

# After Ukraine, Turkey might be the Next Target of “Regime Change”

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*The plot and the leading actors are almost the same. Just change the backdrop. Throw in the diplomatic and intelligence machinations into the mix and you have a recipe for regime change. A corrupt leader backed by a powerful next-door neighbour or an overseas sponsor. Internal dissent in the form of mass, on going, and very violent protests, which lead to several deaths in the streets due to confrontation between riot police and demonstrators. Calls for resignation of the (elected) leader and foreign forces manipulating events by meddling in the internal affairs of a sovereign state.*

## **After US-EU backed palace coup in Kiev is Ankara the next target?**

Yes, this sounds very much like pre-putsch Ukraine, doesn't it? But what if we look across the Black sea to a powerful regional US ally, and key NATO member state (NATO's second largest standing army in terms of troop numbers): Turkey. The same template or scenario for a popular uprising or potential for “regime change” can just as well be applied to that country. Sound exaggerated? Let's see then.

The whole world knows that, Turkey is currently racked by inner or domestic instability. But unlike Ukraine or Arab states which saw their leaders overthrown in successive revolutions as part of the euphemistically termed “Arab Spring”, the Turkish leader has applied methods not unlike his arch-enemy President Assad of Syria, to remain in power.

Tactics used such as the systematic persecution of opposition and trade union leaders, journalists, censorship of social media etc. have not gone unnoticed in the EU and the US. The imprisonment without trial of political dissenters or dissidents (to use the old cold war word) has become a common, or everyday occurrence in Turkey. Hence, the brutality of the ruling AKP (Development and Justice Party) regime makes the reign of ousted (yet democratically elected) President Yanukovich, seem almost like life in Arcadia or Shangri la by contrast.

Erdogan's iron fisted rule over his country has become wearisome for many of the country's denizens, over the past year or so. How has the west and especially Turkey's biggest sponsor (the US) reacted to his anti-democratic and at times paranoid (He has accused foreign powers or outside forces, including Israel, and individuals like Fethullah Gulen, of subverting his rule or plotting his demise.) behaviour? With a slight tap on the wrist or maybe a gentle rebuke or two.

Until Yanukovich's overthrow Washington denounced this “Russian puppet” as a corrupt and despotic ruler over Ukraine. However during this same period, and up until now, the US has conspicuously remained strangely mute, about the turbulent events in Turkey. Is there a

double standard here, or am I misreading the situation?

But beneath the surface tensions between Turkey and the US are rising. [Washington seems displeased with Erdogan's rule](#). Might regime change in Turkey be on the menu at the White House? Hard to tell at this point, but Washington's patience with Erdogan is certainly not unlimited; in other words, it's running out. As the March 30<sup>th</sup> municipal elections approach things will get very dicey in the country indeed and Washington's support for the AKP may begin to wane.

### **A Ukrainian style “crescent moon” revolution on the way in Turkey?**

Reccip Tayyip Erogan has since June 2013 been faced with waves of protest in his country. [These protest continue](#) . He has been exposed recently as a corrupt, venal, authoritarian and some say even a megalomaniac. He's has done everything to maintain his grip on power, including purging the police, and security and judicial apparatus. His ruthlessness seemingly knows no bounds. The constant repression has reached a tipping point: either more dictatorial style domestic policies will continue or a popular “democratic” and “home-grown” uprising backed by shadowy groups, like the ones currently operating in Ukraine will likely materialise. The Ukraine scenario of course, is based on outside interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign country.

Fomenting a coup in Turkey is far more complicated, due to the country's immense strategic importance to the west. As well, the only leading actors capable of overthrowing the current, graft- ridden, regime (as in the case of Egypt most recently) is the military. There have been several military coups in Turkey' history. So this cannot be excluded (some with US assistance).

### **Ukraine' Crimean secessionist movement mirrors that of Kurds in Turkey**

With the potential of Crimea seceding from the rest of Ukraine or possible reuniting with Russia, Kurds in Turkey who have fought for decades for an independent homeland might be looking closely at the outcome of the referendum there. Moreover, after decades of armed conflict there is a very tenuous peace in that part of eastern Turkey. But growing secessionist movements, clamouring for more regional autonomy (triggered by the Ukraine crisis in the region), might rekindle nationalists' fervour in Turkish Kurdistan. This could destabilise Turkey further and add to the long sanding domestic internal turmoil.

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