

Syria: This U.S. Occupation - Or “Presence” - Is Unsustainable

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In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

The U.S. is now occupying north-east Syria. It wants to blackmail the Syrian government into “regime change”. The occupation is unsustainable, its aim is unattainable. The generals who devised these plans lack strategic insight. They listen to the wrong people.

The Islamic State no longer holds any significant ground in Syria and Iraq. What is left of it in a few towns of the Euphrates valley [will soon be gone](#). Its remnants will be some of several terror gangs in the region. Local forces can and will hold those under adequate control. The Islamic **State** is finished. This is why the Lebanese Hizbullah announced to pull back all its advisors and units from Iraq. It is the reason why Russia began to repatriated some of its units from Syria. Foreign forces are no longer needed to eliminate the remains of ISIS.

In its UN Security Council resolutions [2249](#) (2015) for the fight against ISIS the UNSC was:

“Reaffirming its respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and unity of all States in accordance with purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter,

...

Calls upon Member States that have the capacity to do so to take all necessary measures, **in compliance with international law**, in particular **with the United Nations Charter**, ... **on the territory under the control of ISIL** also known as Da’esh, in Syria and Iraq, to redouble and coordinate their efforts to prevent and suppress terrorist acts committed specifically by ISIL ... and entities associated with Al-Qaida ... and **to eradicate the safe haven** they have established over significant parts of Iraq and Syria;

There is no longer any “territory under the control of ISIL”. Its “safe havens” have been “eradicated”. The task laid out and legitimized in the UNSC resolution is finished. It is over. There is no longer any justification, under UNSC Res 2249, for U.S. troops in Syria or Iraq.

Other legal justifications, like an invitation from the legitimate governments of Syria and Iraq, could apply. But while Syria has invited Russian, Iranian and Lebanese forces to stay in its country it has not invited U.S. forces. These are now illegally occupying Syrian land in the north-east of the country. The Syrian government explicitly called it such.

(One wonder how long it will take the sanctimonious European Union to sanction the U.S. for its egregious breach of international law and for violating the sovereignty of Syria.)

[According to](#) official documents more than 1,700 U.S. troops are currently in Syria. The publicly announced number is only 500. “Temporary” forces make the up the difference.

(Overall U.S. troop numbers in the Middle East have increased [by 33% over the last four month](#). The numbers doubled in Turkey, Kuwait, Qatar and the UAE. No explanation has been given for these increases.)

The U.S. troops in Syria are allied with the Kurdish YPG. The YPG is the Syrian branch of the internationally designated Kurdish terrorist organization PKK. Only about 2-5% of the Syrian population are of Kurdish-Syrian descent. Under U.S. command they now control more than 20% of Syrian state territory and some 40% of its hydrocarbon reserves. This is thievery on a grand scale.

To disguise its cooperation with the Kurdish terrorists, the U.S. renamed the group into the “Syrian Democratic Forces” (SDF). Some Arab fighters from east Syrian tribes were added to it. These are mostly former foot-soldiers of ISIS who changed sides when the U.S. offered better pay. Other fighters were pressed into service. The people of the Syrian-Arab city Manbij, which is occupied by the YPG and U.S. forces, [protested](#) when the YPG started to violently conscript its youth.

New troops were added to the SDF during the last days when ISIS fighters escaped from the onslaught of Syrian and Iraq forces in Abu Kamal (aka Albu Kamal aka Bukamal). They fled northwards towards YPG/U.S. held areas. Like other ISIS fighters the U.S. [helped to escape their deserved punishment](#) these forces will be [reabeled and reused](#).

The Russian Ministry of Defense [accused](#) the U.S. of blocking the lower airspace over Abu Kamal while its Syrian allies were trying to liberate it. For eight days Russian high flying long range bombers had to come all the way from Russia to provide support for its troops on the ground. In a recent TV speech the leader of the Lebanese Hizbullah, Hassan Nasrallah, [accused](#) the U.S. troops in Syria of providing drone intelligence to ISIS in Abu Kamal. ISIS used it to shell Syrian and allied forces. Several high officers of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps [were killed](#) in such attacks. Nasrallah also said that the U.S. used electronic warfare measures to disable the radios of the attacking force. He said that it rescued fleeing ISIS troops. Nasrallah’s accusations are consistent with reports from the ground. (The U.S. and its allies also [continue](#) to [supply](#) other terrorist groups in north-west and the south-west of Syria.)

Neither Nasrallah nor the IRGC will forget those misdeeds. The operation commander of the IRGC, General Quasem Soleimani, [recently reported](#) to Iran’s Supreme Leader Khamenei:

All these crimes have been designed and implemented by US leaders and organizations, according to the acknowledgement of the highest-ranking US official who is currently president of the United States; moreover, **this scheme is still being modified and implemented by current American leaders**.

The U.S. has changed its rule of engagements and [unofficially declared a no-fly zone](#) for Russian and Syrian planes on the east side of the Euphrates. It says that it will attack any force that crosses the river to pursue ISIS. It is openly protecting its terrorists.

Ten days ago the U.S. Secretary of Defense General (rtd) Mattis [announced](#) U.S. intentions to illegally occupy Syria:

The U.S. military will fight Islamic State in Syria “as long as they want to fight,” Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said on Monday, **describing a longer-term role for U.S. troops long after the insurgents lose all of the territory they control.**

...
“We’re not just going to walk away right now before the Geneva process has traction,” he added.

...
Turkey said on Monday the United States had 13 bases in Syria and Russia had five. The U.S-backed Syrian YPG Kurdish militia has said Washington has established seven military bases in areas of northern Syria.

A report in today’s *Washington Post* is more specific. The fitting headline: [U.S. moves toward open-ended presence in Syria after Islamic State is routed](#):

The Trump administration is **expanding its goals in Syria** beyond routing the Islamic State to include a political settlement of the country’s civil war ..

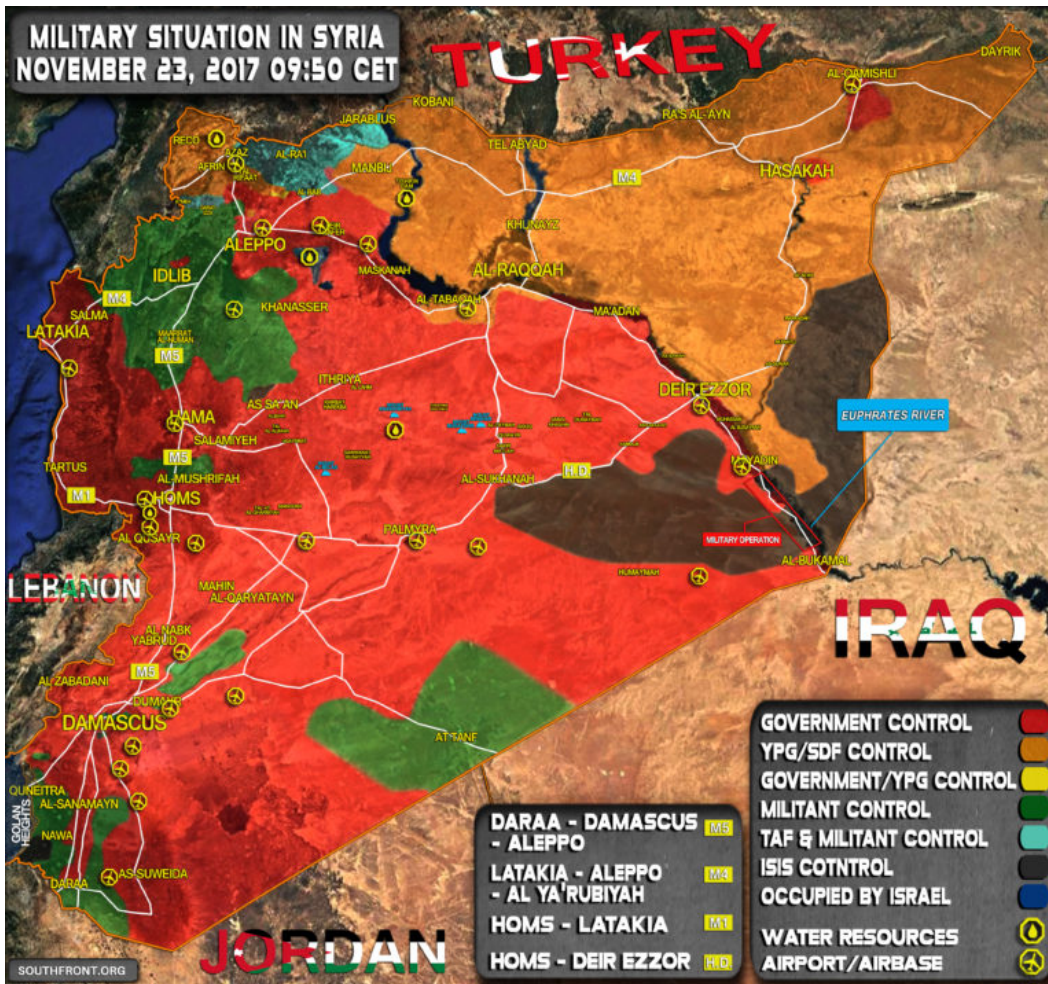
...
With forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad and his Russian and Iranian allies now bearing down on the last militant-controlled towns, the defeat of the Islamic State in Syria could be imminent — **along with an end to the U.S. justification for being there.** U.S. officials say they are hoping to use the ongoing **presence of American troops** in northern Syria, in support of the Kurdish-dominated Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), **to pressure Assad to make concessions** at United Nations-brokered peace talks in Geneva.

