

Washington temporarily withdrawing staff from embassy in Iraqi capital



U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo boards a plane at Neom Bay Airport in Saudi Arabia, on November 22, en route to Washington. (Photo: AFP / Patrick Semansky)

Baghdad, December 3 (RHC)-- The United States is temporarily withdrawing some staff from its embassy in the Iraqi capital Baghdad. The decision comes in the wake of the assassination of an Iranian nuclear scientist near Tehran and ahead of the anniversary of the assassination of Iran's top commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani.

"A source familiar echoed this and said the decision to have a partial, temporary withdrawal was determined at a Tuesday meeting of the National Security Council's Policy Coordination Committee," read a CNN report on Wednesday.

The U.S. State Department has neither confirmed or denied the drawdown of embassy staff.

An Iraqi politician warns of an "imminent war" with the United States as Washington threatens to target dozens of Iraqi sites linked to the Arab country.

"Ambassador (Matthew) Tueller remains in Iraq and the Embassy in Baghdad continues to operate," a State Department spokesperson said in a statement. "The State Department continually adjusts its diplomatic presence at Embassies and Consulates throughout the world in line with its mission, the local security environment, the health situation, and even the holidays... Ensuring the safety of U.S. government personnel, U.S. citizens, and the security of our facilities, remains our highest priority."

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