

Why Will The US Leave Syria Soon? The Kurds Are Waking Up.

By [Elijah J. Magnier](#)

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The Syrian army is ending the battle in the last 2% of [the Qunietra province](#) that remains under the control of the “Islamic State” (ISIS) terrorist group. This will free tens of thousands of troops of the Syrian army and its allies from the burden of fighting in the south of the country and will mark a real turn in the seven years of war imposed on the Levant. The whole of Syria has been liberated from the territorial control of all militias and jihadists. What remains is under the control of two countries: the US and Turkey in the north of the country. However, this doesn’t seem sustainable, particularly when the Kurds, controlling 23% of Syria, have decided to respond to the Syrian President’s call to either start dialogue or face war. The US has no chance of staying over the long run, but will find a way to leave with some dignity, very soon.

The US presence in Syria had several aims:

- To divide Syria and make sure the north is called Rojava, a Kurdish State under US governorate and “protection”, similar to Kurdistan Iraq during Saddam Hussein’s era. The US was not against a Kurdish state that includes Syria and Iraq. However, the Iraqi Kurdistan, under Masood Barzani, burned the bridge towards independence and refused to follow the advice of the US to postpone such a decision for 18 months. Barzani’s decision was confronted with a strong reaction from Baghdad troops, who took control of Kurdistan’s borders and resources.
- To leave the rest of Syria in an endless bloody war between Salafi-Takfiri jihadists and all the other groups. This would have ended with ISIS being in control, whose objective was not the US (a far away enemy, even if it is at its doorstep), but a nearer enemy: Lebanon, Jordan, and the rest of the Middle East. This would have been detrimental to the “Axis of Resistance” (Iran, Syria, Hezbollah) or would have at least interrupted the flow of weapons to Hezbollah in Lebanon. Hezbollah would have been cornered into the south of Lebanon, a Shia enclave surrounded by Israel on one side and a hostile government or Takfiri rule in the other parts of the country.

The US came to Syria not exclusively to control part of its oil but to serve the purpose of Israel by eliminating its enemy. However, the war in Syria did not go as planned and today the Syrian President, or at least the government of Damascus, controls the entire Syrian territory with the exception of the north. This is regardless of ISIS’ insurgency, which can continue to be operational not only in Syria, but also in any other part of the Middle East and North Africa (Egypt is the best example where the state is well established but suffers from continuous terrorist attacks).

Moreover, the Putin-Trump meeting in Helsinki gave confidence to both Trump and the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, where Moscow promised to protect the borders with Israel. The Russian President argued that Assad had kept his borders with the occupied Golan heights for over 40 years without any incident. Therefore, the presence of Assad in power, and the Russian military police on the borders in addition to the UNDOF (UN Disengagement Forces established by the UNSC resolution 350 in May 1974 to monitor the ceasefire between Israel and Syria) all represent security for Israel. When this objective is met, there will be no reason for the US forces to stay and occupy the al-Tanf Iraq-Syria crossing and al-Hasaka province where the Kurdish forces are based.

Moreover, the confident Assad launched his ultimatum to the Kurds: “either negotiate, or you will face war”. The reason why the Syrian president said this because he is aware that Idlib, the north-western city under Turkish control, will not capitulate without fighting.

The military operation has started in rural Latakia to distance the danger from the coastal province, where jihadists sporadically attack Syrian positions and other villages in the area. Moreover, several armed drones were launched from the area against the Russian military base in Hmeymim and were shot down by the Russian air defences inside the base before they reached their target.

In Idlib, the head of the UN’s humanitarian task force for Syria Jan Egeland said “there are two million people including the Internally Displaced Refugees” and beyond 40,000 jihadists and their allies (Jabhat al-Nusra aka Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham, Hurras el-Deen, Jund al-Aqsa, Ahrar al-Sham and many others) who will refuse to put down their weapons without a fight.

Sources in Damascus confirmed the battle of Idlib will happen most probably in September. “When the air force and artillery start pounding jihadists positions, Idlib will be under fire. The Syrian army has studied and established several safe corridors for civilians to leave Idlib either north or south of the city and its rural area to avoid civilian casualties”.

Turkey is aware that the Syrian government is no longer stoppable. Therefore, it needs to determine its withdrawal and will have to accept letting go of jihadists in the north because Assad is determined to liberate all of Syria by all means.

Turkey’s primary concern is to stop the Kurds from having their state. This coincides with Assad’s objective to prevent the partition of Syria. Thus, a Kurdish delegation visited Damascus to initiate dialogue with the central government, with the consensus of the US leadership.

In all three Kurdish enclaves (Afrin, Kobani, and Jazeera), there was a “Democratic Autonomous administration” under the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) and its armed branch, the People’s Protection Units (YPG). With the loss of Afrin to Turkey, the remaining two enclaves become connected to each other and host several US military bases and airports.

The central Kurdish city is Qamishli (in al-Jazeera canton), is still hosting to-date a large Syrian Army force. The Kurds never clashed with the Syrian army (a few small incidents were registered years ago) and are not willing to separate from Syria but look for a decentralised canton. The Kurdish delegation asked Damascus to take up its responsibility as a central government and thus be responsible for the Euphrates Dam and its upkeep and restoration (following the severe damage inflicted during the battle with ISIS), the

distribution of drinkable water, the electricity supply, and the reconstruction of houses, schools, and hospitals.

The Syrian government responded by saying that the Constitution had been amended in 2012, in which articles 130 and 131 called for “decentralisation and financial and administrative independence of local governance structures”, paired with the legislative Decree 107 of October 2011.

The Kurds agreed on Decree 107 but contested the way it was implemented and the lack of authority given to local representatives and the appointed governor. They also contested the power given to the Minister in charge of overseeing all provinces and their administration.

It is the interpretation of the existing laws, as well as their implementation and power that were discussed between the two delegations. Moreover, the distribution of wealth (mainly gas and oil) was discussed, and it was agreed to resume discussion on all suspended points in the future meetings that will soon follow.

Damascus considers that the meeting was successful, indicating the will of the Kurds to remain under the umbrella of the central government in one country. They also accept Russia as a guarantor of both the deal and the political solution in the country.

The Kurds offered to place a substantial amount of their forces under the service of the Syrian Army in order to help and assist any war against terrorists and jihadists, particularly those that remain from ISIS and al-Qaeda and their allies in the north of the country. Damascus welcomes the initiative and will undoubtedly benefit from the offer.

It is too early to talk about a final deal between Damascus and Qamishli. However, it is clear that it has started well and is on the right track. The Kurds have accepted that the US will not be around forever to protect them and therefore they need to protect themselves by returning to the arms of the central government, where they belong.

With the end of the war in the south and the Kurdish initiative, it is only a matter of time and circumstances before the US finds a quiet way out of Syria, ending their occupation and accepting that their “regime change” has failed miserably.

It could very well be that the US would like to see from the vicinities how Syria and Russia will deal with Idlib. Nevertheless, there is no doubt about the outcome of the battle: Syria is walking towards the end of its long and bloody war.

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