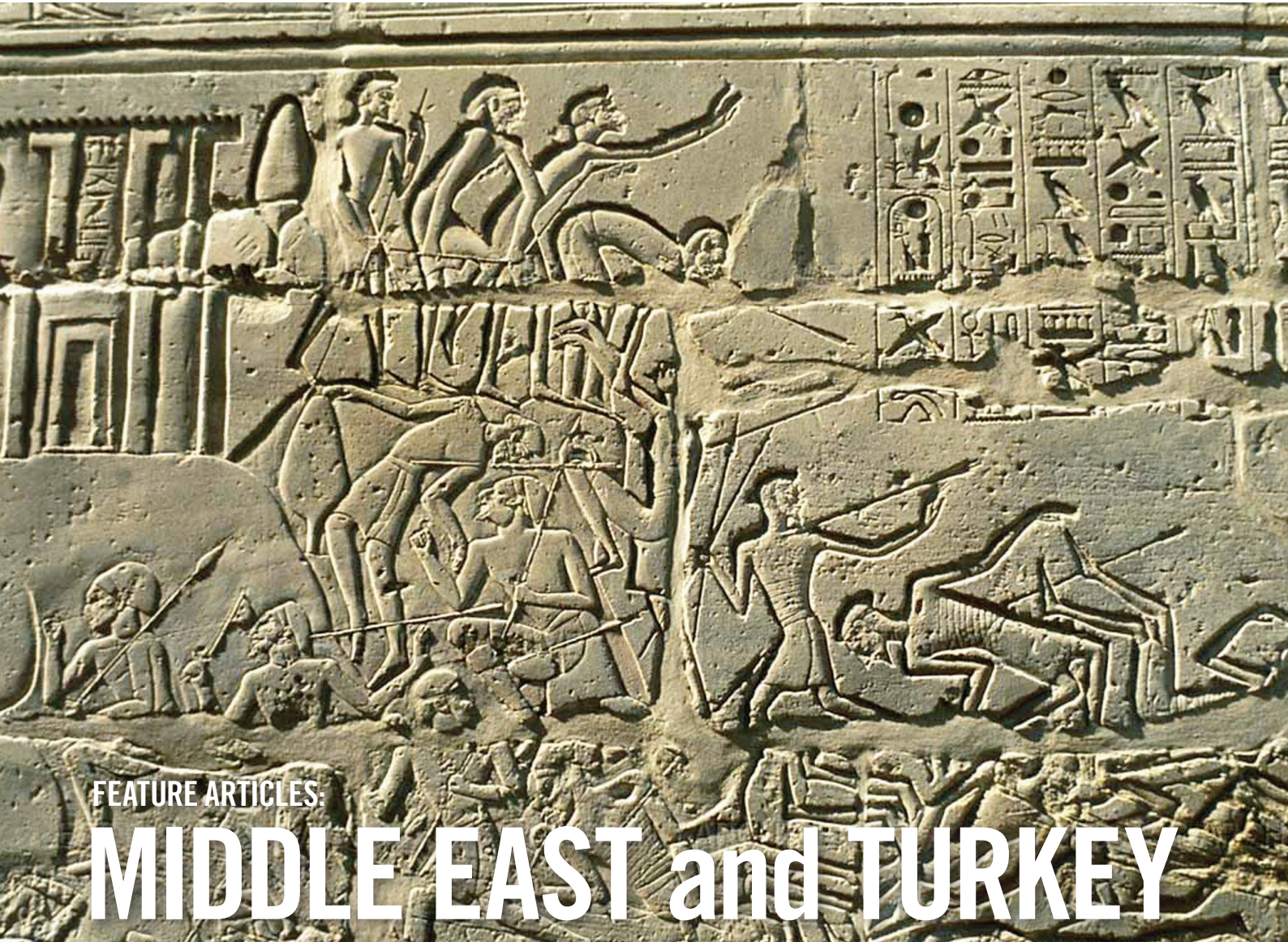


PERSPECTIVES

Political analysis and commentary from Turkey



FEATURE ARTICLES:

MIDDLE EAST and TURKEY

DEMOCRACY

“What they care about is money”

Aksu Bora

Page 49

INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Shifting foreign policy dynamics in the wake of the “Arab Spring”

Solü Özel

Page 58

ECOLOGY

Pesticides and food safety in the era of global warming

Bülent Şık

Page 30



HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG
TURKEY REPRESENTATION

Content

Editor's note	3
Feature articles: Middle East and Turkey	
Turkey's Middle Eastern Policy and the "New Geography", Sedat Aybar	4
Does the Syrian crisis imply the end of the Turkish dream in the Middle East, Bayram Balcı	9
Beware of Hatay's climate of peace, Nidal Özdemir	16
Syrians set sail for self-government, İlhan Tanır	20
Turkey's policy on the Kurdish problem and regional developments, Sezgin Tanrikulu	24
The impact of the crisis in Syria on the economy of Southeast Anatolia, Şah İsmail Bedirhanoglu	28
Ecology	
Pesticides and food safety in the era of global warming, Bülent Şık	30
Which is more dangerous: nuclear lies or radiation, Özgür Gürbüz	33
Climate change: Is a "U-turn" possible? Önder Algedik	37
Democracy	
KCK cases and the judiciary mechanism, Fikret İlkiz	41
The new constitution, Rıza Mahmut Türmen	46
"What they care about is money", Aksu Bora	49
How can I know why, Şanar Yurdatapan	53
Our revolt is written in the Taurus mountains, Pervin Savran	54
Culture	
Art: Backyard of the government, Tayfun Serttaş	55
International Politics	
Shifting foreign policy dynamics in the wake of the "Arab Spring", Soli Özel	58
News from Hbs	62

Heinrich Böll Stiftung – Turkey Representation

The Heinrich Böll Stiftung, associated with the German Green Party, is a legally autonomous and intellectually open political foundation. Our foremost task is civic education in Germany and abroad with the aim of promoting informed democratic opinion, socio-political commitment and mutual understanding. In addition the Heinrich Böll Stiftung supports artistic and cultural as well as scholarly projects, and co-operation in the development field. The political values of ecology, democracy, gender democracy, solidarity and nonviolence are our chief points of reference. Heinrich Böll's belief in and promotion of citizen participation in politics is the model for the foundation's work.

Editor in chief: **Dr. Ulrike Dufner**; editorial team: **Özgür Gürbüz, Semahat Sevim, Yonca Verdioglu**; Heinrich Böll Stiftung Turkey Representation, İnönü Cad. Hacı Hanim Sok. No. 10/12, Gümüşsuyu İstanbul; Telephone: **+90-212-249 15 54** Fax: **+90-212-245 04 30** email: **info@tr.boell.org** web: **www.tr.boell.org**

Editor: **Kathleen Hamilton** Translation: **Esin Aslan, Defne Orhun, Metin Susan, Sungur Savran, Yaman Aksu** Print Production: **Farika Tasarım** Date: **October 2012** Printing House: **Özgün Basım Tanitim** San. Tic. Ltd. Şti., Yeşilce Mah. Aytekin Sok. No:21, Otosanayi - Seyrantepe - İstanbul, Tel: +90-212-280 00 09

Perspectives – Political analyses and commentary from Turkey will appear quarterly and distributed for free. For subscription please send your request by email to info@tr.boell.org The magazine and each article can be downloaded from our webpage **www.tr.boell.org**

- Ecology**
- Democracy**
- Culture**
- International Politics**
- News from Hbs**

Editor's note

The first issue of "Perspectives" got mostly very positive responses and reactions. Especially readers outside of Turkey but also from within were very enthusiastic about the attempt to provide profound analysis on developments of Turkey. Many readers agreed with us on the need of such information. Critical voices were also raised; the Turkey Representation of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung should deal with the "deep state" in Germany instead of the "deep state" in Turkey. Immediately after launching the first issue, we could observe an increase in the number of articles especially on the internet that defame our association or myself as accusing to be part of the German deep state or enemy of Turkey. We consider such articles as a somehow "Pavlovian response" to any critic – be it from within or without of Turkey. We would appreciate a criticism about the articles and views expressed in the Perspectives but, we accept criticism only based on arguments, facts and analysis and strongly dismiss any defamation, against our organization or the authors. The more, a vivid debate and different views is a prerequisite of democracy. Any attempt to criminalize or threaten authors or organizations with critical views are considered anti-democratic, the same is valid for methods of censorship.

When preparing our second issue of Perspectives, with a special attention on "Turkey and the Middle East", we were well aware that the situation is changing with an incredible speed. From the very beginning, the HBSD was critical about the "zero problems" concept which was propagated by Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu. Already at that time, we as HBSD criticized, that you cannot and should not attempt to be "everybody's darling". You should develop criteria which guide your foreign policy, criteria based on democratic standards or international law. The government of Turkey was repeatedly announcing that Turkey hence is acting according its own interests – hereby suggesting it did not so before. In whose interest did Turkey then act? We also questioned if there was really a qualitative new foreign policy approach or if the "zero problems" policy was nothing more than a good PR strategy of the AKP government.

From the retrospective, we think, our critics of the last years proved to be true. The AKP government had to realize that its so-called zero problems policy did not lead to create any further influence on the neighboring regimes. Secondly, as the articles in this issue clearly show, the AKP did also not have a strategy toward the – indeed – difficult situation in Syria. We can observe a shift in its policy and a lack of a consistent strategy. The more, we should describe Turkey's foreign policy as slippery and draw attention to the regular attempts which are trying to readjust its policy and to align

it with its interests that are of course, influenced by the developments.

In this issue, we will not only analyze the shift in foreign policy and the impact of the "Arab spring" but also shed some light on the very recent developments in Syria from within. Finally, we will draw your attention on the impact of the crisis – especially in Syria – on the eastern part of Turkey, Antakya and the Kurdish regions. This is also to understand the close interrelation of Turkey's foreign policy and internal politics. Internal problems of Turkey related to democracy, freedom of religion, etc. are reflected in its foreign policy. The reaction of Turkey concerning the establishment of an autonomous Kurdish entity in Syria is symptomatic. Turkey fears a spillover effect. Without having any serious policy for the Kurdish issue inside Turkey, the government seems to show panic reactions due to the development in Syria.

As a matter of fact, the third issue of Perspectives will deal with the "Kurdish problem" or should we name it the "problem of Turkishness" or the "Turkish problem" – as is suggested by many intellectuals?

In the name of the editorial team
Ulrike Dufner

In 1259 BC, 15 years after the battle of Kadesh, the first written peace treaty in the world was signed. The petograph at the walls of the Karnak Temple in Egypt resembles the war between the Hittites and Egyptians.



Turkey's Middle Eastern Policy and the "New Geography"

Turkey's strategic location at the juncture of three continents has historically been the major driving force behind the design of her foreign policy. In the era of globalisation, geography is still important, although it has a new meaning. Today, the "new geography" forming Turkish foreign policy goes beyond geographical space and encompasses easy access to faster travel, expansive social media, the internet, multi channel TV, quick movement of people and capital, increased awareness of the "world" by the Turkish population and business community. In other words, the "new geography" partly relates to the economic sphere, partly to the political, social and cultural. Another parameter was added after the 9/11 attacks in New York, namely "the security". However, this is different from the Cold War military concept of defence. The new type of "security" links discourse on defence to individual rights and liberties, effectively rendering them pivotal in international relations.

Hence, the new globalised set-up introduced a multi-layered social base for the analysis of international relations, interplaying economic with non-economic, political with cultural and religious. The parameters of the "new geography" necessitated winning the hearts and minds of the people in support of the policies pursued. Evidently, in this new era, it would be impossible to achieve a successful policy outcome without mobilising public opinion and the country's human and social capital. By this token, investigation of any foreign policy should start by understanding policy makers' perceptions of this "new geography", especially their policy formulations based on the evaluation of economic, political and cultural structures that help in mobilising public support for its success.

As such, Turkey's response to the recent developments in the Middle East is no exception. It has been constructed as an integral part of the policy makers' perspective on the "new geography", which is summarily referred to as new-Ottomanism. This is a thrilling "ci-devant" for a number of Turks as it is reminiscent of the nostalgic idea of reviving the great power politics of the "good old days". This policy is now deeply swayed, posing a serious challenge in formulating a new/revised foreign policy based on compromising the structural realities of the country with the concrete situation in the Middle East and beyond.

The Epistemological Foundations of Turkish Foreign Policy in the "New Geography"

During the Cold War, Turkish foreign policy was formulated around NATO's strategic framework, broadly defined by the geographic perimeters of the Western alliance. It is true that the collapse of the Soviet Union and with it, the end of the Cold War, did not produce an international order that can settle international legal and political disputes through well-defined guidelines and mechanisms. Since then, the prevailing international system reflects a set-up whereby disputes are resolved on an ad hoc basis. It is obvious that in such a complicated and challenging world, Turkey's traditional foreign policy of preserving the status quo should change towards creating a new power axis in line with the "new international environment", at the centre of which lies the use of water and energy resources (İşeri and Dilek, 2012).

Turkey is on the crossroads for energy resources and natural gas pipelines running from Central Asia, Russia and Iran towards Europe (Aybar and Özgöker, 2009). With the energy aspect of the "new geography", Turkey gravitates more towards the US by extending its policy of strategic alliance towards a deeper economic collaboration, particularly with regards to energy resources. This is in line with the new US security architecture of the world. Given the current state of the US economy, Washington now relies on its allies more than ever for carrying out its global strategies. Turkey appears to go along with the American global strategy with regards to energy resources, as is the case with the Nabucco Pipeline and Southern Stream Project, both of which aim to reduce Europe's dependence on Russian natural gas and oil (İşeri, 2012).

The USA, the EU and NATO are still decisive factors in formulating today's Turkish foreign policy, particularly towards the Middle East. In fact, Turkey is more actively involved in NATO's new international mandate and Turkish foreign policy is very much in line with the objectives of the EU. Hence, Turkey's "new international presence" in the "new century" (and in the "new geography") did not alter Turkey's commitment to the Western camp. Furthermore, under the AKP leadership, Turkey perceived herself as an important messenger suitably modifying and carrying Western values to the Islamic world in the Middle East and beyond.



Sedat Aybar

Sedat Aybar, Assoc. Professor of Economics, is the head of Economics Department and the Director of the Middle-Eastern and African Studies Centre at the Kadir Has University in Istanbul. He got his Master and PhD in Economics in London. Aybar has worked as a consultant to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the UNDP. He teaches at the Centre for Finance and International Management (CeFIMS) at the University of London. He has also worked for the Economist and at the financial sector in London.

Against such a background, academic cum Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, the architect of the new Turkish foreign policy, “elegantly” laid down epistemological foundations of the new Turkish foreign policy. In his 2010 article in *Foreign Policy*, he asserted; “as we leave behind the first decade of the 21st century, Turkey has been able to formulate a foreign policy vision based on a better understanding of the realities of the new century, even as it acts in accordance with its historical role and geographical position. In this sense, Turkey’s orientation and strategic alliance with the West remains perfectly compatible with Turkey’s involvement in, among others, Iraq, Iran, the Caucasus, the Middle East peace process and Afghanistan.”

According to Davutoglu (2010), Turkey has a good “understanding” of the Middle East, which would help her to operate there effectively. He also stated that its considerable experience with the institutional workings of Western values, a market-based economy and multi-party democracy can be best transmitted by Turkey to inspire the peoples of the region. These beliefs helped Davutoglu formulate his now famously swayed “visionary, consistent and systematic” methodological and operational diplomatic principles of “strategic depth”. Underneath this strategy lies AK Party officials’ frequently re-visited, but vaguely explained, idea of new-Ottomanism.

Davutoglu attempted to formulate a systematic and cohesive methodological approach to AK Party’s foreign relations, one part of which is defined as the “balance between security and democracy” and the other as the principle of “zero problems with neighbours”. Turkey aimed to play a more active role in international institutions (rhythmic diplomacy) while developing relations with other global actors not in competition but complementarily. Turkish presence and presidency over important commissions on North Korea, Afghanistan and the “war on terror” at the UN Security Council during 2010 were shown as positive proof of the rhythm of rhythmic diplomacy.

The events, however, challenged these methodological and operational principles, rendering them ill-defined and analytically weak. The policy makers’ evaluation of the “new geography” was based on the premise that the role of the nation-state would become irrelevant in resolving disputes as “globalization” under the auspices of the US progressed (Aybar, 2008a). Even though the role of the nation-states in meeting and creating solutions for the global political, cultural, and economic turmoil was accepted, it was believed to be temporary. The involvement of the nation-state in this set-up would fade away while “the new global order” continued working to create needed mechanisms (Brzezinski, 2008).

Around such interpretations of the “new geography”, Turkish foreign policy is formulated by using broad, flexible and vague concepts such as “zero problems with neighbours.” These loosely used concepts in the epistemological construction

of foreign policy were probably the most important obstacles in creating successful policies. For instance, in Davutoglu’s (2010) own words: “Turkey’s regional policy is based on security for all, high-level political dialogue, economic integration and interdependence, and multicultural co-existence. Such a policy views Turkey’s strategic relationship with the United States through the two countries’ bilateral strategic ties and through NATO. It considers its EU membership process, its good neighbour policy with Russia, and its synchronization policy in Eurasia as integral parts of a consistent policy that serves to complement each other. This means that good relations with Russia are not an alternative to relations with the EU. Nor is the model partnership with the United States a rival partnership against Russia.”

The answer to the question of what is meant by, for instance, “zero problems”, was left fully unexplained. It implied that as a state of “zero problems” is reached, this will effectively put an end to the management of conflicting interests by deriving innovative policies. It has been unclear however, how to determine when a problem reaches the state of non-existence, i.e. “zero”. This is particularly problematic in a region whereby troubles mushroom constantly from one end to

Turkey’s response to the recent developments in the Middle East is no exception. It has been constructed as an integral part of the policy makers’ perspective on the “new geography”, which is summarily referred to as new-Ottomanism.

the other. It is also unclear what is meant by “all” in the “security for all”, what is the exact height of “high-level political dialogue”, how to simultaneously achieve “economic integration and interdependence”, with what types of “cultures” will “multicultural co-existence” be accomplished. Answers to these questions are all left open ended. In fact, these and many more loosely used concepts enabled policy makers to interpret them conveniently as desired to fit the changing international conditions and situations. The above portrayal of Turkey–US relations vis-à-vis Russia, EU–Turkey relations vis-à-vis the US and Russia is very much a case at point.

Using these analytical tools, Turkey presented herself as an active international actor with multilateral responses to multilateral problems. Turkish policy makers wanted to continue playing a role in the “new geography” primarily by diversifying foreign policy. It “opened up to the African continent” while trying to develop policies for the opening up by the People’s Republic of China to a more market based economy, one of

the main competitors in Africa (Jaques, 2009). It manoeuvred between Iran and the European Union while trying to take a more solid position in the conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis. It attempted to formulate responses to the unclear outcomes in Iraq and Afghanistan. It explored ways in which Turkey can contribute to the “war on terror”, whereby hunting down “religious terrorists” replaced the “Communists”. Additionally, it assumed the co-leading role in the process of “alliances of civilisations” (i.e. multicultural co-existence) as a response to the “clashes of civilisations” thesis. It became an active supporter of the “Greater Middle Eastern Project” while believing that it coincided with the creation of the

The answer to the question of what is meant by, for instance, “zero problems”, was left fully unexplained. It implied that as a state of “zero problems” is reached, this will effectively put an end to the management of conflicting interests by deriving innovative policies.

so called new-Ottomanism. Aras and Fidan (2009) outlines the scope of the new Turkish geo-strategy by using the concept of “new geography” in a different context.

The acute problems in the Caucasus, the Balkans and the Middle East pressured Turkey to continue playing its regional harmonizing role between its strategic allies and neighbours. The challenge of managing these tensions also appeared to put Davutoglu’s foreign policy formulations and above mentioned principles to the test. The changing nature of the economic and political set-up forced a reconciliation of domestic issues with foreign affairs; in other words, international relations that are now used to meet Turkey’s economic, democratic, social and religious ambitions as defined according to the perceptions of the ruling cadre within the AKP of the “existing realities of the world” setting. Thus, the understood “new geography”, when tested by concrete events, generally produced disappointing results. The root causes of the failures behind Turkey’s foreign policy in the Middle East, its epistemological construction, can also be traced in the definition of the 2023 targets, creating a challenge to the government to revise and fill the foreign policy vacuum.

The Middle Eastern Crisis and Turkish Strategy

Under the AKP government, the multilateral dimension of issues relating to energy resources and political developments in the region, most finely crystallized around recent disturbances in Syria, forced Turkey to take a position not based on tactical/temporary solutions or conflict specific agreements but, instead, on her “economic and

political” interests. Despite a warlike discourse, Turkey has chosen to oppose the Syrian regime on the basis of “human rights and democracy” that effectively helped to waive any use of direct military intervention. The Turkish position on Syria has been in line with the US and EU positions that do not desire to see the current conflict evolving towards an international armed conflict. This position also does not want to see any Iranian involvement in resolving the non-international war inside Syria. The very nature of Syrian geo-politics, her close economic, military and political proximity to Russia and internal ethnic structure prevents the escalation of civil strife to an international war.

Turkey’s “vision” of the Middle East, which led to an attempt to mediate between Syria and Israel and to help achieve Palestinian reconciliation, did not produce tangible solutions. In Iraq, Turkey wanted the Iraqi Sunni groups’ participation in the parliamentary elections in 2005 (Aybar, 2008a). Since then, despite denials by Turkey that its policy towards the region is not based on the religious sectarian divide in the Middle East, “unfair” accusations continued by including the position it takes in Syria that Turkey supports Sunni opposition to Syrian President Bashar al Assad. Turkey is involved in the Iranian nuclear issue as an integral part of its foreign policy vision for the Middle East, while Turkish diplomats developed a new language that prioritized Turkey’s civil-economic power. As mentioned above, the discourse on the principles of democracy and human rights has been compromised with the rampant economic interests. Turkey’s new vision for the Middle East encompassing the entire region and going beyond fighting against the PKK (Kurdistan Workers’ Party), failed to deal with separatist terrorist attacks. In addition, Turkey’s emerging regional ambitions created tensions between Turkey and its neighbours and also with its existing strategic allies. This has effectively disqualified the zero problems policy (despite all of its good intentions).

Outcomes of the Arab Spring not only challenged the view of Turkey as the model “mild Islamic country” for the “newly emerging democracies”, but also resulted in some repercussions at home. The zero problem policy, like others formulated with sincere good intentions, did not produce the expected outcomes. Turkey’s problems with its neighbours are not resolved and new ones have been added. Problems with Armenia are pending. There are deep suspicions and lack of trust with the Iranians. The Cyprus problem has now extended to influencing Turkey’s entire full membership process with the EU.

On the economic front, Turkey’s trade with its neighbours and nearby regions has substantially increased in recent years. Turkey’s growing economy required exploring opportunities with neighbouring countries, but such co-operative tracks have been highly damaged, as is the case with Armenia and Syria, which in turn negatively affects economic relations with other countries like Iraq and Iran, not to mention the domestic

Kurdish unrest damaging economic gains in these countries. The impact upon the SMEs has been severe and made the AKP foreign policy highly questionable in the eyes of its supporters.

Drivers of Turkey's "new-Ottomanism" towards Africa and the Middle East

The new Turkish security architecture, based on the Greater Middle Eastern Project (GMP), led Turkey to show an interest in African affairs. The end of the Cold War in 1989, the first Iraq War in 1992 and ensuing developments in the Middle East required Turkey to shift its security emphasis to the broader region beyond the Sahara. In line with the shift in security concerns, a new operational plan was developed in 1988, known as the "Opening Up to Africa Policy" plan (Aybar, 2008b). Hence, in the beginning of the 21st century, as Africa began receiving interest from a variety of emerging market countries such as China and India, Turkey also raised its interest in the African continent. Today, Turkey's interest in Africa is strategical and the African Union has also declared Turkey to be a strategic partner. At the same time, Turkey has become one of the largest donors in developing countries in Africa.

The last of the Ottoman territory on the continent, today's Libya, was lost in 1913. The Turkish presence in North Africa left behind a large Turkish population, as well as cultural and religious ties to the mainland (Aybar, 2008b), sources for important inspirations for the new-Ottomanism. Turkey's presence in North Africa was more recently challenged in Libya after the collapse of Muammar Qaddafi's regime when Turkey began repatriating Turkish workers from Libya, which effectively brought an end to the presence of mainly SMEs and construction firms that had been operating there since the early 1970's.

Examining the nature and scope of Turkish-African relations in a broader context reveals its existing links with the global economic division of labour conditioned by sectoral complementarities and trade. A close investigation of the nature of Turkish international economic interactions reveals existing differences in breadth, scope and depth in the business strategies between large conglomerates and small and medium sized enterprises. The larger firms mainly direct their attention to the EU for their exports and show interest in buying into the EU-based companies through mergers and acquisitions (M&A) while SMEs are more inclined to invest in neighbouring countries, North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa (Aybar et al., 2010).

Clearly, the goals of a variety of outward investors have varied by region too. The larger conglomerates have wanted to access technology and skills in the European Union and low-cost labour in Africa and Asia. They have also sought natural resources in the newly independent Turkic countries of Central Asia and responded to growing demand in the emerging markets of Asia and Africa. Product diversification, along with regional diversification, was also an important strategy and

a way to turn the crisis into opportunity (Aybar et al., 2010).

The way in which Turkish Outward Foreign Direct Investment (OFDI) shapes up also reflects on the international position the government takes. In the new international set-up, the government follows a policy of reconciliation between the SMEs, the so-called Anatolian Tigers (AKP's main source of votes), with the interests of the larger conglomerates, probably another important obstacle for its formulation of foreign affairs. It appears as though the larger conglomerates, the main drivers of Turkish OFDI, are prepared to accept the government's guidance as long as it fits in with their broader business strategies and orientations.

Conclusion

In the opening paragraphs of this article, it was proposed that the policy makers' responses to the changing international order came from a methodological conceptualization of the new structures in the world. In the Turkish set-up, however, it is argued that the policy formulation is based on highly fluid, indeterminate concepts. The most important lesson drawn from the analysis of the new Turkish foreign policy is that the interpretation of the "new geography" by the policy makers that dominated the policy has failed to produce expected outcomes. It also led to overstressing available resources with mismatching desired targets it has put forward. The policies failed because of miscalculations

The realities of the Middle East, its ethnic and religious make up, Turkey's strategic location and complex water and energy issues, as well as the domestic economic and political set-up rendered the present Turkish foreign policy "null and void" in responding to these by reconciling national interests in a dynamically changing world.

between domestic resources and international ambitions. The realities of the Middle East, its ethnic and religious make up, Turkey's strategic location and complex water and energy issues, as well as the domestic economic and political set-up rendered the present Turkish foreign policy "null and void" in responding to these by reconciling national interests in a dynamically changing world.

In addition, in order to pursue desired foreign policy objectives, Turkish human and social capital had to be mobilized. It has been established that the presence of "new geography" parameters makes public opinion backup a necessity in pursuing foreign policy. There have been attempts

to achieve this, for instance, in support of policies pursued in Sudan and Somalia. Live Aid type concerts were arranged while pop-stars were invited to participate in state-sponsored visits to Africa. These attempts have been highly disappointing and failed to mobilize the desired public support. More recently, public opinion turned against the government's refugee policy as complaints have risen against the "Syrian guests", particularly in the bordering provinces with Syria. The other area where public opinion has been rather critical relates to the OFDI. Increased Turkish OFDI raised concerns from an ill-informed public about the consequences of investing abroad that capital outflow was leading to the "stealing of jobs from the Turks."

Finally, to formulate a foreign policy based on concrete analysis of the realities of the country it is necessary to draw up a market-friendly industrial strategy that takes into account world division of labour and industrial complementarities while reconciling these with well-defined global principles. If Turkey wants to become an active international player, as envisioned in its 2023 targets explained above, it needs to mobilise its population behind these. However, up to now, the government's efforts to raise public consciousness has been disappointing and highly fragmented, as well as exclusive, as is the case with aid to Somalia or with relations with Iran and Syria.

References

1. Aras Bülent and Hakan Fidan (2009): "Turkey and Eurasia: Frontiers of a new geographic imagination", (Türkiye ve Avrasya: Yeni Coğrafi Hafzala'nın Hudutları), New Perspectives on Turkey, No. 40, pp. 195-217.
2. Aybar Sedat (2012): "Turkish Economy and the Development of Its Financial Sector", in Aybar and Charambides, Turkey on the Doorstep of Europe, Panteion University, Athens, ISSN 1986 – 4698, pp. 32 – 39.
3. Aybar et al. (2010): Emerging Markets Global Players Report – Turkey, with University of Columbia, Vale Columbia Center.
4. Aybar and Ozgoker (2009): "Batı Enerji Güvenliği Ve Türkiye", (Energy Security of the Western World), Trakya Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, No. 2, Vol. 11, pp. 319 – 334.
5. Aybar Sedat (2008a) (Editor): Türkiye'nin Ortadoğu Politikası, (Turkey's Middle-Eastern Politics), Kadir Has University Publications.
6. Aybar Sedat (2008b): "Türkiye – Afrika İlişkileri", (Turkey – Africa Relations), Almanak 2007 Analizleri, Sosyal Araştırmaları Vakfı (SAV), pp. 353 – 373.
7. Brzezinski Zbigniew, (2008): America and the World: Conversations on the Future of American Foreign Policy , Basic Books (September 2008), ISBN 0-465-01501-8.
8. Davutoglu Ahmet, (2010): "Turkey's Zero Problems Foreign Policy", Quoted on 28/08/2012, from http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/05/20/turkeys_zero_problems_foreign_policy.
9. İşeri Emre and A. Oğuz Dilek (2012): "Yeni Enerji Jeopolitiğinde NATO'nun Enerji Güvenliğinde Tamamlayıcı Rolü ve Türkiye'nin Potansiyel Katkıları", (NATO's Complimentary Role in Energy Security and Turkey's Potential Contributions at the New Energy Geopolitics), Akademik Bakış, Volume 5, No. 10, p. 229.
10. İşeri Emre (2012): "Ya İran Nükleer Programı Enerji İçinse? Türkiye'nin Enerji Güvenliğine Yansımaları", (What if Iran's Nuclear Program is for Energy? Implications for Turkey's Energy Security), Ortadoğu Analiz, Volume 4, No. 42, p. 55.
11. Martin Jaques (2009): When China Rules the World, Allen Lane, London.

Does the Syrian crisis imply the end of the Turkish dream in the Middle East

Although it acted as a loyal ally of Syria when the popular revolt broke out, Turkey nonetheless failed from March to August 2011, to convince the regime of Assad to undertake reforms to calm the discontent. One cannot over-emphasize that during that period, Turkey wished to avoid any deterioration in its relationship with Syria simply because this relationship was important in several ways. First of all, Syria occupied a central position in the new Turkish policy toward the Middle East, based on the principle of “zero problems” with its neighbours, allowing Turkey to project itself as a regional, and beyond, power. Secondly, there were economic motives in the quest for good relations with Syria. In addition to the importance of trade between the countries, Syria was, for the Turkish economy, the door leading to other countries in the region, notably Egypt, Jordan and the Gulf States. Thirdly, and most importantly, Ankara did not wish to jeopardize its cooperation with Damascus in the fight against the terrorism of the PKK, which in the past had been protected by Syria.

However, despite all efforts, Ankara was unable to avoid breaking with Syria, particularly from August 2011 onward, when Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan finally realized it was impossible to reason with his long-time friend and Turkey had no other option but to support the Syrian opposition. At present, and especially since a Turkish reconnaissance plane that violated Syrian air space was brought down by Syria, Turkey has been at the forefront of support extended to the opposition against the regime in Damascus. In effect, it was in Turkey and with help from Ankara that the principal Syrian opposition movement, the Syrian National Council Syria (SNC), saw daylight and established its headquarters. The SNC is certainly not the only opposition movement against the Assad regime, but it is the body most clearly recognized by the international community as an interlocutor and considered the de facto legitimate representative of the Syrian people. Turkey is also the major receiver of Syrian refugees continuing to flee hostilities between the loyalist army and rebel forces. As of the end of August, 80 thousand civilians had crossed the border and were settled in several tent cities, in particular near Antakya and Kilis. Finally, it is by harboring in its territory of the principal leaders of the Free Syrian Army that Turkey has most clearly been expressing its commitment in favour of a regime change in Damascus.

This clear-cut position adopted by Turkey against the Assad government is, before all else, a choice made by Prime Minister Erdogan. Over time, one can see clearly that Erdogan initially believed he could put his cozy relationship with Assad to use in order to find a way out of the crisis; to create dialogue between the regime and the opposition; and project Turkey, an emerging power,

as a regional leader capable of overcoming crises without Western intervention. This gave short shrift to the obstinacy of the Syrian dictator, who trampled on Erdogan's ego and vanity, thereby forcing him to make a U-turn, abandon Assad and pose as defender of the oppressed and repressed people of Syria. Nevertheless, the personal resentment was based on political and strategic considerations. The intransigence of Assad, so irrational when set against the “Arab Spring” and ouster of autocratic regimes in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, only led to the weakening of Syria and further condemned the regime to annihilation. It was time for Turkey to change its stance and start preparing the post-Assad setup. However, like many others, Erdogan underestimated the capacity for resistance of the regime. This misreading of the timing and balance of forces between the regime and the opposition led Turkey to an impasse. Every passing day adds to the uncertainty and risks Turkey faces. Confronted with unmanageable dilemmas, Turkey has gotten bogged down. Firstly, the prolongation of the Syrian crisis is causing considerable sharpening of the Kurdish question, threatening a degeneration of the war into a confessional one and a spillover into Turkey. Additionally, Turkey's implication in the Syrian imbroglio puts the country's provinces neighbouring Syria into difficulty, as their economy had been oriented towards Syria and its neighbours. Finally, the support given to the Syrian opposition has unforeseeable effects on Turkey's relationship with some of its neighbours, namely, Iran, Iraq and Russia.

Aggravation of the Kurdish problem for Turkey

The Kurdish problem in Turkey, which goes back to Ataturk's founding of the republic, and the development of this problem throughout the region, in Syria, Iraq and Iran, has without a doubt been the major preoccupation of Ankara for a number of years, but has become even more so since the destabilization of Syria. Turkey has made undeniable progress since the rise to power of the AKP in 2002 in the conception and management of its Kurdish problem, despite the current setback in this area.¹ Significant steps have been taken thanks to the policy of democratic overture (*demokratik acilim*),² a reform package meant to meet principal demands put forward by the Kurds.³ Insufficient as they may be, these reforms created results, modest at first but tangible: the teaching of Kurdish, creation of a TV channel and radio stations broadcasting in Kurdish and the possibility of conducting Kurdish studies at university. Even bolder and more audacious were talks carried out in Oslo between the Turkish state and representatives of the PKK regarding a political solution to the Kurdish problem,⁴ initiating for the first time a real dialogue between the two sides.

