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A holistic view of Turkey in the 21st Century:
The case of Erdogan

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It appears that contemporary Turkey tries to market/manipulate its past in an effort to revive its once glorious past. To that end, a plethora of mediums are being employed under its foreign policy umbrella whilst, the latest developments may only turn the heed to Erdogan – specially, given the regional proximity/involvement in various open fronts like Syria and Cyprus. Not to mention, the serious internal matters that need to be addressed thoroughly such as, Turkey’s plummeting economy; with Erdogan shifting the focus of the public elsewhere via the use of, say, ‘terroristic’ rhetoric. Thus, the current article attempts to comprehensively analyze issues deemed worthwhile in order to better understand the present multifaceted landscape. Finally, it thought-provokes any reader/-s to reassess the relations between Turkey and other key players in the global/regional chessboard.

The reviving Ottoman imperialism became evident over the recent years,¹ with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan – as the leader of the great Ottoman revival – ambitiously wishing to make Turkey great again.² Actually, Erdogan likes to think of himself as a neo-Ottoman sultan.³ However, the foreign policy of Turkey is more in line with domestic political needs in lieu of, meeting with the aims of the Western alliance; needless to say that, its national public diplomacy comprises of verbal aggression, the spread of doctored news as well as, efforts

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¹ Iacovos Kareklas, *International Law and Politics on Salamis* (Nicosia: Research Centre of Kykkos Monastery, 2007), 87.

² Mustafa Akyol, “Erdoganism [noun],” *Foreign Policy*, 21 June 2016, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/06/21/erdoganism-noun-erdogan-turkey-islam-akp/> [accessed 27 March 2018].

³ Robert Ellis, “Germany must not sell its soul to Turkey to restore good relations,” *Handelsblatt Global*, 7 March 2018, <https://global.handelsblatt.com/opinion/germany-must-not-sell-soul-turkey-restore-good-relations-895660> [accessed 10 April 2018].

to interfere during elections.⁴ Admittedly, the concept of soft power has been extensively adopted to describe the rising popularity relished by Turkey not merely within its region but, also, elsewhere; particularly, thanks to its cultural products – with its cultural diplomacy matching well with the new age of Turkish foreign policy.⁵

Apart from how Erdogan eulogizes the glories of the Ottoman Empire while encouraging public expressions of Islamic devotion, Turkey is faced with foreign problems; especially, as America together with Europe complain over its human rights abuses; not to mention, how NATO, Russia and Iran object to its Syria policy while, Iraq/Syria have protested Turkish military incursions on their land.⁶ Further, Greece and Armenia continue to be its traditional antagonists while, relations with Israel (though, once good) are now tense; moreover, due to Turkey's support for the Muslim Brotherhood, it has estranged Saudi Arabia/Egypt (i.e., the richest/most populous Arab nation, respectively).⁷

A brief synopsis as regards Syria is imperative at this stage, in view of the convoluted civil war that continues for seven years now, with some maintaining that a fall of the President's (Bashar al-Assad) regime may potentially lead to a political vacuum in the country and, a reappearance of the Islamic State (IS).⁸ Unsurprisingly, Syria ranks the second most miserable country in the world (with metrics including inflation and the sum of the unemployment).⁹ It is worth mentioning that lately, America – in conjunction with the United Kingdom and France – decided to launch strikes in Syria so as to eliminate the country's ability to use chemical weapons; that is, deterring the production/use and spread of such weapons.¹⁰ Additionally, some International Relations experts hold that an immediate political solution to the Syrian problem is next to

⁴ Marc Pierini, "Can Europe maintain relations with 'autocratic' Turkey? View," *Euronews*, 15 March 2018, <http://www.euronews.com/2018/03/15/can-europe-maintain-relations-with-autocratic-turkey-view> [accessed 20 March 2018].

⁵ Hakan Fidan, "A Work in Progress: The New Turkish Foreign Policy," *Middle East Policy* (2013), XX: 1 (2013), 91-96 (95).

⁶ J. William Middendorf II and Dan Negrea, "The crisis in U.S.-Turkish relations," *The Washington Times*, 27 March 2018, <https://m.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/mar/27/why-its-important-for-america-to-repair-the-relati/> [accessed 1 April 2018].

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Jim Michaels, "U.S. concerned about triggering wider war as it weighs strike on Syria," *USA TODAY*, 12 April 2018, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2018/04/12/syria-conflict-missile-strike-concerns-islamic-state/511390002/> [accessed 12 April 2018].

⁹ Steve Hanke, "Hanke's Annual Misery Index: The World's Saddest (And Happiest) Countries," *Forbes*, 28 February 2018, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/stevehanke/2018/02/28/hankes-annual-misery-index-the-worlds-saddest-and-happiest-countries/#2bf7feea6657> [accessed 17 April 2018].

