

The Syrian Kurds Think They Can Play Damascus Like a Fiddle

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The Syrian Kurds are exploiting Damascus' strong sense of patriotism in order to provoke it into the dilemma of either entering into a confrontation with Ankara or risk falling victim to slanderous accusations that it "sold them out" to the Turks, with this entire manipulation being carried out with the grand strategic intent of prompting Moscow to diplomatically intervene in safeguarding the PYD's desired "decentralization" dreams in the region and inadvertently furthering the American-Israeli vision for a Kurdish corridor to the sea.

A Plea For Help

The news recently broke that the Syrian Kurds in Afrin have requested that the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) urgently intervene in their northwestern region in order to halt the military advance by Turkey and its [FSA proxies](#), with [Sputnik](#) reporting that the PYD-YPG's [official statement](#) included the following appeal:

"We call on the Syrian state to carry out its sovereign obligations towards Afrin and protect its borders with Turkey from attacks of the Turkish occupier ... and deploy its Syrian Armed Forces to secure the borders of the Afrin area."

[RT](#) translated another key passage from the "federal" Kurds that saw them boast of their 'patriotic' credentials against a supposed Turkish plot to undermine Syria's "territorial integrity":

"We reaffirm that the Afrin region is an integral part of Syria and that our forces are the people's protection units," it wrote in a statement, arguing that the Turkish military operation in Afrin "threatens the territorial integrity of Syria and the security and lives of the civilians."

A casual observer's prima facie response might be to sympathize with the Syrian Kurds after they apparently seemed to have [learned their lesson](#) and are now virtue signaling their commitment to national unity, but such a reaction would be naïve for a few reasons.

Debunking The Kurdish Narrative

Firstly, the [Neo-Marxist](#) PYD-YPG never intended to formally separate from Syria but instead endeavored to carry out a ["federal" regime change](#) in the country as openly expressed in their 2015 [hate-filled manifesto](#).

Despite the Alt-Media fake news propaganda to the contrary, Turkey does not want to “annex” any piece of Syrian territory but does desire to [establish a sphere of influence](#) by [replacing the YPG with pro-Ankara proxy groups](#) and formalizing its interests via a forthcoming “decentralization”.

Therefore, neither the Syrian Kurds nor the Turks are threatening the country’s territorial integrity in any official way, but it can certainly be argued that their shared objective in “decentralizing” the state could easily lead Syria down the path of “[Identity Federalism](#)” and subsequent “Bosnification” into a checkerboard of quasi-independent statelets.

It’s ironic then that the Turks and Kurds are both accusing one another of endangering Syria’s territorial integrity when they’re essentially pursuing the same ends though for completely different strategic reasons, but in all objectivity the creation of a de-facto “Kurdistan” in northern Syria is much more of a regionally destabilizing factor than whatever local “solution” the Turks have in mind for their proxies.

Another factor to keep in mind is that the PYD-YPG Kurds are very close [American](#) and [Israeli](#) allies while Turkey has been progressively drifting towards the [Multipolar World Order](#) since the [failed 2016 pro-American coup against President Erdogan](#), so if Syria’s “decentralization” along the lines of the [Russian-written “draft constitution”](#) is [inevitable](#) (possibly even as early as after the upcoming “[Syrian National Dialogue Congress](#)” in Sochi), then it’s “better” for it to be Turkish-led than Kurdish-led.

Damascus’ Dilemma

The Syrian Kurds keenly understand the power dynamics at play, as well as the “[open secret](#)” that it was most likely due to Damascus’ passive complicity via Moscow’s mediating efforts that Ankara was able to commence its operation in Afrin, hence why they’re deviously seeking to exploit this fact and the “politically inconvenient” contradiction that it reveals between the government’s [public “patriotic” statements](#) and private “pragmatic” deals in order to apply pressure against President Assad in getting him to “stand up” to his Turkish counterpart or risk being “discredited”.



Source: author

To elaborate, Syrians of all ethnicities and confessions are among the most sincerely patriotic people on earth due to the deep attachment that they collectively feel to their millennia-old civilization, yet Damascus has been compelled to “[compromise](#)” time and again in the face of overwhelming odds such as the ones presented before it on the cusp of the speculatively Russian-facilitated Turkish intervention.

