

Pentagon Says Washington Could Deploy More Troops to Syria



Washington, November 9 (RHC)-- U.S. Defense Secretary Ashton Carter has called on President Barack Obama to "do more" on Syria, saying the United States could send additional troops to the Arab country. The Pentagon chief made the remarks during an ABC News interview aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt in the South China Sea, days after Obama ordered the deployment of dozens of Special Operations Forces (SOF) to Syria. Carter's interview was broadcast on Sunday.

Ashton Carter said more U.S. troops could "absolutely" be deployed if Washington can find more "capable" local forces as partners in the fight against the Daesh (ISIL) terrorist group. "In order to have victory stick, you have to have local forces involved who can keep the peace after you've helped them win the peace," Carter said. "Now those are hard to find in Iraq and Syria."

On October 30th, senior Obama administration officials said that Washington would send some 50 SOF troops to Syria to "train, advise and assist" militants fighting against the Daesh, in an apparent breach of Obama's promise not to put U.S. "boots on the ground" there.

A top official told the BBC that this does not indicate a change in U.S. strategy, but an "intensification" of the military campaign.

"What they are doing there is they are enabling local forces, a mixture of Kurds and Syrian Arabs, who want to fight ISIL. So this small, very elite group, is intended to bring to bear all that the United States can bring to bear, in the way of intelligence, air power and so forth, to help these motivated, capable local forces," Carter told ABC News .

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