



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on October 29, 2015

## Journalists Say U.S. Boots on Ground in Iraq Is Not New Action

In our October 28 report, we quoted testimony from Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter before the Senate Armed Services Committee on October 27, that the United States will begin “direct action on the ground” against ISIS forces in Iraq and Syria. Carter’s use of the future tense during his testimony suggested that the direct action was a new turn of events.

However, in an opinion piece that same day, a pair of Bloomberg View columnists, Eli Lake and Josh Rogin, noted that while Carter made the “direct action” sound like a new mission, “America’s special operations forces have been engaging in these kinds of missions for several months, particularly in the Kurdish-controlled provinces in northern Iraq.”



Lake and Rogin opined that the longstanding nature of U.S. involvement in Iraq “casts doubt on the official Pentagon statements that last week’s raid was ‘a unique circumstance’ ” — and they linked to a Reuters report run in the *New York Times* on October 22 about the death of the first American soldier killed in action in Iraq since U.S. forces returned there in mid-2014 to train, advise, and assist the Iraqi military in its war against ISIS. The soldier was later identified as Master Sergeant Joshua L. Wheeler, a team leader for the elite Army special operations unit known as “Delta Force,” based at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

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At a briefing after Wheeler’s death, Carter said: “The plan was not for the U.S. advise-and-assist and accompanying forces to enter the compound or be involved in the firefight,” but when a firefight ensued, Wheeler “ran to the sound of the guns, and he stood up, and all the indications are it was his actions and that of one of his teammates that protected those who were involved in breaching the compound and made the mission successful.”

“It wasn’t part of the plan, but it was something that he did. And I’m immensely proud that he did that.”

While all Americans should be proud of Wheeler’s self-sacrificing bravery, his death — whether part of a plan or not — is still the inevitable result of U.S. interventionism.

The Bloomberg article notes that while the Pentagon refers to the mission for the 3,500 U.S. service members in Iraq as primarily “advise and assist,” with an emphasis on training local Iraqi forces, “the small and highly classified military footprint in northern Iraq shows the U.S. is more involved in the fight against the Islamic State.”



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Lake and Rogin quoted a statement made to them by Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman, the U.S. representative of the Kurdistan Regional Government, revealing the strong U.S. involvement in the ongoing operations:

We have very good and close cooperation with the United States on military operations, whether that is coordinating airstrikes or the professional forces operation like the one we had last week in Hawija.

Hawija was where the firefight in which Master Sergeant Wheeler was killed took place.

Lake and Rogin concluded their article:

None of this is comparable to President George W. Bush's decision to send whole divisions to fight in Iraq. Obama is not returning to a previous phase of the Iraq war. But with secret missions, the president is nonetheless sending U.S. forces back to fight a war he promised to end. After Thursday's raid in Hawija, his administration is now acknowledging that.

While some may say that the United States has a moral obligation to assist the victims of ISIS terrorism, a complete assessment of the situation in Iraq and Syria demands that we look at how ISIS became such a threat in the first place.

Former Texas representative and presidential candidate Ron Paul delved into the causes of the conflict in the Middle East in an article originally appearing at the [Ron Paul Institute for Peace and Prosperity](#) and was [reposted by The New American](#) on September 6. Explaining why so many refugees have been fleeing places like Syria, Libya, Afghanistan, and Iraq, Paul noted: "US and European interventionist foreign policy has left these countries destabilized with no hopes of economic recovery. This mass migration from the Middle East and beyond is a direct result of the neocon foreign policy of regime change, invasion, and pushing 'democracy' at the barrel of a gun."

To understand how U.S. interventionism contributed to the rise of ISIS, it is necessary to look back at the early stages of the civil war in Syria, when a coalition of rebel groups began fighting against the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. In an appearance before a reconfirmation hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee on July 18, 2013, General Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said he favored a U.S. role in "building a moderate opposition" against al-Assad.

Just one day before that hearing, Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) contributed an op-ed [article to Politico.com](#) headlined "Aid to unknown rebels in Syria carries U.S. threat."

