

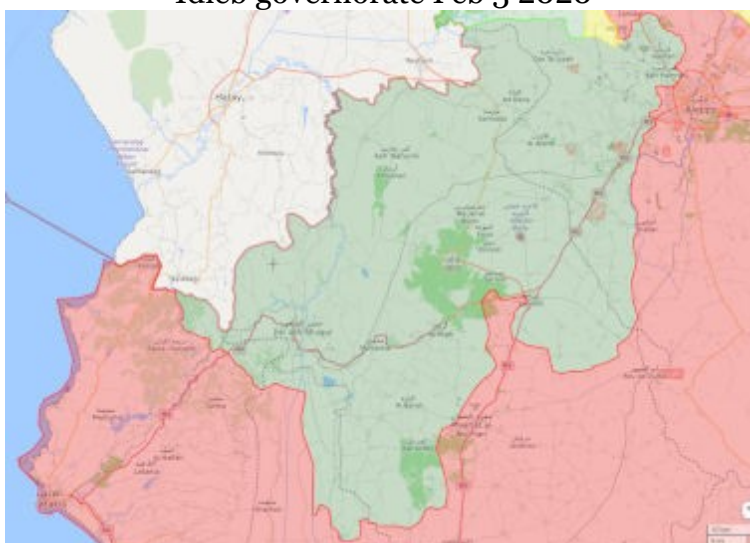
MoA - Syria - Turkey Invades Idleb But Its Bluff Will Be Called

February 10, 2020

Syria - Turkey Invades Idleb But Its Bluff Will Be Called

Since [last week's post](#) on the Syrian Idleb campaign the Syrian army has made significant progress.

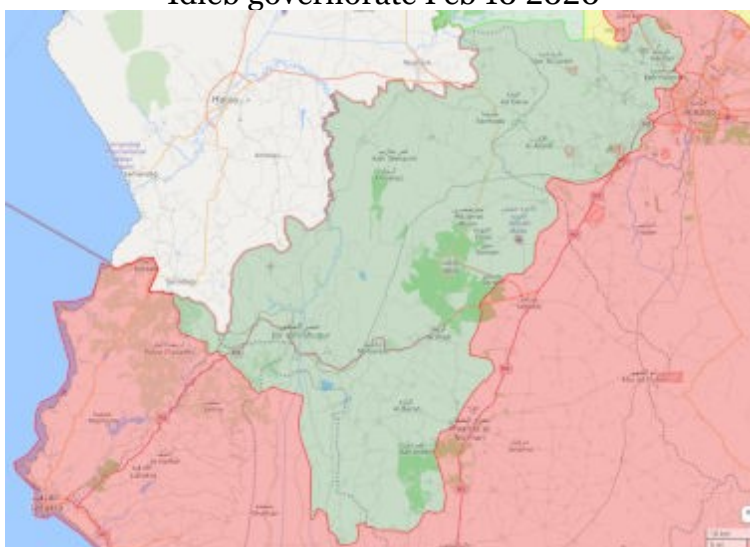
Idleb governorate Feb 3 2020



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Saraqib, Al Eis and dozens of other cities and towns were liberated. Large parts of the M5 highway in Idleb are now under Syrian government control.

Idleb governorate Feb 10 2020



[bigger](#)

The aim of the current campaign is to regain control over the M5 highway between Damascus and Aleppo city and the M4 highway between Latakia and Aleppo. These highways are of importance for the revival of Syria's economy.

It was originally Turkey's task to guarantee free civilian traffic on both highways. The [Sochi Memorandum of Understanding](#) (pdf) between Turkey and Russia, signed on September 17 2018, provides (machine translated):

3. A demilitarized zone with a depth of 15-20 km will be created in the de-escalation zone.
4. The specific passage of the lines defining the demilitarized zone will be agreed upon in the course of further consultations.
5. All radical terrorist groups will be withdrawn from the demilitarized zone by October 15, 2018.
6. All tanks, artillery, MLRS and mortars of the conflicting parties will be withdrawn from the demilitarized zone by October 10, 2018.
7. The Armed Forces of the Republic of Turkey and the military police of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation will carry out coordinated patrols and monitoring using unmanned aerial vehicles in the demilitarized zone.

8. In the interests of ensuring free movement of local residents and goods, as well as restoring trade and economic ties, transit traffic along the routes M4 (Aleppo-Latakia) and M5 (Aleppo-Hama) will be restored before the end of 2018.

None of these points were ever fulfilled by Turkey.

Idleb is still under control of the al-Qaeda aligned Hayat Tahrir al Shams (HTS) which has continued to attack Syrian government positions as well as civilian targets. HTS is internationally recognized as a terrorist organization, including by Turkey. But Turkey has done nothing to remove it. It instead provides the organization with weapons and other supplies.

The reaction of Turkey's wannabe Sultan Erdogan to the Syrian army campaign has been hysterical. He threatened several times that he would militarily intervene if the Syrian army operation does not stop. Over the last days more than 1,450 Turkish military vehicles, including tanks, heavy artillery and armored infantry vehicles, invaded the terrorist held Idleb area.

Turkey says that these are just reinforcements for its 'observer posts'. But in reality these forces are configured to attack the Syrian army. One Turkish artillery groups tried to set up a position at the former Syrian military airbase Taftanaz north of Saraqib. Earlier today it came under Syrian artillery fire. At least six Turkish soldiers were killed and several wounded. A Turkish helicopter was allowed to come in to evacuate the casualties.

Turkish and Russian 'observation points'



Source: [ISWnews](https://www.iswnews.com) - [bigger](#)

The Turkish military [claimed](#) that it retaliated for the attack:

The Turkish army responded to the targets determined in the region, said the statement.

“The necessary response was given, the targets were destroyed and the blood of our martyrs was not left on the ground. The developments are being closely monitored and necessary measures are being taken,” said the statement.

There is no evidence that any such retaliation has taken place.

Turkey demands that the Syrian army retreats back to the lines where its current campaign started months ago.

That is not going to happen.

Today, while the Turkish army settled among the terrorist, HTS sent two suicide vehicles against the Syrian lines. It is not yet known if they caused casualties. If the Turkish army wants to be the bodyguard of such terrorist it will be [handled appropriately](#).

The Russian and Syrian air forces are in control of the airspace over Idleb. Russian war ships are deployed near the coast of Syria and are ready to launch their cruise missiles. Russia can reinforce its airforce in Syria within 24 hours. Turkey's airforce is not able to change that picture.

After the 2016 coup attempt against Erdogan nearly three quarters of Turkey's airforce pilots were dismissed. The maintenance status of Turkey's 240 F-16 fighter jets is dubious. It is estimate that less of a quarter of them are ready to fly. The F-16s are no match for the Russian Su-34 jets which cover Syria. They also lack the capabilities to overcome the Russian air defenses. Then there is also Russia's economic leverage over Turkey.

Over the last few days there have been intense talks between the Russian and the Turkish side. The Russians are not budging. Syria will liberate the two highways that Turkey promised would be opened under the Sochi MoU. Should the Turkish

army try to prevent that it will be bombed to high heaven.

Erdogan can not risk a war with Russia in Syria. He is bluffing and his bluff will be called.

Posted by b on February 10, 2020 at 17:56 UTC | [Permalink](#)

Comments

Turkish News: Akar - Defense Secretary has given a press conferenece claiming that Turkey has attacked Syria again and that 151 'regime' target were hit including tanks and a helicopter!!

Again, there is no accompanying footage of the attacks whatsoever. Strange given that the country's media is obliged to show government approved 'footage' of all 'anti-terrorist' activity in either the first or second slot of the news programme - meaning that the media is continually awash with footage lauding the heroics of the Turkish Armed Forces.

Yet, the second time, as with the first. that they claim massive attacks against the Syrian Government forces there is NOT ONE SECOND of footage!!

It's all a propaganda face-saving exercise.

There is no other explanation.

(Sorry b - only just noticed this ne report so am reposting here)

Posted by: Egor68500 | Feb 10 2020 18:06 utc | [1](#)

Yes, I agree. I'm sure Putin has made Russia's view quite clear to Erdogan, and the Turks won't go too far. It would be difficult to justify a major invasion which was not directly linked to Turkey's essential interests.

Posted by: Laguerre | Feb 10 2020 18:11 utc | [2](#)

"Erdogan can not risk a war with Russia in Syria. He is bluffing and his bluff will be called"

I am wondering why he is making this bluff. I suspect the US pressuring him. Or maybe his armed forces don't want to be seen as defeated. Or his terrorists refuse to give up and Erdogan cannot be seen as abandoning them? Whatever.

Sending jihadists to Libya looks like some kind of bluff, too.

Posted by: David Wooten | Feb 10 2020 18:18 utc | [3](#)

Great piece b

What's interesting is that this overt 'posturing' and 'propaganda' which can be only for domestic consumption shows a much bolder contempt for the Turkish public; it tells of desperation brought about by failure. It could indeed lead to dangerous consequences if not properly managed.

Posted by: Egor68500 | Feb 10 2020 18:22 utc | [4](#)

thanks b... turkey under erdogan has been played a messed up game.. i wonder when the west acknowledges any of it, when the west has went along with so much of it? i agree that his bluff will be called.. one can only take so much of his bullshit, even if it works for the crowd in turkey, and i am not even sure of that..

Posted by: james | Feb 10 2020 18:25 utc | [5](#)

Imagine a non-Erdogan, FETO Turkey under the U.S. puppet Gulenistas today. There would be Turkish armor lined up across Syria from Damascus to al Bukamal.

I'm also wondering if the U.S. would have negotiated some kind of detante between a Gulen Turkey and the Syrian Kurds/SDF, or if we would have just sacrificed them to move the ZATO Zone of Obedience across the northern three-quarters of Syria (less the Russian base, of course).

Posted by: PavewayIV | Feb 10 2020 18:40 utc | [7](#)

Erdogan's Ottoman irredentism is driving him to delusions of grandeur. It looks like a particularly reckless example of the always-risky launching of foreign adventures to distract from intractable domestic predicaments. If the idea is supposed to be to maintain stability and the integrity of Turkey's borders, sowing violent chaos immediately across the border ain't the way to do it. This will boomerang bigtime.

If it's a contest between the US egging him on and Russia warning him to stop, calm down and take deep breaths, the former is more in line with his current state of mind.

Posted by: [Russ](#) | Feb 10 2020 18:43 utc | [8](#)

... [Turk] F-16s are no match for the Russian Su-34 jets which cover Syria.

USA has the air power that Turkey lacks. USA could simply say: we will not allow air attacks against Turkish forces.

Did Russia's warning disrupt a WMD false-flag? IMO a ff is necessary for USA to *rattle it's sword* and cause a pause in fighting.

!!

Posted by: [Jackrabbit](#) | Feb 10 2020 18:43 utc | [9](#)

It seems obvious that Turkey is the primary proxy of the US/Israel.

They would not be doing this without the approval of their masters.

Posted by: [Jon Dhoe](#) | Feb 10 2020 18:44 utc | [10](#)

[The most appropriate tweet](#) I've seen today by a man on the scene:

"I asked soldiers. They laughed at Turkey. The Syrian Army is laughing at NATO's second largest army."

The thread is also revealing.

Erdogan must be in deep domestic political trouble for him to pull this distracting stunt that's gotten a dozen or so of his soldiers killed for zero reason other than his pride.

Posted by: [karlofi](#) | Feb 10 2020 18:45 utc | [11](#)

I spent many years in the shadows and wrote dozens of books on that world. We depended entirely on people like B to put the dots together before we moved in. At times, I would work with closely with the analysts to ensure mission success. It is a

pleasure for me to read here and see what other websites (mainstream liars) will not see. Thank you. I hope Turkey will go home as well as the USA and others, let the Syrian bloodletting end. GMJ

Posted by: [GMJ](#) | Feb 10 2020 18:50 utc | [12](#)

In a related development, "[BOOM!](#)"

"More than 100 US soldiers now diagnosed with traumatic brain injury from Iranian ballistic missile attack."

Initially, it was zero, then 11, then 50, then 64, then 83, now 100. Keeps on rising like the NYSE.

Posted by: [karlofi](#) | Feb 10 2020 18:55 utc | [13](#)

The US must be pressuring him to continue to push into Idlib. I can't see any reason why he would be aggravating the Russians the way he has. I think he backs down because Putin can't here, otherwise this war goes on forever

Posted by: DannyC | Feb 10 2020 18:58 utc | [14](#)

@4 Egor68500

Dangerous consequences? Why? It works for the USA. Nobody was fired after 9/11. Nobody was fired for the invasion of Iraq and the non existent WMDs. Nobody was fired for supposed "Russian Interference" resulting in the wrong candidate winning the 2016 election. Not only was nobody fired but budgets were increased. The heads of our defense and intelligence agencies were sold to us as heroes! Some raised up to higher positions. Some left to sell airport full body scanners. Some moved into the news industry and began new careers as "expert" analysis on defense and intelligence matters. It leads me to believe that the best possible move you can make if you work in government is to fail as spectacularly as possible. You are guaranteed to get a lot of face time and publicity on TV and become a nationally renowned expert. It is a great career move. Huge dollars and prestige awaits! It is often misquoted but here is the real quote... Mencken (1880-1956) in the Sept. 19, 1926 edition of the Chicago Daily Tribune; "No one in this world, so far as I know — and I have searched the records for years, and employed agents to help me — has ever lost money by underestimating the intelligence of the great masses of the plain people. Nor has anyone ever lost public office thereby."

Posted by: goldhoarder | Feb 10 2020 19:10 utc | [15](#)

Posted by: karlofi | Feb 10 2020 18:55 utc | [13](#)

"More than 100 US soldiers now diagnosed with traumatic brain injury from Iranian ballistic missile attack."

It reminds me of favorite excuse for women, headache. Seems US soldiers are trying to excuse them selves from fight where enemy shoots back for a change.

Posted by: Abe | Feb 10 2020 19:11 utc | [16](#)

To clarify: they got pretty often shot at in Iraq and Afghanistan already, but this is different in a way Iran is near peer enemy in terms of long range strikes. Seems US is completely unprepared and undefended to fight with such enemy and panic is setting in.

Posted by: Abe | Feb 10 2020 19:14 utc | [17](#)

Some of those Turkish vehicles got hit in one of the airstrikes meant to halt the column. [Pics are from 3 Feb](#) Saraqib outskirts. IMO, more got hit than shown by pics.

The Turkish involvement only serves to motivate Syrian troops. I expect a new attack axis to emerge from the Southern-most point of the SAA's lines and a quick advance to the M-4 against what ought to be light resistance given most terrorists were drawn away to defend elsewhere. There's also the potential cauldron North of Aleppo as seen on [this map](#).

Also reports that remaining non-Outlaw US Empire NATO forces are leaving Iraq as well as some US forces. Kuwait doesn't seem to be following the Saudi line versus Iran, so I wonder how much longer Outlaw US Empire forces will retain their welcome there.

Posted by: [karlofi](#) | Feb 10 2020 19:22 utc | [18](#)

@goldhoarder | 15
"Dangerous consequences"
(I was actually thinking aloud)))))

But while he appears to be bluffing, the latest actions seem badly considered and inadequately prepared for. That's not his style at all.

If his situation worsens and he is pushed yet further into a corner domestically he would be capable of actually attacking and starting a serious conflict - and it may not be Syria that he attacks.

His target is 2023 and he is so close

Posted by: Egor68500 | Feb 10 2020 19:30 utc | [19](#)

Intersting from clearly biased ANF News (Kurdish/Qamishli) - ANF is usually shy about reporting about various outside parties scheming against Assad. I have little confidence in whatever source(s) ANF used and would be suspicious of this article's accuracy, but the idea of new Turk uniforms/ID cards for select head-choppers plus a bunch of old armor and a minimal amount of actual Turk military advisors? It's worth considering.

This idea makes sense from Turkey's perspective on a number of levels. Could explain the recent Syrian attack on Taftanaz - a perfect staging/distribution point for Turkish Foreign Legion of Head-choppers. Direct Turkish military incursions and retaliatory attacks can then be justified *ad infinitum* after SAA operations if it looks like 'Turkish' soldiers were killed. I'm impressed if this is true - that would be evil scheming on par with U.S. military commanders, and they're the experts!

