

First some good news . .

### **ETHIOPIA'S EVANGELICAL PRIME MINISTER WINS NOBEL PEACE PRIZE**

Less than two years since taking office, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has helped Ethiopia achieve the kind of peace and reconciliation once deemed impossible, including resolving a border conflict with its East African neighbour Eritrea.

## **THE TURKEY INVASION**

### **TASK OF STOPPING TURKEY PASSES FROM TRUMP TO PUTIN.**

### **SYRIAN ARMY DEFENDS THREATENED KURDISH TOWNS**

OCT 14. President Donald Trump's decision to pull US troops back from the Turkish-Kurdish confrontation on October 13 produced **a lightning realignment of big power strength** on the battlefield of NE Syria: the task of protecting the Kurds from the excesses of the Turkish operation passed to **Vladimir Putin and the Syrian army**.

By Monday, Syrian government forces had reached the Kurdish-held towns of Kobani, Manbij and Raqqa **as Turkish troops were poised to move in against the first two**.

According to some reports, the Syrian army **was already inside those towns**, but, say reliable military sources, it can't hold out against a Turkish advance **without Russian support**.

The wheels for this turnabout were set in motion by a deal struck by the Kurdish leaders of the US-backed Syrian Defence Forces (SDF) with Assad regime officials at the Russian command centre in the Khmeimim air base near Latakia.

Their meetings were chaired by **Russian officers**.

**Feeling abandoned by the US pullback, the Kurds quickly agreed to relinquish their struggle for an independent state and settle for autonomous status for their north-eastern provinces in return for the Syrian army taking over the defence of their endangered towns.**

The deal, which took effect within 24 hours, still has rough edges to be smoothed out, such as:

1. The exact nature of Kurdish autonomous rule and relations with central government in Damascus.
2. The borders of Kurdish-ruled lands.
3. The fate of the SDF.
4. How far will Russian President Vladimir Putin be willing to push back against Turkish President Recep Erdogan and **halt his army's advance into northern Syria**.

Trump ordered American troops in northern Syria to move east, **out of the way of a potential clash over the Kurdish regions**, up to the areas adjoining the Iraqi border.

Already now, since the Syrian government is not up to a full-scale battle with the Turkish army **without Russian army and air force support, Turkey and Russia stand at the threshold of a major military clash**.

### **RUSSIAN WARNING PAUSES TURKISH SYRIA OPERATION.**

### **US PULLBACK FROM E. SYRIA OPENS DOOR TO IRAN !**

OCT 16. **The Syrian army's arrival at embattled Kurdish towns in the north east, backed by Russian threats, seemingly halted the Turkish army's advance. On October 15, only minor isolated incidents were visible.**

Although Turkish President Recep Erdogan boasted on Monday, Day 6, **"We will not back down,"** he also said, **"We are co-ordinating with the Russians,"** and praised their **"positive approach."**

For now, therefore, the Turkish army looks like sidestepping direct clashes with the Syrian army, which has meanwhile entered Manbij and **prevented the Turkish army from moving in.** Kurdish forces remain in control there, as well as in the towns of Tal Abyad and Ras al Ayn, which Turkish sources on Monday claimed had fallen.

On Tuesday morning, it looked as though the Turkish president had **paused for reflection** before deciding if and how to proceed with his operation, in the light of the Russia/Syrian threat to his forces. He needs to calculate how far he can go against the Syrian army without incurring Russian military intervention.

He understands that President Vladimir Putin will not put up with an artillery attack on Russian forces like the one **"mistakenly"** directed against US troops at the outset of the Turkish drive into northeast Syria last week.

President Donald Trump has meanwhile followed up on his order to pull 1,000 US troops out of northern Syria **with a second order** for their withdrawal from the eastern regions alongside the Syrian-Iraqi border.

He said those troops would remain in the Middle East and keep watch on the Syrian arena from a distance.

In a phone call to Erdogan, Trump demanded an immediate truce in the hostilities in northern Syria, as US **sanctions** were announced by the Treasury in Washington on Turkey's war leaders, the defence and energy ministries as well as ministers of defence, energy and interior.

**Trump also raised by 50% the tariffs on imported Turkish steel and halted negotiations for a \$100bn trade agreement.**

The US president has delayed, **but never wavered from,** his resolve to pull the US military presence out of Syria. In July 2018, he withdrew US support from Syrian insurgent groups in southern Syria and handed control of their regions to Russian and Syrian forces.

**Israel collaborated with Trump's moves** by lifting its control of the areas adjoining the Golan and allowing them to revert to the Assad regime along with the Syrian rebel groups with whom Israel had collaborated during the war.

Trump's actions in October 2019, for transferring control of northern and eastern Syria to Russian-backed Syrian government forces, are part of **the same consistent policy.**

Early Tuesday, US sources in Washington revealed that US forces would remain **at one last Syrian location,** the large garrison at Al Tanf which commands the key intersection of the Syrian, Jordanian and Iraqi borders.

From Israel's perspective, the Trump administration's decision to pull back from eastern Syrian positions – from which **US forces were able to keep the Iranian presence tied down to one place,** Abu Kamal – **opens most of the Syrian-Iraqi border for Iran,** Hizballah and the pro-Iranian Iraqi Shiite militias, which are already in control of the Iraqi side of the border, **to gain free passage into Syria.**