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European Parliament Calls on EU Leaders to Impose Sanctions against Turkey

Amid the provocations over the last months between Ankara and the EU, the absolute majority of the EU members voted in favour of a draft resolution condemning Turkey. The members demanded in the draft the Euro Summit, which will be held this month, to impose sanctions against Ankara without delay because of its actions to create a fait accompli in Cyprus and its territorial waters in the Eastern Mediterranean and its dispute with Greece and recently with Germany and France as well.

The draft resolution also condemned reopening part of the Varosha district by the Cypriot Turks. It warns that "the creation of a new fait accompli undermines mutual trust and weakens prospects of a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus problem." On a related note, European leaders call on the European Council to maintain a unified position vis-à-vis Turkey's unilateral and illegal actions and to impose tough sanctions in response to them.



European Parliament in the city of Brussels, Belgium

Israel's Embassies on Alert after Iran Retaliation Threats

Israeli media reported that the Israeli diplomatic missions in various parts of the world heightened security following the assassination of the prominent Iranian nuclear physicist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh in Tehran. The Israeli Channel 12 said that Israel has raised alertness in its embassies around the world in anticipation of retaliation for the assassination of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, for which Tehran held Tel Aviv accountable.

The channel also pointed out that Jewish communities around the world heightened security after Iran accused Israel of this assassination. Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, who was a senior official in the nuclear program of Iran, has become the fifth Iranian nuclear physicist to have been assassinated since 2010.



Mohsen Fakhrizadeh

Continuing Battles between the Ethiopian Army and the Tigrayan Rebels

The Ethiopian army entered the city of Mekelle, the capital city of the Tigray Region (the northernmost region of Ethiopia), in the "last phase" of the conflict with the Tigray People's Liberation Front. According to the

Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority, Abiy Ahmad said: "we've been able to enter Mekelle city without innocent civilians being targets." Addis Ababa announced that it will enter Tigray Region and now it is in full control of the

city. Debretsion Gebremichael, the President of Tigray People's Liberation Front, confirmed that the Ethiopian government launched attacks to take control of Mekelle and that Mekelle is under fierce bombardment.

Vacillation and procrastination: Turkey's tactic in distracting the Europeans and preventing sanctions

Despite all the opportunities that the Europeans have given Ankara, to avoid a clash that may be harmful to both sides, economic sanctions, or even a military confrontation, Ankara is proving to the Europeans day after day that it is untrustworthy and an aggravator of the tension and concern in the eastern Mediterranean and MEANA.

Missed opportunities

Ankara gave the West some hopes of reaching reasonable solutions after the EU summit that was held at in early October, with zero sanctions but a reminder that it will be monitored for three months until the next summit next December. The move was acclaimed by the Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis who stated on October 6 that Greece “welcomes Turkey’s moves to calm recent tensions in the eastern Mediterranean”, and that Ankara “needs to show a stronger commitment to improving relations”. The positive signs led to an surprising meeting between the foreign ministers of Turkey, Mevlut Cavusoglu, and Greece, Nikos Dendias, on October 8. It was the first meeting since the beginning of tensions between the two countries in the Eastern Mediterranean. However, Ankara has returned to its usual policies of provoking the Greeks and the wider West. On October 12, the Turkish Navy issued a NAVTEX declaring that vessel “Oruç Rais” would conduct a seismic scan in the Eastern Mediterranean for 10 days. The Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs described this as a direct threat to regional peace and security. The statement highlighted that Turkey was “untrustworthy” and “insincere in its desire for talks.” The failure of talks was inevitable.



Foreign ministers of Turkey Mevlut Cavusoglu (Right) and Greece Nikos Dendias (left)

It seems that the prospect of talks was merely a maneuver and false signal. The Greek Foreign Ministry has declared Ankara as “the most prominent factor of instability” in the region, as seen in “Libya, the Aegean region, Cyprus, Syria, Iraq and now Karabakh.”

Greek anger and Turkish vacillation

Dendias, accused Ankara of being behind all the crises in the region. At the end of the European Union’s Foreign Affairs Council meeting in Luxembourg, he said: “Today I had the opportunity to inform my colleagues in the council about the new illegal activities of Turkey inside the Greek continental shelf, south of Kastelorizo,” adding that “Turkey acts as a saboteur to peace and stability in the region and works against international law.” As for obstinate Turkey, it seems that it has decided to opt for a different tactic to evade the threat of sanctions, especially with the declining value of its currency. It is adopting largely vacillating contradictory positions. After the meeting of NATO defense ministers

seismic survey extension NAVTEX in the region was “unauthorized” and “canceled,” asking sailors to ignore it.

Consequently, on October 26, Turkey announced the cancellation of military exercises to be carried out in the eastern Mediterranean until October 28. “Anadolu Agency” quoted Turkish security sources saying that Ankara also cancelled the “NAVTEX” announced until October 28, while Athens cancelled its notification, which is valid until the 29th of the same month.

Distracting the Europeans

With this mutual in and out, it has become clear that Ankara is pursuing a new method to buy more time and mislead the Europeans, by giving its allies, as in Berlin, more opportunities to convince those who wish to impose sanctions on it, such as Greece, Cyprus and France, that resolving the dilemma, thus avoiding economic damage on both sides, is feasible. The Greek seem to know the drill and are more aware of the difficulty of reaching a diplomatic solution with Ankara under its current government.

Dendias indicated that during a meeting with his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, on 26 October, he conveyed Athens’s concerns about Turkey’s unconstructive role, and stated in a press conference: “Unfortunately, there is a common denominator in all areas represented by the destabilizing Turkish factor.” And added: “I expressed my concern about the negative role that Turkey is playing in Syria, as it undermines the successes that have been achieved. Turkey has turned into a travel agency for jihadists who are sent to different fronts.”

via video link, on October 23, Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar announced that Ankara and Athens decided to cancel their counter-manoeuvres in the Eastern Mediterranean. Akar said, “Turkey supports problems solving through international law, good neighbouring relations, and political talks.”

Nevertheless, on October 25, Ankara revealed that it decided to prolong the survey conducted by “Uruç Rais” in a disputed area in the Eastern Mediterranean, until November 4, a Turkish Navy NAVTEX indicated that, “Uruç Rais” and two other ships “Ataman” and “Genghis Khan” will continue to operate to the south of Rhodes, until November 4, after Ankara extended its survey in the area until October 27, according to a previous notification.

