

Erdogan's Turkey

Criminal Revisionism and Imminent War

Q&A

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Si vis pacem, para bellum (If you want peace, prepare for war)

Publius Flavius Vegetius Renatus

Erdogan's increasingly strident rhetoric suggests Turkey is well under way in her effort to upend the Lausanne Treaty and instigate a neo-Ottoman military push to expand her territory at the expense of Greece and Cyprus. Are we truly faced with a Turkish-instigated regional war?

We are indeed. The neo-sultan is exceeding even his own delirious manner by [sending again](#) his seismic survey vessel, and her warship escort, to cruise 6.5 miles from the Greek isle of Kastellorizo i.e. “an area where Greece reserves the right to extend its sovereignty from 6 to 12 nautical miles.” Thus, and as it was expected, the neo-sultan delivered yet another resounding slap to the yawning semi-paralyzed EU and its notorious reluctance to treat Turkey as she deserves for her constant threats to peace. *The sole responsibility for this shameful European behavior is Germany's permanent dishonorable custom of covering for Ankara due to economic and domestic political reasons (Germany hosts a numerous Turkish minority, estimated variously at 4 to 5 million, which could create electoral problems for any administration that*

may adopt sanctions upon Ankara; additionally, Mrs. Merkel is anxious about not provoking Islamist terrorist cells allegedly residing in her country).

There was much talk about EU sanctions upon Turkey during the last EU meeting on October 1-2 but in the end no sanctions were applied. Both Greece and Cyprus were “convinced” to water down their “hardline” approach to Ankara. It appears that depending on Europe to harness Turkey’s lust for war is a lost cause. Is it?

It certainly is. Despite [early talk of sanctions](#) by European leaders, the final result, massaged and manufactured by Mrs. Merkel, *was to put pressure on the aggrieved parties (Greece and Cyprus) to accept the ridiculous notion that Turkey is willing to take the diplomatic road for resolving disputes.* Thus, both Greek PM Mitsotakis and Cypriot President Anastasiadis were forced to accept a text of the final communique that did not contain the word “sanctions.” The immediate result of both Greece and Cyprus caving in was another immediate Turkish illegal move viz. [the reopening of parts of the Varosha](#) on Cyprus’s east coast, which became a ghost town after the piratical Turkish invasion of the island in 1974, and the resumption of the inflammatory cruising of the Turkish seismic exploration vessel and her warship escorts in the Aegean. The net result of this shameful EU performance was to further reinforce the certainty that Turkey *enjoys total EU immunity irrespective of her open flirting with a war of aggression against two EU members, Greece and Cyprus.*

Greece is supposed to resume “exploratory talks” with Turkey soon. Can these talks really recommence now that Ankara has returned, as it was expected, to her warlike threats?

The Greek government will be the village fool if it goes back to the table of “negotiations” in view of Turkey’s hostile and provocative behavior. PM Mitsotakis should seriously think about any “negotiations” when Turkey has issued a public demand claiming [152 Greek islands and islets in the Aegean via the co-called EGAYDAAK list](#) (source in Greek). I have already [analyzed](#) why any “negotiations” with Turkey now and in the future is a lost cause and will further weaken *an already perilous Greek position.* Negotiations could indeed resume only *after Turkey suffers a decisive paralyzing blow via concerted Allied action.* Since the latter is most unlikely, Greece should hunker down and **prepare for a Turkish attack that could be launched at any moment.**

Turkey’s expansionist plans are now publicly touted as a return to the lost grandeur of the Ottoman Empire that collapsed after WW1. The neo-sultan misses no opportunity to openly call for the re-conquering of former Ottoman-occupied lands. Is anybody listening?

