

## Euro-Atlantic Area

## Western Countries and the Ukrainian Conflict

U.S. military instructors began [the training of Ukrainian armed forces](#), in particular five battalions of active-duty troops and one battalion of special operations forces. The United States hereby extends their training programme for Ukraine where they have so far trained national guard personnel only. Apart from this initiative, the U.S. have sent to Ukraine non-lethal military aid such as Humvee vehicles, counter-mortar radars, night vision goggles, body armour and medical equipment.

## Fighting the ISIS in Iraq and Syria



Source: [The Washington Post](#)

The fight against the Islamic State is getting more intense after Paris attacks from the middle of November. [The Syrian rebels backed by the United States](#) announced their very first offensive action against the ISIS only a day after Washington had approved deployment of Special Forces into the area. This is officially for the first time when Democratic Forces of Syria has taken such an action side by side with the U.S.-backed Kurdish militia and other Syrian rebel groups. [Meanwhile, the U.S. sent other 50 troops of Special Forces to Iraq](#) where they should operate as advisers for Syrian Kurds and Arab forces. They might also be commanded to free hostages,

gather intelligence or capture ISIS leaders. According to some analysts, this may be considered as breaching the promise of not leading U.S. ground operation in the Middle East. However, other experts claim that it is not possible to defeat ISIS without a ground operation.

French president Hollande has taken several decisions to [intensify air strikes against jihadists](#) after the attacks in Paris. Ten French fast jets took off from air bases in Yemen and United Arab Emirates in order to bomb Rakka which is believed to be the capital of ISIS. In the city, originally with million inhabitants, jihadists applied strict rules for about 400,000 citizens. According to president Hollande, ISIS committed an „act of war“ by attacking Paris. Moreover, France sent [its aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle with 26 fighters on board](#) near Syrian coast where it is supported by British destroyer HMS Defender. In the meantime, [Germany decided to send 1,200 troops](#) to the conflict area for advisory purposes. Berlin also offers to France fast jets Tornado, a naval frigate, air-fuelling capabilities or satellite pictures of the current battlefield.

During G20 summit, [Russian federation agreed with the United States](#) on the need to have „Syrian lead and Syrian owned political transformation“ of the country which would ease the current situation. According to Putin and Obama, United Nations should act as a mediator during these negotiations.

Daily journal Spiegel published an interesting interview with former [U.S. Special Forces Chief Michael Flynn](#) who openly spoke about wrong decisions in fighting ISIS and also pointed out on the biggest mistake of the U.S. policy that led to the emerge of jihadists which was getting rid of dictators both Hussein and Kaddafi.

## North America

[Senior U.S. military leaders propose](#) to send more U.S. troops to Europe on a rotating basis to increase U.S. presence in the area. The U.S. has currently deployed two brigades to Europe (each about 3,500 troops) and another brigade is allocated on the U.S. soil for the rotary purposes. There has also been a request from the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army Mark Milley to send more attack helicopters, engineering teams or artillery. The decision should be made by the Obama Administration within a few months. The U.S. also extends its military training to counter Russian threat in the context of hybrid warfare, propaganda and other unconventional tactics. General Philip Breedlove also warned against cooperation with Russia on Syria which could lead the West to acceptance of annexation of Crimea and Russian support to separatists in Eastern Ukraine.



Source: [Military Times](#)

In the meantime, there has been a strong debate about refugees from the Middle East. U.S. president Obama previously agreed to accept 10, 000 Syrian refugees in the current fiscal year - so far there has been accepted only about 1, 854 Syrians since 2012. Paris attacks intensified the debate as at least 28 governors refused to accept refugees in their states. Republican-led Senate also agreed on [extending security measures](#) for asylum seekers which prolongs already long process of

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their acceptance. [Canada also changes its plans](#) as it is able to accept only 10, 000 out of planned 25, 000 Syrian refugees this year when the rest will come to Canada until the end of February. The newly elected Canadian government also decided to provide asylum primarily to women with children, families and LGBTI community that are considered to be the most vulnerable groups and present a smaller threat for the country compared to single men.

## British Isles

After five years, [British government published](#) a new National Security Strategy (NSS) and Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) where besides reflecting new threats in the context of Russian aggression or rise of the Islamic state, the NSS focuses on deepening cooperation with partners. In the case of attacks such as in Paris, the UK is able to mobilise 10, 000 troops to help the police and civil authorities which doubles the previous numbers. The UK also plans to establish two strike brigades (each 6,500 troops) which should be deployed in a short time with a little dependence on logistic support and using the new Scout vehicles. However, the brigades should not be ready until 2025 and will be established from the current Army strength of 82, 000 personnel. Increase in personnel have been spotted in the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy but it counts only with 700 new soldiers although the Navy asked for at least 3,000 men and women to fill personnel gaps.



