

Ukraine Bear Trap: Neo-Nazis, Syrian Jihadists and Hybrid Warfare

By [Nauman Sadiq](#)

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Today, the dangers of military escalation are beyond description.

What is now happening in Ukraine has serious geopolitical implications. It could lead us into a World War III scenario.

It is important that a peace process be initiated with a view to preventing escalation.

Global Research condemns Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

A Bilateral Peace Agreement is required.

Besides providing lethal drone warfare technology to Ukraine and closing Bosphorus straits to warships, effectively blockading Russia’s Black Sea fleet and cutting it off from the Mediterranean fleet, Turkish President Erdogan has also reportedly introduced Syria’s battle-hardened militants to the Ukraine conflict.

During the neo-Ottoman Sultan’s official visit to Ukraine last month following the escalation of hostilities, selling and co-producing Turkish-made drones to Ukraine’s security forces was publicly discussed between the two delegations, but in secret negotiations between security officials of Turkey and Ukraine, Ankara also pledged to dispatch Syrian mercenaries to Ukraine.

Numerous brigades of neo-Nazis fighting alongside Ukraine’s security forces, specifically in the Russian-majority Donbas region, is a documented fact. But introducing Syrian militant groups to Ukraine’s proxy war is a new development that would further aggravate the already complex hybrid warfare in Ukraine.

The foremost reason several contingents of Ramzan Kadyrov's Chechen forces are taking part in the Ukraine war alongside Russia's security forces is to hunt down Kadyrov's ideological rivals, the Islamic jihadists. Several contingents of Syrian militant groups had already left for Ukraine and were taking part in some of the most hard-fought battles against Russian security forces north of Kyiv and in Kharkiv and Mariupol and the rest were on their way, according to Turkish security officials who spoke with the correspondent on the condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to speak.

One of the principal reasons the Russian armored corps has lost so many tanks and armored personnel carriers during the week-long offensive is that Syrian mercenaries are especially skilled at using Javelin anti-tank weapons—which they dubbed “the Assad-tamer” during Syria's decade-long conflict—as they were trained in the use of American-made TOW anti-tank munitions by Turkish security officials during the CIA's Operation Timber Sycamore and the Pentagon's \$500 million train-and-equip programs to provide guerrilla warfare training and lethal weaponry to rebels battling the Syrian government at the training camps located at border regions of Turkey and Jordan.

Despite having immense firepower at its disposal that could readily turn the tide in conflicts as protracted as Syria's proxy war, the Russian advance in Ukraine has been slower than expected according to most estimates because Kremlin is doing all it can to minimize collateral damage, particularly needless civilian losses in the former Soviet republic whose majority population is sympathetic to Russia.

So much so that on Tuesday, March 1, Russia even gave an advanced warning before striking Ukraine's Security Service (SSU) headquarter and the main center for information and psychological operations in Kyiv to avoid civilian casualties. Thus far, Russian security forces have only targeted military installations and battalions of combatants posing an imminent danger to Russian troops.

Rather than mitigating suffering of Ukraine's disenfranchised masses held hostage by the Volodymyr Zelensky-led oligarchy, the self-styled champions of human rights are doing all they can to lure Russia into their “bear trap project,” a term borrowed from the Soviet-Afghan War of the eighties when Western regimes used Pakistan's security forces and generous funding from the oil-rich Gulf States for providing guerrilla warfare training and lethal weaponry to Afghan jihadists to “bleed the security forces” of former Soviet Union in the protracted war.

Of the \$10 billion humanitarian and military assistance for Ukraine announced by the Biden administration, the top brass of the Pentagon is reportedly making preparations for allocating a significant portion of the funds for providing military training and arms to over half a million refugees who have fled Ukraine following the war.

The Machiavellian plan of NATO's military strategists is to establish refugee settlements with the “humanitarian assistance” in the border regions of Ukraine's neighboring countries Poland, Romania and Bulgaria, and then provide guerrilla warfare training and lethal arms to all able-bodied men of military age in order to “bleed Russia's security forces” in the ensuing irregular warfare once Kyiv falls to advancing “40-mile-long” column of Russian tanks and heavy artillery from the north.

Western military-industrial complex is a flourishing industry. It not only sells armaments to “friendly regimes” but also provides “gainful employment” to myriad militant groups across

the globe to destabilize adversaries.

As for NATO's "gracious favor" of deciding not attempting to enforce no-fly zone over Ukraine, which is being propagated as a "concession to Russia" and "peaceful intentions" of the trans-Atlantic military alliance by the corporate media, it's worth pointing out that no-fly zones could only be enforced against Third World countries, such as Gaddafi's Libya or Saddam's Iraq, whose air forces only had several dozen creaking old aircraft bought in scrap following the Second World War.

Though it stretches credulity, even if NATO decides to impose a no-fly zone over Ukraine, who is going to implement the impossible decision. If anything, Russia is now going to enforce no-fly zone for hostile aircraft in Ukraine's airspace by deploying S-400 missile defense systems following the impending fall of Kyiv. Taking a backseat in the Ukraine conflict by the NATO powers isn't a "goodwill gesture" to Russia, rather it's an issue of lacking military capacity to confront resurgent Russia under Putin's astute leadership.

How ironic that despite investing trillions of dollars over decades on their lethal military-industrial complex, all the global bullies could do is sow chaos and mayhem across the Third World but are left with no other choice than turning the proverbial other cheek when confronted with equal military powers, such as Russia and China.

Regarding the neo-Ottoman Sultan's decision of introducing Syrian mercenaries as cannon fodder in the Ukraine conflict, it's worth recalling that during the four years of the Trump presidency, Erdogan acted with impunity in regional conflicts, from Syria and Libya to Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan, because he had forged a personal bonhomie with Donald Trump, as Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner was a business partner of Erdogan's son-in-law and former finance minister of Turkey Berat Albayrak, who was summarily dismissed from the ministry as soon as Trump lost the US presidential election in November 2020. Biden tightened the screws on Erdogan after being elected president, and now the "Turkish strongmen" is bending over backwards to reconcile with the Biden administration to regain his lost international prestige.

Besides mounting several military incursions into northern Syria and illegally occupying northwestern enclaves Idlib and Afrin and several strategic areas east of Euphrates, Erdogan also sent thousands of Syrian jihadists, drones and military hardware in support of the Tripoli government against eastern Libyan warlord Khalifa Haftar's military campaign in western Libya lasting from April 2019 to June 2020. After defeating Haftar's forces in Tripoli, Turkish proxies had set their sights on Sirte but a peace process involving international mediators has since begun.

Similarly, during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan that lasted from September to November 2020, Armenia's ambassador to Moscow alleged that Turkey had sent thousands of fighters from northern Syria to Azerbaijan. Armenia also accused that Turkish military experts had fought alongside Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh, and that Turkey had provided drones and warplanes.

Two Syrian fighters, from Turkish-backed rebel groups in areas of northern Syria under Turkish control, [told Reuters](#) [1] in Oct. 2020 they were deploying to Azerbaijan in coordination with Ankara. "I didn't want to go, but I don't have any money. Life is very hard and poor," said a fighter who had fought in Syria for Ahrar al-Sham, a jihadist group that

Turkey has supported.

Both men said they had been told by their Syrian brigade commanders they would earn around \$1,500 a month – a substantial income for Syria, where the economy and currency have collapsed, thanks to Washington’s sanction and for squatting over vast oil and gas reserves in eastern Syria in collaboration with Kurds.

The fighter said he had arranged his assignment with an official from the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army (SNA) in Afrin, a region of northwest Syria seized by Turkey and its Syrian rebel allies. The other fighter, from the SNA-affiliated Jaish al-Nukhba militia, said he had been told thousands of Syrian militants were set to be deployed to Azerbaijan.

The irony is that almost all the militant groups that had fought against the Bashar al-Assad government during the decade-long conflict were Sunni jihadists, whereas Azerbaijan is an ethnically Turkic, Shiite-majority country. So practically, these jihadist mercenaries had fought in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict alongside their sworn enemies in Syria’s proxy war.

Rather than ideological convergence, Turkish support for Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, however, was about personal camaraderie between Erdogan and Ilham Aliyev, the longtime eccentric autocrat of Azerbaijan. Lacking grassroots support, Aliyev inherited the presidency from his father in 2003 and became a laughing stock when he appointed his trophy wife as the vice president of the country.

16% of Iran’s 83 million population is Azeri, which obviously sympathized with their co-religionists during the proxy war in Syria. Nevertheless, against the wishes and religious sentiments of the native Azeri people, Aliyev provided material support to jihadists in Syria at the behest of his Turkish patron Erdogan.

Regarding Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev’s support to Turkey-backed militants in Syria’s proxy war, a Bulgarian investigative reporter Dilyana Gaytandzhieva authored [a report](#) [2] for Bulgaria’s national newspaper Trud News in August 2017 which found that an Azerbaijan state airline company, Silk Way Airlines, regularly transported weapons to Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Turkey under diplomatic cover as part of the CIA covert program to supply weapons to militant groups in Syria. Gaytandzhieva documented 350 such “diplomatic flights” and was subsequently sacked from her job for uncovering the story.

Similarly, a joint investigation by the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) and the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) [uncovered](#) [3] the Pentagon’s \$2.2 billion arms pipeline to the Syrian militants.

It’s pertinent to note that \$2.2 billion was earmarked only by Washington for training and arming the Syrian militants, and [tens of billions of dollars worth](#) [4] weapons and ammunition that the oil-rich Gulf States pumped into Syria’s proxy war have not been documented by anybody so far.

Notwithstanding, Turkish militarist policy of introducing Syrian mercenaries to the Ukraine war is the outcome of a long-running feud between two strongmen, Erdogan and Putin, who’ve previously crossed swords lending military support to opposing militant factions in Syria, Libya and Nagorno-Karabakh.

In order to please his NATO patrons, Erdogan even wanted to militarily intervene in the

Afghanistan conflict by offering to secure Kabul airport following the announcement of withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan by the Biden administration, and by lending military support to ethnically Turkic Uzbek militants in the Northern Alliance.

Uzbek warlord Rashid Dostum sojourning in Istanbul didn't voluntarily return to Afghanistan endangering his life on the eve of evacuation of US forces. He was persuaded by his Turkish patron Erdogan to lead the first contingent of battle-hardened Syrian mercenaries who were ordered to prepare for their next assignment fighting for Northern Alliance comprising Uzbeks, Tajiks and Hazaras against the Pashtun-led Taliban in Afghanistan.

Besides Syrian militants, there are also a large number of Afghan refugees residing in Turkey who were detained during the last decade while fleeing the Afghan civil war to seek economic opportunities in Europe. It wouldn't be surprising if Turkish security forces had made similar \$1,500 a month offer to desperate Afghan refugees to fight alongside the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan.

In fact, Turkey's former Chief of the General Staff and current Defense Minister Hulusi Akar visited Islamabad in August, likely sensing the mood in Islamabad as to how it would react to deployment of Turkish proxies in the Afghan civil war. But the precipitous fall of Kabul on August 15 was so sudden that only did it take most military strategists by surprise but also scuttled Turkish plans of sending proxies to buttress the Northern Alliance.

Being Islamists themselves and out of deference for Erdogan's self-avowed credentials as the leader of the Islamic World, the diplo-Taliban subsequently requested Turkey to help the nascent government managing the Kabul airport. But the megalomaniac contemptuously shunned them as ragtag militants too far below the lofty stature of the neo-Ottoman Sultan and Washington's NATO ally. Now Qatar and UAE are jostling for the strategically significant contract to run the airport.

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Nauman Sadiq is an Islamabad-based geopolitical and national security analyst focused on geo-strategic affairs and hybrid warfare in the Af-Pak and Middle East regions. His domains of expertise include neocolonialism, military-industrial complex and petro-imperialism.

He is a regular contributor of diligently researched investigative reports to Global Research.

Notes

[1] [Turkey deploying Syrian fighters to help ally Azerbaijan](#)

[2] [Journalist Interrogated, Fired For Story Linking CIA And Syria Weapons Flights](#)

[3] [The Pentagon's \\$2.2 billion Soviet arms pipeline to Syria](#)

[4] [Mark Curtis' book review, Secret Affairs: How Britain Colluded with Radical Islam?](#)

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