

Further U.S. withdrawal from Iraq unlikely this year: U.S. general

By [Global Research](#)

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Washington – Further withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq after the planned departure of 12,000 troops by September is unlikely this year, a U.S. general said on Monday, Xinhua News Agency informed.

Lt. Gen. Lloyd Austin, the second-in-command of U.S. forces in Iraq, told a Pentagon conference via live video-link from Iraq that the expected withdrawal of those troops is what the U.S. military is planning “for the foreseeable future.”

“We absolutely have to make sure that we have the adequate force available to provide that same degree of security that we saw at the end of January for the provincial elections,” he added, stressing the heavy security need for Iraq’s general elections in December.

On the previous day, the U.S. military announced it will pull out 12,000 troops from Iraq by September, still leaving the bulk of troops there.

Last month, U.S. President Barack Obama announced a plan to withdraw all U.S. combat forces from Iraq by Aug. 2010, leaving only 35,000 to 50,000 troops for noncombat missions.

But U.S. military commanders said the plan also gave them the flexibility to adjust troops levels around the “window of risk” surrounding Iraq’s general election in the coming December.

According to a security pact inked by the former Bush administration and the Iraqi government last year, all U.S. forces will leave Iraq by the end of 2011.

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