

New ISW/CTP Series

U.S. Grand Strategy: Destroying ISIS and Al Qaeda

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and AEI's Critical Threats Project conducted a multi-week planning exercise to develop potential courses of action that the United States could pursue to destroy ISIS and al Qaeda in Iraq and Syria. The first report described America's grand strategic objectives as they relate to the threat from ISIS and al Qaeda. The second report defined American strategic objectives in Iraq and Syria, identified the necessary conditions for ending the conflicts there, and compared U.S. objectives with those of other actors in order to understand convergences and divergences. The third report assesses the strengths and vulnerabilities of ISIS and al Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al Nusra to serve as the basis for developing a strategy to destroy them.*



"Among the failings of the current strategy, the authors found: too much focus on the threat from the Islamic State and not enough on the role of Al Qaeda — particularly Jabhat al-Nusra, an offshoot they conclude is building a much more sustainable presence in Syria, is embedded among the more moderate opposition groups fighting the regime of Syrian President Bashar Assad and would be strengthened in the event the Islamic State is dislodged from its safe havens."

01/27/2016

POLITICO



* Please note that articles and authors all have hyperlinks.

Media coverage of the new ISW-CTP series

"ISW and AEI predicted that Jabhat al-Nusra could then become a key affiliate for the global Al Qaeda terrorist network that focuses on attacking the West."

01/27/2016




Report One

"How can the U.S. make the best use of its brains and brawn against both IS and AQ in Iraq and Syria? The folks at the Institute for the Study of War have an idea or two, and they rolled them up in a new report."

01/27/2016



"The report goes on to warn that unless the U.S. finds a way to change course, the result could be exchanging one terrorist-led proto-state for another."

01/27/2016



"The U.S. strategy against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is completely overlooking al Qaeda's affiliate in Syria, the Nusra Front, and may be strengthening the affiliate, according to a new report."

01/27/2016




Report Two

"Al-Nusra is 'much more dangerous to the U.S. than the ISIS model in the long run,' according to the authors of a report labeling both groups 'existential' threats. The report was released last week by the Institute for the Study of War and American Enterprise Institute."

01/27/2016





Harleen Gambhir
Counter-terrorism Analyst

"ISIS has been explicitly explaining its strategy to attack Europe to polarize and destabilize and has a large network of foreign fighters who are working with their contacts on the ground to launch new attacks."

WSJLive with Mary Kissel

1/15/2016



"Turkey has such a robust [ISIS] recruitment infrastructure. You have people who are living in Turkey, who want to continue living in Turkey but are very much networked with ISIS."



International Business Times

01/13/2016



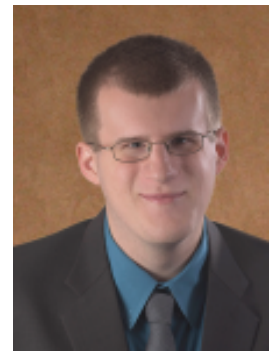
Patrick Martin
Iraq Analyst

"Part of the overall strategy of the Syrian regime has always been to depopulate rebel-held areas to deny them political legitimacy."



Fox News

01/12/2016



Christopher Kozak
Syria Analyst

"All these attacks [Muqdadiah bombings] are part of the same campaign by ISIS to essentially force Iraqi security forces to respond and prevent them from conducting forward operations. It's aimed at undermining their strength."

Associated Press

01/12/2016



"It helps to hammer home the point that the ISF can retake territory [Ramadi] without Iranian proxy militias."

Christian Science Monitor

01/06/2016



Christopher Harmer

Non-Resident

Senior Naval Analyst

"The U.S., like France, has clearly not prioritized the air war against the Islamic State group as much as it's prioritized its rhetoric "



US News and World Report

01/07/2016

"Either the naval leadership put these sailors in an impossible situation or the sailors are professionally incompetent."



CNN

01/14/2016



"There's zero upside to telling ISIS what we're doing, none at all."

The Guardian

01/14/2016

"Having been in a state of almost complete collapse, the Iraqi military is now capable of modest military operations as long as the US is holding its hand."

Financial Times

01/01/2016



"We thought we could love them [Russia] into the NATO alliance, and hug them into being responsible state actors."



Christian Science Monitor

01/08/2016

"We've accommodated Iran for so long, we've accommodated their aggressive behavior, we've accommodated their state sponsorship of terror that we are now in a position where we just don't have as much credibility."

Interview with Bill O'Reilly

1/15/2016





"Coordination with the Kurds would allow for Russia to continue to present itself as a worthwhile anti-ISIS actor in Syria, while angering Turkey and disrupting U.S. operations."



