Lead Inspector General for Overseas Contingency Operations

OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE

DoD
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Quarterly Report to the United States Congress

October 1, 2015–December 31, 2015

LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL MISSION

The Lead Inspector General for Overseas Contingency Operations will coordinate among the Inspectors General specified under the law to:

- develop a joint strategic plan to conduct comprehensive oversight over all aspects of the contingency operation
- ensure independent and effective oversight of all programs and operations of the federal government in support of the contingency operation through either joint or individual audits, inspections, and investigations
- promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness and prevent, detect, and deter fraud, waste, and abuse
- perform analyses to ascertain the accuracy of information provided by federal agencies relating to obligations and expenditures, costs of programs and projects, accountability of funds, and the award and execution of major contracts, grants, and agreements
- report quarterly and biannually to the Congress on the contingency operation and activities of the Lead Inspector General

(Pursuant to section 8L of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended)

FOREWORD

We are pleased to submit the Lead Inspector General (Lead IG) quarterly report to Congress on Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR). This is our fourth quarterly report on the overseas contingency operation (OCO), discharging our individual and collective agency oversight responsibilities pursuant to section 8L of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended. The OCO is dedicated to countering the terrorist threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Iraq, Syria, and the broader international community. The U.S. counter-ISIL strategy includes support to military operations associated with OIR as well as diplomacy, governance, security programs and activities, and, separately, humanitarian assistance.

This quarter, Principal Deputy Inspector General for the Department of Defense (DoD) Glenn Fine assumed the roles of Acting DoD Inspector General and Lead Inspector General with the departure of the Honorable Jon Rymer. Mr. Fine joined DoD in June 2015, having previously served as the Inspector General of the Department of Justice for 11 years. In addition, during this quarter, Ann Calvaresi Barr was confirmed as the Inspector General for U.S. Agency for International Development. She served previously as the Deputy Inspector General at the Department of Transportation and brings more than 30 years of experience in the federal oversight community.

In early December, we briefed interested congressional parties on the work of the Lead IG as it relates to the three OCOs that were designated during the past year. Approximately 25 congressional staff members, representing 8 committees from the Senate and House of Representatives, 3 members' offices, and the Congressional Research Service, participated in the discussion on the individual OCOs as well as the Lead IG oversight concept. As a group, we highlighted lessons learned and best practices that will continue to shape our oversight work.

This quarterly report provides an update on OIR and the counter-ISIL strategy, including Lead IG observations and findings from our oversight activities. It also highlights activities related to OIR from Inspectors General at the Departments of Homeland Security, Justice, and the Treasury. We look forward to continuing our information sharing, coordination, and collaboration among our oversight partners.

/s/

Glenn A. Fine
Acting Inspector General
U.S. Department of Defense

/s/

Steve A. Linick
Inspector General
U.S. Department of State and the Broadcasting Board of Governors

/s/

Ann Calvaresi Barr
Inspector General
U.S. Agency for International Development

MESSAGE FROM THE LEAD IG

Glenn A. Fine

As the newly designated Lead Inspector General for Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) and the associated humanitarian crisis, I am pleased to present to Congress our fourth quarterly report on OIR.

Inspector General Rymer, who resigned as the Department of Defense (DoD) Inspector General on January 8, 2016, was instrumental in creating the Lead Inspector General (Lead IG) concept. I thank him for his leadership in promoting and implementing the Lead IG model as an effective method for improved collaboration and coordination of the oversight of overseas contingency operations.

I also recognize and thank Catherine Trujillo, former Acting Deputy Inspector General, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), for her Lead IG efforts. Ms. Trujillo oversaw USAID reporting for the U.S. humanitarian crisis in Syria and Iraq as well as comprehensive Lead IG reporting to Congress on the Ebola crisis. In the months ahead, we look forward to working with USAID's new Inspector General, Ann Calvaresi Barr, who was confirmed in November 2015.

OIR saw significant changes, successes, and challenges this quarter. In October 2015, for example, the United States and its global coalition partners intensified strikes on ISIL targets, focused on retaking cities in Iraq and Syria, destroyed oil infrastructure and supply routes, and killed several of ISIL's high-value fighters. However, many challenges remain , including clearing explosives and remaining ISIL fighters from liberated areas and providing critical stabilization support in cities like Tikrit and Ramadi, a city estimated to be 80% in ruin. The humanitarian and refugee crisis remains dire. Water, food, and other basic needs are still limited for millions of people displaced internally and millions who have fled to refugee locations outside of Syria or Iraq.

My Lead IG colleagues and I are committed to effective oversight and timely reporting on OIR. In these efforts, we appreciate and rely on the dedication of the teams of OIG employees in the field, who perform the day-to-day planning, analysis, and oversight work for our organizations. We thank them for the hard work and sacrifice.

/s/

Lead Inspector General for Operation Inherent Resolve
Glenn A. Fine
Acting Inspector General
U.S. Department of Defense

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Developments on a number of fronts this quarter illustrate both the changing nature of the threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the evolving approach to combatting it. The United States continues to lead the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, which includes more than 60 countries that joined with Iraq to defeat this terrorist group. Activities across the nine lines of U.S. effort demonstrate the transnational nature of the threat and the need for global coordination and cooperation.

Pursuant to their congressional mandate, the Lead Inspector General (Lead IG) agencies are required to report quarterly to Congress and the public on OIR. This quarterly report covers the events and activities that occurred related to OIR and the associated humanitarian crisis during the period October 1–December 31, 2015. For a timeline of selected major events this quarter, see next page.

INTENSIFIED MILITARY ACTIVITY

On October 27, 2015, Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter discussed the U.S. military's adapted campaign strategy, calling it the 3Rs, for Raqqah, Ramadi, and Raids.[1] The framework on the overall conduct of coalition operations remains the same, but the intent is to be more effective on the ground, to intensify airstrikes, and to attack ISIL infrastructure and supply routes.

By the end of December 2015, with the support of coalition airstrikes, counter-ISIL forces in Syria took control of Tishrin Dam and major nearby supply routes nearby in Syria. The coalition launched Operation Tidal Wave II in Syria to destroy ISIL's oil business, and coalition airstrikes were instrumental in liberating Sinjar, Iraq, and most of Ramadi, in Iraq's Anbar province, by the end of December.[2]

Clearing operations in Ramadi continue. Post-battle stabilization efforts are the next challenge for the Government of Iraq (GOI) and the coalition, including steps to provide basic services and security. According to the Department of Defense (DoD), about 2,800 Sunni tribal fighters had completed a brief training program as of December 2015 and will serve as the foundation for the holding force in Ramadi.[3] However, Anbar officials described Ramadi as 80% destroyed, estimating that it may cost up to $10 billion to rebuild.[4]

As of January 3, 2016, the coalition had launched more than 9,300 airstrikes, with about 78% conducted by the United States.[5] During a 3-week period in December, coalition airstrikes killed 10 leaders characterized by DoD as high-value ISIL fighters.[6]

Although the air campaign continues to be the focal point of the coalition's military efforts, the Secretary of Defense announced on December 1, 2015, that a small, specialized expeditionary targeting force of U.S. personnel would be dispatched to Iraq to enhance cooperation with Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) units as they continue to target ISIL's leadership and infrastructure. At the same time, about 50 U.S. combat forces play a similar role in northern Syria.[7]

Another 3,500 U.S. personnel located at four Build Partner Capacity (BPC) and two specialty training sites train, advise, and equip Iraq's security forces, including the Peshmerga forces of the Kurdistan Region. According to a DoD media release, as of December 29, 2015, about 17,500 Iraqi forces had undergone some level of training at BPC sites, with approximately 2,600 more in the pipeline.[8] These sites form the core of the coalition's effort to develop an Iraqi force capable of eliminating ISIL from its national territory.

DoD IG determinted that DoD has not produced sufficient reporting to meet congressional requirements under Section 1236 of the FY 2015 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The last report the DoD IG received in compliance with Section 1236 covered the 90-day period ending July 17, 2015.

In Syria, the train and equip program was put on pause after fewer than 150 trainees had completed the program. In October 2015, the Secretary of Defense announced that the program would begin to focus instead on providing equipment and supplies to vetted leaders of opposition forces already operating in Syria. Full details of the number of trainees admitted to the program, and the final number trained, are not available in an unclassified report.[9] Further, congressionally required reporting on the Syria train and equip program activities, pursuant to section 1209 of the FY 2015 NDAA, has been insufficient. The last report released covered the period March–May 2015.

As of December 31, 2015, the United States had provided more than $11 billion for DoD programs and operations related to OIR.[10]

POST-LIBERATION CHALLENGES

For the counter-ISIL efforts to be effective long-term, the GOI must develop stable, inclusive, democratic governance structures and engage all sectors of the Iraqi population, including Shia Arabs, Sunni Arabs, and the predominantly Sunni Kurdish population. It must be able to fund military and police forces acceptable to various ethnosectarian groups and also build a diverse economy not solely dependent on the fluctuating price of oil. Two realities discussed in this report illustrate the difficulty of accomplishing these objectives.

First, the GOI passed its budget for 2016, which assumes an average price-per-barrel for oil of $45, well above the level it was trading at in December 2015.[11] With oil sales responsible for approximately 90% of government revenue, reduced oil prices will have profound consequences.

Second, the fight against ISIL is being conducted by an array of forces, including Kurdish Peshmerga in the north; the Sunni stabilization forces beginning to assert themselves in Anbar; the primarily Shia Popular Mobilization Forces in and around Baghdad; and the ISF, which took the lead in recapturing Ramadi, and is preparing for the coming offensive to isolate and reclaim Mosul.[12] Although these groups are united in their objective to destroy ISIL, they do not necessarily share a common vision for the future of Iraq.

The Department of State (DoS) continues its diplomacy efforts to promote governance and decentralization by the GOI and encourage full participation by Shia Arabs, Sunni Arabs and Sunni Kurdish populations. DoS has obligated funds from the FY 2015 Economic Support Fund for Iraq stabilization programs, including $19 million for DoS and $19.7 million for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).[13]

Selected Major Events, 10/1/2015–12/31/2015

October 9 — Syria Train and Equip Program pauses training to focus on equipping

October 21 — Coalition air forces commence Operation Tidal Wave II, targeting ISIL oil resources

October 27 — Secretary of Defense introduces 3R military campaign strategy during testiimony

October 30 — Syria resolution participants meet under UN auspices in Vienna

November 13 — Kurdish forces announce the retaking of Sinjar

November 15 — G20 Leaders meet in Antalya, Turkey and reaffirm solidarity in fight against terrorism

November 24 — Turkey downs Russian attack jet for encroaching on Turkish airspace

December 1 — Secretary of Defense testifies on use of 50 U.S. Special Forces personnel for targeted missions in Iraq and unilateral special operations in Syria

December 4 — Turkey reportedly deploys hundreds of troops inside Iraq northeast of Mosul, leading to widespread calls for their removal from most Iraqi political blocs

President Obama addresses USA on counter-ISIL and counterterrorism strategies

December 8 — ISF units recapture key terrain in Ramadi

December 9–11 — Syrian opposition leaders meet in Riyadh

December 10 — DoD confirms ISIL finance chief Abu Salah killed in coalition airstrike

December 17 — Treasury Secretary chairs first meeting of UN Security Council with finance ministers to discuss terrorist financing and combating ISIL finance

December 18 — UNSCR 2254 endorses Vienna statements on Syria

December 26 — Syrian Democratic Forces retake Tishrin Dam

December 28 — Iraqi Security Forces raise Iraqi flag over government buildings in Ramadi

Note: For the sources of information presented in this timeline, see the last endnote in this report

REGIONAL STABILITY AND RELATED GOVERNANCE INITIATIVES

Significant to overall stability in the region, DoS and the United Nations made progress in efforts to establish a political process to resolve the civil war in Syria. With U.S. support, the United Nations sponsored meetings in October and November 2015 to work toward consensus on broad principles to develop this process, creating the International Syria Support Group, which will serve as a forum for coordinating the global coalition's support for this process.[14] Syrian opposition groups met in December to form their High Negotiations Committee to participate in the UN-sponsored process. Also in December, the UN Security Council passed a resolution endorsing the peace initiatives and calling for a nationwide ceasefire.

UN-brokered preliminary discussions began on January 29, 2016, seeking to involve the Syrian government and opposition groups. The United Nations temporarily suspended those talks, however, on February 3, 2016, with the intention of resuming them by February 25. Secretary Kerry called on the Syrian regime to stop its bombardment of opposition-held areas (particularly Aleppo), enabled by Russian airstrikes, and its besiegement of civilians, to permit a political solution to the conflict.[15]

DoS representatives continued to work with their Turkish counterparts to find a solution for closing approximately 98 kilometers of the Turkish-Syrian border that remains under ISIL control. At a press conference on December 1, 2015, President Obama noted that, although Turkish efforts in this regard have improved, Ankara, Turkey, still needs to dedicate additional resources to close this gap.[16]

EFFORTS TO COUNTER ISIL FINANCING

In conjunction with the DoS and other agencies, the Department of the Treasury (Treasury) continues to conduct efforts to prevent ISIL from accessing international markets. ISIL's heavy reliance on moving money outside the traditional banking system makes interdicting its funds challenging. The Counter-ISIL Finance Group, with representatives from most of the major coalition countries, met for the third time this quarter to better coordinate its efforts to restrict ISIL's ability to move money.[17] In December 2015, Secretary of the Treasury Jacob Lew led a UN Security Council session that unanimously passed a U.S.-proposed resolution to expand the scope of sanctions targeting entities and individuals involved in terrorist financing.[18]

These counter-finance efforts are complemented by the coalition's increasing focus on destroying all aspects of ISIL-controlled oil industry—from wellheads, to trucks, to distribution points—as demonstrated by this quarter's Operation Tidal Wave II, which had destroyed more than 400 tanker trucks as of December 1, 2015. Oil profiteering made up nearly half a billion of ISIL's $1.18 billion 2015 revenue. ISIL's oil smuggling business model includes evasive tactics as it adapts to the airstrikes now targeting oil tankers and refineries.[19]

HOMELAND SECURITY

As foreign terrorist fighters continue to travel to Syria to undergo training and join ISIL's forces, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) added actions to further stem their potential entry into the United States, including sending air marshals overseas to stop them at their point of departure and improving information sharing on travelers. The Department of Justice (DoJ) and Federal

Table 1.

Selected ISIL-directed and ISIL-inspired Attacks, 10/1/2015–12/31/2015

Region	Date	Description
Yemen	October 6	Series of ISIL bombings in Yemen's two largest cities kill at least 25 people
	October 31	ISIL claims responsibility for car bomb that killed provincial governor and 8 bodyguards
Sinai Peninsula	October 31	ISIL affiliate claims responsibility for downing Russian passenger jet in Egypt, killing 224 people
	November 4	ISIL's Sinai affiliate claims responsibility for a suicide bombing that killed at least 4 police officers
Bangladesh	October 3	ISIL claims responsibility for the shooting death of a Japanese man riding a rickshaw
	October 24	ISIL claims responsibility for bombings that killed 1 person and wounded dozens more during a procession commemorating a Shiite Muslim holiday
	November 4	ISIL claims responsibility for a stabbing and shooting that killed 1 police officer and wounded 1 more
	November 26	ISIL claims responsibility for shooting in Shia mosque that killed 1 worshiper and injured 3 others
Lebanon	November 12	ISIL claims responsibility for double suicide bombing in Lebanon shopping district, killing at least 43 people
France	November 13	Teams of ISIL attackers kill at least 129 and wound more than 350 other in coordinated bombing and shooting attacks in Paris, France
United States	December 12	Married couple kill 14 people and wound 17 in an assault rifle attack in San Bernardino, California
Turkey	October 10	ISIL is prime suspect in investigation of bombings in Ankara that killed at least 128 people and wounded 247
	December 30	Turkish authorities arest 2 ISIL jihadists accused of planning bombings in Ankara on New Year's Eve (bomb materials confiscated)

Source: Karen Yourish, Derek Watkins, and Tom Giratikanon, "Recent Attacks Demonstrate Islamic State's Ability to Both Inspire and Coordinate Terror," *The New York Times*, 1/12/2016.

Bureau of Investigation (FBI) work closely with law enforcement agencies across the country to interdict terrorist activity here at home.

DHS also administers programs to provide public awareness of terrorist threats and travelers entering the homeland. During a December 9, 2015, roundtable discussion with the House Subcommittee on National Security, DHS described many of the gaps and weakness in the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). The program allows citizens of 38 countries to enter the United States for up to 90 days without a visa,[20] but DHS acknowledged that it has biometric information for only 75% of the VWP traveling population and generally lacks information about whether a traveler has been to Iran, Iraq, or Syria. Further, DHS has acknowledged that these features need improvement with international partners and noted that such efforts were underway.[21]

Counter-radicalization messaging remains an essential part of the U.S. government's efforts to defeat ISIL and disrupt its recruitment efforts. In December 2015, DoS introduced the new Global Engagement Center, as the successor to its Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications, to address its counter violent extremism communications efforts. According to DoS, this new Center will focus more on empowering and enabling partners, governmental and non-governmental, who are able to speak out against these groups and provide an alternative to ISIL's apocalyptic vision.[22] In early January 2016, the President reorganized U.S. counter-messaging programs, creating a DHS-based counterterrorism task force that will bring together many federal and local agencies to enhance coordination and produce more effective information campaigns.[23]

TRANSNATIONAL THREAT

The recent attacks in Paris, France, and San Bernardino, California, this quarter illustrated ISIL's global reach, with the ability to inspire like-minded individuals to attack innocent citizens. For a listing of selected ISIL-directed and -inspired attacks this quarter, see Table 1.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Conflict among armed groups continued to drive humanitarian needs in Syria and Iraq this quarter. Flooding and a cholera outbreak in the central and southern provinces of Iraq exacerbated conditions for people affected in areas. By the end of the reporting period, 9.7 million people had been displaced within the two countries and 4.6 million more Syrians had sought refuge in other countries. The United Nations identified more than 23.5 million people in need between the two countries.[24]

In Syria, the number of people in need continued to grow, increasing by more than 1 million over the quarter. Of those in need, more than 8.7 million were reportedly food insecure and 4.5 million remained in hard-to-reach areas, where access for humanitarian responders remained limited. In addition to continuing conflict, Syria's crippled infrastructure also presented challenges for those remaining in the country. USAID reported that an estimated 60% of Syria's water and sewage networks have been destroyed or were out of service. As conditions in Syria deteriorated, the number of Syrian refugees residing in neighboring countries rose, growing by 600,000 during the quarter.[25]

In Iraq, the number of people in need also increased over the quarter, from 8.6 to 10 million. Conditions improved in other respects as more Iraqis returned to their places of origin and GOI and Kurdish forces made gains against ISIL, retaking the towns of Ramadi and Sinjar.[26]

The U.S. government provides humanitarian assistance in the region to assist displaced, vulnerable, and conflict-affected populations in Iraq and Syria, as well as Syrian refugees in neighboring countries, and to work with host governments to mitigate the effects of the crises. The U.S. government has committed $5.13 billion to respond to the Syria and Iraq complex crises since FY 2012. The U.S. government provides food assistance as well as basic humanitarian support in areas such as shelter and settlement, water and sanitation, and healthcare.[27]

LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL ACTIVITIES

For this report, DoD IG interviewed Major General Michael Nagata, the former Director of Combined Joint Interagency Task Force-Syria and Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command Central, on the challenges and long-term objective of training moderate Syrian opposition fighters within the broader U.S. strategy for countering ISIL in Syria. For a summary of this interview, see the *Building Partner Capacity* section of this report.

On November 5, 2015, DoD IG led the quarterly Joint Planning Group meeting, an ongoing effort required by the FY 2008 NDAA to coordinate oversight activities in Southwest Asia. Importantly, representatives from the Offices of Inspectors General for the Departments of Justice, Homeland Security, and the Treasury participated for the first time to promote a whole-of-government approach to provide strategic oversight of the overseas contingency operations. In addition to coordinating and de-conflicting projects, the Joint Planning Group along with these new members will engage in strategic oversight planning for OIR.

As of December 31, 2015, Lead IG agencies had 23 ongoing projects related to OIR and the complex humanitarian crisis. For a listing of those projects, as well as 14 projects being conducted by other federal oversight agencies, see Appendix A. Several of these projects are highlighted in the discussion of their respective line of effort. Lead IG agencies will provide detailed summaries of completed work, as well as a discussion of ongoing and planned work among Lead IG agencies and their oversight partners, in the next quarterly report.

3Rs: Raqqah, Ramadi, and Raids

1. THE MARA LINE

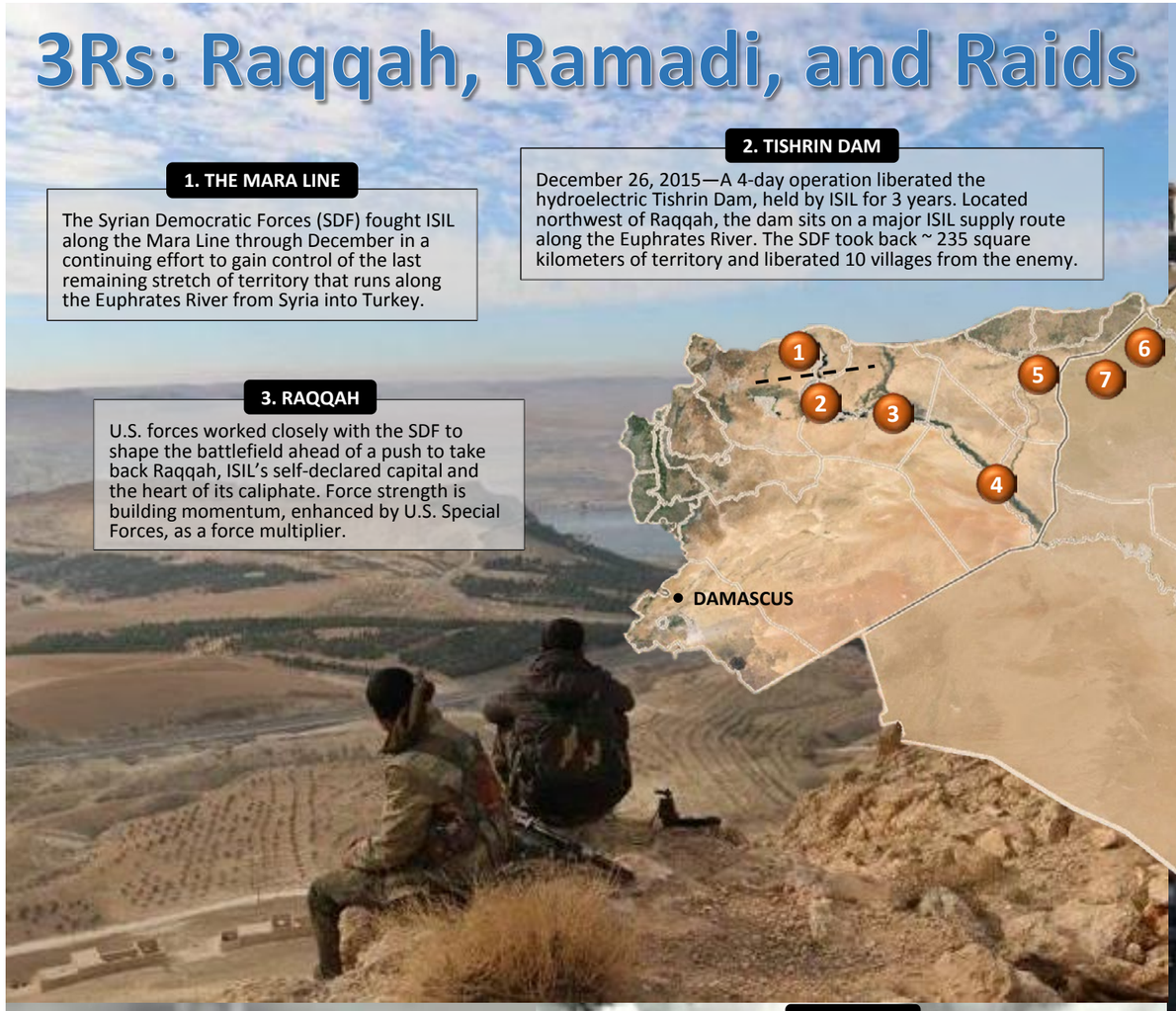
The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) fought ISIL along the Mara Line through December in a continuing effort to gain control of the last remaining stretch of territory that runs along the Euphrates River from Syria into Turkey.

2. TISHRIN DAM

December 26, 2015—A 4-day operation liberated the hydroelectric Tishrin Dam, held by ISIL for 3 years. Located northwest of Raqqah, the dam sits on a major ISIL supply route along the Euphrates River. The SDF took back ~ 235 square kilometers of territory and liberated 10 villages from the enemy.

3. RAQQAH

U.S. forces worked closely with the SDF to shape the battlefield ahead of a push to take back Raqqah, ISIL's self-declared capital and the heart of its caliphate. Force strength is building momentum, enhanced by U.S. Special Forces, as a force multiplier.



4. DEIR EZ ZOR

Along the road connecting Raqqah to Ramadi, this city is the nexus of ISIL's oil business. Operation Tidal Wave II intensified coalition airstrike raids targeting ISIL-controlled oil infrastructure, taking out more than 400 tanker trucks through November 2015.

5. AL HAWL

December 2, 2015—Two weeks of coalition airstrikes softened SDF's approach for liberating al-Hawl after 9 months of ISIL occupation. Reports indicate that ISIL retreated, allowing the SDF to reclaim ~900 square kilometers and 200 villages from the enemy.

6. PESHMERGA

December 18, 2015—The Peshmerga have been holding a forward line extending approximately 1,200 km along the eastern boundary of ISIL's control in northeastern Iraq. A battalion-sized ISIL attack (or about 500 enemy fighters) originating from Mosul penetrated the line this quarter. ISIL coordinated small assault groups in to simultaneously attack four locations, including the towns of Nuran, Bashiqa, and Tal Aswad. Coalition airstrikes killed nearly 200 enemy fighters and destroyed all of ISIL's construction vehicles, such as excavators, that had breached Peshmerga defensive emplacements.

7. SINJAR

November 13, 2015—Sinjar lies on a main supply and communications road for ISIL, a linchpin connecting Mosul and Raqqah, that had been held since summer 2014. Sinjar is among the successful Peshmerga operations that took back hundreds of kilometers of territory this quarter.

8. RAMADI

December 28, 2015—After nearly 8 months, the ISF reclaimed Ramadi, the capital of Sunni-dominated Anbar. Ramadi represents the second major victory in Iraq, since Tikrit in April 2015. The Palestine Bridge and the Anbar operations center were two key objectives contested along the main supply routes to ISIL in the city. By mid-December, Ramadi was fully isolated, and the ISF continued clearing operations, slowly squeezing the city along four axes. Disruption operations with intensified airstrikes continued throughout the Tigris River Valley—including Baiji, Mosul, and Hawaija—and along the Euphrates River Valley, including Ramadi, Falluja, and Abu Hayat.

For the sources of information on this infographic, see the last endnote in this report.

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U.S. STRATEGY UPDATE

The U.S. airstrikes to support counter-ISIL efforts in Iraq and Syria began in August 2014. A month after these targeted attacks began, on September 10, 2014, President Obama announced a broader strategy to degrade and defeat ISIL, to be executed across nine lines of effort by multiple U.S. agencies.[28] For a description of each, see the sidebar feature in this section.

The U.S. strategy relies on a partnership with the broad international coalition to counter ISIL, attack its root causes, and foster a peaceful political transition in Syria. The Global Coalition includes more than 60 countries and has five working groups to advance the following components of its anti-ISIL strategy:[29]

- providing military support to partners, led by the United States and Iraq
- impeding the flow of foreign fighters, led by The Netherlands and Turkey
- stopping ISIL's financing and funding, led by Italy, Saudi Arabia, and the United States
- exposing ISIL's true nature (or counter-ISIL messaging) led by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the United Kingdom, and the United States
- stabilizing liberated areas, led by Germany and the UAE

In addition to these working groups, approximately 24 members of the Coalition meet as the Small Group of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL to synchronize and adjust strategies. The Small Group met in Brussels on November 5, 2015, and anticipates its next meeting in early 2016. The Small Group also stated its support for the preliminary discussions aimed at establishing a foundation for a political transition to a democratic, inclusive, and pluralistic government in Syria.[30]

Senior Leadership Changes

Since November 13, 2015, Brett McGurk has served as Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL,[31] succeeding General John Allen. Special Presidential Envoy McGurk previously served as Deputy Special Presidential Envoy, from September 2014 to November 2015, and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Iraq and Iran in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs from August 2013 to September 2014. He also served three U.S. Ambassadors in Baghdad and focused on Iraq and other regional initiatives as the Senior Advisor in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and special advisor to the National Security Staff.[32]

On November 30, 2015, the White House announced that Robert Malley would serve as the President's senior adviser for the nine lines of effort working across the interagency to counter ISIL. Earlier in his career, he served as the Senior Director at the National Security Council for the Middle East and Africa. His role is meant to be "complementary to and in partnership with" the Special Presidential Envoy. The President has directed Mr. Malley to coordinate with the Special Presidential Envoy to:[33]

- work closely with the full national security team to ensure constant synchronization of counter-ISIL efforts
- ensure daily focus from across the interagency within the coalition on measures to strengthen the U.S. partnership with Iraq and to support a reinvigorated diplomatic track toward a political transition in Syria

Command of the military portions of OIR were also reorganized this quarter, with Secretary Carter consolidating multiple layers of leadership and appointing one commander to lead the campaign—Lieutenant General Sean McFarland, U.S. Army, Commander, Combined Joint Task Force-OIR (CJTF-OIR).[34] General MacFarland, through the Commander, U.S. Central Command, oversees military operations and has direct access to Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi.[35]

Diplomacy for a Political Resolution in Syria

On December 6, 2015, President Obama addressed the nation on the strategy to defeat ISIL and combat the transnational terrorist threat. He stressed as complementary to the U.S. lines of effort for countering ISIL the need to bring about a political resolution to the conflict in Syria.[36] The strategy builds on earlier diplomatic efforts, including the Geneva Communique of June 30, 2012, which provided for the creation of a transitional governing body for Syria, with full executive authority.[37]

This quarter's key diplomatic activities that focused on resolving the Syrian conflict included:

- The United Nations, represented by UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura, hosted two meetings in Vienna, on October 30 and November 14, 2015, resulting in the development of a timeline and a concept for a transition process for Syria that were ultimately incorporated into two Vienna Statements.
- Participants at those meetings formed the International Syria Support Group, which comprises China, Egypt, the European Union, France, Germany, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Arab League, United Nations, and United States. The group agreed to work to implement a nationwide ceasefire in Syria and to support a political resolution to the conflict. The nations pledged, as individual countries and as supporters of various belligerent groups, to take all possible steps to require adherence to a nationwide ceasefire by the groups that they support or influence.[38]

9 Strategic Lines of Effort To Counter ISIL

SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE IN IRAQ

We are supporting the new Iraqi government on efforts to govern inclusively and effectively as well as to strengthen its cooperation with regional partners.

DENYING ISIL SAFE HAVEN

We are conducting a systematic campaign of airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq and Syria. Working with the Iraqi government, we are striking ISIL targets and supporting Iraqi forces on the ground. We will degrade ISIL's leadership, logistical and operational capability, and deny it sanctuary and resources to plan, prepare and execute attacks.

BUILDING PARTNER CAPACITY

We will build the capability and capacity of our partners in the region to sustain an effective long-term campaign against ISIL. Our advisors are working to advise Iraqi forces, including Kurdish forces, to improve their ability to plan, lead, and conduct operations against ISIL, and we will provide training to help the Iraqis reconstitute their security forces and establish a National Guard. Our train and equip program will strengthen the Syrian moderate opposition and help them defend territory from ISIL.

ENHANCING INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION ON ISIL

Continuing to gain more fidelity on ISIL's capabilities, plans, and intentions is central to our strategy to degrade and ultimately destroy the group, and we will continue to strengthen our ability to understand this threat, as well as to share vital information with our Iraqi and Coalition partners to enable them to effectively counter ISIL.

EXPOSING ISIL'S TRUE NATURE

Clerics around the world have spoken up in recent weeks to highlight ISIL's hypocrisy, condemning the group's savagery and criticizing its self-proclaimed "caliphate." We are working with our partners throughout the Muslim world to highlight ISIL's hypocrisy and counter its false claims of acting in the name of religion.

DISRUPTING ISIL'S FINANCES

ISIL's expansion over the past year has given it access to significant and diverse sources of funding. So, we are working aggressively with our partners on a coordinated approach to reduce ISIL's revenue from oil and assets it has plundered; limit ISIL's ability to extort local populations; stem ISIL's gains from kidnapping for ransom; and disrupt the flow of external donations to the group.

DISRUPTING THE FLOW OF FOREIGN TERRORIST FIGHTERS

Foreign terrorist fighters are ISIL's lifeblood, and a global security threat—with citizens of nearly 80 countries filling its ranks. On September 24, the President convened a historic Summit-level meeting of the UN Security Council, focused on this issue and we will continue to lead an international effort to stem the flow of fighters into Syria and Iraq.

PROTECTING THE HOMELAND

We will continue to use the criminal justice system as a critical counterterrorism tool, work with air carriers to implement responsible threat-based security and screening requirements, and counter violent extremism here at home.

HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT

We and our partners will continue to provide humanitarian assistance to the displaced and vulnerable in Iraq and Syria.

Source: The White House, "The Administration's Strategy to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the Updated FY 2015 Overseas Contingency Operations Request," November 7, 2014.

