

# NEWS BYTES

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"Let us be alert to the season in which we are living. It is the season of the Blessed Hope, calling for us to cut our ties with the world and build ourselves on this One who will soon appear. He is our hope—a Blessed Hope enabling us to rise above our times and fix our gaze upon Him." Tozer

Well, this is a significant trajectory for Turkey, or shall I say, The Neo-Ottomans? Very interesting. If you only read one article, make it this one:

## **Erdoganistan: The New Islamic Superpower?**

by Giulio Meotti March 23

- Erdogan was promoting his global campaign of victimization by "Islamophobia", while in fact it is the *critics* of extremist Islam who are in danger and frequently killed.
- In the Caucasus, Turkey has just supported the Azerbaijani war against Armenia in Nagorno-Karabakh in order to create a Turkish Islamic corridor between Azerbaijan, Turkey and other Muslim countries.
- "It began in 1989 with the fatwa against Salman Rushdie: no Western country reacted except with words – as if they thought a verbal spell might work!.... The battle lost in Armenia is the first of a war waged in the West against the Judeo-Christian civilization". — Michel Onfray, *Revue des deux mondes*, February 1, 2021.
- While the new sultan extends his influence to Syria, Libya and the Caucasus, he also extends it to the Mediterranean. For pacifist Europe, that sea only exists when it comes to bringing in migrants.
- "What the Turkish regime is doing is using its diaspora as a Trojan horse." — Michel Sifaoui, *europe1.fr*, February 7, 2021.
- In Turkey under Erdogan, school textbooks have been rewritten to refer to Jews and Christians as *gavur*, "infidels." Earlier Turkish textbooks referred to the members of the two religions as the "people of the Book".... The curriculum adopts an anti-American stance, and shows sympathy for the motives of ISIS and al-Qaeda. — Report by the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education (IMPACT-se), March 2021.
- "We are a large family of 300 million people from the Adriatic to the Great Wall of China". — Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, *Minval.az*, October 18, 2018.

"It was a very special day, July 24 [2020]," said France's leading expert on Islam, Gilles Kepel.

"It was pilgrimage time to Mecca and, due to the pandemic, no one was there! It was the anniversary of the Treaty of Lausanne, the origin of modern Turkey within its current borders. Erdogan was about to twist the arm of the secular Ataturk, who had turned the old Hagia Sophia basilica into a museum that he had donated 'to humanity'. Erdogan... turned it back into a mosque".

This was the moment, remarked Kepel – who just published a new book, "Le Prophète et la Pandémie" ["*The Prophet and the Pandemic*"] -- that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan became the new leader of the *umma*, or global Islamic community. "Erdogan is trying to appear as the champion of Islam, just like Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989".

Both Khomeini and Erdogan seem to have been committed to erasing secularism and ties with Western culture from their respective countries; to heading a battle against Saudi Arabia for supremacy of the Islamic world and to re-Islamizing their societies. Veiled women, for instance was rarely seen in Tehran before Khomeini, and Erdogan reintroduced it into Turkish society.

The Iranian mullahs were also able to impose on the international arena the use of the word "Islamophobia", but now it is Turkey that is leading the ideological persecution of the "Islamophobes". Under the auspices of Turkish diplomat Volkan Bozkir, President of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, the UN just celebrated the "International Day against Islamophobia" and Secretary General Antonio Guterres himself strongly denounced an "epidemic of Islamophobia". Erdogan was promoting his global campaign of victimization by "Islamophobia", while in fact it is the *critics* of extremist Islam who are in danger and frequently killed.

This grotesque and shameful conference was organized by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), an entity made up of 56 mainly Muslim countries, plus "Palestine". In the OIC, states such as Pakistan punish "blasphemy" with death; Saudi Arabia flogs and jails liberal bloggers such as Raif Badawi, and Turkey fills its jails with writers and journalists, to mention just a few of members.

On that July 24, in 2020,, Erdogan challenged Europe and the West by re-appropriating what had been, for a thousand years, the largest church in Eastern Christianity. The lack of response on the part of the West most likely convinced him that the moment was right. No one paid attention or countered the act.

Unlike Iran and Saudi Arabia, Turkey is a democracy. It is in talks with the European Union about its possible membership; it is pampered in Washington; it is the second-largest army in NATO, and stands as Asia's gateway to Europe.

The Financial Times (FT) has dedicated a series of analyses to Erdogan's grand plan for hegemony. In Africa, for the past 15 years, for instance, the Turkish president has spearheaded a mega-relaunch of his alliances. Since 2009, Turkey has increased the number of embassies there from 12 to 42. Erdogan has even been a frequent visitor, making trips to more than 20 capitals. The government has set itself the goal over the next few years of doubling Turkey's trade volume with Africa to \$50 billion, about a third of its current trade with the European Union.

Turkey has also chosen the Balkans as a battlefield -- "the region," according to the FT, "is symbolically very important, since much of it was ruled by Istanbul during the Ottoman Empire". Then, there is Europe:

"Several European countries have voiced concern over activity by Turkey's intelligence service on their soil and the use of state-trained Turkish imams to spy on the diaspora".

Erdogan's goal in Europe seems to be to use the Turkish diaspora as a political instrument of pressure on states (in particular Germany, France, Austria, Belgium and Holland) and as the base for his hegemony.

In the Caucasus, Turkey supported Azerbaijan's war against Armenia in Nagorno-Karabakh presumably to create a Turkic-Islamic corridor between Azerbaijan, Turkey and other Muslim countries. Erdogan also apparently makes use of mercenaries. The Indian media reported a contingent sent to Kashmir to support Pakistan. Turkey has also previously used "Sadat" mercenaries against the Armenians, as well as in the Libyan and Syrian civil wars.

In the latest issue of the Revue des deux mondes, the French philosopher Michel Onfray remarked that there is a clash of civilizations and that Erdogan now leads the Islamist side. "It began in 1989 with the fatwa against Salman Rushdie," he wrote.

"No Western country reacted except with words – as if they thought a verbal spell might work! With the beheading of Professor Samuel Paty it is this Judeo-Christianity that is being attacked -- in Armenia, Islam is attacking the oldest Christianity in Europe .... Europe is afraid of Erdogan and his ability to cause damage. This Tamerlane in the making threatens, insults, attacks, [and] supports those who threaten us, insult us and attack us".

That, Onfray continues, was the meaning of the Turkish aggression against Karabakh:

"Armenia is being attacked by Azeris and Muslim Turks who want its total disappearance. It is the result of a war of civilizations. What is happening in this country, which is the cradle of Christian civilization, is what awaits us here, in the tomb of the Judeo-Christian civilization itself. The battle lost in Armenia is the first of a war waged in the West against the Judeo-Christian civilization".

Erdogan has not even tried to hide his ideological vision. "The crescent and star embellish the skies of Karabakh now thanks to the efforts of our Azerbaijani brothers and sisters", the Turkish president proclaimed after the war. "The Azerbaijani flag flies proudly over Nagorno-Karabakh as a symbol of our martyrs' valor".

One of Erdogan's advisors, the retired Turkish general Adnan Tanrıverdi, who founded the mercenary agency "Sadat", articulated the vision of a unified Islamic superpower. His Justice Defenders Strategic Studies Center called it "Asrica", the union of Africa and Asia, 61 countries whose capital is Istanbul and under the aegis of this "Erdoganistan".

They include 12 countries of the Middle East, namely Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Palestine, Iraq, Qatar, Kuwait, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Jordan and Yemen; eight in Central Asia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkey and Turkmenistan; four in the Near East, namely Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iran and Pakistan; three in Southeast Asia, Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia; six in North Africa, namely Algeria, Chad, Morocco, Libya, Egypt and Tunisia; six in East Africa, including Djibouti, Eritrea, Comoros, Mozambique, Somalia and Sudan; ten in northwestern Africa and South America, ie Western Sahara, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Guyana and Suriname; eight in South West Africa, namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Gabon, Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria and Togo; and four in Europe, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Macedonia.

Turkey evidently wants to be a great neo-Ottoman Empire and the only one capable of leading the Muslim world. The conversion of Hagia Sophia into a mosque seems to have been intended as a watershed in Islamic history that heralds the establishment of a powerful league of Muslim nations to face the West under the Turkish leadership.

Three seas surround Turkey: the Eastern Mediterranean, the Black Sea and the Aegean Sea. Turkey recently launched a large naval exercise. The Turkish Ministry of Defense announced that 82 warships, 17 naval aviation craft, amphibious forces, air force units and special operations teams engaged in exercises that ended on March 8.

"Blue Homeland" -- *Mavi Vatan* in Turkish -- is the geopolitical concept that marks Erdogan's agenda for the coming years. Conceived by nationalist Admiral Cem Gurdeniz, it is the "diplomacy of drills and warships" that pursues "the return of Turkey to the sea, the union between Anatolia and the eastern Mediterranean". The goal is clear: to control the sea, to control energy resources and to impose its influence. Erdogan announced that it will no longer be called "Aegean", but the "sea of islands".

Ankara is on a collision course with Greece and Cyprus over who has the right to exploit the eastern Mediterranean's oil and gas deposits. "They will understand that Turkey has the political, economic and military power to tear up immoral maps and imposed documents," Erdogan said.

Turkey has problems with Cyprus, which, unlike the Turks, belongs to the European Union but not to NATO. Turkey, which invaded the island in 1974, remains the only country to recognize Turkish-occupied Northern Cyprus as a state. The Republic of Cyprus, which is majority-Greek Cypriot, wants to make deals with foreign energy companies, while Turkey, to the island's north, wants economic rights in the waters that Cyprus considers its own.

While the new sultan extends his influence to Syria, Libya and the Caucasus, he also extends it within the Mediterranean. For pacifist Europe, that sea only exists when it comes to bringing in migrants.

President Erdogan, in an official visit to Paris on January 5, 2018, proceeded to launch this provocative phrase to the leaders of the French Council for Muslim worship: "The Muslims of France are under my protection". Those were the first lines of an inquiry by the France's *Journal du Dimanche*. Several reports sent to the Elysée Palace by the Directorate General for Internal Security (DGSI), which the newspaper was able to consult, reveal the scope, forms and objectives of a "real infiltration strategy" through networks managed by the Turkish embassy and the Turkish spy agency, the MIT. "They act mainly within the Turkish immigrant population, but also through Muslim organizations and also recently in local political life, through the support given to elected officials".

"These actions have different objectives," commented the journalist Mohamed Sifaoui.

"First, to improve the image of the Turkish regime in the diaspora and in French society. Then, to defend Erdogan's image at all costs. And finally, of course, the spread of an Islamist vision of Islam".

Sifaoui cites as an example the latest charter wanted by French President Emmanuel Macron, the charter of principles present in the law that strengthens "republican principles," and is currently being examined by Parliament:

"It was not signed by the two Turkish federations, at the request of Ankara, because it is a charter that recalls the fundamental principles important for the Republic and which the Turkish regime clearly opposes... What the Turkish regime is doing is using its diaspora as a Trojan horse."

The Brookings Institution wrote in 2019:

"According to the [French] ministry of interior, 151 imams have been sent by Turkey (which has undertaken a spate of religious outreach to Muslims across Europe over the past decade)..."

Just as Turkey controls 400 mosques out of 2,500 in France. It is Ahmet Ogras, apparently close to Erdogan, who for two years occupied the symbolic position of president of the French Council for Muslim Worship -- as Turkish voters in France are generally more pro-Erdogan than in Turkey. During the presidential elections of 2014, Erdogan won 66% of the votes cast by Turkish citizens in France, compared to only 51.79% in Turkey. First- and second-generation Turkish immigrants in France continue to watch Turkish television, which is extremely submissive to Erdogan's power. In French public schools, 180 teachers, directly appointed by Ankara, are responsible for teaching the Turkish language.

These efforts make up the great project of conquest by Erdogan the Islamizer.

Erdogan recently withdrew Turkey from an international treaty on preventing violence against women. With this decision, it seems that the president is determined to increase impunity around murder of women and "honor killings", which common in Turkey.