By openly asking the SAA to ‘save’ them, the Syrian Kurds are hoping to put Damascus on the spot by forcing into a dilemma – if the military rushes to their ‘rescue’, then it risks breaking the “gentlemen’s agreements” that it reached with Moscow and Ankara while functionally recognizing the PYD-YPG as a “patriotic” force “worthy” of a seat at the Astana and Sochi conferences, but if it refuses to do so then it risks weaponized infowar accusations that it “sold out” “the only Syrians fighting the Turks” in order to please Ankara at Moscow’s behest.

This Catch-22 puts enormous pressure on President Assad because it could pose a lose-lose outcome unless he and his government are extremely careful, but of the two options available, the worst would be if he orders the SAA to assist the Syrian Kurds.

Sitting back and allowing President Erdogan to crush the “federalists” might lead to the infowar reaction that was predicted, but it’ll nevertheless be considerably muted because Ankara could order its proxies and their international backers (particularly the popular Al Jazeera media outlet owned by his [Qatari](#) allies) to downplay the Syrian Kurds’ “backstabbing” accusations against President Assad and possibly even creatively engineer an effective counter-narrative that further exposes the PYD-YPG as American-Israeli pawns for playing this role.

On the other hand, apart from the dangerous state-to-state war scenario that could suddenly transpire if the SAA began to clash with the Turks in defense of the Syrian Kurds, the most likely eventuality would be that Russia would be forced to diplomatically intervene between its two national allies to the benefit of its [presumed non-state ones](#) in essentially turning Afrin into Moscow’s military “protectorate” and therefore [advancing the PYD-YPG’s “decentralized” “solution”](#).

The Suicidal Scenario

Predictably, having provoked a frenzy of Syrian patriotism after tricking the SAA into confronting the Turks on their behalf and thus triggering a decisive Russian diplomatic response in their favor, the wily Syrian Kurds would then be in an ideal position to exploit the country’s long-standing dreams of liberating the former Syrian [Province of Iskenderun](#) that has been under Turkish control as the Province of Hatay since 1939.

The Syrian Kurds are far from being actual Syrian patriots since all that they care about is Neo-Marxism, “federalization”, and “Kurdistan”, but they might come to believe that they have the perfect moment to promote all three of their interlinked ideologies if they could seize the moment to make the “patriotic” case for militantly pressing Damascus’ claims to Iskenderun/Hatay in order to take advantage of the SAA as their “cat’s paw” for carving out their cherished corridor to the sea.

The SAA is incapable of conquering Iskenderun/Hatay since it can’t even liberate the entirety of its internationally recognized borders from the Kurdish occupation of the energy- and agriculturally-rich northeastern one-third of the country and remove the [10 American bases](#) that are there, so there’s no way that it can handle the Turkish Armed Forces on their opponent’s mountainous “home turf” and dismantle the instruments of its statehood there.

Not only that, but Russia and the rest of the world would consider this to be a Saddam-like 1991 “war of aggression” in invading Turkey’s internationally recognized borders despite the arguable legitimacy of the offensive party’s historical claims there, and it’s all but guaranteed that Moscow would be tasked by the UNSC to put an immediate stop to Damascus’ operation.

In any case, it’s doubtful that the SAA would allow themselves to be tricked by the Kurds into falling for this [suicidal scenario](#), but they and even Russia might not be able to fully stop emboldened “volunteers” – whether Kurds, “[Social-Nationalists](#)”, Arabs, or otherwise – from attacking Iskenderun/Hatay from their Afrin “safe haven”, which could in and of itself trigger a cross-border Turkish military response or even a problematic internal one between the

SAA-Russia and the Syrian nationals carrying out these raids.

All of these aforementioned reasons are why the SAA needs to carefully consider the pros and cons of rushing to the PYD-YPG's assistance after their heavily publicized plea for help, as surrendering to the knee-jerk reaction of "patriotism" would amount to nothing more than Damascus being played like a fiddle by the Syrian Kurds, thereby jeopardizing all of its hard-fought gains over the past 7 years and inadvertently laying the strategic basis for the American-Israeli Kurdish corridor to the sea.

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