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SE	Section
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CY	c. 1975 New York Times Company

LP

Moroccan radio repts that over 10,000 Moroccans open 2d front in Spanish **Sahara**, crossing border 120 miles east of Tarfaya (**Morocco**). New march appears to be attempt to circumvent 10-mi-long **barrier** of barbed wire and landmine warnings erected by Spanish forces on both sides of road leading directly from Tarfaya to Aiun (Spanish **Sahara** capital) (S).

RE	africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa | spsah : Western Sahara | wafrz : West Africa
IPD	ARMAMENT, DEFENSE AND MILITARY FORCES
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SE Foreign Desk; A

HD **MOROCCAN PEACE MOVE REFLECTS GAINS IN SAHARA**

BY By JAMES M. MARKHAM

WC 700 words

PD 7 July 1981

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SC NYTF

ED Late City Final Edition

LA English

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LP

RABAT, **Morocco**, July 1 -- With his troops buoyed by an apparently successful defensive strategy in the contested Western **Sahara**, King Hassan II of **Morocco** has made an attempt to bring the prolonged struggle there to a political conclusion.

At last month's gathering of the Organization of African Unity in Nairobi, the King offered to hold a "controlled referendum" in the Western **Sahara**, where Moroccan troops have been fighting the Algerian-backed Polisario guerrilla movement since 1975.

TD

By seemingly embracing the recommendation of an O.A.U. committee, which had called for a cease-fire and a referendum, Hassan prevented the Polisario's Saharan Arab Democratic Republic from being seated as a member nation. He also gained time for **Morocco** to consolidate its hold on the former Spanish colony.

But few well-placed Moroccan or Western diplomats here believe that the King has any intention of allowing a referendum that would challenge **Morocco**'s long-standing claim to the phosphate-rich desert. **Morocco** annexed the northern two-thirds of the territory when Spain pulled out in 1975, and took over the remaining third when Mauritania, battered by guerrilla attacks, renounced its claim four years later. Cease-Fire and Referendum

A seven-nation O.A.U. committee, made up of Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and the Sudan, is supposed to meet before the end of August with the two sides to organize a cease-fire and a referendum.

But already sharp disagreements have broken out between **Morocco** and the Saharan rebels over what procedures should be used to determine the wishes of the Saharan people. The very composition of the population is itself the subject of considerable dispute. King Hassan wants to use a 1974 Spanish census, which counted 73,487 inhabitants. The guerrillas have said that there are closer to a million.

Supported by Algeria, the rebels have demanded the withdrawal of the Moroccan administrators and troops before the vote. Hassan has firmly rejected this idea, and the Moroccan press has become lukewarm to the possible presence of a United Nations peacekeeping force in the **Sahara**, as proposed by the Organization of African Unity. Moroccan Position Improved

The King was evidently emboldened to accept the principle of a referendum by an improved Moroccan military position in the **Sahara**, where the mobile guerrillas had long retained the initiative on a vast battlefield.

A year ago, the Moroccans began building a 280-mile **wall** of sand, 6 feet high and sprinkled with mines and barbed wire, enclosing what is called the "useful **Sahara**." Initially ridiculed by some, this perimeter, known as a **berm**, was finished early this year and seems to have hampered the rebels' ability to flee across the desert after striking isolated Moroccan positions.

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Some 80,000 troops of the fast-growing, 140,000-member Moroccan military are committed to the defense of the **Sahara**, but until recently this force had been hampered by King Hassan's insistence on personally approving the use of air strikes against rebel columns. Now, according to various military informants, the King has allowed his local commanders greater leeway. Guerrillas Shift Southward

The completion of the **berm** in the northern **Sahara** appears to have obliged the rebels, who can field about 9,000 fighters, to shift their activities southward, operating out of Mauritania. But the main town in the south, Dakhla, sits on an easily defensible peninsula, leaving the guerrillas few easy targets.

Now **Morocco** is reportedly encouraged by signs that Libya, which finds itself isolated in the Arab world, may be cutting its financial support for the rebels. Just before the Nairobi gathering, Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi, the Libyan leader, sent an emissary to **Morocco** to discuss resuming diplomatic ties. This move is known to have disturbed the rebels, who have grown financially dependent on Libya.

The Moroccans are not placing much hope in Colonel Qaddafi, who has been known for making spectacular diplomatic gestures that lead to nothing. But they are savoring the rebels' discomfiture, and continue to believe Algeria will eventually cut its aid to the rebels in an effort to improve ties with Rabat.

NS gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

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The New York Times

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HD **400-MILE WALL CHANGING WAR IN WESTERN SAHARA**

BY By JAMES M. MARKHAM, Special to the New York Times

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LP

SMARA, Western **Sahara**, Nov. 9 -- From a Moroccan hilltop artillery position, a long line of bulldozer-turned earth can be seen forming a raised scar across the low mountains and desiccated plain of the Western **Sahara**.

Completed early this year, the earth-and-concrete **barrier**, 400 miles long and dotted with soldiers, guns and mines, has transformed the nature of the six-year-old war between **Morocco** and its guerrilla foes, who would like to turn the territory into an independent nation.

TD

"People think it is a kind of Maginot Line or Bar-Lev Line," said 46-year-old Col. Mekki Naji, the Smara commander, recalling French and Israeli attempts at defense with fortifications -France in the 1930's and Israel after the 1967 Middle East war. "But for us it is a line of obstacles and surveillance, not a thing to hide behind."

'The Useful **Sahara**'

A three-day visit to the Western **Sahara**, including a 160-mile jeep trek from the coastal city of Aiun to this garrison town, has shown that the Polisario guerrilla movement is being kept out of what is called "the useful **Sahara**," where most of the territory's 90,000 people live.

Military and civilian traffic now moves freely between Aiun, Smara and the southern Moroccan town of Tan Tan. The improved security situation has also apparently given a fillip to an ambitious Moroccan building and development program that aims at weakening Saharan sympathies for the Polisario's vision of an independent desert nation.

Both Aiun and Smara have become miniature boom towns, with Moroccan largesse providing free pilgrimages to Mecca for Saharans and virtually free housing. 'Will Be 100 Percent for Us'

Speaking of the referendum that both King Hassan II and the Organization of African Unity have accepted to determine the fate of the Western **Sahara**, a Moroccan official in Smara, a whitewashed town of 7,500 people, said:

"I can tell you, there is no doubt about the vote here. I can even say it will be 100 percent for us." The town has just acquired its first driving school and photography shop, and it is soon scheduled to have direct-dial telephone and television links to **Morocco**.

The looping **wall** in the territory's northern sector, which **Morocco** annexed from Spain in 1975, has apparently obliged the Polisario guerrillas to rethink their hit-and-run tactics, and to shift their operational center southward to sanctuaries in northern Mauritania. Moroccan officers say they are convinced that the Polisario movement, which has about 8,000 fighters, is moving toward conventional warfare that could embroil Mauritania, Algeria and Libya.

On Oct. 13, a three-pronged Polisario attack overwhelmed the isolated 2,400-man garrison at Guelta Zemmur, which lies outside the **wall** 25 miles from Mauritania, dealing the Moroccans their worst defeat of the war. The guerrillas took about 200 prisoners in the assault, killed 200 soldiers and shot

down five aircraft - a C-130 Hercules transport, two Mirage F-1 fighters, an F-5E fighter and a helicopter.

The bulk of the garrison fled to the hills. Later in the week Moroccan troops recaptured the base. Use of Soviet Tanks at Issue

King Hassan and the Moroccan command charged that the Polisario fighters, for the first time in the conflict, had used Soviet-made T-54 and T-55 tanks and radar-guided SAM-6 missiles at Guelta Zemmur. Moroccan officers insist that the SAM-6's were fired by outside advisers, possibly Libyan-trained Palestinians, but some Western military experts say they believe that an improved version of the SAM-9, a simpler, heat-seeking weapon, might have downed the Moroccan planes.

The Moroccan charges have been greeted with some skepticism among diplomats in Rabat, the Moroccan capital. But the actions of Moroccan officers indicate that they believe the statements.

Moroccan tanks have been moved to the Guelta Zemmur base, and wire-guided, anti-tank missiles are being distributed to troops stationed along the **wall**.

Since the completion of the **wall**, military attaches in Rabat have been predicting that the Polisario will have to deploy weapons other than its standard armory of Land-Rovers, Soviet multiple rocket launchers, mortars, light artillery and shoulder-fired SAM missiles.

The guerrillas are known to have T-54 tanks at their Algerian rear base in Tindouf. The emergence of Mauritania as a new "front" deeply troubles the Moroccans. Mauritania, a weak country whose leaders have tribal links to the guerrillas, originally joined **Morocco** in carving up the Western **Sahara**. But in 1979, after enduring Polisario attacks, it abandoned its own claims to the territory, which is rich in phosphates. **Morocco** then took the Mauritanian share.

Since an unsuccessful coup attempt in March that was apparently Moroccan-inspired, Mauritania's military junta has become extremely suspicious of King Hassan's intentions. There have been persistent reports that Libya, which has displaced Algeria as main arms supplier to the guerrillas, has flown weaponry to the guerrillas at airstrips at Chegga and Ain Ben Tili in Mauritania.

With a foothold in Mauritania, the Polisario guerrillas can resume attacks against the two Moroccan garrisons in the south that lie outside the **wall**, Guelta Zemmur and Bir Enzaran, though some Moroccan military men say privately that they think the posts should be abandoned once a new **wall**, linking Bou Craa and Bojador on the Atlantic Coast, is completed.

Another option for the guerrillas appears to be to attack weak points in the **wall**, inflicting limited casualties on Moroccan troops but aiming at downing more planes.

"The SAM-6 is carried on tracks," said Colonel Naji, the Smara commander, "so they can bring it up to the **wall**. They can attack the **wall**. The thing is for us to get the reinforcements there quickly enough."

Although **Morocco** has insisted that it intends to go forward with the O.A.U.-sponsored referendum, the chances that it will ever take place appear faint, particularly after Guelta Zemmur. The Polisario movement has demanded that Moroccan troops be withdrawn from the territory before the vote takes place, and that is an unacceptable condition to Rabat.

"It has been a long war," said Colonel Naji. "the men have the calm of soldiers in a long war. It is not one victory or one defeat that is going to change our morale."

Illustrations: map of **Morocco**

NS gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE alg : Algeria | maurtn : Mauritania | moroc : Morocco | spsah : Western Sahara | africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wafrz : West Africa

IPD ARMAMENT, DEFENSE AND MILITARY FORCES

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LP	

Construction of 400-mile earth-and-concrete **wall** in Western **Sahara** causes Polisario Front guerrillas to change their tactics. Improved security has caused development boom in Smara and Aiun which is weakening support for independence from **Morocco**. Guerrillas have shifted their operational center to northern Mauritania. Are moving toward conventional warfare which could involve Mauritania, Libya and Algeria. Map (M).

ART	Maps
RE	africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | libya : Libya | maurtn : Mauritania | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa | spsah : Western Sahara | wafrz : West Africa
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HD **MOROCCO, BACKED BY U.S., SPURS ECONOMIC BUILDUP IN WEST SAHARA**

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ED Late City Final Edition

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LP

AIUN, Western **Sahara** -- Garbed in a French designer suit, Mohammed Hossain Matala drives around this dusty desert town in a Mercedes limousine. The 33-year-old builder has become wealthy in Western **Sahara**'s construction boom.

A couple of hundred miles from here, Lieut. Chdidji Lahcen, also 33, commands one of the groups of Moroccan soldiers who man a heavily fortified, 280-mile-long mud **wall** built to protect Aiun, Smara and other communities from hit-and-run raids by Polisario Front guerrillas.

TD

Both are involved in developing the territory, rich in phosphates, which **Morocco** took over from Spain in 1976 and which the guerrillas, aided by Algeria and Libya, have been trying to capture.

"We are fully prepared to counter all threats now," said Col.- Maj. Abdelaziz Benani, the chief of staff of **Morocco**'s southern command in Agadir. "If there were no foreign interference in the region, there would be no war. If our neighboring countries wanted to stop this war, it would be easy for us to live in peace."

The Moroccan forces, which fought off two Polisario attacks and a series of smaller raids in January, appear to be confident that the **wall** will continue to be the key **barrier** between them and the guerrillas. The **barrier** is equipped with American-made sensors to detect intruders, and the Moroccans appear to be banking on the continued availability of American arms. U.S. Committed to Moroccans

The Reagan Administration, which has obtained military transit rights in **Morocco**, says it is committed to the defense of the kingdom.

Western diplomatic sources in Rabat, the Moroccan capital, say the United States has increased intelligence activities in **Morocco**, including aerial monitoring of developments in the Western **Sahara**.

The United States has also called publicly for a peaceful settlement of the Western **Sahara** dispute. The American relationship with **morocco**, a country the size of California with a population of 21 million, is said to have alarmed the Polisario Front. 15,000 Polisario Guerrillas

Western intelligence reports suggest that the 15,000-member guerrilla force is increasingly being strengthened by new supplies of Soviet-made surface-to-air missiles, T-55 tanks and armored personnel carriers.

King Hassan II, aided by funds from Saudi Arabia, is said to be pouring more than $1 billion a year into the economic development of what Moroccans call their "Saharan province," which has a population of about 75,000.

Since there are no taxes in Western **Sahara**, businessmen like Mohammed Hossain Matala take home everything they make. And since there are no customs levies, Rolex watches, Christian Dior shirts and Givenchy perfumes cost substantially less here than in Europe. Fresh meat and vegetables

are flown in daily from the north, where they cost four times what they do in the bazaars of Aiun.
Housing Is Virtually Free

Housing is virtually free here, and the Government is busily moving occupants of shantytowns into neat, domed homes built by Mr. Matala.

Physicians are being brought into Western **Sahara** at high salaries to augment medical services. New hospitals, hotels and schools are being established.

Morocco seems eager to present its efforts in Western **Sahara** as a demonstration of economic development and evidence of the benefits of its rule for the Saharan people. Moroccan officials say the Saharans favor union with the kingdom.

A recent visitor here was introduced by Gov. Salah Zemrag of Aiun to a dozen town elders who scoffed at the idea that Saharans would side with the guerrillas. 'They Are Nothing but Brigands'

"They are nothing but brigands," said Bashir Abeddin, president of the municipal council. "They have brought nothing but death and destruction to the **Sahara**. They are not Saharans."

Municipal and neighborhood councils have been established in Saharan communities, and there are four Saharan representatives in the 264-member Moroccan Parliament.

Local officials here, as well as former nomads who have moved into new free housing, deride the Polisario Front's assertion that it has set up a **Sahara** Arab Democratic Republic in Western **Sahara**.

But the Government of the 52-year-old King Hassan II takes the guerrilla statement far more seriously. That is because the Polisario Front, in a development that caught the Moroccans by surprise, was recognized in February by the Organization of African Unity as its 51st member. The O.A.U. Is Divided

The action, considered a diplomatic coup for Algeria and Libya, is being challenged by **Morocco** and at least 20 other O.A.U. members, who want the organization to rescind its recognition of the front.

From **Morocco**'s perspective, as described in interviews with Foreign Minister Mohammed Boucetta and Secretary of State Abdelhaq Tazi, the O.A.U.'s action has invalidated the King's offer of a cease-fire and an internationally supervised referendum in the disputed territory.

"We have no doubt that **Morocco** will win any referendum," Mr. Boucetta said, an assessment that is shared by Western ambassadors in Rabat. But it is unclear whether a referendum will take place.

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FT FINANCIAL TIMES

HD **Overseas News: King Hassan walks Moroccan tightrope without right-hand man**

BY By FRANCIS GHILES
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SC FTFT
PG Page 6
LA English
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LP

MOROCCO WAS already facing considerable difficulties at home and abroad before the death late last month of Gen Ahmed Dlimi, who was responsible for both internal security and external intelligence.

The circumstances of his death, in what was officially described as a car accident, fuelled political speculation not least because Gen Dlimi was the most trusted adviser to King Hassan. A French journalist who cast doubts on the official version of the General's death was immediately asked to leave the country.

TD

The recent cancellation of the visit to Britain of the Arab League delegation headed by King Hassan for 'internal Moroccan reasons' provides only one example of the problems the monarch will now face without his advisers.

Gen Dlimi had an impressive record of service to the King stretching back many years.

He helped to mastermind the Kolwezi operation which restored President Mobutu's rule in Katanga, Zaire, nearly five years ago. He acted as his master's emissary to Gulf leaders, many of whom rely on Moroccan bodyguards for their security. He carried King Hassan's messages to Baghdad, a capital to which **Morocco** has lent strong support since the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war 28 months ago.

A few days before his death, Gen Dlimi is believed to have met Algerian envoys in Madrid, in yet another attempt to find a solution to the conflict in the Western **Sahara**.

The seven-year-old Saharan conflict continues to bleed the Moroccan economy, while the stalemate, both on the battle-field and on the diplomatic front, remains total.

The Reagan Administration likes to hold up King Hassan as an exemplary ally but gives little help in hard cash.

France's Socialist Government continues to provide the bulk of weapons which **Morocco** needs, in spite of the fact that arrears on this account are growing. Despite Saudi aid, estimated at more than Dollars 1.5bn (Pounds 986m) annually, **Morocco** will pay about half its export income this year to service its foreign debt.

King Hassan's diplomatic hand was strengthened last year following the successful Arab Summit in Fez and the monarch's success in preventing the annual summit of the Organisation of African Unity - where the fate of the Western **Sahara** would have been discussed - from meeting in Tripoli.

In the meantime, **Morocco**'s economy has been severely damaged by declining phosphate exports, the country's major hard currency earner; the growing protectionism of the EEC, which remains the major market for Moroccan exports of fruit and textiles; and the aftermath of the severe drought in 1979-81.

It was as a colonel on the Western **Sahara** battlefields that Dlimi won his spurs and was promoted general. He devised the strategy which led to **Morocco** building a defensive **wall** to protect the north-west corner of the former Spanish territory, where the very rich phosphate mines of Bu Cra lie.

This reversed previous Moroccan military losses and led to the military stalemate between the Moroccan forces and the Polisario Liberation Movement, which is fighting for the independence of the territory.

Polisario is unable to cross the **barrier**, while the Moroccan army, increased threefold to 200,000 men since 1975 - two-thirds of which are stationed in the **Sahara** - does not dare venture beyond the protective **wall** into the territory.

General Dlimi came to international prominence in 1968 when he flew to France, and gave himself up to the French courts, to answer accusations of complicity in the kidnapping of Mehdi Ben Barka, the leader of the Moroccan opposition who disappeared in Paris in October 1968.

This act of bravado was carried out to cover General Dlimi's master, General Mohamed Oufkir, who was King Hassan's right-hand man.

King Hassan has proved a master, throughout the 22 years he has ruled **Morocco**, at walking tightropes. The loss of his most trusted adviser, can only make the problem the Moroccan monarch faces that much more intractable.

NS gdip : International Relations | gtacc : Transport Accidents | gcat : Political/General News | gdis : Disasters/Accidents | gmmdis : Accidents/Man-made Disasters | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News

RE alg : Algeria | moroc : Morocco | spsah : Western Sahara | africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wafrz : West Africa

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ED Late City Final Edition

LA English

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LP

AIUN, Western **Sahara** -- In 1975 Ahmed Douiri was 21 years old, living in the central Moroccan town of Sidi Kacem, with a chance to get a university education. But being "an adventurer," he said, he took part in November of that year in the Green March of about 350,000 Moroccans charged with walking into this barren territory to put pressure on Spain to give it up.

For making the march, which King Hassan II called off soon after it began, saying it had accomplished its purpose, Mr. Douiri was issued a green card. This qualified him a few months later, when **Morocco** had taken over most of Western **Sahara**, as a settler at the sand-swept town of Aiun.

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He has stayed, he said, because he feels he is part of something new in **Morocco**, far from the crowded cities with their vast gaps between the living standards of the few rich and the many poor.

In his seven years here Moroccan forces have turned back attempts by the Polisario Front, an insurgent Marxist-led group based in Algeria, to seize control of Western **Sahara**. In 1979, when Mauritania decided to give up its third of Western **Sahara** and sign a peace agreement with the guerrillas, **Morocco** annexed its share as well. No Major Battles for a Year

"The war is over," Mr. Douiri said, noting that there had been no major battle in the area for more than a year and that even skirmishes in the outlying desert areas are rare.

Mr. Douiri has made an acceptable life for himself as an accountant and purchasing agent and as a guide for the few tourists who stop here on their way to the Canary Islands and for journalists. The reporters, who come looking for a war, stay at the Hotel Parador, one of the few useful structures left intact by the Spanish when they left in 1975.

Mr. Douiri has a free room at the hotel. He is paid better than he would have been back home. There is not much to do at night, but there are many young Moroccan female students for company.

If he marries, he says, it will be to a Moroccan woman, not a native Saharan. This is because Saharan families still demand the equivalent of thousands of dollars in dowry plus two sheep and a camel for ritual sacrifice at the wedding. 'It Is Finished for the Polisario'

In some ways Mr. Douiri echoes what Government officials here and in Rabat, the capital, 700 miles to the north, say about King Hassan's claim to Western **Sahara**, and the efforts of the Polisario Front to take control.

"It is finished for the Polisario," Mr. Douiri said. He said the Polisario forces were now mostly foreign mercenaries, not Saharans. They are the poor une@mployed from the deserts of Niger, Mali, Mauritania and Algeria, he said, and they are given a cash bonus to join the front, and a gun.

Last year **Morocco** finished building a curving 400-mile-long **wall** of rock and stone that protects Western **Sahara**'s coastal areas from attack by the Polisario. The insurgents say they have taken much of the disputed land, but what they control is vast areas of uninhabited desert, outside the

Moroccan **wall**, which has American-made equipment to detect the approach of large mobile forces or aircraft.

According to Mr. Douiri and local Moroccan officials, thousands of Saharans now want to leave the Polisario camp across the border in Tindouf, an Algerian town, but are not allowed to go. But some manage to escape, one official said. Public Housing Is Going Up

Meanwhile, Aiun has the problem of fulfilling a royal decree calling for turning this town of 7,000 into a city of 50,000. New inexpensive but attractive public housing is going up and being given to settlers virtually rent free. There is a need for doctors, administrators and civil servants. Water has to be piped in and distributed daily by trucks.

Mr. Douiri, other civilians and the soldiers here feel that King Hassan, having won the war in the desert, must continue to use diplomacy to gain international recognition for Western **Sahara** as part of **Morocco**. He and other Moroccans are confident that the people of Western **Sahara** will vote to remain part of the kingdom when a referendum that King Hassan has offered is held.

Illustrations: map of Africa

NS gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE alg : Algeria | moroc : Morocco | spsah : Western Sahara | africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wafrz : West Africa

IPD BOUNDARIES AND TERRITORIAL ISSUES

PUB New York Times Digital (Full Text)

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The New York Times

SE Foreign Desk; 1

HD **WALL OF SAND DEADLOCKS THE WAR IN WEST SAHARA**

BY By ALAN COWELL, Special to the New York Times

WC 861 words

PD 11 June 1983

SN The New York Times

SC NYTF

ED Late City Final Edition

LA English

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LP

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia, June 10 -- A great **wall** of sand stretches across the deserts of Western **Sahara** these days, a rampart 400 miles long encrusted with mine fields and artillery positions. The **wall** contains and protects the territory's "useful triangle," where **Morocco** maintains its disputed dominance of its southern neighbor.

Beyond the **wall** lies the bulk of the former Spanish territory that is claimed by the Polisario guerrillas, who have not yet been able to breach the defensive line. So, for over a year since the **wall** was built, there has been a stalemate in the military campaign, and the battle has shifted from desert confrontation to diplomatic jousting far from the territory.

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Morocco, in partnership with Mauritania, took over Western **Sahara** in 1975 when Spain withdrew. The Moroccans and their ally inherited a land made up largely of desert but endowed with deposits of phosphate, nickel and uranium. The inheritance also included the Polisario insurgents, who on May 20, 1973, launched a guerrilla war with an attack on a Spanish garrison at a place called Khanga.

The war did not disappear with the transfer of title from Madrid, prompting Mauritanian officers to overthrow their Government and withdraw from the conflict in 1979. 100,000 Moroccan Troops

Morocco now has at least 100,000 troops, using American military equipment, in Western **Sahara**. But it has withdrawn behind its defensive **wall** rather than risk attacks on outlying garrisons. Morale among the soldiers is low, according to Western specialists.

Within the **wall**, Polisario officials here said, lies Western **Sahara**'s wealth - its phosphate mines, other mineral deposits and a coastal strip that boasts some of the world's richest fishing grounds.

Along the **wall**, Western military analysts said, is an array of electronic detection devices and military hardware, much of it of United States origin.

Also within its confines, from Boujdour to Bou Craa, Smara, Kreybichet and Zag, are 80 percent of Western **Sahara**'s nomadic people, driven by drought into towns where **Morocco** wants to keep and influence them. The size of the adult population of Western **Sahara** is not known and estimates range from 75,000 to 750,000.

Morocco abandoned its last outposts in October 1981, Western specialists said, and the **wall** was completed a year later. U.S. Planes vs. Soviet Missiles

On one side is the Moroccan Army, with its United States equipment, including tanks and aircraft. On the other side, operating from headquarters at Tindouf in neighboring Algeria, is Polisario, which concedes that its "liberated areas" do not include major inhabited settlements.

The guerrillas do not announce their numbers, but, at celebrations last month to mark the 10th anniversary of the start of their war, 8,000 desert fighters, many of them teen-agers, were reported to have taken part in a military ceremony with Brazilian armored cars bought and provided by Col.

Muammar el-Qaddafi of Libya. Incongruously, the desert guerrillas were said to include frogmen in full underwater gear.

Polisario's equipment is said by Western experts to include machine guns, mortars and artillery. The downing of several Moroccan aircraft, the specialists said, provides evidence that Libya has also supplied Polisario with ground-to-air, heat-seeking missiles of Soviet origin, possibly shoulder-fired. The American Stake in the War

Polisario takes great issue with the involvement of the United States on **Morocco**'s side, asserting that it is holding up the settlement of what the guerrillas see as a colonial dispute. The insurgents say the involvement is also endangering America's future influence in northwestern Africa.

Morocco, for its part, says it is prepared to hold a referendum to allow the people of Western **Sahara** to decide whether they want independence or not.

But, Polisario's argument runs, the terms under which **Morocco** wants to hold the referendum are unacceptable since they do not provide for a withdrawal of Moroccan troops before the voting and will not permit a fair poll.

The Polisario dispute had, until this week, paralyzed the Organization of African Unity for over a year, dividing it between supporters of **Morocco** and those who recognize the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic proclaimed by Polisario in 1976. Rebels Skip O.A.U. Parley

Polisario's representatives agreed, however, not to take part in the meeting this week of leaders of the O.A.U. nations, permitting the gathering to go ahead. But the session was still dominated today by the Polisario issue.

The intention of Algeria, a key nation in the conflict, is to use the meeting to forge an agreement on the terms of a settlement in Western **Sahara**.

Algeria recently embarked on what appears to be an improvement of relations with **Morocco**, and is anxious for an agreement, Arab diplomats said.

The O.A.U. leaders met today to discuss the Western **Sahara** issue, and participants said Algeria's intention was to get a deadline for a referendum, direct negotiations between Polisario and **Morocco** and a test of opinion under conditions acceptable to both sides.

Illustrations: map of **Morocco**

NS gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE alg : Algeria | maurtn : Mauritania | moroc : Morocco | spsah : Western Sahara | ethpa : Ethiopia | africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eafrz : East Africa | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wafrz : West Africa

IPD ARMAMENT, DEFENSE AND MILITARY FORCES

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FT FINANCIAL TIMES

HD **Overseas News: Moroccan troops in big Western Sahara offensive**

BY By FRANCIS GHILES

WC 297 words

PD 2 November 1983

SN Financial Times

SC FTFT

PG Page 4

LA English

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LP

THE offensive which 18,000 Moroccan troops launched in the Western **Sahara** last week is the first military operation on this scale to take place in this former Spanish colony since October, 1982.

It comes at a time when discussions about the future of the territory within the framework of the Organisation of African Unity have reached a stalemate: last July the OAU summit in Addis Abbaba adopted a resolution calling for a referendum of self-determination before the end of this year.

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Meeting refused

King Hassan accepted the resolution, but has been adamant in his refusal to meet representatives of the Polisario Front which have been fighting for the independence of the Western **Sahara** for the last 10 years.

Since the winter of 1975-76, when the Spanish left their former colony abruptly and Moroccan troops moved in, a state of intermittent warfare has reined.

In October 1982, the Moroccan garrison in Guelta Zemmour, in the central part of the Western **Sahara**, close to the Mauritanian border, was overrun by Polisario guerrillas.

Then and for the first time since 1975, the guerrillas used SAM 6 missiles with which they inflicted heavy damage on Moroccan military aircraft.

Defensive **wall**

Since then, the Moroccan army has concentrated its efforts on building a defensive **wall**, which includes electronic surveillance equipment, along the Djebel Ouarkziz mountains in southern **Morocco** and around the north-western corner of the Western **Sahara**.

This includes the rich phosphate mines of BuCraa and the capital of the territory, El Aiun.

Polisario guerrillas have attacked these defences, notably at Lemsiyey last July.

The Moroccan offensive comes before a debate later this month on Western **Sahara** in the Decolonisation Sub-Committee of the United Nations.

NS gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE alg : Algeria | moroc : Morocco | spsah : Western Sahara | africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wafrz : West Africa

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The New York Times

SE Foreign Desk; A

HD **MOROCCO'S WALL SEEMS TO TURN TIDE AGAINST REBELS**

BY By HENRY KAMM

WC 968 words

PD 1 February 1984

SN The New York Times

SC NYTF

ED Late City Final Edition

LA English

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LP

SMARA, Western **Sahara**, Jan. 26 -- The Moroccan Army is pushing ever farther into the desert the Great **Wall** of the **Sahara**, now more than 400 miles long. It protects part of the territory that **Morocco** annexed eight years ago by keeping out the Polisario Front guerrillas who are fighting to make the Western **Sahara** an independent nation.

Officers interviewed at this desert post, which Saharans consider a holy city of Islam, and at a front-line command post to the north said that in a previously unreported battle late in December **Morocco** annihilated a large Polisario armored column trying to turn back the advance of the **wall**.

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Morocco, recognizing that it faces a mobile and well-armed enemy and that it cannot, except at great cost, hold the whole of the vast and nearly empty desert that was Spanish **Sahara** until 1976, built a tall and massive revetment of sand and stone that stretches from the Atlantic east toward the border of Mauritania and then turns north roughly parallel to the Algerian border.

The no man's land between the **wall** and the borders is the main area of operation of the guerrilla movement, which is based in Algeria and backed by the Government there. The Polisario Front has declared the former colony an independent republic, a majority of African countries have recognized it and it has been admitted to the Organization of African Unity. How the **Wall** Is Manned

The **wall** stands higher than a man and is studded with defensive positions and observation posts from which three-quarters of the Moroccan Army of 140,000 men scan the desert, monitor American-supplied radar and sensors and patrol beyond the barbed wire and minefields at the **wall**'s approaches in search of guerrillas.

In the deep south of what was the last European colony on this continent, another **wall** rings the town of Ad Dakhla, the former Villa Cisneros. The rest of the territory - more than half its total area and about the size of Colorado - has been left to the gazelles, jackals and hyenas.

The nomad tribes that used to traverse it now live in fixed settlements behind the **wall** or are confined under Polisario rule around the Algerian desert post of Tindouf.

Late last year, after many months of vain and costly enemy attacks to breach the part of the **wall** that was completed in the summer of 1982, particularly around this fabled town that was a center of Islamic scholarship and a source of the spreading of Islam south into black Africa, the Moroccan forces began extending the **wall**. Officers interviewed during a visit to the battle zone said the objectives were to add to the protected territory and to draw the Polisario into a challenge that would expose a major force to a prepared counterattack from ground and air.

The attack came in the last week of the year. The officers said it came from Mauritanian territory about 50 miles south of here. Army Displays the Spoils

The officers said the battle raged for three days before turning into a rout. No independent verification was possible, but the Moroccan Army displayed its spoils of war today: Soviet-built tanks as well as charred and twisted desert vehicles, rockets and cannon.

Col. Abid Tria, who commands an 85- mile sector of the **wall** north of here, said no Polisario attack had occurred since the battle. The **wall**, he said, is heading north now, parallel to the Algerian border, and is nearing the important track linking Smara to Hawza to the east. The Polisario Front declared Hawza the capital of its territory. Colonel Tria said that when the **wall** reached the desert track, his forces would push it east, beyond Hawza.

The real war is over, contended Colonel Tria and his fellow officers. The "essential **Sahara**" - an area containing the capital of El Aiun, this holy town, the phosphate deposits of Bu Craa and the principal coastal settlements of Boujdour and Ad Dakhla - is in Moroccan hands. The officers say the rest is empty and will fall to **Morocco** when the Polisario rebels and their backers give up, and this view is widely echoed in **Morocco**. The Gains for **Morocco**

Diplomats and foreign military experts in **Morocco** agree that at great and undisclosed cost, **Morocco**, whose average citizen earns $800 a year, has turned the military tide. Its army is no longer sustaining heavy casualties by exposing units to surprise hit-and-run attacks while stretched thin across the entire Western **Sahara**. Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf countries continue to pay for many of **Morocco**'s military purchases. The Polisario fighting strength is believed to have dwindled to about 3,500 from a maximum of perhaps 8,000. Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi of Libya, the Polisario's main donor of arms and equipment, was reported to have reduced the flow after meeting King Hassan II last year.

But the Polisario Front is recognized by about 100 countries, and even **Morocco**'s strongest backers, including the United States, do not recognize its annexation of the territory.

King Hassan has staked his prestige on the emotive issue of what in **Morocco** is generally considered to be reuniting the national territory, in which many Moroccans also include Mauritania, parts of Algeria and the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. This appears to rule out compromise.

Diplomats in Rabat, the Moroccan capital, believe that the Moroccan Army will have to man the **wall**, without an end to the effort and expense in sight, and extend it to the former colony's limits to make real its claim to all of the Western **Sahara**.

photo of a Moroccan soldier in position; map of **Morocco**

NS gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE alg : Algeria | moroc : Morocco | spsah : Western Sahara | africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wafrz : West Africa

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THE GLOBE AND MAIL

SE News

HD **Moroccan soldiers take Polisario village**

CR Reuter News Agency
WC 393 words
PD 18 June 1984
SN The Globe and Mail
SC GLOB
PG N11
LA English
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LP

HAWZA, Western **Sahara** (Reuter) - Moroccan troops pushing eastward in their eight-year war against Polisario guerrillas are now in full control of Hawza, a deserted village once held by Polisario as its provisional capital.

For the first time, foreign correspondents were invited last week by Moroccan authorities to visit the latest stretch of the defence "**wall**" built within three weeks from mid-April in the former Spanish colony.

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A three-metre high sand rampart protected by landmines and electronic surveillance equipment stretches along 320 kilometres from Zag in the east to the previous **wall** skirting Smara, the territory's holy city. A French journalist said he had been there with the Polisario two years ago and recognized the site. Until recently, communiques by the Algerian-backed Polisario were datelined Hawza, Liberated Territories.

A former Spanish outpost on the main road from Layoune, on the Atlantic, to the Algerian oasis of Tindouf, Hawza is just a couple of blown-up houses near an old Spanish fort with sparse vegetation surviving in a dried river bed nearby.

Col.-Maj. Abdelaziz Bennani, commander of **Morocco**'s southern zone, said the Polisario fought five or six one-day battles in an attempt to stop construction of the **wall**.

Colonel Ahmed Wali, in charge of the central sector of the **wall**, said **Morocco** lost 38 men killed and 100 others wounded during the three weeks. Polisario losses were estimated at about 250 dead or wounded, he said.

The Polisario, fighting for the independence of the former Spanish colony now administered by **Morocco**, lined up between 1,500 and 2,000 men backed by strong firepower, including 122 mm artillery guns and howitzers, he said.

But few tanks were seen because of the heavy losses that Polisario armor suffered further south, near the Mauritanian border, a few months ago, he said.

Col.-Maj. Bennani said a radar-guided, ground-to-air SAM-6 missile site was destroyed by **Morocco** on May 6, about 30 kilometres southwest of Hawza. Two Moroccan fighter planes were shot down by SAM-6s when the Polisario first used them in October, 1981.

Hawza itself has no immense tactical or strategic value, he said. But occupying it was useful to end the "myth" of a capital of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic proclaimed by the Polisario.

AN Document glob000020011125dg6i02ytm

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The New York Times

SE Foreign Desk; A

HD **MOROCCO FORESEES VICTORY IN SAHARA**

BY By EDWARD SCHUMACHER <p>

WC 1,086 words

PD 17 September 1984

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SC NYTF

ED Late City Final Edition

LA English

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LP

OUED EL KHATT, Western **Sahara**, Sept. 11 -- Moroccan officials and military commanders, buoyed by a treaty with Libya that has ended Libyan financing of leftist Polisario guerrillas, assert that they have all but defeated the guerrillas in their 8-year war for Western **Sahara**.

At this small outpost nearly 100 miles south of the former Spanish colonial capital of Aiun, Lieut. Col. Abdelhak Sahli, Moroccan commander of the local sector, stood with his hands on his hips in the searing **Sahara** sun and said, "If I am here, then the war is not over."

TD

"But," he added, "we have Polisario where we want them."

The 3,000 to 5,000 Polisario Front guerrillas, still fighting for the independence of the former Spanish colony are likely to continue harassing operations from their bases in Algeria, according to the Moroccans, as well as Western and Arab diplomats and many Saharans.

But they say the treaty ratified two weeks ago with Libya makes formal the final stage of a phased reduction of Libyan aid to the guerrillas over the last year and appears to have accelerated their decline as a major force. Arms and Funds From Libya

Libya had provided much of the Polisario's financing and arms, including artillery, some tanks and Soviet-made SAM-6 antiaircraft missiles. Algeria is thought to have helped with logistics, but Moroccans and foreign diplomats say that hardly compensates for **Morocco**'s military superiority, the guerrillas' dwindling number and their loss of political support.

The Moroccans say 18 of their soldiers have been killed this year, a dramatic turnabout from three years ago, when **Morocco**'s annual casualties were in the hundreds, the war was sapping the national economy, and the position of King Hassan II, the ruler since 1961, appeared tenuous.

The guerrillas, already frustrated by **Morocco**'s simple military strategy of cordoning off more and more territory by building sand walls, have been unable to carry out a significant raid since an unsuccessful attempt in May to stop the completion of the latest and largest **wall**, the sources say.

The walls, bulldozed 6 to 12 feet high out of the baked sand, stretch more than 800 miles in an arc from near the Algerian border to the Atlantic. A **wall** also surrounds Dakhla, the only population center to the south. Ever-Larger Sections

The walls, slicing off ever-larger sections of the **Sahara** over the last three years, contain less than half the territory's 109,000 square miles but almost all its estimated 150,000 people.

The walls are lined with mines, fortified with gun emplacements and protected by radar and electronic sensors that detect attackers up to 40 miles away, exposing them to air attacks in the open and retaliation from **Morocco**'s force of almost 80,000 soldiers.

As a result, the guerrillas have been mostly confined to their base camp in Algeria, venturing occasionally in Land-Rovers within a few miles of the **wall** and lobbing a few shells before retreating hastily. Extravagant casualty claims by the Polisario have almost all proved false.

Among Moroccans, the incorporation of Western **Sahara** is such a powerful issue that it is known as "the national question" and was the driving force behind the King's brooking of criticism from his chief allies and arms suppliers, the United States and France, to sign the treaty with Libya. Green March of 1975

The King drove Spain from the **Sahara** by mobilizing more than 300,000 Moroccans in the peaceful Green March into the territory in 1975. Madrid split the territory between **Morocco** and Mauritania for temporary administration. Moroccan troops took over the Mauritanian half in 1979 after Mauritania began to pull out under Polisario pressure.

Morocco has agreed to hold a referendum sponsored by the Organization of African Unity, but it has threatened to quit the organization over a demand that it negotiate with the Polisario.

Morocco hopes the Libyan agreement will help move the issue to the Arab League, where it has wide support. The Libyan leader, Muammar el- Qaddafi, was a prime mover behind the O.A.U. pressure, and his switch also has occurred as many black Africans are tiring of the divisive Arab issue.

Even though **Morocco** still officially accepts a referendum, a leading minister reflected the Government's attitude when he said in an interview, "Nobody cares about a referendum now." Algeria's Role

One country that does care is Algeria, which has helped arm Polisario guerrillas at their headquarters in Tindouf, near the Saharan border. Partly behind the support, however, has been a competition between **Morocco** and Algeria for the dominance of the western Arab world.

"The Polisario are only a proxy in a war between two countries," said Col. Abdelaziz Bennani, commander of the Moroccan forces in the Western **Sahara**.

Adding to the risky situation is the fact that a section of the Moroccan **wall** runs almost 40 miles along the Mauritanian border, forcing Polisario guerrillas to pass through Mauritania, an Algerian ally, to get to much of the Western **Sahara**. King Hassan has declared that **Morocco** reserves the right to enter Mauritania in hot pursuit of the guerrillas.

Morocco, which plans to keep extending the **wall**, is receiving more than $77 million this year in military aid from the United States, which supplied the electronic sensors, and nearly three times that from France, which since 1980 has supplied 50 Mirage warplanes, American and French officials said. The American aid has decreased from $101 million in 1983, the Americans said. Saudi Arabia finances most of the arms purchases. Change for the Bedouins

The walls, meanwhile, have virtually ended a way of life for the Bedouins, who until a few years ago still crossed the desert in camel caravans. **Morocco** has poured economic development funds into the area, turning Aiun into a booming city of new schools, industry and housing to settle the Bedouins and win the hearts of the Saharans.

Thousands of Moroccans have also been enticed by higher, tax-free wages and travel benefits to settle in the Western **Sahara**. The settlement policy has complicated the issue of who the real Western Saharans are.

Young people interviewed in Aiun, attracted by the boom, said they wholeheartedly supported the Moroccan takeover, but some older people were more resentful.

"Who has the power, rules," said a gray-bearded shopkeeper dressed in a traditional long blue robe.

map of Africa; photo of Moroccan soldier

NS gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE alg : Algeria | maurtn : Mauritania | moroc : Morocco | spsah : Western Sahara | libya : Libya | africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wafrz : West Africa

IPD ARMAMENT, DEFENSE AND MILITARY FORCES

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HD **Fighting has broken out near Zaag in the disputed western Sahara, involving the independence movement, Polisario.**

WC 39 words

PD 19 October 1984

SN Middle East Economic Digest

SC MEED

PG 35

LA English

CY Not Available for Re-dissemination.

LP

Polisario states that it has taken control of part of the sand wall put up by Morocco to keep the guerrillas at bay.

NS gcat : Political/General News | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gdip : International Relations | ghome : Law Enforcement | grisk : Risk News | gvio : Military Action

RE africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa

AN Document meed000020011205dgaj00bgq

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HD **Morocco has sent 10,000 more soldiers to the Western Sahara to attempt to build a forward line of defence along the Algerian border.**

WC 68 words

PD 26 October 1984

SN Middle East Economic Digest

SC MEED

PG 26

LA English

CY Not Available for Re-dissemination.

LP

According to the Algerie Presse Service, a defensive sand **wall** is being built from Akka in southeast **Morocco** to Bir Lablou in the Western **Sahara** in order to protect phosphate mines in the north and to prevent Polisario raids from across the Algerian border.

NS gcat : Political/General News | gdip : International Relations | grisk : Risk News | gvio : Military Action

RE africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa

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FT FINANCIAL TIMES

HD **Overseas News: Stalemate in Sahara independence fight - MOROCCO STANDS FIRM**

BY By FRANCIS GHILES RECENTLY
WC 884 words
PD 14 November 1984
SN Financial Times
SC FTFT
PG Page 4
LA English
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LP

MOROCCO'S decision to leave the Organisation of African Unity in protest at its decision to give a seat to the Polisario Front's Saharan Arab Democratic Republic is unlikely to bring any closer a solution to the battle for possession of the Western Sahara.

SADR was set up in 1976 by the Polisario Liberation Front, whose guerrillas have been in conflict with the Moroccan Forces Armees Royales for the past nine years. The situation on the ground is now at a stalemate which favours Morocco, but SADR has had more success on the diplomatic front: it is now recognised by 56 countries, including a majority of African states.

TD

Whatever hopes were raised by the summit 18 months ago between King Hassan of Morocco and President Chadli, the Algerian leader whose support is vital to the Polisario Front, they have since been dashed by a volte face in North African alliances.

Tunisia has drawn away from Morocco and closer to Algeria, while last summer, to most observers' surprise, Colonel Muammer Gadaffi of Libya signed a treaty of friendship with Morocco.

But the deep-seated rivalry between Morocco and Algeria remains. Morocco broke off relations with Algeria eight years ago after President Boumediene recognised the newly founded SADR.

The Polisario guerrillas started their dogged fight for an independent Western Sahara in 1975. In 1979 Mauritania sued for peace and renounced the southern part of the territory. It was immediately annexed by Morocco.

The Moroccan armed forces suffered a series of defeats at the hands of the Polisario guerrillas, then dug themselves into the north-western corner of the territory, so-called the 'useful triangle' because it contains the rich phosphate mines of Bu Craa and the provincial capital of La'youn.

Polisario has failed to breach Moroccan defences since 1981, although it continues to throw men, tanks and armoured vehicles against the defensive wall: the latest major incident occurred south of Zag early in October.

That part of the Western Sahara which is occupied by the Moroccans has changed considerably in the past few years. In 1977 La'youn was a dusty town of 15-20,000 people and the nearby mines at Bu Craa were closed. Guerrilla attacks had stopped the 100 kilometre conveyor belt which transported phosphate rock from the mine to be treated and shipped.

La'youn has grown into a handsome provincial capital of 93,000, the direct result of Dirhams 5.7bn (Pounds 504m) invested in the Western Sahara since 1976. The Bu Craa mines resumed production 2 1/2 years ago and will produce, this year, 1m tonnes of phosphates.

Security in the town is minimal and Moroccan officials are sparing no effort to settle those West Saharans who stayed into a comfortable new life. The drought of recent years has, quite apart from the war, made nomadic existence increasingly difficult.

On the military front the Moroccan troops have been fighting what King Hassan has called 'a war of attrition which is draining Morocco of her blood.' But the days when Polisario raided targets inside the

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'useful triangle' have gone. The defensive **wall** started in 1980 and now includes Haouza, which until last year was occupied by Polisario forces.

Morocco has pushed the guerrillas inexorably westwards with a long defensive line of 80-90,000 troops, much of whose time is spent scanning the horizon with binoculars in the search for enemy movement.

The war may cost Dollars 2m (Pounds 1.57m) or more each day and has contributed towards **Morocco**'s heavy foreign debt, but the sophisticated weapons provided by France and the US allow Moroccan troops to deny Polisario access to the places that matter.

The war has also thrown up a breed of younger Moroccan officer such as Colonel Tria in Haouza and Lt Colonel Chtioui in Amgala who are of high calibre, sober defenders of Moroccan views and prepared to sit out the conflict even if it lasts, in their own words, 'for a hundred years.' Their morale is good and the ordinary soldiers better looked after than in the early years of the conflict.

There is little doubt but that the monarchy and the 'sacred Saharan cause' are the cement of **Morocco**: hence the King's margin of manoeuvre is narrow. He would more surely lose his throne by complacency on this issue than by any amount of bloody repression of bread riots.

The King has thus regained the military upper hand, but his efforts to convince the world of Moroccan rights have failed. His union with Libya has caused rumblings in the US, with whom Moroco has been aligned since independence, and thrown off course President Reagan's policy of seeking to isolate Colonel Gadaffi. Defending the Dollars 140m aid package the US gives to **Morocco** every year may not be so easy after Congress reconvenes in January.

The war in the Western **Sahara** has not made headlines since 1975, nor has it become a focus of East-West rivalry. Meanwhile, the Iran-Iraq conflict remains a useful reminder to both Algerian and Moroccan leaders of the likely result of a head-on clash - a risk Moroccan officers on the ground are adamant they do not wish to run.

NS gdip : International Relations | gdef : Armed Forces | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE alg : Algeria | moroc : Morocco | spsah : Western Sahara | usa : United States | africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | namz : North America | wafrz : West Africa

PUB The Financial Times Limited (AAIW/EIW)

AN Document FTFT000020070505dgbe034db

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The New York Times

SE Week in Review Desk; 4

HD **SAHARAN REBELS WIN A DIPLOMATIC VICTORY**

BY By EDWARD SCHUMACHER

WC 833 words

PD 18 November 1984

SN The New York Times

SC NYTF

ED Late City Final Edition

LA English

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LP

MADRID -- In the empty expanse and pounding heat of the Western **Sahara**, the Polisario Front, an army of leftist rebels, has been losing ground in its fight for independence from **Morocco**. But although unable to win on the battlefield, the front scored an important diplomatic victory last week, jolting the complex power calculations in North Africa. The Organization of African Unity, meeting in Ethiopia, recognized and seated the Polisario's proclaimed Saharan Arab Democratic Republic. **Morocco** promptly withdrew from membership in the 21- year-old regional organization, an unprecedented action. In support of **Morocco**, Zaire walked out temporarily.

TD

The dispute centered on a former Spanish colony in the Western **Sahara** that was set loose by Madrid in 1976. Administration of the Nevada-sized state was divided at first between **Morocco** and Mauritania, pending a final political settlement. Mauritania, under pressure from Polisario attacks, began pulling out in 1979, and **Morocco** took over. In 1981, **Morocco** agreed to hold an African- sponsored referendum among the region's estimated 150,000 inhabitants. The vote has not taken place, and although Moroccan officials said last week that the agreement still stands, a referendum appears even more distant now.

The dispute is partly traceable to longstanding rivalry between **Morocco** and Algeria for dominance in the Maghreb, the Arabic-speaking region of northern Africa stretching from Mauritania to Libya. The Polisario uses Algerian territory as a staging area and has been largely financed and armed by Algeria and Libya.

Morocco's pro-Western King Hassan II challenged that lineup in August when he signed a secretly negotiated cooperation treaty with Libya's Colonel Muammar el-Qaddafi, who was expected to end Libyan aid to the rebels.

After nine years of desert fighting and living in dismal Algerian camps, Polisario's forces, as estimated by Western intelligence, have shrunk from more than 9,000 to about 3,500 today. They reportedly include soldiers recruited from neighboring Saharan countries such as Mali and Mauritania. Facing them are an estimated 80,000 Moroccan troops, whose morale and will to pursue what they consider a national cause appear high. Using a simple strategy of building massive walls of sand across the desert, the Moroccans have steadily advanced, bringing nearly one-third of the territory and almost all the population inside their ramparts. Since 1981, the Polisario has been unable to successfully breach the advancing walls.In its latest attempt, on Oct. 13, a Polisario armored column of 1,000 soldiers attacked south of Zag, a Moroccan town near the Algerian border. They managed to get briefly inside the **wall** but were repulsed by Moroccan forces that poured into the easily pinpointed area. Casualties, which the Polisario can ill afford, were reportedly high. Recognition by the Organization of African Unity, if not a new lease on life, was at least a morale booster that will help to keep the Polisario fighting. The rebels are armed with Soviet- made SAM-6 antiaircraft missiles, tanks and artillery, and they keep getting new weapons. In the October attack, **Morocco** captured nine advanced Soviet troop carriers of a type previously unseen in the war.

The United States and France have supplied King Hassan with prodigious amounts of hardware, including jet fighters and radar to monitor the **wall**. But although much of the equipment has been financed by Saudi Arabia, fighting the rebels has severely strained the Moroccan economy.

A reinvigorated Polisario is not likely to draw the superpowers into the conflict, diplomats say, but tensions are rising in the Maghreb. Since last year, Tunisia and Mauritania have been allied in a treaty with Algeria, loosely pitting them against the new Moroccan-Libyan axis.

How formal recognition will be received by the people of the Western **Sahara** is still unclear. **Morocco** has cultivated their loyalty by investing more than $500 million to build schools, housing and other projects, thus stimulating an economic boom that has doubled the area's population since 1976. The Polisario has been unable to launch a major terrorist attack in recent years. The huge Bu Craa phosphate mine, which was forced to close by Polisario attacks early in the war, has returned to full operation.

Mohammed Abdelaziz, the Polisario leader, said the Africans voted in Addis Ababa to satisfy justice. But many black African diplomats said they also voted to be done with an Arab issue that had tied up the unity organization's last two annual conferences with walkouts and protests. Turning to more pragmatic concerns last week, the organization called for additional aid to combat widespread drought and starvation in Africa.

The door was left open for a reconciliation that could restore Moroccan participation in the Organization of African Unity. The regulations do not recognize withdrawal until after one year. When the King's senior adviser, Reda Guedira, bade his colleagues farewell last week, he said **Morocco** was departing only "until wiser days."

photo of photo of guerrilla

NS armhg : Arab Maghreb Union | gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations | ocat : International Pol-Econ Organizations

RE alg : Algeria | maurtn : Mauritania | moroc : Morocco | spsah : Western Sahara | africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wafrz : West Africa

IPD INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS

PUB New York Times Digital (Full Text)

AN Document NYTF000020050510dgbi00erd

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HD **Capital of Moroccan Saharan named.**

WC 169 words

PD 26 January 1985

SN BBC Monitoring Service: Middle East

SC BBCME

LA English

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LP

Radio France International reported that on 23rd January the Moroccan Interior Minister, Driss Basri, had announced that the town of Goulimime, 150 km south of Agadir, was to become the capital of the Moroccan **Sahara**. The radio commented that this decision was a "political act" since Goulimime was "inside the internationally recognised borders" and "by attaching the whole of the Western **Sahara** to this city of 130,000 inhabitants, the Moroccan authorities want to put an end to any separation between political **Morocco** and the annexed territories". The Minister had added that with Goulimime as the political capital the town of Zag would become important, in economic and social terms, in the south-east of the country.

Algiers radio reported on 24th January that in the first two weeks of the month "Saharan fighters" had put more than 1,000 Moroccan soldiers out of action and had breached "the so-called new **wall** of protection" along a front which was over 15 km long.

NS gcat : Political/General News | gpol : Domestic Politics

RE africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa

AN Document bbcme00020011205dh1q0019k

FT FINANCIAL TIMES

HD **Moroccan army to extend wall protecting them from Polisario guerrillas**

WC 92 words

PD 28 June 1985

SN Financial Times

SC FTFT

PG London Page 3

LA English

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LP

The Moroccan army is extending the 1,200-kilometre **wall** which has been built to protect the Western **Sahara** from incursions from the Polisario guerrillas. The new stretch of **wall** will force the guerrillas to cross more deeply into Mauritania to re-supply from their bases in Algeria, south of Tindouf.

Columbia has become the 62nd country to recognise the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic, which has been fighting **Morocco**'s claim to the former Spanish colony of the Western **Sahara** since 1975.

NS gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE alg : Algeria | moroc : Morocco | spsah : Western Sahara | africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wafrz : West Africa

PUB The Financial Times Limited (AAIW/EIW)

AN Document FTFT000020070505dh6s03l3l

The Washington Post

HD **Polisario Says It Killed 124 Moroccan Soldiers**

CR Associated Press
WC 129 words
PD 6 July 1985
SN The Washington Post
SC WP
PG A12
LA English
CY (Copyright 1985)

LP

ALGIERS, July 5-The Algerian-backed Polisario guerrilla movement claimed it killed 124 Moroccan soldiers Tuesday during an attack on the Moroccan defensive **wall** in the disputed Western **Sahara**.

A communique issued by Polisario's Algiers headquarters said the guerrillas attacked Moroccan units extending the **wall** near Oum Dreiga, 200 miles northeast of Dakhla, causing heavy casualties. It claimed the commander of a Moroccan construction battalion was among the 124 killed.

TD

Moroccan authorities, in accordance with their usual practice, refused to comment on the claim, and it was impossible to verify it independently. The report was the first indication that the battlement of sand and rock built by **Morocco** over the past five years was being extended that far south.

IPD @Slug: POLIS

AN Document wp00000020011125dh7600jd6

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The New York Times

SE Foreign Desk; A

HD **MOROCCO TRIES TO FOIL REBELS WITH 1,550-MILE WALL OF SAND**

BY By JUDITH MILLER, Special to the New York Times

WC 1,168 words

PD 15 August 1985

SN The New York Times

SC NYTF

ED Late City Final Edition

LA English

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LP

AGADIR, **Morocco**, Aug. 11 -- Within about 10 days, **Morocco** will finish building a huge **wall** of sand and electronic sensors that is revolutionizing antiguerrilla tactics, according to senior Moroccan military officers.

The **wall**, begun five years ago, is helping Rabat in its nine-year war against Polisario Front rebels. When complete, it will stretch more than 1,550 miles across the **Sahara** from the Algerian and Mauritanian borders to the Atlantic ocean, the Moroccan officers say.

TD

Western diplomats said they were studying the Moroccans' use of American and French-supplied radar and sensors as well as Moroccan military tactics. One official called the war the most conspicuous success of the use of high technology against a guerrilla army equipped with sophisticated Soviet weapons.

A Line in the Sand

By building, dismantling and rebuilding a 9-foot-high revetment of sand and stone, and by pushing it ever forward into the desert, the Moroccans have succeeded in cordoning off more and more of what was once-disputed Western **Sahara**. Now, nearly all of the Nevada-sized territory, with a population of 150,000, has been brought inside the **wall**.

From a helicopter at 1,500 feet, the **wall** looks like the pattern left on a beach after a stick has been dragged through the sand in a slightly wavy line. The command posts, one every 1.8 to 2.4 miles along the **wall**, resemble sandcastles without the towers.

On the ground, the view is one of unrelenting bleakness. At a central part of the Saharan **wall** near the Algerian border, the heat is intense, and mirages are burned away. Even behind the darkest sunglasses, eyes throb from the glare and the heat. Every now and then, a toothpick of a tree with splintered branches will inexplicably protrude from the barren landscape.

Missiles and Tanks for Rebels

The Polisario Front was no ordinary insurgency, in which guerrillas are armed with guns and grenades, diplomats said. The war against the Polisario Front, which has been fighting to make Western **Sahara** an independent nation, was a confrontation that pitted electronic tracking devices against insurgents armed with Russian-built SAM-6 antiaircraft missiles and T-55 tanks.

Brig. Gen. Abdelaziz Bennani, commander of the Southern Zone and one of the architects of the **wall**'s defensive strategy, said in an interview here that the **wall** had enabled the Moroccan Army to set up a hermetic defensive line behind which its forces could move without detection, and from which it could through radar and sensors detect and destroy the enemy. Above all, he said, the **wall** had enabled **Morocco** to do this cheaply.

"Therein lies the beauty of it all," General Bennani said. "Through a combination of limited means, we're trying to maintain ourselves at sufficient strength everywhere along the **wall**."

The Moroccans' military success has also proved the value of the Libyan-Moroccan union agreement, signed a year ago Tuesday, Moroccan officials said. Since the agreement, Libya has ceased arms shipments to the Polisario guerrillas, Western and Moroccan sources agreed.

For **Morocco**, the Polisario Front's military defeat may not signal political victory. Recognized by more than 100 countries and the Organization of African Unity, the Polisario Front continues to receive arms and aid from neighboring Algeria, **Morocco**'s rival for dominance in the Arabic-speaking region of northwest North Africa.

Morocco Appears Confident

There was no independent means of confirming **Morocco**'s assertion that except for occasional "harassment" by Polisario guerrillas, the war has virtually been won.

A reflection of Moroccan confidence, however, was the military's decision to permit three American reporters to visit two command points on the **wall** and several cities in Western **Sahara** this week.

According to General Bennani, the movement of the **wall** is what distinguishes it from its historical predecessors - the Great **Wall** of China, France's Maginot Line, and the Bar Lev Line, Israel's defense line at the Suez Canal before the 1973 war.

General Bennani said that at its widest point, the gap between the point where the **wall** originated and its current location was 600 miles.

But what has been a mobile defense line, or as General Bennani called it, a mobile bridge to the border, will soon become a final defensive position.

At Command Post 1, 3.6 miles from the Algerian border and 18 miles from the town of Mahbes, an American-supplied radar screen is mounted on a metal platform 36 feet above the ground. The antipersonnel radar system detects movement more than 12 miles away.

Western sources said electronic and seismic sensors were interspaced with antipersonnel radar to improve the detection of the guerrillas. Spikes, planted in the ground, are connected by wire or remote control to a light panel in a control unit. If someone steps on a spike, a light on the panel is illuminated, indicating the sector of activity.

"We can even detect a dog 30 miles away," a colonel at a southern command post said.

Last Battle in October '84

Command Post 1 is among the closest Moroccan positions to the battery of two to four Soviet SAM-6 missiles, which guard Polisario camps near the Algerian town of Tindouf.

Despite the proximity, Moroccans said, the last major battle occurred in October 1984, when a Polisario armored column of 1,000 soldiers attacked south of Zag, near the Algerian border. The rebels penetrated the **wall**, General Bennani said, but were quickly surrounded by Moroccan forces who poured into the area. He said 30 vehicles along with "some" prisoners were captured.

Morale appears high, despite the intense heat and the lengthy service of enlisted soldiers here - six months on duty with one month off. A chinning bar, a makeshift soccer field in the sand and a sauna relieve boredom. Weapons appear well maintained, and soldiers wear clean uniforms. Hobbies, like drawing, are encouraged. In one of the reinforced barracks, a sketch of a mermaid pouring wine hung above a soldier's bed. #3 to 6 Miles of **Wall** a Day Depending on terrain, the 40 bulldozers that work to maintain and expand the **wall** can build 3 to 6 miles of new **wall** a day, the colonel said.

General Bennani and others estimated that Polisario troop strength had dropped from 9,000 to some 3,500 to 4,000.

Despite the 80,000-man Moroccan force in the **Sahara** and the Polisario Front's apparently declining strength, Colonel Tria said Moroccan forces only occasionally engaged in "hot pursuit" of rebels across the Mauritanian border. He said Algerian-based rebels crossed the border with impugnity.

Officers said Moroccan troops had been ordered not to cross into Algeria, whose military forces are far superior to **Morocco**'s.

"We want to stop a war here," General Bennani said, "not start one."

photo of Moroccan soldiers (page A6); map of **Morocco** (page A6)

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IN i3302 : Computers/Electronics | i342 : Electrical Components/Equipment | i32 : Machinery/Industrial Goods | ielec : Electronics | iindele : Industrial Electronics

NS gdip : International Relations | ccat : Corporate/Industrial News | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE alg : Algeria | moroc : Morocco | spsah : Western Sahara | fra : France | africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eecz : European Union Countries | eurz : Europe | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wafrz : West Africa | weurz : Western Europe

IPD MILITARY STRATEGY AND TACTICS

PUB New York Times Digital (Full Text)

AN Document NYTF000020050505dh8f01etd

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The Washington Post

SE A23

HD Morocco Walls In a Desert Fortified Sand Dunes Extend Its Hold in Former Spanish Sahara

BY Christopher Dickey

CR Washington Post Foreign Service

WC 1,086 words

PD 15 August 1985

SN The Washington Post

SC WP

LA English

CY (Copyright 1985)

LP

SUPPORT POINT ONE ZAG, **Morocco**-For five years the great **wall** of **Morocco**'s King Hassan II has pushed outward across the former Spanish **Sahara** like a sidewinding snake.

At this outpost, less than six miles from the Algerian border, its sharp-edged ridges nine feet high stretch toward horizons where the sky is white with dust and the sand is the color of ash. The soldiers who live here in holes beneath the earthworks say the sun burns the rock until it is black.

TD

Some observers called the **wall** a monumental folly when its first stages were pushed up in this brutal terrain in 1980.

But this massive **barrier** of sand, manned by tens of thousands of troops with sophisticated antipersonnel radar and guided antitank missiles now spans more than 1,500 miles. It has become the central element in an unusual strategy that appears to be winning decisively against an unusual insurgency.

A year ago Polisario guerrillas claimed to control two-thirds of the former Spanish **Sahara**. Now they claim less than one-third.

Within 10 days, according to **Morocco**'s southern region commander, Brig. Gen. Abdelaziz Bennani, the **barrier** will be finished all the way from the ill-defined Algerian border to the Atlantic Ocean at a point near Dakhla.

If it succeeds in sealing out the insurgents there, **Morocco** can claim and demonstrate de facto control over all but the far south of the region, also known as Western **Sahara**.

At the same time, Hassan's decision to form a "union" with Libya last year appears to have ended Libya's extensive support for the insurgents. What they lose attacking the **wall** is increasingly difficult for them to replace.

In the last major engagement acknowledged by the Moroccans, the Polisario were reported to have been caught in cross fire 10 months ago as they breached the **barrier** a few miles from here. Bennani claimed 12 Polisario tanks were captured.

While the Moroccans are not yet claiming victory, they clearly are confident. To demonstrate its success this week, the Army took reporters from The Washington Post and two other U.S. papers on a guided tour of the **wall**.

There was virtually no opportunity to interview local residents away from government aides and thus no way of gauging popular support for the Polisario in the settled areas.

Yet there seemed little reason to doubt the impression shared by western diplomats in Rabat that the **wall** and the Libyan union have done serious damage to the Polisario guerrillas and their decade-old cause.

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The fight for the region began in 1975 when Spain pulled out of its colony and **Morocco** moved in to occupy it as about 300,000 Moroccan citizens trooped through the desert waving their country's flag.

But some of the residents and nomadic tribesmen soon began a fight to turn it and its potentially rich phosphate and mineral deposits into their own Sahrawi Republic. Algeria and Libya backed them in an unusual guerrilla war.

The Polisario-the Sahrawi army-do not move in stealth with small arms but in armored columns with Soviet T55 tanks and armored personnel carriers. They claim about 20,000 fighters, but few western sources believe they have many more than 5,000.

Since 1977, when Bennani first came to the region, "the nature of the rebellion has changed," he said at his headquarters in Agadir. "In the beginning it was a matter of insurgents on foot and in jeeps. Now it's a matter of tanks and" SA6 surface-to-air missiles.

In 1981 a Moroccan C130 transport plane was downed by an SA6 missile, according to diplomatic sources. Bennani confirmed this and said such missiles are still used to protect the main Polisario camps south of Tindouf in Algeria.

Bennani and other officers shunned any analogy between this **wall** and France's World War II Maginot Line or Israel's Bar-Lev Line, both of which eventually proved useless.

This **wall** is different, according to Bennani, because it is always being moved outward. He called it a "mobile bridge" pushing through the desert until it reaches the borders of Algeria in the east and Mauritania in the south.

While guerrillas elsewhere can blend into the local population, in much of this desert virtually no local population exists. The **wall** has been used to separate the Polisario military forces from what population there is, Bennani said.

Little radar units on towers along the line also remove the advantage of surprise from the Polisario. Some of these can pick up a man moving on foot 16 miles away in the desert, according to officers here. Others, they said, can zero in on an artillery piece the minute the shells begin to land.

Bennani said some of the radar units are manufactured by Thompson, a French electronics firm that has a factory in **Morocco**. But others may have been provided by the United States, according to diplomatic sources.

According to official reports, the United States will give **Morocco** $43 million in military assistance this year. Much of the aerial surveillance along the lines is done with American equipment, Bennani said.

Another advantage of the **wall** is that Moroccan attack units deploying behind it cannot be seen by the Polisario, thus giving the Moroccans the advantage of surprise.

Politically, the key to **Morocco**'s success thus far has been the surprise union with Libya signed at Hassan's initiative a year ago. Before that **Morocco** had suffered devastating diplomatic setbacks as more than 60 countries recognized the Sahrawi Republic.

The union between Hassan's relatively conservative monarchy and Muammar Qaddafi's radical regime has proved, for **Morocco** at least, a valuable marriage of convenience.

According to Bennani and several other top Moroccan officials, Libya now gives the Polisario nothing. "The **wall** has allowed us to economize on money and allowed us to relax a little bit," Bennani said.

According to officers along the line it is steadily forcing the Polisario to travel through Mauritania to mount attacks south of Dakhla.

Meanwhile, the military likes to point out that behind the **wall** its officers do not even bother to carry pistols, and at LaYoun, which was harassed by Polisario attacks before, **Morocco** has now opened a Club Med resort. Graphics/one: Moroccan troops check a mortar emplacement at a desert military outpost near Smara in Western **Sahara**.

IPD @Slug: MOROC

AN Document wp00000020011125dh8f00rjx

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Associated Press

HD **Saharan Defensive Wall of Sand and Stone Nears Completion**

WC 328 words

PD 16 August 1985

SN The Associated Press

SC ASP

LA English

CY (Copyright 1985. The Associated Press. All Rights Reserved.)

LP

(AP) _ A 1,550-mile **wall** of sand and stone across the Western **Sahara**, begun by the government five years ago to keep out guerrillas, will be completed in the ""next few days," the daily Le Matin du **Sahara** reported Friday.

Morocco has built the **wall** in stages, gradually extending it into the territory of the Polisario Liberation Front, a guerrilla group that is fighting for independence of the former Spanish **Sahara**. **Morocco** annexed the former Spanish protectorate in 1979 without United Nations recognition.

TD

The **wall** was built with giant bulldozers and other earthmoving machines that scooped up rock and sand to an average of 6 feet in height. The **barrier** is studded about every two miles by heavily fortified artillery positions and sophisticated American-made long-range detection devices.

The Polisario guerrillas operating from their bases in the Algerian and Mauritanian desert have proved incapable of either penetrating the **wall** in force or preventing its extension by the Moroccan forces.

The newspaper reported that the fifth and last section of **wall** will run east-to-west parallel to the southern border of Mauritania, ending near the town of Imlile on the Atlantic coast.

Completion of the structure ""should put an end to surprise attacks" by the Polisario, the newspaper said.

The Polisario, based in neighboring Algeria, began fighting for independence in the Spanish **Sahara** in 1975. Spain, which took control of the area in 1912 while most of **Morocco** became a French protectorate, relinquished it to joint Moroccan-Mauritanian control in 1976. Mauritania withdrew in 1979.

The guerrilla group has been recognized by about 100 countries, including a majority of members of the Organization of African Unity.

The Western **Sahara**, an arid stretch of desert south of **Morocco**, is believed to be rich in minerals. **Morocco** has lost an estimated 10,000 troops in the war, but in recent years has established clear military superiority to the Polisario.

IPD INTERNATIONAL

AN Document asp0000020011126dh8g004s9

Associated Press

HD **Guerrillas Claim Major Victory In Western Sahara**

WC 179 words

PD 20 August 1985

SN The Associated Press

SC ASP

LA English

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LP

(AP) _ The Polisario Front guerrilla movement claimed Tuesday it killed 270 Moroccan soldiers and captured six Moroccan officers and about 100 military vehicles in a widespread attack in the northeast part of the Western **Sahara**.

There was no immediate comment from **Morocco**, which has been fighting the Polisario for control of the mineral-rich territory for nine years.

TD

The Polisario communique claimed the attack was along a nine-mile stretch of the 1,500-mile sand and stone defensive **wall Morocco** has constructed to repel the rebels.

The guerrillas, who operate from bases in Algeria, claimed they captured 14 tanks and more than 80 other vehicles in the attack.

Polisario claims of battle victories are virtually impossible to verify and are routinely dismissed by the Moroccans.

Polisario officials on Tuesday were organizing a press tour into the Western **Sahara** that they said may be conducted Wednesday, and there was speculation that the captured equipment and officers could be put on display.

The guerrilla communique did not specify when the attack took place.

IPD INTERNATIONAL

AN Document asp0000020011126dh8k005ie

Associated Press

HD **Polisario Shows Reporters Its Side Of Sahara War**

BY JOELLE STOLZ

WC 787 words

PD 29 August 1985

SN The Associated Press

SC ASP

LA English

CY (Copyright 1985. The Associated Press. All Rights Reserved.)

LP

(AP) _ Polisario gunners fired rockets. Three miles away, puffs of smoke rose from the **wall** of rock and sand that **Morocco** has built through 1,500 miles of desert to keep the guerrillas at bay.

Moroccan artillery replied and the guerrilla rocket batteries fell silent.

TD

The long-distance attack on the defensive **wall** was the culmination of a tour on which the Polisario took reporters this week to show their side of the 10-year-old war for the Western **Sahara**, a former Spanish colony.

Two Land Rovers carried the journalists for three days, mostly by night, through the wilderness west and south of Tindouf, an Algerian oasis. The reporters had no compass and the distance readings were blocked out on both vehicles, preventing identification of localities or international borders.

Brahim Ghali, described as the Polisario's defense minister, held a news conference in a desert training camp in Algerian territory. He acknowledged for the first time that the **wall** has had a ""psychological effect" on the guerrillas, forcing them to limit operations largely to long-distance rocket and mortar fire.

He said the bombardments create a ""climate of insecurity" among the Moroccan troops, and said **Morocco**'s continuing extension of the **wall** ""multiplied the points of attack available to us."

The desert **barrier**, studded with heavy artillery and American-supplied electronic sensors, has virtually eliminated Polisario hit-and-run guerrilla attacks in the inhabited and mineral-rich areas of the former Spanish colony.

The Polisario's self-proclaimed **Sahara** Arab Democratic Republic has gained formal recognition from more than half the nations of Africa, but has failed to capture and hold any inhabited part of the 114,000-square-mile territory.

Ghali, who was a policeman in the Spanish colonial administration, told a questioner ""it cannot yet be ruled out" that the **wall** will ultimately force the Polisario to adopt terrorist tactics in Moroccan-controlled territory.

He repeated an earlier threat against the French Club Mediterranee resort being built on the Atlantic coast near the territorial capital, El Ayoun.

When Spain withdrew from its North African desert colony 1975, **Morocco** moved in, claiming the local nomadic tribes had been loyal to the Moroccan crown for centuries. Algeria, **Morocco**'s neighbor and rival, refused to recognize the annexation and sponsored the Polisario as a ""liberation movement."

The war has involved **Morocco**'s entire 120,000-man army, costing the government of King Hassan II more than $3 billion and an estimated 10,000 casualties.

Polisario forces, estimated by Western military analysts at fewer than 15,000 men, are supplied and financed almost exclusively by Algeria. A flow of arms and money from Libya halted last year following Libyan leader Moammar Khadafy's ""treaty of union" with Western-oriented **Morocco**.

The 75,000 inhabitants who were registered under Spanish rule now live either in the Moroccan-controlled area or in camps around Tindouf. Each side has called for a referendum, on its own terms, to decide the future of the territory, which has large phosphate deposits.

Guerrillas paraded 10 Moroccan non-commissioned officers before the reporters, saying they were captured in attacks on the **wall** between June 22 and Aug. 19.

The prisoners appeared well fed and were neatly dressed in battle fatigues, but all were barefoot. A 24-year-old sergeant, Boudjemaa Kidah, said he was captured when a Polisario shell disabled his vehicle.

Kidah spoke in French, with guerrillas listening and recording his remarks. He said Moroccan troops were demoralized by the harsh living conditions and nearly 115-degree heat in the desert. He said they received meat only once a month.

The journalists, the first taken to the Polisario side of the front since January, were escorted by guerrillas armed with Soviet-designed Kalashnikov assault rifles. They would not show their heavy weaponry.

The rocket batteries that fired at the **wall** were out of sight. Although the smoke from the hits could be seen, the **wall** was too distant for any damage estimate, even with the use of field glasses.

Polisario fighters produced piles of Moroccan military documents, with recent dates, said to have been captured in attacks on the **wall**. Some referred to low morale and suggested that the most frequent disciplinary offense was absence without leave.

Ghali said further extensions of the **wall** ""will keep the soldiers busy, and will exhaust them more than ever."

Construction on the **wall** continues, with the only acknowledged limits the Algerian and Mauritanian borders.

Morocco has not disclosed its plans for successive phases of construction or indicated what extensions are envisaged. It has said repeatedly that it intends to guarantee the security of the entire Western **Sahara**.

IPD INTERNATIONAL

AN Document asp0000020011125dh8t00iqx

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FT FINANCIAL TIMES

HD **King Hassan Wins Tactical Victory With Fortified Saharan Wall / Moroccan King builds wall to keep out Polisario Separatist rebels**

BY By A Special Correspondent

WC 879 words

PD 3 April 1986

SN Financial Times

SC FTFT

PG London Page 4

LA English

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LP

A twin rampart of sand and stone winds across the utterly desolate stony desert of the western **Sahara** as far as the eye can see, blending into its surroundings well before the horizon.

The **wall**, built in stages over the past five years, is a 1,300-mile-long cordon sanitaire built by King Hassan of **Morocco** to keep out the Polisario guerrillas who have been fighting for independence over the past 10 years.

TD

On the Atlantic coast, just south of the town of Dakhla, the commanding officer, Col Driss Menoua, was confident. 'When we built the **wall**, the Polisario had to change their tactics. They can no longer be guerrillas, they have to use tanks and armoured cars. We prefer that. For us, the military problem is now over. '

On the other side of the **wall**, the Polisario secretary general, Mr Mohammed Abd al-Aziz, frankly admitted that the heady days of the war in the late 1970s, when Polisario regularly ambushed and captured Moroccan soldiers and equipment, were over.

Although the 10-year-old war is in stalemate, Mr Abd al-Aziz insisted that the **wall** is not unbeatable. 'We carry out raids almost daily. Out tactics are to harass, to attack the **wall** and keep worrying the Moroccans,' he said.

The key Moroccan command post on the **wall** is at Mahbes. General Abd al-Aziz Bennani, in charge of more than 80,000 soldiers in the southern zone, considers Mahbes to be strategically crucial. The town sits on a 1,500 ft high plateau and commands the triangle formed by the meeting of the international borders of Algeria, Mauritania and **Morocco**.

The **wall** along this sector is probably the most heavily defended. Built into the eight-foot-high rampart are concrete bunkers with heavy-calibre machine-guns. Behind the first rampart anti-aircraft cannon and anti-tank missiles are mounted on armoured personnel carriers and behind the second are US- and French-built tanks and further back are rapid deployment units and air bases for French Mirage and US F5E jet fighters.

The area in front of the **wall** is mined and dotted with heat and vibration detectors which, together with ground radar, are connected to a communications post that gives early warning of any Polisario attack.

'We know exactly what they are doing all the time,' one officer said. 'They don't dare attack here. ' But Polisario can and does attack the weaker points - the small machine-gun emplacements strung out approximately every nine miles along the **wall**.

In the area of the Western **Sahara** beyond the **wall**, Polisario has free rein and a considerable military presence. More than 60 countries recognise the Sahawi Arab Democratic Republic, set up 10 years ago, including India and Yugoslavia, though not the Soviet Union. Polisario has also secured full membership of the Organisation of African Unity.

Mr Abd al-Aziz, also President of the Republic, speaking in an area south of the Algerian town of Tindouf, was at pains to stress Polisario's non-military achievements: the well-organised tented towns that sustain

over 100,000 Saharawi refugees; the well-run schools that still teach Spanish - the language of the former **Sahara** colonial power - as a second language; the successful literacy campaign; and the transformation of women's lives to give more support for the war effort. More than 1,000 women make up the logistics, administration and medical corps.

The cost to **Morocco** of maintaining its defensive position is substantial - estimated at between dollars 750,000 and dollars 1 m a day. '**Morocco** gets its aid from France, the US and Saudi Arabia,' Mr Abd al-Aziz said. 'It is they who are prolonging this war. Without them **Morocco** would collapse. '

The Polisario leader conceded that without massive Algerian backing he, and his people could not keep up the pressure on **Morocco**. 'Ours is now a war of attrition. But there can be no military solution. The only way to solve this problem is for the belligerents to sit at a table face to face,' a likelihood which he thought was remote.

King Hassan has staked much on his policy of steady assimilation of the Western **Sahara** into **Morocco**. Despite the cost of the war the King owes a good measure of the political unity now prevailing in his country to his popular Saharan policy.

The armed forces sections of which have twice tried to overthrow him, now have something tangible to get their teeth into and the phosphate mines at Bou Kra in the **Sahara**, whose output is second only to **Morocco**'s, are now under his control and safely behind the defensive **wall**.

The long Atlantic coastline of the **Sahara** is ripe for tourist exploitation, and a Club Mediterranee resort was completed last September at La'youn, the territory's capital.

Algeria's backing for Polisario is both ideological and strategic - Algeria's leaders perceive King Hassan's policies as expansionist in the long term. But it is obvious that, for the time being, both countries are being very careful not to allow the war to escalate away from the current stalemate.

NS gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE alg : Algeria | moroc : Morocco | spsah : Western Sahara | africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wafrz : West Africa

PUB The Financial Times Limited (AAIW/EIW)

AN Document FTFT000020070506di4301c69

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FT FINANCIAL TIMES

HD **The Financial Times comments on the defence policies of King Hassan of Morocco, which focus on controlling the activities of the Polisario guerrillas who have been attempting to achieve independence for the past 10 years.**

WC 249 words

PD 3 April 1986

SN Financial Times

SC FTFT

PG 4

LA English

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LP

The latest venture aimed at controlling the Polisarios is the construction of a fortified Saharan **wall**. This has been built in stages over the past five years, is 1,300 miles long and is heavily defended (particularly at the strategically important Mahbes area).

Polisario secretary general, Mohammed Abd al-Aziz insists that the **wall** is not unbeatable, declaring that "We carry out raids almost daily. Our tactics are to harass, to attack the **wall** and keep worrying the Moroccans."

TD

This aim is successful in the respect that in the Western **Sahara** beyond the **wall**, the Polisario is not controlled and has managed to achieve reform in the context of general social progress. Financial aid form Algeria is acknowledged as being essential to the ability of the Polisario to challenge **Morocco**, Algeria giving support for ideological and strategic reasons (fearing King Hassan's long term expansionist policies).

In turn, **Morocco** receives extensive military aid from the US, Saudi Arabia and France, Mr Abd al-Aziz putting this figure at between $750,000 and $1m per day, stating that "It is they who are prolonging this war. Without them **Morocco** would collapse".

The only way to break the stalemate is for both sides to embark on diplomatic negotiations, a prospect which appears attractive to neither party.

NS e51 : Trade/External Payments | e511 : Capital Movements/Invisible Trade | ecat : Economic News | gcat : Political/General News | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gdip : International Relations | ghome : Law Enforcement | grisk : Risk News | gvio : Military Action

RE africaz : Africa | alg : Algeria | asiaz : Asia | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | eurz : Europe | fra : France | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Regions | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa | namz : North America | saarab : Saudi Arabia | usa : United States | usaz : Arizona | usw : Western U.S. | wasiaz : Western Asia | weurz : Western Europe

PUB The Financial Times Limited (AAIW/EIW)

AN Document ftft000020011204di4301301

FT FINANCIAL TIMES

HD **Hassan Delays Summit After Deadlock: Moroccan King irked by stance of Libya and Syria**

BY By Richard Johns

WC 644 words

PD 3 May 1986

SN Financial Times

SC FTFT

PG London Page 2 omitted.

LA English

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LP

King Hassan of **Morocco**, deeply angered by what he saw as a failure to honour a firm commitment, cancelled all plans for an immediate Arab summit only hours after foreign ministers had met here on Wednesday night to prepare an agenda.

The monarch was understood to have been satisfied that Col Muammer Gadaffi of Libya, and his ally, Syria, were prepared to give the Iraq-Iran war as much weight in a summit agenda as the US air raid against targets in Tripoli and Benghazi on April 15.

TD

In the event, Libya was adamant that the attack should be the sole topic for discussion at the emergency summit which it had called for.

King Hassan was also angered by the proposal by Mr Kamal Hassan Mansour, Libya's chief delegate, that any summit should take place at Sebha, Col Gadaffi's home town. As prospective host to the summit and convener of any meeting until the next full one scheduled at an unspecified date for Riyadh, the descendant of the Prophet found the proposal insulting.

The decision to adjourn the meeting was conveyed to foreign ministers, of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq and Jordan after the first two-hour session, at which it became clear that there would be total deadlock on the agenda.

Those four member states have been foremost in insisting that any discussion of the US action against Libya should be held in the wider context of all 'aggressions against the Arab nation. ' Apart from Libya's grievance over which there was fundamental lack of sympathy, the conservative participants and Iraq also wanted the Palestinian issue and Lebanon to be included on the agenda.

News on Thursday that Mr Farouk al Sharaa, the Syrian Foreign Minister, would attend, came as a surprise because the previous day Damascus had informed the Arab League that it would not be represented. The change of mind by President Hafez al Assad was in response to a Libyan plea for solidarity.

Mr Mohammed Filali, the Moroccan Foreign Minister and another leading participant, firmly squashed an attempt on Thursday night by Mr al Sharaa to have inserted in the final communique, which gave notice of deferral of further discussion, a condemnation of the US - something the conservatives regarded as relevant to the breakdown of the agenda.

The majority, it seems, would have been prepared to go ahead with a summit on their own terms on the basis of the principle of majority decision, rather than the concept of complete consensus traditionally followed by Arab summits.

The general intention is to convene a summit by the end of June following another Foreign Ministers' meeting after the month-long Ramadan fast period beginning at the end of next week. By then, they hope the US campaign against Libya may no longer be seen as an emergency.

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan and Iraq are still determined to rally maximum Arab opposition to Iran's seemingly dogged determination to continue the Gulf conflict until President Saddam Hussein's regime falls. They are increasing pressure on Syria to cease supporting Iran.

Algeria and South Yemen would have been willing to give the Gulf conflict parity at a summit with the US retailiation against Libya but almost certainly would have not backed Iraq.

Libya's intransigent attitude here is bound to strain relations between King Hassan and Col Gadaffi even to the point of making the moribund treaty of August 1984 providing for a form of federal union a dead letter.

From the monarch's point of view its main purpose was to bring an end to Libyan support for Polisario rebels in the Western **Sahara**. With the defensive **wall** now operating effectively and Libya desperately short of cash that will be less of a preoccupation now.

NS gcc : Gulf Cooperation Council | gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations | ocat : International Pol-Econ Organizations

RE iraq : Iraq | libya : Libya | syria : Syria | usa : United States | africaz : Africa | asiaz : Asia | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Regions | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | namz : North America | wasiaz : Western Asia

PUB The Financial Times Limited (AAIW/EIW)

AN Document FTFT000020070506di53016so

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HD **The Moroccan army is preparing to build a new defensive wall in the disputed Western Sahara, to reduce access to the territory by Polisario, the Saharan people's independence movement.**

WC 129 words

PD 14 February 1987

SN Middle East Economic Digest

SC MEED

PG 20

LA English

CY Not Available for Re-dissemination.

LP

The existing fortifications cover about two-thirds of the territory, but Polisario is free to operate in a largely desert area in the southeast, including about 250 kilometres of coastline. Polisario reports large concentrations of Moroccan troops at Bir Anzarane, which suggests the army is preparing to extend the **wall** further, to cut off Polisario's access to the sea. Algeria's official press agency, Algerie Presse Service (APS), has denounced the moves. APS, quoting Polisario officials, says **Morocco** wants to show it can control the entire coast because it is negotiating a new fishing agreement with the EEC.

NS gcat : Political/General News | gdip : International Relations | grisk : Risk News | gvio : Military Action

RE africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa | spsah : Western Sahara | wafrz : West Africa

AN Document meed000020011204dj2e001cu

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The Washington Post

SE A SECTION

HD **Polisario Raid Shows Fragility Of Morocco's Hold on Territory;11-Year Stalemate on Former Spanish Sahara Continues**

BY Jonathan C. Randal

CR Washington Post Foreign Service

WC 947 words

PD 27 February 1987

SN The Washington Post

SC WP

ED FINAL

PG a34

LA English

CY (Copyright 1987)

LP

Polisario guerrillas today celebrated the 11th anniversary of their Algerian-backed Saharawi Republic by attacking Moroccan troops in what both sides agreed was the fiercest battle in the disputed Western **Sahara** for two years.

Despite conflicting and fragmentary accounts of the fighting that began yesterday near Mahbes in the eastern sector of the desolate former Spanish colony, analysts and foreign diplomats generally credited the guerrillas with a psychological victory in their struggle for the territory.

TD

Only 10 days ago reports said **Morocco** had begun construction of the final stretch of an already more than 1,000 mile-long defensive sand **wall** designed to keep all but light Polisario raiding parties at bay.

Even if the fighting was merely diversionary to distract attention from the **wall** construction, the guerrillas made the point that they could attack in force at will.

The battle also suggested to analysts that the 11-year military stalemate was continuing, with no end in sight, for 120,000 Moroccan troops condemned to man defenses made increasingly vulnerable by the **wall**'s growing length.

Spain pulled out of the Spanish **Sahara** in 1976 and the territory was partitioned between **Morocco** and Mauritania. Guerrilla pressure helped force Mauritania to withdraw three years later and the conflict in Western **Sahara** continues between Polisario and **Morocco**.

A Moroccan communique acknowledged that 110 Polisario armored and other vehicles had launched a "massive attack," but it said they had been "repulsed" trying to gain a "foothold" inside the **wall**.

Polisario claimed its forces stopped a Moroccan "counterattack in its tracks," forcing its foe to "withdraw in disorder" and leaving behind one Moroccan colonel killed, a second wounded and "hundreds" of Moroccan troops rendered hors de combat-or disabled.

But despite the fresh fighting-timed to coincide with this week's birthday of the Saharawi Arab Socialist Republic (also known as the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic) and next week's 26th anniversary of King Hassan II's accession to the Moroccan throne-Polisario recently has been on the defensive.

Morocco had succeeded in neutralizing Polisario's past spectacular military victories and ignoring growing international diplomatic support for a referendum on Western **Sahara**'s future as part of a directly negotiated settlement.

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With the new **wall** under construction to deny the guerrillas ready access to the last unprotected stretch along the Atlantic coast near the border with Mauritania, **Morocco** hopes to stop Polisario from mounting attacks with armed rubber dinghies against international fishing fleets.

At stake is renewal of **Morocco**'s lucrative fishing deal with the European Community, which Hassan prizes because it helps defray the mounting costs of his country's 11 1/2-year-old contested occupation of the former Spanish colony.

Officials of the Saharawi Republic modestly talk about "bee sting" guerrilla attacks and a long "war of attrition."

"We cannot stop the **wall**, but only slow its construction," said Mahmoud Abdel Fettah, a Politburo member and ambassador to Algeria, in a recent interview. "It is not the Great **Wall** of China and we can still get through it," he said.

He charged the new **wall** construction constituted a "slap in the face" by Hassan to the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

Both have tried in vain to persuade **Morocco** to accept a referendum in the disputed territory. Polisario has complicated its case by demanding that **Morocco** withdraw its troops and civil administration from the **Sahara** before the referendum could be held.

Fettah noted that 68 states recognize the Saharawi Republic, but that international support has not budged Hassan, who is backed by the United States, France, Spain and Saudi Arabia.

He acknowledged that the now-dissolved Libyan-Moroccan treaty of union, from 1984 to 1986, had "hurt us a lot" by ending "very important" Libyan financial and military aid and facilitating Moroccan expansion of the **wall** defenses.

He warned of future international "escalation," with France likely to be sucked into providing military aid to its former colony of Mauritania if, as he said he felt certain would be the case, **Morocco** pursued Polisario guerrillas across the Mauritanian border.

He recalled past French military involvement that proved powerless to prevent Mauritania's abandonment in 1979 of the contested Saharan territory's southern third, which it had annexed.

The new fighting also lent credence to denials here of renewed rumors of a possible deal between Algeria and **Morocco** to end the conflict over the territory.

Over the years diplomats have produced various face-saving compromise solutions, but Algeria appears loath to abandon the Saharawis.

Algerian officials still broadcast their attachment to the principles of self-determination for the Saharawis and respect for the frontiers inherited from European colonial rule.

But with the steep price decline for oil and natural gas, Algeria's only significant foreign exchange earners, support for the conflict is producing grumbling.

Some Algerians resent providing government aid to Polisaro while they have to tighten their belts.

Asked whether he thought Algeria would abandon the Saharawis, Fettah laughed and replied: "People have been predicting that ever since Algeria first began helping us in 1975."

Algerian officials noted that the Saharawis have never said victory was within their grasp.

One recalled that "their slogan is `Fatherland or Martyrdom.' "

Mindful that the Saharawis claim they number only 500,000-and that the disputed Spanish census of 1975 counted no more than 75,000 inhabitants-the official said, "Maybe they will fight until there are no more Saharawis."

CAPTION:**Morocco**'s **wall** in western **sahara** of northwestern africa

ART Map,,Larry Fogel

RE africaz : Africa | alg : Algeria | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa | spsah : Western Sahara | wafrz : West Africa

IPD NEWS FOREIGN

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AN Document wp00000020011118dj2r01q2x

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HD **Polisario operation against Moroccan forces.**

WC 74 words

PD 28 February 1987

SN BBC Monitoring Service: Middle East

SC BBCME

LA English

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LP

Hundreds of Moroccan soldiers were "put out of action" and dozens captured in an operation launched by Polisario fighters on 25th February against **Morocco**'s fifth defensive **wall** in the Farsia region of Western **Sahara** (40 km south of the Tinouchet river), Algiers radio reported on the 26th. The dead included two Moroccan colonels. The Moroccan agency said Moroccan forces had repelled "a massive attack by the 'Polisario' mercenaries".

NS gcat : Political/General News | gdip : International Relations | grisk : Risk News | gvio : Military Action

RE africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa | spsah : Western Sahara | wafrz : West Africa

AN Document bbcme00020011204dj2s001jq

HD **The Moroccan government announced on 17 April that its defence lines in the disputed Western Sahara have been extended to the coast, denying Polisario guerrillas access to the Atlantic.**

WC 138 words

PD 25 April 1987

SN Middle East Economic Digest

SC MEED

PG 22

LA English

CY Not Available for Re-dissemination.

LP

General Abdelaziz Bennani said in a communique that an additional 550 kilometres of defence line, called the sixth **wall**, have been completed. The new line runs south to Aglab Addlim, where it turns west and runs along the northern Mauritanian border as far as the coast at Guerguerat. One aim in building the new **wall** has been to prevent further attacks on fishing vessels in the area by guerrillas of Polisario, the Saharan people's independence movement (MEED 7:3:87). King Hassan has emphasised his respect for Mauritania's existing frontiers, after Nouakchott expressed concern that it would be dragged into the military conflict between **Morocco** and Polisario.

NS gcat : Political/General News | gdip : International Relations | grisk : Risk News | gvio : Military Action

RE africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | maurtn : Mauritania | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa | spsah : Western Sahara | wafrz : West Africa

AN Document meed000020011204dj4p003ae

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THE TIMES

HD **Morocco walls up desert to keep out Polisario (498)**

BY From SUSAN MACDONALD, GA GARATH, **MOROCCO**

WC 569 words

PD 29 April 1987

SN The Times

SC T

LA English

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LP

We could have been standing the end of the world, but in fact we were standing in the desert at the exact point on the sea where **Morocco** meets Mauritania. The first journalists to set foot in Ga Garath, we had come to see the latest defensive **wall** which the Moroccans completed just two weeks ago.

There is now a total of 1,550 miles of defensive line designed to keep Polisario guerrillas, fighting for an independent state in the Western **Sahara**, one of this vast area. The former Spanish Western **Sahara** was annexed by **Morocco** in 1975 after a triparite agreement between Morocca, Spain and Mauritania allowing them to do so.

TD

The **wall** itself at this point is singularly unimpressive, being hardly distinguishable through the sand-filled wind whipping our faces from the surrounding rocks and dunes.

But all along the six walls which run the length of **Morocco**'s border with Algeria and Mauritania, Moroccan Army units are in place, complete with radar, every three miles. They are backed up by hidden artillery and rapid deployment forces. The radar is sophisticated enough to pick up a man at a maximum range of 74 miles, according to Colonel Lamouar, who commands this Dakhla region.

'What is the distance between this **wall** and the Mauritanian border,' the colonel was asked. 'Nil,' he barked in reply. During his visit to **Morocco** last week, President Mitterrand expressed concern at the positioning of the latest **wall** but faith in Moroccan diplomacy.

The idea of the walls, which General Bennani, commander of the southern military zone, insisted were there for the protection, is to force the Polisario to attack from neighbouring Algeria, where they had their headquarters at Tindouf, and Mauritania and to deny them across to the Atlantic through Moroccan territory.

Antagonism between **Morocco** and Algeria goes back to the time of Moroccan independence in 1956, and **Morocco** considers the Polisario a pawn in the Algerian game to harass them.

The walls also act as a morale-booster for the Moroccan Army, who were sitting ducks for Polisario attacks before they were started in 1981.

After the serious clashes on the **wall** at the end of February, for which the general refused to give Moroccan casualty figures, he said that a range of Sam missiles had been captured as well as brand-new Soviet BMP tanks. I was also told by another colonel that **Morocco** had captured an Iranian along with Polisario prisoners and that Iranians were training the Polisario in Tindouf.

The same colonel, however, became very angry when it was suggested that Israeli advisers had been present in the desert. 'What do we need them for?' he asked.

The Army is presently living in tents, although permanent accommodation is being built. There are no rivers, no vegetation and no civilian population in this area; only sand, wind heat and more sand.

'When we have something to do, it's fine,' said the colonel. 'If not, boredom is the chief difficulty. '

A lieutenant with military security said he had served four years here - 'a sacrifice', he termed it. It was a far cry from his previous posting as an attache in the Moroccan Embassy in the Senegalese capital

of Dakar. Every three months there is an entitlement of 20 days' leave. (c) Times Newspapers Ltd, 1987

NS gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE alg : Algeria | maurtn : Mauritania | moroc : Morocco | spsah : Western Sahara | africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wafrz : West Africa

PUB News International Associated Services Limited

AN Document T000000020051001dj4t00csj

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FT FINANCIAL TIMES

HD **Mauritanian Neutrality Put At Risk By Saharan Wall**

BY By PETER BLACKBURN

WC 829 words

PD 30 April 1987

SN Financial Times

SC FTFT

PG London Page 3 Map omitted.

LA English

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LP

Mauritania's neutrality in the long running war in the Western Sahara has been threatened by the construction by Morocco of a sixth defensive wall close to its strategically important iron ore railway line.

The 550 km (340 mile) wall - a ridge of rock and sand reinforced by mines and electronic scanners - is intended to bar the Algerian-backed Polisario direct access to the Atlantic Ocean.

TD

The Polisario have for the past 12 years been fighting for the independence of the former Spanish Sahara which is now occupied by Morocco.

The Polisario have made a number of seaborne attacks on foreign fishing vessels and light aircraft in an apparent change of tactics after the defensive walls made land based raids much more difficult.

The sixth wall protects Morocco's southern flank and completes a defensive wall system of more than 1,200 miles. It means that the Polisario will now be obliged to pass through Mauritanian territory in order to reach the ocean.

Mauritanian President Maaouya Sid Ahmed Ould Taya has described the situation on the northern frontier - especially the 140-mile stretch from the small border town of Inal to the ocean - as 'serious. '

A recent skirmish between Polisario and Moroccan troops near Inal, where the wall is only 400 yards distant, increased Mauritanian fears.

A ministerial communique said that 'the massive and permanent presence of foreign troops so close to our vital centres is unacceptable. '

The communique added that measures have been taken to guarantee the security of the northern port of Nouadhibou, the country's economic capital.

No details were given but analysts say that the former Spanish garrison of La Guera, four miles across the desert peninsula from Nouadhibou, has probably been reinforced with Mauritanian troops. Border surveillance has been increased and more troops stationed along the railway line, especially from Inal to the ocean where the wall runs parallel at a distance of little over a mile away.

The railway carries some 9 m tonnes of iron ore from the mines at Zouerate to the port of Nouadhibou and is vital to the Mauritanian economy.

At Nouadhibou there was little sign of extra security and the fishing and iron ore industries, which account for virtually all the country's exports, were operating normally.

Although the iron ore trains continue to run as usual, this correspondent was refused permission to make the 400-mile journey to Zouerate. 'There is tension in the area and we cannot afford to take any risks, especially with foreigners,' Mr Dah Ould Cheikh, the governor of Nouadhibou region, explained.

The Mauritanian military regime of President Taya is nervous about being dragged back into the conflict, analysts say.

The former civilian regime of President Moktar Ould Daddah was otherthrown in 1978 by the military after a disastrous four-year war alongside **Morocco** against the Polisario. A peace treaty was signed in 1979 adn Mauritania gave up the southern third of the former Spanish **Sahara** except for the strategically important garrison of La Guera.

Since Col Taya took over just over two years ago he has sought strict neutrality in contrast to his predecessor Col Haidalla who was seen as too sympathetic towards the Polisario.

Many northern Mauritanians have close ethnic and cultural ties with the Polisario and support its struggle for self-determination, analysts say. They are also suspicious of their powerful northern neighbour's colonial ambitions - in 1969 **Morocco** claimed all of Mauritania down to the Senegal river.

President Taya restored diplomatic relations with **Morocco** in 1985 while continuing to recognise the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic. Internally he has given priority to restoring the country's drought- and war-ravaged economy.

Although improved rains helped to increase the cereals harvest to 95,000 tonnes in 1986, compared with 20,000 tonnes in 1984, Mauritania still imports nearly two-thirds of its food. Food self-sufficiency is a receding target, according to some aid donors. Desert already covers 75 per cent of the country and is advancing by four miles a year.

Major reforms in food policy, including the promotion of 'Food for Work' programmes and reduced distribution of free food, are part of the conditions attached to the first World Bank structural adjustment loan of some dollars 40 m due to be approved early June. Banking, energy, fisheries, iron ore mining and institutional reforms are also included in the programme.

The Taya regime has made a big effort over the past two years to promote economic recovery. 'The last thing it wants is to be dragged back into the Saharan war,' one aid donor in Nouakchott said.

However, Mauritania may find itself powerless to prevent the Polisario using its territory to launch further sea and land raids and this could provoke reprisals from **Morocco**. If this happens Mauritania may feel the need to invoke its military co-operation agreement with France in order to help preserve its territorial integrity.

RE maurtn : Mauritania | moroc : Morocco | africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wafrz : West Africa

PUB The Financial Times Limited (AAIW/EIW)

AN Document FTFT000020070506dj4u02fpb

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HD **Completion of the latest desert wall system has strengthened Rabat's hand in delicate negotiations with the EEC about a fishing agreement.**

WC 338 words

PD 16 May 1987

SN Middle East Economic Digest

SC MEED

PG 24

LA English

CY Not Available for Re-dissemination.

LP

It has also moved the Western **Sahara** conflict further from the disputed territory's most economically useful areas which are now being developed by **Morocco** (MEED 9:5:87, page 5).

Observers say the speed with which **Morocco** has enclosed a further 70,000 square kilometres reflects Rabat's concern to exert its control over the coast before its four-year fishing agreement with the EEC runs out on 7 August.

TD

FULL_TEXT Negotiations about a new agreement have started, but no details are available. **Morocco is believed to want better terms for its fruit exports, in return for fishing concessions - which will affect Spain in particular. According to a senior official in Madrid, about 800 Spanish fishing boats are working in Moroccan waters - including the disputed **Sahara** - mainly from Andalusian ports.

Recent reports indicate continued fighting in the northwest. On 9 May, Polisario, the Saharan people's independence movement, reported a violent attack at Dhoueheb in the Farsia area - its first such claim since the 4 May meeting of King Hasan and Algeria's President Chadli.

Elsewhere in the **Sahara**, **Morocco** is consolidating its hold. The 1987 investment budget allocates MD 180 million ($21.7 million) to Saharan development, but spending is considerably higher. In the capital, Layyoun, tourist development is being promoted around two luxury hotels, the Al-Massira and Parador, managed by France's Club Mediterranee.

Construction is under way at Layyoun phosphate port, for which France's Bureau Central d'Etudes pour les Equipments d'Outre-Mer (BCEOM) completed studies in 1985. A 2,150-metre breakwater and 755-metre jetty are being built there by Matrap, a French company based in **Morocco**.

The port is intended to handle 10 million tonnes of phosphate a year by 1991. However, some delays are expected, as the client, Direction des Ports, has met problems finding contractors - and financing - for work in the disputed territory.

CO bceomx : | clubmdx :

NS c01 : Profiles of Companies | c11 : Plans/Strategy | c12 : Corporate Crime/Legal/Judicial | c13 : Regulation/Government Policy | c31 : Marketing | c33 : Contracts/Orders | ccat : Corporate/Industrial News | e51 : Trade/External Payments | e512 : Physical Trade | ecat : Economic News | eec : European Union | gcat : Political/General News | gdip : International Relations | grisk : Risk News | gvio : Military Action | ocat : International Pol-Econ Organizations

RE africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | eurz : Europe | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa | spsah : Western Sahara | wafrz : West Africa | weurz : Western Europe

AN Document meed000020011204dj5g004td

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THE TIMES

HD **Polisario and the desert war - Part 1: Lightning raids on wall sap Morocca n morale (946)**

BY By SUSAN MACDONALD
WC 964 words
PD 22 June 1987
SN The Times
SC T
LA English
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LP

For 12 years a war for control of the Western **Sahara** has been waged between **Morocco** and guerrillas of the Polisario Front. Susan MacDonald has been in the desert with Polisario and reports on a grim conflict about which Europe knows little

There is a war going on in Western **Sahara**. It is not a question of skirmishes or even of occasional battles, but of daily bombings and attacks using the most sophisticated weaponry that can be bought from the main arms-producing countries.

TD

The war is between **Morocco** and the Saharwi people, who have formed the Polisario movement. For the past five years it has been fought and on and around a defensive **wall** built by the Moroccan Army to keep the Polisario Front out of Western **Sahara** and to protect its own troops from attack.

But the Saharwi people's fight for independence for their territory goes back to the early 1970s, when resistance fighters attacked Spanish forces in what was then Spanish West Afria. In 1975, without consulting the Saharwi, Spain handed over its colony to **Morocco** and Mauritania, and both countries claimed territorial rights. The Sahawi could either flee invading Moroccan and Maurtanian forces, coming from both north and south, or stay on their land under Moroccan occupation. (Mauritania pulled out of the conflict in 1979.)

There is a considerable difference between approaching the fortified **wall** from the Moroccan side and from the Polisario side. The Moroccans airlift you up to the **wall** in a display of military might; from the Polisario side you crawl on your belly through the desert sand, accompanied by three or four Polisario fighters, to within 800 yards of the **wall**. The full weight of the 200,000-strong Moroccan Army has been thrown into the Western **Sahara** conflict. It makes full use of heavy weaponry, including tanks, missiles, radar and its Air Force.

Polisario operates small mobile forces which also make use of advanced weapons but whose strength lies in being able to move quickly through a desert terrain they know well and mount morale-sapping attacks against Moroccan troops entrenched on the 1,500-mile **wall**. The Moroccan Army commander puts their number at between 1,800 and 5,000. Mr Muhammad Abdelaziz, the President of the Saharwi Arab Democratic Republic (a state in exile) talked figures for the first time when he said there were about 25,000 Polisario fighters - a not unreasonable figure given that every adult male in the 165,000 civilian population living in refugee camps in Algeria is a Polisario member.

The need for the **wall** points to the previous Polisario military successes. Polisario studied the **wall**'s secrets for four years before beginning to launch attacks. Now they have units stationed all along its length and they keep the Moroccans on a permanent state of alert with continuous bombings and invasions.

The **wall** itself is a low rubble structure designed to keep out Polisario tanks. Ahead of it is a mined area and in front of that barbed wire fencing. Polisario says its troops have learnt during night attacks to cut the barbed wire, pick up the mines and place them behind the Moroccan lines. The display of captured heavy arms and vehicles and Moroccan prisoners attests to the Polisario's ability to penetrate several miles behind the **wall**.

It is fairly clear that the **wall** no longer acts as a defence for Moroccan troops. Muhammad Lel-Ouali, the Polisario commander for the Farsia military region, said: 'We bomb, they reinforce in expectation of a

wall invasion, nothing happens, they disperse, we bomb again, they regroup again, still nothing - they become demoralized and then we attack. We have the initiative. We are not obliged to participate in any attack if we don't want to. '

In a makeshift camp of blankets spread under hardy desert accadia trees, about 2 of the more senior troops sat.

At the end of the meeting the camp packed into a couple of Land Rovers and we moved on. Mobility is all in Polisario desert warfare tactics. But, the night before, the ability of Moroccan radar to detect objects on the other side had been proved when Moroccan shells began falling around a Polisario Jeep from which I was watching a Polisario bombardment of the **wall**.

The question of prisoners sums up the whole sad situation. President Abdelziz said Polisario was holding about 2,000 Moroccans. **Morocco** does not recognize the Polisario Front and refuses to conduct direct negotiations on prisoners. President Abelaziz said **Morocco** was holding between 100 and 170 Polisario fighters, but when he talked about prisoners he was refering to the hundreds of Saharwi still living in Moroccan-occupied territory who have been imprisoned or have disappeared since the Moroccan invasion.

The Union of French Lawyers is among organizations which have published reports on **Morocco**'s presence in Western **Sahara**. Its president, Maitre Gerard Boulanger, who has just completed a trip to the Polisaro camps, says he will be taking up the human rights question of prisoners on both sides.

President Abdelaziz appeears disillusioned that so little is known in Europe about the Western **Sahara** problem. He says his people are fighting for their land and for recognition. Both the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity have called for an independent referendum to allow the Saharwi people to determine their own future.

Included in this call are direct negotiations between **Morocco** and the Polisario to set up such a vote. It is these negotiations to which **Morocco** will not agree, while the Polisario will not agree to a referendum under present occupation conditions. (c) Times Newspapers Ltd, 1987

NS gdip : International Relations | ghum : Human Rights/Civil Liberties | gcat : Political/General News | gcom : Society/Community/Work | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE moroc : Morocco | spsah : Western Sahara | africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wafrz : West Africa

PUB News International Associated Services Limited

AN Document T000000020051001dj6m00506

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THE TIMES

HD **Exiles make wasteland bloom: Polisario and the desert war (Part 2): (1008)**

BY By SUSAN MACDONALD
WC 1,016 words
PD 23 June 1987
SN The Times
SC T
LA English
CY © 1987 Times Newspapers Ltd. All rights reserved

LP

Hassi Abdallah is the name of a Spanish-style fort built in the middle of the desert in southern Algeria, not far from the Algerian military base of Tindouf. It acts as a first stop-off for foreign visitors who have come to see the Saharwi refugee camps, which are spread over a wide area in this desert region considered uninhibitable by the Algerians before they allowed Saharwi refugees to settle here.

The Saharwis have proved them wrong. Against what some might consider to be impossible odds they have managed to carve out a life for themselves, creating hospitals and schoolss and even agricultural projects in an area where there is no natural vegetation and little underground water.

TD

The majority of the 165,000 people who are said to live in the four sprawling camps are those who fled the Western **Sahara** in 1975 after Spain, the colonial power, had handed it directly over to Moroccoo and Mauritania which claimed territorial interests there. Since then a few of the several thousand Saharwis living under Moroccan occupation have chosen to swell the camps' population.

The Polisario Front movement, fighting for an independent state in the Western **Sahara**, is battling on three fronts. First, it is engaged in an armed struggle against **Morocco** in the Western **Sahara**; secondly, it is backing this war with a diplomatic offensive, especially in Europe; and thirdly, it is fighting for its own survival.

Historically the Saharwi people are nomads with their own language - Hassania - and culture. The territory became a Spanish protectorate in 1885, but it was only with French help at the beginning of this century that Spain managed to break down local resistance and establish itself in the colony.

Franco was on his deathbed in 1975 when Spain concluded the tripartite agreement with **Morocco** and Mauritania. Eventually Mauritania pulled out of the conflict in 1979 and renounced its territorial claims.

Many of today's top leaders of the Polisario Front are sons of men imprisoned or exiled by the Spanish for resistance activities. The civilians who fled into Algeria to escape Moroccan air bombardment, they say, were mainly women and children, the men already having joined the resistance.

Once in Algeria they had to start from scratch. Students studying abroad to be teachers and doctors were called into the camps to hand on their limited experience. Some of the most important priorities for a still largely nomadic people forced to become sedentary were health, hygiene and disease prevention.

Today there are small regional hospitals and dispensaries, as well as a national hospital for the more serious cases. Teaching facilities mean that doctors and nurses now can be trained on the spot. Women play a predominant role in health and social care and each district in each camp has its own Women's Committee, members of which go from tent to tent checking on hygiene and social welfare.

International aid provides cloth for their tents and clothing, food supplies and tools, but their programme for survival is their own. Faced with a 'plan to liquidate a people', as Muhammad Abdelazia, the Saharwis' President, put it, their emphasis is on increasing the birth rate and caring for the old.

Market gardening is perhaps the most startling of all Saharwis' achievements. Each camp, or wilaya, has its own agricultural project. Deep wells have been dug and an intricate irrigation system introduced to grow such crops as carrots, onions, turnips, tomatoes and melons in soil which has been brought in

lorries across the border from their own more fertile Western **Sahara**. The produce goes to nursing mothers, young children and the elderly.

The slim herds of goats and camels are used for the same purpose. Camel milk is reserved for the needy, while the bulk of the population, who eat meat about once a month, live on imported powdered milk.

The governor of the wilaya of El Aioun, named after Western **Sahara**'s capital city, has even introduced five Dutch cows into the desert. They appear to be thriving in the scorching heat on a diet of leftovers from tinned food.

Rain fell in the region this year for the first time since 1981. The Saharwis immediately planted wheat and have just harvested their first crop.

Each district in each camp has its infant and primary school, at which Spanish is the second language after Arabic. One huge secondary education established has been created which boards 4,500 pupils between the ages of 12 and 17 under a national education programme.

There are about 6,000 students in higher educational establishments in Algeria and Libya; several South American countries also provide scholarships. Italy is among the European countries which receive Saharwi schoolchildren in summer camps.

While the Polisario are happy to talk about aid given to the refugee camps, they are not willing to be specific on the enormous funds needed to equip their Army or who provides them, except to say that much of their military equipment has been captured from the Moroccans, although they do have a problem with ammunition.

Over the years the Polisario Front has been accused of being funded and aided by Cuba, Libya and Iran. President Abdelaziz says that these accusations are designed to mask the truth. He admits that they have friends abroad who help them and without whom they could not survive, but he says the Saharwi people are an authentic people with a long history who are fighting for their right to live in peace in their own territory.

If, he claims, an independent referendum under United Nations protection could be organized in Western **Sahara**, then he like the others would vote. But until the day when every Saharwi, on either side of the Moroccan defensive **wall**, will be given the right to determine his own future, the choice is 'toda la patria o la muerte' (all our country or death). And these are the words the schoolchildren chant when one enters a classroom.

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NS gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE alg : Algeria | moroc : Morocco | spsah : Western Sahara | africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wafrz : West Africa

PUB News International Associated Services Limited

AN Document T000000020051001dj6n004r3

Associated Press

HD **Polisario Guerrillas Claim 275 Moroccan Soldiers Killed in Battle**

WC 214 words

PD 10 July 1987

SN The Associated Press

SC ASP

LA English

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LP

(AP) _ The Polisario guerrilla movement on Friday claimed it's fighters killed 275 Moroccan soldiers and took 73 prisoners in a battle in the extreme south of the disputed Western **Sahara**.

There was no immediate comment from **Morocco**, which has been fighting guerrillas of the Algeria-based Polisario movement for more than a decade over control of the mineral-rich but almost uninhabited territory.

TD

The Polisario movement said in a statement that its units also destroyed 10 Moroccan tanks, 46 light vehicles and four troop transport trucks and captured two tanks, six artillery pieces and other equipment in the battle Wednesday near Techla.

It claimed the guerrillas seized a 25-mile-long section of the **wall Morocco** has built along the territory's border with Mauritania. The statement made no mention of guerrilla casualties.

If the Polisario claim is true, the fighting would have been the most intense in several months in the Saharan war.

Morocco annexed the 118,000-square-mile former Spanish **Sahara** territory after Spain withdrew in 1975, but the annexation has not been internationally recognized.

The fighting has taken thousands of lives since 1975 and it is is estimated the war is costing **Morocco** at least $1.5 million a day.

IPD INTERNATIONAL

AN Document asp0000020011118dj7a00ria

FT FINANCIAL TIMES

HD **Survey of Morocco (1): King Seeks Wider Stage**

BY By FRANCIS GHILES and ANDREW GOWERS

WC 3,214 words

PD 13 July 1987

SN Financial Times

SC FTFT

PG London Page I

LA English

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LP

When King Hassan II of Morocco, paying his first state visit to Britain this week, meets Mrs Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister, they ought to have a lot to talk about.

Both leaders, after long years in power, now dominate their domestic political scene in a way without precedent this century. Both are presiding over a measure of improvement in their countries' economies following a number of very difficult year. And in their rhetoric at least, the governments of both are now committed to liberal economics, in which phrases like fiscal responsibility and the free market loom large.

TD

The similarities, of course, do not go much farther. King Hassan has, for more than 26 years, been the absolute monarch of a country which considers itself part of the Arab world, whatever its trappings of Western parliamentary democracy. Scion of the Alaoui dynasty which has ruled Morocco since the 17th century, he is also one of the more intriguing figures on the international political scene: a firm friend of the West, an immediate neighbour of the European Community since the accession of Spain and Portugal in 1986, and a player of some significance in the tortuous conflicts of the Middle East.

There are a number of reasons why the King's presence in London will evoke more than the customary courteous interest which state visits normally receive.

For example, there are signs that he is beginning to take a broader approach to foreign policy than has been customary in the past. In the years since it gained independence from France in 1956, Morocco has tended to look at its relations with other countries in a relatively narrow focus.

It has concentrated on ties with Paris, and its other some-time colonial adversary, Madrid, to the virtual exclusion of other western European capitals.

This narrow focus has been reinforced by the West Saharan conflict - relations with Algeria have been strained since 1975, while Libya was viewed with great misgivings until it switched sides in 1984 and signed a treaty of 'union' with Morocco at Oujda. King Hassan's purpose was to try to wean Colonel Gadaffi away from supporting the Polisario guerillas. Despite breaking the 'union' last year, King Hassan is not on overtly hostile terms with his Libyan counterpart.

Relations with the US, which are close and go back exactly two centuries, were badly upset by the Oujda treaty. Washington had looked upon King Hassan as its paramount friend in North-west Africa: Morocco sent troops to Zaire's troubled Shaba province to help re-establish order in 1978; it allowed old US bases to be refitted for possible use by the US Rapid Deployment Force; it will soon house the most powerful Voice of America broadcasting station outside the US.

Fences have now been mended, after King Hassan's decision publicly to receive the Israeli prime minister last summer.

Meanwhile, the West has never denied the monarch the weapons he asked for in recent years - often paid for out of Saudi cash. France and Spain have, however, been far more generous where loans for such purposes are concerned than the US.

On the Middle East scene, King Hassan has played a role which belies Morocco's somewhat marginal geographical position in the Arab world. He hosted an important Arab summit in Fes in 1982, and last

year became only the second Arab leader after the late Egyptian president, Anwar Sadat, publicly to meet an Israeli prime minister. when he received Mr Shimon Peres in Ifrane. His relations with Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, who have, over the years, extended considerable financial help to **Morocco**, remain very close.

A born gambler, the monarch's occupation of the Western **Sahara**, as General Franco lay dying in Madrid, remains his boldest move. The King disregards the fact that nearly 70 countries recognise what the Morroccans argue is a phantom Saharan Arab Democratic Republic. **Morocco** left the Organisation of African Unity in 1984, when the latter agreed to seat the Polisario, with few regrets.

The King's visit to London is one sign that he is now seeking to assert himself on a wider stage. His statement, three years ago, that **Morocco** would like to join the European Community was in the same spirit - a largely symbolic affirmation of **Morocco**'s desire for a close relationship with the bloc to its immediate north. The importance of such ties was never greater than now, since Spanish membership of the EC has raised vital economic questions for Rabat, especially in relation to its agricultural and fishing industries.

On questions of domestic economic policy, too, **Morocco** is currently provoking great interest in Western capitals. For the first time since independence, the Government is demonstrating a serious intention to bite the bullet of economic reform. Despite falling foul of IMF targets twice since 1981, it is now applying a collection of measures straight out of the International Monetary Fund's and the World Bank's textbooks.

By cutting public spending, it has reduced its budget deficit from 12.6 per cent of gross domestic product, in 1982, to only 6.2 per cent last year. In 1986, its current account deficit equalled less than 2 per cent of GDP, compared with more than 13 per cent four years earlier. By allowing the traditionally-over-valued dirham to float downwards, it has boosted exports (particularly in important industrial sectors like textiles) and receipts from tourism. It is reducing costly and wasteful areas of expenditure, such as food subsidies, and has, at least since the riots of 1984, avoided any serious social unrest.

To cope with the problem of large debts built up during the 1970s and early 1980s, the Government has reached rescheduling agreements for dollars 1.8 bn of commercial bank debt payments and dollars 900 m of government-to-government loans since last December. The debt burden, nonetheless, remains heavy, and is reckoned by the IMF to total about dollars 16.5 bn this year - only a little short of **Morocco**'s entire GDP.

To put all this into perspective, it has to be said that **Morocco** has been lucky in the last year or so, and that a good deal of the short-term improvement in its position has been due to a range of external factors over which the Government has no control. It has been helped by the collapse in oil prices, which has trimmed **Morocco**'s import bill by some dollars 500 m; by the fall in the value of the dollar and of US interest rates, which have reduced debt service costs; and by a plentiful 1986 cereals harvest which slashed the need for food imports and gave a welcome fillip to that half of the population which still lives on the land.

But the Government is now talking about far-reaching structural reforms with a view to liberalising the economy, enhancing the role of the private sector, and broadening the tax base. Important steps are being taken to restucture **Morocco**'s cumbersome public-sector companies, with the aid of a dollars 240 m loan from the World Bank - the largest of its kind.

That his Government can even contemplate such an ambitious programme is in part a reflection of King Hassan's personal authority within **Morocco**, which is widely acknowledged now to be at its zenith. His political and religious legitimacy absolutely unchallenged within the country.

Political activity, of course, revolves around the King, but he has allowed a certain loosening of the reins in recent years following the repression and immobilism of the 1960s and 1970s. The vast majority of Moroccans accept Hassan as the guarantor of the country's territorial integrity - including the former Spanish colony of the Western **Sahara**, which **Morocco** took over in the face of Algerian opposition and international disapproval in 1975 - and of its political stability. **Morocco** benefited from the reluctance of most Western, Arab and African countries to help create what they believed would be yet another impoverished small state.

True,
Morocco has never suffered from the sort of identity problems which

afflict many other Arab countries. For much of its history, it has been

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physically, as well as politically, isolated from its immediate neighbours; sealed off to the east by the Rif and Atlas mountain ranges; to the south by the **Sahara** desert; and to the west by the Atlantic Ocean.

It is the only member of the Arab world that can claim to have been an independent country for more than a thousand years, and to have developed its own traditions and monarchy rather than having them imposed by outsiders. **Morocco** was never part of the Ottoman empire, and was left relatively untouched by French rule: in marked contrast to Algeria and Tunisia, its own institutions and culture survived the colonial period more or less intact.

What is more, the legitimacy of the Moroccan monarch rests on the dual foundations of historical tradition and the religion of the prophet Muhammad. The King is Amir al Mu'minin (Commander of the Faithful) and Khalifat Allah Fi'l ard (Allah's deputy on earth). It is fair to say that no other Maghrib state - indeed no other Arab state - is in a position of being able to appeal to centuries of independent government, and an unbroken and apparently entirely orthodox combination of secular and religious legitimacy.

Nevertheless, for all its shared history, **Morocco** is something of an ethnic and tribal patchwork quilt, which requires careful handling. And King Hassan's position was by mo means always as strong as it is today. When he came to the throne after the sudden death of his father, Mohammed V, in February 1961, he spent many years experimenting with Moroccan constitutions, alternately liberalising and clamping down on political activity.

In the mid-1960s, he successfully faced down a wave of agitation by the main opposition party and within the universities, but only after a number of executions, bloody confrontations between rioters and security forces, and the disappearance in Paris of one of the leading opposition figures, Mehdi Ben Barka, in circumstances which remain mysterious to this day.

What is more, it is not that long since the King miraculously survived two attempted military coups. In the first, in July 1971, many of the guests who had gathered to celebrate his birthday at the seaside palace of Skhirat were killed; in the second, little more than 12 months later, a group of dissident pilots attacked the aircraft in which he was returning to Rabat from France.

Since these narrow escapes, Hassan has had an aura of baraka (good fortune) which has undoubtedly enhaced his position within the country. But he was shaken by the events of the early 1970s, and has moved both decisively and deftly in the past 15 years to turn events to his own advantage.

Opposition has been kept within well-defined bounds. Political parties across a reasonably broad spectrum are allowed to function, and have recently been able to speak out on a range of issues, including some quite sensitive economic and social ones. Whatever its limitations, the Moroccan press must be one of the liveliest in the Arab world.

With any opposition which falls 'off limits,' as it were - and especially with those who have dared to speak out against the Moroccan takeover of the Western **Sahara** - the authorities have been ruthless. In its 1986 annual report, Amnesty International expressed concern about the detention of 190 actual or possible 'prisoners of conscience,' as well as pre-trial and trial procedures for political prisoners which allegedly do not conform to international standards; incommunicado detention; and alleged torture and ill-treatment of detainees.

Yet on the other hand, the King has also demonstrated finely-tuned political antennae. Time and again in recent years he has out manoeuvred the opposition with a bold gesture, especially where Moroccan nationalist setiments are involved. After the troubles of 1971 and 1972, for example, there was a notable shift in economic policy to take account of such feelings. It was decreed in 1973 that all strategic sectors of the economy were to be at least 51 per cent Moroccanised, and that foreign-owned agricultural land was to be expropriated by the state and distributed to farmers.

The King's masterstoke, though, is widely acknowledged to have been the famous Green March, launched during the autumn of 1975, in which 350,000 unarmed Moroccans headed south into the desert (preceded by the Moroccan army) in order to reassert Rabat's sovereignty over what was still the Spanish **Sahara**. Even if the resultant conflict with Polisario guerrillas who oppose Moroccan rule is still going on today, and **Morocco** has won itself little international diplomatic credit by annexing the former colony, the move arguably continues to pay domestic political dividends.

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The reconquest of the Western **Sahara**, over which **Morocco** claims rights of sovereignty stretching back to the Middle Ages, provided the monarch with what one commentator has described as 'an almost miraculous diversion' from pressing domestic problems. All at once, he presented Moroccans with a common opponent against which to close ranks; provided the military with an enemy to fight and with a big boost in spending; and asserted a very popular strain of Moroccan irredentism.

Foreign observers have often commented critically on the costs of the conflict. But against such a background, they actually seem to most Moroccans quite limited, whether counted in lives or in money. What is more, the expense involved in keeping control of the **Sahara** has fallen since the 1970s and early 1980s when the armed forces underwent the bulk of their re-euipment programme.

Moroccan confidence in its battle with the Polisario is currently at an all-time high. This stems principally from the construction over the past five years of a 1,300-mile defensive **wall** around the territory, which now reaches the port of Dakhla, designed to keep the guerrillas out. The latest stage of this ambitious project in the south is all but complete, meaning that **Morocco** can now deny the Polisario fighters access to most of the Saharan territory for most of the time, and has closed off their route to the sea, which they had used to mount attacks on shipping and small aircraft off the West Saharan coast.

Even the Polisario admits that the character of the war has changed dramatically since the 1970s, when it regularly ambushed and captured Moroccan soldiers and equipment.

Politically, the war is no longer making the waves it used to, either. Most of **Morocco**'s Western friends, while trying to stay neutral on the issue and limiting diplomatic visits to the **Sahara**, in practice do not allow it to cause any great friction between them and Rabat. For its part, Algeria - while continuing to support the Polisario both financially and diplomatically - has, since 1979, clearly demonstrated its desire not to let the conflict spill over into a wider confrontation betwen the two countries. That was the main message to emerge from the unexpected summit meeting between King Hassan and President Chadli Bendjedid, arranged through the mediation of Saudi Arabia's King Fahd in May.

If the **Sahara** war is diminishing in importance, King Hassan still has other nationalist cards up his sleeve - notably the argument with Spain over the future of its two remaining enclaves on the north Moroccan coast, Ceuta and Melilla. That is an issue of which we can expect to hear a lot more of in the next couple of years.

Yet it is arguably on the domestic political, economic and social front that King Hassan faces his most significant and difficult challenges - problems which may well be spotlighted or accentuated by the reforms which his government is now initiating.

They include:

Extremes of wealth and poverty, with large numbers of Moroccans still living beneath the poverty line. To ensure that they achieve greater purchasing power is important, both to retain their loyalty and bring them into the real economy. By the same measure, the widespread evasion of taxes by industrialists, when added to the virtually tax-free status of farming, building and tourism, deprives the state of resources which are much needed to improve the country's infrastructure and meet important social and educational needs.

Disparity between regions. The Casablanca-Rabat-Kenitra axis boasts over two-thirds of the country's economic activity, while the north has, since independence, been left largely to its own devices. Many people in Tangier are hoping that King Hassan's visit next autumn will reverse this state of affairs.

Vast mountain areas remain where poverty is acute and peasants engage in subsistence farming on poor soils, with uncertain rainfall. Such areas, which for foreign travellers are ones of outstanding natural beauty contrast sharply with the relatively large, well farmed and irrigated estates in the plains which feed cities and grow export crops.

A bloated public sector, where 680 enterprises account for at least one-fifth of GDP and a far higher proportion of jobs - the giant Societe Nationale d'Investissement literally squats on a vast portfolio of company holdings which does little to encourage growth. The Minister of Finance, Mr Mohammed Berrada has been scathing in his references to the state asminstration but vested interests remain deeply entrenched.

The need to overhaul the education system with a view to generalising primary education and making access ro university more selective to recognised as a major, but inevitable, challenge.

A high birthrate and the steady pace of urbanisation dictates the creation of many more jobs that are at present on offer. Only private industry, if it invests more than today, and foreign investors, if they are willing, can provide the necessary money.

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Concentration of power. However deep loyalty to the monarchy may go, powerful centrifugal forces exist which need to be addressed. Up to now a bedrock of support for the King has been the mass of Moroccan peasantry. In years to come, the King will have to find a way of associating the rising numbers of educated people in industry and civil service with the exercise of real power.

This does not necessarily mean destroying traditional structures and ways of doing business. But the successful modernisation of **Morocco**'s economony perforce means a strengthening and diversifing of political institutions. Changes need to be introduced into a form of government born of a centuries-old system of patronage and interlocking families which owe allegiance to the King.

The World Bank is keeping its fingers crossed about **Morocco**, with which it has a very important programme. Cautious optimism probably sums up best the view of senior officials who have been dealing with the Kingdom these past few years. The IMF, from which **Morocco** has drawn 440 per cent of its quota, also feels that, however long and arduous, there exists no other road to recovery and steady growth than the one which implements the policies agreed in recent years.

If the policies succeed, King Hassan's role will be consolidated and the reputation of the IMF and the World Bank enhanced. The consequences of failure is something which outsiders and Moroccans alike prefer not to think about.

NS imf : International Monetary Fund | nsur : Survey/Poll | ncat : Content Types | ocat : International Pol-Econ Organizations

RE moroc : Morocco | africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

PUB The Financial Times Limited (AAIW/EIW)

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THE GLOBE AND MAIL

SE FOCUS
HD **Morocco's walls across the desert turn tide in war for Spanish Sahara**
BY JON MARKS
CR Special to The Globe and Mail
WC 952 words
PD 8 August 1987
SN The Globe and Mail
SC GLOB
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LA English
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LP

Special to The Globe and Mail

WESTERN **SAHARA**

TD

AFTER MORE than 11 years of war, the Polisario Front has reached a critical point in its battle with **Morocco** for an independent state in the former Spanish **Sahara**.

The movement's diplomatic campaign for sovereignty over this desolate northwest African territory has yielded good results - 69 states recognize its government-in-exile, the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic - but militarily things have not gone so well recently.

Morocco has built about 2,500 kilometres of defensive walls, which, after years of setbacks, are keeping the Saharawi away from the few productive regions in the 266,000-square-kilometre territory.

"Our aim is to make secure and encircle all the territory," said General Abdelaziz Bennani, Moroccan commander in the war zone.

Most analysts believe the **wall** system has turned the tide. It has allowed **Morocco**'s King Hassan "to show his allies he is in control, and they agree it has even if they don't like the war," said a Western diplomat in the country's capital, Rabat. France, Spain and the United States, **Morocco**'s leading allies, provide arms as well as financial support for its troubled economy. Conservative Persian Gulf states also help bankroll it, some of them receiving Moroccan military assistance in return. Even Moscow and Soviet satellite countries, while remaining officially neutral, provide heavy machine guns and other weapons.

The walls, consisting of bulldozed sand and rock, follow the contours of the rough terrain. Lined with barbed wire and mines, they are defended by heavily armed positions (points d'appui) about every five kilometres, and these are supported by heavy artillery and rapid-intervention units, positioned in the desert behind the front line.

Since the 1,000-kilometre sixth **wall**, skirting the Mauritanian border, was completed in April, three-quarters of the disputed territory has been under Moroccan control. Only five years ago the Moroccan armed forces were penned into a small enclave around El Aioun, the Saharan capital.

Construction of the **wall** "has severely limited Polisario's room to manoeuvre," one Western analyst observed, but the small army is not giving up. The Moroccan press derides Polisario guerrillas as no more than "mercenaries" hired by neighboring Algeria, King Hassan's greatest rival. But as a Moroccan officer at the front confided, "They are very tough troops who for years knew the country better than we did. They have given us some very tough times."

Saharawi troops are highly skilled in using begged, borrowed and captured weapons in desert conditions, and in driving Land-Rovers at breathtaking speeds, unseen from nearby Moroccan positions. Some special abilities, such as campaigning on a minimal water intake and finding their way at night

around seemingly featureless desert, were learned long ago by their nomadic ancestors, whose camel-mounted raids terrorized the Saharan region's settled populations.

Other skills - such as their easy familiarity with the Kalashnikov rifle and their ability to defuse a wide variety of foreign anti-personnel and land mines - have been learned the hard way in a modern war against **Morocco**'s military might.

The Saharawi have undoubtedly formed a powerful guerrilla army, which even boasts its own desert military academy to polish the troops' rougher edges. While the number of soldiers in the field is considered a military secret by both sides, independent estimates suggest Polisario has between 10,000 and 12,000 full-time fighters. **Morocco** has perhaps 10 times that number based in the territory. A full-scale field battle is beyond Polisario's capacity, and despite fierce resistance the guerrillas have eventually been outgunned by the Moroccans when the **wall** moves.

The sixth **wall** "is more dangerous than all the others," said Brahim Hakim, SADR's information minister and a senior Polisario member. Construction of the new **wall**, which was accompanied by heavy fighting, "shows **Morocco**'s determination to find a military solution."

According to an Algerian analyst, the **wall** system "also threatens a wider regional conflict." With the Polisario pushed back to the territory's previously deserted borders with Mauritania and Algeria, the possibility of direct clashes between Algeria and **Morocco** increases. Further expansion of the system could heighten the tension.

There are other major problems for the insurgents besides the walls, which have moved the front line into the bleakest parts of the desert, far from the **Sahara**'s few "useful" centres, including El Aioun, the Bou Craa phosphate mines and the southern port of Dakhla.

Perhaps worse for the insurgents is that despite the war's heavy cost, a combination of lower oil prices, economic reforms, continued external support and apparently widespread approval of the war within **Morocco** have combined to support King Hassan's monarchy (for the time being at least), giving the lie to Polisario's claims that **Morocco**'s campaign in the **Sahara** would soon collapse along with the Alawite regime.

Standing at Bir Guendouz, a desolate, windswept spot with little to distinguish it but driving heat and swirling sand, it is hard to see why **Morocco** pushed so hard to include this land within its sixth **wall**. But the **Sahara** has wealth, in phosphates, and there is tourist potential on the coast.

To the Polisario guerrillas, it is the home of their tiny indigenous people - 500,000 at most, far fewer according to **Morocco** - and thus they remain defiant. After 11 years in the wilderness, however, their dilemma is that they know there is nowhere else to go, apart from their camps in Algerian territory or a "home" now controlled by **Morocco**.

So the war goes on.

NS gcat : Political/General News | gpol : Domestic Politics | grisk : Risk News | gvio : Military Action

RE africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa

IPD Morocco

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REUTERS

HD **KING HASSAN WELCOMES U.N. PEACE MISSION ON SAHARA DISPUTE.**

BY By Ibrahim Noori

WC 322 words

PD 7 November 1987

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

CY (c) 1987 Reuters Limited

LP

RABAT, Nov 6 , Reuter - King Hassan urged Moroccans on Friday to assist a United Nations committee set up to settle a conflict in the former Spanish Western **Sahara** through a referendum.

"We should all calm our nerves and facilitate the committee's mission," he said in a radio and television broadcast marking the 12th anniversary of a mass march by volunteers to strengthen **Morocco**'s claim on the disputed area.

TD

The technical committee, including representatives of the U.N. and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), is due to visit the region on November 20.

The King sent 350,000 unarmed Moroccan volunteers marching into the desert territory in November 1975 to press his claim. Since then he has been at war with Algerian-backed Polisario guerrillas fighting for the territory's independence.

Nearly 70 countries have recognised Polisario's self-styled Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). It was also admitted in the OAU in 1984 and **Morocco** quit the organisation in protest, taking the issue before the U.N.

King Hassan said the fact the U.N. was dealing with the dispute was "a very important victory which will enable the international community to differentiate between truth and falsehood."

"We are waiting for the U.N. technical committee to visit the **Sahara** region...to arrange a ceasefire and a clean referendum, enabling the people of our **Sahara** region to freely express their association with their original country **Morocco**," he said.

Reaffirming **Morocco**'s position to abide by the referundum results, the King said the committee "will see no military confrontation but peace and security, with schools and hospitals open to all".

Morocco has built a 1,600-km (1,000-mile) long defensive **wall** in the **Sahara** but the King said the committee would not find any armed soldiers in any of the territory's towns or villages.

NS gcat : Political/General News | gdip : International Relations | grisk : Risk News | gvio : Military Action

RE africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa | spsah : Western Sahara | wafrz : West Africa

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REUTERS

HD U.N. HEAD VISITS NORTH AFRICA OVER WESTERN SAHARA CONFLICT.

BY By Jonathan Clayton

WC 468 words

PD 1 May 1988

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

CY (c) 1988 Reuters Limited

LP

RABAT, May 1, Reuter - A diplomatic offensive aimed at ending the 12-year-old Western **Sahara** conflict is stepped up this week when United Nations Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar tours key North African states.

Polisario guerrillas, backed by Algeria, are fighting **Morocco** -- which controls four-fifths of the desert territory -- for independence for the former Spanish colony.

TD

The Moroccan army is dug in behind 1,600 km (1,000 mile) **barrier** of sand and rock, known simply as "The **Wall**". But it is still a target for sniper fire and sometimes costly hit-and-run raids. Diplomats say, the military situation is stalemated.

De Cuellar will arrive first in **Morocco** for talks with King Hassan. He will then fly on to Mauritania and Algeria where he will also meet the leadership of the Polisario Front.

His much-awaited trip follows a visit to the region in mid-April by Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda, chairman of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).

Morocco quit the OAU in November 1984 when the continental boday admitted Polisario's diplomatic arm, the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), which is now recognised by 71 countries. No country has officially recognised Moroccan sovereignty over the area.

Morocco now favours settling the issue through a referendum under U.N. auspices, but Algeria and the Polisario are first demanding a full military withdrawal and an end to Moroccan adminstration.

A joint OAU-U.N. technical mission was sent to the Western **Sahara** in November to report on the problems of holding a referendum. At a recent meeting in Brussels, De Cuellar and Kaunda agreed to step up efforts to solve the conflict.

Kaunda visited North Africa a few days later, but little has emerged on the details of his talks.

In February, Kaunda -- who was received in **Morocco** as President of Zambia and not in his capacity of OAU chairman -- angered **Morocco** by declaring it should pull out its troops before the referendum.

His remarks appeared to back the stand of Algeria and Polisario who also want direct talks before any plebiscite. **Morocco** rejects the demand, maintaining that the Polisario guerrillas are merely Algerian mercenaries.

Diplomats say De Cuellar may have a peace plan in his back pocket in an attempt to find some compromise, but are not hopeful of any breakthrough during this visit.

"He will have to knock heads, and twist wrists for quite a while before anything begins to emerge," a U.S. diplomat said.

Mauritania split control of the area with **Morocco** after Spain pulled out of its former colony of the Spanish **sahara** in 1976 under a deal reached in Madrid.

With the guerrilla war bleeding its weak economy, Mauritania later ceded its share to **Morocco**.

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NS gcat : Political/General News | gdip : International Relations | grisk : Risk News | gvio : Military Action

RE africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa | spsah : Western Sahara | wafrz : West Africa

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The Boston Globe

SE NATIONAL/FOREIGN

HD VICTORY ELUSIVE IN MOROCCO'S BATTLE FOR THE WESTERN SAHARA

BY Thomas Palmer, Globe Staff
WC 1,094 words
PD 15 May 1988
SN The Boston Globe
SC BSTNGB
ED THIRD
PG 3
LA English
CY © 1988 New York Times Company. Provided by ProQuest Information and Learning. All Rights Reserved.

LP

LAAYOUNE, Western **Sahara** - The Moroccans say these 100,000-plus square miles of desert are rightfully their own southern provinces.

Members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saqiet el Hamra and Rio de Oro -- the Polisario -- say this is their land. They want nationhood.

TD

At considerable cost to its treasury, **Morocco** has won military control of more than two-thirds of the desert land known as the Western **Sahara**. Yet diplomatic victory is elusive. Seventy-one nations have officially recognized the Polisario -- and none acknowledges the sovereignty **Morocco** proclaims.

A long-running war is being fought over this former Spanish colony just south of the Canary Islands. The desert area is three times the size of Maine, and its known assets are phosphates -- rock that makes good fertilizer when it is ground up -- and 1,200 miles of sardine-rich Atlantic coastline. About 150,000 people live there.

The first half of the war, which began in earnest in the mid-1970s after Spain gave up its colonial claim to the region, was fought militarily, costing the Kingdom of **Morocco** many casualties. Now it is fought diplomatically.

The **Wall** changed everything.

In what is considered a brilliant defensive military tactic, **Morocco** built a series of walls -- now there are six, end to end -- that has effectively halted the damaging guerrilla attacks of the Polisario Front.

The **Wall**, also known as the **Berm**, is built primarily of the materials at hand, sand and rock bulldozed from the desert, and it runs 1,200 miles in a generally southwestern direction from the **Morocco**-Algeria border, along Mauritania's western boundary, to the coast.

But the corridor along this archaic defensive structure is studded with the gadgets of high-tech warfare: electronic sensors and mines, which have helped secure for Moroccan settlement more than two-thirds of the disputed territory.

The **wall** has eliminated the effective surprise element of the Polisario, said John Damis, a professor of political science at Portland State University now living in **Morocco**, who is an authority on the Western **Sahara**.

"It's one thing to get in, but it's another thing to get out," Damis said of the Polisario fighters who must cross the **wall** to reach the Moroccan enemy. "It's sort of like mice caught in a trap."

Moroccan casualties, once running 100 a month, have dropped to almost nothing.

In **Morocco**, the Western **Sahara** is an important symbol of nationalism, passionately claimed by almost all Moroccans. Such is the sensitivity to the issue that when the Saharan republic was admitted as a full member of the Organization of African Unity in 1984, **Morocco** withdrew.

Mohamed Maa-el-Ainine is vice president in the Moroccan Parliament, in Rabat, and was born in the Western **Sahara**. His grandfather, he says, helped found the first city in the territory.

Ask him about the Western **Sahara**, and he will insist on delivering a lengthy and detailed history of the land.

In 1912, what was then Northwest Africa was officially divided between Spain and France. "Since that date **Morocco** has never stopped claiming the territory," Maa-el-Ainine said.

Spain ruled the Western **Sahara** until 1975, when it signed a treaty yielding the territory to Mauritania and **Morocco**. The Polisario formed and challenged that transfer. Mauritania then withdrew, and **Morocco** laid claim to the entire former colony.

Moroccans bitterly blame Algeria, their neighbor and traditional rival, for their Western **Sahara** problems, and students of the situation agree that Polisario scarcely would exist without Algeria's support.

"How does a Polisario diplomat attend a conference?" asks Damis. "With an Algerian passport and a plane ticket paid for by Algeria."

Azeddine Laraki, **Morocco**'s prime minister, said in a recent interview that Algeria "had the means of its politics -- petroleum and gas." He repeated the Moroccan charge that Algeria has bribed weaker nations to adopt a pro-Polisario position.

Algerian officials, however, insist that they oppose **Morocco**'s annexation only because it does not allow the Saharwis, as the people of the Western **Sahara** are known, to decide their own future.

Some observers ask who would want the area. Professor I. William Zartman of Johns Hopkins University says it is "utter nonsense" to suggest that the Western **Sahara** would be an economically viable country. But the Algerians disagree.

"Some people have begun to talk about the Western **Sahara** as a future Kuwait," said one Algerian Foreign Ministry official. Known fishing reserves and potential oil deposits tend to stiffen positions on both sides, but the Algerians insist they do not support the Polisario because they want the territory for themselves.

"Our position is clear," the official said, echoing what has been a traditional Algerian stand on similar international disputes. "It's just full respect for self-determination."

The Moroccan government refuses to negotiate the issue directly with the Polisario, whose members it considers terrorists. Both sides have embraced the idea of a popular referendum in the Western **Sahara** to decide how it will be governed.

But the circumstances under which that referendum is conducted, everyone understands, will determine the outcome. Most observers say a negotiated settlement between **Morocco** and Algeria is a prerequisite to any Western **Sahara** solution.

A United Nations report is due in July following a fact-finding visit late last year and is expected to make recommendations about conditions for a vote, such as whether the approximately 100,000 Moroccan soldiers should depart first. However, negotiations by United Nations Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar earlier this month failed.

His visit to the region was watched with intense hope by Western Saharan residents, many of whom live in the coastal Laayoune area.

Laayoune, a few miles inland from the crashing Atlantic, is a wind-whipped desert town with two distinct architectural aspects intermixed. Many of the buildings are dilapidated wooden structures left over from the Spanish era.

But there are also brightly painted new buildings, a stadium, hotels -- not all of them inhabited but nevertheless the objects of pride. They signal the progress that **Morocco** has brought to a long neglected area.

"We have already had our referendum," said a Laayoune resident, pleased to be a subject of **Morocco**'s King Hassan II. "We have already said our words. But his majesty said there will be a

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referendum, and we are ready to make a confirmatory referendum, and will make it as soon as possible."

HLEWIS;05/06 CORCOR;05/16,20:56 SAHARA15

ART MAP

IPD MOROCCA

PUB Boston Globe Newspaper

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Associated Press

HD **Morocco Winning Hearts And Minds In Disputed Desert**

BY MICHAEL GOLDSMITH

WC 879 words

PD 28 May 1988

SN The Associated Press

SC ASP

LA English

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LP

(AP) _ **Morocco** is making so much headway winning people over in this long-disputed territory that it no longer fears a referendum on independence among the inhabitants.

Exemption from taxes and import duties, development projects and an apparently unlimited supply of fresh water _ most precious of all commodities in the desert _ have helped undermine the support once enjoyed by the Polisario independence movement.

TD

The hardest blow suffered by Polisario, which Algeria supports, was the announcement May 17 that Algeria and **Morocco** had restored diplomatic relations after 12 years of hovering on the brink of war over the **Sahara**.

Algeria had pledged not to renew relations until **Morocco** granted independence to the territory.

The Moroccan army took foreign reporters on a five-day tour of the 110,000-square-mile wilderness, allowing them to set their own itinerary and talk with inhabitants at random, without military escort.

Nomadic tribes of the former Spanish colony paid allegiance to the sultans of **Morocco** for centuries, and **Morocco** annexed the territory after Spain withdrew in 1975.

Polisario, a Marxist-led movement that is armed, financed and supplied by Algeria, began fighting from Algerian sanctuaries and at one time virtually overran the Moroccan defenders.

Its guerrillas have been unable to breach a 1,500-mile **wall** of sand and rock that **Morocco** erected, but defending it has cost the Moroccans nearly 10,000 men dead or wounded and an estimated $400 million a year, much of it donated by Saudi Arabia.

Inhabitants of the region, estimated at 76,000 by the Spanish colonial administration, have fled to the Moroccan-held cities or to refugee camps around Tindouf, an Algerian oasis about 500 miles south of Casablanca.

The United Nations is trying to arrange a referendum among original inhabitants and their offspring on whether they want Moroccan rule or independence.

King Hassan II proposed the referendum in 1981. Moroccan officials say Polisario's increasing reluctance to accept a U.N.-supervised referendum is a measure of the movement's loss of support among the population.

Reporters saw no sign of Polisario activity or support.

Saharan workers in the Bou Craa phosphate mines, Saharan fishermen in Dakhla port, 800 miles south of Casablanca, shopkeepers in El Ayoun, the territorial capital, and nomads with their herds of camels and goats all expressed pro-Moroccan feelings and loyalty to Hassan.

Pictures of the monarch were displayed in their tents. The king is both political and religious leader of **Morocco**.

Mohamed Ould M'barek, 65, has pitched his tent 25 miles west of Bou Craa. He sold two-thirds of his 100 camels to buy two apartments in El Ayoun for his two wives, so his children can go to the new Moroccan-run schools there.

Asked how he felt about Polisario, the gray-bearded Bedouin clutched the engraved silver handle of his dagger and said angrily: "If they come here, I will kill them."

In El Ayoun, trader Mohamed Khaddad said one of his eight sons was with the Polisario in Tindouf. He said there had been no word from him in eight years and declared:

"If he ever comes back, I will tell him he is a traitor to his country and his king. I pray that God may give me the strength to forgive him one day."

Salah Zemrag, governor of El Ayoun province, said **Morocco** has built schools, hospitals, highways, artesian wells and more than 18,000 homes in the town, which was little more than a military outpost when the Spanish left.

Fadli Rguibi, 38, is among hundreds of former Polisario guerrillas who Moroccan officials say fled across the desert from Algeria in recent months as morale declined and camp conditions worsened.

Of the people in the Tindouf refugee camps, Rguibi said: "They are carefully watched and spied on. They are afraid to talk freely among each other because anyone could be an informer. But you can't suppress the truth forever. Everyone long suspected the war was lost, only the leaders still seemed to believe in it."

Polisario originally claimed the Western **Sahara** had 1 million inhabitants, most of them in and around Tindouf, but now says only 165,000 refugees live in the Algerian camps. **Morocco** says most are not Saharans.

Rguibi said the guerrillas number fewer than 10,000.

In Aousserd, a desolate volcanic crater outpost 125 miles southeast of Dakhla, the reporters were taken by helicopter to a strongpoint on the **wall**.

Moroccan soldiers manned French, American and Czechoslovak-made artillery and machine guns overlooking the wide, empty plain leading into neighboring Mauritania. The red, green-starred Moroccan flag fluttered overhead.

Gen. Abdelaziz Bennani, commander of Moroccan forces in the **Sahara**, said the **wall** was manned by 80,000 men, more than half the Moroccan army, equipped with sophisticated weapons and radar sensors.

"Our equipment is so sensitive," he said, "that we recently picked out a truck with four tourists who lost their way in the desert from more than 25 miles away."

He said the guerrillas last attacked the **wall** Jan. 30 in a hit-and-run raid without causing Moroccan casualties or getting near the Moroccan defenses.

"Their claims of almost daily attacks are sheer fantasy," he said.

IPD INTERNATIONAL

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THE GLOBE AND MAIL

SE News
HD **Plan for Western Sahara elicits cautious welcome**
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WC 566 words
PD 15 August 1988
SN The Globe and Mail
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CY All material copyright Thomson Canada Limited or its licensors. All rights reserved.

LP

New York Times Service

MADRID

TD

Diplomats in northern Africa have welcomed a United Nations proposal for resolving a 13-year war between **Morocco** and the Polisario Front in the former Spanish colony of Western **Sahara**, but the officials also were cautious about any quick settlement.

"We simply don't know if it will happen," one Western official said in a telephone interview from Rabat. "We're afraid to be too enthusiastic, although we're hopeful."

The Moroccans, who claim the mineral-rich territory, and members of the Polisario Front, which has waged a guerrilla war since Spain withdrew in 1974, were given a plan last week at the UN that calls for a ceasefire and a peacekeeping force of 2,000 troopers.

The two sides have until Sept. 1 to reply.

Under the proposal, the UN would supervise administration of the territory and organize a referendum to find out whether natives of the Western **Sahara** prefer to be an independent nation, as sought by the Polisario Front, or to be a part of **Morocco**.

A Polisario spokesman said its officials are studying the proposal. One impediment in the past has been a dispute over who would be eligible to vote among the 150,000 inhabitants. The group has insisted that **Morocco** remove soldiers as well as administrators that it says do not have the right to vote.

Moroccan officials have refused to comment, but the proposal has stirred some anxiety within the Government, officials in Rabat and Casablanca reported. Both pro-Government and opposition leaders said they expected King Hassan to confer with them before responding to UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar's proposal.

The Western diplomat described the atmosphere in Rabat as upbeat, "of peace breaking out, but it's hard to say if this thing is serious."

Al Bayane, the Communist opposition daily and first to comment editorially, said the plan was "an excellent initiative responding perfectly to **Morocco**'s desire to put an end to the conflict."

The Western diplomat said **Morocco**'s re-establishment of diplomatic ties with Algeria, the Polisario's biggest supporter, "was without doubt a major factor in the two sides' agreeing to meet with the Secretary- General."

Morocco controls two-thirds of the disputed 265,000-square-kilometre territory, including all the towns, phosphate mines and the entire Atlantic coast, but it has been an expensive operation to maintain, costing about $100-million (U.S.) a year.

On the battlefront, the two sides are almost at a standstill.

Estimates are that from 3,500 to 7,000 Polisario fighters, equipped with Soviet-made tanks, personnel carriers and anti-aircraft missiles as well as British and Japanese four-wheel-drive vehicles, have pinned down 100,000 Moroccan troops armed with U.S. and French weapons, including aircraft.

An impasse was reached in April, 1987, when **Morocco** completed a 1,450- kilometre, two-metre-high "**wall** of sand" - a ridge of rock and sand embedded with electronic sensors to warn of attack.

A Polisario official in Madrid said he is optimistic only because the war is costing **Morocco** more each year than it can afford.

Although a Moroccan official said the cost of the war has been acceptable "for the principle," Western diplomats and a few Moroccans believe the burden was becoming too great for the kingdom.

NS gcat : Political/General News | grisk : Risk News | gvio : Military Action

RE africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa

IPD Morocco

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THE GLOBE AND MAIL

SE News
HD **W. Sahara peace plan approved**
CR New York Times
WC 428 words
PD 31 August 1988
SN The Globe and Mail
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LA English
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LP

New York Times Service

GENEVA

TD

The Government of **Morocco** and the guerrillas of the Polisario Front agreed yesterday to a United Nations peace plan to end the 13-year-old war in the former Spanish colony of Western **Sahara** .

UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said through a spokesman that the Moroccan foreign minister, Abdulatif Filali, and a senior Polisario official, Bechir Mustafa Sayed, had told him that they were ready to accept the peace plan, which he presented to them this month in New York.

The plan provides for a quick ceasefire, which UN officials say could be in effect within a month. The UN would then deploy a large peacekeeping force in the sparsely populated territory, take charge of its administration, and organize a referendum in which the indigenous population would decide the territory's future.

Implicit in the UN plan, officials say, is an assumption that the Sahroui people of Western **Sahara** will vote to retain a form of loose federal association with **Morocco** that will allow all parties in the conflict to accept the outcome and end the war without losing face. UN officials said that they believed the whole operation could be completed within about six months.

Morocco has been engaged in a fight with the Polisario Front for control of the Western **Sahara** since 1975 when it ordered a civilian march into the phosphate-rich territory on the eve of Spain's withdrawal. In 1976, **Morocco** and Mauritania moved to divide the territory between them, although Mauritania renounced its claim three years later.

Neighboring Algeria is the most active supporter of the Polisario (the name is an acronym for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro) and provides the movement with arms and secure military bases in its territory around the desert town of Tindouf.

A total of 71 developing countries, mainly in Africa, recognize the Polisario Front as the government of Western **Sahara**, even though **Morocco** is in firm control of virtually the entire territory, which it has surrounded with a heavily fortified sand **wall** that keeps the Polisario's forces at bay.

Officials say the UN plan provides for the neutralization of the Moroccan and Polisario forces in the region. **Morocco** claims to have 200,000 soldiers in Western **Sahara** while the Polisario says it has 20,000 fighting men across the border in Algeria. UN officials say the true figures are closer to 150,000 and from 6,000 to 8,000.

NS gcat : Political/General News | gdip : International Relations | grisk : Risk News | gvio : Military Action

RE africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa

IPD Western Sahara

AN Document glob000020011117dk8v015io

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The New York Times

SE Foreign Desk; A

HD **SAHARA FOES MOVE TO END THEIR WAR**

BY By PAUL LEWIS, Special to the New York Times

WC 787 words

PD 31 August 1988

SN The New York Times

SC NYTF

ED Late City Final Edition

LA English

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LP

GENEVA, Aug. 30 -- **Morocco** and the Polisario Front guerrillas agreed today to a United Nations peace plan to end the 13-year-old war in the former Spanish colony of Western **Sahara**.

Morocco and the Polisario Front guerrillas agreed today to a United Nations peace plan to end the 13-year-old war in the former Spanish colony of Western **Sahara**.

TD

The United Nations Secretary General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, said through a spokesman that the Moroccan Foreign Minister, Abdellatif Filali, and a senior Polisario official, Bechir Moustapha, had told him that they were ready to accept the peace plan, which he presented to them this month in New York.

The plan, details of which remain to be worked out, calls for the two sides to agree to a cease-fire soon, and United Nations officials say a truce could be in effect within a month. The United Nations would then deploy a peacekeeping force in the sparsely populated territory, take charge of its administration and organize a referendum in which the indigenous population would decide the territory's future.

Implicit in the United Nations plan, officials say, is an assumption that the people of Western **Sahara** will vote to retain a form of loose federal association with **Morocco** that will allow all parties in the conflict to accept the outcome and end the war without losing face. United Nations officials said they believed the entire operation could be completed within about six months.

The Moroccan Foreign Minister said a referendum could be held "in the relatively near future" if conditions were right, but cautioned that **Morocco** is awaiting United Nations proposals on details of holding the vote.

Mr. Moustapha said the Polisario "accepted the formulation of the question that will be put to the voters." But he said the front is concerned about "the future of the Moroccan administration and army," and that details of their retreat would have to be worked out in negotiations. "We have accepted with certain conditions," he said.

Morocco has been fighting the Polisario Front for control of Western **Sahara** since 1975, when it ordered a civilian march into the phosphate-producing territory on the eve of Spain's withdrawal. In 1976, **Morocco** and Mauritania moved to divide the territory between them, although Mauritania renounced its claim three years later.

Neighboring Algeria is the most active supporter of the Polisario and provides the movement with arms and secure military bases around the Algerian desert town of Tindouf.

Seventy-one developing countries, mainly in Africa, recognize the Polisario Front as the government of Western **Sahara**, even though **Morocco** is in firm control of virtually the entire territory, which it has surrounded with a heavily fortified sand **wall**.

As a result, analysts say, the Polisario is in a poor position to press its demand for complete independence. Withdrawal Plan

Under the United Nations plan, officials say, **Morocco** will withdraw about two-thirds of its estimated 150,000 troops from Western **Sahara**. The Polisario will then confine all its forces -estimated by the United Nations to number between 6,000 and 8,000 soldiers - to camp under United Nations supervision. In a third stage, **Morocco** will confine its remaining troops to camp under United Nations supervision, with the United Nations choosing campsites far from polling places.

United Nations officials say their peace plan tries to capitalize on the Polisario's weakness and on growing signs that **Morocco** and Algeria are tired of the war.

The Governments of Algeria and **Morocco**, enemies for decades, are increasingly preoccupied with similar internal problems, diplomats report, including efforts to restructure their economies and pay off huge foreign debts. The two countries restored diplomatic relations in May and then held direct talks in Jidda, Saudi Arabia.

At present, the United Nations plan gives the territory's indigenous people, who number about 400,000, a choice between becoming an independent state and remaining part of **Morocco**.

But United Nations officials are encouraging a compromise giving the people a third choice: a loose form of federation with **Morocco**.

The officials say they are not convinced that **Morocco** would ever completely surrender sovereignty over the territory. But King Hassan is publicly committed to giving regions of his country greater autonomy.

Only those born in Spanish **Sahara** before the last Spanish census in 1974 will be allowed to vote. A special United Nations commission will determine eligibility, officials say.

The Polisario says there are about 170,000 refugees from the territory in camps in Algeria and another 200,000 living in Western **Sahara** itself.

Map of **Morocco** showing location of Western **Sahara** j(NYT)

NS gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE alg : Algeria | moroc : Morocco | spsah : Western Sahara | africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wafrz : West Africa

IPD CIVIL WAR AND GUERRILLA WARFARE

PUB New York Times Digital (Full Text)

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REUTERS

HD **POLISARIO CLAIMS NEW ATTACK IN WESTERN SAHARA.**

WC 172 words

PD 16 September 1988

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

CY (c) 1988 Reuters Limited

LP

TUNIS, Sept 16, Reuter - The Polisario Front said it killed or wounded hundreds of Moroccan troops in an attack on **Morocco**'s defence **wall** in the Western **Sahara** on Friday.

In a communique telexed to Reuters in Tunis, the Front said its forces had also captured Colonel Abdelsalam al-Abidi, the commander of the third regiment of motorised infantry, in the four-hour attack on the Oum Dreiga section of the **wall**.

TD

The reported attack was the first since August 18, when the Polisario said it hit Moroccan forces in the Hawza area near the Mauritanian border.

Morocco and the Polisario have since agreed in principle to U.N. peace proposals for the former Spanish territory.

The U.N. plan envisages a ceasefire and a referendum offering the inhabitants of the Western **Sahara** a choice between independence or integration with **Morocco**, which already controls most of the territory.

The Polisario has linked the ceasefire with Moroccan agreement to direct negotiations, a condition **Morocco** has rejected.

NS gcat : Political/General News | gdip : International Relations | grisk : Risk News | gvio : Military Action

RE africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa | spsah : Western Sahara | wafrz : West Africa

AN Document lba0000020011203dk9g0331n

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The New York Times

SE Foreign Desk; 1
HD **A Call to Vote, Not to Arms, For Polisario**
BY By PAUL DELANEY, Special to the New York Times
WC 827 words
PD 18 September 1988
SN The New York Times
SC NYTF
ED Late City Final Edition
LA English
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LP

MAHBES, Western **Sahara**, Sept. 15 -- The end to a long war for independence for this sparsely populated, largely desert region now hinges on votes, not bullets.

The end to a long war for independence for this sparsely populated, largely desert region now hinges on votes, not bullets.

TD

A local referendum, proposed by the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, on whether the Western **Sahara** should be an independent nation or part of **Morocco** has been accepted by the rebel Polisario Front and by King Hassan II of **Morocco**.

"We will lay down our arms if that is the will of the Saharwi people," said Mohammed Abdaziz, general secretary of the Polisario Front and president of the provisional government of what it calls the Saharwi Arab Democratic Republic.

"If the Saharwi people want a free and independent Western **Sahara**, we will defend that choice," Mr. Abdaziz said. "But if they want to be a colony of **Morocco**'s, we will accept their decision and stop the armed struggle." War Rages for 13 Years

Mr. Abdaziz, who took command after a shuffling of the top leadership last month, said he was confident that the majority would vote for independence.

The Polisario has waged war for 13 years, first against Spain, then Mauritania and **Morocco** after Spain relinquished its colony to the neighboring countries in 1975. Most of the area is wasteland, but it is rich in phosphates and has a lucrative fishery.

Mauritania renounced its claims to the territory in 1979, and the subsequent **Morocco**-Polisario fighting has wound down to a stalemate. **Morocco** has refused direct talks with the Polisario, while the organization rejected a suggestion by King Hassan that the Western **Sahara** become part of a confederation of Moroccan provinces. Both sides agreed late last month to the international peace proposal, which calls for the stationing of a United Nations peacekeeping force and a cease-fire to be negotiated by a United Nations representative who will also oversee the referendum.

At the moment, implementation of the peace plan awaits the appointment of the special representative. Issue of Who Can Vote

One disagreement is over eligibility to vote in the referendum. **Morocco** insists that eligibility be limited to the 74,000 native Saharwi, or Saharans, who were counted in a Spanish census in 1974. The guerrillas say the Saharan population is now more than 200,000.

Another sticking point has been the presence of Moroccan troops, settlers and administrative staff whose numbers are in dispute but total more than 200,000. The Polisario demands that all Moroccan troops and civilians be withdrawn before the referendum, and insists on direct talks with **Morocco** as part of the peace plan. **Morocco** is resisting on both counts.

The agreement on the peace plan was another step in a general relaxation of regional tensions. **Morocco** and Algeria renewed relations in May after 13 years of hostility generated over Algiers' support for the Polisario Front.

Diplomats believe Algeria put pressure on the front to negotiate, but in the interview Mr. Abdaziz denied it. He said he met recently with the Algerian President, Chadli Benjedid, who reaffirmed his support for the front. Softens Stance

But the Polisario chief appeared to soften the guerrillas' stance on the removal of Moroccan troops and civilians from the region. He said a token troop presence, separated by United Nations forces, would be acceptable, and civilians, especially administrators who would be needed in a postwar nation, could remain during the voting, "so long as they are prevented from trying to influence the referendum."

But he said he was concerned with some of the Moroccans who were part of the original group of settlers who took part in the "green march" of civilians that moved in to occupy the territory when Spain abandoned it. He said, "There are some extremist elements, dangerous elements among the settlers who must be controlled." On the other hand, Moroccan officials expressed concern over controlling "Polisario propaganda and influence" during the polling.

The interview with Mr. Abdaziz took place at his underground desert bunker near here, an area where there are no cities, only thousands of people living in tents.

Mr. Abdaziz said his forces continue to fight along the 900-mile **wall** of sand and rocks that the Moroccans completed last year. He said Polisario fighters conduct frequent mortar attacks and commando raids. But diplomats in the region report that the **wall** is practically impregnable.

The Polisario leader said direct negotiations are necessary before a cease-fire and referendum to discuss such questions as prisoners of war and postwar issues, as well as give credibility to the voters that both sides will accept the results. He would not predict when the war would end, saying it depends "on the good will of **Morocco**."

Map of **Morocco** and the Western **Sahara** (NYT)

NS gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE alg : Algeria | moroc : Morocco | spsah : Western Sahara | africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wafrz : West Africa

IPD REFERENDUMS

PUB New York Times Digital (Full Text)

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THE GLOBE AND MAIL

SE News

HD **Battle reported in Western Sahara**

CR Reuter News Agency

WC 394 words

PD 19 September 1988

SN The Globe and Mail

SC GLOB

PG A11

LA English

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LP

Reuter RABAT

Morocco and its Polisario Front guerrilla foes in the Western **Sahara** have reported a major battle less than three weeks after conditionally approving a United Nations peace plan.

TD

Morocco said there were 270 casualties in fierce fighting that raged on Friday around the Oum Dreiga section of **Morocco**'s defensive **wall**.

The Polisario Front, fighting for independence for the Western **Sahara**, a former Spanish colony, said 200 Moroccan soldiers were "put out of action" and 25 taken prisoner in the attack. It said Colonel Abdelsalam Abidi, commander of the third regiment of motorized infantry, was captured and died later of severe wounds.

Polisario communiques were carried by the Algerian APS news agency. Algeria has backed the Marxist-led Polisario Front and allowed it to establish base camps on the Algerian side of the border.

Morocco said the rebels, who normally mount hit-and-run raids at the 1,600-kilometre **wall** surrounding the Moroccan-held territory, committed more than 1,000 men to the battle.

The Moroccan armed forces command rarely comments on Polisario claims, but late on Saturday it announced that 51 Moroccan soldiers were killed and 95 wounded in the fighting.

No mention was made of Col. Abidi. Western diplomats said he was one of **Morocco**'s most experienced field commanders.

In a statement read over state television and carried in yesterday's Le Matin du **Sahara** daily, the Moroccan command said "the mercenaries of the Polisario suffered 124 casualties."

The raid was the first reported fighting since **Morocco** and the Polisario Front agreed on Aug. 30 to UN peace proposals to end the war.

The plan calls for a ceasefire and a referendum offering the inhabitants of the sparsely-populated, barren Western **Sahara** a choice between independence and integration into **Morocco**.

The Polisario attack coincided with an agreement between Algeria and **Morocco** to build a pipeline to carry Algerian natural gas across North Africa to Spain. It is the first major joint enterprise since the two countries restored relations in May after a 12-year rift caused by the Western **Sahara** rebellion.

Since the restoration of relations, not all Polisario communiques have been carried by APS, fuelling speculation that Algiers was ready to ditch the guerrillas. But military and political analysts say large Polisario attacks would have needed Algerian approval.

NS gcat : Political/General News | grisk : Risk News | gvio : Military Action

RE africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa

IPD Morocco

AN Document glob000020011117dk9j01bnf

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The Sydney Morning Herald

SE News and Features

NEW FIGHTING DASHES PEACE HOPES

BY John Hooper
CR The Guardian
WC 543 words
PD 20 September 1988
SN Sydney Morning Herald
SC SMHH
PG 15
LA English
CY Copyright of John Fairfax Group Pty Ltd

LP

MADRID, Monday: Hopes of a speedy end to the war in the Western **Sahara** receded at the weekend as details emerged of a bloody attack by Polisario Front guerillas on a section of the 1,600-kilometre **wall** which the Moroccans have built around the territory they control. Both sides acknowledged that the casualties ran into hundreds.

King Hassan of **Morocco** was reported to have cut short his holiday to return to his palace in Rabat for urgent talks with his advisers.

TD

It was the first clash since August 30, when Moroccan and Polisario Front representatives agreed in principle to a United Nations-inspired peace plan.

In the wake of the UN's successful mediation in Afghanistan and the Gulf, the deal encouraged expectations that a third, seemingly interminable, conflict was within sight of a resolution.

Although many of the details remain secret, the UN proposals are known to envisage a cease-fire followed by a referendum that would allow the inhabitants of the Western **Sahara** to choose between independence and integration in **Morocco**.

The Algerian-backed Polisario Front has been fighting for 12 years for control of the former Spanish colony which is now largely occupied by **Morocco**

Last Friday's battle, at the Oum Dreiga section of the **wall**, appeared to have been the fiercest this year.

The Moroccan Armed Forces Command said in a statement that 51 Moroccan soldiers were killed and 95 wounded in two hours of fighting that inflicted 124 casualties on the Polisario side. The Polisario claimed that 200 Moroccan troops had been "put out of action" and 25 taken prisoner.

A Polisario statement carried by the Algerian news agency said that the prisoners included Colonel Abdelsalam al-Abidi, commander of the 3rd Motorised Infantry Regiment, who later died of his wounds. Western diplomats in Rabat described him as one of **Morocco**'s most experienced field commanders.

The Moroccan Armed Forces Command said in a statement that the Polisario had attacked with a mechanised infantry battalion, consisting of 30 armoured personnel carriers backed by heavy artillery, and two other infantry battalions. Polisario battalions consist of about 350 guerillas each.

The statement added that the Polisario was equipped for the first time with Soviet SPG-9 anti-tank missiles.

The attack may have been mounted to press home the Front's demands for face-to-face negotiations, which **Morocco** rejects. Two encounters are reported to have taken place - one in Lisbon in 1985 and the other in Saudi Arabia last month. But neither has ever been acknowledged by Rabat.

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However, there was also speculation that the battle was intended to tell Rabat and the worldthat the Front can inflict damage without the support of Algeria. Observers in Madrid said that, to attack the **wall** at that point, the guerillas would have had to have set off from Mauritania, rather than from their camps in southern Algeria.

The UN peace plan was launched following the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between **Morocco** and Algeria in May after a 12-year break. Friday's fighting coincided with the announcement that the two countries had agreed in principle to run a gas pipeline from Algeria through **Morocco** to Spain.

AN Document smhh000020011117dk9k01ue1

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FT FINANCIAL TIMES

HD **Talks Standstill Sparked Western Sahara Battle**

BY By FRANCIS GHILES

WC 312 words

PD 21 September 1988

SN Financial Times

SC FTFT

PG International Page 5

LA English

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LP

Negotiations aimed at settling the 13-year Western **Sahara** conflict have run into problems because of **Morocco**'s apparent unwillingness to accept a compromise formula aimed at granting autonomy to the territory after a referendum of its inhabitants planned for next year.

These difficulties prompted a guerrilla attack by the Polisario Front last Friday at Oum Dreiga against the 1,000-mile defensive **wall** which surrounds the Moroccan-held territory. The attack killed hundreds, including one of the kingdom's most experienced field commanders, Col Abdesalam al-Abidi.

