

## [Transcript] The Intelligence from The Economist / The Intelligence: Israel's Gaza offensive

Where will M&A be at the start of 2024? Listen to Strategic Alternatives, the M&A podcast series from RBC Capital Markets, to get fresh insights on the driving forces behind M&A activity, the factors that are impacting future deal flow across sectors, and how companies are preparing for a potential surge in M&A activity. Listen and subscribe to Strategic Alternatives, the RBC M&A podcast today, wherever you get your podcasts.

Hello and welcome to The Intelligence from The Economist. I'm your host, Jason Palmer. Every weekday, we provide fresh perspective on the events shaping your world. Celebrations in Turkey this weekend marked a hundred years since Kemal Ataturk created the modern Turkish Republic. Many view the country's current leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan as a kind of anti-Ataturk. We discover it's more complicated than that. And we pay tribute to the unifying force of a simple marking of time, the Canadian broadcaster's daily long dash. First up though.

In Gaza over the weekend, Israel's offensive expanded enormously. Israel's army said it had carried out strikes on 600 sites in 24 hours. Authorities in Gaza accused the Israelis of targeting civilians, including striking near one of the main remaining operational hospitals. The Palestinian Red Crescent posted a video to social media today to show how close the strikes have come. Doctors have been told to evacuate but with hospitals acting as safe haven for both patients and thousands of displaced civilians, evacuation is all but impossible. The UN's Palestinian Refugees Agency said that civil order was starting to break down. Yesterday desperate civilians raided UN food warehouses.

The meanwhile, a spokesman for the Israeli army said the war would be long and would require resilience, faith and patience. It all speaks to a very different kind of offensive than many had predicted. There was a great deal of anticipation over what sort of attack Israel might conduct on Gaza and I think a lot of people expected a D-Day type assault, a huge division level attack on Gaza all out completely across the Gaza Strip. That is not what we're seeing. We're seeing in the last few days a ground invasion that is much more gradual, much more cautious, it's coming in stages and I think most importantly this is an invasion that's not going to last days, not a couple of weeks like the previous invasions of Gaza but potentially months, maybe even longer than that. And what have we seen so far, what is it that gives you that impression? We're only a few days in, Jason, but on Friday we saw the Israel Defense Forces, the IDF enter Gaza from two points that was around Beit Hanun which is a town in the very north of the Strip and Buraj which is about the midpoint of the Strip, it's about 45-50 kilometers long as a territory. We saw airstrikes and artillery providing cover for very sizable numbers of tanks and other armored vehicles, I could see a very substantial number of these on footage, entering Gaza at these points. And there were a couple of distinctive things, these incursions were much bigger than the raids of the previous two nights which we'd seen. And those raids were in and out, they lasted a few hours before troops came back to Israel. This time the Israeli forces have remained inside Gaza, they're still there as we understand, and they have established I guess what we could call strongholds within Gaza as a kind of base for further operations. And so what does that tell you about the overall strategy? In the last few days, Jason, our colleagues in Israel have been talking to officials, IDF officials, other officials, and they say, look, the aim of the war is unchanged. They say it remains to

## [Transcript] The Intelligence from The Economist / The Intelligence: Israel's Gaza offensive

isolate and destroy Hamas, its military infrastructure, and to remove it from control of Gaza's government ultimately. But the tactics are slightly different, they're saying a full-scale ground invasion might have played into Hamas' hands, and so that's why we are seeing this more staged approach. And if you look at the two locations where Israel came in on Friday, in the north and south of Gaza City, which is basically the Gaza Strip's biggest urban area, that suggests a gradual plan to encircle the territory. There's an element here, I think, of siege tactics, of trying to starve and squeeze Hamas out of their tunnels, out of their strongholds inside the city, not by storming across it, but by upping the pressure gradually in a way that essentially slows things down. And we'll come to what that means, as you say, for Hamas and the tunnels, but what about for the civilians at the middle of all of this? Well, it's catastrophic. Urban wars are always extremely damaging to cities and to the people who live in them. And I can give you examples from Fallujah, Ramadi in Iraq, Mosul, where Islamic State was bedded down, Marawi in the Philippines, so many different examples, and these have all been devastating for civilians. What I think makes Gaza unique in a certain way is just how difficult it is for civilians to get away. Of course, the Israelis have told them to move to the south. That isn't easy because the south is still being struck by airstrikes. The south is still in the midst of a humanitarian crisis. The UN has sounded the alarm over food, over supplies, over fuel. And I think you see a lot of this in the dilemma over the Al-Quds hospital in Gaza City. The Israeli military told the hospital to evacuate on Sunday. Doctors say that's impossible. We cannot move hundreds of patients, many of whom are effectively plugged into ICU. The Israelis say, I think with some justification that Hamas uses the site as a military stronghold, they say they have tunnels underneath the hospital and they have a command and control

