SUPPORTERS ARGUE
ISIS is the most well-armed, well-funded, deadly threat to global security in years. If the U.S. military does not act quickly and boldly, ISIS will consolidate its territory and secure a state from which it can plot deadly attacks against the West and potentially carry out genocide. To ignore the ISIS threat would mean a disastrous abdication of U.S. influence in the Middle East.

OPPONENTS ARGUE
As proven by the disastrous U.S. presence in Iraq, little long-term progress can come from U.S. military intervention in the Middle East and Persian Gulf. U.S. interference—particularly ill-planned, short-term operations—aggravates sectarian tensions without compelling local powers to assume responsibility for stabilizing and securing their own territory. Even limited military action in Iraq and Syria is likely to lead to broader U.S. involvement and another unproductive ground war.

In August 2014, members of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), an extremist Islamic militant group, beheaded James Foley, an American journalist who had been kidnapped in Syria in 2012. Two weeks later, in early September, the group similarly executed Steven Sotloff, another American journalist, who had been captured in Syria in 2013. In videos released by the group, Foley and Sotloff read statements moments before their executions claiming the beheadings were retribution for U.S. air strikes on ISIS forces in Iraq.

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, sometimes translated as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), is a militant group that aims to build an Islamic state, or caliphate, in the Middle East. Since late 2013, the group has conquered a substantial amount of territory in Syria and Iraq, complicating a civil war that has raged in Syria since 2011 and threatening to destabilize Iraq along sectarian lines. In June 2014, the group shortened its name to the Islamic State and declared that it had established a caliphate in the area it controls. (Despite the name change, many world leaders and media outlets often continue to refer to the group as ISIS or ISIL.)

ISIS emerged as an offshoot of the militant group Al Qaeda in Iraq, which began operating in Iraq after a U.S.-led invasion toppled Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein in 2003. The overthrow of Hussein's government cleared the way for the construction of a democratic government but also unleashed long-simmering sectarian tensions that threatened to fragment the country. Iraq's Islamic population, like that in much of the Muslim world, is composed of different sects, notably Sunnis and Shiites, groups that have clashed with each other for more than a thousand years.

After nearly a decade of efforts to establish a secure, peaceful Iraq, American troops withdrew from the country in 2011. They left in their wake a Shiite-dominated central Iraqi government that, though relatively stable and democratic, remained threatened by ongoing sectarian tensions and insurgencies from militant groups. By late 2013, ISIS posed a significant military threat to the Iraqi government. In early 2014, the group's forces—with help from former Hussein loyalists and Sunni tribes that felt marginalized and persecuted by Iraq's government—conquered predominantly Sunni areas in northern Iraq and Syria, alarming the Western world with its swift and overwhelming military success. Al Qaeda, the international terrorist group responsible for the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States, has condemned the group for sowing dissent within jihadist ranks.

ISIS quickly implemented its extreme version of Islamic law in territories under its control, brutally persecuting Christians and other minority sects. In some conquered areas, ISIS has conducted mass executions of opposing soldiers; handed down harsh punishments—such as the chopping off of thieves’ hands and crucifixions—for a variety of infractions; and imposed bans on music, smoking, and other behavior it deems immoral. The group is also known for its harsh treatment of women; in addition to imposing restrictions on what women can wear and where they can go, ISIS has sold women and girls into slavery and forced them to wed ISIS fighters.

A relatively cash-rich organization, ISIS has raised funds by selling oil and ancient Iraqi artifacts, looting banks, extorting Iraqis, collecting ransom from kidnappings, and taxing civilians in areas under its control. Experts consider ISIS—which has come into possession of heavy weaponry from both fleeing Iraqi troops and Syrian rebels—better trained and equipped than Al Qaeda, which has been a focal point of U.S. antiterrorism efforts for more than a decade.

ISIS's aggression in 2014 triggered renewed U.S. involvement in Iraq. The United States has sent hundreds of U.S. Special Operations Forces to Iraq to gather intelligence and analyze how the U.S. military could aid the Iraqi government in fighting the ISIS insurgents. After ISIS gained additional ground in August 2014, U.S. president Barack Obama (D) authorized limited air strikes on ISIS artillery positions with the stated goals of protecting U.S. personnel in Iraq, driving the group away from the largest dam in the country, and preventing ISIS from carrying out a genocidal slaughter of the Yazidi.
a small Islamic sect.

