

When Russia Howls, Turkey Moves

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After a decade of trying to become a Middle East player in its own right, Turkey may now find comfort in the NATO alliance when faced with the historic Russian menace.

Russo-phobia has acted as a key catalyst for Turkish political maneuvering for hundreds of years. That is why Ankara's recent downing of a Russian jet, which only briefly violated Turkish airspace, makes more sense under scrutiny.

As a resurgent military power, Russia has been violating air spaces of NATO allies regularly, from Estonia to the United Kingdom, but none of these countries has shot down a Russian plane. Closer to home, Russia is not the only country that violates Turkish airspace. Greek and Turkish jets regularly violate each other's airspace, yet Turkey is not shooting down any Greek planes. In other words, there is something uniquely disturbing in the Turkish decision to shoot down the Russian plane: This is neither routine Turkish behavior, nor a typical NATO reaction.

Furthermore, with history in mind, Ankara ought to be aware that the odds that it could win a military confrontation with Russia on its own are close to nil...

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