

CHAPTER II

THE CONFIGURATION OF ANTI-ISIS COALITIONS

The rise of ISIS and its way to purify Islam makes the world busy showing their respond. Starting from the beginning of ISIS establishment, international societies not realize ISIS will shows its “canine” to get the attention of the world. Even Al-Qaeda was so proud of ISIS and considered it as the branch of Al-Qaeda. Time passed, the group which is considered as a common and not dangerous, now turns to shows its power to ruin the world in the name of Islam and jihad. Labeled as a terrorist group, the U.S response ISIS by building power with other countries (focusing on Middle East countries) to fight against ISIS. Ever since 9/11 tragedy, the U.S considered itself as the “world police” which has purposes to keep the world from the terrorism attack and fight for humanity. Meanwhile, another Western country which is enthusiast to get involved in overthrowing ISIS is the U.S cold war enemy, Russia. Though Russia also uses its military force to attack ISIS, but these two countries always have different point of view to solve the crisis. The U.S has purpose to attack ISIS in Syria and to overthrow Bashar Al-Assad regime, while Russia aims to help Assad to re-build his power as well fight against ISIS and also to fight rebellion that is contra with Assad administration.

A. Turkey-Syria Relations and the Emergence of ISIS

Turkey changes its mind from being ignorant about ISIS, into aggressively attacks ISIS. This issue is peculiar to international society, but it is also common in the world of politics. Many argue why Turkey finally attacks ISIS. One of them is

Serhat Guvenc in his interview with Al Arabiya News conclude that Turkey is a country that is difficult to compromise. But the changes to attack ISIS will not help Turkey improve its image as a reluctant and difficult partner¹. It is better to examine from Turkey and Syria relations that have fluctuate relationship. The unstable relations between Turkey and Syria illustrate that these two neighboring countries have complicated problems to be defined by the world. Sometimes they reconciled like brothers, then, one or both of them turned into temperamental if one of them interfere with the internal problems of its neighbors. The tension of Turkey and Syria fluctuate relations started long time ago, since the First World War era. As new independent countries at that time, these two countries were still confused about the border line. Hatay is as a disputed place between Turkey and Syria. Hatay was claimed by Ankara under the Turkish National Pact of 1920, but it remained part of the French mandate of Syria until 1938. The autonomous parliament made decision in 1939 that Hatay is a part of Turkey's territory. Even then, the decision was never accepted by Syria for decades².

The dispute of border line is a problem commonly faced by neighboring countries. The problem between Turkey and Syria does not even stop for seizing some areas, but also the sharing of water. Turkey's construction of dams on the Euphrates and Asi rivers, limiting the flow across the frontier, caused a resentment³.

¹ "Why Turkey joined the U.S.-led mission to 'degrade and defeat ISIS" by Menekse Tokyay *on Al Arabiya News*, September 1, 2015.

² "Syria and Turkey – a history of complex relationship", by *Euronews*, July 28, 2015. <http://www.euronews.com>

³ *Ibid.*

The little quarrels are understandable because those are usual problems faced by the two neighboring countries. Then apparently in 1990s the catastrophe relations of Turkey and Syria be prolonged. “Delinquency” of Syria angered Turkey. Hafez al-Assad the president of Syria at that time, father of Bashar al-Assad, supported Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) to fight against Turkey. Turkish are certainly sensitive when dealing about the Kurdish. Therefore the hatred of Turkey became increased due to the support of the Syrian government for the Kurdish to ravage Turkish government. Although Hafez al-Assad was no longer the president of Syria and was replaced by his son, Bashar al-Assad, but it seems that the support for the Kurdish people does not stop yet from Syrian government. In 2012, Turkey suspected that Syria still supported the Kurdish rebellion. It is proven when Syria allowed Kurdish to establish bases in Syrian territory, as ties between the two neighboring countries deteriorate⁴.

