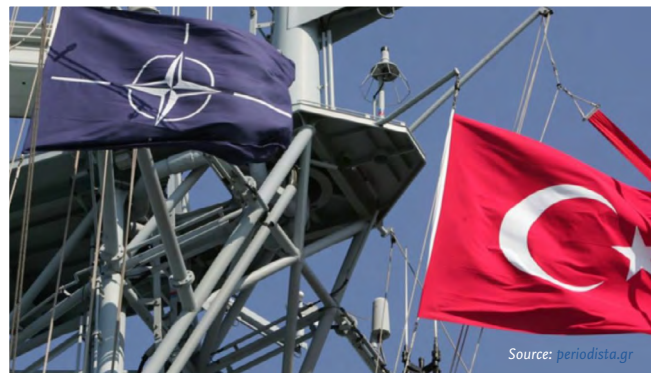


# EUROPEAN SECURITY, TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY AND ARTICLE 5 OF THE NATO TREATY

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Do NATO member states have a duty to protect Turkey while Turkey at the same time threatens NATO and European security and stability? This publication clarifies that NATO members can withhold (Article 5) protection without changing the NATO Treaty or expelling Turkey from NATO. European, Canadian and American citizens can be informed that the military of their countries will not protect Turkey and the Erdogan government. The question is if European, Canadian and US politicians have the courage to do so.



Source: [periodista.gr](http://periodista.gr)

### KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THIS PAPER

1. The EU, US, Canada and NATO are struggling with the question of how to deal with Turkey. This publication offers an overview of Turkish behaviour since 2013 and a viable way forward in how to counter it. The strategy that this publication suggests is that NATO Member States, backed by their Parliaments or Congress, will state that Turkey can no longer count on protection based on Article 5 of the NATO Treaty until Turkey changes its behaviour.
2. This publication maintains that Turkish external behaviour since 2013 is based on the ideological agenda of President Erdogan's AKP government. The domestic oppression of Kurds, opposition, and all forms of free speech mirrors that agenda as well.
3. In order to effectively deal with this situation this publication outlines the interpretation of Article 5 of the NATO Treaty as described by NATO itself. From there, this publication explains why it would be consistent with democratic principles, the NATO Treaty, and helpful for EU, US and NATO security to make it clear to Turkey that it is no longer protected under Article 5 until it changes its behaviour. This will force Turkey to concentrate on its own security instead of the current expansionist agenda. For this, no change of the NATO Treaty or Turkish membership of NATO is needed.
4. The publication closes with a call to politicians in Europe, the US, and Canada to muster the courage to stand up for human rights and security and reassure our citizens, and our men and women in uniform now that no sacrifices will be made to defend Turkey in its current state.



*Diyanet minister Ali Erbaş holding a sword, in the Ottoman tradition, as he gives the sermon in the Hagia Sophia. The “conquest verse” from the Koran (48:1) is also inscribed on the sword. It reads: “Indeed, we have given you, [O Muhammad], a clear conquest.”*<sup>1</sup>  
source: [lintasnasional.com](https://lintasnasional.com)

‘neo-Ottomanism’. Turning Hagia Sofia into a mosque symbolised and clarified the ideological agenda behind the military and diplomatic escalation since 2013.

### A CLASH BETWEEN THE EU AND ERDOGAN'S TURKEY

Turkey has been portrayed negatively in the news for many years. The government led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is involved in fighting a number of wars and is escalating its confrontation against EU Member States. It is flexing its muscles and is attempting to hijack the population in an Islamist, nationalistic drive known as

At 16 October 2020, history teacher Samuel Paty was murdered in Paris by an Islamist extremist after Mr. Paty had shown the Charlie Hebdo cartoons of the prophet Muhammed in a class on freedom of speech (not with the purpose to provoke the pupils). The killer was subsequently found by the police and shot which led to his death. In the days after it became public knowledge that the Pantin mosque near Paris and Islamist teachers had been

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.world-today-news.com/what-is-the-sword-tradition-in-the-sermon-here-is-the-message-given-by-the-sword-tradition/>



spreading online hate messages against Mr. Paty. The teachers were arrested, and the mosque closed<sup>2</sup>. As a consequence the French authorities launched a crackdown against Islamic extremist groups. President Macron launched a vigorous defence of free speech and reaffirmed the project that he announced at 2 October in a speech<sup>3</sup>. In that speech he stated that “Islam is a religion which is experiencing a crisis today, all over the world,” citing difference between fundamentalism, proper religious projects and politicians. He announced measures to reduce foreign and extremist influence over the Muslim community in France as a run-up to the presentation of his draft law on “secularity and liberty” in December. The French crackdown on Islamist groups brought this speech back into focus and the remark that ‘the Islam is in crisis’ was pulled out of context which incited a fiery response from parts of the Muslim world, especially from Turkish President Erdogan.

Erdogan stated that “Macron needs treatment on a mental level. What else can be said to a head of state who does not understand freedom of belief and who behaves in this way to millions of people living in his country who are members of a different faith?”. In response France recalled its Ambassador and declared that these remarks were

not acceptable<sup>4</sup>. A number of European Ministers stated their support for Macron and condemned Erdogan<sup>5</sup>. Subsequently Erdogan called at 26 October for a boycott on French products<sup>6</sup>.

German Foreign Minister Maas called it ‘a new low’ in Erdogan his behaviour<sup>7</sup>. The term ‘new’ was unsurprising given the fact that it came after a series of escalations by Turkey against Greece, Cyprus and Armenia in the previous month. These escalations followed after years of increasing aggression as a consequence of Erdogan his growing desire to become the leader of the Muslim world akin to the role of the Ottoman empire<sup>8</sup>.

Although the relation between Turkey and the EU has had it ups and downs there has been steady progress between 1987 and 2005. Turkey was one of the first countries to become a member of the Council of Europe in 1949 thanks to the secularist and westward looking philosophy of Kemal Atatürk. Turkey acceded to the European Economic Community, the predecessor of the EU, on 14 April 1987. The country was also an associate member of the Western European Union from 1992 to its end in 2011. Turkey signed a

4 <https://apnews.com/article/turkey-mental-health-health-recep-tayyip-erdogan-france-a4464c96841ae2be9c40cd316f543d59>

5 <https://apnews.com/article/turkey-emmanuel-macron-recep-tayyip-erdogan-france-europe-6b12b46b33a77094c5c91a544f2a017f>

6 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54692485>

7 <https://www.dw.com/en/maas-slams-unacceptable-attack-by-erdogan-on-macron/a-55398995>

8 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54692485>

2 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54625270>

3 <https://www.euronews.com/2020/10/27/macron-and-islam-what-has-the-french-president-actually-said-to-outrage-the-muslim-world>

Customs Union agreement with the EU in 1995 and was officially recognised as a candidate for full membership on 12 December 1999, at the Helsinki summit of the European Council. Negotiations for full membership were started on 3 October 2005. Since then progress has been very slow. The early 2016 refugee deal between Turkey and the European Union was intended to accelerate negotiations after previous stagnation and allow visa-free travel through Europe for Turks. The refugee deal however reflected an opposite reality that had grown since the ‘Arab Spring’ of 2011.

When Erdogan took power in 2003 he initially made a number of promising steps. He started a peace process with the PKK to end the civil war between Kurds and Turks that had plagued Turkey since the 1970’s. He created more cultural freedoms and emphasized in 2006 that Turkey was a multi-ethnic society. He created a better relation with both Greece and Armenia in these early years. The change towards the, starkly different, current situation began in 2011 around the ‘Arab Spring’ and after the third time that the AKP won the elections where Erdogan started his attempts to seize domestic and regional power<sup>9</sup>. However it should be noted that the previous ‘zero problems with the neighbours’ policy was in fact a soft-power approach based on the Ottoman empire (Strategic Depth doc-

trine of Davutoğlu)<sup>10</sup>. Today, Erdogan is a de-facto dictator in a country where there is no freedom of press, where Kurds are oppressed, and freedom of expression has been marginalized. In that sense both domestically and in foreign policy, Turkey’s agenda is now neo-Ottomanism.

This publication describes that the described escalation between France, EU and Turkey is only the latest sign that Turkey’s neo-Ottomanism has become a threat to Europe’s security. The change that started in 2011 became apparent in the Syrian civil war since 2013 and has become more aggressive and extreme ever since. This publication describes this reality in full in order to give a comprehensive overview of these developments and how the cumulative acts of Turkish aggression became this threat. This publication however does not just describe this reality but presents a clear policy option through Article 5 of the NATO Treaty to deal with this security situation. Our aim is to present MP’s and other policy makers with a concrete tool to enable them to work on a more secure Europe.

That Turkey now indeed represents a security situation was something that Europe fully woke up to in September and October 2020, just before the above described diplomatic escalation between Turkey and the EU. This realisation came when in September and October 2020,

9 <https://www.dw.com/en/turkish-premier-seeks-influence-during-arab-spring-tour/a-1538892>

10 Murinson, 2006: 947-948; Walker, 2007: 33-34 & The Davutoğlu Doctrine and Turkish Foreign Policy by Ioannis N. Grigoriadis Bilkent University / ELIAMEP (p. 4/5).

Erdogan engaged in unprecedented diplomatic and armed escalations against Armenia, Cyprus and Greece.

For both Members of European Parliament and Members of Parliament of EU Member States we recommend pursuing an end to the EU accession talks with Turkey as well as any funding to Turkey connected to these talks. This publication describes how Turkey is undermining European security, which is incompatible with accession talks. In that light the Customs Union with Turkey can be terminated as well.

### **TURKISH ESCALATION AGAINST ARMENIA, CYPRUS AND GREECE**

From the last week of September 2020 to the first weeks of October 2020, Turkey engaged in three consecutive acts of escalation against its neighbours. First, Turkey supported Azerbaijan through the Syrian jihadists that Turkey recruited for the purpose to start a war on 27 September against Armenia in Nagorno-Karabach<sup>11</sup>. Subsequently, Turkey blocked all efforts to reach a ceasefire and moved even more jihadists to the conflict. This raised the memory of the enormous trauma of the genocide against the Armenian, Syriac-Assyrian and Greek peoples in the final days of the Ottoman empire. The Armenian community is, at the moment of the release of this publication (November 2020), reliving that trauma. That seems justified in light of the Islamist and anti-Armenian rhetoric from

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-armenia-azerbaijan-putin-macron-idUSKBN26L3SB>

the Turkish government and extremists backed by the Erdogan government as well as the Turkish behaviour in the last few years<sup>12/13</sup>.

