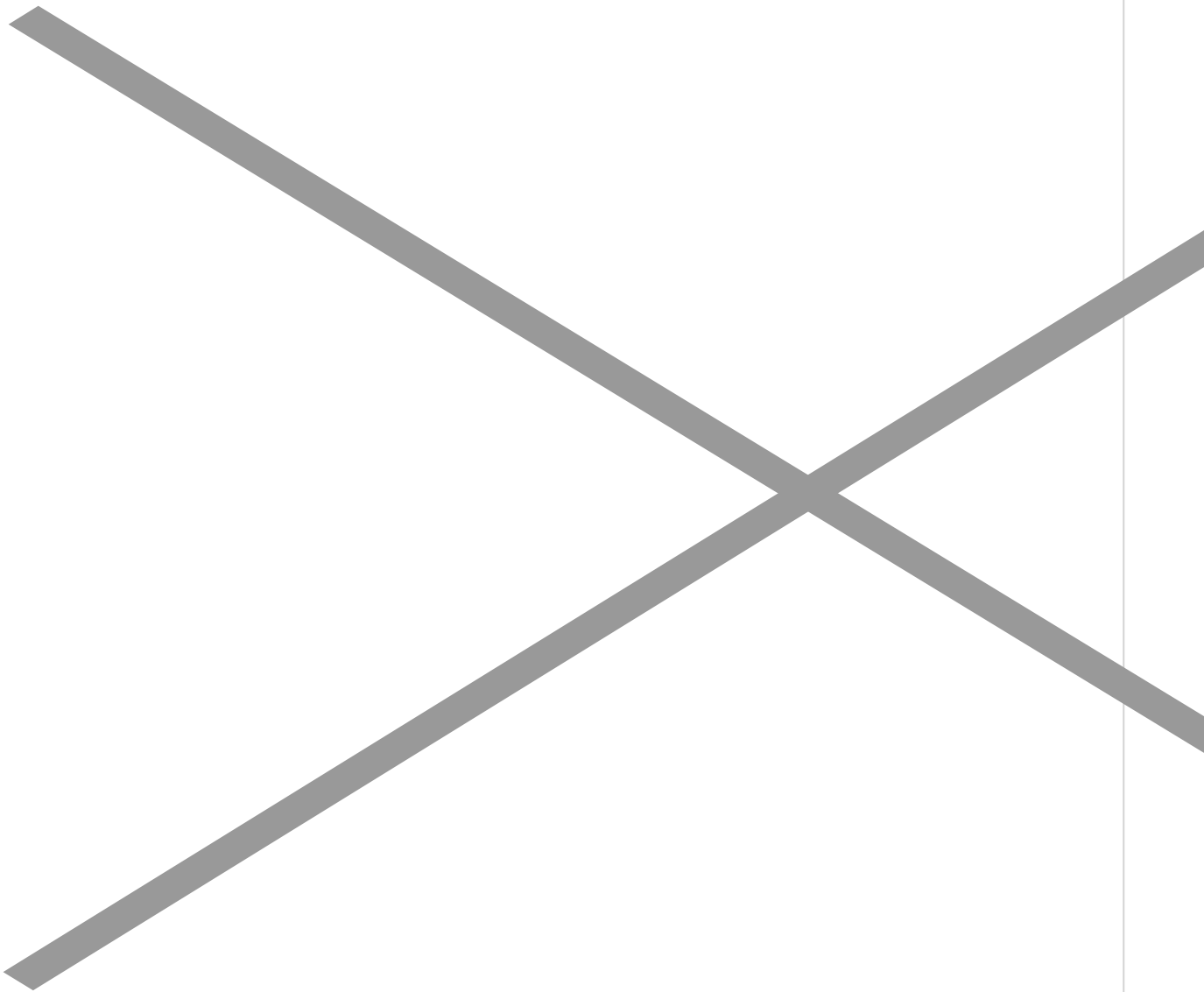


Washington launches air attacks using F-15 fighter jets against targets inside Syrian territory

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F-15 fighter jets attacked positions inside Syrian territory on Wednesday.

Damascus, November 9 (RHC)-- The United States has attacked an alleged weapons storage facility in eastern Syria it believes was being used by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and what the Pentagon called "Iran-backed groups."

In a statement on Wednesday, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said the so-called "self-defense strike" was carried out by two of the air force's F-15 fighters in response to recent attacks on U.S. forces.

"The president has no higher priority than the safety of U.S. personnel, and he directed today's action to make clear that the United States will defend itself, its personnel and its interests," the statement said -- without mentioning that U.S. troops are illegally stationed in Syrian territory.

Amid rising tensions since the Israeli aggression against Gaza began on October 7th, Washington has said its troops and their allies have been attacked at least 40 times in Iraq and Syria by Iran-backed forces, with 45 servicemen suffering traumatic brain injuries or minor wounds.

Late last month, the Pentagon said the U.S. struck two IRGC and Iran-linked facilities in Syria following attacks on U.S. personnel.

"The United States is fully prepared to take further necessary measures to protect our people and our facilities. We urge against any escalation," he said.

The United States has 900 troops in Syria and 2,500 more in Iraq, on a mission to advise and assist local forces trying to prevent a resurgence of ISIL (ISIS), which in 2014 seized control of large swathes of both countries before it was eventually defeated.

The U.S. has said its strikes are not connected with the Israel-Hamas war, amid concerns about a regional escalation of the crisis.

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