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Pullout Unlikely as US Reinforcements Arrive in Syria

While President Trump still talks about withdrawing troops from Syria "relatively soon," the impression on the ground in Syria is very much that US troops are staying. The Pentagon is showing no signs of rolling back deployments, and is adding more reinforcements into the area.

Over 2,000 US troops are deployed at a dozen bases in Syria, mostly in the northeast. Reports out of the area are that the US continues to expand the bases, building perimeter walls, defensive ditches, and helicopter runways.



This all points to one conclusion: the US troops are staying. Despite President Trump's repeated comments, everything the Pentagon is doing gives the impression they're readying more permanent bases, and making no effort to ready for drawing down their troop levels.

Pentagon officials have also <u>been talking up a new round of military offensives</u> against ISIS in northeastern Syria. The Pentagon has always been suggesting an open-ended presence in Syria, and much of the cabinet is seen to be trying to talk Trump out of a withdrawal. Last week, after talking pullout, President Trump and French President Macron talked about having a "<u>strong and lasting footprint</u>" in Syria. Though Trump never explicitly said this meant he was ditching the pullout, he has so far issued no orders preparing to leave Syria.