While Rome Burns: The Case for Arming the Kurds

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While Rome Burns: The Case for Arming the Kurds

You’ve probably heard in the news of the terrible havoc in the Middle East being created by the armed group Islamic State, sometimes known as ISIS, ISIL or just IS. We currently have friends in the region, an ethnic group known as the Kurds, living in northern Iraq, who are willing to fight these monsters. But current policy doesn’t allow us to arm them with the weapons they need, so the Islamic State atrocities go on and on. Please join us as we affirm that The United States should significantly reform its policy toward one or more countries in the Middle East. The country to which we will be changing our policy is Iraq. Let’s start with…

OBSERVATION 1. Our DEFINITIONS

**Significant**: “large enough to be noticed or have an effect” *(Merriam-Webster Online Dict. 2014* [*http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/significant*](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/significant)*)*

**Policy**: “a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body”*(Merriam-Webster Online Dict. 2014* [*http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy?show=0&t=1402599657*](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy?show=0&t=1402599657))

**Middle East** is defined in the Turkish Journal of Politics in 2011 as:

Turkish Journal of Politics Vol 2 No. 2, 2011 (Osman Nuri Özalp, Kırklareli University) “Where is the Middle East? The Definition and Classification Problem of the Middle East as a Regional Subsystem in International Relations” <http://tjp.fatih.edu.tr/docs/articles/112.pdf>

In a broad meaning, we can state that the Middle East covers a region from Ethiopia in the south, Turkey in the north, Afghanistan and Pakistan in the east to Morocco in the west.

**Peshmerga** is explained by the BBC News in 2014:

BBC NEWS 2014. Profile: Who are the Peshmerga? 12 Aug 2014 <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28738975>

The Peshmerga, whose name translates as "those who face death", are the Kurdish fighters in northern Iraq. In recent weeks, they have been fighting Islamist militants of the Islamic State - formerly known as Isis - who seized large swathes of territory in the north.

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY, or the conditions of the STATUS QUO. Two key FACTS:

FACT 1. Kurdish Aid Blocked. US law requires military aid to the Kurds to go through the Iraqi government in Baghdad, and they’re blocking it

Yerevan Saeed 2014. (journalist) US shift towards the Kurds too slow, expert says 25 Nov 2014 <http://rudaw.net/mobile/english/middleeast/25112014?ctl00_phMainContainer_phMain_ControlComments1_gvCommentsChangePage=4_5> (Brackets added)

The locations of Iraq’s internal conflicts mirror the ethno-sectarian borderlines that have turned the country into three major zones in the south, center and the north. The United States continues to support a united Iraq at a high cost of blood and treasure and avoids arming the Peshmerga directly, who have been a major force in pushing back the IS in Iraq and Syria. "The United States has to ship some more equipment to the KRG. But we cannot do that because the law says the American military aid has to go through Baghdad and of course Baghdad does not want to give too much military aid,” said [Tennessee Tech. University Professor Michael] Gunter.

FACT 2. Insufficient Supplies. The Kurds aren’t getting the heavy weapons they need to fight the Islamic State

Reuters news service quoting Iraqi Kurdistan President Massoud Barzani 2014. Iraqi Kurds say West not providing enough arms to defeat Islamic State 19 Nov 2014 <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/11/19/us-mideast-crisis-barzani-idUSKCN0J30ON20141119> (ellipses and parentheses in original)

"We'd like to thank the members of the (anti-IS) coalition for the support they have provided, but ... all the support we have received so far is not up to the level that is needed," Barzani told France 24 in an interview aired on Wednesday. "The heavy weapons systems that we need, especially in terms of quality and quantity, for example the APCs (armored personnel carriers), the helicopters, the artillery we need for a decisive war against them (IS) – we have not received these types of weapons," he said.

OBSERVATION 3. The HARMS

HARM 1. Staggering atrocities. The Islamic State commits horrific crimes and atrocities

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR 2014. (journalist Michael Holtz) 2 Oct 2014 UN report spotlights 'staggering' Islamic State atrocities in Iraq <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2014/1002/UN-report-spotlights-staggering-Islamic-State-atrocities-in-Iraq> (brackets in original)

The group, which is fighting in Iraq and Syria, has carried out a wide range of atrocities, including mass executions, abductions, rape and other forms of sexual and physical violence against women and children, the UN said.  A joint statement by the UN's mission in Iraq and its human rights commission said 9,347 Iraqi civilians had died in the conflict. Another 17,386 had been injured.  “The array of violations and abuses perpetrated by [Islamic State] and associated armed groups is staggering, and many of their acts may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity,” said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein.

