

Turkey: NATO's First Rogue State

by Dean Andromidas

Jan. 19—Turkey has become the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's first "rogue state." This term, so popular with the State Department and the neo-conservatives, is used against states with alleged "authoritarian" regimes that supposedly support terrorism and seek weapons of mass destruction. Turkey's President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, is increasingly being recognized as an "authoritarian" whose government is supporting the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Syria. And now it is reported by specialists in Washington and London that Erdogan is calling for the development of an independent ballistic missile capability with a range of 3,000 km, far enough to hit almost any target in the European Union and the western half of Russia.

This confirms Erdogan's own statement of intent on ATV television on Nov. 18, 2015.

But unlike Saddam Hussein's Iraq, or North Korea, Turkey is a member of NATO—it could drag the alliance into World War III. Many were reminded of this ugly possibility when, on Nov. 24, Turkey became the first NATO country since the formation of the alliance to shoot down a Russian warplane without provocation.

In Whose Behalf?

But make no mistake, this "clear and present danger" is not the folly of the former mayor of Istanbul, who has delusions of becoming the Sultan of a resurrected Ottoman Empire, but is rather the work of the Anglo-Saudi empire that has thrown the entire Middle East into war and catastrophe that, if not stopped, promises to lead directly to a thermonuclear confrontation between Russia and the West.

Just as the old Ottoman Empire was manipulated by



Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan hosts Saudi King Salman at his palace on March 2, 2015. Saudi-U.S. Relations Information Service

the British Empire against Russia and its other rivals, today's Turkey has become that same tool against Russia. Since Russia made its strategic move into Syria to crush ISIL and end the civil war, Turkey has taken the lead in the attempts to stop it, under orders from its Anglo-Saudi masters. The shooting down of the Russian warplane was only the most dramatic and dangerous ploy.

In what is nothing less than a war crime on behalf of the Anglo-Saudi empire, Turkey is using the millions of Syrian and other refugees—which its support of the war against the Syrian government has generated—against Europe. It is an open secret that the Turkish authorities have allowed the people-smugglers to operate freely along its coasts, generating waves of hundreds of thousands of refugees into the European Union, most of them via impoverished Greece.

Greek President Prokopios Pavlopoulos, in an interview with the Germany daily *Süddeutsche Zeitung* published Jan. 18, on the occasion of his official visit to

Germany, accused Turkey of facilitating the smuggling of migrants.

“I have serious concerns that Turkish human traffickers get support from authorities,” Pavlopoulos told the German daily. “In particular, port authorities are pretending to be unaware of this.”

That this humanitarian catastrophe is being used as blackmail against particularly Germany, the one country seeking cooperation with Russia on these issues, was exposed by Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Mehmet Simsek himself, in an interview with Germany’s *Die Welt* on Jan. 16: “If Germany and others want to stop the influx of refugees, they must stop the bombing against the Syrian opposition.” The “Syrian opposition” to which Simsek refers are Turkmen, most of whom are Turkish nationals—such as the Turkmen terrorist who murdered the Russian pilot of the Su-24 shot down last November in his parachute—or are mercenary Turkmen from central Asia.

In an expression of caution from the side of the U.S. military, the daily *Defense News* noted Turkey’s likeness to a rogue state in its report on Jan. 16 that Erdogan is seeking long-range ballistic missiles. It also quoted an unnamed, Ankara-based NATO ambassador, who expressed his concern that “Such ambitions can fuel sectarian tensions in the region. A missile rivalry between a NATO member Turkey and Iran does not sound pleasant.”

Turkey as Pakistan

With the outbreak of the so-called Arab Spring in 2011, Turkey’s foreign policy of “zero problems” with neighboring countries became that of the chief standard-bearer for the Muslim Brotherhood takeover of the entire Middle East. When the Arab Spring hit Syria, Turkey under Erdogan went from being a “strategic partner” with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to becoming the logistical base for the massive, Saudi-financed military operation to overthrow the Syrian Government.

Again, the mastermind was not the would-be sultan, but is seen in a very clear deal Erdogan signed with the Anglo-Saudi monstrosity known as the Sunni alliance, which led to billions of dollars pouring into Turkey, not only to pay for the war against Syria, but also to keep Erdogan in power. It is no secret that Erdogan’s Justice and Development Party won the last election thanks to billions of dollars that poured into the country during the election campaign, money that originated in Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

Erdogan renewed his membership in the Sunni alliance last December, when Turkey announced it was joining the 34-nation, Saudi-backed so-called Islamic military alliance against terror. Erdogan’s official visit to Saudi Arabia followed on Dec. 29, when the two countries agreed to set up a “strategic cooperation council” to strengthen military and economic cooperation between the two countries.

Four days after this visit, on Jan. 2, Saudi Arabia conducted its infamous execution of 47 prisoners it called terrorists, including the country’s leading Shi’a cleric, Nimr al-Nimr, an atrocity that Iran saw as a major provocation, and which reinforced the widespread belief that the Saudi-led “Islamic military alliance against terror” is nothing more than the sectarian Sunni alliance that has been backing the overthrow of the Syrian government and taking aim at Iran and its influence in the region.

As with any pact with the devil, the policy has come with a bloody price. In a February 2015 interview with the Turkish daily, *Today’s Zaman*, retired British MI6 officer Alastair Crooke warned that Turkey could become like the Pakistan of the 1980s under pro-Muslim Brotherhood President Muhammad Zia ul-Haq, who suffered serious blowback from the same terrorist organizations he had sponsored, also with Saudi money, to fight the Soviet forces then occupying Afghanistan. These were the same groups that later morphed into the Taliban and al-Qaeda, backed by the same Saudi networks responsible for the 9/11 attacks on the New York World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

Crooke, who is director and founder of Conflicts Forum and former adviser on Middle East issues to former EU Foreign Policy Chief Javier Solana, told the Turkish daily that the Turkish government’s strategy for playing a leading role in the region may be costly, because Turkey might become hostage to ISIL.

“I was there at that time,” Crooke said. “Zia ul-Haq was a strong, Muslim Brotherhood-oriented leader, and he rejected any notion of blowback. For 25 years, I have seen political leaders who believe that they can control and use the Salafists for their own ends, but who subsequently find it is they who have been used by the Salafists.”

Zia ul-Haq paid the supreme penalty for his policy. He died in 1988 in the crash of the C130 transport aircraft in which he was travelling. The official inquiry found that the most probable cause of the crash was sabotage.

Blowback on Turkey

Almost one year after that interview, Crooke told *EIR* for this article that he believes the situation in Turkey in this respect is even worse than it was in Pakistan in the 1980s. Erdogan's courting of ISIL and the Salafists has seen these forces penetrating the entire "fabric of the state," as it is well known that MIT, the Turkish National Intelligence Service that takes its orders from Erdogan, has been supporting Islamic terrorist operatives in Syria. Now these groups have "leverage," and any attempt to curtail their operations is very dangerous. Crooke pointed to the recent Istanbul suicide bombing targeting the city's most important tourist site—in which 10 German tourists were killed—as a case in point.

Although this was the first attack on tourists, the Istanbul bombing is only the latest of several high-level terrorist attacks in Turkey, including one last summer in Ankara, Turkey's capital, that killed more than 100 people.

Crooke went on to assess the very seriously deteriorating situation in Turkey. He warned that it is just a matter of time before Erdogan's war against the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK)—which has led to civil war conditions in the country's southeast and which he used to win the elections—spreads to the western districts of Turkey. The Istanbul bombing was a foretaste of such violence. On top of this violence is the collapse of the economy. Erdogan's economic policy has been based on real estate speculation and hot money. The former has collapsed, and the latter is being pulled out of the country, as Turkey is seen descending further into chaos.

Another point of internal instability is the "internal polarization" Erdogan has created. This includes the repression of all criticism of the government, such as the arrest and dismissal of academics who signed a petition calling for an end to the heavy security operation in the southeast. The opposition to Erdogan has spread to elements in the ruling Justice and Development Party itself, which Erdogan does not hesitate to repress brutally.

Proxy War with Russia

Turkey's shooting down of the Russian Su-24 warplane last Nov. 24 has highlighted the fact that Turkey has launched a proxy war with Russia since the latter made its strategic intervention against Turkey and its Anglo-Saudi sponsored ISIL and other terrorist organizations. The attack on the Su-24 has led to NATO taking

over the defense of Turkey's airspace bordering Syria with the deployment of NATO's AWACS surveillance planes and maritime patrol aircraft and ships provided by Germany and Denmark, while Spain will deploy its Patriot surface-to-air missiles along Turkey's border to replace those recently removed by Germany and the United States.

Under the cover of NATO's security umbrella, Turkey believes it can continue to channel support to ISIL and other terror groups operating against the Syrian government and Russian forces, including their smuggling of oil from ISIL-controlled oil fields in Syria. None of this has deterred Russia and Syria from carrying out their operations against ISIL in Syria, which are said to be achieving considerable success.

