

Trump Commits US to ‘Indefinite’ Military Presence in Syria

State Dept officials say Trump signs off on new strategy with more goals

By [Jason Ditz](#)

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According to State Department officials, President Trump has recently abandoned his desire to “get out” of Syria and bring US troops home. He has signed a new strategy, [which includes new military goals, and eliminates all timelines for removing troops from Syria.](#)

US troops are in several parts of Syria, mostly in the Kurdish-held northeast. An estimated 2,200 US troops are in Syria, though official numbers are being withheld from the public. Special Envoy James Jeffrey said the old plan was to leave Syria by year’s end, but now the troops are committed to an “indefinitely extended” stay.

The new goals are substantial as well, with the US now focusing on forcing Iran out of Syria and “enduring defeat” for ISIS. Jeffrey says the US is “not in a hurry” and that Trump is now on board with this idea.

Pentagon officials have long presented the operation in Syria as more or less permanent, and have resisted all talk of pullout, including from President Trump. This mirrors their policy in Iraq, where US troops are similarly positioned in unknown numbers on a more or less permanent basis.

Trump, interestingly, has not commented on this fairly dramatic change in his position on US troops in Syria. It is unclear why Trump hasn’t spoken on the matter, but there is no sign such comments are coming in the near future.

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Jason Ditz is news editor of [Antiwar.com](#).



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