¹⁰ Michael C. Bender and Louise Radnofsky, "Trump Says Strikes Aimed at Ending Syria's Use of Chemical Weapons, Sending Message to Russia and Iran," *The Wall Street Journal*, 14 April 2018, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-says-strikes-aimed-at-ending-syrias-use-of-chemical-weapons-sending-message-to-russia-and-iran-1523673529> [accessed 14 April 2018].

implausible.¹¹ As for Turkey's involvement in the war in question, the position held by its military was that the operation in Afrin (Northern part of Syria, bordering Turkey) comprised the provision of safety for its border and the elimination of terrorists whilst, saving friends/brothers, the individuals of the region, from their cruelty.¹² The latter statement was packaged well, analogous to the marketing of the Cyprus 1974 war, sold as a 'peace operation'.¹³ Surely, an *invasion* may be wrapped in the clothing of an *intervention* or whatever a mighty power pleases for that matter.

Another point worth stressing early on in our current analysis is how the S-400 anti-aircraft missile systems that Turkey purchased from Russia may not be integrated into the military architecture of NATO – that is, the system is not compatible with the systems of the Alliance;¹⁴ as a result, even though America and Turkey may have been close allies since the Second World War, the diplomatic ties between the two nations have worsened recently.¹⁵

Moreover, the failed July 15 (2016) coup – which claimed no less than 240 lives¹⁶ – forms yet another worthwhile point, with a plethora of the tens of thousands of people taken in prison being innocent; besides the latter imprisonments as well as firing of many more, Erdogan named the coup 'a gift from God', facilitating him to eradicate any political/ideological opponents from the society.¹⁷ A parenthesis here is that, according to political scientist Jay Ulfelder and his mathematical model, the probability of a Turkish coup effort in 2016 was just 2.5 %; so, the attempted coup was, indeed, somehow godsend as Erdogan himself instantly realized.¹⁸ Yet, many ordinary people imprisoned in

¹¹ Lucas Fesias, "Menyma apotropes pros ton Asant, e epithese ton Symmachikon Dynameon (VIDEO)," *alphanews.live*, 15 April 2018, <https://alphanews.live/politics/menyma-apatropes-pros-ton-asant-e-epithese-ton-symmachikon-dynameon-binteo> [accessed 15 April 2018].

¹² "Turkey air strikes hit Syria's Afrin province," *Cyprus Mail*, 20 January 2018, <http://cyprus-mail.com/2018/01/20/turkish-military-operation-syrias-afrin-begun-erdogan/> [accessed 14 April 2018].

¹³ Melih Altinok, "From the 1974 Cyprus operation to the Afrin offensive," *Daily Sabah*, 15 February 2018, <https://www.dailysabah.com/columns/melih-altinok/2018/02/15/from-the-1974-cyprus-operation-to-the-afrin-offensive> [accessed 14 April 2018].

¹⁴ Tuvan Gumrukcu and Ece Toksabay, "Turkey, Russia sign deal on supply of S-400 missiles," *Reuters*, 29 December 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-turkey-missiles/turkey-russia-sign-deal-on-supply-of-s-400-missiles-idUSKBN1EN0T5> [accessed 20 March 2018].

¹⁵ Lela London, "US THREATENS Turkey over surface-to-air S-400 MISSILE DEAL with Russia," *Express*, 28 February 2018, <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/925033/us-threatens-turkey-surface-to-air-s400-missile-deal-russia> [accessed 20 March 2018].

¹⁶ "Recep Tayyip Erdogan: Turkey's pugnacious president," *BBC*, 17 April 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-13746679> [accessed 21 March 2018].

¹⁷ Michael Rubin, "More evidence Erdogan behind coup," *American Enterprise Institute*, 16 May 2017, <http://www.aei.org/publication/more-evidence-erdogan-behind-coup/> [accessed 20 March 2018].

¹⁸ Shadi Hamid, "How Much Can One Strongman Change a Country?" *The Atlantic*, 26 June 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/06/erdogan-turkey-islamist/531609/> [accessed 3 April 2018].

Turkey happen to suffer in vague connection to the coup plot, counting numerous figures from human rights organizations plus, other civil society groups.¹⁹ Not to mention, others from the military, judiciary and academia.²⁰

In regards to the conditions of Turkish prisons, suffice to mention how the naked-body search of an inmate is not something rare, with the government frequently releasing photos of detainees handcuffed behind their back – needless to say that, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have reported the ill-treatment/torture of inmates.²¹ It seems that even the prison guards are scared as, if a visitor asks for a glass of water, the guards will not offer it to them so as to evade the suspicion of being nice to the opposition (as a plethora of them have been fired ever since the failed coup).²² On top of it all, relations between the European Union (EU) and Turkey have also gone downhill since the aforesaid mid-2016 failed coup attempt contra Erdogan.²³

Equally important to note is the fact that, thirty-eight Nobel laureates signed an open letter to President Erdogan, voicing their concern – one that is shared by lots of people within Turkey, its allies as well as, multilateral organizations that Turkey is also a member – and calling for the fast return to the rule of law besides, the full freedom of speech/expression.²⁴ In this manner, Turkey could feel again a proud member of the free world – that is, the detention and prosecution of Altan brothers is viewed as part of a larger pattern of repression in Turkey contra those expressing dissent/criticism of the authorities and so, until Turkey frees detained writers, it simply may not claim to be a member of the free world.²⁵ Perhaps, it may be worrisome, at best, to people of such caliber (i.e., Nobel laureates) to hear that Erdogan is determined to expand his power and, guarantee his victory in the upcoming elections; with

¹⁹ Ishaan Tharoor, "Turkey's Erdogan wages a dangerous war on many fronts," *The Washington Post*, 31 January 2018,

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/01/31/turkeys-erdogan-wages-a-dangerous-war-on-many-fronts/?utm_term=.99df41dc6ed7 [accessed 20 March 2018].

²⁰ Alon Ben-Meir, "Erdogan: Sultan of an Illusionary Ottoman Empire," *The Globalist*, 9 March 2017, <https://www.theglobalist.com/erdogan-sultan-of-an-illusionary-ottoman-empire-turkey/> [accessed 21 March 2018].

²¹ Safak Pavey, "Inside Erdogan's Prisons," *The New York Times*, 14 July 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/14/opinion/turkey-erdogan-prison.html> [accessed 26 March 2018].

²² Ibid.

²³ Jonathan Stearns and Nikos Chrysoloras, "Turkish Tensions With Cyprus Cause EU to Rethink Erdogan Summit," *Bloomberg*, 23 February 2018, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-02-23/turkish-tensions-with-cyprus-cause-eu-to-rethink-erdogan-summit> [accessed 15 April 2018].

²⁴ JM Coetzee, Kazuo Ishiguro, Svetlana Alexievich *et al.*, "An open letter to President Erdoğan from 38 Nobel laureates," *The Guardian*, 1 March 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/feb/28/nobel-laureates-president-erdogan-turkey-free-writers> [accessed 27 March 2018].

²⁵ Ibid.

legislative/presidential elections due on 3 November 2019.²⁶ Well, at least, that was the original plan – as, following the developments to date, Erdogan called a snap election for June 24;²⁷ with the used rhetoric premising on the need to combat internal/external foes that solely he may handle.²⁸ But, however, Turkey needs to balance rhetoric with reality²⁹ – other than, simply attempting to silence the domestic (public) dissent that is rising with the death toll in view of the military operations in Syria/Iraq.³⁰

Moving into a different milieu, in 2018, the educated cybercriminals are expected to make their assaults more damaging and less avertible so as to gain control in this saturated criminal marketplace.³¹ Against the aforesaid *cyber-space/warfare* backdrop, it is noteworthy mentioning that hackers from Turkey have long attacked those nations from Europe whereby, its politicians hold anti-Islamic opinions or criticism against Turkey.³² After having said that, one must note the group of attackers who call themselves Ayyildiz Tim (translated as 'Star and Crescent Team', a reference to the Turkish flag) and describes itself as 'the Turkish cyber army', as it seems to have previously hacked entities like a United Nations group; with the messages of the group consisting of Islamist sentiments whilst, backing Erdogan.³³

To shift away now from cyber space, following numerous incidents at sea, Turkey was accused of violating international law in a row over offshore oil/gas exploration; thereby, EU leaders plan to condemn what they view as the illegal actions of Turkey in an impasse over eastern Mediterranean gas reserves with

²⁶ Akram Belkaid, "Erdogan tries to fix his election," *Le Monde diplomatique*, April 2018, <https://mondediplo.com/2018/04/04turkey-belkaid> [accessed 14 April 2018].

²⁷ "Kouvelis says tension to continue after Erdogan calls snap polls," *E Kathimerini*, 20 April 2018, <http://www.ekathimerini.com/227878/article/ekathimerini/news/kouvelis-says-tension-to-continue-after-erdogan-calls-snap-polls> [accessed 20 April 2018].

²⁸ Bulent Aliriza, "Turkey Heads to the Polls on June 24," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 19 April 2018, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/turkey-heads-polls-june-24> [accessed 20 April 2018].

²⁹ Nicolai Due-Gundersen, "Erdogan seeks to expand Turkey's influence in the Middle East through diplomacy – and force," *The Conversation*, 17 April 2018, <http://theconversation.com/erdogan-seeks-to-expand-turkeys-influence-in-the-middle-east-through-diplomacy-and-force-93757> [accessed 21 April 2018].

³⁰ "Erdogan's surprise elections: what's the rush?" *Euronews*, 20 April 2018, <http://www.euronews.com/2018/04/20/erdogan-s-surprise-elections-what-s-the-rush-> [accessed 22 April 2018].

³¹ Marcin Kleczynski, "A Look At The Five Biggest Future Cyberthreats Of 2018," *Forbes*, 2 January 2018, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2018/01/02/a-look-at-the-five-biggest-future-cyberthreats-of-2018/#7e7874f349d2> [accessed 18 March 2018].

³² Sarah Souli, "Turkey's band of pro-Erdogan hackers keep trolling Europe," *VICE News*, 17 March 2018, https://news.vice.com/en_us/article/wj7enx/turkeys-band-of-pro-erdogan-hackers-keep-trolling-europe [accessed 17 March 2018].

³³ David Z. Morris, "Former Sheriff David Clarke Becomes Latest Right-Wing Target of Turkish Hackers," *Fortune*, 22 January 2018, <http://fortune.com/2018/01/22/sheriff-david-clarke-turkish-hackers/> [accessed 3 April 2018].

two EU members (that is, Cyprus and Greece).³⁴ To bring the discussion closer to home, it seems that Turkey became more aggressive vis-à-vis the gas matter following the most recent round of talks in the Swiss resort (Crans Montana); it is worth emphasizing here that Cyprus is hopeful with its natural gas findings in its Economic Exclusion Zone (EEZ) given how the waters are delineated as its sovereign territory.³⁵ Having said that, Turkey must respect the fact that the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) proclaimed a 12-mile territorial sea-zone in 1964 and, proceeded in 2004, to proclaim its EEZ on the basis of the median line of delimitation between opposite geographical states; that is, the legal position of Cyprus on the Law of the Sea is solidly based on the provisions of United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) III of December 10, 1982, wherein it actively participated – although, one must note, Turkey happens to be one of the small minority of states that did not sign/ratify UNCLOS.³⁶

To elaborate further, during the meeting the Foreign Minister of the RoC, Nikos Christodoulides, had with officials (including, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu) in his recent visit to Israel, a significant part of the agenda placed emphasis on what the Cypriots described as Turkey's "provocative actions" in the EEZ of the RoC whereby, Cyprus hopes to develop a big natural gas field as stated earlier.³⁷

Therefore, while Erdogan may be determined to strike a deal essentially on his terms as far as Cyprus is concerned,³⁸ he will need to respect international treaties. After all, the RoC is recognized by the international community; and, in 2004, became a member of the EU.³⁹ Put differently, despite any Turkish threats or opposition in relation to the energy plans of the RoC, Turkey ought to remember that it is accountable under international law.⁴⁰

³⁴ Gabriela Baczyńska, "EU leaders condemn Turkish actions in Mediterranean gas standoff," *Cyprus Mail*, 22 March 2018, <http://cyprus-mail.com/2018/03/22/eu-leaders-condemn-turkish-actions-mediterranean-gas-standoff/> [accessed 26 March 2018].

³⁵ Hannah Lucinda Smith, "Cyprus rules out peace talks with 'aggressive' Turkey," *The Times*, 2 March 2018, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/cyprus-rules-out-peace-talks-with-aggressive-turkey-9fn0m58hk> [accessed 19 March 2018].

³⁶ Andrew Jacovides, "Turkey and the Law of the Sea: some facts," *Cyprus Mail*, 11 February 2018, <http://cyprus-mail.com/2018/02/11/turkey-law-sea-facts/> [accessed 19 March 2018].

³⁷ Herb Keinon, "AFTER ERDOGAN SPAT, PM SPEAKS WITH GREEK, CYPRIOT LEADERS," *The Jerusalem Post*, 5 April 2018, <http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/After-Erdogan-spat-PM-speaks-with-Greek-Cypriot-leaders-548956> [accessed 7 April 2018].

³⁸ Ben-Meir, *op. cit.*

³⁹ "Nicos Anastasiades: Cyprus, Turkey and the gas standoff," *Al Jazeera*, 17 March 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/talktojazeera/2018/03/nicos-anastasiades-cyprus-turkey-gas-standoff-180316093537586.html> [accessed 21 March 2018].