- Saudi Arabia hosted a conference attended by more than 100 leaders of Syrian opposition groups in early December.[39] The result was the formation of the High Negotiations Committee, a group of Syrian opposition figures tasked with selecting and providing guidance to the delegation that would represent the Syrian opposition in future negotiations.[40]

- The UN Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 2254, endorsing the two Vienna Statements and the earlier Geneva Communique of June 30, 2012. The resolution called for an expeditious nationwide ceasefire in Syria.[41]

As a result of these initiatives, the participants have agreed on a set of broad principles that may serve as a foundation for a political process to end the ongoing conflict, including the following:[42]

- The political process will be Syrian-led and -owned.
- The United Nations will invite the Syrian government and the opposition groups to begin an inclusive political process.
- The political process will establish credible, inclusive, and nonsectarian governance within 6 months.

A UN-brokered follow-up meeting between the Syrian government and opposition groups was set for late January.[43] According to UN Special Envoy de Mistura, the priorities for these talks are a broad ceasefire, humanitarian aid, and halting the threat posed by ISIL.[44] Further, according to Secretary Kerry, "sharp differences" remain among International Syria Support Group members about the future of Syrian President Bashar al-Asad.[45] All agree, however, that ISIL and other terrorist groups must be defeated.[46]

UN-brokered preliminary discussions began on January 29, 2016, seeking to involve the Syrian government and opposition groups. The United Nations temporarily suspended those talks, however, on February 3, 2016, with the intention of resuming them by February 25. UN Special Envoy de Mistura recessed the talks because the anticipated immediate implementation of a humanitarian initiative had not occurred. According to the Special Envoy, the Syrian government cited procedural issues that delayed humanitarian assistance. Secretary Kerry called on the Syrian regime to stop its bombardment of opposition-held areas (particularly Aleppo), enabled by Russian airstrikes, and its besiegement of civilians, to permit a political solution to the conflict.[47]

With respect to longstanding discussions about humanitarian access in Syria, UNSCR 2254 and the Vienna Statement called for humanitarian agencies to have free and immediate access to people in need. UNSCR 2254 noted "the dire and deteriorating humanitarian situation" and "the continued suffering of the Syrian people."[48] In UNSCR 2258, issued on December 22, 2015, the Security Council reiterated its demand for Syrian authorities and others to comply with international law and UN resolutions to stop humanitarian abuses, and again stressed the need for a peaceful political resolution of the Syrian conflict.[49]

Congressional Reporting Requirements

(continues to next page)

The National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2016 requires the following:

- Secretary of Defense (in coordination with the Secretary of State)—continue reporting on the Iraq train and equip program, including, among many other items, details of ITEF projects, how they address gaps and weaknesses in Iraq's security forces, assessments of operational effectiveness of the forces, the status of U.S. funds, and a new requirement to list details of forces vetted to receive U.S. assistance, including the association of those groups to terrorist organizations (quarterly)
- Secretary of Defense and Secretary of State—submit a strategy for the Middle East to counter violent extremism (no later than 60 days from enactment)
- Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq—report capability gaps in Iraq's security forces, OSC-I activities to address those capability gaps and how they are coordinated with and complement security assistance provided through the ITEF program, and measurements of effectiveness (September 30, 2015, and every 180 days)
- Secretary of Defense—report any determination that equipment or supplies have been transferred to or acquired by a violent extremist organization
- Secretary of Defense—report on the deployment of U.S. armed forces deployed in support of OIR, including the authorities, limitations, and rationale for such deployments
- Secretary of Defense—continue reporting on the Syria train and equip program, including matters related to the vetted Syrian opposition and a description of actions to be taken by the Secretary to ensure that support does not benefit violent extremist organizations (quarterly)

Congressional Reporting Requirements

(continued from previous page)

The Consolidated Appropriations Act for FY 2016 imposed several additional requirements, including several new reports:

- The President—report on coordination and synchronization of the U.S. counterterrorism strategy to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat the Islamic State, al-Qaeda, and their affiliated groups, associated groups, and adherents (no later than 180 days from enactment and coordinated with the Director of National Intelligence, Secretary of State, Secretary of the Treasury, Attorney General, and Secretary of Defense, and head of any other department or agency of the federal government that has responsibility for any such activities)
- Department of Defense—continue *Cost of War* report on incremental contingency operations costs for OIR and any named successor operations (monthly)
- Secretary of State—report on security assistance provided under the headings ''Peacekeeping Operations,'' ''International Military Education and Training,'' and ''Foreign Military Financing Program'' (no later than 120 days after enactment)
- Director of National Intelligence—report on foreign fighter flows to and from Syria and to and from Iraq (no later than 60 days after enactment and every 60 days thereafter)
- Director of National Intelligence—report on the strategy, efforts, and resources to detect, deter, and degrade Islamic State revenue mechanisms (no later than 90 days after enactment)
- Secretary of Homeland Security—report on each instance in which the Secretary exercised waiver authority during the previous year regarding use of the Visa Waiver Program for aliens who travel to certain countries (annually)
- Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with Director of National Intelligence and Secretary of State—report including evaluation and threat assessment of each country determined to present a high risk to the national security of the United States (no later than 60 days after enactment)
- Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of State—report on the number of individuals who were denied eligibility to travel under the Visa Waiver Program, or whose eligibility for such travel was revoked during the previous year, and the number of such individuals determined to represent a threat to the national security of the United States (no later than 30 days after enactment)

U.S. FUNDING

As of December 31, 2015, more than $11 billion had been provided for OIR and related U.S. programs and activities to counter ISIL since FY 2014. Most appropriations have funded DoD programs and operations to wage the military campaign under OIR.

Additional amounts attributable strictly to programs and operations across the nine lines of U.S. effort and multiple U.S. agencies have been difficult to isolate. However, billions of dollars support additional programs and operations to counter violent extremism, fight global terrorism, and support regional stabilization by directly addressing the threat posed by ISIL to the United States and beyond. This report presents details of funding by appropriation, account, and program where information from the agencies has been provided.

The FY 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 114-113), passed on December 18, 2015, continued funding for most counter-ISIL activities, including $715 million for the Iraq Train and Equip Fund (ITEF) and $80 million for the security assistance activities of DoD's Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq, which facilitates equipment purchases for Iraq's security forces.[50] Although the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2016 authorized up to $531 million to create a new Syria Train and Equip Fund, P.L. 114-113 did not enact funds for this 2-year standalone account.[51] DoD reported that it intends to request reprogramming of up to $350 million for the program in FY 2016. Of these funds, it appears likely that some portion will be required for U.S. trainer and enabler costs not otherwise funded in service OCO requests.[52]

Details of amounts appropriated and allocated for FY 2016 programs and activities have not been released, but DoD requested $5.3 billion for OIR programs and operations in FY 2016.[53] Both P.L. 114-113 and the FY 2016 NDAA impose numerous reporting requirements on the uses of train and equip funds. For details, see the sidebar discussion in this section.

The Administration identified an additional $1.82 billion in its FY 2016 request for foreign operations funding. Most of this amount is to be used to address the effects of the Syrian crisis on neighboring countries, including:[54]

- $1 billion for Jordan to counter ISIL and mitigate Syria-related economic and security concerns
- $335 million to strengthen Iraq's counterterrorism capabilities
- $211 million to assist Lebanon in meeting the needs of Syrian refugees and addressing the ISIL threat

According to the Congressional Research Service, the overall "Syria and Counter-ISIL" request is a 17% increase over FY 2014 funding for this purpose (FY 2015 funding data was not available).

DoD Funding

As of December 31, 2015, the United States had provided more than $11 billion for DoD programs and operations related to OIR and counter-ISIL activities since FY 2014, including:[55]

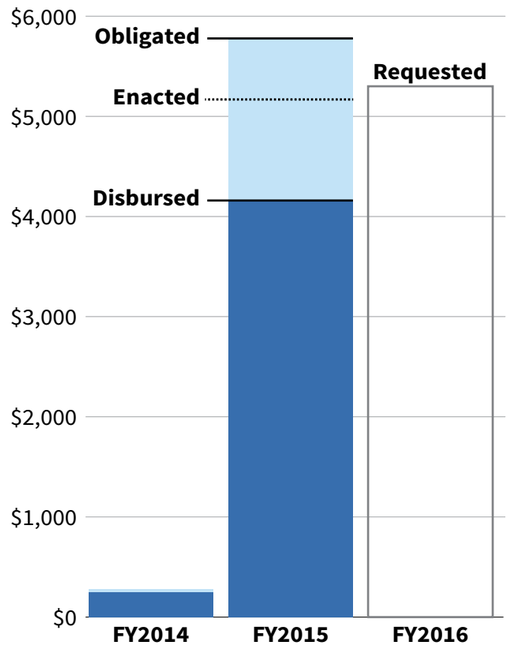
- **FY 2014**—$281.7 million
- **FY 2015**—$5.78 billion
- **FY 2016**—$5.30 billion

The amounts for FY 2014 and FY 2015 reflect total obligations as of September 30, 2015, provided in the most current iteration of the *Cost of War* report, produced by the DoD Comptroller. The status of OIR funding lags the Lead IG reporting period by at least three months. The total for FY 2016 reflects the amount requested by DoD. Details of amounts appropriated and allocated should be available in the next quarterly report. However, as Figure 1 shows, obligations of FY 2015 appropriations exceed the $5.10 billion amount enacted by Congress last year.[56]

The *Cost of War* report captures the *incremental* cost of Overseas Contingency Operations (OCOs) up to and above planned deployment activity. The total funds obligated as of September 30, 2015, do not include reimbursement for the full cost of munitions required for the air campaign that has been waged since August 2014. According to the DoD Comptroller, those obligations and disbursements are recorded one to two years after the munitions have been expended, as part of end-of-year reimbursement requests.[57] Thus, the final cost of OIR programs and activities funded by FY 2015 appropriations will not be known for many months.

Figure 1.

Status of OIR Funding for DoD Programs and Operations, by Fiscal Year of Appropriation, as of 9/30/2015
($ Millions)



Sources: OUSD(C), *Cost of War*, 9/2015, and "United States Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Request: Overview," 2015.

For details of the status of the ITEF and funds for the Syria train and equip program, see the *Building Partner Capacity* section in this report.

DoS Funding

P.L. 114-113 also set funding levels for DoS operations and foreign assistance. Congress directed that certain levels of FY 2016 foreign assistance funds be provided for Iraq, Syria, Jordan, and for humanitarian assistance, but did not direct all funds or how the funds should be allocated across programs. DoS reported it is working to determine FY 2016 allocations for programs and activities that support OIR and the counter-ISIL strategy, and to continue long-running efforts related to the Syria strategy and support of regional partners.[58]

Approximately $750 million in FY 2016 appropriations were provided for the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) to fund international communication activities and grants for broadcasting. Nearly $110 million is for Arabic broadcasting to the Middle East by BBG grantee *Middle East Broadcasting Networks* (MBN). BBG's worldwide media networks, including the *Voice of America* and *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, also broadcast objective news and information programming to counter ISIL's information activities, but the budget amounts supporting those particular efforts cannot easily be segregated within the overall budgets of those networks.[59]

Funding for Humanitarian Assistance

According to USAID, the United States has provided more than $5.1 billion in funding since FY 2012 to address the current complex crises associated with Syria and Iraq.[60]

Ascertaining the Accuracy of Data

Under section 8L of the Inspector General Act, as amended, the Lead IG is responsible for ascertaining the accuracy of information provided to federal agencies on OIR-related programs and operations.[61] Specifically, the Lead IG is responsible for reviewing the accuracy of obligations and expenditures, costs of programs and projects, accountability of funds, and the award and execution of major contracts, grants, and agreements.

The Lead IG agencies share the responsibility to ascertain the accuracy of the information related to the overseas contingency operation, and have begun a series of projects to meet this requirement. USAID OIG is implementing discrete steps to its future Government Management Reform Act work to test financial data from a sample of awards related to humanitarian assistance in the region, and DoS OIG is identifying approaches to obtaining and analyzing financial information obtained from DoS. An ongoing DoD IG audit is reviewing financial systems tracking costs related to OIR and determining whether reporting of war-related obligations in the *Cost of War* report meet reporting and legislative requirements.

SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE IN IRAQ

Key to the long-term effectiveness of the counter-ISIL efforts is a stable, inclusive, democratic government for Iraq. In Iraq, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has stated his intentions to streamline the government, encourage reforms, and engage all sectors of the population, including Shia Arabs, Sunni Arabs, Sunni Kurds, and ethnic and religious minorities, to support the state of Iraq. The challenges are particularly stark in the push to liberate territory occupied by ISIL, and to devise structures for stabilization, reconstruction, and reconciliation.[62]

DoS reported that it continued its efforts to promote effective governance in Iraq through diplomatic engagement and foreign assistance programs this quarter.[63] DoS focuses on improving governance in Iraq through diplomatic efforts to encourage full participation by Sunni, Shia, Kurdish, and Arab populations; promote decentralization; reduce corruption; and develop democratic institutions. In addition, DoS reported that, as ISIL is driven from more territory, DoS provides support for Iraqi stabilization efforts in liberated areas and tracks Iraqi progress on reconciliation issues.[64] The Small Group of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL at its November 4, 2015, meeting in Brussels, "reaffirm[ed its] continuing support for the efforts of Prime Minister al-Abadi's government to address corruption, decentralize certain federal authorities, and reconcile ethnic and sectarian divisions in Iraq."[65]

This quarter, DoS OIG undertook an evaluation of Embassy Baghdad's implementation of U.S. efforts to support effective governance in Iraq. DoS OIG conducted this evaluation in Washington from September 8 to October 14, 2015, and at Embassy Baghdad from October 16 to November 10, 2015. DoS OIG anticipates releasing the results of this evaluation before April 2016.

U.S. Capacity-building Programs

On October 22, 2015, DoS notified Congress that it intended to obligate $38.7 million of the FY 2015 Economic Support Fund (ESF) for Iraq programs, including $19 million for DoS and $19.7 million for USAID. According to DoS, these funds support programs in conflict mitigation and reconciliation; inclusive, responsive, and accountable governance, including decentralization; and economic growth; as well as the needs of IDPs and violence-affected communities. In particular, the funds are directed to the following objectives:[66]

- $7 million for a USAID contribution to the UN Development Program's Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization (FFIS) for Iraq

- $27.7 million for democracy and governance programs (shown in Table 2)
- $2.5 million for programs administered by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) to address vulnerable populations, which can include widows, single-female-led households, victims of torture and war, at-risk youth, survivors of gender-based violence, and other trauma survivors
- $1.5 million for DoS to support economic growth in Iraq under an interagency agreement with the U.S. Department of Commerce

DoS OIG is conducting an evaluation of DRL governance programs, including a review of 12 grants related to Iraq awarded in prior years, valued cumulatively at nearly $42.4 million. These grants involved strengthening political institutions to help deliver democracy, supporting and strengthening rights of victims of enforced disappearances, mitigating conflict in Iraq host communities, strengthening Iraq's National Strategy and National Action Plan, and other governance activities.

USAID reported that it has four active projects to promote governance in or around contested areas of Iraq. These projects were designed to advance governance reforms at the national and local levels and to promote stabilization.[67]

Table 2.

ESF-funded Democracy and Governance Programs for Iraq

$ Million

Program Description	Cost
USAID decentralization and service delivery programs—partner with line ministries and provincial governments across Iraq to improve the delivery of services at the provincial level.	11
DRL rule-of-law and human rights programs—provide grants to promote reconciliation, increase human rights protections, and strengthen the rule of law.	6
DRL political competition and consensus-building programs—provide grants to support a more representative political system in Iraq to promote national reconciliation and overall stability, with the goal of addressing the root causes of ISIL's rise.	6
DRL good governance programs—provide grants to promote inclusive governance strategies at the national and local levels, particularly greater participation of Sunnis, women, youth, and religious and ethnic minorities. They may also work to support GOI decentralization strategies.	3
USAID public financial management programs—supplement earlier funding for USAID to provide on-site senior advisory services to key line ministries in the KRG.	1.7
Total	**27.7**

Source: DoS, response to Lead IG request for information, 1/11/2016.

USAID's *Taqadum* and *Tarabot* projects, which predate ISIL's incursion into Iraq, focus on supporting governance reform. USAID has sought to advance decentralization under the *Taqadum* (Strengthening Service Delivery) project by improving public service delivery through the adoption of more reliable and effective systems for planning, budgeting, monitoring, and oversight at the provincial level. The purpose of the *Tarabot* (Administrative Reform) project is to strengthen Iraq's public management institutions through better governance and improved oversight of human and fiscal resources. The project has reportedly worked to establish and strengthen institutions, systems, and processes in close collaboration with the GOI. This quarter, the project focused on advancing procurement reforms and increasing efficiencies in the oil sector to improve revenue generation.[68]

Two other USAID projects in this sector were established in 2015. The Asia and the Middle East Growth Best Practices project supports the embedding of senior technical advisors on sovereign debt issuance and budget execution at the GOI's Ministry of Finance. In an effort to stabilize areas recently liberated from ISIL, USAID has also provided support for the UN Development Programme's Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization (FFIS). This effort was designed to build local authorities' capacity in reestablishing state authority by renewing basic services, jump-starting the restoration of livelihoods, and promoting community-level reconciliation to encourage IDPs to return to their places of origin. The effort is intended to fill temporary resource gaps until Iraqi resources can be used to support the needs of IDPs and residents in newly liberated areas.[69]

USAID reported that by December 31, 2015, it had obligated nearly $215 million in Economic Support Funds for these activities since their inception, and disbursed more than $180 million. USAID reported that it provided project oversight of these activities with the assistance of 11 Baghdad-based personnel, including a mix of U.S. direct-hire staff, U.S. personal services contractors, foreign-service nationals, and a third-country national.[70]

Stabilization

On November 4, 2015, the Small Group of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL met in Brussels to combine information and synchronize activities.[71] Included among these were the representatives from the coalition's Stabilization Working Group, who continued to discuss the lessons learned from the liberation of Tikrit and how to apply them to Ramadi, Sinjar, and other areas being rid of ISIL.[72] According to a UN news report, more than 155,000 people have returned to Tikrit since its liberation from ISIL.[73] Also, according to Special Presidential Envoy McGurk, thousands of students are returning to Tikrit University, recently reopened using FFIS funds from the coalition.[74]

As of December 31, 2015, the United States and nine other members of the coalition had pledged or contributed more than $50 million to the FFIS, administered by the UN Development Program (UNDP), including $15.3 million from the United States through USAID.[75] The stabilization process is also supported by thousands of local police and tribal forces, many of whom have been trained by the coalition.[76]

As reported last quarter, GOI and the coalition have planned for stabilization following the liberation of Ramadi, incorporating lessons learned from Tikrit. According to Special Presidential Envoy McGurk, a major challenge for stabilization in Sinjar and Ramadi is the removal of the multitude of explosives left by ISIL in homes and public buildings.[77] As of the end of the quarter, Ramadi was not fully cleared of ISIL forces, and Iraqi forces were undertaking extensive efforts to deactivate explosives.[78] FFIS funding of $7.5 million has been allocated for immediate stabilization needs in Ramadi, and additional resources will likely be needed as the work proceeds.[79]

GOI 2016 Budget

The Iraqi Council of Representatives approved the Iraq government's 2016 federal budget on December 16, 2015, after reviewing the draft sent by Prime Minister al-Abadi and the Council of Ministers. The 2016 budget projects about $89.7 billion in public expenditures. Of this total, approximately three-quarters is dedicated to operating costs, such as salaries and pensions, with the remainder committed to investments in infrastructure and equipment. The budget includes increases for the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMFs), primarily Shia militia groups who support the ISF's efforts against ISIL, and allocates funds to the Ministry of Displacement and Migration and for reconstruction efforts in areas retaken from ISIL.[80]

As in prior years, national revenues rely almost exclusively on the oil sector and have therefore been significantly affected by the decline in oil prices internationally. The budget is based on two assumptions: that Iraq will export an average of 3.6 million barrels of oil per day and that the average price of oil per barrel in 2016 will be $45—a potentially optimistic prediction, given the price of Brent crude closed at $37.28 on December 31, 2015.[81]

DENYING ISIL SAFE HAVEN

DoD adjusted the coalition military campaign in October 2015 to reinforce programs and tactics that have proven effective.[82] According to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Joseph Dunford, the campaign framework is essentially the same for Iraq and Syria,[83] but will adapt to be more effective on the ground and intensify airstrikes.[84] As anti-ISIL forces gain ground on multiple fronts throughout the region, the international coalition continues to identify the anti-ISIL groups, especially in Syria, it can provide support to, including Kurds and Arabs in northern Syria and personnel for Iraq's armed forces—particularly Sunni tribal fighters. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter described this effort to increase the use of just local ground forces as a "snowball effect" that gathers momentum and fighters as it goes.[85] Another "ingredient," as he puts it, is improved intelligence,[86] enabling new actionable opportunities for airstrikes and ground operations, including raids.[87]

Campaign Priorities: The 3Rs

In testimony on October 27, 2015, before the Senate Committee on Armed Services, Secretary Carter framed the coalition military campaign priorities as the "three Rs"—Raqqah, Ramadi, and raids.[88] Before the same committee on December 1, 2015, he underscored the importance of controlling towns, as opposed to the expanse of territory retaken, as an indicator of success, since much of ISIL's strategic depth is in sparsely populated desert regions in eastern Syria and western Iraq.[89]

During October 1–December 31, 2015, the anti-ISIL coalition reported some significant milestones, including:

- liberation of Sinjar, a town in Iraq linking ISIL's headquarters in Iraq (Mosul) and Syria (Raqqah)
- liberation of Ramadi, a large city in Iraq that had fallen to ISIL in May 2015
- increased coalition airstrikes focused on killing ISIL fighters and disrupting their revenues
- liberation of al-Hawl, a key town in northeastern Syria near the border with Iraq
- liberation of the Tishrin Dam, on the Euphrates River east of Aleppo in Syria
- progress in a strategy to sever ISIL supply lines ahead of retaking Raqqah and other ISIL-held territories

DoD has been focusing on the training and equipping of specialized teams of Syrian nationals to provide air, medical, and logistics support for anti-ISIL units.[90] At the same time, DoD has said it intends to improve intelligence regarding ISIL activities, strengthen Jordan's border and defenses, and intensify airstrikes against high-value targets, including ISIL's financial infrastructure in Syria.[91]

RAQQAH

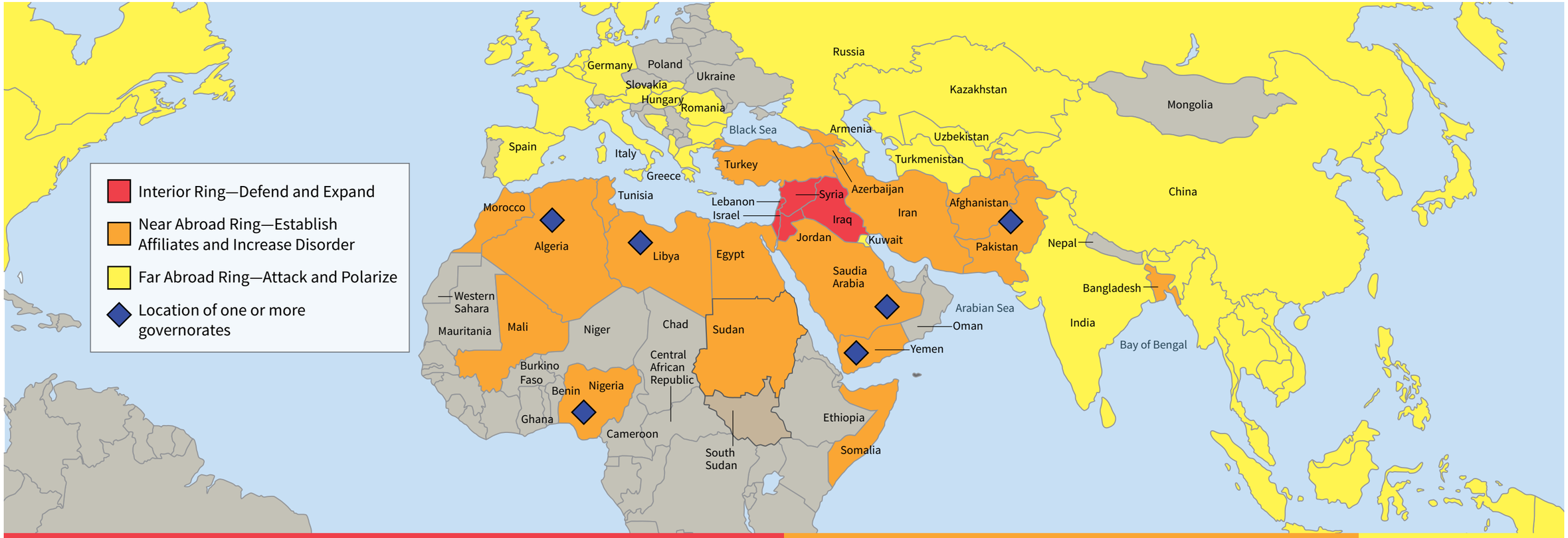
ISIL has based much of its leadership infrastructure in Raqqah, Syria, since it captured the city in June 2014.[92] U.S. plans call for strengthening moderate Syrian anti-ISIL forces in a push to isolate Raqqah.[93] To succeed, the coalition

ISIL as a Transnational Threat, as of 12/2015

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) has been reporting on the spread of ISIL based on its tracking of, among other things, social media and satellite imagery to provide a picture of ISIL's spread of influence throughout the Middle East and beyond.

ISW's research shows that ISIL vets and enjoins local militant leaders to establish provinces, imposing brutal Sharia law where they take hold. With affiliates in Afghanistan, Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen, ISIL inspired lone-wolf attacks have reached the West, including the killing of 14 Americans in San Bernardino, California, on December 2, 2015. These affiliates give the group "strategic resilience," making their destruction essential to defeating ISIL in the long term.

Sources: Harleen Ghambhir, "Meet ISIL's Most Dangerous Affiliates," *Politico*, 12/14/2015. Source of attack information: Karen Yourish, Derek Watkins, and Tom Giratikanon, "Recent Attacks Demonstrate Islamic State's Ability to Both Inspire and Coordinate Terror," *The New York Times*, 1/12/2016



FIRST TIER

Rated as the most dangerous emerging element, extending across northern Africa and up through the Caucasus region. In Egypt, Wilayat Sinai (WS) is ISIL's self-declared Sinai province, operating since July 2014. In 2015, WS increased signature vehicle-borne improvised explosive device tactics in Egypt, mirroring ISIL operations against the Government of Iraq. On October 31, the group was attributed with Russia's Metrojet in-flight explosion over the Sinai Peninsula, killing all 224 people on board. Along Africa's north-central coast, ISIL positioned leaders such as Iraqi Abu Nabil al-Anbari (since killed by U.S. airstrikes) to organize affiliates and conduct operations in Libya and eastern Syria. ISIL affiliates have seized more than 100 miles of Libya's coast, attacking Tripoli and Benghazi, and seizing Sirte, as these affiliates continue to push for control of Libya's oil reserves. As foreign terrorist fighters join these affiliates, they are trained in Libya, many coming from nearby Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan, and Nigeria.

SECOND TIER

Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia

Wilayat Khorasan (WK) is a self-declared IS province operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan since January 2015, after multiple jihadist commanders in the region pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The WK has repeatedly attacked Jalalabad, a major provincial capital, and commits atrocities along the way to suppress the local populations, including executing ribal leaders and, in September 2015, destroying a UNICEF convoy. In Yemen, ISIL killed 140 people in 5 coordinated suicide bombings, and it continues these use these tactics in the capital region. In Saudi Arabia, ISIL's affiliates are threatening stability by targeting Shia civilians and Saudi security forces with multiple successful suicide attacks.

THIRD TIER

Algeria and Russia's North Caucasus

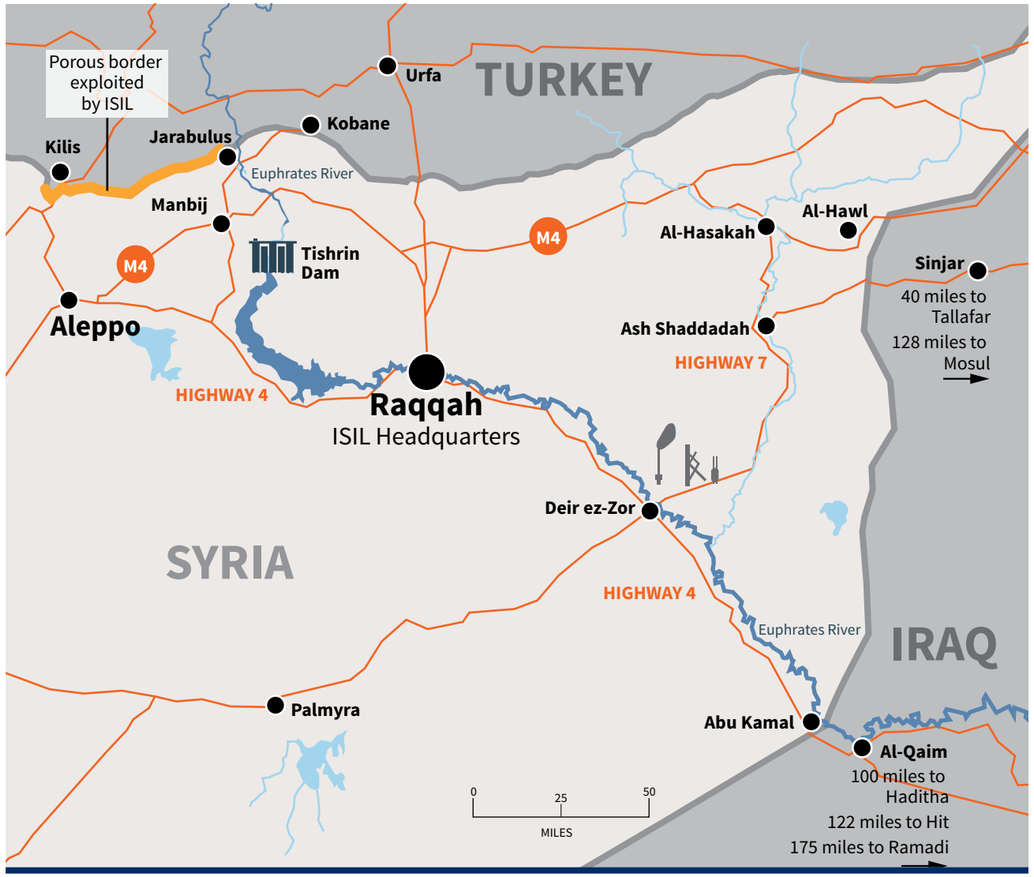
Although ISIL has declared provinces in both Algeria and Russia, these affiliates have not emerged as a direct threat with demonstrated capability or confirmed connections to al-Baghdadi.

must have a "reliable Sunni force on the ground," according to Secretary Carter.[94] The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) include established moderate Sunni Arab groups, Kurdish forces, in addition to the U.S.-trained New Syrian Forces that are also fighting ISIL on the Mara Line.[95]

Secretary Carter said in December 2015, that the timeline for liberating Raqqah is predicated on building momentum and having more Syrian Arabs join the fight to take back their own city. He committed to send U.S. Special

Figure 2.

Locations of Counter-ISIL Activity in Northeast Syria



Sources: Adam Entous, Gordon Lubold, and Dion Nessenbaum, "U.S. Urges Turkey to Seal Border," *The Wall Street Journal*, 11/27/2015; President Obama, "Press Conference by President Obama," OECD Centre, France, 12/1/2015, www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/12/01/press-conference-president-obama, accessed 1/6/2016.

Operations Forces to Syria as a force multiplier with a "unique suite of capabilities," including intelligence gathering. However, details of the force composition and operational commitments in and around Raqqah are classified and not reported here.[96]

Shaping the battlefield in Syria continues. By mid-December 2015, the SDF prepared for a push into Shaddadi in the northeast. Local anti-ISIL forces, supported by the coalition, continued to fight ISIL along the Mara Line, with the intention of pushing eastward from there into the Manjib pocket, the last remaining ISIL-held strip along the Turkish border with Syria. This followed a two-week SDF campaign with coalition airstrike support, to liberate al-Hawl. ISIL had held al-Hawl for 9 months; however, its forces retreated with the SDF approach. As of December 2, 2015, the SDF had defended the city from counter-attacks, reclaimed about 900 square kilometers and 200 small villages from ISIL, and continued clearing operations behind the forward line of operations.[97] For a map of the locations of counter-ISIL activity this quarter, see Figure.

Additional forces have been vetted by U.S. agencies and positioned to the west along the Mara Line for future offensive operations.[98] Syrian-Arab Coalition forces, equipped by the United States, continued fighting alongside the People's Protection Units (YPG) and other Kurdish forces.[99] Secretary Carter described the U.S. Syrian equip effort as "transactional," providing only a certain measured amount of equipment to the Syrian-Arab Coalition at any given time and then assessing performance before providing more.[100] For details of the U.S. train and equip programs for both Syria and Iraq, see the *Building Partner Capacity* section in this report.

On December 26, 2015, a 4-day operation culminated in the SDF's capture of the Tishrin Dam, which had been held by ISIL for 3 years. The hydroelectric dam is located on the logistically important route to Raqqah from Manbij. Supported by 26 coalition airstrikes, the operation resulted in approximately 100 ISIL fighters killed and SDF control of a major ISIL supply route. DoD reported that the SDF took back about 235 square kilometers of territory and liberated 10 villages.[101]

Southeast of Raqqah, coalition airstrikes targeted Syria's seventh largest city, Deir ez-Zor, as part of an intensified campaign against ISIL's oil infrastructure. The city is located along the road connecting Raqqah to Ramadi in the heart of the al-Omar oil field.[102] For more information on interdiction of ISIL's sources of oil revenue, see the discussion of raids later in this section and the *Disrupting ISIL's Finances* section of this report.

