

Breaking the Israel-Turkey Alliance - Part 2

By [Jack Kelley](#)

"The two kings, with their hearts bent on evil, will sit at the same table and lie to each other, but to no avail, because an end will still come at the appointed time."

(The Bible's definition of diplomacy, from Daniel 11:27)

Today we're returning to an area of special interest to me. I think watching prophecy being fulfilled in current events really brings the Bible to life. It energizes our faith and demonstrates the nearness of End Times events. Few if any recent generations could sit with a Bible in one hand and their newspapers in the other and see the fulfillment of prophecy, but for us it's almost routine.

Beginning the day after I posted part 1 of this commentary, several developing stories revealed there's much more to the story. First the world learned of joint training exercises Turkey has agreed to hold with Syria. On Monday April 27, Israeli defense minister Ehud Barak commented that Turkey's decision to hold three days of military maneuvers with Syria is "disturbing." Never before has an important NATO power staged a joint exercise with any Arab army.

And that's not all. Turkish defense minister Vecdi Gonul and his Syrian counterpart Hassan Turkmani have agreed to sign a letter of intent for cooperation between their defense industries as well. According to DEBKAfile's military sources, the signing and the exercise are major signposts on the shrinking road of military and commercial ties between Turkey and Israel.

Furthermore Ankara has begun defaulting on payments for military purchases and other contracts with Israel, and is currently several million dollars behind on defense contracts worth a total of \$5 billion. For its part, Israel has halted construction on a new tank factory in Turkey and is working to quickly shut down other exchanges to prevent the leakage of military secrets to an avowed Arab enemy.

Conventional wisdom has long held that Turkey's west-leaning secular army was the real power behind the government and only tolerated the installation of Islamic leaders as long as they didn't try to rock the boat. In the past they've shut down political parties whose goals were perceived to be at odds with their political strategy. (Turkey is a NATO member and has undertaken extreme measures to be seen as a European Country, trying for years to qualify for membership in the EU.) Therefore Israel's defense and foreign ministries have maintained the view that the presence of a pro-Islamic government in Ankara would not detract from the long-held ties of cooperation and trust between Turkey and Israel.

DEBKAfile's intelligence sources report they've misread the signals. The Turkish military is no longer the body it once was. The generals of today are in harmony

with Prime Minister Erdogan's decision to turn Turkey's back on Israel and its face toward the Moslem world.

Washington's approval of all this underscores its new policy of building a strong military coalition between Syria, Turkey and Lebanon. In part 1 I mentioned President Obama's OK for Turkey to provide arms and training for the Lebanese army, a force which is already largely subservient to Hizbullah and may come under its complete control in the upcoming Lebanese elections.

According to Syrian sources, Turkey has tightened its relations with Syria partly as a result of Israel's offensive on the Gaza Strip. They claim that Turkey changed its attitude toward Israel following the three week war and thus decided to strengthen its military cooperation with Syria.

And now, Russian state arms export firm Rosoboronexport has revealed that Russia is in talks with Turkey about selling Ankara state-of-the-art S-400 air defense systems. Turkey is a traditional rival of Russia, and has long bought many of its weapons from the United States. One more sign of change.

Also, an article in the Jewish World Review claims that having been buoyed by President Obama's warm embrace of Turkey, PM Erdogan has moved to consolidate his place as a central pillar in a new regional axis spearheaded by Iran, which also includes Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority.

To that end, Turkey recently signed a trade agreement with Iran aimed at doubling trade between the two countries within five years and, again with US approval, agreed to allow Iranian gas exports into Europe through the Nabucco gas pipeline which runs from Turkey to Austria. Iran's access to the pipeline will earn it billions of dollars in annual income and increase its political power as Europe becomes more dependent on Iranian gas. (And less dependent on Russia.)

A report by the Washington Institute indicates that Turkey is expected to break with NATO on such issues as Iran's nuclear weapons program as well as its proxies Hamas and Hizbullah. It said Ankara has moved steadily away from its NATO allies and toward Iran, Russia and Syria, and that Turkey's new foreign policy has come at the expense of Ankara's relations with Israel, the European Union and the United States. "Ankara will likely opt out of a NATO consensus on Iran, clash with the United States on how to handle Hamas and Hizbullah, and disagree with the EU and the U.S. on Russia," the report concluded.