If there is any Turkish operations, I could easily believe the cannon fodder would mostly be al Qaeda/MB in Turkish uniforms marching ahead of the newly-trained head-chopper-operated Turkish tank and artillery crews. Laughable as a serious military threat, but good enough to do a lot of damage to the SAA or outright block the SAA from advancing, and more than enough for 'justified retaliation' directly by Turk military.

Jihadists stationed in Idlib put on Turkish military uniforms

Turkey has switched to dressing jihadists in Turkish uniforms in the embattled

Syrian region of Idlib and equipping them with armoured vehicles of the Turkish military.

ANF - ERSİN ÇAKSU QAMISHLO Monday, 10 Feb 2020, 13:31

The Turkish army has adopted a new tactic to stop the advance of Russian and Syrian troops in Idlib. Jihadists of the mercenary alliance SNA (Syrian National Army) have been dressed in Turkish uniforms and are now stationed in Idlib. The SNA is an alliance of al-Qaeda factions such as Ahrar al-Sham and groups recruited from Turkish right-wing extremists and ISIS and al-Nusra members. In particular, the Hamza Brigade, the Sultan Murad Brigade, the Sultan Süleyman Shah Brigade and the Muntasir Bilallah Brigade were equipped with Turkish army uniforms and transferred to Idlib after receiving military training in Turkey.

Members of the Turkey's secret service MIT and the Turkish Special War Department have been active in the country since the beginning of the Syrian civil war. So far, however, they have mainly worn uniforms of the various armed groups. Now the Turkish state is trying to keep itself in the region by dressing the jihadists in uniforms of its own armed forces.

Troop transferred to Idlib

The Turkish army has brought about 1,500 military vehicles into the region in the past ten days. The jihadists have been stationed at Turkey's "observation posts" and newly established positions.

These troops are also said to have been stationed at the four military posts near Saraqib, which were built by Turkey to stop the Russian-Syrian advance. From there they attack Syrian and Russian units with tanks and artillery. After the fall of Saraqib, many of the jihadists have withdrawn to the Turkish observation posts.

...

More [\[here\]](#)

Posted by: PavewayIV | Feb 10 2020 19:32 utc | [20](#)

Abe @16&17--

The reports are from Reuters and say the troops were "diagnosed," meaning they didn't just go on sick-call. I discussed this briefly with an Vet from Iraq, and it's entirely plausible effects from pressure waves caused by missile impacts may take weeks to manifest. The kinetic impact of a missile strike is very different from an artillery shell's impact, and this would be the very first instance of Outlaw US Empire forces--or any NATO forces--being subjected to such impacts.

Posted by: [karlofi](#) | Feb 10 2020 19:32 utc | [21](#)

For his long-term survival, Erdogan needs to court two lovers. It's how-to-show-affection-to-NATO week.

Posted by: Symen Danziger | Feb 10 2020 19:45 utc | [22](#)

karlofi @21

IMO that is over diagnosed modern invention that only makes US forces look like bunch of wussies. Armies have been dropping comparable or larger warheads on each other for last 100 years and there were no debilitating epidemics like this. If there were, WW1 western front, WW2, Vietnam or Korea wars would be over in months.

If initial pressure wave doesn't get your internal organs (shrapnels not included, of course) any long term damage is comparable to any other risky professions that cause concussions.

But IMO these numbers are BS and invented, time will tell what is real or not.

Because airbases hit are extremely sparsely populated, with living quarters protected with barriers. Personnel had preparation time, except from guards and minimal crews, all expect all other personnel was dug in. There were simply too few missiles to cause 100+ brain injuries and no deaths.

Posted by: Abe | Feb 10 2020 20:05 utc | [23](#)

@David Wooten | 3

If I may try to explaining my thoughts.

a) We have to remember that the perception maintained loyally by all media is that Idlib is an area full of refugee civilians and local civilians under attack from the Syrian Regime. White Helmets videos are still regularly shown on news programems. And the Turkish forces and Turkish backed forces are defenders of Islam and a cause of intense national pride.

b) He is still terrified of fight-back from terrorist groups that Turkey has been supporting.

How on earth does Erdogan now go from that nationalistically and puffed up Godfather of Islam position to admitting that Turkey is allowing the 'Regime' to 'over-run' muslim civilians without a fight?

In my opinion he has little option but to up the lies, which is exactly what he is doing. What allows this to happen is that he feels that all the measures taken to control information in Turkey are sound - he's not wrong. After last year's staggering intimidation tactics control of Social Media is all but complete, let alone other internet content. And he knows that on military and nationalist topics the opposition dare not criticise.

The question is what happens when the web of lies unravels?

Posted by: Egor68500 | Feb 10 2020 20:09 utc | [24](#)

Unfortunately, Erdo's not bluffing. If the Russians attack the Turks in retaliation - which I'm waiting for - they will try to involve other warring parties, after all, one is in nato. Apart from the fact that he is the aggressor and doesn't give a damn about international law, the man is willing to risk World War III just to fulfill his neo-Ottoman dreams.

Posted by: Pnyx | Feb 10 2020 20:09 utc | [25](#)

karlof1 @21

Also, there isn't much difference between SRBM with 500kg warhead and standard 500kg free fall bomb. There are specialized SRBM warheads (cluster, fuel air) but in this case these seem to be thin walled high explosive kind with no delay detonation comparable to bombs planes carry).

Only difference is that rocket has thin body, some avionics and perhaps some fuel left in moment of impact, but these are not any more damaging than light jet plane

hitting the ground in high speed - hardly an addition to concussion or damage factor.

High explosive amount is main factor that determine level of concussion on troops, and again, ballistic rocket or plane dropped bomb - there is no difference. There is absolutely nothing special in these rockets and they have no special magical effect on tender american brains.

Posted by: Abe | Feb 10 2020 20:15 utc | [27](#)

@27

If the reports here are right <https://breakingdefense.com/2020/01/massive-improvement-in-accuracy-of-iran-missiles-over-scud-b/>

The potential energy of the missile warhead at peak trajectory is around 7 million joules per KG. The energy release of TNT is 4.6 million Joules per kg. I dont know how much of the potential energy is lost to aerodynamic drag, but with a suitably streamlined case the kinetic energy will greatly increase the total destructive effect

Posted by: Paul Cockshott | Feb 10 2020 20:32 utc | [28](#)

One thing is for sure : 60.000 terrorists and 6.000 Turkish soldiers, without air support, cannot win against the SAA. That is far too little.

Erdogan can either escalate by sending his f-16s and hundreds of thousands of Turkish troops, or he will have to retreat.

Posted by: redrooster | Feb 10 2020 20:40 utc | [29](#)

Is he bluffing or is he putting on a show for his jihadist buddies so they don't turn on him and start blowing up things in Turkey? I think it's more of the latter than anything else but I'm sure Erdo will attempt to keep parts of Syria if he is able.

Posted by: Alaric | Feb 10 2020 20:47 utc | [30](#)

PavewayIV @20

Fits with what Lindsey Snell [has just tweeted](#) (TFSA = Turkish-run FSA):

Just got a video of TFSA in the Western countryside wearing Turkish army uniforms to make it look like Turkey has their own men there. The Turks asked for 5 volunteers from each village to do this. The payment is "a free vacation in Turkey." (If they don't die in airstrikes.)

Posted by: [CE](#) | Feb 10 2020 20:49 utc | [31](#)

Posted by: Abe | Feb 10 2020 20:05 utc | [23](#)

There were simply too few missiles to cause 100+ brain injuries and no deaths.

So far the reporting of injuries from the retaliation attack has been proven to be lies upon lies. There is no reason to believe the present report represents truth. There could very well be a number of unreported deaths.

Posted by: Norwegian | Feb 10 2020 20:52 utc | [32](#)

Easy recruiting as the global jihadists are fleeing towards the Turkish border ...

Libyan militia leaders in Tripoli told *The Associated Press* that Turkey

has brought more than 4,000 foreign fighters into Tripoli, and that “dozens” of them are extremist-affiliated.

Posted by: [Oui](#) | Feb 10 2020 20:59 utc | [33](#)

@22, Symen Danziger

Erdogan is not courting lovers. Whichever way he turns, he's the courtesan, not the courtier.

Front and rear, the Emperor is being abused. Of his own designs. Quite laughable.

