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## ISIS: the Useful Enemy

***Kobani Kurds Expose the Hypocrisy of the Coalition Against ISIS***

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The dark force of ISIS is apparently an invincible and unstoppable war juggernaut that is mercilessly killing and conquering in pursuit of establishing an Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. In reality, however, it is not as out of control as it appears. It is, indeed, carefully controlled and managed by its creators and supporters, that is, by the United States and its allies in the regions—those who now pretend to have established a coalition to fight it! The U.S., Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and other allies in the region do not really need to fight ISIS to (allegedly) destroy it; all they need to do to extinguish its hellish flames is stop supplying fuel for its fire, that is, stop supplying it with funds, mercenaries, military training and armaments.

There are many ways to show the fact that, in subtle ways, ISIS benefactors control its operations and direct its activities in accordance with their own geopolitical interests. One way is to pay attention to its purported mission: to dismantle the corrupt and illegitimate regimes in Iraq and Syria and replace them with a “pure” Islamic state under the rule of a “pious caliphate.” Despite this professed mission to fight the dictatorial regimes that have tarnished Islam, however, ISIS does not question the most corrupt, dictatorial and illegitimate regimes in the region—such as the Saudi, Qatari, Kuwaiti and Jordanian regimes that fund and arm its operations.

Another way is to compare ISIS's attack (in early August) on the Iraqi Kurds in Irbil with its current attack on the Syrian Kurds in Kobani. When Irbil came under attack by ISIS, the U.S. unleashed the full force of its air power in concert with the Kurdish peshmerga fighters to repel the attack.

By contrast, while the Kurdish city of Kobani in Northern Syria is being attacked by the disproportionately better armed forces of ISIS, and thousands of its besieged residents face certain mass killings if it falls, the forces of the "coalition to fight ISIS" are watching—in effect, playing a game of *hide-and-seek*, or perhaps *trick-or-treat*, with ISIS—as the outgunned and outmanned Kurdish forces are valiantly fighting to death against the attackers. Only occasionally the coalition forces carry out bombing missions that seem to be essentially theatrical, or just for the record.

So, why are the Kurds in Kobani treated differently than those in Irbil? I find Ajamu Baraka's answer to this question quite insightful:

"The reason why the Kurds of Kobani are to be sacrificed stems from the fact that they are the wrong kind of Kurds. Masoud Barzani and the bourgeois Kurds of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) are the "good Kurds" and the predominant force among the Kurds of Iraq. Their control of almost 45% of Iraqi oil reserves and the booming business that they have been involved in with U.S. oil companies and Israel since their 'liberation' with the U.S. invasion makes them a valued asset for the U.S. The same goes for Turkey where despite the historic oppression of Kurds in Turkey, the government does a robust business with the Kurds of Iraq" (Source).

While the U.S., Turkey and their allies in the region do not view KDP as a threat to their geopolitical plans (at least for now), they do so when it comes to the "bad" Kurds in the self-governing area in Northern Syria, led by the Kurdish People's Protection Unit (YPG). Contrary to KDP that tends to shun the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in Turkey in order not to antagonize the Turks, the United States and their allies in the region, YPG welcomes support from PKK in its fight against ISIS.

Turkey's overriding interest in Syria is not so much against ISIS as it is against the Syrian Kurds, as well as the Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad; because the rabidly anti-Kurd regime in Ankara fears that the weakened regime of Assad may not be able to do away with the self-governing Kurds in Kobani and the surrounding Kurdish areas. The Turkish regime is concerned that if the Kobani Kurds succeed in fending off the ISIS forces, their success and their experience of self-government in the Kobani region, may serve as a tempting model of self-rule for the 15-million Kurds in Turkey. The Turks are also concerned that the success of the Syrian Kurds against ISIS would thwart their long-harbored ambitions to occupy and/or annex the oil-rich Kurdish region in Northern Syria—hence their insistence on a buffer or no-fly zone in that region.

This helps explain why the Turkish regime insists that the overthrow of the Assad regime must take precedence over the fight against ISIS. It also explains why it is feverishly trying to prevent the Kurdish volunteers to cross its border with Syria to help the besieged Kobani defenders against the brutal ISIS attack—in effect, helping ISIS against the Kurds. The inaction or half-hearted action of the United States in the face of the preventable slaughter of the Syrian Kurds,

which makes it complicit in the carnage, can be explained by its political horse-trading with Turkey in exchange for the Turks' collaboration with the pursuit of its imperialistic interests in the region.

The U.S. approach to ISIS would be better understood when it is viewed in the context of its overall objectives in the region—and beyond. That overriding objective, shared and reinforced by its client states, is to undermine or eliminate “the axis of resistance,” consisting of Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, Hamas and, to a lesser extent, Shia forces in Iraq, Yemen, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. Achievement of this goal would also be achievement of another, even broader, goal: undermining Russia's influence and alliances in the region and, by extension, in other parts of the world—for example, its critically important role within both the Shanghai Cooperation Council (China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan) and the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa).

To intervene in order to achieve these goals, the U.S. and its allies need pretexts and/or enemies—even if it means inventing or manufacturing such enemies. Without ISIS, resumption of U.S. military operations in Iraq and extension of those operations into Syria would have been difficult to justify to the American people. A year or so ago, the Obama administration's drive to attack Syria was thwarted by the opposition from the American people and, therefore, the U.S. congress. The rise of ISIS quickly turned that opposition to support.

Viewed in this light, ISIS can be seen as essentially another (newly manufactured) instrument in the tool-box of U.S. foreign policy, which includes “global terrorism,” the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, weapons of mass destruction, Iran's nuclear technology, Al-Qaeda, and many other radical Islamic groupings—all by-products of, or blowbacks to, imperialistic U.S. foreign policies.