Unfortunately, the leaders of powers that can interrupt the neo-sultan’s aggression aren’t paying attention, either intentionally or because they are asleep at the wheel. From among the European powers only France has gone toe-to-toe with the neo-sultan in a war of words. We are thus witnessing an extremely dangerous replay of the 1930s when the then “great powers” of Europe, left Adolf Hitler to run rampant. The neo-sultan has already helpfully told us [“all he wants is](#)

[same powers as Hitler.](#)” His playbook is a stark reminder that allowing dictators to grow insatiable and unopposed appetite for expansionism at the expense of other countries leads to disasters. [As Michael Rubin put it recently:](#)

*“The Eastern Mediterranean is a tinderbox. Wars are seldom caused by a desire for resources alone, but rather by overconfidence. Turkey has essentially become like Iraq in early 1990: Erdoğan, like Saddam, sees his economy collapsing and recognizes that he will not be able to deflect blame from his own mismanagement and choices. Like Saddam, he sees neighbors possessing valuable resources and believes the international community to be paper tigers. In 1990, Saddam had April Glaspie equivocate and turn a blind eye to his ambitions; in 2020, Erdoğan has an [equally credulous envoy James Jeffrey](#). Turkey’s recent escalations in the region show that Erdoğan’s ambitions are out-of-control. **The question for Washington, Berlin, and Brussels is whether the United States and Europe are willing to stand up and shut down those ambitions before Erdoğan pulls the trigger, or whether they will instead wait until a resolution is far more costly to Turks and everyone in the Eastern Mediterranean.**” (emphasis added).*

Turkey’s deliberate escalation toward regional conflicts was recently presented in no uncertain terms via a revealing longwinded 4,875-word commentary published by the [SETA Foundation](#), a Turkish think tank with direct links to the Turkish government.

The [commentary](#) under the ostentatious title “The Logic Beyond Lausanne: A Geopolitical Perspective on the Congruence between Turkey’s New Hard Power and its Strategic Reorientation” offers the reader a step-by-step description of how Turkey wants to gain the upper hand in the Eastern Mediterranean and beyond via her developing “hard power.” The report begins with the following revealing introduction:

Turkey’s new expeditionary capability, resting on enhanced naval capacity and new forward bases, is the logical result of Turkey’s post-Cold War strategic reorientation. Moving beyond the Cold War framework, Turkey’s strategic goal is to become an interregional power that will set the terms for a new pattern of connectivity between Europe, Africa and Asia. ‘Reclaiming’ a foreign policy prerogative exercised by the Ottoman Empire but discontinued after Turkey’s founding following the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, Turkey’s policymakers are seeking to move beyond the Lausanne orientation that informed Turkey’s 1952 NATO accession and persisted throughout the duration of the Cold War. This study examines Ankara’s challenge of calibrating the use of its hard power instruments to serve its post-Lausanne strategic orientation toward establishing a Turkey-centered, interregional connectivity.

There are two prominent themes in this report, aside from signaling the neo-sultan’s intention to utilize Turkey’s “enhanced naval capacity... and new forward bases:” “post-Lausanne strategic orientation” and “interregional connectivity.”

The first theme reminds the reader the neo-sultan and his supporters are straining at the leash to reject and tear down the Lausanne Treaty as the means of running rampant primarily in the Aegean to begin with; and the second rather awkward theme of “interregional connectivity” points to Turkey’s ambition *to seek naval prominence in the Eastern Mediterranean by using her “hard power” to establish sea control of her own sea lines of communication (SLOCs,) an ambition that will bring her in **direct competition, and possible eventual conflict, with other regional and global powers.***

The report exudes an ambitious “great power” air constantly reminding the reader Erdoganist Turkey is determined to expand well beyond her Anatolian boundaries by acquiring and developing bases in Africa while, at the same time, dealing with annoying closer neighbors like Greece and Israel. The report says in its tongue-bending language:

Calibrating a precise congruence between its new hard power instruments and its post-Lausanne strategic orientation requires Turkey to prevent the hardening of a containment arc in the Eastern Mediterranean by distinguishing systemic rivals, such as France and the UAE, from neighbors, such as Greece and Israel, whose antagonisms with Turkey remain fundamentally local. Turkey’s systemic rivals view Turkish connectivity as a threat to their national interests, whereas Turkey’s neighbors do not. The coalescing of Turkey’s systemic rivals with its neighbors to form a containment arc in the Eastern Mediterranean reveals an incongruence between Turkey’s use of hard power instruments and its post-Lausanne logic of interregional connectivity.