The conflict between these two neighboring countries seemed to subside in 2000s. Potentially one or both of them are just exhausted to face the conflicts. In 2000s, this year brings a “fresh air” into Turkey-Syria relations, these two countries felt the need of each other. Then, these two countries turned to reduce the conflict by doing cooperation in term of trade and investment, de-securitizing borders problem, and initiating to joint river management together⁵. These two countries also aligned, together with Iran, in a regional ‘Trilateral bloc’ against the common

⁴ Suzan Fraser, “Turkey Says Syria is Aiding Kurdish Rebels”, May 23, 2012. <http://www.theworldpost.com>

⁵ Raymond Hinnebusch, “Back to Enmity, Turkey-Syria Relations since the Syrian Uprising”, Orient, 2015. p14

threat from Kurdish irredentism and the destabilization of Iraq after the 2003 US invasion⁶. The sentimental thing also conducted by Turkey, when Hafez al-Assad, its ex-enemy passed away, Turkish president Ahmet Necdet Sezer even attended the funeral. Turkey-Syria became best friends and neighbors who live side by side peacefully. Even after 10 years, Turkey helped Assad's regime to escape from international isolation after the assassination of Lebanese prime minister Rafic Hariri⁷. Especially when Ahmet Davutoglu became foreign minister of Turkey in 2009, he used new foreign policy of Turkey which prioritizing the contribution in security, stability, and prosperity in huge area that go beyond Turkey's immediate neighborhood⁸. Syria became the key of Turkey's "zero problems with neighbors" policy and it opened to Arab World. The problem of PKK had been solved during Bashar al-Assad administration, his decision was to fight against PKK and cooperate with Turkey⁹.

The intimacy of Turkey and Syria did not last long and forever. The civil war in 2011 that happened in Syria became the sign of damage of the harmonious relations between Turkey and Syria. The governmental administration of Syria was taken over by Bashar al-Assad after his father passed away. After feeling confident because he got support and was so much close to Turkey, Assad tried to change the political reform in Syria, which aimed to open up to international society. Assad also promised to build Syria to be more modern and democratic. In fact, Assad became a dictator. The freedom of media to argue was still limited by the

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Suzan Fraser, op.cit.

⁸Bulent Aras, "The Davutoglu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy", 2009. p129

⁹Damla Aras, "Turkish-Syrian Relations Go Downhill", 2012, <http://middleeastforum.com>

government. A law issued in 2007 required Internet cafes to record all the comments posted on the chat forum. Arab websites, YouTube and Facebook were blocked between 2008 and February 2011¹⁰. Human Rights groups such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, said that the Assad regime and secret police routinely tortured, imprisoned, and killed political enemies and those who defied his regime. This is what causes the Syrian's Uprising which the aimed to overthrow the government of Bashar al-Assad, the opposition of the government. Seeing the cruelty of Assad, Turkey started saturation. After waiting for quite some time in order to compromise with the government of Assad but did not also get result, then Turkey took an action in order to response this problem. Instead of helping Assad, Turkey finally made the decision to support the Syrian opposition to overthrow Assad regime. Because of that, Assad with his government changed their mind that once gave more support on Kurdish to do their rebellion action to fight against Turkey's government.

ISIS is not only an enemy of the U.S, but also for the whole world, especially for Syria and Iraq, the places where ISIS emerge. Fighting against ISIS is considered as an important act for any countries that hate terrorism. Turkey also hates ISIS, but the Turkish action against ISIS cannot be separated from the internal relations between Turkey and Syria. Usually the problems faced by Turkey and Syria are about Kurdish, the distribution of water, and the Syrian Uprising, but now the problem increased because of ISIS. Even Syrian government also fight against

¹⁰ See "Bashar al-Assad" on *Merdeka*, <http://www.merdeka.com>

ISIS, Turkey's action to fight against ISIS cannot be neutralized by ignoring and not involving the problems between Turkey and Syria.

