

The “Manbij Model”, Turkey-US Deal for Northeastern Syria

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The so-called “Manbij Model” that the US and Turkey agreed to in jointly administering the strategic city following the YPG’s withdrawal is promising but nevertheless imperfect because it fails to address the Kurdish-led “deep state” that controls the SDF’s political and military activities in northeastern Syria.

The US and Turkey finally reached a deal to jointly administer the strategic city of Manbij following the YPG’s withdrawal from it, and this promising agreement is being touted as a model for Ayn al-Arab (more popularly known in the Mainstream Media by its Kurdish name “Kobani”), Raqqa, and other population centers in the northeastern agriculturally and energy-rich one-third of Syria under American-Kurdish SDF occupation. The working concept as [articulated by Turkey](#) at the moment but importantly unconfirmed by the US is to gradually return to the pre-war ethnic status quo in the region either by physically reversing the effects of [anti-Arab and -“Turkmen” ethnic cleansing](#) (which is unlikely) or at the very least not recognizing its political consequences in the sense of refusing to allow the minority Kurds to be the majority stakeholders in each city that they’ve conquered.

The “Manbij Model” is therefore very promising, but it’s still far from being perfect because of the many obstacles inherent to its full implementation.

On the surface, it’s sensible for Turkey to be in favor of allowing so-called “layered decentralization” in the [self-declared “federal” region](#) of what the Kurds call “Rojava” by turning it into a “federalized” collection of different “decentralized” entities that divides and ultimately dilutes this region’s post-war political power vis-à-vis Damascus, thus weakening Kurdish proxy control over this structure. Empowering the native Arabs that form the majority of northeastern Syria’s population as well as the scattered settlements of “Turkmen” in the region could allow both ethnicities to effectively counteract the Kurds’ disproportionate influence and restore balance to the presently lopsided relationship that this American-backed non-state minority has with its in-country neighbors in the region. “Layered decentralization” would also align with the [“democratic confederalism”](#) theories of the late Marxist theoretician Murray Bookchin, whom the Kurds have elevated to the level of a “secular god” and are obsessed with emulating.

So far, so good, but the problem is that the SDF militia that would prospectively continue to administer “Rojava’s” “layered decentralization” is nothing more than a thinly “diverse” front of Arab collaborators barely concealing the reality of a Kurdish-run “deep state” (or permanent military, intelligence, and diplomatic bureaucracy) protected by over 20

American bases and an undisclosed number of French ones. Ironically, the Kurds took up arms against the democratically elected and legitimate Syrian government on the supposed basis that the minority Alawites had hijacked the country's "deep state" and were exploiting it for their own self-interested ends at everyone else's expense, though the fact of the matter is that it's now the Kurds – and never was the Alawites – who are actually doing this via the "federalization" of "Rojava" as enforced by the [US-created](#) SDF.

The non-Kurdish locals are well aware of this and that's why [almost 100 tribes](#) have banded together to oppose the US occupation of their land, fighting to free it from the control of the Pentagon's Kurdish kapos through a conflict that the author earlier christened as the "[Rojava Civil War](#)". To be clear, though, this is not a policy of "reverse-ethnic cleansing" in killing Kurds just because of who they are, but in liberating one of the last remaining parts of Syria from foreign control by striking at the US' local militant collaborators and then subsequently restoring a fair ethno-political balance in the region's post-war affairs by implementing the "Manbij Model" and its related "layered decentralization" corollary. In view of this, the question naturally becomes one of how this vision can be executed in practice, and therein lays the opportunity for Turkey, Syria, and Iran.

Neither of these three states wants to see the perpetuation of a US-backed de-facto independent Kurdish client entity in northeastern Syria, while Russia – given its [envisioned "balancing" role](#) – is comparatively more accepting of this for its own reasons, so they can either coordinate their actions or advance them independently in pursuit of this shared objective. The tactics will differ but the strategy will remain the same, and that's to break the back of the Kurdish-controlled SDF "deep state" that the US has tasked with carrying out the day-to-day occupational activities in "Rojava" through arms shipments, training, and political support in order to liberate the local Arabs and "Turkmen" from the dictatorial control of their foreign-backed Kurdish militant neighbors. The end result of this latest intra-Syrian struggle could also prospectively see the region being offered a better "autonomy" deal under [President Putin's peace plan](#) than the dystopian one that the US is presently imposing upon its inhabitants.

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