TD

The same difficulties led two weeks ago to a fierce exchange between Algeria and **Morocco** at a meeting of non-aligned foreign ministers in Nicosia. Against strong Moroccan opposition, Mr Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi of Algeria got the assembly to reaffirm a previous call for direct talks between **Morocco** and Polisario.

On August 30, both parties accepted a plan proposed by Mr Javier Perez de Cuellar, the UN Secretary-General, to end the war and hold a referendum. The UN's hope is that Polisario will renounce its claim to full independence of the former Spanish colony in exchange for Moroccan agreement to grant it a real measure of autonomy. Mr Perez de Cuellar was yesterday pressing ahead with plans to appoint a special representative to oversee a ceasefire and referendum.

Three key problems threaten to cause endless argument. The first concerns who is a genuine Sahrawi: many of the territory's inhabitants took refuge in **Morocco** to avoid Spanish repression in the 1950s, and many others in Algeria when **Morocco** overran the territory in 1975-76. The two others relate to King Hassan's willingness to withdraw some of the 100,000 troops at present there, let alone remove some of the more 'political' elements of his administration in the run up to a referendum.

NS gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE alg : Algeria | moroc : Morocco | spsah : Western Sahara | africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wafrz : West Africa

PUB The Financial Times Limited (AAIW/EIW)

AN Document FTFT000020070428dk9l0161r

The New York Times

SE Foreign Desk; 1

HD **Moroccans Say Attack Won't Derail Peace Effort**

BY By PAUL DELANEY, Special to the New York Times

WC 599 words

PD 25 September 1988

SN The New York Times

SC NYTF

ED Late City Final Edition

LA English

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LP

RABAT, **Morocco**, Sept. 24 -- Moroccan officials say they are determined not to let a major attack by Polisario guerrillas upset plans for a United Nations-sponsored negotiation to end the war in Western **Sahara**.

Moroccan officials say they are determined not to let a major attack by Polisario guerrillas upset plans for a United Nations-sponsored negotiation to end the war in Western **Sahara**.

TD

More than 200 combatants may have been killed last weekend in the battle in Western **Sahara**, where the Polisario Front has waged a 13-year war for an independent state. **Morocco** claims sovereignty over the mostly desert territory, the former Spanish **Sahara**.

The fighting and its aftermath produced several surprises: The battle featured the first use in the conflict of a Soviet-made missile that proved to be deadly and efficient; it prompted an acknowledgment by **Morocco** of major battle losses, and it occurred as the United Nations was putting into place a peace plan accepted by both sides. Relations Restored

Western diplomats, Moroccan officials and private citizens interviewed the last few days agreed that **Morocco** was determined not to let the attack disrupt renewed relations with Algeria, the Polisario's main supporter, or interfere with prospects of ending the economically draining war or King Hassan's aim of playing a bigger role in North African affairs.

Diplomatic relations between Algeria and **Morocco**, cut off at the outset of the war, were re-established in May. There are growing mutual benefits to the renewal of relations. For example, the two sides agreed last weekend to construct a pipeline to carry Algerian gas across **Morocco** to Western Europe, the biggest enterprise between the nations so far.

"The Polisario seems to be saying, look, we are still a force capable of inflicting great damage; you've got to deal with us," a senior Western diplomat said. "But the striking thing is **Morocco**'s reaction, or nonreaction, to Algeria. Neither the press nor the Government is pointing the finger at Algeria as responsible for the Polisario. But officials we've talked to are very angry at the Algerians and feel they should better control the Polisario." 'Kind of a Poker Game'

Officials contend that the attack was an attempt by the Polisario to put more pressure on King Hassan II for direct negotiations, which he has rejected, and to put the guerrillas in a stronger bargaining position for the peace talks.

The fight last weekend was near the Oum Dreiga section of a "**wall** of sand" built by **Morocco** as a **barrier** between territory it controls and that of the Polisario.

Diplomats said the Moroccans were surprised by the effectiveness of the attack and use of the missile, the SPG-9. That may be an explanation for publicizing the incident.

"This time they may have wanted to demonstrate that another piece of Soviet equipment had been introduced at the same time the peace process was going on, the incongruity of it all, to them," the senior diplomat said.

The attack was criticized by the State Department for that reason.

Under the United Nations peace plan, promoted in conjunction with the Organization of African Unity, both sides have agreed to a cease-fire and referendum by the citizens of Western **Sahara**, supervised by the United Nations.

The Security Council this week approved a recommendation to name a special representative to oversee the carrying out of the plan.

Map of **Morocco** indicating attack by Polisario guerrillas near Oum Driega. (NYT)

NS gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE alg : Algeria | moroc : Morocco | spsah : Western Sahara | africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wafrz : West Africa

IPD CIVIL WAR AND GUERRILLA WARFARE

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The Washington Post

SE A SECTION

HD **W. Sahara War Nears an End; Morocco, Guerrillas Agree to Peace Plan**

BY Edward Cody

CR Washington Post Foreign Service

WC 1,312 words

PD 25 September 1988

SN The Washington Post

SC WP

ED FINAL

PG a01

LA English

CY (Copyright 1988)

LP

After thousands of lost lives and millions of dollars in spent treasure, one of the world's most remote and least-noticed wars seems to be coming to an end after sputtering along in the **Sahara** Desert for the past 13 years.

The war, waged along an unusual 1,200-mile sand **barrier** equipped with electronic sensors, has matched **Morocco**'s U.S.-supplied Army against Bedouin guerrillas who have used armored vehicles to mount lightning raids in Western **Sahara** from sanctuaries in Algeria.

TD

But now, with their recent acceptance of a U.N. peace plan, the guerrillas' long crusade for an independent Saharan state appears to have entered a new phase.

The plan calls for an early cease-fire to be followed by a referendum in which this region's desert tribesmen will be asked whether they want independence or affiliation with **Morocco** under King Hassan II.

The agreement, announced by U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar in Geneva on Aug. 30, grew out of pressure from Arab rulers, local economic realities and a new North African determination to get along. But it also fit into a lengthening string of U.N.-sponsored peace negotiations-stretching from Afghanistan through the Persian Gulf to Angola-that have raised hopes for the resolution of regional conflicts in an atmosphere of improved U.S.-Soviet relations.

Although many obstacles remain, the Western **Sahara** accord offers this 104,000-square-mile expanse of sand and shrub its best chance for permanent peace since Spain's colonial rulers ceded sovereignty in 1975 to **Morocco** and Mauritania, ignoring demands for independence from the guerrillas' group, Polisario, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saqiet al-Hamra and Rio de Oro.

Mauritania, its tiny Army unable to repulse Polisario attacks, gave up its claim to the region in 1979. Hassan promptly annexed the entire territory of Western **Sahara**, citing ancient tribal fealty to his Alaouite dynasty and resolving never to give in to Polisario's demands.

When they announced their acceptance of the peace plan, Foreign Minister Abdulatif Filali of **Morocco** and Bechir Mustafa, a senior Polisario representative, both expressed reservations. But Moroccan officials and foreign diplomats in Rabat, the capital 600 miles north of here, said signs are mounting that the Polisario cause is about to be sacrificed for a new spirit of amity between **Morocco** and Algeria and an increasing realization in Algiers that military expenditures and political tensions brought on by the war can no longer be sustained.

Hassan and President Chadli Bendjedid of Algeria renewed diplomatic relations last May after a 12-year break. Discreetly forgotten was Algeria's longstanding vow that ties could be restored only if Hassan agreed to negotiate with the Polisario and its Algerian-sponsored government-in-exile, the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic.

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"It was always that solving the **Sahara** problem depended on improving relations with Algeria, and improving relations with Algeria depended on solving the **Sahara** problem," a Moroccan Foreign Ministry official explained. "But now we've decided to move ahead on both problems at the same time."

The new friendship between Rabat and Algiers has come as part of a sudden spurt in efforts to harmonize economic and political relations among the often feuding neighbors of North Africa. The leaders of Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, **Morocco** and Mauritania publicly put aside their perennial quarrels at a summit last June, nudged along by other Arab leaders such as King Fahd of Saudi Arabia.

Since then, five ministerial commissions have been meeting regularly to discuss joint political structures, customs accords, social policies, education and economies. Despite their obvious differences, the five leaders have decided to meet again soon to review work by the commissions.

The spirit of good neighborliness suffered a jolt Sept. 16, however, when a force of approximately 1,000 Polisario guerrillas attacked a section of the sand defensive **wall** at Oum Draiga, 200 miles southeast of Al Ayoun. The attack, in which **Morocco** said 51 of its soldiers died, was the first major assault since Hassan and Bendjedid began the reconciliation process in the spring of 1987 at a meeting arranged by Fahd.

Last week, Hassan dispatched his top foreign affairs adviser, Ahmed Reda Guedira, along with Filali and Interior Minister Driss Basri, to seek an explanation from Bendjedid. Moroccan officials have long believed Polisario guerrillas are unable to operate without arms and logistical assistance from the Algerian military.

A knowledgeable diplomat said the guerrilla forces moved south from bases near Tindouf, Algeria, and crossed the unprotected Mauritanian desert in small groups of armored vehicles before regrouping at the last moment and launching the concentrated attack. As it has since it was completed several years ago, the series of defensive barriers enclosing two-thirds of the area kept the fighting far from Western **Sahara**'s population centers along the Atlantic coast and the phosphate mines of Boukra.

The attacking force amounted to one-third of the Polisario's total fighting strength of 4,000, according to Moroccan estimates. U.N. estimates, however, place the number at more than 6,000. The Polisario itself claims an overall guerrilla and supply force of 12,000.

In any case, the guerrillas have been unable to penetrate the defense line in force since Hassan's 100,000-man Army completed the long fortification system and installed U.S.-supplied sensor devices. The kingdom has received extensive Saudi financing for the war effort, along with U.S. aid amounting to $53 million for military purchases and $91.3 million for economic support in fiscal 1988.

In Moroccan eyes, the Polisario acceptance of a U.N. referendum has set the stage for an endorsement of Hassan's rule and long-awaited international recognition. The appointed governor of Al Ayoun Province, Salah Zemreg, asserted that 99 percent of the region's 164,000 residents consider themselves Moroccan.

"Internationally and diplomatically, you can do a lot of things, but you can't change blood ties," he said in a conversation with foreign reporters.

Zemreg's reference to diplomacy reflected Moroccan irritation at Algeria's success in helping the Polisario government-in-exile win recognition from 71 governments, chiefly in African and other Third World nations.

But in the U.N. accord, **Morocco** and the Polisario agreed to use a census drawn up by the Spanish in 1974 as a basis for the referendum. That count showed 73,000 native-born residents, mostly nomads. Both sides have recognized a need to update it, but there is deep disagreement how that should be done.

The Polisario previously had insisted that the more than 100,000 refugees under its control around Tindouf, Algeria, and thousands of Saharans living in northern **Morocco** should be part of the electorate. These people, many of whom fled Spanish colonial authorities or fighting between Polisario and Moroccan forces, have formed the guerrilla group's recruit pool and followed its pan-Arab vision of a leftist Saharan state.

Local leaders said tribal chieftains know blood lines and family ties well enough to identify those born in the **Sahara** before 1974 no matter where they are now. Sidi Mahmoud Khalifi, an Arousim tribal dignitary who works as an electrician, said many Polisario refugees "were born outside our borders, and they are still outside our borders."

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To reinforce such tribal loyalty, the Moroccan government has invested heavily in Western **Sahara** since taking control upon Spain's departure. Provincial authorities said more than $1 billion has been spent in the Al Ayoun area alone.

This town, numbering about 93,000 residents, boasts 24 new schools and a new port. **Morocco** has also built 1,300 miles of new roads, sections of which have to be graded daily to keep off the encroaching sands.

ART Map,,Larry Fogel

RE africaz : Africa | alg : Algeria | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | spsah : Western Sahara | wafrz : West Africa

IPD NEWS FOREIGN

AN Document wp00000020011118dk9p0140a

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The Sydney Morning Herald

SE News and Features

HD RABAT REFUSES TO BE DRAWN BY POLISARIO BAIT

BY Paul Delaney
CR The New York Times
WC 363 words
PD 26 September 1988
SN Sydney Morning Herald
SC SMHH
PG 14
LA English
CY Copyright of John Fairfax Group Pty Ltd

LP

RABAT, Sunday: Moroccan officials say they are determined not to let a major attack by Polisario guerillas upset plans for a United Nations-sponsored negotiation to end the war in Western **Sahara**.

More than 200 people may have been killed last weekend in the battle in Western **Sahara**, where the Polisario Front has waged a 13-year-war for an independent State. **Morocco** claims sovereignty over the mostly desert territory, formerly Spanish **Sahara**.

TD

The battle featured the first use in the conflict of a Soviet-made missile that proved deadly and efficient. It also prompted an acknowledgment by **Morocco** of major battle losses, and happened as the UN was implementing a peace plan accepted by both sides.

Sources said **Morocco** was determined not to let the attack disrupt renewed relations with Algeria, the Polisario's main supporter, or interfere with prospects of ending the costly war.

Relations between Algeria and **Morocco**, severed at the outset of the war, were re-established in May and there are growing mutual benefits for the two countries. For example, the two sides agreed last weekend to build a pipeline to carry Algerian gas across **Morocco** to Western Europe, their biggest combined enterprise so far.

"The Polisario seems to be saying, 'look, we are still a force capable of inflicting great damage, you've got to deal with us'," a senior Western diplomat said.

"Neither the Moroccan press nor the Government is pointing the finger at Algeria as responsible, but people we've talked to are angry at the Algerians and feel they should better control the Polisario."

The fight last weekend was near the Oum Dreiga section of a "**wall** of sand"built by **Morocco** as a **barrier** between territory it controls and that of the Polisario.

Diplomats said the Moroccans were surprised by the effectiveness of the attack and use of the missile, the SPG-9. That may be an explanation for publicising the incident.

Under the UN plan, both sides have agreed to a cease-fire and referendum by the citizens of Western **Sahara**, supervised by the UN.

AN Document smhh000020011117dk9q01v5k

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FT FINANCIAL TIMES

HD **Polisario Weighs Up War And Compromise With Hassan: Supporters of a deal with Morocco contend with the temptation to use force**

BY By FRANCIS GHILES

WC 959 words

PD 13 October 1988

SN Financial Times

SC FTFT

PG International Page 5

LA English

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LP

On Friday September 16, one of the fiercest North African battles in years took place around the Oum Draiga section of the 1,000 mile **wall** which surrounds the Moroccan held section of the Western **Sahara**.

The Polisario, which has been fighting for 13 years for the independence of this former Spanish colony, threw 2,500 guerrillas, two motorised light infantry battalions and one mechanised infantry battalion against the Moroccan defences. More than 250 Moroccan soldiers and Polisario guerrillas were killed or wounded and The Forces Armees Royales lost Colonel Abdesalam El Abidi, one of King Hassan's most experienced field commanders.

TD

That such a battle should occur less than three weeks after a United Nations peace plan was accepted conditionally by the two parties to the conflict, suggested to many observers that negotiations were going badly and might even be on the verge of breaking down.

Such a pessimistic reading was reinforced by the fierce exchange between Algeria and **Morocco** which had taken place, earlier in September, in Nicosia, at a meeting of non-aligned foreign ministers. There was a feeling among certain diplomatic observers that King Hassan of **Morocco** was not prepared to grant the kind of autonomy needed to draw Polisario into giving up its campaign for an independent Western **Sahara**.

Others however are less pessimistic. They argue that as the two parties get down to the nitty gritty of negotiation, there are bound to be clashes.

Polisario's temptation to use force in the hope of winning further concessions from King Hassan must be strong. In particular, the guerrillas would like to get the monarch to agree to direct and publicly acknowledged talks.

Despite private meetings between both sides, the last of which took place in July, in the Saudi summer resort of Taef under the aegis of Mr Ali Ben Moussalem, the Saudi monarch's adviser on North African affairs, King Hassan has remained adamant his advisers will not negotiate directly with people the Moroccans have always branded as 'mercenaries.'

The temptation to use force could also be encouraged by some in the Algerian military high command, although last week's bloody riots in Algeria will have weakened that country's diplomatic hand. Algeria has been Polisario's most stalwart ally since 1975 but no one doubts the sincerity of President Chadli Bendjedid in wishing to find an honourable solution to the conflict. Algeria would not have renewed diplomatic links with **Morocco** last May had its leadership not reached a consensus on this point.

This battle may also be the result of the divisions within the Polisario leadership about whether an accommodation with the kingdom is desirable. In recent weeks, there have been two reshuffles of ministerial portfolios in the Government of the Republique Arabe Saharaouie Democratique (RASD), which is recognised by 71, mostly third world, countries.

The position of people such as Mr Bachir Mustapha Sayed, Polisario's foreign affairs specialist and key negotiator with the UN and Mr Mohamed Sidati, the new minister of foreign affairs has been reinforced. They argue that Polisario has fought long and hard to gain recognition for the notion of Saharawi, but

accept that the likelihood of creating a new state is remote. Therefore an honourable compromise with **Morocco** is worth seeking.

However Mr Brahim Ghali, the man who for 13 years has been in charge of military operations, remains - a clear indication that Polisario is not giving up the possibility of using military pressure.

The ascendancy of those who hope to find a compromise is nonetheless demonstrated by Polisario's acceptance that the Spanish census of 1974 should be accepted as the proper basis from which to prepare a referendum.

This meant Polisario discarding the argument about the tens of thousands of Saharawis who had taken refuge in **Morocco** to avoid Spanish repression in the 1950s and 1960s. For that matter it would be impossible to register those Saharawis who for decades have lived in Algeria, Mauritania, Mali and Niger, let alone enable them to vote.

Considerations of regional equilibrium also matter. Were the RASD to become independent, its first act would no doubt be to forge a federation with Mauritania, where the balance between the dominant northern Moors and the black population in the south, many of whom were, until recently, virtual slaves, is very fragile. Neighbouring Senegal is sympathetic to its black brethren across the border and is thus indirectly involved. Such arguments all militate in favour of a Polisario compromise with **Morocco**.

Another issue concerns King Hassan's willingness to grant a measure of autonomy to the 'Saharan provinces' if and when the tens of thousands of Saharawis refugees now living in camps south of Tindouf return in the event of a referendum which favours **Morocco**. The King has declared that what counts for him is 'the flag and the postage stamp'.

He has also indicated a wish to leave his successor a country of landers built on the German model. Such words hold promise, but questions remain. What guarantees is the monarch able to offer Polisario, or the UN, that he will hold to his word?

The next few weeks will provide some answers. The UN Secretary General, Mr Javier Peres de Cuellar, is shortly due to appoint a special adviser to oversee the organisation of a referendum.

Only when a date for a ceasefire is announced will those who have followed this intractable conflict have a measure of real confidence in the peaceful settlement of a crisis which has pitted the Maghreb's two most powerful nations, Algeria and **Morocco** against each other for over one decade.

NS gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE alg : Algeria | moroc : Morocco | spsah : Western Sahara | africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wafrz : West Africa

PUB The Financial Times Limited (AAIW/EIW)

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The Sydney Morning Herald

SE News and Features

HD MOROCCO SET TO REAP DESERT'S REWARD

BY Paul Delaney
CR The New York Times
WC 970 words
PD 5 November 1988
SN Sydney Morning Herald
SC SMHH
PG 36
LA English
CY Copyright of John Fairfax Group Pty Ltd

LP

JOUMANE Taib, the manager of a local ice-making plant, beamed as his workers pulled one slab of ice after another from a machine.

"Ice made right here in the desert," he said.

TD

Outside, under a scorching sun, he pointed to a building that, when completed, will produce fish meal and canned fish, the backbone of a developing fish industry. The construction here in Aiun and elsewhere along the Atlantic coast is the beginning of the region's first industrial park.

Progress is evident in this town, the capital of Western **Sahara**, although it is still essentially a military garrison. **Morocco** has invested $US1 billion($A1.25 billion) since 1976, and it plans to spend $US400 million more on ports and industry in the next seven years, a display of just how seriously **Morocco** takes its portion of the partitioned Western **Sahara**.

The Moroccans have created towns like this one along the dunes where the desert gently touches the sea. The spending represents an effort to legit-imise their assertion of sovereignty over this phosphate-producing territory, a claim disputed by the Polisario Front, a rebel group that has fought for nearly 20 years for an independent State.

Moroccan maps do not show Western **Sahara**, only an elongated **Morocco**. The old borders from the days of the Spanish **Sahara**, which Moroccans refer to as"artificial boundaries", are marked by a monument.

There are new hospitals, schools, factories, houses and roads. Aiun is a bustling town of 120,000, said Saleh Zemrag, the Moroccan Governor of Aiun Province. There are 170,000 people in the region. Although statistics on Western **Sahara** are subject to question, there is no disputing that urban life has sprung up in the heart of the desert.

The Moroccan investment apparently is paying off. Most of the people seem to support the territorial claim of King Hassan II, the Moroccan ruler, and consider themselves Moroccan.

The test will come soon, in a United Nations-supervised referendum that will ask Western Saharans, or Saharwis, which they prefer: integration with **Morocco** or an independent country.

"We are Moroccan," said Sniba Brahim, a jewellery shop owner who descended from the nomadic tribes that roamed the desert with their sheep, goats and camels. "There is no doubt about that. We will carry the vote."

Both **Morocco** and the Polisario guerillas have said they will abide by the outcome of the referendum.

About two-thirds of this former Spanish territory is controlled by **Morocco** and the rest by the Polisario. A **wall** of sand and stone, studded with electronic sensors installed by **Morocco**, separates the regions.

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Both sides are confident of winning the vote, perhaps explaining why each insists that it will abide by the result. But each side also says the other will find an excuse to undermine the referendum.

"I'm more than optimistic," Zemrag said. "I'm certain the war will end, and in our favour. The majority of the Saharwis reside here and have prospered under King Hassan's leadership."

But Zemrag and others said that if the majority voted for nationhood they would accept the results, and they cite Hassan himself, who said **Morocco** would be the first country to establish an embassy in Western **Sahara**. And some Moroccans are worried.

"They say they're for us and we believe most are, but you can't trust what they might do once in the voting booth," a government official said.

The leaders of Tarfaya, a town of 9,000 about 100 kilometres north of Aiun, say they are Moroccan and plan to vote to remain a province. Sebar Mohammed, the chief of the town council, said: "We and our fathers fought the French, Spanish and other oppressors, but we never regarded the Moroccans as the oppressor."

Many here contend that the people in Polisario territory were forced to join the rebels in a conspiracy by the departing Spaniards and the Algerians, who have supported the guerillas over the years. A few here are bitter about the longtime division and the war.

There are great contrasts between the two sectors of Western **Sahara**. The Polisario-controlled region is much worse off than the Moroccan part. Thousands of Saharwis live in tent cities in the desert, scratching out a meagre living.

On this side of the **wall**, **Morocco** controls the land and the cities. Backed by an army of 100,000 equipped with advanced American and French weapons, settlers and administrators have built viable communities.

They measure progress by contrasting what is here now with what was here when Spain gave up its claim in 1975. They point to the new 1,900-kilometre paved road as superior to the one it replaced, which was built by the Spanish and still runs alongside the new highway. They show off new school buildings and then take visitors to a boarded-up tin structure left by the Spanish. They boast about the new housing.

"Before independence there was a small hospital, actually a clinic, with only two departments," said Moulay Hassan, administrator of the Bel Mehdi Hospital. In his new hospital, clean and well-equipped, some units have advanced computer technology.

The contrast with the nomadic past is striking. Beyond the factories a camel caravan will appear on the horizon. In the middle of the desert a tent will spring up with a Peugeot or Renault parked outside.

"The nomadic spirit still exists, not for a living but as a matter of choice, of culture," said Yadih Bouchaab, an aide to the Governor.

"There is a feeling of a need to get out of the city, to get away from things, go to the desert for space, to breathe fresh air and drink camel milk."

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The Sydney Morning Herald

SE News and Features

HD **TALKS RAISE HOPES FOR PEACE IN WEST SAHARA**

BY RICHARD DOWDEN

CR The Independent

WC 367 words

PD 6 January 1989

SN Sydney Morning Herald

SC SMHH

PG 7

LA English

CY Copyright of John Fairfax Group Pty Ltd

LP

LONDON, Thursday: King Hassan met leading members of the Polisario Front in Marrakesh yesterday, according to reports from **Morocco**. The talks could represent a breakthrough in the search for an end to the 13-year war over the Western **Sahara**.

The Polisario delegation was led by Bachir Mustapha Sayed, the movement's second-in-command. The other members were Mahfoud Ali Beiba, the Prime Minister of the Saharwi Arab Democratic Republic proclaimed by Polisario in 1976, and Bachir Ghali, the Defence Minister, according to Agence France-Presse.

TD

No official statement was made about the meeting. It is understood that the talks were also attended by the Moroccan Interior Minister, Driss Basri. Algeria's APS news agency said that the meeting, the first of its kind, "in itself constitutes an event in so far as it could lay the foundations of direct negotiations between the parties to the conflict in the Western **Sahara**".

The meeting, which represents a big concession by the King, had been expected since he indicated last month that he was ready to meet Polisario representatives "to discuss, but not to negotiate". He had persistently refused to meet the Polisario leadership, which the Moroccans say does not even come from the territory. Polisario had made direct negotiation a condition of peace.

The struggle for the barren desert territory is a battle between reality and legality. **Morocco** is seeking to legitimise its seizure in 1975 of the former Spanish colony, claiming it as part of the lost Moroccan kingdom. No other country recognises its claim.

Polisario, backed by Algeria, declared the territory independent, calling it the Saharwi Arab Democratic Republic, a reality which only exists in the sprawling refugee camps around Tindouf, in western Algeria. The Moroccans built a defensive sand **wall** around most of the territory, excluding Polisario and limiting its fighters to hit-and-run raids. But the Saharwi state is recognised by more than 70 countries, which support Polisario's demand for Moroccan withdrawal and a referendum on the territory's future.

Both sides accepted a United Nations peace plan in August, but they disagree over its implementation.

AN Document smhh000020011117dl16001fx

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THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

SE WORLD

HD **Morocco Winning Hearts and Minds. Rabat's liberal spending in disputed territory woos residents away from Polisario. WESTERN SAHARA: FROM WAR TO REFERENDUM**

BY George D. Moffett III, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

WC 1,086 words

PD 12 April 1989

SN The Christian Science Monitor

SC CHSM

PG 3

LA English

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LP

RISING out of the rocky, windswept Saharan desert, La'Youn's ornate public buildings, five-star hotels, and 30,000-seat sports stadium seem dramatically out of context.

Fifteen years ago this former capital of the Spanish **Sahara**, one of Spain's two African colonies, was little more than a rude frontier village.

TD

Transformed by nearly $1 billion in Moroccan aid, it is now a gleaming model city of 90,000 - and a symbol of the sophisticated tactics that have brought **Morocco** to the brink of victory in its 13- year war against Algerian-backed guerrillas to gain permanent control of the Colorado-sized swath of desert on which La'Youn sits.

"The Polisario movement has had it," says long-time **Morocco**-based journalist Stephen Hughes of the imperiled fortunes of the guerrilla movement that has been fighting to make the Western **Sahara** an independent nation. "It's all over but the shouting."

Citing historical rights going back to the 11th century, **Morocco** annexed the Western **Sahara** in 1976.

To make good on its claim of sovereignty - which no country recognizes yet - **Morocco** has fought a costly war against the Polisario rebels, who operate from bases clustered around the Algerian border town of Tindouf.

Simultaneously, **Morocco** has sought to win the hearts and minds of residents of the Western **Sahara** against the day, perhaps not far off, when they will vote either for independence or affiliation with **Morocco**.

Following the massive transfusion of Moroccan aid that has made La'Youn a showcase in the wilderness and its citizens the beneficiaries of free education and health care, the outcome seems hardly in doubt.

"We're part of **Morocco**. We always have been. We always will be," says one college-age La'Youn resident, speaking in the presence of a Moroccan official.

New highways and TV hookups with the north have largely completed what one Western source calls "Moroccanizing" the Western **Sahara**, making its incorporation nearly a fait accompli.

In the long war of bullets and words, the guerrillas have charged that two-thirds of residents of the Western **Sahara** are Moroccan immigrants who, under **Morocco**'s own suggested guidelines, would be barred from voting in a proposed United Nations-sponsored referendum. Moroccans respond that most Polisario leaders are themselves Moroccan- born, diluting claims that the Polisario is an authentic national liberation movement.

At stake is a region rich in phosphates (used in fertilizers), and largely untapped fishing resources off its long Atlantic coast.

The Polisario's position was bolstered by a 1975 decision by the International Court of Justice denying **Morocco**'s claim of sovereignty over the Western **Sahara**.

Meanwhile, some 71 countries, most African, have recognized the Polisario's government-in-exile, the Saharan Democratic Arab Republic, as the legal government of the disputed area.

But legal and diplomatic support have been insufficient to offset **Morocco**'s preponderate military might.

Morocco has used its estimated 120,000 troops to construct a 1,200- mile **wall** of sand and barbed wire that now encloses 80 percent of the Western **Sahara**. The desert **wall** has cut off the estimated force of 4,000-8,000 guerrillas from the population it purports to represent.

The resulting stalemate has opened the door to diplomacy. Last year, the UN tabled a plan calling for a cease-fire, the dispatching of an interim peacekeeping force, and an eventual plebiscite to allow the 120,000 inhabitants of the Western **Sahara** to decide their own future.

The UN is now working on the details of holding a referendum. **Morocco**'s King Hassan II met with Polisario representatives twice in February. A third meeting was postponed but is expected to be rescheduled.

One sticking point has been the modalities of the voting. The Polisario has insisted that Moroccan troops and administrators evacuate the territory in advance of a referendum, arguing that no fair election can be held if the region is under occupation.

Such proposals have been greeted in **Morocco** with universal disdain. "In other words, abandon the provinces and allow the rebels to install themselves in the vacuum," said Abd Ar-Rahim Bouabid, leader of the opposition Socialist Union party, at a public meeting.

In the end, the question of modalities may prove academic as the vital life signs of the guerrilla movement grow weaker.

One Western military source notes that while in 1987 the guerrillas mounted major offensives to penetrate the desert **wall** every six to eight weeks, only three such attacks occurred last year while none has been launched in 1989.

Meanwhile, the absence among Western Saharans of anything like the nationalist feelings that have fueled the Palestinian uprising against Israel is suggested by the fact that in 13 years no terrorist attack has been launched against Moroccan soldiers in the Western **Sahara** or targets inside **Morocco**.

The most recent blow to the Polisario's hopes was delivered last spring when Algeria restored relations with **Morocco** and later joined **Morocco** and three other countries in signing a treaty calling for greater Maghreb (North African) political and economic unity.

While Algeria still provides staunch rhetorical support to the movement it claims is the only authentic voice of the Western Saharan people, few doubt that the Polisario cause has now been sacrificed to larger interests.

Unconfirmed reports from Western sources indicate that Algeria is now recalling arms given to the guerrillas.

Moroccan and Western sources assume the existence of a tacit agreement by Algerian President Chadli Benjedid to withdraw support from the rebels and allow the UN to get on with negotiating a political settlement.

"It's a death sentence for the Polisario," says one Moroccan source of the treaty signed between Algiers and Rabat.

In La'Youn, meanwhile, where Moroccan money has largely settled the matter of political loyalties, the war now sputtering to an apparent conclusion seems a distant matter.

"More people talk about fishing, business, and football," says a construction worker. "The war, that's just something we read about in the newspapers."

ART PHOTO: R. NORMAN MATHENY - STAFF; LA'YOUN: A slum was razed to make way for these new homes, which **Morocco** provides rent-free to residents. MAP: SHIRLEY HORN - STAFF; Western **Sahara** and **Morocco**, highlighting the 1,200-mile **wall** of sand and barbed wire that now encloses 80 percent of the Western **Sahara**

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NS c12 : Corporate Crime/Legal/Judicial | ccat : Corporate/Industrial News | gcat : Political/General News | gcrim : Crime/Courts

RE africa : | africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | med : | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafr : | nafrz : North Africa

IPD United Nations

PUB Christian Science Monitor

AN Document chsm000020011116dl4c0006v

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The INDEPENDENT

HD **Clashes disrupt peace moves in Western Sahara.**

BY By Richard Dowden, Africa Editor

WC 419 words

PD 13 October 1989

SN The Independent - London

SC IND

PG 9

LA English

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LP

The war in the Western **Sahara**, dormant for 12 months after an informal ceasefire, has burst into life again with two attacks in the past five days by Polisario guerrillas on the Moroccan **wall** dividing the territory.

**FULL_TEXT The Moroccans claim to have killed 101 Polisario guerrillas and lost 11 dead and 10 wounded in Wednesday's battle near the border with Mauritania. Polisario claims to have killed 180 Moroccans and wounded 150. It gave no figures for its own losses.

TD

Last week **Morocco** claimed it had killed or wounded 80 Polisario guerrillas and had lost 14 soldiers, including a colonel, when Polisario attacked its defences near the Mauritanian border.

For the past 13 years Polisario, operating in jeeps across the semi-desert, has mounted surprise attacks on the huge sand **wall** which runs across the country. Braving the minefields, guerrillas capture Moroccan soldiers and equipment and retire into the desert.

In February a ceasefire was established after King Hassan met Polisario leaders for the first time. Meanwhile Algeria, Polisario's main backer, restored diplomatic relations with **Morocco** and signed a regional co-operation pact with **Morocco**, Mauritania and Tunisia. The advantages of regional economic co-operation appeared to outweigh obligations of shared ideology.

Morocco claims the former Spanish colony as Moroccan territory. Polisario, representing many of its inhabitants, claims it is an independent country. Both sides have agreed in principle to a referendum on the future of the territory, and the United Nations has been trying to achieve agreement on its details but, despite concessions by Polisario, little progress has been made.

A follow-up meeting between the movement and the king never materialised, and after the two clashes on the border King Hassan has called off a second meeting.

"Hassan is not serious," said Malainine Sadik, a member of the political bureau of Polisario, in London this week. "If he was he would sit down at the negotiating table with us."

This view was reflected by one observer in Rabat, who said: "He [King Hassan] has so clearly been playing for time. I think the Algerians have been angry with him for some time and are prepared to let Polisario have a free hand."

Frustrated by the delay in the peace talks, Polisario has resumed fighting and claims to have occupied 10 miles of the Moroccan lines. But without new supplies from Algeria it is doubtful whether it can sustain an offensive for long.

NS gcat : Political/General News | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gdip : International Relations | ghome : Law Enforcement | grisk : Risk News | gvio : Military Action

RE africaz : Africa | alg : Algeria | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | maurtn : Mauritania | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa | wafrz : West Africa

AN Document ind0000020011129dlad00p8z

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THE TIMES

SE Overseas news

HD **Polisario desert battle;Western Sahara;Morocco**

BY Sausn MacDonald

WC 113 words

PD 13 October 1989

SN The Times

SC T

LA English

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LP

Paris - The Polisario Front, fighting for independence for the Western **Sahara**, has announced a second desert battle in four days against Moroccan forces.

Polisario claimed 200 Moroccan soldiers had been killed during a battle last we ekend after which King Hassan refused to hold a second meeting with Polisario le aders. An estimated 200,000 Moroccan troops are deployed in the former Spanish c olony, mainly manning a 1,560-mile **wall**. **Morocco** has acknowledged both attacks s aying 80 polisario fighters were killed or wounded last weekend, compared with 1 4 Moroccan soldiers killed, including a colonel.

TD

(c) Times Newspapers Ltd, 1989

NS gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE moroc : Morocco | spsah : Western Sahara | africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wafrz : West Africa

PUB News International Associated Services Limited

AN Document T000000020051004dlad01mmj

REUTERS

HD **MOROCCO SAYS 45 OF ITS SOLDIERS KILLED IN SAHARA BATTLE.**

WC 413 words

PD 8 November 1989

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

CY (c) 1989 Reuters Limited

LP

RABAT, Nov 8, Reuter - **Morocco** said 45 of its soldiers were killed and 56 wounded in fierce fighting with Polisario guerrillas in the disputed Western **Sahara** on Wednesday.

The Information Ministry, in a statement carried by the official news agency MAP, said a "particularly hard" battle in the Amgala region of the former Spanish colony lasted for more than three hours.

TD

It said 87 guerrillas were killed.

Earlier, a military communique from Polisario telexed to Reuters in Algiers said that in the dawn attack the guerrillas occupied a 25-km (16-mile) stretch of a defensive **wall** built by **Morocco**.

The Polisario communique said Moroccan troops were chased 22 km (14 miles) into Moroccan-held territory.

The latest battle is the third in the last month after a one-year lull.

On October 7 and 11, Polisario said as many as 200 Moroccans, including one colonel, were killed in separate attacks at Gueltat Zemmour and Hawza. **Morocco** confirmed the attacks, but said it lost only 25 men.

Military analysts and diplomats were surprised by the attacks which followed an 18-month period of regional rapprochement in which Polisario's main backer, Algeria, restored diplomatic relations with **Morocco**.

The two countries then joined with Tunisia, Libya and Mauritania to create the Arab Maghreb Union -- intended as a North African equivalent of the European Community.

After the first two attacks, analysts said Polisario would be hard put to launch another major offensive unless it received fresh supplies and said a third attack could create fresh tension in the region.

Polisario has said it is stepping up its military campaign out of frustration over international efforts to settle the 14-year-old conflict.

Both sides have agreed in principle to a U.N.-sponsored referendum on the territory's future, but little progress has been made on withdrawal of Moroccan troops ahead of a vote.

Senior Polisario defectors have called the upsurge in fighting an attempt by the guerrilla group to stay in the public eye and mask internal differences.

King Hassan met a Polisario delegation for talks last January for the first time, but has since declined to hold a second meeting saying there is nothing to discuss.

On October 25, the United Nations decolonisation committee adopted a resolution calling on the two belligerents to show the necessary goodwill to end the conflict and said a continuation of direct talks would contribute to this end.

NS gcat : Political/General News | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gdip : International Relations | ghome : Law Enforcement | grisk : Risk News | gvio : Military Action

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RE africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa

AN Document lba0000020011130dlb800fhy

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REUTERS

HD **POLISARIO REPORTS NEW ATTACK AGAINST MOROCCAN TROOPS.**

WC 175 words

PD 8 November 1989

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

CY (c) 1989 Reuters Limited

LP

ALGIERS, Nov 8, Reuter - Polisario guerrillas said they launched a major new attack against Moroccan defence lines in the Western **Sahara** on Wednesday.

A military communique telexed to Reuters said the dawn attack in the Amgala region killed several Moroccan troops from the Fourth Parachute Battalion and wounded many.

TD

It said the guerrillas occupied a 25 km (16 mile) stretch of a defensive **wall** built by **Morocco** across the mostly desert former Spanish territory and chased Moroccan troops 22 km (14 miles) beyond the **wall**.

The Polisario has stepped up its military campaign in recent weeks out of frustration over the lack of progress in international efforts to settle of the 14-year-old conflict.

The Polisario communique said King Hassan of **Morocco** in a speech on Monday "omitted everything about the evolution of the conflict except his alleged military gains."

Both sides have agreed to a U.N.-sponsored referendum on the territory's future but Polisario, seeking independence, wants Moroccan troops to withdraw before the vote.

NS gcat : Political/General News | gcrim : Crime/Courts | ghome : Law Enforcement

RE africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa

AN Document lba0000020011130dlb800fif

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Associated Press

HD **45 Government Soldiers Reported Killed, 56 Wounded**

WC 173 words

PD 8 November 1989

SN The Associated Press

SC ASP

LA English

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LP

RABAT, **Morocco** (AP) _ A morning attack by Polisario guerrillas in the disputed Western **Sahara** left 45 government soldiers dead and 56 wounded, the Ministry of Information said Wednesday.

The statement released in Rabat confirmed reports from Polisario headquarters in Algiers, Algeria, of heavy fighting early Wednesday between the guerrillas and Moroccan troops.

TD

Morocco claimed 87 guerrillas died in the fighting in the northeastern section of the Western **Sahara**. Polisario released no casualty figures for its fighters.

Both sides claimed to have wounded and taken prisoner unspecified numbers of enemy troops.

The attack took place along 16 miles of the 2,500-mile defensive **wall Morocco** has built around the territory to keep the guerrillas at bay, Polisario said.

The rebels, who operate mostly from camps in Algeria and Mauritania, claimed to have pushed back the 4th Moroccan Parachute Battalion 15 miles.

The guerrillas have battled the Moroccan government of King Hassan II for control of the sparsely populated, mineral-rich territory since Spain withdrew in 1975.

IPD INTERNATIONAL

AN Document asp0000020011116dlb8012o0

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REUTERS

HD **U.N. PLAN FOR FORCE TO MONITOR CEASEFIRE, VOTE IN W.SAHARA.**

BY By Anthony Goodman

WC 534 words

PD 20 June 1990

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

CY (c) 1990 Reuters Limited

LP

UNITED NATIONS, June 20, Reuter - Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar proposed on Wednesday the establishment of a U.N. force to monitor a ceasefire and referendum in Western **Sahara**, where **Morocco** has been battling Polisario Front guerrillas since 1976.

But in a written report to the Security Council he could provide no figures for the size of the force, to comprise civilian, police and military units and to be called the U.N. Mission for the Referendum in Western **Sahara** (MINURSO).

TD

He also said he did not yet have even a preliminary estimate of the cost of the operation in the territory, which Spain evacuated more than 14 years ago.

The referendum is to enable the people of phosphate-rich Western **Sahara** to decide freely between independence, as sought by Polisario, which in the past has enjoyed Algerian support, or integration with **Morocco**, which controls most of the territory.

The two sides agreed in principle in August 1988 on proposals by the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) for a ceasefire and referendum, but details remained to be worked out.

Perez de Cuellar said it was clear the U.N. operation "will be large and complicated."

"There are at present unknown factors and it is not possible at this stage to present to the Council even a preliminary estimate of what the cost will be."

He intended sending a technical mission very soon to the territory and neighbouring countries to refine the administrative aspects of his plan and find out what logistic supplies and support would be available so he could provide a further report giving an estimate of the costs.

When that report was available, he said, he would recommend that the Security Council authorise the immediate establishment of MINURSO, whose costs should be apportioned among all U.N. member states.

When the Council had authorised the setting up of the force, Perez de Cuellar said he would send identical letters to **Morocco** and Polisario proposing a date and time -- called "D-Day" -- for the start of a ceasefire.

This would be about 14 weeks after the despatch of the letters, to ensure that MINURSO's military unit was by then effectively deployed to monitor the ceasefire.

To permit the holding of a referendum without military constraints, **Morocco** had agreed to make "an appropriate, substantial and phased reduction of its troops in the territory," to be completed within 12 weeks of D-Day.

Remaining Moroccan troops, with the exception of certain logistic and support units, would be deployed in static or defensive positions along an existing sand **wall** built by **Morocco** close to the territory's eastern and southern frontiers.

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Polisario troops would be confined to locations to be designated by the secretary general's special representative, who will run the U.N. operation on the ground.

The referendum would be held 24 weeks after the ceasefire went into effect and its results proclaimed within 72 hours, the secretary general proposed.

Perez de Cuellar estimated MINURSO's presence in the territory would last for up to 35 weeks from the start of the ceasefire.

NS gcat : Political/General News | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gdip : International Relations | ghome : Law Enforcement | grisk : Risk News | gvio : Military Action

RE africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa | spsah : Western Sahara | wafrz : West Africa

AN Document lba0000020011128dm6k01pvu

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THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

HD **Western Saharan Peace Prospects Improve, UN Says**

BY Marian Houk, Special to The Christian Science Monitor

WC 616 words
PD 3 July 1990
SN The Christian Science Monitor
SC CHSM
ED All
PG 6
LA English

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LP

UNITED NATIONS efforts to organize a vote to settle the status of the disputed Western **Sahara** have gained new momentum.

Both **Morocco** and the Polisario guerrillas who have fought a 15-year desert war for independence are showing signs that they are willing to make concessions. And the UN Security Council last week authorized final preparations for a peacekeeping operation that Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said would be "large and complicated." A UN technical team is to go to the area in mid-July to assess logistical requirements.

TD

The UN chief has also asked the two sides to meet with him in Geneva on Thursday. The session could provide a breakthrough - if **Morocco** agrees to Perez de Cuellar's request for joint, rather than separate, talks.

Moroccan officials do not rule it out.

Previously, **Morocco** has refused to enter direct negotiations.

Morocco asserted its historic links to the Western **Sahara** and moved into the territory (along with Mauritania, which later dropped its claim) as Spain evacuated its colonial outposts there in 1975.

Morocco consolidated its administration behind a movable radar-equipped **wall** of sand that was eventually extended south to the Mauritanian border. The defense **wall**, now 1,400 miles long, is manned by some 160,000 Moroccan troops.

Polisario fighters now operate in a narrow strip of "no man's land" that runs along the territory's eastern edge. Civilian refugees live in tents across the border in Algeria's Tindouf region.

Energetic Algerian diplomacy helped secure recognition of the Polisario's proclaimed Saharan Arab Democratic Republic by over 70 African and nonaligned countries. By contrast, no country has granted more than de facto acknowledgment of **Morocco**'s far more substantial presence in the territory, pending the outcome of a referendum.

Algerian officials insist that there has been no change in their position of support for self-determination of the Sahrawi people. But they are reported to have squeezed Polisario supply lines over the past year, and Polisario reports that no combat units or equipment are now on Algerian soil.

The restoration of diplomatic relations between Algeria and **Morocco** in 1988, their increasing integration in the regional Maghreb Union, and mounting internal economic and political pressures have clearly contributed to a greater interest in a pragmatic resolution of the conflict.

The Polisario's chief negotiator, Bachir Mustafa Sayed, said in an interview in New York last week that he is urging full participation in the proposed balloting, despite his concern that more security will be provided for the "occupying (Moroccan) forces" than for the population.

Mr. Sayed indicated that the Polisario organization was no longer overly preoccupied with the presence of thousands of Moroccan settlers in the territory, because "they are civilians."

However, the plan appears to leave the existing administration and police structures intact - much as did the UN operation in Namibia - though the Polisario had demanded their dismantlement.

The UN plan does call for a "substantial" reduction in Moroccan troop levels before the referendum, but **Morocco** has argued that the UN cannot guarantee security in the territory. The UN is responsible for identifying and registering the Sahrawis eligible to vote in the referendum, and those living outside the territory are to be returned under UN auspices. The Secretary-General is expected to propose a date for a definitive cease-fire soon after his technical team reports back. UN military observers will then be deployed, opposing forces confined to specified positions, and prisoners released under a general amnesty.

Six months after the cease-fire takes effect, the Sahrawi people will choose between independence and integration with **Morocco**.

PUB Christian Science Monitor

AN Document chsm000020011120dm73001d3

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FT FINANCIAL TIMES

HD **UN accord likely over W Sahara referendum**

BY By FRANCIS GHILES

WC 567 words

PD 29 April 1991

SN Financial Times

SC FTFT

PG International Page 3

LA English

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LP

A SOLUTION to the conflict over the status of the former Spanish colony of Western **Sahara**, which has pitted **Morocco** against the Polisario Liberation Front, appears to be in sight, reports Francis Ghiles.

The UN Security Council is expected to agree today to proposals for a referendum, drawn up by Mr Javier Perez de Cuellar, secretary-general.

TD

Both parties to the conflict - especially, it seems, Polisario and its main ally Algeria - have made recent concessions.

Under the plan, **Morocco** would cut its troops by two thirds, to 65,000, within 11 weeks of a ceasefire. All remaining Moroccan troops would be confined to defensive positions along the protective **wall Morocco** has built to defend itself from Polisario guerrilla attacks. Polisario's estimated 7,000 fighters would also be confined to camps around the main refugee centre south of Tindouf, in south western Algeria.

The existing Moroccan administration will however remain, contrary to Polisario's initial wishes. Considerations of cost strongly militated against the UN a wholesale takeover of taking over the administration of the territory by the UN before during the run-up to a referendum.

An election commission would decide who is eligible to vote in the referendum. To those names included in the census conducted by the former colonial power just before it relinquished control of the territory and which estimated the Saharawi population to be just short of 74,000 would be added people from the Sidi Ifni region which Spain returned to **Morocco** in 1969 and those born in **Morocco**, Algeria and Mauritania who could bring proof of the Saharan origin. That, ironically enough includes the Polisario leader, Mohammed Abdelaziz, who was born in Marrakesh and whose father still lives there.

King Hassan has accepted the idea of a referendum but made it clear that the result could only 'ratify' what most Moroccans strongly feel is theirs historically. His prestige would suffer a considerable blow were the outcome of the vote to be a call for independence. His opposition, frustrated by having no share in running **Morocco**, has systematically been more 'royaliste que le roi.'

Algerian President Chadli Bendjedid for his part has gone to great lengths to rebuild links with Algeria's his eastern neighbour, notably by re-establishing diplomatic ties, broken off in 1976, three years ago. But the outcome of the first-ever free elections in North Africa, due next July in Algeria, could bring to power people far less willing to compromise.

Furthermore, King Hassan and his Algerian counterpart know that the pipeline due to carry natural gas to Spain across northern **Morocco** and the Straits of Gibraltar will only get the final go-ahead if the two big north African countries settle the status of the Western **Sahara** once and for all.

Finally, were the long festering dispute to be settled, the Maghreb countries would be in a better bargaining position with the EC with whom they share so many links. Instead of engaging in quarrels which leave most Europeans indifferent and buying weapons with money better used in civilian projects, they would for once have shown they were capable of doing something constructive.

With turmoil likely to continue in the Middle East, that would at least leave the Maghreb al Aqsa (and of the setting sun) as one part of the Arab world with no major disputes.

NS gdip : International Relations | unsc : UN Security Council | utdnat : United Nations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations | ocat : International Pol-Econ Organizations

RE alg : Algeria | moroc : Morocco | spsah : Western Sahara | africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wafrz : West Africa

PUB The Financial Times Limited (AAIW/EIW)

AN Document FTFT000020070429dn4t00xyn

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THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

HD **UN Gears Up for Peace Operation In Western Sahara**

BY Marian Houk, Special to The Christian Science Monitor

WC 641 words
PD 6 May 1991
SN The Christian Science Monitor
SC CHSM
ED All
PG 6
LA English

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LP

YEARS of United Nations diplomacy have culminated in agreement to begin a small but significant peacekeeping operation to settle the future of the Western **Sahara**.

The UN Security Council unanimously approved the start of the operation last Monday.

TD

The sparsely populated former Spanish colony in northwest Africa is claimed and currently administered by **Morocco**.

The UN's task is to allow the legitimate Saharan inhabitants to choose freely by secret ballot whether they want independence or integration with **Morocco**.

If all goes well, the vote should take place by January.

UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar told the Council that it will be "a complex operation involving responsibilities unequaled in similar operations in the past."

It will be the first time that the UN alone will organize and conduct a referendum.

The UN's special representative, Swiss diplomat Johannes Manz, who will run the mission under the authority of the secretary-general, said it is "one of the most challenging the UN has ever undertaken." He added: "We have to establish the voter list, organize the voting, establish polling stations - all these are things that the UN has not done before."

Morocco will continue to administer the territory, but the UN special representative may call for any laws in the territory to be abrogated, if he believes they may interfere with the referendum.

Morocco's King Hassan II led 300,000 of his subjects, unarmed and on foot, into the desert territory in the dramatic 1975 Green March to stake **Morocco**'s claim, as Spain was preparing to abandon its colonial holdings there. When Spain pulled out, it split the territory between **Morocco** and Mauritania, which later renounced its claim. The UN has upheld the right of the Saharan people to decide their own fate. Moroccan troops cracked down on the Polisario Front, which had been agitating for independence.

POLISARIO guerrillas, who received important logistical support from Algeria, conducted an intense 15-year desert war against Moroccan troops. For more than a year, the Polisario has observed an informal cease-fire.

Morocco has refused to negotiate with the Polisario, not wishing to confer recognition on a group it considers mere rebels.

The secretary-general is to call for a formal cease-fire by summer's end, and the International Committee of the Red Cross is to arrange an exchange of prisoners of war. Polisario claims to be holding about 2,500 Moroccan soldiers. They say that **Morocco** captured about 200 of their fighters and that about 2,000 Saharans have disappeared under Moroccan administration.

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Shielded behind a mobile, radar-equipped defense **wall** of bulldozed sand, **Morocco** gradually pushed the 7,000 Polisario guerrillas out of all but a narrow strip of "no-man's land" along the territory's eastern border.

Sixty-five thousand Moroccan soldiers will stay at the **wall** during the UN operation, a substantial reduction from the 165,000 soldiers **Morocco** reported at the **wall** last year.

The Moroccan forces will be monitored by approximately 550 UN military observers. More than 700 UN infantry troops will protect returning refugees and the polling places. Altogether, about 2,700 UN personnel will participate in the mission.

As part of the UN plan, any Saharan eligible to vote, plus members of their immediate families, will be repatriated by the UN High Commission for Refugees. France has reportedly pledged half the estimated $34 million cost to return the refugees. Because of the financial strains on the UN, the UN chief said he will not begin to deploy UN peacekeepers until the full amount for repatriation is in the bank.

And with other peacekeeping operations being planned for El Salvador, Angola, and Cambodia, total costs for the Western **Sahara** must be kept below $200 million.

IPD Stats

PUB Christian Science Monitor

AN Document chsm000020011109dn56000bv

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REUTERS

HD **POLISARIO REPORTS MOROCCAN AIR RAID.**

WC 196 words

PD 5 August 1991

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

CY (c) 1991 Reuters Limited

LP

NICOSIA, Aug 5, Reuter - Polisario guerrillas accused **Morocco** overnight of mounting an air raid against an oasis in the Western **Sahara**, where an informal ceasefire has been in effect for nearly two years.

A guerrilla communique broadcast on Algiers radio said the Moroccan air force staged a "massive attack" on Tifariti, a waterhole in the northeast of the territory outside the area controlled by the Moroccan army.

TD

But the communique said Polisario was willing to regard the raid as "an isolated incident". It gave no details of casualties or damage.

Polisario has fought for independence since Spain ended its colonial rule in the mainly desert Western **Sahara** 15 years ago without agreeing with the inhabitants who should take over.

Both sides have accepted a United Nations plan for a referendum next year. No serious fighting had been reported since November 1989.

Tifariti is about 15 km (10 miles) from Mauritania and about 300 km (200 miles) from the Atlantic coast. Polisario, which has its main bases in Algeria, said the oasis was 100 km (60 miles) from the defensive **wall** built by the Moroccan army as a shield against guerrilla raids.

NS gcat : Political/General News

RE africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa | spsah : Western Sahara | wafrz : West Africa

AN Document lba0000020011124dn8503shy

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REUTERS

HD **MOROCCO AND POLISARIO CLASH AHEAD OF PLANNED CEASEFIRE.**

BY By John Baggaley

WC 589 words

PD 7 August 1991

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

CY (c) 1991 Reuters Limited

LP

ALGIERS, Aug 7, Reuter - Fighting between **Morocco** and the Polisario has flared in the Western **Sahara** after a lull of almost two years and both sides said it could jeopardise U.N. plans for a September 6 ceasefire and a referendum in January.

Polisario Front guerrillas said Moroccan planes raided one of their positions twice in the past two days at Tifariti, a waterhole 15 km (10 miles) from the Mauritanian border.

TD

They said 13 Moroccan planes attacked on Sunday and others carried out another raid at 1.30 p.m. (1230 GMT) on Monday.

Rabat did not confirm the air raids but said its forces were making sweeps across no-man's-land in the vast desert region against what it called Polisario terrorist infiltration.

"The Royal Armed Forces have conducted and are conducting sweeps and clean-up operations in the no-man's land," a Moroccan statement carried by the official news agency MAP said.

A Western diplomatic source in Rabat said Polisario had been moving forces from the Tindouf area in Algeria into "liberated terrorities" -- the front's term for the area described by Rabat as "no-man's-land" -- to set up bases ahead of the ceasefire.

The waterhole lies about 100 km (60 miles) from a Moroccan defensive **wall** built to defend the phosphate-rich area.

The war for the Western **Sahara**, most of which is now under Moroccan control, has been raging on and off since 1975 but the latest fighting was the first reported since November 1989.

Under the U.N. plan, accepted by both sides after talks in Geneva in June, Saharans would vote in January either for independence or integration with **Morocco**.

Some 2,800 troops, police and civilians are to oversee the peace plan, which will cost some 180 million dollars. Moroccan officials said the first elements of the force, set up by 34 countries, are due to arrive next weekend.

Rabat accused the guerrillas of infiltrating no-man's-land "with the clearly defined mission to commit terrorist acts inside the Moroccan **Sahara**...to perturb and delay preparations for the peaceful conduct of the self-determination referendum".

Ibrahim Hakim, Algiers ambassador of the self-proclaimed Saharan republic, which is recognised by 74 countries, said he hoped the first attack was "an isolated act".

But in a later communique, the Saharan Republic's information ministry said, "The credibility of the United Nations and its Security Council and the capacity of the Saharans to strike back is put to a rude test by Moroccan adventurism.

"Despite the conciliatory tone of the Polisario Front's first communique reporting the first Moroccan attack, the Moroccan government does not intend to stop the provocation and end aggression.

"It is just the start of carrying out a deliberate plan to resume the war."

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The Polisario said it shot down one of the Moroccan planes on Sunday and captured the deputy commander of Moroccan armed forces in the Western **Sahara**. It gave no casualty figure.

Military experts in Rabat said it was unlikely the deputy commander, Colonel-Major Haj Ahmed El-Ouali, was piloting a plane during the attack.

Morocco took control of most of the Western **Sahara** when Spain, the former colonial ruler, pulled out in 1975. The Polisario guerrillas, who had been fighting Spain, pursued the war against **Morocco** with Algerian backing.

The war strained relations between Algiers and Rabat but these were normalised in 1988 and fighting eased the next year.

NS gcat : Political/General News

RE africaz : Africa | alg : Algeria | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | maurtn : Mauritania | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa | spsah : Western Sahara | wafrz : West Africa

AN Document lba0000020011124dn8703v1f

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REUTERS

HD **POLISARIO GUERRILLAS REPORT SECOND MOROCCAN AIR ATTACK.**

WC 322 words

PD 7 August 1991

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

CY (c) 1991 Reuters Limited

LP

ALGIERS, Aug 7, Reuter - Polisario guerrillas have accused the Moroccan airforce of attacking Tifariti in the Western **Sahara** for the second time in two days and said it jeopardised U.N. plans to end 18 years of war.

Algiers radio said Rabat had confirmed its military was carrying out a clean-up operation in part of the Western **Sahara**.

TD

An informal ceasefire has been in effect for nearly two years while the United Nations organises a referendum next year to decide the territory's future.

The Algerian radio quoted **Morocco** as saying it launched the "clean-up" in a no-man's land part of the territory because Polisario guerrillas were infiltrating to carry out terrorism. The Moroccan statement was not immediately available in Rabat.

Polisario said Moroccan planes struck against Tifariti at 1.30 p.m. (1230 GMT) on Monday. The guerrilla-held oasis lies about 15 km (10 miles) north of the Mauritanian border in the north-east corner of the disputed territory.

Polisario says the waterhole is about 100 km (60 miles) outside a defensive **wall** built by the Moroccan army to shield territory it controls from guerrilla attack.

Only 24 hours earlier, 13 Moroccan aircraft carried out a "massive attack" on the post, Polisario said, adding that one was shot down.

It gave no details of casualties in either reported raid.

Ibrahim Hakim, Ambassador of the self-proclaimed Saharan republic recognised by more than 70 countries, commenting on the first attack said he hoped this was "an isolated act".

But in a communique on Monday's reported attack, the Saharan Republic's information minister Bir Lahlou, said: "The credibility of the United Nations and its Security council and the capacity of the Saharans to strike back is put to a rude test by Moroccan adventurism."

Polisario has fought **Morocco** for independence since Spain ended its colonial rule in the Western **sahara**.

NS gcat : Political/General News

RE africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa | spsah : Western Sahara | wafrz : West Africa

AN Document lba0000020011124dn8703v2l

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The INDEPENDENT

HD **GOVERNMENT FORCES and Polisario GUERRILLAS RENEW fight OVER WESTERN SAHARA after two-year lull.**

WC 572 words

PD 8 August 1991

SN The Independent - London

SC IND

PG 8

LA English

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LP

Algiers (Agencies) - Fighting between **Morocco** and Polisario guerrillas has flared in the Western **Sahara** after a lull of almost two years and both sides said the action jeopardised UN plans to end 18 years of war in the area.

Polisario guerrillas, fighting for their own Western **Sahara** state, have accused the Moroccan air force of attacking Tfariti in the Western **Sahara** for the second time in two days and accused **Morocco** of seeking to resume the war one month after King Hassan II called a halt to hostilities.

TD

The attack was the first report of serious military action since November 1989 when the Polisario and **Morocco** accepted the UN peace plan for the Western **Sahara**. Both sides agreed to a UN-supervised referendum to decide the territory's future and an informal ceasefire has been in effect. The Western **Sahara**, formerly a Spanish territory, has been disputed between the Polisario and **Morocco** since it came under Moroccan occupation in 1975.

A Moroccan government statement in Rabat, carried by the official news agency Map yesterday, said that "the Royal Armed Forces have conducted and are conducting sweeps and clean-up operations in no man's land" between their defence lines and the Western **Sahara**'s borders. It, however, made no mention of Tfariti.

The statement said that Polisario guerrillas had "infiltrated into the no man's land armed and trained elements with the clearly defined mission to commit terrorist acts inside the Moroccan **Sahara**", adding that the guerrillas' aim was to "perturb and delay preparations for and the peaceful conduct of the self-determination referendum" in January.

The referendum will give the people of the territory a choice between independence as demanded by the Polisario or integration with **Morocco**, which controls four-fifths of the area.

Polisario said Moroccan aircraft attacked Tfariti on Monday afternoon. The guerrilla-held oasis lies about 10 miles north of the Mauritanian border in the north-east corner of the disputed territory. Polisario says it is about 60 miles outside a defensive **wall** built by the Moroccan army to shield the territory it controls from guerrilla attack.

Only 24 hours earlier, Polisario said, 15 Moroccan aircraft had carried out a "massive attack" on the post. The guerrillas said one plane was shot down but it gave no details of casualties.

Ibrahim Hakim, an ambassador of the self-proclaimed "Saharan Republic" recognised by more than 70 countries, said after the first attack that he hoped it was "an isolated act". But after Monday's reported attack, the "republic's" Information Minister, Bir Lahlou, said the credibility of the United Nations and "its Security Council" was being challenged by "Moroccan adventurism".

The Polisario leader, Mohamed Abdulaziz, protested to the UN yesterday about the attacks. "I am convinced that if this deliberate derailing is not promptly ended, the chances of peace... will be destroyed," he said in a letter to the UN Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar.

The peace plan is to be implemented by a special UN mission known as Minurso. It is composed of 2,800 troops, police and civilians. It is expected to cost about $180m (#105m) with 34 different countries

contributing personnel. Moroccan officials say some UN military technicians have visited the area to prepare for the arrival of the force, the first elements of which are due to arrive next weekend.

NS gcat : Political/General News

RE africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa

AN Document ind0000020011124dn8800mqg

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THE GLOBE AND MAIL

SE News
HD **Morocco bars UN mission to observe Western Sahara vote**
CR Reuter News Agency
WC 453 words
PD 14 August 1991
SN The Globe and Mail
SC GLOB
PG A11
LA English
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LP

Reuters News Agency

RABAT

TD

Morocco is barring from the Western **Sahara** a United Nations mission assigned to supervise a referendum on the territory's future, a Moroccan government source said yesterday.

The vote, planned for next year, aims to end a 15-year war by Polisario rebels for independence in the former Spanish colony. **Morocco**, which controls most of the territory and launched new military strikes last week, is unhappy with the way UN officials are drawing up the electoral roll.

"MINURSO (the UN mission) cannot come until the electoral roll question is settled," said the official Moroccan source.

The **Morocco**-Polisario agreement to decide the desert territory's future by referendum may now be in danger of unravelling.

Moroccan foreign minister Abdellatif Filali travelled to Geneva yesterday to discuss the peace plan with the man who fathered it, UN Secretrary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

Mr. Perez de Cuellar said after the meeting: "I hope that there will be no military activity that could upset the process of the referendum."

He said he was still aiming for a formal ceasefire on Sept. 6.

The first of 2,800 MINURSO troops, police and officials were due in the Western **Sahara** last Friday. The Moroccan Communist newspaper al-Bayane said yesterday they will not arrive before Monday.

An unofficial ceasefire had been in effect since November, 1989.

Morocco announced last week that its forces were conducting sweeps in " no man's land" - the region east of a defensive **wall** built to shield the area it controls from rebel attacks - to clear it of fighters intending to disrupt the peace plan.

Polisario accused the Moroccan air force of bombing an oasis settlement near the Mauritanian border and renewing the war to keep the UN mission away.

Three Moroccan opposition parties denounced the peace plan yesterday, saying, "The return of the Saharan provinces to the motherland is final and a referendum on the issue has no raison d'etre."

The crux of the present dispute is that the peace plan calls for an electoral roll based on a Spanish census which listed 74,000 people living in the territory in 1974. It also allows the UN to "consider applications from persons who claim the right to participate in the referendum on the grounds that they are Western Saharans who were omitted from the 1974 census."

Morocco has put forward the names of 120,000 people it says are Saharan refugees living in **Morocco**, many from before 1974.

The UN has drawn up a "consolidated list" of 70,000 voters and says it will not consider applications presented in mass rather than by individuals.

NS gcat : Political/General News | gpol : Domestic Politics | gvio : Military Action

RE africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa

IPD Morocco

AN Document glob000020011109dn8e00wje

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REUTERS

HD **POLISARIO SAYS MOROCCAN TROOPS ATTACK AGAIN.**

WC 350 words

PD 22 August 1991

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

CY (c) 1991 Reuters Limited

LP

ALGIERS, Aug 22, Reuter - Polisario guerrillas said the Moroccan army made a fresh attack on Thursday on their positions in Western **Sahara** near the Mauritanian border, two weeks before a U.N. ceasefire is due to come into effect.

"The Moroccan army attacked on Thursday morning at 11 a.m. (0900 GMT) at Mijek and Tafriti," ambassador Ibrahim Hakim of the Saharan republic told Reuters. He said the troops had started building a new defence **wall**.

TD

Polisario accuses **Morocco** of seeking to block implementation of a United Nations plan. The plan calls for a formal ceasefire on September 6 between **Morocco**, which controls four-fifths of Western **Sahara**, and Polisario guerrillas, followed by a referendum in January.

King Hassan on Tuesday asked the United Nations to postpone the referendum, in which Western Saharans will choose between independence or integration with **Morocco**.

He said he accepted the plan but the agreed timetable, including taking a decision on who should be eligible to vote, had not been respected.

The Polisario Front said earlier on Thursday that **Morocco** should be isolated by the world to force it to accept the U.N. plan. "The only riposte to bring **Morocco** back to legality and reason is to boycott it and isolate it," it said.

Fighting in the 15-year war flared earlier this month after a lull of nearly two years as Moroccan troops launched mopping-up operations against guerrilla positions.

In April 1987 **Morocco** completed the construction of a defensive **wall** running parallel with the Mauritanian border on the southern edge of the territory.

Hakim said more civilians than usual were in Mijek and Tafriti at this time of year because water was available there and he feared their lives were at risk.

"Time after time, **Morocco** destroys everything that has been achieved on the path of peace," he said.

In Rabat Moroccan officials were not available for comment on the Polisario report of a new attack. But diplomatic sources confirmed there were large Moroccan troop movements on Thursday in the Mijek area near the Mauritanian border.

NS gcat : Political/General News

RE africaz : Africa | alg : Algeria | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | maurtn : Mauritania | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa | spsah : Western Sahara | wafrz : West Africa

AN Document lba0000020011124dn8m04kbl

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REUTERS

HD **MOROCCO, POLISARIO ACCUSE EACH OTHER OF BREAKING CEASEFIRE.**

BY By Stephen Hughes

WC 480 words

PD 20 September 1991

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

CY (c) 1991 Reuters Limited

LP

RABAT, Sept 20, Reuter - **Morocco** and Polisario guerrillas have accused each other of violating a U.N.-sponsored ceasefire in the Western **Sahara**.

The ceasefire was proclaimed on September 6 when U.N. peace-keeping forces began to move into a dozen observation posts along the territory's eastern borders.

TD

Minister of State without portfolio Ahmed Alaoui, considered a spokesman for King Hassan of **Morocco**, said the ceasefire accord had been broken by the Polisario Front by moving in forces from neighbouring countries.

"Under cover of the ceasefire, the opposing gangs have moved into various points in the zone between the **wall** and **Morocco**'s international frontier," Alaoui wrote in the semi-official daily Le Matin du **Sahara** on Friday.

He said the activities were "a violation of the ceasefire and a veritable provocation. The ceasefire accord was agreed between **Morocco** and the U.N. It is up to the United Nations to get it respected."

In statements carried by the official Algerian news agency APS, the Polisario said **Morocco** had violated the ceasefire by sending reconnaisance flights this week over Agounit and Bir Lahlou in what it calls liberated territory.

The area, described as a no man's land by the Moroccans, is a strip of territory between the Algerian and Mauritanian borders and Moroccan defence lines, or the "**wall**" referred to by Alaoui.

On Thursday, the Polisario said Moroccan Interior and Information Minister Driss Basri had decided to organise a second "Green March" of 170,000 Moroccans into the Western **Sahara**.

The first Green March was launched by King Hassan in 1975 when 350,000 unarmed Moroccans were moved in to press claims to the disputed territory. The March led to Spain's withdrawal in February 1976.

Moroccan officials said the Polisario report of a second Green March was "pure fantasy."

Diplomats said the Polisario report, which said people from southern **Morocco** were being moved into areas near the Saharan towns of Laayoun, Smara, Dakhla and Boujdour, was apparently a reference to Saharan refugees **Morocco** says fled to **Morocco** from the Western **Sahara**.

Diplomats said **Morocco** had submitted lists of 134,000 people it says are entitled to vote in a U.N. referendum offering Saharans the choice between independence and integration with **Morocco**.

The lists include Saharans resident in the area controlled by **Morocco** and also refugees who have fled to **Morocco** in the past 33 years.

Foreign Minister Abdellatif Filali told Moroccan journalists at a briefing on Thursday that **Morocco** would reject the referendum if the United Nations did not agree to register on the electoral rolls the names of people on the lists.

The U.N.-sponsored truce came into force as a first step towards the referendum next year.

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Morocco and the Polisario have been fighting over the former Spanish colony since 1975.

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AN Document lba0000020011124dn9k05nxz

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REUTERS

HD **POLISARIO SEEKS U.N. ACTION, CHARGES RABAT MINED W. SAHARA.**

WC 231 words

PD 12 December 1991

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

CY (c) 1991 Reuters Limited

LP

ALGIERS, Dec 12, Reuter - Polisario guerrillas have asked the United Nations to act against what it terms **Morocco**'s violations of a ceasefire, including planting mines in the Western **Sahara**.

In a statement to Reuters on Thursday, the Polisario Front said it had warned the U.N. special envoy Johannes Manz it could not accept indefinitely what it called Rabat's provocations.

TD

The Front's Saharan referendum commissioner Bachir Moustapha Sayed told Manz in a letter: "Moroccan military units, in a new type of violation of the peace plan ceasefire, carried out mining operations on December 3, five km (three miles) to the east of the '**wall** of shame'..."

The **wall** is a Moroccan defence line built during more than 15 years of wars in the former Spanish colony, before a U.N.- sponsored ceasefire last September 6 ended fighting.

A referendum is due early next year to give Saharans the choice between independence and integration with **Morocco** which claims the area.

Both sides have accused the other of violating the ceasefire and trying to sabotage the peace plan, with the Polisario first saying on December 7 that Moroccan troops had mined the area four days earlier.

In its statement on Thursday, the front said: "The Saharan side cannot adopt indefinitely an attitude of acceptance in the face of these provocations..."

NS gcat : Political/General News

RE africaz : Africa | alg : Algeria | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa | spsah : Western Sahara | wafrz : West Africa

AN Document lba0000020011124dncc07jkf

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REUTERS

HD **GUERRILLAS SAY MOROCCAN TROOPS STRENGTHENING POSTS IN W.SAHARA.**

WC 294 words

PD 19 December 1991

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

CY (c) 1991 Reuters Limited

LP

ALGIERS, Dec 19, Reuter - Polisario guerrillas said on Thursday that Moroccan troops were erecting new positions and strengthening entrenchments outside their defensive **wall** in the Western **Sahara**.

Troops stationed in the Techla sector, in southernmost **Sahara** some 25 km (15 miles) from the Mauritanian border, started beefing up the defences on Tuesday, the Polisario Front said in a statement to Reuters in Algiers.

TD

Both **Morocco**, which claims the Western **Sahara**, a former Spanish colony, and the front which has fought for over 15 years for independence there, accuse each other of trying to sabotage a U.N. peace plan.

"Such actions come from the manifest determination of the Moroccan party to destroy the international community's efforts to preserve the ceasefire and apply the U.N. peace plan for the Western **Sahara**," the front said.

A U.N.-sponsored ceasefire came into force last September and a referendum is to be held next year giving Saharans the choice between independence or integration with **Morocco**.

Diplomats at the U.N. have said the poll is running months late and that special U.N. envoy Johannes Manz, charged with implementing the peace plan, was expected to resign at the end of this month.

In Algeria, which has supported the Polisario cause, the independent newspaper El Watan on Thursday said it was not surprised that Manz was expected to leave.

It said **Morocco** had carried out a press campaign against him, prevented U.N. forces from deploying to organise the referendum, and blocked U.N. material including medical supplies in Agadir port.

"In all the Moroccan newspapers his name has been dragged through the mud and he has been pratically banned from accomplishing his task," El Watan said.

NS gcat : Political/General News

RE africaz : Africa | alg : Algeria | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | maurtn : Mauritania | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa | spsah : Western Sahara | wafrz : West Africa

AN Document lba0000020011124dncj07s94

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REUTERS

HD **POLISARIO SAYS MOROCCO STRENGTHENING DEFENCES.**

WC 171 words

PD 9 February 1992

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

CY (c) 1992 Reuters Limited

LP

ALGIERS, Feb 9, Reuter - Polisario guerrillas accused Rabat on Sunday of strengthening defences and building new ones in the Western **Sahara** in violation of a U.N.-brokered ceasefire which ended 16 years of war last September.

In a statement in Algiers, the Polisario Front said Moroccan troops had been working on the fortifications since last Friday in a "new act of obstruction to the peace plan and a challenge to the authority of the United Nations".

TD

Morocco and the Polisario Front have accused each other of trying to sabotage a peace plan for the former Spanish colony, which is claimed by Rabat. The Polisario wants the territory to be independent.

Under the plan, Saharans should have voted last month in a referendum to choose between independence or integration with **Morocco**. Diplomats say the plan is running months late.

Morocco built a defensive **wall** to deter attacks during the war. The Polisario said ceasefire terms agreed by both sides banned improvements or additions to defence works.

NS gcat : Political/General News

RE africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa | spsah : Western Sahara | wafrz : West Africa

AN Document lba0000020011122do2901tk4

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REUTERS

HD **POLISARIO ACCUSES MOROCCO OF VIOLATING CEASEFIRE.**

WC 189 words

PD 29 February 1992

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

CY (c) 1992 Reuters Limited

LP

ALGIERS, Feb 29, Reuter - Polisario guerrillas accused **Morocco** on Saturday of violating a U.N.-brokered ceasefire which last September ended nearly 16 years of war in Western **Sahara**.

"A Moroccan warplane last Monday flew over Bir Lahlou...less than 48 hours after one recorded in the Oued Treitime region..," the Polisario Front said in a statement in Algiers.

TD

The Front said that on the same day the Moroccan army also started strengthening its defensive **wall**, built during the war to protect the Moroccan-held part of the former Spanish colony.

Both acts violated the ceasefire and "everything indicates that **Morocco** is pursuing its work aimed at worsening an already- worrying situation," the Front said.

It called on the international community to put pressure on Rabat to respect the letter and spirit of the peace plan.

Under the U.N. plan a referendum was scheduled for last month to enable Saharans to choose between independence and integration with **Morocco** which claims the territory.

The referendum has been delayed, diplomats say by several months, mainly by a row over who is eligible to vote.

NS gcat : Political/General News

RE africaz : Africa | alg : Algeria | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa | spsah : Western Sahara | wafrz : West Africa

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REUTERS

HD **MOROCCANS LAYING MINES IN DESERT, SAYS POLISARIO.**

WC 200 words

PD 1 March 1992

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

CY (c) 1992 Reuters Limited

LP

ALGIERS, March 1, Reuter - Moroccan forces have been laying mines in part of the Western **Sahara**, violating a ceasefire and endangering a United Nations peace plan, the Polisario Front said on Sunday.

Thirteen Moroccan soldiers slipped from behind their defensive **wall** to lay the mines 800 metres (half a mile) inside the region under Polisario control on February 25, the independence-seeking front said in a statement.

TD

"It is the second time the Moroccan army has acted this way in the same region, the first time back on February 15."

Accusing Rabat of 56 ceasefire violations since the accord ended nearly 16 year of war last September, Polisario said **Morocco**'s repeated acts threatened the U.N. plan to bring lasting peace to the former Spanish colony.

Rabat claims the territory but both sides have agreed to a U.N. plan for a referendum to give Saharans the choice between independence or integration with **Morocco**.

Both have accused the other of trying to sabotage the plan, which is bogged down on who should be eligible to vote. The original date for the ballot was January. Diplomats say it is now running months late.

NS gcat : Political/General News

RE africaz : Africa | alg : Algeria | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa | spsah : Western Sahara | wafrz : West Africa

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THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

SE THE WORLD

HD **Western Sahara Dispute Delays UN Peace Plan Cease-fire holds but sides disagree on terms of independence vote**

BY George D. Moffett III, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

WC 997 words

PD 17 March 1992

SN The Christian Science Monitor

SC CHSM

ED All 03/17/92

PG 5

LA English

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LP

WHEN it comes to United Nations peacemaking, just keeping warring armies disengaged is usually challenge enough. When it also involves the unprecedented task of organizing a referendum in a remote swath of desert, the job takes on an entirely new dimension.

That is exactly what the UN has been trying to do in the Western **Sahara**, a former Spanish colony contested by **Morocco** and a local rebel force known as the Polisario Front. After 17 years of conflict, the two sides have agreed to a cease-fire and a referendum to determine the future status of the territory. But the UN, frustrated by renewed squabbling over the issue of who can vote, has signaled that its patience, while ample, is not inexhaustible.

TD

"Acceptance of this delay should not be perceived as indicating an open-ended commitment on the part of the international community," UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali warned in a recent report.

In the still unlikely event that UN peacekeeping efforts falter, the result could be renewal of the low-level conflict that has already claimed several thousand lives. Collapse could also impinge on the future of **Morocco**'s King Hassan II, a longtime ally of the United States, who has invested huge amounts of financial and political capital to ensure a favorable outcome for **Morocco**.

"If the peace plan fails, it could have serious consequences for stability in North Africa," warns a report issued last month by the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Disagreement on voters

UN peacekeepers, including 29 Americans, were sent to the Western **Sahara** last September to enforce a formal cease-fire until local residents (Sahrawis) decided whether the territory should become independent or part of **Morocco**.

But the referendum, which was to have been held last month, has been delayed because of the dispute over voting rights.

Morocco and the Algerian-backed Polisario initially agreed that a 1974 Spanish census should serve as the basis of the voting list, which would be updated to reflect recent demographic changes. But the process was thrown off track when **Morocco** unexpectedly presented the UN with a list of 120,000 additional names. In addition, **Morocco** began moving nearly 40,000 prospective voters into tent cities in the territory late last summer, precipitating an end to an informal two-year cease-fire.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali has set a time frame of three months for redefining eligibility requirements. Many observers say it could take far longer. So far, peace is kept

If an impasse is reached, the two sides might have to adopt a whole new approach. Any compromise would almost certainly have to be based on a recognition of **Morocco**'s sovereignty over the region, analysts say.

"Within that framework there's lots of flexibility, including local autonomy for the Western **Sahara** and possibly even a role for the Polisario," says one analyst based in Washington.

Since the UN force was deployed there have been no exchanges of fire and no deaths on either side. Commanders in the field say they are now positioned to detect preparations for any major attack by either side.

But monitoring the cease-fire has been complicated. Moroccan troops have hindered the movement of peacekeepers and, until recently, blocked supply lines, according to the UN and the Senate report. And the UN force, known by the acronym MINURSO, has had little political support from UN headquarters and has been forced to live in harsh conditions without adequate supplies, the Senate report adds.

"Without the proper tools to carry out its mission, there is little likelihood that MINURSO can maintain an atmosphere of confidence or sufficient credibility to ensure that a free and fair referendum takes place," the report says. "If the present circumstances persist, MINURSO runs the risk of failure."

Under the original UN plan, the peacekeeping force was not to be deployed until the issue of voter criteria was resolved. But former UN Secretary-General Javier Peres de Cuellar reversed the sequence, leaving the force in what the Senate report describes as a "holding pattern" until political questions are resolved.

The dispute over the phosphate-rich Western **Sahara** erupted after Spain relinquished its former colony in 1975. Citing historical rights going back to the 11th century, **Morocco** immediately annexed two-thirds of Western **Sahara**. It occupied the rest when Mauritania, under pressure from **Morocco**, renounced its claim to the remaining third in 1979.

The takeover was resisted by native Saharans who formed the Polisario guerrilla front and have operated since out of bases clustered around the Algerian border town of Tindouf.

Outspent and outgunned, Polisario has been on the defensive, its forces confined to a narrow strip of land - 20 percent of the disputed territory - isolated behind a fortified 1,200-mile **wall** of sand and barbed wire erected by Moroccan troops. Polisario forces have also been the victims of a 1988 rapprochement between **Morocco** and Algeria, which has greatly reduced Algeria's support for the guerrillas. High cost to **Morocco**

But **Morocco** has been weakened economically by the huge cost of supporting 120,000 soldiers in the region and by lavish spending to provide free schools, medical care, and housing to win the support of Western Saharans for the eventual referendum. The estimated $250 million spent by **Morocco** in the territory each year has come at the expense of pressing social needs at home.

The UN force in the Western **Sahara** is only one of 11 peacekeeping forces assigned to disarm combatants and monitor truces in hot spots around the world.

Since last fall the UN has launched or planned major peacekeeping operations in El Salvador and Yugoslavia in addition to the Western **Sahara**. UN peacekeepers are also deployed in the Middle East, Africa, and the Asian subcontinent.

ART MAP: **Morocco** and Western **Sahara**, SHIRLEY HORN - STAFF

PUB Christian Science Monitor

AN Document chsm000020011107do3h001oc

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The INDEPENDENT

HD **Poll aims to boost Sahara claim.**

BY By Charles Richards, Middle East Editor.

WC 349 words

PD 4 September 1992

SN The Independent - London

SC IND

PG 9

LA English

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LP

The referendum to be held today in **Morocco** on some very limited constitutional changes is merely the latest device to ensure that King Hassan will never renounce title to the Western **Sahara**, which is claimed by the Polisario Front.

The King has finessed the issue consummately. First, he showed statesmanship by accepting the United Nations peace plan for the Western **Sahara** announced on 31 December last year. Then he displayed cunning by announcing his own referendum, which will, in effect, undermine the whole UN exercise.

TD

The key to the UN plan was a referendum of the inhabitants of Western **Sahara**, until 1975 a Spanish colony, and since then largely controlled by **Morocco**. They would have been asked to choose between independence, or being absorbed more formally into **Morocco**. However, the Moroccan referendum presents a problem for the Western Saharans. If they cast their vote in it, they will lend legitimacy to **Morocco**'s claim to sovereignty over the region.

The Polisario Front has been much weakened over the past years, militarily, diplomatically and politically. **Morocco**'s building of a sand **wall** across the territory, in violation of all accepted principles of the uselessness of fixed defence lines in desert warfare, effectively contained the Polisario fighters.

The Polisario has been severely hit in recent months by defections of some key political and military personnel, including its ambassador to Algiers. Most serious of all, however, was Algeria's decision to drop its backing of the Polisario as part of its broader desire to improve relations with all states in the region, especially **Morocco**.

Today's referendum is over only fine adjustments to the constitution. The King has made quite clear that he is not prepared to renounce any of his real power. And he gave plenty of ammunition to those who argue that Islam and democracy are irreconcilable. He stated in an interview with Le Monde that "Islam forbids me to set up a constitutional monarchy in which the sovereign delegates all his authority and would reign without ruling".

NS gcat : Political/General News

RE africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | medz : Mediterranean | moroc : Morocco | nafrz : North Africa

AN Document ind0000020011123do9400hvo

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ANSA

HD **Tunisia: Islamic terror commando attacks Libya border post.**

WC 81 words

PD 13 August 2013

ET 14:01

SN ANSA - English Media Service

SC ANSAEN

LA English

CY © ANSA.

LP

Combat ongoing with national guard, security forces, a chopper

(ANSAmed) - TUNIS, AUGUST 13 - A 6-8 man Islamic terrorist commando late last night attacked the Tbaga **border** post in the Hydra region, at the Tunisian **border** with Libya.

TD

Breaching the external **wall** with a grenade, the commando engaged in furious combat with National Guardsmen for several hours. Security forces and a helicopter have surrounded the post and combat is ongoing, sources said. (ANSAmed).

RE tunis : Tunisia | libya : Libya | tuncty : Tunis | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

PUB Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata

AN Document ANSAEN0020130813e98d000jk

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ahramonline

HD **Bin Laden's death not an end: A guide to Al-Qaeda's resurgence post-Arab Spring**

WC 4,516 words

PD 4 March 2014

SN Al-Ahram Gate

SC AHRAGEN

LA English

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Osama Bin Laden filled news headlines for a decade. Was his assassination enough to deter Al-Qaeda? The mastermind of the transnational terrorist entity was killed by UN Navy SEALs in a Pakistani compound near a military academy in May 2011. One anticipated outcome was the absence of a long-term planner for the movement, which would lead eventually to the collapse of Al-Qaeda and a successful conclusion to the "war on terror" era. Ironically, Bin Laden's killing coincided with the eruption of the so-called Arab Spring uprisings by some Arab populations against authoritarian regimes that ruled them for decades. The phenomenon led to the spread of Al-Qaeda-linked, or inspired groups, as many Arab Spring countries failed to create strong, well-established institutions capable of accelerating the new state-building process. A yearning for democracy was soon enough converted into a bare need to bring safety to Arab citizens.

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"Bin Laden's death hurt Al-Qaeda but not fatally," Bruce Riedel, who served as an expert advisor to the prosecution of Al-Qaeda terrorist Omar Farooq Abdulmutallab in Detroit, told Ahram Online. Riedel, an ex-advisor to US President Bill Clinton, argued that Ayman Al-Zawahiri, Bin Laden's right hand man and successor, took bin Laden's place "smoothly." "The 'Arab Spring' opened up opportunities in many Arab states for Al-Qaeda affiliates and sympathisers to flourish, like in Libya, Syria, Yemen and Egypt," Riedel notes. "That process is likely to continue for a long time." Other Arab states, such as Lebanon and Iraq, escaped uprisings yet didn't escape terrorism, making the phenomenon complex to analyse. Some Arab Spring countries, such as Yemen, suffered the Al-Qaeda headache for years ahead of their popular revolts. Katherine Zimmerman, senior Al-Qaeda analyst for the American Enterprise Institute, said that Arab regimes, such as that of Egypt's Hosni Mubarak, had "little tolerance" for Al-Qaeda sympathisers, cracking down on Islamists domestically. "Their fall from power created an opening for Al-Qaeda groups. These groups also benefited from the release or escape of Islamist leaders from prison in 2011 and 2012. Muhammad Jamal, for example, gained his freedom in Egypt and then reached out to old comrades in Yemen for assistance in establishing his group," she stated. "These groups will continue to seek to expand." Syria: Al-Qaeda's primary breeding ground Fighters from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) try to calm civilians demonstrating against the rebel infighting in Aleppo January 6, 2014. (Reuters) Syria is home to over 1,000 rebel factions, Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, a fellow at the Middle East Forum, told Ahram Online. Some of the main ones, including the Supreme Military Council, the Free Syrian Army, Jaysh Al-Mujahideen, the Syrian Revolutionaries Front, the Islamic Front, Jabhat Al-Nusra, and the Islamic State of Iraq and Ash-Sham (ISIS), have been formidable forces fighting on the frontlines against Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad's troops and his allies since 2011. With unclear political command lines and a clear lack of group cohesion, ultra-conservative militant groups, which once appeared as one bloc, have only in the past few months emerged fragmented and beleaguered by infighting. On 9 April 2013, Iraqi Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, the emir of the Islamic State of Iraq, the precursor to ISIS, declared a merger between his group and Al-Nusra. Al-Nusra rejected the merger, renewing its pledge of allegiance to Al-Qaeda chief Ayman Al-Zawahiri. Having always been Al-Qaeda's rightful branch in Syria, which ISIS tried to co-opt, Al-Nusra's refusal, nonetheless, created "one of the major splits within the history of the global jihadist movement," Al-Tamimi said, mainly because both groups share the same political programme. In a recent article, Aaron Zelin, Richard Borow Fellow at The Washington Institute, said that open warfare between conservative rebel groups and ISIS has widened since early January 2014. He added that Zawahiri's announcement 2 February officially disavowing ISIS of its command might "create a scenario in which war between the two is more likely." Al-Tamimi makes a similar prediction for "wider infighting" between both groups who were previously trumpeted in their leaders' public speeches as Al-Qaeda affiliates. He, moreover, identifies a stark discrepancy between open and closed jihadi source material on the groups' relationship. "In open source, the tendency has been to cheerlead both Al-Nusra and ISIS as 'brothers' who hold the same ideology, but on password protected forums there have been very fierce debates from

the beginning, with some of the pro-ISIS even going so far as to accuse Al-Nusra's leader Abu Mohammed Jowlani of apostasy and lying about a 'renewal' of his pledge of allegiance to Zawahiri," he said. Zimmerman argues that the main problem does not lie in the multiplicity of Al-Qaeda affiliates. Rather, "the challenge has been the fighting between the groups. Part of Al-Qaeda's mission has been to support the growth and development of local movements -this has been ongoing since the early 1990s," she tells Ahram Online. One fatal result of the jockeying for power by competing forces was the occupation of Raqqa in northeast Syria -the first Syrian provincial capital to fall to rebels. On 4 March 2013, the town was left an undefended turf open for anyone's capture when regime forces lost a battle to several rebel groups and then retreated. At first run by two simultaneous administrations, then by Al-Nusra, the latter was soon run out by ISIS, which wrested power from all competing groups. It was not long before ISIS took Raqqa as its stronghold and tried to turn it into strict Islamic state. Souad Nofal, one of a bevy of local prominent activists who fought for the town's restitution from ISIS, told Ahram Online that the group's presence became blatantly apparent seven months in. Nofal was shot at and forcibly driven out of Raqqa for staging a one-woman protest for two months and nine days, after an initial demonstration plan was called off by youth activists out of fear of a violent dispersal, in front of ISIS's headquarters. She said their forces are still pursuing her until today. daawa niqab Under ISIS's administration, the citizens of Raqqa suddenly found themselves running the gauntlet of an endless stack of abuses and violations. Nofal cited over two dozen, including wiping out any opposition, once by blowing up a brigade's headquarters; performing public executions; turning churches to(political preaching) centres; opening fire on protests; banning media; forming fighting training camps for youth beginning from the age of 10; imposing the(full face veil) on women and tasking a special woman police force with monitoring their dress. "Raqqa has been emptied of its people who fled fearing for their lives," Nofal recounted, "ISIS has adopted the same policies of the murderous regime, which they have never directly fought. They are a poison dagger pointed at the revolution." ISIS has other strongholds in Al-Bab, Azaz, Jarabulus and Manbij in Aleppo province. Al-Tamimi delineates the differences in Al-Nusra and ISIS's management of their strongholds. Backed by extensive financial resources, ISIS is focused on building its proto-state and caliphate and is willing to use militancy. Al-Nusra lacks a strong grip on its strongholds and is poor on demonstrations of state building, but is known for its pragmatism. ISIS has also come into conflict with the Free Syrian Army (FSA), the Syrian opposition's moderate rebel force on the ground. Spokesperson of the FSA Fahad Al-Masri said that the army did not recognise ISIS as a legitimate rebel group, and have even laid down a strategy for their expulsion from Syria. He has reason to believe that the ISIS now controlling parts of Syria is the birth child of Al-Qaeda having emerged following a series of Al-Qaeda prisoner releases and smuggling from Sednaya and Abu Gharib prisons. Speaking to Ahram Online in March of last year, former spokesperson of the Syrian National Council (SNC) Basma Kodmani also alleged that Al-Assad released Al-Qaeda jihadists just as Islamist extremists started appearing within the ranks of rebel fighters. "The elimination or weakening of Al-Qaeda and its affiliates requires an international will power wanting to illuminate the makers and exporters of terrorism, including the Syrian regime at its head and then moving towards the Iranian regime," Al-Masri said. "This will cut off the groups' sources of funding. The fall of the Syrian regime will end terrorism from Shia Iran represented by Hizbullah and the Iraqi armed Shia movements supported by Iran." Lebanon: Paying Syria's bill Lebanese firefighters extinguish a burning car at the site of an explosion near the Kuwaiti Embassy and Iran's cultural center, in the suburb of Beir Hassan, Beirut, Feb. 19, 2014. (AP) It is no secret that the Syrian crisis developed into a regional conflict with geopolitical reprecussions on Damascus's neighbours, including Lebanon. For Lebanon, this has been part of an ongoing Sunni-Shia clash over dissimilar positions towards Syria that produced nothing but bombs on both sides of the story. The government itself recognised the dilemma. Lebanon's lately-outgoing Prime Minister Najib Mikati denounced the terrorist car bomb that killed four and injured 30 in Hermel city on 1 February. But where does Al-Qaeda fit into this picture? Al-Nusra Front in Lebanon claimed responsibility for the car bomb in the Hizbullah stronghold at the northern end of the Bekaa Valley. Al-Nusra, in a statement, warned Sunnis to avoid all areas where Hizbullah operates. Also, Wednesday's 19 February double-bombing attack on an Iranian cultural centre in Beirut was claimed by the Abdullah Azzam Brigades, a jihadist group inspired by Al-Qaeda. In that vein, it appears that Sunni political forces are not fond of Al-Qaeda's growing role in the country that fears the appearance of a new civil war after coming out of a heartbreaking conflict that lasted from 1975 until 1990. Former premier Saad Hariri, who heads the anti-Syrian Future Movement, said in a statement that Lebanese and Sunni sects refuse to be part of any war between Hizbullah and Al-Qaeda, rejects that civilians are a target in this war, and condemns its dangerous "repercussions on national and Islamic unity." Evidence of Al-Qaeda presence Lebanon came in a five-minute recording in January, from a Lebanon-based Sunni militant with alleged links to Al-Qaeda who declared allegiance to ISIS and called on the radical group to "reactivate its cell" in the country. "We pledge allegiance to the prince of the believers, Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi ... and we ask him to guide us past the obstacles, and make us your spearhead in crushing your enemy, and not a single man among us will hold back in helping you," AFP quoted Ansari as saying. The Lebanese army managed to make two major arrests of Al-Qaeda leading figures during the last period. The first was in December of Al-Qaeda linked leader Majid Al-Majid who died of kidney failure in a Beirut hospital. The second was this month, of Naim Abbas whom officials described as a "mastermind of car bombs" targeting Shia areas. Security sources told Reuters that Abbas admitted his organisational task. Sahar Atrache, a Beirut-based Lebanon analyst with the International Crisis Group, said that the Lebanese state is "eroding, [and] its institutions are

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paralysed ... a militia culture has been revived and it is uncertain how Lebanon can resist all the shockwaves coming from Syria." However, Atrache believed that no political party intends to challenge the political system, at least in the near future, which she described as a "power-sharing" system. She stated that the roots of growing Sunni extremism "go much deeper," being a consequence of radicalisation of both Sunnis and Shias that started with the Iraq war, but hastened greatly with former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri's assassination in 2005 and the country's subsequent crisis. "Undoubtedly, the Syrian conflict constitutes a catalyst for the rise of jihadi groups in Lebanon. It has led to teh empowerment of Lebanese Islamists, facilitatedthe access of extremist Salafists to funding,allowedsmuggling of weapons and militants across the borders as they become less controlled, and spread the feeling that Hizbullah's power could be challenged. Hizbullah, by joining the Syrian war, gave its opponents a direct motive to attack it," Atrache concluded. Iraq: A second payer of Syria's bill Fighters from Islamist Syrian rebel group al-Nusra Front (Reuters) The conflict in Anbar is automatically evoked when thinking about Al-Qaeda in Iraq. Security forces cleared a year-long Sunni protest camp on 30 December, causing the eruption of fighting near Ramadi and spreading to Fallujah. Sunni militants took partial control of Anbar and Fallujah with the support of Sunni tribesmen who founded the Sahwa (Awakening) militias, armed groups that allied with US troops against Al-Qaeda in late 2006. These events were the first time anti-government fighters exercised open control since the height of the rebellion against the Shia government of Nouri Al-Maliki. "I ask the people of the province - the tribes, the notables, and all who live there - to be ready to take a stand, to take serious action against those dirty people, without making any sacrifices," Al-Maliki said in his weekly televised address in January. The government did not stand still though; airstrikes and artillery fire were launched in Fallujah against Sunni militants associated with ISIS. US Vice President Joe Biden praised Al-Maliki's efforts to integrate tribal forces against Al-Qaeda into state security forces after a phone conversation with him in January, and to compensate those injured and killed fighting militants. Majid Rafizadeh, a scholar at Harvard University, highlighted the interrelation between the situation in Iraq and the war in Syria, saying that the latter "brings negative repercussions for stability and security in Iraq and a ripe environment for insurgents." But he pointed to rising tensions between Islamist groups. "We should understand that the picture is not black and white; there have been tensions among different Al-Qaeda linked groups as well. For example, Al-Qaeda's central leadership announced recently that they have officially cut ties with the ISIS, a powerful jihadist group in Syria," Rafizadeh said. North Africa: Libya, **Tunisia** and Algeria The US consulate in Benghazi, Libya, in flames. (Reuters) Discussing Al-Qaeda's existence in the North Africa region often is a source of controversy. The relationship between North African terrorist groups and the mother organisation remains incompletely understood. The case of Libya is the most alarming. New government authorities are struggling to create a stronghold over armed tribes and militia groups that went out of control after the NATO-backed removal of Muammar Gaddafi's regime by an uprising that turned bloody three years ago. Evidence for this tragedy was the abduction by armed men of Prime Minister Ali Zeidan in 10 October 2013 from Tripoli's Corinthia Hotel where he lives. The kidnapping did not arise of the blue.It took place five days after US commandos captured senior Al-Qaeda suspect Abu Anas Al-Libi and transferred him to a warship, a step that embarrassed the government and was denounced by Zeidan himself. Though Zeidan was released on the same day, daring to kidnap the country's head of state indicated the seriousness of the security situation. One month later, Libya's deputy intelligence chief was kidnapped outside Tripoli Airport with no group claiming responsibility. The biggest blow was the attack on the US mission in Benghazi in which four embassy staff were killed, including US Ambassador Christopher Stevens. "I don't think that it is entirely clear whether Al-Qaeda elements were involved; but those who carried out the attack certainly were extremist and highly anti-American," said Wayne White, a former State Department official whose tasks involved the Middle East. White, who personally knew Stevens, asserted that the absence of "proper central governance" provides the "typical circumstances" that allow Muslim extremists, whether Al-Qaeda or independent militias with similar leanings, to emerge. He highlighted some regional implications for the security vacuum in Libya. "Another centre of extremist activity is the mostly lawless southwest corner of Libya in the vicinity of Sebha where even neighbouring countries like Algeria, Mali and Niger are unable to control their sides of the **border**," White stated. White also noted that "Libyan extremists" in the desert's southwest provide arms and sanctuary for Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. "Many localised militias not only defy the central government, but also fight each other -even on the streets of Tripoli -for territory. The Al-Qaeda related or terrorist dimension functions rather easily in such a disorganised and militia-dominated environment simply as another (or several) of these many largely independent militias that refused to disarm after Gaddafi's overthrow," he asserted. The **Wall** Street Journal . On 10 January, the State Department listed three groups called Ansar Al-Sharia as separate foreign terror organisations and targeted their leaders with sanctions,(WSJ)reported The WSJ mentioned that two of them are based in Libya and were "separately created" after Gaddafi's fall and are responsible for the attack on the Benghazi diplomatic mission. The State Department mentioned that Ansar Al-Sharia in **Tunisia** was listed as well. Protesters shout slogans during a demonstration against security forces seeking to arrest Tunisian Salafist leader Saif-Allah Benahssine, who heads the hard-line group Ansar al-Sharia, over clashes at the U.S. Embassy last week, at the al-Fatah mosque in Tunis, Sept. 17, 2012.(Reuters) Here enters **Tunisia**, the Arab Spring pioneer that battled militants from Ansar Al-Sharia that attacked the US embassy in 2012, a situation that arguably comes close to that of Libya. The movement has been active in the Mount Chaambi region, close to the **border** with Algeria. Zeidan, Algerian premier Abdelmalek Sellal and **Tunisia**'s ex-prime minister Hamadi

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Jebali decided to reinforce **border** security and join forces during a meeting in the southern Libyan oasis of Ghadames in January 2013. The decision involved an 11-point plan to "create common **border** checkpoints and intensify cooperation in the security sphere through joint patrols," and vowed as well to tackle organised crime and terrorism. Youssef Cherif, a Tunisian writer on North African affairs, believed that Ansar Al-Sharia is "taking over from Al-Qaeda" in the region. "It's like Al-Qaeda 2.0," he said. **Tunisia**'s Islamist Ennahda party, which headed the Tunisian government until recently, had accused Al-Qaeda of killing the two opposition leaders Mohamed Brahmi and Chokri Belaid. "That's what the ministry of interior said, that Al-Qaeda was involved. Ennahda sympathisers accuse the old regime and speak of a conspiracy; while their opponents accuse Ennahda of being behind the killings. But it is very early to make conclusions, as is often the case with political assassinations," Cherif concluded. Egypt: Throwback to tough times Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis (Photo: Al-Ahram) In Egypt, resurgent violence, reminiscent of an Islamist insurgency that flared in the 1990s and early 2000s, is back -this time, set off by the ouster of Islamist president Mohamed Morsi on 3 July 2013. Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis, a previously little known Sinai-based group, claimed responsibility for a string of well-orchestrated fatal attacks including a bomb blast targeting a tourist bus in the Red Sea resort town of Taba, two car bomb blasts targeting the security headquarters of Cairo and Nile Delta city of Mansoura, the attempted assassination of Interior Minister Mohamed Ibrahim, and the downing of a military helicopter over Sinai. The group is thought to be inspired by Al-Qaeda in its ideology and made up of Egyptians returning from fighting abroad. Eman Ragab, senior researcher at the Security and Strategic Studies Unit of Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies, stated that the group is endorsed financially by Hamas, based in neighbouring Gaza. "If we take the issued statements as articles of faith, then there is a link between Al-Qaeda and Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis. Yet, on an organisational level, we are yet to confirm the tie, despite the presence of several Al-Qaeda cells in Sinai," Ragab told Ahram Online in a phone interview. Ragab, however, notes a tactical difference in the way the operations of both sides are carried out. While Al-Qaeda militants must undergo intensive training, Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis have been shown to recruit from the ranks of students and blue-collar workers and give them minimal training, like driving a van or transporting materials. The group made its first appearance after 2011, striking gas lines in Sinai. Following the dispersal of two main pro-Morsi protest camps this summer, statements released by the militant group called the Egyptian army and police infidels, and issued a clear call for jihad in Sinai and Egypt’s governorates in the name of retribution. The call to arms brings to mind jihadist ideologues who pronounce fatwas from behind bars, such as Abu Mohamed Al-Maqdisi in Jordan, and Wahhabi takfiri sheikhs who have issued similar edicts, such as Abi Al-Munzir Al-Shanqiti, author of a lengthy tract calling on jihadists in Sinai to take up arms against the Egyptian army. Confirmed reports reveal that some Egyptian jihadists have joined the ranks of terrorist groups in Syria during its ongoing three-year civil war and then returned to Egypt to continue their militancy. "It was Morsi’s year of lawlessness that led to the jihadists’ terrorist, armed and chaotic resuscitation," a Sinai-based journalist told Ahram Online on condition of anonymity. Wayne White of the Middle East Institute, who was a US Sinai Field Mission peacekeeper in the 1970s, spoke of how the current security vacuum fuelled the emergence of "a particularly dangerous combination" with regards to "the involvement of Al-Qaeda related armed elements in eastern Libya with the smuggling of arms and ammunition to Egypt's dangerous Sinai-based Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis militants." Despite mounting a major offensive in the contested Sinai, on a quasi-daily basis since September, the journalist says that the army has only succeeded in targeting civilian populated villages in the corridor between Al-Arish and Rafah, contrary to its publicly announced victories in defeating terrorism. He says that jihadists often hole up in surrounding mountains. "The incompetence and powerlessness of the government in cracking down on these jihadists only exacerbates the situation and strengthens them," he added. The first official engagement of the army in Sinai came in the summer of 2011, in what was dubbed Operation Eagle. Another, Operation Sinai, was launched under Morsi after 16 Egyptian soldiers were killed at gunpoint by militants on 5 August 2012 near the Rafah **border**. Though attacks had until recently only targeted security institutions, the latest attack is a throwback to the early 2000s when tourists were mostly targeted. From 2004 to 2006, more than 140 civilians -mostly tourists -were killed in blasts in the towns of Taba, Dahab and Sharm El-Sheikh. Many jihadists in Egypt benefited from mass prison escapes in the years since the 2011 uprising. Zimmerman names jihadist Muhammad Jamal who gained his freedom upon escaping an Egyptian prison in 2011 and then reached out to former comrades in Yemen for assistance in establishing his own militant group, the Muhammad Jamal Network (MJN). MJN was listed on the UN Security Council’s Al-Qaeda Sanctions List as an Al-Qaeda terrorist group on 21 October 2013. Yemen: AQAP's new commitments Members of Ansar al-Sharia are seen near a tank taken from the army, as they guard a road leading to the southern Yemeni town of Jaar (Reuters). A result of a merger between Saudi Arabia and Al-Qaeda cells in Yemen, the Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) was formed in January 2009, based on a cadre of top professional jihadists, leaders and operatives. A second front group to emerge is Ansar Al-Sharia, which has a broader, more locally-focused membership. This front is responsible for "local recruiting, smuggling, and interfacing with Yemeni tribes," says Christopher Swift, adjunct professor of national security studies at Georgetown University. "This two-tiered approach reflects AQAP's commitment to building sustainable relationships within Yemeni society, rather than simply imposing its will through fear and coercion," Swift told Ahram Online in interview. Having traditionally had a stronghold in Yemen, Al-Qaeda elevated the small country's role by Zawahiri's appointment of Nasir Al-Wuhayshi, the emir of AQAP, as his deputy last year, thereby catapulting the emir into the group's core

leadership. In his expert testimony to the US Congress on 4 February, Seth Jones, associate director of the International Security and Defense Policy Centre of the RAND Corporation, cites data from the Global Terrorism Database indicating that violence caused by Al-Qaeda affiliates has been highest in Yemen, followed by Somalia, Iraq and Syria. Despite that, Swift attests that AQAP members only number 2,000 to 3,000 members in the country of 23 million, and have not shaken Yemen's transitional process. Unlike in other Arab Spring states, AQAP has put itself on the side of the Yemeni lately-concluded national dialogue, which ended with an agreement to form a six-region federation. Swift says that AQAP supported calls for secession provided the Yemeni Socialist Party leadership in the south establish an Islamic emirate on Al-Qaeda's terms. However, they opposed the Gulf Cooperation Council's intervention in the dialogue, viewing it as "unwelcome by the allegedly apostate monarchies to Yemen's north and their infidel allies in Europe and North America," he said. Since mid-2011, US counterterrorism operations led by both the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) have been conducted in Yemen against AQAP and Ansar Al-Sharia, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism notes in its investigations portfolio entitled "Covert Drone War." Three US drone strikes have already been conducted this year, 26 in 2013 and 41 in 2012 according to the Long War Journal, which tracks US counterterrorism efforts. From 16 covert US operations carried out last year, an estimated 16 to 23 civilians were killed from a targeted average of 80, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism reported. Though considerable resentment has surrounded the campaign, for often missing the target and hitting civilians, Swift, who spoke to Yemen's tribal and religious leaders as part of field research in Yemen for a forthcoming book, said they "acknowledged that the drone campaign was hurting Al-Qaeda more than it was helping it." "These men were justifiably enraged when a strike went awry, but also recognised the value of suppressing and degrading Al-Qaeda's forces," he added.

CO aqeda : Al-Qaeda | unscou : United Nations Security Council

NS gvio : Military Action | gterr : Acts of Terror | gcivds : Civil Disruption | gdip : International Relations | gkdnap : Kidnap | gdef : Armed Forces | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : FC&E Executive News Filter

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IPD world

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SE Arabic region

HD **Tunisia closes borders with Libya after violence**

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LP

Tunisia's state news agency says the country closed its main **border** crossing with Libya after hundreds of stranded Egyptians, fleeing violence in Libya, tried to break through the passage, AP reported.

Security officials say the Egyptians, barred from entering **Tunisia** because they had no visa, held a protest, raised an Egyptian flag and broke through part of a **fence** at the Ras Ajdir crossing, prompting Tunisian police to fire tear gas and shoot in the air. The TAP news agency said a Tunisian police officer was wounded by gunfire from the Libyan side of the **border**.

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The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the press.

On Thursday, two Egyptians were killed at the crossing in unrest as more than 10,000 people crossed, mostly Libyans.

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VOA English Service

Tunisia Closes **Border** Crossing with Libya

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VOA News

August 1, 2014 1: 09 PM

Tunisia's state news agency says the country has closed its main **border** crossing with Libya after hundreds of Egyptians and Libyans tried to break through the passage while fleeing violence around Benghazi and Tripoli.

Security officials say Egyptians who did not have visas into **Tunisia** broke through part of a **fence** at the Ras Ajdir crossing when authorities would not let them pass.

Police fired gunshots and tear gas into the air to stop the mob.

Earlier this week, an Islamist and jihadist alliance called the Benghazi Revolutionaries Shura Council seized the headquarters of the Libyan special forces in the eastern city of Benghazi. Ansar al-Sharia, which Washington has listed as a terrorist organization, is part of the fighting alliance.

Officials had to close Tripoli's airport after two weeks of fighting. Authorities said Wednesday a fire continued to burn near the airport after a rocket struck a fuel tank and the blaze spread to a second storage site.

A battle for control of the airport has raged since July 13. Dozens of people have been killed.

Libya's newly elected parliament is scheduled to hold an emergency session Saturday in the eastern city of Tobruk. An official cites the "dangerous situation" in the country.

The surge of violence has renewed fears that Libya is plunging deeper into civil strife. Chaos has engulfed Libya since the 2011 civil war that ousted dictator Moammar Gadhafi.

NS gcat : Political/General News

RE libya : Libya | bengh : Benghazi | tripol : Tripoli | tunis : Tunisia | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

IPD VOA English Service

IPC DEF

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Irish Independent

SE News

HD **Tunisia seals border as thousands flee bloodshed in Libya**

BY Ben Bouzza Tunis

WC 374 words

PD 2 August 2014

SN Irish Independent

SC IINM

ED 3; National

PG 28

LA English

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LP

TUNISIA closed its main **border** crossing with Libya yesterday after thousands of stranded Egyptian and foreign nationals, fleeing militia fighting and violence in Libya, tried to break through the passage.

It was the second eruption of unrest at the **border** in as many days, as thousands streamed into its neigbour.

TD

Tunisia is the only escape route as fighting escalates in the Libyan capital, Tripoli, where rival militias have been battling for weeks to control the airport.

Yesterday's unrest took place when thousands of Egyptians, barred from entering **Tunisia** because they had no visa, held a protest then broke through a **fence** at the Ras Ajdir crossing.

The police responded by shooting in the air and firing tear gas. A reporter at the crossing said no one managed to make it to the other side and security forces used vehicles to physically block access. After a Tunisian police officer was wounded by gunfire from the Libyan side of the **border**, authorities closed the crossing. A day earlier, two Egyptians were killed during a similar protest. Tunisian officials say thousands of Libyans have been crossing the **border** each day during the past week.

Libya is witnessing its worst factional violence since the downfall of Moammar Gadhafi in 2011. Along with the fighting in Tripoli, which the Health Ministry said has killed 214 people and wounded over 980 others, Islamic militias have overrun army bases in the second largest city, Benghazi.

Irish citizens warned to leave troubled country immediately THE Department of Foreign Affairs has warned Irish people "not to travel to Libya under any circumstances" and for those citizens who are already there to "leave immediately".

"Travel within the country is extremely dangerous. In Benghazi and Derna, there have also been a number of foreign nationals shot dead," the advisory read.

A crisis team has been set up to assist around 100 Irish citizens caught up in the escalating violence.

Foreign Affairs Minister Charlie Flanagan yesterday announced that the team had been established to help those Irish citizens who wish to remain in the country as well as those trying to flee.

"The security situation in Libya has deteriorated significantly," he said.

RE ire : Ireland | libya : Libya | tunis : Tunisia | bengh : Benghazi | tripol : Tripoli | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eecz : European Union Countries | eurz : Europe | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | weurz : Western Europe

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With escalating unrest in Libya, **Tunisia** is facing increasing difficulties securing its borders Tunisian army stand guard near a demolished vehicle following a roadside bomb in the mountainous **border** region near Algeria where security forces have been hunting Al-Qaeda linked jihadists, on June 6, 2013. Source: AFP Photo/Abderrazek Khilfi

Tunis, Asharq Al-Awsat-Like all **border** zones across the world, **Tunisia**'s borders have never been completely secured. But the nature of problems along **Tunisia**'s southern **border** with Libya and western **border** with Algeria have seen radical shifts in recent years, mainly due to the political developments that have taken place both in **Tunisia** and its neighboring states.

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Tunisia itself witnessed massive political changes after the fall of former President Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali on January 14, 2011 while turmoil also ripped through Libya in the aftermath of the ouster of dictator Muammar Gaddafi, also in 2011. In the western part of **Tunisia**, fierce clashes with armed militias positioned in the mountainous area along the **border** with Algeria have resulted in the deaths of more than 50 Tunisian military and security officers. As for its southern **border** with Libya, the flow of smuggled weapons has increased, bringing increased concerns over security.

Tunisia's national economy has been a major casualty of its porous borders. Smuggling from Libya and Algeria costs **Tunisia** over one billion US dollars every year, a study prepared by the International Monetary Fund revealed.

According to the study, smuggled commodities make up 5 percent of the country's total imports, with the loss in tax revenue amounting to 730 million US dollars.

The relatively high fuel price in **Tunisia**, compared to Algeria and Libya, has made it the most targeted commodity by smugglers. Fuel price in **Tunisia** is six times higher than in Libya or Algeria. This is not to mention the increased smuggling of commodities from Asia which have disrupted the country's industries, prompting the closure of several factories and the laying off of workers.

However Tunis's greatest nightmare lies in the shadowy realm where the interests of smugglers and extremist Islamist militias intersect. Reports suggest that smugglers have no qualms about dealing with arms so long as they can make a profit.

According to **Tunisia**'s Borders: Jihadism and Contraband, a study by the crisis group, "The security vacuum that followed the 2010-2011 uprising against Ben Ali's regime . . .largely explains the worrying increase in cross-**border** trafficking," with "hard drugs" and "firearms and explosives" regularly entering "the country from Libya."

"Likewise, the northern half of the Tunisian-Algerian **border** is becoming an area of growing trafficking of cannabis and small arms," the report adds.

The worsening security situation has prompted authorities to step up their presence along the **border** Algerian-Tunisian **border**. The Tunisian government is even considering erecting a kilometre long **fence** near the Ras Jadir **border** crossing with Libya.

It is well-known that **Tunisia**, since its independence, has not allocated large budgets for arms. But the new scenario has altered Tunis's priorities; the 2014 budgets allocated to the military and security establishments have seen significant increases.

During his recent tour of the US and Europe, the acquisition of military equipment was one of the main talking points on the agenda of Tunisian Prime Minster Mehdi Jomaa.

Jomaa has also emphasized that several agreements have been sealed with friendly countries to provide **Tunisia** with the military equipment it needs to crush terrorist groups to the west and crack down on smuggling activities from Libya to the south.

NS gtraff : Trafficking/Smuggling | gterr : Acts of Terror | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : FC&E Executive News Filter

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IPD Features

PUB Saudi Research and Marketing

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The New York Times

SE World; Africa

HD Libyans Seeking Aid in Tunisia Tell of a Home Torn Apart

BY By CARLOTTA GALL
WC 946 words
PD 10 September 2014
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SC NYTFEED
LA English
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LP

SFAX, Tunisia — Libyans seeking medical care and a refuge from war are filling the private clinics in this coastal Tunisian city for the second time in three years, bringing with them fresh accounts of the violence racking their country.

Since the revolution three years ago that overthrew Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi, about 1.8 million Libyans — nearly a third of the country's population — have fled to Tunisia. A new wave of refugees has arrived in recent months as fighting has engulfed the Libyan capital, Tripoli, driven away by random shelling and shooting, as well as shortages of cash, electricity and fuel.

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"The country has plunged into the sea," said Jomaa Abdullah, 68, a farm laborer from near Tripoli who had brought his son for treatment for gunshot wounds. "It's gone. It's going to be hard for it come back."

The refugees' accounts of the most recent spasm of fighting make it clear that the violence afflicting Libya is only worsening. While the influx has brought economic opportunity here, it has also raised fears that Libya's instability will bleed into Tunisia, which is itself grappling with a budding insurgency since a popular uprising threw out the dictator, Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, in 2011.

Hundreds of wounded fighters, from opposing sides, have arrived here since August. Relatives of the wounded sit hunched over, smoking cigarettes in clusters in hospital parking lots. One fighter lounged in the back seat of a car, his wounded leg and crutches propped up beside him. Civilians caught in the crossfire or injured in shelling have sought treatment here, too.

Most of the wounded men are from army units in Tripoli and the militias from around Zintan, a region in western Libya, that were guarding installations like the airport and fuel depot in the capital, both of which were destroyed.

They were attacked by rival militias from the powerful city-state of Misurata and their Islamist allies. As the fighting escalated, the Zintan militias were forced to abandon their posts and the Misuratans now control the capital.

"I was guarding the fuel tanks and I was shot twice in the stomach and wounded from shrapnel on the back," Munir Ahmed, 34, said.

Mr. Ahmed, a trained soldier in Colonel Qaddafi's army since the age of 16, had joined the revolution early on. After the fall of Colonel Qaddafi, Mr. Ahmed's revolutionary brigade became part of a new national army. He was with a unit of just 10 men who were guarding the vast oil storage tanks in Tripoli when a militia attacked the installation.

"They bombed the vehicles as we were fleeing, and the cars caught fire," Mr. Ahmed said. "The people with me were all killed. Just one survived," though his leg was amputated.

The opposing militiamen were black-clad Islamists, who accused the soldiers of being infidels even though they were all Muslims, he said. "We want stability," Mr. Ahmed said, "and these people who are wearing black masks are saying: 'God is our Lord' and telling us, 'You don't have a Lord.'"

Wounded civilians described the conflict bluntly as a power struggle between the militias.

“Three years after Libya was liberated, the Zintanis want to rule, and the Misuratans want to rule. It’s a struggle for power,” said Muhammad Meftah Essid Feres, 33, who was shot in the legs while driving home from a farm near the airport.

“They destroyed the airport, and it is not only their airport, it is everyone’s airport,” he said. “It is not even a good airport, not like Dubai, or the Emirates, but now the whole population is without an airport. People are having to drive four hours to the **border**.”

Some of the shelling has hit civilian homes and forced people to abandon whole neighborhoods near the airport.

Three women, one who was pregnant, and a 3-year-old boy were killed in late July when a stray rocket crashed into a house about six miles from the Tripoli airport. The owner of the house, Ghaith Gneb, 75, a former police officer said that the rocket smashed through the **wall** and exploded in the courtyard of the house. “It was not dangerous in our area,” he said. “This rocket came randomly.”

His daughter, Hanan Gneb, 32, a primary schoolteacher, was badly burned by the blast and is almost completely blind. His sister-in-law, Dhiba Nejah, was sliced across the chest by shrapnel. The two women sat opposite each other on their beds in Errachid Clinic, their limbs and heads still bandaged after a month of care. “Reality makes you brave,” Ms. Gneb said.

“We wish for peace,” she said. “We wish students can go back to their schools and people go back to their places as soon as possible, and for things to be stable and calm.”

But her father did not see a swift end to the conflict. Their entire community, some 100 families, had fled, Mr. Gneb said. “It is chaos; people fighting for power,” he said.

Some of the refugees had hopes that the newly elected Libyan Parliament could bring a solution. Others said they were waiting for international intervention, as in 2011.

“We friends know if it does not calm down we will not have stability here,” said Ridha Kallel, the Tunisian administrator at Ibn Annafis, the largest private clinic in Sfax. “It needs Western intervention. All the Libyans are waiting for the West.”

* Libyan Militias Seize Control of Capital as Chaos Rises

* **Tunisia** Fears Attacks by Citizens Flocking to Jihad

RE libya : Libya | tunis : Tunisia | tripol : Tripoli | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

IPD Qaddafi, Muammar el-

PUB The New York Times Company

AN Document NYTFEED020140909ea9a002xs

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HD **Katibat Uqba Ibn Nafaa recruitment efforts increase risk of terrorist attacks in urban centres in post-election Tunisia**

BY Ludovico Carlino

WC 1,402 words

PD 21 November 2014

SN IHS Global Insight Daily Analysis

SC WDAN

LA English

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LP

On 15 November, Tunisian army units and **border** guards stopped a group of 20 suspected armed militants attempting to infiltrate the Tunisian territory from a **border** point between Algeria, Libya, and **Tunisia**.

IHS perspective

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Significance

The foiled attempt followed a 7 November call by the leader of the jihadist Katibat Uqba Ibn Nafaa urging Libyan and Tunisian militants to return from Syria to support its operations in **Tunisia**.

Implications

Katibat Uqba Ibn Nafaa recruitment efforts indicate growing intent to extend the Jihadi front in **Tunisia**.

Outlook

The electoral victory of the secularist Nidaa Tounes party and influx of returnees from Libya and Syria will probably increase the risk of attacks against government and Western assets in Tunisian cities in the six-month outlook.

Tunisian media have not provided further details on the incident, such as the nationality of the militants or the weapons in their possession. However, they have suggested that the group originates from the Libyan city of Sebha, around 800 km south of the Tunisian **border**. Despite the long distance, this is a common smuggling route used by traffickers and militant groups to move weapons, fighters, and drugs across Algeria, **Tunisia**, and Libya.

Armed soldiers guard a polling station in Tunis on 26 October. The secularist Nidaa Tounes party's victory in the election increases the risk of attacks on government assets in Tunisian cities. PA. 21297328

Since 2013, the alliance between traffickers and jihadist groups in the three countries has considerably increased in the **border** regions. This co-operation has been largely fuelled by the security instability of neighbouring Libya. The frontiers' porosity has prompted Tunisian security forces to increase their presence along the Algerian-Tunisian **border** and consider erecting a **fence** near the Ras Jadir **border** crossing with Libya. However, the modestly equipped and staffed Tunisian army has largely failed to close off the two borders and stop cross-**border** infiltrations.

Katibat Uqba Ibn Nafaa militant campaign

It is likely that the group of militants intercepted on 15 November was attempting to reach the Jebel Chaambi area, a mountainous region on the western **border** with Algeria where the Tunisian army has been confronting, since December 2012, a jihadist insurgency spearheaded by the Katibat Uqba Ibn Nafaa. The latter is a jihadist group that was formerly under the control of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic

Maghreb (AQIM), but that pledged allegiance to the Islamic State on 20 September 2014. According to the Tunisian government, Katibat Uqba Ibn Nafaa was established in late 2012 by Algerian and Tunisian militants who had left Mali after the French military intervention. The group, which since January has been led by Algerian militant Khaled Chaieb, has been responsible for a number of improvised explosive device (IED) and ambush attacks against the Tunisian army in Jebel Chaambi and Kasserine areas. On 16 July, it claimed responsibility for an attack on two military checkpoints with assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs). The ambush, which killed 14 soldiers and injured 23, was the deadliest on **Tunisia**'s armed forces in the country's post-independence history. Tunisian authorities have also claimed that Katibat Uqba Ibn Nafaa has been responsible for the latest of such attacks, a 5 November ambush on a coach carrying army personnel near Nebeur, between Kef and Jendouba, in which four soldiers were killed and 11 others wounded.

Connections with Ansar al-Sharia in **Tunisia** and Libyan militants

Katibat Uqba Ibn Nafaa maintains strong connections with Ansar al-Sharia in **Tunisia**, a Salafist organisation involved in da'wa (preaching) activities and in numerous incidents of low-level violence against targets deemed un-Islamic. Ansar al-Sharia is predominantly active in **Tunisia**'s economically poor interior and in Tunis's suburbs, where it is engaged in a constant effort to recruit fighters to dispatch to Syria to wage jihad there. This approach partially contradicts its domestic stance, as Ansar al-Sharia has not openly declared **Tunisia** as a land of jihad, favouring instead social outreach to achieve its goal of the Islamisation of the country. This decision has pushed the more militant elements among Tunisian Islamists to join the ranks of Katibat Uqba Ibn Nafaa and jihadist groups in Libya. An 18 November statement released on pro-jihadist social media claimed for instance that five of the seven suicide bombing operations perpetrated in November in eastern Libya were carried out by Tunisian jihadists.

Likely intent to extend the jihadist front in **Tunisia**

A report published by Tunisian media before the 15 November incident suggests that the cross-**border** infiltration was not a routine attempt. On 7 November, a media report claimed that Turki al-Binali, a prominent Bahraini jihadist ideologue close to the Islamic State leadership, held a meeting in Sirte, Libya, with regional jihadist commanders. In the meeting, al-Binali allegedly called for the opening of a new jihadist front in **Tunisia** to support the group's fellows in the country and sustain its battle against the Tunisian state. On the same day, Katibat Uqba Ibn Nafaa's leader, Khaled Chaieb, released a similar statement urging Libyan and Tunisian militants to return from Syria to support its operations in **Tunisia**.

Since it pledged its allegiance to the Islamic State's leadership on 20 September, Katibat Uqba Ibn Nafaa has increased its rhetoric against the Tunisian state. The group has issued statements threatening to disrupt the ongoing electoral process and to assassinate Prime Minister Mehdi Jomaa and Minister of Interior Lotfi Ben Jeddou, among others. On 28 October, the group announced a new 'retribution campaign' against security forces, depicted as "taghut" (tyrants). These threats have yet to materialise, as the attacks launched by the group against the army have been limited to Kasserine and Jebel Chaambi areas, and do not amount to a persistent terrorist campaign. However, Uqba Ibn Nafaa is probably trying to reorganise its ranks and expand its operations in **Tunisia**'s cities. The pledge of allegiance to the Islamic State is likely to be a part of this scheme. Firstly, it is aimed at accelerating the return of Tunisian jihadists fighting in Libya and Syria, especially those from Islamic State-affiliated groups. Secondly, it aims at increasing its popularity and attracting further Ansar al-Sharia members in order to exploit the logistical network that the group maintains across Tunisian cities. The gunfight between militants and security forces that broke out on 24 October in the Tunis suburb of Oued Ellil, which resulted in the deaths of one policeman and five gunmen, corroborates this theory. Counter-terrorism forces raided the house where a group of armed militants was allegedly planning an attack ahead of the 26 parliamentary elections. Both Ansar al-Sharia and Uqba Ibn Nafaa have released statements mentioning the incident and vowed revenge for their 'brethren' killed.

Outlook and implications

A new coalition government led by the secular Nidaa Tounes party is likely to continue the security crackdown on religious extremism in an attempt to mitigate the risk of domestic terrorism. This effort is likely to lead to further defections from Ansar al-Sharia to Uqba Ibn Nafaa and accelerate the return of Tunisian militants from Libya and Syria, which is likely to increase terrorism risks in urban centres in the one-year outlook. The return of jihadist veterans will probably improve the group's organisational and combat capabilities. Uqba Ibn Nafaa is likely to attempt to launch attacks against government officials, buildings, and security assets in Kasserine, Kef, Kairouan, Sidi Bouzid, Ariana, Sfax, Gafsa, and Tunis with both shooting and IED attacks. The return of jihadist veterans will probably improve the group's organisational and operational capabilities, increasing the likelihood of more complex operations involving use of suicide operations, suicide vehicle-borne IEDs (SVBIEDs), and VBIEDs. The group will also aspire to inflict major property damage, targeting commercial sectors such as tourism, damaging the economy, and undermining confidence in the country's security. The group would probably plan to stage attacks on

Western targets to demonstrate its credibility with, and to leverage support from, the Islamic State. As such, the risk of small-scale shootings, IED attacks, and larger operations targeting Western hotels, tourist resorts with high concentration of Western tourists, especially in Tunis, Sousse and Monastir, and diplomatic assets is likely to increase in the one-year outlook.

NS gtraff : Trafficking/Smuggling | gvio : Military Action | gterr : Acts of Terror | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE tunis : Tunisia | libya : Libya | alg : Algeria | tuncty : Tunis | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

IPD Main Story

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

SE World

HD **Tunisian Elite Police Recount Horror Day at the Museum; Libya-trained gunmen fended off security unit for more than two hours**

BY By Tamer El-Ghobashy and Radhouane Addala

WC 1,243 words

PD 20 March 2015

ET 23:17

SN The Wall Street Journal Online

SC WSJO

LA English

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LP

TUNIS, **Tunisia**—The two gunmen who attacked **Tunisia**'s national museumon Wednesday fended off an elite unit of antiterrorism police for nearly two hours and were killed after a grenade they tossed failed to explode.

Details of the standoff, relayed by two members of the nation's security services including a member of the unit that brought the siege to its deadly conclusion, came as security officials said Friday that the young assailants had been trained in neighboring Libya before the assault that killed 21 people, including 18 foreign tourists.

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On Thursday, Islamic State, the Sunni extremist group with strong footholds in Iraq, Syria and Libya, claimed responsibility for the attack. Another al Qaeda-linked group praised it. But security officials said the emerging portrait of the assailants as lone wolves with no known ties to major terrorist organizations suggests they acted without coordination with the large group, but were inspired by their radical ideology.

Wednesday's assault has put **Tunisia**—the only country to emerge from the Arab Spring revolutions with a stable democracy—on edge, with its president deploying soldiers to large cities amid fears of further attacks. At least nine people, including members of the gunmen's families, have been detained for alleged connection to the museum assault.

The suspects had a plan that included secondary targets and were efficient, consistent with guerrilla training on the types of weapons the gunmen employed, the security officers told The **Wall** Street Journal.

Both attackers had been known to intelligence services, with the older suspect arrested last year on terrorism-related charges, before being released by a judge who cited a lack of evidence.

Both are believed to have crossed the **border** illegally into Libya in December, returning to **Tunisia** after receiving weapons training there. Libya has been a hotbed of radical Islamist groups—three of which have pledged loyalty to Islamic State.

Prime Minister Habib Essid said Thursday that neither man had any connection to known terrorist organizations in the country.

The security officials said the men, identified on Thursday by the interior ministry as Hatem Khachnaoui, 26 years old, and Yassine Labidi, 20, were each armed with a Kalashnikov rifle with their wooden stocks sawed-off and several hand grenades. Each wore a suicide explosive belt under their casual clothes.

Evidence gathered since Wednesday suggests the pair had initially tried to launch an assault on Tunis's Parliament building, but were deterred by a heavy police presence there. There was a brief exchange of gunfire with parliament guards, which sent the assailants running toward the Bardo National Museum, which shares the same gated compound with the National Assembly.

“The first calls came in as shots fired at the assembly," said the antiterrorism officer, a 17-year-veteran of the elite Brigade Anti Terroristes, commonly known as BAT. “The second call was that terrorists had moved to the museum and the third was that there were victims on the ground."

The unit of 34 officers, who had been eating a fish lunch, donned their gear—bullet resistant vests, helmets, M4 assault rifles, 9mm Glock pistols and plexiglass shields—and raced to the scene, arriving 14 minutes later. Led by two dogs trained in tracking explosive material, the officers split into teams of about eight and surrounded the museums entrances. The officer said that inside the museum gates, he observed three lifeless bodies, with six more just inside the main entrance alongside an unexploded grenade.

The team proceeded lightly. He and others had never been inside the three-story museum, popular with tourists, and weren't familiar with the layout. The team was led by a German Shepherd named Akeel, who guided the officers toward a staircase to the second level of the museum. As they proceeded up the stairs, they were shot at and returned fire. “We stopped shooting to give the dog a chance to detect where the gunfire was coming from," the officer said. “We could not see the gunmen and the exchange of fire made it difficult to know where it was coming from."

The officers got to the second-floor landing that led to a long hallway adorned with artwork and multiple doorways to galleries. Akeel sniffed his way down the corridor and stopped at a doorway where he was immediately shot and killed from inside the gallery. The officer said one of the gunmen briefly emerged before retreating to the room, slamming the wooden door shut.

In a room across the hall, a young Tunisian tour guide peeked out and waved his arms. He had been holed up with about 30 Italian tourists. The team radioed other units, who came upstairs and rushed the tourist group outside, using their plexiglass shields to protect them.

For the majority of the nearly two-hour standoff, there was no shooting and the only sounds heard were the moans of injured victims who lined both sides of the hallway."

“We checked each body, looking for vital signs and radioed for ambulances," the officer said. “Our members carried out those who were alive while the rest took cover, watching the door."

Once the injured had been removed, one officer broke rank and opened the door. The attackers immediately began shooting, and another member of the team, Aymen Morjane, was struck in the stomach, below his Kevlar vest.

Mr. Morjane, a hulking 30-year-old, had been off that day but responded to the attack out of a sense of duty. Despite efforts to save him at the scene, he died later that day.

“When our man was shot, we were furious," the officer said. “We had nothing else in our minds other than to kill these terrorists."

The officers then rolled two nonlethal flash grenades into the room. After they exploded, they rushed in. They found Mr. Labidi disoriented and clutching his head and shot him dead, before retreating to the hallway to regroup.

They believed Mr. Khachnaoui was hiding in a staircase at the opposite end of the room where Mr. Labidi had been killed and radioed the location to other units in the museum. At that point, Mr. Khachnaoui tossed a grenade in their direction. It landed about two yards from the team of eight officers. “We froze," the officer said. “We thought we were going to die."

A typical fragmentation grenade will explode within eight seconds. The team waited. There was no explosion. Cautiously, they rolled another flash grenade toward the room shielding the remaining terrorist.

The loud blast from their nonlethal grenade was likely mistaken by Mr. Khachnaoui as the sound from his own grenade, which had never exploded. It drew him out into the hallway thinking he had inflicted severe damage on the officers chasing him. They were waiting when he emerged, and shot him dead.

The entire operation, from the time the 34-man team left its base to the moment they killed Mr. Khachnaoui, took two hours and seven minutes. The killing of the two suspects transpired over just five to six minutes.

In the immediate aftermath, the exhausted officers wept and prayed for their wounded colleague, Mr. Morjane. Hours later, they learned that he had died, the latest victim of the attack.

Write to Tamer El-Ghobashy at tamer.el-ghobashy@wsj.com

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IN i974123 : Museums/Historical Sites/Gardens | i329 : Firearms | iaer : Aerospace/Defense | ilea : Leisure/Arts/Hospitality | i97412 : Theaters/Entertainment Venues | idef : Defense Equipment/Products | iindstrls : Industrial Goods

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RE tunis : Tunisia | libya : Libya | africaz : Africa | meastz : Middle East | tuncty : Tunis | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

IPD Hatem Khachnaoui

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MAGHREB CONFIDENTIAL

SE BUSINESS CIRCLES

HD **Thales seeks to install watch system to guard Libya border**

WC 242 words

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LP

Up to now mainly focussed on civil aeronautics and transportation in **Tunisia**, Thales is increasingly interested in the country's military market in step with president Beji Caid Essebsi's decision to depend more on the armed forces to counter the Jihadist threat.

To show its willingness to participate in that shift in strategy, the French group recently named Charles-Hubert Dufour as head of operations in the country. Dufour's background reflects his wide experience. Named Thales' Libya director in 2013 (MC 1075), he had previously been based in Amman and covered the Lebanese and Iraqi markets from there.

TD

According to a Tunisian diplomatic source, Thales is particularly interested in a project to install a 450-km "electronic **fence**" between **Tunisia** and Libya to limit infiltrations by Islamic fighters but also to counter smuggling.

The idea for the **fence** was hatched over a year ago but has not gained all that much traction in Tunis as yet. And Thales will also have to be quite creative when it comes to helping to finance the facility, which can be highly costly to install. That part of the project will be dealt with by France Blackwell, who is in charge of export financing in Africa and North America. She accompanied Dufour to a **Tunisia** workshop organized by Business France (formerly Ubifrance) in Paris on March 23.

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PUB Indigo Publications

AN Document MGREB00020150402eb3q00008

HD **After Sousse, Tunisia struggles to contain jihadist groups**

BY By Tim Lister and Raja Razek CNN

WC 1,389 words

PD 6 July 2015

ET 01:02

SN CNN Wire

SC CNNWR

LA English

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LP

SOUSSE, **Tunisia** (CNN) -- Ten days after Saif al-Deen al Rezgui's rampage on the beach in Sousse, the Tunisian government is uncovering a terror network that reaches far beyond its borders. At the same time it is trying to rescue the country's image among tourists while striking a balance between tougher security and preserving **Tunisia**'s democratic gains.

There are promises of greater security at resorts, tougher laws to pursue militants, the closure of "illegal" mosques. But the chaos in neighboring Libya and a thriving militant fringe in **Tunisia** itself are threatening to undo the gains Tunisians celebrated when they kicked off the Arab Spring four years ago.

TD

According to authorities here, al-Rezgui trained in Libya with the two men who attacked the Bardo Museum in Tunis earlier this year, killing 22 people, most of them tourists. The local affiliate of ISIS, also known as the Islamic State, has claimed responsibility for both attacks, indicating that it's training cells to return to **Tunisia** and is developing a network here.

The place where the men allegedly trained, near the Libyan coastal town of Sabratha, is barely 60 miles (100 kilometers) from the Tunisian **border**. There have been reports of several hundred jihadists receiving military training in the area, but some analysts believe the presence is much smaller, and more of a center of religious education. They also doubt that powerful militia in the area would allow ISIS to plant a deep footprint there.

There's plenty of illegal movement between the two countries across their long empty frontier, mainly among smugglers. But members of the Tunisian branch of Ansar al Shariah -- perhaps in their hundreds - also crossed into Libya after the group was banned in **Tunisia**.

Ansar's relationship with ISIS is murky. Its leadership appears loyal to al Qaeda, but an unknown number of supporters have gravitated toward ISIS (as in Libya.) At least one of the ISIS cell involved in attacking the Corinthia Hotel in Tripoli in January was a Tunisian.

ISIS supporters already have a footprint in **Tunisia** under the banner of a group called Jund al Khilafah (Soldiers of the Caliphate), which claimed the attack on the Bardo museum in March (though Tunisian officials are still not convinced the group was responsible for the attack.)

"Surely, the security of **Tunisia** will see horror, and surely you will see assassinations and explosions," the group claimed after the attack.

A pro-jihadist media outlet in **Tunisia** subsequently (in May) issued this warning via Twitter: "To the Christians planning their summer vacations in **Tunisia**, we can't accept u in our land while your jets keep killing our Muslim Brothers in Iraq & Sham, but if u insist on coming then beware because we are preparing for u something that will make u forget #Bardo Attack .."

Jund al Khilafah is especially active in the impoverished interior. The town of Kasserine sits in the shadow of the Chambi mountains that straddle the **border** with Algeria. It's a neglected corner of **Tunisia** where most young men are without work.

Yassir, an 18-year-old who spends much of his time learning English from sub-titled American movies, told CNN he tried to avoid trouble with either the police or the militants. He had stopped going to the local

mosque, which had become a recruiting ground for militant groups, and wants to move to Tunis to look for work.

Yassir said well over a dozen teenagers in neighboring streets had vanished --- some into detention and others into the nearby mountains. More still had joined the hundreds traveling overland to Libya and onwards to Syria and Iraq. Jihadist recruiters sometimes offered money, he said, even modest amounts would entice young men without work.

One young man in Kasserine described to CNN a visit from one of **Tunisia**'s most wanted men, Luqman ibn Sakhr, regarded by officials as the mastermind behind the Bardo attack.

"I knew I was either going to be killed or become a killer," he said, asking not to be identified for his own safety.

"They asked if we were still praying and I said praying had brought me nothing but trouble.

They said be ready, you're going to work for us," he said.

After that meeting, he said he had been detained by the police for a second time and questioned. He still feels unsafe, even though Sakhr was killed in March by government forces.

Yearning for the past

The craggy landscape of the Jebel Chambi ascends to nearly 2,000 meters and is covered in pine forests. People in Kasserine say it is dotted with jihadist camps, each of 30 or 40 men, often led by Algerians. The Tunisian security forces are struggling to dislodge these groups and taking heavy casualties in the process. A year ago, 15 soldiers were killed in one incident, the worst single loss of life for the military since independence in 1956.

ISIS also claimed an attack last month on military posts in the neighboring region of Sidi Bouzid, claiming to have killed or wounded more than "20 elements." And in another incident in May, a soldier opened fire in a base in Tunis, killing seven other soldiers. The defense mnistry said he had been suffering psychological problems, but the attack was claimed by ISIS.

Yassir is not alone in yearning for pre-revolution **Tunisia**, and the authoritarian rule of Ben Ali. At least, he says, there was security -- no jihadists building camps or shooting tourists. Another local agrees, even though his two sons were shot and wounded by the security forces in protests against the previous regime in 2011.

In a CNN interview last week, Prime Minister Habib Essid acknowledged that jobless youth were vulnerable to being radicalized, or joining jihadist groups for money. His government's first goal was delivering security, and then investment. But now, he admitted, the tourism sector was "drowning." His government sees $500 million in tourism revenue being lost this year.

According to Philip Stack, North Africa analyst Verisk Maplecroft, one-third of the unemployed are young university graduates. And there is a growing divide between the elite and middle class of the northern and coastal areas and the poor of the rural and desert interior --- fertile ground for militant groups.

Stack says the Tunisian authorities also lack a good intelligence network, having long neglected the Islamist threat, and that will take time to build. But time is not a luxury the Tunisians have, given the growing activity of both Jund al Khilafah and an offshoot of al Qaeda -- known as Katibat 'Uqba ibn Nafi (KUIN). Young men join both groups, and KUIN may be stronger in the Chambi mountains.

It's unclear whether and how these groups co-operate --- or compete for recruits. Aaron Zelin, an expert on the North African jihadist scene with the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, says there is a risk the two groups will seek to outdo each other. "If ISIS attempts a full-scale terrorist or insurgent campaign in **Tunisia**, pressure on KUIN could mount and an outbidding scenario of escalating violence could ensue," Zelin says.

Mohsen Marzouk, head of the Nidaa Tounes Party and an adviser to President Beji Caid Essebsi, told The Independent newspaper: "**Tunisia** is the last **wall** between terrorists and Europe. If **Tunisia** is not able to fight [them], Europe will have to face them directly."

For now, the Tunisian government -- and the thousands depending on tourism for a living --- dread a third major attack within a matter of months. Outside the hotels in Sousse, there are now armed police. Some 2,000 have been deployed altogether at Tunisian resorts --- but Sousse alone has hotels along several kilometers of beachfront. A resort the size of Hilton Head or Torremolinos, it cannot be fully protected.

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Habib, who runs a small souvenir shop opposite one of the most expensive hotels in Sousse, smiles broadly whenever a tourist enters.

'Tunisians are strong," he says. "We will fight the terror. And we will always welcome people here like they are our own families."

But he fears that another al-Rezgui, with another AK-47, will ruin him.

CNN's Nima Elbagir contributed to this report.

NS gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpol : Domestic Politics | gterr : Acts of Terror | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE tunis : Tunisia | libya : Libya | tuncty : Tunis | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

IPD Sousse--1

PUB Cable News Network LP.

AN Document CNNWR00020150705eb75005mu

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HD **Tunisian premier says 160-kilometre wall being built along border with Libya**

WC 833 words

PD 7 July 2015

ET 23:43

SN BBC Monitoring Newsfile

SC BBCMNF

LA English

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LP

Tunisian Prime Minister Habib Essid has said that his government has enacted a "clear pre-emtpive" counterterrorism strategy since the 18 March Bardo museum attack and revealed that a 160-kilometre **wall** is being built along the **border** with Libya.

Essid made these comments in a recorded interview that was conducted by three presenters, and aired at 1800 gmt on 7 July on Tunisian National TV.

TD

Pre-emptive counterterrorism strategy

According to Essid, **Tunisia** has enacted a more effective counterterrorism strategy since the Bardo attack. "Before, pre-emptive [attacks] were done by terrorists. We have gone through this in several situations when terrorists used to kill our soldiers and security officials and pass by as if nothing happens. We have a pre-emptive strategy that we agreed on and began to implement since the Bardo incident."

Essid then mentioned several counterterrorism operations, including one which he said led to the killing of the Algerian senior leader of the Al-Qa'idah-affiliated Tunisian Okba Ben Nafaa Brigade, Lokmane Abou Sakhr, and seven of his aides. He noted: "Of course after this, what happened was in retaliation and we were awaiting such an operation. Our national army conducted some pre-emptive operations by killing four or five terrorists at the same time."

The prime minister also said that **Tunisia** is organizing a counterterrorism conference in September: "We want to provide all conditions for this conference to be a success, which is why it is important and necessary to hold this conference in September, and we have started preparing for it from now."

One of the presenters asked Essid to comment on accusations that his government was fighting Islam, after it announced the closure of "unlawful" mosques. "**Tunisia** is a republic and Islam is its religion. There is no debate about that and there is no fight against Islam. On the contrary, we are defending it. Those people who have encroached on Islam have no relation to the proper, peaceful, Tunisian Islam," he said.

Wall, trench with surveillance along **border** with Libya

As part of the procedures to strengthen security in **Tunisia**, Essid said that the country is undergoing a project to build a **wall** and a trench behind it, along the **border** with Libya. "With our army we are building a protective [**wall**] along [the **border**], especially in the area between Ras Jedir and Dehiba, which is approximately 168 kilometres long," he said. The **wall** would also include surveillance centres along it. The prime minister added that they are expediting the process due to the frequency of terrorist operations and illegal infiltration into the **border**, and said that the **wall** will be completed by the end of 2015.

He denied that "terrorists" entered legally through the **border**, and said the Sousse attacker "had a passport that was confiscated. His passport was issued in 2013 and was not used. However, we still have information that he went to Libya."

Emergency law for **Tunisia**'s "greater good"

After condemning the 26 June Sousse attack and offering his condolences to the families of victims, Essid said that the state of emergency in the country was declared after being discussed in cabinet meetings. He said that the developments in the security situation led to the decision to enact the state of emergency "to provide all conditions to protect **Tunisia**".

"Terrorism is threatening state institutions so we have to confront it," he said.

"There were some who did not agree [with the enactment of the state of emergency] but the greater good of the nation requires that we take this step," he noted.

When one of the interviewers asked him about the repercussions on freedoms, Essid replied: "**Tunisia** has institutions, a constitution and laws. The government is tasked with executing policies while respecting these laws and the constitution. We tell all Tunisians that all we have done is to protect and strengthen their freedoms that many martyrs fought and sacrificed for."

The prime minister also denied any connections between the Sousse attack and the dismissal of Mohamed Laroui from his role as the official spokesperson for the Interior Ministry.

Tunisians "do not hand over their sons"

Regarding the involvement of Britain in investigations on the Sousse attack, he said that this was because "Britons made up the largest group targeted in the operation". "The two governments think that Britons were the target because the terrorist went towards a hotel that had a majority of British [visitors]," he added.

On whether the government would hand over to Britain, Tunisians who were accused of involvement in the operation, Essid said: "In that case there are laws, which we apply. We Tunisians do not hand over our sons, and we cannot do so, we have to respect the laws of our country. This is not negotiable." The prime minister then denied any prisoner swaps between the two countries.

Source: National Tunisian TV, Tunis, in Arabic 1800 gmt 7 Jul 15

NS gdip : International Relations | gpol : Domestic Politics | gterr : Terrorism | gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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PUB The British Broadcasting Corporation

AN Document BBCMNF0020150707eb77002s1

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HD **Tunisia Starts Building Wall on Border With Libya to Protect Against IS – Prime Minister**

CR РИАН

WC 218 words

PD 8 July 2015

ET 04:20

SN Sputnik News Service

SC RVESEN

LA English

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LP

CAIRO, July 8 (Sputnik) - **Tunisia** has started constructing a concrete **wall** along its **border** with Libya to prevent the Islamic State militants from entering Tunisian territory, the country's Prime Minister Habib Essid said Tuesday.

"We have started constructing the **wall** and digging a ditch along the entire **border** with Libya. The length of the **wall** will be 168 kilometers [105 miles], the construction works will be over by the end of 2015," Essid said in an interview with state broadcaster.

TD

The announcement comes less than two weeks after the deadliest terrorist attack in the history of **Tunisia** occurred in the resort city of Sousse.

On June 26, a gunman, later identified as Seifeddine Rezgui, walked down a beach by the Spanish-owned five-star Riu Imperial Marhaba hotel and killed 40 tourists with an automatic rifle. A further 40 tourists were injured.

The Islamic State terrorist group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

On July 4, President of **Tunisia** Beji Caid Essebsi declared national emergency.

Islamic State Sunni jihadist group is in control of vast territories in Iraq and Syria. A number of IS cells also operate in Libya, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and other locations across the Middle East and North Africa.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gdip : International Relations | gpol : Domestic Politics | gterr : Acts of Terror | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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IPD TUNISIA

IPC 160

PUB Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency

AN Document RVESEN0020150708eb780012x

The Washington Post

SE worldviews
HD **Tunisia plans to build a really long wall to keep out terrorists**
BY By Ishaan Tharoor
WC 448 words
PD 8 July 2015
SN Washington Post.com
SC WPCOM
LA English
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LP

In the wake of last month's shocking terror attack at a beach resort in the coastal city of Sousse, the Tunisian government has authorized plans to build a 104-mile-long **barrier** to better secure its **border** with Libya.

The proposed **wall** was announced Wednesday by **Tunisia** Prime Minister Habib Essid, who deemed the lawless situation next door in Libya to be "the biggest dilemma" facing his nation.

TD

[Sousse, the beautiful city rocked by terror]

Seifeddine Rezgui, the Tunisian gunman who slew 38 people, mostly tourists, in Sousse, is believed to have received training from Islamist militant group Ansar al-Sharia in Libya, which is in the grips of a fractious civil war. The Islamic State, which has a Libyan off-shoot, separately claimed responsibility for the attack and has set its sights on expanding its branches in North Africa.

The **wall** would comprise a long trench and sand fortification stretching inland from the Mediterranean, according to reports. It would be built and monitored by the Tunisian military and interspersed with surveillance posts. Reports also suggest **Tunisia** will receive outside logistical and technical support from France and the U.A.E. to help reinforce its borders.

Beyond a physical **barrier**, though, **Tunisia** has taken other more controversial steps to crack down on suspected radicals. Essid, who was nominated to his post by **Tunisia**'s ruling secularists, ordered some 80 mosques accused of "spreading venom" to be closed. A group of Tunisian clerics protested the "unjust" move, saying the assault "bore no relation to Islam."

[Why **Tunisia** suffers from Islamist violence]

Since 2011, when mass protests led to the ouster of entrenched Tunisian dictator Zine Abidine Ben Ali and ushered in the country's fledgling democratic transition, ultraconservative Salafists have found more space and traction within Tunisian society. As The Washington Post charted earlier, tiny **Tunisia** has seen a huge flow of its nationals join the ranks of foreign jihadists fighting for the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq.

The attacks within the country are a huge blow to its tourism industry, which contributes to more than 15 percent of **Tunisia**'s GDP and is responsible for nearly half a million local jobs.

Essid's government is not the only one this year to announce such a drastic measure. Last month, Hungary's right-wing government announced a planned 109-mile-long **wall** on its Serbian **border** to thwart migrants and refugees escaping to Europe from the Middle East and Africa.

"We have only recently taken down walls in Europe," said an E.U. spokeswoman. "We should not be putting them up."

CO aasinb : Ansar Al-Sharia in Benghazi

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | gterr : Acts of Terror | gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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IPD worldviews

PUB Washington Post

AN Document WPCOM00020150708eb78005br

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HD **Tunisia fears new 'terrorist attacks': PM**

WC 484 words

PD 8 July 2015

ET 20:44

SN Agence France Presse

SC AFPR

LA English

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LP

Tunisia fears more potentially destabilising "terrorist attacks," like the one that killed 38 foreign tourists last month, which is why it has imposed a state of emergency, the premier said Wednesday.

Eight days after the June 26 shootings at the Mediterranean resort of Port El Kantaoui, President Beji Caid Essebsi decreed on Saturday a state of emergency for 30 days.

TD

The rampage by a Tunisian student killed 30 Britons, three Irish nationals, two Germans, one Belgian, one Portuguese and a Russian, and was claimed by the Islamic State group.

"We are engaged in a ferocious war against terrorism to protect lives and property, defend the republican regime... the civil state and its institutions," Prime Minister Habib Essid told parliament.

"We would not have felt obliged to decree the state of emergency if we were not convinced that our country was facing numerous terrorist plans to destabilise the country," he said.

He spoke of "the gangs of terrorism, murder and crime preparing other operations... aimed at killing the maximum number of people, undermining morale and grinding the national economy to a halt."

Essebsi spoke as rights groups warned the state of emergency should not suppress freedoms gained since the 2011 revolution that overthrew longtime dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.

But while saying "whatever it takes, we will prevail over terrorism," this would not come at the expense of human rights.

These will "not be touched," he said.

Meanwhile, **Tunisia** will complete construction of a **barrier** along the Libyan **border**, from Ras Jedir on the Mediterranean coast to Dhiba, 186 kilometres (115 miles) to the southwest, a defence ministry official said.

The **barrier**, which will include berms and trenches, was announced after a terrorist attack on the national museum in Tunis in March killed 22 people, mostly tourists.

Work began on the **barrier** in April and will be completed by year-end, Belhassan Oueslati said.

The interior ministry said Wednesday that 33 young Tunisians, mostly Muslim fundamentalists, have gone missing, with media saying that their families fear they have joined extremist groups in Libya.

Members of the group, which includes one woman, are aged between 16 and 35, it said, adding that their families reported them missing from the southern province of Tataouine.

The perpetrators of both the beach and museum attacks were said to have been trained in Libya.

The state of emergency grants the security forces exceptional powers. Among them, it allows the authorities to bar strike action and public meetings deemed dangerous to public order and to increase controls on the media.

The current state of emergency is not the first to be imposed in **Tunisia** since the revolution that sparked the Arab Spring.

There was also one in force from January 14, 2011 -- hours after the flight of dictator Ben Ali -- until March last year.

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NS gcrim : Crime/Courts | ghum : Human Rights/Civil Liberties | gpol : Domestic Politics | gterr : Acts of Terror | gtour : Travel | gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcom : Society/Community | glife : Living/Lifestyle | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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IPD Lead

PUB Agence France-Presse

AN Document AFPR000020150708eb780093u

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HD **Tunisia to Build Moat, Wall of Sand Against Terror**

BY Edward Yeranian

WC 443 words

PD 8 July 2015

SN Voice of America Press Releases and Documents

SC VOA

LA English

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LP

Tunisia to Build Moat, **Wall** of Sand Against Terror

Edward Yeranian

TD

July 8, 2015 12:48 PM

CAIRO-

Tunisian Prime Minister Habib Essid says his country is starting to build a **wall** of sand along the **border** with neighboring Libya, along with a moat, to stop terrorists from infiltrating Tunisian territory. The Tunisian government has been taking preventive measures to try to stop a repeat of the terror attack which left 38 people dead -- most of them foreign tourists -- on June 26.

The terrorist who trained in Libya and gunned down the tourists on a beach last month has forced the Tunisian government to take action to prevent further attacks from taking place, and assure skittish tourists that **Tunisia** is safe.

Speaking Wednesday on state TV, Prime Minister Essid says the Tunisian army will build a 160 kilometer-long **wall** along the length of the country's **border** with Libya, with a moat next to it.

The prime minister indicated that the **wall** would be made of sand and would be finished by the end of the year. He said security cameras and surveillance posts would be placed at regular intervals.

State of emergency

Essid added that the recent decision to impose a state of emergency was prompted by fears that outside plotters were acting to carry out further acts of terrorism and mass killings, to destabilize and demoralize the country.

Tunisian gunman Seifeddine Rezgui reportedly trained with Islamic militants in Libya before carrying out the bloody June 26 attack at the Imperial Marhaba Hotel in the resort town of Sousse.

Tunisian officials have said the drop in tourism resulting from the attack will cost the country nearly $500 million this year alone. Egypt is facing similar troubles after a series of high profile attacks inside that country.

Usefulness questioned

Khattar Abou Diab of the University of Paris tells VOA that he doesn't think that building a **wall** is going to be sufficient to solve **Tunisia**'s security problems and that the measure could have adverse effects, as well.

He says that given the existence of terrorism sanctuaries in various places, many think they can protect their security by building barriers, as Israel did with the Palestinian Territories or Europe is trying to do in the Mediterranean. But, he argues, such preventive measures will be difficult to enforce, given the length of the borders involved and lengthy shared coastlines.

Abou Diab also stresses that **Tunisia** and Libya do a great deal of black market trading along the **border** and that building a **wall** could adversely affect the economy of both countries.

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IPD VOA English Service

PUB U.S. Government

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REUTERS

HD **Tunisia hunts group fleeing to Islamic State in Libya- locals**

BY By Tarek Amara

WC 483 words

PD 10 July 2015

ET 14:51

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

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LP

TUNIS, July 10 (Reuters) - Tunisian authorities on Friday were investigating the disappearance of 33 residents from the same town after families reported they had left overnight to join Islamic State militants in Libya, locals said.

Tunisian militants make up one of the largest groups of foreign fighters in Islamic State ranks, but the departure of such a large number from the same town illustrates the struggle the government faces in controlling jihadist recruiters.

TD

The interior ministry said it was investigating the disappearance on Tuesday of the group, from Remada, a small central town of 11,000 near the **border** with Libya. Most were conservative salafists, but also included a pilot, two soldiers and one female civiian, officials and local residents said.

"The town is really in shock," said Mbarka, a resident who said families had received messages from their relatives saying they had left for Libya.

The gunman who carried out last month's deadly shooting at **Tunisia**'s Sousse beach resort, where 38 foreign tourists died, and the Bardo museum attack in March, were radicalised in **Tunisia** and trained in jihadist camps in Libya before returning.

Islamic State is making inroads in Libya, where two rival governments and their armed forces are battling for control, leaving a security vacuum that has allowed Islamist militants and migrant smugglers to expand their operations.

Tunisian air force planes were searching for the group along the Libya **border** area. Residents said the group, which includes several teenagers, had left after a meeting at the local mosque.

TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY

Worried about a flow of militants across its **border**, **Tunisia** says it has started building a **wall** and trench along 168 km (105 miles) of its Libya frontier. It will be ready by the end of 2015, the government said.

Since its 2011 revolution against Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali, **Tunisia** has enjoyed a mostly peaceful transition to democracy. But one of the Arab region's most secular countries, **Tunisia** has also struggled with the rise of ultra-conversative Islamist groups, some of them violent.

Authorities say they are cracking down on illegal mosques and those preaching extremist messages since the Sousse attack, the worst militant assault in the country's modern history.

Faten Abd Elhak, fiancee of the pilot who disappeared, said he had taken part in bombardments against militant camps in the mountains in the past. But he had become disillusioned with the armed forces and wanted to leave, she said.

"It's true his brother was an extremist who didn't hide his desire to join Islamic State, but he himself was not an extremist," she told Reuters. "They have all left for Libya, some of them might want to join Islamic State, but not him." (Writing by Patrick Markey; editing by Ralph Boulton)

RF	Released: 2015-7-10T13:51:32.000Z
CO	aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
NS	gpol : Domestic Politics | grel : Religion | gterr : Acts of Terror | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcom : Society/Community | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter
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IPD	Business
IPC	SERVICE:AFA
PUB	Thomson Reuters (Markets) LLC
AN	Document LBA0000020150710eb7a00ea8

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HD **Tunisia to Hold Military Draft to Strengthen Libyan Border From Islamic State – Minister**

CR РИАН

WC 261 words

PD 11 July 2015

ET 13:12

SN Sputnik News Service

SC RVESEN

LA English

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LP

CAIRO, July 11 (Sputnik) - **Tunisia** will carry out a military draft to reinforce its **border** with Libya in light of incursions by Islamic State (IS) jihadist group militants, Kamel Jendoubi, the country's minister in charge of government relations with the civil society, said at a press conference on Saturday.

On July 8, **Tunisia**'s Prime Minister Habib Essid said **Tunisia** has begun constructing a concrete **wall** along its **border** with Libya, an area that has been in a state of turmoil since early 2011 after Arab Spring protests led to a civil war and the overthrow of long-time leader Muammar Gaddafi. The IS has become increasingly active in the country amid the hostilities.

TD

According to Jendoubi, the government, suspecting that a terrorist threat is imported from neighboring Libya, is currently preparing a decree to begin the mobilization.

He added that the **border** will be equipped with the modern electronic tracking systems and unmanned aerial vehicles.

The IS claimed responsibility for a June 26 attack in the northeastern **Tunisia** resort town of Sousse, when a gunman, later identified as a 23-year-old local resident, killed 38 foreign tourists with an automatic rifle.

The assault on the Sousse hotel followed a deadly gun attack on the Tunis Bardo National Museum in March, which resulted in the deaths of 24 people, including two of the three gunmen.

According to media reports, the Sousse gunman and the Museum assailants were trained in the same jihadist camp in Libya.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gdip : International Relations | gpol : Domestic Politics | gterr : Acts of Terror | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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IPD TUNISIA

IPC 160

PUB Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency

AN Document RVESEN0020150711eb7b003h1

HD **Tunisia scrambles to seal border amid growing ISIS threat**

BY By Tim Lister CNN

WC 1,256 words

PD 13 July 2015

ET 16:07

SN CNN Wire

SC CNNWR

LA English

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LP

Approved - awells

(CNN) -- The desert town of Remada in southern **Tunisia** has suddenly lost 33 of its citizens. They vanished overnight last week and are thought to have crossed the nearby **border** into Libya, amid a crackdown by the Tunisian authorities against suspected jihadist cells.

TD

The Interior Ministry said "the missing individuals are between 16 and 35 years old. Most of them are radical extremists," but did not confirm all were from Remada. Two were said to be former soldiers, another an air force pilot.

The mass disappearance is another sign of radicalization among young Tunisians, especially in the poorer and more conservative interior, and the lure of Libya as a safe haven for jihadist groups.

Towns like Remada, Kasserine and Sidi Bouzid are fertile recruiting grounds for militants. They suffer from high unemployment, especially among the young, and a heavy-handed police presence. Remada is a town of nearly 10,000 people surrounded by desert and scrub. To the south-east are ochre-colored hills and cliffs along the **border** with Libya, criss-crossed by smugglers' tracks.

A CNN team in Remada last March encountered several military checkpoints around the town and a substantial plain-clothes intelligence presence. Even then, Tunisian authorities had imposed a no-go zone extending several kilometers from the Libyan **border**, with military outposts every couple of kilometers along the frontier in an effort to stem the jihadist traffic in both directions.

The government's next step is to build a ditch and earth **wall** along nearly 170 kilometers (110 miles) of the **border**, from Ras Jedir on the coast to Dhehiba, a remote **border** town where a road snakes through the hills to Libya.

"We have 500 kilometers of **border** with Libya, mostly desert, and we need special equipment to control that **border** that we don't have," said President Beji Caid Essebsi last week as he declared a state of emergency for 30 days. The U.S. State Department approved last year the sale of 12 Blackhawk helicopters to **Tunisia** to improve **border** security. But **Tunisia** also shares a long and porous **border** with Algeria: sealing its frontiers is virtually impossible.

The government can point to one recent success in its battle against jihadist groups affiliated with the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and al Qaeda. On Friday, security forces killed five extremists belonging to an offshoot of al Qaeda -- the Katibat 'Uqba ibn Nafi (KUIN) -- near Mount Orbata in central **Tunisia**.

Presidential spokesman Moez Sinaoui said one of those killed had been identified by DNA tests as Mourad Gharsalli, a senior figure in the group, which is fighting the Tunisian army in mountains along the Algerian **border**.

On Saturday, Kamel Jendoubi, the minister heading the government's crisis response, said 127 suspected "terrorists" had been detained since the attack in the resort of Sousse on June 26th, in which 38 people were killed, the majority of them British tourists. According to Jendoubi, 100,000 members of

the security forces -- police, national guard and army - are now deployed, with 3,000 protecting tourist destinations and archaeological sites.

But the scale of the challenge is considerable. The U.N. Working Group on mercenaries said last week that complex recruitment and travel networks had moved thousands of Tunisians to Syria and Iraq, including families.

Tunisia is the only Arab state to have made a lasting transition to democracy after the uprisings of 2011, and yet Tunisians make up the largest group of foreign fighters with ISIS in Syria and Iraq, and are an increasing presence in Libya. According to the U.N. group, some 4,000 Tunisians are in Syria, 200 in Iraq and between 1,000 and 1,500 in Libya. The number in Libya swelled after the militant group Ansar al Shariah was banned in **Tunisia**.

"It was reported that recruiters in these networks are well paid - around $3,000 to $10,000 per new recruit, according to human skills," said Working Group director, Elzbieta Karska, after a recent visit to **Tunisia**. Karska said she had been "told repeatedly that many foreign fighters are undergoing training in Libya before heading to Syria."

The gunman responsible for the Sousse massacre, Saif al-Deen al Rezgui, trained in Libya -- as did the two men who attacked the Bardo Museum in March, according to Tunisian officials.

The promise of money lures some young men but more are influenced by Salafist preachers in local mosques or are radicalized online. Many are teenage school drop-outs. Residents of Remada quoted by Reuters said the group that disappeared last week had left after a meeting at a local mosque.

Mokhtar Awad at the Center for American Progress, whose research focuses on North Africa and the Middle East, says "jihadists in countries like **Tunisia** still invest in scouting inside mosques or developing recruits in their local areas."

Awad told CNN that some high-profile members of Ansar al Shariah have remained loyal to al Qaeda and have joined groups like al Nusra in Syria. But there also appear to be a generational split among Tunisian militants, with senior figures aligning themselves with al Qaeda while younger fighters are easily attracted to ISIS.

Awad identifies an "intelligence deficit" as one of **Tunisia**'s main problems. He says senior police and military officers distrusted the previous Ennahda government, regarding it as far too soft on Salafist groups. By the same token, Ennahda, an Islamist party inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood, distrusted the security apparatus, because many senior officers were holdovers from the Ben Ali era.

The Tunisian state's ability to finance ambitious security measures won't be helped by the acute loss of tourism revenue, which made up some 15% of national income in 2014, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council. After a steep decline in 2011, when the ousting of the Ben Ali regime contributed to a fall of about one-third in tourist arrivals, the sector had been recovering.

The British government's advice to tour operators last week to bring home all their clients in **Tunisia** immediately was deeply disappointing and surprising, according to Tunisian officials. Hundreds arrived home on special flights at the weekend after Britain's Foreign Minister, Phillip Hammond, said another terrorist attack was "highly likely."

That is certainly the intent of ISIS affiliate Jund al Khilafa. In a statement at the weekend it warned of "further attacks in the future that will target people who ally with the non-believers as well. A foreigner who is Muslim is a dear brother to us while a secular Tunisian is an enemy to us," the statement said.

For now, France and Germany have not followed Britain's move. The French Foreign Ministry told CNN on Friday: "France and its main partners do not forbid, to this date, travel to **Tunisia**." French citizens visit **Tunisia** more than any other nationality.

The long-term challenge for the Tunisian state is to give people living in the poor interior some hope of work and opportunity. Mokhtar Awad says this will require western investment to be focused on deprived regions, as well as incentives by the Tunisian government.

But the loss of tourism revenue, higher spending on security and the emergence of ISIS cells inside **Tunisia** make for an immediate crisis. In the words of President Essebsi, "if attacks like Sousse happen again, the country will collapse."

CNN's Margot Haddad and Merieme Arif contributed to this report

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gvio : Military Action | gterr : Acts of Terror | gmurd : Murder/Manslaughter | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE tunis : Tunisia | libya : Libya | syria : Syria | africaz : Africa | asiaz : Asia | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Tunisia-scrambles-to-seal-border-against-ISIS-1

PUB Cable News Network LP.

AN Document CNNWR00020150713eb7d004v2

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BBC MONITORING

HD **Tunisia starts construction of security barrier on Libya border**

WC 614 words

PD 14 July 2015

ET 16:43

SN BBC Monitoring Middle East

SC BBCMEP

LA English

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LP

Tunisia has started the construction of a security **barrier** along its **border** with Libya to prevent the infiltration of extremists and smugglers amid criticism from residents of Tunisian **border** towns and a Libyan revolutionary group, Al-Jazeera reported on 13 July.

The 220-kilometre long **barrier** will consist of a trench and sand fortification and will be equipped with an electronic and air surveillance system.

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Al-Jazeera showed the construction work under way and a trench filled with water at the **border**.

Controversy around the **barrier** prompted the Tunisian government to rename it "a **border** defence system".

The Ministry of Interior established that the perpetrators of the attack on the Bardo Museum in the capital Tunis in March 2015 and of the 26 June attack on a beach resort in Sousse had received training in Libya, according to Al-Jazeera.

A Tunisian official told reporters that the **border** defence system is expected to be completed by the end of December to protect the country from "smuggling and terrorism".

The **barrier** has drawn criticism from many residents of **border** regions dependent on trade with Libya. They say the **barrier** may affect their direct trade ties with Libyans.

An unidentified man told Al-Jazeera the construction of the **barrier** is the "latest injustice" done in **Tunisia**. Another man spoke of local residents' "shared trade interests" with Libyans, which will be harmed by the **barrier**.

He added that there was no security **fence** between **Tunisia** and Libya even under the French and Italian colonial rule.

Al-Jazeera also showed a copy of the statement purportedly issued by the Higher Council of Libya's Revolutionaries, which warned **Tunisia** against the construction of the **barrier**. The statement was circulated by activists on social media.

The council warned **Tunisia** against "the consequences of building a **barrier** before consulting with the Libyan authorities on the **border** demarcation".

The council will consider the building of the **barrier** "a blatant violation and an infringement on Libyan territory that would amount to occupation", the statement said.

It added that in response to this measure, the council will have "the full right to decide the course of action it will take and how, when and where we want to do it".

Tunisian Minister of Foreign Affairs Taieb Baccouche said the Libyan authorities denied any links with the statement. He stressed that **Tunisia** had not received any official Libyan protest against the **barrier** construction.

Tunisian security affairs expert Yousri Dali told Al-Jazeera that in August 2013, former Tunisian President Moncef Marzouki and the then military and security council decided to create a "buffer zone" in three areas in the south of **Tunisia**.

There is one in the Ras Jedir area, another in the south central region and a third in the southwest on the Algerian **border**, he said.

Having found evidence that established the inflow of weapons across the Libyan **border**, he said, **Tunisia** embarked on building the trench and the sand **wall**. He noted that it would be appropriate for **Tunisia** to consult with Libya "in a show of respect for its neighbour".

Building a **border barrier**, he argued, is "only 10 per cent of the process of protecting **Tunisia** from terrorism".

He went on to say that the real solution lies in "a fair distribution of wealth, fighting corruption, poverty and economic marginalization, and promoting an appropriate kind of religious and cultural attitudes of tolerance".

Dali urged the Tunisian government to pay attention to the needs of southern regions, suggesting the creation of a free trade zone on the **border** with Libya.

Source: Al-Jazeera TV, Doha, in Arabic 2044 gmt 13 Jul 15

NS gdef : Armed Forces | gdip : International Relations | gterr : Terrorism | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE tunis : Tunisia | libya : Libya | qatar : Qatar | africaz : Africa | asiaz : Asia | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wasiaz : Western Asia

PUB The British Broadcasting Corporation

AN Document BBCMEP0020150714eb7e003bh

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HD **Caid Essebsi: Any possible attack on border wall with Libya could have military response"**

WC 376 words

PD 16 July 2015

SN Agency Tunis Afrique Press

SC AGETAP

LA English

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LP

TUNIS (TAP)- Any possible attack on the **wall** being constructed on the Tunisian-Libyan **border** could have a military response," President Beji Caid Essebsi said Wednesday in an interview with private TV channel Attassia."

Caid Essebsi pointed out that this security **wall** is being constructed on the Tunisian territory about 8 kilometres from the joint borders with Libya.

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Only smugglers will be frustrated by this **barrier**," he underlined, noting that in case of attack, **Tunisia** will respond militarily."

Besides, he said that **Tunisia** is very concerned about the situation in Libya and the militia belonging to Daesh active there."

Essebsi asserted that he had asked for the assistance of the seven more powerful States to guarantee the protection of Tunisian borders, adding that **Tunisia** is dealing with the various Libyan sides as being an effective power and not a legal one."

He also warned against terrorists' training on the Libyan territory and the dangers of their infiltration into **Tunisia** as well as against arms trafficking, recalling that the perpetrators of the Bardo and Sousse attacks were trained in Libya.

After highlighting the importance of co-operation between **Tunisia** and the U.S. in the field of fight against terrorism, Caid Essebsi elaborated about the memorandum of understanding signed between the two countries, saying we are not a NATO member.The document will not be submitted to vote at the House of People's Representatives and has not created a problem with Algeria."

Besides, the President affirmed that the Tunisian State will not collapse but it is in war against terrorism and that necessary conditions should be provided to win this war. He added that the country's enemies wanted to hit tourism which holds a very important position in the country's economy.

After pointing to the need to show continuous vigilance to foil the terrorist groups' plots, Essebsi asserted that terrorism does not spare any country.

Speaking about the Sousse terrorist attack, the Head of State deplored the absence of security officers, denying the existence of infiltration within the Interior Ministry. It is rather a bad organisation, he pointed out, adding that a director general of security will be appointed shortly.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gterr : Terrorism | gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE tunis : Tunisia | libya : Libya | tuncty : Tunis | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

IPD Politics

PUB Agency Tunis Afrique Press

AN Document AGETAP0020150716eb7g000mb

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BBC MONITORING

HD	**Tunisia-Libya Ras Ajdir border crossing reopened following Tunisian protests**
WC	179 words
PD	22 July 2015
ET	22:30
SN	BBC Monitoring Middle East
SC	BBCMEP
LA	English
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LP

Text of report by Saber Ayyub and Ajnadin Mustafa in English: "Ras Jedir crossing open again after Tunisians protest at **barrier** plans", published in English by Libyan privately-owned online news website Libya Herald on 21 July

The Tunisian-Libyan **border** crossing at Ras Ajdir was again open today [21 July] after being closed yesterday [20 July] on the Libyan side because of protests in the nearby Tunisian town of Ben Guerdane.

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Demonstrators there had blocked the main road with salt, angry at the Tunisian government's construction of a **fence** and trench along the **border**.

The **barrier** is perceived by the Tunisian authorities as a useful tool in preventing arms and terrorists from Libya crossing into **Tunisia**.

The Ben Guerdane protestors, however, say that it will damage the local economy, a complaint repeated by local trades unions.

In fact, much of the local economy is based on cross-**border** smuggling, which would be hit by the **barrier**.

Source: Libya Herald, Tripoli, in English 0000 gmt 21 Jul 15

NS	gcivds : Civil Disruption | gdip : International Relations | gterr : Terrorism | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter
RE	libya : Libya | tunis : Tunisia | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa
PUB	The British Broadcasting Corporation
AN	Document BBCMEP0020150722eb7m005pl

The New York Times

SE World; Africa

HD **Tunisia's Secular Government Cracks Down on Mosques in Aftermath of Massacre**

BY By CARLOTTA GALL

WC 1,301 words

PD 24 July 2015

SN NYTimes.com Feed

SC NYTFEED

LA English

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LP

TUNIS — Among a flurry of security measures the Tunisian government began after a gunman massacred 38 tourists last month in Sousse was a crackdown on dozens of mosques, creating concerns that the secular government may be falling back toward the authoritarian ways of the former dictatorship.

In the middle of Ramadan early this month, the government closed 80 mosques and barred two preachers. But neither the men nor most of the mosques had any known connection with Seifeddine Rezgui, the gunman who carried out the June 26 massacre, officials acknowledged.

TD

It was another sign that the divisions between secularists and Islamists that threatened to tear the country apart in the years after the 2011 Arab Spring uprising are still playing out.

In a recent interview with the daily newspaper La Presse, Habib Essid, who heads a government led by the secularist party Nidaa Tounes, described the battle to control Tunisia's 5,000 mosques as a "long-term fight."

"We change a radical imam from a mosque and the next day he is replaced with another extremist," Mr. Essid said. "But we will not give in."

Notably, the main Islamic political party, Ennahda, which holds a token cabinet post in the coalition government, has supported the government's stance against terrorism and even its regulation of mosques. Its leaders have condemned the terrorist attacks and told followers that supporting the government, and the country, is more important right now than party support.

"We are all in agreement that no one is allowed to preach violence," said Zied Ladhari, 39, the Ennahda cabinet member and the minister for vocational training and employment. The closed mosques are ones that were built without permits in a somewhat "anarchical way," he added. "No one is closing regular mosques."

But other officials say some regular mosques have been closed, and deep ideological differences exist among the main parties over how to combat extremism. The secularists leading the government, many of whom have connections to the old dictatorship, lean toward tight control of mosques and preachers. The government has replaced many Ennahda appointees in the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Those in the mainstream Tunisian religious community warn that government controls enforced by the police send religious followers underground and stifle efforts by moderates to counter the ideology of religious extremists.

Religion was strictly controlled under the dictatorship of Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali. Thousands of Islamists were imprisoned, and the outward display of religion, such as head scarves and beards, was banned in government offices, under a policy of forced secularization.

Ennahda members, and some independent scholars, say the repression actually encouraged extremism, and that removing mainstream Islamists and reducing opportunities for religious education

left a void the extremists were able to fill. Thousands who fled the repression under Mr. Ben Ali in 1991 ended up in Afghanistan and were recruited by extremist groups.

Another wave fled to Libya when the government outlawed as a terrorist organization the Islamic movement Ansar al-Shariah in 2013, said Habib Ellouze, a former Ennahda legislator who runs a religious organization, the Preaching and Reform Association. “It is very well known now that a lot went to Libya,” he said. “Thousands escaped.”

In Libya, Tunisians can find work but many have joined extremist groups, compounding the security problem at home. The men behind the country’s two recent attacks on foreign tourists received weapons training in Libya, the government has said.

In the freewheeling period after the overthrow of Mr. Ben Ali in 2011, communities forced out many of the clerics who were seen as loyal to him. But there was a shortage of imams, and Salafist clergymen, some of whom were extremists and even Qaeda loyalists, joined the rush to take over mosques.

Amor Mighri, a quiet-spoken imam and former political prisoner, led the monitoring commission for the Ministry of Religious Affairs and began a campaign to weed out the extremists. He toured the country, listening to complaints from the public, interviewing imams and evaluating their sermons.

During a visit to the holy city Kairouan in the summer of 2013, he noted the implicit jihadist references in a sermon by Seifeddine Rais, a young and charismatic spokesman of Ansar al-Shariah who drew a large crowd of youthful followers to a neighborhood mosque. Mr. Mighri said he invited the professed imam to his office and discovered that he had not even completed high school.

“His qualifications were weak,” Mr. Mighri said, adding that the spokesman was a hard-liner who demanded that all Muslims fight all nonbelievers. “He only knows the Quran for the things that go with his vision. He is very selective.”

Many of the Salafists were aggressive and resisted efforts by the authorities to remove them. Some of them were armed. The ministry could not reason with them and had to ask the police to intervene, Mr. Mighri said. Relations between Ennahda and the police were tense at the time and cooperation was poor, but the Ansar al-Shariah spokesman was eventually arrested amid some violence in March 2014.

Under the next government, cooperation with the police improved, and by the end of 2014 the government had removed all those considered extremists, Mr. Mighri said.

Sheikh Taieb Gozzi, 73, imam of the Great Mosque of Oqba Ibn Nafa in Kairouan, **Tunisia**’s most venerated place of worship, said Ansar al-Shariah had come close to occupying the central mosque in 2013. The Salafists, in the meantime, took over three mosques in the city, and the police managed to push them out only six months ago.

“Over the past year, the state backed the mosques and things got relatively better,” Sheikh Gozzi said. “If we are in this situation, it is because the state is still not strong.”

But the problem of the radicalization of young Tunisians remains.

“There are no extremists who are imams,” Mr. Mighri said, “but it does not mean we have eliminated the extremist mentality.” He and others in the ministry are worried that the government is addressing the threat improperly.

The newly appointed minister for religious affairs, Othmane Battikh, is an old-school cleric who served as chief mufti under the dictatorship. He has disbanded Mr. Mighri’s monitoring commission, replaced several senior Ennahda appointees to the ministry, and handed the oversight of mosques largely to the police.

“There is a decrease in extremist discourse,” he said in an interview. “The preachers realized the need to back down.”

But ministry workers have protested his methods.

“We appreciate the police and the important role they play in fighting terrorism, but we want them to stay out of religious affairs,” Abdessalem Atwi, the secretary general of the Union of Preachers, said during a recent protest outside the ministry. “If you bring back the interior ministry, it is the police that will evaluate the sermons.”

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Mr. Mighri warned that the ministry must tackle extremism with vigorous debate and not just with the police.

“The current dialogue is very general, it does not go deep enough,” he said. “You have to use solid debate, deep dialogue, in mosques, on the radio, everywhere, so we use our solid arguments so that people can hear and people can be convinced. The minister is not using strong arguments.”

Farah Samti contributed reporting.

* **Tunisia** Hosts Security Meeting With Group of 7 to Discuss Terrorism Threat

* **Tunisia** Plans to Build Antiterrorism **Wall** Along **Border** With Libya

* State of Emergency Is Declared in **Tunisia**

ART Tunisians arrived at the El-Abidine Mosque in Tunis for the Eid al-Fitr prayer last week. Some fear restrictions, enforced after the massacre of 38 tourists, signal a return to authoritarian rule. | Fethi Belaid/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

NS gterr : Terrorism | gpol : Domestic Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE tunis : Tunisia | libya : Libya | tuncty : Tunis | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

IPD Rezgui, Seifeddine (d 2015)

PUB The New York Times Company

AN Document NYTFEED020150723eb7o003h1

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MENAFN.COM

HD **Border fences rise across the region**

WC 688 words

PD 25 July 2015

SN Middle East North Africa Financial Network (MENAFN)

SC MENAFI

LA English

CY Copyright 2015. Middle East North Africa Financial Network Inc.

LP

(MENAFN - The Peninsula) As they confront the rising threat of modern jihadist violence, many of the nations most at risk are retreating behind one of the oldest forms of defence.

Tunisia became the latest to invest in a **border barrier** after dozens of foreign tourists were killed in two attacks by Islamist militants trained in neighbouring Libya and armed by smugglers. The **fence** and watch towers ordered by Prime Minister Habib Essid will for now stretch 100 miles inland from the coast along the most vulnerable stretch of the shared frontier.

TD

From Morocco to Saudi Arabia, boundaries are being fortified at a rate not seen since the months following the September 11 attacks.

"The Middle East and North Africa is now the most walled region in the world," said Said Saddiki, a professor of International Relations and International Law at Al-Ain University of Science and Technology in Abu Dhabi. They range from "fences inside cities to anti-migrant walls and separation barriers to counter-insurgency" barricades, he said.

The builders have often been spurred by fear of Islamic State, after its conquests in Iraq and Syria and the group's ability to inspire Islamist extremists elsewhere, or concern over failed or failing nations next door.

The jihadist group has built its own walls to fend off attackers and keep people from escaping, including around the Iraqi cities of Tal Afar and Mosul. Syria's embattled government has placed concrete shields around areas of regime support in Homs. Fences offer a quick fix, though they are costly and may ultimately do little to solve the problems, analysts say.

Of the Middle East's most-famed physical defences, the majority failed. Jerusalem's ancient walls did little to halt a succession of conquerors, and Byzantine Constantinople's elaborate fortifications didn't thwart the Ottomans.

Though modern barriers may curb trafficking and illicit crossings in the short term, they almost never deliver prolonged security without cross-frontier cooperation.

separation barriers

"Israel's barriers have worked well for them so far," said Brent Sterling, author of Do Good Fences Make Good Neighbours? and a professor at Georgetown University. Long- term, though, they remove the incentive to try and reach a permanent accord with the Palestinians, he said.

In the fight with jihadist movements, where would-be militants are often homegrown and indiscernible from the crowd, and instruction or indoctrination can be doled out over the Internet, barriers are especially ineffective. Saudi Arabia, which has strung heavily militarised fences along its land borders, saw suicide bombings at two mosques this year.

"**Wall** builders are just trying to improve their leverage and hope for the best," Sterling said. "They aren't a panacea, and if you do build a **wall**, you have to use the time it buys to deal with problems and not sit behind it forever and hope they'll go away."

In **Tunisia**, where European holidaymakers were gunned down at a beach resort in June, militancy is being fanned by poverty away from a prosperous northeastern coast.

While governments in Tunis have vowed to tackle radical preachers and stem travel to Libya's war zones, activists say little has been done to end economic marginalization, and protests demanding change have been met with police repression.

Hardship in **border** zones can even be exacerbated by barriers and the people who profit the most are smugglers, said Elisabeth Vallet, a scholar at the University of Quebec in Montreal and author of "Borders, Fences and Walls."

Construction, meanwhile, comes at a price. Saudi Arabia's "Great **Wall**" separating its north from Iraq includes observation towers with cameras and motion detectors, part of a $3.4 billion security system. **Tunisia** expects to pay at least $81m for the first phase of its **fence**. Barriers have to be maintained and patrolled.

"If we spent money on acquiring good intelligence or addressing some of the social and economic problems that create it rather than building walls, we'd be economically, socially and morally much better off," said Liza Schuster, a former lecturer at City University London, who studies the issue.

NS gterr : Terrorism | gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE libya : Libya | tunis : Tunisia | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

PUB Middle East North Africa Financial Network Inc

AN Document MENAFI0020150725eb7p0005v

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HD **Tunisia, Egypt Boosting Security on Libyan Border**

BY Forecast International - International Military Markets

WC 230 words

PD 27 July 2015

SN Forecast International Defense Intelligence Newsletters

SC FORCST

LA English

CY (c) 2015 Forecast International, Inc./DMS.

LP

NEWTOWN, Conn. - The Tunisian government is erecting a fortified security **fence** that will cover 220 kilometers of its 459-kilometer **border** with Libya to prevent the free flow of fighters, weapons and goods trafficked from the war-torn neighboring country.

The government has not revealed the cost or announced any contractors that will work on the **border fence**, but images of the site published by Libyan media appear to show military bulldozers at work on one section. Site clearance work for **Tunisia**'s **fence** began July 15.

TD

The Tunisian security project follows United States approval in June of the possible sale of a $100 million mobile surveillance sensor system to Egypt for its **border** with Libya under the U.S. Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program. Egypt currently lacks remote detection capability for **border** violations and needs the equipment to stop foreign fighters, weapons, goods and human trafficking operations from crossing into its territory.

Since Col. Muammar al-Qadhafi's overthrow from power in 2011 Libya's security situation has been rocky. One of the larger issues is the country's weak civil society, as serious weapons remain in civilian hands, former rebels are still outside the state's control , and mistrust and score-settling issues remain widespread. All of which has put surrounding nation's security into jeopardy.

RE libya : Libya | tunis : Tunisia | egypt : Egypt | africaz : Africa | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

PUB Forecast International

AN Document FORCST0020150728eb7r00001

REUTERS

HD **Tunisia says arrests 12 trying to enter Libya**

WC 280 words

PD 8 August 2015

ET 13:27

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

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LP

TUNIS (Reuters) - **Tunisia** has arrested 12 people, one of them a woman, who were trying to cross into lawless Libya to join a "terrorist group", the interior ministry said.

After attacks on tourists by Islamist militants, **Tunisia** is especially concerned about those entering from Libya. Chaos created by two rival Libyan governments battling for control has enabled Islamic State to establish a toehold there.

TD

Security forces arrested the 12 at a bus stop in the southern town of Ben Guerdane near the **border** with Libya, the ministry said in a statement late on Friday.

"The suspects said that they had been planning to cross into Libyan territory with the help of a smuggler," it said.

Tunisia made a largely peaceful transition to democracy after a 2011 popular uprising toppled president Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali. But its army has been fighting a rise in Islamist militancy.

Last month, a gunman killed 38 mostly British tourists in the Tunisian seaside city of Sousse. In March, two gunmen killed 21 foreign tourists and a policeman at Tunis's Bardo Museum. Both attacks were claimed by the Islamic State jihadist group.

Tunisia says it has started building a **wall** and trench along the insecure 168 km (105 miles) of its frontier with Libya. The Sousse gunman obtained training with militants in Libya before carrying out his attack.

Last month, **Tunisia**'s parliament approved legislation allowing the death penalty for those convicted on terrorism charges and giving judges and the security forces more power to detain suspects.

(Reporting by Mohamed Argoubi; Writing by Ulf Laessing; Editing by Ruth Pitchford)

RF Released: 2015-8-8T11:27:58.000Z

NS gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpol : Domestic Politics | gterr : Terrorism | gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE libya : Libya | tunis : Tunisia | tuncty : Tunis | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

IPD Entertainment and Lifestyle

IPC SERVICE:OUSWDM

PUB Thomson Reuters (Markets) LLC

AN Document LBA0000020150808eb8800a15

BBC MONITORING

HD	**Tunisian defense minister says land barrier on Libya borders to "secure country"**
WC	159 words
PD	25 August 2015
ET	22:36
SN	BBC Monitoring Middle East
SC	BBCMEP
LA	English
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LP

Text of unattributed report, entitled: "**Tunisia**: Land **barrier** on Libyan **border** aims to secure country", published by Libyan news agency WAL (also known as LANA)

Tunisian Minister of Defence Farhat Horchani said on 24 August that the land **barrier** on the Tunisian-Libyan borders would secure the borders with Libya.

TD

During his field visit to the city of Remada in Titaouine Governorate to see the construction of the **barrier** process, the Tunisian minister stressed the readiness of the National Army units in protecting the security and stability of the country.

He noted the developmental role of the army aiming at improving the lives of Tunisians through participation in the provision of public services, in addition to the primary role of protecting the security of the country amid its war against terrorism.

Source: WAL (also known as LANA) news agency, Tripoli, in Arabic 0000 gmt 25 Aug 15

NS	gdip : International Relations | gvdef : Defense Department | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations | gpol : Domestic Politics | gvbod : Government Bodies | gvexe : Executive Branch
RE	libya : Libya | tunis : Tunisia | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa
PUB	The British Broadcasting Corporation
AN	Document BBCMEP0020150825eb8p005sd

HD **Tunisia Digs a 100-Mile Moat to Keep Refugees At Bay**

BY by A Global Information Network Correspondent

WC 466 words

PD 16 September 2015

ET 17:15

SN All Africa

SC AFNWS

LA English

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LP

Tunis, Sep 16, 2015 (Inter Press Service/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- Once surrounding castles of old, a moat stretching 100 miles is being dug by **Tunisia** against alleged terror threats from nearby Libya. Reporters are kept at bay from the digging in what officials have dubbed "a closed military area."

Saltwater will fill the massive trench to be topped with sand dunes. Alligators are not mentioned in the moat's prospectus.

TD

"Why erect this **wall** when one was brought down between the two Germanies?" asked Salim Grira Mzioui, a local council representative of Wazen, a Libyan village along the **border** in an interview with the French newspaper Le Monde. "This will pose insurmountable problems. There are farmers cultivating land on both sides. There are also camel herds coming and going."

The **wall** will put an end to ancestral traditions of **border** communities that have long ignored the state line artificially dividing entire tribes, he said. "We're going to divide a people," Adel Arjoun, a Tunisian hotel owner from Medenine, told Le Monde.

According to Tunisian officials, incursions by terrorists who target tourists prompted the decision to dig the **barrier**. Last June, for example, 38 foreign tourists were killed by a Tunisian said to be trained at a Libyan camp. Earlier, two attackers killed 21 foreign visitors at the Bardo Museum in Tunis.

But the small number of attacks suggests that **Tunisia** may be joining the anti-immigrant fever that has gripped some northern European countries.

And as the walls go up, the number of lives lost among desperate refugees is growing. Last month over 500 people leaving Libya were tossed into the seas when their vessels capsized.

Tunisia's moat is only one of several misguided solutions to the swelling number of refugees fleeing war and extreme poverty. Hungary, Bulgaria and Greece are building walls. Ukraine plans to seal its 1200 mile **border** with Russia, and Estonia has a 70 mile **wall** in the works against the former Soviet Union.

Meanwhile, hundreds of Tunisians turned out last weekend to march against a draft bill for amnesty to those accused of corruption.

The draft bill is the centerpiece of the new government, which seeks to boost the economy by clearing away cases against businessmen and civil servants charged with corruption crimes.

Opponents of the law, however, call it as an attempt to whitewash the misdeeds of the old regime and ignore an ongoing process of transitional justice through the Truth and Dignity committee.

"We're against the draft law because it is unfair and unconstitutional," Sami Tahri, an official with the Union for Tunisian Workers, said at the protest. "It doesn't fight corruption, it encourages it."

NS ghum : Human Rights/Civil Liberties | gterr : Terrorism | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcom : Society/Community | gcrim : Crime/Courts | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE tunis : Tunisia | libya : Libya | africaz : Africa | greece : Greece | tuncty : Tunis | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eecz : European Union Countries | eurz : Europe | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

IPD amnesty

PUB All Africa Global Media

AN Document AFNWS000201509l6eb9g001cd

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الشرق الأوسط
ASHARQ AL-AWSAT

HD **Tunisia investigates execution of its national by ISIS in Libya**

WC 369 words

PD 17 September 2015

SN Asharq Al-Awsat (English Edition)

SC ASHAL

LA English

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LP

The video is meant to affect the morale of the Tunisian people, according to analysts

Tunis, Asharq Al-Awsat —**Tunisia** has confirmed a video showing one of its nationals being executed by militants affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Libya.

TD

An investigation into the cause and time of the execution as well as when the victim was taken hostage by ISIS had been opened, a Tunisian interior ministry official told Asharq Al-Awsat.

On Monday, Libya's ISIS affiliate released a video purportedly showing the execution of a 39-year-old Tunisian man for spying on behalf of Libya's internationally recognized government.

The victim, identified as Mohammed Khadrawi, is believed to have been a baker living in the city of Benghazi in eastern Libya.

This is the first time the ultra-radical group has executed a Tunisian national. ISIS announced in early 2014 that it had executed two Tunisian journalists, Sofiene Churab and Nadhir Ktari, but the foreign ministry in Tunis later said it had proof" they are still alive.

Islamist groups, including ISIS, have exploited the turmoil in Libya which is caught in a power struggle between two rival governments—an internationally recognized one in the eastern city of Tobruk and a self-declared one that controls Tripoli.

Earlier this year, Tunis erected a **fence** and watchtowers along its **border** with Libya to prevent the flow of smuggled weapons and fighters.

Faisal Charif, a Tunisian military expert, told Asharq Al-Awsat ISIS released the footage of the execution in order to affect the morale of the Tunisians after it became increasingly difficult for the Islamist group to infiltrate the country.

In an interview with Asharq Al-Awsat, the Tunisian secretary of state for Arab and African affairs said although his country was constantly monitoring" its side of the **border** with Libya, Few ISIS members sneak into **Tunisia** every now and then."

Libya does not control the **border** area as it should do due to political disputes between the Tripoli group and the Benghazi group," Touhami Abdouli said, referring to the country's rival governments.

Sawsan Abu-Husain contributed additional reporting from Cairo.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant | tuninr : Tunisia Ministry of Interior

NS gterr : Terrorism | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE tunis : Tunisia | libya : Libya | bengh : Benghazi | meastz : Middle East | tripol : Tripoli | tuncty : Tunis | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

IPD Middle East

PUB Saudi Research and Marketing

AN Document ASHAL00020150918eb9h0005l

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REUTERS

HD **Tunisian troops block car bombs crossing Libyan border**

BY By Tarek Amara

WC 367 words

PD 1 October 2015

ET 13:08

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

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LP

TUNIS (Reuters) - Tunisian troops stopped two bomb-laden cars crossing from Libya and seized arms and documents bearing the symbol of Islamic State, as security tightened following two major attacks this year, the government said on Thursday.

Last month, Tunisian authorities had warned of possible car bombings in Tunis and banned traffic in parts of the city after getting intelligence reports about potential attacks in the capital.

TD

Authorities said three suspect vehicles were tracked on Wednesday after crossing the **border** and troops opened fire to stop them. Two were halted and a third fled back across the Libyan **border**.

"The army has dismantled the car bombs, which were rigged to detonate, one with a bomb belt, the other with rocket explosives," the interior ministry said in a statement.

An security official said troops had opened fire on the vehicles to block them fleeing back to Libya. They also recovered 10 Kalashnikovs, rocket-propelled grenades, explosives, Libyan telephones cards and documents

Tunisian forces have been on high alert since March, when Islamist gunmen killed 21 tourists in an attack at the Bardo Museum in Tunis. In June, 38 foreigners were killed in an assault on a Sousse beach hotel in June.

Islamic State, the Islamist militant group controlling parts of Iraq and Syria claimed responsibility for both attacks. Officials said the attackers were trained in jihadist camps over the **border** in Libya.

Tunisia's government last July also started building a **wall** along its **border** with Libya to stop Islamist militants slipping across the frontier from Libya, where Islamic State has gained ground in the country's chaos.

Four years after its uprising ousted autocrat Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali and inspired the "Arab Spring" protests, **Tunisia** has a new constitution, free elections and a coalition government with secular and Islamist parties.

But more than 3,000 Tunisians have left to fight for Islamist militant groups in Syria, Iraq and neighboring Libya. Some of those jihadists have threatened to return home and carry out attacks on Tunisian soil.

(Reporting by Tarek Amara, writing by Patrick Markey; editing by Larry King)

RF Released: 2015-10-1T11:08:38.000Z

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | gterr : Terrorism | gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE tunis : Tunisia | libya : Libya | tuncty : Tunis | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

IPD Politics

IPC SERVICE:OUSWDM

PUB Thomson Reuters (Markets) LLC

AN Document LBA0000020151001eba1009hp

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REUTERS

HD **Tunisia busts Islamic State recruitment cells, arrests 11 suspected recruits**

WC 233 words

PD 6 October 2015

ET 13:06

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

CY Copyright 2015 Thomson Reuters. All Rights Reserved.

LP

TUNIS (Reuters) - The Tunisian police has broken up three "cells" that were recruiting fighters for Islamic State and arrested 11 people suspected of trying to join the Islamist militant group in Libya, the Tunisian Ministry of Interior said.

Tunisia has been on high alert against possible attacks since Islamist gunmen killed 21 tourists in March at the popular Bardo Museum in Tunis. In June, a man shot dead 38 foreigners at a beach hotel in the southern city of Sousse.

TD

Islamic State claimed responsibility for both attacks. Officials said all three attackers were trained in jihadist camps over the **border** in Libya, where political chaos has allowed Islamist militants to grow in strength.

"The National Guard counter terrorism unit dismantled three cells which sent young people to Libya," the Interior Ministry said in statement late on Monday.

Last week, **Tunisia** seized two car bombs and weapons on the **border** with Libya. In July, the government began building a **wall** along the **border** to stop Islamist militants slipping across.

The government says that more than 3,000 Tunisians have left to fight for Islamist militant groups in Syria, Iraq and Libya. Some of them have threatened to return home and carry out attacks on Tunisian soil.

(Reporting By Tarek Amara; Editing by Patrick Markey and Raissa Kasolowsky)

RF Released: 2015-10-6T11:06:55.000Z

CO tuninr : Tunisia Ministry of Interior | aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gmurd : Murder/Manslaughter | gterr : Terrorism | gvio : Military Action | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE tunis : Tunisia | libya : Libya | meastz : Middle East | tuncty : Tunis | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

IPD Politics

IPC SERVICE:OUSWDM

PUB Thomson Reuters (Markets) LLC

AN Document LBA0000020151006eba600d9v

HD **Tunisia says suicide bomber behind bus attack that killed 13**

WC 494 words

PD 25 November 2015

SN Cyprus Mail

SC CYMAIL

LA English

CY © 2015, Cyprus Mail, All rights Reserved - Provided by SyndiGate Media Inc.

LP

By Tarek Amara

Tunisian security officials said on Wednesday a suicide bomber carried out the attack on a presidential guard bus, killing at least 13 and forcing the government to impose a nationwide state of emergency.

TD

Tuesday's blast on a main boulevard in the capital underscored **Tunisia**'s vulnerability to Islamist militancy following the gun assaults on a Sousse hotel in June and the Bardo Museum in Tunis in March, both claimed by Islamic State.

No group claimed responsibility for Tuesday's attack. But **Tunisia** has increasingly become a target for militants after being hailed as an example of democratic change since its 2011 uprising ousted autocrat Zine Abidine Ben Ali.

This is an evolution in the behaviour of the terrorists, this time they attacked a symbol of the state and in the heart of the capital," Prime Minister Habib Essid told reporters after an emergency security meeting.

It was also the first suicide bombing in the capital. In October 2013 a bomber blew himself up on a beach in Sousse, and previously an al Qaeda suicide bomber attacked the synagogue in Djerba, killing 21 people.

Troops and armed police patrolled the city streets and set up checkpoints searching vehicles and pedestrians. At Tunis international airport security forces were allowing in only passengers travelling.

Security officials said the bomber blew himself up as presidential guards were boarding a bus on the main Mohamed V Avenue to travel to the presidential palace for duty.

According to the preliminary details, the attacker was wearing a bag on his back. He had on a coat and was wearing headphones. He blew himself up just getting into the door of the bus with military explosives," Hichem Gharbi, a presidential security official, told local Shems FM radio.

One of the most secular countries in the Arab World, **Tunisia** has enjoyed relative stability since its 2011 uprising compared with its North African neighbours Libya and Egypt. It has a new constitution, free elections and a compromise politics between secular and Islamist parties that has allowed progress.

But fighting Islamist militants has become a major challenge for a country heavily reliant on tourism for its revenues.

In the early chaotic days after its revolution, ultra-conservative Islamists gained ground and recruited among young Tunisians and took over mosques.

More than 3,000 Tunisians are now fighting for Islamic State or other militant groups in Iraq, Syria and neighbouring Libya. Some have threatened to return to carry out attacks in **Tunisia**. The gunmen in the Sousse and Bardo attacks were all trained in jihadist camps in Libya.

The government has cracked down on hardline preachers and taken back mosques. It is also building a security **wall** along the **border** with Libya to try to stop militants crossing over into its territory. Send to Kindle

The post **Tunisia** says suicide bomber behind bus attack that killed 13 appeared first on Cyprus Mail.

NS gterr : Terrorism | gpol : Domestic Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE tunis : Tunisia | libya : Libya | cypr : Cyprus | africaz : Africa | asiaz : Asia | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eecz : European Union Countries | eurz : Europe | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD International

PUB Cyprus Mail Ltd

AN Document CYMAIL0020151125ebbp000gw

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HD **Islamic State Entrenches in Sirte, Libya**

BY By Tamer El-Ghobashy and Hassan Morajea

WC 1,531 words

PD 29 November 2015

ET 12:52

SN Dow Jones Institutional News

SC DJDN

LA English

CY Copyright © 2015, Dow Jones & Company, Inc.

LP

MISRATA, Libya--Even as foreign powers step up pressure against Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, the militant group has expanded in Libya and established a new base close to Europe where it can generate oil revenue and plot terror attacks.

Since announcing its presence in February in Sirte, the city on Libya's Mediterranean coast has become the first that the militant group governs outside of Syria and Iraq. Its presence there has grown over the past year from 200 eager fighters to a roughly 5,000-strong contingent which includes administrators and financiers, according to estimates by Libyan intelligence officials, residents and activists in the area.

TD

The group has exploited the deep divisions in Libya, which has two rival governments, to create this new stronghold of violent religious extremism just across the Mediterranean Sea from Italy. Along the way, they scored a string of victories--defeating one of the strongest fighting forces in the country and swiftly crushing a local popular revolt.

Libya's neighbors have become increasingly alarmed.

Tunisia closed its **border** with Libya for 15 days on Wednesday, the day after Islamic State claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing on a bus in the capital Tunis that killed 12 presidential guards.

Tunisia is also building a security **wall** along a third of that **border** to stem the flow of extremists between the countries. Two previous attacks in **Tunisia** this year that killed dozens of tourists were carried out by gunmen the government said were trained by Islamic State in Libya, which has recruited hundreds of Tunisians to its ranks.

This burgeoning operation in Libya shows how Islamic State is able to grow and adapt even as it is targeted by Russian, French and U.S.-led airstrikes in Syria as well as Kurdish and Iraqi ground assaults in Iraq.

In Libya, Islamic State has fended off challenges from government-aligned militias, crushed an uprising in Sirte and called for recruits who have the technical know-how to put the nearby oil facilities into operation.

Libyan officials said they are worried that it is only a matter of time before Islamic State attempts to take over more oil fields and refineries near Sirte to boost its revenue--money that could fund attacks in the Middle East and Europe.

Sirte is a gateway to several major oil fields and refineries farther east on the same coast and Islamic State has targeted those installations over the last year.

"They have made their intentions clear," said Ismail Shoukry, head of military intelligence for the region that includes Sirte. "They want to take their fight to Rome."

Islamic State is benefiting from a conflict that has further weakened government control in Libya.

For nearly a year, the U.S. and European powers have pointed to the Islamic State threat to press the rival governments to come to a power-sharing agreement. Despite a United Nations-brokered draft agreement for peace announced in October, neither side has taken steps to implement it.

A new U.N. envoy, Martin Kobler, was appointed this month to break the stalemate, part of efforts to find a political solution to counter the extremists' expansion.

"We don't have a real state. We have a fragmented government," said Fathi Ali Bashaagha, a politician from the city of Misrata who participated in the U.N.-led negotiations. "Every day we delay on a political deal, it is a golden opportunity for Islamic State to grow."

Islamic State militants have successfully taken on and defeated myriad Libyan armed factions, including the powerful militias from Misrata which were the driving force behind the revolt that unseated longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi in 2011. Misrata, 150 miles west of Sirte, has recently come under sporadic attacks from Islamic State.

Since early 2014, two rival factions have ruled Libya, effectively dividing the country. In the east, an internationally recognized government based in the town of Tobruk has won the backing of regional powers Egypt and the United Arab Emirates. In the west, an Islamist leaning government based in Tripoli has relied on Misrata fighting forces for political legitimacy.

Members of Misrata's militias, who are loosely under the control of the western government in Tripoli, say they lack the support to mount an offensive against Islamic State. Earlier this month, the Tripoli government forced the Misrata militias into a humiliating prisoner swap with Islamic State.

"There will be no meaningful action without a political agreement," said Abdullah al-Najjar, a field commander with the Brigade 166, an elite Misrata militia that engaged in a protracted fight with Islamic State on the outskirts of Sirte earlier this year. "You have to know you're going to war with a government that is going to back you."

This month, the U.S. launched its first airstrike against Islamic State outside Syria and Iraq, underlining concern about the group's expansion. Officials said they believe the strike killed one of the top deputies of Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The deputy, Abu Nabil al-Anbari, had been sent to Libya last year to establish the group's presence there.

In recent weeks, a flood of foreign recruits and their families have arrived in Sirte--another indication the group is becoming increasingly comfortable in its North African base, according to residents and activists from Sirte and Libyan military officials.

Islamic State has called on recruits to travel to Libya instead of trying to enter Syria, while commanders have repatriated Libyan fighters from Syria and Iraq, Libyan intelligence officials said.

"Sirte will be no less than Raqqa," is a mantra often repeated by Islamic State leaders in the Libyan city during sermons and radio broadcasts, several residents and an activist from the city said. Raqqa is the group's self-declared capital in Syria.

Like its mother organization in Syria, Islamic State has appointed foreign "emirs" in Sirte to administer its brutal brand of social control. Music, smoking and cellphone networks have been banned while women are only allowed to walk the streets in full cover. Morality police patrol in vehicles marked with Islamic State's logo and courts administering Islamic law, or Shariah, as well as prisons have been set up.

With a population of about 700,000, Sirte was long known for being Gadhafi's hometown and a stronghold of his supporters. Soon after Libya's uprising ended more than four decades of Gadhafi's rule, he was killed in Sirte by fighters from Misrata.

Earlier this month, Islamic State reopened schools in the city, segregating students by gender and strictly enforcing an Islamic State approved curriculum. On Fridays, the traditional day of communal prayer, the group organizes public lectures and residents are often herded into public squares to witness executions and lashings of those who run afoul of the strict rules.

The seeds of Islamic State's growth in Libya were planted after Gadhafi's ouster. In the almost exclusively Sunni Muslim Libya, the Sunni extremist group exploited tribal and political rifts that lingered after the strongman's death, particularly around Sirte. Islamic State lured extremists from other groups under the Islamic State umbrella.

By June, Brigade 166, one of western Libya's strongest armed brigades, abandoned a monthslong battle with the militants on Sirte's outskirts. In August, Islamic State cemented their grip on the city, bringing the last holdout district under their control, officials and residents said.

Islamic State crushed an armed uprising in August in three days. It was sparked by local residents angered over the group's killing of a young cleric who opposed the radicals. Militants publicly crucified several people who participated in the revolt and confiscated homes.

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The brutality moved the internationally recognized government of eastern Libya to plea for military intervention by Arab nations and a lifting of a U.N. arms embargo on Libya in effect since 2011. But the support never came.

Unlike in Syria, the group has struggled to provide basic services. Gas stations are dry and residents are expected to smuggle in their own fuel--as long as it is not confiscated by Islamic State.

Hospitals have been abandoned after Islamic State ordered male and female staffers be segregated. The ill must travels miles to other cities for treatment, a trip that is often accompanied by difficult questioning and searches at Islamic State checkpoints.

"No services, just punishment," said Omar, a 33-year-old civil engineer who fled Sirte after taking part in the failed uprising against Islamic State. "Sirte has gone dark."

Despite the challenges, Islamic State has big plans for Sirte. A recent edition of their propaganda magazine, Dabiq, featured an interview with Abu Mughirah al-Qahtani, who was described as "the delegated leader" for Islamic State in Libya. He vowed to use Libya's geographic position--and its oil reserves--to disrupt Europe's security and economy.

"The control of Islamic State over this region will lead to economic breakdowns," the Islamic leader said, "especially for Italy and the rest of the European states."

(END) Dow Jones Newswires

November 29, 2015 06:52 ET (11:52 GMT)

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gterr : Terrorism | gvio : Military Action | neqac : Equities Asset Class News | nfiac : Fixed Income Asset Class News | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE libya : Libya | tunis : Tunisia | eurz : Europe | iraq : Iraq | syria : Syria | tripol : Tripoli | africaz : Africa | asiaz : Asia | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wasiaz : Western Asia

PUB Dow Jones & Company, Inc.

AN Document DJDN000020151129ebbt000eh

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HD **When ISIS lives next door: Tunisia's desperate fight against extremism**

BY By Sara Sidner CNN

WC 1,580 words

PD 10 December 2015

ET 08:25

SN CNN Wire

SC CNNWR

LA English

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LP

SIDI BOUZID, Tunisia (CNN) -- Their lives begin where the paved road ends.

Getting there is a jarring ride along a dirt road that passes through small, dry canyons. The land is these people's most precious possession -- second only to life itself.

TD

But they're now faced with a new and terrible reality -- the worst kind of neighbors have moved in.

"My sons refuse to move from this place because this is their father's land," said Zahara Ghorballi. "If we move from here the terrorists will take it." The terrorists she speaks of have already done their worst to her.

In November, her youngest son was snatched. The 16-year-old shepherd was grazing his flock of sheep on the side of the mountain that looms over their lonely home in the sparsely populated valley below.

As if their lives weren't difficult enough, ISIS militants now roam the hills -- and seemed to come out of nowhere that fateful day. They asked her son to hand over his flock. It's the family's main source of livelihood and so he refused. ISIS retaliated.

His mother had no idea what was happening until her son, Braik, did not return home with his cousin one day. His cousin had the family's sheep and was holding a plastic bag.

"I said 'What is in the plastic bag?' He told me there is a dead sheep in it. I asked him to give it to me. And he refused. He ran away with it," Zahara said.

The reason was sinister and horrifying.

Inside the plastic bag was Braik's severed head. ISIS militants had beheaded him.

Zahara's remaining sons put their brother's head in a refrigerator until they could get the body down from the mountain for a proper burial.

"They beheaded him and the sheep at the same time," she said, "He was everything to me."

Braik helped her do everything in the house because her eyesight is failing. Now he's gone. The night it happened she spent pacing, wailing and hitting herself in the head, consumed by grief.

Before they killed him, the militants made Braik spew propaganda in a video. Their chilling message: This is what happens to spies who tell police where ISIS is hiding.

But his family says the reality is the militants are no better than common thieves and just wanted his sheep.

"I want to get rid of all of them. Look for them one by one. Because they hurt me so deeply," Zahara said.

But that's easier said than done.

Extremist groups, like ISIS, have gained a foothold in **Tunisia** in the turbulent power vacuum created after the fall of the old dictatorial regime of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and before the formation of a new democratic government three years later.

"They used that margin of freedom to organize and establish their networks. There were groups affiliated with Al Qaeda and Ansar al Sharia, that set up shop all around the country under the guise of (religion)," Oussama Romdhani, Editor-in-Chief of newly-formed newspaper The Arab Weekly said.

Eventually ISIS started to penetrate the hearts and minds of some of **Tunisia**'s suffering population.

Attacks on the rise

In 2015 alone, the country experienced three major terrorist attacks. The most recent coming in November, when a suicide bomber blew himself up killing 12 members of the Tunisian presidential guard. The country responded with a month-long state of emergency and a curfew.

In June, terrorists targeted and killed more 38 international tourists on the picturesque beaches of Sousse, some 140km (86 miles) south of the capital, Tunis.

And in March, extremists attacked the popular Bardo National Museum, taking hostages for three hours before killing 20 people, 17 of whom were tourists.

The country's biggest security concern at the moment is its **border** with Libya, another country that erupted in revolt against its dictator Moammar Gadhafi.

"Libya has basically become an open-air weapons depot. It developed into not only a harbor but also a training ground and a transit point for jihadists," Romdhani said.

But the flow of jihadists isn't just one way. The government and a private security intelligence gathering group estimated **Tunisia** has the most foreign fighters going off to join ISIS. They estimate that some 3,000 Tunisian nationals and rising have crossed into Libya since the fall of Ben Ali's regime to train with extremist groups -- and some return to wreak havoc in their own country.

"We came to the conclusion that the real danger is coming from Libya because there's no state in Libya. There's chaos instead. Many terrorist groups and members of those groups go to Libya, get trained there, and then they come to **Tunisia** to perpetrate attacks," Director of Communications for the Tunisian Interior Ministry, Lougini Walid told CNN.

And the country has not been slow to react to the threat.

Since the Bardo Museum attack in March, Tunisian security forces have arrested more than 1,000 people during 21,000 raids, according to Walid, and they also discovered a large storage space filled with heavy weapons and explosives.

As for **Tunisia**'s trouble with its porous **border** with Libya, he said: "We are building a **fence**. It is almost finished."

But he knows fences can do little to offset the hopelessness and poverty felt by many due to a lack of jobs and a stalled economy -- and this hardship is helping to feed the extremists' cause.

Birthplace of the Arab Spring

No one knows that more than Radhia Bouazizi. Her last name is synonymous with the revolution of 2011. It was her nephew Mohamed Bouazizi who essentially started it all.

Mohammed was a fruit seller whose last desperate act sparked protests that eventually turned into what the world now refers to as the "Arab Spring."

Bouazizi set himself on fire after a government inspector seized his produce cart and, some witnesses say, slapped him. It was his only means of income.

Radhia was close to Mohamed. She said he dreamed of owning a car one day so he didn't have to pull the cart. Those humble dreams never came true. His burns were too severely and he died. His body is now buried in his family plot outside of Sidi Bouzid, a previously unknown town that shot into the world's glare.

It was Mohamed's reaction to government seizure of his wares that sent shock waves around the country and ignited the underlying frustrations of its citizens. They'd had enough of Ben Ali's 23-year reign.

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Four years after the revolution, a huge banner with his picture and the scales of justice hang for all to see on a government building in the town. But all is not well here. Post-revolution, the job market has suffered with **Tunisia**'s economy in crisis.

"We know our economy was hit after the revolution. But we in **Tunisia** can also rely on our partnership with our friends and brothers abroad who are also concerned with Daesh (ISIS)," Walid of the Tunisian interior ministry explained. "This is why **Tunisia** is part of the international coalition of 17 countries against Daesh."

But newly-elected lawmaker Wafa Makhlouf is more downbeat.

"It's like a chain, to have the economic investment we have to have the security. And the big problem today is security and terrorism. Our big challenge is to find or create jobs for these youth. And to create these jobs we need investment in the economy," he said.

And it isn't just the youth suffering through hard times economically.

Tourism suffering

On a beautiful sunny day in a district that offers some of the most picturesque views of Tunis, shopkeepers stand at their doors waiting for customers. But they've stopped coming.

Belhassen Al Arabi runs a shop filled with carpets, ornate handmade Tunisian pottery and dreamy arabesque paintings. The 500-year-old building is in the stunning suburb of Sidi Bou Said, where **Tunisia**'s famous blue doors are impossible to ignore. They're especially easy to see now because there are no people crowding down the streets past them.

"I want to say: Americans, you are welcome. French, Russian, British people, you are all welcome to come to my country. We need your support," he said. "But I understand the fear. Even as a Tunisian I am scared."

He remembers when hordes of tourists would come in from huge cruise ships year round. He continues to hope they'll return next year. The country as a whole hopes so too. In 2014, tourism contributed about 15% of **Tunisia**'s GDP, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council.

While **Tunisia** boasts a stunningly beautiful coastline and incredible architecture, it also has something else to boast about: It has continued to push toward democracy despite all its troubles and challenges.

And that has culminated in a group of Tunisians who helped make that happen being awarded this year's Nobel Peace Prize.

"It's a symbol of a hard-earned status to be proud of," The Arab Weekly's Romdhani said. But he warned the country has to deliver more security and jobs for its citizens for this fragile democracy to prosper.

Houda Zaghdoudi contributed to this report

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gterr : Terrorism | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE tunis : Tunisia | libya : Libya | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

IPD isis-tunisia-democracy-extremism-1

PUB Cable News Network LP.

AN Document CNNWR000201512l0ebca002mh

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HD **Tunisia unveils anti-jihadi fence on Libyan border**

WC 140 words

PD 6 February 2016

ET 20:02

SN Associated Press Newswires

SC APRS

LA English

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LP

BEN GUERDANE, **Tunisia** (AP) — **Tunisia**'s defense minister has visited an anti-jihadi **fence** that's being built on the country's **border** with Libya to stop Islamist militants from entering Tunisian territory.

Defense Minister Farhat Horchani inspected the first completed part of the 196-kilometer (122-mile) **fence** Saturday, which aims to counter the threat from jihadi militants and render the entire **border** impassable by vehicles. Horchani said the project came about with financial assistance from Germany and the U.S.

TD

Military personnel and dozens of journalists were also given a tour of the defense structure, composed of sand alongside water-filled trenches and monitoring centers.

The **fence** initiative was announced last summer after two terrorist attacks in three months killed 59 foreign tourists and garnered world attention.

NS gdef : Armed Forces | gdip : International Relations | gpol : Domestic Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE tunis : Tunisia | africaz : Africa | libya : Libya | meastz : Middle East | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

IPD ML

IPC i

PUB The Associated Press

AN Document APRS000020160206ec26007ne

REUTERS

HD **Tunisia finishes Libya border fence intended to keep out militants**

WC 305 words

PD 6 February 2016

ET 22:49

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

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LP

SABKEHT ALYUN, **Tunisia** (Reuters) - **Tunisia** has completed a 200-km (125 mile) **barrier** along its frontier with Libya to try to keep out Islamist militants, and will soon install electronic monitoring systems, Defense Minister Farhat Hachani said on Saturday.

Libya's chaos since the fall of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011 has allowed Islamic State to gain a foothold there, and officials say militants who carried out two major attacks in **Tunisia** last year had trained in jihadist camps in Libya.

TD

Troops have raised an earth **wall** and dug trenches 2 km (1.2 miles) from the Libyan **border**, and European and American military trainers will soon train Tunisian forces to improve electronic surveillance with cameras and radar, Hachani told reporters on a visit to the **border**.

"Today we finished closing it off, and this will help us protect our **border**, and stop the threat," he said.

Security forces said the defenses had already helped to reduce smuggling.

Islamic State controls the Libyan city of Sirte and has attacked key oil installations as it expands beyond its heartland in Iraq and Syria.

More than 3,000 Tunisians have left to fight for Islamic State and other Islamist groups in Syria and Iraq, but Hachani said many had now returned to North Africa to join the group in Libya.

Since its own democratic revolution in 2011, **Tunisia** has been praised as a model of democratic transition, with free elections, a new constitution and a politics of compromise between secular and Islamist parties.

But last year's two major attacks, on a museum in Tunis and a beach hotel in Sousse, dealt heavy blows to its tourist industry, a mainstay of the economy.

(Writing by Patrick Markey; Editing by Kevin Liffey)

RF Released: 2016-2-6T21:49:26.000Z

NS gdip : International Relations | gpol : Domestic Politics | gterr : Terrorism | gvdef : Defense Department | gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | gvbod : Government Bodies | gvexe : Executive Branch | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE libya : Libya | tunis : Tunisia | meastz : Middle East | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

IPD Politics

IPC SERVICE:OUSWDM

PUB Thomson Reuters (Markets) LLC

AN Document LBA0000020160206ec2600llt

HD **Fence built on border with Libya completed (Defence)**

WC 235 words

PD 6 February 2016

SN Agency Tunis Afrique Press

SC AGETAP

LA English

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LP

MEDENINE, (TAP) - Minister of National Defence Farhat Horchani announced Saturday the completion of the erection of a **barrier** on the **border** with Libya.

Works, carried out over 250 kms (from Ras Jedir to Dhehiba), lasted only four months instead of a year, he noted.

TD

During a field visit to the buffer zone in the Tunisian south, Horchani said the defence system will be equipped in the coming months with an advanced electronic sensor system, in co-operation with the United States and Germany.

US and German military and technicians will travel to **Tunisia** to install these equipment and train members of the Tunisian army which requires, he said, the signing of an agreement between **Tunisia** and the two countries to organise the presence of foreign military officers in the country.

The Tunisian-American co-operation in intelligence is part of the fight against inter-continental terrorism, he also noted.

Training sessions in planning and control of equipment are scheduled, he also said.

This co-operation requires developing a legal framework which requires submitting this co-operation programme to the parliamentary security and defence committee for discussion, the Minister of Defence also stressed.

Horchani emphasised **Tunisia**'s commitment to preserve the constants of national defence and national sovereignty.

During this field visit, a mock operation was conducted by army units in an outpost on the **border** with Libya.

RE tunis : Tunisia | libya : Libya | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

IPD Politics

PUB Agency Tunis Afrique Press

AN Document AGETAP0020160207ec260005m

HD **Tunisia Opposes Foreign Intervention in Libya - Defense Minister**

WC 307 words

PD 7 February 2016

ET 16:28

SN Sputnik News Service

SC RVESEN

LA English

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LP

MOSCOW, February 7 (Sputnik) - **Tunisia** opposes the deployment of foreign ground troops in Libya in the fight against terrorist enclaves, Defense Minister Farhat Horchani said Sunday.

"There must be a Libyan government, recognized by all sides, and we will have to help it, supporting it militarily. The government will then be able to request the deployment of foreign troops by itself. If action on the ground is required, then it is the Libyans who must fight. We are against a foreign ground operation," Horchani said, as quoted by Al Arabiya.

TD

The defense minister has been reportedly inspecting an anti-militant **fence** currently under construction on the Tunisian-Libyan **border**, which is designed to keep militants out of the country.

Horchani announced earlier the completion of the first section of the 196-kilometer (122 miles) **fence**. Construction was announced after the June 2015 attack on a tourist resort in the city of Sousse that resulted on nearly 40 deaths. The Islamic State (IS) militant group took responsibility for the attack.

Both the United States and the European Union have so far ruled out a possibility of a ground operation against terrorists in Libya, stressing that the future Libyan unity government should bear responsibility of stabilizing the country.

Libya has been in a state of turmoil since its longtime leader Muammar Gaddafi was deposed and killed in 2011. IS, which is outlawed in many countries including Russia, seized a pocket of Libyan territory centered in Gaddafi's hometown of Sirte in November 2014.

According to estimates of Pentagon officials, Islamic State forces have doubled to more than 6,000 in the past six months in Libya. In late January, the Pentagon said it was looking into potential military options in Libya as the threat of the IS intensifies in the country.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gterr : Terrorism | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE libya : Libya | tunis : Tunisia | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

IPD LIBYA

IPC 160

PUB Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency

AN Document RVESEN0020160207ec27005ha

HD **Sand wall on Tunisian-Libyan border insufficient," unless reinforced by electronic monitoring system (Defence)**

WC 209 words

PD 15 February 2016

SN Agency Tunis Afrique Press

SC AGETAP

LA English

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LP

TUNIS (TAP) - Defence Minister Farhat Horchani said, Monday, that the sand **wall** erected all along the Tunisian-Libyan **border** is insufficient," if it is not reinforced by an electronic monitoring system which is expected to be set up as part of international cooperation.

The sand **wall** erected by the Defence Ministry to protect our **border** is insufficient and should be reinforced by setting up an electronic monitoring system, as part of an international cooperation with Germany and the United States," Horchani explained to the House of People's Representatives (HPR) commission for the armed forces administrative organisation and affairs.

TD

Tunisia's situation is very sensitive," he said in reference to the military intervention threats against Libya where a political solution and a government of national consensus has not yet been established.

Tunisia rejects all military intervention in Libya, Horchani confirmed, pointing out however that the country is facing serious threats," given the presence of a large number of Tunisian terrorists among those who had been trained in Libya.

These terrorists threaten to perpetrate terrorist acts in **Tunisia** in the absence of Libyan forces capable of getting the current situation under control," the defence minister warned.

NS gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE tunis : Tunisia | libya : Libya | tuncty : Tunis | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

IPD Politics

PUB Agency Tunis Afrique Press

AN Document AGETAP0020160216ec2f0002t

HD **Tunisia kills five militants near Libyan border**

WC 316 words

PD 2 March 2016

ET 22:05

SN Agence France Presse

SC AFPR

LA English

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LP

Tunisian security forces killed five militants near the Libyan **border** on Wednesday in a gunbattle in which one civilian also died and an army commander was wounded, the government said.

Troops had been on alert after receiving reports that militants had slipped across the **border** over the past three days in response to a US air strike on an Islamic State group training camp in Libya on February 18 that targeted a senior Tunisian commander, the interior ministry said.

TD

The militants were killed after being surrounded by troops in a house in El Aouija, 10 kilometres (six miles) outside the town of Ben Guerdane, the defence ministry said.

The army commander was wounded in the head during the operation but was in a stable condition, ministry spokesman Belhassen Oueslati told AFP.

The civilian was killed by a stray bullet, the interior ministry said in a statement.

Explosive vests, improvised grenades and a large quantity of munitions were recovered from the slain militants, it added.

Search operations were continuing late Wednesday, the defence ministry said.

Tunisia has built a 200-kilometre (125-mile) **barrier** that stretches about half the length of its **border** with Libya in an attempt to prevent militants from infiltrating.

A series of deadly attacks by IS on foreign holidaymakers last year, which have dealt a devastating blow to the country's tourism industry, are believed to have been planned from Libya.

Last month's US strike on the IS training camp outside the Libyan city of Sabratha targeted the suspected mastermind of two of the attacks, Noureddine Chouchane.

Washington has said that Chouchane was likely killed along with dozens of other militants.

Britain announced on Monday that it was sending a team of around 20 soldiers to **Tunisia** to train troops patrolling the **border** with Libya.

str-gk-kl/kir/dv

NS gvio : Military Action | gterr : Terrorism | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE libya : Libya | tunis : Tunisia | tuncty : Tunis | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

IPD Lead

PUB Agence France-Presse

AN Document AFPR000020160302ec3200bhy

HD **Border electronic monitoring: German and American technicians expected (Horchani)**

WC 344 words

PD 6 March 2016

SN Agency Tunis Afrique Press

SC AGETAP

LA English

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LP

MONASTIR- "German and American technicians will arrive next week to **Tunisia** to contribute to the installation of en electronic monitoring system" at the level of Tunisian-Libyan borders, affirmed Sunday in Monastir, national defence minister Farhat Horchani.

Taking the floor on the sidelines of "the Marathon of peace" organised in Monastir by the Tunisian association of students in pharmacy, Horchani specified that this system will play a role of extreme importance in monitoring these borders.

TD

He specified that the department is now preparing the legal framework related to co-operation between **Tunisia**, Germany and the United States, which will be submitted to the House of People's Representatives, as the foreign military presence on the Tunisian territory or Tunisian servicemen abroad requires the elaboration of a legal text to this end.

According to Horchani, "the defence system in the south is complete and global, covering three components namely sand trenches and barriers 100% achieved from Ras Jedir to Dehiba and further, the electronic monitoring system to be installed and the surveillance carried out by drones. "Discussions are underway with other countries to finish off setting up this system at the maritime, land and air levels to control regions where the terrorist threat is high," he explained, adding that Tunisian servicemen should be trained to use drones as part of co-operation with other countries.

Besides, the defence minister stressed the importance of intelligence in countering terrorism, lauding the role played by the citizens of Ben Guerdane in this field, estimating however that this means remains insufficient, which requires mobilisation of other technical means as drones.

He underlined that the monitoring system is not a **barrier** between the Tunisian and Libyan peoples, pointing out that in the absence of a political solution and a central government in Libya, **Tunisia** is obliged to resort to these means to secure joint borders.

He asserted **Tunisia**'s willingness to help Libya at the political level and in training its security and military officers after setting up a single government.

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE tunis : Tunisia | libya : Libya | usa : United States | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | namz : North America

IPD Politics

PUB Agency Tunis Afrique Press

AN Document AGETAP0020160307ec3600001

HD **Tunisia: Minister, also drones to control borders with Libya.**

WC 207 words

PD 7 March 2016

ET 09:49

SN ANSA - English Media Service

SC ANSAEN

LA English

CY © ANSA.

LP

Law authorising presence of foreign military to be passed soon

(ANSAmed) - TUNIS, MARCH 7 - **Tunisia** is going to resort to drones in order to monitor its **border** with Libya, said Tunisian Minister of Defense, Farhat Horchani, on the sidelines of a public meeting in Monastir with the associations of Pharmacy students, clarifying that **Tunisia** will employ an integrated and collateral defense system in the south of the country based on three elements: a **wall** of sand and moat, electronic surveillance and videosurveillance established thanks to the cooperation of American and German experts and the use of drones to control the territorial borders and waters between **Tunisia** and Libya.

TD

According to the minister these measures will not be of hindrance to the historical ties between the two peoples as these ties may not be tarnished by these exceptional actions made necessary by the proliferation of jihadi terrorism.

The minister also announced the study of a legal framework that will allow friendly countries to deploy their forces on Tunisian soil both in order to train military personnel or to carry out actions of joint defense within the sphere of bilateral relations.

These measures will need to be approved by parliament.

NS gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE tunis : Tunisia | libya : Libya | tuncty : Tunis | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

PUB Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata

AN Document ANSAEN0020160307ec3700001

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HD **Tunisia: Clashes erupt in Ben Gardane, near Libya**

WC 234 words

PD 7 March 2016

SN Al Jazeera English

SC AJAZEN

LA English

CY Copyright 2016 Al Jazeera English.

LP

Army barracks and national guards attacked with rocket-propelled grenades in town near Libyan **border**.

Deadly clashes have erupted between security forces and armed men in the Tunisian city of Ben Gardane near the **border** with Libya.

TD

The death toll was not immediately clear as calm returned to the area on Monday. An army spokesman said 10 attackers were killed in the clashes.

Assailants simultaneously attacked an army barracks and national guards with heavy weaponry, including rocket-propelled grenades.

An ambulance was also stolen in the clashes.

A security and military campaign began last week in Ben Gardane, after Tunisian security officials said "terrorist groups" sneaked into the country.

Officials said the campaign followed raids in Libya against fighters of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

Fighters trained in Libya carried out several attacks on **Tunisia** last year.

Al Jazeera's Nazanine Moshiri, reporting from **Tunisia**, described Ben Gardane as a strategically important town that is the "gateway to Libya". It serves as a hub for arms trafficking and smuggling of everyday goods.

"**Tunisia** has built a **fence** along the **border** with Libya but that doesn't seem to stop the movement of armed attackers coming in from Libya and targeting the army and security forces," she said.

"In the past week we have seen several incidents of people coming across."

Al Jazeera

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gterr : Terrorism | gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE tunis : Tunisia | libya : Libya | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

PUB Al Jazeera International

AN Document AJAZEN0020160307ec37000ma

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REUTERS

HD **Militants attack Tunisian forces near Libyan border, 53 killed**

WC 596 words

PD 7 March 2016

ET 18:49

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

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LP

TUNIS (Reuters) - Dozens of Islamist fighters stormed through the Tunisian town of Ben Guerdan near the Libyan **border** on Monday, attacking army and police posts in a raid that killed at least 53 people, including civilians, the government and residents said.

Local television broadcast images of soldiers and police crouched in doorways and on rooftops as gunshots echoed in the center of the town. Bodies of dead militants lay in the streets near the military barracks after the army regained control.

TD

Authorities sealed off the nearby beach resort town of Djerba, a popular destination for foreign and local tourists, imposed a curfew on Ben Guerdan and closed two **border** crossings with Libya after the attack.

"I saw a lot of militants at dawn, they were running with their Kalashnikovs," Hussein, a resident, told Reuters by telephone. "They said they were Islamic State and they came to target the army and the police."

It was not clear if the attackers crossed the **border**, and no group immediately claimed responsibility. But it was the type of militant operation **Tunisia**'s government has feared as it prepares for potential spillover from Libya, where Islamic State militants have gained ground.

Since its 2011 revolt to oust ruler Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali, **Tunisia** has struggled with Islamist militancy at home and across the **border**. Militants trained in jihadist camps in Libya carried out two attacks last year in **Tunisia**.

"This attack was an unprecedented, well-organized. They wanted to try to control the Ben Guerdan region and name it as their new Wilaya," President Beji Caid Essebsi said, referring to the name Islamic State uses for regions it considers part of its self-described caliphate.

Soldiers killed 35 militants and arrested six, the Interior Ministry said. Hospital and security sources said at least seven civilians were killed along with 11 soldiers.

Troops also later discovered a large cache of rifles, explosives and rocket-propelled grenades in Ben Guerdan, a security source said.

"If the army had not been ready, the terrorists would have been able to raise their flag over Ben Guerdan and gotten a symbolic victory," said Abd Elhamid Jelassi, vice president of the Islamist party Ennahda, part of the government coalition.

REGIONAL JIHADISTS

More than 3,000 Tunisians have gone to fight with Islamic State and other groups in Syria and Iraq. Tunisian security officials say increasingly they are returning to join the militant group in Libya.

Since the fall of Muammar Gaddafi five years ago, Libya has slipped into chaos, with two rival governments and armed factions struggling for control. Islamic State has grown in the turmoil, taking over the city of Sirte and drawing foreign recruits.

Tunisian jihadists are taking a lead role in Islamic State camps in Libya, Tunisian security sources say.

Tunisian forces have been on alert for possible militant infiltrations since last month, when a U.S. air strike targeted mostly Tunisian Islamic State militants at a camp near the **border** in Libya's Sabratha.

Western military advisers are starting to train Tunisian **border** forces to help better protect the frontier with electronic surveillance and drones and authorities have built a trench and **barrier** to help stop militants crossing.

Islamist militant gunmen trained in Libyan camps carried out two of the three major attacks on **Tunisia** last year, including assaults on the Tunis Bardo museum and a Sousse beach hotel targeting foreign tourists.

(Reporting by Tarek Amara; Writing by Patrick Markey; Editing by Janet Lawrence, Larry King)

RF Released: 2016-3-7T17:49:19.000Z

NS gvio : Military Action | gpol : Domestic Politics | gterr : Terrorism | ntop : Top Wire News | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter | redit : Selection of Top Stories/Trends/Analysis

RE tunis : Tunisia | libya : Libya | meastz : Middle East | tuncty : Tunis | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

IPD Entertainment and Lifestyle

IPC SERVICE:OUSWDM

PUB Thomson Reuters (Markets) LLC

AN Document LBA0000020160307ec3700ho5

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HD **Tunisia close its borders with Libya after clashes between army and militants**

BY Ahmed Abbas

WC 158 words

PD 7 March 2016

SN Daily News Egypt

SC DAINEG

LA English

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LP

Tunisia decided to close its borders with its neighbour Libya following clashes between the Tunisian army and militants in the city of Ben Guerdan.

Forty-five people were killed including 21 Islamist militants, 28 militants, 10 security personnel, and seven civilians, the Tunisian Ministry of Interior said in a statement. Tunisian authorities urged people to stay indoors during the clashes.

TD

Despite **Tunisia** having completed construction of a **barrier**, comprised of sand banks and water trenches, along its **border** with Libya, chaos and the spread of terrorism is still prolific.

UK military experts are helping the Tunisian army to protect its borders, while German and US experts are supposed to train more Tunisian troops about **border** security.

Islamist extremist groups trained in Libya carried out several terrorist operations in **Tunisia** in 2015, including attacks on Bardo museum in the capital and a resort in Souse.

CO tuninr : Tunisia Ministry of Interior

NS gvio : Military Action | gterr : Terrorism | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE tunis : Tunisia | libya : Libya | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

PUB Business news co.

AN Document DAINEG0020160307ec37000gt

HD **Tunisia hunts jihadists after deadly border raid**

BY Ines Bel Aiba and Mounir Souissi

WC 700 words

PD 8 March 2016

ET 12:56

SN Agence France Presse

SC AFPR

LA English

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LP

Tunisian security forces pressed a search for jihadists near the Libyan **border** on Tuesday after a deadly raid the authorities described as an "unprecedented" assault by the Islamic State group.

Prime Minister Habib Essid said around 50 extremists were believed to have taken part in Monday's coordinated dawn attacks on an army barracks and police and National Guard posts in the **border** town of Ben Guerdane.

TD

He said that 36 attackers had been killed and seven captured in a fierce firefight that also saw the deaths of seven civilians and 12 security force personnel.

Essid told a news conference that the militants "murdered one internal security force member in his own home".

He said three civilians and 14 security personnel were also wounded.

"The (security forces') reaction was rapid and strong. We won a battle and are prepared for any others," Essid said.

"Now they know **Tunisia** is no easy pushover and that it is not so simple to set up an emirate in Ben Guerdane."

On Monday, Essid said that the operation's aim had been to create a "Daesh (IS) emirate" in the town.

Interior ministry spokesman Yasser Mesbah said the search for any militants still at large was continuing in the **border** area.

He said a nighttime curfew imposed in the town after the attack had been well respected and that the situation was "stable".

Essid also called for vigilance, saying that **Tunisia** was waging "total war against terrorism".

Asked how the jihadists could have mounted such an assault on the town, the premier promised a "thorough assessment" of Monday's events.

"There are lessons to be learned from this terrorist attack. There will be a thorough assessment of what happened, and we will draw all the conclusions," Essid said.

"It may be that there was a failure at a certain level, that of intelligence, other elements," he said.

President Beji Caid Essebsi had said on Monday the "unprecedented" jihadist attack was "maybe aimed at controlling" the **border** region and vowed to "exterminate these rats".

Residents told AFP the assailants appeared to be natives of the region.

They stopped people, checked their ID cards apparently to seek out members of the security forces, and announced their brief takeover of Ben Guerdane as "liberators".

Press reaction to Monday's events was both bullish and cautionary.

The French-language Le Quotidien warned of "The threat of sleeper cells" of jihadists, while Al Maghreb trumpeted "It's war!" on its front page.

Another daily, Le Temps, said the attacks may "mark a turning point in the terrorists' strategy towards our country".

It urged thought into "another approach in both judicial and security inquiries into any case with terrorist connotations".

Late Monday, US State Department spokesman John Kirby condemned the "cowardly attack" and offered fresh US help to Tunis, while EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said the attack "once more demonstrates the gravity of the threat faced by **Tunisia**".

On Tuesday the authorities said the situation in Ben Guerdane was "stable", and that "large quantities" of arms and ammunition had been recovered.

It was the second deadly clash in the **border** area in less than a week as **Tunisia** battles to prevent the large number of its citizens who have joined IS in Libya from returning to carry out attacks at home.

Two deadly IS attacks on foreign tourists last year that have dealt a devastating blow to **Tunisia**'s tourism industry are believed to have been planned from Libya.

Jihadists have taken advantage of a power vacuum in Libya since the NATO-backed overthrow of longtime dictator Moamer Kadhafi in 2011 to set up bases in several areas, including near Sabratha between Tripoli and the Tunisian **border**.

A US air strike on an IS training camp outside Sabratha last month killed dozens of Tunisian militants, including the suspected mastermind of two of last year's attacks, Noureddine Chouchane.

Tunisia has built a 200-kilometre (125-mile) **barrier** that stretches about half the length of its **border** with Libya in an attempt to stop militant incursions.

bur-iba/gk/srm/mm

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IPD Recit

PUB Agence France-Presse

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HD **Tunisia continues to fight against ISIL infiltration**

BY Rashmee Roshan Lall

WC 910 words

PD 16 March 2016

SN The National

SC NATENG

LA English

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LP

Rashmee Roshan Lall

How much closer is **Tunisia** to the destiny apparently mapped out for it by ISIL now that the extremist group is heavily under attack in Iraq and Syria?

TD

Every so often, there are rumours that ISIL is stealthily but surely moving to base itself in North Africa and establish a so-called Islamic State" there. But the most recent iteration of the rumour seems particularly significant. Unverified reports that ISIL leader Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi is living in Sirte in Libya coincided with the March 7 Battle of Ben Guerdane near **Tunisia**'s **border** with Libya.

The Ben Guerdane operation, the most audacious cross-**border** attack in **Tunisia**'s history, took the form of three separate incidents on a single day, within 15 kilometres of the city centre.

It featured simultaneous assaults on Tunisian security personnel and installations, including a military barracks. It ended with the Tunisian army and police killing nearly 50 extremists and capturing at least 20. Later, **Tunisia**'s president Beji Caid Essebsi would explain that his government saw the Battle of Ben Guerdane as an unprecedented" attempt by extremists to take over parts of the country and establish a new Islamic State emirate" in **Tunisia**.

A new ISIL video has said as much. The only question is why now?

There are four possible reasons. If Al Baghdadi, who may have been injured in a bomb attack on his convoy in October, is really in Sirte, ISIL would be anxious to take territory in the region.

It would want to overturn the perception that it is in retreat and on the run in Iraq and Syria. It would seek to retake control of the propagandist story it has consistently put out and portray itself as strong and unassailable.

Second, Ben Guerdane may be the blowback from the recent successes in fighting Tunisian militants based in Libya. Last month, American planes hit an ISIL site at Sabratha, which is close to the Tunisian **border** and just about 130km from Ben Guerdane.

The main target was a Tunisian ISIL operative, Noureddine Chouchane, who is said to have played a key role in planning last year's two devastating attacks on western tourists in **Tunisia**. According to analysts, Tunisian extremists may be finding it too dangerous to stay on in Libya and keen to open a new front in their home country.

Third, territorial gain in **Tunisia** would be entirely in line with ISIL's oft-expressed view on the need to erase 20th-century borders and redraw the world map.

The independent NGO International Crisis Group recently pointed out that Ben Guerdane would mark the top of a ‘liberated' area, including the south-east of **Tunisia** and Tripolitania (a kind of emirate of Tripoli and Ben Guerdane). Given its history, this would allow Ben Guerdane to serve as a transit point for men and arms throughout the region." This would seem logical to ISIL because the region was once governed by the Ottomans as the wilayet of Tripolitania.

Finally, there is this dismal truth. If ISIL is especially focused on **Tunisia** right now, it may be more in the way of a vulture watching over its weakening prey than anything else.

In the five years since the Jasmine Revolution, **Tunisia**'s laundry list of problems has only grown longer.

Despite urgent and well-meaning advice from independent economists, the IMF and the World Bank, **Tunisia**'s government has dithered over reform. Young Tunisians continue to be unsustainably dependent for jobs on the overburdened public sector. This can trigger tensions nationwide, as happened in January when Ridha Yahyoui, a young man angry at being denied a government job, scaled a pylon in the southern town of Kasserine and was electrocuted.

Tunisian youth still remain largely unable to secure bank loans and the various official permits required to start businesses.

So, is **Tunisia** too weak to neutralise the extremist threat? There are as many answers as the people you ask but it's fair to acknowledge that it's doing rather better than before on the basics of counterterrorism.

For more than a year, the army has been fighting local militants in the Chaambi Mountains, along the southeastern **border** with Algeria. As for the **border** with Libya, **Tunisia** recently completed a 200-km **barrier** and a trench, which runs from the coastal town of Ras Jedir to Dhiba in the south-west.

There are plans, **Tunisia**'s defence minister recently said, for German and US contractors to install electronic surveillance equipment at strategic points along the **wall**.

The international community – the US, UK, France, Germany and most recently, Russia – is increasingly generous in its offer of men and equipment to help the Tunisian forces fight the militant threat.

But most important of all may be the spirit of local resistance. The Tunisian press has reported that the residents of Ben Guerdane played a key role in defeating the extremists. Not only did they alert the authorities to the ISIL infiltrators' presence, they mobilised to support the security forces.

A cartoon in La Presse, one of **Tunisia**'s most influential newspapers, summarises the people's attitude. It shows a journalist asking a gun-toting and sorely banged-up extremist, So how did the people of Ben Guerdane welcome you?" and the man mumbling in response: Warmly".

Rashmee Roshan Lall is a writer on world affairs.

On Twitter: @rashmeerl

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

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IPD Comment

PUB Abu Dhabi Media Company

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HD **Tunisia reopens border with Libya after clashes in Ben Guerdane**

WC 256 words

PD 22 March 2016

ET 11:49

SN dpa International Service in English

SC DPAEN

LA English

CY Copyright 2016. dpa Deutsche Presse-Agentur

LP

Tunis (dpa) - Tunisian authorities reopened **border** crossings with Libya on Tuesday, almost two weeks after clashes erupted in the town of Ben Guerdane that led to the killing of dozens of civilians and security personnel, the Interior Ministry said in a statement.

The crossing points Ras Jedir and Wazen-Dhehibe are open initially from 7 pm (1800 GMT) to 7 am (0600 GMT), the statement added.

TD

The curfew hours in Ben Guerdane, near the Libyan **border**, were also reduced and are now from 10 pm (2100 GMT) until 5 am (0400 GMT), the ministry said.

The violence in Ben Guerdane first broke out on March 7 when unidentified gunmen attempted to seize military and police facilities there, which led to clashes with security forces.

Thirteen security personnel and seven civilians lost their lives during the fighting on that day alone, while scores of insurgents were killed during the clashes that lasted for days.

The violence prompted Tunisian authorities to shut down the **border** with Libya to prevent terrorists from entering the country.

Tunisia, widely seen as the sole democratic success story of the 2010-11 Arab Spring uprisings, has experienced a series of deadly attacks during the past year.

Some of those attacks were claimed by Islamic State, which is active in Libya.

Last month, **Tunisia** completed a sand **barrier** and trench running half the length of its **border** with Libya.

Libya has been destabilized since the 2011 overthrow of long-ruling dictator Moamer Gaddafi.

Notebook

RE tunis : Tunisia | libya : Libya | tuncty : Tunis | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

IPD Tunisia

PUB dpa Deutsche Presse-Agentur GmbH

AN Document DPAEN00020160322ec3m003s6

REUTERS

HD **Tunisia gets U.S planes, jeeps to guard Libyan border**

WC 350 words

PD 12 May 2016

ET 20:13

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

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LP

TUNIS (Reuters) - The United States gave jeeps, communications technology and small aircraft to **Tunisia** on Thursday to help protect the **border** with Libya, where Islamic State has gained ground and set up training camps, officials said.

The North African country was also expecting to receive a number of attack aircraft, Defense Minister Farhar Horchani said, though he did not give details on who would supply them.

TD

Tunisia has already built a 200-km (120-mile) **barrier** along the frontier to guard against militants since gunmen trained in Libya targeted tourists in attacks on a beach hotel and a Tunis museum last year.

Islamic State also launched a major assault on the **border** town of Ben Guerdane in March.

U.S. Assistant Secretary for Defense Amanda Dory said at a ceremony in Tunis that the jeeps, Maule light aircraft and a communication system between them would help Tunisian forces improve their monitoring of the **border**.

Horchani said the U.S. package was worth around $20 million. The U.S. ambassador said it consisted of 48 jeeps and 12 aircraft.

Western governments are giving **Tunisia** financial and military aid to support its young democracy, which they are holding up as a model for the region since its 2011 uprising ousted autocrat Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali.

A small group of Islamist militants tied to al Qaeda is fighting in remote mountains near the Algerian **border**. Other Tunisian militants have split to join Islamic State in Libya.

On Wednesday, four police were killed when a militant detonated his bomb belt during a raid on a house in Tataouine in the south. That and a raid in Tunis were part of an operation that stopped planned attacks on the capital, authorities said.

More than 4,000 Tunisians are thought to have left to fight for Islamic State and other militant groups in Iraq and Syria. Some are returning to join Islamic State in Libya, threatening more attacks on **Tunisia**.

(Writing by Patrick Markey; Editing by Andrew Heavens)

RF Released: 2016-5-12T18:13:44.000Z

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gdip : International Relations | gterr : Terrorism | gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National/Public Security | gcrim : Crime/Legal Action | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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IPD Business

IPC SERVICE:OUSWDM

PUB Thomson Reuters (Markets) LLC

AN Document LBA0000020160512ec5c01rfd

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HD **Trade resumes at main Tunisia-Libya crossing: officials**

WC 354 words

PD 14 May 2016

ET 20:45

SN Agence France Presse

SC AFPR

LA English

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LP

Border traffic between **Tunisia** and Libya resumed on Saturday after the two countries reached a deal to lift a trade blockade at the main frontier crossing following angry street protests.

The breakthrough came after an agreement was reached late Friday on customs duties for goods passing through Ras Jedir, local governor Tahar Matmati said.

TD

The accord provides for the establishment of a single customs duty for goods, Matmati said, adding that a joint monitoring committee was to oversee the deal.

Libyan **border** officials halted all freight traffic through the crossing at the end of April in an attempt to stop the smuggling of fuel, which is much cheaper across the **border**.

The closure sparked demonstrations on the Tunisian side and a strike on Wednesday in the impoverished town of Ben Guerdane, where the economy is heavily dependent upon trade with Libya, both legal and contraband.

On Monday, police used tear gas to disperse a protest by hundreds of demonstrators.

Ben Guerdane, one of the North African nation's poorest towns, was also hit by jihadist violence in March from across the **border** that killed seven civilians and 13 security personnel as well as 55 extremists.

On Saturday, Libya's LANA news agency cited an official in the Libyan town of Zwara as saying passenger traffic had been fully restored.

On the Tunisian side, lines of vehicles waited patiently under the hot sun to cross, as security forces looked on, an AFP correspondent said.

Tunisia has built a 200-kilometre (125-mile) **barrier** stretching about half the length of its **border** with Libya in an attempt to prevent militants from infiltrating.

Thousands of Tunisians have joined jihadist movements including the Islamic State group in Syria, Iraq and Libya.

Last year, **Tunisia** was hit by three IS attacks targeting both the country's lucrative tourism industry and the security forces, killing a total of 72 people.

This week, the authorities launched a sweep that they said resulted in the arrest of 37 people, some of whom were involved in attacks on the country.

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IPD Lead

PUB Agence France-Presse

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

SE World

HD **Islamic State Fighters in Libya Flee South as Stronghold Crumbles; Loss of Sirte is latest setback for extremist group, but officials say they could launch counteroffensive**

BY By Maria Abi-Habib and Hassan Morajea

WC 988 words

PD 14 August 2016

ET 20:17

SN The Wall Street Journal Online

SC WSJO

LA English

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LP

TUNIS, **Tunisia**—Islamic State fighters fleeing their Libyan stronghold of Sirte are seeking to cross the **border** into neighboring countries or possibly regroup in southern towns to fight again, Western and local officials say.

The extremists have headed to the long, porous **border** that Libya shares with Algeria and Niger. The countries bordering Libya have been on high alert, officials say, as part of efforts to block foreign fighters who may be looking to return home to other parts of Africa. But the vast desert expanse of the Sahel region offers a refuge to militant fighters that has long vexed U.S. counterterrorism forces.

TD

"These borders are so huge and they require a degree of professionalism that these countries do not have in order to monitor them," said a Western official who is monitoring the offensive in Sirte.

Although the offensive to clear Islamic State from the coastal region around Sirte began in May, recent U.S. airstrikes have played a pivotal role in the battle for the city, which is the hometown of late Libyan strongman Moammar Gadhafi. The U.S. airstrikes have helped an alliance of ragtag Libyan militias dislodge a cornerstone of Islamic State's caliphate and now surround the remaining fighters in a handful of neighborhoods.

Sirte was the only city Islamic State fully controlled in Libya and was considered the militants' beachhead in North Africa and just across a narrow strip of the Mediterranean Sea from Europe. But Sirte's loss is the latest setback for the extremist group, which is also under pressure in Syria and Iraq after losing key cities and seeing its resources and supply lines pinched.

U.S. officials once considered the Libyan branch as the extremist group's fallback option as it suffered territorial losses in Syria and Iraq. That option has crumbled as the offensive gained intensity.

Western officials assess that hundreds of fighters fled Sirte weeks ago before the city was fully surrounded, fleeing south. About half of Islamic State fighters in Sirte are considered foreign, according to Western officials monitoring the offensive. The majority are Tunisian but include an array of sub-Saharan nationalities, notably Sudanese and Nigeriens, these officials say.

A Tunisian military officer said his country's air force has been on high alert for the possibility of these fighters fleeing back home. That has involved increasing overhead surveillance flights, with the support of the U.S. military, to monitor any cross-**border** movements by the militants in Libya.

Libya's neighbors are adopting other methods to slow the flow of extremists back home. **Tunisia** last year began building a **wall** and water trenches along its Libyan **border**. Meanwhile, Algeria is reportedly building a **fence** to stanch the flow of militants and their supplies, in addition to beefing up **border** security.

A Libyan military intelligence officer at the operations room in Misrata, a neighboring coastal city whose militia is leading the battle, said there was little that local forces could do to prevent the exodus as the offensive began.

"There was almost 100 miles between us and Islamic State [in Sirte]," said the officer who asked not to be named in line with the protocol of the operation room, which functions as a nerve center orchestrating the battle for Sirte. "All that space was open desert for them to escape."

Militants who aren't seeking to flee across borders may also exploit Libya's insecurity and longstanding tribal rivalries by taking refuge in the country's southern towns, where locals oppose the government in Tripoli and the powerful militia of Misrata city.

The extremist fighters also have a robust presence in the east, in Derna and Benghazi, the country's second-largest city. Those pockets raise the possibility that the militants will regroup to launch counteroffensives, Western officials in Tunis said.

Of particular concern is the small city of Bani Walid, which sits at a southern crossroads connecting Tripoli to Misrata. The conditions that gave rise to Islamic State in Sirte are ripe in Bani Walid, whose Warfalla tribe is spread between the two cities and have complained of disenfranchisement by the government in Tripoli and Misrata's powerful militia. But Sirte residents also experienced the militants harsh punishment for violations of Islamic edicts, which involved frequent beheadings.

"In Sirte they told us ‘the Islamic State fighters are our sons' and asked that we not harm them," said the Misratan military intelligence official. "Bani Walid will say the same, but when they start chopping off their heads, they will come to us begging for help."

Islamic State announced the formation of its Libyan branch in early 2014, taking advantage of the country's postrevolution civil war to establish a foothold in the country. Before the current offensive, U.S. officials considered Islamic State's Libyan operations to be the extremist group's most powerful franchise outside of its command in Syria and Iraq.

Despite the recent setback for Islamic State, Libya's political situation isn't looking much better than it did in 2014. Two governments claim authority, one in Tripoli that is backed by the United Nations and an opposing government in the east, which has drawn on support from regional powers including Egypt and the U.A.E.

In recent weeks, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry has called on all governments to rally their support to shore up the government in Tripoli.

Write to Maria Abi-Habib at maria.habib@wsj.com

Earlier

* Libyan Forces Take Over Islamic State Headquarters in Sirte (Aug. 10)

* Barack Obama Says Islamic State Is Losing Ground Militarily (Aug. 4)

* Libya, U.S. Face Entrenched Islamic State (Aug. 2)

* Libyan Forces Advance in Islamic State-Held City (July 25)

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

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IPD ALGERIA

IPC N/CRM

PUB Dow Jones & Company, Inc.

AN Document WSJO000020160814ec8e002bd

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HD **Tunisia extends state of emergency, citing extremist threat**

WC 142 words

PD 16 February 2017

ET 17:50

SN Associated Press Newswires

SC APRS

LA English

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LP

PARIS (AP) — Tunisian authorities have extended a state of emergency in place since 2015, citing a persistent threat of extremist violence from neighboring Libya and elsewhere.

The Tunisian president's office announced the 3-month extension in a statement Thursday. Defense Minister Farhat Horchani said this week that despite frequent government operations to dismantle extremist cells, "as long as Libya doesn't have a government that can control the situation, the threat exists."

TD

Tunisia has built a sand **wall** along half the desert **border** with Libya, and received six U.S. combat helicopters this month aimed at helping the North African country fight terrorism.

Tunisia was hit by a string of extremist attacks targeting tourists and the presidential guard in 2015, and an unusually high number of Tunisians have joined the Islamic State group.

NS gcns : National/Public Security | gdef : Armed Forces | gpol : Domestic Politics | gterr : Terrorism | gcat : Political/General News | gcrim : Crime/Legal Action | gpir : Politics/International Relations | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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PUB The Associated Press

AN Document APRS000020170216ed2g00dav

الشرق الأوسط
ASHARQ AL-AWSAT

HD **Tunisia Arrests Smugglers on Libyan Border**

WC 213 words

PD 18 July 2017

SN Asharq Al-Awsat (English Edition)

SC ASHAL

LA English

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LP

Tunisia – Tunisian Security Forces apprehended on Monday 11 smugglers and confiscated dozens of vehicles after it engaged in clashes with the suspects south of the country.

On dawn of Monday, a Tunisian military patrol exchanged fire with a group of vehicles at the **border** buffer zone with Libya, according to the Tunisian Ministry of Defense.

TD

The patrol arrested 11 Tunisians, while the rest fled into Libyan territory. Security forces also seized 35 Tunisian smuggling trucks, in addition to a Libyan fuel tanker, which crossed the Tunisian-Libyan **border**.

The ministry had previously warned it will respond to any weapons fired at its troops during any smuggling and illegal crossings operations into the country.

It reiterated that military units are ordered to act within their means and as authorized by law against any target that does not comply with orders to stop.

Tunisia has completed a 200-km **barrier** along its frontier with Libya to try to keep out militants and put an end to the smuggling operations. Troops have raised an earth **wall** and dug trenches 2 km from the Libyan **border**.

Since 2011, the country had been under a delicate economic situation amid security risks due to the war on terrorism and drop in tourism revenues.

NS gvio : Military Action | gtraff : Trafficking/Smuggling | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National/Public Security | gcrim : Crime/Legal Action | grisk : Risk News

RE tunis : Tunisia | libya : Libya | meastz : Middle East | africaz : Africa | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa

IPD Middle East

PUB Saudi Research and Marketing

AN Document ASHAL00020170718ed7i0008d

BBC MONITORING

HD **Tunisian patrol attacked by smugglers near Libya border**

WC 213 words

PD 5 April 2018

ET 16:31

SN BBC Monitoring Middle East

SC BBCMEP

LA English

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LP

By BBC Monitoring

Tunisia's Ministry of Defence has said that a military patrol deployed in a buffer zone in the southern Tataouine province on the **border** with Libya came under attack from gunmen who were securing smuggling activities in the area, according to media reports on 5 April.

TD

The ministry said in a statement that the patrol operating in the buffer zone in Larzit in Tataouine was fired at on the night of 4 April by gunmen who were in two four-wheel drive vehicles, the official news agency TAP reported on its website.

The gunmen were securing activities of Libyan and Tunisian smugglers, TAP quoted the statement as saying.

The website of state-run Shems FM radio reported that recently-installed electronic monitors detected a water tanker, eight lorries carrying smuggled fuel and the two vehicles which were all coming from Libya in the direction of the sand **wall** in the buffer zone.

The gunmen shot at the patrol which returned the fire, setting the tanker and lorries ablaze, according to the statement.

It also said that four Tunisian smugglers were arrested while the others fled in the two vehicles towards Libyan territory.

Source: BBC Monitoring in Arabic 1227 gmt 5 Apr 18

NS gcrim : Crime/Legal Action | gterr : Terrorism | gtraff : Trafficking/Smuggling | gassa : Assault | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National/Public Security | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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PUB The British Broadcasting Corporation

AN Document BBCMEP0020180405ee45002mh

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HD **Repot: Syrian al-Qaeda planning car bombings in Turkey**

WC 307 words

PD 25 October 2013

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LP

İSTANBUL (CİHAN)- **Turkey**'s Gendarmerie General Command, the military police responsible for security in rural areas, has reportedly notified the country's Interior Ministry about preparation by al-Qaeda-affiliate fighters in Syria to stage car bomb attacks in **Turkey**.Turkish daily Milliyet reported on Friday that the gendarmerie sent a letter to the intelligence department of the Interior Ministry before the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha notifying them about 10 car bombs that are being prepared to be detonated across **Turkey**.A secret cable the gendarmerie sent to the police said the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is planning terrorist attacks in **Turkey** and has prepared 10 cars with fake Turkish plates and loaded with bombs to be detonated in **Turkey**. The terrorists were planning to cut the wired **border fence** with **Turkey** to bring in the cars.

TD

The cable said the final decision as to whether or not to carry out the terrorist attacks would have been given based on **Turkey**'s position during the Friends of Syria meeting in London last week.The letter explained that the ISIS plan would have been called off if **Turkey** had considered the terrorist group among the legitimate moderate opposition. Milliyet said Turkish authorities issued warnings to all police and gendarmerie forces in all cities across the country.**Turkey**, which has been a staunch supporter of the Syrian opposition fighting to topple President Bashar al-Assad, is accused of providing logistical support to two al-Qaeda-linked groups -- the al-Nusra Front and ISIS.Ankara has said several times that its stance towards the developments in Syria is clear and that it will not take part in the ongoing fighting, denying claims that it supports radical Islamist groups operating in Syria. (Cihan/Today's Zaman) CİHAN

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant | aqeda : Al-Qaeda

NS gterr : Acts of Terror | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : FC&E Executive News Filter

RE syria : Syria | turk : Turkey | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

PUB Cihan News Agency

AN Document CINEWA0020131025e9ap0005m

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

SE NEWS

HD **Emboldened by victory over jihadis, Syrian Kurds push toward autonomy**

BY Alexander Christie-Miller

CR Alexander Christie-Miller Correspondent

WC 1,438 words

PD 13 November 2013

SN The Christian Science Monitor

SC CHSM

PG n/a

LA English

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LP

Emboldened by a string of victories over powerful Al Qaeda affiliates fighting in Syria, Kurds there have taken a major step toward autonomy.

On Tuesday, Kurdish groups announced the formation of an interim autonomous government in Syria's Kurdish region, with elections to follow. The announcement comes on the heels of battle successes against Jabhat al-Nusra and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS), among the most powerful of the myriad homegrown and foreign forces fighting the Assad regime.

TD

Since the latest fighting between the Syrian Kurds and Al Qaeda affiliates broke out in July, the dominant Kurdish organization, the Democratic Union Party (PYD), has used its battle successes to burnish its image among Kurds and consolidate its hold over the region.

In October the PYD's armed wing drove ISIS from the strategic Iraqi **border** crossing of Yaroubiya, which analysts say has hampered the jihadis' access to its support network in Iraq and handed the Kurds a vital **border** crossing.

In recent days it has also made advances in the oil-rich Hasakah Province, and consolidated its hold on Ras al-Ayn, **Turkey**, following several months of intense fighting against Jabhat al-Nusra.

Why has it enjoyed this apparent success against some of the world's most notoriously ruthless terrorist groups, which have come to dominate the ranks of the opposition?

The PYD commanders are drawn heavily from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The separatist group - which is listed as a terrorist group by the US and European Union - that has waged a three-decade insurgency against **Turkey**, according to Wladimir van Wilgenburg, a Kurdish affairs analyst affiliated with the Washington-based Jamestown Foundation.

As a result, unlike most of Syria's homegrown rebel forces, the PYD can draw from a long-established command structure and 30 years of combat experience.

Most of the PYD's victories have been in Kurdish-majority areas, or places where it has otherwise secured the allegiance of local populations. In Yaroubiya, ISIS had earned the enmity of the town's population by ejecting the militia of a local clan, according to Mr. van Wilgenburg.

"They were angry because of this, and when the [PYD's forces] came they stayed neutral. They were able to take it over because [ISIS] didn't have local support," he says.

The conflict epitomizes the growing complexity of Syria's civil war. Although the fight is a sideshow to the central aim of Syria's rebels - the overthrow of the Assad regime - it has the potential to lay the foundations for an autonomous Kurdish state like that in neighboring northern Iraq, perhaps even redrawing the borders of the Middle East.

Murky alliancesWhile ISIS, the more radical of the two Al Qaeda affiliates, aims to create an Islamic caliphate straddling Iraq and Syria, the PYD professes neutrality, only fighting groups that threaten its sphere of control.

"We are facing a big campaign by these fundamentalist groups ... [but] have proved we are able to resist and defend the people," Redur Xelil, a military spokesman for the group, told The Christian Science Monitor, speaking by phone from Syria.

But PYD's critics say it is allied with Assad. Syrians who traveled in the region recently told the Monitor that regime agents and soldiers maintain a visible presence in PYD areas.

The Kurds, who number about 30 million in the four countries between which they are divided - Iran, Iraq, Syria, and **Turkey** - have long harbored dreams of self-rule.

In Syria, where they make up around 10 percent of the population, many were stripped of citizenship rights in 1962, effectively banning them from owning property or marrying. An anti-regime Kurdish uprising was brutally suppressed in 2004. However, the Assad regime is believed to have longstanding links with the PYD's close Turkish affiliate, the PKK, which it supported during the 1990s in its insurgency in neighboring **Turkey**.

The PYD's critics say it owes its current dominance of the Kurdish region to the regime, which effectively handed control to it when it abandoned the area early last year to concentrate on the rebel insurgency elsewhere in the country.

Since then, PYD forces have clashed sporadically with the regime, but Assad's Air Force has left the areas they control untouched.

Analysts say that successfully facing off against Al Qaeda has allowed the PYD to strengthen its support among Syria's Kurds and to sideline other Kurdish groups by portraying itself as the Kurds' sole champion against a ruthless and antidemocratic enemy.

"We consider that [the jihadis] are fighting the Kurdish people because they are against their democratic aspirations," said Salih Muslim, the PYD's leader, in a telephone interview."We are the first line of democracy against [them]."

Extremists fighting extremists?The reality may be more complex. Opponents of the PYD, many of them Kurds as well, accuse it of enforcing a ruthless rule, imprisoning and torturing political opponents.

Many Kurds, frustrated at the PYD's perceived proximity to the Assad regime, have aligned themselves more openly with the Western- backed Free Syrian Army (FSA) rebels.

In July, the United States condemned the PYD for the brutal suppression of anti-Assad protests in the town of Amuda, during which it allegedly killed six people and detained 90.

"I regard them as extremist armed group that works for its own interest and the interest of the Syrian regime," says Bassam Hajji Mostafa, a Kurdish rebel commander affiliated with the FSA.

He and other critics characterize its fight against the Al Qaeda affiliates as a pragmatic battle over resources and strategic towns. The key flashpoints have been **border** crossings and oil fields.

"They're not fighting for the interests of Kurds at all. As a matter of fact, they're assaulting all the Kurdish political components," says Mustafa, adding that his own rebel brigade with anyone fighting under the FSA banner, leading to clashes against both the jihadis, the PYD, and the regime.

The PYD's perceived closeness to the Assad regime likely explains why its increasingly vocal overtures to the West have gone unanswered.

Last month, Mr. Muslim, the PYD leader, was refused a visa to visit the United States for a Kurdish conference at which he was to be a star speaker. He has had mixed success in Ankara, which he visited twice in July and August this year.

Turkey, fearful of the PYD's links to its own Kurdish separatist movement, is constructing a **wall** along its **border** to stymie aid to the group.

Perpetual underdogsFor some Syrian Kurds, the PYD is the lesser of two evils, and that is enough to earn their reluctant backing, says Hefiz Abdulrahman, a Syrian Kurdish human rights activist based in **Turkey**.

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"[ISIS] and Nusra are dangerous for Syria, and the fact that the PYD are fighting them has given the PYD legitimacy among the Kurdish public," he says.

While Abdulrahman himself is a staunch opponent of the organization, he acknowledges that it "has done a good job in preserving the integrity of the Kurdish area and protecting it from jihadis."

A steady flow of "martyrs" and military gains since fighting with the Al Qaeda groups intensified have also bolstered support for PYD, according to van Wilgenburg.

"A lot of people have friends and family fighting for the PYD and if they have martyrs in their circle of family or friends, respect grows for them," he said. "If they were not fighting al Qaeda they would have more problems."

In fact, deaths of Kurds fighting in Syria have helped fuel an old and powerful narrative in which the long-suffering minority are perpetual underdogs fighting for their very survival.

Naif Dundar's father, brother, and uncle all died fighting the Turkish state in the name of Kurdish separatism. Last month, his son Ferit became the family's latest martyr, killed in fighting in northeast Syria.

"We Kurds don't care what country we're in. We are together and we support each other wherever we are," said Mr. Dundar as he impassively greeted a stream of mourners at his son's funeral in the Turkish **border** town of Nusaybin, from which Ferit departed this summer to fight in Syria.

"We have to be strong at every moment," he said. "They are trying to exterminate us, if we are not always awake and alert they will destroy us."

Syrian Kurds have triumphed in battle over powerful rebel Al Qaeda affiliates. This week, they announced an autonomous government in Syria's Kurdish region.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gislam : Islam | gcat : Political/General News | gcom : Society/Community/Work | grel : Religion

RE kurd : Kurdistan | syria : Syria | iraq : Iraq | turk : Turkey | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD OTHER NEWS

PUB Christian Science Monitor

AN Document CHSM000020131114e9bd00003

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HD **Smuggler guides Syrians across perilous frontier**

BY Joseph KRAUSS

WC 717 words

PD 17 January 2014

ET 13:01

SN Agence France Presse

SC AFPR

LA English

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LP

For a modest fee Ibrahim leads Syrians across the Turkish **border**, one of many services his organisation, the Al-Qaeda affiliated Al-Nusra Front, provides to those in need.

On a recent day he led a line of taxis up a muddy road through olive groves toward **Turkey**'s **border** with Syria, where dozens of Syrians clutching overstuffed suitcases and burlap sacks waited on the other side to get across.

TD

Thousands have fled following an outbreak of clashes pitting Islamist and moderate rebels against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), a feared Al-Qaeda affiliate with roots in the Iraq war.

The fighting has claimed an estimated 1,100 lives, and comes as the rebels are still battling forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad.

Ibrahim, who asked that his last name not be used, belongs to Al-Nusra Front, which is also affiliated with Al-Qaeda but has pursued a very different strategy in Syria, seeking to build popular support by providing aid and other services.

"We are civilised," he says. "We don't have this archaic mentality."

He charges refugees about $15 to cross, less for those of more limited means.

"I am here to protect people from injustice and help them however I can," says Ibrahim, a soft-spoken man with a close-cropped beard.

"If people don't have a way to get to **Turkey**, are we supposed to leave them here to die?"

The Turkish government has an open-door policy towards the refugees, but those who have no passports must cross illegally, and in recent weeks many of the official checkpoints on the Syrian side have seen fierce clashes.

Since the fighting erupted with ISIL thousands have crossed every day, fleeing an increasingly brutal war in which the unfinished struggle to overthrow President Bashar al-Assad is just one of many fronts.

At an official crossing several kilometres (miles) to the east, Abu Omar walked across with his wife and five children.

Rebels from the Islamic Front and ISIL were battling for control of Jarabulus, the Syrian town on the other side of the **border**, and that a huge car bomb had exploded the day before, killing several people.

"It's very, very bad inside," he says.

In recent months ISIL militants, including jihadists from Iraq, Egypt and Tunisia, had banned smoking and made prayers compulsory, says Abu Omar.

And three months ago ISIL shot dead two men in a public execution.

"They were accused of stealing," Abu Omar's adolescent son chimes in.

Several kilometres to the west, vans pull over on a highway looking out across a scenic valley, the Syrian Kurdish village of Afrin visible in the distance.

A group of refugees is gathered at the **border fence** down in the bottom of a valley, where they have been stopped by Turkish soldiers, who will likely allow them to pass.

ISIL has laid siege to Afrin for days and residents are running low on food and fuel.

Abdelrahman left a week ago to seek work in Istanbul and has returned to retrieve his wife and children, hoping they will soon make their way up the hillside on the Turkish side of the **border**.

"I have a law degree from the university. Have you ever seen a lawyer dressed like this?" he says, gesturing to his dusty clothes and unkempt beard.

Three years into an uprising that was supposed to restore dignity to Syrians after decades of dictatorship, more than two million have fled the country and millions more have been driven into poverty.

And three years after protesters broke through a police state's **wall** of fear, Abdelrahman, like dozens of Syrians interviewed in **Turkey**, asks his full name not be printed for fear of retribution.

"I know a doctor in Syria who is selling diesel on the side of the road," he says. "I know a fellow lawyer who is selling vegetables. No one has any dignity."

When his wife and children arrive he will take them to Istanbul and seek work as a day labourer.

"I think about my children every night and I cry," he says. "We've all become beggars, no matter where we go."

jk/dv

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant | nusrah : Al-Nusrah Front

NS gpov : Poverty | gcat : Political/General News | gcom : Society/Community | gsoc : Social Issues

RE turk : Turkey | syria : Syria | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Insight

PUB Agence France-Presse

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HD **Troops fire warning shots to disperse war-weary Syrians at border**

WC 317 words

PD 20 February 2014

SN Cihan News Agency (CNA)

SC CINEWA

LA English

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LP

İSTANBUL (CİHAN)- Troops in the Turkish-Syrian **border** town of Akçakale in Şanlıurfa province fired warning shots on Wednesday evening to disperse a crowd of Syrians who were trying to enter **Turkey** after fleeing heavy clashes in Syria's Raqqa province.

According to news agency reports, after fierce fighting broke out between Syrian regime forces and opposition fighters in rural areas of Raqqa -- controlled by the radical Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) -- a large number of Syrians fled to the Akçakale **border** crossing, which was closed for security reasons. War-weary Syrians gathered by a barbed-wire **fence** along the **border** with Şanlıurfa and attempted to cross into **Turkey** by scaling the **fence** and walls.

TD

Troops in the area reportedly did not permit the group of 150-200 Syrians to cross over and instead fired into the air to disperse those who had gathered on the Syrian side of the **border**. Tensions lingered and the Turkish military sent armored vehicles and reinforcements to the area.

Meanwhile, the Free Syrian Army (FSA) is in the process of sending 10,000 Syrians who have allegedly been looting Turkish trucks and aid vehicles around the Bab al-Hawa crossing, just across from Cilvegözü **border** gate in the southern province of Hatay, to a camp in the town of Harf Salkin in Latakia, Syria. The transfer is expected to be completed by Friday, which is when the Cilvegözü **border** gate, which has been closed to both vehicular and pedestrian crossings for more than a week for security reasons, is supposed to open again.

The closure of the gate has led to the formation of a long line of trucks at the crossing -- a line that has reached Hatay's Reyhanlı district, which is 30 kilometers from the gate -- according to media outlets.

(Cihan/Today's Zaman) CİHAN

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gdip : International Relations | gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News

RE syria : Syria | turk : Turkey | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Politics

PUB Cihan News Agency

AN Document CINEWA0020140220ea2k000dz

THE MAJALLA
The Leading Arab Magazine Est. 1980

HD **Yesterday's Enemies, Tomorrow's Friends?**

BY Soner Cagaptay
WC 2,359 words
PD 9 July 2014
SN The Majallah
SC MAJAL
LA English
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LP

Kurdish Peshmerga forces seize control of Mosul's Rabia district after Iraqi army forces abandoned the city to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, June 14, 2014. (Emrah Yorulmaz/Anadolu Agency/Getty Images)

When I visited Erbil, the capital of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in 2007, my host, a leading Kurdish official, asked me when **Turkey** was going to invade the KRG. Today, the world has seen a 180-degree shift, and the question now is if the KRG will cut ties with Baghdad and seek to shelter under a Turkish umbrella, and if the Syrian Kurds could follow suit. The recent developments in Iraq and Syria have transformed those countries' politics irrevocably, and with that, the relationship between **Turkey** and Kurds throughout the region.

TD

Iraq today eerily resembles Syria, a country torn apart by civil war, sectarian conflict and, more importantly, jihadist-led insurgency. The Kurds in northern Iraq and Syria are pivoting towards their erstwhile enemy, **Turkey**, to ensure the virtual independence that they have been able to seize.

A new era

A new Fertile Crescent is in the offing: the Iraqi and Syrian borders may remain formally intact, but **Turkey** will become the patron of Iraq and Syria's Kurdish enclaves. **Turkey** has thus far been indifferent to the jihadist groups in Syria and Iraq. However, following the spread of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria's (ISIS) control from Syria into Iraq and the group's attack on its consulate in Mosul, Ankara has come to a painful conclusion that it has a jihadist problem on its doorstep. For the Turkish government, having the Kurds as a buffer between the jihadists and their territory could be the best remedy to address this problem. **Turkey** is prepared to take both the KRG and the Syrian Kurds, who have declared three autonomous regions in that country, under its wing in an effort to form a cordon sanitaire against ISIS.

ISIS is, perhaps, the closest thing to an existential threat **Turkey** has faced in decades. ISIS differs from Al-Qaeda due to its territorial ambitions. ISIS and Al-Qaeda share ideologies, but their strategies are different. Al-Qaeda is a fleeting international organization with no clear goal of establishing a permanent territorial base, an intentional measure which gives the group a mercury-like ability to avoid capture. ISIS, on the other hand, is similar to the Taliban, a territorially based organization. **Turkey**'s worst nightmare is a state similar to 1990s Taliban-led Afghanistan that will harbor and foster terrorist movements a stone's throw away from the country's largest cities.

For **Turkey**, the ISIS threat raises concerns of a potential "Talibanistan" to its south. This trumps all other treats—nobody wants to **border** a Taliban-style state. As a result, Ankara views the Kurds in northern Syria and Iraq as an indispensable buffer against ISIS.

Turkey will, accordingly, support Iraqi Kurdistan which is already closely integrated into the Turkish economy. In 2007, the Kurds pivoted towards Ankara in order to counter a newly assertive Baghdad. **Turkey** reciprocated, sending merchants, airlines, and consumer goods into Iraqi Kurdistan. The Kurds now opt to sell their oil through **Turkey**, bypassing Baghdad to the benefit of Ankara.

It will be no surprise to see further economic rapprochement, including potential measures such as new oil deals, a free trade agreement, visa-free travel, and de facto adoption of the Turkish Lira by the KRG in the near future. **Turkey** is also likely to back the KRG militarily and politically.

Turkey is so comfortable with the KRG that my sources in Ankara say that Turkish officials encouraged the KRG to take control of Kirkuk on June 12. For many years, Ankara had objected to the prospect of the Kurds' annexation of Kirkuk, an oil-rich and multi-ethnic city contested between Arabs, Kurds, and Turkmens (the Turks' ethnic kin). The Turkish fear was that with Kirkuk's oil under its control, the KRG could march to autonomy, a step that could reignite nationalist ambitions and among Kurds in southeastern **Turkey**.

Now, the threat of ISIS has changed the Turkish stance on Kirkuk: when the KRG's Peshmerga moved in to occupy Kirkuk, Ankara did not utter a word. In fact, it advised the Kurds to take the city to prevent it from falling into the hands of ISIS. **Turkey** feels so threatened by ISIS and is simultaneously so comfortable with the KRG that it even encouraged the Kurds to take Mosul. The KRG wisely did not follow this advice due to the fact that, unlike Kirkuk, Mosul is a predominantly Arab city and a KRG takeover of that town would have almost certainly made the Kurds occupiers of a hostile population.

With Kirkuk under its control, the KRG's increased oil riches will bind **Turkey** and Iraq's Kurds further together. **Turkey**'s decade-plus long economic growth is threatened by the country's huge current accounts deficit, two-thirds of which is due to energy imports. Cheap Kurdish oil has the potential to make **Turkey** energy independent, fueling its growth further.

Turkey shares interests with Kurds in Syria as well. The Kurdish troops in that country are the only force, Assad's regime included, that has been able to defeat ISIS on the battlefield. The Syrian Kurds may not have oil to offer to the Turks, but they do present Ankara with a degree of 'strategic depth' by keeping ISIS away from its doorstep.

The Syrian Kurds need **Turkey**, too. Currently, the Democratic Union Party (PYD), an outgrowth of the Turkish-Kurdish group, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), dominates the Syrian-Kurdish opposition. The PKK and PYD have similarly strong secular tendencies; both oppose ISIS and its uber-conservative, totalitarian ideology. The PYD-PKK controls three Kurdish exclaves in northern Syria, all of which are flanked by ISIS to the south and **Turkey** to the north. The Syrian Kurds depend on Turkish support as a lifeline for survival.

Having, at times, allowed the jihadists to cross freely into Syria, Ankara now realizes it must take a more measured approach towards ISIS, an organization that has the potential to do more than just bite the hand that once fed it. Once **Turkey** secures the release of dozens of its citizens held hostage by ISIS, Ankara will likely start combating ISIS with its regional allies, the Kurds, in earnest. This will cement Ankara's ties to the Syrian Kurds, and could eventually result in a relationship similar to that which currently exists between **Turkey** and the KRG.

The security logic driving Ankara's Kurdistan policy is simple: Together, the Iraqi and Syrian Kurds guard around 90 percent of **Turkey**'s 805-mile-long (1,296-kilometer-long) **border** with Iraq and Syria, providing a **wall** against ISIS infiltration.

The price of security

However, **Turkey** cannot become best friends with the region's Kurds without making peace with its own Kurdish population.

Enter the ongoing peace talks with the PKK. Ankara has granted the Kurds additional rights regarding their language, the official acknowledgement of which has long been seen as a threat to Turkish nationalism. The Turkish government now funds the use of the Kurdish language in different forums—from universities to city governments—in southeastern **Turkey** where the Kurds dominate demographically.

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has a personal stake in this as well, due to the upcoming August elections. In the recent March 30 nationwide local polls, his party received 43 percent of the vote and the support of the pro-PKK Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), who received 6.5 percent of the March vote, and so could clinch Erdoğan the presidency.

On June 26, Erdoğan declared a new "reform package" on the Kurdish issue that calls for official talks between Ankara and the PKK. If these negotiations are successful, Erdoğan has promised to provide amnesty for the thousands of PKK fighters. The Turkish leader will try to entertain the desires of Kurds living in **Turkey** while building even deeper ties with those living outside. Turkish domestic politics and international relations have therefore turned Ankara's one-time enemies into attractive partners.

Taking advantage of the collapse of central authority in Iraq and Syria, **Turkey** will also make advances into Iraq and Syria's Sunni areas. Left to their own devices without significant economic development, these regions will remain desolate and may become hotbeds of radicalism in a similar way to Afghanistan, which remains an incubator of the Taliban. In light of this, Washington will support this foray, just as it has supported the Turkish-Kurdish rapprochement.

In contrast, Ankara's attempts to woo the Sunni Arabs to its side may end up being a tall order. **Turkey** is losing the Sunni Arabs in Iraq and Syria even if it has hitherto acted as their patron. In Syria, **Turkey** has thrown its support behind the Sunni insurgency to oust the Assad regime. Initially, this development brought the Sunni Arabs under **Turkey**'s sphere of influence. Subsequently, Ankara's Syria policy morphed into Ankara's Sunni Arab policy.

In Iraq too, Ankara reached out to the Sunnis following a change in direction. During Iraq's parliamentary elections in 2010, **Turkey** supported Iyad Allawi's coalition, a pan-Iraq list of both Sunni and Shi'ite candidates. When Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki won and broke with Ankara to protest Turkish support to his opponents, **Turkey** subsequently pivoted to become the protector of that country's Sunni Arab community. To this end, Ankara utilized its existing reach into the Sunni community, a result of Ankara's opposition to the Iraq war in 2003 that had made Erdoğan popular among Sunnis. **Turkey** then went on to develop intimate political and economic ties with the Sunni Arabs in northern and western Iraq, becoming a benefactor and drawing the ire of Maliki, who was already upset due to Turkish rapprochement with the KRG.

Despite its initial successful foray into building links with Sunni Arab communities in Iraq and Syria, **Turkey** has recently lost some ground among both due to the backfiring of its permissive attitude towards **border**-crossing jihadists. ISIS has been spreading the message that **Turkey**'s societal values, as well as its ties with the United States and NATO, are anathema to Muslims. Although Ankara sees little chance of these arguments gaining traction, **Turkey**'s leaders will no longer ignore the growing ISIS presence in Syria and Iraq. The group has put muscle on its bones and now threatens foreign targets in the Fertile Crescent: the first of which being **Turkey**'s consulate in Mosul.

Ankara needs to come up with an effective strategy to combat ISIS influence among some Sunni Arabs. At the same time, it needs to use its key strength—its phenomenal economic growth—to economically penetrate the Sunni Arab areas of Iraq and Syria before ISIS takes of over both regions entirely. If **Turkey** plays its cards right, Sunni Arab urban centers in northern Syria and Iraq could become the forward stations of **Turkey**'s zone of influence.

In carrying out its Sunni Arab outreach, **Turkey** will have to strike a delicate balance between its dealings with the Kurds in both countries and not upsetting nationalist Sunni Arabs in Iraq and Syria. Too-intimate ties between Ankara and the Kurds have a potential pitfall: they could drive some Sunni Arabs towards an anti-Turkish and anti-Kurdish Arab identity and gravitate towards ISIS.

In this regard, the KRG has a problem as well. With Kirkuk under its belt, the KRG is now truly multiethnic—with Kurds, Arabs, Christians, Turkmens, and others. So far, the KRG has acted as "a state by the Kurds and for the Kurds," ignoring its small yet diverse ethnic communities. Now, the KRG has a real diversity problem, and it must find a way to transform itself from an ethnic movement with nationalist ambitions to a quasi-state that must accommodate more than just one group within its borders.

Turkey has a democracy challenge as well. Ankara must navigate contentious terrain in order to address Kurdish nationalist aspirations at home while serving as protector and thus fostering them in Iraq and Syria. Erdoğan will usher in greater emphasis on Kurdish self-rule and rights in **Turkey**. Kurdish support will prove helpful towards Erdoğan's presidential ambitions, and eventually benefit the AKP in 2015's parliamentary elections. The latter would open the path for constitutional amendments that could result in a presidential system in **Turkey** with Erdoğan at the helm.

Erdoğan is not known for his liberal tendencies, nor is he famous for his embrace of Kurdish nationalism. It is conceivable that after securing election victories in 2014 and 2015, "President Erdoğan" could go back on some his promises to the Kurds. For their own part, **Turkey**'s pro-PKK Kurds do not like Erdoğan much. Socialist and leftist in orientation, they abhor Erdoğan's strait-jacket social conservatism.

Any political deal between Erdoğan and the pro-PKK Kurds could also be undermined by factions on both sides. One risk, in this regard, is the hardline camp within the PKK that elevated many of its members to the group's leadership in a 2013 shuffle of the PKK's upper management. The ties between Ankara and the Turkish Kurds could be the soft, vulnerable underbelly of the broader Turkish-Kurdish rapprochement.

Even with these risks, a new Fertile Crescent has been born, with a de facto Turkish-Kurdish union, flanked by simmering civil wars and jihadist presence to the south. Rapprochement between **Turkey** and

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the Kurds may not lead to outright Kurdish independence, but it is almost certain that in the new Middle East the borders between the Kurds and Arabs will be more real than the borders between the Kurds and **Turkey**. A day may come when Kurds will need visas to go into Iraq and Syria and only ID cards to enter **Turkey**. The Turks and Kurds have become good friends in the Middle East and there is, probably, no going back.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

RE turk : Turkey | iraq : Iraq | kurd : Kurdistan | syria : Syria | baghd : Baghdad | kirku : Kirkuk | mosul : Mosul | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Features

PUB Saudi Research and Marketing

AN Document MAJAL00020140709ea790002t

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The Observer

SE Observer Home News Pages

HD **Front: US 'set to launch air strikes' on senior Isis terror chiefs in Syria: White House will 'take action' against threats Turkey under pressure to halt flow of jihadists**

BY by Toby Helm and Martin Chulov

WC 924 words

PD 24 August 2014

SN The Observer

SC OB

PG 1

LA English

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LP

The United States was yesterday said to be considering air strikes aimed at eliminating individual leaders of Islamic State as **Turkey** came under mounting pressure to stem the flow of jihadists across its **border** into Syria.

As Washington debated extending air strikes into Syria, senior British politicians urged Ankara to act to block recruits from the UK and other countries from entering Syria via **Turkey**, en route to joining Islamic State (formerly Isis). This weekend large numbers of Isis jihadists were trying to secure greater control of the **border** area, pushing northwards in armoured trucks looted from abandoned Iraqi military bases.

TD

Isis wants to establish dominance in the area to make it easier for potential recruits to gain safe passage and to allow the movement of vital supplies, including weapons and oil. The route has been used by most of the foreign fighters who have joined the cause, and is believed to have been taken by several hundred of those who have joined Isis from the UK.

US officials said yesterday that there was now a "new context" for confronting Isis - and cutting off its supply routes - following the beheading of US journalist James Foley. In a sign that Washington may widen the field of its air strikes, the White House said it was ready to "take action" against any threat to America in Iraq or Syria. US military officials confirmed last night it had carried out an air strike against Isis near the Mosul Dam to support Iraqi and Kurdish operations.

Deputy national security adviser Ben Rhodes said before the strike: "If we see plotting against Americans, if we see a threat to the US emanating from anywhere, we stand ready to take action against that threat. We have made it very clear time and again that if you come after Americans, we're going to come after you, wherever you are - and that's what's going to guide our planning in the days to come."

According to US military officials cited in the **Wall** Street Journal, the time needed to mount strikes at high-value targets, such as individual leaders, could be an hour, or "as much as a week". The official added: "If it's based on training camps, we could do that pretty soon." Similar briefings cited by the New York Times suggested officials were discussing the possibility of mounting unmanned drone strikes on Isis leaders, as has happened in Yemen, Somalia and Pakistan.

Islamic State declared itself a "caliphate" in late June and has since added large parts of northern Iraq to territory it already held in eastern Syria.

President Barack Obama authorised air raids in Iraq two weeks ago to help regional Kurdish and Iraqi forces fighting Isis in the country's north. If Washington widened its attacks to extremists in Syria, this would mark a turning point, ending its hands-off approach to the country's civil war.

EU countries have for weeks been putting pressure on **Turkey** to do more to seal its **border**. Because Ankara has wanted to oust President Bashar al-Assad from control in Syria, **Turkey** has kept its **border** open to jihadists who oppose him, including Isis fighters, and this has allowed the area to become a

safe haven over the past three years. While the Turks now say that Isis is no longer welcome, Ankara has not sent in troops in large numbers to patrol the **border**.

Last night, senior UK politicians called for greater pressure to be exerted on **Turkey** via the European Union and Nato - of which **Turkey** is a member. Former Liberal Democrat leader Sir Menzies Campbell said that **Turkey** had a "vital role to play in preventing the free passage of jihadists travelling to . . . join Islamic State".

Campbell, a member of the House of Commons intelligence and security committee, said there should be a "full-scale diplomatic initiative" to draw **Turkey** closer towards the EU, and moves to offer it a faster route towards membership in return for its full cooperation in the fight against Isis.

Shadow foreign secretary Douglas Alexander said: "People and arms continue to move across the Turkish **border** with Syria, and **Turkey**, a Nato ally, has a key role to play in developing a more effective regional response to Isis. The priority now must be for **Turkey** to offer guarantees to its partners and allies that it is taking the necessary steps to uphold its responsibilities to secure key **border** areas that represent a vital front in the struggle to contain, disrupt and defeat Isis."

Foreign secretary Philip Hammond has not explicitly ruled out supporting a policy of US air strikes but sources say there is no prospect of the UK taking part. Campbell said UK participation would need the approval of parliament, as well as UN backing.

Yesterday, the UN called for a concerted effort to end the siege of Amerli, a town 110 miles north of Baghdad which is encircled by Isis jihadists. The town is home to 18,000 Turkmen people who, as Shias, are directly targeted by supporters of Isis, who consider them apostates.

Downing Street said that David Cameron, who warned a week ago that Isis was an "exceptionally dangerous" movement which represented a generational threat, would remain on holiday in Cornwall until the middle of this week.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS clabdi : Labor Disputes | gpol : Domestic Politics | npag : Page-One Stories | c42 : Labor/Personnel | ccat : Corporate/Industrial News | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpin : C&E Industry News Filter

RE usa : United States | turk : Turkey | iraq : Iraq | syria : Syria | ankra : Ankara | uk : United Kingdom | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eecz : European Union Countries | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | namz : North America | wasiaz : Western Asia | weurz : Western Europe

IPC article-thisissplash.1

PUB Guardian Newspapers Limited

AN Document OB00000020140824ea8o0001f

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FT FINANCIAL TIMES

HD **Turkey's clampdown on Isis bearing fruit in border areas**

BY By Daniel Dombey in Reyhanli

WC 871 words

PD 3 September 2014

ET 19:15

SN Financial Times (FT.Com)

SC FTCOM

LA English

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LP

Turkey has tightened control of its **border** to cut the flow of funds and fighters to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (Isis), the jihadi group that has taken control of swaths of northern Syria and Iraq.

The moves have dramatically reduced the visibility of both smuggled goods and jihadi fighters in Turkish **border** regions and come as Ankara faces renewed pressure from its allies to step up measures against the militants. The group released a video on Tuesday showing the murder of Steven Sotloff, a US journalist, and threatened to kill a British citizen.

TD

Barack Obama, US president, and David Cameron, UK prime minister, are expected to discuss Isis with **Turkey**'s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan at this week's Nato summit in Wales. Chuck Hagel, US defence secretary, will then travel to **Turkey** for more talks.

In the past, **Turkey** has been accused of turning a blind eye to the movement of Isis and al-Qaeda-affiliated fighters across its borders, in part because of its eagerness to see the ousting of Bashar al-Assad, the Syrian president.

But Turkish officials say they have clamped down on the militants and are looking for their allies to do more - particularly in terms of forwarding information on suspected foreign fighters who plan to travel through **Turkey** to Syria.

Part of Ankara's effort has been aimed at reducing fuel smuggling from Syria. Turkish and foreign officials say some of the proceeds end up in the pockets of Isis, which controls oil wells in both Iraq and Syria. Officials say the total amount of diesel they intercepted increased by 300 per cent between 2011 and 2013.

The government's measures have not been popular, however. At the Reyhanli **border** gate into Syria a queue of hundreds of trucks laden with flour, concrete and food stretches back for miles. The drivers are refusing to cross the **border** in protest at new anti-smuggling measures that prevent them from filling up their tanks with cheaper Syrian diesel.

"They stopped diesel smuggling about two months ago because the money was going to Isis," says one driver, who remembers Syria as "heaven" because of the ease of stocking up on cheaper goods.

In the nearby Turkish village of Hacipasa, which sits in a valley just below the Syrian town of Azmarin, a small military guardpost checks passing cars for diesel. Locals here are also disgruntled.

"We are not using these any more," says an angry man, pointing to a pile of dozens of large blue canisters, intended to ferry diesel from Syria but now left in their plastic wrapping. "There is no trade left: they arrested 80-90 people from our village."

In the town of Reyhanli, some 5km from the Syrian **border**, Islamist fighters who last year thronged the streets are now largely absent.

In the bowels of a Reyhanli hotel, Hani, a fighter for the Liwa al-Haq group, says that **Turkey** is now less welcoming and that fewer fighters pass through.

"There were 10 of us in one room before, now there are just four," he says. Ten months ago, mattresses were neatly piled up on the sides of his sleeping quarters and the black flag of jihad hung on one **wall**; now the room is empty, dirty and largely bare.

But he insists Isis fighters still pass through Reyhanli. "They come to town for two or three days," he says. "They don't stay long . . . There are fewer fighters in Reyhanli now."

Turkish officials highlight their efforts to tighten control in the area. Efkan Ala, interior minister, initiated stronger measures against Isis in April - including more **border** checks and patrols.

Ankara has also stepped up screening at major airports to prevent foreign fighters from entering the country and has compiled a 6,000 person watchlist with input from foreign intelligence agencies.

But **Turkey** complains that it needs more co-operation from its partners. "Not all men with beards are Isis or al-Qaeda," says one official, highlighting the difficulty of distinguishing such combatants from other internationally backed fighters against the Syrian regime.

The official acknowledges that Isis previously operated safe houses in Hatay province, where Reyhanli is located. He adds that greater intelligence is essential - particularly from western European and north African countries where fighters originate: "This is also not just about patrols and barbed wire. You need to have the right intelligence and pick these guys up when you could . . . this has never been a 100 per cent protected **border**."

Ankara is constrained in its actions and statements against Isis by 49 Turkish hostages - including diplomats and special forces - taken by the group in a June assault on its consulate in the Iraqi city of Mosul.

"**Turkey** is under pressure to declare more visibly that it is working against Isis, but it has a dilemma because of the 49 hostages and the danger of other blowback," says a senior international diplomat. "The measures at the **border** could be a case of closing the stable door after the horse has bolted. In these kind of situations you need to get things right at the beginning."

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gtraff : Trafficking/Smuggling | gcat : Political/General News | gcrim : Crime/Courts

RE turk : Turkey | syria : Syria | ankra : Ankara | iraq : Iraq | uk : United Kingdom | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eecz : European Union Countries | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia | weurz : Western Europe

IPD Crimes

IPC GN

PUB The Financial Times Limited (AAIW/EIW)

AN Document FTCOM00020140903ea93003jw

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theguardian

SE Guardian Home Pages

HD **Islamic State: Extremists' rise: From border bootcamp to battle, Isis runs jihad with ruthless skill: Martin Chulov charts the journey of foreign recruits to join the terror group and the juggernaut advance of its battle-hardened leadership**

BY Martin Chulov

WC 819 words

PD 6 September 2014

SN The Guardian

SC GRDN

PG 9

LA English

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LP

The last leg of the journey to jihad starts on goat trails near the Turkish-Syria **border** and ends in one of many holes in a barbed wire **fence** stretching several hundred miles.

Just beyond, in some cases no more than several kilometres away, new recruits are received by extremist leaders waiting in boot camps in towns, villages and abandoned Syrian regime buildings.

TD

There the indoctrination begins. Most who make the journey to Syria are already committed to the hardline worldview. And after 30 days of Islamic study, weapons training and frugal living, they are locked in to a lifestyle that few ever rescind.

"It was tough and uncompromising," said one man who spent time in a camp within sight of the Turkish **border** town of Kilis. "The trainers were Saudis and Yemenis. The trainees were from everywhere. I saw two blue-eyed Frenchmen and a Belgian and many from north Africa."

It has been this way in northern Syria since mid-2012 when foreign fighters from around the world started to descend on the country, about 18 months into the civil war.

The jihadis' entry was at first low key, almost polite. They would share planes and buses with tourists travelling to southern **Turkey** and pay local smugglers to get them to rendezvous points that had been relayed by those who had made it safely inside.

The trails get busier after dark. From June 2012, up to 40 men and boys were crossing each night from the Turkish town of Reyhanli alone.

"They were standing outside my property like cattle," a Turkish smuggler near the Syrian **border** town of Atmeh, who says he helped jihadis cross for free, told the Guardian. "They would come every day for many months that year."

Within months, the extremists had organised into disciplined and structured cells, their growth enhanced by their benign approach to locals and their willingness, initially, to help Syrian rebel groups.

"We knew they were foxing, but what could we do?" said a leader of the town of al-Bab north-east of Aleppo, who was ousted along with his entire company of rebels earlier this year. From exile in **Turkey**, he added: "As the weeks continued they started to get more inflexible, more demanding, and then just ruthless. They gained power quicker than we thought."

In late April 2013, the Trojan horse act was realised, and what is now known as Islamic State (Isis) was born. The group had gathered such numbers and momentum that it was able to oust the local al-Qaida group.

Its rapid advance ever since has been abetted by a loose but effective military command structure, a logistics operation that depends heavily on co-opting locals for food and accommodation, and a

fierceness in battle that has been developed by years of conflict in Syria and Iraq and which, for newer recruits, is almost instantly contagious.

"The only thing like it in terms of spread and potency was the Nazi party in the late 30s," a senior western diplomat said recently. "We are now dealing with a juggernaut."

At the head of Isis is Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the self-declared caliph. Baghdadi sits atop a military council that sets strategy and manages resources from the eastern edge of Aleppo through to north-western and central Iraq.

His commanders are almost all Iraqi, and many are alumni of the two US prisons in Iraq, Camp Bucca and Camp

Cropper, which were closed in 2010. Beneath them are several dozen cadres who carry no rank, but have a vaunted reputation from their time on the battlefields of Iraq, both against US forces and Shia militias, and civilians.

These battle-hardened ideologues, according to one member of the organisation, give Isis a resilience that trickles down to the new foreign recruits, many of whom had not used a weapon before arriving in Syria.

"The intensity of their operations is extreme," the former Isis member said. "Sometimes they are fighting for weeks on end. They were boys then, but they are not now."

He said the intensity of the fighting had reduced the need for training camps. Some newcomers were thrown straight into battle, learning on the move.

Others were drafted into sourcing supplies, or working at the business end of Isis, smuggling oil and antiquities and what is left of Syria's state-owned enterprises.

"They don't have a central system for food or accommodation," he said. "They are all handled locally. But all ammunition requests are dealt with centrally.

"The leadership is central to most things. They have a very tight grip on Isis. No one is prepared to defy them."

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

RE syria : Syria | turk : Turkey | iraq : Iraq | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPC article-mcinsideisis.1

PUB Guardian Newspapers Limited

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BBC MONITORING

HD **Turkish reporter views Iraqi Kurds' fight against Islamic State**

WC 1,351 words

PD 11 September 2014

ET 10:15

SN BBC Monitoring European

SC BBCEUP

LA English

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LP

Text of report by Turkish newspaper Milliyet website on 9 September

[Report by Asli Aydintasbas: "We Fight in the Mountains, But Had Difficulties in the Desert"]

TD

I am visiting the **border**, the Makhmur front. When I ask Sirwan Barzani, the commander of the front, "why were the Peshmergas [Iraqi Kurdish military forces] unable to fight against ISIL [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant]?", he says: "Those facing us had American weapons. In addition, we know how to fight in the mountains. We had great difficulty on the desert. Tanks are needed here. They have them; we don't."

Sirwan Barzani opens a map and shows on it the areas where ISIL dominates, and where the fighting is continuing. Barzani describes the savagery displayed by ISIL as "something not seen before."

When I saw the sign pointing to Mosul on the highway, a slight shudder went over me. We were just below Mosul, at the edge of ISIL's area.

Even though I was surrounded by armed Peshmergas on every side, it was disturbing to realize that I was only a few kilometres distant from the head-cutting organization that is the number one organization on which the entire world is focusing.

I had spent a few days in Arbil and then set out towards the Makhmur front. We passed through completely empty villages and arid towns whose inhabitants had fled in fear. The Makhmur plain is considered the exterior **barrier** to Arbil. After ISIL seized it in early August, it approached to within 22 kilometres from Arbil, and came into a position of threatening the city.

Arbil, which until just a few months ago had aimed at becoming another Dubai, had suddenly found itself confronting militias that cut people's heads off. On the road leading to Makhmur, my first stop was the headquarters of the Makhmur front commander, Sirwan Barzani. The young commander, in addition to being the nephew of [presumably Kurdistan Regional President Mas'ud] Barzani, had fought in the opposite diection, towards ISIL, at a time when the Peshmergas had begun to flee from ISIL; he had retaken Makhmur with the help of US bombardment.

An atmosphere of total mobilization prevailed at the headquarters. These most recent attacks have brought Peshmergas of the new generation, in their fresh new uniforms, together with the old guard who also jumped up and went to the front. With smartphones in their hands, everyone, young and old, was sharing stories (and images) of savagery.

'Only 22 Kilometres From Silopi'

Sirwan Barzani opened up the maps and began to explain:

"We are not fighting only for ourselves. We are here for everyone. Are you aware that ISIL had, at one point, gotten to within 22 kilometres from Silopi? We woke up one day and they were practically next-door to us. And to top it off, they have the most modern American weapons. Even if you were to bring the strongest army in the world, it would have a difficult time against an organization of this sort."

Well, then, why did the famous Peshmergas, about whom we had heard praise for so many years, fall flat in their own region?

"For one thing, ISIL conducted very effective psychological warfare. Not only cutting off heads; they seized women and children in Mosul and Sinjar. They implement a senseless savagery. This had an impact. People wanted to flee the front and save their families."

He then adds, without any complex: "We have not fought since 1992. Moreover, we are accustomed to fighting in the mountains; now we are fighting in the desert for the first time. In the mountains we are safe. But we had difficulties in the desert. Tanks are needed here. We don't have them. But they have the most modern American weapons, tanks, and Humvees."

Well, then, just who is this ISIL? According to the information Barzani has, the core cadre is from Afghanistan and Chechnya. Then there are people left over from the army of [former Iraqi President] Saddam [Husayn], former Republican Guards, and people joining from the region.

'They Even Kidnap Children'

For the Peshmergas, who have lived with their weapons for years, the savagery of ISIL is of a nature as to boggle the mind: "Why? Why? Why do they kill so many people? Why did they kidnap Yazidi and Christian children in Mosul? (92 children are still being held in Mosul.) What are they going to do with a seven-year-old child? We witnessed war for years, but we never saw such savagery. They had put booby traps into every house we entered. Even on the doors of refrigerators, and on the Koran. We are unable to make any sense of it. I do not even want to call them animals, because animals harm no one."

Barzani, just like all the Northern Iraqi officials I spoke with, complains that **Turkey** is not being of sufficient support to them against ISIL. I ask what his military expectation is. Is ISIL going to stay in Mosul? "If NATO does not send a land force, ISIL will remain in these parts. At the moment, they already control 13 per cent of Iraq. They have refineries, cities, and millions of dollars. We have to push them back. But only step by step..."

Retired Peshmergas Called Up!

We tour the **border** posts in the Makhmur region one by one. In this dramatic scene, the only thing that brings a smile to my face in the entire day is the elderly Peshmergas at the front. The old hands, following the ISIL attack, turned up from the most out-of-the-way corners of Northern Iraq, strapped on their bandoliers, and rushed off to the front. Included among them are old commanders in their 70s, and grandfathers with big bellies who rushed straight from their fields. We cannot refuse the tea offered to us at the posts we visit. I look about me, and there are gray-haired Peshmergas all around me; the young ones are standing, listening with respect to their elders. I ask a former commander, who has the position of the leader of the group: "What do you do with the ISIL members you capture?" He says: "We are soldiers of Molla Mustafa [Barzani, the late Iraqi Kurdish leader]," unaware of the slogan with a similar resonance in **Turkey**. "Molla Mustafa (Mas'ud Barzani's father) never mistreated prisoners." The man reportedly took up arms for the first time in 1963. He fought in the mountains, first against the Iraqi government and later against Saddam. This time, years later, he has once again taken up arms against ISIL...

Take Loving Care of Humvees

Peshmerga commander Sirwan Barzani said that ISIL has attacked them with US-made Humvees. "What can our weapons do against these?" Humvees from ISIL are now in the hands of the Kurds. The Peshmergas treat with loving care the new Humvees they have seized.

At Ground Zero With ISIL

We go from Sirwan Barzani's headquarters to Guver, where major fighting has taken place. At the entrance to Makhmur, the PKK [Kurdistan People's Congress, KGK] is also at the checkpoint, along with the Peshmergas. Everyone with whom I speak at the front says that the PKK fought well at Makhmur, and that when the Peshmergas were fleeing, female guerrillas remained in the camp and fought. Thanks to this, they are now more "visible" in places like Kirkuk and Makhmur.

Afterwards, we go to the very tip of the front, to ground zero with ISIL. On the road there are burned out vehicles, and buildings bearing signs of fighting. The Peshmergas at the front put a pair of binoculars into my hands. ISIL is in houses, a few kilometres away. At another point, we get close, to within 500 or 600 meters. They say: "The other side of the river is ISIL. The villages and towns along the road have been completely evacuated, out of fear of ISIL...

Source: Milliyet website, Istanbul, in Turkish 9 Sep 14

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CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gdef : Armed Forces | gdip : International Relations | gterr : Acts of Terror | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : FC&E Executive News Filter

RE iraq : Iraq | mosul : Mosul | turk : Turkey | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

PUB The British Broadcasting Corporation

AN Document BBCEUP0020140911ea9b000xd

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REUTERS

HD **Hundreds of Syrian Kurds fleeing Islamic State gather on Turkish border**

BY By Seyhmus Cakan

WC 604 words

PD 19 September 2014

ET 10:09

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

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LP

DIKMETAS, **Turkey**, Sept 19 (Reuters) - Close to a thousand Syrian Kurds gathered on the **border** seeking to cross into **Turkey** on Friday after Islamic State fighters seized 21 villages and besieged a Kurdish city in northern Syria, a Reuters witness said.

The crowd of mostly women and children sat behind a barbed wire **barrier** along the **border** opposite the Turkish village of Dikmetas, 20 km (12 miles) from the Syrian Kurdish city of Ayn al-Arab, known as Kobani in Kurdish.

TD

The attack on Kobani prompted a Kurdish militant call to the youth of **Turkey**'s mainly Kurdish southeast to join the fight against Islamic State (IS) and came days after the U.S. military said the help of Syrian Kurds would be needed against the Islamist militants.

The number of Kurds on the **border** shrank from about 3,000 on Thursday night, but more were arriving on foot from nearby villages, carrying possessions in sacks, witnesses said. Turkish security forces were not allowing them to cross the **border**.

"The weather was cold overnight so most went back to their villages. They started coming back to the **border** this morning," said Halil, a man in his 40s on the Turkish side of the **border**.

Turkish soldiers armed with rifles formed a line to maintain security along the **border** but allowed locals on the Turkish side to fling across bottles of water and bags of bread.

"People are continuing to come on foot and by vehicle. We expect their numbers to swell to 3,000-4,000," said village official Huseyin Gundogdu.

He said military and humanitarian officials had visited the area and were telling the Syrian Kurds they would be offered aid further along the Syrian side of the **border** nearer Kobani.

"AID WITHIN SYRIA'S BORDERS"

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said the governors of **border** provinces in **Turkey**, where Kurdish militants have waged a decades-long insurgency to push for greater autonomy, had been ordered to extend aid to refugees on Syria's side of the **border**.

"We're ready to help our brothers who are building up at the borders regardless of their ethnicity, religion and sect. But our priority is to deliver aid within Syria's borders," he told reporters in Ankara on Thursday.

U.S. President Barack Obama said last week he would not hesitate to strike IS, which has used Syria as a base to advance its plan to reshape the Middle East according to its radical vision of Sunni Islam.

The United States is conducting air strikes against Islamic State in Iraq and last month Obama authorised surveillance flights over Syria.

Islamic State fighters, armed with heavy weaponry including tanks, have seized 21 villages near Kobani in the last 24 hours, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which tracks Syria's civil war, said on Thursday.

Western states have expanded contact with the main Syrian Kurdish party, the PYD, since Islamic State seized wide areas of Iraq in June.

The YPG, the main Kurdish armed group in Syria, says it has 50,000 fighters and should be a natural partner in a coalition the United States is trying to assemble to fight Islamic State.

But the Syrian Kurds' relationship with the West is complicated by their ties to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) - a group listed as a terrorist organisation in many Western states because of the militant campaign it waged for Kurdish rights in **Turkey**. (Writing by Daren Butler; Editing by Nick Tattersall and Janet Lawrence)

RF Released: 2014-9-19T09:09:39.000Z

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

RE turk : Turkey | syria : Syria | kurd : Kurdistan | usa : United States | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | namz : North America | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Business

IPC SERVICE:C

PUB Thomson Reuters (Markets) LLC

AN Document LBA0000020140919ea9j006rc

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FT FINANCIAL TIMES

HD **Syrian Kurds flee to Turkey as Isis offensive intensifies**

BY By Piotr Zalewski in Istanbul and Erika Solomon in Beirut

WC 714 words

PD 19 September 2014

ET 19:34

SN Financial Times (FT.Com)

SC FTCOM

LA English

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LP

Turkey opened its **border** to about 4,000 Kurds fleeing the fighting in northern Syria on Thursday, a day after the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or Isis, seized 24 villages in the area within 48 hours.

Masoud Barzani, the head of the semi-autonomous Kurdistan Region Government (KRG) in Iraq, called for all Kurdish forces to put aside their differences and defend Kobani, the Syrian town now under attack from Isis. He also appealed for international help to protect the area, now isolated by large swaths of territory held by Isis and forces loyal to Syrian president Bashar al-Assad.

TD

"I'd like to request the international community to take every measure as soon as possible to save Kobani and the people of West Kurdistan from the hands of the terrorists," he said in a statement. "The Isis terrorists perpetrate crimes and tragedies wherever they are, therefore they have to be hit and defeated wherever they are."

Turkish media broadcast images of a thick stream of refugees, most of them women and children, carrying large bags and suitcases and making their way through a wire **fence**, surrounded by Turkish army vehicles. Journalists reported hearing a barrage of artillery fire across the **border**. One saw a convoy of Isis vehicles rolling into a hilltop village on the Syrian side of the **border**.

"We will take in our brothers fleeing to Anatolia from Syria or any other place without any ethnic or sectarian discrimination," said Ahmet Davutoglu, **Turkey**'s Prime Minister.

Hours earlier, security forces had fired tear gas and water cannons to disperse a crowd that arrived on the Turkish side of the **border** to protest that the refugees being kept at bay. Shortly after noon, the Ankara authorities announced they would allow the group to cross into **Turkey**.

Social media accounts said to belong to Isis fighters featured photographs from the newly seized areas in Syria, including mangled bodies of Kurdish militants and a handful of prisoners.

Kurdish activists in Syria said that most of the captured villages had already been vacated as a result of previous Isis attacks. Many villagers had taken shelter in the city of Kobani and in surrounding areas.

"We left as soon as we heard the explosions," said Ferhan Ahmet Kadir, a farmer from Karamax, a village less than half a mile from the **border**, speaking over the phone. Mr. Kadir, 45, fled to **Turkey** with his family, including eleven children, on Friday. There was no one left in his village, he said.

"There's no reason why Daesh should persecute us like this," he said, referring to Isis by its Arabic acronym. "We've done nothing to deserve this."

Kurdish activists and Syrian Observatory for Human Rights say the Syrian Kurdish militia, the People's Protection Units (YPG) has withdrawn from 60 villages in the region. In a statement posted online, YPG announced that fierce fighting was continuing on five fronts. The group claimed that it had killed 86 Isis members in the last five days of clashes, losing eight of its own fighters. It was impossible to verify the claims.

The Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, the outlawed political group linked to the YPG, appealed yon Friday for all Turkish Kurds to defend the area. "The young people of northern Kurdistan," it said, referring to Kurdish-majority areas of **Turkey**, "should join the honourable, historical resistance in Kobani".

Activists in Kobani, meanwhile, complained that their allies from the Free Syrian Army, the moderate rebel grouping pitted against both Isis and the regime of Bashar al-Assad, had not yet sent reinforcements.

"Isis has had Kobani blockaded for about a year, and only now it chose to attack. Why, we don't know," said one activist in the city, who asked not to be named.

The activist added: "It is relying on a plan of shelling the villages, then moving in with tanks, and then foot soldiers. The number of YPG and other kurdish fighters is very limited, they don't have what is needed either in numbers or equipment. The townsmen and villagers have been helping them fight . . . but they lack weaponry or fighting skills."

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gvio : Military Action | gdip : International Relations | gpol : Domestic Politics | gterr : Acts of Terror | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : FC&E Executive News Filter

RE turk : Turkey | kurd : Kurdistan | syria : Syria | iraq : Iraq | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD General News

IPC GN

PUB The Financial Times Limited (AAIW/EIW)

AN Document FTCOM000201409l9ea9j004v5

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THE TIMES

SE Europe

HD Kurds flood in after Turkey opens border

BY Catherine Philp, Beirut
WC 590 words
PD 20 September 2014
ET 02:01
SN thetimes.co.uk
SC TIMEUK
LA English
CY © Times Newspapers Limited 2014

LP

Turkey bowed to pressure to open its **border** to thousands of Syrian Kurdish refugees fleeing an assault by Islamic State fighters yesterday amid calls for international intervention to save the besieged residents of a key city.

Masoud Barzani, the president of Iraqi Kurdistan and an important western ally, called on the outside world to intervene and prevent the massacre of tens of thousands of Kurds in Kobani, now all but surrounded by the jihadists.

TD

"I call on the international community to use every means as soon as possible to protect Kobani," Mr Barzani said, adding his voice to warnings from Kurdish leaders across the region that the city's inhabitants were under mortal threat.

His pleas may carry weight with the US, given Washington's close relationship with Iraq's Kurds. While America has said that Syrian Kurdish forces should play a role in the fight against Isis, their involvement is complicated by their ties with **Turkey**'s PKK, which is proscribed in the West as a terrorist organisation. PKK fighters answering a Syrian Kurdish call for help clashed with Isis fighters along the **border** near Kobani yesterday.

At the same time, Turkish soldiers finally opened the **border** crossing to thousands of Kurdish refugees who had fled villages surrounding Kobani after warnings from Syrian Kurdish forces that they could not be protected.

Turkey's prime minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, said he had given the order for the Syrians to be let across the **border** after being told 4,000 were trapped there after fleeing the Isis advance.

Fellow Kurds from a village on the Turkish side came to the **border** to hurl bottles of water and bags of bread to the refugees on the other side of the barbed-wire **fence**.

Turkey, which is already host to 1.3 million Syrian refugees, is trying to persuade the US of the need to create a "buffer zone" inside Syria where displaced civilians could be sheltered and given aid.

That would require, at the very least, the establishment of a no-fly zone patrolled by foreign aircraft, but refugees would still remain vulnerable to attack without the presence of ground troops. Most international aid organisations oppose such a move.

Isis captured three more villages surrounding Kobani, bringing the number under its control to 24. From positions above the city, its fighters have rained down artillery and rockets using an arsenal of American-supplied heavy weaponry seized from military bases in Iraq.

The pincer assault on Kobani has been carried out by Isis fighters from Aleppo and Raqqa provinces, two jihadist strongholds that the Pentagon is drawing up plans to bombard from the air.

Activists in Raqqa said that they had seen surveillance drones flying over the city yesterday and, for the first time, another kind of aircraft fitting the description of an AWAC — Airborne Warning And Control System — which uses radar to detect targets.

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The activists said that Isis fighters had started to go underground in anticipation of American airstrikes, dispersing their heavy weaponry to many different places and evacuating buildings previously used as command centres.

The families of many foreign fighters have already moved to seek safety outside the city, while many of the fighters themselves, including Europeans, have set off for Iraq, believing that the US is more likely to put ground troops there despite President Obama's insistence that American forces will not be deployed.

"They are expecting the big battle to be there," Sarmad Jilany, an activist, said.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE kurd : Kurdistan | turk : Turkey | syria : Syria | iraq : Iraq | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

PUB News UK & Ireland Limited

AN Document TIMEUK0020140919ea9k0041n

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ALJAZEERA

HD **Turkish forces fend off Kurdish protesters**

WC 619 words

PD 21 September 2014

ET 13:40

SN Al Jazeera English

SC AJAZEN

LA English

CY Copyright 2014 Al Jazeera English.

LP

Turkish security forces have used tear gas and water cannon to disperse a rally by Kurds, who gathered in support of Kurdish refugees who fled attacks in Syria, and those battling Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (ISIL) fighters on Syrian soil.

Hundreds of young demonstrators, who gathered on Sunday near the **border**, fought back by hurling rocks and setting up barricades on the road leading to a nearby **border** crossing, reporters from the AFP news agency said.

TD

The security forces kept demonstrators away from a barbed wire **border fence** that stands just five kilometres from Ain al-Arab, known to the Kurds as Kobani, where Kurdish fighters are holding off ISIL.

Al Jazeera's Joelle Naayem said tensions rose as Turkish authorities temporarily closed the **border**. Ankara has opened a stretch of its borders over the past few days, allowing as many as 70,000 Syrian Kurds to stream in and escape advances by the ISIL.

"We've come to support our brothers in Syria under attack by Daesh," Turkish Kurdish demonstrator Mehmet Eminakma told AFP, referring to ISIL.

ISIL fighters have captured dozens of villages along the Syrian borders, threatening the largely-Kurdish inhabitants of the northern Kobani area.

Mehment said that Turkish authorities were preventing young Syrian Kurds, who had accompanied their families to safety inside **Turkey**, from returning to the battlefront.

Call for arm

The Kurdistan Workers' Party, or the PKK, has renewed its call for arms as Kobani came under fierce attack by the ISIL for the fourth day in a row.

"Supporting this heroic resistance is not only a debt of honour for the Kurds, but for all of the Middle East people. Just giving support is not enough. ISIL must drown in the blood it spills. The youth of North Kurdistan must flow in waves to Kobani," the party said in a statement.

A Kurdish commander on the ground said ISIL had advanced to within 15 kilometres of Kobani, whose strategic location has been blocking the radical group from consolidating their gains across northern Syria.

A Kurdish politician from **Turkey** who visited Kobani on Saturday said locals had told him ISIL fighters were beheading people as they went from village to village.

"Rather than a war this is a genocide operation. They are going into the villages and cutting the heads of one or two

people and showing them to the villagers," Ibrahim Binici, a deputy for **Turkey**'s pro-Kurdish HDP, told Reuters.

Refugee influx

Carol Batchelor, the UNHCR's Representative in **Turkey**, told Al Jazeera that the flood of Syrian Kurdish refugees in to **Turkey** over the past 24 hours has been the "largest since the Syrian crisis erupted," adding that **Turkey** currently hosts about 1.35 million Syrians.

Officials estimate the relief effort has cost the Turkish government in excess of $3 billion.

Expressing gratitude to **Turkey**, Batchelor warned that the ferocity of the fighting and the fast-moving situation near

Kobani made any cross-**border** aid efforts impossible, meaning there was no option other than to keep the Turkish **border** open.

"There can be a misunderstanding that Turrkey is a country that is wealthier, better-resourced than other countries in the region, that therefore don't need assistance. This is not the case. These are refugees, its a international responsibility. It's a committment for all of us," Batchelor told Al Jazeera.

"These are 80 percent women, children, disabled, elderly, who need our help. We need to be able to say to the Syrian people, and to the host communities who have been helping them for 3.5 years, that they have solidarity and their humanitarian life-saving needs will be met."

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gcivds : Civil Disruption | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | grisk : Risk News

RE kurd : Kurdistan | turk : Turkey | syria : Syria | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

PUB Al Jazeera International

AN Document AJAZEN0020140921ea9l0005m

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REUTERS

HD **Turkey struggles with spillover as Syrian Kurds battle Islamic State**

WC 1,078 words

PD 22 September 2014

ET 14:53

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

CY Copyright 2014 Thomson Reuters. All Rights Reserved.

LP

* Syrian Kurds battle Islamic State advance on key town

* More than 130,000 Syrian Kurds flee to **Turkey**

TD

* Turkish security forces fire tear gas on protesters

* PKK accuses **Turkey** of supporting Islamic State

* **Turkey** unlikely to take military role in anti-IS coalition

By Daren Butler

MURSITPINAR, **Turkey**, Sept 22 (Reuters) - Syrian Kurds battled to defend a key **border** town from an Islamic State advance on Monday as Kurdish youths from neighbouring **Turkey** rushed to their aid, heightening the pressure on Ankara to act against the Islamist insurgents.

In **Turkey**, which is struggling to manage an influx of more than 130,000 Syrian Kurdish refugees since Friday, security forces fired tear gas and water cannon at hundreds of Kurdish protesters who accuse Ankara of favouring Islamic State against the Kurds.

The main Kurdish armed group in northern Syria, the YPG, said its fighters had halted the Islamic State advance east of the predominantly Kurdish town of Kobani, also known as Ayn al-Arab, but that fierce fighting was continuing.

Hundreds of Kurdish youths gathered on the Turkish side of the **border**, responding to calls from Kurdish leaders to join the fight against Islamic State fighters who have seized swathes of Iraq and Syria and proclaimed a caliphate.

Residents fleeing Kobani said the militants were executing people of all ages in villages they seized. Kurds are mostly Sunni Muslims but Islamic State views them as apostates because of their secular ideology. It has persecuted and killed Shi'ite Muslims, Christians and members of the ancient Yazidi sect as well as moderate Sunnis who reject its stark version of Islam.

Turkish security forces are now trying to keep Kurds from crossing the frontier to aid their brethren. At the Mursitpinar **border** crossing, a line of paramilitary police stood guard along a barbed-wire **border fence**.

"We all want to cross the **border**. We tried yesterday but they attacked us, and we will try again today," said balaclava-clad Kurdish activist Shirwan, 28, holding a large PKK flag.

Ismet, 19, a local man who makes a living collecting strawberries, said the protesters had gathered from cities across **Turkey**'s predominantly Kurdish southeast: "They are not from around here. They come from Sirnak, Van, Mardin, Nusaybin."

He said several hundred Turkish Kurds had already crossed to join the fight. Other residents put the figure higher.

The advances by the Sunni insurgents just across **Turkey**'s southern **border** have alarmed Ankara. But so far **Turkey** has been slow to join calls for a coalition to fight Islamic State, worried in part about links between the Syrian Kurds and **Turkey**'s own Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which waged an armed campaign for Kurdish rights over several decades.

Turkey strongly denies it has given any form of support to the Islamist militants, but Western countries say its open borders during Syria's three year civil war allowed Islamic State and other radical groups to grow in power.

The PKK called **Turkey**'s Kurds to arms on Sunday, saying "supporting this heroic resistance" in Kobani was a "debt of honour". Radio stations played patriotic Kurdish songs about heroic fighters and martyrs and one played recordings of PKK commander Murat Karayilan in a bid to drum up support.

Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmus said more than 130,000 Syrian Kurds had fled to **Turkey** since Friday.

TREADING DIFFICULT LINE

Fierce clashes continued on Monday but the Islamic State advance to the east of Kobani, scene of the fiercest fighting since the insurgents launched their offensive last Tuesday, had been halted, Redur Xelil, spokesman for the YPG, said via Skype.

He said hundreds of Turkish Kurds were already helping in the struggle to push back the insurgents.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which tracks violence in the Syrian war, said Islamic State fighters had made no significant advance in the last 24 hours.

The United States has carried out air strikes against Islamic State fighters in Iraq and says it is prepared to extend them into Syria, but has not said when or where strikes would begin.

Turkey, a NATO member with a big U.S. air base in the southern town of Incirlik, has so far made clear it does not want to take a frontline military role. Initially, officials said they were wary of fighting Islamic State because the group was holding 46 Turkish hostages.

Those hostages - including **Turkey**'s consul general in the Iraqi city of Mosul, soldiers and children - were freed on Saturday, but Turkish officials said policy toward Islamic State was unlikely to change.

"The hostages weren't the only concern for our Iraq and Syria policy," said one senior Turkish official, declining to be identified so as to speak more freely.

"There are security problems especially in the Kurdish regions of Syria. We are always ready to help them but that doesn't mean that we will carry out a military operation ... **Turkey** will continue to be a part of the coalition but our policies on Iraq and Syria will not change," he said.

Turkey launched a peace process in 2012 to end a 30-year-old conflict with the PKK, listed as a terrorist organisation by Ankara, the European Union and the United States. Mutual suspicion still runs high between Kurdish communities and the security forces in large parts of the southeast.

In Iraq, where there is an autonomous Kurdish region with its own official security forces, European countries, including Germany, France and Italy, have already agreed to send the Kurds light weapons to use against militants.

But in Syria, where Kurdish fighters have no official status and their leaders are more closely linked to the banned PKK, outside help is more complicated.

Opposition politicians in Germany have called for the PKK to be taken off the EU list of terrorist groups.

Turkey remains strongly opposed to such a move and diplomats say it would not be considered without Turkish accord.

"The threat to the Yazidis and Christians in northern Iraq is no reason, in my view, to reconsider the ban," German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier told broadcaster ARD on Sunday.

"The ban stands. We are delivering weapons to (Iraqi) Kurdish security forces; that is what we decided." (Additional reporting by Tom Perry in Beirut, Alexandra Hudson in Berlin and Orhan Koskun in Ankara; Writing by Nick Tattersall; Editing by Peter Graff)

RF Released: 2014-9-22T13:53:25.000Z

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CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gimm : Asylum/Immigration | grel : Religion | gcat : Political/General News | gcom : Society/Community/Work | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE turk : Turkey | kurd : Kurdistan | syria : Syria | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Business

IPC SERVICE:C

PUB Thomson Reuters (Markets) LLC

AN Document LBA0000020140922ea9m00au4

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SE News

HD **Panic as 200,000 on run; Turkey faces unprecedented refugee crisis as Kurds flee Islamic extremists**

BY ROBERT TAIT AND JOMAH AL-QASEM

CR London Daily Telegraph

WC 723 words

PD 23 September 2014

SN Montreal Gazette

SC MTLG

ED Early

PG A13

LA English

CY Copyright © 2014 Montreal Gazette

LP

Turkey is bracing itself for an unprecedented refugee crisis after as many as 200,000 ethnic Kurds fled across the frontier from Syria in just two days to escape a fresh advance by Islamist extremists.

The influx came after Islamic State, also known as ISIS and ISIL, captured dozens of Kurdish villages in northern Syria and threatened the **border** city of Kobani, which was left deserted after most of its inhabitants evacuated in panic.

TD

The mass exodus triggered chaotic scenes on the Turkish side of the **border** after authorities in Ankara, **Turkey**'s capital, were forced to let refugees in by cutting openings in a barbed wire **fence** following warnings of a potential humanitarian catastrophe.

Refugees who crossed recalled the fear they left behind with some claiming ISIL had broadcast dire warnings about their fate.

"They said in the mosques that they could kill all Kurds between seven and 77 years old," Sahab Basravi said. "So we collected our things and left immediately."

Hours after the exodus, defence sources said Britain is poised to launch airstrikes against Islamic State militants in Iraq.

British Prime Minister David Cameron is expected to use a meeting of the UN General Assembly on Wednesday to announce that the U.K. will join the air bombing campaign.

Amid calls for the United Nations and international aid agencies to help, Numan Kurtulmus, the Turkish deputy prime minister, said an even greater number of refugees could flood in during the coming days.

" I hope that we are not faced with a more populous refugee wave, but if we are, we have taken our precautions," he said. "A refugee wave that can be expressed by hundreds of thousands is a possibility."

Despite **Turkey**'s proclamations that it could cope, there were pleas for international assistance from Syrian groups opposed to the regime of Bashar Assad, Syria's president who has fought armed rebels in a bloody three-and-a-half-year civil war.

"We ask all the international agencies, the countries of the world, the United Nations and the Turkish government to come together to help the Kurds in their crisis," said Hevaroun Sherif, a member of the Syrian National Coalition.

Unofficial estimates have put the number of Kurdish refugees to have crossed the **border** at 200,000 - greater than the figures issued by the government, the English-language Hurriyet Daily News reported.

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There are thought to be between 250,000 and 400,000 people living in the region around Kobani - also known by its Arabic name, Ain al- Arab - creating the potential for another wave.

Nearly 1.6 million refugees have entered **Turkey** from Syria since fighting began against the Assad regime in March 2011.

Kobani, very near the Turkish **border**, was a virtual ghost town - with only around 2,000 of its 50,000 inhabitants remaining, plus a handful of Kurdish fighters.

Many of those who stayed were elderly people who guarded their property with guns. People began seeking refuge at the **border** last Friday after ISIS made fresh gains that saw it overrun around 50 Kurdish villages. At least 16 Kurds have been reported killed in recent days.

ISIS, which has attacked other non-Sunni Muslim groups, including Christians, Yazidis, Alawites and Shiites in Iraq and Syria, is believed to be targeting the Kurds because of their secular lifestyle. Most said it was ISIS's reputation for bloodthirsty killings that had driven them to leave. Many of those escaping took shelter in the Turkish **border** town of Suruc, whose population is said to have more than doubled in recent days.

Many of those crossing were women and children, many weeping hysterically from fear and distress.

ART GETTY IMAGES / Syrian refugees wait to cross into **Turkey** at the **border** Monday near the southeastern town of Suruc in Sanliurfa province. Many arrived at the **border** weeping hysterically from fear. **Turkey** has pleaded for international help for the refugees.; GETTY IMAGES / Syrian refugees wait to cross into **Turkey** at the **border** Monday near the southeastern town of Suruc in Sanliurfa province. Many arrived at the **border** weeping hysterically from fear. **Turkey** has pleaded for international help for the refugees. [MTGZ_20140923_Early_A13_02_I001.jpg];

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gimm : Asylum/Immigration | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE syria : Syria | turk : Turkey | kurd : Kurdistan | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD News

PUB Montreal Gazette

AN Document MTLG000020140923ea9n00006

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The New York Times

SE World; Middle East

HD **In a Maze of Alliances, Syrian Kurds Find a Thorny Refuge at the Border**

BY By ANNE BARNARD

WC 1,421 words

PD 25 September 2014

SN NYTimes.com Feed

SC NYTFEED

LA English

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LP

SURUC, **Turkey** — Turkish tanks dot the hills here, guarding against Islamic State militants advancing just across the Syrian **border**. Lines of police fan out across fields, brandishing riot shields to stem the flow of Syrian Kurds fleeing the militants.

Tear gas mixes with wind-blown dirt as the police disperse refugees desperate to get into **Turkey** and Turkish Kurds trying to help them. The police also clash with Kurdish men equally desperate to cross in the opposite direction — Turkish and Syrian citizens bound for Syria to defend the Kurdish enclave of Kobani from an Islamic State assault.

TD

Refugees who reach **Turkey** sit on dry, loose earth, unsure where to find shelter. Behind a **border fence**, thousands have waited for days, some with herds of sheep and goats, which they say are in danger of dying of thirst.

The chaos on this one small stretch of the **border** illustrates the complexity of the conflict into which the United States is now inserting itself far more forcibly than it has yet during three years of Syrian civil war.

Here, where Kurdish communities straddle the **border**, the three-way battle among the Islamic State, Syrian insurgents and President Bashar al-Assad overlaps with a far older conflict between **Turkey** and its Kurdish minority.

Kurds on both sides of the **border** here accuse **Turkey**, nominally an American ally against the Islamic State, of creating the extremist group to kill Kurds and stop them from using the chaos in Syria to establish autonomy there. That view was only strengthened this week, they said, as Turkish authorities impeded both those trying to flee the Islamic State and those trying to fight it.

“It’s a lie that the U.S.A. and the Turks are bombing ISIS; they are the ones who made ISIS to fight Kurds and weaken us,” said Mustaf Uzcan, 52, a Turkish Kurd who had brought aid for refugees from Adana, where he works in construction. He used an alternate name for the Islamic State.

Citing **Turkey**’s open borders that facilitated the flow of Islamic State fighters from foreign countries into Syria, he added, “ISIS is not an enemy of **Turkey** — **Turkey** sees the Kurds as the enemy.” The Turkish government has provided safe haven for many Syrian insurgents and called for Mr. Assad’s ouster, but denies supporting the Islamic State.

President Obama has sought to package the American airstrikes against Islamic State militants in Iraq and Syria as a single straightforward battle, to “degrade and destroy” an organization that has accelerated the destabilization of the region and poses a potential, though not imminent, threat to the United States. And on Tuesday evening, American and Arab forces again attacked Islamic State targets in Syria, according to Rear Adm. John F. Kirby, the Pentagon press secretary.

But unleashing American firepower against Islamic State introduces new, unpredictable dynamics that vary from place to place in the volatile and increasingly fragmented conflict. Hitting the Islamic State means different things to different players in different places — adding to the difficulties Mr. Obama faces in building a coherent coalition against the group.

Syrian insurgents, including some that the Obama administration says will act as its ground force against the Islamic State, have criticized the strikes, while one official in the Syrian government, which has condemned the strikes as a violation of its sovereignty, told Reuters they seemed to be "proceeding in the right direction."

The fighting in Kobani — a collection of Kurdish villages whose cinder-block buildings can be seen just beyond the **border** posts — is just one of the many wars within the war that have tangled alliances across the region.

Kurds in the area, home to about 400,000 people, had largely ruled themselves for the past two years after government forces withdrew, allowing a Kurdish party to take over military and government posts. The party's military wing is affiliated with the separatist Kurdistan Workers' Party in **Turkey**; the PKK, as the party is also known, is a bitter enemy of the Turkish government, which considers it a terrorist organization.

But in July of last year, fighters from the Islamic State surrounded the area, leaving it largely besieged, with only limited aid coming across the Turkish **border**. Over the past week, Islamic State fighters advanced deeper into Kobani with tanks and artillery, taking dozens of villages, with the United Nations reporting massacres of civilians.

The Turkish government says 150,000 people have crossed into **Turkey** since the new attacks began, one of the most dramatic refugee flows of the war. Humanitarian groups say thousands more want to cross, although others hoped to go back, saying they preferred to die at home than to face what they called a hostile reception in **Turkey**, where many slept in the open.

"Our sons are still fighting and I want to join them, even though I hear they are surrounded," said Souad Saleh, 45, clutching a garbage bag full of clothes.

Turkey says it closed the **border** to refugees for security reasons, and has provided a medical tent, vaccines and a team of emergency response officials. Municipal officials and residents in the mostly Kurdish town of Suruc have been helpful, refugees say, but their resources are limited.

Local Kurds had hoped that American airstrikes would target the advancing militants, much as they hit Islamic State fighters threatening Kurds in Iraq. But while airstrikes were reported in the area Wednesday morning, the Pentagon denied carrying out any there. American military officials did report strikes in another region against oil refineries controlled by the Islamic State.

By Wednesday night, residents of Suruc were reporting that the militants had advanced miles more, coming within sight of the Turkish **border**.

Despite checkpoints on the roads to the **border** and dozens of armored vehicles patrolling Suruc, residents said that hundreds, perhaps as many as a thousand, Turkish Kurds had crossed the **border** to fight, with some pulling up **fence** posts and squeezing through.

Hajjar Sheikh Mohammad, a young Kurdish man who was born in Syria but has family in **Turkey**, leaned against a metal **border barrier** as if wanting to catapult himself across it. His story further illustrated the complex alliances in Syria; he said he was a fighter in Aleppo with a Syrian insurgent group, the Fatah Brigade, that included many non-Kurdish Turks who helped train fighters.

But when he heard that Kobani, where his relatives were staying, was in danger, he said, he went there to bring them to **Turkey**. Now, he said, he wanted to return and defend Kobani alongside Kurdish militants, although he disagrees with their goal of an independent Kurdistan.

"I don't want separation," he said. "I want Syria to be safe and I want Kurdish rights and to speak my language inside Syria."

Nearby, protesters chanted "Freedom!" in Kurdish, calling for accountability for **Turkey**'s Islamist ruling party, which they said had fostered the Islamic State. Some were from a Turkish teachers' union, on strike in solidarity with Kurds, including those in **Turkey** who want the option of schooling in the Kurdish language.

Servin Aydin, a high school teacher in Suruc, said a student had come to say that he was going to Syria. "He is pretty and smart, but he doesn't like school," she said. "He thinks in Kurdish, but we have to teach him in Turkish."

She said she supported the attacks on the Islamic State "because it's a terrorist organization."

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“But we don’t support other American policies,” Ms. Aydin added, “because America is an imperialist country.”

Asked if they saw Mr. Assad — who put down Kurdish protests in 2004 — as a protector, Kurdish refugees said he had not shielded them from the Islamic State.

“He barrel-bombs us,” said one, Abu Hishaar. Another said, “They want us to defend ourselves by ourselves.”

Karam Shoumali contributed reporting from Surac, and Eric Schmitt from Washington.

* Startling Sight Where Blasts Are the Norm

* In Airstrikes, U.S. Targets Militant Cell Said to Plot an Attack Against the West

ART Refugees from Syria waited at the Turkish **border** near Sanliurfa, **Turkey**, on Wednesday. **Turkey** is wary that the fight against the Islamic State is empowering separatist Kurdish militants on both sides of the **border**. | Sedat Suna/European Pressphoto Agency | The president spoke on Tuesday after the United States military launched airstrikes overnight against Islamic State targets in Iraq and Syria. | AP

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

RE syria : Syria | turk : Turkey | kurd : Kurdistan | usa : United States | iraq : Iraq | namz : North America | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Refugees and Displaced Persons

PUB The New York Times Company

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HD **Turkey Hesitant to Ally With U.S. in Syria Mission**

BY By ANNE BARNARD and MARK LANDLER

WC 1,547 words

PD 28 September 2014

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LA English

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LP

KARACA, **Turkey** — No American ally is closer to the threat of the Islamic State than **Turkey**, and no country could play a more important role in a coalition that President Obama is assembling to combat the extremist Sunni militants. Yet **Turkey** has been reluctant to enlist, in part because of the desperate conflict playing out on its **border** with Syria.

TD

From frontier outposts, one can see black-clad Islamic State fighters climbing up a hill to peer down at Kobani, a besieged Kurdish city that has become the prize in a fierce battle between Syria's embattled Kurds and the rampaging Sunni militants.

It is a violent, murky situation, with Turkish Kurds seeking to cross into Syria to help their Kurdish brethren fight, while Syrian Kurds are fleeing into **Turkey** to escape the militants. The chaos on the **border**, and **Turkey**'s ambivalent reaction, is a reflection of **Turkey**'s complex interests in the Syrian civil war raging to its south.

Turkey is caught between conflicting interests: defeating Islamic militants across its **border** while not enhancing the power of its own Kurdish separatists.

The dilemma played out on Saturday here as outgunned Kurdish fighters battled the militants less than a mile away. At the same time, the United States conducted its first strikes against the extremist group in a besieged Kurdish area of Syria.

Mr. Obama wants **Turkey** to stop the flow of foreign fighters traveling through the country to join the Islamic State. As a NATO ally, **Turkey** could also take part in military operations and provide bases from which to carry out airstrikes in Syria and Iraq.

Turkish leaders have condemned the brutality of the Islamic State, but they worry that the American-led campaign against the militants will strengthen the Syrian Kurds, whose fighters maintain ties to Kurdish separatists in **Turkey**. Adding to that pressure is the fact that the United States is allied with Kurds in Iraq.

After intense lobbying by the Obama administration at the United Nations General Assembly last week, **Turkey** finally appears ready to take a more active role in the fight. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of **Turkey**, who met with Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. on Thursday, returned home to declare that **Turkey** would no longer be a bystander. "Our religion does not allow the killing of innocent people," he said.

On Saturday, in comments published in the newspaper Hurriyet, Mr. Erdogan said **Turkey** would defend its frontier pending authorization of military action in Syria expected at a special meeting of the Turkish Parliament on Thursday.

But the recruitment has been arduous, and **Turkey**'s military role is likely to be constrained by its complex interests in Syria. In a statement, the Obama administration said Mr. Biden and Mr. Erdogan had discussed the urgency of building a broad-based coalition to defeat the Islamic State "through a variety of means, including military actions."

Mr. Obama, who gained backing for the coalition from the British Parliament on Friday, did not meet Mr. Erdogan in New York. But on Thursday, Mr. Obama called him to thank **Turkey** for taking care of "the massive influx of refugees flowing into **Turkey**, including tens of thousands this week alone."

Turkey was initially reluctant to take an openly aggressive stance toward the Islamic State, because the militants had taken 46 Turkish citizens and three Iraqis hostage in Mosul, Iraq. On Sept. 20, **Turkey** obtained the release of the hostages in a covert intelligence operation. The circumstances of the release were murky — there were reports that **Turkey** had swapped prisoners for the hostages — but the return of the Turkish captives nevertheless stirred hopes that **Turkey** would feel less constrained in acting against the group.

