

**AS U.S. SOFTENS IRANIAN NUCLEAR POLICY, SYRAI EMERGES
AS U.S.-TURKEY WEDGE ISSUE**
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Isranet Daily Briefing, October 12, 2012
<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/us-softens-iranian-nuclear-policy-syrai-emerges-us-turkey-wedge-issue/>

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"We just cannot continue business as usual, that every country can build its own factories for separating plutonium or enriching uranium. Then we are really talking about 30, 40 countries sitting on the fence with a nuclear weapons capability that could be converted into a nuclear weapon in a matter of months."

[Syria Becomes a Wedge between U.S. and Turkey](#): Soner Cagaptay, *Washington Post*, October 4, 2012

"The close relationship that President Obama has built with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has provided the United States with a key Muslim ally in the Middle East. Washington and Ankara have worked closely to stabilize Iraq. Yet a storm awaits them in Syria."

[Be Wary of Playing Turkey's Great Game](#): Con Coughlin, *The Telegraph*, Oct 4, 2012

"Syria might be getting all the blame for firing the first shot in the sudden eruption of hostilities on the Turko-Syrian border, but Tayyip Erdogan, the Turkish prime minister, can hardly claim to be an innocent party when it comes to stoking the fires of a conflict that retains the potential to ignite a regional conflagration."

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A. Savyon and Y. Carmon

[MEMRI](#), October 5, 2012

The Non-Proliferation Treaty, or NPT, bans member states from enriching uranium to a level above the 3.5%-5% level required for producing energy and above the 19.7% level required for medical research; even this enrichment is permitted only with the approval and oversight of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

For years, the IAEA, representing the international community, had interpreted the right of NPT member states to use enriched uranium as the right to obtain the necessary enriched uranium for legitimate civilian purposes from the IAEA/the superpowers holding the monopoly on uranium enrichment. In line with this policy, in January 2005, then-IAEA director Mohamed Elbaradei called for a five-year moratorium on uranium enrichment activities, or, as he told the Japanese daily Asahi Shimbun, "until we have completed our work on how we can have an international arrangement for the fuel cycle."...

In February 2005, El Baradei, explained to *Agence France Presse*: "We just cannot continue business as usual, that every country can build its own factories for separating plutonium or enriching uranium. Then we are really talking about 30, 40 countries sitting on the fence with a nuclear weapons capability that could be converted into a nuclear weapon in a matter of months."

Furthermore, this policy was the basis of the agreement signed in 2005 between Iran and Russia, on the provision of nuclear fuel for the Bushehr reactor. Under that agreement, Russia undertook to provide fuel for the light water reactor at Bushehr, while Iran undertook to return the spent fuel rods to Russia - all under full IAEA oversight.

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Thus, all IAEA decisions over the years categorically demanded that Iran immediately cease its uranium enrichment project. The negotiations between Iran and the international community focused on the demand to stop uranium enrichment, with the IAEA and the superpowers undertaking to meet Iran's legitimate civilian needs for enriched uranium. When Iran refused to stop its uranium enrichment, the U.N. Security Council placed sanctions on it - that is, sanctions by the international community.

The U.S. administration gradually reversed its policy regarding uranium enrichment. Under the new policy, the right to use enriched uranium was reinterpreted as countries' right to enrich uranium on their own soil, as long as it was for civilian/peaceful purposes. This was reflected first in general statements such as President Obama's June 2009 Cairo speech, in which he stated: "Any nation - including Iran - should have the right to access to peaceful nuclear power if it complies with its responsibilities under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. That commitment is at the core of the treaty, and it must be kept for all who fully abide by it. And I'm hopeful that all countries in the region can share in this goal... I recognize it will be hard to overcome decades of mistrust [vis-à-vis Iran] but we will proceed with courage, rectitude, and resolve. There will be many issues to discuss between our two countries, and we are willing to move forward without preconditions on the basis of mutual respect. But it is clear to all concerned that when it comes to nuclear weapons, we have reached a decisive point."

Later, this shift was expressed in clearer terms. For example, prior to attending a security summit in Thailand in July 2009, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said in remarks regarding the security needs of the U.S.'s Arab allies in the Middle East that could come under the hegemony of a nuclear Iran, "We want Iran to calculate, what I think is a fair assessment, that if the U.S. extends a defense umbrella over the region, if we do even more to support the military capacity of those in the Gulf, it's unlikely that Iran will be any stronger or safer, because they won't be able to intimidate and dominate, as they apparently believe they can, once they have a nuclear weapon."

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In addition to the proposed defense umbrella, President Obama has repeatedly expressed his administration's firm commitment to preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. However, both the president and Secretary of State Clinton limit their objections to nuclear weapons alone, and no longer express objections to the right to enrich uranium as long as it is for civilian purposes and under oversight....

