

Turkey Sending Troops to Libya? Erdogan Supported Tripoli Forces to Fight Trump Supported Haftar Forces?

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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It appears likely. According to Turkey's Anadolu news agency, President Erdogan will send troops to Libya to support the Tripoli-based/UN-recognized Government of National Accord (GNA).

It's combatting Trump-supported/longtime CIA asset/warlord **Khalifa Haftar** for control of the country.

Anadolu news said in late November, "Ankara and the Tripoli-based GNA signed two separate agreements, one on military cooperation and another on maritime boundaries of the countries in the Eastern Mediterranean."

On Thursday, Erdogan said the following:

"Since there is (a Libyan GNA) invitation right now, we will accept it. We will present the motion to send troops (to the country) as soon as (Turkey's) parliament resumes."

"God willing, we will pass it in parliament on January 8-9 and thus respond to an invitation."

Libyan GNA interior minister **Fathi Bashagha** said his government will officially request military support from Turkey, adding:

"If the situation escalates then we have the right to defend Tripoli and its residents" with foreign help.

In late November, GNA Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj signed a memorandum of understanding on security and military cooperation with Turkey.

His ministers and Turkish parliamentarians OK'd the deal, a separate GNA request needed to send troops — what apparently is forthcoming.

Moscow expressed concern about escalating the conflict further, urging diplomatic resolution to end it.

Reports of Russian mercenaries involved are greatly exaggerated. Moscow strongly denies

them.

According to Bloomberg News, Erdogan and Libya's Sarraj approved a maritime deal last month in contested gas-rich eastern Mediterranean waters, saying:

The "preliminary agreement demarcates an 18.6-nautical mile line that will form the maritime boundary separating what will be the two countries' respective exclusive economic zones," adding:

Libya's (GNA) "presidential council and Turkey's parliament approved the memorandum of understanding."

According to Turkish official in charge of maritime and aviation boundary affairs Catagay Erciyes, the deal "amounts to a political message that Turkey can't be sidelined in the eastern Mediterranean and nothing can be really achieved in the region without Turkey's participation."

Waters in question are contested by Greece, Cyprus and Egypt, these countries criticizing what they call a brazen Turkish bid to control them.

Libya and Greece disagree over offshore exploration licenses Athens and Crete (the most populous Greek island) agreed on — the waters located between Turkey and Libya.

According to risk analyst Anthony Skinner, "Erdogan's strategy has been to intensify tensions to such an extent as to force serious concessions from Greek Cyprus during future negotiations on the status of the island and how its natural gas wealth will be distributed," adding:

"Standing up strongly for Turkish Cypriots constitutes part of Erdogan's nationalist credentials, but also forms a key part of Turkey's political identity and will remain a priority national interest."

Bloomberg said Greece claims Erdogan's deal with Libya "violate(s) continental shelf and economic exclusive zones of its own islands, including Crete."

According to Erciyes, the Greek islands in question lie "on the wrong side of the median line between mainlands."

Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, Egypt and Israel are contesting for control of gas-rich eastern Mediterranean waters.

Turkish drilling ships operate off Cyprus in waters Ankara claims as its exclusive economic zone per agreements with northern Cyprus it controls.

On Thursday, Erdogan said "(a)s long as the (GNA) government in Libya stands firm on its feet," he'll go all-out to secure what he and Sarraj agreed on.

His interest in getting involved in the Libyan conflict appears all about wanting control of resource-rich eastern Mediterranean waters.

And where's there's gas, there's likely oil.

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Award-winning author **Stephen Lendman** lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. He is a Research Associate of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG)

His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html>

Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com.

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About the author:

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html> Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com. Listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network. It airs three times weekly: live on Sundays at 1PM Central time plus two prerecorded archived programs.

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