Turkey's most immediate concern, however, is the rise of tensions on its **border**. The United States and its Arab allies have carried out numerous airstrikes in eastern Syria, but until Saturday there had been no attacks around Kobani, a collection of mostly Kurdish farming villages, also known as Ayn al-Arab. Kurdish fighters had issued urgent calls for help, saying they had only light weapons and were struggling to hold off the extremists, whose fighters are armed with tanks and artillery.

Kurds on both sides of the **border** were angry that the United States had not protected Kobani, especially since an assault on Kurds from the minority Yazidi religious sect in Sinjar, Iraq, last month triggered the first American airstrikes against the Islamic State. Some Kurds suspected that the United States was gnoring Kobani to mollify **Turkey**.

A Turkish political analyst said the scenes at the **border** raised the possibility that **Turkey** sees the Kurds, and the semiautonomous zone they have carved out around Kobani during three years of civil war in Syria, as "a greater threat" than the Islamic State, which has seized parts of Iraq and Syria, imposing harsh rule in areas under its control.

Those competing priorities, said the analyst, Soli Ozel, a newspaper columnist and a lecturer at Kadir Has University in Istanbul, were likely among the remaining "sticking points" with the United States.

"**Turkey** will do something militarily," he said, citing Mr. Erdogan's comments to Hurriyet that he would consider using Turkish ground forces to set up a secure zone inside Syria. But one of **Turkey**'s goals, Mr. Ozel said, might be "to crush or dissolve the Syrian Kurdish autonomous zone."

Several male residents of Kobani said in recent days that they had brought their families to safety in **Turkey** and planned to head back to fight. Some, presenting themselves as civilians, were allowed into **Turkey** after checks at a **border** post.

"If they need to locate them, I can insert a smart chip in my heart and go to the Islamic State fighters," said Hajjar Sheikh Mohammad, 22, a Syrian Kurd trying to return to Syria to fight, suggesting that he would sacrifice himself to spot Islamic State targets.

On Friday, as the Islamic State fighters came closer, large crowds gathered on both sides of the **border fence** and broke it down. Hundreds of people streamed across. Entering **Turkey** were women, children and older men, one leading a cow. Entering Syria were hundreds of men, some carrying backpacks, one riding a motorcycle.

At first, the police and army forces withdrew, and the atmosphere was almost jovial, with people singing and standing on the **fence**. But then security forces returned, firing tear-gas canisters. A crowd of perhaps 1,000 people scattered in panic, and the security forces continued firing tear gas as the crowd fled on foot and in cars.

On Saturday, Syrian and Turkish Kurds cheered from hilltops dotted with fig and olive trees and foxholes as Kurdish fighters scaled a ridge and fired a heavy machine gun mounted on a pickup truck. Muzzle flashes could be seen as Islamic State fighters returned fire and zipped toward the front line in cars and on motorcycles. A Kurdish activist, Mustafa Ebdi, said from Kobani that an Islamic State command post, a tank and a cannon had been hit by an American strike.

Complicating the geopolitical issues is the fact that the Kurdish militants defending Kobani, the People's Protection Units, are linked to the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or P.K.K., the **Turkey**-based Kurdish militia that **Turkey** and the United States consider a terrorist group.

But the Kurdish militants in Kobani and Afrin further west have been among the more effective groups in Syria at carving out safe areas where Christians and Muslims have lived in relative safety and harmony.

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That is what troubles **Turkey**, Mr. Ozel, the analyst, said. When Mr. Erdogan calls for “a buffer zone,” Mr. Ozel said, he could mean the Syrian Kurdish autonomous area, with **Turkey** “not only taking control, but changing the demographics” by resettling the overwhelmingly Arab Syrian refugees there.

Mr. Obama’s top military adviser, Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, has suggested that the Kurds could be a ground force partner in Syria much as they have been in Iraq, especially since plans to beef up Syrian insurgents to play that role will take months and may not succeed.

Though that prospect unsettles the Turks, some longtime experts say that **Turkey**’s interest in defeating the Islamic State is ultimately no different than that of the United States and its allies, even if it avoids military action.

“Perhaps **Turkey** will come to judge that they should participate or overtly support other allies in the airstrikes,” said Francis J. Ricciardone, who recently retired as the American ambassador to **Turkey**, “but less visible forms of support also can be important.”

Anne Barnard reported from Karaca, **Turkey**, and Mark Landler from the United Nations. Bryan Denton contributed reporting from Mursitpinar, **Turkey**; Ozgur Ogret from Istanbul; and Karam Shoumali from Gaziantep, **Turkey**.

ART Turkish Kurds watched Kurdish forces battle Islamic State militants across the **border** in Syria on Saturday. **Turkey** fears emboldening Kurdish separatists. | Bryan Denton for The New York Times | Cars abandoned by Syrian Kurdish refugees were parked at a **border** position, with a Turkish armored vehicle nearby. Nearly 150,000 refugees from Kobani have crossed in the last week. | Bryan Denton for The New York Times

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

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IPD Terrorism

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HD **Turkey moves to use force in Syria and Iraq**

BY Jacob Resneck

CR Jacob Resneck, Special for USA TODAY

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PD 30 September 2014

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LP

Jacob Resneck, Special for USA TODAY

SURUC, **Turkey** -- **Turkey** is moving to reverse its non- intervention stance and approve the use of force in Syria and Iraq to fight radical Islamic State militants who have advanced against cities along the Syrian-Turkish **border**.

TD

A proposed resolution that would authorize the army to fight the extremists is all but certain to win formal approval from the parliament Thursday. It would allow the U.S.-led coalition conducting airstrikes against the militants to use Turkish air bases, a significant help to the coalition, given **Turkey**'s proximity to the fighting.

"We are a determined government," **Turkey**'s deputy prime minister, Bulent Arinc, was quoted as saying Tuesday in the Hurriyet Daily News. "We perfectly know what's going on inside and outside **Turkey**."

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan "has been on the **fence** about intervening," said James Phillips, an analyst at Heritage Foundation. "It looks like he is jumping off the **fence**."

The United States has said forming a broad coalition is critical to defeating the Islamic State. Tuesday, British aircraft participated for the first time in the air campaign against the Islamic State in Iraq. It launched two airstrikes in support of Kurdish forces fighting militants in northwestern Iraq.

Turkey has been reluctant to take military action against the extremists despite U.S. urging.

Until the militants moved closer to seizing **border** towns that would open up a **border** crossing from Syria to **Turkey**, the Turkish government ruled out use of its bases and prevented its citizens -- mostly ethnic Kurds -- from joining the fight against the Islamic State.

Kurdish militias are battling the extremists for control of the besieged city of Kobane, about a mile from the **border**.

Another concern of **Turkey** is the prospect of Turkish and Syrian Kurds uniting to fight the Islamic State, a move that could advance their dream of an independent state, which **Turkey** has long opposed. The Turkistan Workers' Party (PKK), branded a terrorist group by the United States, has been fighting a guerrilla war with **Turkey** since the 1980s.

Sunday, a leader of the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP) crossed from **Turkey** into Kobane to meet with Syrian Kurds.

"Concrete, practical steps are needed. Then the perception of people will change. ...**Turkey** should not prevent aid heading to Kobane," HDP co-chair Selahattin Demirtas said, according to the Hurriyet Daily News.

Turkey has been under pressure from Washington to do more to curb the advance of the Islamic State. More than 160,000 refugees have poured into **Turkey** in the past week to flee the fighting. Altogether, more than 1.5 million refugees are in **Turkey** after years of civil war in Syria.

Turkey's leaders have proposed a **border** buffer zone that could include ground troops. That plan has been met with suspicion by Kurds, who fear it would cut off Kurdish militias in Syria suspected of being supplied by the PKK.

Turkey had been pushing the idea of establishing a no-fly zone over the **border** area in Syria that might help protect towns and villages across the **border** and lessen the numbers of refugees flooding into **Turkey**.

Washington says it has no plans to establish a no-fly zone. "A buffer zone might at some point become a possibility, but that's not part of our campaign plan presently," said Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gcat : Political/General News

RE turk : Turkey | kurd : Kurdistan | syria : Syria | usa : United States | iraq : Iraq | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | namz : North America | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Resneck, Jacob

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Mail Online

SE News

HD **ISIS flag flies on Europe's doorstep: Jihadis are poised to seize key town... while Nato's tanks hold their fire on Turkish border**

BY JOHN HALL and JACK CRONE FOR MAILONLINE

WC 2,472 words

PD 7 October 2014

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LA English

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LP

* Islamic State terrorists raise the black flag of jihad in Kobane - where Kurdish forces have been resisting for weeks

* Flag was seen being waved on hill on the outskirts of town, before being raised over four-storey building in suburbs

TD

* Brave Kurdish troops still desperately resisting and earlier said they will not let them take city 'for as long as we live'

* But new reports say militants have entered city's eastern districts, engaging in street-to street fighting with defenders

* If Kobani falls ISIS will control unbroken 125-mile stretch of frontier with **Turkey** - 1,000 miles from the EU

* Heavily armed Turkish soldiers stationed on nearby Syrian **border** have been watching the fierce fighting take place

* Mortar shells fired by ISIS militants have fallen inside Turkish territory in recent days damaging homes in Atmanek

* NATO member **Turkey** has announced that alliance's 'joint defence mechanism' will be activated if ISIS breach **border**

Islamic State militants have entered the key strategic city of Kobane, which lies on the Syrian-Turkish **border**, and have taken control of its eastern districts after engaging in street-to-street fighting with Kurdish defenders.

ISIS raised their flag over a building in the outskirts of the town yesterday morning following an assault lasting almost three weeks, amid fears the town could fall to the jihadists within hours.

Kobane is just six miles from the Turkish **border** - the gateway into Europe - and the NATO member country has already called on the international alliance to provide military assistance in the event that ISIS fighters breach the **border**.

Despite the symbolic raising of the flag, the town's brave Kurdish defenders earlier claimed that the terrorists had not reached the city centre and would not be allowed to do so 'for as long as we live'.

Scroll down for video

But ISIS are believed to have now taken the town's industrial zone in the east - as hundreds of civilians flee to the Turkish **border**.

Meanwhile, Turkish tanks were massing across the hillsides just miles away, with soldiers standing atop ready to fire.

Turkey has announced that NATO has drawn up a strategy to defend the country if it is attacked along its **border** with Syria, ABC News reports.

Defense Minister Ismet Yilmaz yesterday said that NATO had done this at **Turkey**'s request, adding: 'If there is an attack, NATO's joint defence mechanism will be activated.'

NATO's Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg also spoke yesterday, claiming that the alliance had 'deployed Patriot missiles in **Turkey** to enhance and strengthen' the country's air defence.

He added: 'The main responsibility for NATO is to protect all allied countries. **Turkey** is a NATO ally and our main responsibility is to protect the integrity, the borders of **Turkey**,' NBC News reports.

Local sources inside Kobane confirmed the group had planted its flag but said that Kurdish forces had repelled their advances so far. At least 20 ISIS militants have so far been killed in their assault on the city yesterday - following the deaths of more than 45 fighters on each side on Sunday.

Charlie Cooper, a spokesman at the Quilliam Foundation, a British counter-extremism think tank, said: ‘The fall of Kobani is perilously close, if not inevitable. It is most likely there will be mass execution of those left fighting. Kobani is important symbolically because it is the last pocket of resistance in northern Syria for hundreds of miles.’

Jenan Moussa, a reporter for the Dubai-based network Al Aan, who is on the **border**, said there were fears in Kobani that ‘all will be killed’.

She posted a series of tweets, including: ‘Isis used booby trAlan Henning calls for David Cameron to send troops to...apped cars to force their way through Kurdish defence lines in Kobani.’ Another read: ‘Isis entered #Kobani from both east & west. They are in the city. Street fights raging.’

Kobane is a town of key strategic importance to both ISIS and the Kurdish resistance due to its close proximity to the largely porous Turkish **border**.

While the city centre is roughly six miles from the barbed wire **fence** that separates **Turkey** from Syria, the city's northern suburbs are so close to **Turkey** that civilians in the Turkish town of Mursitpinar have been able to watch the fighting with binoculars.

Yesterday morning Kurdish fighters inside Kobane - which is also known as Ayn al-Arab and situated right on the Turkish **border** - declared that U.S.-led airstrikes against ISIS targets in northern Syria have had little impact on the militant group, who have continued to seize swathes of territory.

'ISIL have only planted a flag on one building on the eastern side of town,' said Ismail Eskin, a journalist in the town, using an alternative acronym for ISIS.

'That is not inside the city, it's on the eastern side. They are not inside the city. Intense clashes are continuing,' he added.

ISIS has been battling to seize the predominantly Kurdish town after taking over large swathes of territory in Syria and Iraq in recent months.

Air strikes by American and Gulf state warplanes have failed to halt the advance of the Islamists, who have besieged the town from three sides and pounded it with heavy artillery.

'During the day sometimes IS makes advances but YPG pushes them back. There are clashes within the vicinity, but they are not inside the city, YPG is resisting,' said Pawer Mohammed Ali, a translator for the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) inside Kobane.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights and a statement from the Kurdish force known as the People's Protection Units, or YPG, said more than 45 fighters on both sides were killed yesterday near Kobane - including a Kurdish female fighter who blew herself up, killing several jihadists.

Kobane and the surrounding areas have been under attack since mid-September, with ISIS capturing dozens of nearby Kurdish villages.

The assault has forced some 160,000 Syrians to flee - many of them across the porous **border** into neighboring **Turkey** - and has strained Kurdish forces, who have struggled to push back the extremists despite being aided by U.S.-led coalition airstrikes.

ISIS PLOTTING TROJAN HORSE CAMPAIGN BY SMUGGLING MILITANTS INTO EUROPE DISGUISED AS REFUGEES

ISIS is plotting to smuggle militants into Western Europe disguised as refugees so that they can launch devastating terror attacks, according to US intelligence sources.

Encrypted communications unravelled by American military intelligence have revealed that Islamic State leaders are planning to take advantage of the 'chaotic conditions' on the Syria-**Turkey** crossing.

Relaxed **border** controls would allow IS militants to blend in with the thousands of genuine refugees spilling over the **border** in search of safety.

The Trojan Horse tactic would see fighters equipped with fake passports, leaving them free to travel around European countries and plot terrorist attacks unchecked.

A US intelligence source, speaking to German newspaper Bild, said that ISIS was moving away from plans to conduct aircraft hijackings for fear of tight security - and that they were looking to land a new strategy.

'In view of the chaotic conditions on the Syria-**Turkey border**, it is nearly impossible to catch Isis terrorists in the wave of refugees,' wrote Bild.

Because hundreds of refugees cross the Syrian-Turkish **border** every day, the jihadists have a good chance of remaining unnoticed in the crowds.

On the Turkish side of the **border**, at least 14 Turkish army tanks took up defensive positions on a hilltop near Kobane.

Heavy bombardment could be heard down below as plumes of smoke rose from the town.

A shell from the fighting struck a house and a small grocery store across the **border** in **Turkey** yesterday morning, but no one was wounded. At least four people were injured in a similar incident yesterday.

Despite mortars raining down on residential areas in Kobane and the stray fire hitting Turkish territory, Kurdish pleas for help have so far largely gone unanswered.

ISIS wants to take Kobane to consolidate a dramatic sweep across northern Iraq and Syria, in the name of an absolutist version of Sunni Islam, that has sent shockwaves through the Middle East.

Beheadings, mass killings and torture have spread fear of the group across the region, with villages emptying at the approach of pick-up trucks flying Islamic State's black flag.

'If they enter Kobane, it will be a graveyard for us and for them. We will not let them enter Kobane as long as we live,' Esmat al-Sheikh, head of the Kobani Defence Authority, said by telephone earlier on Monday.

'We either win or die. We will resist to the end,' he added as heavy weapons fire echoed from the eastern side of town.

Yesterday morning Kurdish fighters in the city declared that U.S.-led airstrikes against ISIS targets in northern Syria have had little impact on the militant group, who have now advanced to within 1.2 miles of central Kobane - also known as Ayn al-Arab and situated right on the Turkish **border**.

'Air strikes alone are really not enough to defeat Isis in Kobani,' Idris Nassan, a senior spokesman for local Kurdish fighters told the Guardian, using an an alternative name for the city.

'They are besieging the city on three sides, and fighter jets simply cannot hit each and every Isis fighter on the ground,' he added.

The claim comes just two weeks after America extended its bombing campaign beyond Iraq and into northern Syria, an ISIS stronghold - particularly around de facto capital Raqqa, where the vast majority of the terrorist group's operatives are based.

Raqqa is also where the sickening filmed murders of U.S. journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff, and British aid workers David Haines and Alan Henning are believed to have taken place, and where other hostages such as Briton John Cantlie and American Peter Kassig are thought to be held.

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The YPG said in a statement that there were 50 points of clashes around Kobane yesterday, adding that 74 Islamic State fighters as well as 15 Kurdish gunmen were killed. The Observatory, which gathers information from activists inside Syria, said 27 jihadists and 19 Kurds were killed in the battles, making it one of the deadliest days since the latest round of fighting began three weeks ago.

Syrian Kurdish forces have long been among the most effective adversaries of the Islamic State group, keeping it out of their enclave in northeastern Syria even as the extremists routed the armed forces of both Syria and neighboring Iraq in recent months.

But in recent weeks the overstretched Kurds have struggled to counter the increasingly well-armed militants.

Speaking of the militants' response to airstrikes in Kobane, Mr Nassan said: 'Each time a jet approaches, they leave their open positions, they scatter and hide.'

'What we really need is ground support. We need heavy weapons and ammunition in order to fend them off and defeat them,' he added.

Yesterday morning an activist group and a Kurdish official say gunmen defending Kobane repelled a wide offensive by jihadi fighters loyal to ISIS.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights and a statement by the Kurdish YPK force say more than 45 fighters on both sides were killed near the Turkish **border** yesterday.

Kuridsh fighter Deilar Kanji Khamis becomes first female to carry out suicide bomb attack against IS

A Female Kurdish fighter carried out a suicide bomb attack against advancing Islamic State militants, it has emerged.

Deilar Kanj Khamis, known by her military name Arin Mirkan, blew herself up at an IS position east of the **border** town of Kobane, killing ten jihadists.

It was the first known case of a female Kurdish fighter carrying out a suicide bomb attack against IS.

As Kurdish fighters withdrew from a position on the strategic hill of Mistenur, above the city, Khamis stayed behind.

In a desperate attempt to stop them advancing, she attacked IS fighters with gunfire and grenades and then eventually blew herself up, according to a defence official in Syria's Kurdish region.

She was among 15 fighters who 'martyred' themselves after facing jihadists, 'with all their strength', it was reported in a statement.

According to sources, she was a mother with two children, though this was unconfirmed.

While there is little else known about Mirkan, she was a member of the Women's Protection Unit, a branch of the Peoples Protection Units. The force has more than 10,000 female fighters who played a major role in the battles against IS.

Yesterday the force suggested all of their fighters would martyr themselves if it meant defeating IS and protecting the pivotal **border** town.

A statement from the People's Defence Unit read: 'As a result of remarkable resistance by our units on the axes of the city, repelling the invading attacks, 15 of our comrades martyred in action after facing the mercenaries with all the strength.

'Of our martyrs was valiant comrade Arin, she was able to perform a fedai action and kill dozens of ISIS mercenaries and stop their advance, such strong will and determination shown by comrade Arin will be the spirit of resistance in the hearts of all our combatants of the People's Defence Units and Women's Defense Units.

'If necessary, all our fighters will be comrade Arin and shall not allow the mercenaries reach their wishes at whatever cost.'

The YPG had earlier called on all Kurds to join the fight against IS as the radical group edged closer to the centre of the city near the Turkish **border**.

On Sunday night supporters took to Twitter in support of her actions. Kurdihez wrote: 'She fought and died like a hero for us all. Don't forget Arin Mirkan.'

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Another wrote: ‘I weep tonight for a lady I never met, never talked to nor heard, a lady who will always be braver and stronger than me, a lady who is ArinMirkan.

The Observatory's chief Rami Abdurrahman yesterday morning that one of the attacks against Islamic State fighters was carried by a female Kurdish fighter who blew herself up, killing 10 jihadists.

The Kurdish official identified the suicide attacker as Deilar Kanj Khamis.

The Islamic State group has pushed to the outskirts of Kobane as part of a week-long offensive against the town and surrounding villages.

Meanwhile, Syrian government forces yesterday seized control of a strategic area outside Damascus used by rebels to fire mortar shells at the capital.

In shocking pictures, the city's Dakhaniyeh neighberhood, southeast of the city, resembled a post-apocalyptic wasteland with piles of rubble surrounding crumbling buildings.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant | nato : North Atlantic Treaty Organization

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PUB Associated Newspapers

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THE TIMES

SE Middle East
HD **14 die as Kurds riot in Turkey over Isis battle**
BY Hannah Lucinda Smith, Alexander Christie-Miller and Catherine Philp
WC 780 words
PD 8 October 2014
ET 11:31
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SC TIMEUK
LA English
CY © Times Newspapers Limited 2014

LP

Deadly riots erupted across **Turkey** yesterday in which more than a dozen people died after the army watched idly as the Kurdish town of Kobani, just across the Syrian **border**, was swamped by Islamic State fighters.

President Erdogan of **Turkey** chose a visit to the nearby city of Gaziantep to announce that Kobani was "on the verge of falling", even as the Isis artillery continued to pound residential neighbourhoods of the encircled town. Turkish tanks, their turrets pointed towards Kobani, were parked along the **border** within a few hundred metres of the battle, but did not move.

TD

In a desperate attempt to save the town, the US-led coalition changed tactics and started bombing Isis positions during the daytime, but failed to break the three-week siege that has claimed more than 400 lives.

President Erdogan pledged last week that he would not allow Kobani to fall. Yesterday he blamed Nato for his apparent change of heart, insisting that Turkish intervention was contingent on coalition support for a broader strategy to create a safe zone in northern Syria — something the United States rejects. "We asked for three things: for a no-fly zone to be created; for a secure zone parallel to the region to be declared; and for the moderate opposition in Syria and Iraq to be trained and equipped," he said.

His refusal to act sparked fury across **Turkey**. Up to 14 people were killed in violent protests in Istanbul, Ankara and cities in the southeast. Curfews were declared in six southeastern provinces as protesters hurled stones and petrol bombs at government buildings, blocked roads with barricades and burnt buses.

Police responded with tear gas, rubber bullets, water cannon, and, in one case, allegedly with live ammunition that left a 25-year-old man dead in the town of Varto, in eastern Mus province.

The plight of Kobani has monopolised national attention in **Turkey** in recent days, kindling deep-seated anti-government sentiments among the country's 15 million Kurds. "The protests will grow," said Nazmi Gur, an MP for the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic party.

The Democratic Union party, the Kurdish movement whose fighters, known as the YPG, are defending Kobani, have appealed to **Turkey** to create a corridor to allow heavy weapons to reach them, but their pleas have fallen on deaf ears.

"If **Turkey** is really a part of this coalition, they have to open this corridor and allow immediate weapons and support for the people of Kobani," Mr Gur said.

Thousands of Turkish Kurds have travelled to the **border** to watch the battle for Kobani unfold. Turkish security forces have cleared the area close to the **border**, and are using tear gas and water cannon to push onlookers back.

With Kobani on the brink, the US-led coalition launched its heaviest round of airstrikes yet in a last-ditch attempt to stop the town falling to Isis. Four Isis positions to the south and west of Kobani were hit yesterday morning, destroying several armoured vehicles. A second wave of airstrikes in the afternoon hit positions to the west.

Idris Nassan, a senior Kurdish official in Kobani, said the few night strikes in the past two weeks had been largely ineffective. “Isis hides the heavy weaponry at night, in civilian places, so jet fighters cannot find them,” he said.

Ibo Kader, a Kobani resident who fled across the **border** to **Turkey** yesterday, said he had seen two Isis tanks aflame after being hit by coalition airstrikes. “It is the first time I’ve seen tanks hit,” he said. “Why did they wait until the last minute?”

However, the strikes appear to be merely slowing Isis’s advance. The YPG has been locked in street-to-street fighting with the jihadists in the eastern suburbs since Monday. By 4pm yesterday, rifle fire could also be heard from Kobani’s western neighbourhoods.

Elsewhere dozens of Kurdish demonstrators burst into the European Parliament in Brussels to protest. Brandishing Kurdish flags and effigies of their jailed separatist leader Abdullah Ocalan, the men and women broke through a police **barrier** to enter the hall of the building.

They staged a sit-in while several European members of parliament came to meet with them.

Martin Schulz, the European parliament president, said he met the group’s leaders and told them to end their protest peacefully.

He also told them he fully shared their concerns about the situation for civilians in Kobani as well as that more broadly in Syria and Iraq, and promised to convey their message to Nato.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gcivds : Civil Disruption | gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News

RE turk : Turkey | kurd : Kurdistan | syria : Syria | gazian : Gaziantep | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

PUB News UK & Ireland Limited

AN Document TIMEUK0020141007eaa80039j

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theguardian

SE Guardian International Pages

HD **Turkey's Kurdish minority embittered by Ankara's refusal to confront Islamic State: Government's perceived aloofness foments outrage South-east of country hit by violent street clashes**

BY Constanze Letsch Suruc Ian Traynor Brussels

WC 1,020 words

PD 9 October 2014

SN The Guardian

SC GRDN

PG 20

LA English

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LP

The sense of betrayal is palpable. The Kurds on **Turkey**'s southern **border** with Syria are embittered as the tragedy of Kobani unfolds before their eyes on the other side of a wire **fence**.

In Syria, Kurdish fighters of the YPG militias are beleaguered. They were all but unaided until Tuesday when the US-led allies started to bomb Islamic State positions during the day, slowing their advance.

TD

Many now fear that without a more substantial ground offensive, YPG forces will be unable to prevent the fall of Kobani.

The forces might be in the terminal stages of failing to prevent a massacre, but Ankara refuses to allow Kurdish fighters to cross into Syria to relieve the city.

As Turkish troops and tanks stand guard at the **border**, many Kurds are desperate and angry, assaulted by Turkish teargas, water cannon, and police violence.

"Isis are inhuman, they are the terrorists. The YPG is fighting not only for the Kurds, but for all of humanity," said Nesrattin from the **border** town of Siirt. "We're protecting **Turkey**, too. Why can't they see that? We are **Turkey**'s friends."

He is surrounded by a throng of other Kurds from Siirt who have come to the **border** "to make sure that **Turkey** does not support Isis".

The rancour on the **border** is giving way to recrimination across **Turkey** as an incipient Kurdish insurrection gathers steam, as much against Islamist extremism in Syria as against the Turkish authorities after years of Turkish blundering in its policies towards the region.

Turkey's perceived inaction to the situation in Kobani and the conviction of many Kurds that Ankara directly supports Isis militants against Kurdish fighters seems to be the final straw.

Hatice, 38, asked: "Why do they use so much force against us? Many of our friends were hurt in clashes with the police on this side of the **border**. They use teargas and water cannon. We're not doing anything bad, we just want to stand here to support the YPG fighters in Kobani."

More than three years into the Syrian war, the Kobani crisis has all the makings of a watershed moment for **Turkey** and its president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

Turkey's aloofness has outraged the Kurds. There have been clashes and killings in a dozen towns across the south-east in recent days, in Istanbul and Ankara as well as in western Europe, leaving at least 19 dead. Countless buildings are being torched and curfews imposed, including in Diyarbakir, the biggest city in the south-east.

The fall of Kobani to Isis represents a huge threat to Erdoğan, not just from the Sunni militants increasingly controlling his **border**, but from **Turkey**'s Kurds, who make up about 20% of the

population, and their outlawed army, the PKK or the Kurdistan Workers' party, which, until a couple of years ago, had been effectively at war with the Turkish state for 30 years.

According to one European diplomat involved in the effort to build an anti-Isis coalition: "Erdoğan hates the Syrian Kurds. He thinks they're worse than Isis. **Turkey** has many problems with this and has always been ambiguous."

That view appeared to be vindicated this week when Erdoğan equated the Kurds of Kobani with the jihadi assailants. "It is wrong to view them differently, we need to deal with them jointly," he told journalists in Istanbul.

EU officials and diplomats say that when the west presses Erdoğan to get a grip on his borders and stem the flow of foreign fighters to Isis, Ankara angrily dismisses the complaints, arguing that the foreign fighters are a European security issue and that the west refuses to share intelligence on the problem.

In Washington and Europe governments are exasperated at what they regard to be Ankara's cynical calculations in seeking to play one enemy off against another - Isis and the PKK.

Demir Celik, MP for the Kurdish People's Democracy party (HDP) in Mus province, has accused the government of double-dealing. "We have been very patient for a long time, but the government in Ankara did very little. They raised our hopes, but never fulfilled them," he said.

In Celik's home province on Tuesday evening, Hakan Buksur, 25, was reportedly shot by the police during anti-Isis protests. Ankara imposed a curfew on Mus and five other cities, including Diyarbakir.

"This state of emergency will not produce a solution," said Celik. "It did not work in the past and it will not work now."

The violence in Diyarbakir was notable for the fighting between PKK loyalists and Islamist Kurds, with five of eight people killed being from the Free Cause party, or Huda Par, according to local police.

Very conservative religiously, Huda Par has emerged as a rival to the more secular PKK in the Kurdish south-east. Many Kurds see Isis and Huda Par as representing an identical threat of extremism and view Ankara as their sponsors.

In cities such as Adiyaman and Diyarbakir, residents have been accusing Huda Par of recruiting young, mostly Kurdish, men to fight for al-Qaida in Syria while the Turkish government looks the other way.

On the Turkish side of the **border**, the overwhelming view among the Kurds is that Erdoğan is less concerned with the extremists attacking Kobani than with the Syrian Kurds struggling to defend it.

"We will be here to stand watch that they don't help Isis, but every day [the police] uses violence against us," said Rahman, 40, from Siirt. "Why do they do that if not to cover up their actions? They bring up the peace process whenever it suits them. They are not serious."

Leader comment, page 36

Captions:

Kurdish protesters in Diyarbakir, south-east **Turkey**, who are demanding Ankara do more to protect Kurds in Syria, carry an injured man away from clashes with police Photograph: Sertac Kayar/Reuters

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS greg : Regional Politics | gterr : Acts of Terror | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | gpol : Domestic Politics | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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IPC article-CLITturkeykurds.1

PUB Guardian Newspapers Limited

AN Document GRDN000020141008eaa90007r

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SE Regional

HD **Erdogan's dangerous game: Turkey's refusal to fight ISIS hurts the kurds**

WC 304 words

PD 9 October 2014

ET 11:31

SN ARMENPRESS News Wire

SC ARMENE

LA English

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LP

YEREVAN, OCTOBER 9, ARMENPRESS: **Turkey**'s president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, once aspired to lead the Muslim world. At this time of regional crisis, he has been anything but a leader. Turkish troops and tanks have been standing passively behind a chicken-wire **border fence** while a mile away in Syria, Islamic extremists are besieging the town of Kobani and its Kurdish population, reports Armenpress referring to The New York Times.

This is an indictment of Mr. Erdogan and his cynical political calculations. By keeping his forces on the sidelines and refusing to help in other ways - like allowing Kurdish fighters to pass through **Turkey** - he seeks not only to weaken the Kurds, but also, in a test of will with President Obama, to force the United States to help him oust President Bashar al-Assad of Syria, whom he detests.

TD

Mr. Erdogan's behavior is hardly worthy of a NATO ally. He was so eager to oust Mr. Assad that he enabled ISIS and other militants by allowing fighters, weapons and revenues to flow through **Turkey**. If Mr. Erdogan refuses to defend Kobani and seriously join the fight against the Islamic State, he will further enable a savage terrorist group and ensure a poisonous long-term instability on his **border**.

He has also complicated his standing at home. His hesitation in helping the Syrian Kurds has enraged **Turkey**'s Kurdish minority, which staged protests against the Turkish government on Wednesday that reportedly led to the deaths of 21 people. Mr. Erdogan fears that defending Kobani would strengthen the Syrian Kurds, who have won de facto control of many **border** areas as they seek autonomy much like their Kurdish brethren in Iraq. But if Kobani falls, Kurdish fury will undoubtedly grow.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gdip : International Relations | gpol : Domestic Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE syria : Syria | turk : Turkey | kurd : Kurdistan | yerevn : Yerevan | armen : Armenia | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | ussrz : CIS Countries | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Regional

PUB Armenpress CJSC

AN Document ARMENE0020141009eaa90002y

DECCAN Chronicle
NO. 1 IN SOUTH INDIA

HD **Kurds, jihadists in heavy fighting near Turkish border**

WC 249 words

PD 13 October 2014

SN Deccan Chronicle

SC DECCLE

LA English

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LP

Mursitpinar: Heavy fighting broke out on Monday between Islamist jihadists and Kurdish fighters close to the Turkish **border** just north of the besieged Syrian town of Kobane, an AFP correspondent reported. The clashes threatened to cut all access from Kobane to the Turkish **border** and block the passage which which has so far allowed some 200,000 refugees from the Kobane area to find refuge in **Turkey**. Clashes with automatic gunfire and mortar fire were taking place an an area less than one kilometre (half a mile) from the barbed wire **fence** that marks the **border** between Syria and **Turkey**, the correspondent on the Turkish side of the **border** reported. Meanwhile the US-led international coalition carried out at least two new air strikes against positions held by Islamic State militants (IS) in and around Kobane. The first took place a little before 0430 GMT, witnesses said, while the second in the late morning struck at the heart of Kobane and sent a huge plume of smoke

TD

into the sky, the correspondent reported. **Turkey** has so far not intervened in the battle for Kobane despite building up its military presence on the **border**. Over the last day, new Turkish tanks and artillery arrived with their weaponry pointing towards Kobane. US officials said at the weekend that **Turkey** agreed to let American forces use its air bases for the campaign against the jihadists. But this has yet to be confirmed by Ankara.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

RE turk : Turkey | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD World

PUB Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited

AN Document DECCLE0020141013eaad0007a

HD **Clashes near border as Turkey denies use of bases to battle IS**

BY Burak Akinci with Rita Daou in Beirut

WC 837 words

PD 13 October 2014

ET 14:29

SN Agence France Presse

SC AFPR

LA English

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LP

Kurdish fighters engaged in fierce clashes with jihadists on the Turkish **border** near Kobane on Monday, as Ankara denied allowing Washington to use its bases against the Islamic State group.

US officials had earlier said **Turkey** would also host training for "moderate" Syrian rebels, in the hopes of finally creating a force capable of tackling IS on the ground.

TD

"There is no new agreement with the United States about Incirlik," a Turkish government official told AFP of an air base in southern **Turkey** that the US wants to use to launch air strikes.

"Negotiations are continuing" based on Turkish conditions previously laid out, the official added.

Near Kobane, fighting spread early Monday to the **border** area just north of the flashpoint town, threatening to cut it off from the outside world.

IS fighters were also putting strong pressure on pro-government forces in Iraq, with concern over Anbar province and the key oil refinery of Baiji.

With the jihadists advancing on its doorstep, NATO member **Turkey** has come under intense pressure to take action as part of a US-led coalition that has been carrying out air strikes in Syria and Iraq.

US officials said **Turkey** had agreed to let Washington use its bases including Incirlik for the air campaign.

Pentagon chief Chuck Hagel said the agreement included "hosting and conducting training for Syrian opposition members" in **Turkey**, noting that Ankara would welcome a US Command team next week to "develop a training regimen".

US military planners have repeatedly warned that the air campaign alone will not be enough to defeat IS, which in June declared an Islamic "caliphate" in the large parts of Syria and Iraq under its control.

Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu on Sunday called for military backing for Syria's "moderate opposition" to create a "third force" in the war-torn country to take on the Damascus regime as well as IS militants.

Near Kobane, clashes with automatic gunfire and mortar fire were taking place less than a kilometre (half a mile) from the barbed wire **fence** that marks the **border** between Syria and **Turkey**, an AFP reporter on the Turkish side said.

Turkey had moved reinforcements to the **border** including more tanks and self-propelled artillery, the reporter said.

The US-led international coalition launched at least two new air strikes against IS positions in the area, with one striking the heart of the town and sending a huge plume of smoke skywards.

Kobane has become a highly visible symbol of resistance to IS and its fall would give the jihadists control of a long stretch of the **Turkey**-Syria **border**.

But concern has also been growing over Iraq, where IS fighters have been threatening to seize more territory.

Iraqi forces are reported to be under intensifying pressure in Anbar province between Baghdad and the Syrian **border**, where a roadside bomb killed the police chief on Sunday.

On Monday, security sources said Iraqi government troops stationed on the edge of the city of Heet in Anbar had withdrawn to another base, leaving the city under full jihadist control.

Pro-government forces have also been in trouble around Baiji oil refinery south of IS-held Mosul, where US military aircraft on Sunday for the first time dropped supplies including food, water and ammunition to Iraqi troops.

Washington has insisted it will not send ground troops back to Iraq and Secretary of State John Kerry said Sunday the Iraqis themselves will have to succeed on the ground.

"Ultimately it is Iraqis who will have to take back Iraq. It is Iraqis in Anbar who will have to fight for Anbar," he said in Cairo.

IS has committed widespread atrocities in areas under its control, including attacks on civilians, mass executions, beheadings and enslaving women.

In the latest issue of its propaganda magazine Dabiq released on Sunday, IS boasted of having revived slavery, giving Yazidi women and children captured in northern Iraq to its fighters as spoils of war.

IS believes the Yazidis hold deviant religious beliefs and claims that Islamic sharia law allows for their enslavement.

"After capture, the Yazidi women and children were then divided according to the sharia amongst the fighters of the Islamic State," the article said.

The group has also murdered four Western hostages in on-camera beheadings, and on Sunday hundreds of people gathered in northwest England for a memorial service for British aid volunteer Alan Henning.

The 47-year-old taxi driver had travelled to Syria to help Muslim colleagues deliver aid in a convoy, but was kidnapped and his murder claimed by IS in a graphic video released on October 3.

More than 180,000 people have been killed in Syria since an uprising against President Bashar al-Assad's regime began in 2011, evolving into a several-sided civil war that has drawn thousands of jihadists from overseas.

bur-mm/srm

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | grisk : Risk News

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IPD Recit

PUB Agence France-Presse

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BBC MONITORING

HD **Turkish paper calls for corridor to Kobane to safeguard ties with Kurds**

WC 1,519 words

PD 17 October 2014

ET 13:57

SN BBC Monitoring European

SC BBCEUP

LA English

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LP

Text of report by Turkish newspaper Radikal website on 15 October

[Commentary by Cengiz Candar: "What Needs To Be Done Immediately..."]

TD

A "modus vivendi" must at all costs be found between the AKP [Justice and Development Party] government and the Kurdish political movement. The grounds and infrastructure of the Turkish-Kurdish unity, which is a priority for the stability of our country and the future of the region, must be safeguarded at all costs.

I read the English version of this Tweet a little after midnight:

"Air strikes in #Kobani over the past 48 hours destroyed #ISIL [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant] assault units, staging areas, shelters; and in #Raqqa, a garrison. #Syria"

The person who wrote that Tweet is important: Brett McGurk. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Iraq and Iran in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. His position corresponds to that of deputy undersecretary in our country. I had watched him at a symposium in Sulaimaniya in March. His close relations with all Iraqi political actors and particularly with the Kurds had drawn my attention. He came a few days ago to hold meetings together with retired General John Allen for the cooperation against ISIL.

Yesterday, we witnessed the development that confirmed the reliable reports regarding McGurk's influence in the airstrikes in Kobani. For the first time in over three weeks, optimistic messages were received from the forces defending the city. They were capable to take initiative to launch a counter-attack. A village to the west of the city and certain hills surrounding it were recaptured from ISIL. The ISIL flag was hauled down in certain positions in the east where the heaviest attacks had taken place.

Can we say that the tables are turned in Kobani? I do not know. In the last issue of Der Spiegel, the statements Ibrahim Kurdo, the "Kobani Canton" official in charge of foreign relations, shouted out in furor a few days ago in a phone conversation:

"IS (Islamic State) fighters are coming by the thousands, with tanks, but mainly on foot from the south and the east. Their numbers are constantly growing. It is like in 'The Lord of the Rings,' and we cannot stop them. They run, shoot, run, shoot, they do not even care if they die."

Der Spiegel reported that, as of last Friday, ISIL is fighting with a force of 9,000 fighters coming from Raqqa, Deir Ezzor, al-Bab, and from all corners of the "Caliphate State," against a Kurdish force of 3,000. Der Spiegel also noted that the "Kobani Canton" official in charge of foreign relations had spoken more optimistically on Thursday where 14 powerful airstrikes had been carried out.

The longer the time period is stretched out in Kobani, the more ISIL's defeat of the Kurds becomes inevitable considering that ISIL seems to be supported with tanks, modern heavy machine guns, mortars, arms, and fighters, and the Kurds do not have anything to defend themselves apart from a few bazookas and light Kalashnikovs.

Only a merciless air operation can stop that. That is apparently what is happening now. It can stop that, but, can it thwart it completely?

That is a question mark...

Kobani has become very important for everyone - and not only those who are directly linked to it and are fighting there - in terms of the future of millions of people, the stability of countries, their internal balance, foreign politics, and international relations.

As a matter of fact, this is what Der Spiegel wrote:

"Victory in Kobani would be a triumph for the Islamic State because it would deliver proof that the terrorist militia cannot even be stopped by an alliance led by a superpower like the United States. It is even possible that developments in Kobani will determine whether the US-led coalition remains intact and prevails in the battle against ISIL.

If the city falls into the hands of the jihadists, Kobani would also become a disaster for **Turkey**, for the peace process between Ankara and the PKK [Kurdistan People's Congress, KGK] and for the entire country's stability."

Last week's incidents clearly showed that. It is possible to understand the inseparable relation between the fate of Kobani and Turkish Kurds' perception of future from the philippic HDP [Peoples' Democratic Party] Co-chair Selahattin Demirtas launched yesterday against the government, in which he explained the reason the HDP called on the people to demonstrate:

"In Mursitpinar, ISIL was about to capture the **border** gate. The coalition's planes did not strike, they simply flew idly. What we wanted was that 'the necessary be done with the PYD [Democratic Union Party], that our people expose that situation, and that they send a distress signal.' We took to the streets together with our people. We stand behind that call. Together with that call, the coalition planes started to hit ISIL in Kobani. We wanted to expose those countries including **Turkey**. Did we make a single call for violence? The patience of all people has its limits. You may be able to have your cadres act upon your orders. We are not one of them. Have you not learned that? Is there anything worse than death? What are you threatening us with? If there is provocation, and [referring to the government] you saw that, then why did you not from the first day join forces with the HDP and solve the problem, and instead said 'Kobani will fall'?"

In fact, - if that is not a coincidence - one may see a direct relation between the uprising of the Kurds in **Turkey** for Kobani and the intensification of the airborne operation against ISIL. The date of Brett McGurk's first Tweet announcing that the airborne operation caused serious losses to ISIL is 9 October. The date of the first powerful airborne operation against ISIL that brought hope to the "Kobani Canton" official in charge of foreign affairs we mentioned earlier, is 8 October.

One can also talk about the fact that once the "coalition" started to be effective in Kobani, **Turkey** started to face extremely negative and dangerous developments.

It is known that the relative settling down of the incidents - rather frighteningly and for the time being - was only possible with Abdullah Ocalan's involvement. Demirtas relayed the full text of Ocalan's "message":

"Your contact with the government in order to quell the city incidents that resulted from ISIL's siege of Kobani is of vital importance, otherwise, we will have caused provocation that may lead to massacre. The sides must abandon their interest-based defiant stand. Under the circumstances, the way to accelerate the solution process is directly dependent on your success. It is very important, and it is our right to expect the government to take speedy steps. It is important to solve the situation through dialogue together with the NGOs, which we had to fight at the beginning. Expecting to see the necessary sensitivity in those issues, and hoping to see you soon. Regards, Abdullah Ocalan."

In his article in yesterday's Radikal, Ahmet Insel described very accurately the way Abdullah Ocalan came into play:

"We are watching a get-the-upper-hand game where the 'president' is suffering from a failure of engine brakes because he does not lift his foot from the accelerator, and the head of the government, the ministers and party leaders who see that forgot about the existence of the brake pedal in order not to fall behind the president. Those who saw last week that the car is about to crash into the **wall** slammed their foot on the brake before things got totally out of hand. The handbrake was in Imrali. The message Ocalan sent managed to stop the spiral of violence to the point that a handbrake can stop a vehicle going downhill. The car could have turned upside down. We hope that the 'president,' the head of the government, and the party leaders and supporters who are blinded by the race to curry favour with the president, have detected the thick smell of balata that filled the air."

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If the speeches delivered yesterday are to give us a clue, we can conclude that the "thick smell of balata" was not detected at all.

The incidents of last week may come back to life tenfold with the influence of the potential developments in Kobani, and perhaps Afrin and Jazira.

If we have already entered such dangerous territory, it is necessary at all costs to find a "modus vivendi" between the AKP government and the Kurdish political movement.

The grounds and infrastructure of the Turkish-Kurdish unity, which is a priority for the stability of our country and the future of the region, must be safeguarded at all costs.

To that end, what needs to be done today, and the shortest way to do it - and despite everything, it is not too late to do it - is to open a "corridor" to Kobani.

Source: Radikal website, Istanbul, in Turkish 0000 gmt 15 Oct 14

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gdip : International Relations | gterr : Acts of Terror | nedc : Commentaries/Opinions | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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PUB The British Broadcasting Corporation

AN Document BBCEUP0020141017eaah001p5

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HD **ISIS-Kurdish fight stirs trouble in Turkey**

BY By Ivan Watson CNN

WC 1,377 words

PD 20 October 2014

ET 20:00

SN CNN Wire

SC CNNWR

LA English

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LP

GAZIANTEP, **Turkey** (CNN) -- **Turkey** made a significant policy shift Monday when it announced it would allow Kurdish Peshmerga fighters from northern Iraq to travel through the Turkish territory to reinforce the besieged Kurdish town of Kobani in northern Syria.

The announcement was all the more striking, because earlier this month **Turkey**'s President equated the Kurdish militants defending Kobani to the ISIS fighters who were laying siege to the town. Both the Kurdish and ISIS militants are, in the words of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, "terrorists."

TD

"**Turkey** feels like it has fallen into the subway tracks and is surrounded by live rails," said Hugh Pope, senior **Turkey** analyst with the International Crisis Group, a conflict mediation organization. "It is very difficult for **Turkey** to make any choice."

Turkey's historically troubled relations with its own ethnic Kurdish population is one reason Ankara balked at joining the U.S.-led coalition bombing the militants who call themselves the Islamic State.

Fighting triggers violence within **Turkey**

But **Turkey**'s noninterference policy came at a cost.

The scenes of Kurdish and ISIS fighters locked in a death struggle on the **border**, as well as the images of more than 100,000 desperate Syrian Kurds fleeing to Turkish territory, triggered spasms of deadly violence between rival factions within **Turkey**.

Kurdish politicians in **Turkey** accused the Turkish government of siding with ISIS by refusing to arm Kobani's defenders. Kurds then took to the streets in protest.

More than 30 people were killed in cities around **Turkey** this month as ethnic Kurds clashed with Islamist and nationalist groups as well as Turkish police.

"All of these constituencies are getting fired up by the scenes on television that they're seeing in the Middle East," said Pope of the International Crisis Group. "This has led for the first time in 20 years to gangs taking to the streets and killing each other."

Disruption on peaceful campus

On Friday, the battle for Kobani was felt at one of **Turkey**'s most elite institutions, Bogazici University.

On a leafy campus overlooking Istanbul's Bosphorus Strait, friends, relatives and fellow academics gathered to remember a 30-year old sociologist named Suphi Nejat Agirnasli.

Agirnasli, a member of **Turkey**'s Marxist-Leninist Communist Party, was reported killed this month in Kobani after he volunteered to join Kurdish militants defending the city.

Mourners waved red communist flags and chanted "ISIS killers" as they marched carrying Agirnasli's portrait through the usually peaceful campus.

Agirnasli's death shocked some Turks, who have felt Turkey's largest city was somehow insulated from the turmoil in the Middle East.

"I never thought that someone from our university would actually go there and get killed," said Suveyda Cil, 19, a Bogazici student. "I never thought I was so close to these situations because it's so far from Istanbul, but now it's so close."

One of Agirnasli's professors said he understood why his former student volunteered to fight alongside the Kurds, even though Agirnasli wasn't a Kurd.

"What's going on in Kobani today is basically kind of a struggle against barbarians ... against people who have no sense of humanity," said Zafer Yenal, the head of Bogazici's sociology department. "Probably (Suphi) Nejat was very shocked. He basically saw this and wanted to be there in some capacity."

Battle for Kobani threatens peace talks

An estimated 20% of Turkey's population is made up of ethnic Kurds. Historically, the Turkish government has persecuted and marginalized this community, referring to them for years as "mountain Turks."

In 1984, a group of Marxist-inspired guerrillas calling themselves the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, began fighting an insurgent war against the Turkish state. The conflict would ebb and flow for the next 30 years.

The PKK initially fought to carve an independent Kurdistan out of Kurdish-populated regions of Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Iran. But the bulk of the bloodshed took place in southeastern Turkey, resulting in the deaths of more than 30,000 people over three decades.

The PKK was accused of assassinating teachers, police officers and rival Kurdish activists. Meanwhile, the Turkish security forces demolished hundreds of Kurdish villages in an attempt to destroy support for the separatists.

The United States and European Union joined their NATO ally Turkey in labeling the PKK a terrorist organization.

Since coming to power in Turkey some 12 years ago, Erdogan pushed to open peace talks with the PKK. Meanwhile, the PKK has dropped its demands for an independent state, instead calling for greater autonomy and cultural and linguistic rights within Turkey.

"This peace process is one of the only good things happening in the Middle East today," Pope said.

But the Kobani-related violence inside Turkey has threatened to derail the peace process.

ISIS finds some support within Turkey

Complicating matters further is that ISIS has found some support within Turkey's majority Muslim society.

Hundreds of Turks are believed to have joined the movement.

Some appeared in propaganda videos urging their countrymen to join ISIS' ranks.

"We have come here to Syria for jihad to practice God's religion, to practice jihad on God's path, and to gain God's sustenance to, God willing, go to his heaven," one bearded man holding a machine gun told the camera in Turkish.

Another unnamed Turkish militant explained in a video why he left his three children behind in Istanbul to join ISIS in Syria.

"When the children are dying here, my conscience did not let me stay and love my children. If you come here, there is dignity, honor, everything is here," the man said. "Instead of staying in Turkey and living in contempt, standing guard here for one night would be better for you."

ISIS supporters have emerged on at least one Istanbul university campus.

On September 26, students filmed more than 10 men wearing masks and carrying clubs yelling, "Allahu Akbar" ("God is great"), in the literature department at Istanbul University. The video then showed these Islamist students attacking leftist students who had been protesting against ISIS.

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The International Crisis Group's Pope said that when it comes to ISIS "there's a conflicted feeling in **Turkey**. There's a condemnation of the methods. At the same time there's a sympathy for the cause."

One Turk strongly sympathizing with ISIS is Ali Osman Zor, a self-described "Islamic revolutionary" and enthusiastic member of the Great Eastern Islamic Raiders' Front.

Zor, who spent several years in prison on terrorism convictions, now edits a magazine published in Istanbul that endorses ISIS.

In an interview with CNN, Zor said he supported ISIS' violent methods, arguing they were a natural response to what he claimed were decades of Western imperialism in the Middle East as well as Kurdish and Shiite Muslim persecution of Sunni Muslims in Iraq.

"We saw one man killed," Zor said, referring to the multiple beheadings and executions ISIS militants filmed on camera and distributed over social media.

"What about all the people killed by U.S. airstrikes? We haven't forgotten about Abu Ghraib," he added, referring to the notorious prison where Americans soldiers were photographed abusing Iraqi prisoners during the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

Pope advises against **Turkey** being drawn further into the Syrian civil war.

"**Turkey** has all the fractures you have in the Middle East: the sectarian Sunni-non-Sunni divide, the ethnic divide between Kurds and Turks, the political divide between Islamists and non-Islamists," he warned.

"All these fault lines can break open in a very bad way."

On Monday, a top adviser to the Turkish President defended Ankara's decision not to attack ISIS.

In an op-ed in The **Wall** Street Journal, deputy secretary-general of the presidency, Ibrahim Kalin, argued instead that the U.S.-led coalition should focus on overthrowing Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

"ISIS's barbaric beheadings and summary executions, horrible and disgusting as they are, should not shadow the war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated by Mr. Assad," Kalin wrote.

"Hitting ISIS while ignoring the Assad regime alone is a shortsighted strategy that will not end the bloodshed in Syria and Iraq."

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant | itlcru : International Crisis Group

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IPD turkey-isis-1

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.
ASIA EDITION

HD **Turkey Shifts Position To Bolster Syrian Kurds**

BY By Joe Parkinson
WC 1,016 words
PD 21 October 2014
SN The Wall Street Journal Asia
SC AWSJ
PG 1
LA English
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LP

ISTANBUL -- Under U.S. pressure, **Turkey** agreed to allow Iraqi Kurdish forces to cross its territory to reinforce the besieged Kobani, a striking shift in policy hours after U.S. aircraft dropped weapons for the first time to aid fighters in the Syrian city.

The new aid efforts were just the latest example of how the battle against extremist group Islamic State is reconfiguring regional alliances.

TD

Turkish Foreign minister Mevlut Cavusoglu on Monday said his government was "aiding the transfer of Peshmerga forces to Kobani for support," referring to fighters under control of the semiautonomous Kurdistan region in Iraq.

Kobani borders **Turkey** and the U.S. decided to arm the Syrian Kurdish fighters there over **Turkey**'s objections. The airdrops signaled to the government in Ankara that Washington had other options to support the militia trying to fend off an Islamic State takeover even if they couldn't use air or land routes through Turkish territory.

Turkey had previously opposed allowing a corridor of weapons and fighters across its territory to relieve the city, which has been under attack by Islamic State for a month. The offensive is part of a larger campaign by the group, which has captured large tracts of territory in Syrian and neighboring Iraq since June.

Syria, **Turkey**, Iraq and Iran all have sizable Kurdish populations under different leadership. **Turkey**'s government is wary of the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia defending Kobani because it is loyal to the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK in **Turkey**, which Ankara has fought in a low-intensity war for three decades.

Less than a week ago, Turkish fighter jets bombed the Iraqi headquarters of the PKK.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, speaking in Jakarta, said the U.S. airdrop was a temporary measure and confirmed that Washington had asked **Turkey** to allow passage for Iraqi Kurdish fighters.

"It would be irresponsible of us, as well morally very difficult, to turn your back on a community fighting [Islamic State] as hard as it is at this particular moment," Mr. Kerry told reporters, adding that the U.S. understood the fundamentals of **Turkey**'s opposition to any kind of terrorist group, particularly with respect to the PKK.

Syrian Kurdish commanders, who had repeatedly complained that U.S.-led airstrikes would be insufficient to drive away the militants without new supplies of ammunition and heavy weapons, warmly welcomed the U.S. help and said it could shift the dynamics on the battlefield. Iraqi Kurdish officials said they stood ready to send Peshmerga units to aid their Syrian brethren.

Turkey has been under significant international pressure to expand efforts to stop the Islamic State advance on Kobani.

In recent days, U.S. officials were growing increasingly alarmed that fast-declining Kurdish supplies in Kobani would soon run out and were lobbying Ankara to execute a previously devised plan to inject Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga forces through Turkish territory.

Turkish officials publicly voiced opposition to arming the Syrian Kurdish militia but privately told the Americans that they were comfortable with the Iraqi Kurds loyal to their ally Massoud Barzani playing a bigger role in Kobani's defense, so long as they didn't strengthen PKK-linked fighters.

Sinan Ulgen, a former Turkish diplomat now at the Carnegie Endowment in Brussels said the Turkish move stemmed from **Turkey**'s desire to repair frictions with Washington over how to tackle Islamic State and to bolster Ankara's faltering peace process with the Kurdistan Workers' Party, which has come under heavy pressure in the wake of the attack on Kobani.

"There are two reasons why **Turkey** were forced to acquiesce to this: firstly, a stronger awareness in Ankara that the fall of Kobani could upend **Turkey**'s peace process," Mr. Ulgen said.

"Second, because Ankara wants leverage in Washington to help their ultimate objective of convincing the U.S. to give stronger support to the Turkish goal of regime change in Syria."

Last week, 36 Kurds were killed in antigovernment demonstrations against Ankara's perceived failure to intervene more decisively in Kobani despite stationing troops and tanks on the hills across the **border** with a view of the city.

U.S. President Barack Obama informed Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan about the impending airdrop in a phone conversation on Saturday, signaling that Turkish objections wouldn't stop Washington from providing weapons to the Syrian Kurds in their monthlong campaign against Islamic State.

Three U.S. C-130 cargo planes dropped 27 bundles of weapons, ammunition and medical supplies in northwestern Kobani, U.S. officials. The mission marks a deeper U.S. involvement in the conflict but also boosts the credibility of the Syrian Kurdish militia -- and by extension the PKK -- as more legitimate international actors, said Aaron Stein, associate fellow at the Royal United Services Institute, a London-based think tank.

"**Turkey** has stood by while Kobani has become the 'Stalingrad' of Kurdistan and legitimized the Syrian Kurds and the PKK in the eyes of the international community. Now the U.S. is all in and **Turkey** looks impotent," Mr. Stein said.

Idres Nassan, an official of the local Kobani government, said the Kurds there would be able to gauge the impact of the U.S. airdrops only after they unpacked the boxes and assessed the weapons and ammunition inside.

Syrian Kurdish leaders, who are in Iraqi Kurdistan for talks on military collaboration, said this could be a game changer.

"This is a turning point that will set the foundation for better ties in the future," Aldar Khalil, senior leader in the Social Democratic Movement, an umbrella group for Syrian Kurdish parties.

"This is a huge deal," Mr. Khalil told The **Wall** Street Journal.

Further support for the Syrian Kurdish fighters now hinges on the ability of the PYD and its allies to forge unity with other Syrian Kurdish parties particularly those backed by Mr. Barzani, a long-standing U.S. ally who has also built strong economic and security ties with **Turkey** since 2008.

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HD **Turkey helps peshmerga cross into Kobani, US drops arms to PYD**

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LP

ANKARA (CİHAN)- DENİZ ARSLAN

In a major policy shift, **Turkey** has announced that it is assisting peshmerga forces to cross into Kobani to fight against the radical Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) upon the request of US officials; meanwhile, the US air-dropped small arms and medical aid to the Kurdish fighters in Kobani over the weekend.

TD

Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said on Monday that **Turkey** is helping the Iraqi Kurdish forces to cross into the Syrian **border** town of Kobani to fight against ISIL. "We never wanted Kobani to fall," said Çavuşoğlu during a joint press conference with visiting Tunisian Foreign Minister Mongi Hamdi in Ankara.

Çavuşoğlu did not elaborate further on how **Turkey** is facilitating Kurdish forces to cross into Syria.

His statement came after the US military announced that it had air-dropped arms to Syrian Kurds battling ISIL near Kobani, the first such delivery after more than a month of fighting. US military officials announced on Sunday that they dropped weapons, ammunitions and medical supplies to the Democratic Union Party (PYD), the Syrian branch of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The PKK is classified as a terrorist organization by the US, **Turkey** and the European Union.

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) on Monday welcomed the US air-drop over the weekend. "As part of the Kurdistan Region's continuous efforts to support western Kurdistan in general and Kobane in particular, weapons and military aid were delivered to Kobane today from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq by American cargo jets. The Kurdistan Region Presidency expresses its gratitude to the United States government for its air support for Kurdistan against the terrorists of ISIS," said the KRG on its website.

According to the American press, a senior US military official said on Sunday that Kurds fighting in Kobani needed more ammunition and weapons to confront ISIL. "We do assess they are low on munitions and supplies," the official said.

US Secretary of State John Kerry on Monday signaled that reluctant **Turkey** has been convinced by the US. Kerry said on Monday that dropping weapons was a temporary measure and the US had asked **Turkey** to allow passage for the Iraqi Kurdish fighters. "It would be irresponsible of us, as well as morally very difficult, to turn your back on a community fighting ISIL as hard as it is at this particular moment," said Kerry to journalists in Jakarta.

Kerry said the US administration understands **Turkey**'s concerns of weapons aid to the Kurds in the region who are linked to the PKK, but he said resupplying Kobani was absolutely necessary in a "crisis moment."

"Let me say very respectfully to our allies the Turks that we understand fully the fundamentals of their opposition and ours to any kind of terrorist group, and particularly, obviously, the challenges they face with respect to the PKK," he said, adding: "But we have undertaken a coalition effort to degrade and destroy ISIL, and ISIL is presenting itself in major numbers in this place called Kobani," he added. Kerry said the ISIL militants had chosen to "make this a ground battle, attacking a small group of people there who -- while they are an offshoot group of the folks that our friends the Turks oppose -- they are valiantly fighting ISIL and we cannot take our eye off the prize here."

US President Barack Obama spoke on the phone with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan after Erdoğan's return from an official visit to Afghanistan on Saturday. The White House said in a statement on Sunday that Obama called Erdoğan to discuss Syria, particularly the situation in Kobani and "steps that could be taken to counter ISIL's advances."

"The President expressed appreciation for **Turkey** hosting over a million refugees, including thousands from Kobani. The two leaders pledged to continue to work closely together to strengthen cooperation against ISIL. They also discussed the need for continuing close cooperation on efforts to consolidate peace and stability in Afghanistan," said the White House. An unnamed US official told American press that Obama notified Erdoğan about his administration's plans to make air drops to PYD during the call, but did not describe Erdoğan's reaction, only saying that US understands that **Turkey** opposes any aid to Kurdish forces, which **Turkey** sees as an enemy.

A belated decision

Main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) Adana deputy and veteran Turkish diplomat Faruk Loğoğlu has said the government's decision to allow peshmerga forces to cross into Kobani to help Kurdish fighters is a "belated one."

"The [Turkish] government should have made that decision at a much earlier point in time. An earlier move could have saved lives in Kobani, halt ISIL's advances, shown our solidarity with the Kurds and spared **Turkey** from the bloody Kobani demonstrations," Loğoğlu told Today's Zaman on Monday.

Kurds in **Turkey** have been protesting the Turkish government's reluctance to help Kurdish forces in Kobani against ISIL.

Loğoğlu supported the US dropping weapons, medicine and food to the Kobani Kurds as an "appropriate act, consistent with both the aims of the anti-ISIL coalition and tenets of humanitarian intervention." "Unfortunately, that action has come a bit too late and under pressure from the US. But better late than never. Of course, the move also underlines the rift between Ankara and Washington over the identity of the PYD and means that at the end of the day, Washington simply ignores what the Turkish government thinks about the issue," said Loğoğlu.

He said the Turkish government's move is probably designed to prevent further the country from becoming further marginalized in the fight against ISIL, to appease the Kurds in and outside **Turkey** and to deflect greater American pressure for deeper involvement in fighting ISIL.

KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani said they are in constant contact with **Turkey** and the US over providing help to Kobani, according to a report by the Kurdish Rudaw news agency on Monday. Barzani also said 10,000 people from Kobani have come to the KRG seeking refuge, and that the KRG supports Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi in seeking a solution to the regional problems.

PKK emboldens its position

Kawa Hassan, a Kurdish expert with Carnegie Middle East Center and Hivos, a Dutch development organization, said the PYD and the PKK are emboldened by the enormous support they have received from Kurds all over the world for standing up to ISIL in Kobani despite being outnumbered and ill-equipped, the **Wall** Street Journal (WSJ) reported on Monday.

"There is a growing sense among many Kurds that the PKK is the only force that can confront ISIS," said Hassan to WSJ.

Up until today, **Turkey** refused the idea of opening a corridor for fighters and weapons transfers to help Kobani against ISIL. Erdoğan said over the weekend that it is "impossible" for **Turkey** to support the idea of arming the PYD.

Çavuşoğlu on Monday did not mention the US dropping small arms to PYD forces over the weekend.

ISIL's siege of Kobani has been halted by recent military air strikes by the US-led coalition forces. Unnamed US officials in the Western press have criticized **Turkey** for not acting to help the Kurds in Kobani. The Turkish military has sent 10,000 troops to the **border** and a number of tanks have been deployed over the **Turkey**-Syria **border**, in visible distance to Kobani.

The US Central Command made a statement on Sunday saying that the vast majority of the airdropped supplies reached the intended Kurdish fighters. An official from the Central Command said that three C-130 planes dropped 27 pieces which consists of small arms, ammunition and medical supplies.

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Unnamed US official from the administration told reporters that there might be more US resupply missions to the Kurdish fighters in Kobani in the coming days. Another official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said further air drops by the US requires **Turkey**'s cooperation and talks on resupply needs and means will continue.

The state-run Anadolu news agency posted on Twitter that the discussions about the peshmerga crossings and the aid that will go to Kobani is continuing, according to the Prime Ministry sources talking to Anadolu.

The US has been working on building a strong coalition against ISIL. **Turkey** has been reluctant to provide contribution to this coalition and insists on removing the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria from power as a priority. **Turkey** also pushes for the establishment of a safe zone and a no-fly zone inside Syria to curb the refugee influx into **Turkey**. (Cihan/Today's Zaman)

CİHAN

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

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SE World
HD **US crosses Rubicon to arm Peshmerga**
BY Adam Entous, Joe Parkinson, Washington
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LP

Delicate diplomacy was needed to allow the Kobane airdrop

WASHINGTON: In public, the Obama administration argued for weeks that Kobane was not strategically vital to the air campaign against Islamic State extremists. Behind the scenes, however, top officials concluded the Syrian city had become too symbolically important to lose and they raced to save it.

TD

As the US role rapidly evolved, US and Syrian Kurdish commanders began to co-ordinate air and ground operations far more closely than previously disclosed. A Syrian Kurdish general in a joint operations centre in northern Iraq delivered daily battlefield intelligence reports to US military planners, and helped spot targets for airstrikes on Islamic State positions.

In contrast to the lengthy legal debate over US aid to rebels fighting the Syrian regime, US airdrops of weapons to Kobane got a swift nod from administration lawyers — a sign of its importance to the administration.

The change in thinking over the fate of one city, described by US, Kurdish, Turkish and Syrian opposition officials, shows how dramatically US war aims are shifting. After Islamic State made Kobane a test of its ability to defy US air power, Washington intervened more forcefully than it had initially intended to try to stem the group's momentum.

In doing so, the US crossed a Rubicon that could herald a more hands-on role in other towns and cities under siege by Islamic State at a time when some US legislators question the direction of American strategy and warn of mission creep.

"This is a war of flags. And Kobane was the next place Islamic State wanted to plant its flag," a senior US official said. "Kobane became strategic." The US now is relying on two separate, stateless Kurdish groups in Iraq and Syria as ground forces to back up its air campaign against the extremists.

This has strained US relations with another strategically important ally, **Turkey**. The US has conferred new-found legitimacy on the Syrian Kurdish militia fighting in Kobane, which is linked to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in neighbouring **Turkey**. The US and **Turkey** both list the PKK as a terrorist group.

Washington's decision to send in supplies by air to fighters loyal to the Democratic Union Party (PYD) followed a US assessment that the Syrian Kurdish defenders would run out of ammunition in as little as three days.

Iraqi Kurdish leaders told American officials they were considering sending reinforcements from their region to Kobane. To reach the town, they would have to pass through other parts of Syria. US defence officials looked at the route and told the Kurds it would be a suicide mission.

The US asked the Turkish government to let Iraqi Kurdish fighters cross through Turkish territory to reinforce Kobane. US officials said **Turkey** agreed in principle and that Massoud Barzani, the head of

the Kurdistan Regional Government in northern Iraq, proposed sending a specially trained force of Syrian Kurdish refugees.

But events on the ground forced Washington's hand. US contacts in Kobane sent out an urgent SOS.

"We needed weaponry and fast," said Idris Nassan, the deputy foreign minister of the Kobane regional government.

To tide the Kurds over until **Turkey** opens a land corridor, US General Lloyd Austin, who runs the air campaign against Islamic State, decided on a delicate plan: dropping supplies at night using C-130 cargo planes. General Austin presented the proposal to the White House on Friday. President Barack Obama approved it immediately, US officials said.

Until recently, the White House refused to even acknowledge US contacts with the PYD because of its close ties to the PKK and the diplomatic sensitivities over that in **Turkey**.

But officials were desperate for partners on the ground on the Syrian side of the **border**.

US contacts with the Syrian Kurdish leadership began as indirect and secret. The Syrian Kurds' objective during the talks was to persuade the Americans to provide them with military support to fight Islamic State.

"If there is one moderate force in Syria, that's us," said Khaled Saleh, the group's representative in France, who took part in many of the preliminary discussions.

For the Syrian Kurdish leaders, progress was frustratingly slow. The US became more responsive over the summer, after Islamic State seized Mosul, Iraq's second largest city.

US intelligence officers were impressed with the Syrian Kurdish fighters' track record in combating Islamic State. When the fighters crossed the **border** into Iraq to help save members of the Yazidi religious minority, Washington took note, US officials said.

US officials said the outcome in Kobane remains far from certain but the operation could have implications for fighters in other towns facing Islamic State.

"Given where we are now, we're there to help the people who are able to resist," a senior US official said.The **Wall** Street Journal

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RE kurd : Kurdistan | usa : United States | turk : Turkey | iraq : Iraq | syria : Syria | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | namz : North America | wasiaz : Western Asia

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HD **Informal patrols on Turkey's border with Syria**

BY By ELENA BECATOROS

CR Associated Press

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LA English

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LP

CAYKARA, Turkey (AP) — Their collars pulled up against the evening cold, a group of men and women peer through binoculars, scanning the fields along a barbed wire fence. A few kilometers (miles) away across the Turkish border, black smoke rises from the besieged Kurdish Syrian town of Kobani, the dull thud of mortars carrying across on the breeze.

They are some of the hundreds of volunteers, predominantly Turkish Kurds, who have traveled from villages, towns and cities across southeastern Turkey and even from Istanbul, to keep watch on the border. They are on the lookout for potential fighters of the extremist Islamic State group attempting to cross into Kobani, besieged since mid-September by IS and defended by Kurdish Syrian fighters known as the People's Protection Units.

TD

"To be honest, we don't trust (the Turkish border guards), because we have seen many occasions that the Turkish government has loosened its borders for ISIS fighters, weapons and logistical support to cross," said Ibrahim Binici, a Kurdish lawmaker for the left-wing HDP party, which put out a call in September for the volunteers.

It's a claim Turkey vehemently rejects. But the deep distrust of Turkish authorities in the border area reflects Turkey's complicated attitude toward the Islamic extremists who captured swaths of Iraq and Syria, and its strained relations with its own Kurdish population.

The country's reluctance to join a U.S.-led international coalition action against IS in Syria and Iraq, mainly through airstrikes, has frustrated Turkey's American and European allies. Ankara, however, insists the priority should be the unseating of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, whose 2011 crackdown on protesters sparked an uprising that soon spun into a vicious civil war.

Turkey's position on IS is "ambivalent at best, uncertain at worse," said Serhat Guvenc, international relations professor at Istanbul's Kadir Has University.

One reason, Guvenc explained, is that Turkey suspects IS "is here to stay" — that the group will eventually become part of the Sunni establishment in Syria and Iraq, which also borders Turkey. Ankara therefore fears it will inevitably have to deal with the group.

Another is the Kurdish issue. Separatists, mainly led by the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, have fought a 30-year guerrilla war in Turkey's southeast which has left tens of thousands dead. An uneasy ceasefire has been in place for only about two years. The PKK is on the terrorist list of Turkey, the European Union and the U.S., and Ankara is deeply suspicious of the People's Protection Units, which it views as an extension of the PKK.

When the IS onslaught in Kobani began, Turkish Kurds were furious that their government was not doing more against IS or allowing them to cross into Syria to help fellow Kurds defend the town from extremists beheading prisoners and carrying out mass executions. Riots in predominantly Kurdish towns and cities ensued, leaving more than a dozen people dead.

But Kurdish resistance in Kobani has been a major public relations success for the Kurds, who have managed — along with the coalition airstrikes — to prevent IS from taking the town.

"Empowerment of the Kurds in the region is kind of upsetting the Turkish positions ... because they're getting credit as the only group in the region that could put up a fight and win against ISIS," said Guvenc.

However, he noted, credit was due to Ankara for recently allowing 150 Peshmerga troops — Kurdish fighters from northern Iraq — to cross through **Turkey** to bolster the People's Protection Units with artillery in Kobani.

Binici, the Kurdish member of parliament, said the **border** observers' main aim was to prevent "the mass passage of IS fighters, since you cannot control individuals. ... We believe that we managed to stop that."

About 10,000 people responded to the initial call for volunteers and were deployed in 10 villages. Now, about 2,000-3,000 people remain in three villages, numbers falling due to winter weather and what activists said was targeting by Turkish authorities with tear gas and rubber bullets.

"We've had police intervening and we had many injuries" from the tear gas," said Ipek Gunes, a volunteer from the city of Mardin.

In the villages still hosting volunteers, tents stand among mud and concrete brick houses and meals are provided in outdoor communal kitchens, with everyone taking turns to cook stews in vats over wood fires.

With a roughly 900-kilometer **border** with Syria and 330-kilometer **border** with Iraq, **Turkey**'s attraction as an entry point for fighters is obvious. Ankara insists it has cracked down. Checks have increased at ports and airports, a government official said, with 2,000 people interrogated, 1,400 deported and more than 7,000 people denied entry into **Turkey** since October 2013.

The official, who was not authorized to comment on the issue and therefore demanded anonymity, said allegations of cooperation between **border** guards and IS fighters were "deliberate disinformation." The army had strengthened **border** security with fences, thermal cameras and patrols, the official said — but added that authorities "can't check every meter" of the **border**. The official also noted that hundreds of wounded fighters from the People's Protection Units had been treated in Turkish hospitals.

The foreign ministry did not respond to a request for comment.

The credibility of reports that Turkish guards are ignoring IS fighters crossing the **border** — or even helping them — is hotly contested. Fighters of the People's Protection Units also cross the **border**, often using smuggling routes.

"What we are witnessing is part reality, partly constructed reality. There is a big PR war going on, on both sides," said Guvenc. "It seems that the Kurds are more successful at this level of struggle."

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Mohammed Rasool contributed from Caykara.

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ART In this picture taken on Nov. 11, 2014,Kurds stand in line flashing victory signs during a solidarity rally with the Syrian city of Kobani in the village of Caykara, **Turkey**, on the **Turkey**-Syria **border**. Hundreds of volunteers, predominantly Kurdish Turks, who have traveled from all over southeastern **Turkey** and even from Istanbul, keep watch on the **border** with Syria, looking out for potential fighters of the extremist Islamic State group attempting to cross into Kobani, besieged since mid-September by IS and defended by Kurdish Syrian fighters known as the People's Protection Units. (AP Photo/Vadim Ghirda) | In this picture taken on Nov. 3, 2014, a member of the Peace Mothers, a Kurdish civil rights group that promotes peace between **Turkey**'s ethnic groups, carries binoculars in the village of Caykara, on the **Turkey**-Syria **border**. Hundreds of volunteers, predominantly Kurdish Turks, who have traveled from all over southeastern **Turkey** and even from Istanbul, keep watch on the **border** with Syria, looking out for potential fighters of the extremist Islamic State group attempting to cross into Kobani, besieged since mid-September by IS and defended by Kurdish Syrian fighters known as the People's Protection Units. (AP Photo/Vadim Ghirda) | A Kurdish man wears a traditional uniform in Caykara, on the **Turkey**-Syria **border** Wednesday, Nov. 12, 2014. Hundreds of volunteers, predominantly Kurdish Turks, who have traveled from all over southeastern **Turkey** and even from Istanbul, keep watch on the **border** with Syria, looking out for potential fighters of the extremist Islamic State group attempting to cross into Kobani, besieged since mid-September by IS and defended by Kurdish Syrian fighters known as the People's

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Protection Units. (AP Photo/Vadim Ghirda) | In this picture taken on Nov. 3, 2014, a kite in the colors of the Kurdish flag with a photograph of the PKK's imprisoned leader Abdullah Ocalan is flown above the crowds during a solidarity rally with the Syrian city of Kobani in the village of Caykara, **Turkey**, on the **Turkey**-Syria **border**. Hundreds of volunteers, predominantly Kurdish Turks, who have traveled from all over southeastern **Turkey** and even from Istanbul, keep watch on the **border** with Syria, looking out for potential fighters of the extremist Islamic State group attempting to cross into Kobani, besieged since mid-September by IS and defended by Kurdish Syrian fighters known as the People's Protection Units. (AP Photo/Vadim Ghirda) | In this picture taken on Nov. 1, 2014 Kurds hold flags, one depicting PKK's imprisoned leader Abdullah Ocalan, right, during a solidarity rally with the Syrian city of Kobani in the village of Caykara, **Turkey**, on the **Turkey**-Syria **border**. Hundreds of volunteers, predominantly Kurdish Turks, who have traveled from all over southeastern **Turkey** and even from Istanbul, keep watch on the **border** with Syria, looking out for potential fighters of the extremist Islamic State group attempting to cross into Kobani, besieged since mid-September by IS and defended by Kurdish Syrian fighters known as the People's Protection Units. (AP Photo/Vadim Ghirda) | Kurdish people watch the area around the Syrian town of Kobani, in Caykara, on the **Turkey**-Syria **border** Wednesday, Nov. 12, 2014. Hundreds of volunteers, predominantly Kurdish Turks, who have traveled from all over southeastern **Turkey** and even from Istanbul, keep watch on the **border** with Syria, looking out for potential fighters of the extremist Islamic State group attempting to cross into Kobani, besieged since mid-September by IS and defended by Kurdish Syrian fighters known as the People's Protection Units. (AP Photo/Vadim Ghirda) | In this picture taken on Nov. 3, 2014 a Kurdish man speaks on the phone in Caykara, on the **Turkey**-Syria **border** Wednesday, Nov. 12, 2014. Hundreds of volunteers, predominantly Kurdish Turks, who have traveled from all over southeastern **Turkey** and even from Istanbul, keep watch on the **border** with Syria, looking out for potential fighters of the extremist Islamic State group attempting to cross into Kobani, besieged since mid-September by IS and defended by Kurdish Syrian fighters known as the People's Protection Units. (AP Photo/Vadim Ghirda) | In this picture taken on Nov. 1, 2014, men stand on the roof of a mosque during a solidarity rally with the Syrian city of Kobani in the village of Caykara, **Turkey**, on the **Turkey**-Syria **border**. Hundreds of volunteers, predominantly Kurdish Turks, who have traveled from all over southeastern **Turkey** and even from Istanbul, keep watch on the **border** with Syria, looking out for potential fighters of the extremist Islamic State group attempting to cross into Kobani, besieged since mid-September by IS and defended by Kurdish Syrian fighters known as the People's Protection Units. (AP Photo/Vadim Ghirda) | In this picture taken on Nov. 3, 2014, members of the Peace Mothers, a Kurdish civil rights group that promotes peace between **Turkey**'s ethnic groups, look through binoculars in the village of Caykara, on the **Turkey**-Syria **border**. Hundreds of volunteers, predominantly Kurdish Turks, who have traveled from all over southeastern **Turkey** and even from Istanbul, keep watch on the **border** with Syria, looking out for potential fighters of the extremist Islamic State group attempting to cross into Kobani, besieged since mid-September by IS and defended by Kurdish Syrian fighters known as the People's Protection Units. (AP Photo/Vadim Ghirda) | In this picture taken on Nov. 3, 2014 a Kurdish man handles a mobile device in Caykara, on the **Turkey**-Syria **border**. Hundreds of volunteers, predominantly Kurdish Turks, who have traveled from all over southeastern **Turkey** and even from Istanbul, keep watch on the **border** with Syria, looking out for potential fighters of the extremist Islamic State group attempting to cross into Kobani, besieged since mid-September by IS and defended by Kurdish Syrian fighters known as the People's Protection Units. (AP Photo/Vadim Ghirda) | In this picture taken on Nov. 3, 2014 a Kurdish man drinks tea in Caykara, on the **Turkey**-Syria **border**. Hundreds of volunteers, predominantly Kurdish Turks, who have traveled from all over southeastern **Turkey** and even from Istanbul, keep watch on the **border** with Syria, looking out for potential fighters of the extremist Islamic State group attempting to cross into Kobani, besieged since mid-September by IS and defended by Kurdish Syrian fighters known as the People's Protection Units. (AP Photo/Vadim Ghirda) | A Kurdish man positions a pin depicting PKK's imprisoned leader Abdullah Ocalan on another's jacket in Caykara, on the **Turkey**-Syria **border** Wednesday, Nov. 12, 2014. Hundreds of volunteers, predominantly Kurdish Turks, who have traveled from all over southeastern **Turkey** and even from Istanbul, keep watch on the **border** with Syria, looking out for potential fighters of the extremist Islamic State group attempting to cross into Kobani, besieged since mid-September by IS and defended by Kurdish Syrian fighters known as the People's Protection Units. (AP Photo/Vadim Ghirda)

CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party | aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gdef : Armed Forces | gpol : Domestic Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE turk : Turkey | syria : Syria | kurd : Kurdistan | iraq : Iraq | ankra : Ankara | istan : Istanbul | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD EU

IPC i

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PUB The Associated Press

AN Document APRS000020141113eabd001sm

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HD **Kurds hold joint front against IS in Kirkuk**

WC 1,098 words

PD 19 November 2014

ET 14:50

SN Deutsche Welle

SC DEUEN

LA English

CY (c) 2014. Deutsche Welle.

LP

PKK fighters fight alongside fellow Kurds from Iraq in a move unprecedented before the advance of the "Islamic State" in the region. DW reporter Karlos Zurutuza met a few of them on the frontline in Iraq.

They appeared overnight on the horizon last June, and they are still clearly visible from the road to Baghdad. Today, the black flags of the "Islamic State" group (IS) align its current boundaries at this point, 200 kilometers (124 miles) north of the Iraqi capital. "There is no god but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet," can be read on the flapping pieces of cloth.

TD

A few meters away, diggers work non-stop in Matara, a small village on the Kurdish side of this increasingly well-delineated **border**. Ditches are dug and earth walls erected across the positions guarded by an improbable contingent: Iraqi Kurdish soldiers - peshmerga - and Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) fighters. They fought each other back in the 1990s, but a powerful common enemy brought them together last August.

"When we saw that Daesh [The Arabic acronym for the "Islamic State"] was at the gates of Kirkuk we thought they needed us here," PKK commander Heval Agid - "comrade Agid" in Kurdish - tells DW. "The situation was so dire that even the local people asked us to come," recalls the guerrilla fighter from the half-finished apartment that is now the headquarters of his unit.

To the north of Baghdad, the Kirkuk has its foundations in one of the largest oil reserves in the Middle East. While Arabs and Kurds struggled in vain over the past decade to control the city, a third actor appeared on the scene. Today, Kirkuk is not only the thorniest issue in relations between Baghdad and Irbil, the seat of the Kurdish Regional Government, it may also be a last strategic step for the jihadis on their way to the country's capital.

Since they took over Mosul, Iraq's second city, in June, IS has proven to be a very strong enemy, with tens of thousands of fighters and heavy weaponry, much of it captured from the US-armed Iraqi army, but also from the Syrian regime

Commander Agid, who joined the PKK 18 years ago, is among those determined to stop the advance of such a powerful adversary. He relies on an armed body with numbers ranging between 100 and 300, "depending on the needs." They appear to become more pressing as the sun goes down.

"During the day it can be relatively quiet but at night we have to cope with the shelling of our positions and those trying to break across our lines," explains 40-year-old Agid. He stresses that both his men and women are "highly experienced" in combat, in opposition to the majority of the peshmerga, who had not been involved in fighting until recent months.

Military routines

Although the majority of the PKK fighters are from **Turkey**, that is not the case with Heval Mardin. The 32-year old prefers not to disclose his birth place, although he specifies he is from "bashur ("South" in Kurdish, a term used to refer to Iraqi Kurdistan). Mardin could have easily joined the ranks of the peshmerga, but he says he had his reasons not to do so: "The PKK is not fighting for money but for an ideal of justice for all our people," explains the fighter, adding that he came to this trench after receiving training in the Qandil Mountains, the PKK stronghold, where the borders of Iraq, Iran and **Turkey** meet.

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Others came from much further away. Like Abdullah Ocalan, the imprisoned leader of the PKK, Beritan was born in Urfa, eastern **Turkey**. She tells DW she joined the armed movement at 18 - she's 23 today - and that she also got military training and "ideology lessons" in Qandil. Beritan fought against Turkish security forces in the Nur Mountains, along the Aegean Sea, until her unit got the order to pull back to Qandil after the announcement of the unilateral ceasefire declared by Ocalan, in the spring of 2013.

The PKK leader's last announcement linking the future of the ceasefire to that of Kobani, the besieged Kurdish enclave in Syria, means that PKK fighters deployed today in Kirkuk could be mobilized back at any time.

"Today we are fighting here but eventually, we may receive orders to resume the fighting back in **Turkey**," explains Beritan sharply, adding that Ankara "has not lifted a single finger toward peace."

The belief is widespread in Kurdish areas that **Turkey** secretly backs Islamic extremists.

Holding off chaos?

In the meantime, the fighters stick to the rigid military routine described by Media, who comes from Diyarbakir, eastern **Turkey**:

"We get up at five o'clock. Breakfast is at six and the rest of the day depends on the shifts at the front. When we're not in the first line, we either get training or teach the local people who show up to learn how to operate a rifle and defend themselves," 22-year-old Media says.

The conversation is interrupted by the arrival of Iraqi **Border** Police Commander Ahmed Fakardin. This Iraqi Kurd from Sulaymaniyah confirms to DW that Iraqi **border** guards, peshmerga and the PKK are "in close coordination" on the ground.

"PKK fighters make everything easier," claims Farkadin. However, he insists, "we are still in high demand of weapons and air strikes."

After inspecting the position, the officer gazes at the large number of empty water bottles at the bottom of one of the ditches. "We are soldiers, we should be more careful with our waste," says the veteran official.

But according to PKK fighter Heval Dersim, the plastic bottles are still useful even after they have been emptied.

"If the enemy tries to reach our positions at night they will surely step on them, making it much easier to detect their presence," notes this guerrilla who has just joined the always-troubled night watch.

Despite the unprecedented collaboration between Kurds, Kirkuk police commander Khabat Ali Ahmed labels the security situation "too fragile."

"We are trying to protect an area of 200 kilometers around the district, but in some spots the terrorists are less than three kilometers away from oil refineries and power plants," the security official tells DW from his desk in Kirkuk.

"Over the last years I had suggested the Kurdish Regional Government build a **wall** around Kirkuk," Ali Ahmeds says. "At this point, a single breach in the security line will surely bring chaos to the city."

RF 18073555

CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party | aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gvio : Military Action | ntra : Transcripts | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfce : C&E Exclusion Filter | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter | niwe : IWE Filter

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IPD World

PUB Deutsche Welle

AN Document DEUEN00020141119eabj000b7

Search Summary

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Timestamp	31 January 2019 11:33

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HD **Germany asks Turkey to do more to seal its border**

WC 810 words

PD 12 January 2015

SN Cihan News Agency (CNA)

SC CINEWA

LA English

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LP

İSTANBUL (CİHAN)- While Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu started his official visit to Germany on Monday, head of Germany's domestic intelligence agency Hans-Georg Maassen urged **Turkey** to do more to prevent foreign fighters crossing into Syria to join the terrorist Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

Speaking on a program on Germany's ARD television on Monday, Maassen said **Turkey** is a key country to prevent foreign fighters traveling back and forth between Syria and Europe, because about 90 percent of the extremists traveled to the region via **Turkey**.

TD

Maassen said preventing extremists crossing into Syria has been partly successful, but the number of extremists managing to get into Syria is still too high and **Turkey** needs to take further measures to prevent these crossings.

On Monday, Prime Minister Davutoğlu arrived in Berlin and met with German Chancellor Angela Merkel. The two leaders held a press conference after their meeting. During the conference, Davutoğlu was asked whether he believes that the Turkish government needs to take more measures against ISIL.

Davutoğlu said accusing **Turkey** of not doing much with regards to sealing the **border** is not fair, since **Turkey** has suffered more than others. He pointed out that there are about 2 million refugees finding safe haven in **Turkey**, saying, We opened our borders to the children whose mothers and fathers have been killed in the hands of Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria, not for terrorist crossings."

Davutoğlu also stressed that the **border** is 910 kilometers long and therefore difficult to protect, but **Turkey** is doing its best to prevent terrorist crossings.

He also said that **Turkey** is in close intelligence cooperation with European countries and prevented about 7,000 people entering **Turkey**, as a result of this intelligence cooperation.

Pointing out that only one day before the Paris terrorist attack there was one in İstanbul in which a Turkish policeman was killed, Davutoğlu said the European people have not showed their solidarity with Turkish people, but he had attended the march against terrorism in Paris on Sunday.

The prime minister also expressed his displeasure about the European people easily associating Islam with terrorism and said he is against associating any religion or ethnicity with terrorism.

Davutoğlu was also asked about a woman named Hayat Boumeddiene, who is believed to be the partner of a man who killed a policewoman and four people at a Jewish grocery store last week in Paris.

Boumeddiene had entered Syria via **Turkey** on Jan. 8, one day after the Paris attack. Davutoğlu said despite the fact that there was no intelligence given to **Turkey** from Europe about Boumeddiene, Turkish intelligence found out about this woman and provided information to France. He said Boumeddiene came to **Turkey** from Madrid and said that it's not reasonable to put the blame on Spain or **Turkey** about the incident.

The prime minister also warned against xenophobic and Islamophobic attitudes in Europe and said that everyone should stand up against such things.

German Chancellor Merkel told journalists that she discussed freedom of expression, press freedoms, counter-terrorism issues and developments in Syria and Iraq with Davutoğlu. She praised **Turkey** for providing a safe haven for Syrian refugees.

Merkel was asked if Germans of Turkish origin and Muslims in general have any reason to worry about their place in German society. She firmly said that she is the chancellor of everyone in Germany who shows respect to law. She also said that it's important to hear from these people that they condemn terrorism as a tool. She added that Germany supports interfaith dialogue.

When asked about whether the future of the Schengen Agreement, which enables visa free travel among EU countries, is in danger or not after the Paris attacks, Merkel said there is no plan to abolish the Schengen Agreement.

In the meantime, early on Sunday morning neo-Nazi groups in Germany attacked a mosque in Dormagen in the state of Northern Rhine-Westphalia and drew swastikas and wrote abusive words on its walls.

This is the second attack on the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs' Süleymaniye mosque in three weeks.

Along with swastika signs and Islamophobic graffiti on the **wall**, it was written, Germany belongs to Germans."

Turkey's Consul-General to Dusseldorf Alatting Temur visited the mosque and condemned the attack on Sunday.

The mosque was first attacked on Dec. 20 last year and local German authorities were asked to take necessary measures to provide protection for the mosque. Despite asking for protection from the authorities, the second attack came on Sunday.

The Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs made a statement on Monday and said that such attacks created fear among Muslims in Germany. The German police launched an investigation about the attacks.

(Cihan/Today's Zaman) CİHAN

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gterr : Acts of Terror | gdip : International Relations | gpir : Politics/International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE gfr : Germany | turk : Turkey | syria : Syria | paris : Paris | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | dach : DACH Countries | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eecz : European Union Countries | eurz : Europe | fra : France | ilefra : Ile-de-France | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia | weurz : Western Europe

IPD World

PUB Cihan News Agency

AN Document CINEWA0020150112eb1c0010i

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HD **After Kobane's capture, refugees return blocked**

BY Burak AKINCI with Bulent KILIC in Kobane

WC 527 words

PD 28 January 2015

ET 20:57

SN Agence France Presse

SC AFPR

LA English

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LP

The fierce battle for the Syrian **border** town of Kobane is over, but for refugees in **Turkey** desperate to return home the massive destruction and ongoing fighting means they still must wait.

"We all want to go home. But go home to what?" asked one woman in tears, who like many others experienced short-lived euphoria after the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) recaptured the town Monday from Islamic State (IS) fighters.

TD

But shortly after the shooting ended in a battle that observers say killed 1,800 fighters -- including some 1,200 from IS -- the word got back to **Turkey** that Kobane lay in ruins.

Proof of the intensity of the four-month battle stood everywhere Wednesday -- buildings pounded to dust by coalition airstrikes and shelling, cars torched, and unexploded explosives strewn in the street.

"Our heritage is our most valuable possession. But in the current conditions, returning home is simply impossible to imagine," said 36-year-old Cemile Hasan through sobs.

"Frankly I'd be happy if we could be home in a year. But I'm optimistic in saying that, because we're going to have to rebuild everything," she added.

The ferocious fighting sent some 200,000 people fleeing across the **border** into **Turkey**, which has been working to move hundreds of refugees from Kobane to a new camp in the southeastern **border** town of Suruc able to accommodate up to 35,000 people.

For now it is impossible to cross back into Syria as police and soldiers have sealed the crossing near Kobane until further notice, **Turkey**'s **border** security agency said.

Turkish security forces on Tuesday fired tear gas and water cannon to push back people approaching the barbed wire **fence** that marks the line between the two countries.

On top of the devastation in Kobane, refugees would face the prospect of a flare-up of fighting or bombing should they return.

On Wednesday, clashes with IS fighters were reported near Kobane in villages where coalition planes were bombing the jihadists.

The United States had said on Tuesday that Kurdish fighters were in control of about 90 percent of the town.

But a State Department official warned that the militants, also known as ISIL, were "adaptive and resilient" and no-one was declaring "mission accomplished" yet.

Stera Hussein, holding her two-week-old child in her arms, said she already had to flee for her life at a moment's notice.

"It was horrible. The YPG (Kurdish militia) told us for days that everything was fine, that they guaranteed our safety," she said. "And then suddenly they told us to leave within the hour without being able to take anything with us."

She added: "Our lives were saved, but we lost everything."

And even if she were allowed to go home immediately, she would think twice before crossing back into Syria.

"I don't know if I should trust the YPG any more," she said. "They misled us once and we almost paid with our lives."

BA-pa/cls/jm/ccr

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS ghum : Human Rights/Civil Liberties | gimm : Asylum/Immigration | gcat : Political/General News | gcom : Society/Community | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE turk : Turkey | syria : Syria | iraq : Iraq | usa : United States | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | namz : North America | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Scener

PUB Agence France-Presse

AN Document AFPR000020150128eb1s00aq8

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MarketWatch

CLM The Wall Street Journal
SE News & Commentary
HD **Turkey launches military operation in Syria to evacuate Ottoman tomb**
BY Joe Parkinson
WC 314 words
PD 22 February 2015
ET 18:26
SN MarketWatch
SC MRKWC
LA English
CY Copyright 2015 MarketWatch, Inc. All Rights Reserved.
LP

ISTANBUL—**Turkey** launched a large-scale military operation inside Syrian territory overnight to evacuate Turkish soldiers guarding an Ottoman tomb thought to be at risk from Islamic State militants.

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said on his Twitter feed that some 600 Turkish ground forces backed by 100 military vehicles and 39 tanks had rescued Turkish troops guarding the mausoleum of Suleyman Shah, grandfather of the founder of the Ottoman Empire, which is located in Syria's war-torn Aleppo province.

TD

One soldier was killed in an accident during the early stages of the operation, which also moved the tomb to another location in Syria closer to the Turkish **border**, **Turkey**'s state news agency Anadolu reported.

Turkish television channels broadcast images of Turkish troops planting **Turkey**'s flag at the new site at Suriye E mesi village, about 20 miles north of its previous location.

The operation comes after a raft of media reports that Turkish soldiers guarding the tomb had been effectively trapped by nearby Islamic State fighters for months. A leaked report from **Turkey**'s intelligence agency warned that the jihadists were planning imminent attacks on Turkish targets and embassies on Turkish territory.

The tomb—which was reinforced by Turkish special forces in March after alleged jihadist threats to attack the tomb—has emerged as a potential flash point in recent days, with Turkish media reporting that an Islamic State attack could be imminent.

The rescue operation comes as **Turkey** faces pressure to ramp up its contribution to the anti-Islamic State coalition that has for more than six months been launching airstrikes to degrade the group and last month helped Syrian Kurdish fighters eject the militants from the **border** town of Kobani.

An expanded version of this report appears at WSJ.com

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CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
NS ncolu : Columns | ncat : Content Types
RE turk : Turkey | syria : Syria | africaz : Africa | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia
IPD News & Commentary
PUB Dow Jones & Company, Inc.

AN Document MRKWC00020150222eb2m0008d

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HD **FEATURE Turkey's porous border provides smuggling route to Islamic State By Can Merey, dpa**

WC 651 words

PD 6 April 2015

ET 14:05

SN dpa International Service in English

SC DPAEN

LA English

CY Copyright 2015. dpa Deutsche Presse-Agentur

LP

Turkish authorities insist they are halting the flow of Western jihadis into Syria. But a visit to the **border** shows how accessible it is.

Akcakale, **Turkey** (dpa) - Standing in the town of Akcakale in south-eastern **Turkey**, Ahmed Ali gestures across the **border** to Tell Abyad on the Syrian side, where he comes from.

TD

"I move back and forth," the 18-year-old smuggler says, unconcerned at his lack of identification or travel documents as he prepares to cross the **border** into territory controlled by Islamic State extremists.

The **border** crossing is supposed to be open to refugees only. "I travel illegally, and I'm going now. You can watch," he tells a dpa reporter.

Ahmed sets off with his friend, who carries wire cutters, both running away to the east from the **border** crossing monitored by a military post.

"What are you doing?" a **border** guard officer shouts, but his intervention suggests a response to the presence of a journalist rather than a genuine challenge to the young men.

The officer does not move at all, even though Ahmed and his friend continue to run parallel to the **border fence**.

The young men head southwards between the crossing and the army post, disappearing from view as they pass through a ditch. Then they reach the **fence**, and suddenly they are on the other side.

All of this takes place in broad daylight within a space of 10 minutes, just 200 metres from the crossing point and in full view of the Turkish security forces.

"Look, Ahmed is now in Syria," says Suleyman, a 16-year-old porter on the Turkish side.

And Mustafa, his friend of the same age, says: "If you want, I'll take you across as well." **Turkey** has become the most important transit country for Western jihadis wanting to join the Islamic State.

Ankara denies allegations that **Turkey** is doing little to halt the flow, noting that the 900-kilometre **border** is virtually impossible to monitor.

Western security experts point out, however, that **Turkey** has the second largest army in NATO and could strengthen controls if it wanted to.

The plainclothes Turkish officers in Akcakale decline to provide their names, and photography is banned.

They acknowledge their concerns about the proximity of the extremists. "We are worried, but thus far they haven't attacked," an officer says.

He adds that several jihadis from countries like Britain and Germany have tried to cross, but they were detained and deported.

Only Syrians are allowed to cross, and only in one direction. "We do not allow anyone from other countries to cross."

According to the Turkish authorities, more than 1,150 foreigners have been deported, with a ban on entering the country imposed on a further 12,500 or more.

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However, anyone not under an official ban and who does not draw attention to themselves by, for example, attempting to cross the **border** officially to Tell Abjad, has a good chance of reaching the militants.

Ahmed and his friends smuggle tea, olives, clothes and whatever they can sell for cash in **Turkey**. But the porters at the **border** crossing offer to set up contact with people smugglers in Akcakale - not now at midday, as they are asleep, but at night, when they go to work.

"Westerners cannot cross the **border** legally, because the police stop them," says Suleyman. "They need a smuggler to help them cross the **border**."

While the number of Westerners wanting to cross the Akcakale **border** to join Islamic State has declined, every couple of days one or two turn up, soon disappearing in the direction of Syria, he says.

The smugglers charge 100 dollars per person for the trip, Suleyman. "Whoever wants to can cross to the other side."

Notebook

Note to editors - Foto - aktuell

Locations - [Grenzübergang](Akçakale/Sanliurfa, Türkei)

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gtraff : Trafficking/Smuggling | gcat : Political/General News | gcrim : Crime/Courts

RE turk : Turkey | syria : Syria | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Syria

PUB dpa Deutsche Presse-Agentur GmbH

AN Document DPAEN00020150406eb46003h1

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HD **Turkish forces push massing Syrians from border: AFP**

BY Bulent KILIC

WC 445 words

PD 13 June 2015

ET 18:22

SN Agence France Presse

SC AFPR

LA English

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LP

Turkish security forces on Saturday used water cannon and fired warning shots to push Syrians back from the frontier as thousands massed at a **border** crossing to escape escalating fighting, an AFP photographer said.

The Syrians were being held behind barbed wire fences around the Turkish crossing of Akcakale in the southeast of the country.

TD

They are fleeing a looming battle as Kurdish forces advance on the Syrian town of Tal Abyad, which is held by Islamic State (IS) jihadists and lies just across the Turkish **border**.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said earlier that Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) had advanced to within 10 kilometres (six miles) of Tal Abyad.

The Turkish forces used water cannon and fired warning shots into the air to keep the Syrians away from the **border** fences, the correspondent said.

With more Syrians still arriving from Tal Abyad, tensions remained high with Turkish police and soldiers deployed right on the **border fence** to ensure no one slipped through.

Most of the women arriving from the IS-controlled town were clad in black with full face veils. Many carried white sacks of possessions on their head.

Turkish forces were not allowing any Syrians through the **border** gate.

Despite the Kurdish advance, the black flag of IS could however still be seen flying over the town of Tal Abyad, the correspondent added.

Turkey had said on Thursday it was taking measures to limit the flow of Syrian refugees after an influx of thousands more over the last days due to the fighting between Kurds and jihadists.

Under an "open-door" policy championed by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, **Turkey** has taken in 1.8 million Syrian refugees since the conflict in Syria erupted in 2011.

But Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmus said at Akcakale crossing on Thursday that new entries would only be considered in case of a humanitarian tragedy.

The government has emphasised that this does not mean any end to the "open door" policy. But it is not clear if the Syrians caught in the current situation will be allowed through.

Officials have said that **Turkey** had taken in over 13,500 refugees over the last days escaping the fighting for Tal Abyad.

The Turkish government has over the last months expressed increasing bitterness that it has been left to shoulder the burden of refugees while the West stands by.

The government said in April it has spent almost $5.5 billion (4.8 billion euros) to provide for Syrian refugees since the crisis began in 2011.

pho-sjw/fg

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gimm : Asylum/Immigration | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE turk : Turkey | syria : Syria | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Lead

PUB Agence France-Presse

AN Document AFPR000020150613eb6d0073p

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HD **Turkey opens border to Syrian refugees fleeing Tal Abyad**

BY Bulent KILIC

WC 546 words

PD 14 June 2015

ET 18:46

SN Agence France Presse

SC AFPR

LA English

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LP

Turkey on Sunday began accepting onto its territory Syrian refugees fleeing the battle between Kurds and Islamic State (IS) jihadists for the Syrian **border** town of Tal Abyad, an AFP photographer said.

Dozens of Syrian refugees, many carrying sacks of possessions, started passing through the Akcakale **border** gate onto Turkish territory as thousands more awaited their turn to cross on other side.

TD

Turkey had for several days been blocking the Syrians from entering **Turkey**, saying it would only allow them into the country in the event of a humanitarian tragedy.

However, local officials in Akcakale said earlier that permission had been received from Ankara to allow the refugees to cross into **Turkey**.

The decision came as Kurdish forces advanced on Tal Abyad, which is controlled by IS militants who have captured swathes of Syria and Iraq.

A delay followed which Turkish television said was due to the IS jihadists impeding the refugees from crossing on the other side of the **border**.

Amid chaotic scenes, some Syrians managed to push their way through the **border** fences away from the actual Akcakale **border** gate to cross illegally into **Turkey**.

Some squeezed under the mesh-wire fences while others managed to climb over, with bags thrown the **fence**. Many carried young children.

The army immediately used water cannon and tear gas in a bid to restore control.

But in the early evening the Turkish authorities opened the Akcakale **border** gate and the refugees began to enter in an orderly fashion.

Many had relatives already waiting for them on the other side. The queue of refugees could be seen extending up the hillside.

With temperatures above 35 degrees Celsius, Turkish emergency workers threw bottled water into the crowds as dozens of hands stretched out to catch them.

The refugees were then registered with the Turkish authorities. Those with relations already in **Turkey** can stay with them, others will be taken to existing refugee camps, the Dogan news agency said.

Turkish television said that in all 3,000 people were expected to cross over into **Turkey**.

Under an "open-door" policy championed by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, **Turkey** has taken in 1.8 million Syrian refugees since the conflict in Syria erupted in 2011.

The Turkish government has over recent months expressed increasing bitterness that it has been left to shoulder the burden of refugees while the West stands by.

The government said in April it has spent almost $5.5 billion (4.8 billion euros) to provide for Syrian refugees.

Before the closure of the **border** last week, **Turkey** had taken in more than 13,500 Syrian refugees escaping the fighting for Tal Abyad, officials said.

Turkish officials have said that the refugees are mainly ethnic Arabs and Turkmen.

Erdogan earlier said he was troubled by the advance of Kurdish forces to Tal Abyad, saying they could in the future threaten **Turkey**.

He said the places refugees had vacated were being occupied by the Syrian Kurdish group the Democratic Union Party (PYD) and the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

"This is not a good sign," he said. "This could lead to the creation of a structure that threatens our borders."

pho-sjw/boc

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS ghum : Human Rights/Civil Liberties | gcat : Political/General News | gcom : Society/Community

RE turk : Turkey | syria : Syria | kurd : Kurdistan | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD 2ndlead

PUB Agence France-Presse

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DOW JONES NEWSWIRES

HD **Kurds in Syria Advance Toward Islamic State Territory in North**

BY By Ayla Albayrak And Karen Leigh

WC 2,322 words

PD 14 June 2015

ET 18:16

SN Dow Jones Institutional News

SC DJDN

LA English

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LP

ISTANBUL--Kurdish fighters reached the outskirts of an Islamic State stronghold in northern Syria on Sunday, a step toward connecting up the divided Kurdish region along the Turkish **border**.

The forces were within 3 miles of the northern Syrian city of Tal Abyad, said Ahmad Hisso, a spokesman for Jaish al-Thawra, a fighting group allied with the Kurdish militia leading the fight against Islamic State.

TD

The offensive comes almost six months after the same militia, the People's Protection Units, or YPG, repelled a monthslong Islamic State offensive in the Syrian town of Kobani on the Turkish **border**. The Kurds were backed by U.S.-led coalition airstrikes.

Control of the city would help the Kurdish militia strangle a key Islamic State supply route. Since falling to the extremists in 2014, Tal Abyad has served as a way station for the militants moving supplies and foreign fighters through porous segments of the Turkish-Syrian **border**.

It would also bring Kurdish forces to within 60 miles of Raqqa, Islamic State's main base of operations in Syria and the first city in the region to come under its control.

Turkish officials allowed thousands of Tal Abyad refugees to cross into the country on Sunday after many waited two days to be cleared for entry. Most villages surrounding the city were empty, Mr. Hisso said, with residents having fled toward the **border** in anticipation of a battle.

14 Jun 2015 13:05 ET Kurds in Syria Advance Toward Islamic State Territory in North

By Ayla Albayrak And Karen Leigh
ISTANBUL--Kurdish fighters reached the outskirts of an Islamic State stronghold in northern Syria on Sunday, a step toward connecting up the divided Kurdish region along the Turkish **border**.

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14 Jun 2015 17:21 ET Kurds in Syria Advance Toward Islamic State Territory in North

By Ayla Albayrak And Karen Leigh

Kurdish forces advanced on an Islamic State stronghold in northern Syria on Sunday, an escalating offensive that prompted thousands to flee their homes for the nearby Turkish **border**, carrying children and sacks full of their possessions in their arms.

On Saturday, black-clad Islamic State fighters with guns slung over their shoulders rounded up residents near the **border** crossing to **Turkey** and forced some of them back to their homes around the Syrian city of Tal Abyad. Some of the extremist militants grinned as they mingled among the refugees within sight of Turkish soldiers across the frontier.

Turkish forces, trying to stem the tide of refugees crossing into their country, fired tear gas at the crowds on Sunday, a day after they used water cannons to the same end. A Turkish official in the **border** town of Akçakale who oversaw refugee intake on Sunday said there were at least 20,000 Syrians from Tal Abyad and its surrounding villages waiting at the crossing, many of them children.

The Kurdish militia YPG, which is leading the fight against Islamic State in this area, said late Sunday they had begun battling the extremist group inside Tal Abyad. The militia said it was being helped by the Western-backed rebel group Free Syrian Army and by the YPG's female unit.

The forces "reached to the east of Tal Abyad, where fierce fighting is taking place between our combatants and terrorist groups," a YPG statement said. It said its fighters were less than 3 miles from a strategic Islamic State supply route leading to Raqqa--the radical group's main base of operations in Syria and the first city in the region to come fully under its control.

The Kurdish militia also claimed a large number of Islamic State fighters had been killed in the battle.

The U.S. military's Central Command said local ground forces composed of Syrian Kurdish fighters, Assyrian Christians, local tribes and elements of the anti-regime opposition continued to advance successfully against Islamic State in the northeast of the country. The coalition continues to conduct airstrikes against Islamic State forces in the northeast, it said.

Most villages surrounding Tal Abyad were empty, said Ahmad Hisso, a spokesman for Jaish al-Thawra, a fighting group allied with the YPG.

Praised for its open-door refugee policy since the Syrian conflict began in 2011, **Turkey** has registered 1.7 million refugees in the past four years, according to the United Nations. But earlier in June, Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmus said it would temporarily close its doors to more refugees "unless a major humanitarian tragedy emerged."

On Saturday, Turkish television showed the scenes of security forces firing water cannons at many of those fleeing, trying to turn them back. One refugee was shown lifting his young daughter in the air, trying to persuade Turkish soldiers to allow them to cross the **border**.

The surge of refugees at the **border** appeared to have prompted Turkish officials to charge course and open the **border** once again to refugees.

"The decision was reversed," said Abdulhakim Ayhan, mayor of Akçakale, which faces Tal Abyad. "This is a tragedy now. We cannot leave these people to die."

On Sunday, Turkish television showed Turkish officials bringing soup to the refugees, many who waited up to two days to be allowed entry. An official from **Turkey**'s disaster and emergency management authority, confirmed that all refugees still at the **border** crossing near Akçakale on Sunday would be allowed in.

The offensive comes almost six months after the same Syrian Kurdish militia repelled a monthslong Islamic State offensive in the Syrian town of Kobani, also on the on the Turkish **border** farther west. The Kurds were backed by U.S.-led coalition airstrikes.

Control of Tal Abyad would help the Kurdish militia clamp off a key Islamic State supply route. Since falling to the extremists in 2014, Tal Abyad has served as a transit point for both supplies and foreign reinforcements to militants coming through porous segments of the Turkish-Syrian **border**.

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Taking the town would also bring Kurdish forces within 60 miles of Raqqa, Islamic State's self-styled capital in Syria.

Situated between Kobani and the majority-Kurdish city of Hasakah, where the YPG is under siege by Islamic State, a victory in Tal Abyad could connect Syria's disjointed Kurdish-populated regions or cantons.

Unlike in neighboring **Turkey** and in Iraq, where Kurds control a semiautonomous region, Syrian Kurds are scattered throughout the north of the country.

"It was very important for the YPG to connect the free Kurdish enclaves, " said Jamestown Foundation analyst Wladimir van Wilgenburg.

The YPG advanced swiftly to Tal Abyad after a 48-hour siege of Islamic State in the town of Salouk, which is between Raqqa and Tal Abyad, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition group that monitors the conflict via activists on the ground.

It said they were backed in Salouk by airstrikes from the U.S.-led coalition that has been targeting Islamic State in Syria and Iraq since last September. But the Kurdish advance has been hampered by Islamic State's use of roadside bombs and explosives, Mr. Hisso said.

Mohammed Nour Al Akraa contributed to this article.

14 Jun 2015 19:30 ET Kurds in Syria Advance Toward Islamic State Territory in North

By Ayla Albayrak And Karen Leigh

Kurdish forces advanced on an Islamic State stronghold in northern Syria on Sunday in an escalating offensive that prompted thousands of residents to flee to the nearby Turkish **border**, carrying children in their arms and possessions on their backs.

On Saturday, black-clad and bearded Islamic State fighters with guns slung over their shoulders rounded up residents near the Akçakale **border** crossing and forced some back to their homes around the Syrian city of Tal Abyad. Some of them grinned as they mingled among the refugees within sight of Turkish soldiers on the frontier.

Turkish forces fired tear gas at the Syrian crowds on Sunday, and a local official said it was to prevent them from rushing the **border**. A day earlier, the Turkish troops sprayed them with water cannons. Images from the scene showed desperate refugees tearing a hole in the chain-link **border fence** topped with barbed wire and passing frightened women and children through it.

An official in the Turkish **border** town of Akçakale who oversaw refugee intake on Sunday said there were at least 20,000 Syrians from Tal Abyad and surrounding villages waiting at the crossing, many of them children.

The Kurdish militia YPG, which is leading the new offensive against Islamic State in the area, said late Sunday they had begun battling the group inside Tal Abyad. The militia said it was being helped by the Western-backed rebel group Free Syrian Army and by the YPG's female unit.

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The Kurdish militia also claimed that a large number of Islamic State fighters had been killed in the battle.

The U.S. military's Central Command said local ground forces composed of Syrian Kurdish fighters, Assyrian Christians, local tribes and elements of the antiregime opposition continued to advance successfully against Islamic State in the northeast of the country. The U.S.-led coalition conducting airstrikes against Islamic State in Syria and Iraq continued to bomb Islamic State forces in the northeast, it added.

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Mohammed Nour Al Akraa in Beirut contributed to this article.

(END) Dow Jones Newswires

June 14, 2015 19:30 ET (23:30 GMT)

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gterr : Acts of Terror | gvio : Military Action | neqac : Equities Asset Class News | nfiac : Fixed Income Asset Class News | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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PUB Dow Jones & Company, Inc.

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HD **Kurds Push Into IS Stronghold**

WC 1,710 words

PD 14 June 2015

SN Middle East North Africa Financial Network (MENAFN)

SC MENAFI

LA English

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LP

(MENAFN - Arab Times) The Syrian Kurdish YPG militia said it began an advance towards an Islamic State-held town at the Turkish **border** on Saturday, thrusting deeper into the jihadists' stronghold of Raqqa province in a campaign backed by US-led air strikes. Redur Xelil, the YPG spokesman, told Reuters the YPG and smaller Syrian Arab rebel groups fighting alongside it had begun the move towards Tel Abyad after encircling the Islamic State-held town of Suluk 20 km (12 miles) to the southeast.

The advance raises the prospect of a battle at the Turkish **border** between the well-organised YPG militia and Islamic State. Tel Abyad is important to Islamic State as the nearest **border** town to its de facto capital of Raqqa city.

TD

Fighting near the **border** has already forced more than 13,000 people to cross into **Turkey** from Syria. Some 1,500 more are waiting to cross. Turkish soldiers sprayed water and fired into the air when some of them approached the **border fence** on Saturday, a security source Iraqi Kurdish singer Helly Luv poses for a picture during an interview with AFP in Arbil, the capital of the autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq, on June 9. Luv is aiming for international fame as she releases her new English song 'Revolution', calling for action against terrorism and violence. (AFP) See Page 12 said. The YPG has made a determined push into Raqqa province from neighbouring Hasaka where, with the help of the USled alliance, it has driven Islamic State from wide areas of territory since early May. "The move towards Tel Abyad from the east began today after the completion of the Suluk blockade," Xelil said. "Many of the Daesh militants have fled (Suluk), apart from a group of suicide attackers inside the town and the booby traps, so we are very cautious about entering the town centre," he added via Skype. DAESH is an Arabic name for Islamic State.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a UK-based organisation that tracks the war, said the YPG fighters were now half-way between Suluk and Tel Abyad, situated across the **border** from the Turkish town of Akcakle.

Help

For the YPG, seizing Tel Abyad would help them link up Kurdish-controlled areas in Hasaka province and Kobani. The expansion of Kurdish influence in Syria near the **border** with **Turkey** is a concern for Ankara, which has long been worried about separatism among its own Kurdish population. The Turkish authorities have closed Akcakale to vehicles and it has been months since they allowed anyone to cross from Tel Abyad into **Turkey**. However, **Turkey** still allows people with a valid passport to cross into Syria from Akcakle. The Turkish military has dug trenches in the **border** area. With the help of US-led air strikes, the YPG fended off an Islamic State attack on the **border** town of Kobani, or Ayn al- Arab, in January. Since then, the YPG has emerged as the most significant partner on the ground in Syria for the US-led alliance that is trying to roll back Islamic State.

Idea

Washington has ruled out the idea of partnering with President Bashar al-Assad, who last month lost the city of Palmyra in central Syria to Islamic State - the first time the jihadists seized a city directly from government control. Iraq's former premier and current vice-president, Nuri al- Maliki, blamed "conspiracies" Saturday for the loss of major cities to jihadists and said Baghdad should prioritise paramilitaries over the army to fight them. But Maliki, who was prime minister when the Islamic State jihadist group began a brutally effective offensive last year, failed to mention the role he and his government played in the debacle. "Mosul would not have fallen except for a conspiracy, and Ramadi

would not have fallen except for a conspiracy," he said in televised remarks, referring to two major cities lost to IS. He blamed politicians who opposed him and said a plot to weaken the army was hatched in a neighbouring country, but did not name names. And he even said that denying the existence of a conspiracy amounts to one: "It is a conspiracy to say that there is not a conspiracy." Maliki, a Shiite, pursued policies while premier that angered and isolated Iraq's Sunni Arabs, who make up the backbone of IS' support, making it easier for the group to operate and expand. And as commander-in-chief, he sought to centralise control of the military in his office and played a significant part in its degradation, including by appointing commanders because of loyalty over skill. On Saturday, he said Iraq should give priority to paramilitaries known as Hashed al-Shaabi, or "popular mobilisation" forces, instead of the army. "Today, we must focus our effort on the Hashed al-Shaabi until we are liberated and end (IS) and free our lands, and then return to building the army," Maliki said. Last June, with security forces in disarray and IS advancing toward Baghdad, Maliki announced that the government would arm citizens who volunteered to fight.

Bombing

Meanwhile, at least 11 Iraqi security personnel were killed Saturday in a quadruple suicide car bombing near Baiji that the Islamic State group said four of its foreign fighters carried out. Police and army sources said the four car bombs were unleashed on security targets in Hajjaj, which lies on the road between Tikrit and Baiji in Salaheddin province, north of Baghdad. Seven soldiers were killed as well as four members of the Popular Mobilisation force, an umbrella for mostly Shiite militias and volunteers that has been doing much of the heavy lifting in the fight against IS in Iraq. At least 27 people were also wounded in the coordinated attack, which saw one of the four car bombs neutralised before it could reach its target, a police colonel said. An army officer said the vehicles used were identical, brand new SUVs that looked like an official convoy. Pictures released by IS show the blackclad suicide bombers each standing by one of four black Toyota Land Cruisers. IS said in a statement that the bombers were a Kuwaiti, a Palestinian, a Briton and a German.

Bomber

The picture of the German bomber, named Abu Ibrahim al-Almani, shows a red-haired blue-eyed man behind the wheel of his explosives-laden car, smiling and pointing his index finger to the sky. Ali Ahsan paced back and forth carrying a rifle more than half his height in the searing heat as his militia convoy made a pit stop in the Anbar desert to rest and pray. Unlike the rugged men in fatigues around him, his prepubescent face has barely sprung a whisker. Now that school is out, the petite 14-year-old is spending his summer break fighting the Islamic State group with his father and other members of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces, which includes the Shiite militias. "I'm here because it's my duty," the stone-faced boy in blue jeans said, referring to an edict from Iraq's highest Shiite religious authority last year. "The Popular Mobilization Forces are not sectarian forces.

They represent all of Iraq, and I want to help them liberate Iraq." Despite concerns over heightened sectarian strife, Shiite militiamen continue to pour into Iraq's Sunni heartland of Anbar province with the initial hope of recapturing Fallujah, the first major Iraqi city to fall to the Islamic State group last year. As the US prepares to send an additional 450 personnel to Iraq, the Iranianbacked militias say that coalition assistance only hurts their efforts, contradicting statements by the Iraqi government that more international support is needed.

IS fighters captured Anbar's provincial capital of Ramadi last month, prompting Defense Secretary Ash Carter to lament that the US-trained Iraqi troops lacked "the will to fight." The Popular Mobilization Forces were called to battle in Anbar after the fall of Ramadi, despite concerns that their involvement in the province would antagonize the Sunni population, and they are now setting their sights on Fallujah. "We think the liberation of Fallujah will allow us to enter Ramadi without any fighting, so the battle that we are preparing is the battle of Fallujah," Hadi al- Amiri, the head of the Popular Mobilization Forces, told journalists Friday at an outpost on the Salahuddin- Anbar **border**. "God willing, it will be imminent." President Barack Obama's decision to expand the US force of more than 3,000 soldiers already in Iraq followed his acknowledgement earlier this week that Washington still lacks a "complete strategy" for training Iraqi forces to fight the Islamic State.

A US-led coalition has launched more than 1,900 airstrikes in Iraq since August 2014 to mixed results. Many of the Shiite fighters, including Ahsan and his uncle, Salah Mahdi, believe that airstrikes have been a hindrance to their efforts to recapture territory - and in some cases, have been deadly. "We know of Hashd al-Shaabi fighters who were killed by the American planes," Mahdi said, using the commonly known Arabic name for the Popular Mobilization Forces. "If they really wanted to help us, then they would leave Iraqis to liberate Iraq by themselves." The Popular Mobilization Forces have played a key role in several battles in the past year, but their strategy appears increasingly at odds with that of the government. While Prime Minister Haider al- Abadi continues to lobby for greater international support in the way of arms, training and aid, the Popular Mobilization Forces want the coalition to back off.

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Noting the increased number of US advisers, trainers, logisticians and security personnel, al-Amiri scoffed at the notion that an additional "450 experts will be able to win the battle." "There were 150,000 American troops, thousands of tanks and mortars, and hundreds of jets, and they were unable to do anything to al-Qaeda in 2006 and 2007," al-Amiri said. While there are no official estimates for the size of the Popular Mobilization Forces, they are now believed to make up the majority of fighters in Iraq, outnumbering the official Iraqi military, which virtually crumbled in the face of the militant onslaught last year.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gvio : Military Action | gterr : Acts of Terror | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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PUB Middle East North Africa Financial Network Inc

AN Document MENAFI0020150614eb6e00035

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THE TIMES

SE Middle East

HD Syrians mass on Turkish border to flee Isis fighting

BY Hannah Lucinda Smith, Abu Zela, Turkish-Syrian border
WC 1,053 words
PD 15 June 2015
ET 02:57
SN thetimes.co.uk
SC TIMEUK
LA English
CY © Times Newspapers Limited 2015

LP

A humanitarian crisis was unfolding on Syria's border with Turkey last night as thousands of civilians fleeing fighting between Kurdish forces and Islamic State were trapped with no supplies or shelter.

Turkish soldiers turned water cannon on refugees who approached us at the fence trying to tell their stories. Nearby, Isis fighters have been pictured forcing civilians at gunpoint back towards the fighting they have fled.

TD

Some desperate Syrians trapped near the Turkish border town of Akcakale managed to cut through the border fence yesterday before they were penned back by soldiers, forcing the Turkish authorities to open their frontiers at that point.

Turkey closed its borders with Syria three months ago, but as fighting around the Isis stronghold of Tel Abyad has intensified thousands have fled towards Turkey. Kurdish forces, backed by coalition air power, are trying to take the town, a major Isis way-station on the road to Raqqa, the capital of their self-declared caliphate.

At Abu Zela, a Turkish hamlet ten miles east of Tel Abyad's main border gate, behind the waist-high roll of barbed wire and a dirt berm that marks the frontier, hundreds of pitiful figures were ranged under a merciless sun, trying to find shade under shelters knocked up from sticks and blankets.

Turkish soldiers prevented us from approaching the border fence, and as we stepped back the refugees ran to the fence and shouted."We have no water and no food," yelled one. "Please bring us some water." Another gestured to the sky. "Airplanes, airplanes," he shouted. "We are under siege."

As more ran towards the barbed wire, one of the Turkish tanks turned its gun turret towards us and sounded a warning horn, forcing us out of the area. The troops turned water cannon on the refugees gathered by the fence, forcing back the crowd that had gathered.

Among those trapped behind the fence are Ali Jelad's daughter and granddaughter. He and his family fled the village of Slouk, to the east of Tel Abyad, when the international coalition began airstrikes in the area. "We had heard that the Americans don't bomb civilians, but they are killing people in Slouk," Mr Jelad said, adding that 12 neighbours from two families had been killed in the past week.

Mr Jelad reached the border at Abu Zela in time to slip across unnoticed, but by the time his daughter arrived the Turkish army had sealed the crossing point. The Turks say that 13,000 people have been allowed to cross at an open crossing ten miles away, but that is no comfort to those who are trapped and no longer able to make that journey.

The Syrians fleeing the latest round of fighting in their country say that they are caught between two militias on the ground and airstrikes as Kurdish forces backed by the US-led coalition advance towards the Isis stronghold.

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Capturing Tel Abyad would be a strategic victory for the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG). The frontier around the town has been the nexus of **Turkey**'s "jihadist highway" to Syria, with thousands of foreign fighters using it as their gateway into Isis territory. The assault is hailed as a decisive strike against the extremists, but the Sunni Arab civilians who are fleeing say that they are the victims of aggression by Isis, Kurds and Turks.

A video released on social media yesterday showed Isis fighters rounding up civilians waiting by the **border** and forcing them back to Tel Abyad.

"When everything started they were letting people leave," said Um Abdulkarim, a mother of five who lived in Tel Abyad for 16 months after being displaced from Homs in central Syria. "But two days ago they stopped letting people go, even if they pay money. They are using people as shields."

Isis has punished those caught trying to leave its territory, but the Syrian regime has avoided targeting areas controlled by the extremists, leading many civilians to sacrifice freedom for security and move to Isis-held areas.

Despite the harsh restrictions and cruel punishments of life under Isis, people fear what might happen to them and their homes should the Kurdish militia take control.

"We fear that even if we get rid of Isis, the Kurds will not be any better," said Yassin Sayeed, who left Tel Abyad last Thursday with his wife, mother and four-month-old baby. "We don't trust any armed group in Syria any more."

If they capture Tel Abyad from Isis, Kurdish forces will be close to total control over hundreds of kilometres of territory along Syria's **border** with **Turkey**, which alarms Ankara. Yesterday thousands of Syrians cut through a **border fence** and crossed into **Turkey**, fleeing fighting between Kurds and jihadists. People threw their possessions over the **fence** and passed infants over barbed wire, before following through an opening in the **border fence**.

According to the Turkish foreign ministry, about 13,000 refugees have crossed into the country in the past ten days and on Sunday afternoon thousands more, who had been gathering on the Syrian side of the Akcakale **border** crossing, broke through. Turkish troops later gathered up the refugees, stopping them from going deeper into **Turkey**.

Ankara considers elements of the Kurdish forces to be allied to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers party , which it designated a terrorist group. "This could lead to the creation of a structure that threatens our borders," President Erdogan told reporters as he returned from the European Games in Azerbaijan. He has expressed concern about the West's backing of the Kurdish, saying that it could lead to their domination of northern Syria.

Turkey has said that the priority for solving the war in Syria should be the ousting of President Assad. While the US maintains that the purpose of its airstrikes in Syria is to fight Isis, those fleeing the offensive say that the bombing is aiding a Kurdish campaign to push Arabs out and establish their own autonomous region.

"Instead of supporting everyone, they [the US] are just helping the Kurds," said Mr Sayeed. "This is what can push people to join Isis. They are just adding fuel to the fire."

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gterr : Acts of Terror | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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DOW JONES NEWSWIRES

HD **Syrian Kurdish Alliance Sets Sights on Islamic State Stronghold of Raqqa**

BY By Ayla Albayrak And Nour Malas

WC 635 words

PD 16 June 2015

ET 20:32

SN Dow Jones Institutional News

SC DJDN

LA English

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LP

AKCAKALE, **Turkey**--A quick and successful offensive by Kurdish fighters and allied rebels in a northern Syrian town has boosted a U.S.-backed effort to choke off Islamic State's supply routes.

Emboldened by this week's recapture of Tal Abyad on the Turkish **border**, Syrian Kurdish fighters and allied rebels said their next target is Raqqa, Islamic State's main stronghold about 50 miles south of Tal Abyad. On Monday, these fighters said they had already begun to advance southward toward Raqqa, reaching the town of Ain Issa, only about 30 miles away.

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"Now that we have just completed clearing Tal Abyad and the surrounding villages, we will move to liberate Raqqa in the near future. It's our mission," said Shervan Darweesh, a spokesman for rebel groups allied with the Syrian Kurdish militia known as YPG.

The YPG's political affiliate, the Democratic Union Party or PYD, has ruled the three Kurdish-majority enclaves along the Turkish **border** in northern Syria since regime forces withdrew from the area in 2012.

The latest advance came amid stepped-up U.S. airstrikes in the region around Raqqa, Kurdish and Syrian fighters said. The U.S. carried out 23 airstrikes near Raqqa over the past two weeks, according to the U.S. military's Central Command. That was more than double the number in the same area in all of May.

Tal Abyad's capture is an important milestone for the U.S.-led coalition fighting Islamic State from the air in northern Syria and its allies on the ground. It is part of efforts to cut off the group's supply lines not just to the city of Raqqa but into neighboring Iraq, where the coalition has struggled to stem recent gains by Islamic State.

The advance recalled a similar battle six months ago in the Syrian Kurdish city of Kobani, where U.S. airstrikes helped YPG and a smaller alliance of Syrian rebels seize the town. However, it was a much longer and bloodier fight that lasted about four months.

On Tuesday, fighters were clearing mines and booby-traps in the Tal Abyad area, Mr. Darweesh said.

Abdulrahman al-Salih, a spokesman for one of the non-Kurdish Syrian rebel groups in the alliance, the Raqqa Revolutionaries, said Islamic State, also known as ISIS, retreated from Tal Abyad on Monday after very little fighting.

He said the YPG-rebel coalition surrounded the town starting Sunday, while airstrikes "prevented ISIS from sending any resupply convoys from Raqqa."

The offensive cut an important supply line for Islamic State across the porous Turkish **border** nearby.

Mr. Salih said that most Islamic State fighters withdrew south to Raqqa, or handed themselves over to Turkish forces policing the **border**. Turkish officials also said at least two Islamic State members had been detained after handing themselves over.

The Islamic State rout followed recent gains by the group that suggested efforts to contain the extremist group were failing. Last month, the militants captured Palmyra, the central Syrian town with a trove of ancient ruins, and Ramadi, the capital of Iraq's largest province.

Thousands of people fled in recent days as they anticipated a violent offensive, swarming **Turkey**'s **border** and cutting holes through a **fence** to get through when officials briefly closed the crossing. More than 23,000 Syrians have fled into **Turkey** since early June, mostly fleeing the Tal Abyad offensive, Turkish and United Nations officials said.

Mohammad Nour Alakraa and Dana Ballout in Beirut contributed to this article.

Write to Ayla Albayrak at ayla.albayrak@wsj.com and Dana Ballout at dana.ballout@wsj.com

(END) Dow Jones Newswires

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HD **Islamic State group loses key town on Turkish border**

BY By ZEINA KARAM

CR Associated Press

WC 2,521 words

PD 16 June 2015

ET 22:07

SN Associated Press Newswires

SC APRS

LA English

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LP

BEIRUT (AP) — For more than a year, the Syrian town of Tal Abyad on the Turkish **border** provided a lifeline for the Islamic State group, allowing it to ferry foreign fighters to its self-proclaimed capital of Raqqa and sell oil on the black market.

The loss of the town to the Kurds on Tuesday is a huge setback directly affecting the extremist group's operational structure and its ability to wage war, making it more difficult to attract volunteers and potentially turning the tide against the militants in Syria and Iraq.

TD

It marked a significant reversal of fortunes for the group that only last month generated alarm through its lightning capture of the provincial capital of Ramadi in Iraq's Anbar province and the historic town of Palmyra in central Syria.

"It shows that the Islamic State group is weaker than it seems despite their earlier victories," said Wladimir van Wilgenburg, a political analyst who writes for The Jamestown Foundation, a U.S.-based research center.

Analysts said the fall of Tal Abyad is potentially the most damaging loss for the Islamic State group — known by the acronyms ISIS or ISIL in English and Daesh in Arabic — since it declared its self-styled caliphate stretching across northern Syria and a third of Iraq a year ago.

While losing the town of Kobani to the Kurdish fighters of the People's Protection Units, or YPG, in January was a symbolic blow to IS, the defeat in Tal Abyad presents a real setback that may lead to a serious degrading of the group's operations.

Many had predicted a long, drawn-out war with the YPG before the militants would relinquish their hold on Tal Abyad — if at all. Only 50 miles (80 kilometers) north of Raqqa, the town was a major commercial avenue for the group, a smuggling hub for everything from foreign fighters to food and other supplies.

It took less than a month of fighting in the province and only two days for Tal Abyad to fall, with the militants melting away. Some fled to Raqqa, while others went over the **border** to **Turkey**, blending in with a flood of refugees.

Aided by U.S. air cover, Kurdish units marching west from Kobani and others moving east from the Kurdish town of Ras al-Ayn linked up, encircling Tal Abyad from three sides.

With that, the Kurds connected two of their self-administered cantons along the **border** with **Turkey**, putting even more pressure on Raqqa.

"What happened in Tal Abyad attests to the beginning of a large-scale decline process for IS," said Hilal Khashan, a political science professor at the American University of Beirut.

While IS could still bring forces across the **border** in Syria's Aleppo province where it holds territory, it would be a roundabout route that could expose the extremists to other fighting amid the long Syrian civil war against President Bashar Assad.

"The American policy in Syria and Iraq is to encircle IS and choke them off. When they can no longer sell oil and get reinforcements, they will eventually hit them at intervals," Khashan said.

The White House indicated the U.S. wasn't changing its policy after the Kurdish victory and said the ground forces combined with air power are working.

"It is an indication that when our coalition can back capable, effective local fighters on the ground, that we can make important progress against ISIL," White House press secretary Josh Earnest said.

Activists in Raqqa reported that militants there were on alert Tuesday, preparing for military operations north of the city. A Raqqa-based anti-IS activist group called Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently said the militants were seen digging trenches, building shelters and opening a new road.

In Tal Abyad, senior Kurdish commander Haqi Kobane told The Associated Press that Kurdish units along with their allies from the Free Syrian Army were starting to clean up booby traps and mines planted by the extremists so residents can return.

The Kurdish advance caused the displacement of about 23,000 people who fled the fighting to **Turkey** in the past two weeks, according to the UNHCR.

There were accusations by Syrian rebel groups and some Arab residents of Tal Abyad that the Kurds were deliberately displacing ethnic Arabs and Turkmen to change the demography of the area. Others have alleged that Kurdish forces burned crops and homes in their advances — accusations denied by the YPG.

An AP team on the Turkish side of the Akcakale **border** crossing said a large black and white Islamic State group flag was taken down Tuesday from a pole in Tal Abyad and replaced with a yellow triangular YPG flag.

The **border** was calm, in sharp contrast to previous days when thousands of Syrians poured into the frontier crossing, some punching a hole in the **fence** to enter **Turkey**.

Even with Tal Abyad's loss, the Islamic State group still holds roughly about a third of Iraq and Syria, including Iraq's second-largest city, Mosul.

"It does not mean they will be defeated in a matter of months, but it does mean that Western airstrikes combined with motivated armed militia groups could beat the IS," said van Wilgenburg, adding that there is still no good strategy to retake the two main IS strongholds of Mosul and Raqqa.

Still, he said, if the United States, the Kurds and **Turkey** could agree on training and equipping FSA rebels and using the Kurdish territories as safe havens to attack the Islamic state in Raqqa, "it could turn the tide" in Syria.

With most of Syria now controlled by either Islamic State militants or forces loyal to Assad, the U.S. has found a reliable partner in the YPG, a group of moderate, mostly secular Kurdish militiamen driven by revolutionary fervor and the desire for self-rule. Most of the U.S.-led airstrikes in Syria have focused on assisting the Kurds.

On Tuesday, the coalition carried out five airstrikes near Tal Abyad, three near Kobani and one near Raqqa.

The successes of the Kurds and the airstrikes "are exposing Daesh military capabilities and terrorists for subsequent removal from the battlefield," said Col. Wayne Marotto, chief of public affairs for the coalition.

Since the beginning of 2015, they have wrested back more than 500 mostly Kurdish and Christian towns in northeastern Syria, as well as strategic mountains seized by the Islamic State group. They have recently pushed into Raqqa province, an IS stronghold where Tal Abyad is located.

Kurds say they are preparing for an eventual offensive to recapture the city of Raqqa, but senior Kurdish commander Haqi Kobane said that would take time and need more unity among rebels. For now, they take delight in having deprived IS of a lifeline.

"Tal Abyad was for Daesh a lung through which it breathed and connected to the outside world," he told AP by telephone from northern Syria.

"Its loss marks the beginning of Daesh's defeat in Syria," he said.

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Associated Press writers Lefteris Pitarakis and Berza Simsek in Akcakale, **Turkey**, Suzan Fraser in Ankara and Nedra Pickler in Washington contributed to this report.

ART In this photo taken from the Turkish side of the **border** between **Turkey** and Syria, in Akcakale, southeastern **Turkey**, a Turkish soldier on an armoured personnel carrier watches as in the background a flag of the Kurdish People's Protection Units, or YPG, is raised over the city of Tal Abyad, Syria, Tuesday, June 16, 2015. Kurdish fighters with the YPG, captured large parts of the strategic **border** town of Tal Abyad from the Islamic State group Monday, dealing a huge blow to the group which lost a key supply line for its nearby de facto capital of Raqqa, a spokesman for the main Kurdish fighting force said. (AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis) | In this photo taken from the Turkish side of the **border** between **Turkey** and Syria, in Akcakale, southeastern **Turkey**, people walk, right, near the line of trees on the outskirts of the **border** town of Tal Abyad, Syria, Tuesday, June 16, 2015. Kurdish fighters with the YPG along with their allies Free Syrian Army, took full control of Tal Abyad on Tuesday, dealing a major blow to the Islamic State group's ability to wage war in Syria. Mopping up operations have started to make the town safe for the return of residents, after more than a year of State group militants holding control of the town. (AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis) | In this photo taken from the Turkish side of the **border** between **Turkey** and Syria, in Akcakale, southeastern **Turkey**, a Turkish soldier stands on an armoured personnel carrier as in the background a flag of the Kurdish People's Protection Units, or YPG, is raised over the town of Tal Abyad, Syria, Tuesday, June 16, 2015. Kurdish fighters with the YPG along with their allies Free Syrian Army, took full control of Tal Abyad on Tuesday, dealing a major blow to the Islamic State group's ability to wage war in Syria. Mopping up operations have started to make the town safe for the return of residents, after more than a year of State group militants holding control of the town.(AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis) | In this photo taken from the Turkish side of the **border** between **Turkey** and Syria, in Akcakale, southeastern **Turkey**, children celebrates as a Turkish soldier on an armoured personnel carrier watches while in the background a flag of the Kurdish People's Protection Units, or YPG, is raised over the city of Tal Abyad, Syria, Tuesday, June 16, 2015. Kurdish fighters with the YPG, captured large parts of the strategic **border** town of Tal Abyad from the Islamic State group Monday, dealing a huge blow to the group which lost a key supply line for its nearby de facto capital of Raqqa, a spokesman for the main Kurdish fighting force said. (AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis) | In this photo taken from the Turkish side of the **border** between **Turkey** and Syria, in Akcakale, southeastern **Turkey**, a Turkish soldier stands on an armoured personnel carrier as in the background a flag of the Kurdish People's Protection Units, or YPG, is raised over the city of Tal Abyad, Syria, Tuesday, June 16, 2015. Kurdish fighters with the YPG, captured large parts of the strategic **border** town of Tal Abyad from the Islamic State group Monday, dealing a huge blow to the group which lost a key supply line for its nearby de facto capital of Raqqa, a spokesman for the main Kurdish fighting force said. 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(AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis) | In this photo taken from the Turkish side of the **border** between **Turkey** and Syria, in Akcakale, southeastern **Turkey**, a Kurdish fighter with the Kurdish People's Protection Units, or YPG, climbs to install the group's yellow triangular flag on a factory in the outskirts of Tal Abyad, Syria, Monday, June 15, 2015.Kurdish fighters captured large parts of the strategic **border** town of Tal Abyad from the Islamic State group Monday, dealing a huge blow to the group which lost a key supply line for its nearby de facto capital of Raqqa, a spokesman for the main Kurdish fighting force said. (AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis) | In this combo of two photos taken Tuesday, June 16, 2015 from the Turkish side of the **border** between **Turkey** and Syria, in Akcakale, southeastern **Turkey**, on the left photo a Turkish soldier on an armoured personnel carrier watches over the **border** the town of Tal Abyad, Syria, while a flag of the Islamic State group flies over the town, where on the right one taken two hours later, a flag of the Kurdish People's Protection Units, or YPG, is raised on its place. Kurdish fighters with the YPG along with their allies Free Syrian Army, took full control of Tal Abyad on Tuesday, dealing a major blow to the Islamic State group's ability to wage war in Syria. Mopping up operations have started to make the town safe for the return of residents, after more than a year of State group militants holding control of the town. (AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis) | In this combo of two photos taken Tuesday, June 16, 2015, seen from the Turkish side of the **border** between **Turkey** and Syria, in Akcakale, southeastern **Turkey**, on the top photo a flag of the Islamic State group flies over the town of Tal Abyad, Syria, where on the bottom one taken two hours later, a flag of the Kurdish People's Protection Units, or YPG, is raised over the town. Kurdish fighters with the YPG along with their allies Free Syrian Army, took full control of Tal Abyad on Tuesday, dealing a major blow to the Islamic State group's

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IPD ML

IPC i

PUB The Associated Press

AN Document APRS000020150616eb6g002bt

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The Canberra Times
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HD **Kurds cut key Islamic State smuggling and supply route**

BY By Ruth Pollard in Akcakale, Syria

WC 813 words

PD 17 June 2015

SN Canberra Times

SC CANBTZ

PG A012

LA English

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LP

Kurds cut key Islamic State smuggling and supply route

Refugees on the Syrian side of the **border** crossing into **Turkey** at Akcakale on Monday. Thousands had cut through a **fence** the previous day.Photo: Getty Images By Ruth Pollard in Akcakale, Syria

TD

'Of course I am worried, we have left our house, our land, everything ... and we do not know where we will sleep tonight.' Assa, a refugee who fled with his family

Syrian Kurdish fighters have cut the main supply and smuggling route used by Islamic State militants and reports were emerging overnight that the jihadist-held **border** town of Tel Abyad had also fallen into Kurdish control. The intense battle that followed several days of fierce clashes drove thousands more terrified civilians to flee into the Turkish town of Akcakale on Monday, with some arriving sobbing and exhausted from the harrowing wait at the **border**. As many as 20,000 Syrians have fled into **Turkey** since last week, humanitarian workers estimated, with some of them caught in the terrifying situation of being prevented from leaving Syria by IS fighters and then blocked by **Turkey**'s on-again, off-again **border** closures. "In the beginning ISIS prevented us from leaving, they used us as human shields," 40-year-old Khalil told Fairfax Media as he sat in the burning afternoon heat, drenched in sweat from the strain of carrying all that he could across the **border** with his family. Turkish security forces lined the **border** as families struggled from Syria into **Turkey** once the crossing was opened on Monday afternoon. Relatives waited anxiously on the Turkish side, craning their necks to spot anyone from their family were among the estimated 3000 to have made it through in the short window that the **border** was opened. Assa, 38, reached the safety of **Turkey** with his wife and three young children after a frightening few days where fighting between Islamic State jihadists and the Syrian-Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) grew ever closer to their village, about 40 kilometres to the south of Tel Abyad. "We had to change cars several times along the way because there were air strikes near us," Assa says. "Of course I am worried, we have left our house, our land, everything - we have just what we were able to carry with us now and we do not know where we will sleep tonight." For the last year, the road from Tel Abyad to the Islamic State's stronghold of Raqqa allowed the movement of jihadists, weapons and other supplies and facilitated the

jihadist group's lucrative oil smuggling operation. Experts say its fall to the YPG and the Free Syrian Army, supported by US-led airstrikes, represents a significant loss for IS and allows the formerly separated, self-declared Kurdish cantons of Kobane and Jazira to merge. "Many jihadists flowing from different parts of the world travel into Syria through this gate (at Tel Abyad) ... and whatever ISIS produces goes out from there such as oil and other kinds of smuggling," says Mutlu

Civiroglu, a Kurdish affairs analyst. "It has been a key supply route for almost a year and is economically, politically and geographically vital for them - Tel Abyad is less than 100 kilometres from the capital of the Islamic State's so-called caliphate in Raqqa." Not only is it a strategic victory for the YPG, but it ensured the Syrian rebel brigade fighting alongside them - Burkan al-Furat - played an important role in liberating Tel Abyad, Mr Civiroglu told Fairfax Media from Washington.

"It is leverage for the Arab factions to show they are getting stronger and it may attract more people to join them." But the Kurdish advance has also drawn allegations of "ethnic cleansing" by some Syrian groups who say YPG forces are forcing Sunni Arabs and Turkmen to leave Tel Abyad, Agence-France Presse

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reported. Several Syrian refugees Fairfax Media interviewed at the **border** said they were as worried by the YPG as they were about IS.

"If the Kurds control the city I fear there will be ethnic cleansing - I don't think we will be going back there very soon," one man said. Kurdish military and political officials - who did not respond to Fairfax Media inquiries - were quoted by AFP as rejecting those allegations, saying they asked civilians to evacuate potential battle zones to avoid casualties. North-eastern Syria has been home to Sunni Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen, Assyrians and other Christian faiths and tribal loyalties drive much of the politics. However Kurdish officials insist theirs will be an inclusive rule that respects and actively includes all minorities. Courts will try anyone suspected of criminal behaviour. . **Turkey** is already home to 1.8 million Syrian refugees who have fled the four-year civil war.

RF 68515014

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gtraff : Trafficking/Smuggling | gimm : Asylum/Immigration | gterr : Acts of Terror | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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PUB Federal Capital Press of Australia Pty Ltd

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BBC MONITORING

HD **Turkish president said to prefer Islamic State control of northern Syria**

WC 1,203 words

PD 17 June 2015

ET 08:48

SN BBC Monitoring European

SC BBCEUP

LA English

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LP

Text of report in English by Turkish newspaper Today's Zaman website on 15 June

[Unattributed report: "Erdogan views PYD as threat, prefers ISIL control in northern Syria"]

TD

Rattled by new flux of refugees fleeing the raging war between the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in the northern Syrian city of Tel Abyad near the **border**, **Turkey**'s leader expressed concern over the YPG takeover of the town, implying that he would rather prefer ISIL control over the strategic **border** city.

The ISIL and YPG, the armed wing of the Democratic Union Party (PYD), are vying for control over Tel Abyad in an episode in the long struggle for supremacy in northern Syria. Backed by air forces from the global anti-ISIL coalition, the YPG recently made swift gains and pushed back radical militants after a withering months-long siege of the Kurdish city of Kobani, which proved to be a turn in the tide against ISIL. **Turkey** had to absorb more than 150,000 civilians during ferocious battles in and around Kobani in late 2014.

A similar fierce showdown is in the air, this time in Tel Abyad, a key **border** town just opposite of Akcakale, a Turkish **border** town in the southeastern province of Sanliurfa. Barbed fences and a **wall** divide the two towns.

The YPG advance towards Tel Abyad prompted a new mass exodus of refugees, sparking a humanitarian crisis across the **border**. The town is of strategic importance to the militant group, which regards as its only gateway and supply line through the **border** with **Turkey**.

Losing Tel Abyad, some 80 kilometres north of the ISIL stronghold of Raqqa, would deprive the group of a direct route to bring in new foreign militants or supplies. The Kurdish advance, coming under the cover of intense US-led coalition airstrikes in the area, also would link their two fronts and put even more pressure on Raqqa as Iraqi forces struggle to contain the group in their country. Reports on Monday suggested that the YPG totally encircled the town.

A Today's Zaman reporter in Akcakale said the ISIL militants began to withdraw to Raqqa to prepare for the next round of the battle, which will probably take place in or around Raqqa, the provincial capital of ISIL. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which tracks the conflict, said there were only around 150 Islamic State fighters in Tel Abyad.

Already battered by endless waves of refugees, **Turkey** allowed more than 3,000 refugees who were fleeing the fighting in Tel Abyad to enter the country, reversing its earlier decision of closing its borders to new refugees.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in a reflection of the widely-held opinion of Justice and Development Party (AK Party) senior figures, views the looming battle from a different angle. Ankara sees the YPG as the Syrian arm of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), an outlawed militia that has fought a 30-year insurgency against the Turkish state to establish regional autonomy in southeast **Turkey**. The PKK is listed as a terrorist organization by the US, **Turkey** and EU.

Erdogan spoke to reporters from pro-government media outlets during his return from Azerbaijan and addressed the steep challenges **Turkey** faces across the Turkish-Syrian **border**.

Offering a bleak assessment of the security situation in northern Syria, the president, however, appeared uneasy about the ascendant YPG, which has systematically rooted out ISIL groups from towns and villages as part of a steady campaign since January when it defeated the militant group in Kobani.

Erdogan portrayed the YPG's ascendancy on the battleground as a threat to Turkish national interests, accusing the Kurdish militia of deliberately targeting the indigenous Arab and Turkmen population in northern Syria.

The Turkish president said the US-led coalition fighting ISIL militants in Syria was bombing Arabs and Turkmens near **Turkey**'s **border**.

"On our **border**, in Tel Abyad, the West, which is conducting aerial bombings against Arabs and Turkmens, is unfortunately putting terrorist members of the PYD and PKK in their place," Erdogan said.

Last week, he accused the West of backing "Kurdish terrorists" in northern Syria. The YPG has emerged as the main military partner for the US-led campaign against ISIL in Syria. Erdogan's views reflect a concern over the revival of probable separatist sentiment among **Turkey**'s Kurdish community, which closely follows YPG movements in Syria.

Erdogan's refusal to help the besieged Kurds in Kobani fight ISIL touched off nationwide protests in **Turkey** on Oct. 6-7, 2014, leading to the death of more than 40 people in street clashes. The AK Party government, sources close to the party say, does not want to see a Kurdish enclave in northern Syria that could control **Turkey**'s **border** and thus transport routes to Arab Syria.

The president's comments came at a time when the Cumhuriyet and the Birgun newspapers ran news stories involving video and photo footage that appeared to be evidence of the AK Party government's links to ISIL in northern Syria. In one incident, the National Intelligence Organization (MIT), transported ISIL militants on buses through the Akcakale **border** gate as reinforcements in the fight against Kurdish forces.

Rebels accuse Kurds of deliberately displacing Arabs

More than a dozen Syrian rebel groups on Monday accused the country's main Kurdish militia of deliberately displacing thousands of Arabs and Turkmens as it pushes deeper into ISIL strongholds in northern Syria.

The Kurdish advance has caused the displacement of 18,000 people who fled to **Turkey** in the past two weeks. On Monday, up to 3,000 more refugees arrived at the Akcakale **border** crossing, according to the state-run Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT). An Associated Press photographer saw large numbers of people at the **border** and thick smoke billowing across as US-led coalition aircraft targeted ISIL militants in Tel Abyad.

The accusation, which was not backed by evidence of ethnic-or sectarian-related killings, threatened to escalate tensions between ethnic Arabs and Kurds as the Kurdish fighters conquer more territory in northern Syria.

Since the beginning of the year, the YPG have wrested back more than 500 mostly Kurdish and Christian towns in northeastern Syria, as well as strategic mountains seized earlier by ISIL. They have recently pushed into Raqqa province, an ISIL stronghold where Tel Abyad is located.

"YPG forces ... have implemented a new sectarian and ethnic cleansing campaign against Sunni Arabs and Turkmen under the cover of coalition airstrikes which have included bombardment, terrorizing civilians and forcing them to flee their villages," the statement issued by rebel and militant groups said. The YPG, however, denies these claims.

Rami Abdulrahman, who runs the the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said the people who had fled into **Turkey** were escaping fighting and there was no systematic effort to force people out.

He said also said there were no Turkmen in the area, stating, "There are violations [referring to acts of abuse] by individuals from the YPG, but not in a systematic way."

Source: Zaman website, Istanbul, in English 15 Jun 15

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

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PUB The British Broadcasting Corporation

AN Document BBCEUP0020150617eb6h000m9

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HD **Locals fear IS jihadists quietly slipped into Turkey**

BY Dilay GUNDOGAN

WC 691 words

PD 18 June 2015

ET 18:02

SN Agence France Presse

SC AFPR

LA English

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LP

As the Syrian town of Tal Abyad taken by Kurds from Islamic State (IS) militants this week looms in the distance, one question troubles the Turkish residents on the other side.

What happened to the defeated jihadists?

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Many locals on the Turkish side of the **border** fear some of the beaten Islamists may have shaven their beards, slipped across, and now be quietly living among them.

"Don't film me smoking," pleads Mustafa, a barber in the Turkish **border** town of Akcakale.

"It's (the holy Muslim fasting month of) Ramadan. Daesh might see it and cut my fingers," he said using the pejorative Arabic acronym for IS, which imposes a harsh interpretation of Islamic law.

Turkey has always vehemently denied accusations it has allowed jihadists to use the **border** as a transit point. It has given no indication that large numbers of jihadists could have joined Syrian refugees crossing the **border**.

The governor of the Sanliurfa province, Izzettin Kucuk, said just two unarmed IS members gave themselves up at the **border** when thousands of refugees streamed across at the weekend.

Other reports said five suspected IS militants were captured as they attempted to cross into **Turkey** together with refugees through the barbed wire **fence** that once sealed the **border**.

Kurdish forces took the strategic town earlier this week after several days of intense fighting, which sparked an exodus of more than 23,000 refugees into neighbouring **Turkey**.

Some have started to return home but residents fear IS fighters in disguise were among the thousands of refugees who stayed in Akcakale or in nearby camps.

"When IS first took over Tal Abyad, I bought a Kalashnikov. But now that they might be among us, I'm planning on buying something heavier," said Ihsan Kurt, 50, a grocery owner.

"Our town is a ticking bomb," he said.

The fears have been amplified by extraordinary scenes at the weekend -- just before the town was taken by the Kurds -- when IS fighters appeared right at the **border fence** and appeared to grin at the Turkish guards on the other side.

"Because so many refugees crossed the **border**, the jihadists had a good chance of remaining unnoticed in the crowds. They shave their beard and cross over. It's that simple," said Ismail Yilmaz, a local official from the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP).

"Once they cross the **border**, they go to bigger towns or refugee camps where they can hide more easily," he said.

"I've seen them praying at our mosques, I've seen them in our hospitals, I've seen them getting arrested, I've seen them being freed."

The Human Rights Association (IHD) of **Turkey** NGO said in a recent report on Akcakale that at least 50 IS militants crossed over from Tal Abyad to **Turkey** after Kurdish fighters drove out IS militants.

It denounced the Turkish authorities for "not following up the arrival of any of these militants."

"We do not know who is walking our streets anymore. We are helping our brothers and sisters coming from Syria because they are in need of help, but we may well be helping the jihadists unknowingly," said Mustafa, the barber.

But Salih Kerpeten, a farmer, said he was not particularly bothered by an IS presence in town because any newcomers were "not hardliners like foreign fighters."

"I heard that some IS fighters fled to **Turkey** out of fear. They fled from IS," he said.

"We still can't trust them. There are good and bad among them, but how can you differentiate?" he said.

"In any case we have nothing to be afraid of. We are the citizens of **Turkey**. They should be afraid of us," he said.

In recent months, there have been growing signs that **Turkey** is responding to Western criticism that it is not doing enough to halt foreign fighters.

The Turkish army said on Wednesday it captured "four terrorists" from IS in the southern **border** province of Kilis as they were trying to cross into **Turkey** from Syria.

dg/sjw/ccr

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

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IPD Scener

PUB Agence France-Presse

AN Document AFPR000020150618eb6i0073l

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REUTERS

HD **Turkey looking to construct more walls on Syrian border -officials**

BY By Orhan Coskun

WC 324 words

PD 27 June 2015

ET 16:37

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

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LP

ANKARA, June 27 (Reuters) - **Turkey** wants to construct more walls along its **border** with Syria to strengthen security against Islamic State militants and crack down on illegal **border** crossings, senior officials told Reuters on Saturday.

Turkey shares a more than 900 km (560 mile) **border** with Syria, and much recent fighting has taken place on its doorstep. On Saturday Syrian Kurdish fighters secured the town of Kobani near the Turkish **border**, two days after Islamic State launched a deadly attack in the area.

TD

Turkey has already erected more than 10 km of walls along its borders, supported by additional measures such as thermal cameras.

Now, the government wants to add to that and is considering adding portable concrete walls in some locations, two officials told Reuters. The portable walls, which are made up of concrete slabs, can be taken down and reassembled in different locations.

Ankara decided that constructing a **wall** along the length of the **border** would be too costly. The officials declined to say how long a **wall** the government was looking to build, or where it would put it.

Turkey has kept an open-**border** policy throughout Syria's civil war and has vowed to maintain it, providing a lifeline to rebels battling President Bashar al-Assad by allowing supplies in and refugees out.

But the policy has had its costs. Smuggling has thrived, and a growing number of Syrians forced by the war to eke out a living where they can, swell the ranks of those trying to cross back and forth outside the official **border** posts.

That has compounded the challenge of securing the **border** for Turkish authorities, already accused of doing too little to stop foreign jihadists from entering Syria and posing an even bigger risk to the wider region. (Writing by David Dolan; editing by Ralph Boulton)

RF Released: 2015-6-27T15:37:11.000Z

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gimm : Asylum/Immigration | gterr : Acts of Terror | gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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IPD Business

IPC SERVICE:G

PUB Thomson Reuters (Markets) LLC

AN Document LBA0000020150627eb6r00dkx

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HD **As Kurds gain in Syria, Turkish govt ponders military action**

BY By SUZAN FRASER and RAPHAEL SATTER

CR Associated Press

WC 1,330 words

PD 30 June 2015

ET 00:31

SN Associated Press Newswires

SC APRS

LA English

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LP

ANKARA, **Turkey** (AP) — As Kurdish rebels in northern Syria rack up wins against the Islamic State group, Turkish media is abuzz with talk of a long-debated military intervention to push the Islamic militants back from the Turkish **border** — a move that will also outflank any Kurdish attempts to create a state along **Turkey**'s southern frontier.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan chaired a National Security Council meeting Monday which covered developments in Syria and pro-government newspapers were rife with purported proposals, ranging from loosening the rules of engagement to give Turkish troops a freer hand to fire into Syria, to a tanks-and-troops invasion aimed at occupying a 110-kilometer (70-mile) long, 33-kilometer (20-mile) wide buffer zone.

TD

The burst of tough talk has analysts "scratching their heads about what to make of all of this," Aaron Stein, an associate fellow at the London-based RUSI think tank, said in a Twitter message.

In a telephone interview, Stein said the new talk of action was due in part to dramatic Kurdish gains in Syria, where rebels have scored a series of victories against IS, most notably in the **border** town of Tal Abyad. That key transit point is not far from the IS's Syrian power base of Raqqa.

The capture of Tal Abyad opened ways for Kurds to connect their stronghold in Syria's northeast to the once-badly isolated **border** town of Kobani — which famously resisted a months-long Islamic State siege — and perhaps even the Kurdish enclave of Afrin in Syria's northwest.

Turkish officials fear the creation of a vast and contiguous zone of Kurdish control could stir up separatist sentiment among its own Kurdish minority. Ankara is concerned over reports that Kurdish rebels are chasing other ethnic groups, such as Arabs and Turkmens, out of the areas under their control.

Ankara is also eager to shake accusations that it is turning a blind eye to the Islamic State group — especially after photos were published showing the grinning fanatics within a stone's throw of the Turkish **border** during the battle for Tal Abyad, Stein said.

There is no evidence that **Turkey** did anything except stay out of the fight, but Stein said the pictures were embarrassing.

"You had ISIS fighters walking within 10 feet (3 meters) of the **border**, smiling and waving at Turkish **border** guards," he said, using an acronym for Islamic State. "That gives the impression of complicity. It's very damaging to Ankara."

The idea of military intervention across the **border** remains unpopular in **Turkey**. Any battles in urban areas would almost certainly mean heavy casualties in a fight against a determined and entrenched foe. The Dogan News Agency on Monday broadcast footage of what it said were IS militants digging ditches and planting mines across from the Turkish **border**.

Even a more limited intervention, such as artillery or air strikes, could increase the flow of Syrians seeking shelter in **Turkey**, which is already burdened with the world's largest number of refugees.

Fighting in Syria could also weaken the standing of **Turkey**'s Justice and Development Party, which recently lost its parliamentary majority and is now courting potential coalition partners to stay in power.

Most seriously, any fighting in Kurdish areas of Syria risks derailing the peace process with Kurdish rebels in southeastern **Turkey**, overturning a key achievement of Erdogan's leadership and potentially spreading violence across the country.

"If there is a decision to attack the cantons in Rojova (the Kurdish-controlled areas of northern Syria), it would amount to an attack on all Kurdish people," senior Kurdish rebel commander Murat Karayilan said in a statement Monday. "Such an intervention would be an intervention that takes **Turkey** to civil war."

More modest forms of intervention in Syria seem likelier. **Turkey** has long pressed the U.S. to set up a no-fly zone — to no avail — and previous plans for a buffer zone have been shelved. Stein believes Monday's meeting will probably result in orders to **Turkey**'s **border** forces to take their gloves off.

Meanwhile any hopes that recent rebel gains against the government of President Bashar Assad elsewhere in Syria had turned the dictator's allies against him were knocked back by a surprise visit by Syria's foreign minister to Moscow on Monday.

The Kremlin's policy to "support Syria, the Syrian leadership and the Syrian people remains unchanged," news agencies quoted Russian President Vladimir Putin as telling the envoy.

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Satter contributed to this report from Istanbul. Berza Simsek in Istanbul also contributed.

ART FILE-In this Monday, June 15, 2015 file photo taken from the Turkish side of the **border** between **Turkey** and Syria, Turkish soldiers run to their new positions next to the **border fence** in Akcakale, southeastern **Turkey**. As Kurdish rebels in northern Syrian rack up wins against the Islamic State group, **Turkey**'s press is once again abuzz with talk of plans for a long-debated intervention aimed at pushing the radical religious group back from its **border**, and outflanking any Kurdish attempt at creating a state along **Turkey**'s southern frontier. (AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis, file) | FILE-In this Monday, June 15, 2015 file photo taken from the Turkish side of the **border** between **Turkey** and Syria, in Akcakale, southeastern **Turkey**, a Turkish army soldier guards the **border** area with Syria as in the background Syrian refugees wait in order to cross into **Turkey**. As Kurdish rebels in northern Syrian rack up wins against the Islamic State group, **Turkey**'s press is once again abuzz with talk of plans for a long-debated intervention aimed at pushing the radical religious group back from its **border**, and outflanking any Kurdish attempt at creating a state along **Turkey**'s southern frontier. (AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis, file) | FILE-In this Monday, June 15, 2015 file photo taken from the Turkish side of the **border** between **Turkey** and Syria, in Akcakale, southeastern **Turkey**, showing a Turkish soldier walking by the **border fence** with Syria while in the background, Kurdish fighters, top right, advance, as civilians, top left, flee the outskirts of Tal Abyad, Syria. As Kurdish rebels in northern Syrian rack up wins against the Islamic State group, **Turkey**'s press is once again abuzz with talk of plans for a long-debated intervention aimed at pushing the radical religious group back from its **border**, and outflanking any Kurdish attempt at creating a state along **Turkey**'s southern frontier. (AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis, file) | FILE-In this Monday, June 15, 2015 file photo taken from the Turkish side of the **border** between **Turkey** and Syria, showing a Turkish soldier walks by the **border** with Syria in Akcakale, southeastern **Turkey**, as in the background, Kurdish fighters with the Kurdish People's Protection Units, or YPG, wave their yellow triangular flag in the outskirts of Tal Abyad, Syria. As Kurdish rebels in northern Syrian rack up wins against the Islamic State group, **Turkey**'s press is once again abuzz with talk of plans for a long-debated intervention aimed at pushing the radical religious group back from its **border**, and outflanking any Kurdish attempt at creating a state along **Turkey**'s southern frontier. (AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis, file) | FILE-In this Monday, June 15, 2015 file photo taken from the Turkish side of the **border** between **Turkey** and Syria, in Akcakale, southeastern **Turkey**, showing Kurdish fighters with the Kurdish People's Protection Units, or YPG, advance in the outskirts of Tal Abyad, Syria. As Kurdish rebels in northern Syrian rack up wins against the Islamic State group, **Turkey**'s press is once again abuzz with talk of plans for a long-debated intervention aimed at pushing the radical religious group back from its **border**, and outflanking any Kurdish attempt at creating a state along **Turkey**'s southern frontier. (AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis, file)

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IPD EU

IPC i

PUB The Associated Press

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SE News

HD **Militants could be pushed from border**

BY SUZAN FRASER AND RAPHAEL SATTER, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WC 349 words

PD 30 June 2015

SN Brockville Recorder and Times

SC BRCKVL

ED Final

PG A10

LA English

CY 2015 Sun Media Corporation

LP

ANKARA, **Turkey**--As Kurdish rebels in northern Syria rack up wins against the Islamic State, Turkish media is abuzz with talk of a long-debated military intervention to push the Islamic militants back from the Turkish **border**--a move that will also outflank any Kurdish attempts to create a state along **Turkey**'s southern frontier.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan began chairing a National Security Council meeting Monday, only days after he vowed to prevent the Kurds from establishing a state in Syria.

TD

Pro-government newspapers are rife with purported proposals, ranging from loosening the rules of engagement to give Turkish troops a freer hand to fire into Syria, to a tanks-and-troops invasion aimed at occupying a 110-km long, 33-km wide buffer zone.

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But the idea of military intervention across the **border** remains unpopular in **Turkey**.

Any battles in urban areas would almost certainly mean heavy casualties.

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ART LEFTERIS PITARAKIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS \ Turkish soldiers run to their new positions next to the **border fence** in Akcakale in southeastern **Turkey**. \

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PUB Sun Media Corporation

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ALJAZEERA

HD **Kurdish offensive in Syria has Ankara on its toes**

WC 671 words

PD 1 July 2015

SN Al Jazeera English

SC AJAZEN

LA English

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LP

Turkey worries about expanding cooperation between US-led coalition and Kurdish YPG forces.

The Syrian **border** town of Jarablous could soon become a battleground and that battle could change the frontlines and the balance of power in territories outside the control of the government in northern Syria.

TD

Jarablous is controlled by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Its flag is hoisted just a few metres from the Turkish flag at the **border** crossing.

A **fence** is what demarcates what has been a quiet frontier for years.

Just 100 metres from where we were standing, we could see a bulldozer digging trenches around the town's perimeter. A few days ago, ISIL fighters were filmed planting explosives.

The group is preparing for war.

This is the last Syrian-Turkish **border** crossing ISIL controls. It cannot afford to lose it. Last month, it was pushed from Tal Abyad and the main Syrian Kurdish fighting force, the YPG, claimed control of 400 of the 900km Syrian-Turkish **border** from Iraq to the town of Kobane in the west.

US support

The US, which leads the anti-ISIL coalition, praised the capture of Tal Abyad which it said was the group's main route to bring in foreign fighters and supplies to its de facto capital Raqqa.

It would undoubtedly welcome ISIL losing Jarablous.

The YPG now has its sights set on taking the town.

The coalition has provided the Kurds with air cover in previous operations and it is likely to do so in any new offensive against ISIL - leading some to suggest that it prefers the YPG over the Turks as **border** guards.

A few weeks ago President Barack Obama was highly critical of **Turkey**, accusing it of failing to stop the flow of foreign fighters, a charge officials here said was baseless.

A possible push by the Kurds into Jarablous is causing concerns in **Turkey**. It believes the YPG has another agenda apart from fighting ISIL. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan accused the Kurds of wanting to capture Jarablous to link its territories in the northeast with the Kurdish enclave of Afrin in Aleppo province further west and eventually declare a state.

The Turkish government is promising to prevent that. Reinforcements have been sent to the **border** and officials say all options are on the table. Pro-government media have been reporting a possible cross-**border** operation that would involve creating a buffer zone in the Jarablous region.

Why is this region strategically important?

It is not far from the town of Marea in Aleppo province which has become a frontline between ISIL and Syrian opposition groups.

Turkey doesn't just want to prevent Kurdish expansion, it wants to ensure the Syrian rebels who it supports continue to hold the northern countryside of Aleppo and its main **border** crossing, Bab al-Salameh.

If they lose that territory to either ISIL or the YPG, it would weaken them in their fight against the Syrian government.

Turkey has long expressed its frustration with the coalition's failure to focus on targeting President Bashar al-Assad's forces.

Many believe Turkish officials are raising the possibility of intervention in Syria to pressure the west to change its policy.

Ankara is also worried about the expanding cooperation between the coalition and the YPG and would like the US to stop supporting the group.

The tensions could complicate the anti-ISIL campaign.

The YPG has been the only viable and reliable partner for the coalition on the ground in Syria but there are limits to what the Kurds can or are willing to do.

Syrian Arab groups say the YPG is not only fighting for what they consider to be Kurdish territory or "Western Kurdistan" but cleansing their newly captured areas from ethnic Arabs.

And if the YPG pushes deeper into Arab majority areas under ISIL's control - it could mean yet another conflict in Syria's war which already has many different fronts.

Al Jazeera

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PUB Al Jazeera International

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KASHMIR OBSERVER

HD **Ankara on the fence**

BY DAVID LEPESKA

WC 1,059 words

PD 2 July 2015

SN Kashmir Observer

SC HTKASO

LA English

CY Copyright 2015. Kashmir Observer.

LP

Srinagar, July 2 -- ONe year ago this week, a spokesman for the Islamic State of Syria and the Levant (ISIL) announced a new Islamist caliphate, declaring statehood for territory controlled by the group and demanding support from other Islamist groups.

"Listen to your caliph and obey him," Abu Mohammed al-Adnani said, in the video released on the first day of Ramadan. "Support your state, which grows every day."

TD

ISIL has since solidified its so-called state and its system of governance by fear. More than 25,000 men and women have travelled to join the group, in addition to the countless swearing fealty from oceans away. With Tunisia and Kuwait added to the list last week, ISIL and ISIL-backed jihadists have now launched or inspired attacks in two dozen countries. ISIL generates as much as a million dollars' worth of revenue every day, thanks to sales of oil, artefacts, humans, and other contraband.

By just about any measure, ISIL is the most successful terrorist group in the history of the world. Much ink has been spilled on its foundations and internal workings, but one aspect has been left largely unmentioned: How **Turkey**'s ambivalence towards the group is key to its success.

21st century caliph

The founder of modern **Turkey**, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, abolished the world's most recent caliphate in 1924. But by then, the concept had crumbled to near irrelevance, along with the Ottoman Empire.

The current president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has revived many ideals of the Ottoman Empire and appealed to the broader Muslim world, making himself out as a sort of 21st century caliph.

His country, meanwhile, almost seems like an ISIL protectorate. About 1,000 Turks have crossed the **border** to join ISIL, according to police and intelligence reports, and as many as 3,000 Turks still at home are part of jihadist sleeper cells, awaiting orders. A jihad-themed bookstore in Istanbul peddles ISIL merchandise and a pro-ISIL Turkish-language website continues to operate, even promoting on its homepage a new ISIL publication that calls for the conquering of Istanbul.

ISIL has threatened **Turkey** repeatedly, and even executed two prominent attacks already this year: A suicide bomb on an Istanbul police hut in January, killing one officer; and two more bombs on a political rally in Diyarbakir, two days before the recent election, killing three people.

Still, Ankara remains tepid about combating the terrorist group. Erdogan responded to Kurdish fighters forcing ISIL out of Tal Abyad as "a threat to our borders". Reports out this week say **Turkey** is considering sending some 18,000 troops into Syria - not to attack ISIL, but rather to curb the recent gains by Kurdish forces there.

That Turkish officials might worry about the success of Kurdish fighters across the **border** inspiring Kurdish separatists in **Turkey** is understandable: Like everybody else, they would like to avoid another bloody separatist war.

But preferring ISIL to the Kurds - as Ankara also seemed to do during the battle for Kobane last year - seems a bridge too far. The Kurds now control two-thirds of the Syrian side of **Turkey**'s **border** with Syria, which surely means fewer fighters and supplies flowing to ISIL. For Ankara, a closer alliance with

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Kurdish fighters in Syria and Iraq would help combat ISIL and encourage progress on **Turkey**'s peace process with Kurds at home.

