

**"Continued violations by both pro-regime and opposition factions have fueled the largest outbreak of violence in northern Syria since the [ceasefire] agreement."**

*Christopher Kozak*

**"In the most dangerous scenario, the Iraqi government could collapse."**

*Patrick Martin*



## Battle for Aleppo

Syrian government forces and their allies have set the stage for an imminent offensive to complete the encirclement of Aleppo, following the near-total breakdown of peace talks on April 19, the Institute for the Study of War said.



**Area of control:**

- Syrian army
- Rebels
- YPG
- Islamic State/ recent gains



Economist.com



**Harleen Gambhir**

*Non-Resident  
Counter-terrorism Fellow*

**"Not a death  
blow to  
[ISIS]."**

4/13/2016



**"[ISIS] could claim it  
was the leader of Sunni  
against Western  
aggression in Syria,  
which proved to be an  
incredibly  
useful recruiting tool."**

4/5/2016



**"ISIS is a hybridized force."**

4/10/2016



**Genevieve Casagrande**

*Syria Analyst\**

*\*And primary airstrikes map creator*

**BUSINESS  
INSIDER**

**"Jahbat al-Nusra is eating  
away at these moderate  
groups... It's only going to  
fuel further radicalization and  
the spectrum is going to start  
inching farther and farther  
toward Salaafi-jihadi groups."**

4/11/2016

**"We need to look to places  
like Aleppo in order to see  
how ISIS is prioritizing key  
terrain."**

4/5/2016



**"These types of military assets  
aren't necessarily used, you  
don't actually need them to  
fight ISIS."**

4/21/2016





**Christopher Kozak**

*Syria Analyst*

"A number of signs, including a higher concentration of air strikes, the movement of Russian artillery support for regime forces, and a variety of skirmishes near a 3-to-4 kilometer gap that still keeps Aleppo from being besieged, all show that [Russian forces] are getting ready to move."

4/29/2016



"Russia and Assad 'paint with a very broad brush... If a group is working tactically with Jabhat al-Nusra, or is co-located with them, then that group is Jabhat al-Nusra... Nusra wants the cease-fire to collapse. . . . They pitch the case to other groups that the regime is still shelling and striking them and violating the cease-fire all over' and then offer to help them retaliate."

4/27/2016

"These re-deployments were enabled in part by the ongoing 'cessation of hostilities' which allowed the regime and its allies to withdraw troops from its front-lines with opposition groups ."

4/4/2016



"Continued violations by both pro-regime and opposition factions have fueled the largest outbreak of violence in northern Syria since the [ceasefire] agreement. "

4/12/2016

"The regime and its allies will act within the coming weeks to encircle and besiege Aleppo city."

4/29/2016





## Christopher Harmer

*Non-Resident  
Senior Naval Analyst*

**“For a given population of pilots — aviators... the less they fly, the less training missions they get, the less training the aviation maintenance personnel get, the less money we have for spare parts, the less money we have for training exercises, the higher the mishap rate will be if everything else is held constant.”**

*Marine Corps Times*

4/26/2016

**“ The Syrian strategy of killing or depopulating civilians has been relatively effective at preserving the Assad regime and gradually attriting and degrading the human and geographical terrain controlled by the rebels.”**

4/28/2016

**“It’s clear that the U.S. military, especially the Marines, are going to get drawn more and more into a combat mission.”**

*The San Diego Union Tribune*

4/1/2016

**“To defeat ISIS in Raqqa and Mosul, there needs to be a ground force that has integrated close air support on request, along with integrated electronic and human intelligence enabling time sensitive strikes.”**

4/25/2016



**“If the Syrian (army) is successful in Aleppo, there’s nowhere left for the moderate opposition to regenerate.”**

4/21/2016

**“Anything you can do to force the Syrian Air Force higher is going to be good for the rebels.”**

4/20/2016

**“ How do you compound chemicals so they aren't as detectable?”**

4/2/2016

**THE DAILY BEAST**





**Jennifer Cafarella**

*Syria Analyst  
Evans Hanson Fellow*

**"Kurdish forces ultimately want an autonomous region of their own within Syria, a goal that many Sunni Arabs do not support."**

4/25/2016



**"[Al Qaeda is] positioning itself as an inextricable presence able to pursue its long-term vision of a global caliphate with local support and legitimacy – something ISIS hasn't been able to do."**