The United States faces major policy decisions, meanwhile, regarding ISIS activity in Syria. In 2011, civil war erupted in the country after Syrian president Bashar al-Assad violently cracked down on protesters during the Arab Spring, a series of pro-democracy uprisings that swept the Arab world. The Obama administration has repeatedly urged Assad, whose regime has been accused of various human rights abuses, including the use of chemical weapons against the Syrian people, to step down and clear the way for a democratic government. He has refused, and the civil war has spread.

The emergence of ISIS as a major player in Syria has sparked a separate civil war between two anti-Assad groups: more moderate rebels predominantly interested in toppling the Assad regime and religious extremists intent on forming an Islamic state. The United States has been wary of fighting ISIS in ways that might unintentionally aid Assad's government. U.S. policy makers have also been reluctant to send military aid to Syrian rebels because of the possibility that such weapons could fall into the hands of ISIS or other extremist groups. Nevertheless, in a speech in September 2014, President Obama announced that U.S. action against ISIS would move into Syria, and that the initiative would include arming moderate Syrian rebels in the hopes they would use those weapons against ISIS. It is likely, however, that the rebel forces will also use U.S. arms against Assad.

Polls in the United States in recent years have repeatedly indicated that, after nine years of combat in Iraq and more than a decade of war in Afghanistan, most Americans are war-weary and opposed to engaging in another ground campaign, particularly in the turbulent Middle East. In many ways, the controversy over what the United States should do regarding ISIS reflects a broader debate regarding the U.S. role in the Arab world. While some advocate a strong presence in the region to advance U.S. interests, others contend that American meddling is in large part responsible for the growth of militant groups like ISIS in the first place.

Obama administration officials have articulated several goals in the fight against ISIS: protecting the approximately 5,000 U.S. personnel in Iraq, preventing a humanitarian catastrophe, defending the Iraqi government, preventing a full-scale Iraqi civil war, and keeping ISIS from establishing a base in Iraq and Syria from which it can launch terrorist attacks on the West. Intelligence analysts estimate that approximately 1,000 ISIS fighters are from Western countries. Of those, an estimated 100 hold U.S. passports, a fact that has prompted concern that ISIS will eventually turn its attention to launching attacks on U.S. soil, as Al Qaeda did on September 11, 2001.

President Obama has repeatedly argued that political reform in Iraq must complement any military strike against ISIS, and he has pledged not to involve U.S. troops in another ground war there. Observers, however, have wondered whether the broad goals surrounding American intervention in Iraq might lead to "mission creep"—the gradual broadening of U.S. military objectives and actions. Many have pressed the Obama administration to more clearly define U.S. goals in the battle against ISIS, and to set limits for the commitment of U.S. forces. "For a president criticized as overly cautious and reluctant to lead, Barack Obama is taking a huge risk," Associated Press reporter Julie Pace wrote in September 2014. "He is thrusting U.S. fighting forces into a growing military operation with clear dangers, unknown costs, an indefinite length and unpredictable consequences."

Should the United States be taking military action against ISIS?

Supporters of taking military action stress that ISIS is a brutal, ruthless group bent not only on establishing extremist inhumane theocracies in Iraq and Syria, but also on attacking the West and wholly undermining U.S. interests in the Middle East. To do nothing against ISIS, proponents warn, would lead to a humanitarian catastrophe and essentially amount to forsaking all responsibility, moral weight, and influence in the Middle East, leaving innocent people and moderates in the hands of fanatics.

Opponents argue that, brutal and ruthless as ISIS may be, military action will not solve the problem. Disarming ISIS is the responsibility of regional powers and Iraq's own security forces, critics argue, and only the formation of an inclusive Iraqi government offers any sustainable solution to the extremist threat. Furthermore, opponents contend, U.S. military involvement will likely lead to mission creep, entangling the United States again in another deadly, costly, and unconstructive ground war in the region.

**U.S. Invasion Brings Changes to Iraq**

On September 11, 2001, terrorist operatives from the Islamic extremist group Al Qaeda hijacked four commercial airliners in the United States, crashing two of them into the Twin Towers of New York City’s World Trade Center and a third into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.; the terrorists had intended to crash the fourth plane into the Capitol in Washington, D.C., but passengers revolted against the hijackers and the plane crashed into an empty field in Pennsylvania, killing all aboard. Almost 3,000 people were killed in the attacks. The United States responded by invading Afghanistan, whose Taliban government had been harboring Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.

After toppling the Taliban, the administration of President George W. Bush (R, 2001–09) argued that Iraqi president Saddam Hussein was developing weapons of mass destruction, which could fall into the hands of terrorists if he was not overthrown. The administration also alleged that Hussein was offering support to Al Qaeda. In March 2003, the United States led a coalition that invaded Iraq. Within weeks, coalition troops captured the Iraqi capital city, Baghdad. Less than six weeks after the initial bombing campaign that opened the war, President Bush declared that “major combat operations in Iraq have ended.”

U.S. troops remained in Iraq for years, however, attempting to unite Iraq’s warring factions, suppress insurgencies, and help form a new democratic government. Overall, nearly 4,500 U.S. troops and thousands of Iraqis were killed during the conflict, which cost the United States more than $1 trillion. In 2004, the Bush administration admitted that it had not found any weapons of mass destruction, and experts believe that Al Qaeda never received support from Hussein. Critics of the invasion also argued that, however harsh and cruel a dictator Hussein was, his absolute rule over Iraq had stabilized the country. The power vacuum resulting from his absence, they contended, enabled the rise of extremist groups like Al Qaeda in Iraq, an offshoot of Al Qaeda.
Issues And Controversies

While President Obama argued that the air strikes were necessary to protect American personnel in Iraq and to prevent the genocide of the Yazidi, he launched limited air strikes to protect both Kurdish territory and a minority sect known as the Yazidi. Tens of thousands of Yazidis had fled their villages advanced weaponry to the Iraqi government and conducted regular surveillance flights over Iraq to track ISIS's movements. In August, the United States Special Operations Forces to secure U.S. facilities in the country and assist the Iraqi military in gathering intelligence. The United States also sold

As ISIS continued to advance, the United States broadened its military support for Iraq. In June, President Obama announced he would send 300 U.S. Special Operations Forces to secure U.S. facilities in the country and assist the Iraqi military in gathering intelligence. The United States also sold advanced weaponry to the Iraqi government and conducted regular surveillance flights over Iraq to track ISIS's movements. In August, the United States launched limited air strikes to protect both Kurdish territory and a minority sect known as the Yazidi. Tens of thousands of Yazidis had fled their villages to Mount Sinjar, a barren mountaintop, where they faced starvation or, if they returned to the base of the mountain for food, massacre by militants.

While President Obama argued that the air strikes were necessary to protect American personnel in Iraq and to prevent the genocide of the Yazidi, he
pledged in a speech on August 7 that he would “not allow the United States to be dragged into fighting another war in Iraq.” The air assault proved successful, enabling Iraqi forces to retake control of the Mosul Dam, preventing an imminent ISIS assault on the Kurdish capital of Irbil, allowing the Yazidi to flee, and clearing the way for the delivery of humanitarian aid. U.S. officials warned, however, that ISIS could be thoroughly cleared from the region only if air attacks were combined with ground assaults.

In addition, U.S. officials pushed Maliki to resign and clear the way for a more inclusive government, a move they hoped would encourage Iraq’s Sunni minority to fight ISIS and protect the territorial integrity of Iraq. On August 14, despite rumors that he would attempt to orchestrate a coup to maintain power, Maliki resigned, transferring power to his colleague Haider al-Abadi. The same day Maliki resigned, Obama pledged to continue air strikes to protect U.S. facilities and provide “military assistance,” in the form of intelligence and weapons, to Iraqi and Kurdish forces.

ISIS, meanwhile, has made substantial inroads in Syria, where it has added new dimensions to an already complicated civil war. A variety of rebel groups—including pro-democracy advocates such as the Free Syrian Army as well as Islamic extremists from Al Qaeda and other groups—has been battling Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad since 2011. ISIS’s military proficiency has made it a formidable power in the struggle, and the group has captured large swathes of territory in northern and eastern Syria. The territory captured by ISIS includes oil fields and power plants, making it of particular strategic value. The group has thus been able to fund itself by selling oil and electricity to the Syrian government, even as it fights against it. “[A] terrorist group that actively seeks the Syrian government’s destruction, and is so extreme that al-Qaeda rejected it,” journalist Max Fisher wrote for Vox in June 2014, “has become so powerful that the Syrian government has to buy electricity from them.” The situation in Syria has thus grown extremely complicated, with an ideological range of rebel militias battling both ISIS and Assad’s government.

