

“Exploratory Talks” with Turkey

A treacherous path

Q & A

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Greece and Turkey are resuming the so-called “exploratory talks” concerning the latter’s totalitarian demands re. the Aegean Sea. Is this a “positive” development, and if it is, how do we define “positive?”

Very little, if anything, is “positive” when it gets to talking to a hostile, expansionist, threatening, Islamist self-appointed “superpower” like Turkey. A positive negotiation needs a modicum of good will, at least, in order to be “positive” and this good will *does not exist and never existed despite Turkish claims to the contrary*. Thus, “positive” should not be used for any reason associated with Turkey’s overt aggression in the Eastern Med.

Greece is being pushed to “negotiate” by Germany anxious to protect her good relations with the Ankara Islamist maniac and, to a lesser extent, by the US, lest Ankara is faced with EU sanctions which, at a minimum, will publicly confirm Turkey’s unacceptable belligerence in the Aegean targeting Greece. The pressure has led the Greek Foreign Ministry to announce that [“exploratory talks” will resume soon](#) and added that the “talks” won’t be “negotiations.” Greece will be entering these “exploratory talks” from a perennial position of weakness, with her government [already speaking](#) of resorting to the International Court of Justice in the Hague, if efforts to find common ground with the aggressor fail, a move pregnant with risky imponderables for Greek interests.

Recent tensions in the Aegean brought Greece and Turkey very close to a shooting war. Isn’t talking better than fighting?

There is no doubt that talking is preferable to a war. Yet, there is a limit to everything. Talking to Erdogan, who once [famously said](#) that “...all he wants is the same powers as Hitler,” is literally a lost cause, especially since both the Europeans and the US *tiptoe around the menace that*

Erdoganist Turkey has become as she quickly morphs into the Iran of the Eastern Mediterranean. Erdoganist mouthpieces have already taken to [threatening the world](#) with a resurgent aggressive Ottoman Empire in a way that those who remember history immediately connect this kind of threatening trash to Nazi Germany's early period (only, this time, wrapped in the banners of Islam), a fact I [highlighted on this page as early as December 2019](#).

The issue, therefore, is how do you carry on in a rational manner with a thinly camouflaged war-thirsting Islamic dictatorship that the West continues to baby because of its "importance"—which does not really exist given Erdogan's vicious turn towards a theocratic dictatorship and his break with the West. In a replay of the 1930s, Europe, led by Germany this time, [has literally lost its bearings](#) concerning the burgeoning Turkish threat which, sooner or later, with beget a war that could easily explode regionally, if not globally.

What Greece should do then?

At a minimum, Athens should [impress upon Berlin](#) that serious talks with Turkey can only begin if Turkey agrees beforehand *to limit any negotiation to the issue of economic zones in the Aegean that cannot include even the faintest mention of territorial concessions*, something that Ankara desires badly but "masks" behind the usual drivel about "we don't accept preconditions, etc., etc."

There is no question that Mrs. Merkel looks kindly upon the neo-sultan, but even she should be made to understand that she could have a catastrophic Euro-Turkish war in her hands if all else fails in the Greek-Turkish "dispute." This is exactly the point that escapes most yawning EU members, who seem oblivious to the **severe risks their own countries face** if Erdogan's Turkey is allowed to dictate to Brussels and push Europe around and, thus, *ignite the fanatical Muslim cells that grow unopposed in most European countries*.

In my December 2019 piece, I said:

Erdogan, just like Hitler, has revealed himself a similar expert juggler, judge of character, and extortionist vis-a-vis the again divided and apathetic West counting on the European and American indecisive and hesitant attitudes.....

So far, the parallel Erdogan-Hitler blueprint unfolds with significant similarities. And this is where the ominous part begins: The timeline of Turkey's "civil" Islamist strongman has reached the approximate point of Hitler deciding to invade Poland (September 1, 1939). Would Erdogan follow in Hitler's footsteps by attacking Greece and Cyprus claiming Turkey's "inalienable rights" and "vital interests" are being threatened?

