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How Obama and Erdogan Moved ISIS from Iraq to Syria, to Weaken Assad

By Eric Zuesse

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Chris Tomson of Al Masdar News headlined on Monday May 1st, “Syrian Army tank takes direct hit from ISIS guided missile in Deir Ezzor” and reported that, “Currently, government forces are less than 1500 meters from linking up Deir Ezzor city to its airbase,” which would be an essential link-up in order for the Syrian government to begin to restore control over the largest city in eastern Syria. Here will be the account of how U.S. **President Barack Obama** handed that city over to ISIS by means of two key actions, so as to weaken Assad’s government.

Today, Der Zor, or Deir Ezzor, Syria’s major oil center, is controlled by ISIS or Daesh, but Obama’s warplanes bombed the Syrian government troops there on 17 September 2016 and thereby ended the then 5-day-old ceasefire that **John Kerry** had spent months putting together with **Sergei Lavrov**, and thus Obama effectively ended all peace negotiations with Russia regarding Syria. Then, when U.S. and Turkish forces attacked ISIS in Mosul Iraq, an escape-path was intentionally left by them for those ISIS jihadists to travel west to Der Zor, so that they could not only take over the oil wells there, but do major damage to the Syrian government’s army forces in that key city, after Obama had bombed there on September 17th. Consequently, Erdogan and Obama were now using ISIS in Mosul as a means for reinforcing ISIS in Syria, in such a way as to provide oil-income to ISIS and also to directly weaken Assad’s government.

Obama never told anyone that he favored ISIS and all jihadists over Assad's government, but he showed it clearly and consistently by his actions.

A 12 August 2012 U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency warning that the Obama Administration's strategy might drive ISIS from Mosul in Iraq to Der Zor in Syria, has actually been carried out as a plan instead of a warning — a plan to weaken and ultimately oust Syria's non-sectarian **President Bashar al-Assad** and replace him with a Sunni Sharia-law regime (one led by jihadists). The 2012 DIA warning had called this scenario an "unraveling," but Obama and the U.S. Congress actually chose it, so as to set the incoming President Trump up with an opportunity to replace Assad's government by one that the Saudis and their U.S.-made weapons will control.

The DIA warning in 2012 had said:

"C. IF THE SITUATION UNRAVELS THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A DECLARED OR UNDECLARED SALAFIST [fundamentalist Sunni] PRINCIPALITY IN EASTERN SYRIA (HASAKA AND DER ZOR), AND THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT THE SUPPORTING POWERS [U.S., Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey] TO THE OPPOSITION WANT, IN ORDER TO ISOLATE THE [pro-Russian and pro-Iranian] SYRIAN REGIME."

Whoever wrote this assessment recognized that though the option would mean an "unraveling" of Syria, it's what the U.S. and its allies were actually seeking.

On September 17th of 2016, U.S. and UK jets bombed the compound of Syrian government troops who were fighting to oust jihadists from Deir Ezzor, and killed 62 Syrian soldiers, with a hundred more injured, in that U.S.-led bombing attack. Der Zor was being softened-up for the coming U.S.-and-allied takeover.

The brilliant anonymous military blogger "Moon of Alabama" then became the first reporter to notice the possible connection that the DIA's warning might end up having, to what became the joint U.S.-Turkish-Iraqi operation against ISIS in Mosul; he headlined on 20 September 2016, "Deir Ezzor Attack Enables The 'Salafist Principality' As Foreseen In The 2012 DIA Analysis", and he presciently wrote:

"Two recent attacks against the Syrian Arab Army in east-Syria point to a U.S. plan to eliminate all Syrian government presence east of Palmyra. This would enable the U.S. and its allies to create a 'Sunni entity' in east-Syria and west-Iraq which would be a permanent thorn in side of Syria and its allies [Russia and Iran]. A 2012 analysis by the Defense Intelligence Agency said" — and he then quoted the above DIA excerpt.

Then on October 12th, he bannered "The 'Salafist Principality' — ISIS Paid Off To Leave Mosul And To Take Deir Ezzor?", and reported that the Obama Administration had just negotiated with Turkish **President Tayyip Erdogan**, and with Saudi **Prince Salman** (who is the decision-maker in Saudi military matters), to provide safe passage into the large Syrian city of Deir Es Zor, for the ISIS jihadists who were occupying the large Iraqi city of Mosul.

He cited also a tweet on the morning of October 12th, from the celebrated Syrian historian and journalist **Nizar Nayouf**, reporting:

“Breaking news: Sources in #London say: #US&#Saudi_Arabia concluded an agreement to let #ISIS leave #Mosul secretly & safely to #Syria.”

So, Britain too was in on this assistance for ISIS to fight against the Syrian government.

Furthermore, on October 15th, the Turkish government posted online a map showing the “‘Sensitive’ Operation Plan for Mosul” including six steps, one of which was “An escape corridor into Syria will be left for Daesh [ISIS] so they can vacate Mosul.” Though the U.S. government wasn’t public about this part of their plan — moving the jihadists “into Syria” instead of killing the jihadists (as Obama always *claimed* to be his intention) — the Turkish government was public, and proud, of it.

Slightly beyond Der Zor is Palmyra — another Syrian city that the U.S.-Saudi alliance want to grab.

On December 11th, Russian Television headlined “4,000 ISIS fighters regroup, make new attempt to capture Palmyra”, and reported that:

“Over 4,000 Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIS/ISIL) terrorists, reinforced by tanks, have started an offensive to retake the key Syrian city of Palmyra after regrouping themselves. ... The terrorists have received considerable reinforcement, including heavy military hardware from the regions of Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor. ... The terrorists are receiving support from jihadists coming from Iraq. ... In October, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov warned that terrorists ‘could flee from Mosul and go to Syria.’”

That’s precisely what happened.

So: the Obama Administration set up the next U.S. President, Trump, with an “unraveling” situation in Syria, so as to enable Trump to continue Obama’s war against Russia and all its allies (such as Syria).

President Trump has thus far been continuing Obama’s policy of helping the invading jihadists to overthrow and replace Assad’s government.

Istanbul’s *Daily Sabah* newspaper headlined on April 26th, “Daesh said to move capital from Raqqa to Deir ez-Zor” and reported that,

“High-ranking executives of the Daesh terrorist group are withdrawing from Raqqa. ... They are believed to have set up their new headquarters in Deir ez-Zor, located about 140 kilometers southeast of Raqqa, in anticipation of a decisive battle.”

