

RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN: THE LONELY PADISHA OF THE MIDDLE EAST REVISITED

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As the geopolitical field in Ukraine is unavailing with uncertainty between the competition of Ukraine's Pro-western elite and Moscow's security concerns, Turkey a nearby neighbor is confronting also its own political anxiety and Geo-strategically designs that are currently shaping its own destiny.

Despite the recent bashing that Premier Recep Tayyip Erdoğan received from the EU and the US for his autarchic handling of the Gezi Park protests and the bribery scandals that included AKP party and family members, his political power tarnished he has still remained relatively unscathed. Not only did the EU request Turkish security forces to participate in a Peace keeping mission in the civil war torn Central African Republic, but also all the latest Turkish exit polls show Erdoğan's political power holding at 40 to 45 percent.

As far as his interior political front he has confronted all the corruption charges as a ploy, by labeling them an act of a parallel state by his former Islamic ally Fethullah Gülen or as a work of exterior powers and lobbies that perceive him as an enemy of their interests. In addition he has vowed to attain victory once more in the forthcoming triple (Municipal, National and Presidential) elections or quit if he fails to accomplish the latter. Worth mentioning is the idea that he is looking to push for extradition charges on the US based Imam Fethullah Gülen from the US government. Already, Fethullah Gülen's Turkish Passport has been revoked by the Turkish Government and many of his Zaman reporters that are extreme vocal against Erdoğan are under constant security scrutiny. If not, one step before official incarceration. These actions are a political ploy to be used primarily for his supporters and enemies alike thus clarifying to the crowds of Anatolia his willingness to confront his Islamic US based nemesis once and for all.

In addition Premier Erdoğan is familiar with the chronic and unsolved esoteric political and cultural divisions (Alevism versus Sunnism, the Kurdish Issue and CHP's past governing history) that dwell in the Kemalist opposition camp. Issues that have been used successfully up to now to divide and combat his secular opponents. Also taking advantage of the similarities that his Islamic AKP Party shares with the Turkish Nationalist Party (MHP) which until yesterday was a neutral force against his

schemes. Presently, however the MHP has turned to be a potential foe that is aligning with Gülen's forces and even with the Secular CHP against his administration policies.

In order to nullify any negative influences and possible political damage that the MHP could cause prior to the election run up he has begun using patriotic political links and tactics that could garner support from Turkey's Islamic nationalistic sphere to further his own political agenda. Namely satisfying the Islamic nationalistic associations that could be used for his electoral benefit. Especially with the Ülkücü movement inside MHP's popular voting base that inhabits a vast segment of its voters sentiments. It is not a coincidence that presently a series of calculating nationalistic policies were issued lately by Erdoğan in order to counterbalance MHP's Islamic and nationalistic culture. Aiming to pleasing the inner Turkic psych of the conservative masses of Anatolia. More specifically, as result of this nationalistic antagonism with the MHP a series of prison releases were approved by the AKP dominated government.

That of General Mehmet İlker Başbuğ, a prime Ergenekon suspect along with two suspects, in the murder case of renowned Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink. Concluding with the release of the Zirve publishing House murderers in the city of Malatya that tortured and killed a German and two Turkish Christian missionaries in 2007. Noteworthy is also a promise by AKP to reopen the Ayia Sofia Byzantine Christian Cathedral, which is presently a museum back into a Mosque once more. All of the above policies have one thing in common. That of hindering any further MHP gains from his conservative Islamic political voting electorate base in the forthcoming elections.