The signs of where Turkey is going are loud and clear—if, that is, you keep your ears unplugged and your eyes open. So far neither Berlin nor Washington follow this formula choosing instead to placate Erdogan because Turkey is "important." *They should remember what happened when Adolf Hitler became "important."*

What you are describing is in effect an impasse. So, what happens next?

There is little doubt that Greece, conditioned over the years to be the “good girl” that obeys “alliance [and EU] suggestions,” will eventually end up sitting at the table with Turkey only to discover that very little has changed since 2016 when the earlier “exploratory talks” were abandoned. Would she then go for the International Court “option?” If she does, she will need to co-sign with Turkey (provided that Ankara also accepts this ‘solution’) an agreement saying she will accept the court’s ruling as final, no objections allowed. Once the signatures are affixed, Greek vital interests *will be in the hands of an unpredictable organ that can produce unacceptable surprises* putting Athens at an impossible position.

In short, all is up in the air. If the “exploratory talks” begin, Greece will discover that little has changed since 2016—and, indeed, things have gotten worse. What will happen next is anybody’s guess. Judging from the neo-sultan’s warmongering attitude (that balloons by the day—[see Nagorno-Karabakh](#)) we will soon discover that a dead end is indeed a dead end—unless a miracle happens.

President Macron’s resounding reaction to Turkish antics in the Aegean inserted a new variable in the Greek-Turkish face-off. Is there something changing in the EU’s semi-lethargic reaction to Turkey? Could French intervention take more specific forms beyond showing the flag by dispatching warships to watch Turkey’s moves?

The arrival of the French carrier in Eastern Med waters was an unprecedented gesture by one of the EU’s leading powers—and contributed to the sudden “need” of Turkey’s exploration vessel to return to port for “repairs.” *France has really created the kind of political turbulence necessary to begin a concerted effort to oppose Turkey’s aggression.* And if we judge by the tenor of the European press, there seems to be a shift toward a more energetic approach to opposing Turkey’s war machinations. As the *Independent* newspaper [put it recently](#) in a piece titled **“Turkey is the biggest threat to Europe today, and the Greeks need our help:”**

“But today, by far the biggest threat to Europe – in terms of a foreign power that is threatening EU territory and almost everything Europe says it seeks to project as its values – comes from Turkey. Speaking in Athens last week, the former French president, Francois Hollande, laid out his concerns about Turkey.

For Hollande, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, now known in diplomatic circles as “The Sultan”, was a threat to Europe. He has led Turkey to economic ruin and now has to beat the nationalist drum, urging the restoration of Ottoman empire glory, in order to divert people’s attention from rising economic problems.

Hollande’s charge sheet includes multiple accusations: Erdogan is seeking to militarise the eastern Mediterranean; he has breached Nato obligations by buying Russian missiles; he has imprisoned hundreds of journalists and political opponents; he is obsessed with Islamism, promoting Islam in Europe and has converted two of the finest

Byzantine Christian cathedrals in Istanbul into mosques; he flagrantly interferes in the politics of European countries including France and Germany, holding giant political rallies and insisting that Turkish EU citizens owe loyalty only to Turkey; his adventurism in Syria and his war on the Kurds are dangerous; his alliance with Libya was an act of aggression.”

These are encouraging signs although it is almost certain that Berlin will again intervene “discretely” to defend Erdogan and insist on not putting Turkey’s Islamist in a vice that he heartily deserves. And signs that this is what will happen are already being made clear. The *Independent* continued:

“The main problem for Greece is the refusal of Germany to take a clear line. Speaking after Hollande, the former Social Democratic Party leader, Sigmar Gabriel, who was German foreign minister from 2017 to 2018, took a completely different line. Gabriel insisted that if Turkey was sanctioned for buying Russian S-400 air defence missiles in clear violation of Nato obligations or was made to leave Nato, Turkey would quickly become a nuclear power.

