



Emergence Of New Threats To Turkey's National Security During The Syrian Crisis: "Euphrates Shield" Movement

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ABSTRACT

The political crisis in Syria, which began in 2010 in North Africa and later spread to the Middle East under the name of the Arab Spring, has not changed for the better in 10 years. The crisis that began in the country has already become a regional problem in the local issue. The issue was followed by various issues that endangered Turkey's national security for Turkey, Syria's close neighbor. Such problems include refugees and wolves. The article describes the "Euphrates Shield", a cross-border military operation aimed at eliminating a number of militant groups that have been seen as a threat to Turkey's national security.

KEYWORDS

"Syrian Crisis", "Arab Spring", PKK, YPG, PYD, Kurds, Islamic State, Turkish-Syrian relations.

INTRODUCTION

The crackdown on the current regime in Syria, which began in 2011, escalated into violent clashes by the end of the year. The Assad regime, which resisted the legitimate and

legitimate demands of the people, used disproportionate force against its own citizens, causing many casualties and millions of refugees to flee their country. Turkey, which

has the longest border with its neighbor, has been quietly following the situation in Syria, first by adopting a “wait-and-see” policy and then supporting opposition groups by opening the country's borders to Syrian refugees. As a result, more than three million Syrians now live in Turkey.

Turkey, which has blamed Assad for the clashes on the southern border, has blamed Russia, which wants to increase its influence in Syria, for its involvement in the conflict, as well as ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) and PYD-YPG (Democratic Unity Party and People's Defense Forces). also threatened.

After the peaceful protests in Syria turned into a civil war, the gap in the government led to the diversity of opposition groups and the rapid formation of terrorist groups. This has led to an increase in the sense of threat in Turkey and the start of the fight against terrorism. Turkey, which wants to ensure both border and internal security, entered northern Syria as part of an operation called the “Euphrates Shield Movement” to “defend itself” under Article 51 of the United Nations Treaty and began fighting ISIS.

Due to its historical characteristics, the Middle East region remains a permanent battleground today. Nevertheless, the states of the region are trying to maintain pressure on their peoples, defending their forces by an authoritarian regime. The population of the region was tired of oppression and authoritarian rule and dreamed of seizing power with the help of popular movements that began in late 2010.

The mass protests that began in Tunisia on December 17, 2010 as a result of the self-immolation of 26-year-old university graduate

Muhammad Bouaziz quickly spread across the country and quickly spread to North Africa and the Middle East.

In general, these movements were called the “Arab Spring”. These efforts have focused on socio-economic factors such as economic inequality, political disorder, and entrenched corruption, and have had a profound impact on the wider geography.

THE MAIN FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Syria, which gained independence in 1946 as a result of France's withdrawal from the country, had military coups in the 1950s and 1960s and the country remained in a state of instability.

The Baath Party, which championed Arab nationalism, came to power in 1963, and in 1971 Hafez Assad took over as president. For forty years he ruled the country with the help of an “authoritarian system in the form of democracy”.

The economic situation has a special place among the mass protests that began in Syria in 2011. However, it should be noted that the main reason is the end of the state of emergency, which has lasted since 1963, and the emergence of a number of other political demands, such as political reform and freedoms.

In March 2011, protests against the Assad regime began in the southern Syrian city of Daraa, which quickly spread across the country.

In this situation, the Assad regime decided to retaliate, taking into account the influence of the “Arab Spring” in other countries, and,

despite the legitimate demands of the people, approved a military solution.

This political choice has led to the outbreak of civil war and the escalation of unrest in Syria.

Turkey has not been indifferent to the uprisings in the Middle East in 2010. Not forgetting that it is also a part of the region, Turkey has chosen to play an active role in the “Arab Spring” process.

Due to a cultural affinity that has been going on for a long time, Turkey’s quest for stability in the Middle East has demanded active steps from it in this process.

In general, Turkey has stood by the peoples who are going through this unpleasant process, without separating the countries covered by the Arab Spring. As a pro-democracy activist, he has also shown support for reforms in the Middle East.

It emphasized the desire to ensure that the process of change was peaceful and not painful, in order to avoid any violence, preserve the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political unity of the state, prevent various divisions and protect them as a basic principle.

Turkey’s policy towards Syria, one of the countries that has experienced mass uprisings in the Middle East, is of great importance. Because Syria is Turkey’s longest border neighbor. Turkey initially pursued a policy of “wait and see” for mass protests in Syria. One of the main reasons for Turkey’s choice of “wait and see” policy was its unwillingness to sever ties with its long-troubled neighbor, which has been improving in recent years, especially in the last decade. From this point of view, the crisis in Syria will be a very difficult and important test for Turkey. In the wake of

the protests, Turkey has called on the Damascus administration to heed the demands of the Syrian people and speed up the democratization process, in line with its “wait and see” policy.

Bashar al-Assad and his government, which did not take into account the demands of Turkey and its own people, intensified violence against the people on the pretext of destroying those who opposed them. It was also said that the international community should use Turkey’s military intervention in Syria as the violence in Syria continues to escalate. Turkey, on the other hand, opposed the issue and expressed confidence that the Syrian issue would be resolved through Assad’s democratic reforms.

Turkey has shown its attitude towards the Middle East countries that experienced the “Arab Spring” in the form of Syria. He did not back down from directly supporting the demands of the people. In the process, direct talks were held with Assad in 2011 and he was told to pay attention to the demands of his people. These requests have not been met, and in 2012, a Turkish Air Force F-4 was shot down by Syrian regime forces, prompting Turkey to change its security policy toward threats on its southern border.

