



## EURASIA SECURITY WATCH

The American Foreign Policy Council's Review of  
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# Eurasia Security Watch: No. 345

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**Related Categories:** Terrorism; Middle East

### ITALIAN ENERGY GROUP FINDS OIL OFF EGYPT COAST

Italian oil company Eni has discovered a massive natural gas field off of Egypt's coast. The company claims that the gas field is one of the largest in the world, and that it could hold as much as 30 trillion cubic feet of gas, or 5.5 billion barrels of oil. Eni has full concession rights to the field. CEO Claudio Descalzi says that Egypt still has great energy potential, and that the company will start drilling wells and installing pipelines next year. Eni will likely sell the fuel in Egypt's domestic markets, which could help address Egypt's energy shortages. (BBC August 30, 2015; Bloomberg August 30, 2015)

### ISIS CRACKS DOWN IN IRAQ TOWN AFTER PROTEST

ISIS militants moved to punish local residents of Rutbah in Anbar Province for participating in a street protest. The dissidents were protesting against the execution of civil servant Munir al-Kobeisi, who was executed for killing an ISIS member. The collective punishment included the detaining of at least 70 people and tying people, including tribal leaders, to streetlight poles. Public resistance within ISIS's conquered territories is rare, usually due to fear of reprisal. (ABC August 29, 2015)

### ISIS BOMBS TEMPLE IN PALMYRA

ISIS detonated explosives at the Temple of Bel in Palmyra, Syria, as part of the organization's campaign to destroy all artifacts that it considers un-Islamic. The temple, a UNESCO World Heritage site, was 2,000 years old and one of the region's largest and most significant artifacts. In fact, UNESCO considered the structure "one of the most important religious buildings of the 1st century AD in the East." The explosions reduced the temple to rubble. (*Wall Street Journal* August 31, 2015; BBC September 1, 2015)

### HOUTHIS RAID HOMES OF OPPONENTS IN CAPITAL

Houthis have raided the homes of political opponents and NGO workers in Sanaa, the capital of Yemen. The Shiite rebels claim that the targets of these raids had ties to ISIS and al-Qaeda. Officials claim that the Houthis have detained 20 people, one of whom works for the United Nations. Even though pro-government forces have driven the Houthis from the south of Yemen in recent weeks, the rebels still have a strong foothold in Sanaa. (*Washington Post* August 31, 2015)

### YEMEN FACTIONS TO BATTLE OVER CENTRAL PROVINCE

Yemen factions are braced for a key battle in a central province, Marib. Marib, an oil-rich region, supplies the Houthi-held capital of Sanaa with electricity and fuel. Pro-government forces currently hold the capital of the province, also called Marib, and are preparing to push the Houthis out of the province. If pro-government forces succeed, rebels in Sanaa will lose important access to fuel and electricity, and the pro-government faction could potentially retake another nearby province, Jawf. (ABC August 30, 2015)