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Johnson calls NATO to increase military spending



British PM Boris Johnson called on NATO members, at the Madrid summit, to increase their military spending. Britain reported Boris Johnson would ask the leaders of the rest of the NATO member states to increase

their military spending, in response to the Russian military operation in Ukraine. After Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, NATO countries pledged to increase their defence budgets by 2024 to at least 2% of their

GDP.

Out of 30 countries, only 8 have achieved or exceeded this goal by 2021, but since then many countries have increased their level of armament due to the war in Ukraine.

Germany plans to build the largest conventional military in Europe

In an interview with the public television network ARD on June 28, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced his country will have the largest European conventional army in NATO thanks to the huge funds Berlin decided to invest to enhance its military capabilities since Russia began its operation in Ukraine.

"Today, along with the USA, Germany is certainly the largest contributor to NATO. The largest conventional European military is being built within the NATO's framework, and this is important for the entire NATO's defence capabilities," he said.

Germany now has about 180,000 personnel in the military - compared to 210,000 in the French one. Observers believe the German military's size could double by 15-20% in a short time.

Since the Russian operation in Ukraine started on February 24, the German government has announced the establishment of an extraordinary fund worth €100 billion to modernise its military.

"We will spend on average between €70-80 billion annually on defence," Scholz added. "These huge investments will make Germany the most invested country in this field."

The USA did not offer any concessions to Turkey to make it accept Finland's & Sweden's accession

A senior administration official said Washington did not offer any concessions to Turkey to make it accept the deal of Finland's & Sweden's accession to NATO. "US President had deliberately chosen to prevent the USA from being a party to the negotiations or being in a situation in which Ankara could request temptations from the USA," he noted. The official, who prefers to remain anonymous, added Turkey never asked anything from the USA to get involved in the talks but the USA

played a crucial role in helping bring the two sides together.

US President spoke with his Turkish counterpart at Sweden and Finland's request to help advance the talks. Swedish Foreign Minister Ann Linde explained negotiations to overcome Turkey's objections to Stockholm's accession to join NATO had made progress, and a breakthrough agreement could be achieved at the alliance's summit in Madrid.



Olaf Scholz

US tries to restore relations with KSA

In an attempt to restore relations with the KSA, to what they used to be before Joe Biden assumed office, the White House has acknowledged the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's role in extending a ceasefire in Yemen before an expected trip to the KSA by the US President.

Sources told Axios website that President Biden is considering visiting Saudi Arabia as part of his planned trip to the Middle East at the end of June. Getting a package of understandings between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia on these issues is crucial for the visit to take place.

Axios also reported the Biden administration has been quietly mediating among Saudi Arabia, Israel and Egypt on negotiations that, if successful, could be a first step on the road to the normalization of relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel.

White House press secretary, Karine Jean-Pierre, told reporters that bin Salman and Saudi King Salman deserved credit for their roles in extending the ceasefire in Yemen. «This truce would not be possible without the cooperative diplomacy from across the region. We specifically recognize the leadership of King Salman and the crown prince of Saudi Arabia in helping consolidate the truce,» she said.

Sources familiar with the process say Biden's expected trip to the KSA in conjunction with a trip to Europe and Israel in late June.

Biden would participate in a Riyadh summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

The visit would be aimed at strengthening relations with the KSA to find ways to lower gasoline prices in the USA.

Jean-Pierre would not confirm Biden's trip but said: «What the president is focused on first and foremost is how his engagements with foreign leaders advance American interests. That's as true with Saudi Arabia as anywhere else.»

Biden is looking for opportunities to meet leaders in the Middle East and he will do so «if he determines that it's in the interests of the United



States ... and that such an engagement can deliver results.»

«There's also no question that - as with many countries where we share interests - we have concerns about its human rights record and past conduct, much of which predated our administration. And we raise those concerns with them, as we do with others,» the official said.

«There are also strategic priorities that are important to address, and our contacts and diplomacy have intensified recently and that will continue.»

Further boosting the prospects for Biden's trip was the OPEC+ decision to increase its oil production by 200 thousand barrels in July and August, a move welcomed by the White House.

The newspaper Levant News had published an opinion piece titled «Saudi Arabia's strategic patience makes Joe Biden administration reconsider». In his article, Darwish Khalifa said that the Saudi strategic patience contributed to modifying the US President's general policy, especially after his statements and promises to hold accountable all those who committed human rights

violations (implicitly referring to some Middle Eastern countries, Russia and China) after signing two arms deals between Washington and Riyadh in September and November. The arms were 280 advanced and medium-range AMRAAM air-to-air missiles which are used to enhance air defence capabilities but are not used against ground targets.

«The sale is fully consistent with the administration's commitment to lead with diplomacy to end the conflict in Yemen,» the State Department spokesman Ned Price said. «The air-to-air missiles give Saudi Arabia the means to defend against Iranian-backed Houthi airstrikes.»

«The American arms deal has other goals; President Joe Biden calls the OPEC+ group, specifically the KSA and Russia, to pump more oil into global markets. The Saudi Minister of Energy Prince Abdul Aziz bin Salman said he had held talks with the US on all levels and that the OPEC+ group did the right thing. The US President informed the Congress members on the same day of the arms deal with Saudi Arabia based on a step-by-step principle,» Darwish explained

«The Saudi leadership is still

cautiously looking at any new American move; it considers the recent steps as an attempt to restore regional balance after the opportunities the US administration has given to the Iranian regime, the latest of which was the resumption of negotiations under the government of the radical Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and remaining silent about the piracy by Iranian naval units in the Gulf of Aden and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait which are important for international trade,» he explained.

«Biden's plans to boost the US economy and rehabilitate the infrastructure require the US to be more open to the rich countries, especially the GCC member states. Therefore, he has to lift the noose he tied around the GCC when he dealt with the deteriorating Iranian regime and lifted the terrorist designation of the Houthi militia ignoring the strategic relations between the USA and KSA. He has also to think about returning to the approach of former President Donald Trump in signing commercial and military deals with the KSA in particular and the wider GCC, in general,» he noted.

Turkey and NATO..

Erdogan's blackmail is responded to firmly

An official report issued on 13 May, before Sweden decided to join NATO, said that such a move by the Scandinavian country would reduce the risk of conflict in northern Europe. Driven by this assessment, and other contributing factors, Sweden and Finland were encouraged to align themselves with NATO, especially after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, on February 24. However, Ankara declared its opposition to the two countries joining NATO before they change their position on the Kurdish forces, especially in Syria.

Turkey's official position

Several Turkish officials, including the Turkish President, displayed their pessimism about Finland and Sweden joining Nato. «As Turkey, we don't want to repeat similar mistakes (referencing NATO's acceptance of Greece's membership). Furthermore, Scandinavian countries are guesthouses for terrorist organizations (referencing the Nordic countries' hosting of members of the Kurdish Workers' Party, or PKK, which Turkey classifies as a terrorist group),» Erdogan said

Fruitless negotiations

To solve the problem, the foreign ministers of the three countries held an informal meeting in Berlin. On May 15, Swedish Foreign Minister Anne Linde stated that Finland and Sweden had not reached any agreement with Turkey. «We have different positions, but we said that we consider the PKK a terrorist organization» she stated, adding: «like many of our NATO partners, we are also in discussions with other Kurdish organisations which believe that all the Kurds in northeastern Syria subscribe to one organization. We do not think so, neither do the Americans or others,» Linde told channel SVT. It seems Erdogan is trying to settle the score with Sweden and Finland which imposed arms



embargo on Turkey in October 2019, when Turkey invaded northern Syria, under what was named 'Operation Peace Spring'.

Turkey-NATO relationship may be damaged

Turkey is trying to put Sweden, Finland, Washington and NATO on the spot by pushing them to trade changing their positions on the Kurdish forces in Syria or elsewhere in return of approving the two Scandinavian countries' proposed membership in the alliance. However, Turkey's plan may backfire, especially since there are many more differences with the USA, in particular, and the wider West, in general.

American orientalist researcher Daniel Pipes stated, in late May, that Turkey should be excluded from NATO, because of its overall policies during the past years and its position on the accession of Sweden and Finland to the alliance. «Turkey was from 1952 to 2002 a very good ally for NATO, but for the past 20 years, it has been a very bad one. Not even an ally... it pursues policies that are hostile to NATO, it's aggressive towards NATO members, like Greece, it engages in the invasion of Syria, it threatens Europe with Syrian migrants. The Turkish government sees Europe as a transactional relationship,» he told TVP World Channel. «Turkey's policy is blackmail. You give us

what we want, and we will give you what you want. I don't think Turkey belongs in NATO. I've been saying this for a decade. It is time to expel it from NATO. Let it go to Russia! let it go to China! Good riddance!»

Turkey is an outlier and uncertain ally

David Phillips who served as a Senior Adviser and Foreign Affairs Expert at the State Department during the Clinton, Bush, and Obama administrations published an article in The National Interest Newspaper about Turkey's current situation in NATO. He stated in his article that Turkey "has become an outlier in Europe and an uncertain ally of the United States". It criticized Russia for attacking Ukraine while refusing to join multilateral sanctions against Russia. «Turkey has broken ranks with international consensus» he added. Erdogan believes that preserving economic relations with Russia and Ukraine will cushion the conflict's impact on Turkey's economy, and benefit Turkey politically. Turkey imports a big proportion of its gas, oil and petrol from Russia. Russia is also a major export market for fruits and vegetables from Turkey. Russian tourism is a further key contributor to Turkey's economy. Russia is helping to build Akkuyu, a Turkish nuclear power plant. Moreover, Turkey, unlike other NATO member states, is

refusing to send military equipment to Ukraine; it rejected Washington's proposal to transfer its Russian-supplied S-400 surface-to-air defence missiles to Ukraine. It also refused to send other Soviet-era weaponry that could help Ukraine's self-defence.»

Double agent

In an article he co-wrote in Der Spiegel, German journalist Maximilian Popp went as far as saying that «NATO's behaviour will be correct if it does not yield to Erdogan's demands. In recent years, Erdogan has developed a close affinity with Putin.»

Irreconcilable differences

In an article she wrote in the Chicago Tribune newspaper, senior fellow on U.S. foreign policy with the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and a previous U.S. diplomat Elizabeth Shackelford wrote: «Is Turkey today really the Turkey NATO was drawn to as a partner 70 years ago? I fear NATO and Turkey have grown apart.»

«Turkey's antidemocratic nature isn't just a bad look for an alliance that claims to be grounded in democratic principles. It also undermines NATO's security. Turkey wields its veto within the alliance like a cudgel, slamming its allies on unrelated issues to punish it for not validating Erdogan's obsession with punishing the Kurds,» she explained.

«If the rest of the alliance finds that Turkey has consistently violated NATO principles, they can unanimously agree to withdraw Article 5 protections from Turkey, effectively suspending its participation and any assistance it receives from NATO. If NATO cannot trust that Turkey would share its collective priorities with it? Can you trust Turkey to have your back? If not, consider your options. Breakups are hard and messy, but you might be better off in the long run. And Finland and Sweden might be able to help with the rebound,» she added.

The UAE operates the first Arab nuclear power plant for peaceful purposes

The world faces a challenge to find additional sources of energy to support economic development. Because of the climate crisis, it would be better if these sources were eco-friendly.

The economic diversification makes the UAE need more electrical energy to run new industrial, construction, health and technology sectors. The more industries flourish, the more the population and the demand for electricity and water increase. For example, the need for water rapidly increased so that 90% of the water consumed comes from seawater desalination plants.

In 2007, the UAE conducted an extensive study to know its increasing needs for energy and its available capacity to generate electricity. The study showed the available electricity supplies will not meet the state's future needs.

The UAE government has studied several energy options to meet its future needs, such as oil, gas, coal, renewable sources and nuclear energy which has proven it is the best option for the country because it is safe, eco-friendly, cost-saving, and provides large amounts of electrical energy with almost zero harmful carbon emissions.

Barakah nuclear plant

The UAE Peaceful Nuclear Programme was launched in 2009, and over the past 13 years, the UAE has made achievements in that programme which made it a pioneer of nuclear power in the Arab world. The Barakah Nuclear Power Plant in the UAE is the Arab world's first multi-unit operating nuclear power plant.

The UAE is building four units at the Barakah Nuclear Energy Plant, and the project is 97% complete as follows: the first and second stations are commercially operating, the third one is in the operational readiness stage and the fourth one is 92% complete.

When completed, the Barakah plant, which is being built by the Korea Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO), will contain four reactors with 5,600 megawatts, of total capacity - equivalent to around 25% of the UAE's peak demand.

In March 2022, the Ruler of Dubai and Vice President of the UAE, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, announced the successful operation of the second nuclear power plant in the Barakah area in the capital city Abu Dhabi.

In early August 2020, the UAE announced the operation of its first nuclear plant in the Barakah field, the first of its kind in the Arab world.

Barakah Station is about 50 km away from the KSA in the west, about 320 km away from the Sultanate of Oman in the south and 350 km from Iran in the north.

On Friday, the Federal Authority for Nuclear Regulation (FANR) which is the regulatory body responsible for regulating the nuclear sector in the UAE, granted a license to operate the third unit of the Barakah Nuclear Power Plant.

The Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation said that the unit was completed in Abu Dhabi's al-

Dhafra region last year, and it will start operating and producing clean electricity in 2023.

Licensing the third unit made the UAE the first Arab country to operate a nuclear power plant and start using it in its electricity network.

Hamad al-Kaabi, the UAE's permanent representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency and deputy chairman and member of the FANR's board of management said: «Today's announcement is a milestone in the UAE's journey as it makes it the first Arab country to operate a nuclear power plant. It is the result of 14-year-old efforts in building its nuclear power programme.»

After the license for the third unit was issued, the inspectors of Nawah Energy Company who resides at the Barakah Nuclear Energy Plant will begin the stage of the preparations for commercial operation during which FANR will conduct round-the-clock. More inspectors will be sent to ensure that fuelling and testing operations are completed in accordance with regulatory requirements.

«FANR has played a vital role in supervising the construction and development of the Barakah Nuclear Power Plant since 2009, especially

after we received an application for a license to operate Units 3 and 4 in 2017. We have conducted extensive reviews and inspections to ensure the plant complies with all regulatory requirements and the highest levels of safety. The authority has also completed its preparations to start the operation phase of the third unit which include taking the necessary steps to implement control measures and carry out the necessary inspections to ensure the plant is operating in accordance with safety standards,» Christer Viktorsson, Director General of FANR, said.

Since the launch of the peaceful nuclear programme, the UAE has made sure to apply the highest standards of security and safety. The International Atomic Energy Agency, in cooperation with the FANR, conducts inspections, evaluations and reviews of the four Barakah plant reactors. It is worth mentioning the UAE has signed more than 13 international agreements and treaties to ensure compliance with safety and security standards for nuclear energy including the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement of the International Atomic Energy Agency.



After 40 years of work in public affairs...

Brookings Institution president John R. Allen's career ends with scandal

On June 13, 2013, John Retherford Allen joined the Brookings Institution as a distinguished fellow. In October 2017, he became the president of the Institution until his resignation on June 12, 2022. The retired US Marine Corps is a four-star general and a former commander of the NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and U.S. Forces – Afghanistan (USFOR-A). He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Operations Analysis from the U.S. Naval Academy. Last year, he was declared a distinguished graduate by the Naval Academy Alumni Association and Foundation. He has a Master of Arts degree in National Security Studies from Georgetown University, a Master of Science degree in Strategic Intelligence from the National Defense Intelligence College, and a Master of Science degree in National Security Strategy from the National War College of National Defense University.

Positions and awards

Allen served in senior diplomatic roles after he retired from the Marine Corps., as Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Defense on Middle East Security for 15 months, during which he led the security dialogue for the Israeli/Palestinian peace process. President Obama appointed Allen as a special presidential envoy to the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL for 15 months.

Allen's diplomatic efforts expanded the coalition to 65 members, successfully halting the ISIS expansion. In recognition of this work, he was given the Department of State Distinguished Honor Award by Secretary John Kerry and the Director of National Intelligence Distinguished Public Service Award by Director James Clapper.

In 2015, He received the Business Executives for National Security



(BENS) Eisenhower Award, and in 2020 he received the Czech and Slovak for his work on strengthening democracy in Central and Eastern Europe.

Brilliant military career

During his four-decade military career, Allen served in a variety of command and staff positions in the Marine Corps and the Joint Force. He commanded 150,000 U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan from July 2011 to February 2013.

During his tenure as ISAF commander, he recovered the 33,000 U.S. surge forces, moved the Afghan National Security Forces into the lead for combat operations, and pivoted NATO forces from being a conventional combat force into an advisory command.

In Iraq, he served as Deputy Commander of Multinational Force – West, during the intense combat operations in the western desert of Al Anbar Province in 2007. Working closely with the Anbari tribes, he was a principal facilitator in the emergence of the Awakening (Sahawa) Movement of al-Anbar's tribes.

Allen's first tour as a general officer was as the principal director of Asia-

Pacific policy in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, a position he held for nearly three years during the George W. Bush Administration. In this assignment, he was involved intensively with policy initiatives involving China, Taiwan, Mongolia, and Southeast Asia.

Allen also participated in the Six-Party Talks on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and played a key role in organizing the relief effort during the South Asian tsunami from 2004 to 2005.

Brookings & Doha

He resigned on June 12 amid a federal investigation into his role in an illegal lobbying campaign on behalf of the wealthy Persian Gulf nation of Qatar. Glenn Hutchins and Suzanne Nora Johnson, the co-chairs of the think tank's board, announced Allen's departure in an email to Brookings staff after he submitted a resignation letter dated Sunday.

The Brookings Institution placed Allen on administrative leave on June 15, a day after the Associated Press reported the FBI had seized Allen's electronic data who authorities say made false statements and withheld "incriminating" documents about

his role in an illegal foreign lobbying campaign on behalf of the wealthy Persian Gulf nation of Qatar. He has not been charged with a crime.

He also, according to a US District Court filing made public last week, was allegedly lobbying top officials in President Donald Trump's administration on behalf of Qatar. He did not register as a foreign lobbyist as required under the Foreign Agents Registration Act.

Spokesperson Beau Phillips denied that Allen had ever worked as an agent of Qatar: «Gen. Allen has actively and voluntarily cooperated with all U.S. government inquiries related to this matter.»

If the FBI's allegations are correct, Allen's conduct crossed lines — legal ones. But it was only possible in a world where similar, albeit less explicitly transactional, connections are normalized.

The scandal surrounding Allen's resignation shows how foreign and corporate interests have a bigger role in policy-idea production than we tend to realize, and how relatively little scrutiny the capital's think tanks receive despite their outsize influence in policymaking.

The court filing appears to have accidentally been posted online, and the New York Times later published it in full. The allegations are explosive. «As requested by Qatari government officials, Allen corresponded with, met with, and successfully lobbied U.S. Executive Branch officials in the United States to release public statements sought by Qatar,» according to the filings.

In conclusion, it is believed Allen has connections with the sheikhs and senior officials of Qatar. For the work, Allen arranged a "speaking fee" of \$20,000, though no speech was delivered, and the prospect of long-term compensation. This apparently occurred before he became president of the institution in November 2017.

After confronting & exposing the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt... its remnants are chased

Some regional countries found the religious organisation of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) a golden opportunity to implement their expansionist agenda so they made it bear the slogan of Muslim unity and use people's religious emotions and they succeeded in influencing the region's peoples and divide them relatively before the national armies and security could confront them.

Before the Egyptian court

The Egyptian authorities did not stop combating the extremist organisation as they implemented many security and preventive measures. The investigation authorities in Egypt issued, in mid-May, a decision to seize 29 MB leaders' funds pursuant to the court's decision to place their names & organisation on the terrorists' list for 5 years and to law no. 8 of 2015 concerning the terrorists and terrorist organisations.

In early June, the Criminal Court and the Supreme State Security one in Egypt sentenced 3 MB members to death and sentenced 20 ones to life imprisonment after being charged with 18 offences. The verdict came after the accused had been proved guilty of attempting to assassinate Counselor Tareq Abu Zeid, head of the Faiyum Criminal Court (back then), judicial secretaries and police personnel, shooting at police stations, preparing and planting explosive devices in vital places and terrorising citizens to spread chaos in the country and bring down state institutions and authorities.

All of them were charged with 18 crimes that happened between late 2014 and early 2015 as the MB leaders revived the organisation's secret apparatus called Qualitative Operations Committees and task them with assassinating and assaulting anyone against their agendas from public people and personnel of the military, Ministry of Interior and the judiciary.

The MB members were divided into



cluster cells and were given secret names. They carefully watched policemen, military personnel and judges and knew where they live, places they go to and even the vehicles they use as well as some police and public facilities to attack them.

Documented report to the British House of Commons and Lords

Egypt's Dar al-Ifta said, in mid-May, that the Grand Mufti of Egypt, Shawki Allam, on the margin of his historic speech before members of the House of Commons, had distributed an important and documented report in English to all members of the British House of Commons and Lords on the Muslim Brotherhood. The report revealed the MB's roots of violence and bloody history.

Dar al-Ifta said the report exposed the MB and revealed its extremist ideology since its foundation, its relations with terrorist organisations, especially ISIS, Hasm and others, the most extremist ideas it adopted, and the figures who founded it and legitimise violence.

The report also talks about the foundation of the Muslim Brotherhood as a political response against the colonialism in Egypt and how its ideology was different from

the original anti-colonial ideologies as the MB used comparison teaching and used Islam and religious texts against society's interests to serve its own interests.

The report mentioned the MB adopted terrorism and violence since its foundation and its General Guide, Mustafa Mashhur who stressed once in a lecture, more than two decades ago, the need to use violence and armed force: «We will never win unless we use terrorism and spread fear. We do not have to abandon ourselves to psychological defeat.»

The roots and methodology of violence

The report also noted the MB was two-faced, the first face is for the general public as it presented itself as a social reformer and an opposition force, while the second one was secret as it was establishing the MB's secret apparatus whose responsibility was to carry out terrorist operations and assassinations, spread fear, and seize power by force as soon as possible, they call this secret activities empowerment.

About the roots and methodology of violence of the terrorist MB, the report showed the founder, Hassan al-Banna, presented himself and his organisation in the 1920s as a reform

movement but he used religion to legitimise violence claiming that jihad is a must to form an Islamic state, revive the caliphate and enforce Sharia.

The report revealed the MB used violence under the guise of jihad which is an indispensable concept in al-Banna's ideology and had a large share in his speeches and writings. Therefore, he made sure to establish a strong group capable of restoring Islamic rule and enforcing Sharia. Therefore, two forces indispensable for al-Banna combined: the power of preaching and the power of arms, and then he called the group to adopt violence as a goal and a means.

MB members are chased outside Egypt

After years of broadcasting from Turkey, the latter realised the possibility of the MB's return to power is almost zero, Ankara decided to reconcile with Cairo and sacrifice those who provided it with great services at the expense of their home country. Many Turkey-based MB media personalities announced they were going to leave Turkey. For example, the MB presenter in Mekameleen TV Mohamed Nasser tweeted he would leave Turkey for another country and thanked Turkey for its hospitality; after he had lived there for 8 years.

His name was placed on a list of MB presenters whom Ankara demanded to stop their media activities on satellite and social media, otherwise, they will be deported. The list also included Moataz Matar, Hamza Zoba', Hisham Abdullah, Hossam al-Ghamry, and Haitham Abu Khalil.

Although the MB in Egypt is maybe witnessing its sharpest decline compared to the last decade, it must always be confronted in Egypt and elsewhere because of the dangers this organisation poses to other countries in the Middle East, especially Syria which is threatened by division.

Amineh Kakabaveh the Kurdish woman who defeated Erdogan in Sweden

With Sweden and Finland having recently petitioned to join NATO, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in late February, Turkey declared its opposition to the two countries joining the alliance claiming they support terrorism. When Ankara talks about terrorism it neither means ISIS, that has resided beside it for years undisturbed, nor Al-Nusra Front or Al-Qaeda which coordinate with Turkey in Idlib so much so that no force except the Turkish army can enter Idlib, which along with other areas in northern Syria are now at risk of repeating the history of Alexandretta.

In fact, what Ankara means by terrorism is specifically the Kurdish political and military forces opposed to Ankara, whether in northern Syria or south-eastern Turkey where it refuses to resolve the Kurdish issue in Syria or Turkey via diplomatic and political means. It rather insists on resolving it via military power, which can only lead to destruction, displacement and demographic change as seen in Afrin, Ras al-Ayn and Tell Abyad in northern Syria.

Turkish demands from Sweden

Turkish dissent newspaper Zaman reported on May 25 that Ankara is asking Sweden to extradite 33 Turkish citizens, including a Swedish MP, and to proscribe Kurdish forces as terrorist organisations in exchange for Turkey's approval of Sweden and Finland joining NATO. The list submitted by Ankara to Stockholm included Kurds and members of the Service Movement, the US-based Turkish Da'i Fethullah Gulen's foundation.

Reports revealed that one of the names on the list is the Swedish MP Amineh Kakabaveh, a Kurdish-Iranian who used to be a fighter with a Kurdish force (opposing Iran) before she sought asylum in Sweden in the 1990s. However, the Turkish ambassador to Sweden Emre Yunt denied statements



Amineh Kakabaveh

attributed to him that his country wants to extradite Kakabaveh as a precondition for Turkey's approval of Sweden's accession to NATO. He told Radio Sweden, that there was a misinterpretation of his statements denying that Kakabaveh's name was on the list sent to the Swedish government.

The Swedish news agency TT reported on May 20 that in response to a question by the agency on whether Turkey wanted Sweden to extradite Kakabaveh, the ambassador stated: «If possible! Yes! But I don't know, she must be a Swedish citizen? It is difficult to deport their own citizens. But it is up to the Swedish government.» Kakabaveh responded on Instagram: «I am a Swedish citizen, and I was elected to represent Swedish citizens in the Swedish parliament. It is the ambassador who should be sent to Turkey.»

Undermining democracy

«If you want to sell everything for NATO membership, then go ahead but I think it's awful,» Amineh told AFP. «It's awful that everything depends on NATO membership, rushing it through and undermining democracy.»

A compromise between Amineh Kakabaveh and the Prime Minister is difficult to see, according to SVT's domestic policy commentator Mats Knutson. The demands she makes are

in direct opposition to the demands made by Turkey. Minister of Justice Morgan Johansson (SocDem) can be overthrown in a no-confidence vote with the help of Amineh Kakabaveh - and thus the government can be overthrown.

«Kakabaveh, as a political savage, has ended up in a position of power where she takes the opportunity to pursue issues in which she is personally involved. If this is pushed to its peak, the government may be forced to choose between Amineh Kakabaveh's support and Turkey's support for a Swedish NATO application,» he said. «The discussion that is now going on in Swedish politics with Turkey can be perceived as a confirmation of the criticism that has been made, namely that Kakabaveh has great influence in Sweden which is a problem for the government. It has already had consequences for the NATO application, but it can also affect the Swedish credibility in the negotiations that are ongoing in the NATO process,» added Mats Knutson.

Not yielding to Erdogan's demands

Before the parliament session for the no-confidence vote on June 7, the independent deputy in the Swedish Parliament, Amineh Kakabaveh confirmed on June 6 that she would hold a new meeting with the Social

Democrats stressing that without promises not to bow to Turkey's demands about NATO membership, it will vote of no confidence against the Minister of Justice and Interior Morgan Johansson.

«Unfortunately, without promises not to bow to Turkey's demands, I will forcibly vote against the government,» she said in a message to Swedish TV as the future of the current government is decided by the former Left Party member Amineh Kakabaveh. «It is important the Socialist government supports the agreement and does not yield to Erdogan and Turkey,» Kakabaveh wrote to SVT.

Kakabaveh saves the government and Erdogan's attempts are in vain

On June 7, Sweden's government narrowly survived a vote of no confidence only because of Amineh's vote. The far-right and the right-wing parties contributed to 174 votes out of 289; but they needed an absolute majority of 175 to bring down the minister. Magdalena Andersson announced that she would resign if the opposition won the vote of no-confidence against the minister, who is a member of her party and who is accused by the opposition of failing to tackle gangs that have terrified Swedish society with a wave of violence, settling scores and bloody shootings.

Independent MP Amineh Kakabaveh, confirmed that she would not give her vote to the opposition, after negotiations throughout the weekend with the social democratic government. Hours before the poll she stated: «I am satisfied». She had previously warned she would vote against the minister if she was not given guarantees on the complex negotiations Sweden is holding with Turkey on its accession to NATO.

Will Bibi return to power?



Ian Black

In another turbulent week across the Middle East it was hard to compete with the implications of the news that Israeli prime minister Naftali Bennett's unwieldy coalition has collapsed, and there is going to be fresh general election in October or November – the fifth in less than four years.

Chief amongst them is that Benjamin “Bibi” Netanyahu is likely to return to power. It is not guaranteed of course, but is still a possible outcome. “Everyone is smiling,” as Bibi told reporters. Bennett’s office said last Monday that “attempts to stabilise the coalition had been exhausted” and his fractious government, made up of ideologically disparate parties, will submit a bill this week to dissolve parliament.

Netanyahu’s return is by no means inevitable but if his political career has shown anything over the years, it’s that it’s best not to underestimate him. “There is no politician in the country with greater political skills, charisma, and experience than Netanyahu”, wrote Aaron David Miller, a former US state department official. In 1996, Bibi became Israel’s youngest prime minister and is now the longest-governing prime minister in the country’s history. And there are many Israelis who can’t imagine political life without him. If approved, as is expected, the legislation will force new elections and mean the centrist foreign minister, Yair Lapid, takes over as caretaker leader in line with an existing coalition agreement. In comments at a joint media conference after the unexpected announcement, Bennett said: “Over the past weeks, we did whatever we could to save this government, not for us, but for the benefit of the country.”

Lapid praised Bennett as a friend and for the “responsibility he is showing today, for the fact that he is putting the country before his personal interests”. As Amos Harel, a Haaretz columnist, commented: “If the outgoing prime minister possessed limited diplomatic



experience and came from a small party, and led a narrow, conflicted coalition, he will now be succeeded by an equally untried prime minister whose powers will be clipped by dint of the fact that he will be leading a transition government.”

On a positive note, in contrast to Bennett, it looks as though Lapid will not have a problem of principle in holding a tête-à-tête meeting with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, though what that is likely to achieve is very uncertain.

Eight factions from Israel’s left, right, and for the first time, an independent Arab party, banded together a year ago as part of an ambitious coalition experiment in order to oust Netanyahu from power. The government has struggled to function, however, since losing its slim majority in April.

Netanyahu said that the coalition’s imminent collapse was “great news for millions of Israeli citizens” and that his center-right Likud party would seek to form a “wide, national government”. Israel held four inconclusive elections between 2019 and 2021 that were largely referendums about the scandalous Netanyahu’s ability to rule while on trial, in an unprecedented era of political gridlock. On the negative

side, the Likud may now only be able to work with other parties if it promises to remove Bibi as leader.

The former prime minister denies any wrongdoing. Three separate trials, into allegations that he sought preferential treatment for a telecom company, solicited favourable media coverage and received gifts worth hundreds of thousands of dollars, are ongoing.

Bennett’s government can claim some successes during its short tenure: it formed the most diverse coalition in Israeli history; passed overdue budgets; guided Israel through the latter stages of the covid pandemic without ordering new lockdowns; and made amends with a judiciary much maligned by Netanyahu. It has also largely dampened the tensions that last May led to a round of fighting between Israel and Hamas, the Palestinian group in control of the Gaza Strip, as well as ethnically charged violence on the streets of Israeli cities.

Nevertheless, Netanyahu remains the country’s most capable and experienced politician. He has dominated public life for much of the past quarter-century, not only as the country’s longest-serving prime minister but also as a formidable

opposition leader.

The dissolution may derail a visit to Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories by US President Joe Biden, scheduled for mid-July. Israeli media quoted the US ambassador to Israel, Tom Nides, as saying that the president’s trip would take place as planned. Lapid is expected to host Biden during the state visit.

Biden is no fan of Netanyahu, whom he’s known for years. Indeed, as vice-president visiting Jerusalem in 2010, Biden was stunned when the Netanyahu government announced a significant expansion of housing in occupied East Jerusalem. And one look at the US administration’s approach to the Bennett-Lapid government in the past year and a half reflects a consistent willingness to avoid any steps that might bring that government down and allow Netanyahu back in—even when the Israeli government’s policies on settlements and Palestinian statehood run counter to Washington’s approach.

With the long-stalled Iranian nuclear talks about to resume, Lapid will have to proceed cautiously, knowing that across the Middle East, every step taken by the Israeli leadership is being closely watched.