True, these steps slowed down a certain extent



Bayram Balci

As visiting scholar in Carnegie's Middle East Program Balci focuses on Turkey's foreign policy in the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. He established the Baku office of the French Institute for Anatolian Studies in 2003, where he studied about Shia and Sunni Islam in Azerbaijan and its relations with Iran and Turkey. He was director of the French Institute for Central Asian Studies in Tashkent (2006-2010). Balci is founding member of the European Journal of Turkish Studies and directing the editorial board of *Les Cahiers d'Asie Centrale*. He is author of *Missionnaires de l'Islam en Asie centrale: Les écoles turques de Fethullah Gülen* (Paris, 2003) and co-edited *China and India in Central Asia: A New "Great Game"?*

before the onset of the Syrian revolt. The Syrian crisis only contributed to the aggravation of tension and lack of confidence between the Turkish state and the actors representing the Kurdish cause, thereby creating a risk of postponing sine die the settling of the Kurdish problem in Turkey. The aim here is not a detailed analysis of the points on which the Turkish-Kurdish dialogue has foundered; let us concentrate on the impact of the Syrian conflict on the Kurdish problem in Turkey.

Turkish officials and some independent analysts raised the question of resumption of relations between the PKK and Syria as a measure of retaliation for Turkey's pro-opposition stance.⁵ It is in fact true that, parallel to the deterioration of the situation in Syria, the PKK stepped up its attacks on the Turkish army, most notably during raids in July 2011 and June 2012 that inflicted heavy losses on Turkish forces. For many analysts, these meticulously organised and conducted attacks are testimony to the fact that the PKK has begun to benefit again from assistance and support from Damascus. The raid of July 2011 was said to be directed by Dr. Bahoz, Syrian commander of the PKK.⁶ To be frank, an analysis of the balance of forces shows that the PKK does not need Syrian support in order to carry out armed action in Turkey, where it wields sufficient force, as it also does in Northern Iraq. The Syrian conflict has changed the overall situation for the PKK: it has become more suspicious toward the Turkish state and has been developing a regional strategy including the Kurds of Syria and Iraq.

In the Turkey-Syria-PKK equation, it is necessary to bring into the picture the relationship between the Damascus regime and the Democratic Unity Party (the PYD), the Syrian extension of the PKK, even if officials of these parties reject this characterisation, preferring to talk of ideological affinity.⁷ In the initial stages of the revolt, the aim of the Damascus government was probably to use this alliance against Turkey, but even more against the Syrian opposition, be it Kurdish or Arab.⁸ In effect, PYD forces have supported the Syrian regime mostly by preventing other Kurdish parties from entering the fray. The strategy of the PKK (and its Syrian affiliate) consists in reinforcing its positions to be able to wrest a status or representativity favourable to the Kurds in post-Assad Syria, even if it discredits itself in the eyes of regional actors for supporting Assad. Hence, support extended by the PKK to Assad is the result of a rational calculation involving the following objectives: weakening the position of Ankara to force it to grant new rights to the Kurds of Turkey and acting in a way that will allow the Kurds to enjoy a better status in the future Syria.⁹ Ankara is not oblivious to this strategy and yet tries tactlessly to influence the Syrian National Council in its negotiations with the Kurdish component of the Syrian opposition, which resents the Turkish interference. In reaction, Kurdish parties have boycotted gatherings of the SNC, opting to create their own bodies, thereby conferring upon them an ambivalent attitude vis-à-vis the Syrian regime. The cautious attitude adopted by the Kurds of Syria is also adopted by the Kurds of Turkey, who have even less confidence in the Turkish government, which has stepped up detentions among militants of the Kurdish cause suspected of belonging to the urban branch of the PKK, the KCK.¹⁰

The worst scenario for Turkey would be having promoted, due to its support of the Syrian opposition, the downfall of Assad and, through a boomerang effect, favoured the creation of an autonomous Kurdish region in Syria, where political and cultural rights the Kurds of Turkey

have been demanding for decades would be guaranteed. Moreover, the prospect of an autonomous Kurdish region in Syria does not only worry Turkey, but all the forces of the Syrian opposition, which fear the disintegration of the country into Kurdish, Arabic, Sunni and Alawite regions. The SNC has gone out of its way to reassure the Kurds of Syria with respect to their rights in the new Syria and published a specific declaration on the Kurdish question.¹¹ Nonetheless, Kurdish parties have continued to tread their separate paths, gathering in two major blocs, the Kurdish National Council (KNC), bringing together various parties, and the Democratic Unity Party (PYD), on its own, but stronger because it is armed. The emergence of an autonomous Kurdish region in Syria is a real possibility. At the end of July 2012, the intensification of hostilities and the weakness, or else complicity, of the Damascus regime permitted PYD militants to take control of several towns in the Kurdish region (Afrin, Derek, Qamishlo, Kobane and Amoude). To Turkey's dismay, the Kurds will have to be taken into account in post-Assad Syria.¹²

The Kurdish issue is not to be underestimated, but one should not mask the other damage caused by the Syrian crisis. The possibility of the Syrian conflict progressively taking on a sectarian nature threatens to kindle tensions in Turkey and Ankara dreads the prospect of the division between pro-Assad and anti-Assad forces, between Sunnis and Shiites spilling over to the Anatolian Turkish, Kurdish, Sunni, Alevi etc. populations.

The prospect of sectarian war in Syria and its possible impact on Turkey

The Assad clan, which has ruled Syria for four decades, belongs to the religious minority of Alawites, an offshoot of Shia, which, by definition, places Ali at the centre of the faith.¹³ This Alawite minority extends to the Turkish province of Hatay on the frontier between the countries. Alawites are not to be confused with the Turkish Alevi minority, who also revere Ali, but are, nonetheless, different from Alawites. The common reverence for Ali does not suffice to consider them a homogeneous Shiite group. This confusion is common and conceals the reality of divergences and numerous divisions within this minority denomination of Islam. The Alevis of Turkey are a religious community with origins from pre-Islamic traditions and beliefs (mostly shamanistic and tengristic) of the Turkic tribes of Central Asia, mixed with Anatolian and Islamic beliefs.¹⁴ Close to 20 per cent of the population of Turkey and labelled under a deceptive generic designation, the Alevis in fact, form a disparate mass divided into different groups, most significantly of an ethnic nature.¹⁵ Some, for instance, are linguistically and culturally Turkish while others are Kurdish, called Zazas. The Alawites of Turkey, also called Nusairis,¹⁶ are the same as the Alawites of Syria, but their demographic weight in the population of Turkey is slight (500,000 out of a total population of more than 70 million).

The Alevis and Nusairis of Turkey and the Alawites of Syria share a feeling of persecution over the centuries by dominant Sunni groups, which is probably the reason behind their attachment and loyalty to any power constraining Sunni domination. On that basis, in Turkey as well as Syria, the Alevis, Nusairis and Alawites have traditionally supported secular regimes that limit Sunni domination. However, is this sufficient to create a united community transcending territorial, linguistic, ethnical and cultural barriers? In reality, beyond this shared perception of being the

underdogs persecuted by the Sunni majority, the Alawites of Syria and Alevis of Turkey have fundamental differences in their religious practices. They do not speak the same language and there have been few instances interaction between communities.

Yet, while the crisis in Syria worsens, growing into a sectarian war pitting Alawite against Sunni, and while the threat of foreign intervention that would eventually implicate Turkey as well hovers over the country, the question of the position that the Alevis of Turkey will adopt arises. Will they display solidarity with the Alawite regime of Assad? Can the progressive transformation of the conflict in Syria into sectarian war have consequences for the relationship between the Sunni majority and Alevi minority in Turkey? The 500 thousand Nusairis of the Hatay region, although they have lived under Turkish influence for decades, still have some sympathy for their co-religionists in power in Damascus¹⁷ but do not necessarily engage in defense of the regime. Since the beginning of the rebellion, they have been discreet and the rare manifestations of solidarity with Damascus, as in the demonstration in the border town of Antakya in February 2012, have attracted few people.¹⁸

The Alevis of Turkey, who are not Arabic speakers, speaking Turkish or Kurdish, have an even feebleness of solidarity with the regime in Damascus. Frankly, the events in Syria have put leaders of the Alevi community in Turkey in an awkward position. In effect, this community, traditionally maltreated by the Sunni majority, has always been at the vanguard of struggles against injustice and inequality. Now the situation in Syria has turned the tables. This is a case of a minority affiliated with Shiism, the Alawites, which oppresses the Sunni majority. It is difficult for the Alevis of Turkey, sharing a relatively common destiny with the Alawites, to support a group that has been committing atrocities that are hardly defensible from an ethical viewpoint. That is why the weak religious affinity does not bring the Alevis of Turkey near the regime of Assad or pit them against the majority Sunni population of Turkey. The confrontation between Alawites and Sunnis in Syria therefore has little prospect of spilling over into Turkey, pitting Alevi against Sunni as happened in Lebanon, which is a completely different case.

A politicisation of the Syrian question has arisen that tends to divide Turkish political elites. The government party, AKP, joined the anti-Assad camp, while opponents have adopted a discourse more favorable to the regime, without going all the way to supporting it. Erdogan's position, motivated as much by political considerations as humanitarian and personal ones, is presented by his rivals as a sign of solidarity with the Sunnis of Syria who are fighting the Alawite Assad regime. Not believing for an instant that the motives behind Turkey's support to the Syrian opposition is religious, Kurdish parties and Turkish far left parties put the Syrian question to use as leverage to attack AKP politics in their entirety. Each party that criticises Erdogan's position with respect to the conflict in Syria has its own reasons and motives. For the CHP, the main opposition party, the aim is to bring Erdogan's popularity down. The Turkish far left, the Communist Party of Turkey, the Workers' Party and other similar ones, as well as the trade union left, all seem to share a deep conviction that events in Syria have less to do with a popular insurrection against an oppressive regime than a real conspiracy instigated by international capitalist and imperialist forces (sic).¹⁹ Even the very progressist and popular musical group Grup Yorum has publicly displayed

its support for the Syrian regime, a "victim of an international imperialist conspiracy".²⁰ As for the Kurdish bloc and the BDP, they have had a difficult time to develop an independent position of their own. Although they have usually been very active fighting repressive regimes, they found themselves compelled as ever to copy the slogans of the PKK, which has opted to support the Assad regime.

At present, and especially since a Turkish reconnaissance plane that violated Syrian air space was brought down by Syria, Turkey has been at the forefront of support extended to the opposition against the regime in Damascus. In effect, it was in Turkey and with help from Ankara that the principal Syrian opposition movement, the Syrian National Council Syria (SNC), saw daylight and established its headquarters.

Although the Syrian crisis has not had much impact on the relations between the different religious communities in Turkey, it has divided the Turkish political elite. The official participation of Turkey in an international military intervention would further poison the stakes of domestic politics. But, in effect, Turkey is already at war with Syria since it has been harboring part of the Free Syrian Army. This war also has an economic aspect and economic costs, which are laden with consequences for certain regions of the country.

The economic consequences of the Syrian crisis for Turkey

As a direct consequence of the official position against the Damascus regime adopted in August 2011, Turkey undertook, in tandem with Western allies and the Arab League, a series of economic and financial sanctions to force Assad to negotiate with the opposition. These sanctions included, most significantly, freezing of commercial transactions with the Syrian government as well as a similar freeze between the Turkish and Syrian central banks.²¹ These measures have brought to an end the flourishing economic and financial relations between the countries that had been developed when the two states were tied together by a strategic agreement. Hence, while Turkish exports to Syria continued to rise to USD 1.424 billion in 2009 and 1.845 billion in 2010, the figure for 2011 reflected a decline to USD 1.611 billion for 2011.²² For 2012, an official statement by the Turkish Minister of Economy talked of a near freeze in trade between the countries.²³ The industry suffering most was transportation, which represented a vital activity in the economy of regions near the border, such as Gaziantep, Adana and Hatay.²⁴ Tourism has also been seriously affected: before the revolution, 800 thousand Syrians visited Turkey each year. However, the major problem that the Turkish economy has faced since Syria was caught by the ravages of the rebellion is the impossibility for Turkish firms to transit their goods through Syria to the Gulf States and the Mashreq. Thus, Turkey's trade with Egypt, Jordan and the Gulf States is threatened with a long disruption, for everything indicates that the Syrian conflict will last for many months.

However, the overall impact on the Turkish economy is not far-reaching. Trade with Syria does not represent a significant share of Turkish foreign trade. In 2011, Turkey exported goods and services at a total of USD 137 billion, of which, only USD 1.6 billion was sent to Syria.²⁵ However, in the regions of Turkey close to the Syrian border, especially in the dynamic province of Gaziantep, the local fallout is more serious. Commercial and transportation firms find themselves in difficulty and forced to revise their whole strategy in order to export products. As this crisis will last some time, it is bound to impel Turkey to consider alternative solutions to safeguard economic interests in the Middle East. But, more serious than these economic considerations that have only a limited impact on Turkey is the fact that the firm commitment of the country against the regime in Damascus threatens to weaken Ankara's relations with some of its neighbours that have a different outlook on the Syrian question.

The Syrian crisis threatens to weaken Turkey's relations with its neighbours, Iran, Iraq, and Russia

Because the Syrian conflict is a crisis of significant proportions bound to create repercussions on regional equilibria, it will no doubt force Turkey to readjust its relations with its partners. Thus, Iran is in total disagreement with Ankara regarding the solution to the Syrian conflict. Partially for religious reasons, due to the kinship between Iranian Shia and the Alawite doctrine in Syria,²⁶ but above all, for political and strategic reasons, Iran firmly supports the regime of Assad. For Tehran, events unfolding in Syria are the result of a conspiracy of the West in order to oust its principal ally in the region and isolate it even more on the international front. In line with this, Iranians think that Turkey is the Trojan horse of the West in the region, a classical reproach directed at Turkey by Iran that nonetheless has not prevented close relations between the two countries. It is a fact, though, that Iran believes Turkey and its Western allies are trying to use the insurrection in Syria to prepare ground for a new regime in Damascus, pro-Western and hostile to Iran.²⁷ Moreover, in the context of the Syrian conflict, Turkey finds itself on the side of two other regional powers that have traditionally been rivals of Iran: Saudi Arabia and Qatar. This fact exacerbates the sectarian tension between the Sunni and Shiite countries. This Iranian perception of Turkish commitments in Syria contributes to further deterioration of the already fragile relations.²⁸ Without going back to the rivalry between the Ottomans and Safavids, we observe that since the Islamic revolution of 1979, ideological differences have been important between the two countries. The rise to power of the AKP removed some of these without, however, eliminating them all. Erdogan is certainly admired in Iran for his charisma as a leader and Islamic statesman, but paradoxically, this international aura worries Iran. For years, the political figure of Erdogan has become extremely popular on the Arab street and the AKP was already a model for certain Arab political tendencies even before the Arab Spring. Iran's relations with Turkey received a boost when Turkey, together with Brazil, proposed to Western countries to act as mediator on the thorny issue of the Iranian nuclear programme,²⁹ but then worsened when Turkey, on the basis of its commitments within the framework of NATO, agreed to the deployment on its soil of an anti-missile system aimed at Iran.³⁰ It is in this overall context of a decent, but fragile, relationship

that the Syrian rebellion erupted, with it hardly possible to find a common position between the two countries.

The question now is whether the Syrian conflict will seriously undermine Turkish-Iranian relations. Here, the turn of events in Syria and, in particular, the nature of the future regime in Damascus will be decisive. Iran will not welcome a regime that will strike an alliance with Turkey and the West and this will cause complications for the indispensable economic relationship between the two countries, whose interests are intertwined. Turkey depends on Iran for a significant part of its gas and oil supply, of vital importance for a rapidly growing country. Iran, isolated on the international arena and subjected to suffocating sanctions, cannot afford to break completely with Turkey. It also shares other common interests, particularly on the Kurdish question. Although at present Syria divides them, the development of the situation may push them towards cooperation. The granting of autonomy to the Kurds in the new Syria would exercise additional pressure on Turkish and Iranian governments from their Kurdish minorities and could push them to cooperate, despite their differences regarding Syria.

Even more than Iran, Russia has extended the greatest political and military support, if one believes the rumors, to the Damascus regime. It is true that Russia has economic and strategic interests at stake in Syria, but on this issue, the Kremlin is guilty once again for having acted as a spoiler to preserve its status as a great power in the international arena, especially vis-à-vis the United States. Leaving Russian interests aside, let us concentrate on the impact of this pro-Assad policy on Russo-Turkish relations. Does this divergence between Moscow and Ankara on the Syrian affair threaten to damage the relatively good bilateral relations? The a priori answer is "No" since their national economic interests would prevail over other considerations. Turkish firms are very active in Russia, Russian tourists are flocking to Turkey, but above all, the countries depend on each other in the sphere of natural gas. Turkey needs Russian gas as much as it does that of Iran for its gas-guzzling economy.³¹ The Russians need this market. What is more, the project for the construction by Russia of a nuclear plant in Turkey has progressed too far for the sides to sacrifice it on the Syrian altar.³²

In that context, the Turkish prime minister paid an official visit to the Russian capital in mid-July, at a time when the Syrian conflict turned even more deadly.³³ The aim was to convince Russia to rethink the question and consider a new Syria without Assad, and to reaffirm the terms of economic cooperation so vital for both countries. Hence, the Syrian conflict is bound to create little impact on Russian-Turkish relations, provided Erdogan sustains his diplomatic efforts and devotes time and energy for maintaining good relations with Russia.

Finally, Iraq perceives a threat to its relationship with Turkey because of the crisis in Syria. Relations are further complicated by the fact that in an almost bicephalous Iraq, Ankara has to negotiate as much with Baghdad as with Erbil, the capital of the Kurdish autonomous region. Largely implicated in the domestic politics of Iraq, Turkey has seen its relations with the Shiite component of the Baghdad government worsen. Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al Maliki has even accused the Ankara government of deliberately poisoning relations between the Sunnis and Shiites of Iraq.³⁴ Moreover, the Baghdad government accuses Turkey of maintaining privileged relations with the Kurdish autonomous government, which is nothing but a

region in the north of Iraq, implying that, in its eyes, this represents a threat to the territorial integrity of the country. In effect, however, as much of a paradox this may seem, Turkey, a country that represses its own Kurdish minority, has established steady and solid relations with the Kurds of Iraq for the sake of economic benefit and out of political pragmatism.³⁵

Shiite solidarity has led the Baghdad government to not oppose the Alawite government of Assad, which levels at Turkey the accusation of demonstrating sectarianism through its support for the Sunnis in Syria based on its privileged relations with the SNC, in which the Muslim Brotherhood, which is close to Turkey, has a strong position. Its powerful ally in the region, Iran, supported Baghdad in this. Although neither side wishes to take the slippery road of a sectarian drift, the Syrian crisis nevertheless crystallises the Shiite-Sunni fault line and further aggravates existing tensions between Ankara and Baghdad, just as it simultaneously reinforces Turkey's ties to Erbil.

In effect, in its relations with Iraq, even more markedly since the Syrian conflict, it has become essential for Ankara to be on very good terms with leaders of the autonomous Kurdish region. The emergence of the Kurds of Syria as a new autonomous political, even military, force has added value to the good relations with Erbil, which is the only political actor capable of influencing the Kurds of Syria, including and, above all, the PYD, which seems to be a black sheep for Ankara because of its ties to the PKK. Turkey hopes to receive guarantees as to the containment of the Kurdish question in Syria through the secret mediation of the Kurds of Iraq. Erbil, on the other hand, can negotiate the preservation of direct economic and political ties with Turkey, which then strengthens its hand vis-à-vis Baghdad, which is not pleased with the lingering penchant of the Kurds for excessive autonomy. For Ankara, the Kurds of Iraq have become more important than ever in their capacity of preferred mediators for any future talks with the PKK. Paradoxically, by talking on an equal footing with the autonomous region, Ankara has increased the autonomy of this quasi-state of the Kurds, which does not necessarily coincide with its interests. Inevitably, the Syrian conflict is pushing Turkey into a new Kurdish dilemma and forcing it to seek external levers that it lends strength to, but can, in the long run, put it in a difficult situation.

Turkey's fragile leverage for coping with the Syrian crisis

Being a frontline state, Turkey is seeking to come out of this imbroglio without excessive damage. The prolongation of the conflict sharpens the Kurdish question, affects its economy and puts its regional policy and leadership in jeopardy. Turkish efforts are focused on preventing the breaking up of Syria and containing Kurdish demands. To the extent that the outcome of the crisis is hardly foreseeable and the orientation of the future regime is an unknown, it is difficult for Turkey to influence these issues. Although the country does not possess sufficient leverage in this area, it nonetheless wields some instruments in order to defend its interests in post-Assad Syria.

Its trump card is the SNC, whose establishment it favoured based on several meetings held in Turkey and through the intermediation of NGOs close to the AKP. The Turkish government maintains very good relations with the SNC, which goes even further in the case of the Muslim Brotherhood within it, a force that is sensitive to the

Islamic rhetoric of the AKP. The modest and little-known Turkmen minority has come out in favour of the revolution and may act as another lever for Turkey because it belongs to the Turkish world.

Concerning the Muslim Brotherhood, many analysts claim that the Turkish Prime Minister, who comes from a political Islamic background but later converted to a moderate conservative brand of Islam, aims to put his friends, the Brotherhood, in power in Damascus.³⁶ This is a complex issue and requires recalling certain aspects of the ties between Turkish and Syrian Islamists and the question about the thinking of political Islam in Syria.

The thinking of the Muslim Brotherhood has unquestionably left its mark on that of Islamists in Turkey. This was especially true in the 1960's and 1970's.³⁷ The historic leader of Turkish political Islam, Necmettin Erbakan, made clear his solidarity with the Brotherhood in Egypt, Jordan and Syria and hosted their leaders regularly in

Turkey's implication in the Syrian imbroglio puts the country's provinces neighbouring Syria into difficulty, as their economy had been oriented towards Syria and its neighbours. The support given to the Syrian opposition has unforeseeable effects on Turkey's relationship with some of its neighbours, namely, Iran, Iraq and Russia.

Turkey. However, Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan, although he was a close disciple and collaborator of Erbakan, sought to change his image and take his distance from political Islam when he came to power in 2002.³⁸ This distance was even more marked in the case of the Syrian Brotherhood since Erdogan was pursuing an ambitious regional policy based on privileged relations with the Assad regime, who, following his father, applied repression on the Muslim Brotherhood and its sympathisers.³⁹ Some of these took refuge in Turkey and were welcomed, such as Gazwan al Masri, a businessman who played a significant role in the "Mavi Marmara" operation aiming to break the maritime blockade of the Gaza Strip.⁴⁰ From 1998, when relations were normalised, up to the eve of the revolution, the Turkish government contained a handful of Muslim Brothers settled in Turkey to prevent them from becoming a barrier to good relations with Syria.

The situation has somewhat changed since the beginning of the revolution in Syria. The establishment of the SNC in Turkey and the strength of the Muslim Brotherhood within this body instills confidence in Turkish politicians and AKP strategists to look to an alliance between Turkey and the Brotherhood in the new Syria. Whether this corresponds to reality or is a figment of the imagination, this is in any case precisely the target of the criticism leveled at Erdogan by the Turkish media that is most hostile to the AKP, in particular the ultra-Kemalists and Kurdish parties. But this fear is also voiced by the most secular forces of the Syrian opposition.

Yet, these allegations are not wholly unfounded. It is a well-known fact that the AKP seeks to seduce the Muslim world by presenting itself as a model political

party that has reconciled Islam and democracy.⁴¹ In many Muslim countries that have had their share of the Arab Spring, such as Tunisia, the AKP experience is often cited as an example to be emulated or inspired by.⁴² Some Muslim Brotherhood leaders, such as Ali Sadr ad-Din al-Bayanouni and Mohammad Farouk Tayfour, who settled in Turkey in 2011, untiringly praise the merits of the Turkish model and the pioneering role played by the AKP in the conceptualisation of an Islamic model of democracy.⁴³ However, to strike an alliance with the Syrian Brotherhood as a dependable and lasting support can be complex for the AKP.

First of all, the strength of the Muslim Brotherhood is often overestimated, both by supporters and opponents. A quick look at the history of political Islam in Syria would show that the Brotherhood was never able to reconstitute itself after the destruction it was subjected to in 1982.⁴⁴ Even officials of the Brotherhood admit the fraternity lost a big chunk of its popular base,⁴⁵ to such an extent that the Islamic element in the Syrian revolution may not necessarily be tied to the Brotherhood. Within the country, Salafist cells and others affiliated with Hizb ut-Tahrir are also active and their views are different from those of the Brotherhood.⁴⁶

Although absent from Syrian territory, the Muslim Brotherhood is certainly well-organised abroad within the SNC, but even there they do not wield a monopoly in the sphere of Islamist ideas. Certain religious dissidents, such as Mahmut Osman, who has lived in Turkey for several decades,⁴⁷ are in the SNC without being affiliated with the Brotherhood. Finally, another Syrian Islamist party in exile in London, the Justice and Construction Party,⁴⁸ whose members are younger and more dynamic, are beginning to shadow the greying historic leadership of the Brotherhood.

The idea that Islamists will dominate the new Syria, beginning with the Muslim Brotherhood, is a product of the paranoia of partisans of ultra-secularism, of some Islamophobic Western media and traditional allies of the Assad regime, such as Russia (which is also Islamophobic).⁴⁹ One cannot compare Syria to other Arab countries where Islamists, traditionally strong as in Tunisia or Egypt, came to power riding the crest of the Arab Spring. A simple look at the demographic data and ethno-denominational composition of the Syrian population rebuts the arguments of those who are fearful of Islamists. In effect, assuming democratic elections were held in a pacified Syria tomorrow, Islamists could only hope to receive about 30 per cent of the vote. They would not be able to count on Christians (10 per cent), the Alawites (10 per cent), Druze and Circassians (5 per cent), or the Kurds (10 per cent), who would vote based on nationalism or identity. Even within the Arab Sunni majority, a landslide of the Islamist vote would not be earth shattering for the overall results given the extreme division of different groups both within the country and among expatriates. That is also the reason why Erdogan refuses to bet solely on the Brotherhood and diversifies Turkey's contacts and intermediaries within the SNC and beyond.

The Syrian crisis brought to light a small Turkmen community, the existence of which was unknown until recently.⁵⁰ This community speaks a language very close to the Turkmen spoken in Iraq and feels very close to Turkey.⁵¹ Its identity seems to be quite feeble, but it has,

nonetheless, been awakened thanks to the revolution. Numerically weak (500 thousand at most), this community has provided Syria with statesmen as important as Shukri al Kuwwatli, president from 1943-1949 and again from 1955-1958. The place that Turkmens occupy in the history of Syria is as assimilated and Arabized Syrians, rarely as a minority with a consciousness of belonging to a Turkish identity.

With the revolution however, the community restructured itself and created its own movement, the Turkmen Democratic Movement of Syria, which collaborates closely with the SNC, where it has a small representation. Its aim is to benefit from its particular ties to Turkey to obtain specific rights in the new Syria.⁵² Can this community become a lever for Turkey similar to the Turkmens of Iraq, who established a serious collaboration with Turkey? Their small number and quest for an identity between a forgotten Turkishness and an adopted Arabness indicate otherwise.

Conclusion: Syria creates a setback for Turkish ascendancy in the Arab world

The levers that Turkey can use to influence the future of Syria are weak and marginal, both in relation to the Turkmens and the Muslim Brotherhood in the Syrian National Council. Alone when confronting its domestic and regional dilemmas, the country has no choice but to turn to the international community, in particular its Western allies and the United Nations, in order to be part of shaping the destiny of Syria and defend its national interest.

Until recently, good relations between Turkey and Syria graphically brought alive the Turkish policy of engagement toward the Middle East. Syria, once the main enemy of Turkey, became, towards the end of the 1990's, Ankara's most loyal ally in the region. The Arab Spring catapulted into power political forces close to the AKP and fed into the popularity of Turkey in the Arab world, even contributing to the obliteration of the hesitations and tergiversations of Erdogan about developments in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. The Syrian crisis demonstrates the limits of the "zero problems" with neighbors policy so dear to Davutoglu's heart. The Syrian crisis turning into a nightmare will probably put an end to the regional policies of Turkey and threatens to destroy all the capital of sympathy and soft power that Turkey could boast in its Middle Eastern surroundings.

Yet, Erdogan's management of the crisis has not been bad in general. On the contrary, it was sensible and diplomatic during the first few months, but as the Syrian regime hardened its stance into an all or nothing attitude, Turkish policy acquired more belligerent traits. Like others, Erdogan expected a swifter transition. Now, after 19 months of relentless struggle, the government has still not given up and Syria finds itself bogged down in a civil war that threatens to destabilise Turkey. However, the real bombshell for Erdogan seems to be the emergence, especially clear after July 2012, of a Kurdish political force in Syria controlled by the PYD and PKK, which comes as a blow to Turkish leverage.

On its own, Turkey cannot cope with the situation. Admitting this weakness damages its aura. It is looking for levers and instruments to make use of within the Syrian opposition, among countries of the region and in international bodies. The spectre of the emergence of a

Kurdish autonomous region at its borders should impel Turkey to finally take up its own Kurdish problem with courage and will-power. However, the task is not easy. The public is no more prepared for it than the political elite and the reflex for repression dies hard. It is dismaying to see the Turkish government accords priority to recourse to force rather than engaging in dialogue.

The Turkish prime minister bears a personal responsibility in this cul-de-sac. While public debate exhausts the possibility of agreement and national consensus on the question of abortion, which was never a real issue in Turkey, the government fails to initiate a real dialogue with the Kurds and rethink post-modern Turkey, all the while imagining itself a regional leader of international stature.

Footnote

- Jake Hess, "The AKP's 'New Kurdish Strategy' Is Nothing of the Sort", An Interview with Selahattin Demirtaş, Middle East Research and Information Project, May 2, 2012, URL: <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero050212>.
- Muharrem Erbey, "The 'democratic opening' and the illusion of advanced democracy in Turkey", Open Democracy, August 23, 2011, URL: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/muharrem-erbey/democratic-opening-and-illusion-of-advanced-democracy-in-turkey>.
- International Crisis Group, "Turkey: Ending the PKK Insurgency", Report, N° 213, September 20, 2011, URL: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/europe/turkey-cyprus/turkey/213%20Turkey%20-%20Ending%20the%20PKK%20Insurgency.pdf>.
- Hemin Khosnaw, "Secret Talks Reported between Turkey and Imprisoned PKK Leader", Rudaw, July 11, 2012, URL: <http://www.rudaw.net/english/news/turkey/4942.html>.
- Oytun Orhan, "Suriye Türkiye'ye Karşı PKK Kozunu Oynuyor (mu?)", ORSAM, February 14, 2012, URL: <http://www.orsam.org.tr/tr/yazigoster.aspx?ID=3208>.
- Murat Gürgeç, Muharrem Çaglar, Zeki Dara, "Yine Bahoz yine Dağlica", Habertürk, June 20, 2012, URL: <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/752237-yine-bahoz-yine-daglica>.
- Mahmut Hamsici, "Suriye'nin kuzeyinde iktidar Kürtler'e geçiyor", BBC Türkçe, July 24, 2012, URL: http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkce/haberler/2012/07/120724_pyidinterview.shtml.
- Bakr Sidki, "The Kurds and the Syrian Revolution", Henrich Böll Stiftung, March 2012, URL: http://www.lb.boell.org/downloads/Bakr_Sidki-The_Kurds_and_the_Syrian_Revolution.pdf.
- Bakr Sidki, http://www.lb.boell.org/downloads/Bakr_Sidki-The_Kurds_and_the_Syrian_Revolution.pdf.
- Gareth H. Jenkins, "The Latest KCK Arrests: One Step Closer to Breaking Point", Central Asia Caucasus Institute-Turkey Analyst, June 4, 2011, URL: <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/inside/turkey/2011/11107A.html>.
- "SNC: National Charter: the Kurdish Issue in Syria", Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, URL: <http://carnegie-mec.org/publications/?fa=48436>.
- Patrick J. McDonnell, "Turkey says it won't let Kurdish rebels operate in north Syria", Los Angeles Times, July 27, 2012, URL: <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-turkey-syria-kurds-20120727,0,4304751.story>.
- Halm, Heinz, The Shi'ites: A Short History, Wien, Markus Pub, 2007.
- Paul White, Joost Jongerden (eds.), Turkey's Alevis Enigma: A Comprehensive Overview, Leiden, Brill, 2003.
- Abdulkadir Yeler, "Shi'ism in Turkey: A Comparison of the Alevis and the Jafaris", Journal of Shi'a Islamic Studies, Vol. 3, No. 3, London, 2010.
- Abdulkadir Yeler, "Aleviler Suriyenin Neresinde? Arap Baharında Mezhep Faktörü", Türk Asya Stratejik Araştırma Merkezi, URL: http://www.tasam.org/tr-TR/Icerik/4491/aleviler_suriyenin_neresinde.
- Ceren Kenar, "Esed Rejimi, Nusayrılık ve Suriye...", Taraf, 09/07/2012, URL: <http://www.taraf.com.tr/ceren-kenar/makale-esed-rejimi-nusayrilik-ve-suriye.htm>.
- "TURKEY: Hundreds of people in border town of Antakya demonstrate in support of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad", February 20, 2012, URL: <http://www.itnsource.com/shotlist/RTV/2012/02/20/RTV555612/?v=0&a=1>.
- Suriye'ye Karşı Emperyalist Müdahale Vatana İhanettir, Odatv, 25/06/2012, URL: <http://www.odatv.com/n.php?n=suriyeye-karsi-emperyalist-mudahale-vatana-ihanettir-2506121200>.
- Kübra Parmaksızoglu, Grup Yorum: 'Suriye'deki Yönetimi destekliyoruz', Habertürk, 21/07/2012, URL: <http://www.haberturk.com/kultur-sanat/haber/760702-grup-yorum-suriyedeki-yonetimi-destekliyoruz>.
- Veysel Aynan, "Türkiye ve Arap Birliği'nin Suriye'ye yaptırım kararları ve olası sonuçları", International Middle East Peace Research Center, http://www.impr.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/suriye_yaptirim_raporu_no_9.pdf.
- "Suriye sınırında ekonomik canlılık darbe yedi", Ekoayrıntı, 07/12/2012, URL: http://www.ekoayrinti.com/news_detail.php?id=100571.
- "Suriye sınır kapıları mühürlendi, dış ticaret çöktü", Timeturk, 25/06/2012, URL: <http://www.timeturk.com/tr/2012/07/25/suriye-sinir-kapilari-muhurlendi-dis-ticaret-coktu.html>.
- Mehmet Ezer, "Suriye'deki olaylar en fazla Hatay ekonomisini vurdu", Radikal, 29/07/2012, URL: <http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalDetayV3&ArticleID=1095598&CategoryID=80>.
- Sur l'évolution du commerce extérieur turc, voir <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/turkey/indicators>.
- Martin Krämer, "Syria's Alawis and Shi'ism", URL: <http://www.geocities.com/martinkramerorg/Alawis.htm>.
- Alex Vatanka, "Syria Drives a Wedge between Turkey and Iran", Middle East Institute, <http://www.mei.edu/content/syria-drives-wedge-between-turkey-and-iran>.
- Giorgio Cafiero, "Will Syria Cause a Divorce Between Iran and Turkey?", Foreign Policy in Focus, July 5, 2012, URL: http://www.fpi.org/articles/will_syria_cause_a_divorce_between_iran_and_turkey.
- Parisa Hafezi, "Turkey, Brazil seal deal on Iran nuclear fuel swap", Reuters, May 6, 2010, URL: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/05/16/us-iran-nuclear-deal-idUSTRE64F29P20100516>.
- Reuter, "Iran warns over NATO's anti-missile radar in Turkey", Reuters, September 6, 2011, URL: <http://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFRE7851V20110906>.
- Leyla Karakaya, "Turkey Played its Hand Well in the Energy Game", TEPAV, 2011, URL: http://www.tepav.org.tr/upload/files/1330691043-7.Turkey_Played_its_Hand_Well_in_the_Energy_Game.pdf.
- Şebnem Arus, "Turkey's Pact With Russia Will Give It Nuclear Plant", New York Times, May 12, 2010, URL: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/13/world/europe/13turkey.html>.
- "Rusya'ya Esedsiz yönetim önerdik, düşünceler", HaberRus, July 19, 2012, URL: <http://haberrus.com/politics/2012/07/19/rusyaya-esedsiz-yonetim-onerdik-dusunceler.html>.
- Nick Ottens, « Diplomatic Crisis Between Iraq, Turkey Deepening », Atlantic Sentinel, April 29, 2012, URL: <http://atlanticsentinel.com/2012/04/diplomatic-crisis-between-iraq-turkey-deepening>.
- Gönül Tol, "Turkey Cozies Up to the KRG", National Interest, May 29, 2012, URL: <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/turkey-cozies-the-kr-6975>.
- Utku Çakırözer, "'Erdoğan'ın isteği Müslüman Kardeşler'i Suriye'de iktidara getirmekmiş", Cumhuriyet, February 29, 2012, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/erdoganin-istegi-musulman-kardesleri-suriyede-iktidara-getirmek-mis/198170>.
- Ali Buluç, "Müslüman Kardeşlerin Türkiye İslam'ı üzerindeki etkileri", Hasan El-Benne ve Müslüman Kardeşler Uluslararası Sempozyumu, Tebliğler, Genç Birikim Yayınevi, Ankara, 2012, pp. 291-300.
- Interview with Mohammad Farouk Tayfour, deputy comptroller general of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood and representative in the Syrian National Council, Istanbul, June 19, 2012.
- Olivier Carré, Gérard Michaud, Les Frères musulmans: Egypte et Syrie (1928-1982). Paris, Gallimard, 1983.
- Steven G. Merley, "Turkey, the Global Muslim Brotherhood and the Gaza Flotilla", Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, http://jcpa.org/text/Turkey_Muslim_Brotherhood.pdf.
- İpek Yezdani, "Muslim Brotherhood debates Turkey model", Hurriyet Daily News, 14/09/2012, <http://www.hurriyettailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=muslim-brotherhood-debates-turkey-model-2011-09-14>. See also Feriha Perikli, "AK Party Model for Islamists", Insight Turkey, July 2012, <http://www.insightturkey.com/ak-party-model-for-islamists/articles/187>.
- Dorothee Schmidt, Marc Sémo, "Un modèle turc pour les révoltes arabes?", Politique Internationale, Paris, Spring 2011.
- Interview with Mohammad Farouk Tayfour, deputy comptroller general of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood and representative in the Syrian National Council, Istanbul, June 19, 2012.
- Sami Moubayed, "No Room for Political Islam in Syria", Asia Times, May 10, 2005, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/GE10Ak01.html.
- Interview with Mohammad Farouk Tayfour, deputy comptroller general of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood and representative in the Syrian National Council, Istanbul, June 19, 2012.
- Aron Lund, op.cit., pp. 60-66.
- Interview with Mahmut Osman, Member of the Syrian National Council, Istanbul, 17 June 2012.
- Abdulrahman Alhaj, "Political Islam and the Syrian Revolution", Al Jazeera Center for Studies, <http://studies.aljazeera.net/ResourceGallery/media/Documents/2012/6/10/20126109615611734Political%20Islam%20and%20the%20Syrian%20Revolution.pdf>.
- Joe Lauria, "Fears of 'Islamists taking over Syria' fuelling Moscow's support for Damascus", The National, June 15, 2012, URL: <http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/middle-east/fears-of-islamists-taking-over-syria-fuelling-moscows-support-for-damascus>.
- "Suriye'de değişimin ortaya çıkardığı toplum: Suriye Türkmenleri", Orta Doğu Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi, November 2011, URL: http://www.orsam.org.tr/tr/trUploads/Yazilar/Dosyalar/20111127_orsam_raporu_83_tr.pdf.
- Minhaç Celik, Kazım Pınar, "Suriye Türkmenleri: Tek dayanağımız Türkiye", Zaman, July 27, 2012.
- Interview with Abdurrahman Betra, vice-president of the Turkmen Democratic Movement of Syria, Istanbul, June 21, 2012.