node underneath it. And under international law, that makes the hospital a potentially legitimate military target. But it doesn't mean that the IDF can simply strike it at will. They have obligations to make sure that there are precautions taken, that civilians can get away, and ultimately moving a full-fledged hospital out of a city. That's just not something that can be done in days. It just isn't. And what about the suggestion that it is connected to a command and control center for the tunnels? How much do the tunnels of Hamas figure into the overall plan here? Tunnels are really important to Hamas. These things began in the 1980s, where Bedouin groups in the south of Gaza and in the Sinai Peninsula on the Egyptian side used tunnels to basically smuggle in material, construction material, arms, food, other kinds of things. But the tunnels had other uses. And what we saw in the 2000s was Hamas massively expanding its tunnel network. I think by 2014, so about 10 years ago, Hamas employed about 900 full-time staff for tunneling. And the whole tunnel network is now about 1,300 tunnels. The way to think about this, I think, is that if the Israeli way of war is dependent on complete supremacy of the air, going underground is a way for a weaker militant group to basically evade that surveillance and evade those precision bombs. It's a method of trying to undercut Israel's control over the surface and the airspace of Gaza. And we saw this in the last major campaign in 2014, where these tunnels provided hiding places, they could be used for ambushes against Israeli incursions, and they also allowed cross-border raids into Israel itself for attacks and abductions. So will this invasion then be fought from the air and on the ground with the attendant civilian cost, as we were talking about before? Will this be fought in and for the tunnels?

## [Transcript] The Intelligence from The Economist / The Intelligence: Israel's Gaza offensive

It'll be fought everywhere. And if you talk to scholars of urban warfare, they say the urban battlefield has these different levels to it. There's the air above, there's the buildings extending up into the sky, there's the streets, and then there's underground. And all of these layers are connected, not just physically, but also, you know, electromagnetically in terms of radio signals, in terms of communications, in terms of information operations. And if you fight only on one of these layers, only in the air or just on the streets, you get a kind of empty battlefield effect, because the enemy just moves to the other networks. So the question of tunnels is going to be pivotal to this campaign, because if Israel really wants to destroy Hamas's military infrastructure, it will have to destroy a large chunk of those 1300 tunnels. And in 2014, it only destroyed 32.

But from the start of this conflict, there has been the suggestion that Israel would want to get in and get out fast, essentially to get ahead of international pressure on humanitarian grounds, for example. I think this is exactly the dilemma. On the one hand, Israel has been constrained by the fact that there's still more than 200 hostages who were abducted on

October 7th inside Gaza, and it has to move cautiously. It's facing American pressure. America didn't like the initial Israeli war plan and encouraged Israel to proceed much more cautiously, much more slowly. And the presence of so many Palestinian civilians is another problem, because the Israelis know that the harder they go in, the more casualties they cause, the more international pressure they face. Around a third of civilians in northern Gaza have not fled south, so there's still a lot of people left. But on the other hand, a long siege campaign that is designed to starve Hamas to fuel for its generators and force it out of its tunnels, that has other problems. That's also going to cause humanitarian suffering in a different way. It's going to eke out the campaign and elongate it in a way that allows diplomatic pressure in Europe and in other parts of the world to mount. And ultimately, Israel isn't just thinking of military considerations. For example, one of its aims at the end of this campaign is to maintain its relationship to Arab governments who have been normalizing their ties to Israel. Some in Israel would like Arab states to effectively help run Gaza after this war is over, and perhaps even to facilitate a new peace process. That's not going to happen if Israel is in this long quagmire, stuck in Gaza for years, having completely destroyed the strip and its infrastructure in a long siege. This ground invasion is trying to do so many things at once, to destroy Hamas, to protect the hostages, to keep America on side, to try to keep civilian casualties in check, and to try to keep space for diplomacy. It just can't do all of these things. And I think we're going to see some of these Dilaners come to the surface as the invasion plays out in the days ahead. Tjonk, thanks very much for your time. Thanks very much, Jason.

