

“Sunnistan”: US and Allied “Safe Zone” Plan to Grab Territorial Booty in Northern Syria

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

Remember when the Obama Administration told the world how it hoped to identify 5,000 reliable non-jihadist ‘moderate’ rebels hanging out in Turkey and Jordan, who might want to fight for Washington in Syria? After all the drama over its infamous [‘train and equip’](#) program to create their own Arab army in Syria, they want to give it another try.

This week, Pentagon officials [announced their new plan](#) to train up to 7,000 more ‘moderate’ fighters, but this time the project would take place *inside* Syria (and to hell with international law).

We’re told that this was requested by Ankara, and with all NATO allies singing the same hymn – claiming that this new effort will help in securing Turkey’s porous border with Syria, or so the story goes. Washington’s political cover for this is fashioned from the popular post-Paris theme: to protect civilized Europe from invading hordes and the terrorists who hide among them, as stated in the *Wall Street Journal*:

The program would address part of the tense and long-running dialogue between Washington and Ankara over sealing the border, which Western governments have long complained is an avenue for extremists to leave Syria and travel internationally,

The timing of this announcement seemed uncanny against the backdrop of an unlikely ISIS ‘suicide bomb’ terrorist attack, in Turkey, of all places, where the victims just happened to be [14 German tourists](#), feeding perfectly into Europe’s new binary fear set of terrorism and immigration. Shades of [GLADIO](#), undoubtedly (but you won’t see western journalists entertaining such *conspiracy theories*).

Our friends at *Nation Builders Inc* are banking on the global public suffering from *Syria fatigue*, but now is the time to really pay attention. The west’s real agenda for the region is starting to unfold...

Despite all of US-led Coalition’s [scandals](#), lies, epic failures, [false flags](#) and official [conspiracy theories](#), the mainstream narrative on Syria persists. It’s on our TV screens and in our newspapers constantly – from Los Angeles to London, from Paris to Riyadh, every politician and pundit seems to have an opinion about, “what to do with Syria?” Everyone, except the Syria people themselves, who like the people of Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, Yemen and ever other country that’s found itself under the cleaver of western interests – are never afforded any say in their own destiny. As is tradition in Washington, London and Paris, the only Syrian voices which count are the ones who have been [hand-](#)

[picked by western technocrats and approved by the Saudi royal family](#) to form their ever-changing 'recognized' government-in-exile, the Syrian National Council. Currently, that could be Riad Hijab, George Sabra or Khaled Khoja. Next week, it could be three others, depending on who has fallen in, or out of favor with Washington or Riyadh.

To anyone who was listening close enough early on in the conflict, you would have heard determined members of the western-backed 'Syrian Opposition' admitting how they would, *'make a deal with the devil if that's what it takes to win power.'* Four years later, we now see that is exactly what happened, but whether you believe that this devil is US-led Coalition, or terrorist armies fighting groups (or both) might be cause for debate. Others will argue over which is the *bigger devil* - is it the Wahabist-Salafist terrorist brigades like al Nusra Front and Islamic State, or is it the West and its GCC partners?

The unfortunate reality is that these two devils are not mutually exclusive. The West and its partners not only [created this 'terror' crisis](#), but did so with the intent of unveiling a grand 'solution' to the problem.

Plans A-Z

The terrorist enclave in Syria is designed for purpose - to implant a hostile metastasis right in the middle of the very territory which neocolonial powers plan to tear away from the barely sovereign nations of Iraq and Syria.

