

## Turkey to Possibly Invade Syria

Debka is reporting that Turkey may invade Syria to establish a refugee zone in northern Syria.

*A new and dramatic turn in the Syrian crisis: Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan Friday night, June 10, ordered his army to move into northern Syria where battles were blazing in Idlib, Maarat al-Numaan and Jisr al-Shuhour. Debkafile's exclusive sources report that the prime minister's office and high command in Ankara are still working out how to define the Turkish military mission in Syria. One proposal is to evoke UN Security Council's 1973 resolution which mandated the NATO operation in Libya to protect civilian lives against Col. Qaddafi. Turkey would be acting to defend Syrian civilians against a crackdown which Erdogan called barbaric. (<http://www.debka.com/article/21015/>).*

**Analysis.** Turkey has a whole bunch of problems not the least of which is a repeat of the Kurdish refugee problem that caused the creation of the northern no fly zone in Iraq after Desert Storm. Saddam Hussein was slaughtering his Kurdish citizens. The US eventually moved in to provide humanitarian assistance and military protection. At the moment the US may not have the forces available to repeat its operations in northern Iraq in northern Syria.

The Syrian revolt is undoubtedly local in origin. There is also little doubt that it is seriously supported by Saudi Arabia as a means of decoupling Syria from Iran. There have been numerous reports of Syria shutting its borders with Jordan and Iraq to prevent smugglers from bringing arms to the Syrian revolutionaries. It is very possible that Saudi Arabia has convinced Turkey to create a free zone inside Syria. This may mean war between Turkey and Syria as a start.

As with most things in the Middle East, religion is at the bottom of it all. While Syria may not react to the Turkish invasion should it occur, it may also lash out at all its enemies including Jordan and Israel. I have presumed for a long time that Syria was the western anchor of the notional new Persian Empire. As such, its mission is to attack south down the Damascus-Amman highway and continue south through Tabuk to Medina and Mecca. Thus it would secure the Two Mosques for the Shiites and dethrone the House of Saud.

Saudi Arabia tried several times in the recent past to convince Bashar Assad to break with Iran. The last time that I remember, King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia personally visited Damascus to try and break Assad away from Iran and particularly from supporting Lebanese Hezbollah. This was during and after the presentation of the indictments to the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. King Abdullah failed to break Syria away from Iran. Therefore it is highly probable that the Saudis have a major hand in supporting the Syrian revolutionaries. Syria is also a majority Sunni country ruled by a minority Shiite government. Alawites are "Sevener" Shiites.

The ongoing revolution in Syria may be a major reason that Jordan was recently invited to join the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). That invitation formalizes an ongoing arrangement between the GCC countries, Jordan, Egypt and Israel to share intelligence that was revealed a few years ago. I said then that planners usually follow the intelligence people by about six months. I still hold to that. I expect that there are contingency plans between these countries to react in concert to any attack by Iran, Syria or both together.

So far Iran has sent between 10,000 and 20,000 Iranian Revolutionary Guard Qods Force personnel to

Syria to assist in the squashing of the revolution. This is an indication of the value of an Assad run Syria to the mullahs in Tehran. I presume there will be a reaction from Iran should Turkey enter Syria. I have not seen any reports of Iranian forces massing on the eastern border of Turkey. However, I doubt that such information will become available for a few days. Nor have I seen reports of renewed violence in Bahrain. It will take time for the mullahs to react to this move by Turkey.

I don't believe that Iran is ready for the great confrontation quite yet. Iran reportedly received two nuclear capable warheads and expects to have ten by the middle of next year. I have been expecting Iran and North Korea to conduct a joint nuclear weapons test in North Korea by the end of June. The Syria situation may speed up that test. It will probably also speed up the construction of the "physics packages" for the nuclear warheads. The physics package is the actual explosive material and its associated fusing and firing systems. The warhead is the protective shell.

Erdogan may well wait until after the Turkish elections on Sunday. I doubt he will wait much beyond that unless there are serious counter moves by Syria and Iran. We must now wait for events to take their course.