

# IS GREECE READY FOR WAR?

## Q & A

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*Recent developments in the Eastern Med and Turkey's aggressive militaristic antics have brought a shooting war with Greece ante portas. Is Greece ready for a clash of arms with Erdogan's Islamist neo-Hitlerite expansionist authoritarianism?*

Those who wish to hedge their bets, along with the “realists,” would probably respond “perhaps” to this question. A loud minority will bark “come and get it.” The “level-headed” pro-EU, pro-US, pro-illegal immigration, pro-NGO “humanitarian” constituency, sustained and fed from subversive sources abroad, along with the overwhelming majority of Greek politicians and the peculiar species of academic “peaceniks,” will shudder at the thought and will tell us so emphatically. As for the proverbial “average man” in the street, he will either say he knows “nothing about these things” or, simply, shrug his shoulders indifferently.

*Greece's weak link is the country's political elites*, whether of the “right” or “left” persuasion. Greece's bankruptcy in 2010, and the 10-year long torture that followed in the hands of the country's bailout “saviors” (EU, ECB, IMF) demonstrated glaringly the mettle of the current generation of Greek politicians. The phenomenon is not new—it grew rapidly after the fall of the junta in 1974, and the restoration of a “democracy” that has been failing continuously ever since thanks to *top-to-bottom corruption that is immune to any attempt at reform*. This conclusion will be met, of course, with angry and fiery denials from the politicians, not to mention accusations of “treason” directed at any person who adopts it. But the angered and the insulted have only a fig leaf to defend their “achievements” with—one naked eye look at the state of the country defeats them easily and handsomely.

*Strategically speaking, is there any Greek advantage in case of war with Turkey?*

If we accept the common assumption that a war with Turkey will be of short duration (2-3 days) Greece could have the upper hand in the air war—Greek pilots are NATO’s best cutting-edge aces year after year thanks to their ultra-realistic training of intercepting Turkish intruders violating Greek airspace almost daily. At sea, Turkey enjoys the power of numbers but Greek seamanship and constant training could make a surprising difference. The big question here is whether Turkey would choose to launch a land invasion across the Greco-Turkish land frontier. Geography gives a slight advantage to the defender but, over the years, Greece has failed to build a truly deterrent defense in depth in western Thrace. International pressure resulted in the removal of all anti-personnel minefields between 2004 and 2010, a major weapon loss for the defense. The Western Thrace terrain is not kind to any large-scale armored thrust but Greek anti-tank preparations appear limited. In any case, a major Turkish thrust across the Evros frontier could get bottled up if Greek counterfires are sustained and accurately targeted.

*Politically speaking, is Greece “warlike” enough to deliver the requisite amount of damage to the attacker and balance out Turkey’s superior numbers?*

The harsh reality is that Greek politicians have followed the path of appeasement for years. Caught between the EU priorities and NATO’s sleepy posture, when it gets to Turkey’s glaring breach of every rule in the book, Greek governments simply accepted being slapped around verbally by Turkey since the 1974 Cyprus invasion lest they rock the boat and the priorities of the “greater powers.” *Appeasement is thus the instinctive reaction even today when Turkey stands ready to attack*—e.g. both the Greek PM and his ministers miss no opportunity to quote emphatically the International Court at the Hague as the ultimate arbiter of the Aegean “dispute” despite the fact that any such resort contains too many dangerous unknowns for Greek interests. As for “warlike,” Greek politicians are nothing but; years and years of playing the “good boys” (and girls) have translated patriotism into a prohibited term; have elevated “civilized manner and behavior” to the acme of Greek handling of thuggish Turkish threats; and have made “nationalism” the main threat to Greece’s “peaceable and legal” posture vis-a-vis Turkey’s naked aggression. In short, *Greek governments have elevated the psychological disarming of the country to a form of art.*

*Greece has suffered violent austerity since 2010. What is the impact of this tightening of belts on Greece’s armaments?*

To put it simply, it is close to catastrophic. Bankruptcy came after two decades of corruption and waste in armaments acquisition, with the PASOK party socialists occupying center stage and having a blast stuffing their pockets heartily with kickbacks. Haphazard procurement and unbridled corruption resulted in a less than balanced mix of arms for the needs of the country while enriching political hacks up and down the government ladder. Bankruptcy and “bailout” made a bad situation near disastrous as armaments acquisition almost ceased save isolated contracts of limited scope. Against this backdrop, the recent French offer to sell the Rafale

fighter to Greece sounds great as a political gesture but almost impossible from the point of view of the Greek budget still under draconian monitoring by the creditors. Bottom line is that all three services have to make do with what they have got already, which means a lot of tweaking and improvising with systems that are often 20 years old or even older.

*Overall, with Turkey on the war path, what is at stake for Greece?*

The proverbial “average” Greek must realize his country has near zero strategic depth so that she can stage a campaign of protracted defensive maneuver. At the same time, the perpetuation of the “civilized” Greek call for negotiations increases exponentially Turkey’s appetite for a quick grab of Greek territories. Unless “civilized” takes the back seat, and a non-nonsense attitude toward *any negotiation whatsoever* replaces it, the threat of a Turkish blow will continue to expand by the hour. It would be hard of course for the Greek politicians to grow “tough” overnight, and make sure Turkey understands she will receive the absolutely maximum possible blow from the Greek side in case of conflict. So far, “civilized” wins Greek politicians a pat on the back from our “allies” but ***absolutely nothing concrete*** in terms of *real tangible assistance* in the face of the Turkish enemy. “Civilized” is a malignant attitude that inculcates the Greek people with defeatism and the treacherous myths of “rejecting nationalism” and being “good Europeans.”

*In conclusion, what Greece can expect from her allies as Turkish keeps throwing hostile challenges in every direction?*

Greece must assume she stands alone in the face of Turkish aggression. She should gather all of her powers to make sure Turkey suffers crippling damage if she attacks. At the same time, Erdogan’s malignant Islamist hostility towards the West [appears to slowly shake the European powers out of their slumber](#). EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell [told the European Parliament](#) on September 15 that ties with Turkey "are at a watershed moment in history, which will go to one side or the other, depending on what happens in the next days." France, along with Austria, are fully supportive of a European reaction “with teeth” to the continuing Turkish provocations. The rest of the EU “partners” are largely silent or mumbling, as usual. As for Berlin, it is still sitting on the fence—Germany is Turkey’s biggest economic partner—but even Mrs. Merkel appears in favor of reining in Erdogan and averting the worst. Yet, in the end, the situation will remain precarious as long as the US remains all but absent from the Eastern Med thanks to a massive politico-social domestic crisis, accelerated by the impact of the pandemic, only weeks away from the 2020 presidential election. Could Europe—and a largely toothless NATO—avert a war that can trigger a wider conflict at a time of global instability that grows reminiscent of the 1930s?