
ERDOGAN, AT UNITED NATIONS, DEFENDS TURKEY'S MOVE INTO SYRIA

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President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey defended his decision to send ground troops into Syria on Tuesday, saying that his military's incursion had helped establish peace, balance and stability in a region taken over by hopelessness.

Mr. Erdogan urged world leaders gathered in New York for the United Nations General Assembly to find an immediate political solution to the Syrian crisis that does not tolerate the starve-or-surrender policy employed by the Syrian government against opponents of President Bashar al-Assad.

We cannot lose more time to realize the political resolution process and end the root of the problem, which is the fighting in Syria, Mr. Erdogan said, citing terror and an atmosphere of cruelty.

He was speaking a day after the deadly bombing of a humanitarian convoy that was delivering food and medicine to rebel-held areas near Aleppo, Syria, effectively ending a weeklong cease-fire brokered by the United States and Russia.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey in August. He said the Turkish army's incursion into Syria had helped stabilize the border area in a speech to the United Nations General Assembly on Tuesday. Credit Pool photo by Yasin Bulbul

Turkey has been opposed to the Syrian government's crackdown on the rebels and has sought to remove Mr. Assad from power. It is also engaged in the fight against Islamic State militants in Syria. Mr. Erdogan first sent ground forces, backed by American air power, into Syria last month to fight the Islamic State. They have sought to roll back the territorial gains of Kurdish militants, who are also fighting the Islamic State. Turkey considers the Kurdish militias in Syria a threat, saying they are allied with Kurdish insurgents in Turkey.

On Tuesday, Mr. Erdogan also renewed his request for a no-fly zone over the border area between Turkey and Syria. He has long pushed to establish a safe zone across the border to accommodate Syrian refugees and help curb the flow of migrants through Turkey and on to Europe.

Turkish officials have vowed to continue military operations in the border region with Syria until all threats to its national security are removed. Turkey is also reeling from a failed coup in July that aimed to topple the government of Mr. Erdogan and left at least 240 people dead.

On Tuesday, Mr. Erdogan called on world leaders to take measures against the organization of Fethullah Gulen, a Muslim cleric living in self-imposed exile in the United States whom Mr. Erdogan

has accused of orchestrating the coup. Mr. Gulen has denied involvement.

I am calling, from this podium, to all our friends, to swiftly take the necessary measures against the Gulenist terrorist organization for their own safety and the future of their nations, he said.

It is evident from our experience that if you do not fight the Gulen network at this stage, it may be too late later.

Kaynak/Source: