

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF WAR**

FROM THE DESK OF SECRETARY OF WARPETE HEGSETH

**TURKISH CIVIL WAR PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT**

All information presented in this report has been verified through thorough assessment by the United States Navy Sixth Fleet.

1. **OVERVIEW**

There are four groups currently involved in the Turkish Civil War. Below are assessments of each group’s strength, capabilities, and motivations, as well as other relevant information.



*Figure 1: Turkish President Erdoğan addresses Turkish soldiers in an undisclosed location.*

1. **TURKISH ARMED FORCES (REPUBLIC OF TURKIŸE)**

* Strength: ~280,000 ACTIVE MEMBERS, RESERVE UNKNOWN
* Capabilities Assessment:
  + The Turkish Armed Forces are equipped with state of the art technologies and greatly outclasses their enemies, which makes them a highly capable group in this conflict. This was observed during Operation Iron Crescent, where Turkish naval forces alone launched a successful invasion against Kurdish-held territory and took back hundreds of square miles of land within days.
  + However, the strength of the army continues to deteriorate as large sums of soldiers, discontent with Erdoğan’s policies, continue to defect to join the Republican Guard. Furthermore, as the Turkish economy grinds to a halt, available spending resources for further weapon and ammunition procurement is slowly lessening. While it is unlikely that the regime will collapse as a result of this conflict, it is nearly guaranteed that further offensive operations will require external assistance. The defense of Ankara is fully within the capabilities of the Turkish Armed Forces.
* Motivations & Cause:
  + The Turkish Armed Forces is motivated by the prospect of national reunification under the Erdoğan regime. Following a series of purges of the military following a failed 2016 coup, Erdoğan’s military high-ranking officials are all devout loyalists. If the Turkish Government were to win this war, it is likely that Erdoğan and his body of followers will impose martial law and rule the nation with an iron fist, transforming the nation into a full autocracy.



*Figure 2: President of the Kurdistan Region Nechirvan Barzani promotes a member of the Kurdish Insurgency to General.*

1. **KURDISH INSURGENCY (NO NATION AFFILIATION)**

* Strength: ~510,000 ACTIVE MEMBERS, RESERVE UNKNOWN
* Capabilities Assessment:
  + The Kurdish Insurgency, while deeply motivated and strongly unified, lack advanced weaponry to effectively counter Turkish attacks. American Intelligence satellite imagery informs us that the Kurdish fighters are adopting a strategy of guerilla warfare, using the harsh geography of the country to their advantage. Since the Insurgency lacks direct trade relations with foreign countries, it is unclear where their weapons were sourced from, suggesting deep ties to the international arms black market.
  + Nonetheless, more and more Kurdish people are joining the Insurgency each day, making it possible but still unlikely for the Insurgency to overwhelm Turkish forces through raw manpower. Interestingly, Kurdish fighters are taking great care when fighting to minimize civilian casualties. Many local Turkish people have responded positively to this, with some going as far as offering their assistance to the Kurdish people rather than the Turkish Armed Forces.
* Motivations & Cause:
  + The Kurdish Insurgency, led by President Nechirvan Barzani, is driven by a desire for an internationally-recognized homeland. American Intelligence believes that the Kurdish Insurgency seeks total victory in the conflict against the Turkish State, as forced capitulation of the State would allow the group to sign peace accords with their ally, the Republican Guard, to acquire territory in the east and use it as settling grounds for their displaced people. If the Kurdish Insurgency were to win this war alongside the Republican Guard, it seems that they would live in peace, given international sovereign recognition. Furthermore, the question of Kurdish statehood would finally be resolved, and the group would have a new place free of discrimination and oppression to live.



