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Obama ‘urgently’ mulls attacks on Syria, Iraq

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The US government is ‘urgently’ considering air assaults on Iraq and Syria in an attempt to flush out the al-Qaeda-linked Takfiri militants operating in the two countries, a US official says.

The unnamed official, quoted by the *Guardian*, said on Friday that the White House was “urgently and expediently” considering military action to halt the rapid advance of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

The revelation comes one day after US President Barack Obama said there are “some short-term, immediate things that need to be done militarily,” signaling a new openness to returning the US to war in Iraq.

According to unnamed officials, the Obama administration is examining an air assault using air force or navy warplanes and drone strikes, but manned aircraft are said to be the preferred option, owing to their superiority against moving and maneuverable targets.

Meanwhile, a Pentagon official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told the Guardian that the ISIL “is now across the border,” adding, “It is possible to take out the head, you’ve got to take out the heart.... Everything is being looked at.”

US Secretary of State John Kerry said in London that the Obama administration would make a decision quickly about action on the ISIL terrorists, adding, “I am confident the US will move rapidly and effectively to join with our allies in dealing with this challenge.”

Carl Levin, the Democratic chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said after emerging from a briefing with defence officials on Thursday that a direct US military involvement in Iraq may revive the bloody conflict which erupted following the 2003 capture of the Iraqi capital Baghdad.

“While all options should be considered, the problem in Iraq has not been so much a lack of direct US military involvement, but a lack of reconciliation on the part of Iraqi leaders,” he said.

Over the past days, Iraqi armed forces have been engaged in fierce clashes with terrorists, who have threatened to take their acts of violence to other Iraqi cities, including the capital, Baghdad.