

Who is Supporting ISIS-Daesh in Syria? Erdogan or Obama? “Cross-Cutting Coalitions”, NATO Military Alliance in Crisis

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In an unusual turn of events, Washington accuses Ankara of supporting the ISIS-Daesh.

And Turkey’s president Erdogan responds by accusing Washington of supporting ISIS-Daesh. “Now they give support to terrorist groups including Daesh, YPG, PYD. It’s very clear. We have confirmed evidence, with pictures, photos and videos.” said Erdogan.

And Washington responds ““he [Erdogan] continues to supply arms [into Syria] as well, with his ultimate aim [being] to go after the Kurds, and ISIS is secondary.”

While Washington has strongly denied Erdogan’s latest allegations, the structure of political and military alliances is in crisis.

Who is supporting the ISIS?

The fact of the matter is that **both the US and Turkey provide covert support to the terrorists** including ISIS-Daesh and Jabhat Al Nusra.

Both Turkey and the US have collaborated in supporting the ISIS-Daesh in Northern Syria.

From the very outset, the Islamic State has been supported (unofficially of course) by the broader US-NATO coalition which includes several NATO member countries (including the US, France, Britain as well as Turkey) and their Middle East allies including Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Israel.

What is of concern to Erdogan is that the US is ALSO supporting the Kurdish separatists YPG forces which have been combating the ISIS. And until recently Turkey has used the ISIS rebels to combat YPG forces, which are also supported by the US.

From the outset in 2011, the recruitment of jihadist mercenaries to be deployed in Syria was coordinated by NATO and the Turkish High Command. In this regard, Turkey has played a central role in relation to logistics, weapons supplies, recruitment and training, in close liaison with Washington and Brussels.

The Ankara government has also played a strategic role in protecting the movement of jihadist rebels and supplies across its border into Northern Syria

What is now occurring is a rift in the structure of military alliances, through the emergence

of “cross-cutting coalitions”.

Turkey as a NATO member state is an ally of the US. But the US is now supporting the YPG which is fighting both the ISIS and Turkey.

In turn, Turkey, which is a staunch ally of the US is negotiating with Russia and Iran.

Already in May 2016, Erdogan accused US-NATO of supporting YPG forces:

“The support they give [US, NATO] to... the YPG (militia)... I condemn it,” Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Saturday during an airport ceremony in the Kurdish city of Diyarbakir. “Those who are our friends, who are with us in NATO... cannot, must not send their soldiers to Syria wearing YPG insignia.” ([Ara News Network](#), May 28, 2016)

What is the underlying cause of this clash between the US and Turkey, which strikes at the very heart of the Atlantic Alliance?

Washington is firmly opposed to Erdogan’s territorial ambitions in Northern Syria. The US-NATO objective is to fragment both Syria and Iraq. Washington’s strategy in Northern Syria consists in supporting and controlling the Kurdish YPG separatists.

Mark Toner, the US State department spokesperson confirmed that Washington would continue to support the YPG “despite the Turkish government opposition towards Kurdish-US cooperation”. (See [Ara New Network](#), December 27, 2016):

“...there are disagreements among members of the coalition as to how we proceed and with whom we’re cooperating on the ground? I’m not going to say that there aren’t. And obviously, Turkey’s made very clear their feelings about the YPG. We have also been equally clear, while we understand Turkey’s concerns, that we’re going to continue to work with the YPG as a part of the overarching Syrian Democratic Forces. So the YPG is not the sole group that we’re working with on the ground. We’re working with Syrian Arabs, Syrian Turkmen, and other groups that are fighting Daesh,”

Officially the US is fighting the ISIS, unofficially it is supporting it.

And now in an about turn, the ISIS which is integrated (covertly and unofficially) by Western special forces (often on contract to private mercenary companies) has turned against Turkey, a NATO member state. This action is largely on behalf of YPG forces, which are also fighting Turkish forces:

“ISIS claims it has killed 70 Turkish soldiers during the conflict and just a few days ago the warped death cult released a video of two Turkish men being burned alive.

Turkey has rushed tanks and heavy weapons to its border and blamed the US-led coalition for inadequate air support after Erdogan’s forces which encountered deadly resistance from ISIS militants - 14 Turkish troops were killed. ([Daily Express](#), December 27, 2016)

Cross-Cutting alliances

While Ankara accuses Washington, Moscow is playing at the diplomatic level a skilful “double game”: Foreign Minister Lavrov is talking to John Kerry on the one hand as well as negotiating with Ankara on the other hand.

On December 21, the Foreign Ministers of Russia, Iran and Turkey (See image below) met in Moscow “to draft a joint statement aimed at resolving the long term conflict in Syria.” (RT, December 22, 2016)

Moscow also intimated that other countries including Saudi Arabia would be invited to join this initiative. “It is *“very important”* that the statement by Moscow, Tehran and Ankara *“contained an invitation to other countries that have influence ‘on the ground’ to join such efforts,”* (RT, December 22, 2016)

The underlying objective would be to weaken the allegiance of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States to US-NATO. It is worth noting, in this regard, that Moscow has built a strategic alliance with Qatar following a major deal in the area of natural gas. Until recently Qatar alongside Saudi Arabia was supporting and funding the insurgency in Syria, including both the Islamic State and Al Qaeda on behalf and in close liaison with Washington. According to [Thierry Meyssan](#):

Moscow has managed to turn Qatar and make it an ally. Qatar’s change of heart was sealed by the sale by Moscow of one fifth of the capital of Rosneft, at the beginning of December, in Doha. Rosneft, the jewel in Russia’s crown, is the largest company in the world. By implementing this transaction, ... Vladimir Putin [has] inextricably united the political energies of the two greatest gas exporters in the world. De facto, Qatar dropped the jihadists, although since last May, it has disposed of a permanent office at NATO headquarters in Brussels.

Typically, Moscow has favored **“cross-cutting coalitions”** with America’s staunchest Middle East allies. While these alliances with US proxy States are fragile by their very nature, they nonetheless constitute **a wedge in the conduct of US foreign policy**. They also contribute to weakening Washington’s geopolitical clutch in the Middle East. The important issue is: how will the new Trump administration respond to these developments.



According to media reports, Turkey has Moscow’s support in the siege of the Northern Syrian city of Al-Bab which has been under the clutch of the ISIS since 2013. Fierce fighting is ongoing. Ankara reported on December 26 that “the anti-ISIS coalition was making progress in al-Bab”.

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