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As Losses Grow, Pentagon Officials Push New Iraq ‘Surge’

By Jason Ditz

May 29, 2015

Since Iraqi troops lost the city of Ramadi to ISIS, the Pentagon has been talking up changes to their training and arming programs as a way to boost Iraqi military effectiveness. That’s the public version. Privately, some officials are talking up a more precipitous escalation.

Pentagon officials are now talking up what is being dubbed a new military “surge” into Iraq, including embedding “spotters” and “advisers” with Iraqi military forces on the frontline. Some of these troops would be involved in actual combat missions in everything but name.

Army Chief Gen. Ray Odierno, who formerly led the military occupation of Iraq during the last surge, conceded that the embedding program would greatly increase the risk to US ground troops in Iraq, but insisted it would “probably” make Iraqi troops more effective to have US troops looking over their shoulder.

Putting ground troops in Iraq at all was repeatedly ruled out by White House officials in the past, though this was eventually shifted to “no combat troops,” and later “no enduring combat missions.” The process seems to be continuing toward escalation to a full-scale ground war, and each failure in the war seems to be followed by the same response, more escalation.