At that moment, Turkey's priority was to keep its country from PKK which supported by Syrian government. Because of the emergence of ISIS, PKK being alongside priority, and the first threat of Turkey that should be prioritized is ISIS¹¹. In the beginning of the emergence of ISIS, Turkey responded it as not a threat to the country, but rather a means to ravage PKK. Anis Matta, as a President of Prosperous Justice Party (*PKS*) in Indonesia said "For Turkey, hostile to ISIS would have strengthened the position of the Kurds and the Kurdish Workers' Party under the leadership of Abdullah Ocalan who has long been in detention of the Turkish government¹²". The confusion of Turkey is to decide its respond through ISIS in which one of them is affected by the involvement of Kurdish to attacking ISIS. This is creating security dilemma of Turkey in making a decision to participate in the eradication of ISIS. If Turkey wants to fight against ISIS, the cooperation with the Kurds must be built because the Kurds have an excellence strategic role in the field and have qualified powerful human resources in military¹³. Then, for covering its hesitation through ISIS, Turkey build a strong military with its army in Turkish-Syrian borders. But it still potentially far away from military aggression, because Turkey still allows ISIS participants around the world to come inside Syria by passing Turkey's border.

¹¹Euronews. Op.cit.

¹² See "Lebainya Respon Dunia Terhadap ISIS Menurut Anis Matta", *on Kompasiana*, September 22, 2014. <http://www.kompasiana.com>.

That statement came out after Anis Matta has done visited Islamic Party in Turkey.

¹³Lando Alfa Martogi Manurung, "Sikap Arab Saudi, Qatar, Iran, dan Turki Terhadap Penyelesaian Fenomena Islamic State of Iraq and Suriah (ISIS)", 2014. <http://www.academia.edu.com>

Turkey is a country that directly in touch with the mainland of Syria. Of course many parties suggest or possibly persuade to attack ISIS. Then in October 2, 2014, Turkey with its parliament agreed to join the U.S led-coalition to fight against ISIS and to authorize expanded military operations in Iraq and Syria and to allow foreign forces to launch operations from its territory¹⁴. The decision of Turkey to join the U.S led-coalition to fight against ISIS is still unclear. This country did not even try to do military intervention. Whereas Turkey has strong military army, plus the powerful country, in which the U.S would be pleased to become a patron for the intervention. The president of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan said “Turkish government is unlikely to send the army across the border unless an internationally supported no-fly zone is imposed first, to keep the Syrian Air Force from attacking Turkish troops”¹⁵.

After confusing international society through its unclear action to fight against ISIS, Turkey surprised the world by conducting military intervention, on July 24, 2015 in Turkish-Syrian borders. The military intervention was signed when it carried out its airstrikes in that borders. The reason behind why finally Turkey decided to do military intervention is that because ISIS conducted suicide bombing in Turkish town of Suruc that caused 32 people died. Turkey by its foreign ministry, Davutoglu said that “Countering terrorist organizations is a national security issue of priority for Turkey. Our efforts to combat terrorism will continue resolutely. This

¹⁴Ceylan Yeginsu, “Turkey Votes to Allow Operation Against ISIS”, October 2, 2014. <http://www.nytimes.com>

¹⁵ Ibid

action not as part of the U.S led-coalition”¹⁶. However the evidence said different. Turkey eventually agreed to open its air bases to the coalition, enabling the U.S F-16 jets to launch raids from the southern base of Incirlik near the border with Syria. Besides doing military intervention, Turkey cooperates with the U.S to create “buffer zone” area in Northern Syria, which this action had long been desired by Erdogan and also as the strategy of the U.S and its regional allies for re-constructing Syria’s sovereignty and reducing the tension of ISIS attacks.

Looking from the history, it is obvious that Turkey does not only have one purpose to destroy ISIS, but it also has other reasons. The cold war between Turkey and Syria, after Syrian Uprising affected the action of Turkey to fight against ISIS. Erdogan said that Turkey would not allow its allies to use its military bases or its territory to fight the militants unless the overthrow of Mr. Assad remained a priority¹⁷. With the same vision and mission, which is to overthrow the Assad regime and destroy ISIS, Turkey turns into a key partner for the U.S.

B. Syria and Iraq Efforts against ISIS

Syria is a country that has so much costs because of the rise of ISIS. Not only face the problem about ISIS, the hard thing that makes Syrian government weak is Syrian Uprising. The force of Syrian opposition to overthrow Assad regime makes the focus of government is divided into apart, destroying ISIS, or defending Assad regime. Syria still puts on fighting opposition as its national priority, but

¹⁶Menekse Tokyay, “Why Turkey joined the U.S.-led mission to ‘degrade and defeat ISIS”, September 1, 2015. <http://www.alarabiyanews.com>

¹⁷Ceylan Yeginsu, op.cit.

