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WAR IN MIDDLE EAST

US TO DEPLOY ABOUT 1,000 MORE TROOPS



MAJDI MOHAMMED, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Israeli soldiers take their photo Tuesday beside the wreckage of an Iranian missile that landed in the West Bank village of Kifl Haris.

Sources say US agrees to diplomatic talks in Pakistan

JON GAMBRELL, DAVID RISING AND SAMY MAGDY
Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — The American military will deploy around 1,000 troops from the 82nd Airborne Division to the Middle East, a person with knowledge of the plans told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

The troops are to be sent in the coming days, the person said.

The unit is considered the Army's emergency response force and can typically be deployed on short notice. The force would include a battalion of the 1st Brigade Combat Team as well as Maj. Gen. Brandon Tegtmeier, the division's commander, and division staff, according to the person, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

It's the latest addition of American troops after U.S. officials last week said thousands of Marines aboard several Navy ships will head to the region.

While the Marine units are trained in missions that include supporting U.S. embassies, evacuating civilians and disaster relief, the soldiers of 82nd Airborne are trained to parachute into hostile or contested territory to secure key territory and airfields.

The New York Times earlier reported that the deployment was being considered.

War continues

Meanwhile, airstrikes battered Iran and Iranian missiles and drones targeted sites across the Mideast on Tuesday, even as Trump claimed the United States was in talks with the Islamic Republic to end the war.

With both sides firing barrages and Iran denying any negotiations are taking place, the war's tempo remained high a day after Trump delayed his self-imposed deadline for Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz. Tehran's chokehold on that crucial waterway snarled international shipping, sent fuel prices skyrocketing, and threatened the world economy.

Pakistan offered to host diplomatic talks, but Iran remained defiant, vowing to fight "until complete victory."

Any talks between the U.S. and Iran would face monumental challenges. Many of Washington's shifting objectives, particularly over Iran's ballistic missile and nuclear programs, remain difficult to achieve. It's not clear who in Iran's government would have the authority to

negotiate — or be willing to — as Israel has vowed to continue taking out leaders after killing several.

Iran remains highly suspicious of the United States, which twice under the Trump administration has attacked during high-level diplomatic talks, including with the Feb. 28 strikes that started the current war.

Pakistan volunteers

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif wrote on social media that Pakistan is ready to "facilitate meaningful and conclusive talks" to end the Iran war.

The U.S. agreed in principle to join talks in Pakistan, according to three Pakistani officials, one Egyptian official and a Gulf diplomat, while mediators were still working to convince Iran.

One diplomat from the region said the talks could happen by early next week, and that special envoy Steve Witkoff and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner are expected to represent the U.S. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to provide details to the media.

Please see **IRAN**, Page A2

Crash underscores pressures faced by air traffic controllers

Experts say incident highlights issue of staffing shortages in demanding job

RIO YAMAT
Associated Press

Just before an Air Canada jet collided with an airport fire truck, air traffic controllers at New York's LaGuardia Airport were juggling a developing late-night emergency on the runway.

A United Airlines flight had twice aborted takeoff and reported an odor coming from the back of the plane. But with no gate immediately available, the pilot and controllers went back and forth

over the radio as controllers tried to reach the airline and find a safe spot to put the plane. Audio recordings captured the chaotic conversation as the cockpit conveyed growing urgency.

"Flight attendants in the back are feeling ill because of the odor," the pilot can be heard saying. "We will need to go into any available gate at this time."

With no place to park the aircraft, air traffic control dispatched fire trucks to go to the plane instead and offered stairs to evacuate passengers, all while continuing to manage other traffic. Then a frantic warning cut across the radio: "Stop, stop, stop, Truck 1. Stop, stop, stop."

Please see **AIR TRAFFIC**, Page A2



SETH WENIG, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Firefighters and investigators examine the site Monday where an Air Canada jet came to rest after colliding with a Port Authority fire truck at LaGuardia Airport, after landing Sunday night in New York.