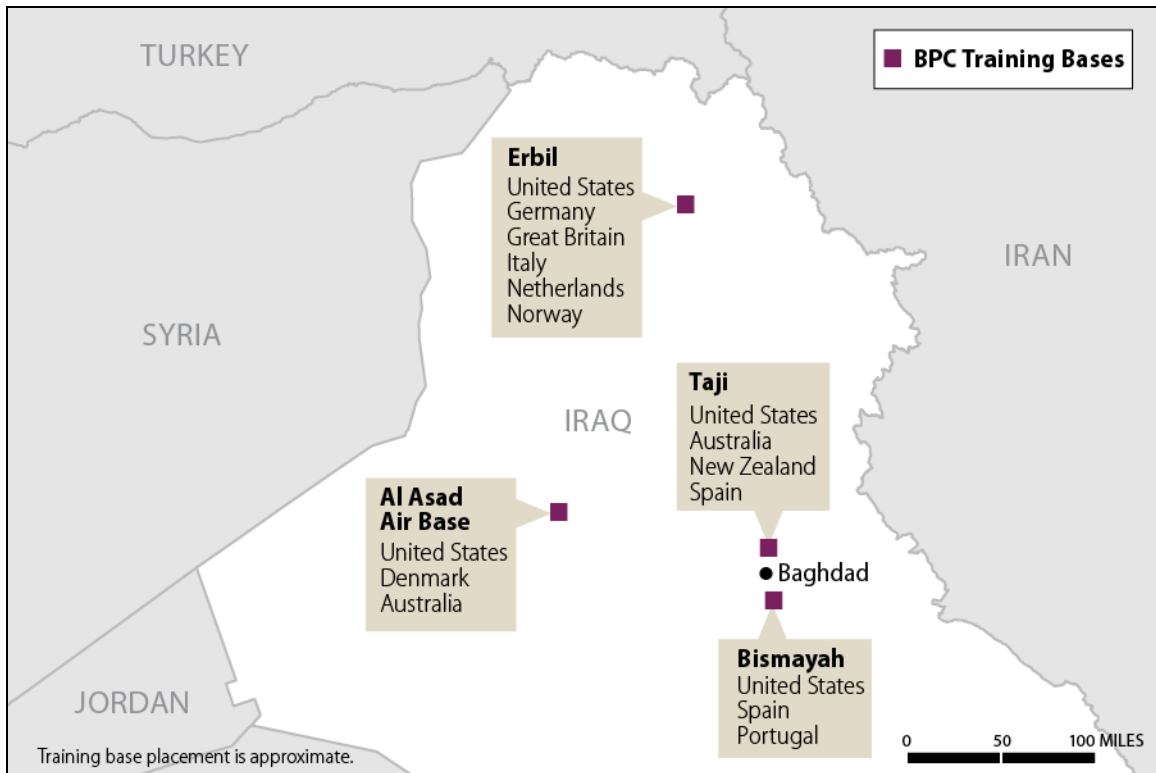
COUNTRY	TRAINING MISSION CONTRIBUTIONS		AIRSTRIKE CONTRIBUTIONS	
	FOR IRAQ	FOR SYRIA	FOR IRAQ	FOR SYRIA
 Turkey	N/A	Training grounds	N/A	Long-range artillery, unspecified number of planes ^g
 United Arab Emirates	N/A	N/A	N/A	8 F-16 aircraft ^h
 United States	3,550	700 ⁱ	Unspecified, but largest number of aircraft and personnel	
Total:	5,954ⁱ	700		

Sources: United States Central Command data, augmented by data gathered through open source reports.

Notes: Country contributions are approximate due to rotations in and out of theater. These numbers are subject to rapid change based on changing circumstances.

- a. Australia recently announced that it would send 330 extra troops on a two year mission to train Iraqi soldiers, with about 200 soldiers in Iraq prior to that announcement.
- b. Belgium's contribution to the airstrikes against ISIL ended June 30, 2015, due to financial constraints. Six Belgian F-16 fighters spent nine months in Jordan.
- c. On Friday, July 17 2015, the Ministry of Defense confirmed that British pilots had taken part in military strikes in Syria, despite the fact that Parliament voted two years ago against military action there.
- d. Up to 20 F-16 aircraft participated in airstrikes against ISIL in response to the killing of a Jordanian pilot. It is unclear if this many F-16's participate in regular airstrikes against ISIL.
- e. It is unclear if all of these aircraft are for combat sorties against ISIL or if they are force protection for Dutch ground forces.
- f. The Swedish Parliament approved 35 troops to be sent to Iraq, but have stated that they are willing to raise that number to 120.
- g. Based on a recent agreement struck between the United States and Turkey on July 23, 2015.
- h. The number of F-16's is based off of press photos of the UAE squadron deployed in Jordan.
- i. The United States has pledged 400 to 700 troops to train Syrian forces. It is unclear how many forces are currently in place.
- j. Based off of the data in this chart; not including the unspecified number of troops contributed by NATO.

Figure I. Country Participation at Training and Capacity Building Bases in Iraq



Source: United States Central Command and Open Source Reporting.

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