

# The Role of Turkey in the US-NATO-Israeli War on Syria

Turkey's False-flag Operation against Syria Backfires: The Reyhanli bombing attacks in a larger context

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Global Research, May 29, 2013

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

*"Syria is worrying that it will be attacked by Turkey from above and by Israel from below. It is worrying that it will be squeezed between us like a sandwich."* [Israeli President Ezer Weizman (1993-2000), interview with Guneri Civaoglu, Caesarea, Israel, 11 June 1996] [1]

*"Although Turkey has never taken part in a war alongside us, it is a positive factor for Israel that Syria has an enemy on its northern frontiers. Syria will never attack Turkey, but it cannot exclude the reverse."* [Former Israeli Defence Minister Uri Or (1995-1996), interview with Alain Gresh, Tel Aviv, October 1997] [2]

## INTRODUCTION

*When the U.S. and its allies launched the covert war on Syria in 2011, they were expecting that either Syria's political establishment would collapse within a short duration or they would find a way to ignite an open war. As Syria's leaders and people proved to be exceptionally resilient, increasingly more brutal means have been deployed to tear the country apart. Being at the forefront of this covert war in every respect, Turkey has been thoroughly complicit in monumental war crimes committed against the neighbouring people of Syria.*

*Turkey's phony peace with its neighbours Syria (since December 2004) and Iran (since November 2008) came to an abrupt end in May 2011, when its central role in NATO's covert war against Syria became evident. [3]*

*As for Turkey's phony conflict with Israel, which began with the May 2010 Gaza Freedom Flotilla massacre, has also been fully exposed when Turkey overtly supported Israel's blatant acts of military aggression against Syria in 2013. The repercussions of the May 2013 Reyhanli false-flag bombing attacks near Turkey's border with Syria is the latest evidence of a deep crisis of legitimacy for the United States, Britain, Israel and Turkey; the four countries whose alliance has been dominating the political scene in the Middle East and beyond since 1990.*

## ISRAELI AIR ATTACKS ON DAMASCUS

*As NATO's international mercenary forces from 29 different countries started suffering heavy defeats against the Syrian Army, Israeli Air Forces came to their rescue by launching two separate air strikes in Syria, both of which were blatant acts of war. [4] [5]*

After the first Israeli air attack on Damascus on January 30th, Turkey's Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu made the following remarks [6]:

"Why did the Syrian Army, which has been launching attacks on its own innocent civilian population for the past 22 months with jets from the air and with tanks and artillery fire from the ground, not retaliate against this Israeli operation? Why does Assad not even throw a pebble when the Israeli jets fly over his palace and violate the dignity of his country? Why is Assad, who gives an order to fire Scud [missiles] at Aleppo, not doing anything against Israel? Is there a secret pact between Assad and Israel? [...] The Assad administration knows only to abuse. Why doesn't he use against Israel, [a country] which they have regarded as an enemy since its foundation, the same force that he uses against defenceless women?" [7]

On May 5th, UN human rights investigator Carla del Ponte announced the findings of the United Nations independent commission of inquiry on Syria:

"According to the testimonies we have gathered, the rebels have used chemical weapons [in Syria], making use of sarin gas." [8]

The same day, Israel launched another air attack on Damascus. [9] In response to this second act of war by Israel against Syria, Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, lashed out at Syria's President Bashar al-Assad for war crimes that were actually perpetrated by NATO's international mercenary forces in Syria [10]:

"The scenes in [the Syrian town of] Baniyas are as tragic as those in Karbala [in AD 680] and the murderers are at least as despicable as Yazid [...] [who killed] our beloved Prophet's beautiful grandchildren Hassan and Hussein [...]"

Those organisations which are lending support to the illegal regime of Syria, those countries which are backing the illegal regime of Syria, the United Nations and the [U.N.] Security Council in particular, will not be able to exonerate themselves of this sin. Those who ignore this massacre, this inhumane scene in the name of sectarian solidarity, in the name of [political] conjuncture or in the name of international [political] interests will not be able to exonerate themselves of this major sin. [...]

