
JOE BIDEN, MALCOLM TURNBULL AGREE TO EXPAND IRAQ TRAINING COMMITMENT TO POLICE OPERATIONS

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Australia and the United States have struck an agreement to expand operations in Iraq, extending them from military to police force training.

Just hours after his new Government was sworn in, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull met US Vice President Joe Biden in Sydney for talks canvassing regional tensions, terrorism, military engagement in Iraq and trade relations.

Mr Turnbull told reporters afterwards the existing mandate in Iraq only applied to military training.

He said one of the most important objectives in Iraq now was ensuring police could keep the peace in areas "liberated" from terrorist groups.

The joint media event was peppered with protestations of mutual affection, and Mr Biden admitted his praise for the relationship between the two nations was "almost corny".

"The Prime Minister and I reaffirmed our commitment to continue to work together to uphold the liberal international order that has served the world so well for the past 75 years," he said.

"And to maintain the free flow of trade in the air and on the sea, making sure the sea lanes are open and the skies are free for navigation."

Australia makes one of the largest contributions to the coalition fighting IS militants, including:

- The Special Operations Task Group comprising 80 people which provides advice and assistance to the Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service
- The 400-person Air Task Group which is conducting airstrikes, providing airborne command and control and refuelling capabilities against IS in Iraq and Syria
- An extra 15 ADF personnel will be sent to Iraq, based at Camp Taji north of Baghdad, to take over artillery rocket and mortar operations from another group within the international Coalition forces.

Australians will also train Iraqi police, both local and federal, as well as border guards.