

Military chiefs seize on Brussels attacks to send more US troops to Iraq

Thomas Gaist
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The United States Defense Department (DOD) is seizing on the terror attacks in Brussels to carry out yet another wave of US troop deployments to Iraq, US Joint Chiefs Chairman General Joe Dunford and Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter made clear in statements last Friday.

Additional US forces will come on top of the current force of some 5,000 troops, which already exceeds the Obama administration's nominal "cap" of 3,800 soldiers. More troops could depart for Iraq within a matter of weeks.

"We have a series of recommendations that we will be discussing with the president in the coming weeks to further enable our support for the Iraqi Security Forces," General Dunford said, in a statement from the Pentagon.

"The secretary and I both believe that there will be an increase to the US forces in Iraq in the coming weeks—but that decision hasn't been made," Dunford added.

"We're broadening both the weight and the nature of our attacks," Defense Secretary Carter told the Pentagon press corps during the same briefing. The US is taking "important steps" in preparation for "crucial battles in the months to come," Carter said.

The "important steps" being taken by US forces include daily rounds of air strikes and artillery bombardments, in preparation for full-scale assaults against Mosul and other major Iraqi cities. On Monday, US air forces bombarded ten area targets in and around the Iraqi cities of Mosul, Qayyarah, Sinjar and Sultan Abdullah.

Hundreds of US Marines, having secretly deployed to a new firebase near Makhmur in northern Iraq earlier this month, are shelling villages on the outskirts of Mosul on a daily basis. Iraqi national forces forcibly

evacuated some 2,500 civilians from villages south of Mosul Monday, including Mahana, Kudila and Kharbardan, the Iraqi military said.

In 2014, at the outset of the latest US Iraq war, known as "Operation Inherent Resolve," the Obama administration vowed that the US intervention would be limited to air strikes and a minimal ground role, restricted to small numbers of "advisors" embedded with Iraqi units.

During the nearly two years of escalating US operations that followed, these promises have been continuously rolled back. A familiar pattern has emerged, whereby the US military chiefs periodically announce, without any suggestion that the civilian administration has been consulted or even informed, their plans for an imminent expansion of the quality and role of US forces in the war.

Last June, the Pentagon unveiled plans for the indefinite stationing of US ground forces throughout Iraq in a network of "lily pad" bases. In December, Secretary Carter announced the deployment of a Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) "expeditionary targeting force," essentially a small army of lavishly funded and equipped commando units specializing in assassination, kidnapping, and other black operations.

The US moves toward larger ground operations have proceeded beneath a relentless bombing campaign. US-led coalition planes have pummeled Iraq with more than 7,336 strikes since the beginning of the air war in August 2014.

The American military violence being inflicted upon Iraq in the name of fighting the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is part of a decades-long assault on the country.

The endless US wars in Iraq are the product of the geopolitical struggle of American imperialism for

primacy on the world stage. Like Al Qaeda before it, ISIS is fundamentally a creation of US military interventions, which is now being seized upon to conduct new military operations aimed at imposing US hegemony over the oil-rich Middle East.



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