



2016 Impact Highlights

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ISW Impact Highlights

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Our Mission Drives Us

The Institute for the Study of War has been advancing an informed understanding of military affairs through reliable research, trusted analysis, and innovative education since 2007.

- ISW's analysis has an outsized impact because of the mission-driven efforts of 16 full-time staff members.
- ISW briefs deploying military units, civilian leaders in the U.S. government, private sector, and media.
- ISW retains focus even when issues fall out of the news cycle. We maintain expertise in strategically vital areas in order to forecast threats and warn of potential crises before they erupt.
- ISW develops the next generation of national security leaders, preparing them for the challenges the US faces today and in the future.

ISW in a non-partisan, 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

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I. Supporting the Warfighter

In 2016, ISW's analysts delivered briefings to deploying troops and to civilian leaders supporting our warfighters. The team briefed both American and allied units deploying to Iraq to discuss the threat environment. ISW also hosted multiple combatant commands to discuss scenarios that soldiers and their leaders will face in upcoming missions.

Selected highlight: In September 2016 the ISW team spent two days at Fort Riley, Kansas preparing troops deploying to Iraq. ISW analysts briefed the 1st Infantry Division on Syria, Iraq, ISIS and al-Qaeda. The ISW team then conducted an intensive table-top exercise designed by ISW for the IID troops to test scenarios that may occur in theater during their deployment. The game placed the participants in nearly 40 military and civilian roles, including U.S. commanding officers, allies and adversaries. Participants emerged with a better understanding of the strategic and operational environment that they were entering.



ISW team with Brigadier General William Turner, Fort Riley, Kansas

Selected Highlight: In April 2016, ISW's Iraq Research Analyst Patrick Martin briefed the 7th Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment prior to their deployment to Camp Taji in Iraq for the Build Partner Capacity mission. Patrick provided the deploying troops with a background of the political and security situation in Iraq, walking through the complex breakdown of friendly and enemy powerbrokers and the various challenges to stability. Patrick also briefed the 7th Battalion on November 2015 prior to a different rotation to Camp Taji.



2. Informing Policymakers

ISW continued to conduct public and private briefings with policymakers and law-makers to provide expert analysis of current and emerging conflicts in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Russia, Ukraine, and with respect to ISIS. In 2016, ISW staff extended briefings to Capitol Hill, national security staff and the intelligence community. ISW also brought together a select group of policymakers, military leaders, and warfighters in its first annual conference, titled “Rethinking U.S. Grand Strategy,” in September.

Selected Highlight: Senate Armed Services Committee Briefing

ISW's ISIS and Syria teams briefed the staff of the Senate Armed Services Committee on ISW-CTP's planning exercise for a grand strategy against ISIS and al Qaeda. The group discussed policy options in Syria, particularly focusing on the humanitarian crisis in Aleppo and the growing influence of al Qaeda.



ISW President Dr. Kimberly Kagan testifies to U.S. Congress about U.S. policies in the Middle East

Select 2016 Hill Briefings

1. House Foreign Affairs Committee
2. Senator Lindsey Graham (R)
3. Senator Marco Rubio (R)
4. Senator Corey Booker (D)
5. Senator Robert (Bob) Casey (D)
6. Congressman Bradley (Brad) Sherman (D)

ISW Inaugural Security Conference

On September 14, 2016 ISW inaugurated an annual security conference. The conference, titled "Rethinking U.S. Grand Strategy," gathered nearly 200 civilian and military leaders, from the Pentagon to Silicon Valley, to generate ideas on a national security strategy suited for a new era.