Turkey has facilitated the movement of thousands of anti-Russian fighters—who are wanted in Russia for terrorism—from the Russian Caucasus to fight in Syria as well as their return to conduct terrorist operations in Russia itself. It is also feared that Turkey is stirring up mischief among the ethnic Turkic population in Crimea and Central Asia, including the Turkic Uyghurs in China.

In the volatile Caucasus, Armenia—a member with Russia of the Commonwealth of Independent States—has asked for, and received assurances from Russia for support against any possible Turkish attack. While Armenia has no border with Russia, it does border Turkey and Turkey's ally Azerbaijan, with which it has a long-running dispute over the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave in Azerbaijan. In consequence of this request, Armenia and Russia have integrated their air defense systems and Russia recently announced it will deploy MIG-29 fighter jets and a Mil Mi-8 transport helicopter to a Russian base near Yerevan by the end of this year.

Russia has also made diplomatic representations to Azerbaijan to prevent any rise in tension between Azerbaijan and Armenia. It is believed that Azerbaijan, despite pressure from Turkey, has no stomach to get involved in such insane schemes.

Russia, while refusing to be provoked, has nonetheless responded with increasing economic pressure on Turkey. While imposing sanctions on certain Turkish exports to Russia, tightening visa requirements, and suspending new construction projects, it has virtually ended Russian vacationing in Turkey. Russia has also suspended the construction of Turkey's first nuclear power station as well as all nuclear-related research and training programs.

The Russian government also invited the co-chair-



Kurd Press

Turkish Army troops mobilize to pursue Kurdish fighters in the Qandil Mountains. The Kurdish fighters are among the most effective against the Islamic State.

man of Turkey's People's Democratic Party (HDP, oriented to the Kurdish issue), Selahattin Demirtas, to Moscow last month, where he met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. According to Sputniknews.com, Demirtas said during this meeting that Turkey should not have shot down the Russian Su-24 last month and that Turkey should work to improve relations with Russia.

"We criticized the government's actions when it downed the Russian plane," Demirtas said. "Problems between states will always arise, but it's necessary to leave the door open for a political and diplomatic settlement," Demirtas added, whose party has 59 seats in the 550-seat Turkish parliament.

The visit did not please Erdogan, who immediately called Demirtas a traitor.

Civil War in Turkey

Erdogan's reckless policy is leading to the "Syrianization" of Turkey itself. For weeks, in the cities of Turkey's ethnic Kurdish southeast, war has been raging between Turkish security forces and the PKK, and several cities have been kept under curfew. This warfare has led to scenes of destruction similar to Aleppo and Homs in Syria. Every day the body count increases, with deaths of members of the security forces, PKK fighters, and civilians. While more than 100 civilians have been killed in the last months, the Turkish army admits to the death of well over 200 members of the security forces and more than 500 PKK fighters.

The protracted security operations have caused an uproar among the Kurdish community and the opposition more broadly. More than 1,200 academics have signed a petition demanding an end to the security operations and a return to negotiations with the PKK, which the government broke off last year. Erdogan's response has been to conduct brutal repression, arresting several of the signatories on charges of supporting terrorism, while demanding that university rectors dismiss signatories.

The conduct of the Erdogan government has drawn a strong response from the main opposition, the Republican People's Party (CHP). Its leader, Kemal Kiliçdaroglu, slammed the Turkish government in a speech given shortly after

the Istanbul suicide bombing.

"No buts about it, from now on, 78 million citizens in Turkey need to know this truth: This government cannot govern Turkey. It is not able to govern. The Twenty-first Century's Turkey cannot be ruled with third-degree staff. We have so far remained silent and we have been patient. Now we have run out of patience; you will go if you are not able to rule, and those who are able to rule will take over," Kiliçdaroglu said in an address before his party's parliamentary group.

He said his party had warned the government years ago not to "drag the country into the Middle East quagmire."

An Army Insider Sums It Up

Lt. Col. (ret.) Mithat Işık, former head of the elite Turkish army unit Bordo Bereliler (Crimson Berets), slammed the government's anti-Syria policy for dragging Turkey into a security disaster, in an interview with *Today's Zaman* on Jan. 12.

"Turkey has tried to design Syria in line with its foreign policy priorities without considering Syria's own social dynamics. These wrong policies have resulted in the emergence of state-like structures that pose a threat to Turkey's domestic security. Broken relations with Russia, Iran, Iraq, and Syria have turned Turkey into a main target for the terrorist groups in question. The government should abandon its policy of undermining its neighbors' interests and should cooperate with them, in order to prevent future attacks," Işık said.