HARM 2. Weaker US national security. Failing to arm the Kurds weakens US security by allowing Islamic State to grow

Julian Pecquet 2014. (journalist) 20 Nov 2014 “Congress weighs arming Iraqi Kurds” AL-MONITOR [http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/11/congress-arm-kurds-isis-warning-baghdad.html#](http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/11/congress-arm-kurds-isis-warning-baghdad.html) (first 2 brackets in original, last 2 added)

I think it makes eminent sense to arm the Kurds directly," said Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, a member of the Armed Services Committee. "They are the boots on the ground, they are fighting against [IS], they are capable and for whatever reason the administration has delayed providing them the tools to defeat [IS]. That makes no sense and weakens US national security." [Kurdish head of the Dept of Foreign Relations, Falah Mustafa] Hussein and [Kurdish Presidential Chief of Staff Fuad] Bakir argued that the peshmerga forces need the weapons to go on the offensive and take over territory occupied by IS. Otherwise, they said, IS will continue to be able to replace its losses despite US and coalition airstrikes.

OBSERVATION 4. We have a PLAN, to be passed by Congress and implemented by the Department of Defense

1. Authorize aid, the Royce Bill. Congress passes the November 2014 bill introduced by Rep. Ed Royce authorizing direct US military equipment aid and training to Kurdish Peshmerga in Iraq for the purpose of fighting the Islamic State.  
2. Arm the Kurds. The President and the Defense Department use the authority granted by the Royce bill to provide weapons and training to all remaining Peshmerga brigades not currently sufficiently armed and trained.  
3. Funding is $345 million taken from the existing Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund.   
4. Enforcement through normal means within existing agencies and existing laws.  
5. Plan takes effect the day after an Affirmative ballot.  
6. All Affirmative speeches may clarify as needed.

OBSERVATION 5. The ADVANTAGES

ADVANTAGE 1. Effectively fight the Islamic State.

Sub-Point A. The Link: Well-armed front line fighters. By reversing US policy, and no longer letting Iraq’s government tell us what we can give the Kurds, we can finally help them fight IS on the front-lines

Julian Pecquet 2014. (journalist) 20 Nov 2014 “Congress weighs arming Iraqi Kurds” AL-MONITOR [http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/11/congress-arm-kurds-isis-warning-baghdad.html#](http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/11/congress-arm-kurds-isis-warning-baghdad.html) (brackets in original)

Foreign Affairs Chairman Ed Royce, R-Calif., and ranking member Eliot Engel, D-N.Y., introduced [temporary legislation](http://backchannel.al-monitor.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/ROYCE_138_xml.introduction.pdf" \t "_blank) to arm the [peshmerga forces](http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/09/iraq-kurdish-forces-peshmerga-gain-ground-is.html" \t "_blank) in their fight against the Islamic State (IS). Doing so would mark a reversal of current US policy, which has sought to reinforce the central government in a bid to stop the country from splintering along [ethnic and sectarian lines](http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/11/iraq-sectarian-relations-islamic-state.html" \t "_blank). "We thought a long time ago that our appeals to Baghdad to do the right thing would be heard and [former Prime Minister Nouri al-] Maliki's government turned a deaf ear month after month. We've reached the point where we have allies to our cause of defeating [IS] fighting in the field, without adequate equipment, and we are determined to see that they obtain it," Royce told Al-Monitor. "We want the weapons in the hands of the peshmerga that are on the front line, now."

Sub-point B. The Impact: Effective Opposition. The Peshmergas are the most effective ground force currently fighting the Islamic State

Rep. Ed Royce quoted by journalist Yerevan Saeed 2014. (journalist) US shift towards the Kurds too slow, expert says 25 Nov 2014 <http://rudaw.net/mobile/english/middleeast/25112014?ctl00_phMainContainer_phMain_ControlComments1_gvCommentsChangePage=4_5> (Brackets added)

Last week, House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce introduced a bill to arm the KRG directly. "Our critical partner in the fight against ISIL (another name for ISIS) is badly outgunned. Despite being armed mainly with antiquated weapons, the Iraqi Kurdish 'Peshmerga' forces have proven to be the most effective ground force currently fighting ISIL. For months, I have urged the Administration to urgently arm the Kurds. So too have many others in Congress. This important legislation will finally allow the 190,000-strong force to get the firepower it needs to effectively fight this brutal terrorist organization," said the congressman in a statement on November 20.

