

# Turkey Invades Northern Syria — Truth of Turkish “Coups” Revealed?

By [The New Atlas](#)

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*Syria's conflict has escalated into dangerous new territory as Turkish military forces cross the Turkish-Syrian border in an attempt to annex the Syrian city of Jarabulus. The operation includes not only Turkish military forces, but also throngs of Western-backed militants who will likely be handed control of the city before expanding operations deeper into Syria against Syrian government forces.*

With the beginning of the operation, aimed allegedly at seizing the city from militants of the so-called Islamic State as well as preventing the city from falling into the hands of advancing US-backed Kurdish forces, Ankara's move has made several things clear about the current geopolitical dimensions of the ongoing regional conflict.



## The “US-Backed” July Coup Was Likely Staged

First, with US warplanes providing close air support for Turkish operations, claims by Ankara that the US was behind an attempted coup in July appear to have been fabrications and the coup itself likely staged.

US Vice President Joseph Biden made an official visit to Turkey just this week in what was the highest level visit by a US representative since the attempted coup in July. Vice

President Biden discussed bilateral relations and joint US-Turkish military cooperation.

Reuters in its report, "[With Biden visit, U.S. seeks balance with truculent Turkey](#)," would claim:

Biden, who visited Latvia on Tuesday, will look to show support with Turkey, while raising concern about the extent of the crackdown, according to officials. Turkey will press its case for Gulen's extradition.

"The vice president will also reaffirm that the United States is doing everything we can to support Turkey's ongoing efforts to hold accountable those responsible for the coup attempt while ensuring the rule of law is respected during the process," a senior Obama administration official told reporters, briefing ahead of Biden's visit on condition of anonymity.

It is difficult to believe that Fethullah Gülen could have orchestrated a violent military coup while residing in the United States without the explicit approval and support of the United States government. Thus, for the US to "*hold accountable those responsible for the coup attempt*" would require the identification and detainment of those Americans who were involved.



Regarding US joint operations with Turkey specifically, the BBC in its article, "[Syria Jarablus: Turkish tanks roll into northern Syria](#)," would report:

An unnamed senior US official in Washington told BBC News before the start of the Turkish operation that it was "partly to create a buffer against the possibility of the Kurds moving forward".

"We are working with them on that potential operation: our advisers are communicating with them on the Jarablus plan.

"We'll give close air support if there's an operation."

It would be likewise difficult to believe that Turkey truly suspected the US of an attempted

decapitation of the nation's senior leadership in a violent, abortive coup just last month, only to be conducting joint operations with the US inside Syria with US military forces still based within Turkish territory.

What is much more likely is that the coup was staged to feign a US-Turkish fallout, draw in Russia and allow Turkey to make sweeping purges of any elements within the Turkish armed forces that might oppose a cross-border foray into Syria, a foray that is now unfolding.

Anthony Cartalucci, a Bangkok-based geopolitical analyst would note in a July 18 piece titled, "[Turkey's Failed Coup: "A Gift from God" or from Washington?](#)," that:

...the coup was staged – not against Turkey – but in part by it, with the help of not only the United States, but also Gulen's political faction. It will represent a 21st century "Reichstag fire" leading to a 21st century "Hitlerian purge," removing the last remaining obstacles to President Erdogan and the corrosive institutions he has constructed in their collective bid to seize absolute power over Turkey.

And quite to the contrary of those changes one would expect Turkey to make if truly the US engineered this coup to oust, not abet Erdogan, Turkey is very likely to double down on hostility toward neighboring Syria and its allies.

With Turkey now moving into northern Syria, backing militant forces that will go on to fight Syrian forces and prolong the conflict from a new forward base of operations inside Syria and with NATO protection, this is precisely what has now happened.