Genevieve Casagrande
*Syria Analyst**

The Daily Beast

01/12/2016

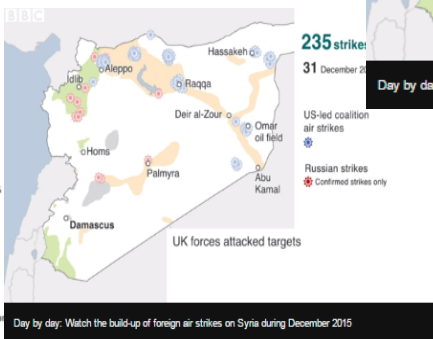
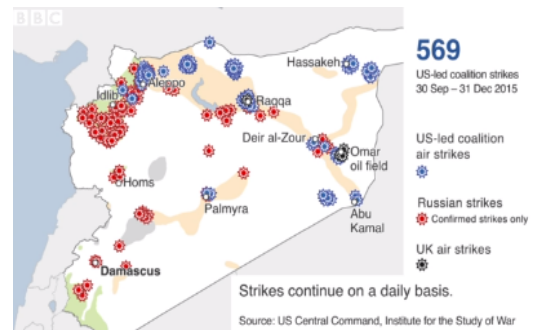
*And primary airstrikes map creator

"The Russian air campaign enabled additional battlefield gains by the Syrian regime from January 8 to January 14. "

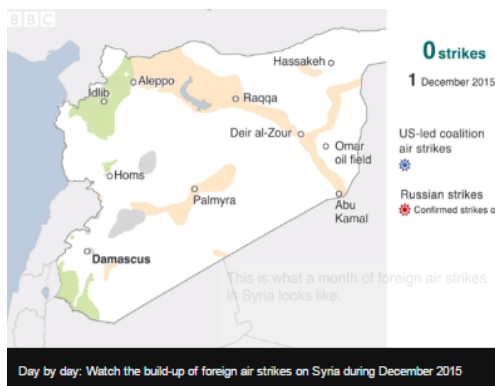


Voice of America

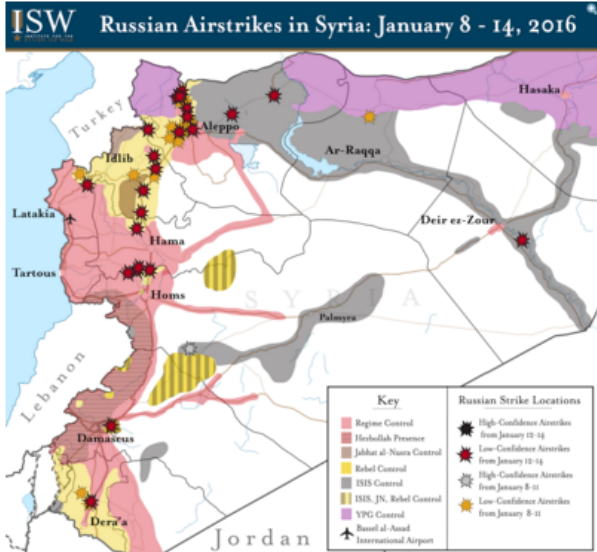
01/18/2016



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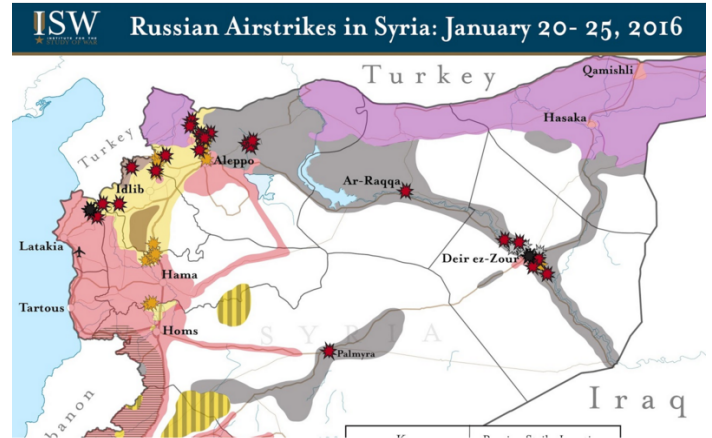


