

Syria Summary - Will the Trump-Putin Agreement Hold?

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#), [Russia](#) and [FSU](#)

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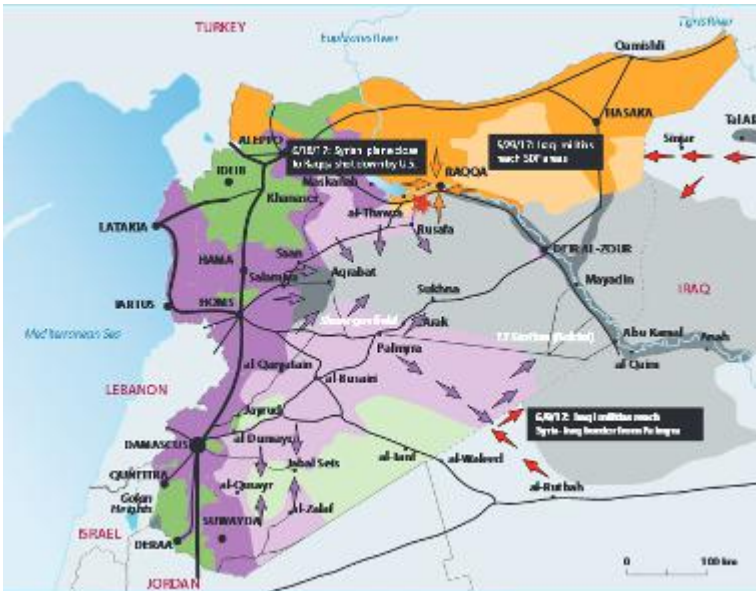
Featured image: Syria, after six years of U.S.-manufactured war. (Source: VENEZUELAPHOTO: PRENSA LATINA | INTERNET@GRANMA.CU | SANA)

The conflict between the U.S. and Russia over Syria seems to have calmed down after the recent G-20 meeting between Putin and Trump. Some kind of agreement was made but neither its scope nor its bindingness is known. One common current aim is the defeat of ISIS.

At the meeting between the Presidents Trump and Putin in Hamburg a temporary truce was agreed for the south-west area of Syria. The Syrian government (violet) holds the city of Deraa while various foreign sponsored insurgent groups (green), including al-Qaeda and ISIS, occupy the borders towards Israel and Jordan. There had been some serious fighting after recent al-Qaeda attacks on Baath city neat the Golan. During these the Israeli airforce had multiple times supported the al-Qaeda groups with attacks on the Syrian army.

Under the truce agreement the Russian side guarantees that the Syrian government and its allies stop fighting while the U.S. guarantees that Israel, the various FSA groups, al-Qaeda and ISIS stay quiet. The truce has now held for several days. There were no spoilers. The U.S. seems to have strong influence with ALL those entities.

East of the Deraa area in the governate of Sweida the Syrian army has continued operations against U.S. supported Free Syrian Army groups. Within a few days it has taken a lot of ground against little resistance including [a deserted U.S. base](#) that was not publicly known. It is possible that a secret part of the Deraa truce agreement allows for the Syrian army to liberate the whole area next to the Jordan border towards the east up to the U.S. held border crossing at al-Tanf.



Source: [Fabrice Balanche/WINEP](#) - [see bigger picture here](#)

The U.S. base in Tanf had become nonviable after the Syrian army had taken all ground north of it and Iraqi militia had blocked it from the Iraqi side. The U.S. had trained some Syrian mercenaries at Tanf and had planned to march those north towards Deir Ezzor. As that route is now blocked some of the trained mercenaries were recently transferred by air to Shadadi base in north-east Syria where they will have to fight under Kurdish command. Others [have refused](#) to move north. Jaysh Maghawir al-Thawra, previously called the New Syrian Army, is mostly made up of local men who probably do not want to leave their nearby families and do not want to come under Kurdish leadership. The U.S. should send them home and leave the area.

Today a new two-pronged move against the ISIS siege on Deir Ezzor was started. Syrian army forces and its allies moved east from their Palmyra positions and south-east from their positions south of Raqqah. An additional move against Deir Ezzor may come from the Syrian forces further south-east near the Iraqi border. The Iraq air force has recently flown attacks against ISIS position in the Deir Ezzor areas. This was done in agreement with the Syrian government. That may be a sign that Iraqi forces will join the fight to relief the city with an additional move south-west from their positions near Tal Afar. The U.S. military has for now given up its dream of assaulting and occupying Deir Ezzor with its proxy forces.

The west and north west of Syria have been relatively quiet. A rumored imminent Turkish attack on Kurdish held areas has not happened. The mostly al-Qaeda held areas in Idleb governate are still unruly. Al-Qaeda, ISIS, Turkmen, Uighurs, Kurds, local Free Syrian Army gangs all have their little fiefdoms in the area. Assassinations and attacks on each other are daily occurrences. There is no reason for the Syrian government to intervene in that melee.

The agreement between Trump and Putin over Syria might be more wide ranging than is publicly known. For now it seems that the parties have agreed on areas of influences with the U.S. for now; occupying the north-east currently under control of its YPG proxies. It is building [more bases](#) there with the total number [now being](#) eight or nine. At least three of these have their own airstrips. It is [asking Congress](#) to legalize further base building. It is obvious that the U.S. military plans to stay in the area even after ISIS is defeated.

But the Kurds in Syria are only a minority in almost all areas they currently control. They are not united and the YPG, the only U.S. partner, is a radical anarcho-marxist group that has no legitimacy but force. The area is landlocked and all its neighbors are against Kurdish autonomy.

The U.S. effort to impose itself on the area is doomed. The use of [the Kurds as a Trojan horse](#) is unlikely to succeed. The Defense Department, it seems, has not yet accepted that fact. It still may try to sabotage whatever Trump and Putin have agreed upon.

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