

Week 17 of the Russian Intervention in Syria: Does Erdogan Want War with Russia?

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The situation with Turkey is rapidly getting out of control: not only have [the Turks conducted artillery strikes across the Syrian border](#), [Turkey has refused to comply with its obligations under the Open Skies Treaty and refused to let a Russian surveillance aircraft overfly Turkey](#). The Russian military has now declared that it had detected signs of [Turkish preparations for an invasion](#). The Turkish refusal to abide by the Open Skies Treaty is an extremely worrisome development, especially when combined with the Russian warnings about the preparation for an invasion of Syria, and the Russians are not mincing their words:

There are plenty more indicators and warnings showing that an escalation is possible: the Geneva negotiations have been abruptly terminated, the Saudis are [threatening to invade Syria](#) and there are signs that the Syrian army is slowly but surely preparing an operation to liberate Aleppo from the Takfiris, creating a panic in Ankara and Riyadh (so much for the stupid notions that the [Russians are not winning](#) or that [the Syrian military does not exist](#)).

In the meantime, there are plenty of signs that Erdogan's entire "grand plan" for Syria has completely collapsed that that he has no more options left (please read the [excellent analysis by Ghassan Kadi on this topic](#) posted today as well as [Pepe Escobar's take on the same issue](#)).

I am not a psychic or a prophet. I cannot tell what Erdogan is really thinking, or whether the Turks will try to invade Syria. But what I can do is to try to make some educated guesses about possible Russian responses to such an event.

First, two basic principles:

1) If Russian forces are attacked they will hit back. Putin already gave them that authority and this will happen almost automatically with only local commanders making the final call. In other words, such an exchange of fire would not automatically be tantamount to a full-scale war between Turkey and Russia.

2) If Turkey invades Syria, Russia will act in strict compliance with international law. That means that she will demand an emergency meeting of the UNSC and that much will depend upon what the Council's reaction will be. If the usual gangs of puppets "covers" for Turkey (which is by no means certain, in my opinion, at least not for very long, maybe a week or so max) then the Russians will then refer to their obligations to assist Syria under the 1980 "*Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation*" between the two countries (Russia being today the successor state to the USSR the treaty is still in force) and the 2015 "*Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Syrian Arab Republic on the deployment of aviation*

group of the Armed Forces on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic“.

In other words, Russia will retain a degree of flexibility to interpret the situation in one way or another. That, in turn, means that much will depend on what the Turks really try achieve.

If we are talking about the typical Turkish violation of a national border to attack the Kurds, like what they did many times in the past already, and if that intervention is limited in depth, Russia will probably chose non-military means to put pressure on Turkey. Again, while the crazies in Turkey badly want a war with Russia to internationalize the conflict and force NATO to intervene, the Russians have no interest at all in such an escalation. Just as in the Donbass, the West is trying to bait Russia into a war and Russia is refusing to take that bait. The problem is that unlike the Ukronazis, the Turks have a much more powerful military machine which the Russian cannot ignore like they have ignored the Ukronazi military and various death squads. So if Erdogan's goal is just to look macho and flex some muscle, say like what Reagan did in Grenada, then he can probably get away with it, at least for a short operation. But if Erdogan is dead set in having a conflict with Russia, the Russian won't be able to just hunker down and wait for him to calm down.

In the latter case, Russia will have a number of escalatory options.

The first obvious options is to help the Syrians and Kurds with intelligence. This is already taking place now and will only intensify in the case of a Turkish invasion.

The second is to shoot Turkish fixed or rotary-wing aircraft out of the skies. This is an easy option as the Syrians already have some pretty good air defense systems (including some Pantsir-S1, Buk-M1/2E, Tunguskas 2K22 and a fairly robust early-warning system) and a few more or less capable aircraft (possibly including upgraded MiG-29s). The Kremlin can thus enjoy a degree of what the CIA called “plausible deniability”.

The third option for Russia is to help the Syrians with the artillery system she reportedly deployed in the country including 52-millimeter MTSA-B guns, BM-27 Uragan and BM-30 Smerch rocket launchers.

All these options would still fall short of a “full-scale” war between Russia and Turkey. But if Erdogan is determined to escalate further then a war will be inevitable. If Turkey tries to attack Khmeimim directly, then Russia will strike back, no doubt about it.

What could it look like?

