

## Surprising Day in the Greek-Turkish Confrontation

*Greek FM Dendias drops a mini bomb smack in the middle of Ankara*

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The tense history of Greek-Turkish relations took an abrupt turn for the worse during a televised news conference involving the Greek and Turkish FMs following their meeting in Ankara on April 15, 2021.

With Turkish FM Mevlut Cavusoglu listening in surprised disbelief, his Greek counterpart, Nikos Dendias, delivered a blow-by-blow list of Greek grievances, related to Turkey's illegal and provocative maneuvers in the Aegean coupled with routine threats of war against her neighbor and NATO "ally."

Addressing his Turkish counterpart as his "dear friend Mevlut," Dendias coolly enumerated Turkey's violations of international maritime law, her long history of warlike provocations in the Aegean, her using illegal immigration floods to blackmail Greece, and her standing threat of declaring war if Hellas chooses to extend its territorial waters from 6 to 12 miles, as it is her right under the 1982 UNCLOS, which Turkey refuses to sign.

With Cavusoglu clearly taken aback by the cheek of his giaour opposite, and rushing to huffingly rattle away Ankara's "counter-grievances," the Ankara meeting was instantly transformed into a tactical Greek "victory" after decades of what many observers, both in Greece and abroad, describe as Greece's "meek and retreating" behavior in the face of Turkish chauvinistic and blackmailing posture.

Dendias's Ankara performance set alight Greek media, with commentators generally expressing approval of the FM's performance which, they stressed, broke the long history of Greek deliberate docility vis-a-vis Turkish increasing aggression toward both Greece and the Republic of Cyprus. But Dendias's suddenly bold Ankara stance, aside from heartening Greek public opinion after years of GoG retreat in the face of Turkish threats, instantly exposed the widely known "secret" of fundamental differences on the Turkish issue within the incumbent Mitsotakis administration itself. Indeed, those claiming to be in the know wondered whether Dendias was on the same page with PM Mitsotakis, who is well known for sharing Germany's lukewarm and double-faced attitude toward any idea of slapping sanctions on Turkey, or he had acted on his own initiative that dovetails with the ideas of the "patriotic" wing of the ruling New Democracy party.

The same observers suggested that Dendias, if indeed acted on his own initiative, is apparently throwing the gauntlet to what many see as the Mitsotakis “collaborationist” camp in relation to Greece’s “national issues;” this presumed entity comprises those who followed the choices of former pro-German FM Costas Simitis, the “reformist” socialist of the now defunct PASOK party, who spent most of his time in power dutifully implementing the German line of appeasing and stroking Turkey at the expense of Greek national interests.

In light of all of the above, the Dendias Ankara meet-the-press show touches upon both the immediate future of government politics (and Mitsotakis’s longevity as the ‘Europeanist’ PM and leader of the New Democracy party) and the need for a completely different Greek strategy vis-a-vis the growing Turkish menace.

***To boot:***

**(A)** If indeed Dendias acted on his own he should be prepared to explain what, previously unknown, fundamental strategic options are available to Greece as she faces an imminent war with Turkey in the Aegean—and with the EU lying dead-in-water vis-a-vis Turkish threats and provocations.

**(B)** If the emerging infant “Dendias tendency” succeeds in outmaneuvering the Mitsotakis-led allegedly “collaborationist” appeasers, tethered to Berlin, it will need to present to the country viable alternative plan of securely linking Greece to the strategic interests of the United States, which they appear slowly shifting away from the pro-Turkish stand promoted by the now retired president Donald Trump.

**(C)** Dendias himself should be prepared to explain to the country his own longer-term “strategic philosophy” that made him confident enough to deliver his surprise attack in Ankara.

**(E)** And, finally, this new “alternative” in the Greek political party universe needs to also prove its presumed “patriotic” policies have (or could acquire) the operative, inspirational, and political teeth necessary to motivate the country as she confronts a much bigger, and perennially rabid fundamentalist Moslem, enemy.

Can Dendias pull it off? Bookies should begin taking bets.