

## Euro-Atlantic Area

## Iraqi crisis and the Islamic state



Source: [Business Insider](#)

In September, [Russia joined the fight against the Islamic State](#) as another key player, who however stays on the side of Syrian president Assad. According to Vladimir Putin, Moscow is trying to create international counter-terrorism coalition. Nevertheless, Washington does not share the same point of view and believes that Russian support for Syrian regime only worsens the situation in many ways. Firstly, Syria has become most powerful than ever in the past years as it is backed by both Russia and Iran and their military equipment, supplies, diplomacy cover and advisory help. Secondly, Russia has launched unspecified operations which may potentially lead to misunderstanding and unwanted aiming of Russian soldiers by current coalition in the future. Moreover, during the first Russian air strikes, it showed up that Russia does not differ between kinds of Syrian rebels and thus [hit the group of rebels trained and equipped by the U.S.](#) These steps by Russia proved that Kremlin is creating some kind of anti-West bloc in the Middle East. According to U.S. sources, [Russia deployed 28 combat aircraft in Syria](#) alongside with one bomber aircraft and 20 combat helicopters, including a few drones. Despite these facts, U.S. Minister of Defence Carter called for

common effort to defeat ISIS altogether with Russia. [Obama and Putin met at UN summit](#) where they discussed how to avoid misunderstandings during operations in Syria. French president Hollande is trying to bring all interested parties into one room as well. In the meantime, [French government authorized country's first air strikes in Syria in September](#). France has been cooperating with the coalition since 2014 and has already launched 215 strikes in Iraq out of total 4,500 air strikes led by coalition forces.

## North America



Source: [Wikimedia](#)

Brand new U.S. aircraft carrier [G. R. Ford is still not ready for sea trials](#) due to the need for additional tests and modifications. Costs of these improvements will be covered from 13 billion USD budget approved by the law but whole program will be delayed approximately from six to eight weeks. In the meantime, the [United States approved sale of RQ-11 Raven drones to Ukraine](#). Contract worth 9 million USD will be realized in May 2016. It is very likely that it will be financed by the U.S. as a part of its military aid budget. American neighbour, Canada, has opened a tight discussion about the purchase of F-35 Lightning II fighter jets. [Opposition liberal party have stood against planned deal just now before election](#). Canada should buy 65 aircraft and pay 34 billion USD

(including life cycle costs). This huge sum which raised above former expectations is the biggest concern. Current prime minister Harper stands for F-35s saying that there was not any other western fighter jets available to counter other modern fifth generation aircraft. But even the ruling party will not approve the deal before October's elections.

[Canada has also logistic issues within its navy and will lease commercial vessels for refuelling and supply capabilities](#). The situation is caused by fund shortage in supply ship acquisition program. Canadian navy should already have had new supply ships but the decision which ships it wants to acquire was announced just in the last few days.

## Continental Europe

British Prime Minister [David Cameron announced sending dozens of British troops to Somalia](#) and potentially also to South Sudan to help train local forces and increase security measures in the area. British soldiers will help against Shebab group, which is a part of al-Qaeda and has been trying to overthrow internationally supported government in Mogadishu, protected by 22,000 troops of African Union deployed from Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya and Uganda. As well as in previous months, European migrant crisis has not been effectively resolved and migrants are still searching for new ways to get to their final destinations. For example, [hundreds of them got on railway in station Calais-Frethum](#) in order to come from France to the UK. This station lays five kilometers inland and is not under Eurotunnel company surveillance.

[Norway has announced purchase of 52 F-35 Lightning II fighter jets](#), despite current tightening of defence budget.

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Norwegians will receive the first two jets already this year for training in Arizona, United States, others will be delivered during 2017. Full operational readiness is expected until 2019.



Source: [Wikimedia](#)

After some time, [Egypt is the one which will buy both French Mistral class ships previously built for Russia](#). Saudi Arabia will likely cover huge part of nearly 1 billion EUR costs. It is about 200,000 euro less than the price which Russia should have paid. After Rafale fighter jets it is the second biggest French-Egyptian arms deal in recent years. Egypt is clearly building a strong regional force while significantly improving its relations towards France. Germany announced that it is prepared to welcome 500,000 refugees each year for next few years. [On the contrary, Germany established controls over its border with Austria](#). Both countries also stopped railway transport with each other for some time. This was based on Munich Mayor call that Munich is full, migrants already filled all hosting capacities and now they are sleeping on the streets. Hungary still continues with its current attitude. [Hungarian Parliament approved new competences for the police and army](#). They include for example broader use of non-lethal weapons and grant police the ability to

enter homes in order to search for illegal immigrants. After Hungary sealed its border with Serbia, [Croatia faces a huge immigrant wave](#) as they try to find a new way to get in Schengen.

[Naval mission EUNAVFOR MED is ready to get into the second stage](#). There is already 22 countries and 1,318 personnel engaged under Italian command. EUNAVFOR MED already gathered information from surveillance over the North African coast and is prepared to strike against smugglers now. Number of ships will rise from four to nine or ten. There is also a third stage proposed which should be aimed to strike smugglers on North African soil but it is very unlikely due to the necessary blessing from Libya which has been led by two governments for some time and their opposed stands do not incline to an approval for the mission. [EU approved migrant redistribution quotas](#). EU member countries should redistribute 120,000 migrants mainly from Italy, Greece and Hungary among themselves. The Czech Republic, Slovakia Hungary and Romania stood strongly against this decision. They were instantly under strong critique from other EU countries. Those who refuse to participate will be sanctioned by 0,002% of GDP fee.



Source: [New York Times](#)

## North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Swedish Centre Party has changed its policy towards NATO as it announced a decision that [the country should enter NATO altogether with Finland](#) due to the outside dependence on military help as the state is not able to defend itself in case of an attack. The party also released three principles of potential entry: entrance the Alliance alongside with Finland, non-deployment of either NATO troops or nuclear weapons to Sweden as well as commitment from NATO to help create a non-nuclear zone in the Nordic area. Therefore, Green Party is the only one party in the Swedish Parliament that opposes the NATO membership nowadays. Despite political will to join the Alliance, the country must undergo a referendum in order to fulfil its legal commitments. [The latest polls showed that 41% was in favour of entering NATO](#), 39% opposed and 20% stayed undecided. One of the facts slowing down citizens' decision is Russian statement that Swedish of Finnish NATO membership would be followed by Russian counter-measures.

At the end of September, [fourth U.S. destroyer, USS Carney, has arrived to Spanish ports](#) as a part of Alliance's anti-ballistic defence shield. The destroyer thus joined its colleagues USS Donald Cook, USS Porter and USS Ross. All of these ships have advanced sensor capabilities and interceptor missiles that are able to detect and shoot down ballistic missiles. Besides its primary role, ships will also join

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security operations, search & rescue, multinational exercises or NATO



deployments.

Source: [USNI](#)

In the meantime, NATO member countries are still being active in the context of the mission in Afghanistan. Austria, Belgium, Canada, Germany and the Netherlands have decided to contribute to [Afghan Trust Fund with \\$200 million](#) to help renew infrastructure in the country. This money should also cover operational costs of military equipment, including training.

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