*Figure 3: Leader of the Opposition Özgür Özel addresses the nation regarding the Turkish Civil War.*

1. **REPUBLICAN GUARD (REPUBLICAN PEOPLE’S PARTY, TURKIŸE)**

* Strength: ~165,000 ACTIVE MEMBERS, NO RESERVE
* Capabilities Assessment:
  + The Republican Guard is almost entirely fueled by discontent defectors of the Turkish Armed Forces, putting their strategic capabilities at a level similar to that of the Turkish Government. Furthermore, most of their equipment is formerly of that belonging to the Turkish Government, as the armament was seized during the taking of several Turkish military installations in the south. However, the Guard is still extremely outnumbered, making it more than challenging for them to win battles against the Turkish Armed Forces alone. Therefore, the survival of the Republican Guard almost entirely depends on the survival of the Kurdish Insurgency, as the dual-front war structure forces Turkish resources to be split.
  + Nonetheless, the Republican Guard is gaining significant ground and continues to grow stronger day by day. As more defectors join the Guard, their capabilities increase. However, somewhat heavy losses on both sides of the war means that this momentum is poised to fade soon. It is possible that the Republican Guard will seek out peace talks with the Turkish Government, but it is unlikely that the peace discussions will be successful or have meaningful long-term impacts.
* Motivations & Cause:
  + The Republican Guard’s motives stem from a political background surrounding President Erdoğan’s authoritative policies that has rocked the nation to its core. Despite constant civil objection and opposition to the President’s policies, most efforts failed due to an increasingly corrupt and faltering government structure. The Republican Guard and the Republican People’s Party seeks to establish a new Turkish State based on freedoms and liberties not unlike the United States Constitution.
  + U.S. Intelligence also reports that the Republican Guard’s leadership is attempting to keep Turkish Government leadership alive so all leaders can be tried for their crimes in the new state. According to one source, during a closed-doors Guard leadership meeting, one Army General commented, “the Ottoman Republic [namesake for Rep. Guard’s new nation] will rise above our adversaries, and the dawn will bring new light to overcome the darkness that has shadowed our people for so long. In the name of *özgürlük* [liberty], we fight!”



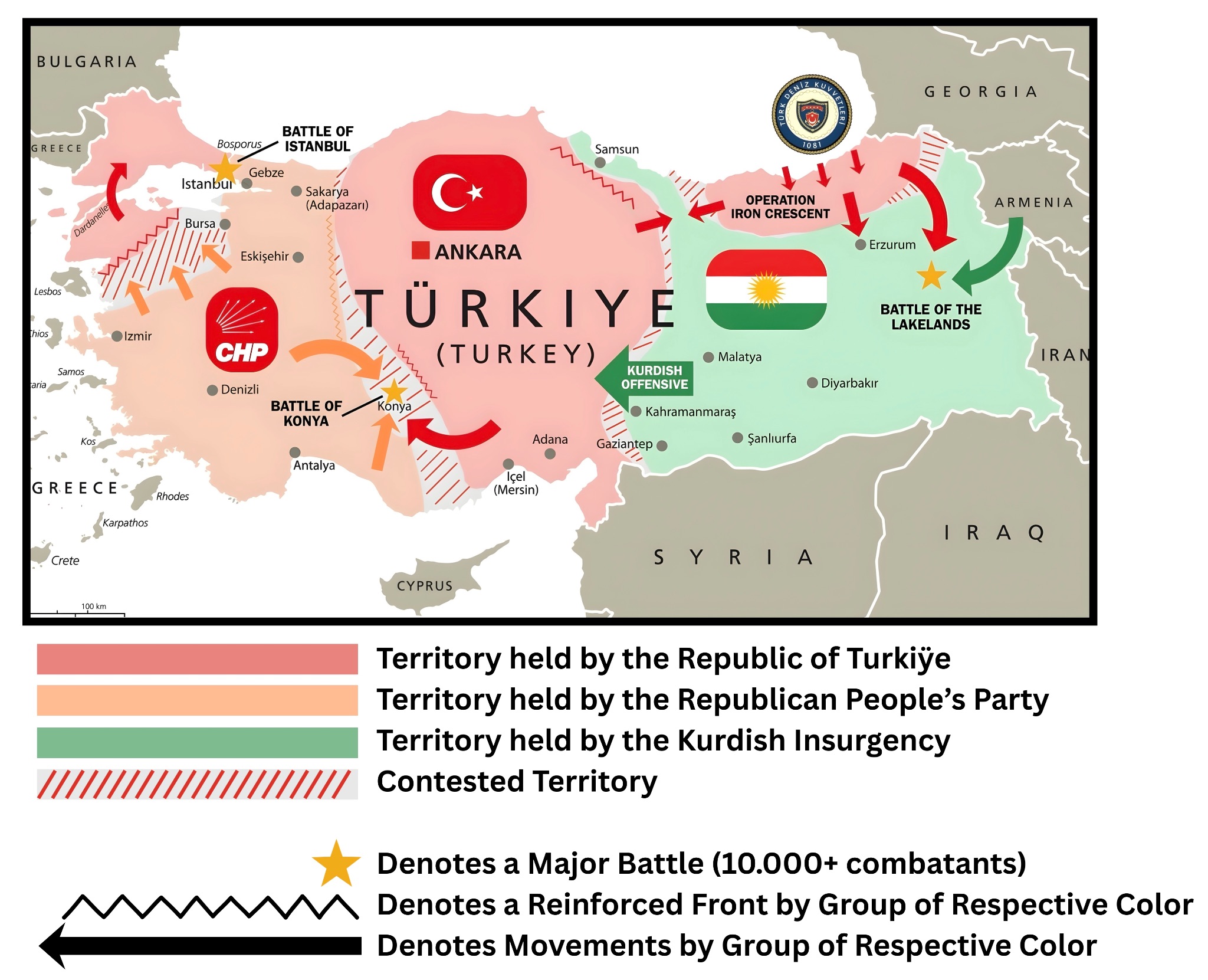
*Figure 4: Bulgarian and Greek soldiers meet with journalists prior to the evacuation of Turkish troops across the Dardanelles Strait.*

1. **GREEK & BULGARIAN ASSISTIVE FORCES (REPUBLICS OF GREECE & BULGARIA)**

* Strength: ~7,000 SOLDIERS DEPLOYED
* Capabilities Assessment:
  + While both countries have allocated a significant number of soldiers, their capabilities remain unclear. The Turkish Armed Forces seem to be employing this assistance primarily in evacuating Turkish soldiers and civilians from the western front. However, Greek and Bulgarian special forces units have been spotted in and around Istanbul, with one unit turning up near Konya, and 5 Greek soldiers were captured in Antalya, suggesting deep involvement in the conflict with attempts to assassinate the leader of the Republican Guard, Özgür Özel.
  + It should be noted that both of these nations are capable of allocating more resources if necessary.
* Motivations & Cause:
  + It seems that both nations are motivated by the fact that the conflict is at their doorstep, and that a quick conflict resolution would restrict damage done to their countries, as well as the spillover of this conflict into other nations. Their alliance to the Turkish Armed Forces, however, seems exceptionally strong, and U.S. Intelligence is unable to offer a reason why.

1. **BREAKDOWN OF MILITARY OPERATIONS**

The conflict in Turkiÿe is quite convoluted, with no clear reporting on how the conflict is progressing. Below is a map of the conflict assembled by American Intelligence based on what we know to be true.



*Figure 5: General Overview of Turkish Civil War, last updated on 25 December 2025.*

| **KEY:**  RED - Territory Known to be Held by the Turkish Armed Forces/Republic of Turkiÿe  ORANGE - Territory Known to be Held by the Republican Guard (CHP)  GREEN - Territory Known to be Held by the Kurdish Insurgency  GREY & DASHED RED LINES - Contested territory  STAR - Major Ongoing Battle, Siege, or Other Conflict  ARROWS - Movements by Armed Forces of Respective Color  TRIANGLE WAVEFORM (ZIG-ZAG) - Known Defensive Line of Respective Color  \**The Blue & Yellow Circular Emblem in the top right is the Turkish Navy, part of the Turkish Armed Forces.* |
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As of the time of this report’s publishing, there are several battles and operations currently underway. Below is a brief overview of each battle’s significance and size, based on region.

**EASTERN FRONT:**

*Combatants: Republic of Turkiÿe, Kurdish Insurgency.*

* **OPERATION IRON CRESCENT:**
  + MISSION OBJECTIVE (TURKISH): Turkish Counteroffensive against Kurdish Insurgency forces.
  + OPERATION OVERVIEW:
    - Turkish counteroffensive into Kurdish-held territory, with goals of severing the Kurdish connection to Samsun in the north in order to reconnect with Turkish Armed Forces located near Ankara, and the taking of Erzurum in the east. Forces from this operation attempted to flank Kurdish forces in Erzurum but accidentally met Kurdish forces in rural territory, leading to the ongoing Battle of the Lakelands.
    - Most of the Turkish Armed Forces’s naval strength is allocated here, providing support from the Black Sea as well as assistance with the transport of troops from Ankara to the operation zone.
* **BATTLE OF THE LAKELANDS:**
  + MISSION OBJECTIVE (TURKISH): Victory in the battle to secure Erzurum and continue advancement into Kurdish territory.
  + MISSION OBJECTIVE (KURDISH): Defense of Kurdish territory against Operation Iron Crescent to allow for the development of strong supply lines for Kurdish Insurgency fighters.
  + OPERATION OVERVIEW:
    - The battle currently seems to be at a standstill, with neither side making many successful pushes forward. However, in the past few hours, Turkish forces have successfully pushed through Kurdish defensive lines, posing a significant threat to the viability of the Kurdish operation. Victory for the Turkish forces would allow for all Kurdish supply lines to be cut, potentially forcing the entire Kurdish offensive to halt and turn back. Victory for the Kurdish fighters keeps Turkish forces at bay along the north coast.
    - It is likely that Kurdish victory here will provide the Insurgency with enough time to march on Ankara before the Turkish Armed Forces can regain enough strength to launch another counteroffensive.
* **KURDISH OFFENSIVE:**
  + MISSION OBJECTIVE (KURDISH): Push through Turkish territory before meeting with Republican Guard fighters in the south. Joint March on Ankara to come after.
  + OPERATION OVERVIEW:
    - The Kurdish Insurgency is pushing strong through Turkish-occupied territory in the south and is meeting little resistance. U.S. Intelligence is unsure why the Turkish Government is failing to effectively respond to the offensive. It is highly probable that Kurdish fighters will successfully break through Turkish territory and meet Republican Guard forces in Konya, forcing the Turkish surrender of the city.
    - This is the main fighting force of the Kurdish Insurgency, with little fighters being allocated elsewhere (exception being the Battle of the Lakelands). Most Kurdish-held territory has been assessed to be weakly supported, meaning that Turkish Armed Forces personnel are easily able to penetrate Kurdish defensive lines. Kurdish forces at Samsun seem to be almost lost as Operation Iron Crescent attempts to sever their connection to the main fighting group.

**WESTERN FRONT:**

*Combatants: Republic of Turkiÿe with Greek and Bulgarian Assistance, Republican Guard.*

