
'Arab NATO' reserve force to fight terrorism is 'myth & propaganda'

23/05/2017



The Saudis and the Emiratis would never dare put their troops onto a battlefield in Syria or Iraq for fear the troops would mutiny and join ISIS, says Peter Ford, the former UK ambassador to Syria and Bahrain.

US President Donald Trump on Sunday addressed leaders of 55 Muslim-majority countries who gathered for the Arab-Islamic American Summit in Saudi Arabia's capital Riyadh.

[@RT.com](#) [#Trump](#) & 55 Muslim-majority states sign pact pledging 34,000 troops to fight [#ISIS](#) in Iraq & Syria <https://on.rt.com/8c9s>



Washington and Middle East countries signed a new pact that promises to provide extra troops to fight terrorists. The so-called Riyadh declaration says leaders of those Islamic countries are ready to provide a reserve force of 34,000 troops when needed.

RT asked analysts where this "reserve force" of 34,000 troops will be used?

Peter Ford said he thinks *"it's a myth."* In his opinion, the Saudis and Emiratis *"cannot count on the loyalty of their own troops."*

[Saudi Night Fever: Trump steps out with traditional Arabian sword dance](#)

"It is a symbolic gesture so Trump can look good in the eyes of the American and the wider Western media. Let's be realistic here: this whole visit was not about advancing the fight against terrorism, or advancing Middle East peace – it was about Trump trying to recover some prestige after his battering back home in Washington. So these symbolic gestures and these pictures of him doing Saudi dancing in Riyadh," Ford said.

This entire Saudi trip *"was designed to restore Trump's image,"* the former ambassador added. *"If he were serious, then in his big speech yesterday we would have heard some acknowledgment of the two countries, which are doing most to resist ISIS. That is the government of Iraq and the government of Syria. But Trump did not make any acknowledgment whatsoever of these countries, and he also tried to portray Iran, as the biggest threat in terms of terrorism, while this is a blatant distortion that has not been one single instance that Trump could point to of Iranian-inspired terrorism in the West,"* he said.

Read more [Trump talks tough on extremism in Middle East - but it's guns, oil, and money that](#)

[matter](#)

Independent journalists Rania Khalek said it was specifically said this “*reserve force*” would be used in Iraq and Syria. She says it is interesting because many of the countries at the gathering on Sunday, “*especially Saudi Arabia, have been investing a lot of money in extremist groups operating in Iraq and Syria.*”

So, she added, “*they are actually responsible for the extremism problem that they are now being tasked with combating.*”

Khalek also did not rule out a possibility that this force could be the basis for some kind of an

action against Iran, which was not only excluded but also repeatedly bashed at this summit.

"This entire summit was based on not just selling weapons, but on also isolating Iran. When you have a summit based on American-Arab-Islamic understanding, and you exclude Iran, which is a state that's majority Shia. And you have an audience full of the Sunni leaders from Arab countries, it sends a message. So it is about isolating Iran, as well as it has been sending a message to Iran that 'we're all against you'," she told RT.

The statements, views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of RT.
