

A Middle East Grand Bargain Must Create Kurdistan

by Sherkoh Abbas and Robert Sklaroff



President Trump's itinerary during his first overseas trip revealed both his goal and its attendant strategy—although it remains officially unstated—as he tries to fashion a durable end to the Syrian civil war and the birth of a restructured region.

In the process of touching-base with the nerve-centers of each of the three major Middle East religions, he attempted to eliminate the Islamic State without empowering Iran.

Conspiratorial Liberals yelp when he recruits Russia, and acolytes of the Obama Administration condemn his having maneuvered around Tehran.

But he must defang the ayatollahs, lest they ally with North Korean missile-rattlers and threaten World War III.

This is why he keeps an armada in the Gulf, while maintaining a beefed-up presence in the Sea of Japan and encouraging Beijing to block Pyongyang from nuke-testing, for he must stretch the depleted military in theaters a half-globe apart until it has been rebuilt.

And that's why he has embedded Americans with Kurdish forces attacking Raqqa, for it is impossible to be a "player" without having placed pieces onto the board. Lt. Gen. H. R. McMaster, the U.S. national security adviser, was triggered to inform Turkey on May 1st that the [Kurds](#) were to receive heavy machine guns, mortars, anti-tank weapons, and armored cars after the Turks had [lethally-bombed](#) Kurdish forces in

northeast Syria the prior Tuesday. That reflected autocrat Erdoğan having again “distracted” world attention from targeting the primary target, the Islamic State.

Accommodating this major reconfiguration of regional forces, President Vladimir Putin said that [Russia](#) saw no need to arm the Syrian Kurds, but said Moscow would maintain working contacts with them.

Secretary of Defense James “Jim” Mattis had decided to arm the Kurds directly rather than via any regional country, finally reversing Obama’s following-from-behind intransigent passivity.

He is implementing key [aphorisms](#) derived from his storied career defending America.

Indeed, Senator Joni Ernst (R-Iowa) recognized arming the Kurds constitutes “an immense [milestone](#).”

In the process, Mattis has recognized [The Road to Defeating the Islamic State Runs through Kurdistan](#), an essay—illustrated by a settlement-map—that succinctly details the historic, military, economic, religious and political implications of this overdue stance.

Visiting Trump in this charged atmosphere, Erdoğan chose the wrong time to be bellicose against [Israel and America](#). His post-referendum dictatorial effort to promote *Jihad* was again manifest through two decrees; one that expelled more than 4,000 civil servants and another that banned television dating programs.

That these actions were not being well-received. That was reflected in the fact that the latter two hyperlinks [*al-Monitor* and *Aljazeera*] are from Arab websites, suggesting welcome-recognition of a tilt toward *inter-alia* the Sunni Gulf states, plus Qatar, the locale of a major American military presence over NATO-aligned Ankara ,which is increasingly

aligning with [Iran](#) against the potential for Kurds to achieve independence.

That would serve as the culmination of battle-plans we have proposed for almost a decade. In 2008, we identified Kurds as an “[invisible people](#)” and advocated confronting the major source of global terrorism, [The Road to Iran Runs through Kurdistan – and Starts in Syria](#). In 2015, we showed why the United States cannot evade this trouble-spot, [[The Pathway to Defeating ISIS Runs Though Kurdistan – And Starts in America](#)]. In 2013, we concluded [The Kurds can lead a reconstituted Syria, at peace with all of her neighbors](#). In 2014, we suggested [NATO Must Help the Kurds Now](#).

That is why Kurds are seeking [recognition](#) of their enormous military sacrifice and their unique political feat, noting their carefully-constructed federal system in [Rojava](#)