
TC OF AMERICA - STATEMENT REGARDING THE SITUATION IN SYRIA

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17.10.2019

Turkish Coalition of America (17 October 2019)

The group [YPG] has deep ties to the Kurdistan Workers Party, also known as the P.K.K. Both Turkey and the United States consider the P.K.K. to be a terrorist organization for its violent separatist movement inside Turkey. - Barnard, Anne, and Ben Hubbard. Allies or Terrorists: Who Are the Kurdish Fighters in Syria? The New York Times, 25 Jan. 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/25/world/middleeast/turkey-kurds-syria.html>.

When the US decided to equip and train Syrian Kurds, as well as some Arabs, to fight IS, they were aware of a potential problem, that their would-be Kurdish allies were regarded as terrorists by their Nato ally, Turkey. Washington turned a blind eye to a problem that could be kicked into the future. Now the future is here, and it has blown up. - Bowen , Jeremy. Turkey-Syria Offensive: Disastrous Moment for US Mid-East Policy .BBC News , 14 Oct. 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-50039856>.

YPG[1] control of Syria expanded with U.S. support to roughly 30% of the landmass, even though the Kurdish population (which the YPG does not represent) constitutes only 5-10% of the countrys overall population and is concentrated mostly along the northern border with Turkey. YPG expanded into these lands beyond their inherent capabilities with ulterior motives. The overextended YPG ethnically cleansed the conquered territories in an effort to consolidate their control. The YPG occupation has disenfranchised Arabs, minority groups and Kurds who do not share their Marxist-Leninist politics alike.

YPGs success in Syria is owed directly to American support since 2015 (approximately 30,000 truckloads of American arms and materials). The choice to ally with YPG, which the U.S. assured to Turkey was transactional and temporary, deliberately ignored Turkeys legitimate and pressing security concerns. U.S. officials have repeatedly acknowledged YPGs deep affiliation with the PKK, which the U.S. designated as a foreign terrorist organization in 1997 and affirmed in 2019. Commander-in-chief of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), General Mazloum, in conjunction with the PKK has orchestrated from Syria dozens of large-scale terrorist attacks in Turkey, specifically targeting tourists and civilians. Furthermore, over 50% of YPG fighters are composed of PKK members from Turkey.