Beware of Hatay's climate of peace

Just as change does not necessarily mean progress, political scheming in Hatay fell short of raising the city to the level of the rest of Turkey. We residents are people who live freely in peace and security regardless of what religion or sect we belong to. Our lives had no traces of blood, tears, grudges, hatred, suspicion or fear. Our level of tension would be less than one percent of the tension existing in the Southeastern province. It is apt to use a well-worn adage: In peace, children bury their parents; in war, parents bury their children.

Even though one and a half years have passed since the turmoil in Syria began, information pollution and uncertainty of the duel between conflicting sides – first in words and then in arms – rages on. As Syria tries to make sense of the U-turn in Turkey's attitude, those who govern are insistent upon Assad's departure. As for the USA, who played a key role in escalating the situation to its present state, it's occupied with the disorganization and growing number of Syrian dissidents and difficulties in finding a replacement for Bashar al Assad.

As Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Davutoglu gave us a list of Syrian sanctions, Turkish Grand National Assembly Speaker Cemil Cicek warned, "No one should attempt oriental cunning by watching from the sidelines, saying, 'Let Turkey handle this.'"

Some say the reason behind this is the Tarsus–Haifa–Mosul oil pipeline – the most effective and powerful pipeline on the planet – that Israel, the USA, UK and EU want to get their hands on. Others say the problem stems from the USA wanting a base in Syria, who is reluctant to sell out Russia and China.

Some regard this as democracy and others as a belated popular uprising, but it seems what's happening is simply people being trampled and losing their lives like grass under the feet of elephants.

It was inevitable instability in Syria spread to Turkey. We all know "a neighbor's loss is our loss" and "a neighbor's gain is our gain". With this in mind, Syrians must determine Syria's future.

What's going on in Hatay? What are people talking about? Why are they uneasy?

It's inappropriate for Turkey to intervene directly in affairs of a neighboring country and people it called brothers. The emotional behavior of Arab Alawis living in Hatay, the Alawi-Sunni conflict,

exhortations of "Let's make it clear where we stand" are all false; unconvincing. Alawis in Hatay are bonded by family relationships, half who were in Syria and the other half in Turkey when borders were drawn. The same is true for Christians and Sunnis.

The minority Alawis had always been under suspicion. They were regarded with skepticism: "Alawis are acquiring land on behalf of Syria; they cannot be trusted!" This was what was in reports sent by our local governors who were closest to us, who we lived with, and who we put on a pedestal. The Christian community of 1,000-2,000 people and the 100-strong Jewish assemblage had never been seen as a threat, anyway.

I'll share a story from my own experience: My late father kept us from seeing relatives in Syria for many years, we grew up without knowing them. One day, a couple of women from a group visiting Turkey called us up. My father got excited, saying, "My cousins are in Antakya! I'm going to pick them up." I never forgot that night. Police were around our house until morning. Our relatives and we were very uneasy. When asked why all the commotion, my father said the cousins' husbands were high-level officials in Syria. We severed ties with our relatives for fear that the smallest visit could cause pressure and tension that might follow us even if we left Hatay for an education in the future. When my father passed away, though, relatives from Syria visited us, including my father's 99-year-old uncle. By 1993, our relationships were improving and we didn't have problems.

During 1998-2006, I was President of the Environmental Protection Society of Hatay, and the Syrian government invited NGO representatives from Antakya to Rakka, in the Euphrates dam watershed, as part of a movement toward a more civil administration. The goal was to share experiences. We told the Syrians what the civil movement in Turkey had done and what we could do together, and they kept saying, "It won't work." I delivered most of my presentation in Arabic, which impressed them. They presented me with garments worn by Bedouin women. I attended dinner that night in that dress and felt quite at home because part of me was Syrian. Officials told us Assad's son was more pro-democracy than his father, he worked for social peace, he had married Esma, a Sunni, as a first step; he took care to preserve the ethnic balance in the administration, and everything was different. They explained how civil movements were



Nidal Özdemir

She holds a master from the Faculty of Agriculture at Ankara Univ. Having founded the Botanik Ladin Company in 1997, Özdemir cultivates, markets, and does landscaping with nurslings and ornamental plants. She has been actively involved in the environmental movement and was the President of the Environmental Protection Society of the Hatay province (1998-2006). She was a co-founding the Greens Party and a member of the Party Assembly. Özdemir is currently President of the Hatay Laurel Association of Medical Aromatic Plants and Return to Nature. She is married with two children.

started by the state and run by government agencies. Baffled as we were by this genre of democratic progress, we weren't able to make them understand that their NGO's had to be civil and autonomous like ours. Actually, they understood, but they played dumb because they knew they could never do that.

As we left, each of us was handed an envelope with money. This surprised us because we had been hosted in the best possible manner. Later, we received an invitation to a culture and arts festival and we met again, discussing things that, according to them, had to be discussed in silence. We invited them to the meeting of the Mediterranean Environment Platform (AKÇEP) held in the Turkish province of Burdur. They decided to come.

Ms. Sems, Environment Director in Syria and French-educated agricultural engineer Dr. Ali, who conducted conservation work in the Euphrates basin, came with us. The plainclothesmen did not give us a moment alone when we checked into our hotel. They probed for information, asking, "What are you discussing? Who are you? Why did you come? What are the topics?" Ms. Sems talked about environmental problems in Syria and Dr. Ali talked about conservation work in the basin. Ulrike Dufner, Turkey Representative of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Association, which partly paid for our meeting, said we were wrong to host visitors in Burdur instead of in the west of Turkey where they could be hosted better. Some associates reacted to the meeting, saying, "What do we care about environmental problems in Syria?" It seemed as if democracy had not yet been fully embraced in Turkey, either. We finished the meeting with the civil police and went home with a feeling of being a potential suspect. Environmental problems are experienced on a global scale, so how could we find a solution to pollution in the Orontes River without joining forces with Syria?

We, who live in Turkey's border provinces, had to suffer from these wrong political decisions. Intellectuals, progressives and democrats in Hatay had no objections to the settling of, and receiving humanitarian aid for Syrians who crossed the border to the tent cities. But now, residents of Hatay are disturbed by policies implemented by the government. Economic losses in our region have reached serious proportions. We live in fear that war can erupt any time. Tensions have been at an extreme over the last couple of months in particular. The only topic is the plight of Syria and Hatay, with an accent on minorities.

"Refugees" freely roam streets, parks, malls, neighborhoods, restaurants – everywhere in Antakya. Some walk accompanied by armed guards in military outfits. Some are armed men with a beard but no mustache, wearing long overgarments, sports shoes or military boots. We doubt if these are Syrians because we have had economic, familial and neighborly ties with Syrians for years and these people do not look like the Syrians we know. Citizens of Antakya call them "hired killers" or "plunderers".

There are prerequisites to being a refugee. Seeking refuge is a right safeguarded by international law. But the situation in Antakya is different. When something happens that sends

tensions soaring, people in the camps start a riot, saying, "This isn't what you promised! You were going to give us homes, jobs, wages!"

Camp dwellers spew hatred at doctors there to treat them, saying "Are you an Alawi? Don't touch me if you are!" They take humanitarian aid issued and sell it downtown the same day. Some get free medical exams and medicine in town without an ID simply by stating their names for the record. They ask doctors for sun lotion, Viagra and lens solution and the government pays for it. The emergency ward

Some regard this as democracy and others as a belated popular uprising, it seems what's happening is simply people being trampled on and losing their lives like grass under the feet of elephants.

in the state hospital in Antakya is often closed to locals for three days on end, serving only refugees. Emergency patients in Antakya are left to die untreated.

Refugees at health clinics do not wait in line. They cause disturbance by saying, "We have priority! You've got to treat us first!" When questioned about their problem and instructed to queue like everyone else because they are not emergency patients, they retort, "We're Muslims. We're going to complain to Tayyip."

Vagrant refugees enter restaurants, eat and leave without paying – but not before causing a scene about the bill, saying it will be paid by Tayyip. They are a nuisance for local shopkeepers. When they see a girl walk by wearing shorts, they harass and scare her with hand gestures signaling, "I'll cut your throat." A gang of refugees spreads fear in the neighborhood near the old intercity bus terminal, saying, "This place is nice. It'll all be ours soon." A group of bearded men arrived at a gas station around 2 AM the other night and left without paying, uttering, "The time is near. Everything here will be ours." These are a few examples, but local shopkeepers have had enough. When they ask the freeloaders to pay for what they took and ate, the freeloaders reply, "We'll see you later. We like these places. They're going to be ours soon enough," and they leave without paying. They act as if they have the guarantee that police are going to protect them rather than us. We cannot call the police because they tell us, "Don't make a fuss! They are guests. Just keep clear of them."

I flew from Istanbul to Hatay on 7 August 2012, and one third of the passengers were strangely dressed, bearded men. One mentioned that he was coming from Libya. They got off the aircraft after all passengers had disembarked, picked up their unusual-looking luggage, checked out through the VIP gate and were driven off in waiting vehicles. They were not Syrians. When Co-chair of the German Greens Party Claudia Roth came we told her about this, and found that she had a similar flight, which

had put her ill at ease. When she returned to Germany, she announced that these bearded men were not there to bring democracy.

These people rent houses, TIR trucks pull up, materials are offloaded, meetings are held and they disperse late at night. They block apartment driveways but no one dares protest. Some make a lot of noise but no one can say anything. Neighbors who attempted to do so got beaten and police did not intervene. When someone does muster the courage to intervene against refugees, he finds himself alone because nobody dares to put himself at risk.

There's plenty of polluted information on the internet from both the Alawis and Sunni interest groups such: "We don't want Alawis. They're Assad's lapdogs. Their goal is to found a Nusayri state including Hatay. They're going to kick Sunnis out of Hatay. We should not allow them."

As for the Alawis, their tone is more hardline,

Camp dwellers threaten, "Your turn will come after we take care of Assad." Alawis heard it because they speak Arabic. Contractors building the tent city, doctors treating the sick, technicians setting up the security system, couriers delivering medicine – they all heard.

as the rallying cry, "It's time to take up arms! God bless Assad with more power so he can do away with them all," which does not bode well for the future. During the rally in support of Syria four months ago, a group of provocateurs showed up waving Assad's photographs and the Syrian flag. We wished Turkish and Syrian flags had been waved together and slogans shouted for peace, but it was too late. The following day, several local newspapers ran headlines reading, "Alawis rallied for Assad but did not bat an eye for martyred policemen." Everyone was interpreting things how they wanted. From that time, regardless of whether they were supporters or dissidents, no groups from out of town were given permission to stage a demonstration.

The Antakya Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Antakya Commerce Bourse, Industrialist Business People's Association of Hatay, and Young Businessmen's Association of Hatay announced all business sectors were seriously impacted, with many companies verging on bankruptcy – especially the transportation industry because of burning and pillaging of TIR trucks and subsequent border closure. They explained the annual volume of exports to Syria was 30 million dollars in more stable times and the adverse effects of the current situation not only hit local businesses but were also felt by merchants as far away as Istanbul. A couple of years ago, rich Syrians visited Istanbul for pleasure; middle-income Syrians regularly came to Mersin and its environs; and relatives of local folk, day-trippers, or weekend holidaymakers preferred Antakya. Today, tourism has taken a crippling blow because the

prerequisite for tourism is peace.

Professional organizations in Hatay put together a civil platform called Hatay Professional Chambers Coordination Council (HAMOK). They try to build public opinion through a joint decision-making mechanism by convening their boards on issues concerning Hatay. HAMOK believes that the problem in Hatay more pressing than the economy is safety and peace. Environmental protection associations, HAMOK and others currently have a consultation team, of which I'm a member, that discusses ways to avert the collapse of the climate of peace. The team is engaged in enlisting public support to ensure rights of refugees are granted in compliance with international law, real victims receive services they need, humanitarian aid efforts are conducted effectively, the odd-looking, bearded and armed gangs roaming our streets are eliminated, hospitals are reopened to local residents by setting up a field hospital for 3 million dollars in aid if necessary, and bearded types infiltrating our neighborhoods are prevented from doing whatever they are up to.

NGO's in Hatay are not idle, but anxiety is mounting. Schools open on 17 September and we're worried what may happen to our children on their way to and from school in this unsecure atmosphere.

The cause of this anxiety is the efforts of pro-AKP media targeting religious sects and their hateful rhetoric. They no longer use the term "Alawi" but use "Nusayris" in an effort to divide, fragment, otherize and thus prepare ground for a sectorial conflict that could escalate into a massacre.

The Free Syrian Army (FSA) has offices in Hatay and members of the press openly tell us they will go to the FSA offices for an interview after interviewing us. Neither authorities nor police showed the slightest reaction to FSA's threat of "Your turn will come" by pointing a finger at the Alawis. In fact, a Turkish policeman was shot with his own firearm by dissidents but the incident was covered up.

Governor of Hatay Celalettin Lekesiz is a well-liked administrator who maintains strong dialogue with the public. When approached on a daily basis by a string of NGO representatives eager to voice their worries, he brought together representatives of all NGO's, political parties; Alawi, Sunni, Jewish, Christian, and Armenian community leaders, and opinion leaders. Everyone expressed the wish for tolerance, brotherhood and peace. First to speak were the province mufti, Alawi sheikh, Christian priest, Armenian priest and Jewish rabbi. They mentioned how their communities had been living together for centuries. They recalled our chorus of civilizations. The political party representatives also shook hands and said, "We are one."

We felt gloomier as we left the nearly four-hour meeting because we had no say. We had to choke down our protest because the problem was not the public. We were already living as peaceful, comfortable and brotherly a life as possible until letters were seized on the border saying, "You will be religiously sanctioned to enjoy the properties and women of the Alawis after the revolution." These offensive provocations went on. Peace no longer

prevailed in Hatay. The buzzword among 15 and 16-year-old children in camps was “Massacre.”

Camp dwellers threaten, “Your turn will come after we take care of Assad.” Alawis heard it because they speak Arabic. Contractors building the tent city, doctors treating the sick, technicians setting up the security system, couriers delivering medicine – they all heard.

Worries over the presence of “secret agents” and “Al Qaida” run rampant

Chairperson of the Hatay Industrialist Businessmen’s Association (HASİAD) Gulay Gul was urged by authorities to exercise restraint in her statements after she announced, “Apart from the economic crisis, Hatay has been experiencing serious problems security-wise. Hatay is a symbol of peace and its citizens know each other. Security is top-notch in this town. Recently, though, uneasiness has set in because of the presence and annoying stares of strange-looking, unsavory characters who roam the streets. I had no problems walking down the streets of my hometown after hours but now I cannot venture out of my house. 23 July was the anniversary of Hatay’s annexation to the Turkish homeland and we, the people of Hatay, must close ranks and lay claim to Hatay’s values of peace, brotherhood, and tolerance; and exercise greater common sense.” Gul said, “I spoke what I felt and what townspeople were talking about. I was their voice,” and she made no further comments despite queries from the press.

CHP deputies speak loudly with the motions they make in parliament and information they get from the public. It’s mentioned, for example, that ambulances carry weapons to the border and come back with wounded. Hatay residents are familiar with violence perpetrated against Syrians by mercenaries backed by foreign sources. Armed groups entered Syria through the Reyhanli border and seized Syria’s Bab el Hava border gate. The rush of weapons during that time was said to be of incredible proportions. Three commercial TIR trucks were set afire at the border. Twelve TIR’s with merchandise were looted, several were hijacked. Turkish citizens engaged in shuttle trade attempting to cross to the Turkish side were attacked, beaten, and intimidated by refugees who asked them, “How were you able to get out unscathed? You must be on their side.” After this, the governorate warned the public not to cross the border in either direction.

Hatay residents resent the approach of the media. They get angry when media churns out false

reports such as when reporters set up cameras in a locale in Harbiye, 45 kilometers from Syria, and made it seem as they were reporting from Syrian territory and hearing blasts from a battle “nearby.” This team was roughed up and kicked out of Harbiye. We have witnessed many other newspapers publishing false stories pretending everything was taking place in Syria. We have relatives in every Syrian town and when we call, we feel they are worried but don’t want to say anything.

I subscribe to a peaceful outlook against violence and war, and though I don’t regard revolutions as an inevitable and indispensable, albeit bloody, price to pay for political change, I believe it’s a right for people under intense pressure to stand up and resist violence by the ruling authority when channels of democracy and negotiation are cut off. Uprisings are edifying for both the people uprising and others. Let the Syrians to determine their fate.

I’m an Alawi and I tried to describe what’s happening in Hatay but I’m also enough of a democrat to know I have to respect a conservative government ruling my country if the majority of people voted it in. We, the people of Hatay, must

Vagrant refugees enter restaurants, eat and leave without paying – but not before causing a scene about the bill, saying it will be paid by Tayyip. They are a nuisance for local shopkeepers. When they see a girl walk by wearing shorts, they harass and scare her with hand gestures signaling, “I’ll cut your throat.”

oppose such a policy because this approach will not only inflame domestic strife but also constitute a serious threat against peace. Residents need neither a conflict between Alawis and Sunnis – as some circles try to spark – nor differentiation. Both Alawis and Sunnis have been careful not to agitate sensibilities in the past and they still are. We must not let ourselves be tricked into this dangerous game because we know the consequences. It must be the duty of each of us to warn the AKP government against incidents that are occurring and possible conflict scenarios that may unfold. As Voltaire said to a political opponent, “I don’t agree with a word you say but I would die defending your right to say it.”

Syrians set sail for self-government

My visit then had coincided with the decision of the Arab League mission to withdraw from Syria. During that two-week visit, I had witnessed firsthand the systematic oppression the Syrian regime perpetrated in the areas inhabited mostly by Sunni Arabs and the deadly reactions to the protest demonstrations that had become quite frequent at the time. I had gotten trapped amidst armed clashes when the forces of the regime had attacked a funeral in Duma, a town half an hour from Damascus that provided a great deal of support to the rebels, and an unarmed demonstration in the district of Kabun, which could be reached by a ten-minute ride from the capital. I had desperately sought shelter during these incidents when one person had gotten killed in Kabun and seven in Duma with dozens of others injured. I had been finally carried away by the wave of rebellion the security forces of the regime had been trying to quell with all their might when, in the wake of the clashes on the night of January 26th in the district of Harasta 15 km from central Damascus, the house I was sharing with an unarmed dissident had been stormed by the victorious regime forces along with many others in the neighborhood and I had been arrested and forced to leave Syria.

My name having been entered in the list of banned people after this arrest, it could no longer enter the country through official channels. Therefore, I made my way into Syria, the northern reaches of which were controlled by the rebels as far south as central Aleppo, by crossing the border at Kilis illegally this time, accompanied by Michael Weiss who worked for a British think tank, Mahmoud Elzour who also doubled as our guide, and Army Captain Yusuf who had severed his ties with the Syrian regime last February and joined the rebels (Captain Yusuf was killed by tank fire during the clashes with the Syrian regime in Aleppo's Saladin quarter on August 15th). I found out that Mahmoud, who was in his early fifties, had come to Antakya upon turning over his successful business selling vehicle spare parts to the construction industry in Atlanta, USA, for the last twenty years and had devoted himself to financing an army division in the town of Al Bab to the north of Aleppo using his own means and additional sources he could mobilize.

On August 2nd, 2012, we set out from Antakya and headed for the Kilis county of the Gaziantep province in a Volkswagen van owned by Juma who was from Antakya and hauled cargo between Turkey and Syria until his business came to a standstill because of the incidents in Syria. When his transportation business went into a hiatus, Juma started serving as a guide for the foreign journalists driving about in the region. I noticed that his constant shuttling across the area had made him privy to certain information I had not heard from anyone else.

In my second entrance into Syria, the whole road from the border to Al Bab some 35 km away appeared to be cleared of regime forces. It was late in the evening when we reached Al Bab where we were to stay for the eight days to follow and take a ride almost every morning to Aleppo accompanied by a member of the Free Syrian Army (FSA). Embarking on the trip to Aleppo both excited me and sent shivers down my spine every time what with all the news I had recently read about the violent clashes taking place there.

Although located only 45 minutes from Aleppo, Al Bab, where approximately 200,000 people live, had repelled the regime forces out of the city very recently. I got the impression that the townspeople relished the total freedom they had for the first time in their lives. Getting the chance to interview many members of the local populace and dissidents was invaluable to me as far as feeling the revolutionary pulse of Aleppo was concerned. I asked dozens of questions about Turkey's role, daily life in Syria, the people's ideals and fears, and the like to many different individuals during this month of Ramadan when people sat up chatting until the pre-dawn start of fasting.

In this seemingly small town, the conversations between the local residents generally revolved around exchanging the latest news from the front lines of the conflict – whether they'd been to Aleppo that day and, if they had, what districts had the clashes been occurring in. Next to conflict talk, the most common conversation topics were the posting of the reports on the demonstrations of the day and any additional photos to YouTube or Facebook. Another topic of debate was the municipal and administrative tasks that needed to be done in Al Bab now that the regime



İlhan Tanır

Mr. İlhan Tanır is the Washington, DC correspondent for Vatan Daily and writes extensively on Turkey-US relations, as well as issues related to the wider Middle East and Eurasian region. He has also been published by the Christian Science Monitor, the Lebanese Daily Star, several US and British think tanks, and his work has been frequently quoted by many of the world's leading publications such as the New York Times, Reuters, CNN, TIME, Jerusalem Post, Washington Times and Congressional Research Service. He received his Master's degree from George Mason University in 2006 in Public Administration and International Management.

forces and their authority had been dispensed with. The conversations taking place in a hookah house or the home of a dissident as the news commentary came on Al Jazeera or Orient TV which reported extensively on the Syrian Revolution usually lasted from after the evening prayer to the pre-dawn meal.

El Bab lives its freedom

The protest demonstrations in Al Bab started on April 8th, 2011, the second Friday in April, only three weeks after March 2011 when the first sparks of protest were ignited in Daraa in the south of the country. These peaceful protests kept on for more than a year without any incidents involving weapons. This went on until after one year the townspeople were assaulted heavily by the regime once more in April (the 27th in 2012) until the FSA backfired. Bloodshed and loss of property grew as tension mounted when the regime forces reacted more violently to the intensifying protests in May 2012. Al Bab's main battle with the regime erupted when the townspeople spontaneously filled the city's squares and streets after three high-level officials of the Assad regime were killed in a bombing incident in Damascus on July 17th. The demonstrations outside several intelligence offices and police stations went on around the clock. The shops in town collectively pulled down their shutters. The FSA summoned its militia to the city and set them to fight against the regime forces. After clashes that went on for days, an agreement was wrought with the help of some of the town's eminent figures, referred to as the "old people," that had not broken their relationship with the regime whereby the FSA lifted its siege of the regime buildings and the intelligence and security forces of the Syrian regime promised not to attack the free protest demonstrations of the townspeople of Al Bab. According to Barry Al Bab, the foremost name among Al Bab's young revolutionary leaders (he preferred to go by this name), the agreement amounted to one in which the townspeople and the regime forces said to each other, "You go your way, I'll go mine."

But this state of keeping clear of each other did not last long. Freed from the siege of the FSA militia by the undercover agreement, the regime forces reneged on their promise during the noon prayer en masse the very next Friday and attacked the assembled protesters, thus burning the last bridge between themselves and the townspeople. Inspired by the street fighting that FSA militia had taken to the innards of Aleppo, Al Bab launched an attack to expel the regime forces from the city altogether. On the 29th of July, only a few days before my arrival, when the regime forces had been refusing to accept the FSA militia's call to abandon a military compound housing an approximately 400-strong Syrian regime unit as well as four or five tanks in the town of Ziraa just outside Al Bab where a siege and fighting had been going on for four days, the militia detonated a water engine under

a building in the compound and raided the place, ridding Al Bab of regime forces for good.

Thus, my arrival in Al Bab coincided with the first few days of the regime forces losing control of the city, which no doubt enabled me to witness the atmosphere of freedom in the city more closely and while it was still fresh. During my eight-day stay in Al

In this seemingly small town, the conversations between the local residents generally revolved around exchanging the latest news from the front lines of the conflict – whether they'd been to Aleppo that day and, if they had, what districts had the clashes been occurring in.

Bab, I observed on a daily basis the efforts to establish a Civil Council to address all the tasks from garbage collection to jurisprudence and law enforcement that had to be performed in this city with a population close to 200,000 because of the departure of not only the security forces but also the municipal and fiscal staff.

On some days when I did not go out to central Aleppo, I watched the founding efforts of this Civil Council that was being talked about and took some photographs together with the 30-year-old Barry Al Bab. At this stage, Barry was spending his energy to have democracy bloom in this small town by working a sort of grass-roots shuttle diplomacy, together with a handful of companions representing the younger segment of the population, between the town's "old people" and the "trainers" who had been supporting the protests, and consequently the revolution, from early on.

According to Abdessalam, another young dissident on the Civil Council, the primary task of the Civil Council now was to have the FSA militia leave the city and to build a police force to ensure security in Al Bab. Barry thought the consensus reached at the Civil Council meeting on my last day in Al Bab between the old people and the trainers on common goals laid down in a white paper was the city's first political victory on its way to democracy after leaving the former regime behind. Now, the 21-member council was engaged in electing the city's first chief manager.

Considering that the employees of the city administration had left Al Bab at the same time as the security forces, there was no organized entity at present to assume the municipal tasks of a city with a population of nearly 200,000. Instead, a volunteer force consisting of civilians from 12 to 50 years of age as well as FSA members divided up the streets between themselves and collected garbage using some trucks left over from the former administration as I, too, witnessed the evening of my first day in Al Bab. Mahmoud told me that civilian and military elements continued to clean up the city by splitting the districts between themselves. When the schools would open

depended on the course the conflict would take. The salaries of all the people to work in public service now had to be paid by the Al Bab businessmen and this augmented the fiscal burden already posed by the schools and education. For the time being, Al Bab was trying to generate funds for medical and first aid supplies, public servants to take care of urgent matters, and fighters.

Sharia courts at work

Another important and indispensable entity that left Al Bab together with the regime was the city's courts. Efforts were under way to institute sharia courts to replace them. A sharia court established in Al Bab's old courthouse was trying to become functional by following the road map provided by the Religion Council that currently had 15 members. The court had not yet started hearing cases and issuing sentences but it was trying to bring order to the city and to help by issuing fatwas. The qadis passing judgments barely numbered a dozen. The Council had only been founded in mid-July. In an interview with the incumbent qadi Usame Zoeytir during our visit to the courthouse, I found out that the council members each came from one of the 15 FSA companies in town. Qadi Zoeytir explained that the FSA companies appointed these representatives from among clerics that had stood behind the revolution from the beginning and allegedly had public support behind them. Zoeytir said there were a couple of pending cases in court as of the evening of August 6th when I visited the courthouse, a homicide and a theft, but these had not yet been taken up because the establishment of the court had not yet been completed.

During our interview, the qadi also stated that the judges in the sharia courts did not receive any formal education but had field experience. According to the qadi, Syria after Assad had to be governed in accordance with democratic principles and sharia rules; secularism had to be denounced. Pointing out that they could coordinate and coexist with such a secular system if necessary, the qadi somehow felt obliged to note, without waiting for my question, that the Turkish model, i.e., one in which a religious and conservative government like the Justice and Development Party (AKP) was in power but secularism was in place nevertheless, would be suitable for Syria as many Syrian Sunnis agreed.

The qadi of the sharia court was wholeheartedly in favor of air support by NATO or the USA to the FSA militia but avidly against any foreign military boots treading upon Syrian soil. He predicted that Turkey would be Syria's best friend in the post-Assad era, a forecast shared by many Aleppo folk.

Tax office turned into rocket manufacturing center

I went on strolling through Al Bab. The intelligence and security buildings stood empty. The pictures of Assad adorning their walls were removed, torn up or burned.

The buildings vacated by the regime soldiers told a history lesson to discerning observers. Several city residents vied to be my guide on my tour of these most dreaded buildings of the regime. The tax office and the town hall served as headquarters for FSA militia as they awaited their new occupants.

When we paid an unannounced visit to the Tax and Fiscal Affairs Office, one of these abandoned buildings, in the afternoon of August 8th, a small meeting was in progress, chaired by Abu Ali, the deputy leader of the Abu Bekr company which was the strongest company (katibeh) of the FSA forces in Al Bab. I asked the FSA man in charge what his duty was for the day – given that the tax and finance services were no longer available in the city. He answered that he was responsible for meeting the needs of the 15 FSA militiamen who were engaged in manufacturing rockets by hand. Abu Ali played me a video clip on his cell phone showing how these hand-made rockets were tested. When I asked him how they learned to build rockets and where they got the materials from, he replied, "Information is everywhere, on the Internet, on Google..." He also mentioned that the materials used were simple although he declined to go into detail about them.

The "New Turkish Model" is quite popular

Democracy and self-government were quite popular among all the residents of Aleppo we were able to interview, as they were in Al Bab. Still, serious questions persisted about secularism. An approach that was either reluctant or skeptical about secularism was clearly visible among all of the dissidents I was able to talk to both in the suburbs of Damascus where I had spent two weeks during my first trip to Syria and in Aleppo this time. It was not a coincidence that the principles of secularism were mostly regarded as anti-religious. The "Turkish Model" had therefore become a panacea for everyone. It was quite interesting to see how the "Turkish Model", the opinions about which I had surveyed during my previous visit, had come to be rated as number one among the ideal solutions by many Syrians who were quick to broach the subject of the post-Assad era before I even hinted at it. It was evident that Turkish secularism and the piety of Erdoğan and his AKP had found their reflection in the conscience of the Syrians as a solution which successfully married the aversion of Syria's Sunni Muslims against secularism and their passion for democracy and voting.

Although disappointment with Turkey was regularly voiced because of Turkey's failure to live up to the expectations it stirred up especially among the Sunni population in Syria by the explicit and repeated promises of the AKP government leader Erdoğan that "We are not going to allow any more massacres the Syrian President Assad may attempt in Syria". Turkey's image was clearly seen to be ahead of those of the European countries and the USA thanks to Turkey's welcoming stance toward both the armed and the

unarmed elements of the Syrian dissidents. Neither the FSA militia nor the unarmed dissidents appeared satisfied with what Europe and the USA had generally done to the Syrian Revolution. On the contrary, according to the numerous conspiracy theories I had heard, not a few Syrians were convinced that in reality the West was not so eager to let Assad go. The fact that no Western country was ever mentioned in the ranking of Syria's three leading allies in the post-Assad era, the subject of my favorite interview question during this last visit, was something that should definitely send the alarm bells ringing in these countries.