In deciphering the above, the reader notes two main points: (a) Turkey is willing to use her “hard power” to collide with immediate neighbors and more distant powers from “hardening of a containment arc in the Eastern Mediterranean” that could presumably derail Turkish strategic ambitions and (b) Turkey is not concerned with the reactions of her immediate neighbors, Greece and Israel, because her “hard power” can presumably deal with them with little trouble, especially since it is assumed that Turkish “interregional connectivity” is not perceived as a threat by these two neighbors (wrong assumption).

Coming back to the open Turkish threats to Greece, what should be the next steps for the Greek government in view of EU-NATO anesthesia and the imminent threat of Turkish military action to “correct” Greece’s “intransigence?”

Greek governments since the return of parliamentary rule in Greece in 1974 have generally assumed a hesitant attitude toward Turkey’s constant threats and violations of Greek sovereign space. The present administration is no exception to the rule. We should also remember that in addition to political passivity over the years, Greece is a bankrupt country held in debtor’s prison since 2010 by her creditors (led by Germany), a situation that deteriorates further as the Covid-19 pandemic spreads havoc across European economies. Hence, Greece, just like Cyprus, has almost no wiggle space in the face of “solidarity advice” from Brussels, and particularly Berlin, to remain silent and not rock the EU-German boat of treating Ankara with kid-gloves.

Having said that, and given Turkey's constant violations, intrusions, demands, and open ridicule of Greece and her leadership, the Greek government *must decide whether it will continue being prostrate in the face of Turkish aggression, and the EU feeding this aggression, or answer the Turkish violations of her sovereignty by resorting to legitimate defense.*

For example, violations by [Turkish spy planes](#) or drones should be answered by allowing the Greek defense forces to resort to “active measures” to intercept and neutralize the threat. Furthermore, the government must urgently review the defense forces readiness with the aim of responding to a Turkish challenge in a manner equal, or greater, than that of the opponent (an opportunity it missed during the [1996 Imia Crisis](#)).

The GoG monotonously repeating that Greece seeks “talks according to international law” only fuels Turkish belligerence and appetite for a “splendid little war.” Athens must internalize that Erdogan's favorite pastime is [fueling hostility against the West](#) and that the Turkish autocrat is a [fervent supporter of the Muslim Brotherhood and its terrorist brainchild ISIS](#). To put it bluntly, Greek politicians must realize that Greece faces literally an *existential threat* from the Turkish thirst for territorial expansion to secure “interregional connectivity” and promote the neo-sultan's determination to spread fundamentalist Islamism in the Balkans.

And while Turkey continues with her non-stop provocations, Germany is doing what it always does: she sides with the Turkish maniac lest his Islamist dictatorial regime is “destabilized:” news from Berlin confirmed yet again that [“Germany Doesn't Expect EU Summit to Draft Sanctions Against Turkey.”](#) PM Mitsotakis is thus cornered yet again thanks to the transparently pro-Turkish German posture and has nothing to expect from the EU meeting of October 16-17—other than more lukewarm and evasive EU talk about “following developments with the view of diplomatically defusing the situation, but sanctions won't be on the agenda.”

Where do we go from here then?

The Mitsotakis administration must realize we are now **in the anteroom of a Turkish military attack**. Islamist Turkey is itching to deploy her “hard power” to demonstrate she is a “great power” with the Allah-given right to sit at the same table with the true great powers of the world. In other words, the neo-sultan has arrived at the phase his idol Adolf Hitler entered on the eve of his *Überfall auf Polen* (Poland campaign) in the closing days of August 1939, which ignited World War II.

Indeed, if one has the persistence of comparing the Nazi German preamble to the attack on Poland on September 1, 1939 to what is happening today in the Aegean will immediately identify similarities between the Nazi fanatic and what the neo-sultan has been doing for the past several months—posing as the injured party, lashing out at those who will “suffer their due punishment” if they “ignore Turkish rightful property rights,” and promising a “crushing response” to imaginary threats—prompting Israel to call upon the Ankara autocrat [“to stop destabilizing the region.”](#)

The least the Mitsotakis administration can do right now is to put the country on war footing despite what the usual suspect “peaceniks,” and various “scholars” and “experts,” have to say in a desperate attempt to keep the country in her morose slumber. In the opposite case, Greece will be caught disastrously barefoot in a sea of thorns.