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US Continues Iraq Buildup with Combat Troops, Helicopters

By Jason Ditz

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US officials continue to loudly protest against concerns of “mission creep” in Iraq, but with the rate of the military buildup in the nation it no longer appears at all credible to deny that the administration is moving toward direct involvement in the latest Iraqi War.

Last week saw deployments of growing numbers of ground troops, with claims Obama’s promises of no boots on the ground only covered “combat troops.” Monday of this week, the first combat troops came, with the promise now shifting to a “no combat missions” one.

Even that seems absurd, as the Pentagon sends Apache attack helicopters into Iraq for the combat troops to use in these “non-combat” missions. The administration appears to recognize the unpopularity of a new Iraq War, but seems determined to escalate quietly until it is no longer a potential move to warn against, but a simple reality.

Though US operations center around Baghdad, the first special forces troops have also been sent northward into Irbil to set up a second Joint Operations Center for the fight against ISIS.

Even the denials of America’s war-footing in Iraq are getting mighty slim, with Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Martin Dempsey saying of direct US military involvement only “we’re not there yet,” while confirming the US assessment that Iraq can’t retake any of their lost cities without foreign involvement on their behalf.

Promises of no more than 300 US troops have now led to nearly 1,000 troops on the ground, with more coming in all the time, and no signs that the escalation is stopping.