Some policy makers have called for the United States to take action against ISIS in Syria as well as in Iraq, helping clear the way for moderate rebel fighters. Others argue that the United States should not involve itself in the Syrian civil war, warning that arming moderate rebels could increase the risk of the weapons falling into the hands of Islamic extremists. After ISIS executed James Foley in August, the Obama administration conducted surveillance flights over Syria, a move some observers interpreted as a precursor to launching air strikes over the war-torn country. The U.S. government later revealed that U.S. Special Forces had entered Syria in a failed attempt to rescue Foley and other hostages.

In a televised address on September 10, President Obama detailed a plan to “degrade and ultimately destroy” ISIS. He announced that the United States would send 475 service members into Iraq to “support Iraqi and Kurdish forces with training, intelligence, and equipment.” Obama pledged that he would “not hesitate to take action against ISIL in Syria” as well as Iraq, and pledged to arm moderate Syrian rebels to aid their fight against ISIS. [See President Obama Details U.S. Plan to Fight ISIS (primary source)]

Shortly afterward, the United States launched an air strike campaign against ISIS targets in Syria. Assisting in the strikes were five predominantly Muslim countries: Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. Although all five countries have Sunni-led governments and predominantly Sunni populations, many observers note, they nevertheless feel threatened by ISIS’s extremism. “These are Sunni-Arab governments,” NPR correspondent Deborah Amos noted in September 2014, “who are joining in a U.S. airstrike against a Sunni-Arab militant movement that also threatens them. This is an unprecedented coalition.” The air strikes also targeted a small Al Qaeda offshoot group called Khorasan. [See Secretary of State John Kerry Testifies Before Congress on Action Against ISIS (primary source)]

Though U.S. officials have welcomed the assistance, some have questioned whether the United States should trust such governments, pointing out that wealthy donors in Saudi Arabia and Qatar have been suspected of funding extremist Sunni groups like ISIS. Indeed, while Saudi Arabia has long had close ties with the United States, its people live under a strict system of Islamic law resembling the one ISIS seeks to impose.

The role of Iran in containing ISIS has also been controversial. Since a revolution that overthrew a U.S.-backed government in 1979, Iran, a Shiite-Muslim nation, has had an antagonistic relationship with the United States. In recent years, the international community has condemned Iran for attempting to build nuclear weapons, and only in the past year have diplomats obtained what they see as significant concessions from Iran in nuclear negotiations. Iran has fostered closer ties with Iraq since the Shiite-led Maliki government came into power and has provided Iraq with military assistance in fighting ISIS. The improved relationship between the two countries, however, has made many American policy makers wary, worrying that such cooperation will weaken the West’s position in ongoing negotiations over Iran’s nuclear program.

Debate has also raged over the effectiveness of the air strikes against ISIS targets in Syria. Some have noted that the moderate rebel groups favored by the Obama administration do not yet have the infrastructure or organization to take advantage of U.S. assistance, and that the strikes could ultimately help Assad maintain his hold on power. Only a year earlier, they note, the United States was threatening to attack Assad due to his use of chemical weapons against rebel groups.”[I]t will take more than a year to train about 5,000 moderate Syrian rebels,” NPR correspondent Tom Bowman reported in September 2014. “So in the meantime...there are really no U.S.-backed troops to fill the void there, like you see in some of the operations in Iraq. So it’s possible the current Syrian rebels on the ground could get a boost from these airstrikes. But it’s also possible that Assad’s forces could take advantage of these militant groups getting hit, and take back some of their lost ground.”

Supporters Argue: The United States Should Take Military Action Against ISIS

Supporters argue that the United States should take immediate military action against ISIS. The group is without doubt a force of evil, they contend, and failing to stop it will put innocent lives at risk. “These are the worst people on earth,” conservative columnist Charles Krauthammer argued in the National Review in August 2014. “They openly, proudly crucify enemies, enslave women, and murder men en masse.... These are primitive cultists who celebrate slaughter, glory in bloodlust, and slit the throats of innocents as a kind of sacrament.”
Ignoring the ISIS threat, supporters argue, would be equivalent to admitting defeat. A lack of military response to ISIS "would send a far stronger signal than anything this administration has done to date that we really are walking away completely from the Middle East, that the hegemon has finally shrugged and all bets are off," New York Times columnist Ross Douthat wrote in August 2014. "[W]hat remains of our diplomatic heft in the Middle East (as elsewhere) is contingent, at least in part, on the military power that backs up our commitments, and the promise that at some point, for some purposes, that military power could possibly be deployed."

