

Putin's Eurasian Alliance

by Dean Andromidas

Aug. 21—In a discussion of the recent sudden, dramatic rapprochement between Russia and Turkey, Lyndon LaRouche maintains that this represents Turkey's joining the alliance of Eurasian nations created under the leadership of Russian President Vladimir Putin, and goes well beyond simply the improvement of bilateral relations. President Putin's strategy dovetails with China's "One Belt One Road," New Silk Road policy. Putin has created a new reality across Eurasia, a reality the Europeans are failing to recognize, but which cannot be reversed.

The meeting between Russian President Putin and his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Aug. 9 in St. Petersburg, marked Turkey's joining this new reality. The meeting laid to rest the eight-month crisis caused by Turkey's shooting down of a Russian warplane operating over Syria, and put bilateral relations well on the road to deepening economic, political, and strategic cooperation.

Erdogan described that meeting as a "milestone," and told reporters afterwards that the two leaders were committed to increasing trade and tourism, and had prioritized the Turkish Stream Gas Pipeline and the Akkuyu nuclear power station. He added that they had discussed using their own currencies for bilateral trade. Erdogan was accompanied by a large economic and business delegation which held a meeting parallel to the summit.

The two presidents agreed that a High Level Strategic Council (HLSC) of their two countries would meet



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Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (left) and Russian President Vladimir Putin at their Aug. 9 summit at St. Petersburg.

in December in St. Petersburg. They also committed themselves to expand cooperation in the defense-industry sector.

On the crucial question of ending the Syria war, they created a tripartite mechanism of high-level representatives of each country's intelligence agency, foreign ministry, and defense ministry, which held its first meeting on Aug. 11. They also established a hotline between the Chiefs of Staff of their respective armed forces.

The Putin-Erdogan Summit occurred within 24 hours of the historic Aug. 8 summit among President Putin; the President of Iran, Hassan Rouhani; and the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, whose discussions centered on the urgency of making the International North-South Transport Corridor operational, which will create a rail link from Iran's Persian Gulf port at Bandar Abbas to Europe, through Russia and



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Russian President Putin, Iran President Hassan Rouhani, and Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev meeting at the historic Aug. 8 trilateral summit in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan. This will facilitate the ability of South Asian countries—India, in particular—and the Southeast Asian nations, to skirt the Suez Canal and send their cargoes more directly by sea and rail to Central Asia, Russia, and Europe. This route will reduce transportation time by almost one-third.

Following the three Presidents’ summit, the three foreign ministers, Azerbaijan’s Elma Mammadyarov, Iran’s Mohammed Javad Zarif, and Russia’s Sergey Lavrov, held a joint press conference where Mammadyarov made the point that Azerbaijan’s unresolved Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with Armenia impedes the development of the North South Corridor. But now, “opportunities were created for the settlement of [the] Nagorno-Karabakh conflict after the meeting of Presidents in St. Petersburg,” he said.

As a result of the Russo-Turkish Summit, Turkey will be able to help play a role in resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Turkey historically has had poor relations with Armenia, and has backed Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, but now Turkey will be sitting at the same table to help resolve it. For Turkey, the resolving of this conflict would open the East-West rail link to Turkey and the Black Sea, which would in-

tersect the North South Corridor via Armenia,— whose rail links to Turkey and Azerbaijan have been cut because of this conflict.

In further diplomatic steps to begin implementing this Eurasian alliance, the foreign ministers of Iran and Turkey have exchanged visits to Ankara and Tehran respectively, where both the Syrian and the Nagorno-Karabakh issues were raised, and the groundwork for a future summit of the Presidents of Turkey, Iran, and Azerbaijan was laid.

Kazakhstan, one of the most important countries in Central Asia and a member of the Eurasian Economic Union (along with Russia, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Belarus), is also playing a major role in this Eurasian alliance. Kazakhstan President Nasultan Nazarbayev was a key actor in mediating the Russo-Turkish rapprochement. He became the first head of state to visit Turkey after the coup-attempt, during which he discussed the possibility of Turkey joining the Eurasian Economic Union.

Thus a process has moved forward that opens the promise to create an arc of peace and development from Syria and Turkey, deep into Central Asia and on into China.