

Three Lessons from the NATO Summit in Lithuania

News:

Reuters reported on 10 July that “NATO leaders gather in Vilnius this week aiming to overcome divisions on Ukraine’s push for a path to membership and end Turkey’s block on Sweden joining the transatlantic military alliance.”

Comment:

The NATO summit was held in Vilnius, Lithuania on 11-12 July 2023. Annual Summit meetings are often held at key moments in the alliance’s development. They are not regular meetings, but important junctures in the alliance’s decision-making process.

The NATO summit was earmarked as a key strategic event where the so called “free world leaders” would come together with a definitive stance against Russia and offer Ukraine a passage into NATO. However, this did not come to pass and the fear of antagonizing Russia and escalating tensions further resulted in no clear roadmap for Ukraine to enter NATO.

However, Sweden was inducted into the alliance after Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan agreed to withdraw his objections. Erdogan also pushed for Turkey’s case to enter the EU and was assured of Sweden’s support in this matter. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said in a news conference, “I’m glad to announce ... that President Erdogan has agreed to forward the accession protocol for Sweden to the grand national assembly as soon as possible, and work closely with the assembly to ensure ratification.”

There are three key lessons for the Muslim Ummah from this summit which are important to discuss here.

First: The Western alliance which seems united and strong on the outside, has a number of strategic fault lines and fissures. While the United States pursues its own agenda of crippling Russia at the expense of Ukraine and Europe at large, Washington is also weakening Europe and making it more reliant on her energy, as the Russian energy supplies dwindle, causing massive energy price hike in European markets. This is in direct conflict with the national interests of European powers like England, France and Germany. This presents a major fault line in NATO, which can be exploited by the future ideological Islamic state, which is on the horizon.

Second: The eagerness of Turkey to look West rather than East towards the Muslim World, where her historical and natural strength lies, shows the weakness and short sightedness of the Turkey’s leadership in general, and President Erdogan in particular. Turkey has been shunned and humiliated by the West and EU a number of times in the past, as it kept knocking and begging at their doorstep. Europe’s rejection of Turkey’s admission in to EU is due to Turkey’s Ottoman past and the rise of Islamic sentiment and resurgence in Turkey, something the West cannot overlook or forget. Even until this day, Europe remembers the conquests led by Ottoman Khulafah (caliphs), as the Ottoman army moved from one Western capital to another, bringing them under the shade of the Islamic caliphate.

Third: At a time when the Holy Quran was burnt and desecrated in Sweden and the sentiments of the Muslim Ummah were deeply hurt, Turkey and Erdogan welcomed Sweden into NATO. Some in the Muslim world view Erdogan as a voice for Islam and Muslims and see Erdogan as an example for the whole Muslim world to follow. To them, this should serve as an eye-opener and a clear sign that he is no different than any other ruler in the Muslim world. It is only the Islamic Khilafah and the Khaleefah of the Muslims who shall protect the honor and dignity of Islam and the sanctity of the Quran and the Prophet (saw). It was none other than the Ottoman Khaleefah Sultan Abdul Hamid the Second who threatened to launch a global call of Jihad against the French and the British if they dared to desecrate the honor of the Prophet (saw). How tragic that Erdogan is eager to shake the hands of the same West whilst claiming to be a descendent of the Ottoman Caliphs. It is not the time to submit to humiliation and retreat before the kuffar, but to advance to victory and dominance through the Nasr of Allah (swt).

Allah (swt) said, **﴿فَتَرَى الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ يُسَارِعُونَ فِيهِمْ يَقُولُونَ نَخْشَى أَنْ تُصِيبَنَا دَائِرَةٌ فَعَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِالْفَتْحِ أَوْ أَمْرٍ مِنْ عِنْدِهِ فَيُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا أَسْرَوْا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ نَادِمِينَ﴾** “You will see those in whose hearts is sickness racing towards them. They say, “We fear the wheel of fate may turn against us.” But perhaps Allah (swt) will bring about victory, or some event of His making; thereupon they will regret what they concealed within themselves” [Surah Al-Maidah 5:52].

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