
IRAQ 'WILL NEVER ALLOW US BASES ON ITS SOIL'

05.03.2018

AFP, March 4, 2018

Iraq says it will under no circumstances permit the United States to build permanent military bases on its soil, which would be a violation of its sovereignty.

Baghdad firmly rejects the construction of US military bases on its soil, said Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim Jaafari at the end of an extended visit to Russia on Saturday.

Iraq will not stand on ceremony when it comes to the protection of its sovereignty, he said. He said that, back in 2014, when Baghdad asked for international help in fighting the Takfiri terrorist group of Daesh, it said the potential contribution had to meet the requirements of Iraqs sovereignty and independence.

Jaafari said Baghdad had made the matter clear that contributions to its counter-terrorism operations should not lead to the establishment of military bases or permanent foreign military presence in its territory. Iraqs sovereignty is our red line, the Iraqi foreign minister said.

He pointed to the presence of permanent US military bases in South Korea, Turkey, Japan, and many other world countries long after the end of World War II and said the bases violated those countries sovereignty.

According to US government data, there are about 9,000 American troops in Iraq. The US Department of Defense, though, puts the number at far lower. In 2003, the US invaded Iraq to topple the then-regime of Saddam Hussein, who the US and Britain falsely claimed was in possession of weapons of mass destruction. Former US President Barack Obama pulled out all US combat troops from Iraq in 2011, effectively ending the invasion and occupation of the Arab country.

But the destruction that the war had caused, including the decimation of the Iraqi security structure, allowed Daesh to emerge in 2014. In September that same year, the US led a number of its allies in launching an aerial bombardment campaign against purported Daesh targets in Iraq. That coalition continues to be present in Iraq even as the Iraqi leadership announced the end of the war on Daesh in the country in December last year.

Last month, Nato even agreed to a US demand to deploy a larger military mission to Iraq. Earlier, on Tuesday, Jaafari told reporters in Moscow that Baghdad was thoroughly considering purchasing Russias surface-to-air S-400 missile defense systems.

The issue is being studied in every detail, he said. All necessary decisions aimed at strengthening

Iraq will be made after that. Late last month, the US warned Iraq through State Department spokeswoman Heather Neuert of the consequences of extending military cooperation with Russia and striking deals to purchase advanced weaponry, particularly the S-400 systems.

Neuert said Washington had contacted Baghdad and many other countries to explain the significance of the Countering Americas Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) which targets Russia, Iran, and North Korea and possible consequences that would arise in the wake of defense agreements with Moscow.

Kaynak/Source: