



By: Tomorrow's Affairs Staff

Russia's futile expectation that Turkey will participate in its concept of a new world order



When the Russian aggression against Ukraine ends, Turkey will claim credit for having contributed to the peaceful outcome.

Turkey will be considerably more persistent in competing with other international peacemakers to take credit for solving one of the biggest global crises after the Second World War.

Russia has recognised the potential of Turkey's approach to the Ukrainian crisis, and has been asserting itself as its partner in the policy.

Russia made a mistake and expected too much from Turkey – to be an ally in fabricating a "new world order" in the post-Ukrainian world, as envisioned in Moscow.

"Any negotiation needs to be based on considering Russian interests, Russian concerns. It should be about the principles on which the new world order will be based", said Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Ankara last Friday, where he met with his Turkish counterpart Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

Peacekeeping mediation

Since the start of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, Turkey has shown significant ambition to be the chief mediator in achieving peace.

The first attempt was made on March 10 last year, just three weeks after the start of the aggression, when Turkish Minister Çavuşoğlu organised talks with Russian and Ukrainian Foreign Ministers Lavrov and Dmytro Kuleba in Antalya on the side-lines of the Diplomacy Forum.

Since then, Ankara has held talks with Russian and Ukrainian officials, using its position as a mutually acceptable mediator, a significant and influential neighbour, and a globally respected actor.

Turkey's involvement included the highest diplomatic resources, at the meeting of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Lviv last August.

Peacekeeping efforts have so far failed, but Turkey has earned credit as a mediator in resolving one of the most severe global consequences of Russian aggression.

Together with the UN, Ankara worked out an agreement regarding grain exports through Ukrainian ports on the Black Sea, which remedied the global food supply crisis.

Russia has misunderstood Turkish signals

The latest appearance of the head of Russian diplomacy, Lavrov, in Ankara showed that Russia has misunderstood Turkey's position regarding the Ukraine crisis.

His insistence that the future peace solution for Ukraine is built on the principles of the "new world order", which, according to Moscow, has been emerging, means that Russia considers Turkish mediation as a close alliance and not its neutral mediation.

Lavrov's appearance in Ankara has been the result of Russian wishes. Wishes turned into expectations: for Turkey to fundamentally support its aggression against Ukraine.

Russia took what fitted into its strategic concept from Turkey's position towards the war in Ukraine.

Turkey did not impose economic sanctions on Moscow. It remained open for the travel of Russian citizens and officials, remaining the only immediate traffic corridor to the rest of the world.

Turkey has been an open channel for Russian circumvention of financial sanctions during the critical months of the Russian invasion.

Moscow's much-needed business regarding the import of high-tech equipment, primarily semiconductors, but also oil exports, pass through Turkey.

These moves by Turkey were understood in Moscow to be an open alliance, and proof that one step further with Ankara is possible.

As a result of the war in Ukraine, Turkey has been drawn into the fabrication of a "new world order" combined with its ambition to be a mediator in achieving peace.

A loyal member of NATO

Apart from the assumption of an unquestionable Turkish alliance being wrong, what has been missing in the Russian calculation was the answer to the question: does Turkey really want a redefinition of the existing international order, and particularly, does it want such a "new order" as envisioned by Moscow?

Turkey has been a loyal and active member of NATO for the entire time of Russian aggression against Ukraine, which was viewed in Moscow as an enemy and an "existential

threat".

Turkey actively supplied Ukraine's defence with state-of-the-art drones, which made a crucial difference in the critical initial phase of the war, further forcing Russia to make concessions on grain exports.

Its initial opposition to Finland's membership, and Sweden's entry into NATO, is not siding with Russian interests, as is often interpreted in Moscow, but represents Ankara's bilateral pressure on the Scandinavians, that is, on NATO partners.

Any economic "concession" to Russia has been exclusively tied to Turkey's resolution of internal economic disturbances, meaning using its favourable position to turn the crisis into an opportunity.

At the start of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, Turkey had 85% inflation and 55% in February.

Turkey's privileged position in trade with Russia, primarily in energy products, had a significant part in reducing inflation. The export of Russian oil has been subject to sanctions with a price limit of \$60 per barrel.

Short-sighted expectation

Russia's invitation to Turkey to join in creating a "new world order" is a short-sighted expectation, which loses sight of Turkey's ambitions to continue to play the role of a significant regional factor, with unquestionable loyalty to obligations arising from NATO membership.

The upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections in Turkey on May 14 will not change

this strategic orientation of Turkey, regardless of the outcome.

Even in the case of a change at the top of the state, the policy of the opposition candidate Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu will remain calibrated according to previous measures, both in relation to Russia and the West.

"Relations between Turkey and Russia are now rather asymmetric, since Turkey is very dependent on energy imports from the Russian Federation. We will simply highlight the fact that Turkey is a member of NATO, and in our discussions with Russia, we will certainly seek equal relations", Ünal Çeviköz, an adviser to joint opposition candidate Kılıçdaroğlu, said recently.