⁴⁰ Tom Ellis, "Kasoulides: A solution is the only way forward for Cyprus," *E Kathimerini*, 5 April 2018, <http://www.ekathimerini.com/227367/opinion/ekathimerini/comment/kasoulides-a-solution-is-the-only-way-forward-for-cyprus> [accessed 5 April 2018].

However, Erdogan's Turkey is determined to carry on safeguarding its own alongside, Turkish-Cypriots' rights when it comes to natural resources in the region.⁴¹ Needless to add here that the Turkish-Cypriot side, together with Ankara, continues to promote its key objectives like changing the current demographics of Cyprus while, aiming at the dissolution of the RoC so as to replace it with a federal or confederate entity.⁴² What is more, Erdogan hopes that by 2023 (the marking of the 100th anniversary of the Turkish Republic), Turkey will become as great as the Ottoman Empire was during its zenith; Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (i.e., the 'Father of the Turks'), who set up the Turkish Republic in 1923, consists of his role model – despite any similarities, though, Atatürk wished to found a Westernized secular democratic state in antithesis to Erdogan who chose the opposite way.⁴³ That is to say, Erdogan inexorably silenced the media – specially now with the current talks regarding the sale of the assets of the biggest media group in the country to a group loyal to Erdogan, aiding in the creation of a huge monopoly in the media market⁴⁴–, placed under his control the judiciary and subordinated the military, with the aim of indoctrinating the public in a subconscious manner to his outlook of the glorious Ottoman era; nevertheless, no matter how he will try to resurrect the Ottoman Empire, such utilized means are doomed to fail.⁴⁵

On the positive side, Erdogan's followers maintain that he has ameliorated the national economy, led political reform while making important progress in terminating the thirty years of guerrilla war with Kurdish separatists; nonetheless, many are those who criticize him and his autocratic proclivities – let alone, corruption/extravagance.⁴⁶ To be more precise with, for instance, the aforesaid positive economic note, there were nonetheless policies that, needlessly, managed to expose the Turkish economy to greater political as well as, economic uncertainty.⁴⁷ In fact, in terms of its economic paradigm, the economy in Turkey is overheating, with Erdogan recognizing the fact that the

⁴¹ "Turkey determined to protect own, Turkish Cypriot rights in East Med, President Erdoğan says," *Daily Sabah*, 20 March 2018, <https://www.dailysabah.com/energy/2018/03/20/turkey-determined-to-protect-own-turkish-cypriot-rights-in-east-med-president-erdogan-says> [accessed 21 March 2018].

⁴² Andreas Theophanous, "To anigma ton odofragmaton kai e katohi," *Agora Dialogue*, 20 April 2018, <http://agora-dialogue.com/2018/04/19/το-άνοιγμα-των-οδοφραγμάτων-και-η-κατο/> [accessed 20 April 2018].

⁴³ Ben-Meir, *op. cit.*

⁴⁴ Ercan Ersoy, Kerim Karakaya and Tugce Ozsoy, "Turkey Media Baron to Sell After Long Battle With Erdogan," *Bloomberg*, 22 March 2018, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-03-22/dogan-in-talks-to-sell-turkish-media-assets-to-demiroren-group> [accessed 25 March 2018].

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ "Recep Tayyip Erdogan Fast Facts," *CNN*, 19 February 2018, <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/11/26/middleeast/recep-tayyip-erdogan-fast-facts/index.html> [accessed 25 March 2018].

⁴⁷ Fadi Hakura, "Erdogan's Policies Are Undermining the Turkish Economy," *Chatham House*, 7 March 2016, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/erdogan-s-policies-are-undermining-turkish-economy> [accessed 26 March 2018].

lira has plunged; further, the Turkish firms have accumulated a foreign debt load equal to around 40 per cent (%) of economic output.⁴⁸ Not to mention how, according to the German newspaper *Handelsblatt*, experts warn about the possibility of a recession.⁴⁹ To be sure then, the future is blurry. Yet, the economy notwithstanding, the \$615 million presidential residence – comprising of 1150 rooms – antagonizes the homes of the Ottoman sultans.⁵⁰

In addition, in accordance with a refugee expert in Turkey, the European Commission falls short of monitoring the role of the Turkish government closely and enforcing adequate transparency with regards to the use of funds; the worst part is that once the whole procedure is over, the refugees end up receiving merely 5-6% of the intended EU funding.⁵¹ A bracket here stressing the crucial role Turkey plays when it comes to this specific crisis is that Turkey became geopolitically vital for, say, Germany in the course of the refugee crisis of 2015/2016.⁵² Particularly, taking into consideration how Germany accepted 700,000+ Syrian refugees since 2015, before the new German legislation was introduced that put new barriers to family reunification to the mounting numbers of Syrian refugees, who now look for returning to Turkey.⁵³

Beyond any shadow of doubt, further attention regarding the latter sensitive subject is critical. Specially, when one reads that 18 million euros destined to be given to Syrian refugees (who happen to be in Turkey) were spent instead – on behalf of Ankara – on the purchase of military equipment from Holland.⁵⁴ Intriguingly, the EU is advising its members to approve a further €3.7billion so that to aid Turkey deal with the refugees who reached there from Syria.⁵⁵ It is

⁴⁸ Constantine Courcoulas and Asli Kandemir, "Turkey Overheating Means Race Against Time for Erdogan," *Bloomberg*, 3 April 2018, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-04-03/turkey-overheating-means-race-against-time-for-president-erdogan> [accessed 3 April 2018].

