

Phares' Plan for Northern Syria Conflict Resolution

by Walid Phares



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In considering how best to solve the border conflict between the Government of Turkey and the Syria Democratic Forces (SDF) operating in Northern and Eastern Syria several facts must be taken into account.

First, the Government of Turkey and its executive leader President Recep Erdogan accuse the SDF of collaborating with the terror group PKK and aiding them to cross the Syria/Turkey border to strike targets inside the country, and thus Turkey has a legitimate concern about infiltrations.

Second, the Government of Turkey has announced plans for a military operation south of their border with Syria, to dismantle and disarm the SDF and form a "security zone" on Syrian territory.

Third, the SDF has been our ally in the war on ISIS and have proven their commitment to the fight against terror, and whereas the SDF has legitimate fear that Turkish forces and allied militias, mostly inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood, would invade Kurdish and minority areas to establish a security zone, thus destroying the SDF region in Eastern Syria.

Fourth, the national security interest of the US lies in insuring no terror attacks targeting Turkey's territory occur, as Turkey is a NATO ally, and likewise insuring that Turkish forces and militias won't invade Kurdish and minority

territories inside Syria.

I propose a plan for conflict resolution coined as the "Phares plan for disengagement between Turkish and SDF forces along the Turkish Syria border." This plan is based on the following components:

1. Both sides accept a US-led initiative and/or a UN led initiative calling for cessation of hostilities between the two parties and a start of Peace Talks.
2. The deployment of a Peace and Monitoring Force, either a multinational force or a UN force operating under Chapter 7 along the border where both parties are deployed.
3. Both the Turkish forces and SDF forces allow the international force to deploy on all observation and passage points between the two parties and to deploy units in the hills and adjacent areas on both sides of the border.
4. The SDF pull back heavy weapons from the border area but maintain police and light weapons.
5. All individuals or parties traveling from the SDF zones into Turkey should be searched by the international forces.
6. A special security status would be granted to Kobani – to be discussed later.
7. All PKK centers inside Syria should be removed by the SDF.
8. Afrin should be transferred to the international forces.
9. Manbej should be transferred to the responsibility of an Arab force.
10. The small Christian area inside Qamishli should be

transferred to a European force for protection from ISIS terrorists.

It is hoped that these 10 points will provide a platform to insure security, peace and stability in the northern Syria region, in preparation for Peace talks about the future of Syria as a whole.