On 8 October 2020, Turkey de facto seized the property around the Varosha beach in Northern Cyprus<sup>14</sup>. This means that original Greek owners (and now EU citizens) will be robbed from property worth billions, signalling that Turkey will block any peaceful solution to the situation in Cyprus. That signal was underscored when the Turkish Cypriot President, Mustafa Akinci, informed the public that he had been threatened by Erdogan to pressure him not to stand for re-election<sup>15</sup>. Mustafa Akinci aims for a peaceful unification of Cyprus. In November 2020, Erdogan stated that he wanted to split Cyprus permanently<sup>16</sup>. EU High Representative Borrell indicated that this was another tipping point in the EU-Turkey relation<sup>17</sup>.

On 11 October 2020 Turkey sent the research ship Oruc Reis back to Greek and Cypriot waters in order to search for gas and oil in these waters that Turkey aims

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/08/06/is-armenian-an-insult-turkeys-prime-minister-seems-to-think-so/?arc404=true>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.vice.com/en/article/epddna/turkey-france-armenia-grey-wolves-lyon>

<sup>14</sup> <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/clash-turkey-becoming-inevitable-170143>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.evensel.net/daily/416166/turkey-has-threatened-me-not-to-stand-as-a-candidate-in-presidential-election-says-turkish-cypriot-leader-mustafa-akinci>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.politico.eu/article/erdogan-calls-for-two-state-solution-for-cyprus/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.yahoo.com/news/turkeys-behaviour-widening-separation-eu-151543630.html>

to claim for itself<sup>18</sup>. This happened in early September 2020 after tensions between Greece and Turkey over a similar search mission by Oruc Reis almost escalated into open war. Both navies conducted drills and a Greek and Turkish warship collided<sup>19</sup>. The French navy sent a carrier and part of its fleet to support Greece<sup>20</sup>. The United Arab Emirates sent fighter jets to support Greece against Turkey<sup>21</sup>. After EU and US mediation, Turkey moved the Oruc Reis back to Turkish waters. Since October 11 the situation escalated again and on 14 October 2020, the Associated Press reported that Erdogan accused Greece and Cyprus of failing to fulfil “promises” made during negotiations within the European Union and NATO, and said his country would continue to give them “the response they deserve”<sup>22</sup>.

The question that arises from this frenzy of military and diplomatic hostility is whether Turkey is indeed reaching the tipping point in its relations with the US and EU and what impact that may have on NATO. The EU Foreign Affairs, EU Member States Foreign Affairs Ministries, and

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54504123>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-greece-turkey-warships-idUSKCN25A161>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.fr24news.com/a/2020/09/eastern-mediterranean-energy-balance-evolves-as-france-sends-nuclear-powered-aircraft-carrier.html>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/paulidond/2020/08/26/uae-sends-fighter-jets-to-support-allies-against-turkey/#1df818f927e1>

<sup>22</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/turkey-says-greece-failed-to-fulfill-promises-vows-response/2020/10/14/c8d39eb8-0e16-11eb-b404-8d1e675ec701\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/turkey-says-greece-failed-to-fulfill-promises-vows-response/2020/10/14/c8d39eb8-0e16-11eb-b404-8d1e675ec701_story.html)

the US State Department and the related diplomatic corps have long held the line in defending Turkey against the mood expressed in national Parliaments, the European Parliament and the US Senate and Congress. MP's and MEP's in Europe and members of US Congress or Senate often call for more concrete and harsher actions against Turkey only to receive non-committal responses or softer statements and the refusal to implement sanctions<sup>23/24/25</sup>. Both the fear of a new refugee wave in Europe and business interests kept the mentioned Foreign Affairs departments stuck to a policy that glossed over the aggression and human rights abuses as well as the increasing oppression in Turkey and the silencing of the opposition<sup>26</sup>. This policy is now becoming more and more untenable as it is becoming clearer and clearer that Turkey takes this policy as a signal that it can expand and continue hostile acts without any consequences<sup>27</sup>. Moreover, the escalating Turkish behaviour makes it ever more difficult to maintain the described diplomatic and technocratic distance by Foreign Affairs departments from democratically elected Parliaments and Con-

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.rtlnieuws.nl/nieuws/politiek/artikel/4879796/turkije-sancties-kabinet-sigrid-kaag-syrie>

<sup>24</sup> <https://usa.greekreporter.com/2020/10/17/us-senators-call-for-sanctions-on-turkey-after-russian-s-400-test/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/turkey-military-action-in-syria-urgent-question-opening-statement>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2020/country-chapters/turkey>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2020-10-19/turkey-s-erdogan-gets-away-with-foreign-policy-adventurism>

gress that demand action against this aggression.

There are now clear signals that the mood is changing in Foreign Affairs departments and that the escalation described above in Armenia, Cyprus and Greece is indeed leading to a tipping point. On October 13 the US State Department stated: "The United States deplores Turkey's October 11 announcement of renewed Turkish survey activity in areas over which Greece asserts jurisdiction in the Eastern Mediterranean, (...). Coercion, threats, intimidation, and military activity will not resolve tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean. We urge Turkey to end this calculated provocation and immediately begin exploratory talks with Greece"<sup>28</sup>. Meanwhile the US is accelerating the process of decreasing US presence at Incirlik airbase in Turkey and move it to Crete<sup>29</sup>. At the EU level, even Germany is more and more under pressure from France, Greece, Cyprus and other Member States to follow up on EU threats in September that it would sanction Turkey if it continued its aggression in the Eastern Mediterranean<sup>30</sup>. Nevertheless, the EU Council so far only underscored the December deadline for Turkey to adapt its behaviour<sup>31</sup>.

28 <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/us-slams-turkeys-seismic-survey-push-in-eastern-mediterranean-645560>

29 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/pompeo-holds-talks-on-moving-the-incirlik-air-base-to-punish-erdogan-6nhphghxh>

30 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54381498>

31 <https://apnews.com/article/international-news-turkey-ankara-baghdad-greece-494c598b2b846c5257d3452615b2aed1>

The question that this publication asks is whether the EU, EU Member States and the US have indeed learned the lessons from the Turkish policies and acts since 2013<sup>32</sup>. The fact is that many realities have been framed in such a manner that each military act or hostile behaviour has often been dealt with separated from all other Turkish behaviour. In some cases (like the Turkish invasion of Afrin), the unprovoked military hostility and human rights abuses have even been justified by western officials and government ministers<sup>33</sup>. The failure to act decisively has led to an untenable situation that threatens Europe's security and destabilises NATO's southern flank. This however is still not fully understood as the total picture of Turkey's malign activities and political agenda is often not debated. Debates often focus on the situation at hand. The debate. Ministries of Foreign Affairs do not provide a full overview to MPs when a new act of hostility and destabilisation by Turkey is on the agenda. As the situation has developed over the years it is therefore crucial to have a clear picture of the overall situation. For that reason we include here an overview of Turkish foreign policy realities since 2013, the cumulative consequences for Europe's security and the ideological agenda that explains the drive behind these destabilising acts that

32 <https://www.reuters.com/article/turkey-greece-eu/carrot-and-stick-approach-to-turkey-failing-eu-envoys-say-idUKL8N2H51ZA>

33 <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/nato-chief-says-turkey-has-right-to-self-defense-amid-afrin-operation-126326>

34 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-42782017> (The phrase 'Turkish legitimate security concerns' was used to 'explain' the Turkish invasion of Afrin and to justify western inaction)

violate human rights. This overview will conclude with providing some reasons why we believe that economic sanctions alone will not force Turkey into retreat from this path of destruction. This publication maintains that it is necessary to force Turkey to concentrate again on its own security.

### **TURKISH BEHAVIOUR SINCE 2013; ACTS, IDEOLOGY AND CONSEQUENCES**

The format of this publication does not allow for an extensive consideration of each situation. However, a concise overview will be provided that gives a picture of how the various military interventions where Turkey is involved in since 2013 and explain how they are interconnected and are driven by an ideological expansionist agenda. This sequence of events coming from that agenda has created a serious security situation for Europe.



### **SUPPORTING EXTREMISTS IN THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR SINCE 2013**

The Syrian crisis became a civil war in June 2011 and at 29 July the Free Syrian

Army (FSA) was created<sup>35</sup>. Especially in and after 2013 the FSA fell apart in many different groups with different ethnic, political and religious agendas<sup>36/37</sup>. Turkey ensured that its own support and that of western partners went to these Islamist groups. From Sallux conversations with the Syriac Military Council (Self-Defense force of Syriac Christians in NE Syria/SDF) in 2014, it became clear that European and US support for Syrian opposition was in that time completely determined by Turkish preferences (western support later shifted to the Syrian Democratic Forces). The Turkish influence over the support for Syrian armed opposition was underscored when in 2018 a scandal rocked the Dutch government when it appeared that the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs had, since 2015, supported extremist groups with 'non-lethal-assistance' (for example pick-up trucks) through a program to support the Syrian opposition. What was not mentioned is that the Turkish intelligence screened these groups and excluded those who did not support their ideological aims from the support programs. The Dutch Clingendael Institute however makes it clear in a report dedicated to this topic that 'Turkey hosted the FSA's initial military headquarters, facilitated collaboration among FSA field commanders, welcomed supportive Western/Gulf representatives in the early stages of the war, and launched

35 <https://www.joshualandis.com/blog/free-syrian-army-established-to-fight-the-syrian-army/>

36 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/may/08/free-syrian-army-rebels-defect-islamist-group>

37 <https://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/523>

a 'train and equip programme' in 2014 for vetted fighters to accelerate the overthrow of the Assad regime, together with the US<sup>38</sup>. Furthermore, the Clingendael Institute states that 'Ankara attempted a similar 'control-through-centralisation' approach towards nationalist Islamist armed groups in northwest Syria (particularly Idlib), albeit with less success. Between 2013 and 2016, Turkey acted as a silent partner – along with Saudi Arabia and Qatar – in the provision of direct and indirect financial assistance to such Islamist armed opposition groups<sup>39</sup>. Moreover, these Islamist forces moved to extremism in that time-frame<sup>40</sup>. Saudi Arabia backed out of their involvement around 2016/2017 and gravitated towards the Syrian Democratic Forces parallel with increasing acrimony between Saudi-Arabia and Turkey. Around that same time, the US and other western powers moved their support to the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)<sup>41</sup>. That left Turkey as sole 'patron' of what had become a loose alliance of extremists and jihadists; Turkey merged these groups into the 'Syrian National Army'<sup>42</sup>.