The Liberation of Sinjar

On November 13, 2015, a mixed force of Kurdish and Yazidi units, supported by heavy U.S. and allied airstrikes, liberated the northwestern Iraqi town of Sinjar. Located near the border on the strategically important Highway 47, which runs from Raqqah, Syria, to Mosul, Iraq, Sinjar represents a significant victory for the northern elements of Iraq's security forces.[103]

Sinjar fell to ISIL during its initial onslaught in summer 2014. With a mixed population of Yazidis, Kurds, and some Arabs, a large number of Sinjar's residents fled the town when ISIL took control. This led to a humanitarian crisis as many of them took what few possessions they could carry and sought refuge in nearby mountain ranges. A series of U.S. airdrops of relief supplies in August 2014 staved off a humanitarian disaster, providing thousands of refugees with much-needed provisions.

Sinjar is almost equidistant from ISIL's self-declared headquarters in Syria (Raqqah) and Iraq (Mosul). Consequently, its liberation is important in shaping the battlespace for the eventual assaults on both towns. By partially isolating Mosul from the supplies and reinforcements that flowed through the ISIL-controlled portion of Turkey's border with Syria, through Raqqah to Mosul, the taking of Sinjar paved the way for future offensives in the north.[104]

Coalition airpower played a crucial role in liberating Sinjar, targeting ISIL positions prior to the ground offensive and providing close air support during the actual operation. According to CJTF-OIR, at least 280 airstrikes targeted ISIL positions in and around Sinjar between October 15 and mid-November, culminating in 70 strikes during the week of the offensive and 14 aimed at ISIL holdouts after the city was retaken.[105] To isolate Sinjar from ISIL reinforcements, the coalition also conducted 42 strikes against the main town to Sinjar's west, al-Hawl, Syria, and

Kurdistan Regional Government President Masoud Barzani announces the liberation of Sinjar from ISIL on November 13, 2015. (Photo courtesy of KRG's Office of the President)

another 10 against the city of Tellafar, which lies to Sinjar's east.[106] Indicative of the still-unsettled nature of the region, though, CJTF-OIR reported that the coalition conducted 22 more airstrikes near Sinjar during November 22–28.[107]

Kurdish Peshmerga units led the ground offensive, supported by elements from the local Yazidi community, a Kurdish minority group.[108] Anti-ISIL forces swept through most of Sinjar in about two days (November 12–14), encountering improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and other booby traps as their main obstacles. The Kurdistan Region Security Council estimated that at least 300 ISIL fighters were killed in the battle that liberated 28 villages and almost 200 square kilometers from ISIL control.[109] According to the council, Kurdish forces had established blocking positions to obstruct ISIL's movement on the four major arteries in and out of Sinjar.[110]

The Aftermath of ISIL Control

A November 14, 2015, report by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Joint Crisis Coordination Center (JCC) summarized the human toll inflicted by ISIL's occupation of Sinjar. According to the JCC, since ISIL took the city in early August 2014:[111]

- Approximately 140,000 residents fled to nearby mountains or to the Kurdistan Region.
- During the ensuing humanitarian crisis, about 600 civilians who took shelter in the mountains died from starvation or exposure, including approximately 200 children.
- An estimated 3,000 women and children were kidnapped, with most forced into slavery.
- Approximately 1,800 Yazidis were victims of what the JCC calls "genocide," including 400 men executed in the small village of Goto.
- At least 254 Yazidis are confirmed by their families as still "missing."
- 14 religious buildings, including Yazidi temples, were destroyed.

The Cost of Restoration

The JCC conducted an assessment to determine the cost of refurbishing key infrastructure and public services with the goal of restoring them by mid-2016. The data shown in the table does not address long-term reconstruction costs, which will undoubtedly be higher.[112]

Table 3.

Estimated Costs for Post-liberation Stabilization of Sinjar

$ Thousands

Category	Cost First 6 Months Post-liberation
Repair 1 hospital and 3 heath centers	3,800
Debris removal	2,250
Restore water supply	1,660
Renovate 27 schools	1,220
Rehabilitate electrical infrastructure	600
Road and bridge renovations	400
Procure 5 250 kV generators	200
Total	**10,130**

Source: KRG, JCC, "Priorities for Early Recovery of Public Services in Shingal [Sinjar] City," 12/21/2015, twitter.com/JccKrg, accessed 1/7/2016.

Next Steps

With the support of intensive coalition airstrikes, Iraq's Kurdish forces were able to liberate the city. However, even success on the battlefield does not resolve difficult questions that remain about the shape of governance and relations among the various interrelated ethnic and religious groups.

The Sinjar victory intercepted Highway 47, an important line for ISIL's communication and its transit of goods and troops between Raqqah and Mosul. ISIL controls less well-maintained roads in this region, but it remains unclear whether it can retain control on them.

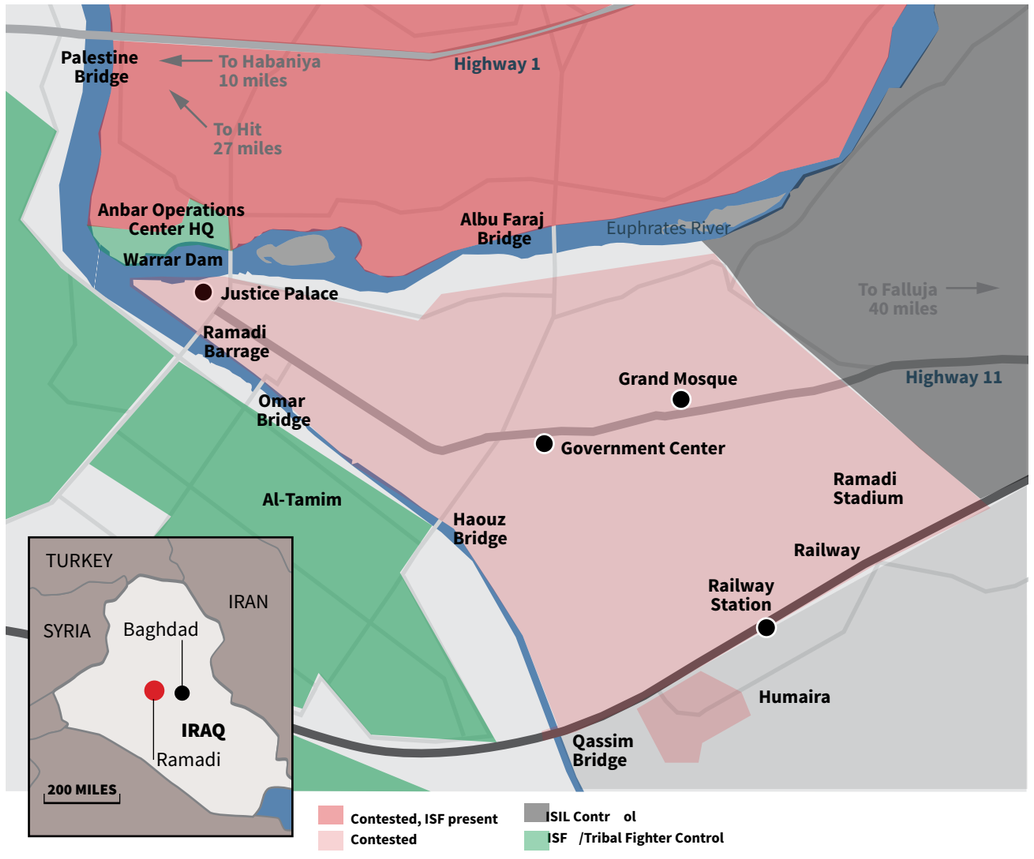
Sinjar itself requires stabilization and reconstruction. The GOI budget and funds from the UNDP FFIS face many competing demands, as discussed throughout this report. According to Special Presidential Envoy McGurk, returning residents to their homes, stabilizing and restoring the city, and facing the humanitarian issues is "an enormous challenge."[113]

RAMADI

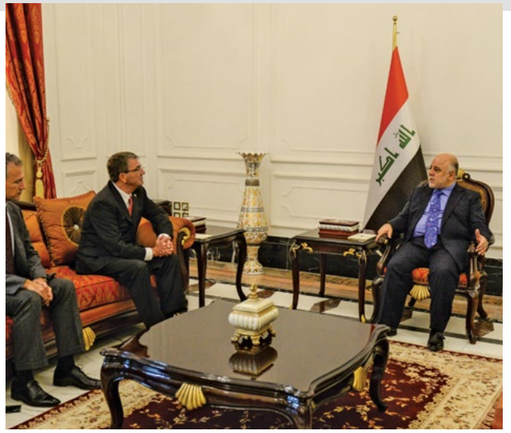
On December 28, 2015, the ISF raised the Iraqi flag over Ramadi's provincial government complex. After nearly 8 months of occupation, GOI-controlled forces had liberated many areas in the capital of Sunni-dominated Anbar province.[114] Ramadi is strategically important, located on the highway that links Iraq with Syria and Jordan, and only 74 miles west of Baghdad. Ramadi represents a key victory in terms of territory, proximity to Baghdad, and morale,

Figure 3.

Liberating Ramadi, as of 12/22/2015



Sources: Patrick Martin, "Ramadi Control Map, Dec. 22, 2015," Institute for the Study of War, 12/22/2015; *Graphic News*, "Iraq: Battle for Ramadi Looms," 12/21/2015.



Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter meets with Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi on December 16, 2015. (DoD photo)

rebuilding confidence lost when the city fell in May 2015.[115] Early reports in December estimated 800–1,000 ISIL fighters killed and 150–250 were left hiding in the city, but many were already slipping away. Civilian casualties, prisoner, and high-value target information were not available as of the end of the reporting period.[116]

The fight to take back Ramadi progressed slowly, featuring isolation, clearing, and stabilization campaign phases. [117] During the isolation phase, the ISF seized Camp Warrar, having cleared the al-Tamim neighborhood. Next, the ISF seized the Palestine Bridge across the Euphrates River, on November 15, 2015, completing the isolation phase and positioning for the clearing phase. On December 1, 2015, anti-ISIL forces killed 47 enemy fighters through the course of 37 engagements supported by 9 coalition airstrikes.[118] By December 9, the ISF had retaken and was holding its Anbar operations center.[119] By mid-December, Ramadi was fully isolated, and the ISF continued clearing operations, slowly squeezing the city along four axes. To the east of Ramadi, Iraqi police were in position to prevent enemy reinforcements from Falluja; to the north and south, Iraqi Army divisions held positions; and the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service (CTS) held to the west.[120] Figure 3 provides details of the locations the Ramadi operations.

Two key objectives were contested again by ISIL during the fight in mid-December: the Palestine Bridge, temporarily seized by ISIL, and the Anbar operations center.[121] The final outcome of these battles left the ISF in control of both sides of the Euphrates River and the Palestine Bridge along the western axis, successfully closing off the final lines of supply available to ISIL in Ramadi.[122] Holding these positions, the ISF can monitor the river and intercept ISIL munitions, fighters, and other supplies.

For the final phase, Anbar's provincial government is coordinating its stabilization and reconstruction plan with the GOI, the UN, and other organizations, including humanitarian relief organizations. GOI plans call for Sunni tribal fighters along with federal and local police to provide security, with the ISF mobilizing elsewhere.[123] DoD reported that 5,000 Sunni tribal fighters who recently completed training "will form the bedrock of the holding force in Ramadi."[124]

This quarter, "disruption operations," with intensified airstrikes, continued throughout the Euphrates River valley, in particular the Hit and Haditha corridor. The ISF had positioned several units near Falluja, intending to isolate ISIL within the city. In Hit, coalition airstrikes continued to disrupt ISIL command and control. Further east, airstrikes in the Tigris River valley focused

U.S. advisors train ISF personnel on the use of armored bulldozers to breach ISIL fortifications. (DoD photo)

on Baiji, Mosul, and Hawaij. In Baiji, the ISF conducted clearing operations, focusing north of the town in the Makhoul Mountains.[125]

According to DoD, training and equipping came together in Ramadi.[126] Following the retaking of the Anbar operations center, Secretary Carter reported in December that U.S. military forces could accompany the Iraqis, but Prime Minister al-Abadi had not requested those additional resources, including Apache attack helicopters.[127] Iraq's 10th Iraqi Division and the CTS led the ground operation, without participation from Shia militias. The United States assisted with air power, specialized engineering equipment, and advisor support at multiple Iraqi Army headquarters, including:[128]

- integrated air support, providing 630 coalition airstrikes since July (more than 150 in December alone), against 2,500 targets (an estimated 70 truck bombs, 300 other enemy vehicles, 800 structures, and 400 types of weapons)
- deliveries of Iraqi-purchased F-16s for the Iraqi Air Force
- mine-clearing line charges to breach ISIL's southern defensive belt, especially along the southern approaches to downtown
- 21 armored bulldozers to clear IEDs and build up berms quickly to shield advancing units
- floating bridge across the Tharthar Canal off the Euphrates River for the combat advance into downtown
- ISF armored vehicles for security

Although the ISF has largely succeeded in retaking the city, it did so by relying heavily on a handful of highly-trained Iraqi units to plug holes in defensive lines and conduct offensive operations. One such unit is the Golden Division (a formation much smaller than a U.S. division) and its associated elements from the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service. The high operational tempo imposed by the exigencies of battle on Iraq's most elite units over the past few years has taken a toll on the troops and their equipment. Moreover, the relatively small size of these formations makes their use in large urban environments, such as Mosul, challenging, especially considering ISIL's frequent use of IEDs and booby-trapped buildings. Few, if any, other units trained by the coalition are capable of performing at the level of these formations, with most only receiving about 30 days of training at reasonably secure facilities away from the front lines, referred to by DoD as Build Partner Capacity sites. Consequently, the battle for Mosul, which had a population of about 1 million people before it was seized by ISIL, will feature other ISF and Peshmerga units in key roles.[129] From here, retaking Mosul—considered ISIL's center of gravity in Iraq—would eliminate most of ISIL's major strongholds in the country.[130] General Dunford anticipates a Mosul push some months from now.[131]

RAMADI AFTER ISIL

Ramadi required significant infrastructure upgrades even before its capture by ISIL in May 2015

Never fully "rebuilt" after the fierce fighting there during 2004–2007, Ramadi required significant infrastructure upgrades even before its capture by ISIL in May 2015. The ISF's successful operation to wrest control of Anbar's provincial capital from ISIL inflicted yet more damage, with provincial officials characterizing 80% of Ramadi as destroyed and estimating that it may take $10 billion to rebuild.[132]

Stabilization plans for Ramadi have been developed by the Governor of Anbar province, in connection with the GOI and with the support of the United States and the coalition. These plans address restoration of services, security transition to local police, and communications outreach.[133]

On December 30, 2015, Prime Minister al-Abadi issued an executive order "to restore stability to and…reconstruct" Ramadi. The order established a "high committee," led by the Governor of Anbar, with representatives from most major ministries, including Defense, Interior, Justice, Water Resources, Transportation, and Labor and Social Affairs. The committee reports directly to the Office of the Prime Minister and is charged with:[134]

- developing a comprehensive plan for the reconstruction of the city and other areas of Anbar province damaged by ISIL
- taking the necessary measures to secure the city from land mines and IEDs
- providing basic services and stability for the safe return of citizens to their homes
- coordinating with the Office of the Prime Minister to ensure the success of the stability restoration measures implemented by the GOI's civilian crisis-management cell
- securing financial support and technical assistance from the United Nations Development Program, the World Bank, and donor countries

Both immediate stabilization and longer-term reconstruction will require significant funding. As with Sinjar, these efforts will compete with other demands on GOI's oil-dependent economy.[135]

RAIDS

The U.S. military plans to conduct opportunistic strikes, either in support of anti-ISIL forces, via direct U.S. airstrikes, or through ground missions,[136] and has deployed a specialized expeditionary targeting force (ETF) for that purpose. DoD envisions that the ETF will intensify pressure through raids and intelligence-gathering missions, defense of borders, and a focus on high-value targets, striking targets as soon as they are identified.[137]

U.S. leaflet dropped prior to strikes on trucks carrying ISIL-supplied oil.

According to DoD, approximately 100 U.S. personnel will support these raids, including Special Forces commandos to perform offensive operations.[138] In Iraq, U.S. offensive efforts will take place at the invitation of the GOI, in coordination with GOI-controlled units. This includes assisting Iraqi and Peshmerga forces to put more pressure on ISIL by conducting raids, freeing hostages, capturing ISIL leaders, and gathering intelligence.[139] In Syria, the ETF will "conduct unilateral operations."[140]

On November 15, 2015, the new Syrian forces trained by the coalition conducted a mortar raid on an ISIL stronghold in the tri-border area near al-Tam, Syria. This was the first operation of its kind in southern Syria, resulting in destruction of five buildings and a weapons cache.[141]

OPERATION TIDAL WAVE II

ISIL's infrastructure and financial operations were under greater attack by the coalition this quarter—in particular, ISIL-controlled oil facilities and wells. On November 16, 2015, as part of Operation Tidal Wave II (named after a similar operation in World War II against the Nazis in Romania[142]), the coalition conducted its first airstrikes against ISIL's tanker trucks.[143] About 45 minutes before the strike, aircraft flew over portions of the Euphrates River valley to drop leaflets warning civilians about the airstrikes.[144] A-10 and C-130 aircraft made strafing runs in between two bomb drops, taking out 116 tankers filled with stolen oil.[145] Airstrikes also took out an ISIL factory and staging area for vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices in Iraq's Anbar province, near al-Qaim and the Syrian border with Iraq.[146] More than 400 ISIL oil tanker trucks had been destroyed in the operation as of December 1, 2015.[147]

HIGH-VALUE ISIL FIGHTERS KILLED

Coalition forces have killed several key transregional ISIL leaders since June 2015, including:[148]

- Haji Mutazz, ISIL's second in command, killed August 18, 2015, by a U.S. drone airstrike[149]
- Junaid Hussain, a key external operative actively plotting against U.S. military personnel, killed August 24, 2015, by a coalition airstrike[150]
- "Jihadi John," ISIL's notorious executioner, killed November 13, 2015, by a U.S drone strike using a hellfire missile[151]
- Abu Nabil, ISIL's leader in Libya, killed November 13, 2015, by a U.S. airstrike[152]

Targeted attacks intensified through December 2015, eliminating ISIL leaders, enforcers, executioners, and extortionists.[153] For a list of the top ten targets killed, see Table 4.

Table 4.

High-value ISIL Fighters Killed by Coalition Strikes in 12/2015

Name	Role	Location	Date Killed
Rawand Dilsher Taher	external operations; handled money and equipment	Raqqah, Syria	12/7
Khalil Ahmed Ali al-Wais (AKA Abu Wadhah)	"Emir" of Kirkuk province	Kirkuk, Iraq	12/7
Abu Anas	IED cell leader	Kirkuk, Iraq	12/8
Yunis Khalash (AKA Abu Jawdat)	Deputy Financial Emir	Mosul, Iraq	12/9
Mithaq Najim	Deputy "Emir" of Kirkuk province; trained FTFs	Kirkuk, Iraq	12/9
Siful Haque Sujan	computer systems engineer/ external operations; educated in the U.K.; hacker; specialized in anti-surveillance technology and weapons development	Raqqah, Syria	12/10
Akram Muhammad Sa'ad Faris (AKA Akram Aabu)	commander/executioner	Tellafar, Iraq	12/12
Charaffe al-Mouadan	external operations; Paris attacks cell leader	Syria	12/24
Abdel Kader Hakim	external operations; forgery specialist; veteran fighter; linked to Paris attacks network	Mosul, Iraq	12/26
Tashin al-Hayali	external operations	Mosul, Iraq	12/27

Sources: Terri Moon Cook, "Coalition Killed 10 Senior ISIL Leaders in December," DoD News, 12/29/2015, www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/639489/coalition-killed-10-senior-isil-leaders-in-december, accessed 1/3/2016, and Lead IG analysis of open-source data, 12/2015.

An EA-18G Growler launches from the flight deck of aircraft carrier USS *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75) on November 30, 2015. (U.S. Navy photo)

At least two of these terrorists, al-Mouadan and Hakim, allegedly had ties to the cell that staged the Paris attacks, while three others—al-Wais, Khalash, and Najim—held senior positions in ISIL's command structure in northern Iraq.[154] Based on the limited information available, however, several others appear to have been more junior actors, leading IED cells or playing some undefined role in "external operations."[155] ISIL has shown a significant degree of resilience, however, in replacing operational cadres by exploiting the talents of newly recruited foreign fighters.[156]

Coalition Air Support

At the onset of OIR, France was the first North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) partner to conduct airstrikes in Iraq, contributing approximately 12% of all non-U.S. strikes against ISIL since the beginning of the air campaign.[157] Shortly after the ISIL attacks in Paris on November 13, 2015,[158] France declared war against ISIL[159] and deployed, as scheduled, its aircraft carrier *Charles de Gaulle* to the Mediterranean Sea,[160] adding "significant strike capability to the coalition."[161] France hit targets in Raqqah this quarter, including ISIL headquarters buildings, training camps, and storage depots.[162] The USS *Harry S. Truman* joined in air operations this quarter as well.[163] France and the United States are conducting strikes in both Iraq and Syria. Other coalition partners conducting air operations in Syria include:[164] Australia, Bahrain, Canada, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, UAE, and the United Kingdom. In Iraq, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Jordan, The Netherlands, and the United Kingdom are flying missions.[165]

In early November, DoD deployed additional F-15 strike aircraft to Incirlik Air Base in Turkey, and the coalition conducted the highest number of airstrikes against ISIL since August 2014.[166] On December 18, 2015, a CJTF-OIR spokesman said that the F-15s had departed Incirlik in a planned rotation, noting that replacement aircraft had not yet been moved into position.[167]

As of January 3, 2016, the coalition had conducted more than 9,300 airstrikes since August 2014:[168]

- United States—7,260 strikes (approximately 4,200 in Iraq and 2,980 in Syria)
- Coalition partners—2,119 (1,934 in Iraq and 185 in Syria)

A Complicated Battlefield

During testimony this quarter, Secretary Carter and General Dunford addressed several areas of concern, including a no-fly zone in Syria, increasing Sunni participation across the region, and military actions by Russia and its allies. Secretary Carter also discussed considerations for various types of other zones, including humanitarian and buffer zones as possibilities "to adapt to the changing battlefield."[169]

NO-FLY ZONE

DoD has not recommended or requested a no-fly zone in Syria.[170] According to DoD, Syrian regime forces are primarily using artillery, not airstrikes, to inflict the most damage on civilian populations. This quarter, however, Secretary Carter said that DoD had studied the situation, determined it could enforce a zone if needed, and that the option was available to the President. Most of the areas where the coalition is flying and striking against ISIL is largely east of Russian and Syrian air force activity. Where Syrian planes are flying, they are partially protected by an integrated air defense system, which would further complicate any plans for a no-fly zone. According to Secretary Carter, a no-fly zone would have no impact on artillery damage; would be contested by the Syrian government, ISIL, and others; and would require a large military commitment, redirecting certain resources already dedicated to battle ISIL.[171]

RUSSIAN INVOLVEMENT

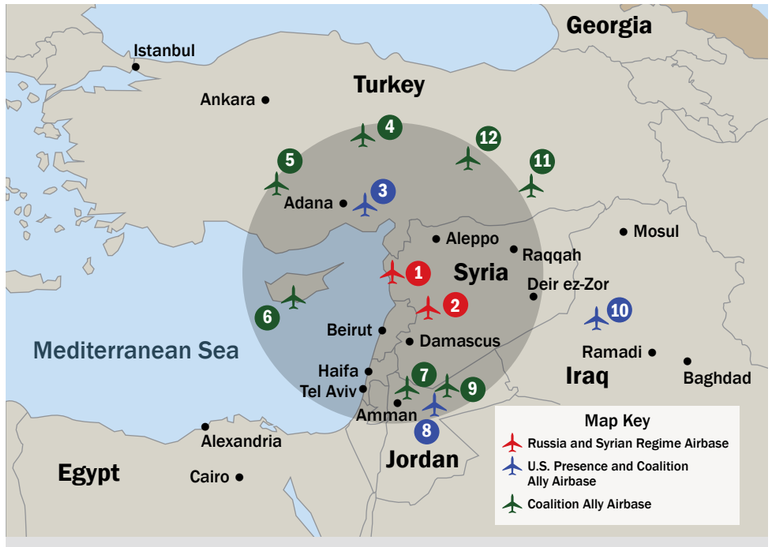
Last quarter, Russia deployed ground and air assets to western Syria to support the regime of Bashar al-Asad. Since then, Russia has conducted air strikes on a regular basis against Syrian opposition groups. Although the Russian ground presence appears limited at this time, Russian troops are guarding air bases near Latakia, in the far west of Syria.[172]

Secretary Carter said that Russia is not influencing the "pace or scope" of the operations against ISIL and that the United States is not aligning with Russia in Syria because Russia is supporting the regime and "primarily attacking the Syrian opposition."[173] When asked if the United States would take military action against Russian aircraft if they attack troops supported by the coalition, Secretary Carter said that there is an obligation to protect the people the U.S. supports, and the U.S. military has options.[174]

General Dunford testified that he had advised the Iraqi Prime Minister and Minister of Defense that continuing U.S. support would be problematic if the GOI were to "invite the Russians in to conduct strikes."[175] He also confirmed that the Russians have supported the YPG forces with airstrikes and dropped them approximately five tons of ammunition.[176]

Figure 4.

Russian S-400 SAM System Range



Sources: Inst "Institute for the Study of War," various products, including "ISIS's Regional Campaign: November 2015," 11/2015, http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/ISIS%20Regional%20Activity%20Map_November%202015-01_13.png, accessed 1/30/2016.

Russia's introduction of the S-400 *Triumph* weapons system in Syria near Latakia, confirmed by CJTF-OIR officials on December 2, poses additional risk to U.S. and coalition forces in the airspace over the battlefield in Syria.[177] The S-400 is a mobile surface-to-air defense missile system with long-range strike capability of about 400 kilometers. See Figure 4 for key cities and airspace positions in full range of the missiles.

In December, CJTF-OIR reported that Russia's SA-17 air-defense radar system is located in Aleppo, but its location was not influencing coalition airstrikes.[178] CJTF-OIR officials repeatedly denied that the deployment of these advanced systems had any effect on the U.S. air mission.[179]

DoD reported that, over a 27-day span during December 5–31, the coalition conducted 172 airstrikes in Syria (6.37 per day). The month prior, during November 7–27, it conducted 185 strikes (8.01 per day).[180]

SUNNI FORCE REQUIREMENTS

Secretary Carter emphasized that capable and motivated Iraqi Sunni forces are "in short supply," but they are necessary to take back and hold Sunni territory.[181] Partnering with tribal forces and enabling them to conduct offensive operations with added coalition air power is an overarching objective for DoD.[182] But regaining their trust will be a challenge given that, contrary to U.S. assurances, many of the tens of thousands of Sunni tribal forces who joined the Sons of Iraq program in the latter stages of Operation Iraqi Freedom did not receive employment with the Iraqi Security Force after the program transitioned to Iraqi control.[183]

Although there has been some progress, outreach to the Sunni tribes continues to be problematic for the Shia-led GOI. General Dunford stated that Sunni involvement is "a necessary condition for us to be successful."[184] He also noted that "there is a qualitative difference" in the performance between brigades, saying that U.S.-trained brigades perform "at a much higher level than other units."[185] According to General Dunford, increasing Sunni participation in the fight has four parts:[186]

- Increase the number of Sunni Arab personnel in the ISF ranks (who now comprise about 20% of the force, roughly in proportion to the best estimates of Iraq's population).
- Train more Sunnis for the PMFs, also known as the tribal fighters (the Iraqi government must authorize more Sunni for training).
- Train more Sunnis for Iraq's Counter Terrorism Service.
- Work with the Sunni police.

A Look Ahead: Potential Areas of Contention

Although the diverse forces arrayed against ISIL seek its destruction, their interests may otherwise not be aligned. Four areas of strategic importance where these differences may emerge to complicate the overall counter-ISIL effort are:

- **Mosul.** Peshmerga forces under the command of the KRG have expressed their willingness to participate in the eventual operation to retake Mosul.[187] Despite this apparent comity between the KRG and GOI, Mosul remains a largely Sunni Arab city, which will complicate the efforts to liberate, stabilize, and reconstruct and rebuild it.[188] Among the complex dynamics that appear likely to affect an offensive on Mosul are the role, if any, of the largely Shia Popular Mobilization Forces in the ground offensive and how to mitigate the inevitable collateral damage that will ensue once coalition air forces and ISF artillery focus full attention on ISIL targets inside of the city, which may still be home to more than 1 million people.[189] The ISF is regarded as a Shia force by many Sunnis, especially those[190] who witnessed its collapse and retreat during ISIL's initial conquest of Mosul in 2014.
- **Sinjar.** Enabled by coalition air support, ISIL was evicted from the crossroads town of Sinjar this quarter. Retaking this strategic city, located between Raqqah and Mosul, was an essential step in degrading ISIL's ability to conduct operations in northern Iraq and Syria.[191] However, the alliance that retook the town remains fragile, formed as it was by a temporary confluence of interests rather than a long-term alignment of strategic objectives.[192] In the wake of Sinjar's recapture, KRG officials proclaimed victory,[193] even though Sinjar, which lies within the boundaries of Ninewa province, is not part of the KRG, and Yazidi forces played a significant part in the battle. To further complicate matters, the primarily Syrian Kurdish forces of the YPG also participated in wresting the town from ISIL.[194] Although maintaining control of Sinjar remains key in the military effort against ISIL, its political future remains uncertain.
- **Falluja.** With the liberation of Ramadi in late December, Falluja is now isolated between Baghdad and the recently reconquered Ramadi. While attention turns to Mosul, ISIL elements in Falluja remain capable of staging attacks on Baghdad itself. When it is eventually retaken, the overwhelmingly Sunni town will, like Ramadi, need to be secured by Sunni forces, providing yet another test for the GOI's ability to recruit and sustain a Sunni stabilization force, a matter raised by multiple DoD officials both in public communications and in discussions with Lead IG representatives.[195]
- **Jarabulus.** Situated on the western banks of the Euphrates River, just south of Syria's border with Turkey, Jarabulus constitutes a red line for the Turkish government, with officials adamantly opposed to any Kurdish YPG move west of the Euphrates River.[196] The capture of Jarabulus will contribute to the further severing of ISIL's supply lines—for recruits, funds, and supplies. Further, as stated by CJTIF-OIR's spokesman, closing off the final stretch of Syrian-Turkish border held by ISIL remains an integral part of coalition strategy.[197]

BUILDING PARTNER CAPACITY

The coalition continues to work towards building the capacity of a diverse array of forces to defeat ISIL. Although much of the training mission occurs at four Build Partner Capacity and two specialty training sites in Iraq, coalition advisors assist other anti-ISIL forces at bases elsewhere in the region.[198] DoD reported that, as of December 29, 2015, just more than 17,500 Iraqi soldiers had completed training, and about 2,600 were actively training.[199]

The human capital these advisors have to work with ranges from hardened veterans of past fights to young men fresh from civilian life. The diversity of goals among the various anti-ISIL groups adds to the complexity of this capacity-development mission, with lingering ethnosectarian animosities contributing to the challenges coalition advisors need to be cognizant of in building forces capable of defeating ISIL.

Syria Training and Equipping

The Syria train and equip program began with the aim of building the capabilities of moderate Syrian opposition fighters to defend the Syrian people, stabilize areas under opposition control, promote the conditions for a negotiated settlement of the conflict in Syria, and empower trainees to go on the offensive against ISIL. DoD officials expected to form classes of 300 Syrian volunteers, and the first cohort of 90 soldiers began training on May 7, 2015.[200]

By October 2015, however, DoD announced it would pause training of Syrian fighters after fewer than 150 trainees had completed the program.[201] Full details of the number of trainees admitted to the program, those who failed out, and the final number trained could not be included in an unclassified report. DoD IG reported on some of the challenges to obtaining qualified candidates, as well as the rigorous vetting standards, in its classified evaluation of the U.S. screening processes completed in September 2015.[202]

The first group of coalition-trained fighters inserted back into Syria met with the challenges of re-forming after the Eid-al-Fitr holiday and an attack on their base in Syria by an al-Qaeda affiliate. Out of 54 graduates of the first training class, 9 were still serving with active groups as of September 29, 2015. The second training class yielded 75 fighters who returned to the two major opposition groups they had previously served.[203]

Congress and others strongly criticized the low numbers and questioned the effectiveness of the program. According to DoD, the program now focuses on assisting groups already actively engaged in fighting ISIL.[204] The coalition provides vetted leaders of these forces with limited equipment packages and specialized training, as needed.[205] On October 10, for example, U.S. forces reportedly air-dropped 50 tons of ammunition for a Syrian-Arab coalition group whose leader received training on the use of specialized equipment, including machine guns and assault rifles.[206] DoD reported that the Syria Engagement Team, a small group of U.S. Special Operations Forces personnel, liaises directly with Syrian opposition groups in Turkey and Jordan.[207]

The Army Audit Agency has two reviews of the U.S. program ongoing. One will determine whether processes and procedures related to the accountability and reporting of equipment transferred to vetted Syrian opposition forces were sufficient to ensure compliance with provisions set forth in Section 1209 of the FY2015 National Defense Authorization Act and applicable regulations. The other reviews whether funds supporting the training and equipping program were properly obligated and executed in accordance with the same legislative provisions.

