

## **US to send military advisers to help fight Islamic State in Syria**

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**Washington:** The White House on Friday confirmed that the United States will send less than 50 Special Operations troops to northern Syria to act as military advisers and help local forces fight the Islamic State (IS), Xinhua reported.

"There -- the less than 50 number is accurate. I cannot be more specific than that, primarily for reasons related to Operational Security," White House spokesman Josh Earnest said in response to question about the US plan widely reported on the US media.

Those US troops "do not have a combat mission" and their major task is to build capacity of local moderate opposition forces fighting the IS militants by offering some training and advising assistance, the spokesman said.

He stressed that despite the plan to deploy US troops on the ground in Syria for the first time, the US strategy in fighting the IS in Syria has not changed.

"The first is, you have heard the President (Obama) on many occasions discussed our strategy in Syria. And the fact is, our strategy in Syria has not changed," Earnest said.

This will be the first time that US troops are deployed on the ground in Syria, where large swaths of territory have been controlled by the IS.

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