Indeed, this new policy entitling Iran to enrich uranium on its own soil as long as it is for civilian purposes was in fact an acceptance of Iran's years-long demand that it would be given a status equivalent to that of Germany and Japan (known as the Japanese/German model) which Iran has

publicly demanded already in 2005.

In a visit to Berlin in February 2005, Iranian foreign minister Kamal Kharrazi proposed the Japanese/German model as the basis for Iran-EU negotiations. In a meeting with German foreign minister Joschka Fischer, Kharrazi elaborated on Iran's perspective on how to resolve the dispute with the EU3: "Peaceful nuclear plants in Germany and Japan can serve as a good model for Iran's nuclear projects, and serve as the basis for any round of talks in that respect."

Also, at a May 2009 joint press conference with Japanese foreign minister Hirofumi Nakasone, Iranian foreign minister Manouchehr Mottaki called for implementing the Japanese nuclear model in Iran as well, saying, "The view that exists about Japan's nuclear activities should be applied to other countries including Iran." Mottaki reiterated that Iran's nuclear activities were "legal and peaceful," and said, "Japan spent many years to build confidence about its nuclear work. Iran is moving on a similar path... During the confidence-building years, Japan was never obliged to suspend its (nuclear) activities."

There are three differences between Iran and these two countries.

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- 1) Both Germany and Japan have constitutional prohibitions against nuclear weapons;**

- 2) Both countries are democracies, and have for decades acted in a way that allows trust in their stated intentions; and**

- 3) Both enable full IAEA oversight of their nuclear facilities.**

On the other hand, Iran:

- 1) Does not enable full IAEA oversight of its nuclear facilities; IAEA reports and U.N. Security Council resolutions stress that Iran does not allow full inspection of its nuclear facilities and does not cooperate with the IAEA....**

- 2) Is not a democracy and its conduct does not allow trust in its stated intentions. Iran's top nuclear official openly declared recently that Iran had regularly deceived and lied to the IAEA. Moreover, Iran has in the last few months even announced that it intends to enrich uranium to 90% for military use (nuclear submarines); and**

- 3) Has never provided constitutional or quasi-constitutional assurances, comparable to those by Germany and Japan, that it does not intend to possess nuclear weapons. Indeed, in April 2012, an attempt was made by the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei to promote a substitute for an Iranian "constitutional" ban on nuclear weapons, in a form of a purported fatwa by Khamenei banning nuclear weapons....However, the attempt failed;....**

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The risk of this new policy, as pointed out by former IAEA director ElBaradei, is that it allows NPT member states to become nuclear threshold states, developing capabilities for enriching uranium to advanced levels on their own soil under the guise of legitimate civilian purposes.

In a September 2012 CNN interview, former president Bill Clinton also pointed out the danger of this new policy, saying, "Iran has all these extensive contacts with terrorist groups, and even if the government didn't directly sanction it, it wouldn't be that much trouble to be - to get a Girl Scout cookie's worth of fissile material, which, if put in the same fertilizer bomb Timothy McVeigh used in Oklahoma City, is enough to take out 20 to 25 percent of Washington, D.C. Just that little bit...."

It is safe to say that even if the U.S. had maintained its traditional previous policy, and opposed Iran's uranium enrichment on its own soil, Iran would still continue its efforts to attain high-level enrichment and nuclear weapons. However, this new U.S. policy provides legitimacy and impetus for Iran's efforts, and preempts any deal based on no enrichment above 5% on Iranian soil that Iran might possibly have accepted....

These two policies - the new nuclear policy allowing the development of threshold states, and the vision of non-proliferation and global nuclear disarmament - are completely at odds with one another. This is because it is the status of threshold state, in the case of states such as Iran, that paves the way for the development of nuclear weapons - even though there is an absolute intention not to allow them in the final stage of their development.

(Y. Carmon is President of MEMRI; A. Savyon is Director of MEMRI's Iranian Media Project.) [\(Top of Page\)](#)

SYRIA BECOMES A WEDGE BETWEEN U.S. AND TURKEY

Soner Cagaptay

[Washington Post](#), October 4, 2012

The close relationship that President Obama has built with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has provided the United States with a key Muslim ally in the Middle East. Washington and Ankara have worked closely to stabilize Iraq. Yet a storm awaits them in Syria. Turkey announced Thursday that it has authorized military operations in Syria following Syrian shelling of Turkish areas this week. As the crisis in Syria has deepened, the White House has appeared willing to wait for the demise of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. For Ankara, the crisis has become an emergency.