38 Clingendael Institute: 'Strategies of Turkish proxy warfare in northern Syria', November 2019, Chapter 1, p.6.

39 Clingendael Institute: 'Strategies of Turkish proxy warfare in northern Syria', November 2019, Chapter 2, p.8

40 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/20/most-syrian-rebels-sympathise-with-isis-says-thinktank>

41 <https://tcf.org/content/report/assads-ene-mies-gave-syrian-opposition/?agreed=1>

42 <https://syriadirect.org/news/the-syrian-national-army-for-the-syrian-revolution-or-against-the-kurds-1/>

This early development is significant as it was indicative of the ideological agenda of the Turkish policy. Turkey has been using this pool of extremists in many consecutive conflicts that it has been involved in; notably in Afrin, Libya, North-East Syria and Nagorno-Karabach<sup>43/44</sup>. Within the ranks of the Syrian National Army (SNA), a number of ISIS fighters have been identified which is unsurprising given the Turkish support for ISIS<sup>45</sup>.

### **TURKISH SUPPORT FOR ISIS**

Stories regarding Turkish support for ISIS have been recurring since the siege of Kobane in 2014, especially from the moment that ISIS fighters tried to enter Kobane while coming from Turkey (Kobane is adjacent to the Turkish border)<sup>46</sup>. Several reports published through investigative journalism have revealed the ties and support from Turkey to ISIS<sup>47/48</sup>. The Autonomous Administration of North-East Syria filed, in 2016, a report detailing the evidence they found on Turkish cooperation with ISIS<sup>49</sup>. After Turkey brought down a Russian fighter jet, Rus-

43 <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/north-africa-west-asia/what-are-syrian-mercenaries-doing-azerbaijan/>

44 <https://www.dw.com/en/turkey-syrian-mercenaries-foreign-policy/a-55098604>

45 <https://www.icsve.org/the-isis-ambassador/>

46 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/11697764/Isil-reenters-key-Syria-border-town-of-Kobane-live.html>

47 <https://investigativejournal.org/video/turkey-supports-isis-and-al-qaeda-in-syria/>

48 <https://www.meforum.org/5317/turkey-isis> & <https://anca.org/columbia-university-researchers-confirm-turkeys-links-to-isis/> & <https://turkey-isis.org/>

49 Sallux can provide this report at request

sia released much of the information it had on the Turkish oil deals with ISIS<sup>50</sup>. Some Turkish government officials, understanding that this cooperation with ISIS was ultimately dangerous for Turkish security, came forward to reveal the talks and deals between the Erdogan regime and ISIS<sup>51</sup>. Moreover, high-ranking US officials (such as Brett McGurk, former US envoy to the International Coalition against ISIS) have implicitly or explicitly stated that Turkey is supporting ISIS<sup>52</sup>. Remnants of ISIS moved to Turkish occupied areas in Syria and became part of the Turkish controlled Syrian National Army (SNA)<sup>53</sup>. Around 25 October 2020 SNA elements stationed in Turkish-occupied North-East Syria waved ISIS flags in anti-French protests<sup>54/55</sup>.

The collected evidence from a range of sources points to a sustained and long-term support by Turkey for ISIS which has severe implications for the security

50 <https://www.nordicmonitor.com/2019/09/erdogan-governments-role-in-isis-oil-trade-exposed/>

51 <https://www.nordicmonitor.com/2020/01/whistle-blowers-tell-details-of-secret-talks-between-erdogan-govt-and-isis-leaders/>

52 <http://www.hawarnews.com/en/haber/brett-mcgurk-why-are-we-allies-of-a-state-that-supports-terrorism-like-turkey-h12765.html>

53 <https://rojainformationcenter.com/storage/2020/10/Rojava-Information-Center-Database-Former-ISIS-Members-Now-Part-of-Turkish-Backed-Forces.pdf>

54 <https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/26102020>

55 <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/turkeys-anti-french-incitement-underpins-protests-in-syria-647588>

of Europe<sup>56/57</sup>. Turkey has for a long time been portrayed as a necessary pillar for European security. However, ISIS has committed a series of very grave attacks in Europe and Turkey's support for ISIS is therefore a threat to Europe. The idea that Turkey somehow fits into the interests of Europe is no longer applicable if Turkey is a threat to Europe's security. Turkish support for jihadists, ISIS and related terror groups undermines Europe's security.

### **TURKISH INVASION OF AFRIN**

On January 19 2018, Turkey invaded Afrin in North-West Syria even though it did not pose any threat to Turkey<sup>58</sup>. The simple fact was that Turkey did not want this canton of the Autonomous Administration to exist. Afrin presented a democratic alternative for ethnicities to co-exist peacefully without being dominated through Turkish nationalism or through a Turkish proxy government. It was the only area of Syria not damaged by the civil war. Moreover, Afrin implemented freedom of religion and gender equality<sup>59/60</sup>. Afrin harboured a hundred thousand IDPs regardless of Afrin's limited

56 <https://twitter.com/AnneSpeckhard/status/1284443408464060417>

57 <https://www.thenationalnews.com/opinion/comment/ankara-s-links-with-isis-are-still-a-red-flag-1.1126332?fbclid=IwAR3wZYnb-bRMLo4SHRPbT3a-YzV3uOn625CPPmqAUt69Be-h3CqVEFLzOyNVo>

58 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-42704542>

59 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/mar/16/turkey-democracy-kurdish-afrin-britain-syria-arming>

60 <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/tag/afrin/>



resources<sup>61</sup>. The international community abandoned the people of Afrin and allowed Turkey to use SNA extremists to destroy this society and destroy in particular the Christian and Yazidi communities of Afrin<sup>62</sup>. In March 2018 the Syrian Democratic Forces were forced to retreat and so were a hundred thousand Afrin citizens<sup>63</sup>. Since then, Afrin has become a very dangerous area in which competing gangs of extremists are terrorizing the civilian population that is still present. Afrin is now a safe haven for extremists and terrorists that commit (among other things) human trafficking and other crimes against humanity<sup>64</sup>. Especially women and girls risk being kidnapped, raped and murdered.<sup>65</sup> Based on the above it is safe to say that the Turkish occupation of Afrin has been a setback in the international attempt to decrease terrorism and extremism.

## **TURKISH INVASION IN NORTH-EAST SYRIA**

The unprovoked Turkish invasion in North-East Syria in October 2019 has been widely documented in all major media in

Europe and America. Before this invasion, the SDF, the US, and Turkey had agreed to a security mechanism in August 2019 and the SDF had fulfilled all conditions<sup>66</sup>. Erdogan nevertheless ordered the attack (as in Afrin) in which mainly the SNA jihadist forces were deployed for the ground invasion. During the invasion these forces liberated ISIS prisoners, attacked the civilian population, and raped and murdered Hevrin Khalaf, a political leader<sup>67/68/69</sup>. The Turkish army deployed banned phosphorus against the SDF and the civilian population<sup>70</sup>. The deal reached between the SDF and Russia on the one hand, and Russia and Turkey on the other hand, ended the invasion on October 22. Although both the US and Russia have stayed in the area and although Turkish/Russian patrols continue, there is also continuing violence and harassment by the Turkish army and the SNA. Turkish jihadists demolish and loot the region they occupy in NE Syria<sup>71</sup>. Turkish jihadists kidnap, rape, and murder many young women in their controlled

66 <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/us-hoping-its-security-mechanism-gamble-in-syria-will-pay-off-analysis-602422>

67 <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/10/14/isis-prisoners-are-escaping-from-camps-in-syria-amid-turkish-offensive.html>

68 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/10/syria-damning-evidence-of-war-crimes-and-other-violations-by-turkish-forces-and-their-allies/>

69 <https://www.businessinsider.nl/turkey-syria-videos-war-crimes-us-accuses-2019-10?international=true&r=US>

70 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/syria-invasion-phosphorus-evidence-mounts-against-erdogan-7v2thnhtd>

71 <https://www.syriaahr.com/en/157609/>

61 <https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/f8b355e5-25af-41ab-abd2-5c8a6730e8ea/syrian-arab-idps-shelter-in-rojava%E2%80%99s99s-afrin>

62 <https://vermontcatholic.org/world/christian-activists-say-militias-target-religious-minorities-in-syria/>

63 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/07/too-many-strange-faces-kurds-fear-forced-demographic-shift-in-afrin>

64 <https://www.voanews.com/extremism-watch/rights-groups-concerned-about-continued-abuses-afrin>

65 <https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/583763dd-efd8-4b1b-9b4d-2de8adee8019>

areas in Syria.<sup>72/73</sup>. Turkish-backed jihadists clash continuously in the areas occupied by them and Turkish troops as different jihadi gangs fight over loot and dominance in towns and areas<sup>74</sup>. Turkey asserts virtually no pressure over the various jihadi militias to end this violence even though they operate next to Turkish forces.

At the same time, the SDF and the Autonomous Administration remain crucial in dealing with the ISIS threat in the region as well as the ISIS prisoners. It is clear that the Turkish invasion in North-East Syria has emboldened ISIS and put a great strain on the SDF and the Autonomous Administration<sup>75</sup>. The SDF has been instrumental in defeating ISIS in Eastern Syria (their former stronghold). As a consequence this Turkish invasion and occupation is a serious undermining of European security<sup>76/77</sup>.

## **MILITARY INCURSION IN IRAQI KURDISTAN**

In June 2020, Turkey launched an attack on Iraqi Kurdistan with support from Iran under the premise of ‘attacking the

PKK<sup>78</sup>. This attack consisted of bombings and commandos entering Iraqi Kurdistan. These bombings also targeted the Yazidis in Sinjar, even though it is crystal clear that the PKK has long since left there, as both Baghdad and the US have confirmed<sup>79</sup>. Since then, Turkey has continued incursions into Iraqi Kurdistan up until November 2020. These incursions and bombings have been especially hurtful for the Syriac-Assyrian Christians in that part of Iraqi Kurdistan as their villages have been struck in particular, causing a wave of displacements<sup>80</sup>. The question here is whether this situation will eventually lead to a larger conflict. That question is relevant because Turkey has hinted at ambitions which go far beyond a few PKK camps in the border region. On June 19, Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mevlüt Cavuşoğlu, stated that the entire Sulaymaniyah province of Iraqi Kurdistan is “under guidance” of the PKK<sup>81</sup>. Given that Turkey has always used “PKK” to justify its expansion policy in the region, Baghdad is concerned about losing parts of Iraq to Turkey. This concern is partly because the EU and the US soft responses to all Turkish military invasions up until recently. Therefore, there is no confidence that anyone else will stop a Turkish attack. This Turkish attack on Iraq therefore entails

78 <https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/040720201>

79 <https://www.uscifr.gov/news-room/releases-statements/uscifr-condemns-turkish-air-strikes-sinjar>

80 <https://syriacpress.com/blog/2020/10/15/former-iraqi-mp-joseph-sliwa-turkish-aircraft-renew-bombing-chaldean-syriac-assyrian-and-kurdish-villages-in-nohadra/>

81 <https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/8a3ab4bb-248f-4be1-a461-2c7e17d61219>

72 <https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/583763dd-efd8-4b1b-9b4d-2de8adee8019>

73 <https://www.srf.ch/news/international/folgen-tuerkischer-offensive-brutaler-krieg-gegen-frauen-in-nordostsyrien>

74 <https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/rebels-fighting-sari-kani-ras-al-ain-280520201>

75 <https://www.mei.edu/publications/us-policy-and-resurgence-isis-iraq-and-syria#pt7>

76 <https://warsawinstitute.org/turkeys-invasion-syria-consequences-europe/>

77 <https://www.neweurope.eu/article/turkeys-syria-invasion-empowered-russia-extremist-groups-and-undermined-natos-principles/>

far more risks of escalation than is apparent at first sight. ISIS is still active in Iraq and is growing there again<sup>82</sup>. The Turkish attack in Iraq is therefore undermining the security of the region and the EU.

### **TURKISH MILITARY INTERVENTION IN LIBYA AND CLAIMS OVER THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN**

In November and December 2019, Turkey started to move SNA forces to Libya as a first move in a large-scale intervention in Libya in order to support the 'Government of National Accord' (GNA) in Tripoli against general Heftar. The GNA is formally backed by the UN (which does not stop any party from backing their opponents). Heftar, a Libyan strongman, controls Eastern Libya and was, at the end of 2019, on the verge of taking Tripoli. Since early 2020, Turkey has shipped and flown between 10,000 and 15,000 Syrian jihadists to Libya. An extensive journalistic investigation by Openfacto has been published in "Die Welt" which shows in detail that Turkey armed these jihadists with heavy weapons<sup>83</sup>. This investigation shows that these arms deliveries are not limited to small arms. They included the deliveries of heavy weapons such as anti-aircraft missiles, armored vehicles and anti-tank weapons. It is very rele-

vant to notice to whom these weapons are supplied and distributed. It is well known and recognised that Turkey ships Syrian extremists to Libya. This was already explained in detail by the renowned 'Deutsche Welle' (DW) that this included the infamous 'Sultan Murad' brigade, which was also at the centre of the problems that came to light with regard to the Dutch support for extremists in Syria<sup>85</sup>. The Openfacto report shows that Turkey makes no distinction as to which of its proxies uses the weapons in Libya. One of the recipients identified by Openfacto is for example someone personally placed under sanction by the UN (Salah Badi, p.25 & 26 of Openfacto report).

Moving extremists to Libya and arming them hurts European security and undermines NATO. In addition, the GNA has signed an agreement with Turkey that if it controls all of Libya, the GNA together with Turkey will make a claim on the Mediterranean Sea between Turkey and Libya. That would mean that the Turkish and Libyan claims would border one another. In this way, Turkey wants to cut off the planned Egyptian/ Israeli/Cypriot/Greek gas pipeline that would make the EU independent of Russian gas<sup>86</sup>. Tensions between France, Greece, Cyprus and the Arab world on the one hand, and Turkey on the other, have clearly increased, partly as a result of this claim. This Turkish attempt to cut through a future strategic gas supply line is one more

82 [https://www.ict.org.il/Article/2565/ISIS-Strengthens\\_in\\_Iraq#gsc.tab=0](https://www.ict.org.il/Article/2565/ISIS-Strengthens_in_Iraq#gsc.tab=0)

83 <https://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/plus210988121/Trotz-UN-Embargo-Tuerkei-schmuggelt-Waffen-nach-Libyen.html>

84 <https://openfacto.fr/2020/03/29/violations-of-the-arms-embargo-in-libya-methodological-guide/>

85 <https://www.dw.com/en/libya-are-turkeys-syrian-mercenaries-a-new-threat/a-52329943>

86 <https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/why-the-turkey-libya-maritime-deal-is-rattling-the-east-mediterranean-1.8318515>

example of how Turkey is undercutting Europe and NATO and how Turkish military operations outside Turkey are key in that process.

This Turkish attempt to control the Eastern Mediterranean and the joint response from France, Greece, and the Arab world largely explains the subsequent Turkish conflict with Greece and Cyprus in September 2020 (Oruc Reis exploration etc as described earlier in this publication).

What it does not explain is the drive behind this seemingly continuous consecutive acts of military conflict and diplomatic escalations between 2013 and 2020. It is the opinion of the writers of this publication that it is essential to include the situation around the Hagia Sophia to understand the ideological agenda driving the events described above.

### **IDEOLOGY AND CONSEQUENCES**

The above overview has focused on the facts as they arise from Turkish policy. However, this pattern of a sustained policy over many years does not come without an ideological agenda that guides and motivates this policy. The attitude of many foreign ministries and diplomats in Europe seems to be that Turkey's expansionist drive and support for terrorism are seen in primarily secular terms of Turkey's economic or security interests<sup>87</sup>. Turkish Islamist rhetoric that accompa-

nies this aggression is being ignored as being "for domestic use". By not connecting these two facts, the impression of a rational regime in Ankara is maintained.

This attitude is however now more and more under pressure from the real-life experience with Turkish expansionism and how this is shaped and motivated by the Erdogan government. Turkey does connect the neo-Ottoman and Islamist rhetoric to the military and diplomatic conflicts it is engaging in. For example the Turkish state-controlled Yeni Akit posted a warning ahead of the invasion, "Go and tell the unbelievers that the army of (Islam's Prophet) Muhammad is back," when Turkey invaded North-East Syria. Similar rhetoric was spread during the invasion of Afrin<sup>88</sup>. It appears to be more realistic to accept that the stated motivation for Turkish policy is the actual motivation. Given the recent history since 2011 and foreign policy facts since 2013, it is more realistic to assume that even in this time and age, and also in Turkey, there can be a government that is driven by an extreme ideology. There is no rational reason to assume that this cannot be the case in the 21st century. Since October 2020 there seems to be growing realisation in Europe that this indeed the case in today's Turkey<sup>89</sup>.

In an interview on Al-Jazeera broadcasted at 31 October, French President Macron stat-

88 <https://www.nhnieuws.nl/nieuws/219894/jihadpreek-uitgesproken-in-moskee-in-hoorn> (Jihad sermon spread by Turkish-controlled imams).

89 <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/29194/europe-is-losing-patience-with-erdogan-s-islamist-rhetoric>

87 <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2020/06/03/engaging-from-pandemic-turkey-rolls-out-more-assertive-foreign-policy-pub-81963> & [https://esiweb.org/pdf/esi\\_turkey\\_tpq\\_vol7\\_no3\\_nicholas\\_danforth.pdf](https://esiweb.org/pdf/esi_turkey_tpq_vol7_no3_nicholas_danforth.pdf) (examples of that approach)



ed: “I note that Turkey has imperial inclinations in the region and I think that these imperial inclinations are not a good thing for the stability of the region, that’s it.”<sup>90</sup>

The 2020 report of the Swiss Intelligence Service (released 6 November 2020) describes Turkey’s policies explicitly. Its chapter on Turkey is introduced under the heading: “Turkey: aggressive pursuit of regional power” and this pursuit is described as ‘neo-Ottomanist’<sup>91</sup>. The report reinforces that this leads to destabilising actions by Turkey. It is noteworthy that the report describes Turkey’s policy as ‘aggressive’. Even the German government (known for its soft line to Ankara) is on the path to recognition that current Turkish policy is motivated by Islamism. In an answer to a Parliamentary question the German government stated that Turkey has in recent years increased its support for Milli Görüş, an Islamist group monitored by German intelligence services due to alleged extremist leanings. In addition the government also emphasized in that same answer the links between Milli Görüş and Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood and therefore intentionally connected the Turkish government to the Muslim Brotherhood<sup>92/93</sup>.

90 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/01/macron-criticises-turkeys-imperial-inclinations-as-row-between-countries-escalates>

91 <https://www.news.admin.ch/news/message/attachments/63415.pdf> (p. 30-32, ‘neo-Ottomanist’ remark p.31)

92 <https://www.duvarenglish.com/diplomacy/2020/10/27/berlin-erdogan-regimes-support-for-controversial-islamist-group-in-germany-increasing>

93 <https://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/19/235/1923548.pdf> (p.6)

Turkey itself displayed this reality most explicit when the Hagia Sophia was turned into a mosque by Erdogan after 89 years as a museum. This marked a moment when Erdogan wanted to make his nationalist Neo-Ottoman agenda public to Turkey, the region and the world. With regard to the latter, something remarkable could be noted. The English text with which Erdogan publicly motivated this decision differed from the Arabic text. Where the English text maintains the appearance of rationality, the Arabic text is crystal clear about the actual agenda, but it is also different from the Turkish original text. An article in the Jerusalem Post describes this as follows:

“The speech, which was in Turkish, was translated slightly differently to Arabic and English, apparently as a way to hide part of Ankara’s full views on how it has linked Hagia Sophia to a wider agenda. In Arabic the speech says that turning Hagia Sophia into a mosque is part of the “return of freedom to al-Aqsa,” essentially meaning Israel should be ejected from controlling Jerusalem’s Old City where al-Aqsa is located. Turkey’s President linked the decision to reviving Islam from Bukhara in Uzbekistan to Andalusia in Spain. This terminology, linking al-Aqsa in Jerusalem to Hagia Sophia and Spain, is a kind of coded terminology for a wider religious agenda. In the Turkish translation the same reference to Spain does not appear to be included as in the Arabic.”<sup>94</sup>

94 <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/turkey-vows-to-liberate-al-aqsa-after-turning-hagia-sophia-to-mosque-634700>



SNA Militants onboard A400

*Syrian National Army (SNA) fighters have been transported from Libya, through Turkey to Azerbaijan by means of Turkish Air Force A400M transport aircraft<sup>95</sup>. (source: [investigativejournal.org](https://investigativejournal.org) / Lindsey Snell)*

The intervention in Nagorno-Karabach can be explained with reference to Uzbekistan as Turkey did not hide its wish to expand its influence over the Turkic coun-

tries in that region<sup>96</sup>. In the ceasefire deal that ended the conflict in Nagorno-Karabach, it was agreed that Armenia will open up a road between the Azerbaijan exclave (located between Turkey/Iran and Armenia) and the rest of Azerbaijan. This means that Turkey will have a land bridge towards the whole block of Turkic nations<sup>97</sup>.