PROGRAM FUNDING

As of December 31, 2015, $500 million had been allocated (through an FY 2015 reprogramming action from the Counterterrorism Partnership Fund) to vet, train, and equip moderate Syrian forces to fight ISIL. DoD reported that, as of December 31, 2015, $346.8 million had been obligated for weapons, ammunition, and equipment—most of which remains available for issue. At the end of FY 2015, nearly $116.5 million had not been executed, and DoD took action to reprogram those funds for use in FY 2016. In December 2015, Congress approved, with varying conditions, $67.5 million of that amount and deferred $49 million pending strategy briefings. DoD reported that it expects the remaining $49 million of funds to be approved once the appropriate congressional committees are briefed on the particulars requested by each committee, such as an employment plan for the Syrian Arab Council and resumption of suspended activities.[208]

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2016, signed on November 25, 2015, authorized $531 million in FY 2016 to create a new Syria Train and Equip Fund. Of that total, $42 million was identified for realignment to the U.S. Air Force and $25.8 million to the U.S. Army for trainer and enabler requirements. The appropriation committees opposed the creation of the standalone two-year Syrian Train and Equip Fund and did not approve any FY 2016 funding. DoD reported it intends to submit an FY 2016 reprogramming action for up to $350 million to be realigned from other sources to fund the program.[209]

INSUFFICIENT REPORTING

Section 1209 of the NDAA for FY 2015 requires the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretary of State, to submit a progress report on the Syria train and equip program. This report must be submitted to the appropriate congressional committees not less than 90 days after the Secretary of Defense submits the notification to provide assistance and every 90 days thereafter.

Although DoD IG received some details on the program's status last quarter through its data call, the last 1209 report received covered the period March–May 2015. That report was classified but contained summary information in an unclassified format. Details on the status of U.S. funding for Syria train and equip operations or uses of those funds were not available in an unclassified format.

For this quarterly report, DoD IG requested the most current 1209 report to gain information on the status of program funding and details on the training and equipment provided. According to DoD policy officials, because of changes in the program's strategy, the 1209 report covering the June–August 2015 has been combined with the report for the period covering September–November 2015. The consolidated 1209 report covering the 6-month period was expected to be released by December 2015, but had not been released as of January 28, 2016. According to DoD, senior DoD policy officials provided separate briefings this quarter to the appropriate congressional committees on activities to assist vetted Syrian forces.[210]

Interview With General Michael Nagata: Syrian Train and Equip Program and the U.S. Strategy To Counter ISIL

Major General Michael Nagata, U.S. Army, served as the Director of Combined Joint Interagency Task Force-Syria and Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command Central from June 2013 to October 2015. As the Task Force-Syria Director, General Nagata was responsible for standing up and implementing the Syria train and equip program, an initiative whose early results have been strongly criticized by Congress.

In a December 16, 2015, interview with DoD IG, he offered his views on the immediate challenges and long-term interests of training moderate Syrian fighters within the overarching U.S. strategy for countering ISIL in Syria. General Nagata's perspectives are helpful to ongoing oversight work and planning for future work.

Establishing a Vetting and Training Process Takes Time and Patience

General Nagata observed that the United States has been fighting violent extremist groups and individuals for more than 15 years—the equivalent of a generation. He views ISIL as al-Qaeda "on steroids," and the spread of ISIL and its violent, apocalyptic ideology as a general "uprising" within the Sunni Muslim world. He asserts that the counter-ISIL campaign will be a generational fight that could last 15 years or longer. For that reason, General Nagata believes the United States and its partners in the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL need to make a long-term commitment. Further, in the Middle East, particularly in Syria, the United States must overcome deep distrust. The train and equip program is a critical part of building trust and establishing the relationships that can lead to military success.

General Nagata acknowledged the limited results of the program and the resulting criticism. He analogized this to starting a new business and assessing its success based on the first production run. Like new businesses, new military programs have high "startup costs." Business owners must find and pay for suitable land, construct new production facilities, hire and train employees, and build and perfect the production process. He noted that all of this preparatory work takes time and money.

According to General Nagata, the initial phases of program delayed serious recruitment efforts until spring 2015. He continued that in effect, focusing solely on the few U.S. trained moderate Syrian fighters after one year was equivalent to condemning a new business because of a limited first production run. General Nagata offered his perspective to the negative reaction received on the program's progress by citing these intensive start-up requirements, and the contribution that the train and equip program could make to the broader strategy.

General Nagata emphasized that the counter-ISIL campaign may require years, and will require more than killing ISIL fighters in Iraq and Syria. The U.S. and Global Coalition partners must also counter the ideology that continues to draw foreign fighters to the battlefield and inspires individual terrorist attacks around the world.

According to General Nagata, the moderate Syrian opposition forces, now re-named the New Syrian Forces (NSF) train and equip program, should be realistically appraised. He believes that with some patience, the "production process" is improving and, equally important, the program is building relationships of trust with Syrian moderate groups and leaders who will rebuild Syria when a negotiated peace settlement is eventually achieved.

General Nagata described the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service (CTS) and held it up as a positive example of what a long-term train and equip investment strategy can achieve. The CTS is the Iraqi equivalent of U.S. Special Operations

Major General Michael Nagata, U.S. Army (Souce DoD)

Forces, trained during a long-running U.S. program to build for Iraq a special operations capability—a critical component of the Iraqi Security Forces. The CTS was instrumental, for example, in liberation operations in Ramadi this quarter. In 2003, the U.S. Army's 5th Special Forces Group was assigned in Jordan to train the CTS throughout the course of the 9-year U.S. program that translated into strong personal trust relationships. Conventional Iraqi fighting forces tend to align along sectarian lines, and trust between these forces and the Iraqi government is, at times, limited. General Nagata noted that the trust built by U.S. trainers in the prior program resulted in a partnership with Iraqi government officials who then sought the advice and assistance of U.S. Special Operations leaders when considering how to best employ their CTS forces.

Coalition "Tending" Is Worth the Investment

General Nagata described coalition relationship building and maintenance as time-consuming and taxing, but necessary. General Nagata believed it essential to regularly meet with U.S. and host-nation officials contributing to the Syrian T&E program. On the U.S. side, that meant meeting and continually interacting with the U.S. Ambassador, the Deputy Chief of Mission, the Political Advisor, and the Legal Attaché. For each of the six countries supporting the program, it meant meeting and maintaining good relations with the officials of the Ministries of Defense and Interior, the country's Intelligence agency, and the Foreign Ministries. The general and his staff were regularly interacting with hundreds of officials in each of these countries.

Setbacks Should Be Expected

General Nagata cautioned that the U.S. government needs to understand that working through foreign surrogates will always be fraught with risk and prove less reliable than employing far more capable and trustworthy U.S. forces. Yet the general noted that U.S. military history is replete with examples of U.S. forces delivering initial disappointing results until experience, adaptation, and determination overcame the setback.

General Nagata stressed how difficult the decision is for Syrian men to leave families for military training outside Syria. Following four years of civil war, and the constant threat of attack by Syrian government forces, families exist at a "pre-industrial" stage, where life is focused on daily survival. Potential recruits are not able to consider larger ideas like building a better Syria. Recruits will sign up for training and fighting inasmuch they perceive it is beneficial for them and their families.

General Nagata asserted that the U.S. train and equip program, like other aspects of the whole-of-government military and civilian efforts, is a "journey of experimentation," that will adapt and evolve. Disappointment and setbacks are inherent in the process. Because the U.S. strategy does not employ U.S. combat troops to "close with and kill ISIL" fighters, he believes the United States should allow for the fact that the Syrian fighters differ from U.S. personnel, come from groups with differing agendas, are operating in survival mode, and will continue at times to surprise and disappoint.

General Nagata stated that, because of today's instantaneous and worldwide communications, overreactions to short-term setbacks or disappointments may have the unintended result of damaging the confidence coalition and regional partners have in the resolve of the United States to persevere through set-backs and difficulties.

Synchronization of U.S. Administration Strategy Needs To Improve Across the Nine Lines of Efforts

General Nagata stated that the work of civilians at DoS, USAID, and other federal agencies has indirectly led to recruits for the U.S. program. The civilian efforts changed negative perceptions of Americans and influenced families to favorably view American efforts. Nevertheless, he asserted that "synchronization" of U.S. agencies' efforts must significantly improve. He acknowledged that interagency coordination is much better than at the time of the 9/11 attacks, but commented that improved interagency cooperation and coordination has not led to "fully harnessing U.S. power" in the counter-ISIL fight. General Nagata stressed that interagency "coordination" must lead to interagency "collaboration," whereby leaders engage beyond their agency focus and lend resources, funding, and people to accomplish the larger goals. During his command, he assigned staff to locate with, and provide extra capability to, the efforts of other agencies. He stated that this effort paid significant dividends in improving relations with moderate opposition leaders and citizens, who then encouraged sons and brothers to join the training program.

The U.S. train and equip program, like other aspects of the whole-of-government military and civilian efforts, is a "journey of experimentation," that will adapt and evolve.

Iraq Train and Equip Program

The Iraq train and equip program centers on four main elements—advise and assist, train, equip, and reform—to support the Iraq's security forces in their efforts to halt ISIL's advance and liberate territory. As discussed below, DoD IG is unable to report on the status of this program or provide details on the number of personnel trained and equipped and activities undertaken.

INSUFFICIENT REPORTING

Section 1236 of the NDAA for FY 2015 requires the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretary of State, to submit a quarterly progress report on the Iraq train and equip program. This report is to provide the most recent quarterly information regarding the training, equipment, logistics support, supplies, and services, stipends, facility and infrastructure repair and renovation, and sustainment being provided to military and other security forces of or associated with the GOI, including KRG forces, Sunni tribal security forces, or other local security forces with a national security mission. These reports provide program outputs and outcomes, effectiveness assessments, and a statement on the funding expended during the quarter.

The last report DoD IG received in compliance with Section 1236 covered the 90-day period ending July 17, 2015. According to the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy, the quarterly report for the period July 18–September 18, 2015, is in internal coordination. These officials also advised that the quarterly report for the next 90-day period is also under internal review and, once released, both of these reports will be in a classified format.

For this quarterly report, DoD IG received general statements about the goals and objectives of the programs, concept of operations, and priorities in an unclassified format. The U.S. Army provided alternative sources for the status of ITEF funds.

FUNDING

U.S., coalition, and GOI funds committed to building the capacity of the ISF as of December 31, 2015, totaled more than $3.76 billion, including:

- **United States**—$2.33 billion for the ITEF (including $715 million made available through the FY 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act); $747 million[211] in Foreign Military Financing, and $25 million through a special presidential drawdown authority in the Foreign Assistance Act.[212]

An Iraqi soldier assigned to 71st Iraqi Army Brigade prepares to lift a simulated casualty while participating in a patrol scenario during urban operations training at Camp Taji, Iraq, November 4, 2015. (U.S. Army photo)

- **Iraq**—$138.0 million in Foreign Military Sales and $362.7 million in direct commercial sales contracts[213]
- **Coalition nations**—$183.4 million in direct contributions[214]

Operations of the OSC-I and the activities of its security assistance teams were funded at $80 million for FY 2016. This office works with Iraq's Ministry of Defense and other GOI forces to address capability gaps, integrate processes relating to intelligence, air sovereignty, combined arms, logistics and maintenance, and to manage and integrate defense-related institutions.[215]

An undetermined amount of Operation and Maintenance (O&M) funding for FY 2015 and FY 2016 supports the costs associated with approximately 3,600 personnel authorized by the President serving the train, advise, and assist (TAA) mission in Iraq.[216] The only reporting available on these costs aggregates O&M in broader categories, which prevents reporting on the status of funds specifically supporting the TAA program in Iraq.

Reporting on the status of the ITEF through the *Cost of War* report lags the Lead IG reporting period by at least a quarter. As the executive agent for the ITEF account, the U.S. Army provides the most current reporting on the status of funds. As of November 30, 2015, just more than $1.11 billion (69%) of the ITEF had been obligated, and nearly $1.02 billion (63%) had been disbursed.[217]

Enhancing the ISF's Conventional Capabilities

U.S. capacity-building support for the ISF has undergone repeated strategic adjustments since the fall of the Ba'athist regime in 2003. The Iraqi Army was initially intended to be a force focused on external defense, but the rise of al-Qaeda in Iraq and other terrorist groups resulted in the ISF's shift to a counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy. Therefore, when the U.S. forces left, at the end of 2011, the Iraqi Army was largely structured as a COIN force, focusing on missions such as route clearance and manning checkpoints. Numerous reports detail how, after the U.S. departure, the ISF suffered from corruption, neglect, and a shortfall of combat-effective resources and personnel—all of which contributed to the ISF's partial collapse in the north of the country in 2014.[219] After committing more than $25 billion to train and equip the ISF from 2003 to 2012, the United States and its coalition partners have re-embarked on a similar mission to train and equip the ISF.[220]

As CJTF-OIR's spokesman stated in December 2015, the Iraqi Army was "not ready for … the conventional assault that ISIL brought to Mosul and beyond."[221] Consequently, the coalition began anew the process of rebuilding and refitting the ISF, training them in previously underemphasized tactics, including combined-arms operations, river crossings, and close air support.

DEMINING AND THE REMOVAL OF UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE

More than 700 million square meters of Iraqi land remain vulnerable to the risks posed by unexploded ordnance

According to DoS, its Bureau of Political-Military Affairs' Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement provided more than $24 million in 2015 to support conventional weapons destruction efforts in Iraq. U.S.-funded initiatives included:[218]

- safely releasing and clearing landmines and unexploded ordnance from more than 65 million square meters of land
- destroying more than 61,979 pieces of unexploded ordnance and other munitions
- providing risk-education programs to more than 38,000 Iraqi citizens, warning them about the potential dangers from landmines and unexploded ordnance in their communities

These programs, directed through several Iraqi and international non-governmental organizations (NGO), made progress toward protecting communities from potential risks, but more than 700 million square meters of Iraqi land remain vulnerable to the risks posed by unexploded ordnance left over from decades of conflict.

Significantly smaller in size and scope than past U.S.-led training efforts, the precise contours of this new mission to build partner capacity are still evolving, with approximately 17,500 Iraqi troops trained, as of early January 2016.[222] To date, this initiative has had some modest successes, with several U.S.-trained cadres operating on the front lines against ISIL.[223]

Under the new approach, an Iraqi Bridging Battalion gained the capacity to successfully ford the Tharthar Canal this quarter, thereby gaining a foothold in southern Ramadi. The ISF now employs advanced mine-clearing techniques to counter the mines, IEDs, and other obstacles used by ISIL as area-denial weapons. Although the Iraqi Air Force is still in the early stages of integrating the first deliveries of 36 U.S.-made F-16s purchased by the GOI, a handful of F-16s now in use are beginning to play a role in supporting Iraqi ground operations. Notwithstanding these tangible advances, DoD reported that the eventual battle to retake Mosul will be an order of magnitude beyond the operations that the ISF has undertaken to date, and will require more training, more equipment, and, perhaps most of all, "patience."[224]

Rebuilding the Iraqi Army: A U.S. Military Unit's Experience

An Iraqi soldier assigned to the 71st Iraqi Army Brigade plots coordinates on a map during mortar training at Camp Taji, Iraq, November 4, 2015. (U.S. Army photo)

The 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, spent about 9 months training units in 5 Iraqi Army brigades (totaling about 12,400 Iraqi soldiers—a very small portion of a force that numbers over 100,000), including units of the Iraqi Army's new 16th Division.[225] Mission-essential elements covered during these training exercises included marksmanship, counter-IED tactics, first aid, calling in indirect-fire missions, obstacle breaching, and combined-arms operations up to the battalion level.[226]

Although the urgency to insert troops into the battle meant that some Iraqi Army units received shorter training, the U.S. commander of the training mission stated that "they can fight on their own," as was subsequently demonstrated—at least to a degree—by the 16th Division's participation in operations to retake Ramadi. He noted, however, that the Iraqi Army still faced many challenges, including corruption and an overly centralized command structure.[227]

Developing a Sunni Stabilization Force

According to a DoD spokesman, as of late December, the GOI had enrolled approximately 8,000 Anbari Sunni as Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF). Plans call for the PMF to include Sunnis in the fight. As part of the program, some Sunnis have been instructed in basic infantry tactics so that they can assist in liberating and holding Sunni towns and villages, such as Ramadi, freeing up regular ISF units for new offensive operations.[230]

CORRUPTION IN THE IRAQI MILITARY

The challenge of corruption within the military needs to be addressed

The ISF continues to face the challenge of combatting corruption by preventing, detecting, and deterring the waste, fraud, and abuse of public funds. A report issued in early December by Transparency International details deep-rooted corruption within Iraq's military institutions, placing "it in the highest risk category for corruption in the [defense] and security sector . . . with the highest risk sector[s] being Operations." The report also identifies the following problems:[228]

- ghost soldiers
- leaking of intelligence by corrupt ISF officials
- ISF extortion of civilians
- diversion by senior officials of approximately $380 million intended for ISF salaries in 2015
- inadequate parliamentary oversight
- poorly vetted key appointments
- inadequate defense procurement processes

More specifically, Transparency International gave Iraq's security institutions the lowest possible rating in several sub-categories, These included maintaining public trust, defense-acquisition processes, links to organized crime, the recruitment of intelligence officers, export controls, asset-disposal procedures, legislative access to defense-spending records, intermingling of military and business interests, payroll- and personnel-tracking processes, and anticorruption training and monitoring.[229]

For the ISF to continue to develop as an effective partner to the coalition—one capable of consolidating recent battlefield gains—the challenge of corruption within the military needs to be addressed.

An Iraqi soldier assigned to 71st Iraqi Army Brigade scans his area of responsibility during urban operations training at Camp Taji, Iraq, Nov. 18, 2015. (U.S. Army photo)

The ISF provides the training for these tribal fighters, and, according to DoD, about 2,800 fighters have completed courses. Following a brief period of training in basic soldier skills, fighters are deployed for a two-week rotation for operational training in higher-threat areas. Fighters are then given additional training to address observed needs before further employment. DoD has stated that these tribal fighters "will form the bedrock of the holding force in Ramadi," but noted that the mission was not fully developed, as of the end of December 2015. In addition, Italy's elite *Carabinieri* are training a small number of Iraqi police to participate in the stabilization force deployed to Ramadi.[231]

This mission has significant challenges. Although most of Ramadi has been freed from ISIL's grip, the terrorist group still holds Falluja to the east and several major towns to the northwest and west. These tribal fighters will face continued threat from ISIL elements still active in Anbar province, requiring support from more-experienced Iraqi Army units.[232]

Iraqi Citizens' Perceptions of the GOI and ISF

Funded by the U.S. government since 2010, the National Democratic Institute has commissioned the firm of Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research to poll Iraqi citizens on a wide array of issues affecting security and development in Iraq. The survey covering August to September 2015 shows that an all-time low of 26% of Iraqis polled view Iraq as heading in the "right direction," down from a peak of 48% in spring 2012.[233] Security was cited by 48% of respondents as one of the two top issues confronting the GOI—down from 61% in September 2014 (arguably, at the height of the ISIL threat), indicating some improvement in the public's view of the ISF's performance.[234] Other problems cited as top priorities for the GOI were mitigating corruption (43%) and improving public services (37%).[235]

Security Issues

The poll's results showed widespread support for counter-ISIL efforts, including relatively strong backing for the employment of PMFs on the battlefield.[236]

- 78% of respondents from western Iraq felt that security there was getting worse.
- 60% of all Iraqis viewed the Iraqi Army as "represent[-ing] all Iraqis." Only 29% of Sunnis and 14% of Kurds agreed, versus 90% of Shia.
- 0% of Kurds and just 4% of Sunnis polled trusted the PMFs alone to ensure their security, versus 30% of Shia; however, 66% of all Iraqis polled trusted a combination of the ISF and PMFs to safeguard them.
- 81% of all Iraqis polled supported the use of PMFs against ISIL.
- 52% of Sunnis viewed the PMFs as important to their security, while 100% of Shia and 5% of Kurds polled felt the same.

The GOI's Performance

On matters indirectly linked to security, the poll found:[237]

- 69% of respondents still preferred democracy over all other forms of government.
- 65% approved of the Prime Minister's job performance, while only 13% approved of the parliament's performance.
- 58% of Sunnis responded in the affirmative when asked whether they wanted to continue "in the direction" the Prime Minister is taking Iraq.
- The Prime Minister's favorability rating was 54% overall (75% among Shia, 39% among Sunni Arabs, and 5% among Kurds).
- 85% of respondents from the KRG categorized the GOI as unresponsive to their needs, though 70% also said the same of the KRG.
- 88% of Kurds, 61% of Sunnis, and 46% of Shia said sectarianism was getting worse.

Based on the results of this survey, the Iraqi people stand behind their government's efforts to combat ISIL while finding flaws in its performance elsewhere. Over the long term, however, significant differences persist between Kurd and Arab and between Sunni and Shia over core issues, such as political reconciliation and the powers of the central government.[238]

Training and Equipping Kurdish Forces

This quarter, the coalition commander of the Kurdistan Training Coordination Center (KTCC) provided an update on coalition activities to train soldiers for the Kurdistan Regional Government's armed forces. The center is led either by a German officer or an Italian officer on alternating 6-month assignments. Currently, a German Army officer heads the KTCC, with an Italian officer serving as his deputy.[239] The KTCC has approximately 300 trainers from seven coalition partners: Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Norway, The Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.[240]

One of four BPC centers in Iraq, the KTCC trains the Peshmerga to fight ISIL. Complementary to the center's programs, the coalition provides additional advisor assistance for Peshmerga operations, beyond the basic training curriculum.[241]

As of December 29, 2015, about 820 Peshmerga soldiers had completed the KTCC basic training course.[242] According to the KTCC commander, approximately 100 soldiers in each of 8 cohorts received 25 training days of instruction on basic marksmanship and offensive and defensive operations in rural and urban settings. The coalition has also been providing specialized training in explosive ordnance disposal, medical care, sniper training, and maintenance functions, as well as command and control as part of officer training. Training of personnel to serve as joint terminal attack controllers, to direct air power, is being handled by coalition special forces who operate independently from the KTCC.[243]

On the issue of whether the Peshmerga are being equipped with the types of heavy weaponry needed to hold and retake ground from ISIL along a front that extends 1,200 kilometers, the KTCC commander stated: "I think it's never enough… of course, they need more, " including additional anti-tank weapons and mortars.[244]

Diplomatic Issues With Turkish Troops

Since 2014, Turkey has maintained a small base near the town of Bashiqa, in Ninewa province, Iraq, to train Peshmerga forces and others. This quarter, Turkey rotated in new and additional troops, asserting that they were for training and reinforcement of the Bashiqa installation against ISIL attacks. In December 2015, issues arose between Turkey and the GOI regarding the presence of these troops.[245]

On December 15, the GOI's Council of Ministers, led by Prime Minister al-Abadi, called on Turkey to withdraw fully from Iraqi territory and "respect [Iraq's] national sovereignty."[246] On December 30, Prime Minister al-Abadi issued a statement categorically rejecting the presence of Turkish troops on Iraqi territory without the knowledge or approval of the Iraq government. Al-Abadi accused Ankara of not delivering on a promise to pull back, requesting that "the Turkish government announce immediately that it will withdraw from Iraqi territory and to respect Iraqi sovereignty and actually withdraw its troops."[247]

In a call to Prime Minister al-Abadi on December 30, Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu claimed that Turkish troops do not intend to stay in Iraq and that Turkey respects Iraq's sovereignty.[248] As of December 31, DoS officials, General MacFarland, and their GOI and Turkish counterparts were working to resolve this conflict.[249]

Challenges To Building and Sustaining Defense Capacity

According to Finance Minister Hoshyer Zebari, the GOI committed to spending just under 20% (or about $18 billion) of its 2016 budget on the Ministries of Interior and Defense. He stated that arms purchases in 2016 will focus on more affordable light and medium weapons, as opposed to expensive systems purchased in the past, such as F-16s and M1 Abrams tanks.[250] While funds have been provided to pay and equip the PMFs (approximately $1.5 billion), numerous strings are attached to these appropriations, many contingent on factors beyond the control of the PMFs and their supporters. Articles 39–41 of the budget detail how the GOI expects to fund and manage the PMFs in 2016. Key sections of these articles include:[251]

- Article 39(1)—provides 3% of GOI salaries, pensions, and other (unspecified) official benefits for PMFs (60%) and IDPs (40%)
- Article 39(3)—transfers $85.8 million to the PMFs from funds previously committed to disarmament programs
- Article 39(4)—assigns an additional 3% of the budget for PMFs and IDPs from other state expenditures, such as public services, to be divided equally between the two groups
- Article 40—requires the PMFs to commit to accepting up to 30% of their personnel "from areas where military operations [are occurring]"
- Article 41—specifies that the prime minister will manage the PMF account set up by the Ministry of Finance

Funding for the PMFs is tied to the GOI's ability to raise or borrow the funds necessary to meet its budgetary commitments, and the Budget Law appears to provide the prime minister with final say over the disposition of these funds. Further, Article 40 could result in an increase in the number of Sunni fighters within the PMF ranks, as anti-ISIL operations are now almost solely occurring in predominantly Sunni areas.

ISIL's Arsenal and Support Elements

While the omnipresent "technical" (armed pickup truck) remains the backbone of ISIL's mobile units, and IEDs its weapon of choice for targeted attacks, the terrorist group has also acquired or manufactured a variety of other weapons capable of inflicting damage on its opponents. For example, ISIL has demonstrated that it possesses the ability to produce and use chemical weapons on a small scale in Iraq and Syria. DoD reported its concern that, if unimpeded, ISIL could develop more lethal chemical agents or even transfer them to affiliates operating in countries other than Iraq or Syria. As of early January 2016, however, DoD was unable to provide an estimate of the size of ISIL's chemical-weapons inventory and was unaware of any attempts by the organization to develop biological weapons.[252]

ISIL employs a number of anti-aircraft weapons that primarily target the Syrian regime's aging fleet of Russian planes. It reportedly captured man-portable air-defense systems (MANPADs) from Iraqi and Syrian government forces, a small number of more advanced Chinese FN-6 MANPADs initially intended for moderate Syrian opposition forces, and older anti-aircraft guns of the sort that were a staple of Soviet and Chinese exports to client states. Although ISIL may have captured some Syrian military aircraft, DoD assessed that they are not likely operational.[253]

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The decentralized nature of ISIL's IED-manufacturing base makes it more challenging for coalition planners and opposition ground units to destroy these facilities. However, a featured component of the coalition's training program remains counter-IED tactics, with trainers adjusting the program in response to ISIL's evolving tactics.[254]

ISIL also employs other types of improvised weaponry, such as up-armored bulldozers and indirect-fire weapons cobbled together from various source materials, including from weapons systems left behind by the Syrian Arab Army and the ISF. DoD reported that ISIL has captured "several hundred" Humvees previously supplied by the United States to the ISF—361 of which had been destroyed by coalition airstrikes, as of December 9, 2015. According to DoD, there is "no evidence" that ISIL has captured M1A1 Abrams tanks from Iraqi armored formations, despite unverified, albeit widely disseminated, ISIL propaganda videos that feature at least one Abrams tank.[255]

With regard to battlefield medicine, ISIL has openly recruited doctors and other medical professionals in its online literature and elsewhere. These professionals also support ISIL's rudimentary civilian medical system, but providing assistance to wounded fighters appears to take priority over the needs of civilians. According to DoD, the sophistication of treatment provided by ISIL to the sick and injured, however, is uncertain, and likely primitive by Western standards.[256]

ENHANCING INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION ON ISIL

In February 2015, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Lieutenant General Vincent R. Stewart, testified before Congress about the spread of ISIL across Iraq and Syria, and its growing influence in Algeria, Libya, and Egypt. He described it as assembling a "growing international footprint."[257]

This quarter, U.S. forces continued to conduct extensive intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) missions targeting ISIL assets. ISIL remains a difficult target for collection due to a wide array of factors, including the relatively insular nature of its high-level commanders, the rough terrain on the northern limits of its territory, and its demonstrated ability to combine modern methods of communications with the archaic, but still effective, techniques of conveying information by messenger and moving money via informal, trust-based networks commonly known as *hawalas*.

DoD IG is currently evaluating ISR activities to determine whether the intelligence collection aircraft allocation process satisfied the OIR Commander's intelligence requirements.

Collection Challenges

On October 8, 2015, the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, Nicholas J. Rasmussen, testified before the Senate Committee Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, largely echoing DIA's February assessment. He outlined two trends that make obtaining actionable intelligence against ISIL more challenging. First, ISIL and other terrorist networks continue to improve their ability to communicate via means inaccessible to U.S. collection methods. Director Rasmussen cited several new factors that hinder U.S. intelligence collection, including the exposure of collection techniques, the disclosure of classified information, and the use of what he described as ISIL's "innovative and agile" means of communication.[258]

Second, foreshadowing the December attacks in San Bernardino, California, the Director highlighted the proliferation of smaller plots "that emerge simply by an individual encouraged to take action, then quickly gathering the few resources needed and moving into an operational phase." The end result is an extremely compressed planning cycle that is difficult for the intelligence community to disrupt. Director Rasmussen said that the intelligence community had "seen a decrease in the frequency of large-scale, complex plotting efforts that sometimes span several years." Yet, a month later, ISIL conducted its coordinated attacks in Paris.[259]

Aftermath of a coalition airstrike west of Sinjar in mid-November. (KRG Security Council photo)

Joint Terminal Attack Controllers Support Liberation of Sinjar

From December 5, 2015 to January 1, 2016, the coalition conducted at least 55 airstrikes near Sinjar and several dozen more on ISIL supply lines leading to the town.[260] Joint Terminal Attack Controllers (JTACs) played an important role in the battle to retake this strategic town. According to DoD, JTACs based in the KRG capital of Erbil coordinated with Kurdish commanders on the scene to leverage U.S. air assets.[261]

Acting as spotters, U.S.-supported fighters on Mount Sinjar suggested ISIL targets to their colleagues in Erbil who then conferred with the JTACs. In turn, the JTACs employed U.S. ISR platforms to determine whether the target fell within the scope of the U.S. rules of engagement and met the GOI's requirements. If the target fulfilled these conditions, the JTACs would then vector in an airstrike to the appropriate coordinates while coordinating with U.S.-backed ground forces to mitigate the risk of friendly fire.[262]

U.S. Electronic-Warfare Support for ISF Ground Operations

Staging out of Ali al-Salem Air Base in Kuwait, several U.S. Air Force EC-130H "Compass Call" electronic-warfare planes have been flying missions in support of ISF ground operations since at least March 2015. This quarter, they supported the ISF's operation to liberate Ramadi, jamming ISIL communications and providing signals-intelligence support to ground forces. The planes, which were first used in the early 1980s, are also capable of scrambling radio transmissions and blocking cell phone signals, the latter capability particularly crucial in operations against ISIL since terrorists often use cell phones to detonate IEDs. Although the EC-130H's exact capabilities are classified, its involvement in Ramadi demonstrates that U.S. air support to the ISF extends beyond strike missions into the realm of intelligence support and electronic warfare.[263]

USAF EC-130H. (USAF photo)

Vetted Syrian Opposition Forces Facilitating Coalition Airstrikes

This quarter, Syrian opposition forces vetted by the United States provided information about the location of ISIL fighters and infrastructure to coalition planners, leading to several airstrikes against these targets. U.S.-backed Syrian groups informed the coalition about ISIL positions in northern Syria using what DoD referred to as "an established system" that incorporated an array of ISR assets to locate enemy targets and minimize collateral damage. This information also played a part in coordinating coalition airstrikes in support of the YPG-led victory at Tal Abyad and the capture of Kobane earlier in 2015.[264]

Intelligence Sharing

In the wake of ISIL's November attacks in Paris, the French government deployed additional assets to the region to assist in counter-ISIL operations, including its sole aircraft carrier, the *Charles de Gaulle*. The Secretary of Defense and the Director of National Intelligence have instructed personnel under their command to "enhance" intelligence sharing with France and "deepen" operational military cooperation with French forces in the region.[265]

DoD IG is currently evaluating the U.S. intelligence and information sharing with coalition partners in support of OIR. Specifically, it is reviewing procedures and guidelines for sharing information, including intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance.

The coalition is not sharing any intelligence with Russian forces operating in Syria,[266] but is deconflicting its operations with them.[267]

ENHANCING FINANCIAL-INTELLIGENCE COOPERATION

In mid-December, the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury chaired a Summit of Finance Ministers of the UN Security Council to discuss ways to strengthen global efforts to counter terrorist financing. One of the outcomes of this meeting was an agreement among the participants to improve intelligence-sharing capabilities within and between governments.[268] For more on U.S.-led efforts, see the *Disrupting ISIL's Finances* section of this report.

THE FBI INTEGRATES INTELLIGENCE AND OPERATIONS

According to FBI Director James B. Comey, today's FBI is a "threat-focused, intelligence-driven organization," with counterterrorism as its top priority. The FBI has adapted its counterterrorism focus to confront ISIL, considering ISIL as a metastasized cancer and the progeny of al-Qaeda. Director Comey identified several specific changes made to meet the threat:[269]

- established an FBI Intelligence Branch to drive intelligence integration across the entire FBI enterprise
- established a methodology to categorize and prioritize national security and criminal threats (at both a national level and for its 56 field offices) to better understand the threats, how they may be connected, and reveal information gaps
- created a new Cyber-Counterintelligence Coordination Section, a partnership of FBI Counterintelligence and Cyber Divisions and stood-up the Hybrid Threat Center to support Department of Commerce Entity List investigations
- maintained a 24-hour cyber command center, called CyWatch, combining the resources of the FBI and National Cyber Investigative Joint Task Force, providing connectivity to federal cyber centers, government agencies, FBI field offices, legal attachés, and the private sector in the event of a national security related cyber intrusion

EXPOSING ISIL'S TRUE NATURE

The coalition working group focused on countering ISIL's messaging is led by DoS and the National Counter Terrorism Center. Through the end of 2015, the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC) led the DoS counter ISIL messaging strategy, [270] operating within the Under Secretariat for Press and Public Diplomacy. In January 2016, DoS announced a revamping of the counter violent extremist communications efforts and established a new Global Engagement Center, discussed below, as the successor to the CSCC.[271]

According to DoS, regional bureaus, such as the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA), and several functional bureaus, including the Bureaus of Counterterrorism and International Information Programs, support the effort and assist in coordinating regional counter ISIL messaging efforts.[272]

The Sawab Center is one such outlet for regional messaging.[273] It was established in July 2015 through the joint efforts of the United States and the United Arab Emirates. The Sawab Center has worked to counter ISIL's Twitter and social-media messages in Arabic,[274] reporting more than 29,000 followers on Twitter as of December 31, 2015.[275] According to DoS, similar messaging centers are being established by the governments of Malaysia[276] and Nigeria,[277] and by the Organization for Islamic Cooperation.[278]

Through the end of 2015, the CSCC led DoS's counter-ISIL messaging strategy.[279] CSCC's Information Coordination Cell included staff from seven government agencies,[280] and collaborated with regional bureaus, which, in turn, provided communications guidance to foreign governments and NGOs.[281] The coordination cell also distributed regular reports on ISIL's messaging trends and ongoing U.S. efforts to discredit the group's messaging.[282]

CSCC's Digital Engagement Team specifically confronted extremist ideology online.[283] The center reported that it had posted 51,200 messages during FY 2015, at an average rate of 140 posts per day and an estimated total reach of more than 241 million opportunities for key audiences to be exposed to the messaging.[284]

Beginning in September 2015 DoS OIG conducted an evaluation of Embassy Baghdad's implementation of DoS's strategic line of effort to counter ISIL's messaging and expose ISIL's true nature. The OIG inspection team met with DoS officials in Washington and traveled to Mission Baghdad in October and November. DoS OIG anticipates publication of its evaluation report in February 2015.