I need to point this out as well: Israel's air attack on Damascus is certainly not acceptable either. No reason, no excuse can justify this operation. Such attacks serve as trump cards, golden opportunities offered to the Syrian regime. In fact, by using Israel's attack as an excuse, Assad engages in an effort to cover up the genocide in Baniyas. [However], even this Israeli operation will not be able to save Assad who does not shed a drop of sweat, let alone a drop of blood for the Golan [Heights]. " [11]

Four days after the second Israeli air attack on Damascus and United Nations' statement on the mercenaries' use of chemical weapons in Syria, Mr Erdogan gave an interview to the U.S. television channel NBC, where he said that if the U.S. were to launch a ground military invasion of Syria, then Turkey would support it. [12] However, as this statement amounted to a de facto declaration of war on Syria, it has been instantly censored by the NBC and the Prime Minister's office issued a press release which denied it. [13] Here are excerpts from the edited version of this interview:

“ERDOGAN: It is clear that the regime has used chemical weapons and missiles. They used about 200 missiles, according to our intelligence. There are different sizes missiles. And then there are deaths caused by these missiles. And there are burns, you know, serious burns and chemical reactions. And there are patients who are brought to our hospitals who were wounded by these chemical weapons. You can see who is affected by chemical missiles by their burns. [14]

NBC: So has President Assad crossed President Obama’s red line?

ERDOGAN: A long time ago. My question is, the United Nations, U.N. Security Council, are you doing what you are supposed to do? Why do you exist in the first place? What is your job? I mean, is there a deadline, like they are not going to move until 1 million people are killed?

NBC: Will you encourage President Obama to get involved directly in the situation in Syria?

ERDOGAN: We want the United States to assume more responsibilities and take further steps.

NBC: What is the just punishment for Mr. Assad, in your view? What is your message to him today, at this moment in history?

ERDOGAN: Well, I am saying that he should leave Syria immediately. Sooner or later, the opposition are going to get him. And I hope that his end does not be like Qadhafi’s.” [15]

During the interview, Mr Erdogan also said that he plans to share the evidence of chemical weapons use in Syria with the U.S. President Barack Obama. [16] However, no evidence at all was presented by either Mr Erdogan or Mr Obama after their meeting in the following week on May 16th. [17]

The same day, Turkey’s Foreign Minister Davutoglu reiterated the last Anglo-American propaganda argument before the launch of the invasion of Iraq in 2003, by making a reference to the Iraqi Army’s mass murder of Iraqi Kurds in Halabja in 1988 [18] :

“From now on, we will be carrying out these tests [for chemical weapon wounds] on every injured person coming [from Syria] so that no one could dare to commit a crime against humanity, like the one in Halabja, by using [chemical weapons] in Syria.” [19]

The same day, the Associated Press reported the ongoing preparations at Turkey’s border with Syria:

“Turkey had stationed a team of eight experts to screen injured Syrians at the frontier. They were manning a chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defense vehicle deployed at the main Cilvegozu border gate with Syria.” [20]

Again on the same day, a news report entitled “Forensic medicine establishment proves that al-Assad has used chemical weapons” was published by Turkish newspaper Star:

“It has been definitely determined that [Syrian President Bashar] Al-Asad has used chemical weapons against his own people. The Public Health Institute and the Ankara Forensic Medicine Establishment have found the substance “Ricin”, which in the world is found only in Iran, China, and Russia, in 13 wounded individuals coming from Syria. [...] It is stated that Prime Minister [Recep Tayyip] Erdogan will place the dossier before [US President Barack] Obama on his US visit [on May 16] .The affair emerged when 13 wounded Syrian oppositionists were brought on 29 April from Syria to the Reyhanli State Hospital. ” [21]

