

Statement by Secretary of Defense Ash Carter on Belgium's Expanded Role in the Counter-ISIL Air Campaign

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Immediate Release

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I want to commend Prime Minister Charles Michel and Defence Minister Steven Vandeput for today's announcement that Belgian aircraft will begin conducting strikes within Syria as part of the coalition air campaign against ISIL. Belgium is an important member of the coalition, and this contribution comes at a key moment in the campaign. Belgian aircraft played a key role in the air campaign over Iraq from October 2014 to June 2015. As they return to Operation Inherent Resolve as part of a scheduled rotation with the Dutch military, Belgian F-16s now will operate with greater flexibility and coherence of effort as a result of the decision to conduct strikes in Syria as well. We continue to stand with the people of Belgium as they have responded with resolve and character to the attacks of March 22nd. Together with Belgium and all of our coalition partners, we will deliver ISIL a lasting defeat.