Abu Usame's yearning to join the FSA

As we started our march with Mahmoud, the Syrian who helped us make our clandestine entrance from Kilis to Syria, I couldn't help but notice Abu Usame who joined us in another vehicle from Kilis. He looked congenial with his innocent features, well-kept beard, and 28-year-old countenance and spoke pretty fluent English. I asked him right away what he was up to in Syria – especially in Aleppo where the fighting was getting more and more violent. Usame told me that his family came from Ramallah in Palestine. His grandfather migrated to Homs in Syria with his family in 1948 but they still considered themselves Palestinian. Usame's purpose was to visit his family in Homs. He said he had flown from Dubai, where he had spent the last five years, to Istanbul and from there to Gaziantep before reaching Syria via Kilis. He knew full well, though, that traveling from Aleppo to Homs was impossible under the present circumstances in Syria.

As we marched on, Abu Usame made the acquaintance of Captain Youssef, a regime deserter since February who had subsequently joined the ranks of the FSA and was now marching towards Syria with us, and lost no time to divulge to him his true reason for coming from Dubai: to join the FSA. Having left Syria five years ago to save money to pay for partial exemption from compulsory military service, Abu Usame worked as a graphic designer for various economy newspapers in Dubai, which afforded him comfortable living standards. He wasn't alone in this, he said, as many of his peers also made a getaway to the Gulf countries for the same purpose.

The primary reason why Abu Usame left his homeland was the disappearance of the country's middle class before the Syrian Revolution got under way and the apparent lack of any possibility of acquiring better economic conditions for the people in the lower-income classes. I was now getting the same answer from Abu Usame as I got from the revolutionary youths during my January visit to the environs of Damascus: that their greatest grievance was the absence of economic opportunities and their need for freedom.

Abu Usame's parents, an electronics repairman and a housewife, continued living in Homs. His comeback dream was to join the FSA and to save the Syrian cities,

starting with Aleppo, from the regime's rule before finally rejoining his family.

My weeklong housemate in Al Bab, Abu Usame seemed to be taking stock of the fact that seeing his dream realized by the end of this one week wasn't going to be so easy. As the FSA militia was giving up some of the ground it had gained in Aleppo in the previous weeks, no news was forthcoming from the FSA divisions he hoped would accept his application for conscription. Abu Usame was not motivated by revenge; he simply wanted to help bringing freedom to Syria by

The qadi of the sharia court was wholeheartedly in favor of air support by NATO or the USA to the FSA militia but avidly against any foreign military boots treading upon Syrian soil. He predicted that Turkey would be Syria's best friend in the post-Assad era, a forecast shared by many Aleppo folk.

joining one of the 15 FSA companies in Al Bab. He had the chance to present himself to the commanders of three companies during the week. His favorite among them was the Abu Bekr, the oldest and largest company in Al Bab. Unfortunately for Abu Usame, he had neither been promised a weapon nor given a date for conscription although he had communicated his request to the company. He was already giving signs of disappointment and probably considering calling off the whole adventurous undertaking by the time I departed from Al Bab.

Can democracy be permanent?

The city of Al Bab to the northwest of Aleppo that the Syrian regime had been forced to totally withdraw from was like a test ground where one could clearly observe the difficult and painful steps the people had to take in order to build democracy. The townspeople of Al Bab were engaged in a struggle to plot the course of their own destiny when a bloody battle was raging in Aleppo only 35 km away. Who will emerge victorious from the fighting in Aleppo would doubtless determine the fate of the smaller Al Bab. Therefore, practically the only answer I got from the town's residents when I asked them how it felt to experience freedom for the first time in their lives was, "We cannot be safe here until Aleppo's fate is known." Although many believed that the days of the Syrian regime were numbered, the Damascus regime with its considerable superiority in military equipment and air capabilities had not altogether given up on its plans to recapture the towns to the north of Aleppo that were currently trying to make their self-government take root.

Turkey's policy on the Kurdish problem and regional developments

Turkey's Kurdish policy is about how to approach an issue inappropriately called the "Kurdish problem" instead of the "Kurds' demands and struggle for their rights and liberties." Thus, this has to do with the definition of the issue. It's no secret that there are different definitions and, therefore, different perspectives on this issue in the state organization and public sphere.

I address this issue primarily as the Kurds' demands and struggle for their rights and liberties since the mid-1980's, when I was involved in the struggle for human rights by civil society, working for the Human Rights Association, Human Rights Foundation and Diyarbakir Bar Association.

Such a perspective has direct bearing on how Turkey's Kurdish policy is interpreted. Therefore, I need to address the issue in detail by first offering some brief facts.

In reports I prepared in the early 1990's, I explained that the Kurdish issue was contemporaneous with the Republic of Turkey and could essentially be described in terms of the disregard for the Kurds' most fundamental human rights and liberties, denial of their existence and identity, banning of their language and, in connection, the constant attempts to keep them under control by means of persecution and oppressive regimes throughout the history of the Republic. Such a description of the situation naturally entails clues to the interpretation of the Kurdish policy/policies pursued by the state.

In this light, I view the Kurdish policies of the state as having been laid on the basis of assimilation driven by denial, oppression and security concerns of the Republic.

Denial and assimilation or self-deception

It can be said that the policy targeting the Kurdish issue has been in place for almost the entire lifespan of the Republic. The first steps were taken in 1925 with reports by Minister of the Interior Cemil Uybadin and Speaker of the Turkish Grand National Assembly Mustafa Abdulhalik Renda, in search of identification of the issue, its content matter and possible solutions to be recommended have continued until today, with hundreds of subsequent reports drafted by civil society and the state in the meantime.

The same dilemma continues to arise: a policy centering on security or centering on civil society?

The outcome of policies centering on security

are plain to see.

A terrifying human tragedy has unfolded over the last 30 years, with a death toll of more than 50,000 caused by 45,000 acts of violence. Nearly 2 million people were displaced and reduced to refugees in their homeland according to data published by Human Rights Watch.

This shows that the Kurdish policy/policies pursued by Turkey have served no purpose but self-deception and aggravation of the problem, inflicting great pain, injury, loss and expense.

This is also the conclusion reached by Turkey's key opinion leaders, writers and journalists who have given thought to the dimensions the issue assumed in the last quarter of a century. The most convincing proof of this is the increasingly frequent and widespread comments by despairing columnists such as "Everything worth saying has been said and written. Are we going back to square one?"

"Turkey's on the Skids," "Turkey's Breakaway Paranoia," "Sentimental Rift Moves Toward Political and Social Rift," "Last Exit Before the Bridge," "Old Concept Restored," "Turkey's First 'Civil' War," and "Praise for the '93 Concept" are titles of some of my recent essays and presentations. These titles alone suffice to show the content matter of and direction taken by Turkey's policy on the Kurdish issue.

These policies still remain unchanged although they exhibited certain differences over time depending on the domestic and international conjuncture such as internal and external conditions, different governments, coups, memorandums and the like. Yes, I'm using the word "still" on purpose because the Justice and Development Party (AKP), in ten years of uninterrupted political tenure backed by a powerful majority, has often cited certain steps, such as TRT6 television channel, as the end of the policy of denial and assimilation.

If the policy of denial and assimilation had been abandoned, however, the TRT6 that began broadcasting in the AKP's seventh year of incumbency with the mission of government propaganda would not have been touted as a favor to the Kurds at a time when they already had dozens of TV channels. The policy of denial and assimilation is still strong and, consequently, the security-centered policy of a "solution built on persecution and intimidation," although waxing and waning, is still rampant.



Sezgin Tanrikulu

Born in Lice, Diyarbakir in 1963, Tanrikulu graduated from the Law Faculty of Istanbul University, received a Master's Degree in Public Law from the Social Sciences Institute of Dicle University and a PhD from the Social Sciences Institute of Kültür University. He served as the President of the Diyarbakir Bar Association from 2002 to 2008.

Tanrikulu was co-founder of the Diyarbakir Branch of the Human Rights Association (1988) and the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey. Bestowed with the Robert Kennedy Human Rights Award in 1997, Tanrikulu is currently the Deputy Chair of the Republican People's Party (CHP) and MP from Istanbul.

PKK and the climate of violence and terror are not the cause of the issue but only one of its effects

Turkey's traditional security-centered policies to deal with the Kurdish problem became stuck during the rule of the AKP governments that enjoyed a powerful majority in parliament for ten years. Instead of laying groundwork for a peaceful solution along the lines of social consensus, democracy and liberties, the AKP governments chose to raise false hopes by means of so-called "reforms" and "initiatives" and to rely on policies which, in essence, were security-centered in spite of strong support they had in parliament and international circumstances that were favorable to democratization and liberties such as the process of full membership in the EU, not to mention possibilities served up by political developments in the Middle East.

Consequences of this policy are increasingly causing irreparable damage. When it comes to the Kurds' demands for rights and liberties, AKP's top officers, foremost among them Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, do not desist from referring to these as "the demands of the PKK" on the grounds of the climate of violence, conflict and terror although they claim at every opportunity that Kurdish citizens are represented by the AKP. This ultimately means that they themselves bind the steps that must be taken in this most important issue for Turkey, for possible solutions and goals for the discourse and action of the PKK. And, in doing so, palliative measures such as relative freedom to use the Kurdish language are presented as a favor to the Kurds. In reality, they are looking down on the Kurds by saying, "Haven't we given enough?" or "What more can you possibly want?"

As mentioned before, the so-called "Kurdish issue" is actually not a PKK issue. On the contrary, the PKK reality is only one of the consequences of this issue in the areas of domestic and foreign politics and security in the last thirty years. The issue was there before the PKK came along and it will remain on Turkey's agenda as the most pressing issue awaiting a solution even if the PKK is removed from the picture.

What needs to be done is find a solution to the Kurds' demands for rights and liberties and basic human rights complying with international law and conventions. A plan to meet these needs must be presented to the public and brought before parliament with accompanying mechanisms, calendar and genuine and credible provisions.

The antidote against the relative legitimacy that the PKK's actions and discourses enjoy among the Kurdish public and the remedy to their being taken for granted lies in such a road map being laid down by Turkey's political machine through consensus.

The means to a solution is more democracy and freedom; the place for a solution is the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA)

In the past 25 years, I have published many articles, studies, reports, etc. All expressed views that had been put forward on public platforms and presented to public opinion.

As early as 1989, in an article in the daily

Cumhuriyet, I argued that the ban against using Kurdish names, based on laws passed in the 1930's, was inadmissible from a legal and human rights viewpoint.

I explained that the way to a peaceful solution required more democracy and freedom.

A deadlock in the Kurdish issue not only prolongs and deepens the plight of the Kurds, but also holds Turkey back from democratization.

There's nothing new that can be said

In a nutshell, as I stated many times, the issue referred to as the "Kurdish issue" basically consists of the demands for rights and liberties by citizens of the Republic of Turkey of Kurdish origins.

Therefore, I view this not as the "Kurdish issue", but as a demand and quest by citizens of Turkey of Kurdish origins for basic human rights and liberties that are stated in international and supranational treaties that Turkey is a party to and a cardinal requirement for accession to the EU.

The Kurds demand and claim the right to exercise their fundamental human rights and

I view the Turkish state's Kurdish policies as having been laid down on the basis of assimilation driven by denial, oppression and security concerns throughout the history of the Turkish Republic.

liberties both prescribed by universal human rights and legal norms and necessitated by social reality. Associating these demands with any particular political party is not right.

This outlook stems from a misunderstanding of demands for rudimentary rights and liberties and the topic of democracy and freedom in Turkey.

There are hundreds of examples of this situation

Since 1951, 26 out of 28 political parties were closed or banned for putting and/or wanting to put in their bills the fundamental human rights of the Kurds, referred to as the "Kurdish issue."

The rationale for closing of the Turkish Labor Party (TIP) following the military coup in 1971 is the most concrete and clear example of this situation in recent political history. With the exception of the Welfare Party, which was closed in the 1990's, reasons for the closure of other parties are not much different than the TIP's.

Elevating freedom of association, including political organization, to EU standards together with freedom of thought and expression would not only ensure the Kurds' demands for rights and liberties were met in a manner in which the will for "peace, democracy, freedom, equality, citizenship law, Turkey's integrity, fraternity, and coexistence" would prevail, but also set Turkey's perspective in the right direction for democracy, freedom, and social justice.

As I pointed out in Law Today (Guncel Hukuk) magazine in 2010, "there are steps the government

should take for this purpose,” and, as I pointed out in another article, steps to be taken by the government “would eliminate political, legal, and social conditions lending legitimacy to the use of violence in the Kurdish issue and, thereby, public support granted to it”. Under such circumstances, as I have declared, affirming my belief that the

So, what needs to be done is to find a solution to the Kurds’ demands for rights and liberties and basic human rights in a way complying with international law and conventions. A program to meet this need must be presented to the public and brought before parliament together with appropriate accompanying mechanisms, a calendar, and genuine and credible elements.

Kurds’ resorting to violence to secure their rights and liberties is neither right nor necessary, the armed organization should discontinue use of violence by its own will and in accordance with its rules. This is the most feasible way.

When circumstances are ultimately created, there will be four main topics, other than the armed conflict aspect of the Kurdish issue, which is the hottest, that will require much debate, will be a challenge to solve, and will require constitutional amendments. In my opinion, these topics are:

1. Redefinition of citizenship;
2. Introducing provisions to the Constitution, particularly Political Parties Law, allowing Kurds to organize freely for their political goals under their own identity and in keeping with their demands, provided such organization does not include, use, or incite violence;
3. Learning mother tongue/education in mother tongue;
4. Restructuring of the administrative structure in Turkey in terms of strengthening local governments or rebuilding of decentralized models.

Having this policy reflected in Turkey’s foreign policy

In order to defend itself, Turkey’s traditional security-centered Kurdish policy has turned the Kurdish issue into one purportedly instigated by foreign enemies, a material and means for foreign politicking, an issue exposed to “foreign provocation” and “meddling by foreign powers” throughout the history of the Republic. The weight of this policy is still felt in the determination and evaluation of the PKK.

It’s no secret that in international and intergovernmental relations, some states or international powers cultivate a keen interest in internal issues of others and prod issues into channels from which they can derive benefits for themselves. This is true for Turkey in regards to the Kurdish issue. Turkey has been, and still is, pursuing similar policies in some of its international relations and foreign policy. The recent example of this are

developments in Syria.

However, the pivotal fact here is Turkey’s stubbornness in viewing the Kurdish issue as a “provocation and intervention by foreign powers” and turning a deaf ear to the Kurds’ demands for rights and liberties.

This misjudgment of Turkey has sometimes driven it to make concessions to certain states and sometimes (e.g., in the 1980’s and the 1990’s) plunged it into serious tensions and brought it to the brink of war as the case with Syria. It’s possible to see versions of the same picture in relations with Greece, Armenia, Iran, and some European countries. One of the satirical examples of this was in 1984 when Turkey sent a diplomatic letter to Sweden protesting the opening of its first kindergarten offering education in Kurdish, only to be harshly rebuked by Sweden in response.

The policies of Turkey on the Kurdish issue, which I describe as “denial and self-deception”, took center stage not only in relations with individual countries but in joining international organizations such as the Baghdad Pact and CENTO.

What tensed relations with the EU in recent history was the Kurdish issue and Cyprus dispute. Turkey went so far in its unrealistic policies in these areas that at one point it was engaged in a futile effort and foreign policy vision (or lack of) bent on persuading the world that the EU had been founded to divide Turkey and save the Kurds.

More examples can be provided to illustrate this. As for relations with our neighbors Iran, Iraq and Syria, the Kurdish issue was always in the spotlight due to Kurdish populations and struggles in these countries.

Briefly, Turkey’s policies on the Kurdish issue brought Turkey into confrontation with problems not only in domestic politics but also in foreign policy and international relations.

A peaceful solution to the Kurdish issue is a must if Turkey is to be able to freely and resolutely pursue a stable and credible foreign policy vision that would advance its cause. The absence of a solution to the Kurdish issue appears to remain a burden on Turkey’s back in international affairs.

Rather than serving a purpose in Turkey’s current Kurdish policy, developments in Syria and the region are rendering it dysfunctional. Underlying this is the no-solution policy Turkey has been pursuing about its Kurds.

This has been proven by experience. Just as the policy pursued about the Kurds in Iraq since the 1990’s became dysfunctional, current developments will lead to Turkey’s existing policy becoming dysfunctional and collapsing. It’s up to the government to play the right cards.

The Syrian crisis gets deeper with the risk of civil war mounting each day. Turkey is top of the list of countries feeling the impact of this crisis acutely due to geographical location and political, social, cultural and historical reasons.

Syrian Kurds are on the agenda more often in the process of defusing the Syrian crisis and reshaping the Middle East. Recent events have put the position, power and possible role of the Syrian Kurds

among Syrian dissidents in greater focus. These are as follows:

1. Turkey's relations with Syria, raised almost to the level of joint cabinet meetings by the AKP and "brotherly" rhetoric between Erdogan and Assad, quickly deteriorated into loggerheads and "dictator" epithets. The Syrian policy of the government, key portions of which contradict international initiatives, rapidly assumed dimensions of a civil war; and we are facing risk of spillover into Turkey.
2. Certain characteristics of Syria distinguish it from other countries in the Arab Spring. Therefore, the relatively quick settlement in Libya and Egypt has not occurred in Syria.
3. Turkey is blundering about Syria as it pursues the AKP government's narrow-minded, nationalistic policy devoid of foresight and partly built around religious sectoral considerations. The AKP's false and unrealistic appraisal and outlook on the Syrian Kurds play a major role in this.
4. Syrian Kurds are the best-organized segment of Syrian dissidents. The National Assembly of Syrian Kurds (ENKS) comprises a total of eight political parties, including the Kurdish Democratic Party of Syria, dating back to the early 1950's, and the Leftist Party of the Syrian Kurds, founded in 1969.
5. In recent years this number has grown to nine with the addition of the Kurdish Union Party (PYD), founded with backing of the PKK. Relations between the ENKS and PYD were normalized at the behest of Massoud Barzani and the parties have conducted an integrated opposition for a month, based on a signed joint declaration.
6. Political demands of the Syrian Kurds have been fielded with a strategy based on cultural rights and autonomy. In view of developments in Syria, "cultural rights, human rights, and the principle of self-determination" were adopted as tenets of a common strategy during the founding of the ENKS.
7. Abdul Basit Seyda, a Kurdish asylum-seeker in Sweden, was voted chairman of the Syrian National Council. Kurdish organizations signed a unification protocol upon the initiatives of Barzani. The PYD, initially supporting the Assad regime and known for its closeness to the PKK, joined the ranks of the ENKS.
8. The joint political platform and will of the Syrian Kurds has widespread, effective relations in the international sphere, mainly Europe. A number (approximately 30,000) of Kurds in this country receive strong political and moral support abroad for their demands for cultural and political rights and liberties as well as citizenship privileges.
9. Militia forces affiliated with Kurdish political parties have recently gained control over some Kurdish cities and towns. This is played up by certain media organizations and political actors in Turkey with the aim of fomenting fears of impending war and fragmentation of the country, fanning flames of nationalistic sentiment.

10. These developments made clear that the AKP government miscalculated the true strength of Syrian dissidents out of nationalistic concerns.

They brought the AKP's policy to the brink of failure by proving that, in reality, the Syrian Kurds are the best-organized dissident power.

11. In its Syrian policies, the AKP mis-estimated leverage afforded Turkey's geographical location that would entail a more active role in the situation. It worked itself into a quandary in terms of support it gave dissident powers in Syria, alliances between these powers and the stance it took against the Assad regime. Its support of the Syrian dissidents, its stance vis-à-vis Kurdish organizations in Syria during the alliance of dissident powers and attempts to isolate the latter met with failure.

All these developments have made clear the fact that the AKP government miscalculated the true strength of the Syrian dissidents out of nationalistic concerns. They also brought the AKP's policy to the brink of failure by proving that in reality the Kurds in Syria are the most well-organized dissident power.

12. The AKP's Syrian policy inconvenienced Turkey in regards to regional equilibrium. The support Turkey is providing to opposition in this Sunni Islam centered country is translating into greater tension in relations with Iran and Iraq.

13. During the inception of the Syrian policy, though, development of direct relations with the Syrian Kurds held potential that could make significant contributions to the process of peace and fraternity and goals of democracy, freedom, justice, stability and security.

Considering these developments and the violence and terror that intensified in recent weeks, the only way for Turkey to overcome this impasse in domestic and foreign policy is the formation of a Wise Men's Committee and Consensus Commission to prepare a map for a solution to the Kurdish issue, as proposed in a parliamentary motion by our party, and the urgent convening of the TBMM as the central entity where all internal and external political matters are to be solved.

This is an emergency – not concession as the Prime Minister mentioned in an effort to reap short-term gains by polemicizing and blocking the political process. It is a moral duty for individuals to be directly engaged in politics. The TBMM's striving for a solution is important to demonstrate its being the legitimate address for a solution.

The impact of the crisis in Syria on the economy of Southeast Anatolia

An overview of the region's economy is necessary before addressing the impact of regional developments on the Turkish economy. Throughout history, this region has been host to many civilizations and cultures. A center of trade for many centuries, it has been a place where languages, religions, identities and cultures coexisted. Until the early 1900's, this characteristic was preserved; however, with the founding of the Republic, it began slowly fading away.

In the 1927 census, Diyarbakir, one of the major cities of the region, was the third largest city in Turkey in terms of the proportion of the population employed in industry. Today, however, Diyarbakir ranks 68th in terms of socio-economic development among Turkey's 81 provinces although it still ranks in the top ten in terms of population, geographical size, size of agricultural land and natural resources. 18 out of the 20 provinces at the bottom of the list of Turkey's provinces sorted by socio-economic development are in this region. The region's provinces regularly appear among the last 20 regardless of what criterion of general prosperity we apply.

For example, the number of automobiles per 1,000 people is 465 in EU countries, 80 in Turkey, and 20 in the region – that is, one-fourth of the average in Turkey. Similarly, the number of doctors per 1,000 people in the region is one-fifth the average for Turkey. The unemployment rate ranges between 30% and 35%, which is roughly three times the average for Turkey, which is 11%.

Nearly 40% of the region's population makes less than 100 dollars a month, entitling them to a green card in order to receive social assistance. There are approximately 550,000 officially registered green card holders in Diyarbakir, which has a population of 1.5 million. Another 100,000 people cannot receive social aid because they cannot prove their poverty.

There are more than 10,000 shanty houses in Diyarbakir, which are home to nearly 100,000 immigrants.

50% of Diyarbakir's population is 25 years of age or younger. Each year, 40,000 youth reach the working age without receiving any professional training.

Industry in the region is of a low intensity. Some 14,000 workers are employed in industry and their share in overall employment is 5%.

Of industrial businesses, 11% export their

products and 60% of their exports are to Iraq or the Kurdistan Regional Government. Goods exported to destinations other than Iraq consist almost entirely of marble, which is a newly developing industry in the region.

Doubtless, this socio-economic underdevelopment that has Diyarbakir and the region at large in its throes has nothing to do with the region's potential. On the contrary, the following data shows that the region has a highly significant economic potential.

Diyarbakir has twice as much farmland as the Turkish average in terms of arability, but it ranks 52nd among all Turkish provinces in terms of production as a function of the rural population because its arable land is not effectively utilized. This is a paradox because the region boasts an enormous potential for both hydroelectric and solar energy. For example, the Kiziltepe county of Mardin province has been declared the most suitable and attractive area in the world for solar energy production.

Diyarbakir and its neighboring provinces hold some of the world's most valuable heritage areas in terms of faith and culture tourism. Diyarbakir also has adequate potential to be a regional hub in health and education. Possessing considerable potential in agriculture and textiles, the region is the proud grower of cotton that's rated number two in the world in terms of quality. The region is also rich in mineral resources and holds 25% - 30% of Turkey's marble reserves.

More examples, backed with data, can be given along these lines. But the issue we are addressing is why the socio-economic situation is so poor. The politics and economic policies targeting the region after the foundation of the Turkish Republic, especially after the 1930's, caused Southeast Anatolia to remain underdeveloped. The regional development plans prepared by the State Planning Organization (DPT) after the 1960's were either designed wrong or wrongly implemented.

Economic development moved at a much slower rate than in the other regions of Turkey when the atmosphere of conflict set in as of the 1980's, giving rise to the present developmental disparity and imbalance between regions.

Recent governments devised a number of measures to eliminate the differences in the levels of development between regions, including:

A) The "GAP Action Plan" that was developed in order to complete the GAP (Southeast Anatolia



Şah İsmail Bedirhanoglu

Born in Diyarbakir in 1961, Bedirhanoglu completed his primary, secondary, and high school education in this town. He took up commerce in 1985 after graduating from the Turkish Department of the Faculty of Education in Diyarbakir. Working hands-on for various NGO's in the business world as of 1994, Bedirhanoglu first served as director and chairman of the Industrialists and Businessmen's Association of Diyarbakir (DISIAD) followed by his current assignment as director and chairman of the Industrialists and Businessmen's Association of the Southeast (GÜNSIAD). Bedirhanoglu is married with two children.

Project) as soon as possible (still not completed).
B) Efforts were made to bring to life the incentives introduced from time to time (unsuccessful).
C) Efforts were made to incentivize trade with neighboring countries and to boost border trade (this trade commonly fell victim to politicking).

When we look at trade with neighboring countries, in particular the trade with Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government, which began in 2003 following the end of the embargo, it reached record volumes even in its early stages and kept rising yearly. According to official figures, the volume of trade with Iraq reached 3 billion dollars in 2005/2006; 4 billion dollars in 2007; 5 billion dollars in 2008; 6.5 billion dollars in 2009; and approximately 8.3 billion dollars in 2011. The trade volume with Syria shot up from 100 million dollars to nearly 1 billion dollars as relations improved (these figures predate recent events in Syria).

The region's economy is directly tied to the volume of trade with neighboring countries and border trade. When Gaziantep is added in, 40% of the exports to Iraq are made via Southeast Anatolia. Gaziantep alone accounts for 30% of total exports.

Profiling the economic relations between the provinces in the region and neighboring countries by taking Iraq as an example, we see that 50% of the exports from Diyarbakir go there, with ores and metals taking the lead in volume at 38%. Marble probably makes up 80% of this amount. Other major export items this year were grains, pulses, oily seeds and products made from them.

Turkey's undisputed champion in exports to Iraq and the Kurdish territory is Gaziantep, which exported 1.8 billion dollars' worth of goods in 2011. The primary reason for this is the level of maturity Gaziantep has attained in commerce and industry. Currently in its third generation in industry, Gaziantep did some highly adroit lobbying upon spotting a receptive market. Thanks to its advanced industry and commerce, Gaziantep is perceived as a manufacturing province with a highly diversified portfolio of products ranging from food to textiles, from chemicals to plastics.

There's no denying that the crises emerging in Southeast Anatolia impact this region more severely than other parts of Turkey. The view that the region's economy is not integrated at all with Turkey's overall economy falls rather short of the truth because, in reality, the region's economy is integrated with the economy of the western parts of the country in many sectors, from automotive to textiles and from food to construction. Southeast Anatolia's economy is not structured around border trade alone, but border trade has been quite instrumental in the growth of the transportation and logistics sectors there. In fact, these are the

sectors that are the most affected by and sensitive to the crises that occasionally break out in the region. 10,000 families in Southeast Anatolia depend on the transportation and logistics sectors for their subsistence. The recent developments in Syria had an adverse effect on the regional provinces (Gaziantep, Hatay, and Sanliurfa) that had been developing their volume of trade with the country. These provinces sustained great losses, as did many of their companies. Impacted by the events in Syria, the trade volume with the country dropped from the aforementioned 1 billion dollars to nil. Likewise, the recent political tension between Turkey and Iran negatively influenced the border provinces in East Anatolia that had been making progress in border trade with Iran. Animal husbandry, textile and food products are the staples of the border trade with Iran. The border trade with Iran is directly susceptible to any fluctuations in the political situation in the region, which in turn

There are approximately 550,000 officially registered green card holders in Diyarbakir, which has a population of 1.5 million. Another 100,000 people cannot receive social aid because they cannot prove their poverty.

undermines economic life in the East Anatolian provinces.

It's natural for this crisis to impact the Southeast Anatolian provinces. The echoes of this impact ring to a lesser degree in the economy of Turkey as a whole because a significant portion of consumer goods and services sold in border trade (food, textiles, etc.) rely on produced goods that are purchased from the manufacturers in the west of Turkey.

In addition to these developments, the lack of a solution to the Kurdish problem, which remain Turkey's top issue, and the widespread continuation of conflict and violence deal a debilitating blow both to trade with neighboring countries and border trade. Even if the economic measures prove successful, the integration of the region's economy with Turkey's economy keeps slowing down with each passing day as the Kurdish problem remains unsolved and security and stability remain not restored in the region. Not only will we then fail to remedy the inequality between regions regarding levels of development, but the debacle will worsen. Therefore, finding a solution to this problem is the primary and imperative duty of each individual and all segments of society in this country.

Pesticides and food safety in the era of global warming

While it is a requirement to produce environmentally friendly production techniques based on sustainable use of natural resources able to protect biological diversity, agricultural activities globally have become highly dependent on the chemical industry. Engaging in agricultural activities without pesticides, hormones and artificial fertilisers is now almost impossible, even though they cause numerous health problems for many species. However, this situation is quickly drawing us towards extinction. In order not to overly expand this article, I will touch upon the chemical materials used in modern agricultural activities focusing only on pesticides and I will try to elucidate the reasons for my opinion.

Food security entails an approach that deals with processing, preparation, transportation, storage and delivery to end users of food in such a way as to prevent the biological, physical and chemical factors that cause food borne diseases. The primary aim is to assure that food remains healthy and maintains its nourishing qualities in a process summarized as 'from the field to the table'. From the point of view of food security, toxic chemicals, the residues that they contain, are among the most significant threats to human and environmental health. A residue may refer to anything that is not inherent in the natural structure of food and that is available on, in or over plants, phyto-genetic or edible animal products. Pesticides are among the most important toxic chemical substances used in agricultural production and they leave residues on food. Pesticides are substances used against creatures we believe harmful to products we grow. They are divided into groups according to their functional characteristics; for example, "herbicides" are used to wipe out weeds and "insecticides" are used to kill insects. Food is checked for pesticide residues by laboratory analyses that should be performed regularly in order to assure food safety. Control and monitoring activities need to be conducted annually at regularly scheduled times. In other words, activities are conducted by determining first which chemical materials will be looked for and how many products will be controlled in a specific zone.

Food safety and pesticide use in Turkey

In Turkey, where modern agricultural techniques and chemicals are used intensively, there are public and private institutions active in monitoring pesticide residues. Private institutions are generally laboratories established to conduct analyses for pesticide residues in fresh produce for exportation. These institutions do

not engage in activities targeted at protecting public and environmental health; the aim is to assure required analyses are performed rapidly for pesticide residues on products being exported. All controlling, monitoring and auditing duties in relation to agricultural and food products belong to the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Animal Husbandry. Controlling and monitoring food products for residues is conducted by the Provincial Food Control Laboratories and Food Control Branch Directorates functioning under this ministry. There are 41 active Food Control Laboratories in Turkey. If pesticide residue exceeding limits stipulated by law is found during analysis conducted in these labs, a fine is imposed. The problem is how an effective control can be performed. Before tackling this, one needs to examine the use of pesticides in Turkey and current legislation.

Worldwide, annual pesticide use is 3 million tons on average, whereas it is around 33 thousand tons in Turkey. Actually, this number does not mean anything; one has to delve further. Around 700 grams (Reference 1) of pesticides per hectare are used in Turkey. In comparison, the Netherlands, which has the highest pesticide use in Europe, uses nearly 13 kilograms and in Finland, the country with the lowest pesticide use, it is around 1.2 kilograms. From this perspective, the amount of pesticides used in Turkey seems quite low. However, this is not the case. The pesticide usage varies by city. For example, pesticide usage in Antalya, where fresh vegetable-fruit production is rampant, is twice the amount of the Netherlands, with approximately 26 kilograms per hectare (Reference 2). Pesticide residues are mostly found in fresh fruit and vegetable products. Therefore, routine controls on these products is imperative. According to data collected in 2011, 44.7 million tons of fresh fruits and vegetables were produced in Turkey and 7.2 per cent was exported (Reference 3). 93 percent of products produced are consumed within the country and control over them is inadequate. I will only touch upon the main points since it would take a long article to fully explain the reasons for this inadequacy.

The pesticides used in food products produced in Turkey and the allowable amounts are determined by the Turkish Food Codex ("Communique on Maximum Residue Limits on Pesticides Allowed to be Found in Food Products"). Food products submitted for consumption have to meet the threshold values for pesticide residues in this communiqué, called the "Maximum Residue Limit-MRL". MRL denotes the maximum amount of pesticide residue legally allowed (!) to be found in food products. Pesticide residue in any



Bülent Şık

Bülent Şık is a food engineer and has a PhD on environment friendly food analysis techniques. He worked for the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Animal Welfare from 1990 to 2009. Since 2009 he is lecturing in the Food Engineering Department of Akdeniz University on food safety, analysis of residues of toxic and chemical materials in food products and environment friendly chemical applications. He also serves as the technical director assistant in the Food Safety and Agricultural Researches Centre, which is being established within the premises of Akdeniz University.

food product should not exceed these thresholds. If food products contain residues above the MRL, they are considered to be harmful to health.

There are approximately 1000 chemical substances used as pesticides worldwide. In performing analyses for pesticide residues, which pesticides from among hundreds that are possibly used during agricultural production that might have left residues in the food are checked. Therefore, this trace is highly complex and, unfortunately, there are still no laboratories in Turkey that can analyse all the pesticides used in agricultural production. In other words, analysis methods used in food control laboratories are only able to determine some of the pesticides used. This problem is bigger than thought because if you do not check for all (or at least a majority) chemicals that are possibly used as pesticides during an analysis, then your analysis is worthless.

Pesticide tracking programs in Turkey conduct residue analyses for very few food products and a limited number of pesticides. For example, there are 70 thousand greenhouse producers registered in the city of Antalya. If these producers launch goods on the market once a year, we have 70 thousand samples to be analysed. It is neither possible, nor plausible, to analyse all the products on the market. However, the number of analyses should be enough to give an idea of pesticide residues in food. However, few products are currently analysed for pesticide residues. This is limited to a few thousand food samples across the country. This is not only the case in Turkey, but worldwide. The state can control only a small portion of the market. There are many reasons for this, but I believe the most important one is that the state has left all aspects of control to what we call "the market". In a nutshell, there is a strict relationship between the downsizing of the state as a result of neoliberal policies implemented, effacement of public life and the increase in the number and amount of toxic chemical materials in our food.

