

Top US general travels to Middle East for war talks

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Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey traveled to the Middle East this week, arriving in Israel on Monday.

Dempsey met with top Israeli General Benny Gantz and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday, to discuss “the threats that could emanate out of the region—globally and to the homeland—and how we can continue to work together to make both of our countries more secure.”

After he is finished in Israel, Dempsey will travel to Jordan, where over 1,000 US forces are already stationed, including F-16s with crews and Patriot missile batteries. The US has also pledged to help Jordan implement “border control techniques” to manage the large influx of refugees streaming in from Syria.

US Air Force chief of staff General Mark Welsh had flown to Israel for secret meetings August 4-8 in advance of Dempsey's visit.

While his official task is to discuss strengthening of military ties with the regimes in Israel and Jordan, General Dempsey's visit comes amid the serious setbacks experienced by the US-backed opposition in Syria, and is bound up with plans for a military escalation in that country, utilizing regional allies including Turkey, Jordan and Israel.

In an interview with the *Wall Street Journal* on Friday, former deputy CIA director Michael Morrell said that the situation in Syria is the number one threat to US “national security,” and that the country may become the new preferred haven for al Qaeda.

The purpose of Dempsey's Near Eastern trip is to promote and coordinate support for US war plans targeting Syria. In its report on Dempsey's visit, DEBKAFfile claimed that the purpose of the trip is to “lay the ground ahead of President Barack Obama's

final decision to embark on limited US military intervention in the Syria civil war.”

DEBKAFfile's report states that the US intends to enforce a no-fly zone over Syria, carve out “buffer areas” inside Syria along the Israeli and Jordanian borders, declare the southern Syrian town of Deraa, near the border with Jordan, the new capital of “liberated Syria,” and insert thousands of Syrian commandos, trained and led by Jordanian and American officers, into Syrian territory to conduct the war against Assad.

While Dempsey did not explicitly call for such aggressive measures, he is clearly convinced that the only solution in Syria is the removal of Assad and the installation in power of US-backed opposition elements.

While in Israel, Dempsey warned that the war in Syria “will not be resolved in the short term,” and characterized the cause of the war as “the unleashing of historic ethnic, religious and tribal animosities that will take a great deal of work and a great deal of time to resolve.”

Actually, the cause of the war in Syria is the determination of US and European imperialism to re-impose colonial status on the nations of the Middle East. Ethnic and sectarian divisions are being intentionally stoked up and manipulated by the imperialist powers as part of this project.

Dempsey claims that a primary task for the US is to strengthen the moderate forces within the opposition while marginalizing the radical elements.

He said, “I am very concerned about the radical element of the opposition, and I am concerned about the potential that extremist ideologies will hijack what started out to be a popular movement to overthrow an oppressive regime.”

Dempsey's comments turn reality upside down. In reality, the US has been channeling material and financial support to militants inside Syria, including the al Nusra Front, since 2011. These "extremists" are America's most lethal shock troops in Syria.

Dempsey himself admits that the moderate and radical components within the opposition often work together. "It doesn't surprise me that from time to time they collaborate with each other," Dempsey said.

Inconveniently for the Pentagon's public relations effort, the more radical or extremist units are from all reports the most effective fighters within the anti-Assad coalition. Radical Islamist groups, backed by US allies, are in fact the "vanguard" of the Syrian "revolution."

Responding to the capture of a crucial base at Minegh by anti-Assad forces, *Jane's Defence Weekly* analyst Charles Lister said, "The victory again underlines the leading strategic impact being played by militant Islamists, particularly in northern Syria."

According to Lister, "every major offensive in northern Syria this year has been announced, led, and coordinated by Islamists."

Speaking to *The Voice of Russia*, editor of the *Long War Journal* Bill Roggio said, "the reality is that these rebel groups, the group that the US wants to support, the Syrian Military Council and the Syrian National Coalition and then by extension the Free Syrian Army, they fight with and alongside the Al-Nusra Front against Assad's regime ... The Free Syrian Army is held up as secular and when you watch what's happening in Syria, you could argue that large segments of it just aren't."

In a column for *Russia Today Online*, journalist Patrik Henningsen similarly wrote, "the Free Syrian Army is painfully weak, and dominated by dozens, if not hundreds of radical, foreign-led Islamist fighting groups, of which Al-Nusra Front is the largest and best-funded."

Iran's *Press TV* reported on Sunday that Al-Nusra Front militants massacred 450 Kurds on August 5 in the northern Syrian town of Tal Abyad, mostly women and children.

The newspaper *Al-Alam* reported that, "Mass killings at the hands of terrorists have been increasing in Syria during the past month...As the foreign-backed insurgency in Syria continues without an end in sight, the US government has boosted its political and

military support to Takfiri extremists."

Kurdish journalist Barzan Iso reported the attacks on the Kurdish population date from mid-July: "Al-Qaeda started attacking Kurdish villages on the 19th of July. After these attacks they kidnapped many Kurds."

The US government and media have maintained an eerie silence in relation to these claims, which, if true, will provoke greater scrutiny of these Islamist militants and their connections to the CIA.



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