

Incirlik and Diyarbakir air bases back in business; Third F-35 squadron at Luke; North Korean missile lands in Japanese waters

ANTI-ISIS OPERATIONS FROM TURKEY

US flight operations against ISIS in Iraq and Syria resumed from Incirlik and Diyarbakir air bases in Turkey, after being "intermittent" for several days following a July 15 coup attempt in the country, a defense official told *Air Force Magazine*.

The Turkish government had closed its airspace to all military aircraft, effectively halting air operations at Incirlik and other bases in the country after the coup attempt. Two Turkish F-16s had threatened the Turkish president's airplane during the military's attempt to wrest control, locking radars on the plane and other aircraft that were protecting him en route to Istanbul, Reuters reported.

Roughly 8,000 police officers and 6,000 judicial and military personnel, including Turkish general officers, have been suspended or detained, after the Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, promised to get rid of the "virus" that sparked the fighting, the BBC reported.

become available for the fight against ISIS, including B-52s, A-10s, and Marine Corps EA-6B Prowlers deployed to Incirlik.

Despite the closure of the key Turkish bases, US Central Command was able to adjust flight operations elsewhere so it would not impact the campaign against ISIS in Iraq and Syria, the defense official said.

US and coalition forces conducted 12 air strikes in Syria and 11 in Iraq on July 17, according to the Department of Defense. The strikes in Syria destroyed ISIS oil wellheads and 22 ISIS fighting positions, while the strikes in Iraq hit several ISIS tactical units and destroyed mortar systems, fighting positions, tunnel entrances, and two ISIS headquarters buildings.

Incirlik ran on backup power for several days after the coup attempt but was able to sustain operations, the official said. Base officials worked with Turkish allies to restore commercial power following the disruption, the official said. Commercial power was finally restored to the base on July 22.

Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James said July 26 that although base operations had returned to normal and the relationship with Turkish troops on base was no problem during the July 15 attempted coup, there was not enough reserve fuel to power the entire base.

That meant nonmission-critical buildings were not powered. US airmen needed to prioritize those areas of the base receiving power during the outage, which forced airmen to sleep on cots in their work places because those were the only places with air-conditioning.

"The biggest hardship was the lack of A/C," James said. Once airspace was reopened to military aircraft, the base continued with operations striking ISIS targets, fighting through the ongoing power outage. "People were doing well" during the outage, James said.

No Defense Department personnel were harmed during the attempted coup or in its immediate aftermath, the defense official said. Although top officials did not anticipate the Turkish coup attempt, instability in the NATO ally's territory was not a complete surprise.

The US government in September 2015 paid for the families of US troops stationed at Incirlik or the US consulate in Adana, Turkey, to fly out of the country. In November 2015, EUCOM announced travel restrictions to Turkey for all service members, civilians, and dependents.

Those restrictions remain in place as the command considers the appropriate reaction to the security situation there, the defense official said.

LUKE'S NEW F-35 TRAINING SQUADRON

Luke AFB, Ariz., now has three F-35 squadrons, Air Force officials announced. Lt. Col. Matthew Vedder took command of the new unit—the 63rd Fighter Squadron—Aug. 1 at a

Screenshot from a USAF video



COALITION AIRSTRIKE DESTROYS A DA'ESH FIGHTING POSITION NEAR MANBIJ, SYRIA, 19 JULY 2016, TO DISRUPT TERRORIST OPERATIONS.

Operations against ISIS continued unabated.

Joint Chiefs Chairman Marine Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr. told reporters aboard his aircraft July 17 that he had not seen "any indication" that the coup was going to happen.

"It was surprising to me that it occurred, but gratifying to me that the army didn't respond and they continue to respect civilian leadership," Dunford said, according to a DOD news release. The country "bounced back pretty quickly," he added.

Dunford called the US-Turkey relationship "broad: politically, economically, and from a security perspective," and said that the border between Turkey and Syria is key to isolating the battlefield in Syria.

The Air Force has been launching manned air strikes against ISIS from Incirlik since August 2015. In April, the spokesman for Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve said more combat aircraft and capabilities had

ceremony on the base's flight line. The squadron will train American and Turkish F-35 pilots as part of the partnership between the two countries; the pilot instructors will all be American.