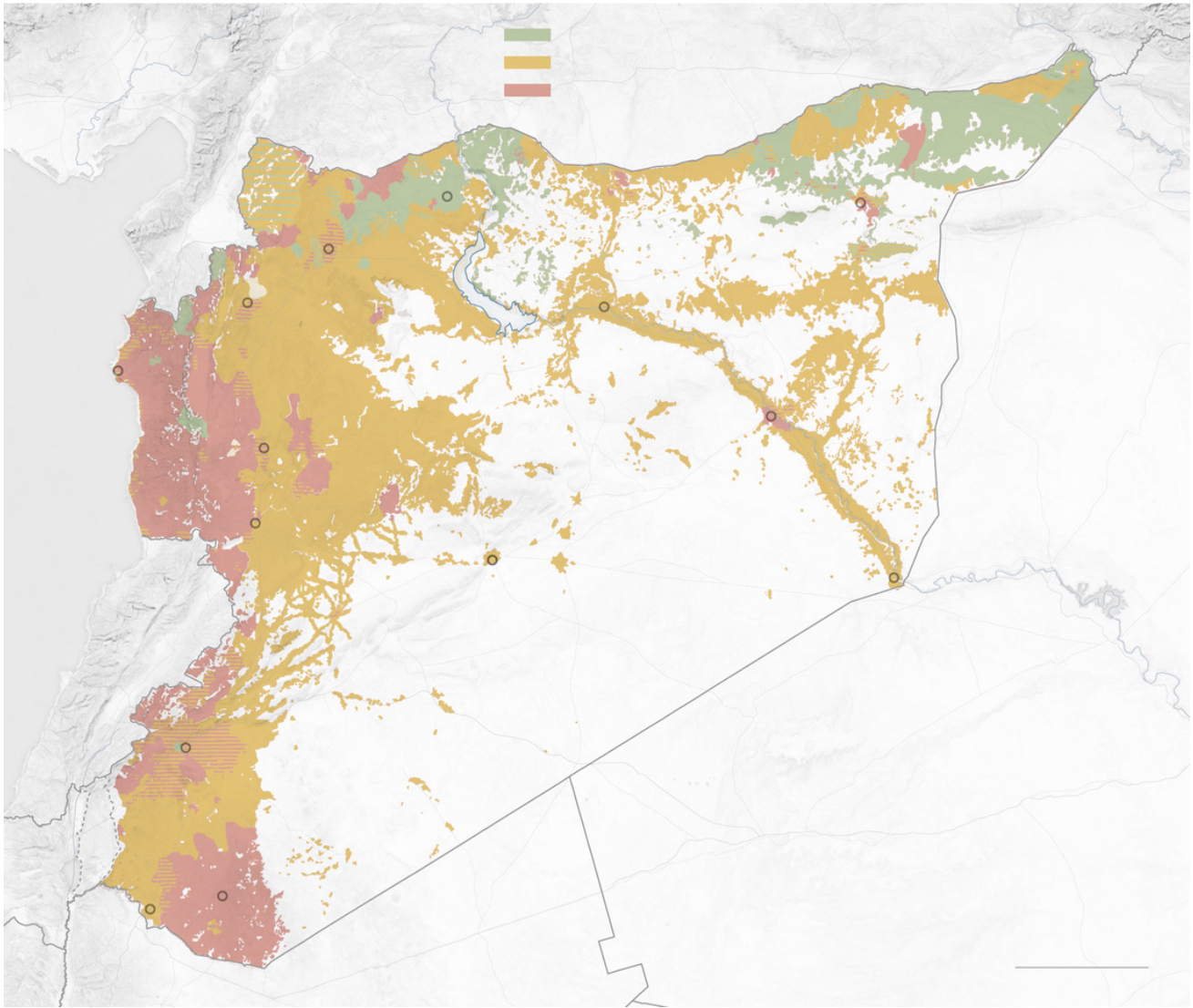
The situation was unsustainable, and without Americas support, the militias disproportionate hold in region has started to collapse. In an attempt to maintain their control over the region, the YPG has now allied with Assads murderous regime that is backed by Russia and Iran.

The U.S. media nevertheless insists on portraying the YPG, naively, as steadfast allies. Meanwhile,