In his article, Paul pointed out that there currently were at least 17 armed jihadist groups engaged in the rebellion against the Syrian regime, one of them being Jabhat al Nusra, an al-Qaeda affiliate "that had emerged as one of the most effective rebel factions in Syria," according to the Associated Press.

Therefore, noted Paul, the Obama government was about to arm an affiliate of al-Qaeda.

Senator Paul also brought up a point generally ignored among Western commentators, that the small but significant Christian population in Middle Eastern countries often suffers when rebellion against secular Muslim regimes is encouraged. He wrote:

There is also the question of what happens to Syria's 2 million Christians. As a minority, these Christians have generally been protected by Assad's regime, but have been targeted by some of the rebel groups. Imagine if the United States delivered weapons to extremists who, in turn, used them against Christians. Imagine the tragic irony of aiding the same Islamic radicals we have asked American soldiers to fight in places like Iraq and Afghanistan.



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What has happened to Christians in Syria since ISIS has emerged as the dominant force in the region? A BBC article, "Syria's beleaguered Christians," published last February reported:

In areas seized by the jihadist group Islamic State (IS), Christians have been ordered to convert to Islam, pay jizya (a religious levy), or face death. In the Syrian province of Hassakeh in February 2015, **hundreds of Christians are feared to have been kidnapped by the militants.** [Bold in original.]

Senior Christian clerics have also been kidnapped by unknown gunmen. Suspicion for the abductions has fallen on the Nusra Front, al-Qaeda's Syrian affiliate.

The BBC article also made a very significant point about the life of Christians under Bashar al-Assad, whom the U.S. government is so determined to bring down that our government covertly helped the anti-Assad rebels, including ISIS:

Although, like other Syrians, they had very limited civil and political freedoms, Christians are believed to have valued the rights and protection accorded to minorities by Hafez al-Assad, who was president between 1971 and 2000, and by his son Bashar.

Recall that Saddam Hussein, whom the United States also toppled, had a Chaldean Catholic right-hand man, Tariq Aziiz. Which leads us to ask the question: Whose side is the U.S. government on in the Middle East?

As the United States sends Americans such as Joshua Wheeler to die in Iraq fighting against ISIS, an unconscionable reality exists — the United State played a major part in strengthening ISIS and turning it into a major terrorist player in the region! Evidence of this was provided in multiple articles in *The New American*, but one of the best was "[ISIS: The Best Terror Threat U.S. Tax Money Can Buy](#)," posted last January.

One of the most striking statements made by the article's author, Alex Newman, was:

Indeed, without the U.S. government and Obama's "coalition" of Sunni Islamist strongmen, the "Islamic State" would probably not exist — much less have the resources, weapons, manpower, and training needed to seize enough territory to create a "Caliphate" (Islamic Empire) of barbarism across large swaths of Iraq and Syria. This is hardly a secret to anyone who has been paying attention to anything other than the establishment media.

Newman cited a statement made at Harvard by Vice President Joe Biden revealing that despite the Obama administration's claim to have been trying to support a "moderate" opposition to Assad in Syria, no such entity existed. "The fact is, the ability to identify a moderate middle in Syria, um, was, uh — there was no moderate middle," Biden stated.

Biden also cited Obama's "anti-ISIS" allies as the most important players behind the creation and empowerment of the terror group to begin with.

However, rather than accepting blame for the administration for the rise of ISIS, Biden deflected it to the rulers of Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia as the main culprits building up ISIS. "They were so determined to take down Assad and essentially have a proxy Sunni-Shia war," Biden said. "What did they do?" the vice president asked before providing a partial answer. "They poured hundreds of millions of dollars and tens, thousands of tons of weapons into anyone who would fight against Assad; except that the people who were being supplied were Al Nusra and Al Qaeda and the extremist elements of jihadis coming from other parts of the world."



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Newman observed that Biden conveniently did not mention the role of the CIA and the State Department in building up ISIS.

The article's conclusion? "U.S. foreign policy appears to have been practically designed to create the 'Islamic State' rather than destroy it. In other words, ISIS is the 'new and improved' best terror group U.S. tax money can buy."

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