

# "U.S. Airstrikes in Syria: Critical Analysis of Iranian Proxy Impact, Rising Geopolitical Tensions, and Middle East Stability Threats"

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## Introduction

In recent weeks, the U.S. has carried out a spate of airstrikes across Syria, the majority targeting Iranian-backed militias and extremist groups such as ISIS. The strikes were in retaliation for a sharp increase in attacks against the U.S. presence in Iraq and Syria, further inflaming an already volatile situation. But hostilities are also growing in the Middle East, increasingly at risk of turning into a wider battlefield as the war between Russia and Ukraine, and Israel's with Hamas, rages on.

Yet the question arises whether these airstrikes mark a necessary escalation in US military involvement or rather constitute the latest round in an endless cycle of violence.

The column looks at why the U.S. is striking, the military and political dynamics, and how these acts will further grease the conflicts.

## What Triggers the Airstrikes?

Cumulatively, Iranian proxy militia forces have conducted over 200 rocket and drone attacks against all U.S. military installations in both Iraq and Syria in the last two weeks alone. The attacks culminated in targeting a base in Syria, Mission Support Site Green Village-arguably a key installation-in an attack that killed six Syrian Democratic Forces soldiers allied to the US military.

The U.S. responded with precision strikes on militias including Kata'ib Hezbollah, Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, and Hurras al-Deen-all with close ties to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Iranian influence is growing, and its tendencies to use proxy militias to reach further have turned into a hotbed of tension between the U.S. and its allies in the region. What makes matters interesting is that Tehran has used such groups to pressure the U.S. forces added to the recent surge in attacks underlining dramatically the growing instability in Syria and Iraq.

### Details of the U.S. Airstrikes

The retaliatory strikes targeted several facilities affiliated with these Iran-backed militias and affiliates of ISIS. According to the Pentagon, more than 40 militants were killed, which included key figures within Hurras al-Deen and Kata'ib Hezbollah. The strikes-carried out by F-35 fighter jets and MQ-9 Reaper drones-destroyed command centers, depots holding weapons, and training camps.

That precision targeting was to degrade both the residual capacity of ISIS and Iranian proxies. The destruction of key facilities has set back these groups' capability to conduct a coordinated attack, at least for the foreseeable future.

Casualty Count and Military Impact Whereas the U.S. confirmed that more than 40 militants were killed, the fallout arising out of these strikes has implications other than just immediate casualties. Other reports said that the attacks severely disrupted the operational capacity of such militias, weakening their capability to a large extent to plan and execute future assaults.

In the run-up to these airstrikes, about 50 U.S. personnel had been injured in recent drone and rocket attacks. The growing toll has put new pressure on the Pentagon not only to strike back but

also to reconsider the broader U.S. strategy in the Mideast, where forces remain stretched thin across several active conflict zones.

### The Strategic Role of US Forces in Syria

The U.S. maintains a force of around 900 troops in Syria, dedicated to two missions: preventing the reemergence of ISIS and countering Iranian influence via its militia proxies. Those missions have grown increasingly complicated. The fight against ISIS has become increasingly enmeshed in the larger U.S. mission of countering Iranian influence within the region. The airstrikes reflect a changing U.S. approach—striking at both ISIS cells and Iranian-backed groups as it seeks to prevent further destabilization.

But as the Biden administration navigates these dual threats, the broader question of how long U.S. forces will remain in Syria weighs in. As tensions in the region are higher than ever, keeping a military presence which is sustainable will be increasingly difficult.

### Bombing and Global Geopolitical Tensions

These latest airstrikes do not occur in a vacuum; they form part of a wider-ranging geopolitical game of chess.

The U.S. is sending a clear signal to Tehran, Moscow, and Ankara as regards its commitment to regional stability. It is not just that U.S. airpower started to push back against Iran's influence in Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon through proxy militias, but a coalition including most of Washington's most firm Western allies—the recent U.K. mission of striking Houthi positions in Yemen having been joined to the U.S. Meanwhile, Russia and Turkey have their own major stakes in the outcome of Syria's

ongoing war. Russia, an ally of the Assad regime for many decades, has collaborated with Iran in trying to keep things as they are in Syria, while Turkey has focused its efforts on containing the Kurdish groups in northeastern Syria, very often at odds with America's support for the Kurdish-led SDF forces. The spate of interests created a battlefield where every player's move is likely to have farther-reaching consequences than meets the eye.

## US Military Strategy Beyond

The recent strikes represent a significant tactical victory for the U.S., but the broader question remains: What comes next? Though the strikes have weakened both ISIS and Iranian-backed militias for the time being, U.S. officials warn the long-term presence of these groups presents a persistent threat to American forces and their regional allies. The Pentagon has already increased drone surveillance and air defenses across the region—a strong indicator that U.S. forces are preparing for a prolonged engagement.

But with all these successes, further escalation is precariously real. With Iran still capable of deploying its array of proxy forces across the Middle East, another round of retaliation feels very up in the air, with a great likelihood of the region engulfing itself in a wider conflict.

## Humanitarian Concerns during Military Operations

But these military operations are clearly not being counted in terms of the number of militants killed. While the airstrikes target militant positions, thousands of civilians have been forced to flee Syria. The Syrian War, which began entering its 13th year, has displaced millions of people so far and reduced whole cities to rubble. Ongoing U.S. and coalition operations are mindful of the devastating humanitarian consequences of continued military action.

## International Implications of U.S. Airstrikes

These airstrikes are a strong message not only to Iran but to other international players in Syria, particularly Russia and Turkey. For both nations, the strategic interests run deep in what Syria is to become: Russian support of the Assad regime is critical for its standing in the region, while Turkey continues to battle Kurdish forces it sees as a threat to its sovereignty.

It is in these dynamics that U.S. strikes complicate, especially with Russia, which may look at American military action as a challenge to its regional authority. Besides, a war between Israel and Hamas has already caught worldwide attention toward the region, which in itself increases further potential for destabilization. Certainly, the potential does exist that any one miscalculation could turn a local skirmish into a full-scale regional war.

## Conclusion

The recent U.S. airstrikes in Syria marked a significant escalatory turn in an already volatile region. They have achieved their objective of wiping out more than 40 militants and disrupting the operational capabilities of some key Iranian-backed groups. But the wider geopolitical landscape has been left little short of treacherous: tensions between Iran and the U.S. run higher than at any time in recent years, and global conflicts elsewhere continue to smolder-the risk of further entanglement in the Middle East growing by the day. As the world watches, the U.S. has to balance its military objectives with the diplomatic ways of averting the engulfing wider conflict in the region. Yet, with Iran proxies still active and extremist groups like ISIS regrouping, how long the U.S. can stay in Syria remains a critical issue before the policymakers.

## Author Bio:

Eric A. Cinotti, MPA, JD is a highly regarded expert in constitutional law, national security, public administration, and emergency management, with a distinguished career that encompasses military service, intelligence operations, and academia. A published author and legal scholar, Cinotti provides in-depth analysis on U.S. military strategy, geopolitical conflicts, and global security. As the host of the internationally syndicated talk show *The Hostile Zone*, Cinotti delivers expert commentary on intelligence analysis, emergency management, defense strategies, and U.S. foreign policy, leveraging his background as a military veteran, intelligence expert, and emergency management specialist. His experience in conducting complex investigations, crisis response, and intelligence operations solidifies his authority in national security and international relations. Furthermore, Cinotti's role as a professor and prolific writer has shaped the discourse in constitutional law, military strategy, emergency management, and global security policies, contributing to critical discussions on national defense and foreign policy.