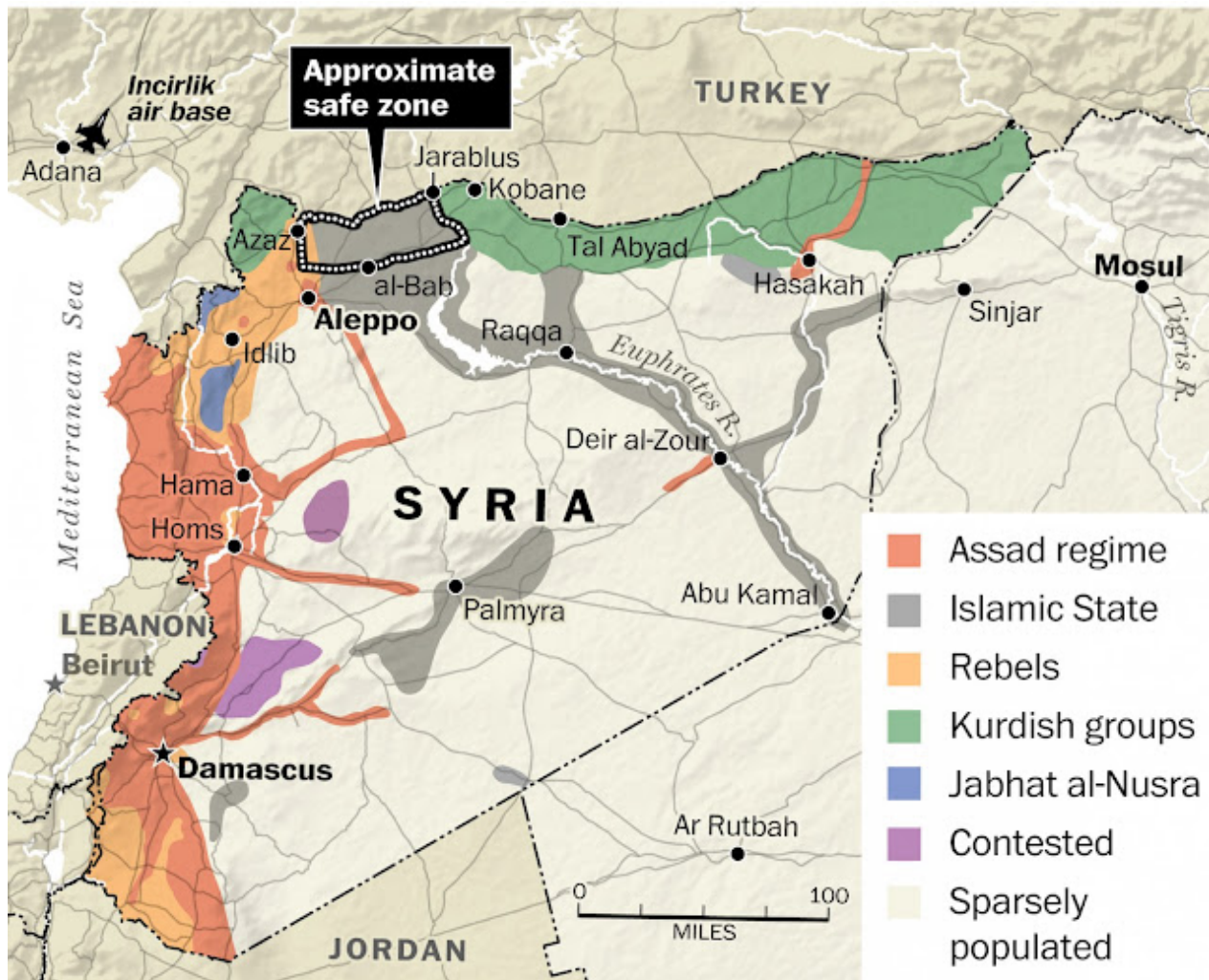
#### Building Long-Desired Militant Safe-Havens

The crossing of Syria's border constitutes the fulfilment of longstanding plans predating both the Kurdish offensive and the rise of the Islamic State.

The plans laid by Washington and its regional allies seek to establish a buffer zone or "safe-haven" within Syrian territory unassailable by Syrian forces from which Western-backed militants can launch operations deeper into Syrian territory. Currently, these operations are launched from Turkish territory itself.

With militants being incrementally pushed out of Aleppo and Syrian forces making advances everywhere west of the Euphrates River, it appears that [the US is attempting to use Kurdish forces to annex eastern Syria](#) while Turkey's latest move is aimed at finally creating a long-desired northern safe-haven in order to prevent a full collapse of fighting within the country.





