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Head of the U.S. CENTCOM Makes Surprise Visit to Israel

On April 23, the commander of the U.S. military's Central Command (CENTCOM), U.S. Army Gen. Joseph Votel, arrived in Israel to meet with senior Israeli officials for talks on Syria and Iran. According to AIPAC News Hub, during his visit, Gen. Votel met with Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Chief of Staff Gadi Eisenkot, National Security Adviser Meir Ben-Shabbat, and other senior Israeli defense officials. As the leader of CENTCOM, Gen. Votel oversees U.S. operations across the Middle East. Votel has strongly criticized Iran's behavior throughout the region. "It is my view that Iran poses the greatest long-term threat to stability in this part of the world," he said in recent testimony to Congress. Votel is the second head of a U.S. Unified Combatant Command to visit Israel in recent months. In March, U.S. Army Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti, commander of the U.S. European Command (EUCOM) traveled to Israel for the joint U.S.-Israel Juniper Cobra military exercise. "The U.S. is deeply committed to the defense of Israel. We will continue to work alongside the IDF to promote stability throughout the region, not only for the purposes of this exercise, but in the event of any real-world contingency," Gen. Scaparrotti said during the visit.

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