

Statement by Secretary of Defense Ash Carter on the Netherlands Expansion of Air Campaign Against ISIL in Syria

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I want to commend the government of the Netherlands for its announcement today that Dutch pilots will expand their current mission over Iraq to participate in coalition air strikes against ISIL in eastern Syria. I also appreciate the announcement of additional funding to support moderate armed Syrian opposition groups with civilian means and medical assistance, consideration of additional support to the Iraqi security forces and the Peshmerga, and additional funding for the restoration of damaged hospitals, schools and other infrastructure.

As I discussed last week in Paris when I met with my counterparts from six of the leading contributors to the counter-ISIL campaign including Dutch Minister of Defense Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, the lasting defeat of ISIL must be a global undertaking, because it is a global threat. At that meeting, we reached broad agreement on our military campaign plan and the capabilities required to deliver ISIL a lasting defeat, and we each committed to further aligning our contributions to meet those needs in order to continue accelerating that campaign.

I am grateful for Minister Hennis-Plasschaert's immediate action following last week's meeting, and for the continuing commitment from the Dutch people to this fight. They have provided a strong example for the 26 nation military coalition which will gather in Brussels along with representatives from the Iraqi government in two weeks to discuss the progress of the campaign and what additional capabilities are needed from every member nation.