In Erdogan's Turkey, school textbooks have been rewritten to refer to Jews and Christians as *gavur*, "infidels," according to a new study published by the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education (IMPACT-se). Earlier Turkish textbooks referred to the members of the two religions as the "peoples of the Book". "School books have been used as a weapon in Erdogan's attempts to Islamise Turkish society and to trace back to a nostalgic era of Turkish domination," wrote IMPACT-se's CEO, Marcus Sheff.

These are some of the findings of the study: Jihad was introduced in textbooks and transformed into the "new normal", with martyrdom in battle glorified. Ethno-nationalist religious goals of neo-Ottomanism and pan-Turkism are taught. Therefore, Islam is described as a political issue, with science and technology used to further its goals. There is an emphasis on concepts such as "Turkish world domination" and "Turkish or Ottoman ideal of world order". According to the curriculum, the "Turkish basin" extends from the Adriatic Sea to Central Asia. The curriculum adopts an anti-American stance, and shows sympathy for the motives of ISIS and al-Qaeda. Turkey takes anti-Armenian and pro-Azerbaijani positions. The identity and cultural needs of the Kurdish minority continue to be largely neglected. The pogroms of 1955 against the Greek community in Istanbul are ignored.

At schools, during the term of Erdogan, maps showing Turkish power have appeared. Reference is made to the "Turkish heritage from the Adriatic Sea to the Great Wall of China": "Turkish cultural artifacts can be seen in a vast region, starting with the countries of Central and East Asia, such as China and Mongolia, and extends to Herzegovina and Hungary..."

"We are a large family of 300 million people from the Adriatic to the Great Wall of China," Erdogan said in a speech from Moldova.

Europe, the US, NATO and the Free World might start worrying. Erdogan seems aiming to be the new Islamist wolf in sheep's clothing.

## **Biden Administration Will Push to Squeeze Israel Within 1949 Armistice Lines**

- March 27, 2021

By Hugh Fitzgerald

The Biden Administration intends to squeeze Israel back within the 1949 Armistice Lines. A report on this monumental folly is here: “Internal Biden memo said to back 2-state solution along 1967 lines,” by Jacob Magid, Times of Israel, March 17, 2021:

*The Biden administration will reportedly push for a two-state solution based on the pre-1967 lines, with mutually agreed upon land swaps, reinstating US policy on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to more traditionally held positions than those of former president Donald Trump.*

*A memo titled “The US Palestinian Reset and the Path Forward,” which was revealed Wednesday to the Abu Dhabi-based The National, also showed that the Biden administration is planning on announcing a \$15 million aid package in coronavirus-related humanitarian assistance for the Palestinians as early as this month.*

If the Biden Administration gives the Palestinians a \$15-million aid package for coronavirus assistance – or gives the PA any aid package, for any purpose – it will be violating the Taylor Force Act, which forbids any American aid being given to the PA as long as its “Pay-For-Slay” program is in force. The PA not only continues with that program, but just announced a 50% increase in the amount it will provide the terrorist who murdered five members, including two small children and a baby, of the Fogel family. The PA may try to repackage “Pay-For-Slay” as aid innocently provided based on economic need, and not as a reward for terrorist acts, but as long as PA stipends are provided to terrorists and their families, however that aid is deceptively labelled, the real purpose of those stipends – to both reward and to incentivize terrorism – will be obvious, and Congress should not let the Biden Administration pretend that the Taylor Force Act does not apply.

*Drafted by Deputy Assistant Secretary for Israeli and Palestinian Affairs Hady Amr, the memo also details plans to roll back various Trump policies that Washington believes made reaching a two-state solution more difficult, such as US legitimization of the settlement enterprise.*

What will keep the peace between Israel and the Palestinians is not a “two-solution” based on a treaty. The Palestinians take as their model of treaty-making the Hudaibiyya Agreement that Muhammad made with the Meccans in 628 A.D. That “truce” was to have lasted 10 years, but after only 18 months, realizing his army had grown stronger, Muhammad violated the treaty and attacked the Meccans. This has been the model of all subsequent treaty-making by Muslims with Infidels. What will keep the peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors is what kept the peace between the West and the Soviet Union during the Cold War – the strategy of deterrence. As long as Israel remains, and is seen to be, militarily much stronger than its potential enemies, the Jewish state will be able to keep the peace.

To that end – of keeping the peace through deterrence – Israel has to retain certain territories, including the Jordan Valley and the Golan Heights. This is not only the unanimous opinion of Israel’s military, but was also the conclusion of the Joint Chiefs, in a report they prepared for President Johnson in 1967, on what territories — that Israel had won in the Six-Day War — it needed to keep for security reasons.

*Amr recommends in the memo that the White House back a two-state framework “based on the 1967 lines with mutually agreed land swaps and agreements on security and refugees.”*

*While behind closed doors, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has participated in peace negotiations based on the 1967 lines, publicly the formula is not very popular in Israel, particularly among the right wing, which is expected to further expand in the Knesset after next week’s election.*

This is a meretricious attempt by Hady Amr to suggest that even Netanyahu was willing to engage in negotiations “based on the 1967 lines.” It’s false. During his decades in public life, Netanyahu has

always rejected anything like those “1967 lines” as a basis for negotiations. He may have been physically present in the room when such a proposal was brought up by the Americans, but he would not have “participated” in any way other than to flatly reject such a possibility.

In requiring exports from Israeli towns and villages (i.e., “settlements”) in the West Bank to be labelled as “made in Israel,” the Trump Administration was quite properly helping to legitimize those places as part of Israel. It is this that the Biden Administration is now trying to undo. It wants to impose a clear demarcation between Israel in its pre-1967 lines – lines which only reflect where the armies of each side stood when the shooting stopped in 1949, and were never meant to be permanent borders – and the new territories that Israel won in the Six-Day War. In so doing, the Biden people are ignoring the Palestine Mandate, and the territories assigned by it to the future Jewish state, which included the entire West Bank. They are also ignoring U.N. Resolution 242, which allows Israel to keep territories won in that war which it needed to retain if it was to have “secure [i.e., defensible] and recognized boundaries.”

This election announced by the Palestinians should be taken with a shaker of salt. It is not a hopeful sign of a sudden embrace of democracy by Mahmoud Abbas. The elections – both parliamentary and presidential – were called by Abbas as a way to impress the Biden Administration with Abbas’ democratic evolution. He has, in the meantime, managed to ensure that he will have no serious rivals, and will remain, now 16 years into his 4-year term, President-For-Life. He has attacked Nasser al-Kidwa, Arafat’s nephew, for daring to field his own list, separate from that of Fatah, of candidates for Parliament. He’s cut off all funding for the Yasser Arafat Foundation, where Al-Kidwa has his sinecure, as a way to punish him for daring to take democratic elections seriously.

Abbas has also obtained a promise from Hamas that it will not field its own candidate in the Presidential race. That removes Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh as a possible rival candidate. What did Abbas offer Hamas in return? Most likely, jobs in the government for relatives of Hamas leaders. Two other serious rivals – Marwan Barghouti and Mohammad Dahlan – are both prevented from running for different, impossible-to-overcome, reasons. Dahlan was convicted of “corruption” many years ago, in a trial arranged by Mahmoud Abbas (who is far more corrupt than Dahlan), after which he went into exile in the U.A.E., where he has become an adviser to the Crown Prince, Mohammad bin Zayed. Because of his criminal conviction, Dahlan is by law prevented from running for President. If he were to run, opinion polls tell us he would handily defeat Abbas, with more than 60% of the vote.

Marwan Barghouti has a different sort of handicap. He’s now serving five life terms — for murdering five people — in an Israeli prison. And while he, too, would win more than 60% of the vote if he ran against Abbas, it’s a moot point, since Israel has no intention of letting him out of prison. Should a serious rival appear before the presidential election at the end of July, Mahmoud Abbas will no doubt find a way to derail his candidacy. He wants free elections for the presidency, all right, as long as he’s the only candidate. In the past Abbas hasn’t hesitated to send his goons to physically intimidate political dissidents, including those who complain about the PA’s corruption and mismanagement in the West Bank. Why would he not do the same to rivals now, to ensure his reelection?