

Egypt and Russia Pursuing Greater Military Cooperation

ON OCTOBER 21 RUSSIA AND EGYPT held their first joint military exercise in Egypt.

Like other countries, such as the Philippines, Egypt would like to diversify its military and trade options and acquire new partners to counter the growing threat of terrorism. At the same time, Russia is looking for partners as it is forced to expand military operations in the region due the failure of rebel forces and their sponsors to leave Syria and Yemen.

Egypt is willing to risk the ire of the United States and Saudi Arabia the regions destabilizing sponsor of terrorism, but like the Philippines will continue to court relationships with the US and Saudi Arabia necessary for economic viability.

Nonetheless, this is a situation to watch in tandem with the Philippines to see just how far these countries are willing to alter their foreign policy and push the limits set by their traditional sponsors.

Iraqi and Kurdish Troops Move Closer to Liberating Mosul

THE CHRISTIAN TOWN OF QARAQOSH has been entered by the Iraqi military on October 22. The town situated near Mosul was captured by Islamic forces in 2014

Ash Carter, U.S. Secretary of Defense, is meeting with Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi in Baghdad to forward plans to remove the Islamic State from Mosul. Carter indicated that he had previously visited Ankara and solidified Turkey's participation in the move to liberate Mosul. Al-Abadi the Iraqi Prime Minister however does not desire Turkey's help unless officially requested by Iraq itself.

Interestingly Kurdish Peshmerga infantry are fighting alongside Iraqi units in the attempt to free Mosul while [Turkey reportedly is killing Kurdish soldiers in Syria](#). The Iraqi forces have liberated over 40 cities since they began the offensive on October 17.

Turkish Backed Rebels will Advance to Al-Bab

TURKISH PRESIDENT, RECEP ERDOGAN announced on October 22 that Turkey will continue to support the rebel Free Syrian Army against the Islamic State-who occupy Al-Bab in the Aleppo province of Syria. The Free-Syrian Army has clashed with Kurdish People's Units (YPG) contrary to US wishes.

South Africa Withdraws from International Court

ON OCTOBER 19 MAITE NKOANA-MASHABANE, South African Minister of International Relations formally withdrew his country from the International Criminal Court (ICC) located in the Netherlands.

Masganbane indicated that the ICC is overreaching by forcing compliance on issues that violate the sovereign rights of the nation, specifically the ICC mandate to arrest Omar al-Bashir, President of Sudan during a state visit to South Africa.