

## Question and Answer

# Turkish Build-up at the Syrian Borders

(Translated)

### Question:

The Turkish president expressed his strong rejection to any demographic change within the Syrian lands. This came in a speech he delivered upon the sidelines of his participation in an Iftar party in the presidential palace that he organised for the ambassadors of the foreign states based in Ankara. That was on the evening of Thursday 09/07/2015 as reported by the news site 'As-Saabi' (Seven)... referring to the previous statement as reported by Anatolia Agency on 26/06/2015 when he said: "We will never permit for the creation of a Northern Syrian State upon our southern borders and our struggle will continue upon this path whatever the cost," and he said, "What is happening in Syria and Iraq is an attempt to remake a new Sykes Picot order in the region and it aims to charge an internal public opinion against Turkey". This was followed by what the news media conveyed in terms of Turkey strengthening its defensive capabilities and so on...

The question is: 'What is the true reality of what is happening? Is it actually for a Turkish military intervention in the North of Syria? Or is it for other purposes? And what is the true reality of the American position in respect to the military intervention?'

### Answer:

In order to provide clarity to the question we will present the following matters:

1) The Turkish President stated: 'We will never ever allow the creation of a State in the North of Syria upon our southern borders and our struggle will continue upon this path whatever the cost' and he said: "What is happening in Syria and Iraq is an attempt to remake a new Sykes Picot regime in the region and it aims to charge an internal public opinion against Turkey" (Anatolia Agency 26/06/2015). Afterwards on 02/07/2015, Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said to Channel Seven: "We have taken steps to protect the borders and there are orders to mobilise if any new circumstances arise that threaten the security of the country". He also added, "That it is necessary that nobody imagines that Turkey will intervene tomorrow or in the near future". He reiterated something similar to that on 03/07/2015 in an interview with 'Television Qawniyaa' stating: "It is not correct to expect that Turkish intervention to be immediate in Syria, in an actual manner. However Turkey is in a standby mode to confront any possible threat from the Syrian side and is thoroughly following all developments". He also said, "This is so that it does not come to anyone's mind that we are being pulled into something reckless".

2) Therefore the statements are such that on occasion they raise the prospect of intervention whilst at other times they seek to make the intervention a distant matter. This model is followed in the same manner of a contradicting statement and denial. So the Hurriyet Turkish newspaper published on 05/07/2015 that: "The Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces recalled the commanders of the border units and the commanders of the commando brigades in the provinces of Boulu and Qaisari to examine a potential operation following the latest developments upon the Turkish Syrian border". However the Chief of Staff denied this news as the Anatolia Agency reported from military sources on 06/07/2015 saying: "The claims stating that the commanders of the border units and commandos (special forces) had been recalled to the headquarters of the Chief of Staff as a result of developments on the Syrian side of the border do not reflect the truth and that not meeting was convened that these claims have mentioned. And that there are no plans in respect to this".

3) These contradictory statements were accompanied albeit with a spirit of 'sport! They were accompanied by military movement. The news media reported the Turkish mobilisation upon the Syrian border and that it (i.e. Turkey) had sent out more than 400 armed soldier carriers in addition to a round of air forces to assist an intervention of this kind. It also reported that there were around 45 thousand soldiers which had been spread across the length of the border with Syria and that it

had reinforced its defence capabilities across the length of the border by dispatching tanks and anti-aircraft missiles and forces which occurred after the escalation of battles in the north of the city of Halab (Aleppo). This is not all but rather the amplified coverage of this news to the extent of gross exaggeration. So some of the media outlets began to leak news and perhaps they were prepared by official parties connected to future Turkish plans. So the *Yani Shafaq* Turkish newspaper mentioned on 28/06/2015 that: "The Turkish Chiefs of Staff have set in place a military plan to intervene in Syria with the objective of preventing the emergence of a Kurdish State in the north of Syria or its imposition as a matter of fact. This plan comprises creating a buffer zone 28-33km deep stretching from Sarikamiş to Oncupinar covering a length of 110km. It comprises the plan of deploying 18 thousand soldiers to Syria for a period of two years after gaining support from the international community. If it does not attain international agreement it would then move by itself to establish a buffer zone upon the model of what Israel did in South Lebanon.

4) It becomes evident to the one who scrutinizes this news and other news that has come related to it, that they are closer to internal objectives than to objectives of actual intervention and that is due to the following reasons:

A - The advance of the Kurds in the north of Syria which the Turkish government has attempted to suggest that its current military preparations are for the sake of prevention. Then this advance was actually assisted by the Turkish government when it permitted the Peshmerga to enter Ain Al-Arab Kobani through Turkish land and that was to give support to the Kurds by fighting with them... Similarly in respect to Tal Abyad then the newspaper *Turk News* on 04/07/2015 reported from one of its journalists from those who held a meeting with an important Turkish official, the following as it came in the newspaper: "We and a group of journalists yesterday were in a meeting with an important Turkish official of a high level in the Turkish government and he confirmed to us that the government will never take the United Democratic Party (Kurdish Party) as a target for it at all". The official indicated that: "There is a probability of the United Democratic Party gaining control over the region connecting Efreeen and Kobani and in other words the formation of a Kurdish corridor upon the Turkish border is not currently on the table in the current stage". And he said: "The United Democratic Party gaining control over Tal Abyad is in Turkey's interest however for the conduct over the region that the party dominates to be undertaken a principle of conquests would create contentions and a number of problems in the region over the middle and long term". As such the issue between the Turkish government and the Kurds in the North of Syria is not of the level of heatedness that calls for a military war.

