

Turkey Gives the US a Deadline in Syrian 'Safe-zone'

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The Syrian war ends in Idlib

While most of Syria struggles to recover from 8 years of bloody conflict, Idlib is left as the last hot-spot. The population in Idlib today includes foreign terrorists following the tenets of Al Qaeda. The terrorists have wives and children, and while they may be seen as innocent, they remind us of the ISIS wives and children now in the Al Hol "concentration camp", who is seen to be the seeds of the next ISIS resurgence. Every war has an ending, and the Syrian conflict is ending in Idlib in slow-motion: with deals, ceasefires and eventual peaceful transition.

North-east Syria

The Kurds are an ethnic group that accounts for 10% of the Syrian population, but they are a minority in north-east Syria. To establish their Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (NES), aka Rojava, they led a brutal campaign of ethnic cleansing, while advertising themselves in the western media as standing for equality, freedom, democracy and social justice. The homeless and hopeless Syrians who were driven off their lands, farms, and homes at the butt of an American weapon bear testimony to the atrocities committed by the Kurds in Afrin, Jazira, Euphrates, Raqqa, Tabqa, Manbij, and Deir Ez-Zor. The fact the area holds Syria's richest oil resources should come as no surprise.

The fight against ISIS

When ISIS declared its existence in Raqqa, the first line of attack should have come from the Syrian Arab Army (SAA), but the US wouldn't consider aligning with the legitimate Syrian forces, or their allies the Russian forces. Instead, the US employed Kurdish mercenaries, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), who lost about 11,000 fighters before they defeated ISIS in northern Syria. The SDF is now guarding 10,000 ISIS prisoners, and the US and other foreign countries refuse to take these men back home to be incarcerated or rehabilitated. The prison camp is financed by the US, but it is the SDF who are the guards. There is no plan on what is the future for those men, the area, or their wives and children.

The US betrayal of the Kurds

The Kurds will not end up with a 'homeland' carved out of stolen land in Syria. The US used them and paid them well for services rendered, and the US continues to deliver support to them with about 200 trucks from Iraq at the Semelka crossing recently, while previously they delivered 55 trucks of four-wheel-drive vehicles, excavators, closed boxes, and 60 trucks.

Turkey demands security

Turkey is a NATO ally and commands the most powerful armed force in the Middle East. Pres. Trump angered **Pres. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan** with his support of the SDF, who Turkey views as extensions of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which is deemed a terrorist group by Turkey, the US, and the EU, and has killed more than 40,000 people in its 30-year terror campaign against Turkey. Erdogan has promised to clear out the SDF on the Turkish border, and he has given a specific time to achieve his results. Sunday, October 6th is the deadline, and if the Turkey-US 'safe-zone' has not proved successful, then Turkey will initiate its plans.

"We have no wish to come face to face with the US," Erdogan said. "However, we cannot afford to overlook the support that the US is giving to a terrorist organization."

The safe-zone

Turkey and the US military agreed in August to set up a safe-zone in northern Syria, with a plan to move millions of Syrian refugees from Turkey and Europe there. The US Congress is calling for the State Department to spend \$130 million on stabilizing Syria next year, including \$25 million for programs inside the 'safe- zone', and has raised as much as \$300 million for the effort from allies and partners, such as the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Christopher Maier leads the Pentagon's Defeat-Islamic State Task Force. He said the combined operations center in the 'safe-zone' is staffed by US and Turkish one-star generals and is conducting helicopter reconnaissance flights and ground patrols. An official of the SDF said recently they have pulled back from the border 5 to 14 kilometers in various places.

Trump's 2020 election

Trump had a promise to get the US out of Syria, and he tried to implement his plan, only to be thwarted by his military advisors. He still wants to get out of Syria, but he might not be able to give the pull-out order until after the November 2020 election. The Turkish may agree to allow the SAA to re-take the area, securing it from SDF, while Moscow coordinates with Ankara.

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