Ukraine – Preparing for the Long War



James Denselow

The G7 meeting has no secretariat or traditional agenda but instead provides a more informal space for this community of allies to address the most pressing issues of the day. Unsurprisingly Ukraine has headlined the affair with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky telling G7 leaders he wanted Russia's war in Ukraine ended by the end of the year before the winter sets in. Addressing the G7 Summit in the Bavarian Alps via video link, Zelensky said battle conditions would make it tougher for his troops as they mount their fightback against Vladimir Putin's men.

Zelensky is understandably focused on urgency considering how pivotal the amount and type of Western arms will be to slowing or reversing Russian gains in the east of the country. Yet G7 leaders are focused on a different timeline and over 120 days into the escalation are looking to reassure both Kiev and their own publics that

this is a long-term endeavour that will be costly but ultimately worth it.

Indeed, a G7 statement explained the group's commitment to 'continue to provide financial, humanitarian, military and diplomatic support and stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes'. British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, has gone even further in interviews where he is clear that «the price of freedom is worth paying.» Johnson invoked World War Two as taking «a long time» and was «very expensive» but brought «decades and decades of stability» and delivered «long-term prosperity». There is an interesting strategic analysis that looks at the conflict from Moscow's perspective and sees a strategy that saw two key scenarios for victory. One was the success of the rapid thunder run effort to seize Ukraine's capital at the start of the escalation. A short, sudden and overwhelming use of force could have captured Kiev and replaced the government with a pro-Moscow entity, is the supposed logic.

This of course failed, but that doesn't rule out the second path to victory. A slow grinding seizure of land in

the east including the land bridge that now joins Crimea to Russia. Russia has paid quite the price for this operation to date in terms of losses to its armed forces and the massive range of sanctions – economic and other - that have been leveraged against it, yet Moscow could imagine that such is European reliance on its oil and gas that time will dilute these sanctions.

The European Union should stop adding sanctions on Russia over its invasion of Ukraine and instead push for a ceasefire and the start of negotiations, a senior aide to Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said last week. Low level splits in the Western-led unity towards the conflict in Ukraine was perhaps inevitable as the conflict grinds on. Russia's ability to use energy supplies as a tactic means there is a very real prospect not just of the high price of energy continuing to spike in Europe, but fuel rationing being introduced in the winter period to come. This will result in public anger that will be felt by politicians in these countries. Estonia's prime minister, Kaja Kallas, spoke out at the start of June

saying that “we are at a point when sanctions start to hurt our side. At first the sanctions were only difficult for Russia but now we are coming to a point when the sanctions are painful for our own countries, and now the question is how much pain are we willing to endure”.

G7 leaders are aware of this prospect so are doubling down on the theme of unity. “We have to stay together, because Putin has been counting on, from the beginning, that somehow NATO and the G-7 would splinter, but we haven't and we're not going to,” President Biden said after meeting with his German counterpart, Olaf Scholz.

A key component around unity is support Kiev's decision to seek peace talks at a time they feel is right, rather than being forced into them as part of a process of concessions to Moscow. Whilst peace talks spluttered along in the first few weeks of the escalation they have largely broken down as both sides see a military route to success. With no clear sense as to when this equation changes it's time to prepare for the conflict going on into the long term.



Egypt: Is the Economic Crisis Hurting El-Sisi's Approval Ratings?



Dalia Ziada

Under the escalating pressures of the Russia-Ukraine war on the Egyptian economy, and the uncertainty about when this stress is going to end, the issue of citizen approval ratings of President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi has made a strong comeback. Should we look at the return of the talk about citizen satisfaction, in Egypt, in the same context of media cynicism, or is it an alarm call that should be taken seriously?

The last time a private or governmental research center surveyed the Egyptian public about their satisfaction with the performance of the government or the president of the state, was in 2016, before the launch of the national economic reform plan. These surveys were mainly used as tools in the media war between those who supported and those who opposed the economic reform program, at that time.

But this time, there is a general concern that is shared by analysts, media personnel, that the current economic stress could instigate public protests that may renew the political instability that the country had witnessed following the Arab Spring revolutions. The alarming part, here, is that the Egyptian president, El-Sisi, has publicly declared that he shares the same worries.

"The issue is no longer about availing lucrative investment opportunities. My concern is to preserve the state of political stability in Egypt. If the [economic] pressures increase further, what should we expect them to do?" President El-Sisi warned, on June 13th, while opening a new national complex for animal and dairy production, in Menoufia Governorate. "I am not keen on preserving political stability for my own benefit. When I talk about keeping the public satisfaction rates

high, I am not aiming to preserve the power of the regime or the president. Rather, I am talking about the lives of the 100 million citizens that will be jeopardized if people come out [in protests] as a result of being unsatisfied."

Since the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, in February, the Egyptian economy has been weathering a significant amount of stress. The sharp decline in eastern European tourist turnout to the Red Sea resorts, the disruption of food supply chain, especially in relation to wheat imports, and the spike in exchange rates of the Egyptian pound against the U.S. dollar due to international policies made to contain the unprecedented inflation rates; are some of the reasons leading to the heightened economic weight that the Egyptian government is trying to handle.

This pushed analysts, in the eastern and the western media, to make wild speculations about the potential of overthrowing El-Sisi leadership via a public revolution similar to the one that ousted Mubarak's regime from power, in 2011. However, a closer examination of the crisis causations, the government performance to contain its consequences, and the traditional dynamism of the Egyptian politics indicate otherwise.

It is true that the Egyptian people are deeply frustrated by the economic regress, that came at a moment when they should have been harvesting the fruit of the macroeconomic reform program that has been successfully progressing over the past seven years. However, they are not angry at the government or the president. The bond of trust between the general public and El-Sisi's leadership is still intact. The grassroots citizens still believe that El-Sisi is not corrupt and that he is sincerely working for their interest, not for the interest of a privileged elite of his own, as was the case under Mubarak. The poor, who benefited from El-Sisi's socio-economic initiatives, such as "Hayah

Karima," know by experience that El-Sisi's leadership cares for protecting them.

It may not be an exaggeration to claim that the Egyptian political leadership can, easily, benefit from the crisis in increasing its popularity among the public citizens, and thus avoid the scenario of jeopardizing the hard-won status quo of political stability. The key to overcome the current economic crisis, as well as all the potential crises in the future, is for the government to let go of its centralized approach, in economics and politics, and open a greater space for the private sector, political parties, and civil society organizations to share the burdens as well as the profits. The Egyptian government has already started to take unprecedented steps in that direction.