From a global perspective, the harmful effects of a chemical substance is not remain limited to the area where it was delivered. Chemical molecules know no boundaries. In time, they spread everywhere by means of chemical cycles in the planet. In fact, it is impossible to analyse all toxic substances that contaminate food through human activities and environmental pollution. Our methods are inadequate. In order to further clarify the issue, various analytical devices are used in analysing residue materials. These devices should be able to detect the types and amounts of toxic chemicals existing in food. There is an interesting situation here: there is a strict relationship between the increase in the ability of devices to perform analyses, the increase in their precision and the increase in the number of residue materials that we can check for in food. In other words, we discover new chemical substances that we were unaware of, but that have toxic effects, as we use more precise devices. These substances were available in the food products we consumed before we were able to detect them. Sometimes, some chemical substances that are thought to be non-toxic are actually very harmful. For example, some pesticides assume much more harmful chemical compositions in a food product over time. These are observed occurrences. It is true that our methods are very inadequate.

However, we act as if we know and can control everything in spite of this. This is a complete hoax.

How will global warming influence the pesticide residue problem

Global warming is no longer a threat, it is a fact and we are now in the era of global warming. Agricultural activities across the globe using pesticides, seeds, fertilizers, genetically modified organisms etc and the food industry that has been integrated into this structure, as well as food production activities are some of the major causes of the global warming problem. Unfortunately, it does not seem possible to escape or reverse the situation. For example, the worldwide use of pesticides in the next 50 years is not going to decrease; on the contrary, it will increase. It is estimated that temperature and precipitation systems will change due to global warming, causing epidemic diseases in agricultural products, extreme rises in the number of pestilent creatures and weeds and, therefore, the use of pesticides will be obligatory (Reference 4). It is obvious that we will have to use more pesticides to protect existing products since there will be decreases (Reference 5) in product efficiencies due to increasing temperatures. As a result, this situation shall increase the possible risks for the environment and human health. Even though it does not seem possible to prevent this situation, using chemical substances in agriculture is a matter requiring discussion.

The view defending required use of pesticides is based on two main arguments: One is that pesticides

For example, the amount of pesticides used in Antalya, where fresh vegetable-fruit production is rampant, is twice the amount used in the Netherlands, the country with the highest rate in Europe, with approximately 26 kilograms per hectare.

do not harm human and environmental health and the other is that it is an obligation to use chemicals that enhance product efficiency, such as pesticides, in order to feed the growing global population and to fight hunger. As a matter of fact, both arguments are not true and they have no function other than being arguments often expressed in order to rationalize use of pesticides in agriculture.

According to those who suggest the argument that pesticides are not harmful to health, toxicological tests conducted on this matter are reliable. Toxicological tests essentially try to determine the threshold that a specific toxic chemical in a food product should exceed in order to become harmful to health. The assumption here is based on the idea that the toxic effect of a chemical will become active when it exceeds a certain dose. Therefore, they try to determine what the MRL value of a toxic chemical in food products could be. It is assumed that only circumstances where MRL values are exceeded cause problems. However, studies conducted in recent years suggest that the amounts of residues in some

However, studies conducted in recent years suggest that the amounts of residues in some pesticides are harmful to health even though they are below MRL value. Our hormonal system is dealt the biggest blow and the harm is higher when consumers are of a younger age.

pesticides are harmful to health even though they are below MRL values (References 6 and 7). Our hormonal system is dealt the biggest blow and the harm is worse when consumers are of a younger age. This situation sheds suspicion on toxicological studies conducted in order to assess the effects of harmful pesticides. Additionally, toxicological studies focus on the health issues caused by a single chemical substance. However, there are hundreds of varieties of pesticides used in agriculture and it is quite possible that multiple pesticide residues be observed¹. We are devoid of the scientific methods that can assess health issues that could be caused by such situations. On the other hand, one does not have to be a clairvoyant to say that exposure to such a chemical cocktail will not lead to good results.

There are various studies suggesting product losses of varying degrees, between 40 to 65 per cent, unless pesticides are used in agricultural production (References 8 and 9). However, this argument is very problematic since the social and environmental costs of using pesticides are not taken into account at all in these studies. In other words, it is emphasized that the inclusion in the total costs of the expenses made for overcoming health issues caused by any activity, eliminating the harm from the waste deposited in nature or disposing of such waste is a more suitable way for measuring the efficiency of economic activities (References 10 and 11). It would be much more accurate to examine the requirement to use pesticides in agricultural production using the approach of ecological economic theory and to determine the real costs as such. For example, a study conducted by

Pimentel et al. (Reference 11) determined that the use of pesticides is not as cheap as proposed; on the contrary, it is very expensive and causes wasteful use of petrochemical resources. Another study suggests that the annual loss of products caused by insects in the 1950's in the USA was around 7-8 percent, whereas this ratio has now reached a level of 12-13 percent (Reference 12). Even though the amount of pesticides used has increased 10 times when compared to the 1950's, the amount of products lost on account of insects has doubled, which is rather worrisome. The fact that the problem of hunger is not solely due to inadequate food production is well-known to everyone who is slightly knowledgeable about global food policies, therefore, I will not touch upon them here.

Even though all this has been known for at least 30-40 years, pesticides are still being used. I believe we will continue to use them. Men are able to imagine the end of everything, however, they are not able to imagine that the system in which we live may have an end and may lead rapidly to our own extinction. Undoubtedly, this matter is not only about pesticides. Actually, no matter which issue we lay our hands on, we are still faced with a situation of condemnation or desperation despite the need for a radical change. Undoubtedly, there are situations that require the use of pesticides. For example, pesticides are used to combat diseases transmitted by mosquitoes, such as malaria, and provide benefits in controlling them. They should indeed be used in such situations. However, we feed millions of tons of grain to animals even though it does not suit their physiological nature and we use enormous amounts of pesticides in order to raise them. These two situations are completely different. In one, we talk about surviving, whereas in the other, we talk about a so-called consumption craze backed by science and technology. A change that would shake the position of the chemical substances used in modern agriculture does not seem possible in the short term. In the long term, it will be too late for everything, let alone for making changes in agricultural activities and our dietary habits.

Footnote

1. No studies have been conducted so far in order to determine how many of the food products in Turkey contain multiple pesticides.

References

1. Tiryaki et al. (2010): Tarım ilaçları kullanımı ve riskleri (Use of pesticides and their risks). Erciyes Üniversitesi (Erciyes University) Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü Dergisi (Journal of the Natural Sciences Institute) 26 (2): 154-169.
2. Anonymous (2011): Antalya Tarım Master Planı (Antalya Agricultural Master Plan), Publication by Antalya Provincial Directorate for Agriculture.
3. Anonymous (2012): Opinion of the TMMOB (Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects), Chamber of Agricultural Engineers; http://www.zmo.org.tr/genel/bizden_detay.php?kod=18027&tipi=5&sube=0
4. Miraglia et al. (2009): Climate change and food safety: An emerging issue with special focus on Europe. Food and Chemical Toxicology, Volume 47, Issue 5, 1009-1021.
5. Schultz N. (2009): Wheat gets worse as CO2 rises, www.newscientist.com/article/dn17617-wheat-gets-worse-as-co2-rises.html.
6. McKinlay et al. (2008): Endocrine disrupting pesticides: Implications for risk assessment, in: Environment International 34 (2008), 168-183.
7. Mnif et al. (2011): Effect of Endocrine Disruptor Pesticides: A Review, in: International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health 8 (2011), 2265-2303.
8. Urech, P. (2000): Sustainable agriculture and chemical control: opponents or components of the same strategy. Crop Protection 19, 831-836.
9. Dag et al. (2000): Türkiye'de tarım ilaçları endüstrisi ve geleceği (Pesticide industry in Turkey and its Future). http://www.zmo.org.tr/resimler/ekler/2092a75caa_75e46_ek.pdf?tipi=14&sube=0.
10. Fratzscher, W. and Stephan, K. (2001): Waste energy utilisation-An appeal for an entropy based strategy, in: International Journal of Thermal Sciences, 40 (4), 311-315.
11. Pimentel D. and Pimentel M. (2008): Environmental and Economic Costs of the Application of Pesticides Primarily in the United States, 161-183, Food Energy and Society Third Edition CRC Press Taylor & Francis USA.
12. Weber P. (1992): A place for pesticides, in: World Watch Magazine, May/June, Vol. 5, No. 3.

Which is more dangerous: nuclear lies or radiation?

If I start an article about nuclear energy with a sentence including the words radiation, nuclear waste, Fukushima, Chernobyl or earthquake, rest assured that no one in the world would find it odd. However, when it comes to Turkey, the most appropriate word to define the nuclear energy policy of the state seems to me to be “heroism”. As far as nuclear energy is concerned, you can hear the best examples of “heroic literature” from the politicians in Turkey. Would you like to have an example of this form of “heroism literature” about nuclear energy? Let’s start with the most repeated line: “If Turkey does not build nuclear plants, it will remain without electricity.”

The main argument used to justify the decision towards building nuclear plants in Turkey is the rapid increase in energy/electricity demand. According to the data of the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, between 1990 and 2008, the annual average rate of increase in primary energy demand was realized as 4.3%.¹ Since the planned nuclear reactors can generate only electricity, it would be more appropriate to look at the increase in electricity consumption of Turkey. As a result of the global economic crisis, in 2009 the demand for electricity in Turkey decreased by 2 percent, however, it increased by 7.9 percent and 9 percent in 2010 and 2011, respectively. In accordance with the estimates for 2012, again, an increase by 7 to 8 percent is expected. In the view of these figures, it can be said that the electricity demand in Turkey shows a parallel tendency to the increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP). If you do not question the demand growth, then you can claim that any energy investment to respond to this demand is appropriate. It seems that the investments made through the private sector to meet the demand would increase the installed capacity of Turkey to 55000 megawatt (MW) at the end of this year. As a reminder, 10 years ago this figure was 31845 MW.² In the same report, there are two important scenarios regarding electricity consumption. According to these two different scenarios aiming to estimate the increase in electricity demand, it is expected that the demand that reached 227 billion kilowatt-hour (kWh) at the end of 2011 will approach to 398 billion kWh based on the low scenario and to 433 billion kWh based on the high scenario.

Table 1: Demand Estimations (High Demand)

YEAR	PEAK DEMAND		ENERGY DEMAND	
	MW	INCREASE (%)	GWs	INCREASE (%)
2011	36000	7,8	227000	7,9
2012	38400	6,7	243430	7,2
2013	41000	6,8	262010	7,6
2014	43800	6,8	281850	7,6
2015	46800	6,8	303140	7,6
2016	50210	7,3	325920	7,5
2017	53965	7,5	350300	7,5
2018	57980	7,4	376350	7,4
2019	62265	7,4	404160	7,4
2020	66845	7,4	433900	7,4

Reference: TEİAŞ

I should emphasize that we are facing a government that will not even question such an inflated electricity demand, one that is “shockingly slow off the mark” in taking measures to decrease electricity losses originate from transmission and distribution and increase energy efficiency.

For a solution some of the energy intensive sectors should be downsized, while activities in high value-added, low-energy intensive areas are included in the middle and long termed planning. In the short term, it is possible for Turkey to rapidly decrease its energy consumption by using energy efficiently. The following statement is taken from the 9th Development Plan of the Ministry of Development: “According to the studies performed by the General Directorate of Electrical Power Resources Survey and Development Administration (EİE), via efficiency implementations on the sectors of industry, construction and transportation, it seems possible to decrease consumption of both general energy and electricity by 20-25 percent.”³ It is obvious that, in a country with an electricity consumption of 230 billion kWh, a 20 percent deduction would make the nuclear power plant (NPP), claiming to generate 35 billion kWh of electricity upon the completion of four reactors, unnecessary. To calculate the energy intensity of a country, the amount of energy which is used to generate GDP is taken into account. In the case of Turkey, this figure was 258 kilograms of oil equivalent (kgoe) per €1000 of GDP in 1990.



Özgür Gürbüz

Serving as project coordinator for the Turkey Representation of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Association since June 2011, Gürbüz is known for his work in ecology. A graduate of the Business Administration Department of Dokuz Eylül University, Gürbüz received a Master's Degree in Computers from Oxford Brookes University and in Production Management and Marketing from Marmara University. Gürbüz worked for various media organizations in Turkey and abroad. He was in charge of the Energy Campaign in the Mediterranean Office of Greenpeace in 2004-2005. After working as an independent consultant in energy and environment, he published a book entitled Energy and Cows.

In 2010, compared to 1990, it is only 6 kgoe lower (252). Whereas Ireland used 253 kgoe to generate €1000 of GDP in 1990, but, in 2010 it managed to use only 112 kgoe to generate same amount of GDP. In the same period of time, Greece dropped its energy intensity figures from 264 to 165 kgoe and Switzerland, in that category the top of Europe, from 102 to 86 kgoe. In other words, they have learned how to do the same job with less energy. Turkey has not even tried it yet.

Table 2: The comparison of energy intensity between countries (This ratio is measured in kgoe per EUR 1 000.)

	1990	2000	2002	2010
Turkey	258,66	264,62	259,06	252,51
Greece	264,39	204,92	198,78	165,46
Switzerland	102,46	97,58	98,38	86,54
Ireland	253,31	137,00	129,65	112,36

Reference: Eurostat

Turkey intends to construct two NPPs, one in Akkuyu area on the Mediterranean coast and then in Sinop on the Black Sea. The name of Akkuyu was brought to the agenda in Turkey through a nuclear power plant. In 1976, a site license for Akkuyu, which is located within the boundaries of the town of Büyükceli in the province of Mersin, was obtained, but this first attempt ended unsuccessfully. This was followed by two separate attempts in 1980 and 1990. For several reasons, such as public backlash, economic conditions and bribery accusations, numerous attempts towards building a nuclear plant failed until 2004. In 2004, then Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Hilmi Güler surprised everyone by announcing, completely out of the blue, that they were working on projects for NPPs and would soon start construction. Although the dates given for the start of construction have changed consistently, significant developments have occurred since the 2004 statement through to today. “The Law on the Construction and Operation of Nuclear Power Plants and Energy Sale” was enacted by the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) on the 8th of May, 2007. This less than 5-paged law, with no regulation on the most critical matters for nuclear power plants such as security and waste issues, was vetoed by the 10th President of the Republic of Turkey, Ahmet Necdet Sezer. Law No. 5710 was re-debated by the Parliament and re-enacted with some amendments on the 9th of November, 2007. Abdullah Gül, a member of Justice and Development Party (AKP), who had just taken presidency and who had served as Prime Minister for a term, approved the amended law. Yet, the Chamber of Electrical Engineers criticized the law for being amended beyond the vetoed articles and, therefore, being totally reshaped.

Law No. 5710 was published in the Official Gazette dated 21 November 2007 and entered into force. The Turkish Electricity Trading and Contracting Company (TETAŞ) acted without delay and five days

later announced that a tender would be initiated for a nuclear power plant. Although they called it a “competition”, the sealed-bid-tender-like process did not meet the expectations of the government when only one firm submitted a bid. The owner of this bid was the consortium formed by the group of Atomstroyexport-Inter Rao-Park Teknik. Although the specification was obtained by 13 firms including, but not limited to, AECL, Itochu, RWE, Suez, Sabanci and Alarko, only six of them joined the tender. From five of the six sealed envelopes a thank you note appeared, all that was left was the consortium led by Atomstroyexport. It is rather curious that the top nuclear corporations did not even submit a bid for a nuclear power plant tender that had been pursued for years. Many firms hesitated because of Turkey started the tender process without preparing the legal and technical base for it. Sabanci Holding summed up the reason for not submitting a bid for the tender in a written statement given to the Istanbul Stock Exchange: “Sabanci Holding remains convinced that nuclear energy should be among the resources to be used in satisfying of increasing energy demand of Turkey. However, Sabanci Holding did not submit a bid today for the tender made by the TETAŞ affiliated with the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources regarding the nuclear power plant planned to be built in Akkuyu, Mersin. This decision results from the inefficiency of the calendar given for such a nuclear plant tender process requiring highly delicate and detailed studies which need to be in line with Sabanci Holding’s high quality standards and carrying vital importance on security and risk in regard to our country.”⁴

Despite the submission of only one bid and, therefore a lack of two competing firms, the process was continued by the Ministry of Energy. After the Turkish Atomic Energy Authority (TAEK) approved the bid according to the required criteria, the price quote of the consortium was disclosed. The government granted a 15-year long power purchase agreement (PPA) to the planned nuclear plant. If a company opts to sell electricity at a lower price, the government would choose that firm to build the nuclear plant. Only one firm survived the bid, the sealed envelope of the Atomstroyexport-Inter Rao-Park Teknik group was opened and their bid of 21.16 US cents per kWh was seen. The government and nuclear power supporters had another shock. Not only politicians, but also some scientists introducing themselves as nuclear energy experts in Turkey were often stating without hesitation that the price of electricity generated by a nuclear power plant would be very low. Hence, many people dreaming of cheap nuclear power were surprised when they heard this price quote on January 2009. The decision of a stay of execution of the Plenary Session of Administrative Law Divisions of the Council of State for three articles of the regulation on the NPP tender brought about an end to the tender, which had already soured with the “high price”. On 20 November 2009, TETAŞ announced that the

nuclear plant tender was cancelled.⁵

Thereafter, the AKP government took a quite different path. Through price-oriented negotiations with the Russian company, the guarantee of purchase paid per kWh was decreased first to 15 cents and then to 12.35 cents. The following statement that Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Taner Yıldız uttered during the negotiations significantly showed that the government also believed in the cheap nuclear power myth, “If we are not content with the price, it means that there is an error. Where does this error come from; us, bidders or non-bidders? We should address that. The actual price is above the average price of electricity generated in Turkey. The 15-odd cent price is too high. We are not satisfied. A nuclear plant is a must, but it should be at a reasonable price. Nuclear energy has two components. One of them is technical and the other is financial. I think the financial cost has appeared to be more than expected.”⁶

The price did not fall to 2-3 cents as mentioned in the heroic speeches of politicians. The negotiations started with Rosatom after the cancellation of the tender were clarified and finalized in an international agreement signed between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey on 12 May 2010. Needless to say, nothing was clarified on many matters, such as what would happen to nuclear wastes; who would be responsible in a case of accident and in what extent; the security of the proposed VVER-1200 technology; the earthquake resistancy of the Akkuyu region; how this plant would affect Turkey’s tourism haven in the Mediterranean region; and how on earth this decision was taken in spite of the public saying no to nuclear power. The only things clarified were the price of the guarantee of purchase and the role to be undertaken by the Russian company in this nuclear plant project. As stated in the fifth paragraph of Article 10 of the international agreement signed between Turkey and the Russian Federation, TETAŞ guaranteed to purchase from the project company “Akkuyu NPP” a fixed amount, 70 per cent for the first two units (reactors) and 30 per cent for the other two units, of the electricity planned to be generated by the plant for 15 years from the date of commercial operation of each power unit at a weighted average price of 12.35 US cents per kWh (not including Value Added Tax). The planned power plant to be built in Akkuyu is composed of four VVER-1200 type reactors. According to the Build-Operate-Own (BOO) model, the company must compensate the first investment value of Akkuyu NPP with electricity sales. It was a paradox that government officials executed this agreement while, during their marketing efforts regarding the NPP, they were complaining about energy dependency on Russia and stating that the planned nuclear plant would reduce this dependency. In the agreement, it was even stated that the Russian company could not sell more than 49 percent of the shares of the power plant to another company.

Dependency on Russia

Turkey imports 98.3 percent of the natural gas it consumes. In 2011, 25.4 billion cubic meters out of total 43.8 billion cubic meters was imported from Russia.⁷ Iran followed Russia with 8 billion cubic meters. The 47.89 percent of the natural gas imported in 2011 was used for power generation. From this point of view, it can seem wise to generate a portion of the necessary electricity through a nuclear plant to reduce the share of natural gas in electricity generation; however, if you grant the tender to a state company of the country you are already 58 percent dependent upon for natural gas, this would only mean change of fuel not the supplier. Even if the nuclear plant begins operations, since, due to the type of reactor, the fuel has to be produced in Russia and imported from Russia, the dependency of Turkey to that country in terms of energy would increase, not decrease. Additionally, merely building a NPP is not enough for reducing the dependency on natural gas. As long as electricity demand increases, it cannot be possible to close the existing natural gas plants. Even if

Now, after the Fukushima accident, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said that “There is no investment involving zero risk. Then we should not have bottled gas or install a natural gas line at home or no crude oil pipeline should cross our country.”

their proportional share in increasing demand reduces, the amount would not decrease. And here is a fact that suffers from the heroism literature of the government: from the list of licensed projects of the Energy Market Regulatory Authority (EMRA), it can be seen that the construction of a new natural gas power station with 13000 MW installed capacity continues. More interestingly, the applications for natural gas fuelled thermal power stations made to the EMRA show the capacity to reach 53000 MW.⁸

Thus far, I have tried to illustrate how the government mis-informed the public in an effort to justify Turkey’s nuclear adventure. Mainstream media facilitates this propaganda by not publishing any objective news on nuclear energy and reporting news in support of the government and the above-mentioned company. In the USA, one of the biggest hindrances in front of new nuclear plants is the waste problem, but this issue has hardly ever come up in Turkey. While the company avoids this question with short and un-detailed responses, such as wastes would be taken to Russia, it is in contradiction with Paragraph 9 of Article 10 of the international agreement it is signatory to. In that Article, it is stated that “The Project Company shall pay a separate amount of 0.15 US cents per kWh to the account for spent fuel, radioactive waste management and 0.15 US cents per kWh to the account for decommissioning for electricity

purchased by TETAŞ within the framework of the PPA. With regards to the electricity sold outside the framework of the PPA, the Project Company will make the necessary payments to relevant funds stipulated by the applicable Turkish laws and regulations.” If spent fuel would be sent to Russia, then why the project company still pays for spent fuel and radioactive waste management?

Uncertainty is not limited only with the text of the agreement and the responsibilities of the Russian company. The earthquake risk of the Akkuyu region is still a debated subject. It is still unknown who would control the construction said to be started in 2014. There is no authority other than TAEK. But TAEK does not have any experience in NPPs, let alone independency. The VVER-1200 type reactor does not conform to the condition to be tested, which was mentioned often during the pre-tender period; there is no VVER-1200 reactor operating in the world. Again, Turkey has to rely on detail-less and imprecise statements from the Russian company on that matter. These statements do not go beyond phrases like “We are constructing the strongest building in the world in Akkuyu”. The reply given by Managing Director Sergey Petrov, who is operating the construction of the Vorenej-2 reactor, to the reporter who had wanted to climb to the top of the 136-meter pipe, and published in the news, hitting the headlines of Hürriyet newspaper on 8 July 2012 and looking almost like an advertisement of the Russian company reveals everything: “... Last May, a group of experts from the Turkish Ministry of Energy visited our construction site. At the beginning, there was a bombardment of questions. But when we took them to the top of the pipe, no more questions were left about our technology.”⁹

Despite all, it can be considered a miracle to get a “No to Nuclear” response from public opinion surveys.¹⁰ Due to governmental oppression, the local community or the silent majority saying “No to Nuclear” in Turkey are not hopeful about the cases brought against the nuclear plant. Lawyer Fevzi Özlüer from Ecology Collective says that the purpose of preferring to execute an international agreement was to prevent the process of the nuclear plant from being subjected to judicial review. Although an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process has been started, as a result of its perfunctory nature, it does not seem able to meet expecta-

tions. Though the briefing meeting on 29 March 2012 in Akkuyu could not be held due to hours of protests, it was a total scandal that officials from the Ministry of Environment drew up minutes stating that “the meeting was conducted in line with its particular purpose.”

Since it affects the lives of millions of people and living beings, it is important that Turkey, possessing one of the best renewable energy potentials in Europe and having many ways in respect to energy efficiency, once again stop its nuclear power plant plans. It is confusing to see the Ministry of Energy insisting upon nuclear energy, although it accepts that 380 billion kWh electricity can be generated by solar pv or we can have 48000 MW wind installed capacity which will have no feasibility question (today the installed capacity for wind is around 2000 MW). The renewable energy resources such as wind, sun, geothermal and biomass are more feasible for technology transfer as well as providing more employment opportunities than a nuclear plant.. According to the figures of the European Wind Energy Association, with each 1 MW wind turbine built and installed, 15 new jobs are created.¹¹ Thus, 1000 MW of wind power creates employment for 15,000 people, while a nuclear plant with the same capacity only employs 400-700 people, according to data of the Nuclear Energy Institute. Yet, it is claimed by Rauf Kasumov, the Deputy General Manager of the company that wants to build a nuclear power plant at Akkuyu, that the plant would employ 20,000 people when completed.¹² Apparently, this heroism thing is infectious. The Akkuyu NPP deputy manager seems to be infected by our politicians.

When tons of tea was exposed to radioactive fallout in the Black Sea Region after the Chernobyl accident, the then Prime Minister Turgut Özal said that “Radioactive tea is much more delicious.” Now, after the Fukushima accident, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said that “There is no investment involving zero risk. Then we should not have bottled gas or install a natural gas line at home or no crude oil pipeline should cross our country.”¹³ As has been shown, many things have changed in 40 years, but in Turkey, Prime Ministers and their ambition on nuclear power has not changed at all.

Footnote

1. http://www.enerji.gov.tr/index.php?dil=en&sf=webpages&b=enerji_EN&bn=215&hn=&nm=40717&id=40717. Last accessed on 14 August 2012.
2. Turkish Electrical Energy 10-Year Generation Capacity Projection (2011-2020), November 2011, TEİAŞ (Turkish Electricity Transmission Company), p. 84.
3. Ninth Development Plan (2007-2013), 2012 program, p. 112.
4. <http://www.kap.gov.tr/yay/Bildirim/Bildirim.aspx?id=58038>, last accessed on August, 14 2012.
5. Elektrik Mühendisliği Dergisi (Journal of Electricity Engineering), Volume 437, p. 61, December 2009.
6. <http://arama.hurriyet.com.tr/arsivnews.aspx?id=12311121>. Last accessed on 14 August 2012.
7. Energy Market Regulatory Authority, Natural Gas Market, 2011 Sec-

tor Report.

8. <http://zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=1238314&title=tuketim-artiyor-dogalgazda-fatura-kabaracak>. Last accessed on 14 August 2012.
9. <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/planet/20938460.asp>, last accessed on 15 August 2012.
10. The results of the survey made by Greenpeace to A&G research company. See <http://www.greenpeace.org/turkey/tr/news/turkiyenin-yuzde-64u-nukleere-hayir-diyor-290411>.
11. <http://www.ewea.org/index.php?id=1638>, last accessed on 15 August 2012.
12. <http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=1212117&title=akkuyu-nukleer-santrali-bolge-insanina-istihdam-saglayacak>. Last accessed on 15 August 2012.
13. <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/17282118.asp>. Last accessed on 15 August 2012.

Climate change: Is a “U-turn” possible

The Conference of the Parties held in Durban in December, 2011, resulted in the decision to draft an agreement that would bind all countries and target global reduction of emissions by 2015. The new agreement that will be in force by 2020 actually targets the reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions, which so far could not be achieved.

The legally binding nature of the agreement to come out, as well as the seriousness of its targets currently brings up the biggest questions. However, the actual problem is that this date does not have any scientific validity. While the scientific community shows that we will be in trouble unless global greenhouse gas reduction is achieved by 2015, setting 2020 as the target date means risking it all. The challenge here can be seen as the chance of success in braking after turning the bend.

Based on a comparison of scientific predictions made in the past and events currently taking place, scientists state that events took place earlier than envisaged. A series of scientific studies have been published since the last assessment report was published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change-IPCC in 2007. All the studies foresaw extreme hydro-cycles in the form of draught-extreme precipitation, increase in the frequency of extreme climate events, increase in the frequency of heat waves and the possible results of all these factors.

The climate change brought about by men, which was scientifically uncovered with long-term observations, today manifests itself in the events we have encountered in the short run. The global record heat and flood-related disasters that took place in a number of countries in 2010 are some global examples of this. The melting of the ice cap in Greenland on 8-12, July, 2012 by 97 percent gave us a more vivid idea of what the speed of climate change in its current stage could be. The whirlwinds that happened in Turkey in the winter months, the flooding that took place in a number of towns and regions in the summer months, with Samsun ranking first, as well as the heat waves are a few examples. The fact that Ankara experienced the warmest day measured since 1926, which was recorded as an “extreme heat wave”, is another example from our daily lives showing the current state of affairs in this process.

The seesaw equation

There is a difficult equation at stake here. The scientific community and wide sectors of society complain about the inadequacy of the combat against

climate change. Politicians do not want to lose the advantages of the usual carbon economy and current dynamics. This conflict is most seriously visible in the climate negotiations.

During the summit in Durban, Russia, Japan and the USA, with Canada ranking first, formed a significant obstacle. The remaining countries were pleased with this balanced status in the process, pretending to want change, with the exception of Africa and island states. The second period of obligation of the Kyoto Protocol could be saved as the European Union pushed for a change by convincing China and India at the last moment.

On one end of the seesaw were those who wanted to continue with high carbon emissions, the other end of the seesaw was taken by those who wanted a low carbon solution, with those who wanted the continuation of the pact in the middle. The ones who stood in the middle formed the largest group. Such an equation might mean not only an increase, but also a multiplication of the disasters that we experienced in 2012.

In an equation where the balance has to shift towards the climate-friendly side, where does Turkey sit on the seesaw?

Turkey's love affair with carbon

One can say that Turkey stands apart from the seesaw. To paint a more detailed picture, it stands closer to the carbon-friendly side. Let us see the element of truth in this analogy.

First of all, in 2004 it became a party to the UN Climate Change Framework Agreement negotiated in Rio in 1992, after more than 180 countries had signed.

Secondly, in 2005 it became a party to the Kyoto Protocol negotiations in 1997, again after it was signed by more than 180 countries.

Thirdly, while 140 countries made their own commitments in the Copenhagen Consensus that emerged in 2009, Turkey did not make any commitments.

In short, Turkey has the inertia that could set an example for a country that does not want to take any steps in climate, namely, it is almost non-existent in international negotiations tackling climate change. There are two places it occupies. Firstly, it did not take any responsibilities, featuring on the Attachment-1 list, namely, the “special circumstances”, which was accepted in the summit in Marrakech and recorded at every meeting. Secondly, it wants to be a beneficiary in fields such as financing and technology, without



Önder Algedik

A project coordinator and activist, Önder Algedik has worked as a project manager, provided consultancy related to climate change and served as Secretary General for the Climate Platform. He has written numerous reports and conducted analyses in this area and is still working as a consultant for different projects. His articles are published regularly in the Green Economy website (www.yesilekonomi.com) and Cumhuriyet newspaper's energy supplement. Within the framework of the observer status of Federation of Consumers Associations (TÜDEF) he monitors international processes during the climate change negotiations.

assuming any responsibilities.

Let us come to its proximity to the carbon side, namely, its love affair with carbon!

The greenhouse gas emissions of Turkey which were equivalent to 187 million tons of carbon dioxide in 1990 increased by 115 percent in 2010 and reached 401.9 million tons. In the 1990s, emissions per person was 2.6 tons, which was below the global average.

The global record heat and the flood-related disasters that took place in a number of countries in 2010 are some global examples for this. The melting of the ice cap in Greenland on 8-12 July, 2012 by 97 percent gave us a vivid idea of what the speed of the climate change in its current stage could be.

However, it increased to 5.45 tons in 2010, hence above the average. One of the leading roles in this increase is played by greenhouse gases stemming from electricity consumption. The amount of carbon dioxide arising out of only electricity consumption increased by 252 percent! That is to say, that coal and natural gas usage was marked by an extreme increase. One can assume that this increase shall continue as it is. The reason is not only that the construction of power plants that caused these emissions is under way, but also, the construction of coal and natural gas plants is ongoing. Focusing only on the coal plants, we see that 27 are in the construction phase, one of them has been licensed and license applications have been completed for 27, bringing the total number to 51! In other words, Turkey's love affair with carbon is in bloom and moving at full speed.

A global climate policy without Turkey

Just as the steps by Canada to withdraw from the Kyoto Protocol at the Durban climate summit weakened negotiations, the lack of responsibility assumed by Turkey and the steps it has taken in the reverse direction provide the driving force for fossil fuel policies. Turkey forms a good example for many politicians who do not want to take any steps. Signing the agreements almost after the work is done, declining to assume any obligations and marketing fossil fuels packaged as "development" make Turkey the secret hero of the front of double-crossers.

Having said all these, one can think about a combat against climate change without Turkey, but that is wrong!

First of all, there is little time left until the emissions of developing countries surpass those of developed countries. In other words, the total emissions of "developing countries" like Turkey are more than the amount required to stop climate change alone if things continue as they are!

Secondly, good and bad examples have a really determining role for countries. Today, the 8 percent decrease made by Australia in its greenhouse gas emissions, in spite of the 3 percent growth in economy,

as emission trading schemes go through troubled times¹ has an impact on the plans of politicians. Just as Australia has a good influence and Canada a bad one, it would be unfair to ignore the impact of Turkey.

Thirdly, this problem will not be solved unless governments, companies, local governments and societies as a whole in all countries act. There is a very simple truth; you go wherever the horses pull you. Combating climate change is an act in which everybody should take part.

Although one cannot imagine a world without Turkey, imagining a world without carbon is, on the contrary, very easy. Reviewing a model that becomes carbon-free by focusing on transportation will give you a good idea.

Turkey and climate-friendly transport

Turkey has gained a significant motor vehicle volume, with 15 thousand kilometers of divided roads, many new overpasses, underpasses and a series of urban roads constructed in the last decade. Thus, through the policies, the number of vehicles in 2002 was 8.6 million, and by May, 2012, that had increased to 16.5 million - having almost doubled in number.² Today, only the number of cars is equal to the total number of vehicles in 2002. Therefore, greenhouse gas emissions stemming from transport was increased by 80 percent from 1990-2010.

On the other hand, the policies have now rendered transport impossible and costly. The traffic problems in the two largest cities of Turkey during the summer months caused people to be stuck on the roads for several hours. The roads that are repaired and overlaid with asphalt every year also indicate that these policies can no longer continue. In addition to the time lost and the destinations unreachable, as well as never-ending public transport projects, millions of dollars spent on renewal constitute a serious problem. The amount allocated to asphalt overlaying works only by the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality in 2012 is 365 million TL,³ namely, around 200 million dollars!

Such an equation makes us think about how the reduction in fossil fuels will be achieved on top of the problem of cities where "transport is impossible".

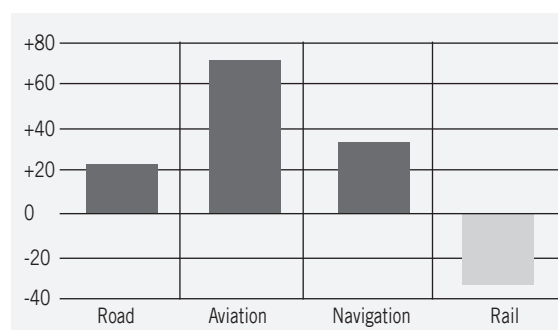
A subtle topic: Transport

As the greenhouse emissions due to transport turn into a rapid and uniform model within the framework of the notion of the "globalizing world", the globalization of commerce has also become a serious issue. As per the latest report by the International Center for Trade and Sustainable Development, greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere due to trans-border transportation of commercial goods and people have increased by 65 percent during 1990-2009. In Turkey, the increase in greenhouse gas emissions stemming from transport is a bit higher - it is 80 percent! The fields where the increase has been the highest are airway and seaway transport. Roadway transportation has been in its golden year thanks to divided roads and urban highways. As a matter of fact, the emissions stemming from transport was increased by 64 percent as compared to 1990.