Since 2011, the western-led cartel has deployed various levels of international subterfuge in Syria, starting with **Plan A:** the Arab Spring method - igniting a popular street uprising that might capture the world's attention for 15 minutes - enough to generate some high-quality evocative imagery and a social media storm to carry memes of liberty around the globe, inspiring the people on the streets (and on Twitter) to demand "change". Their cries for freedom would then be backed up by the US State Department, along with its functionaries at Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International America, and other Open Society Institute-funded NGOs and 'human rights' organizations. Obviously, this did not work. **Next, Plan B:** the political opposition suddenly transcended into an armed, paramilitary opposition, followed by brutal violence and killing on both sides. The US and its allies wasted no time, pledging weapons, training, cash and logistical support to the armed opposition. The west set up its own parallel government for Syria abroad, but it failed to gain any traction with the Syria people. **Then came Plan C:** this '*opposition*' would be quickly overrun and absorbed into a massive array of mostly foreign jihadi and mercenary soldiers of misfortune and other assorted terrorists. This fed into an already established 'War on Terror' western narrative. Now the west had a familiar entry point into the fight. The *Washington-London-Paris-Tel-Aviv-Riyadh-Doha-Ankara Axis* hoped that these terrorists would do the job of overthrowing the government of Bashar al Assad in Damascus, and collapse the country into a spirally pit of sectarian and tribal chaos. Who could blame them? After all, it worked in Libya in late 2011.

Fast forward to 2016, having failed to overthrow Assad and implode the nation-state of Syria, the men and women of *Nation Builders Inc* and their muscles in Brussels (NATO), are quickly moving to **Plan D:** take territory. That's not to say plans A through D weren't always in the schematics - they certainly were, and further back than many people would dare to speculate.

We now know from [Wikileaks cables that this operation goes back to at least 2006](#), but in

reality, it's probably much earlier than that. Taking the long view of history and the audacious building, and rebuilding, of a Euro-centric empire in the Middle East, one could say the process began the day the [Sykes-Picot Agreement](#) was signed in 1916. Concealed between those post-colonial lines drawn exactly 100 years ago, was the latent potential for the very conflicts and *uncivil* wars we are seeing today. If those borders are redrawn once again, you can be certain that they will be drawn by the very same powers involved a century ago. Whatever the arrangement, it will be to weaken, not strengthen the region, and certainly not strengthen any of the present nation states in the region, especially Syria. Proprietary powers will want any new states to be stuck in a perpetual state of neocolonial dependency, with an emphasis on financial and security dependency.

Mice and Men

21WIRE was one of the first news sources to warn about [Washington's initial impulse back in 2014 when it began calling for a 'No Fly Zone'](#) in Northern Syria. It was clear that a problem, reaction, solution dialectic was in play, with ISIS being the object of the public's reaction. That plan might have come to fruition in the fall of 2015, but a funny thing happened on the way to the [UN General Assembly](#) in New York City. Later that week, Russia announced that it would be inserting itself, and its Air Force, into the Syrian quagmire, and with that, thwarted any master plan for a US-Turkey (NATO) controlled *No Fly Zone* along the Turkish-Syrian border. Suffice to say, that Russia already knew NATO's next move and acted accordingly, and with purpose.

When asked two days ago about the prospect of the Washington DC latest brainchild, *Train and Equip 2.0*, this time inside Syria, here were my initial thoughts:

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Many political commentators were confounded by the mad dash of nations to make their bones against ISIS in Syria and northern Iraq. France and Britain were chomping at the bit to get in on the bombing, and at the time this might have seemed illogical to observers, what with the *Team America* and the world's largest military force - more powerful than all coalition members combined - running point on the operation. Why bother, with America and Turkey in the air, and the Kurdish Peshmerga on the ground? Why would any nation in its right mind want to volunteer to enter that quagmire?

We now know why, and it has more to do with what's beneath the sand than what's on top.

As any good pirate will tell you - if you want to claim your share of the booty, you have to do your share of the killing.



The Truth About 'Train and Equip'

The previous 'train and equip' program ended with Washington's military brass paraded in front of the Senate Armed Services Committee, before being roundly lambasted for failing to train even a handful of 'moderate rebels', this after being awarded \$500 million by the US taxpayer to *get'er done*.

When originally announced amid much fanfare, the public were told that the US government, in conjunction with the CIA, would be arming and training 'moderate' militants in Turkey, Jordan or at a base in Saudi Arabia - before sending them to fight inside Syria. Washington claims that these new trainees were meant to fight ISIS, and not the Syrian government forces, but judging by the unwavering 'regime change' rhetoric from the west, it would be highly naive to think that all this was strictly for ISIS.