Speakers & Moderators



GEN (Ret.) David H. Petraeus and
Vice Admiral Frank Pandolf



GEN Joseph Votel and David Ignatius



The Hon. Michèle Flournoy

Vice Admiral Frank Craig Pandolfe
Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Anders Fogh Rasmussen
Former NATO Secretary General

Hon. Michèle Flournoy
Chief Executive Officer for Center of
New American Security

General (Ret.) David H. Petraeus
Partner & Chairman of the KKR Global Institute

General Joseph L. Votel
US Central Command Commanding General

General Raymond A. Thomas
U.S. Special Operations Command
Commanding General

Raj Shah
Managing Partner, Defense Innovation
Unit Experimental

Lt. General H.R. McMaster
Deputy Commanding General, Futures, U.S. Army
Training and Doctrine Command

Dr. Kimberly Kagan
President, Institute for the Study of War

David Ignatius
Associate Editor & Columnist, Washington Post

3. Shaping the National Security Debate

ISW's timely and accurate analysis of military activity in regions that threaten U.S. national security continues to inform the policy debate. Our publications, including our signature maps, have reached millions of viewers and readers; our analysts continue to appear in print and on screen as subject matter experts in mainstream media; we launched an insight series highlighting our expert analysis and hosting leaders in the field, and ISW team members took part in international discussions organized by allied states and international organizations to shape the international debate.

ISW's online platforms



Twitter Followers



47,700 Followers



Readers of e-publications



20,537 Subscribers



Earned Media Hits



516 Unique Hits

ISW in the Media

Over the past year, ISW's analysts have appeared on major news networks, published opinion editorials for mainstream media, and been quoted extensively by journalists in the U.S. and abroad.

Selected Opinion Editorials:



[America is Acting Locally, the Islamic State is Thinking Globally](#)

Jessica Lewis McFate, ISW Tradecraft and Innovation Director



[Why the most dangerous group in Syria isn't ISIS](#)

Jennifer Cafarella, ISW Lead Intelligence Planner

Selected Quotations:

“Russia and the (Syrian) regime are driving the radicalization of the opposition on purpose.”



Genevieve Casagrande,
The New York Times, 9/28/2016

“ISIS has latent capability to regenerate operations again.”



