
Baghdad won't let Washington use its territory in war against Iran – Iraq's envoy

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Iraq does not want a “devastating” new war in the Middle East and will not allow the US to use its territory for military action against neighboring Iran, Baghdad’s ambassador to Moscow has said.

“Iraq is a sovereign nation. We will not let [the US] to use our territory,” Haidar Mansour Hadi, the Iraqi envoy to Russia, told journalists at a press conference in Moscow when asked about Iraq’s stance on the rising tensions in the region, fueled by the feud between Washington and Tehran.

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The ambassador expressed his hope that *“nothing will happen”* eventually, adding that his nation *“does not want a new devastating war in the region.”* He also said that Baghdad could try to use its close ties with both the US and Iran to ease tensions.

Iraq made it clear that we want to be part of a solution and not part of the problem.

His words came amid fears that a new war is brewing in the Middle East. On Wednesday, the US ordered the partial evacuation of its embassy in Baghdad and a consulate in Erbil, in Iraqi Kurdistan, after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo claimed that *“Iranian activities”* endanger American sites and troops in Iraq.

The move prompted Germany and the Netherlands to halt its missions in Iraq aimed at training the local forces.

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Last week, the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visited Baghdad, telling reporters the US is concerned that Iran's supposedly-increased activities might compromise Iraq's sovereignty.

Tensions between Washington and Baghdad flared after the US unilaterally withdrew from the 2015 Iranian nuclear deal and re-imposed all sanctions against Tehran while also threatening other nations, which continued to trade with Iran, with some restrictive measures.

America's increased pressure angered Tehran. Most recently, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said his nation would not enter any talks with Washington about any new nuclear deal. He expressed his belief that the two nations would not engage in a military conflict as neither side *"seeks a war."*