The first thing I would say is that neither country will try to invade the other one. The notion of Turkey invading Russia is self-evidently ludicrous, but while Turkey does fall within the 1000km depth the Russian military is trained to fight in, I don't believe that Russia would ever attempt this. For one thing, and just as was the case with Georgia, nobody in Russia really believes that the Turks, as a nation, want war. If anything, Erdogan is much more of a “Saakashvili v2” then a Hitler and he will be dealt with similarly. Furthermore, while during the 08.08.08 war Russia had to protect the Ossetians from the quasi-genocidal Georgians, Russia has no such obligations in Kurdistan.

A much more likely scenario is a repeat what we have already seen, but on a much larger scale: if Erdogan really forces Russia into a war, what will happen will be cruise and ballistic missile attacks on the infrastructure supporting the Turkish invasion, the sinking of any Turkish Navy ship involved in this effort, and bomb and missile attacks on Turkish force

concentrations, ammo and fuel ([POL](#)) dumps and, especially, airfields. **The goal of the Russian response will not be to “defeat” Turkey militarily, but to push back the Turks long enough to force some kind of a ceasefire upon Erdogan.** Even if the Russian military is capable of completely defeating Turkey in a war, the Kremlin also realizes that **any war between Turkey and Russia ought to be stopped as soon as possible and that rather than “defeating Turkey” the real Russian objective ought to be to defeat Erdogan.**

For this reason, the Russians, far from being trigger happy, will undertake every imaginable effort to show that they did not initiate the war, even if that means letting Turkey enter into Syria, at least as long as the Turks stay close to their border and do not attempt to change the course of the war. **If all the Turks want is a thin “security zone” inside Syria, I don’t see the Russians using military force to deny this to them.** They will protest, vehemently, on a diplomatic level, and they will help the Syrians and Kurds, but they will not directly attack the Turkish forces.

What about the Saudis? Well, what about them? They can’t even deal with the Houthis in Yemen, why would anyone think that they could make a difference in Syria? The Saudi military is a joke, a degenerate repression force barely capable of engaging in anti-Shia repression operations. They can make all the threats they want, but if they try to move into Syria the Syrians, Russians, Iranians and Hezbollah will all try to race each other to be the first one to finally get a hold of these SOBs in teach them a lesson they shall not forget in a long time.

Frankly, I simply don’t want to believe that Erdogan and his advisors are crazy enough to try to trigger a war with Russia or even to invade Syria. While Erdogan himself is clearly a maniac, I cannot believe that his entire staff is also composed of lunatics. Furthermore, I cannot imagine that the US/NATO/EU would actually support a Turkish invasion of Syria or, even less so, an attack on Russia. Russophobia is great only as long as it does not expose you to a continental war, at which point your self-interest and survival prevails over any ideological notions. At least I hope so.

And maybe I am naive, but I want to believe that the Turkish people are not going to just sit back and do nothing while their leader is dragging their country towards a war with Russia.

The Elder Saint Paisios the Athonite. Credit: The Saker

In conclusion, I want to mention one disturbing thing. A [Greek elder, a monastic named Paisios](#), whom the Greek Orthodox Church has glorified as a saint, was known for his prophetic visions. One of the most famous one was his prediction that Turkey and Russia would have a major war which would result in a complete break-up of Turkey and the liberation of Constantinople from the Ottoman yoke (if you are interested by the details, click [here](#) and [here](#)). Now I quite realize that in our times most people will immediately dismiss such things as meaningless nonsense, obscurantism, superstition, wishful thinking on the part of a “resentful Greek”, religious gobbledygook etc. But please keep in mind that between the 15th and the 20th century, [Russia and Turkey have already fought 12 wars](#) (!). That over 2 wars (2.4 exactly) per century and that the last one happened a century ago.



The Elder Saint Paisios the Athonite. Credit: The Saker

So whether you look at prophecies, past experience or statistics, things look very, very scary, at least to me. And, as Ghassan Kadi and Pepe Escobar have explained, Erdogan is now cornered. That also makes him very dangerous.

The AngloZionists are experts at unleashing crazed ideologues (Wahabis in the Middle-East and Nazis in the Ukraine) but that they always seem to eventually somehow lose control over them. I just hope that the American 'cover' of the Turkish regime did not result in the unleashing of yet another rabid ideology - Ottoman Imperialism - or, if it has, that it is not too late for the US to rein in this lunatic before it is too late.

Erdogan and his regime are a threat to regional and even world piece. I don't really care who removes him, the Turkish people or the White House, but I sure hope that his days in power are numbered because as long as he is in power a catastrophe of major proportions can happen.

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