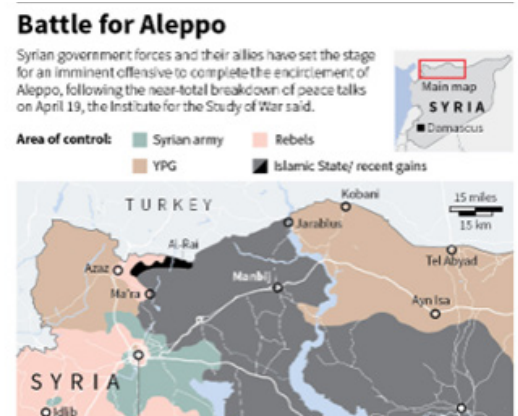
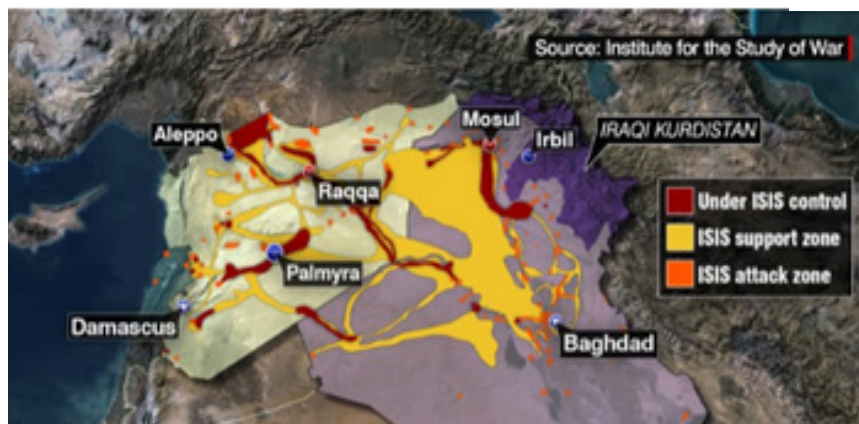
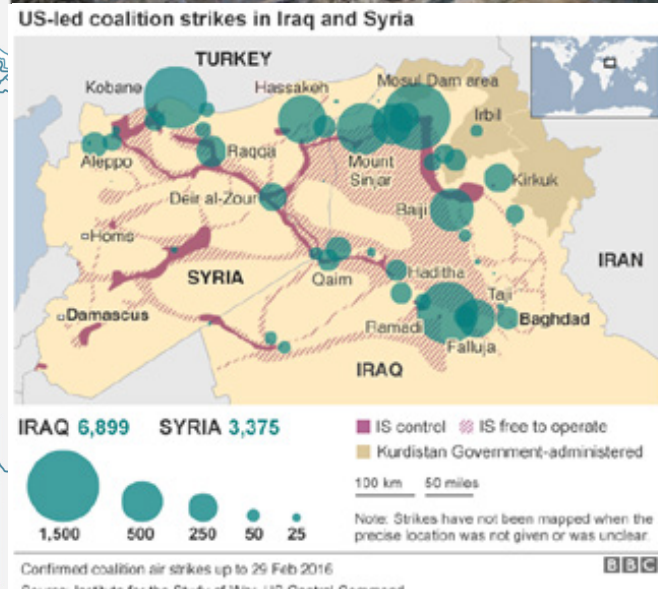
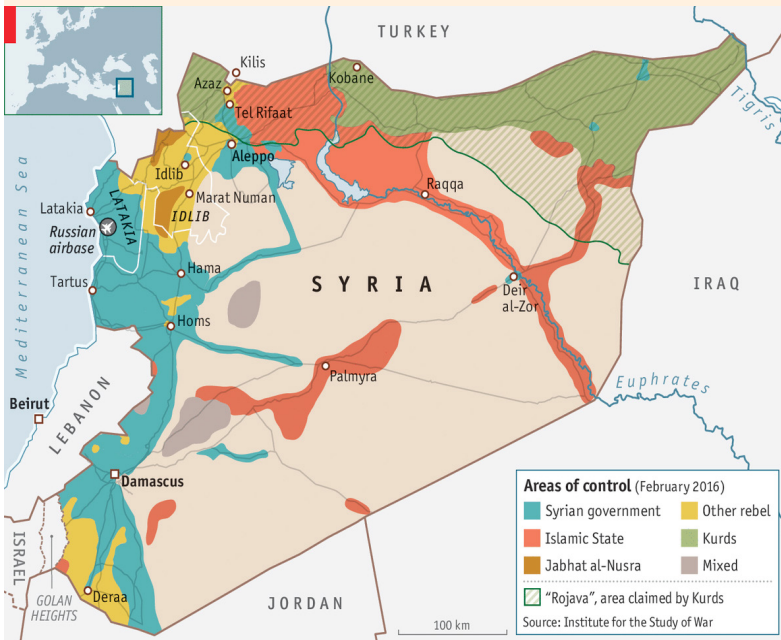
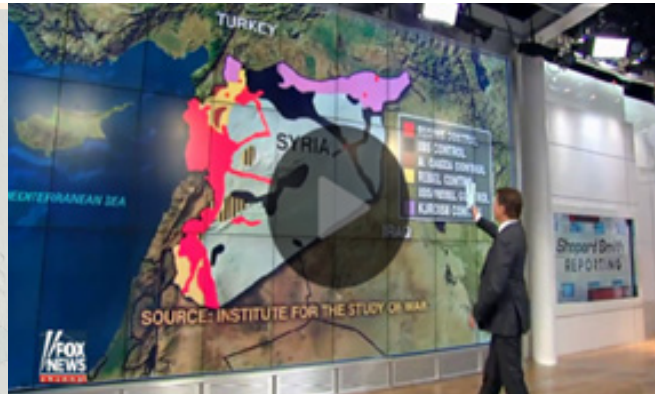
Jessica Lewis McFate,
Voice of America, 6/16/2016

“These are very, very clear signals from Russia that say they are willing to escalate and to push boundaries,”



Kathleen Weinberger,
Financial Times, 8/17/2016

ISW's maps have been featured in major print and online media outlets, including *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, and *The Economist*.



New Series: “U.S. Grand Strategy: Destroying ISIS and Al Qaeda

Shortly after the Paris attacks in 2015, ISW and the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute conducted an intensive multi-week exercise to frame, design, and evaluate potential courses of action that the United States could pursue to defeat the threat from the Islamic State in Iraq and al Sham (ISIS) and al Qaeda. Over the past year, they have conducted research and have published three reports in the series, “U.S. Grand Strategy: Destroying ISIS and Al Qaeda.”



