

## Headlines:

- **New Report Exposes Hundreds Killed in US Airstrikes**
- **US Trained Rebels Routed by Rebels**
- **New Saudi-Egypt Axis**

## Details:

### **New Report Exposes Hundreds Killed in US Airstrikes**

The US has been conducting an air campaign in Iraq and Syria under the guise of attacking ISIS for over a year now. More than 5,700 air strikes have been launched in the campaign. The coalition's lead commander, Lt Gen John Hesterman, called the campaign "the most precise and disciplined in the history of aerial warfare," something US officials say in every war. Now Airwars, a project by a team of independent journalists, is publishing details of 52 strikes with what it believes are credible reports of at least 459 non-combatant deaths, including those of more than 100 children. It confirmed there is a "worrying gulf between public and coalition positions" on the campaign's toll on civilians. Airwars project leader Chris Woods told the UK's *Guardian*: "The emphasis on precision in our view hasn't been borne out by facts on the ground." Iraqi forces have been very critical of the lack of precise US strikes against ISIS in Iraq and rebel groups in Syria have long exposed US airstrikes are never concentrated enough to deal a fatal blow to ISIS. This is why it is not surprising that many of the victims from US airstrikes are not ISIS members, but innocent bystanders.

### **US Trained Rebels Routed by Rebels**

This week's reports emerged that Jabhat al-Nusra (JN), captured a number of top members of the US-trained "Division 30," also known as the "New Syrian Force." JN completely routed the group from its headquarters in northern Syria, who were forced to flee into Kurdish territory.

Reports have varied on how many of the US train and equip fighters were captured, with early reports suggesting it could be as many as 18. That's a lot, since the US only managed to train 54 of them in the long-term effort. JN has said that it will continue with such actions as they have no intention of working with any US-backed groups, and will resist all "agents of America." As matters stand currently, the US supporter rebels cannot even safely travel around Syria, let alone have any real impact in the ongoing war.

### **New Saudi-Egypt Axis**

On Friday 30 July, the Cairo Pact was signed by Egypt and Saudi Arabia aimed at boosting military and economic ties between the two Arab allies. In a statement released after a meeting between President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and Saudi Defence Minister and Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Sisi's office said the two leaders will also work to create a joint Arab military force. Egypt's presidential office said, "The two sides stressed the need to exert all efforts to boost security and stability in the region, and to work together to protect Arab national security." Since the ouster of the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohamed Morsi in 2013, Saudi Arabia has been giving the military regime the leg up it desperately needed, offering billions in aid to Egypt. Saudi Arabia has spent \$4bn to help kick-start an economy battered by years of political turmoil. The Sisi government has participated in the Saudi-led bombing campaign against Houthi rebels in Yemen. Cairo had previously said it would also be prepared to commit ground troops if required. The common denominator between both these nations is their pro-US stance. Egypt historically has been America's lynchpin in the region. The emergence of King Salman in Saudi has formally moved the kingdom into America's camp.