

# *U.S. General Says U.S. Plans to Remain in Iraq Over Long-Term*

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Washington, July 14 (RHC)-- The U.S. plans to continue its multiple-decade-long destabilizing military occupation of Iraq, even after the fall of the Islamic State group. Lieutenant General Stephen Townsend dashed hopes that the impending collapse of the Islamic State group might mean the end of U.S. military involvement in Iraq, when he said that the United States is “interested” in maintaining a US military presence in Iraq after the eventual defeat of the Islamic State group.

“I would anticipate that there will be a coalition presence here after the defeat of the Islamic State group,” the general told reporters. “This fight is far from over... there's still hard work to be done.” He said decisions over post Islamic State group plans for a U.S. presence in the country are in a “final decision-making” stage.

The U.S. general claimed that U.S. coalition forces were needed to prevent a “replay” of 2011 when U.S. forces began to withdraw from Iraq following a decade of bloody, devastating invasion and occupation. With Iraq left in a destabilized condition, the Islamic State group quickly rose up as a regional power.

There are currently over 5,600 U.S. troops in Iraq, according to the Pentagon.



**Radio Habana Cuba**