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**CARTER: US MUST STAY IN IRAQ AFTER ISIS DEFEAT**

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ERBİL, Kurdistan Region □ US Secretary of Defense Ash Carter has said that the United States military, along with its coalition allies, needs to retain a presence in Iraq after ISIS is defeated to ensure the group does not rise again.

Insisting that the US and the coalition must not halt the current campaign until the Iraqis successfully retake Mosul from the militants Carter said the need for a continued coalition presence after that objective is complete.

But there will still be much more to do after that to make sure that, once defeated, ISIL stays defeated, Carter said on Saturday, according to AP. We'll continue to counter foreign fighters trying to escape and ISIL's attempts to relocate or reinvent itself. To do so, not only the United States but our coalition must endure and remain engaged militarily.

In Iraq in particular, it will be necessary for the coalition to provide sustained assistance and carry on our work to train, equip and support local police, border guards and other forces to hold areas cleared from ISIL, he added.

Carter did not say how long he believed the US should remain in Iraq to ensure ISIS does not reestablish itself after losing all of its territory in Iraq.

The US withdrew all of its military forces in Iraq at the end of 2011 as part of an agreement under the then Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. Since mid-2014 it has once again become militarily involved in the country in the war against ISIS, providing air support to its Iraqi and Kurdish allies there.

Today the US has approximately 5,000 troops in Iraq, most of whom are combat advisors deployed to Iraq as part of the aforementioned train, equip efforts Carter referred to.

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Kaynak/Source: