

Turkey Threatens to Invade Greece

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In an incident that took place less than two weeks after the Greek Defense Ministry [announced](#) that Turkey had violated Greek airspace 138 times in a single day, a Turkish coast guard patrol boat on February 13 [rammed a Greek coast guard vessel](#) off the shore of Imia, one of many Greek islands over which Turkey claims sovereignty.

Most of the areas within modern Greece's current borders were under the [occupation of the Ottoman Empire](#) from the mid-15th century until the Greek War of Independence in 1821 and the establishment of the modern Greek state in 1832. The islands, however, like the rest of Greece, are legally and historically Greek, as their names indicate.

Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), however, and even much of the opposition seem intent on, if not obsessed with, invading and conquering these Greek islands, on the grounds that they are actually Turkish territory.

In December, for instance, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, the leader of the main Turkish opposition CHP party, [stated](#) that when he wins the election in 2019, he will "invade and take over 18 Greek islands in the Aegean Sea, just as former Turkish PM Bulent Ecevit invaded Cyprus in 1974." He said that there is "no document" proving that those islands belong to Greece.

Meral Akşener, the head of the newly established opposition "Good Party," has also called for an invasion and conquest of the islands. "What is required must be done," [she tweeted](#) on January 13.

The most garish muscle-flexing has come from Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, of course, who seems emboldened by his [military invasion of the Afrin region](#) in northern Syria having gone virtually unchallenged.

"We warn those who have crossed the line in the Aegean and Cyprus," [Erdoğan declared](#), continuing:

"Their courage persists only until they see our army, our ships and our planes... Whatever Afrin is to us, our rights in the Aegean and Cyprus are the same. Do not ever think that the natural gas exploration in the waters of Cyprus and the opportunistic attempts in the Aegean Sea drop off our radar.

"Just as we disrupt the plots [in the region] through Operation Euphrates Shield and Operation Olive Branch [on Syria], and soon in Manbij and other regions, we can and we will disrupt the plots of those who engage in miscalculations on our southern border... Our warships and air forces are keeping an eye on the area closely to intervene in every way when required."

Referring to the days of the Ottoman Empire, [Erdoğan went on](#):

“Those who think that we have erased from our hearts the lands from which we withdrew in tears a hundred years ago are wrong.

“We say at every opportunity we have that Syria, Iraq and other places in the geography [map] in our hearts are no different from our own homeland. We are struggling so that a foreign flag will not be waved anywhere where adhan [Islamic call to prayer in mosques] is recited.

“The things we have done so far [pale in comparison to the] even greater attempts and attacks [we are planning for] the coming days, inshallah [Allah willing].”

The [Ottoman dynasty](#) and empire was established by a nomadic Turkmen chief sometime around the year 1300. During the more than 600 years of the Ottoman period, the Ottoman Turks, who also represented the Islamic Caliphate, regularly launched wars of jihad, invading and occupying lands across three continents.

[Neo-Ottomanists](#) in Turkey still proudly embrace the concept of jihad (Islamic holy war) against the kafirs (infidels). The head of the state-funded Directorate of Religious Affairs, the *Diyanet*, has openly [described](#) Turkey’s recent military invasion of Afrin as “jihad.”

This designation makes sense when one considers that Muslim Turks owe their [demographic majority in Asia Minor](#) to centuries of Turkish Muslim persecution and discrimination against the Christian, Yazidi and Jewish inhabitants of the area. In the 11th century, Turkic jihadists from Central Asia invaded and conquered the Greek-speaking, Christian Byzantine Empire, paving the way for the gradual Turkification and Islamization of the region through methods such as murder, kidnapping, rape and forced conversions.

The greatest 20th century Turkish assault against Christians took place in the [1914-1923 genocide](#) of Greeks, Armenians and Assyrians (Syriacs/Chaldeans) in Ottoman Turkey. This did not prevent Turkey, which continues to deny the genocide, from becoming a member of NATO in 1952. The assault also did not stop Turkey, three years after joining NATO, from committing [a savage anti-Greek pogrom](#) in Istanbul or from [forcibly expelling](#) the remaining Greeks from Turkey in 1964.

It is precisely because the Turkish government has never been held accountable for its criminal actions and aggression that they continue to threaten the security and sovereignty of their neighbors. It is high time for the [West wake up](#) and take Ankara to task.

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