

Kurds Lauded by Pentagon as “Reliable and Effective” Partners in War against ISIS



Kurdish YPG fighters capturing Tal-Abyad, Syria, June 2015

Monday, July 6, 2015 was a red letter day in Washington with Pentagon officials acknowledging the critical role of Kurdish YPG and Peshmerga forces successfully fighting ISIS in Syria and Iraq. President Obama appeared at the Pentagon to give an update on the campaign to “degrade and destroy the Islamic state”. It wasn’t a great score card since his declaration made on national television on September 10, 2014. He suggested that winning the war was going to a “generational conflict’. “This will not be quick. This is a long-term campaign. (ISIS) is opportunistic and it is nimble,” Obama said. As usual he reiterated that the ISIS campaign was “not a war against Islam”. This despite that ISIS practices pure Salafist Islam that has attracted tens of thousands of foreign fighters from across the Muslim *ummah*. The President still hasn’t addressed a coherent strategy except to commit minimal numbers of US trainers to develop combat cadres in both Iraq and Syria and conduct air assaults against ISIS targets. During his remarks he pointed to more than 5,000 air strikes in Iraq, Syria and North Africa equivalent to just three days of air operations during the Gulf Wars.

According to *CNN*, President Obama [suggested](#) that the ‘coalition’ was going after “the heart” of the Islamic State. He exhorted Congress to confirm the replacement head of the Treasury Department, Undersecretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, Adam Szubin. He suggested that US Trained forces had some successes on the ground in both Iraq

and Syria backed up by air support, without naming them.

They are the Kurdish YPG (Popular Resistance Forces) in Syria and the Peshmerga in Iraq. In our July *New English Review* (NER) Article, "[Empowering Kurdistan](#)", those front line Kurdish forces have been the only forces capable of rolling back ISIS forces. Obama and his national security staff had met with President Barzani and aides of the Kurdish Regional Government in early May 2015 during the latter's meetings in Washington seeking quality weapons and support in the war against ISIS. We noted in our NER article that both KRG and Syrian Kurdish leaders had met separately with Rep. Trent Franks (R-AZ) in the House and Senate Armed Forces Committee Chairman John McCain (R-AZ). That resulted in amendments to the National Defense Appropriation Act authorizing military assistance for Kurdish fighting units in both Syria and Iraq.

[Watch](#) this C-Span video of President Obama's Pentagon Conference on the ISIS War, July 6, 2015:



**Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter and French Defense Minister
Jean-Yves Le Drian, The Pentagon, July 6, 2015**

Source: Carolyn Kaster/AP

A few hours before President Obama and military leaders briefings on the War against ISIS, there was another Pentagon meeting with a more positive message. This one featured Secretary of Defense, Ashton Carter and French Defense Minister, Jean-Yves Le Drian to specifically discuss military aid for the Kurds. *McClatchey* had a definitive report on that more substantive meeting recognizing the Kurds as "reliable and effective allies" in the war against ISIS, "[Kurdish](#)

[militia proving to be reliable partner against Islamic State in Syria.](#) The *McClatchey* report noted:

In comments Monday, Defense Secretary Ash Carter acknowledged that Kurdish fighters from the YPG militia are identifying bombing targets for U.S.-led airstrikes. He referred to the militia as “capable,” hailed its “effective action,” and said because of the Kurds’ actions, U.S. forces had been able to “support them tactically.”

It was the first public description by a senior Obama administration official detailing the cooperation that has been unfolding for months between the United States and the militia, which has drawn the ire of key