

A US-Turkey Sponsored “Islamic State Free Zone” within Syria

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An article in the [New York Times](#) was published recently discussing that the US and Turkey had agreed to create a ‘safe zone’ in Syria. Specifically the article stated that the plan was to have “an Islamic State-free zone controlled by relatively moderate Syrian insurgents, which the Turks say could also be a ‘safe zone’ for displaced Syrians.”

Now, ignoring the fact that this is obviously a massive infringement upon the sovereignty of the Syrian state, there are some problems with this, as well as larger implications.

For starters, Turkey has actively been aiding ISIS. In November 2014, [Newsweek ran an interview](#) with a former ISIS member in which he stated that he “travelled in a convoy of trucks as part of an ISIS unit from their stronghold in Raqqa, across Turkish border, through Turkey and then back across the border to attack Syrian Kurds in the city of Serekaniye in northern Syria in February” and that commanders told him and other fighters that they nothing to fear “because there was full cooperation with the Turks.” The very next month, [Claudia Roth](#), then-deputy speaker of the German Parliament, noted that the Turkish government was aiding ISIS.

In addition to this, information just came to light from a US Special Forces raid in May, which shows “undeniable” evidence that “Turkish officials directly dealt with ranking ISIS members.”

The second problem is the hope that “relatively moderate Syrian insurgents” will take over the area. This assumes that there are moderates, which doesn’t seem to be true, given the fact that the US essentially gave up on the Free Syrian Army when it decided to create [an entirely new force](#) of fighters. Before then, the US had been [touting](#) the FSA as moderates. (This, of course, doesn’t get into the fact that, for example, an FSA brigade commander [admitted](#) to working with Al Nusra and ISI or that a [major beneficiary](#) of this war on ISIS is AL Qaeda.)

A third problem is that while Turkey has essentially declared war on ISIS, they are [bombing Kurdish positions](#) as well, due to the fear that they have always had of Kurdish independence.

The US had [been backing the Kurds](#), however it seems to now have sold them out, at least on the Syrian front, in order to further its own goals in the region and calms the Turks’ nerves.

The Times article also reported that “American officials said they would need to arrange the

same kind of system for calling in airstrikes that American Special Operations forces have worked out successfully with Kurdish fighters to the east in Syria,” which sounds like Libya, [where US forces were on the ground](#), aiding the Libyan rebels.

Furthermore, the article later reports that “Insurgents, as well as their supporters in the Syrian opposition and the Turkish government, are already envisioning the plan as a step toward establishing an area where alternative governance could be set up without fear of attack by Islamic State or government forces.” Thus implying that this entire idea of a ‘safe zone’ could really just be used as a staging ground to consolidate anti-Syrian government forces and allow them to coordinate attacks.

What this does for the US is it allows for them to continue to put even more pressure on the Syrian government, it gives the Turks free reign for the most part and lets them know that Washington will turn a blind eye to the bombing of the Kurds, and gives the US the option of turning the situation into another Libya, all while the US doesn’t have to truly directly engage in any actions aside from Special Forces and air strikes.

This entire scenario could allow for another Libya-type situation to unfold where the goal posts are constantly shifted until they are at the outcome the US and its allies want: the fall of the Assad government.

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