

**TURKEY**  
*A Clear and Present Danger to World Peace*

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Turkey these days earns highest grades as the unmitigated aggressor and bully in the Eastern Mediterranean. Almost-president-for-life Recep Tayyip Erdogan, wrapped in his neo-Ottoman illusions, has risen to the status of Public Enemy Number One threatening regional peace and, even, world stability given his dangerous politico-military antics with Moscow and Teheran and his desperate scuffling with the United States and Europe.

Inflated by his fundamentalist Islamism, Erdogan appears convinced he can browbeat *all neighboring states* into submitting to Turkey’s extravagant domination plans. Ankara unabashedly invests in leading with its guns in neighboring Syria—where its plans have been nevertheless thwarted repeatedly—threatening Greece with war in the Aegean, [invading Cypriot waters to drill for hydrocarbons](#), and demanding that all East Med states submit to Turkey’s “rightful supremacy.” The discovery of rich natural gas resources in East Med waters Turkey does not control has wetted Erdogan’s thinly-veiled appetite for military aggression. Daily, Erdogan’s ministers reiterate there will be “no problems” provided *all of Turkey’s neighbors*, both close and distant, recognize unconditionally Turkey’s “inalienable rights” over strategic space it neither controls nor it can legally claim.

To those who remember recent European history (and they are fewer and fewer these days), Erdogan’s belligerent huffing-and-puffing over “inalienable” Turkish territorial rights brings back memories of another delirious dictator whose push for expansion plunged the world into a global conflagration. Adolf Hitler’s constant demands during the 1930s, in pursuit of Germany’s similarly self-declared “inalienable rights” aiming at neighboring countries, led to a succession of military land grabs which, finally, ignited World War Two. Considering the dangerously fluid condition of today’s international system, with the US, Russia, and China

involved in a destabilizing military-economic *bra de fer*, and with various hot spots around the globe exploding in violence, Erdogan's militaristic aggressive reach becomes ***a clear and present danger*** to both regional and world peace.

Such is Erdogan's superiority complex that he appears to believe his [Islamist policy of "precious loneliness,"](#) which forbids Turkey coming to terms with "immoral" states like e.g. Israel and Egypt, won't be an obstacle in ***imposing*** Turkish participation in energy cooperative projects now under way by Israel, Greece, Cyprus (minus the illegal Turkish Cypriot construct recognized by Ankara) and Egypt. What makes the Islamist strongman to believe in such fantasies is unknown. Meantime, the [Eastern Mediterranean Partnership](#) (EMP), bringing together the aforementioned four states, is well under way and has recently won the open endorsement of the Trump administration.

Greece, in particular, faces ***a rapidly deepening crisis and the imminent threat of war in the Aegean.*** Few, whether in Greece or outside it, can convincingly argue that the EU's first failed state, in all but name, possesses the strength and to defend its own alone. A long Greek history of appeasing Ankara, coupled with the double-faced approach of the US and Europe to the burgeoning Turkish Islamist threat, leave no room for optimism in Athens. To add insult to injury, four and a half years of government by the SYRIZA groupuscule of radical anarcho-leftists, turned footboys of Greece's creditors, have critically weakened an already deeply ailing country. With a snap general election scheduled for July 7, the traditional pre-polling paralysis of all levels of government has taken hold leaving the country dangerously exposed to Turkish aggression.

Even to those, who traditionally approach things Greek with sustained disbelief vis-à-vis the chaotic state of Greek politics, the current crisis is registering a new dangerous low. Even a cursory observer will be hard pressed to discover ***a single Greek politician*** raising the alarm at the obvious Turkish war preparations lest Greek voters are disturbed. The leader of the main opposition New Democracy party, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, in particular, apparently sees no reason for alarm as he continues crisscrossing the land to press the flesh and promise a "new day" the minute he assumes power complete with lower taxes and jobs for all.

This dangerous situation is further complicated by the wild card named "Donald Trump." Many in Greece have come to believe the [recent surge](#) in US-Greek alliance constitutes a cast iron guarantee of stability in the Aegean. But, realistically speaking, this is far

from certain given a long record of diplomatic experience and Washington's own security policies. Despite the recent severe deterioration in US-Turkish relations over Ankara's leaning toward Russia and Iran; and despite the apparently [solid American determination](#) to punish Erdogan over his Russian S-400 missile acquisition, Turkey, as an "irreplaceable strategic partner," continues to exert some [lingering influence](#) on American security thinking despite the gravity of the current crisis.

With the American congressional establishment mobilized against Erdogan, serious Washington players are concerned about Trump's windmill governance "Twitter" attitude and have hastened to publicly express their opinion on how Turkey must be treated at this juncture.

In an opinion piece [published](#) in the *Wall Street Journal*, for example, former U.S. Ambassador to Turkey [Eric Edelman](#) and [Jonathan Schanzer](#), senior vice president of the Washington-based neoconservative [Foundation for Defense of Democracies](#), suggested that "Trump can't afford to go soft on Turkey." The authors minced no words on how Turkey "...has been outside the NATO tent for a decade now... [and has] descended into authoritarianism domestically."

Consistent US efforts to appease Ankara, the authors underlined, have convinced Turkey America sees it as "too big to fail" thus increasing "strongman" Erdogan's belief he can flip any and all US domestic opposition to his developing Islamist authoritarian state. "The anti-American strongman," the opinion piece concluded, has tried "to drive a wedge between the president and Congress" in the past and he will try again unless Trump forces "...Turkey to decide whether it remains a part of the Western alliance in fact or in name only."

This is unprecedented wording indicative of the rapidly hardening US political attitude toward Turkey. But, is it enough to discourage yet another Trump Twitter torrent that could cause major complications? Nobody can answer this question in confidence and the example of Trump's [sudden about-face](#) after ordering air strikes upon Iranian targets is a good example of the president's windsock attitude.

However, there are two encouraging facts in play at this time. Trump has just launched officially his campaign for re-election in 2020 and has already begun his usual whirlwind crisscrossing of the country. This is no time to display "softness" toward an authoritarian Islamist "republic" that is often savaged in US media thanks to Syria, Turkey's support of ISIS, and Erdogan's cozying up to Moscow and Tehran. And, second, Erdogan is hostage to his own

ultra-nationalist Islamists who, under no circumstances, would support *any* rapprochement with the US and the Western alliance thus making the (poor) alternative of Russia the only option of the increasingly embattled neo-sultan, a move that continues being the red cape in the eyes of the American political establishment.

Irrespective of the above, a “hot incident” in the Aegean is never off the table either by accident or deliberate Turkish political decision. In such case, Greece will have no other option but to react *without actual assistance from anyone* pitting its naval forces against the invading Turks—and the [1996 Imia Crisis](#) is a good example of how an event like this could unfold. Against this backdrop, the Greek PM’s [warning](#) that “Turkey’s actions will now have consequences,” not to mention the usual yawning bureaucratic [EU reaction](#), which Turkey dismissed outright, constitute credible deterrence of Erdogan’s wild-eyed manic appetite over the Aegean and Cyprus (where Erdogan now [threatens](#) to allow the Turkish Cypriots to colonize the sealed Greek Cypriot ghost town of Varosha).

If there was ever a time for the West to initiate the *actual diplomatic and, if need be, military containment* of Turkey, after decades of pussyfooting and, more recently, tap dancing around the neo-sultan, ***this time is now***. Otherwise, all “great powers” risk another monumental mistake in allowing Turkish belligerence and unabashed expansionism to explode in our faces with cataclysmic international consequences.