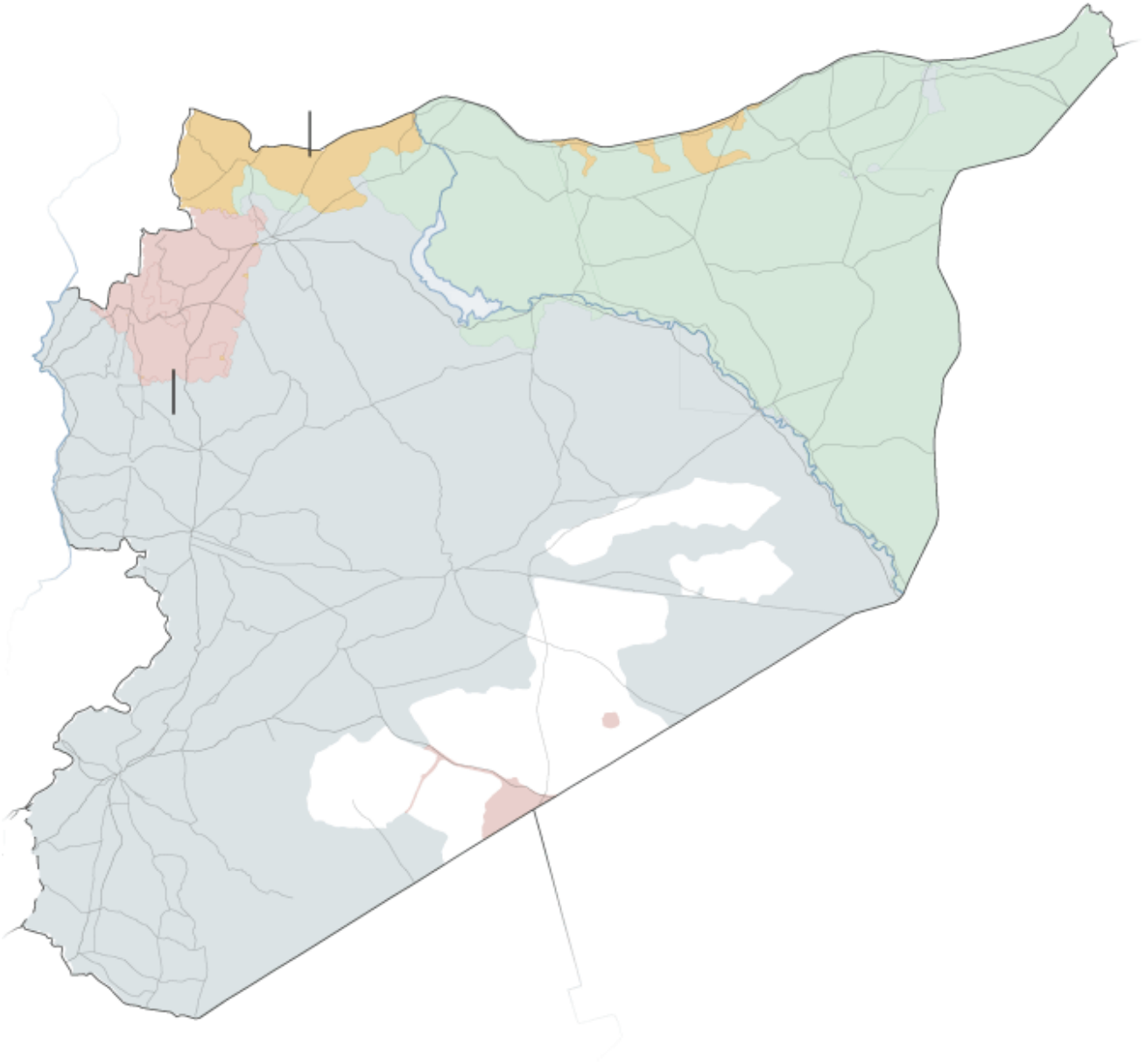
Turkey, a vital ally of the U.S. in the Middle East, Balkans and Afghanistan and a key member of NATO since 1952, is portrayed as an irrational antagonist in the region. Yet, Turkey has been integral in dealing with the humanitarian crisis caused by the Syrian Civil War. According to the UNHCR, Turkey is providing asylum to 3,674,588 Syrian refugees: amounting to 68% of the entire Syrian refugee population. No country has carried the burden of the humanitarian crisis in Syria more than Turkey. Meanwhile, the EU, the U.S., and the wealthy Arab states of the Persian gulf have made only nominal attempts at relieving the humanitarian crisis or providing asylum. Turkey's incursion into Syria not only champions its own security concerns but those of the Syrian refugees who long to return to their homeland.

The United States military intervention in lands alongside Turkey has rarely gone smoothly. Our troops remain in Iraq, which was invaded in 2003 ostensibly to root out weapons of mass destruction that were quickly proven not to exist. Turkey expressed strong objections at the start of that operation, but it has never flinched in its support for and participation in counter-terror operations alongside the U.S. It has been an anti-ISIS coalition member from the start and has even trained Iraqi Kurdish soldiers and Iraqi Army units for counter-ISIS operations. Therefore, it is disheartening to see Turkey unfairly portrayed by the media, members of Congress and officials of the administration in a way that oversimplifies the situation in Syria. Further, the eagerness of Congress and the foreign policy establishment of overlooking the security concerns of the Turkish people reflects a double-standard and inherent prejudices present in the U.S. Instead of characterizing Turkey as a villain and scapegoating it for years of questionable U.S. policy choices toward Syria, it is important to understand the underlying concerns that motivate Turkey's actions in Syria today. A permanent rupture in the bilateral relationship would be a lose-lose for both countries, especially considering the well-established alliance, partnership and historical cooperation in between the two states.

[1] The YPG, a mainly-Kurdish militia in Syria and the primary component of the Syrian Democratic Forces, was formed in 2004 as the armed wing of the Kurdish leftist Democratic Union Party.



Majority Kurdish Areas Represented in Green



YPG Controlled Territory Represented in Green

Maps Provided by: Barnard, Anne, et al. 4 Big Questions About Syria's Future . The New York Times , 15 Oct. 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/10/15/world/middleeast/syria-turkey.html?auth=login-email&login=email>.

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