Nine months into the train and equip project, US Army **Gen. Lloyd Austin III**, [acknowledged in Sept. 2015](#) that they had only managed to get "four or five" on the battlefield by then. Not one member of the media challenged this statement, probably because most were happy with the answer given - one which gave any hawkish critics of the Obama administration the pound of flesh they wanted and served to only intensify more calls before the new year for US 'boots on the ground' in Syria. Doves loved it because it seemed to prove that backing proxies doesn't work, and that the best solution was to call it quits. For the sanguine mainstream media, it served-up that all-too familiar government narrative, of a "cock-up, not a cover-up." This is the media's natural default position. In other words, "Well, it didn't work out, but that's nothing new with our incompetent government. Nothing to see here, move along." To ask how the money disappeared, or really inquire into how it costs \$500 million to train only five men - apparently was way too much work for the media. Not one 'journalist' stopped to ask, if only 5 fighters were trained and dispatched, then what happened to the half a billion dollars?

The real answer to that question should be self-evident to anyone studying reports on the ground in Syria, and is way too uncomfortable for the US media to stomach - that the US 'train and equip' program provided the necessary official cover to allow the prosecution of a dirty war *under the table*. It wasn't a failure like fall guy Gen. Lloyd Austin will have you

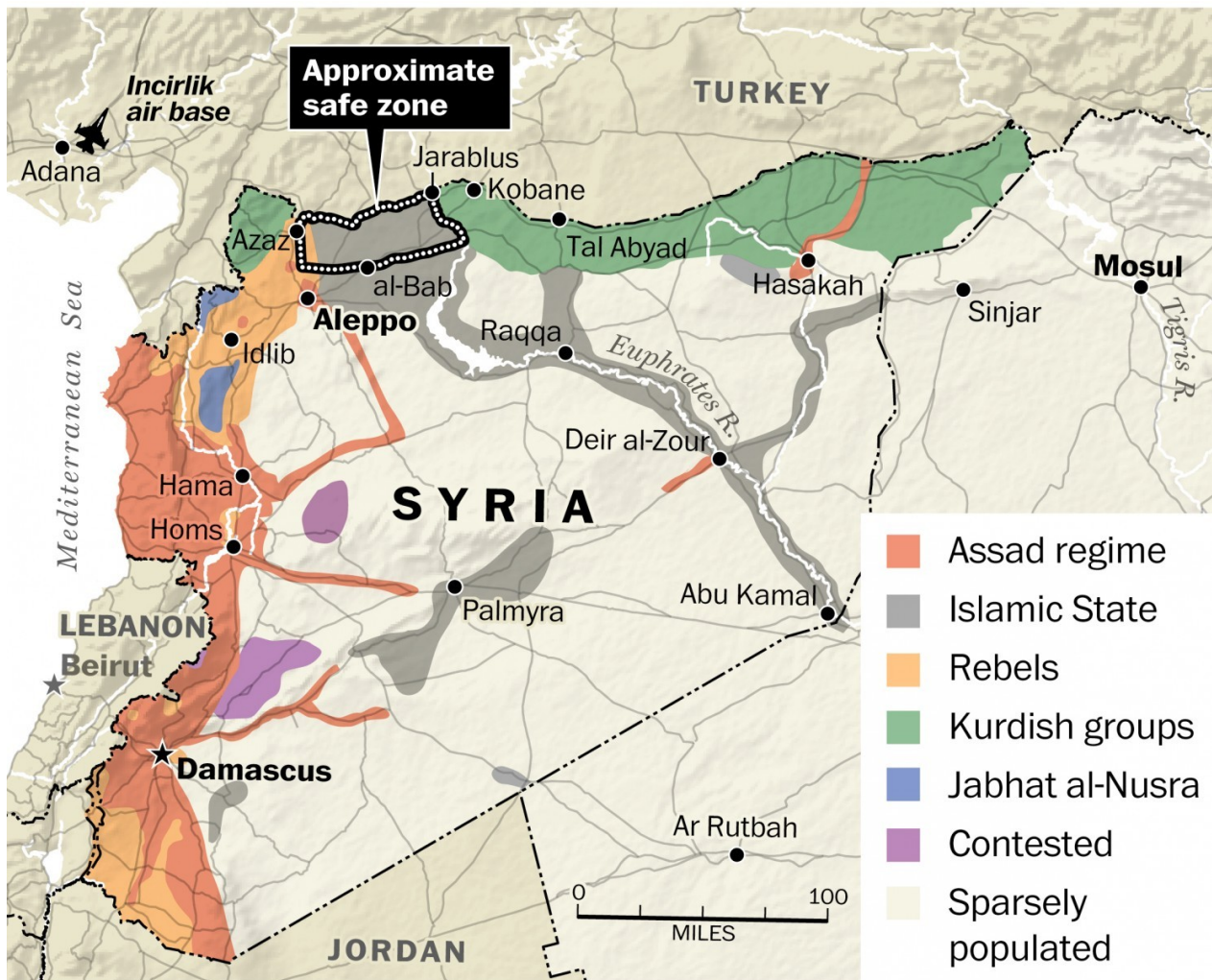
believe, it was a success.