Where will M&A be at the start of 2024? Listen to Strategic Alternatives, the M&A podcast series from RBC Capital Markets to get fresh insights on the driving forces behind M&A activity, the factors that are impacting future deal flow across sectors, and how companies are preparing for a potential surge in M&A activity. Listen and subscribe to Strategic Alternatives, the RBC M&A podcast today, wherever you get your podcasts.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan later wretched at the mausoleum of General Kemal Ataturk, the founding father of the country, before making a speech to mark the occasion.

He spoke about Turkey's thousands of years of tradition, and that the Republic was a link in that chain. He proclaimed that Turkey was setting sail toward the second century that we call the

## [Transcript] The Intelligence from The Economist / The Intelligence: Israel's Gaza offensive

century of Turkey. Ataturk started that first century by abolishing the sultanate of the Ottoman Empire and proclaiming Turkey a republic. He was swiftly elected its first president and began a whole sale remaking of the country. Achieving Turkish independence, Kemal Ataturk set out to change a backward Oriental despotism into a modern republic. Beginning with his cabinet, he forced his people to adopt the Latin alphabet in place of the complicated Arabic script, and ordered the country modernized and westernized from top to bottom.

When he died 15 years later, Turkey had more than a new alphabet. It had a new civil code, universal suffrage, and a new state religion, secularism, to go along with the popular one, Islam. Even today, Ataturk remains Turkey's most popular politician and viewed as a kind of polar opposite to the country's leadership today. President Erdogan and his Justice and Development, or AK Party. But the president isn't simply an anti-Ataturk. The intertwining of the men's legacies is more subtle than that. When Recep Tayyip Erdogan first came to power in 2003, many of his critics abroad and at home warned that he would try to upend Turkey's secular order and try to turn the country into a second Iran. Piotr Zulebski is our Turkey correspondent.

Now, Mr. Erdogan has had 20 years to dismantle Turkey's secular order, but he has not done so. He has not done so despite his control over state institutions and much of the media. He has chipped away at parts of Ataturk's legacy, but he has also co-opted and redefined it. And in the process, Ataturk's legacy may have co-opted him too. Well, let's get into that. You say that Mr. Erdogan has chipped away at Ataturk's legacy.

What do you mean by that? So in the 20 years of AK Party rule and Erdogan rule, we've seen Islam acquire a bigger place in Turkish politics and in public life, a bigger place perhaps than at any time since the Ottoman Empire. Erdogan has empowered an entire generation of pious business people from Turkey's heartland. He has been outdated restrictions

on the wearing of the Islamic headscarf, and he has overhauled education so as to allow for more religious teaching in schools. Under Erdogan, some 15,000 new mosques have opened and so have thousands of so-called imam hatip schools, which are designed to educate Islamic preachers. These schools now count for over 13% of public schools in Turkey. Under Erdogan, the government has also

imposed some of the highest taxes on alcohol in all of Europe. I mean, from what you say there, it sounds as if he has dismantled a lot of that secularism already, no?

Well, means are not tantamount to ends, and Erdogan has seen relatively meager returns on investment. Turkey's society remains largely secular, and there are many polls that will confirm this. The share of women who wear some form of the Islamic headscarf, the share of people who pray regularly or fast during the holy month of Ramadan, these have all dropped. Meanwhile, the share of Turks who identify as non-believers has risen from about 2% a decade ago to 7% today. So there's a lot of evidence to suggest that Turkish society has actually become more secularized under Erdogan.

