

NATO to discuss “Islamic State-free zone”

All 28 NATO countries are holding emergency talks to discuss a plan by the U.S. and Turkey to rout the Islamic State (IS) group from a strip of Syrian territory along the Turkish border



Turkey: Has granted U.S. access to air bases and bombed targets in Syria linked to IS

However, Turkey’s air strikes on Kurdish insurgent camps in Iraq are raising tensions with Kurdish militia forces fighting IS in northern Syria

Buffer zone: 100km stretch will provide air cover for Syrian rebels, bolstering Turkey’s security and providing possible safe haven for civilians

Airbases opened to U.S.



Primary



Emergency

Malatya

Suruc, Jul 20: Suspected IS suicide bomber kills 32

Kobane

Batman

Diyarbakir

Incirlik

TURKEY

Idlib

Aleppo

Tal Abyad

Al-Hasakah

Hama

SYRIA

IRAQ

Homs

Palmyra

Deir al-Zawr

Abu Kamal

Mediterranean Sea

LEBANON

Damascus

As-Suwayda

ISRAEL

JORDAN

Dera'a

100km

60 miles

Syria’s Kurdish militia – **People’s Protection Unit (YPG)** – is affiliated with **Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK)**, which has waged decades-long insurgency in Turkey and maintains bases in northern Iraq

AREAS OF CONTROL (Jun 19)

Syrian regime

Islamic State group (IS)

Kurdish (YPG)

Jabhat al-Nusra (al-Qaeda affiliated)

Other rebel groups

Mixed

Sources: Institute for the Study of War, Stratfor © GRAPHIC NEWS