US Military Rejects Russian Claims about Number of IS Fighters in Afghanistan

The United States military has rejected Moscow’s claim the number of Islamic State militants in Afghanistan runs into the thousands, while at the same time urging Russia and Iran to support the Kabul government, not the Taliban, to help defeat IS in the country.

KABUL - Commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan General John Nicholson made the remark Saturday while responding to recent Russian accusations Washington is intentionally downplaying the spread of IS militants in the country.

“Numbers that are spread about the number of Daesh fighters by Russia is grossly exaggerated. It is around 1,500,” Nicholson told a news conference in the Afghan capital. He used the Arabic acronym for IS.

The general said that IS militants are operating in parts of the eastern Afghan provinces of Nangarhar and Kunar and maintain a “pocket” in the northern Jowzjan province.

Nicholson said that Afghan forces, backed by U.S. counterterrorism troops and airpower, are attacking all three of the locations...

First US Front-Line Adviser Troops Arrive in Afghanistan

KABUL - More than 600 members of the assistance brigade are expected to arrive in Afghanistan over the next few weeks.

A new US Army unit created specifically to advise and assist conventional foreign military forces has begun deploying to Afghanistan.

Military.com reported this week that the leadership of 1st Security Forces Assistance Brigade has arrived in Kabul and their troops will be dispersed at outposts throughout the country in order to be closer to the front lines of the war.

This is the first time in years that US troops will be on the frontline. Until now US troops have been advising high-ranking Afghan commanders but under US President Donald Trump’s new strategy, these troops will advise battalion-level personnel, military.com reported...

Turkey Condemns Terrorist Attacks in Afghanistan

ANKARA - Turkey on Saturday condemned the latest terrorist attacks in Afghanistan which killed at least 22 people including 18 soldiers.

“We learned with sorrow that various terrorist attacks perpetrated in Kabul and provinces of Farah and Helmand today, killed and wounded many Afghan brothers and sisters, including soldiers,” Turkey’s Foreign Ministry said in a statement. At least 18 Afghan soldiers were killed in an overnight attack...

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