A New Global Engagement Center

On January 8, 2016, DoS introduced the new Global Engagement Center, as the successor to the CSCC, to address its counter violent extremism communications efforts. Michael Lumpkin, former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations, was appointed GEC's new Director. He will be the third person in less than a year to guide the DoS counter-violent extremist communications effort.[285]

According to DoS, the GEC will focus more on empowering and enabling partners, governmental and non-governmental, who are able to speak out against these groups and provide an alternative to ISIL's nihilistic vision.[286]

On December 3, 2015, a DoS press spokesperson confirmed that a review of counter-ISIL messaging by an outside independent panel of technology experts, referred to as a "sprint team," was ongoing during the final quarter of 2015.[287] The private sector also figured prominently in the White House's update issued the same day, referring to the new GEC and emphasizing that it would "combat terrorist messaging in close collaboration with the private sector, particularly media and technology companies."[288]

In December 2015, DoS OIG requested production of documents relevant to the sprint team panel's evaluation and conclusions,[289] and in January 2016, DoS advised that the requested documents would be produced.[290] Information concerning the panel's assessment and conclusions derived from those documents will be summarized in LIG-OCO's next OIR quarterly report.

The Broadcasting Board of Governors

The Administration's National Security Strategy for 2015 focused on combating the persistent threat of terrorism, including supporting alternatives to extremist messaging. A central mission of the BBG is balancing and exposing ISIL propaganda by providing factual and credible journalism that both explains U.S. policy and supports the free flow of information. Relying on its media-distribution capabilities, BBG reported it is able to provide information to audiences difficult to reach, such as civilians living in ISIL-occupied territories in Iraq and Syria.[291]

BBG is involved with the distribution of the *Da'esh Daily Report*, which highlights ISIL-related content published by BBG entities, including MBN, the *Voice of America* (VOA), and *Radio Free Europe*, and *Radio Free Africa*. This report is distributed weekly to over 300 policy analysts and decision makers.[292]

ISIL's Media Spectrum: *Dabiq* and Twitter

ISIL's propaganda on various social-media platforms garners a significant amount of attention in the U.S. press. However, ISIL also uses the Internet to disseminate its long-form publications in a number of languages, including its English-language magazine *Dabiq*. As of mid-November, ISIL had published 12 issues of *Dabiq*, including "The Return of Khailafa" (the first issue, published in July 2014, shortly after the fall of Mosul), "Shariah Alone Will Rule Africa" (March 2015), and "Just Terror" (November 2015).[293]

Dabiq aims to provide a comprehensive view of ISIL's goals and vision to entice sympathizers to emigrate to the territories it controls. One of its first issues included a standalone advertisement calling for skilled professionals, such as doctors and engineers, to join ISIL's cause, preferably by relocating to the "Islamic State." Unlike some of al-Qaeda's English-language missives, *Dabiq* focuses on the organization's strategic vision for constructing a reborn "caliphate." Building on the steps outlined by the now-deceased leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Musaib al-Zarqawi, *Dabiq* sets forth a 5-step plan for achieving ISIL's objectives, beginning with emigration by sympathizers to ISIL lands in the Middle East, and progressing through congregation, destabilization of its religious opponents, consolidating its gains, and, finally, establishing the "caliphate." By co-opting al-Zarqawi's legacy, ISIL deftly manages to appropriate its preferred aspects of the al-Qaeda in Iraq's legacy while still maintaining a distinct identity from its rival, al-Qaeda.[294]

ISIL exploits less costly and time-intensive media channels as well, curating an extensive presence on Twitter to react rapidly, cheaply, and anonymously to changing world events. Through Twitter, ISIL and its sympathizers are able to reach an audience that may have neither the time nor the inclination to read more in-depth articles. According to a study recently completed by the Brookings Institute, approximately 46,000 "overt" ISIL supporters had Twitter accounts as of November 2014. But Brookings concluded that up to 90,000 accounts belonged to the broader category of ISIL "supporters," which includes both overt supporters and those whose links to and support of ISIL is more attenuated. The top four self-identified locations of these account holders were the "Islamic State," Syria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia. The vast majority of ISIL supporter-accounts (73%), however, had fewer than 500 followers.[295]

Not surprisingly, most of these accounts were created during the peak of ISIL's success on the battlefield, with the top three months for account creation being September, October, and August 2014.[296] Interestingly, the most-used ISIL hashtag (the group's name in Arabic) decreased from being mentioned in 40,000 tweets per day in September 2014 to less than 5,000 per day in February 2015. This marked decrease came after Twitter began an extensive effort to suspend accounts it had reason to believe were connected to ISIL, suggesting that countermeasures aimed at reducing ISIL's Internet presence can be at least somewhat effective.[297] ISIL's Twitter activity can also prove counterproductive, providing intelligence agencies with potential locations of the group's supporters.[298]

Through Twitter, ISIL and its sympathizers are able to reach an audience that may have neither the time nor the inclination to read more in-depth articles.

MIDDLE EAST BROADCASTING NETWORK

BBG reported that, in 2015, the MBN Raise Your Voice Campaign added five new television shows to its existing line-up of six shows broadcast to the region on Television Alhurra and accomplished the following:[299]

- added a new radio program in late November, the sixth in its line-up of radio shows broadcast on MBN's Radio Sawa
- launched new digital properties, including an interactive website (www.irfaasawtak.com)
- started a Facebook page (facebook.com/Irfaasawtakonline) to complement the website

For examples of specific MBN content streamed online and distributed by satellite to 22 countries, see the sidebar in this section.

ISIL SUPPORT FOR SLAVERY

Enslaving non-Muslim women from groups allegedly waging war against Islam benefits the enslaved by educating them

This quarter DoS's anti-ISIL Twitter site publicized a translation of an ISIL document explicitly advocating the enslavement of women and children.[300] Captured by U.S. forces in a May 2015 raid that killed a top ISIL financial official in Syria, the pamphlet states that the "captivity of the women of the disbelievers waging war and their enslavement must be through jihad … [after] the ruling of the Imam."[301] According to these materials, "the Imam" is empowered to decide whether female captives "are allowed to be taken as slave girls."[302] Among these purported benefits of enslaving captive women are the spreading of the Islam to those who practice other faiths, the purification of decadent women, an increase in the number of Muslim children, and "a clear affirmation showing the supremacy of the people of Sharia."[303]

Further, the pamphlet advocates slavery as a way "of finding solution[s] to the problems of human societies," and one whose benefits "are numerous and great." According to this document, enslaving non-Muslim women from groups allegedly waging war against Islam benefits the enslaved by educating them, calling them to Islam, and disciplining them. The document also states that slave girls are also a manifestation of "God's mercy on men who cannot find marriage or for whom the matter of marriage is difficult from expenditures and the like …" In sum, the document states that "[t]here is no doubt that the captivity and enslavement of the women of the disbelievers ... and their offspring are among the greatest forms of the [honor] of Islam ..."[304]

VOICE OF AMERICA

VOA's Extremism Watch Desk, launched in October 2015, is a BBG-wide media-monitoring and translation hub designed to amplify content that exposes ISIL's true nature and debunks its propaganda. The unit monitors ISIL-related content in multiple languages, translates it into English and the appropriate foreign language, and then distributes content to counter it on a variety of BBG platforms. According to BBG, the Desk produces a number of original stories each week, all of which are published on language services websites and the VOA Central News English site[306]

VOA reported these additional activities during the quarter:

- expanding its coverage of news and information countering ISIL propaganda in Turkey, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and Syria, focusing on explaining U.S. policies and activities in the region
- increasing its social media engagement related to countering ISIL
- planning to enhance its Turkish and Kurdish Services, utilizing approximately $3.15 million in OCO funds to expand support for this effort

Further, the VOA Watch Desk is developing its own independent social-media presence, in addition to providing content to the language services for their use on social media. It expects to establish its Twitter account soon.[307]

MEASURING BBG'S EFFECTIVENESS

BBG uses an "impact model" to measure the effectiveness of its networks. The model outlines the impact of BBG programming in three sectors: audiences, media, and governments. It includes quantitative and qualitative indicators that represent impact over the short, medium, and long terms. Indicators include weekly audience size, stated audience perceptions of trustworthiness, audience sharing of content, content co-creation with affiliates, indications of increased understanding of current events, and numbers of high-profile news stories picked-up by other news outlets and attributed to the BBG originator.[308] Each fiscal year, BBG conducts a mid-year evaluation and a final evaluation to determine if its targets were met and goals achieved.[309]

In Iraq, BBG reported that its broadcasters reach:[310]

- 43.9% of Iraqis residing outside the Kurdistan Region on a weekly basis
- 23.9% of the Kurdistan Region's population on a weekly basis

MBN Programming

In January 2016, BBG provided the following information on many of its feature programs.

Television Alhurra

From Erbil: This new, weekly program began airing in November, broadcasting in Arabic from the streets of Kurdistan. It targets Iraqi audiences, but is also available to the entire region via satellite and online. One of the show's first topics focused on the question of Sinjar's future following its liberation from ISIL in November 2015.

Delusional Paradise: A 30-minute, weekly mini-documentary series offering firsthand accounts obtained through original interviews with families and communities that have suffered at the hands of ISIL.

Your Question: This monthly town hall show is distributed to Iraqi audiences through Alhurra-Iraq, and to entire region, through satellite and online outlets. It brings activists and young people together with leaders to whom they rarely have access. The first episode featured the Speaker of the Council of Representatives as a guest.

Free Hour: Alhurra's flagship talk show, this program provides breaking news and expert analysis of the issues of the day.

Al-Youm: A live daily magazine program, Al-Youm is produced simultaneously from five countries on three continents, covering the latest news from the Middle East. It focuses on the humanitarian situation facing the victims of ISIL.

Special Report: This weekly, 45-minute talk show focuses on a single topic with reports and interviews. Recent stories have included how extremist organizations, such as ISIL, are fighting among themselves for domination.

Television Alhurra Broadcasting Studio (Television Alhurra photo).

The World Today / The Global Newscasts: These two daily newscasts report from the Middle East, the United States, and elsewhere, covering topics such as the migrant crisis and the destruction of artifacts by ISIL.

Eye on Democracy: This 15-minute discussion program highlights important issues challenging freedom and democracy. Recent topics have included attacks on a comedian who comically portrayed ISIL and Morocco's ban on religious figures talking about politics in mosques and its potential impact on ISIL recruitment.

Hunna: This weekly discussion program brings together women to discuss sensitive social and political issues and how women can counter misinformation put out by ISIL.

Iraq Today: This hour-long daily newscast covers events in Iraq, targeting Iraqi audiences, and has recently reported from towns liberated from ISIL control.

Talk of Two Rivers: This show examines issues facing Iraqi society, such as poverty, the lack of basic services, the rights of women, and the differences between social classes. Topics have included internal fighting within ISIL and first-person perspectives on the reasons for joining ISIL.

Radio Sawa

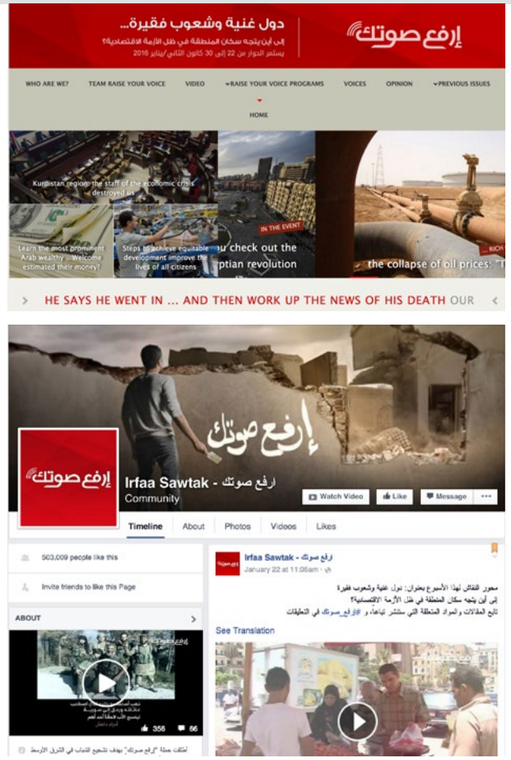
What is Your Opinion: A 65-minute, daily call-in program distributed over radio and online, this program focuses on topics related to the root causes of ISIL, allowing Iraqi citizens to share their opinions. A television counterpart is currently in production.

Free Zone: This weekly, 20-minute discussion program emphasizes issues relating to freedom and democracy, including elections, women's rights, and freedom of the press. According to BBG, this is the only Arabic-language program broadcast in the region on freedom and democracy issues.

Sawa Magazine: This 20-minute daily program focuses on political, social, and cultural issues and is provided in a magazine-style format. Recent topics have included countering ISIL online, why Tunisian youth are drawn to ISIL, and a profile of a Yazidi girl who was adopted after her parents were captured by ISIL.

Ask the World Now: This is a short magazine program that broadcast quotes from senior U.S. policymakers—including President Obama, Vice President Biden, and Secretary of State Kerry—to answer peoples' questions about a range of policy issues pertinent to the U.S. regional policies.

Radio Sawa Newscasts/News Updates: These news updates air twice per hour with the latest news and information. The Iraqi version also has Iraq-specific newscasts that are broadcast during the evenings. Topics have included moderate religious leaders speaking out against ISIL, updates on joint operations against ISIL, and ideas about what can be done to help the refugee crisis.[305]



Irfaa Sawtak website and Facebook page.

MBN Digital

Irfaa Sawtak: This new interactive website provides a forum for the productive discussion of extremism. It has a weekly theme, such as "Children in Danger," and provides a platform for essayists, reporters, and community members to share opinions, cross-posting key stories on Facebook with active curation and engagement from MBN's digital team.

Alhurra's Website and Facebook Page: The website, Alhurra.com, is a news source for Arabic-speaking audiences. The website includes original reporting from MBN's digital team, as well as reports from Alhurra and Alhurra-Iraq television networks.

MBN reported a surge in digital traffic following an increase in coverage of ISIL. Alhurra's website had 2.7 million visits and 4.9 million page views of its articles. Alhurra's Facebook page gained 245,000 fans in the past quarter reaching a total of 6.7 million, with nearly 300,000 comments and more than 10,000 shares of Alhurra original content, primarily edited content from Alhurra Television. In the past quarter, there were more than 7.6 million video views lasting 30 seconds or longer on Alhurra's Facebook page.[311]

DISRUPTING ISIL'S FINANCING

ISIL's control of territory has enabled it to amass greater economic strength than other terrorist groups like al-Qaeda. ISIL's extortion of and taxation on the local population, its production and sale of oil and gas, its looting and illicit sale of cultural antiquities, and other methods (including foreign donations and kidnapping for ransom) have funded its military machine for years. These activities generated over a billion dollars in 2015.[312] For the distribution of ISIL's estimated $1.18 billion revenue for 2015, by source, see Figure 5.

According to Under Secretary of the Treasury Adam Szubin, ISIL's finances are now vulnerable in several areas. These weaknesses include limited access to the international financial system, reliance on vulnerable oil supplies to generate revenue, dependence on middlemen to move money to ISIL affiliates, and the hostility it faces from the population it extorts for taxes.[313]

Administering ISIL's Conquered Territories

About three-fourths of ISIL's budget supports its armed forces, either directly or indirectly, making countering ISIL's finances an integral part of the coalition strategy. According to seized financial records in one province, about 44% of expenditures pay the salaries of ISIL's fighters, another 10% pay its "Islamic Police," and 20% supports ISIL military bases. [314]

In addition to running its military forces, ISIL established a relatively significant administrative governing structure for the territories it seized from the Iraqi and Syrian governments. Following the takeover of Raqqah in 2013, ISIL's nascent bureaucratic structures expanded in scope, including the establishment of Islamic Services Committees to oversee the existing local councils that administer basic public services (such as healthcare and education). This enabled ISIL to retain at least some capable technocrats while installing its own loyalists at the top of the bureaucratic structure.[315] Lacking an experienced workforce trained in public services, such as staffing schools, paving roads, and providing electricity to businesses and residences, ISIL has relied on forcing former government workers to return to their old jobs. The penalty for those in the public workforce who elect not to work for ISIL can be severe, including the confiscation of personal effects and property, or worse. Through early 2015, the GOI continued to pay the salaries of public servants forced to work for ISIL's healthcare administration.[316]

ISIL's administrative apparatus enables it to generate revenue through taxation, fines, and the collection of fees for everything from sales of goods to the collection of garbage. For example, in Anbar province, fines can be assessed for selling electronic cigarettes (10,000 Iraqi dinars), owning "smoking goods" (confiscation of the offender's automobile and 15 days imprisonment), and using a taxi to transport cigarettes (250,000 Iraqi dinars).[317] In Syria's Deir ez-Zor province, ISIL collected $1.8 million in taxes during a 12-month period from personal wealth, wheat, camels, and fruit. As standalone revenue sources, the numbers are not significant, but when combined and added to ISIL's lucrative oil-smuggling efforts, its extortion and kidnapping rackets, and its sale of stolen antiquities, the organization's financial resources are enough to support the basic administrative structures of a state-like entity.[318]

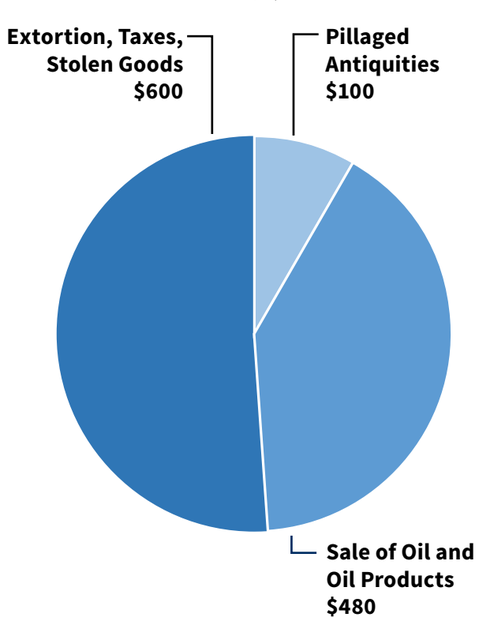
According to seized ISIL documents, a sample of monthly revenue streams from Deir ez-Zor, for example, showed that ISIL's income consisted primarily of:[319]

- confiscations of homes and goods from people who have fled, died, or been imprisoned (44.7%)
- oil and gas (27.7%)
- taxes (23.7%)
- electricity sales (3.9%)

Although in no way comprehensive, these documents illustrate the relatively diversified nature of ISIL's various revenue sources. Although ISIL's access to the international financial system is limited, it relies significantly on *hawala* networks to move money. These networks rely on the trust and connections among the transactional parties—a level of privacy that presents a significant obstacle for U.S. and allied financial-intelligence groups.[320]

Figure 5.

ISIL's Estimated Revenue for 2015, by Source
($ Millions)



Source: Treasury, "Remarks by Acting Under Secretary Adam Szubin at Chatham House," as prepared for delivery, 12/10/2015.

ISIL's Revenue Sources

OIL PRODUCTION AND SALES

Crude oil is second only to taxation and extortion as a source of income for ISIL.[321] In Syria, ISIL took control of approximately 160 operational oil wells.[322] In December 2015, U.S. Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew estimated that ISIL was bringing in an estimated $40 million per month, or $480 million annually, in oil revenue.[323]

Nearly three-fourths of ISIL's Syrian oil revenues come from Deir Ez-Zor province, where five oilfields account for approximately 60% of ISIL's total oil output. According to Treasury, ISIL oilfield workers have developed innovative methods of gathering, processing, and selling oil. ISIL-controlled oil operations likely involve hundreds of skilled workers trained in financial management, accounting, engineering, and other technical skills. There is also a general workforce of about 1,600 people used to expedite construction, maintenance, and repairs of its facilities. This new information leads Treasury to believe that oilfield workers are salaried employees[324]

Prior to ISIL control, oil production at Syrian's main fields ran between 400,000 and 500,000 barrels per day. In October 2015, with ISIL at the helm, the estimated production dropped to an estimated 34,000–40,000 BPD.[325] ISIL's lack of technical expertise, coalition airstrikes, and the general chaos of war have caused significant production drops.[326] However, the impetus to buy oil, and related hydrocarbon products, from ISIL persists. Recent estimates of ISIL sales suggest that oil is sold at the wellhead for between $20 and $45 per barrel, often allowing purchasers to obtain oil at below market price.[327] For estimates of ISIL oil production and sales from the oilfields it controls in Syria, see Table 5.

Table 5.

ISIL Oil Sales in Syria: Price and Production Estimates, by Field, as of 11/2015

Oilfield	Price per Barrel Post-liberation	Production (BPD)
al-Tanak	40	11,000-12,000
al-Omar	45	6,000-9,000
al-Jabseh	30	2,500-3,000
al-Tabqa	20	1,500-1,800
al-Kharata	30	1,000
al-Shoula	30	650-800
Deiro	30	600-1,000
al-Taim	40	400-600
al-Rashid	25	200-300

Source: Erika Solomon, Robin Kwong and Steven Bernard, "Inside ISIS Inc: The Journey of a Barrel of Oil," Financial Times, 12/11/2015.

ISIL Oil-smuggling Model

ISIL profits from selling oil to residents in the territories it controls and from the sale of crude directly to independent traders or middlemen, who sell it elsewhere, including to the Syrian government. These middlemen pay a tithe for the opportunity to buy oil without being taxed; otherwise, they are taxed per barrel.[328]

ISIL Fuel Sales to the Syrian Regime

ISIL is reportedly using natural gas plants in Syria to bottle propane, and is distributing these bottles to its fighters or the local population for free or at a discount as a means to win local support. According to Treasury, ISIL also sells natural gas to the Asad regime. The Syrian government is struggling to mitigate persistent gas shortages, and ISIL does not have enough consumers in its territory. Selling its gas to the Asad regime allows ISIL to operate its plants and produce propane, while the Syrian government fulfills some of its needs. Treasury reported that this arrangement probably deters military attacks against ISIL in areas that would otherwise disrupt this supply.[329]

ISIL PILLAGING OF HERITAGE SITES

ISIL pillages heritage sites to enforce its ideology and to extract saleable archaeological and ethnological material which it markets as art, antiquities, and collectibles. U.S.-government data shows that the percentage of declared antiquities from the Syria and Iraq imported into the United States increased about 23% from 2010 to 2014, suggesting previously unavailable items from Iraq and Syria have begun to appear on the market.[330] Declared U.S. imports of such items from Iraq alone rose 412% over the same time period.[331] Although it is impossible to determine the true provenance of these items, the sudden increase in items available coincides with the increased instability and armed conflict in Iraq and Syria.[332]

ISIL organizes and monetizes this criminal enterprise through a variety of means. Among them, ISIL mandates that looters first obtain licenses, for which they must pay a fee; taxes sales of such goods at 20%–50% of the sale price; confiscates goods from unauthorized looters and resells them directly; and profits from the sale of items, such as metal detectors, that make the exploitation of these sites easier for all involved.[333]

The small size of many of the objects makes them difficult for customs officials to detect. According to the International Center for Terrorism and Transnational Crime in Ankara, Turkish officials have seized 6,800 items (mostly coins) of dubious provenance since 2011, but many others have likely slipped through and now reside in private collections.[334]

ISIL'S OTHER SOURCES OF REVENUE

ISIL also earns money in a number of other ways, including:

- **Donations.** ISIL received an estimated $40 million from wealthy donors in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Kuwait in 2013 and 2014 alone.[335]

- **Kidnapping and Ransoms**. In 2014, Treasury estimated that ISIL took in about $20 million in ransom payments.[336] Other estimates for this activity are around $6 million a day. But ISIL's demands are often unrealistic and go unmet, leading to unfortunate consequences for the hostages. Recent examples include ISIL demanding: $100,000,000 for the release of journalist James Foley, who was beheaded when payment was not forthcoming, and demanding $200,000,000 from the Government of Japan for hostage Haruna Yukawa, who was also beheaded when no payment was made. Sometimes, though, the tactic yields payment. For example, the family of a Syrian Christian held for 5 months with dozens of other ISIL captives eventually paid $80,000 for his release.[337]
- **Agricultural products.** ISIL has taken control of as much as $200 million in wheat from Iraqi silos alone. It also controls significant swathes of fertile farmland spanning across the Tigris and Euphrates River valleys, which have historically produced half of Syria's annual wheat crop, about a third of Iraq's annual wheat crop, and almost 40% of Iraq's barley.[338]
- **Sales of stolen consumer products.** ISIL members also loot the homes and businesses of those who have fled or perished during its reign of terror.[339]
- **Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs).** FTFs contribute to financing ISIL operations, largely by transporting hard currency on their person as they make their way to ISIL-controlled lands. More significantly, foreign supporters of ISIL who may not travel to Iraq or Syria also help fund ISIL. For example, according to the UN Security Council, relatives of an Australian FTF who was fighting in Syria sent him more than $15 million via a money-transfer business that his relatives controlled.[340]

Intensification of Coalition Efforts To Counter ISIL Financing

AIRSTRIKES

Initial coalition efforts centered on destroying oil extraction capabilities.[341] ISIL, however, responded to these airstrikes by rebuilding and creating a work-around to extract the oil.[342] According to the Financial Action Task Force, which tracks terrorist financing, U.S.-led bombing forced locals in ISIL-controlled territories to rely on "primitive refining techniques," likening it to burning crude oil in open pits or roadside furnaces.[343] Thousands of these roadside furnaces are located throughout ISIL-controlled territories and oil smuggling routes.[344] In October 2015, the coalition launched an intensified campaign to disrupt ISIL's oil activities, targeting the oil distribution chain, including tankers and the many primitive roadside furnaces. ISIL responded by revamping the pick-up process for middlemen, who must now register outside the field to receive a queue number. From there, they are told when to return to fill up, thus eliminating the sprawling line of vehicles that makes for a more obvious airstrike target.[345] For more on the military campaign details, see the *Deny ISIL Safe Haven* section in this report.

EFFORTS TO INTERRUPT ISIL'S ILLICIT ANTIQUITIES TRADE

As reported in our last quarterly report, DoS has led international efforts to stop the illegal trade in cultural artifacts. DoS has provided almost $1 million to support the Iraqi Institute for the Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage since 2009.[346] The institute is a state-of-the-art educational facility in Erbil, where international experts are training Iraq's museum and heritage professionals in the preservation of their national treasures.[347] DoS has also participated in the compilation of a list of more than 1,000 cultural-heritage sites in Syria.[348] Despite programs such as DoS's Rewards for Justice,[349] criminals involved in the illicit antiquities trade will remain a challenge so long as ISIL has control of a supply for which there is a demand.

RENEWED UN SECURITY COUNCIL SANCTIONS

Strengthening the enforcement of counterterrorist financing laws by some Middle East countries is among the primary challenges faced by coalition partners and the law enforcement community.[350] To address this and other gaps in the international-community's efforts to counter ISIL's financing, the UNSC Finance Ministers unanimously passed the U.S.-proposed resolution in December 2015 to renew and strengthen the "ISIL (DAESH) and al-Qaeda Sanctions List."[351] UNSCR 2253, updates and reinforces the existing UN sanctions program by expanding the listing criteria, making it easier to designate ISIL supporters, and strengthens the bodies overseeing the resolution. The UN sanctions freeze assets and impose bans on travel and arms transfers for individuals and entities listed as associated with ISIL. The resolution explicitly targets ISIL's use of oil, gas, cultural heritage trafficking, and kidnapping for ransom, and provides for the following:[352]

- clarifies terrorist financing (in the absence of a link to a specific terrorist act) as including financing terrorist organizations or individual terrorists for any purpose, including recruitment, training, or travel
- calls on member countries to develop greater relationships with the private sector, particularly financial institutions

- requests that member countries improve information sharing through multiple authorities and channels, including law enforcement, intelligence, security services, and financial intelligence units
- calls on member countries to provide a report on their implementation of these measures within 120 days of the resolution passing
- requires the United Nations to report quarterly on ISIL's financing

TREASURY INITIATIVES TO COUNTER ISIL'S FINANCING

In coordination with its interagency partners, Treasury plays a leading role in U.S. efforts to cut off ISIL's revenue. This quarter, Treasury reported that, in addition to chairing the UNSC meeting of Finance Ministers, it hosted the third Counter ISIL Finance Group meeting. The group works to ensure that counter-ISIL financing efforts fully integrate into the broader mission. At the meeting, members received the latest information on ISIL's financial networks and practices to establish a uniform baseline of information for the members' coordinated follow-up actions. Members also adopted four sub-groups to serve as platforms for members of the coalition to cooperate on these aspects of counter-ISIL finance:[353]

- cross-border illicit financial flows
- oil smuggling
- financial connections with affiliates
- looting and sale of antiquities

Treasury reported that ISIL funds its transnational affiliates, using different methods depending on depth and breadth of its contacts in a particular region. In Iraq and Syria, ISIL primarily uses exchange houses and money remitters to move funds throughout its territories and to other regions of the world. ISIL also relies on the nonbank financial sector, in particular, because of steps taken by the GOI to sever ISIL's access to the international financial system through bank branches in ISIL-controlled territory. But putting a halt to the movement of money via the nonbank sector continues to be a challenge, and ISIL's use of exchange houses and money remitters remains a particular vulnerability. To address the exchange and transfer of money, the coalition's Cross Border Illicit Financial Flows project group met to develop recommendations for members to address gaps in the coalition's capacity to counter the threat.[354]

ISIL has recognized and supported affiliates across North and West Africa, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Arabian Peninsula. Armed groups from these areas have pledged allegiance to ISIL under the belief that they would receive funding. Information obtained by Treasury indicates that ISIL may have sent funding to some of these groups. In one example, ISIL accepted Boko Haram's pledge of allegiance in March 2015, establishing the group as the official ISIL branch in Nigeria. To help coalition members handle ISIL affiliate funding, the coalition's Foreign Affiliate Financing project group shared information on ISIL's financial ties to its affiliates and developed an engagement strategy to guide the coalition's outreach to countries where ISIL affiliates operate.[355]

Working with DoS and the international coalition, Treasury has provided some of the information necessary to designate for sanctions 30 key ISIL individuals and businesses, as of December 31, 2015. These designations also led the United Nations to designate some individuals, adding them to its al-Qaeda Sanctions List. This quarter, Treasury designated four individuals and six entities who provided support to the Government of Syria and two senior Boko Haram leaders for supporting ISIL.[356]

Over the past several months, Treasury has worked with the Central Bank of Iraq to bolster its anti-money-laundering/counter-terrorist-financing (AML/CTF) regime. In December, the GOI enacted a new law giving it greater authorities to counter terrorist financing and money laundering. Additionally, the bilateral U.S.-Iraq Committee to Counter Terrorist Financing, established in the summer of 2015, continues to serve as a primary forum for the countries to exchange information and coordinate efforts across various ministries and offices within the GOI to counter terrorist financing. [357]

As a member of several other international financial organizations, Treasury contributes to various studies, including Financial Crimes Enforcement Network involvement in the Egmont Group's initial results of the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Typology Study and the Financial Action Task Force's *Emerging Terrorist Financing Risks* report.[358]

OTHER COUNTER-ISIL EFFORTS

This quarter, DoS's Bureau of Energy Resources hosted a meeting of Counter ISIL Finance Group oil and natural resources exploitation group. ENR also enhanced its outreach to regional partners and key private-sector entities, as mandated by UNSCR 2199. The goal of these initiatives is to curtail ISIL's access to oil refining equipment and regional markets. Regular communications with industry representatives has assisted ENR in developing a list of the crucial types of equipment ISIL needs to maintain its lucrative energy business.[359]

In early December 2015, DoS's Bureau of Counterterrorism funded a DoJ-led AML/CTF workshop for Iraqi officials from the Central Bank of Iraq and private bank compliance officers. The workshop outlined internationally accepted AML/CTF principles and best practices, and discussed the enforcement of Iraq's new AML/CTF law.[360]

DISRUPTING THE FLOW OF FOREIGN TERRORIST FIGHTERS

FTFs continue to reach ISIL-controlled territory, although it remains impossible to accurately assess their number, origins, affiliations, or identities. These FTFs continue to travel undetected through the relatively small portion of the Turkey-Syria border still controlled by ISIL (about 98 km). Ongoing diplomatic efforts seek to work with Turkey to increase security of that border, and the U.S.-led coalition is active on a variety of fronts to prevent, detect, and deter such individuals from joining ISIL.