Judging by the proliferation of heavy weaponry and other lethal arms that have made it into the hands of al Qaeda in Syria (al Nusra Front), ISIS, Jaysh al-Islam and others - it's clear that Uncle Sam's generous donation of \$500 million has definitely been used to equip, if not train, those'rebels' in Syria.

Middle East commentator and analyst [Sharmine Narwani](#) explains the West's perennial dilemma when trying to identify who their 'moderates' are in Syria:

For years, Washington has insisted there are armed 'moderate' groups in Syria, but have gone to great lengths to avoid naming these 'moderates.' Why? Because if moderates were named and identified, the US would have to be very, very certain that no past, present or future 'atrocities' would surface to prove otherwise. And the US could not guarantee this with any of the groups they have armed, trained or financed in Syria over the past five years.

The next 'train and equip' round will be more focused, and will be used to secure the following...



Sources: Institute for the Study of War, Hurriyet Daily News

THE WASHINGTON POST

The map above is from July 2015, but still represents the current military chessboard in Syria.

Safe Zone = 'Sunnistan'

Somehow it feels like 1998 all over again, with bad memories of the [KLA](#) in Kosovo, imported jihadist fighters in Bosnia, and NATO lording over a newly balkanized region.

When you hear US officials like John McCain or clueless Republican presidential candidates like Marco Rubio or Carly Fiorina, all crowing for a “Safe Zone” in northern Syria, this is what they are referring to (see map above). Their ‘safe zone’ just so happens to be in the exact same area where ISIS is currently holding court. It’s a ‘safe zone’ alright, but not for refugees and “Syrians fleeing the evil Bashar al Assad” – rather, the ‘safe zone’ will be for an array of ‘rebel’ and terrorist fighters, part of a defacto Sunni *state-lette* in waiting.

So the US-led Coalition’s ‘safe zone’ is the very *Caliphate* that Americans are decrying.

For anyone requiring proof that such a grand chessboard is in play in Syria, they need look no further than a set of US airstrikes that took place before Christmas. On December 6, 2015, US fighter bombers struck a Syrian military base located in the village of **Ayyash** in Deir Ezzor Province, east of Raqqa, which killed 3 Syrian Arab Army (SAA) soldiers and wounded additional others. Naturally, the [Pentagon swiftly denied](#) that any such attack took place. What happened after this incident was extremely telling, as explained by global affairs analyst [Mike Whitney](#) from *Counterpunch Magazine*:

It’s also worth noting, that according to South Front military analysis, the US bombing raid coincided with a “a full-scale ISIS offensive on the villages of Ayyash and Bgelia.” In other words, the US attack provided sufficient air-cover for ISIS terrorists to carry out their ground operations. Was that part of the plan or was it merely a coincidence?

So the US air force was coordinating with ISIS boots on the ground, to achieve a common military objective. But it didn’t end there.

