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Manbij False Flag: The Empire Devours Its Own Soldiers

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Immediately after Donald Trump's announcement of withdrawal of American troops from Syria on December 19, the Kurdish leadership reportedly threatened [1] to set free hundreds of Islamic State's prisoners and their family members being held in makeshift prisons in the Kurdish-held areas of Syria.

Some of those prisoners are foreign fighters and their countries of origin, Western countries in particular, are unwilling to accept them since they lack evidence to prosecute them. Though the Kurds have since backtracked on their statement, it shows the level of frustration shown by the Kurdish leadership regarding President Trump's abrupt and apparently whimsical decision to pull American forces out of Syria after a telephonic conversation with Turkish President Erdogan on December 14.

The next step the Kurdish leadership took was to rush to Paris to hold discussions with French President Emmanuel Macron who has donned the globalist, interventionist cap after the inauguration of isolationist, "alt-right" president in the US in January 2017.

President Macron reassured the Kurdish leadership that hundreds of French troops stationed in Syria as a part of global coalition to battle the Islamic State will remain there and take the lead after the withdrawal of 2,000 American troops, though it is unlikely that the French forces will stay in Syria for long once the American forces pull out. Particularly, if we keep the fact in mind that President Macron has been facing the biggest challenge to his presidency in recent months in the form of Yellow Vest protests.

Notwithstanding, four American soldiers were killed and three wounded in a suicide bombing in Syria's northern flashpoint town of Manbij on Wednesday. Additionally, ten civilians were also killed and more than a dozen injured in the bombing.

Although Islamic State promptly claimed the responsibility for the attack via its Amaq news agency, the jihadist group is simply a weapon. The finger that pulled the trigger and created circumstances for the attack to take place is to be blamed for the atrocity.

Reuters reported [2] on Wednesday:

> "An explosion hit near a restaurant, targeting the Americans, and there were some forces from the Manbij Military Council with them." The report further adds: "The Manbij Military Council militia has controlled the town since the US-backed Kurdish-led forces took it from Islamic State in 2016. It is located near areas held by Russian-backed Syrian government forces and by anti-Assad

fighters backed by Turkey."

It bears mentioning that the so-called "Syrian Democratic Forces" (SDF) are nothing more than Kurdish militias with a symbolic presence of mercenary Arab tribesmen in order to make SDF appear more representative and inclusive in outlook. The Manbij Military Council, as mentioned in the Reuters report, is comprised of mercenary Arab units of the Kurdish-led SDF.

Thus, it is quite easy for the fighters of the rest of Sunni Arab jihadist groups, including the Islamic State, battling the Shi'a-led government in Syria to infiltrate the Arab-led units of the Syrian Democratic Forces, specifically the Manbij Military Council.

And since the Syrian Kurds are opposed to the Trump administration's policy of withdrawal of American troops from Syria, therefore it is quite likely that the Kurdish-led SDF did not maintain the level of vigilance necessary for keeping the evacuating American soldiers out of the harm's way. The US soldiers mingling with the Arab-led units of SDF in a public restaurant on a busy street in Manbij appears to be one such incidents of costly negligence that claimed precious lives.

Regarding the Islamic State's claim of responsibility for the suicide bombing, it has a history of making dubious claims for grandstanding and for attracting international attention in order to generate funds and attract potential jihadists to its transnational network of terrorists. It even claimed the responsibility for the Las Vegas attack in October 2017, which was perpetrated by Stephen Paddock who killed 58 people in cold blood and left hundreds injured at a concert at Mandalay Bay.

Since the Ghouta chemical weapons attack in August 2013, numerous false flag attacks have been staged in Syria by the militants and their regional and global patrons in order to cross then-President Obama's purported "Red Line in Syria" – that Washington would not tolerate a chemical weapons attack against the Syrian opposition – in order to enforce an American no-fly zone over Syria.

The suicide bombing in Manbij on Wednesday that targeted evacuating American soldiers appears to be one such false flag attack that was either perpetrated by the Kurds themselves or by one of myriad Sunni Arab jihadist outfits battling the Shi'a-led government in Damascus, which are on the payroll of their regional and global patrons, in order to impede or possibly overturn the Syria exit strategy of the Trump administration by keeping the bogey of the Islamic State alive.

Fact of the matter is that Islamic State has been comprehensively defeated as it does not hold any territory in Syria and Iraq now. As far as its capability to wage guerilla warfare is concerned, Washington could not possibly hope to degrade it even if American forces remained stationed in Syria and Iraq for another decade.

Remember that despite fighting America's longest seventeen-year war in Afghanistan, according to a recent report by the US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), the US-backed Afghan government only controls 55% of Afghanistan's territory. It's worth noting that SIGAR is a US-based governmental agency that often inflates figures.

Factually, the government's writ does not extend beyond a third of Afghanistan. In many

cases, the Afghanistan government simply controls district-centers of provinces and outlying rural areas are either controlled by the Taliban or are contested between the militants and the government.

