

European security, Turkish foreign policy and Article 5 of the NATO Treaty

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For years now all ethnicities who are under threat from Turkey have failed to push for a strategy that is really effective. This has to do with several factors. The first is the focus of each ethnicity on its own needs and situation only. The second factor is the lack of understanding of how the political system of the US and Europe actually work and what works within that system in terms of effective results. A third factor is that too many people are interested in showing that they are on the picture with ‘an important and powerful person’ and not focused on actual results. In return, most western politicians in these pictures have no idea of the background and position of the people they had a chat and a picture with. This results in a cacophony of voices shouting different unworkable solutions from a western or international perspective while they all try to deal with the same problem. What you get is Kurds organising again another mass demonstration for the release of Ocalan, Armenians issuing another demand for international recognition of Artsakh and Syriac-Assyrians again demanding for Nineveh Plain to become a state protected by the UN. And all of them crave for recognition of their pain and none of them getting anything actually done. Thanks to these waves upon waves of ineffectiveness there is plenty of time for other actors to sow internal divisions and create proxies for themselves.

There may be a better way and there may be now an opportunity to get something done. That is not a certainty or a given. However, it is certain that the existing strategies of the various peoples involved did not work. So trying something new will for sure not hurt anyone.

The irony is that Turkey itself created this opportunity as Turkey’s regime has become increasingly engaged in military interventions throughout the region. Turkey unleashed its aggression on the North of Iraq, North of Syria, Libya and Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh through utilizing the jihadist mercenaries and sending them to all these areas. Moreover and intertwined in this Turkey pushed its aggression against Cyprus and Greece as well as extending its expansionism to deeper into Africa (like Somalia). In so doing, Turkey is undermining the stability of the region as a whole, posing a significant threat to European and NATO interests and security. Turkey compounded this by buying the S-400 system from Russia and antagonised the US to unprecedented levels.

As a consequence it is clear that Turkey lost all political support among the public and elected politicians in Europe and the US. There is practically no politician left that matters that can publicly defend his or her support for Turkey. This is the opportunity that was mentioned above. The question is how to use this opportunity in such a way that it will indeed curtail Turkey.

For this it is crucial to go come back to an earlier point which is a proper understanding the western political system. Many initiatives taken together with MP's and MEP's are getting nowhere because they are blocked by the civil servants in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs or the European External Action Service. In these institutions there is more concern for the interests of big business and their shareholders than for the public concerns and democratic accountability. Moreover at the EU level (in the case of sanctions for example) any measure will be a watery compromise without effect as we witnessed in the EU Council decision on Turkey last December.

The situation in the US is not much different where the US State Department is supporting Turkey while the Congress and Senate do not. But in the US there are two other bases of power with regard to Foreign Affairs: the White House and the Pentagon. The Pentagon is clearly no longer with Turkey. When the new Biden Administration settles in it will be clear that Turkey has lost any foothold in the White House as well. In addition more and more lobby firms have cancelled their contracts with Turkey. So the situation in the US is even more open for a clear change towards Turkey than what we see in Europe.

But in order to act effectively in this situation there is need for pushing a measure that will indeed have a real effect on Turkey and that cannot be stopped by civil servants in Ministries of Foreign Affairs, US State Department or EEAS. Something that can be done by Members of Parliament, US Congress or State Department and that will be popular by the voters. Something that does not focus on any particular ethnicity but deals with the cause of their problems which is Erdogan's Turkey.

For this reason Sallux has released its latest publication ['European Security, Turkish Foreign Affairs and Article 5 of the NATO Treaty'](#). This paper offers an overview of what Turkey did which undermined European and NATO security and why Turkey did that. Then as a measure to put the brakes on Turkey the publication advocates to lobby parliamentarians in the Parliaments of the NATO Member States (including US Congress and Senate) to pass resolutions that they will not support the deployment of armed forces to support Turkey in the event that they are attacked until Turkey ceases its foreign interventions and occupations.

Article 5 of the NATO treaty, which holds member states of the alliance must support one another in event of warfare on their own soil, is worded in a very particular way; it states countries must support one another, but does not specify that this support must be in the form of military assistance. This is to say, it is up to the discretion of the remaining NATO countries whether or not to militarily support a particular NATO country if they are attacked. As the paper explains, Article 5 was worded this way intentionally, to provide for precisely this possibility.

There are a number of benefits to this proposal; first, it circumvents the executive or state departments of each country, who have proven to be more reluctant to act against Turkey, by focusing on the legislative or parliamentary bodies, who have the capacity to pass such a resolution, and additionally have shown to be more potentially willing to take actions against Turkey. Furthermore, this proposed action would be of no cost to the countries passing the motion, would be a substantial demonstration of force to which Turkey would be forced to respond, and does not require the creation of new mechanisms or sacrifice the potential for alliance with Turkey in the future, as would the proposal to expel Turkey from NATO (which is legally impossible).

Passing such a resolution regarding Turkey and Article 5 NATO Treaty would be so serious that no Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be able to ignore or circumvent it. No government that wants to win the next election would try to deny that such a vote happened. It would signal to all powers around Turkey that nobody will defend it anymore. That would force Turkey to focus much more on its own security. Turkey's membership of NATO would not end but it would be reduced to a paper tiger in practice.

All peoples who are now feeling the Turkish aggression will be able to advocate for this measure via the

organisations, lobby and Members of Parliament that they know and work with. Moreover it is possible to explain this idea to the public at large. Every single Member of Parliament in any NATO member state would be able to work with this and do something concrete. For many or most of them it will be new to hear that this possibility exists.

The only question left is whether Syriac-Assyrians, Kurds, Armenians, Cypriots, Greek and others will be able to work effectively based on the bigger picture and achieve something real.