Less than 24 hours after the attack, US warplanes bombed the village of Al-Khan in north-eastern Syria killing 26 Syrian civilians including at least four women and seven children and four women. The message the US military is sending with these lethal attacks is that it wants to control the air-space over east Syria where it plans to remove ISIS and establish a de facto Sunni state consistent with its scheme to break Syria and Iraq into smaller cantons governed by local warlords, Islamic fanatics, and US puppets.

Also taking place at the same moment on Dec 6th, was Turkey’s quiet little invasion into northern Iraq, sending hundreds of troops and at least 20 tanks into territory north of Mosul, right between the Kurds *and* ISIS. It should be noted that this illegal incursion by NATO member Turkey was not approved by the Iraqi government in Baghdad, and Iraqi PM **Haider al-Abadi** called for Turkey to “immediately withdraw its troops.” Judging by Washington’s silence on the matter, it’s obvious that the US gave Turkey its full blessing. Here, [Zero Hedge](#) astutely points out the obvious:

Most importantly of all, right on what [Al-Araby al-Jadeed claims](#) is the smuggling route for illegal ISIS crude into Turkey from Iraq.



Not surprisingly, Turkey's sudden move also came at the same time that Russia began to [publicly expose Turkey's clandestine role in facilitating the ISIS oil trade](#), as well as launching airstrikes to destroy ISIS oil convoys moving from Syria into Turkey. And then Turkish leader **Recep Tayyip Erdoğan** (photo, left) places his military assets at the very location where stolen ISIS oil makes its way from Iraq into Turkey? Hardly a coincidence.

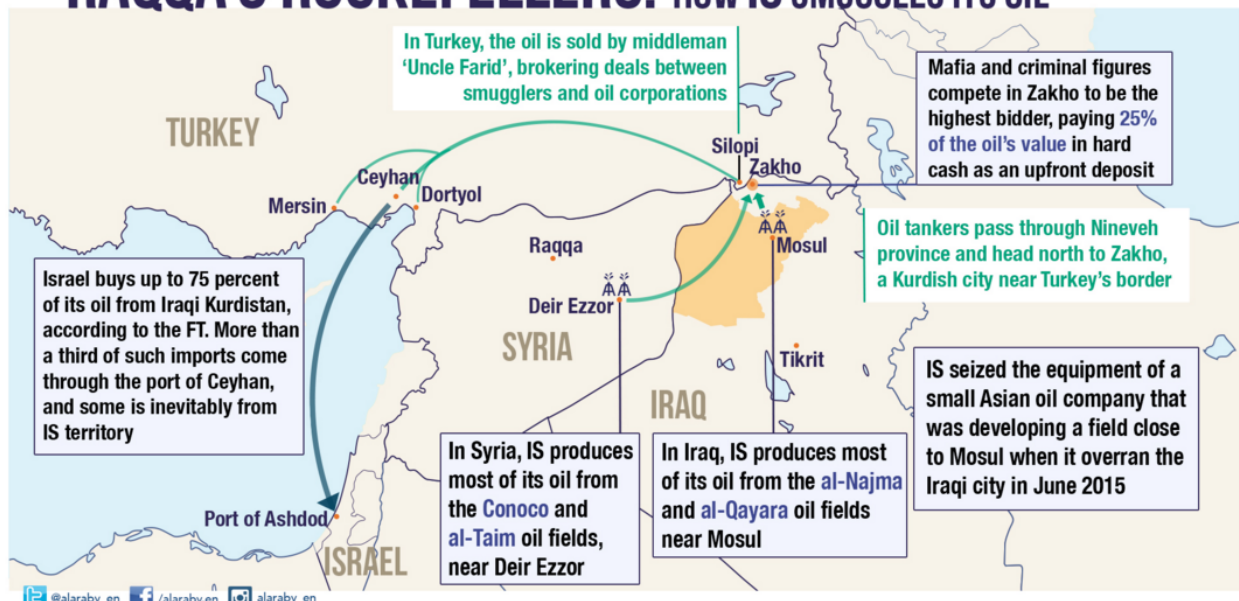
Make no mistake, both ends of NATO's military axle, the United States and Turkey, along with their Saudi-backed boots on the ground in ISIS and al Nusra - have each made critical strategic moves in *unison*, and with a specific military purpose each time, nudging towards securing territory. Once each key piece is finally in position, all that is required is a new "crisis", either in the region, or in Europe, or in America - to allow the Axis powers to move in quickly and take what is needed to implement the next phase of the game, whether that's creating a Kurdish canton, or a Sunni state-lette. Such moves will rarely be covered by the western international media.