Deep animosity

But that animosity runs deep, while Ankara's embrace of conservative Islam and Syrian rebels is real. Seeking to oust Bashar al-Assad, **Turkey** reportedly shipped weapons and supplies to Syrian rebel groups through 2014. Since the ultimate destination of this military aid is mostly unknown, many hold **Turkey** indirectly responsible for ISIL's growth.

Ankara has repeatedly denied any support for the group. A few weeks ago Erdoganaccused the editor of Cumhuriyet of espionage and threatened to jail him for life after his newspaper's website posted a video that purportedly showed the state intelligence agency sending weapons to Islamist-held parts of Syria in early 2014.

Turkey has certainly done a commendable job hosting some two million(mostly Syrian) refugees - more than any country in the world. And it's more than likely that Ankara does not directly support ISIL in any way, and hasn't for some time, if it ever did.

But that's largely beside the point. By not taking a clear stand against ISIL and its apocalypto-extremist ideology, **Turkey** has fostered an environment in which pro-caliphate marches and pro-jihadist websites are perfectly normal and disenchanted youth feel quite comfortable slipping across the **border** to join the jihad.

More anniversaries?

There have been signs of a shift. Turkish authorities have deported some 1,300 suspected foreign fighters in the past year. In recent weeks, Ankara has quietly been talking with Kurdish rebel forces in Syria about cooperating on improved **border** security. And **Turkey** is reportedly considering bombing ISIL positions in northern Syria, rather than sending in troops.

Yet apart from the deportations, the above is thus far just talk. In reference to ISIL, US President Barack Obama recently said that Turkish authorities "recognise it's a problem, but haven't fully ramped up the capacity they need". The efforts of the anti-ISIL coalition haven't exactly been stellar, and should certainly be subject to criticism and improvement.

But until Ankara sees ISIL as a clear national security threat and takes a strong policy stance against the group and its ideology, the international community has zero chance of keeping ISIL from celebrating more anniversaries. Turkish officials are right now attempting to cobble together a coalition government. It could offer a chance for a new start on ISIL, even with Erdogan's Justice and Development Party in a leadership role.

Turkish leaders have in the past century already rid the world of one caliphate. With a great deal more at stake, the time has come to help do it again.

David Lepeska worked for the Kashmir Observer before moving to Istanbul (**Turkey**). He has written extensively for The New York Times, The Atlantic, The Guardian, The Financial Times and other outlets.

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CT For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

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PUB Kashmir Observer

AN Document HTKASO0020150703eb720008g

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REUTERS

HD **Drones and ditches as Turkey tightens border after Islamic State bombing**

BY By Orhan Coskun

WC 653 words

PD 23 July 2015

ET 12:53

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

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LP

ANKARA (Reuters) - **Turkey** is erecting a modular **wall** along part of its **border** with Syria as well as reinforcing wire fencing and digging extra ditches after a suspected Islamic State suicide bombing killed 32 mostly young students in a **border** town this week.

Turkey's NATO allies have long expressed concern about control of its **border** with Syria which in parts runs directly parallel with territory controlled by Islamic State. A suicide bombing on Monday in the southeastern town of Suruc highlighted fears about Syria's conflict spilling onto Turkish soil.

TD

U.S. President Barack Obama spoke by phone with his Turkish counterpart Tayyip Erdogan late on Wednesday, agreeing to work together to "stem the flow of foreign fighters" and secure the 900 km (560-mile) **border**, the White House said.

Turkish officials have said they believe that the bomber in the Suruc attack was a 20-year old Turkish man who had traveled to Syria last year with the help of a group linked to Islamic State.

"Critical sections (of the **border**) have been identified. Priority will be given to these areas and measures will be taken with all technological capabilities," Deputy Prime Minister and government spokesman Bulent Arinc told reporters during a break in a cabinet meeting late on Wednesday.

Thousands of foreign fighters are thought to have traveled through **Turkey** to join Islamic State in Syria and Iraq in the past few years, some of them with assistance from Turkish smuggling networks sympathetic to the militants.

The government's critics say it is acting too late.

A senior government official told Reuters that a 150 km "modular **wall**", which can broken down into parts and reassembled elsewhere, would be set up along part of the **border**, while wire fencing in other parts would be reinforced.

Flood-lighting would be installed along a 118 km stretch, while **border** patrol roads would be repaired, a package of upgrades which would cost around 230 million lira ($86 million), the official said.

The armed forces were also digging a 365 km long ditch along the **border** and have deployed some 90 percent of drones and reconnaissance aircraft to the Syrian **border**, the military said.

Turkey's armed forces have already stepped up security along parts of the **border** in recent weeks, as the conflict in Syria involving Kurdish militia fighters, Islamist militants and Syrian security forces intensified.

Around half of the armored vehicles which patrol **Turkey**'s borders are along the Syrian frontier, the official said. Half of the 40,000 military personnel who guard **Turkey**'s borders - including with Iraq, Iran, Armenia, Georgia, Greece and Bulgaria - are now on the Syrian frontier.

KURDISH TENSIONS

The general staff said on Thursday four suspected Islamic State members, accompanied by four children, had been caught trying to cross to Syria in the southern province of Gaziantep on Wednesday, the latest in a string of such detentions.

The Suruc bombing, whose victims included Kurds, enraged **Turkey**'s Kurdish minority, many of whom suspect the government of tacitly backing Islamic State in Syria against Kurdish forces, something Ankara strongly denies.

Kurdish militants claimed responsibility for the killing of two Turkish police officers on Wednesday in what they said was retaliation for the Suruc bombing.

The armed forces also reported a series of attacks by Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militant group on Wednesday, though no casualties were reported.

In the eastern province of Tunceli rebels opened fire on a military base, triggering a brief clash. In Van, near the Iranian **border**, militants set fire to trucks and opened fire on troops, the military said in a statement.

Guerrillas also blocked highways and set fire to vehicles in various provinces across the east of the country.

(Additional reporting by Daren Butler; Writing by Nick Tattersall; Editing by Clelia Oziel)

RF Released: 2015-7-23T10:53:16.000Z

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gvio : Military Action | grel : Religion | gterr : Terrorism | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcom : Society/Community | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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IPD Business

IPC SERVICE:OUSWDM

PUB Thomson Reuters (Markets) LLC

AN Document LBA0000020150723eb7n00dkx

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BBC MONITORING

HD **Turkish paper publishes details of cabinet decisions on Syrian border security**

WC 573 words

PD 23 July 2015

ET 14:32

SN BBC Monitoring European

SC BBCEUP

LA English

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LP

Text of report by website of Turkish pro-secular, mass-circulation daily Hurriyet on 23 July

Hurriyet has obtained details about the measures to be taken against ISIL [Islamic State group or ISIS] on the Syrian **border** that were discussed at the Cabinet's critical meeting yesterday.

TD

According to information from prime ministry sources, the most remarkable of the measures against ISIL to be taken on the **border** is the introduction of "airship eyes." Accordingly, airships are going to be deployed so as to observe critical locations on the **border** from the air. They will remain stationary but as they will be at a higher altitude than UAVs they will have a much wider field of view. They will be purchased from the United States, which has been using the same system very effectively on the Mexican **border** for many years.

In addition, a **wall** will be built at critical locations along the **border** as part of the integrated physical **border** security system. Also, advanced cameras, thermal cameras, ground surveillance radar and wire fences equipped with motion sensors are going to be installed. These systems are going to work in an integrated fashion with the UAVs and the airships.

Needs have been identified in the **border** regiments' areas of responsibility in the provinces of Hatay, Sanliurfa, Mardin and Gaziantep. The need has emerged for the construction of modular walks, chicken wire and illumination mainly for **border** security. The **border** regiment commands have given detailed kilometre information regarding the high risk **border** lines within their respective regions. The decision was made to provide an extra 116 million TL to cover these needs. The cost of an integrated **border** security system to protect **Turkey**'s borders on land, sea and in the air has been calculated at just over 4 billion TL.

1,300 Turks In ISIL

Undersecretary for Public Security Muhammed Dervisoglu presented a detailed report on foreign fighters at yesterday's Cabinet meeting. Some of the information in that report reads as follows:

1. It is estimated that there are 24,000 foreign terrorists in addition to the Iraqis and Syrians in Daes (ISIL) ranks in Iraq and Syria. Estimates as to ISIL's total size range between 40,000 and 70,000.

2. A significant proportion of the foreign terrorists come from European countries. In addition to them, the number of Turkish Republic citizens who have joined the Daes terrorist organization and either returned or been killed as of July 2015 ranges between 1,000 and 1,300 hundred.

More than 3,000 suspicious foreigners were questioned by Risk Analysis Units. Of these, up to 1,000 were denied entry and a further 300 more that were spotted inside **Turkey** have been deported.

Approximately, 16,000 people from 108 countries have been banned from entering our country with 50 per cent of those on the list coming from North Africa or the Middle East. Approximately 23 per cent of those who are banned are from North America and European countries and 23 per cent are from Eastern Europe and Asia.

More than 1,600 foreigners from 83 countries have been caught on Turkish soil on suspicion of being foreign fighters and have been deported. This number was 520 or so in 2014 but had reached 570 in the first half of 2015.

Source: Hurriyet website, Istanbul, in Turkish 23 Jul 15

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gdef : Armed Forces | gdip : International Relations | gterr : Terrorism | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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PUB The British Broadcasting Corporation

AN Document BBCEUP0020150723eb7n002ut

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HD **Turkey bolsters border as policeman shot dead**

BY Ambre TOSUNOGLU, with Stuart WILLIAMS in Istanbul

WC 733 words

PD 23 July 2015

ET 15:19

SN Agence France Presse

SC AFPR

LA English

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LP

Turkey on Thursday took steps to bolster its frontier with Syria after a suicide bombing blamed on jihadists killed 32, as the country was shaken by a new deadly attack on police.

A day after the fatal shooting of two police claimed by Kurdish militants as "revenge" for Monday's suicide bombing in the town of Suruc on the Syrian **border**, one policeman was shot dead in the majority Kurdish city of Diyarbakir.

TD

The unrest has intensified fears that the battle raging between Islamic State (IS) jihadists and Kurds inside Syria is now spilling over onto Turkish territory.

Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Arinc said after a cabinet meeting late Tuesday that the government had discussed an "integrated system" to secure the frontier with Syria amid its civil war.

Turkish media reported Wednesday that the measures were set to include sending zeppelins into the air several hundred metres high to monitor the **border** and building a concrete **border wall**.

Turkey also plans to put in place two fences separated by a military patrol road at the **border**, complete with observation towers at some locations, the Hurriyet daily said. A moat will also be dug at some points.

Turkey has long been accused by its Western partners of failing to properly control the 911-kilometre (566-mile) frontier and even of colluding with IS, allegations it fiercely denies.

In places, the **border** has been marked only with a crude wire-mesh **fence** ridden with holes that has provided easy passage to militants and smugglers.

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu meanwhile convened a meeting of security chiefs in Ankara later Thursday to discuss further measures.

The attack in Suruc -- which killed mainly young activists preparing for an aid mission to Syria -- was the first time the government had explicitly blamed IS for a strike in the country.

It inflamed tensions with **Turkey**'s Kurdish minority, which is unhappy over the lack of support provided by the government to Kurdish militias fighting IS inside Syria.

The military wing of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) claimed the killing of the two police in the **border** town of Ceylanpinar, accusing the two slain officers of collaborating with IS extremists.

Aged 24 and 25, they were given a funeral ceremony with full honours outside police headquarters in the regional centre of Sanliurfa, their coffins draped in the Turkish flag.

"The martyrs never die, the people will never be divided," dozens of police chanted, using a well known patriotic slogan.

The state Anatolia news agency said the three suspects had been arrested in early morning raids and were being questioned, without giving further details.

In new violence, one Turkish policeman was shot dead and another badly wounded in an attack Thursday by armed men during a routine traffic check in **Turkey**'s majority Kurdish-city of Diyarbakir, hospital sources said.

Meanwhile the Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement (YDG-H), seen as a youth wing of the PKK, claimed it had shot dead an alleged former IS fighter in Istanbul late Tuesday.

Turkey has so far stopped short of playing a full role in the US-led coalition assisting Kurds fighting IS militants who have taken swathes of Iraq and Syria.

However the Hurriyet daily reported on Thursday that Ankara had finally given the green light to US forces for use of the Incirlik air base in the campaign against IS in Syria.

It said that the accord was finalised in telephone talks Wednesday between President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his US counterpart Barack Obama.

Turkish officials have confirmed a 20-year-old Turkish man linked to IS carried out the suicide bombing in Suruc.

Media reports named the bomber as university student Seyh Abdurrahman Alagoz from Adiyaman in southeastern **Turkey**.

His father Zeynel Abidin Alagoz told the Dogan news agency that Abdurrahman had gone missing with his elder brother Yunus Emre six months ago.

Turkish media said a major hunt was now on for the brother, who had run a teahouse in Adiyaman that had become a known meeting place for IS sympathisers.

The unrest comes at a critical time for **Turkey** following elections in which the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) of Erdogan lost its overall majority in parliament for the first time since coming to power in 2002.

sjw/ccr

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

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PUB Agence France-Presse

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The Telegraph

SE NEWS

HD Turkey to build 500-mile wall on Syria border after Isil Suruc bombing

BY By Nabih Bulos Beirut
WC 544 words
PD 23 July 2015
ET 16:26
SN The Telegraph Online
SC TELUK
LA English
CY The Telegraph Online © 2015. Telegraph Media Group Ltd.

LP

Turkey plans high-level security **barrier** along **border** with Syria after suspected Islamic State suicide bombing

The Turkish government has announced plans for a high-level security **barrier** along its 500-mile **border** with Syria, three days after a suicide attack in the **border** town of Suruc left 32 dead.

TD

Bulent Arinc, **Turkey**'s deputy prime minister, announced a "renewed effort" to "avoid the entry of terrorists and the foreign fighters and to ease humanitarian passages" after a cabinet meeting in Ankara.

"A physical security system will be established along the **border**," Mr Arinc said, according to the Turkish state news agency, Anadolu.

"The critical issue here is preventing the entry of terrorists [into **Turkey**] and taking physical measures along the **border** against the Daesh threat," he continued, referring to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (Isil) by its Arabic acronym.

Turkey has blamed Isil for Monday's attack in Suruc, a town six miles from the Turkish-Syrian **border**. The attack targeted a gathering of young Kurdish and Turkish activists planning to cross into Syria to help rebuild areas of the Kurdish-majority town of Kobane, devastated by a months-long battle against Isil militants.

Interactive: Suruc suicide bomb

Local media outlet Daily Sabah published a graphic on Wednesday depicting the proposed security system, which included a concrete **wall** topped with barbed wire, a dedicated patrol road, and a strengthened **fence**.

It will also have 24-hour surveillance with drones, mobile surveillance vehicles, and an integrated command and control centre.

Thousands of foreign fighters are thought to have travelled through **Turkey** to join Isil in Syria and Iraq in the past few years, some of them with assistance from Turkish smuggling networks sympathetic to the militants.

The Suruc bombing, whose victims included Kurds, enraged **Turkey**'s Kurdish minority, many of whom suspect the government of tacitly backing Isil in Syria against Kurdish forces, something Ankara strongly denies.

The Kurdish guerrilla force the PKK claimed responsibility for the killing of two Turkish police officers in the town of Ceylanpınar on Tuesday. The murders were described as retaliation for the Suruc bombing, according to Turkish state news.

• **Turkey**'s Syria war policy unravelling as attacks increase fears of further violence

The PKK's youth wing, the YDG-H, also put out a statement claiming it had tracked a high-level Turkish Isil member it named as Mursel Gul to Istanbul and killed him in retaliation for Suruc.

The Turkish government insists that it is cracking down on would-be Isil terrorists.

On Wednesday, Ankara declared it had detained 457 terror suspects between January 1 and June 30. The detainees, who it claimed included citizens from 32 different countries, "were being treated as foreign terrorist fighters," according to Anadolu.

Monday's bombing appeared to have stirred the Turkish authorities into immediate action.

Syrian media outlet Zaman al-Wasl reported on Wednesday that hundreds of Syrians were gathered near the Bab Al-Salama crossing, a vital passageway into **Turkey** that serves Syrians coming from Aleppo province. Many had been forced to wait for more than 24 hours at the crossing as a result of strict security measures.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

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PUB Telegraph Media Group Ltd.

AN Document TELUK00020150723eb7n002mo

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HD **Turkish army hits IS in Syria after soldier killed**

BY Stuart WILLIAMS

WC 803 words

PD 23 July 2015

ET 18:57

SN Agence France Presse

SC AFPR

LA English

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LP

The Turkish military Thursday pounded positions of Islamic State (IS) militants in Syria after a Turkish soldier was killed by cross-**border** fire from jihadists, in a drastic escalation of tensions between Ankara and the extremist group.

The deadly clash was the most serious yet between the Turkish army and IS since the Islamists began to take swathes of Iraq and Syria right up to the Turkish **border** from 2013.

TD

The fighting came after the killing of 32 people in a suicide bombing in a Turkish town on the Syrian **border** Monday, blamed on IS, sparked an upsurge in violence in **Turkey**'s Kurdish-dominated southeast.

One soldier -- a non-commissioned officer -- was killed and two sergeants wounded by fire from five IS "terrorists" on the Syrian side of the **border**, the Turkish army said in an official statement.

The soldier was killed in the region of Kilis on the **border**. Four Turkish tanks from the fifth armoured brigade then responded by opening fire on IS targets in Syria.

"Three vehicles belonging to the IS terrorists were fired on and heavily damaged," the army said.

The army said that one IS militant had also been killed. His corpse, a rocket launcher and an AK-47 used by the militants had been seized, the army said, without specifying if troops had crossed into Syria to take them.

Thirty-two people -- mainly young activists, one as young as 18, preparing for an aid mission to Syria -- were killed on Monday in the devastating suicide bombing in the **border** town of Suruc.

That attack marked the first time the government had explicitly blamed IS for a strike in the country.

Turkish officials have confirmed a 20-year-old Turkish man linked to IS who had been missing for six months carried out the suicide bombing.

Turkey has been accused of colluding in the past with IS extremists in the hope they might prove useful in its aim of knocking out Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Ankara has always vehemently denied the claims.

The Suruc bombing inflamed tensions with **Turkey**'s Kurdish minority, which is unhappy over the lack of support provided by the government to Kurdish militias fighting the jihadists and accuses Ankara of backing IS.

A day after the fatal shooting of two police claimed by Kurdish militants as "revenge" for the Suruc suicide bombing, a policeman was killed in the majority Kurdish city of Diyarbakir.

The policeman was shot dead and another badly wounded by armed men during a routine traffic check in Diyarbakir, hospital sources said.

The military wing of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) had claimed Wednesday's killing of the two police in the **border** town of Ceylanpinar, accusing the two slain officers of collaborating with IS.

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The state Anatolia news agency said the three suspects had been arrested in early morning raids and were being questioned, without giving further details.

Meanwhile the Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement (YDG-H), seen as a youth wing of the PKK, claimed it had shot dead an alleged former IS fighter in Istanbul late Tuesday.

The unrest has intensified fears that the battle raging between IS jihadists and Kurds inside Syria has spilt over onto Turkish territory.

The cabinet late Tuesday discussed a range of new physical measures to improve security on the 911-kilometre (566-mile) frontier with Syria, whose porousness as been repeatedly criticised by the West.

Turkish media reported Wednesday that the measures were set to include sending zeppelins into the air several hundred metres high to monitor the **border** and building a concrete **border wall**.

Turkey also plans to put in place two fences separated by a military patrol road at the **border**, complete with observation towers at some locations, the Hurriyet daily said. A moat will also be dug at some points.

Turkey has so far stopped short of playing a full role in the US-led coalition assisting Kurds fighting IS militants who have taken swathes of Iraq and Syria.

However the Hurriyet daily reported on Thursday that Ankara had finally given the green light to US forces for use of the Incirlik air base in the campaign against IS in Syria.

It said that the accord was finalised in telephone talks Wednesday between President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his US counterpart Barack Obama.

The unrest comes at a critical time for **Turkey** following elections in which the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) of Erdogan lost its overall majority in parliament for the first time since coming to power in 2002.

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PUB Agence France-Presse

AN Document AFPR000020150723eb7n008q2

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MENAFN.COM

HD **Turkey to fly zeppelins, build new fence and moat for border security**

WC 427 words

PD 23 July 2015

SN Middle East North Africa Financial Network (MENAFN)

SC MENAFI

LA English

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LP

(MENAFN - The Journal Of Turkish Weekly) **Turkey** plans to take yet another turn by flying zeppelins and building a two-fenced **border** system with a new moat as part of its efforts to beef up its **border** security with Syria, after accusations from the international community of not doing its best to stem the flow of foreign fighters from **Turkey** to its neighbor.

"What is important in the face of Daesh (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant - ISIL) is to block the terrorists' transit points and to have physical obstacles to this. A physical security system will be established at the **border**," Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç told reporters during a break from a cabinet meeting attended by the commander of **Turkey**'s ground forces on late July 22.

TD

Arınç said they discussed implementing an "integrated system" to secure "critical parts of the **border**" with war-torn Syria to counter the threat of ISIL, adding those measures would not include building walls between the people of two countries.

Two-section **fence** system in risky areas

According to the new plan to beef up **border** security, **Turkey** plans to fly zeppelins over the **border** area, officials told the Hürriyet Daily News. Compared to drones, zeppelins bring about several advantages for **border** surveillance. They are able to stay stationary in the air and at higher altitudes, thereby covering a greater area. **Turkey** is expected to buy the zeppelins from the U.S.

The government will build a two-fenced **border** system including roads passing through two-section wire-mesh fences with observation towers, officials said. The amplified wire-mesh **fence** system will be located in risky regions of the **border** area which have been subject to high illegal passage.

The government has already renewed 145 km of wire **fence** and has set up 90 km of new fences on the **border**, according to information gathered from Turkish officials.

A total of 450 km of other parts of **Turkey**'s **border** with Syria, on the other hand, will be protected by a new moat. The cost of the new **border** security measures, including drones, thermal cameras and motion sensors, will be around 4.2 billion Turkish Liras.

With a renewed reinforcement of **border** security personnel, 50 percent of soldiers assigned to protect the county's borders have been carrying on work on the Syrian **border**.

Turkey also assigned 90 percent of its drones, along with 50 percent of its armored cars, to the **border** area with Syria.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gdip : International Relations | gpol : Domestic Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

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PUB Middle East North Africa Financial Network Inc

AN Document MENAFI0020150723eb7n000sh

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Mail Online

SE News

HD **Turkey unveils plan to build concrete wall with spy ZEPPELINS, watch towers and moats along its 560-mile border with Syria after deadly ISIS bombing in Suruc**

BY SIMON TOMLINSON FOR MAILONLINE

WC 987 words

PD 23 July 2015

ET 18:56

SN Mail Online

SC DAMONL

LA English

CY Copyright 2015

LP

* $1.5billion **wall** will include two fences separated by a military patrol road

* Comes as four soldiers and three police are shot dead along the **border**

TD

* ISIS suicide bombing also killed 32 Turkish activists in the town of Suruc

* Fears grow unrest between ISIS and Kurds is spilling into Turkish territory

Turkey has revealed plans to build concrete **wall** along its a 560-mile **border** with Syria to fend off the threat of Islamic State attacks.

The measures, estimated to cost $1.5billion, were set to include sending zeppelins into the air several hundred metres high to monitor the frontier.

Turkey also plans to put in two fences separated by a military patrol road at the **border**, complete with observation towers and moats at some locations.

The announcement comes three days after an ISIS suicide bomber killed 32 Turkish activists in the town of Suruc on the Syrian **border**.

Thousands of foreign fighters and jihadi brides, including a large number of British citizens, have crossed from **Turkey** into Syria to join ISIS over the last year.

One Turkish soldier was also killed and at least one more wounded today by fire from the Syrian side of the **border**, the official Anatolia news agency reported.

The soldier was killed in the Turkish **border** region of Kilis, the agency said.

Dogan news agency said four soldiers had been wounded and the fire came from an area controlled by ISIS.

The country has also been shaken by a new deadly attack on police.

A day after the fatal shooting of two police officers claimed by Kurdish militants as 'revenge' for Monday's suicide bombing in the town of Suruc, one policeman was shot dead in the majority Kurdish city of Diyarbakir.

The unrest has intensified fears that the battle raging between ISIS and Kurds inside Syria is now spilling over onto Turkish territory.

Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Arinc said after a cabinet meeting late Tuesday that the government had discussed an 'integrated system' to secure the frontier with Syria amid its civil war.

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A senior government official said a 150km 'modular **wall**', which can broken down into parts and reassembled elsewhere, would be set up along part of the **border**, while wire fencing in other parts would be reinforced.

Flood-lighting would be installed along a 118km stretch, while **border** patrol roads would be repaired, a package of upgrades which would cost around 230 million lira ($86 million), the official said.

The armed forces were also digging a 365 km long ditch along the **border** and have deployed some 90 per cent of drones and reconnaissance aircraft to the Syrian **border**, the military said.

Turkey has long been accused by its Western partners of failing to properly control the 566-mile frontier and even of colluding with ISIS, allegations it fiercely denies.

In places, the **border** has been marked only with a crude wire-mesh **fence** ridden with holes that has provided easy passage to militants and smugglers.

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu meanwhile convened a meeting of security chiefs in Ankara later Thursday to discuss further measures.

The attack in Suruc – which killed mainly young activists preparing for an aid mission to Syria – was the first time the government had explicitly blamed ISIS for a strike in the country.

It inflamed tensions with **Turkey**'s Kurdish minority, which is unhappy over the lack of support provided by the government to Kurdish militias fighting ISIS inside Syria.

The military wing of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) claimed the killing of the two police in the **border** town of Ceylanpinar, accusing the two slain officers of collaborating with ISIS extremists.

Aged 24 and 25, they were given a funeral ceremony with full honours outside police headquarters in the regional centre of Sanliurfa, their coffins draped in the Turkish flag.

'The martyrs never die, the people will never be divided,' dozens of police chanted, using a well known patriotic slogan.

The state Anatolia news agency said the three suspects had been arrested in early morning raids and were being questioned, without giving further details.

In new violence, one Turkish policeman was shot dead and another badly wounded in an attack Thursday by armed men during a routine traffic check in **Turkey**'s majority Kurdish-city of Diyarbakir, hospital sources said.

Meanwhile, the Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement (YDG-H), seen as a youth wing of the PKK, claimed it had shot dead an alleged former ISIS fighter in Istanbul late Tuesday.

Turkey has so far stopped short of playing a full role in the US-led coalition assisting Kurds fighting ISIS militants who have taken swathes of Iraq and Syria.

However, the Hurriyet daily reported on Thursday that Ankara had finally given the green light to U.S. forces for use of the Incirlik air base in the campaign against ISIS in Syria.

It said that the accord was finalised in telephone talks Wednesday between President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his US counterpart Barack Obama.

Turkish officials have confirmed a 20-year-old Turkish man linked to ISIS carried out the suicide bombing in Suruc.

Media reports named the bomber as university student Seyh Abdurrahman Alagoz from Adiyaman in southeastern **Turkey**.

His father Zeynel Abidin Alagoz told the Dogan news agency that Abdurrahman had gone missing with his elder brother Yunus Emre six months ago.

Turkish media said a major hunt was now on for the brother, who had run a teahouse in Adiyaman that had become a known meeting place for ISIS sympathisers.

The unrest comes at a critical time for **Turkey** following elections in which the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) of Erdogan lost its overall majority in parliament for the first time since coming to power in 2002.

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CO	aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
NS	gterr : Terrorism | gdef : Armed Forces | gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter
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PUB	Associated Newspapers
AN	Document DAMONL0020150731eb7n00dst

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HD **ISIS bomb draws Turkey's ire**

WC 431 words

PD 24 July 2015

SN Today.az

SC DLSDAZ

LA English

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LP

By Claude SalhaniB

Expect the war against the so-called Islamic State to take a serious shift in the weeks to come if as expected, **Turkey** gets in the game. Two recent developments lead us to believe this is likely.

TD

First is the news reported by The New York Times that **Turkey** has green-lighted US warplanes the use of the strategically positioned Incirlik air base in southern **Turkey**. This is an air base used by NATO forces where the US has a number of fighter jets and bombers, It also places the planes much closer to the theater of operations.

Being able to use the Incerlik facility will give the US Air Force an operating edge in the fight against the Islamists.

One official in Washington called this a "game changer".

This is a dramatic change of pace in the battle to defeat the jihadists, not only because of Ankara&s acquiescence to US pressure to allow American war places access to the air base, but perhaps more importantly is the fact that **Turkey** is now off the **fence** and squarely on NATO&s side once again.

Strategically, operationally, as well as emotionally, this must be a huge setback for this Islamists.

And second is the report from the previous week accusing the IS for the bombing that killed 31 people and left more than 100 wounded when a huge explosion took place in a Turkish town near the **border** with Syria. Ankara was quick to point an accusing finger at the jihadists.

With relations between the two sides reaching rock bottom, things can only go from bad to worse. Until recently the IS (also called ISIS) enjoyed support from **Turkey**.

But on Friday, Turkish antiterrorist police raided a number of safehouses in Istanbul and arrested about 250 people. This will of course raise the stakes and the fight with Islamists.

Now **Turkey**&s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, himself is a practicing Muslim, recognizes that there is no way that **Turkey** can survive as a modern nation and agree with the brutality and the uncivilized behavior practiced by the IS.

The interesting question now is what concessions did Washington make to **Turkey** to have Erdogan come off the **fence** on the right side.

One wild guess is that the ones who will come out with the short straw at the end of the day are the Kurds.

This of course was all very predictable and it was only a matter of time before **Turkey** came to realize it too.

/By Trend/

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

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PUB Day.Az Media Company

AN Document DLSDAZ0020150724eb7o0002v

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The Telegraph

SE NEWS

HD Turkey strikes PKK targets in Iraq increasing fears over ceasefire collapse

BY By Richard Spencer Middle East Editor, Raziye Akkoc and Louisa Loveluck

WC 1,048 words

PD 25 July 2015

ET 06:30

SN The Telegraph Online

SC TELUK

LA English

CY The Telegraph Online © 2015. Telegraph Media Group Ltd.

LP

Second night of air raids launched by Ankara as **Turkey** goes on the offensive attacking Isil and PKK positions

Turkey went on the offensive on Friday night across the Middle East, bombing both Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (Isil) and Kurdish positions after a week of violence which threatened to spread the region's violence across its southern borders.

TD

Fighter jets based at the Pirinçlik Air Base near Diyarbakir in the south-east of the country attacked Isil for the second time overnight, after earlier striking a base and supply dump just over the **border** in Syria earlier in the day.

Combined with an announcement that it was allowing US jets to use the Pirinçlik base and the major US air base at Incirlik, close to the Syrian **border**, for bombing missions against Isil, the action seemed to be a decisive break to join forces with other groups and nations combating the jihadists.

However, on Friday night, the Kurdish guerrilla group, the PKK, which has campaigned for autonomy from **Turkey** for four decades but is now also fighting Isil, said Turkish jets had bombed its rear bases over the **border** in northern Iraq.

It was reported by al-Jazeera that the attacks were on mountain positions in the north of Dohuk province, part of Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish region.

"Turkish warplanes started bombing our positions near the **border**, accompanied by heavy artillery shelling," a PKK spokesman said.

A Turkish official confirmed to Daily Sabah that Isil targets in Syria and PKK camps in Iraq were targeted and the attacks appeared to continue over Friday night and into Saturday morning.

An official statement from the Turkish prime ministry was due at 7.30am (5.30am BST), the Turkish newspaper reported.

There were also reports that pro-Kurdish websites as well as Facebook and Twitter were restricted for users in **Turkey**.

The first strike, early on Friday morning, was said to have killed at least nine militants . Although the Turkish authorities did not give full details, sources inside Syria said the target was an Isil base just south of the **border**. The F16 jets were said to have filed their missiles from inside Turkish air space.

The raids were a response to months of pressure on **Turkey** to take action against Isil, which has recruited widely inside the country and used the porous **border** to smuggle men and arms into Isil-held territory in Syria and Iraq.

The policy of **Turkey**'s ruling party, the Islamist AKP, of leaving borders open has been heavily criticised by **Turkey**'s Western allies and the Kurds, including its own Kurdish minority, for encouraging, deliberately or by neglect, the growth of Isil.

It also backfired on Monday when a Turkish Kurd who had joined Isil blew himself up at a youth centre in a Turkish town near the **border**, killing 32 people.

The victims were youth activists intending to head to the Syrian Kurdish town of Kobane nearby to help rebuild it after the Kurds' successful defence of it against Isil attack.

Ahmet Davutoglu, the Turkish prime minister, rounded on Isil in a bellicose speech on Friday and promised that action against the Islamist group "will not stop."

Meanwhile, Turkish police were rounding up what were described as "militants", with 297 people arrrested across 13 provinces. Among them was a man described as Isil's leading recruiter in Istanbul.

However, a large number were also leftist and Kurdish radicals, a sign that the government is still intent on preserving a balance between its fight against Isil and that against those it considers its real enemies - the PKK and the Assad regime.

A statement said raids were conducted "without distinction" against all terrorist groups.

"**Turkey** cannot stand by as Kurdish, Leftist and Islamic State militants target **Turkey**," said Mr Davutoglu. "We will take necessary measures against whoever constitutes a threat to our **border**."

The unrest threatens to open a new chapter in **Turkey**'s relations with its neighbours. Some have accused Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Turkish president, of acting like an Ottoman sultan with his thundering rhetoric about the Assad regime, Egypt, and other Middle Eastern flashpoints, and determination to back Syria's non-Isil rebels.

The United States has still refused to get behind Mr Erdogan's preferred option, of a no-fly and buffer zone in northern Syria against the Assad regime's air force.

Turkey also announced plans for a high-level security **barrier** along its 900-kilometre **border**, to exercise greater control over who is going in and out.

Syrian/Turkish relations: A timeline **Turkey** is being dragged further into the four-year conflict in neighbouring Syria following a deadly suicide attack, blamed on Isil, that killed 32 activists near the **border**. September 13, 2011 "The Syrian people do not believe al-Assad, I do not either," says Recep Tayyip Erdogan, then premier, a few months after calling the Syrian leader his "friend". Erdogan warns of civil war in Syria. "I fear that matters will end with a civil war breaking out between the Alawites and the Sunnis," he says in reference to Assad's Shia Alawite sect, and the majority Sunni Muslims. October 2, 2011 Following a series of meetings in several Turkish cities, Syrian opposition leaders announce the creation of the Syrian National Council (SNC), which groups political factions opposed to the Assad regime. November 15, 2011 **Turkey** passes its first sanctions against Syria, and halts joint oil exploration with the country. June 22, 2012 A Turkish plane that Ankara says was on a training mission in international airspace is shot down by Syrian forces. May 11, 2013 Twin attacks kill 52 people in Reyhanli, a large Turkish town near the **border** with Syria. September 16, 2014 Isil militants attack the Syrian **border** town of Kobane, and seize parts of it. Kobane becomes the scene of fierce battles. May 16, 2015 **Turkey** says it has shot down a Syrian helicopter that violated its airspace. July 20, 2015 At least 32 people die when a suspected Isil suicide bomber attacks a gathering of activists in the town of Suruc, near the Syrian/Turkish **border**.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gterr : Terrorism | gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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PUB Telegraph Media Group Ltd.

AN Document TELUK00020150725eb7p0008d

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HD **The Suruç massacre**

WC 691 words

PD 25 July 2015

SN Cihan News Agency (CNA)

SC CINEWA

LA English

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LP

İSTANBUL (CİHAN)- It has been announced that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) was behind the dreadful attack in Suruç which killed scores of youths.

The terrorist organization did not claim responsibility yet, but the Turkish and international public opinion seem to be quite sure that they are the perpetrators. Now the United States and **Turkey** say they have decided to reinforce their cooperation in order to defeat ISIL. Moreover, Ankara is getting ready to build a protection **wall** along its **border** with Syria.

TD

The police have announced that the suicide bomber was a Turkish citizen who had joined ISIL and spent several months in Syria. This is, however, not enough to prove that ISIL's leaders did indeed order him to commit this atrocity.

We must keep in mind that one of the purposes of terrorist attacks is to create confusion and make divergent segments in the country blame one another. It seems that what has happened in Suruç will have a number of political consequences from this perspective.

Those young people who were murdered were planning to travel to Kobani, Syria, in order to show solidarity and help the inhabitants of this devastated town with their rebuilding efforts. We know that the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) is particularly interested in what is going on in Kobani, so the party's leadership promptly declared that they see the attack as directed at the HDP. Most analysts agree that the bombing's target was indeed the HDP, or the Kurdish political movement in general.

The HDP has also blamed the governing Justice and Development Party (AK Party), saying that the government's policy on Syria -- and its desire to take down the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad at all costs -- is the main reason behind the ISIL threat. There are also people who claim that the AK Party did not just turn a blind eye to ISIL's activities, but even actively supported it.

In the meantime, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) has launched a campaign of retaliation and killed a soldier and two police officers. Then the government started accusing the HDP of having links to the terrorist PKK and accused the HDP leadership of playing a double game.

Turkey's Kurdish problem is already a big and complicated issue. Now, the activities of both ISIL and the PKK risk turning it into something worse. In this context, the AK Party and the HDP are the only players who can resolve the Kurdish issue, yet they are at each other's throats. Those in the country and abroad who were hoping to get rid of these two political players must be quite happy nowadays.

It has been quite a long time since the elections, but we still lack a government. In the absence of a solid government, the country is not capable of making long-term plans, as the authorities can take only daily measures. Terrorist organizations like ISIL or the PKK and those behind them know that, and they are trying to benefit from this foggy atmosphere.

Society is already quite polarized and terrorist attacks make the situation worse. Difficult days are ahead of us, as the Suruç attack does not augur well for anything. Analysts are already talking about **Turkey**'s Syrianization," upcoming social chaos and political uncertainty. We don't even know if we are heading for a snap election, or if we'll have new names or parties that may emerge in this time of crisis.

The problem is that the international system isn't patient enough to wait for **Turkey** to make its decisions. The international power struggle is continuing and the simultaneous ISIL and PKK attacks aim at pushing

Turkey to make its decisions quickly. If political parties keep accusing each other, and if **Turkey** does not reshape its Syria policy, further attacks are to be expected.

That is why, irrespective of whether he received his orders from ISIL or not, it is not easy to be sure about the suicide bomber's real mission and objective.

BERİL DEDEOĞLU (Cihan/Today's Zaman) CİHAN

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

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IPD OPINION

PUB Cihan News Agency

AN Document CINEWA0020150725eb7p00139

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BBC MONITORING

HD **Turkey takes "extra measures" to end flow of foreign fighters to Syria - agency**

WC 661 words

PD 27 July 2015

ET 13:28

SN BBC Monitoring European

SC BBCEUP

LA English

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LP

Text of report in English by the Turkish state-funded news agency Anadolu (also known as Anatolia) website

[Unattributed report: "**Turkey** moves to halt flow of foreign fighters to Syria"]

TD

- Risk analysis centres at airports, improved **border** security are among efforts to stop militant recruits

ANKARA (AA) -**Turkey** has revealed some of the measures it has put in place across its 900 kilometre (560 mile) **border** with Syria to stop the flow of fighters fuelling the civil war.

Information from the Prime Minister's Office of Public Diplomacy shows that more than 1,000 people suspected of trying to join groups like Daesh [Islamic State group IS or ISIS/ISIL] have been denied entry to **Turkey** over the last year.

At risk analysis centres based in airports and bus stations, special teams seek to identify extremists heading for Syria.

The centres, established last year, have screened more than 4,500 foreign suspects, denying entry to around 1,000 and deporting at least 600.

In interview rooms, security officials conduct psychological testing to help determine whether suspects should be to be sent back to their countries of origin. For those who are denied entry or deported, a confidential file is sent to the authorities in their home country that outlines the reasons for their return.

Turkey, which receives more than 40 million visitors every year, has been doing it all it can to disrupt the journeys of potential fighters to Syria since the conflict erupted in 2011, according to the Prime Ministry.

It has deployed additional troops to the **border** to tackle smuggling and illegal crossings and was among the first to highlight the dangers of foreign fighters crossing from neighbouring countries.

The government says Western countries should do more to prevent their nationals from travelling to Syria.

According to Turkish officials, it is easier to stop foreign terror suspects before they leave the country of origin than apprehending them in **Turkey**.

They also criticize a lack of intelligence-sharing by Western governments for aiding the tide of militants across **Turkey**'s borders.

The prime minister's office estimates that there are between 40,000 and 70,000 militants in Iraq and Syria, including around 24,000 foreign fighters.

Many of these foreigners come from Europe and **Turkey** attributes this to the failures of Western governments to combat radicalization and ban suspects from travelling abroad.

In contrast, the office estimates that between 1,000 and 1,300 Turkish nationals have joined Daesh - putting **Turkey** outside the top ten of nations supplying recruits to the group.

Turkey says it has barred entry to nearly 16,000 people from 108 countries since 2011, when it introduced a list of restricted people.

-Syrian **border** measures

The Turkish army has taken a number of extra measures to prevent illegal crossings into Syria and Iraq.

A 365 kilometre (225 mile) ditch to stop vehicle crossings, a 70 km rampart and a concrete **wall** stretching for 7 km are among the **border** security measures, as well as a 22 km accordion **barrier**.

On the Syrian **border**, 145 km of wire fencing has been renewed and improved lighting and roads along a 270 km stretch make it easier to guard.

The increased presence of soldiers has been a key factor and half of **Turkey**'s 40,000 **border** troops are now dedicated to patrolling the Syrian boundary.

Recently, the Turkish media has reported on a project that will include a 3.5-meter high concrete **wall** along the **border** with Syria as well as improved lighting, more fences and ditches, watchtowers, aerial observation and an improved patrol road network.

This echoes the measures already put in place in Kiziltepe, Mardin province, that include night vision and thermal surveillance cameras and sensors that are monitored constantly from a command centre.

Source: Anadolu (also known as Anatolia) news agency website, Ankara, in English 1012 gmt 27 Jul 15

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

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PUB The British Broadcasting Corporation

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DOW JONES NEWSWIRES

HD **Kurdish Gains Stir Ethnic Strife**

WC 768 words

PD 29 July 2015

ET 01:29

SN Dow Jones Institutional News

SC DJDN

PG A9

LA English

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LP

(FROM THE
WALL STREET JOURNAL 7/29/15)
By Raja Abdulrahim

AKCAKALE, Turkey -- The capture of the Syrian border town of Tal Abyad was a swift and strategic victory for Syrian Kurdish fighters in the battle against Islamic State. But the takeover didn't just dislodge the extremist group.

TD

Some Arab and Turkmen residents of the Tal Abyad area also fled the advance last month, many crossing the nearby frontier into Turkey. There, they accused the Syrian Kurdish militia YPG of using the pretense of an Islamic State threat to drive Arabs and members of the Turkmen ethnic minority from their homes to advance the goal of establishing an autonomous Kurdish region in northern Syria. They charged this was the Kurds seeking revenge for decades of abuse by the Syrian regime.

The reports of displacements angered Turkey, which is wary of any moves toward Kurdish autonomy in the region. The YPG is an affiliate of the Kurdish separatist group PKK, which Turkey considers a terrorist group.

Turkey launched its first airstrikes in four years on the PKK in Iraq and Turkey after a recent string of attacks by the separatist group on Turkish authorities. A three-year-old peace process between Turkey and the PKK is quickly unraveling. But the PKK-affiliated YPG has proved to be an effective ally on the ground to the U.S.-led coalition battling Islamic State in Syria.

Aided by some factions of the Western-backed rebel group Free Syrian Army, the YPG has been making steady gains against Islamic State and pushing it out of towns and villages in the north. These allegations, however, could strain that alliance.

Last month, the YPG sounded a warning from mosque speakers in the northern Syrian village of Hamam al-Turkman, ordering residents to leave by noon the next day. If they didn't heed the warning, residents said they were told the U.S.-led coalition would be given the coordinates of their homes and told they belonged to Islamic State.

The YPG denies that it drove residents away by claiming they would be attacked as Islamic State militants.

Speaking in unfinished houses and public parks in the Turkish border town of Akcakale, Arabs and Turkmen who fled the Tal Abyad area, including Hamam al-Turkman, said their homes and crops were bulldozed and burned and they ran away after threats to detain and kill them.

The allegations of rights abuses have resurfaced long-standing ethnic fault lines in northern Syria and could complicate the military campaign against Islamic State even further. Among some Syrians, they have even increased support for the extremist group.

As the battle for Tal Abyad raged last month, Khalil Aboud al-Malhaw received by text message a list of people wanted by the YPG for alleged collaboration with Islamic State. Mr. Malhaw said that not only

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was his name on the list, but so were many of his male relatives, including his father, who died in the 1980s. Entire villages were also listed as suspect territory.

"They are accusing us in order to expel us," Mr. Malhaw said. "They know these accusations aren't true."

A man from Tal Abyad said he was detained by the YPG for seven days as he tried to return home after the fight for the city. During his interrogation he was asked: "What [Islamic State] sleeper cells do you belong to?"

Days after the man was released, a number of fighters for the YPG and the rebel Free Syrian Army came to his neighborhood bearing a list of people suspected of working with Islamic State. They arrested 15 men, including one whose job the man said was to make coffee and tea for the militants.

An investigation by the Syrian National Coalition, the political opposition in exile, found the YPG had forced women and children from their homes and sent threatening messages.

Redur Xelil, a YPG spokesman, denied allegations that his group was committing abuses and driving Arabs and Turkmen from their land by falsely accusing them of collaborating with Islamic State.

The claims, Mr. Xelil said, reflect the political concerns of **Turkey**, where the coalition is based. They also serve the interests of Islamic State, which he said was trying to foment ethnic tensions between Arabs and Kurds to remain in control of territory across Syria and Iraq. The YPG, he added, has protected many Arab villages in northeastern Syria and provided refuge in mainly Kurdish areas to thousands families displaced by the fighting.

(END) Dow Jones Newswires

July 28, 2015 19:29 ET (23:29 GMT)

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HD **Turkey opens up old wounds with a new campaign against the PKK**

BY Cengiz Gunes, Associate Lecturer, Faculty of Social Science at The Open University

WC 1,093 words

PD 29 July 2015

SN The Conversation

SC CONVAU

LA English

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LP

https://62e528761d0685343e1c-f3d1b99a743ffa4142d9d7f1978d9686.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/files/90159/width496/image-20150729-30862-njq2yb.jpgAn anti-government protest underway in Istanbul. EPA/Ulas Yunus Tosun

The recent surge of violence in **Turkey** following the massacre of socialist activists in Suruc has brought **Turkey** perilously close to an all-out conflict with the Kurds.

TD

Turkey has begun regular air strikes targeting the bases of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) guerrillas as part of its broader "war on terror", which has also included action against Islamic State (IS) and the left-wing Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKPC). So far, more than 1,000 people have been detained in **Turkey**. That number includes many trade unionists – and there are growing fears that non-violent dissidents will be targeted.

Turkey's effort to tie its campaign against the PKK to the international campaign against IS is widely seen as a ploy to make its actions against the Kurds more internationally legitimate. **Turkey** seems to have convinced the US of the need to create a de-facto safe zone on the **border** with Syria, a long-held Turkish plan to prevent Kurdish autonomous regions from joining one to another. The Kurds view that plan with deep suspicion, seeing it as a push to undermine their achievements in Syria.

While the trigger points of **Turkey**'s conflict with the PKK in the past year have all been connected to the developments in Syria, it's worth remembering that the conflict has a much deeper history.

Long road to peace

Since the early 1980s, the PKK has been the main force in the Turkish-Kurdish conflict. It began its insurgency against **Turkey** in 1984, mounting guerrilla attacks against the security forces between 1984 and 1999. Ever since the capture and imprisonment of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan in 1999, Turkish governments have introduced some minor reforms to broaden Kurdish rights in **Turkey**.

The violence has simmered down, with the PKK abandoning armed conflict in favour of political struggle for long periods. That said, during the past decade, the PKK has resorted to violence on a number of occasions – but this has always been followed by periods of inactivity.

Overall, the PKK maintains its commitment to peaceful political resolution of the conflict, but retains its estimated 5,000 strong guerrilla force, some of which is positioned inside **Turkey**.

The total number of casualties in the conflict is thought to be more than 45,000. The state has carried out many large-scale operations against the PKK, but without much success. The PKK has proved to be an extremely resilient organisation able to exploit general regional developments to its advantage.

The dialogue between Ankara and the PKK has continued over the past two and a half years and has produced positive outcomes. A ceasefire was declared on March 21 2013, and an agreement on the plan for future negotiations was made public in February 2015.

The PKK's capacity to use violence and its occasional attacks have been cited by the Turkish government as reasons why a military approach is needed. Ankara has set withdrawal of the PKK guerrillas from **Turkey** and the conclusion of the armed struggle against **Turkey** as the basic conditions for restarting the peace process.

Kurds versus the AKP

As things stand, Kurdish demands cannot be accommodated within **Turkey**. A form of self-rule for the Kurds – which can be achieved through decentralisation of state structure in **Turkey** and devolution of power to regional level, the recognition of Kurdish cultural and linguistic rights (such as Kurdish-language education) and reforms to strengthen democracy and pluralism – would go a long way in satisfying Kurdish demands.

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The escalation came after the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) performed strongly in the recent elections winning sufficient support to send 80 MPs to Turkish parliament and raising hopes that the peace process would finally take a step forward.

All round, the HDP has dented the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP)'s hopes of consolidating its hegemony, which has been challenged on a number of fronts since the Gezi Park protests broke out in May 2013. Most importantly, the HDP's success kept the AKP from winning the parliamentary majority it needed to introduce the presidential form of government for which it had been campaigning.

Meanwhile, in Syria, Kurdish forces have managed to repel IS attacks and consolidate their three autonomous regions, collectively known as the Cantons of Rojava. Their success reduces the likelihood of moulding post-conflict Syria into a state shaped by **Turkey**'s vision of the region.

The Rojava project is achieved under the guidance and leadership of the Democratic Union Party. This party has an ideological affiliation with the PKK but is a separate entity, and the international powers treat it as such – but **Turkey**treats it as a terror organisation, worried as it is that Rojava's success will increase the PKK's power as a regional actor and permanently change the game in the Kurds' favour.

What's next?

The recent developments in **Turkey** and Syria make the Kurds the main **barrier** to the goverment's ambitions for both **Turkey** and the wider region. Present indications are that actions against the PKK will be extended to include the HDP and that pro-Kurdish representation in the parliament will be eliminated. The debate in **Turkey**'s mainstream media following the attacks against the PKK has already begun to marginalise the HDP and implicate them in the latest violence, and the Supreme Court has begun an investigation into the HDP that could result in its closure and the possible imprisonment of senior MPs.

In Syria, the Kurdish forces have complained that **Turkey** has attacked their defence positions and it is possible that **Turkey**'s actions will be expanded to include the Rojava Cantons.

Starting a large-scale campaign against the Kurds could have unpredictable consequences and further increase the instability in the region. For that reason **Turkey** will face domestic and international opposition. However, without a workable plan to put the peace process on track, the ongoing tensions will further escalate the conflict.

Cengiz Gunes does not work for, consult, own shares in or receive funding from any company or organization that would benefit from this article, and has disclosed no relevant affiliations beyond the academic appointment above.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant | kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party | rvpplf : Revolutionary People's Liberation Party Front

NS gcat : Political/General News

RE turk : Turkey | kurd : Kurdistan | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

PUB The Conversation Media Group Limited

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The INDEPENDENT

SE News

HD **Kurds stuck in Turkey-IS axis of hatred**

BY Cathy Otten

WC 1,241 words

PD 9 August 2015

SN Independent On Sunday

SC INDOS

ED 2ND

PG 25,26

LA English

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LP

News | The PKK fighting Islamic State is being distracted by an older enemy. By Cathy Otten in Makhmour

In a guerrilla camp to the south-west of Irbil in Kurdish Iraq, fighters from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) huddle on sofas in a darkened room, some bearing scars from the war with Islamic State (IS). That morning, the Islamists sent a rocket whizzing towards the nearby town of Makhmour, killing one civilian and injuring two.

TD

"IS renews itself all the time and attacks new places," said Sertaf Aso, the PKK commander for the Makhmour and Kirkuk fronts, speaking to The Independent on Sunday from the camp. He emphasised the danger still posed by the IS jihadists, which the PKK rebels and the Peshmerga are fighting, supported by airstrikes from the US-led coalition that has been hitting IS targets for a year this weekend.

"They cannot stay in this position. They want to control cities, not small towns," Commander Aso said.

But the talk among the guerrillas was not of the war with IS, but of an older foe further north: **Turkey**. At the end of July, an armed wing of the PKK claimed it killed two Turkish police officers in retaliation for the death of more than 30 pro-Kurdish activists in a bomb blast in the Turkish town of Suruc. This was believed to be have been carried out by an affiliate of IS, but the PKK accused the Turkish government of aiding IS, something the government denies.

Turkey condemned the attack and began airstrikes on IS in Syria and the PKK in northern Iraq. More than 100 airstrikes have so far mainly targeted the PKK, as have sweeping arrests of suspected supporters of both groups in **Turkey**. The PKK has fought a 30-year long insurgency in **Turkey** for Kurdish rights - with tens of thousands having been killed in the conflict - although a ceasefire began two years ago. Now, new violence means more instability in **Turkey**, a broken ceasefire, and a potential complication for the regional war against IS.

In Makhmour, 10 miles from the IS front lines, Commander Aso denies that his guerrillas will be drawn away from the fight. "We know the Turkish government is bombing the mountains, but we don't regret being here because the Kurdistan region is in difficulty all the time [from IS] attacks and we have to protect Kurdish people."

He adds that if the bombing against PKK rebel bases continues, fighting will reach "not only north Kurdistan [**Turkey**'s predominately Kurdish south-east], but all Turkish cities", he said.

"At first glance, **Turkey**'s bombardments of the PKK are more a diversion from the war against IS than a detriment [to it]," said Dov Friedman, an independent **Turkey** and Kurdistan analyst, adding: "Yet, at a fundamental level, **Turkey**'s bombings are destabilising to the region."

The United States has defended **Turkey**'s right to strike the PKK, but denied a connection between the strikes and a recent deal allowing the US to use **Turkey**'s Incirlik airbase to hit IS in Syria. The US classifies the PKK as a terrorist group, yet in Syria provides air support to the Syrian Kurdish fighters,

who are closely aligned with the PKK. Both Kurdish groups have proven themselves to be highly effective IS adversaries - particularly in breaking the IS siege of thousands of Yazidis on Sinjar mountain in Iraq last summer - but are viewed as existential threats by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of **Turkey**.

The need for those involved in the fight against IS to help protect ordinary citizens - in both Iraq and Syria - was made clear yesterday, when hundreds of Christian families fled a central Syrian town as IS fighters advanced. Osama Edward, director of the Christian Assyrian Network for Human Rights in Syria, said that "hundreds of families" have fled the Christian town of Sadad towards the government-held central city of Homs and the capital, Damascus.

The President of the Kurdistan Region, Massoud Barzani, meanwhile condemned the Turkish bombardments of the PKK that have killed at least five civilians in northern Iraq, and asked the PKK to leave populated areas. Mr Barzani's ruling party has close ties to **Turkey** and has ideological differences with the PKK, but they share a common enemy in IS.

In the camp, south-west of Irbil, Serkeft, a 21-year-old PKK fighter, sits on a light green sofa below a smiling portrait of the jailed PKK leader, Abdullah Ocalan. On his arms, hands and legs are red scars from an IS rocket attack on the front lines near the city of Kirkuk.

"I want to go north to fight the Turkish army when I recover fully," he said, adding that he would prefer to fight **Turkey** over IS because he sees the AKP (President Erdogan's party) as the real danger. Many Kurds accuse the Turkish government of standing by while the Syrian **border** town of Kobani endured a gruelling four-month IS siege. Syrian Kurdish fighters were eventually assisted by coalition airstrikes. The Turkish **border** with Syria has also been the main route for foreign fighters to cross over, to the consternation of Western officials. **Turkey** has vowed to crack down on its **border** security.

In **Turkey**, the leader of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), Selahattin Demirtas, also called for peace. His party passed a steep 10 per cent **barrier** to win parliamentary seats in the June elections, denying the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) its majority. Turkish prosecutors have now opened a case against the HDP leader, which opponents view as an attempt to discredit the party, alongside the strikes against the PKK.

On Friday, three people were reportedly killed in clashes between the security forces and Kurdish militants in the Turkish town of Silopi, close to the Iraq and Syrian borders, and two soldiers were killed in other incidents as violence spread across **Turkey**'s south-east - bringing the death toll among Turkish security forces since 20 July to at least 21.

Mr Demirtas urged the PKK to "remove its finger from the trigger" and said the Turkish government should launch talks to halt the surge in violence. Speaking in the south-eastern city of Van, he said the government must halt security operations and revive the peace process. "A coalition may be formed or not but peace is urgent. Mr Davutoglu, we are not requesting this from you. You are obliged to do it," Mr Demirtas said in comments addressed to the Turkish PM, Ahmet Davutoglu.

In a show of support for the army, Mr Davutoglu visited a **border** outpost in Kilis province yesterday, which is near where a soldier was killed in clashes with IS militants on the Syrian side of the **border** last month.

The US-led coalition conducted 19 airstrikes on IS targets in Syria and Iraq overnight on Friday into the next morning, making up some of the thousands they have carried out since last year. However, despite US tactical victories, such as the ability to use Incirlik airbase and getting the Turks to agree to better management of their **border** with Syria, Mr Friedman said that the "US fails to recognise the extent to which the [Turkish] caretaker government's campaign is destabilising - to the Kurdistan Region, to the PYD [Syrian Kurdish ruling party], and, most critically, to **Turkey** itself".

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant | kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

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IPD News

PUB Independent Print Ltd.

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HD **Turkey Constructing Concrete Wall Along Syrian Border Amid Terror Attacks - Reports**

CR РИАН

WC 175 words

PD 14 August 2015

ET 15:09

SN Sputnik News Service

SC RVESEN

LA English

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LP

MOSCOW, August 14 (Sputnik) - **Turkey** has begun the construction of a concrete **wall** on the **border** with Syria following a surge in terror attacks in the country's southern regions, local media reported.

According to Anadolu Agency, the construction of a 10-foot **wall** stretching some 5 miles began Thursday as part of security measures tightening the **border** following a series of deadly terror attacks.

TD

Turkey's anti-terror efforts were prompted by a recent Islamic State (IS) suicide bombing in the town of Suruc on the **border** with Syria, which killed 32 people and left 100 wounded.

Two days later, two police officers were murdered in the southern city of Ceylanpinar. The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) claimed responsibility for the attack, justifying the killings with claims of the murdered officers' support of IS.

In response to the attacks, **Turkey** launched airstrikes against the PKK and IS positions in the Middle East. It has also conducted nationwide anti-terror raids across the country.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant | kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

NS gterr : Terrorism | gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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IPD TURKEY

IPC 160

PUB Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency

AN Document RVESEN0020150814eb8e004pi

HD **3-meter-high wall being erected on Syrian border in Hatay**

WC 311 words

PD 14 August 2015

SN Cihan News Agency (CNA)

SC CINEWA

LA English

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LP

İSTANBUL (CİHAN)- A three-meter-high **wall** is being built on the Syrian **border** by the governor's office in **Turkey**'s southern Hatay province and the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) in a bid to beef up security measures, according to Turkish media outlets.

The concrete blocks used to build the **wall**, which will be eight kilometers long when finished, are reported to be three meters high, two meters wide and weigh seven tons each, and are being put up near Bükülmez in the district of Reyhanlı, directly across the town of Atme.

TD

The town of Atme made headlines in **Turkey** in June when it claimed that the National Intelligence Organization (MİT) was assisting extremist Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) militants by allowing militants and weapons safe passage through **Turkey** into Syria, according to footage obtained by the Cumhuriyet daily.

The daily featured video footage of bus drivers admitting that they transferred heavily bearded people who looked scruffy" to the **border**, in reference to ISIL militants. One of the two drivers explains in the video footage that the coaches had been accompanied by MİT agents during the trip.

According to the report, the militants and cargo were collected from an ISIL camp in the town of Atme that bears the black flag of ISIL.

The militants were then transported via **Turkey**'s southeastern **border** and dropped off at the **border** town of Akçakale in Şanlıurfa province, where the militants and cargo re-entered Syria after passing through Turkish territory.

According to Cumhuriyet, ISIL militants were unable to travel safely through Syrian territory near Kobani -- a predominantly Kurdish town near Syria's **border** with **Turkey** -- as the city and surrounding area is held and defended by the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG).

(Cihan/Today's Zaman) CİHAN

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IPD World

PUB Cihan News Agency

AN Document CINEWA0020150814eb8e001e2

KASHMIR OBSERVER

HD **Turkey constructing wall on border with Syria: Reports**

WC 291 words

PD 14 August 2015

SN Kashmir Observer

SC HTKASO

LA English

CY Copyright 2015. Kashmir Observer.

LP

ANKARA, Aug. 14 -- The Turkish military has reportedly started constructing a concrete **wall** along **Turkey**'s southern **border** with conflict-stricken Syria.

The Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) is building the **wall** - three meters (10-feet) in height - in the Reyhanli district of **Turkey**'s southern province of Hatay, which lies just across from the northern Syrian village of Atmeh, AFP cited Anadolu news agency as saying on Friday.

TD

The report said the **wall** will be two meters thick, and its total length will be 8.25 kilometers. Some 2.5 kilometers of the **wall** has already been constructed, and the Turkish army is also digging ditches just behind it, according to the report.

Turkey recently launched airstrikes against purported Daesh targets in Syria as well as the positions of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in Iraq. The airstrikes were launched after a deadly bomb attack that left 32 people dead in the southeastern Turkish town of Suruc, across the **border** from the northern Syrian town of Kobani, on July 20. **Turkey** attributed the attack to Daesh.

A shaky ceasefire between **Turkey** and the PKK that had stood since 2013 was declared as null by the latter following the Turkish airstrikes against the group, narrowing chances of the two sides reaching a potential peace deal in the near future.

There have been reports that the Turkish government actively trains and arms the militants operating in Syria, and also facilitates the safe passage of would-be foreign terrorists into the crisis-stricken Arab country.

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PUB Kashmir Observer

AN Document HTKASO0020150814eb8e0003d

HD **Turkish Border Guards Kill 3 Syrian Refugees, Injure at Least 7 - Rights Group**

CR РИАН

WC 269 words

PD 15 August 2015

ET 15:49

SN Sputnik News Service

SC RVESEN

LA English

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LP

MOSCOW, August 15 (Sputnik) – Turkish **border** guards killed three and injured at least seven Syrians, attempting to cross the **border** into **Turkey**, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) said.

Rami Abdelrahman, the SOHR head, told Doha-based Al Jazeera broadcaster that the incident took place on Friday near the Syrian **border** town of Tal Abyad in Al-Raqqah province.

TD

He added that these killings were the latest in a wave of lethal shootings conducted by Turkish board guards.

"Since May 30, at least 29 Syrian civilians have been killed by Turkish **border** guards," he told the broadcaster.

Turkey has toughened the **border** security measures following a surge in terror attacks in the country's southern regions.

On July 20, a suicide bombing killed 32 people and left 100 wounded in the Turkish town of Suruc on the **border** with Syria. The local authorities blamed the Islamic State (IS) jihadist group for the attack.

Two days later, two police officers were murdered in the southern city of Ceylanpinar. The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) claimed responsibility for the attack, justifying the killings with claims of the murdered officers' support of IS.

On Friday, local media reported that **Turkey** began the construction of a concrete **wall** on the **border** with Syria.

According to the UN Refugee Agency, some 4 million of refugees have fled Syria since the civil war broke out in country in 2011. **Turkey** is currently hosting 1.8 million Syrian refugees alone, which makes it the country with the world's largest refugee population.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant | syobhu : Syrian Observatory for Human Rights

NS ghum : Human Rights/Civil Liberties | gcat : Political/General News | gcom : Society/Community

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IPD TURKEY

IPC 160

PUB Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency

AN Document RVESEN0020150815eb8f003jt

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

SE NEWS

HD **For Kurdish youth in Turkey, autonomy is no longer enough**

BY Dominique Soguel

CR Dominique Soguel Correspondent

WC 1,326 words

PD 17 August 2015

SN The Christian Science Monitor

SC CHSM

PG n/a

LA English

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LP

In her flowing dress, leather sandals, and sunglasses, Ozgur Yesha, whose name means "Live Free" in Kurdish, looks a lot like an American hippie from the sixties.

The teenager doesn't strike you as someone ready to rush off to battle. Still, her parents lose sleep over the idea that she might run off with the peshmerga, the Kurdish fighters rolling back Islamic State militants in northern Iraq.

TD

Her ideological zeal exceeds that of her parents and is emblematic of a generational divide among Turkey's Kurds that is crystallizing in a time of turmoil. In recent months, Kurds have celebrated victories over IS across the border in Syria and made unprecedented political gains in Turkish elections, only to see the unraveling of a three-year peace process between Turkey and the outlawed Kurdish Workers' Party, or PKK.

Ms. Yesha's parents voted for a pro-Kurdish party and sympathize with PKK militants demanding autonomy within Turkey. But for their daughter, that's not enough. "The main difference is that we want independence for Kurdistan, whereas they are okay living in Turkey," she says.

Independence, separation, and war are the buzzwords this summer of Turkish Kurds in their teens to early thirties. Everyone seems to have a classmate, friend, or relative already fighting with a Kurdish faction against IS in Iraq or Syria.

The youth of Diyarbakir, or Amed, the Kurdish name they prefer for their de-facto capital, had little vacation this summer, which opened with the successful push to get the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP) well past the 10 percent threshold to enter parliament.

But their faith in democracy and political activism has been crushed as Turkey, simultaneously with joining the US-led anti-IS alliance, recently launched a vigorous campaign of arrests and airstrikes against the PKK, pummeling its enclaves in the mountains of northern Iraq.

Run-ins with Turkish forcesDiyarbakir's Kurdish community has a long tradition of resistance. Many in the younger generation grew up with images of dead relatives - martyrs from the PKK-Turkey war of the nineties - hanging on the wall alongside portraits of PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, who was captured and jailed in 1999. In 2012, Mr. Ocalan entered peace talks with Turkey.

But even in these last years of relative peace, many youths have brushed up against state forces. They name peers who were arrested for throwing stones or Molotov cocktails at police, an infraction that earns the full wrath of the law.

"They are charged like a member of the PKK," explains Bayram Baran, a graduate of Dicle University's law school in Diyarbakir. "They are not formally PKK members, but they get huge punishments - kids sentenced to 10, 15 years."

What sets this new generation apart - analysts, parents, and teachers warn - is that they are less fearful and far more ambitious than their predecessors. Their nationalist resolve has been forged on the front lines against IS and boosted by social media.

"Today the positions of the Kurds in the Middle East made the younger generation more self-confident and made them think about separation," says Mehmet Alkis, a political lecturer at Dicle University. "They say we don't belong to **Turkey** psychologically and politically."

Unraveling of peace processThat feeling of alienation has grown with the collapse of the peace process. An imperfect cease-fire largely held until July, but the PKK announced mid-month it was stepping up attacks over what it said were violations.

What brought things to a boiling point was an IS-linked bombing in the Kurdish **border** town of Suruc that killed 32 young people on July 20. Reflecting the views of the Kurdish nationalist movement, Diyarbakir's young blame **Turkey**, accusing it of helping the IS in Syria.

After Suruc, the PKK stepped up attacks on Turkish security forces, while **Turkey** began airstrikes against PKK camps. Since then, 18 Turkish policemen and soldiers have died in PKK-linked attacks, while **Turkey** has rounded up more than 800 alleged PKK collaborators, stripped HDP leaders of parliamentary immunity, and begun investigating them for "inciting violence and carrying out terrorist propaganda."

Mr. Alkis warns that if the peace process doesn't resume by year's end, matters will spiral out of control. While the Kurdish upper and middle classes voted for the HDP, throwing their lot with **Turkey** for economic reasons, the younger generation is leaning toward militant separatism.

Opposed to assimilation in TurkeyThe debate on how to press the Kurdish struggle in **Turkey** and beyond is vibrant at the headquarters of Tevger, a Kurdish youth movement established in 2013. "The new generation is aiming higher than its predecessors," says Tevger General Secretary Serhat Merdini.

Mr. Merdini juggles leadership at the association, where many come to learn and polish their Kurdish, with peshmerga rotations as far afield as the Mosul area in Iraq. "There are big wars in front of us. The fight will not just be on the military front, it will be political, diplomatic and economic. Kurdish youth should be ready," he says.

Other than the crumbling peace process, the main obstacle the independence-minded youth see on their path is **Turkey**'s relative success in assimilating Kurds into cities. During **Turkey**'s election campaign, some youth turned their back on the HDP because its supporters raised the Turkish flag along Kurdish banners at an election rally in Diyarbakir.

"First we must educate the Kurdish nation here," says Yusuf Tan, who unlike his peers was raised speaking Turkish at home and is now doing his best to rapidly master Kurdish. "Then we will enter an armed struggle."

This hardening of attitudes worries those whose work is dedicated to advancing Kurdish rights and putting to rest the conflict between the Turkish state and PKK. So does the Turkish state's heavy-handed reactions to Kurdish youth activism, particularly during the IS siege of Kobane in northern Syria.

"We know that in the last few years many youth have joined the YPG and YPJ," says Abdurrahim Ay, a lawyer and vice-chairman of human rights association Mazlumder, referring to PKK-affiliated fighting units in Syria. "The next generation is much more radical. We can't control them."

No fear among today's youthThe names of those who have fought and died in Kobane and other recent battles fill two notebooks in the offices of Meya-Der, an association for the families of martyrs. There, bereaved parents gather and watch the news on a PKK channel. The network of such families numbers 3,500 in Diyarbakir, 20,000 nationwide, according to the association.

"The old generation wants the peace process to succeed but the younger one has different ideas," says co-chairwoman Ayse Dicle, whose teenage son and daughter long to fight in either Iraq or Syria. "In the nineties there was so much fear and torture. Today's youth haven't absorbed this. There is no fear. The new generation won't tolerate attacks on Kurds. We can't hold them back."

Ms. Dicle, clad in khaki and sporting a floral headscarf, warns that war will come to **Turkey** if the peace process is not revived.

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Even the academically minded wonder if the final fight will be not across the **border** in Syria and Iraq but against Turkish forces at home. Among them is the lawyer Mr. Baran, who wants peace but ultimately believes separation from **Turkey** is the best solution to the Kurdish question.

"I am against going to the mountains," he says. "But if the government doesn't give us the opportunity to challenge in a democratic way, most of the young generation will want to go to the mountains and fight."

Youth in Diyarbakir, the Kurdish 'capital' in **Turkey**'s southeast, have been celebrating triumphs on the battlefield and at the ballot box, even as a peace process with **Turkey** unravels.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

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IPD OTHER NEWS

PUB Christian Science Monitor

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BBC MONITORING

HD **Turkey building concrete wall along Syria border after attacks**

WC 305 words

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SN BBC Monitoring European

SC BBCEUP

LA English

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LP

Text of report in English by website of Turkish pro-secular, mass-circulation daily Hurriyet on 15 August

The Turkish military has started building a concrete **wall** along the **border** with Syria following a series of attacks, Anadolu Agency said on August 14.

TD

The Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) is building the three metre (10 feet) high **wall** in the Reyhanli district of Hatay province just across from the Syrian town of Atmeh, state-run Anadolu Agency said.

The military is also digging ditches just behind the **wall**, which will stretch eight kilometres (five miles), the agency stated.

A bombing killed souther **border** town of Suruc killed 33 people on July 20, ending a truce between Ankara and the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

The toll rose overnight when one of the wounded succumbed to his wounds in hospital.

Turkey said the attack was carried out by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and launched a two-pronged offensive to bomb its militants in Syria as well as PKK militants in northern Iraq and southeast **Turkey**.

So far, the operation has focused largely on PKK militants, who have responded by tearing up a 2013 ceasefire and waging a bloody campaign against the security forces.

Hatay is home to thousands of the roughly 1.8 million Syrian refugees who have fled to **Turkey** to escape the violence at home.

In May 2013 twin car bombs struck the town of Reyhanli, killing 52 people. Turkish authorities blamed Syria-linked groups but Damascus denied any involvement.

Turkey has angrily denied allegations it had failed to do enough to prevent Islamist militants crossing its **border**. But in recent months it has stepped up security, arresting hundreds of suspected jihadists.

Source: Hurriyet website, Istanbul, in English 15 Aug 15

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant | kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

NS gdef : Armed Forces | gdip : International Relations | gimm : Asylum/Immigration | gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News

RE turk : Turkey | syria : Syria | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

PUB The British Broadcasting Corporation

AN Document BBCEUP0020150818eb8i000xe

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The INDEPENDENT

SE Frontpage

HD Syrian Kurdish leaders planning to capture last border crossing with Turkey held by Isis

BY Patrick Cockburn

WC 1,270 words

PD 21 September 2015

ET 20:54

SN Independent Online

SC INDOP

LA English

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LP

Plans to recapture a vital town on Syria's border with Turkey could transform the fight against the jihadists

Syrian Kurdish leaders plan to capture the last border crossing point between Syria and Turkey held by Isis, making it impossible for jihadist volunteers from Europe and elsewhere to reach Isis-held territories.

TD

The seizure of the frontier town of Jarabulus on the Euphrates River is certain to anger Turkey, which is already alarmed by the rise of a Syrian-Kurdish state-let in northern Syria, aided by US air strikes and fielding strong military forces.

The loss of Jarabulus would isolate Isis, bringing to an end its ability to bring in thousands of fanatical Islamic fighters who have been crossing from Turkey into Syria without significant hindrance over the last four years. Isis has frequently used these foreign volunteers as suicide bombers driving vehicles packed with explosives as an essential element in its military strategy.

"We have plans to liberate Jarabulus," said Idris Nassan, the vice-minister for foreign affairs of Kobani, the Kurdish enclave where the YPG (People's Protection Units) defeated Isis, told The Independent. He pointed out that "Jarabulus is the last Daesh [Isis] border crossing with Turkey" since the YPG seized its only other border crossing point at Tal Abyad, east of Kobani, in June.

Mr Nassan quoted the overall commander of the YPG, General Sipan Hamo, as saying the attack on Jarabulus would "be in coordination with the US because we are part of the international coalition. They fight in coordination with us". This may present the US with a dilemma because in July it did a deal with Turkey whereby it uses Incirlik airbase in Turkey for air strikes against Isis. But the Turks want to stop the YPG advancing west of the Euphrates. The Syrian Kurds already control half of Turkey's 550 mile-long border with Syria.

The Syrian Kurds are confident they can defeat Isis, which dominates the rest of eastern Syria, after they withstood a four-and-half-month siege of Kobani by Isis that ended in January. The success of the YPG came because its fighters fought ferociously against the Islamic militants and, since October last year, its commanders have been able to call in US air strikes.

It was the support of some 700 US air strikes that helped the YPG win the battle for Kobani, though it reduced this small city to a seascape of shattered concrete where buildings have been pounded into rubble by the force of the bomb blasts. In between the ruins there are individual shops and houses that survived intact, but 70 per cent of the city is destroyed and construction workers are only slowly making an impact.

Victory at Kobani boosted the self-confidence of the YPG, which is the only ground force in Syria or Iraq that has regularly defeated Isis. After the end of the siege, the YPG won back the rest of Kobani canton, including 380 villages. And in June it captured the border town of Tal-Abyad which Isis had held for more than two years. This linked up the two main Kurdish cantons. Its capture was also important because it is only 100km (62 miles) north of Raqqa, the Isis de-facto capital in Syria.

Important though Tal Abyad was to Isis, it did not commit many fighters to holding the town, having apparently decided that it was indefensible. YPG forces were advancing from west and east towards the road linking it to Raqqa. A 21-year-old YPG fighter called Misro Munzer, hit in the knee by a machine gun bullet in a later battle and interviewed in a military hospital in Kobani, said that he had fought at Tal Abyad where “Daesh [Isis] did not fight hard”.

He explained that the more battle-hardened Isis men had retreated leaving only a remnant of 25 men without much combat experience who were demoralised and confused by US air strikes.

There is no doubt that YPG light infantry backed by US air power are highly effective and Isis cannot hold fixed positions against a combination of the two. Isis suffers heavy casualties when it tries to do so. But this does not mean that it cannot hit back as became evident on the drive east from Kobani, on what was meant to be an entirely safe road going to al-Qomishli, the capital of the largest Syrian Kurdish enclave.

There were some early signs that the road was not quite as secure as we had been told. As we entered an Arab village called Qayyil, 15km west of Tal Abyad, we were stopped by a large detachment of YPG troops who said they were conducting a search. One of them told us that “we have information that four or five Daesh [Isis] fighters have penetrated the village and we are looking for them”. Other YPG fighters were guarding crossroads and entry points into Qayyil.

We drove on to Tal Abyad, a town which locals said had once had a population that was half-Arab and half-Kurdish, Turkoman and Armenian. Three months ago it had been in the hands of Isis. We wanted to look at the closed **border** crossing with **Turkey** and the police agreed to take us there.

But, as we followed a police vehicle down the street, a Kurdish woman in a black robe rushed out of a house shouting that she needed the police and our escort stopped to help her. She said that she and her daughters had been sitting in the courtyard of her house when “a man dressed in black with a beard who looked like Daesh had climbed over a **wall** and run past us”. The police said that there were still Isis hiding in the many abandoned houses in Tal Abyad.

These two incidents were not too surprising since Tal Abyad and nearby villages had only recently been captured by the Kurds. But the next town on our route, Ras al-Ayn, had been held by the YPG for two years. But, soon after we had entered, there were two bangs that sounded like gunshots close together, but then we saw a cloud of dense smoke rising from a checkpoint just ahead. Kurdish security men blocked the road in front of us within a couple minutes, turning back vehicles and news soon spread that there had been a suicide car bomb which killed at least five people.

Read more: **Turkey** duped the US, and Isis is reaping the rewardsSyria's Kurds have little choice but to flee amid the desolutionObama's deal with **Turkey** is a betrayal of Syrian Kurds

It also emerged that there had been a suicide bombing just behind us at a checkpoint at the entrance to Ras al-Ayn that we had just driven through. A man on a motorbike had blown himself up but had failed to kill or injure anybody.

These incidents are all probably an attempt by Isis to show that it is still to be feared despite its recent defeats. In June it sent a detachment into Kobani disguised in Kurdish and Free Syrian Army uniforms that killed over 200 men women and children.

Isis has in the past launched diversionary raids to keep its enemy’s troops dispersed before the main assault on a single target. But if the YPG tries to capture Jarabulus and cut Isis’s last exit to the outside world, the Islamic militants will probably have to fight.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gterr : Terrorism | npag : Page-One Stories | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE syria : Syria | turk : Turkey | eurz : Europe | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

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AN Document INDOP00020150921eb9l003uy

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Mail Online

SE News

HD **Shutting the door after the horse has bolted! Turkey begins to build a wall along its border with Syria in a bid to halt jihadis crossing illegally to join ISIS**

BY IMOGEN CALDERWOOD FOR MAILONLINE

WC 512 words

PD 15 October 2015

ET 23:37

SN Mail Online

SC DAMONL

LA English

CY Copyright 2015

LP

* **Turkey** begins construction on 500-mile concrete **wall** along Syrian **border**

* It hopes to put a stop to the tide of jihadi fighters flooding in from Syria

TD

* Government announced the plans in July after suicide attack left 32 dead

* Plans include barbed wire, a patrol road and 24-hour surveillance drones

Turkey has begun construction of a **wall** along its **border** with Syria to keep out jihadi fighters, but critics claim the move has come too late to have an effect.

The plans for the high-security **border fence** were announced in July, just three days after a suicide attack in the **border** town of Suruc left 32 people dead.

As well as a 500-miles concrete **wall** stretching the length of the **border** between the two countries, plans include barbed wire, a dedicated patrol road and a reinforced **fence**.

There will also be 24-hour surveillance with drones, mobile surveillance vehicles and an integrated command and control centre.

Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Arinc announced a 'renewed effort' to 'avoid the entry of terrorists and the foreign fighters and to ease humanitarian passages' after a cabinet meeting in Ankara in July.

'The critical issue here is preventing the entry of terrorists [into **Turkey**] and taking physical measures along the **border** against the Daesh threat,' he continued, using the Arabic name for ISIS.

But thousands of foreign fighters are thought to have already successfully made the journey through **Turkey** to join ISIS in Syria and Iraq in recent years.

Some of these were helped by Turkish smuggling networks who are working in support of the militants.

Ankara claimed to have arrested 457 suspected terrorists between January 1 and June 30, this year, reportedly from some 32 different countries.

But it has been claimed that the **border fence** could obstruct the Bab Al-Salama crossing, a passageway from Syria into **Turkey** that has proved vital to Syrians fleeing from war-torn Aleppo province.

Meanwhile, Hungary announced today the completion of its **fence** along the Croatian **border**.

Its government threatened today to seal the **border** with Croatia to stem the flow of thousands of migrants arriving daily, unless European Union leaders agree on a joint task force to halt them at Greece's **border**.

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Prime Minister Viktor Orban has already come under fire after building a steel **fence** to shut down the migrant route over Hungary's southern **border** with Serbia.

But the **fence** merely diverted the flow of people through Croatia.

Orban, one of Europe's most vehement opponents of immigration, insisted he is only protecting the EU's Schengen zone and Hungary.

If the **border** with Croatia is sealed, the migrants could turn towards Slovenia, or may remain stranded in Croatia.

According to Hungarian police data, up to 8,000 migrants have crossed the Croatian **border** every day in recent weeks, who were shipped to the Austrian **border**.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gterr : Terrorism | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE syria : Syria | turk : Turkey | crtia : Croatia | hung : Hungary | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eecz : European Union Countries | eeurz : Central/Eastern Europe | eurz : Europe | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

PUB Associated Newspapers

AN Document DAMONL0020151015ebaf008sq

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HD **Syrian Kurds form new administration in semi-autonomous area**

BY By SARAH EL DEEB

CR Associated Press

WC 685 words

PD 21 October 2015

ET 19:49

SN Associated Press Newswires

SC APRS

LA English

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LP

BEIRUT (AP) — Syria's Kurds have expanded their semi-autonomous region in northern Syria, announcing Wednesday a new administration in a majority Sunni-Arab town they seized from the Islamic State group this summer.

The announcement falls short of declaring Tal Abyad a separate region, but prepares it for such a step if the current experiment is successful, said Kurdish official Omar Alloush, who is part of the umbrella group administering the Kurdish semi-autonomous region.

TD

Syria's Kurds, the country's largest ethnic minority group long ostracized under the central government, declared a semi-autonomous administration in 2013 made up of three largely Kurdish regions, or cantons, in Afrin, Jazeera and Kobani. They refer to their overall autonomous region as Rojava, meaning "west" in Kurdish.

The Arab majority town Tal Abyad was captured by the Kurdish fighters in June, expelling the Islamic State group. The expulsion dealt a major blow to the IS group's abilities, cutting off a vital supply line to its self-proclaimed capital, Raqqa and depriving it of a strategic avenue for cross-**border** smuggling.

But many, including rights groups, accused the Kurds of displacing the town's majority Arab population. The U.N. refugee agency at the time said the Kurdish advance caused the displacement of about 23,000 people who fled the fighting to **Turkey**. Amnesty International accused the Kurdish authorities of intentionally displacing thousands of Arab residents later, some in retaliation for perceived support to IS — charges that the Kurds denied.

Alloush said the new administration of Tal Abyad is largely made up of Arabs; the ruling council will consist of six Arabs, two Kurds and one Turkman. Tal Abyad will fall under the Kobani administrative region for now, but Alloush said if the experiment was successful, it could become its own fourth semi-autonomous region.

"The importance of this step is that Tal Abyad has agreed to be part of the project of self-administration, the political project in Rojava," Alloush told The Associated Press. He said the area doesn't yet qualify as a separate fourth region because it lacks the resources and an independent police force.

The most powerful political force among Syria's Kurds is the Kurdish Democratic Union Party, which is deeply secular and is affiliated with the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, which waged a decades-long insurgency in **Turkey** and maintains bases in remote parts of northern Iraq. Any expansion in the autonomous area of the Kurds in Syria is likely to produce tension with neighboring **Turkey**.

In an example of the contradictions in Syria's complex conflict, the U.S., a close **Turkey** ally, is coordinating closely with the Kurdish fighters and has relied on them as the most dependable ground force to combat the expansion of IS. US officials have recently said they will equip and support joint Arab and Kurdish forces to pursue its anti-IS efforts in Syria.

Alloush said for now the Kurdish security forces in Kobani will be in charge of securing Tal Abyad. The budget too will be from Kobani. "If there are enough police and security forces (volunteering), then we can move into a canton," he said.

ART FILE - In this Sunday, June 14, 2015 file photo, Syrian refugees are helped into **Turkey** after breaking the **border fence** and crossing from Syria in Akcakale, Sanliurfa province, southeastern **Turkey**. A Kurdish official says a new administration has been formed for a majority Sunni-Arab town controlled by Syrian Kurds, expanding the ethnic group's semi-autonomous administration in northern Syria. (AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis, File) | FILE - In this Sunday, June 14, 2015 file photo, a Syrian refugee carries a baby over the broken **border fence** into **Turkey** after breaking the **border fence** and crossing from Syria in Akcakale, Sanliurfa province, southeastern **Turkey**. A Kurdish official says a new administration has been formed for a majority Sunni-Arab town controlled by Syrian Kurds, expanding the ethnic group's semi-autonomous administration in northern Syria. (AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis, File)

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | grel : Religion | gcat : Political/General News | gcom : Society/Community | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE kurd : Kurdistan | syria : Syria | leban : Lebanon | meastz : Middle East | turk : Turkey | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD ML

IPC i

PUB The Associated Press

AN Document APRS000020151021ebal00d4d

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The INDEPENDENT

SE World

HD **'Seal the border with Isis'**

BY PATRICK COCKBURN

WC 885 words

PD 30 November 2015

SN The Independent

SC IND

ED 1ST

PG 23,24

LA English

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LP

World | Obama demands that **Turkey** close the stretch of its frontier with Syria which serves as a crossing point for Isis recruits and oil sales, as Ankara is accused of tolerance of - if not complicity with - the terrorists. PATRICK COCKBURN reports 'This is an international threat, entering via **Turkey**'

The US is demanding that **Turkey** close a 60-mile stretch of its **border** with Syria which is the sole remaining crossing point for Isis militants, including some of those involved in the massacre in Paris and other terrorist plots.

TD

The complete closure of the 550-mile-long **border** would be a serious blow to Isis, which has brought tens of thousands of Islamist volunteers across the frontier over the past three years.

In the wake of the Isis attacks in Paris, Washington is making clear to Ankara that it will no longer accept Turkish claims that it is unable to cordon off the remaining short section of the **border** still used by Isis. "The game has changed. Enough is enough. The **border** needs to be sealed," a senior official in President Barack Obama's administration told The **Wall** Street Journal, describing the tough message that Washington has sent to the Turkish government. "This is an international threat, and it's coming out of Syria and it's coming through Turkish territory."

The US estimates some 30,000 Turkish troops would be needed to close the **border** between Jarabulus on the Euphrates and the town of Kilis, further west in **Turkey**, according to the paper. US intelligence agencies say that the stretch of frontier most commonly used by Isis is between Jarabulus, where the official **border** crossing has been closed, and the town of Cobanbey.

It has become of crucial importance ever since the Syrian Kurdish forces known as the People's Protection Units (YPG) captured the **border** crossing at Tal Abyad, 60 miles north of Isis's capital of Raqqa in June. **Turkey** had kept that **border** crossing open while Isis was in control on the southern side, but immediately closed it when the YPG seized the crossing point. The Turkish authorities are refusing to allow even the bodies of YPG fighters, who are Turkish citizens and were killed fighting Isis, to be taken back across the **border** into **Turkey**.

The US move follows increasing international criticism of **Turkey** for what is seen as its long-term tolerance of, and possible complicity with, Isis and other extremist jihadi groups such as al-Qaeda's branch in Syria, Jabhat al-Nusra and Ahrar al-Sham. Not only have thousands of foreign fighters passed through **Turkey** on their way to join Isis, but crude oil from oilfields seized by Isis in north-east Syria has been transported to **Turkey** for sale, providing much of the revenue of the self-declared Islamic State.

Last week a Turkish court jailed two prominent journalists for publishing pictures of a Turkish lorry delivering ammunition to opposition fighters in Syria. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan claimed that the weapons were destined for Turkmen paramilitaries allied to **Turkey** fighting in Syria, but this was denied by Turkish political leaders close to the Turkmen.

Turkey is now under heavy pressure from the US and Russia, with President Vladimir Putin directly accusing Ankara of aiding Isis and al-Qaeda. In the wake of the shooting down of a Russian aircraft by a

Turkish jet, Russia is launching heavy air strikes in support of the Syrian army's advance to control the western end of the Syrian-Turkish **border**.

The pro-opposition Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said a Russian air strike on the town of Ariha yesterday killed 18 people and wounded dozens more. Meanwhile **Turkey** said it had now received the body of the pilot killed when the plane was shot down and would repatriate it to Moscow.

The US demand that **Turkey** finally close the **border** west of Jarabulus could, if **Turkey** complies, prove more damaging to Isis than increased air strikes by the US, France and, possibly Britain. The YPG has closed half the Syrian frontier over the past year and defeated an Isis assault aimed at taking another **border** crossing at Kobani.

Syrian Kurdish leaders say they want to advance further west from their front line on the Euphrates and link up with a Kurdish enclave at Afrin. But **Turkey** insists that it will resist a further YPG advance with military force. Instead, it had proposed a protected zone on the southern side of the **border** from which Isis would be driven by moderate Syrian opposition fighters.

The US has opposed this proposal, suspecting that the Turkish definition of moderates includes those the US is targeting as terrorists. It also appears to be a ploy to stop the YPG, heavily supported by US air power, expanding its de facto state along **Turkey**'s southern flank. US officials are quoted as saying that there could be "significant blowback" against **Turkey** by European states if it allows Isis militants to cross from Syria into **Turkey** and then carry out terrorist outrages in Europe.

Meanwhile in Iraq, officials said three more mass graves had been found in the northern town of Sinjar, which Kurdish forces backed by US-led air strikes recaptured from Isis earlier this month.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gterr : Terrorism | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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IPD News

PUB Independent Print Ltd.

AN Document IND0000020151130ebbu00019

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DOW JONES NEWSWIRES

HD **Iraq Tells Turkey To Withdraw Its Forces**

WC 343 words

PD 7 December 2015

ET 08:36

SN Dow Jones Institutional News

SC DJDN

PG A10

LA English

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LP

(FROM THE
WALL STREET JOURNAL 12/7/15)
By Karen Leigh in Baghdad and Dion Nissenbaum in Istanbul

Iraq gave Turkey 48 hours to withdraw military forces deployed near the Islamic State stronghold of Mosul without the consent of the Baghdad government, and warned that it would ask the United Nations Security Council to force their removal.

TD

"Iraq has the right to use all available options," said Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi on Sunday.

The forces' arrival last week was a violation of Iraq's sovereignty and international laws, coming without the Baghdad government's consent, Defense Minister Khaled al-Obaidi said in a phone call on Sunday with Turkish counterpart Ismet Yilmaz that was reported by Iraqi state media.

Mr. Yilmaz said the forces were in Iraq to backstop the small number of Turkish trainers who had been working with Sunni Muslim tribal fighters at Zelgan camp, in Nineveh province, as the area was under threat by Islamic State.

Turkish and Kurdish officials said on Saturday that the troops were training Iraqi Kurdish fighters, known as Peshmerga, who are fighting Islamic State in northern Iraq.

Turkey's move "does not respect good neighborly relations" between the two countries, Mr. Abadi had said on Saturday, calling for the troops' immediate withdrawal.

Iraq previously said it rejected any military operation on its soil that isn't coordinated with the government.

A spokesman for the Kurdish Regional Government on Saturday said Turkish personnel were at Bashiqa camp on the northern outskirts of Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, to train Peshmerga forces.

Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu sent a letter to Mr. Abadi on Sunday, Turkey's Anadolu news agency reported, outlining the details of Turkey's training program in Mosul since March 2014,

Anadolu reported on Friday that about 150 soldiers and 20 to 25 tanks arrived in the region Thursday, stationed at military camps both near Mosul and close to the Iranian border.

(END) Dow Jones Newswires

December 07, 2015 02:36 ET (07:36 GMT)

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant | unscou : United Nations Security Council

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | gvio : Military Action | neqac : Equities Asset Class News | nfiac : Fixed Income Asset Class News | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters

RE iraq : Iraq | turk : Turkey | baghd : Baghdad | eurz : Europe | mosul : Mosul | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

PUB Dow Jones & Company, Inc.

AN Document DJDN000020151207ebc7000ky

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HD **Turkey detains over 900 IS militants in 2015**

BY zhengjinfa

WC 251 words

PD 11 December 2015

ET 10:18

SN Xinhua News Agency

SC XNEWS

LA English

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LP

ANKARA, Dec. 11 (Xinhua) -- Turkish security forces have detained a total of 913 Islamic State (IS) militants since January as they were trying to illegally cross through **Turkey**'s **border**, private Dogan News Agency reported on Friday.

TD

About 61 percent of the arrests of the IS members took place in the second half of 2015 as the Turkish military stepped up security measures on **border** with Syria, according to the report.

A security **wall** is being built along 900 kilometers along Syrian **border**, with barbed wire and security cameras installed, to prevent infiltration.

A crisis between **Turkey** and Iraq was triggered over the weekend after a Turkish battalion, equipped with armored vehicles, was deployed near the city of Mosul in order to train Iraqi paramilitary groups against IS militants.

Iraq contacted the five permanent members of the UN Security Council for condemning **Turkey**'s deployment of troops on its soil, the Iraqi Foreign Ministry said on Thursday.

Baghdad also demanded an Arab League extraordinary meeting to "discuss the consequences of the Turkish breach (to Iraqi sovereignty) and adopt an Arab stance against it," according to a ministry spokesman.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan vowed on Thursday that he will not pull troops out of Iraq for the moment.

Ankara claimed that sending troops to Iraq was in response to increasing skirmishes with the IS in Mosul, the capital of Nineveh province which has been under IS control since June 2014.

Enditem

RF 01

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant | irqmfa : Iraq Ministry of Foreign Affairs

RE turk : Turkey | iraq : Iraq | ankra : Ankara | mosul : Mosul | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Turkey

PUB Xinhua News Agency

AN Document XNEWS00020151211ebcb0048t

BBC MONITORING

HD **Turkey building wall along Islamic State-controlled border region**

WC 230 words

PD 12 December 2015

ET 11:47

SN BBC Monitoring European

SC BBCEUP

LA English

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LP

Text of report in English by website of Turkish pro-secular, mass-circulation daily Hurriyet on 12 December

A **wall** construction has begun along an 82-kilometre stretch of **Turkey**'s **border** with Syria that is under the control of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) militants on the Syrian side.

TD

The four meter-high slabs were being positioned along the **border** in the southeastern provinces of Kilis and Gaziantep. Video footage showed construction vehicles lining concrete blocks along the **border**.

Turkey has stepped up security along its **border** to prevent ISIL militants from entering Syria and crossing back into **Turkey**.

In August, **Turkey** also began constructing a **wall** along the **border** at the town Reyhanli, a main smuggling point southwest of Kilis.

Meanwhile, Turkish Armed Forces recently said in a statement that it has built a 23-kilometre-long modular concrete **wall**, a 108 kilometre-long trellis **fence**, 386 kilometres of trenches, an 80 kilometre-long embankment, added 423 kilometres of illumination and reformed a 1450-kilometre-long **border** patrol route since 2012.

Turkey, home for more than 2 million Syrian refugees, is also an important route for the flow of foreign militants to join ISIL, as it shares a 900-km **border** with Syria.

December/11/2015

Source: Hurriyet website, Istanbul, in English 12 Dec 15

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gdef : Armed Forces | gdip : International Relations | gimm : Asylum/Immigration | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE turk : Turkey | syria : Syria | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

PUB The British Broadcasting Corporation

AN Document BBCEUP0020151212ebcc00001

THE SUNDAY TIMES

SE News
HD **Turkey will shoot to kill as it builds wall along border with Isis in Syria**
BY Nicola Smith
WC 699 words
PD 13 December 2015
SN The Sunday Times
SC ST
ED 1; Ireland
PG 17
LA English
CY © Times Newspapers Limited 2015

LP

TURKEY has begun building a 13ft **wall** along a 50-mile stretch of its southern **border** with Syria and will implement a shoot-to-kill policy against Isis terrorists who try to cross.

The area protected by the **wall** extends from the Kilis **border** point east to the town of Karkamis, representing about 10% of **Turkey**'s 566-mile **border** with Syria.

TD

The **barrier** largely seals off the territory controlled by Isis fighters in northern Syria.

The **wall**, made of giant concrete blocks, rivals the Israeli-Palestinian "**barrier**" erected since 2003 to block suicide bombers from the West Bank, said Ali Yerlikaya, governor of **Turkey**'s southern province of Gaziantep.

Yerlikaya told The Sunday Times that construction would be finished by May. "When the civil war in Syria emerged, we faced two difficulties — migration and terrorism. These are not only questions for us, they are global ones," he said. "The terrorist organisation Isis has become a threat for our friends in Europe."

According to local media reports, the entire **wall** will eventually cover the **border** of Gaziantep and Kilis provinces with Syria. Since the start of the Syrian civil war four years ago, people from 37 countries — from western Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America — have been caught trying to cross the **border** into Syria illegally from Gaziantep province alone.

The governor said the **wall** would be equipped with searchlights, cameras and watchtowers. Soldiers guarding the **border** would be given authority to kill those who attempt to breach it.

"If somebody attempts to cross the **border** they will be shot," Yerlikaya said, although he insisted that this applied only to terrorists — not refugees.

The project has sparked fears that **Turkey** may attempt to extend construction to **border** regions that are not occupied by the Islamists but by Kurdish forces known as the YPG, or People's Protection Units.

While the YPG has been deemed one of the West's most effective allies in the fight against Isis, Ankara is suspicious of the Syrian-based faction's links to the Kurdistan Workers party (PKK), which has fought a bloody conflict with **Turkey**.

On the Syrian side of the **border**, within sight of the start of the **wall** in Karkamis, lies the key town of Jarabulus.

It is the last **border** crossing held by Isis. An offensive by YPG forces attacking from the east on Jarabulus could drive out Isis but would be seen by **Turkey** as a Kurdish land grab.

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Photos of the **wall**, taken two weeks ago by the local Gaziantep newspaper Guncel, appear to show construction heading eastwards, towards the YPG.

Yerlikaya said nothing to allay suspicions. "Forty-four kilometres [27 miles] of [Gaziantep's] **border** is under the control of Isis, and the PYD has 6km [4 miles]," he said, referring to the Democratic Union party, the political wing of the YPG.

"We have a **border** with two terrorist organisations."

News of the planned structure appears to bring **Turkey** into the growing fold of European nations that are building **border** fences to control the flows of people unleashed by the conflict in Syria and the Middle East.

Although Turkish officials deny the **fence** is designed to stop refugees, they admit that local towns are feeling the strain. "Gaziantep [city] has a population of 1.8m. We have absorbed 350,000 Syrian refugees over the past three years. Imagine what that kind of increase would mean for London," said one local official.

The government in Ankara has confirmed the **wall** is under construction but said it would not affect its open-door refugee policy.

America and other western allies have pressed **Turkey** to seal off the southern **border** to prevent the flow of fighters, arms and supplies to Isis.

Ankara has been criticised for the perceived ease with which foreign jihadists, many of them British, have travelled from Turkish towns to Isis's Syrian headquarters, Raqqa.

Yerlikaya suggested that the **wall** could be torn down when the situation improved.

"It will not be permanent," he said. "It will be removed if there are no more problems with Syria."

@niccijsmith

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gmurd : Murder/Manslaughter | gterr : Terrorism | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE turk : Turkey | syria : Syria | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

PUB News UK & Ireland Limited

AN Document ST00000020151213ebcd00074

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International
New York Times

SE news

HD **Turkey puts new focus on tightening its borders; Long-sought clampdown aims to halt migrants and keep fighters from ISIS**

BY By TIM ARANGO

WC 1,350 words

PD 23 December 2015

SN International New York Times

SC INHT

PG 3

LA English

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LP

The Turkish Coast Guard has stepped up nighttime patrols on the choppy, wintry waters of the Aegean Sea, seizing rafts full of refugees fleeing war for Europe and sending them back to **Turkey**.

Down south, at the **border** with Syria, **Turkey** is building a concrete **wall**, digging trenches, laying razor wire and at night illuminating stretches of land in an effort to cut off the flow of supplies and foreign fighters to the Islamic State.

TD

On land and at sea, **Turkey**'s borders, long a revolving door of refugees, foreign fighters and the smugglers who enable them, are at the center of two separate yet interlinked global crises: the migrant tide convulsing Europe and the Syrian civil war that propels it.

Accused by Western leaders of turning a blind eye to these critical borders, **Turkey** at last seems to be getting serious about shoring them up. Under growing pressure from Europe and the United States, **Turkey** has in recent weeks taken steps to cut off the flows of refugees and of foreign fighters who have helped destabilize a vast portion of the globe, from the Middle East, to Europe, to San Bernardino, Calif.

Smugglers who used to make a living helping the Islamic State, also known as ISIS or ISIL, bring foreign fighters into Syria say that it is increasingly difficult — though still not impossible — to do so. **Border** guards who once fired warning shots, they say, now shoot to kill.

‘‘Whoever approaches the **border** is shot,’’ said Omar, a smuggler interviewed in the **border** town of Kilis who insisted on being identified by only his first name because of the illegal nature of his work. ‘‘And many have been killed.’’

Another smuggler, Mustafa, who also agreed to speak if only his first name was used, said, ‘‘Two months ago, you could get in whatever you liked.’’ He said he used to bring in explosives and foreign fighters for the Islamic State, which allowed him to continue his regular business of smuggling food and other items, like cigarettes, into Syria. Now, he said, ‘‘the Turkish snipers shoot any moving object.’’

At the coast, **Turkey**'s efforts to stop more boats full of migrants came after the European Union agreed to pay Ankara more than $3 billion to help with education and health care for the refugees in the country.

Some rights groups have cried foul. Amnesty International recently accused **Turkey** of illegally detaining migrants and, in some cases, of sending them back to war zones. Turkish officials have said they detain relatively few migrants, and only ones they say have links to smuggling rings.

The Basmane neighborhood of this coastal city, the primary hub for migrants on their way to Europe, is quieter than it was during the summer — not primarily because of any new toughness by the Turks, but because fewer migrants will risk a sea crossing during the winter, when the waters are rougher. Smugglers' fees have lately dropped to as low as $500 a person from about $1,200, because of the lower demand.

On a recent afternoon here, Bilal Barghoud, a 19-year-old Syrian, sat in a dingy guesthouse. Scrawled on the **wall**, in Arabic, was, ‘‘We have vests and inner tubes,’’ and, ‘‘Tea for 1 Turkish lira.’’ Mr. Barghoud had just returned from a harrowing night at sea.

The trip began smoothly, he said, but as they drew closer to Greece, the waves grew higher. Then, just a few minutes from the beaches of Greece, a Turkish Coast Guard cutter appeared.

‘‘Everyone was saying, ‘Oh, in 10 minutes we’ll be in Greece,’’’ he said. ‘‘And then that ship showed up. Everyone was afraid.’’ The Turks brought them back to the port and also confiscated their life jackets.

Now, he said, they were waiting for a new night and another shot at crossing to Greece. Their wait was not long. The next morning, having successfully evaded the Turks, they were safely on the shores of Europe.

American and European leaders have complained for years that **Turkey**’s **border** policy inflamed the Syrian civil war and enabled the rise of extremist groups like the Islamic State. Determined to see the overthrow of the Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad, it allowed a virtually free flow of weapons and fighters across its lands.

Turkish officials have rejected such criticism, often blaming Western ‘‘Islamophobia’’ and European governments’ treatment of their own Muslim populations for the copious flow of foreigners passing through **Turkey** to join the Islamic State.

While American officials say **Turkey** has improved in numerous ways — for instance, it has created a watch list of 26,000 terrorism suspects and established a new agency to monitor it — they are still pressuring the country to do more. As Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter flew to **Turkey** recently to push officials to do more in the fight against the Islamic State, he said of the country, ‘‘The single most important contribution that their geography makes necessary is the control of their own **border**.’’

In recent weeks, the United States has increased airstrikes on the last stretch of Islamic State-held territory along the Turkish **border**: a 61-mile strip of land west of the Euphrates River. This is the area where last summer the United States and **Turkey** spoke publicly of a deal to clear the area of the Islamic State, but the two sides disagreed on what to call it — the Americans said ‘‘ISIS-free zone’’ and the Turks a ‘‘safe zone’’ — and the idea seemed to fade.

Now, after the recent Islamic State-inspired terrorist attacks in France and the United States, the two countries have renewed cooperative efforts to seal that final stretch.

Despite the Turkish crackdown, foreign fighters are still able to reach the Islamic State. According to a recent report by the Soufan Group, a political risk firm based in New York, the Islamic State now has 27,000 to 31,000 foreign fighters, more than double the estimate the firm published in June 2013.

Richard Barrett, senior vice president at the Soufan Group, said that while the Turks were doing a lot more, there were still effective smuggling routes for the Islamic State. He said there were some reports that the group faced a shortage of manpower, but nevertheless the numbers of foreign fighters show that ‘‘they are still able to get people in.’’

With 2.2 million Syrians, and tens of thousands more Iraqis, **Turkey** hosts more refugees than any other country. But as it has moved to clamp down on its southern **border**, critics say it has also closed its doors to new refugees. Many of these are currently fleeing Russian airstrikes in rebel-held areas of Syria and finding themselves trapped by **Turkey**’s closed doors.

Now, to reach safety, these refugees say, they have to be smuggled multiple times: from Islamic State-held areas to rebel territory, and then to **Turkey**, before they even consider the sea journey to Europe. Omar, the smuggler, said that thousands of desperate Syrians would cross to **Turkey** if it reopened its **border** crossings.

Turkish officials, though, say that the country’s policy toward refugees has not changed.

‘‘We will still keep our open-door policy,’’ said a senior Turkish official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to comment publicly. ‘‘But obviously the security situation on the ground changed.’’

As refugees here wait to leave, they worry about the rough seas and the Turkish Coast Guard, but also about how they will be treated in Europe in the aftermath of the Paris attacks.

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‘‘In Europe, as Muslims, we will be treated badly,’’ said Amir Kuatbi, who left Damascus, Syria’s capital, in recent weeks to escape army conscription and who was hoping to reach Sweden. But in **Turkey**, he said, ‘‘there is no future.’’

He chose Europe, and the day after he spoke, he arrived in Greece, on his way to Sweden.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gtraff : Trafficking/Smuggling | gimm : Asylum/Immigration | gterr : Terrorism | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE turk : Turkey | syria : Syria | greece : Greece | izmir : Izmir | usa : United States | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eecz : European Union Countries | eurz : Europe | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | namz : North America | wasiaz : Western Asia

PUB International Herald Tribune

AN Document INHT000020151223ebcn00003

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DOW JONES NEWSWIRES

HD **Kurds Secure Hold Over Syria Dam**

WC 373 words

PD 28 December 2015

ET 08:36

SN Dow Jones Institutional News

SC DJDN

PG A8

LA English

CY Copyright © 2015, Dow Jones & Company, Inc.

LP

(FROM THE
WALL STREET JOURNAL 12/28/15)
By Sam Dagher

BEIRUT -- U.S.-backed Kurdish militias and their allies battled Sunday to consolidate their hold over a strategic dam seized from the extremist group Islamic State in northern Syria.

TD

The Kurdish militia known as the People's Protection Units, or YPG, aided by allied local Arab fighters in what is called The Democratic Forces of Syria, said it captured the Tishrin Dam on the Euphrates river, about 60 miles east of the city of Aleppo, over the weekend. Clashes continued on Sunday.

Video footage released by the YPG showed Kurdish fighters on the hills overlooking the dam.

Local opposition activists and the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a U.K.-based monitoring group, said Kurdish fighters had crossed over to the west bank of the Euphrates, severing a crucial Islamic State supply line connecting the town of Manbej in Aleppo province and the city of Raqqa.

Both places are under Islamic State control and Raqqa is the de facto capital of its self-proclaimed caliphate.

Neighboring **Turkey**, which considers the YPG a terrorist organization and an offshoot of Kurdish separatists it has been battling for decades in **Turkey**. **Turkey** had previously warned it would retaliate against any crossing of the Euphrates by the Syrian Kurds, who already control most of Syria's northern **border** with **Turkey**.

The Turks have been under pressure from Washington and its European allies to do more to fight Islamic State.Turkish officials on Sunday said they were closely monitoring developments on the ground in northern Syria, suggesting possible prior coordination with the U.S.

The U.S. military said Sunday that it conducted several airstrikes against Islamic State targets near Manbej and Raqqa, where the Kurds and their allies have been pressing ahead with their latest offensive against Islamic State.

Elsewhere in Syria, rebel groups supported by **Turkey**, Qatar and Saudi Arabia came under increased pressure from regime forces backed by Iran and Russia.

Russian warplanes pounded rebel positions on Sunday around Damascus and in the southern province of Daraa, according to opposition activists and Syrian state media.

(END) Dow Jones Newswires

December 28, 2015 02:36 ET (07:36 GMT)

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

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NS gvio : Military Action | neqac : Equities Asset Class News | nfiac : Fixed Income Asset Class News | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters

RE syria : Syria | turk : Turkey | eurz : Europe | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

PUB Dow Jones & Company, Inc.

AN Document DJDN000020151228ebcs0009i

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

SE Opinion

HD **Turkey's Dangerous Game in Syria; President Erdogan is more eager to hold back the Kurds than he is to defeat ISIS.**

BY By Stuart Rollo

WC 843 words

PD 29 December 2015

ET 00:34

SN The Wall Street Journal Online

SC WSJO

LA English

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LP

When the Syrian civil war broke out in 2011, **Turkey** was one of the earliest countries to invest heavily in the overthrow of the Assad regime. Despite a decade of warming relations with Syria, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was making a bid to become the region's dominant power. The situation in Syria has since changed dramatically—but the Erdogan strategy has not.

The result is that **Turkey** has become a **barrier** to resolving the conflict. It wages war on the Syrian Kurds, Islamic State's most effective opponents. And the country now plays host to an elaborate network of jihadists, including ISIS.

TD

Early on, **Turkey** wanted to foster a Sunni majority government in Syria, preferably run by the local branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. This would deprive **Turkey**'s two historical rivals, Russia and Iran, of an important client state, while allowing it to gain one of its own.

The plan was simple and elegant. But the Assad regime proved more resilient than expected, and the West refused to intervene and deliver a coup de grâce. So-called moderate Syrian rebels have either been sidelined by Islamist militants, or revealed to have been Islamist militants themselves. Thanks to Islamic State, the war has spread to engulf half of Iraq. And yet, as a global consensus solidified about the importance of defeating ISIS, **Turkey** has continued to play the game as if it were 2011.

This summer, for example, the Erdogan government came to an important agreement to let the U.S. use two of its air bases for strikes against ISIS. Yet **Turkey** has used the same bases to attack Kurdish forces in Iraq and Syria. The Erdogan government remains more concerned with limiting the power of the Kurds in Syria than with defeating ISIS.

Turkey has gone from being viewed by Western government officials, media and academics as an influential, moderating force for regional stability and economic growth, to a tacit supporter, if not outright sponsor, of international terrorism. It is also viewed as a dangerous ally that risks plunging NATO into an unwanted conflict with Russia.

When Russian President Vladimir Putin labeled the Erdogan government “accomplices of terrorists" after its fighter planes downed a Russian jet on Nov. 24, he was bluntly rewording an accusation that has been made repeatedly, but more diplomatically, in the West. The accusation: **Turkey** allows oil and artifacts looted by Islamic State to flow across its **border** in one direction, while foreign jihadists, cash and arms travel in the other.

Speaking last year of the porous **Turkey**-Syria **border**, Vice President Joe Bidenlet slip, in a moment of candor, that the biggest problem the U.S. faced in confronting ISIS was its own allies. More recently, on Nov. 27, a senior Obama administration official described the situation to this newspaperas “an international threat, and it's all coming out of Syria and it's coming through Turkish territory."

Turkey has figured that its important position in NATO as a bulwark against Russian power would shield it from criticism by its Western allies, and buy it enough time to shape the Syrian conflict in its

favor. But Russia has effectively turned the international sympathy over the downing of one of its jets into increased sway in Syria.

Mr. Putin has promised to “immediately destroy" anything that threatens Russian forces in the country. He also upgraded the local Russian arsenal to show that he can make good on his promise.

Mr. Erdogan's best chance of achieving his goals is as a committed member of the U.S.-led coalition. He can then help the coalition remain in a strong position to negotiate, with Russia and Iran, a settlement of the Syrian conflict and the future of Mr. Assad.

Turkey also needs to accept the move toward Kurdish autonomy in Syria as a fait accompli. The Kurdish Democratic Union Party, which **Turkey** officially categorizes as a terrorist organization, now fights ISIS alongside the U.S. and receives arms and training from a swath of Western countries. Through its bravery and effectiveness, this group now has substantial international political capital.

Kurdish autonomy in Syria does not necessarily mean increased separatist activity in **Turkey**, any more than the creation of the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq did. But Mr. Erdogan does need to negotiate peace with the Syrian Kurds, with clear terms for territorial integrity and respect for Kurdish rights. **Turkey** did so with the Kurds in northern Iraq, and now enjoys robust relations with them.

Failure to redirect its policy in Syria can only lead to **Turkey**'s further isolation and reputation as a reactionary pariah—and the continuation of a horrendous conflict. This is not the ascendant trajectory that the country has sought over recent decades.

Mr. Rollo writes on international security. He is currently at Sydney University, working on a research project investigating strategic minerals and international politics.

CO muslbh : Muslim Brotherhood | aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | gterr : Terrorism | nedc : Commentaries/Opinions | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE russ : Russia | syria : Syria | turk : Turkey | asiaz : Asia | eurz : Europe | meastz : Middle East | balkz : Balkan States | bric : BRICS Countries | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eeurz : Central/Eastern Europe | medz : Mediterranean | ussrz : CIS Countries | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD SYND

PUB Dow Jones & Company, Inc.

AN Document WSJO000020151228ebcs006si

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DOW JONES NEWSWIRES

HD **Turkey Blames Islamic State in Istanbul Attack**

WC 651 words

PD 12 January 2016

ET 10:20

SN Dow Jones Institutional News

SC DJDN

LA English

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LP

ISTANBUL—An Islamic State suicide bomber struck the heart of Istanbul's central tourist district on Tuesday, killing at least 10 people, most of them visitors from Germany, in the extremist group's first major attack on **Turkey**'s vital tourism industry, officials said.

The bomber, identified by Turkish officials as a Syrian in his late 20s, walked up to a tour group standing in Sultanahmet Square and blew himself up shortly after 10 a.m. as visitors were gathering to see the city's most picturesque attractions.

TD

The explosion killed at least 10 people, nine of whom were German, and injured 15 others, according to Turkish officials.

Germany didn't confirm whether its citizens were among the dead in Istanbul, but Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu called Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel to brief her and expressed his condolences, according to **Turkey**'s state-run Anadolu news agency.

Ms. Merkel warned that members of a German tour group may be among those who were killed. She said the German government had set up a crisis team and was working with the Turkish government to find out details about the blast and its victims.

"We don't have all the information yet but we are deeply worried that there were also Germans there," Ms. Merkel said. "Terror has again shown its gruesome face."

As graphic images of the bloodshed in Sultanahmet Square spread across social media following the morning explosion, authorities imposed a ban on broadcast coverage of the blast. The plaza remained cordoned off by police Tuesday afternoon.

The square is bordered by three destinations popular to foreign tourists: the Blue Mosque, the Ottoman-era Topkapi palace and Hagia Sophia, a 6th-century Byzantine church that is now a museum.

Witnesses said the focus of the blast appeared to be an area bordered by an ancient Egyptian obelisk and a fountain marking the 1898 visit to Istanbul of Germany's Emperor Wilhelm II.

"There were a lot of tourists…listening to their guide," said Mehmet Alas, 46, a taxi driver. "Suddenly there was a huge explosion."

"It was a single, very loud blast. Then people started running for their lives," said Mahmut Karademir, a worker at a nearby restaurant, as the smell of burned plastic and smoke lingered around the blast site some 90 minutes after the blast.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said the bombing was a response to his country's antiterror campaign.

"**Turkey** is the primary target for all terrorist organizations active in the region," Mr. Erdogan said. "**Turkey** will continue its determined and principled fight against terrorism until the very end."

Turkish officials told The **Wall** Street Journal that while they were focusing on the likelihood that Islamic State was responsible for the attack, but left open the possibility that the blast was the work of Kurdish insurgents with the Kurdistan Workers' Party, better known as the PKK.

The Turkish military is enmeshed in an escalating war with the Kurdish separatists that threatens to spill from the country's southeast into the main cities of the west.

The leading tourist magnet in **Turkey**'s largest city, Sultanahmet Square was most recently the scene of violence in January 2015, when an armed woman was killed after attacking a police station less than 100 yards from the plaza.

Turkey's capital, Ankara, was the scene of a double suicide-bombing attack on a peace rally in October that killed more than 100 people. A bombing in Suruç , near the **border** with Syria, killed 33 left-wing youth activists. **Turkey** blamed the attack on local Islamic State-linked militants.

Andrea Thomas and Ruth Bender in Berlin contributed to this article.

Write to Emre Peker at emre.peker@wsj.com and Dion Nissenbaum at dion.nissenbaum@wsj.com

(END) Dow Jones Newswires

January 12, 2016 04:20 ET (09:20 GMT)

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gterr : Terrorism | gvio : Military Action | ntop : Top Wire News | nttwn : Today's Top Wire News | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | ndj : Dow Jones Top Stories | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter | redit : Selection of Top Stories/Trends/Analysis

RE turk : Turkey | gfr : Germany | kurd : Kurdistan | eurz : Europe | istan : Istanbul | syria : Syria | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | dach : DACH Countries | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eecz : European Union Countries | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia | weurz : Western Europe

PUB Dow Jones & Company, Inc.

AN Document DJDN000020160112ec1c000tm

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REUTERS

HD **Istanbul bomber entered Turkey as refugee from Syria, PM says**

BY By Ayla Jean Yackley and Humeyra Pamuk

WC 1,066 words

PD 13 January 2016

ET 20:15

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

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LP

ISTANBUL (Reuters) - An Islamic State suicide bomber who killed 10 German tourists in the heart of Istanbul's historic district entered **Turkey** as a refugee from Syria and went undetected as he was not on any watch lists, Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said on Wednesday.

The bomber, who blew himself up among groups of tourists on Tuesday near the Blue Mosque and Hagia Sophia, the top sites in one of the world's most visited cities, had registered with immigration authorities in the city a week ago.

TD

Turkey has kept an open **border** to refugees from Syria's civil war and is now home to more than 2.2 million, the world's largest refugee population. But its **border** has also been used by foreign fighters seeking to join Islamic State or return from its ranks to commit atrocities abroad.

"This individual was not somebody under surveillance. He entered **Turkey** normally, as a refugee, as someone looking for shelter," Davutoglu told a news conference, adding he had been identified from fragments of his skull, face and nails.

"After the attack his connections were unveiled. Among these links, apart from Daesh, we have the suspicion that there could be certain powers using Daesh," he said, using an Arabic name for Islamic State.

Turkey accuses Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, and his allies including Iran and Russia, of cooperating with Islamic State in the Syrian regime's effort to destroy Syrian opposition forces.

Turkey, which like Germany is a member of the U.S.-led coalition against Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, has become a target for the radical Sunni militants.

It was hit by two major bombings last year blamed on the group, in the town of Suruc near the Syrian **border** and in the capital Ankara, the latter killing more than 100 people in the worst attack of its kind on Turkish soil.

Asked if **Turkey** planned retaliatory air strikes on Islamic State, Davutoglu said Ankara would act at a time and in a manner that it saw fit. He pointed out the Turkish military had hit Islamic State targets abroad after the Suruc and Ankara attacks.

But he said Russia's entry into the Syrian war was a complicating factor. Turkish war planes have not flown in Syrian air space since **Turkey** shot down a Russian fighter jet in late November, triggering a diplomatic row with Moscow.

"They (the Russian air force) shouldn't obstruct **Turkey**'s fight against Daesh ... Right now unfortunately there is such a **barrier**," Davutoglu said. "Certain countries are in an obstructive attitude in terms of **Turkey**'s air bombardments. They should either destroy Daesh themselves or allow us to do it."

TOUR GUIDE YELLED "RUN"

Asked about a report in the Turkish media that the bomber had registered at an immigration office in Istanbul a week ago, Interior Minister Efkan Ala earlier confirmed that his fingerprints were on record with the authorities.

The Haberturk newspaper published what it said was a CCTV image of the man, named in some local media as Saudi-born Nabil Fadli, at an Istanbul immigration office on Jan. 5. Turkish officials have said he was born in 1988.

Foreign tourists and Turks paid their respects at the site of the attack early on Wednesday. Scarves with the Bayern Munich soccer club emblem were left along with carnations and roses at the scene, before Turkish police sealed off the area.

German Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere, visiting Istanbul, said there were no indications Germans had been deliberately targeted and that he saw no reason for people to change travel plans to **Turkey**. He said Germany stood resolutely by **Turkey**'s side in the fight against terrorism.

"If the terrorists aimed to disturb, destroy or jeopardize cooperation between partners, they achieved the opposite. Germany and **Turkey** are becoming even closer," he said, adding there was no link to Germany's role in the fight on terrorism.

Davutoglu praised the German group's Turkish guide who, according to the Hurriyet newspaper, yelled "run" after seeing the bomber standing among the tourists and pulling a pin on his explosives, enabling some of them to get away.

Witnesses said the square was not packed at the time of the explosion, but that several groups of tourists were there.

"I didn't finish the tour, you know, the tour I had bought," said Jostein Nielsen, a wounded Norwegian tourist, as he waited on a stretcher at Istanbul airport, his left leg bandaged.

"I still have to go to the Blue Mosque and the old Turkish Bazaar ... We have no hard feelings towards **Turkey**. We know there are some mad people out there," he said.

DETENTIONS CONTINUE

Davutoglu said the security forces had detained four people suspected of links to the suicide bomber, and that six of those wounded were still in hospital. The German foreign ministry said earlier five Germans were still in intensive care.

A Peruvian national was also injured in the blast.

Turkey has rounded up hundreds of suspected Islamic State members since launching what it called a "synchronized war on terror" last July, raids which continued on Wednesday.

Since the attack, police have detained a total of 65 people including 16 foreign nationals in six Turkish cities, the Dogan news agency reported.

The Russian foreign ministry confirmed three of those detained were Russian nationals, but it was not immediately clear whether there was any connection to the Istanbul attack, for which there has been no claim of responsibility.

Turkey has faced criticism at home and abroad for failing to do more to fight Islamic State networks, but Ala, the interior minister, defended **Turkey**'s record, saying 200 suspects had been detained just a week before the Istanbul blast.

He said **Turkey**, which has repeatedly called on foreign intelligence agencies to do more to prevent would-be jihadists from traveling to its shores, had detained 3,318 people for suspected links to Islamic State and other radical groups since Syria's conflict began. Of that number, 847 were subsequently arrested, most of them foreigners.

(Additional reporting by Melih Aslan in Istanbul, Orhan Coskun in Ankara, Michelle Martin in Berlin, Jack Stubbs in Moscow; Writing by Nick Tattersall; Editing by Giles Elgood and Janet McBride)

RF Released: 2016-1-13T19:15:17.000Z

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gdef : Armed Forces | gimm : Asylum/Immigration | gpol : Domestic Politics | grel : Religion | gterr : Terrorism | gvio : Military Action | ntop : Top Wire News | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National

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RE turk : Turkey | syria : Syria | russ : Russia | gfr : Germany | istan : Istanbul | meastz : Middle East | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | bric : BRICS Countries | dach : DACH Countries | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eecz : European Union Countries | eeurz : Central/Eastern Europe | eurz : Europe | medz : Mediterranean | ussrz : CIS Countries | wasiaz : Western Asia | weurz : Western Europe

IPD Entertainment and Lifestyle

IPC SERVICE:RTRFLN

PUB Thomson Reuters (Markets) LLC

AN Document LBA0000020160113ec1d00bkp

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REUTERS

HD **Walls and watchtowers rise as Turkey tries to seal border against Islamic State**

WC 1,110 words

PD 3 February 2016

ET 18:59

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

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LP

ELBEYLI, **Turkey** (Reuters) - Slabs of concrete **wall** have sprung up and military patrols have intensified, but local people say this stretch of **Turkey**'s **border** facing Syrian territory under Islamic State control is still far from water-tight.

Ankara is under intense pressure from its NATO allies to seal off the 70 km (40 mile) strip that stretches from just east of the Turkish town of Kilis to Karkamis, long a conduit for fighters, smuggled goods and war materiel.

TD

Beyond a string of tiny villages nestled in undulating fig and olive groves lies the last stretch of Syrian territory on **Turkey**'s southern frontier that Islamic State militants still hold, following advances by rival Kurdish rebels.

European governments fear that their own citizens who have fought with the jihadists could still cross back into **Turkey** before heading home to stage attacks.

Likewise, the United States believes **Turkey**, which has NATO's second largest army, must close the frontier if Islamic State is to be defeated in Syria.

Soldiers patrol in armored vehicles along a **border** delineated in some places by little more than razor-wire **fence**. Additional watchtowers and huts have appeared in recent months, and three-meter (10 foot)-high concrete slabs are being erected along some of the most vulnerable sections.

But the efforts by a nation which had long been criticized for failing to do more to prevent the passage of foreign fighters appear to have come too late to stop Islamic State networks developing inside **Turkey**.

Washington and Ankara have been discussing for months how to seal this stretch of **border**. Senior U.S. officials said last month they would offer **Turkey** technology including surveillance balloons and anti-tunneling equipment.

Border security is now undoubtedly tighter but, for those wanting to sneak over, not absolute - and help remains available for a price.

"It's difficult, but not impossible," said Ismail, a 37-year old who described himself as a trader, smoking a cigarette in a tea house near the village of Akinci.

"Let's say you want to cross. You tell me where and when and I can call people who will make it happen," he said. "But you would have to pay more."

The military's own figures suggest attempts to cross into Islamic State-held Syrian territory have continued, showing 121 people tried over the past 10 days alone. Almost half were children, and at least a dozen were foreigners.

Nevertheless, it is cracking down on those trying to spirit people over the **border**.

"The security is very tight now, soldiers give the smugglers no respite," said Abbas, 51, a farmer near the Turkish **border** town of Elbeyli, as two soldiers carrying rifles passed by his house, walking toward their outpost a few hundred meters away.

Last year, Abbas was so alarmed by the numbers of people crossing illicitly into Syria under his nose that he emailed a government bureau, set up years ago for citizens to register complaints, queries and concerns. It receives more than a million inquiries a year and Abbas said he never heard back.

"It was literally a flood of people here," he said, describing how some in his village made a fortune shuttling people back and forth to the **border fence**, often doing a dozen trips a night, until the flow largely stopped about a month ago.

Several residents in other **border** villages and towns confirmed security had been tightened, but emphasized that did not mean the two-way traffic had dried up.

GRAPHIC - Areas of Syria controlled by government and rebel groups: http://reut.rs/1P61KRt

KILLINGS IN **TURKEY**

Turkey launched what it called a "synchronized war on terror" last July, opening up its Incirlik air base to countries in the U.S.-led coalition bombing Islamic State. Most of its own air strikes, however, have been against Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militants battling for Kurdish autonomy in its southeast.

Turkish tanks and artillery bombarded Islamic State positions in Syria and Iraq in the days after a suicide bomber blew himself up among groups of tourists in the heart of Istanbul last month, killing 10 Germans.

The security forces have also stepped up raids against Islamic State in cities across **Turkey**, detaining more than 1,000 alleged members and uncovering urban cells.

"We have never allowed Islamic State to use our territory to cross into Syria and we will not allow them ... We see Islamic State as an extremely serious threat and we don't want them on our **border**," a senior government official told Reuters.

Turkey has increasingly become a target itself for the Sunni Muslim radicals. The Istanbul bombing followed a suicide attack in Ankara in October that killed more than 100 people and a bombing in the **border** town of Suruc last July, both of which were blamed on Islamic State fighters.

Diplomats and analysts say Ankara woke up late to the threat, allowing Islamic State to develop networks of sympathizers, a charge the government rejects.

"These networks are tapped into well-established al Qaeda networks inside **Turkey** ... They were already there and they operated with little interference until March 2015," Aaron Stein, senior fellow at the Atlantic Council said, nothing a marked increased in arrests thereafter.

Aside from the high-profile suicide bombings, Islamic State sympathizers have been able to carry out targeted attacks inside Turkish territory along the **border** in recent months.

Naji Jerf, a Syrian activist and documentary maker who made a film about Islamic State and had lived in **Turkey**'s southeastern city of Gaziantep since 2012, was gunned down on the street in broad daylight last December.

A couple of months earlier, two other Syrian activists who worked for Raqqa Is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS), a campaign group against Islamic State, were shot in the head and beheaded in the nearby city of Sanliurfa.

Jerf and the two activists had appealed to the Turkish police after they received death threats, friends and fellow activists in Istanbul and Gaziantep told Reuters.

"Naji went to the police after somebody tried to break into his car," said his friend Manhal Bareesh, a journalist based in Gaziantep but originally from Syria's Idlib province.

"He suspected they were trying to plant a bomb in his car. But the Turkish police wrote a report and told him not to worry," Bareesh said.

Three people have been detained in Gaziantep in relation to Jerf's murder, according to local media, but the killings have alarmed the Syrian immigrant community.

(Editing by Nick Tattersall and David Stamp)

RF Released: 2016-2-3T17:59:47.000Z

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

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DOW JONES NEWSWIRES

HD **Kurds Strain U.S.-Turkey Ties**

WC 989 words

PD 8 February 2016

ET 08:42

SN Dow Jones Institutional News

SC DJDN

PG A1

LA English

CY Copyright © 2016, Dow Jones & Company, Inc.

LP

(FROM THE WALL STREET JOURNAL 2/8/16)

By Dion Nissenbaum and Carol E. Lee

Turkey's growing hostility to one of America's most effective allies in the fight against Islamic State -- Syrian Kurdish fighters -- is undermining efforts to step up the campaign against the extremist group, U.S. officials say.

TD

The tensions, and the strains they have put on U.S.-Turkish relations, bubbled to the surface when U.S. Vice President Joe Biden flew to Istanbul late last month to talk with Turkish leaders about the campaign. According to U.S. and Turkish officials involved in the talks, Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu and his top advisers showed a specially prepared map of the **Turkey**-Syria **border** that identified several places where they said Syrian Kurdish militants had smuggled weapons meant to battle Islamic State into **Turkey**.

Over and over again, Turkish officials told their American counterparts, security forces had seized arms and ammunition being secretly diverted by U.S. allies in Syria to members of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, better known as the PKK -- the militant force both countries classify as a terrorist group.

U.S. officials said they have checked out the complaints and found no evidence that any firepower provided directly by the American military to Kurdish fighters in Syria has turned up in **Turkey**. Any other smuggling of weapons into **Turkey** is likely to be small, they added, given that the Syrian Kurds are focused on their fierce fight with Islamic State.

In the meetings with Mr. Biden, though, Turkish leaders made it clear they found any arms smuggling unacceptable. After the meetings, Turkish officials told The **Wall** Street Journal that they were prepared to bomb America's allies in Syria if the flow continued.

Several senior U.S. officials now say **Turkey** has become one of the biggest impediments to securing a political resolution to the five-year-old conflict in Syria -- and to mounting the most effective military campaign against Islamic State.

The deepening feud comes as the U.S., **Turkey**, Russia and other world powers prepare to meet Thursday in Munich to try to salvage stalled United Nations-backed Syrian peace talks.

The new diplomatic effort came to a halt last week after Russian warplanes and Iranian fighters helped the Syrian military seize the advantage in the long-running battle for control of Aleppo, the country's largest city. Amid the Assad regime's advance, **Turkey** and Saudi Arabia pressed Syrian opposition leaders to withdraw from the talks in Geneva, according to diplomats and Syrian opposition leaders involved in the talks.

The rising role of the Kurdish fighters in Syria is creating new political strains, as well: Moscow, which is still seeking an apology from **Turkey** for shooting down a Russian jet last fall along the **Turkey**-Syria **border**, is trying to strengthen its ties with the Kurdish militants that Ankara views as a threat. The U.S., meanwhile, is trying to ensure the Syrian Kurds focus their firepower on Islamic State and don't

antagonize **Turkey**, which doesn't want to see the Kurdish fighters receive international support for their hopes of one day creating their own state.

After successfully preventing the U.S.-backed Kurdish group from taking part in last week's Geneva talks, Ankara is pressing its argument that the YPG -- as the Kurdish fighting force is known -- is an unreliable American partner in the fight against Islamic State.

For months, Ankara has complained to Washington that its Kurdish allies in Syria were smuggling U.S.-made weapons to PKK fighters who declared an end to a two-year-old cease-fire with **Turkey** last summer.

Since then, PKK militants have been embroiled in a worsening fight with the Turkish military that has transformed parts of southeastern **Turkey** into urban war zones. Kurdish insurgents have used homemade bombs, rocket-propelled grenades and automatic weapons to kill hundreds of Turkish security forces in recent months.

The tensions with **Turkey** come as the U.S. is increasing its cooperation with the Syrian Kurds by sending dozens of elite military advisers into northern Syria to work with YPG fighters and their Arab allies. That was evident when America's key diplomat in the fight against Islamic State secretly traveled to northern Syria a week ago to meet with the Kurdish group to demonstrate the Obama administration's backing.

During the trip, Brett McGurk, President Barack Obama's special envoy for the global coalition to counter Islamic State, was photographed with a number of Kurdish militant leaders.

In one photo, a smiling Mr. McGurk was shown accepting a thank-you plaque from Polat Can, spokesman for the Syrian Kurdish fighters who first was a member of the PKK.

When photos emerged on social media showing a younger Mr. Can in a PKK uniform, critical Turkish media seized on it as clear evidence that the U.S. was working hand-in-hand with terrorists battling Turkish security forces.

For President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the photographs, taken in the Syrian **border** town of Kobani, were an insulting public embrace of **Turkey**'s adversary. "How can we trust [you]?" Mr. Erdogan told reporters on his plane in remarks published Sunday. "Is it me that is your partner, or is it the terrorists in Kobani?"

While much of the weaponry used by the PKK is believed to come from Russia, U.S. officials said they have kept a close eye on the **border** to ensure U.S. support for the Kurds in Syria doesn't end up in **Turkey**. **Turkey**'s concerns are a main reason the U.S. has restricted what it has directly given to the Kurdish fighters.

One senior administration official said the U.S. has a consistent message: Support for the Syrian Kurdish fighters isn't an endorsement of the PKK.

(END) Dow Jones Newswires

February 08, 2016 02:42 ET (07:42 GMT)

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gdip : International Relations | gterr : Terrorism | gvio : Military Action | neqac : Equities Asset Class News | nfiac : Fixed Income Asset Class News | npag : Page-One Stories | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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AN Document DJDN000020160208ec28000dl

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HD **Infighting? NATO Members Ask Turkey to Stop Shelling Kurds in Syria**

WC 291 words

PD 16 February 2016

ET 14:53

SN Sputnik News Service

SC RVESEN

LA English

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LP

Turkish artillery fire from the **border** near Kilis toward northern Syria, in Kilis, **Turkey**, Monday, Feb. 15, 2016.

"We are concerned about the situation north of Aleppo and are working to deescalate tensions on all sides," State Department spokesman John Kirby said in a statement Saturday.

TD

"We have also seen reports of artillery fire from the Turkish side of the **border** and urged **Turkey** to cease such fire," he added.

France also joined the US calls, with the country's Foreign Ministry urging **Turkey** to halt the bombardment of Kurdish areas in Syria.

"The priority should be the fight against Islamic State [Daesh] and the implementation of agreements reached by the International Syria Support Group (Russia, US and UN) in Munich earlier this week," it added.

The Kurdish militants are fighting terrorists in Syria, but they are themselves viewed as such by Ankara.

Turkey is a NATO country and hailed by the US State Department as an "active member of the anti-ISIS [Daesh] coalition."

However, what Ankara is doing to the Kurds, who are fighting Daesh terrorists in Syria, means that its priorities definitely lie elsewhere.

The United States can distance itself from **Turkey**, which is bombing those Washington purports to support, but just how long it is going to call **Turkey** "a true ally" and "a great partner" is a big question.

What we now see is a clear clash of priorities with Turkish President Erdogan asking America point blank whose side it is on - **Turkey**'s or the Kurds?

To this Washington says it supports both, but with the situation developing as it does, America will hardly be able to sit on the **fence** for too long.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant | usstat : United States Department of State | nato : North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NS gvstd : State Department | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations | gpol : Domestic Politics | gvbod : Government Bodies | gvexe : Executive Branch

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IPD politics

PUB Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency

AN Document RVESEN0020160216ec2g0058y

HD **Refugees employed to erect wall along Turkey's Syrian border**

WC 347 words

PD 22 February 2016

SN Cihan News Agency (CNA)

SC CINEWA

LA English

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LP

İSTANBUL (CİHAN)- Syrian refugees who have fled to neighboring **Turkey** due to civil war in their country are now working on the construction of a **wall** the Turkish government has been building along its borders to stem the illegal crossing of terrorist Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) militants.

A three-meter-high concrete **wall** is being built along some parts of the Turkish-Syrian **border** in the southern province of Kilis, which neighbors ISIL on the other side. The **wall** will consist of two-meter-thick concrete blocks and have one meter of razor wire on top.

TD

Police have detained several alleged ISIL militants who reportedly entered **Turkey** illegally, crossing the **border** in the province.

(Photo: Today's Zaman, Kürşat Bayhan)

Apart from the project foremen, most of the workers on the **wall** are Syrians and all of them wished to remain anonymous when speaking to the media. Expressing sorrow for their relatives on the other side of the **border**, they say, We must put up this **wall** for our security."

Speaking to Today's Zaman, Metin Çorabatır from the Ankara-based Asylum and Immigration Studies Center (İGAMDER) says the construction of the **wall** risks violating Article 14 of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees peoples' right to asylum.

Even though we cannot say that the [intended] **wall** along **Turkey**'s Syrian **border** will definitely violate this right, it will make it hard for one to avail oneself of this right," Çorabatır said.

If a [Syrian refugee] group wants to flee the war in the near future, how can they take refuge without facing this **wall**?" he added.

Turkey has been home to around 2.5 million Syrians, the world's largest refugee population. While only about 10 percent of those refugees stay at specially designated camps near the Syrian **border**, the rest have been scattered across the country.

Turkey has only very recently begun issuing work permits to the refugees.

SEVDE NUR TUNÇ | KILIS [Cihan/Today's Zaman] CİHAN

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IPD Economy

PUB Cihan News Agency

AN Document CINEWA0020160223ec2m00005

The Telegraph

HD **Turkey 'fires live rounds to drive away Syrian refugees fleeing Islamic State'**

BY By Raf Sanchez and Richard Spencer

WC 628 words

PD 15 April 2016

ET 20:03

SN The Telegraph Online

SC TELUK

LA English

CY The Telegraph Online © 2016. Telegraph Media Group Ltd.

LP

Turkish **border** forces were on Friday accused of using live bullets to drive away refugees fleeing a fresh wave of fighting between Syrian opposition forces and Isil.

Around 30,000 people fled as their refugee camp north-east of Aleppo was over-run by fighters from Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, relatives and activists said.

TD

As they neared **Turkey**'s partially-constructed **border wall** a few miles away guards opened fire with live rounds to discourage them from coming closer, Human Rights Watch claimed .

"As we approached the **border wall** we saw Turkish soldiers on a hill behind the **wall** and they just started shooting at us," one witness said. "They shot at our feet and everyone just turned round and ran in all directions."

The aftermath of an air strike by government forces, on the rebel-held area of Haydariya, in Aleppo earlier this week Credit: THAER MOHAMMED/AFP There were unconfirmed reports of some civilians and smugglers being killed by the gunfire, but they were denied by Hasan Kara, mayor of Kilis, the town on the Turkish side of the **border**.

He said the refugees were actually heading west to refugee camps built by the Turks on the Syrian side, which brought them close to the **border**.

He said the sound of fighting had been not from the Turkish forces, but from western coalition aircraft which had bombed Isil positions nearby in support of the non-Isil, Turkish-backed Free Syrian Army rebels.

The FSA has launched a major offensive against Isil in the **border** area north of Aleppo since February's ceasefire, which excluded the jihadists, took effect on other fronts.

The FSA's supporters say that it had been prevented from doing this before because of the risk of being bombed by the Russians, who support the Assad regime, the FSA's other foes.

Families load their belongings onto a bus in Palmyra on Thursday Credit: Hassan Ammar/AP Backed by **Turkey**, which is keen to see neither the regime, Isil or Kurdish forces occupy the **border** area, it has pushed several score miles to the east, but were taken unawares by a sudden counter-attack on Thursday.

Activists say that Isil over-ran one refugee camp that housed more than 30,000 people, and set fire to its tents. They tried to force the occupants to move into Isil-held territory to the east, but most fled west, carrying their wounded.

"My brother Abdullah was injured yesterday," said Maha Hajji Mohammed, 25, a Syrian now living in Kilis. "My other brother has gone in to try to get him out." She said her brother had been fighting with the FSA.

The Turks are allowing the injured through for treatment but have stopped accepting other refugees, at least so long as there is a "safe zone" that is not being bombed on the Syrian side.

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But that has left thousands of people also trapped between the renewed fighting and the **border fence**.

“As civilians flee Isil fighters, **Turkey** is responding with live ammunition instead of compassion,” said Gerry Simpson, senior refugee researcher at Human Rights Watch.

Kilis AleppoFighting has also intensified around the city of Aleppo between the regime and Jabhat al-Nusra, the local branch of al-Qaeda, which is also excluded from the ceasefire.

That is one of a number of clashes that is threatening to break the ceasefire, since in that area Jabhat al-Nusra is fighting alongside other rebel groups.

However, the regime offensive has so far been beaten back, with social media accounts filling with pictures of dead fighters from either side.

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PUB Telegraph Media Group Ltd.

AN Document TELUK00020160415ec4f003pg

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HD **Turkey Begins Operation in Syria to Establish Buffer Zone**

WC 708 words

PD 11 May 2016

SN FARS News Agency

SC FARSNA

LA English

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LP

TEHRAN (FNA)- **Turkey** reportedly launched a military operation on the Syrian side of the **border** as part of a plan to establish a buffer zone in Syria.

According to a Tuesday report by the Turkish Yeni Safak newspaper, the operation allegedly aims to push back the Takfiri ISIL terrorists from an area that is 18 kilometers long and 8 kilometers deep in Syria's Jarablus region, presstv reported.

TD

Under the plan, the Turkish military will use artillery shells, guided missiles and mortars to target the militants who have repeatedly fired rockets at the Southern Turkish **border** town of Kilis.

The newspaper said the operation will be supported by the international coalition, particularly the United States and Germany.

Earlier in April, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Ankara will deploy a US-made rocket launcher system on the **border** with Syria to allegedly combat the Takfiri ISIL terrorists.

Cavusoglu said the US High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) would be deployed on the Turkish **border** in May as part of an agreement" with Washington.

HIMARS would allow **Turkey** to hit ISIL positions within a 90-kilometer (56-mile) range, while Turkish artillery has a limited range of only 40 kilometers (24 miles), the minister stated.

Ankara is seeking to establish a safe zone in the 98-kilometer (60-mile) stretch between Manbij in Aleppo Province, Northern Syria, and the **border** to shelter Syrian refugees, the Turkish foreign minister said.

Citing unnamed US officials, the **Wall** Street Journal reported on Tuesday that **Turkey**'s special military force carried out an unusual weekend operation against ISIL in Syria.

A small group of elite Turkish troops entered Syria on Saturday to help more effectively target ISIL who have been launching rocket attacks into **Turkey** for weeks, US officials claimed.

According to the US officials, the operation was part of a deepening campaign by the Turkish army to push ISIL away from a vital 60-mile stretch of the **Turkey**-Syria **border** that serves as the group's main lifeline.

Over the past few weeks, Kilis has come under frequent rocket attacks by ISIL militants, prompting the Turkish army to respond with howitzer fire.

Turkey has frequently used such rocket attacks as a pretext to shell the Syrian territory or send troops into the Arab country.

Kilis is a town located just north of the Syrian **border**, some 10 kilometers from the Syrian town of Azaz. According to Turkish officials, it is the only town in **Turkey** with a majority of Syrians.

In late July 2015, reports said that Washington and Ankara have agreed to establish a buffer zone along the **Turkey**-Syria **border** in an alleged attempt to flush ISIL Takfiri terrorists out of the demarcated region and facilitate the return of the Syrian refugees to their homeland.

The United Nations has voiced concerns over the plan, saying **Turkey** should first guarantee the safety of the refugees in the area.

Iran has also expressed their opposition to the plan, saying it encroaches upon the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Arab country.

Moreover, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov censured the proposal, which he said, contradicts the international law and will heighten tensions in the region.

Many blame Ankara for supporting militant groups that have been fighting to topple the Syrian government. The Turkish government also stands accused of being involved in illegal oil trade with ISIL, but it strongly rejects the allegations.

In late May 2015, Turkish-language Cumhuriyet newspaper posted on its website footage purportedly showing trucks belonging to **Turkey**'s National Intelligence Organization, also known as the MIT, carrying weapons for militant groups in Syria.

Since late September 2014, the United States, along with some of its allies, has been conducting airstrikes against purported positions of ISIL inside Syria without any authorization from Damascus or the United Nations. **Turkey** permits US warplanes to use its air base in the South for the airstrikes.

Syria has been gripped by foreign-backed militancy since March 2011. UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura estimates that over 400,000 people have been killed in the conflict, which has furthermore displaced over half of Syria's pre-war population of about 23 million.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

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IPD World

PUB FARS News Agency

AN Document FARSNA0020160511ec5b000mm

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BBC MONITORING

HD **Turkish paper says PKK, Islamic State expected to escalate attacks in June**

WC 664 words

PD 6 June 2016

ET 08:09

SN BBC Monitoring European

SC BBCEUP

LA English

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LP

Text of report by Turkish newspaper Cumhuriyet website on 4 June

[Unattributed report: "ISIL Came Through Tunnel 'To Conquer']

TD

A "classified" communique, sent by the Turkish National Police to two provincial governors on 21 May 2016, stated that the purpose of the missiles fired into **Turkey** by ISIL was to force people to flee those areas. "If the local people are evacuated, the members of the organization waiting on the **border** line will infiltrate into those areas," said the communique.

The National Police warned that the terrorist organization ISIL would be escalating its actions to conquer Kilis and Gaziantep in order to add these two cities to the Islamic state territory. Stating that the purpose of the missiles and rockets fired at Kilis, which caused the death of 21 citizens, was to force the local people to flee their homes, the National Police said, "If the residential areas are evacuated, the members of the organization waiting on the **border** line will be infiltrating into those areas." The National Police reported that the ISIL members who infiltrated into Kilis through a tunnel dug under the **wall** built on the **border** along Jarabulus line were tasked with the role of becoming sleeper cells in the city.

On 20 May 2016, the National Police sent a "classified" communique to the governorates in Kilis and Gaziantep and issued a serious warning. In line with the warning, on 21 May 2016, Kilis Deputy Governor Mustafa Unver Boke sent a communique, with the heading "security measures," to the **border** local authority in the village of Oncupinar. On the basis of the communique from the National Police, Deputy Governor Boke listed ISIL's action plan against the city as follows:

* (ISIL) is preparing to carry out a car bomb attack against the Kilis/Oncupinar **border**.

* The organization will escalate its actions in Kilis and Gaziantep to allegedly conquer these provinces and add them to the Islamic State territory.

* Missile and rocket fire from Syria will continue to force the local people to evacuate the residential areas. If the local people evacuate the residential areas, the members of the organization waiting along the **border** line will infiltrate into those areas.

* ISIL elements entered Kilis through a tunnel build in Jarabulus, Syria and the elements that entered the city have not engaged in any activity and are tasked with the role of becoming sleeper cells.

* A religious sermon was issued calling for the shooting of Turkish officials and soldiers wherever they are seen.

The communique from the governorate asked, on the basis of these reasons, for the security measures at the Oncupinar **border** crossing to be revised and increased. The communique also added, "Vehicles and persons arriving from Syria should only be allowed to cross after a meticulous search and additionally, I ask that necessary action is taken to warn the relevant officials at Syria **Border** Customs for the meticulous search of vehicles and persons looing to enter our country."

In the governorate communique penned on the basis of the communique from the National Police, it was also stated that as of 1 June, the PKK [Kurdistan Workers' Party], too, would be escalating its actions. The communique included the following remarks regarding this topic:

"Because of its latest strategic failure in urban warfare, Kongra-Gel [Kurdistan People's Congress] (PKK) -KCK [Assembly of Communities of Kurdistan] will be escalating its actions across the country. To that end, 200 members of the organization crossed into the country from Syria, as part of the reinforcement of manpower, weapons, and explosives, and joined the OSB [Self-Defence Units]/YBS [Sinjar Protection Units] cadres in the southeast. As of 1 June, the organization will escalate its actions across the country and step up actions such carrying out car bomb attacks against security forces, kidnapping security officials and public service personnel to reclaim psychological superiority."

Source: Cumhuriyet website, Istanbul, in Turkish 0000 gmt 4 Jun 16

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gsec : State Security Measures/Policies | gcrim : Crime/Legal Action | gdef : Armed Forces | gterr : Terrorism | gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National/Public Security | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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PUB The British Broadcasting Corporation

AN Document BBCEUP0020160606ec660002t

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HD **Turkey strikes IS as Syria border tensions flare**

BY Stuart WILLIAMS

WC 818 words

PD 23 August 2016

ET 13:14

SN Agence France Presse

SC AFPR

LA English

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LP

Turkey on Tuesday pounded Islamic State (IS) jihadists in Syria with new artillery strikes as expectations grew of a major Ankara-backed offensive against the group after a deadly suicide bombing on its soil.

With tensions flaring on the **Turkey**-Syria **border** following the bombing in the nearby city of Gaziantep that left 54 people dead, Turkish howitzers on Monday hit jihadist and Kurdish rebel targets across the frontier.

TD

Turkey has been shaken by one of the bloodiest years in its modern history, with a string of attacks by IS jihadists and Kurdish militants and the botched July 15 coup.

In new fighting on Tuesday, two mortar rounds fired from an IS-controlled area in Syria hit the southeastern Turkish town of Karkamis while three more hit the centre of the Turkish **border** town of Kilis, the state-run Anadolu news agency said.

There were no reports of injuries although 21 people in Kilis have been killed by fire from Syria in recent months.

Turkish artillery responded to the fire on Karkamis by hitting four IS positions around the jihadist-controlled Syrian town of Jarablus with around 60 shells. The army also responded to the fire on Kilis.

The shelling came as activists said hundreds of Ankara-backed rebels were preparing an offensive against the IS group to seize control of Jarablus.

But this could potentially put them on collision course with the militia of the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) which Ankara vehemently opposes and who also have designs on Jarablus after seizing the strategic Manbij area in northern Syria from IS.

Rami Abdul Rahman, the head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said the "Turkish shelling in Syria aimed to prevent the advance of troops backed by Kurds from Manbij towards Jarablus".

He told AFP the commander of Kurdish-dominated forces headed to Jarablus, Abdel Satar al-Jader, was also "assassinated" on Monday after announcing he planned to resist the Turkish advance. There was no confirmation of this from Turkish sources.

Abdulkadir Selvi, a well-connected columnist for the Hurriyet daily, said the **Turkey**-backed offensive "could begin at any moment".

The movements have come at a critical juncture for **Turkey** in Syria's five-and-a-half-year war, with signs growing it is on the verge of a landmark policy shift.

Ankara has always called for the ouster of President Bashar al-Assad as the key to ending the conflict, putting **Turkey** at odds with his main supporters Iran and Russia.

However Prime Minister Binali Yildirim at the weekend for the first time acknowledged that Assad was one of the "actors" in Syria and may need to stay on as part of a transition.

On Monday, he urged world powers including Iran, Russia and the United States to join together to rapidly open a "new page" in the Syria crisis.

But he also warned it was "unacceptable" for Kurds to seek to establish any kind of separate entity in northern Syria.

Turkey regards PYD as a terror group, although Washington, Ankara's ally in the fight against IS, sees its People's Protection Units militia (YPG) -- as having an important role in the fight.

US Vice President Joe Biden is due to visit Ankara Wednesday to meet **Turkey**'s leadership with agreeing a unified strategy on Syria set to be a crucial issue.

Turkey had long been accused of turning a blind eye to the rise of IS -- charges it vehemently denies -- but has taken a tougher line following attacks at home.

It has lately been building a 240-kilometre (150-mile) concrete **wall** in order to tighten security.

The attack in Gaziantep on a Kurdish wedding party for a young couple has horrified the country, with the majority of the 54 victims aged under 18 and including children as young as four.

But there is confusion as to who was behind the attack, with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan initially saying the suicide bomber was a child aged 12-14 acting on the orders of IS.

However Yildirim on Monday said **Turkey** still had no clue who carried out the attack and said all "rumours" over the age and affiliation of the bomber should be taken with a pinch of salt.

Hurriyet said the authorities still suspected IS was behind the attack as the main line of inquiry, with investigators taking DNA samples in Gaziantep from the families of possible IS suspects.

Reports said the previous assertions by the authorities had been based on eyewitness statements rather than concrete scientific evidence.

One guest at the wedding party, Emine Ayhan, lost four of her five children in the blast, Turkish media reported.

"To finish off the evening the young guys wanted one last song. It was in the middle of this song that the bomb went off," Hurriyet quoted her as saying.

sjw/ric

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gvio : Military Action | gterr : Terrorism | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National/Public Security | gcrim : Crime/Legal Action | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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IPD Recit

PUB Agence France-Presse

AN Document AFPR000020160823ec8n005v6

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SE Conflict, Conflict & Justice

HD **Turkey is fighting ISIS in Syria, and blocking US-backed Kurds**

BY GlobalPost

WC 869 words

PD 24 August 2016

SN GlobalStream

SC GLOSTR

LA English

CY Copyright GlobalPost 2016

LP

Turkish tanks crossed into Syria on Wednesday with hundreds of Syrian rebels to capture the Syrian **border** town of Jarablus from the Islamic State group.

But they also aimed to block the advance of Syria's US-backed Kurdish militia.

TD

Dubbed “Euphrates Shield,” this marks the first time a foreign state has officially sent ground troops to support Syria’s armed opposition in the fight the extremist group. The Syrian government condemned the operation.

The move is aimed at “clearing the Turkish borders of terrorist groups, helping to enhance **border** security and supporting the territorial integrity of Syria,” according to **Turkey**’s state-run Anadolu news agency.

Turkey sent tanks, artillery, special forces and warplanes in its largest intervention in Syria since the country's civil war began five years ago.

The operation follows months of rocket fire and terrorist attacks against **Turkey** by ISIS. Just four days ago, 54 people were killed by a suicide bombing at a wedding in the southeastern Turkish city of Gaziantep, an attack **Turkey** blamed on ISIS.

US officials said the Turkish and Syrian rebel fighters were being supported by the US-led anti-ISIS coalition with drone surveillance and military advisers. “We are syncing up with the Turks,” one senior US official told the **Wall** Street Journal.

But the display of unity between NATO allies US and **Turkey** have been undercut by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s declaration that the operation was also aimed at containing Syrian Kurds, key allies of the US in the fight against ISIS.

"At 4:00 this morning, operations started in the north of Syria against terror groups which constantly threaten our country" like ISIS and the Syrian Kurdish rebels, Erdogan said in a speech announcing the operation.

The US has played a delicate balancing act with its partners in the fight against the Islamic State. The US military operates out of — and in cooperation with — **Turkey**, but is also backing **Turkey**'s bitter enemy, the Kurdish People’s Protection Units, or YPG.

Read more: Pentagon denies enforcing a no-fly zone in northeast Syria. Kurdish allies say otherwise.

But here's where it gets even more complex. **Turkey** views the YPG as an offshoot of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, a militant group that's fought the Turkish state for almost 40 years in the quest for greater autonomy and rights for **Turkey**’s Kurds. The group is engaged in a brutal urban conflict with the Turkish army across the country’s southeast.

Officials in the capital Ankara fear that if Kurds manage to break away from northern Syria, that will ignite separatist demands in **Turkey** even more.

The US classifies the Kurdistan Workers’ Party as a terrorist group, but says Syria's Kurdish rebels are a separate organization. Many analysts say the distinction is not as clear as Washington might hope.

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The YPG is the main component of an alliance of various Arab and Kurdish rebels called the Syrian Democratic Forces. The alliance has made steady progress pushing east, capturing ISIS-held areas with support from US fighter jets and military advisers. That progress worries **Turkey**'s government, and caused a rift between Turkish and US officials over Washington's backing for the group.

Earlier this month, the Syrian Democratic Forces drove out ISIS from the Syrian city of Manbij. They had then set their sights on Jarablus, around 20 miles north.

That's where Turkish forces stepped in. Rather than aid the Kurdish-Arab alliance, **Turkey** backed a rival Sunni rebel group to take over Jarablus. **Turkey** wants to stop the YPG from grabbing a contiguous stretch of land along the **border** — territory that Syrian Kurds want badly in order to create an autonomous zone in northern Syria.

US officials had tried to allay **Turkey**'s concerns by promising that Kurdish fighters would withdraw from Manbij once the city was recaptured and secure, and that they would not move farther north.

Vice President Joe Biden, who arrived in Ankara for talks with Erdogan on Wednesday, said the YPG would lose US support if it did not withdraw to the east of the Euphrates — a red line that **Turkey** has repeatedly insisted upon.

If the Syrian Kurdish fighters and **Turkey** agree to those terms, a potentially major stumbling block for the various forces lined up against ISIS may be overcome in the short term.

Aaron Stein, a **Turkey** analyst and senior resident fellow at the Atlantic Council, said the new arrangement might even benefit US-**Turkey** relations.

“This is a net benefit for US-Turkish relations,” he told PRI on Wednesday. “The US had pledged to take Turkish security concerns into account regarding the YPG presence west of the Euphrates and has stuck to its commitment. I think this operation is the next logical move following the successful Manbij operation.”

Still, the US faces the hard task of balancing **Turkey**'s fears over Kurdish aspirations with supporting a vital partner in the fight against the Islamic State.

Soon, Turkish tanks could share a front line with emboldened Kurdish fighters, raising the possibility of a violent flare-up between the two.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gterr : Terrorism | gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National/Public Security | gcrim : Crime/Legal Action | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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IPD Conflict

PUB Public Radio International, Inc.

AN Document GLOSTR0020160824ec8o00001

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HD **Turkish Invasion Highlights Rapidly Shifting Alliances**

BY Maximilian Popp Christoph Reuter

WC 2,388 words

PD 26 August 2016

SN Spiegel Online International

SC SPION

VOL 0 2016

LA English

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LP

The Turkish advance into northern Syria marks a turning point in the Syrian conflict. Its nominal target was Islamic State, but with large powers reconsidering their alliances in the region, the Kurds stand to lose the most.

One common description of chaos theory holds that the flapping of a butterfly's wings can trigger a tornado. And it could very well be that the theory is the best tool we currently have available to describe the complex situation in Syria . The butterfly wings in this case was the late July decision by the Syrian regime to recruit new tribal militia fighters in a remote northeastern province. The tornado it triggered four weeks later was threefold: the invasion of northern Syria by the Turkish army; the sudden expulsion of Islamic State from the **border** town of Jarabulus; and the US military suddenly finding itself on both sides of a new front in Syria -- that between the Turks and the Kurds.

TD

"It is 3:30 p.m. and we have almost reached the center of Jarabulus and have suffered almost no casualties. But we only just crossed the **border** this morning!" Saif Abu Bakr, a defected lieutenant and commander with the rebel group Hamza Division, sounded on Wednesday as though he couldn't believe what had just happened. "We set off with 20 Turkish tanks and 100 Turkish troops from Karkamis" -- the **border** town in **Turkey** -- "and headed through the villages west of the city and then on to Jarabulus."

More than two-and-a-half years after Islamic State (IS) conquered the **border** city, displaying the heads of its adversaries on **fence** posts in the process, the jihadist tumor was removed in mere hours. Jarabulus was one of the last IS bastions on the Turkish **border** and the group had long been able to use the **border** crossing there unchallenged, allowing them to funnel both men and materiel into the parts of Syria under their control. "Almost all of them fled three days ago, except for a few local followers and a couple of foreigners," Umm Chalid, a widow from the city, said of the IS fighters. "All the residents left too. We knew that something would happen."

The invasion in the north is a turning point in the Syrian war, marking the first time that **Turkey** has become directly involved in the conflict. At the same time, many of the complicated alliances in the region are suddenly shifting, with some allies becoming estranged and some enemies discovering common interests.

Primary Goal

In the days leading up to the Turkish invasion, a bizarre procession could be witnessed traveling along the roads on the Turkish side of the **border** -- the product of the Turkish army's attack preparations, which involved bringing in rebels belonging to a variety of groups from Idlib and Aleppo in buses and pick-ups. The fighters were mostly from small, Pentagon-supported units, such as the Hamza Division, the Sultan Murad Brigade and the Levante Front. Large and powerful hardcore Islamist groups like the former Nusra Front were not part of the operation.

Once the Turkish tanks had established their position on a hill west of Jarabulus, they began firing on the fragmented IS units in the city. But they also fired on those troops that had likewise been seeking to liberate Jarabulus from IS: the Kurdish-controlled SDF militia, which had advanced on the city from the south. For the Turks, it was a two-fold success: For one, they attacked IS, which Ankara believes was behind the attack last weekend on a wedding in Gaziantep which killed over 50 people. For another, **Turkey** was able to pursue its primary goal of stopping the advance of the Kurds, who are seeking to establish a contiguous territory stretching across all of northern Syria. That is something Ankara wants to prevent at all costs.

The events are consistent with the pattern that seems to govern the involvement of most powers active in Syria. Each party is fighting its own war: It's Syria à la carte. The Turks are interested in battling the Kurds. The Americans are only interested in defeating Islamic State. The Kurds are seeking to establish their own state. And the Russians are primarily intent on demonstrating to the world that they are once again a global power.

The Turkish army's new invasion partnership with Syrian rebels -- car-sharing included -- is just the latest of the rapidly shifting alliances of convenience used by all to pursue their interests. Taken together, they have transformed this horrific war into a completely unpredictable battlefield. The cards have been reshuffled -- and one of the catalysts was local skirmishes in the remote northeastern province of Hasakah.

Rapid Escalation

But first, a bit of background. For years, a tense alliance of convenience had existed in Hasakah between troops loyal to Syrian ruler Bashar Assad and Kurds with close ties to the PKK, the Kurdish militant group in **Turkey**. The Kurds have continually founded new PKK offshoots in the region, an alphabet soup of groups including most importantly the YPG (which stands for People's Protection Units in Syria) and, more recently, the SDF, or Syrian Democratic Forces. All the groups share personnel, funding and leadership and the image of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan can be seen everywhere. The YPG did not participate in the uprising against Assad and in exchange, the group was allowed to expand its control in Kurdish areas with Assad's unspoken acquiescence. There have been occasional skirmishes between the YPG and Assad troops, but the conflicts have always been rapidly resolved.

Because it is running out of troops, however, Assad's army in July began recruiting a new militia as part of the "National Defense Force" from Sunni tribes in Hasakah -- fighters from the same clans that were involved in earlier plundering and killing of local Kurds when they rose briefly in 2004. The Kurds haven't forgotten and within days, the situation escalated, with the two sides firing on each other and the Kurds conquering almost the entire provincial capital, likewise named Hasakah. Then on August 18, the Syrian air force bombed Kurdish positions in the region for the first time in five years.

The air strikes didn't have much impact on the local fighting, but they completely altered the international balance of power. Though **Turkey** has long been fighting against Syrian President Assad, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan recognized that the Syrian strikes against the Kurds could be useful. As a leading member of Erdogan's Justice and Development Party formulated it in June: "Ultimately, Assad is a killer and tortures his own population. But he doesn't support Kurdish autonomy. We abhor one another, but in this respect, we are pursuing similar policies."

Assad's attack on the Kurds also facilitated rapprochement between the Turkish and Russian governments on the Syrian question. Ankara and Moscow have long been far apart on Syria. Erdogan has been demanding Assad's deposition since 2011 and finances some rebel groups. Russian President Vladimir Putin, meanwhile, has preferred to prop up the Assad regime in the hopes of a more orderly transition of power. But the ice age between Erdogan and the West, which has only become colder since the recent putsch attempt in **Turkey**, has once again made Russia a potential ally for the Turks.

Dropping the Kurds

On the other hand, the Kremlin is no longer making much progress towards its own vision for Syria. The Russian air force, to be sure, has been effective in propping up Assad's rump empire despite ground troops from Iran, Afghanistan and elsewhere doing their best to defeat him. But Bashar Assad has refused to make even the tiniest of concessions. His renewed military strength is entirely the product of Russian support and Moscow's plan was not to dump him, but to present him as an example of their own successful strategy of intervention.

Were **Turkey** to accept a transition goverment under Assad's leadership, this would be easier to achieve. Assad would never step down on his own, but the Russians would be in a position to swap him out with a favorable general at their convenience. That would clear the way for an international agreement -- with the West likely footing the bill for Syrian reconstruction -- and for Russia's departure from Syria.

Turkish support would make the plan easier to achieve -- and such support appears to be forthcoming: Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said last weekend that **Turkey** would tolerate an Assad-led transition government. The deal would involve concessions for **Turkey** in exchange for Ankara's agreement that Assad could remain in power for the time being. Russia, meanwhile, would then drop the Kurds as an ally, a partnership that only came into being last autumn.

In the tactical shifting of alliances in Syria, the Kurds had hoped to be the cleverest player. Now, however, it looks as though they may have risked too much.

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To make matters worse for the Kurds, their relations with the US have likewise deteriorated rapidly, despite being Washington's closest ally in the fight against Islamic State. After pushing IS out of its own areas, Kurdish fighters did not, as had been agreed with the US, turn their attentions to the de facto IS capital of Raqqa but opted instead to head in the opposite direction and push IS out of the Arab city of Manbij before heading north to Jarabulus, another predominantly Arab city.

From the Turkish perspective, any further Kurdish advance west of the Euphrates River crosses a red line -- and the Turkish name for the tank operation in northern Syria, Euphrates Shield, indicates as much. The US is likewise uninterested in seeing the Kurds conquer additional Arab cities. "We've put a lid on the Kurds moving north," a US government official told the **Wall** Street Journal this week, "or at least doing so if they want any support from us, which I think is a fairly significant piece of leverage."

The Turkish operation in Jarabulus also received US air support and US Special Forces are thought to have participated. Furthermore, just hours after the invasion, US Vice President Joe Biden landed in Ankara in an attempt to smooth over tense relations between the two countries. The upshot, though, was that on the ground south of Jarabulus, the sudden change of course very nearly led to two American-supported groups firing on each other.

Miscalculation

The recent events mark an unfortunate example of history repeating itself -- of the PKK allowing itself to be used by the Syrian regime only to be dropped at the whim of Damascus. For many years beginning in the 1980s, Assad's father and predecessor Hafez Assad allowed the PKK to maintain a presence in the Syrian-occupied Bekaa Valley in Lebanon. But when Turkish tanks appeared on Syria's northern **border** in 1998, Hafez turned his back on the Kurds and the PKK had to abandon its Bekaa Valley camps. That marked the beginning of Öcalan's odyssey across the world, which ended with his arrest by Turkish special forces in Kenya.

Now, it looks as though the PKK has once again miscalculated. The group had hoped to take advantage of the US and Russian battle against IS to establish a Kurdish state in northern Syria. And Russia had been happy to use the Kurds to pressure the Turks. Now that Moscow has achieved its goal, though, it looks to be abandoning the PKK.

On Wednesday, Shirwan Darwish, spokesman for the Kurdish military leadership in Manbij, issued a threat to **Turkey** during a conversation with DER SPIEGEL. "We have established our defensive lines on the Sajur River (west of the Euphrates) and will defend ourselves against anyone who even comes close to this line. It has been drawn with the blood of our martyrs."

Most of the residents who fled Jarabulus, the majority of whom are Arabs, see the situation a bit differently. "If you liberate an area, that doesn't mean that it subsequently belongs to you," says Darwish Chalifa, a local politician. "The majority of the people here are for the Free Syrian Army and against Assad. We hope that our Kurdish brothers understand that and don't begin fighting against us."

The fact that Assad's air strikes targeting the YPG were close to a US Special Forces camp has finally moved the US to prevent all Syrian planes from flying into the region -- "that is extremely positive," says Chalifa.

"As soon as the situation has calmed down, we want to go back home," says Ahmed Abd al-Hossein, a member of the city's former municipal government. "We've been preparing for months and have established a stabilization committee for several villages. First, we intend to evaluate the damage that has been done and then to meet with international aid organizations next week to determine what is needed. The FSA has promised to withdraw, with the exception of one small unit, and then we plan to open up a police station."

Under the Eyes of the Russians

City elections are expected to be held soon. A naive hope maybe, but it at least offers a clear perspective. For the larger protagonists in the region, it isn't yet clear whether they will profit from the recent changes or not.

The Russians would seem to have gained the most, and the Kurds look to be on the opposite end of that spectrum.

The fighting in Hasakah, where it all began, was hastily brought to an end on Tuesday. Emissaries from the government in Damascus and YPG representatives agreed to put a stop to the skirmishes. Furthermore, the only road to Qamishli is to be reopened: Assad's troops still control part of the town in addition to its airport, which is the only airfield in northeastern Syria.

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Negotiations for the agreement took place at the Russian air force base at Khmeimim, which has long since become a second center of power for the Assad regime. It is here where the government leads talks with all manner of Syrian groups -- under the close watch of the Russians.

A Turkish tank on its way to Jarabulus in Syria.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

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IPD International / World

PUB Spiegel-Verlag Rudolph Augstein GmbH

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HD **Turkey claims gains against IS in northern Syria**

BY Bulent Kilic with Raziye Akkoc in Ankara

WC 358 words

PD 1 September 2016

ET 19:42

SN Agence France Presse

SC AFPR

LA English

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LP

Turkey said Thursday it had made gains against Islamic State jihadists on the ninth day of an offensive in neighbouring Syria to clear the **border** area of IS fighters and a Kurdish militia.

The Turkish army said it had cleared "terrorist elements" out of three villages west of Jarabulus -- a **border** town taken from Islamic State militants by Turkish-backed Syrian rebels last week.

TD

The villages -- Zavgar, Tal al-Agbar and Kiliyeh -- lie in territory where Turkish-backed forces have been fighting IS.

The military said it had carried out artillery strikes on Zavgar and Kiliyeh.

Turkey says it has cleared dozens of villages of "terrorists" since the start of its unprecedented Syria operation on August 24.

After taking Jarabulus without much resistance on the first day of the offensive, **Turkey** carried out strikes against a Kurdish militia that Ankara regards as a terror group.

A Turkish soldier was killed last week inside Syria when his tank was hit by a rocket fired by the YPG. **Turkey** responded with bombardments it said killed two dozen "terrorists".

The strikes on the Kurdish People's Protection Units militia (YPG) caused alarm in Washington, which regards the group as an ally in the fight against IS.

Turkey on Wednesday denied a US claim it had agreed a truce with the YPG but the Turkish-backed fighters confirmed there was at least a lull in the fighting.

While pressing its Syria offensive, **Turkey** has also been reinforcing its defences to prevent cross-**border** attacks.

NTV television said **Turkey** was building a **wall** between Jarabulus and Karkamis on the Turkish side of the **border**.

Jarabulus residents who fled the town when it was taken over by IS in 2013, have meanwhile have begun to return, television images showed.

Turkish forces have also been clearing the area of mines planted by the jihadists.

Controlled explosions on Thursday sent huge clouds of dust and smoke into the sky, an AFP photographer said, adding that artillery fire could also be heard on the other side of the **border**.

raz-cb/hmw

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gdef : Armed Forces | gterr : Terrorism | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National/Public Security | gcrim : Crime/Legal Action | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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IPD Lead

PUB Agence France-Presse

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The Telegraph

SE News

HD Turkey warns: we will treat Britons fighting with Kurds as terrorists

BY By Josie Ensor
WC 565 words
PD 2 September 2016
ET 14:21
SN The Telegraph Online
SC TELUK
LA English
CY The Telegraph Online © 2016. Telegraph Media Group Ltd.