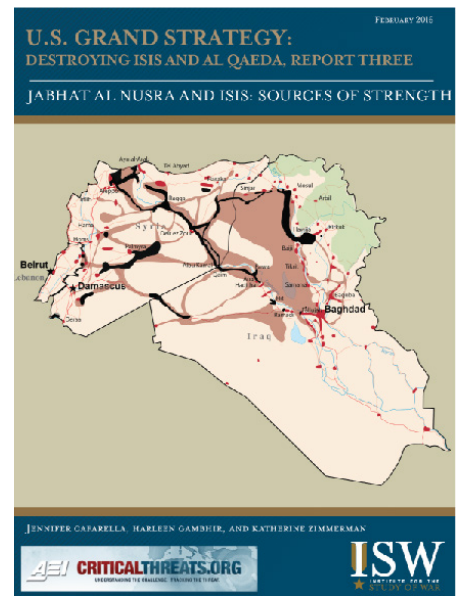
1. [Al Qaeda and ISIS: Existential Threat to the U.S. and Europe](#)

This report finds that Salafi-jihadi military organizations, particularly ISIS and al Qaeda, are existential threats to the security and values of American and European citizens. It argues that American and European security requires the elimination of ISIS and al Qaeda regional bases and safe havens.



2. [Competing Visions for Syria and Iraq: The Myth of an Anti-ISIS Grand Coalition](#)

This reports argues that the U.S. must take the lead in the mission to destroy ISIS and al Qaeda, and that a “grand coalition” with Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran, and Russia will not meet American strategic objectives in Iraq and Syria.



3. [Jabhat al Nusra and ISIS: Sources of Strength](#)

This report recommends that U.S. strategy must operate against both ISIS and Jabhat al Nusra simultaneously by targeting their sources of strength, and defines ISIS’s source of strength as its control of terrain and Jabhat al Nusra’s strength as its intertwining with the Syrian opposition.

Event Series: “ISW Insights”

In 2016, ISW launched its Insight Series, aimed at both sharing ISW’s intelligence insights and fostering cross-sector collaboration.



“The Changing Geostrategic Landscape,”
April 20, 2016 featuring ISW analysts



“Economic Warfare against ISIS and al Qaeda,”
May 11, 2016 featuring Gen (Ret.) John Allen,
LTG Michael Nagata, Dr. David Asher, CNAS,
and Daniel Glaser, Assistant Secretary of Trea-



A Conversation with General Rodriguez,
former Commander of US AFRICOM, June
29, 2016



A Conversation with Dr. Catherine Dale,
Senior Advisor to the Commander of Euro-
pean Command and Supreme Allied Com-
mander, Europe, June 30, 2016

Shaping the debate internationally

The ISW team is often cited by international news sources and takes part in international discussion platforms.

Selected Highlight: ISW Syria Analyst Christopher Kozak was invited to speak on a panel at the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) workshop on Syria held in Valetta, Malta in February 2016. The workshop covered various means of identifying potential war criminals and other perpetrators of excludable crimes amidst refugee flows entering the European Union. The workshop included briefings and question-and-answer sessions for representatives from over twenty-five countries as well as the United Nations and other international humanitarian organizations.

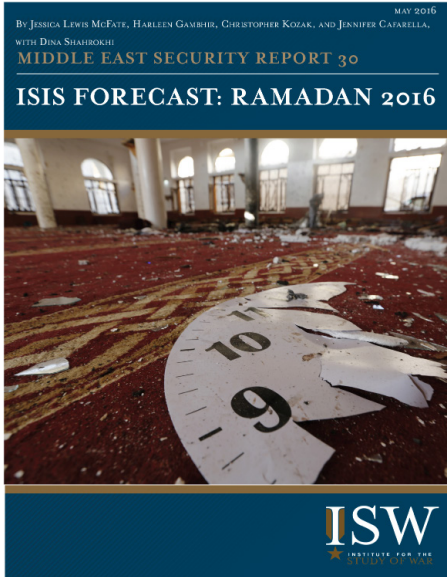


Selected Highlight: ISW President Dr. Kimberly Kagan presented at the Engelsberg Seminar 2016, titled “The Return of Geopolitics,” in Avesta, Sweden in June 2016. Dr. Kagan’s presentation focused on Russia’s expanded presence in the Middle East. The conference brought international historians, academics, government representatives, and practitioners together to address the topic of geopolitics both as reality and ideology with a particular focus on geopolitical hotspots like India, China, and the Levant.