The terrorist organizations that took advantage of the weakening of the forces as a result of the civil war in Syria began to develop rapidly and the situation reached a level that threatened Turkey’s security interests. The fact that Turkey’s border with ISIS is several hundred kilometers long, and that there are people within ISIS who are Turkish citizens waiting to return to the country, are the main reasons for Turkey’s serious fight against ISIS. Turkey has cooperated with the international

coalition in the fight against ISIS and has been involved in air operations.

One of the main reasons for the threat from Turkey to create a power vacuum caused by the imbalance in Syria and its subsequent actions is the conflict between Russia and Russia over the shooting down of a fighter jet. It is known that on November 24, 2015, a Russian military plane continued its flight, violating the Turkish border. According to the rules of foreign conduct, Turkish forces shot down a Russian plane, which led to a breakdown in Turkish-Russian relations, which became a positive phenomenon in the 2000s. In general, the severance of ties was similar on the Syrian issue. Because Russia controlled Syrian airspace. This has limited Turkey's air power in cross-border operations. After seven months of tensions, the situation has improved with Turkey's efforts.

Meanwhile, relations were fully restored after Putin telephoned Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan after the terrorist attack by ISIS at Ataturk Airport in June 2016. Even after the attempted Russian coup on July 15, Russia's announcement of support for Turkey's current government was a major step in strengthening relations. It is also noteworthy that President Recep Tayyip Erdogan made his first foreign visit to Russia on August 9, 2016 after an attempted coup.

Euphrates shield movement. The emergence of threats both inside and outside the country has led Turkey to pursue an active policy in the field. The rise of ISIS in the country, the use of provocative relations on the border, the establishment of a corridor along the Turkish border by ISIS and the YPG – People's Defense Forces have moved Turkey.

On August 24, 2016, Turkey launched Operation Euphrates Shield Movement with Free Syrian Army (FSA) forces in order to "defend itself" under Article 51 of the United Nations Treaty.

The operation has three main pillars: clearing ISIS of its territory, eradicating all terrorist elements along the border, and returning refugees from the country to areas liberated from terrorist groups.

In this operation, which started on August 24, 2016, the Turkish Army and the Free Syrian Army moved together towards the city of Jerablus. In a short time, Jerablus was cleared of ISIS. Jerablus was the first stage of the operation of the Euphrates Shield Movement, and this task was accomplished in a short time - a day. In the following days, the march of the Turkish Army and the Free Syrian Army continued successfully.

The second part of the operation was to seize control of Chobanbey and Dabiq. Turkish army and OSA troops will surround Chobanbey and clear the area of ISIS terrorists. After that, the Euphrates Shield Movement towards Dabiq once again demonstrated that the main target was the city of Al-Bab.

By capturing the city of Dabiq, the Euphrates Shield movement took control of an area of 1,300 square meters, thus securing the area from Azaz to Jerablus.

In addition, the victory of Dabiq prevented the YPG, the People's Defense Squad, which was moving south, from being able to unite its territories with the western city of Afrin.

On August 24, 2016, the Turkish Armed Forces officially launched Operation Euphrates Shield. The operation, which lasted nearly seven months, killed 72 Turkish soldiers, while the

Turkish-backed Free Syrian Army lost 600 fighters. PYD - Democratic Unity Party, YPG – People's Defense Squad and more than three thousand ISIS terrorists neutralized.

In less than seven months, Turkey has cleared its border area of ISIS terrorists and secured up to 40 kilometers of its southern border from the Euphrates Shield operation. In addition, two thousand square meters of territory was cleared of terrorists during the operation. The part of the operation aimed at ISIS was completed and the fight against the PYD - Democratic Unity Party, YPG – People's Defense Squad continued with operations that are a continuation of the Euphrates Shield Movement.

There have been different reactions from some states to the Euphrates Shield movement. In particular, the Syrian Foreign Ministry said that the operation was incompatible with international law, threatened the country's integrity and should be considered an occupation. Russia and Iran, two of the most important participants in the events in Syria, did not oppose the operation, but said it should be carried out in accordance with international law.

Israel, meanwhile, has backed the operation because ISIS could threaten its borders. France was also one of the countries that supported the movement. Stressing that a coalition has been formed to fight ISIS, France has openly stated its support for Turkey's Euphrates Shield operation. The U.S. initially backed Turkey in its fight against ISIS, but later said it was concerned about clashes in areas cleared of terrorists.

In general, Turkey's fight against ISIS as part of the Euphrates Shield operation has been described as "self-defense" outside of Syria.

CONCLUSION

The clashes, which have been going on since 2011, have gone beyond the Arab Spring movement and turned into a power struggle and a civil war. No one has won the civil war in Syria. The clashes led to the deployment of ISIS in northern Syria as a result of the imbalance of power and power, and the emergence of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK), the YPG, a branch of the Kurdish Workers' Party.

Bashar al-Assad, ISIS, PYD - Democratic Unity Party, YPG – People's Defense Squad Most of the people who fled the persecution moved to Turkey. At the beginning of the Syrian crisis, ISIS fought against the Assad regime, but after the rise of opposition groups, others began to join the war. The rapid spread of ISIS in the country, Russia's support for the Assad regime to maintain its influence, and the expansion of the Democratic Unity Party have changed Turkey's security views.

In terms of the successes achieved as a result of the Euphrates Shield operation, it should be noted that the use of local and national armed forces and their role in success has been high. In addition, Turkey has had the opportunity to demonstrate the power of its armed forces to the international community.

Thus, Turkey has restored its weakened strength in the operation, has a say in the region, has shown that it knows no borders (especially under international law) when threatened, and has stated that it can conduct other operations to maintain its security.

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