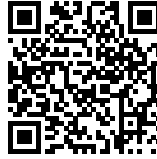


# APOLOGIA PRO ERDOĞAN

*Posted on July 1, 2022 by Theodore Roosevelt Malloch and  
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Turkey's President Erdoğan is often badly misunderstood, maligned, and castigated by the Western press and its leaders. With the Finno-Swedish accession talks underway, it is worth stepping back from the current downward spiral and reinvesting in a long-term, rock-solid, good relationship before it's too late to restore good relations between the U.S. and Turkey. This isn't rocket science, just good policy and plain common sense. It is something sorely needed today in preserving good relations between all the allies.

That's the way it was for decades, and it's the way it should be for decades to come. The consequences of deterioration in the relationship are just too great for each side.

More than a generation ago, the acclaimed motivational speaker Dale Carnegie penned a best seller titled, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. You have ever heard of it? Read it?

It was chock-full of good advice that any leader could readily utilize. Do not be overly critical. Give honest, sincere appreciation. Get the other person's point of view. Show genuine interest. Smile. Be a good listener. And make the other party feel wanted and important.

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The U.S. appears to be doing precisely the opposite of what Carnegie suggested and is literally losing Turkey as a good friend and ally. Together both countries should work to turn that around and make sure it does not happen.

Perhaps the greatest exponent of Blobby opposition to Ankara's designs is neo-con pundit Michael Rubin: Erdoğan turned away from the West, he says. With some chutzpah—for an AEI egghead, certainly—he accuses defenders of the President of a NATO ally of being on his payroll. There are some matters of substance behind the mutually felt frosty caution from Ankara towards official Washington. Let's unravel the truth.

Turkey's modern association with the United States began already in 1947 when the United States Congress designated Turkey, under the provisions of the Truman Doctrine, as the recipient of special

economic and military assistance intended to help it resist threats from the Soviet Union.

A mutual interest in containing Soviet expansion provided the foundation of U.S.–Turkish relations for the next four decades. As a result of Soviet threats and U.S. assistance against them, Turkey moved away from a single-party government towards democracy; in fact, holding the first democratic elections in 1950.

Turkey contributed personnel to the United Nations forces in the Korean War from 1950–53, joined NATO in 1952, became a founding member of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) collective defence pact established in 1955 and dissolved after the Iranian Revolution, Turkey was a keystone state for the 1957 Eisenhower doctrine, stitching together the collective security aims of the Free World from the Mediterranean through the Hindu Kush.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Turkey generally co-operated with other United States allies in the Middle East to contain the influence of those countries regarded as Soviet clients. Throughout the Cold War, Turkey was the bulwark of NATO's south eastern flank, directly bordering Warsaw Pact countries and risking nuclear war on its soil during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Turkey is a large, modern secular-Muslim country of over 80 million people, with a sizeable economy (\$2.7 trillion GDP), very significant military force (Second only to the US within NATO) that straddles Europe and Asia. It occupies a strategic space and has been a stalwart ally to the United States from late in the Second World War through the Cold War up until recently. What has shifted?

The Turks played a starring role in Post-9/11 American foreign policy and can claim accolades like being on the founding list of five countries that were already spending 2% of GDP on defense when the Obama administration codified that norm into NATO at Wales. Compare their treatment in cognoscenti rags to Germany's, for example, and recall that while Turkey is now assuming the security obligations of allied priorities (Kabul Airport, to name but one) Merkel and her "Defense" minister (who failed upwards as the Head of Government of the EU) packed up their military presence and turned their participation into a big development aid project long ago.

The exceptionally harsh treatment of Erdoğan's allyship to Washington doesn't stop above board. The fate of 4-Star DIA General Michael Flynn, for example – defenestrated among other reasons for a lack

of sympathy toward the putschist Turkish cleric who resides in Pennsylvania – was a very clear signal from the Beltway that they wished Erdoğan had been felled in the coup d'état attempt against his government. To put it bluntly, old Recep has every right to take personally an attempt on his life. In fact, that January revolt against Turkey's President, which killed hundreds, was organized and executed by the CIA and its proxies on the ground. Their man, Muhammed Fethullah Gülen, was escorted in 1999 on a private plane to a safe retreat in the Pocono Mountains by the Clintons—after he donated some \$14 million to the Clinton Foundation. It is nice to have, as they say, "friends in high places."