In a sense, Turkey seems to have a dream of combining the Ottoman and Seljuk empires. It is an extreme nationalist and Islamist neo-Ottoman agenda that is driving all of Turkey’s policies, foreign and domestic.

95 “The men were taken to Turkey, forced to shave their beards and wear civilian clothes, and then they began their journey,” a Hamza Division militant in Afrin said. <https://investigativejournal.org/turkeys-syrian-mercenaries-in-azerbaijan-feel-tricked-as-bodies-pile-up/>

The proof for the used aircraft being a military transport aircraft filled with standard aircraft seats can be seen if you look at an empty A400M cargo bay: <https://www.aircraftcompare.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Airbus-A400M-Atlas-Inside-Cargo-1140x696.jpg>

96 <https://asiatimes.com/2019/11/central-asia-ankara-seeks-turkic-primacy/>

97 <https://www.portseurope.com/azerbaijan-and-turkey-gain-a-direct-road-link-from-the-nagorno-karabakh-war/>

The extremist Islamist agenda is particularly felt by all Christian communities and countries with a Christian majority that are in the crosshairs of Turkish military interventions. In all cases they have been victims of the genocide of 1915 and in that sense, it is a continuation of these crimes. In all acts of aggression, these Christian and Yazidi communities have suffered most. In many cases they have been a specific target during the Turkish invasions in Syria and Iraq and a clear victim of Turkish support for ISIS. The policies driven by this ideological agenda have devastating real-life consequences.

This ideological reality is indeed repeated in Turkey's domestic situation. Political opposition has been jailed and removed<sup>98</sup>. Freedom of the press and of expression has ended<sup>99</sup>. Erdogan has implemented a policy of creating an overwhelming new number of Islamic schools<sup>100</sup>. There is no independent judiciary anymore<sup>101</sup>. This is all a result of this extreme and authoritarian agenda that is felt in the whole region.

That it concerns the whole region can for example be seen in the fact that Turkey is now openly supporting Hamas and

98 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/05/three-turkish-opposition-mps-expelled-from-office-and-arrested>

99 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-security-media/more-than-120-journalists-still-jailed-in-turkey-international-press-institute-idUS-KBN1XT26T>

100 <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/turkey-erdogan-education/>

101 <https://www.lnwc.org/upr-of-turkey-erosion-of-judicial-independence-and-attacks-on-lawyers-in-turkey/>

Erdogan is often repeating his desire to 'liberate' Jerusalem<sup>102/103</sup>.

Given the realities described earlier, it is clear that this agenda is undermining the common security of the EU, EU Member States and NATO. The spread of an extremist agenda and jihadist forces in the region, support for terrorism and aggression in Syria, Iraq, Libya, and the Eastern Mediterranean as well as Nagorno-Karabach are destabilizing the region and undermine our security on many fronts.

One other aspect is the growing evidence of a targeted spreading of this ideology among the Turkish communities in Western Europe, especially in Germany and The Netherlands. The Dutch Parliament concluded this in a special investigation<sup>104</sup>. In Germany there is a growing realisation that Turkey is using DITIB (Diyanet İşleri Türk-İslam Birliği) for this purpose<sup>105/106</sup>. The German government stated at 21 October openly that Turkey is influencing the Germans of Turkish descent and presented this answer in the context of admitting that the DTIB

102 <https://www.timesofisrael.com/us-state-department-slams-turkey-for-hosting-hamas-heads/>

103 <https://www.timesofisrael.com/jerusalem-is-our-city-turkeys-erdogan-declares/>

104 [https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerleden\\_en\\_commissies/commissies/pocob](https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerleden_en_commissies/commissies/pocob)

105 <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article187762562/Konferenz-mit-Muslimbruedern-Innenminister-setzen-Ditib-wegen-Radikalen-unter-Druck.html>

106 <https://www.normativeorders.net/de/presse/medienecho/40-presse/presse-echo/5606-dschiihadisten-als-elitetruppe-des-islams-eine-klare-ablehnung-dieser-position-durch-islamische-verbaender-in-deutschland-fehlt-von-susanne-schroeter>

is used for that purpose<sup>107</sup>. It is clear that the spread of extremism in Europe by Turkey is another way of undermining the security and stability of the EU and NATO. One example is the Turkish extremist 'Grey Wolves' organisation which is also operating in Europe and recently attacked the Armenian neighborhood in Lyon, France<sup>108</sup>. In Germany concerns have been expressed in 2018 over the ties between Erdogan and the 'Grey Wolves' after he used the 'Grey Wolves' sign during the opening of the largest DITIB mosque in the country<sup>109</sup>. Erdogan showed again his support for the 'Grey Wolves' in February 2019 when Turkey condemned Austria for banning the 'Grey Wolves' sign<sup>110</sup>. At 2 November 2020, France banned the 'Grey Wolves'<sup>111</sup>. At 5 November, Ankara vowed a 'firm response' to that ban which underlined Erdogan's support for this group<sup>112</sup>.

## ANSWERING THE TURKISH CHALLENGE

This cumulative list of acts and the ide-

107 <https://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/19/235/1923548.pdf> (p.5 see connection of subsequent answers)

108 <https://www.vice.com/en/article/epddna/turkey-france-armenia-grey-wolves-lyon>

109 <https://www.dw.com/en/turkish-far-right-erdogan-greetings-cause-concern-in-germany/a-45721866>

110 <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-condemns-austrias-ban-on-grey-wolves-salute-141230>

111 <https://www.france24.com/en/france/20201102-france-to-ban-turkish-grey-wolves-after-defacement-of-armenian-memorial>

112 <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20201104-ankara-vows-firm-response-to-french-ban-on-turkish-group>

ological agenda driving these acts have serious consequences for NATO and EU security as well as stability in the region and therefore a fundamental question needs to be raised and answered.

Will the West continue the existing way of dealing with Turkey or will it take steps in answering the extreme Turkish agenda and destabilising policies? There seems to be a growing realisation that it is not possible to maintain the integrity of the NATO and the EU if there is no action against Turkey. How can for example the EU maintain solidarity if the calls for action from Greece and Cyprus are not taken seriously? There is therefore need to implement serious action to ensure that NATO and EU security and values are protected as well as human rights and stability in the region around Turkey.

Sanctions are one way to counter Erdogan's policies. They may be able to add serious pressure but will they be sufficient in practice?

Another often-cited option is the removal of Turkey from NATO. Given all the described measures it may seem fitting and this publication will shortly consider the practical feasibility.

This publication will especially highlight the fundamental question of whether governments in Europe and North America can still ask and expect democratic support for the ongoing assumption that NATO member states would protect Turkey in the case it was attacked. It is fairly obvious that this would not

have popular and democratic support. We cannot expect that electorates will agree to risk the military of the respective NATO member-states in order to protect a totalitarian regime that has persisted in a campaign of rampant conflicts and the spread of extremism for years. A development that has accelerated in 2019 and 2020. This reality regarding Turkey is common knowledge in the respective populations of NATO members. Moreover, it can hardly be expected from our militaries that they will risk their lives in order to protect a dictatorship. In that sense, Turkey has already made it impossible to apply Article 5 of the NATO Treaty and this publication argues that it is time to come clean to the citizens of Europe and North America on that fact.

### ECONOMIC SANCTIONS BY EU AND US ARE LIKELY INSUFFICIENT

The most often cited approach to deal with Turkey's behaviour is economic sanctions. As described in this publication, the EU has warned Turkey that it may face sanctions from the EU in December 2020 if Turkish behaviour does not change. However given the struggles at EU level over sanctions against Belarus the question is what actual EU sanctions against Turkey might ultimately mean in practice<sup>113</sup>. The limited EU sanctions placed on some Turkish companies and individuals as a consequence of the Turkish transports of guns and jihadists to Libya has not deterred Turkey in continu-

ing with these transports<sup>114</sup>.

It is close to impossible for individual EU Member States to impose sanctions on Turkey and in any case there is little enthusiasm 'to go alone' given that companies in other EU Member States would quickly fill the gap. At the EU level however a compromise will need to be forged between different interests. Some EU Member States will not feel the same equal urgency and threat but will try to protect their economic interests while unanimity at EU level is needed<sup>115/116</sup>. The fact that arms sales suspensions have been lifted within a year may be a telling sign of how long EU sanctions might last.

The outcome of the EU Summit at 10 & 11 December was that some listings of Turkish companies and individuals in connection with the Turkish search and test-drilling for gas in Cypriot and Greek waters have been adopted and that the European Commission has been tasked to draw up options for sanctions that then could be adopted in a next session of EU Foreign Ministers or Leaders of Government<sup>117/118</sup>. In the cited Reuters reports, EU diplomats called these steps 'symbolic' and 'incremental' Cypriot, Greek and

<sup>114</sup> <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/turkey-blasts-eu-for-sanctioning-turkish-firm/1980998>

<sup>115</sup> <https://www.euronews.com/2020/10/01/eu-summit-european-leaders-remain-divided-over-turkey-and-belarus-sanctions>

<sup>116</sup> <https://greekcitytimes.com/2020/10/19/eu-sanctions-against-turkey/>

<sup>117</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/turkey-eu-draft/exclusive-eu-to-toughen-sanctions-on-turkish-drilling-draft-statement-idUSKBN28J1N6>

<sup>118</sup> <https://the arabweekly.com/eu-draws-list-turkish-targets-sanctions>

<sup>113</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/02/belarus-officials-eu-sanctions-lukashenko>

French demands for tougher steps did not gain a majority. That outcome is insufficient given what is at stake in terms of EU security and European solidarity as well as human rights and stability in the region. It is very unlikely that such a 'light touch' approach will deter Turkey as Turkey itself already indicated<sup>119</sup>. Overall the lack of action at this EU Summit is evidence of the limits of economic sanctions through the EU.