Vedder previously served as director of operations for the 62nd Fighter Squadron, which also trains international F-35 pilots at Luke.

By 2022, Luke is scheduled to have six F-35 squadrons and 144 jets. The 62nd FS transitioned from the F-16 to the F-35A in June of 2015, making it the second F-35 training squadron at the Arizona base. Luke's first F-35 training squadron, the 61st FS, stood up in October 2013.

Col. Benjamin W. Bishop, commander of the 56th Operations Group, said at the ceremony the 63rd has "a distinct heritage" and has been part of the 56th Fighter Wing since World War II.

Turkey plans to buy 100 F-35As, according to Lockheed Martin. Lockheed Martin in November 2015 announced it would develop and integrate the Turkish SOM-J medium-range cruise missile onto the country's Lightning IIs.

A-10S OVER ESTONIA

Eight A-10s, a KC-135, and more than 200 airmen from bases around the US and Europe recently deployed to Estonia for training as part of Operation Atlantic Resolve. The A-10s, from 442nd Fighter Wing at Whiteman AFB, Mo., arrived at Amari AB on July 25 for the two-week exercise. The A-10s also trained with British, Estonian, Lithuanian, and Latvian joint terminal attack controllers during the exercise.

Two A-10s and two British RAF Typhoon FGR4s flew over Tallinn, Estonia, as part of the demonstration of capabilities. Eight A-10s successfully landed on and took off from a highway in the northeastern European country, practice for when the aircraft are forced to land on alternative runways, Col. Gregory A. Eckfeld, vice commander of 442nd Fighter Wing, said in a press release.

The participation of the KC-135 Stratotanker, from the 185th Air Refueling Wing of the Iowa Air National Guard, marked the first time airmen and aircraft from the wing participated in a forward training deployment in Estonia, according

to the wing. Airmen from the 442nd Medical Squadron and the 442nd Civil Engineering Squadron also were in the exercise.

DPRK LAUNCHES MISSILES

North Korea on Aug. 3 launched ballistic missiles, with one becoming the first to land in or near waters controlled by Japan. The medium-range missile flew about 620 miles, making it the longest North Korean launch so far, the Associated Press reported. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said the launch was a "serious threat" to his country and called it an "unforgivable act of violence."

US Strategic Command said it had detected two missiles, but one exploded almost immediately. South Korea's Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said North Korea's actions showed the country's desire to "directly and broadly attack neighboring countries." Officials from the US, the Republic of Korea, and Japan quickly came together to condemn the launches as a provocative act and to push for more cooperation to deter the threat from unstable, unpredictable North Korea.

The US, represented by Christopher Johnstone, DOD principal director for East Asia, spoke with Brig. Gen. Cheol-Kyun Park, the deputy director general of the International Policy Bureau for the Republic of Korea Ministry of National Defense, and Koji Kano, the principal director of the Defense Policy Bureau of the Japanese Ministry of Defense. The officials said the launch, among other recent ballistic missile launches, are "provocative acts that represent a flagrant violation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions and a serious threat to peace and stability," according to a Pentagon readout of the conference.

The countries discussed possible further cooperation to deter the missile threats, following an agreement last month between the US and South Korea to deploy a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile system on the Korean Peninsula.

AFCENT BOSS TALKS PRIORITIES

New Air Forces Central Command boss Lt. Gen. Jeffrey L. Harrigan recently visited the 380th Air Expeditionary Wing in Southwest Asia to meet the airmen and reinforce AFCENT's priorities in the war against ISIS.

Harrigan took command of AFCENT July 22 and visited the wing Aug. 1. The new commander said delivering airpower, defending the region, and developing partnerships are "pretty straightforward" priorities for everyone from himself to the youngest airman.

Harrigan said the Combined Forces Air Component is made up of 20 countries with "tremendous capabilities" and must be strong to succeed at the mission. The 380th AEW flies strike, ISR, command and control, and aerial refueling missions in northeast Africa, the Middle East, and central and south Asia.

The wing's efforts have had an impact on ISIS, Harrigan said. "A significant amount of momentum has occurred where we've been able to get after the financing, the communication, command and control, that the enemy has tried to leverage, and we've taken that away from them," he said. 🌟

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USAF photo by SrA. Missy Sterling



A KC-135 refuels an A-10 over Estonia.