What's the 'safe zone' for? As the US-led Coalition steps up its 18 month-long *Punch 'n Judy* air operation to supplant ISIS from Raqqa, those western-backed jihadis will later require a safe corridor to flee but still remain connected to their Turkish supply lines. Washington's 'safe zone' would also provide a much-needed safe haven for 'rebels' who have been sent packing by the Syrian government from towns like **Homs** and others, as part of a painstaking [disarming and reconciliation process](#) between the Assad government and 'opposition' rebels who are willing to participate in the program. Once the NATO-GCC Axis has established a mini protectorate inside of Syria, this will provide everything ISIS, al Nusra, Ahrar al-Sham, Turkmens *et al* will need; a secure launching pad for incursions further inside Syria - which will certainly guarantee a longer, protracted conflict in Syria - and beyond.

This little Sunni wedge is also conveniently located next to a large rebel-terrorist contingent in Syria's northwestern Idlib governorate (province). Syria's border with Turkey has been porous from the beginning of the conflict, so the proposed 'safe zone' will allow Turkey to maintain this status quo - where it has been continuously allowing the free-flow of weapons, rebels and terrorist fighters alike, along with oil, narcotics and human trafficking - to move freely through its southern border with Syria.

If 'regime change' rhetoric is anything to go by, along with turning a blind eye to NATO member Turkey's role in facilitating supply lines and safe passage for al Qaeda and ISIS, then Washington's agenda is fairly transparent here. If they can establish a "internationally recognized" safe zone and a No-Fly Zone on top of it, central planners believe they will have the platform they need to eventually destroy Damascus, install their own western puppet, and then carve up Syria and northern Iraq accordingly.

RAQQA'S ROCKEFELLERS: HOW IS SMUGGLES ITS OIL



ISIS RAT-LINES: Black market oil has been a key component to carrying on both conflicts in Syria, and Iraq.

For the architects of instability in Washington, one crucial benefit of carving out Sunni territory in both northern and eastern Syria is that available oil will help fund all of their paramilitary and terrorist needs - making it *sustainable*. To guarantee this uninterrupted income stream from black market oil which is presently making its way out of Syria and into Turkey and via Kurdistan, help is required from the **Kurdish Regional Government (KRG)** and other stakeholders, including the British-Turkish firm [Genel Energy](#), just one firm who is providing the end-run to market for illicit ISIS oil. Ditto for a key mover and shaker in Raqqa's new Rockefeller class, **Bilal Erdogan**, the son of Turkish president, who [according to numerous recent reports](#) has already amassed a small fortune from the lucrative oil-for-terror trade.