4. Accurately Forecasting Crises

One of ISW's key analytical strengths lies in threat forecasting. This year we have enhanced our forecasting capabilities to provide our military and civilian leaders with early warnings about crises before they strike.



Selected Highlight: [ISIS Forecast: Ramadan 2016](#)

In this report, our analysts forecasted that ISIS would take action to reverse serious losses in Iraq and Syria while expanding its attacks against the non-Muslim world in an attempt to spark an apocalyptic total war. We assessed that the U.S. needed to dedicate increased resources toward disrupting its ground campaign, protecting vulnerable targets, and reinforcing key global and regional alliances.

Selected Highlight: ISW forecasted the likely trajectory of the anti-ISIS fight in Syria and Iraq as well as the overall trajectory of the Syrian Civil War over a 12 month period beginning in January 2016. ISW infused its insights into various publications and briefings over the course of 2016. A key theme in the ISW forecast was America's over-reliance on Syrian Kurds in the anti-ISIS fight, which limited the possible forward progress of Operation Inherent Resolve and caused a major schism between the U.S. and Turkey. Turkey intervened in northern Syria on August 24 to block the advance of US-backed Syrian Kurds, in accordance with ISW's forecast. ISW publications on this theme in 2016 included:

[The pitfalls of relying on Kurdish forces to counter ISIS](#), Patrick Martin and Christopher Kozak, February 3, 2016.

[Russia and Turkey Escalate: Russia's Threat to NATO goes beyond Eastern Europe](#), Genevieve Casagrande, Christopher Kozak, and Franklin Holcomb with Kimberly Kagan, Nataliya Bugayova, and Jennifer Cafarella, May 23, 2016.

[The competing campaigns against ISIS in Northern Syria](#), Christopher Kozak, June 10, 2016.

[How Turkey Could Become the Next Pakistan](#), Jennifer Cafarella, July 19, 2016.

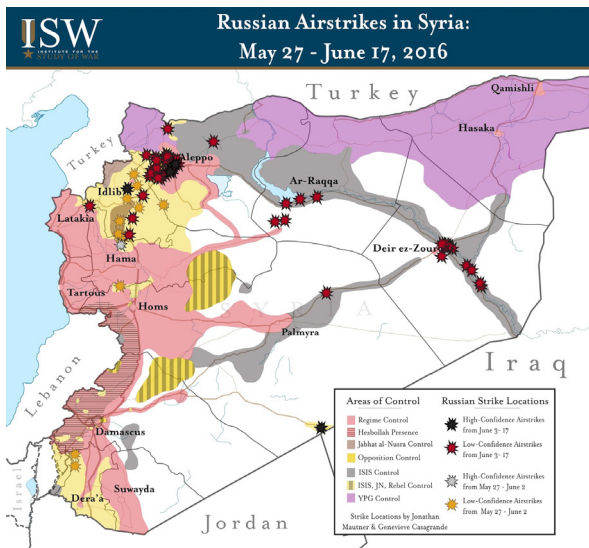
[Failed Coup in Turkey: Implications for the Syrian Civil War](#), Christopher Kozak, July 22,

5. Publication Highlights

In 2016, ISW has produced roughly 250 analytical products on Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, overall Middle East security, ISIS, Ukraine, Russian military activity & more. Our publications range from in-depth policy reports to daily intelligence summaries and maps.