⁴⁹ "Ksenia MME: E tourkiki lira katarreei," *SigmaLive*, 9 April 2018, <http://www.sigmalive.com/news/international/500456/ksena-mme-i-tourkiki-lira-katarreei> [accessed 10 April 2018].

⁵⁰ Doug Bandow, "Turkey's Erdogan Plays Dictator in Constitutional Fight: Divides Nation as Popularity," *Cato Institute*, 26 April 2017, <https://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/turkeys-erdogan-plays-dictator-constitutional-fight-divides-nation> [accessed 17 April 2018].

⁵¹ Ioannis Antypas and Zehra Yildiz, "Turkey refugee deal: following the money," *Euronews*, 24 March 2018, <http://www.euronews.com/2018/03/24/over-1bn-pledged-in-eu-turkey-migrant-deal-still-to-be-paid-> [accessed 26 March 2018].

⁵² Keinon, *op. cit.*

⁵³ Ayhan Simsek, "Syrian refugees in Germany returning to Turkey: Reports," *Anadolu Agency*, 12 April 2018, <https://aa.com.tr/en/europe/syrian-refugees-in-germany-returning-to-turkey-reports/1116559> [accessed 14 April 2018]; also, may find in: *Hürriyet Daily News*, 13 April 2018, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/syrian-refugees-in-germany-returning-to-turkey-reports-130240> [accessed 14 April 2018].

⁵⁴ "Tourkia: 80ek apo EE gia prosfygiko, pigan se str. eksoplismo," *Sigmalive.com*, 24 March 2018, <http://www.sigmalive.com/news/international/497445/tourkia-80ek-apo-ee-gia-prosfygiopigan-se-streksoplismo> [accessed 26 March 2018].

⁵⁵ Matt Drake, "World War 3: Turkey's Erdogan calls for 'ARMY of Islam' to ATTACK Israel on all sides," *Express*, 26 March 2018, <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/936954/World-War-3->

significant to highlight at this point that, following the capture of Afrin, the US - together with Germany- condemned Turkey for adding further to the misery of Syria.⁵⁶

The epitome of the aforementioned absurdity is how Turkey, also responsible for the Syrian refugee crisis, is receiving ever more funds from the EU in order to alleviate the situation and, instead, uses these money to buy weapons so that to continue invading Syria, locking the refugee crisis in a vicious circle. And, despite the fact that in recent times, the EU harshly criticizes Turkey; all the same, it continues to view Turkey as a 'key partner' in numerous policy areas – especially, concerning migration.⁵⁷ Perhaps then, a less contradictory stance next time may grasp Ankara's attention more.

Another key point is how the American academic, Noam Chomsky, accused Erdogan of hypocrisy (and operating double standards vis-à-vis terrorism) in his email to *The Guardian*; Chomsky said that Erdogan – while condemning left-wing critics for ignorance – has been helping the Islamic State of Iraq/Syria (ISIS), which he held liable for bomb attack on Constantinople.⁵⁸ To illustrate the aforesaid hypocrisy with a recent example, the Defense Minister of Turkey, Nurettin Canikli, stated that if France takes any steps concerning its military presence in northern Syria then, such act would comprise an illegitimate step that would not merely go against international law but, in fact, constitute an invasion.⁵⁹ Intriguingly, Erdogan showed persistence in rebuking the French President, Emmanuel Macron, stating: 'go to hell' to those nations countering the struggle made by Turkey versus terrorism.⁶⁰

[Turkey-Erdogan-army-of-Islam-Israel-war-attack-all-sides-latest-news](#) [accessed 26 March 2018].

⁵⁶ "After taking Afrin, Turkey looks for new targets in Syria," *The Economist*, 22 March 2018, <https://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21739225-its-pursuit-kurdish-fighters-it-risks-running-america-after-taking> [accessed 26 March 2018].

⁵⁷ "EU: Turkey's membership hopes at an all-time low," *Deutsche Welle*, 15 April 2018, <http://www.dw.com/en/eu-turkeys-membership-hopes-at-an-all-time-low/a-43391440> [accessed 17 April 2018].