Despite heated criticism from some of the socialist members of the parliament, the Egyptian government is determined to proceed with its ambitious plan to liberalize the economy, while bending in the wind of the Russia-Ukraine war. The plan is to shrink government's involvement in the market, as a competitor, to avail a space as large as 65% for the local private sector and the foreign investors to compete over the many lucrative opportunities that the huge and prolific Egyptian market has to offer. The government hopes that these new macroeconomic reforms should attract foreign investments of 40 billion dollars over the coming four years.

The initial reaction of the foreign investors and international lenders to these brave steps by the Egyptian government is quite promising. In less than one month, since the Egyptian Prime Minister, Mostafa Madbouly, announced the roadmap to opening the market, the government has been able to make deals of future investments with foreign investors and international lenders, that total as more than 30 billion dollars. Moreover, the 'hot money' investors, who fled the country in the past two



President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi

years, started to crawl their way back to benefit from the new opportunities. Moreover, on June 17th, at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, the Egyptian president announced that Egypt is expecting an increase in the economic growth rate by 5.5% compared to 3.3% in 2021, and that non-oil exports have increased to 32 billion dollars in the second quarter of 2022, despite the significant influence of the global crises, including the global economic standoff around the Russia-Ukraine war, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Therefore, the Egyptian government should not allow itself to be dragged by the media claims about the decline of citizen satisfaction rates. Up till this moment, there is not a credible survey or data that proves or denies that. However, we know for sure that citizens are not angry at the leadership of President El-Sisi. Rather, the public citizens are frustrated by the economic retreat.

There is a huge difference between a citizen being 'angry' and being 'frustrated'. In the first case, the government and the entire regime should be changed as this indicates failure. But, in the second case, the state leadership, which is still respected by the public citizens, should find a way to turn citizen's frustration into a power that fuels positive changes that eventually brings hope back to their hearts. That is exactly what President El-Sisi and his administration should focus on, in the coming period.

To NATO: Why don't you listen to Russia instead of fighting it?



Jwan Dibo

If the West had listened from the beginning to Russia's caveats in Ukraine and took them into consideration, perhaps the current war would not have erupted. Consequently, Europe and the entire world would have been able to avert this devastating war and its horrific repercussions.

However, since there is no place for the word 'if', which refers to prudence in international relations, then everything is contrary to 'if', which refers to imprudence, will prevail and lead to destruction and chaos.

This is not to say that Russia is right in its reservations or allegations. Rather the point here is that this war could have been averted if the collective will of the participants had been present. The issue here is not about truth, rightness, and justice as much as it is about power and hegemony of the great powers.

Indeed, Russia is wrong in its current invasion of Ukraine, and it was not

right in its war against Georgia in 2008 and against Crimea in 2014. But at the same time, was America right in its war against Vietnam in 1965, against Afghanistan in 2001 and against Iraq in 2003? Was NATO right in striking the Gaddafi regime and toppling it in 2011? Most of the wars that America had undertaken in its contemporary history were done without international approval.

So, the question is why the U.S would like to impose certain rules on Russia at a time the U.S itself does not abide by these rules and is constantly violating them. In other words, why doesn't the U.S allow Russia to do what the U.S is doing? The answer is simply because superpowers are adopting a policy of double standards and hypocrisy. In addition, they deal with international issues based on interests and benefits that can be acquired by using power according to the logic of force.

This is the essence of the realist theory in international relations, which emphasises: pessimistic view of human nature, international relations are conflictual, war is the only means of resolving international

conflicts, countries give importance and priority to national security and survival, the endless panting for power and constant scepticism on the intentions of other states.

The U.S was and still hostile to Cuba simply because its regime is communist or socialist. In addition, the U.S had tried several times in the past to overthrow the regime in Havana. The Soviet missile crisis in Cuba in 1962 is a good example of this. Would the U.S, for example, have agreed to the accession of Mexico into an anti-Washington alliance? The answer, of course, is no, and the American reaction would have been more violent than the Russian reaction to Ukraine. Note that in the past, the U.S seized many Mexican lands by force and wars.

Repercussions and effects of Ukraine's war are rapidly expanding and have turned into economic and commercial conflict between Russia and the West. There are signs of a global food crisis. Inflation has swept all over the world. Russia has stopped exporting gas and oil to Europe and the leading countries of the EU, such as Germany, began to reuse coal as an

alternative to gas.

As a result, Europe returns, even temporarily, to the Middle Ages, and no one can predict what will happen in winter. The U.S alone seems to be victorious so far in this war, as it has tripled its exports of gas to EU, at a more expensive price than Russia's price. Does Ukraine, or rather, does the immature Ukrainian leadership deserve to plunge the whole of Europe into economic, living and service crises for its sake, if the war does not expand little by little, so that Europe finds itself compelled to enter into it? This is how war works, its beginning can be controlled, but its end is not easy to foresee.

It would have been better for the EU, specifically Germany, France, and Italy, to find a settlement with Russia rather than being forcibly drawn into the agendas of America, which has no care about European security as much as it cares about its unique interests and agendas. This is how the U.S was, and so it will remain, since hegemony over the entire world and curtailing competitors is the goal of the White House, without any regard for the alleged international peace.



What to expect from Hamas... if JCPOA fails?



Sami Moubayed

The situation in Palestine is volatile, tottering on the verge of a third intifada. In recent weeks we have witnessed a series of stabbings, target assassinations, and arrests, topped with a major raid on Jenin and the murder of veteran Palestinian journalist Sherin Abu Akleh on 11 May. At least one officer of the elite Israeli force Yamam was killed in Jenin's Burqin town last month, while a handful of Palestinians have been arrested. Among the dead is Daoud Zubaidi, who succumbed to his injuries on 15 May 2022. He was the brother of arrested Fateh military leader in Jenin Zakariyya Zubaidi, who is in an Israeli prison. The Zubaidis are allies of Hamas and ranking commanders of the Jenin branch of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PMI)'s military wing, Saraya al-Quds. So are the Dabai brothers, who were the target of a recent raid on the Jenin Refugee Camp. In the midst of the violence, Qatari diplomat Mohammad al-Imadi landed in Gaza on 18 May, raising eyebrows and plenty of questions. Imadi heads the Qatari

Committee for the Reconstruction of Gaza, and his visit comes amidst unprecedented tension in the Palestinian Territories—tension that he can either enflame, or defuse. That depends on how much money is given to Hamas, and what strings are attached to it. Officially, the visit is to settle an overdue payment to Gaza, pending since 1 May. Qatar provides the Gaza Government with \$30 million USD monthly but last month, only \$24 million were wired to Hamas. \$10 million are allocated for fuel, \$10 million for 100,000 families in-needs (including families of Hamas martyrs), and \$4 million USD in salaries for the Hamas government. Qatar gives Hamas \$360 million USD/year.