US sanctions, if they were to happen, might be more stringent and effective. When the US imposed sanctions on Turkish Ministers over the jailed Pastor Andrew Brunson, Turkey released him<sup>120</sup>. It is unlikely that the US would indeed place the same devastating sanctions on Turkey as it did on Iran. Given that Turkey is still in the customs union with the EU the US will ultimately need cooperation with the EU for any serious sanction program against Turkey that is focused on overall change of Turkish behavior (and not a single issue). In a sudden move, President Trump greenlighted at 10 December some sanctions against Turkey but according to Reuters they were limited to Turkey's defense officials, including the chief of the top defense procurement agency<sup>121/122</sup>.

<sup>119</sup> <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-turkey-eu-erdogan-idUKKBN28J17L>

<sup>120</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-45036378>

<sup>121</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-12-10/u-s-plans-to-sanction-turkey-for-buying-russian-s-400-missiles>

<sup>122</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/usa-turkey-sanctions-exclusive-int-idUSKBN28K2TZ>

One specific option in terms of sanctions is a suspension or ban on arms deliveries. Suspensions of arms deliveries to Turkey due to the Turkish invasion in North-East Syria have however in reality often been circumvented by the same countries or have been silently lifted a few months later<sup>123/124</sup>. The slow, costly and laborious withdrawal of the F-35 production from Turkey has however shown the limits of the 'arms suspension' approach<sup>125</sup>. It needs to be noted here that Turkey has now sufficient capacity to build armed drones that can match for example Russian drones<sup>126</sup>. Turkey could also decide to buy arms elsewhere which further limits the effectiveness of suspension or banning arms deliveries to Turkey.

The overall effectiveness of sanctions as security tool is disputed and uncertain as several studies show<sup>127/128/129</sup>. Publications referred to show that at the very least they need to be combined with other tools that apply pressure on the targeted

<sup>123</sup> <https://ahvalnews.com/germany-turkey/germany-lifts-suspension-arms-deliveries-turkey-jerusalem-post>

<sup>124</sup> <https://www.brusselstimes.com/news/business/143995/belgian-companies-circumvent-arms-embargo-to-turkey/>

<sup>125</sup> <https://www.defensenews.com/air/2019/07/17/turkey-officially-kicked-out-of-f-35-program/>

<sup>126</sup> [https://www.defenseworld.net/news/27424/Did\\_UK\\_s\\_Defense\\_Secretary\\_Praise\\_Turkey\\_s\\_Drones\\_EW\\_Systems\\_#.X9CtCNhKi7o](https://www.defenseworld.net/news/27424/Did_UK_s_Defense_Secretary_Praise_Turkey_s_Drones_EW_Systems_#.X9CtCNhKi7o)

<sup>127</sup> <https://www.asionline.org/security-management-magazine/articles/2020/01/the-effectiveness-of-economic-sanctions-as-a-security-tool/>

<sup>128</sup> [https://www.wto.org/english/res\\_e/reser\\_e/ersd201803\\_e.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/reser_e/ersd201803_e.pdf)

<sup>129</sup> <https://theconversation.com/under-what-conditions-are-international-sanctions-effective-147309>



country<sup>130</sup>. Even if the EU and US would indeed apply effective sanctions on Turkey, additional tools such as the one presented in this publication would still be necessary in addition to these sanctions.

Moreover the EU High Representative Borrell stated clearly at 22 November 2020 that the EU Foreign policy cannot „rely on just money and sanctions” but that the EU needs to „learn to use the language of power”. This new mentality of EU foreign policy needs to arise from the EU Member States in order to become reality at the European level<sup>131</sup>.

The tool presented in this publication fits in that approach as it has one important advantage in comparison with economic sanctions. Informing Turkey that it will not receive any military help as NATO Member can only be done by national Parliaments and/or governments. It is therefore far less subject to a process of international compromise. It is in that sense a very democratic tool as it is one that can directly be applied by those elected in a Parliament or Congress or Senate. Security is an issue that affects the European citizens immediately (as we have seen in terror attacks in Europe) and therefore it is important that there are tools that their elected representatives can apply. This is why this publication focuses on Article 5 of the NATO Treaty.

<sup>130</sup> <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/sanctions-are-effective-if-used-correctly/>

<sup>131</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?ref=save-d&v=1834969879983893>



Truman signing NATO treaty

Credits: George Tames The New York Times

## CLARITY ON TURKEY AND ARTICLE 5 OF THE NATO TREATY AS ROAD TO CURB TURKISH EXPANSIONISM

The recurring debate on Turkish NATO membership and a road forward

The debate on Turkey's membership in NATO is by now a permanent issue<sup>132</sup>. Turkey entered NATO in 1952 in order to counter the threat of communism<sup>133</sup>. In 1974 it became already clear how problematic Turkish membership was when Turkey invaded Cyprus. Internally Turkey's democracy was from 1960 to 1997 ultimately under control of the military that in 1960, 1971 and 1980 took control of the country. There was hope for change for the better in 2002 but that lasted only until 2011. Meanwhile the Turkish

<sup>132</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2019/10/turkey-and-nato-troubled-relationship/599890/>

<sup>133</sup> [https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/greece\\_and\\_turkey\\_join\\_nato\\_london\\_22\\_october\\_1951-en-c193a825-2f1c-4e12-b26d-d35fab6c659f.html](https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/greece_and_turkey_join_nato_london_22_october_1951-en-c193a825-2f1c-4e12-b26d-d35fab6c659f.html)

track-record on human rights and the rights of minorities has remained poor even before 2011<sup>134</sup>. After Turkey invaded Afrin and all subsequent escalations, the debate on Turkish membership of NATO became more and more a mainstream issue<sup>135</sup><sup>136</sup><sup>137</sup>.

There is nevertheless little appetite among most leaders of government of NATO members to try to remove Turkey from NATO. From a legal perspective there is no mechanism in the NATO Treaty to remove a Member State from NATO. The application of the 'Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties' has been suggested but some NATO members are not party to that Treaty<sup>138</sup>. Removing Turkey would require suspending or changing the NATO Treaty which (from a legal perspective) would require the support of Turkey which would not cooperate to that end<sup>139</sup>. Aside from the legal impossibility there is a reluctance to create such a rough rupture in relations without any clarity over the future or leverage left.

However, given the Turkish purchase of the Russian S-400 air defense missile

<sup>134</sup> Arat, Zehra F. Kabasakal (1 January 2011). Human Rights in Turkey. University of Pennsylvania Press.

<sup>135</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/03/world/europe/turkey-nato.html>

<sup>136</sup> <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/natos-turkey-ties-must-change>

<sup>137</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/aze545ea-f0f7-11e9-bfa4-b25f1f42901>

<sup>138</sup> <https://www.justsecurity.org/66574/can-turkey-be-expelled-from-nato/>

<sup>139</sup> <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/skeptics/sorry-lindsey-graham-america-cant-kick-turkey-out-nato-unilaterally-86461>

system and its activation and testing on 16 October 2020 it is becoming clearer that NATO needs to make a strong move in regard to Turkey (seen from a purely NATO perspective alone)<sup>140</sup>. The described developments since 2013 are in any case sufficient ground to take decisive action against Turkey in the NATO framework. As described, suspensions of arms sales or economic sanctions may not have the desired effect and need at the very least a strong additional measure that will immediately impact Turkish security.

This publication will for these reasons now focus on a middle road between a total rupture and continuation of the existing policy that is now tantamount to appeasement. Appeasement is no longer an option as Turkish malign actions are gaining pace in 2020. A total rupture without any leverage left would make it very difficult for other forces in Turkey to shift the country back to a more normal and democratic situation. So a middle road between extremes is needed that is at the same time firm and consequential

As stated above there is no question regarding the popular opinion in the West over Turkey. The simple fact that opposition against Turkey is seen as a vote winner is a sufficient answer to that question. That the support for Turkish accession to the EU has plummeted is indicative of the public mood on the

<sup>140</sup> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/us-warns-of-serious-consequences-as-turkey-said-to-test-s-400-defense-system/>

matter<sup>141</sup>. It is therefore no surprise that defending Turkey with western military forces is understood as something unpopular. However, in democracies it is widely understood that the military acts to defend the people and is not outside the democratic process. The principle of parliamentary and therefore democratic oversight of the military is a given in all western democracies and military deployment is understood as ultimately being subject to democratic control. The lack of democratic support for an actual defense of Turkey should therefore matter in dealing with the role of Turkey in NATO. This publication maintains that it is at that point that there is a solution that provides a strong response to Turkey that respects democracy without losing all leverage.

This publication maintains that it is democratically responsible to clarify openly to the electorate that if Turkey would ask for assistance in the framework of Article 5 of the NATO Treaty, no support would be given unless Turkey ends and withdraws from all its acts of aggression and areas it now occupies. This would force Turkey to reconsider its expansionist and aggressive agenda and instead focus on its own security.

## ARTICLE 5 OF THE NATO TREATY ACCORDING TO NATO

Time and again, US and European For-

<sup>141</sup> <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/international/articles-reports/2019/03/05/eurotrack-it-was-mistake-admit-romania-and-bulgari> (Note that hypothetical accession of Russia is more popular than accession of Turkey)

eign Affairs officials repeat this one phrase 'Turkey, our NATO ally'. That one phrase implies a reality that does not exist anymore and now needs to be called out. The fact that Turkey is called 'a NATO ally' implies that it can rely on NATO for defense if it is attacked. That idea is one of the deepest commitments any nation can make. It means that a nation is prepared to sacrifice its men and women in uniform to defend another country. The phrase 'Turkey, our NATO ally' implies that NATO states still have this commitment to Turkey. Given all developments since 2013, it is clear that Turkey no longer adheres to NATO values. It is time to inform our citizens and Turkey that its membership of NATO does not mean that other NATO members will sacrifice their men and women if Turkey is being attacked.

