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by Dave DeCamp 24.03.2024

Israeli Minister Says Israel Will Invade Rafah No Matter What the US Thinks

Ron Dermer, a former ambassador to the US, says Israel will take control of the city 'even if the entire world turns on Israel, including the United States'

Israeli Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer has vowed that Israel will invade the southern Gaza city of Rafah even if it causes a rift with the US, *The Times of Israel* reported Thursday. Any Israeli attack on Rafah would incur huge civilian casualties since 1.5 million Palestinians are packed into the city, which has a pre-war population of 275,000. Israeli officials claim they have a way to protect civilians, but the US has said Israel has not presented any plan.

"We're quite confident that we can do this in a way that would be effective — not only militarily, but also on the humanitarian side. And they have less confidence that we can do it," Dermer, an American-born former Israeli ambassador to the US, said on the podcast Call Me Back With Dan Senor.

"It will happen even if Israel is forced to fight alone. Even if the entire world turns on Israel, including the United States, we're going to fight until the battle's won," Dermer added.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly vowed that he will go ahead with an invasion of the city despite concerns from President Biden, but he has agreed to send an Israeli delegation to Washington to discuss the attack. The US is expected to suggest a more limited, targeted operation against Hamas.

While the US has been expressing concerns about an attack on Rafah, it is not threatening any consequences as it continues to provide military aid and other types of support. Some

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reports have said the US is considering conditioning military assistance if Israel invades Rafah, but one US official said the US was actually <u>thinking about providing more aid</u>, not less.

A full-scale assault on Rafah would also disrupt aid shipments and tighten the starvation siege on Gaza, as the one border crossing into Egypt is in the city. The Israeli government <u>ultimately wants Palestinians in Gaza</u> to be expelled into Egypt, but Cairo is holding firm on its position that it won't accept refugees, although camps <u>are being</u> <u>constructed in the Sinai Desert near the border</u>, signaling they're preparing for the eventuality.

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