

16/11/2020

Cyprus: Oxford Analytica: Erdogan piles on pressure for Cyprus solution

Turkish support for a two-state solution is nothing new but Erdogan is probably aiming to give new talks a push

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday repeated his preference for a "two-state" solution for Cyprus. He was visiting its separatist Turkish enclave, four weeks after it elected as its leader Ersin Tatar, a nationalist closely aligned with Erdogan. They celebrated the 37th anniversary of its self-proclamation of statehood, which only Turkey recognises. Erdogan said there were two peoples and two separate states on Cyprus. Echoing Erdogan, Tatar said the Turkish Cypriots were ready to resume negotiations on a new model based on "existing realities". Erdogan arrived too late for a scheduled picnic in Varosha, a resort abandoned by its Greek Cypriot residents during the 1974 Turkish invasion. Tatar had proclaimed the beach reopened just before the elections. EU High Representative Josep Borrell deplored opening Varosha's fenced-off area and statements contradicting the UN framework for a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation, as increasing distrust and tension. The Republic of Cyprus presidency described Erdogan's visit as provocative and illegal.

Oxford Analytica's judgement

Erdogan's visit sends a signal that Turkey wants a negotiated solution to the long-standing division of Cyprus, partly because exploitation of undersea hydrocarbon resources around the island cannot go ahead without it. However, a Biden presidency would probably put its weight behind the federal solution.

16/11/2020

Cyprus: Ankara focused on getting recognition of north Cyprus -Tatar to go on 'official' visits

knews.kathimerini.com.cy

Well-informed sources in the Turkish capital and in the Turkish Cypriot community insist on the fact that the messages relayed during Sunday's celebrations in the north are of particular importance for the future course of the Cyprus Problem. Returning to the well-known rhetoric of the division, Turkey once again brought to the fore strategies and moves for the Cyprus Problem that had been forgotten for several years.

Tatar in Azerbaijan

"The President of Turkey announced that Ersin Tatar's visit to Azerbaijan is imminent," Turkish Cypriot sources told "K", adding that this was not simply a move to impress the Turkish side, but a new diplomatic manoeuvre by Turkey on the Cyprus Problem chessboard, just a few days after the victory of Azerbaijan in the Karabakh War.

The sources added: "Azerbaijan marked a historic victory with the support of the Turkish army and Turkish diplomacy. Everything shows that Baku is called to express its gratitude for this support by welcoming the new Turkish Cypriot leader in the near future. A few years ago, similar ideas were voiced regarding Mr. Akinci. However, Mustafa Akinci rejected such proposals on the grounds that they would not contribute to the strengthening of the profile of Turkish Cypriots abroad and, on the contrary, would harm the settlement process. "

And other states?

In Ankara, well-informed sources on the same issue share the view that Azerbaijan is not going to be the only foreign destination that will receive Tatar "as a head of state" in the near future. "There are many countries with which Turkey currently has close relations. And these states could contribute to the effort to promote Turkish Cypriots in the international arena", our sources added.

In the Turkish capital over the past few hours, information that has been picked up by certain pro-government media also stands out. According to new Turkish reports, Tatar will travel to Baku at the official invitation of the Azerbaijani government. **The date of the visit has not yet been clarified.**

Nakhchivan, the 'Turkish State of Cyprus' and the time conjuncture

It is worth noting that a few weeks ago, at the time of the Karabakh war, the pro-government newspaper "Turkiye" reported that the Nakhchivan Autonomous Administration had recognized the 'TRNC'. The information was refuted within a few hours, with representatives of the Turkish Cypriot leadership reminding that in 1991 Nakhchivan tried to take a similar decision, without any remarkable results.

A few weeks after the above development, pro-government Turkish press brought to the fore a new proposal for the future of the Turkish Cypriot community. According to various pro-government analysts, in the future, in parallel with the effort to gradually

recognize the separate 'state entity' of the Turkish Cypriots, the 'TRNC' should change its name and be renamed as 'Turkish State of Cyprus'. This is the name by which Turkish Cypriots are being represented as observers in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

The attempt to upgrade the status of the Turkish Cypriots on the international scene, and even the possible recognition of a 'separate Turkish Cypriot state' by states that maintain friendly relations with Turkey, comes at a time when the new Turkish Cypriot leader insists on the condition of 'equal sovereignty' and Ankara claims that now is the time to discuss a two-state solution.