Syria also pays attention to attack ISIS in its country. At that point, Syria also has desire to build a partnership with Western to attack ISIS. Syria's Foreign Minister, Walid Muallem said without the involvement of Syria, the intervention of any countries would not end fast¹⁸. However it did not get positive respond from Western, especially Germany that said anti-ISIS coalitions should not have any cooperation with Assad regime. Germany was worried that the efforts of Assad regime to make cooperation with anti-ISIS coalitions is a strategy to smooth his way to overthrow the opposition of Assad regime in Syria¹⁹.

Anti-ISIS coalitions which is under the U.S leadership are mostly the countries that have desire not only to attack ISIS, but also overthrow Assad regime. For example; Turkey, Germany and France, since the dictatorship of Assad considered as the effect of Syrian Uprising and ISIS movement. This coalition promises that they will never get any cooperation with Assad regime and choose to protect Syrian opposition.

Syria should keep on going to fight against ISIS, besides struggling to defend Assad regime. The ignorance of the U.S led-coalitions does not stop Syria to fight against ISIS. The government is getting weak because of the government opposition, then Russia came as an angel for Syria. After conducted military intervention in Syria, Russia got positive respond from this country. Syria feels glad because Russia helps them in military intervention to fight against ISIS, since the U.S and its coalitions do not want to involve Syria in their coalition, because they

¹⁸Rizki Nugraha, "Suriah dukung perang melawan ISIS", September 23, 2014. <http://www.dw.com>

¹⁹ Ibid.

do not want to cooperate with Assad regime.²⁰. Because the help by Russia in military intervention, Syria decided to join as Russia coalitions to fight against ISIS.

Besides Syria, Iraq, as a country where Islamic state was born also choose to join Russia coalition. There is a reason why Iraq decided to join Russia coalition than the U.S coalition. Even the U.S is in the first line to fight against ISIS, but Iraq never had desire to make cooperation with the U.S, since the pain in the past 2003 when the U.S tried to destroy Iraq by overthrowing Saddam Hussein regime. Even though ISIS controlled more land of Syria, but Iraq does not keep silent on ISIS movement on its country. Before Russia decided to involve on military intervention, Iraq already makes cooperation with Russia by buying the airstrikes²¹. Even though Iraq did not cooperate with the U.S, Iraq still allowed the U.S to do air campaign in ISIS area²².

After Russia finally decided to get involved in military intervention to fight against ISIS, Iraq also decided to join on Russia coalitions to strengthen its power against ISIS. Together with Iran, and Syria, these three countries officially united as the coalitions of Russia for anti-ISIS. Russia coalitions also have interest to help Assad regime in the disturbance of opposition, Western, and any countries who try to overthrow him. The past experience of Iraq in 2003, which was an intervention of the U.S makes Iraq helping Syria to join on Russia coalition than the U.S to prevent Syria from chaos.

²⁰ Victor Maulana, "Russia siap Bantu Suriah lawan ISIS", July 22, 2015. <http://www.international.sindonews.com>

²¹ Sergey Balmasov, "Irak Impor Pesawat Tempur Rusia untuk Melawan Ekstrimis", July 2, 2014. <http://www.indonesia.rbth.com>

²² RT, Irak tidak meminta bantuan operasi darat AS untuk melawan ISIS", October 29, 2015. <http://www.zejournal.mobi>

C. The U.S Intervention against ISIS

The U.S is in the first line country that feels hectic to fight against terrorism in the world. After 9/11 tragedy, this country never feels exhausted to concern about terrorism attack, even that when it does not exist in its country. The U.S with its consideration as police world, perhaps also implement security issues to protect its country from terrorism. Then, ISIS still becomes a hot news as one of terrorism actions that should get more attention for the U.S. In the name of humanity, the U.S sent troops to fight against ISIS in Syria and Iraq. Therefore, the U.S also establish The U.S led-coalition as a place for any countries who want to join to fight against ISIS with the U.S as the leader and named Brett Mc Gurk as the new official in charge²³. Australia, Bahrain, Canada, France, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and United Arab Emirates, have served as allies, particularly in conducting airstrikes²⁴. However, in the action of the U.S to fight against ISIS, it prefers to attack ISIS by sending troops or airstrike than attacks them by land. Besides that, the U.S also implement “buffer zone” in purpose to safe Syrian refugees.

Other interest from the U.S besides fighting against terrorism, the U.S, has the same purpose as Turkey to overthrow Assad from his position, on behalf of democracy. Therefore, the U.S consentient with its allies, under the U.S led-coalition, has the purpose to overthrow Assad regime. Nevertheless, the U.S led-coalition decision to overthrow Assad regime got critics from China. Hua Chunying

²³ “Obama names new envoy to oversee US - led coalition against ISIS”, October 23, 2015. <http://www.foxnews.com>

²⁴ Jess McHugh, et.al, “Who Is Fighting ISIS? Map of US-Led Coalition Campaign after Paris Attacks”, November 15, 2015. <http://www.ibtimes.com>

as the spokesman of foreign ministry of China said “We are all against terrorism, and China believes the international community must work together to combat terrorism, but territorial integrity and interests of countries should be respected”²⁵. The U.S assumes, to destroy ISIS, there must be a new head of state. Because the emergence of ISIS is also a result of the cruelty of Bashar al-Assad²⁶.

D. Russia Intervention against ISIS

Russia being lustful this recent day to fight against ISIS. In the beginning of ISIS appearance, Russia more focus to respond it using diplomatic way, such as sending some of its most advanced fighter planes to Syria²⁷. Now, this country be opposed coalition of the U.S. After approving by his parliament, Vladimir Putin finally conducted military invention against ISIS. The alliances of Russia are Iraq, Syria, and Iran. Military intervention from Russia, among others are military airstrikes, sending Chechnya forces to attacks ISIS by land, and supplying various kinds of weapons to Syria. It is proven, the carried out of airstrikes able to force ISIS out from Aleppo, Syria²⁸. Russia also planned to build headquarter of army, navy, and air force in Syria. Seeing the seriousness of Russia to fight against ISIS, Iraq and Syria, as places where got many damages from ISIS decided to join on Russia coalition.

²⁵“China dukung upaya Amerika perangi ISIS”, by *VOA Indonesia*, November 19, 2015. <http://www.voaindonesia.com>

²⁶ Smith Alhadar, “Simalakama Rusia Perangi ISIS”, October 6, 2015. <http://www.tempo.com>

²⁷ Lizzie Dearden, “Russia joins fight against ISIS: Parliament approves Vladimir Putin’s request for Military Intervention”, September 30, 2015. <http://www.independent.co.uk>

²⁸ Victor Maulana, “Serangan Rusia Paksa ISIS Keluar dari Aleppo”, October 27, 2015. <http://www.international.sindonews.com>

The U.S feels incomparable by the military intervention of Russia. These two countries have different goals in fighting against ISIS. Russia is pro to Assad regime, while the U.S is contra. Obama did not object to Russia in directly involved against ISIS, but the U.S opposed with Russia idea²⁹. The U.S did not want Assad to continue to rule the government of Syria, except during the transition period to form a national unity government. In the other words, Putin wants to defend Assad, who is seen as the only power that is legitimate and able to deal with ISIS. Putin also pointed the errors of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) while displacing the U.S-led Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and Libyan leader Muammar Kaddafi, which led to the destruction of the two countries³⁰.

E. Other Middle East Countries Involvement on Attacking ISIS

Middle East always came with the news of broke down war. This time, world face the real war against terrorism group, which is ISIS bravely shows its cruelty to the world. Western countries are already showing up their power to fight against ISIS, while, Middle east countries look calmer on attacking ISIS. This is of course makes international society thinks that the Middle East is always seen to be weak in dealing with any problems that plagued in its region. Afterward, the existence of Arab Leagues are be questioned in this case.

ISIS exist in Middle East, and some argue that ISIS is the problem of Middle East. Otherwise, Middle East is considered as a party that has to take more responsibility to fight against ISIS since it made a lot of damages in Middle East

²⁹ Smith Alhadar, op.cit.

³⁰ Ibid.

area. Questioning about the Middle East countries that look calmer against ISIS not always true. Even Arab Leagues look not care, but the Middle East countries already taken action to fight against ISIS. Example, Egypt, Iran, and Jordan, and so many of Middle East countries take an action even though they do not hanging on with the Arab Leagues.

Middle East countries seem independent to respond ISIS even without cooperation with Arab Leagues. The desire of Khalaf Ahmad Al Habtoor to make cooperation with Middle East countries to attack ISIS seems difficult to achieve without cooperation with the U.S or any powerful country, such as Russia. Nevertheless, besides joining coalition with other countries, Middle East countries such as Egypt, Iran, and Jordan did their own action to destroy ISIS.

Egypt incensed after ISIS murdered 21 Egyptian Christian Orthodox and spread the video how fierce they killed them. This incident was changed the action of Egypt that at that time has no interest to ISIS, then Egypt showing up its angriness by bombing headquarter of ISIS in Syria. But then, Egypt decided not to join any coalition to fight against ISIS. It prefers to attack ISIS with its own power.

Before joining Russia to fight ISIS, Iran, which is also the neighbor of Iraq already took its action by sending drones in Iraq. Hassan Rouhani as the president of Iran said, “Iran is ready to support Iraq from the mortal threat fast spreading through the country”³¹. Now together with Iraq and Syria, Iran choose in coalition with Russia to fight against ISIS.

³¹“Iran sends troops into Iraq to aid fight against Isis militants” by *The Guardian*, June 14, 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com>

Another Middle East country that also fights against ISIS is Jordan. Before Jordan joined on coalition with the U.S, this country already had its action. After the downed of Jordanian pilot, Muath al-Kasasbeh who was executed by ISIS by being burned to death, King Abdullah II vowed to revenge and temporarily took the lead in the bombing raids on ISIS during February 2015. On 8 February, Jordan clarified its air strikes carried out in Syria from 5-7 February as the acts of revenge to ISIS.³².

One of annoying countries in the involvement of anti-ISIS coalition is UAE. At the first time when the U.S made anti-ISIS coalition, UAE was being eager to join. Unlike other countries that will attack if attacked, this country is so weird with its decision to pull out air strikes against ISIS after the pilot was shot down and killed by ISIS. Another reason, the UAE was not satisfied with the leadership of this coalition³³. Feel unsatisfied, or having other interest, now UAE also join on Russia coalition³⁴. This country now stands in two coalitions to against ISIS. But the speculation from Smith Alhadar the Advicer for the Indonesian Society for Middle East Studies, the UAE action to join on two coalitions considered strengthening its power to conquer Iran in Persian Bay³⁵.

Every country has different interest and goal. It is proven from the different actions undertaken by any countries involved to fight against ISIS. The U.S as the

³²Jonathan Broder, "Jordan Goes All In Against ISIS, but for How Long?", February 11, 2015. <http://www.newsweek.com>

³³ Rahman Asmardika, "Uni Emirate Arab menarik diri dari Koalisi Anti-ISIS", February 5, 2015. <http://www.okezone.com>

³⁴ "Will the USA, Russia, China, Europe and the UAE ever fight together against IS?" by Quora. <http://www.quora.com>

³⁵ See "Simalakama Rusia Perangi ISIS", <http://www.tempo.com>

first country who took an action to fight against ISIS by military intervention and created the coalition in which UAE as the member, followed by Jordan. Russia could be call as “the last one” who concern on doing military intervention against ISIS. But, it not surprising people in the world because Russia is strong in military power, more, this country is eternal enemy from the U.S. Naturally it is considered as fighting arena for two powerful countries. The confusing and surprising action gained Turkey. Its “wishy-washy” action from not involving on military intervention to ISIS, changes aggressively to join on military intervention, cooperated with the U.S. this way still reasonable than the UAE respond on ISIS. The UAE at the first time join on the U.S coalition, but after Russia appears as other coalition, then this country join it also. It prefers to stand in two coalitions.

The national interest and goal can be concluded as the tools to influence the foreign policy that implemented by each country to regulate how it should act and respond on the existing of international issues. Even some countries get no damage on ISIS cruel action, still, it can be used as a platform to struggle the power, and also show up that countries have big role to solve this big international issue.