ADVANTAGE 2. Greater stability in northern Iraq.

Using the Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund, we could establish a good security alliance by arming and training the Kurds. This would help stabilize northern Iraq

Dr. [Michael Knights](http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/experts/view/knights-michael) 2014. (PhD from Department of War Studies, King's College London; Lafer fellow of The Washington Institute, specializing in the military and security affairs of Iraq, Iran, and the Persian Gulf states) 24 July 2014 Last Man Standing: U.S. Security Cooperation and Kurdistan's Peshmerga <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/last-man-standing-u.s.-security-cooperation-and-kurdistans-peshmerga> (the word “federal” in this quote is referring to the Iraq federal government, not the US federal government)

With significant shared experience and mutual sacrifice fighting Iraq's insurgents, the U.S. and Kurdish militaries remain natural security partners. Iraqi Kurdistan's long frontier with ISIS and the safe domestic security environment make it an optimal air base location for U.S. drone and Special Forces operations against ISIS, whether covert or overt. The Kurdish forces are now the custodians of significant swaths of new territory and the guardians of persecuted non-Kurdish minorities who are being attacked daily by ISIS. Long-term accommodation between Kurds and neighboring ethnicities is vital for the stabilization of northern Iraq. As PUK's recent actions illustrate, the Kurds could facilitate the reinforcement of holdout pockets of federal security forces through Iraqi Kurdistan's airports. The Kurds control an important portion of Iraq's border with Syria, providing useful access to opposition-held areas. These factors necessitate an upgrade in the U.S. military alliance with the Kurds. Such a development would improve U.S.-KRG relations after a bruising few years of differences on a raft of issues. A major new security cooperation program could tap into the $5 billion Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund. Due to its good security and excellent airports, Iraqi Kurdistan would be an ideal venue to safely undertake a major U.S.-delivered military train-and-equip program for both Kurdish and federal Iraqi security forces.

2A Evidence: Arm the Kurds

2A EVIDENCE: ARM THE KURDS

TOPICALITY / DEFINITIONS

Arming the Kurds would be a “significant change” in US policy

Guy Taylor 2014. (journalist) WASHINGTON TIMES 20 Nov 2014 House GOP leader pushes for U.S. arms to go directly to Iraqi Kurds fighting ISIS <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/nov/20/house-gop-leader-pushes-for-us-arms-to-go-directly/?page=all>

[Rep. Ed Royce](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/ed-royce/) of California, chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, introduced legislation Thursday that would give the [White House](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/white-house/) “temporary” authority to ship American “anti-tank and anti-armor weapons, armored vehicles, long-range artillery” and other equipment directly to the Kurds. The legislation would give the president “three years” to provide such weapons without having to seek reapproval from Congress. It would represent a significant change in course from the current U.S. policy of allowing officials in the central government in [Baghdad](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/baghdad/) to determine what American equipment gets shipped to the Kurds in northern [Iraq](http://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/iraq/).

“Royce bill still has the US consult with Iraqi government” – Response: It is a clear departure from current policy

**Analysis: That’s because “consult” with Baghdad is not the same as Status Quo policy of “waiting for Baghdad’s permission before we do anything.” Under the plan, we go ahead and send the Kurds the weapons and simultaneously tell the Iraqi government in Baghdad what we’re doing.**

Julian Pecquet 2014. (journalist) 20 Nov 2014 “Congress weighs arming Iraqi Kurds” AL-MONITOR [http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/11/congress-arm-kurds-isis-warning-baghdad.html#](http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/11/congress-arm-kurds-isis-warning-baghdad.html) (brackets in original)

The Royce-Engel bill would make it US policy to "directly provide" the KRG with "advanced conventional weapons, training, and defense services, on an emergency and temporary basis." Authorized assistance would include "anti-tank and anti-armor weapons, armored vehicles, long-range artillery, crew-served weapons and ammunition, secure command and communications equipment, body armor, helmets, logistics equipment, excess defense articles and other military assistance that the President determines to be appropriate." The bill would sunset after three years, "in recognition of the emergency nature of this authority," according to a committee [press release](http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/press-release/chairman-royce-introduces-legislation-arm-kurds" \t "_blank). The White House declined to comment and the Iraqi Embassy did not respond to a request for comment. While the bill would require the US government to "consult" with Baghdad before providing the aid to Erbil, it would mark a clear departure from current policy.