LP

Turkey will treat as terrorists any Briton fighting alongside Kurdish groups in Syria, a government spokesman has warned.

There are at least six British volunteers currently on the frontline in northern Syria battling Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (Isil) in support of the US-backed YPG, which Ankara considers a terrorist group.

TD

“These are terrorist groups and anyone fighting under their banner will be considered terrorists,” said Yunus Akbaba, a spokesman for the Turkish prime minister, Binali Yildirim.

“It is the responsibility of the countries where they come from to prevent them from joining these groups. Turkish forces will confront them if they are fighting under the banner of terrorist groups, regardless of whether they are members of allied countries,” he told Middle East Eye.

The comments raised the prospect that a Nato member army could open fire on British citizens.

Turkish troops head to the Syrian border, in Karkamis, TurkeyCredit: AP Turkish troops entered Syria last week together with allied Syrian rebels to clear both Islamic State militants and Kurdish-led forces from the border area around the town of Jarablus.

Turkish forces have been clashing with the YPG and carrying out air strikes on Kurdish-held towns since it began its unprecedented offensive.

It is thought Turkish artillery fire over the weekend hit close to the British volunteers’ position 30 miles from Raqqa, the Islamic State’s so-called caliphate.

There are as many as 100 American, Canadian, German, French and Swedish volunteers operating in some capacity with the group.

Although the legal status of volunteering is unclear, the fighters answered a call put out by the YPG's International Freedom Battalion (IFB) last year, and has drawn comparisons to the Brigadas Internacionales of 1930s Spain.

One British volunteer, who uses the pseudonym Macer Gifford, said he hoped the UK government took the “threats” seriously.

“Many are former servicemen that have distinguished themselves in Iraq and Afghanistan. Others are leftist and humanitarians. We aren't terrorists by any definition of the word,” he told the Telegraph.

“If one of them were to be killed by Turkey then you would see a lot of public anger.”

As well as UK volunteers there are also several dozen British special forces assisting the YPG on the ground that could be at risk from rogue Turkish fire.

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The already chaotic multi-sided war was complicated by **Turkey**'s operation in the north of the country, a dramatic escalation in its role in the five-year conflict.

Ankara have been accused of concentrating their efforts on pushing back Kurdish forces rather than on defeating Isil - a major concern for the US as it sees Syria's Kurds as the best fighting force against the jihadists.

Washington has proposed a ceasefire in the hope of averting an escalation between its two allies.

While the US and **Turkey** had been planning Operation Euphrates Shield for months, the Americans were apparently caught off guard by **Turkey**'s timing.

Ankara pulled the trigger on the mission unilaterally without giving officials in Washington advance warning, according to US officials quoted in the **Wall** Street Journal.

The US and UK would likely not have had time to move their special forces out of harm's way.

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PUB Telegraph Media Group Ltd.

AN Document TELUK00020160901ec910050p

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HD **Turkey-backed rebels clear Syria border villages of IS: army**

BY Bulent KILIC with Clare BYRNE in Istanbul

WC 513 words

PD 2 September 2016

ET 19:59

SN Agence France Presse

SC AFPR

LA English

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LP

Syrian rebels supported by Turkish and coalition air strikes pushed further west into areas held by Islamic State in northern Syria as Ankara and its allies step up a campaign to rout the jihadists from the **border** area.

Turkish strikes destroyed three buildings used by IS around the villages of Kunduriyah and Arab Izzah, about 30 kilometres (18 miles) west of the **border** town of Jarabulus, the army said in a statement.

TD

The pro-Ankara rebels took Jarabulus from IS last week on the first day of an unprecedented Turkish offensive aimed both at IS and a US-backed Kurdish militia that had been leading the fight against the jihadists.

In the last few days the rebels have been moving quickly to clear the jihadists from the last stretch of the **border** under their control, backed by Turkish artillery and Turkish and coalition air strikes.

The army said the area around Kunduriyah was now controlled by the opposition rebels.

An AFP photographer at the **border** said Turkish-led forces were undertaking operations near the town of Al-Rai, about 20 kilometres further west.

On Thursday, Pentagon spokesman Captain Jeff Davis estimated IS only retained control of about 25 kilometers of the **border**, east of Al-Rai.

Turkey sent tanks and troops into Syria on August 24 to both combat IS -- which has been blamed for a string of suicide attacks inside **Turkey** -- and halt the westward advance of the Kurdish People's Protection Militia (YPG).

Turkey sees the YPG as a terror offshoot of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) waging a bloody three-decade insurgency on its soil.

The **Turkey**-Kurdish fight is yet another complication in Syria's tangled civil war, with both **Turkey** and the US seeking to retake territory from IS jihadists by supporting different proxy groups.

Washington, which backs the YPG, on Monday expressed alarm at **Turkey**'s bombardments of the group and called on its two allies to remain focused on fighting IS.

Ankara has said the YPG will remain a target unless it returns east of the Euphrates river into the two cantons under Kurdish control.

On Friday, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan dismissed US claims that the YPG-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) had retreated to the northeast, as demanded.

"Right now, people say they have gone to the east but we say no, they haven't crossed," Erdogan said.

A US defence official in Washington, who requested anonymity, said that any continuing presence by the YPG in the area was "completely insignificant".

Turkey's operation against the YPG has raised tensions with Syrian Kurds in other areas.

On Friday, Turkish security forces fired tear gas and water cannon at stone-throwing protesters in the Syrian **border** town of Kobane, which Kurdish militia took from IS in 2015 after a lengthy battle.

The demonstrators were protesting the route of a five-kilometre **wall** being built by the Turks between Kobane and the Turkish town of Suruc.

pho-cb/pvh

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IPD Syria

PUB Agence France-Presse

AN Document AFPR000020160902ec9200dyv

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HD **Turkish Tanks Enter Syria's Aleppo Province to Attack IS Targets – Reports**

CR РИАН

WC 153 words

PD 3 September 2016

ET 16:52

SN Sputnik News Service

SC RVESEN

LA English

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LP

MOSCOW, September 3 (Sputnik) - A score of Turkish tanks rolled into the northern Syrian province of Aleppo from Kilis on Saturday and attacked positions of the Islamic State (IS) jihadi group, Turkish media reported.

Twenty tanks, five armored transport vehicles and a truck crossed near the Turkish village of Cobanbey and entered Aleppo near the Syrian city of Al-Rai, which lies on a major motorway, according to the Dogan news agency.

TD

Turkish troops had to disassemble a part of the **fence** on the **border** with Syria to let the military hardware pass.

Saturday marked the eleventh day of **Turkey**'s operation Euphrates Shield, which is a cross-**border** offensive to clear northern Syria's Jarabulus of IS militants, with air support from the US-led coalition. Syrian Kurds and Damascus accused Ankara of violating the country's territorial integrity.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

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IPD TURKEY

IPC 160

PUB Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency

AN Document RVESEN0020160903ec93008n5

MarketWatch

CLM	The Wall Street Journal
SE	News & Commentary
HD	**Turkey routs Islamic State from border area in Syria; Breakthrough deprives IS from resupply lines**
BY	Margaret Coker
WC	266 words
PD	5 September 2016
ET	01:52
SN	MarketWatch
SC	MRKWC
LA	English
CY	Copyright 2016 MarketWatch, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

LP

Breakthrough deprives IS from resupply lines

ISTANBUL — **Turkey**'s military has flushed Islamic State from its 60-mile foothold along the Syrian **border** after launching a second front against the jihadist group over the weekend, the Turkish state news agency Anadolu and a Syrian rebel unit fighting with the Turks reported Sunday.

TD

The breakthrough victory deprives Islamic State of direct access to the areas that had been vital to its ability to resupply itself with foreign fighters and bomb-making materials. Losing access to that stretch of the **border** will likely make it harder for the group to preserve its self-declared caliphate and export terrorism around the world.

Turkey's incursions, called Operation Euphrates Shield, also represent an important achievement for the nation still struggling to restore stability after the July 15 failed coup and prove that its military preparedness hasn't suffered despite a purge of thousands of officers after the failed takeover.

Turkish armored units, artillery and air force took part in the battles, along with some 1,000 Syrian rebel fighters and air support from the U.S.-led coalition against Islamic State. **Turkey** reported only one death among its soldiers during the 12 days it took the military and its allies to seize control of the **border** area.

An expanded version of this report appears on WSJ.com.

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PUB	Dow Jones & Company, Inc.
AN	Document MRKWC00020160904ec94000p1

REUTERS

HD **Turkey to complete Syria border wall within 5 months, official says**

WC 463 words

PD 28 September 2016

ET 14:51

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

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LP

ANKARA/ISTANBUL (Reuters) - A concrete **wall** being built to stop illegal crossings along the length of **Turkey**'s 900-km (560-mile) **border** with Syria will be finished by the end of February, an official at a Turkish state institution with knowledge of the project said on Wednesday.

Ankara has long been under pressure from its NATO allies to seal off the **border** with Islamic State-controlled territory in Syria and is also concerned by the presence of the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia, which controls most of its Syrian **border**.

TD

Construction on a **border wall** to combat smuggling and illegal migration started as early as 2014 even as **Turkey** maintained an open-**border** policy that has seen nearly 3 million Syrians seek refuge in the country.

"Construction will be completed within five months," the official told Reuters, declining to be identified because he was not authorized to speak to the media. He said winter conditions would be a challenge to the timetable, however.

Turkey last month launched an operation dubbed "Euphrates Shield" in alliance with Syrian rebels to drive Islamic State militants away from the **border** area and stop the YPG's advance.

Turkey regards the YPG as closely tied to Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militants fighting an insurgency in southeast **Turkey** and deems both as terrorist organizations.

The United States, meanwhile, sees the YPG as an ally in its operations targeting Islamic State -- a source of tensions between Ankara and Washington.

U.S.-MEXICO **BORDER**

A 200-km (125-mile) stretch of the **wall** has already been completed and state housing developer TOKI will build the rest, the official said. He likened the project to **border** walls in other countries, such as the one between parts of Mexico and the United States.

The official declined to give an estimate for the cost of construction. But the mass circulation Hurriyet newspaper said that including a road for military patrols planned alongside it, the **wall** was expected to cost 2 billion lira ($672 million).

Made up of seven-tonne portable blocks topped with razor wire, the **wall** will be three meters (10 feet) high and two meters (6.5 feet) wide. The official said private companies would be hired once construction tenders were completed.

Hurriyet cited the head of TOKI as saying that 200-250 concrete blocks were currently being produced daily at five work sites, and that the latest construction work had begun around 20 days ago.

New watchtowers on roads patrolled by armored vehicles have already been erected along the **border** this year as part of increased security measures.

(Reporting by Orhan Coskun; Writing by Daren Butler; Editing by David Dolan and Sonya Hepinstall)

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PUB	Thomson Reuters (Markets) LLC
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HD **Suicide blast in Turkey near Syrian border kill 3, wound 9**

BY By ZEYNEP BILGINSOY

CR Associated Press

WC 545 words

PD 16 October 2016

ET 18:22

SN Associated Press Newswires

SC APRS

LA English

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LP

ISTANBUL (AP) — A suicide bomber blew himself up Sunday during a Turkish police raid against suspected Islamic State members near the Syrian **border**, killing three police officers and wounding nine other people, an official said.

In a separate explosion, a man suspected of being responsible for an IS suicide bomber cell in Gaziantep blew himself about 20 kilometers (12 miles) away in another district of the city, provincial governor Ali Yerlikaya said in a televised statement. No one else was killed or wounded in the second blast.

TD

Earlier, police received a tip about a group of IS militants hiding in a house in the city's Sahinbey district and launched an operation to apprehend them. A militant blew himself up when he realized he couldn't escape. Three police officers were killed, while five police officers and four civilians were wounded, Yerlikaya said.

News reports initially said that more than one suicide bomber was involved in the first explosion.

The governor said the police raid followed intelligence that the group could be planning an attack on an Alevi cultural association in the city. The Alevis are an offshoot of Shia Islam and are the largest religious group in **Turkey** after Sunnis. IS regards Alevis as heretics.

Hours later, a man suspected of organizing IS activities in Gaziantep blew himself up in an apartment as Turkish police were about to "neutralize" him, Yerlikaya said. The man was identified by the governor as Mehmet Kadir Cebael. The man's wife and two children were apprehended alive. TV footage showed the fifth floor of the building in which part of the **wall** was blown away.

The governor said Cebael was the "brain" behind the plan to attack the Alevi cultural association.

Turkey has been rocked by a series of deadly attacks over the past year, carried out by IS or Kurdish militants linked to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK.

In August, 54 people were killed when a suicide bomber blew himself up during an outdoor wedding celebration in Gaziantep. Authorities said the attack was the work of the IS group.

Following the deadly attack in August, Turkish tanks entered the Syrian town of Jarablus and began its Euphrates Shield operation with **Turkey**-backed Syrian opposition forces to clear its shared **border** with Syria from IS. The symbolic town of Dabiq in northern Syria was captured Sunday where IS fighters put up "minimal" resistance.

—

Suzan Fraser contributed to this report from Ankara.

ART Ambulances and security members attend the scene, near an explosion site after suicide bombers blew themselves up Sunday during a police raid against suspected Islamic State militants near the Syrian **border**, in Gaziantep, **Turkey**, Sunday, Oct. 16, 2016. Three police officers were killed and others wounded, according to Gaziantep governor Ali Yerlikaya speaking to **Turkey**'s state-run Anadolu Agency.

(DHA via AP) | Ambulances and security members attend the scene, near an explosion site after suicide bombers blew themselves up Sunday during a police raid against suspected Islamic State militants near the Syrian **border**, in Gaziantep, **Turkey**, Sunday, Oct. 16, 2016. Three police officers were killed and others wounded, **Turkey**'s state-run Anadolu Agency reported. (IHA via AP)

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IPD EU

IPC i

PUB The Associated Press

AN Document APRS000020161016ecag008c3

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HD **Turkey's push for Syrian town complicates anti-IS fight**

BY By SARAH EL DEEB

CR Associated Press

WC 1,494 words

PD 25 November 2016

ET 15:43

SN Associated Press Newswires

SC APRS

LA English

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LP

BEIRUT (AP) — **Turkey** is pushing to capture the town of al-Bab, the last major Islamic State group stronghold in northern Syria. But are others welcoming the new advance in the war against the militants? Not quite.

By seizing the city, **Turkey** would plant its firmest foothold yet in Syria. That is already causing frictions with other players in the country's war.

TD

Syrian President Bashar Assad's government opposes the Turkish incursion. His military's air defenses have threatened Turkish warplanes, and on Thursday, three Turkish troops were killed outside al-Bab in what the Turkish military said was a Syrian airstrike.

At the same time, **Turkey**'s Syrian allies are clashing with Syrian Kurdish fighters, who are another ally of the United States in the war on IS and are currently leading an assault on the Islamic State group's de facto capital Raqqa.

Here is a look at why al-Bab is important for Ankara and how it can influence the balance of power in Syria.

WHY AL-BAB?

For **Turkey**, capturing al-Bab is key to preventing Syrian Kurds from connecting the stretches of territory they have captured along the **border**. A contiguous Kurdish-held area in Syria emboldens **Turkey**'s own Kurdish rebels. Ankara views the Kurdish forces on both sides of the **border** as linked and labels them terrorists.

A victory would push IS further from **Turkey**'s **border** and further squeeze the militants in the city of Raqqa.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said **Turkey** was forced to descend to al-Bab, 30 kilometers (19 miles) south of the Syria-**Turkey border**, "to prepare a region there that is free of terror." Home to at least 2.7 million Syrian refugees, **Turkey** is looking to establish a "safe-zone" inside Syria.

But **Turkey**'s priority is the Kurds.

Erdogan has also vowed to take the nearby town of Manbij, which the Kurds captured from IS this summer after 10 weeks of grueling battles. That victory allowed the Kurdish forces to expand west of the Euphrates River — a line Ankara said they must not cross.

Al-Bab, Arabic for 'the door', would provide **Turkey** with a new leverage with its NATO ally, the United States, and strengthen Ankara's influence over Syrian rebels at a time when a new Trump administration in Washington could halt support.

—

THE BATTLEFIELD

Al-Bab is sandwiched between three rival forces. Moving from the north and west, Turkish-backed fighters are less than one kilometer (half a mile) away. Kurds are moving in from the east. Syrian troops are stationed to the south.

The Islamic State group is ready, erecting a **wall** around the entire town and its countryside to the south, according to satellite imagery by U.S.-based firm TerraServer shared by intelligence analyst Roa Komar. He said fighting could be as heavy as the battle for Manbij.

Some 1,500-3,000 Syrian fighters backed by 300-600 Turkish troops are involved in the three-month-old Turkish incursion into northern Syria, known as Operation Euphrates Shield, according to a Western military official speaking on condition of anonymity in line with regulations. So far they have captured some 1,800 square kilometers (700 square miles), largely sparsely populated rural areas cleared by Turkish artillery and warplanes.

Turkey's Syrian allies comprise diverse factions often plagued by infighting, including the ultraconservative Ahrar al-Sham and the U.S.-backed al-Mutassem Brigade. **Turkey**'s ground presence provides the factions with some protection from Russian or Syrian airstrikes, which have pounded rebels elsewhere, said al-Mutassem's chief, Mustafa Sejari, on his Twitter account.

At the same time, the Kurds vow to take al-Bab as well, though they are more likely to prove a distraction for **Turkey**'s assault. Kurdish fighters and the Turkish-backed forces are already battling over control of an IS-held village between al-Bab and Manbij.

Meanwhile, **Turkey** is aggressively recruiting among rebels. One opposition faction recently evacuated from Damascus suburb of Darayya to rebel-held northern Idlib is mulling whether to join **Turkey**'s operation.

After surviving a four-year government siege, Abu Jamal, leader of Islam Martyrs Brigades, said his estimated 700 fighters are joining other battles in northern Syria to gain new experience. "We have never fought Daesh before," he said, using the Arabic acronym for IS.

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HOW DOES THE U.S. FEEL ABOUT IT?

Nowhere is the U.S.'s often muddled Syria policy more tested than in al-Bab.

The U.S. has mainly been trying, with little success, to prevent fighting between its two allies, **Turkey** and the Kurds. After U.S. Chief of Staff Gen. Roger Dunford visited Ankara in early November, an American military liaison was sent to **Turkey** for closer coordination on anti-IS operations.

Part of that coordination could be over the offensive against Raqqa, said Noah Bonsey, of the Brussels-based International Crisis Group.

The offensive has been led by the Kurds, but Washington recognizes the need for a more local Sunni Arab force to eventually capture and control the city with its majority Arab population, Bonsey said. Ankara, which also said it wants to take part in the Raqqa operation, is in a position to help in that.

But while focusing on fighting IS, Washington has struggled in playing the bigger power game with Russia, **Turkey** and other players in Syria.

Turkey has grown closer to Russia even as it consolidates the opposition, including ultraconservatives, under its leadership.

"The U.S. is going to wake up in 2017 ... to find that **Turkey** has all the local influence and all the local leverage, and we have exactly none or precious little," said Jennifer Cafarella, a Syria analyst with the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War.

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THE VIEW FROM MOSCOW AND DAMASCUS

Despite Assad's opposition to the Turkish incursion, his ally Moscow appears to be tolerating it in order to further cultivate its warming ties with Ankara.

Russia and **Turkey** have been finding common ground on Syria. Russia's Vladimir Putin and Erdogan have met several times since August, after Ankara apologized for downing a Russian warplane a year ago. Russian and Turkish military chiefs met three times in as many months, and Russian media say Moscow is sharing military intelligence with Ankara.

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With the better ties, Russia likely aims to exploit **Turkey**'s strains with the West. **Turkey**, in turn, prevents Moscow from growing closer to the Kurds.

Russia could see advantages in the Turkish foray — for example, in the city of Aleppo, where Assad's Russian-backed forces are threatening to crush the eastern, rebel-held enclave. Ankara is unlikely to risk its rapprochement with Moscow by sending its allied Syrian factions to rescue the opposition part of the city.

Russia, however, must also deal with its ally Assad's opposition to Turkish influence in Syria.

Turkey had to briefly halt its airstrikes around al-Bab after Syrian air defenses locked on its warplanes last week. The strikes resumed this week, raising speculation Moscow mediated.

Thursday's Turkish casualties could be a sign Damascus views **Turkey**'s advance so close to al-Bab as a step too far. Ankara's account of how the three soldiers died is disputed by Syrian activists, who said they were killed by an Islamic State suicide attack the day before.

Foreign Minister Walid al-Moallem said Damascus "cannot accept having one Turkish soldier remain" in Syria.

___

Associated Press writers Suzan Fraser in Ankara, Vladimir Isachenkov in Moscow, and Lolita Baldor in Washington contributed to this report.

ART FILE - In this Sunday, Oct. 16, 2016 file image made from video posted online by Qasioun News Agency, Turkish-backed Syrian opposition forces patrol in Dabiq, Syria. **Turkey** is pushing ahead with plans to liberate the town of al-Bab, the last major Islamic State stronghold in northern Syria despite a complicated terrain. (Qasioun News Agency via AP, File) | This photo released on Sunday, Nov. 13, 2016 by the Baladi News Network, an opposition activist media organization, which has been authenticated based on its contents and other AP reporting, shows **Turkey**-backed Syrian opposition fighters raising their guns in the back of pick-up trucks in northern Syria. **Turkey** is pushing ahead with plans to liberate the town of al-Bab, the last major Islamic State stronghold in northern Syria despite a complicated terrain. (Baladi News Network via AP) | Soldiers carry the coffin of one of the Turkish soldiers killed, during a ceremony at the airport in Gaziantep, **Turkey**, Thursday, Nov. 24, 2016. Three Turkish soldiers were killed and 10 were wounded in northern Syria on Thursday in what the Turkish military said was a pre-dawn airstrike believed to have been carried out by Syrian government forces. Turkish authorities have banned distribution of images relating to the Syria attack within **Turkey**. (AP Photo)

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IPC i

PUB The Associated Press

AN Document APRS000020161125ecbp0056b

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REUTERS

HD **Trapped by war and a Turkish wall, Syrians dig in for long exile**

WC 1,044 words

PD 7 March 2017

ET 16:14

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

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LP

BEIRUT (Reuters) - Fawaz Atmeh and Mohammed Musa's families were among the first to flee Russia's intervention in the Syrian conflict, sheltering in tents on boggy ground near the Turkish **border** as jets bombed their villages further east.

As Syria's battle lines have shifted in nearly 18 months since, the two young men have watched their camp swell with families and fighters escaping government territorial gains, insurgent infighting and Islamic State violence.

TD

The blue and white tarpaulin tents have doubled, Atmeh says, and rubbish is strewn along a shallow ditch running through the camp, where boys play football and men sit on plastic chairs to pass the time, sometimes going out on fruitless job hunts.

Atmeh and Musa, who first spoke to Reuters when they arrived at the camp in Idlib province in October 2015, still hope they will one day go back to their homes in the southern Aleppo countryside.

But each new twist in the conflict makes return a more distant dream for those huddling at the **border**.

Trapped between fighting in western Syria on one side, and an increasingly tightly sealed Turkish frontier on the other, they are beginning to prepare for a lifetime of exile.

"We're on **Turkey**'s doorstep, but forbidden from crossing - **Turkey** has put a **wall** up, and shoots at anyone who gets close," Atmeh, 33, said, speaking by phone from his camp.

"In the other direction - inside Syria - we can only move about 15 km (9 miles) away from the camp," before getting dangerously close to the insurgent infighting in Idlib.

"And we can't go back to our homes - the regime is in control of that area. I'm wanted by the government, and for my family it's the same - half of us are accused of terrorism" for sympathizing with the Syrian uprising that began in 2011, he said.

The Syrian battlefield has shifted since Russia began its air campaign in support of President Bashar al-Assad, and has sent more displaced flooding to the Idlib camps.

Assad won back Aleppo in December, forcing many rebels and their families to leave to Idlib in the process. Insurgents and their kin have also headed there from around Damascus as the Syrian government flushes out rebel-held pockets of territory near the capital.

More recently, Syrians in Idlib province itself have fled fighting between jihadist insurgents and more moderate factions. U.N. data shows some of the displaced near the Turkish **border** have come from as far as al-Bab, where Turkish-backed rebels recently drove out Islamic State.

In all, some 900,000 displaced Syrians are sheltering in Idlib, nearly half the province's total population, the United Nations says. The Syrian conflict has displaced more than 11 million people, around half within Syria and half as refugees abroad.

Turkey, which conducted its own incursion into Syria in support of the anti-IS rebels, is meanwhile erecting a **wall** and fortifying stretches of the frontier, in a clamp down which is keeping out both militants and refugees.

Seeing no escape, Atmeh and the 11 family members in his tent, including his wife and three children, have tried to make the abode more livable, putting up curtains as screens and laying down blankets for a floor.

Musa, 25, and his family lived for almost a year alongside Atmeh, but he moved to a tent on higher ground in recent months with his wife and a six-month-old baby to escape the damp and mud, he said.

The two men say they rely on irregular food basket deliveries by international NGOs or the kindness of other residents or locals to survive. There is not even casual work available nearby for Atmeh, a former civil servant and Musa, a former student.

BORDER WALLS AND GUNFIRE

The nearest town, of several thousand people, cannot absorb even a fraction of the labor force among the displaced, they say.

Daily life is dull, with little to do other than survive, but the fear of further upheaval is always there, Musa said.

"When there are clashes between the factions (insurgents), they can get fairly close. We're scared for the children and women - if a stray bullet hits one tent it will go through 10 of them, we're very vulnerable should the violence get closer."

In the camps, there are those who do not want to wait around, and are so desperate to leave that they regularly brave the gunfire of Turkish troops to try to cross the **border**.

Mohammed al-Ali, a 30-year-old who fled Hama province further south about three years ago, approaches the **wall** which is visible from the camp on a daily basis to see if there is a chance to cross over.

"It's dangerous, you take your life in your hands if you try. The Turks have clamped down a lot at the **border**," he said.

"If you're on the Syrian side and you're trying to get across (illegally), they fire above your head. If you manage to get onto the Turkish side, they'll shoot at you. Someone was killed that way the day before yesterday," he said.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which monitors the conflict, has reported regular injuries and deaths from Turkish troops firing at people trying to cross the **border**.

Turkey has been sealing its frontier with Syria with fences, mines and ditches, in an effort to halt the movement of Islamic State fighters and curb Kurdish militias. The clamp down has also sharply reduced the flow of Syrian refugees.

An EU-**Turkey** migration deal to stem movement of refugees to Europe has also put pressure on Ankara to accommodate the nearly 3 million Syrians it already hosts.

As Ali tries each day to get to **Turkey**, Atmeh and Musa wait it out.

Atmeh sent a picture of a dwelling he said belonged to the "richest person in the camp" - four muddy brick walls with two metal doors and tarpaulins stretched over as a roof.

"Syrians - we've become like gypsies," he said.

(Reporting by John Davison; editing by Peter Graff)

RF Released: 2017-3-7T15:14:16.000Z

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gimm : Migration | gterr : Terrorism | ntop : Top Wire News | gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National/Public Security | gcrim : Crime/Legal Action | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter | redit : Selection of Top Stories/Trends/Analysis

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IPD Economy

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IPC SERVICE:OUSWDM

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THE IRISH TIMES

SE World

HD **Liberal Izmir an unlikely hot spot for Isis; Anti-terror police have broken up at least four cells in recent months**

BY Stephen Starr

WC 877 words

PD 17 May 2017

SN The Irish Times

SC IRTI

PG 8

LA English

CY (c) 2017, The Irish Times.

LP

At Izmir's Konak Pier, an 1800s-era dock-turned-shopping mall, clusters of teenagers saunter through a Brooks Brothers store and queue to watch the latest cinema releases. Outside along the seafront corniche, cyclists, joggers and fishermen together make up a scene a world away from **Turkey**'s security troubles.

But Izmir's reputation as **Turkey**'s most progressive city is under threat. A bastion of Turkish secularism, Izmir has been rocked by a string of Islamic State-linked arrests and close calls.

TD

Anti-terror police have broken up at least four cells in recent months, the latest two weeks ago, when six men, including two Syrians, who were plotting an attack on the May 1st celebrations, were detained.

A cell of three families linked to the Reina nightclub attacker, who killed 39 people on New Year's Eve in Istanbul, hid out in Izmir before security forces apprehended the group in January. Fake passports and weapons were found at their homes, and authorities believe the nightclub attacker, Abdulkadir Masharipov, may have planned to flee to Greece before his eventual arrest in Istanbul.

Nine jihadists, including a Syrian, suspected of planning an attack in the city were detained in February. Bomb-detecting police have been deployed to car parks. The Atlantic Council, a Washington DC-based think tank, reports that Islamic State and Jabhat al-Nusra, a jihadist group formerly linked to al-Qaeda now known as Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, have set up recruitment campaigns in the city.

Turkey says it has detained 1,700 "home-grown" extremists and deported almost 3,300 more to 95 countries.

As **Turkey**'s third-largest city, Izmir is known to attract Turks from poorer regions in the east in search of jobs. In the working-class neighbourhood of Cilgi, a nondescript district in the northern suburbs from where an Isis extremist was detained in November, Kurdish graffiti covers the walls of tiny, informal homes. No one here would speak about the local presence or otherwise of extremists.

Easy recruits

Poor young men make easy fodder for jihadist groups, and a Turkish national known as Sari Murat has recruited Kurds for Isis in Izmir, where in "classrooms [that] doubled as prayer rooms" he "held discussions about religion with recruits for up to four months before the recruit was sent to Syria", according to the Atlantic Council report.

In a city with a refugee population that ebbs and flows, though is thought to be in the tens of thousands in summer, the possible link between extremists and refugees fleeing to Europe can no longer be ignored.

Dozens of jihadists who crossed the Aegean Sea to the Greek islands have been detained in Europe having impersonated refugees fleeing Syria. With fake Syrian passports in hand, four men involved in

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the November 2015 Paris attacks, which killed 130 people, entered Europe through the island of Leros to Izmir's south.

Disguised refugees

None were Syrian nationals, although the men, from Iraq, Algeria and Pakistan, were reported by the Washington Post to have lived in Isis-controlled territory in Syria before entering Greece through **Turkey**. Isis has vowed to send jihadists disguised as refugees to Europe to carry out attacks.

Esat Kadayifci works at a watch store in Cesme, a holiday town 100km west of Izmir, and thinks that about "15-20 per cent" of migrants he sees moving through Cesme are single men. He says police have upped their presence in the area.

"Recently I was riding on my scooter, wearing rain gear, when the police stopped me at a checkpoint. They said they were looking for someone who looked like me," he said. "Here it is difficult for terrorists because there is no way back [to Izmir] for them if something goes wrong when they try to cross."

Since 2014 thousands of migrants and refugees have used Cesme to launch their crossing to Chios, and while their numbers have fallen considerably this year and last, police continue to detain hundreds of suspects: 78 people in a convoy of seven cars were detained on a road close to Cesme in April.

According to the Hurriyet Daily News, more than 70 boats and 23 coast guard teams are patrolling waters between **Turkey** and Greece.

Since the Syrian uprising morphed into a full-blown war five years ago, claims have persisted that **Turkey**'s monitoring of the Syrian **border** and arrest of extremists was slack, as evidenced by a series of attacks by foreign Isis members in Istanbul last year, including on the main airport.

When seven Isis suspects were acquitted in March 2016 of charges of ferrying foreigners into Isis-held Syria, the public were up in arms. One of them, a Syrian, claimed he occasionally escorted foreigners for tourism reasons. Now, however, such charges are heard less often, with Ankara building **barrier** walls for hundreds of kilometres along its frontier with Syria.

For Kadayifci, there is an obvious solution to the threat Europe faces, but one that would require direct political intervention. "If the [Turkish] government wants, it could stop terrorists moving to the EU. In one day."

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gterr : Terrorism | gimm : Migration | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National/Public Security | gcrim : Crime/Legal Action | gpir : Politics/International Relations | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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PUB Itronics Limited

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arab news

HD **Turkey beefs up border security against Daesh, PKK**

WC 489 words

PD 7 October 2017

SN Arab News

SC ARNEWS

LA English

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LP

MENEKSE TOKYAY A boy jumps into the Bosphorus in Istanbul's historical Eminonu district. (AFP) ANKARA: **Turkey** has beefed up its **border** security, primarily due to threats posed by the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and Daesh.

PKK militants have infiltrated popular touristic Turkish cities such as Mugla, Fethiye and Koycegiz via the Syrian port city of Latakia, Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu said Thursday.

TD

Security forces killed five PKK militants in Mugla earlier that day, with two militants reportedly at large in the same area.

Security forces are also continuing counterterror operations and airstrikes in eastern **Turkey** and northern Iraq against PKK hideouts, ammunition depots and militants preparing for possible attacks.

Meanwhile, Turkish police carried out raids against suspected Daesh cells in big cities such as Istanbul, Konya and Izmir.

Turkey recently completed a 688-km-long security **wall** along its **border** with Syria. Twenty-one high-security, bulletproof and portable watchtowers are being built in the area, and 10 military officers will reside in each of them.

In order to intervene along the **border** in emergency situations, passenger routes will be built at 10-km intervals, especially in areas where Daesh is believed to have placed handmade explosive traps.

Sertac Canalp Korkmaz, a researcher in security studies at ORSAM, a think tank in Ankara, said it is not the first time PKK militants have tried to attack coastal tourist hotspots.

However, recent security measures at the Syria **border**, and cross-**border** operations against PKK hideouts in northern Iraq, have pushed terror organizations to infiltrate **Turkey** via different routes, or by using proxy cells inside the country," Korkmaz told Arab News.

But the latest security measures in the coastal zones show that **Turkey**'s intelligence capacity in counterterrorism efforts has greatly increased."

He said the high-tech **border** security measures have led to the PKK changing tactics, such as using armed drones.

The security void in Iraq and Syria, due to geopolitical tectonic changes and the lack of a common counterterrorism approach by the international community, is being filled by terror groups and increasing security threats in the region," he added.

Turkey's military recently placed anti-drone systems at some **border** posts against possible attacks by terror groups.

Metin Gurcan, a former military officer and security analyst at the Istanbul Policy Center, said he thinks the PKK's presence in the western coastal cities may not be heavily armed.

This might be an intentional strategy by the terror group to divert the military from the south-eastern provinces toward western cities," Gurcan told Arab News.

Military zones in **Turkey** are vulnerable to vertical assaults from the air. Anti-drone defense systems should be integrated into all military levels, until the squadron," he said.

Walls and security towers can contribute to security to a great extent, but it would be naive to expect that they'd stop all illegal crossings at once."

CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party | aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gcivds : Civil Unrest | gpol : Domestic Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National/Public Security | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News

RE turk : Turkey | syria : Syria | ankra : Ankara | istan : Istanbul | meastz : Middle East | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Middle East

PUB Saudi Research & Publishing Company

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REUTERS

HD **Turkish army expands deployment in Syria's northwest: rebels**

WC 765 words

PD 15 October 2017

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SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

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LP

AMMAN (Reuters) - The Turkish army is expanding its deployment in northwest Syria with the goal of encircling a Kurdish enclave and reining in Russian strikes in the Idlib **border** province under a deal to reduce clashes, rebels and witnesses said on Sunday.

A convoy of Turkish army troops entered Syria near the Bab al-Hawa **border** crossing on Thursday in the first such deployment since last year when Ankara launched a major ground and air offensive to clear Islamic State militants from its last stretch of **border** with **Turkey**.

TD

At least four convoys carrying scores of armored vehicles and equipment have been stationed in several locations in the first phase of a deployment that is expected to deepen inside rebel-held Idlib, opposition sources said.

"Nearly 200 troops are now stationed in areas that separate territory under control of Kurdish groups and opposition groups," said Ibrahim al Idlibi, a military adviser in the opposition's Free Syrian Army (FSA).

Witnesses said Turkish bulldozers were working around the clock, digging fortifications and setting up observation posts.

A new deployment of Turkish armored vehicles and personnel arrived along the Syrian **border** on Saturday, positioned on the Turkish side, witnesses said.

Turkey was expanding its presence in an area where it hopes to act as a **barrier** to Kurdish ambitions of uniting the isolated Afrin region, north of Idlib, with the rest of a self-declared autonomous Kurdish zone in the country's north.

Turkish positions near Samaan castle in the Sheikh Barakat mountains of the fertile, olive-growing province put them just a few kilometers from Kurdish militia forces based in Jendaris.

"Turkish forces are still in a state of advancing and expanding," said Mustafa al Sejari, a Free Syrian Army official.

Turkey says its operations there, along with the Syrian rebel groups it backs, is part of a deal it reached last month with Russia and Iran in Kazakhstan to reduce fighting between insurgents and the Syrian government.

Syria on Saturday denounced the Turkish incursion saying it was a flagrant violation of its sovereignty and demanded Ankara pull its troops.[L8N1MP0EN]

The Turkish incursion into the province dominated by the jihadist group Tahrir al Sham, whose backbone is ex-Nusra Front, Syria's former al Qaeda offshoot, has run smoothly.

'POSITIONS AS AGREED'

Rebel sources familiar with the deployment said the operation was preceded by weeks of coordination between Tahrir al Sham with Turkish intelligence officers to ensure no clashes happened.

Free Syrian Army rebel groups said the goal of the campaign was to push deeper into the province, with the expansion of supply lines and observation posts. The jihadists would be retreating further south in a phased withdrawal.

"The Turks will be taking up positions 40 km deep inside Idlib as agreed," Idlibi said.

The goal was ultimately to create a contiguous stretch that goes from Bab al-Hawa all the way to Jarablus city, west of Euphrates River and as far south as the city of Bab, widening a pocket of the northern **border** under the control of **Turkey**-backed rebels.

Many residents in the towns of Idlib province, where more than two million people live, have welcomed the arrival of Turkish troops.

They are seen as a bulwark against heavy Russian and Syrian army bombardment to crush the rebel province that would cause massive devastation and high civilian casualties.

"The Turks presented the factions of the FSA the military and logistical support so that Idlib escapes the fate of Deir Zor or Raqqa," said Colonel Abdul Jabar Akaidi, a senior commander in the FSA in the north.

Heavily populated Idlib has been the target of hundreds of strikes by the Russia and Syrian air forces in the past year that has killed hundreds of civilians and destroyed hospitals and civil defense centers.

Six months of relative peace under a Turkish-Russian understanding that gave a temporary reprieve to thousands of people was shattered when Russia resumed an intensive bombing campaign last month when jihadists launched an offensive against Syrian army positions.[L5N1M508R]

On Saturday in southern Idlib, jets believed to be Russian killed at least three civilians and injured scores when bombs struck the outskirts of Maarat al Numan.

The air raids also targeted a camp run by Failaq al Sham, a **Turkey**-backed FSA group in Kafr Ruma village where a strike last month killed dozens of its fighters.

(Reporting by Suleiman Al-Khalidi; Additonal reporting by Bulent Usta and Tuvan Gumrukcu; Editing by Robert Birsel)

RF Released: 2017-10-15T06:33:18.000Z

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

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IPD Politics

IPC SERVICE:OUSWDM

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DOW JONES NEWSWIRES

HD **Kurds Face Setbacks Across the Middle East -- WSJ**

BY By Yaroslav Trofimov

WC 985 words

PD 3 November 2017

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SN Dow Jones Institutional News

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PG A9

LA English

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LP

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With Islamic State on the wane, the West no longer needs Kurdish help -- and the Kurds face a historic calamity once again, in part due to their own leaders' mistakes.

TD

In **Turkey** and Iraq, Kurdish achievements of recent years have already been rolled back. In Syria, too, Kurdish gains are confronting new perils as the region's nation-states work together to squelch the possibility of an independent Kurdish homeland in the Middle East.

For a short moment over two years ago, many of the 30 million Kurds, one of the world's largest ethnic groups without a state of their own, believed that history was finally on their side after decades of massacres, persecution, and war.

In Iraq, **Turkey** and Syria -- three of the four nations (alongside Iran) that include the main Kurdish-populated territories -- they had secured unprecedented power and influence.

The Kurdistan region in northern Iraq took advantage of the Iraqi army's 2014 rout by Islamic State to seize the oil-rich area of Kirkuk, and essentially operated as an independent entity. Elections in **Turkey** had deprived the ruling AKP party of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of a parliamentary majority and turned the main pro-Kurdish party, HDP, into the country's third largest -- with a real chance to influence national politics.

And in Syria, the dogged defense of the Kurdish town of Kobani against Islamic State attracted international sympathy -- and U.S. military assistance -- to the Syrian-Kurdish YPG militia. Within months, the Syrian Kurds became America's indispensable partner against Islamic State, seizing a significant part of Syrian territory.

Now, these Kurdish gains in **Turkey** and Iraq have been lost, possibly for decades, and the fate of Syrian Kurds looks increasingly precarious as the Syrian war -- and particularly the campaign against Islamic State -- enters its endgame.

"We are going through a very difficult moment, even though we have seen worse in the 1980s and 1990s," said Kendal Nezan, head of the Kurdish Institute of Paris, a think tank formed in 1983 to rally Western support for the Kurdish cause. "Kurds fear that their allies will once again abandon them to their own fate, as they are bargaining about the future of the region."

In **Turkey**, a July 2015 move by the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, to resume its armed struggle against the Turkish state after a two-year peace process allowed Mr. Erdogan to win a rerun of elections later that year amid nationalist fervor. Subsequently, the PKK's disastrous decision to launch an urban guerrilla campaign resulted in the near-destruction of several Kurdish cities and towns in the country's southeast. Both the U.S. and **Turkey** consider the PKK a terrorist organization.

Mr. Erdogan followed up on the military campaign against PKK by imprisoning most of the leadership of HDP, which he accused of being a PKK front, by removing the elected HDP mayors across Kurdish-populated parts of **Turkey**, and by eliminating many other concessions to the Kurds.

In Iraq, meanwhile, the Kurdistan Regional Government's then-president, Masoud Barzani, called a September independence referendum despite international advice to the contrary and deep-seated internal opposition to his 25-year rule. The move backfired astoundingly: within days, the Kurdistan government lost Kirkuk and many of its privileges, with internal conflict threatening its very existence as a self-ruled entity. Mr. Barzani himself had to step down and the U.S., which had warned him against the referendum, remained neutral as Iraqi federal forces swiftly seized vast territories that Kurds had controlled since 2003.

"From the perspective of most Kurds, the present predicament is largely due to incompetence, corruption and nepotism afflicting the Kurdish ruling elite," said one of Mr. Barzani's leading political opponents, Barham Salih, a former Kurdistan prime minister and former Iraqi deputy prime minister. "The setback in Iraqi Kurdistan is undeniably painful for most Iraqi Kurds, but it will be foolish to think this is the end of the Kurdish reality."

Regardless of who is to blame, the dramatic events in **Turkey** and Iraq have soured the mood across the Kurdish political spectrum. "Among Kurdish intellectuals and elite, you see the signs of frustration and a lot of criticism directed at all parties and groups. This is one of the most unhappy moments of the Kurdish liberation struggle in the last ten years and there is little hope among intellectuals that the situation may recover in the short term," said Turkish lawmaker Ertugrul Kurkcu, one of the few senior HDP leaders who still remain free.

Across the **border** in Syria, the momentum -- for now -- is still with the Kurds. Backed by the U.S., the Kurdish-led forces recently seized Islamic State's stronghold of Raqqa, and are pushing down the Euphrates Valley.

But there, too, many Kurds fear that once YPG is no longer useful against Islamic State, Washington will end up making a deal with Russia, **Turkey** and even the Syrian regime at the Kurds' expense. American support for YPG, after all, has become a major irritant in U.S. relations with NATO ally **Turkey**, which considers the group an offshoot of PKK. Already, YPG leadership is hedging its bets by reaching out to Moscow and Damascus.

"Any one of these powers can betray the Kurds anytime and Damascus will be very happy if the Kurds lose their ground after having devastated Islamic State's military positions," said Mr. Kurkcu, the HDP lawmaker. "The Kurds have fulfilled their duty and can vanish now."

Write to Yaroslav Trofimov at yaroslav.trofimov@wsj.com

(END) Dow Jones Newswires

November 03, 2017 02:32 ET (06:32 GMT)

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

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HD **Turkish leader vows wider offensive against Kurdish militia**

BY By SARAH EL DEEB and SUZAN FRASER

CR Associated Press

WC 1,362 words

PD 19 March 2018

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SN Associated Press Newswires

SC APRS

LA English

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LP

BEIRUT (AP) — **Turkey**'s president vowed Monday to keep up the pressure against a U.S.-backed Syrian Kurdish militia after his troops captured the Syrian town of Afrin, threatening to expand the military offensive into other Kurdish-held areas across northern Syria and even into neighboring Iraq.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan appeared set on forcing Washington to reconsider its partnership with the Syrian Kurdish fighters, the main U.S. ally in the fight against the Islamic State group.

TD

Turkey first launched its military operation in Syria in 2016, and Erdogan has repeatedly said it will not allow a "terror corridor" along its **border** — a reference to territories controlled by the Kurdish forces, which **Turkey** views as terrorists because of their links to Kurdish insurgents fighting inside **Turkey**.

Emboldened by Sunday's capture of Afrin, Erdogan went even further on Monday, asserting that Turkish troops and allied Syrian forces would press eastward, targeting territory that includes Kobani, a town that has become a symbol of the fight against the Islamic State militants, as well as Qamishli, where the Syrian government controls an airport and a security zone.

Also in the cross hairs is Manbij, a town jointly patrolled by U.S- and Kurdish forces and where U.S. bases are housed, triggering concerns over potential friction with U.S. troops. Erdogan even threatened to target Iraq's Sinjar mountains, used by Kurdish fighters to move between Iraq and Syria, and which **Turkey** claims is a stronghold for the outlawed Kurdish rebels fighting an insurgency in its southeast.

"We'll continue this process until we completely abolish this corridor," Erdogan said. "One night, we could suddenly enter Sinjar."

Nicholas Heras, a Middle East Security fellow at the Washington-based Center for a New American Security, said the capture of Afrin was a "milestone" for **Turkey** in Syria but was not the end of its campaign against the Kurdish militia, known as the Syrian Kurdish People's Defense Units, or YPG.

"The final destination is a Turkish war on the Kurds throughout northern and eastern Syria that destroys the YPG and forces the Americans to work by, with and through **Turkey**" in the fight against IS and in Syria, he said.

U.S. support of Syria's Kurdish militia, which **Turkey** views as a threat to its national security, has soured relations between the two NATO allies. Ankara has accused the U.S. of not fulfilling a promise to move Syrian Kurdish fighters out of Manbij. Seeking to ease tensions, U.S. and Turkish officials held talks about Manbij earlier this month following a visit by outgoing U.S. State Secretary Rex Tillerson. But with Tillerson's firing, the next round of talks has been postponed.

Ozgur 'Ünlühisarcikli', the Ankara director of the German Marshall Fund of the United States think tank, said the capture of Afrin had fulfilled **Turkey**'s aim of preventing the Kurdish militia from linking up its territories in eastern and western Syria, and Erdogan's threat to expand the military operation was a bargaining chip aimed at Washington.

"Politically, though, it would be very difficult to accomplish," he said.

Formidable guerrilla fighters, the YPG withdrew from Afrin on Sunday after a Turkish thrust into the town center. They have vowed to continue the fight, using hit-and-run attacks against Turkish troops in Afrin.

Such an insurgency could prove to be "a big thorn" for the U.S. military operation in Syria, Heras said. "A YPG insurgency in Afrin would prompt **Turkey** to escalate against the Kurds throughout northern Syria, jeopardizing the U.S.-led mission to stabilize the areas captured" from IS militants, he said.

Already, thousands of Kurdish fighters have been redeployed away from front lines with IS to take part in the Afrin battle, threatening to distract from the fight against the extremists.

Turkey's state-run news agency said 11 people — seven civilians and four Turkish-backed Syrian fighters — were killed on Monday in an explosion as a building in the town center was being cleared of booby traps. Anadolu News agency said the bomb was reportedly left by the Syrian Kurdish fighters.

The Turkish takeover of Afrin has triggered a humanitarian crisis as thousands of residents fled the town to government-held areas. Once a safe area for tens of thousands of displaced Syrians from other parts of the conflict, Afrin residents have become Syria's new homeless.

The U.S. State Department said it was "deeply concerned" over the humanitarian situation following **Turkey**'s capture of Afrin. The European Union's top diplomat also criticized the Turkish military offensive in Afrin, calling on Ankara to work to halt the fighting in Syria. Federica Mogherini told reporters in Brussels that international efforts in Syria should be aimed at "de-escalating the military activities and not escalating them."

A senior Kurdish official, Aldar Khalil, called the Turkish offensive an "occupation" that endangers "the whole of northern Syria."

Erdogan insisted **Turkey** had no intention of "occupying" Syria, saying it was merely clearing the **border** area of terrorists.

But panic has already set in among Afrin's residents, most of them Kurds, who fear **Turkey** will bring in loyalists and some of the 3 million Syrian refugees living inside its borders to repopulate the town. Some 200,000 people fled Afrin in recent days as the Turkish offensive escalated, and whether they will be permitted to return remains an open question.

Many feared revenge attacks, amid reports of looting and abuse of residents in the town.

Images emerged of torched stores and men, some in uniform and others in civilian clothes, walking out of homes with household goods. Others were seen driving away with tractors and agriculture supplies. A commander with the **Turkey**-backed Syrian forces blamed the looting on "thieves," and said a unit had been created to prevent further theft.

Azad Mohamed, an Afrin resident who fled, said looting was underway in nearby villages even before the Turkish forces entered the town.

"If they have not yet stolen my things, they will in an hour," he said.

He said fear of people taking over their homes has also fueled violent sentiments among Kurds. "Some are saying those who come settle in our homes must be killed to prevent others from even thinking about it," he said.

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Fraser reported from Ankara, **Turkey**. Associated Press writer Lorne Cook in Brussels contributed to this report.

ART Turkish soldiers, positioned in the city center of Afrin, northwestern Syria, Monday, March 19, 2018, a day after they took the control of the area. **Turkey**'s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Monday following victory in Syria's Afrin region, his country will expand its military operations into other Kurdish-held areas in Syria as well as in Iraq's Sinjar region.(Hasan Kırmızitaş/DHA-Depo Photos via AP) | **Turkey**'s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan speaks at a ceremony for judicial appointments in Ankara, **Turkey**, Monday, March 19, 2018. Erdogan says following victory in Syria's Afrin region, his country will expand its military operations into other Kurdish-held areas in Syria as well as in Iraq's Sinjar region.(Murat Cetinmuhurdar/Pool Photo via AP) | Residents who fled fighting return to the city center of Afrin, northwestern Syria, Monday, March 19, 2018, a day after Turkish troops and allied Free Syrian Army fighters took the control of the area. **Turkey**'s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Monday following victory in Syria's Afrin region, his country will expand its military operations into other Kurdish-held areas in Syria as well as in Iraq's Sinjar region.(Hasan Kırmızitaş/DHA-Depo Photos via AP) | A Turkish soldier

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writes "**Turkey**" on a **wall**, near to tanks in position, in the city center of Afrin, northwestern Syria, Sunday, March 18, 2018. **Turkey**'s president said Sunday the Turkish military and allied Syrian forces have taken "total" control of the town center of Afrin, a major development in the nearly two-months offensive against a Syrian Kurdish militia that controls the area. (Hasan Kırmızitaş/DHA-Depo Photos via AP)

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IPD ML

IPC i

PUB The Associated Press

AN Document APRS000020180319ee3j007hh

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

CLM National Security

SE Politics

HD **In Shift, Trump Orders U.S. Troops Out of Syria; Move throws campaign against Islamic State into question; pullout sparks concerns from the White House to the State Department to the Pentagon**

BY By Dion Nissenbaum, Nancy A. Youssef and Vivian Salama

WC 1,904 words

PD 20 December 2018

ET 00:57

SN The Wall Street Journal Online

SC WSJO

LA English

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LP

WASHINGTON—President Trump ordered a rapid withdrawal of all U.S. military forces from Syria, officials said Wednesday, marking an abrupt shift of the U.S.'s posture in the Middle East.

The U.S. immediately began moving a handful of personnel from Syria and will quickly extract about 2,000 forces over the next few weeks, officials said, ending a four-year military campaign against Islamic State on the brink of its defeat.

TD

"The Pentagon has an order to move troops out of Syria as quickly as possible," a U.S. official said.

The decision recasts U.S. policy in the Middle East, where the Trump administration has been working to defeat Islamic State, contain Iran's expansionist ambitions and counter Russia's influence in Syria, where Moscow has a vital Navy base. The planned exit also worried the U.S.'s Kurdish partners, who risk losing vital backing just when **Turkey** is threatening to attack them.

The U.S. has long said it would remain in Syria until Islamic State was defeated and local forces could prevent a new rise of extremist forces, and to press Iran to withdraw its forces from the country. While those objectives haven't been met, Mr. Trump declared an end to the fight against Islamic State, or ISIS, in a tweet on Wednesday.

"We have defeated ISIS in Syria, my only reason for being there during the Trump Presidency," he wrote on Twitter after The **Wall** Street Journal reported on the plans.

Sarah Sanders, Mr. Trump's press secretary, said the U.S. would now "transition to the next phase of the campaign." Neither the White House nor the Pentagon offered details of the withdrawal.

A senior U.S. official said the U.S. would continue to press Iran and fight Islamic State.

"We will continue to use tools of national power, including economic sanctions and diplomatic pressure, as leverage to press for the withdrawal of Iranian-backed forces," the official said. "Iran knows the U.S. stands ready to re-engage at all levels to defend American interests.

The withdrawal plan drew criticism from within the White House, among both Republicans and Democrats on Capitol Hill, the State Department and in the U.S. military. Some lawmakers urged Mr. Trump to reconsider, comparing it to former President Obama's decisions to scale back U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Withdrawal of this small American force in Syria would be a huge Obama-like mistake," Sen. Lindsey Graham, (R., S.C.), wrote on Twitter. "A decision to withdraw would also be viewed as a boost to ISIS desire to come back."

Vice President Mike Pence, meeting with Senate Republicans on Capitol Hill, received "strong pushback," said Sen. Ron Johnson (R., Wis.), chairman of the Senate Homeland Security Committee.

"He's getting an earful from everybody in the room," said Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker (R., Tenn.).

A few lawmakers praised Mr. Trump for his decision.

"I'm proud of the president today to hear that he is declaring victory in Syria," said Sen. Rand Paul (R., Ky.). "The president has the courage to say, 'We won in Syria, and we're coming home.'"

Another U.S. official cited conflicting interests within the administration between those pushing to keep U.S. forces in Syria indefinitely to counter Iranian aggression versus Mr. Trump's insistence on disengaging. In recent days, Mr. Trump has grown impatient and told his advisers enough is enough, the official said.

Mr. Trump's order drew alarm abroad, not only among the Kurds but in Israel, which has carried out hundreds of strikes against Iranian targets in Syria. Israeli officials, who see the U.S.'s presence in Syria as a crucial deterrent, fear the consequences of a U.S. exit.

The U.S. has a strategic base in southern Syria that has served as a bulwark against Iran's efforts to create a land route for weapons from Iran to Lebanon, where Tehran's Hezbollah allies pose a worrying threat to Israel.

On Wednesday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the Trump administration had informed him of the move and reaffirmed its commitment to exert influence in the Middle East.

"This is, of course, an American decision," he said in a video statement. "We will learn its timetable, the manner of implementation and of course the implications for us. In any event, we will make sure to maintain Israel's security and protect ourselves in this arena."

The U.S. move follows a call last weekbetween Mr. Trump and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has steadfastly opposed the U.S. partnership with Kurdish forces in Syria that he views as a terrorist force intent on destabilizing **Turkey**. Mr. Erdogan has threatened to launch an assault on the Kurds. The U.S. has relied on the Kurdish forces as the most effective fighting force in Syria against Islamic State.

On the call, Mr. Trump told Mr. Erdogan that he no longer wanted to spend money and time in Syria and preferred instead to focus his energy on domestic issues, said an official briefed on the call. Mr. Erdogan assured Mr. Trump that **Turkey** would continue the fight against Islamic State—and against the Kurds, the official said.

News of the move came hours after the State Department cleared the way for **Turkey** to buy $3.5 billion in American Patriot missile-defense systems. Some analysts see the proposed sale as an enticement for Ankara to back off its plans to purchase a Russian S-400 air-defense system. The issue has strained relations between the U.S. and **Turkey**, two North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies.

The U.S. has long sought to reconcile Mr. Trump's seemingly incompatible goals in Syria: to withdraw of all U.S. forces from Syria while deterring Iran's military ambitions there.

Officially, the U.S. military has no authority to battle Iran in Syria. Their mission has been to defeat Islamic State and ensure the militant group that once controlled large swaths of Syria and Iraq is unable to regroup.

That task is largely complete. Islamic State has been effectively cornered in a small stretch of Syrian territory along the Iraq **border**, where the U.S. military estimates about 2,000 fighters have managed to hold off complete defeat for months.

Earlier this year, the Pentagon said that Islamic State controlled less than 2% of the territory it once held in the Middle East, sparking a vow from Mr. Trump to get all U.S. forces out of Syria in a matter of months.

"We'll be coming out of Syria, like, very soon," he said in the spring. "I want to get out. I want to bring our troops back home."

Mr. Trump's national security team pushed back against Mr. Trump's idea and persuaded him to embrace an open-ended military strategy to keep Islamic State at bay and force Iran to withdraw its forces from Syria.

The U.S. sent in diplomatic teams to help rebuild northeastern Syria as the military set up new outposts on the country's **border** with **Turkey**, which views them as an effort to shield the Kurds from an attack by Turkish forces.

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In recent weeks, **Turkey** has moved military forces to the **border** and Mr. Erdogan said on Monday that they stood ready to attack the Kurdish militants on the Syrian side "at any moment."

The U.S. military has ramped up its strikes against suspected Islamic State targets in the middle Euphrates River Valley in anticipation of a possible Turkish incursion into Syria that likely would pull U.S. ground partners off the anti-Islamic State fight, defense officials said. Between Dec. 2-8, the U.S.-led coalition launched 251 strikes against Iraq and Syria, almost all of those in Syria, compared with 90 the previous week.

Mr. Trump released an 80-second videolate Wednesday about his decision.

"We have won against ISIS," he said while standing outside the White House. "We've beaten them, and we've beaten them badly... Now it's time for our troops to come back home."

Marine Gen. Joe Dunford, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, suggested earlier this month that the U.S. mission in Syria was incomplete, saying Islamic State hadn't been defeated and that only 20% of the needed local forces had been trained so far.

"With regard to stabilization, we have a long way to go," Gen. Dunford said at a Washington Post live event.

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* Trump Bowed to Pentagon Restraint on Syria Strikes (April 16)

* Trump Vows Quick Exit From Syria (April 3)

Kristina Peterson in Washington and Dov Lieber in Tel Aviv contributed to this article.

A U.S.-Syria Timeline

* 2011 The U.S. begins to provide a rebel force, known as the Free Syrian Army, with nonlethal aid, including food, cash and intelligence, in its effort to oust Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

* 2011-15 The U.S. tries to train and assist Syrian rebels, then arm them, first through a CIA-led program, then through a U.S. military program. Most of the training efforts collapsed by 2015.

* September 2014 U.S. begins airstrikes against suspected al Qaeda and Islamic State targets in Syria. Strikes by the U.S. and coalition partners against Islamic State have continued since then.

* 2015 U.S. special-operations forces arrive inside Syria, the beginning of the U.S. military footprint there.

* March 2017 Marines begin to deploy in anticipation of battles to reclaim Syrian cities from Islamic State. The number of U.S. troops inside Syria eventually rises to more than 2,000.

* April 2017 The U.S. launches 59 Tomahawk missiles at the Syrian regime's Shayrat air base in response to a chemical attack, the first planned strike against the Syrian regime by the U.S.

* October 2017 The capital of Islamic State's self-proclaimed caliphate, Raqqa, falls to U.S.-backed forces after a monthslong coalition airstrike campaign.

* December 2017 Then-Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al Abadi declares victory over Islamic State in Iraq. U.S. officials say the battle against the group in Syria had entered its final stages.

* April 2018 The U.S., France and the U.K. launch a second attack on the Syrian regime in response to another chemical attack, hitting three regime targets: a research center, a military installation and a storage site. The military says the strikes hit the "heart" of the regime's chemical weapons program.

* December 2018 President Trump orders the U.S. military to begin making plans for its total withdrawal from Syria. The pullout would affect all U.S. forces in Syria, including those in northeastern Syria and in the al-Tanf area.

Write to Nancy A. Youssef at nancy.youssef@wsj.com and Vivian Salama at vivian.salama@wsj.com

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AN Document WSJO000020181219eecj0030d

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HD **Syria in Past 24 Hours: ISIL Executes over 700 Inmates in Eastern Euphrates**

WC 976 words

PD 20 December 2018

SN FARS News Agency

SC FARSNA

LA English

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Homs, Deir Ezzur

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The London-based pro-opposition Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) quoted the local population in Eastern Syria as reporting on Wednesday that the ISIL has secretly executed over 700 defected members who had been in prison on different charges.

It added that the execution operations were carried out at ISIL bases and detention centers in the towns of al-Sha'afah, al-Souseh and Baqouz and a number of villages in Eastern Euphrates, noting that tens of other people have fled the regions occupied by the terrorist group.

According to the report, the ISIL has also transferred nearly 350 to 400 of its prisoners to Badiyeh (desert) region in Homs and Deir Ezzur.

Also on Wednesday, tribal people in Eastern Deir Ezzur staged a vast demonstration against the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), protesting against their brutalities, including hording fuel.

Tens of people in the small town of al-Shoheil in Eastern Deir Ezzur took to the main street and protested against the SDF's fuel plundering in the region.

The protestors closed off the streets and engaged in armed clash with the SDF, killing two of them and wounding several more.

The protestors further moved towards al-Umar oilfield, but, the SDF blocked their access to the oilfield, cordoning off the area.

The SFD further sent more gunmen to the regions on the outskirts of the town and kept them on alert.

People in Eastern Deir Ezzur controlled by the SDF are suffering from drinking water, electric power and fuel shortages.

Also in the past 24 hours, the Turkish Army's elite forces arrived at **border** with Syria as the Ankara forces are standing the order to kick off a large-scale offensive against the Kurds on the Eastern bank of the Euphrates River, a Turkish media outlet reported.

The Arabic-language website of Anadolu reported that the Turkish army has deployed a large number of its elite forces and military vehicles, who had been deployed in Hatay province, to Kilist region at **border** with Northern Syria.

It further said that another convoy, including several armored vehicles, has been forwarded to Hatay.

The news agency went on to say that Turkish reconnaissance planes have also been flying over regions between West of Ein al-Arab and Tal Abyadh in Northern Raqqa, adding that the Turkish army's engineering units have removed a part of the cement **border wall** at **Turkey**-Syria **border** near the village of Quneitra in Northern Raqqa.

Aleppo

The Syrian Army dispatched more soldiers and military hardware to Western Aleppo on Wednesday to pave the ground for a major operation in the region.

The army sent a convoy of soldiers and military equipment from Eastern Aleppo to contact lines with Tahrir al-Sham Hay'at (the Levant Liberation Board or the Al-Nusra Front) in Western Aleppo.

The convoy included hundreds of forces and at least 50 military vehicles carrying cannons and heavy weapons.

The convoy headed toward al-Ma'amel in Western Aleppo.

The army's move came after Tahir al-Sham and its terrorist allies, deployed in Southwestern Aleppo, launched missile and artillery attacks on army positions.

Tahrir al-Sham and its allies, deployed in demilitarized zone, have been continuing attacks on the army in Aleppo, Hama, Idlib and Lattakia provinces on a daily base.

Idlib

Ibrahim al-Adavi, a Saudi commander of Horras al-Deen, wad killed by unidentified attackers in Idlib province, local sources reported on Wednesday.

Ibrahim al-Adavi nom de guerre Abu Musa was gunned down by unknown raiders near the village of Safouhan in Jabal al-Zawiyah on Tuesday, the sources said.

They added that, meantime, Tahrir al-Sham Hay'at has started storming the positions of rival terrorists from the ISIL in Southern Idlib, arresting a number of them.

The sources said that fresh wave of tension has covered the town of Fua'a North of Idlib city after Tahrir al-Sham expelled the families of tens of terrorists from the town.

Hama

The London-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported on Wednesday that the terrorist groups, deployed in Northern Syria, have destroyed historical sites and smuggled hundreds of millions of dollars worth of artifacts to Iraq and **Turkey**.

SOHR said that the terrorists are excavating historical sites in Qala Afamiya, Hourtah, Um Nir and Tal Qarqour in al-Ghaab Planin in Northwestern Hama.

It further said that Tahrir al-Sham Hay'at carried out its largest excavation operation in Babsaqa region at Syria's **border** with Iskandaroun North of Idlib city and in Bab al-Amoud and al-Khatib regions, discovering and stealing artifacts almost $200 mln in value.

In the meantime, the Turkistani Islamic Party has also been conducting excavations in Jisr al-Shughour, specially in Tal Qarqour West of the town of Jisr al-Shughourm, stealing artifacts over $800 mln in value.

Also on Wednesday, the Syrian Army troops engaged in fierce clashes with a group of terrorists, deployed in the demilitarized zone, and managed to fend off their attack in Northern Hama.

The army soldiers exchanged heavy fire with a large number of terrorists of Kata'eb al-Izzah, deployed in al-Latamina in the demilitarized zone, and warded off their attack on government forces near the small town of al-Masasanah in Northern Hama.

The terrorists suffered heavy casualties in the failed attack.

In the meantime, the army's artillery and missile units pounded terrorists' positions and movements in the towns of al-Latamina, Kafr Zita and near the villages of al-Arabaeen and al-Zakat.

The army's heavy artillery and missile attack forced the terrorists to pull forces back from al-Latamina that was supposed to be one of the largest foreign terrorists' bases in Northern Hama.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

SE World

HD **Militant Kurds Declare Truce With Turkey; In Momentous Ceremony, Jailed PKK Leader Tells His Outlawed Fighters to Withdraw; Hurdles and Skepticism Remain**

BY By Joe Parkinson and Ayla Albayrak

WC 1,000 words

PD 21 March 2013

ET 18:49

SN The Wall Street Journal Online

SC WSJO

LA English

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LP

DIYARBAKIR, **Turkey**—Jailed Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan ordered his militant fighters to put down their weapons, withdraw from Turkish soil and move into politics, marking the most concrete step in a monthslong bid to end a conflict that has polarized Turkish society, choked its economy and left 40,000 people dead.

Hundred of thousands of Kurds packed into a field on the outskirts of the southeastern city of Diyarbakir on Thursday to hear the historic address on the first day of the Kurdish New Year. The statement by Mr. Ocalan, incarcerated since 1999 in a Turkish island prison in the Sea of Marmara, was read aloud by pro-Kurdish lawmakers—once in Turkish and once in Kurdish—for more than 20 minutes.

TD

"Lets the guns fall silent, let ideas speak," the statement said. "The time has come for our armed elements to withdraw beyond the **border**.…This does not mean giving up this struggle. It means starting a new phase."

The Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, which is listed as a terrorist organization by **Turkey**, the U.S. and Europe, took up arms against Ankara in 1984 with the aim of independence, but later commuted its demands to greater autonomy within the Turkish state.

The statement, broadcast from batteries of speakers suspended from cranes, stopped short of giving a timetable for the cease-fire, but a formal declaration by the PKK leadership from its base in the mountains of northern Iraq is expected to follow shortly.

Meanwhile, high-level Kurdish officials and activists report that the leader of PKK militants in Qandil, Iraq, Murat Karayilan, supports Mr. Ocalan. "The atmosphere in Qandil is positive. The PKK wants to support the process," said Mihemed Resho, a Syrian Kurdish official close to the PKK, who attended a Newroz celebration by the PKK at its Qandil base.

A sea of people, many wearing Kurdish traditional colors of yellow, red and green or waving flags with Mr. Ocalan's face, interrupted the speech with chants of "freedom for Ocalan," or "long live Apo," using the militant leader's nickname.

"I didn't have much hope a couple of months ago, but all the steps that have been taken toward peace have made me hopeful," said Ali Over, a 29-year-old buying fruit juice near the Diyarbakir's ancient city **wall**.

The call for a cease-fire follows months of talks between Turkish intelligence officers and Kurdish politicians. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, speaking on a state visit to the Netherlands, welcomed the news, but stressed that the pledge should be followed by action.

"I see this historic call as a positive development but what matters is the implementation. As soon as the call is applied I believe there can be a change of atmosphere in the region," Mr. Erdogan said.

A peace deal could alter the power dynamics in a region of the world being reshaped by uprisings and a reduced U.S. military presence.

Turkey aspires to be a model for nascent Muslim democracies emerging from the Arab Spring, and to boost its standing. A deal also could speed one of **Turkey**'s most dramatic geopolitical shifts—its deepening ties with the oil-rich Kurds of northern Iraq.

But Mr. Erdogan must soothe distrust from a skeptical conservative establishment in **Turkey**, just as Mr. Ocalan must from his jail cell maintain the loyalty of fighters in the hills of northern Iraq.

Even if a cease-fire holds, the path to disarmament and the reintegration of militants will be long and vulnerable to sabotage. Huge obstacles to brokering a peace deal remain, and trust between the parties, while growing, remains fragile.

Turkish nationalists on Thursday warned that the rapprochement with the PKK would foreshadow a breakup of **Turkey**.

"We don't recognize the Newruz in Diyarbakir.…A celebration without the Turkish flag doesn't include the message of brotherhood and unity," said Devlet Bahceli, leader of the nationalist MHP party, adding that images from Diyarbakir were "the beginning of a separation."

The atmosphere in Diyarbakir was festive. As the sun beat down, wave after wave of people made their way to a vast patch of land outside the city center to show support for the peace process. Many of the city's hotels were fully booked, while special bus services ferried visitors to the city from nearby villages and towns.

Truces have been declared and secret talks held with the PKK in the past, but without results. This time, however, higher expectations have been fueled by the openness with which the process has been conducted.

"We are really hopeful now that peace will finally come. We trust Ocalan, whatever he says we will follow," said Aysel Okay, a 33-year-old mother of two who traveled from the nearby city of Batman with 50 of her family members.

Still, skepticism and tensions remain. Leftist militants launched bomb and missile strikes on Turkish government and ruling-party offices on Tuesday night in attacks that the prime minister said were aimed at derailing the peace process.

Kurdish and Turkish participants have warned that failure to reach a settlement could send the region into a renewed cycle of conflict. Earlier this year, Mr. Ocalan said in a statement read by Kurdish lawmakers that **Turkey** could become as troubled as Syria or Iraq if steps weren't taken to end the insurgency.

"I can't fully trust the Turkish government, but I have to trust in order not to lose hope," said Ali Elis, a 49-year-old farmer who traveled from nearby Mardin, to where his family fled after their village was burned in violent clashes in 1992. "During the last 30 years, peace is the only way we have not tried. Now it's time."

Write to Joe Parkinson at joe.parkinson@wsj.com

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IPD Abdullah Ocalan

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DOW JONES NEWSWIRES

HD **DJ Kurd Rebels Start Exit From Turkey**

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LP

(FROM THE
WALL STREET JOURNAL 5/9/13)
By Joe Parkinson and Ayla Albayrak

ISTANBUL -- Kurdish militants began to withdraw from **Turkey** to their stronghold in northern Iraq on Wednesday, the latest step in the six-month bid to end a three-decade conflict that has left tens of thousands of people dead.

TD

Officials from **Turkey**'s pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party said some of the estimated 2,000 armed militants from the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, had begun moving through mountainous terrain toward the Iraqi **border**.

The withdrawal could take as long as three months, with most militants moving at night to ensure safety in areas with a large military presence, Kurdish officials said.

"Information we have received from the ground confirms that the withdrawal has started," said Gultan Kisinak, co-chair of the Peace and Democracy Party, adding the process had started peacefully, without interference from Turkish security forces. "By the end of June, they will have proceeded to an extent that will satisfy the public," she added.

Turkey's government welcomed the news cautiously, saying it will monitor the process closely and make a fuller statement when it sees more tangible evidence of the withdrawal. "We feel that we are nearing the conclusion. . . . But it isn't possible for me to give information saying 'now it started, here are the images,'" Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Arinc said.

The beginning of the withdrawal marks the latest concrete step in negotiations that began last fall when Turkish intelligence agents started talks with the leader of the PKK, Abdullah Ocalan, who has been imprisoned on the island of Imrali since his capture in 1999.

Turkey hopes that concluding a peace deal, though riddled with risks, will give it more influence in a part of the world being reshaped by uprisings and a reduced U.S. military presence.

Among demands of Kurds in **Turkey** are greater autonomy in southeast **Turkey**, education in the Kurdish language and equal rights in the new constitution.

"The momentum of the process is very strong and nothing is capable of derailing it so far. It is quite evident that both sides believe that they will benefit from a cessation of violence," said Soli Ozel, a professor at Istanbul's Kadir Has University. "There is public discomfort, but that doesn't come from the ceasefire but because we don't know what the result of the talks will be."

Obstacles to an overall peace deal remain, and trust between the parties, while growing, remains fragile. A question speaking to the complexity is the future of senior PKK operatives, many of whom have publicly expressed interest in trading guns for politics -- something many Turks find impossible to accept.

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According to a recent poll from the private Genar polling group, almost 64% of Turks say they disapprove of the state talking with the PKK's Mr. Ocalan, who was long demonized by the Turkish press.

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HD **Turkey to invest in Kurdistan production**

BY ArabianBusiness.com Staff

WC 514 words

PD 15 May 2013

SN ArabianOilandGas.com

SC ARBOLAS

LA English

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LP

Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced on 14 May that a Turkish state-owned oil company has struck a deal with the US supermajor ExxonMobil to develop hydrocarbons in Iraqi Kurdistan, according to a report published by IHS country analyst Jamie Ingram and energy analyst Siddik Bakir.

Erdogan said that "countries from various parts of the world are taking steps to explore and produce oil in different parts of Iraq, and then deliver it to world oil markets…there is nothing more normal, more natural than **Turkey**, which provides all kinds of support and aid to its next-door neighbor, to take a step that is based on mutual benefit", in quotes carried by the **Wall** Street Journal, reported Ingram and Bakir.

TD

"The regional government in northern Iraq has a constitutional right to 17% of [hydrocarbons] revenues. Since it has the ability to readily spend that share, it's in its right to use that in exchanges with **Turkey**. It is possible for us to have mutual agreements, there's nothing to prevent that", the Prime Minister is reported to have said. Ingram and Bakir also noted that, according to various sources, the Turkish Petroleum International Company (TPIC), an arm of state-run Turkish Petroleum (TPAO) will enter a partnership with the KRG and ExxonMobil to explore and develop hydrocarbons in ExxonMobil's six untapped blocks in Iraqi Kurdistan (see table below).

Erdogan reportedly also added that "our oil company already has an agreement with Exxon Mobil in place ... This is a step with the KRG on exploration work", in quotes carried by Reuters. Given the Iraqi central government's opposition over independently-signed oil deals in Kurdistan, it was no surprise that Baghdad complained that "the deal is illegal and is not in line with the Iraqi constitution… and any agreement signed without the approval of the central government is illegal", according to Faisal Abdullah, spokesman for Hussein al-Shahristani, Iraq's deputy prime minister for energy, carried by the IHS' same source.

Ingram and Bakir have said that this deal is arguably the culmination of the budding energy-fuelled relationship between **Turkey**'s AKP-government in Ankara and the KRG in Erbil, which has evolved since 2007 but especially since 2009 in spite of Baghdad's opposition. For the first time, a Turkish national oil company (NOC) would become a key oil explorer in its **border** neighbourhood and become part of the burgeoning hydrocarbons sector in Iraqi Kurdistan. Given **Turkey**'s high demand for energy and its dependence on oil and gas imports, **Turkey** has developed a strategic alliance with the KRG over the past years hoping to benefit one day from the potential oil and gas exports coming from Kurdish fields in northern Iraq. **Turkey**'s move also signifies that it has positioned itself clearly on the KRG side of the ongoing feud with the regional administration and the central government in Baghdad, which claims that it alone has the authority to sign oil deals and control exports from Iraq.

CO exxn : Exxon Mobil Corporation

IN i13 : Crude Oil/Natural Gas | i1 : Energy | i1300003 : Crude Petroleum Extraction | iextra : Natural Gas/Oil Extraction

RE iraq : Iraq | turk : Turkey | kurd : Kurdistan | baghd : Baghdad | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

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DOW JONES NEWSWIRES

HD **Kurds, Turkey Edge Toward Oil Deal -- WSJ Blog**

WC 896 words

PD 31 October 2013

ET 16:59

SN Dow Jones Institutional News

SC DJDN

LA English

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LP

(This story has been posted on The Wall Street Journal Online's Middle East Real Time blog at http://blogs.wsj.com/middleeast/)

By Emre Peker

TD

ISTANBUL--**Turkey** and Iraq's semiautonomous Kurds agree on an adage that gives Baghdad the fits: oil will always find a way to international markets.

With energy-hungry **Turkey** just across the **border**, the oil-rich fledgling Kurdistan Regional Government, or KRG, in northern Iraq is eager to start pumping crude, to broaden its independence from the central government and bolster its booming economy. KRG's Energy Minister Ashti Hawrami said Thursday that Erbil will inevitably become a major exporter, outlining a path to export one million barrels a day by 2015, and doubling that by 2020.

"As we all know, nowhere in the world can one million barrels [of oil] per day remain stranded forever. So the oil export is a reality, it is happening and will happen in the future," Mr. Hawrami said. "Iraq's security and stability will be [determined by] the passage of the revenue sharing law...We believe that during and after that election will be a decisive period when people will have to agree on this long-outstanding issue."

But getting oil to world markets from Kurdistan is fraught with problems, chief among them the inability for the regional rulers in Erbil to agree with Iraq's central government in Baghdad about revenue sharing since 2007.

This month, **Turkey**, KRG and Iraq engaged in a flurry of diplomatic activity, which officials and analysts say may help resolve the gridlock as Kurds are getting closer to completing pipelines and clinching sales agreements with Ankara to start the northern oil flow. The talks come as Iraq prepares for next year's national elections, which the Kurds see as a critical turning point for their relations with the central government.

The inability to export oil and gas out of Iraqi Kurdistan hasn't stopped Erbil from signing deals with producers including oil and gas giants like Exxon Mobil Corp. and Chevron Corp., as well as wildcatters like Genel Energy, the Turkish firm listed in London and run by former BP PLC chief Tony Hayward. Already, Genel is exporting about 40,000 barrels per day from the KRG, albeit via the costly and inefficient means of trucking it to **Turkey**.

"This business has now reached a point of no return. Leave aside the political aspect of the matter, a fast-growing country like **Turkey** with constantly rising energy needs cannot remain indifferent to energy resources right under its nose--that would be treason," Genel's President Mehmet Sepil said Thursday in an interview. "As the KRG expedites the process to ship oil to **Turkey**, Baghdad is seeing that the crude will hit markets in one way or another."

Independent of the political gridlock, the private sector has been charging ahead in northern Iraq, at the risk of irking Baghdad.

In May, **Turkey**'s Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced that a state-run oil company would work with Exxon to develop projects in the Kurdish region. Baghdad, which maintains that KRG's deals are illegal, has previously expelled Ankara's main oil producer from an exploration deal in the south.

Turkey and Kurdish leaders in Erbil completed the framework of an oil-sales agreement and signed the term sheet, with only a week's worth of work left to complete the deal, according to people familiar with the talks. But the process may take longer depending on political developments, said the people, who weren't authorized to discuss the matter publicly.

Another deal Ankara and Erbil are looking to complete is a gas-sales agreement, which would see KRG export by late 2016 as much as 10 billion cubic meters of natural gas a year to **Turkey**, which currently uses about five times that amount annually and imports almost all of its energy.

Meanwhile, the KRG is about to connect its oil fields with the Baghdad-controlled Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline, seeking to tap into Iraq's underutilized export route to **Turkey**, Mr. Hawrami said. He added that another pipeline will be completed in 18-to-24 months, directly linking KRG to **Turkey**, with a capacity to ship one million barrels of crude a day.

Yet despite the advances on the ground, Turkish and Kurdish officials are mindful of their Iraqi counterparts and reluctant to share details. Ever hopeful about diversifying **Turkey**'s energy sources, officials in Ankara say meetings with Iraqi officials in recent months have been very constructive, without providing additional details.

On Wednesday, **Turkey**'s Energy Minister Taner Yildiz echoed the enthusiastic tone at the sidelines of the conference, saying that while it is too soon to divulge details, Ankara hopes to announce a gas deal with the Iraq's Kurdish region as the process moves ahead.

"This is very important for both **Turkey** and Iraq. If gas and oil are being extracted somewhere, my friends, it will most certainly be exported after meeting that country's needs. And that will be an important process in the normalization of Iraq," Mr. Yildiz said. "I don't see any problems."

For continuously updated news from The **Wall** Street Journal, see WSJ.com at http://wsj.com.

(END) Dow Jones Newswires

October 31, 2013 11:59 ET (15:59 GMT)

NS e512 : Physical Trade | gpol : Domestic Politics | mcrntg : Crude Oil/Natural Gas Product Markets | neqac : Equities Asset Class News | nfiac : Fixed Income Asset Class News | e51 : Trade/External Payments | ecat : Economic News | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations | m14 : Commodity Markets | m143 : Energy Markets | mcat : Commodity/Financial Market News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfce : FC&E Exclusion Filter

RE iraq : Iraq | turk : Turkey | kurd : Kurdistan | baghd : Baghdad | eurz : Europe | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

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DOW JONES NEWSWIRES

HD **Turkish Government Seeks to Advance Talks With Kurds Ahead of Elections**

BY By Ayla Albayrak

WC 562 words

PD 26 June 2014

ET 14:59

SN Dow Jones Institutional News

SC DJDN

LA English

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LP

ISTANBUL--**Turkey**'s government on Thursday took its first concrete step in a two-year effort to secure peace with its restive Kurdish population, seeking to advance talks ahead of presidential elections in August.

The move also comes as **Turkey** courts Northern Iraq's semiautonomous Kurdistan Regional Government, or KRG, which stands to increase its power as Islamist insurgents march on the embattled central government in Baghdad. KRG leaders were meeting with top government officials in Ankara on Thursday.

TD

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government submitted its proposal to the Ankara parliament and the ruling Justice and Development Party, or AKP, is expected to swiftly pass the legislation by bolstering its majority with Kurdish lawmakers.

The draft law says it will allow the government to "take necessary precautions" and enable members of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, to return home from camps in Turkish and northern Iraqi mountains, as well as secure their "integration into the society." The move is broadly seen as an initial step to amnesty for PKK members--long a taboo.

Kurdish lawmakers told The **Wall** Street Journal that the proposal fell short of their suggestions but was still a "positive step." **Turkey**'s antiterrorism laws also remain too broad, and threaten to undermine peace talks, they said.

Turkey's premier, who is expected to run and win the vote to become the country's first directly elected president, launched peace talks in 2012 and clinched a cease-fire from jailed PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan in March 2013.

Since then, there has been little to feed previously high hopes of lasting peace, except for a reform package in autumn 2013, which Kurdish lawmakers in Ankara criticized as insufficient. Those laws had paved the way for changing village names from Turkish to their Kurdish origins, allowing private education in Kurdish, and letting Kurds use their language at political rallies.

More than 40,000 people have been killed in the three-decade conflict between **Turkey** and the PKK, which is listed as a terrorist organization by Ankara, the European Union and the U.S. Comprising about 20% of **Turkey**'s 77 million population, restive Kurds have been a pressing political problem for **Turkey**.

The proposed law also seeks to shield officials, participants and mediators in the peace process from prosecution. The precaution follows a 2012 attempt by state attorneys to question **Turkey**'s intelligence chief, Hakan Fidan, over secret talks he conducted with the PKK in Oslo that were leaked in 2011.

Since then, the government has adopted a more transparent process to ensure public support. Kurdish lawmakers have been pressing for a legal framework to the peace talks since the start.

A successful resolution of the so-called Kurdish issue would strengthen Ankara's hands as Iraqi Kurds are becoming increasingly more autonomous, fueling speculation that the semiautonomous region across **Turkey**'s southern **border** is closer to independence than ever before.

Scoring a political victory would also help **Turkey** improve its tarnished image as a model democracy in the region, and strengthen Mr. Erdogan's hand as he seeks to extend his rule for another decade by clinching the presidency.

Write to Ayla Albayrak at ayla.albayrak@wsj.com

(END) Dow Jones Newswires

June 26, 2014 08:59 ET (12:59 GMT)

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | neqac : Equities Asset Class News | nfiac : Fixed Income Asset Class News | nfxacb : Forex Asset Class Basic News | nfxacp : Forex Asset Class Premium News | gvote : Elections | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters

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HD **Turkey moves to use force in Syria and Iraq**

BY Jacob Resneck

CR Jacob Resneck, Special for USA TODAY

WC 590 words

PD 30 September 2014

SN Gannett News Service

SC GNS

PG n/a

LA English

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LP

Jacob Resneck, Special for USA TODAY

SURUC, **Turkey** -- **Turkey** is moving to reverse its non- intervention stance and approve the use of force in Syria and Iraq to fight radical Islamic State militants who have advanced against cities along the Syrian-Turkish **border**.

TD

A proposed resolution that would authorize the army to fight the extremists is all but certain to win formal approval from the parliament Thursday. It would allow the U.S.-led coalition conducting airstrikes against the militants to use Turkish air bases, a significant help to the coalition, given **Turkey**'s proximity to the fighting.

"We are a determined government," **Turkey**'s deputy prime minister, Bulent Arinc, was quoted as saying Tuesday in the Hurriyet Daily News. "We perfectly know what's going on inside and outside **Turkey**."

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan "has been on the **fence** about intervening," said James Phillips, an analyst at Heritage Foundation. "It looks like he is jumping off the **fence**."

The United States has said forming a broad coalition is critical to defeating the Islamic State. Tuesday, British aircraft participated for the first time in the air campaign against the Islamic State in Iraq. It launched two airstrikes in support of Kurdish forces fighting militants in northwestern Iraq.

Turkey has been reluctant to take military action against the extremists despite U.S. urging.

Until the militants moved closer to seizing **border** towns that would open up a **border** crossing from Syria to **Turkey**, the Turkish government ruled out use of its bases and prevented its citizens -- mostly ethnic Kurds -- from joining the fight against the Islamic State.

Kurdish militias are battling the extremists for control of the besieged city of Kobane, about a mile from the **border**.

Another concern of **Turkey** is the prospect of Turkish and Syrian Kurds uniting to fight the Islamic State, a move that could advance their dream of an independent state, which **Turkey** has long opposed. The Turkistan Workers' Party (PKK), branded a terrorist group by the United States, has been fighting a guerrilla war with **Turkey** since the 1980s.

Sunday, a leader of the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP) crossed from **Turkey** into Kobane to meet with Syrian Kurds.

"Concrete, practical steps are needed. Then the perception of people will change. ...**Turkey** should not prevent aid heading to Kobane," HDP co-chair Selahattin Demirtas said, according to the Hurriyet Daily News.

Turkey has been under pressure from Washington to do more to curb the advance of the Islamic State. More than 160,000 refugees have poured into **Turkey** in the past week to flee the fighting. Altogether, more than 1.5 million refugees are in **Turkey** after years of civil war in Syria.

Turkey's leaders have proposed a border buffer zone that could include ground troops. That plan has been met with suspicion by Kurds, who fear it would cut off Kurdish militias in Syria suspected of being supplied by the PKK.

Turkey had been pushing the idea of establishing a no-fly zone over the border area in Syria that might help protect towns and villages across the border and lessen the numbers of refugees flooding into Turkey.

Washington says it has no plans to establish a no-fly zone. "A buffer zone might at some point become a possibility, but that's not part of our campaign plan presently," said Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gcat : Political/General News

RE turk : Turkey | kurd : Kurdistan | syria : Syria | usa : United States | iraq : Iraq | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | namz : North America | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Resneck, Jacob

PUB USA Today Information Network

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NEWSWIRES
DOW JONES

CLM The Wall Street Journal

HD **Turkey, Syrian Kurds Remain at Odds Over Kobani Fighters**

BY By RORY JONES in Beirut and EMRE PEKER in Istanbul

WC 541 words

PD 24 October 2014

ET 22:13

SN Dow Jones Top Global Market Stories

SC DJTGMS

LA English

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LP

Syrian Kurds defending Kobani were locked in a public dispute with **Turkey** on Friday as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan made remarks they said showed he wants to dilute an increasingly confident and unified Kurdish regional political bloc.

Mr. Erdogan said **Turkey** would allow a force of 1,300 fighters from the rebel Free Syrian Army, which is fighting to topple the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, to move through Turkish territory to aid in the defense of Kobani just across its southern **border**.

TD

"We don't have a problem with the Free Syrian Army crossing into the relevant region from our side," he told a news conference during a state visit to Estonia.

Berfore his announcement that a sizable non-Kurdish fighting force would be allowed to transit through **Turkey**, Mr. Erdogan has bitterly criticized the U.S. for air-dropping weapons, ammunition and medical supplies to Kurdish fighters in Kobani, saying the initiative was arming "a terrorist organization," the state news agency Anadolu reported.

Mr. Erdogan's comments seemed to reflect his worries about what he sees as burgeoning Kurdish strength, and they rankled Saleh Muslim, the leader of the main Kurdish political party in Kobani, who accused **Turkey** of sowing confusion by spreading false news about the FSA reinforcements.

"This news is a complete lie," Mr. Muslim told the pro-Kurdish news agency Firat.

Mr. Muslim said the FSA hadn't pledged to send the 1,300 soldiers and that some groups allied with the moderate rebel group were already fighting alongside Kurdish militants.

Despite a multiparty agreement on Wednesday to send Iraqi Kurdish fighters to Kobani, none had left northern Iraq by Friday, according to Kurdish officials.

Representatives of the Syrian Kurdish militia defending Kobani, known as the YPG, were still negotiating the exact size of the Peshmerga unit and the types of heavy weaponry that will join the fight against Islamic State in Kobani, the officials said.

Friction between the Ankara government and Mr. Muslim's Syrian Kurdish Democratic Union Party, or PYD, has escalated as Kurdish political factions from across the region have set aside--at least for the moment--long-standing differences to pledge help for fellow Kurds in Kobani in the face of Islamic State's onslaught.

The PYD is an affiliate of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, which is designated a terrorist organization by **Turkey** and the U.S.

The Kurds defending Kobani have repeatedly warned the U.S. they need heavy weaponry to confront Islamic State, which is using superior arms such as tanks and artillery.

Fighting in Kobani subsided for the first time in days on Friday, Khaled Barkal, vice president of Kobani's local government, said by phone from the city.

Mr. Barkal urged the FSA to open a second front against Islamic State in the northeast of Syria rather than reinforcing Kobani.

Islamic State has shored up its own forces in Kobani, drawing help from cities such as Aleppo, Raqqa and Deir Ezzour, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a monitoring group.

Mohammad Nour Alakraa in Beirut contributed to this article.

NS gcat : Political/General News | gvio : Military Action | gpir : Politics/International Relations | gvbod : Government Bodies | gcns : National Security | gpol : Domestic Politics | grisk : Risk News

RE meastz : Middle East | asiaz : Asia | eurz : Europe | easiaz : Eastern Asia | russ : Russia | iraq : Iraq | syria : Syria | turk : Turkey | apacz : Asia Pacific | balkz : Balkan States | bric : BRICS Countries | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eeurz : Central/Eastern Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | medz : Mediterranean | ussrz : CIS Countries | wasiaz : Western Asia

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HD **Zero problems with Kurdish neighbors**

WC 707 words

PD 25 October 2014

SN Cihan News Agency (CNA)

SC CINEWA

LA English

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LP

İSTANBUL (CİHAN)- **Turkey** is painfully discovering that its southern borders are occupied by Kurds. For years, our officials belittled the Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and its leaders. We were hostile to them in most cases and always sided with the central Baghdad government against the Kurds. Nevertheless, KRG President Massoud Barzani has now become our greatest ally due to several factors. It seems that we are now making a similar mistake with Syrian Kurds.

TD

Now our officials and commentators are saying that they do not have a problem with the Kurds but that they are concerned about the activities of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in Syria. While I share these concerns to a certain extent, I am not fully satisfied that it is only about the PKK. Would we still be feeling all right and content if the PKK was not involved in the Syrian Kurdish issue and our ally Barzani's men or entirely indigenous local Kurdish actors were trying to increase their autonomy in northern Syria? I am not sure. Would the reactions of our officials, commentators and media be the same if instead of the Kurds, some Turkmen were trying to declare independence in the very same region? Of course not. This is understandable to a certain extent but in this case we should not keep boasting that other powers are only looking after their interests and we are the only ones that care about virtue, morality and humanity in our relations with other countries, people and societies.

Yes, **Turkey**'s position towards Kurdish activities in Syria is understandable. To start with, Kurds in "northern Iraq" were able to call their government the "Kurdistan Regional Government" since unlike in **Turkey**, the K-word is not taboo on the other side of the **fence**. They can receive education in Kurdish, can give Kurdish names to their children, streets, parks and villages without any hassle. Nobody can deny that Kurds in **Turkey** will increasingly envy their Kurdish neighbors. Imagine the same thing taking place across the Syrian **border**, too. Since Turkish politics have been enslaved and enchanted by nationalism, instead of giving similar rights to our Kurds, the state is trying to prevent "bad" examples from emerging. This did not work in the Iraqi Kurdish case, and I do not think that it will work in the Syrian case, either.

Instead of wasting our energies with myopic nationalist short-term electoral gains, our politicians must, as soon as possible, start a "zero problems with Kurds and Kurdish neighbors" policy. If the overwhelming majority of the Kurds in **Turkey** are satisfied with their democratic rights, then instead of being afraid of the Kurds in our neighboring countries gaining rights, we would start looking at the issue of Kurds in the Middle East as part of our strategic depth policy. I am not denying the possibility that granting more rights to the Kurds could pave the way for their eventual independence, but we must also see that not granting them these rights would make this outcome inevitable given the conditions in the region. We must give up employing the PKK terrorism as a pretext of our nationalist policies. It is not rocket science to know that while handling the terrorist issue, the majority of Kurds who do not sympathize with the PKK could be treated as equal citizens. Otherwise, we will not only lose our soft power but we will also have to utilize hard power, which simply means the end of soft power. Moreover, our foreign policy rhetoric will become less and less convincing.

The above piece was published in this column on July 27, 2012; that is more than two years ago. I did not change even a word of it. Despite the agonizing two years that have passed, it is unfortunate that Turkish policy makers could not at all improve their stance on the Kurdish issue. They do not have any right to complain about foreign powers' involvement with the problem. If you cannot sort out your own problems in tune with the spirit of the times, others will of course try to maximize their benefits in the Hobbesian international chaos.

İHSAN YILMAZ (Cihan/Today's Zaman) CİHAN

CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE kurd : Kurdistan | turk : Turkey | iraq : Iraq | syria : Syria | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD OPINION

PUB Cihan News Agency

AN Document CINEWA0020141025eaap00031

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REUTERS

HD **A new generation of Kurdish militants takes fight to Turkey's cities**

WC 1,290 words

PD 27 September 2015

ET 12:22

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

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LP

* PKK youth wing shifts conflict into urban areas

* Nature of relationship with PKK high command remains unclear

TD

* More than 150 security personnel killed since ceasefire ends

* **Turkey** faces snap election on Nov. 1

By Humeyra Pamuk

DIYARBAKIR, **Turkey**, Sept 27 (Reuters) - Young, urban-based fighters, many of them still teenagers, have taken centre-stage in the conflict between Kurdish militants and Turkish security forces that has flared anew in southeast **Turkey** since a two-year ceasefire fell apart in July.

The intensity of the violence recalls for some the 1990s, when the insurgency waged by the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) was at its peak and thousands were being killed annually, though the death toll remains for now well below those levels.

The fighters from the PKK's youth wing, known as the 'Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement' (YDG-H), attack security forces in cities and towns with heavy weapons, dig trenches and erect barricades down side streets.

The police retaliate by imposing curfews and launching dragnet security operations, most controversially this month in the town of Cizre near **Turkey**'s borders with Iraq and Syria where at least 20 people were killed.

More than 150 Turkish police officers and soldiers have died in the violence since July, many of them in cities and towns, government officials say, marking a departure from the PKK's traditional focus on more rural areas.

"We are facing an effort to bring the war of armed groups in rural areas into the cities," Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu told A Haber television in an interview this month.

The escalating bloodshed in the mainly Kurdish southeast has exacerbated already sky-high political tensions in **Turkey** ahead of a snap Nov. 1 parliamentary election, with President Tayyip Erdogan and the ruling AK Party accusing pro-Kurdish lawmakers of being in cahoots with the PKK.

It also complicates international efforts to combat Islamic State fighters across the **border** in Syria: **Turkey** says there are links between the PKK and Kurdish groups in Syria who work with a U.S.-led alliance bombing Islamic State.

Turkey, the United States and European Union all classify the PKK as a terrorist organisation.

The Turkish military has resumed its attacks on PKK camps in northern Iraq while also joining the U.S.-led campaign of air strikes against Islamic State, the hardline Islamists who have seized territory across the Turkish **border** in Syria and Iraq.

Inside **Turkey**, the YDG-H militants, largely untrained but determined to fight what they see as an oppressive Turkish state, say they have strong support from local people in a region long blighted by violence and poverty.

"There is a large mass of people who have huge sympathy and support for us. They are not armed but they do help us," said 19-year-old Nuda, who said she had abandoned her education after high school to become a full-time insurgent.

Turkish government officials say the renewed violence in the southeast, where residents had cherished two years of calm as Erdogan's government conducted peace talks with the PKK, has actually dented local support for the militants.

TRENCHES AND BARRICADES

The PKK launched its armed campaign for a Kurdish homeland in southeast **Turkey** in 1984, triggering a conflict that has cost more than 40,000 lives. Its leader Abdullah Ocalan was jailed in 1999 but still has considerable influence in the PKK, whose senior commanders are based in the Qandil mountains of northern Iraq.

The YDG-H, many of whose members were born in the traumatic 1990s, was only founded in 2006. The precise nature of its relationship with the PKK leadership is unclear, though there can be no doubting its dedication to the separatist cause.

"Police and soldiers come to your neighbourhood to detain you or intimidate you. We aim to prevent them from doing that by digging trenches and barricades," said YDG-H fighter Mawa, speaking hurriedly while his comrades nervously stood guard, looking out for security patrols.

"We have units in every street, every neighbourhood across Kurdistan," he said, his face concealed by a scarf.

Mawa, who said he had left university after a year to join the YDG-H, joked that, at 26, he was one of the oldest members of the group.

He was standing behind a community building in the Sur district of Diyarbakir, the biggest city of southeast **Turkey**, where authorities imposed a brief curfew this month after YDG-H militants killed two police officers.

YDG-H members say their group has grown rapidly but refuse to give a number. Mawa and other members described it as "semi-independent" of the PKK leadership, though Ankara refutes this.

"We act in line with the rules of the (PKK) leadership and its perspective against the destructive policies of the state," said 23-year-old Sorxin, another young militant in Diyarbakir.

A Turkish foreign ministry official, however, insisted the YDG-H took its orders directly from senior PKK commanders.

"They are not flash mobs, they do not tweet each other and meet up," said the official. "It is a structure and that structure is being directed from Qandil."

One PKK fighter deployed to a base near the Iraqi city of Kirkuk told Reuters the reality was more ambivalent.

"They (the YDG-H) don't have a direct relationship with the leadership because then they would be found out," said the militant, who gave his name as "Kani Kobani", sitting in a room with machine guns propped against the **wall**.

"The leadership gives general directions via TV. All the comrades watch TV. We know how to interpret the message."

CURFEWS

Turkey's Anadolu Agency, citing security officials, said this month the PKK had kidnapped more than 2,000 people below the age of 18 in the past two years to be used in its attacks.

Officials say as many as 70 YDG-H militants were involved in this month's clashes in Cizre, where police imposed a round-the-clock curfew for more than a week.

Lawmakers from the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) say 21 civilians were killed in Cizre and that people went hungry for days and could not bury their dead.

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Turkey's interior minister said only one civilian and 32 militants had been killed in the Cizre clashes.

The HDP, whose success in Turkey's inconclusive June election deprived the AKP of its single-party majority in parliament, accuses the authorities of imposing curfews in areas that support the pro-Kurdish party in order to "punish" voters and intimidate them into not participating in the Nov. 1 poll.

The government denies such suggestions, saying the curfews are aimed at facilitating its operations against the YDG-H militants holed up in urban areas.

Officials are also very aware that a heavy security crackdown could prove counterproductive by further radicalising Kurds in the countdown to the Nov. 1 election and they acknowledge that having to fight teenagers complicates the aim of defeating the PKK.

"What do you do when a 15-year-old shoots at you? You shoot back," the foreign ministry official said. "The police have to justify their actions and it's very controversial."

Suleyman Ozeren, a security analyst for the Ankara-based think-tank Global Policy and Strategy, said he expected no swift resolution of the conflict.

"There's a very thin line between the terrorists and the (local) population ... Turkey can degrade the PKK but it will take time, especially in the cities," he said. (Additional reporting by Dasha Afanasieva in ISTANBUL, Isabel Coles in KIRKUK and Jonny Hogg in ANKARA; Editing by David Dolan and Gareth Jones)

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CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

NS greg : Regional Politics | gterr : Terrorism | gvio : Military Action | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gpir : Politics/International Relations | gpol : Domestic Politics | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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The New York Times

CLM Editorial
SE Opinion

HD **The Kurds' Push for Self-Rule in Syria**

BY By THE EDITORIAL BOARD
WC 540 words
PD 22 March 2016
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LP

One important political outcome of the Syrian war could be a decision by Syrian Kurds to establish a semiautonomous region in the northern part of the country. The move entails risks and has been condemned by **Turkey** and even some Kurds, but could offer a model for decentralized governance in a federated Syria.

TD

The Kurds have taken advantage of the five-year war to consolidate control over three noncontiguous areas in northern Syria. Last week, Kurdish parties, including the Democratic Union Party, or P.Y.D., announced they were putting together a plan to unite areas controlled by Kurdish forces in a semiautonomous entity within a federal system.

The Kurds are an ethnic group of perhaps 35 million in Syria, Iraq, Iran and **Turkey**, and they have long argued that they are the world's largest ethnic group without a state. They have suffered persecution and had their aspirations for self-governance crushed. The American invasion of Iraq created an opportunity for Kurds living there to establish a semiautonomous region in northern Iraq, which has been reasonably successful.

The Syrian Kurds are in a stronger position to press their case for political autonomy because they have emerged as a key ally in the fight against the Islamic State. But the pro-autonomy move is anathema to **Turkey**, a NATO ally at war with its own Kurdish separatist groups and fearful of an expansion of Kurdish self-governance anywhere. **Turkey** managed to exclude the Kurds from this week's United Nations-mediated peace talks on Syria. The Syrian Kurds' announcement seemed timed as a reminder that they will not be ignored.

The United States has said it opposes Syrian Kurds acting now to form an autonomous self-ruled region because the long-term goal of the United Nations talks is a national unity government that does not include President Bashar al-Assad and keeps Syria united. But it has also said it would support a federal system of semiautonomous regions if that's what the Syrian people agree to in the peace talks.

The notion of a federal system has been floated by Philip Gordon and James Dobbins, former officials in the Obama administration, and has been discussed not only among the Kurds but also in Washington as a potential solution for Syria, at least until a longer-term political solution is agreed to. Russia has also endorsed the concept.

The idea is that Syria would be divided into zones roughly corresponding to areas held by Kurdish militias, the government, the Islamic State and other insurgents. The zone held by the Islamic State would be under international administration as the United States and others worked to defeat the militants.

The Syrian Kurds say they are not seeking total independence, only a democratic region in which they, Arabs and other ethnic groups can live together. This may be an idea worth building on as part of a political solution to end the war and the slaughter of civilians.

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ART Syrian Kurds from Kobani behind a **border fence**. | Murad Sezer/Reuters

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The New York Times

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SE Magazine

HD **Behind the Barricades of Turkey's Hidden War**

BY By ROBERT F. WORTH

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LP

On the morning of Oct. 29, 2014, a long convoy of armored vehicles and trucks rolled northward in the shadow of Iraq's Zagros Mountains and crossed a bridge over the Khabur River, which marks the **border** with **Turkey**. As the convoy rumbled past the **border** gate, the road for miles ahead was lined with thousands of ecstatic Kurds, who clapped, cheered and waved the Kurdish flag. Many had tears in their eyes. Some even kissed the tanks and trucks as they passed. The soldiers, Iraqi Kurds, were on their way through **Turkey** to help defend Kobani, a Syrian **border** city, against ISIS. Their route that day traced an arc from northern Iraq through southeastern **Turkey** and onward into northern Syria: the historical heartland of the Kurdish people. For the bystanders who cheered them on under a hazy autumn sky, the date was deliciously symbolic. It was **Turkey**'s Republic Day.

TD

What had long been a grim annual reminder of Turkish rule over the Kurds was transformed into rapture, as they watched Kurdish soldiers parade through three countries where they have long dreamed of founding their own republic.

Some who stood on the roadside that day have told me it changed their lives. The battle against the Islamic State had made the downtrodden Kurds into heroes. In the weeks and months that followed, the Kurds watched in amazement as fighters aligned with the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or P.K.K. — long branded a terrorist group by **Turkey** and the United States — became the central protagonists in the defense of Kobani. The P.K.K.'s Syrian affiliate worked closely with the American military, identifying ISIS targets for airstrikes.

By the time ISIS withdrew from Kobani in January 2015, the Kurdish militants had paid a heavy price in blood. But they gained admirers all over the world. The Pentagon, impressed by their skill at guerrilla warfare, saw an essential new ally against ISIS. There was renewed talk in Europe of removing the P.K.K. from terrorism lists, often in news articles accompanied by images of beautiful female Kurdish soldiers in combat gear. For many Turkish Kurds, the lesson was unmistakable: Their time had come. I met a 27-year-old P.K.K. activist in **Turkey**, who asked not to be named, fearing reprisals from the government, and who first went to Kobani in 2012, when the Kurds began carving out a state for themselves in Syria called Rojava. "I remember talking to P.K.K. fighters, and I thought, They're crazy to think they can do this," she said. "Now I look back and think, If they can do it there, we can do it here."

Nineteen months after that convoy passed, the feelings it inspired have helped to start a renewed war between **Turkey** and its Kurdish rebels. Turkish tanks are now blasting the ancient cities of the Kurdish southeast, where young P.K.K.-supported rebels have built barricades and declared "liberated zones." More than a thousand people have been killed and as many as 350,000 displaced, according to figures from the International Crisis Group. The fighting, which intensified last fall, has spread to Ankara, the Turkish capital, where two suicide bombings by Kurdish militants in February and March killed 66 people. Another sharp escalation came in mid-May, when P.K.K. supporters released a video online seeming to show one of the group's fighters bringing down a Turkish attack helicopter with a shoulder-fired missile, a weapon to which the Kurds have rarely had access. Yet much of the violence has been hidden from public view by state censorship and military "curfews" — a government word that scarcely conveys the reality of tanks encircling a Kurdish town and drilling it with shellfire for weeks or months on end.

The conflict has revived and in some ways exceeded the worst days of the P.K.K.'s war with the Turkish state in the 1990s. The fighting then was brutal, but it was mostly confined to remote mountains and villages. Now it is devastating cities as well and threatening to cripple an economy already burdened by ISIS bombings and waves of refugees from Syria. In Diyarbakir, the capital of a largely Kurdish province, artillery and bombs have destroyed much of the historic district, which contains Unesco world heritage sites. Churches, mosques and khans that have stood for centuries lie in ruins. Tourism has collapsed. Images of shattered houses and dead children are stirring outrage in other countries where Kurds live: Iraq, Syria and Iran.

This war, unlike earlier chapters in the centuries-old Kurdish struggle, is also creating a painful dilemma for the United States. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of **Turkey** is furious about American support for the P.Y.D., a leading Kurdish party in Rojava, which the Erdogan government considers a P.K.K. front. The White House says it has little choice: Erdogan has offered limited help in the fight against ISIS, despite years of American lobbying. That has pushed the United States to rely more and more on the P.Y.D., which it views as distinct from the P.K.K. American Special Operations troops now arm, equip and advise these Kurdish fighters, even as **Turkey** shells their bases farther west — and pays Islamist militias to attack them. As the war in **Turkey** grinds on, the United States is confronting a perilous sideshow that has begun to drain the energy and attention of the two allies it needs most. If it continues to spread, it could be worse than a distraction. As one Obama administration official put it to me: "Post-Paris, post-Brussels, we have to clear ISIS out. If it turns out that the coalition can't operate in that space" — because of **Turkey**'s conflict with the Kurds — "then we have a serious problem."

The Turkish city Nusaybin sits directly on the long southern **border** with Syria, a faded cluster of stone and cinder-block dwellings where truckers often stop on their way eastward to Iraq. Driving by, you would scarcely guess that it has been an outpost and a battleground for a half-dozen empires over the past 3,000 years, from the Aramaeans to the Ottomans. It still contains Roman ruins and one of the Middle East's oldest churches. It has been a Kurdish town since a century ago, when Christian residents fled southward from Turkish pogroms that started during the upheavals of World War I. Last summer, when the fighting broke out, Kurdish youth affiliated with the P.K.K. built barricades around several neighborhoods making up about half the town. The Turks initiated several short military operations during the autumn and winter, but the defenders kept them at bay with a mix of well-placed roadside bombs and snipers.

I entered in early March with the help of a local activist, who acted as a translator and guided me as we drove along a winding road on the edge of town. We had to carefully avoid army and police checkpoints; journalists are strictly barred by the Turkish government from reporting on the insurgency, and even the mildest expression of sympathy for the rebels can earn a prison sentence. As a result, what has happened behind the barricades and under "curfew" has gone largely unreported.

We stopped near a bridge over a shallow creek with big holes blasted into it, the legacy of a car bomb several months earlier. The rusted carcass of an upturned water truck, riddled with bullet holes, marked the start of the insurgents' territory. We walked around it, and after a block or so we reached the first barricade, built of paving stones. It was about six feet high and three feet thick. We soon passed several more; the streets had been torn up to build them and were now mostly dusty earth. The area seemed deserted, but at last we heard voices and emerged into a vacant lot between houses. A young man came out to greet us, wearing a tan vest and clutching a walkie-talkie. He led us into a half-open patio that once served as a garage, where other fighters and activists were slumped on battered old couches, chatting and drinking tea and smoking.

They were all in their 20s, apart from a heavyset middle-aged woman who introduced herself laughingly, in Kurdish, as the "cook of the terrorists." They wore rumpled clothes and gave off a relaxed, faintly bohemian air; they seemed more like leftist college students on a weekend morning than guerrilla fighters. They told me they had all been protecting what they called the "liberated zone" since the summer. Some grew up here and had families still living alongside them. Nineteen civilians and 12 fighters were killed during the fighting in Nusaybin, they said. On the walls were big posters of several of the dead, with their names and the word sehid, or martyr. One of them looked no more than 16, a kid in a soccer jersey with the sweetest of smiles on his face.

Also on the walls were two big portraits of Abdullah Ocalan, the founder of the P.K.K., with his unmistakable log of a mustache and tussocky black eyebrows. Ocalan, a man of titanic ego who ruthlessly ordered the execution of rivals and dissidents, has been in prison on the Turkish island Imrali since his capture in 1999. He still lords over the movement — including its Syrian affiliate, the P.Y.D. — like an absent philosopher-king, issuing cloudy leftist declarations through his lawyers. Ocalan no longer directs the P.K.K.'s day-to-day operations, and no one has been allowed to see him for more than a year. I asked the fighters what they would do if Ocalan told them to take down the barricades and stop fighting. "We would stop," one of them said, with no hesitation. "We see Ocalan as our leader."

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No one in Nusaybin had any illusions about what was in store for them. A few days earlier, the war's realities burst into public view in Cizre, about two hours to the east. Cizre had been under curfew and closed to the outside world for almost three months, with tanks on nearby hillsides firing down on it. Few images had leaked past the military's blockade until the town was declared free of terrorists and partly reopened, early on a Wednesday morning.

I drove in with the first wave of returning residents. The damage was visible as soon as we passed the first checkpoint on the edge of town: Burned debris and shattered glass littered the main boulevard. Huge holes left by tank rounds gaped in the walls of buildings. Moving onward on foot, I followed the returnees into a residential district where the streets were half-blocked by piles of rubble. Roofs had collapsed earthward, the buildings' innards — mattresses, curtains, chair legs — sticking out at odd angles. A weird silence reigned. I saw people clutch their faces as they found their ruined homes. Others sobbed or shouted curses. Some were looking for children who were trapped in basements during the fighting. The smell of rotting corpses played in the spring breeze, hinting at what lay buried below. One man stared in wonder at a featureless pile of bricks and stones. This, he explained, had been the local mosque. Another grabbed my shoulder and stammered: "What is the accusation against us? That we are Kurds, and we refuse to be slaves. They are telling us, 'If you refuse to be slaves, we will kill you.'"

Now, on the patio in Nusaybin, the rebels talked to me about friends who died in Cizre, and they made clear that they expected an equally merciless assault any day. I asked whether by staying behind the barricades they were committing suicide. No one appeared to have survived the Turkish blockade in Cizre. One of them said: "The other side has more powerful weapons. We fight with our belief, so they can't stop us." Another one told me: "If you die, you die with honor."

The founder of modern **Turkey**, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, was bent on melding his fractious array of peoples into a single, homogeneous state. Starting under his rule in 1923, the Kurds, whose presence in the area goes back well over a thousand years, were rebranded "mountain Turks," their language and customs suppressed. Kurdish schools, organizations and publications were forbidden; even the words "Kurd" and "Kurdistan" were prohibited. Hundreds of thousands of Kurds fled to western **Turkey** and Europe, and the southeast became a neglected backwater.

The P.K.K. aimed to reverse all of this, preaching a reverence for transnational Kurdish identity and language under the banner of a secular, leftist program. Its war with the government has cost at least 30,000 lives since it began in 1984. The group's leader, Ocalan, cleverly played on **Turkey**'s rivalries with neighboring states to gain refuge for his fighters in Iraq, Syria and Iran, which are home to about half of the Middle East's roughly 30 million Kurds.

The Nusaybin rebels I met were mostly born in the mid-1990s, when the Kurdish conflict last crescendoed. One of them, a lanky 27-year-old with a lean, foxlike face, seemed startled when I asked about his childhood; I got the sense that no one had bothered to ask him before. He went by the nom de guerre Omer Aydin. He spoke quickly, hunching forward in his chair and steadily tapping his feet, his dark eyes glinting with a nervy, cheerful energy. He was born in a village near Nusaybin, the son of a farmer. His village was full of P.K.K. sympathizers, including his parents, who ardently supported the group's vision for a Kurdish state, and would shelter and feed its armed rebels as they slipped back and forth from their strongholds in the mountains. The military raided Aydin's village so many times — arresting young men, shooting up houses and animals — that Aydin's father gave up and moved the family to an Istanbul slum. Aydin's parents sent him to work in a clothing factory when he was 10. One day the factory boss overheard Aydin speaking Kurdish, the only language he knew, and rounded on him, shouting: "Never speak that language in here! You will speak Turkish." Aydin told me he would never forget that.

In those years, the Turkish military destroyed and evacuated thousands of Kurdish villages, creating a flood of displaced people. The state supported shadowy proxy groups like Kurdish Hezbollah (no connection to the Lebanese movement), which tortured and killed with impunity and fostered an atmosphere of terror. The P.K.K. responded with raids that killed hundreds of Turkish soldiers and police officers. Kurdish children born in the '90s are known to their elders as the "youth of the storm." They grew up with a legacy of anger. Tens of thousands were arrested as teenagers, and prison contact with P.K.K. members radicalized many. They are more likely to be unemployed than their non-Kurdish peers. And there are a lot of them: The bulk of the population in some Kurdish areas is under 20. Older Kurdish political figures often declare, in talks with the state, that they are the last generation the government can have a dialogue with; the next one, they say, is far more radical. It's a pressure tactic, and it has become a talking point. It may also be true.

By the time Aydin was in his teens, his father and all of his eight brothers had been arrested on charges of P.K.K. activity. So had many other relatives; one childhood friend was shot dead by Turkish soldiers in the mountains. Aydin had spent a total of four years in school. He learned Turkish there; he still didn't speak it well. "When you are 15 or 16 years old, you are looking for something," Aydin told me. "After what happened to my brothers, my father, all the arrests and the killings, I looked at my life and said: I

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should do something toward a revolution." He joined the P.K.K. I asked him how it happened, and he grinned mischievously. "When there is a light in the dark, you will find your way to it," he said.

Aydin trained in the mountains, learning how to handle a gun, set bombs, evade capture and communicate with fellow members. He then spent a decade in a series of Turkish cities, mostly helping to recruit other young Kurds. This, too, is a mark of his generation. The Kurds were a rural people for thousands of years, but in the past two or three decades that abruptly changed, and most now live in cities. By 2014, the P.K.K. had ordered Aydin to Nusaybin. His primary task was to supervise the recruitment and training of young locals. These youth affiliates were given a new name: the Y.D.G.-H., which later grew into Y.P.S. (The P.K.K. is known for its love of abbreviations.) Many were only teenagers.

At the time, there was some hope for an end to the conflict. After its high point in the 1990s, violence had lapsed under Erdogan, who quietly loosened restrictions on Kurdish language and culture after he came to power in 2002. He also promoted economic development in the long-neglected southeast. Many Kurds were moved and impressed when Erdogan said in a 2005 speech that "the Kurdish problem is not only the problem of one part of my nation, it is a problem of every one of us, including myself." Progress was slow and halting, but after a cease-fire was declared in 2013, Turkish security forces largely withdrew from Kurdish cities in the southeast, softening old resentments. Some Kurds told me they felt free to walk late at night without fear of arrest for the first time. You could even wave a P.K.K. flag without receiving a jailhouse beating.

Erdogan had long appeared to believe that peacefully resolving the Kurdish issue would bolster his reputation as a unifying leader and win more votes from Turkish Kurds. He needed those votes to accomplish a larger goal: revising **Turkey**'s Constitution to create a presidential system that would augment his own powers. To get there, he would need to offset the rise of a new Kurdish political party, the H.D.P., which was expanding beyond its base to appeal to other minorities and even to some liberal Turks. The party's soft-spoken leader, Selahattin Demirtas, seemed to embody widespread hopes for a new center of gravity that would marginalize Ocalan and the militant P.K.K. leaders in the Qandil Mountains of northern Iraq. He spoke of a more pluralist **Turkey**, with greater local control within the Kurdish areas in exchange for a reconciliation with the Turkish state. This vision was very popular with ordinary Kurds, which made the H.D.P. a real political threat to Erdogan. To outflank it, he would need to tackle the Kurdish issue himself — and get credit for it.

With all this in mind, Erdogan gave his blessing in mid-2014 to an unlikely series of meetings on the prison island of Imrali. Every few weeks, Ocalan sat at a table with H.D.P. leaders and members of **Turkey**'s intelligence ministry, discussing the terms of a P.K.K. disarmament. Hatip Dicle, a Kurdish political figure who participated, told me that the meetings helped to build trust. Several times, the parties relayed grievances about government arrests or unwelcome P.K.K. moves, and they were sent back down the chain and resolved, Dicle said. Notes from each meeting were instantly relayed to both Erdogan and the P.K.K.'s leaders in the mountains. Finally, in late February 2015, a joint news conference took place in Istanbul with **Turkey**'s deputy prime minister and leading H.D.P. members to announce a 10-point plan, including both the P.K.K.'s disarmament and enhanced local authority in the Kurdish southeast. They even relayed a message from Ocalan: "This is a historic declaration of will to replace armed struggle with democratic politics."

But that triumph was stillborn. Before the battle of Kobani became a high point of Kurdish pride, it began sowing mistrust. Weeks before their troops were allowed to join the fighting, the Kurds watched with outrage as Erdogan breezily predicted an ISIS victory in Kobani and refused to allow Turkish Kurds to cross to the rescue. There were protests across the southeast, and young P.K.K. members began building barricades; the police responded with force, shooting and killing dozens of protesters. Only weeks later and under heavy international pressure did Erdogan allow the Iraqi Kurdish convoy to pass through and join the battle. As Kobani fueled a wider sense of Kurdish empowerment, Erdogan appears to have concluded that he was being played for a fool. Within weeks of the news conference, he began distancing himself from the peace talks. He declared that "there is no Kurdish problem" and ultimately denied that he'd even known what his deputies were doing. All dialogue was dropped, and the government took away Ocalan's ability to communicate with the outside world.

The P.K.K. began making menacing noises. In July, amid mutual recriminations, P.K.K. militants killed two police officers in the town of Sanliurfa. Young Kurdish militants began rebuilding their barricades across the southeast, and this time, they were armed.

The P.K.K. and the Turkish state seem to have jointly stumbled back into war, like an old couple who cannot let go of their quarrels. "We did not think at first of barricades," Aydin told me. "We thought at first of a revolution among ordinary people, based on the demand for self-administration. But after we declared autonomy, the state attacked brutally. It was like a red flag to the bull. We saw we cannot defend ourselves with small barricades, so we built them bigger."

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The radicalism of the P.K.K.'s younger urban members clearly played a role. Some of these fighters even speak dismissively of the H.D.P. — the flagship Kurdish political party in **Turkey** — as a pack of cowardly appeasers. One young activist who spent time in Cizre before the final assault there told me she'd watched a delegation of sympathetic Kurdish political figures arrive inside the barricades to press for a cease-fire, only to be rebuffed. Afterward, she said, one of the young commandos — now dead — declared: "Lies, all lies. They say, 'We're with you,' but when we die they'll come and take selfies with our corpses."

For all their talk of victimhood, the young radicals have become adept at waging guerrilla war. Almost 500 Turkish police officers and soldiers have been killed since the cease-fire ended, many by snipers. The streets around the Nusaybin "liberated zone" were planted with roadside bombs, I was later told, to be used in case of a Turkish assault. Two days after my first visit there, a car bomb exploded outside a police building a few hundred yards away, killing two officers and wounding dozens of civilians.

After we'd finished talking, Aydin led me out into the bright spring sunshine. I heard a high voice shouting orders. In the vacant lot, about two dozen women dressed in combat fatigues and balaclava-style head coverings were doing an exhibition drill, their boots crunching the ground in unison as they swung their rifles up, across their shoulders and down. A row of female commanders stood at attention in front of them. It was International Women's Day, an opportunity for women to showcase their powerful role in the movement. One paradox of the P.K.K. is its blend of ardent feminism and cultish devotion to Ocalan. Many women are escaping difficult homes. They credit Ocalan with elevating Kurdish women from a traditional life, in which honor killings were common, to a position of power and respect. A number of women in the movement told me that their first experience handling weapons was revelatory. One who fought as a sniper in Kobani described the moment when she killed her first man, an ISIS fighter: "I felt as if fire were streaming from my eyes," she said. I had expected some expression of remorse or unease, but instead her face glowed with a kind of exaltation as she said the words.

Most of the women that day carried AK-47s, but one had a Russian-made sniper rifle, and I glimpsed a rocket-propelled grenade launcher off to the side. Several dozen children and older women sat near a **wall**, watching. At one point, a commander held out a sheet of paper and read a statement aloud in a strident voice. "In the spirit of our martyrs, we will fight harder in our self-administered areas. We will not forget our comrades murdered in Cizre." She continued: "We invite all the women of Kurdistan to fight behind the barricades." Aydin leaned over and told me that women made up about half the fighters in Nusaybin.

When the military maneuvers were over, the women put away their guns and formed lines to do a traditional folk dance, their voices sailing over the empty streets in trilling ululations. Some of the civilian women had dressed up in bright, sequiny gowns for the occasion, and joined the dance. A tinny P.A. system blasted P.K.K. anthems, including one about Rojava — the new Kurdish statelet in Syria — and the battle of Kobani. There were frequent choruses of allegiance to "Apo," the Kurdish word for uncle, Ocalan's nickname.

From where we stood, the **border** was only a few hundred meters to the south. From the rooftops around us, you could easily see the grain silos and watchtowers of Qamishli, the new capital of Rojava, where Ocalan's portrait hangs almost everywhere. It struck me that if the Turkish military waged full-scale war here, it would be like the battle of Kobani in reverse. The Syrian Kurds — many of them cousins of those in Nusaybin — would be sorely tempted to come to their aid.

The rebels I spoke to claimed to be the voice of a colonized and dispossessed people. But after nine months of war, many middle-class Turkish Kurds say the P.K.K.'s decision to take on the state was madness. In Diyarbakir's historic Sur district, the fighting has destroyed a shopping and small-business hub that was the heart of the city's economy. Thousands of jobs have been lost, and investors who flocked to the city during the cease-fire — when new hotels were being built — have fled. Even in Cizre and other bastions of P.K.K. support, many people quietly admit that they blame the insurgents.

I met a 42-year-old gas dealer in Cizre who showed me the ruins of his house, what once must have been an attractive three-story home, with a stone courtyard. "We didn't want this, any of it," he told me. "When the youth started building barricades and digging trenches, we warned them, 'You are doing something dangerous; we are civil people.' They said, 'We are protecting you.' You see the result." The man said he and other local business leaders held meetings with the insurgents and the governor during the autumn, and appealed for peace. He stared at the remains of his house for a moment. "Both sides are responsible," he said. "We are caught in between, and our hearts are broken."

Within the movement, the violence has clearly radicalized many young people. But there, too, I heard some quiet but telling voices of dissent. One of them was a 24-year-old woman, a battle-tested P.K.K. sniper whose commitment to the group was beyond question. She grew up in Silvan, another movement stronghold, to a family crowded with P.K.K. members and martyrs. She had not planned to join the

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organization herself, but as a university student in western Turkey, she grew resentful that the university authorities treated her and other Kurds as potential criminals. She began reading Ocalan's writings, and his ideas — especially about women's empowerment — won her over.

She did her military and political training in the Qandil Mountains. Before it was over, the ISIS assault on Kobani began, and she and another new recruit joined. She fought inside Kobani for more than a month, often coming so close to ISIS fighters that she could see their faces. She carried one grenade on each hip: one to use against the enemy, one to blow herself up in case of capture. Several of her comrades used their grenades this way, she said. The Kurds lost huge numbers of people. In her 25-person unit, only three survived. She described carrying away the remains of friends who were eviscerated by a suicide truck bomb. "You don't have time to have emotions," she said. "You go back to your fighter mood." In November, she was injured in the back by a collapsing barricade and was taken to the mountains for surgery.

I asked her whether she had been tempted to join the P.K.K.'s struggle in Turkey, behind the barricades. She was living in Mardin at the time, a short drive from Nusaybin. She said no. Then she was silent for almost a full minute, her open face suddenly full of unease.

"When we were fighting in Kobani, we knew we'd get a result," she said. "Here, when they fight, they don't see a result. I don't want to die for a cause that brings no results. All the world knew what we were doing in Kobani. The fight had a meaning. Here, I don't see a meaning." She continued: "When I look around at my generation, everybody's mind is confused. People are asking: Are these trenches right or wrong?"

Her feelings echo those of many other war-weary Kurds, who watched in dismay last summer as Turkey's politics congealed once again into hostile camps. All hopes for a middle ground vanished. The H.D.P. had to take sides once the fighting started, and its highest-ever share of votes in June — 13 percent — dropped to 10 percent in the November elections. Many believe that if elections were held today, the party would not be in Parliament at all. "The H.D.P.'s constituency was based on a bridge between Kurds and non-Kurds," Gonul Tol, a Turkey analyst at the Middle East Institute in Washington, told me. "After that bridge collapsed, the H.D.P. had to take a more extreme stance in order to hold onto its base. It became little more than a front for the P.K.K."

I saw this drama being enacted at some of the P.K.K. funerals I attended in March, where H.D.P. politicians seemed desperate to shore up their base. After my last visit to Nusaybin, an activist invited me to attend the funeral of a veteran P.K.K. commando, who was killed the night before in a gun battle with Turkish soldiers. We had to drive for 20 minutes along narrow country roads to get to her village, a cluster of stone houses overlooking a magnificent landscape of rolling hills and olive trees. Several guests told me the village was a celebrated center of P.K.K. support, with many local martyrs. As we arrived, we could see images of the dead fighter's face — lean and ascetic, with short dark hair — being held aloft on posters; relatives also handed out stamp-size pictures for guests to pin on their lapels. Her name was Jiyan Konak, and relatives told me she spent 22 years as a fighter. We waited alongside geese, turkeys and clucking chickens until a coffin draped in a flag emerged from her parents' house, with scores of women ululating and holding up the victory sign with their fingers. At least half a dozen local officials and members of Parliament, all from the H.D.P., were there. When the ceremony began, the relatives and elders gave short, simple speeches. The H.D.P. members delivered long, fierce tirades against the "horrific enemy" — the Turkish government — that killed Konak. One of them, a middle-aged female lawmaker in an elegant gray patterned blazer and scarf, spoke longer than anyone else. "Kobani did not fall, and northern Kurdistan will triumph, too," she said, her voice rising almost to a shriek as she neared her conclusion. "The Kurdish woman will triumph soon. Leader Apo will triumph soon. She was not the first martyr, and she won't be the last. Until we win our freedom on this land, we will continue to fight!"

If the H.D.P. has dropped all caution, so has Erdogan. The man who once held back Turkey's trigger-happy security services has now given them carte blanche. "Turkey has no Kurdish problem, but a terror problem," he said in January. "No one should try to palm it off on us as a Kurdish problem." He later called for members of Parliment to be stripped of their immunity, so H.D.P. leaders could be prosecuted and jailed as terrorists, and parliamentary debates devolved into mass fistfights. In mid-May, the Parliament passed the immunity-lifting measure, an act that is likely to push more Kurds toward militancy.

At the same time, Erdogan has led a crackdown on the press, with the state jailing critical journalists and academics en masse and closing down opposition outlets; scarcely any remain. He has urged Parliament to "redefine" terrorism in a way that is ominously broad. "The fact that their title is lawmaker, academic, writer, journalist or head of a civil society group doesn't change the fact that that individual is a terrorist," he said in March. Even in Erdogan's own party, total loyalty to the president has become a condition of survival. Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, long viewed as a flunky, was forced out unceremoniously in

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early May after some mild gestures of difference with Erdogan, including on the Kurdish issue; he had hinted at a return to peace talks. “The one who talks about peace in wartime is as much a traitor as the one who talks about war in peacetime,” wrote an Erdogan ally, in an anonymous denunciation of Davutoglu posted on a blog on May 1.

This all-or-nothing strategy seems guaranteed to return **Turkey** to the days when the Kurds were forced to choose between the P.K.K. and the state. If that happens, many who are now critical of the P.K.K.’s violence and hungry for an alternative will fall in line behind Ocalan’s minions. **Turkey**’s compliant mainstream media, meanwhile, have done their part to whip up a nationalist frenzy. Turn on a TV anywhere in **Turkey**, and you will see frequent footage of soldiers’ funerals, but no mention of civilian casualties or the hundreds of thousands forced to leave their homes.

Anyone who tries to reach across the gap becomes a target. One of the country’s few remaining bridge figures was Tahir Elci, a celebrated Kurdish human rights lawyer and president of the Diyarbakir Bar Association. Elci had a long record of taking on the state, but he also publicly criticized the P.K.K., something very few people — including H.D.P. members of Parliament — were willing to do. In the fall, the drumbeat of death threats against Elci rose after he said in a televised interview that he considered the P.K.K. an armed political organization rather than a terrorist group. A month later, facing prosecution for his comments, he appeared at a midday news conference in Diyarbakir, where he called again for an end to the conflict. Moments later, gunfire broke out, and a bullet struck him in the neck. The killing remains unsolved. His funeral drew tens of thousands of mourners.

The Turkish government has pledged to rebuild the southeast and to make peace with the Kurds in its own way. So far, that effort does not look promising. I happened to be driving toward Silopi, another town ravaged by war, on the day in March when Prime Minister Davutoglu, then still in government, was visiting. We could see Black Hawk helicopters crisscrossing the sky as we approached, and a long convoy of armored vehicles — part of his security detail — blocked traffic for hours. It was painfully apparent that this remained enemy territory for the Turkish state. Government officials have hinted that they have their own Kurdish intermediaries, and Davutoglu met with some of these during his visit. This is an old Turkish strategy: For decades, the state paid “village guards” to fight the P.K.K., and the Ottomans had their own divide-and-rule strategies. If history is any guide, this will sow more violence without damaging the P.K.K.’s popular legitimacy.

Europe once had the power to play a moderating role, thanks to **Turkey**’s decades-long quest to join the European Union. But the migrant crisis has reversed that equation. European Union officials are now so desperate for **Turkey** to stop the flow of refugees that they have made little mention of **Turkey**’s civil rights issues or the Kurds in recent talks. One Kurd who lost his house in Cizre told me bitterly that no one would help, “because the E.U. only cares about stopping the migrants.”

The United States may have more leverage. The Paris and Brussels attacks have raised the pressure on President Obama to destroy the ISIS sanctuary in Syria and Iraq, and it is clear that **Turkey**’s Kurdish conflict is putting this effort at risk by dividing the administration’s two key allies. “What’s concerning is that while **Turkey** has every right to fight the P.K.K., it’s increasingly becoming a conflict pitting **Turkey** against the Kurds,” one administration official told me. “That jeopardizes the credibility of even our friends among the Kurds, including Iraqi Kurds.” American officials have tried to keep their Kurdish allies in Syria from unnecessarily provoking the Turks. They say they are not aware of any P.Y.D. fighters or weaponry being transferred north to be used against the Turkish military. The Turks dispute that claim and insist that American weapons sent for use against ISIS have been passed northward and used by the P.K.K. (The shoulder-fired missile shown in the recent online video has prompted widespread speculation about a weapons trail from Syria.) The Obama administration officials I spoke with said they believed that if a peace deal is reached, the Turks will eventually become reconciled to a Kurdish statelet in Syria, just as they agreed to (and even helped midwife) the birth of Iraqi Kurdistan a decade ago. Perhaps. But the Turks say the two situations cannot be compared. In mid-March, the Syrian Kurds took another step toward independence, voting to establish a self-governing federal region. The announcement prompted angry rebuttals from the Turkish and Syrian governments and Arab opposition factions fighting in Syria.

Meanwhile, the Americans are trying to find Arab allies who could substitute for the Kurds in a push to conquer Raqqa, the Islamic State’s capital. But they are hobbled by **Turkey**’s insistence on treating not just the P.Y.D. but also anyone who has worked with it, including Arabs, as terrorists. The fact that Erdogan’s government has itself supported hard-line Islamist militias in Syria — including some with ties to Al Qaeda — only adds to the American frustration. The Obama administration appears to be forging ahead with its plans, despite Turkish complaints: In late April, Obama announced that an additional 250 Special Operations troops were on their way to northeastern Syria to work with the Kurdish-led force there. American officials say they have little choice; the Turks have provided no viable alternatives for an assault on Raqqa. For Erdogan, fighting ISIS remains secondary to ousting President Bashar al-Assad of Syria, whom he blames for the region’s turmoil.

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Erdogan's visit to Washington in late March did nothing to address these tensions. The visit was for nuclear-security talks, but Erdogan reportedly lashed out angrily at American policy during an off-the-record dinner with former government officials and academics, and complained repeatedly about the American refusal to treat the P.Y.D. as a terrorist group. During a public speech at the Brookings Institution, his security guards got into a nasty melee outside the building, shoving and shouting at journalists, protesters and Brookings personnel. The guards ordered a prominent Turkish journalist, Amberin Zaman, to leave, calling her a "P.K.K. whore"; security staff members had to stop the guards from removing other journalists from inside the auditorium. In video clips, beefy Turkish guards in dark suits and sunglasses can be seen shouting at pro-Kurdish protesters and being restrained by police officers. **Turkey**'s Kurdish problem seemed, for a moment, to have spread all the way to Massachusetts Avenue.

A few days after my last visit to Nusaybin in March, the authorities announced a new military "curfew," and thousands of civilians began streaming out of the town. Within days, images began appearing on Twitter of tanks firing into the same buildings where I had sat chatting with young insurgents, and smoke rising from the city. Many of the photographs were taken by sympathetic Syrian Kurds from just over the **border** in Rojava, where they had a good view of the fighting. The Turkish media reported soldiers killed by bombs and snipers. The activist who had taken me to Nusaybin sent me a set of color sketches she made on her iPad, showing tanks, fighters with guns, bloodied bodies, dead children.

I thought about Omer Aydin, the P.K.K. commander who told me his life story. Most of the fighters I met refused to say much about their feelings; they retreated behind a stoical mask and repeated the same P.K.K. talking points. Not Aydin. "I can't forget the face of this soldier I killed," he said at one point. "At the end, they are human, too." Aydin seemed a little defensive about the justice of his cause, as if he understood that he and his fellow rebels were putting the lives of ordinary people at risk. A few months earlier, he told me, he'd been on the lookout for Turkish snipers when he walked past a mother holding a baby who was crying uncontrollably. The sight unnerved him for a moment. "I passed, and when he saw my weapon, he stopped crying," Aydin said. "He was 5 or 6 months old. I had a feeling: Even this baby knows why we're fighting. I will never forget this."

One afternoon at the end of March, I received a message from my activist contact in Nusaybin. She had fled the city. There were reports of terrible firefights that day, with tanks blasting buildings into rubble in an effort to recapture the P.K.K. neighborhoods and young rebels struggling to push them back. Omer Aydin, she said, was dead.

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Robert F. Worth is a contributing writer for the magazine. His book on the legacy of the Arab uprisings, "A Rage for Order," was published in April by Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

ART Kurds in Cizre, **Turkey**, on March 2, surveying the damage after much of their town was destroyed by Turkish forces. | Moises Saman/Magnum, for The New York Times | Omer Aydin, 27, a Kurdistan Workers' Party (P.K.K.) fighter in Nusaybin, **Turkey**. | Moises Saman/Magnum, for The New York Times | Kurdish residents of Cizre returning to their destroyed neighborhood on March 3. | Moises Saman/Magnum, for The New York Times | A unit of female Kurdish fighters in Nusaybin, **Turkey**. | Moises Saman/Magnum, for The New York Times

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS c12 : Corporate Crime/Legal Action | gterr : Terrorism | ncolu : Columns | ccat : Corporate/Industrial News | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National/Public Security | gcrim : Crime/Legal Action | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter | nfcpin : C&E Industry News Filter

RE turk : Turkey | syria : Syria | kurd : Kurdistan | iraq : Iraq | usa : United States | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | namz : North America | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Ocalan, Abdullah

PUB The New York Times Company

AN Document NYTFEED020160524ec5o002bd

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HD **Turkey Completes Building Wall on Borders With Syria, Iraq – Reports**

CR РИАН

WC 131 words

PD 14 January 2017

ET 20:24

SN Sputnik News Service

SC RVESEN

LA English

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LP

ANKARA, January 14 (Sputnik) – **Turkey** finished building concrete **wall** along the state's **border** with Syria and Iraq for security reasons, local media reported Saturday, citing the Turkish General Staff.

The Anadolu news agency reported that the total length of the **wall** was 330 kilometers (approximately 205 miles) and the 191-kilometer segment of the southern **border** was fenced with barbed wire.

TD

The news agency reported that 57,186 attempts of illegal **border** crossings were prevented over the past year due to the increased security measures.

The number of people, trying to join Islamic State (IS) terrorist group dropped by seven times compared to 2015, the news agency added.

IS is a terrorist organization outlawed in many countries, including Russia.

NS gsec : State Security Measures/Policies | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National/Public Security

RE turk : Turkey | syria : Syria | iraq : Iraq | ankra : Ankara | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD SYRIA

IPC 160

PUB Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency

AN Document RVESEN0020170114ed1e007vd

HD **Turkey completes building wall on borders with Syria, Iraq**

WC 118 words

PD 15 January 2017

SN Mehr News Agency

SC MENEAG

LA English

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LP

ANKARA, Jan. 15 (MNA) - **Turkey** finished building concrete **wall** along the state's **border** with Syria and Iraq for security reasons, local media reported Saturday, citing the Turkish General Staff.

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SPUTNIK/MNA

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IPD Politics

PUB Mehr News Agency

AN Document MENEAG0020170115ed1f0005p

HD **Turkey plans to build walls along borders with Iraq, Iran**

WC 131 words

PD 1 June 2017

ET 19:53

SN Associated Press Newswires

SC APRS

LA English

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LP

ANKARA, **Turkey** (AP) — Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan says his country plans to build walls along its borders with Iraq and Iran, similar to the one currently being erected along the frontier with Syria.

Erdogan said Thursday that **Turkey** has so far completed the construction of a 650-kilometer (403-mile) stretch of the **wall** along the 911-kilometer **border** with Syria.

TD

Turkey began building the **wall** in 2014 to boost its security by preventing infiltrations of Kurdish militants and Islamic State group fighters as well as refugees from Syria.

Erdogan said **Turkey** aims to build along its entire **border** with Syria.

He added: "We'll do the same along the Iraqi **border** and in appropriate places along the Iranian **border**."

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

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IPD EU

IPC i

PUB The Associated Press

AN Document APRS000020170601ed6100lb0

EXPRESS.co.uk
Home of the Daily and Sunday Express

HD **GREAT WALL OF TURKEY: Erdogan plans to build HUGE barrier on Iran and Iraq border**

BY By Katie Mansfield

WC 598 words

PD 3 June 2017

ET 14:38

SN express.co.uk

SC EXCO

LA English

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LP

TURKEY plans to build huge walls along its borders with Iran and Iraq as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan mounts a security crackdown.

REUTERS/ ANADOLU

TD

Turkish President Erdogan has vowed to build a **wall** along the borders of Iran and Iraq

The Turkish president said Ankara plans to build walls along its borders with southern neighbours Iraq and Iran in addition to the **wall** currently being built along the Syrian **border**.

Construction is well underway on the **wall** along the **Turkey**-Syria **border** with 403 miles of the **wall** already completed.

The **wall** will stretch the distance of the 566 mile **border** as **Turkey** bids to protect its national borders and boost security.

Related articles Macron takes on Erdogan and demands French journalist 'wrongfully' ... **Turkey** backlash: EU states gang up on Erdogan ahead of Nato summit

Work on the Syria **wall** started in 2014 with Ankara determined to stop ISIS militants, illegal immigrants and Kurdistan Workers' Party fighters from entering **Turkey**.

A ceasefire between the Turkish state and the PKK broke down in July 2015 with violence gripping the region.

Announcing plans for the Iraq and Iran **border** walls, Mr Erdogan said: "We'll do the same along the Iraqi **border** and in appropriate places along the Iranian **border**."

It is thought the Iran **wall** will stretch 43 miles with towers, iron fences and round-the-clock surveillance installed along the remaining **border**.

One official told Hurriyet Daily News: "The PKK has the Maku, Dambat, Navur, Kotr, Keneresh and Sehidan camps inside Iran near the Turkish **border**. There are some 800-1,000 PKK terrorists in those camps.

"They enter **Turkey**, carry out attacks and leave… As a precaution against this, we are going to build a **wall** along 70 kilometers of the **border** near Agrı and [the eastern province of] Igdir."

GETTY

President Erdogan said he wants to replicate the Syrian **border wall** along **Turkey**'s southern borders

Security officials are said to believe large numbers of PKK militants are hiding out in the Qandil Mountains in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Turkey's military killed six members of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party in air strikes in northern Iraq on Thursday, the army said in a statement.

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Turkish warplanes hit the Avasin-Basyan region in northern Iraq, killing PKK militants believed to be in preparation of an attack, the military said.

GETTY

Construction is well underway on the **wall** along the **Turkey**-Syria **border**

ANADOLU

Work on the **Turkey**-Syria **wall** started in 2014

The PKK, which has carried out a three-decade insurgency against the Turkish state, has camps in the mountains of northern Iraq, near the Turkish **border**.

It is considered a terrorist group by **Turkey**, the United States and European Union.

A ceasefire between the Turkish state and the PKK broke down in July 2015 and the southeast subsequently saw some of the worst violence since the PKK launched its insurgency in 1984.

Iranian political analyst Hassan Hanizadeh branded the construction plans “absurd”.

He said: "The construction of the **wall** on the Turkish-Iranian **border** will have no impact on the security within **Turkey** and is in itself absurd.

"Iran is one of the very few stable and secure countries in the Middle East. Iran has defied international terrorism and is waging war against this evil.”

Related articles Now **Turkey** builds HUGE **WALL**: 900km **border** with Syria to be CLOSED **Turkey** launch plans for home grown defence initiative with new drone Germany warns **Turkey** 'we will not be BLACKMAILED'

CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

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PUB News UK & Ireland Limited

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HD **Civilians pay price as Turkey battles Syrian Kurds**

BY By SUZAN FRASER and ZEINA KARAM

CR Associated Press

WC 1,656 words

PD 31 January 2018

ET 19:37

SN Associated Press Newswires

SC APRS

LA English

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LP

ANKARA, **Turkey** (AP) — Rockets fired from northern Syria into a Turkish **border** town killed a teenage girl and wounded another person on Wednesday, **Turkey**'s state-run news agency reported, in the latest fallout from Ankara's intensifying offensive on a Syrian Kurdish-controlled enclave.

Doctors inside the northwestern enclave of Afrin meanwhile warned of a rapidly worsening humanitarian situation, adding that medical supplies at the city's main hospital, which has received dozens of patients in the past week, were running low.

TD

Activists say more than 65 civilians have died in Afrin since **Turkey** launched its aerial and ground campaign on Jan. 20 to drive out a Syrian Kurdish militia. Ankara considers the Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units, or YPG, an extension of the outlawed Kurdish rebels fighting an insurgency inside **Turkey**.

The militia has hit back with occasional rockets across the **border**.

Turkey's Anadolu Agency said Syrian Kurdish fighters in Afrin fired two rockets Wednesday, hitting a house and a garden **wall** in the Turkish town of Reyhanli. Two people were hospitalized after the attack and one, 17-year-old Fatma Avlar, died from her wounds, the agency said. The attacks inside **Turkey** have so far killed four people, including Avlar. Two of the victims were Syrian refugees.

The Kurdish militia, meanwhile, accused **Turkey** of firing Katyusha rockets into Afrin, and reported that at least 12 people were wounded from the shelling.

"We appeal to the United Nations to stop this Turkish aggression," Khalil Sabri, head of the Afrin hospital, said at a press conference aired on Kurdish and some Arab channels. "The medical supplies we have are about to run out," he said.

Doctors at Afrin hospital issued appeals to halt the shelling, saying they were running dangerously low on supplies.

The Turkish offensive has strained relations between Ankara and Washington, which has partnered with the Syrian Kurds in the fight against the Islamic State group.

U.S. troops have no presence in Afrin, but **Turkey** has threatened to expand the offensive to Manbij, in eastern Syria, where U.S. troops carry out regular patrols as part of the fight against IS.

On Wednesday, the top American commander for the Middle East said the U.S. military is doing "everything we absolutely can" to avoid a confrontation with **Turkey** in Syria.

Gen. Joseph Votel, of U.S. Central Command, told reporters there is a "robust" coordination mechanism to avoid such friction.

NATO ally **Turkey** views the YPG as an extension of the Kurdish insurgency it has battled for decades. The Syrian Kurdish force is a key ally of the U.S.-led coalition and has driven IS from large parts of northern and eastern Syria.

Coalition officials have warned that the offensive could destabilize recent gains against IS along the Iraq-Syria **border** in the Euphrates River Valley.

The top U.S. general in Iraq said Tuesday, after a visit to a coalition outpost near the Iraqi **border** town of Qaim, that he is "very much concerned" the fight in Afrin could ease pressure on pockets of IS fighters in other parts of Syria.

"I don't want our partner to be distracted," said U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Paul Funk, referring to the Syrian Kurdish forces. "It's a continual fight (against IS) certainly on the Syrian side."

Iraqi forces declared victory over IS in December, but since the Afrin offensive began, Iraq's **border** guard has reported increased IS activity and attacks along the **border** with Syria.

If the Syrian Kurdish forces get deeply entangled in the fighting in Afrin, that could force them to shift fighters from the **border** area, said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Brandon Payne, who is stationed in western Iraq, not far from the Syrian **border**.

Such a scenario "essentially takes the focus off ISIS and gives ISIS manoeuvre space. We don't want to do that," he added, using an alternative acronym for IS.

On Wednesday, French President Emmanuel Macron warned **Turkey** against a full-scale invasion of Afrin and appealed on his Turkish counterpart, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, to respect Syria's sovereignty.

In an interview with French newspaper Le Figaro, Macron said that **Turkey** must coordinate with allies, and that its operation inside Syria must be limited to fighting terror. Macron said he would talk to Erdogan in the coming days.

"If it turned out that this operation had to take another turn than an action to fight against a potential terror threat at the Turkish **border**, and that it was an invasion operation, at that moment, this operation would pose a real problem for us," Macron said.

Turkey swiftly responded to Macron's remarks, with Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim saying the French president has a "flawed understanding" of **Turkey**'s cross-**border** offensive.

"The whole world knows and should know that **Turkey** does not operate with the mentality of an invader," Yildirim said.

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Karam reported from Beirut. Associated Press writers Susannah George at al-Asad Air Base, Iraq, and Karin Laub in Amman, Jordan contributed to this report.

ART Paramedics carry the body of a teenage girl killed on a rocket attach, fired from inside Syria, in the **border** town of Reyhanli, **Turkey**, Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2018. Rockets fired from northern Syria into the town killed the girl and wounded another person, **Turkey**'s state-run news agency reported Wednesday. (DHA-Depo Photos via AP) | Damage at the scene after a rocket attack, fired from inside Syria, in the **border** town of Reyhanli, **Turkey**, Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2018. Rockets fired from northern Syria into the town killed a teenage girl and wounded another person, **Turkey**'s state-run news agency reported Wednesday. (DHA-Depo Photos via AP) | A Turkish motorcyclist drives on the outskirts of the **border** town of Kilis, **Turkey**, in support of Turkish troops, Tuesday, Jan. 30, 2018. **Turkey** launched a military offensive against Afrin on Jan. 20 to drive out the Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units, or YPG, which is says are an extension of the outlawed Kurdish rebels inside **Turkey**. (AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis) | **Turkey**-backed Syrian opposition fighters of the Free Syrian Army drive towards the **border** with Syria, in the outskirts of the **border** town of Kilis, **Turkey**, Tuesday, Jan. 30, 2018. **Turkey** launched a military offensive against Afrin on Jan. 20 to drive out the Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units, or YPG, which is says are an extension of the outlawed Kurdish rebels inside **Turkey**. (AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis) | Residents react as the body of a teenage girl killed during a rocket attack, fired from inside Syria, is taken away in the **border** town of Reyhanli, **Turkey**, Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2018. Rockets fired from northern Syria into the town killed the girl and wounded another person, **Turkey**'s state-run news agency reported Wednesday. (DHA-Depo Photos via AP) | **Turkey**'s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, center, Prime Minister Binali Yildirim, left, and former Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu look toward the party members at the parliament in Ankara, **Turkey**, Tuesday, Jan. 30, 2018. Turkish troops and allied Syrian opposition fighters have cleared two villages in a northern Syrian enclave of Syrian Kurdish fighters which **Turkey** considers to be terrorists. Erdogan said Tuesday that Turkish troops, who had managed to capture the strategic Bursayah hill, northeast of Afrin town, on Sunday, were now attempting to take control of nearby hills and mountains.(AP Photo/Burhan Ozbilici) | Turkish police push back members of the media at the scene of a rocket attack, fired from inside Syria, in the **border** town of Kilis, **Turkey**, Tuesday, Jan. 30, 2018. **Turkey** had launched a military offensive against the nearby Kurdish enclave of Afrin on Jan. 20 to

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drive out the Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units, or YPG, which is says are an extension of the outlawed Kurdish rebels inside **Turkey**. (AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis) | Police and firefighters work at a scene of a rocket attack, fired from inside Syria, in the **border** town of Kilis, **Turkey**, Tuesday, Jan. 30, 2018. **Turkey** had launched a military offensive against the nearby Kurdish enclave of Afrin on Jan. 20 to drive out the Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units, or YPG, which is says are an extension of the outlawed Kurdish rebels inside **Turkey**. (AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis) | Members of ruling party shout slogans for **Turkey**'s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan at the parliament in Ankara, **Turkey**, Tuesday, Jan. 30, 2018. Erdogan said Tuesday that Turkish troops, who had managed to capture the strategic Bursayah hill, northeast of Afrin town, on Sunday, were now attempting to take control of nearby hills and mountains.(AP Photo/Burhan Ozbilici) | Turkish firefighters work at a scene of a rocket attack, fired from inside Syria, in the **border** town of Kilis, **Turkey**, Tuesday, Jan. 30, 2018. **Turkey** had launched a military offensive against the nearby Kurdish enclave of Afrin on Jan. 20 to drive out the Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units, or YPG, which is says are an extension of the outlawed Kurdish rebels inside **Turkey**. (AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis) | Police and firefighters work at a scene of a rocket attack, fired from inside Syria, in the **border** town of Kilis, **Turkey**, Tuesday, Jan. 30, 2018. **Turkey** had launched a military offensive against the nearby Kurdish enclave of Afrin on Jan. 20 to drive out the Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units, or YPG, which is says are an extension of the outlawed Kurdish rebels inside **Turkey**. (AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis) | Paramedics carry the body of a teenage girl killed on a rocket attach, fired from inside Syria, in the **border** town of Reyhanli, **Turkey**, Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2018. Rockets fired from northern Syria into the town killed the girl and wounded another person, **Turkey**'s state-run news agency reported Wednesday. (DHA-Depo Photos via AP)

NS gdef : Armed Forces | gvio : Military Action | gdip : International Relations | gcns : National/Public Security | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News

RE turk : Turkey | syria : Syria | ankra : Ankara | iraq : Iraq | meastz : Middle East | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Syria

IPC i

PUB The Associated Press

AN Document APRS000020180131ee1v0080y

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REUTERS

HD **Turkey's Erdogan says will bring safety and peace to Syria, Iraq**

WC 438 words

PD 26 August 2018

ET 16:35

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

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LP

ANKARA (Reuters) - Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan vowed on Sunday to bring peace and safety to Iraq and areas in Syria not under Turkish control and said terrorist organizations in those areas would be eliminated.

Turkey, which has backed some rebel groups in Syria, has been working with Russia, which supports Syrian President Bashar al Assad, and Iran for a political resolution to the crisis.

TD

It has so far carried out two cross-**border** operations along its **border** with Syria and set up a dozen military observations posts in the northern Syrian region of Idlib.

The rebel-held Idlib enclave is a refuge for civilians and rebels displaced from other areas of Syria as well as for powerful jihadist forces, but has been hit by a wave of air strikes and shelling this month.

The attacks posed a possible prelude to a full-scale Syrian government offensive, which **Turkey** has said would be disastrous.

Speaking in the southeastern province of Mus to commemorate the anniversary of the Battle of Manzikert of 1071, Erdogan vowed to bring peace and safety to Syria and Iraq.

"It is not for nothing that the only places in Syria where security and peace have been established are under **Turkey**'s control. God willing, we will establish the same peace in other parts of Syria too. God willing, we will bring the same peace to Iraq, where terrorist organizations are active," he said.

Erdogan also linked regional conflicts and an ongoing currency crisis in **Turkey**, which he has cast as an "economic war", to previous attempts to invade Anatolia, warning that the this would lead to the collapse of surrounding regions.

"Those who seek temporary reasons behind the troubles we have been facing recently are wrong, very wrong. The attacks we face today... are rooted in history," he said.

"Don't forget, Anatolia is a **wall** and if this **wall** collapses, there will no longer be a Middle East, Africa, Central Asia, Balkans or Caucasus."

Turkey's lira has tumbled nearly 40 percent this year as investor concerns over Erdogan's grip on monetary policy and a growing dispute with the United States put pressure on the currency.

Ankara has accused Washington of targeting **Turkey** over the fate of Andrew Brunson, an American pastor being tried in **Turkey** on terrorism charges that he denies.

"Some careless people among us think this is about Tayyip Erdogan or the AK Party. No, this is about **Turkey**," Erdogan said.

(Reporting by Tuvan Gumrukcu; Editing by Alison Williams, Richard Balmforth)

RF Released: 2018-8-26T14:35:18.000Z

NS gvio : Military Action | gdip : International Relations | ecat : Economic News | gdef : Armed Forces | gpol : Domestic Politics | ntop : Top Wire News | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National/Public

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RE	syria : Syria | turk : Turkey | ankra : Ankara | iraq : Iraq | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia
IPD	Politics
IPC	SERVICE:ORTAEM
PUB	Thomson Reuters (Markets) LLC
AN	Document LBA0000020180826ee8q00hld

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HD **Iraq : KDP wants to entice Turkey with oil and gas**

WC 410 words

PD 2 January 2013

SN Mena Report

SC MENREP

LA English

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LP

The Prime Minister of **Iraq** s autonomous Kurdistan Region Nechirvan Barzani s Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) wants to attract Turkey with oil and gas to support Kurdish **independence** from Baghdad.

Being landlocked we have to have a partner, a regional power to be convinced of Kurdish **independence** he said. Turkey needs something that it doesn t have, Barzani said.

TD

He referred to the vast reserves of oil and gas which the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) offers as bait to Turkey as their emergent economy and population need energy. The KRG is in need of Turkish and international investment to construct the pipelines as through the pipelines, its oil and gas can flow to Turkish markets and more.

Barzani said that a separate Ankara-Erbil deal will be needed for strong international backing. But Russia or China would not support Kurdish **independence**. The United States recently also opposed moves for separate deals between Turkey and the KRG.

Ankara is aware that signing oil and gas deals directly with the KRG without going through **Iraq** s central government would grant even greater **autonomy** to the **Kurds** and could even be a huge step toward full **independence** for the Kurdistan Region.

Though Ankara were prepared to court international opposition and Baghdad s anger at such a deal, it is held back by a major internal issue. That is more **autonomy** or **independence** for the Kurdistan Region would encourage Turkey s own **Kurds** in their quest for **independence**, led by the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

Turkish policy is against any Kurdish **independence**, I mean it s obvious. So this is the fate that we have been given, Barzani said.

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan is against Kurdish **independence** from Baghdad. The division of **Iraq** is being talked about, but I am of the opinion that this should not happen," Erdogan said.

Turkey s energy minister said that Ankara would respect Baghdad s constitutional sway over the Kurdistan Region. We will abide by the principles set forth in the Iraqi constitution in our oil dealings in northern **Iraq**, he told journalists in Ankara.

Barzani warned that the KDP might make a surprising move without hopeful signs from Turkey. And if that door, that hope is closed, it will be impossible for us to surrender to Baghdad. We will do something that will put in danger the interests of all those concerned, Barzani said.

RE turk : Turkey | kurd : Kurdistan | iraq : Iraq | baghd : Baghdad | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | vista : VISTA Countries | wasiaz : Western Asia

PUB Al Bawaba.com, Inc.

AN Document MENREP0020130102e912001p8

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REUTERS

HD **Kurdistan starts independent crude oil exports**

WC 627 words

PD 7 January 2013

ET 20:12

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

CY (c) 2013 Reuters Limited

LP

* First crude from Taq Taq oilfield reaches Turkish port

* Fresh tender for Kurdish condensate imminent

TD

* KRG oil exports via Baghdad-controlled pipeline halted

By Julia Payne and Peg Mackey

LONDON, Jan 7 (Reuters) - Kurdistan has begun to export crude oil directly to world oil markets through Turkey, industry sources said on Monday, which poses the biggest challenge yet to Baghdad's claim to full control over Iraqi oil.

The export of crude, in addition to small volumes of niche condensate, demonstrates the semi-autonomous region's growing frustration with Baghdad as it moves towards ever greater economic **independence**, the sources said.

The volume of oil involved is small, but industry sources said the direct export is highly symbolic as the KRG seeks more financial **independence** from Baghdad.

The first crude has been delivered by truck to the Turkish port of Mersin on the Mediterranean, shipping and industry sources said.

"The KRG gave us permission to start crude exports from the Taq Taq oilfield," Genel Energy President Mehmet Sepil said in an interview.

Control of oil is at the heart of a dispute between **Iraq**'s Arab-led central government and the autonomous region run by ethnic **Kurds** in the north. Baghdad insists the central government has the sole constitutional right to export oil.

In an apparent renewed dispute over payment, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) halted shipments through the Baghdad-controlled **Iraq**-Turkey pipeline last month.

The KRG began exporting its own very light oil, or condensate, independently to world markets in October by truck to a Turkish port, where it was sold via an intermediary.

Now the Kurdish region is adding crude from the Taq Taq oilfield, where London-listed explorer Genel Energy has a stake, to its slate of exports.

A fresh cargo of condensate is also ready to sell through an imminent tender, said a shipping source.

Industry sources reckon around 15,000 barrels per day (bpd)of condensate from the Khor Mor gas field are reaching the Toros terminal in Turkey. Crude oil exports from Taq Taq, for now, are also small.

In exchange, Turkey is sending back refined products to the Kurdish region, which is short of fuel.

Over the past year and a half, Kurdistan has upset Baghdad by signing deals directly with oil majors such as Exxon Mobil

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and Chevron, providing lucrative production-sharing contracts and better operating conditions than in **Iraq**'s south.

The KRG says its right to grant contracts to foreign oil firms is enshrined in the Iraqi constitution, which was drawn up following the 2003 invasion that ousted Sunni dictator Saddam Hussein.

But payments to foreign operators in Kurdistan are getting caught up in the long-running spat over land and petroleum rights.

Baghdad said last month it would not pay oil firms operating in Kurdistan because the region had failed to export the volume of crude it pledged under a deal struck in September.

That agreement stipulated that Kurdistan would pump crude through the Baghdad-controlled **Iraq**-Turkey pipeline in return for payment.

An export target of 200,000 bpd was set for the last two months of 2012, and Kurdish authorities pledged to raise exports to 250,000 bpd in 2013.

But exports of Kurdish oil have been halted since around mid-December, after nearing the 200,000 target early in the month.

Baghdad transferred an initial sum of 650 billion Iraqi dinars ($560 million) to the KRG. But a second payment is still pending for the foreign companies in Kurdistan.

(Reporting by Julia Payne and Peg Mackey; editing by Jane Baird)

RF KURDISTAN-CRUDE/EXPORTS (REPEAT) | ABN | O | OIL | C | D | E | M | U | MTL | GRO | SOF | BNX | GFN | UKI | RBN | RNP | DNP | PCO | PEN

IN i13 : Crude Oil/Natural Gas | i1 : Energy

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IPC TNKR

PUB Reuters Limited

AN Document LBA0000020130107e9170010d

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HD **First Kurdish fighters from Turkey arrive in Iraq**

BY Abdel Hamid Zebari

WC 481 words

PD 14 May 2013

ET 08:37

SN Agence France Presse

SC AFPR

LA English

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LP

The first group of Kurdish fighters leaving Turkey as part of a peace drive with Ankara arrived in the Harur area of Iraqi Kurdistan early Tuesday after a gruelling week-long journey.

"We are the first group to reach the safe area in **Iraq**," said Jagar, the leader of the group of Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) fighters, which comprised nine men and six women.

TD

The fighters, who arrived about 6:00 am (0300 GMT) and were armed with Kalashnikov assault rifles, light machineguns and rocket-propelled grenade launchers, were greeted with handshakes and hugs from PKK members based in **Iraq**.

After the welcome, the apparently-exhausted fighters put down their weapons and warmed themselves at a fire.

"Our withdrawal came according to orders from the leader (Abdullah) Ocalan, as we want to open a way for peace through this withdrawal," Jagar said, referring to the jailed chief of the PKK.

"We faced many difficulties because of rain and snow" during seven days on the road, he said, adding that they were observed by Turkish aircraft.

The PKK has fought a 29-year nationalist campaign against Ankara in which some 45,000 people have died, but is now withdrawing its fighters from Turkey as part of a push for peace with the Turkish authorities.

The roughly 2,000 fighters in Turkey are leaving on foot, travelling through the rugged border zone to reach safe havens in **Iraq**'s autonomous Kurdistan region, where they will join the thousands of fighters already present.

Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has repeatedly vowed that retreating rebels "will not be touched," and said that "laying down weapons" should be the top priority for the PKK.

The PKK however is demanding wider constitutional rights for Turkey's **Kurds**, who make up around 20 percent of the 75 million population, before disarming.

Over the years, the group's demands have evolved from outright **independence** to **autonomy** as well as cultural and language rights.

A permanent peace could transform Turkey's impoverished Kurdish-majority southeast, where investment has remained scarce and infrastructure insufficient due to the threat of clashes.

Turkey is believed to be home to the largest single community of ethnic **Kurds**, who are scattered across Turkey, **Iraq**, Iran and Syria.

Iraq's federal government, which has made repeated complaints to Turkey about air and artillery strikes targeting the PKK in its territory, is not pleased that more of the group's fighters will enter the country.

The foreign ministry said in a statement last week that while the Iraqi government welcomes any settlement that ends the PKK-Turkey conflict, it "does not accept the entry of armed groups into its territory".

But it is Kurdish, not federal, security forces who man **Iraq**'s border with Turkey and ultimately decide who enters the region.

bur-wd/

CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

NS gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | grisk : Risk News

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IPD 2ndlead

PUB Agence France-Presse

AN Document AFPR000020130514e95e003ec

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DOWJONES | Newswires

HD **2nd UPDATE: Turkey-Kurd Deal on Oil Riles Iraq**

BY By Emre Peker

WC 753 words

PD 15 May 2013

ET 01:09

SN Dow Jones News Service

SC DJ

LA English

CY (c) 2013 Dow Jones & Company, Inc.

LP

ISTANBUL--A Turkish state-run oil firm struck a deal with Exxon Mobil Corp. (XOM) and **Iraq**'s semiautonomous **Kurds** to develop projects in northern **Iraq**, Turkey's leader said Tuesday, an agreement fraught with political risks for the energy-rich region.

TD

The deal thrust Turkey into a long-standing feud between **Iraq**'s central government and the Kurdistan Regional Government over who has rights to northern **Iraq**'s vast energy resources and raised tensions with Baghdad, which called it illegal.

The deal could help underpin a peace accord that Turkey is negotiating to end a three-decade conflict with its own Kurdish population as it enters a delicate phase, analysts say. It could also help Turkey meet rising energy demand and raise Ankara's sway in the oil-rich region next door.

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's announcement came two days before he was scheduled to meet in Washington with President Barack Obama, whose support could help propel the deal forward.

The White House is caught between a desire to support the aspirations of Turkey, a Washington ally, and trepidation that empowering regional Iraqi authorities like the **Kurds** could alienate **Iraq** Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, who is seeking to extend Baghdad's influence across the divided country.

U.S. officials also fear setting a precedent for allowing regional governments to strike independent resource deals could destabilize Mr. Maliki's government during a time when Sunni-Shiite tensions in **Iraq** are mounting.

The Obama administration, which in the past months brokered talks between Ankara and Baghdad, called for talks between **Iraq**'s central government and the regional Kurdish government to resolve the issue. "Our position on energy trade from **Iraq** has been consistent and remains unchanged: The United States doesn't support oil exports from any part of **Iraq** without the appropriate approval of the federal Iraqi government," said Caitlin Hayden, a spokeswoman for the National Security Council.

There is a deep divide between the **Kurds** and Baghdad over how to interpret **Iraq**'s constitution in regards to oil rights. The **Kurds** maintain that it gives them the right to grant new contracts while letting the central government manage existing licenses. Mr. Maliki maintains that Baghdad's approval is needed for all agreements.

In his announcement, Mr. Erdogan emphasized that Turkey backs the **Kurds**' position and that Turkey can pursue deals directly with the Erbil-based Kurdistan Regional Government, in this case through Turkiye Petrolleri AO, Turkey's state news agency Anatolia said.

"Countries from various parts of the world are taking steps to explore and produce oil in different parts of **Iraq**, and then deliver it to world oil markets," Mr. Erdogan said. "There's nothing more normal, more natural than Turkey, which provides all kinds of support and aid to its next-door neighbor, to take a step that is based on mutual benefit."

Baghdad held firm to its position. "The deal is illegal and is not in line with the Iraqi constitution," said Faisal Abdullah, spokesman for Hussein al-Shahristani, **Iraq**'s deputy prime minister for energy. "Any agreement signed without the approval of the central government is illegal."

Exxon Mobil declined to comment. The Kurdish Regional Government didn't comment.

Oil rights and political **autonomy** was one of the issues discussed on April 30 when representatives of the Iraqi government and the Kurdistan Regional Government held talks. Kurdish representatives characterized the talks as an early step in a long process of settling relations between Baghdad and Erbil, the Kurdish capital.

Some analysts said Tuesday's announcement contrasts sharply with a carefully honed policy in Ankara. Turkish officials have consistently called for the territorial integrity of **Iraq** and reiterated that they won't pursue any deals that would undermine the country's stability.

Striking an agreement with Ankara offers **Iraq**'s **Kurds** a gateway to export its huge reserves of crude oil directly to world markets via Turkey through a new pipeline it hopes to build. Most of the region's oil is normally sold domestically.

Aside from U.S. oil major Exxon Mobil, Chevron Corp. and smaller explorers like Turkey-based Genel Energy PLC, run by former BP PLC chief Tony Hayward, are working in northern **Iraq**.

--Keith Johnson, Joe Parkinson, Hassan Hafidh, Ali Abbas and Tom Fowler contributed to this article.

Write to Emre Peker at emre.peker@dowjones.com

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CO exxn : Exxon Mobil Corporation

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IPC AENE

PUB Dow Jones & Company, Inc.

AN Document DJ00000020130514e95e000v5

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REUTERS

HD **Pan-Kurdish congress planned to unify ranks amid regional turmoil**

WC 523 words

PD 23 July 2013

ET 17:32

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

CY (c) 2013 Reuters Limited

LP

ARBIL, **Iraq**, July 23 (Reuters) - **Kurds** from Turkey, Iran, **Iraq** and Syria have agreed to convene a pan-Kurdish congress to tackle historical divisions and position themselves to take full advantage of regional upheaval.

Often described as the world's largest ethnic group without a state of their own, **Kurds** regard the modern borders that have carved up their homeland of "Greater Kurdistan" as a historical injustice.

TD

Geopolitics may have condemned the **Kurds** to live in four different countries, but their own competing ideologies and partisan rivalries have also got in the way of greater unity, and even led to armed conflict.

Representatives of 39 Kurdish parties attended a symbolic meeting in the capital of **Iraq**'s Kurdistan region on Monday, though any joint initiatives, let alone the political or institutional unity that some dream of, are still a long way off.

No date for the conference has yet been set, but some participants said it could be held as early as next month.

"Our main goal in holding this congress is for all Kurdish political factions to reach a shared strategy and voice," Iraqi Kurdish leader Masoud Barzani said in a speech, describing the meeting in Arbil as "historic".

"I call on all participants to work together in a spirit of brotherliness and patriotism, far from any narrow political ideologies."

Successive governments in Baghdad, Damascus, Tehran and Ankara have long exploited disunity among the **Kurds** to thwart their aspirations for more **independence** or a unified homeland, and at times resorted to brute force to suppress them. Thousands were gassed to death by the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

Ramzy Mardini of Beirut's **Iraq** Institute for Strategic Studies said divisions still posed a challenge: "Competition amongst the **Kurds** is leading to contradictory policies, which inhibit their ability to position themselves as winners of the Arab Spring."

Nonetheless, ethnic **Kurds** who fought out their partisan rivalries in the 1990s now run their own quasi-state in northern **Iraq**, and are enjoying unprecedented prosperity while sectarian violence threatens to rip the rest of the country apart.

In Syria, civil war has provided an opening for greater **autonomy** for the **Kurds** after years of oppression under President Bashar al-Assad and his father before him, who denied thousands citizenship and confiscated their lands.

In Turkey, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) is currently in talks to end a three-decade armed rebellion in return for greater rights for the **Kurds**, who make up around one fifth of Turkey's population.

Only in Iran have **Kurds**' fortunes remained little changed.

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"There is no doubt that the **Kurds** see the historical upheavals plaguing the region through the lens of opportunism," Mardini said. "It is by way of an unravelling of the political order that national borders could eventually be redrawn. The **Kurds** are trying to best position themselves for that moment." (Reporting by Isabel Coles; Editing by Kevin Liffey)

RF KURDS-CONGRESS/ | AFA | CSA | LBY | RWSA | RWS | REULB | GNS | RNA | G | RBN | GFN | C | D | E | M | O | U | MTL | GRO | SOF | OIL | RNP | DNP | PGE | SXNA

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

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IPC PIA

PUB Reuters Limited

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BBC MONITORING

HD **Commentary views Turkish premier's meeting on Syrian Kurds**

WC 720 words

PD 25 July 2013

ET 15:04

SN BBC Monitoring European

SC BBCEUP

LA English

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LP

Text of report by Turkish privately-owned, mass-circulation daily Hurriyet website on 25 July

[Commentary by Yalcin Dogan: "Our Southern Neighbour Replaced!"]

