

Headlines:

- **Erdogan's Hypocrisy**
- **EU Military Takes Shape**
- **Lebanon's Hariri's Mystery becomes Clearer**

Details:

Erdogan's Hypocrisy

Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan took swipes at US and Russian intervention in Syria on November 13, and said if the countries truly believed a military solution was impossible, they should withdraw their troops. Russian President Vladimir Putin and his US counterpart Donald Trump said in a joint statement on Saturday they would continue to fight in Syria, while agreeing that there was no military solution to the country's wider, six-year-old conflict. "I am having trouble understanding these comments," Erdogan told reporters before flying to Russia for talks with Putin. "If a military solution is out of the question, then those who say this should pull their troops out...Then a political method should be sought in Syria, ways to head into elections should be examined... We will discuss these with Putin," he said. Later, after more than four hours of talks with Putin in the southern Russian resort of Sochi, Erdogan said the two leaders had agreed to focus on a political solution to the conflict. Neither leader went into more specific detail. Asked if the two discussed Erdogan's earlier comments, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the talks were about more complex issues which could not be made public, according to RIA news agency. "The United States said it would completely leave Iraq, but it didn't. The world is not stupid, some realities are being told differently and practised differently," he said. He said the United States had 13 bases in Syria and Russia had five.

EU Military Takes Shape

Most of the governments in the European Union have signed a deal binding themselves to joint military projects and increases in military spending, with an eye toward increased integration of the union-wide military forces. 23 nations signed the deal, while Denmark, Portugal, Ireland, and Malta will remain outside of the pact. Britain, which is in the process of withdrawing from the EU, will similarly not be involved. Brexit is likely a big part of why this effort, which was long sought by France and Germany as a way to spread weapons development costs to smaller EU nations, finally got through at all, as Britain had long been resistant to the effort. The expectation is that this will eventually give EU-wide forces the capacity for overseas operations.

Lebanon's Hariri's Mystery becomes Clearer

Muhammed bin Salman's drastic campaign to consolidate power in Saudi Arabia continues to make headlines, the fate and events that led to Lebanon's Prime Minister Saad Hariri's detention have become clearer. Saad al-Hariri, was called very suddenly to Saudi Arabia. He cancelled all his appointments and went on Thursday 2nd November. We now know he was told to come alone and not bring any assistants, cabinet members or bodyguards. The day before Saad Hariri was called to Saudi Arabia, he was speaking positively of the Lebanese government. There was no discord within the government. On Saturday 4 November, there was a taped broadcast in which he stated that he was resigning as prime minister. This has never happened in the history of Lebanon i.e. a resignation submitted from outside the country. Hariri was detained in the Carlton Hotel along with other members of the royal family who were victims of the purge. Whilst it remains to be seen if Hariri has anything to do with the clamp down in Saudi, what is certain is this act will have a huge impact on Lebanon's weak coalition government.