INHERENCY

Kurds want to cooperate with the US military, but US policies are blocking

Dr. [Michael Knights](http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/experts/view/knights-michael) 2014. (PhD from Department of War Studies, King's College London; Lafer fellow of The Washington Institute, specializing in the military and security affairs of Iraq, Iran, and the Persian Gulf states) 24 July 2014 Last Man Standing: U.S. Security Cooperation and Kurdistan's Peshmerga <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/last-man-standing-u.s.-security-cooperation-and-kurdistans-peshmerga> (Note: the word “federal” in this quote refers to the Iraqi federal government, not the US federal government)

Cooperation between the U.S. military and peshmerga should be excellent considering the very pro-U.S. position adopted by the Kurds for decades, the pivotal U.S. role in protecting the fledgling KRG and overthrowing Saddam, and the basic affinity felt by American and Kurdish soldiers battling the same insurgents for more than a decade. In practice, however, the United States has struggled to work closely with Iraqi Kurdistan's military. Tensions between Baghdad and the KRG have been one obstacle, with the federal government claiming that Kurdistan should only be allowed to build and operate small and lightly armed paramilitary police forces, while blocking Kurdish access to end-user certificates for heavier equipment. Clashes and tension between Kurdish and federal forces have been a further complicating factor. The United States demanded a range of military reforms in Iraqi Kurdistan before it would commit to full development of the peshmerga and Zerevany, including the full integration of such forces under KRG ministries with budgetary and parliamentary oversight as opposed to political party control.

US military aid to Kurds is blocked by current law, which requires approval of Iraqi government before aid can flow (and Iraq blocks it)

Text of a Bill introduced into Congress by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman. Ed Royce 2014. (R-Calif. member of Congress, chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee) text of his bill, “A BILL To authorize the direct provision of defense articles, defense services, and related training to the Kurdistan Regional Government, and for other purposes.” <http://backchannel.al-monitor.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/ROYCE_138_xml.introduction.pdf>

United States airstrikes against ISIL targets have helped stall the terrorist organization’s advance on territory held by Kurdish forces, but have not proven to be militarily decisive against ISIL. The United States and its allies have provided the resupply of various small arms and training to Peshmerga forces since June 2014. Such resupply efforts, to comply with United States law, must be approved and coordinated through the Government of Iraq. In the initial phase of the resupply effort, the Government of Iraq has constrained and delayed the emergency supply of weapons to the Kurdistan Regional Government.

Kurdish forces’ are underdeveloped due to lack of equipment & training

Dr. [Michael Knights](http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/experts/view/knights-michael) 2014. (PhD from Department of War Studies, King's College London; Lafer fellow of The Washington Institute, specializing in the military and security affairs of Iraq, Iran, and the Persian Gulf states) 24 July 2014 Last Man Standing: U.S. Security Cooperation and Kurdistan's Peshmerga <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/last-man-standing-u.s.-security-cooperation-and-kurdistans-peshmerga>

Despite these advances, the peshmerga is still significantly underdeveloped. Outside the RGBs, peshmerga units' equipment remains rudimentary and heavy weapons are largely absent. During periods of crisis, the peshmerga relies on improvised logistical, engineering, communications, and medical capabilities, mainly drawing support from KRG civilian agencies and the public. Aside from some small, unarmored helicopters, the peshmerga currently has no air support. With Baghdad refusing since 2003 to fund any KRG military forces except the Zerevany (which is nominally funded through the federal Ministry of Interior), operating the peshmerga has been a huge drain on the KRG budget. Indeed, Baghdad is still withholding all the KRG's monthly salary payments due to disputes over oil contracts and revenue-sharing arrangements. Under such circumstances, maintenance of the current mobilization and procurement of new equipment and training are particularly difficult for Kurdistan to finance.

