

Rebel-seeking Turkish troops enter Iraq

by UPI

IRBIL, Iraq -- Some 300 Turkish soldiers crossed 2 miles into northern Iraq early Tuesday in search of Kurdish separatists, Iraqi Kurds alleged. Various reports said Ankara was saying little about the allegations, although it authorized airstrikes in Iraq two days ago that killed as many as seven people, the BBC reported. A spokesman for the Iraqi Kurdish security forces told the broadcaster the Turkish troops entered Iraq in a mountainous triangle between Iraq, Iran and Turkey. The chief of staff for the president of the Kurdish regional government, Fouad Hussain, told CNN the troops' movements in the rugged terrain were confusing. "We don't have our own troops in that area," Hussain said. "No human can stay there, so I don't know what they are doing." Last month, the Turkish Cabinet authorized cross-border attacks to root out members of Kurdistan's Workers' Party, known as the PKK and designated by the U.S. State Department as a terror group. Turkey claims the group has been using Iraq as a base to attack Turkish border and military installations as part of its bid to establish a Kurdish nation. Some 37,000 people have been killed in associated fighting since 1984, Kuwait's KUNA news agency said.

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