...
An abrupt U.S. withdrawal could complete Assad’s sweep of Syrian territory and help guarantee his political survival — **an outcome that would constitute a win for Iran**, his close ally.

To avoid that outcome, U.S. officials say they plan to maintain a U.S. troop **presence** in northern Syria — where the Americans have trained and assisted the SDF against the Islamic State — and establish new local governance, apart from the Assad government, in those areas.

...
“By placing no timeline on the end of the U.S. mission . . . the Pentagon is creating a framework for **keeping the U.S. engaged in Syria for years to come**,” [said Nicholas Heras of the Washington-based Center for a New American Security.]

Even the propaganda writers at the *Washington Post* admit that there is no longer any justification for a U.S. presence in Syria. The **U.S. intent is to commit blackmail**: “to pressure Assad to make concessions”. The method to do so is military “presence”. There is no way that Syrian government and its people will give in to such blackmail. They did not fight for over six years to give up their sovereignty to U.S. intrigue. They will call the U.S. bluff.



Source: [Southfront](http://Southfront.org)

No military handbook includes “presence” as a military mission. There are no rules for such an undefined task. The last time the U.S. used the term was in the early 1980s during the civil war in Lebanon. The task of U.S. troops stationed in Beirut was defined as showing military “presence”. After such units and naval forces of the U.S. interfered on one side of the civil war, an aggrieved party took revenge against the U.S. and French military stationed in Beirut. Their barracks were blown up, 241 U.S. and 58 French soldiers died. U.S. military “presence” in Beirut ended.

The U.S. military “presence” in Syria is likewise doomed.

The U.S. alliance with the YPG/PKK pushes Turkey into an alliance with Russia, Iran and Syria. Several thousand Turkish soldiers and civilians have died due to PKK attacks. Last week Russian transports planes crossed through Turkish air space on their flights from Russia to Syria. This was a first. The U.S. had urged its NATO allies, including Turkey, to prevent such flights and Russian planes had to take the longer route through Iranian and Iraqi air space. Due to the U.S. alliance with the YPG and for many other reasons Turkey [feels alienated](#) from the U.S. and NATO. It is moving into the “resistance” camp.

The northern border between Turkey and Syria is thus closed for U.S. supplies to its forces in north-east Syria. Towards the west and south Syrian forces and their allies prohibit any U.S. supplies. Iraqi Kurdish territory to the east is for now the only way for a land supply route. But the government in Baghdad is allied with Iran and Syria and it is pushing to regain control over all the border posts of Iraq, including those still held by the Kurds and used by

the U.S forces. Several Iraqi militia who fought ISIS under Iraqi government command have announced their hostility to U.S. forces. The Iraqi government may try to reign them in but they will hardly vanish. The U.S. land supply route through Iraqi-Kurdish areas can thus be closed at any time. The same goes [for any air space](#) around Syria's north-east.

The north-east of Syria is surrounded by forces hostile to the U.S. On top of that many Syrian people in the now occupied north-eastern Syria continue to be loyal to the Syrian state. Syrian, Turkish, Iranian and Hizbullah intelligence are working on the ground. There are lots of local Arabs hostile to Kurdish overbearance. The U.S. bases, outposts and all its transports in the area may soon come under sustained fire. While Russia said that it will not intervene against the U.S. allied SDF forces, many other entities have motives and means to do so.

The mission of the 1,700+ U.S. troops in north-east Syria is undefined. Their supply routes are unsecured and can be blocked by its enemies at any time. The local population is largely hostile to them. All of the surrounding countries and entities have reasons to attain the end of any U.S. presence in the area as soon as possible. It would require a ground force that is at least ten-twenty times larger to secure the U.S. presence and its communication and supply routes.

The presence is as useless and unsustainable as [the southern U.S. presence at al-Tanaf](#).

Trump [had spoken out](#) against such occupation and interference in the Middle East:

The U.S. president [...] campaigned on a pledge to avoid getting sucked into intractable conflicts.

The [military junta](#) that controls Trump and the White House, (former) generals McMaster, Kelly and Mattis, are not acting in the interest of the United States, its citizens and troops.

They are following the [call of the Zionist Jewish Institute for National Security of America](#) which is pushing for a war on all Iran related entities and interests in the Middle East. JINSA [advertises](#) its huge influence on the higher U.S. officer corps. It is not by chance that a recent speech at the Jewish Policy Center in Washington described [The U.S. Military as a Zionist Organization](#). But like other such wish-wash, it fails to explain why unquestioned support for a colony of east-European racist in west Asia is of "American interest".

The military mission of the U.S. occupation force in north-east Syria is undefined. Its positions are not sustainable. The aim this "presence" is said to have is unattainable. There is no larger concept into which it fits.

The generals ruling the White House may be tactical geniuses in their fields. They are neophytes when it comes to strategy. They blindly follow the siren call of the Lobby only to again wreck the U.S. ship of state on the cliffs of Middle Eastern realities.

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