“Other countries are aiding the Kurds” – Response: It’s not enough

Reuters news service quoting Iraqi Kurdistan President Massoud Barzani 2014. Iraqi Kurds say West not providing enough arms to defeat Islamic State 19 Nov 2014 <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/11/19/us-mideast-crisis-barzani-idUSKCN0J30ON20141119>

France says it has provided machine guns and munitions and has promised to give "sophisticated" weapons to Iraqi Kurds. Some 200 French special forces are also on the ground training the Iraqi Kurds.Germany has said it is sending weapons to equip 4,000 Kurdish fighters, including machine guns, grenades, anti-tank systems and armored vehicles. Britain has said it will provide anti-tank weapons, night-vision goggles, radar and body armor . However, Barzani said the pledges were not sufficient.

“Status Quo is doing air-drops of weapons for Kurds” – Response: Doesn’t work. ISIS gets them

Adam Chandler 2014. (journalist) More American Weapons for ISIS, THE ATLANTIC, 21 Oct 2014 <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/10/american-weapons-find-their-way-to-isis-again/381733/> (brackets added)

On Monday, hoping to decisively turn the tide in the battle, the United States [airdropped weapons](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/10/20/us-mideast-crisis-usa-airdrops-idUSKCN0I904X20141020) to the Syrian Kurds of Kobani. By way of explanation, especially to a skeptical Turkish audience, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry offered that not aiding the Kurds in their fight against ISIS is both "irresponsible" and "morally very difficult." Unfortunately, with that one airdrop, the weight of the American dread about where its weapons might go also landed. According to the Associated Press, some of the weapons meant to reach the Kurds [ended up](http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2014/10/21/world/middleeast/ap-ml-syria.html?ref=aponline) in Islamic State hands instead.  
[“]The cache of weapons included hand grenades, ammunition and rocket-propelled grenade launchers, according to a video uploaded by a media group loyal to the Islamic State.[“]

“Why hasn’t the bill already been passed?” – Response: Because some Senators oppose it

Julian Pecquet 2014. (journalist) 20 Nov 2014 “Congress weighs arming Iraqi Kurds” AL-MONITOR [http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/11/congress-arm-kurds-isis-warning-baghdad.html#](http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/11/congress-arm-kurds-isis-warning-baghdad.html) (brackets in original)

The Senate isn't quite there yet, however. "We met with the Kurdish delegation today," Senate Foreign Relations Chairman Robert Menendez, D-N.J., told Al-Monitor on Nov. 20. "We think they're incredibly important in our fight [against IS]. They've proven to be on the ground now, and of being effective. I think we need to continue to bolster our effort to help them with the right types of armements. How we do that exactly is still an open question for me." Congressional sources tell Al-Monitor that there's been some talk about helping the Kurds directly in the annual Defense authorization bill currently being negotiated between the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, but leadership is said to oppose it.

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

Fighting the Islamic State should be as clear as fighting the Nazi Holocaust: Atrocities demand intervention

Marc Thiessen 2014. (scholar with American Enterprise Institute; former policy advisor to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; former speechwriter for Pres. G. W. Bush) WASHINGTON POST 18 Aug 2014 In failing to stop the Islamic State, U.S. ignores the lessons of Auschwitz <http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/marc-thiessen-in-failing-to-stop-the-islamic-state-us-ignores-the-lessons-of-auschwitz/2014/08/18/ef3b3fe8-26d2-11e4-86ca-6f03cbd15c1a_story.html>

Walking among the starvation cells and gas chambers where more than a million souls perished, it is hard to explain to my 12-year-old son how the free world allowed this happen. Why did the world’s democracies not stop the Nazi movement in its infancy — before it indoctrinated millions with its hateful ideology, took control of a great power, built its military might, invaded foreign lands and constructed death camps like the one here at Auschwitz? The depressing answer is: for the same reason that the world’s democracies have done almost nothing to stop the rise of the Islamic State.

We have to deal with the Islamic State: They are threatening America and Europe

Marc Thiessen 2014. (scholar with American Enterprise Institute; former policy advisor to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; former speechwriter for Pres. G. W. Bush) WASHINGTON POST 18 Aug 2014 In failing to stop the Islamic State, U.S. ignores the lessons of Auschwitz <http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/marc-thiessen-in-failing-to-stop-the-islamic-state-us-ignores-the-lessons-of-auschwitz/2014/08/18/ef3b3fe8-26d2-11e4-86ca-6f03cbd15c1a_story.html>