Posted by: Red Ryder | Feb 10 2020 20:59 utc | [34](#)

I think a lot of people are missing the point here. Don't see Erdogan as threatening WW3. This is a repositioning by him. He is placing himself in a new role, and making a lot of noise in the process. Have you noticed that there are no false flag attacks racing quickly through diplomatic channels to be raised at the UN ? The reason why this is not happening is that control of the armed militias has passed from western financiers to Turkish control. John Le Mesurier's death is the symbol of British loss of control. The west may have their Sama documentary and the lights of Hollywood, but they have lost the respect of the fighter on the ground. Erodgan's Muslim Brotherhood contacts have been working hard to engineer this over the previous months. His sending armoured vehicles into Idlib is largely for theatre, but what he is doing is making his influence real and tangible on the ground. He knows that Assad will gain back his country, but Erdogan has positioned himself as the person with whom Assad will negotiate when it comes to final diplomatic niceties. He will make sure there is something in it for him, because he can argue with some justification that it has been him who has tamed and withdrawn (ultimately) the Free Syrian Army militias. Better a clownish Erdogan that Assad can do business with than a rogue Trump with end-time Evangelicals breathing down his neck. US's influence is on the wane and whether the US put Erdogan is its place as its stooge or whether the US cut and run because the militia's were sick and tired of the betrayal, it changes nothing. The war is winding down. Syria has prevailed. One of the great military stories of the twentieth century has nearly been completed.

Posted by: aniteleya | Feb 10 2020 21:21 utc | [35](#)

The F-16s are no match for the Russian Su-34 jets

Did you mean Su-35? Su-34s are strikers/bombers, not really the equivalent of fighters like the F-16.

Posted by: Shaun | Feb 10 2020 21:32 utc | [36](#)

So, Erd is trying to sit on the fence? Send some more troops and weapons in to keep US/Nato off his back, but with no real intention of changing anything on the ground?

Posted by: casey | Feb 10 2020 21:40 utc | [38](#)

Shaun

The 34 is probably more than a match for the F-16's. Designed for air to air as well as ground strikes.

Posted by: Peter AU1 | Feb 10 2020 21:44 utc | [39](#)

Not wishing to belittle the heroic SAA but the spectacular recent advances have all the hallmarks of Russian intelligence and planning, and execution. Not to mention logistics to keep the show rolling. The coordination of all arms, and the real-time feedback of intelligence to action, as well as the classic cauldron tactics indicate that Russia is leading this. So much for those decrying Putin. This will not stop now until Idlib is liberated.

Posted by: cdvision | Feb 10 2020 21:55 utc | [40](#)

Posted by: Paul Cockshott | Feb 10 2020 20:32 utc | @28

yes, basic physics.

Posted by: dickr | Feb 10 2020 21:56 utc | [41](#)

Russia bombs Turkish troops but sells Turkey the S-400. Russia fights for Syria while trying to align Syria with KSA and its Gulf allies, while Saudis and allies have been trying to overthrow Syria. Russia works with Syria against Israel's interests, Russia works with Israel against Iranian interests. Russia works against Syrian interests, particularly the Golan and right of Syria to take it back. Israel engineers destruction of Russian aircraft, Putin and Netanyahu are great pals.

It's fucking confusing.

Posted by: NoOneYouKnow | Feb 10 2020 22:01 utc | [42](#)

karlof1 @ 13, Abe @ 16:

Is it possible that the "traumatic brain injuries" are actually deaths? I have seen some online reports that the Iranians speculate that the Americans are hiding the deaths and reporting them as "concussion injuries".

There is also the possibility that the soldiers caught in the Iranian missile attack on Ayn al Assad base have been transferred to other US bases in the Middle East and Europe so any recent deaths at those bases will not be connected to the attacks by Western MSM.

There was [this report of two US airforce men dying at a US base in Germany](#) in January not long after the missile attack. The US Dept of Defense is keeping schtum about these men's deaths.

Posted by: Jen | Feb 10 2020 22:05 utc | [43](#)

NoOneYouKnow @42 Yes confusing, but concentrate on outcomes not inputs. Who do you think is in the ascendancy?

Posted by: cdvision | Feb 10 2020 22:12 utc | [44](#)

I wonder if the US service members with "brain damage" are being given that diagnosis because they are psychologically incapable of returning to service - "shell-shocked" if you like. Many years ago, I read an account of WW2 service by a German officer who had served on the Eastern Front before being transferred to Italy. He reported that he'd been on the receiving end of many mass barrages on the Eastern Front but had never really thought he'd die as the result of one. On the other hand, in Italy he'd been in a barrage delivered by the Royal Artillery and even though he survived, he became convinced that because of the precision of the barrage, every single shell had his name on it. Although he survived that barrage,

his unit surrendered almost straight after because it was incapable fighting any more. I've read that the US Army artillery is also capable of high precision controlled fire but I wonder how often US Army units have been on the receiving end. Probably not very often until they came under precision Iranian missile fire. I can understand the US Army being happy to accept that the soldiers suffered from "brain damage" rather than "[bottling it](#)", even if not their fault.

Posted by: Ghost Ship | Feb 10 2020 22:24 utc | [45](#)

This thankless piece of crap "Sultan Erdogan", saved by Putin from his demise and failed assassination attempt on his useless hide. This is what they get, a rat, used by all sides as a painted whore. This dummy is going down, Erdogan, yes as the saying goes, ..."a friend in need is a friend indeed"..., yea some friend. The Russians have his number, and it is not bingo!

Posted by: Taffyboy | Feb 10 2020 22:25 utc | [46](#)

NoOneYouKnow

Iran and Syria are Russia's allies. A few years back, on an interview of Putin, he had this to say.

US approach to a problem is to remove or destroy that problem, but then a large number of other problems arise because of that. Putin's approach is to rather than destroy or remove the problem completely, take the problem down to stage that it is manageable, but not to the point numerous other problems will arise.

Russia will continue helping Syria regain all its territory, but this will be done piece by piece, all the time ensuring other problems do not arise.

Posted by: Peter AU1 | Feb 10 2020 22:27 utc | [47](#)

You can tell when the bad guys are losing. Canadian media have suddenly paused their demonization of Iran. As Syria prepares to regain Idlib, the CBC has begun howling over 'An Absolutely Desperate Situation'. Canadians better stand by to receive more Syrian jihadi 'refugees'. Have a listen:

<https://twitter.com/TheCurrentCBC/status/1226987871837532161>

Posted by: John Gilberts | Feb 10 2020 22:40 utc | [48](#)

"USA has the air power that Turkey lacks. USA could simply say: we will not allow air attacks against Turkish forces.

Posted by: Jackrabbit | Feb 10 2020 18:43 utc | 9

USA lacks the S-400 that Russia has.

USA could simply say, please Vlad don't use them when we try to make a big show of things. K? Trump loves youse Russians right? C'mon, be a pal and don't show us up.

Posted by: Bubbles | Feb 10 2020 22:49 utc | [49](#)

Erdogan is pathetic, his regime is beyond mentally ill, one can not trust them at all, not even the turkish people. This regime lies thru their teeth as a natural as taking a dump, all this BS of fighting the SAA blah blah is nothing more than flatus vocis.

The SAA has an exceptional chance to encirclement Idlib city and all main towns around it, 13 kms to encircle it from north, east and south, that would trap thousand of turkish illegal occupiers and all their equipment and one way out...thru M4.

RuAF is so very active in the air, bombing the hell out of convoys, the terrorists are dying in large nbrs, everyday, and their pool is become extremely swallow to attract more terrorists. Turkish regime and its terrorists are doomed, seriously doomed, there is a limit for stupidity and they are just crossing the no return from it, turkish national security will be severely impacted in the mid-long term.

Posted by: Canthama | Feb 10 2020 22:55 utc | [50](#)

PeterAu1 @39

Sure Su-34 has fighter capability since it's based off Su-27, but it was mainly designed as a striker variant, the Su-35 is the fighter version. If you look at recent headlines, you'll see Russia has been using Su-35s to stop Israeli and Turkish F-16s.

Posted by: Shaun | Feb 10 2020 22:57 utc | [51](#)

Erdogan is pathetic, his regime is beyond mentally ill, ...

Posted by: Canthama | Feb 10 2020 22:55 utc | [51](#)

Isn't more humane to kill soldiers on paper, rather than in reality? Can't you see any positives?

Posted by: Piotr Berman | Feb 10 2020 23:00 utc | [52](#)

Egor68500 #24

The question is what happens when the web of lies unravels?

What makes you think that Erdo's web of lies will unravel? If all his jihadi proxies are exterminated he will then make a hero of himself by allowing all the Syrian refugees to return to the bosom of mother Syria. He will claim that Assad has seen the Islamic wisdom and made a faithful promise etc etc. That way he takes the pressure off his home folk who are 'caring for' Syrian refugees.

Erdo is a callous POS and he will use anything to secure his tenure. Then his party will replace him with another POS guaranteeing not to go after him. That cycle could go on a long time. The USA is a good example of how that is done in a totally different society using different techniques.

Taffyboy #47

This thankless piece of crap "Sultan Erdogan", saved by Putin from his demise and failed assassination attempt on his useless hide. This is what they get, a rat, used by all sides as a painted whore. This dummy is going down, Erdogan, yes as the saying goes, ..."a friend in need is a friend indeed" ..., yea some friend. The Russians have his number, and it is not bingo!

Well I wont be holding my breath on Erdy going down or up for that matter. He is everybodys 'useful idiot' and he will now demonstrate both of those words in

Libya.

Erdoghan is a chauvinist poseur and he is pandering to the worst of masculine muscle heads at home.

Speaking of useful rats, you could consider what would have happened if a USA tool was outright running Turkey. I should imagine the jihadi empire would be pushing north from Kosovo right now and invading Iran and Armenia and so on. The disgraceful military adventurism emanating from the USA is a curse on this earth.

I for one am really pleased to see jihadis stalemated and eradicated right where they are and the USA blocked in its psychopathic global militarism.

Posted by: uncle tungsten | Feb 10 2020 23:00 utc | 53

Paul Cockshott @28

Kinetic energy of ballistic rocket (in 3-4 tonnes range) hitting the ground doesn't contribute to explosion. It is hollow thin shell that ends up squashed like this plane: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4CX-9lkRMQ>

500kg warhead hitting the ground, even at hypersonic speed, will not transfer all of its kinetic energy as it detonates immediately and most of it is negated by released chemical energy. So weight and composition of explosives is what determines size of boom, not kinetic energy of moving object which disintegrates on impact.

Norwegian @32 Jen @44

IMO number of brain injuries and meaning of that is BS, we can't know its true meaning for now. What we do know is that ballistic missiles of comparable type (OTR-21 Tochka), when used with intention to kill, can kill more than 100 personnel per missile when targeting typical US built army bases.

On 4 September 2015 Houthi forces fired a Tochka missile at Safir base in Marib killing over **100** Saudi-led coalition personnel.[10][11][12]

On 14 December 2015 Houthi forces fired another Tochka missile at Bab Al Mandab base killing over **150** Saudi-led coalition personnel stationed there.[13][14][15]

On 16 January 2016 Houthi forces fired a Tochka at Al Bairaq base in Marib killing **dozens** of Saudi-led coalition personnel [16][17]

On 31 January 2016 Houthi forces fired a Tochka at Al Anad base in Lahj killing over **140** Saudi-led coalition personnel[18][19][20][21]

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OTR-21_Tochka#Use_in_combat

Posted by: Abe | Feb 10 2020 23:01 utc | 54

It's fucking confusing.

Posted by: NoOneYouKnow | Feb 10 2020 22:01 utc | 42

Those damn Russians are pragmatic. ie see their response to the American putsch in Ukraine.

Want to gauge what's working? Who is gaining territory, who is losing it, and who

has the means to maintain their momentum.

Meanwhile, Freddy trump's little boy is focused on taking their oil, all 13,500 bpd worth at current production rates.

He calls that WINNING! Conman..grifter..River Boat Gambler..King of Bankruptcy..His dumb as dirt base eats it up however.

Posted by: Bubbles | Feb 10 2020 23:03 utc | [55](#)

Jen @44 & Ghost Ship @46--

I didn't have time to complete my conversation with the Iraq vet, but he's within the VA system and knew what he was talking about regarding the time delay to manifest symptoms. He felt the numbers were genuine. I'll likely see him again this Thursday and talk more.

As for the genuineness of the reported casualty count, there were several initial published reports about casualties being airlifted to Zionist and Kuwaiti hospitals that were rapidly erased, including a rather detailed one by Ha'aretz I happened to read. As shown by others above, the kinetic force applied was more than enough and we must also consider the possibility of several missiles impacting at the same time or in very rapid succession. As I wrote at the time, I'd experienced artillery live fire exercises meant to come as close to simulating actual bombardment as possible for which we were outfitted with the hearing protection available in the late 1970s, but which I knew was a rather poor comparison. Whether WIA/KIA, those soldiers are now out-of-action and if hospitalized a burden on the support infrastructure. Will the attack cause a reduction in induction or motivate? IMO, it will have little effect there; however, it will have an effect on those stationed in theatre knowing they all have a bullseye painted on their person with the triggerman capable of hitting it.

Proof of Iran's strategy's success is now beginning to be heard as NATO begins the process of leaving while grumblings within NATO of its rationale are leaking into the public domain. NATO via its Turk member is very overtly supporting internationally named terrorists in Syria such that plausible deniability no longer applies. And in Yemen, the Houthis continue on a roll adding to the defeatist atmosphere that's growing within NATO. The truth about Maidan is becoming more widely known thus undermining the attempts to keep Russophobia going strong. Thus we witness the almost daily hysteria cried by Pompeo as the Outlaw US Empire's policies go down in flames like planes over Afghanistan.

Posted by: [karlofi](#) | Feb 10 2020 23:07 utc | [56](#)

Yea I'm with Piotr, let Erdogan say he's killing SAA while doing bugger all. Don't call him out on it too much. Poor Ataturk must be pissed the modern Turkish nation is doing shitty deals with Islamo-mental-disabled again.

Posted by: Jezabeel | Feb 10 2020 23:25 utc | [57](#)

I think Pepe Escobar really hit it out of the park with his piece about the Outlaw US Empire's "siren call" that should be resisted by humanity at all costs. The Turks are playing that same LP with Erdogan as lead singer. But what of Turkey and why has Russia helped so much? I've written before about the long game being played by Russia regarding their longtime adversary--everything supplied is in Turkey's national interest regardless of the leadership, and is also in Russia's national interest. Then there're the lures being presented by China. I rather doubt Turkey will be in NATO come 2030; NATO itself might dissolve by then.

Here's some of that "siren call" uttered by [the astounding idiot James Jeffrey](#):

"James Jeffrey, US Envoy to Syria, rattles Kurds by stating the US 'stands with Erdogan.' He said, 'Erdogan is a leader who has been through several conflicts. He's experienced in dealing w Syria, but he is our partner & our NATO ally & we stand with him.'"

As I wrote above, the Outlaw US Empire wholly approves of its darling Turkey overtly supporting al-Qaeda terrorists thus making it an overt supporter too, as if we didn't already know.

Posted by: [karlofi](#) | Feb 10 2020 23:33 utc | [58](#)

@55

Kinetic energy of impact can not be negated by a chemical explosive reaction. Energy has to be conserved so the kinetic and explosive energies add. At high enough impact velocities the kinetic energy would simply vaporize the warhead . If even half the potential energy survived reentry a water filled warhead would cause a substantial steam explosion as it vapourised. With TNT the effect would be to raise the temperature of the carbon monoxide, nitrogen and hydrogen released by the TNT decomposition. Higher temperatures means higher overpressure.

Posted by: Paul Cockshott | Feb 10 2020 23:36 utc | [59](#)

The turk lira is again at the tipping point. This happened rather quickly as it did just a few months ago when the US wanted to pressure Erdogan to do as he was told. Our economics experts say it's a slippery slope for the turkish economy with nowhere to go but down once the lira passes 6 to the USD. The world's greatest currency manipulator and King of sanctions is the US, and they are locked and loaded with dweebs like Mnunchin leading the economic hitmen brigade.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/quote/USDTRY:CUR>

The US currency manipulators have the Sultan's balls in a vice and this isn't the first time they turned the handle. Sadly the competition between east and west results in trying to keep the pos afloat and give him some face saving treats for the home boys.

On a different vein, think of how Westerners thought of Turkey and what it was like a decade ago, and what it is now. Then think about how the direction of a country can change in a relatively short time. Then think about what the boo birds say about Bernie Sanders and his supporters. That isn't an invitation for disruptiCons to equate Sanders to Erdogan so kindly don't waste readers time with that sort of useless equivocation.

Posted by: Bubbles | Feb 10 2020 23:42 utc | [60](#)

karlofi

Trump's US look like they are trying to bring Turkey back into the fold with some sweet nothings. Allows Erdo to play the field a bit but his his current moves in Syria seem directed at his domestic audience. US unreliable trying or pretending to give him what he wants, Russia reliable but some of it goes against what Erdo wants. I think he will go with Russia, but I could be wrong.

Posted by: Peter AU1 | Feb 10 2020 23:47 utc | [61](#)

@60

Detonation adds chemical energy that ejects mass in (mostly) all directions with

much greater speed than warhead moves. This removes a lot of original kinetic energy as it is now a lot of pieces flying everywhere else instead of just in one direction.

If warhead was solid projectile then you could talk about transfer of kinetic to explosive energy ("rods from gods", https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kinetic_bombardment) but it is unfeasible even with much much bigger warheads going far faster (dozens of tons of it going hypersonic speeds down from orbit).

Posted by: Abe | Feb 10 2020 23:51 utc | [62](#)

@60

Yes, energy is preserved, but what I am trying to say is that warhead will transfer only small amount of its kinetic energy to useful explosion. Most of it will be redirected into particles moving into other directions. Again, this is only with no/short delay detonated warheads.

Posted by: Abe | Feb 10 2020 23:57 utc | [64](#)

"If initial pressure wave doesn't get your internal organs (shrapnel not included, of course) any long term damage is comparable to any other risky professions that cause concussions."

"Because airbases hit are extremely sparsely populated, with living quarters protected with barriers. Personnel had preparation time, except from guards and minimal crews, all expect all other personnel was dug in. There were simply too few missiles to cause 100+ brain injuries and no deaths."

Posted by: Abe | Feb 10 2020 20:05 utc | [23](#)

I got a similar explanation from a military medic guy.

Posted by: Per/Norway | Feb 11 2020 0:02 utc | [65](#)

How many border crossings into - *and out of* - Idlib are available to the Turkish army?

Only one, Bab al-Hawa.

This would be a strategic nightmare for the Turkish army if it were to come to a full scale war between Syria and Turkey. Surely the Turkish armed forces have, even after the Gülenist purges, some analysts left who can see that issue.

The Turks and their FSA proxy gangs were successful against the Kurds in Afrin because they had air superiority and overwhelming artillery advantage from the Turkish side of the border. Earlier, the Kurds had been similarly successful against ISIS because NATO had provided them with air and artillery support. But when the Turks came, NATO dumped the Kurds and they were left to fend for themselves without heavy weaponry. The Kurdish defeat was predictable. Shame on the Afrin Kurds for turning down the Syrian government's offer to block the Turks.

Against the Syrian army, the Turks are now in a similar position. They have no air support because Russia says "nyet". Their Turkey based artillery cannot reach far enough into Idlib and they do not have good supply lines to bring and replenish in the necessary amounts of heavy weaponry. It will be a turkey shoot for the Syrian army.

Military strategists on all side know this and act upon it. The propaganda organs may play all kinds of dramatic opera music, but that does not change the facts on the ground. It only distracts and diverts the naive and the gullible.

Erdogan and Trump have at least one thing in common: a voter base that consists largely of hysterical morons, motivated by a melange of irrational chauvinism and retarded religious fundamentalism.

Posted by: Lurk | Feb 11 2020 0:04 utc | [66](#)

Barflies seem constantly confounded by Putin. Follow the money. Putin is a salesman for Russia and he aims at all times to keep the customers satisfied....all of them.

His reaction will be muted, understated if he has one at all and of course his actual views will not be made public.

Pictures of the oversupplied and over-clothed Turkish Army were pretty funny. They look as agile as astronauts fitted for a moon landing. They will have trouble walking in all that gear much less fighting an experienced army on its own turf.

Posted by: donkeytale | Feb 11 2020 0:09 utc | [67](#)

Posted by: cdvision | Feb 10 2020 21:55 utc | 40
i have been told noticing such things is rayzizz!
im just glad im not the only one noticing...

Posted by: Per/Norway | Feb 11 2020 0:11 utc | [68](#)

I cant see that Erdo has any rationale for fighting in Idlib.
Possibly a mop up operation. He has no more use for his attack dogs and they might become a problem if allowed to roam free.

Posted by: jared | Feb 11 2020 0:16 utc | [69](#)

Looks like the ball is totally in the Russian court, and it falls on them to secure Syrian sovereignty. We'll see. Hope to see and end to this empire caused conflict in my lifetime.

I'm not holding my breath.

Posted by: ben | Feb 11 2020 0:51 utc | [70](#)

I think it would be best, for all concerned parties within this comment section to finally pay attention to eschatology (in all its versions) concerning Syria and its immediate surroundings, it is fair that YOU might not believe in religion, however I am inclined to remind you (although, I am sure you already know this) that genuine psychos are running most governments, who are essentially harbingers of doom, and by doing so you become more informed, and might just help you disseminate the cluster**** we are in at this present moment in time.

Posted by: Yahya | Feb 11 2020 0:55 utc | [71](#)

Echo Yahya @ 72<= genuine psychos are running most governments, who are essentially harbingers of doom, and by doing so you become more informed, and might just help you disseminate the cluster**** we are in at this present moment in time. <==these people are not psychos they are international mobsters. They think they can make the governed in each nation state stand still while they the

Mobsters use the fire power of the nation states they control to take over the world, breaking the knees and of any who get in their way.

Erdo has a problem in Libya, Iraq, and Syria. He's trapped.. in his own fodder. at his domestic back is the regime change gang on his East <=Iraq and its playful Kurds, to the South<=Syria and its Playful Kurds, between them Libya and its challenges. and over his head is Israel waiting like a vulture strip the Turk caucus .

If Erdo decided on all out war in Syria it would not surprise me. he is in the same spot Hitler was. in 1944.. Its just a matter of time.

I predict the Erdogan will come out better by merging Syria with Turkey, and letting Assad lead.

Posted by: snake | Feb 11 2020 1:16 utc | [72](#)

I suspect that Erdogan lives in fear of the prospect that many of those homicidal crazies that call themselves Muslims are going to end up in Turkey blaming him for their defeat. (After all Allah could not possibly have let them down.) Turkey will then see a rain of terror far worse the one that afflicted Russia during and after the Second Chechen War.

Also the comment above by Lurk is very apropos. The current thrust to the west from ICARDA to Kafr Nuran is aimed at cutting the only supply line, Hwy 60, north of Idlib city from Bab al-Hawa to the whole of the southern area held by Al Qaeda et al. The Turkish army will end up in a box along with the rest of the crazies. They'll have to beg for safe passage home. These prospects are part of what's making Erdogan so crazy. He's feeling his throat.

Posted by: stew | Feb 11 2020 1:39 utc | [73](#)

IIRC, Erdogan may have the spotlight but he isn't the only person pushing for a neo-Ottoman Empire.

dltravers | Feb 10 2020 21:35 utc | [37](#):

No mention of where those troops are heading; home or surrounding bases outside of Iraq?

Posted by: Ian2 | Feb 11 2020 2:45 utc | [74](#)

paveway - headchoppers in turkish army fatigue.. that sounds correct...

others on russia showing it's military expertise in the saa's actions - that seems pretty clear as well.. the syrian army has developed some real skill over the past 8 years, thanks in good measure to russia's direct involvement..

Posted by: james | Feb 11 2020 2:47 utc | [75](#)

Turkey is a member of NATO. What if Turkey claims Syria is attacking Turkey and under article 5, NATO MUST help Turkey? Maybe thats Erdougan's plan.

Posted by: Hoyeru | Feb 11 2020 3:21 utc | [76](#)

Bubbles @61

I do not doubt that the US will threaten sanctions if Erodgan does not fight Russia

/ Syria / Iran, but he has already called Trump's sanctions bluff on the S-400. He has to know that long term Russia offers a better partnership, and perhaps an agreement where Turkey gets some of Syria's crops as compensation for feeding its influx of Syrians would be a much more logical outcome.