For the most part, this all fits very well with Ezekiel's prophecy of a sneak attack on an unsuspecting Israel by Russia and a coalition of Moslem countries. Most commentators agree that Turkey has to be with the Moslem attackers against Israel and not on the sidelines (like NATO for example). Therefore it's been said that strategically, Turkey is the most important country in the Middle East.

It isn't Over till it's Over

Baseball great Yogi Berra's popular saying certainly is applicable here. Preparations for Ezekiel 38 are still a long way from being complete. As an example of how complicated these things are becoming, less than a week after announcing their big breakthrough in Turkey-Syria relations, Syria left its new found friend to team up with Saudi Arabia and Egypt against the ongoing Turkish effort to hammer out a peace agreement between Syria and Israel.

Iranian President Ahmadinejad abruptly canceled a scheduled trip to South America, hurrying to Damascus instead. According to DEBKAfile's intelligence sources, one reason for his urgent visit was to thwart the Saudi-Egyptian move to snatch the Syrian-Israeli peace talks backed by Washington away from Turkey and relocate it in the Jordanian capital, Amman.

But he was too late. Syrian President Assad had already appointed one of his most trusted intelligence officers, Gen. Bahjat Suleiman (the Syrian ambassador in Amman) to the position of heading his government's side in prospective peace talks there.

Egypt and Saudi Arabia are solidly backed by the Persian Gulf emirates as well as Jordan in the move to cut Turkish PM Erdogan out and "Arabize" Middle East peacemaking. So Erdogan was left holding an empty bag after he turned against Israel and lined up with Syria and Iran.

(The combined Arab step also dealt a reverse to President Obama's Middle East plans. Observers say he planned to use a substantially more forceful approach toward Israel as a bargaining chip in his Middle East strategy. Strengthening Syria, Turkey and Lebanon was part of the plan to force Israel's compliance. He also hoped he could entice Iran into helping with the mess in Pakistan and Afghanistan by showing he was being tough on Israel while opening a dialog with Tehran. At the same time he warned Israel that unless they get back in line behind the 2 state solution with the Palestinians, they couldn't expect any help curtailing Iran's nuclear aspirations.)

You see, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the Persian Gulf Emirates and Jordan are all members of the Arab League. Turkey and Iran, although Moslem, are not members and are not considered Arabic countries. The Arabic countries of the Middle East are deathly afraid of Iran. They also suspect that Turkey's Erdogan has visions of re-creating the Ottoman Empire (of which several of their countries were once part) with him at its head.

President Obama's recently begun dialog with these two non-Arab countries has left them feeling very insecure, so much so that two high ranking US diplomatic missions, the first headed by Asst. Sec'y of State Dennis Ross and the second by

Sec'y of Defense Robert Gates, were hastily dispatched to the region to reassure them. Apparently they weren't successful because Arab leaders were still upset when a 3rd US delegation showed up unannounced to suggest that they should invest several hundred billion dollars in the US economic recovery plan. The delegation came away empty handed and the Arabs are still angry, warning that any further US gestures towards those two radical regimes would place US ties with Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the Gulf in grave jeopardy.

In response to all this President Obama, in a sharp reversal, has decided to punish Syria for abandoning Turkey by asking the Congress to re-impose sanctions. He's also backed away from his flirtation with Tehran and Damascus, and has scheduled a second major speech to the Arab/Moslem world, this time from Cairo. (This may be due in part to the fact that he really needs the Arab money. The delegation was instructed to tell the Arabs that Fed chairman Bernanke's recent optimistic report on the US economy's impending recovery was "premature".)

In summary, anyone who thinks he or she sees a straight line from here to Ezekiel 38 simply doesn't understand the dynamics. Since the 1970's otherwise competent observers have been saying that Ezekiel 38 is right around the corner and indeed the world has come close several times. But always at the last moment someone or something has intervened to cause a delay because all the pieces are not yet in place. For example, the disposition of Israel's next door neighbors, Syria, Lebanon, Hezbollah, Hamas, and the PLO must still be determined, because all are missing from Ezekiel's list of attackers. And Israel has to come up with the treasure sufficient to motivate Russia's participation while being lulled by a perception of peace into thinking they're safe from attack. (Ezek 38:11)

Even so, breaking the Israel-Turkey alliance is a major step in bringing the moslem coalition of Ezekiel 38 together. You can almost hear the footsteps of the Messiah.