

PM: Where Are They?

By Polly Mann

Hey, hey 9,000 U.S. troops were sent to Israel—or so they say. Or were they? And, if they weren't, where are they??

I guess they're there. But you'd never know it if you depended on the mainstream corporate press to tell us; I found absolutely no word of them there. I first learned about U.S. troops being sent to Israel on the website, Al Arabiya, back in the middle of January. Apparently, in December, General Frank Goprenc, commander of U.S. forces based in Germany, had made an announcement while on a visit to Israel. He had spoken of an upcoming deployment of several thousand U.S. troops to Israel where they would participate in military drills with Israeli troops in an operation called "Austere Challenge 12." Then, on January 15th, according to Al Arabiya, about 9,000 U.S. soldiers arrived in Israel.

Egyptian Major General Jamal Mathloun said the deployment might not necessarily mean a direct signal of war, but that it could be construed as readiness on the part of Israel and the U.S. in case of a conflict in the region. Abulaziz Sager, chairman of the Gulf Research Center in Dubai, said the deployment of U.S. troops to Israel is "definitely to send a clear signal to Iran." Elias Henna, a Lebanon-based military expert, said the deployment was "to support U.S. presence in the region."

However, the exercises must have been called off, according to reports on the internet. The Common Dreams website, in announcing the postponement of the exercises, said the call-off was attributed to the desire to avoid "unnecessary headlines in such a tense period." It further stated that it was thought the exercises could "dangerously ramp up regional tensions." But there's nary a hint as to where the troops were during this interim.

The Israeli website, debka.com reported on January 15th of this year that Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Moshe Yaalon, in a radio interview, said that the exercises had been called off despite the fact that 9,000 U.S. soldiers had already arrived in Israel. Yaalon said the U.S. was hesitant over possible repercussions for fear of a spike in oil prices. According to the site, "Israel's Deputy Prime Minister further inflamed one of the most acute disagreements in the history of U.S.-Israeli relations over the Obama administration's objections to an Israel military action against Iran's nuclear sites in any shape or form." The Deputy Prime Minister contended that "a military operation is the last resort, but Israel must be ready to defend itself. The friction had already been fueled by the deep resentment aroused in Israel by Washington's harsh condemnation of the Jan. 11th assassination of the nuclear scientist Prof. Mostafa Ahmadi-Roshan and the absolute denial of any U.S. involvement."

The final word that is evidence to be found anywhere of U.S. troops in Israel comes from what appears to be a fundamentalist Christian end-times website. It concludes that the deployment of troops was for the “specific purpose of enforcing the division of Jerusalem.” It predicts that the Rapture (at the end of the world) will take place immediately upon the launching of the first Israeli nuke. The report, which is headed by a statement that is said to be for educational or discussion purposes, contains a miscellany of interesting items: “1) By the way, I am confident that many of our military missile- defense personnel deployed in Israel are, in fact, born-again Christians; 2) Benjamin Netanyahu, likewise, is expecting the near-Rapture; and 3) January 23rd is a New Moon. There is a tactical advantage for air strikes then.”

So it goes. Maybe the troops are just having a great time, visiting Jerusalem and enjoying the nightlife of Tel Aviv while awaiting the Rapture—or, just awaiting orders from headquarters? Or, are they back in Quantico or New Mexico?

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