Erdogan and Tatar insist on two-state solution

The President of Turkey and the new Turkish Cypriot leader are insisting on a two-state solution and on the new, Turkish plan for the fenced-off city of Famagusta, and they mean it. Speaking from north Nicosia and Varosha on Sunday, Erdogan and Tatar said the Turkish side will not give up on its new plans for the Cyprus Problem.

In close cooperation, Ankara and the new Turkish Cypriot leadership are focusing their attention on three issues, which are coming to change the course of developments on the Cyprus Problem.

Two-state solution

First, Erdogan and Tatar claim that the Cyprus issue has exhausted all room for negotiation on the basis of a bi-zonal, bi-communal solution. "In 2017, the Greek Cypriot side showed that it is not ready to share power, wealth and even hospitals," Erdogan claimed on Sunday afternoon. In the context of this logic, Tatar repeated the new slogan of the Turkish Cypriot leadership, namely "equal sovereignty". Tatar's message was clear: "The Turkish Cypriot side is not going to give up its independence, its sovereignty and its Turkish guarantees." On this basis, Ankara and the Turkish Cypriot side believe that now is the time to discuss alternative ideas in the Cyprus issue, mainly a two-state solution.

Turkish Cypriots increasingly dependent on Turkey

Secondly, Ankara currently appears determined to provide all kinds of support to the Tatar leadership for the promotion of the vision of the separate 'Turkish state of Cyprus'. As part of this support, the Turkish side paves the way for Tatar's visit to Azerbaijan, which is now emerging victorious from the Karabakh war with the support of Turkey. At the same time, Turkey is beginning preparations for the transfer of gas and electricity to the north, as well as the construction of a new 'presidential palace', developments that will undoubtedly intensify the dependence of the Turkish Cypriots on Ankara.

The Turkish plan for Varosha

Finally, **the Turkish plan for Varosha is moving forward with the next phase, that of lifting the military zone status and the involvement of the 'Real Estate Committee' in the whole project. An important development is the Turkish President's reference to the possibility of compensation of the Greek Cypriot owners by the 'committee', a fact which according to some Turkish Cypriot sources indicates the real goal of the Turkish side, namely the Turkification of real estate in Varosha.**

Others insist on federation

Turkey and the Tatar leadership are focusing on the above three areas at a time when Turkish Cypriot supporters of a bi-zonal bi-communal federation, mainly the Turkish Cypriot Left, are insisting on the reunification of the island. **On Sunday, Turkish Cypriot activists, parties and organizations took to the streets of Nicosia and raised their voices, despite a previously alleged ban by 'authorities'. In other words, contrary to what Turkey claims today, a significant portion of Turkish Cypriots do not accept the new, joint plans of Ankara and the Tatar leadership.**

15/11/2020

Cyprus: Erdoğan met by protests from Turkish Cypriots during visit

www.theguardian.com

[...on annexation fears] Sertac Sonan, an associate professor in political science at Cyprus International University who advised Akinci, said:

- "Inaction would invite more meddling, more interference from Turkey. This is about the 48% who voted for Akinci. This was not a fair election. It's not been easy to swallow and we still have the chance to express our discomfort, otherwise the worry is it could end up in annexation."

Ankara had gone all out preparing the ground for Erdoğan's arrival with a cleanup of the sealed-off area of Varosha and plants and shrubs being flown in.

[...]

In a poignant video broadcast before the Turkish president's visit, Greek Cypriots forcibly displaced from Varosha called on him to stay away, saying: "This is not your homeland Mr Erdoğan, it was taken by war at gunpoint. You are there with power but not with law."

But **analysts** said that 16 years after Greek Cypriots rejected reunification in a referendum, and more than three years after the collapse of peace talks that came close to a settlement, Erdoğan was also sending a message.

- "Turkey has alienated a lot of allies and it needs a foreign policy success story," said Prof Ahmet Sözen, who chairs the department of international relations at the Eastern Mediterranean University in northern Nicosia.

“Accession would not be in its interests. Instead, what Erdoğan is saying is: we want to solve the Cyprus problem, we’re ready for a negotiated deal but if you don’t want to do that we’re ready to go the extra mile and change the status quo with Varosha. It’s a retaliatory move that reflects the frustration of Turkey with the stance of the Greek side both over Cyprus and the issue of hydrocarbons.”

