

U.S. Reduces Military Personnel in Saudi Arabia



Riyadh, August 20 (RHC)-- The U.S. military has withdrawn some of its troops from Saudi Arabia who were helping the Kingdom with its aggression against Yemen. A new report shows that Washington has also dramatically reduced the number of its staff members that are helping the Riyadh regime with the month-long war against its southern neighbor, Reuters reported Friday, citing American officials.

According to Lieutenant Ian McConnaughey, a U.S. Navy spokesman in Bahrain, there are now less than five people assigned full-time to the "Joint Combined Planning Cell," which was established to coordinate U.S. support for the offensive. At its peak, the U.S. dedicated about 45 full-time staff members to the war who were deployed in Riyadh and elsewhere, McConnaughey noted.

The move comes as the Saudi monarchs and their allies in Washington are faced with growing pressure from the international community to stop the military campaign which, according to local sources, has killed about 10,000 people, most of them civilians.

The kingdom launched the war in March 2015, in a bid to undermine the Houthi Ansarullah movement and to reinstate Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, who had stepped down as Yemen's president but is now seeking to grab power by force.

Saudi Arabia has purchased billions of dollars worth of American warplanes and other U.S.-made weaponry that it is actively using to attack various Yemeni cities. The Saudi-led coalition has also received training, aerial refueling support and intelligence from the Pentagon.

The U.S. has specifically been criticized for providing the Arab monarchy with cluster bombs, illegal bombs in the form of large shell casings that contain hundreds or thousands of bomblets.

Leading rights advocacy groups such as Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch (HRW) have repeatedly blasted the U.S. for selling the illegal munitions to Saudi Arabia, urging Riyadh to stop using them as some of the bomblets fail to explode on impact and may go unnoticed for years before killing unsuspecting civilians.

However, the US has continued its unconditional support for the Saudi regime. In November last year, Washington approved a USD 1.29 billion rearming program for Riyadh.

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