In return, Greece responded by issuing a counter “NAVTEX” from its station in Iraklio, Crete, confirming that Ankara was working illegally within the Greek continental shelf. Athens said that Ankara was not authorized to issue “NAVTEX” messages in the region, and indicated that the Turkish



Yemen and the Iranian tumor.. The correct diagnosis is the beginning of the cure

Since the burst of the Yemeni movement seeking salvation from the rule of Ali Abdullah Saleh, Iran has sought to exploit this opportunity through its proxies in Yemen, located in the far southwest of the Arabian Peninsula, within a geographical area overlooking one of the most important sea corridors and straits in the world. It is part of Tehran's efforts to tighten its grip on world exports and imports passing from the Bab al-Mandab Strait towards the Red Sea, and from there to the Egyptian Suez Canal.

Since 2011, Tehran has sought to undermine Yemen and control its future by financing and arming the Houthi militia to be a thorn in the Gulf countries' side, especially the KSA, due to its great influence in the Gulf. This has pushed the region into a dark tunnel putting most of its countries under threat with no end in sight. It has complicated the region's trouble further, and attracted interference by regional parties seeking to expand their influence, with total disregard to the people who have been suffering whether in Syria, Libya, Iraq or elsewhere.

Funding and encouraging attacks

Iran's actions in the region have prompted a group of Gulf states to form the Arab coalition to support legitimacy in Yemen, on March

25, 2015, by launching Operation Decisive Storm, which continues to direct successive blows to the Houthi militia, who have managed to hold on, thanks to the strong Iranian support; the operations that were carried out throughout October prove it.

On October 7, the Saudi-led Arab Coalition spokesman, Colonel Turki Al-Maliki, announced that the Coalition forces had intercepted a booby-trapped unmanned air vehicle (drone) in Yemeni airspace, launched by the terrorist Houthi "Ansar Allah" group towards the Kingdom in a systematic and deliberate manner to target civilian institutions in the Kingdom. It is a semi-routine operation for the Houthi militia. The spokesman highlighted the continuous Iranian support to these militia, despite the US sanctions imposed mainly to block funding and arming of militias in other Arab countries.

In mid-October, Riyadh stressed the need to activate the United Nations program to prevent, combat and eliminate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, especially combating the phenomenon of supplying militants. The Kingdom's permanent representative to the United Nations, Abdullah bin Yahya Al-Muallami, called on the international community to stand firmly against Tehran's supply of weapons and logistical support to

the militias in Yemen, Lebanon, and elsewhere in Middle East, in flagrant violation of all international resolutions in this regard, including Security Council Resolution 2231.

Iranian insistence on playing deaf

However, international and regional calls have fallen on deaf ears, as Iran seems determined to continue tampering with the security of the region and the continuing state of war between its countries. Tehran's response was appointing a new diplomatic mission in the Yemeni capital, Sanaa, which is subject to the Houthi militia. The Yemeni President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi and his government condemned this mission on October 18, considering that it was a clear violation of international law and Security Council resolutions, including International Resolution No. 2216. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that: "The continuation of the Iranian regime in behaving as gangs and terrorist organizations by smuggling weapons and personnel to the Houthi militia, confirms the aggressiveness of this regime and its malicious intentions towards the Yemenis."

On October 23, the Yemeni Minister of Information, Moammar AL-Eryani, launched a scathing attack on Iranian policies towards the crisis in Yemen, accusing Tehran of trying to "spread

chaos and terrorism" in Yemen and the region. "The past five years in Yemen have proved that the Yemeni government, army and people, with the support of the Coalition which supports legitimacy, led by the Kingdom, are fighting a historic and decisive battle in defense of land and identity," stated Al-Eryani.

Regional Coalition Against Iran

Tehran continues to pretend not to hear what it does not want to hear, putting region's present and future at risk. This has, effectively, shuffled the cards and encouraged the Gulf states to rearrange them. It can be seen in successive normalization agreements with Israel, which the US Treasury Secretary, Stephen Mnuchin, referred to on October 19, emphasizing that "the peace agreement between the UAE and Israel contributes to confronting Iran's activities in the region,". Eli Cohen, the Israeli Minister of Intelligence, revealed on the 27th of October that what the region is experiencing at the moment is the result of both Israeli strong influence and American insistence that led to the formation of a front includes Egypt, Sudan, Bahrain and the Emirates to confront Iran and the Turkish president. Israel continues to communicate with a number of countries, with the aim of normalizing relations, but that will happen after the American elections, noted Cohen.

Muslim Brotherhood expands influence in America through think tank

The issue of impartiality and independence of think tanks and research centres in Washington has always been a contested one. It is well known that many of the entities that shape the policy conversation in the city have extensive ties and receive large funding from foreign countries and corporations. This, of course, makes their analyses and activities at times questionable, as it is arguable that, beyond their veneer of independence, they pursue specific agendas.

While most of the attention has been on governmental funding, a related and equally serious problem is that of Washington think tanks with strong ties to Islamist groups and, in particular, to the Muslim Brotherhood. Despite some statements in the past from the Trump administration announcing their intention to do so, the Muslim Brotherhood is not a designated terrorist organization in the US. But the presence of think tanks that, while claiming to be independent and hiding their true colours and therefore attracting mainstream praise and attention, have solid links to the Muslim Brotherhood is a serious problem.

An investigation conducted by The Levant has revealed that the Center for Global Policy (CGP, <https://cgpolicy.org/>), a relatively new DC think tank that has loudly proclaimed its independence has strong connections to the upper echelons of the Muslim Brotherhood in America. CGP and its newly launched flagship publication Newlines have been getting accolades across the board for the excellent quality of their analysis. They have also made of independence from any political influence their alleged main feature. But a search of Washington DC governmental databases clearly shows that the Center for Global Policy is registered on October 2, 2019, as a trade name for the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT).

Moreover CGP and IIIT share the same address (1776 Mass. Av. NW Washington DC).

Finally, CGP stated on its website that its funding comes from the Fairfax University of America (FUA). FUA's Chair of the Board of Trustees is IIIT's founder and governor, Dr. Hisham al Talib. IIIT is arguably the most prominent

global think tank of the Muslim Brotherhood in the world.

- Its founding meeting took place in Switzerland in 1977 in the home of top Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood financier Youssuf Nada. Attending it were some of the most prominent figures of the global Islamist movement, including Khurshid Ahmad from Pakistan's Jemaat e Islami; WAMY co-founder Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman; Malaysia's Anwar Ibrahim; and Muslim Brotherhood spiritual leader Youssuf al Qaradawi.

- IIIT was incorporated in 1980 in Pennsylvania and later moved its headquarters to northern Virginia. It has since become a global knowledge hub aimed at what it calls the "Islamization of knowledge." With branches worldwide, it has translated the works of and provided a platform to a broad array of Islamist scholars, including Youssuf al Qaradawi, Sayyid Qutb and many others.

- For decades IIIT has been run by its founders, three prominent and long-time US-based leaders of the global Islamic movement whom Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood

financier Youssuf Nada calls "my boys" : Ahmed Totonji, Hisham al Talib, and the late Jamal Barzinji.

- IIIT founders Ahmed Totonji, Hisham al Talib, and the late Jamal Barzinji were also founding members of many other Muslim Brotherhood-linked organizations in America (the Muslim Students Association, the Islamic Society of North America, the North America Islamic Trust...). They also served in leadership positions in global entities such as the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) and the International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations (IIFSO).

- The same individuals that have run IIIT since its inception are also behind the so-called SAAR network, a northern Virginia-based complex web of companies, think tanks and charities---all of them sharing the same address (500 Grove Street, Herndon, Virginia 20170). An analysis of 990s filed by some of the entities that belong to the network clearly show very significant financial fluxes.

- The York Foundation, for example, declared 77 million USD dollars in total assets in 2018.

- The Safa Trust, for example, declared 334 million USD in total assets in 2018.

- It should also be noted that SAAR was raided by federal authorities in 2002 as part of Operation Greenquest, one of the largest terrorism financing investigations in American history.

These facts strongly bring into question CGP's claim of independence. The claim becomes even more problematic if one considers the deep and widely documented ties between IIIT and Turkey's AKP and the fact that recently IIIT cancelled a scholar's lecture allegedly because he expressed anti-Erdogan views.

Who We Are

Mission

Values

Expertise

Funding

Programs

Partnerships & Collaborations

Our People

Funding

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CGP accepts such grants and donations in full compliance with U.S. laws and in line with our commitment to independence, impartiality and non-partisanship. CGP does not accept funding, interference or influence from foreign governments or entities.

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Political Islam fulfills Erdogan's promise to Macron of "more problems"

It is no secret that political Islam groups are adept at manipulation, fishing in troubled waters and double standards. When Ankara turned Hagia Sophia Museum into a mosque, despite that fact that it was a historic church, those groups claimed that this was a matter of Turkish internal affair, despite the offense it has caused to Christians worldwide. Churches denounced the move, demanding not to escalate and leading to a world religious war led by Ankara, which claims guardianship over Muslims worldwide, as if they are waiting for Ankara to decide on their affairs. These groups, however, changed their tune when France began taking significant steps to protect its values and laws, which fall under internal affair that should be respected, especially by those who have come to settle as refugees escaping conflicts or persecution in their own Muslim countries, despite being Muslims. Often, they tend to blame the West for the conflicts and wars in their homeland, wrongly denying their own people's responsibility. They are fully aware that France has not planted Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, raged ethnic and sectarian war in Iraq, civil war in Syria and Libya, or funded and armed sectarian militias in Lebanon or Yemen.

Playing with refugee's emotions

Then came the French President, Emmanuel Macron's statement in early October, announcing a draft law to combat "separatist tendencies" in France, mainly "Islamic separatism". It calls up Muslim countries to investigate financing mosques and charities in Europe. It seems obvious to start with the already exposed Qatari and Turkish role, which needs to be examined by the Muslims. They should question countries that seek to harness Muslim communities in



French president Emmanuel Macron (Right) and Turkey's president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (Left)

the West to implement the agendas of both parties, by using the refugee card against Western governments to force them to accept Ankara's expansionist policies.

Although Ankara has recently failed to send more refugees to Europe, enough of them had already reached the continent to create chaos and violence, if it decides to incite them to do so; as long as there is segment of Muslim refugees that is ready to follow political Islam. Thus, ruining their lives and instigating further demonization of refugees in Western societies; which will inevitably lead to an increase in "Islam phobia" and negative consequences on innocent majority of Muslim refugees who are have nothing to do with the dark picture that Erdogan and his alliance are seeking to create. It is possible that Erdogan might retract and apologize to Macron at any moment, as he had previously done to Putin, when he's about to lose, but Muslims in the West will pay, like Syrians have, especially in areas that fell under Turkish control during the Syrian civil war and were eventually recaptured by the regime.

Why France?

Looking at the events since the beginning of this year, it is clear that

Paris has become a thorn in Ankara's side. In January, France objected to the Turkish attacks against the Kurds in northern Syria, denounced the agreement of understanding signed between Turkey and the Brotherhood Accord in Libya, and sending Syrian mercenaries there, and commemorated the anniversary of the Armenian massacre. In February, Macron told Turkey that Turkish laws were inapplicable on French soil, in a press statement, in which he indicated "investigating financing mosques and other projects."

Then, in May, the Mediterranean confrontation took place, when the UAE, Egypt, France, Cyprus and Greece denounced Turkey's moves there. Paris saw Ankara's activities in Tripoli as an imminent threat, and pledged to move in the face of Turkish "aggressive" interventions in Libya. Moreover, it stated that it wanted to hold talks with NATO member states, to discuss the developments, noting that "NATO could not bury its head in the sand in front of Turkey's actions."

In July, France denounced Turkey's move on "Hagia Sophia" stating that it should remain open to all. Accordingly, new warnings of imposing sanctions were issued

to Turkey. The Greek and Cypriot issue made matters worse, as Paris sent two Rafale aircrafts to protect Cyprus. In mid-August, with the refusal of Turkish excavations in the eastern Mediterranean, Macron said "Erdogan is pursuing an expansionary policy contradicting European interests," noting that "the Turks respect nothing but actions.". "I have set a red line for them," added Macron referring to Paris's support to Greece and Cyprus. Paris also accused Erdogan of creating an "Islamic-national atmosphere".

Given that political Islam affiliates have suspicious relations with external parties seeking to undermine Western values of justice and equality among all, it seems unfair that some Muslims see France's wish to control these organizations that are operating on its soil, as a direct attack on their religion. It is something that all Muslims should be aware of and not be dragged into. It requires careful distinction between what those organizations seek to implicate Muslim refugees in, and the religious sentiments that they manipulate, destroying the future of those refugee in order to achieve their

Vienna attacks... Will Europe unite to ban Muslim Brotherhood's activities?!

On Monday evening, gunmen terrified Vienna's city centre firing their machine guns in six different locations killing 3 people and injuring 14; six of them in critical condition in what the Austrian government described as "a terrorist" attack. The Austrian capital had never seen such bloody attacks near the main synagogue and the opera house.