TD

A meeting was held behind closed doors under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan and with the participation of BDP [Peace and Democracy Party] Cochairman Selahattin Demirtas and Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu.

The topic of discussion was Syria, the **Kurds**, and the southeast.

Davutoglu said: "Al-Asad cannot do anything from now on. Nevertheless, if he tries to do something, the **Kurds** in Syria will seek refuge from you [Prime Minister Erdogan]."

Demirtas objected: "That is not true. The **Kurds** in Syria would not seek refuge in Turkey, they would declare their **autonomy**."

Oil to PYD

The developments in Syria confirm Demirtas's view. The great strategic genius has been proven wrong once again. The intelligence he received was wrong. His assessments are always off the mark, anyway. Mistakes have consequences, however, and Turkey has failed in its Syrian policy. None of Davutoglu's predictions about Syria have come true so far.

Al-Asad gave part of the oil revenues to the PYD [Democratic Union Party] which is the Syrian wing of the PKK [Kurdistan People's Congress, KGK]. The PYD settled in northern Syria, across from our southern border and that area went under the **Kurds**' control.

Northern **Iraq** has been an autonomous Kurdish region for years. With northern Syria and northern **Iraq**, Turkey's south has been turned into a Kurdish region.

Do not be fooled by the map; our southern neighbours have been replaced; they are no longer **Iraq** and Syria. A Kurdish region is our southern neighbour now.

Arbil Summit

Kurdish representatives from Turkey, Iran, **Iraq**, and Syria came together in Arbil. Barzani announced the aim of the meeting as follows: "The establishment of a Kurdish state by the **Kurds** in the four countries."

And what is Turkey doing? The comedy of errors experienced in connection with Iran, **Iraq**, and Syria has been added to the AKP's [Justice and Development Party] "Kurdish overture," and we are approaching the establishment of a Kurdish state step by step.

The **Kurds** in southeast Turkey say the area belongs to them de facto. "The Nation Comes First" written in large letters on the mountains in that area is now replaced with "the PKK Comes First." The PKK is getting ready to rule the southeast. One of the most symbolic steps has been to build a "PKK

martyrs' cemetery" in the region. Allegedly, the military tried to prevent this but the government stopped the military. Everything is advancing in harmony.

Ocalan Problem

Despite all that, there is still an important unsolved problem. There is great pressure both from within the country and from outside to free Ocalan. That is the critical threshold the "overture policy" has been stuck at. The AKP is deep in thought on how to overcome this threshold. It would be impossible to take such a step before the presidential elections. And if taken after the presidential elections, the step would wipe the AKP off the political scene.

While the AKP continues to make its own calculations and to make mistakes, our neighbours in the south are being replaced de facto. Considering this and the Arbil meeting, it would be unrealistic to think that these developments will not have an impact inside Turkey.

The Interest Rate Lobby

Just like the promises of "zero problems with neighbours" and "zero tolerance to torture," the promises related to the interest rate too are not being kept by the AKP.

At the beginning of the year, and repeatedly after that, Tayyip Erdogan said: "The real interest rate will be zero," "I will not have my citizens crushed under the interest rate," and "I will not allow the interest rate lobby to take even one cent from our nation's money." During the Gezi protests, he blamed everything bad on the "interest rate lobby." He declared this to the world one hundred times, one thousand times...

The other day, the Central Bank announced that it was raising the interest rate from 6.5 to 7.25 per cent. This showed who the interest lobby is. It is the AKP itself.

Source: Hurriyet website, Istanbul, in Turkish 25 Jul 13

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HD **Turkey politics: PKK peace process reaches a delicate stage**

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LP

The relationship of the Turkish state with its Kurdish population is in a period of flux. If reforms can be agreed and implemented, it would mark a major advance for the country. Landmark steps have already been taken in the peace process between the government and the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), but progress has slowed sharply, with each side looking to the other for more substantial confidence-building gestures. In 2009 a failure to manage adequately political sensitivities derailed an earlier push for a solution. This could happen again, particularly given a political timetable that involves both local and presidential elections next year. However, some of the gains made so far are unlikely to be reversed under the current government.

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Having already expended considerable political capital on the Kurdish issue, the incentives for the prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, to push the peace process through to a successful conclusion are potentially huge. Turkey has been scarred by decades of violent conflict in its impoverished, largely Kurdish, south-eastern regions, while the state's continuing restriction of Kurdish cultural and political rights has fuelled domestic social and political tensions and damaged the country's international standing. Enabling the country to close this chapter in its history is the stuff of which political legacies are made. A lasting settlement of Turkey's Kurdish issue could also have positive implications for Turkey's international relations, especially if it helps to foster closer co-operation with Iraqi and Syrian **Kurds**.

More immediately, Mr Erdogan has additional reasons to hope a solution can be reached. Following widespread protests against his rule and international condemnation of his response to them, he would benefit greatly from a high-profile democratising success. He also has parliamentary arithmetic to consider: his stated preference for a move to a presidential system in Turkey would require constitutional changes that might not pass without the support of Kurdish parliamentarians.

High risks urge government caution

The Kurdish question is far from being all potential upside for Mr Erdogan. The political risks involved are reflected in the government's cautiousness in relation to the concessions that it is prepared to offer in return for an end to the PKK's campaign of violence. Although in abstract terms the peace process appears to enjoy significant public support, no Turkish government can afford to be seen either to hand the PKK a victory or to compromise the country's territorial integrity. (The PKK initially sought outright secession, but over the years has shifted to demands for political **autonomy** within Turkey.) When Mr Erdogan launched a "democratic opening" with the **Kurds** in 2009, a lack of preparation led to its early collapse in the face of public outrage when eight PKK fighters returning from bases in northern **Iraq** were greeted as heroes.

In the intervening years, the government appears to have developed a more realistic sense of the magnitude of this issue and the difficulty of resolving it. Crucially, in December 2012 Mr Erdogan acknowledged that direct negotiations were taking place with the jailed PKK leader, Abdullah Ocalan, a reviled terrorist in the eyes of most Turks, but an unavoidable part of any settlement that is going to have a realistic prospect of lasting. The importance of talking to Mr Ocalan was quickly made clear by the swift acceleration of progress earlier this year. On March 21st, Mr Ocalan released a letter calling for an end of the PKK's armed struggle. A month later, the PKK announced that its fighters would withdraw from Turkey to northern **Iraq**, a process which began on May 8th and is expected to finish at the end of August.

A two-step process or moving forward in tandem?

Since May, progress has slowed again. The main obstacle appears to be differences of opinion as to the choreography of various moves that have been agreed by leaders on both sides. The government's view is that it is engaged in a two-phase process and that it will grant concessions to the **Kurds** once the PKK's withdrawal from Turkey is complete. (According to the government, only 20% had left the country by late June.) The Kurdish view is that both sides should be moving in tandem and that the process of withdrawal will come to a halt if political reforms are not forthcoming. On July 23rd, Turkey's deputy prime minister, Bulent Arinc, publicly outlined some of the measures that the government intends to enact. But Mr Ocalan has since stepped up the pressure, reportedly indicating that "concrete and practical steps" must be taken by October 1st, when the new parliamentary session begins.

It is easy to envisage circumstances in which the process begins to unravel rapidly. If the government appears to onlookers not to trust in its interlocutors' good faith, it will have little chance of convincing the public to accept what would potentially be one of the most radical developments in Turkey's history. Similarly, if the Kurdish side overplays its hand on the assumption that Mr Erdogan must rely on its political support, the risk is that he will walk away-no Turkish prime minister is likely to lose many votes on the basis of refusing to respond to an ultimatum from Mr Ocalan. In addition, Turkey's crowded electoral calendar and the continuing fallout from the recent wave of anti-government protests may also deprive negotiations on the Kurdish question of the time and space that they will need if they are to succeed.

Possible setbacks amid permanent gains

Although there are risks that the current signs of an impasse foreshadow another breakdown in the process, important progress has been made that is unlikely to be reversed. Crucially, both sides accept that a resolution is within reach and on the face of it seem willing to make concessions in order to secure it. While it is entirely possible that setbacks could lead to violence flaring up again, it is much less likely that political negotiations will simply be abandoned. For a Turkish government to be negotiating with Mr Ocalan and for the PKK to be promising to lay down its weapons suggests that both sides are committed-in a way that has not previously been the case-to ending their conflict.

RF EIU ViewsWire 01 Aug 2013 (T16:45), Part 5 of 9

CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | greg : Regional Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

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IPD Politics

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TheMiddleEast

HD **Borders of blood.(Current Affairs/BORDERS)**

BY Blanche, Ed

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LP

The map of the Middle East is undergoing dramatic change as the old order that has existed since the infamous Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916, that arbitrarily divided the region steadily disintegrates, triggered in large part by the Anglo-American invasion of **Iraq** in 2003. Now, the Syrian bloodbath is accelerating this historic process. Ed Blanche examines some possible future scenarios.

THE MIDDLE EAST, THE PATCHWORK OF states largely created by Britain and France, when they carved up the Ottoman Empire between them in the aftermath of World War 1, is falling apart as the region is engulfed by a wave of conflict and political upheavals that are splintering it along religious and tribal fault lines, the very lines the victorious colonial powers ignored.

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The Syrian war seems to be the core of this. Several distinct conflicts have come together in that ancient land--the battle between the Sunnis and Alawites, the wider 1,300-year-old schism between Sunnis and Shi'ites currently enshrined in the power struggle between Iran and Saudi Arabia, the confrontation between Iran and the United States, the reborn Cold War between the US and Russia/China, an unfolding and unsettling wave of political change sweeping the Arab world, reflecting a broader malaise now emerging in Turkey and Pakistan, the eastern rim of the Greater Middle East and a hornet's nest of Islamist zealots. **Iraq** as we knew it is disintegrating, with the world's first permanent Kurdish state apparently emerging in northern **Iraq**, which has had semi-autonomous status since the aftermath of the 1990-91 Gulf War, initially under US protection. The Kurdish area is already acting like an independent state as it exploits its oil and gas wealth without regard for Baghdad and develops economic and political ties with Turkey.

Ankara's plans to build an export pipeline from Kurdistan's Taq Taq field to its eastern Mediterranean terminal at Ceyhan, with a target of two million barrels a day by 2019, could well hasten the break-up of federal **Iraq**, the tortured remains of George W. Bush's catastrophic experiment in democratic nation-building that wound up achieving everything it sought to prevent--empowering an expansionist Iran and escalating Sunni-Shi'ite rivalry--and, says veteran Middle East observer David Gardner, has probably doomed "the state system that succeeded the Ottoman Empire almost a century ago in Syria and Mesopotamia."

Iraq, ancient Mesopotamia and a tragic mix of Shi'ites, Sunnis and **Kurds**, may well splinter into three sectarian cantons in the not-too-far distant future. The country's six million **Kurds** are leading the way. Despite their denials, they are well down the road to establishing the first viable state that could eventually embrace all the 30 million or so **Kurds** spread across Turkey, Syria and Iran, the world's largest ethnic group without a state.

As **Iraq** fails apart, amid ever-widening bloodshed between the minority Sunnis, backed by Saudi Arabia, the birthplace of Islam and the beacon for Sunnis everywhere, and the majority Shi'ites. The three Sunni-dominated provinces in western **Iraq** border Sunni-held territory in northern Syria and are providing seasoned fighters for rebels opposing the Damascus regime there. These provinces are seen as a potential state.

"We are seeing the centrifugal forces of tribal, or religious or ethnically divided societies coming apart because the old guard has lost influence and credibility due to the passage of time, grassroots forces

empowered by new technologies and the deep frustrations and disengagement of outside powers," observed David Rothkopf, editor-at-large of Foreign Policy. At the root of the artificiality of Middle Eastern borders lies the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the time-bomb of a document drawn up by two diplomats, Sir Mark Sykes and Francois Georges-Picot, in 1916 to divide the Levant and Mesopotamia between Britain and France once the war against Germany and Turkey was won.

Artificial order

Few mourn its unravelling. The borders drawn up in that notorious agreement arbitrarily divided ancient territories and their peoples and created an artificial political order in the Middle East that has been the cause of so much of the friction that has convulsed the region ever since.

The Middle East is reverting to "the natural borders" of mankind. Even the 65-year-old Palestinian-Israeli dispute, long the core conflict in the modern Middle East, is being steadily eclipsed by the broader sweep of historic change coursing through the region, perhaps the final corrective convulsion of the cause of Arab nationalism that World War 1 helped spawn.

The fragmentation and bending of borders we are witnessing now is a process that Israel--another consequence of British interference and possibly the greatest source of territorial trouble since Sykes-Picot--began when it seized vast swatches of Arab land in 1967.

The irony is that as the prospect of new states emerging from the Middle East's political earthquakes increases, the hapless Palestinians look likely to be left out of the new order, doomed perhaps to another Babylonian captivity. Ariel Sharon, resisting Palestinian calls for an independent state in the West bank, often remarked that there already was a Palestinian state "and," the Zionist former prime minister insisted "its name is Jordan".

Sadly, that may well be the Palestinians' only route to statehood, an alliance with the resource-poor Hashemite kingdom, set up by the British to reward its allies from the Hejaz after World War 1, and where Palestinians already form some 60% of the population.

"As the Sykes-Picot borders disappear and the nations created by the mapmakers if 1919-20 disintegrate, a Muslim 30 Years' War may be breaking out in the thrice-promised land," warned US commentator Patrick J. Buchanan.

This process began with the decline of British and French colonial power after World War II, the 1954 Suez debacle, when US President Dwight D. Eisenhower pulled the plug on the two states' intervention with Israel in Egypt, France's loss of Algeria and Britain's East of Suez military withdrawal in the 1970s, the last gasp of empire as US power, driven by the exigencies of the East-West confrontation, expanded in the Middle East to protect its oil wealth.

The process was accelerated with the end of the Cold War and most recently by the nightmare events of 11 September 2001 and the disastrous US-British venture into **Iraq**, the final nail in Sykes-Picot and the beginning of the end of US imperial power.

"It may well be that the absence of a central organising principle for the region is a greater threat to many countries in the Middle East, including Israel, than any specific threat currently in the headlines, including Iran's nuclear programme," Rothkopf noted.

Oil power

Syria, the new cockpit of the Sunni-Shia schism that has become the dominant conflict in the Middle East, is also collapsing as a unitary state, with its 1.7 million-strong Kurdish minority moving towards linking up with their brethren in **Iraq**.

Both enclaves contain considerable reserves of oil and gas that could provide the economic anchor for a supra-state uniting the region's **Kurds**. Iraqi Kurdistan's dusty plateau contains an estimated 45bn barrels of oil--the fourth largest reserves in the world--and enough natural gas to last 100 years.

However, despite the accelerating pace of change, it must be said that any prospect of a Kurdish state stretching from present-day Syria to western Iran likely lies far in the future.

Amid the Syrian bloodbath in which 100,000 have perished, Bashar Assad's Alawite minority could end up with its own tiny state in their tribal heartland along the Mediterranean coast and in the mountains of northwestern Syria. There they would be linked to the Bekaa Valley stronghold of their Shi'ite ally--the Alawites are an offshoot of Shia Islam--thus preserving the gateway to the Levant so desperately sought by their masters in Tehran, while Syria's Sunni majority holds the hinterland down the border with Israel.

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Lebanon, that frail figment of latter-day French crusading, may well collapse into competing sectarian cantons--as it did for much of its 1975-90 civil war when an estimated 150,000 people perished. Already Hizbullah, Tehran's most prized proxy, rules a state within a state in southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley on the Syrian border.

Libya, with the divisions between its 140 tribes in the three main regions, Tripolitania in the west, Cyrenaica in the east and Fezzan in southern desert, unshackled by the 2011 NATO-assisted overthrow and murder of Muammar Gaddafi, could go the same way, and in just as bloody a fashion.

Sunni-dominated Turkey, home to 15 million Shi'ites and 15 million **Kurds**, is open to sectarian conflict of its own even as the 30-year Kurdish insurgency in Anatolia seems to be waning amid a still-tenuous peace plan, while the nation's power-hungry Islamist prime minister, Recep Tayip Erdogan, seeks to revive the glories of the Ottomans under whom Turkey was for four centuries the region's pre-eminent power.

"A long war in Syria could open up divisions in Turkey, just as it is doing elsewhere," says Patrick Cockburn, a veteran chronicler of the vicissitudes of Middle Eastern life over the last several decades.

"Syria is increasingly resembling its neighbours to the west and the east: There will soon be a solid bloc of fragmented countries that stretches between the Mediterranean and Iran," he observed. "In all three places the power of the central state is draining away as communities retreat into their own well-defended and near-autonomous enclaves ... The feeling that the future of whole states is in doubt is growing in the Middle East."

Monarchies menaced

The Arab Reawakening--a more accurate description of the chain of pro-democracy uprisings that erupted across the Arab world in January 2011 and become known as the "Arab Spring"--has so far swept through Arab republican dictatorships in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen and fuelled jihadist campaigns across the region.

Even impoverished, war-torn Yemen, the Arab outpost on the Indian Ocean, is also being torn apart as largely secular, left-leaning secessionists in the south, who once occupied the Soviet-backed People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, now seek to break their reluctant 1990 union with the Islamist, tribal north.

Two years after an uprising inspired by the Arab Reawakening drove out longtime dictator Ali Abdullah Saleh, the country has fallen prey to the Sunni-Shi'ite schism.

Now the last of the Arab monarchies--the six Gulf petrostates, plus Jordan and Morocco--are in the crosshairs too.

These dynastic states have felt the reverberations of the 'Reawakening' and whether they can hold firm against the new political order that is emerging is debatable.

Jordan, an artificial state created by the British after World War 1 that has survived the intrigues of the region's strongmen, often by the skin of its teeth, has never looked more vulnerable. An uneasy mix of Bedouin tribesmen and urbanised Palestinians, who control the economy, is held together with growing difficulty by King Abdullah II, whose family claims descent from the Prophet Mohammed.

"The most arbitrary and distorted borders in the world are in the Middle East and Africa," says Ralph Peters, a former colonel in the US Army and now a military analyst. "The unjust borders in the Middle East--to borrow from Churchill--generate more trouble than can be consumed locally.

"While the Middle East has far more problems than dysfunctional borders--from cultural stagnation through scandalous inequality to deadly religious extremism--the greatest taboo in striving to understand the region's comprehensive failure isn't Islam, but the awful-but-sacrosanct international boundaries worshipped by our diplomats ...

"We are dealing with colossal, man-made deformities that will not stop generating hatred and violence until they are corrected," Peters observed. "Correcting borders to reflect the will of the people may be impossible. For now. But given time--and the inevitable attendant bloodshed--new and natural borders will emerge. Babylon has fallen more than once."

ALL CHANGE--THE NEW MIDDLE EAST TAKES SHAPE

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In June 2006, Ralph Peters, a former US Army colonel now a military analyst and strategist, drew up a map of his own interpretation of a radically reshaped Middle East, a process that now appears to be accelerating amid the political upheavals and conflicts sweeping the region.

Sykes-Picot: the great betrayal that started it all

The Sykes-Picot agreement was a secret understanding drawn up in May 1916, at the height of World War 1, between two British and French diplomats, Sir Mark Sykes and Francois Georges-Picot, that with the tacit assent of Tsarist Russia dismembered the Ottoman Empire between the two western allies.

Under that agreement, after Turkey was defeated, Britain would have control of Palestine, plus an area between Palestine and Saudi Arabia named Transjordan--modern Jordan--and southern **Iraq**.

France got Syria, Lebanon and Turkish Cilicia. Northern Syria and Mesopotamia were also considered to be a region of French influence, while Arabia and the Jordan Valley were considered to be within the British sphere of influence, Jerusalem was to be governed by an international administration.

This agreement was concluded with the full knowledge that they unilaterally abrogated British pledges to the Hashemite leader, Sharif Hussein of Mecca, that he would be given **independence** across a wide swathe of the Middle East in return for heading the British-backed Arab revolt in the Hejaz against Turkish occupation. In 1915, Henry McMahon, the British High Commissioner in Egypt, secured Hashemite support for the war against the Turks, a commitment later buttressed by Colonel T.E. Lawrence, who was a pre-eminent leader of the Arab Revolt.

Sykes-Picot, which was a far wider realpolitik strategic agreement that reshaped the entire Middle East, betrayed both those commitments. That betrayal was deepened in November 1917, a month before British Gen. Edmund Allenby led his forces into Damascus to effectively end the war against Turkey.

It was then that Lord Balfour, formally recognised the Zionist organisation's plan for "a National Home for the Jews", which turned out to be in British-administered Palestine. That consequences of that commitment has been perpetual war in the Middle East for the last six decades. For the Hashemites, the duplicity of Sykes-Picot was only partly assuaged by the British setting up kingdoms for them in Transjordan and Syria. Faisal, the Hashemite prince installed in Damascus by a disillusioned Lawrence, was swiftly booted out by the indignant French, leaving the British to establish him as King of **Iraq** in Baghdad.

"With the Islamic Awakening and Arab Spring toppling regimes, the natural map of the Middle East seems to be asserting itself," observed Patrick J. Buchanan.

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IPD General

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HD **Iraq Kurds dream of independence but differ on details**

BY Prashant RAO

WC 777 words

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LP

Voters in **Iraq**'s Kurdish region may have had differing views at the ballot box during weekend polls, but there is one dream which unites virtually all of them: an independent state.

Behind that dream, however, Iraqi **Kurds** and their leaders differ on key issues related to statehood, their future within a unified **Iraq**, and ties with Kurdish populations in neighbouring countries, all of which are likely to confront the regional parliament as it embarks on a new term.

TD

In particular, voters and the ruling elite appear to disagree on the main upcoming issue: as the three-province autonomous region becomes increasingly economically free of the central government, whether full-fledged **independence** is in the offing.

"The Kurdish dream of **independence** is always there, we have a fundamental right to that, but we are hoping that **Iraq** will succeed as a democratic nation," said Barham Saleh, a former Kurdish regional prime minister who also spent time as the deputy premier in **Iraq**'s federal government.

"The issue of identity is very important, it is a very emotional issue," he continued.

"I am proud of my Kurdish heritage and identity. I very much would like to see an Iraqi state that is democratic -- genuinely democratic -- respectful of individual liberties, that makes us all proud to be Iraqis.

"This **Iraq** is yet to be realised."

On the streets of regional capital Arbil, however, views towards Baghdad are often much stronger.

"My relationship is with **Kurds**, all **Kurds**, wherever they are," said Mohsen Ali, a 57-year-old former fighter with Saleh's own party of ex-rebels, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

Clad in traditional Kurdish garb and sat at a cafe in one of the city's oldest districts, Ali added: "I want to cut ties with the centre. I want to be free, on our own, not connected to anywhere else."

"We, the **Kurds** of Syria, the **Kurds** of Turkey, the **Kurds** of Iran, the **Kurds** of **Iraq**, want ... to be free -- one free country."

Kurds make up significant minority groups in **Iraq**, Turkey, Syria and Iran but have historically faced hostility from those countries' governments.

In **Iraq**, in particular, Kurdish rebels battled the Baghdad government for decades and suffered from often-brutal repression, notably during the Anfal campaign and the Halabja chemical attack, which remains the deadliest gassing of civilians ever.

Since 1991, however, they have largely run their own affairs, and now operate an autonomous region that passes its own laws, has its own security forces, and runs its own visa and foreign investment regimes.

As a result, younger **Kurds** often have little to do with their Arab countrymen -- fewer speak Arabic than older generations, and have the option of exclusively Kurdish satellite television channels and news outlets.

And while much of the Arab-dominated parts of **Iraq** suffer from regular, and indeed worsening, violence, residents of Kurdistan enjoy relative safety and stability.

"We were second-class citizens," said Mohammed Saleh, an architect who studied at the University of Baghdad until 1979 but, like many of fellow **Kurds**, expressed a desire for **independence**.

"The people here do not like to be Iraqi, or feel like real members of the country."

He added: "We have a federal government, but there is no relationship between us and them."

But many are not optimistic for **independence**, noting that an Iraqi Kurdish declaration of statehood would raise alarm in the region, worsening what have largely been improving ties between Arbil and neighbouring states.

"Everyone -- everyone -- in his heart, or her heart, feels that an independent Kurdistan is our right," said Asos Hardi, a journalist and analyst based in Sulaimaniyah, the region's second-biggest city.

"But ... I think that it would be very hard to imagine that, for example, in the next 10 years we would have an independent Kurdistan.

"I hope that we could build a democratic system in this area and be supportive of other parts of Kurdistan -- to the peace process in Turkey, between **Kurds** and the Turkish state, and support as much as possible the **Kurds** in Syria and Iran."

And while many **Kurds** have expressed strong fraternal links between neighbouring Kurdish populations, one politician pointed to failed moves towards pan-Arab statehood in the 20th century as a guide for **Kurds** with ambitions for one state.

Laughing while referring to the 22-member Arab League, Abubakr Ali, a senior member of the Kurdistan Islamic Union, said: "Even if there will be **independence**, there will be four countries.

"And then we will have a league!"

psr/wd/hc

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IPD Insight

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HD **Turkey extends mandate for strikes on Kurds in Iraq**

WC 307 words

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LP

Turkey's parliament on Thursday extended for one year a mandate that would allow Ankara to order military strikes against Kurdish rebels holed up in neighbouring northern **Iraq**.

The vote coincides with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's reforms to boost the rights of the country's sizeable Kurdish community and secure an end to the nearly 30-year battle with the banned Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

TD

All opposition parties, except the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party, gave solid backing to the motion providing the government with another year-long mandate for cross-border operations against PKK hideouts in northern **Iraq**.

The current mandate expires on October 17. Parliament has extended the mandate every year since it was first approved in 2007.

On September 30, Erdogan moved to scrap restrictions on the use of the Kurdish language, allowing it to be used in private schools and letting election candidates campaign in Kurdish.

The reforms are aimed at breaking an impasse in the peace process between Turkey and the PKK, which is classified as a terrorist organisation by Ankara and its Western allies.

In March the PKK's jailed leader Abdullah Ocalan declared a ceasefire after months of clandestine negotiations with the Turkish secret service.

Last month, Kurdish rebels announced a suspension in their planned pull-out of their fighters from Turkish soil, accusing Ankara of not keeping its promises of reform. They called the measures introduced by Erdogan as unsatisfactory.

In return for withdrawing its fighters, the PKK demanded changes such as the right to education in the Kurdish language, changes to the electoral system and a degree of regional **autonomy**.

The PKK has been fighting for self-rule in the mainly Kurdish southeast and east of Turkey since 1984.

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IPD Turkey

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HD **Iraq Kurd chief visits Turkey after peace process stalls**

BY Burak AKINCI

WC 651 words

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ET 04:48

SN Agence France Presse

SC AFPR

LA English

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LP

Turkey's prime minister will hold talks on Saturday with Iraqi Kurdish leader Massud Barzani aimed at restarting a stalled peace process, with decades-old divisions between Ankara and the **Kurds** far from over.

The talks -- branded "historic" by Prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan -- come at a sensitive time for the Turkish government after a peace deal with Kurdish rebels stalled in September.

TD

Erdogan said he and Barzani, who is highly respected by Turkey's own **Kurds**, would meet in the Kurdish-majority province of Diyarbakir in Turkey's southeast.

"The choice of the city, the cradle of **Kurds**, is certainly symbolic," a source close to the government told AFP.

"The Turkish government wants to demonstrate its commitment to ending the Kurdish conflict at a time when business is not going so well."

Thousands of rebels from Turkey's outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) remain holed up in the autonomous north of **Iraq**, an area under Barzani's control, using the region as a springboard for attacks on Turkish targets as part of their campaign for self-rule in southeastern Turkey.

Turkey's "Kurdish question" has been in a thorn in Ankara's side since the modern republic was founded in 1923 with a constitution that failed to recognise its Kurdish population as a separate minority.

The **Kurds**, a distinct Sunni Muslim people, make up an estimated 20 percent of Turkey's population but are also scattered across **Iraq**, Iran and Syria.

Some 45,000 people have been killed in the conflict since the PKK took up arms in 1984.

Diyarbakir was where a letter written by jailed Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan from his prison cell was read out to large crowds in March, appealing for a ceasefire with Turkey.

Ocalan's declaration followed months of clandestine negotiations with Ankara with the ultimate goal of disarming the PKK, classified as a terrorist organisation by the government and its Western allies.

But the PKK announced in September it had stopped the withdrawal of Kurdish fighters from Turkish soil to their bases in northern **Iraq**, saying Ankara had not kept its side of the bargain in granting greater rights.

Turkey's **Kurds** want constitutional recognition, a degree of regional **autonomy** and Kurdish-language education in public schools.

The ceasefire, however, has been respected by the two parties, with no major clashes since December 2012.

"In this difficult context, it's obviously wise for Turkey to show that it is no longer seeking conflict but peace," said the source.

In the past Barzani has criticised Turkish military operations against PKK hideouts in the north of **Iraq**.

Turkey has often accused the Iraqi **Kurds** of tolerating and even aiding the rebels, but in a major policy shift, Ankara has forged close ties with Iraqi **Kurds** in recent years.

Meanwhile, in late March Erdogan confirmed that his government was discussing the terms of an energy partnership with Iraqi **Kurds**, a project that could aggravate tensions in the troubled region.

Any energy deal threatens to worsen a long-running dispute between Baghdad and the autonomous Kurdistan region in northern **Iraq** over the exploitation of the country's energy wealth.

Barzani's visit also comes after Tuesday's declaration by the powerful Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) of Syrian **Kurds** of a temporary autonomous administration in the country's north.

Like Turkey, Barzani's government has not made secret its concerns over the PYD move after its victory over jihadist groups in Syria.

Kurdish regions of Syria have been administered by local Kurdish councils since forces loyal to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad withdrew in the middle of 2012.

The redeployment was seen as a tactical move by Damascus to free up forces to battle rebels elsewhere and encourage Syrian **Kurds** to avoid allying with the opposition.

ba-fo/jom/cc

CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

NS gvio : Military Action | gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News

RE turk : Turkey | kurd : Kurdistan | iraq : Iraq | syria : Syria | ankra : Ankara | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Advancer

PUB Agence France-Presse

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ALJAZEERA

HD **Iraq's Kurdistan backs Turkey peace efforts**

WC 369 words

PD 16 November 2013

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SC AJAZEN

LA English

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LP

The president of Iraqi Kurdistan has called on Turkey's **Kurds** to back a flagging peace process with Ankara, in a show of support for Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan andrsquo;s bid to overcome a three-decade conflict.

Masoud Barzani made the announcement on Saturday during his first visit to Diyarbakir, the main city in Turkey's Kurdish-dominated southeast, in two decades.

TD

Ankara hopes to use Barzani's influence as a respected figure among Turkey's **Kurds** to bring the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) back to the negotiating table.

"This is a historic visit for me ... We all know it would have been impossible to speak here 15 or 20 years ago," Barzani said, as members of the crowd waved green, white and orange Kurdistan flags.

"Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan has taken a very brave step towards peace. I want my Kurdish and Turkish brothers to support the peace process," he said.

Ankara seeks to kick start the stalled peace talks since a ceasefire declaration in March. PKK is saying reforms announced by Ankara last month, meant to boost Kurdish rights, had fallen well short of expectations.

Turkey's effort to make peace with the PKK has been given a sense of urgency by Syria's 2-1/2 year civil war in which **Kurds** have made major territorial gains, paving the way for their long-declared plans for independent governance in parts of Syria just over Turkey's southern border.

Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan share concern about the growing clout of Kurdish militias in Syria, particularly after their announcement this week of an interim administration that aims to carve out an autonomous Syrian Kurdish region.

Both Turkish and Iraqi Kurdish officials in Arbil have criticised the declaration, which lays out plans for a regional government similar to that of Iraqi Kurdistan, seeing it as part of a deal with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

Kurds, often described as the world's largest stateless ethnic group, number about 30 million, concentrated in parts of Turkey, Iran, Syria and **Iraq**. While they have had partial **autonomy** in Iraqi Kurdistan since 1991, nationalist movements have long been suppressed in Turkey, Syria and Iran.

CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

NS gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE turk : Turkey | kurd : Kurdistan | iraq : Iraq | syria : Syria | ankra : Ankara | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

PUB Al Jazeera International

AN Document AJAZEN0020131118e9bg0001p

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

SE World

HD **Turkey, Iraqi Kurds Make Progress on Oil Deal; Turkey Offers to Create Escrow Account for Kurdish Oil Proceeds; Baghdad Still a Sticking Point**

BY Emre Peker

WC 834 words

PD 21 November 2013

ET 18:00

SN The Wall Street Journal Online

SC WSJO

ED WSJ.com

LA English

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LP

ISTANBUL—Turkey and the Kurdish Regional Government in northern **Iraq** are quickly forging ahead with a series of deals that would let the semiautonomous region start piping oil to world markets as soon as early next year. But the central government in Baghdad remains a major obstacle.

The Ankara government is preparing to set up an escrow account at a state-owned Turkish bank to collect proceeds of KRG energy sales, officials said Thursday at the Atlantic Council Energy & Economic Summit here.

TD

The move, of which the first tangible details emerged at the conference, would solve the main problem Iraqi **Kurds** face in cashing in on their abundant energy resources: paying firms ranging from energy giants Exxon Mobil Corp. and Chevron Corp. to wildcatters like Genel Energy PLC, the Turkish company listed in London and run by former BP PLC chief Tony Hayward.

"Out of the proceeds of the payments from the sales, the contractors will get their share of compensation," KRG Energy Minister Ashti Hawrami said at a panel. "We are not planning to touch the net revenue, which is net of contractors and transportation costs."

Sharing the proceeds of energy sales has been a sticking point between **Iraq**'s central government and the **Kurds**. The parliament in Baghdad has repeatedly failed to adopt an oil-and-gas law, as well as a revenue-sharing law, which would settle the disputes caused by the Iraqi constitution.

A fast resolution still looks difficult. The central government maintains that Baghdad alone has the authority to handle Iraqi energy contracts and exports, while **Kurds** say the national charter gives them exploration, production and sales rights as long as they adhere to an agreement that sees the KRG take 17% of the total national proceeds, with Baghdad getting the rest.

An Iraqi government official in Baghdad said Thursday that the central government continued to press Turkey to facilitate Kurdish exports through **Iraq**'s State Oil Marketing Organization.

Baghdad also is unlikely to agree to an escrow account to house the Kurdish region's energy-sales proceeds, the Iraqi official said. Turkish Energy Minister Taner Yildiz had said that while negotiations are ongoing, there was no final agreement with the central government yet.

Mr. Hawrami said the **Kurds** wouldn't touch their net revenue until they hammered out a deal with the central government whereby the profits could be merged with gains from all Iraqi oil shares and then redistributed.

"I don't think we have the ability to bring about a consensus for promulgating an oil-and-gas law, and a revenue-sharing agreement, two things that are essential to keeping **Iraq** together," said Adnan al-Janabi, chairman of the Iraqi parliament's oil-and-gas committee.

Despite the **Kurds**' assurances to Baghdad, one of the chief drivers of investor appetite for northern **Iraq**'s resources has been the KRG's unyielding push for more **autonomy** and improving ties with energy-thirsty Turkey.

Aside from the payment mechanism, which energy executives described as a leap forward, the KRG's push to lure international investors to develop its oil and gas fields also involved building a pipeline to carry crude into Turkey. Mr. Hawrami said the project is undergoing final tests, and shipments can start within the first three months of 2014.

"Kurdistan is on the verge of becoming a major world exporter of oil, first, and then gas," Mr. Hayward of Genel said at a panel. "For me, the future is bright."

Turkey's Mr. Yildiz met his Iraqi counterpart, Hussein al-Shahristani, at an October summit in South Korea. On Thursday, Mr. Yildiz said he broached the idea of the escrow account to Mr. Shahristani for the first time last month.

During the Istanbul conference, officials from Turkey, the KRG and the U.S. went to great lengths to stress that any deal would be for the greater good of **Iraq**, and not pose a threat to Baghdad.

"Contracts with northern **Iraq** and the profits that result from that, the oil that will flow, all the Iraqi people have a claim to that. Therefore, if we're parking this money in a state-owned bank, we will definitely share the receipt with the central government of **Iraq**," Mr. Yildiz said during a news conference on the sidelines of the summit.

Until recently, the U.S. had resisted a KRG-Turkey deal for fear of antagonizing Baghdad and pushing its Shiite prime minister closer to Iran. But the progress has Washington's tone shifting.

"We support the discussions, and companies being engaged, within the constitutional structure," U.S. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz said in response to The Wall Street Journal's questions during a briefing at the summit. "Minister Yildiz—from my understanding—had a very, very good meeting with Iraqi Minister Shahristani. We hope those discussions will converge quickly."

CO acotus : Atlantic Council | bp : BP PLC | exxn : Exxon Mobil Corporation | vllrez : Genel Energy PLC

IN i1 : Energy | i13 : Crude Oil/Natural Gas | i1300002 : Oil Exploration | iexplo : Natural Gas/Oil Exploration | i1300003 : Crude Petroleum Extraction | iextra : Natural Gas/Oil Extraction

NS c21 : Output/Production | ccat : Corporate/Industrial News

RE turk : Turkey | iraq : Iraq | kurd : Kurdistan | ankra : Ankara | baghd : Baghdad | eurz : Europe | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Middle East News

PUB Dow Jones & Company, Inc.

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FT FINANCIAL TIMES

HD **Turkey bats Kurdish oil deal over to Iraq**

BY By Daniel Dombey in Istanbul

WC 773 words

PD 10 December 2013

ET 16:32

SN Financial Times (FT.Com)

SC FTCOM

LA English

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LP

Throughout this year, Ankara and Erbil have been buzzing with talk of a secretive deal between Turkey and Northern **Iraq** that would redraw the energy map of the Middle East. But now the agreement has been openly proclaimed by the parties doubts are growing about how, when and even if it will enter into force.

The deal, which officials said as long ago as April had been agreed in principle, will bring oil, and later gas, into energy-poor Turkey, give Ankara an ownership stake in a clutch of Kurdish oilfields and move the Kurdish Regional Government of Northern **Iraq** closer to economic **independence** from Baghdad.

TD

For Turkey, the deal could reduce the country's trade deficit by $3bn-$5bn by 2016-17 because of transmission fees and cheaper gas, reckons Atilla Yesilada of GlobalSource, a consultancy.

But there is a complication: despite having its own flag, government and army, the KRG is not a sovereign state and its ability to sign international deals in the face of opposition from the Iraqi government is in question. After long arguing that central government approval was welcome but not essential, Ankara now says the future of the agreement is up to Baghdad and Erbil.

"The ball is now in the court of Northern **Iraq** and the Iraqi central government," said Taner Yildiz, Turkey's energy minister, last week.

For months the KRG and Turkey have been discreetly working on the details of a deal, with Ankara establishing a new state entity, the Turkish Energy Company, to take stakes in the Kurdish fields and Erbil building a pipeline from fields in its territory directly to the Turkish border. Baghdad and the US objected to the process, which they said violated the country's constitution and risked fracturing **Iraq** still further.

Ankara assumed that once the deal came into effect, Baghdad would change its mind - not least because a bank account would be set up to reserve 83 cents for each dollar of oil sales to the Iraqi central government, in line with the country's revenue sharing agreement. But as details of the agreement emerged, Baghdad made clear it would not acquiesce.

A day before Mr Yildiz unveiled the agreement at an energy conference in Erbil last week he flew to the Iraqi capital to begin direct negotiations.

It is unclear whether Turkey has in effect conceded a veto to **Iraq**, or whether the government of Nouri al-Maliki, **Iraq**'s prime minister, will ultimately sign up to a deal that empowers the KRG but also enriches Baghdad's coffers.

Asked by the Financial Times, Mr Yildiz declined to confirm or deny whether Baghdad now had the final say in the deal.

Meanwhile, at an Opec meeting in Vienna last week, Abdul-Kareem Luaibi, **Iraq**'s energy minister, argued that a deal could be struck swiftly if **Iraq**'s concerns were addressed, but insisted payments for exports had to go through the central government's designated account for oil export earnings.

Some analysts argue the agreement remains a remote prospect. "For all the **Kurds**' bluster and their willing optimism, **Iraq** holds a lot of the cards here," says Crispin Hawes at Teneo, a consultancy. He says the KRG remains dependent on income from Baghdad, that **Iraq** does not need extra revenue from the North and that the dispute reflects fundamental differences over who should pay oil groups developing the fields.

However, Luay al-Khateeb, an adviser to the Iraqi parliament, argues an agreement can be struck as long as it is recast as a state-to-state deal between Baghdad and Ankara.

Turkish officials privately remark that if **Iraq** continues to object, the decision whether to proceed will come down to Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey's prime minister.

With the infrastructure in effect in place the benefits of a deal are within Mr Erdogan's grasp. But the prime minister is also in the midst of an attempt to heal relations with Baghdad, an endeavour bound to be thrown off course if he proceeds with the KRG deal without Mr Maliki's consent. The Iraqi market as a whole is a bigger prize than just the North, and Turkish contractors are eager to overcome political difficulties that have prevented them from winning tenders in the south of the country.

It is not a choice that Mr Erdogan will relish making. Much, including Turkey's economic prospects and its diplomatic clout, will depend on whether Ankara and Erbil can get Baghdad to sign up to their ambitions.

Additional reporting by Ajay Makan in London

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IPD Government News

IPC GN

PUB The Financial Times Limited (AAIW/EIW)

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TheNational

HD **In setting energy policy, Kurds flex their independence**

BY Orlando Crowcroft

WC 882 words

PD 6 February 2014

SN The National

SC NATENG

LA English

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LP

When a referendum on **independence** for the Kurdish region was held alongside the 2005 parliamentary elections in **Iraq**, the result was more than conclusive - 98.8 per cent of **Kurds** voted in favour of an independent Kurdistan. Now, with Erbil and Baghdad at loggerheads over the former's independent oil exports to Turkey and the latter's threat to cut the Kurdistan Regional Government's (KRG) funding in response, the issue of **independence** has raised its head again. As an Islamist insurgency rages in the south, the KRG's control over the north has looked impressive by comparison, with little violence in the Kurdish region apart from last September's attack on Erbil, in which a number of soldiers were killed and dozens injured. But increasingly, it is energy policy where the **Kurds** are able to demonstrate their growing **independence**.

TD

As oil exploration and development in the south is hampered by violence and economic malaise, Kurdish **Iraq** has pressed ahead with its pipeline link to Turkey and is increasing exports every week. It has also signed agreements with many of the world's major international oil companies independently of Baghdad, much to the chagrin of the south. "There is the sense that the **Kurds** feel that they should be getting a larger share of Iraqi's overall wealth and should have more of it devolved for them to manage and spend, while Baghdad feels that the **Kurds** are not contributing their fair share to the economy and pushing for too much," said Richard Mallinson, a geopolitical analyst and **Iraq** expert at Energy Aspects in London. "Both sides have an eye to the long term and the fact that independent oil sales would be another plank in the **autonomy** platform that the **Kurds** have been bulling up." The KRG deputy finance minister, Rashid Tahir, was quoted by the local newspaper Rudaw earlier this year as saying that if a solution could not be reached with Baghdad over the budget then "we have no choice but to separate". "It would be like a father who encourages his son to separate from the family. If they want us to separate, we thank them and we take our own path," he said. Analysts say that Kurdish **Iraq** would struggle to support itself if a break with **Iraq** came tomorrow. An estimated 80 per cent of spending in the region goes to salaries, and the KRG could not switch exports on and overnight receive enough money to break all links with the south. "It wouldn't be able to pay the bills," said Shwan Zulul, head of Carduchi Consulting in London. There are territorial issues too, Mr Zulal says, with disputed regions such as the city of Kirkuk, with its sizeable Arab and Kurdish populations. These regions also contain the bulk of northern **Iraq**'s oil, a guaranteed source of conflict between **Iraq** and a future Kurdish state. **Iraq**, for its part, would lose the Kurdish border with Turkey. Then there is the international element, said Mr Mallinson, with sizeable Kurdish populations in Iran, Turkey and Syria. "Some advocates of an independent Kurdistan argue that the desire has been suppressed for decades, if not longer, because they are spread among several countries, so any change in one of those countries would have big ramifications for its neighbours," he said. He points out that while the Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, reached a ceasefire with the militant Kurdistan Workers' Party last March - ending a bloody campaign in the south-east of Turkey - there has been no conclusion on what the future holds for Turkish **Kurds**. They will be looking at what happens in **Iraq**. Others have said that the pipeline with Turkey demonstrates a willingness on the part of Mr Erdogan to deal with a separate Kurdish entity in **Iraq**. "The recurrent, traditional argument against Kurdish **independence** was that there would be a reluctance on the part of Turkey to go all the way and let the **Kurds** export oil from the KRG area in the event of **independence**. That problem now seems significantly diminished," said Reidar Visser, a research fellow at the Norwegian Insitute of International Affairs. On the other hand, he said that the increasing federalist ambitions of Syrian **Kurds** - who have all but carved out their own state in eastern Syria as the civil war rages - could force a rethink of Turkish policy towards the Kurdish region. "They may see the danger of a domino effect that could ultimately impact eastern Turkey itself," Mr Visser said. In the end, it will be the international community that would need to get on board if the Kurdish region

was to separate from **Iraq**. The recent involvement of the American vice president, Joe Biden, in the spat between Baghdad and Erbil suggest that the United States would prefer to see a compromise rather than a split, Mr Mallinson said. "A big change in **Iraq** would not only have implications for **Iraq**'s security, it would also have impacts elsewhere in the region. The US spent a lot of blood and treasure to get **Iraq** to where it is today, and it doesn't want that to fundamentally alter that or go backwards," he said. business@thenational.ae

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

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PUB Abu Dhabi Media Company

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HD **Kurdish export delay likely to become permanent**

BY Raad Alkadiri

WC 1,032 words

PD 8 April 2014

SN IHS Global Insight Daily Analysis

SC WDAN

LA English

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LP

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) announced on 1 April that it was delaying implementation of a 100 mb/d oil export deal with Baghdad due to begin that day, citing technical problems. However, a number of factors are likely to push Erbil to make the delay permanent.

IHS Energy perspective

TD

Implications and outlook

The decision to delay implementation of the limited export deal with Baghdad was driven by technical and political factors.Erbil remains hesitant to make any moves that would postpone or put in jeopardy longer-term, large-volume independent crude exports via Turkey – as evidenced by the KRG's refusal to release crude from storage at Ceyhan to fulfil its end of the export deal. With the KRG no longer convinced that it has anything to gain from the 100 mb/d interim deal with Baghdad, the delays could give way to a permanent suspension of the agreement. Instead, Erbil is likely to wait until after the 30 April Iraqi parliamentary elections – and the several months of political manoeuvring that is likely to follow them – before deciding whether to pursue a more comprehensive political agreement that would pave the way for renewed exports. In the meantime, the KRG will continue to apply pressure on Turkey in hopes that the government decides to allow independent Kurdish exports without Baghdad's approval.A comprehensive deal between Erbil and Baghdad allowing sustained crude pipeline exports from Kurdistan now looks less likely to materialise in the short term, bringing continued uncertainty about investors' ability to recoup operating costs and profit shares.

Attacks and politics undermine interim export deal

On the face of it, the KRG has valid reason to delay implementation of the deal with Baghdad to export 100 mb/d of Kurdish crude through the federal State Oil Marketing Organisation (SOMO). Attacks on the main Kirkuk to Ceyhan pipeline on the stretch between Baiji and Mosul have led to repeated interruptions, and repairs are currently being carried out to restore flows after the most recent incident. According to KRG officials, the Ministry of Oil's North Oil Company (NOC) requested the temporary delay while this work is completed.

However, politics has also coloured the Kurdish decision. The KRG clearly has misgivings over the merits of an export agreement with Baghdad rather than pursuing independent exports through Turkey, which would grant Erbil much greater fiscal **autonomy**. Although the KRG publicly announced that the interim 100 mb/d deal was a goodwill gesture to Baghdad, privately Kurdish leaders painted it as a short-term concession to Washington, which has been pushing hard for a longer-term agreement over oil exports and the budget. Erbil's appetite for compromise with the federal government has also waned as a result of growing anger over Baghdad's refusal to disburse revenue to the KRG until the 2014 federal budget is agreed. Kurdish leaders, including KRG president Masoud Barzani, see the federal government's policy as tantamount to financial blackmail. This perception not only reinforces Erbil's deeper sense of vulnerability and suspicion regarding the federal government, but also makes it more difficult for Kurdish proponents of a long-term deal with Baghdad – including KRG prime minister Nechirvan Barzani – to argue their case in the face of rebuttals from supporters of independent oil exports.

Erbil to keep options open

The delay in the interim deal has also made it clear that Erbil has no intention of doing anything that would preclude the independent export option. Baghdad initially requested exports from either the Khormala dome or Taq Taq fields via Kirkuk and then into the Ceyhan line, allowing volumes to be measured. The restart of these flows is impossible at present due to damage to the line. However, Erbil has adamantly refused to consider the alternative option of tapping Kurdish crude currently held in separate storage at Ceyhan awaiting a Turkish decision on independent exports. The KRG appears determined to fill up storage at the Turkish port as quickly as possible in a bid to force Ankara's hand on independent exports (according to Turkish officials, tanks could be full to capacity as soon as late April). Moreover, KRG proponents of independent exports (and eventual political **independence**) are likely to see the ruling AKP's success in the recent Turkish municipal elections as making the prospect of a decision in their favour far more likely.

NOC insists that it still expects to receive as much as 70 mb/d from Khormala into the Kirkuk-Ceyhan line in the near future. However, given prevailing opinion in the KRG, the prospects of the interim deal being implemented are dimming in the absence of a wider political breakthrough between Baghdad and Erbil. This seems unlikely before the 30 April parliamentary elections. Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's rivals – including the **Kurds** – are more inclined to wait for the election results and then assess their options. Indeed, it is possible that relations between Baghdad and Erbil could deteriorate further in the interim if Maliki somehow succeeds in pushing through a budget that imposes financial penalties on Erbil if it does not meet steep export targets via the SOMO system.

Either way, Erbil will see little to be gained from implementing the interim deal. A budget agreement of this type is likely to convince KRG leaders (particularly in Masoud Barzani's KDP) once and for all that they have little to gain from the current fiscal arrangements in **Iraq**, prompting them to push Ankara even harder to approve independent exports. However, even if the budget remains stalled, Erbil is likely to favour not activating the interim export deal. For technical reasons, the two pipelines running through Turkey (the 46-inch line used by the Iraqi federal government and the 40-inch line used by the KRG to transport crude independently to Ceyhan) cannot operate simultaneously. Erbil has been able to take advantage of the closure of the 46-inch line to ship crude to Ceyhan; if the interim deal were to happen, not only would it reinforce the precedent of Kurdish crude sales through SOMO, it would preclude the independent Kurdish flow to the Turkish port.

CO thybrn : TBG Europe NV

IN i13 : Crude Oil/Natural Gas | i1 : Energy | i8396 : Diversified Holding Companies | ibcs : Business/Consumer Services

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IPD Main Story

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BBC MONITORING

HD **Turkish website views rift among Kurds, ditch built along Syrian border**

WC 1,273 words

PD 21 April 2014

ET 10:16

SN BBC Monitoring European

SC BBCEUP

LA English

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LP

Text of report by Turkish newspaper Radikal website on 18 April

[Commentary by Fehim Tastekin: "Kurdish Ditch: At Times a Shield At Times a Grave"]

TD

Just as the talk was about "Kurdish spring" and the debate on a Kurdistan federation-confederation with four parts was in full swing, a ditch got in the way between "Rojava ([Kurdish term for]West) and "Basur" (South). The ditch dug out by the Kurdistan Regional Administration (KYB) led by Mas'ud al-Barzani between Rojava in northern Syria and Basur in northern **Iraq** is the embodiment of the ditch in the minds. It is the manifestation of the existing division onto the soil. First and foremost, this is a separation of the Kurd from the Kurd. There is no point in cursing the Sykes-Picot Agreement [concluded in 1916 in secret between the United Kingdom and France to effectively divide the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire outside the Arabian peninsula into areas of future British and French control or influence]; the real Sykes-Picot is the division in the minds which gave itself away with the digging out of the ditch. Apart from the "separatism" ensuing among the **Kurds** as a result of the circumstances imposed by the alliances set up by the countries in the region, this is also a showdown between the traditional politics based on tribal bonds and the politics which goes beyond the traditional boundaries on ideological grounds. The fact that the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (KYB), which differs from the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) in terms of its thinking despite having traditional ties, and Goran [Iraqi Kurdish opposition Change Movement] recognized the Rojava's three autonomous cantons makes this division even more comprehensible.

Before looking at the counterarguments in the ditch war, let us see what happened on the border: The Barzani administration built a ditch along the 17-km stretch between the point where the Tigris flows into Kurdistan to the point at (?Waleed), guarded by peshmerga [Kurdish fighters] in northern Tel Kocer [al-Yarubiyah.] The ditch is three meters wide and two meters deep. The folding bridge at (?Semelka) (Peshabur) border gate, taken down and put up at will by the Arbil administration, is now taken away, too. In response to the angry demonstrations staged by the Rojavans, the peshmerga opened fire, and some got injured. In Peshabur the KYB flag was taken down and the KDP flag was hoisted in its place. The members of the KYB and Goran movement held a protest against this move in front of the parliament in Arbil.

Whose project is it?

As for what the sides had to say:

-According to the Barzani administration, the ditch was built to prevent illegal entries and terrorists infiltrating into the area. Anwar Hadji Osman, deputy minister for Peshmerga Affairs said, in an interview with Rudaw TV channel, "terrorists emerged in the area. We worked out the same plan in Arbil and Kirkuk. Up to date, about 1,000 armed people were captured at the border."

-The PYD [the Democratic Union Party] who is the dominant power in Rojava claimed that "the terrorists were in fact moving in to the west from the south." A source, quoted by daily Radikal, said," it was established that 32 of the members of the Islamic State of **Iraq** and the Levant (ISIL) killed during their attack against Rojava had arrived from Basur. It is Rojava that is fighting against Al-Qa'idah."

-The PYD believes that the ditch is part of the plan aimed at cutting off Rojava and holds the KDP headed by Barzani responsible for the ditch but not the entire Kurdistan administration.

-The peshmerga commander announced that the ditch was a joint decision taken by the Arbil and Baghdad administrations. According to the commander, the 17-km long ditch is part of the 605-km long ditch built on the Iraqi-Syrian border. However, Ali Musavi, adviser to the Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri Kamil al-Maliki, responded by saying that the government had not taken such a decision. Hadji Osman rejected the accusation that the "ditch was a KDP plan "and said, "this is a decision taken by the KYB and a policy of the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs." Jabbar Yaver, the secretary for the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs, refuted Osman's statement when he said: "[the ditch] has nothing to do with the ministry."

Political Calculations

It is not credible that the Barzani administration would work with Baghdad, while the two are still at each other's throats, to take such a precaution against Rojava. The relations and the cooperation between Baghdad and Arbil came to an end a long while ago. What is more, it is difficult for 1,000 members of the ISIL to make a transit from Rojava into Kurdistan without being caught by the YPG [Popular Protection Units (Kurdish group in Syria affiliated with PYD, KGK]. The ISIL usually uses the areas below Mosul that stretches out towards the south. Therefore the side that stands to be impacted by the ditch most is the smugglers. Smuggling of goods is one vein that feeds the economy in Rojava blockaded both by Turkey and Kurdistan. Draining of this vein may lead to economic hardship, and subsequently to questions being asked about the success of the PYD. This must be the political calculation behind the ditch; if the PYD is weakened in this manner, this will pave the way for the pro-Barzani parties!

If the KDP affiliates in Syria were in charge of Rojava, an oddity of **Kurds** applying embargo against **Kurds** may not have come about. From the outset, the source of the problem is that the PYD got the upper hand and that those who rely on the Arbil-Ankara line refuse to accept this. The only thing those parties, whose leaders do not even live in Rojava, did so far was to say, "the PYD is breaching the Arbil agreement and collaborating with the [Syrian] regime." In an interview with the Sky News, Barzani took this accusation to the next level and said: "The PYD imposed the fight on the **Kurds** to the advantage of the [Syrian] regime. It took control of the area by armed force. The gains are only temporary. When their reason d'etre changes they will disappear."

However, we find out through the secret US Foreign Ministry documents, dated 2009, that in the aftermath of the mini Kurdish uprising in Kamishli in 2004 when the PYD was establishing roots, it was seeking ways of cooperation with the regimes of leaders such as pro-Barzani Abdul Hakim Bashar. As I said earlier, this dispute escalated when Barzani's political project was frustrated in Rojava. Now there is a new move in place: On 3 April in Arbil, Barzani brought together al-Parti, Azadi Party, Azadi (2) [as received], and Yekiti Party under the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Syria (KDPS). Suud Mele from Rojava was elected to be the leader of the new party. In this way the criticism that "they [the pro-Barzani parties] cannot take root because their leaders do not live in Rojava" was rendered ineffective. Needless to say, the delegates of the new party were detained upon their return to Rojava and sent back. With this action by the YPG, the PYD handed its opponents a valuable advantage. For whom the ditch is going to serve as a shield or as a grave depends on Rojava's ability to safeguard its **autonomy**.

Source: Radikal website, Istanbul, in Turkish 0000 gmt 18 Apr 14

NS gdef : Armed Forces | gdip : International Relations | gterr : Acts of Terror | nedc : Commentaries/Opinions | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : FC&E Executive News Filter

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BBC MONITORING

HD **Turkish daily says Kurds key to domestic, foreign developments**

WC 852 words

PD 16 June 2014

ET 12:23

SN BBC Monitoring European

SC BBCEUP

LA English

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LP

Text of report in English by Turkish privately-owned, mass-circulation daily Hurriyet website on 16 June

[Editorial by Murat Yetkin: "Kurds key to current Turkish politics; domestic and foreign"]

TD

Developments in Turkish foreign and domestic politics have entered a dangerous collision course, less than two months before the first round of presidential elections on Aug. 10.

The common denominator of developments in current Turkish foreign and domestic politics is the Kurdish issue. In domestic politics, the role of the Kurdish issue in the presidential elections is becoming more visible every day. There are a number of scenarios in the Ankara corridors regarding the possible role of Kurds in the presidentials.

It is no secret the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) sees the elections as an opportunity to force Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan into a bargain for autonomy rights. Most of the municipalities in the predominantly Kurdish-populated towns and cities of the southeast (either bordering or near to Syria, Iraq and Iran) were won by the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) in the March 30 local elections, now changing its name to the Peoples' Democracy Party (HDP).

The Erdogan initiative to carry out talks with the PKK through National Intelligence Agency (MIT) Chief Hakan Fidan in order to pursue a political solution to Turkey's chronic Kurdish problem (which had claimed over 40,000 lives in 30 years) has cautious public support.

The PKK has stepped up its military activities in the last few weeks in order to persistently remind of their presence and demands to Erdogan. A protest by the PKK against building stronger military stations in the Lice township of Diyarbakir turned into a clash where two people lost their lives.

Those demands include not only autonomy rights, but flexible prison conditions for Ocalan such as house-arrest, if not release. But when a PKK militant grabbed a Turkish flag from a major base of the military, (which has been under the influence of coup-plot trials like Ergenekon and Balyoz), and successfully escaped, Erdogan was subject to strong criticism by the opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) and Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), and even from some within his Justice and Development Party (AK Parti).

The capture of Iraq's second biggest city of Mosul by the radical organization Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) took place amid heated debates in Turkey over the Kurdish issue. ISIL is engaged in a fierce fight in Syria against the Bashar al-Assad forces and also against other opposition forces including the Kurds, (the Syrian branch of the PKK), who hold a piece of land they call "Rojava" by the Turkish border. The Turkish opposition has been accusing the Erdogan government of secretly helping Islamist forces in Syria, which they claim increase the risk of more terrorist activity in Turkey.

Moreover, ISIL raided the Turkish consulate in Mosul, taking 49 people there, including the consul general, hostage, together with 30 Turkish truck drivers.

On top of that, the federal forces of Masoud Barzani's Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq took advantage of a dispersing Iraqi army in the north and captured the disputed city of Kirkuk within hours. For Barzani, Kirkuk is the "Jerusalem of Kurds," but for the Turkish government it is a Turkmen city.

The advance of ISIL over the weekend included Telafar, another city where both Sunni and Shi'i Turkmens live. Turkmens in both Mosul and Kirkuk have been seeking refuge in the KRG areas, which gives Ankara mixed feelings: The Turkmens have been saved, but saved by the **Kurds**. Together with the capture of Kirkuk, developments give Barzani a stronger hand not only with the Turkish government but also against the PKK in their competition for power.

As the contacts between an alerted Iran and the US have started with the possibility of joint operations, Erdogan is not in the most comfortable position.

That picture might get more complicated if the BDP (or now HDP) comes up with a strong candidate for presidency. That would mean if Erdogan does not agree for a bargain and does not accept the **Kurds**' demands before the elections, the **Kurds** will run a campaign against Erdogan to prevent him from getting at least 50 per cent of the vote, which is necessary.

If he does bargain, then the BDP could withdraw its candidate before election day. If not, and if Erdogan (of course if Erdogan stands for candidacy) does not win the first round outright, the plan of the **Kurds** is to raise the stakes for the second round. However, if Erdogan agrees with the demands of the **Kurds** he risks losing some of his nationalist/conservative voter base.

The outcome will definitely affect the position of **Kurds** in **Iraq** regarding Turkey, as well as the Turkish position over there. That is why it is possible to say that the **Kurds** are holding the key to Turkish foreign and domestic politics at the moment, which are on a collision course.

Source: Hurriyet website, Istanbul, in English 16 Jun 14

CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

NS gdip : International Relations | gterr : Acts of Terror | gvote : Elections | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | gpol : Domestic Politics | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : FC&E Executive News Filter

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DOW JONES NEWSWIRES

HD **Turkish Government Seeks to Advance Talks With Kurds Ahead of Elections**

BY By Ayla Albayrak

WC 562 words

PD 26 June 2014

ET 14:59

SN Dow Jones Institutional News

SC DJDN

LA English

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LP

ISTANBUL--Turkey's government on Thursday took its first concrete step in a two-year effort to secure peace with its restive Kurdish population, seeking to advance talks ahead of presidential elections in August.

The move also comes as Turkey courts Northern **Iraq**'s semiautonomous Kurdistan Regional Government, or KRG, which stands to increase its power as Islamist insurgents march on the embattled central government in Baghdad. KRG leaders were meeting with top government officials in Ankara on Thursday.

TD

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government submitted its proposal to the Ankara parliament and the ruling Justice and Development Party, or AKP, is expected to swiftly pass the legislation by bolstering its majority with Kurdish lawmakers.

The draft law says it will allow the government to "take necessary precautions" and enable members of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, to return home from camps in Turkish and northern Iraqi mountains, as well as secure their "integration into the society." The move is broadly seen as an initial step to amnesty for PKK members--long a taboo.

Kurdish lawmakers told The Wall Street Journal that the proposal fell short of their suggestions but was still a "positive step." Turkey's antiterrorism laws also remain too broad, and threaten to undermine peace talks, they said.

Turkey's premier, who is expected to run and win the vote to become the country's first directly elected president, launched peace talks in 2012 and clinched a cease-fire from jailed PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan in March 2013.

Since then, there has been little to feed previously high hopes of lasting peace, except for a reform package in autumn 2013, which Kurdish lawmakers in Ankara criticized as insufficient. Those laws had paved the way for changing village names from Turkish to their Kurdish origins, allowing private education in Kurdish, and letting **Kurds** use their language at political rallies.

More than 40,000 people have been killed in the three-decade conflict between Turkey and the PKK, which is listed as a terrorist organization by Ankara, the European Union and the U.S. Comprising about 20% of Turkey's 77 million population, restive **Kurds** have been a pressing political problem for Turkey.

The proposed law also seeks to shield officials, participants and mediators in the peace process from prosecution. The precaution follows a 2012 attempt by state attorneys to question Turkey's intelligence chief, Hakan Fidan, over secret talks he conducted with the PKK in Oslo that were leaked in 2011.

Since then, the government has adopted a more transparent process to ensure public support. Kurdish lawmakers have been pressing for a legal framework to the peace talks since the start.

A successful resolution of the so-called Kurdish issue would strengthen Ankara's hands as Iraqi **Kurds** are becoming increasingly more autonomous, fueling speculation that the semiautonomous region across Turkey's southern border is closer to **independence** than ever before.

Scoring a political victory would also help Turkey improve its tarnished image as a model democracy in the region, and strengthen Mr. Erdogan's hand as he seeks to extend his rule for another decade by clinching the presidency.

Write to Ayla Albayrak at ayla.albayrak@wsj.com

(END) Dow Jones Newswires

June 26, 2014 08:59 ET (12:59 GMT)

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | neqac : Equities Asset Class News | nfiac : Fixed Income Asset Class News | nfxacb : Forex Asset Class Basic News | nfxacp : Forex Asset Class Premium News | gvote : Elections | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters

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AN Document DJDN000020140626ea6q001o5

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HD **Turkey and the Kurds: from nightmare to partnership**

WC 707 words

PD 26 June 2014

SN Cihan News Agency (CNA)

SC CINEWA

LA English

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LP

İSTANBUL (CİHAN)- Turkey's approach to the Kurdish question has for decades been characterized by an acute sense of fear and alarm, bordering on paranoia.

The Turkish Republic was traumatized during its fledgling years by major Kurdish uprisings that lasted from the 1925 Sheikh Said Rebellion to the Ağrı revolt in 1938. Having witnessed firsthand the loss of the Ottoman Empire (mainly because of ethnic minorities pursuing separatism), the Kemalist founding fathers of the young Turkish Republic developed an aversion to all things Kurdish within their nation-state's borders.

TD

As a result, Ankara came to see Kurdish nationalism exclusively as an existential security threat. In its most extreme form, this aversion turned into cultural genocide, with attempts to ban the Kurdish language and deny Kurdish ethnic existence in the cultural heritage of Anatolia. The **Kurds** had to become Turkish in the assimilationist drive of the new republic.

During the Cold War decades, Turkey's Kurdish intellectuals joined the Turkish left. These were times when ideology trumped identity. In Turkish cities, where they migrated from eastern Anatolia, they often embraced the ideological agenda of a socialist and communist utopia instead of pursuing the dream of national **independence**. It is no coincidence that the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) founded by Abdullah Öcalan had Marxist-Leninist origins. It was only after the 1980 military coup and the brutal repression of Kurdish dissent by the Kemalist generals that the movement assumed a separatist and nationalist agenda. By 1984, the Turkish Republic was facing a full-blown Kurdish separatist insurgency. The dream of Kurdish **independence** had once again become a Turkish nightmare. For the next 25 years, the war between the Turkish military and the PKK caused the death of more than 40,000 **Kurds** and Turks. Ankara's determination to see the Kurdish question as a security threat extending to Syria and **Iraq** did not change until very recently. The US invasion of **Iraq** and the emergence of the semi-autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in **Iraq** exacerbated Turkey's nightmare of Kurdish **independence** right at its borders.

Yet, somewhat miraculously, Ankara's approach to the Kurdish issue -- both within borders and beyond -- began to evolve toward a completely different direction after 2011. The reasons for this sudden change of heart were multifold. At home, the most important factor was the realization that the PKK was proving impossible to defeat militarily. There was a growing sense that Kurdish nationalism was on the rise and that the PKK was becoming increasingly popular among a new generation of young **Kurds**. Millions of **Kurds** came to see the PKK as the only reason the Turkish state had no other choice but to accept the Kurdish "reality." But it was also quite clear that the PKK would not be able to defeat the Turkish military. Such deadlock dictated the logic of dialogue. By 2012, the Turkish intelligence chief, Hakan Fidan, and PKK leader Öcalan had become interlocutors in what is now known as the Kurdish peace process.

The second factor that radically altered Turkey's approach to the Kurdish question was the decision to co-opt rather than confront the KRG in northern **Iraq**. By 2010, it became clear that the administration of US President Barack Obama was leaving **Iraq** for good. The American exit was a major disappointment for the Iraqi **Kurds**, since it exposed the vulnerable position of Arbil and put an end to the Kurdish dream of hosting permanent American military bases. In the absence of Americans, oil-rich Kurdistan was in desperate need of a regional ally. A growing Turkish economy in search of domestic peace and additional energy resources became an unexpected candidate for partnership. In a matter of a few years, Ankara turned from foe to strategic ally for the KRG. Turkey's muted reaction to the KRG's annexation of Kirkuk speaks volumes about this new Kurdish-Turkish entente. Ironically, today, Ankara has become the only

regional power at ease with the idea of an independent Kurdistan in northern **Iraq**. The nightmare of Kurdish **independence** for Turkey has thus become part of a visionary neo-Ottomanism fueled by energy deals and realpolitik.

ÖMER TAŞPINAR (Cihan/Today's Zaman) CİHAN

RE turk : Turkey | kurd : Kurdistan | iraq : Iraq | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD OPINION

PUB Cihan News Agency

AN Document CINEWA0020140626ea6q00003

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BBC MONITORING

HD **Turkey stresses Iraq's territorial integrity amid calls for Kurd independence**

WC 295 words

PD 30 June 2014

ET 14:56

SN BBC Monitoring European

SC BBCEUP

LA English

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LP

Text of report in English by Turkish privately-owned, mass-circulation daily Hurriyet website on 27 June

Turkey's top security board has reiterated Ankara's long-standing policy of protecting the territorial integrity and political unity at a moment where calls for Kurdish **independence** are increasing due to the growing unrest in the oil-rich country.

TD

"It is noted that our support for the Iraqi people for the protection of the country's territorial integrity and political unity will continue," read the statement issued following the bi-monthly National Security Council (MGK) meeting late June 26.

The statement came on the same day when Turkish officials held lengthy meetings with Nechirvan Barzani, prime minister of Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), and nephew of Massoud Barzani, president of the KRG. Massoud Barzani recently has said "there was a new reality" in **Iraq** and the people of Kurdistan have the right to determine their fate, implying the declaration of an independent Kurdish state is on their agenda.

Having convened under the leadership of President Abdullah Gul and with the participation of senior government and military officials, the MGK discussed the reflections of violent activities that have the tendency to turn into a sectarian-based conflict in the entire region.

The MGK also reviewed the state of Turkmens in **Iraq** who had to flee their homes following the Islamic State of **Iraq** and the Levant (ISIL) offensive towards Mosul, Telafer and other nearby cities where Turkmens and **Kurds** are the majority.

Additionally, the board reviewed the efforts carried out for the release of the 80 Turkish citizens who have been kept by ISIL militants since June 10.

Source: Hurriyet website, Istanbul, in English 27 Jun 14

NS gdef : Armed Forces | gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gpir : Politics/International Relations

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PUB The British Broadcasting Corporation

AN Document BBCEUP0020140630ea6u0025w

REUTERS

HD **Turkey rejects Kurdish independence, wants Iraq unity government, officials say**

WC 667 words

PD 30 June 2014

ET 17:40

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

CY (c) 2014 Reuters Limited

LP

* Turkey wants unified **Iraq**, rejects Kurdish **independence**

* Ankara-Iraqi Kurd ties have flourished in recent years

TD

* Turkey has poor relations with Maliki government

By Jonny Hogg and Orhan Coskun

ANKARA, June 30 (Reuters) - Turkey opposes **independence** for a Kurdish state in northern **Iraq** and wants a unity government in Baghdad to counter the threat by Islamist Sunni rebels who have seized large swathes of territory in recent weeks, Turkish officials said.

Iraqi **Kurds** have benefited from the recent turmoil sweeping the country by occupying territory abandoned by government forces fleeing the advance of Sunni fighters led by the Islamic State in **Iraq** and the Levant (ISIL), which took **Iraq**'s second city Mosul earlier this month.

Turkey has good relations with the semi-autonomous Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in **Iraq** but would not support moves to push for **independence** from Baghdad, a Turkish government official said in response to questions from Reuters on Monday.

"Turkey's position is for the territorial integrity and political unity of **Iraq**, that's it," the official said anonymously, in order to speak more freely.

"(We) are not in favour of any **independence**, that would be detrimental to that unity. Nothing like that could be discussed," the official stated, adding that Ankara is backing calls for the creation of a consensus or unity government to represent the interests of all Iraqis.

There has been mounting speculation over the past few weeks that Ankara's poor relations with the central Shi'ite-led government of Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki could lead to Turkey accepting or supporting a Kurdish breakaway from Baghdad.

Comments in the Financial Times on Saturday by Huseyin Celik, a spokesman for Turkey's ruling AK Party, have been interpreted as suggesting Ankara would tolerate an independent Kurdish state if **Iraq** were to fall apart.

"If **Iraq** is divided and it is inevitable, they are our brothers... Unfortunately the situation in **Iraq** is not good, and it looks like it is going to be divided," Celik was quoted as saying.

However another Turkish official at the prime minister's office last week appeared to pour cold water on the idea, telling Reuters that "the integrity of **Iraq** is very important to Turkey".

Turkey has in the past been cool to efforts for greater **autonomy** for Iraqi Kurdistan for fear of stirring up separatist feelings among its own **Kurds**, who fought a decades-long insurgency in which an estimated 40,000 people were killed.

Peace talks led to a cease-fire in that conflict last year.

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This year, Turkey allowed Iraqi **Kurds** to pipe oil to export for the first time, pumping it to a Turkish port over Baghdad's objections.

The first tankers of Kurdish oil were bought in recent weeks by Israel, whose Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu voiced support for Kurdish statehood on Sunday, taking a position that appeared to clash with the U.S. preference to keep **Iraq** united.

The **Kurds** have seized on the recent sectarian chaos in **Iraq** to expand their autonomous northern territory to include Kirkuk, a city they consider their ancestral capital, perched on vast oil deposits that could support an independent state.

Kurdish officials say the ISIL advance has transformed **Iraq**, requiring a renegotiation of the settlement in place since the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003, under which they rule themselves but remain within **Iraq** in return for a fixed percentage of its overall oil revenue.

Iraq's five million **Kurds** have ethnic compatriots in Iran, Syria and Turkey, and have so far hesitated to declare full **independence**, in part to avoid angering neighboring countries.

Turkey has in recent years pursued deeper ties with Iraqi **Kurds**, partnering up in the exploration and production of oil fields in Iraqi Kurdistan and signing multi-billion dollar oil and gas deals last November. (Reporting by Jonny Hogg and Orhan Coskun; Editing by Humeyra Pamuk and Peter Graff)

RF Released: 2014-6-30T16:40:01.000Z

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | gdip : International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

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IPD Business

IPC SERVICE:C

PUB Thomson Reuters (Markets) LLC

AN Document LBA0000020140630ea6u00a2j

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ALJAZEERA

HD **Iraq's Kurds push for independence referendum**

WC 575 words

PD 3 July 2014

ET 14:48

SN Al Jazeera English

SC AJAZEN

LA English

CY Copyright 2014 Al Jazeera English.

LP

The president of the Kurdish region of northern **Iraq** has asked his parliament to prepare for a referendum on **independence**, potentially paving the way for the break-up of the country.

Masoud Barzani, president of the Kurdistan Regional Government, called on parliament on Thursday to form an independent electoral commission that would start organising a referendum on **independence** for the semi-autonomous region.

TD

"It will strengthen our position and will be a powerful weapon in our hands," he said.

Al Jazeera's Jamal Elshayyal, reporting from the regional capital Erbil, said the move was in line with the **Kurds**' march for self-determination.

Barzani's latest call is expected to anger Nouri al-Maliki, **Iraq**'s prime minister, who is struggling to keep a grip on the country.

On Friday, Barzani issued a defiant statement to Baghdad that there was no going back on autonomous Kurdish rule in the oil city of Kirkuk.

The US has urged Barzani to stick with Baghdad, though Barzani said during a meeting last month with John Kerry, US secretary of state, that it was "very difficult" to imagine **Iraq** staying together.

The Kurdish region has long been at odds with **Iraq**'s federal government on numerous issues, especially over what Kurdish politicians say are delayed and insufficient budget payments to the region.

But the issue is significantly complicated by the **Kurds**' control of Kirkuk and a chunk of other northern territory that they want to absorb, over the Maliki government's strong objections.

Speaking on Wednesday, Maliki accused the **Kurds** of "exploiting current events in order to impose a reality" and called the latest moves unacceptable.

Though calls for a referendum on **independence** are not new - **Kurds** strongly backed **independence** in a 2005 non-binding vote - the drastic change in the situation on the ground means the **Kurds** now see a fully sovereign state as within their grasp.

State within grasp

Iraq's five million **Kurds**, who have ruled themselves within **Iraq** in relative peace since the 1990s, have expanded their territory by up to 40 percent in recent weeks as a Sunni-led rebellion seized vast stretches of western and northern **Iraq**.

Saudi Arabia, who shares an 800km long border with **Iraq** sent 30,000 troops to guard its border after Iraqi soldiers withdrew from the area.

State news agency SPA said King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz ordered all necessary measures to protect the kingdom against potential "terrorist threats".

In Thursday's other developments, Sunni fighters released 32 Turkish lorry drivers captured in Mosul during a offensive across the north and west of the country.

Al Jazeera's Bernard Smith, reporting from Silopi, a Turkish district close to **Iraq** border, said the drivers were freed earlier in the day and were expected to fly back from Erbil.

Ahmet Davutoglu, Turkey's foreign minister, said the drivers were well but did not provide any details on the circumstances leading to their release.

Speaking in Ankara, he said efforts were under way to secure the release of the Turks still in captivity.

Fighters from the recently declared Islamic State seized the men on June 9. Three days later, they captured another 49 people from the Turkish consulate in Mosul.

"The critical process continues," he said. "Our prayers and our efforts will go on for the rest of them and God willing, we will share such good news about them too as soon as possible."

RE iraq : Iraq | kurd : Kurdistan | turk : Turkey | mosul : Mosul | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

PUB Al Jazeera International

AN Document AJAZEN0020140703ea730005l

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HD **Turkey softens stance on independence for Iraqi Kurds**

BY Dilay GUNDOGAN

WC 726 words

PD 4 July 2014

ET 17:51

SN Agence France Presse

SC AFPR

LA English

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LP

After embarking on a peace process with homegrown Kurdish militants, Turkey is finally reconciling itself with the prospect of an independent Kurdish state in neighbouring war-torn **Iraq**.

The idea of an independent Iraqi Kurdistan was once anathema for Ankara, which traditionally feared it would lead to a greater Kurdistan incorporating its own Kurdish-majority regions.

TD

But struggling to fend off the growing jihadist threat on its doorstep, and pursuing its own strategic and economic interests in Iraqi Kurdistan, Turkey has gradually changed its position to forge a new alliance with the Iraqi **Kurds**.

In stark contrast to previous Turkish leaders who deferred to the once-powerful military, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has started a peace process with Kurdish rebels in Turkey and introduced reforms to ease discrimination against **Kurds**.

Erdogan also hopes to call on support from among the 15 million-strong Kurdish minority, most of whom hail from the poor and underdeveloped southeast, when he stands for election as president on August 10.

"Supporting **Iraq**'s territorial integrity no longer serves Turkey's interests. Turkey knows that **Iraq** cannot stay united anymore and wants to remain unscathed," said Bilgay Duman, an **Iraq** expert at the Ankara-based Centre for Middle-Eastern Strategic Studies.

"It has no better ally in the region than the **Kurds**... An independent Kurdish state will provide a buffer zone to counter the Islamist threat," he told AFP.

Ankara's alarm has reached new heights after Sunni jihadists seized a vast swathe of territory in northern **Iraq** and declared a "caliphate" straddling Turkey's neighbours **Iraq** and Syria.

Emboldened by recent gains as a result of the jihadist surge, Iraqi Kurdish president Massoud Barzani on Thursday asked the autonomous region's parliament to prepare for a referendum on **independence**, possibly paving the way for the break-up of **Iraq**.

Duman said Turkey no longer fears that Iraqi **Kurds**' push for **independence** will lead to the creation of a greater Kurdistan, "because there is no unity among the region's **Kurds**".

Recent comments to the Financial Times by Huseyin Celik, spokesman for Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party, also suggested that Ankara could tolerate an independent Kurdish state in northern **Iraq**.

Originally of Indo-European origin, **Kurds** in the Middle East are predominantly Sunni Muslim and number between 25 and 35 million, with a language and culture that make them distinct from Arabs, Turks and Persians.

They are therefore often seen as a threat by all the four countries they principally inhabit -- **Iraq**, Iran, Syria and Turkey -- and have long suffered discrimination.

But Turkey's **Kurds** have begun to enjoy greater democratic rights under Erdogan's 11-year rule, with the Turkish strongman engaging the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in talks to end a conflict that has claimed some 45,000 lives.

The government last week proposed reforms to revive stalled talks with the PKK, which took up arms in 1984 with the aim of creating an independent Kurdish state, but has since scaled back its demands to greater **autonomy** for **Kurds**.

"Turkey is still very different from **Iraq**, not least in the fact that the country's ruling AKP commands up to half of the votes of Kurdish speakers, even in the Kurdish-majority southeast, and because perhaps half of all Turkey's **Kurds** live in the west of the country," said Hugh Pope of the International Crisis Group.

"There is every chance that a well-judged democracy package that gives an element of regulated decentralisation to the whole country can keep the country whole and prosperous."

Turkey has also built up strong trade ties with **Iraq**'s Kurdistan region in recent years, which experts say is another reason why Ankara cannot afford to be as hostile to the idea of an independent Iraqi Kurdish state as in the past.

In May, Turkey began exporting oil supplies from Iraqi Kurdistan to international markets, drawing the ire of the central government in Baghdad.

"Erdogan cannot afford to antagonise the **Kurds** in northern **Iraq**. Because he needs them for their oil and the goods he is selling them," Duman said.

Iraq has also become the second biggest single export market for Turkey, accounting for 8 percent of the country's overall exports.

dg/sjw/fg/er

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IPD Insight

PUB Agence France-Presse

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REUTERS

HD **Turkey's Kurds prefer peace prospects at home to perilous statehood in Iraq**

WC 1,134 words

PD 9 July 2014

ET 15:48

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

CY (c) 2014 Reuters Limited

LP

* **Kurds** in Turkey seek greater **autonomy**, not **independence**

* Parliament working on laws to bolster peace process

TD

* Iraqi **Kurds** plan referendum on **independence**

By Ayla Jean Yackley

ISTANBUL, July 9 (Reuters) - What has long been a dream for the Middle East's **Kurds**, an independent state, is within reach in **Iraq**, but Turkey's **Kurds**, wearied by a 30-year conflict with Ankara, see a brighter future at home, where negotiations could deliver the rights they have fought for.

At Istanbul's Kurdish Institute, where 400 students are learning Kurdish, they are riveted by events across the border in Iraqi Kurdistan, which appears to be hurtling towards **independence** as state forces retreat and Sunni militants, led by the Islamic State of **Iraq** and the Levant (ISIL), an al Qaeda offshoot, seize parts of northern **Iraq**.

Events are not, for now at least, stirring separatist sentiment in Turkey, where many **Kurds** prefer to put their faith in greater **autonomy** within the established borders of a booming economy than in the vagaries of a new nation state surrounded by hostile neighbours.

That might not always have been the case, when **Kurds** and the Turkish state appeared beyond reconciliation after more than 40,000 people, mostly **Kurds**, were killed in an armed struggle led by the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) since 1984.

When linguist Zana Farqini began work at the Kurdish Institute two decades ago, he faced terrorism charges just for performing a song in his native language at a political rally.

Police regularly raided the institute, which published a magazine and offered workshops, as the separatist insurgency raged in Turkey's southeast.

Now, Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan's efforts to negotiate an end to the 30-year conflict have included lifting strict curbs on Kurdish political and cultural expression, long unthinkable in a country with strong nationalist sentiment.

"We finally see it is possible to solve our problems without spilling blood, through democratic means," said Farqini, now 47. "With the peace process, **Kurds** are declaring they want to live with Turks. They're saying, 'We do not want to break away.'"

NATION WITHOUT A STATE

Kurds are considered the largest ethnic group without a state - more than half of them living in Turkey - and their fate in **Iraq** will reverberate across the region. **Iraq**'s Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), long locked in a dispute with the central government in Baghdad over oil revenues, is planning a referendum on **independence**.

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Iraqi **Kurds**, who have governed themselves since the 1990s, have responded to the ISIL crisis by taking over areas left undefended by the Iraqi military, adding as much as 40 percent to their own territory.

Officially, Turkey remains committed to **Iraq**'s territorial unity. But Ankara has largely welcomed the KRG's empowerment in recent years, partly out of its own economic concerns, seeking access to Kurdish oil and gas and with its construction firms leading a building boom there.

There is strong mutual interest. Iraqi Kurdistan serves as a buffer against the chaos in the rest of **Iraq**, while Turkey is the only viable export outlet for Kurdish hydrocarbons en route to lucrative markets in Europe.

Relations with the Shi'ite-dominated government in Baghdad have meanwhile soured. Erdogan, who is like most Turks a Sunni, has accused Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki of sectarian policies that have led to **Iraq**'s current crisis.

"Because **Kurds** in **Iraq** are not getting their needs met by the central government, Kurdish aspirations for **independence** have gained more legitimacy and justification," said Yasin Aktay, who heads the ruling AK Party's foreign affairs office.

That is a lesson the government will have learned from events at home, where the PKK has scaled back demands for full-fledged **independence** in favour of local administration and more cultural rights, including Kurdish-language education.

Violence largely subsided after talks began with jailed PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan in late 2012.

SHIFTING LINES

Kurds inhabit a mostly mountainous arc from Turkey and Syria into **Iraq** and Iran. Denied a land of their own in the break-up of the Ottoman Empire after World War One, the turmoil in **Iraq** puts the dream of statehood within their grasp.

These shifting lines have lent a fresh sense of urgency to the Kurdish peace process in Turkey. In late June, parliament began work on legislation to resolve the conflict, formalising the process for the first time.

The advances have helped quell fears of Turkey fracturing along ethnic lines, according to Idris Kardas, coordinator of the Platform for Global Challenges at Istanbul Bilgi University.

"The PKK and its supporters have accepted that remaining in Turkey is more realistic, as long as they have more **autonomy**, cultural rights and a say in governing themselves," he said.

An August election, in which Erdogan aims to become Turkey's first directly elected president, is also driving the impetus, given that no politician can ignore a community that makes up about a fifth of the population.

In a sign of **Kurds**' commitment to mainstream politics, one of Erdogan's two competitors in the August presidential race is a Kurd: Selahattin Demirtas, head of parliament's Peoples' Democracy Party (HDP), a pro-Kurdish alliance of left parties that now wants to be a broader, Turkey-wide organisation.

The HDP itself is opposed to an independent Kurdistan carved out of **Iraq**, lest it imperil the fledgling peace in Turkey.

Idris Baluken, an HDP lawmaker and mediator in the talks, said **Kurds** exert more clout within the countries where they reside than they would in any new nation, surrounded by neighbours opposed to its very existence.

"Our model is a democratic confederacy that is based on living within borders, together in pluralism," he said.

Demographic movement has also blunted the urge for **independence**; after decades of migration from the poverty-stricken Kurdish southeast, Istanbul, with an estimated 2 million **Kurds** out of a population of 14 million, is now the world's biggest Kurdish city.

"Despite everything, Turkey is home," said Farqini at the Kurdish Institute, on a broad boulevard in Istanbul's ancient quarter of Fatih. "We want unity, but it cannot be forced. It must be of our own accord."

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If negotiations fail, the influence of events in **Iraq**, where former PKK militants remain in mountain hideouts, can only grow.

"My friends in the mountains are a guarantee for the peace process. If it doesn't work, we will of course defend ourselves once again," said Umut, a 17-year old villager sitting with his father and uncle near the town of Silopi, close to the **Iraq** border. (Additional reporting by Humeyra Pamuk in Silopi; Editing by Nick Tattersall and Will Waterman)

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CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gdip : International Relations | gpol : Domestic Politics | gvote : Elections | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

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IPD Business

IPC SERVICE:C

PUB Thomson Reuters (Markets) LLC

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HD **Iraq Kurds use army to boost control over Kirkuk oilfields .**

WC 752 words

PD 12 July 2014

SN Energy Monitor Worldwide

SC ENRGYMEN

LA English

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LP

Baghdad: **Iraq**'s semi-autonomous **Kurds** increased their control over oil resources in the north of the country after deploying armed forces to the Kirkuk and Bai Hassan oilfields. Kurdish Peshmerga forces took control of the two sites at the country's fourth-biggest oil field on Friday and ordered workers from **Iraq**'s state-run North Oil Co. to leave, the oil ministry said in an e-mailed statement. The Kurdistan Regional Government said in response that it acted to prevent the central government damaging an oil export pipeline. The oil ministry in Baghdad denied the claim. Given the political context, the **Kurds** are solidifying their control, Richard Mallinson, an analyst at consultants Energy Aspects Ltd., said by e-mail from London. The **Kurds** have signaled their intentions to start moving Kirkuk oil through their pipeline network, and this is another step toward making their ambitions a reality, he said.

TD

Iraq's minority **Kurds**, who historically have resisted control by Arab-dominated governments in Baghdad, are charting a course to independently develop oil reserves the KRG calculates at 45 billion barrels - equivalent to almost a third of **Iraq**'s total deposits according to BP Plc data. Kurdish armed forces moved last month outside their region in northern **Iraq** and occupied the long-disputed territory around Kirkuk after the Iraqi army fled from Islamist militants. Later Friday, a suicide bomber struck a checkpoint at the southern entrance to Kirkuk city, killing 13 people, Iraqi news agency al-Mada reported, citing the local health department. National unity The oil ministry demanded that the **Kurds** withdraw immediately from these oilfields, according to the e-mailed statement. The move is unconstitutional and a threat to national unity, it said. The KRG said it acted to prevent damage to an oil pipeline built to allow the export of crude from fields in the Kirkuk area through the Kurdish region, according to an e-mailed statement. Kirkuk Oil Protection Forces moved to secure the oil fields of Bai Hassan and the Makhmour area, after learning of orders by officials in the federal ministry of oil in Baghdad to sabotage the recent mutually agreed pipeline, according to the KRG statement. North Oil Co. staff had been instructed to dismantle or render inoperable valves on the pipeline, it said. This talks is ridiculous and we totally deny it, Asim Jihad, spokesman for the oil ministry in Baghdad, said by phone. The KRG's accusations are false and North Oil Co. staff were only taking action to protect equipment at the oilfields, Abdul Ilah Qassim, adviser to deputy prime minister Hussain Al- Shahristani, said by phone. Lost patience The **Kurds** have lost patience with any political process and are taking matters into their own hands on the ground, said Julian Lee, an oil strategist who writes for Bloomberg First Word. The observations he makes are his own. The **Kurds**' allies in the US and Turkey may be fine with tacitly supporting the export of crude from fields indisputably on Kurdish territory, but facilitating the export of oil from fields outside Kurdistan may be a step too far. Tensions between the **Kurds** and authorities in Baghdad have flared since the KRG began to export locally produced crude via a pipeline to Turkey without the central government's approval. The Kurdish region increased output by more than 50 percent to 360,000 barrels a day last month as ships loaded crude delivered through the Turkish pipeline, the International Energy Agency said Friday. New pipeline While Kurdish forces have occupied the area around Kirkuk since last month, oilfield facilities had remained in the hands of North Oil Co., Energy Aspects' Mallinson said. The KRG had previously said its troops would guard the Kirkuk oil hub until a referendum on regional **independence** could be held. The new pipeline through the Kurdish region was built to allow the export of crude from the Makhmour, Avana and Kirkuk oilfields after the main **Iraq**-Turkey oil link was shut down by sabotage in March, the KRG said. The Avana and Makhmour fields produce about 110,000 barrels of oil a day, which will be used primarily to fill the shortage of refined oil products on the domestic market, it said. As much as 325,000 barrels a day of oil production from fields in the Kirkuk area could be exported through the new pipeline, KRG Natural Resources Minister Ashti Hawrami said in London on 17 June. BLOOMBERG

CO irqnol : North Oil Company

IN i1 : Energy | i13 : Crude Oil/Natural Gas | i1300003 : Crude Petroleum Extraction | iextra : Natural Gas/Oil Extraction

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IPD Oil & Gas

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FT FINANCIAL TIMES

SE WORLD NEWS

HD **Kurds defy Baghdad over oil**

BY By Erika Solomon in Beirut and Anjli Raval in London

WC 181 words

PD 18 July 2014

SN Financial Times

SC FTFT

ED USA Ed1

PG 04

LA English

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LP

Iraq 's autonomous Kurdistan region is pumping crude from the disputed province of Kirkuk into its own oil infrastructure, raising the stakes of a worsening political conflict with the central government in Baghdad, write Erika Solomon in Beirut and Anjli Raval in London .

The Kurdish Regional Government appears to be making a serious effort to consolidate its control of the area, which is claimed by both Erbil and Baghdad, amid increasingly loud calls for Kurdish **independence**.

TD

Last week, Kurdish peshmerga forces seized two oilfields in Kirkuk.

"There has been a plan for several weeks now to sell the oil from Kirkuk," said a member of parliament who asked not to be named. "They will try to sell oil as soon as possible, I believe, because Turkey is in agreement, even though legally the oilfield belongs to **Iraq**."

He said the Kurdish parliament was drafting laws to claim its right to run disputed areas like Kirkuk - and its oilfields.

In full: www.ft.com/**iraq**

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IPD Government News

IPC GN

PUB The Financial Times Limited (AAIW/EIW)

AN Document FTFT000020140718ea7i0001t

HD **Arms for Kurdish peshmerga to affect military balance**

WC 875 words

PD 13 August 2014

ET 20:53

SN Deutsche Welle

SC DEUEN

LA English

CY (c) 2014. Deutsche Welle.

LP

Kurdish peshmerga militia are receiving modern weaponry to do battle with the extremist group "Islamic State." But the military aid is stirring fears of **Kurds**' aspirations for **independence**.

These days, much hope rests on the shoulders of **Iraq**'s Kurdish militia, the peshmerga. The military units of the Kurdish regional authorities are trying to stop the radical Sunni group "Islamic State" (IS, formerly ISIS) from taking over any more territory. They are also tasked with bringing Christians, Yazidis and others fleeing IS terrorists to safety. But the men and women peshmerga fighters are not well equipped for battle.

TD

The United States and France plan to ship them modern weaponry. Meanwhile, Deputy Chancellor and head of Germany's Social Democrats (SPD) Sigmar Gabriel has rejected any German participation in arming the **Kurds** for now, but has not completely ruled out future participation. The idea of supplying the peshmerga with modern weapons has raised many questions, for example, about how it could affect the sensitive military balance in the region.

The Kurdish term "peshmerga" means "those who face death." It is applied mainly to fighters in Iran and **Iraq**, but not members of the Kurdish Worker's Party (PKK) in Turkey. Two organizations with armed units have emerged since 1975: the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), said Erfurt-based professor and **Iraq** expert Ferhad Seyder.

"After 1991, there were attempts to fuse the two groups, but party interests and sheer egoism have led to the continued existence of two peshmerga units today," Seyder told DW.

He estimated that the KDP has between 30,000 and 40,000 soldiers, while the PUK has around 25,000. Other experts estimate that there are more than 100,000 militia members. Today, the peshmerga serve as the army of the Kurdish autonomous region. Regional President Massoud Barzani is their official commander, with a ministry in the regional capital of Irbil that acts as a department of defense. According to Seyder, however, actual control over the units lies with the KDP and the PUK.

Peshmerga weaponry dates to Soviet era

The "Islamic State" has access to a modern arsenal of weapons. Its fighters looted weapons from the Iraqi governing forces – including weapons supplied by the United States. The peshmerga, on the other hand, are using outdated weaponry, some of which was supplied by the former Soviet Union.

"The **Kurds** are not able to buy bigger weapons systems, because the suppliers have always looked for approval from **Iraq**," said Seyder, who heads the Center for Kurdish Studies in Erfurt. The Baghdad central government under Nouri al-Maliki has always blocked such moves.

Although a part of the Kurdish militia was – on paper, at least – supposed to be integrated into the Iraqi army, the relationship between Baghdad and the Kurdish regional government has remained tense.

"The Iraqi government refused to arm the peshmerga and pay them a salary because they wanted to reduce the number of peshmerga," Seyder said. It seems Baghdad doesn't want any strong troops beyond its control.

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Iraq's neighboring states will be closely monitoring any changes in the military balance resulting from the arms supplies. According to Bilgay Duman from the Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies (ORSAM) in Ankara, the weapons shipments are not a problem for Turkey.

"Relations between Turkey and the Kurdish administration are good, neither side sees the other as a threat," Duman said. Better armed **Kurds** in the autonomous region would not seriously call Turkey's military superiority into question.

Concerns about **independence** aspirations

But not all states are equally relaxed about the situation. According to Seyder, other countries are not keen on the idea of stronger Kurdish troops, because of the perceived threat posed by the **Kurds**' aspirations for **independence**. They would rather see the Iraqi federation remain intact.

"They believe that arming the **Kurds** will change the status quo, and they're not wrong," Seyder said.

ORSAM researcher Duman does not think that the **Kurds** in **Iraq** will declare **independence** only because they have access to better weapons. Kurdish **independence** would only be possible within the framework of an international agreement, including that of neighboring states such as Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia, according to Duman.

Two arguments were used by the West to oppose weapons shipments to the opposition in neighboring Syria: That the weapons could escalate the already bloody civil war, and that they could end up in the hands of anti-Western groups. The same concerns apply to **Iraq**. The peshmerga from the KDP and PUK fought each other bitterly in the 1990s, and Seyder said that tensions between the two parties could surface again now. He doesn't think they will do battle with each other, however.

"The **Kurds** learned their lesson from the '90s," he said.

Seyder also doesn't think that modern weapons in the hands of the **Kurds** would one day be used against the West. Unlike other movements in the Middle East that once received US military aid, the **Kurds** would likely not change sides. The PUK is a social democratic party, and the KDP is a moderate conservative party.

"Kurdish nationalism is secular and pro-Western," said Seyder.

RF 17853077

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS ntra : Transcripts | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfce : FC&E Exclusion Filter | nfcpex : FC&E Executive News Filter | niwe : IWE Filter

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IPD World

PUB Deutsche Welle

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HD **PKK - from terrorist threat to ally?**

WC 833 words

PD 30 August 2014

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SC DEUEN

LA English

CY (c) 2014. Deutsche Welle.

LP

The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) is banned in Germany. The EU deems it a terrorist group. Now, however, regarding the threat from 'IS,' some German politicians appear ready to begin discussions over reconsidering.

Summer 1993: Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) members storm the Turkish consulate in Munich. They take hostages and demand of German Chancellor Helmut Kohl that he increase support for Kurdish rights.

TD

The PKK carried out dozens of attacks that year on Turkish institutions in Germany, often as arson attacks. The battle that the PKK had been fighting against Turkey since the 1980s had also arrived in Germany.

The **Kurds** have long fought for their own state, an independent Kurdistan, as their settlements are spread across several countries: Turkey, Syria, Iran and **Iraq**. In these attacks, primarily in eastern Turkey and neighboring border regions, tens of thousands of people were killed - Turkish soldiers, PKK fighters, and thousands of civilians as well.

Since then, many countries have classified the Marxist-oriented PKK as a terrorist organization. This view is shared by the European Union and NATO. PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan has been in Turkish custody for years, though this did not harm the popularity of the party with **Kurds** - quite the opposite in fact.

Relaxing tensions

Times have changed, however. Öcalan has called for non-violence, and since last year, a truce has been in place. The goal of an independent state no longer seems to be an issue. Now it is about increased **autonomy** and rights for **Kurds** in their settlement areas. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced as he took office, that the peace process with the Kurdish minorities would be taken up again.

This coming Monday, September 1, the Turkish government and the PKK leadership will begin such discussions.

The image of the **Kurds** in Turkey is slowly changing. "We have to recognize that the Kurdish candidate has achieved a remarkable result in the presidential election," German SPD politician Rolf Mützenich said. Selahattin Demirtaş received nearly 10 percent of the vote in the election. He is committed to non-violence and believes he can negotiate with the Turkish government for more rights for the Kurdish people.

From terrorism to fighting terror

The PKK's rage, which in the past was directed against Turkey, has turned now against a common enemy: the terrorist militia, "Islamic State," (IS). PKK fighters have already delivered several military defeats against IS. It is also said that PKK allies helped to free Iraqi Yazidi refugees who had fled from IS into the mountains. The battle-hardened PKK seems to be even more successful than the armed forces of the autonomous region of Kurdistan in northern **Iraq**, known as the Peshmerga.

The West is placing their hope in the Peshmerga in the battle against the IS terrorists. The Kurdish troops will supposedly be supplied with weapons from Germany, France and the United Kingdom, and they will be given air support by the United States, because the Kurdish autonomous region in northern **Iraq** has no air force.

It is thought that Peshmerga fighters and supporters of the PKK have already fought side-by-side against IS terrorists. As it seems - unfortunately for Chancellor Angela Merkel, who has made it clear she wants German arms to be delivered to the Peshmerga only and not to the PKK - there isn't really any big difference between the two Kurdish organizations.

Look to Turkey

Rolf Mützenich, the foreign policy spokesman for the German Social Democrat Party (SPD); is skeptical about delivering weapons to crisis areas, though Foreign Minister Frank Walter Steinmeier, also an SPD member, has spoken out in favor of it. He claims this situation is different.

Mützenich has long believed it is sensible to have a discussion about the classification of PKK as a terrorist group in Germany, and he is not alone. Opposition politician Frithjof Schmidt of the Green Party sees it similarly. He told the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ), there is every reason to re-examine the classification, as, in the long-term, the PKK has the potential to be political actor in Turkey and play a role in its bordering regions. If the Turkish government has already started rethinking its attitude toward the PKK, Germany could also consider it, the politicians believe.

Lengthy discussion

Mützenich argues: "What is currently being tested in Turkey will impact Germany and other European countries in the foreseeable future." The discussion should be held now, the foreign policy expert says, "but certainly not because of any weapons deliveries." Green Party politician Konstantin von Notz also told the FAZ that the debate should not be used as a lever to justify weapons delivery to the PKK.

Only few expect a quick decision to legalize the PKK in Germany. The European Union as a whole has classified the PPK as a terrorist group, therefore the EU would have to uniformly rescind that decision. In Germany, however, the government does not seem ready to change its attitude.

RF 17890523

CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

NS gterr : Acts of Terror | gpol : Domestic Politics | ntra : Transcripts | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfce : FC&E Exclusion Filter | nfcpex : FC&E Executive News Filter | niwe : IWE Filter

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IPD Germany

PUB Deutsche Welle

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FT FINANCIAL TIMES

HD **Iraq prepares legal crackdown on Kurdish oil sales**

BY By Anjli Raval, Oil and Gas Correspondent

WC 584 words

PD 4 September 2014

ET 20:21

SN Financial Times (FT.Com)

SC FTCOM

LA English

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LP

Iraq's oil ministry is preparing to sue a Greek shipping company for its role in the "illegal" export of crude from the Kurdistan region, marking a renewed effort in Baghdad's campaign to restrict the **Kurds**' ability to market and sell their own natural resources.

Baghdad alleges that Athens-based Marine Management Services (MMS) operated five tankers transporting Kurdish Iraqi oil from Turkey, including the United Leadership, the United Emblem, the United Kalavrvta, the United Carrier and the United Dynamic.

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"MMS is liable for damages of at least $318m, and possibly significantly more, as a result of its willing and active participation in the [Kurdistan Regional Government's] illegal crude oil export scheme," the government alleged.

It also accused the ship owner of "repeatedly ignoring warnings that the crude oil it was carrying does not belong to the KRG".

KRG officials and MMS did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Baghdad and the KRG have for months been wrangling over the latter's right to produce and market its natural resources. Although the Kurdish region does not have giant oilfields like those in southern **Iraq**, it has a vast undeveloped resource base that, if tapped into, could make it a significant player in the energy market. The resulting financial and energy **autonomy** could also help pave the way toward the region's long-sought goal of **independence**.

Baghdad has responded by freezing the KRG's finances, withholding nearly $10bn in budget payments due to the region since the start of the year, according to oil analysts.

In turn, the region has sought out sales of pipeline crude pumped from fields in northern **Iraq** into an Iraqi-Turkish pipeline which was then transported to the port of Ceyhan. More than 10m barrels of the oil has been shipped from the port since then, Turkey's energy minister told Reuters.

Although the legal case is not expected to be filed in a Greek court until next week, according to a person familiar with the legal proceedings, **Iraq**'s oil ministry announced the move on Thursday.

Iraq's oil ministry said MMS declared false destinations for its tankers, turned off tracking devices to avoid detection and undertook "dangerous" night-time ship-to-ship transfers of crude oil on the high seas.

The United Kalavrvta, which held $100m worth of crude, has been anchored off the coast of Texas since July.

Baghdad had asked a US federal court to use admiralty law to block the KRG from moving the 1m barrels of Kurdish crude into US waters. But a Texas judge said he lacked jurisdiction on the matter.

The Iraqi oil ministry is set to file an amended petition in the Texas court on Thursday, the person familiar with the proceedings said.

Earlier this week the ministry said it would "not hesitate to prosecute any companies or individuals dealing with illegally exported Iraqi oil, whether by loading, unloading, lightening, transporting or purchasing of such cargos".

The legal dispute is just one of the central government's many tactics used to deter buyers and curb the KRG's oil sales.Last month it warned potential buyers of "unauthorised" Iraqi crude that they could be unwittingly helping to fund Isis militants, who are active in the black market. Industry observers have said the statement was also an indirect swipe at the **Kurds**, who have avoided the country's official mechanism of selling oil.

CO irqmoo : Iraq Ministry of Oil

NS gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpol : Domestic Politics | c12 : Corporate Crime/Legal Action | ccat : Corporate/Industrial News | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : FC&E Executive News Filter | nfcpin : FC&E Industry News Filter

RE iraq : Iraq | kurd : Kurdistan | baghd : Baghdad | greece : Greece | turk : Turkey | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eecz : European Union Countries | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Company News

IPC CN

PUB The Financial Times Limited (AAIW/EIW)

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HD **Kurds claim advances in Iraq as Britain joins fray**

BY By VIVIAN SALAMA and RYAN LUCAS

CR Associated Press

WC 1,701 words

PD 30 September 2014

ET 23:48

SN Associated Press Newswires

SC APRS

LA English

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LP

SALHIYAH, **Iraq** (AP) — Kurdish fighters in northern **Iraq** captured a border crossing with Syria on Tuesday, expelling Islamic State militants in heavy fighting that ground down to vicious house-to-house combat and close quarters sniping.

In neighboring Syria, Kurdish militiamen were on the defensive as the extremists pressed ahead with a relentless assault on a town near the Turkish border. The attack on Kobani, also known as Ayn Arab, has driven more than 160,000 people across the frontier in the past few days.

TD

Iraqi Kurdish fighters, known as peshmerga, were doing the bulk of the fighting on the ground as a U.S.-led coalition carried out an aerial assault against the Islamic State group in both **Iraq** and Syria. Britain joined the air campaign Tuesday, carrying out its first strikes against the extremists in **Iraq** — though it does not plan to expand into Syria.

The goal of the campaign is to push back the militant group that has declared a self-styled caliphate, or Islamic state, ruled by its brutal interpretation of Islam in territory it has seized across much of **Iraq** and Syria.

On Tuesday, Kurdish fighters in **Iraq** said they saw some of the heaviest fighting yet. Peshmerga spokesman Halgurd Hekmat told The Associated Press the **Kurds** seized the border crossing of Rabia, which the extremists captured in their blitz across **Iraq** over the summer.

Rami Abdurrahman, the director of the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, also said the **Kurds** had retaken the border post. He said Syrian Kurdish militiamen, who control the Syrian side of the frontier, had helped in the fight.

Kurds wounded in the fighting were brought to a makeshift clinic in the town of Salhiyah, where dusty and exhausted, they described savage battles, with militants sniping at them from inside homes and from the windows of a hospital in Rabia.

"They're such good fighters," said one soldier, resting outside the clinic on a rock surrounded by blood-soaked bandages. He refused to be identified because he was not a senior officer. "They're fighting with weapons the Iraqi military abandoned — so, American weapons really."

Fighters at the clinic described how the peshmerga first took the town of Mahmoudiya near the Syrian border on Monday, then moved down the highway to assault Rabia. The two sides had intense clashes overnight, with Islamic State group snipers shooting from inside houses and setting off roadside bombs.

Peshmerga fighters advanced on a five-story hospital in the city, only to be ambushed by some two dozen militants inside, the fighters said.

Hekmat said the Kurdish fighters intended to push further south toward the town of Sinjar, which the extremists took last month, prompting the flight of members of the small Yazidi religious sect.

In Britain's first airstrikes of the campaign, two Tornado jets hit a heavy weapons post and an armored vehicle being used by the militants to attack Kurdish forces in northwest **Iraq**, British Defense Secretary Michael Fallon said in London.

In Washington, Pentagon spokesman Navy Rear Adm. John Kirby said the U.S. and its coalition partners conducted 20 strikes in **Iraq** and Syria against fixed and mobile targets. So far, about 306 air attacks have been conducted — more than 230 in **Iraq** and the rest in Syria, he said.

He said the strikes were having an effect because the extremists have changed their tactics — blending in more with the local population, dispersing and refraining from communicating as openly as they once did.

But, he said, that "doesn't mean they aren't still trying, and in some cases succeeding, at taking and holding ground."

"No one should be lulled into a false sense of security by accurate airstrikes," he said. "We will not, we cannot bomb them into obscurity."

In northern Syria, Islamic State group fighters have pushed ahead with an assault for days trying to take the beleaguered Kurdish town of Kobani near the Syrian-Turkish border — despite U.S. airstrikes on their positions.

The fighting has created one of the single largest exoduses in Syria's civil war, now in its fourth year: More than 160,000 people have fled into Turkey over the past few days, the U.N. humanitarian chief Valerie Amos said.

"Their fear is so great that many people crossed heavily mined fields to seek refuge," she told the U.N. Security Council.

Kurds and militants battled Tuesday on Kobani's eastern edge, said Ahmad Sheikho, an activist operating along the Syria-Turkey border. He said that members of the Syrian Kurdish militia, known as the YPG, destroyed two tanks belonging to the Islamic State group. Militants have been hitting the town with mortars and artillery shells.

A day earlier, fighting around Kobani killed 57 fighters, both **Kurds** and militants, the Observatory said.

The situation in Kobani is "very difficult," said Nawaf Khalil, a spokesman for Syria's leading Kurdish Democratic Union Party.

Just outside Kobani, Islamic State militants captured the deserted Kurdish village of Siftek on Tuesday and appeared to be using it as a headquarters from which to launch attacks on Kobani itself.

The fighting could be seen from a hilltop on the Turkish side of the border, in the Karacabey area, where spectators — mostly Turkish **Kurds** — watched the fighting, peering through binoculars and cheering on their Syrian Kurdish brethren.

"Long live YPG! Long live Apo!" shouted one woman, referring to Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan, whose YPG group has been fighting Turkey for Kurdish **autonomy**, by the Kurdish nickname for Abdullah.

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Lucas reported from Beirut. Associated Press writers Jill Lawless in London, Edith M. Lederer at the United Nations, Burhan Ozbilici in Suruc, Turkey, and Bassem Mroue in Beirut contributed to this report.

ART Syrian refugees wait for transport after their arrival at the Turkey-Syria border near Suruc, Turkey, Tuesday, Sept. 30, 2014. U.S.-led coalition airstrikes targeted Islamic State fighters pressing their offensive against a Kurdish town near the Syrian-Turkish border on Tuesday in an attempt to halt the militants' advance, activists said. (AP Photo/Burhan Ozbilici) | Syrian refugees wait for transport after their arrival at the Turkey-Syria border near Suruc, Turkey, Tuesday, Sept. 30, 2014. U.S.-led coalition airstrikes targeted Islamic State fighters pressing their offensive against a Kurdish town near the Syrian-Turkish border on Tuesday in an attempt to halt the militants' advance, activists said. (AP Photo/Burhan Ozbilici) | In this Friday, Sept. 26, 2014 photo, released by the U.S. Air Force, a U.S Air Force KC-10 Extender refuels an F-22 Raptor fighter aircraft prior to strike operations in Syria. The F-22s, making their combat debut, were part of a strike package that was engaging Islamic State group targets in Syria. Washington and its Arab allies opened the air assault against the extremist group on Sept. 23, striking military facilities, training camps, heavy weapons and oil installations. The campaign expands upon the airstrikes the United States has been conducting against the militants in **Iraq** since early August. (AP Photo/U.S. Air Force, Russ Scalf) | In this Friday, Sept. 26, 2014 photo, released by the U.S. Air Force, a U.S Air Force KC-10 Extender refuels an F-22 Raptor fighter aircraft prior to strike operations in

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Syria. The F-22s, making their combat debut, were part of a strike package that was engaging Islamic State group targets in Syria. Washington and its Arab allies opened the air assault against the extremist group on Sept. 23, striking military facilities, training camps, heavy weapons and oil installations. The campaign expands upon the airstrikes the United States has been conducting against the militants in **Iraq** since early August. (AP Photo/U.S. Air Force, Russ Scalf) | An elderly Kurdish woman looks around as Syrian refugees arrive at the Turkey-Syria border near Suruc, Turkey, Tuesday, Sept. 30, 2014 U.S.-led coalition airstrikes targeted Islamic State fighters pressing their offensive against a Kurdish town near the Syrian-Turkish border on Tuesday in an attempt to halt the militants' advance, activists said. (AP Photo/Burhan Ozbilici) | Syrian refugees arrive at the Turkey-Syria border near Suruc, Turkey, Tuesday, Sept. 30, 2014. U.S.-led coalition airstrikes targeted Islamic State fighters pressing their offensive against a Kurdish town near the Syrian-Turkish border on Tuesday in an attempt to halt the militants' advance, activists said. (AP Photo/Burhan Ozbilici) | Syrian refugees arrive at the Turkey-Syria border near Suruc, Turkey, Tuesday, Sept. 30, 2014. U.S.-led coalition airstrikes targeted Islamic State fighters pressing their offensive against a Kurdish town near the Syrian-Turkish border on Tuesday in an attempt to halt the militants' advance, activists said. (AP Photo/Burhan Ozbilici) | Syrian refugees arrive at the Turkey-Syria border near Suruc, Turkey, Tuesday, Sept. 30, 2014. U.S.-led coalition airstrikes targeted Islamic State fighters pressing their offensive against a Kurdish town near the Syrian-Turkish border on Tuesday in an attempt to halt the militants' advance, activists said. (AP Photo/Burhan Ozbilici) | Syrian refugees wait for transport after their arrival at the Turkey-Syria border near Suruc, Turkey, Tuesday, Sept. 30, 2014. U.S.-led coalition airstrikes targeted Islamic State fighters pressing their offensive against a Kurdish town near the Syrian-Turkish border on Tuesday in an attempt to halt the militants' advance, activists said. (AP Photo/Burhan Ozbilici) | Syrian refugees wait for transport after their arrival at the Turkey-Syria border near Suruc, Turkey, Tuesday, Sept. 30, 2014. U.S.-led coalition airstrikes targeted Islamic State fighters pressing their offensive against a Kurdish town near the Syrian-Turkish border on Tuesday in an attempt to halt the militants' advance, activists said. (AP Photo/Burhan Ozbilici) | A woman holds a baby as Syrian refugees board a bus after their arrival at the Turkey-Syria border near Suruc, Turkey, Tuesday, Sept. 30, 2014. U.S.-led coalition airstrikes targeted Islamic State fighters pressing their offensive against a Kurdish town near the Syrian-Turkish border on Tuesday in an attempt to halt the militants' advance, activists said. (AP Photo/Burhan Ozbilici)

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS grcult : Religious Cults/Movements | gdef : Armed Forces | gpol : Domestic Politics | gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcom : Society/Community/Work | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grel : Religion | grisk : Risk News

RE iraq : Iraq | syria : Syria | kurd : Kurdistan | turk : Turkey | uk : United Kingdom | usa : United States | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eecz : European Union Countries | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | namz : North America | wasiaz : Western Asia | weurz : Western Europe

IPD ML

IPC i

PUB The Associated Press

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HD **Iraqi Kurds Urge Turkey To Let Volunteers Through To Defend Kobani**

WC 913 words

PD 13 October 2014

SN Radio Free Europe Documents and Publications

SC RFEUR

LA English

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LP

News Stories and Documents

By Charles Recknagel

TD

October 13, 2014

A top official of **Iraq**'s autonomous Kurdish region is calling on Turkey to let volunteer fighters through to the besieged Syrian city of Kobani, where Syrian **Kurds** are waging a desperate battle against Islamic State (IS) militants.

Speaking on a visit to RFE/RL in Prague on October 13, Falah Mustafa, the foreign minister of the Kurdish regional government (KRG), said Ankara should heed calls from the international community to help the city, which has been under siege for almost four weeks.

"It's a moral responsibility for all of us to move in order to help the besieged [city of] Kobani," Mustafa said. "We hope that there would be an understanding by Turkey to the calls from the international community and to the needs of these people who have proven to be bravely fighting the terrorists throughout this period, from the day they have been besieged."

He said Ankara should establish a corridor between its border checkpoint of Mursitpinar and Kobani, whose northern edge is less than a kilometer from the Turkish frontier.

"We are not asking for the impossible," Mustafa said. "For a corridor to be opened for those who are ready to go and join [the fighters in Kobani], because they need weapons, they need ammunition, they need medical assistance, and they need foodstuffs.

Ankara ruled out a call on October 10 by the UN's special envoy for Syria, Stefan de Mistura, to open the border to volunteers. De Mistura said Kurdish residents in Kobani "will be most likely massacred" by advancing Islamic State forces if the city falls. He said there were up to 700 mainly elderly civilians still inside the city center and another 10,000 to 13,000 people gathered nearby, all of whom are at risk.

But Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusogly rejected the UN envoy's appeal. He told France 24 on October 11 that "sending civilians to the war is a crime."

Specter Of The PKK

Cavusogly also expressed fears that any weapons reaching the YPG, the Syrian Kurdish militia defending Kobani, could ultimately find their way back to Kurdish separatist militants in Turkey. The YPG is allied to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which fought Ankara for Kurdish **autonomy** for over 30 years. Both Turkey and its Western allies consider the PKK a terrorist group.

Turkey has been rocked by protests by Turkish **Kurds** demanding the border be opened to volunteer fighters, many presumed to be veterans of the PKK. The death toll from the protests has risen to 31 following the death of a man injured in demonstrations in Turkey's southeastern province of Diyarbakir on October 10.

The Iraqi Kurdish foreign minister told RFE/RL that Turkey was wrong to put its domestic concerns about the PKK ahead of defending Kobani, the largest Syrian Kurdish city. He said IS presented a threat not just to Syria and **Iraq** but to all neighboring states of the region and that Ankara must help those groups that are capable of fighting the militants.

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"We have to be realistic," Mustafa said. "The only forces on the ground that have proven to be a reliable partner to the international coalition are the **Kurds**, the **Kurds** in **Iraq** and in Syria. We have seen it now in Kurdistan, where the Peshmerga forces are fighting IS and have proven to be successful, and in Syria we are seeing it in Kobani and other areas."

Ankara, as a member of the international coalition against IS, says it will not take part in ground action but will make its bases available to the coalition for training Syrian rebel forces and for conducting air strikes.

But Turkish government officials have told Western media privately that Turkey would accept only 4,000 opposition fighters and that they would be screened by Turkish intelligence. The screening would likely rule out fighters from the YPG, despite the fact the group has proven to be the best organized and effective Syrian Kurdish force against Islamic State forces.

Syrian Kurdish fighters aided by U.S.-led air strikes continued on October 13 to defend Kobani, where IS has taken control of about a third of the town in recent days. Neither side appeared to be gaining ground as fighting raged on the city's eastern and southeastern edges.

Mustafa said that Turkey must open its border to Kurdish volunteers from Turkey because the other most obvious source of help, the Iraqi **Kurds**, cannot reach the city.

One reason is that Kobani is hundreds of kilometers from **Iraq**'s Kurdish region, across IS-held parts of **Iraq** and Syria. The other is that the Iraqi Kurd forces, known as Peshmerga, are tied down fighting the IS along their own front line.

"We are ready to do whatever we can to support Kobani but we have to be mindful of the fact that we have got a front line with IS which is 1,035 kilometers long," Mustafa said. "We have been fighting them since June, when they came and took control [of] over one-third of **Iraq**'s territory, the western part, and since August we have been engaged in fighting on a daily basis with them."

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RE turk : Turkey | kurd : Kurdistan | syria : Syria | iraq : Iraq | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD News Stories and Documents

IPC FDL

PUB Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

AN Document RFEUR00020141013eaad00035

The Washington Post

SE A-Section

HD **Iraqi Kurds set off to help Kobane**

BY Brian Murphy

WC 500 words

PD 29 October 2014

SN The Washington Post

SC WP

ED FINAL

PG A09

LA English

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LP

Kurdish militiamen from **Iraq** took their first steps Tuesday to enter the battle against the Islamic State in Syria, news agencies reported, in a mission that underscored the regional political tensions complicating the U.S.-led alliance confronting the militants.

The dispatch of the reinforcements followed extensive negotiations for transit through Turkey, which is wary of further strengthening the region's Kurdish bonds after fighting its own Kurdish insurgency since the 1980s.

TD

Trucks carrying troops and weapons left northern **Iraq** for the nearly 300-mile trip through Turkey to the embattled Syrian border town of Kobane, according to the Rudaw news agency, which is close to the Iraqi Kurdish leadership.

The rest of the 150-member Iraqi Kurdish contingent was expected to depart later by plane from the **Kurds**' semiautonomous region in northern **Iraq**, Rudaw and other news agencies reported, citing senior Kurdish officials.

The fighters, known as pesh merga, are then expected to cross into Syria to join Syrian **Kurds** defending Kobane, which has been the target of intensified U.S. airstrikes aimed at driving back the Islamic State assault.

Turkey has military units deployed on the border but refuses to launch a solo ground offensive into Kobane. Turkey opposes the ties between the Syrian **Kurds** and a Kurdish rebel faction in Turkey that has waged a three-decade guerrilla campaign for greater rights.

Although **Kurds** in Syria and **Iraq** have been among the front-line fighters against the Islamic State, long-standing regional worries about Kurdish **autonomy** and identity have become a sticking point in organizing forces.

Turkey and the United States classify Turkey's Kurdish rebels as a terrorist group. The Kurdish ethnic homeland encompasses parts of Syria, **Iraq**, Turkey and Iran.

Turkey eventually agreed to allow the Iraqi pesh merga to pass through its territory to reach Kobane. But Turkey imposed restrictions, including limiting the number of fighters allowed to cross, reports said.

For the Islamic State, gaining control of Kobane would be a potential propaganda boost. The battle for Kobane has played out within sight of journalists and observers on the Turkish border.

The pesh merga contingent is unlikely to tip the scales against the well-armed Islamic State militants, but its arrival could open the way for more reinforcements.

The role of the Iraqi **Kurds** also is unclear. On Sunday, a spokesman for **Iraq**'s Kurdish region, Safeen Dizayee, was quoted as saying that the pesh merga will not initially engage in combat but will provide artillery support for Kobane's defenders.

Rudaw, the Kurdish news agency, reported that about 150 pesh merga would arrive in Kobane by early Wednesday.

At least four U.S. airstrikes have targeted Islamic State positions around Kobane since Monday, the U.S. Central Command said. Other air attacks by the United States and its allies were launched in **Iraq**, including one against an Islamic State unit west of Baghdad, the military said.

CT

RF WP20141029syria1029

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

RE iraq : Iraq | syria : Syria | turk : Turkey | kurd : Kurdistan | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Foreign

PUB Washington Post

AN Document WP00000020141029eaat00012

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FT FINANCIAL TIMES

HD **Economic independence trumps secession, say Iraq's Kurds**

BY Roula Khalaf in Erbil

WC 690 words

PD 13 November 2014

ET 09:47

SN Financial Times (FT.Com)

SC FTCOM

LA English

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LP

Iraq's Kurdistan Regional Government is taking a step back from its decades long push for secession but is staking out a tough position as it prepares for budget negotiations with Baghdad, insisting that it must from now on secure economic **independence**.

The northern region has been strapped for cash since the beginning of the year, when a dispute over oil sales led the former prime minister, Nouri al-Maliki, to cease paying the region's share of the government budget.

TD

The KRG says it is now owed about $12bn and officials complain that despite promises by the new government in Baghdad, budget transfers have yet to resume.

Nechirvan Barzani, the prime minister, told the Financial Times in an interview that the KRG was willing to give the government of Haider al-Abadi a chance and would work with it to combat the jihadis of the Islamic State of **Iraq** and the Levant, the group known as Isis. But he said the KRG would now insist on securing its share of the Iraqi budget through its own oil sales.

Ahead of expected negotiations with the new government, Mr Barzani said that the KRG would also demand the full 17 per cent share of the budget that it is entitled to, rather than the up to 11 per cent that Baghdad provided, after subtracting sovereign expenses.

"We will not give full control of oil sales to Baghdad again. That is not possible," said Mr Barzani. "We need a mechanism that won't allow Baghdad to disrupt the budget for the region . . . we would take 17 per cent of the budget."

Analysts say that the KRG's negotiating position will face stiff opposition in Baghdad, potentially setting the stage for a protracted crisis that is likely to frustrate an American government looking to bolster Iraqi unity and the credibility of the Baghdad authorities.

"Dividing oil revenues at the point of sale gives the Kurdish government control but any policy that enshrines financial **independence** is unacceptable to Baghdad," said an Iraqi oil expert.

The tabular content relating to this article is not available to view. Apologies in advance for the inconvenience caused.

<>The KRG's exploitation of its own oil resources has been at the centre of a long-running dispute with the central government. With at least 45bn barrels in reserves, the KRG has charted its own course, attracting international companies including ExxonMobil, Total and Chevron. The conflict over oil reached a climax this year as the KRG prepared to pump oil through a new pipeline that for the first time directly connected the region with Turkey, bypassing federal government control.

The central government says Kurdish exports through the pipeline are illegal under Iraqi law and has launched legal proceedings in the US. Backed by the US, it has sought to block buyers, and several tankers carrying Kurdish oil have been reported stranded in search of buyers.

<>Ashti Hawrami, the Kurdistan oil minister, told the FT in a separate interview that the exports had, nonetheless, continued to climb, reaching close to 300,000 barrels per day, and they were on track to rise to 500,000 bpd by the first quarter of next year. "I won't divulge who is buying. Those buying want to stay private," he said, insisting that neither the slump in oil prices nor the threats from Baghdad have obstructed the KRG's export strategy. He dismissed market speculation that the KRG was discounting its oil. "We're getting market value . . . And we have more demand than we can supply," he said.

The downplaying by the KRG of pressures on oil exports is part of a broader effort to strengthen its negotiating stance in talks with Baghdad. Officials say that despite the slump in oil prices, the KRG's financial strains have eased and public salaries have been paid up to the month of August.

"We've been able despite the budget cuts to sell crude and borrow money locally and internationally against future supplies of oil. And we continue to borrow money," said Mr Hawrami.

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IPD Government Budgets

IPC GN

PUB The Financial Times Limited (AAIW/EIW)

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FT FINANCIAL TIMES

HD **Baghdad and Kurds reach budget deal**

BY Roula Khalaf in London

WC 562 words

PD 13 November 2014

ET 20:59

SN Financial Times (FT.Com)

SC FTCOM

LA English

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LP

Iraq's central government and the semi-autonomous Kurdish region reached an agreement on Thursday that allows for the resumption of long-withheld budget transfers for the Kurdish areas, the first sign of breakthrough in a fraught relationship.

Nine months after the former Iraqi government cut budget transfers to the Kurdistan Regional Government over an oil dispute, the new administration in Baghdad agreed to release some $500m in funds for the **Kurds**' civil servants salaries.

TD

The deal stipulates the KRG will contribute 150,000 barrels per day of its own oil exports to the federal budget, Safeen Dizayee, the Kurdish government spokesman, confirmed to the FT. It will be rolled over until a more comprehensive agreement is reached.

The deal will come as a relief to the US and other world powers that are pressing for political reconciliation between the **Kurds** and the central government, as they seek to degrade the Islamic State of **Iraq** and the Levant, the group known as Isis.

Mr Dizayee said the agreement marked the first step towards resolving the broader oil dispute between the KRG and Baghdad. Negotiations are expected to start soon. "What's been agreed today is not a final solution. It is a first step towards a comprehensive solution," he said.

The KRG's exploitation of its own oil resources has been at the centre of a long-running dispute with the central government. It led the former prime minister, Nouri al-Maliki, to withhold budget transfers to the region earlier this year.

After Isis captured the Iraqi city of Mosul, and the **Kurds** threatened to secede from **Iraq**, the US pushed for a new, more conciliatory government that the **Kurds** have joined.

With at least 45bn barrels in reserves, the KRG has charted its own course, attracting international companies including ExxonMobil, Total SA and Chevron. The conflict over oil reached a climax this year as the KRG prepared to pump oil through a new pipeline that for the first time directly connected the region with Turkey, bypassing federal government control.

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<>The central government says Kurdish exports through the pipeline are illegal under Iraqi law and has launched legal proceedings in the US.

In a recent interview with the FT, Nechirvan Barzani, the prime minister, said that given the KRG's experience with Baghdad, it would now insist on securing its share of the Iraqi budget through its own oil sales, and was seeking economic **independence**.

Mr Barzani said that the KRG would also demand the full 17 per cent share of the budget that it is entitled to, rather than the up to 11 per cent that Baghdad provided, after subtracting sovereign expenses.

"We will not give full control of oil sales to Baghdad again. That is not possible," said Mr Barzani. "We need a mechanism that won't allow Baghdad to disrupt the budget for the region . . . we would take 17 per cent of the budget."

Ashti Hawrami, the Kurdistan oil minister, told the FT in a separate interview that the KRG's oil exports had reached close to 300,000 barrels per day, and they were on track to rise to 500,000 bpd by the first quarter of next year.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE iraq : Iraq | kurd : Kurdistan | baghd : Baghdad | turk : Turkey | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Government Budgets

IPC GN

PUB The Financial Times Limited (AAIW/EIW)

AN Document FTCOM00020141113eabd004h5

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REUTERS

HD **Kurds clash with Turkish police on anniversary of leader's capture**

BY By Seyhmus Cakan

WC 497 words

PD 15 February 2015

ET 14:30

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

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LP

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey (Reuters) - Thousands of **Kurds** rallied in towns across Turkey's mainly Kurdish southeast on Sunday and some clashed with riot police in calling for the release of Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan on the 16th anniversary of his capture.

Ocalan, leader of the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party(PKK), is viewed by nationalist Turks as responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of people in the group's 30-year armed struggle with the Turkish army.

TD

But for many of Turkey's estimated 15 million **Kurds**, the 65-year-old represents their bitter struggle for greater cultural and political rights.

Ocalan may call an end to the PKK's armed struggle by March, some people close to the process say. But some also say that unrest in the southeast suggests the PKK is flexing its muscles as it looks to stamp its authority on the mainly Kurdish region.

Four months after deadly riots provoked by Kurdish anger at Ankara's reluctance to help defend their kin in Syria, fresh unrest broke out in the town of Cizre near the Syrian and Iraqi frontiers between security forces, PKK supporters and Kurdish Islamists. At least six people were killed during the riots last month.

Those involved in talks remain tight-lipped on details, fearful of undermining prospects for a final deal. **Kurds** have been pushing for Ocalan's release, an amnesty for fighters and steps towards **autonomy**.

"The Kurdistan freedom struggle will from now on aim for the freedom of leader Apo (Abdullah Ocalan). We will step up the struggle for a free Kurdistan," PKK-linked political umbrella group KCK said in a statement on Sunday.

Ankara's hopes of a complete end to the PKK as an armed group have been frustrated by the role it has carved out for itself fighting in Syria and **Iraq** against Islamic State.

On Saturday night and Sunday, demonstrators and police fought in streets in Sirnak and Diyarbakir, the main city in Turkey's predominantly Kurdish southeast.

Shops kept their shutters lowered in a sign of protest and thousands took to the streets holding up recent photographs of their jailed leader. Police detained 17 protesters in Sirnak.

"Long live leader Ocalan," protesters chanted.

The Turkish government launched talks with Ocalan in 2012. The PKK, which is designated as a terrorist group by Turkey, the United States and the European Union, subsequently declared a ceasefire and began withdrawing from Turkey to camps in northern **Iraq** where they are based.

Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said on Saturday the peace process had reached a critical stage and that he expected "a beautiful spring" if the arms were silenced.

"Arms should totally leave Turkey's agenda. Then, beautiful steps will be taken and the country will go through an atmosphere of spring," he said.

(Writing by Ece Toksabay; Editing by Stephen Powell)

RF Released: 2015-2-15T13:30:56.000Z

CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

NS gcivds : Civil Disruption | gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | grisk : Risk News

RE turk : Turkey | kurd : Kurdistan | iraq : Iraq | syria : Syria | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Politics

IPC SERVICE:OUSWDM

PUB Thomson Reuters (Markets) LLC

AN Document LBA0000020150215eb2f00di5

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HD **Barzani heralds Kurdistan's independence, hails Turkey's peace process**

WC 705 words

PD 12 May 2015

SN Cihan News Agency (CNA)

SC CINEWA

LA English

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LP

İSTANBUL (CİHAN)- Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) President Massoud Barzani has said that **independence** for Iraqi Kurdistan is not a matter of "if" but "when" and that freedom for Iraqi **Kurds** is only being delayed by the war against the Islamist radicals that have overrun large swathes of territory in Syria and **Iraq**.

The head of **Iraq**'s semi-autonomous Kurdistan region, who is visiting Washington this week, told a packed hall of the capital's leading intellectuals and journalists on Wednesday that **independence** for Kurdistan is "coming." He hailed a settlement process in Turkey that was launched in 2012 to end the country's lingering Kurdish problem, which had frequently brought violence and claimed the lives of at least 40,000 people, and extended his support to the process he believed will have a "good outcome."

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Earlier on Tuesday, Barzani met with US President Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden and Deputy Secretary of State Anthony Blinken on issues including the campaign to battle the Islamic State of **Iraq** and Levant (ISIL). All of the officials reportedly reminded Barzani of their support for a "unified, federal and democratic **Iraq**."

Barzani said at the Atlantic Council on Wednesday that the unity of **Iraq** is "voluntary and not compulsory," reiterating that their long dream of **independence** will duly come true once the war against ISIL concludes. He assured that the **Kurds** do not have an immediate plan to secede from **Iraq**, but that they would hold a referendum after the war to see what the people of the region desire.

"Certainly an independent Kurdistan is coming. It's a continuous process. It will not stop, it will not [take a] step back," Barzani said through a translator. He said any change in the make-up of **Iraq**'s territorial system would be with mutual understanding and dialogue, and not through violence.

The Barzani government rose to international prominence after forces loyal to the regional government, known as peshmerga, led a sustained and successful effort to drive back the rapidly advancing ISIL militants. The US is closely coordinating the war against ISIL with Kurdish officials and military officers. More than 1,000 peshmerga fighters were killed in the past year as a result of the fight against ISIL. An important part of that fight was focused on the key Syrian border town of Kobani, which US officials had once said had no "strategic importance." Later, US-led allies pounded the area with hundreds of air strikes because ISIL kept sending its best fighters and equipment to Kobani, according to Obama's envoy to the global coalition fighting against ISIL, John Allen.

Barzani said, "Our hearts and minds are with our [Kurdish] sisters and brothers in other countries," adding that he hopes for their problems to be solved. He said the problems of Kurdish people in neighboring countries, including Turkey, have their own characteristics and that Kurdistan is supportive of any solution that is "peaceful and democratic."

On Turkey, Barzani said Kurdistan enjoys good relations with Turkey, particularly in the field of economics. He noted that the important part of that relationship is the peace process that was launched three years ago to bury three decades of hostilities between the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the Turkish military. "We have helped them; we will continue to help them. We believe there will be a good outcome from that process. We hope a peaceful solution will be found for the Kurdish question in Turkey," Barzani said.

The Kurdish peace process recently hit bumps in the road after opposition Kurdish politicians and Turkish leaders got embroiled in political wrangling as part of their electoral campaign. The government was

betting on Kurdish support to shift the country's current parliamentary system into a presidential one, but the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) repeatedly said they're not interested in any such deal.

The ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party) did not include the peace process in its election manifesto booklet, but then claimed that the pages devoted to the process had been accidentally left out when the booklet was sent for publication.

Mahir Zeynalov, Washington (Cihan/Today's Zaman) CİHAN

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE kurd : Kurdistan | iraq : Iraq | turk : Turkey | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Dünya

PUB Cihan News Agency

AN Document CINEWA0020150513eb5c000gu

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HD **Kurds are enjoying a triumphant moment, thinking of a country of their own**

WC 845 words

PD 22 June 2015

SN The Kurdish Globe

SC KURGLO

LA English

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LP

press photo

The Kurdish Globe

TD

It is time of good news for the **Kurds**, a people more accustomed to tragedy than to triumph.

It is time of good news for the **Kurds**, a people more accustomed to tragedy than to triumph.

Just last week in Turkey, a political party rooted in the struggle for Kurdish rights vaulted over the 10% threshold for parliamentary representation, giving the **Kurds** their biggest say ever in Turkish politics.

Day's later, allied Kurdish fighters in Syria seized a crucial border crossing from Islamic State, thus uniting Kurdish areas that now stretch from **Iraq** halfway to the Mediterranean Sea.

In **Iraq**, the **Kurds** repelled an assault by Islamic State last year, and their budding autonomous government in northern **Iraq** has taken advantage of the collapse of the Iraqi army to seize full control of the disputed northern city of Kirkuk?often dubbed the ?Kurdish Jerusalem? because of its historic significance?and the all-important oil fields nearby.

Amid an imploding Middle East ravaged by religious hatreds, the **Kurds** are providing a rare bright spot?and their success story is finding fresh support and sympathy in the West.

By contrast with the rest of the region, all the main Kurdish movements today are broadly pro-Western and secular

?We are now living a Kurdish moment in the history of the region,? said Kendal Nezan, director of the Kurdish Institute of Paris, a think tank formed in 1983 to unite Kurdish intellectuals and rally Western support.

?The Kurdish project is a project of pluralism, democracy and protection for minority rights?which is something new for the Middle East as we know it.?

The Kurdish awakening has emerged from the upheaval of the 2011 Arab Spring, and it is adding fresh disruption to the region?s old order.

?The events in **Iraq**, in Syria and in Turkey have profoundly altered the place of the **Kurds** in the Middle East?they provide fresh impetus and momentum toward Kurdish **independence** in some form,? said Ryan Crocker, who served as U.S. ambassador to **Iraq** and to Syria and is now dean of the Bush School of Government at Texas A&M University.

Such Kurdish **independence**, he cautioned, ?could produce permanent fragmentation of **Iraq** and Syria?and launch a whole new dimension of instability in the Middle East.?

Across the border in **Iraq**, Kurdish **autonomy** was sometimes recognized, but Kurdish uprisings were ruthlessly suppressed by successive governments.

The Kurdistan government in northern **Iraq** maintains its own armed forces, known as the Peshmerga (literally, ?those who confront death?).

No Iraqi troops are allowed in the Kurdish Region, which controls its own borders, and Westerners can fly into the region?s capital, Erbil, without a visa.

Kurdish is used everywhere as the official language, and few young Iraqi **Kurds** can speak fluent Arabic. A giant green, white and red Kurdish banner flies from Erbil?s ancient hilltop citadel, while Iraqi flag is hard to spot.

In 2011, the Arab Spring opened still other possibilities for the **Kurds**. The PKK, once an ally of the Assad regime in Damascus (and still classified as a terrorist group by the U.S. and Turkey), had long been present among Kurdish communities in northern Syria.

When the revolutionary tide reached Syria, the group?s Syrian affiliate quickly seized control of three Kurdish-majority regions along the Turkish frontier. PKK fighters and weapons streamed there from other parts of Kurdistan.

Still, political divisions do hamper the **Kurds**? struggle against Islamic State and their prospects for self-rule.

According to Mustafa Sayid Qadir, the Minister of Peshmerga affairs in **Iraq**?s Kurdistan Regional Government, only a minority of Peshmerga brigades on the front lines are under unified command, and the rest still report directly to one of the two rival political parties.

?The external environment now is more favourable to **independence** for Kurdistan than before, but our internal affairs are not,? warned Jalal Jawhar, deputy secretary-general of the Movement for Change, the second-largest party in the parliament of Iraqi Kurdistan, which emerged in recent years from a protest movement against the dominance of two older parties.

?For 80 years, the Arab Sunni people led **Iraq**?and they destroyed Kurdistan. Now we?ve been for 10 years with the Shiite people [dominant in Baghdad], and they?ve cut the funding and the salaries?how can we count on them as our partner in **Iraq**?? asked Erbil Province?s Governor, Nawzad Hadi. ?All the facts on the ground encourage the **Kurds** to be independent.?

Kemal Kirkuki, a former Speaker of the Kurdistan Parliament who now commands 11 Peshmerga brigades on the Kirkuk front lines, agreed: ?The Iraqi state has failed, and we need another solution.?

The prospect of an independent Kurdistan in **Iraq** or northern Syria isn?t something that regional powers such as Turkey and Iran are likely to welcome.

The U.S., too, still clings to the idea that a unified **Iraq** could be brought together again somehow.

RE kurd : Kurdistan | iraq : Iraq | syria : Syria | turk : Turkey | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD National

PUB Kurdish Globe

AN Document KURGLO0020150622eb6m00005

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REUTERS

HD **Syrian Kurds, on offensive, seize military base from Islamic State**

BY By Tom Perry

WC 767 words

PD 22 June 2015

ET 23:24

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

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LP

BEIRUT (Reuters) - Kurdish-led forces said on Monday that they had captured a military base from Islamic State in Syria's Raqqa province, advancing deeper into territory held by the group and showing new momentum after they seized a border crossing from the jihadists last week.

The **Kurds**, aided by U.S.-led air strikes and smaller Syrian rebel groups, pushed on Monday to within 7 km (4 miles) of Ain Issa, a town 50 km (30 miles) north of Islamic State's de facto capital Raqqa city, said Redur Xelil, a spokesman for the Kurdish forces.

TD

"They have been defeated," YPG spokesman Redur Xelil told Reuters.

Islamic State had held the military base, Liwa 93, southwest of Ain Issa, since capturing it from the Syrian military last year.

"This means that the Islamic State keeps collapsing inside its own stronghold," said Rami Abdulrahman, head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which monitors the conflict.

The rapid advance into Raqqa province has defied expectations of a protracted battle between the Kurdish YPG group and Islamic State fighters, who waged a four-month battle for the border town of Kobani, where the **Kurds** finally defeated the jihadists in January.

Raqqa is the main seat of power in Syria for Islamic State, the group also known as ISIS or ISIL, which has proclaimed a caliphate to rule over all Muslims from territory it controls in Syria and **Iraq**.

The United States has been leading an air campaign against the group in both countries since last year. The **Kurds** have been the most important partner so far for the U.S.-led campaign in Syria, where Washington has far fewer allies on the ground than in **Iraq**.

The Kurdish front in northern Syria has been one of the few sources of good news for the global campaign against Islamic State since the jihadists made major advances last month in western **Iraq** and central Syria.

A spokesman for the Pentagon said last week that Islamic State forces had appeared to "crack" at the Turkish border town of Tel Abyad, which fell to the YPG in less than two days, cutting Islamic State's supply route from Turkey.

Thousands of people had fled from Ain Issa toward Raqqa city in the last two days, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

Some refugees from the Tel Abyad area had accused the YPG of driving Arabs and Turkmen from territory seized from Islamic State. More than 23,000 people had fled northern Syria into Turkey.

With the fighting having moved on and a border crossing reopening, some of the refugees were returning to Tel Abyad on Monday. Hundreds of Syrians, mostly women and children carrying bags of belongings, returned across the border from the Turkish town of Akcakale.

Kurdish officials denied forcing people out and said that such accusations were being made to stir up ethnic strife. The Observatory has said there has been no evidence of systematic abuses by the YPG, though there have been individual cases.

The Kurdish advance is alarming the Turkish government, which is worried the growing Kurdish sway in northern Syria could inflame ethnic unrest among its own Kurdish population.

Ankara has conveyed to Washington its concerns about signs of "a kind of ethnic cleansing" in areas captured by **Kurds** near Tel Abyad.

The Syrian **Kurds** have said they do not want their own state, but see their example of regional **autonomy** as a model for how to settle the war in Syria and elsewhere in the region. Their cousins in **Iraq** also have self-rule in an autonomous region.

The Kurdish administration's growing strength has led to friction with the Damascus government, which has tended to avoid direct conflict with the **Kurds** during the four-year war while maintaining a foothold in areas where the **Kurds** hold sway.

Tensions have flared in Qamishli, a northeastern city split between Kurdish and government forces. Kurdish forces seized several positions from government control there last week following clashes that Kurdish officials said the Syrian government had instigated to stir Arab-Kurdish conflict.

Syrian government officials did not comment specifically on the Qamishli events but have said they suspect some **Kurds** of harboring separatist aims.

"In general, (the **Kurds**) and us are friends, but there is no state of permanent harmony," a Syrian government official said by telephone on condition of anonymity.

(Additional reporting by Seyhmus Cakan in Akcakale and Laila Bassamin Beirut; Editing by Peter Graff, Toni Reinhold)

RF Released: 2015-6-22T21:24:42.000Z

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gterr : Acts of Terror | gvio : Military Action | ntop : Top Wire News | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter | redit : Selection of Top Stories/Trends/Analysis

RE syria : Syria | turk : Turkey | iraq : Iraq | kurd : Kurdistan | usa : United States | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | namz : North America | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Politics

IPC SERVICE:OUSWDM

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The Telegraph

SE NEWS

HD Turkey strikes PKK targets in Iraq increasing fears over ceasefire collapse

BY By Richard Spencer Middle East Editor, Raziye Akkoc and Louisa Loveluck
WC 1,048 words
PD 25 July 2015
ET 06:30
SN The Telegraph Online
SC TELUK
LA English
CY The Telegraph Online © 2015. Telegraph Media Group Ltd.

LP

Second night of air raids launched by Ankara as Turkey goes on the offensive attacking Isil and PKK positions

Turkey went on the offensive on Friday night across the Middle East, bombing both Islamic State of **Iraq** and the Levant (Isil) and Kurdish positions after a week of violence which threatened to spread the region's violence across its southern borders.

TD

Fighter jets based at the Pirinçlik Air Base near Diyarbakir in the south-east of the country attacked Isil for the second time overnight, after earlier striking a base and supply dump just over the border in Syria earlier in the day.

Combined with an announcement that it was allowing US jets to use the Pirinçlik base and the major US air base at Incirlik, close to the Syrian border, for bombing missions against Isil, the action seemed to be a decisive break to join forces with other groups and nations combating the jihadists.

However, on Friday night, the Kurdish guerrilla group, the PKK, which has campaigned for **autonomy** from Turkey for four decades but is now also fighting Isil, said Turkish jets had bombed its rear bases over the border in northern **Iraq**.

It was reported by al-Jazeera that the attacks were on mountain positions in the north of Dohuk province, part of **Iraq**'s semi-autonomous Kurdish region.

"Turkish warplanes started bombing our positions near the border, accompanied by heavy artillery shelling," a PKK spokesman said.

A Turkish official confirmed to Daily Sabah that Isil targets in Syria and PKK camps in **Iraq** were targeted and the attacks appeared to continue over Friday night and into Saturday morning.

An official statement from the Turkish prime ministry was due at 7.30am (5.30am BST), the Turkish newspaper reported.

There were also reports that pro-Kurdish websites as well as Facebook and Twitter were restricted for users in Turkey.

The first strike, early on Friday morning, was said to have killed at least nine militants . Although the Turkish authorities did not give full details, sources inside Syria said the target was an Isil base just south of the border. The F16 jets were said to have filed their missiles from inside Turkish air space.

The raids were a response to months of pressure on Turkey to take action against Isil, which has recruited widely inside the country and used the porous border to smuggle men and arms into Isil-held territory in Syria and **Iraq**.

The policy of Turkey's ruling party, the Islamist AKP, of leaving borders open has been heavily criticised by Turkey's Western allies and the **Kurds**, including its own Kurdish minority, for encouraging, deliberately or by neglect, the growth of Isil.

It also backfired on Monday when a Turkish Kurd who had joined Isil blew himself up at a youth centre in a Turkish town near the border, killing 32 people.

The victims were youth activists intending to head to the Syrian Kurdish town of Kobane nearby to help rebuild it after the **Kurds**' successful defence of it against Isil attack.

Ahmet Davutoglu, the Turkish prime minister, rounded on Isil in a bellicose speech on Friday and promised that action against the Islamist group "will not stop."

Meanwhile, Turkish police were rounding up what were described as "militants", with 297 people arrrested across 13 provinces. Among them was a man described as Isil's leading recruiter in Istanbul.

However, a large number were also leftist and Kurdish radicals, a sign that the government is still intent on preserving a balance between its fight against Isil and that against those it considers its real enemies - the PKK and the Assad regime.

A statement said raids were conducted "without distinction" against all terrorist groups.

"Turkey cannot stand by as Kurdish, Leftist and Islamic State militants target Turkey," said Mr Davutoglu. "We will take necessary measures against whoever constitutes a threat to our border."

The unrest threatens to open a new chapter in Turkey's relations with its neighbours. Some have accused Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Turkish president, of acting like an Ottoman sultan with his thundering rhetoric about the Assad regime, Egypt, and other Middle Eastern flashpoints, and determination to back Syria's non-Isil rebels.

The United States has still refused to get behind Mr Erdogan's preferred option, of a no-fly and buffer zone in northern Syria against the Assad regime's air force.

Turkey also announced plans for a high-level security barrier along its 900-kilometre border, to exercise greater control over who is going in and out.

Syrian/Turkish relations: A timeline Turkey is being dragged further into the four-year conflict in neighbouring Syria following a deadly suicide attack, blamed on Isil, that killed 32 activists near the border. September 13, 2011 "The Syrian people do not believe al-Assad, I do not either," says Recep Tayyip Erdogan, then premier, a few months after calling the Syrian leader his "friend". Erdogan warns of civil war in Syria. "I fear that matters will end with a civil war breaking out between the Alawites and the Sunnis," he says in reference to Assad's Shia Alawite sect, and the majority Sunni Muslims. October 2, 2011 Following a series of meetings in several Turkish cities, Syrian opposition leaders announce the creation of the Syrian National Council (SNC), which groups political factions opposed to the Assad regime. November 15, 2011 Turkey passes its first sanctions against Syria, and halts joint oil exploration with the country. June 22, 2012 A Turkish plane that Ankara says was on a training mission in international airspace is shot down by Syrian forces. May 11, 2013 Twin attacks kill 52 people in Reyhanli, a large Turkish town near the border with Syria. September 16, 2014 Isil militants attack the Syrian border town of Kobane, and seize parts of it. Kobane becomes the scene of fierce battles. May 16, 2015 Turkey says it has shot down a Syrian helicopter that violated its airspace. July 20, 2015 At least 32 people die when a suspected Isil suicide bomber attacks a gathering of activists in the town of Suruc, near the Syrian/Turkish border.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gterr : Terrorism | gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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PUB Telegraph Media Group Ltd.

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HD **Turkey: 5 killed in clashes between authorities and PKK**

BY By SUZAN FRASER

CR Associated Press

WC 1,728 words

PD 31 July 2015

ET 14:21

SN Associated Press Newswires

SC APRS

LA English

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LP

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Kurdish rebels raided a Turkish police station and fired on railway workers in two separate attacks that left five dead, officials said Friday, amid renewed conflict between the security forces and insurgents that has wrecked a fragile peace process.

Violence has sharply increased in Turkey in the past week, with the government launching aerial strikes against Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, bases in northern **Iraq**, and the rebels escalating attacks against Turkey's security forces. Some 20 people, most of them soldiers, have died in the renewed violence.

TD

PKK militants raided the police station in the town of Pozanti, in southern Adana province, late on Thursday, killing two policemen and touching off a gunfight that also killed two rebels, said Gov. Mustafa Buyuk. He said the rebels were armed with automatic rifles and hand grenades.

In the eastern province of Kars, the rebels detonated a bomb they placed on rail tracks and later fired on rail workers who were sent to repair the line, the region's deputy governor, Adem Unal, told the state-run Anadolu Agency. One of the workers was killed.

Turkey last week conducted air assaults on Islamic State group targets and also opened its air bases for sorties by the U.S.-led coalition fighting the group. The decision came after a suicide bombing blamed on IS killed 32 people and militants fired on Turkish troops, killing a soldier.

But Turkey shifted focus to the PKK following an attack claimed by the rebels that killed two policemen. That is complicating the U.S. war on IS militants, which has relied heavily on Syrian Kurdish fighters affiliated with Turkey's Kurdish rebels.

Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu has said Turkey's onslaught against the PKK will continue until its fighters lay down arms, despite calls from Turkey's main pro-Kurdish political party for the resumption of peace efforts. On Thursday, Davutoglu vowed renewed strikes against IS militants if the group attacks Turkish targets again.

"A single shot fired at our soldiers will result in the destruction of all those who fired the shot, until no one dares again to conduct such a thing at our border," Davutoglu said. "These operations will continue until all arms are laid down and armed (fighters) leave the country, and until (IS) stops being a threat."

The Kurdish party's co-chairman renewed his plea for peace on Friday, as Turkey began holding funerals for the two officers killed in the police station attack and three soldiers who were slain in southeast Turkey on Thursday.

"The dialogue — slow as it was — must resume," Selahattin Demirtas said in televised comments. "Fingers must be removed from the trigger."

Meanwhile, Turkey hit back at Iraqi criticism that its air raids against the PKK had breached its sovereignty.

A Turkish Foreign Ministry statement expressed "disappointment" toward **Iraq**'s "negative" stance, which it said, came despite Turkey's support to Baghdad in its fight against IS. It also accused **Iraq** of failing to keep to a pledge to prevent PKK attacks on Turkey from its territory.

Kurdish activists and government critics say Turkey's toughened stance against the PKK is a tactic aimed at strengthening the ruling party and attracting nationalist votes ahead of possible new elections in November. Davutoglu's Justice and Development party lost its parliamentary majority in June and has until Aug. 24 to form a coalition government, otherwise new elections will be called.

The PKK, considered a terror organization by Turkey and its Western allies, launched its armed campaign for **autonomy** in Turkey's southeast in 1984. The conflict has killed tens of thousands of people since then.

The **Kurds** declared a cease-fire in 2013 as part of the peace efforts, but halted a planned withdrawal of fighters from Turkish territory, accusing the government of not keeping promises.

ART Relatives cry during the funeral of two police officers, killed in an attack by Kurdish rebels overnight, in the city of Adana, southern Turkey, Friday, July 31, 2015. Kurdish rebels have attacked a police station in southern Turkey, killing two policemen amid renewed violence between the security forces and the Kurdish insurgents. Two rebels were also killed in a gunfight that ensued. Violence has flared in Turkey in the past week, shattering a fragile peace process launched in 2012 with the **Kurds**. The government has launched aerial strikes against bases of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, in northern **Iraq** and the rebels have escalated attacks against Turkey's security forces. Meanwhile, Turkey has also started to crack down on the Islamic State extremist group. (AP Photo/Emrah Gurel) | Relatives cry during the funeral of two police officers, killed in an attack by Kurdish rebels overnight,in the the city of Adana, southern Turkey, Friday, July 31, 2015. 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attack by Kurdish rebels overnight, in the the city of Adana, southern Turkey, Friday, July 31, 2015. Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK rebels raided a police station in the town of Pozanti, in southern Adana province, late on Thursday, killing two policemen. Two rebels were also killed in a gunfight that ensued. Violence has sharply increased in Turkey in the past week, with the government launching aerial strikes against PKK bases in northern **Iraq**, and the rebels escalating attacks against Turkey's security forces. (AP Photo/Emrah Gurel) | Turkish police officers carry the coffin of slain police officer Serdar Kazar, one of the two police officers, killed in an attack by Kurdish rebels overnight, in the the city of Adana, southern Turkey, Friday, July 31, 2015. Turkish officials say Kurdish rebels have attacked a police station in southern Turkey, killing two policemen amid renewed violence between the security forces and the Kurdish insurgents. Two rebels were also killed in a gunfight that ensued. Violence has flared in Turkey in the past week, shattering a fragile peace process launched in 2012 with the **Kurds**. The government has launched aerial strikes against bases of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, in northern **Iraq** and the rebels have escalated attacks against Turkey's security forces. Meanwhile, Turkey has also started to crack down on the Islamic State extremist group. (AP Photo/Emrah Gurel)

CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

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IPD EU

IPC i

PUB The Associated Press

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HD **Iraqi Kurds Call On Turkey To Make Peace With Kurdish Rebels**

WC 785 words

PD 1 August 2015

SN Radio Free Europe Documents and Publications

SC RFEUR

LA English

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LP

By RFE/RL

August 1, 2015

TD

Masud Barzani, the president of **Iraq**'s Kurdish region, has called on militants in the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) to leave northern **Iraq** in order to prevent Turkish air strikes from causing civilian casualties.

Barzani's office issued the statement on August 1, just hours after another series of Turkish air strikes against PKK camps in northern **Iraq** killed at least six people in the village of Zarkel to the east of the autonomous Kurdish region's capital Irbil.

The PKK fighters have been crossing into northern **Iraq** from southeastern Turkey as part of a cease-fire deal with Ankara that was reached in 2013.

Barzani's call for the PKK to leave the region came a day after the head of foreign relations for **Iraq**'s Kurdish region, Falah Mustafa Bakir, criticized the PKK for abandoning their cease-fire deal with Turkish authorities.

Bakir also said Turkey's air strikes in northern **Iraq** are not an appropriate response to PKK attacks, and that Iraqis have been "caught in between" the two sides.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry said on August 1 that Ankara opened a probe into reports of civilian casualties in Zarkel air strikes.

The reports had been received "with sorrow," the ministry said in a statement.

But it also accused the PKK of using "civilians as human shields."

Turkey says its air strikes were retaliation for a series of targeted killings of police officers and soldiers by the Kurdish militant group.

The PKK said those attacks were in response to what they claimed was collaboration with Islamic State (IS) militants by Turkish authorities that allowed an IS suicide bomber to kill 32 Kurdish activists on July 20 in southeastern Turkey's border city of Suruc.

Bakir said northern **Iraq**'s Kurdish leaders believe "there is no military solution to such kind of problems," and that the "best way forward would be peace and talks."

He said the Turkish air strikes have "affected us negatively, because it is the mountainous border areas of [**Iraq**'s] Kurdistan region that have been bombarded."

Inflammable Situation

Iraq's Kurdish regional government was already struggling to assist refugees fleeing IS advances in western **Iraq** before the PKK's cease-fire with Turkey broke down.

Bakir was careful not to openly criticize Turkey. Earlier this week, **Iraq**'s central government in Baghdad called Turkey's air strikes in the region "an assault on Iraqi sovereignty."

Turkey's renewed fight with the PKK also has put the United States in an uncomfortable position.

U.S. officials have supported the strikes against the PKK, which they brand as a terrorist group, even as they support Kurdish Peshmerga forces in **Iraq** and Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) in Syria as allies against IS militants.

U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter called the Peshmerga a model for the kind of force needed to defeat IS during a visit Irbil on July 24.

Yet some of those Iraqi Kurdish forces that he lauded reportedly received training in the PKK camps that Turkey has been bombarding.

The strategically murky and inflammable situation derives from the **Kurds**' status as minorities throughout the region -- in Syria, Turkey, **Iraq**, and Iran.

The PKK's fight for a separate Kurdish state resonates within the far-flung community, where many long for greater **autonomy**.

Only in **Iraq** have **Kurds** ruled an autonomous region, which was established in the early 1990s.

That region borders Kurdish areas of southeast Turkey as well as a part of northeastern Syria that is now run by Syrian **Kurds** as a result of their gains in the fight against IS.

Opposition groups in Turkey have said the attacks on PKK camps are motivated at least in part by Ankara's concern that Kurdish battlefield successes against IS militants could lead to the creation of an independent Kurdish state on its border and strengthen calls by **Kurds** in Turkey for **independence**.

Turkey's assaults on the PKK coincided with its first air strikes against IS militants and a decision by Ankara to allow its air bases to be used by the U.S.-led coalition that is fighting the militant Sunni extremist group.

Bakir said he was assured in meetings with U.S. officials in Washington during the past week that the U.S. agreement with Turkey was solely to join forces in the fight against IS militants, and did not involve the PKK.

With reporting by Reuters, AP, AFP, and dpa

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IPD News Stories and Documents

PUB Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

AN Document RFEUR00020150803eb810000x

International
New York Times

SE news

HD **Kurds team with U.S. to combat ISIS in Syria; But Turkey, concerned as they gain territory, attacks camps in Iraq**

BY By RUKMINI CALLIMACHI

WC 1,909 words

PD 10 August 2015

SN International New York Times

SC INHT

PG 6

LA English

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LP

Green drapes are drawn against the sun, cloaking the room where members of a Syrian Kurdish militia huddle around walkie-talkies, assiduously taking down GPS coordinates.

The coordinates mark the deserted apartment buildings and crumbling villas where the **Kurds** are battling Islamic State fighters on the front line near this northern Syrian town. The data, though, is flowing hundreds of miles away, to a United States military operations room.

TD

The **Kurds** transmit the locations, and then wait for American warplanes to scream in and strike.

At 10:03 p.m. on July 30, Talal Raman, a 36-year-old Kurdish fighter, worked on a Samsung tablet under the yellow flag of his militia, quickly annotating a Google Earth map. He pinpointed in yellow the positions where his men were hunkered behind a wall south of Hasaka, and highlighted in red the coordinates of a building beside a mosque where Islamic State fighters were firing from cover.

‘‘Our comrades can see the enemy moving at the GPS address I just sent you,’’ he wrote in Arabic to his handler at the far-off coalition war room.

The strike that ensued at 10:41 blasted a crater at exactly the coordinates provided by the Kurdish fighter. It left a ring of bodies, including one Islamic State fighter who died slumped over his AK-47.

An urgent message came in from the coalition war room: ‘‘Please confirm our comrades are O.K.?’’

The tight coordination of American air power with the Kurdish Y.P.G. militia has dealt the Islamic State, also known as ISIS or ISIL, its most significant setbacks across an enormous strip of northern Syria near the Turkish border in recent months.

Now, the United States air campaign is poised to expand, aided by a deal with Turkey to allow American aircraft to fly airstrike missions from bases closer to the border.

Yet at a time when the Kurdish militia, Americans’ most effective ally in Syria, would otherwise be celebrating the increased help, its members are sounding a note of worry.

That is because Turkey, which sees the **Kurds**’ territorial expansion as a threat, is making some moves of its own.

Even as it agreed to join the fight against the Islamic State, Turkey immediately began bombarding the mountain camps of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, or P.K.K., an insurgent group in Turkey and **Iraq** that is allied with the Kurdish militia in Syria. The militia is known as the Y.P.G., from the Kurdish initials for People’s Protection Units.

The Turkish deal with the United States sets up an ‘‘ISIS-free’’ bombardment zone along a 60-mile strip of the border region that features another exclusion: It is also explicitly a Y.P.G.-free zone, at Turkey’s request, even as the Kurdish militia had begun advancing toward the area to start battling the Islamic State there.

Despite cooperating with American forces for months, the Syrian **Kurds** are now starting to worry that their success might not outweigh Turkey's importance to the United States.

Cale Salih, a visiting fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations and the author of numerous articles on Kurdish affairs, summed up the unease over the deal with Turkey this way: ''If it comes at the price of the relationship with one of the few effective partners on the ground in Syria, it doesn't seem to make sense.''

For their part, American officials have always had to step carefully when cooperating with the Y.P.G. — because of its links to the P.K.K., which is widely listed as a terrorist group.

American officials have acknowledged cooperating with the Kurdish militia in Syria in general terms. In an emailed response to questions, however, the Pentagon would not confirm whether the militia was calling in airstrike coordinates, saying only that it was working with Syrian **Kurds** as well as other groups.

American officials and members of the militia alike take pains to note that it is not the same group as the outlawed P.K.K. But on the ground in northern Syria, the connective tissue is hard to miss.

Framed portraits of Abdullah Ocalan, the founder of the P.K.K. and champion of Kurdish **autonomy**, are ubiquitous in the offices and headquarters in Syria of the Kurdish militia.

There is growing evidence that more P.K.K. fighters are directly joining the fight in Syria, too. Bulent Aliriza, director of the Turkey Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, estimates that thousands of P.K.K. fighters have crossed the border from Turkey to join the Kurdish militia in fighting the Islamic State, making the distinction between the two groups even more vague.

''There is only one group that has consistently and effectively battled ISIS in Syria, and that is the Y.P.G.,'' said Redur Khalil, a spokesman for the militia who says it has grown to include 35,000 soldiers, roughly 11 years after its start as a self-defense force in a single town.

As it has captured territory from the Islamic State, the Kurdish militia has rapidly expanded its territory in northern Syria by more than a third; it now controls more than 11,000 square miles — a ribbon of land roughly the size of Maryland. Across the border, Turkish officials have watched the **Kurds**' gains with unease, mindful of Kurdish ambitions to eventually carve out an independent state. And the growing cooperation between the United States and the militia has only heightened Turkish concerns, Mr. Aliriza said.

That cooperation took off last October, when the Islamic State almost overran the border town of Kobani, cutting off a unit of Kurdish fighters. A senior Syrian Kurdish official, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence details, said he had traveled to Erbil, **Iraq**, in October to meet United States military commanders. After much negotiation, he said, the Americans agreed to airdrop 27 pallets of weapons and ammunition, supplied by Kurdish officials in neighboring **Iraq**.

Fighters from the Kurdish militia provided the Americans with GPS coordinates of a site in Syria, and approximately 20 metric tons of supplies came floating down just before dawn on Oct. 19. ''And it started from there,'' said the official, who explained how that first exchange evolved to include coordination of airstrikes, allowing the militia to take back Kobani, followed by victories in Tal Abyad and, in recent days, most of the province of Hasaka.

All the political complications are troubling to Mr. Raman, the radio operator who spends his days behind the green drapes sending in airstrike coordinates. His tools include nothing more than a walkie-talkie, a Samsung tablet and a cellphone, on which he has a screen saver of Mr. Ocalan's face.

He sees himself as a partner of the Western pilots flying warplanes overhead — just as he sees the P.K.K. as his militia's partner in the fight against the Islamic State. ''If the Turks bomb the P.K.K., they're in effect helping ISIS,'' he said.

Here in northern Syria, the battle against the Islamic State looks like this: Units of Kurdish fighters driving pickup trucks and minivans flying the group's yellow banner mass at the front, which is fluid and in some places is leaping forward by as much as one mile every day. The **Kurds**' uniforms feature Marpat digital patterns, a type of camouflage pioneered by the United States Marines, reproduced in a factory here using local cotton and sewn by Kurdish tailors, officials said.

Each fighter is assigned to a platoon of about 30 members. In keeping with Mr. Ocalan's philosophy of gender parity, women are present in large numbers on the battlefield, and portraits of female martyrs adorn almost as many billboards and lampposts as those of their male colleagues.

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It was a female commander who led the battle that unfolded inside a group of empty apartment blocks in the town of Hasaka last week. Black pools of melted plastic and tar lined the road to the area, marking where Islamic State suicide bombers had detonated their belts.

At a nearby traffic circle, a crane operator was trying to lift an old Soviet-designed T-55 tank recently recovered from Islamic State fighters.

The road turned to dirt, passing empty multistory buildings, their walls a Swiss-cheese pattern of holes left by machine-gun fire. Several streets in, a mosque with a green dome shared a wall with a building from which a unit of Y.P.G. fighters began taking heavy fire.

Just after 10 p.m. on July 30, a Kurdish fighter radioed the coordinates of the building to Mr. Raman. According to the log of the exchange, a few minutes passed before the fighter called again to say he had sight of a group of Islamic State fighters.

In his relay station, Mr. Raman and his partner jotted down the coordinates: 36 degrees 28 minutes 23 seconds north latitude, 40 degrees 44 minutes 58 seconds east longitude. They noted the location on a digital map on their tablet computers, as well as recorded it in a spiral notebook, decorated with a picture of a smiling baby.

Then they sent the grid via chat to their handlers in the American operations room.

At 10:12 p.m., the coalition sent a message asking for confirmation that the Kurdish militia was still taking fire from the location.

Mr. Raman answered that they were, before asking: ‘‘Is there a fighter jet overhead?’’

‘‘Yes, and they’re preparing to strike,’’ his counterpart replied.

At 10:23, the operations room sent a Google Earth map, showing a large, yellow circle approximately 100 yards to the north of the Islamic State target. The official instructed Mr. Raman to tell his men to retreat to the circle. ‘‘Make sure our comrades are in the yellow, O.K.?’’ the official wrote in Arabic.

At 10:34, he stressed: ‘‘Can you confirm that they’re inside the yellow? Because the pilot is waiting.’’

The countdown began at 10:38 p.m., immediately after Kurdish fighters radioed Mr. Raman to say that their colleagues were in the safe zone.

‘‘3 min.,’’ said the first message from the coalition.

‘‘1 min.’’

‘‘30 sec.’’

Then: ‘‘Strike,’’ and a request to confirm that **Kurds** nearby had not been hurt.

Just after midnight, he received one last message saying that the coalition’s aircraft had counted nine bodies.

Later the next day, when New York Times journalists went to the scene of the blast, the mosque was still partly standing, though with part of its dome missing.

The GPS coordinates of the strike site exactly matched the one that Mr. Raman sent to the coalition war room on the night of July 30. A spokesman for the coalition declined to identify the specific coordinates, saying only that coalition planes had conducted seven airstrikes that day on Islamic State targets near the town of Hasaka.

The bodies of the Islamic State fighters lay around the eight-foot-deep crater. There were nine in all, some wedged under slabs of concrete.

One dead fighter wore a camouflage vest. Another died within reach of his rocket-propelled grenade launcher.

Bullet casings littered the ground like confetti.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

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PUB International Herald Tribune

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USA TODAY

SE NEWS

HD **Turkey launches new attacks on Kurdish rebels ; Military strikes came in retaliation for deaths the day before**

BY Kiran Nazish

CR Kiran Nazish, Special for USA TODAY

WC 575 words

PD 12 August 2015

SN USA Today

SC USAT

ED FIRST

PG A.5

LA English

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LP

Turkey carried out fresh airstrikes on Kurdish separatist targets Tuesday, a day after a wave of attacks on Turkish forces that the country's military said killed at least nine people, including five police officers.

The Turkish military said it hit and neutralized 17 "separatists terrorist targets" in Hakkari province, which borders Iran and **Iraq**.

TD

Violence between the military and rebels from the Kurdistan People's Party (PKK) has escalated dramatically in recent weeks. At least 50 people have been killed in ongoing attacks after a two- year cease-fire ended last month.

Tuesday's strikes were in retaliation for a series of attacks across Turkey on Monday, including one outside the U.S. Consulate in Istanbul. The government blamed the PKK for the attacks, but another revolutionary group claimed responsibility for the consulate attack.

Turkey considers the PKK a terrorist group that seeks to create an autonomous region for **Kurds** out of parts of Turkey, Syria and **Iraq**. The PKK accuses Turkey of recently joining the fight against the Islamic State to counter Kurdish control along the border with Syria and exclude **Kurds** from gaining a voice in Turkey's democracy.

Exiled from Turkey, senior PKK members live in northern **Iraq**, where they train, recruit and plan strategy.

The government of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has hit PKK targets in its strongholds in the remote mountains of northern **Iraq** and southeastern Turkey -- along with the airstrikes on Islamic State militants in Syria. Erdogan accused the PKK of starting a new conflict by assassinating Turkish policemen and soldiers in the past few weeks.

This month, Turkish F-16 planes began striking Zergali, the PKK's stronghold and one of the small villages in the Qandil mountains in northern **Iraq** near the border with Iran.

The first of four airstrikes on Aug. 1 hit at 4 a.m., killing mostly farmers and women who had no association with the PKK, the rebel group said.

According to eyewitness accounts, when villagers tried to retrieve the dead, the strikes continued. In all, eight civilians were killed, the PKK said.

"The main aim of Erdogan is not to target PKK, it is to take revenge from all of the **Kurds**," Zagros Hiwa, spokesman of PKK's political wing, told USA TODAY. "Turkey does not feel shame in murdering innocent civilians, old men and women, who harm no one."

A tour of the scene showed houses and a mosque reduced to rubble, dead bodies on the ground, contaminated drinking water and a lack of electricity.

"This is brutality; this is a massacre, not just of **Kurds**, but of humanity," said Nabi Hassan, 36, who survived the attacks. "I wish I had a gun to take those planes down," added Hassan, a Kurdish fighter who has fought Islamic State militants in **Iraq**.

Hiwa said the PKK wants peace with Turkey but will continue to fight back in self-defense.

Turkey "should stop its war against the **Kurds**," he said. "We don't want **independence** from Turkey. We want Turkey to accept **Kurds** as Turkish citizens and give us our right to live our lives according to our customs and culture. We just want our identity included in a democratic manner. We just want peace."