All this evokes the war propaganda back in February 1998, when the Bill Clinton administration made an unsuccessful attempt to instigate a war with Iraq. According to an AFP report;

“Turkish authorities have sent 60,000 gas masks to its southeast regions bordering Iraq to protect civilians from possible chemical and biological attacks by Iraqi forces, [Turkish] dailies Sabah and Yeni Yuzyil said Friday. The masks, sent by civil defence chiefs, are destined for civil servants working in the region bordering Iraq [...] . Southeast Turkey borders Iraq and the region is thought to be in a potentially dangerous position in case Iraq decides to use the chemical and biological weapons it is suspected of having.” [22]

It is worth also mentioning two allegations made against Turkish Armed Forces’ use of chemical weapons in the past:

In August 2011, five members of parliament from Germany’s Die Linke party held a press conference to condemn the appointment of the current head of Turkish Armed Forces Necdet Ozel:

“When [Necdet] Ozel was the General Commander of the Gendarmerie, he was not only responsible for the death, torture and violence in the Kurdish region [of Turkey] . In 1999, he ordered the use of chemical weapons against Kurdish guerrillas [near the Ballikaya Village in Silopi] .” [23]

In October 2011, two months after Necdet Ozel’s appointment, 37 Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) guerrillas were killed in the Kazan Valley of the Hakkari province during an operation by the Turkish Armed Forces. The following month, a European delegation visited the Kazan Valley to investigate the allegations of chemical weapons use during this operation. [24]

As the earlier quote from Turkish newspaper Star shows, the Reyhanli State Hospital near Turkey’s border with Syria was at the forefront of the chemical weapons propaganda over the April 29 incident. Two days after this press report, the same hospital was inundated with the victims of a far more devastating false-flag operation.

#### OFFICIAL REACTIONS TO THE REYHANLI BOMBING ATTACKS

On May 11, international media agencies reported that twin car bombs have killed at least 43 people and injured at least 100 in the Turkish town of Reyhanli, near the Syrian border. [25] Shortly after the bombing attacks, Turkey’s Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Arinc pointed the finger at Syria:

“Our thoughts are that their Mukhabarat [Syria’s intelligence agency] and armed

organisations are the usual suspects in planning and the carrying out of such devilish plans.” [25]

Hours after the Reyhanli bombing attacks, the head of global military alliance NATO Anders Fogh Rasmussen issued a press release:

“I express full solidarity with the people and the authorities of our Ally Turkey.”  
[26]

The following day, Turkey’s Interior Minister Muammer Guler held a press conference:

“For the time being there is no evidence suggesting that al-Qaida was involved.” [27]

This is a rather interesting comment considering that until 2012, when al-Qaeda’s role in NATO’s covert war on Syria became fully exposed, Turkey’s political authorities were quite at ease in holding Al Qaeda responsible for any atrocity committed in Turkey or abroad. [E] That same day, Prime Minister Erdogan also accused Syria:

“These attacks betray the intention of a country on fire which is trying to drag Turkey into the same fire. These attacks, to put it bluntly, are the bloody Baath regime’s attempt to provide an opportunity to its collaborators. [...] These attacks aim to provoke those who live together in peace, in serenity, in fraternity, particularly in Hatay. Most importantly, these attacks target Turkey which has resolved its terror issue, reinforced fraternity, put an end to mothers’ tears. [...]

