

Betrayal of Kurds Delivers Victory to US Enemy Iran

by Jerry Gordon



This morning I fielded a call from Sherkoh Abbas, President of the Kurdish National Assembly of Syria (KUDNAS)). He had spoken overnight with contacts among the Peshmerga commanders on the battlefield in Sinjar and other so-called ‘disputed areas.’ They told of American advisers to the Iraqi National Army – Shia Hashd al-Shaabi Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) telling them that the US was neutral in the dispute over the Independence referendum, but that if they didn’t stand down and leave, “there would be consequences.”

That message was conveyed to embattled Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) President Massoud Barzani, who exclaimed that this means the end of US support. Kurdish Peshmerga units had no alternative but to leave. As a result 40 percent of KRG controlled areas held since the 2014 Islamic State blitzkrieg have now been effectively taken over by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards –controlled Shia Hashd Al Shaabi (PMU) commanded by Quds Force General Qassem Soleimani. KRG President Barzani of the ruling Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP)

lost vital oil fields that would have bolstered the economy of an independent Kurdistan.

The irony is that the Trump National Security team and State Department forced the surrender of a US ally to US sanctioned Iranian “terrorists.” Terrorists, whose Shia Iraqi proxy, the PMU, are in possession of US weapons in violation of US agreements with the Iraqi National Army of the Government of Premier Haidar al-Abadi.

Note these comment of Washington KRG Representative Karwan Zebari:

Kurds are furious and perplexed why the United States has abandoned them to be attacked by American weapons in the hands of Iranian-backed forces. U.S. silence at this time is actually a statement of support for the actions of Baghdad (Tehran).

The Kurds want the United States to press the Iraqi government. American weapons should not be used against Kurds or against civilians and political differences must be resolved through dialogue. Most importantly, the United States should be alarmed that Iraqi political and security decision-making is occurring in Tehran, and that the IRGC is in command and control of American weapons that were given to Baghdad for the purpose of fighting ISIS. The use of these weapons against Kurdistan should be considered a red line.

This comes in the wake of disclosures of an alleged Kirkuk withdrawal deal with certain members of the Talabani family, founders of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), and IRGC Quds Force Commander Qassem Soleimani on Sunday night in Sulaimaniya in the KRG. Dexter Filkins, in a *The New Yorker* article, [‘Kurdish Dreams of Independence delayed,’](#) reported the deal with the Talabani family that figured in the

betrayal:

On Sunday, Qassem Suleimani, Iran's chief spymaster, travelled to the Iraqi city of Sulaimaniya to meet with the leaders of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, or P.U.K., one of the two main Kurdish political parties. It is not known what Suleimani—the Middle East's most cunning operative—told the P.U.K.'s leaders. But, within hours, their fighters began abandoning their posts, making way for Iraqi military units just across the front lines. Not long after, Iraqi forces took over the former Kurdish positions and a stretch of oil fields near the city of Kirkuk. With the Iraqi Kurds now split in two—the P.U.K. on one side and the K.D.P. on the other—hopes for an independent Kurdish state appear to be fading fast. "It was a horrible, horrible betrayal," a senior official in the Kurdish Regional Government told me.

On the P.U.K. side, the deal was struck by the survivors of Jalal Talabani, the group's longtime chief and a former Iraqi President, who died earlier this month: his widow, Hero; his son Bafil; and his nephew Lahur. It's not clear what was included in the deal, but the speculation is that Suleimani offered a mix of threats and inducements, including money and access to oil-smuggling routes. "Everyone is calling it the P.U.K. drug deal," a former senior American official who works in the region told me. Notably, many P.U.K. units refused the order to stand down and fought the oncoming Iraqi units.

PUK members of the KRG government broke with the Talabani family, who fled to occupied Kirkuk under the protection of the Hashd PMU. Reports from Kirkuk indicate that the PMU has undertaken reprisals burning KRG and KDP office, as well as Referendum supporters' homes- Kurds, Sunni Arabs and Turkmen. The betrayal of Kurdistan comes at a time when the US-backed PYG; Syrian Kurdish led Syrian Democratic Force (SDF) announced completion of retaking the former Islamic State

administrative center at Raqqa. Special Envoy Brett McGurk, who opposed an independent Kurdistan, was in northern Syria and in an *AP* report noted his comments in the new phase of war against the Islamic state:

“Brett McGurk, the top U.S. envoy for the coalition, said he was in northern Syria to prepare for the defeat of the militants. He said the United States will help in clearing explosives as well as restoring services in the city.”

“McGurk posted a photograph Wednesday of surrendering IS militants, saying: “Once purported as fierce, now pathetic and a lost cause.” He said IS lost nearly 6,000 militants in Raqqa before surrendering in large numbers.”

McGurk made no mention of the valiant role of the Kurdish YPG-led SDF as ‘the best boots on the ground’. Nor has there been any such commendation for the blood and treasure expended by Kurdish Peshmerga forces in the battles for Mosul, Nineveh province, Kirkuk and holding the line against the Islamic State blitzkrieg in 2014-2015. Instead, Kurds have once again been betrayed by trusting that they would be rewarded for their valor defeating the forces of Sunni Supremacist Islamic State. Instead, ironically after the victory, Kurds were sacrificed to the Shia Supremacism of hegemonic Iran.

Sherkoh Abbas of KURDNAS was interviewed on *i24 Crossroads* on Wednesday, October 18, 2017 about these devastating acts of betrayal. He said:

It is terrible for America and the free world that [Trump] is not taking sides. That is purely taking the side of Iran and the Hashd al-Shaabi which is the equivalent of Hezbollah. This is ten times worse as all of the oil of Kirkuk and Iraq is under the control of Iran and [Quds Force commander] Soleimani without the control of Baghdad and [Premier] al Abadi. The Hashd al Shaabi is 10 times worse than Hezbollah and could terrorize the region.

Having said this, you have to stop and think that the US really had a good relationship with the Kurds in Syria and Iraq. The Kurds were the ones who liberated the whole region from ISIS (and all of the horrible things [ISIS] was doing) and worked on behalf of humanity. It is time for the international community to support the Kurds. If Kurdistan falls, that means that Iran will have free reign over all the Middle East: Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen. It will terrorize Israel, the GGC and oil interests in the region. ... Perhaps the Kurds should stop fighting ISIS and instead protect and defend their homelands.