

# No, the US Didn't Abandon the Syrian Kurds. A Trump-Erdogan Agreement?

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*Trump has ostensibly compromised by promising Turkish President Erdogan that he'll stop arming the Syrian Kurds.*

The US and Turkish leaders spoke by phone last Friday, during which time Trump allegedly gave his counterpart his word that he will stop giving arms to the Syrian Kurds. The Turkish side [reported](#) that Trump called the previous policy of arming the YPG “nonsense” and promised to end it, while the [official White House readout](#) was more ambiguous and said that he “informed President Erdogan of pending adjustments to the military support provided to our partners on the ground in Syria”.

The discrepancy between both side's interpretation of the conversation prompted the Turkish Deputy Prime Minister to [state](#) that the US “would be deceiving the whole world” if it went back on its pledge, while the Pentagon [reiterated](#) that it is “reviewing pending adjustments to the military support provided to our Kurdish partners in as much as the military requirements of our defeat-ISIS and stabilization efforts will allow to prevent ISIS from returning.”

In addition, it should be reminded that [reports](#) have been circulating that the US might officially acknowledge that up to 2000 of its troops are in Syria, which would be around 4x more than what it previously admitted, and that the Pentagon is moving towards more of an “[open-ended](#)” mission in the war-torn country now that Daesh – it's supposed reason for being there – is defeated. What all of this means is that the US will probably not withdraw from Syria, and there's a chance that arms shipments to the Kurds might continue.

No matter what Trump may or may not have said to President Erdogan, he's [on record](#) in early April saying that he's given the US military “total authorization” to do what it wants, so if the Pentagon decides that there's a need to continue arming the Syrian Kurds, then that's exactly what the US will likely end up doing. Furthermore, nobody knows the exact terminology that Trump might have used during his phone call, so there's a chance that he might try to employ a “technical loophole” by selling weapons to the Syrian Kurds instead of “loaning” them like the US is presently doing.

In any case, the unlikelihood of the US military withdrawing from Syria means that the Pentagon could still extend a defense umbrella to its on-the-ground allies, thus staving off a [Turkish military intervention](#) and creating the pretext for forming a so-called “air bridge” in the event that the neighboring states attempt to blockade this region like they did to Iraq

Kurdistan. The key difference between the Iraqi Kurds and the Syrian ones is that the former didn't have 2000 US troops and reportedly [10 American bases](#) on their territory, hence why Washington "[betrayed](#)" them.

In addition, Iraq is already an internally partitioned country for the most part due to its "federal" status, while Syria has yet to formally follow in its footsteps, so the indefinitely prolonged US military presence there is designed to [advance](#) Washington's [preferred](#) "political solution" by pressuring Damascus, while Trump's talk about supposedly discontinuing weapons shipments to the Syrian Kurds is meant to give Turkey a "face-saving" excuse for passively accepting what they had previously said would be a clear red line for them.

The post presented is the partial transcript of the CONTEXT COUNTDOWN radio program on Sputnik News, [aired on Friday Dec 1, 2017](#):

[https://video.img.ria.ru/Out/MP3/20171201/2017\\_12\\_01\\_CONTEXTCOUNTDOWN130011217\\_mk2dxidu.nbr.mp3](https://video.img.ria.ru/Out/MP3/20171201/2017_12_01_CONTEXTCOUNTDOWN130011217_mk2dxidu.nbr.mp3)

***Andrew Korybko** is an American Moscow-based political analyst specializing in the relationship between the US strategy in Afro-Eurasia, China's One Belt One Road global vision of New Silk Road connectivity, and Hybrid Warfare.*

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