Religion has also made rather limited inroads into the economy. Turkey's biggest conglomerates continue to be run by largely secular families, and Mr. Erdogan's own experiments with interest rates, which have been driven partly by his conviction that interest rates are the root of all evil, and he has cited the Islamic injunction against usury to drive home the point, have backfired terribly, and these interest rate experiments, this interest rate policy,

## **[Transcript] The Intelligence from The Economist / The Intelligence: Israel's Gaza offensive**

has had to be reversed. And so in a sense, the explicit efforts to dismantle a lot of what Ataturk put in place doesn't seem to have worked or at least rung through society, but you hinted that Mr. Erdogan has a kind of complicated relationship with the Ataturk legacy. Yes, and that Erdogan and the Justice and Development Party being rooted in Turkish tradition of political Islam will never be the Republic's loudest cheerleaders, but they cannot and frankly do not aspire to knock Ataturk down from his pedestal or to dismantle the secular order entirely. You have to recall that Ataturk's legacy, his memory, has been some of Turkey's most valuable and most abused political currency. Politicians from the right and the left on that includes Turkey's two main opposition parties, as well as Mr. Erdogan's political allies, all claim to follow in Ataturk's footsteps. And frankly, so does Mr. Erdogan. But there's a tension there, right? If he has more ideas of an Islamic State that runs entirely counter to Ataturk's secularism, right? Well, not entirely, simply because what Erdogan is after is not an Islamic State. What he is after is a more Islamic Turkey. And I think that's an important distinction to make. I don't think he ever set out to transform Turkey into a second Iran. And if he did, he no longer does. During his first decade in power, Erdogan was actually more critical and openly critical of Ataturk. Over the last decade, and especially over the past few years and since a coup attempt in 2016, he has embraced Ataturk as a symbol of State power and of his own power. But that embrace is quite selective. So Ataturk's image as a secular reformer, as a state builder, and as a supporter of Turkey's European vacation has taken a back seat under Erdogan. Instead, Turkey's current leader has tried to cast or recast Ataturk as a war hero, and often he does so in religious terms, as a war hero who saved Turkey from the Greeks, the British, the French and the Italians, in short, who saved Turkey from western imperialism during or before the dawn of the Republic. In doing so, Erdogan has created sort of a new brand of nationalism that aspires to transcend the former divisions between religious and secular. And Ataturk, the redacted Ataturk, has become one of the emblems of that new nationalism. So what next for that nationalism that he's created then as Turkey enters its second century as a Republic? What next for the country and for Mr. Erdogan himself? So one of the characteristics of this new nationalism which Erdogan has managed to forge is that it can appeal to people outside his own political family. It can appeal to secularists and nationalists and not only to Islamists. It's a vision that combines the pursuit of strategic autonomy from the west, economic expansion powered by new infrastructure projects and new defense projects, and also driven partially by a rather whitewashed version of the Ottoman past. And because that vision has the backing of not only Turkey's Islamists but also many nationalists and some secularists, it has the power to endure even once Erdogan himself is gone. Now Erdogan might not have felt very comfortable in Ataturk's Turkey and Ataturk would probably not feel very comfortable in Erdogan's Turkey but the transformation we've witnessed in Turkey over the past decade is that Erdogan no longer really feels like Ataturk's challenger. He now feels like his heir. Piotr, thank you very much for your time. And thanks for having me. I hope that lots of you have had a chance over the past couple of days to listen to the first ever episode of The Weeknd Intelligence, our new subscriber exclusive show that's going to be our home for storytelling. We heard a thought-provoking tale about what's driving space geeks and



## [Transcript] The Intelligence from The Economist / The Intelligence: Israel's Gaza offensive

governments

in a push towards colonizing the moon. If you're not already a subscriber to our digital or print editions and you haven't yet signed up for our new podcast subscription, Economist Podcasts Plus, you've got just a couple of days left to get it on the cheap so you can hear that show and all of our weekly specialist shows and all the new stuff we've been pulling together for months. Until tomorrow, you can join Economist Podcasts Plus for half price, just a couple of bucks a month. Head to the show notes, as ever, or just search for Economist Podcasts.

It's not my gold watch already. It sounds like you're pinching me off.