Syrian Armed Opposition Powerbrokers

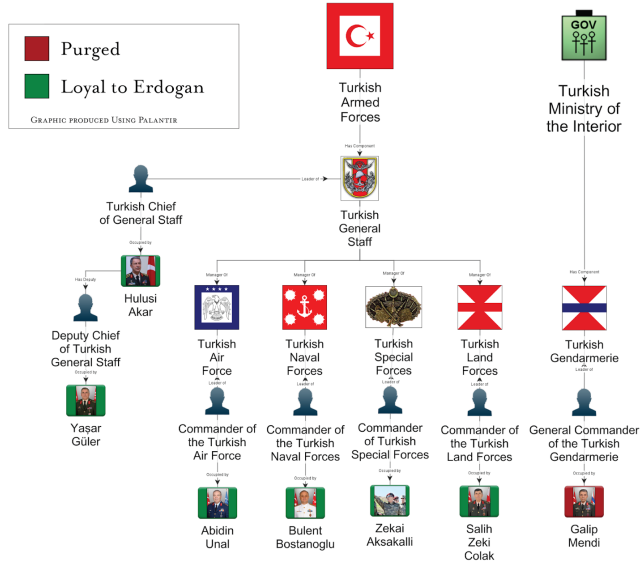
ISW produced a granular assessment of the most important armed opposition groups on the battlefield in Syria. The report demonstrated the value of intelligence from open sources and reshaped how policymakers and military analysts frame the Syrian opposition in 2016 and beyond. The report was circulated among national security staff, combatant commands, and other DC think tanks.



Russian Air Campaign in Syria

ISW started tracking the locations of Russian airstrikes in September 2015, less than 24 hours after the first strikes, and has since published over 60 maps that counter the Russian Ministry of Defense's intentionally false maps. ISW's Russian airstrikes maps have been featured in testimony on Capitol Hill and in various major print media outlets, and have been pivotal in calling out Russian propaganda as they continuously target moderate opposition groups and civilian infrastructure in Syria.

ISW Turkish Top Echelon Military Leadership: July 2016



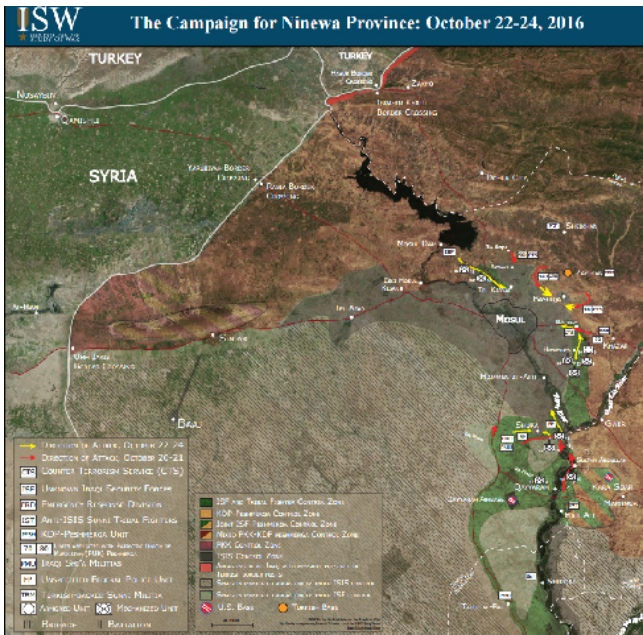
Partial Assessment of Turkey’s Post-Coup Attempt Military Purge

ISW’s Syria team conducted a detailed analysis of Turkey’s purge of military officers after the failed coup attempt in July 2016. The report demonstrated the extent of Erdogan’s purge soon after the coup attempt and accurately forecasted how Erdogan would continue to consolidate power over the following months.

Russia Military Build-up in and around Ukraine

ISW’s Russia and Ukraine team produced a map of the Russian military escalation in and around Ukraine that began on August 7th. The map was reprinted in major news outlets, including by Business Insider (74,000+ hits) and the Financial Times, which animated the map. ISW’s analysis of the escalation was quoted in major online and print media sources, including the Wall Street Journal and Foreign Policy.