Is it the policy of the deep state and its agents who work to thwart everything Trump attempted in foreign policy? The dirty money Gülen and his FETÖ network has paid for years in exchange for support and cover in the U.S. might provide a clue. Seen through the lens of Ankara's objection towards Stockholm's receipt of leftist Kurdish radicals, a picture comes into focus.

That so-called "spiritual network," which is a known terrorist Islamic threat, has funded congressional campaigns and made sizable donations in the millions USD to the Clinton Foundation. Such political favors have bought influence and safety in Pennsylvania—where Gülen maintains his nerve center, undisturbed. Exposing the history of such doings and payments would further question the deep state.

The State Department certainly has no interest in fixing relations and is decidedly anti-Erdoğan. They have gone out of their way to humiliate and demean his regime—at considerable cost to the nation.

But it's not us it's him, insists Rubin. S-400 Surface to Air missiles can't go to a NATO country without implied treason. The US could have given more assurances along with the keys to their defense options. Of course, if Erdoğan didn't have to worry about the loyalty of his own Air Force, he might not think he needed the only gear that runs any risk of shooting down his own aircraft. We should have every faith that the extensive purge of that and all other branches was thorough enough, but the fact remains. Fussy old business, that, and a direct consequence of the Clinton/Kerry/Biden State Department, without even touching the rest of the "Arab Spring" (Green Revolution, anyone? How are those gas prices doing, Libya?)

Turkey is a friend, a trading partner and a close military and intelligence partner. This in spite of the fact that the U.S. has failed to meet a reasonable demand of Turkey, its dear friend and ally.

What demand is that? Namely, the return and extradition of Fethullah Gülen, known terrorist operator who it is established played a lead role in the attempted coup of President Erdoğan's government.

Even when presented with reams of information and dossiers of evidence the U.S. State Department and the Justice Department were slow or remiss to act.

If the shoe were on the other foot, would it be so? Of course not.

Turkey has a treaty with the U.S. and has itself extradited numerous assailants to the U.S. over the years. If Turkey harbored an insurrectionist who tried to overthrow the legitimately elected government of the United States, would we demand his head? We'd get it, too.

Under normal circumstances, Joe Biden should call President Erdoğan urgently and revert to the late Dale Carnegie's well-advised policy. But he won't as his leftist foreign policy advisors won't let him.

As the Council on Foreign Relations stated, among the most important developments in international affairs of the past decades is the emergence of Turkey as a rising regional and global power.

Insofar as Rubin is tempted to call Erdoğan, a "Colonizer" and "Imperialist," it is important to remember that the AKP's long tenure in Ankara will someday give way—democratically—to another party's political facts on the ground. In the meantime, Ankara's priorities are being skillfully pushed by a foreign office dusting off Ottoman protocols which objectively promote the strategic interests of a midsize Mediterranean power with significant land presence in the middle east.

It is a hard neighborhood—bordering Iran, Iraq and Syria, to name just a few. Insofar as Turkey's own value as an ally, geographic: location location location is the order of the day. Again, contrast this reality with other NATO members of less distinguished plumage and Turkey will objectively come out favorably positioned by the comparison to any other possible pair. Do Turkey the disservice of comparing it to a non-NATO ally like Saudi Arabia, and much of the kvetching over human rights melts away: Ankara provided the international community with the intelligence to pin the Khashoggi murder on Riyadh, a net contribution to the enforcement of international norms like not murdering dissident journalists on diplomatic soil.

This is admittedly not without drawbacks on purely allied concerns: Treasury has already sanctioned Turkish-flagged actors over proxy forces in Syria, a force of professional fighters which seems to have other wars ahead of them as Turkish mercenaries á la Wagner group or Akademi. Libya is the most vivid example of this, though one wonders which theater they'll be left high and dry in, or if their destiny is to export the revolution like the Stalinist cadres who lost the Spanish civil war.

Developing the capability to play at this cagey business is positive news for the alliance's toolkit, and one which is already paying dividends in theatres important to the alliance. Turkey is, has been, and should remain, a bulwark of security and a core, critical ally to the United States in the coming years. Turkey is both a significant regional power and among the best partners we have.

And lastly, rebrand Turkey, not only as a new and modern, fascinating Ottoman polity, a strategic force for good and moderate Islam but as a country where everyone is welcome to visit, invest, and do business. It is this economic realm that needs broadcast because Turkey is a vibrant growing, large and increasingly prosperous middle-income country.

All this to say, to the hawkish neoliberals of the Biden White House and the Bush-Cheney warmonger neocon gadflies, like Rubin—Erdoğan is playing his own game. Don't expect him to be a chess piece for you to move as you please.

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