

Syria: At the Gateway of A Greater War

By [Tony Cartalucci](#)

Global Research, February 17, 2016

[New Eastern Outlook](#) 17 February 2016

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

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

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

Syrian forces backed by Russian airpower have made major advances across the battlefield along multiple fronts.

Around Aleppo, Syrian forces have cut supply lines from Turkey that were for years, supplying terrorists operating inside the country. Just east of a growing encirclement of the city of Aleppo, a secondary encirclement of so-called "Islamic State" (ISIS) forces is forming as the offensive to relieve Kuweris Airbase has evolved into a northern advance toward Al Bab – a critical logistical hub used by US-NATO-GCC backed terrorists during the initial invasion of Aleppo in 2012 and onward.

Deeper within the interior of Syria, Syrian forces have advanced eastward into the Al Raqqah Governorate, approaching the Tabaqa Airbase. The airbase is a crucial waypoint toward seizing back the city of Al Raqqah itself, which has become the defacto capital of ISIS.

Advances Against ISIS in East Only Possible After Cutting NATO-Fed Supply Lines in North

This second operation aimed at ISIS in Al Raqqah has only been made possible because of successes amid the first operation around Aleppo and along the Turkish-Syrian border. It is now demonstrably clear that the source of ISIS' fighting capacity originated almost exclusively from NATO-member Turkey's territory and more specifically, from between the Afrin-Jarabulus corridor.

So far, NATO has been unable to account for this obvious fact, or explain why it has been unable to secure the Turkish border from the Turkish side, particularly when nations including the United States and United Kingdom have for years been conducting military and intelligence operations precisely in the same locations ISIS supplies have been crossing over into Syria from.

As Syrian and Kurdish forces backed by Russian airpower close one logistical corridor after another along the border, the fighting capacity of ISIS has withered to the verge of collapsing.

As ISIS Folds US-NATO-GCC Mount Rescue

For several days now, Turkey has been firing across the border at the pivotal Syrian city of Azaz. The city is on the verge of being overrun by Kurdish fighters who will for all intents and purposes shut down one of ISIS' last remaining logistical hubs supplying their fighters in Syria from Turkey.

Turkey has vowed not to allow the city to fall and has implied that it is willing to go as far as

invade Syria to ensure that it doesn't.

While Turkey poses as an enemy of ISIS and has not mentioned its presence in the city of Azaz or why it would attempt to protect them, it would be in 2013 that the BBC itself would declare Azaz "seized" by the terrorist group. In their article, "[Isis seizure of Syria's Azaz exposes rebel rifts](#)," the BBC would report:

...the Free Syrian Army lost the town of Azaz to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, or Isis, the most hardline group linked to al-Qaeda on the rebel side. As a measure of the grip the jihadis have in Azaz, one eyewitness inside the town said no-one was smoking on the streets – tobacco is forbidden according to strict Islamist doctrine.

Other reports from last year indicated that ISIS was either near or in the city – suggesting not that it had ever lost control of Azaz – but that at various moments during the conflict, it suited the West and its regional allies better to pretend "moderate rebels" held it instead.

It should be noted that in all Western media stories, it is never precisely mentioned who the Kurds are fighting in Azaz – because it is ISIS.

Considering this, Turkey would be quite literally intervening to save ISIS and other hardcore terrorist groups sharing the city with it.

Saber-Rattling or Wider War?

An invasion into Syria would constitute an act of war – and beyond that – affirmation that NATO was behind the ISIS menace from the beginning. While leaks like that of the United States' own [Defense Intelligence Agency \(DIA\) in 2015](#) have exposed this rhetorically, a NATO invasion of Syria to save an ISIS stronghold from destruction would prove it demonstrably.

The fact that the US is attempting to distance itself politically from both Turkey and Saudi Arabia – who has also pledged to carry out ground operations in Syria amid the collapse of terrorist fronts across the country – indicates a possible attempt to produce plausible deniability ahead of a much larger provocation or intervention.

Just as US policymakers had plotted in 2009 to use an apparent "unilateral" attack by Israel upon Iran to provoke a retaliation the US could then use as a pretext to "reluctantly" go to war, a similar strategy appears to be materializing along Syria's borders today.

While the US and Europe attempt to distance themselves from Turkey, they have at the same time committed to a campaign of disinformation attempting to frame ongoing security operations moving ever closer toward Turkey's border as "targeting civilians" and attacking "moderate rebels" at the expense of fighting ISIS. This is to lend Turkey and Saudi Arabia rhetorical cover, however tenuous, ahead of any actual intervention.

What will ultimately determine whether this remains mere "saber-rattling" or transforms incrementally into wider war, will be the actual deterrence Syria and its allies, including nuclear-armed Russia, are prepared to meet continued provocations with.

The next few days pose a critical test to Syria and its allies – a test that may determine

whether or not this conflict passes through the gateway toward greater war.

Tony Cartalucci is a Bangkok-based geopolitical researcher and writer, especially for the online magazine ["New Eastern Outlook"](#).

The original source of this article is [New Eastern Outlook](#)

Copyright © [Tony Cartalucci](#), [New Eastern Outlook](#), 2016

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

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Tony Cartalucci](#)

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