Even if Turkey were to remain silent, stand idly by in the face of the tragedy in Syria, these traps would still have been set up, Turkey would still have been targeted. Those who criticise Turkey’s policy on Syria in the wake of these attacks with utter brazenness, a sheer lack of common sense and pure opportunism exhibit ignorance and an absence of policy. These attacks do not target our policy on Syria, they target our fraternity, our stability, our growth.” [28]

The next day, Mr Erdogan spoke even more categorically:

“This incident is definitely connected to the [Syrian] regime. The [Syrian] regime is behind this incident. That is evident.” [29]

Syria’s Information Minister Omran al-Zoubi responded to Mr Erdogan’s accusations in full force:

“The real terrorist is the government of Turkey under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan. It opened Turkey’s border with Syria to the terrorists. [Turkey] became a hub of international jihadi terrorism. It unleashed these terrorists on Turkish people’s houses and fields. It hosted terrorists coming from all over the world. Without any consideration, it provided them with all types of arms, bombs and explosive devices so that they could massacre people of Syria. Turkey’s Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his interior and foreign

ministers bear a political and moral responsibility towards all the people of the world in general and the people of Syria and their own people in particular. [...]

The sole responsibility for the bombing attacks in Reyhanli lies with Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) and its Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. These [attacks] couldn't have been perpetrated by Syria. Despite all the things they did to the people and army of Syria for such a long time, neither our decency, nor our ethics, nor our policy would allow us to do something like this. [...]

No one has got the right to accuse others. Shortly after [the attacks], Turkey's Interior Minister [Muammer Guler] has said that they suspect that [the attacks] were connected to Syria. To put it plainly, the reason why he came up with such quick accusations without any evidence at hand, is to fabricate the evidence they had in mind. These [attacks] were directly perpetrated by Erdogan and the AKP. They are the ones who, through their intelligence and security forces, supplied Al Qaida with chemical and got them to penetrate all the way to Aleppo. They are the ones who transported terrorists, arms and deaths through their planes. Erdogan himself and his party want to destroy Syria. What occurred in Reyhanli was the ambition of destroying Syria itself. Whoever wants death and massacre is the one who carried out this massacre in Turkey.

When bombs explode in Turkey, we know why these bombs have been made to explode. The whole world knows why the bombs are exploding in Syria. But why in Turkey and why now? And why particularly before Erdogan's meeting with Obama? Erdogan wants to get the United States into action. And then he will say 'I am a member of NATO, Syria is attacking me'. In fact, in his latest statement, he said 'we are capable of making war with Syria'. [...] Turkey's Foreign Minister [Davutoglu] said yesterday that Turkey is strong enough to defend itself. Against whom is it going to defend itself? Who actually poses a threat to Turkey? " [30]

Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah's statement was equally straightforward:

"These terrorist bombings came as part of a series of similar crimes that affect innocent people in several Arab and Islamic countries, which can only be made [by] criminal hands. It also bore the hallmarks of international intelligence agencies, aimed at destabilizing and creating discord and unrest in these countries." [31]

Two weeks later, Turkey's Deputy Prime Minister Bekir Bozdag targeted Hezbollah for its political and military support to Syria [32]:

" [Hezbollah] says that it stands by Assad. [...] From where does it draw its strength? Having sided with those who unleash death upon their fellow Muslim brothers [...] , [Hezbollah] has no right to draw strength from Islam and the Quran. The source of their strength would actually be the Satan who wants to pit Muslims against each other, who wants to have them slaughter each other. [...] Hezbollah should change its name to 'Hezbol-satan' [i.e. Party of Satan] . " [33]

## DESTROYING THE EVIDENCE

On the day of the incident, which was a Saturday, the Government managed to get the local

court of Reyhanli to issue a blanket censorship ban regarding the broadcasting of news about the bombing attacks in Reyhanli. According to this ban, only statements made by senior authorities and police reports would be allowed to be reported on the media and the internet:

“Within the framework of the investigation concerning the blasts in Reyhanli district on 11.05.2013 [...] , broadcasting and displaying information concerning the site of the incident, concerning the dead and injured casualties of the incident and concerning the content of the incident on all types of audio-visual, written and visual media and the internet is banned according to Article 153 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.” [34]

Actually, this blanket ban was mainly targeting the information flow through the Internet considering that Turkey’s mainstream media have been fully complicit in the Government’s constant war propaganda against Syria from April 2011. Nevertheless, the ban on the Internet proved to be somewhat ineffective in the face of an overwhelming sense of indignation towards to Government across the country.

Medical staff in the Hatay province, where Reyhanli is located, was ordered to “limit the death toll to 50”. Local authorities said they ‘were instructed not to give any statement to the press’. [35] Journalist Ferdi Ozmen revealed the actual figure by posting the number of deaths in seven local hospitals with a total of 177. He has been arrested for defying the blanket ban. [36]

Republican People’s Party (CHP) member of parliament Mevlut Dudu explains how the evidence was instantly destroyed after the incident:

“The police officers refused us entry to the site of the attacks on the grounds that they are collecting evidence. Nevertheless, we did [manage] to enter and saw that no evidence was being collected. Quite on the contrary, they were destroying the evidence using heavy construction equipment.” [37]

It transpired that none of the 73 closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras in the town recorded the bombing attacks. Due to a “system error”, they had been out of order four days before the incident. Most of these 73 CCTV cameras were directly viewing the points where the bombing attacks occurred. [38]

CHP member of parliament Aytug Atici revealed that electricity was cut off just five minutes before the bombing attacks. [39] In fact, according to activist Hamide Yigit, cutting off the electricity was a strategy used by Turkey’s authorities in smuggling international mercenaries into Syria:

“Electricity is cut off along the [Harbiye-Yayladagi] itinerary; everywhere, including streets and roads, becomes totally dark. Meanwhile, vehicles carrying military ammunition and armed groups to the border pass by. Once their passage is over, the electricity resumes. The local residents, who are prevented from witnessing this transport, are feeling deeply restless about it.” [40]

On the day of the bombing attacks, the militants who wanted to cross from Syria into Turkey were guided towards the Cilvegozu border gate instead of their habitual point of entry in Reyhanli. [41]

A currently censored video which was posted on Youtube shortly after the bombing attacks was recorded from an angle which oversaw the site of the attacks. Arabic speaking “Free Syrian Army” militants are seen to be recording the blasts in jubilation, shouting “Allah-u Akbar” (God is great) and mentioning the location of the blasts and the date. [42]

Only two days before the bombing attacks in Reyhanli, ABC reported “a secret visit” by the former U.S. Ambassador to Syria (January-October 2011) Robert Ford, who is the mastermind of NATO’s covert war on Syria [43] :

“A U.S. official confirmed [Robert] Ford’s secret visit, which occurred along the Turkey-Syria border. He briefly crossed into Syria to meet with opposition leaders before returning to Turkey.” [44]

In fact, there is a long history of false-flag incidents occurring in Turkey ahead of almost every top level meeting between Turkey’s politicians and their U.S. or Israeli counterparts.

Of all the false-flag operations in Turkey, by far the most devastating was the bombing attacks on 15th and 20th November 2003, which targeted two synagogues, HSBC bank headquarters and the British Embassy in Istanbul, killing 57 people and wounding another 700. The attacks coincided with U.S. President George Bush’s meeting with the British Prime Minister Tony Blair in London. [45]

Baki Yigit was one of the five people who were sentenced to aggravated life imprisonment in 2007 for their roles in these attacks. He was released from prison in 2010 and died in 2012 whilst fighting in Aleppo among the ranks of the Free Syrian Army. [46]

Furthermore, foreign intelligence agencies CIA (U.S.), Mossad (Israel), MI6 (Britain) and BND (Germany) have a very prominent presence across Turkey’s border region with Syria. Located some 100 km from Turkey’s border with Syria, NATO’s Incirlik Airbase is being used as the command centre for the covert war on Syria. [47]

## PROTESTS AGAINST THE ERDOGAN GOVERNMENT

Immediately after the bombing attacks, spontaneous protests broke out in Reyhanli and in various parts of the Hatay province. Incensed protesters were chanting “Erdogan resign” Turkey’s military deployed a huge number of air and ground military reinforcements to Hatay and Reyhanli in order to prevent spontaneous protests in Reyhanli and other parts of the Hatay province turning into a full-scale uprising. [48] [49]