As turmoil in Syria has grown over the past 18 months, Ankara has presumed that the United States and Turkey were on the same page regarding regime change. Now, though, differences are emerging. The Obama administration is hesitant toward Syria for several reasons, including reticence to act before the November elections and war-weariness among Americans. Erdogan appears to view such concerns as cover for general indifference to Turkey's Syria problem. A sign of such sentiment emerged Sept. 5, when Erdogan chided Obama on CNN for lacking initiative on Syria — a rare rebuke from an otherwise steadfast friend.

This statement could be a harbinger. Erdogan has a penchant for treating foreign leaders as friends — and losing his temper when he thinks his friends have not stood by him. The more Washington looks the other way on Syria, the more upset Erdogan is likely to get over what he sees as Obama's unwillingness to support his policy.

To the White House, the Syrian crisis has appeared manageable. As the conflict grinds on, some have grown concerned that Syria will radicalize as Bosnia did in

the 1990s: When the world did not act to end the slaughter of Muslims in the Balkan country, jihadists moved in to join the fight, and they succeeded in convincing the otherwise staunchly secular-minded Bosnian Muslims that the world had abandoned them and that they were better off with jihadists.

U.S. policy holds that a gradual soft landing could be possible in Syria. The hope is that the opposition groups will coalesce and take down the Assad regime, eliminating the need for hasty foreign intervention — an option that Washington fears could cause chaos.

Ankara, however, wants an accelerated soft landing. Particularly with this week's strikes, Turkey feels the heat of the crisis next door — Erdogan has reason to believe that time is not on his side.

The Syrian conflict's sectarian nature is percolating into Turkey. More than 100,000 mostly Sunni Arab Syrians have taken refuge there, fleeing persecution by Assad and his Alawite militias. Alawite Arabs in southern Turkey resent the Sunni refugees, mirroring Syria's Alawite-Sunni split. Angry Alawites in Turkey's southern Hatay province oppose their country's policy toward the Assad regime, and since the summer they have been holding regular pro-Damascus and anti-Ankara demonstrations. This is Ankara's problem, and it might get ugly if Syria descends into full-blown sectarian warfare.

Ankara also fears the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). Lately, the Assad regime has allowed the PKK to operate in Syria as a means to retaliate against Ankara. A PKK car bombing in August in Gaziantep, a large Turkish city near the border, has raised citizens' fears about PKK infiltration. For Erdogan, the political cost associated with Syrian turmoil has also risen.

None of this bodes well for Erdogan's hopes to become Turkey's first popularly elected president in 2014 (until recently, the country's presidents were elected by parliament). Although Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) won 49.5

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percent of the vote in last year's elections, further PKK attacks are likely to dent his much-liked tough-guy image.

Moreover, Erdogan has won successive elections since 2002 by delivering record-breaking economic growth, made possible by Turkey's image as a stable country safe for business and investors. The more protracted the Syrian crisis becomes, the more Turkey's image could be tarnished, blighting a key ingredient of its economic success and feeding the perception that Erdogan is not delivering. Erdogan believes that he cannot stand by and watch Syria pull Turkey into the maelstrom.

In the coming days, Ankara is likely to press Washington for more aggressive action against the Assad regime, including U.S.-supported havens for refugees in Syria and measures to hasten Assad's fall. Washington's response is likely to be sticking to the soft-landing strategy while trying to slow Erdogan down.

As serious as these policy differences are, they are not likely to rupture the Obama-Erdogan relationship. Turkey relies on the United States too much to sacrifice its relationship lightly. Turkey is increasingly wary of Iran's regional ambitions: Erdogan knows that Tehran's Shiite regime militarily supports the Assad regime in Syria and the government of Iraqi Shiite Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, whom Ankara detests. The tumult of the Arab Spring has led Ankara to revise its erstwhile autarchic foreign policy and Turkey now seeks security with NATO — a shift symbolized by Ankara's agreement in September 2011 to host a major missile-defense project that NATO can use as a bulwark against Iran, as well as Russia and China.

Still, given Obama and Erdogan's divergent policies on Syria, a storm between them appears almost unavoidable.

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(Soner Cagaptay is director of the Turkish Research Program and a fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.) ([Top of Page](#))

BE WARY OF PLAYING TURKEY'S GREAT GAME

Con Coughlin

[The Telegraph](#), Oct 4, 2012

Syria might be getting all the blame for firing the first shot in the sudden eruption of hostilities on the Turko-Syrian border, but Tayyip Erdogan, the Turkish prime minister, can hardly claim to be an innocent party when it comes to stoking the fires of a conflict that retains the potential to ignite a regional conflagration.