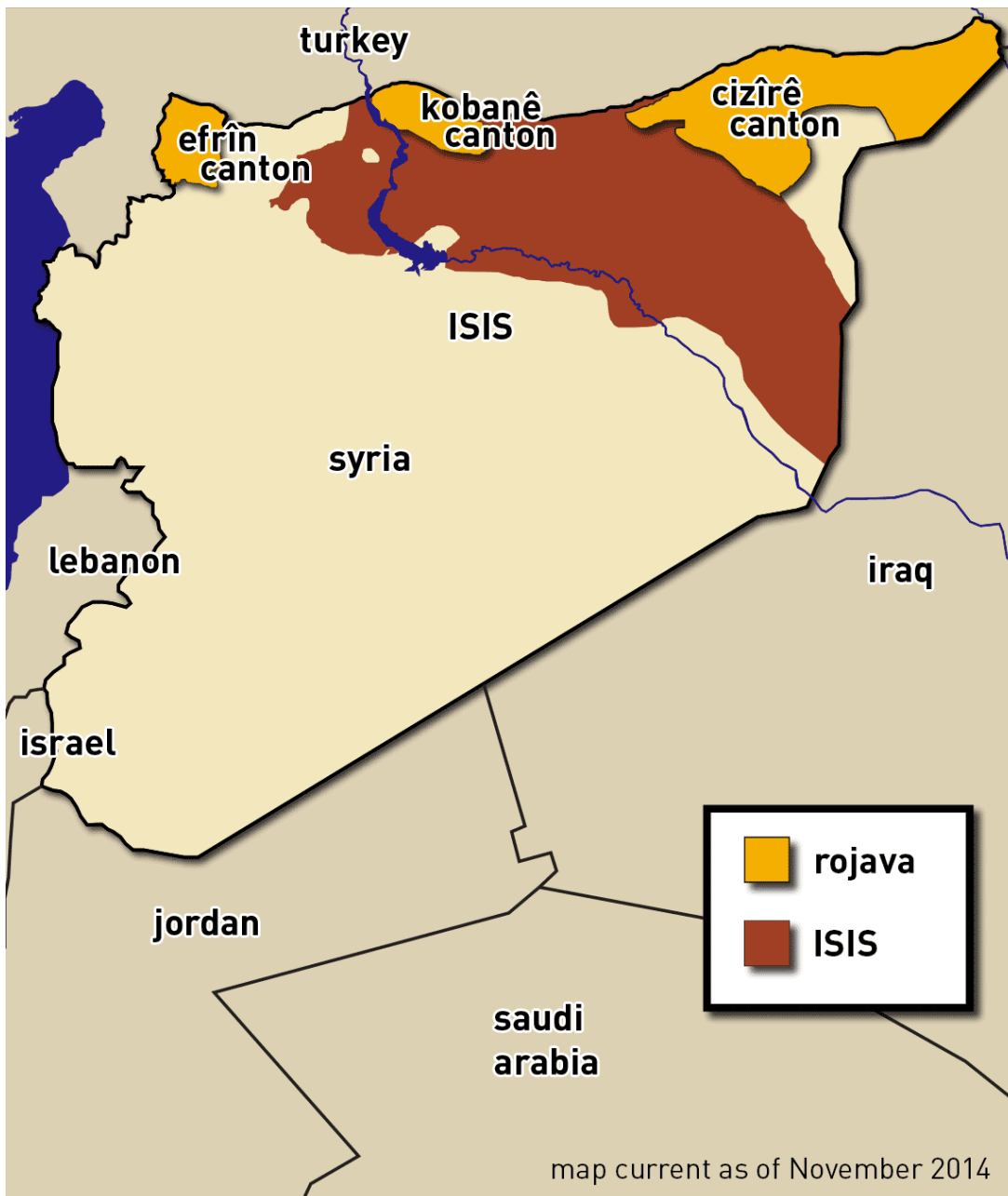
This is a problem, but one which Washington, London and Paris are not overly concerned with, much less upset about. Iraqi, Kurdish and Turkish opposition officials have accused Turkish governments and the KRG of deliberately allowing some of these smuggling operations to take place.

Even as provisional state-lettes and cantons are conjured around it, there is no guarantee that **Greater Kurdistan** will ever see the light of day if *Nation Builders Inc* having anything to say about it. The *promise* of Greater Kurdistan is as important to neocolonialists, than the reality of a Greater Kurdistan. Turkey also has its own interests and ambitions, and a Greater Kurdistan is not compatible with them. Iraq is not crazy about the idea either, because of obvious financial and energy resource reasons. So they remain in limbo indefinitely, even as smaller quasi-Kurdish entities sprout up around the KRG. Turkey has its own ongoing 'Kurdish problem' within Turkish borders, so Ankara will naturally view any expressions of Kurdish autonomy around it as a threat and potential inspiration for international Kurdish solidarity. Ruling over the Kurds means keeping them *divided*, and playing them off against their neighbors.

There are those within the Turkish establishment who believe there are old scores still unsettled - in reclaiming Turk territory in both Syria and Iraq.