Even the Reyhanli State Hospital was under siege, where riot police, plain-clothes police officers and an armoured police vehicle were deployed. [50]

Nine months before the bombing attacks in Reyhanli, activist Hamide Yigit describes the state of mind of the people in the Hatay province where Reyhanli is located:

“The mendacity of the media in ‘marketing’ war to the people is seen more clearly from Hatay. From the very first day the incidents started in Syria, they



have been aware and observe that the media is reporting lies. The people of Hatay have relatives in every city in Syria, they speak its language [i.e. Arabic] , watch its broadcasts, read its press, and even if none of that is the case, can inform themselves about any incident at the convenience of a phone call, they are furious towards the media for its distortion of the facts to such an extent. [...]

For the past seventeenth months, the people [of Hatay] have been living in fear of [the possibility that] a war, for which they can find no reason, might explode on their doorstep. Hatay's economy is stagnating, its revenues have stopped, its bread has shrunk. Hatay has enjoyed harmonious fraternity among its diverse population up until the present day. However, [the Government] is trying to disrupt this by pitting groups against each other, by emphasising differences of identity [Turkish, Arabic, Kurdish, etc.] , sectarian differences [Sunni, Alevi, etc.] . The people of Hatay are constantly hearing news of deaths and injuries from relatives [in Syria] and live in constant fear of hearing such news.

The worst of this is that Hatay is being used as the command centre for attacks launched on their brotherly, blood-related people of Syria and hosting those who are firing bullets at them... With the anger and sorrow this, what is being spoken on every street and household [in Hatay] is the following: 'We refuse to endure this disgrace any longer. We don't want to keep waiting for this catastrophe which is advancing rapidly and looms closer every day. The refugee camps should be immediately removed from Hatay and re-arranged in a way to prioritise a humanitarian function. The flow of weapons and 'terrorists' across the border [with Syria] must stop! " [40]

In 2013, tensions between the local population of the Hatay province and the international mercenary forces have reached a peak. Numerous riots broke out between the Syrian refugees and Turkey's security forces in the refugee camps in Hatay and other southern provinces of Turkey. [51] [52] According to the Government's own figures, a total of 114,000 Syrian refugees in Turkey have returned to Syria. [53]

In fact, since last year, Hatay took the lead in protesting Turkey's pro-imperialist policies against Syria. The particularly massive and vibrant demonstrations held last September were retaliated by draconian restrictions against the freedom to protest in Hatay. [54]

Furthermore, regardless if it was a false-flag attack or an accident by NATO's mercenary forces fighting in Syria, after every incident that occurred along the border with Syria which resulted in deaths in Turkey, the local people have protested against the Government.

Massive protests occurred spontaneously across Hatay on the day of the bombing attacks and demonstrations are being held across the country on a daily basis to denounce the Government's responsibility for the attacks and its warmongering policies against Syria.

Large protests held by students from a number of universities in Ankara and Istanbul were suppressed in a particularly brutally manner by the riot police forces. In Istanbul, beyond its standard lavish use of pepper gas and pressurised cannon water, the riot police went so far as firing plastic bullets at a university campus. [55] [56]

On the weekend the bombing attacks occurred, during the singing of the national anthem to mourn the victims ahead of two separate football games in Istanbul, the fans of Besiktas and Fenerbahce teams started shouting "Government resign". The company broadcasting the games censored this unexpected mass protest by muting the voice of the transmission.

[57]

All these instances of spontaneous popular dissent highlight the conspicuous absence of a genuinely anti-imperialist stance among a wide range of the largely co-opted, misguided and divided opposition groups in Turkey.