This picture of transport in Turkey is not independent from global policies. The European Union data provided in Graph 1, prepared in accordance

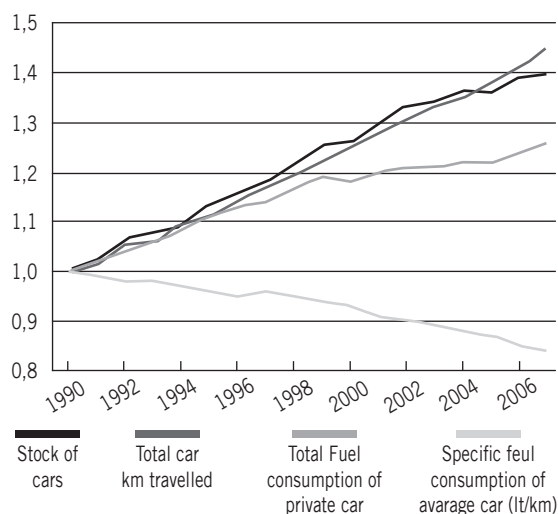
with the International Energy Agency data,⁴ indicate that the airway transportation emissions increased the highest, at 70 percent, in 1990-2009, whereas roadway emissions increased by more than 20 percent and seaway transport emissions increased by almost 30 percent. All this in spite of the 20 percent emission reduction target of the EU in the year 2020!

One can come up with the question of “why the EU has such a gap while leading in a series of policy areas”. Let us explain it with a simple example. Following the crisis in 2008, Turkey classified the replacement of old vehicles with more efficient ones, thus raising the engine efficiency, as combating climate change. In the EU countries, engine efficiency is a matter that is similarly taken into account and remains on the agenda.



Graph 1- Changes in percentage in the greenhouse gas emissions of the EU countries arising respectively out of roadway, airway, seaway and railway transportation in 1990-2009 ⁵

Thanks to the advancements in technology and applications, the cars in the EU in 2007 had a more efficient fuel consumption rate by 15 percent as compared to 1990. However, as seen in Graph 2, the 40 percent increase in the total distance where cars are driven as a result of the efficiency increase, as well as the increase in the number of cars of up to 40 percent, resulted in an increase of 25 percent in total fuel consumption. This shows that a simple efficiency increase policy never produces tangible results as long as it is part of a holistic strategy and it creates the reverse effect, called the “re-bounce effect”.



Graph 2-The total number of cars, covered total distance, total fuel consumption and fuel efficiency graph in the EU countries in 1990-2007, 1990 is shown as 1. ⁶

Departing from this example, the question we have to answer is “how shall we switch to a transport solution that will not change the climate and will not prevent human mobility.”

Mobility, not transport

The ‘success’ of designs, not to say, policies that are centered on the notion of transport is evident. The major factor in this is that urban transport is based on motor vehicles, therefore, on cars. Mobility means people reaching a destination in line with their needs. In other words, mobility, namely, a person, a handicapped or a pregnant woman reaching their destination, is taken as the basis, not motor vehicles.

The essential parameter being motorized vehicles, urban transport slows down too. For example, the average speed of a car in London is only 19 kilometers per hour.⁷ Naturally, a car-centered transport jungle does not provide ease in public transport. As a matter of fact, the average speed of a bus in New York City⁸ has dropped to 15 kilometers and this speed is declining each and every day. Unfortunately, all these data are similar throughout the world. This arithmetical value has been the most-debated topic in Turkey in 2012. The traffic congestion that started in Istanbul and Ankara during the summer months with a simple repair reached a point where 1 kilometer was covered in almost 5 hours, hence at a speed of 0.2 km/hour. On the other hand, in Ankara, one of the cities with no cycling infrastructure where traffic is judged to be very bad, a cyclist can solve their urban transport need at an average speed of 16-17 km per hour while commuting to work or school. In a city like Ankara, where traffic jams occur often, the speed achieved on the same road and with no problems actually indicates that the key parameter in transport is not motorized vehicles, but mobility.

Consequently, the car-centered transport policies are able to neither move people nor stop climate change. However, climate-friendly solutions are affordable and practical in terms of both investment and utilization.

Climate-friendly = Wallet-friendly

In the struggle against climate change, countries submit their annual greenhouse gas inventory data every year to the UN Climate Change Secretariat. Today, similarly to the carbon calculations of countries, companies have also started to make their own calculations. Furthermore, the greenhouse gas emissions during the life cycle of products ranging from raw materials to production and use, then disposal are calculated as carbon-equivalents. Since the value obtained as a result of this calculation is actually related to the coal or oil used, it brings about a result that is proportional with not only the climate cost, but also the fossil fuel cost in a sense.

According to the studies⁹ conducted, dividing the total greenhouse gas emission values of a bicycle including its production, maintenance and use, by the covered kilometers gives a result of 21 grams CO₂/km. Applying the same calculation to a bus, the value is 101 gram CO₂/km for a passenger travelling by bus to cover 1 kilometer and 271 gram CO₂/km by car.

From another perspective, the greenhouse gas emission resulting from covering one kilometer by car is

achieved after 13 kilometers covered by bike and after 2.7 kilometers covered by bus.

The life cycle carbon dioxide calculation we made, climate-friendly vehicles and applications that support them give us the chance to use less fossil fuels and they also provide wallet-friendly alternatives due to less greenhouse gas emissions and less fossil fuel consumption.

A simple example of a city

Today, the share of transport by bike in a relatively large city in Turkey is almost below 1 percent, whereas the ratio of public transport is not more than 40 percent. A simple urban arrangement can enable the construction of cycling lanes, cycling can be developed as priority means of transport and stronger steps can be taken towards integrating it with public transport. Let us make a conservative estimate considering that the share of biking in transport is 40 percent in Amsterdam and 32 percent in Copenhagen, it will be understood that the proposed share of 10 percent for biking is not that high. One can suggest that the share of cars in transport falling to 40 cent is a conservative proposal considering that the rate of car ownership in Bogota, the capital of Colombia, is 13 percent on account of a significant public transport network and integrated cycling transport.

	Bicycle	Bus	Car	Emitted CO ₂
CO ₂ , gr/km	21	101	271	
Current Share	%0	%40	%60	➡ 100
Policy Change	%10	%10	%40	➡ 79

Table 1- Calculation of carbon dioxide savings via a city-wide, climate-friendly policy change.

Investment in climate-friendly transport

Binali Yildirim, Minister of Transport, Maritime and Communications, stated that around 43 billion TL were spend for 15 thousand kilometers of divided roads that have been added to date. Unfortunately, this cost does not include the cost of asphalt that is renewed every year. Such an amount of money alone is enough to make the transport in Turkey today climate-friendly and economical beyond similar examples in the world.

Considering the investment items of public institutions, the alternative that could be created is rather exciting. This money could have been spent to construct a double-line railway of 2.600 kilometers in total to connect cities of Turkey with populations more than one million and no railway transportation and the fast train line, which is a serious alternative to air travel, could have been increased from 500 kilometers to 5 thousand kilometers. The remaining funds could have been used to increase the total urban railway system length of Turkey, which is 242 kilometers today, with 113 kilometers of subway and 129 kilometers of tramway in 10 cities, to 1.000 kilometers, thus it could have been quadrupled! Turkey could have already had all these investments; it could even have used the remaining funds to have a cycling network of 15.000 kilometers similar to the cycling highways that reached 60.000 kilometers in Europe and hundreds of cycling lanes in cities.

In other words, Turkey could have had today a more comfortable, affordable and climate-friendly transport system with the same investment.

Can Turkey make a “U-turn” for climate change?

The current oil-centered policies are not able to offer us any services other than traffic and climate change. We need more good examples and less bad examples, like Turkey, for the reduction of greenhouse gases on a global level.

Turkey dreams of growing its economy by constructing more roads in addition to more coal power plants in the forthcoming period. The cost of this dream is that we would have an expensive life at the expense of losing the climate.

Turkey's return to a climate-friendly policy is possible with a sharp “U-turn”. Even though the term ‘possible’ denotes that it is within the limits of possibilities, scientifically speaking, it is an obligation. In terms of preferences, it is much cheaper than the carbon-centered economy as explained above.

The main question is ‘are we going to wait for the politicians to put on the brakes to stop climate change or are we going to make sure that they put on the brakes?’

Footnote

1. <http://www.yesilekonomi.com/roportajlar/turkiye-dunyanin-tersine-daha-karbon-yogun>.
2. TÜİK (Statistics Institute of Turkey), Motorized Road Vehicles, May 2012, News Bulletin.
3. 2012 Budget Year Performance Program, Ankara Metropolitan Municipality Administration, p. 133.
4. Railway Handbook 2012, Energy Consumption and CO₂ Emissions,

International Union of Railway.

5. op. cit. p. 26
6. For the original graph, please see: Quantifying CO₂ savings of cycling, European Cyclists' Federation, November 2011, p. 18.
7. http://www.forbes.com/2008/04/21/europe-commute-congestion-forbeslife-cx_po_0421congestion.html.
8. <http://www.straphangers.org/buscams>.
9. Quantifying CO₂ savings of cycling, European Cyclists' Federation, November 2011.

KCK cases and the judiciary mechanism

The United Nations General Assembly defines acts of terrorism as “activities aimed at the destruction of human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy, threatening the territorial integrity and security of States, destabilizing legitimately constituted Governments, undermining pluralistic civil society and having adverse consequences for the economic and social development of States” (17 December 1999, Resolution No. 54/164).

It is the responsibility of all States to bring those who are suspected of perpetrating, organizing and sponsoring terrorist attacks before the courts (12 September 2001, UN Security Council Resolution No. 1368). To this end, the Security Council called on States for urgent cooperation. According to this call, States should endeavour to eliminate reasons creating terrorism.

“Guidelines on Human Rights and the Fight Against Terrorism” adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 11 July 2002 at its 804th Meeting, which stress that “the imperative duty of States [is] to protect their populations against possible terrorist attacks”, is an important document in respect to the fight against terrorism.

Parliamentary Assembly Resolution No. 1258, “Democracies Facing Terrorism”, dated 26 September 2001, called on States to “renew and generously resource their commitment to pursue economic, social and political policies designed to secure democracy, justice, human rights and wellbeing for all people throughout the world”.

As a country where many deaths occur due to the unresolved Kurdish problem, it is an indisputable fact that we all have a responsibility in the prevention of terrorism and maintenance of peace.

On 15 January 2010, then current Minister of the Interior Besir Atalay held a press conference about the “Democratization” efforts within the scope of the “National Unity and Brotherhood Project”.¹ At this press conference, he reiterated certain points, summarized below:

- The Regulation enabling detained and convicted persons to speak with relatives in their native language entered into force.
- State television channel, TRT 6, began broadcasting in different languages and dialects.
- The “Institute of Living Languages in Turkey” was founded within the framework of the Higher Education Council (YOK) resolutions towards establishment of Research Institute Centers operating in different languages and dialects within universities.
- Steps were being taken that would normalize the daily lives of citizens, but in a manner that would not

disrupt the fight against terrorism. Measures had been taken to reduce road checks and minimize bans on plateaus.

- That the foundation of the “Turkish Human Rights Institution” and “Anti-Discrimination and Equality Board”, the ratification of the “Optional Protocol to the UN Convention Against Torture” and the establishment of the national mechanism foreseen therein² had been targeted were issues mentioned during same press conference.

According to Atalay’s statement, efforts within the scope of the National Unity and Brotherhood Project had two main objectives: One was ending terrorism and the other was increasing the level of the standard of democracy and expanding the sphere of fundamental rights and freedoms.

Atalay said “If these two objectives are attained, it is clear that all members of our nation, who have shared a common fate throughout history, will live in a more peaceful, secure and free country. If these objectives are attained, all of us will live in this country as brothers, in wealth and under better conditions.” Meanwhile, he described the session held by the Turkish Grand National Assembly on 13 November 2009 as a “historic session”, mentioning that short, mid and long-term steps under the “Democratic Initiative” project were announced.

In his speech, Atalay stated that they would continue to take short, mid and long-term measures aimed at reaching democratic and human rights standards within the framework of democratization and the fight against terrorism. According to him, measures will relieve not only one part, but the whole country, for they believe that democratization will only be successful if it covers all segments of the community. He even said, “For this reason, the slogan of the democratic initiative is ‘More freedom for all’. We say more rights, freedom and democracy for everyone. This would not weaken Turkey; on the contrary, would strengthen it”.

The same day, Ahmet Turk declared his opinion on behalf of the Democratic Society Party (DTP) at the Turkish Grand National Assembly, stating that the process initiated by the Government under the title “Kurdish Initiative” and then changed to “National Unity Project” was far from presenting a solution. His proposal was the setting up of a commission where all parties in the Grand National Assembly would be represented, which would investigate economic and political dimensions and produce a solution to the Kurdish problem.

Turk, who stated that the Turkish public had a right to learn all the facts surrounding the Kurdish problem, explained that it would be unrealistic to expect public



Fikret İlkiz

Graduated from the Law Faculty at Istanbul University, İlkiz was co-founder and member of the executive board of the Internship and Training Center at the Istanbul Bar Association (1996–2002). He also headed the “ECHR and Individual Applications” section. He was member of the Human Rights Studies Central Executive Board of the Union of Turkish Bar Associations (2002–2005), where he was Legal Advisor and Secretary General of the Press Council (1992–1994). He was Legal Advisor (1992–2004) and editor in chief (1997–2002) for Cumhuriyet newspaper. Currently İlkiz teaches at different universities in Istanbul. Since late 2011, he has served as President of the Turkish Penal Law Association and editorial coordinator of Güncel Law Magazine.

support for the process without knowing the truth and they expected democratic proposals from the commission that would be set up under the Grand National Assembly. Turk stressed that with proper management of this process, Turkey would be the one to gain and he stated, "Democratization of Turkey would pave the way for peace and democracy in the Middle East. With a resolution of the Kurdish problem, Turkey would lead the democratization process in the region. The inhumane suffering in Turkey and the Middle East would end. Democratization in Turkey would mean democratization in the Middle East."³

The process, which drew attention with the arrest of 53 people in Diyarbakir on 14 April 2009, is known by Turkey's public as the KCK cases.

The talks at the Grand Assembly and the democratic initiative process seven months after these detentions did not bring anyone more freedom. On the contrary, the number of cases and detained increased and KCK cases continue to influence Turkey's agenda.

In addition to the KCK cases in Diyarbakir, there are similar cases pending in Adana, Erzurum, Van and Izmir.

After Diyarbakir, the most striking cases are the three separate KCK cases pending in Istanbul.

The significant feature of these cases is that the majority of those who were investigated, are being investigated, and tried are executives, members and mayors of DTP (Democratic Society Party) or its successor, Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), or similar circles.

Some of the facts subject to the investigations and pending cases are closely related to freedom of speech, freedom of association, organizing in associations, trade unions, chambers, political parties or participating in political party activities in local elections, being a candidate, engaging in local administrations, attending meetings and protest marches, exercising political and civil rights as mentioned in the petition.

The main subject of this article is providing information regarding the KCK cases and assisting in the determination and comprehensibility of the legal situation.

The goal is not seeking an answer to the question of how the Kurdish problem can be resolved.

Instead, it is to reflect upon the KCK cases and the criminal justice system in conjunction with the accusations put forth in the indictments.

Similarity of the indictments and KCK

The indictments prepared before July 5, 2012 by the Office of the Authorized Chief Public Prosecutors pursuant to Article 250 of the Criminal Procedure Code, which was repealed by Law Number 6352, contain similar features and duplications.

Many legal problems were encountered due to extensively long indictments in the cases known as Ergenekon and Balyoz. Many suspects are accused and tried under multi-paged, long and similar indictments regarding KCK. An example of this practice can be seen in the indictment dated March 19, 2012, File No. 2012/59, prepared by the Office of the Authorized Chief Public Prosecutor of Istanbul. The case initiated with this indictment is referred to as "the main Istanbul KCK case".

According to the indictment, "'A quadruple international project...' under the control of PKK with participation of the KCK Turkish Council, Party for Freedom and Life in Kurdistan (PJAK) in Iran, Kurdistan Democratic Solution Party (PCDK) in Iraq and Democratic Union

Party (PYD) in Syria, and an 'independent state structure'" is being targeted (Page 70).

According to the indictment, this target, in other words "each organization" under the KCK's name, has a "mission" "in the country where it is located", meaning Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria.

The indictment explains KCK's mission as follows: "...[KCK] undertakes the mission of creating a basis for the structure referred to as a united and independent Kurdistan and that existence of citizens of foreign countries within the PKK terrorist organization should be evaluated in this respect, and activities that are engaged in initially aim at an autonomous structure and, finally, a state under the name of Kurdistan occupying lands of the four states".

The indictment explains the underlying reason for frequent name changes: "...due to the fact that the terrorist organization PKK's more than 30 years of terrorist activities face a deadlock from time to time, a name change was needed. For this reason, names such as KADEK, KONGRA-GEL were used." The indictment determines that the "organizations KCK and Democratic Society Congress are political movements", "and KCK and DTK, which initiated the physical division of the country, attempted to legitimize themselves in this way" and, in conclusion, PKK and KCK are identical organizations and when referring to the organization it was referred to as the "PKK/KCK terrorist organization".

From page 69 onwards of the indictment, the history of PKK/KCK is outlined. Explanations of its activities continue until page 550. Thereafter, suspects are investigated individually and accusations explained. Explanations of the accusations are completed on page 2073.

According to the indictment, the PKK/KCK terrorist organization held its "5th General Assembly Meeting" 16-22 May 2007 with participation of 213 members. After the said general assembly meeting, its name was changed from Kurdistan Democratic Confederation/ Koma Komelan Kurdistan (KKK) to Kurdistan Democratic Union/Koma Civaken Kurdistan (KCK).

Thereafter, KCK decided to run activities inside Turkey as Kurdistan Democratic Union /Turkish Council (KCK/TM). "Consequent to the meeting held on 12-13 January 2008 in Diyarbakir, which was presented to the pro-organization media as the "Confederation of the Democratic People's Council", an organizational document titled 'Democratic Community Agreement' was approved". It is included in the historical progress section of the indictment that "in the document prepared by taking 'The "KCK Agreement' as basis, which is the terrorist organization's constitution, the structure of the KCK/TM is described as "Turkey and North Kurdistan Democratic Society Co-federalism".

Some of the determinations in the indictment can be grouped together under certain main headings and summarized as:

- * Recently, the terrorist organization was named "KCK".
- * KCK adopted a structuring model comprising Turkish-Iraqi-Syrian-Iranian lands. The terrorist organization runs its operations in Turkey through the KCK/TM organization.
- * KCK is the main structure of the terrorist organization PKK/KCK.
- * Issues such as the structure of KCK, the manner of how its system is managed and roles of its organs are handled

in detail in the KCK Agreement, comprised of 14 sections.

* KCK aims to run activities in Turkey through a strategy it calls “all-out defense”.

* Its recent strategy, “a strategy characterized by the organization as the ‘Kurds’ period of defending their existence and provision of freedom”, which commenced on 31 May 2010, ‘a strategy based on ‘social construction efforts which contains armed and political aspects’, and whose mainstay is constituted by democratic autonomy”.

* In this scope, the organization accelerated its violent, mass actions and politicization activities and commenced a complete existence campaign.

The indictment of the main Istanbul KCK case places special importance on “Political Academies”. The indictment explains “Political Academies”, their role and purpose as follows:

“Political Academies serve to accelerate terrorist organization’s activities in the political arena and revive politics in parallel with the organization’s ideology and objectives. At the same time, infusion of staff, which will be educated and trained in the organizational ideology, will be realized through these academies. Construction of a new society is intended in this way. Due to the fact that the achievement of this goal is possible through the establishment of educational centers under the name Political Academies, they were established in different provinces under various names.”

According to the indictment, overthrowing the government in Egypt as a result of the civil uprising in Tahrir Square is shown as an example at KCK meetings. It is alleged that the intention was to turn Diyarbakir into Tahrir. And, KCK, DTK and the Political Academies are the supports of the project to divide the state through descending into public and civil uprisings.

From May 2007 onwards, the organization established the KCK structure to attain the objective of a “United and Independent Kurdistan”. Taking its principal basis from the KCK Agreement, this structure represents a unified state structuring model comprising legislative, executive and judicial elements under the presidency of the Leadership (organizational leader Abdullah Ocalan).

Between pages 2388 and 2399, all accusations regarding KCK, Political Academy and DTK are summarized under the heading “IN CONCLUSION”.

KCK cases and those on trial

It may be possible to determine how many are being tried in the KCK cases according to the indictments and cases initiated, but this could be misleading. If one considers the other cases joined in the cases initiated, it is hard to estimate the exact number of suspects across Turkey. Minister of Justice Sadullah Ergin responded to BDP Diyarbakir MP Emine Ayna’s parliamentary question regarding the number of suspects who are being tried in court. Accordingly, there are 113 criminal cases pending within the scope of KCK investigations, which began on 14 April 2009. 2146 suspects are being tried in these cases. 992 of them are arrested. According to information given by Ergin, 274 of the suspects consist of local administrators, provincial and district presidents of political parties, members of municipal assemblies and MPs. The Ministry of Justice’s response based on information obtained through correspondence with Office of the Chief Public Prosecutor of Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, Adana,

Malatya, Erzurum, Diyarbakir and Van appeared in the daily press.⁴

However, it is possible to determine the number of suspects in cases pending in Diyarbakir and Istanbul based on the indictments, taking into account the margin of error.

Following the investigation, which began on 14 April 2009, the first case initiated is the one pending in Diyarbakir. 151 individuals were named as suspects under the indictment dated 9 June 2010, consisting of 7587 pages (Indictment No. 2010/1072).

According to the indictment of the first case in Istanbul,

The most significant feature of these cases is that the majority of those who were investigated or are being investigated and tried are executives, members, mayors of DTP (Democratic Society Party) or its successor Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) or from similar circles.

bul, dated 19 March 2012 (Indictment No. 2012/123), in which BDP provincial and district executives and known figures such as Busra Ersanli, Ragip Zarakolu, Ayse Bertay are being tried, 193 people are named as accused. The indictment of this case is 2401 pages.

The first trial in this case was held on 2 July 2012. Held before the court in Silivri, it lasted until 13 July 2012. Due to the request of some suspects for arraignment, the indictment is continuing to be read in the on-going trials. Requests for submitting Kurdish identity details and defense in Kurdish were denied. 352 pages of the indictment had been read before the hearing on 13 July 2012. At the hearing held on 13 July 2012, 16 individuals were released, including Prof. Ersanli. Trials in this case will continue on 1 and 9 October 2012.

According to the indictment of 3 April 2012 of the second case in Istanbul, publicly known as “Istanbul KCK Attorneys”, 50 individuals are named as suspects (Indictment No. 2012/168). The indictment is 891 pages. Trials in this case were held 16-18 July 2012 at the Istanbul Caglayan Courthouse. Requests for submitting defense in Kurdish were denied. The court decided for the release of some suspects. Trials were postponed to November. Due to a lack of courtrooms, trials will be held in Silivri.

According to the indictment of the third case, publicly known as the “KCK case regarding journalists”, dated 27 April 2012, 44 individuals are being tried. The first trial in this case will be held in September. The indictment consists of 800 pages.

Therefore, considering the criminal case pending in Diyarbakir, the KCK main case in Istanbul, the second and third cases in Istanbul regarding attorneys and journalists respectively, 438 individuals are being tried in the said four cases. The total number of pages of the indictments in these cases is 11,679.

Is it normal that 2146 are being tried

According to Ergin’s statement, 438 individuals are subject to criminal proceedings in Istanbul alone. We

should accept that given these statistical data we are facing an alarming situation. No one can say, "Perpetrators of crimes should not be tried or punished". What is expected is a fair and lawful trial process. Undoubtedly, in relation to the authority of the judiciary, every criminal case is expected to be concluded in a short period of time, pursuant to the right to a fair trial.

Detentions, arrests and the trial process within the scope of KCK operations and investigations suddenly became an ordinary part of life. As a result, a process of internalizing extraordinary trials has been experienced, and this is a continuing process, which is essentially the worrying issue. When initiatives such as the "Democratic Initiative" or political proposals such as the "National Unity and Brotherhood Project" and the criminal cases initiated are considered together, the inconsistencies between the legislative, executive and judiciary become apparent. The inconsistencies encountered in practice damage the trust towards politics and law and therefore, the sincerity of political solutions are being questioned.

Principally, a debate on democracy should not be engaged in over numerous criminal cases, long indictments or long periods of imprisonment. Such issues do not occupy agendas of countries where principles of democratic constitutional states are in place. If we want to solve such issues in our country, democracy should be used as an instrument because man is the objective, not the instrument. Judicial authorities and courts do not have a duty to resolve the issue of terrorism. Courts adjudicate, and if there is a crime committed, make a determination and decide upon a sentence. For this reason, a perception by the legislative, executive organs and/or politicians that the judiciary has a different duty creates a problem in the judiciary. Therefore, any regulation to resolve these issues results in the emergence of other problems. As a result, continuing the adjudication of extraordinary periods creates problems, not solutions. A legal system where extraordinary powers and duties are pursued is not the norm.

What is expected from criminal law

What is your outlook on criminal law? What is your preference? Do you have a philosophy about criminal law? You have to answer all these questions and be brave.

Turkish criminal law is experiencing a reversion to "panic legislation". Everyone is making statements regarding the law. Criminal proceedings have come to dominate our lives. Now we have proceeded on to talk regarding crimes such as "forming and being a member of an armed terrorist organization" and/or "aiding and abetting a terrorist organization".

Everyone is acting as a "party", but the important thing is to side with the law and exercise one's conscience. Now everyone has his/her own law and trial. The cases have a "name" that they are referred to. In conclusion, the Turkish criminal law system is about to be "diverted" and is dealing with constantly increasing problems.

In short, because "detention" prescribed by the Criminal Procedure Law is not operating as a fair notion, but operating like a constantly malfunctioning mechanism, issues such as restriction of freedoms and the right to a fair trial continues to deeply influence the public.

First, a "problem" is created consistent with the law. Then a law is enacted to solve the problem created. As

this solution is created in the name of "democracy", it pretends the problem is being resolved. "Politics" are then pursued over new problems created with "legal amendments", which are determined to be solutions. The latest example of this is the "Law Regarding Amendments to Certain Laws to Promote Judicial Services and Postponement of Proceedings and Sentences in Relation to Crimes Committed Through the Press", Number 6352, adopted 2 July 2012. When this law entered into force, published in the Official Gazette on 5 July 2012, Numbered 28344, trials of the main Istanbul KCK case were ongoing and the second case, the prosecution of attorneys, had not started yet.

According to Law Number 6352, justifications must be recorded for the continuation of detention, which should be based on substantial facts between the crime attributed to the accused and his acts. Strong suspicion of guilt was recognized as sufficient grounds for detention. It was the legislator's intention to implement judicial control measures instead of detention. The sentence period condition foreseen in the former law for judicial control decisions instead of detention was abrogated. It became possible to decide on judicial control measures instead of detention decisions.

While KCK trials were ongoing at the Specially Authorized Court, which - quoting the records - has an "independent entrance" next to the Silivri Penitentiary, the Ergenekon and Balyoz trials were ongoing in other courts also held at Silivri. Adoption of Law Number 6352 during the trials of the KCK main case on 2 and 13 July 2012 aroused "hopes" that detentions would end. Based on this law, it was submitted to the court that the high criminal court's duty terminated, that it was invalid, and that continuation of duty pursuant to the provisional article was unconstitutional. However, the court rejected these submissions. Living in a judicial system based on detention and living in a country where politics are pursued over individuals' freedom affect everyone's lives.

Now, problems created through fear, intimidation and an unconscientious legal system create tension and panic in society. The search for justice and rule of law wounds the conscience.

Yet, there are very simple solutions. The UN General Council adopted the Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary in 1985. The source of these principles is the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. These fundamental principles are: equality before the law, presumption of innocence and the right to a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal established by law. International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Civil and Political Rights (twin covenants) guarantee the exercise of these rights. Not just in Turkey, but throughout the world, there is regrettably a huge divide between the judiciary and independence of the judiciary, protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms due to the failure to implement those principles. To eliminate this divide and prevent creation of new ones, the Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary should be adopted and applied in practice.

According to Principle 5 of the Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary, "Everyone shall have the right to be tried by ordinary courts or tribunals using established legal procedures".

Criminal law aims to ensure individuals live together

in peace and safety. Where it is not possible to protect the legal rights of individuals and society with less severe or other legal and socio-political measures, states can resort to criminal law to protect citizens. Criminal law should be a last resort when other legal regulations fall short. Relieving each disruption in social order through criminal sanctions does not coincide with principles of a constitutional state. For this reason, criminal law is not and should not be a law of sanctions. Criminal law should protect the fundamental and other rights of individuals. The legislator cannot create crimes that violate human rights. Freedoms such as freedom of speech, freedom of association and freedom to participate in political life exist to be exercised, not restricted. Therefore, criminal law and criminal sentences should be a last resort (*ultima ratio*), not the first resort (*solo ratio*).

KCK cases and investigations should be screened with this perspective.

It is imperative that a society attain not just a “legal system”, but a “legal system based on ethics”. For this reason, individuals should be accepted as subjects and not be instrumentalized in order to attain a public order that does not instrumentalize individuals. The object should be individuals.

Therefore, the judiciary’s relationship with suspects in the KCK cases, even justice and the rule of law, should be considered from this perspective.

Are the KCK cases in fact cases for the BDP’s closure

As understood from the indictment of the main Istanbul KCK case, audio surveillance was conducted on individuals and investigative authorities were informed of their being a member of “KCK” or engaging in activities for the terrorist organization. According to the indictment, “Upon receiving information that meetings were held at BDP Istanbul Provincial and District Head Offices by KCK/TM, which constitutes high level management of the terrorist organization and those meetings were attended by the organization’s high level managers and core staff, audio surveillance was conducted...”. Thus, evidence was gathered in this way.

A striking piece of information is on the last page of the indictment of the main Istanbul KCK case: “[This] manifestly reveals the organic relation and unity of purpose between PKK/KCK terrorist organization and BDP. Additionally, as understood, given the fact that Social Academies are being established under the legal personality of BDP and being used as terrorist organization’s training camps, a copy of the indictment will be forwarded to the Office of the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Court of Appeals for evaluation of the said party’s legal situation”.

These “two separate investigation” procedures, which may arise from this decision, may lead to future legal problems.

Pursuant to Article 68 of the Constitution, political parties are founded without pre-authorization. They engage in activities in conformity with the Constitution and law. BDP is a political party and represented at the Grand National Assembly. Citizens have the right to establish political parties, join political parties according to procedures and terminate memberships. Besides the regulation under Article 68 of the Constitution, principles that political parties should adhere to are stated under Article 69. Paragraph 4 of Article 68 states the permissible content of statutes and permissible activities of

Many legal problems were encountered due to extensively long indictments in the cases known publicly as Ergenekon and Balyoz. Many suspects are being accused and tried under multi-paged, long and similar indictments regarding KCK.

political parties and those that are banned. Activities, internal regulations and operations of political parties should adhere to democratic principles and implementation is regulated by law.

Closure of political parties is decided upon by the Constitutional Court in proceedings initiated by the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Court of Appeals. If a political party’s statute and program is determined to be against Paragraph 4 of Article 68 of the Constitution, the Constitutional Court decides for the permanent closure of the party. With this in mind, preparing an indictment and initiating action would create a legal consistency given the fact that being a member of BDP, engaging in activities, visiting party buildings, participating in democratic social protests organized by the party, a democratic right was exercised. If an accusation is brought against the legal entity of a political party, then it is unnecessary to accuse individuals. An environment that can lead to a criminal case against individuals to pave the way for closure and termination of the legal entity of a party cannot be created. This is because accusation of individuals would be unlawful in the face of accusations of a political party constituted and operated in accordance with the law.

This issue was submitted to the court. However, the request that the case should be heard by the Constitutional Court was denied on grounds that it was BDP’s legal entity, but the suspects, or individuals, who were on trial.

In lieu of conclusion

The Kurdish problem cannot be solved through criminal cases initiated regarding the KCK.

Footnote

1. http://www.icisleri.gov.tr/default.icisleri_2.aspx?id=4262.
2. At the General Assembly of the Turkish Grand National Assembly held February 23, 2011 (23rd Term 5th Legislative Year 70th Sitting) “The Law Authorizing Adoption of the Additional Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment” was passed by open vote of 203 MPs. The Approval Law of the Convention dated 23 February 2011, No. 6167 was published in the Official Gazette on 12 March 2011, No. 27872.
3. Term 23, Legislative Year 4. Journal of Turkish Grand National Assembly, Volume 53, 18th Sitting, 13 November 2009.
4. Radikal Newspaper, 4 August 2012: KCK Balance Sheet (KCK Bilancosu), by Tarik Isik, (<http://m.radikal.com.tr/NewsDetail.aspx?ArticleID=123751&CategoryIDs=1>); Milliyet, August 4, 2012: Ergin: Number of suspects in KCK is 2146 (Ergin: KCK’dan yargılananların sayısı 2 bin 146).

The new constitution

Turkey has begun the process of drafting a new constitution. A new constitution means redefining the state and society and remaking basic political choices. Therefore, preparing a constitution is a turning point for a nation.

Constitutions have two main functions: to restrict political power by rule of law and to safeguard fundamental rights and liberties. Democracies carry the risk of a political party acquiring power through elections then shifting to an undemocratic, oppressive regime by wielding power to advance its own political aims. Constitutions offer structural and institutional arrangements to lessen this risk.

Of course, a constitution is not a magic wand. If the prerequisites for democracy are absent, if the culture of democracy has not taken root and democratic institutions have not been established, the constitution may prove inadequate to serve its intended purpose. Conversely, if the prerequisites for democracy are present, democracy will survive regardless of the constitution. However, there is a third choice: in hybrid countries like Turkey, where some prerequisites for democracy are present and some absent and the culture of democracy has not taken root in the true sense, the constitution serves an even weightier function. A good constitution may strengthen democratic institutions and advance democracy. It can help create a framework to ensure coexistence of different social segments. Conversely, a poor constitution may cause democracy to collapse.

In view of Turkey's realities, a poor constitution has the following attributes:

- Serves the purposes of the political power rather than restrict it;
- Is a uniform nation-state constitution ignoring ethnic and religious differences in society;
- Does not provide robust safeguards for rule of law;
- Reflects ideological preferences of the state;
- Fails to protect fundamental rights and liberties;
- Fails to safeguard the principle of separation of powers.