For more than a year now Turkey has been taking a lead role in the campaign to overthrow the Syrian regime of President Bashar al-Assad. Working closely with a number of Gulf states, such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar, that are also committed to ridding Damascus of Assad's Alawite clique, the Turks have been carefully coordinating international support for Syria's rebel forces. There are even reports that the Turks have established a shared command centre in southern Turkey...Something not lost on Mr Assad.

Whether forces loyal to the regime were responsible for firing the mortar round that killed five civilians - including three children - in a Turkish border village this week is unclear. If Syrian rebels were active on the Turkish side of the border, and the Turkish authorities were doing nothing to apprehend them, then Assad loyalists might have felt within their rights to attack them. The Syrian government, for what it's worth, denies any involvement and says it is investigating the incident.

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Alternatively, amid the fog of war, there is always the possibility that Syrian rebels - or those sympathetic to their cause - fired the round into Turkey as a deliberate attempt to provoke the country and its allies into retaliating....

Irrespective of who was responsible for the attack on the Turkish village of Akcakale, its effect has been to galvanise the Western powers into action, with Nato convening an emergency session of its 28 members to condemn the attack. The uncompromising tone of Nato's statement, which denounced Syria's "flagrant violations of international law", will be music to Mr Erdogan's ears, as the Turkish prime minister has spent most of this year agitating for greater Western intervention in Syria. Apart from achieving regime change in Damascus, Mr Erdogan has argued that the refugee crisis on the Turkish border, where an estimated 80,000 Syrians have sought refuge, is a compelling reason for the Western powers to play a more active role in halting the bloodshed.

But before Nato gets too carried away with committing itself to Turkey's defence, alliance leaders would do well to consider Mr Erdogan's less-than-altruistic reasons for seeking a change in the way Damascus is governed....

Against Mr Erdogan's impressive economic track record must be set his increasingly authoritarian style of government, with politicians and journalists regularly being jailed for criticising his policies, and his desire to build alliances with radical Islamic governments. Before the recent wave of Arab uprisings hit the Middle East, Mr Erdogan's main focus was to develop better relations with the ayatollahs in Tehran.

He was forced to abandon this policy only after it became clear that he could no longer tolerate the survival of the Assad regime, which just so happens to be Iran's most important regional ally....Like Mr Morsi, the Turkish leader would be happy to see the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria emerge as the eventual victors of the crisis in that country, a development which would lead to the establishment of

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a network of Islamist governments - a "Sunni arc" from the shores of North Africa to those of the eastern Mediterranean.

It is highly questionable whether such an outcome would benefit Western interests. And with the Turkish parliament yesterday approving a measure that effectively gives Mr Erdogan a "green light" to invade Syria, Nato leaders should take care not to involve themselves in a conflict that only helps to further the Turkish leader's Islamist agenda. ([Top of Page](#))

On Topic

[Pro- And Anti-Assad Camps Share Concerns Over Syria's Possible Disintegration Into Separate Sectarian, Ethnic Entities](#): **N. Mozes, MEMRI, October 1, 2012**

"Everything in Syria these days is fragmented or divided. The regime is divided and crumbling, the land is divided, [and] the opposition is splintered and fragmented. Nothing is united... Aleppo is practically a separate [region], the Kurdish north is nearly independent, Damascus is isolated, the road to Al-Latakia is unsafe, and Homs is rebelling against the regime..."

[Turkey Gets Tough on Syria](#): **Amanda Paul, Today's Zaman, October 7, 2012**

"The violence in Syria has already killed around 31,000 people.... The urgency of the situation has become greater not simply because of the deteriorating situation

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inside the country, but because violence is increasingly spreading beyond Syria's borders into Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq and elsewhere."

[Can Sanctions Change Iran's Mind?: Efraim A. Cohen, *Jerusalem Post*, October 8, 2012](#)

"The UN's efforts to alter Iraq's actions have been cited as an example of a successful sanctions regime. Contrary to what some people now believe (or have forgotten), sanctions on Iraq were an abject failure."

[Kurds to Pursue More Autonomy in a Fallen Syria: Tim Arango, *New York Times*, September 28, 2012](#)

"Just off a main highway that...slices through a moonscape of craggy hills, a few hundred Syrian Kurdish men have been training for battle, marching through scrub brush and practicing rifle drills. They are preparing for the fight they expect to come...when Mr. Assad falls [from power] and there is a scramble across Syria for power and turf."

[Gulen's False Choice: Silence or Violence: Stephen Schwartz, *Gatestone Institute*, October 5, 2012](#)

When the enigmatic Turkish Islamist leader, M. Fethullah Gulen, who lives in the U.S., published, in the September 27 London *Financial Times*, an op-ed column with a clumsy turn from benevolent moderation to hard Islamist ambitions, he revealed his authentic character.