* **BATTLE OF KONYA:**
  + MISSION OBJECTIVE (TURKISH): Defense of southern Turkish-held territory and prevention of successful Republican Guard breakthrough.
  + MISSION OBJECTIVE (REP. GUARD): Taking of Konya before advancing through Turkish territory in order to rendezvous with Kurdish Insurgency forces near Adana.
  + OPERATION OVERVIEW:
    - Republican Guard forces originally intended to break through Turkish-held territory with a lightning-fast pace. However, this proved unsuccessful due to previously unknown strong Turkish defensive lines that prevented advancement. Therefore, Republican Guard forces turned south to meet with reinforcements in Konya. Turkish Intelligence discovered the plan and sent several thousand soldiers to intercept the weakened Republican Guard forces in Konya, plunging the city into a devastating battle. Republican Guard forces are receiving more and more reinforcements, but it is still unclear if they can successfully beat the might of the Turkish Armed Forces. There is no clear winner in this battle yet.
* **BATTLE OF ISTANBUL:**
  + MISSION OBJECTIVE (REP. GUARD): Taking of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits to secure control over entry points of the Black Sea. Victory most likely ensures surrender of stranded Turkish Armed Forces west of Istanbul, as well as the exit of Greece and Bulgaria from the war through peace agreements.
  + MISSION OBJECTIVE (TURKISH): Defense of Istanbul metropolitan area to maintain control of Bosphorus Strait and continue counteroffensive operations against the Republican Guard in the west through the usage of large military arsenals throughout the city. Victory most likely ensures the usage of Istanbul as a military stronghold.
  + OPERATION OVERVIEW:
    - Perhaps one of the only urban centers of warfare in the 21st century, the Istanbul Metropolitan Area houses more than 15 million people, all of which are now subject to one of the most decisive fights in this conflict. Both sides have struggled to make significant advancements as the Bosphorus Strait divides the two legions. Satellite imagery highlights the devastation of the city, plotting the estimated death toll at well over one hundred thousand thus far. High-rise structures are falling to missile strikes daily, and minarets from Istanbul’s vast collection of mosques are now used as sniper vantage points. The city has been almost entirely cut off from external access. U.S. Intelligence reports that Turkish Armed Forces personnel seem to act without much regard to civilians caught in active crossfire. Those lucky enough to be found on the outer edges of the city, however, are being evacuated. See below.
    - Civilian evacuations to Greece and Bulgaria are underway by Turkish forces in the west, whereas the Republican Guard in the east is currently too weak to allocate significant resources towards relocation efforts.
* **TURKISH EVACUATION ACROSS THE DARDANELLES:**
  + MISSION OBJECTIVE (TURKISH): Relocation of stranded Turkish troops forced out of the western country back to territory firmly held by the Turkish, Greek, and Bulgarian militaries. Seeks redeployment of relocated soldiers into the Battle of Istanbul.
  + OPERATION OVERVIEW:
    - The remainder of the Turkish Armed Forces that fought against the Republican Guard has been pushed back towards the Greek and Bulgarian borders. Supply lines for Turkish forces have been significantly damaged. Commands for a full evacuation of territory southwest of Istanbul have been issued, and Greek & Bulgarian forces are assisting with the evacuation. Although the Turkish defensive line near Bursa is heavily fortified, the Republican Guard is closing in on the territory extremely fast and may take the evacuated land within hours.

1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & ASSESSMENT OF U.S. POSITION**

Given the sensitive nature of the conflict, it is in the best interest of the United States to find a comprehensive solution that both advances U.S. regional security initiatives and bolsters allied support. Critically, any drastic action has a nonzero chance of having large repercussions for the War in Ukraine, which must also be monitored carefully. Deterring further conflict in Ukraine may be achieved by ensuring NATO remains unified. However, support for the Turkish Government by the American military may have unintended long-term side effects as well.

The situation must be handled with care, with priority given to maintaining relationships with our allies and deterring further escalation. The rebel groups fight for values that more closely align with U.S. interests, but fighting against the Turkish Government may have unforeseen consequences. Conversely, fighting alongside the Turkish Government may bring a quicker end to the war, but may quickly worsen the situation in the War in Ukraine (given Putin and Erdoğan’s talks on December 28), and may lead to the establishment of an authoritative state, contrary to Erdoğan’s statement. The only thing we know for certain is that nothing we know is certain.

**ASSESSMENT: HIGH RISK TO EUROPEAN STABILITY. MUST BE ADDRESSED IMMEDIATELY. U.S. MILITARY INTERVENTION HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.**