Erdogan attacks EU with Refugees as COVID-19 Hits Turkey

I do not want history to record me as someone who has bequeathed to his nation the institution of despotism. ~ Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the first president of Turkey

Erdogan’s Idlib war has morphed into a new one with the EU, which he can’t win. Is there a method to his madness? I ask because as soon as things calm down in one place, he picks a fight somewhere else. While he advanced into Idlib with a traditional military invasion force minus the aircover to back up his proxy terrorist forces there, he sent a jihadi mercenary force into Libya.

The last story I saw was that these were people, an unbelievable number of 5000, tasked to guard Tripoli’s oil facilities. But then, within a week we were getting confirmed reports they were already getting killed in action with Haftar’s forces out of Benghazi.

This force is suspected of being part of Erdogan buying into a deal with Libya to share a Mediterranean economic zone that would block everyone else’s oil and undersea gas pipelines to Europe.

The Cyprus-Turkey standoff continues as President Nicos Anastasiades refuses to stop his own exploratory drilling despite Turkish threats. He wants to reunify Cyprus and share any petro resources, but Erdogan does not seem to be in a partnering, sharing mode right now. After all, this is the same man that wants Idlib to eventually be absorbed by Turkey, tagged onto its Hatay province courtesy of the French after WWI, which had been Syrian.

"Disputing sovereign rights or preconditions such as 'I'm violating international law and in return, you must give up your sovereign rights so that we can talk'...that doesn't demonstrate either good will or good faith," said Anastasiades, who is the president of Cyprus' internationally recognized government.

It appears Erdogan is a “chip off the old Trump block”, wanting Anastasiades to surrender Cyprus’ economic sovereignty like Trump wanted North Korea to completely denuclearize before he would begin discussing sanctions adjustment.

The first time I heard Trump mention his “total denuclearization” precondition, I went on the record editorially at Veterans Today that Trump never meant to do a deal with Kim Jong-un and that Kim would never give up his nuclear deterrent on a shaky promise from Trump. No one on the planet would be that stupid.

North Korea was a pretend negotiation, where Trump knew he could generate a ton of international media on his being the King of the Deals, but to borrow a term from him, it was a “fake negotiation” from day one with all the theatrics, including his “Rocket Man” name calling from the UN podium. Trump can certainly be said to be a talented showman, a double-edged knife for a President as it cuts both ways.

Erdogan tries to be a showman, but he is not. He loves being on the stage, but he’s just not likeable. He certainly was not a nice guy when, after his coup attempt, he decided to take down all the opposition press while rounding up the real coup network, where his legal case was that they were supporting terrorism. This allowed him to take over Parliament and pass new laws giving him new powers to keep his political opposition hammered down.

VT lost our three month Turkish correspondent who just disappeared one day. Several years later, our Syrian
correspondent visited Turkey for a change of pace from Damascus and also committed the unpardonable sin of talking to the opposition. On her 2nd arrest “for questioning,” she was tagged with a terrorism charge on day two, and then transferred to the foreigners’ prison. We put an “all hands on deck” call out to our international network, and within 24 hours she was on a plane to back to Damascus, thanks to a reptile file that is kept for such events.

Erdogan wants S-400s and Patriot batteries

Turkey felt rejected by the US not quickly responding with the Patriot missiles, a silly request because such a transfer would take months of logistical planning, when Erdogan was posing that he was in an emergency situation. No one believed that he thought that air attacks were a real possibility from the Syrian or Russian Airforce unless Turkish planes fired missiles from inside Turkish airspace at Syrian or Turkish planes.

NATO also passed on being one of Erdogan’s proxy forces. Trump belatedly offered some munitions as a token. That was when Erdogan weaponized his refugees to use against the EU and his old enemy Greece.

We heard his charge that the EU had promised $6 billion for refugee support and had not paid, an unbelievable statement which most interpreted as not having paid it all. Might that have had something to do with the EU learning that the refugee money it had sent was being stolen by Erdogan’s political cronies to steal a piece of every transaction they were involved in?

I have always been surprised to not see any video or written reports of EU people on the ground in the refugee camps along Turkey’s Syrian border. We can all sympathize that that was a big load to put on Turkey, but a lot of those refugees were families of the terrorist and militant proxy groups fighting in Syria. They were never starving.

This is the same Turkey that marketed all of Syria’s stolen oil by ISIS and helped fund ISIS via the oil tanker convoys so large across the Iraqi desert that they could have been seen by anyone on the moon with a hobbyist telescope. Erdogan’s party henchmen participated in the physical looting of Aleppo, stripping every piece of machinery out of every factory in the city and trucking it back to Turkey in convoys twenty kilometers long.

This past week was the turn of the refugees to be Erdogan’s geopolitical cannon fodder, the thousands he sent toward the Greek border after the Syrian ceasefire. The news reported large numbers of Afghans and Africans, although I did not see any in the video footage.

In the first few days, I did view some women with children, but then no more. News got back to the camps that Greece was blocking the stampede and that most all the refugees were men were young or of military age, and way too many not even carrying a backpack for cold weather supplies. They were not even carrying bottled water or food supplies that I could see.

I was getting suspicious that I was looking at ROTC kids and young military recruits play acting as refugees to generate the kind of video that Erdogan’s people are so experienced in recording for propaganda purposes. When they could not get across, the refugees took on the Greek border guards defending their national border, which is their job and they did it well.

I saw video of the young men using Molotov cocktails against the border guards at night, the materials obviously supplied to them by the Turkish authority to add more drama. But the Greeks held the line, and that is when Erdogan made a mistake.

He deployed his own border guards and some Special Forces to support “refugee” efforts to break holes in the Greek fence. I watched video from the Turkish side of uniformed men firing teargas at the Greek border guards, and some firing modern infantry weapons that may have been rubber bullets, but the Greeks maintained their discipline. I am sure much of Europe watched all this, also.

The border clash theatrics got the EU to send a mission to meet with Erdogan, where the EU agreed to take 1500 unaccompanied children and no more.

While all this was going on, the COVID-19 virus was barreling down the highway and not slowing down for pedestrians. To say Erdogan’s ploy had poor timing is an understatement. Merkel, who usually holds her cards close to the vest, went mainstream yesterday that Germans needed to get ready for 70% of them getting the virus over the next one to two years.

If you think the EU nations are going to take in a flood of refugees while this pandemic is upon them with the
economic devastation that will come with it, I would consider that an hallucination. COVID-19 just landed in Turkey, so Erdogan is going to have a new domestic battlefront to deal with on top of his others. I think he might have reached for a bridge too far.

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