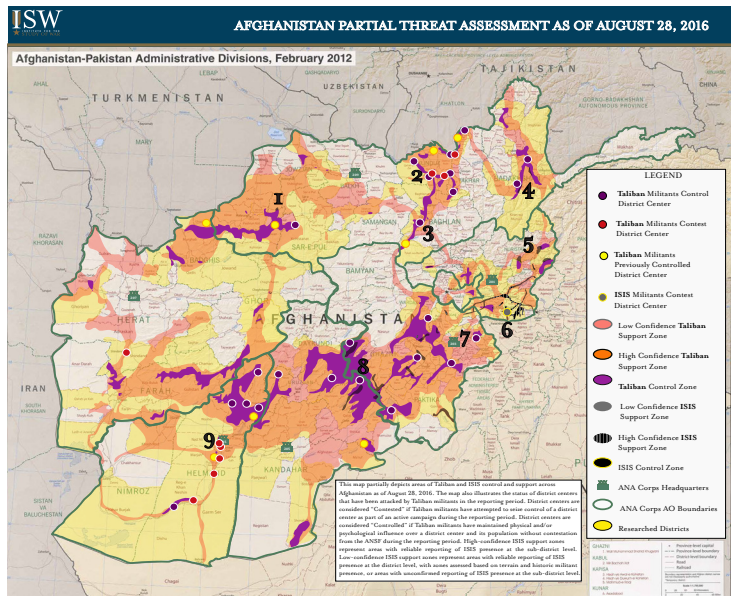


Mosul Campaign Map

ISW's Iraq Team has produced campaign maps to monitor the anti-ISIS fight in Iraq. The team is currently monitoring daily developments in the campaign to retake Mosul, and previously tracked efforts to retake Fallujah and Ramadi with high fidelity.

Afghanistan Partial Threat Assessment

ISW Afghanistan team produces threat assessment maps tracking the Taliban militants' and ANSF's campaigns and ISIS's developments in the country. ISW is currently a leader in mapping this ongoing conflict and major news outlets, including Reuters and the Washington Post, have used this set of maps in their publications in 2016.



6. Educating the Next Generation of National Security Leaders

ISW recruits, educates, and helps to launch the careers of nearly 100 emerging leaders annually through ISW analyst and internship programs and the Hertog War Studies Program.

In 2016, ISW graduated our fourth class of undergraduates from the [Hertog War Studies Program](#), an intensive 2-week program run by ISW in Washington D.C. The program aims to educate undergraduate students about the theory, practice, organization, and control of war and military forces. It is taught by Dr. Kimberly Kagan, Dr. Fredrick Kagan and LTG (Ret.) James Dubik. This summer, the Hertog War Studies Program welcomed General (Ret.) John Allen to its faculty.

The alumni of the Hertog War Studies Summer Program also have the opportunity to participate in two one-week advanced sessions every year. This summer, 20 alumni gathered at ISW with Dr. Kimberly Kagan, Dr. Frederick Kagan and LTG (Ret.) James Dubik to discuss lessons from the Cold War.



GEN McChrystal signing his book, *My Share of the Task*, after a discussion about his military strategy in Afghanistan



Hertog Summer 2016 Program participants in discussion during the seminar

ISW has selected and trained three classes of interns in 2016. Every term we accept approximately 20 interns from undergraduate and graduate programs to assist our analysts in researching, writing, and publishing materials or to work with our operations team. These interns, along with our young analyst, receive formal classroom training in war studies, intelligence analysis, leadership, and more. The research team also has the opportunity to work with cutting edge technology made available through our technology partnerships, and they are taught basic computer coding in multiple languages to enhance their research capabilities.

ISW interns also go through rigorous professional development training, including learning how to deliver briefings, write effectively for policymakers, and search for jobs in the national security field.



“I worked closely with ISW analysts to monitor terrorist media accounts, translate attack claims and tweets, and track and analyze the day-to-day activity of ISIS militants and supporters on a global scale”

S.W., Summer 2016
Counterterrorism Intern

Interns briefing on their research portfolios during ISW’s daily morning meeting

Rising Stars



Every year ISW launches rising stars through its analyst program. In 2016 we promoted Jennifer Cafarella, ISW’s Syria analyst, Evans Hanson Fellow, and alumna of the Hertog War Studies program, to the position of Lead Intelligence Planner in order to provide direct support to military and civilian leaders.

