

History of CJTF-OIR

2013. Rise of ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and al Sham), also referred to as Da'esh. Taking advantage of a lawless environment fueled by sectarian strife, ISIS ascended from relative obscurity in 2013 to claim it had created an Islamic caliphate. Organized around an extremist socio-political ideology, ISIS acquired conventional weapons, established sizeable-armed formations, and took control of large areas within Iraq and Syria, perpetrating atrocities that shocked the world.

Da'esh has been used as a way of challenging the legitimacy of the terror group due to negative connotations of the word. Da'esh is essentially an Arabic acronym formed from the initial letters of the group's previous name in Arabic - "al-Dawla al-Islamiya fil Iraq wa al-Sham". Although it does not mean anything as a word in Arabic, it sounds unpleasant and the group's supporters object to its use. Da'esh also sounds similar to an Arabic verb that means to tread underfoot, trample down, or crush something.

By June 2014, the security situation in Iraq had deteriorated and Iraqi cities of Mosul and Tikrit fell to ISIS control. DoD (Department of Defense) designated ARCENT (Army Central Command) as JFLCC (Joint Forces Land Component Command) for conduct of operations in Iraq. This designation established the first operational headquarters since departure of U.S. troops from the region in 2011. On September 17, 2014, DoD re-designated ARCENT as CFLCC (Combined Forces Land Component Command), which ultimately led to formal establishment of CJTF-OIR (Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve), meaning that the world community joined the fight against ISIS.

Currently, CJTF-OIR is the military component of a Global Coalition of 77 nations and 5 international organizations who are operating in Iraq at the request of the Government of Iraq and in Syria in support of a lasting political settlement based on UN Security Council Resolution 2254.

2014-2015. During Phase I, Degrade, CJTF-OIR conducted strikes against Da'esh to blunt their expansion into Iraq and to begin to reduce their combat effectiveness.

First commander of CJTF-OIR, LTG James Terry. DoD formally established CJTF-OIR on October 17, 2014, to provide mission command of the defeat-ISIS fight. CJTF-OIR took the fight to ISIS via air operations. Defensive and offensive operations rapidly matured with the rescue of innocent Yazidi victims trapped on Sinjar Mountain, the recapture of the Mosul and Haditha dams, and the defense of Baghdad and Kirkuk.

Second commander of CJTF-OIR. III Armored Corps, commanded by, LTG Sean McFarland, assumed authority of CJTF-OIR from ARCENT, on September 22, 2015. CJTF-OIR vigorously increased pressure on ISIS and shaped the battlefield for the liberation of terrain from ISIS control. Coalition fires targeted ISIS leadership and infrastructure. Deliberate and dynamic precision airstrikes targeted ISIS economic infrastructure, significantly degrading its ability to govern. CJTF-OIR transitioned from Phase I to Phase II by the end of 2015.

2015-2016. During Phase II, Counterattack, CJTF-OIR supported ISF and partnered-forces in Syria as they attacked to liberate territory and people under the control of Da'esh.

Third commander of CJTF-OIR. XVIII Airborne Corps, commanded by LTG Stephen Townsend, assumed authority of CJTF-OIR from III Armored Corps, on 21 August 2016. CJTF-OIR seized the strategic airfield at Qayyarah, positioning Coalition forces within striking distance of the ISIS-controlled city of Mosul. Following a brief pause, ISF, supported by Coalition fires, began the ground battle for East Mosul on October 17, 2016. ISF and partnered-forces in Syria liberated the two capitols of the self-proclaimed caliphate; Raqqah in Syria (on July 17, 2017) and Mosul in Iraq (by July 20, 2017).

2017-2020. During Phase III, Defeat, CJTF-OIR conducted strikes in support of decisive battles against Da'esh.

Fourth commander of CJTF-OIR. III Armored Corps, commanded by LTG Paul Funk II, assumed authority of CJTF-OIR from XVIII Airborne Corps, on 05 September 2017. ISF (Iraqi Security Forces) and SDF (Syrian Democratic Forces) freed 155 villages, the cities of Hawijah, Al Qaim, Anah, Rawah, Raqqah, Dashisha, and much of eastern Dayr Az Zawr province. Iraq declared victory over ISIS in that country on December 9, 2017, validated by largely peaceful elections for the Iraqi Parliament on May 12, 2018. Additionally, the ISF and SDF, working together, cleared all but the last 200 square kilometers of the MERV (Middle-Euphrates River Valley). April 2018 was end of major combat in Iraq.

Fifth commander of CJTF-OIR. XVIII Airborne Corps, commanded by LTG Paul LaCamera, assumed authority of CJTF-OIR from III Armored Corps, on September 14, 2018. Increases in operational tempo, training and support to ISF and SDF provided the foundation for broader strategic success. Iraqi and Syrian "train and equip funds" provided necessary assets and capabilities to achieve increasingly higher levels of partner participation. With comprehensive and consistent Coalition support, partner forces steadily gained confidence needed to fight and win against ISIS. March 23, 2019, marked the end of ISIS control of any physical territory;

culmination of a five-year fight; and ISIS reduced to an underground organization; its aspirations for a global caliphate laid to rest, as Daesh was militarily defeated.

