

# Angela Merkel's "Grey Zone": How the Islamic State (ISIS) Acquired German Weapons

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*Germany has been supplying weapons to Iraqi Kurdistan since October, 2014. That was a crucial moment that determined the further foreign political course of Germany. Feeling pressure from the United States, the Cabinet of Germany lifted a ban on weapons and military vehicles' supplies to crisis war-torn regions. According to German government officials, Germany realized the Kurds could stand up to ISIS terrorists. "The Kurdish fighters are manning the front line against the Islamic State", German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen stated.*

At the same time, Washington celebrated its victory as well: the White House had managed the Germans to dance to the U.S. tune. However, it has become known this January that black markets in Northern Iraq openly sell German weapons. Berlin demanded that the Kurdish leadership account for using supplied armory. The report revealed that a part of the weapons delivered by Germany to the Kurds fell into the hands of terrorists. Inside Syria Media Center focused on this issue deciding to find out the way military cargos were delivered to Iraqi Kurdistan.

Very Important Person

Our activists in Erbil found out that Dilshad Barzani (a brother of Masoud Barzani, the president of Iraqi Kurdistan) was responsible for organization of weapons supplies from Germany. He has been living in Germany for a long time and now he represents the Kurdish government and the Kurdistan Democratic Party in that country. The biggest Kurdish diaspora in Europe which includes about 1,000,000 people is under his control in fact. Dilshad Barzani has close trust-based relationships with Angela Merkel and he often visits various events of the ruling Christian Democratic Union party as VIP.

"The main Kurd of Germany" has an armored car and the agents of Federal Intelligence Service (BND) usually escort his vehicle. He also enjoys encrypted communications equipment that enables him to get in touch with the Federal Chancellor or any government member at any time. Dilshad Barzani is certainly a very powerful person in Germany.

Germany - Bulgaria - Kurdistan

Now, let's have a look at the way the arms are delivered from Germany to the Middle East.

Sure, Germany cannot supply Kurdistan with arms in a direct way because this does not comply with the International Law. But the West or its special services have never had a trouble with launching a specific cargo delivery at any corner of the world via mediate countries.

As Germans and Bulgarians have agreed to send some amount of Soviet-made weapons stocked at the Bulgarian depots to the Kurds, it would be reasonable to transfer all weaponry through the same country. For the record, details of this traffic had been studied since the beginning of 2015, though Berlin was realizing this was not a perfect deal. As Bulgaria is a NATO member country, it's not convenient to conduct the operations like that. So, they considered another way, via Ukraine, that looks the most appropriate in the context of secret traffic of semi-legal cargos. In 2015, Kurds representatives came to Kiev several times in order to work out an alternative traffic way. Major General Sirwan Barzani, Iraqi Kurdistan president's nephew, and Brigadier General Hazhar Ismail were among the delegates.

Nevertheless, the situation has dramatically changed. After Russia launched operations in Syria, Kiev and Ankara began closing their positions. In particular, this is characterized by widening of bilateral military and technical cooperation as well as by intensified exchange of intelligence information. As Peshmerga leaders worried that secret data about weapons delivery to the Kurds could be handed to the Turkish special services, the idea to supply arms via Ukraine was rejected.

Finally, they opted for Bulgaria as a main mediator of the military cargos' delivery to Kurdistan while the American side took responsibility to provide security and control of the whole operation. Since August 2015, German AF's cargo planes with weapons have conducted regular flights from the U.S. Ramstein Air Base near Kaiserslautern to the city of Plovdiv in Bulgaria. From there, the cargo accompanied by the US embassy officials and Bulgarian special services' agents is transferred to the Varna port. The "goods" are registered to an unknown company "Eleko". Unfortunately, we were unable to find any information about this company or contact it.

From Varna German weapons are delivered by sea to Basra port in Iraq. According to the Marine Traffic website, such sea trips have been conducted on a regular basis since last August. From Basra, the cargo guarded by American troops, is transferred to Kurdistan. A peculiar fact is that weapons for Peshmerga are delivered through Bosphorus, literally under the nose of Turkey, which is trying by all means to undermine Kurds' enforcement and fears that they may use German arms to fight against the Turkish army. However, the agreements with the EU on migrants and Western money subsidiaries compel Ankara to put up with it.

According to the terms set by the German side, Kurds should acquire an end-user certificate for the supplied weapons in Baghdad. This document envisages that the recipient takes full responsibility for the usage of the cargo and is not planning to transfer it to another party. The key figure responsible for acquiring the certificate is Hoshyar Zebari, uncle of Iraqi Kurdistan's acting president and the Finance Minister of Iraq.

However, it is worth mentioning the Iraqi authorities obviously don't hail the fact that third countries arm the Iraqi Kurds without any supervision from Baghdad. In an attempt to affect the process, the Iraqi government is deliberately delaying the conformance of certificates or simply refuses to release them. In such cases, Barzani uses his off-shore companies to acquire these certificates in a tiny African state Swaziland for \$1 million per a document.

So this may be a reason why German weapons had merged on arms market? Obviously, the Kurds have to recoup such unexpected expenditures. And of course, selling the goods at the

black market is a fine way to cut the losses. And here again questions to German leaders rise. Is Merkel really aware of the fact that German weapons are sometimes officially supplied to Swaziland? Moreover, sometimes the German Federal Ministry of Defense turns the blind eye to compliance with any formalities. It often sends military cargo straight to Erbil by air.

Following this scheme, a plane from Germany heads for Baghdad, but on its way it makes a forced landing in the capital of the Kurdistan Region under the veil of technical malfunctions or a need to provide members of the crew with an emergency aid. The weaponry is unloaded during such a not planned stop and then an empty plane arrives in Bagdad. In this case Iraqi government is helpless and has no possibility to find out the nature and the purpose of the secret cargo.

“Grey zone” of Angela Merkel

Nowadays we have a well-developed and effective traffic of contraband weapons to the heart of one of the most hostile regions. The regional policy of Washington and Berlin gave birth to an ideal “grey zone” where oil, people, drugs and weapons are sold without any control. By casting the north of Iraq and Syria into chaos the USA play its own game and try to promote its own interests. Why does Angela Merkel who is more likely to be a puppet than a leader of the European country actively help them? These are the Germans who are to answer this question.

Germany is planning to supply the Kurds with 200 anti-tank guided missiles MILAN, 4 thousand assault rifles G36, and 6 million ammo for them, as well as 5 Dingo armored cars in June. Although there is absolutely no guarantee that these weapons won't fall into the hands of the Islamic State. German government and personally Angela Merkel should assume responsibility for the fact that weapons supplied by Germany fall into the hands of terrorists

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