On wonders, will this money be used to sooth the suffering of Palestinians, or will Hamas allocate it for military activities?

Hamas leaders has been in the news lately, especially after Israeli media outlets demanded the assassination of Hamas chief Yehya al-Sinwar. Joining the chorus were Uri Zaki of Meretz, journalists Ammon Abramovich (TV Channel 12) and Ben Caspit (Maarev), while Likud MP Yoav Gallent was quoted saying: "Sinwar needs to be assassinated immediately. Assassinate him, no

matter what the consequences." Channel 13 then conducted a survey on whether or not Sinwar should be killed, showing that 60% of respondents wanted him dead. It must be remembered that Hamas thrives on such logic. They feel uncomfortable when dealing with moderates and are at great ease with radicals like themselves. Such provocative remarks give Sinwar and his colleagues a free hand to further militarize Palestinian society, toughen their stance, and ask for more money, whether from Qatar or Iran. Hamas is already planning for attacks south of Nablus, in response to the killing of its member Walid Sharif, a native of Beit Hananiya who was wounded at the Al Aqsa Mosque in April, and died in May.

Another survey, this time conducted by the Israeli Democracy Institute, showed that a majority of Israelis believe that the Bennet government should impose sovereignty over the Temple Mount and permit Jews to pray there. More music to the ears of Yehya al-Sinwar. This, and the need to eliminate Sinwar, is a view that is starting to gain momentum throughout the political and security establishment in Israel. If Bennet is convinced, then such actions would, undoubtedly, ignite a third intifada.

The Izz al-Din Qassam Brigade has promised an "earthquake" in the region, should Israel kill Sinwar. The sixty-year old Sinwar, who "We would rather not turn the battle with the occupation into a religious battle. But if the occupation and extremists want to turn the battle with the Palestinians into a religious war, then, challenge accepted." In any future war, Sinwar promised to fire 1,111 rockets against Israel. In most cases, such rhetoric would go by unnoticed, since it is common for Hamas to make such inflated claims. But coming from Sinwar, it must be taken seriously, although such a threat cannot be carried out without the support of Iran. And such support doesn't seem forthcoming, at least in the short-term, so long as JCPOA remains on the table.

But what if JCPOA collapses? Many have started asking that question, wondering where and when Iran will decide to flex its muscle and strike back at the US. Its needs a stage that is all set for confrontation; a theatre where there are plenty of arms, topped with high indoctrination, poverty, and radicalization.

Iran will want to retaliate through stages that are all set up for a confrontation. The obvious stage then, would be Gaza.

Erdogan's «Safe Zone» as an umbrella for terrorists and jihadi outfit



Zara Saleh

The nightmare of the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has turned out to be a fact in the recent Astana Group Summit on Syria, as Moscow and Tehran has completely rejected any military operation in north Syria.

Despite the US-Russian tensions over the Russian occupation in Ukraine, the Moscow's Special Syria envoy Alexander Lavrentiev has warned Erdogan to stop its intervention plan against Syrian Kurds in Tel Rifaat and Manbij. Simultaneously with that, Erdogan failed to convince the US to launch a new military offense in the Kurdish-controlled areas of Manbij and Tel Rifaat. In contrast, the US State Department has said that, the stability of the region in northern Syria will be under threat if Turkey began any operation, and especially «its impact on the civilian

population there» according to American officials. Moreover, the US administration has dismissed the Erdogan's speculation regarding the Turkish threats to block Finland and Sweden membership in NATO.

There is no doubt that, Erdogan is facing internal public anger regarding the refugee crisis in Turkey as he is expecting difficult elections next year. Turkey's plan was to establish the so-called «safe zone» in the Kurdish-controlled areas that were governing by the Syrian Democratic Forces SDF, and to commit a demographic change by returning one million Syrian refugees and it can be considered as an ethnic cleansing. However, in such «safe zone» areas that are occupied by Turkey and Syrian National Army SNA has turned out to be part of ISIS caliphate instead of being a real «safe zone» for the Syrian people. For example, the recent tensions between the jihadi outfit and other extremists' groups that were led by Turkey, has been cleared so that Erdogan is now capable to create a so-called «safe

zone».

The latest confrontations and clashes between the Sham Front and Ahrar Al-Sham with the participation of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), which is in fact, a former Jabhat Al-Nusra and founded by Al-Qaida terrorist group members. Furthermore, the majority of such militias group that are now part of the so-called SNA with Erdogan's political umbrella were jihadi militias. For instance, the Sham Front terrorist group has been split up from Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham and now they are part of the Syrian National Army and backed by Turkey. In other words, Turkey's strong relationship with Al-Qaeda, ISIS, and the Muslim Brotherhood groups such Al-Tawhid Brigade and the Sham Front has had obvious evidence that Turkey and Erdogan's party become one of the main sources of terror and extremism.

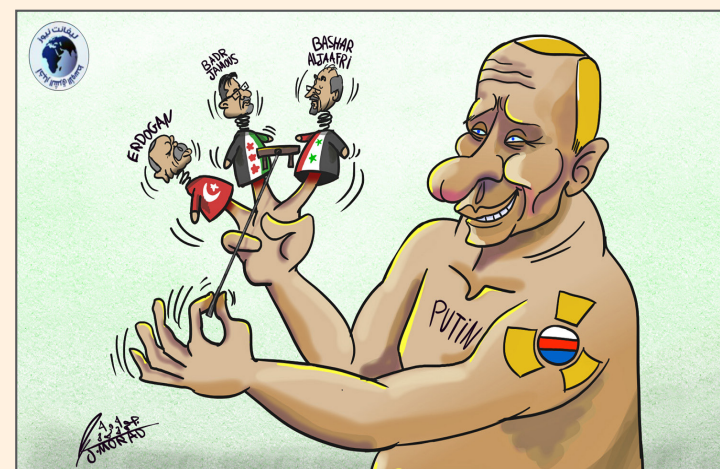
Arguably, Recep Tayyip Erdogan's «Kurdish phobia» has led him, with the other factors against Kurds, to become an umbrella of all terrorist



President Recep Tayyip Erdogan

and jihadi outfits in north and northeast Syria in the occupied areas. Aiming to fulfil his «chronic phobia» towards Kurds and also Kurdish question, Erdogan is ready to hand over the Kurdish areas of Afrin, Tel Abyad and Ras Al-Ain to Al-Qaeda terrorist such as Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham and even the ISIS. Consequently, the so-called Syrian National Army (SNA), is completely part of Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham or Al-Nusra Front with no differences, and now serving the Erdogan's political agendas against Kurds and to extend Turkey's occupation of the Syrian territories with some support of Syrian groups themselves that had affiliated with Turkey.

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