The risks of letting ISIS advance, supporters argue, far outweigh the downsides of exerting U.S. force. "I don’t know exactly what the politics of the Middle East would look like if we shrugged, dropped humanitarian aid, and let ISIS continue its advance," Douthat argued. "But I’m willing to accept the risks of action, and accept the perils and downsides of continued hegemony, in order to avoid finding out."

ISIS must be stopped, proponents of military action assert, before the group can organize itself well enough to carry out terrorist attacks abroad. "ISIS is a savage terrorist organization that has to be defeated before they can create the operational wherewithal to conduct a Sept. 11–like tragedy," Senator Bob Menendez (D, New Jersey) said in September 2014 on the program Fox News Sunday. President Obama’s plan to attack the group, he added, meant that the United States was "clearly headed toward a strategy that will defeat" ISIS.

Indeed, supporters warn, the United States can either deal with the terrorist threat in the Middle East or it can deal with it on American soil, where ISIS has recruited a small number of adherents. "These people will come home eventually," Representative Mike Rogers (R, Michigan) told the Wall Street Journal in a June 2014 interview, "and they are going to come home with, I believe, intentions to fulfill al Qaeda’s dream for another attack on our homeland."

If the United States is serious about destroying ISIS, proponents maintain, the effort might require sending in ground troops. Stopping ISIS "would require a willingness to send American forces back to Iraq. It would not mean merely conducting U.S. air strikes, but also accompanying those strikes with special operators, and perhaps regular U.S. military units, on the ground," Frederick Kagan, resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, and Weekly Standard editor William Kristol contended in June 2014. "This path won’t be easy, but the alternatives are much worse. Doing nothing means we will face a full-scale sectarian war...along with a massive expansion of Iranian control into southern Iraq and an al Qaeda safe haven stretching from the Tigris to the middle of Syria."

Supporters dispute the notion that the failure of the 2003 invasion of Iraq is reason to not take action against ISIS now. As Wall Street Journal columnist Peggy Noonan argued in August 2014:

One of my fears in the early years of the Iraq war was that if it proved to be the wrong war—if no weapons of mass destruction were found, if sustained unrest showed Saddam Hussein was the garbage-pail lid who kept the garbage of his nation from spilling out—it would mean that at some time in the future when America really needed to fight and had to fight, she would not. I feared the war’s supporters would be seen to have cried wolf, and someday there would be a wolf and no one would listen. Now there is a wolf.

Opponents Argue: The United States Should Not Take Military Action Against ISIS

Opponents argue that military action is not the proper course to defeat ISIS. The current U.S. approach, they contend, lacks clear thinking about long-term goals. "We do not have a political strategy for Iraq, or for the region," American Conservative blogger Noah Millman argued in an August 2014 post. "[A]nd so we cannot even say whether a given military outcome would serve that strategy.... And in the absence of any kind of regional political process for containing and ultimately resolving the war, even the most limited operation strikes me as extremely risky."

War hawks and the media, opponents argue, have grossly exaggerated the threat ISIS poses to the United State. Daniel Benjamin, a former top counterterrorism adviser to the Obama administration, told the New York Times in September 2014 that public discussion of ISIS was a "farce," with "members of the cabinet and top military officers all over the place describing the threat in lurid terms that are not justified." Benjamin emphasized how little evidence existed of the danger ISIS actually posed to Americans:

It's hard to imagine a better indication of the ability of elected officials and TV talking heads to spin the public into a panic, with claims that the nation is honeycombed with sleeper cells, that operatives are streaming across the border into Texas or that the group will soon be spraying Ebola virus on mass transit systems—all on the basis of no corroborated information.

Military action in Iraq, critics argue, is vulnerable to mission creep unless the U.S. government precisely and strictly defines its objectives. "Without guidelines, the United States could incrementally increase its engagement in Iraq by pursuing additional missions," Micah Zenko, a fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, wrote in Foreign Policy in June 2014. "President Obama...has an obligation to articulate to the American public and Congress with clarity what military missions those airstrikes are for, and what they will not be for. To date, an intelligible and unambiguous description of what those missions might be has been lacking, which is the surest path toward an unintended, gradual, and deepening U.S. military commitment in Iraq.” [See Senator Rand Paul Discusses U.S. Military Action Against ISIS (primary source)]

Opponents argue that the United States must insist that Iraqi forces bear the burden of any on-the-ground combat against ISIS in Iraq. "The U.S. can no longer be the sheriff for the whole world," Representative C. A. Ruppersberger (D, Maryland) told the Wall Street Journal in June 2014. "We can’t be everywhere, and we can’t always use military boots on the ground. We have to plan with people who have boots on the ground."

