
CARTER: U.S. TROOP LEVEL IN AFGHANISTAN BOLSTERS GLOBAL COUNTERTERRORISM FIGHT

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Addressing U.S. troops at Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan yesterday, Defense Secretary Ash Carter said President Barack Obamas announcement last week that the U.S. would maintain 8,400 troops in that country into next year bolsters the fight against terrorists around the globe.

Carter said the presidents decision will ensure that the Afghan forces have success next year based upon our experience in the last fighting season and up to this time in this fighting season.

Refresh, Retrain Afghan Forces

The secretary said the number of U.S. troops will aid in the process of refreshing and retraining Afghan security forces. Calling the effort sensible, the secretary also said next years U.S. defense budget provides full funding to continue the mission. In Poland last week at NATOs Warsaw Summit, the United States coalition allies agreed to provide the same support, Carter added.

The United States and its allies efforts in Afghanistan aim to make sure that Afghanistan can control its own territory [and] give its own people a better life * [and] never again become a platform from which attacks can be launched on our country, and our people and our society, Carter emphasized.

And, the United States is committed to stick with that effort so it succeeds, the defense secretary said. But right now, they need our help, Carter said of Afghanistans government, adding, And we're going to continue to provide that help.

The United States wants Afghanistan as a long-term friend and security partner, the secretary said.

Afghan Partners

Look at a map of this region. [Its] not a bad place to have good friends. So we're in this for the long run, Carter said.

Providing support to Afghanistan and its security forces demonstrates Americas commitment, he said. It's buying a little extra insurance next year for us to make sure that we continue to be able to do what we're doing now, the secretary said of helping the Afghans defeat various terrorist groups that are trying to tyrannize a country that was busted up for decades, and use it to mount attacks on the United States.

This is a really important part of the world. And it's a really important moment to be here, Carter told the U.S. troops. And here you are, doing what you're doing with this part of your lives. You should feel very good about it. ... I'm very proud of what you've done.

Kaynak/Source: