

Beat: Miscellaneous

URGENT -- U.S. aircraft strike Islamic State forces in northern Iraq

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USPA News - The U.S. military carried out airstrikes against Islamic State militants in northern Iraq on Friday afternoon, just hours after U.S. President Barack Obama warned that American forces had been ordered to strike the jihadists if they attempted to advance towards the Kurdish city of Erbil. Pentagon Press Secretary Rear Admiral John Kirby said the U.S. military conducted a targeted airstrike against Islamic State (ISIS/ISIL) militants at approximately 1:45 p.m. local time (6:45 a.m.

EDT) near Erbil. He warned that American forces will continue to take "direct action" against Islamic State fighters if they threaten American personnel and facilities in Erbil. "Two F/A-18 aircraft dropped 500-pound laser-guided bombs on a mobile artillery piece near Erbil. ISIL was using this artillery to shell Kurdish forces defending Erbil where U.S. personnel are located," Kirby said. "The decision to strike was made by the U.S. Central Command commander under authorization granted him by the commander in chief." There was not immediate confirmation of damage or casualties resulting from the airstrikes, but a correspondent for the Kurdish news agency Rudaw described the attacks as "small and very targeted." The news agency claimed a large number of Islamic State fighters were killed and wounded, but the report could not be independently verified.

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