It is often assumed that article 5 of the NATO Treaty means that there is an automatic obligation to defend NATO member states. According to NATO this is not the case.

Article 5 of the NATO Treaty says: 'The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as

it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.'

The NATO website clarifies the precise meaning and working of Article 5<sup>142</sup>. Ultimately, NATO is the only source that can determine how the NATO Treaty is interpreted and therefore their clarification on their own website is the most authoritative source on this issue.

The NATO website clarifies that when the NATO Treaty was drafted, 'the European participants wanted to ensure that the United States would automatically come to their assistance should one of the signatories come under attack. The United States did not want to make such a pledge and obtained that this be reflected in the wording of Article 5'. The US inserted 'such action as it deems necessary' precisely to avoid any automatic duty to aid NATO members if they are attacked.

The NATO website further clarifies the following on the working of Article 5:

'With the invocation of Article 5, Allies can provide any form of assistance they deem necessary to respond to a situation. This is an individual obligation on each Ally and each Ally is responsible for determining what it deems necessary in the particular circumstances. This assistance is taken forward in concert with other Al-

<sup>142</sup> NATO website on 'collective defense – Article 5': [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_110496.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_110496.htm) (on that page go to 'a cornerstone of the alliance' and click there and scroll down to find the precise explanation as cited in this publication).

lies. It is not necessarily military and depends on the material resources of each country. It is therefore left to the judgment of each individual member country to determine how it will contribute. Each country will consult with the other members, bearing in mind that the ultimate aim is to "to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area".

From this explanation it is clear that there is no automatic binding obligation to provide assistance under Article 5 of the NATO Treaty. Each NATO member state can and will make its own decision in that regard. That clarifies that it is possible for any NATO government or its parliament to inform its citizens, and Turkey, that there will be no support for Turkey in the case it was attacked. For that there is no need to change the NATO treaty or remove Turkey from NATO. It is therefore possible to take this political action to provide clarity on this issue.

There is no provision in Article 5 that denies the possibility to give this clarity in advance. Given the tension that Turkey is creating with all its neighbours, it would not be far-fetched to inform the public and Turkey before any escalation happens. This publication maintains that this will have a de-escalating effect as it will reveal Turkey's vulnerability in the region and force it to change its behaviour. Denying Turkey this support until it changes its behaviour will therefore contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area.

## ARTICLE 5 OF THE NATO TREATY AS SHIELD FOR TURKISH BEHAVIOUR

The Foreign Affairs status quo until now has been that Turkish membership of NATO has been beneficial for the security of Europe and NATO as a whole, especially in the light of Russia's expansionism. Furthermore, the 'cooperation against terrorism' is still cited as a reason not to introduce real change in relation to Turkey or apply real pressure on the Erdogan regime<sup>143/144</sup>.

The idea that the West can cooperate with Turkey in combating terrorism while Turkey is moving jihadists from battlefield to battlefield since 2013 is in clear contradiction. There is still an unwillingness among many foreign affairs thinktanks and the diplomatic corps to understand Turkish aggression as a threat to European security on a par with that of Russia. The message that Turkey is indispensable for European and NATO security is still repeated<sup>145/146/147</sup>. However, the fact that Turkey is smaller than Russia does not make it less dangerous for European security. The facts since 2013 show that Turkey has already actively destabilized

Europe's security on a level on par with Russia.

The refugee crisis of 2015 is an example of how Turkey's subsequent moves created destabilization in Europe. Turkey blocked from the beginning of the Syrian crisis the unity of the Syrian opposition through blocking any cooperation between the officially recognized Syrian opposition and the (predecessors of the) Syrian Democratic Forces and their political representation. Instead Turkey favored extremism. That policy guaranteed the victory of Assad as the opposition remained divided and created therefore a much larger stream of refugees from Syria. A refugee stream that in turn was used against the EU in 2015 when Turkey ensured that these desperate people overwhelmed the governance and political capacity of Europe. This in turn created upheaval and instability in the EU. In addition, Turkish active and passive support for ISIS has had a massive impact on Europe's security. To various degrees the other Turkish actions as described earlier in this publication and agenda that drives Turkish foreign and domestic policy, similarly represent a threat to Europe's security and stability.

The status quo opinion on Turkey has failed to present and understand the extent of the seriousness of this situation and its real consequences for our security. The communis opinio in Foreign Affairs continued to emphasize up until very recently that 'Turkey is our indispensable ally'. Turkey has taken this as appeasement of its policies as there was lit-

143 <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2020/01/29/how-far-can-turkey-challenge-nato-and-eu-in-2020-pub-80912>

144 <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/1424345/>

145 <https://www.csis.org/analysis/turkey-and-nato-relationship-worth-saving>

146 <http://crisesobservatory.es/why-does-the-nato-need-turkey/>

147 <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/fikraforum/view/USA-Turkey-NATO-Syrian-War-Assad-Erdogan>

tle or no consequence to the subsequent acts of escalation, support for extremism, military conflicts and the egregious violations of human rights. There has been an almost 'blind' blanket application of Turkish NATO membership and a continuation of the implicit application of Article 5 of the NATO Treaty.

This has at least created the impression that when push comes to shove, the NATO will defend Turkey, regardless of the Turkish realities as described before. And indeed that message of continued protection is still the main message from most of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, many in the State Department and in the diplomatic corps as the old paradigms from the 20th century continues to determine their attitude and policies<sup>148</sup>. The fact that this is also motivated by economic and business interests is not denied<sup>149</sup>. Economic ties are used as an argument to continue the current policy towards Turkey<sup>150</sup>. The problem is that the benefits of these economic ties do not outweigh the costs that the taxpayers are having to carry. The costs of the Syrian refugee crisis and ISIS terrorism, as well as other consequences of Turkish behaviour, need to be put on the table when it comes to relations with Turkey. The question is whether the average taxpayer sees any of the benefits, as there is no question at all that the taxpayers ulti-

mately carry the costs which is important from a democratic perspective. Therefore, it is necessary to take such action as to make clear to Turkey that it can no longer continue to be under the illusion that it is protected by Article 5 of the NATO Treaty. A new balance of power between NATO, the EU and the US on the one side and Turkey on the other is needed to curb the human and economic costs of Turkish foreign policies. Turkey can no longer be allowed to be in a position to blackmail Europe and NATO.

Moreover, the purpose of Article 5 of the NATO Treaty is 'to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.' Ignoring Turkish acts of violence and maintaining the illusion of NATO protection through Article 5 has produced the opposite. At the very least it has not produced any result in terms of reigning in Turkish aggression. This fact alone is evidence that Turkey has concluded that its behaviour enjoys protection which is in contradiction with how the NATO Treaty defines both security and its values.

NATO describes its values and the NATO understanding of security in Articles 1 and 2 of the NATO Treaty:

1. The Parties undertake, as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, **to settle any international dispute in which they may be involved by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered, and to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the pur-**

148 <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-turkey/>

149 <https://www.theneweuropean.co.uk/br-exit-news/europe-news/cathrin-schael-germany-turkey-special-relationship-90036>

150 <https://www.ft.com/content/ec8abaa8-d8f8-11e8-a854-33d6f82e62f8>



poses of the United Nations.

2. *The Parties will contribute toward the further development of peaceful and friendly international relations by strengthening their free institutions, by bringing about a better understanding of the principles upon which these institutions are founded, and by promoting conditions of stability and well-being. They will seek to eliminate conflict in their international economic policies and will encourage economic collaboration between any or all of them.*

Emphasis has been added to those essential elements that have been violated by Turkey since 2013. The facts as described in this publication have all played out in the sight of global media. Both the ideology driving the Turkish agenda, and the acts and policies carried out by the Turkish state because of this agenda, are in flagrant contradiction with Articles 1 & 2 of the NATO Treaty. Therefore, maintaining the illusion of protection for Turkey in its current state is not contributing to the goal of NATO but rather the reverse as it is creating more insecurity and instability. **Turkey feels protected 'at home' through the impression of being protected by NATO and feels therefore free to operate abroad. This publication recommends to take away this impression in order to stem the destructive Turkish operations.**

Ignoring human dignity and democratic values seldom carry costs in the short term. However, as can be seen in this situation, the costs of ignoring fundamen-

tal values will ultimately become apparent.

As the pace of Turkish escalations is accelerating, it is of the essence to make sure Turkey is very soon forced to return to maintaining its own security.

## GEOPOLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

There is already a change in the attitude towards Turkey due to an acceleration of Turkish escalations against NATO and European security interests<sup>151/152</sup>. However there is at the same moment still a persistent belief that any serious steps against Turkey would decrease our security due to a Russian 'takeover' of Turkey. US Assistant Secretary of State R. Clarke Cooper recently told NATO allies, to do what they can to "make sure that Turkey remains in the West"<sup>153</sup>. There is at the very least a persistent conviction that Turkey is a necessary ally against Russia<sup>154</sup>. We want to challenge these oft-repeated notions.

The scenario of a (gradual) takeover of Turkey by Russia assumes that Turkey would be willing to concede to Russia, with the Turkish acquisition of the S-400 system often pointed to as evidence.

<sup>151</sup> <https://www.voanews.com/usa/nato-allies-growing-weary-turkish-aggression>

<sup>152</sup> <https://m.bianet.org/english/world/234736-merkel-a-decision-will-be-made-at-eu-summit-about-turkey-s-eastern-mediterranean-activities>

<sup>153</sup> <https://www.voanews.com/usa/west-danger-losing-turkey-us-warns>

<sup>154</sup> <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2020/03/02/commentary/world-commentary/turkey-mediocre-nato-ally-russia-enemy-no-1/>

What is not factored in, however, is the Turkish agenda. The assumption of a Russian takeover of Turkey would depend on Turkey being willing to concede to Russia. That is not the reality as Turkey sees it. Erdogan described his agenda when the Hagia Sophia was turned into a mosque; this is not a Turkey that is planning to be overtaken by Russia. The reality since 2013, leading to many clashes with Russia on several fronts, also does not indicate that Turkey would simply fall to Russia. To underscore that, Erdogan argued that the support for Azerbaijan was part of Turkey's goal to get its "deserved place in the world order."<sup>155</sup>

Ignoring the actual Turkish agenda, policies, and acts while playing up the idea that Russia would overtake Turkey has been the basis for the soft treatment of Turkey. In that sense the fear that Turkey would take the side of Russia is a theoretical stance. This theory has nevertheless determined European and US Foreign policy towards Turkey. As a result, both NATO and Europe are now less secure.