Source: [Wikimedia](#)

In the context of equipment, Prime Minister David Cameron promised other [£12 billion in defence planning](#) which increases the current equipment plan to £178 billion. It allows RAF for example life extension of aircraft such as C-130J Hercules, Sentinel or Shadow, increase in Typhoon squadrons by two or acquisition of P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft which should fill the capability gap made by scrapping Nimrod MRA4 in the previous SDSR. The UK also plans to acquire all 138 previously planned F-35 Lightning II aircraft, any details have not been revealed though. In the Navy, the government decided to decrease the number of frigates Type 26 from 13 to 8, however, it is willing to launch a programme for building new light frigates simultaneously that should also be assigned for export purposes. Moreover, there will be a modernisation programme for British nuclear deterrent worth £31 billion, other £2 billion are invested in Special Forces, £1,9 billion for cyber defence and new 1,900 intelligence services recruits. The NSS and SDSR are available [here](#).

## Continental Europe

[According to BBC](#), 130 people were killed in recent terrorist attacks in France on 13th October when a group of terrorists attacked simultaneously multiple spots in Paris. Only one attacker - Salah Abdelsan survived aftermath and has been on the run since. French authorities with help from the EU partners called for broad search and French police launched raids on people suspected of terrorist activity. Thanks to [successful raid in Paris suburb Saint Denis](#), the police killed mastermind of the whole operation and spoiled next planned attack on Charles de Gaulle airport. France also bolstered homeland defence by mobilizing 115,000 members of police, army and

gendarmerie. The Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attacks and France answered by air strikes the ISIS "capital city" as retaliation. French intelligence services also discovered that the attacks were organized and planned in Belgium. Based on this intel, [Belgian authorities declared](#) lockdown on the capital city and launch similar police raid on terror suspects as their French colleagues. There were detained 16 people during these raids but there were not found any firearms or explosives.

In the meantime, newly elected Polish government started its planned changes in country's defence policy as defence minister [A. Macierewicz criticized arms deals](#) settled by previous government. According to him the air defence programme Wisla must be scrapped and Poland should choose its new air defence system again because the acquired Patriot air defence system will not supposedly have the right capabilities and late delivery dates will create a new capability gap. The critique also aims on combat capabilities where the combat proved part are only the missiles, other systems like communications, control and radar systems are a result of joint US-PL modernization. The cooperation in general is criticized as well due to low technological sharing from the U.S.



Source: [Wikimedia](#)

The second programme which will be evaluated is the deal to buy Caracal utility helicopters. Caracals supposedly do not have required capabilities. Unlike Wisla programme, [Polish](#)

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[government does not plan](#) to scrap the whole deal, they just want to negotiate better conditions for Poland. Polish [foreign minister W. Waszczykowski also publicly called](#) for scrapping NATO-Russia agreement from 1997 which bans permanent deployment of NATO troops on the newly accepted members' soil. According to Waszczykowski, this agreement discriminates Eastern allies by making impossible to apply conventional deterrent just like in Western countries.

Recent Kunduz city capture and other Taliban successes in Afghanistan became the main reason why [German government decided to prolong](#) its troops participation in this country. [German parliament also approved](#) increase in the personnel limit from 850 to 980 soldiers. Germans plan to continue with their mentoring mission through 2016.

## North Atlantic Treaty Organization



Source: [NATO](#)

In November, the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps as one of the High Readiness Force Headquarters [underwent for the first time its exercise in the Baltics](#). More than 1,700 troops from 20 nations and Sweden participated in the two-week-long exercise which aimed on simulating command over the land forces in a variety of scenarios, including war-game scenario on computers.

NATO also focused on its relations with Nordic states. [The Alliance would like to strengthen its presence in the Nordic-Baltic region](#) through more tightened cooperation and exercises with Sweden and Finland. Simultaneously, both countries refused any pressure from the Alliance to join NATO. The cooperation will also include sharing intelligence and countering cyber-attacks and hybrid warfare. Moreover, Sweden has also decided [to join NATO's Strategic Communication Agency](#) in order to fight efficiently Russian propaganda.

In the meantime, the Alliance had to face escalation in relations with Russia as Turkey, one of NATO members, [shot down Russian Su-24 fast jet above Turkish-Syrian border](#). While Turkey claims that the aircraft remained in Turkish airspace despite several warnings, Russia argues that the pilots were flying in Syrian airspace. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg announced that [NATO supports Turkey](#) and also added that Russian aircraft was flying in the area where there was not proven any presence of jihadists. Nevertheless, Stoltenberg called for ceasing the situation in order to focus once again on the ISIS instead of escalating the relations between Turkey/NATO and Russia.

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