Analysts on both sides of the ceasefire line believe the election of Joe Biden to the US presidency is also likely to play a pivotal role in negotiations. The Democrat is among the few prominent US politicians to have visited Cyprus.

- “It changes Turkey’s calculations on what it can get away with,” said Fiona Mullen, the director of Sapienta Economics, a consultancy in the south. “Turkey clearly wants closure on this and with a Biden presidency a federal solution to the Cyprus problem is still the quickest way to that.”

More than anything, Ankara wants to be involved in the eastern Mediterranean after the discovery of natural gas off the island, and not kept at bay by Athens and Nicosia, Mullen said. “You can’t do that without a settlement.”

Cyprus’s former president George Vassiliou, who pushed hard for a solution when he assumed office in 1988, agreed.

- “We have to recognise that the only way forward is to come to an arrangement with Turkey,” he said. “Of course I am optimistic ... But it is crucial that negotiations restart as soon as possible without preconditions. A solution on this island will be to the benefit of all.”

16/11/2020

Turkey-EU: Turkey slams EU over Cyprus

www.ekathimerini.com

Turkey has reacted to comments by the European Union’s foreign policy chief Josep Borrell who Sunday criticized a visit by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Turkish-occupied Cyprus during which he called for a “two-state” solution.

In a statement Monday, Turkey’s Foreign Ministry spokesman Hami Aksoy said Borrell’s views had “once again revealed how disconnected the EU is from the realities on the island and exposed the fact that it ignores the free will” of Turkish Cypriots, as expressed in recent elections in the breakaway state.

“A fair, lasting and sustainable settlement is only possible if it is based on the will of the two peoples who are the co-owners of the island,” Aksoy said, accusing the EU of ignoring the existence and rights of Turkish Cypriots.

“It should not be expected from the EU, which does not refer to the Turkish Cypriot people in any of its statements, [which] awarded the Greek Cypriot administration that rejected the UN settlement plan in 2004 with membership, and [which] did not fulfill any of its promises to the Turkish Cypriots, to contribute to the settlement,” he said.

“UN Security Council resolutions do not prevail over property rights. Likewise, UN Security Council resolutions are not above the will of the people,” Aksoy said, adding that during the last elections, Turkish Cypriots had clearly expressed their will to negotiate a two-state solution.

“Everyone, including the EU, should respect this will,” Aksoy said.

“The bi-communal, bi-zonal federal settlement model has been tried for more than 50 years in Cyprus, and it has not yielded any results because the Greek Cypriot side does not consider the Turkish Cypriot people as an equal partner and does not want to share the power and the wealth,” he said.

“If the EU wishes to contribute to the settlement of the Cyprus issue, first and foremost, it should acknowledge the existence and the will of the Turkish Cypriot people, and fulfill its commitments made in 2004,” he said.

14/11/2020

EU-Turkey relations have come to 'historical low point,' EP says in draft report

www.turkishminute.com

The European Parliament (EP) said in a draft report on Turkey prepared by its Foreign Affairs Committee (AFET) that the country’s continuous and growing distancing from European values and standards in the last several years has brought its relations with the European Union to a “historical low point.”

[...]

The parliament also **insisted on the formal suspension of accession negotiations with Turkey**, so that both sides can realistically review the appropriateness of the current framework and its ability to function, or, if necessary, explore possible new models for future relations.[...]

The EP in closing said it’s “alarmed by the consolidation of an authoritarian interpretation of the presidential system in Turkey and deeply concerned about the continued hyper-centralization of power in the Presidency, which does not ensure a sound and effective separation of powers between the executive and the legislative branches and the judiciary.”

13/11/2020

Turkey-US: Turkish FM offended by Pompeo's refusal to stop in Ankara during planned Turkey visit: report

www.turkishminute.com

US Secretary of State Pompeo has refused to go to Ankara to meet with Turkish FM Çavuşoğlu during a scheduled visit to Turkey, in the process offending Turkey's top diplomat, Bloomberg reported on Friday.

Pompeo's seven-country trip to France, Turkey, Georgia, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Saudi Arabia between November 13 and 23 includes a stop in Istanbul, where on Tuesday he will meet with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, the spiritual leader of the world's Greek Orthodox Christians.