How many interviews do you... Growing up in Canada, thanks to my parents, CBC Radio, our national broadcaster, was always playing at home.

Kevin Gainers is a producer on The Intelligence. It's the end of another year of as it happens for you as it is for everyone else. It wasn't necessarily the most exciting thing to listen to when you're eight years old. It's not very touching. But as I got older, I grew to love it.

Stuart McLean joins me now. Good morning. About 10 years ago. The host felt like family and the show was like smart, entertaining friends. This is a live thing. This is a live thing, but for time. But while I loved all the programs, there was one part above all that I fell in love with.

It was short, memorable, and to the point. It came on every day for around 15 seconds, and it had one job to signal precisely one o'clock Eastern Standard Time.

The National Research Council official time signal, the beginning of the long dash following 10 seconds of silence, indicates exactly one o'clock Eastern Daylight Time.

One o'clock Eastern Standard Time Monday, the 4th of February.

It was something so small that I adored the long dash. The fact that it was broadcast simultaneously across the country made me feel part of a larger whole.

For me, those little beeps conjured up images of fishermen in the Pacific, farmers in the prairies, and bankers in Toronto. Because in theory, if they all had their radios on, they were listening to the exact same thing at the exact same time. Somehow, that idea seemed powerful to me. And while those beeps evidently served a function to set time, it seemed quaint, or wholesomely old-fashioned in the best possible way.

It harkened back to the dawn of radio, and when the ability to transmit sounds and words across the territory as vast as Canada truly felt magical, from coast to coast to coast.

We have been given the job of enabling Canada to speak to the world.

This is surely a task to which the CBC may well be proud.

During my 20s, when I still lived in the country, if I was near a radio and noticed it was almost 1pm, I'd specifically churn on CBC just to hear the long dash.

One o'clock Eastern Standard Time But this month, without warning, the CBC announced that the dashes were to fall silent, ending their over 80-year run.

The long dashed first aired on CBC radio on November 5, 1939, just as the Second World War was breaking out in Europe. And at the time, the world was a very different place. Of course, this was before cell phones, before GPS, before even normal TV transmissions.

The long dash was the only way you could distribute accurate time across a country as large as Canada, and having access to a synchronized time signal was vital, and not just to ordinary Canadians setting their clocks.

Mariners needed the precise time to measure longitude,

## [Transcript] The Intelligence from The Economist / The Intelligence: Israel's Gaza offensive

and railways used it to make sure their train schedules were accurate and running on sync time. The people introducing the long dash changed over the years.

They went from quaint, old-timey radio voices to the modern ones familiar today.

But however the packaging changed, the long dash was always there at 1pm, consistent, dependable, like an old friend.

And I'm by no means the only one that grew attached to it.

When the CBC announced it was doing away with the Biebs, social media was full of pleas to bring them back,

and listeners called into one of the national programs to share their disappointment.

While I was saddened by the end of the long dash in Canada, apparently CBC had good reasons to stop it.

Mariners no longer use it, railways don't need it,

and the precise time is continuously transmitted over the air to our cell phones and GPS devices.

But there's another modern reason that the long dash is being discontinued.

In the analogue days, the long dash was always extremely close to the precise time.

But the satellite signals and the servers which transmit today's digital streams and up creating what are known as propagation delays.

When a few years ago, CBC introduced high definition radio transmitters in several cities, it led to a delay of up to 9 seconds in the broadcast of the official time signal.

If you listen to the radio on the internet, the delays can be even longer.

So with the long dash behind schedule, ultimately the CBC decided to do away with the Biebs altogether.

That being said, fortunately for anyone who's nostalgic,

the National Research Council remains Canada's official timekeeper

and still offers other means of connecting to their beloved time signal.

They even have a speaking clock that will tell you the time.

All you need to do is pick up the phone, dial into their number,

and you can still hear the soothing sounds of their long dash telling you the precise time day or night, 24-7.

9 minutes and 10 seconds.

The Biebs are dead.

Long live the Biebs.

That's all for this episode of The Intelligence.

Don't forget to sign up while you can to get a subscription to Economist Podcasts Plus for half price to get all of our award-winning shows and piles of new stuff too.

We'll see you back here tomorrow.