The shooting took place before the new nationwide Corona virus lockdown was due to come into force in Austria, in an attempt to control the second epidemic wave in the country. Access to the city was blocked air and ground with the deployment of police searching for other possible suspects. Investigators wanted to determine whether there was more than one escapee because shooting took place in different locations.

One of the attackers was killed by the police while he was carrying a machine gun and fake explosive belt. The government said that he was identified as an ISIL sympathizer, based on findings at his residence. The Mayor of Vienna, Michael Ludwig, announced that the civilian deaths had increased as a woman died of her wounds. This brings the civilian death toll to two, with a total of three deaths, including one of the perpetrators of the suspected terrorist attack.

Should Europe raise the alarm after such extremists' actions?

With considerably low crime rate, the Austrian capital city has lived a horrifying night. Leaders of several countries condemned the bloody attacks, preceded by the events in Paris after the beheading of history teacher "Samuel Patty", and the events in Nice, in which three innocent people were killed by extremists. Hence, a tense



Police officers guard the scene of the attack in Vienna, Austria

atmosphere prevails over Europe where it has become imperative to raise the alarm to protect the communities that are living under threat.

In exclusive statements to "Levant", Dr. Jassim Mohammed, head of the European Centre for Counterterrorism and Intelligence Studies, said: "The seriousness of what happened last night in Vienna proves that the threats posed by extremist Islamist groups is still present and that they have the ability to carry out terrorist attacks from within European countries. "The danger lies in the fact that it plays into the hands of the extreme right in Europe, which benefits from these actions." Mohammed says that "security cooperation among EU member states is very well established, but there is no unified position among those countries on proscribing political Islam groups, specifically the Muslim Brotherhood."

However, European countries are individually trying to neutralize the organizations that spread extremism in Europe.

Dr. Jassim Mohammed says: "One must pay attention to the recent statements of German Chancellor

Angela Merkel who spoke about Islamist extremism, the statements of the French President Emmanuel Macron, and most recently the statements by Austrian authorities following the attack in Vienna. They, undoubtedly, create a great momentum to make these countries, even if individually, impose tight controls on political Islam groups and the Brotherhood in particular, Dr. Mohammed asserted.

How have political Islam groups managed to infiltrate European society?

Dr. Jassim Mohammed affirms that "European countries allowed the establishment of Islamic organisations and community centers because they were subject to registration laws approved by European laws. The problem emerged after the establishment of these centers and organisations as they turned into platforms for extremism and a breeding ground for extremist groups that seek to provide logistic support for associated groups in the Middle East. However, these groups "were able to circumvent European laws and raise funds, whether via external financing or from within

European countries." Dr. Jassim confirmed.

What is we are witnessing now is "the failure of European authorities" as the security services are not able to monitor every center and organization due to their large number, Dr. Jassim stressed. "European countries may reconsider the conditions for establishing organizations, especially those bearing the status of charitable organizations that are effectively linked to the Muslim Brotherhood," he added.

Turkey reveals its ugly face in supporting extremist groups in Europe.

It is not a secret that Turkey has a far reaching influence in Europe through the Islamic organizations that receive financial support from its Qatari ally, and instructed by the "Milli Görüş" movement, which means "national vision." It is a religious political movement and an umbrella organization of Turkish Islamic parties inspired by "Necmettin Erbakan's ideology" who has described them as "the leading Turkish diaspora organizations in Europe." It is the largest Islamic organization operating in the West.

Dr. Jassim Mohammed concluded his remarks saying: "It's clear that the activities of those societies are directly linked to the Turkish government and intelligence via the Milli Görüş group that operates in Europe, especially Germany and Austria." Pointing out that "this is a systematic approach, and a systematic policy by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to destabilize Europe. The Milli Görüş group uses the Turkish community to organize demonstrations to target groups that oppose the Turkish government, especially the Kurdish community in Europe.

Human Rights Advocate Arwa Al-Khattabi to (Levant): Al-Houthi does not recognize any human right



Murhaf Dwaidari

The Yemeni academic and human rights activist, Dr Arwa Al-Khattabi, spoke to "Levant" about the deterioration of human rights in Yemen, on all aspects to an unprecedented level, under the Houthi control of the state. Male and female detainees, including minors, are held in confined and overcrowded prisons.

She highlighted that Yemen is the country with the most land mines in the world, which inevitably means it also has the highest number of disabilities.

In regards to women's rights, Al Khattabi explained that after the Houthi invaded Sana'a on September 21, 2014, women were marginalized, on both sides; the legitimate government that was pushed out, and the Houthi which does not recognize any human right, including the rights of women and children.

Al Khattabi confirms that the Muslim Brotherhood affiliate Islah Party, was responsible for bringing Al Houthi to Sana'a during the Arab Spring revolution, who until then had been confined to a small area in Maran. The party had already handed over the city of Sa'ada to Al Houthis, who was then brought to Sana's to oppose the former president, who later apologized to the Houthis in Taghyeer Square and included them the National Dialogue Conference, and signed the Peace and Partnership agreement with them after the fall of Sana'a.

■ How do you evaluate the state of human rights in Yemen in light of the ongoing violations by the Houthis?

Unfortunately, the state of human rights in Yemen has severely deteriorated on all levels, reaching



Arwa Al-Khattabi

an unprecedented level under the Houthi control over the state, and their possession of various tools of repression such as the army, security, police and intelligence services.

The prisons are full of detainees, men, women, and even children. Most prisoners do not have trials, or lawyers. Cases of kidnapping women have also reached an unprecedented rate. Some of them are detained in unofficial Houthi prisons, often in private villas and homes, where they are subjected to frequent sexual and physical abuses and severe torture, which led some of them to suicide.

Al Houthi took advantage of the education sector to recruit children

After the Houthi militia seized control over the state, it exploited the education sector to recruit children by brainwashing them, which heralds a greater disaster than ISIS, as it will create a terrorist ideological army that will destroy Yemen and pose similar threats to the region and the wider world. Mines might one of the most

serious violations, for which the Houthis are solely responsible. According to some estimates, the number of land mines in Yemen has exceeded one and a half million and has caused killed and maimed thousands of innocent civilians, especially children and women. According to Human Rights Watch reports, Yemen has the most mines, which inevitably means the highest number of disabilities in the world.

■ What is the role of the Yemeni Islah party in the war raging in Yemen?

