

US Sends 200 More Troops to Syria Days after Obama Lifts Ban on Arms Supplies to Rebels

By [Zero Hedge](#)

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With Assad on the verge of retaking Aleppo, and with it, regaining full control in the ongoing Syrian proxy war, we asked last week in "[With Assad On Verge Of Historic Victory, Syrian Rebels Request A Ceasefire](#)" how long before the US intervenes in an attempt to derail the sudden Syrian (and Russian) momentum. We got the answer this morning, when US Defense Secretary Ash Carter said on Saturday that the US is sending 200 additional military personnel to Syria to help drive Islamic State from its de facto capital of Raqqa.

Speaking in Bahrain at the Manama Dialogue conference on Middle East security, Carter said the 200, including special forces trainers, advisers, and explosive ordnance disposal teams, would join 300 US special forces already in Syria. "These uniquely skilled operators will join the 300 US special operations forces already in Syria, to continue organizing, training, equipping, and otherwise enabling capable, motivated, local forces to take the fight to ISIL," Carter said quoted by AP.

Three years ago Obama vowed:that he would not put American boots on the ground in Syria.

President Obama: "I will not put American boots on the ground in [#Syria](#). I will not pursue an open-ended action like Iraq or Afghanistan."

— The White House (@WhiteHouse) [11 September 2013](#)

Carter added that "by combining our capabilities with those of our local partners, we've been squeezing ISIL by applying simultaneous pressure from all sides and across domains, through a series of deliberate actions to continue to build momentum."

A hint of US plans to intervene came earlier in the week, when on Thursday, [President Obama unexpectedly granted a waiver for restrictions on the delivery of military aid to "foreign forces, irregular forces, groups, or individuals," if those forces are supporting the US' alleged counter-terrorism efforts in Syria.](#)

The decision was promptly [slammed by Syria on Saturday](#), whose Foreign Ministry said on Saturday that **"the lifting of the ban on arms supplies to Syria by US President Barack Obama is another evidence of Washington's continuing support for terrorism, the Syrian Foreign Ministry said Saturday."**

"The United States has provided a new evidence of its notorious role in support for terrorism in Syria by taking the decision to lift the ban on supplying arms to terrorist groups," the

ministry added.

Russian presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov likewise warned that “the prospect of terrorists coming into possession of those weapons, including MANPADs (man-portable anti-air missiles), “poses a serious threat not only for the region, but the entire world,” adding that the US’ decision will “definitely” create a risk for the Russian Air Force.

However, according to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, the decision to ease restrictions on military aid for foreign forces and other fighters supporting the US in Syria is unlikely to affect the situation in eastern Aleppo. Moscow is looking for a solution that involves as few casualties as possible, Lavrov stressed, speaking at an OSCE Ministerial Council in Hamburg.

“I think everyone understands that the militants in east Aleppo are agonizing. We don’t want to support those who would gladly finish off those militants at any cost without any talks. We are ready to solve these problems in a way that would spare us additional casualties and destruction,” he noted.

That said, in light of the recent significant gains by the Syria regime and Russian forces in Syria while the US State Department was rocked by a post-election power and decision vacuum, **it would take a full blown US ground offensive against Assad to prevent what now an almost certain defeat of the “Syrian rebels”** in the coming weeks and months, thereby eliminating the biggest source of geopolitical instability in the middle east as life in Syria slowly returns to normal.

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