

Pentagon announces Saudi Arabia deployment details: 200 troops, 4 radars, 1 Patriot battery



Washington, September 27 (RHC)-- The Pentagon is sending a Patriot missile battery, four Sentinel radars and roughly a company's worth of support personnel to Saudi Arabia, pumping more troops into a region already on edge due to the U.S. pressure campaign against Iran.

In addition to the 200 troops and the air defense systems, two more batteries of Patriot missiles and another battery of Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missiles were placed on standby, Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman told reporters in Washington.

The deployment was first announced last week by U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper, along with a promise to release the details as they became available. General Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said at the time that he could only describe it as "not thousands."

Esper and Dunford said the U.S. was talking with European allies to see if they would send any additional troops to Saudi Arabia, which would influence the size of the U.S. deployment. No details on any such European presence were offered.

Washington has been sending a steady stream of military assets to the Kingdom over the past several months, as part of the “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran. Tehran has responded by saying that any attack on its territory would be met with a disproportionate and devastating response against both U.S. assets and allies like Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

The U.S. has blamed Iran for the September 14th attack on the Saudi oil facilities at Abqaiq and Khurais, even though the Houthi rebels in Yemen have claimed responsibility. The attack was undetected by both the U.S. and Saudi air defenses. It resulted in a temporary interruption of Saudi oil production and material damage to the facilities, but no casualties.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo suggested during his visit to Saudi Arabia last week that the Kingdom simply didn’t have enough U.S. hardware to cover its vast expanse, despite having spent hundreds of billions of dollars on it already. Calling the U.S. air defense systems “some of the finest in the world,” he nevertheless admitted that they “don’t always pick things up.”

Patriots were first used during the 1991 Iraq war as a way of intercepting ballistic missiles. The latest generation of the missile system has a range of up to 35 kilometers. .The Sentinel is an X-band radar with a range of up to 40 km, used for air defense spotting.

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