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## GET OUT OF SYRIA

• U.S. troops occupy oil-rich breadbasket of Syria

By the AFP Staff

President Joe Biden has taken considerable heat from both the right and the left after he stuck to a peace deal negotiated by former President Donald Trump and ordered U.S. troops out of Afghanistan. It appears, however, that Biden did not learn any lessons from America's longest war in Afghanistan. Biden bizarrely still considers a U.S. military presence in Syria as vital, despite Trump working in the past to bring our troops home from that troubled Middle East country, as well.

Left-wing reporter Aaron Mate pointed out Biden's glaring hypocrisy in a recent writeup, remarking, "One day after the last U.S. forces left the Kabul airport [in Afghanistan] . . . Biden declared that he is 'ending an era of major military operations to remake other countries'."

While Biden was preaching an end to U.S. nation building, though, Dana Stroul, one of Biden's top military advisors, testified before Congress: "The Biden administration is committed to retaining a U.S. military presence in northeast Syria."

Stroul told Congress that the U.S. is fighting radical Islamic groups like



U.S. soldiers are still occupying the most productive region of Syria.

ISIS in Syria—an organization that didn't even exist before the U.S. invaded and occupied Iraq following the Sept. 11 attack.

Mate notes, however, that the Pentagon inspector general, in a recent report, acknowledged that the Syrian government, along with Russia and Iran, is actually doing the fighting against radical Islamic groups and that ISIS has mostly been contained by the Syrians and their allies, while U.S. troops have done little to help.

So why is the U.S. still in Syria when Biden can order them to come

home just as he did in Afghanistan?

The answer is, no one really knows, though perhaps it was Trump who told the truth in January 2020, when he said to Fox News in an interview that he ordered U.S. troops to stay in Syria "to take the oil."

Stroul was in accord with Trump's candid remarks, according to Mate, when, in October 2019, she spoke on a panel at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. The U.S. military is occupying the "resource-rich, economic powerhouse" region in Syria's northeast, which contains the country's "hydrocarbons" and is its "agricultural powerhouse," Stroul told attendees.

The occupation, she concluded, gives the U.S. government "broader leverage" to influence "a political outcome in Syria" that could pressure the popular Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad to turn over power to a pro-West and pro-Israel regime. That is doubtful, but war is not. ★

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