Adding to all these actualities is also the Kurdish aspirations for a peaceful settlement with Ankara. One reason why lately under the guidance of the imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, Kurdish nationalism is also lending a hand of unofficial support to AKP's electoral designs which could tip the balance for Erdoğan and give him a triple electoral triumph in the land of Anatolia. The only thing that he has to do is to defeat all his opponents plans through a "Managed Democracy Agenda" under the auspices of his trusted Intelligence chief Dr. Hakan Fidan the undersecretary of MIT. Namely restrict the internet, tight control over the media, reconstruct the judicial system to his needs and lastly give a green light to MIT to investigate whoever AKP agenda deems as an enemy of the state, policies that are already at work currently under his AKP government. For example, after the latest security council leakage concerning a hypothetical attack on Syria that was broadcasted by a YouTube account, the voices of the illegal recording were allegedly believed to belong to Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Feridun Sinirlioğlu, National Intelligence Organization (MİT) Hakan Fidan and Deputy Chief of General Staff Gen. Yaşar Gürel, gave the government the opportunity it needed to begin to impose a ban on You Tube. This latest incident despite from where it is originated, let it be Gülen's circles, or from a foreign intelligence, or by an Alevi military interior opposition to Syria's invasion or even staged by the AKP, one thing is for sure.

Its immediate consequence will strength Erdoğan's upper hand in Turkey and the Turkish intelligence Chief and possible future leader of Turkey will not leave this opportunity unchallenged.

Besides using opponents weaknesses, Erdoğan's inner cabal is also using regional issues that take place around Turkey's periphery as a means to hang into power. Including in this equation is the combination of weapon procurement strategies and a policy of weapons production as mean of regime survivability but also as a boost of National pride and force projection in the region. The

latter is also used as a major propaganda image for the masses of Anatolia but also it is a sign of Erdoğan's real geopolitical aspirations.

One thing Ukraine's crisis has shown is that many economic powers like Germany cannot follow major sanctions against Russia because they will also damage their own economical interests that stem from having business with Moscow. A principle that Erdoğan also used which makes it not easy for the US, Israel or any other major power to hinder his ambition vis-à-vis his indigenous proliferation of weapons without equally damaging their own geopolitical and economical vested interests in Turkey. This policy that is currently being followed by Ankara and will continue until all her goals are reached giving Turkey a regional power status. For those who follow Erdoğan's regional aspirations know that he has never wavered from his goals. He might take a turn or two to a different direction in order to pacify his major regional and other opponents but above all his aims remain the same.

In conclusion

Interior opponents weaknesses, combined with regional issues like Crimea, Syria, Iran, plus Turkey's massive weapon modernization and procurement policies along with major civilian projects that involve major powers economies like that of the US, France, Japan, Russia, China guarantee Erdoğan's survivability at least for the foreseeable future.

However, one power that will emerge victorious regardless of Erdoğan's political demise or not is that of Turkey's Kurds a force that currently along with Turkey's present economy standing keeps Turkey's premier on his governing throne. One force that if not satisfied with its political and cultural demands will for sure unleash Dante's Hell in the land of Anatolia.

In so far as the immediate losers in this inner Turkish political imbroglio is for sure the Imam Fetullah Gülen's Hizmet organization that has been tarnished with all these parallel state allegations but also the Alevi population of Turkey. A considerate religious minority that up to date has not seen their rights guaranteed within the Turkish religious framework vis-à-vis their Sunni brothers religious established rights. It is not a coincidence that a vast majority of participants in the Gezi Park protests, but also of the victims of Turkish police brutality in it were of Alevi beliefs.

Already the DHKP-C the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front a leftist terrorist organization that mainly recruits Alevi youth retaliated for the recent death of an Alevi boy (Berkin Elvan) by the Police by killing in Istanbul, an AKP supporter (Burak Can Karamanoğlu) who belonged to the nationalist Kasımpaşa 1453 group sympathetic to Erdoğan's agenda. The DHKP-C terrorist group is already responsible for carrying out various attacks in Turkey, including last year's rocket attack on AKP Party headquarters and a suicide-bombing incident at the U.S. embassy in Ankara. This could signify' the fact that if this religious minority's rights are left unattended they might join the ranks of the Kurdish rebellion, but with a different agenda which could alter the main character of the Turkish state as the world knows it today.