More ISW Airstrikes Maps in the News



01/27/2016

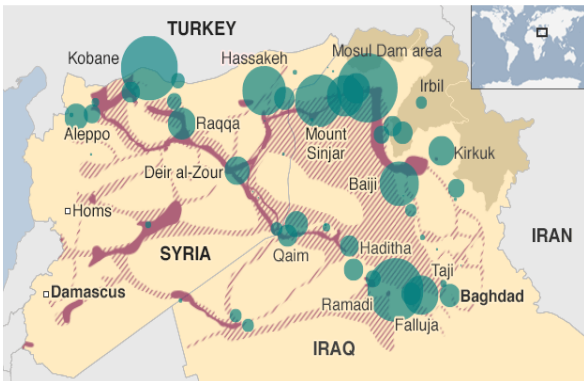
**BUSINESS
INSIDER**



01/27/2016

THE INTERPRETER

US-led coalition strikes in Iraq and Syria



IRAQ 6,899 SYRIA 3,375

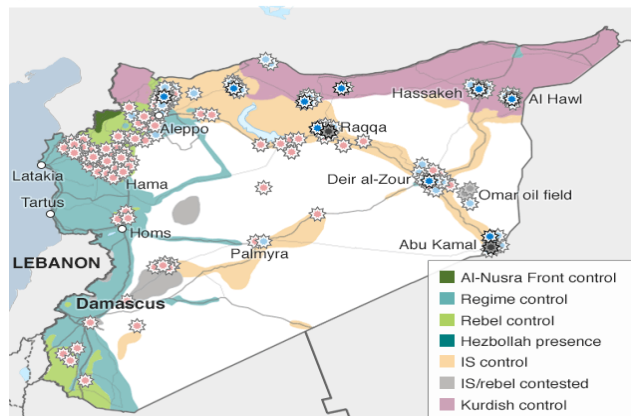
1,500 500 250 50 25
Note: Strikes have not been mapped when the precise location was not given or was unclear.

Confirmed coalition air strikes up to 29 Feb 2016
Source: Institute for the Study of War, US Central Command

01/13/2016
BBC

UK, Russian and US-led strikes in Syria

US-led coalition air strikes
UK: 3 Feb-23 Feb 2016, 3 Dec 2015-2 Feb 2016
Other coalition forces: 24-29 Feb 2016, 30 Sep 2015-23 Feb 2016
Russian air & cruise missile strikes
17-28 Feb 2016, 30 Sep 2015-16 Feb 2016

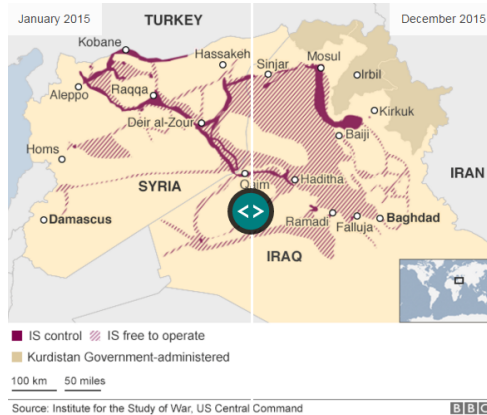


Source: Institute for the Study of War, US military, UK MoD, French Defence Ministry. Locations may have multiple strikes

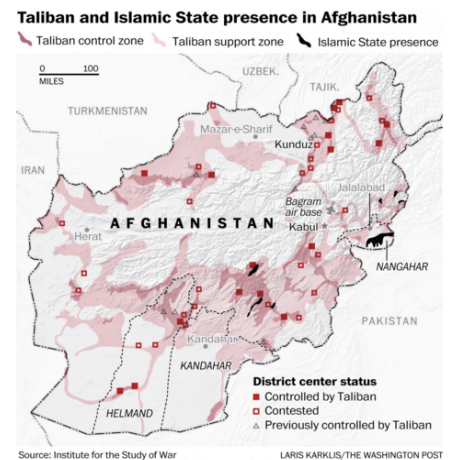
ISW Maps in the News

In addition to our analysts' expertise, ISW's maps continue to be utilized by major news sources as a crucial visual complement to breaking news stories and cutting edge analysis.

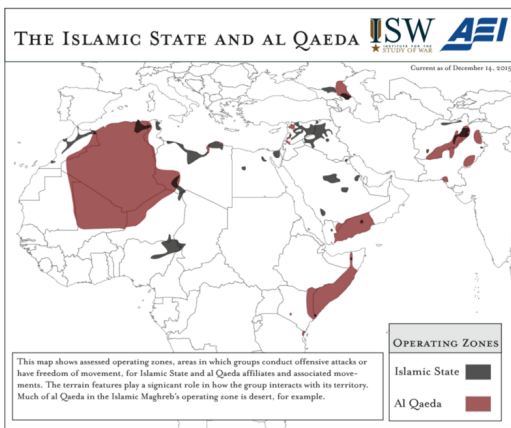
01/14/2016



01/28/2016



01/13/2016



More of ISW in the News

US News and World Report

01/04/2016

International Business Times

01/07/2016

Middle East Monitor

01/20/2016

CNN

01/23/2016

Financial Director

01/25/2016

Daily Caller

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Compiled by Saagar Enjeti