Twitter Thread by Charlie the Fox

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For my followers who aren't experts on middle eastern politics, here's a summary and explanation of all that stuff I've been tweeting about for the last few days - Turkey, Gare, all that stuff.

Gare is a mountain in the autonomous region of Kurdistan, in Northern Iraq (also known as Ba■ur, or South Kurdistan). It's held by the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK), a formerly Maoist group who share an ideology with the YPG. They're pretty great.

Last week the Turkish Army launched an operation in the area, bombarding it with planes and dropping troops from helicopters. They're a long way from home here, and had to rely on the bases of local collaborators to launch the attack.

The initial assault appears to have gone badly, with Turkish troops forced to retreat some way down the mountain. A second front, seemingly aimed at preventing PKK reinforcements from arriving, may have been more successful.

The full aim of the operation isn't clear. They may have hoped to cut Gare from other nearby mountains, and they may have been trying to destroy specific facilities. The only thing we're sure of is that an attempt was made to free a group of high value POWs.

The POWs are soldiers, high ranking police officers, and intelligence agents who have been held for several years by the PKK. The Turkish state has rejected attempts to negotiate peacefully for their release.

The POW camp was bombed, then attacked by ground troops, who seem to have been repulsed. It was then bombed heavily and repeatedly until nothing was left, killing all of the prisoners. This is in line with normal Turkish policy, where a martyr is considered better than a captive.

Turkish troops then withdrew after several days of fighting. They claimed the operation had completed its objectives of retrieving the prisoners, but that the PKK had executed them just before their arrival.

This may be an attempt to save face - casualties were rising, the weather was turning (crucial for an operation so heavily reliant on air support), and the situation was generally untenable.

In the aftermath, the Turkish state is turning it's frustrated rage against left wing parties inside Turkey - particularly the HDP. Several officials have called for violence against HDP members and MPs, and it's possible the party will be banned.

Bolstering public support for the ruling party was probably a major objective for this operation. Now that it's failed, removing the democratic opposition may be necessary if they want to survive the next elections.