Posted by: Schmoe | Feb 11 2020 3:55 utc | [77](#)

karlof1 @ 57:

Thanks for your explanation, much appreciated.

I have now found the IRGC claim, reported by [Al Masdar News citing Press TV](#), that the "brain injuries" the US claims its soldiers suffered in the Ayn al Assad missile attack stand for fatalities.

Iran's Mehr News Agency [also claimed there were 80 fatalities](#) at the airbase. [Citizen Truth](#) stated in its report (16 January 2020) that Iran claimed as many as 143 soldiers had died.

Posted by: Jen | Feb 11 2020 4:26 utc | [78](#)

"They" never tell us what is really happening. Soldiers are getting shot dead here, there, then here again. Only the shot-getting soldiers know about it.

The dead tell no tales. The mainstream propaganda outlets tell no tales. When you die, you die alone.

Posted by: blues | Feb 11 2020 5:08 utc | [79](#)

Hoyeru@77 - That's a widely-held misconception that the U.S. just prefers people believe anyway.

At the drafting of Article 5 in the late 1940s, there was consensus on the principle of mutual assistance, but fundamental disagreement on the modalities of implementing this commitment. The European participants wanted to ensure that the United States would automatically come to their assistance should one of the signatories come under attack; the United States did not want to make such a pledge and obtained that this be reflected in the wording of Article 5.

From NATO website on the topic [[here](#)]

People tend to read between the lines of Article 5 to interpret what NATO allies will/should do, but it's really up to each ally to decide how to respond ('assistance' but exactly what that means is up to each ally) and if that assistance will even be military (it doesn't have to be). So, typical weasel-wording. Nobody is OBLIGATED to do anything if an ally is attacked beyond 'provide assistance'.

Article 5 can't be interpreted by itself, anyway. Meet the seldom considered Article 6 from the discussion on the NATO site:

The “out-of-area” debate

This article is complemented by Article 6, which stipulates:

Article 6

“For the purpose of Article 5, an armed attack on one or more of the Parties is deemed to include an armed attack:

on the territory of any of the Parties in Europe or North America, on the Algerian Departments of France 2, on the territory of Turkey or on the Islands under the jurisdiction of any of the Parties in the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer;

on the forces, vessels, or aircraft of any of the Parties, when in or over these territories or any other area in Europe in which occupation forces of any of the Parties were stationed on the date when the Treaty entered into force or the Mediterranean Sea or the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer.”

Turkey was neutral almost to the end of WWII and had no occupation forces stationed there as far as anybody knows.

So an attack on NATO troops *in Turkey* might be cause to invoke Article 5 even if no Turkish troops were involved. But attacking NATO troops in Syria (Turkish or anyone else) is not cause to invoke Article 5. Neither was the Iranian attack on U.S. troops in Iraq.

This is all perfectly meaningless today. It's all subject to the whims of any NATO country because (as the U.S. has repeatedly asserted) treaties are only as good as the central banks behind the parties. You can change your mind for any reason and just ignore them - especially if you're the neighborhood bully. Or you can just decide something (anything) anywhere qualifies as cause to invoke Article 5 and demand your European lapdogs... er, NATO allies... drop some bombs somewhere.

Posted by: PavewayIV | Feb 11 2020 5:15 utc | [80](#)

@PavewayIV | 84

Precisely. And Turkey learned its lesson with the Suleyman Shah fiasco. Having said that Trump's claim that NATO would play a greater role while not relevant here begs the question how and when.

Posted by: Egor68500 | Feb 11 2020 8:01 utc | [82](#)

Also this:

Article 6

For the purpose of Article 5, an armed attack on one or more of the Parties is deemed to include **an armed attack:**

on the territory of any of the Parties in Europe or North America, on the Algerian Departments of France 2, on the territory of Turkey or on the Islands under the jurisdiction of any of the Parties in the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer;

on the forces, vessels, or aircraft of any of the Parties, when in or over these territories or any other area in Europe in which occupation forces of any of the Parties were stationed on the date when the Treaty entered into force or **the Mediterranean Sea** or the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer.

So an *armed* attack on the aircraft, vessels, or forces (e.g. frogmen) of a NATO member right off the coast of Syria would be considered an armed attack for the purpose of Article 5.

I presume cyber attacks, EW attacks and hand-to-hand combat without using any

kind of weapon (edged, club-like or garrote) are not considered *armed* attacks, so one can safely tear off the breathing tube of a NATO frogman when he's busy [attaching an IED to a Syrian offshore oil pipeline](#).

Posted by: S | Feb 11 2020 8:38 utc | [83](#)

@Abe

I wonder if all the TBI without any other injuries mentioned would have resulted by hitting the exact site where their bunker is/was, but not penetrating it. Such message would be clear, we know where you are. Whilst satellite (surprisingly fast provided) imagery won't reveal the indicated target at all.

Posted by: BG13 | Feb 11 2020 8:43 utc | [84](#)

Posted by: karlof1 | Feb 10 2020 23:33 utc | 59

I rather doubt Turkey will be in NATO come 2030; NATO itself might dissolve by then.

Given the plan described in George Friedman's Forecast for the 21st century, 2030 is the high time to kick Turkey out of NATO so the scenography for 2040 wars can be set up.

Posted by: pppp | Feb 11 2020 8:53 utc | [85](#)

BG13 @88

Images do not show bunkers near hit sites, nor trenches or barriers. I call BS on numbers for 2 things:

- TBI they describe could result from concussion caused by really near blast, and we are talking about really near margin for error between being too close and risking permanent damage/death, and being too far and having no more damage than from loudspeakers at rock concert. And all this is without considering more dangerous flying debris/shrapnel that have greater range. Concussion kill range is eg. 50-75m while debris can kill you 300m away if you are unlucky.

- For 100+ wounded there should be 50+ dead by any conservative estimate. And these wounded could **only** end up with concussions and no other injuries (hearing loss, busted eardrums) if they were in trenches or bunkers really close to impact points but there are none in satellite pictures, only flat ground with soft structures.

Posted by: Abe | Feb 11 2020 9:45 utc | [86](#)

@uncle tungsten | 54

"What makes you think that Erdo's web of lies will unravel?"

Growing political pressure at home is real - while it may not threaten him directly as President it threatens his power base AKP/MHP. IF Davutoglu can split that vote Erdogan will be under serious pressure; or simply getting to the point where reality can not be ignored. When is a different question entirely.

Posted by: Egor68500 | Feb 11 2020 9:56 utc | [87](#)

@ pppp | Feb 11 2020 8:53 utc | 89

Given the plan described in George Friedman's Forecast for the 21st century

That work of fantasy fiction is a screamer. Friedman, founder of STRATFOR of infamy, is a neocon stinktank harlot who performs every trick that the customer will pay for. The categorical imperative of his work is continued US global hegemony. Silly little things like facts are then fitted to suit.

A few of the more hilarious "predictions" for the 2020's

Poland ("the Polish bloc") will be a major Eurasian superpower, taking the place of the now collapsed Russian Federation.

China will also implode and Japan (together with Taiwan) becomes a dominant influence in the fragmented mainland area. A Tibet liberated thanks to India is par for the ZATO pipe dream course.

Crown jewel of Friedman's muppet show is Turkey's ascending military capabilities in space. Yes you read that right: Turkeys in space! Turkey's advancements in the arena of space militarization are such a threat to the US space force that it will be the cause for world war 3.

For anyone still wondering why US foreign policy and interventions seem to be such a failure, Friedman provides a candid look into the deeper motives of the errant empire in decline's elites' failing mindset.

Posted by: Lurk | Feb 11 2020 10:15 utc | [88](#)

Turkish newspapers today scream bloody murder.

The Tigers just took Kafr-Nuran and are one village away in two directions for cutting away the only supply line to Turkey for Idlib and the Al-Gaab plain and one of the major supply lines for the Aleppo front.

The other major news is that the M5 Aleppo-Damascus highway was finally liberated today.

-

Posted by: [BG](#) | Feb 11 2020 10:18 utc | [89](#)

@Abe

The idea of an bunker is to hide and be safe. Being hidden is the precaution for safety in the age of bunker penetrators. Therefore, it may well be constructed that it is not seen in satellite images. That you don't see trenches or a bunker in the images is absolutely no argument, but resembling the Ravenous Bugblatter Beast of Traal instead. Putting a non-penetrating HE warhead of 1000 lbs right above the "roof" results in a shock-wave (what you describe as "really near blast") causing no shrapnel injuries but stuff like TBI. If the reported injuries are true and complete, hitting close to a hardened shelter is the only way to cause them. Well, ofc, this may be a lie, as the Iranians point out. On the other hand it is impossible for the Iranian side to know the exact number of fatalities right after the attack.