Some would like to believe that the Islamic State’s offensive in Syria and Iraq is nothing more than “a quarrel in a faraway country between people of whom we know nothing,” in the words of Neville Chamberlain. In fact, the Islamic State’s leaders have a messianic vision of building a totalitarian Islamic empire encompassing all current and former Muslim lands, stretching from Europe to North Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia. They may never see that vision realized, but they can wreak an awful lot of death and destruction trying. Their “caliph,” Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, recently [warned](http://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA00/20140205/101716/HHRG-113-FA00-Wstate-McGurkB-20140205.pdf): “Our last message is to the Americans: Soon we will be in direct confrontation, and the sons of Islam have prepared for such a day. So watch, for we are with you, watching.” They are rapidly accumulating the recruits and resources to follow through on this threat. The Islamic State is [actively establishing cells outside Iraq and Syria](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/islamic-state-working-to-establish-cells-outside-iraq-and-syria-us-says/2014/08/14/639c32b0-23f5-11e4-8593-da634b334390_story.html?wprss=rss_national-security), including in Europe.

Islamic State is a big threat to the region and beyond, including Europe and the US

Dr Harlan K. Ullman 2014. (PhD from Fletcher School of Diplomacy; serves on the Senior Advisory boards for Supreme Allied Commander Europe at NATO) 1 Dec 2014 The Islamic State: Existential or Exaggerated Danger? <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-harlan-k-ullman/the-islamic-state-existen_b_6214556.html>

If IS increases its hold over Iraq and mounts a successful assault against Baghdad, it will indeed become a potentially existential threat to the region and beyond. Saudi Arabia will be next on the IS game plan. Other regional states will become highly vulnerable. And the large number of foreign Jihadists with legitimate European, African and American passports will constitute a clear and present danger to those regions.

Islamic State plans an extravaganza of brutality – they need to be stopped

Secretary of State John Kerry 2014. Testimony Before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. THE ISIS THREAT: WEIGHING THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION’S RESPONSE, HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 18 Sept 2014 <http://docs.house.gov/meetings/FA/FA00/20140918/102659/HHRG-113-FA00-Transcript-20140918.pdf>

It is critical that, you know, we all understand how complicated it is precisely because we are not just focused on taking out the enemy out on the battlefield, but we have to take out an entire network. I don’t know how many of you saw it, but the Australians today arrested a large group of people that they suspected of being ISIL members, supporters, sympathizers in Australia who were planning some kind of extravaganza of brutality in Australia. So we have to decimate and discredit a militant cult masquerading as a religious movement and claiming, with no legitimacy whatsoever, to be a state.

Islamic State commits gruesome violence

WALL STREET JOURNAL 2014. (journalist Neil Maclucas) 27 Aug 2014 Syrian Army and Islamic State Committing Atrocities, Says U.N. <http://www.wsj.com/articles/syrian-army-and-islamic-state-committing-war-crimes-says-u-n-1409142165>

Islamic State, formerly known as ISIS or ISIL, holds executions, amputations and lashings in public squares on Fridays in the areas of the country that it controls, the report said, and urges civilians, including children, to watch. Gains by the extremist groups as well as a large influx of foreign fighters have contributed to the increasing in violence, the report said. "Hundreds of civilians are dying each day as the fighting goes on with no regard to law or to conscience," said Paulo Pinheiro, the head of the commission, which was established in 2011 by the U.N. Human Rights Council to investigate violations of international human rights law.

Islamic State is a serious threat to the US homeland

[*Stuart Gottlieb*](https://sipa.columbia.edu/faculty/stuart-gottlieb) 2014. (*teaches American foreign policy and counterterrorism at* [*Columbia University*](http://www.columbia.edu/)*, where he is also a Member of the* [*Saltzman Institute of War & Peace Studies*](http://www.siwps.com/)*) THE NATIONAL INTEREST 20 Sept 2014* Four Reasons ISIS Is a Threat to the American Homeland <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/four-reasons-isis-threat-the-american-homeland-11317>

The fact is groups like ISIS always think and act in terms of both local and global ambitions—or, in the parlance of the “defensive jihad” they believe they are waging, their targets are both “near enemies” (apostate Muslim rulers) and “far enemies” (the infidels that support them). While some in Congress and elsewhere still believe ISIS is a localized problem of little concern to the United States, the inconvenient truth is that ISIS actually represents a dangerous new chapter in the global war being waged by Al Qaeda and its affiliated and inspired groups, and a clear and present threat to the U.S. homeland.