4/23/2016



**Patrick Martin**

*Iraq Analyst*

**"There is an issue with [ISF] engaging in multiple fronts."**

4/10/2016

**"In the most dangerous scenario, the Iraqi government could collapse and set off a chain of events that leads to the selection of a pro-Iranian prime minister."**

4/18/2016

**The Economist**



**"A recent spate of spectacular suicide-attacks by IS in the south suggests that its strategy is now to destabilise Iraq's southern provinces."**

4/16/2016



**"These shortcomings underline the need for the U.S. to offer increased support to the [Iraqi forces] in larger increments if [they are] to make any substantial progress towards Mosul."**

4/13/2016



Source: Institute for the Study of War (31 March 2016)



BBC

4/8/2016

**"ISIS conducted a wave of explosive attacks across Iraq aimed at disrupting the forward operations of the Iraqi Security Forces."**

ISW Iraq Team

*The Washington Times*

4/6/2016

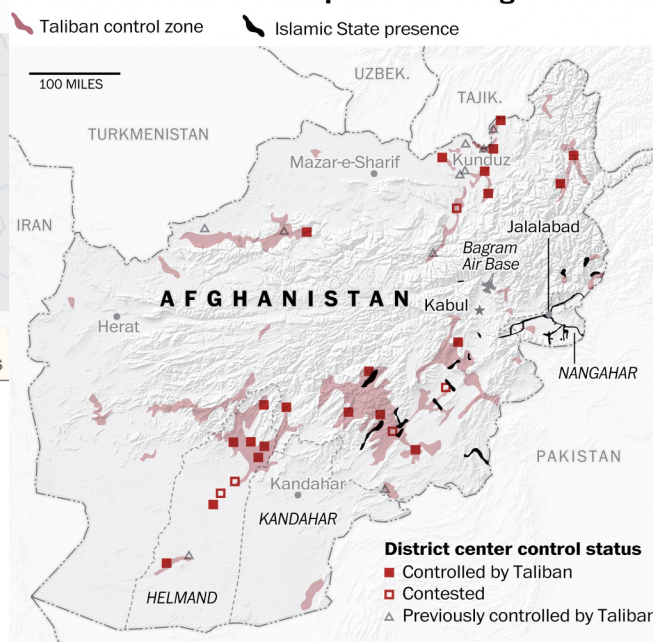
**"The proposal would provide necessary assistance for the ground offensive while demonstrating U.S. support for the Iraqi Security Forces and the Iraqi government, though these additions may not be significant enough factors to make up for the limited number of ISF members currently engaged in operations."**

Patrick Martin and ISW Iraq Team

*Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*

4/15/2016

## Taliban and Islamic State presence in Afghanistan



Source: Institute for the Study of War, As of April 12, 2016 LARIS KARKLIS/THE WASHINGTON POST

*Washington Post | Foreign Policy*

4/16/2016 | 4/19/2016

**"The attacks are 'primarily aimed at hard targets in order to arrest the ISF's (Iraqi Security Forces) forward progress and to force a contraction of security forces towards Baghdad and central Iraq.'"**

Patrick Martin and ISW Iraq Team

*Rudaw*

4/5/2016



Economist.com

*The Economist*  
4/15/2016

**“The current political crisis threatens the stability of Iraq in an unprecedented manner, and the crisis could see the government collapse.”**

**ISW Iraq Team**  
*International Business Times*  
4/22/2016

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**Aleppo Apr. 29**  
Air strikes on rebel-held areas of the city killed 123 civilians during the past seven days, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said

Source: Institute for the Study of War. Control areas as of Apr. 28.

G. Cabrera, 29/04/2016

REUTERS

*Reuters*  
4/11/2016

**“Most Syrian opposition groups cooperate closely with Syrian al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra out of military necessity; these groups would in many cases succumb to the Syrian regime or [ISIS] without Jabhat al-Nusra’s support.”**

**Jennifer Cafarella and Genevieve Casagrande**  
*Hurriyet Daily News*  
4/12/2016

## More of ISW in the News

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|----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>National Geographic</i> | <i>BBC News</i> | <i>The Washington Times</i> | <i>Breitbart</i> | <i>New York Times</i> |
| 4/8/2016                   | 4/8/2016        | 4/12/2016                   | 4/12/2016        | 4/21/2016             |