

# Erdogan Angers Biden but Holds the Keys to NATO Aggression Against Russia

By <u>Steven Sahiounie</u> Global Research, May 29, 2022 Region: <u>Europe</u>, <u>USA</u> Theme: <u>Intelligence</u> In-depth Report: <u>SYRIA</u>

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**President Recep Tayyip Erdogan** announced on May 23 a <u>new military operation in</u> <u>northern Syria</u> to establish a 30-kilometer-wide zone of Turkish occupation. Erdogan terms the proposed action as a counterterrorism operation, with details to be announced in the next National Security Council meeting. Turkey views the US-sponsored Kurdish People's Defense Units (YPG) and their allied militia, Syrian Defense Forces (SDF), as brother-in-arms with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). The US sponsorship and support of the SDF and YPG has angered Turkey for years and has created tension between Washington and Ankara who were at one time seen as close allies, and both are members of NATO.

Turkey has for years targeted Kurdish militias in Syria and northern Iraq. The US is also occupying parts of northeast Syria, which they characterize as anti-ISIS operations, but in reality, are anti-Turkish and anti-Syrian operations in support of the US-sponsored Kurdish militias.

Ankara has conducted three military incursions into northern Syria since 2016, seizing hundreds of kilometers of land and pushing some 30 deep into the country. During the US-NATO attack on Syria beginning in March 2011, Turkey along with the US, UK, France, Germany, and the oil-rich monarchies of the Gulf supported and financed the Radical Islamic terrorists used as foot-soldiers in Syria during the Obama administration.

The conflict in Syria has died out since 2019 into the current stalemate with only Idlib under Al Qaeda control and protected by Turkish military outposts.

#### The US warns Turkey

**Ned Price**, the US State Department spokesperson, came out strongly against Erdogan's proposed new military operation on May 24, saying any new offensive in northern Syria would undermine regional stability and put US troops at risk.

"We are deeply concerned about reports and discussions of potential increased military activity in northern Syria, and in particular, its impact on the civilian population there," Price said, and added, "We condemn any escalation. We support the maintenance of the current ceasefire lines."

The Biden administration wants to maintain the stalemate in Syria, which prevents the Syrian population from recovering or rebuilding after 11 years of armed conflict. The US policy is to keep Syria and Lebanon in chaos to weaken their resistance to the Israeli occupation.

#### The Syrian government's response

On May 25, the foreign ministry of Syria stated that it would consider any Turkish military incursions into its territory as <u>"war crimes and crimes against humanity."</u>

Damascus sees the incursions as a violation of the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and sent a letter to the United Nations secretary-general and the Security Council, describing Turkey's actions as illegitimate.

Before the 2011 conflict began, Syria and Turkey were close allies and had a free-trade and visa-free travel policy between the two neighbors which share a huge border. Turkey signed on to a US-NATO-directed attack for regime change which failed. During the conflict, Turkey hosted terrorists from around the world as a transit hub for terrorists arriving on their way by land into Syria from the Turkish border. The international terrorists were from the US, Western Europe, and Australia as well as from Arab nations. Most were followers of Al Qaeda and ISIS.

Syria is in economic collapse, as US-EU sanctions have destroyed the economy, and have thrown the population into poverty, but the sanctions have not affected the Syrian government, causing economists to question the role of US Congressional approved sanctions.

# Who are the PKK, SDF, and YPG?

The US and NATO view the PKK as a terrorist group but support the SDF and YPG. This has caused friction between the US and EU with Turkey.

The PKK has killed thousands of people in Turkey over decades of terrorism. The PKK is a communist armed terrorist group that is aligned with the US-sponsored SDF and YPG.

Amid the chaos of conflict in Syria, the Kurds took up arms and cleared the northeast of Syria of Arabs in an ethnic cleansing operation at gun point. Hundreds of thousands of Syrian Arabs were made homeless in the process, which set up a socialist administration in the northeast. When the US decided to militarily invade Syria to fight ISIS and put US soldiers on the ground, the Pentagon aligned with the socialist SDF and YPG, who are aligned with the PKK communists. The Pentagon was willing to support and defend those terrorists because they were acting as mercenaries for the US.

Domestically, the US labels communists and socialists as un-American, but the US government will freely align with them as long as it serves the American military interest.

# New houses for Syrian refugees

Speaking by video link at the inauguration of <u>new cement block homes</u> in northern Syria, Erdogan announced his plan to remove Syrian refugees from inside Turkey, and settle them on Turkish-occupied lands in northern Syria. More than 57,000 out of 77,000 planned homes in Idlib Province have been completed and now house 50,000 families, he said. Erdogan's proposed safe zone is to feature 100,000 homes, and ultimately have enough homes to house all the millions of Syrian refugees in Turkey.

The occupation settlement will have schools and hospitals administered by Turkey on Syrian land. Turkey took in more Syrian refugees than any other country and has reported that about 500,000 Syria have returned to Syria since 2016, with some voluntary, and some through forced deportations.

# Turkish hatred against Syrian refugees

Turkey is experiencing a serious economic crisis which has seen its currency devalued and high inflation. In response to their domestic troubles, the Turkish people have collectively pointed an accusing finger at the Syrian refugees. Widespread anger has been directed at Syrian refugees who are being used as scapegoats.

Turkish social media has gone viral with hate-filled posts, and a recent video developed by <u>Umit OzDag, a far-right</u> member of Parliament, has been viewed by millions. A growing segment of the Turkish population blames all their woes on the Syrian refugees and wants them gone.

The Turkish Ottoman administration carried out the very first genocide in history against the Armenians and Christians. The Turkish are not Arabs and have a culture of deep-seated racial prejudice against all who are not ethnically Turks.

The EU paid billions of dollars to Erdogan to keep the Syrian refugees and prevent them from migrating to Europe to seek asylum.

# **Turkey and NATO**

Erdogan holds the decision to allow or disbar, Finland and Sweden's application for NATO membership. Both countries have harbored and protected Kurdish activists, who Turkey deems terrorists linked to the PKK and other extremist groups. To the west in general, the Kurdish issue, and their struggle to establish a homeland on stolen land has been favorably regarded and terrorists are often called 'freedom fighters' by the west.

With the NATO enlargement in the hands of Erdogan, he sees his opportunity to demand Finland and Sweden stop their support of the Kurdish activists and those connected to SDF, YPG, and PKK.

Turkey is demanding that NATO stop supporting terrorists while claiming to provide security for member states. This will be a departure from past support of Radical Islamic terrorists who were the US-NATO's boots on the ground in Syria. The question will be, can NATO stop supporting Kurdish terrorists while the US is partnered with them in Syria? Is NATO a group representing all members, or only a puppet in the hands of the US?

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