SOLVENCY / ADVOCACY

We should aid the Kurds in the fight against Islamic State because of the failure of Iraqi government forces

Dr. [Michael Knights](http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/experts/view/knights-michael) 2014. (PhD from Department of War Studies, King's College London; Lafer fellow of The Washington Institute, specializing in the military and security affairs of Iraq, Iran, and the Persian Gulf states) 24 July 2014 Last Man Standing: U.S. Security Cooperation and Kurdistan's Peshmerga <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/last-man-standing-u.s.-security-cooperation-and-kurdistans-peshmerga>

On July 20, Masrur Barzani, head of the KRG National Security Council, added, "ISIS now has a lot of modern military equipment in their possession, and to fight against them I think the peshmerga have to be much better equipped than they are." A ramp-up of U.S. security assistance to the Kurds is merited, particularly as a hedge against the difficulties of U.S. security cooperation with the shattered and Iran-influenced federal Iraqi security forces.

Kurds have 190,000-strong force that needs the firepower to fight Islamic State

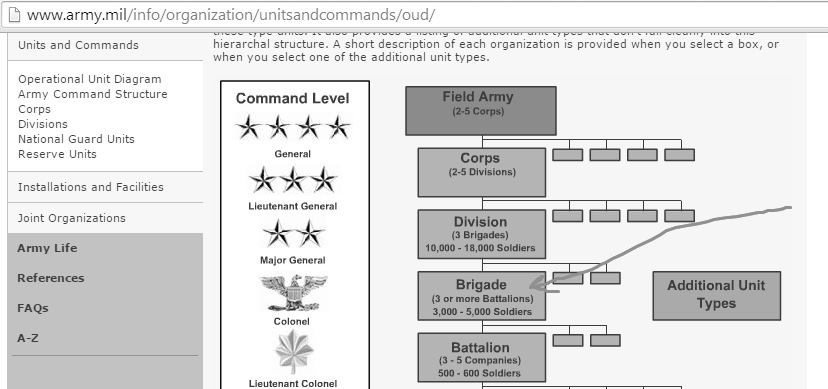
Paul McLeary 2014. (journalist) MILITARY TIMES, 21 Nov 2014 House Republican wants to skirt Baghdad, arm the Kurds <http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/capitol-hill/2014/11/21/royce-kurds-112114/19329467/>

Traditionally, Baghdad has to sign off on any arms transfers to the [Peshmerga](http://www.defensenews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2014311070020), a 190,000-strong ground force that has recently had some success fighting the militants, after being outfought for much of the summer. But this new legislation, which if not passed by the 113th Congress by Dec. 31 would have to be resubmitted for consideration next year in the Republican-controlled 114th Congress, would provide "anti-tank and anti-armor weapons, armored vehicles, long-range artillery, crew-served weapons and ammunition, secure command and communications equipment" to the Kurdish forces In a Nov. 20 statement, Rep. Ed Royce, R-Calif., said that "our critical partner in the fight against ISIL is badly outgunned. Despite being armed mainly with antiquated weapons, the Iraqi Kurdish 'Peshmerga' forces have proven to be the most effective ground force currently fighting ISIL. For months, I have urged the Administration to urgently arm the Kurds. So too have many others in Congress. This important legislation will finally allow the 190,000-strong force to get the firepower it needs to effectively fight this brutal terrorist organization."

“How big is a brigade?” – Response: 3000 – 5000 soldiers.

**According to a chart published on the official US Army homepage that we’ll make available upon request, a Brigade has 3000 to 5000 soldiers.**

Official home page of the US Army, undated. “Operational Unit Diagrams” <http://www.army.mil/info/organization/unitsandcommands/oud/>



“How much does the plan cost?” – Responses: 1) the entire cost fits into the existing Counterterrorism budget, see the 1A ADV-2 card above. 2) Arming 8 Kurdish brigades costs $92 million. 3) See the rest of the cost calculation after reading this card and the information below.