Here is where *Sunnistan* proper can emerge, coming into its own once set pieces are in place in Iraq and across Kurdistan, as [Mike Whitney](#) explained:

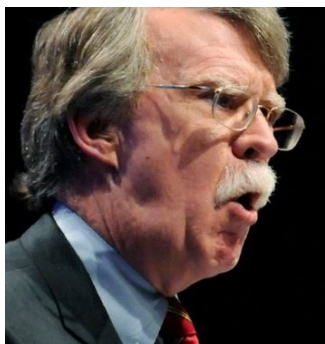
So it looks like an agreement has been struck between Turkey, the KRG and the United States to seize parts of northern Iraq and eastern Syria to create a de facto Sunni state that will be jointly-controlled by Ankara and Washington. It also looks like Obama has agreed to use dodgy jihadi-proxies (aka-Terrorists) to work alongside US Special Forces to carry out future military operations. So while the effort to remove Assad has been temporarily put on the backburner, the determination to destroy Syria is as strong as ever.



Another dismembered part of old Syria and Iraq which central planners are hoping to hack-off is an area called **Rojava** (see map above), or 'Western Kurdistan'. This region in northern Syria, formerly known as **Syrian Kurdistan**, gained its autonomy in November 2013 as part of the ongoing [Rojava Revolution](#). The Kurdish defense forces here are known as the **YPG** (People's Defense Units) and are not on friendly footing with neighboring Turkey, for a number of reasons, not least of all because [YPG defense forces present](#)

[resistance to both al Nusra and ISIS encroachments](#) into all three Rojava cantons. For Turkey, this is bad for business. How Rojava will factor into Washington's plans is not clear yet, but it occupies the most strategic squares on the chessboard.

Make no mistake, the [history's actors](#) are *all in* for this plan. Do not be fooled by talk of 'peace and stability' or humanitarian platitudes from western leaders, the UN, or the fair weather international community.



Another indication that these plans have the full backing of the neoconservative *illiterati*, and Israel too, was PNAC walrus and former US Ambassador to the UN **John Bolton's** [recent article](#) in the establishment's daily journal of political posterity, the *New York Times*, where he states:

"Today's reality is that Iraq and Syria as we have known them are gone. The Islamic State has carved out a new entity from the post-Ottoman Empire settlement, mobilizing Sunni opposition to the regime of President Bashar al-Assad and the Iran-dominated government of Iraq. Also emerging, after years of effort, is a de facto independent Kurdistan."

Central planners will happily frame this geopolitical scenario within the preferred theme of *Sunni vs Shia* 'sectarian strife' in the region, which just happens to suit the interests and desires of both Saudi Arabia and Israel. Bolton confirms this:

If, in this context, defeating the Islamic State means restoring to power Mr. Assad in Syria and Iran's puppets in Iraq, that outcome is neither feasible nor desirable. Rather than striving to recreate the post-World War I map, Washington should recognize the new geopolitics. The best alternative to the Islamic State in northeastern Syria and western Iraq is a new, independent Sunni state.

Not so fast Mr. Ambassador. The Islamic State *is* the Sunni State.

So for all intents and purposes, he's calling for the establishment of *the Caliphate* (funny how this goes right over the heads of 'conservatives').

This is just one of many geostrategic moves *which* will guarantee instability and military conflict in the region for another 100 years, as well as provide a timely entrée through to **Azerbaijan** and into **Iran**, and later towards the Eurasian heartland of **Dagestan** (Russia's emerging energy center and geographic underbelly).

In the meantime, expect to be pelted with [endless propaganda about starving children](#) in one town or another, changing week to week - with the usual slogans like, "we must act now!", and blaming Bashar al Assad for the suffering of his people. It's already wearing thin.

Until the US and its NATO-GCC Axis *stops* flooding Syria and the region with weapons and terrorist fighters, and continues its policy of toppling secular nation-states - then any attempt at holding peace talks will end up back at square one, and stand as another exercise in futility.

If Syria has been good for one thing, it's that the western narrative, and all of its variations, has finally hit the wall of truth.

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