Twitter Thread by Nomas21



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Turkey vs Israel, France and Greece: forked tongue, conflicting messages? - JP columnist

Thread

Turkey’s diplomatic efforts to set aside its differences with Israel, France and Greece over various disputes should not be taken at face value nor trusted, Middle East analyst Neville Teller said in an opinion piece published on Saturday. 1/

In the wake of Joe Biden’s electoral victory to become the next U.S. president in November, Turkey has changed its tone with numerous countries it had fallen out with in recent years. 2/

This posturing “must be viewed as part of a broader strategy designed to strengthen Turkey’s standing with the upcoming U.S. President Joe Biden,” Teller wrote in the Jerusalem Post. 3/

Erdo■an’s “normalisation overtures may be part of his new strategy, but in the light of his past actions and present posturings on the world stage, he cannot be surprised if his motives are viewed by the world at large with suspicion, if not downright disbelief,” he said. 4/

Erdo■an on Friday left open the possibility of meeting with Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis to move towards in de-escalating a five-month political and military standoff over territorial claims in the eastern Mediterranean. 5/

“There have … been meetings between our foreign ministers. We, in turn, agreed to start exploratory talks,” he said. 6/

“Now, after our special representatives, there could be a meeting between me and the prime minister. We are open to taking these steps … These developments are moving in that direction.” 7/

In recent talks with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, “the request for a meeting with Greece and Mr Mitsotakis was an issue that we addressed positively”, Erdo■an said. 8/

However, that same day, his foreign minister, Mevlüt Çavu■o■lu, set a condition that the agenda of the upcoming exploratory contacts between Athens and Ankara must include “all disagreements” and not just maritime boundaries as

Greece wants. 9/

France, which sided with fellow EU member states Greece and Cyprus in the standoff, has consistently opposed Turkey's foreign policy. It has led the push for EU sanctions on the country over the eastern Mediterranean dispute. 10/

Ankara and Paris also support conflicting sides in Libya's civil war & France has condemned Turkey for its 2019 military campaign against Kurdish militias in northern Syria & supporting Azerbaijan in its latest round of fighting with Armenian separatists in Nagorno-Karabakh 11/

Turkish officials have said that Turkey and France have both expressed a willingness to mend relations. 12/

"On the eve of the U.S. presidency of Joe Biden, Erdo■an may well have calculated that it was not in Turkey's interest to be in open conflict with a NATO ally, while it would certainly suit his book to neutralize a persistent opponent within the EU," Teller said. 13/

"Whether he would be prepared to moderate his position on any of the issues to which France objects is debatable." 14/

Erdo■an's tentative offer to Israel to reconcile their differences "equally lacks conviction", he said. 15/

Turkish-Israeli relations hit an all-time low in 2018 when Turkey expelled Israel's ambassador and recalled its own envy over Israeli attacks on the Palestinian enclave of Gaza and the United States' decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv. 16/

Erdo■an also hosted Ismail Haniyeh, political bureau chief of the Hamas militant group, which is at war with Israel, in Turkey twice in the past year. 17/

The U.S. administration had condemned Ankara on both occasions and said that Washington would continue "to raise concerns about the Turkish government's relationship with Hamas at the highest levels". 18/

However, in the past few months, Ankara has recently expressed a willingness for better ties with Israel since reports in November revealed a series of meetings between the countries' top intelligence officials to discuss reconciliation. 19/

Turkey's reconciliation efforts aim to disrupt or undermine Israel's three-way partnership with Greece and Cyprus, Teller said. 20/

Israel, Greece and Cyprus are collaborating on a pipeline project off the Cypriot coast to establish a regional gas market and export hub to Europe.

End/

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