

Turkey Pays Price for Dancing with the Devil

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Indeed, allowing the US and Gulf State vassals to utilise Turkey to supply ISIL has led to internal instability, it seems megalomaniac neo-Sultan Erdogan has completely lost the plot especially by attempting to embroil NATO ([shooting down Russian jet](#)) in its fight to eliminate Kurdish opposition. Well Mr megalopresident, suck on the very real possibility of a Turkish failed State. Hopefully the current nation-wide unrest should sound a clear warning to other players that dance with and support ISIL.



ON the surface, it may have seemed like just another terrorist bombing in the Middle East. But look a little closer, experts say, and you'll see Islamic State taking another step closer to fulfilling its frightening, 1400-year-old prophecy.

Twin attacks in Turkey's capital on the weekend that killed at least 97 people at a peace march could plunge the once moderate country into a bloodbath — and the biggest winner out of the chaos will be the feared terror group.

While the Turkish government blames Islamic State militants, angry citizens have turned on their country's own President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, accusing him of failing to protect them and encouraging violence to gain votes. Riots have broken out and nationwide strikes have been threatened in protest.

Dr Denis Dragovic, Honorary Fellow at the University of Melbourne told news.com.au that Islamic State had ambitious plans to expand across Africa and to Bangladesh in the next five years, and promoting internal chaos in the region was their modus operandi.

"They aren't looking necessarily for long term governance, they're looking at rapid expansion ... and sowing instability is key to this," he said, adding that the extremist group had the most to gain from the instability in Turkey.

Syria and Iraq are perfect examples. Crippled by internal division and violence, Islamic State has been able to move in and establish its self-proclaimed caliphate.

So is Turkey next in their sights?

A continued military offensive within Turkey would take the pressure off the extremist group in Syria. IS also sees Turkey as a legitimate target, after it began air strikes against Islamic State fighters and cracked down on cross-border trade that was financing the group.

But the violence may also help the terror group to gain a foothold in Turkey, bringing it closer to bringing to life a 1400-year-old Islamic prophecy.

According to the prophesy, a battle will take place in Dabiq in northern Syria (which IS currently controls) against "Rome", which is commonly interpreted as the forces of the West. The victors would then go on to be "conquerors of Constantinople", an ancient city which is now known as Istanbul in Turkey.

The city was once instrumental in the advancement of Christianity but became the Islamic capital of the Ottoman Empire following the Muslim conquest.

In recent times, Turkey has been seen as a model secular country but has been dragged further into the Islamic conflict as war rages in neighbouring Syria and Iraq.

Dr Dragovic believes religious motivations for the actions of Islamic State, as well as countries in the Middle East, were often overlooked by the West.

"We as secular Australians can't comprehend that foreign policy would be based on religion but other countries do this and that's where we misunderstand their motivations."

In his first interview since his country's deadliest ever attack on Saturday, Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu denied there had been any security or intelligence failure and dismissed fears Turkey may be facing civil war.

"This attack will not turn Turkey into Syria," he insisted.

But with international concern growing over Turkey's stability, German Chancellor Angela Merkel is set to visit this week to discuss Turkey and Syria, a spokesman said.

'ERDOGAN MURDERER'

The difficulty for President Erdogan is that he is being blamed for the bombing.

Described by Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad as a "Muslim Brotherhood fanatic" who is "suffering from political megalomania", Erdogan's own citizens have branded him a murderer in the wake of Saturday's attack.

Erdogan has been controversial for building an extravagant new palace with more than 1000 rooms, making it the world's biggest residential palace, at a cost of almost \$1 billion, as well as trying to extend his executive powers, leading some to describe him as acting like a dictator or "sultan".

He has been seen as stoking conflict with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) for his own personal ambition and tensions have been high since July, after Turkey agreed to actively support the US-led battle against the Islamic State, launching strikes at the extremist group, but also targeting the PKK in Iraq.

The air strikes ended a ceasefire between the two parties, with PKK retaliating, leading to hundreds being killed in Turkey. The conflict also fired up the Kurds living in Turkey, which make up about 20 per cent of its population.

Critics accuse Erdogan of intensifying attacks on Kurds to rally nationalist votes. They worry the bombings could entice rogue Kurdish forces to attack, persuading Turks to seek security over peace.

“He thinks that he is becoming the sultan of the new era of the 21st century,” Bashar al-Assad said of his Turkish counterpart during in a TV interview in March, accusing Erdogan of deliberately destabilising Syria by allowing Islamic State fighters to cross their shared border to fight.

“He doesn’t only ignore the terrorists from coming to Syria. He support them, logistically and militarily. Directly. On daily basis.”

But Dr Dragovic said it would be a stretch to suggest the Erdogan was stoking tensions purely for his own personal ambition.

“The insecurity is historic, PKK (Kurdistan Workers’ Party) has been fighting since 1984,” he said.

But he said there were a lot of domestic factors at play, and he noted Erdogan was a pious Muslim who supported Turkey becoming more Islamic and wanted the country to have greater influence in the Islamic world.

Dr Dragovic said the president’s ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) may also be trying to position itself as a party that is strong on security.

AKP used to be known for being a “development party” and was very popular in rural areas where it worked to deliver infrastructure such as electricity as well as teachers and nurses.

But Dr Dragovic said now that much of this has been delivered, some of the appeal of the party had been lost so it needed a new image.

“People are not going to vote for them forever because they delivered infrastructure 25 years ago,” he said.

After losing their majority in June, the ruling party was hoping to regain it at the election on November 1 but opinion polls indicated this was unlikely, although it’s now uncertain how this will be impacted by the weekend’s events.

APPROACH NEEDS TO CHANGE

Regardless of who may have planned the weekend bombing, it shows how deeply Turkey is being drawn into the chaos in Syria, with which it shares a 900km-long border.

Dr Dragovic said he thought Turkey needed to do something to reach an agreement with PKK to stop Islamic State benefiting from the instability.

He said the government should also ensure any support Turkey provided to Islamic State ended.

Turkey has made no secret of its desire to see Syrian President Bashar al-Assad ousted and there has been reports that it has helped Islamic militants, although whether this includes IS fighters is

questionable.

Turkish middle men have been involved in smuggling artefacts from historic cities, such as Palmyra, across the border and funnelling proceeds back to Islamic State. Oil used to be openly transported in pipes laid across the border. Food supplies, maintenance and spare parts have also been traded. While Dr Dragovic said it was difficult to close off borders totally because there were other citizens who relied on trade for food and supplies, there needed to be adequate oversight of what was coming in or out.

Overall, Dr Dragovic was critical of the current Western strategy in Syria and described it as like “trying to rebuild Humpty Dumpty”.

He said so far the West’s strategy was based around supporting rebel groups — which had no hope of taking over governing Syria — and maintaining Syria as one united country.

“The rebels have no hope and the country’s falling apart and trying to put it back together now is a futile proposition,” he said.

He said Russian President Vladimir Putin, who had recently launched his own air strikes in Syria, was being smart and focusing on maintaining control of areas in Syria with access to the Mediterranean.

“They don’t care about the eastern desert and north mountains, and that’s just going to reinforce the break up of Syria,” he said.

“What the West needs to acknowledge is that the borders are unsettled and with the population movement, the demographics have changed.”

Dr Dragovic said governments should start looking at innovative peace agreements such as the one formed between Bosnia and Herzegovina.

“This is the type of agreement we should start looking at, where semi-autonomous regions come together under a loose state structure,” he said.

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