

Up to 4,000 U.S. troops ordered to deploy in Middle East amid Iraq unrest



Washington, January 1 (RHC)-- Up to 4,000 American paratroopers have been ordered to deploy to the Middle East region following mass protests outside the U.S. embassy by Iraqi protesters infuriated over Washington's recent deadly military aggression on the Arab country.

The U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division's alert brigade of roughly 4,000 paratroopers, known as the Deployment Ready Brigade (DRB), has been issued orders to prepare for a possible deployment in the days ahead in Kuwait, three US defense officials told reporters on Tuesday. At least 500 paratroopers are already making their way to Kuwait, the officials added.

Earlier in the day, U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper said in a statement that at least 750 paratroopers were set to swiftly deploy to the region. The Pentagon chief says the United States is sending additional troops to Baghdad to provide security for the U.S. embassy there following an attack by protesters. Esper added that additional forces from the Immediate Response Force (IRF) were prepared to deploy over the next several days.

“This deployment is an appropriate and precautionary action taken in response to increased threat levels against US personnel and facilities, such as we witnessed in Baghdad today,” The US defense Secretary said.

The U.S. embassy in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad was evacuated on Tuesday after thousands of angry demonstrators gathered outside the gates of the compound to condemn Washington’s fatal military aggression that targeted Iraq’s Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) on Sunday.

The protesters held up signs calling for the US mission to be shut down and for the parliament to order US forces to leave Iraq. American forces deployed inside the compound fired tear gas, flash bangs and stun grenades to disperse the crowd, however, the Iraqi protesters breached the outer wall of the high-security compound, throwing bricks and stones at the surveillance cameras around the building.

Reacting to the developments in Iraq, U.S. President Donald Trump accused Tehran of being behind the mass protests outside the US embassy in Baghdad.

Trump issued what he called a threat against Iran, saying in a tweet that Tehran will be held fully responsible for any US lives lost in Iraq and claimed Iran would pay a "big price" in case US facilities are damaged or its forces are attacked in the Arab country.

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