Posted by: BG13 | Feb 11 2020 10:20 utc | [90](#)

Erodgan is in a hole of his own making. Many articles coming from Turkey questioning Erodan's continuing support for daesh and the laughable reports of attacking and killing 100's of Syrian troops. Turkey's media is no better than here in the UK or CNN or FOX in the states. Our so called leaders are turkeys and the people are waking up to a new idea of a different xmas

Posted by: Bill | Feb 11 2020 10:20 utc | [91](#)

When I was in high school in the late '70s I had a teacher who had decided he needed to get into an entirely different line of work after having spent time in the special forces in Vietnam. I was always very interested in the military and international affairs, so spent quite a bit of time talking to him. I remember he told me that at the time, our special forces were several places they "shouldn't be," and that any time I heard of soldiers being killed in a training accident, especially helicopter crashes, there were good odds they had actually been killed in a clandestine operation somewhere.

Of course, those were the days when the US still at least paid lip service to international law, and so would at least pretend its troops weren't places they shouldn't be. Those days are long gone, but there are still special circumstances like the Iran missile strike where it would be politically difficult to admit serious casualties, especially deaths. So we have the slow trickle of oddly identical injuries being disclosed, but I had also noticed several deaths of US service members from anywhere but there lately. Makes you wonder.

Posted by: J Swift | Feb 11 2020 10:27 utc | [92](#)

Erdogan has a lot of explaining to do.... to the Russians, that is

More target practice for the syrian and russian air forces...Unfortunately lots of people die from this kind of sh*t still going on in 2020, with that snake and traitor The Sultan - this all may be a bluff by Turkey but it's a deadly one

In Photo: Turkish-Delivered Armoured Vehicles In Hands Of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham

<https://southfront.org/in-photo-turkish-delivered-armoured-vehicles-in-hands-of-hayat-tahrir-al-sham/>

Recently, Turkey has delivered a high number of various weapons and equipment to so-called “moderate rebels” in the Syrian province of Idlib. It seems that a part of these “moderate rebels” was members of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (formerly the Syrian branch of al-Qaeda). The photo above shows the Turkish-provided M113 armoured personnel carrier with a flag of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham.

Turkish sources will likely try to explain this by claiming that the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham flag there is just a decoration and only “moderate rebels” use the equipment.

Posted by: michaelj72 | Feb 11 2020 10:32 utc | [93](#)

@karlofi

Fascinating comments / info. re. Iran attacks. Cheers.

Posted by: Egor68500 | Feb 11 2020 11:10 utc | [94](#)

@Lurk

I think you failed to understand the very important sentence that is repeated several times in that book.

the United States has a single core policy in Eurasia—preventing any power from dominating Eurasia or part of it

USA does not have to win any war, sowing chaos and destruction is enough to

claim "mission accomplished".

And yes, there is something called "technology transfer" which can enable any random country to achieve whatever other country did, as long as that fits the political agenda.

USA might be some 3 to 5 years behind the schedule but it does not mean they dropped their strategic objectives. China did not implode, fine, but why we are witnessing the trade war? Uighurs are also completely unrelated to that? Hong-Kong protests too? Hopefully coronavirus thingy is actually a natural occurrence but never let a good crisis go to waste.

Regarding Poland, Jewish greed collided with USA strategic objectives so the plan implementation suffered. Simply one can't build a proxy force and pillage it at the same time. It now looks USA long term planning won against instant reward. That's why Israel turned to Russia for help with their heirless property demands.

Posted by: pppp | Feb 11 2020 11:15 utc | [95](#)

So far, Syria and Russia have shown no interest in creating cauldrons in Syria. This is probably to reduce civilian casualties by allowing terrorists to escape and leave the population intact as the Syrian army enters. To a large extent this strategy, probably enforced by the Russians, has worked. Therefore, I expect it will continue to be used in the upcoming battles in Idlib. Instead of creating cauldrons in NE Idlib West of Aleppo, or in southern Idlib, south of the M4, I expect we will see the military always leaving an exit route toward Turkey. This is likely to also occur when Idlib itself is taken, with an exit for terrorists north toward Turkey maintained. What this strategy will do is put increasing pressure on Turkey, as it is confronted with a huge problem of terrorists at its southern border.

Posted by: Joseph Dillard | Feb 11 2020 11:18 utc | [96](#)

Erdogan has just given a speech in Ankara in which he said that the "Regime would pay a very heavy price" and that "the steps to be taken will be announced tomorrow"

@Bill | 91 - which articles? I'd be interested to read them. And don't forget that most of the 'critical' Turkish language journalism at the moment is coming from outside of Turkey mostly and banned / inaccessible in Turkey.

Posted by: Egor68500 | Feb 11 2020 11:53 utc | [98](#)

When trying to analyze a somewhat perplexing development, like Turkey's actions in Idlib, I generally like to try to list out all the possibilities, even those I find much less likely, both because it keeps one intellectually honest and occasionally even in walking through dismissing a scenario one can come across some interesting thoughts.

So how about this one? I believe it is pretty well accepted that Erdogan originally trained and assisted many of the terrorists because he was well paid to do so, had the full backing of the US (CIA and Pentagon, with different groups), and was no doubt promised or at least led to believe that he would be allowed to absorb much of Syria into his new Ottoman empire, and control that which he did not. When his forces did not accomplish regime change, he continued to be well paid, and made a production out of working with Russia to at least spare the lives of his pets, but as they were all being dumped in Idlib, there was some thought he didn't terribly mind if they thinned each other out some while they were there (the Syrians and Russians certainly liked that aspect). But there was never any move by Turkey to relocate those terrorists back into Turkey proper, so obviously Ergodan had his

limits.

So Erdogan stalled for time as much as he could (while no doubt continuing to receive plenty of Saudi wahabbi cash), but the surviving terrorists just couldn't behave, and finally Syria had enough. Now PavewayIV brings us a report that many of the new Turkish troops appearing in Idlib are in fact terrorists in Turk uniforms. What if the US has upped its pressure on Erdogan to turn up the heat on Syria/Russia, so he advises Russia privately that he must act to save his economy, but suggest they feign having a falling out, and he sends equipment and supplies to his pets, with the understanding that the new arms will be given to terrorists. His pets will feel Erdogan is going over the top in supporting them, and won't be trying as hard to slip into Turkey to cause mischief. They'll be newly emboldened, making it easier for Russia and Syria to kill them in mass. Sure, the fresh arms will cause some casualties for the Syrians, but as these guys are more adept at sawing the heads off children than running a Leopard tank, they won't be terribly effective. Erdogan can jump and scream enough to satisfy the US and his terrorist backers, but without actually doing much when you blow away the smoke. Is it some sort of bizarre win/win game Erdogan is playing?

I'm not saying I feel this is what is happening, but there are certain dynamics going on that this scenario, or at least some flavor of it, might address.

Posted by: J Swift | Feb 11 2020 12:04 utc | [99](#)

To those few commenters (trolls??) who apparently believe that those Muslims who are religious (and most such in Turkey and throughout West Asia/North Africa are also working class, the middle classes, elite bourgeoisie have been thoroughly westernized via their education in "International/American Schools" and western universities) are "dumb as dirt," are "fundamentalist" (therefore presumably we should see them as bombers, murderers of innocent westerners) - *you* are (deliberately) ignorant not only about the ordinary working people across these lands and their religious faith, but also about which people, which nations are the true "Terrorists," the real "Murderers," which societies are filled with "dumb as dirt" people, political "party" supporters.

I would suggest that you take stock of your own society, nation, government and its destruction, devastation, murderous, terroristic actions against the peoples of West Asia/North Africa: Those dwelling in glass houses should NOT throw stones; concentrate on the beams in your own eyes before castigating the motes in the eyes of others; DO TO OTHER (NATIONS) AS YOU WOULD BE DONE BY.

Posted by: AnneR | Feb 11 2020 12:26 utc | [100](#)