A protest held in Reyhanli seven days after the bombing attacks became yet another scene of police brutality where a large amount of pepper gas was fired. [58]

Two weeks after the attacks, Reyhanli was under a state of military occupation during Prime Minister Erdogan's visit which was announced with 2 days' notice. 5000 special forces troops, 5000 police officers, marksmen on the rooftops, 5 Skorsky helicopters, 20 thousand barriers and 50 tons of pepper gas have been deployed to Reyhanli. [59]

600 bus loads of Justice and Development Party (AKP) supporters from neighbouring districts and provinces as far away as Nigde (400 km), Syrian refugees who did not speak Turkish and workers who were threatened with dismissal for non-attendance by their employers were transported by the authorities to Reyhanli. They were lined up in front of Mr Erdogan in a military order in a manner reminiscent of the periods under military rule. Meanwhile, the local people were not allowed to go out of their homes. [60] [61]

Ten days before Mr Erdogan's visit, government officials began distributing a significant amount of money to the local population of Reyhanli in an effort to buy off their silence. [62] Likewise, during his fifteen-minute speech in Reyhanli, Mr Erdogan announced various financial incentives for the people of Reyhanli as well as promotion of Hatay to metropolitan municipality status in the next year. [63]

#### STANCE OF THE KURDISH OPPOSITION IN TURKEY

The day after the bombing attacks in Reyhanli, the co-chair of the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), which is the only pro-Kurdish party in Turkey's parliament, Mr Selahattin Demirtas rushed to Mr Erdogan's rescue:

"The fact that the attacks took place at Reyhanli on the Syrian border brings instantly to one's mind a Syrian connection of this matter. [...] [These attacks] could be interpreted as the extension of Syria's civil war and internal chaos to Turkey. [...] Were [these attacks] connected to the ongoing resolution process [between the Government and the Kurdish opposition] in Turkey? It is hard to figure that out. What is clear is that the political atmosphere in which Turkey currently finds itself was the target.

Since the day the civil war began in Syria, we have been pointing out that the Government's stance, its foreign policy is wrong. [...] However, particularly in the face of attacks perpetrated in this period against Turkey, attacks which target civilians, our citizens; our priority should be to act in unity instead of holding the Government responsible. [...] We will stand by the Government [in its efforts] to take precautions against these attacks, to adopt an attentive, sensitive stance towards these attacks." [64]

Mr Demirtas' stance is all the more surprising considering the sheer number of false-flag operations of the past three decades which have targeted Kurdish politicians, activists and civilians in Turkey. At the end of April, four days after the PKK's military leader Murat Karayilan announced the withdrawal of the PKK guerrillas from Turkey in line with a

ceasefire agreement, The Times reported the transfer of over 1,500 guerrillas from Turkey into northern Syria to secure the Kurdish areas there. [65] In an interview held eleven days after the bombing attacks, Mr Demirtas spoke even more straightforwardly:

“Three Kurdish states may come into being: A Kurdish state in Iran, a Kurdish state in Iraq, a Kurdish state in Syria. Now it is certain that there will be an autonomous region in Syria just like the one in Iraq. Of course, if the Kurdish entity in Syria incorporates Lattakia as well, a big problem for the Kurds would have been resolved. [Then] they would have access to the sea and a total dependence on Turkey would come to an end. [...] The Kurds are Turkey’s luck. There is a Kurdish buffer [separating Turkey from both Syria and Iraq] . If the central administration in Iraq persists in its current mentality, then the Kurdish state in Iraq may come into being as a fully independent [entity] .” [66]

Nine days after the bombing attacks, the co-chair of the Democratic Society Congress (DTK), which is another pro-Kurdish party in Turkey, Mr Ahmet Turk visited the United States. Following three consecutive meetings held at the U.S. State Department, Mr Turk spoke to the press:

“A Turkey that embraces its own Kurds, that wins the hearts and minds of its own Kurds will play a more effective role in the Middle East, will be an actor capable of bringing democracy to the Middle East. [67]

We need to bring into life the project of a Syria where all sorts of different [identities] could freely exist, could freely express themselves. [The U.S. officials] have very clearly stated that they see eye-to-eye with us on this matter.” [68]

The ‘peace process’ with the Kurdish armed and political opposition in Turkey is actually a classic divide and rule strategy which aims to pacify the Kurdish opposition in Turkey ahead of a planned invasion of Syria and Iran whilst implementing the U.S. plan to divide both the occupied Iraq and Syria into three separate entities.