ART photo Photos by Kiran Nazish for USA TODAY

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IPD News

PUB USA Today Information Network

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MENAFN.COM

HD **Erdogan vows Turkey will hunt PKK 'to last terrorist'**

WC 760 words

PD 12 August 2015

SN Middle East North Africa Financial Network (MENAFN)

SC MENAFI

LA English

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LP

(MENAFN - Gulf Times) President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday vowed that Turkey would press on with its relentless campaign against Kurdish militants "until not one terrorist" was left, as Ankara launched new air strikes against the rebels.

Turkey is currently pressing a two-pronged "anti-terror" offensive against Islamic State (IS) jihadists in Syria and PKK militants in northern **Iraq** and the southeast following a wave of attacks.

TD

But, so far, the air strikes have overwhelmingly concentrated on the separatist Kurdish rebels, who have responded by tearing up a 2013 ceasefire and waging a bloody campaign against the security forces.

"We will continue our fight until weapons are laid down... and not one single terrorist remains within our borders," Erdogan said in a televised speech in Ankara.

He said the weapons of the PKK and other militant groups must be buried "under concrete" to show they were no longer a threat to the Turkish state.

"I'm not talking about laying down arms, I'm talking about burying them. I'd like to emphasise this," Erdogan said.

Turkish warplanes overnight staged a fresh wave of attacks on Kurdish militant targets following a day of bloody attacks that killed six members of the security forces.

The overnight strikes hit 17 PKK targets in the southeastern province of Hakkari, destroying them all, the army said.

On Monday, four Turkish police officers were killed in a roadside bombing in the southeastern province of Sirnak while a Turkish soldier was killed in a rocket attack on a military helicopter.

Meanwhile, in Istanbul a senior police officer in charge of the city's bomb disposal department was killed in clashes that followed a pre-dawn suicide bombing.

The PKK yesterday claimed that attack, confirming that three of its militants had been killed including a suicide bomber and dismissing claims a smaller leftist group had been behind the strike.

In new violence overnight, a Turkish soldier was killed in a gun attack on a military post in Sirnak, also blamed on the PKK.

Two Turkish F-16s then yesterday afternoon destroyed PKK targets in Sirnak province, the army said.

According to an AFP toll, 29 members of the security forces have been killed in violence linked to the PKK since the current crisis began.

The European Union and US, which like Turkey list the PKK as a terror group, have backed Ankara's right to strike against the militants but also indicated concern about the scale of the campaign.

US State Department spokesman John Kirby said Ankara should "take the necessary steps to prevent any civilian casualties and to act in accordance with international humanitarian law."

The state-run Anatolia news agency reported over the weekend that so far 390 "terrorists" had been killed in the campaign against the PKK.

Erdogan said that the over two-week air campaign against the PKK had already inflicted "serious losses" on the group.

But even such an intense campaign may not be enough to finish the PKK.

"Turkey's air campaign damages the PKK, but is not sufficient to destroy it," said Pinar Elman, Turkey analyst at the Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM).

"The decades-old conflict has shown that military means are not sufficient to fight against the terrorist group, and political reforms are necessary," she told AFP.

The Marxist-inspired PKK has waged a three decade insurgency since 1984 for greater **autonomy** for Turkey's **Kurds** that has left tens of thousands dead.

Erdogan also declared the peace process to end the PKK insurgency is currently "on ice."

"This is a familiar lose-lose dynamic," said Nigar Goksel of the International Crisis Group (ICG)

"Neither the Turkish state nor PKK can win by military means. For both, the price of their war is potentially higher than ever," she said in a briefing note.

Ankara has also vowed to begin strikes in the next days against IS jihadists in Syria alongside US forces who have now started arriving to use the well-located Incirlik air base in southern Turkey.

Washington has long been pushing its NATO ally Turkey to step up the fight against IS and Ankara's involvement in the coalition has been seen as a game-changing moment in the fight against IS.

Erdogan said "effective operations" were carried out against IS jihadists, saying the group also posed a threat to Turkish security.

"For us, there is no difference between terrorist organisations. Whatever their purpose is, for us, a terrorist organisation is a terrorist organisation," he said.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gterr : Terrorism | gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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PUB Middle East North Africa Financial Network Inc

AN Document MENAFI0020150812eb8c0003n

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REUTERS

HD **Three Turkish soldiers, one police killed in Kurdish militant attacks**

WC 374 words

PD 15 August 2015

ET 23:38

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

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LP

ISTANBUL (Reuters) - Three Turkish soldiers and a police officer were killed in separate incidents on Saturday, security sources said, as violence roils the country's mainly Kurdish southeast in recent weeks following the end of a two-year ceasefire.

The soldiers were killed and six more were wounded when militants from the **autonomy**-seeking Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) detonated a remote-controlled explosive that hit a military convoy traveling near the town of Bingol, the General Staff said on its website.

TD

The police officer, who was part of a special operations unit, was killed after PKK rebels opened fire near the town of Semdinli, close to the Iraqi border, a security source said.

The PKK, classified by Turkey, the United States and the Europe Union as a terrorist organization, has struck military targets on a near-daily basis since the government first launched air strikes on rebel camps in northern **Iraq** on July 25, wrecking a two-year ceasefire in the three-decade conflict.

More than 40 members of the security forces have been killed in attacks and 174 wounded, according to the government. Turkish media reports have put the PKK's death toll at more than 200.

The southeast is on tenterhooks this weekend as Saturday marks the 31st anniversary of the start of the conflict. An attack on the army in Semdinli on Aug. 15, 1984, is considered the first in the insurgency that went on to claim more than 40,000 lives, mostly Kurdish, have been killed.

Turkish officials have said its military campaign is designed to tackle both the PKK and Islamic State militants in neighboring northern Syria. It opened up its air bases to U.S.-led coalition jets targeting Islamic State last month.

The NATO ally has staged three air strikes against the Islamic State in Syria, a government official said. It has launched more than 400 strikes against the PKK in and out of Turkey, he said.

This had raised suspicions among **Kurds** that Turkey is more interested in curbing Kurdish militants, who have coordinated with the United States since 2014 in battling the Islamic State in **Iraq** and Syria.

RF Released: 2015-8-15T21:38:18.000Z

CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

NS gvio : Military Action | gpol : Domestic Politics | gterr : Terrorism | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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IPD Politics

IPC SERVICE:OUSWDM

PUB Thomson Reuters (Markets) LLC

AN Document LBA0000020150815eb8f00cyp

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HD **Turkey's military: 16 troops killed, 6 wounded in PKK attack**

BY By SUZAN FRASER

CR Associated Press

WC 642 words

PD 7 September 2015

ET 19:20

SN Associated Press Newswires

SC APRS

LA English

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LP

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkey's military announced Monday that 16 soldiers were killed and six others were wounded in a Kurdish rebel attack against troops in southeast Turkey a day earlier. The attack was the deadliest assault on Turkish troops since renewed fighting between the rebels and Turkey's security forces erupted in July, shattering a fragile peace process.

Rebels of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, on Sunday detonated roadside improvised explosive devices near the village of Daglica, in the mainly-Kurdish Hakkari province which borders Iran and **Iraq**, targeting soldiers who were traveling in a convoy on a mission to clear the area of mines and explosives. The attack prompted the military to launch air operations against PKK targets in the area.

TD

Violence in Turkey escalated after a suicide bombing in July, blamed on the Islamic State group, killed 33 people near Turkey's border with Syria, including many **Kurds**. Kurdish rebels held the government responsible for the attack, claiming that the government had been too lenient on the jihadists, and two policemen were killed in an apparent response.

Turkey's air force conducted air raids against the IS group in Syria following the suicide bombing and then proceeded to strike PKK targets in northern **Iraq** and in southeast Turkey.

The renewed fighting between the PKK and the security forces has killed about 200 people since July, including around 85 soldiers and police officers. The fighting derailed the 2 1/2-year-old peace process with the **Kurds**. It comes amid increased political uncertainty in Turkey. The country is holding a new election on Nov. 1, following the ruling party's failure to form a coalition government after an election in June.

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said Monday the rebels first fired on the soldiers and later detonated the bombs in the ambush. He said the troops were on a mission to clear the rugged terrain in Daglica of mines and explosives. Daglica, just a few kilometers from the Iraqi border, is a main crossing point for the rebels to launch attacks on Turkey from bases in northern **Iraq**.

"Our 16 martyred brothers were clearing the roads of land mines so that the people of the region could travel in peace," Davutoglu said.

He again vowed to press ahead with the fight against terror groups.

"We will continue our struggle against terrorism in a determined manner, without making any concessions on democracy or the rule of law," Davutoglu said.

"Those mountains will be cleared of the terrorists," he said. "The mountains, the plains, the highlands and the cities of this country will not be left in the hands of the terrorists."

Turkish security forces have frequently come under attack in Daglica. Separate attacks on military outposts in the mountainous region killed 12 soldiers in 2007 and eight others in 2012.

The military statement said three F-4 jets and four F-16 were carrying out operations against PKK targets since the attack on Daglica Sunday. It said six caves, two storage facilities, three shelters and 12 anti-aircraft machine guns were struck during the aerial operation.

The statement said none of the six wounded soldiers were in life-threatening condition.

Small protests denouncing the PKK erupted in several cities across Turkey soon after the military announced the 16 soldier's deaths, the state-run Anadolu news agency reported.

Earlier, Firat News, a website close to the rebels, claimed that 32 soldiers were killed in the ambush. It said the rebels hadn't sustained any casualties.

The PKK, which has been fighting for Kurdish **autonomy** in southeast Turkey, is considered a terrorist group by the United States, European Union and Turkey. Tens of thousands of people have died in the conflict since 1984.

CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

NS gvio : Military Action | gterr : Terrorism | gcns : National Security | gdef : Armed Forces | gdip : International Relations | gpol : Domestic Politics | gpir : Politics/International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gcrim : Crime/Courts | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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IPD EU

IPC i

PUB The Associated Press

AN Document APRS000020150907eb97004pj

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NEWSWIRES
DOW JONES

CLM Europe News

HD **Turkey Launches Airstrikes Against Kurdish Rebels**

BY By Emre Peker
WC 819 words
PD 7 September 2015
ET 15:06
SN Dow Jones Top North American Equities Stories
SC DJTNAE
LA English
CY Copyright © 2015 Dow Jones & Company, Inc.

LP

ISTANBUL—Turkish warplanes pummeled Kurdish rebel targets in southeastern Turkey on Monday, a day after the insurgents killed at least 16 soldiers in the deadliest attack on government forces since a two-year-old cease-fire collapsed in July.

The soldiers died when the two armored vehicles in which they were traveling were hit by roadside bombs in the mountainous southeastern province of Hakkari. The outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, claimed responsibility for what it called an "act of sabotage" and said 31 troops were killed in the attacks on Sunday.

TD

News of the assault led Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu to convene an emergency meeting of his security advisers late Sunday and triggered anti-PKK protests across Turkey. Local television stations showed marching demonstrators waving Turkish flags, singing the national anthem and chanting, "Martyrs don't die, the homeland is indivisible."

In Monday's air raids, seven Turkish aircraft struck 23 targets belonging to the "separatist terrorist organization," the military said, using its shorthand for the PKK, which the U.S. and the European Union, as well as Turkey, designate a terrorist group. There were no immediate reports of casualties in the raids.

"Those mountains will be cleared of terrorists, whatever happens, they will be cleared," said Mr. Davutoglu, who leads an interim government until elections set for Nov. 1. "For the peace and unity of our nation, I call on all political parties to stand shoulder-to-shoulder against terrorism."

The pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) warned that the fighting was taking Turkey to the edge of disaster.

"Guns must be silenced immediately," it said in a statement. "Mutual cease-fire should be established, operations should stop, steps should be taken to resolve the problems through dialogue and negotiations."

The spiraling fighting between the PKK and Turkish government forces has coincided with Ankara's entry into the military campaign against Islamic State. Turkish aircraft have joined the U.S.-led air offensive against the extremist group in neighboring Syria, and the U.S. has started launching airstrikes from Incirlik Air Base in southern Turkey.

Ankara's deepening involvement in two wars occurs less than two months before scheduled snap elections, in which the Justice and Development Party (AKP) hopes to regain its parliamentary majority.

The 2013 cease-fire, part of a peace process aimed at ending the three-decade-old conflict between the government and Kurdish militants, collapsed following June elections. The HDP doubled its support to 13% of the electorate and gained seats in Turkey's parliament for the first time.

Truce violations by the PKK soon escalated. The group also demanded that the Turkish government stop dam building and military-related construction in mainly Kurdish areas of southeastern Turkey.

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The historic victory for Turkey's **Kurds** cost the AKP its 13-year ruling majority and scuttled efforts by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to expand his executive powers by pushing a new constitution through a friendly parliament. Mr. Erdogan led the AKP and governed Turkey for 12 years as prime minister, before he was elected to the mostly ceremonial, nonpartisan post of president in August 2014.

As efforts to cobble together a coalition government sputtered, Ankara's cease-fire with the PKK frayed. Kurdish rebels attacked state-sponsored infrastructure projects and military outposts.

After Kurdish militants assassinated two Turkish policemen in July, accusing them of cooperating with Islamic State, the government resumed its war on the PKK, pounding its positions in Turkey and its camps in northern **Iraq** with hundreds of airstrikes.

Opponents of Mr. Erdogan accuse him of conspiring to revive the war with the PKK for political gain.

"For the sake of [a parliamentary majority] you turned the country into a bloodbath, left mothers without kids, children without parents," said Kemal Kilicdaroglu, leader of the opposition Republican People's Party. "You don't have an ounce of conscience."

Mr. Erdogan denies the charges, saying the PKK betrayed the peace process and used the two-year truce to bolster its forces.

During the peace talks, the PKK's youth wing expanded in urban areas, especially throughout the majority Kurdish southeast, where it is now fighting Turkish security forces.

On Friday, authorities declared a curfew in the Cizre district of southeastern Sirnak province, following fighting between youth wing members and government security forces.

At least 80 security officials and 23 civilians, as well as almost 1,000 PKK members have been killed in daily attacks and operations since July, according to Turkey's state-run Anadolu news agency.

The PKK took up arms in 1984 with the aim of establishing an independent Kurdish state. More recently, its demands have focused on greater **autonomy** and respect for human rights. The fighting has cost some 40,000 lives and cost Turkey's economy about $1 trillion, according to the government.

Write to Emre Peker at

CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

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PUB Dow Jones & Company, Inc.

AN Document DJTNAE1120150907eb970004f

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HD **Fourteen police killed by PKK as Turkey violence spirals**

BY Fulya OZERKAN

WC 667 words

PD 8 September 2015

ET 12:59

SN Agence France Presse

SC AFPR

LA English

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LP

Fourteen Turkish police were killed Tuesday in a new attack by Kurdish militants as violence in the east threatened to spiral out of control and Ankara launched a massive wave of air strikes against rebel strongholds in northern **Iraq**.

The 14 police were killed in the eastern region of Igdir in a bomb attack by Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) militants on a minibus taking them to the Dilucu border post with neighbouring Azerbaijan, the state-run Anatolia news agency reported.

TD

The attack came two days after 16 Turkish soldiers were killed in a twin roadside bomb attack in Daglica in the southeastern region of Hakkari, according to the army, the deadliest strike in the current phase of the conflict.

Anatolia said that 12 police were killed in Tuesday's attack, with two more losing their lives in hospital. Two others are being treated in Igdir city hospital, it said.

A PKK spokesman in northern **Iraq** confirmed to AFP that the PKK had carried out the attack.

The deaths prompted Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu vow to "wipe out" PKK militants from the mountains of eastern Turkey.

The PKK, known for sometimes exaggerating the death tolls of its attacks, said 31 Turkish soldiers had been killed in Sunday's gun and bomb attack in Daglica.

Turkey has staged air strikes and ground operations against the PKK in its strongholds of southeastern Turkey and northern **Iraq** in a bid to inflict a mortal blow on its capacities.

But the PKK has hit back, killing dozens of Turkish police and soldiers in almost daily attacks, with the bloodier attacks marking a new intensification of the conflict.

In response to the Daglica attack, Turkish warplanes launched a massive air operation early Tuesday in northern **Iraq**, killing as many as 40 rebels, Anatolia said.

More than 50 Turkish jets were involved in the six hours of raids, killing "35 to 40 terrorists according to preliminary findings", it added.

A spokesman for the PKK in northern **Iraq**, Zagros Hiwa, told AFP in **Iraq** that the Turkish air strikes had lasted from 11:00 pm (2000 GMT) on Monday until 5:00 am (0200 GMT) on Tuesday.

"These terrorists must be wiped out from the mountains," Davutoglu said Monday.

"The mountains of this country, the plains, highlands, cities, will be not abandoned to terrorists," he said.

The violence has left in tatters a 2013 ceasefire aimed at allowing a final peace deal to end the PKK's three-decade insurgency, which has claimed tens of thousands of lives.

The PKK initially took up arms in 1984 with the aim of establishing an independent state for Turkey's Kurdish minority, although lately the demands focused on greater **autonomy** and rights.

Commentators have expressed alarm that the current situation increasingly resembles the worst days of the PKKs insurgency in the 1990s when attacks on this scale were commonplace.

In a scene that has become familiar over the last weeks, Davutoglu attended a funeral ceremony for the soldiers killed in the Daglica attack in the eastern city of Van.

The US embassy in Ankara condemned the Daglica attack, saying: "We stand with Turkey in the fight against terror and repeat our call to the PKK -- renounce violence and return to the peace process."

The unrest comes at an explosive time in Turkey as the country prepares to hold snap elections on November 1 following June polls where President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's ruling party lost its overall majority as a pro-Kurdish party made a major breakthrough.

Davutoglu said the elections would be held under "democratic conditions" and urged the country's political forces to stand "shoulder to shoulder" in a show of unity.

The co-chair of pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), Selahattin Demirtas, called for peace between Turks and **Kurds**.

"**Kurds**, Turks embrace each other. The best medicine against all the provocations is peace," he said.

fo-sjw/yad

CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

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IPD Recit

PUB Agence France-Presse

AN Document AFPR000020150908eb980056a

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The Daily Telegraph

SE News

HD Turkey takes its fight against Kurdish rebels across Iraqi border

BY Richard Spencer
WC 440 words
PD 9 September 2015
SN The Daily Telegraph
SC DT
ED 1; National
PG 17
LA English
CY The Daily Telegraph © 2015. Telegraph Media Group Ltd.

LP

TURKISH troops crossed into northern **Iraq** in pursuit of guerrillas from outlawed Kurdish group the PKK yesterday, as the renewed fighting in the south-east of the country escalated.

It was the first time Turkish soldiers had entered Iraqi territory for four years — and the first time since a 2013 ceasefire was thought to have ended Turkey's three-decade long civil war, which killed 40,000 people. The troops were pursuing a group of around 40 PKK guerrillas believed to be responsible for a roadside bomb attack on Sunday that killed 16 soldiers travelling in a convoy near the Iraqi border.

TD

President Recip Tayyip Erdogan promised yesterday that he would not abandon the country to "terrorists" as another 15 soldiers were killed in two further attacks blamed on the PKK.

He said Turkish operations had in-flicted "serious damage" on the PKK.

The ground operation followed a night of bombing raids against PKK bases, including those in the mountains of the Kurdistan Autonomous Region (KAR) of **Iraq**, in reprisal for Sunday's attack.

The recent breakdown of the cease-fire followed PKK accusations that Turkey was aiding Islamist groups, including Islamic State of **Iraq** and the Levant, in their war on the **Kurds** in Syria.

Since hostilities resumed in earnest in early August, more than 100 Turkish soldiers and police have been killed in attacks. The PKK said scores of its fighters have been killed, though Mr Erdogan claimed 2,000 PKK deaths.

Fourteen police officers were killed by another roadside bombing, this time in Igdir province, yesterday morning. Another policeman was killed and three wounded in Tunceli province.

Meanwhile, a major security operation in the Kurdish town of Cizre was said by pro-Kurdish media to have killed seven people.

The ceasefire followed long negotiations with the PKK's jailed leader, Abdullah Ocalan, as a result of which Mr Erdogan's Islamist AK Party offered greater cultural freedom and **autonomy** for the **Kurds**. The **Kurds** have also dropped demands for **independence**.

However, the establishment of Kurdish enclaves in Syria run by the YPG, a Syrian PKK affiliate, is regarded by Mr Erdogan as a major threat. The president has reportedly said he sees Isil as a lesser danger than the PKK.

Abdel Karim Faris, **Iraq**'s acting deputy justice minister, was yesterday kidnapped by gunmen in Baghdad, the second high-profile abduction in the Iraqi capital in less than a week.

40,000 Death toll in Turkey's three-decade long civil war that was hoped to have been ended by the 2013 ceasefire agreement

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PUB Telegraph Media Group Ltd.

AN Document DT00000020150909eb990004e

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HD **Turkey Deploys Ground Forces In Iraq To Pursue Kurds**

WC 598 words

PD 9 September 2015

SN Radio Free Europe Documents and Publications

SC RFEUR

LA English

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LP

By RFE/RL

September 9, 2015

TD

Turkey deployed ground forces across the border into northern **Iraq** on September 8 for the first time since 2011 to pursue Kurdish militants involved in attacks that killed 31 Turkish police in recent days.

The state-run Anadolu Agency said 150 Turkish troops had entered northern **Iraq** with the aim of "destroying" two dozen militants of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) who escaped from Turkey over the border after carrying out one of the attacks.

The move runs counter to U.S. efforts to galvanize the region into battle against the Islamic State (IS) extremist group because Turkey is now hunting down some of the very fighters who are trying to take back territory seized by the militant Sunni Muslim group in Syria and **Iraq**.

Turkish authorities haven't given a specific time frame for the operation in northern **Iraq**, although one official said it was a "short-term" offensive to root out rebels. Turkish jets also carried out more air strikes against rebel camps in the region.

The cross-border operations came after escalating clashes between government and Kurdish forces and a wave of attacks by the PKK that killed at least 31 soldiers and police since September 6. At least 15 police were killed in a car bombing on September 8.

Turkey, a NATO ally, signed up to participate more actively in the U.S.-led coalition against IS in July. It has allowed U.S. warplanes and drones to stage air strikes against IS from Turkish air bases and its jets have struck IS targets near its border in Syria.

But the country's main focus has been its fight against the PKK, which has waged a decades-long insurgency for Kurdish **autonomy**. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said in comments reported by the Turkish media that IS is a lesser threat to Turkey than the PKK.

Turkey's ground and aerial incursions against the PKK pose a difficult situation for the United States and its allies. The **Kurds** are doing much of the fighting against IS across the border in Syria and in northern **Iraq**.

The PKK, the target of Turkey's incursion into northern **Iraq**, has fought alongside Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga forces, notably in Shingal, a predominantly Kurdish town which was taken by IS during last year's blitz.

Nazmi Gur, a former Turkish legislator who is in charge of Turkey's pro-Kurdish party's foreign relations, said Turkey's ground incursion will hurt efforts to liberate northern **Iraq** and Syria from IS.

"Turkey could not have helped [IS] more if it had tried," he said.

The United States called for the Turkish government and PKK to return to the negotiating table.

"It is important for Turkey and the PKK to return to their process of reaching a peaceful solution," White House spokesman Josh Earnest said.

The violence has upended a 2013 cease-fire aimed at allowing a final peace deal to be negotiated.

Critics accuse Erdogan of reigniting the fighting with the **Kurds**, after more than two years of peace efforts, for electoral gains.

Opponents say he aims to rally nationalist votes around his ruling Justice and Development Party and discredit a pro-Kurdish party whose electoral gains in June deprived Erdogan's party of securing a parliamentary majority. Erdogan denies the accusation.

With reporting by AP and AFP

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AN Document RFEUR00020150909eb990000d

USA TODAY

SE NEWS
HD **Clashes intensify between Turkey, Kurdish rebels ; Rebels kill 14 Turkish policemen in bombing**
BY Lucy Kafanov
CR Lucy Kafanov, Special for USA TODAY
WC 724 words
PD 9 September 2015
SN USA Today
SC USAT
ED FINAL
PG A.7
LA English
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LP

War between Turkey and Kurdish insurgents rapidly escalated Tuesday, as the rebels killed 14 policemen in a bomb attack and government fighter jets pounded Kurdish strongholds in northern **Iraq**.

Turkish ground forces crossed into northern **Iraq** for the first time since 2011 in a "short-term" operation in "hot pursuit" of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militants involved in a roadside ambush Sunday that killed at least 16 soldiers, the Associated Press reported.

TD

Sunday's attack was one of the deadliest by the PKK on government forces since the collapse of a two-year cease-fire in July. The PKK claimed responsibility for that assault, which triggered a wave of nationalist protests across Turkey. Thousands of demonstrators Monday attacked several branches of a pro-Kurdish political party.

The PKK is considered a terrorist organization by Turkey, the United States and the European Union, but the group maintains popular support in southeastern Turkey.

Ankara has vowed to step up its military campaign against the PKK as violence in the predominantly Kurdish southeast threatens to spiral out of control ahead of snap elections set for November.

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu attended a funeral Tuesday for soldiers killed in Sunday's attack and pledged that his government will continue to fight the PKK.

"For the unity of this nation, this homeland, anyone responsible for each and every act of bloodshed will be brought to account," Davutoglu said, weeping openly near the flag-draped caskets.

In Tuesday's attack, insurgents detonated a bomb in the the eastern Turkish province of Igdir, killing at least 14 officers who were escorting customs officials to the Dilucu border gate, the state-run Anadolu news agency reported. The death toll could rise as more details of the attack emerge.

The bombing came just hours after Turkish warplanes pummeled alleged PKK positions in northern **Iraq** in an operation lasting more than six hours that state media said killed dozens of militants. The PKK has bases in the Qandil mountain range in northern **Iraq**.

At least 113 members of the Turkish security forces have been killed and more than 160 injured in PKK attacks since July, according to data collected by Aaron Stein at the Atlantic Council's Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East. The escalating violence is reminiscent of the bloody years of the 1990s, the height of the PKK's 30-year-long insurgency for greater Kurdish **autonomy**.

Violence is rapidly spreading across Turkey's southeast. Armed Kurdish youth have set up barricades and street patrols in several towns.

As hostilities escalate, media access to the Kurdish heartland has grown more difficult.

Last week, a Turkish court charged two British journalists and their Iraqi colleague with "working on behalf of a terrorist organization" as they reported on violence between Kurdish militants and Turkish security forces. On Sunday, a Dutch journalist based in Turkey's southeast was detained while reporting from the region.

"The repression and intimidation of the media is an old strategy and one that is part of this war," said Ramazan Demir, a human rights lawyer representing the Dutch journalist. "Sadly, half of the country is not aware of what's happening in the southeast, where Kurdish civilians are dying because only the government version of the story is getting out."

The unrest comes before Turkey holds a fresh round of elections after the June 7 election delivered a hung parliament. In that vote, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's ruling party lost its 13-year grip on power, in part because of the surprise success of the pro- Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP), which gained enough votes to enter parliament for the first time in Turkey's history.

Erdogan has accused Kurdish politicians of being complicit in the PKK attacks, a charge the HDP strongly denies.

HDP co-chair Selahattin Demirtas cut short a visit to Germany to fly back to Turkey on Monday, calling on **Kurds** and Turks to join forces to end the violence.

"We want to stop young people from dying and let the public decide the future at the ballot box," Demirtas told reporters in Istanbul, arguing that Erdogan's party manufactured the current crisis following its election loss.

ART photo AP

CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

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IPD News

PUB USA Today Information Network

AN Document USAT000020150909eb990000x

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CyprusMail
Internet Edition

HD **Growing divisions challenge Kurdish autonomy**

WC 690 words

PD 4 October 2015

SN Cyprus Mail

SC CYMAIL

LA English

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LP

By Farid Mirbagheri

The Kurdistan region in **Iraq** is going through a tumultuous phase. Other than the carnage and savagery inflicted by the Islamic State and its violent ramifications, the region is suffering from serious political divisions, endemic corruption and diminishing public confidence in their leaders.

TD

Although the Iraqi **Kurds** are eager for recognition in the international community as a state, the region's problems are in fact pushing them in the opposite direction, even bringing the presidency of Masoud Barzani into question particularly since his term officially ended on August 20. If left unchecked, the geographic and political divisions could potentially lead to a split region and even civil unrest.

The KRG (Kurdistan Regional Government) is the outcome of a compromise arrived at in the aftermath of the Kurdish civil war between KDP (Democratic Party of Kurdistan) and the PUK (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan) between 1994 and 1998. The deal, however, never resolved the issues relating to revenues, resources and authority. Now, competition for the oil in Kirkuk is bringing rivalries back to the surface with new claimants such the Iraqi government in Baghdad as well as officials in Kirkuk itself entering the foray.

Lack of transparency in the oil sector is further fuelling the fire of political divisions in the region. According to some reports, officials on the oil and gas committees in the Iraqi Kurdistan parliament claim no one knows where the KRG's oil revenues are actually going." Out of the 16 bank accounts held by the region's authorities the finance minister in KRG has access to one that reportedly has a balance of only $14 million dollars. The remaining accounts are allegedly controlled by Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani.

One strategic mistake that may have contributed to the deepening financial crisis is the oil deal between the KRG and Ankara signed in December 2013. The Iraqi government denounced the deal accusing the **Kurds** of being in pursuit of **independence**" and Turkey of interfering in the sovereignty rights of **Iraq**". One Iraqi Kurd has observed that the KRG shot itself in the foot by placing all its eggs in the Turkish basket, while simultaneously weakening links with Baghdad.

Of course when it comes to the question of identity or any existential issues relating to the Kurdistan region, most if not all **Kurds** in **Iraq** are a united front. They believe that their history and heritage merits an autonomous, if not entirely independent, authority and that what Baghdad is offering amounts to a much less attractive alternative.

Be that as it may, political realities cannot be wished away. Any declaration of an independent sovereign Kurdistan in the foreseeable future would probably be vehemently and possibly militarily opposed by Ankara. Together with the tragic situation in Syria, we may end up having Ankara, Baghdad and Damascus in a long-term alliance against the **Kurds** that will further drag the Middle East into bloodshed and misery. It will be a conflict that once started will be difficult to bring to an end and will be viewed and fought as an existential threat by all the parties involved with no clear winner in sight. Kurdish officials may want to bear that in mind before embarking on any such policy.

The P4+1, the four Kurdish political parties and the KRG as they are known, are engaged in discussions to resolve the presidency issue with no solution in sight yet. A resolution, however, may have to wait until the next election scheduled for 2017, which could prove decisive in many ways. Given the current financial crisis, allegations of corruption and the questions of legitimacy a de facto administrative

break-up in the region may not appear far-fetched. However, with brinkmanship and courage, Kurdish leaders could guide their people away from divisions and conflict and towards the hope of a more peaceful and prosperous future for all.

Professor SM Farid Mirbagheri is professor of International Relations in the Department of European Studies and International Relations at the University of Nicosia Send to Kindle

The post Growing divisions challenge Kurdish **autonomy** appeared first on Cyprus Mail.

CO pukiq : Patriotic Union of Kurdistan

RE kurd : Kurdistan | iraq : Iraq | turk : Turkey | baghd : Baghdad | cypr : Cyprus | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eecz : European Union Countries | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD COMMENT

PUB Cyprus Mail Ltd

AN Document CYMAIL0020151004eba40000b

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.
U.S. EDITION

HD **World News: Turkish Jets Strike at Kurds**

BY By Dion Nissenbaum

WC 690 words

PD 4 November 2015

SN The Wall Street Journal

SC J

PG A13

LA English

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LP

ISTANBUL -- Turkish jets launched a new series of airstrikes on Kurdish militants in northern **Iraq**, the first indication that the government is pressing ahead with its military campaign against them as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's allies in parliament prepare to reclaim one-party rule.

While Mr. Erdogan and the dominant political party he founded celebrated their victory in Sunday's election, the Turkish military confirmed on Tuesday that it had staged attacks on Monday against the Kurdistan Workers' Party, known as the PKK, which has been branded as a terrorist force by Turkey, the U.S. and the European Union.

TD

Turkish security forces also stepped up operations in southeastern Turkey on Tuesday, killing at least four Kurdish activists in clashes and imposing a curfew in part of a town in southeastern Diyarbakir province that has been at the epicenter of protests.

As the military pressed ahead with the campaign, Kurdish politicians issued a new appeal for a cease-fire and warned the incoming government not to interpret its electoral victory as a mandate to rely solely on force to deal with the Kurdish minority's decadeslong fight for more rights and freedoms.

Turkey's latest strikes suggest, however, that Mr. Erdogan and his allies will keep hitting the PKK, which has waged a long and often violent fight for Kurdish **autonomy**.

Zagros Hiwa, a PKK spokesman, said the new attacks were a clear sign that Turkey's leaders, including Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, aren't interested in new peace talks.

"On election night, Mr. Davutoglu said the strikes would continue, he said our struggle will continue with determination, and I think it was an indication of these strikes," Mr. Hiwa said Monday night by telephone as Turkish jets were carrying out their attacks.

Mr. Davutoglu and his long-ruling Justice and Development Party, or AKP, have said they are willing to resume peace talks if the PKK lays down its weapons, declares a cease-fire and leaves the country, all of which the Kurdish militants are unwilling to do.

On Tuesday, the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party, which lost voters on Sunday and saw its numbers in the 550-seat parliament drop to 59 from 80, accused the AKP of relying on an "atmosphere of terror" during the recent campaign to regain legislative control and advance Mr. Erdogan's bid to concentrate power in his presidential office.

That echoed independent election observers and the White House criticizing Turkish leaders for creating an intimidating campaign climate by cracking down on opposition journalists. Poll watchers found no signs of widespread electoral fraud in the vote.

Mr. Davutoglu and Mr. Erdogan said Sunday's election result was a clear message that voters want security and stability to replace months of deadly terrorist attacks by Kurdish militants and suspected Islamic State extremists.

Since June, more than 150 Turkish security officials and hundreds of PKK fighters have been killed in the conflict. A further 130 people have been killed by suspected Islamic State bombers who targeted peace rallies and demonstrations by Kurdish activists.

The new attacks are an extension of Turkey's campaign against the PKK launched in the summer after a two-year cease-fire broke down. In July, Turkey surprised the U.S. and its allies by launching airstrikes against PKK camps in northern **Iraq** for the first time in four years. Since then, Turkey's campaign against Kurdish militants has expanded to cities and towns in the country's Kurd-dominated southeast.

On Sunday night, Kurdish demonstrators clashed with Turkish police after Mr. Erdogan's allies won a decisive parliamentary majority that diluted the power of pro-Kurdish lawmakers in Ankara.

As head of the AKP, Mr. Davutoglu is expected to lead the effort to form a new government in the coming weeks.

In June, the AKP lost its parliamentary majority for the first time in 13 years. Pollsters and pundits were surprised by Sunday's vote result granting the AKP a commanding majority and allowing them to avoid having to share power.

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CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

NS gvote : Elections | gcivds : Civil Disruption | gterr : Terrorism | gpol : Domestic Politics | gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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IPC IGV

PUB Dow Jones & Company, Inc.

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HD **Erdogan Meddles in Iraq, Syria to Isolate Kurdish Threat to Turkey - Ex-CIA Officer**

CR РИАН

WC 390 words

PD 15 December 2015

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SN Sputnik News Service

SC RVESEN

LA English

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LP

WASHINGTON, December 16 (Sputnik) - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan wants to seize land from **Iraq** and Syria to cut off support and supplies from the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) in his own country, former CIA counter-terrorism expert and whistleblower John Kiriakou told Sputnik.

"I believe Erdogan seeks to carve out a 'Kurdish-free zone' in northern **Iraq** and northern Syria to keep Iraqi and Syrian **Kurds** from supplying PKK supporters on the Turkish side of the border," Kiriakou said.

TD

The PKK waged two long, violent and unsuccessful struggles for **independence** against Turkey in which 5,000 Turkish troops and more than 40,000 **Kurds** were killed from 1984 to 1999 and from 2004 to 2012. A third insurgency started earlier this year.

The pattern of Turkish aggression against Syria over the past month fitted this interpretation of Erdogan's motives, Kiriakou maintained.

"As proof, we have Turkish actions in Syria in the past few weeks. As soon as Erdogan agreed to support allied military efforts in Syria, he began bombing Kurdish positions along the border. He didn't bomb the Islamic State, but bombed the **Kurds**," Kiriakou observed.

Erdogan had conflicting aims from the United States and its Coalition partners who want to contain and roll back the Islamic State (IS also known as Daesh, which is outlawed in Russia), Kiriakou pointed out.

"Erdogan's goals are thus different from the allies. But he was politically savvy enough to use the allies to further his own agenda," he explained.

Kiriakou also said he did not believe Erdogan and his country had the resources to hold on to Iraqi or Syrian territory for any length of time in any effort to reclaim land that Turkey had to abandon when the Ottoman Empire collapsed at the end of World War I.

"I don't think Erdogan has the wherewithal to create a new Ottoman Empire-like presence in the Middle East, nor to occupy Iraqi or Syrian territory over the long-term. I think his goals are more parochial," he noted.

Kiriakou, an expert on Middle East terrorism, was jailed for two years for passing information to a reporter while a CIA officer. He now serves as an Associate Fellow of the Institute for Policy Studies.

RE turk : Turkey | iraq : Iraq | syria : Syria | kurd : Kurdistan | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD US

IPC 160

PUB Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency

AN Document RVESEN0020151215ebcf008y9

HD **KRG leader instructs officials to expedite independence referendum**

WC 398 words

PD 21 December 2015

SN Cihan News Agency (CNA)

SC CINEWA

LA English

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LP

İSTANBUL (CİHAN)- Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) President Massoud Barzani instructed senior party officials to work on preparations for holding a referendum to decide whether to secede from **Iraq**, a long-standing Kurdish aspiration, Kurdish sources said on Monday.

Speaking to the Arbil-based Rudaw over the weekend, senior KRG official Aras Haso Mirhan talked about the recent KRG meeting, saying the major theme of the gathering was **independence**.

TD

Barzani instructed senior party figures to hold talks with other parties for the referendum, Mirhan told Rudaw.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), led by KRG President Barzani, will hold a meeting with the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), one of the main Kurdish political parties and headed by former Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, to discuss the referendum. Mirhan also said the KDP will meet with other parties to broach the subject.

The Kurdish bid for an independent state has been a thorny issue in Iraqi politics and a source of concern for some regional countries like Turkey and Iran, which have fears that such move would foment separatist sentiment among their restive Kurdish populations.

While Ankara has some reservations about such a move, those hesitations have not prevented Turkish authorities from nurturing closer and stronger ties with Barzani's KRG, and Ankara has not displayed as strong objections as it had in the past.

The central Iraqi government is adamantly against such a move but has little to stop the momentum if **Kurds** decide to take action. Last year, preparations for holding a referendum on whether to secede from **Iraq** were postponed when the Islamic State in **Iraq** and the Levant (ISIL) attacked the region and edged closer to Arbil, the KRG's regional capital, before being rolled back by the US-led coalition's air strikes.

ISIL captured Mosul in 2014 and still holds sway over some territory in the Kurdish region, but an anticipated counter-offensive by the Iraqi army, Kurdish peshmerga forces and Iran-backed Shiite militiamen aims to take Mosul back from the radical group. The US-led anti-ISIL coalition, Arbil and Baghdad are working to finalize operational details, while Kurdish forces are clearing the surrounding area of ISIL elements, trying to cut Mosul's links to the outside world before laying a full-fledged siege on the city.

ZANA ARIF / ARBIL [Cihan/Today's Zaman] CİHAN

CO kurdd : Kurdistan Democratic Party | pukiq : Patriotic Union of Kurdistan

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

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IPD World

PUB Cihan News Agency

AN Document CINEWA0020151221ebcl000mn

SE Feature Stories

HD **Syria-Iraq: Critical Days Loom for Kurdish National Project**

WC 1,049 words

PD 25 December 2015

SN Energy Compass

SC EGYCMP

LA English

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LP

Pretty much everything to do with the political destiny of the Middle East's **Kurds** remains unclear, and is becoming more complex by the day. But two key factors -- namely, the growing strength of the Syrian Kurdish statelet of Rojava, and the renewed alliance between **Iraq**'s semiautonomous Kurdistan region and Ankara -- will be critical in shaping the fate of both the **Kurds** and the wider Middle East region.

What is clear is that neither Rojava nor **Iraq**'s Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) will be sending a permanent representative to the UN anytime soon. Regional sensitivities to formal Kurdish **independence** are simply too strong to allow this. But neither entity is going to disappear. Instead, their influence in the region, especially in the case of Rojava, is likely to grow. However, both semiautonomous regions face very real threats -- not helped by each seeing the other as a bitter rival.

TD

The PYD group ruling Rojava is closely allied with the Turkish Kurdish insurgent group the PKK, with which Ankara is currently doing battle in southeastern Turkey. Ankara claims there is essentially no difference between the two and continues, albeit sporadically, to bombard the PYD -- despite the fact that both groups participate in Washington's alliance against Islamic State (EC Nov.20'15). By contrast, Ankara has strong ties to the KRG.

Rojava emerged as a self-governing statelet of three noncontiguous entities in the wake of the collapse of the Syrian state in 2011. However, it was only with the rise of Islamic State that the PYD assumed real strategic significance. The **Kurds** have become Washington's No. 1 ally in the fight against Islamic State and have taken significant territory from the jihadists, such that the PYD has been able to join up its Qamishli and Kobane enclaves (EC Oct.3'14). PYD forces have also hit further south to threaten the core Islamic State and oil heartland of Deir az-Zor.

The group has also been bolstered by Russia's intervention in the Syria crisis. Moscow, a traditional ally of the PKK, is pushing for PYD involvement in Syrian peace talks -- a position strongly opposed by Ankara.

Having recently retaken Sinopec's eastern Syrian blocks, the PYD operates 20,000-40,000 barrels per day of oil production, albeit mostly lower-quality heavy crude (EC Dec.4'15). But expansion into non-Kurdish areas brings risks. Arab rebel groups, which have already accused the **Kurds** of being too close to the Al-Assad regime, are united in opposing the **Kurds**' involvement in the peace process. A more assertive PYD is also likely to provoke a more aggressive stance from Ankara.

Another key risk for Syria's **Kurds** is the intensifying violence between the PKK and Ankara. Over 550 people, 150 of them civilians, have died since the summer flare-up in fighting (EC Jul.31'15). But this fight, as opposed to the country-wide civil war of the 1990s, has resulted in greater civilian casualties, with ordinary Turkish **Kurds** increasingly blaming both the PKK and Ankara. To survive in the long run, the landlocked territory of Rojava needs both a PYD presence in Syrian peace talks and Turkish acquiescence. But as clashes with the PKK escalate, so too does the Turkish perception of Rojava as a national security threat that has to be sidelined and crushed.

KRG in Crisis

Meanwhile, the KRG's already substantial **autonomy** and influence are threatened by political and economic crises. The former was triggered by a failure to agree on a term extension for President Massoud Barzani and the ensuing suspension of parliament, the latter by the oil price collapse and the costs of the war with Islamic State. But as KRG Deputy Prime Minister Qubad Talabani conceded at a London energy conference earlier this month, problems are structural and reform is urgently needed (EC Sep.18'15).

Even back in 2013, when oil prices were over $100 per barrel, the KRG "was living beyond its means," running a budget deficit of 1.7 trillion Iraqi dinars ($1.5 billion), Talabani said. "It is clear that the KRG's fiscal situation is unsustainable and that major reforms are needed ... We cannot just borrow our way out of the problem," he added, noting that electricity and energy subsidy reform were being studied.

Turkey's crisis with Russia following its Nov. 24 downing of a Russian jet over its border with Syria has given critical momentum to Ankara's need to reduce its reliance on Russian gas -- with Ankara now "desperate" for Kurdish gas, argues one Kurdish source. In a recent visit by Barzani to Ankara, the Kurdish flag was allowed for the first time to fly alongside the Turkish flag, as befitting a head of state visit. "This is historic," the source argues.

However, the rival Sulaimaniyah-based PUK party, which controls security at the Miran and Bina Bawi fields slated to supply gas for export to Turkey, has consistently advocated a less pro-Ankara line. Voices in Sulaimaniyah are now arguing for a revision of the export deal with Ankara, which would secure a better sales price, bring Baghdad into the deal and clip Barzani's wings. This would be welcomed by many in Baghdad, who have been pushing for a deal to wean the PUK, and southern Iraqi Kurdistan, away from Erbil "to basically destroy Barzani's power," notes Michael Knights of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. But "we have yet to see the PUK really choose Baghdad over the broader KRG structure," he cautions.

Rafiq Latta, Nicosia

Compass Points

• SIGNIFICANCE: **Kurds** in Turkey, **Iraq** and Syria sit at the epicenter of what has become a messy and brutal process as the Mideast region's state structure, established by the Sykes-Picot Agreement in the wake of World War I, begins to buckle under stresses generated by the region's wars and collapses in governance.

• CONTEXT: The KRG is aligning itself more closely to Saudi and Turkish efforts to build an anti-Islamic State coalition and may yet secure significant Gulf aid to ease its financial crisis.

• NEXT: Washington has to find a way to continue its alliance with the PYD, while respecting Turkey's redlines on Rojava.

IN i13 : Crude Oil/Natural Gas | i1 : Energy

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

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PUB Energy Intelligence Group Inc.

AN Document EGYCMP0020160126ebcp00007

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HD **Iraq Kurd leader: 'Time has come' for statehood referendum**

BY W.G. Dunlop

WC 713 words

PD 3 February 2016

ET 20:57

SN Agence France Presse

SC AFPR

LA English

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LP

Iraqi Kurdish leader Massud Barzani has declared that the "time has come" for the country's **Kurds** to hold a referendum on statehood, a move likely to raise tensions with Baghdad.

But even if the various political challenges to **independence** are resolved, the major economic problems the region faces due to low oil prices are another bar to Kurdish **independence**.

TD

"The time has come and the conditions are now suitable for the people to make a decision through a referendum on their future," Barzani said in a statement released Wednesday.

"This referendum would not necessarily lead to (an) immediate declaration of statehood, but rather to know the will and opinion of the people of Kurdistan about their future," said Barzani, who has remained in power despite the expiration of his term as president.

Barzani, who has made similar calls in the past, did not specify when the vote would take place.

Asked about the timing of the referendum, Ali Awni, a leader in Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party, said that "today is better than tomorrow," but did not give a specific date.

Awni said the **Kurds** have gained international sympathy from fighting the Islamic State jihadist group, and that now "we must show the world the will of our people (for) **independence** and the right of self-determination."

A US official said in response to Barzani's declaration that the issue was "an internal Iraqi matter".

"The United States continues to support an **Iraq** that is federal, democratic, pluralistic, and unified," the official told AFP.

Iraq's **Kurds** are a key US partner in the war against IS and have been some of the most effective forces fighting the jihadists.

But both the referendum on **independence** -- which **Iraq**'s federal government opposes -- and the issue of which areas it covers will raise tensions between the autonomous Kurdish region and Baghdad, potentially complicating anti-IS efforts.

The region officially includes three provinces, but Kurdish forces now hold parts of four more over which the federal government wants to maintain control.

Federal forces fled positions in various northern areas in the summer of 2014 when facing an offensive by IS, allowing Kurdish forces to gain or solidify control over areas claimed by both them and Baghdad.

Oil-rich Kirkuk province, which is mostly held by Kurdish peshmerga forces, will be a particular point of contention due to the wealth of natural resources there.

Turkey's assent would also be essential for moves toward Kurdish statehood to proceed, as Ankara is a key economic partner of Iraqi Kurdistan, both in terms of oil exports and other trade and investments.

Barzani has a close relationship with the Turkish government.

But Ankara is also battling the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) rebel group, and Turkey fears that having a Kurdish state on its southern border, or even moving toward one, could increase calls for similar action within its own territory.

Iran and Syria, which also have substantial Kurdish populations, would potentially oppose the establishment of a Kurdish state for similar reasons.

And while there is broad support for the idea of **independence** in Iraqi Kurdistan, the sharp divisions among the various Kurdish political parties would pose a significant challenge to the formation and successful administration of a state.

Iraqi Kurdistan has been independently exporting oil via Turkey from four northern provinces since a deal between it and Baghdad on oil and revenue sharing collapsed last year.

And like Baghdad, Kurdistan is facing a financial crisis due to plunging oil prices, on which they rely for the vast majority of government funds.

Salaries for some Kurdish government employees have fallen several months in arrears, and some have gone on strike to protest unpaid wages.

With immediate **independence** not a practical option, Barzani's call could be an attempt to draw attention away from the problems the region is facing or to aid him politically.

"There is no on-the-ground justification for a referendum now," said Kirk Sowell, a Jordan-based political risk analyst who is the publisher of Inside Iraqi Politics.

"You don't form a state when you are in the middle of an economic collapse," he said.

wd/dv/hc

CO kurdd : Kurdistan Democratic Party

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IPD Recit

PUB Agence France-Presse

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UWire
COLLEGE PRESS RELEASES & WIRE SERVICE

HD **Iraqi Kurds protest against Turkey, 3 police wounded**

WC 137 words

PD 7 February 2016

SN U-Wire

SC UWIR

LA English

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LP

Columbia College ; Chicago , IL - news

By

TD

IRBIL, **Iraq** — Protests against Turkey in **Iraq**'s northern Kurdish region turned violent on Sunday, with three police officers wounded.

Hundreds of protesters gathered Sunday outside the United Nations compound in the northern city of Irbil calling for an end to Turkish airstrikes against Kurdish militants in northern **Iraq**, Syria and southern Turkey. Local media reported that three police were wounded.

Turkey began launching airstrikes in **Iraq** and Syria in July 2015 as part of the U.S.-led coalition's fight against the Islamic State group. But Turkey's main focus has been its fight against the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, which has waged a decades-long insurgency fighting for Kurdish **autonomy**.

((Distributed for UWIRE via M2 Communications www.m2.com))

CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

NS guni : University/College | gcivds : Civil Disruption | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gedu : Education | grisk : Risk News

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PUB Normans Media Ltd

AN Document UWIR000020160207ec27001it

HD **Iraqi Kurds protest against Turkish 'genocide'**

WC 395 words

PD 8 February 2016

ET 06:48

SN Euronews

SC EURONEN

LA English

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LP

Protests against Turkey in **Iraq**'s northern Kurdish region turned violent on Sunday (Feb.7) as demonstrators called for the United Nations to intervene in what they described as Turkey's "genocide" against the Kurdistan Workers Party or PKK. Three police officers were wounded in scuffles. PKK supporter Youssef Hamid explained why he was protesting: "The goal of this demonstration is to tell the public and all the foreign NGOs about the Turkish attacks in Syria, Turkey and **Iraq**. All these attacks are targeting Kurdish people and they`re denying the existence of Kurdistan." Scores of PKK rebels killed More than 700 PKK rebels have been reportedly killed in Turkey's mainly Kurdish southeast region in the towns of Cizre and Sur since a security operation by Turkish forces began in December. The group which has waged a decades-long insurgency against Ankara has also had its bases in northern **Iraq**.

TD

Turkey's interior minister claims that 99.5 percent of all the "terrorists nested in Cizre are about to be eliminated". Many neighborhoods of Diyarbakır's central Sur district have been under curfew since Dec. 2, 2015, while the curfew was imposed in Silopi and Cizre on Dec. 14. Almost 90 percent of the population in Sur is estimated to have left their homes because of the fighting. Cizre has a population of around 120,000, of which 100,000 have left. **Kurds** in #Paris condemn the massacre in the besieged Cizre. Outrage of Kurdish community in Europe continues. pic.twitter.com/zzqg5Zegul— Aylina Kılıç (@AylinaKilic) February 8, 2016 Ankara opened peace talks with jailed PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan in late 2012. But a two-year ceasefire collapsed in July after what the government said were attacks on security forces, plunging the region into its worst violence since the 1990s. Around 300 members of the security forces have been killed in urban fighting and PKK attacks since July of last year. Last week Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu unveiled what he billed as a new plan to bolster security and rebuild areas ravaged by conflict, but he also made it clear the PKK militant group would be sidelined unless it laid down its weapons. The PKK which is considered a terrorist group by the US, EU as well as Turkey says it is fighting for Kurdish **autonomy**.

CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

NS gcivds : Civil Disruption | gvio : Military Action | gwar : War Crimes | nimage : Images | ntra : Transcripts | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfce : C&E Exclusion Filter | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter | niwe : IWE Filter

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IPD Demonstration

PUB Euronews

AN Document EURONEN020160210ec2800002

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HD **Kurds Ready to Negotiation With Ankara If Given Autonomy, PKK Founder Released- PKK Leader**

WC 225 words

PD 17 February 2016

ET 11:36

SN Sputnik News Service

SC RVESEN

LA English

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LP

QANDIL MOUNTAINS (**Iraq**), February 17 (Sputnik) – The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) is ready to hold negotiations with Ankara if it is given Kurdish **autonomy** and the party's founder Abdullah Ocalan is released from prison, one of the leaders of the PKK, Murat Karayilan, said.

"As long as [Ocalan] is in prison on the island of Imrali, a discussion of settlement is out of the question. In order for the Turkish government to come to agreement with the **Kurds**, it needs to release our leader…who is considered our leader by the majority of the Kurdish people. Until that happens, the process of settlement cannot bring any results. We're ready for negotiations if the Turkish side fulfills this first and main condition," Karayilan told RIA Novosti in an interview.

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He said that the **Kurds** have been oppressed by the Turks through history and have nothing to lose and will continue their fight for **autonomy**.,

"The Kurdish people have suffered much oppression throughout history and we have nothing to lose. We will continue to insist on our honor and freedom, but I would like to emphasize once again that if Turkey takes a step toward us and acknowledges the **autonomy** of the **Kurds**, the settlement process might bring results," Karayilan said.

CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

RE turk : Turkey | kurd : Kurdistan | ankra : Ankara | iraq : Iraq | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD TURKEY

IPC 160

PUB Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency

AN Document RVESEN0020160217ec2h0048w

MANILA BULLETIN

SE Latest News

HD **Turkey blames Kurdish militants for Ankara attack**

WC 922 words

PD 19 February 2016

SN Manila Bulletin

SC MABULL

LA English

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LP

[caption id="attachment_389026" align="aligncenter" width="576"] Emergency workers help an injured person on the ground near the site of an explosion after an attack targeted a convoy of military service vehicles in Ankara on February 17, 2016.

At least 18 people were killed and 45 wounded by a car bomb targeting the military in the heart of the Turkish capital Ankara on February 17, the city's governor said. The bloodshed came on the heels of a string of attacks in Turkey, blamed on jihadists but also on Kurdish rebels. The bomb aimed at a convoy of military service vehicles, Ankara governor Mehmet Kiliclar said, quoted by the CNN-Turk and NTV channels. / AFP / CIHAN NEWS AGENCY / CIHAN / Turkey OUT[/caption]

TD

by Fulya Ozerkan and Burak Akinci

Ankara, Turkey -- Turkey on Thursday blamed Kurdish militants for a car bombing targeting a military convoy in Ankara that left 28 people dead, in an attack likely to further increase tensions in neighbouring Syria.

The massive car bomb struck five buses carrying military service personnel when it stopped at a red traffic light in the centre of the capital on Wednesday evening. Sixty-one people were wounded.

It was latest in a string of deadly strikes that have rocked Turkey since last summer and one of the deadliest assaults targeting the military in the NATO member state in recent years.

Also Thursday, at least six soldiers were killed in an attack on their convoy in southeastern Turkey blamed on Kurdish militants, security sources said.

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said the Ankara attack was carried out by operatives of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in cooperation with the Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG).

"It has with certainty been revealed that this attack was carried out by members of the terrorist organisation in Turkey in cooperation with a YPG member who infiltrated from Syria," Davutoglu told reporters.

"The attack has direct links with YPG."

He said the bomber was a Syrian national named Salih Necar and that nine people had been detained over the attack.

Davutoglu vowed to make the culprits "pay a price," saying Turkey would take any kind of measure on its border including self-defence.

- New strikes on north **Iraq** -

Hours after the attack, Turkey's air force launched new strikes on PKK targets in northern **Iraq**, acting on intelligence that there were dozens of fighters including top rebel leaders in the area, the army said.

Davutoglu said 70 fighters had been killed in the strikes.

Turkey both considers both the PKK and YPG to be terror groups, in contrast to the United States which only classifies the PKK as a terror organisation and works closely with the YPG as an effective force fighting jihadists in Syria.

The attack struck the heart of power in the Turkish capital in an area where the headquarters of the army, the parliament and prime minister's offices are in close proximity.

Pictures showed that at least two of the vehicles had been reduced to burned out wrecks and the massive blast was heard from all over the city, causing panic among locals.

Police identified the bomber from fingerprints taken from refugees who crossed the border to escape the war in Syria, the strongly pro-government Yeni Safak and anti-government Sozcu daily said.

The YPG and its political wing the Democratic Union Party (PYD) deny being PKK branches and argue they have no interest in attacking Turkey.

PYD head Saleh Muslim on Thursday denied any responsibility for the Ankara attack.

Turkey has for five consecutive days shelled Syrian Kurdish targets inside Syria, saying the military was responding to incoming fire.

Turkey fears the Syrian **Kurds** want to carve out a continuous autonomous region across the border in northern Syria stretching from the Iraqi border almost to the Mediterranean.

Ankara is concerned the **Kurds** will now take a "corridor" east of the flashpoint border town of Azaz -- currently still in control of rebels -- to link up two Kurdish-held areas.

- 'Shoulder to shoulder' -

The bombing prompted Davutoglu to scrap a planned trip to Brussels on Thursday to discuss Europe's migrant crisis. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan also shelved a trip to Azerbaijan.

The United States strongly condemned "the terrorist attack on Turkish military personnel and civilians" and reaffirmed US solidarity with its key NATO partner.

NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg also said the alliance strongly condemned the bombing, adding: "NATO allies stand shoulder to shoulder in the fight against terrorism."

The EU pledged to stand "with Turkey and its people in these difficult times".

Turkey has in the last months waged an all-out assault on the PKK, which has repeatedly attacked members of the security forces with roadside bombings on their convoys in the southeast.

The PKK launched an insurgency against the Turkish state in 1984, initially fighting for Kurdish **independence** although now more for greater **autonomy** and rights for the country's largest ethnic minority.

Ankara was already on alert after 103 people were killed on October 10 when two suicide bombers blew themselves up in a crowd of peace activists, the bloodiest attack in the country's modern history.

Eleven people, all German tourists, were also killed on January 16 when a suicide bomber blew himself up in the tourist heart of Turkey's biggest city, Istanbul.

Those attacks were blamed on Islamic State jihadists, as were two other deadly bombings in the country's Kurdish-dominated southeast earlier in the year.

NS gterr : Terrorism | gvio : Military Action | gpol : Domestic Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National Security | gcrim : Crime/Courts | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

RE turk : Turkey | kurd : Kurdistan | syria : Syria | iraq : Iraq | ankra : Ankara | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Latest News

PUB Manila Bulletin Publishing Corp

AN Document MABULL0020160218ec2j0002i

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HD **Report: Turkish airstrikes in Iraq kill 67 PKK militants**

WC 152 words

PD 12 March 2016

ET 13:27

SN Associated Press Newswires

SC APRS

LA English

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LP

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkey's state-run news agency says the military has carried out air strikes against Kurdish rebel targets across the border in northern **Iraq**, killing at least 67 militants.

Anadolu Agency, citing unnamed security sources, said Saturday that 14 F-16 and F-4 jets were involved in the March 9 strikes which allegedly destroyed ammunition depots, bunkers and shelters belonging to the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK.

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The agency said the offensive targeted five areas in northern **Iraq**, including the Qandil mountains on the **Iraq**-**Iraq** border where the PKK's leadership is based.

Turkey's jets have frequently bombed PKK sites in northern **Iraq** since July, when a fragile peace process between the government and rebels collapsed.

The PKK, which is fighting for **autonomy** for **Kurds** in Turkey's southeast, is listed as a terrorist organization.

CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

NS gcns : National Security | gterr : Terrorism | gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcrim : Crime/Courts | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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IPD EU

IPC i

PUB The Associated Press

AN Document APRS000020160312ec3c0056d

HD **Kurds plan to declare a federal region in northern Syria**

BY By ZEINA KARAM and PHILIP ISSA

CR Associated Press

WC 2,031 words

PD 16 March 2016

ET 22:18

SN Associated Press Newswires

SC APRS

LA English

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LP

BEIRUT (AP) — Syrian **Kurds** are preparing a plan to declare a federal region in the area they control across northern Syria, saying Wednesday it is a model for a more decentralized government in which all ethnic groups would be represented.

Although the idea might seem like a way forward after five years of civil war, it faces big obstacles: It was promptly dismissed by the government of Syrian President Bashar Assad and the rebels who oppose him, both fearing it would lead to a partition of the country.

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Turkey also opposes it, wary of the growing Kurdish influence in the border region of northern Syria and its effect on its own Kurdish minority.

But Ahmad Araj, a Kurdish official in northern Syria, insisted that a federal system containing such a region, which would effectively combine three Kurdish-led autonomous areas, is in fact meant to preserve national unity and prevent Syria from breaking up along sectarian lines.

"After all the blood that has been spilled, Syrians will not accept anything less than decentralization," Araj said.

By making the announcement as U.N.-sponsored peace negotiations take place in Geneva, Syria's main Kurdish faction was trying to become a major player in whatever central government emerges from the war. The faction has been excluded from the talks.

The idea of a federal region appears to have gained some traction lately as world and regional powers grapple with ways to end the conflict. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov this week said such a federal system is one possible option if the Syrian people agree to it. The U.S. also has been an ardent supporter of the **Kurds** in the region, helping them in navigating the delicate rivalries in **Iraq** after the 2003 invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein.

U.S. State Department spokesman Mark Toner told reporters that the U.S. opposes declarations of autonomous federal zones prior to a negotiated political resolution in Syria.

"We're focused on advancing a negotiated political transition toward an inclusive government that is capable of serving the interests of all the Syrian people," Toner said. "We've also been very clear that we're committed to the unity and territorial integrity of Syria."

However, if a resolution is reached by the Syrian people and their representative, and if it includes a federal system that allows for limited or semi-**autonomy** for different regions, Toner said Washington would not oppose it.

The Kurdish declaration is expected to be made at the end of a conference that began Wednesday in the town of Rmeilan, in Syria's northern Hassakeh province, and may last several days.

The plan could make sense in a country that has a multitude of sectarian and ethnic minorities for whom it would be difficult to share a unifying national sentiment.

The government, dominated by Assad's Alawite sect of Shiite Islam, controls Damascus, the Alawite heartland along the Mediterranean coast, and other cities and connecting corridors in between. The **Kurds** run their own affairs in the northeast.

The militants of the Islamic State group control much of the Sunni heartland in the east. Other Sunni rebels control pockets in the north and south. The Druze remain loyal but are starting to talk about **autonomy** in their southern areas as well.

Any move to carve up the country could risk yet more violence, including ethnic or sectarian cleansing.

Joshua Landis, director of Middle East studies at the University of Oklahoma, said the federalist project has logic to it, but is doomed to fail under current conditions.

"The federal system would be the way forward if people would accept it," Landis said, "But they won't because they don't like each other."

Assad's multi-religious base and the largely secular **Kurds** distrust the Islamist-dominated opposition, and the opposition will not tolerate the continuation of Assad rule in any part of Syria, either in Damascus at the head of a federal government, or in the coastal region, where his Alawite supporters predominate.

In these conditions, it would be difficult for federalism to take root.

Kurds are the largest ethnic minority in Syria, making up more than 10 percent of the prewar population of 23 million. They control an area along the Turkish border stretching from eastern Syria, near the Iraqi border, to Afrin in the west, interrupted only by a stretch of territory controlled by the Islamic State group.

The **Kurds** declared their own civil administration in three distinct enclaves, or cantons, under their control: Jazira, Kobani and Afrin, in 2013.

Federalism could be a first step toward creating an autonomous region similar to the one operated by the **Kurds** in **Iraq**, where their territory is virtually a separate country.

The main Syrian Kurdish group — the Democratic Union Party (PYD), and its military wing, the People's Protection Units (YPG) — have been excluded from the Geneva talks so as not to anger Turkey, despite Russia's insistence they participate. Ankara views the group as a terrorist organization.

Nawaf Khalil of the PYD told The Associated Press by phone from Germany, where he is based, that his party is not lobbying for a Kurdish region but an all-inclusive area with representation for Turkmen, Arabs and **Kurds** in northern Syria.

Salih Muslim, the co-president of the PYD, told the AP in Sulaimaniyah, **Iraq**, that the decision to declare a federal region was not yet official, but any such announcement would be a positive step to help keep Syria together.

A Turkish Foreign Ministry official said his country rejects any moves that would compromise Syria's national unity, adding that "unilateral moves carry no validity."

It's up to the Syrian people to "decide on the executive and administrative structure of Syria in line with the new constitution which will be formulated through the political transition process," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of government practice.

Turkey views the PYD as an extension of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, which has renewed a decades-old insurgency since peace talks collapsed last year. The U.S. also considers the PKK a terrorist group, but both Washington and Moscow support the YPG, which has been among the most effective forces against the Islamic State group.

Both the Syrian government and the opposition, at least in theory, reject any form of partition of Syria.

Syria's U.N. ambassador, Bashar Ja'afari, who also heads the government team in Geneva, said the talks are meant to discuss preserving Syria's territorial integrity.

"Betting on creating any kind of divisions among the Syrians will be a total failure," Ja'afari said.

Added Riad Naasan Agha, a member of the Saudi-backed Syrian opposition: "What someone declares on their own, far away from the Syrian people, is unacceptable."

The PYD's Khalil distinguished between autonomous rule over Kurdish areas — which has been in effect in Syria since 2013 — and the federalism project, which he said was ethnically inclusive.

"The federalism project is a model for all Syria," he said.

The Kurdish plan comes at a critical juncture in the conflict. A 2-week-old Russian and U.S.-engineered partial cease-fire is holding, the peace talks have resumed, and Moscow on Tuesday began withdrawing most of its troops from Syria after a 5½-month campaign of airstrikes supporting Assad, its longtime ally.

That has raised hopes for more meaningful discussions in Geneva, where U.N. envoy Staffan de Mistura is shuttling between delegations from the Syrian government and the moderate, Western-backed opposition.

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Associated Press writers Dominique Soguel in Istanbul, Vladimir Isachenkov in Moscow, Matthew Lee in Washington, Jamey Keaten in Geneva and Lynne O'Donnell in Kabul contributed to this report.

ART FILE - In this Saturday, July 25, 2015 file photo, a demonstrator waves the People's Protection Units flag, known as YPG, which is the main Kurdish fighting force in Syria, during a demonstration in Irbil, the Northern Kurdish region of **Iraq**. A spokesman for a powerful Syrian Kurdish political party said on Wednesday, March 16, 2016 that his faction is planning to declare a federal region in northern Syria, a model it hopes can be applied to the entire country. (AP Photo/Bram Janssen, File) | FILE - In this file photo released on Tuesday, June 23, 2015, provided by the Kurdish fighters of the People's Protection Units (YPG), which has been authenticated based on its contents and other AP reporting, Kurdish fighters of the YPG, sit on their pickup in the town of Ein Eissa, north of Raqqa city, Syria. A spokesman for a powerful Syrian Kurdish political party said on Wednesday, March 16, 2016 that his faction is planning to declare a federal region in northern Syria, a model it hopes can be applied to the entire country. (The Kurdish fighters of the People's Protection Units via AP, File) | FILE - In this file photo released on May 16, 2015, provided by the Kurdish fighters of the People's Protection Units (YPG), which has been authenticated based on its contents and other AP reporting, Kurdish female fighters of the YPG, carry their weapons as they walk in the frontline of Kery Sabee village, northeast Syria. A spokesman for a powerful Syrian Kurdish political party said on Wednesday, March 16, 2016 that his faction is planning to declare a federal region in northern Syria, a model it hopes can be applied to the entire country. (The Kurdish fighters of the People's Protection Units via AP, File) | FILE - In this Wednesday, Nov. 19, 2014 file photo, Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) fighters take position at a stronghold in Kobani, Syria. A spokesman for a powerful Syrian Kurdish political party said on Wednesday, March 16, 2016 that his faction is planning to declare a federal region in northern Syria, a model it hopes can be applied to the entire country. (AP Photo/Jake Simkin, File) | FILE - In this file photo released on May 20, 2015, provided by the Kurdish fighters of the People's Protection Units (YPG), which has been authenticated based on its contents and other AP reporting, Kurdish fighters of the YPG stand on their vehicles on their way to battle against the Islamic State, near Kezwan mountain, northeast Syria. A spokesman for a powerful Syrian Kurdish political party said on Wednesday, March 16, 2016 that his faction is planning to declare a federal region in northern Syria, a model it hopes can be applied to the entire country. (The Kurdish fighters of the People's Protection Units via AP, File) | Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan addresses a meeting of local administrators at his palace in Ankara, Turkey, Wednesday, March 16, 2016. Erdogan said Wednesday the United States and Russia were arming the Kurdish rebel group PKK which Turkey considers a terrorist organization. Ankara considers the PKK and the Syria-based YPG, or Kurdish People's Protection Units, to be terrorist organizations. (Murat Cetinmuhurdar, Presidential Press Service, Pool via AP) | Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan addresses a meeting of local administrators at his palace in Ankara, Turkey, Wednesday, March 16, 2016. Tayyip Erdogan says US and Russian weapons are ending up in the hands of the Kurdistan workers' Party, or PKK, which his country considers a terrorist organization. (Murat Cetinmuhurdar, Pool) | A woman greets a pilot returned from Syria at a Russian air base in Primorsko-Akhtarsk, southern Russia, Wednesday, March 16, 2016. More Russian planes returned from Syria on Wednesday, two days after President Vladimir Putin ordered Russian military to withdraw most of its fighting forces from Syria, signaling an end to Russia's five-and-a-half month air campaign. (AP Photo) | Russian Su-25 ground attack jet lands after return from Syria at a Russian air base in Primorsko-Akhtarsk, southern Russia, Wednesday, March 16, 2016. More Russian planes returned from Syria on Wednesday, two days after President Vladimir Putin ordered Russian military to withdraw most of its fighting forces from Syria, signaling an end to Russia's five-and-a-half month air campaign. (AP Photo)

NS gcns : National Security | gdip : International Relations | gpol : Domestic Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

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IPD Syria

IPC i

PUB The Associated Press

AN Document APRS000020160316ec3g0048u

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HD **Turkey Blockades Kurdish Town of Silopi, Pushing Kurds Out of Cizre**

WC 293 words

PD 7 April 2016

ET 16:32

SN Sputnik News Service

SC RVESEN

LA English

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LP

Backdropped by a Turkish forces armoured personnel carrier, residents walk around after the 24-hour curfew was lifted, in the mostly-Kurdish town of Silopi, in southeastern Turkey, near the border with **Iraq**, Tuesday, Jan. 19, 2016

MOSCOW (Sputnik) - "Now the town of Silopi [in the southeastern Sirnak province] is under a blockade and a curfew. Yesterday evening a building with civilians was shelled, and eight people died, including a 50-year-old woman and a child," Tasdemir said.

TD

She added that 16 civilians had been killed in the Sirnak province.

Tensions between Ankara and the **Kurds** escalated in July 2015 as fighting between the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), the Kurdish pro-**independence** organization considered to be terrorist by Ankara, and the Turkish army resumed. Ankara has imposed several round-the-clock curfews in Kurdish-populated towns, preventing civilians from fleeing the regions where the military operations are taking place.

"In Cizre at the moment four districts are totally destroyed. Ten thousand houses are in a completely unlivable condition, including those buildings that did not come under shelling. But the Turkish troops entered those houses, marauded and made everything they could to make the buildings unlivable, on purpose," Tasdemir said.

"They want to clean the place from the **Kurds**," she added.

In 2013, the Turkish government initiated a peace process with the PKK. Talks were jeopardized in 2014, as Ankara was reluctant to help **Kurds** to fight the Islamic State terrorist group, outlawed in many countries, including Russia, when the jihadist group attacked the city of Kobani. The city remained under the siege by IS militants from September 2014 until January 2015, which caused some 400,000 **Kurds** to flee into Turkey.

CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

RE turk : Turkey | kurd : Kurdistan | iraq : Iraq | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD news

PUB Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency

AN Document RVESEN0020160407ec47004hj

BBC MONITORING

HD **Turkey, Iraqi Kurds accused of waging "economic war" against Syrian Kurds**

WC 954 words

PD 12 May 2016

ET 11:47

SN BBC Monitoring European

SC BBCEUP

LA English

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LP

Text of report by German-based Kurdish newspaper Yeni Ozgur Politika website on 11 May

[Commentary by Tariq Hemo: "The AKP and the KDP against the federal entity"]

TD

The dangers being confronted by the federal system in the Rojava [Kurdish term for 'west,' used in reference to northern Syria] are not only the attacks of DA'ISH [Arabic acronym for ISIL, Islamic State of **Iraq** and the Levant], the opposition gang groups, and the army of the [Syrian President] Bashar al-Asad regime. There is also a concept of economic warfare. The parties opposed to the cause of the Kurdish people, and the enemies of the federal experiment in the Rojava, have imposed a major, strict, and systematic economic embargo on the Rojava. The parties that are waging this economic war against the experiment and the people of the Rojava are the Turkish state, the gang groups of the Damascus opposition, the KDP [Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party], and the regime of Bashar al-Asad.

Since the time when a popular uprising took place in the Rojava and when **autonomy** was declared in the year 2012 until now, the Turkish state under the administration of the AKP [Justice and Development Party] has been waging a fierce war in every sphere against the Rojava. All of the customs gates with the Rojava have been closed. Commercial activity has been halted. The Al-Asad regime as well, particularly after the fighting in Al-Qamishli, in which the Asayish [Kurdish security forces] took some sensitive points away from it, is seeking to bring the Rojava into submission by applying a harsh economic embargo. Indeed, the business of the gang groups of the Damascus opposition has come to be hostility towards the Rojava and the YPG [People's Defence Units]. They are now abandoning towns and areas to the Al-Asad regime, and are sending their own fighters towards the Rojava front for the war against the **Kurds**. Those 80 gang members that were killed in the attack on Afrin were all from the city of Homs. As a result of an agreement with the Al-Asad regime, they had departed from the city with their weapons and gone to Afrin.

The most strident and hostile party in the concept of economic warfare against the Rojava is the KDP. The KDP, for some time now, has closed the border crossing at Semalka and is not allowing food, drink, or medicine for the citizens of the Rojava to cross. The KDP, with this embargo, is showing its alliance with the AKP and [Turkish President Recep Tayyip] Erdogan. The KDP has become an instrument of war for the AKP, and at the same time, it is seeking to increase its pressures on the government of the Rojava in order to bring about its fantasy of 50 per cent of the administration for the ENKS [Kurdish National Council in Syria]! If we look at the current situation, we will see that Erdogan and the AKP are at odds with everyone, and are fighting against everyone, but are only happy with the KDP and [Iraqi Kurdistan Regional President] Mas'ud Barzani. The AKP and Erdogan have not even once made the slightest criticism against the KDP and Mas'ud Barzani.

The KDP, via its officials like Hamid Darbandi [Iraqi Kurdish official responsible for Syrian Kurdish affaris], threatens the Rojava with war. It speaks with hostile language, like Erdogan and the AKP. It speaks of harmful methods, those methods that it has in its hands, in case it comes and the Rojava does not accept its demands. Indeed, domestically as well, the KDP is putting pressure on all the political forces in the South [Iraqi Kurdistan] that provide support to the Rojava. It is not allowing officials of the PUK [Patriotic Union of Kurdistan] and Goran [Change Movement] to cross into the Rojava. Either the Rojava must surrender its will to the KDP/AKP, or else it will perish of starvation. This, in short, is the mentality of the KDP.

In conjunction with this economic war, the war against the Rojava and its citizens who are sharing bread, the KDP is sending all its gangs, both within the ENKS and those outside of it, against the Rojava. Now, in every foreign country in which a representation of the Rojava is being opened, or in which there is a meeting with a high-level official, the gangs of the KDP go into action, along with the AKP and Erdogan. They stage demonstrations against "PYD [Democratic Union Party] terrorism" and demand that Europe and America put that party and the YPG onto the terrorism lists. In addition, the KDP, in the sphere of diplomacy as well, calls upon everyone not to accept the Rojava. In truth, the KDP and its allies have become furious at the relations of the YPG and QSD [Syrian Democratic Forces] with the International Coalition against DA'ISH. It only wants its own forces, who fled from Shingal [Sinjar] and Makhmur, to be recognized by the International Coalition against DA'ISH.

Serious measures need to be taken against this war policy of the KDP. It needs to be exposed by Kurdish public opinion. An alternative to the Semalka border gate needs to be found. And the gangs of the ENKS need to be seen as terrorist, and they should not be given permission to engage in political activity. The KDP makes it clear that it will do everything in order to defeat the Rojava. A limit needs to be put on this force that is cooperating with the enemy.

Source: Yeni Ozgur Politika website, Neu-Isenburg, in Kurdish 11 May 16

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant | kurdd : Kurdistan Democratic Party

NS gdip : International Relations | gterr : Terrorism | nedc : Commentaries/Opinions | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National/Public Security | gcrim : Crime/Legal Action | gpir : Politics/International Relations | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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HD **PKK's Armed Wing Says Killed 32 Turkish Servicemen in Country's Southeast in 48 Hours**

CR РИАН

WC 164 words

PD 16 May 2016

ET 17:31

SN Sputnik News Service

SC RVESEN

LA English

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LP

SULAYMANIYAH (**Iraq**), May 16 (Sputnik) - A total of 32 Turkish soldiers and policemen have been killed in clashes with the armed wing of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in 48 hours, the People's Defense Force (HPG) military wing said Monday.

"Over two days of the ongoing conflict in the [Turkish southeastern] province of Hakkari, at least 32 Turkish soldiers were killed. HPG lost seven guerrillas in the clashes," the HPG said in a statement.

TD

The Hakkari province borders Iraqi Kurdistan mountains, where PKK fighters take cover to attack Turkish forces.

Tensions between Ankara and the **Kurds** escalated in July 2015 as fighting between the PKK, the Kurdish pro-**independence** organization considered to be terrorist by Ankara, and the Turkish army resumed. Ankara has imposed several round-the-clock curfews in Kurdish-populated towns, preventing civilians from fleeing the regions, where the military operations are taking place.

CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

RE kurd : Kurdistan | turk : Turkey | iraq : Iraq | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD PKK

IPC 160

PUB Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency

AN Document RVESEN0020160516ec5g009yk

DOW JONES NEWSWIRES

HD **Iraqi Kurds Seize Land, Bolstering Leverage for Future -- WSJ**

BY By Ben Kesling

WC 1,030 words

PD 15 September 2016

ET 08:33

SN Dow Jones Institutional News

SC DJDN

PG A11

LA English

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LP

SULAYMANIYAH, **Iraq** -- Iraqi **Kurds** have pushed forward with renewed vigor to retake land from Islamic State in recent weeks, territory that could be used as bargaining chips in future negotiations they are seeking to achieve more **autonomy** or even **independence**.

Iraqi territory under Kurdish control has expanded by about 50% in the past two years. Since last month, Kurdish Peshmerga forces took control of a number of villages near Mosul and some strategic access points leading into the city. The offensive came as Iraqi forces and their allies gear up for a massive operation in coming weeks to retake the extremist group's last stronghold in the country.

TD

The maneuvering has angered Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, who has warned the **Kurds** not to push further into Mosul on their own, saying the city's Sunni Arab majority population could resist a Kurdish incursion. The U.S., though, has stressed that its priority is defeating Islamic State and that politics are secondary and are up to Iraqis to sort out.

"It is their decision to make and their process to develop," U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Tony Blinken said Wednesday in Baghdad.

Kurdish President Masoud Barzani has signaled he is willing to cooperate for now. But some Iraqi **Kurds** are calling for talks that would partition Nineveh province, of which Mosul is the capital, and allow territories the **Kurds** have seized to vote on whether they want to join Kurdistan.

"There are several proposals on the table, but it is not yet proper to discuss them," Mr. Barzani told France 24 in an interview last week.

Such demands underscore the challenges **Iraq** faces in remaining a unified country: With Islamic State militants in **Iraq** near defeat, the various forces and ethnic groups fighting them may no longer have a common enemy to unite against.

Antagonizing powerful allies is just the latest risk the **Kurds** have taken to further their ambitions of **independence**. Like their brethren across the border in Syria, Iraqi **Kurds** have used the war against Islamic State to burnish their credentials with the West as one of the most effective ground partners capable of defeating the militants.

Recent events in Syria reminded the Iraqi **Kurds** how quickly support can be pulled away by neighboring countries and superpowers: The U.S. acquiesced last month to a Turkish military incursion to push back U.S.-supported Syrian **Kurds**. Their military prowess against Islamic State had allowed them to advance beyond the Euphrates River, a boundary set to avoid provoking Ankara, which accuses the group of supporting terrorism in Turkey.

Some analysts warn Iraqi **Kurds** could easily face a reversal of fortune if neighbors like Turkey and Iran, or fellow countrymen in **Iraq**, decide the ethnic group's designs to carve out its own self-governed territories threaten the larger countries' fortunes and Western powers agree.

"After Mosul, Western powers will again focus on the integrity of **Iraq**," said Gareth Stansfield, professor of Middle East politics at the University of Exeter. The **Kurds** "think they're partners in the fight against ISIS when they're really proxies."

For decades, the rebellious **Kurds** have administered a semiautonomous state in northern **Iraq**. Since the writing of a new constitution two years after the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003, **Kurds** have repeatedly complained that the government didn't enforce clauses meant to give them more control over oil production and more funds to pay Peshmerga, and to allow territories they consider to be Kurdish but fall outside Iraqi Kurdistan's boundaries to vote on whether to join the state.

"The idea of **independence** is not a hidden agenda," said Safeen Dizayee, the spokesman for the Kurdish Regional Government. "The **Kurds** can't wait another dozen years to see if the constitution is going to be implemented."

The Peshmerga sometimes coordinate with the central government in fighting Islamic State but always prefer to rely on the help of U.S.-led coalition air support. After their recent push to take more territory, the **Kurds** have throttled back and agreed to cooperate with the central government.

The Kurdish leader, Mr. Barzani, and Prime Minister Abadi appear to have reached a detente in recent weeks. A senior Kurdish lawmaker, Mullah Bakhtiar, recently announced Mr. Abadi told him that after Mosul is retaken the government is willing to discuss Kurdish **independence**, although Mr. Abadi hasn't commented on the matter.

The government hasn't publicly agreed to hold negotiations with the **Kurds**.

Mr. Barzani has agreed to work with the federal government from now on. But he has also proclaimed that lands taken with Kurdish blood will be kept by **Kurds**.

At a news conference in Baghdad on Aug. 31, Mr. Abadi cautioned the **Kurds** of overreaching, after being asked if the Peshmerga had taken land to drive a hard bargain.

"Whether you can get advantage from areas you have liberated is one thing. But whether you can live in peace with those sectors of society is another issue," he said.

Mr. Barzani's territorial advances and talk of **independence** could be nothing more than a way to extract more concessions from the Iraqi government, whether that is a greater share of oil revenue or the ability to permanently add recently taken territory to Kurdistan.

"Barzani is trying to bluff and scare the central authorities," said Hunain al-Qadu, a member of parliament from Nineveh province. "Mr. Barzani is trying to exploit an opportunity. Trying to advance his objectives and his strategy."

Saed Kakei, a senior adviser to the Kurdish government's minister of Peshmerga, said the Kurdish presence in these captured lands is a moral responsibility to repel Islamic State and is supported by Kurdistan's population of eight million.

But he acknowledged that the territories taken from Islamic State could also help the **Kurds** obtain more favorable terms in talks with the government. Asked if the territory can be used at the bargaining table later, he simply replied: "Yes."

Write to Ben Kesling at benjamin.kesling@wsj.com

(END) Dow Jones Newswires

September 15, 2016 02:33 ET (06:33 GMT)

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

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PUB Dow Jones & Company, Inc.

AN Document DJDN000020160915ec9f000jq

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DOW JONES NEWSWIRES

HD **Turkey Strikes Syrian Kurds as Multifaceted Conflict Rages On**

WC 625 words

PD 20 October 2016

ET 12:20

SN Dow Jones Institutional News

SC DJDN

LA English

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LP

ISTANBUL—Turkish jets bombed U.S.-backed Syrian **Kurds** battling Islamic State overnight, as Ankara and Washington's competing priorities in the multi-sided Syria conflict strain ties between the two North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies.

There were conflicting reports about what was hit, and the death tolls varied significantly.

TD

As many as 200 Kurdish People's Protection Units, or YPG, fighters were killed in 26 strikes on 18 targets, the Turkish military said, in what would appear to be Turkey's deadliest strike yet on Syrian Kurdish fighters.

However, the Syrian Democratic Forces—which includes Arab and Turkmen fighters but is made up mostly by YPG members—contested Turkey's claim, with spokesman Ahmad Hisso Araj putting the casualties at 15 people, including civilians.

The death toll couldn't be independently verified. At least nine people were killed and two dozen injured in the airstrikes, the U.K.-based monitoring group Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

Turkey's attack comes as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan charts an increasingly assertive role in the Syrian and Iraqi conflicts, sparring with Baghdad and NATO allies while threatening to act unilaterally if the U.S.-led coalition against Islamic State fails to address Ankara's concerns.

"We will not wait for troubles to come knocking on our door," Mr. Erdogan said Wednesday in Ankara, citing threats to Turkey's security from Syria and **Iraq**. "We will see to it that the threats are destroyed, resolved at their source."

Fighting a three-pronged war in Syria, Turkey wants to topple President Bashar al-Assad, quash Islamic State, and prevent Syrian **Kurds** from establishing **autonomy** on its southern border.

Ankara's Arab allies—led by Qatar and Saudi Arabia—back the effort against Mr. Assad, and Turkey is part of the international campaign against Islamic State, which has killed more than 250 people in attacks inside Turkey.

But on the fight against the Syrian Kurdish YPG, Turkey is largely alone.

The YPG is affiliated with the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, which has been fighting for Kurdish **autonomy** in southeast Turkey since 1984 in a conflict that his killed more than 40,000 people. While Turkey and its NATO allies list the PKK as a terrorist organization, only Ankara extends that designation to the YPG, which enjoys Western support.

Mr. Erdogan has repeatedly slammed the U.S. for partnering with the YPG on the fight against Islamic State, saying Washington is choosing a terrorist organization over its NATO ally. On Monday, he said Turkey will take matters into its own hands unless the U.S. convinces Syrian **Kurds** to halt their westward push to link their territories in northeastern Syria with a the Afrin region they control in the northwest.

Vice President Joe Biden said during an August visit to Ankara that the YPG must withdraw from Manbij, which Syrian **Kurds** had liberated from Islamic State, if it wants continued U.S. support. While Syrian Kurdish forces claim to have evacuated the frontier town bordering areas controlled by Islamic

State to the south and Turkish-backed Syrian rebels to the north, Turkey contends the YPG maintains a presence.

The Turkish airstrikes late Wednesday came as Syrian Democratic Forces pushed east from Afrin into Islamic State territory toward Manbij, according to SDF's Mr. Araj and Turkey's military. The attack highlights Ankara's determination to prevent Syrian **Kurds** from consolidating their territory while Turkey pushes to establish a de facto safe-zone for Syrian rebels on its southern border.

Raja Abdulrahim in Beirut contributed to this article.

Write to Emre Peker at emre.peker@wsj.com

(END) Dow Jones Newswires

October 20, 2016 06:20 ET (10:20 GMT)

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant | nato : North Atlantic Treaty Organization

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AN Document DJDN000020161020ecak001w6

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SE Feature Stories

HD **Iraq-Syria: Kurdish Rivalries Rise Up**

WC 1,054 words

PD 10 March 2017

SN Energy Compass

SC EGYCMP

LA English

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LP

In **Iraq**, internal Kurdish rivalries have emerged as potentially a bigger threat to the Kurdish experiment with self-rule than either Islamic State, now being squeezed out of Mosul, or Baghdad's pro-centralization policies. Tensions between the KDP, the ruling party of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), and its rival, the PUK -- and between the KDP and the PKK Turkish-Kurdish insurgent group -- have been brewing for some time. But this month those tensions erupted into a shooting match between proxy militia of the KDP and PKK in Sinjar, west of Mosul. Last week also saw PUK forces seize control of a pumping station in Kirkuk, briefly bringing Kurdish crude exports via Turkey to a halt.

TD

Both standoffs appeared to be under control as Energy Compass went to press. But while the position of KDP leader and KRG President Masoud Barzani is under no immediate threat, the forces arrayed against him are not going to go away. Barzani continues to call for **independence** for the KRG, but the populist pitch is increasingly falling on deaf ears. Barzani "has failed on every level. What is the point of **independence** if you haven't got bread to eat?" argues one former supporter, a Kurdish businessman. "The best thing to do is for him to go back to Baghdad."

A new oil prepayment deal with Russian oil major Rosneft concluded in December has given the KRG some breathing space, allowing it to improve its payments to upstream operators, critical to resuscitate flagging investor sentiment. But the prepayments are not a long-term solution, and they reinforce KRG indebtedness. "Rosneft will get their pound of flesh, you will see, and it could be expensive," notes another Kurdish source.

Dissatisfaction over the KRG's economic record, and its corruption and ongoing political chaos, is real and growing (EC Apr.29'16). The Kurdish parliament has not sat for over 18 months, and Barzani's presidential term officially expired in August 2015 (EC Sep.18'15). Butthe prospect of regime change, and the free-for-all it would bring, alarms many in the West, whose support means the powerful Barzani family is unlikely to be dislodged. "For all their failings, the last two years have seen more foreign ministers, heads of state and four-star generals flocking to the Barzanis than ever before," notes one analyst.

Meanwhile, the PUK appears to be backing off its threat to cut off Kirkuk oil exports. But its rift with the KDP -- centered on its relative political and economic marginalization, including lack of access to oil revenues -- is if anything widening. The wider fight over Kirkuk oil is also very much still a live one (EC Mar.3'17). Baghdad's announcement on Wednesday that it has expanded the 30,000 b/d Kirkuk refinery and would add another 10,000 b/d unit by year-end as a sop to provincial accusations of neglect may prove the most fragile of solutions.

The KDP's alliance with Ankara has added to the strain on relations with the PUK, which is closer to Tehran, as well as with the PKK. Turkey has been pushing for the Barzanis to crack down on the PKK. While not formally part of the KRG, the Yazidi heartland of Sinjar was controlled by the KDP prior to June 2014, and Ankara is alarmed by the growth of PKK influence in the area. It is in this context that the Sinjar clashes took place.

A wider Kurdish civil war is unlikely, but the KDP could very well lose control of Sinjar. This could also lead to an unraveling of KDP control of other areas outside the KRG. These include the oil fields of Ain Zalah and Safiyah north of Mosul, the oil-rich Makhmour area on the Nineveh plains, and the 175,000 barrel per day Bai Hassan and 95,000 b/d Avana fields, which the KDP seized in July 2014.

While a formal separation appears unlikely, de facto, Kurdistan is run by two separate administrations. A revival of a KDP-PUK governing alliance, or of the united front they presented for federal elections in the

past, looks unlikely -- with the PUK instead becoming closer to former Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. National elections are slated for 2018.

Washington Backs Rojava

In Syria, events remain in flux. But it's clear that fears that Ankara's military incursion into Syria would lead to the destruction of the autonomous Rojava Kurdish administration are not materializing (EC Sep.9'16). Rojava is run by the PYD, which is effectively the Syrian arm of the PKK. For one, Russia has proved unwilling to turn on the leftist PYD. But most critically, Washington appears to have made a strategic decision to increase its support for Syrian **Kurds** -- in what is perhaps the first sign of a fresh Trump approach in Syria.

US ground troops in northern Syria have been reinforced, with forces placed west of Manbij to minimize the chances of Turkish forces clashing with Washington's Kurdish allies. Given Erdogan's declared intention to move on Manbij, this will damage already fraught US-Turkey relations (EC Aug.26'16).

And in a 180-degree turn from Washington's position a year ago, US and Kurdish troops have also ceded territory taken from Islamic State to Syrian regime troops. In another first, US planes have supported regime ground forces fighting Islamic State, which is now beginning to lose ground in its oil heartland of Deir ez-Zor. Noteworthy, despite public US denunciation of Iranian influence in Syria, is the unspoken coalition of interests with Tehran, as well as with Russia -- both of which back Damascus.

Rafiq Latta, Nicosia

Compass Points

• SIGNIFICANCE: As Islamic State is forced to retreat, the tensions between and within Kurdish nationalist movements in **Iraq**, Syria and Turkey are rising to the fore.

• CONTEXT: The new Trump team contains a number of **Iraq** veterans, and while not anti-Kurdish, as a group they will prioritize the Baghdad relationship over that with the KRG.

• NEXT: The position and powers of a post-Islamic State governor of Nineveh province, home to Mosul, will be a key battleground for influence -- pitting the KDP and Ankara against pro-Iranian Shiite militias, the PKK and Baghdad.

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

IN i13 : Crude Oil/Natural Gas Upstream Operations | i1 : Energy

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PUB Energy Intelligence Group Inc.

AN Document EGYCMP0020170411ed3a00005

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HD **Turkey: No to Kurds' independence referendum**

WC 203 words

PD 31 March 2017

SN Kuwait News Agency (Kuna)

SC KUWNA

LA English

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LP

ANKARA, March 31 (KUNA) -- Turkey on Friday re-affirmed its firm opposition to any bids by the **Kurds** of **Iraq** to secede.

Turkish Government spokesperson Ibrahim Kalin said at a news conference that such a step would be erroneous, in shadow of the fragile situation in **Iraq** and looming regional hazards.

TD

Turkish officials, on several occasions in the past, told Kurdish counterparts from **Iraq** that such a move, "on racial or sectarian basis would be wrong." Such a step will encourage other sectarian and racial grounds in **Iraq** to follow suit, he added.

Masoud Barzani, president of **Iraq**'s Kurdistan, told the UN chief during a meeting on Thursday that his administration was planning a public referendum to attain **independence** as soon as possible.

Iraq's Kurdistan Regional Government Spokesman Safin Dizayee affirmed such an approach in recent remarks to the Turkish news, Hurriyet Daily News. "We ought to hold serious dialogue with Baghdad to reach a cordial settlement for divorce," he said.

Ankara has shown deep sensitivity toward prospected establishment of an independent Kurdish state in the border regions.

Kurds live in large numbers in frontier areas of **Iraq**, Turkey, Syria and Iran. (end) rs.rk

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

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IPD Politics

PUB Kuwait News Agency

AN Document KUWNA00020170401ed3v00001

HD **Iraqi Kurds to vote on independence in September**

BY By BALINT SZLANKO

CR Associated Press

WC 478 words

PD 7 June 2017

ET 22:30

SN Associated Press Newswires

SC APRS

LA English

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LP

IRBIL, **Iraq** (AP) — Iraqi Kurdish officials announced Wednesday that **Kurds** in **Iraq**'s autonomous northern region will hold a referendum on **independence** on Sept. 25.

Masoud Barzani, the president of the Iraqi Kurdish regional government, announced the vote on Twitter. Hamin Hawrami, a senior presidential adviser, said on his own Twitter account that the decision follows a meeting of the major Kurdish political parties in Irbil, the region's capital.

TD

The referendum on whether to secede from **Iraq** will be held in the three governorates that make up the Kurdish region and in the areas that are disputed by the Kurdish and Iraqi governments but are currently under Kurdish military control.

It is not clear whether a 'yes' vote, which is expected to be the result, will lead to the declaration of **independence**. The Iraqi government has so far not reacted to the announcement. Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi said in April that he respects the Kurdish right to vote on **independence**, but he did not think the timing was right for the move.

Iraq's Kurdish region, with a population of about 5 million, already enjoys a high degree of **autonomy**, including its own parliament and armed forces. But relations with the central government in Baghdad have nosedived in recent years over a range of issues. These include the sharing of oil revenues and the control of some areas that are technically part of federal **Iraq** but have come under Kurdish control since 2014 during the war against the Islamic State group.

Neighboring states like Turkey, Syria and Iran that all have large and sometimes restive Kurdish populations have in the past resisted moves towards Kurdish **independence**. Turkey in particular is strongly suspicious of Kurdish ambitions and sent its own troops into Syria in part to shrink the territorial gains of a U.S.-backed predominantly Kurdish militia that is battling the Islamic State group. Turkey regards its own local Kurdish political movement as a terrorist organization.

Since **Iraq**'s founding, its **Kurds** have always had a difficult relationship with the central government; a series of revolts have either been crushed, sometimes with great brutality, or ended in unsatisfactory compromises. Since the Gulf War in 1991, the region has enjoyed de facto **autonomy** under U.S. protection and seen significant economic development largely due to its oil and gas reserves and strong trade links with Turkey.

Relations with the Iraqi government have been difficult since a revenue-sharing agreement over the country's oil resources collapsed in 2015. IS militants routed the Iraqi security forces and took control of much of the country's north in 2014. Since then Kurdish Peshmerga forces have retaken large chunks of IS-held territory, including the oil-rich city of Kirkuk, leading to more tensions with Baghdad.

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IPD Iraq

IPC i

PUB The Associated Press

AN Document APRS000020170607ed6700hz9

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HD **Turkey says Iraqi Kurds' referendum plan 'grave mistake'**

WC 64 words

PD 9 June 2017

ET 10:01

SN Agence France Presse

SC AFPR

LA English

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LP

Turkey on Friday warned that a decision by **Iraq**'s autonomous Kurdish region to hold an **independence** referendum would be a "grave mistake."

"We believe that the announcement by the (Iraqi Kurdish region) to hold an **independence** referendum on September 25 ... will constitute a grave mistake," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

TD

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IPD Iraq

PUB Agence France-Presse

AN Document AFPR000020170609ed69006y2

HD **Turkey warns of 'civil war' if Iraqi Kurds hold referendum**

WC 233 words

PD 16 August 2017

ET 13:12

SN dpa International Service in English

SC DPAEN

LA English

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LP

Istanbul (dpa) - The planned referendum by the Kurdish regional government in northern **Iraq** on **independence** from Baghdad could lead to civil war, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusolgu said on Wednesday.

Turkey, which has a large Kurdish minority, is staunchly opposed to the referendum. The chief of staff of Iran, which also has Kurdish citizens, is currently in Ankara for a three-day visit, and Hurriyet daily reported that the two sides opposed the referendum.

TD

"God forbid, it could go as far as a civil war," Cavusoglu said in an interview with state broadcaster TRT Haber, noting the existing issues **Iraq** is facing.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi is against the referendum and is currently engaged in talks with various factions, including the **Kurds**, to keep the country united.

The referendum is set for next month, to be followed by general elections in the Kurdish region.

Turkey is concerned over growing Kurdish nationalism in the region, especially as Syrian **Kurds** gain new territory, seizing land from Islamic State in a military campaign backed by the United States.

Ankara has also expressed concerns about Turkmen, a minority group in areas under the Kurdish regional government's control.

Cavusoglu also announced that following the visit of the Iranian chief of stuff, the Russian military chief will also visit Turkey, with a focus on Syria.

Notebook

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | gvio : Military Action | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National/Public Security | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News

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IPD Turkey

PUB dpa Deutsche Presse-Agentur GmbH

AN Document DPAEN00020170816ed8g003ml

HD **Iraq, Turkey step up pressure over Kurdish independence vote**

BY Georgi Gotev

WC 969 words

PD 15 September 2017

ET 07:59

SN EurActiv.com

SC EURACOM

LA English

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LP

Iraq and Turkey yesterday (14 September) stepped up the pressure on Iraqi Kurdistan over its planned **independence** referendum, as the governor of oil-rich Kirkuk province that decided to take part in the vote was sacked.

Parliament, at Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi's request, fired the governor of the northern province, Najm Eddine Karim, in a unanimous vote by 173 MPs present in the house.

TD

With tensions rising, the Iraqi parliament this week also voted to oppose plans by leaders of the autonomous Kurdish region in northern **Iraq** to hold the nonbinding 25 September referendum.

EU tight-lipped on Kurdish referendum

Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region last week announced it would hold a referendum on **independence**, in a move the government in Baghdad will strongly oppose. EU ministers on Monday (19 June) are expected to express support for the territorial integrity of **Iraq**.

The **independence** vote has faced strong opposition from the federal government in Baghdad as well as neighbouring Iran and Turkey, which fear it will stoke separatist aspirations among their own sizable Kurdish minorities.

Iraqi Kurdish referendum 'historic mistake': Turkey https://t.co/MNjHxYpxuMpic.twitter.com/vbVDGPgQ8Q

— Reuters Top News (@Reuters) September 14, 2017

Critics of the vote include the United States, the European Union and even some members of **Iraq**'s 5.5 million-strong Kurdish minority.

US, Turkish leaders put best face on ties amid tensions

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan told US President Donald Trump yesterday (16 May) his country would not accept Syrian Kurdish fighters in the region but stopped short of directly criticising a US decision to arm them.

Turkey, a strong opponent, warned Iraqi Kurdish leaders on Thursday that any referendum would "have a cost".

Their "insistence on the referendum despite all friendly advice will definitely have a cost", the foreign ministry in Ankara said, criticising their "erroneous approach".

Turkish presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin urged the Iraqi Kurdish regional government to "return from this wrong decision as soon as possible".

The move would push Iraqi Kurdistan into "bigger isolation", he said.

LIVE— Kalın: Kirkuk is included in the referendum although it is not located within KRG territory, Turkey cannot accept such a de-facto step pic.twitter.com/Z7IpksPmWj

— DAILY SABAH (@DailySabah) September 14, 2017

Kurds defiant

The provincial council of Kirkuk – a region disputed by Baghdad and autonomous Iraqi Kurdistan and home to diverse communities, including Arabs and Turkmen – voted at the end of August to take part in the controversial referendum.

Arab and Turkmen members of the council boycotted that vote, while Kurdish MPs in Baghdad walked out of Thursday's hearing in parliament at which the Kirkuk government was dismissed.

World powers have proposed alternatives to a referendum to Iraqi Kurdish leader Massud Barzani, his office said Thursday.

"If they have a stronger alternative to the referendum, the Kurdish leadership will look at it, but if they want to postpone the vote with no alternatives, we won't," Barzani was quoted as saying.

President Barzani insists on referendum date at large **independence** rally

https://t.co/BUPy5JQLSM

— Rudaw English (@RudawEnglish) September 14, 2017

On Friday (15 September), the parliament in the Kurdish regional capital of Arbil is to hold its first session in more than two years to give "a legal framework" for the referendum, according to its spokesman, Tariq Jawhar.

The fired Kirkuk governor also struck a defiant note, saying: "It is the provincial council which has given me a vote of confidence, and it alone can dismiss me, not the Iraqi premier or parliament."

Disputed zones such as Kirkuk are a highly sensitive issue in ethnically fragmented **Iraq**, with its Shiite-dominated government in Baghdad and large Sunni Arab and Kurdish communities.

In Kirkuk province, the different communities have been arming themselves while numerous paramilitary forces have taken up positions north and west of Baghdad as joint units advance against retreating Islamic State group jihadists.

Civil war fears

In the city of Kirkuk, Kurdish Peshmerga fighters have taken charge of security, while Shiite paramilitary units have been deployed on the outskirts.

Hadi al-Ameri, head of the powerful Iranian-backed Badr organisation, has warned that the Kurdish referendum could lead to partition and civil war, vowing to defend the unity of **Iraq**.

"The US support for the Syrian **Kurds** is what is primarily motivating Turkey to seek closer relations with Iran" https://t.co/xseEq8y58u

— Al Jazeera English (@AJEnglish) September 13, 2017

Barzani, who called the referendum, has said the vote would go ahead because "all other bids" to secure Kurdish rights had failed.

The referendum could lead to the **independence** of Iraqi Kurdistan, an oil-rich region in the country's rugged, mountainous north which gained de facto **autonomy** in 1991.

The region, whose people were brutally repressed under Saddam Hussein, won **autonomy** in 2005 after the dictator's ouster under a constitution which set up a federal republic in **Iraq**.

Iraqi Kurdistan, home to around 5.5 million **Kurds**, is made up of three provinces that are run by an autonomous regional government and protected by their own security services.

Israel has become the first country to back Iraqi Kurdistan's bid for **independence**https://t.co/886YGrIyNmpic.twitter.com/f3npfTFW35

— The Times of London (@thetimes) September 14, 2017

The referendum would "not necessarily lead to (an) immediate declaration of statehood, but rather to know the will and opinion of the people of Kurdistan about their future", Barzani said in February.

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Kurdish leaders have since reiterated that a “yes” vote would pave the way for the start of “serious negotiations” with the Baghdad government.

Sources: Turkish spy chief Hakan Fidan headed to Iraqi Kurdistan https://t.co/w6Q27XHtBR

— Al-Monitor (@AlMonitor) September 11, 2017

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | gpapp : Political Appointments/Terminations | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE iraq : Iraq | kurd : Kurdistan | baghd : Baghdad | kirku : Kirkuk | turk : Turkey | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Iraq

PUB EurActiv PLC

AN Document EURACOM020170915ed9f00001

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HD **Turkey carries out military drill on border with Iraqi Kurdistan**

WC 307 words

PD 18 September 2017

SN EFE News Service

SC WEFE

LA English

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LP

Istanbul, Sep 18 (EFE).- Turkey began on Monday military maneuvers on its border with Iraqi Kurdistan, a week before a referendum on **independence** of that autonomous region of **Iraq** was due to take place, the Turkish general staff said in a statement.

The military exercises began at the Habur border crossing in the Turkish province of Silopi, one of the main crossings between the Iraqi-Kurdish area and Turkey.

TD

The Turkish army said that the military deployment was due to an operation against terror organizations, referring to the armed group Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

About 100 military vehicles have moved to the border area, according to the semi-public agency Anadolu.

In recent months, Turkey has carried out airstrikes against PKK targets on the border and in the mountains of Qandil, northern **Iraq**.

Ankara has spoken out against the referendum that the Kurdish government wants to hold on Sep. 25, noting that the vote could bring more instability to the region.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was set to discuss the issue with Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi this week at a United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York.

Erdogan recently accused Iraqi-Kurdish leader Masoud Barzani of wanting to disintegrate **Iraq** and warned that Ankara would take all necessary steps to contain the side effects of a declaration of **independence**.

About 15 million **Kurds** live in Turkey, concentrated in the southeastern regions, and account for about 18 percent of the country's population.

The PKK, considered a terrorist organization by Turkey, the United States and the European Union, fought an armed struggle against the Turkish state in 1984, and since then more than 45,000 people have died in attacks and armed clashes.

lvm/ab/ss/sh

|Q:POL:en-US:11001000:Politics:De

CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

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IPD 23657950

PUB EFE News Service

AN Document WEFE000020170918ed9i000bm

THE TIMES

SE News
HD **Kurds capture Turkish spies in kidnap plot**
BY Hannah Lucinda Smith ; Richard Spencer
WC 200 words
PD 21 September 2017
SN The Times
SC T
ED 1; Ireland
PG 28
LA English
CY © Times Newspapers Limited 2017

LP

Kurdish guerrillas are holding two Turkish intelligence officers who were tricked by a double agent as they tried to kidnap a PKK leader in northern **Iraq**, Ankara has acknowledged.

The officers had entered Iraqi Kurdistan on a mission to capture or possibly kill Cemil Bayik, a leader of the radical movement that has fought a long war for **autonomy** in southeastern Turkey. But they were double-crossed by a PKK member who had promised to lead them to Mr Bayik, according to reports in Kurdish and other media.

TD

Until now, Turkey has made no public comment. But yesterday the Turkish foreign minister, Mevlut Cavusoglu, referred to the incident in an interview with the online Middle East news site Al-Monitor.

He denied that Ankara was in direct negotiations with the PKK, which is listed as a terrorist group in Turkey, the EU and the US. "Of course our institutions have been working to bring back all our citizens that the PKK kidnapped, but our country doesn't — we didn't — have any direct contact with the PKK to bring those two persons mentioned back," Mr Cavusoglu said.

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | gkdnap : Kidnapping/Abduction | gdef : Armed Forces | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National/Public Security | gcrim : Crime/Legal Action | gpir : Politics/International Relations

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PUB News UK & Ireland Limited

AN Document T000000020170921ed9l0001l

HD **Syrian Kurds vote as part of move toward federal system**

BY By BASSEM MROUE

CR Associated Press

WC 685 words

PD 22 September 2017

ET 15:50

SN Associated Press Newswires

SC APRS

LA English

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LP

BEIRUT (AP) — Thousands were voting Friday in the predominantly Kurdish regions in northern Syria to elect heads of local communities as part of the minority **Kurds**' efforts to move closer to a federal system within Syria.

The vote comes days before Iraqi **Kurds** are to vote on their **independence** from Baghdad but the two elections are not related.

TD

The vote in Syria is likely to anger Turkey, which has been concerned about increasing Kurdish power in northern Syria since the country's crisis began in 2011. Turkey considers the Kurdish forces a terrorist organization, linked to its home-grown Kurdish insurgency.

The Syrian government hasn't commented on the Kurdish vote but Kurdish officials see it as a step toward enshrining their project of a decentralized system — one they say hasn't faced the same objections as the Iraqi vote.

The elections are backed by the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Union Party, or PYD, the country's most powerful Kurdish group and opposed by other smaller factions in the region who object to setting up an autonomous region.

"These elections are an important step in the history of Syria," senior Kurdish official Ilham Ahmed told The Associated Press.

The Kurdish-run Hawar news agency said 12,421 candidates are running to head 3,732 neighborhood and village communities or "communes." Nearly half the candidates are women since each community should be co-headed by a man and a woman.

A local Kurdish official in the city of Kobani, Idriss Naasan, said Arabs, Turkmen and Christians are also voting. He said the move is opposed by Turkey, Iran and the Syrian government adding that "the will of the people will prevail in the end."

Ahmed, co-president of the political wing of a U.S.-backed Syrian Kurdish force battling the Islamic State group, said that unlike the Iraqi Kurdish referendum that's largely been rejected internationally, local Kurdish elections have faced no objections.

Despite Ahmed's comments, the influential Kurdish National Council that is opposed to a federal region called for boycotting the vote. The group called on its supporters in a statement issued Thursday not to go to polling stations.

Kurdish politician in the northern city of Qamishli, Jwan Mohammed, said the vote is taking place amid very tight security for fear of attacks by IS. He said since it is Friday, most shops and institutions are closed and car movement is very limited.

"This vote is ongoing amid war and chaos," Mohammed said by telephone from Qamishli, referring to violence in other parts of the country as Kurdish areas witness relative calm.

Since Syria's crisis began more than six years ago, the country's long ostracized **Kurds** established self-administrations in three different cantons in northern Syria, expanding their semi-autonomous region. Their growing **autonomy** has irked Turkey, which considers the Kurdish project in Syria and **Iraq** a threat, and views **Kurds** across its borders as an extension of its own insurgents.

But Kurdish fighters have become the main U.S. partners in the war against IS in Syria, successfully expelling the militants from several predominantly Kurdish but also Arab areas.

In reaction to the Kurdish military assertiveness, Turkey sent its troops last year into northern Syria, undermining a contiguous Kurdish-held east-to-west territory.

Many fear Kurdish fighters seek to displace Arab populations in areas they seize. The **Kurds** deny the charge, and with U.S. help, have increased Arab representation in their fighting force as well as in local councils.

Manbij, a Syrian town liberated and currently administered by a Kurdish-formed local council, is not taking part in Friday's vote. Ahmed said the predominantly Arab town has not yet decided if it wants to take part in the federal system.

The second phase of the vote will be held in November to elect local councils and a regional parliament, known as People's Democratic Council, will be elected on Jan. 19.

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Associated Press writer Sarah El Deeb in Beirut contributed to this report.

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

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IPD ML

IPC i

PUB The Associated Press

AN Document APRS000020170922ed9m00bq9

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HD **Turkey OKs military intervention, warns Iraqi Kurds on vote**

BY By ZEYNEP BILGINSOY

CR Associated Press

WC 858 words

PD 23 September 2017

ET 19:49

SN Associated Press Newswires

SC APRS

LA English

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LP

ISTANBUL (AP) — The Turkish parliament on Saturday renewed a bill allowing the military to intervene in **Iraq** and Syria if faced with national security threats — a move seen as a final warning to Iraqi **Kurds** to call off their Monday **independence** referendum.

The decree allows Turkey to send troops over its southern border if developments in **Iraq** or Syria are seen as national security threats. Turkish officials have repeatedly warned the semi-autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government in **Iraq** to abandon its plans for **independence**.

TD

Kurds are dispersed across Turkey, Syria, **Iraq** and Iran and lack a nation state. Turkey itself has a large ethnic Kurdish population and is battling a Kurdish insurgency on its own territory that it calls separatist.

The bill read in parliament Saturday listed combating Kurdish militants in Syria and **Iraq** and the Islamic State group as national security requirements for Turkey. It also emphasized the importance of **Iraq** and Syria's territorial integrity and said "separatism based on ethnicity" poses a threat to both Turkey and regional stability.

Speaking in parliament, Turkish Defense Minister Nurettin Canikli likened Monday's vote in northern **Iraq** to a brick that — if pulled out — could collapse an entire "structure built on sensitive and fragile balances." The resulting conflict could be global, he warned.

Osman Baydemir, a lawmaker from the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party or HDP — the third biggest group in parliament — called the bill "a war mandate" and "a proclamation of enmity towards 40 million **Kurds**." A dozen parliamentarians from the party are behind bars for alleged links to terror groups.

The HDP voted against the mandate Saturday. All other parties, including the main opposition Republican People's Party, voted for it.

Earlier Saturday, the Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim called the referendum "a mistake, an adventure." He said Turkey would take diplomatic, political and economic measures according to "developments on the ground." He added a cross-border military operation was also an option.

The renewed mandate is a combination of two previous bills that are based on a constitutional article on the "declaration of state of war and authorization to deploy the armed forces."

The **Iraq** Bill was passed in 2007 to combat outlawed Kurdish militants in northern **Iraq** to prevent attacks in Turkey. The Kurdistan Workers' Party or PKK has its headquarters in **Iraq**'s Qandil mountains. Turkey, the United States and the European Union consider it a terror organization.

The Syria Bill of 2012 was in response to mortar attacks by Syrian government forces on a Turkish border town.

The combined bill was passed in 2014 as IS waged a deadly campaign in Kobani, the Syrian Kurdish town on the Turkish border. IS failed to take over the town and the victory strengthened Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units or YPG, who are now a key U.S. ally against IS in Syria. Turkey, however, considers them a terror group.

The mandate has allowed Turkey to launch a cross-border military operation into northern Syria with Syrian opposition forces in August 2016 to clear its border of IS and YPG. Turkey's air force has also been bombing targets in northern **Iraq** and Syria.

The Turkish military, meanwhile, said additional units joined this week's previously unannounced exercises near the Iraqi border. The chief of staff also met his Iraqi counterpart in Ankara to discuss the Kurdish referendum and border security.

ART Turkish Chief of Staff Gen. Hulusi Akar, left, and his Iraqi counterpart Gen. Othman Ali al-Ghanimi inspect an honour guard at the Turkish military headquarters in Ankara, Turkey, Saturday, Sept. 23, 2017.(Pool Photo via AP) | Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim speaks to the media in Ankara, Turkey, Friday Sept. 22, 2017. Yildirim said Friday his country will never accept a separate Kurdish state in neighboring **Iraq** and would not refrain from taking steps to prevent it. Binali Yildirim again called on Iraqi Kurdish leaders to abandon plans for a referendum on **independence**, saying it was not too late for them to turn away "from this adventure." (Turkish Prime Ministry, pool photo via AP) | Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, center chairs the National Security Council in Ankara, Turkey, Friday, Sept. 22, 2017. Turkey's political and military leaders met to consider possible sanctions and other measures against **Iraq**'s Kurdish region if it goes ahead with a referendum for **independence**. The Council met followed by a Cabinet meeting on Friday as the country stepped up pressure on **Iraq**'s **Kurds** to abandon the vote slated for Sept. 25. (Presidential Press Service, pool photo via AP) | Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, center chairs the National Security Council in Ankara, Turkey, Friday, Sept. 22, 2017. Turkey's political and military leaders met to consider possible sanctions and other measures against **Iraq**'s Kurdish region if it goes ahead with a referendum for **independence**. The Council met followed by a Cabinet meeting on Friday as the country stepped up pressure on **Iraq**'s **Kurds** to abandon the vote slated for Sept. 25. (Presidential Press Service, pool photo via AP)

NS gsec : State Security Measures/Policies | gpol : Domestic Politics | gcns : National/Public Security | gdef : Armed Forces | gdip : International Relations | gterr : Terrorism | gvcng : Legislative Branch | gcat : Political/General News | gcrim : Crime/Legal Action | gpir : Politics/International Relations | gvbod : Government Bodies | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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IPD EU

IPC i

PUB The Associated Press

AN Document APRS000020170923ed9n00dcl

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HD **Erdogan threatens to cut oil flow from Iraqi Kurds over referendum**

WC 280 words

PD 25 September 2017

ET 16:26

SN dpa International Service in English

SC DPAEN

LA English

CY Copyright 2017. dpa Deutsche Presse-Agentur

LP

Istanbul (dpa) - President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has threatened to shut down a pipeline used by **Iraq**'s autonomous region of Kurdistan to send crude oil to Turkey and global markets, increasing pressure on the **Kurds** as they voted in a referendum for **independence**.

"Let us see through which channels the northern Iraqi regional government will send its oil or will sell it and where to," Erdogan told a meeting Monday in Istanbul.

TD

"We have the tap," he said. "It is done once, we close the tap."

Erdogan earlier warned Ankara may impose sanctions on Kurdistan over the plebiscite, stressing that Turkey sees the Iraqi Kurdish referendum as a security threat.

Turkey also issued a travel warning on Iraqi Kurdistan earlier Monday, with the Foreign Ministry strongly recommending that Turkish citizens in Dohuk, Erbil and Sulaimaniya leave as soon as possible unless they are obliged to stay, state-run Anadolu news agency reported.

Ankara fears that Iraqi Kurdish **independence** will encourage secessionist ideas among its sizeable Kurdish minority, estimated at 8 million. Turkey is fighting the armed Kurdistan Workers' party (PKK), which is demanding greater **autonomy**.

Erdogan said Monday that Turkey closed its border crossing into northern **Iraq** in one direction, adding that the border would be closed entirely.

Erdogan also did not rule out a possible military intervention in **Iraq**'s north, referring to a week-long Turkish military drill along the border.

"The armed forces did not take necessary steps there in vain," Erdogan said. "We will not abstain from taking such steps in **Iraq** if required."

Notebook

Internet links - [Cavusoglu statement in Turkish](http://dpaq.de/1EB5W)

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IPD Iraq

PUB dpa Deutsche Presse-Agentur GmbH

AN Document DPAEN00020170925ed9p006pq

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.
ASIA EDITION

HD **World News: Kurd Oil Sector Comes Under Fire From Turkey, Iraq**

BY By Benoit Faucon, Sarah Kent and Summer Said
WC 365 words
PD 26 September 2017
SN The Wall Street Journal (Asia Edition)
SC AWSJ
PG A5
LA English
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LP

Iraqi Kurdistan's **independence** referendum has returned its renegade oil industry to the spotlight, prompting Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to threaten to cut off the region's petroleum exports and Baghdad to call for a de facto boycott of Kurdish crude.

Kurdistan has built up an independent oil sector against the odds, defying **Iraq**'s central government in Baghdad, which claims control over the country's crude revenue. The result is an industry that accounts for 80% of the Kurdistan Regional Government's revenue and that exports nearly 600,000 barrels of oil a day -- about the same as petro-states like Qatar and Ecuador.

TD

More than half of the region's production is exported through a Turkish pipeline, the result of a controversial deal in 2013 with Ankara that allowed the **Kurds** to bypass **Iraq**'s state oil company and sell crude independently. Baghdad has long complained about the deal, but international oil companies now routinely buy Kurdish oil and sell it abroad.

A move toward Kurdish **independence** could change the equation for Mr. Erdogan, who has waged a deadly, costly battle with Kurdish separatists. On Monday, Mr. Erdogan made a veiled threat to close the Kurdistan-Turkey pipeline, saying: "We own the tap, once we close it, that is done also."

Mr. Erdogan's comments came after the Iraqi government called for all countries to "deal exclusively" with Baghdad on oil and other matters. An adviser to the Iraqi oil industry said the government would take legal action if the **Kurds** declared **independence**.

The Kurdistan Regional Government didn't respond to requests to comment. Over the weekend, Kurdistan's Ministry for Natural Resources' Twitter page called Baghdad's oil regulators "corrupt" and accused the federal government of not paying the **Kurds** for oil in the past.

Kurdistan has worked to improve financial stability in its oil sector ahead of the referendum and tried to settle its debts with key players. Earlier in 2017, the regional government signed a deal to sell crude to OAO Rosneft.

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IPC NRG

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HD **Turkey's Erdogan Says Kurdish Referendum 'Treachery'; Iraq Rules Out Talks On Independence**

WC 646 words

PD 26 September 2017

SN Radio Free Europe Documents and Publications

SC RFEUR

LA English

CY (c) 2017 Federal Information & News Dispatch, Inc.

LP

September 26, 2017 11:51 GMT

Iraqi **Kurds** wave the Kurdish flag as they celebrate in the streets of the northern city of Irbil on September 25.

TD

Turkey has accused the head of **Iraq**'s autonomous Kurdish region of "treachery" for pursuing an **independence** referendum, while the Iraqi government has ruled out talks on possible secession for the Kurdish region.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in a speech at his presidential palace in Ankara on September 26, warned that Iraqi **Kurds** would starve when Turkey blocked its trucks from crossing the border, and said all options, including economic and military, were on the table in response to the referendum held in northern **Iraq** on September 25.

Initial results of the referendum indicated 72 percent of eligible voters had taken part and an overwhelming majority, possibly over 90 percent, had said "yes," according to Kurdish Rudaw television. Final results are expected by September 27.

Some 30 million ethnic **Kurds** live in **Iraq**, Iran, Turkey, and Syria, and regional governments fear the spread of separatism from northern **Iraq** to their own Kurdish populations.

Turkey in particular has seen the vote as a threat to its national security and fears it will inflame separatism among its own Kurdish population.

"Until the very last moment, we weren't expecting Barzani to make such a mistake as holding the referendum, apparently we were wrong," Erdogan said, referring to Kurdistan region President Masud Barzani.

"This referendum decision, which has been taken without any consultation, is treachery," Erdogan said, threatening again to cut off the pipeline that carries oil from northern **Iraq** to the outside world.

Erdogan's remarks came after the Iraqi government also ruled out talks on possible secession for Kurdish-held parts of northern **Iraq**.

"We are not ready to discuss or have a dialogue about the results of the referendum because it is unconstitutional," Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi said in a speech late on September 25.

Just hours after polls closed on September 25, the Iraqi Defense Ministry announced the launch of "large-scale" joint military exercises with Turkey.

In Tehran, the Iranian parliament announced it would hold a closed-door meeting on the referendum on September 27.

Meanwhile, in northwestern Iran, thousands attended demonstrations in support of the referendum in the Kurdish-majority cities of Baneh, Saghez and Sanandaj.

The referendum took place in the three provinces that officially make up the Kurdish autonomous region -- Dahuk, Irbil, and Sulaymaniyah -- and some neighboring areas. These areas include disputed cities such as oil-rich Kirkuk, Makhmour, Khanaqin, and Sinjar, over which Kurdish Peshmerga fighters have established control while fighting against Islamic State (IS) militants who captured large parts of northern **Iraq** and neighboring Syria in 2014.

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The UN -- as well as the United States and other Western powers -- expressed concern that the referendum would pull attention away from the efforts to defeat IS.

U.S. State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said in a statement late on September 25 that Washington was "deeply disappointed" that the ballot went ahead.

"The United States' historic relationship with the people of the Iraqi Kurdistan region will not change in light of today's nonbinding referendum, but we believe this step will increase instability and hardships for the Kurdistan region and its people," she said.

In New York, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also said he was concerned about the "potentially destabilizing effects" of the referendum.

While saying he supported "the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and unity of **Iraq**," Guterres called for "structured dialogue and constructive compromise" between Baghdad and Kurdish leaders to resolve their differences.

With reporting by Reuters, AP, AFP, and dpa

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IPD News Stories and Documents

PUB Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

AN Document RFEUR00020170926ed9q0002z

HD **The Latest: Iraqi Kurds claim victory in independence vote**

WC 1,669 words

PD 26 September 2017

ET 20:03

SN Associated Press Newswires

SC APRS

LA English

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LP

IRBIL, Iraq (AP) — The Latest on the Iraqi Kurdish referendum on support for independence from Baghdad and the tensions surrounding the vote (all times local):

9 p.m.

TD

The president of Iraq's Kurdish region has claimed victory for the "yes" vote in the referendum on support for independence.

In a televised address Tuesday, Masoud Barzani called for "dialogue" with Baghdad, which has rejected the vote as unconstitutional and is staunchly opposed to any redrawing of borders.

Barzani said "instead of harassment, let's have dialogue for a better future," adding that "negotiations are the right path to solve the problems, not threats or the language of force."

Iraq's Kurds held a non-binding vote Monday on support for independence from Iraq despite the heavy opposition from Baghdad, as well as neighboring Turkey and Iran.

Iraq's Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has threatened a flight ban if the Kurdish region does not hand over control of its airports to federal authorities by Friday.

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7:40 p.m.

Iraq's prime minister says the Kurdish region has until Friday to hand over airports to federal authorities or will face a flight ban.

Haider al-Abadi's ultimatum Tuesday came the day after Iraq's Kurds held a referendum on independence that has been roundly denounced by Baghdad and Iraq's neighbors.

Al-Abadi says the ban would exclude humanitarian and other "urgent" flights.

The Kurds have their own regional government, parliament, armed forces and airports in Iraq's three northern provinces, where they have enjoyed constitutional autonomy for more than a decade. They control disputed territories outside those provinces that are also claimed by Baghdad.

The referendum is not binding and will not immediately lead to independence, but it has increased tensions in the region. Turkey has threatened to intervene militarily and is holding joint military drills with Iraq on the border.

___

5:20 p.m.

The Arab League is calling on Iraqis to renounce their differences and open comprehensive dialogue to avoid clashes following a controversial independence referendum held by the country's Kurds.

Ahmed Aboul-Gheit, chief of the Cairo-based pan-Arab organization, says in a statement: "It is still possible to contain the repercussions of this step if all concerned parties exercise wisdom and responsibility and conduct themselves inside the parameters of the Iraqi state."

The interests of **Iraq**, he added, "will be best served in the framework of a unified, federal and democratic **Iraq**."

While the referendum is not binding and not expected to immediately lead to **independence**, it has shaken the region, eliciting condemnations from **Iraq**'s neighbors as well as the United States and the United Nations.

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3:50 p.m.

Iran's semi-official ISNA news agency reports that the country's defense minister has expressed concerns over the security implications of a referendum in the Kurdistan region of **Iraq**.

The report quotes Gen. Amir Hatami as saying: "Iran is opposed to any action that leads to a change" in the geographical divisions of the countries in the region.

Iran is among many countries that opposed an **independence** referendum in Iraqi Kurdistan.

In June, the country's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said that advocates of Kurdish **independence** are "opponents of the **independence** and identity" of **Iraq**.

___

3:10 p.m.

Egypt's Foreign Ministry is expressing concern over the possible "negative" consequence of the referendum in **Iraq**'s Kurdish area.

Tuesday's statement by the ministry says "Egypt urges all parties not to take any unilateral measures that could further complicate the situation."

The statement called for "constructive dialogue to achieve comprehensive settlement over issues of conflict between Irbil and Baghdad."

Egypt is just the latest country to issue a statement in opposition to the referendum held by **Iraq**'s **Kurds** on support for **independence** Monday. Iran, Turkey, the United States and the United Nations all condemned the vote citing fears of regional instability.

___

2:35 p.m.

Tanks with soldiers holding the Turkish and Iraqi flags rolled on a field lifting up dust, as the two countries' militaries conducted joint exercises on Turkey's border with **Iraq**'s semi-autonomous Kurdish region.

A group of some 30 Iraqi troops have arrived in the border region to join ongoing Turkish military maneuvers that were launched last week in a symbolic warning to **Kurds** who are holding a referendum on **independence**.

The joint drills, which come a year after Turkey and **Iraq** were at odds over the presence of Turkish troops in **Iraq**, is taking place on land just 3 kilometers (1.86 miles) away from the Habur border crossing into **Iraq** on Tuesday.

Turkey, which has a large Kurdish population and is battling Kurdish insurgents on its territory, opposes **Kurds**' moves toward **independence** and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has threatened military action against the Iraqi Kurdish region.

On Tuesday, Erdogan said all options from military action to economic sanctions were on the table.

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2:30 p.m.

Iran's parliament will hold a closed-door meeting on the referendum in **Iraq**'s Kurdish area.

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The meeting Wednesday will see lawmakers receive a briefing about Monday's vote.

The meeting comes as parliament speaker Ali Larijani on Tuesday criticized the vote. State television quoted him as saying there are "elements" ... "making provocations" in **Iraq**'s Kurdish region.

Thousands of Iranian **Kurds** demonstrated into the early morning Tuesday to celebrate the vote.

Both Iran and Turkey fear the referendum will embolden their own Kurdish populations to seek their own states.

Iran has been holding military exercises near the Iraqi border in a show of its displeasure.

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1:15 p.m.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan says his country is considering all options ranging from military intervention to economic sanctions against **Iraq**'s Kurdish region.

Speaking in Ankara on Tuesday, Erdogan said, however, that he hopes the Iraqi Kurdish leadership will abandon aims of creating a separate state and not force Turkey into enforcing sanctions.

Erdogan says: "I hope the northern Iraqi administration gathers itself together and abandons this adventure with a dark ending."

He added that the landlocked Iraqi Kurdish region would not be able to survive without Turkey's support.

"The moment we shut the valve it's finished for them," Erdogan said in reference to a pipeline into Turkey allowing the region to export its oil.

The Turkish leader said no country other than Israel supports the Iraqi Kurdish referendum on **independence**, which he described as "invalid" and "fraudulent" and said attempts by **Kurds** to form an independent state are doomed to fail.

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11:35 a.m.

Regional authorities say the Iraqi Kurdish referendum saw an over 70-percent turnout.

That's according to the electoral commission in **Iraq**'s semi-autonomous Kurdish region.

Sherwan Zerar, the commission's spokesman, said on Tuesday morning that turnout was about 3.3 million of the eligible 4.5 million residents. Official results from the election are expected later in the day.

The vote, which was held on Monday, was billed by the Iraqi Kurdish leadership as an exercise in self-determination. To Baghdad, the vote threatens a redrawing of **Iraq**'s borders, while leaders in Turkey and Iran fear the move would embolden their own Kurdish populations.

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11:11 a.m.

Thousands of Iranian **Kurds** have poured into the streets in Iran in support of the Iraqi **Kurds**' voting in a landmark referendum for **independence** from Baghdad.

Footage shared online by Iranian **Kurds** showed demonstrators waving lit mobile phones in the air and chanting their support into the night on Monday.

The demonstrations took place in the towns of Baneh, Saghez and Sanandaj.

Iranian state television on Tuesday acknowledged the demonstrations, a rarity in the Islamic Republic.

Iran, Turkey and **Iraq**'s central government in Baghdad have all opposed the referendum. Iran has been holding military exercises near the Iraqi border in a show of its displeasure.

The Iraqi Kurdish push for **independence** comes as Kurdish forces captured extensive territory in fighting against the Islamic State group in **Iraq** and Syria.

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ART Iraqi soldiers leave a Turkish army armoured vehicle as they take part in military exercises in Silopi, near the Habur border gate with **Iraq**, southeastern Turkey, Tuesday, Sept. 26, 2017. (Pool photo via AP) | Turkish, left, and Iraqi soldiers greet each other as they take part in military exercises in Silopi, near the Habur border gate with **Iraq**, southeastern Turkey, Tuesday, Sept. 26, 2017. (Pool photo via AP) | Turkish and Iraqi soldiers take part in military exercises in Silopi, near the Habur border gate with **Iraq**, southeastern Turkey, Tuesday, Sept. 26, 2017. (Pool photo via AP) | Turkish and Iraqi soldiers take part in military exercises in Silopi, near the Habur border gate with **Iraq**, southeastern Turkey, Tuesday, Sept. 26, 2017. (Pool photo via AP) | Turkish and Iraqi soldiers sit on Turkish tanks during the exercises in Silopi, near the Habur border gate with **Iraq**, southeastern Turkey, Tuesday, Sept. 26, 2017. Tanks with soldiers holding the Turkish and Iraqi flags rolled on a field lifting up dust, as the two countries' militaries conducted joint exercises on Turkey's border with **Iraq**'s semi-autonomous Kurdish region.(DHA-Depo Photos via AP) | Turkish and Iraqi soldiers walk with Turkish tanks during the exercises in Silopi, near the Habur border gate with **Iraq**, southeastern Turkey, Tuesday, Sept. 26, 2017. Tanks with soldiers holding the Turkish and Iraqi flags rolled on a field lifting up dust, as the two countries' militaries conducted joint exercises on Turkey's border with **Iraq**'s semi-autonomous Kurdish region.(DHA-Depo Photos via AP) | Turkish and Iraqi soldiers sit on Turkish tanks during the exercises in Silopi, near the Habur border gate with **Iraq**, southeastern Turkey, Tuesday, Sept. 26, 2017. Tanks with soldiers holding the Turkish and Iraqi flags rolled on a field lifting up dust, as the two countries' militaries conducted joint exercises on Turkey's border with **Iraq**'s semi-autonomous Kurdish region.(AP Photo/Mehmet Guzel)

NS gvote : Elections | gpir : Politics/International Relations | gcat : Political/General News | gpol : Domestic Politics

RE iraq : Iraq | kurd : Kurdistan | africaz : Africa | baghd : Baghdad | egypt : Egypt | iran : Iran | meastz : Middle East | turk : Turkey | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | medz : Mediterranean | nafrz : North Africa | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD ML

IPC i

PUB The Associated Press

AN Document APRS000020170926ed9q00a6r

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HD **92 percent of Iraqi Kurds voted in favor of independence**

BY By SUSANNAH GEORGE

CR Associated Press

WC 1,087 words

PD 27 September 2017

ET 21:23

SN Associated Press Newswires

SC APRS

LA English

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LP

IRBIL, **Iraq** (AP) — **Iraq**'s **Kurds** voted overwhelmingly in favor of **independence** from **Iraq**, but faced being left stranded after Baghdad ordered international flights to halt service to Kurdish airports starting Friday. Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi ruled out the use of force, but vowed to take other measures to keep his country from breaking apart as the standoff looked set to worsen.

The referendum passed with more than 92 percent of voters approving **independence**, the Kurdish region's election commission told a news conference on Wednesday. Turnout was over 72 percent, it said.

TD

Despite such strong support, however, the non-binding vote was unlikely to lead to formal **independence**, even as it escalated long-running tensions with Baghdad. **Iraq** and its neighbors, along with virtually the entire international community, oppose any redrawing of the map.

The vote was held across the autonomous Kurdish region's three provinces as well as in some disputed territories controlled by Kurdish forces but claimed by Baghdad.

The election commission did not release turnout figures for the disputed territories, which could serve as an indicator of how many people in those areas prefer Kurdish rule. Hendrin Mohammed, the election commission chief, told The Associated Press those numbers would be released by local authorities. He did not elaborate.

Iraq's Shiite Arab-dominated parliament called on al-Abadi to deploy troops in the disputed territories, including the oil-rich city of Kirkuk, but al-Abadi said Wednesday he didn't want a "fight between the Iraqi citizens."

At a meeting with lawmakers, he instead vowed to "enforce the rule of the federal authority in the Kurdish region with the power of the constitution."

Al-Abadi ordered the Kurdish region to hand over control of its airports to federal authorities by Friday, threatening a total flight ban if they refused. **Iraq**'s Transport Ministry ordered international airlines to halt service to Irbil, the Kurdish regional capital, and Sulaimaniyah, its second city, beginning Friday evening.

Most regional airlines said they would comply.

Lebanon's flagship carrier, Middle East Airlines, EgyptAir and Jordan's national airline, Royal Jordanian, announced they would comply with the international flight ban to the Kurdish region, cancelling all flights after Friday. Low-cost airline FlyDubai said its flights to Irbil would be halted beginning Saturday.

Turkey also warned its citizens that flight service to the Kurdish region would be halted, saying in a statement posted on the Turkish Consulate's website in Irbil that flights by Turkish Airlines, AtlasGlobal and Pegasus "won't be possible" after Friday evening. It added that authorities were working to increase flights until then.

The transport minister for **Iraq**'s Kurdish region said the region's international airports had not violated any laws that would warrant their closure.

Mawlood Bawa Murad told reporters his ministry was ready to negotiate with Baghdad "if they want to implement the law and show that **Iraq** has one air space."

He added that the flight ban would affect, "one way or another, the military aviation that operates from Irbil international airport," which is used for the campaign against the Islamic State group. However, the order from Baghdad stated that humanitarian, diplomatic and military flights would not be affected.

Mohammed, the head of the Kurdish region's election commission, shrugged off the ban, telling AP "we love our country, so if we don't fly, we are very happy here."

The Kurdish referendum has the potential to weaken al-Abadi politically ahead of provincial elections planned for early next year. Former Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, who remains al-Abadi's toughest political opponent and is widely believed to be seeking a return to power, condemned the referendum as a "declaration of war."

Hard-line elements of al-Abadi's government, including the largely Iranian-backed Shiite fighters known as the Popular Mobilization Forces, also called for a tough response and the use of force following the Kurdish vote.

"We will not allow the division of **Iraq**," said Ahmed al-Asadi, the spokesmen for the Shiite forces, stressing that his forces would not target the Kurdish people as a whole. "Those who held the referendum and divided **Iraq**, those are our targets," he said.

The Popular Mobilization forces have units near Kirkuk who are awaiting orders "to go to any city or disputed area to impose (central) government control according to the constitution," al-Asadi added.

Iranian media, meanwhile, said Iraqi Army Chief of Staff Gen. Othman al-Ghanemi had arrived in Iran for talks on military cooperation and coordination. Al-Ghanemi met the Iranian armed forces' chief of staff, Gen. Mohammad Hossein Bagheri, and was scheduled to visit the two countries' joint border, the Mizanonline news website said.

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Associated Press writers Qassim Abdul-Zahra and Sinan Salaheddin in Baghdad, Salar Salim and Bram Janssen in Irbil, **Iraq**, Sarah El-Deeb in Beirut, and Suzan Fraser in Ankara, Turkey contributed to this report.

ART A Kurdish flag hangs in the Irbil International Airport, in **Iraq**, Wednesday, Sept. 27, 2017. **Iraq**'s prime minister ordered the country's Kurdish region to hand over control of its airports to federal authorities or face a flight ban, a response to the Kurdish **independence** referendum. (AP Photo/Khalid Mohammed) | Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, center, attends a session of the Iraqi Parliament, in Baghdad, **Iraq**, Wednesday, Sept. 27, 2017. Al-Abadi on Wednesday ordered the Kurdish region to hand over control of its airports to federal authorities or face a flight ban. (AP Photo/Karim Kadim) | Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, left, arrives for a session of the Iraqi Parliament, in Baghdad, **Iraq**, Wednesday, Sept. 27, 2017. Al-Abadi on Wednesday ordered the Kurdish region to hand over control of its airports to federal authorities or face a flight ban. (AP Photo/Karim Kadim) | Travelers line up to check in at the Irbil International Airport, in **Iraq**, Wednesday, Sept. 27, 2017. **Iraq**'s prime minister ordered the country's Kurdish region to hand over control of its airports to federal authorities or face a flight ban, a response to the Kurdish **independence** referendum. (AP Photo/Bram Janssen) | Travelers check in at the Irbil International Airport, in **Iraq**, Wednesday, Sept. 27, 2017. **Iraq**'s prime minister ordered the country's Kurdish region to hand over control of its airports to federal authorities or face a flight ban, a response to the Kurdish **independence** referendum. (AP Photo/Bram Janssen)

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | gvote : Elections | gpir : Politics/International Relations | gcat : Political/General News

RE iraq : Iraq | kurd : Kurdistan | baghd : Baghdad | iran : Iran | jordan : Jordan | meastz : Middle East | turk : Turkey | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD ML

IPC f

PUB The Associated Press

AN Document APRS000020170927ed9r00byl

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POSTMEDIA

SE PMN Business

HD **The Latest: Turkey to deal only with Baghdad on oil exports**

BY The Associated Press

WC 322 words

PD 28 September 2017

SN Postmedia Breaking News

SC CWNS

LA English

CY Copyright © 2017 Postmedia Breaking News

LP

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates - The Latest on developments in **Iraq** (all times local):

12:10 p.m.

TD

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi says Turkey has agreed to deal only with Baghdad on oil exports from the self-ruled Kurdish region, which seeks secession from **Iraq**.

In a statement issued late on Wednesday following a phone call with his Turkish counterpart, al-Abadi says Binali Yildirim stressed his government's support on all measures taken in response to the Kurdish **independence** referendum.

In defiance of Baghdad, the self-ruled Kurdish region has been unilaterally exporting crude oil produced in their region and contested areas through Turkey.

The statement adds that both countries will continue co-operating to help implement the measures.

The **Kurds** angered Baghdad and **Iraq**'s neighbours by holding an **independence** referendum this week. Though it's non-binding, it has inceased tensions between the **Kurds** and Baghdad as well as Turkey and Iran, both of which have a sizable Kurdish population.

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8:05 a.m.

A state news agency is quoting the CEO of Qatar Airways as saying his airline will continue to fly to Irbil "as long as its airspace remains open and there are no security issues."

That's according to a late Wednesday night report by the state-run Qatar News Agency. It quoted CEO Akbar al-Baker as making the comments at a tourism event in Doha.

Qatar Airways is the only one of three major long-haul Gulf carriers to fly into Irbil.

Iraq's Transport Ministry ordered international airlines to halt service to Irbil, the Kurdish regional capital, and Sulaimaniyah, its second city, beginning Friday evening. That's due to tensions over an **independence** referendum held this week in **Iraq**'s Kurdish region and disputed territories.

Low-cost carrier FlyDubai says it is halting flights from Saturday.

RE iraq : Iraq | kurd : Kurdistan | turk : Turkey | baghd : Baghdad | uae : United Arab Emirates | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD dubai,united,emirates,latest,developments,times

PUB Canwest News Service

AN Document CWNS000020170928ed9s002uv

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THE CANADIAN PRESS

HD **The Latest: Iraqis reach Turkey's border with Kurdish region**

CR The Associated Press

WC 380 words

PD 30 September 2017

ET 17:19

SN The Canadian Press - Broadcast wire

SC BNW

LA English

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LP

IRBIL, **Iraq** — The Latest on developments in **Iraq** (all times local):

6:15 p.m.

TD

Two Iraqi officials say Iraqi central government officials have moved through Turkey onto the Turkish side of one of the Kurdish region's international border crossings.

The Saturday manoeuvrs come as Baghdad works to isolate the region following a controversial referendum on support for **independence** earlier this week.

The officials say Iraqi central government officials are also present in Iran, but their arrival to the border crossings with the Kurdish region has been delayed until Sunday.

A Kurdish official at the Turkish border crossing say the border was operating normally, but described the situation as "tense."

The move is just the latest step in a series of attempts from Baghdad to impose central government rule on the autonomous Kurdish region.

A ban on international commercial flights went into effect at Kurdish airports Friday evening.

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2:30 p.m.

Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency is reporting that the country's armed forces plan to hold a joint military drill with the Iraqi army near Kurdish territory.

The Saturday report quotes Gen. Masoud Jazayeri, spokesman for Iran's joint armed forces staff, as saying the manoeuvr will be held in the coming days in northwest Iran near the Iraqi Kurdistan border.

Jazayeri said the decision to have some Iraqi military units participate came during a meeting Saturday of the chiefs of Iranian armed forces.

Iran closed its borders and stopped flights to Iraqi Kurdistan airports following a Kurdish referendum of **independence** from **Iraq** on Monday.

Ahead of the vote, Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard launched a military exercise in the same region.

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8:30 a.m.

Iraq's military is preparing to take control of the international borders of the northern Kurdish region.

The preparations are part of the central government's stepped-up efforts to isolate the **Kurds** following their vote on **independence** earlier this week.

They come a day after **Iraq** instituted a flight ban that halted all international flights from servicing the territory's airports.

Iraqi troops now in Turkey and Iran were expected to start enforcing control over the border crossings out of the Kurdish region Saturday morning.

NS gcat : Political/General News

RE iraq : Iraq | kurd : Kurdistan | turk : Turkey | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD International

PUB The Canadian Press

AN Document BNW0000020170930ed9u004xt

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HD **Turkey to close border gates with Iraqi Kurds soon: Erdogan**

BY shichun

WC 231 words

PD 5 October 2017

ET 16:33

SN Xinhua News Agency

SC XNEWS

LA English

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LP

ANKARA, Oct. 5 (Xinhua) -- Turkey will close border gates with northern **Iraq** soon as part of the measures against the Iraqi Kurdish **independence** vote, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Thursday.

In a speech at the Presidential Complex in Ankara, Erdogan said that Turkey, **Iraq** and Iran are considering a joint blockade on Iraqi Kurdistan region after the **independence** referendum by the Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) on Sept. 25.

TD

"On one side is Iran, on the other side is Turkey, in the south is Iraqi administration, in the west is Syria... What can you do? Where can you go?" the Turkish President said.

"All the airspaces will be closed, flights are already banned. Borders will be closed soon, how will you conduct entrance and exit?" He added.

His remarks came after a one-day visit to Tehran where he discussed with his Iranian counterpart joint measures to be taken against the Iraqi **Kurds** as sanctions to their ambitions for **independence**.

Turkey has vowed to take any necessary measures, including political, economic sanctions and military intervention, to retaliate for the Kurdish **independence** referendum.

Ankara launched joint military exercises with Iraqi troops on their borders, threatening to join Baghdad and Tehran to cut off flow of oil from northern **Iraq** which is a vital revenue for the region.

Enditem

RF 01

NS gdip : International Relations | gpol : Domestic Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE turk : Turkey | iraq : Iraq | kurd : Kurdistan | ankra : Ankara | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Turkey

PUB Xinhua News Agency

AN Document XNEWS00020171005eda5008ev

REUTERS

HD **UPDATE 2-Erdogan says Turkey will close Iraq border and air space soon**

WC 566 words

PD 5 October 2017

ET 16:36

SN Reuters News

SC LBA

LA English

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LP

* Turkey, Iran, Baghdad will jointly decide on oil exports

* Referendum shows Kurdish "ingratitude" to Turkey

TD

* Erdogan says **Kurds** have no legitimacy in oil city Kirkuk (Recasts with Erdogan comments on border, air space)

By Ece Toksabay and Tuvan Gumrukcu

ANKARA, Oct 5 (Reuters) - President Tayyip Erdogan said on Thursday that Turkey would soon close its border with northern **Iraq** and shut its air space in response to last week's Kurdish **independence** referendum.

Erdogan, who held talks in Tehran on Wednesday with Iranian leaders, also said Turkey would decide jointly with Iran and **Iraq**'s central government in Baghdad whether to cut oil exports from Kurdish northern **Iraq**.

His comments came 10 days after **Kurds** in northern **Iraq** voted overwhelmingly for **independence**, alarming Baghdad, **Iraq**'s neighbours and Western powers who fear the vote could trigger further conflict in the Middle East.

Turkey tightened controls at its main border crossing into **Iraq** in the immediate aftermath of the vote and suspended flights to northern **Iraq**. It has also held joint military exercises with Iraqi troops on the border.

But it has not yet implemented threats to impose wider sanctions on the Kurdish region or to cut off the hundreds of thousands of barrels of Kurdish oil exported daily via Turkey to world markets.

"Flights to northern **Iraq** have already been suspended, the air space and borders will also close soon," Erdogan said in a speech in the Turkish capital, Ankara.

He said the decision to hold the referendum showed the "perfect ingratitude" of the Kurdish Regional Government in northern **Iraq**, after years of close commercial and political ties with Turkey.

"INVADERS"

Earlier, Erdogan told Turkish media on his return from Iran that Ankara, Tehran and Baghdad would jointly decide on whether to close the taps on the **Kurds**' oil export pipeline, adding that it was time for the KRG to take a step back.

"The northern Iraqi leadership is drunk with the result of the referendum, it's not aware of what it is doing or what kind of steps it's taking," he said.

Erdogan also criticised the inclusion of the oil-rich city of Kirkuk in the referendum, saying that **Kurds** had no legitimacy there and that they were "invaders" in the region.

During a joint news conference with his Iranian counterpart Hassan Rouhani on Wednesday, Erdogan said Turkey was considering further measures against northern **Iraq**, and the two leaders promised to work together against the **independence** drive.

The **Kurds** are the region's fourth-largest ethnic group, spread across Iran, Turkey, Syria and **Iraq**. All of those oppose any moves towards a Kurdish state, but the **Kurds** have been building strong international ties.

Last month, Russian oil major Rosneft clinched a gas pipeline deal in **Iraq**'s autonomous Kurdistan to help it become a major exporter of gas to Turkey and Europe. The pipeline will be constructed in 2019 and exports will begin in 2020.

On Wednesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that it was in no-one's interest to cut off oil supplies from **Iraq**'s Kurdistan, which would raise oil prices.

Erdogan, however, brushed off those concerns, saying the final decision would be made by Turkey, Iran and **Iraq**. (Writing by David Dolan and Dominic Evans; Editing by Andrew Heavens)

RF Released: 2017-10-5T15:36:02.000Z

IN i13 : Crude Oil/Natural Gas Upstream Operations | i1 : Energy

NS gdef : Armed Forces | gpol : Domestic Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National/Public Security | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE iraq : Iraq | turk : Turkey | kurd : Kurdistan | baghd : Baghdad | iran : Iran | meastz : Middle East | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD Business

IPC SERVICE:PSC

PUB Thomson Reuters (Markets) LLC

AN Document LBA0000020171005eda500cf9

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DOW JONES NEWSWIRES

HD **Iraqi Forces Move on Territory Seized by Kurds**

BY By Isabel Coles and Ali Nabhan

WC 1,307 words

PD 13 October 2017

ET 13:35

SN Dow Jones Institutional News

SC DJDN

LA English

CY Copyright © 2017, Dow Jones & Company, Inc.

LP

ERBIL, **Iraq**--Iraqi forces advanced toward the oil-rich city of Kirkuk, the first concrete step to restore federal government control over disputed territories seized by the **Kurds** during the war against Islamic State.

Friday's move follows a controversial referendum in which the **Kurds**, who run their own semi-autonomous region in northern **Iraq**, voted overwhelmingly in favor of **independence** in defiance of Baghdad, regional powers and the U.S, which warned it would distract from the final battles to defeat Islamic State.

TD

In the wake of the Sept. 25 vote, **Iraq**'s parliament authorized Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi to deploy troops to retake disputed territories, including Kirkuk and its oil wells, controlled by the **Kurds** since 2014.

Iraqi officials didn't comment on their plans, but Mr. Abadi on Thursday reiterated that he doesn't want conflict between Arabs and **Kurds**.

Iraqi **Kurds** have sent reinforcements to the Kirkuk area and vow they will not relinquish the city, which is economically--and symbolically-- indispensable to the state they dream of declaring.

The command of the region's armed forces, known as Peshmerga, warned of a "big catastrophe" and said they were ready to defend "the land of Kurdistan."

Officials from the Kurdish faction whose forces dominate in Kirkuk are currently in negotiations with the Iraqi government. Kurdish security sources and local officials in Kirkuk familiar with the talks said the Iraqi forces' target was to regain control over oil wells and installations in the province rather than enter the city of Kirkuk itself, which would likely spark a wider conflict.

An elite unit of the interior ministry known as the Emergency Response Division entered the Taza district some 10 miles south of Kirkuk overnight Friday, facing no resistance as it took over a Kurdish military base there, according to commanders on the ground and a statement.

Footage and images circulated online by ERD soldiers showed graffiti over a Kurdish flag painted on blast walls at a base in Taza, and Iraqi forces raising the Iraqi flag.

Iraqi forces intend to take over oil fields, an airport and a military base in the vicinity of Kirkuk, the Kurdistan region's Security Council said earlier, citing intelligence.

Kurdish Peshmerga forces and the Iraqi military had until recently cooperated in the fight against Islamic State, setting aside long-running disputes over land and resources that have strained relations between the federal government in Baghdad and the region for a decade.

Now that their common enemy is on the verge of defeat in **Iraq**, those disputes are re-emerging.

Iraqi forces routed Islamic State from its final pocket of territory in the north of the country last week, removing the last buffer between them and Kurdish forces to the doorstep of Kirkuk. The only

remaining territory under Islamic State control in **Iraq** is in the western province of Anbar, on the border with Syria.

Although September's vote doesn't automatically confer statehood, Kurdish leaders have said it would give them a mandate to negotiate a separation from Baghdad.

But Mr. Abadi, who opposed the referendum, says there will be no talks unless its results are annulled, and has since punished the **Kurds** by imposing a ban on international flights to and from their landlocked region.

Baghdad is also threatening to close the Kurdish region's borders with neighboring Turkey and Iran, which also opposed the vote, citing threats to their national security.

Ghassan Adnan contributed to this article.

13 Oct 2017 14:00 ET Iraqi Forces Move on Territory Seized by **Kurds** -- Update

By Isabel Coles and Ali Nabhan

ERBIL, **Iraq** -- Iraqi forces advanced toward the oil-rich city of Kirkuk, the first concrete step to restore federal government control over disputed territories seized by the **Kurds** during the war against Islamic State.

Friday's move follows a controversial referendum in which the **Kurds**, who run their own semiautonomous region in northern **Iraq**, voted overwhelmingly in favor of **independence** in defiance of Baghdad, regional powers and the U.S., which warned it would distract from the final battles to defeat Islamic State.

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Iraqi officials didn't comment on their plans, but Mr. Abadi on Thursday reiterated that he doesn't want conflict between Arabs and **Kurds**.

Iraqi **Kurds** have sent reinforcements to the Kirkuk area and vow they won't relinquish the city, which is economically -- and symbolically -- indispensable to the state they dream of declaring.

"Heavily armed Peshmerga units deployed in and around Kirkuk, ready very strongly to respond to any possible military attacks... No escalation from our side. Just defend and roll them back if they attack," tweeted an adviser to Kurdish President Masoud Barzani.

Officials from the Kurdish faction whose forces dominate in Kirkuk are currently in negotiations with the Iraqi government. Kurdish security sources and local officials in Kirkuk familiar with the talks said the Iraqi forces' target was to regain control over oil wells and installations in the province rather than enter the city of Kirkuk itself, which would likely spark a wider conflict.

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Footage and images circulated online by ERD soldiers showed graffiti over a Kurdish flag painted on blast walls at a base in Taza, and Iraqi forces raising the Iraqi flag.

The Kurdish regional government's office in Washington said in a statement that Iraqi security forces and government-backed paramilitary groups had "attacked" Peshmerga fighters. But Peshmerga commanders on the ground said there had been no clashes.

Iraqi forces intend to take over oil fields, an airport and a military base in the vicinity of Kirkuk, the Kurdistan region's Security Council said earlier, citing intelligence.

Michael Knights, a fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said there was potential for conflict within the next 48 hours, unless the Peshmerga allowed access for federal forces to some sites.

Kurdish Peshmerga forces and the Iraqi military had until recently cooperated in the fight against Islamic State, setting aside long-running disputes over land and resources that have strained relations between the federal government in Baghdad and the region for a decade.

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Now that their common enemy is on the verge of defeat in **Iraq**, those disputes are re-emerging.

Iraqi forces routed Islamic State from its final pocket of territory in the north of the country last week, removing the last buffer between them and Kurdish forces to the doorstep of Kirkuk. The only remaining territory under Islamic State control in **Iraq** is in the western province of Anbar, on the border with Syria.

Although September's vote doesn't automatically confer statehood, Kurdish leaders have said it would give them a mandate to negotiate a separation from Baghdad.

But Mr. Abadi, who opposed the referendum, says there will be no talks unless its results are annulled, and has since punished the **Kurds** by imposing a ban on international flights to and from their landlocked region.

Baghdad is also threatening to close the Kurdish region's borders with neighboring Turkey and Iran, which also opposed the vote, citing threats to their national security.

--Ghassan Adnan contributed to this article.

Write to Isabel Coles at isabel.coles@wsj.com and Ali Nabhan at ali.nabhan@wsj.com

(END) Dow Jones Newswires

October 13, 2017 14:00 ET (18:00 GMT)

CO aqdirq : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NS gdef : Armed Forces | gvio : Military Action | gpol : Domestic Politics | nenac : Energy Asset Class News | neqac : Equities Asset Class News | nfiac : Fixed Income Asset Class News | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National/Public Security | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters

RE iraq : Iraq | kurd : Kurdistan | baghd : Baghdad | eurz : Europe | iran : Iran | kirku : Kirkuk | turk : Turkey | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

PUB Dow Jones & Company, Inc.

AN Document DJDN000020171013edad0012e

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THE CANADIAN PRESS

HD **Turkey says Iraqi Kurds miscalculated with referendum vote**

CR The Associated Press

WC 146 words

PD 18 October 2017

ET 12:52

SN The Canadian Press - Broadcast wire

SC BNW

LA English

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LP

ISTANBUL — Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu says leaders of **Iraq**'s autonomous Kurdish region "miscalculated" in going ahead with last month's **independence** referendum.

He says the "mistake" of the Iraqi **Kurds** in proceeding with the non-binding vote was rectified by Baghdad when Iraqi forces retook the vital oil city of Kirkuk and other disputed areas from the **Kurds** this week.

TD

Cavusoglu said on Wednesday that Iraqi Kurdish leaders had thought the vote would unite the **Kurds** but that it instead divided **Iraq**'s Kurdish community. He also says Ankara warned the Iraqi **Kurds** of the consequences but that the warning was ignored.

Turkey, which is fighting a Kurdish insurgency within its borders, opposes Iraqi Kurdish moves toward **independence**.

This week, it closed its airspace to flights to and from the Iraqi Kurdish region.

NS gcat : Political/General News

RE kurd : Kurdistan | iraq : Iraq | turk : Turkey | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

IPD International

PUB The Canadian Press

AN Document BNW0000020171018edai006y1

THE CANADIAN PRESS

HD	**Turkey could close border with Iraqi Kurds 'at any moment'**
CR	The Associated Press
WC	149 words
PD	19 October 2017
ET	10:09
SN	The Canadian Press
SC	CPR
LA	English
CY	(c) 2017 The Canadian Press. All rights reserved.

LP

ANKARA, Turkey — Turkey's president says the country could close its border with **Iraq**'s semi-autonomous Kurdish region "at any moment" as a further reprisal for it holding a non-binding referendum on **independence** last month.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan's comments were reported in Hurriyet newspaper on Thursday, and come days after Ankara closed its airspace to flights to and from the Iraqi Kurdish region. Turkish airline companies have also suspended flights to Iraqi Kurdish cities.

TD

Erdogan said: "We have not closed our border gates yet, but this can happen at any moment."

Turkey had close ties to the Iraqi Kurdish leadership, but had urged them not to hold the vote.

Iraq's central government and neighbouring Iran were also deeply opposed to the referendum, in which more than 90 per cent voted for **independence**.

NS	gcat : Political/General News
RE	turk : Turkey | kurd : Kurdistan | ankra : Ankara | iraq : Iraq | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia
IPD	International
PUB	The Canadian Press
AN	Document CPR0000020171019edaj005mt

HD **Erdogan: Turkey won't allow terrorist corridor on its southern border**

WC 424 words

PD 30 October 2017

ET 13:00

SN Today.az

SC DLSDAZ

LA English

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LP

ByB B TrendTurkey attaches great importance to maintaining political unity and territorial integrity of **Iraq**, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said in an interview with Trend, Azertac and APA.

"The developments in northern **Iraq** are of interest not only for **Kurds**, but also Arabs, Turkomans and representatives of other nationalities. Let's not forget that **Iraq** is not a Kurdish, Arab or Turkoman state, and Kirkuk and Mosul are not homeland of **Kurds**," he said.

TD

"Holding the referendum, the Kurdish **autonomy** of **Iraq** blatantly violated international law and the Iraqi Constitution. Despite Turkey&s warnings, unfortunately, it chose a different path and held a referendum. By this, it endangered peace and stability not only in **Iraq** but also in the region. The statement lately made by the Kurdish administration shows that they realized their mistake. We would like them to promptly take steps meeting our expectations. We are ready for any cooperation with the Iraqi government in the context of putting an end to the PKK's [Kurdistan Workers& Party] presence in **Iraq**. Those who mediate in the PKK terrorist organization&s, which is trying to disturb public order and peace in Kirkuk, finding refuge in this region, are responsible for this."

Turkey welcomed the Iraqi government&s statement saying that the Iraqi army will return Kirkuk and will not turn a blind eye to PKK&s actions, according to Erdogan.

"Turkey will stand with the Iraqi government to ensure sustainable peace and stability in the country. Our belief that it is possible to end the conflict in Syria only by political means is immutable. By the Astana meeting and Geneva negotiations, we will continue strong support for the transitional political process aimed at Syria&s development," he noted.

"Turkey played a decisive role in reaching the agreement as guarantor of opposition in the discussion process on the issue of a conflict-free zone in the Syrian Idlib. We tried to take into account the opinions and approaches of various groups in the region. We carried out an operation in Idlib to achieve a ceasefire. By this operation, as well as the Euphrates Shield operation that had been conducted earlier, we will continue providing security in Idlib. This demonstrated that we can take any action against those who threaten our security. We will not allow establishment of a terrorist corridor on our southern border, and will continue to do everything possible to resolve the Syrian conflict by political means," the Turkish president added.

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | gcrim : Crime/Legal Action | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE iraq : Iraq | kurd : Kurdistan | turk : Turkey | kirku : Kirkuk | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia

PUB Day.Az Media Company

AN Document DLSDAZ0020171030edau0002x

DOW JONES NEWSWIRES

HD **As Turkey Invades, Kurds See Betrayal Once Again**

BY By Yaroslav Trofimov

WC 1,022 words

PD 23 January 2018

ET 13:06

SN Dow Jones Institutional News

SC DJDN

LA English

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LP

In Kurdish history, there's a betrayal that looms large. In the 1970s, the U.S. armed Kurdish fighters to rise up against Saddam Hussein in **Iraq**, as part of an effort to help the pro-American Shah of Iran. Then, once the Shah suddenly struck his own deal with Saddam and no longer needed the **Kurds**, Washington simply walked away, ignoring Kurdish pleas to help avert an imminent bloodbath.

"Covert action," then U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger famously told a congressional committee, "should not be confused with missionary work."

TD

Today, as four decades ago, the **Kurds** in both Syria and **Iraq** are realizing just how disposable they are to the regional--and global--powers. That's especially so now that Kurdish help is no longer needed in the campaign to topple Islamic State, and as geopolitical alliances shift in the contest over the future of Syria and the entire region.

In northern Syria, the American- (and until recently Russian-) backed Kurdish forces this week came under a military onslaught by NATO ally Turkey, which is seeking to capture the Kurdish area of Afrin on its border, and threatens to invade other Kurdish-held regions of Syria further east.

In **Iraq**, a different military operation by the U.S.-backed federal government of **Iraq** seized key territories, including the oil-rich area of Kirkuk, from Kurdish forces in October. Baghdad continues economic sanctions against northern **Iraq**'s self-ruled Kurdistan region, holding out the prospect of further military action.

In both cases, the U.S. didn't condemn these military operations, limiting itself to calls for restraint and for avoiding civilian casualties. Russia, meanwhile, appears to have allowed the Turkish air force to operate in Syrian airspace, and facilitated the Turkish incursion by withdrawing Russian forces that had been deployed in Afrin for two years.

Because of the **Kurds**' long history of disappointments, the Syrian Kurdish leadership wasn't surprised, said Etugrul Kurkcu, a veteran lawmaker from Turkey's mostly Kurdish People's Democratic Party, or HDP, a close ally of the main Syrian Kurdish movement known as YPG.

"Their cooperation with the Russian Federation and the U.S.A. was on a tactical basis, and their awareness of the U.S. and Russian Federation's impending tendency to desert them under Turkish pressure had already grown," Mr. Kurkcu said. "As they say, their strategic ally is the mountains."

In part, deserting the **Kurds** has been made easier by a series of mistakes made by Kurdish politicians themselves.

In **Iraq**, the Kurdistan regional government disregarded Western appeals not to hold an **independence** referendum in September, and failed to maintain a democratic system of governance--allowing Baghdad to split Kurdish unity. In northern Syria, YPG--an affiliate of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, a Kurdish movement from Turkey that espouses a far-left ideology and is considered a terrorist group by the U.S. and Turkey--has established an even more authoritarian one-party statelet, marginalizing other political forces.

Yet, despite all these flaws, the main reason the **Kurds** are once again abandoned by their Western allies is cold realpolitik.

For Washington, not siding with the federal government of Prime Minister Haider al Abadi would have pushed **Iraq**, with its massive oil reserves, even closer into an alignment with U.S. arch-enemy Iran. Actively opposing the Turkish operation in Afrin would have accelerated President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's movement away from NATO and into an ever-tighter relationship with President Vladimir Putin.

In fact, Russia acquiesced to the Turkish operation in Afrin precisely because prying Turkey away from the West--including through the recent sale of Russia's S-400 air defense system--is a far more important geopolitical objective to the Kremlin than friendship with the stateless **Kurds**.

"The necessity of maintaining at least a tactical alliance with Turkey is self-evident for Russia, even if it creates problems," said Andrey Kortunov, head of the Russian International Affairs Council, a think-tank affiliated with the Russian foreign ministry. "The entire region is changing course, and Russia and Turkey today have avenues for cooperation that they didn't have before."

Sipan Hemo, the YPG commander-general, vented his frustration over this shift in an interview with the Kurdish ANHA news agency this week: "We had certain agreements with Russia. But Russia suddenly disregarded these agreements and betrayed us. They have clearly sold us out."

The U.S., which unlike Russia didn't have troops in Afrin, was in no position to prevent the Turkish operation there. The big question now is whether Mr. Erdogan will deliver on his threats to also attack the bigger Kurdish-held enclave in eastern Syria--and whether the U.S. forces that are deployed there will try to prevent such an onslaught, as they did during a smaller Turkish-backed offensive against the town of Manbij last year.

James Jeffrey, a former U.S. ambassador to Turkey and **Iraq** and a scholar at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said he expected the U.S. would "react strongly" to any Turkish move against Manbij or other parts of Kurdish-held eastern Syria. But, he added, there are limits to U.S. willingness to oppose Mr. Erdogan: "As U.S. and Russian reactions to Afrin show, Turkey is a serious player and the U.S. has no hopes to impact events in Syria long-term without Turkey."

Despite the temporary acquiescence of Washington and Moscow, the Turkish incursion into Afrin remains fraught with risks, both for Turkey's international reputation and for its domestic stability.

"If the operation lasts too long and there is collateral damage and many civilian casualties on the Kurdish side, this will rally the international community around the Syrian **Kurds**," said Asli Aydintasbas, a Turkey expert at the European Council on Foreign Relations. "And if there are many Turkish casualties, this will further whip up the nationalist frenzy in what is already a very polarized Turkey."

(END) Dow Jones Newswires

January 23, 2018 07:06 ET (12:06 GMT)

CO nato : North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NS gdip : International Relations | gpol : Domestic Politics | gvio : Military Action | nenac : Energy Asset Class News | neqac : Equities Asset Class News | nfiac : Fixed Income Asset Class News | ntop : Top Wire News | nttwn : Today's Top Wire News | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National/Public Security | gpir : Politics/International Relations | grisk : Risk News | ncat : Content Types | ndj : Dow Jones Top Stories | nfact : Factiva Filters | redit : Selection of Top Stories/Trends/Analysis

RE kurd : Kurdistan | turk : Turkey | eurz : Europe | iraq : Iraq | russ : Russia | syria : Syria | usa : United States | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | bric : BRICS Countries | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eeurz : Central/Eastern Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | namz : North America | ussrz : CIS Countries | wasiaz : Western Asia

PUB Dow Jones & Company, Inc.

AN Document DJDN000020180123ee1n001to

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BBC MONITORING

HD **Iraqi Kurds hold first post-referendum talks with Turkish leader**

WC 400 words

PD 19 April 2018

ET 14:01

SN BBC Monitoring Middle East

SC BBCMEP

LA English

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LP

By BBC Monitoring

The prime minister of the Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Nechirvan Barzani, has said that a delegation from a KRG ministry has visited Turkey and met the president, according to ruling Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP)-affiliated Rudaw website.

TD

The meeting, which took place on 16 April, is reportedly the first one between senior KRG and Turkish officials since September 2017. Turkey and the KDP, of which Barzani is deputy leader, have historically enjoyed good relations but these were strained by the KRG's decision to proceed with holding an **independence** referendum in September, which Ankara strongly opposed.

There have been no reports of meetings between senior Turkey and KRG figures since then. However, reports of this meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan were not widely reported in local outlets.

The meeting comes amid recent intense Turkish bombardment of the Kurdistan Region's border area, which has reportedly resulted in civilian deaths and the evacuation of scores of villages.

Barzani made the comments at a news conference on 17 April, in response to a question from a reporter about Erbil's relations with Tehran and Ankara.

According to Barzani, a delegation from the KRG Planning Ministry visited Turkey to attend an economic forum and meet Erdogan.

He said the visit by Planning Minister Ali Sindi was in response to an invitation from the Turkish economy minister to attend the conference, adding: "It seems that there was an opportunity and they held a meeting with the president on the sidelines of the conference."

Regarding relations with Turkey, Barzani said: "Overall, our relations with neighbouring countries are positive... We are definitely expecting further steps to normalise relations between Erbil and Ankara, and so far things are leaning towards normaliasation."

He added that Turkey is important to the Kurdistan Region, which "has always wanted to have positive relations with Turkey".

He did not comment on ongoing Turkish strikes on the Kurdistan Region.

On 16 April, Rudaw reported that the ministerial delegation met Turkey's Economy Minister Nihat Zeybekci and discussed ways to develop economic relations between the Kurdistan Region and other parts of **Iraq** with Turkey.

The report added that the delegation met Erdogan, who gave a speech at the conference, but gave no further details about the meeting.

Source: Rudaw website in Sorani Kurdish 1200 gmt 17 Apr 18

CO kurdd : Kurdistan Democratic Party

NS	gdip : International Relations | gpol : Domestic Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations
RE	turk : Turkey | kurd : Kurdistan | ankra : Ankara | iraq : Iraq | asiaz : Asia | balkz : Balkan States | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | eurz : Europe | gulfstz : Persian Gulf Region | meastz : Middle East | medz : Mediterranean | wasiaz : Western Asia
PUB	The British Broadcasting Corporation
AN	Document BBCMEP0020180419ee4j003ml

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HD **Turkish Forces 'Neutralize' 43 PKK Members in Turkey, Iraq Over Past Week - Reports**

CR РИАН

WC 305 words

PD 20 July 2018

ET 16:41

SN Sputnik News Service

SC RVESEN

LA English

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LP

MOSCOW, July 20 (Sputnik) - The Turkish army killed, captured or forced to surrender a total of 43 militants of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which is listed as a terrorist organization in Turkey, in the east of the country and in northern **Iraq** over the past week, local media reported on Friday citing the Turkish army.

A Turkish soldier was killed in the line of duty, while another two suffered injuries during the counterterrorism operations on July 13-19, the Anadolu news agency said.

TD

The news outlet added that a total of 47 weapons, an anti-tank missile, almost 58 pounds of explosives and three self-made explosive devices were destroyed over the past week.

The Turkish army said in a separate statement that 4,545 militants had been neutralized since the beginning of Turkish offensive in the Syrian northern city of Afrin in January aimed at combating the members of the Kurdish People's Protection Units militia and the Islamic State terrorist group (outlawed in Russia) as well as the PKK in order to ensure security and stability on the country's border.

The armed conflict between the PKK and Ankara dates back to the 1980s with the insurgents demanding to establish a Kurdish **autonomy** in Turkey and equality in terms of political rights. The party is recognized as a terrorist organization by the United States, the European Union and NATO as well.

Tensions between Ankara and the **Kurds** escalated in July 2015 when a two-year ceasefire between Turkey and the PKK collapsed over a series of terror attacks allegedly committed by the PKK members. The Turkish media claim that over 1,200 people including security personnel and civilians have died at the hands of the PKK since then.

CO kuwkp : Kurdistan Workers Party

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | garmy : Army | gterr : Terrorism | gcat : Political/General News | gcns : National/Public Security | gcrim : Crime/Legal Action | gdef : Armed Forces | gpir : Politics/International Relations | ncat : Content Types | nfact : Factiva Filters | nfcpex : C&E Executive News Filter

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IPD TURKEY

IPC 160

PUB Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency

AN Document RVESEN0020180720ee7k004h7

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