The role of the Islah party in the war is a pivotal, and throughout the various stages of Yemen's history since the forties of the past century. It has been a complex and complicated role, bringing Al Houthi to Sana'a during the Arab Spring revolution, who until then had been confined to a small area in Maran. The party had already handed over the city of Sa'ada to Al Houthis, who was then brought to Sana's to oppose the former president, who later apologized to the Houthis in Taghyeer Square and included them the National Dialogue Conference, and signed the Peace and Partnership agreement with them, then handing over some areas to the Houthi

without fighting, five years later.

■ The Houthis have turned their backs to all the initiatives that have been put forward by the United Nations or regional countries ... How do you see the future of Yemen in light of Iran's continuous arms supplies to the Houthis and fueling the war?

The Houthis have one central goal, and that is to establish the Second Imamate State in Yemen. For the sake of achieving their goal, they will not hesitate to use all possible means and tactics, no matter how dangerous and destructive they are. Iran pursues its interests in the region, through its proxies whom it provides them with funding, weapons, expertise and international support. It is obvious that Iran, and every country, pursues its interests. Europe has its own interest with Iran; it does not wish to antagonize Tehran, for fear of its nuclear program. Iran has managed to become a regional power, thanks to its policy of destabilization and spreading its militias in the region.

AS we have witnessed, Iran has been able for a long time to control the groups that represent the Shiite communities in Arab countries. It was not difficult for it to co-opt those communities, especially with the supportive state of affairs, whether in Lebanon, Syria, or Yemen, and maybe some Gulf countries in the future. As long as religion is the horse that pulls the wagon of politics in the direction it desires, conflicts in the region will not stop, and sectarian tensions will only deepen, until Muslims realize that the state must be civil, and that freedom of religion is an individual right, safeguarded by laws which must not be politicized. In short, work to establish secular states that "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's"

Biden, Boris and Brexit



Ian Black

Exaggerated expectations of the arrival of President Joe Biden in the White House in January 2021 are soaring across the world: they range from dealing successfully with the covid pandemic, to confronting China's global ambitions, to tackling global warming, to returning to the nuclear agreement with Iran.

In terms of America's close friends and allies, the stakes could hardly be higher than for Boris Johnson, Britain's prime minister, who led his Conservative party to a resounding victory last December by convincing voters of the wisdom of leaving the European Union. President-elect Biden, however, thinks that Brexit is a bad idea. So Boris has a problem.

The campaign to exit the EU after 46 years was based on the dubious concept of "seizing back control" from Brussels, so the UK would then be able – at least in theory – to strike trade deals with anyone it wanted in order to realize the dream of a "Global Britain".

Donald Trump was a powerful if self-interested supporter: he raved about exporting "chlorinated chicken" – which was banned by the EU. Johnson appears to have assumed that Trump would prioritize a bilateral trade agreement with the UK, giving new impetus to the

long-heralded "special relationship" between Washington and London.

Johnson telephoned Biden to congratulate him on November 10 when it became clear that he had defeated the Twitterer-in-chief. Biden then rang Boris back and urged him to avoid at all costs failing to secure a crucial deal within days on future post-Brexit UK-EU trade relations, including difficult issues like finance, state aid and fishing.

Complicating the story is controversy over checks on trade with Northern Ireland, the part of the UK that shares a border with the Irish Republic, which remains in the EU. The prime minister famously vowed that there would be no border checks, but he was widely perceived to be lying.

Biden's take on this issue is influenced by him being of Irish ancestry: he opposes anything which is perceived to be damaging to the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 (the achievement of Labour prime minister Tony Blair) which ended the "Troubles" that caused so much misery, terrorism and deaths. Any re-imposition of a "hard" border would be unacceptable in Washington.

The president-elect once famously described Boris as "the physical and emotional clone of Donald Trump" – which was clearly not intended as a compliment, any more than the British newspaper columnist who dubbed him "another reckless gambler with startling blond hair

and a record of mendacity."

There is another reason for Biden's hostility to the man in 10 Downing Street. Having served for eight years as vice-president he remembers that when Barack Obama removed a bust of Winston Churchill from the Oval Office, Boris attributed this to his Kenyan origins. "We will never forget your racist comments about Obama and slavish devotion to Trump", as a former Obama aide tweeted.

Whitehall officials worry that Biden will gravitate more towards France and Germany than a Britain outside the EU in the spirit of the multilateral diplomacy in which he believes. The UK, however, remains a committed member of Nato.

Another positive aspect for Boris is that Glasgow is hosting the UN Climate Change Conference in November 2021, which will be the first big event after the US rejoins the Paris Climate Accord – which Trump abandoned.

But Brexit remains a bitterly divisive topic and a cause of profound uncertainty. There was a vivid reminder of that last week with the sudden departure from Downing Street of Dominic Cummings, Johnson's highly influential and controversial adviser who was seen as the brain behind both the Brexit campaign and the Tory election victory.

Cummings' advice and his own behaviour (a stunning breach of the last lockdown rules) has also been

linked to his boss's incompetent handling of the covid pandemic, which has seen Johnson's ratings plummet as UK death rates have passed 50,000 – making them the highest in Europe. Boris himself, who became ill with covid last May, was forced to self-isolate on November 15 after meeting an MP who was infected.

The devastating damage to the UK economy is will be far worse if negotiations with the EU fail to produce a deal within the next two weeks. Businessmen and economists have warned of unprecedented trade disruption, transport chaos, shortages of food, medicines and technologies – and that would be on top of the mass unemployment and bankruptcies caused by the pandemic. Time is running out.

Gordon Brown, the last Labour prime minister, struck a rare note of optimism when he predicted that Johnson would end up doing a deal with Brussels because failing to do so would mean that the UK would be "at war with America on the one hand and Europe on the other at the start of the new year".

Boris has benefited both politically and personally from his relationship with Trump. But that could well change under Biden: "It's amazing what can be achieved with a grown-up in the White House," went one recent exchange on Twitter. "It is," replied a Brit. "Just need one over here now".





Minority Report



James Denselow

Whilst the US President may not think that the election is settled, the rest of the world continue to dissect what the election of the 3rd of November tells us about American politics. The broad-brush strokes of what has emerged as now almost settled, barring a significant upset in Georgia America will have a split Government with a Democratic President, a Republican Senate and Democratic Congress.

Already the narrative of American divisions has been accelerated by record turnouts for both the Biden and the Trump vote. Those close to Biden are frequently asked what plans he has to 'heal' American divides. I would argue that a democratic system that can peacefully process the demands and identities of a nation of some 328 million people through the prism of two major parties is a pretty good template. What is more concerning however, is that the identities of the two major

tribes of America's body politic are being increasingly defined by their marginal and extremist elements. While political 'centrism' is supposedly dead we surely must recognise that a world that understands Americans as either attendees of Trump's rallies or mask wearing members of Antifa is simple false and a incorrect minority report as to the health of the nation.