Sources: Institute for the Study of War, Hurriyet Daily News

THE WASHINGTON POST

British special forces, meanwhile, are reportedly in southern Syria attempting to carve out a similar haven for militants along Jordan and Iraq's borders with Syria.

The participation of US airpower in the ongoing operation also makes clear the lack of strategic and political depth of US loyalty to its supposed Kurdish allies, a betrayal in motion even as Kurdish forces are being marshalled and directed against Syrian forces by the US in eastern Syria.

Plans for such safe-havens were disclosed as early as 2012, with US policymakers in a Brookings Institution paper titled, "[Assessing Options for Regime Change](#)," stating (our emphasis):

An alternative is for diplomatic efforts to focus first on how to end the violence and how to gain humanitarian access, as is being done under [Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's] leadership. This may lead to the creation of safe-havens and humanitarian corridors, which would have to be backed by limited military power. This would, of course, fall short of U.S. goals for Syria and could preserve Asad in power. From that starting point, however, it is possible that a broad coalition with the appropriate international mandate could add further coercive action to its efforts.

This is now precisely what is being created, starting in Jarablus, and likely to extend westward toward Azaz, directly north of the contested Syrian city of Aleppo. Since 2012,

various pretexts have been invented, abandoned and then revisited in order to justify a cross-border operation like the one now unfolding.

#### Creating a Pretext — Staged Terror Attack Was an Option

This included Ankara itself plotting attacks on its own territory to look like cross-border terrorism that could be used as impetus for the creation of a Turkish-controlled Jarabulus-Azaz corridor.

The International Business Times in a 2014 article titled, "[Turkey YouTube Ban: Full Transcript of Leaked Syria 'War' Conversation Between Erdogan Officials](#)," would reveal the details of a transcript in which Turkish leadership contemplated staging just such an attack:

Ahmet Davutoğlu: "Prime Minister said that in current conjuncture, this attack (on Suleiman Shah Tomb) must be seen as an opportunity for us."

Hakan Fidan: "I'll send 4 men from Syria, if that's what it takes. I'll make up a cause of war by ordering a missile attack on Turkey; we can also prepare an attack on Suleiman Shah Tomb if necessary."

Feridun Sinirlioğlu: "Our national security has become a common, cheap domestic policy outfit."

Yaşar Güler: "It's a direct cause of war. I mean, what're going to do is a direct cause of war."

It may just be a coincidence that a similar provocation unfolded just ahead of the current Turkish cross-border operation. The New York Times in its article, "[Wedding Bombing is the Latest in a Series of Deadly Terror Attacks in Turkey](#)," would detail the provocation now being cited for Turkey's current operation:

A bombing on Saturday night at a Kurdish wedding in Gaziantep, a Turkish town near the Syrian border, was one of the deadliest in a string of terrorist attacks that have struck Turkey. Since June 2015, Kurdish and Islamic State militants have staged at least 15 major attacks across Turkey, killing more than 330 people.

Thus, Turkey's government and a complicit Western media have helped place the blame equally on both the Islamic State and Kurdish militants ahead of the now ongoing cross-border operation.

The [above mentioned BBC article](#) would also note:

Turkey has vowed to "completely cleanse" IS from its border region, blaming the group for a bomb attack on a wedding that killed at least 54 people in Gaziantep on Saturday.

In the aftermath of the July coup, many were hopeful Turkey would realign itself geopolitically and play a more constructive and stabilising role in the region.

Instead, while citing the threat of the Islamic State and Kurdish forces along its border, a

threat that its own collusion with US and Persian Gulf States since 2011 helped create, Turkey has decisively helped move forward a crucial part of US plans to dismember Syria and move its campaign of North African and Middle Eastern destabilisation onward and outward.

The response by Syria and its allies in the wake of Turkey's cross-border foray has so far been muted. What, if any actions could be taken to prevent the US and its allies from achieving their plans remain to be seen.

While the toppling of the government in Damascus looks unlikely at the moment, the Balkanisation of Syria was a secondary objective always only ever considered by US policymakers as a mere stop gap until eventually toppling Damascus as well. Conceding eastern and parts of northern Syria to US-led aggression will only buy time.

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