Dr. [Michael Knights](http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/experts/view/knights-michael) 2014. (PhD from Department of War Studies, King's College London; Lafer fellow of The Washington Institute, specializing in the military and security affairs of Iraq, Iran, and the Persian Gulf states) 24 July 2014 Last Man Standing: U.S. Security Cooperation and Kurdistan's Peshmerga <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/last-man-standing-u.s.-security-cooperation-and-kurdistans-peshmerga>

The net effect of U.S. hesitation has been that only eight KRG brigades were built with $92 million of U.S. support (as compared with 109 U.S.-supported brigades in federal Iraq at a cost of more than $25 billion). Today the eight Kurdish units are intact, whereas almost a quarter of the federal forces have disintegrated.

“How much does the plan cost?” – Do the math: $345 million to arm the remaining 30 Kurdish brigades.

190,000 soldiers divided by 5000 per brigade = 38 brigades. 8 brigades already armed – they cost $92 million, that means $11.5 million/brigade. Total cost to arm the remaining 30 brigades = 30 x $11.5m = $345 million.

Specific details of what weapons the Kurds need

Julian Pecquet 2014. (journalist) 20 Nov 2014 “Congress weighs arming Iraqi Kurds” AL-MONITOR [http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/11/congress-arm-kurds-isis-warning-baghdad.html#](http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/11/congress-arm-kurds-isis-warning-baghdad.html)

The Kurds have been distributing a half-dozen page wish list on Capitol Hill that includes items such as anti-tank launch tubes and ammunition, heavy machine guns, high-powered rifles and mortars. Their request struck a chord in both chambers. "It's long overdue," said Rep. Ros-Lehtinen, R-Fla., chairwoman of the panel on the Middle East. "We promised that we'd be helping them out and we did nothing. It's pathetic that they have to come over here with this print-out."

Specific details of what weapons the plan provides

Julian Pecquet 2014. (journalist) 20 Nov 2014 “Congress weighs arming Iraqi Kurds” AL-MONITOR [http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/11/congress-arm-kurds-isis-warning-baghdad.html#](http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/11/congress-arm-kurds-isis-warning-baghdad.html) (brackets in original)

The Royce-Engel bill would make it US policy to "directly provide" the KRG with "advanced conventional weapons, training, and defense services, on an emergency and temporary basis." Authorized assistance would include "anti-tank and anti-armor weapons, armored vehicles, long-range artillery, crew-served weapons and ammunition, secure command and communications equipment, body armor, helmets, logistics equipment, excess defense articles and other military assistance that the President determines to be appropriate."

Summary of what the bill does

House Committee on Foreign Affairs official website 2014. Chairman Royce Introduces Legislation to Arm the Kurds 20 Nov 2014 <http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/press-release/chairman-royce-introduces-legislation-arm-kurds>

[This legislation](http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/sites/republicans.foreignaffairs.house.gov/files/ROYCE_138_xml.pdf" \t "_blank):  
·         makes it the policy of the United States to provide direct assistance to the Kurdistan Regional Government to combat ISIL;  
·         identifies Iraqi Kurds as a reliable and stable partner of the United States;  
·         recognizes that the Peshmerga are the official security force of the Kurdistan Regional Government, organized in accordance with the Iraqi Constitution;  
·         finds that defeating ISIL is critical to maintaining an inclusive, unified Iraq;  
·         emphasizes that ISIL is a significant terrorist threat which may employ more than 4,000 captured heavy weapons, 1,500 armored vehicles, and 50 long-range artillery pieces;  
·         maintains existing Congressional oversight of significant arms transfers;  
·         sunsets after three years, in recognition of the emergency nature of this authority.

Link to the text of the entire bill

<http://backchannel.al-monitor.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/ROYCE_138_xml.introduction.pdf>

DISADVANTAGE RESPONSES

“Contributes to break-up of Iraq” – Response: Non-unique. Iraq is already broken up.

Yerevan Saeed 2014. (journalist) US shift towards the Kurds too slow, expert says 25 Nov 2014 <http://rudaw.net/mobile/english/middleeast/25112014?ctl00_phMainContainer_phMain_ControlComments1_gvCommentsChangePage=4_5> (Brackets added)

“I have been saying that Iraq is a kaput. It’s a former Iraq,” he said. “The United States foreign policy still sees Iraq and the United States is still trying to continue Iraq. It’s just a losing proposition,” he [Tennessee Tech. Univ. Professor Michael Gunter] added. “We really have three entities here – Shiastan, which claims to be Iraq, Sunnistan which is ISIS and the KRG,” he added. The locations of Iraq’s internal conflicts mirror the ethno-sectarian borderlines that have turned the country into three major zones in the south, center and the north.