There is arguably no better time to be a fringe player in this political psychodrama. The rise and rise of political social media could mean that an individual composing conspiracy theory on twitter from the safety of his own home, could suddenly be retweeted by Trump himself to some 80 million followers. Likewise, events like the march for Trump over the weekend see coverage focused on the handful of clashes at the fringes of a fringe event. It is almost as if algorithms of modern news reporting are fuelling a story of deepening difference and irreconcilable political identities. This is made significantly worse by the culture around attack ads that dominates the media and social media airwaves. The Democratic

party is licking its wounds after losing Congress seats and already a debate is raging as to whether they lost votes due to their association with the radical policy position around defunding the police.

Yet this was never Democratic party policy, but instead almost a by-product of Republican attacks looking to tie more progressive members of the Democratic party to the most extreme ideas of the political spectrum. In short it is political strategy for many to paint a picture of such stark divisions and demand that voters take a side.

It is continually fascinating that voters could have turned out in such high numbers for President Trump despite his cack-handed response to a pandemic that has killed close to a quarter of a million Americans. Yet the analysis of issues that Trump voters responded to – particularly law and order and the economy – were almost more existential terrifying than the virus itself.

Whilst headlines and social media clicks are dominated by those on the far left and the far right how can more centralist and representative voices cut through? Well President Biden may be about to demonstrate

one answer to that conundrum. His digital footprint is radically different from his predecessor. Gone are the days where the world will hold its breath waking from Trump to wake up and tweet a 360 reversal of a previous US policy position.

Biden is a self-styled consensus politician who ran as a 'proud Democrat' but promised to Govern on behalf of all Americans. The trust he will need to establish for those worried that he is going to immediately lockdown the country, shut down the fossil fuel industry and defund the police is going to be aided by the fact that those things were never genuine fears in the first place. Report

Meanwhile news networks, and more importantly social media networks, will have to get a lot better at not being driven by covering the most extreme actors. The Steve Bannons of this world have already been kicked off Twitter for and you can almost speculate as to whether we will see Trump kicked off the platform once he loses his privileges as President. The Biden-era may be the majority report overtake that of the minority.

Combating Extremism in Germany & Training Imams



Jasim Muhammad

Germany is at a loss about a number of issues that threaten its societal and national security; one of them is the internal extremism. The issue is more complicated when it comes to religion, its interpretations and platforms. Today, Germany puts its finger on one of the extremism factors on the local level which is the Imams' extremism platforms. The German government announced its new project to train imams since 2019. It is a positive and pioneering step to contain the external influence. The Central Council of Muslims in Germany, supervised by the German Ministry of Interior, bears the great responsibility in this project. It is an important step even if it came too late after Germany had always depended on bringing mosque imams from Turkey perhaps more than any other country. The German constitution recognizes freedom of religion and prohibits the government from interfering in the society's religious affairs. However, the state will maintain neutrality through establishing an independent organization for training imams whose headquarter is in Lower Saxony.

It is assumed that Osnabrück city in the west of Germany will witness the first steps for this project in April 2021, with up to 30 participated German-speaking da'is (preachers). The training, which will last for two years, is carried out by the Islam College in Germany sponsored by the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry for Science and Culture of Lower Saxony, where Osnabrück is. Esnaf Begić, the chairman of the organization's Board of Directors, said that establishing

the organization aims to provide an additional offer because the imams coming from abroad often deal in their Khutbahs (sermons) with "subjects that are not related to our life." Begić added that the new generations of Muslim immigrants also often cannot understand completely a Khutbah in their parents' mother tongue.

Mosques for Integration

The government announced the pilot project in November 2019, under the name "Mosques for Integration", assisted by the Federal office for Migration and Refugees and an advisory council that includes experts from Islamic organizations, and scientific and civil communities. The project aims to support guidance programmes, social work and measures to enhance communications between the mosques and the surrounding environment. According to the Ministry's data, it seeks through this to support community solidarity. The ministry also sponsors the Islam conference in Germany. Most imams are from Turkey and North African. A study revealed that about 90% of the imams in Germany came from abroad. According to a report by Konrad-Adenauer Foundation released by the German newspaper Rheinische Post on March 26, 2019, these imams are mainly from Turkey, North Africa, Albania and Iran. The study added that the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs "DITIB" provides about 50% of the approximately 2,500 imams in its mosques which are about a thousand ones. The report also revealed that the Turkish Islamic organization "Milli Görüş" has 323 mosques, the Turkish Union of Islamic Cultural Centers has approximately 300 mosques and the Islamic community of Bosniaks (Bosnians) in Germany has more

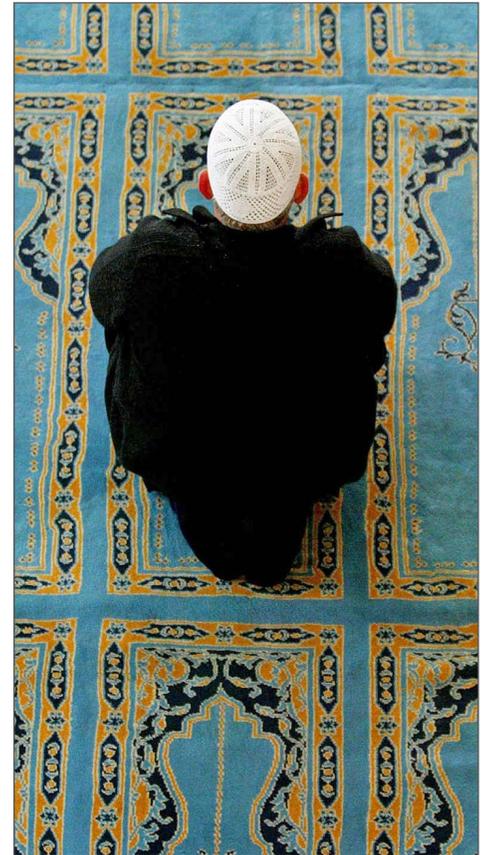
than 70 mosques.

The German MP for the Left, Sevim Dağdelen, said in a speech to the Parliament in October 2020, that "Erdogan's extremist network poses a threat to the public security in Germany and must be disbanded instead of sponsoring it" referring to financing the mosques run by the Turkish Islamic Union "DITIB" by taxpayers in some German states.

