

US runs training camps for Syria militants: Russian general

presstv.com/Detail/2017/12/27/546937/Russia-Syria-Valery-Gerasimov-Daesh-Tanf

This photo, taken on May 23, 2017, and released by AP, shows a militant on a vehicle armed with heavy automatic machine gun (L) next to an American soldier on his armored vehicle at the Syrian-Iraqi crossing border point of Tanf, south Syria.

The Russian military top brass says militants, including those with the Takfiri Daesh terror group, are receiving training in US bases in Syria, adding the terrorists have been instructed to “destabilize” the Arab country.

In an interview with Russia’s Komsomolskaya Pravda daily on Wednesday, Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces Valery Gerasimov said the US had turned its military base near the town of al-Tanf in southeastern Syria into a training camp for militants.

Asked about the situation at the US-run al-Tanf base, he replied, “According to satellite and other surveillance data, terrorist squads are stationed there. They are effectively training there.”

General Gerasimov also accused the US of using a refugee camp outside the town of Shaddadah in Syria’s northeastern Hasakah Province as a training center for the Daesh remnants, including those evacuated from the terror outfit’s former stronghold of Raqqa.

“This is essentially ISIS (Daesh),” he said. “They change their colors, take different names – the ‘New Syrian Army’ and others. They are tasked with destabilizing the situation.”

On December 16, Russia’s Reconciliation Center for Syria revealed Washington’s training activities for members of the so-called New Syrian Army, composed of various terrorist groups, at the Shaddadah camp.

Read more:

- **[Where have surviving members of Daesh gone?](#)**

Elsewhere in his remarks, Gerasimov estimated that there are currently some 350 militants in al-Tanf and about 750 others in al-Shaddadah,

He further noted that the Russian military had been watching the US training activities at the al-Tanf base “for several months.”

The official also stressed that the Pentagon has so far failed to provide any explanation for its military presence at the al-Tanf base after Daesh’s defeat, saying, “So far, their answers have been ambiguous.”

The town of al-Qaryatayn in Syria’s Homs Province risked falling into the hands of the anti-

Damascus militants if the Russian forces did not intervene, according to Gerasimov.

“We took timely measures... They have suffered a defeat, these forces were destroyed. There were captives from these camps. It is clear that training is underway at those camps,” he added.

Nusra terrorists to be wiped out next year

Meanwhile, the Russian general predicted that the operation to eliminate members of the al-Nusra Front militant group in Syria will be completed in 2018.

Next year’s developments in Syria will include “the completion of eliminating militants from Jabhat al-Nusra and its affiliates,” he pointed out.

After losing all the territories under their control in Syria and Iraq, the Daesh terrorists have fled to Libya and southwestern Asia after being defeated in Syria, Gerasimov added.

“Some of them return to countries, from which they illegally arrived. The bulk of them flees to Libya, to southwestern Asian countries,” he said.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov also commented on the issue, saying the main part of the anti-Daesh battle in Syria was over.

“Now, of course, the main anti-terrorist objective is the defeat of Jabhat al-Nusra,” Lavrov said at a meeting with Ahmad Jarba, leader of Syria’s opposition Tomorrow movement.

He warned that the al-Nusra terrorists have been “are still resisting ... because they have been receiving assistance from abroad” to fight against the Syrian government forces.

“We are seeing positive changes in Syria. A decisive blow has been dealt on the IS [Daesh]. And although some militants who have fled the battlefield are trying either to regroup in Syria or to flee abroad,” he added.

Russia, Syria in close defense cooperation

General Gerasimov said the Russian military advisers assist nearly all units of the Syrian forces in planning counter-terrorism operations.

“We cooperate closely with the Syrian government troops, our advisers are attached to nearly all units,” he said.

Russian jets have been conducting air raids against Daesh and other terrorist outfits inside Syria at the Damascus government’s request since September 2015.

President Vladimir Putin said on Monday that Moscow now sees no need for a heavy military presence in Syria, but it will continue its counter-terrorism battle in the Arab state “if necessary.”