Past facts and recent developments point in a very different direction. Russia is seemingly trying to find a stronger balance against Turkey as it is clashing with Turkey in Syria, Libya and Nogorno-Kara-

bach<sup>156/157/158</sup>. The moment that Russia knows that Turkey is vulnerable, it will be possible for Russia to find a stronger balance against Turkey. Turkey however will continue to depend on the West in an economic sense. This new balance will force Turkey to reduce its violence and escalations.

Opponents of our stance will state that Russia may indeed create a hybrid warfare against Turkey once it is clear that Turkey will not be protected<sup>159</sup>. Even though that would be quite a stretch and very risky for Russia, it also would force Turkey to change tack in the region and in its relation to NATO. It is clear that in any circumstance, Turkey would no longer have the means to threaten its neighbours and would not be able to continue to shift jihadists to new battlegrounds. These two facts would bring immediate benefits to the stability of the region.

Regardless of the reasoning described here, it is still clear that there is no rational basis in applying Article 5 of the NATO Treaty to defend one threat against another (assuming a Turkish/Russian clash). The electorates will rightly ask why any NATO member state would risk its mil-

<sup>156</sup> <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/10/turkey-russia-s400-tested-cracks-an-kara-moscow-ties-show.html>

<sup>157</sup> <https://www.france24.com/en/middle-east/20201026-russian-air-strikes-kill-dozens-of-turkish-backed-rebels-in-syria-monitor-says>

<sup>158</sup> <https://npasyria.com/en/49821/> (Negotiations between Russia and Turkey about Nagorno-Karabakh and Syria's Idlib end in stalemate)

<sup>159</sup> <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/in-sights/28583/for-nato-turkey-russia-war-is-a-nightmare-scenario>

<sup>155</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-armenia-azerbaijan-erdogan-analysis/in-nagorno-karabakh-conflict-erdogan-eyes-turkeys-place-in-world-order-idUSKBN26SoJM>

itary for that purpose. Defending an aggressive Turkey will not contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area. The notion that Turkey is an ally against Russia overlooks the facts as described in this publication. Based on these realities we maintain that protecting Turkey would require to ignore the threat that Turkey itself poses to European security.

It is important for NATO to listen more carefully to the region itself when it comes to Turkey. The Arab world understands Turkey as a threat and is implementing sanctions against it<sup>160/161</sup>. They do not see Turkey as an ally against the Russo-Iranian axis but as a threat in its own right. The Arab world rejects the Turkish nationalist use of Islam which is evidence that the rejection of Turkish actions does not imply that Islam as such is a threat. The Arab world has an immediate and intimate understanding of Turkey and its behaviour. The Arab world has not forgotten the Ottoman empire and understands Turkey's ambitions often much better than Europe and the US do<sup>162</sup>. The Arab countries see the Turkish interference as an implementation of the neo-Ottoman agenda and do not dismiss the rhetoric as 'for domestic consumption'. They see the concrete malign activity all over the region. One example has

not even been noticed by major western media. The Arab world is nevertheless very well aware that Turkey is now even interfering in Lebanon through replication of creating a proxy movement and inciting civil unrest (anti-Armenian protests)<sup>163</sup> <sup>164</sup>. Instead of ignoring these concerns, NATO, the EU and the US should take them seriously. The Arab world is changing as can be seen in the peace deals with Israel. The establishment of the energy cooperation between southern Europe, Israel and the Arab world on 22 September 2020 cemented a new strategic reality<sup>165</sup>.

While Turkey is spreading destabilizing activity all over the region and even to Africa<sup>166/167</sup>, the Arab world may be taking a more mature turn<sup>168/169/170</sup>. There is existing cooperation by European NATO members with the Syrian Democratic Forces, Israel, and the Arab world in mat-

163 <https://english.alarabiya.net/en/2020/08/19/Security-fears-in-Lebanon-after-reports-of-Turkish-weapons-shipments>

164 <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/neo-ottomanism-in-anti-armenian-riots-in-lebanon/>

165 <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-joins-new-regional-forum-in-hope-of-selling-gas-to-europe/>

166 <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/08/turkey-africa-opening-fuels-cloud-wars-libya-somalia-niger.html>

167 <https://jamestown.org/program/turkeys-african-eagle-trains-turkish-speaking-troops-in-somalia-where-next/>

168 <https://apnews.com/article/dubai-untied-arab-emirates-honor-killings-travel-islam-bce74c423897dc77c7beb72e4f51a23a>

169 <https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/saudi-arabia-fun-tourists/index.html>

170 <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/israel-mid-east-european-ports-085432042.html>

160 <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1744121/middle-east>

161 <https://www.foreignbrief.com/daily-news/saudi-arabia-imposes-official-embargo-on-turkish-imports/>

162 <https://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/plus219126402/Grossmachtplaene-der-Tuerkei-Wenn-die-ihr-Imperium-wieder-errichten-wollen-bitte-schoen-Aber-nicht-bei-uns.html>

ters of security in that region<sup>171/172/173</sup>. That cooperation is (among others) aiming to reign in Turkish threats in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East. The US has long-standing security cooperation with Israel, the Arab world and the SDF. . NATO can consider to increase the existing cooperation with Israel and enhance that on a case by case basis with the Arab nations that are now becoming allied with Israel. In difference with the fixed position of Turkey in NATO as member, it will be possible to make progress on human rights and fundamental freedoms part of the conditions for cooperation with the Arab world. The real strategic interest for Europe is not to hang on to outdated ideas about Russia and Turkey but to ensure the security of NATO's and Europe's southern flank and to counter the further spread of extremism. That means ending the pretention that NATO will continue to cover Turkey's extremist agenda and behaviour.

## A CALL TO ACTION AND COURAGE

The latest act of terror in France against history teacher Paty in Paris on 16 October 2020, the murder of three people in the Cathedral of Nice at 29 October 2020 and the terror attack in Vienna at 2 November 2020 were wake-up calls to

take the spread of extremism seriously<sup>174</sup>. However, if NATO, Europe and the US allow Turkey to spread the same type of extremism throughout the region, they ignore that this does and will continue to impact our security. Communities outside Europe and in Europe are fundamentally connected. The spread of ideology outside Europe and the US cannot be artificially separated from the spread of the same ideology in Europe and North America. There is a need for political action that will respect our security and our democracy above outdated concepts and short-term economic gains.

**The proposal that this publication makes as a concrete political action is that Parliaments of European NATO Member States, the Canadian Parliament, and the US Congress and Senate speak out in motions, proposals and resolutions that if Turkey will be attacked, it will not receive protection based on Article 5 of the NATO Treaty from that respective NATO member state. This will be the case until Turkey withdraws from all acts of aggression, withdraws from Afrin and North-East Syria, and ends transporting and supporting of extremists in battlefields.**

This publication already demonstrated that to realise this, nothing needs to be changed in NATO membership or the NATO Treaty. It is therefore possible to reassure European, Canadian and American citizens and the men and women

171 <https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/mena/jordan-greece-and-cyprus-discuss-common-approach-to-counter-turkish-interference-1.1125153>

172 <https://greekcitytimes.com/2020/11/29/france-egypt-medusa-exercises/>

173 <https://br.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-turkey-idUSKBN1H6oLD>

174 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54581827>

who serve in the military that no sacrifices will be asked to defend the Erdogan regime.

This will require political courage and the need to see the situation as it is and, in some cases, to move against the established opinions and interests regarding Turkey. However, there are millions in the region who are threatened at this moment by Turkish violence or already suffering under it. It is clear from all the realities described in this publication that the destabilizing and malign agenda of the Erdogan government is real.

For years the suffering of Kurds, Syriac-Assyrians, Yazidis, Arabs and Armenians due to Turkish violence has been seen as 'not our problem'. This has given Turkey the signal that NATO will allow it to continue with any malign act in order to achieve its expansionist goals. It is more than time to give a very clear signal to Turkey and the region that this will no longer be tolerated.



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The proposal that this publication makes as a concrete political action is that Parliaments of European NATO Member States, the Canadian Parliament, and the US Congress and Senate speak out in motions, proposals and resolutions that if Turkey will be attacked, it will not receive protection based on Article 5 of the NATO Treaty from that respective NATO member state. This will be the case until Turkey withdraws from all acts of aggression, withdraws from Afrin and North-East Syria, and ends the transporting and supporting of jihadists in battlefields.

In addition, we recommend Members of the European Parliament and Members of Parliament of EU Member States to pursue an end to the EU accession talks with Turkey as well as any funding to Turkey connected to these talks. This publication describes how Turkey is undermining European security, which is incompatible with accession talks. In that light the Customs Union with Turkey can be terminated as well.

We see these actions as necessary measures as sanctions by the EU and US will likely be insufficient to enforce different behavior by Turkey. Ultimately we hope that all measures combined will realise a more secure Europe, NATO and Middle East.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Johannes de Jong has been working for Sallux since its start in 2011. He has been focusing on economy and international relations with a specific attention to those who are quickly overlooked in the global economy and geopolitics. Since 2014 he has intensively worked with the Kurds, Syriac-Assyrians and Yazidis of Syria and Iraq with a specific focus on the developments in northern Syria.



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Christiaan Meinen works for Sallux, the think tank of the European Christian Political Movement interest in geopolitics, (EU) foreign policies, sustainability, and military doctrine, technologies, and policies.



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David Quinn, Director, Iona Institute, Ireland

*"Our collaboration with Sallux has been tremendously fruitful, and we commend them highly for their wise and strategic investment in helping Christians to be more effective as salt and light in the European public square".*

Jonathan Tame, Director, Jubilee Centre, UK



*"Sallux has provided substantial and very valuable support to our promotion of the rights of the family in Europe at the Council of Europe, a 27 Member States wide European institution that rules over Human Rights in Europe."*

Maria Hildingsson, Director, FAFCE, Brussels

*"Sallux has supported us to find our way in the European Union and to reach out to European decision makers, and to create our common declaration with the Yezidi and the Turkmen. We thank Sallux for their work."*

Rima Tüzun, Head of Foreign Affairs, European Syriac Union

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