

ON DICTATORS AND THIRST WARS

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Turkey's steady converting into a dictatorial war mongering Middle East bully is causing dangerous instability in one of the most volatile regions of the world. Now sinking in religious zealotry and nationalistic maximalism, having ditched the Kemalist secular tradition, Turkey, under Erdogan, has pulled all stops in its attempt to browbeat, blackmail, and force its neighbors to kowtow before its outrageous geostrategic desires.

Turkey's invasion of Syria, carried out via the absurdly named "Operation Olive Branch," brought back into focus the old Turkish tactic of blackmailing its neighbors with water. Unfortunate geography has placed the sources of both the Euphrates and Tigris rivers in Turkish territory—and the Islamist Erdogan regime is unhesitant in deploying this physical characteristic as yet another weapon of mass destruction in its nationalistic rage against all his real and perceive enemies in the region.

One of the prime targets of Turkish bombardment as the Turkish army pushed toward the Kurdish-held Afrin in Syria was [Afrin's water treatment plant](#) leaving the population without potable water. In addition, Turkey is [choking](#) the Euphrates

water flow to the whole of Northern Syria forcing the hydropower plant, fed by the Tishrin Dam in Eastern Aleppo, to stop operation and thus cause severe power shortages in a large part of the country

Turkey's extortionist manipulation of water is [nothing new](#). As Erdogan pushed his country away from the [Davutoglu doctrine](#) of "zero problems" with neighbors to an [existence with "zero friends,"](#) water has been elevated to critical Turkish weapon status.

Aside from Syria, Turkey's other target in this unconventional water war is Iraq. Baghdad, ever since the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, has maintained a dim view of Ankara's role in the Syrian conflict and Erdogan's cozying up to Russia and the Iranian totalitarian theocrats. Iraq's water supplies are dependent on the good will of both Turkey and Iran, with the now disintegrated Syria completing the "water triad." Baghdad is highly suspicious of Turkish strategies in the region and has taken a dim view of Turkey's attempting to "help" Iraq by stationing its troops on Iraqi soil [without permission](#). At present though, Iraq is virtually at the mercy of both Ankara and Tehran as Turkish and Iranian water policies [threaten Iraq](#) with an unprecedented water crisis.

[Building dams](#) is a major part of Turkey's thirst assault on its neighbors. Plans to build twenty two of them, in addition to those already in existence, have "more sinister objectives." Turkey filling up the reservoirs behind its dams deprives its neighbors of vital water resources and works as leverage to force others to submit to Turkish demands.

Syria over the years experienced plenty of such water intimidation thanks to Ankara's efforts to strongarm Damascus into stopping its support of the Kurdish PKK fighters deemed "terrorists" by Turkey, the EU, and the USA. Damming destroys agriculture downriver, deprives populations of their livelihood, and heftily

contributes to severe climatic changes. Indeed, Turkish thirst wars is “at least partially guilty... for the three Ds: desertification, destabilization, and Daesh-ification in Iraq and Syria.” As usual, the West avoided criticizing Turkey’s water blackmail during the golden years of Ankara figuring as the best thing that happened to NATO and the West since the invention of sliced white bread. Fortunately, this attitude is now on the wane as Turkey morphs into an Islamist fundamentalist international time bomb [hostile towards the USA](#), its best friend until recently.

Erdogan’s abandoning his early *maskirovka* as a benign, thoughtful democratic leader, and his transitioning to his true self of brutal dictator, drives a region of repressive governments, religious total wars, occupied lands, and suicide bombers even deeper into chaos. Thirst blackmail is only a small, yet vital and extremely destructive, part of Erdogan’s frantic campaign to avoid the ultimate fate of other dictators like him (Saddam and Qaddafi come to mind). Erdogan’s assault on the world increasingly displays characteristics of the desperate struggle by a totalitarian to achieve the impossible: *full satisfaction of perverted goals and criminal objectives at zero, or minimal, cost to the dictator’s whims.*

Erdogan, like others before him, deliberately ignores history and feeds his outrageous claims upon the world with a lethal concoction mixing Islamist fundamentalism, oppression, thuggery, coarse mob pleasing, and suicidal revisionism. By threatening to unleash all forms of war on his perceived enemies near and far, he is busily digging the final resting place of himself and his regime (as the [Turkish economy tanks](#) in an early sign of where Erdogan’s current death dance will ultimately lead).

The West must *stop* behaving like a nerdy gentleman toward Turkey *now* –and feed its dictator a handsome serving of the fare delivered to Adolf Hitler in the 1940s. And this must be done before it is too late.