

## Washington Forbids Serbia from De-Mining Syria

By [Daniel McAdams](#)

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*This may be one of the cruelest and most cynical moves of Washington in its entire dark “regime change Syria” chapter. Serbian media sources are reporting, based on quotes from US Embassy Belgrade personnel, that the United States has sought and been given assurances by the Serbian government and military that Serbian de-mining experts will not be deploying to Syria to assist in removing the ubiquitous horrific mines and other explosive devices left behind by a retreating ISIS.*

As the rout of ISIS forces continues in Syria, the civilian population begins returning to their homes and their lives that had been disrupted by the Islamic State, al-Qaeda, and other extremist groups. According to the United Nations, more than 600,000 Syrians have returned to areas liberated by the Syrian government with the assistance of Russia and Iranian forces.

But that is where the tragic problems often begin. As the Economist [reported](#) earlier this year, the joy of returning to a life where the scourge of ISIS has been eliminated can be cut short in an instant by what ISIS leaves behind:

‘The first explosion killed our neighbour and his sister-in-law when they entered their house,’ said **Ali Hussain Omari**, a former fighter from the city. ‘Three days later another mine killed my cousin. His 11-year-old daughter’s leg was amputated and their house was destroyed. A week later another mine in an olive tree exploded. My neighbour lost his leg.’

What a horrible irony to have survived the marauding jihadists only to be blown to pieces by the terrors they left behind.

Which is why it is all the more disturbing that the United States government is so adamant that US-trained Serbian de-mining experts NOT deploy to Syria to help make post-ISIS Syria safe for civilians to return.

The “spat” between US Ambassador to Belgrade **Kyle Scott** and **Defense Minister Aleksandar Vulin** began when the Serbian side announced that it would participate in the de-mining efforts in Syria in a manner that would have Serbian forces coordinating with Russians. The Americans reminded their Serb allies, through US Embassy spokesman **Eric Heyden**, that:

...the US government provided significant donations in money, equipment and training to help the Serbian Army get rid of the mines left over from the war, and thus make Serbia a safer place. That is why, over the past 15 years, we

have provided more than USD 20 million in aid for mine clearing operations in Serbia. During our last major joint exercise, in April 2017, the US government donated some USD 450,000 in medical and demining equipment to the Serbian Army to improve its capacities...

In other words, "we funded your training in de-mining operations and if you want to continue receiving money from the United States you had better cancel your plans to assist with de-mining in Syria."

Washington's concerns over Serb participation in de-mining in Syria was, according to press reports, heeded by Belgrade. Heyden further announced:

Media reports from Russia have stated that deminers from Serbia would be deployed together with Russian forces in Syria. In the last six months, in our numerous conversations with the leadership of the Ministry of Defense and the US General Staff, the US government received multiple assurances that this story is incorrect, and that the goal of our bilateral training was to enable members of the Serbian Army to clear the area of the former military airport in Sjenica, and to open it for use...

Once that was settled, the US announced that it "has plans for next year to continue helping to develop the Serbian Army's capacity in this project."

And the Syrian victims of ISIS and other (probably US-backed) extremist mines that continue to kill and maim innocent civilians and children? Too bad for them. More innocents will die in the name of the current US Cold War 2.0 psychosis.

*Featured image is from the author.*

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