Along with interagency colleagues this quarter, DoS has signed two agreements to share information on known or suspected terrorists. DoS also worked with DHS this quarter to improve visa screening by implementing enhanced questionnaires on persons applying for visa-free travel through the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) program. The additional questions are intended to help U.S. security agencies in screening potential FTFs who may seek to exploit the Visa Waiver Program.[361]

FTF Origins and Force Strength

As reported in Lead IG's September 2015 OIR report, the House Committee on Homeland Security estimated that approximately 25,000 FTFs had traveled to Iraq and Syria to join ISIL, as of last September (about 5,000 of them Tunisian nationals).[362] A somewhat more recent report, published in December by the New York-based consultancy The Soufan Group draws on data compiled by the UN and other sources to place the number of FTFs slightly higher, at between 27,000 and 31,000. [363] The Soufan Group noted that the profile of the approximately 150 U.S. citizens who have successfully traveled to Iraq and Syria is diverse, with no predominant geographical region or ethnicity.[364]

The Soufan Group also concluded the following:[365]

- FTFs from Russia and Central Asia have increased an estimated 300% since June 2014
- Regionally, Saudi Arabia (2,500), Turkey (2,100), and Jordan (2,000) are estimated to have produced the most FTFs.
- Personal-recruitment pitches made by ISIL members or sympathizers are often just as compelling as social-media appeals, especially in extremist hotbeds, such as the Pankisi Gorge in Georgia and Arab-immigrant enclaves in France and Belgium. The French government estimated that, as of October, 1,700 FTFs had traveled from France to fight for ISIL.
- The western Balkans are increasingly serving as a transit hub for FTFs seeking to join ISIL in Iraq and Syria.

In November, the New America Foundation released a report on 474 FTFs from 25 Western countries (defined as select countries in Europe and North America, as well as Australia and New Zealand). Of the 474 FTFs included in the study, 83 were U.S. citizens.[366] For an overview of their status, see Figure 6.

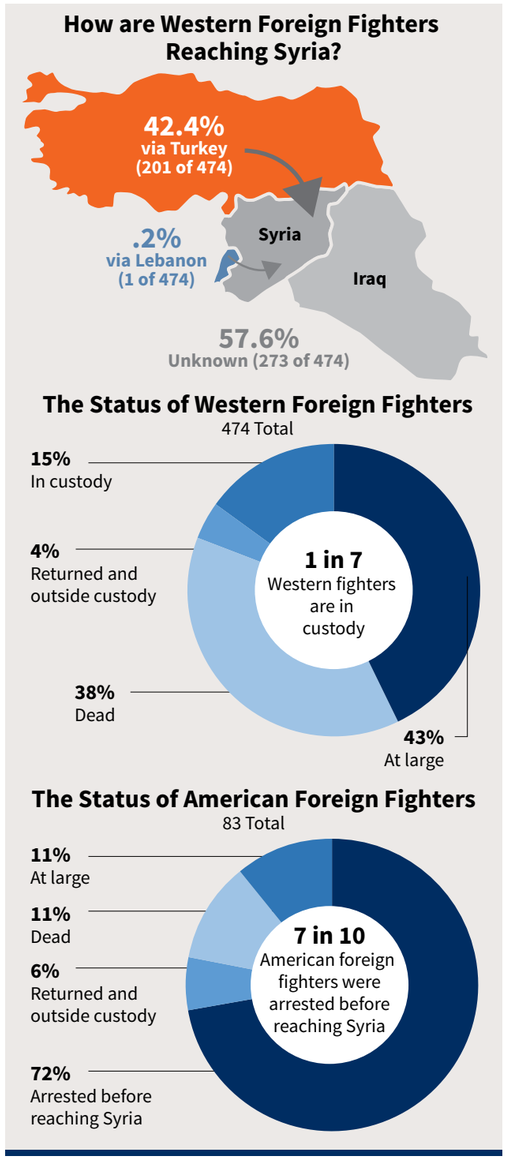
For information on the U.S. law-enforcement community's efforts to stem the tide of FTFs, see the *Protecting the Homeland* section of this report.

Closing the Land Route From Turkey

According to DoS, the Government of Turkey has made noteworthy progress in implementing a "no entry list" and turning back or detaining suspected FTFs. The Turkish government detained 5,900 individuals attempting to cross the Syrian border illegally in the last quarter, and continues to institute its $100 million program to enhance physical security measures along the border. It also plays a key role in U.S. diplomatic efforts by co-chairing the working group to counter the flow of FTFs. DoS continues to work with Turkey as well as other partners in Europe, in the region, and globally, to address foreign fighters through greater information sharing and improved border security.[367]

With respect to closing the roughly 98-kilometer segment of the Turkey-Syria border that remains largely under ISIL control, Special Presidential Envoy McGurk described the continuing diplomatic engagement. He stated that "We have seen the Turks take some significant steps in terms of setting up defensive perimeters, more patrols. Much harder for ISIL to get resources into this very critical area."[368] In early December, President Obama stated that he has had "repeated conversations with [Turkish] President [Tayyip] Erdogan about the need to close the border between Turkey and Syria." President Obama noted that, despite "serious progress on that

Figure 6.



Note: For the sources of information presented in this timeline, see the last endnote in this report

front . . . there are still some gaps." ISIL continues to exploit this 98-kilometer stretch as a transit point for FTFs and for fuel sales.[369]

President Obama also noted the danger posed by FTFs returning from the fight, and stressed, "If you've got foreign fighters coming in that are getting not only ideologically hardened but battle-hardened and then they're returning to their home countries, they are likely candidates for engaging in the kind of terrorist attacks that [took place in Paris]."[370]

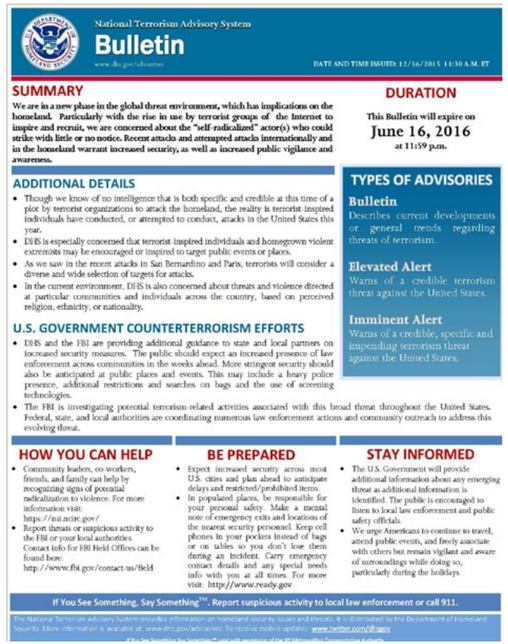
In an October press briefing, CJTF-OIR's spokesman cited several reasons why this gap is difficult to close, including the fortified nature of ISIL's fixed defenses, the rough terrain, and the overall nature of the fight, that he characterized as trench warfare, "reminiscent of . . . early 20th century warfare."[371]

Recent Military Gains in Northern Syria

This quarter, U.S. airstrikes supported several successful ground operations by anti-ISIL Syrian forces in the northern part of the country. The following tactical gains eliminated ISIL's presence from several key towns that were frequented by FTFs as they made their way into ISIL's heartland, including:[372]

- situated just west of the Iraqi border, al-Hawl, constraining ISIL's ability to reinforce its fighters
- in northwest Syria, defensive operations conducted to prevented ISIL from reaching the border town of Bab al-Salam
- Tel Abyad, severing ISIL's sole remaining supply line between Turkey and Raqqah

All of these battles adversely affected potential FTFs' ability to reach core ISIL territories, but it is impossible to quantify these effects or measure their broader strategic impact. The fight appears likely to grow only more complex. With Ankara opposing the movement of Syrian-Kurdish YPG units west of the Euphrates River, Syrian Arab opposition units—and not Kurdish ones—will be necessary to carry the fight south toward Raqqah, the two primary components of the SDF will face major challenges in the months ahead.



National Terrorism Advisory System

Bulletin

DATE AND TIME ISSUED: 12/16/2015 11:30 A.M. ET

SUMMARY

We are in a new phase in the global threat environment, which has implications on the homeland. Particularly with the rise in use by terrorist groups of the Internet to inspire and recruit, we are concerned about the "self-radicalized" actor(s) who could strike with little or no notice. Recent attacks and attempted attacks internationally and in the homeland warrant increased security, as well as increased public vigilance and awareness.

DURATION

This Bulletin will expire on June 16, 2016 at 11:59 p.m.

ADDITIONAL DETAILS

- Though we know of no intelligence that is both specific and credible at this time of a plot by terrorist organizations to attack the homeland, the reality is terrorist-inspired individuals have conducted, or attempted to conduct, attacks in the United States this year.
- DHS is especially concerned that terrorist-inspired individuals and homegrown violent extremists may be encouraged or inspired to target public events or places.
- As we saw in the recent attacks in San Bernardino and Paris, terrorists will consider a diverse and wide selection of targets for attacks.
- In the current environment, DHS is also concerned about threats and violence directed at particular communities and individuals across the country, based on perceived religion, ethnicity, or nationality.

TYPES OF ADVISORIES

Bulletin
Describes current developments or general trends regarding threats of terrorism.

Elevated Alert
Warns of a credible terrorism threat against the United States.

Imminent Alert
Warns of a credible, specific and impending terrorism threat against the United States.

U.S. GOVERNMENT COUNTERTERRORISM EFFORTS

- DHS and the FBI are providing additional guidance to state and local partners on increased security measures. The public should expect an increased presence of law enforcement across communities in the weeks ahead. More stringent security should also be anticipated at public places and events. This may include a heavy police presence, additional restrictions and searches on bags and the use of screening technologies.
- The FBI is investigating potential terrorism-related activities associated with this broad threat throughout the United States. Federal, state, and local authorities are coordinating numerous law enforcement actions and community outreach to address this evolving threat.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Community leaders, co-workers, friends, and family can help by recognizing signs of potential radicalization to violence. For more information visit: https://nsi.ncirc.gov/
- Report threats or suspicious activity to the FBI or your local authorities. Contact info for FBI Field Offices can be found here: http://www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field

BE PREPARED

- Expect increased security across most U.S. cities and plan ahead to anticipate delays and restricted/prohibited items.
- In populated places, be responsible for your personal safety. Make a mental note of emergency exits and locations of the nearest security personnel. Keep cell phones in your pockets instead of bags or on tables so you don't lose them during an incident. Carry emergency contact details and any special needs info with you at all times. For more visit: http://www.ready.gov

STAY INFORMED

- The U.S. Government will provide additional information about any emerging threat as additional information is identified. The public is encouraged to listen to local law enforcement and public safety officials.
- We urge Americans to continue to travel, attend public events, and freely associate with others but remain vigilant and aware of surroundings while doing so, particularly during the holidays.

If You See Something, Say Something™. Report suspicious activity to local law enforcement or call 911.

The National Terrorism Advisory System provides information on homeland security issues and threats. It is distributed by the Department of Homeland Security. More information is available at: www.dhs.gov/advisories. To receive mobile updates: www.twitter.com/dhsgov

Figure 7.

PROTECTING THE HOMELAND

The Department of Homeland Security has several initiatives underway to increase public awareness of domestic-terror threats, including an updated National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS), which replaced the old color-coded alert system in 2011. DHS releases NTAS advisory "bulletins" with details on preparedness and awareness of specific threats as they become known. The NTAS action center provides these bulletins via Facebook, Twitter, and various websites (including www.dhs.gov/alerts), with the goal of providing greater flexibility and timely communications with the public, first responders, law enforcement, transportation centers, and others.[373] Figure 7 shows an alert posted on December 16, 2015, to inform U.S. citizens of concerns over "self-radicalized actors who could strike with little or no notice."

DHS contends that homeland security begins with hometown security under its *If You See Something Say Something*™ campaign to raise public awareness. DHS makes posters, brochures, web graphics, digital signage, and radio and video public service announcements (PSA) available for wide distribution to educate the public on terrorism-related indicators, including the following signature PSAs:[374]

- "Protect Your Every Day" PSA encourages people to recognize and report suspicious activities to help protect their communities.
- "Hospitality" PSA is aired in national hotel chains, emphasizing the importance for travelers stay alert to and report suspicious activity.
- "Officials" PSA works in partnership with Major League Baseball, Major League Soccer, National Basketball Association, National Football League, and the National Hockey League to encourage reporting of suspicious activity at sporting events and venues.
- "The Drop-Off" PSA appeals to patrons of public places, emphasizing awareness and reporting to local law enforcement.

DHS AND NYPD CONDUCT JOINT TRAINING EXERCISE IN THE WAKE OF PARIS ATTACKS

The sheer number of heavily trafficked soft targets scattered throughout the United States will continue to pose a challenge.

On November 22, the New York Police Department (NYPD), collaborating with DHS's Science and Technology Directorate and several other federal agencies, conducted an active-shooter exercise at a closed subway station in New York City.[375] The exercise, which was funded largely by DHS,[376] simulated a complex attack by a suicide bomber and two active shooters,[377] similar to the ones that took place in Paris earlier in November and in Mumbai in 2008. According to DHS, the exercise not only tested the NYPD's training and responsiveness, but also allowed them to incorporate several commercial technologies that could be of use in the event of a terrorist attack.[378]

John Hedderich, director of the U.S. Army Armament Research, Development and Engineering Center speaks to New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio and personnel from the Department of Homeland Security during the shooter exercise Nov. 22 . (DoD photo)

At the NYPD's request, DHS asked the Counter Terrorism Technology Evaluation Center to lead this effort. DHS officials stated that this exercise provided an opportunity to assess and improve indoor shot detection capability, geo-referenced graphing techniques used to enhance situational awareness, and communications capabilities currently used by the U.S. Army.[379]

DHS and its partner agencies normally support at least two of these active-shooter exercises annually, and the November drill in New York was the fifth such exercise held since the inception of this joint initiative.[380] According to NYPD's Commissioner, the lessons learned during this and similar exercises will assist local law-enforcement agencies to accomplish the following:[381]

- improve interoperability among the various federal, state, and local entities responding to an incident
- enhance responders' ability to identify and neutralize threats with alacrity while safeguarding innocent civilians
- integrate the latest surveillance technologies in the overall effort to prevent, detect, and deter terrorist attacks on the homeland

Although the importance of such joint exercises cannot be understated, the sheer number of heavily trafficked soft targets scattered throughout the United States will continue to pose a challenge to law-enforcement and intelligence agencies.

DHS administers three prerequisite bilateral information-sharing agreements with countries for eligibility in the VWP:

- *Homeland Security Presidential Directive-6* requires current information about suspected or known terrorists
- *Preventing and Combating Serious Crime* agreements with VWP countries are completed through DHS in collaboration with DoS and DoJ
- *Lost and Stolen Passports* agreements share information through INTERPOL or other means

GAO Report 2011

Countering Terrorist Travel to the United States

On December 9, 2015, a round table discussion with Senate Subcommittee on National Security and four authorities from DoS and DHS focused on gaps in security screening processes for travel programs, such as visa waivers, as well as gaps in the capability planning and coordination between DHS and DoS. The discussion included concerns about improper screening and illegal entry into the United States for business, tourism, and for refugees.[382] This section provides insights from the roundtable, as well as testimony provided by DHS and other organizations before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform during a hearing on "Terrorism and the Visa Waiver Program," on December 10, 2015, and on terrorist travel on December 17, 2015.[383]

Visa Waiver Program

The Visa Waiver Program (VWP) was established in 1986, with 8 participating countries. The program was designed to allow citizens of partner countries to travel to the United States for business or pleasure for up to 90 days, without obtaining a visa each time. Twenty years later, there are 38 countries in the program. DHS manages the program through its VWP Office and participates in an interagency working group with DoS, DoJ, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).[384]

DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson addressed recent steps to further travel security in a statement on November 30, 2015.[385] Security enhancements began in November 2014, with further advances in August 2015, principally to counter FTF travel.[386] Many of the enhancements are designed to improve on the program. Requirements now include enhanced biometric data fields, and by early 2016, all VWP travelers will be required to use secure, electronic passports with biometric identifiers when traveling to the United States.

DHS is accelerating diplomatic engagements with VWP countries to improve security capabilities and information sharing as well as adherence to information sharing agreements with partner countries. "Preclearance" screening capability was expanded at overseas airports, including deploying U.S. Customs officials to 15 foreign airports to screen inbound passengers with direct flights to the United States. Customs agents collect and analyze travel data, screening the information against such sources as INTERPOL's

Lost and Stolen Passport Database, to identify high-risk travelers before they board inbound planes.[387] The VWP includes four key security components: [388]

- All applicants are vetted individually through the ESTA, which runs traveler biographic data against terrorist, criminal, and immigration watch lists.
- Derogatory information is updated by VWP partner countries through the database.[389]
- Secure travel documents, are required for the VWP. Electronic passports will be required by early 2016. These are more fraud resistant and incorporate biometric identifiers.
- DHS must lead inspections and audits of VWP countries at least every other year. [390]

VWP SECURITY WEAKNESSES

The Visa Waiver Program has significant information gaps. For the first-time regular visa or VWP traveler, biometrics are collected. Biometrics are available for 75% of the VWP traveling population. This data is checked against available databases with DoS, DHS, FBI, and the Intelligence community.[391] Most derogatory information is detected through the biometrics screening part of the application. There is an interview for those eligible. Interviews are one-time conditions and are not repeated once travelers are in the system. Renewals do not require updated biometrics or interviews, although foreign travelers have their fingerprints taken every time they arrive at a U.S. port of entry. Additionally, travel history to places such as Iran, Iraq, and Syria, is not routinely available.[392] ESTA vetting picks up travel history only with a U.S. nexus.[393]

According to DHS officials, VWP creates a strong incentive for countries to share information with the United States. Although not complete, this type of data would otherwise not be available.[394] DHS reported that it reviews the agreement status of 19 VWP-eligible countries annually, each review supplemented by an independent assessment sponsored by the Director of National Intelligence.[395] DHS, in consultation with DoS, provides the results of VWP reviews along with designation determination.[396]

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) conducted a study that addressed potential VWP risks, published in May 2011.[397] The study showed that, in 2010, only about half of the VWP countries participants fully complied with their bilateral information-sharing agreements required to qualify for the program.[398] GAO noted that DHS had not complied with reporting biannually on VWP countries: half were more than 1 year overdue, and some were up to 4 years overdue. Further, GAO found that DHS had not fully analyzed risks from non-compliance. About 2%, or 364,000, of VWP program travelers were not verified as required through ESTA data for approval.[399]

VWP VS. VISITOR VISA APPLICATIONS

The United States hosts approximately 365 million visitors every year, entering through 327 different official ports of entry. The expanse of border protection includes airports, seaports, and land borders, covering 7,000 miles of U.S. land and 95,000 miles of shoreline.[400] Nonimmigrant visitors to the United States generally require a visitor type visa, for business and/or tourism travel.[401] DoS administers routine visa applications, interviews, issuance or denials, whereas CBP similarly administers VWP applications. Travel information, biographic checks and interview requirements are the same for both programs, the distinction being the timing of interviews.[402] For the VWP, full checks are done at the point of entry. Regular visa interviews occur well prior to travel.[403] The VWP is considered by DHS as more stringent than the regular visa program.[404]

DHS reported the following activity in 2015: [405]

- 14 million regular visa applications, with 1.6 million denied
- 13.8 million ESTA applications, with 60,000 denied
- 9,000 Visa Waiver travelers denied entry after arrival in the United States [406]
- 476 Visa Waiver travelers identified as having false documents[407]
- Among 112 million commercial air passengers—U.S. citizens/ permanent residents account for 56 million (50%); visas account for 35.84 million (32%); visa waivers account for 22 million (18%)[408]

Refugees Coming to the United States

In a statement on homeland security following the Paris atacks, Secretary Johnson described the current refugee vetting process as multilayered, taking an average 18–24 months per applicant.[409] According to DHS, resettlement is offered to refugees who are at risk, including survivors of torture; women; children; adolescents at risk; and refugees with medical needs, disabilities, or physical or legal protection needs. DHS vets and screens candidates, and makes a determination of eligibility and admission. Permanent resettlement figures show that refugees come to the United States from approximately 67 different countries:[410]

- FY2015—approximately 70,000 refugees, including 1,700 Syrians
- FY2016 (projections)—approximately 85,000, including at least 10,000 Syrians

Select FBI Measures To Counter Terrorism

The FBI reported that it has implemented a new reporting system, the National Incident-Based Reporting System, to capture incident-based crime data. The FBI considers this type of information essential for law enforcement to develop a more complete picture of crimes and identify patterns and trends, especially for prevention. However, only about 33% of crimes are recorded in the system nationwide. According to FBI Director Comey, as funding becomes available, the system will phase-in over several years, overlapping with a legacy summary reporting system.[411]

The FBI's interagency organization Terrorist Explosives Device Analytical Center coordinates efforts related to evaluating, disarming, or disrupting IEDs, eventually linking them to their makers. Established in 2004, it focused first on devices from Iraq and Afghanistan. Now, it receives and analyzes IEDs from any origin.[412]

Prosecution Activity Reported This Quarter

DoJ works with the FBI, DHS, the intelligence community, and federal and state law enforcement agencies to share information and identify, investigate, and prosecute U.S. citizens and others who support foreign terrorist organizations by providing money or other resources or who travel, intend to travel, or facilitate or recruit others to travel to foreign countries to support terrorist groups. Since 2013, federal prosecutors have charged approximately 80 FTF and homegrown violent extremist [413] related cases, in more than 30 districts often arresting aspiring fighters before they leave the country.[414]

In recent months, ISIL has initiated what FBI Director Comey characterizes as a type of "call to arms" among ISIL followers. For example, ISIL targeted American military personnel and their families, releasing viral messages relaying detailed personal information on the Internet and social media. [415] Several radicalized American citizens were apprehended for conspiracy or attempt to solicit the murder of military members. For a listing of those and other prosecution activities reported by DoJ this quarter, see Table 6.

DHS Oversight

DHS OIG has 7 ongoing and 3 planned projects related to improving security measures in the United States. Several agencies have oversight responsibility, including the U.S. Transportation Security Administration, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Customs and Border Protection, Secret Service, and Coast Guard on a range of subjects, including federal air marshal resource management, monitoring of passengers for illegal cash smuggling, and transportation system security.

Table 6.

ISIL-related Federal Prosecution Activity in the United States, 10/1/2015–12/31/2015

Date	State	Summary
October 13		Bilal Abood pled guilty to one count of making a false statement after admitting to the FBI that he traveled to Syria through Turkey, but denied supporting terrorist groups. He was found to have tweeted "I pledge obedience to the Caliphate Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi."
October 15	VA	Malaysian authorities detained Kosovo citizen Ardit Ferizi in Malaysia on a U.S. provisional arrest warrant alleging that he provided material support to ISIL and committed computer hacking and identity theft violations in conjunction with the theft and release of personally identifiable information (PII) of U.S. servicemembers and federal employees.
October 16	NY	Haroon Aswat, 41, was sentenced to 20 years in prison for terrorism offenses, including providing material support to al-Qaeda, related to a plot to establish a terrorist training camp in the United States.
October 29	IL	Mohammed Hamzah Khan, 20, pled guilty to a federal charge that he attempteding to travel overseas to join ISIL.
October 29	NJ	Alaa Saadeh, 24, admitted to conspiring with his brother and others to travel overseas to join ISIL. Mohamed Saeed Kodaimati pled guilty to one count of knowingly and willfully making materially false statements and representations to federal officials during an international terrorism investigation. He admitted that he lied to federal agents about his recent activities in Syria, including his involvement with the al-Nusrah Front, his use of weapons and fighting in combat, and his knowledge of members of ISIL.
November 5	OH	Four men were charged with providing material support to al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
November 13	PA	Ahmad Feras Diri, 42, of London, was arraigned on charges alleging a conspiracy to illegally export laboratory equipment, including items used to detect chemical warfare agents, from the United States to Syria.
November 24	NY	Al-Qaeda operative Abid Naseer, 29, was sentenced to 40 years in prison for his role in an international terrorism plot that targeted the United States and Europe.
December 1	CA	Nicholas Michael Teausant, 22, pled guilty to attempting to provide material support or resources to ISIL. He was arrested in March 2014 en route to Canada, near the border, with the intent of continuing to travel to Syria to join ISIL.
December 3	VA	Irek Ilgiz Hamidullin, 55, a Russian national and former Russian army tank commander, was sentenced to life plus 30 years in prison for conspiring to shoot down American helicopters and to kill U.S. and Afghan soldiers, conspiring to use a weapon of mass destruction, and several other charges relating to an attack that he led against U.S. and Afghan forces in Afghanistan in November 2009.
December 8	OH	Terrence J. McNeil, 25, was indicted on three counts of solicitation of a crime of violence and three counts of threatening military personnel. He allegedly "solicited the murder of members of our military by disseminating ISIL's violent rhetoric, circulating detailed U.S. military personnel information, and explicitly calling for the killing of American service members in their homes and communities."
December 9	IL	Jonas M. Edmonds, 30, (the cousin of Hasan Edmonds), pled guilty to one count of conspiring to provide material support to ISIL and one count of making a materially false statement to a law enforcement officer regarding an offense involving international terrorism.

Continued on next page

Date	State	Summary
December 10	NJ	Nader Saadeh, 20, pled guilty to conspiring with others, including his brother, to travel to Syria to join ISIL.
December 10	MN	Abdirizak Mohamed Warsame, 20, became the tenth man from Minnesota charged for conspiring with others to travel to Syria to fight with ISIL.
December 11	MD	Mohamed Elshinawy, 30, was arrested on a federal criminal complaint charging him with attempting to provide material support to ISIL. He allegedly received money through Western Union and PayPal on several dates, believing it to be from an "Egyptian ISIL operative."
December 14	IL	Hasan R. Edmonds, 23, a soldier in the U.S. Army National Guard, pled guilty to federal charges that he conspired with his cousin to provide material support to ISIL. He planned to travel to fight for ISIL and to attack the Joliet National Guard base dressed in uniform.
December 17	PA	Jalil Ibn Ameer Aziz, 19, was arrested on charges of conspiring and attempting to provide material support to ISIL. He allegedly used more than 57 different Twitter accounts and posted a hyperlink to a list of 100 military members with information and location advocating violence against them.
December 17	NY	Mufid A. Elfgeeh, 31, pled guilty to attempting to provide material support to ISIL through his various efforts to recruit individuals, raise funds, and coordinate logistics.
December 30	CA	Enrique Marquez Jr., 24, a longtime friend of Sayed Rizwan Farook, the male shooter in the San Bernardino, California, terrorist attack, was named in a federal grand jury indictment charging him charged with conspiring with Farook in 2011 and 2012 to provide material support to terrorists. Other charges include making false statements, straw firearms purchasing, and marriage fraud on immigration paperwork in connection with the San Bernardino attack.
December 31	NY	Emanuel L. Lutchman, 25, was arrested and charged by criminal complaint with attempting to provide material support to ISIL. He was planning to carry out an armed assault on Rochester area Restaurant/bar on New Year's Eve.

Sources: DoJ, response to Lead IG request for information, 1/7/2016, and "Justice News," www.justice.gov/justice-news?keys=ISIL&component= All&topic=All&date[value][month]= &date[value][year]=&items_per_page=25, accessed 1/2/2015.

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HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

OVERVIEW

Efforts to provide humanitarian assistance in Syria and Iraq continued this quarter as conflict in the two countries displaced more people and added to the needs of millions in the region.

In Syria, actions on the part of the Syrian Arab Republic Government and rival factions, including rebel groups and ISIL, as well as an intense air campaign, continued to drive the humanitarian crisis. The Syrian conflict, where the Syrian government, ISIL, and rebel groups all carried out attacks against one another, has left 13.5 million Syrians "in need," displaced nearly 6.5 million within Syria, and prompted more than 4.6 million to seek refuge outside the country.[416]

In Iraq, conflict between ISIL and the GOI, along with allied forces, remained the main driver of the humanitarian situation. However, flooding along with a cholera outbreak in the central and southern provinces exacerbated conditions for those in need in those areas.[417] Overall, the United Nations estimates that there were 10 million Iraqis in need as of December 31, 2015.[418] Although the number of IDPs in Iraq remained unchanged over the reporting period (3.2 million), the number of Iraqi returnees continued to increase. Since January 2014, approximately 470,000 previously displaced Iraqis have returned to their places of origin.[419]

Meanwhile, resource shortfalls reportedly continued to affect humanitarian response efforts in the area.[420] As Table 7 shows, UN appeals for support for IDPs and refugees in the region have received only partial support.[421]

Table 7.

UN Appeals and Funding Received for the Syria and Iraq Crises, as of 12/31/2015

UN Reponse Plan	Requested	Received
2015 Syria Regional Refugee and Resilence Plan	$4.3 billion	$2.7 billion (63% of request)
2015 Syria Humanitarian Response Plan	$2.8 billion	$1.2 billion (43% of request)
2015 Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan	$704 million	$518 million (74% of request)

Source: OCHA, Financial Tracking Services: "Total Funding to the Syrian Crisis," 12/31/2015, fts.unocha.org/pageloader.aspx?page=special-syriancrisis&year=2015, accessed 1/11/2016, and "Iraq: Humanitarian Snapshot (as of 31 December 2015)," 12/31/2015, reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ocha_iraq_humanitarian_snapshot_december_2015.pdf; PRM, Response to DoS OIG request for information, 1/11/2016.

U.S. government financial commitments to the current Syria and Iraq complex crises have totaled approximately $5.13 billion.[422] About 88% of these funds have been focused on responding to the Syria complex crisis, which predates the current humanitarian situation in Iraq by 2 years.[423]

From October 1, 2014, to December 31, 2015, USAID and DoS obligated nearly $1.64 billion in humanitarian assistance in response to the Syria complex crisis. Over that period, USAID and DoS disbursed $1.33 billion to related programs and activities. During the first quarter of FY 2016, OFDA, FFP, and PRM disbursed a total of $194.2 million.[424] For the status of funds, by office, see Table 8.

From October 1, 2014, to December 31, 2015, USAID and DoS obligated nearly $326 million in humanitarian assistance in response to the Iraq complex crisis. As of December 31, 2015, $220 million of that amount had been disbursed for related programs and activities, including $24.2 million disbursed this quarter by OFDA, FFP, and PRM.[425] For a status of funds, by office, see Table 9.

Table 8.

Status of Cumulative FY 2015 and FY 2016 U.S. Government Humanitarian Assistance Funds for the Syria Complex Crisis, as of 12/31/2015

($ Millions)

Office	Obligated	Disbursed
PRM	752.2	586.7
FFP	583.0	721.6
OFDA	304.7	21.7
Total	**1,639.9**	**1,330.0**

Note: Whereas PRM only reported disbursements of funds obligated from FY 2015 forward, USAID reported disbursements of funds obligated at any prior point. As a result, USAID reported disbursements may exceed obligations because disbursements may have been made against obligations from a prior fiscal year. Data on disbursements can provide valuable information about how much money has been spent on activities as well as the amounts of funding that remain available for expenditure. Provided a letter of credit from the U.S. government, however, humanitarian assistance implementing partners may accrue expenses before drawing down on agency funds. For this reason, expenditures on humanitarian assistance activities sometimes exceed disbursements.

Sources: USAID, response to Lead IG request for information, 1/21/2016; DoS, response to Lead IG request for information, 1/11/2016.

Table 9.

Status of Cumulative FY 2015 and FY 2016 U.S. Government Humanitarian Assistance Funds for the Iraq Complex Crisis, as of 12/31/2015

($ Millions)

Office	Obligated	Disbursed
PRM	227.8	187.2
OFDA	70.6	11.6
FFP	27.5	20.9
Total	**325.9**	**219.7**

Note: Whereas PRM only reported disbursements of funds obligated from FY 2015 forward, USAID reported disbursements of funds obligated at any prior point. As a result, USAID reported disbursements may exceed obligations because disbursements may have been made against obligations from a prior fiscal year. Data on disbursements can provide valuable information about how much money has been spent on activities as well as the amounts of funding that remain available for expenditure. Provided a letter of credit from the U.S. government, however, humanitarian assistance implementing partners may accrue expenses before drawing down on agency funds. For this reason, expenditures on humanitarian assistance activities sometimes exceed disbursements.

Sources: USAID, response to Lead IG request for information, 1/21/2016; DoS, response to Lead IG request for information, 1/11/2016.

U.S. GOVERNMENT STRATEGY AND RESPONSE

The U.S. government's humanitarian assistance activities are identified as a line of effort under the Administration's counter-ISIL strategy to highlight the importance of the humanitarian response, but they predate counter-ISIL efforts and have distinct aims. The U.S. government's humanitarian mission in Iraq, Syria, and neighboring countries seeks to provide assistance to displaced, vulnerable, and conflict-affected populations in Iraq and Syria, as well as Syrian refugees in neighboring countries, and to work with host governments to mitigate the effects of the crises.[426] Humanitarian assistance is provided solely on the basis of need and delivered impartially, regardless of political, religious, or ethnic affiliation, and may continue long after the fight against ISIL has ended.[427]

The U.S. government implements humanitarian assistance activities through three operating units: USAID's OFDA and FFP, and DoS's PRM. OFDA works with implementing partners to provide support to IDPs in Syria and Iraq, while PRM works with partners to assist IDPs, refugees and conflict victims associated with the complex crises in these countries. [428] FFP provides food assistance to IDPs, refugees, and others in need who have been affected by these crises.[429]

OFDA and FFP manage, coordinate, and implement humanitarian assistance efforts through field- and headquarters-based units. In the field, USAID Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DARTs) assess conditions on the ground, identify pressing needs, and coordinate the U.S. government response.[430] DARTs are staffed with humanitarian experts and technical advisors and include both OFDA and FFP personnel. A regional DART supports efforts in and around Syria. The DART has two country teams—one based in Jordan and another in Turkey—that are managed by a regional DART team leader. In Iraq, USAID maintains a DART based in Erbil and also maintains a presence in Baghdad.[431] In Washington, D.C., a Middle East Humanitarian Crisis Response Team, staffed primarily by OFDA, but also including FFP staff, supports the DARTs and performs operational and program management, award administration, and interagency coordination functions.[432]

CONGRESSIONAL ATTENTION

The world should not accept the existence of ISIL and like-minded organizations as a "new normal" and must not lose "moral outrage" at the atrocities committed by such groups.

