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Obama Sends 300 Troops as ‘Advisers’ to Iraq

By Jason Ditz

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President Obama announced today his intention to send 300 US special forces troops to Iraq as “advisers” to the Iraqi military. The deployment is above and beyond the nearly 300 US Marines also sent to the US Embassy in Baghdad.

While Obama tried to downplay the move, insisting that he remains determined not to send “American combat troops,” the nature of the advisory positions mean that the troops headed there will effectively be commanding Iraqi combat forces, and could easily get sucked into the fighting.

Sending “advisers” has long been a step toward more overt military involvement, with tiny amounts of US military advisers sent to Vietnam in 1950 by President Truman, with the number of troops and scope of the mission steadily rising for years until the US was in a huge war.

The slow crawl back into Iraq seems even more cynical, as President Obama has insisted he can send whatever troops he wants without Congressional support, and seems to be going slow primarily to pressure Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki to resign.