Results

- Germany along with many European countries, realized too late the gaps in some mosques and cultural centres including bringing imams specifically the Turks to Germany after realizing the real dangers of the Turkish organizations and the influence of other countries in Germany upon mosques and Muslim communities. The most prominent ones are the organizations of DITIB and Milli Görüş which are directly affiliated with the Turkish government.

- The Federal Ministry of Interior in Germany analyzed these gaps that the imams coming from Turkey and other countries adopt a lifestyle incompatible with the policies of peaceful coexistence in the European societies. As well, most mosques and cultural centres have turned into centres of extremism and provide logistical support to the extremist organizations. Also, a number of the perpetrators of terrorist operations came out from some of those mosques and centres. The project of training imams is undoubtedly a new experience, and it might face many challenges and obstacles; some of them are in administration and others in understanding texts and content. This absolutely depends on the institutions that manage this project which determine whether the project is successful or not.



Germany is the leading country in this project, and France has followed it this year. It is possibly that the rest of Europe will adopt this project, especially that the European Union is one of the sponsors for this experience. There may be a European institute in the European Union to train imams and this is was confirmed by Charles Michel, the European Council president.

- The imams' training programme would support the policies of combating extremism & terrorism in Germany and European countries. This shows the right policies adopted by Germany to reach extremism sources in society.

- Training imams inside the German society means a greater understanding of the Germany's traditions & etiquette. What young people in Germany and Europe need is not to stick to religion presented by the Imams as much as they do to the society's customs, guidance and etiquette.

Strengthening cooperation with Al-Azhar is a necessary need to shape completely the Imams' training project and to cooperate with some of the region's leading countries in peaceful coexistence between races and

Why Are Kurds Happy for Joe Biden's Victory?



Jwan Dibo

When Joe Biden was elected the 46th president of U.S., many Kurds in the Middle East as well as throughout the world have expressed their extreme happiness. The main reason of their gladness was because of retaliation against Trump, who let them down more than once.

The first time was in September 2017 when Trump's administration did not uphold the independence referendum of Iraqi Kurdistan. The second time was in October 2019 when Trump granted a green light to Erdogan's Turkey to occupy several Kurdish regions in Syria. Trump's loss is likely to be the half of the story behind Kurdish contentment. The other half of the story is because of Biden's triumph. On November 7, the day Biden was elected president of U.S., many Kurdish activists posted on social media a photograph of Biden with the former president of Kurdistan region, Masoud Barzani. The picture was accompanied with a sentence in different languages which says: "Mr. President, you are more than welcome in Kurdistan".

It is true that, in general, every time when a new American president is elected, Kurdish hopes for freedom and getting rights are growing. In some parts like Syrian Kurdistan, obtaining some rights within a new democratic Syria might be enough. While, in other parts like Iraqi Kurdistan, the independence is likely to be the most desirable goal. Yet, these aspirations have become much greater when Biden has become the new president of the United States.

Kurdish expectancies are built on some of Biden's distant and near statements on Kurds and the states that persecute them and divide their homeland, viz., Kurdistan. In 2006, when Biden was a Senator, he

proposed that the best solution to Iraqi ancient ethnic and sectarian dilemmas is to be decentralised and divided into three regions. The south is for Shiites, the centre is for Sunnis, and the north (Kurdistan) is for Kurds.

Political leadership of Iraqi Kurdistan viewed this proposal as a tacit support by the Democrats for Kurdish independence. But when the Democrats took over the administration in the White House from 2008 until 2016 and Biden himself was a Vice President, this proposition was not discussed at all, as if it was never proposed by the Democrats.

The second point of Kurdish relative optimism stems from poor personal relationship between Biden and Erdogan regarding latter's blatant interference in the Syrian affairs. In addition to the painful successive attacks that Turkey launched against the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces who are considered Washington's staunchest allies in fighting ISIS.

In October 2019, during a debate between Biden and other candidates

for the presidential election inside the Democratic Party, Biden declared that "Turkey is the real problem here and I would be having a real lockdown conversation with Erdogan and letting him know that he's going to pay a heavy price for what he has done".

It is axiomatic to say that no one can predict exactly what kind of policies will Biden adopt regarding Kurdish issues in the Middle East, especially, in Iraqi and Syrian Kurdistan. However, "In politics, there are no permanent enemies, and no permanent friends, only permanent interests". All states, specifically, the superpowers espouse foreign policies according to their interests only, not according to ethical obligations.

Sometimes, the interests of most powerful nations in the world converge with the interests of the Kurds. For instance, when U.S. toppled Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003, then Kurdistan region became a federal region in post-Baath Iraq. Historically, the interests of the great powers have

not met too much with the interests of the Kurds, but rather they were mainly incompatible. It happened in 1923, 1946, 1975, 2018 and 2019. It is probable that Iraqi Kurdistan and Syrian Kurdistan to be subject to fundamental changes during Biden's tenure in the White House. The transition of Iraqi Kurdistan from a federal region to an independent state, and the transformation of Syrian Kurdistan into an official and constitutional federal region within a new prospective Syria. But at the same time, these pivotal alterations expected to occur during Biden period may also be contrary to the anticipations and ambitions of the Kurds.

Everything is possible in the immoral realm of politics, meaning that the winds can blow counter to what Kurdish ships desire. Therefore, what is required of the Kurds is not only to wait for what Biden will do during his presidency. But to commence to fulfil significant changes in terms of unifying Kurdish positions to confront the enormous challenges affecting Iraqi Kurdistan and Syrian Kurdistan alike.



Notes and Observations

Turkey's Future Military Strategy



Dalia Ziada

On November 12th, Turkish Minister of Defense, Hulusi Akar, presented the military budget proposal for the year 2021, to the Plan and Budget Committee of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM). The following analysis summarizes and comments on Akar's presentation.

1. Turkey plans to continue with military involvement in Azerbaijan and Libya under the guise of providing military support and consultations.

Note: Over a year of active communications, especially on military-to-military level, with Libya's Government of National Accord (GNA), Turkey successfully managed to turn Libya into a devotee. Turkish Minister of Defense, Hulusi Akar's first move in Libya, in 2019, was to sign a strategic partnership agreement with GNA's under-construction army, similar to the one Turkey signed with Azerbaijan in 2010. According to this agreement, the two countries could provide "military support" to each other "upon demanding the right to self-defense under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter." In that capacity, Hulusi Akar controlled military decision-making inside GNA and managed to establish a Turkish military base inside Libya. This is seen by Egypt as a national security threat. Egypt, Emirates, and France support the Libyan National Army (LNA) against the GNA.