Congress has maintained a high level of engagement on matters relating to Syria and Iraq. On October 28, 2015, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations held a hearing on the U.S. role and objectives in the Middle East. Committee Chairman Corker and Ranking Member Cardin opened the hearing by stressing the importance of clearly defining U.S. interests and goals, and noted the confusion that many Americans have about our strategy in the region.[436]

Testifying before the Committee were Ambassador Anne Patterson, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs at the Department of State, and General (Retired) John R. Allen, the Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL. Ambassador Patterson spoke about the unprecedented rise in violent extremism across the Middle East and North Africa and the humanitarian crises and economic downturns emanating from the various associated conflicts.[437] Ambassador Patterson also commented that many of the countries involved in these crises are depending on the United States for security and economic assistance and that America's role in the region should be centered on providing such assistance.[438] General Allen echoed the Ambassador's concerns about the rise of violent extremism, especially in association with ISIL, and championed the efforts of the coalition to defeat ISIL, noting that the world should not accept the existence of ISIL and like-minded organizations as a "new normal" and must not lose "moral outrage" at the atrocities committed by such groups.[439]

This hearing built on two Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings in prior months. The first of these focused on ways for the U.S. government to take a broader approach in its strategy for the region to help resolve the humanitarian situation and bring an end to the conflict. Representatives of think tanks and the non-governmental organization (NGO) Mercy Corps, which conducts many relief efforts in the region, testified before the Committee.[440] The second hearing focused specifically on the humanitarian crisis, featuring testimony from the President of the U.S. Institute of Peace and two NGO representatives. The witnesses noted that donor contributions had not kept up with growing needs in Iraq and Syria, and they provided suggestions on how to address the acute needs in the region and growing refugee situation.[441]

Table 10.

OFDA, FFP, and PRM Personnel Assigned to Iraq-Syria Complex Crisis Response Efforts, by Location, as of 12/31/2015

Operating Unit	Washington, D.C.	Iraq	Turkey	Jordan	Lebanon	Total
OFDA	25	5	4	4		**38**
FFM	6	—	1	2		**9**
PRM*	12	5	4	5	2	**28**
Total	**43**	**10**	**9**	**11**	**2**	**75**

*Two additional PRM staff based in Jerusalem focus on support for Palestinian refugees in the region, including those in Syria.

Sources: OFDA, response to Lead IG request for information, 1/14/2016; FFP, response to Lead IG request for information, 1/8/2016; PRM, response to Lead IG request for information, 2/2/2016.

PRM also manages humanitarian assistance efforts through field- and headquarters-based staff. In the field, Refugee Coordinators based in Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, and Israel, as well as temporary staff in Lebanon, meet with partners and monitor programs as security allows. PRM field staff also coordinate with DART teams and a third-party monitor in Iraq, under contract to PRM, also monitors PRM-funded programs for IDPs. In Washington, D.C., PRM staff perform operational and program management, award administration, and interagency coordination functions.[433]

USAID and PRM receive appropriations for humanitarian assistance activities that are not designated for use in responding to a particular humanitarian crisis to enable them to exercise flexibility in responding to ongoing and emerging crises. USAID uses International Disaster Assistance and Title II, Food for Peace, funds to support humanitarian assistance activities associated with the Syria-Iraq complex crisis, while PRM applies Migration and Refugee Assistance funds to this purpose.[434]

OFDA, FFP, and PRM rely on several types of personnel to execute their work, including U.S. government direct hires, U.S. personal service contractors (PSCs), and personnel on long-term temporary duty assignments.[435] As of December 31, 2015, OFDA, which relies primarily on U.S. PSCs, had 38 personnel focused on the Iraq-Syria crises, FFP had 9, and PRM 28.For a breakout of the 75 personnel assigned to the Iraq-Syria complex crisis, by operating unit, and location, see Table 10.

OIG INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITIES

USAID OIG has received a total of 72 complaints associated with USAID activities in and around Syria and Iraq and opened 19 corresponding cases since the start of FY 2015.

USAID OIG has received a total of 72 complaints associated with USAID activities in and around Syria and Iraq and opened 19 corresponding cases since the start of FY 2015. As of December 31, 2015, all 19 cases remained open and ongoing. This quarter, USAID OIG received eight new complaints[442] and opened three investigations pertaining to humanitarian operations in the region.

In support of two of these cases, OIG special agents conducted several weeks of investigative field work in Turkey and Jordan this quarter. Both cases involve allegations of procurement fraud,[443] bribery, and product substitution in USAID-funded humanitarian cross-border programs related to procurements of non-food items. One case involves multiple OFDA-funded projects in Turkey, and the other includes an OFDA-funded project in Jordan. As a result of preliminary investigative data OIG shared with USAID in December 2015, USAID suspended certain program activities carried out by the affected implementing partners. USAID OIG also referred 24 entities to USAID's Suspension and Debarment Office for potential administrative action.

During the reporting period, USAID OIG used incoming complaint data and interviews with implementing partners to drive fraud prevention efforts. USAID OIG used this information to identify risk factors and potential best practices for USAID and its implementing partners in responding to the humanitarian situations in Syria and Iraq and captured this information in a Fraud Prevention and Compliance Handbook for USAID and its partners. The handbook identifies programmatic risk factors and best practices for implementers operating in and around Syria and Iraq, and includes a questionnaire to help evaluate implementing partners' internal controls and procedures.

USAID OIG also conducted an analysis of potential programmatic and budgetary overlap between OIR-related USAID- and DoS-funded humanitarian relief projects. This analysis revealed, for example, that 53% of OFDA implementing partners receiving Syria-related funding also received funding from DoS's PRM. To promote investigative information sharing and coordination on related cases, in October 2015, USAID OIG worked with its counterparts to establish a Syria Investigations Working Group comprising representatives of the investigative oversight bodies of USAID OIG, DoS OIG, other bilateral donors, and international organizations working in the region. The group shares investigative leads, coordinates oversight activities, and identifies regional fraud trends. USAID OIG hosted the group's first teleconference in early November and a second teleconference in December. Attendees included representatives of the oversight or investigative elements of USAID OIG, State OIG, and five international organizations and bilateral donors.

USAID Acting Asisstant Administrator Thomas Staal inspecting bread shipments. (USAID photo)

SYRIA COMPLEX CRISIS

In Syria, high levels of violence on the part of multiple parties continued to displace, injure, and kill civilians. Aerial bombardments and incursions by government and allied forces, including Syrian government barrel bombing and shelling by non-state actors in highly concentrated civilian areas, placed particular strain on urban communities.[444] Conflict among non-state actors and airstrikes on the part of outside militaries contributed to the continued death and displacement of civilians and destruction of civilian infrastructure.[445] The United Nations reported that, as of December 31, 2015, there were approximately 13.5 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Syria, representing an increase of more than 1 million people over the previous quarter.[446] Among them were 4.1 million women of reproductive age, an estimated 360,000 of whom were pregnant, and 6 million youth.[447] According to UN agencies, these individuals' most pressing needs remained food assistance, water and sanitation support, protection, shelter, medical attention and supplies, and access to other non-food items.[448]
As of December 2015, more than 8.7 million Syrians were considered food insecure,[449] with female-headed households experiencing the highest rates of severe food insecurity.[450]

Conflict continued to displace significant numbers of people. Aerial bombardments by the Syrian government and rebel shelling, combined with ISIL incursions against a number of parties, drove the displacement of hundreds of thousands throughout the country, particularly in the western half of Syria.[451] By the end of the year, 6.5 million people were reported to have been displaced within Syria, more than a third of whom were displaced in or around the Damascus and Aleppo governorates, where fighting was particularly destructive.[452] In Aleppo, intensified fighting displaced 10,000 people within the governorate, and 30,000 others previously displaced fled to neighboring Idlib governorate.[453] During October 2015 alone, more than 190,000 people were displaced by fighting in several different governorates, including Aleppo, Idlib, Homs, Rif Damascus, Raqqah, and Dar'a.[454] In November 2015, 121,500 people were displaced from across nine governorates.[455]

Airstrikes by the Russian Federation and international coalition partners resulted in the destruction of civilian infrastructure and displacement of communities throughout the country.[456] In October 2015, localized fighting combined with Syrian government and Russian airstrikes led to the displacement of approximately 80,000 people in Hama and Idlib governorates.[457] The nonprofit Physicians for Human Rights reported that it had documented 12 Russian airstrikes that targeted medical facilities in Syria during October and November 2015.[458] In late November 2015, airstrikes hit

a water treatment facility in Aleppo city and two large-scale bakeries in Idlib governorate.[459] The following month, several USAID partners temporarily froze assistance to parts of Idlib governorate after aerial bombardments in the area impacted civilian infrastructure.[460] The United Nations reported that airstrikes by Russia, France, and the U.S. government-led coalition repeatedly targeted critical infrastructure in Raqqah, interrupting water and electrical services in the city and destroying the New Raqqah Bridge and public buildings.[461]

According to USAID, Syria's water and sewage networks have been destroyed or are out of service in an estimated 60% of the country's sub-districts.[462] Many IDPs live in host communities or informal settings, such as warehouses, that, when combined with diminished water and sewage access, expose them to poor sanitary conditions and potential disease.[471] In October 2015, sub-standard health services and poor water and sanitation management contributed to the outbreak of waterborne diseases and other illnesses, such as diarrhea, leishmaniosis, measles, and respiratory infections.[472] In response, the UN reportedly provided nearly a million people with water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) assistance and more than 2.5 million with medical treatment.[473]

USAID reported that access to those in need remained one of the most significant challenges facing humanitarian assistance efforts in Syria.[474] By December 2015, 4.5 million Syrians were living in one of 147 UN-defined hard-to-reach areas[475] in the country.[476] The United Nations reported that aid deliveries during October–November 2015 had not been made at any point to 55 of these areas and had only once reached 60 more. As a result, medical treatment was provided to about 8% of the population in designated hard-to-reach areas, food aid to 5%, and WASH assistance to only 3% per month.[477]

Areas of the country were hard to access or inaccessible to humanitarian actors for several reasons. In some cases, humanitarian responders were denied access by local authorities or were unable to pass through security checkpoints. In other instances, delays stemmed from the untimely approval of entry by local authorities or their determination not to approve entry at all.[478] By the end of November 2015, only 27 of 91 UN requests made to the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to deliver assistance to those in need had been approved. As of December 2015, only 13 of these 27 approved deliveries had been completed due to security conditions, including lack of agreement on the routes for aid convoys as well as lack of approval necessary to guarantee safe transit by opposition groups or the Syrian government.[479]

Although the United Nations reported that the amount of time required to obtain Syrian government approval for relief shipments had dropped, some outstanding deliveries—including those intended to provide health and nutritional supplies for children—had been pending for 3 months.[480] Other groups have also imposed constraints on the delivery of humanitarian assistance. In Raqqah governorate, the UN reports that ISIL severely restricts civilian movement by preventing travel outside the governorate, denying requests to leave, and imposing heavy taxes on travel. This reportedly prevented civilians from accessing assistance or fleeing the city of Raqqah during a period of intense airstrikes during October and November 2015.[481] The United Nations reported that its World Food Programme (WFP) had been largely unable to provide assistance to those in ISIL-controlled areas, leaving approximately 720,000 people without food assistance in Deir ez-Zor and Raqqah governorates and certain parts of Aleppo, Homs, al-Hasakah, and Hama.[482]

SYRIA WINTERIZATION UPDATE

In Syria and the greater region, winter temperatures can drop below freezing, placing IDPs and refugees at risk.

In Syria and the greater region, winter temperatures can drop below freezing, placing IDPs and refugees at risk.[463] The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a PRM implementing partner, has identified 2.6 million Syrian IDPs and refugees in need of winter assistance.[464] To prepare this group for winter conditions, the international community continued efforts to supply vulnerable communities with winter survival assistance.[465] USAID and PRM gave funding to several UN agencies and NGOs to assist vulnerable, conflict-affected communities throughout Syria with the provision of relief items such as thermal blankets, warm clothing (including winter coats, scarves, hats, socks, and boots), and additional plastic sheeting for shelters.[466] During the reporting period, USAID implementing partners reportedly distributed winter supplies to more than 1.2 million individuals in Syria, including approximately 968,000 in northern Syria and 274,000 in southern Syria.[467] As part of this effort, USAID provided funding for the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) to help up to one million internally displaced children in Syria through its winter support package that included cash assistance as well as locally procured clothing kits, blankets, and school heaters.[468] By the end of November 2015, with PRM assistance, UNHCR had reportedly distributed winter core relief items to nearly 346,000 Syrian refugees and more than 240,000 Syrian IDPs. According to PRM, UNHCR cash assistance for winter months reached over 124,000 Syrian IDPs.[469] USAID noted that its partners faced several challenges in attempting to prepare Syrians for winter, including fuel and electrical shortages, severe weather, road closures, procurement delays, and the fluid security situation. Further, constraints on access to ISIL-held areas prevented USAID-funded assistance from reaching residents in Raqqah, southern al-Hasakah, and Deir ez-Zor governorates.[470]

Active conflict also prevented humanitarian assistance from reaching people in need this quarter. In late October and early November 2015, for example, fighting between the Syrian government, ISIL, and Jabhat al-Nusrah prevented the delivery of food aid to approximately 233,000 people in western Aleppo.[483] According to UNHCR, by December 2015, more than 390,000 Syrians were in particularly hard-to-access areas under siege, such as Deir ez-Zor city, areas of Damascus governorate, and parts of Idlib governorate.[484] In the latter case, the UN reported that humanitarian relief groups were only able to reach some of those in areas besieged by armed opposition groups and Jabhat al-Nusrah in Idlib, and had only been able to do so once during the quarter, in mid-October 2015.[485]

USAID's OFDA focuses on providing aid to vulnerable communities in Syria, while FFP provides food assistance to Syrians in need within the country as well as refugees in surrounding areas.

As of December 31, 2015, OFDA reported that it had 40 active awards[486] to 29 different implementing partners operating in support of its response to the Syria complex crisis. According to OFDA, these awards provided the basis for assistance to IDPs and others in need across all of the country's 14 governorates.[487] OFDA programs provided assistance in sectors such as shelter and settlement, WASH, healthcare, emergency relief commodities, and humanitarian coordination and logistics support.[493] Most OFDA-funded programs provided assistance across multiple sectors of activity to address the varied needs of the Syrian people in a given area.[494] OFDA's portfolio of awards shifted during the quarter, with 7 new awards to partners and the conclusion of 12 past awards.[495]

FFP maintained a portfolio of 11 awards to seven implementing partners to support food assistance activities in the region. Nine of FFP's awards sponsored NGO activities that provide targeted food assistance solely within Syria.[496] WFP is the recipient of FFP's two remaining awards, which provide the basis for assistance to IDPs and other conflict-affected people within Syria as well as Syrian refugees in neighboring countries.[497] Within Syria, WFP provides direct food assistance in the form of foodstuffs like beans, oil, and rice, which are transported to beneficiaries by truck.[498] During the reporting period, WFP reportedly reached 4.1 million people inside Syria.[499] WFP reported that more than 3,000 trucks transporting its commodities are on the road each month, and security and access to those in need remain significant challenges.[500] Outside of Syria this quarter, FFP-funded WFP assistance reached Syrian refugees in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, and Egypt. WFP reported that it provided food assistance in October and November 2015 to more than 1.5 million Syrians residing in refugee camps and local communities in these countries.[501]

As of December 31, 2015, PRM was providing humanitarian assistance to Syrian IDPs and refugees and Palestinian refugees from Syria through 47 awards to implementing partners. Seven of these awards concluded at the end of the reporting period. PRM assistance to Syrian refugees in Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, and Lebanon included healthcare, shelter, protection, education, mental health and psychological support, and other basic lifesaving services. PRM humanitarian support to partners helps fund critical services in refugee camps throughout the region and supports host communities where refugees reside.[502]

PRM reported that it has established enhanced monitoring mechanisms for partners operating inside of Syria. These risk-mitigation measures include regular in-person communication between field staff and implementers to discuss monitoring policies and the use of appropriate monitoring tools. As the security situation allows, monitoring of refugee programs in neighboring countries is conducted by refugee coordinators in the region, locally employed staff within each of the U.S. missions, and by PRM's Washington-based staff. PRM has also advised that it complies with the Department's Risk Analysis and Management vetting system for five pilot countries, including Lebanon, to address the risk of aid supporting terrorist organizations.[503]

SYRIAN REFUGEES IN EUROPE

Refugees sought shelter outside the region, primarily in Europe.

As security and safety continued to deteriorate within Syria, and conditions for refugees in the region worsened, many fled to Europe. By the end of 2015, the number of Syrian refugees residing in neighboring countries, such as Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon, had increased by nearly 600,000 since September 2015, bringing the total to more than 4.6 million.[488] According to the UNHCR, the vast majority of Syrian refugees—three-quarters of whom are women and children—are dependent on aid for survival.[489] As host governments and communities in surrounding countries reached the limits of their ability to support refugees, and the United Nations and other humanitarian groups reduced service in the face of funding gaps, refugees sought shelter outside the region, primarily in Europe.[490] As a result, the number of Syrians seeking asylum in Europe continued to grow during the reporting period. The United Nations reported that Syrians filed 268,239 petitions for asylum in Europe in October and November 2015.[491] Syrians seeking asylum in Europe continued to overwhelmingly seek refuge in Serbia and Germany, which had together received 57% of all Syrian asylum applications on the continent.[492]

Program Feature: Food Vouchers

FFP works through implementing partners to provide food assistance in a number of different forms. Within Syria, most of FFP's food assistance has been focused on providing in-kind, regionally procured food aid, including household food parcels and flour to bakeries.[504] Only a small portion of FFP-supported food assistance in Syria has been allocated to supporting food vouchers.[505] However, food vouchers are the core component of FFP's food assistance mix outside of Syria. Approximately 44% of FFP's FY 2015 overall assistance in response to the Syria complex crisis was provided in the form of WFP food vouchers for Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, and Turkey.[506]

When evaluating a food security crisis and the type, frequency, and mode of assistance needed, USAID reported that FFP implementing partners conduct a series of assessments and submit proposals based on their findings. To assess food security conditions in a given area, implementers look at factors such as local market conditions, availability of food, the expected cost of different interventions, and security conditions.[507] Once these assessments are complete, implementers submit proposals to FFP outlining needs and what they believe to be the most appropriate type of intervention. FFP in turn uses this information to make final decisions on funding levels and the nature of assistance to be provided.[508] If food vouchers are determined to be the best mode of assistance, implementers then select vendors from local markets to participate in the program. USAID reported that vendor selection is based on a specific set of criteria that may include the vendor's willingness to participate in the program and adhere to regulations, its capacity to support the program, the diversity of its stock, and its ability to restock when needed.[509] Following vendor selection, implementers distribute vouchers to beneficiaries that can be exchanged for the selected vendors' food.[510] Vendors complete the process by redeeming vouchers for payment with FFP implementing partners.[511]

FFP advises that food vouchers can provide advantages over other means of food assistance in certain situations. By relying on local vendors to provide food to beneficiaries, food voucher programs make use of local supply chains and inject resources into the local economy.[512] By having direct connections to vendors and setting constraints on how food vouchers can be used, such as what goods can be purchased with them, implementers determine the purpose of the aid and how it is used.[513] In addition, FFP implementing partners using vouchers do not have responsibility for moving and storing food or bear related risks or costs.[514] In cases in which market functioning is diminished or security conditions do not permit regular commercial activity, however, food vouchers may not be the preferred mode of assistance.[515]

USAID reported that it sponsors the use of several types of food vouchers to assist Syrians and Syrian refugees, including paper and electronic vouchers (e-vouchers).[516] Although infrastructure in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt is sufficiently robust to support the use of e-vouchers by Syrian refugees, conditions within Syria vary, prompting FFP partners to rely on paper vouchers in certain contexts.[517] Paper vouchers are designed with either a unique booklet or serial number to prevent forgery or duplication.[518] In Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt, where only e-vouchers have been used almost exclusively, implementers disseminate e-vouchers through an electronic card system, similar to bank or debit cards, loading each card with a specific amount of money each month.[519]

In previous months, WFP reported difficulties meeting Syrian refugee food assistance needs with the levels of funding available to it.[520] WFP indicated that, as a result, it cut the value of its food vouchers in half in Jordan and Lebanon and dropped hundreds of thousands of refugees from the voucher program all together.[521] USAID noted that, provided additional donor funding during this reporting period, WFP was able to increase voucher values to approximately 80% of their former value and reinstate most beneficiaries who had been left out due to funding shortfalls in the past. Given uncertainty about future funding prospects, WFP did not, however, return vouchers to previously provided levels in an effort to sustain assistance to those in need over a longer period of time.[522]

WFP provides different levels of food voucher assistance to refugees in different circumstances. Whereas in November 2015, refugees in camp settings in Jordan received food vouchers valued at $28 a month, refugees living in community settings received less. Those in community settings who were regarded as extremely vulnerable received $21 vouchers, while those seen as less vulnerable received vouchers valued at $14.[523] In November 2015, for example, WFP provided vouchers to:[524]

- nearly 190,000 refugees in Turkey
- more than 526,000 refugees in Jordan
- about 650,000 refugees in Lebanon [525]

WFP OIG and the GAO have identified several problems with FFP-funded food voucher programs in the past. In 2014, WFP OIG found that the Syria WFP country office was only able to perform 25% of planned verification activities

inside Syria due to security conditions and that, when verification visits were made, there was no process to track and record related observations.[526] WFP OIG also reported that corruption of the food voucher system through encashment—the practice of exchanging food vouchers for cash—was common in Jordan and Lebanon.[527] Beneficiaries in Jordan and Lebanon were reportedly cashing both paper and electronic vouchers on a regular basis to purchase other goods, such as medicine, or to pay rent.[528] More recently, a July 2015 GAO report noted that FFP only had two officers to regularly oversee its Syria regional program, which extended across five countries and received approximately $450 million in funding from July 2012 to December 2014.[529]

FFP reported that conditions in these areas have changed and that accountability systems are stronger for food voucher systems than in the past.[530] In particular, FFP asserts that WFP's ability to perform planned verification inside Syria has improved significantly and that it has also increased its capacity to deter voucher encashment through stronger accountability systems (due in part to the transition from paper vouchers to e-vouchers).[531] To maintain accountability of regional efforts, FFP reported that its staff members continued to provide consistent monitoring of WFP regional programs by serving on DARTs based in Turkey and Jordan and also by conducting monitoring trips to Lebanon, Iraq, and Egypt.[532] In addition, FFP indicates that WFP has taken steps to implement recommendations from its OIG to increase the integrity and effectiveness of its activities in the region.[533]

IRAQ COMPLEX CRISIS

In Iraq, the conflict between ISIL and the GOI remained the main driver of the humanitarian crisis. However, heavy rains and flooding, an outbreak of cholera, and the oncoming winter season exacerbated conditions for those in need.[534] The United Nations reported that conflict in Iraq has led to the death of at least 18,802 civilians and the wounding of 36,245 more since the start of 2014.[535] This quarter, more than 2,500 people died from the nationwide conflict. Fighting was especially pronounced in Baghdad province, which experienced more than 880 civilian deaths, and Anbar province, where the ISF liberated the city of Ramadi from ISIL after an extended campaign.[536] The impact of combat was also significant in the town of Sinjar, in Ninewa province, as Kurdish forces liberated the city from ISIL in mid-November 2015.[537]

The United Nations reported that, as of December 31, 2015, approximately 10 million people were in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, including approximately 3.2 million IDPs.[538] UNICEF reported that 3.7 million children were in need by the end of December 2015.[539] The needs of this population reportedly ranged from food aid, emergency relief items, WASH, protection, shelter, and healthcare.[540]

In October 2015, heavy rains and resulting flooding in central Iraq, particularly in Baghdad and Anbar provinces, exacerbated conditions for those in need.[541] The flooding caused electrical outages and overwhelmed sewage systems with the result that wastewater to openly mixed with floodwaters. In response to the flooding, Iraq's Prime Minister declared a state of emergency on November 1, 2015.[542] Flooding displaced at least 84,000 people in more than 40 different camps and sites, including areas besieged by conflict.[543]

A cholera outbreak that started in September 2015 spread primarily through central and southern Iraq, further impacting humanitarian conditions.[544] By the end that month, the World Health Organization (WHO) had recorded more than 400 laboratory confirmed cases and more than 1,500 suspected cases across eight provinces.[545] This outbreak expanded in October and November of 2015, with thousands of people across 15 provinces coming down with the disease. By late November 2015, provincial laboratories had confirmed more than 4,800 cases.[546]

An acute waterborne diarrheal disease, **cholera** is commonly contracted as a result of poor sanitation practices. It affects both children and adults, and can be fatal within hours of contraction if treatment is not received.

World Health Organization, 7/1/2015

Risks of waterborne diseases, such as cholera, increased significantly during the reporting period. The United Nations reported that a low water table from years of drought combined with recent flash flooding from heavy rainfall created conditions conducive for the spread of disease.[547] In addition, recent conflict in Iraq has degraded the country's water and sanitation infrastructure, and many Iraqis sought alternative and often unsafe sources of water, such as the Euphrates River, from whence the outbreak appears to have primarily spread.[548] Sanitation in IDP camps has also been an issue. In September 2015, USAID OIG raised concerns about sanitation in a camp in which a USAID implementing partner was operating. Hasty construction of the camp's water and sewage systems resulted in waste overflow within the camp, potentially violating minimum humanitarian response standards and enabling conditions for the spread of disease.[549]

OFDA reported that its 10 health and WASH implementers took steps to redirect their focus in support of cholera response efforts.[550] UNICEF provided bottled water and water deliveries to affected communities, installed community water tanks, and distributed hygiene kits and water treatment tablets. UNICEF also provided mobile latrine and bathing facilities to affected areas, and issued oral rehydration salts to local health authorities treating patients from dehydration.[551] WHO reported that it provided support to local health departments treating IDPs and others affected by the outbreak at cholera clinics, disseminated cholera prevention messages, and helped assemble a cholera task force to strengthen response coordination.[552]

In affected areas, especially in IDP camps, UN organizations such as UNICEF and WHO launched the Oral Cholera Vaccination campaign.[553] The GOI reported that, by mid-November 2015, the first round of the campaign had achieved 93% coverage among targeted populations, including 229,000 IDPs and Syrian refugees in 62 camps and settlements across 13 provinces.[554] In late November 2015, WHO reported that the numbers of new cases were in decline and that there was no evidence that the outbreak was spreading to new communities. By the end of the quarter, only two deaths had been reported due to the cholera outbreak.[555]

The number of IDPs in Iraq declined modestly due to the rising number of returnees seen during the reporting period, according to reporting by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).[556] Of Iraq's nearly 3.2 million IDPs, approximately 77% (2.5 million) originated from Anbar and Ninewa provinces. The largest share of Iraq's IDPs (49% or 1.6 million) were located in the Anbar, Dahuk, and Baghdad provinces as of December 3, 2015.[557] Although the overall number of IDPs dropped nationwide, IOM reported that, during November 5–December 3, 2015, the number of IDPs in Ninewa province rose by 15,000 and in Baghdad by 9,000.[558]

IOM reported that most IDPs (88%) resided in private or other dwellings, while only 10% resided in camps.[559] An estimated 1.5 million IDP children—a vulnerable population that represented approximately 47% of the total number of IDPs—were in need of protection and assistance according to UNICEF.[560] Although approximately 80% of IDP children were residing outside of camps, the United Nations was working to provide children throughout the country with various types of assistance, including healthcare, protection (ensuring their safety), and education.[561] In December 2015, for example, UNICEF vaccinated 1,716 children under the age of 5 against polio and 533 children under the age of 1 against measles.[562]

Conditions continued to improve in certain parts of Iraq during the reporting period. The United Nations noted that, between January 2014 and the end of December 2015, approximately 470,000 IDPs had returned to their places of origin, with Salah Al-Din province seeing the highest number of returnees.[563] This quarter, the trend continued as the number of returnees increased by more than 70,000. Salah Al-Din province again experienced the largest number of returnees—approximately 39,000 this quarter alone.[564] According to UN reports, many returnees found significant damage to their homes and support infrastructure, leaving some homeless, increasing assistance needs, and complicating permanent resettlement efforts.[565]

The end of ISIL control of Sinjar and Ramadi was expected to increase humanitarian organizations' access to previously cutoff populations.[566] In the short term, however, the effort to recapture Sinjar produced some additional displacements. Kurdish forces supported by U.S. airstrikes regained the city of Sinjar in Ninewa province in mid-November 2015.[567] IOM reported that, between November 12 and December 5, 2015, more than 17,000 people were displaced in Ninewa province, mostly in association with the Sinjar offensive.[568] Sinjar was home to much of Iraq's Yazidi minority population, many of whom have been killed or enslaved by ISIL.[569] According to USAID and the United Nations, the city is now largely destroyed and deserted. It lacks electricity, health, and water services and is littered with IEDs.[570]

While USAID and PRM reported that it seems unlikely many will return to Sinjar until services and security have been restored, the United Nations and others began providing assistance to populations nearby, including those close to Mount Sinjar.[571] Shortly after the liberation of Sinjar, the Danish Refugee Council provided assistance to more than 1,000 people outside of Sinjar in the town of Qabusyiyah, where people had been cut off from assistance since ISIL captured the town in August 2014.[572] Meanwhile, USAID partner WFP reported that it provided 17,000 individuals on and around Mount Sinjar with food assistance in December 2015.[573] Other communities in the area remained inaccessible. As of December 31, 2015, approximately 1,800 people east of Mount Sinjar were still stranded in conflict zones with military frontlines preventing them from reaching safer territory.[574]

The loss of Ramadi, the capital of Anbar province, to ISIL in May 2015 precipitated the displacement of more than 250,000 people. According to USAID and PRM, humanitarian actors had limited access to the area in the ensuing months.[575] This changed during the quarter. On December 8, 2015, ISF launched an offensive on the ISIL-controlled city.[576] As fighting intensified, residents of the city were relocated by authorities to the Habbaniyah Tourist City, where humanitarian responders provided assistance to those in need.[577] On December 28, 2015, the ISF succeeded in driving ISIL's main force from the city. However, conflict in the area continued through the end of the quarter, driving needs among some residents, according to the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office.[578] A day after the bulk of ISIL's forces had been expelled from the city, the office reported that clashes continued in certain parts of the city. Reporting at the time suggested that there may have been 2,500 families in Ramadi who lacked access to safety and humanitarian assistance.[579]

IRAQ WINTERIZATION UPDATE

IDPs and others in Iraq need assistance to survive winter conditions, where temperatures frequently fall below freezing.