Sixth commander of CJTF-OIR. III Armored Corps, commanded by LTG Robert "Pat" White, assumed authority of CJTF-OIR from XVIII Airborne Corps, on September 14, 2019. Previously as MG White, he served with CJTF-OIR as commander of CJFLCC during July 2017 to March 2018. CJTF-OIR consolidated gains from 2019. Coalition and partnered forces continued operations in Syria to target Da'esh smuggling, finance, media, and logistics networks. In Syrian airspace and along highways, Coalition de-conflicted operations with regional military forces. Throughout 2019, Coalition focused on Build Partner Capacity program to enhance Iraqi security capabilities through training, mentoring, and equipping our partner security forces.

2020. During Phase IV, Support Stabilization, CJTF-OIR provides security, planning, and required support to the Government of Iraq and appropriate authorities in Syria. On July 2, 2020, Task Force Iraq of CJTF-OIR transitioned to Military Advisor Group, as part of a new approach to support ISF defeat Da'esh operations. Coalition advisor teams provide specialized planning mentorship to ISF directorates overseeing operations, logistics, intelligence, and other military functions.

Due to ISF success in the campaign against Da'esh, Coalition adjusted its positioning and focus in Iraq. These military movements have been long-planned in coordination with Gol (Government of Iraq). On July 25, 2020, Coalition transferred the upgraded training site at Besmayah, Iraq, to ISF. This was the seventh base transferred to ISF, as part of an ongoing partnership between ISF and anti-ISIS international military Coalition. On August 23, 2020, Coalition transferred the base at Taji, Iraq, to ISF. CJTF-OIR continues to relocate and consolidate personnel and equipment from Iraqi bases throughout 2020, in cooperation with Gol. ISF increasingly conducts independent operations in the fight against Daesh and defense of their homeland including the 2020 series of operations "Heroes of Iraq," in which they have cleared thousands of kilometers to capture enemy fighters and equipment.

* 20200903 This history of CJTF-OIR was adapted from several unclassified sources, for CJTF-OIR change-of-command ceremony 2020, compiled by COL Christopher Eng, CJTF-OIR Historian, <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/7mhd>
 -- CJTF-OIR Campaign Design. <https://www.inherentresolve.mil/campaign/>
 -- CJTF-OIR History 2014-2017. https://www.inherentresolve.mil/Portals/14/Documents/Mission/HISTORY_17OCT2014-JUL2017.pdf?ver=2017-07-22-095806-793
 -- CJTF-OIR History from Change-of-command ceremony 2018.
 -- CJTF-OIR History from CJTF-OIR Historian's portion of Joint Staff Orientation brief.
 -- Definition of Da'esh from multiple sources.

Mission of CJTF-OIR

In conjunction with partner forces, CJTF-OIR (Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve) defeats ISIS in designated areas of Iraq and Syria, and sets conditions for follow-on operations to increase regional stability.

What does that mean?

-- *“In conjunction with partner forces, ...”* Coalition strategy acknowledges that the best forces to win the fight against ISIS are local forces. In Iraq, we are partnered with ISF (Iraqi Security Forces), which includes Iraqi Army, Iraqi Air Force, Counter Terrorism Service, Federal Police, and Kurdish Peshmerga. In Syria, the Coalition is partnered with SDF (Syrian Democratic Forces) and their partner, Syrian Arab Coalition, who are focused on fighting ISIS. Ultimately, military victory over ISIS is accomplished by indigenous forces; we accomplish our mission with those indigenous forces; and improved regional stability is attained through those partners.

-- *“... defeats ISIS ...”* Coalition mission is to defeat ISIS as a military force on the battlefield in Iraq and Syria. We disrupt their ability to command and control their fighters, remove their safe havens, interrupt their revenue streams that fund their operations, destroy their equipment, and kill their fighters. We eliminate their effectiveness as an organized force on the battlefield.

-- *“...in designated areas of Iraq and Syria, ...”* Coalition views this fight against ISIS as one fight, despite circumstances in Iraq and Syria being unique to each country. Coalition operates in designated ISIS-held areas of Iraq and Syria, which is not in southern Iraq or western Syria. Coalition synchronizes the fight between its local partners and Coalition operations in Iraq and Syria in ISIS-held territory; and areas where our partner forces are in direct combat with ISIS; and de-conflicts operations with other regional actors, as necessary, to achieve desired effects against ISIS.

-- *“...sets conditions for follow-on operations ...”* Coalition is responsible for military operations against ISIS, but military action is not the only action that governments of Global Coalition are taking now. Coalition’s military operations against ISIS weaken the terror group and enable nations of Global Coalition to bring full might of their national power – including diplomatic, informational, economic, law enforcement, and other aspects of national power – to bear against ISIS. Global Coalition realizes that we must not only defeat the military power of ISIS, but we must also defeat the ideology of ISIS, in order to stem global flow of foreign fighters and radicalized jihadists in all of our nations.

“One Mission, Many Nations!”

* Adapted with only grammar-type edits from <https://www.inherentresolve.mil/Portals/14/Documents/Mission/20170717-%20Updated%20Mission%20Statement%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf?ver=2017-07-17-093803-770>.