2. Turkey plans to continue military operations in Syria and Iraq, under the guise of fighting terrorism. Yet, Hulusi Akar hinted that Turkey is keen to rebuild positive relations with the Iraqi government.

Note: Iran and Russia, who act as Turkey's top frenemies in the region, are heavily involved in the messy scenes of Syria and Iraq. Russia is the de facto ruler of Syria, while Iran dictates and controls every single decision in the Iraqi government. Relations between Iraq and Turkey have always been quivering, until eventually severed in the summer of 2020, when the Turkish border military forces accidentally shot a meeting point of Iraqi officers in Northern Iraq, leaving two Iraqi generals killed.

3. Turkey is determined to continue the fight



for Mavi Vatan (the blue homeland) in the Aegean Sea and eastern Mediterranean. In this regard, Hulusi Akar said that Turkey «no more can ignore the relationship between Greece and Egypt.»

Note: There is a widening political rift between Turkey and Egypt, since 2013. At the same time, Turkey has been systematically harassing Greece to force the international community to cancel Lausanne agreement of 1922 and set new demarcation points in the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean that allows Turkey to have a fair share in seabed mining dividends. As a result, Greece and Egypt joined forces to counter Turkey's threats to their national and economic security. In January, Egypt, Greece, Cyprus, and Israel established the EastMed Gas Forum, and purposefully excluded Turkey out of it. In return, Turkey signed a customary maritime agreement with Libya, in hope that it gives Turkey rights for gas drilling in eastern Mediterranean. In August, Egypt and Greece signed an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) agreement, in compliance with international law, that successfully nullified the so-called maritime agreement between Turkey and Libya. On the first week of November, Egypt's president El-Sisi visited Athens, and made a press statement that «Egypt stands by Greece against any provocations (by Turkey) in the Mediterranean.» That being said, Turkey is the country with the longest border (1870 km) in the Mediterranean Sea. In other words, Turkey has a right lost in the Mediterranean, since the

signing of Lausanne Agreement in 1922. The international community must listen to Turkey and stop confining it to its borders, based on an agreement that was signed a century ago, under the fog of war.

4. Turkey shall continue with testing the Russian S-400 defense system, while seeking to re-join the America-led F-35 fighter jet program. Hulusi Akar said that Turkey is ready to address U.S. concerns on the use of S-400 system with F-16 planes, including any technical compatibility issues. He also said that other members of NATO have already purchased and used the Russian S-300 system and were not punished by the U.S. or NATO for doing so.

Note: the purchase and testing of Russian S-400 defense system, and secretly testing the system on American F-16 fighters, led to Turkey's expulsion from the American-led F-35 fighter jet program, in July. Turkey had been a partner in the F-35 program, since its very beginning, in 1999. In October, the Trump administration accepted Emirates request to purchase fifty F-35 fighters, after Emirates signed the Abraham Accord with Israel, and despite Israel's pressures to prevent the United States from selling the F-35 jet fighters to any other country in the region. Emirates is seen as a regional rival by Turkey, due to Emirates relentless efforts to counter Turkey's expansionist military operations in the Middle East and North Africa. That is in addition to the diplomatic boycott between Emirates and Qatar, Turkey's closest ally and main financier. In August, Hulusi Akar, on a televised interview with Qatar's Al-Jazeera TV threatened to «hold Abu Dhabi accountable, on the right time and location.» In response, the Emirati F-16 fighters joined forces with the Hellenic Navy in Crete, in September, and managed to give Turkey nightmarish three days as they were flying above Turkey's western borders in the Aegean Sea.

5. Turkey's role in NATO shall continue and grow.

Note: Turkey is the second largest military force in NATO, and has been a member of NATO, since 1952. Recently, France attempted to turn NATO against Turkey, on the background of its military presence in the Mediterranean and other political conflicts between Ankara and Paris. The debate is still going on, amongst NATO members, on whether to keep or disown Turkey.

What would be expected from the fourth round of the Syrian Constitutional Committee?



Zara Saleh

The fourth round of the Syrian Constitutional Committee has been announced to be held on November 30, a day after the Russian special envoy for Syria Alexander Lavrentiev has visited Ankara last Friday, where he met Turkey's Deputy Foreign Minister Sedat Onal. Whereas, the UN special envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen had failed to set a date for the fourth round despite his meetings and discussions with Walid al-Muallem the Syrian Foreign Minister and the head of the Syrian opposition. In fact, Russia and Turkey have reached an agreement for the fourth and fifth rounds on behalf of the Syrian government and opposition delegations. Following their agreement in the Nagorno-

Karabakh case, Russia and Turkey were announced the start of the Syrian talks as both states are partners as well as competitors across many conflict places. Arguably, the fourth round of the Syrian Constitutional Committee talks expected to be ended without an agreement between all parties to be reached in terms of political process in Syria. In the previous three rounds of negotiations, both delegations didn't have any progress and even they couldn't reach an agreement about the basic schedule for the meeting, due to different political agendas. While the Syrian regime's delegation insisted the discussions should be on the "national principles", the opposition's demand was to discuss the "introduction of the constitution". The Syrian regime's delegation, therefore, in this fourth round of negotiations might continue the tactics of manipulation as it will

ask for the talks to tackle again the "national principles" without setting a deadline for it. Moreover, the government delegation's understanding of the "national principles" is that the opposition's delegation must give a clear political opinion regarding the concept of terrorism, foreign intervention and occupation, and Syria's unity and sovereignty. In other words, the discussion on the "national principles" perhaps will carry on with no limited time. However, the Syrian opposition delegation, definitely, will not agree with that regime's idea and demand due to Turkey's views and its relations with it. In addition, most of the Syrian opposition didn't consider Turkey as an occupier and they get military support from it as well. Besides that, Turkey still threatening to occupy more Syrian territories as has happened before. With the support of the opposition militias groups, Turkey has

occupied part of northern Syria and the Kurdish-controlled areas of Afrin, Tel Abyad, and Ras Al-Ayn. On the other hand, as they will not accept the government's idea, the Syrian opposition believes that the regime's demand for the priority on the discussion of the "national principles" is a plan of pushing the opposition to be responsible for the fail of negotiations. However, Moscow and Damascus' plan are that the Syrian presidential election in 2021 to be separated from the Constitutional Committee negotiations. Consequently, the Syrian Constitutional Committee in the next fourth round is far from achieving the expected political progress without an agreement between the main international players such as America and Russia with the participation of all Syrian components in the political process.

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