The United States needs to develop a far-sighted political solution in the Middle East, opponents argue, rather than pursue haphazard military intervention. Andrew Bacevich, a political science professor at Boston University and former U.S. Army colonel, argued for Reuters Opinion in September
2014 that destroying ISIS:

won't create an effective and legitimate Iraqi state.... It won't end the Syrian civil war. It won't bring peace and harmony to Somalia and Yemen. It won't persuade the Taliban to lay down their arms in Afghanistan.... All the military power in the world won't solve those problems. Obama knows that. Yet he is allowing himself to be drawn back into the very war that he once correctly denounced as stupid and unnecessary—mostly because he and his advisers don't know what else to do. Bombing has become his administration's default option. Rudderless and without a compass, the American ship of state continues to drift, guns blazing.

Only when the United States withdraws from the Middle East, opponents contend, will regional powers assume responsibility. "[I]t's clear that America's long-term strategy for the Middle East has to be oriented towards letting local powers settle the geopolitical balance themselves," the Economist argued in June 2014. "Iran, Turkey, and other regional players will have to take the lead in backing the Iraqi government and combating ISIS, because America lacks the expertise, the political will, and ultimately the capacity to do that job."

Critics worry that air strikes against ISIS will intensify Sunni hostility against the United States and validate extremist claims that America is a threat to all Muslims. "[I]s America causing a backlash among the very people it needs to win over?" the Economist asked in October 2014. Jihadists, the magazine noted, "are trying to rally fighters and civilians to their cause—and against America and its allies—by portraying the bombing as a war against Islam."

Post-ISIS: A Fragmented Iraq?

Officials in the Obama administration have blamed the destabilization of Iraq on the Maliki government's failure to include Sunni Iraqis in major decisions, and expressed hope that part of the solution to the ISIS crisis will come with the formation of a new government under Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, who took office in August 2014. Some observers have predicted that a solution to Iraq's sectarian strife might be to adopt a system that allows each of the country's major groups—the Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds—a significant amount of self-governance; others, however, argue that deciding where to draw the boundaries for each group's territory would likely breed further conflict.

U.S. airstrikes on ISIS strongholds in Iraq and Syria continued sporadically throughout September as debate flared over the effectiveness and wisdom of the attacks. Some observers, while agreeing that ISIS must be stopped militarily, have called for a targeted campaign of assassinations to kill the group's top leaders; this strategy, they maintain, would undermine ISIS without employing bombs that might cause collateral damage and potentially rally more people to the group's cause. Others, however, argue that ISIS is large and powerful enough that only a concerted military effort could stop them. The future of ISIS, and the United States' role in the Middle East, remain uncertain.

Discussion Questions

1) Do you think the United States should commit combat troops to fighting ISIS? Or are air strikes sufficient? Should the United States be militarily involved in the fight against ISIS at all? Explain your position.

2) Do you think the creation of a new government in Iraq will help neutralize the ISIS threat? Why or why not?

3) Should the United States cooperate with Iran in the fight against ISIS? What would be the advantages and disadvantages?

4) How does the civil war in Syria affect the U.S. response to ISIS?

5) Write a letter to your representative or senator explaining what you think the United States should do, or not do, about ISIS.

Bibliography


Additional Sources

Additional information about ISIS can be found in the following sources:


Contact Information

Information on how to contact organizations that either are mentioned in the discussion of ISIS or can provide additional information on the subject is listed below:

American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research
1150 17th St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
Telephone: (202) 862-5800
Internet: www.aei.org

Council on Foreign Relations
1777 F St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
Telephone: (202) 509-8400
Internet: www.cfr.org

U.S. State Department
2201 C St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520
Telephone: (202) 647-4000
Internet: www.state.gov

Keywords and Points

For further information about the ongoing debate over ISIS, search for the following words and terms in electronic databases and other publications:

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi
James Foley
Islamic State
Nouri al-Maliki
Sunni rebels

Citation Information