He added that if the EU showed solidarity with Greece and took any measures against Erdogan, Europe would have to build new walls on all its frontiers including internal ones in countries like Hungary, as Erdogan would send a million or more refugees into the EU.” (emphasis added).

Gabriel’s fears reflect the EU’s disastrous illegal (‘irregular’) immigration “policy” and the complete failure of Germany taking the lead in a no-nonsense strategy of addressing illegal immigration **not as a “humanitarian” issue but as a case of national security**—and leading the EU to support Greece with decisive concrete measures of protecting both her land and sea frontiers against Erdogan using “migrants” and “refugees” as Trojan Horses to browbeat the EU and dangerously destabilize Greece as it has already happened.

Does Turkey have a case in the Aegean Sea that can be negotiated in good faith?

No, Turkey does not have a case when she tries to upend treaties and international legal arrangements that are in the books for decades but now Ankara discovers they are not to her liking—and has assumed a malignant form of expansionist neo-Ottomanism “... [aiming to have ideological and economic influence on the territories that were part of the greater \[Ottoman\] Turkey.](#)”

The Aegean is dotted with Greek large islands and inhabited islets all of which have their own continental shelf and exclusive economic zone [according to United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea - Part VIII](#). Turkey *is not* a signatory of the convention and throws out outlandish demands and arguments claiming “rights” because of her long coastline mostly blocked by the larger Greek islands—and indirectly threatening to attack and attempt to occupy some of these “obstacles” to her greatness via the [“Blue Motherland” nonsense](#).

If Turkey wasn't run by a theocratic semi-lunatic supra nationalist regime, there could have been ample room for negotiating rational solutions *based on the UN Convention which Turkey should have signed if she was cognizant of the need to observe a legal regime overwhelmingly endorsed by UN member states*. But by adopting the Hitlerite formula, running roughshod, and sending out warships to claim what is not hers, Turkey not only follows a self-defeating strategy but also endangers regional and world peace. Once the EU, the US, and the “brain dead” NATO (according to the French president) digest this fact, and *really tighten Turkey's leash with skintight sanctions*, there may be a faint chance for peace and rational understanding that could lead to an acceptable solution of the Aegean affair.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo returned to Greece on 28 September as part of regional visit and held talks with PM Mitsotakis. Is this a sign of increasing US concern regarding Turkey's antics in the region—and proof of the US wishing “to tighten Turkey's leash”?

Turkey has benefited from [President Trump's strange relationship](#) with the neo-sultan, but things may be changing because of Turkey going overboard with her sabre rattling that is [being noticed again by the US Congress](#). At this particular moment, with the US in the midst of unprecedented presidential election fever, replete with street violence and vandalism in many larger US cities, severe partisan clashes, and the two candidates [trading insults in a “chaotic debate.”](#) foreign relations have momentarily taken a back seat, but Turkey's behavior is apparently (and finally) being noticed as a dangerous obstruction of US security interests.

According to the State Department, [Pompeo's trip to Greece aimed](#) “to renew our shared commitment to advance security, peace, and prosperity in the Eastern Mediterranean and *celebrate the strongest U.S.-Greek relationship in decades* [emphasis added].” The highlight of the US Secretary's trip was his visit to the Souda Bay naval base in Crete, home of [US Naval Support Activity \(NAS\)](#) that “...operates as a Naval Operating Base, Naval Air Station and Naval Weapons Station.” Furthermore, the US Navy will base [“a mammoth Navy ship” at Souda “a move that could serve as a mark of America's growing irritation with Turkey.”](#)

These are all positive developments but what remains to be seen is how *the Greek Government* will translate these US moves into **tangible guarantees for Greek security** that is being menaced by Turkish belligerence. The record of Greek administrations extracting *real benefits from allied actions (symbolic and/or tangible)* is rather poor since Greek politics is almost exclusively [a domestic game of influence, clientelism, and personal ambitions](#). In light of this condition, GoG actions remain prisoner of domestic partisan electoral priorities and often fail to act with purpose and *concrete aims* in pursuit of the country's external relations in general.