## MILITARY PREPARATIONS

The day after Israeli Air Forces’ May 5th attack on Syria, Turkey and Israel have launched separate military exercises near their respective borders with Syria. Israeli drills took place in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights, while Turkey’s ‘Yildirim-2013 Mobilization Exercise’ was held at NATO’s Incirlik Airbase. [69]

According to a statement by Turkey’s General Staff, the aim of Yildirim-2013 exercise was to test Turkish Armed Forces’ readiness for battle and coordination with Government ministries. The ten-day exercise finished on May 15th, the day before Mr Erdogan met Mr Obama in Washington D.C. [70]

The same day, a unit consisting of hundreds of armed personnel carrier vehicles carrying ‘Free Syrian Army’ militants, accompanied by tanks defending them, crossed from Turkey’s Ceylanpinar border gate into Syria. This military deployment, considered to be the largest ever from the region, occurred at a time when the militants squeezed in Ras al-Ayn [in Northern Syria] needed help. [71]

Again, on the same day, U.S.-led IMCMEX 2013 naval exercise in the Persian Gulf against Iran was launched. Although the list of participant countries has been kept secret, in all likelihood Turkey is among the 41 countries taking part in these exercises which runs from May 6 until May 30. [72]

Turkey will also be among the 18 countries taking part in the U.S.-led 'Eager Lion 2013' exercise due to be held in Jordan in June. [73]

Recently, particularly in the run up to Prime Minister Erdogan's visit to the United States, there has been an increase in flights along Turkey's border with Syria to detect Syria's air defence systems, collect military intelligence and transmit intelligence to armed groups supported by Turkey's government. [74]

Furthermore, according to the Government's own figures, in 2012 Turkey has spent over 694 million Turkish Liras (over 386 million U.S. dollars) from its discretionary operations fund. [75] This fund is financing Turkey's covert war on Syria.

It is worth bearing in mind that NATO's Incirlik Airbase is notorious for the role it played during the wars against Iraq (1991), Yugoslavia (1999), Afghanistan (2001), Iraq (2003) and Libya (2011) and for hosting the largest nuclear weapons of mass destruction arsenal outside the U.S. territory. [76]

## CONCLUSION

When the U.S. and its allies launched the covert war on Syria in 2011, they were expecting that either Syria's political establishment would collapse within a short duration or they would find a way to ignite an open war. As Syria's leaders and people proved to be exceptionally resilient, increasingly more brutal means have been deployed to tear the country apart. Being at the forefront of this covert war in every respect, Turkey has been thoroughly complicit in monumental war crimes committed against the neighbouring people of Syria.

Having very skilfully manipulated the world public opinion with the help, among other measures, of a gigantic public relations apparatus, for more than ten years; Mr Erdogan's government, like its main allies, is currently experiencing a deep crisis of legitimacy both at home and abroad. Instead of boosting Mr Erdogan's standing, the false-flag bombing attacks in Reyhanli have actually unleashed a nationwide popular reaction against his total subservience to Western imperialism.

## NOTES

[1] 'Esad'in sandvic kuskusu' by Guneri Civaoglu, Milliyet, 11 June 1996

[2] Turkish-Israeli-Syrian relations and their impact on the Middle East

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[3] [Turkish Actions Designed To Trigger NATO Confrontation With Syria?](#)

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[4] [Militants from 29 countries fighting in Syria: Assad](#)

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[6] [Israeli Attack on Syria: Desperate Bid to Save Failed US-NATO Covert War](#)

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