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# A Sound of Turning Point is Alerting

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## Authors

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## Introduction

A few days ago, 56th US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger<sup>[1]</sup> told the Sunday Times about the fundamental Middle East and Asia issues that have afflicted Europe and the United States. Although he did not go into details, the power struggle escalates again. A significant regional political and security movement is likely to spur new alliances and rivalries that have been working on for several years. However, how difficult will this situation be? And how will it affect Kurdistan? The NATO meeting at the end of this month will answer these questions. Biden's expected visit to the Middle East next month and the fate of the Tehran nuclear talks are important events that can display critical clues about the changes taking place in the region.

## Three Significant Meetings

On the 29th and 30th, NATO leaders will meet in Madrid. <sup>[2]</sup> They are expected to endorse the coalition formation for the next ten years at this meeting. Some NATO officials believe there is a need for a new concept since there were many events and variables, including the Ukrainian-Russian war, the emergence of ISIS in the Middle East, and strategic competitions for the show. Especially over the past ten years, NATO has seemed divided, from the tensions between Turkey and other allies to the Trump administration's disagreement with other countries over the allocation of 2% of GDP to NATO expenditures. There have been many controversies, some of which are still controversial, along with other issues, like the expansion of the alliance. Of course, when Russia has emerged as a dilemma in Europe, NATO members are less divided than ever. If the coalition can achieve greater unity as the world's most important military alliance, it could significantly impact current events in the Middle East. If the leaders of NATO and Turkey agree on their issues, Turkey will gain more support for its policies in the Middle East.

Shortly, this may refer to some events related to the Kurds in West Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Region. The expected, anticipated Turkish operation in Western Kurdistan will be an essential part of the NATO meeting. The situation is challenging for some NATO countries that see the Kurds as local allies in the fight against ISIS. It is also unclear how they will get around Turkey's and the Kurds' intentions. After the Ukrainian war and the intensification of the rivalry between Iran and Israel, Turkey became a more critical factor. After the visit of Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to the region in recent days, the upcoming visit of US President Joe Biden to the Middle East is another important event. In addition, Biden will attend a meeting of the Quadruple Alliance, I2U2, which was established in October 2021, between the United States, India, Israel, and the United Arab Emirates. The alliance works on everyday issues, from food security to defence matters. The visit shows the region's importance to the United States in the struggle between major powers like China and Russia.

However, it may pave the way for a new Arab-Israeli agreement, which has been in the works since the Trump administration, as the Israeli prime minister, has asked us to supervise the Arab-Israeli security coalition, which could mean more American weapons in the region and possibly the installation of Israeli Iron Helmet defence systems in some Gulf countries.

In 2021, Saudi Arabia purchased eight Patriot defence systems from the United States<sup>[3]</sup> to protect itself from Houthi attacks. But it still needs more of these defensive systems. In the 2021 Israeli-Palestinian war, 4,300 rockets were fired at Israel, 680 of which landed in Gaza, and the Iron Helmet defence system shot down 90% of the remaining missiles <sup>[4]</sup>. This system has shown its ability to counter short and medium-range missiles, which may interest Gulf countries

vulnerable to missile and drone attacks. While the United States is competing intensely with China and Russia, Moscow has become a dilemma for Europe. The NATO meeting, Biden's visit, and meeting with I2U2 are like preparing a political security line that extends from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea and from there to the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf, to the Indian Ocean. Despite this alliance's lack of comprehensiveness and unity, the United States is working to change its direction. Looking at what happened last year in regions along the Atlantic, Mediterranean, Red, Arabian, and Indian oceans, we will see the scene of polarization.

Conflicts have subsided in recent years from the North Atlantic to the Mediterranean. From NATO spending disagreements between Europe and the United States to disputes between France, Turkey, Greece, Turkey, Egypt, and Libya, relations between Ankara and Tel Aviv are taking on a new spirit. Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the UAE have found new ties, and Arab-Israeli peace has passed another stage. Egypt, the Emirates, Jordan, and Iraq (the official Iraqi government) have also come close. There is an attempt to restore relations with Syria and more excellent stability in Iraq. It is as if there is a desire to unite some countries that fall within the basic concept of the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean. Away from these countries, competing powers such as Iran, Russia, and China are much closer to each other than they were in previous years.

## **War possibilities and Weapon Competition**

The fate of Tehran's nuclear talks is still unknown. Still, fears of Iran's possession of nuclear power have increased, and Iran has continuously worked to improve its capabilities in the field of missiles and drones. Consequently, Iran's military capabilities have increased, which may increase prosperity among regional, regional alliances. This is in addition to the fact that the Iranian-Israeli conflict has entered a current phase that will likely affect the entire area. [\[5\]](#) Michelle Wallace believes that between 1816 and 1965, arms races turned 23 of the 28 major power struggles into war. Suppose this talk about the Israeli-Iranian model has yet been entirely unrealized. In that case, the arms race, at least between Iran and Israel, changes the level of tension between the two parties and the two alliances.

There is a possibility that the "competition of superiority" between the two parties will turn into a war, or the complexity of the shadow war between them will increase, which will at least extend until now. Its spark has appeared, therefore, far in many areas between Erbil and Istanbul. Since 2007, at least eight key figures in Iran's nuclear program and the Revolutionary Guards have been targeted inside the country, the latest of whom is Revolutionary Guards officer Hassan Sayyad Khodaei. More than six soldiers have been killed in Iran in recent months. In addition, Iran's Parchin nuclear bases and drone centres have been targeted several times.

On the other hand, Iran has repeatedly said it targeted "Israeli headquarters" in the Kurdistan Region. Still, the Kurdistan Region denied this, and the Iraqi government did not agree to Iran's allegations either. On the other hand, the Iranian Foreign Minister's visit to Turkey this month was cancelled due to an Israeli statement that thanked Turkish intelligence for thwarting a plan to attack Israeli citizens in Istanbul.

What is happening? Is Turkey about to make a decision? We must wait for the next few days to find the answer. However, the arguments put forward by some Turkish experts to justify more isolated intervention in Syria [\[6\]](#) apart from the PKK is the Iranian presence in Syria. They accuse Iran and its allies of filling Russian places in Syria after the Russian withdrawal due to the Ukraine war from some areas west of the Euphrates. These areas gradually: "Hezbollah in eastern Homs and Palmyra, and Liwa Abu al-Fadl al-Abbas in the west of the Euphrates and al-Mayadin, and the Fatimids increased their presence in the south of Raqqa and Aleppo." Earlier this month, Çavuşoğlu said during a visit to Israel that the prospect of increased Iranian influence in Syria posed a threat to both countries [\[7\]](#). Given these facts, it is easy to understand why some close media to Iranian officials accused Turkey of stabbing Iran in the back [\[8\]](#) and some Shiite groups in Iraq, similar to the parliament session against the stay of US forces in Iraq in 2020 demanding a meeting on Turkey's attacks

and raised the tone of criticism of Ankara.

## Conclusion

Symptoms of changes are appearing, alliances are being reconfigured, states are in an arming race and these two factors together, if they do not prepare the ground for war, will lead to more tensions, at least in the short term until the balance of power is achieved. This will equally affect Iraq, the Kurdistan Region, and Western Kurdistan.

Political instability in Iraq is likely to continue. The demand for a settlement is increasing, while the pressure of Iran and Shiite groups on the Kurdistan Region are rising too. Naturally, in Iraq and the region, Iran and the Shiite groups need Erbil more than ever. Therefore, they must either find a compromise or exert more pressure. Turkey's expected operation in the West may be related to the NATO meeting and the relations between Ankara and Israel, in other words, Ankara's relations with the Gulf countries. Indications point to an intensive summer full of hot events.

## Footnote

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[1] <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/henry-kissinger-at-99-how-to-avoid-another-world-war-lwt6q5vbq>

[2] [https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/yb22\\_summary\\_en\\_v2.pdf](https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/yb22_summary_en_v2.pdf)

[3] <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-57404516>

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[5] Michael D. Wallace, Arms Races and Escalation: Some New Evidence The Journal of Conflict Resolution

[6] <https://fikirturu.com/jeo-strateji/suriyeye-olasi-operasyon-bolgede-yeni-dengeler-abd-rusya-iran-pyd-neyin-pesinde/>

[7] <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/analiz/turkiye-israil-normallesmesinde-yeni-asama-cavusoglu-nun-ziyareti/2603746>

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