



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on October 28, 2015

Defense Secretary: U.S. Will Begin “Direct Action on the Ground” in Iraq, Syria

In testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee on October 27, Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter (shown) said that the United States will begin “direct action on the ground” against ISIS forces in Iraq and Syria. “We won’t hold back from supporting capable partners in opportunistic attacks against ISIL, or conducting such missions directly whether by strikes from the air or direct action on the ground,” Carter said in testimony before the committee. (The Obama administration prefers the acronym ISIL.)



NBC News reported that during the testimony, Carter referred to last week’s joint U.S.-Kurdish operation in northern Iraq to free hostages held by ISIS — a mission that Carter and Pentagon officials initially refused to characterize as U.S. “boots on the ground.” However, noted NBC, Carter said last week that the U.S. military expects “more raids of this kind” and that the rescue operation “represents a continuation of our advise and assist mission.”

During last week’s statements, Carter admitted that this may mean some American soldiers “will be in harm’s way, no question about it.”

Demonstrating typical neoconservative, pro-interventionist sentiment, Senator Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) said during the Senate committee hearing that the U.S. effort in Syria is a “half-assed strategy at best,” and charged that the United States is not doing a “damn thing” to bring down Syrian President Bashar Assad’s regime.

Graham’s statement ignored the fact that it was U.S. aid to the rebels fighting Assad, some of whom were allied with ISIS, that enabled the terrorist group to grow strong enough to overrun a sizable portion of Iraq. As Alex Newman noted in his [article for *The New American*](#) posted on August 14, 2014:

Indeed, as *The New American* [reported](#) in June [2014], U.S. officials admit that many of the weapons being used by the Islamic State terrorists to butcher Christians, Shias, and other Iraqis were actually paid for by U.S. taxpayers before being seized by the rampaging barbarians. Before that, [other American weapons now in the hands of those terrorists were acquired in Syria, where the Obama administration and its allies were fomenting and supporting “jihad”](#) in a half-baked plan to overthrow the anti-ISIS Assad dictatorship. Some analysts even said Obama has “switched sides” in the terror war.

A report in *The Hill* stated that during his testimony before the committee, Carter described new ways the U.S. military plans to increase pressure on ISIS: “The changes we’re pursuing can be described by what I call the ‘three R’s’ — Raqqa, Ramadi, and Raids.”

Carter said “Raqqa” represents the plans of U.S.-led coalition against ISIS to support moderate Syrian



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forces to go after Raqqa — the terrorist group’s stronghold and administrative capital in Syria.

Second, noted *The Hill*, Carter said “Ramadi” (the provincial capital of western Anbar province, Iraq) represents an example of cooperation with Iraqi forces and Sunni tribes to retake and hold ground from ISIS. Coalition and Iraqi forces have been working to retake the provincial capital back from ISIS and eventually go northward to Mosul.

The third “R” — raids — represents a new willingness by the United States to conduct more raids unilaterally or to support partners. Last week, U.S. special operations forces supported Kurdish Peshmerga fighters on a raid to rescue Iraqi hostages during which a U.S. soldier was killed.

The New American has long spoken out against the folly of U.S. intervention in Iraq and neighboring countries. After President George W. Bush stood in front of a large “Mission Accomplished” banner on board the USS *Lincoln* on May 1, 2003 and announced that “major combat operations in Iraq have ended” and that “Iraq is free,” TNA responded with our “What Did We Win?” cover story in our May 19, 2003 issue.

In that issues, we observed: “Removing Saddam did nothing to avenge our innocent dead [Saddam did not attack us on 9/11] or make our nation more secure. It did little to free the long-suffering Iraqi people, and may actually result in the emergence of an even nastier and more militant regime in Baghdad. Our military victory has left our nation saddled with the prospect of a long, bloody, expensive occupation, and an escalating terrorist threat.”

Two months later, in our July 14, 2003 article “The Four A.M. Knock,” we warned: “Under U.S. occupation, with American troops being used to carry out a mission that will create anti-American hatred, Iraq is becoming an even more dangerous incubator of terror.”

As our magazine’s editor, Gary Benoit, noted in his September 1 article, [“Thirty Years of Projecting the Lines”](#):

More than a decade later, ISIS is taking full advantage of that incubator to build its murderous Islamic State. But ISIS itself may not have become a threat if the U.S. government did not back supposed “moderate” jihadists in Syria who formed ISIS. The folly of supporting “moderates” to topple Assad was also predictable. As we warned in our September 11, 2012 online article “U.S.-funded Jihadist ‘Holy War’ in Syria Seeks Sharia Dictatorship”: “Contrary to claims by Western governments and Islamist tyrants financing the ‘revolution’ in Syria, foreign jihadist forces and al-Qaeda terrorists battling the secular Bashar al-Assad regime are not trying to create a ‘democracy’ with ‘human rights’ for all. Instead, they are waging so-called jihad, or ‘holy war,’ to build an Islamic dictatorship under Sharia law as part of an emerging international Muslim system.”

As has happened time and time again, U.S. interventionism overseas has only exacerbated the crisis it allegedly was designed to solve.

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