B – America has not taken a decision for military land intervention until now and it is still seeking a replacement agent for the current agent Bashar and the sincere people of Syria have caused its efforts to fail up until now whilst we ask Allah for the efforts of the sincere to continue to cause those efforts to be thwarted... In addition the reality attests to Erdogan's shouts and those of his government representing no more than noise without actuality attached to them unless America agreed with or ordered it. The evidences for that are many:

- The rule in Turkey has requested for the establishment of safe or secured regions inside Syria on more than one occasion whilst America has rejected that. Davutoglu mentioned in October 2014 that it is possible to establish a buffer zone by taking the land route 4m and this line starts from the Latakia border and extends to Al-Hiskah and its length reaches 720km whilst its depth is approximately 70km which representing about a third of the Syrian land. America rejected that and so it was not implemented... And more recently the talk resurfaced in respect to Turkey looking to create secure regions in the form of pockets whilst the first pocket stretches between Jarablus and Ain Al-Arab. Local reports have reported that the Turkish President Erdogan is studying the prospect of establishing a buffer zone upon the border as a result of the Kurdistan National Unity party taking over control of the border regions with Turkey. The American response to that was stated by White House Spokesman John Kerry: "The Pentagon and the American army or alliance does not feel the need currently to establish a buffer zone and for that reason there are difficulties. However we understand the Turkish anxiety upon its borders" (Reuters 30/06/2015)...

The Turkish government has attempted to throw off this embarrassment that resulted from this American rejection which came in a decisive fashion and so Ibrahim Qalin, Assistant to the Turkish Prime Minister, said on 30/06/2015: "Interpreting the procedures that we are undertaking and those

which are connected to the border security to be that Turkey will participate in the war are illogical” and he said: “We have not said at any time that we desire a buffer zone but rather we have only said that we want a secure region as a no fly zone. As such secure areas have to be established” (Anatolia agency 30/06/2015). Therefore it did not accomplish secure regions or a buffer zone until now because America did not agree to it!

- In a similar fashion Erdogan’s famous statements in respect to him saying that he would never allow for the repeat of a ‘Second Hama’ while so much time has passed since then hence they are almost forgotten! This is despite the criminal Bashar regime having perpetrated a second, third, and fourth Hama in every town and provincial capital; and continues to kill and destroy with a green light from American, Russian support and direct Iranian involvement alongside its party in Lebanon... Therefore despite all of that, Erdogan and his regime have not done anything because their will is subject to the American will that did not permit his statements to be implemented. They therefore remained as clouds of dust scattered in the wind without quenching the cavalry of Allah where the person says in this current day: ‘Go forth and ride and to Allah seek the return of the glories of Al-Mu’tasim in ‘Amuriyah Ankara and of Al-Faatih in Constantinople!’

5) Therefore it is not intended from this Turkish military build-up for there to be an actual military intervention in Syria unless America has agreed to that when its interest dictates that... The preponderant and most likely view is that this build-up is intended for the local public opinion and that is due to the following considerations:

a) The statements of the Turkish Prime Minister that were mentioned above which were explicit in stating that Turkey does not intend to intervene in Syria and that it considers intervention to be reckless. Nonetheless, it is prepared to confront any potential threat if it comes from Syria. This therefore means that it wants to protect its borders and not to penetrate the borders of Sykes Picot which they aim to preserve as mentioned by its President Erdogan.

b) There are significant voices from inside Turkey that have begun to express fears about the establishment of a Kurdish entity in Syria and these voices view that this will encourage the Kurdish Workers Party to return to military action against Turkey after having ceased their operations since March 2013. This was when the head of the party, Ocalan, called from prison, for a cessation of fighting, a withdrawal of his party’s armed elements to outside of Turkey and for peace talks to commence... As such this military build-up helps to quiet down these voices and calm them...

c) After Erdogan losing his majority in the elections and the increase of opposition voices being critical of Erdogan’s inconsistent stance in relation to Syria in addition the probability of early elections based upon the possibility of the Prime Minister being unable to form a government within the specified lawful time, all of that pushes Erdogan and the Turkish government to put on a show displaying that Turkey is concerned about its security and that it still remains strong. This is due to the government’s belief that this approach will return the public opinion to its side...

In summary, these actions and the build-up are directed towards winning over the internal public opinion and to calm it more than being directed towards an actual military intervention in the North of Syria. However this build-up will actually be directed towards such an intervention in Syria if America has seen that this is in the interest of its plans in Syria... And we ask Allah Al-Qawwi Al-‘Aziz to cause the plans of America and her agents to fail and to turn them upon their heels without attaining any benefit.

26<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan 1436 AH

13/07/2015 CE