A number of basic needs have led Turkey to begin the process of drafting a new constitution. Foremost among these are problems caused by the 1982 Constitution. Written during the reign of a military administration, the 1982 Constitution reflects the Zeitgeist of that period. It's impossible

to satisfy the conditions of a modern democracy in Turkey through an authoritarian constitution designed to protect the state from citizens with a uniform nation-state mindset and laws passed under it. The myriad of amendments subsequently made to the 1982 Constitution not only failed to eradicate traces of the authoritarian mentality dominating it, they damaged its integrity. Far from meeting public expectations, the 1982 Constitution cannot meet present day requirements of globalization. This problem stems not only from the 1982 Constitution, but also from laws passed under military rule, many of which are still in effect. Therefore, there is a need not only for a new constitution, but also for amending all laws that are the legacy of the 1980 coup.

Another reason why a new constitution is needed is that the current regime in Turkey is not one that would rightfully be referred to as "democracy" even though Turkey has an elected government. International observers categorize Turkey as a hybrid country rather than a democracy. It's difficult to speak of democracy in a country where all power is concentrated in a single entity, the press is not free and justice is subject to the whim of political power or religious communities. A new constitution is needed in order to re-constitute this hollowed-out democracy as befits the word "constitution".

The process of preparing a constitution also defines its character. From the Ottoman Empire to today, constitutions have been prepared from top down as a result of military coups or bureaucratic initiatives.

Now, the new constitutional process we're in offers us the chance to make a democratic constitution from bottom up, one heeding demands of the public. A process that's both reconciliatory and participatory is required for a democratic constitution.

The Constitutional Consensus Commission formed in the Grand National Assembly of the Republic of Turkey (TGNA), in which the four political parties having parliamentary groups are represented equally by three members each meeting under the leadership of the Speaker of Parliament, is a suitable body for creating a consensus-based constitution. As per its rules, this Commission takes all decisions unanimously. If a draft adopted by the Commission is to be changed later, all four parties must approve the change. These procedures effectively serve to ensure



Rıza Mahmut Türmen

Rıza Türmen graduated from Istanbul University Faculty of Law in 1964; he holds a MA from McGill University of Canada and PhD from Ankara University, Faculty of Political Sciences. He started his career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1966 and was stationed in Singapore, Switzerland and the Council of Europe as an ambassador. In 1998 he was elected to the European Court of Human Rights, where he served for 10 years. Türmen was a columnist for Milliyet newspaper for 3 years before he was elected as a deputy from the CHP in the general elections of 2011. He is currently a member of the Constitution Committee of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey.

consensus provided that this set-up functions as intended and political parties remain true to their word.

The Commission received opinions on a new constitution verbally and in writing from the civil society for six months. It held meetings across Turkey almost every weekend. These drew large audiences as a forum where constitutional matters were discussed and ideas expressed. The Commission thus put together a sizable database. When the initial draft of the constitution is ready, the public will be consulted for their opinions. The draft will be submitted to a referendum after adoption in parliament.

This method answers the question of “who will make a new constitution” or “whether the TGNA is authorized to make a new constitution as a principal founding power.” I don’t think the drafting of a new constitution will meet any setbacks on the grounds of legitimacy as this has been entrusted to a Commission with representatives of the four political parties with parliamentary groups in the TGNA and the Commission’s procedural approach to drafting the constitution is one involving participation of all social groups, heeding views, and reflection of the will of the people – briefly, an approach that keeps the public in the picture along the way.

The opinions of the public created a valuable database for the Commission. They are backed with a wealth of constitutional knowledge in international fields as well, which is a major source of inspiration for the Commission.

The bottom line is: the required infrastructure is there for making a democratic and libertarian constitution based on consensus and participation. A strong foundation has been laid. The building needs to be placed on top of it, which is the task of the Commission and the four parties.

Naturally, each political party subscribes to a different outlook and strives to have its views reflected in the constitution. Understandably, it’s difficult to reconcile draft articles originating from different outlooks. What’s important is whether these political parties agree on the ultimate goal. In other words, do the goals of these parties all converge upon preparing a libertarian and pluralist constitution to replace the 1982 Constitution – one focusing on the individual and conforming to universal norms? If so, then they can find solid ground for negotiation and reconciliation in the Commission.

For this to happen, representatives of the parties must trust each other in the pursuit of a common goal. They must avoid undermining trust and place greater weight on actions to enhance it.

There is a formidable task ahead for the party in power. Opposition parties cannot make a constitution on their own, but a party in power can make its own constitution with little effort. However, this will not be a democratic constitution reached by consensus. At best it will produce an imposed constitution serving interests of the incumbent party – which, incidentally, does have such an option available. The duty of the incumbent party during the constitution-making process is to demonstrate

that it doesn’t plan to follow such a course. This is the only way to create confidence among political parties.

There are basic prerequisites for the new constitution to be a modern, libertarian and democratic one.

The first is that like many other countries, Turkey is a multicultural society. Cultural differences create identity differences and different identities are reflected upon politics, demanding recognition. Today, individual rights and liberties include recognition of differences and preventing them being used for discrimination. Will the new constitution be a multicultural model of society in which differences are accepted and protected and every individual is treated equally? Will it unite these differences around a common identity? Will it create a framework for coexistence? Such a framework can only be viable if different cultural groups are convinced their values can be brought

It’s impossible to satisfy the conditions of a modern democracy in Turkey by means of an authoritarian constitution designed to protect the state from the individual citizens with a uniform nation-state mind-set and laws passed under it. As for the myriad amendments subsequently made to the 1982 Constitution, not only did they fail to eradicate the traces of the authoritarian mentality dominating it but they also damaged its integrity.

to life in the system. In other words, will the new constitution transform society into a polyphonic orchestra that plays harmoniously?

Following is the second prerequisite for a libertarian and democratic constitution. Today the political administration holds a concentration of power. This is contradictory to the principle of separation of powers, a pillar of democracy. The classic concept of separation of powers, where power is divided among legislative, executive, and judicial branches, is inadequate in the today’s approach to democracy. Power must also be shared with the press and civil society. In Turkey, there is both a vertical and horizontal concentration of power. In the vertical concentration of power, the administration gathers power of the state in itself, putting the judiciary under its control and reducing the legislature to a department of the executive. The state bureaucracy is one with the administration. In the horizontal concentration of power, the press is transformed to a “yea-sayer” or “intimidated” press. Self-censorship becomes normal. All institutions – economic, cultural, and scientific – are subordinate to the incumbent administration. Under such circumstances, this is not a true democracy. Will the entity in power abide by a new constitution and agree to change from a majoritarian understanding

of democracy regarding democracy as confined to elections to a pluralist democracy – or from concentration of power to the sharing of power? Will it, for example, agree to the introduction of constitutional safeguards for an independent judiciary it does not control or inclusion of institutional pluralism in the constitution or involvement of civil society in the functioning of the legislature?

The Commission is still debating the fundamental rights and liberties section. Discussions on articles on rights and liberties of the individual are almost complete. Political, economic and social rights are being discussed next. Discussions held and articles drafted so far have not always been reassuring as far as laying down the basic tenets of a libertarian and democratic constitution is concerned.

Opinions from the public form a highly valuable database for the Constitutional Consensus Commission. They also have a wealth of constitutional knowledge in international fields, which is a major source of inspiration for the Commission.

During discussions on the article on equality and non-discrimination, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) objected fervently to the proposal by the Republican People's Party (CHP) and Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) that sexual orientation and ethnic origin be counted in discriminatory acts. The parties' revulsion to the terms "sexual orientation" and "ethnic origin" in the wording of the constitution did away with the chance of consensus. Failure to agree on such a basic concept as "equality" was not a good start.

There are other examples. In the article on freedom of thought and expression, the CHP wants restrictions against disclosure of thoughts to be based on exceptional and tangible reasons such as violence and hate speech, while the AKP and MHP propose open-ended and non-specific reasons for constraint such as public morals and order.

Likewise, the CHP suggests that court orders to confiscate publications be based on concrete and extraordinary reasons such as violence, sexual exploitation of children and open assault on human rights-based, democratic and secular constitutional order, the AKP and the MHP argue that reasons such as public morals and order also be applicable

for confiscation orders.

Whether public morals are justified grounds for constraint is a dilemma arising in every debate on any article on fundamental rights and liberties. While the CHP and BDP maintain that morals are a subjective concept varying among societies and individuals and no one should impose their morals on others, the AKP and MHP insist that public morals, including religious values, be included.

In addition to differences in parties' perspectives on liberties, others rooted in ideologies are reflected in the process.

For example, in the article on freedom of religion and conscience, the AKP opposed the CHP's proposal that, "The state shall remain unbiased toward all religions and faiths in its actions. It shall respect social pluralism based on diversity of religions, faiths and beliefs. The state shall take necessary measures to instill and maintain mutual respect and tolerance between religions and faiths and between believers and non-believers" which was intended to itemize the elements of secularity and give it a more democratic and lenient profile. The AKP demanded deletion of the CHP-MHP proposal envisaging a basic order of state not being based on religious doctrine.

The BDP's efforts to include proposals for education in the native language or use of the native language in articles unrelated to freedom of education led to suspension of these articles. The article on children's rights was unaddressed for the same reason. When the BDP tried to insert the phrase "in the language of choice" in the article on disclosure and dissemination of ideas, the other parties objected on grounds that there was no such prohibition in place.

The MHP's reactions geared to protect the state are in every article to do with fundamental rights and liberties of individuals.

Deliberations of the Commission advance by parenthesizing sentences or clauses that do not have consensus. Some parentheses are easily removable, but some stem from deep-seated differences. The parenthesized provisions will be re-addressed once the section on fundamental rights and liberties is completed.

There's a political price to be paid for interrupting the process of drafting a new constitution that the public is participating in, hoping its expectations will be met. Therefore, political parties have to reach consensus by negotiation. As attention to the process deepens and public pressure on the Commission grows, it will be more difficult for parties to back out of the process or to seek a new one.

“What they care about is money” *

Considering AKP within the framework of the “women’s question”, 10 years ago, only one thing came to mind: the headscarf ban. Today, there is only one thing we think of again: the ban on abortion! In the first case, AKP was against the ban; and in the second, it is the prime minister himself who brought the ban into the agenda. He lifted the headscarf ban partially and de facto. However, he could not enable this freedom to have a legal safeguard. Working in the public sector with a headscarf is still subject to extremely arbitrary practices. It does not seem likely that a deputy with a headscarf can enter parliament in the forthcoming elections. As for the result of the ban on abortion, it remains to be seen.

These two bans and the relation of AKP with them seems worthy of examining not only in terms of the policy on women, but also with respect to observing the settlement of the party in the center.

For those who think AKP is the biggest enemy to women as a religious and reactionary party, which has not changed in the last 10 years, this development is amenable to being perceived as the government unmasking their “true face”. The political result of such an analysis is a steady enmity against the AKP. It is true that there are many factors to nourish this enmity. However, we are faced with a party in power that managed to raise its share of the votes with every election in a way unprecedented in the history of the Republic and, probably, it deserves more than the adjective “representative of the most reactionary, the most bigoted sections of society”. It deserves an analysis that is a bit more profound. It would not be possible to say a meaningful word on the political climate of Turkey without understanding why the voters, including many women, voted for this party and furthermore, why they wholeheartedly supported it.

The women of AKP

The demand to review and change the Laws on Political Parties and Elections in such a way as to ensure the participation of everyone in all sections of the political system has been voiced by the Turkey’s feminist movement for years. They have not only voiced it. To my knowledge at least four drafts have been prepared; reports are regularly created and conveyed to political parties every year. This subject seems to be on the agenda of all the parties, however, no progress

has yet been able to be achieved. The political parties are not internally democratic; the leaders have almost absolute hegemony, their words are taken as orders. This is especially the case for the AKP; even though it is the party with the widest (and probably the most active) organization. The AKP has also the most powerful leadership and therefore, Recep Tayyip Erdogan has the ultimate say on who gets elected to the decision-making bodies and features on the lists of deputies. This is also the determining framework of the area of maneuvering for the women in the party. There are few women among the founders of the party; few among these women seem to have the power and willingness to force the limits of this area of maneuver. For example Ayse Böhürler, who is one of the above-mentioned women, took “an oath of silence” after being silenced by the prime minister due to her opposing attitude in the discussion on the “promotion of a known torturer to the position of Assistant Director of the Police Department”. AKP deputies Nursuna Memecan and Mine Lök Beyaz also made opposing statements on this matter. Fatma Bostan Ünsal, one of the founders of the party, announced in a very courageous statement that she was against the ban on abortion. However, the effect of the female members of the party on the policy about women held by the party remains dubious, except for such individual statements. They maintain the position of declaring the conducted policies rather than determining them, including the case of Fatma Sahin, Minister of Family and Social Policies (as a matter of fact, she is a strong politician who has risen out of the party organization). We witnessed a highly desperate example of this during the process of the preparation of the Law on the Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence against Women. Ms. Sahin and her team prepared a draft law with women’s organizations as a result of lengthy meetings, discussions, negotiations, only to be amended overnight, and then it was up to them to explain and defend the text enacted by the Parliament.

Another serious handicap for the female party members is the fact that the headscarf ban has not been abolished entirely. Recalling the fact that the attempt by the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi) to remove the bans on headscarves triggered a process that led to the closure of the party, will probably help drive home the significant nature of this topic. This critical topic remained on the



Aksu Bora

A member of Hacettepe University Faculty of Communication, Aksu Bora is also the editor of “Amargi Feminist Theory, Politics Magazine” and Ayizi Publishing House. She is the author of “Women’s Class” (Kadınların Sınıfı) and “Feminism among itself” (Feminizm Kendi Arasında) and co-editor of “Feminism in Turkey in the 1990s” (1990’larda Türkiye’de Feminizm). She is also co-author of several books, has (co-)translated many books, including “A Primer for Daily Life”, “Our Treacherous Hearts”, “The Yellow Wall Paper”, “Feminist Theory”, “Money Makes Us Relatives”, “A History of Anthropology”, “The Seed and the Soil.” She is the mother of Isik.

agenda of the AKP since the day it was founded, and it was among its most powerful ammunition during the first elections it participated. However, the AKP government did not lift the ban on headscarves even though it felt that it was strong enough to not flinch even in the face of risky events such as the collective resignation of the top administrators of the army during its rule. Instead, a de facto freedom was granted, especially in universities. The bans were lifted in municipalities and some public institutions with the initiatives taken by administrators. Even though they abstain from making an explicit statement about it, the women wearing headscarves within and outside the party mumble that this is a “divide and rule” tactic; this is a tactic that would enable the disqualification of some female party members, who are strong and who rose out of the organization, and who, therefore, have a high chance of acting in an autonomous fashion. Furthermore, some even mumble that in the context of the struggle among female party members, those who do not wear headscarves are not very enthusiastic about lifting the ban.

In spite of everything, the number of female AKP deputies, women acting in the party administration and working as administrators in the local organizations, is not small when compared to other parties. As a function of the high total number of their deputies, the number of their female deputies is also above all previous numbers: 45 (BDP implements the gender equality policy more effectively, therefore I do not include them in the “other parties” category).

The AKP perspective on equality

It should be stated straight away that AKP has no concept such as equality. Strangely, the arena

For example, Ayşe Böhürler, who is one of the founders of the AKP, took “an oath of silence” after being silenced by the prime minister due to her opposing attitude in the discussion on the “promotion of a known torturer to the position of Assistant Director of the Police Department”.

where they come closest to talking about equality is class equality. (It is actually the only one!) Their way of doing this is reminiscent of the unforgettable cue in old Turkish movies: “Once there was a poor but proud young man! Do you remember him?” They have a strong tendency to imagine themselves as a group that, after having been oppressed, scorned and trampled upon, finally managed to rise up with justice being served. (This is normal for a generation that grew up with poems that said: “You have been in misery with your face down for so long/Rise up, Sakarya”!) The scope of “themselves” are subject to change. Sometimes,

especially before elections, it expands to include almost all the inhabitants of Turkey, sometimes it includes the “ascetic members” of the party and at other times it includes only the Prime Minister. A separate article can be penned on the discourse of victimization of the AKP. However, what is important within the framework of our topic is that they can interpret equality only as the revenge for a long-lasting oppression. We’ve been witnessing a feeling of revenge in practices such as the detention of generals and former elites close to them as their houses were raided at dawn during the never-ending saga of the Ergenekon waves.

As for gender equality, “there is no such thing as equality between men and women” was expressed by the Prime Minister himself. The reasoning behind this is the different inherent natures of women and men etc. While saying that women and men were not equal, the AKP government still managed to enact some of the most egalitarian legal amendments in the history of the Republic: inclusion of sexual crimes in the crimes against the individual in the Penal Code (previously, they were deemed as crimes against the familial and societal order), criminalization of intra-marital rape and sexual harassment, binding virginity test to court decision, abolishment of the concept ‘head of the family’, amendment in the marital property law in favor of women, implementation of the principle of ‘equal pay for equal work’ in the labor code. For example, the Prime Ministry Circular issued in 2006 was an important text proclaiming that the state was a party to the prevention of domestic violence with all its institutions and showed the framework in which it would be implemented. Following this circular, 45 thousand policemen received training on domestic violence and gender equality and a recording system was set up at police stations. The training for public servants was extended to include the staff of the Religious Affairs Department, health institutions and even judges and prosecutors. The Ministry of Interior Affairs, jointly with the United Nations, started to conduct the “Project for Women-Friendly Cities” prepared to enable local governments to draft and conduct policies that would take into account gender equality, and the Directorate for Local Governments, an extremely conservative organization (naturally, the conservativeness at stake here is worse than that of AKP), became involved in this project without too much complaint.

It seems to me that seeing and recognizing these developments as areas of negotiation and struggle constitute a more useful effort than “unmasking the party to reveal its true face”. On the other hand, one should keep in mind that there are limits to all these developments. A declaration signed by Erdogan summarizes nicely the perspective of the party on gender equality:

“On the Day of Struggle and Solidarity Against Violence Targeting Women, we, as men, believe that all sorts of violence against women is a fundamental violation of human rights, a public health issue that deeply wounds and weakens

the society and that violence against women can never be legitimized based on any grounds such as strict customs and traditions. The women, who are our companions in life, our sisters, mothers and daughters to whom we entrust our future, are individuals having the same rights as men who form one half of this society. Therefore, we shall not be a partner in crime against women and we shall not stand witness to this. Let us stand hand in hand and end the violence against women. We are determined to do what is incumbent on us as men in struggling against violence against women; we stand by them, too." (The Declaration titled 'We Stand by Them' prepared by the Commission for Equal Opportunities for Men and Women of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey.)

Ranging from the establishment of a "Commission for Equal Opportunities" rather than just "Equality" to the interpretation of the notion of rights merely within the framework of being oppressed and the emphasis on the detrimental effect of violence against women on the family, this text and the framework within which it was penned seems not to have anything to do with the concept of equality as portrayed by feminism. Therefore, it is necessary to assess all the legal amendments and public servant training in the AKP period within this framework. By the same token, the assessment should also be made in light of the undivided attention and caution provided by its own clientele. A crystallized example of this attention is to be found in the emphasis on a news article published in the newspaper Haber Türk on the speech by the prime minister where he purported to consider abortion a crime: "Why did you abolish adultery in the first place and enact a law on it? First you tell the woman that she can be with whomever she wants, and then you go and declare abortion prohibited!" (May, 29, 2012, HaberTürk Internet page readers' comments).

The AKP policy on family

One cannot claim that the ideological line that family is "the founding stone of the society" was drawn up by the AKP; on the contrary, there has never been a government in power so far that did not adopt this line. However, an important feature of the AKP is that it raised the position of phrases such as "family is so important, it is the founding stone of our society" from being merely demagogical remarks to turn them into the basis of government policies. For example, the re-arrangement of the State Ministry in charge of Women to the Ministry for Family and Social Policies was not simply a symbolical action.

As we have seen in numerous examples ranging from the remark by Ali Babacan, who was the State Minister in charge of Economy during the first year of AKP rule, stating that female unemployment was "a good sign" to the recommendation by the prime minister that couples should have "at least three children", this party has a heartfelt commitment to the concept of family. The family that they describe is a nuclear family with at least three children. Even though they do not particularly oppose the

idea that women should work, they cannot possibly fail to envisage that women will indeed fall into the margins of working life after giving birth to three children. As a matter of fact, considering the family as a tool for social policy means a concrete acceptance of the idea that certain societal services will be given within the family (by the women, naturally). An interesting point here is that they envisage the provision of a specific fee for the services to be provided through families; for example, they find it more rational to "tackle" the care for the handicapped within the family,

They did not submissively digest the threatening remarks by Dengir Mir Mehmet Fırat, the "tough guy" of their party that "female members of the AKP did not succumb to feminism"

departing from the reasons why boarding facilities fail to be operated efficiently. Therefore, not only are they aware that family is not a bundle of love, but they also develop policies by accepting this fact as a given.

There is no political parallel for the wide and loving family picture in the election brochures and propaganda texts of the AKP. Even though they like to keep this picture as an ideal and have a look at it time and again, they know that the reality is different and they act upon this knowledge. This is the only way in which they can strip family out of its character as a demagogical motive and make it operational. A trend that became significant during the AKP period in terms of social spending is that these expenditures are made as if mediated by family (for critical texts on this topic, please see the publications by the Bosphorus University, Social Policy Forum: www.spf.boun.edu.tr) and this is what I mean when I say the transformation of the family into an "operational" unit.

In the same vein, AKP seems to have come a long way in its determination not to leave family as a "matter of private space". The number of children is but an example; as underlined by the discussions about the bans on abortion and C-section, the family policies are not only conducted by means of public spending, but tools are also being devised for direct intervention. Many signs ranging, from the re-organization of primary care health services in the form of the family physician structure to the formation of extremely sophisticated registration systems, demonstrate this fact to us.

Perhaps a re-assessment of the feminist policies such as the struggle against domestic violence within this framework might provide us with a different picture and it might pave the way for more interesting things to say on the "feminism" of the AKP. In the meantime, it is also useful to remember the central importance of the family policies of the AKP while analyzing its "feminism" as a development that is in parallel with the re-

We have seen clearly the LGBT policy of the party in the remark by Aliye Kavaf, State Minister in charge of Women, that homosexuality was a disease. It is obvious that homophobia is not peculiar to AKP. However, this seems to be the area that will give them the hardest time in their role as the builder in Turkey of the new gender regime to which they rapidly and easily adapted themselves.

arrangement of the gender regime in the globalized world. The modern gender regime with which modern capitalism and the system of nations work in great harmony (the classical borders of the public space/private divide is a space the scorecard of this regime) is being replaced by the re-arrangement of the global world and new perspectives. An important aspect of this renewal is the body policies; it does not seem possible to grasp this, namely, new policy tools and ideological language within the discourse of the “backwardness of the AKP”.

AKP's allergy to feminism and the party's homophobia

Of course, one can mention the feminism of the AKP just as one can mention the state feminism of the Republic. However, it should not be overlooked that just as the Republic was allergic to feminism, the AKP also developed such an allergic reaction to them: “Dear brothers and sisters, if what we need is feminism; then it is us who can do it in the best way!”

While qualifying the pro-abortion stance as “feminist propaganda”, Erdogan probably sincerely believed that feminism was a lame idea of the kind that could be upheld by no sane women. This belief of his seems to be shared by the female members of the party, although I don't know whether they are equally sincere. As far as I can see, they seem to be ashamed of being feminists although they do not lag behind the women in CHP, the other political party in the center. (There are few among the CHP members who call themselves “feminist” - but that's another discussion) The speeches that start out: “I am not a feminist, but...” reflect this bashfulness, however, one cannot ignore that

they also made attempts, which should be taken seriously, with the effect of their tendency towards political organization and strong capabilities for taking action. They did not submissively digest the threatening remarks by Dengir Mir Mehmet Firat, the “tough guy” of their party that “female members of the AKP did not succumb to feminism”; they responded to him as allowed by their “manners”. Judging by the way in which the female members of the AKP defended their own position, one can easily say that they are ready for a “tidy”, adequately “well-mannered” feminism.

On the other hand, the topic that remains a taboo and cannot be proposed as a discussion point is homosexuality. LGBT rights form one of the sharpest redlines, not to say, the primary one for the AKP, even though it could not yet decide whether homosexuality was a disease or a sin. They had the tendency to dismiss this subject as silently as possible in the period when they entered the EU harmonization process in a more enthusiastic and rapid manner. We have seen clearly the LGBT policy of the party in the remark by Aliye Kavaf, State Minister in charge of Women, that homosexuality was a disease. It is obvious that homophobia is not peculiar to AKP. However, this seems to be the area that will give them the hardest time in their role as the builder in Turkey of the new gender regime to which they rapidly and easily adapted themselves.

Conclusion

We can summarize the women, family and body policies of the AKP neither within the framework of “backwardness and bigotry” nor as independent from the new policies on the global level. Furthermore, we are faced with an area that is not clearly delineated, consistent and holistic. It is an area that is fragmented and consisting of variable parts. We are dealing with a party in power that tries to assure the unity of these parts by telling certain ideological fables. And opponents need to do more than treat these fables as facts. What is required is to deconstruct the fable by starting with the family secrets known to everyone, not to forget the question of which desires, hopes and expectations of the women and men living in this society are met by the “big brother” crystallized in the persona of Erdogan and to progress by taking into account these facts and their mediators.

Endnote

* A quote from the public address of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Diyarbakir in June, 2012.

How can I know why

Perspectives wanted the following: “An analysis on the Freedom of Speech Barometer and the number of detained within the last three months under the anti-terrorism code and the reasons for detention”. I can only answer the second part of the question in one way: “How can I know why?” I also think only the Ministry of Justice can accurately answer this question as the data are not accessible to the public. Never be blinded by the rather good “Law on the Right to Information”, enacted upon pressure by the EU. Since I worked for an initiative to facilitate the use this law to society, I have been a close witness to the practices that have rendered it inoperative.

The Advisory Board on the Right to Information (BEDK), to which you can file complaints when the questions asked based on this law are answered in a non-informative manner, was initially operative. But this institution has been brought into line too quickly. In response to the question on the number of mines available in Turkey asked by the initiative “A Mine-free Turkey”, the General Staff answered “We have enough mines.” Upon protests, BEDK stated that this answer was in line with the “condition to contain information”. We are again faced with the question of “what to do with the salt when it begins to stink”.

As an initiative against Crimes of Thought that strives to form mechanisms to follow up on violations of freedom of speech, we co-operated for many years with organizations such as the Human Rights Association (IHD), the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TIHV), the Association for Human Rights and Solidarity with the Oppressed (Mazlumder), the Joint Platform for Human Rights (IHOP), the Union of Publishers, the International Federation of P.E.N Clubs (PEN) Center in Turkey and Bianet. Unless you find it too tiring, please visit the website at www.antenna-tr.org, select the databank “ÇeTeLe” (Track Record) and have a look at it.

To fill this databank, we not only monitored the media but tried to co-operate closely with newspapers, magazines, and political organizations that were in trouble. However, the majority of individuals, lawyers, and large-scale newspapers abstained from helping us, saying “We don’t want to get in further trouble”. In spite of this, there still was a significant collaboration among the above-mentioned organizations.

At times when Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code was harshest, the most common question both from within and outside of the country was: “How many people are in prison based on this article?” We thought ÇeTeLe gave most accurate answers. However, from the annual statement of the Ministry of Justice we understood that the number of lawsuits we had recorded did

not even correspond to 15 percent of the real figure. To sum up: The Ministry of Justice, the only institution that knows the correct answer to this question, announces this information, which should be open for access at its website by anyone at any time, only once a year in a complicated report. In effect, it tries to obfuscate the facts rather than disclosing them. Still, I wanted my allotted space to be full, so:

From Bianet Media Monitoring Report: (April, May and June, 2012)

As of July, 95 journalists and 35 distributors are in prison within the scope of the Anti-Terrorism Code and Turkish Penal Code. 62 out of 95 journalists and all the 35 distributors are from the Kurdish media.

They are blamed for creating a “media environment for the illegal organization” because the usual journalistic activities such as “writing books”, “journalism that criticizes the party in power” and “working for the Kurdish media” are defined as crimes.

Among the ascribed crimes are also “committing crimes on behalf of the organization while not being a member of the organization” and/or “helping the organization knowingly and willingly while not being part of the hierarchical structure within the organization”. Some journalists are tried on the accusations of setting up an armed or unarmed organization, administrating and managing it and becoming a member of it, and some of them have already been condemned.

Only four journalists are being tried in criminal cases filed against them directly on account of the news they issued, reviews and books they wrote: Managing editors of the newspaper Azadiya Welat: Vedat Kurşun, Ruken Ergün and Ozan Kılınc as well as Bedri Adanır, publisher of the Aram Publications and director of the newspaper, Hawar.



Şanar Yurdatapan

Born in 1941, musician and human rights activist Yurdatapan began his music career in “Comets” (Kuyruklu Yıldızlar), founded by students at Istanbul University Faculty of Sciences. Stripped of Turkish citizenship in 1980, he was in exile for 12 years. After his return 1992, he became known as human rights activist and initiator of the civil disobedience campaign at the 1995 trial of Yasar Kemal. His many awards include “Freedom of Opinion”, “Best Circumvention of Censorship” by “INDEX on Censorship” and Human Rights Watch’s “Global Rights Defender”. Author of 10 books and nearly 100 brochures in the Freedom of Opinion series, he co-authored 3 books with Abdurrahman Dilipak.

The Barometer of Freedom of Speech increasingly indicates a storm

The main factor underlying this situation is the shift of the Erdogan government to the right to attract the votes of the MHP. This line has become more pronounced since Idris Sahin became Minister of Interior Affairs. It hit its peak when a proven torturer was made the vice head of the Anti-Terrorism Branch of Istanbul. Acts such as reconciliation, acceptance of a mistake and its correction are perceived as weaknesses in our “male” government mentality. Therefore, this state will probably continue until the entire structure collapses. This is akin to the way in which the courts still bring the KCK cases to a standstill based on the forced interpretation that “You understand Turkish, then you may not speak in Kurdish” in spite of Article 39 of the Lausanne Agreement.

Our revolt is written in the Taurus mountains

I was born on the 14th day of August in 1959, on the outskirts of the cloudy mountain of Karadag, located in the mid-Taurus Mountains, rising on the border between Konya and Karaman. I am the mother of two sons. As the eldest daughter of the house, I would herd goats and kids while also taking care of my younger siblings. Being the daughter of a deep-rooted family also meant that I had heavy responsibilities. My grandfather, Kerim Savran (Savranlar) was the head of a large family that loved having guests.

We managed to trace our family tree back as far as 300 years ago and we are still adding to it. You may find my speaking language a little odd. I had limited access to formal education. However, I adopt and use only Turkish when I speak, no matter how strange I may sound. Our rule is: "Every Turk is a nomad (Yörük); every nomad is a Turk" and Turkish is the language spoken in this country.

Anyway, let us go back in time a little: Pervin was someone who did not speak much; she used to spend her day working. She was a nomad woman doing all the work - making bread, washing the clothes, cooking - without complaining as she thought these were duties to be fulfilled. My grandfather and father worked hard to keep this culture alive. My uncle, Ahmet Savran, who passed away in September 2011, made efforts to ensure the continuation of this culture. Uncle Ahmet supported me all his life, he was a role model, he never surrendered to exploitation and he never let us surrender. "This head has never been and never will be bent down"; those were his words which have shed light on my path and which I have adopted as a bequest in my life. These words have become a principle for me and for those who will come after me.

With the establishing of the "Social Assistance and Solidarity Association of Sarikecililer" in the Aydıncık district of Mersin my responsibilities increased. You may call it a rumor, defamation or a claim; but they tried to make everyone believe that goats harm the forests and kill the green areas. The ban on grazing goats in the forests and the penalties related to that became so harsh that the Sarikecilis began to find themselves facing a different type of assimilation. Something had to be done by us. The slogan "Nomads set up their caravans on the road" was adopted as a principle to initiate our "caravan march" campaign. We started to read and write about it. By the way, I managed to complete compulsory education thanks to the efforts of my family, but my nomad relatives did not have that chance. They were absorbing whatever information they could; men during their mi-

litary service and women from people around them in the tents. I started to explain that the goats, which are a large part of our culture, do not cause any harm to the forest. Investigations targeting me followed one after another because what I took action, to survive, to save our culture.

You may wonder who the Sarikecilis are: Sarikecilis are a glorious clan of the Oghuzes, who live in tents woven with goat hair, who herd and live with goats, who do not have a regular place to live either in the summer nor in the winter, who spend winter months around Mersin and the summers around the mid-Taurus Mountains, who love their mountains, forests, rivers, who protect their habitats, who love their country, and who have been maintaining a culture they brought from Central Asia to Anatolia one thousand years ago. Throughout years of nomadic life, many of our relatives have settled or have been forced to adopt sedentary life in different parts of our country. All in all, a few thousand of us are left. Some of us, though less and less in number now, move from one place to another on camels, the rest moves with tractors and trucks.

We do not stay in one place for too long so as not to damage the nature. In fact, what we do is similar to what honey bees do, it is biologically efficient. However, those who consider themselves intellectuals have been trying hard to destroy our migratory routes in recent years and, in a mood of unawareness, they have destroyed the common living areas. For instance, the historical Görmeli Bridge in the district of Karaman used to be on our migratory road. It is now under water due to the dam. How are we supposed to cross the tunnels that were built to replace the bridge with our camels? Our goats and camels became the silent witnesses to this massacre of nature. I have many things to revolt against: forests destroyed to make golf resorts, intact coasts given away to tourism investments, hydro-power plants that kill nature just to get 3 kilowatts of energy, the culture we lose. The people of Cavus village were evacuated because of a dam. Their culture, hopes and memories are written in water. Which dam could bring back an eight hundred year old historical bridge and our memories scraped on its bricks? There is no end to what I can tell you, neither to my revolt, but go and see the Taurus mountains; our revolt is written there.



Pervin Çoban Savran

Born 1959 in Karadag, in the mid Taurus Mountains, Savran studied until the second grade of primary school. She is the President of the Association of Solidarity of Sarikecilis, the last remaining nomadic tribe of Anatolia and an active member of the environmental movement. She works hard to keep the nomadic culture alive, to protect their environment, forests and rivers and to maintain their lifestyle in their natural habitat. Savran's application for "UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage Covenant" on behalf of the Sarikecil nomads has been approved by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and will be negotiated by UNESCO in 2012.

Art: Backyard of the government

Before examining the AKP Government's ten-year cultural policy, it is appropriate to review the recent history of modern arts in Turkey, which has progressed in line with Westernization, and to make a comparison based on this review. To understand the story of the next generation in Turkey, it is essential to know the story of the previous generation.

The cultural gap that emerged during the complex modernization venture of the Ottomans, attempted to be filled through "exports", leaning further to the West. Essentially, what was exported was positivist bourgeoisie culture, not going beyond a certain class within the boundaries of the Empire. The export of this conservative and elitist ideology was consistent with the ruling elite.