Among Jennifer’s 2016 impact highlights is the preparation of the table top exercise for the 1st Infantry Division on at Fort Riley Kansas. Jennifer is also a participant of an ongoing Countering Jabhat al Nusra Strategy Group alongside leading Syria experts led by Nick Heras at the CNAS. The group is working to develop a policy recommendation to counter al Qaeda in Syria for the new Presidential administration. Earlier this year Jennifer also participated in a “Peace Game” on the Syrian Civil War held by Foreign Policy in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Jennifer has also prepared scenarios for the development of a Syria scenario testing event at the Center for Strategic International Studies (CSIS).

7. Innovating in the Field

At ISW, we strive to improve the way analysts collect and analyze open source data in order to better forecast national security threats and crises before they strike. We believe this intelligence revolution will be spearheaded from outside of the government through public-private partnerships. ISW has actively been driving this movement alongside its partners at the Critical Threats Project at AEI by bringing together top analytical talent and cutting edge technology.

ISW celebrates its strategic partnerships with leading technology companies that allow ISW to pioneer new methods of research and analysis. In 2016, ISW and CTP formed technology partnerships with Neo4J, Javelin, Intrepid, Ayasdi, and Thales, and we continued our relationship with ISW's long-term partner Prascient Analytics.

ISW's Technology Partners:



Selected highlight: ISW President Dr. Kimberly Kagan and Director of Trade-craft and Innovation Jessica Lewis McFate presented a visualization depicting enemy groups, the interests and activities of the U.S. and its allies, refugee flows, and the other elements needed to understand the world environment and think about how to respond to it at the Concordia Summit 2016 in New York City. The Concordia Summit convenes the world's most prominent business, government, and nonprofit leaders to enable effective partnerships for impact.



ISW Partners and Supporters

We owe a debt of gratitude to our sponsors who have shown themselves committed over the years to the same mission as ISW: serving the war fighters and informing policymakers. The meaningful undertakings of 2016 would not have been possible without the support of ISW donors and partners.

ISW's Partners Include:



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The Kovner Foundation



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Once Upon A Time Fondation



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Mitzi Perdue & Augusta Petrone

Robert Greenhill
Robert R. Grusky
Robert D. Rynkar & William Burke
Sander Gerber
Vincent Viola
William F. Murdy & Timothy C. Tyson

Testimonials

“ISW’s independent analysis is absolutely critical to the decisions made by commanders.”

-General David H. Petraeus, U.S. Army, Retired

“Of all the causes you could contribute to that would make a unique contribution to our national security and well-being, ISW is really the best. It’s a gem.”

-Former Senator Joseph Lieberman

ISW is just about the only institution focusing upon the tactical side of warfare. It has been a tremendous help to CACI in keeping our focus upon the issues affecting our customer’s needs on a daily basis. This focus has totally reshaped the view of what is necessary to achieve US objectives in several confrontations where the US is involved and where CACI has contracts to support our efforts in the field.

-Warren R. Phillips, Ph.D., Lead Director, CACI

“When you read a report from ISW, it covers everything... They have it all together. They’re the best”

-Robert “Bud” McFarlane, Former National Security
Advisor

Winston Churchill once said that we “...cannot avoid war by dilating upon its horrors.” Instead, the way to avoid war is by understanding what causes war. That’s what ISW does. Because I believe that preventing war is one of the most important things society can do, I feel that supporting ISW is the most important thing I can do.

-Mitzi Perdue, Friend of ISW



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

November 14, 2016

Dear Friends:

It is a pleasure to welcome everyone to the Institute for the Study of War's President's Circle Benefit Dinner.

We owe the safety of New York and our nation to the brave men and women who proudly answer the call to serve at home and abroad. It is vital that we never forget to support and uplift the members of our military who face the unknown and risk everything to protect our democratic ideals and freedoms, and organizations like ISW have made lasting contributions to the strength of our Armed Forces. Since 2007, ISW has been helping to support our country's most capable lines of defense through its valuable research, analysis, and educational resources. Tonight's dinner is also a wonderful occasion to renew our commitment to recognize the dedication, integrity, and courage of our service members, and together we will continue to pursue a better and brighter future for our world.

On behalf of the City of New York, I am proud to join in honoring General Stanley McChrystal for his bold commitment to service. Please accept my best wishes for a wonderful dinner and continued success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill de Blasio".

Bill de Blasio
Mayor