

US preparing for "Possible Military Intervention" in Syria, Various Options Contemplated

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In-depth Report: **SYRIA**

A senior Israeli official says the United States is gearing up for a possible military intervention in Syria to prevent Syria's alleged chemical weapons from being used against civilians or falling into wrong hands.

Israel's Minister for Strategic Affairs Moshe Ya'alon told Israel Radio on Thursday that Israeli officials were in close touch with their American counterparts about the latest developments in Syria. He added that at the current juncture there was no fear that Syria would use its alleged chemical weapons against Israel.

Ya'alon refused to comment on media reports that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had secretly met with Jordan's King Abdullah in Amman to discuss Syria's alleged stockpile of chemical weapons.

During the meeting, Netanyahu proposed a coordinated Israeli-Jordanian lightning air strike to destroy Syria's alleged stockpile of chemical weapons.

Jordanians, however, have reportedly declined the option over concerns that it would cause chemical fallout around the target sites.

Israel then proposed a second option, a comprehensive joint military incursion into Syria. The operation would include at least 8,000 soldiers entering Syria from different directions to neutralize the alleged chemical weapons sites.

The Jordanians did not support the Israeli proposals, but they did not completely reject them either.

Foreign-backed militants, however, have reportedly formed a company which has already used chemical weapons in battle against Syrian armed forces. However, in their propaganda, they have tried to incriminate the Syrian army for using such weapons against civilians.

On December 22, Syrian rebels used chemical weapons against the Syrian Army in the town of Daraya, located eight kilometers southwest of Damascus. At least seven Syrian soldiers were killed after they were attacked by a chemical weapon which produced a toxic yellow gas.

Syrian militants have also threatened to contaminate Syria's drinking water supply in a bid to kill all Alawite Shias and the supporters of President Bashar al-Assad.

Syria has been experiencing unrest since March 2011, and many people, including large numbers of security forces, have been killed in the turmoil.

The Syrian government says the chaos is being orchestrated from outside the country, and there are reports that a very large number of the militants are foreign nationals.

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