

Report Says U.S. Redeploying Troops to Afghanistan from Iraq



Washington, February 6 (RHC)-- The U.S. military is pulling its forces from a base in Iraq and shifting them to Afghanistan following the defeat of Daesh militants in the Arab country, the Associated Press reported on Monday. The news agency quoted Western contractors at the base as saying that U.S. troops began the drawdown over the past week, with groups of soldiers leaving the base on daily flights.

According to the report, the exact scale of the redeployment was unclear. The BBC said more than 5,000 U.S. troops were stationed in Iraq as of 2016, with nearly 4,000 others deployed later to purportedly assist local groups fighting Daesh. The remaining troops reportedly included special operations forces, logistics workers and soldiers on temporary rotations.

Iraqi officials said their government reached an agreement with the U.S. to reduce the number of troops in Iraq, Fox News reported. The news came amid reports of a tiff between Baghdad and Washington over the United States' suspension of a maintenance program for Abrams tanks in Iraq.

Iraq's media reports say the US has suspended a maintenance program for Abrams tanks because one of the military vehicles had been provided to Hashd al-Sha'abi fighters. It is also the latest sign of a growing U.S. military buildup in Afghanistan, contrary to President Donald Trump's election campaign promises to end the intervention.

Donald Trump introduced a new Afghanistan strategy in August, hinting at relaxing the rules of engagement, accelerating strikes and other military actions aimed at producing “an honorable and enduring outcome.” Since he took office, the number of troops has nearly doubled in Afghanistan – from 8,500 in early 2017 to 14,000 today.

According to The Washington Post, the U.S. Army is floating plans to increase the total number of troops in Afghanistan by another 1,000.

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