

Final Steps in Syria's Successful Struggle for Peace and Sovereignty

By [Federico Pieraccini](#)

Global Research, January 17, 2019

[Strategic Culture Foundation](#)

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

The situation in Syria evolves daily and sees two situations very closely linked to each other, with the US withdrawal from Syria and the consequent expansionist ambitions of Erdogan in Syria and the Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) takeover in Idlib that frees the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) and Russian aviation to liberate the de-escalation zone.

Trump has promised to [destroy Turkey economically](#) if he attacks the Kurds, reinforcing his claim that Erdogan will not target the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) once the US withdraws from the area. One of the strongest [accusations](#) made against Trump's withdrawal by his opponents is that no Middle Eastern force will ever trust the US again if they abandon the SDF to its fate, that is, to its annihilation at the hands of the Turkish army and its FSA proxies. This, however, is not possible; not so much because of Trump's economic threats, but because of Damascus and Moscow being strongly opposed to any Turkish military action in the northeast of Syria.

This is a red line drawn by Putin and Assad, and the Turkish president likely understands the consequences of any wrong moves. It is no coincidence that he stated several times that he had no problems with the "Syrians or Syrian-Kurdish brothers", and repeated that if the area under the SDF were to come under the control of Damascus, Turkey would have no need to intervene in Syria. Trump's request that Ankara have a buffer zone of 20 kilometers separating the Kurdish and Turkish forces seems to complement the desire of Damascus and Moscow to avoid a clash between the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) and the SDF.

The only party that seems to be secretly encouraging a clash between the SDF and Turkish forces is Israel, criticizing Ankara and singing the praises of the SDF, in order to try and accentuate the tensions between the two sides, though naturally without success. Israel's continued raids in Syria, though almost constantly failing due to Syrian air defense, and the divide-and-rule policy used against Turkey and the SDF, show that Tel Aviv is now weakened and mostly irrelevant in the Syrian conflict.

In Idlib, the situation seems to be becoming less complicated and difficult to decipher. Russia, Iran and Syria had asked Erdogan to take control of the province through its "moderate jihadists", sit down at the negotiating table, and resolve the matter through a diplomatic solution. Exactly the opposite happened. The HTS (formerly al-Nusra/al-Qaeda in Syria) has in recent weeks conquered practically the whole province of Idlib, with numerous forces linked to Turkey (Ahrar al-Sham and Nour al-Din al-Zenki) dissolving and merging into HTS. This development puts even more pressure on Erdogan, who is likely to see his influence in Idlib fade away permanently. Moreover, this evolution represents a unique

opportunity for Damascus and Moscow to start operations in Idlib with the genuine justification of combating terrorism. It is a repeat of what happened in other de-escalation areas. Moscow and Damascus have repeatedly requested the moderates be separated from the terrorists, so as to approach the situation with a diplomatic negotiation.

In the absence of an effective division of combatants, all are considered terrorists, with the military option replacing the diplomatic. This remains the only feasible option to free the area from terrorists who are not willing to give back territory to the legitimate government in Damascus and are keeping civilians hostages. The Idlib province seems to have experienced the same playbook applied in other de-escalation zones, this time with a clear contrast between Turkey and Saudi Arabia that shows how the struggle between the two countries is much deeper than it appears. The reasons behind the Khashoggi case and the diplomatic confrontation between Qatar and Saudi Arabia were laid bare in the actions of the HTS in Idlib, which has taken control of all the areas previously held by Ankara's proxies.

It remains to be seen whether Moscow and Damascus would like to encourage Erdogan to recover Idlib through its proxies, trying to encourage jihadists to fight each other as much as possible in order to lighten the task of the SAA, or whether they would prefer to press the advantage themselves and attack while the terrorist front is experiencing internal confusion.

In terms of occupied territory and accounts to be settled, two areas of great importance for the future of Syria remain unresolved, namely al-Tanf, occupied by US forces on the Syrian-Jordanian border, and the area in the north of Syria occupied by Turkish forces and their FSA proxies. It is too early to approach a solution militarily, it being easier for Damascus and Moscow to complete the work to free Syria from the remaining terrorists. Once this has been done, the presence of US or Turkish forces in Syria, whether directly or indirectly, would become all the more difficult to justify. Driving away the US and, above all, Turkey from Syrian territory will be the natural next step in the Syrian conflict.

This is an unequivocal sign that the war of aggression against Syria is winding up, and this can be observed by the opening of a series of new embassies in Damascus. Several countries — including Italy in the near future — will reopen their embassies in Syria to demonstrate that the war, even if not completely over, is effectively won by Damascus and her allies.

For this reason, several countries that were previously opposed to Damascus, like the United Arab Emirates, are understood to have some kind of contact with the government of Damascus. If they intend to become involved in the reconstruction process and any future investment, they will quite naturally need to re-establish diplomatic relations with Damascus. The Arab League is also looking to welcome Syria back into the fold.

Such are signs that Syria is returning to normality, without forgetting which and how many countries have conspired and acted directly against the Syrians for over seven years. An invitation to the Arab League or some embassy being reopened will not be enough to compensate for the damage done over years, but Assad does not preclude any option, and is in the meantime demonstrating to the Israelis, Saudis and the US Deep State that their war has failed and that even their most loyal allies are resuming diplomatic relations with Damascus, a double whammy against the neocons, Wahhabis and Zionists.

*

Note to readers: please click the share buttons above. Forward this article to your email lists. Crosspost on your blog site, internet forums. etc.

Federico Pieraccini is an independent freelance writer specialized in international affairs, conflicts, politics and strategies. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

Featured image is from SCF

The original source of this article is [Strategic Culture Foundation](#)
Copyright © [Federico Pieraccini](#), [Strategic Culture Foundation](#), 2019

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Federico Pieraccini](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca