

# The Reason for New U.S. and French Military Involvement In Iraq: Protecting Oil or Minorities?

By [Washington's Blog](#)

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Oil and Energy](#), [US NATO War](#)

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## Why We're Bombing to Protect Erbil

Why is Obama now re-committing the U.S. military to Iraq? Why is France [strongly backing](#) military action?

Obama says it's to protect minorities. That's nothing new. Obama is the [fourth president in a row to bomb Iraq](#)... while claiming it is for humanitarian purposes.

But the architects of the Iraq War (the one which started in 2003) *themselves* [admitted it was about oil](#).

But what about *now*? Why are the U.S. and France deploying military force in Iraq now?

Well, ISIS captured some key oil fields in the Kurdish region of Iraq on [August 3rd](#).

[Mere days later](#), the U.S. started bombing ISIS.

And the strikes were targeted in protecting oil resources. As International Business Times [notes](#):

Pentagon Press Secretary Rear Admiral John Kirby tweeted: "US military aircraft conduct strike on Isil [Islamic State] artillery. Artillery was used against Kurdish forces defending Erbil, near US personnel."

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— Rear Adm. John Kirby (@PentagonPresSec) [August 8, 2014](#)

Two F-18 fighters dropped laser-guided 500-pound bombs on the mobile artillery target. Militants of the Islamic State were using artillery that has been abandoned by the Iraqi army when it fled to shell Kurdish forces defending the regional capital of Kurdistan.

US airstrikes were very small and very targeted and the Peshmerga Kurdistan forces are waiting for more strikes by the US fighter jets, according to reports.

The Military Times [reported](#) yesterday:

The Pentagon's top war planner ... Army Lt. Gen. William Mayville, the director of operations, or "J-3" for the Joint Staff [said] "I think in the immediate areas where we have focused our strikes, we have had a very temporary effect ... and we may have blunted some [ISIL] tactical decisions to move in those directions further east toward Erbil," Mayville said.

"However, these strikes are unlikely to affect ISIL's overall capabilities or its operations in other areas of Iraq and Syria," he said.

Obama authorized the airstrikes for two specific purposes. One mission is to prevent an ISIL advance into the city of Erbil where U.S. civilian diplomats and dozens of military advisors are based.

It should be noted, initially, that months of [murder, mayhem and brutality](#) by ISIS on Christians and other minorities didn't cause the U.S. or France to intervene militarily for "[humanitarian](#)" reasons.

And notice that the airstrikes were very targeted on protecting Erbil ... the [regional capital](#) of Kurdistan.

The U.S. and France have never lifted a finger to protect the Kurds. Indeed, the U.S. has actively betrayed the Kurds and let them be slaughtered. For example, during the Gulf War, the U.S. [called on the Kurds to rise up](#) against Saddam (implying that he would protect them), but then [let Saddam slaughter the Kurds en masse](#).

So why are the U.S. and France moving now to protect Erbil?

Because Erbil has now become a major oil center. The Kurdish government estimates that the region is the world's *9th largest* oil producer.

Oil companies from around the world operate in Kurdistan, [including](#) ([major oil companies](#) are indicated in bold, U.S. and French oil companies in italics):

#### USA

- *Exxon Mobil*
- *Chevron*
- *Aspect Energy*
- *Marathon Oil Corporation*
- *Hillwood International Energy*
- *Hunt Oil*
- *Prime Oil*
- *Murphy Oil*
- *Hess Corporation*
- *HKN Energy*
- *Viking International*

#### France

- *Total*

#### Canada

- Forbes and Manhattan
- Western Zagros Resources
- Talisman Energy Inc
- NIKO Resources
- Ground Star
- Shamaran

#### South Korea

- Korea National Oil Company (KNOC)

#### Turkey

- Genel Energy
- Petoil
- Dogan

#### Britain

- Gulf Keystone Petroleum
- Sterling Energy
- Heritage Oil

#### Anglo-French

- Perenco

#### UAE

- TAQA
- Dana Petroleum

#### Austria

- OMV

#### China

- China acquired a significant presence in Iraqi Kurdistan after Sinopec Group bought Addax Petroleum in 2009.

#### Hungary

- MOL

#### India

- Reliance Industries

#### Papua New Guinea

- Oil Search

#### Russia

- Norbest
- Gazprom Neft

#### Norway

- DNO

#### Iraq

- Oil Search (Iraq) Limited
- Kar Group
- Qaiwan Group

#### Spain

- Repsol

#### Independent

- AFREN

Yup ... with Chevron, Exxon, Marathon, Hess and Total operating major facilities in Erbil, the latest Iraq war is *also* about oil ... as confirmed by the [New Yorker](#), [New Republic](#) and [Vox](#).

For those who don't believe that Iraqi oil is driving foreign policy, take a look at what Brookings [wrote](#) in June:

It should be obvious that a key consideration for the United States arising from [the seizure of huge swaths of Iraq by ISIS] is its potential to affect Iraqi oil production.

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Any significant disruption of current Iraqi oil production or long-term diminution in its expected growth could have major repercussions for the U.S. economy.

Kurdistan also possesses approximately [89%](#) of all Iraqi natural gas reserves. And so the West – including France – is eager to protect Kurdish hydrocarbons from falling into the hands of ISIS.

Postscript: Indeed, virtually all U.S. wars involve [a fight over hydrocarbons](#).

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