IDPs and others in Iraq need assistance to survive winter conditions, where temperatures frequently fall below freezing.[580] To prepare the nearly 700,000 Iraqi IDPs and refugees identified by PRM partner UNHCR as being in need of assistance in the area, the U.S. government-supported UN Shelter and Non-Food Item Cluster Group (a coalition of UN agencies and NGOs) continued efforts to provide winter support materials to those in need.[581] USAID also supported UNICEF's "Warm for Winter" campaign, which involved the delivery of winter clothing, shoes, and blankets to IDP children throughout the country.[582]

USAID reported that it provided an additional $70 million in funding for winterization efforts in Iraq at the end of last quarter, but noted difficulties in distributing related assistance.[583] Logistics problems delayed the delivery of goods and materials. Delays at key transit points from border closures, lack of security along travel routes, increased traffic from local events and pilgrimages, and delays at the Port of Kuwait (a hub for goods intended for Iraq) interfered with the delivery of goods to people in need.[584]

At the end of the reporting period, OFDA had 24 active awards through 20 different implementing partners to support humanitarian assistance activities in Iraq. These awards supported an array of activities, including health services, WASH, and social protection activities, as well as information management assistance and humanitarian assistance coordination efforts. OFDA funded efforts in the health sector, including an award for WHO-supported healthcare services at primary and mobile clinics, the rehabilitation of healthcare facilities, and support for polio and measles immunization campaigns throughout the country.[585]

Although a number of OFDA awards supported activities in specific sectors, such as health and social protection, logistical and material support were a focus of many OFDA-supported efforts in Iraq. Eleven of OFDA's awards had a tie to logistics and the provision of relief commodities.[586] This quarter, OFDA awards supporting logistics and relief commodities efforts in Iraq facilitated the delivery of emergency humanitarian assistance to displaced and conflicted affected peoples, the provision of winter assistance, and WASH support. One OFDA-supported program, for example, provided for the delivery of winter clothing for children in addition to covering the transportation costs for personnel associated with a measles vaccination campaign.[587]

USAID representative inspecting kerosene heaters made to help Iraqi families. (USAID photo)

OFDA reported that it initiated a new award this quarter. Starting in December 2015, a program was initiated with OFDA support to assist the GOI in the development of an early-warning system for a potential breach of the Mosul Dam, the largest dam in Iraq.[588] The dam has been at risk for a breach because of its capture by ISIL in 2014 and a lack of maintenance on the dam following its recapture by GOI and allied forces later that year.[589] Such a breach could expose nearly 500,000 people to flooding in an area extending from Mosul to Baghdad.[590] Although efforts are currently underway to rehabilitate the dam, the early warning system is reportedly in place to alert the GOI and the general public should the dam rupture.[591]

IDP settlements and areas under siege in Iraq suffer from food insecurity.[592] This quarter, FFP continued to support WFP operations in Iraq to provide food aid in the form of food vouchers and regionally procured in-kind food aid to IDPs and other people affected by conflict.[593] USAID reported that, in November 2015, WFP reached more than 88,000 new IDPs and recent returnees with immediate response rations (each of which is designed to feed a family of five for 3 days) across Anbar, Baghdad, Diyala, Dahuk, Kirkuk, and Salah Al-Din provinces.[594] In addition, on December 1, 2015, WFP regained access to the cities of Haditha and al-Baghdadi in Anbar province, which had been under siege by ISIL since March 2015.[595] WFP and its partner distributed food assistance to nearly 70,000 people in these two cities. GOI supported this effort by donating foodstuffs, while FFP funded related distribution, logistics, and transportation.[596]

As of December 31, 2015, PRM reported that it was providing humanitarian assistance to Iraqi refugees in the region and Iraqi IDPs through 21 different awards to implementing partners.[597] These awards addressed a variety of needs, such as education, shelter, protection, and mental health care, while combatting gender-based violence and promoting livelihood development.[598] PRM provided funding to international organizations such as the UNHCR, IOM, and UNICEF, among others, to carry out humanitarian activities for vulnerable Iraqis in Iraq and neighboring countries. Three PRM awards concluded at the end of the reporting period, including projects that focused on service delivery in education, shelter, protection, capacity building, livelihoods, WASH, and combatting gender-based violence. All ongoing awards originated in FY 2015, and PRM did not issue any new awards this quarter.[599]

In northern Iraq, PRM programs sought to address education, protection, and other needs of vulnerable Iraqis including those displaced and members of the communities hosting them in both camp and non-camp settings.[600] PRM noted that one program provided more than 1,000 IDPs with access to a community center in the Harshm camp, a safe space where they could come to participate in activities such as sewing, knitting, and hairdressing or barber classes. It is also a space where women and men can learn new skills, such as those related to information technology or a new language. In addition, the center has trained staff to provide one-on-one psychosocial support.[601]

PRM reported that, in central and southern Iraq, its programs primarily supported vulnerable IDPs, host-community members, and other conflict-affected Iraqis. PRM partner UNHCR opened the new Nazrawa Camp in Kirkuk province in late November 2015.[602] According to PRM, the camp will shelter 8,400 IDPs, thereby increasing camp capacity in the province to more than 16,000 people. PRM also supports UNHCR work in non-camp settings to provide shelter and other assistance.[603] UNHCR completed rehabilitation work on 305 unfinished homes in November, providing better shelter for 563 families, and began construction on another 100 houses for more than 220 families in Kirkuk province. UNHCR and partners also rehabilitated 40 unfinished houses benefiting 400 IDP families in the Khanaqin District of Diyala province in November. PRM reported that an additional 40 houses were rehabilitated in Basrah province, and minor shelter rehabilitation started in Qadissiya and Thi-Qar provinces, benefitting 110 families.[604]

This quarter, one PRM program implemented in several provinces was reportedly able to support more than 54 women's centers in providing psychosocial support to women survivors of gender-based violence, including assistance with referrals to other services.[605] According to PRM, these centers have also served as an entry point for outreach and awareness on risk mitigation and provide information to women and girls on available services. During August–October 2015, a total of 11,025 women and girls accessed services provided by the PRM-supported women's center.[606]

PRM reported that its programs also assisted Iraqi refugees in the region this quarter through contributions to UN agencies and NGO programs. In Lebanon, one NGO partner reportedly provided 72 Iraqi refugee children with access to safe spaces and 100 Iraqi refugees with legal assistance.[607] In addition, the U.S. government supported UNHCR in providing a range of services for Iraqi refugees, including registration, basic assistance, and access to healthcare and education.[608] PRM also provided $4 million to NGOs in Jordan to assist the 52,000 Iraqi refugees in that country.[609]

Program Feature: Shelter and Settlement Assistance in Iraq

OFDA leads USAID's shelter and settlement efforts and operates with the goal of quickly providing suitable living space to adequately shelter populations in need while improving the lives of beneficiaries by linking this assistance to longer-term development support.[610]

OFDA's support for shelter efforts in Iraq reportedly accounts for 7% of its total Iraq humanitarian assistance funding, and is designed to assist more than 38,000 IDPs in meeting their shelter needs.[611] OFDA reported that its shelter and settlement efforts in Iraq have been concentrated on subsidizing or augmenting substandard shelters for the most vulnerable IDPs.[612]

In planning related engagement, OFDA reported that it coordinated with the UN and other humanitarian organizations to identify shelter and settlement needs and gaps in Iraq. OFDA decided to target its assistance to non-camp based individuals after it concluded that they were receiving significantly less aid than those residing in formal camps.[613] Most IDPs in Iraq fall into this group. IOM reported that 10% of Iraqi IDPs live in camps, 71% reside in private dwellings, and 17% occupy shelters, such as public or unfinished buildings.[614] NGO reports have noted that IDPs in Iraq have found shelter in unfinished or abandoned private residences, public buildings, and other informal settlements due to the limited number of IDP camps throughout the country. USAID has observed that IDPs frequently find shelter in rented accommodations and with host families.[615]

Non-camp populations that receive OFDA-provided shelter and settlement assistance include both IDPs and host-community residents in need. However, most OFDA-funded shelter programming is reportedly dedicated to assisting the most vulnerable IDPs.[616] In planning its support in these areas, OFDA reported taking steps to ensure that this assistance does not generate divisions between IDPs and the communities hosting them, as these communities also experience economic hardships as a result of conflict. To accomplish this end, OFDA sometimes provides landlords with rental payments and host families with resources to upgrade or make repairs to their properties.[617] According to OFDA, materials provided for upgrades and repairs include items such as plastic sheeting, tools, mattresses, carpets, blankets, heaters, and kerosene. In other cases, bathrooms and latrines are installed or cash transfers and vouchers are used to facilitate the purchase of shelter materials at markets.[618] OFDA reported that, although its partners

adjust shelter assistance to family size and existing shelter conditions, the shelter programs generally spend:[619]

- $900–$1,300 per household on upgrades
- approximately $300–$500 per household for shelter-related non-food item support
- $600 per household for shelter-related subsidies (cash/voucher)

In early 2015, most OFDA-funded initiatives in Iraq, including its shelter programs, were based in the Kurdistan Region. After the fall of Ramadi in May 2015, OFDA expanded its support of shelter efforts across 11 Iraqi provinces.[620]

OFDA and PRM reported that they use information from the United Nations and NGOs on the ground to determine where to target its shelter assistance to meet the needs of the greatest number of IDPs.[621] This quarter, most IDPs were located in Baghdad and Anbar provinces, and to a lesser extent, in northern provinces.[622] According to IOM, 1.39 million, or 43% of all IDPs in Iraq have originated from Anbar province.[623] From Anbar, IDPs have dispersed throughout the country, with approximately 550,000 residing in other parts of Anbar province, more than 405,000 in neighboring Baghdad province, and about 250,000 in the Kurdistan Region.[624]

The U.S. government participates in UN cluster groups to help coordinate shelter and settlement assistance in the context of broader response efforts and to facilitate the provision of other types of assistance in connection with this work.[625]

PRM also provides shelter and settlement support in Iraq, primarily through UNHCR, which is the Shelter and Non-Food Items cluster lead.[626] Additionally, PRM reported that it funded the UN Human Settlements Program to develop long-term shelter solutions for IDPs in Baghdad, Salah ad-Din, Najaf, and Missan provinces. [627]

According to USAID and PRM, several issues complicate U.S. government-supported shelter efforts in Iraq. In particular, USAID noted that IDP mobility, GOI determinations regarding the location of shelters, forced evictions of IDPs by landlords, and the relocation of IDPs due to military operations have all presented difficulties in providing shelter assistance.[628] OFDA and PRM reported that implementers have needed to redirect support to new locations due to frequent IDP relocations.[629] The GOI and the international community, including OFDA and PRM, have also reportedly disagreed over where to build IDP camps. In some cases, the GOI chose camp locations too close to conflict zones, too far from viable water sources, or in settings that were too isolated, all of which may further complicate the provision of assistance.[630]

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APPENDIX A:
U.S. Oversight Projects

Project Title	Project Description
ARMY AUDIT AGENCY	
Accountability and Reporting of Equipment Transferred to Vetted Syrian Opposition Forces	Determine whether CSTC-A and the Afghanistan Ministry of ITo verify that processes and procedures related to the accountability and reporting of equipment transferred to vetted Syrian opposition forces were sufficient to ensure compliance with provisions set forth in Section 1209 of the FY2015 National Defense Authorization Act and applicable regulations.
Funds Supporting Vetted Syrian Opposition Forces	To verify that funds supporting the training and equipping of vetted Syrian opposition forces were properly obligated and executed in accordance with the provisions set forth in Section 1209 of the FY 2015 National Defense Authorization Act and other applicable regulations.
AIR FORCE AUDIT AGENCY	
AFCENT AOR Installation Infrastructure Planning	Determine whether implementation plans for installation development and sustainment adequately address mission requirements. Specifically, determine whether personnel accurately identify and plan civil engineering infrastructure and sustainment support to meet combatant commander's requirements.
AFCENT AOR Integrated Defense	Determine whether Air Force Personnel effectively planned and executed integrated defense (ID) at United States Air Forces Central locations. Specifically, determine if personnel properly identified critical assets, assessed risks, implemented security plans, and tested mitigation strategies.
Consumable Item Demilitarization	Determine whether Air Force personnel properly disposed of consumable parts requiring demilitarization.
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL	
Evaluation of U.S. Intelligence and Information Sharing with Coalition Partners in Support of Operation Inherent Resolve	Evaluate DoD's procedures and guidelines for sharing information, including Intelligence and Surveillance and Reconnaissance, with coalition partners in support of Operation INHERENT RESOLVE.
Assessment of DoD/CENTCOM and Coalition Plans/Efforts to Train, Advise, Assist, and Equip the Tribal Resistance Forces	To determine the extent to which U.S. and Coalition Force efforts to train, advise, assist, and equip Tribal Resistance Forces have enabled their combat effectiveness and successful integration into the Iraqi National Security Forces.
Audit of Facility Maintenance for the King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center	ATo determine whether DoD effectively maintained facilities at the King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center in Jordan.
Inspection of U.S. Occupied Military Facilities at King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center (KASOTC) Jordan	To determine whether U.S. military occupied facilities at KASOTC comply with DoD health and safety policies and standards regarding electrical, and fire protection systems. A radiation survey will also be conducted to determine whether current ambient (background) radiation levels pose unacceptable health risk concerns.
Audit of Acquisition Cross-Service Agreements in Southwest Asia	Determine whether DoD Components are properly using Acquisition Cross-Service Agreement (ACSA) Global Automated Tracking and Reporting System (AGATRS) in support of Operation INHERENT RESOLVE.
Audit of Army Property Accountability in Kuwait	To determine whether the Army had effective controls for maintaining property accountability for equipment in Kuwait. The DoD IG continues its series of audits on property accountability in Kuwait. This current project will determine whether the Army had effective controls for processing equipment in Kuwait.
Audit of Controls Over Shared Costs of Administrative Support Functions in Iraq	Determine whether DoD developed controls to effectively manage the shared cost of administrative support functions in Iraq.
Audit of Reliability of Financial and Operational Data Reported for Operation Inherent Resolve	To determine whether the Air Force has adequate accountability of DoD funds supporting Operation Inherent Resolve by determining the accuracy of obligations and disbursements, as reported in the Cost of War. In addition, to determine the relevance of the Cost of War as it is used to satisfy legal requirements to report financial information for contingency operations.
Assessment of DoD/CENTCOM and Coalition Plans/Efforts to Train, Advise, Assist, and Equip the Kurdish Security Forces	Determine the extent to which U.S. and Coalition Force efforts to train, advise, assist, and equip the Kurdish Security Forces have enabled their combat effectiveness and successful integration into the Iraqi National Security Forces.
Evaluation of ISR Capability Allocation Process for OIR	Evaluate if the intelligence collection aircraft allocation process satisfied the OIR commander's intelligence requirements.
Military Facilities Inspection - Camp Buehring, Kuwait	Determine whether U.S. military occupied facilities at Camp Buehring comply with Department of Defense (DoD) health and safety policies and standards regarding electrical, and fire protection systems.
DEPARTMENT OF STATE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL	
Audit of Department of State Management of the Worldwide Protective Services Task Order No. 3	To determine whether the Department of State is administering WPS Task Order No. 3 in accordance with acquisition regulations and the contractor is complying with contract terms and conditions.

Project Title	Project Description
Audit of Task Orders for Transition Services and Overtime Under the Baghdad Life Support Services (BLiSS) Contract	To determine whether the Department of State is administering the BLiSS contract in accordance with acquisition regulations and the contractor is complying with contract terms and conditions.
Audit of Department of State Management of the Operations and Maintenance (OMSS) Contract for U.S. Mission Iraq	To determine whether the Department of State is administering the contract for operations and maintenance in accordance with acquisition regulations and the contractor is complying with contract terms and conditions
Audit of Department of State Vetting of Syrian Non-Lethal Aid Recipients	To determine whether the Department of State has complied with the process for vetting non-lethal aid recipients in Syria and whether the assistance provided has been used as intended.
Thematic Review of Mission Iraq's Implementation of the Supporting Effective Governance Line of Effort	This thematic review will assess whether Mission Iraq has set clear, outcome-based performance goals for State diplomatic engagement and foreign assistance related to the Supporting Effective Governance in Iraq line of effort
Thematic Review of Mission Iraq's Implementation of the Exposing ISIL's True Nature Line of Effort	This thematic review will assess whether Mission Iraq has set clear, outcome-based performance goals for public diplomacy and counter-ISIL messaging related to the Exposing ISIL's True Nature line of effort.
Inspection of Embassy Cairo and Constituent Post	As part of the inspection of Embassy Cairo, to determine whether the Chief of Mission is effectively coordinating and supporting counter-ISIL programs and operations.
Inspection of Embassy Ankara and Constituent Posts	As part of the inspection of Embassy Ankara, to determine whether the Chief of Mission is effectively coordinating and supporting counter-ISIL programs and operations.
Inspection of Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration	As part of the inspection of the overall programs and operations of the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), to assess the effectiveness of PRM's humanitarian support activities in Iraq, Syria, and neighboring countries.
Inspection of the Middle East Broadcasting Networks, Inc.	As part of the inspection of the Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN), to review obligations, expenditures, and program goals for overseas contingency operations (OCO) funds appropriated to BBG and allotted to MBN.
UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE	
U.S. Efforts to Train and Equip the Vetted Syrian Opposition	Q1. What are the U.S. plans for the Syrian Train and Equip Program? Q2. To what extent have funds allocated to the Syria Train and Equip Program been disbursed? Q3. What progress has been made in training and equipping the vetted Syrian opposition?
DoD's Support for the Syria Train and Equip Program	To evaluate the extent to which DoD 1) Identified roles and missions for the advisor teams, including personnel, equipment, and training requirements; 2) Met these requirements, including any potential impact on the readiness of units providing advisors; 3) Incorporated lessons learned from its prior advisory experience in structure, preparing, and executing this advisor mission; and 4) Provided enablers, such as force protection and base security, to the train and equip mission.
U.S. Efforts to Vet Syrian Opposition	To understand: 1) To what extent has the U.S. government vetted Syrian opposition groups and members who participate in the Syria Train and Equip Program for (a) associations with terrorist groups, Shia militias, and the Government of Iran and (b) a commitment to respect human rights? 2) What roles and responsibilities do U.S. agencies and the international coalition partners have in assisting U.S. efforts to vet the Syrian opposition? and 3) What is the status of U.S. vetting efforts, including the outcome of the vetting?
U.S. Efforts to Train and Equip Iraqi Security Forces	To understand: 1) what are U.S. plans for training and equipping the Iraqi forces? 2) To what extent have U.S. funds been allocated, committed, and disbursed for training and equipping the Iraqi Forces? and 3) What progress has been made in implementing the U.S. plans to train and equip the Iraqi forces?
Vetting Iraqi Security Forces for Human Rights and Terrorism	Assess 1) The processes and procedures in place to ensure that Iraqi Security Forces personnel receiving training and equipment who are required to be vetted are vetted for violations of human rights or for associations with terrorist organizations; 2) The extent to which the U.S. government complied with policies and procedures to vet Iraqi security forces for human rights violations and associations with terrorist organizations; and 3) The extent to which the vetting process resulted in identifying Iraqi Security Forces with evidence of human rights violations or associations with terrorist organizations.
Combating Looting of Antiquities from Iraq and Syria	Key questions: (1) What activities have U.S. agencies taken to combat the destruction and trafficking of Syrian and Iraqi antiquities since 2011, and what resources have been dedicated to those activities? (2) To what extent do U.S. agencies work with art market participants, including auction houses, dealers, and collectors, to prevent the sale and purchase of stolen Syrian and Iraqi antiquities? (3) To what extent do U.S. agencies work with key foreign partner countries and international organizations to combat the destruction and trafficking of Syrian and Iraqi antiquities?

Project Title	Project Description
DoD's Support for the Iraq Train and Equip Program	Determine to what extent DoD 1) Identified roles and missions for the advisor teams, including personnel, equipment, and training requirements? 2) Met these requirements, including any potential impact on the readiness of units providing advisors? 3) Incorporated lessons learned from its prior advisory experience in structuring, preparing, and executing this advisor mission? and 4) Provided adequate enablers, such as force protection and base security, to support its operations in Iraq?
Countering Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant Online Propaganda	Determine: 1) To what extent has the U.S. government developed a plan, with goals and performance metrics, for countering ISIL propaganda online? 2) What activities have U.S. agencies undertaken to counter ISIL propaganda online, and to what extent have these activities been coordinated among federal agencies and entities outside the U.S. government? and 3) To what extent has the U.S. government been effective in countering ISIL propaganda online?
DoD's Use of Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) Funds (Also See OFS 0064)	(1) How has DOD obligated war funds authorized or appropriated with the OCO/Global War on Terror or emergency designation and to what extent has DOD identified and reported these obligations? (2) To what extent has Congress appropriated war funds for non-war purposes? (3) To what extent has DOD applied the Office of Management and Budget or other criteria in identifying costs for inclusion in its war funding requests? (4) To what extent has DOD established and implemented guidance and a plan with milestones for transitioning enduring OCO costs to its base budget.
UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL	
Survey of Selected USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance Activities (OFDA) in Iraq	This survey will determine (1) what USAID/OFDA's activities relate to the humanitarian crisis in Iraq, and (2) what steps have USAID/OFDA and its implementing partners taken to manage and mitigate risks while responding to the humanitarian crisis in Iraq.
USAID/Jordan's Community Engagement Project	This audit will determine whether the project is achieving its goal to strengthen community engagement in the context of regional volatility and transition.

APPENDIX B:
Letters of Reaffirmation

Council of the
INSPECTORS GENERAL
on INTEGRITY and EFFICIENCY

January 11, 2016

Glenn A. Fine
Acting Inspector General
Department of Defense
4800 Mark Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22350-1500

Dear Glenn:

In view of the resignation of Jon T. Rymer as Inspector General (IG), Department of Defense (DoD), effective January 8, 2016, and in recognition of your position as Acting IG, DoD, I am writing in my role as Chair of the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) to reaffirm my designation of the IG, DoD, as Lead Inspector General (LIG) for the overseas contingency operations OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE (OIR) and OPERATION FREEDOM'S SENTINEL (OFS) (see enclosures). It is my understanding and intention that, as Acting IG, DoD, you now hold the LIG responsibilities for OIR and OFS.

As stated in the enclosed letters, on December 17, 2014 and April 1, 2015, former CIGIE Chair Phyllis K. Fong and I acted pursuant to Section 8L(b)(1) of the IG Act of 1978, as amended, 5 U.S.C. App., to designate Hon. Rymer, as Inspector General of the Department of Defense, to the position of LIG for OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE (OIR) and OPERATION FREEDOM'S SENTINEL (OFS), respectively. Upon the advice of Counsel for CIGIE in consultation with your General Counsel, it is my view that, under the applicable authorities, you automatically assumed the responsibilities and functions of the LIG for OIR and OFS when you began serving in an acting capacity, and that you shall continue to serve as the LIG for OIR and OFS until either the sunset provisions of Section 8L(e) of the IG Act become effective or you cease to perform the duties of the IG for the DoD. Given that the overseas contingency operation OPERATION UNITED ASSISTANCE (OUA) terminated on June 30, 2015 and former IG Rymer's responsibilities as LIG for OUA concluded at the end of fiscal year 2015 pursuant to Section 8L(e) of the IG Act, you do not assume any duties under that overseas contingency operation.

I appreciate your willingness to lead these initiatives, in coordination with the Hon. Steve Linick, Inspector General, Department of State and the Hon. Ann Calvaresi Barr, Inspector General, United States Agency for International Development, and, with respect to OFS, in cooperation and coordination with the Hon. John F. Sopko, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR).

If CIGIE can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Michael E. Horowitz
Chair

Enclosures

cc: IG, Department of State
IG, United States Agency for International Development
IG, SIGAR
CIGIE Executive Director
CIGIE Executive Chairpersons

Council of the
INSPECTORS GENERAL
on INTEGRITY and EFFICIENCY

On September 10, 2014, President Barack Obama announced an expanded mission in Iraq to counter the threat of "ISIL," also known as the "Islamic State." On October 17, 2014, the Secretary of Defense designated this as an overseas contingency operation (OCO), as defined in 10 U.S.C. § 101(a)(13), and that the operation will continue until the mission has been accomplished. The operation has lasted more than 60 days. The OCO has been termed Operation INHERENT RESOLVE (OIR).

Section 8L of the Inspector General Act of 1978, 5 U.S.C. app., as amended, (IG Act), assigns the Chair of the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) the following responsibilities:

(1) In consultation with the Inspectors General of the Department of Defense (DoD), the State Department (DOS) and the United States Agency for International Development (US AID), designate a lead Inspector General to discharge the authorities of the lead Inspector General for the OCO concerned.
(2) Resolve conflicts of jurisdiction among the DoD, DOS and US AID Inspectors General on investigations, inspections and audits with respect to such OCO.
(3) Assist the lead Inspector General in identifying other Inspectors General and inspector general office personnel available to assist the lead Inspector General (and the remaining two Inspectors General from the DoD, DOS, or US AID) on matters relating to such OCO.

See U.S.C. app., § 8L(b).

In accordance with the CIGIE Chair's authority under § 8L of the IG Act, and after consulting with the DoD, DOS and US AID Inspectors General, on December 17, 2014, the CIGIE Chair designated Jon T. Rymer, Inspector General, DoD, as the lead Inspector General for the OCO OIR.

Now, in accordance with my authority under § 8L of the IG Act, and in view of the resignation of Mr. Rymer as Inspector General, DoD, effective January 8, 2016, I hereby reaffirm my designation of the Inspector General, DoD, as the lead Inspector General for the OCO OIR, and acknowledge that, if the Inspector General, DoD, dies, resigns, or is otherwise unable to perform the functions and duties of the office, the lead Inspector General responsibilities for the OCO OIR shall be held by the Acting Inspector General, DoD, or by the individual performing the duties of the Inspector General, DoD, if there cannot be an Acting Inspector General, DoD, under the applicable authorities.

Executed this 11th day of January 2016.

Michael E. Horowitz
Chair
Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency

APPENDIX C:
The Lead Inspector General Model

In January 2013, Congress passed the FY 2013 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which amended the Inspector General Act of 1978 to add a new section 8L. It directs responsibilities and authorities to the Chair of the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) and to the Inspectors General (IGs) for the Department of Defense (DoD), Department of State (DOS), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) for the oversight of overseas contingency operations (OCO). Specifically, it details the duties of the designated Lead Inspector General for an OCO and addresses jurisdictional conflicts. [631]

COORDINATION

Section 8L provides a new mandate for the three Lead IG agencies to work together from the outset of an OCO to develop and carry out joint, comprehensive, and strategic oversight. Each IG retains statutory independence, but together, they apply extensive regional experience and in-depth institutional knowledge in a coordinated interagency approach to accomplish oversight responsibilities for the whole-of-government mission. Essentially, when joint oversight projects are to be carried out among them,[632] the Lead Inspector General, in consultation with the other two IG offices, will designate one of the three staffs to lead the project. The standard operating procedures of that IG office will take precedence.[633]

In general, DoD IG, DoS OIG, and USAID OIG conduct oversight projects within the boundaries of their individual office missions. However, OCO programs and operations often involve coordinated work among multiple agencies, including military operations. Pursuant to section 8L, the Lead Inspector General will determine which IG has principal jurisdiction among the Lead IG agencies. When none of the three Lead IGs has jurisdiction, the Lead IG is to coordinate with the appropriate agency to ensure that comprehensive oversight takes place.[634]

STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Lead IG approach leverages dedicated, rotational, and temporary staff from each of the Lead IG agencies to perform various operational activities, including joint strategic oversight planning. The Lead Inspector General must develop, update, and provide to Congress an annual joint strategic plan to guide comprehensive oversight of programs and operations for each

OCO. This effort includes reviewing and analyzing completed independent oversight, internal management, and other relevant reports to identify systemic problems, trends, lessons learned, and best practices to inform future oversight projects.

QUARTERLY REPORTING

As required by section 8L, the Lead Inspector General is responsible for producing quarterly and biannual reports to Congress and making these reports available to the public online. Biannual reports include the status and results of investigations, inspections, and audits; the status of referrals to the Department of Justice; and overall plans for the review of the contingency operation by IGs, including plans for investigations, inspections, and audits. Quarterly reports—published each April, July, October, and January—provide updates on U.S. programs and operations related to the OCO.[635] The Lead Inspector General manages the timely production of congressionally mandated reports in a coordinated effort among the three Lead IG offices and other IG agencies, as appropriate.

THE LEAD INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR OIR

In October 2014, the military mission for Iraq and Syria was named Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR), and on October 17, the Secretary of Defense designated it an OCO.[636] At the onset of the OCO, the Lead IG agencies had already developed a comprehensive framework for their joint oversight strategy. These agencies have always had plenary authority to conduct independent and objective oversight. For more than a decade, while they conducted independent oversight of their agencies in Iraq and Afghanistan, they also worked jointly on several projects requiring cross-agency collaboration. Since 2008, they have met quarterly, along with the Government Accountability Office, the Special Inspectors General for Iraq and Afghanistan Reconstruction, and the Service Auditors General to coordinate their oversight and avoid duplication of effort.

In consultation with the three IGs, CIGIE Chair Phyllis K. Fong designated Jon T. Rymer as Lead Inspector General for OIR on December 17, 2014.[637] On December 18, 2014, Lead Inspector General Rymer appointed DoS Inspector General Steve A. Linick to serve as the Associate Inspector General for OIR, in keeping with the provisions of section 8L of the Inspector General Act, as amended.[638] The Associate Lead Inspector General will draw on his experience as a career federal prosecutor, and as Director of DoJ's National Procurement Fraud Task Force, to develop joint investigative capabilities across the IG community through an interagency working group.

APPENDIX D: Section 8L of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended

§8L. Special Provisions Concerning Overseas Contingency Operations

(a) Additional Responsibilities of Chair of Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency.-Upon the commencement or designation of a military operation as an overseas contingency operation that exceeds 60 days, the Chair of the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) shall, in consultation with the members of the Council, have the additional responsibilities specified in subsection (b) with respect to the Inspectors General specified in subsection (c).

(b) Specific Responsibilities.-The responsibilities specified in this subsection are the following:

(1) In consultation with the Inspectors General specified in subsection (c), to designate a lead Inspector General in accordance with subsection (d) to discharge the authorities of the lead Inspector General for the overseas contingency operation concerned as set forth in subsection (d).

(2) To resolve conflicts of jurisdiction among the Inspectors General specified in subsection (c) on investigations, inspections, and audits with respect to such contingency operation in accordance with subsection (d)(2)(B).

(3) To assist in identifying for the lead inspector general for such contingency operation, Inspectors General and inspector general office personnel available to assist the lead Inspector General and the other Inspectors General specified in subsection (c) on matters relating to such contingency operation.

(c) Inspectors General.-The Inspectors General specified in this subsection are the Inspectors General as follows:

(1) The Inspector General of the Department of Defense.

(2) The Inspector General of the Department of State.

(3) The Inspector General of the United States Agency for International Development.

(d) Lead Inspector General for Overseas Contingency Operation.-(1) A lead Inspector General for an overseas contingency operation shall be designated by the Chair of the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency under subsection (b)(1) not later than 30 days after the commencement or designation of the military operation concerned as an overseas contingency operation that exceeds 60 days. The lead Inspector General for a contingency operation shall be designated from among the Inspectors General specified in subsection (c).

(2) The lead Inspector General for an overseas contingency operation shall have the following responsibilities:

(A) To appoint, from among the offices of the other Inspectors General specified in subsection (c), an Inspector General to act as associate Inspector General for the contingency operation who shall act in a coordinating role to assist the lead Inspector General in the discharge of responsibilities under this subsection.

(B) To develop and carry out, in coordination with the offices of the other Inspectors General specified in subsection (c), a joint strategic plan to conduct comprehensive oversight over all aspects of the contingency operation and to ensure through either joint or individual audits, inspections, and investigations, independent and effective oversight of all programs and operations of the Federal Government in support of the contingency operation.

(C) To review and ascertain the accuracy of information provided by Federal agencies relating to obligations and expenditures, costs of programs and projects, accountability of funds, and the award and execution of major contracts, grants, and agreements in support of the contingency operation.

(D)(i) If none of the Inspectors General specified in subsection (c) has principal jurisdiction over a matter with respect to the contingency operation, to exercise responsibility for discharging oversight responsibilities in accordance with this Act with respect to such matter.

(ii) If more than one of the Inspectors General specified in subsection (c) has jurisdiction over a matter with respect to the contingency operation, to determine principal jurisdiction for discharging oversight responsibilities in accordance with this Act with respect to such matter.

(E) To employ, or authorize the employment by the other Inspectors General specified in subsection (c), on a temporary basis using the authorities in section 3161 of title 5, United States Code, such auditors, investigators, and other personnel as the lead Inspector General considers appropriate to assist the lead Inspector General and such other Inspectors General on matters relating to the contingency operation.

(F) To submit to Congress on a bi-annual basis, and to make available on an Internet website available to the public, a report on the activities of the lead Inspector General and the other Inspectors General specified in subsection (c) with respect to the contingency operation, including-

(i) the status and results of investigations, inspections, and audits and of referrals to the Department of Justice; and

(ii) overall plans for the review of the contingency operation by inspectors general, including plans for investigations, inspections, and audits.

(G) To submit to Congress on a quarterly basis, and to make available on an Internet website available to the public, a report on the contingency operation.

(H) To carry out such other responsibilities relating to the coordination and efficient and effective discharge by the Inspectors General specified in subsection (c) of duties relating to the contingency operation as the lead Inspector General shall specify.

(3)(A) The lead Inspector General for an overseas contingency operation may employ, or authorize the employment by the other Inspectors General specified in subsection (c) of, annuitants covered by section 9902(g) of title 5, United States Code, for purposes of assisting the lead Inspector General in discharging responsibilities under this subsection with respect to the contingency operation.

(B) The employment of annuitants under this paragraph shall be subject to the provisions of section 9902(g) of title 5, United States Code, as if the lead Inspector General concerned was the Department of Defense.

(C) The period of employment of an annuitant under this paragraph may not exceed three years, except that the period may be extended for up to an additional two years in accordance with the regulations prescribed pursuant to section 3161(b)(2) of title 5, United States Code.

(4) The lead Inspector General for an overseas contingency operation shall discharge the responsibilities for the contingency operation under this subsection in a manner consistent with the authorities and requirements of this Act generally and the authorities and requirements applicable to the Inspectors General specified in subsection (c) under this Act.

(e) Sunset for Particular Contingency Operations.-The requirements and authorities of this section with respect to an overseas contingency operation shall cease at the end of the first fiscal year after the commencement or designation of the contingency operation in which the total amount appropriated for the contingency operation is less than $100,000,000.

(f) Construction of Authority.-Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the ability of the Inspectors General specified in subsection (c) to enter into agreements to conduct joint audits, inspections, or investigations in the exercise of their oversight responsibilities in accordance with this Act with respect to overseas contingency operations.

(Pub. L. 95–452, §8L, as added Pub. L. 112–239, div. A, title VIII, §848(2), Jan. 2, 2013, 126 Stat. 1851.)

Prior Provisions

A prior section 8L of the Inspector General Act of 1978 was renumbered section 8M by Pub. L. 112–239.

Acronyms and Definitions

Acronym	Definition
AML/CTF	anti-money-laundering/counter-terrorist-financing
BBG	Broadcasting Board of Governors
BPC	Build Partner Capacity (training sites)
CENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
CJTF-OIR	Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve
CSCC	Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (DoS)
CTS	Counter Terrorism Service (Iraqi)
DART	Disaster Assistance Response Team
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
DoD IG	Department of Defense Inspector General
DoJ	U.S. Department of Justice
DoS OIG	Department of State Office of Inspector General
DRL	DoS Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor
DSCA	Defense Security Cooperation Agency
ESF	Economic Support Fund
ESTA	Electronic System for Travel Authorization
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FFIS	Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization
FFP	Office of Food for Peace (USAID)
FMF	Foreign Military Financing
FMS	Foreign Military Sales
FTF	foreign terrorist fighter
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GOI	Government of Iraq
IED	improvised explosive device

Acronym	Definition
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
ISR	intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
ITEF	Iraq Train and Equip Fund
JCC	Joint Crisis Coordination Center
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
Lead IG	Lead Inspector General
Lead IG agencies	refers to DoD IG, DoS OIG, and USAID OIG
LOE	line of effort
MBN	The Middle East Broadcasting Networks
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCTC	National Counterterrorism Center (DNI)
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
NGO	non-governmental organization
NSF	New Syrian Forces
NTAS	National Terrorism Advisory System
NYPD	New York Police Department
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
OCO	overseas contingency operation
OFDA	Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID)
OIR	Operation Inherent Resolve
PMF	popular mobilization force
PRM	DoS Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration

Acronyms and Definitions

Acronym	Definition
TAA	train, advise, and assist
Treasury	U.S. Department of the Treasury
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
USAID OIG	U.S. Agency for International Development Office of Inspector General
VOA	Voice of America
WASH	water, sanitation, and hygiene
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization
YPG	People's Protection Unit

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