It's worth pointing out that the distinction between Islamic jihadists and purported "moderate rebels" in Syria is more illusory than real. Before it turned rogue and overran Mosul in Iraq in June 2014, Islamic State used to be an integral part of the Syrian opposition and enjoyed close ideological and operational ties with other militant groups in Syria.

Besides, how could heavily armed militants in a sectarian war between Sunni jihadists and Shi'a-led government be possibly labeled as "moderate rebels" with secular and nationalist ambitions? Fact of the matter is that all the militant groups operating in Syria are fanatical Islamic jihadists who regard Shi'a Muslims as apostates and hence liable to death.

Thus, though practically impossible, even if Washington does eliminate all Islamic State militants from Syria, what would it do with myriads of other militant outfits in Syria, particularly with tens of thousands of al-Nusra Front jihadists who have carved out a new sanctuary in Syria's northwestern Idlib governorate since last year?

The only practical solution to the conundrum is to withdraw all American troops from Syria and let Damascus establish writ of the state over all of Syria in order to eliminate all militant groups from Syria, including the Islamic State, though the Zionist lobbies in Washington might have objections to strengthening the hands of Iran and Russia in Syria.

After eight years of utter devastation and bloodletting, a consensus has emerged among all belligerents of the Syrian war to de-escalate the conflict, except for Israel which wants to further escalate the conflict because it has been the only beneficiary of the carnage in Syria.

Washington's interest in the Syrian proxy war was mainly about ensuring Israel's regional security. The United States Defense Intelligence Agency's declassified report [3] of 2012 clearly spelled out the imminent rise of a Salafist principality in northeastern Syria – in Raqqa and Deir al-Zor which were occupied by the Islamic State until October 2017 – in the event of an outbreak of a sectarian war in Syria.

Under pressure from the Zionist lobby in Washington, however, the former Obama administration deliberately suppressed the report and also overlooked the view in general that a proxy war in Syria would give birth to radical Islamic jihadists.

The hawks in Washington were fully aware of the consequences of their actions in Syria, but they kept pursuing the ill-fated policy of nurturing militants in the training camps located in Syria's border regions with Turkey and Jordan in order to weaken the anti-Zionist Syrian government.

The single biggest threat to Israel's regional security was posed by the Shi'a resistance axis, which is comprised of Tehran, Damascus and their Lebanon-based surrogate, Hezbollah. During the course of 2006 Lebanon War, Hezbollah fired hundreds of rockets into northern Israel and Israel's defense community realized for the first time the nature of threat that Hezbollah and its patrons posed to Israel's regional security.

Those were only unguided rockets but it was a wakeup call for Israel's military strategists that what will happen if Iran passed the guided missile technology to Hezbollah whose area of operations lies very close to the northern borders of Israel.

Thus, the Zionist lobbies in Washington literally coerced then-President Obama to coordinate a proxy war against Damascus and its Lebanon-based surrogate Hezbollah in the wake of the "Arab Spring" protests of 2011 in Syria in order to dismantle the Iranian resistance axis against Israel.

Over the years, Israel not only provided medical aid and material support to militant groups battling Damascus – particularly to various factions of the Free Syria Army (FSA) and al-Qaeda's Syrian affiliate al-Nusra Front in Daraa and Quneitra bordering the Israel-occupied Golan Heights – but Israel's air force virtually played the role of air force of Syrian jihadists and conducted hundreds of airstrikes in Syria during the eight-year conflict.

In an interview to New York Times [4] on January 11, Israel's outgoing Chief of Staff Lt. General Gadi Eisenkot confessed that the Netanyahu government approved his shift in strategy in January 2017 to step up airstrikes in Syria. Consequently, more than 200 Israeli airstrikes were launched against the Syrian targets in 2017 and 2018, as revealed[5] by the Israeli Intelligence Minister Israel Katz in September last year.

In 2018 alone, Israel's air force dropped 2,000 bombs in Syria. The purpose of Israeli airstrikes in Syria has been to degrade Iran's guided missile technology provided to Damascus and Hezbollah, which poses an existential threat to Israel's regional security.

Though after Russia provided S-300 missile system to the Syrian military after a Russian surveillance plane was shot down in Syria on September 18, killing 15 Russians onboard, Israel has conducted only a couple of airstrikes in Syria, one on the Christmas Day in which Israeli F-16 fighter jets took cover [6] of civilian airliners flying to Damascus and Beirut airports. The purpose of the airstrike was to locate the precise location of the S-300 air defense system installed in Syria by Russia in order to target it on a later date, or to keep the Israeli air force out of its reach.

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Notes

[1] Kurdish Fighters Discuss Releasing Almost 3,200 ISIS Prisoners

[2] Four U.S. troops reported among 16 dead in north Syria attack

[3] The United States Defense Intelligence Agency's declassified report of 2012

[4] An interview with Lt. Gen. Gadi Eisenkot, Israel's chief of staff

[5] Israel Katz: Israel conducted 200 airstrikes in Syria in 2017 and 2018

[6] Israel Used Civilian Airliners as Cover in Christmas Day Airstrikes in Syria

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