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Springhill Group: Turkey by Springhill Group

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â€œNo one should be deceived by our cool-headed stance. Our acting with common sense should not be perceived as a weakness,â€• said Turkey Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Turkeyâ€™s brief response to last weekâ€™s incident seems to show that a violent retaliation from their si is not happening, although Prime Minister Erdogan has warned that Syria must not test his resolve.

Prime Minister Erdogan announced that Turkey had altered its military policies of engagement toward Syria.

In his speech to the legislative body also attended by Arab diplomats, Erdogan said, â€œEvery military element that approaches the Turkish border from Syria in a manner that constitutes a security risk or danger would be considered as a threat and would be treated as a military target.â€•

Border violations is not something new as the Turks have claimed that Syrian helicopters themselves had repeatedly violated Turkeyâ€™s airspace, without the latter dealing a hostile response in return. The two nations are sharing a 910-kilometer frontier.

According to Syria, Turkeyâ€™s plane was flying at low altitude and high speed, thus violating their airspace so one of their officers shot it down using an anti-aircraft fire. On the other hand, Turkey claims that their plane was fired at over international waters following a brief and unintentional stay in the Syrian space. The two pilots of the Turkish aircraft are still missing.

NATO has supported Turkeyâ€™s version of the story and condemned Syria for shooting the plane, though it did not mention any military action for fear of a conflict that could trigger a wider war. During their conference in Springhill Group, NATO officials referred to the event as â€œanother example of the Syrian authoritiesâ€™ disregard for international norms, peace and security, and human life.â€•

A senior diplomat of NATO commented that even if the Turks were indeed spying, Syriaâ€™s reaction is still out of place. â€œWhen this happens between neighboring countries, you give a warning and then send up interceptors. You donâ€™t just shoot down the plane.â€•

Meanwhile, Europe and the US seem to be avoiding a direct involvement in a military confrontation with Syria.

â€•We would like to see more pressure from our allies, particularly more leadership from the United States,â€• said a senior official from Turkey.

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