⁵⁸ Matthew Weaver, "Chomsky hits back at Erdoğan, accusing him of double standards on terrorism," *The Guardian*, 14 January 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/jan/14/chomsky-hits-back-erdogan-double-standards-terrorism-bomb-istanbul> [accessed 27 March 2018].

⁵⁹ AFP/FP, "Turkey says France sending troops to Syria would be 'invasion'," *Arab News*, 1 April 2018, <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1277106/middle-east> [accessed 2 April 2018].

⁶⁰ "Erdoğan to the West: 'You can go to hell'," *Ahval News*, 8 April 2018, <https://ahvalnews.com/france-turkey/erdogan-west-you-can-go-hell> [accessed 14 April 2018].

Furthermore, the anti-Western Islamic agenda exhibited by Erdogan,⁶¹ is culminated by how he wishes to create an 'Army of Islam' in order to attack and destroy the State of Israel.⁶² More specifically, Erdogan and his ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) – who have publicized their latter desire to create an army of Islam so as to wage warfare versus Israel – made a call to the 57 member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to make a joint army in an effort to concurrently assault Israel from all flanks; that is to say, by uniting militarily, OIC members shall comprise the globe's biggest and most comprehensive army.⁶³ It appears that the feelings are mutual as, according to a 2017 survey, the vast majority of the people in Israel view Erdogan unfavorably; 83 % to be more precise.⁶⁴

That being said, the language used by Erdogan is quite fascinating, of late calling the Israeli leader (i.e., Netanyahu) a 'terrorist'; however, Netanyahu retorted by stating verbatim: *Anyone who occupies northern Cyprus, invades the Kurdish strip and slaughters citizens in Afrin, should not lecture us about values and ethics.*⁶⁵ Therefore, showing how salient discourse happens to be as, it may help to either build or (as in this case) burn bridges between states. A case in point, Erdogan has also accused the French government for 'providing support to terrorism'.⁶⁶

Apart from the incessant Turkish provocations witnessed in the past months, the Prime Minister of Greece, Alexis Tsipras, was also found in the unpleasant situation of having to hear from Erdogan himself – during his recent visit to Greece – overtly demanding the revision of the Treaty of Lausanne; thus, the Turkish plans/objectives with respect to Greece and Cyprus now surely manifest their expansive nature.⁶⁷ In point of fact, a lot of Greeks believe that Turkey

⁶¹ Alon Ben-Meir and Arbana Xharra, "Kosovo And Erdogan's Dangerous Islamic Agenda," *Alon Ben-Meir: Professor*, 6 April 2018, <http://alonben-meir.com/writing/kosovo-erdogans-dangerous-islamic-agenda/> [accessed 11 April 2018].

⁶² Tzippe Barrow, "Erdogan's Vision: Uniting an 'Army of Islam' to Destroy Israel in 10 Days," *CBN News*, 13 March 2018, <https://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/israel/2018/march/erdogans-vision-army-of-islam-to-destroy-israel> [accessed 26 March 2018].

⁶³ Drake, *op. cit.*

⁶⁴ "Opinion of Erdogan is mixed," *Pew Research Center*, 8 December 2017, http://www.pewglobal.org/2017/12/11/key-middle-east-publics-see-russia-turkey-and-u-s-all-playing-larger-roles-in-region/pg_2017-12-11_middle-east_06/ [accessed 2 April 2018].

⁶⁵ Herb Keinon, "ERDOGAN: YOU ARE A TERRORIST, NETANYAHU: YOU ARE A BUTCHER," *The Jerusalem Post*, 1 April 2018, <http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Netanyahu-Ankaras-idea-of-an-April-Fools-Joke-is-to-preach-morality-to-the-IDF-547628> [accessed 2 April 2018].

⁶⁶ Alasdair Sandford, "Turkey: Erdogan lashes out at France warning of 'more terror attacks'," *Euronews*, 7 April 2018, <http://www.euronews.com/2018/04/07/turkey-erdogan-lashes-out-at-france-warning-of-more-terror-attacks-> [accessed 10 April 2018].

⁶⁷ Andreas Theophanous, "O aniforikos dromos pros tin Anastasi," *Agora Dialogue*, 3 April 2018, <http://agora-dialogue.com/2018/04/03/o-aniforikoc-dromoc-pros-tin-anastasi/> [accessed 4 April 2018].

has territorial aspirations versus Greece.⁶⁸ A belief that may be corroborated by how recently, Ankara made reference to the Imia islets of Greece and stated that they comprise Turkish territory; more precisely, they said that the “Kardak Rocks” with their territorial waters, as well as airspace above them, happen to be exclusive under Turkish sovereignty.⁶⁹

In view of the latest developments, especially with regards to the ongoing war in Syria, one must be extremely prudent in the event the current situation escalates. Particularly, when a state-owned Russian TV channel advises the public to pack the basics in preparation for the *Third World War* and, suggests the ideal supplies for survival against radiation.⁷⁰ Within this context, besides the destabilizing tendencies evident in many regions of the world in tandem with the altering borders (specifically, when looking at the map of Syria), the Turkish provocations against Greece/Cyprus must be taken under consideration; let alone, when Turkish officials are openly talking about the need to revise the Treaty of Lausanne (as stated also above) while, concomitantly, Turkey strives to put aside the RoC so as to turn the island into its protectorate.⁷¹

In conclusion, it is quite apparent then that a very difficult situation lies ahead due to the Turkish maximalist aspirations;⁷² particularly, as Turkey is turning into a dictatorship.⁷³ To delve deeper into the Greek-Turkish relations, Cyprus remains a point of friction;⁷⁴ in the meantime, Erdogan, has threatened – and,

⁶⁸ Michele Kambas and Renee Maltezou, “Erdogan and Tsipras verbally spar over old disputes between Turkey and Greece during tense visit,” *Independent*, 7 December 2017, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/erdogan-greece-tsipras-visit-old-disputes-athens-latest-a8097961.html> [accessed 4 April 2018].

⁶⁹ “Imia is Turkish territory, Ankara says in statement slamming EU progress report,” *E Kathimerini*, 18 April 2018, <http://www.ekathimerini.com/227779/article/ekathimerini/news/imia-is-turkish-territory-ankara-says-in-statement-slamming-eu-progress-report> [accessed 18 April 2018].

⁷⁰ Will Stewart, “Russian state TV tells viewers to pack essentials for WW3 bomb shelters - including iodine to protect against radiation,” *Mirror*, 12 April 2018, <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/state-run-russian-tv-tells-12349859> [accessed 12 April 2018].

⁷¹ Andreas Theophanous, “To neo diethnes perivallon kai e Kypros,” *SigmaLive*, 13 April 2018, http://www.sigmalive.com/news/opinions_sigmalive/501346/to-neo-diethnes-perivallon-kai-i-kypros [accessed 13 April 2018].

⁷² Andreas Theophanous, “Peri politikis isotitas,” *Sigmalive.com*, 16 March 2018, http://www.sigmalive.com/news/opinions_sigmalive/495432/peri-politikis-isotitas [accessed 19 March 2018].

⁷³ Hannah Lucinda Smith, “Erdogan’s Turkey ‘has become a dictatorship,’” *The Times*, April 6 2018, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/erdogan-s-turkey-has-become-a-dictatorship-t5w3lf26p> [accessed 6 April 2018].

⁷⁴ “The Davutoglu effect,” *The Economist*, 21 October 2010, <https://www.economist.com/node/17276420> [accessed 2 April 2018]. A note here is that, in the same article, it mentions how the erstwhile foreign minister of Turkey, former international-relations adviser to Erdogan and author of the 2001 book *Strategic Depth*, Ahmet Davutoglu,

more than once – to invade the Greek islands in the Mediterranean (as implicitly mentioned earlier when talking about the provocations) while, synchronously, masquerading its recent intrusion in Syria (with the goal of forming an everlasting presence there) with the fight against Kurdish terrorism.⁷⁵ In other words, Turkey markets its war -or, invasion- as the combat versus terrorism – i.e., under the pretext of combatting Kurdish terrorism⁷⁶– to win the general public opinion and, silence any likely population dissent within its own country. All in all, Erdogan has repeatedly revealed his ambition to resurrect the Ottoman Empire and become the leader of the Muslim world; in view of how he, *inter alia*, undermines the international order, purchases oil from the IS – besides weapons from Russia (i.e., the West's foe) – and, bolsters Islamic studies in schools so that to cultivate a new generation of fervent Muslims loyal to him, one can merely ponder the following: what else should Erdogan do till the EU/US recognize that he happens to be a threat versus western strategic interests?⁷⁷

may reject the accusations that he comprises a 'neo-Ottoman'; yet, his doctrine, surely involved reconstructing ties round the past Ottoman Empire.

⁷⁵ Alon Ben-Meir and Arbana Xharra, "'Army Of Islam': Erdogan's Plot Against Israel," *Alon Ben-Meir: Professor*, 21 March 2018, <http://alonben-meir.com/writing/army-islam-erdogans-plot-israel/> [accessed 21 March 2018].

⁷⁶ Drake, *op. cit.*

⁷⁷ Ben-Meir and Xharra, "Army Of Islam," *op.cit.*