Pompeo, who said the trip would focus on issues of religious liberty, won't meet with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan or other government leaders when he visits Turkey, citing scheduling conflicts.

Bloomberg cited a senior State Department official as saying that Pompeo's itinerary in Turkey did not reflect a refusal by Turkish leaders to meet.

However, the report cites an anonymous Turkish source who said Pompeo turned down an invitation by Çavuşoğlu to come to Ankara during his visit, asking him instead to travel to Istanbul to meet with him.

Çavuşoğlu, offended that Pompeo is giving the cold shoulder to Ankara before leaving office, rejected the offer, according to Bloomberg's report.

Turkey's Foreign Ministry denounced Pompeo's planned meetings, calling them "extremely inappropriate" interference, defending the country's record on religious freedom. [...]

13/11/2020

Turkey-US: Turkish diplomatic missions in the US hunting down critics of President Erdoğan

www.nordicmonitor.com

Turkish diplomatic missions in the United States are continuing to profile critics of President Erdoğan in parallel to an ongoing witch-hunt in Turkey, a Turkish Foreign Ministry document obtained by Nordic Monitor has revealed.

According to the communiqué, Turkey's consulate general in New York has listed a Turkish national who applied for a power of attorney in August to authorize a lawyer in Turkey to sell their property. However, the consulate general staff had seen a note about the applicant on the online Risk Notification and Inquiry Screen, which was created by the General Directorate of Land Registry and Cadastre (Tapu ve Kadastro Genel Müdürlüğü).

Turkish diplomats in New York then collected information on the Turkish citizen and their family members and dispatched a file including their address and contact details to the foreign ministry in Ankara.

The information note conveyed by the Turkish Consulate General in New York was circulated by Mustafa Barış Elmener, head of the ministry's directorate general for consular affairs, to the justice and interior ministries, the Turkish national police and the intelligence agency (MIT) on September 2.

The foreign ministry document revealed the fact that notes added into the online Turkish cadastre information system have not only paved the way for asset seizures but also triggered judicial investigations into government opponents living in Turkey and abroad.

[...]

[for full article and documents click on link]

13/11/2020

Turkey-internal: 63,000 people prosecuted on Erdoğan insult charges over 5 years

www.turkishminute.com

Cases were launched into a total of 63,041 people on charges of insulting the president over the past five years, beginning with the election of Erdoğan to the presidency in 2014 to the end of 2019, according to a report from an opposition deputy.

The report, drafted by main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) deputy Ali Mahir Başarır, shows that 9,554 of the people facing insult charges were convicted.

Başarır said the number of cases filed on charges of insulting the president have dramatically increased during Erdoğan's time in office since similar cases were rarely filed during the terms of previous presidents.

[...]

The insult cases generally stem from **social media posts** shared by Erdoğan opponents. The Turkish police and judiciary perceive even the most minor criticism of Erdoğan or his government as an insult.

13/11/2020

EU Delegation: EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REPORT – NOVEMBER 13, 2020

HIGHLIGHTS

Turkey's third drilling ship, Kanuni, set sail from Istanbul enroute to the Black Sea to undertake maintenance works at the Port of Filyos on the Black Sea coast before it starts its mission at the Sakarya Gas Field, Energy and Natural Resources Minister Fatih Donmez said. Turning to Turkey's operations in the Eastern Mediterranean, Donmez also noted that the Yavuz drillship finalized operations at depths of 6,000 meters in the Selcuklu-1 well from where promising results were achieved.

Turkish and British naval ships performed a passage exercise in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea

No Turkish military unit's flag has ever fallen to the ground before its last single soldier has lost his life, said President Erdogan, at the flag-giving ceremony of the 41st Commando Brigade Command

The defense ministers of Greece, Israel and Cyprus agreed to step up military cooperation which they said will keep their armed forces better prepared, help create more jobs and bolster security in a fraught region.

Frontex preliminary findings suggest no evidence of pushbacks, says Greek media.

The Greek Migration and Asylum Ministry said in its monthly report that there was a 76% reduction in the arrivals of migrants and refugees in the first 10 months of 2020.

Greek American organization applauds Pompeo's upcoming meeting with patriarch

Egyptian billionaire Naguib Sawiris said Turkey's President Erdogan is making a very big mess in the Middle East by interfering around the region.

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