The intellectuals of the Tanzimat period (reformists) who formed a new group in contrast to the Ulemas (academics, scholars of the sciences and Islamic law, members of the *ilmiye* –the scientific community), were the principal actors in Westernization on the political-administrative plane. While the Ottoman Empire came under the influence of capitalism and its original foundation was eroding, various inconsistencies were emerging between the ideology of reformists and reality. An economy and social dynamic compatible to new ideological references was not forthcoming and the existing traditional foundation was gradually decaying. In this respect, the intellectual transformation that sought to be represented as a "reformist movement" swiftly evolved into an auto-colonization process. The reformists, a fraction of the ruling class, were not able to analyze their society. Just as in many other dominions, they were made to pursue the function of colonial powers.

When the Empire was on the brink of dissolution, masses (rightly) saw "Westernists-reformists" and their "reforms" responsible for impoverishment and loss of identity. Thus, the alienation between the ruling class and people (which was, in fact, deep-rooted) in the Ottoman Empire reached a dimension of mutual hatred. While the masses, that had to defend themselves against the system, continued embracing traditional ideology, the reformists did not have much to say against this resistance. While the traditional ideology of the Ottoman Empire was eroding, it was standing against the reformists as an opposing "new discourse". When viewed through the "modern-traditional" alienation that Turkey has been experiencing to the extreme in the last 10 years, a highly familiar tension was preparing the end of the Empire.

This social disengagement reflected a dilemma

that extended to the last minutes of the Empire. Sait Halim Pasa wrote, "While on one side the high and intellectual class, which agrees to everything and sees everything allowable, is internalizing and imitating various foreign nations in the most extreme manner, on the other side, certain intellectuals and the rest of the public are opposing any kind of innovation... Creations of the violence, hatred and panic against innovation are revealing themselves everywhere".¹

The Republic was the most significant gain for "certain intellectuals and the rest of the public". It created a public sense of forward movement by preparing a convenient basis on which this new system could quickly generate itself. It was as if every intellectual dynamic became mobilized, cultural reforms, one after another, began to determine the course of a new era. As a symbol of this new ideology, art was going to be revised along a nationalized line without being alienated from its modern foundations. This was dependent on creating an official history of Turkish art based on interest.

Republic intellectuals were responsible for forming an official ideology, which was more rounded and with sharper boundaries. The first ideologists of the Republic adopted a conception of art that would complement official ideology in every sense, instead of the libertarian art of the West, which increasingly adopted a critical outlook. "Soviet Propaganda Art", successfully implemented by the USSR following the October Revolution, demonstrated the best example of this.

Thus, the notion of art in Turkey settled on a new course of progression lead by a certain mentality, modernization and class. To this end, whilst different mentalities were being represented as "anti-art", modernist arts, which were seen as an extension of official ideology, were embraced with a national sensitivity. While their legitimizing basis and ideological references changed in comparison to the Tanzimat intellectuals, the Republic intellectuals displayed no principal changes with respect to their position on arts and function. They remained "State Intellectuals". As they unable to form a couche of intellectuals as opposed to intellectuals in capitalist societies, the knowledge they created could only serve to protect and legitimize the interests of their caste.

Together with the Turkization of the economy in the Republic era, the notion of a "national bourgeoisie" emerged for the first time. Thus, as opposed to "state-shaping" deep-rooted bourgeoisie culture in capitalist countries, this was simply the foundations of a new structure in which the state "shaped



Tayfun Serttas

After graduating from Istanbul University, Department of Social Anthropology in 2004 with a dissertation on urban anthropology, Tayfun Serttas completed the graduate program at Yildiz Technical University, Faculty of Art and Design Interdisciplinary Art programme in 2007 with the thesis "Photographs and Minorities in Istanbul as a Means of Cultural Representation in the Process of Modernism". He has written the books "Stüdyo Osep" (2009) and "Foto Galatasaray – Studio Practice by Maryam Şahinyan" (2011). His articles have been published in *Agos* and *Taraf*. His works have been in exhibitions in several cities, including Istanbul, London, Paris, Warsaw, Athens, Berlin and Frankfurt.

the bourgeoisie". The bourgeoisie was idealized by families of Turkish origin that were army based and consolidating their class position with the exceptional means provided by the army. A "general grandfather", "officer uncle" or at least a "commander relative" was a prerequisite for this new bourgeoisie.

The army-based "national bourgeoisie" was not only responsible for security, one of the primary missions of the army from the early stages of the Republic, "embracing art" would direct the history of official art. All branches of modern arts, from theatre to sculpture, photography to opera, which in fact owe their evolution within Ottoman territory to the efforts of non-Muslims, suddenly "became Turkish" and the army took on responsibility of this historical task. Therefore, until World War Two, which we refer to as the first quarter of the Republic, the ideal of reaching the level of contemporary civilizations, being one of the absolute ideals of the military tutelage, determined the direction of cultural life. The army also had significance in terms of a model – a leader – to close the artistic deficit of an underdeveloped nation. The

At the time when disputes had not yet climaxed, the first major breaking point occurred when the Prime Minister personally interfered with the "Monument of Humanity" that was being constructed in Kars by sculptor Mehmet Aksoy.

total deterioration of cultural engineering and its inability to replicate itself in the aftermath of World War Two created a serious decline in art.

The haphazard modernization project that encountered three military coups, settled into a completely different course in the 2000's. A new page was turned together with the AKP government. Many undebatable issues become openly debatable, liberalization found a political equivalent, representation of different segments comes into question, and most importantly, military tutelage is perceived as a risk factor for society and culture. AKP kicked off its mission by contributing to democratization in Turkey. Accordingly, this meant a period of economic stability through which public wealth would multiply. For the first time, a political party was embraced by the public in this manner, the prime minister was breaking numerous international taboos, requests from the left wing, such as minority rights, were being placed on the Grand National Assembly agenda, a deliberative tone was being adopted even with respect to the most difficult issues such as terrorism and our country was entering into a climate of reconciliation never before experienced.

However, two fundamental questions have not yet been replied to fully by the AKP government and have been simply waiting in the freezer. The first is how a government with conservative roots would establish its distance from science, which in this respect was emerging through the perspective of its relationships with academic and scientific circles. The second question focused on the attitude of this new mentality vis-

à-vis culture and art policies. This government, which encountered occasional crises regarding cultural sanctions of modernism and embraced traditional lines such as miniature, calligraphy, ornamentation as opposed to modern (and successive) arts - the fruits of the army based modernization process – and which was the first government in the history of the Republic to distance itself from the army, in my opinion had no clear program in the cultural arena.

Plastic arts had no place in the culture of Turkish society, but this cannot be an excuse. Many things with a place in society today were not so ten years ago. If wanted, we could have found a point of negotiation. When speaking of a major transformation, we first need to determine the course of change. But we were not able to do this properly. Turkey evolved and progressed economically, not culturally. We cannot see a minimum amount of the government's success in other fields in the last ten years in fields such as engineering or culture. On the contrary, these fields, in particular academics, experienced a regression. Leading universities have been callously dissolved, some seen to be fit to be converted into convention centres or hotels. When it seemed no art academy would be left, staff of the remaining academies changed, budgets were cut and in the last ten years, art was left to the mercy of the private sector as simply a "branch of commercial activity".

In my opinion, "more privatization" did not have significance for an artist receiving no state support. As the state's interest in certain branches of art meant "control" more than support, it would be hard to say such an expectation existed. For example, the cinema industry and plastic arts in particular experienced advantages by depending on the private sector in the 1990's; in a way, they learnt to take care of themselves. In the same period, popular culture was active more than ever with globalization and social media and Wikipedia. People of the 2000's had wholly different logistics. Cultural institutions were established one after the other. Istanbul's international appeal was increasingly rising, the appetite and curiosity of the post-80's generation, who grew up under much more comfortable conditions compared to the preceding generation, were reflecting on the arts. A wholly extra-government dynamic was forming.

When AKP came to office for the third time, increasing votes in the 2011 elections, as in all other areas, it adopted a more controlling (stringent) policy towards the arts distinct from their preceding periods. Before disputes climaxed, the first major breaking point occurred when the Prime Minister personally interfered with the "Monument of Humanity" being constructed in Kars by sculptor Mehmet Aksoy. Everyone, including the Prime Minister, had the right not to like a work of art produced on behalf of the public. However, giving a demolition order connoted a different authority. After weeks of discussions, the unfinished sculpture was removed. Subsequently, debates on "conservative art", the famous "backyard" themed speech of Minister of Internal Affairs Idris Naim Sahin defining terror and the arts, and restrictions imposed on state theatres, caused the emergence of a new phase where, perhaps for the first time in Turkey's history, "art-artists" from all disciplines were disputed

intensely.

The third term of office of AKP, which stated almost nothing regarding the arts during the first two terms, came on like a cold shower. After ten years, the government, which did not have the slightest contribution to the arts, came out and stated “conservative art”. Well then, are schools of art based on statements of politicians? If we do not take into account humorous examples that occurred in some dictatorships, in which country do statesmen decide to attempt to direct art? As a constitutional state, is it the responsibility of the Republic to support and protect its existing art heritage, or put a cover over its existing potential and design art of the future? All of these are debatable and have been debated.

Parallel with the growing capital, it was inevitable that branches of art wholly dependent on the private sector gained certain momentum. Together with the 2000's, visible changes began to occur. To a high extent, discussions around art arose at the same time from the linking of art with the terms “customer”, “market”, “product”, “and sector”. However, when we consider that art develops not only as a result of the market, but at the same time, as a result of liberation in the political area, it was apparent that we were facing an inversely proportional situation. The state, which is responsible for the protection of art and its agents, sought to protect itself from it. They did not recognize artists as a party and closed all channels of negotiation, imposing sanction after sanction.

Thus, Turkish art circles (it should be recognized that Turkish art circles are dauntless supporters of democratization) took a poised stance against AKP. In short, AKP failed the art test and lost credibility in the eyes of artists. Instead of questioning the mentality, ignoring social reality, dictating the intellectual world of a handful of elitists, imposing an “ideal life form” by ignoring different cultural values, it was unacceptable to take a role within this mentality in Turkey in 2012. This tension caused artists, who were close supporters of the government until a few years ago, to adopt a new stance.

The tendency to expect public gain from art, to undertake cultural engineering in this way and instrumentalize art came to a complete end with the dissolution of the USSR at the end of the 1990's. AKP's current approach was an argument of an essentially highly totalitarian and communist-originated official art theory, which completely ignored individualities and was aimed to be practiced on Turkish society exorbitantly during the earliest stages of the Republic. However, this argument had already collapsed. Today, we would prefer to present a criticism of this mentality. To pursue the discussion from this point not only made the art produced in Turkey in the 2000's, conceived through the Cold War years, it identified a political party with liberal tendencies with a system that it never represented. AKP necessarily became more Kemalist and was thrown a curve in such an open field that it had been criticizing.

Therefore, art created the big test for Turkey to pass. It is against the cultural history that lies on this thin boundary. Art created in Turkey will either be a follower of certain political traditions (conservative, dysfunctional, self-enclosed, communitarian, lobbyist) and will be destined to become marginalized in its own restricted domain and go no further than being a magazine-ish copy of the traditional structure, or it will choose the hard method of transforming the system it actually seeks to criticize and prepare an intellectual basis for the next generation.

Likewise, it is hard to understand the contradiction between criticizing the correct decision to cancel 19th May parades and the statement that ideology is being imposed on society through art. The current system we are criticizing is the ruins of the never-succeeding structure based on the scheme of creating the “ideal society” through art. “Public servant

AKP's current approach was an argument of an essentially highly totalitarian and communist-originated official art theory, which completely ignored individualities and was aimed to be practiced on Turkish society exorbitantly during the earliest stages of the Republic. However, this argument had already collapsed.

artists” are there exactly for this reason. We all know that Turkish society has showed a reflex against the state-imposed ideal of art. Whatever you may do in the name of art “for society” will receive a reaction and you will eventually become elitist. These are the ongoing discussions today, but not in the way of the government.

In conclusion, just as “social benefit” bears importance when we talk about physics, biology or chemistry, “social benefit” could have that much importance when we talk of art. Art contributes to society in the same way as sending an astronaut into space or winning a football game. Art increases a society's respectability and confidence, which cannot be bought. However, every discipline has its own responsibilities in reaching this point. Even if art benefits society, this benefit is not so pragmatic as to be analyzed by lecturing in Kahramanmaraş.

What we call “art” exists for constant questioning and renegotiation of the social agreement. Art has a responsibility of movement. All areas in Turkey encountered movement, however, the intellectual area became stuck because it could not enter into a negotiation with this new process, as this government to some extent feared its intellectuals. This should be read as mutual action and reaction. So far, no efforts have been made to normalize the situation. However, this would be worth the effort.

Footnote

1. S. H. Pasa, “Our Depressions”, Tercüman publishing, p.118.

Shifting foreign policy dynamics in the wake of the “Arab Spring”

The December 2010 event in a small Tunisian city hardly known to the world put the Middle East on top of the politics agenda of the world in a way very different from what we were accustomed to. The storm of democratic change that took hold in Tunisia became a revolutionary hurricane across the Arab Middle East and North Africa. In a region where authoritarian regimes hitherto always found ways to survive successive waves of change, a movement for freedom and sovereignty led by urban middle classes shook the established order to change the character of politics.

Revolutionary movements had their first impact in regime changes in North Africa, carrying to power in Tunisia and Egypt Islamic currents that had waited decades to mount the political stage in a legitimate manner. Although the search for change in Yemen, Bahrain, Jordan and, to a certain extent, Morocco was aborted, variously through repression or bribing the masses, there was no doubt that a different horizon had opened up in the political course of the region from what had been experienced so far.

That the struggle for freedom, sovereignty and dignity was carried out through social mobilization and peaceful organizing was antithetical to the dystopia celebrating violence represented by Al Qaeda. The assassination of Osama bin Laden, the Al Qaeda leader, by US Special Forces precisely when the Arab revolt had broken out was symbolic in making clear the bankruptcy of the line he stood for.

From another aspect, unable to break in the past with relations of dependency despite the reality of radical regimes created from putsches, countries of the region now entered a stage where they would possess sovereignty. During this transition, expected to be drawn out, questions remained, such as how and based on what principles Islamic parties that came to power would rule, in particular how they would establish relations with the West, or how a new distribution of power would come about in the regional order.

In the wave of change in the Middle East, the bloodiest and most complex struggle was in Syria. In this country, the intellectual and political centre of Arab nationalism, which finds itself the focal point of the power struggle in the Middle East, the regime would not give in easily. Thanks to support it has received from the region and the international system at large, it has persevered and fought for its life by waging war on its own people. Caught in a maelstrom where revolution mixed with counter-

revolution and the search for democratic national sovereignty with the struggle for power between religious denominations on the basis of sub-national identities, Syria displayed all the risks and potentials of the Arab revolt in its creation.

For the third time since the end of the Cold War, the “Turkish model” was offered to countries undergoing change as the solution best adapted to Western interests. That Turkey warmed up to this potential outside its role as a “model”, that Erdogan, a devout leader, should, on his North African tour, state his preference for the secular state created favorable repercussions in the West. The AKP government of Turkey also established close links with Islamist parties poised to take power, helping them organize and generate practical outcomes.

In a country like Egypt, the most important in the Arab world, with a deep-rooted political tradition, this search for models would be unpopular and ideological proximity does not mean political alignment. Paradoxically, in the aftermath of Arab rebellions, expected to benefit Turkey and reinforce its tendency to act autonomously in its foreign policy, the approach of the last decade received a blow. Having drummed its foreign policy achievements for ten years and used this to gain legitimacy and power on the domestic front, the AKP government witnessed a dwindling of its space for autonomous action.

In his speech to the Ambassadors' Conference in 2011, Foreign Minister Davutoglu described the position Turkey should hold within an international system in turmoil: “The part that we yearn for in this period for our country may be clearly stated, and I would like to resort to a new image, a ‘Wise Country’. A wise country that the world lends an ear to on global matters, one that foresees events, takes advance measures, generates alternative solutions. A country that senses a crisis in peripheral countries before the crisis has erupted, offering solutions to countries and regions with fine-tuned diplomacy.”

This talk was two weeks after events started in Tunisia with the self-immolation of Mohammed Bouazizi, 11 days before Tunisian dictator Ben Ali fled, and three weeks before the movement in Tahrir Square began in Egypt. Neither Tunisia, Egypt, or countries such as Libya, Syria, Bahrain, or even Yemen that were to be the scene of striking developments throughout the year were mentioned in the talk.

To be fair, it was impossible to predict on 3 January 2011, how history would abruptly change



Soli Özel

Özel holds a BA in Economics from Bennington College and an MA in International Relations from Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. Currently he is Professor at Kadir Has University, a columnist at Habertürk Daily and advisor to TÜSIAD. He was a guest lecturer and teacher at different US universities, held fellowships at Oxford and the EU Institute of Strategic Studies. Özel contributes to the German Marshall Fund's web site's “ON Turkey” series. His work has been published in *Internationale Politik*, *Journal of Democracy*, *Foreign Policy*, *International Security*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Financial Times*, *New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Bitterlemons-International*.

in the Middle East. When events gained historic dimensions, Turkey, before conservative Arab governments, positioned itself correctly. In Libya, despite an early faux pas concerning the role of NATO, it sided with the rebellion, aborting a French attempt to keep Turkey out of the Western Mediterranean.

Having coexisted fraternally, deepened its affinity to and economic integration with repressive regimes, including Iran, Ankara changed course in foreign policy in light of these developments. Davutoglu explained this change of course at an ambassadors' meeting in December: "To stop, look, interpret history calmly on a rational terrain from time to time, while history progresses, but without letting go of the rhythm and pulse of history requires a robust stance."

What he meant by a robust stance was Turkey's will from late 2000's until recently to open up spaces of freedom, carried on enthusiastically in the context of equilibrium between security and liberty. According to Davutoglu, "these regimes did not understand the equilibrium between liberty and security, something we established and stressed for a long time... A country or state perceiving its own people as a threat has no strength to make a leap forward."

Starting to blend realpolitik with idealism and selectively take its distance from despotic regimes, Turkey's foreign policy would own up, Davutoglu said, "those fraternal peoples who rise in the name of principles and fundamental rights such as the right to vote, stand for office or freedom of expression, which we see as rights for our own people."

Deliberations of the West, panicked as it was in the face of Arab rebellions, and other powers, concerning the future of countries whose regimes were overturned resulted in circulation of the "Turkish model". In effect, expecting salvation from the "Turkish model" was nothing new. This went back to when the Soviet Union disintegrated, as well as 9/11. A mission was attributed to Turkey both times.

The difference was that, helped by US failure after the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Turkey's maneuvering room considerably expanded. In this environment, armed with concepts like "core country" or "zero problems with neighbors", Turkish foreign policy had become truly ambitious. From this vantage point, perhaps one of the most ironic outcomes of Arab rebellions is events restricted Turkey's room to maneuver, forced it into closer contact with the US and revealed limitations of its power to shape developments in the region. The exemplary case is Syria.

1989-1999

With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Cold War ending, Turkey found itself in profound strategic isolation. Talking to Mehmet Ali Birand on Turkish television, then US Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger said that perhaps Ankara should focus on the Middle East since it is not at bottom a European country. Turkish foreign policy and security elite were concerned that with the weakening of the European security axis, or the disappearance of the most important *raison d'être* thereof, ties linking Turkey to Europe would seriously loosen.

Saddam Hussein's occupation of Kuwait in August 1990 led Western allies to rediscover the strategic

map and place Turkey once again in a critical position on that map. Initially, though, a crisis of confidence was experienced in the Atlantic alliance. Germany refused to take sides, in case of an outbreak of war, with Turkey in accordance with Article 5 of the NATO agreement and refrained from sending Patriot missiles necessary for defending the country. In the wake of the Gulf War evicting Iraq from Kuwait, the Soviet Union disintegrated. The independence of the natural resource-rich Turkic republics of Central Asia and Azerbaijan resulted in opening up an entirely new strategic and cultural geography.

This new strategic map resulted in the "Turkish model" being on the agenda for the first time. A country with a Muslim population, member of the NATO alliance, capitalist, secular, and democratic, all

The government of Turkey has established close links with the Islamist parties poised to take power in North African countries, trying to help them organize and generate practical outcomes.

this meant Turkey was as valuable for its identity as its geography. Central Asian countries were supposed to imitate these systemic characteristics of Turkey; in return, Ankara would help integrate them into European institutions. This did not last long. After having a "big brother" for so long, these countries did not wish to see a new one. Moreover, Turkey's capacity was insufficient to carry the burden.

Nonetheless, although the 1990's were highly problematic with domestic politics, the role played by Ankara in the disintegration of Yugoslavia, successful participation of the Turkish Armed Forces in peace missions, and the strategic relationship developed with Israel led to renewed importance of Turkey in US strategic thinking. It is interesting that while this was happening, a large part of Turkish opinion regarded the US as an unreliable, dangerous, albeit indispensable, ally because it facilitated the *de facto* establishment of an autonomous Kurdish political entity in Northern Iraq.

In this period after the Cold War, when globalization and democratization were the two most important values, Turkey faced its most important problem on the domestic front. Turkish politics bore responsibility of raising its democratic criteria, restructuring its administration, and liberalizing its legal system by adopting a conception bringing the individual to the forefront. Unfortunately, after the death of then President Turgut Ozal, who had adopted this agenda, guardians of Turkey's meager democracy, in particular the Armed Forces, turned the country inward using the low intensity warfare against the PKK and the imagined threat of the "sharia" as excuses. This intraverted Turkey, at loggerheads with the world, authoritarian, would loosen up after the US delivered PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan to Turkish intelligence in Kenya in 1999.

2001-2011

Ocalan's capture created an environment that improved relations with Iran and Syria, which had been poisoned in the 1990's because of support extended to the PKK by these regimes. Then US President Bill Clinton visited Turkey and relations between the countries came to be defined as a "strategic partnership". The EU, which excluded Turkey in 1997, accorded Turkey status of candidate member as a result of the German change of government and intense US efforts.

While this was happening, Ankara, under leadership of then Foreign Minister Ismail Cem, began to build a multi-dimensional foreign policy in harmony with the post-Cold War period, as well as the theoretical pillars of such a policy. When the AKP came to power in 2002, the present foreign minister, who in past years was advisor to the prime minister, further deepened this approach and using concepts borrowed from his own theoretical approach established discourse for policies developed.

Meanwhile, a part of the security elite of Turkey, traditionally pro-Western, began to feel ill at ease when confronted with the democratization program rendered necessary by the EU accession process they knew would undermine the regime of military tutelage. This discomfort led to a Eurasianist strategic option to become more visible among these elites. Those who opted for the Eurasianist strategic orientation in later years were arrested and prosecuted for allegedly taking part in conspiracies against the government.

9/11 revived the discourse on the "Turkish model". In counter position to the jihadist project of Al Qaeda, Turkey, "the NATO member with a Muslim population, a market-oriented economy, ruled by a secular democratic regime, albeit with defects" was a highly attractive alternative. The AKP rise to power added to this attraction. For the new party, despite its Islamist origins, enthusiastically implemented a democratic reform program that contributed to progress in demilitarization and establishment of the preponderance of civilian power in Turkish politics. No doubt, the EU accession process, supported overwhelmingly by the Turkish public, played a disproportionate role in the success of these steps. Thus, a new alignment between the values of the security community that Turkey belonged to and the fundamentals of domestic political life was brought about.

The unfortunate US adventure in Iraq, which Turkey opposed and warned against from the beginning and refused to be a part of on the basis of a parliamentary decision, upset the balance of forces in the region. With the US occupation paving the way to power of the Shiites and the Kurds, the balance of forces established for centuries in this region between the Sunnis and Shiites, favoring the former, changed.

In this new and different strategic environment, Turkey took the status quo as given and proceeded to establish an intense policy of engagement with its neighbors. It played a pioneering role in measures that may be considered revolutionary, such as eliminating visas with the aim of developing budding economic relations. In an article for the German Marshall Fund, analyst Ian Lesser assesses circumstances that surround Turkey as a "harmless environment", despite

the occupation of Iraq and the sectarian civil war raging in the country. The environment is harmless, since none of the actors is in a position to challenge the regional vision of and policy pursued by Turkey. In effect, the Syria and Iran policies of Turkey from 2003-2010 were implemented in the face of choices made by Washington.

As the impact of the armed forces in the making of foreign policy decreased, Ankara was able to get rid of groundless fears perpetrated since the foundation of the Republic and began to feel less unease with respect to the formation of a Kurdish political identity in Northern Iraq. Policies of the AKP government channelized the economic energy of the newly ascendant Anatolian business community to turn to business and new markets. Hence, in the words of Kemal Kirisci, Turkey went from being a "national security state" to more of a "business state".

The AKP government focused on its own targets in the economic and political spheres and, in line with the definition of "core state", tried to transform Turkey's periphery as well. While efforts were rather painless in the Balkans, in the Caucasus, the overture to Armenia was aborted due to the harsh reaction of Azerbaijan. The Middle East was the region considered to be the most problematic and it received the greatest concentration. By remaining equidistant to all parties in the Middle East, Ankara strived to become a constructive party on unresolved questions in the region. In particular, it tried to mediate and resolve the impasse between its Western allies and Iran as a result of its nuclear program. While all this was happening on a visible level and Turkey appeared to be overzealous in defending Iran, the neighbors were carrying on their rivalry over Iraq, Gaza, Lebanon and even Syria.

The declaring of the agreement put together by Brazil and Turkey null and void by the United States was an opportunity missed in Iranian nuclear efforts. Brazil and Turkey had at least convinced Iran to sign an agreement, which involved some highly creative aspects. This attitude by Washington implied that the senior partner was showing the junior partner the limits of its power and room for autonomous maneuver. Because Ankara did not sufficiently comprehend this message, approximately one month after the agreement, it voted, together with Brazil, against the new sanctions package at the UN Security Council, despite a request by US President Obama that it abstain. This strained relations and the American, and more generally, Western media began to discuss whether Turkey was effecting a shift of axis. Having grasped the political cost of the "No" vote, Ankara agreed to the "missile shield" project at the Lisbon NATO summit and asked for radar to be used within the framework of this project to be deployed on its soil, thereby ending the debate.

Turkey's policies seemingly in defense of Iran were not the sole source of the debate on the shift of axis. Starting with Israel's attack on Gaza, relations deteriorated rapidly. When the AKP took power, it initially tried to carry on as good relations as possible with Israel, with a flexibility and realism hardly to be expected from a party with its ideological origins. However, it did not refrain from taking steps that

strained relations with Israel, such as inviting Hamas leader Khaled Meshall, living in Damascus, to Ankara in the wake of Palestinian elections. Deteriorating relations were brought to the verge of rupture as a result of the attack by the Israeli army on the Mavi Marmara, flagship of the aid convoy to Gaza, during which nine Turks were killed. Since the Israeli government twice withdrew at the last moment from offering apologies, relations between the countries have practically come to naught since May 2010. Although tension with Israel brings considerable benefit to the government in domestic politics in a country where the public loathes Israel's policies toward the Palestinians, in the atmosphere of instability and uncertainty of the Arab rebellions, both countries suffer from the interruption of relations.

Turkey's taking an initiative in this period and being able to act with considerable autonomy has been made possible by a confluence of circumstances. On one hand, Turkey earnestly coveted EU accession and put its house in order. On the other hand, it strengthened its economy and by pursuing a careful line tried to create a zone of interest around it. The chaos in the region, weakness of regional forces, military presence of the US in Iraq and the fact that Turkey is considered the only regional power that can counterbalance Iran contributed to the achievements of its foreign policy at this time. However, for this policy to be sustained and effective, the status quo would have to continue. With the status quo overturned by the Arab revolt and awakening, and with the withdrawal of the US from Iraq, Turkey found itself in a more challenging environment.

2011-

The uprisings that shook the Arab Middle East brought discourse on the "Turkish model" again onto the agenda. In the course of events, the question was posed whether movements from an Islamic background, like the AKP, would be able to rule without harming the system under the domination of the West. Time and the course of history will answer that question. In the meanwhile, Turkey's prestige and its ambitions to become a regional or global power has been damaged.

With the deepening Syrian crisis in 2011, the struggle over the regional distribution of power exploded on the basis of a discourse referring to sectarian polarization. With outside forces meddling in the struggle, Syria became a battlefield for new geopolitical competition. In this context, Turkey displayed a performance that was miles away from being an actor of decisive weight, despite all the advantages geography accorded it. Furthermore, its close relations with erstwhile partners such as neighbors Iran and Russia, both of which have a stake in Syria, were strained.

The realities of the new period and the fact that the regional power struggle has come to involve a variety of actors, mean for Turkey, first and foremost, that limitations will be imposed on its room for autonomous action. Beyond that, despite the anti-American ethos of the public, Ankara and Washington will engage in closer cooperation. Its resources dwindling, the US feels the need for regional allies;

Turkey, for its part, will wish to feel the power and support of Washington behind to master developments it cannot shape on its own and guarantee its own security. The economic crisis and deeper identity crisis that the EU is suffering from create a dual problem for Turkey. On one hand, the waning of the EU perspective and the fall in the public's support have eliminated a critical incentive for the democratization of Turkey. A worrying setback has come about in the effort to restructure Turkish democracy with a view to shape it on a veritable basis of the rule of law and a liberal understanding. Tied to this, the reduction in the attraction of Europe has raised the possibility of Turkey being pulled into the Middle Eastern vortex. For this reason, more authoritarian political discourse and action, as well as a less sensitive discourse on religious denominations, may cause problems for Turkey, as they have in the past.

Paradoxically, in the aftermath of Arab rebellions, expected to benefit Turkey and reinforce its tendency to act autonomously in its foreign policy, the foreign policy approach that marked the last decade received a heavy blow.

Having aptly assessed the historic nature of Arab rebellions and seen as legitimate the demands for liberty and sovereignty put forth by this movement, Turkey was not able to calculate correctly that a different kind of historical development would follow the Syrian conflict. The Kurds, unable to receive their due when the new order designed by Britain and France was established in 1918-1922, acquired, after 90 years, a political identity first in Iraq and now have found the opportunity to change their status in Syria. If one dimension of the new order to be established in the Middle East is the sectarian war that seems to have some future yet and another is the prospect of Islamist movements to come to or share power, one final dimension is the fact that the political status of the Kurds will be different from what it was the past.

This kind of development will bring into its sway not only Iraq and Syria, but also Iran and Turkey, which both have considerable Kurdish populations. The duty of foreign policy makers in Turkey at this stage is to assess the new environment cool headedly, measure the country's power and capacity accurately and overcome the ongoing crisis with as little damage as possible. Already, the ill-advised policies pursued in the Syrian crisis has pushed Turkey into isolation in the UN system, the inflow of refugees has begun to eat up its resources and resulted in tense and hostile relations with neighbors such as Iran, Iraq, and Syria that can put pressure on Turkey through the intermediary of the PKK.

The reintroduction of the regional vision will only be possible after this hurricane has settled down.

News from hbs

Scholarship opportunities for graduate students

The Turkey Representation of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung has been supporting graduate students with a scholarship program since 2008 with the aim of supporting progress in rural development and energy and helping young people put together long-term policies in these areas as the decision makers of the future. We provide scholarships for a maximum of three semesters starting with the second or third semester to graduate students who have chosen rural development or alternative energy as the core topic of their research and who want to write their master on these topics.

As an independent political non-governmental organization aligned with the German political party Alliance 90/The Greens, we describe ourselves as an active green network extending across the world. In this connection, the foundations of the scholarship program we are conducting rest on our values of ecology, sustainability, democracy, human rights, justice, and gender mainstreaming. We question what we must radically change in practice and in the realm of thought for sustainable living and try to create policies for these changes. Along with our other projects, we are engaged in initiatives in Turkey to have measures in place against climate change; to have fossil fuels replaced by clean and renewable sources of energy; and to see the realization of a just rural development that is in harmony with nature and upholds gender mainstreaming. We work in partnership with the non-governmental organizations and scientists in Turkey on these projects.

We provide €150 monthly and at the beginning of two semesters to cover research expenses and book purchases in order to support students wishing to do research in the specified areas under our scholarship program.

Our scholarship students are extremely successful academically and have developed themselves socio-politically as well.

Our scholarship students are open to interdisciplinary approaches to research that are innovative and out of the ordinary. Their scientific addressing of issues is critical and constructive. They enrich their own ideas by taking an active part in our multifaceted program. In addition to the reports they regularly submit on their educational progress for the duration of the scholarship program, they give a presentation on their thesis to a panel of experts comprising journalists, academicians and NGO representatives in the month of January following the commence-

ment of the scholarship program.

The deadline for application for the next scholarship cycle is 19 December 2012; please find further details at www.tr.boell.org.

Notes from a stipendiary

In December 2011, I completed the graduate program that I began at the Landscape Architecture Department of Ankara University in September 2009. I found out about the Scholarship Program of the Turkey Office of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Association on my school's website, the Science Institute, during the first few months of my graduate studies. The program's focus on providing grants mainly to students who had chosen rural development or renewable energy/energy efficiency for their master topic was what made it different from other programs. Personal research about the program revealed the Association's approach to and activities in the fields of environment, ecology and energy efficiency, which made me even eager to join this scholarship program. As a result, I decided to do my master on "An Energy-Effective Landscape Planning Approach in the Context of the Environment and Sustainable Development – the Urla, İzmir Example."

The conferences I attended during the program and the professionals from different disciplines I met at these meetings both contributed to my graduate work and helped me acquire alternate perspectives. The Heinrich Böll Stiftung Association's efforts to have scholarship students attend conferences it staged or sponsored were valuable opportunities for us to receive additional benefits from its support. An example of this was the meetings staged in various provincial seats and counties by the Rural Development Initiative Group, a protégé of the Association, where important issues pertaining to rural development were addressed and discussed by speakers from a variety of professional disciplines, backed up with local field trips and workshops. We were encouraged to assume an active role in these meetings, not merely as an attendee, but at times as speaker or moderator. Moreover, the Association provided me with all possible support so that I could attend activities such as the Landscape Architecture Convention, which is a key event in my particular field.

Additionally, the preliminary master thesis presentation meeting that was a part of the scholarship program afforded scholarship students significant benefits by having our thesis evaluated from different viewpoints. I believe we not only gained new insights by sharing the knowledge, experience and methods of fellow scholarship students, but also enjoyed the chance to improve our master work in light of the invaluable criticisms and recommendations of the judges. (Nihan Yeğin)

ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Friday, 16.11.2012

Plenary Sessions: 09:30 – 16:30

Peasants and Agriculture

Jan Douwe Van Der Ploeg

Murat Öztürk

Joost Jongarden

Food

Paul Nicholson

Ahmet Atalık

Berin Ertürk

Ali Kerem Sıysel

Gender perspectives on rural development

Ayşe Gündüz Hoşgör

Özgün Akduran

Melda Yaman Öztürk

Gülbahar Örmek

Saturday, 17.11.2012

Workshops: 10:00 – 15:30

Yer: Place: Kadir Has University Istanbul

Detailed information can be found at: www.kalkinmamerkezi.org, www.tr.boell.org

**ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES
IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE**

Friday, 16.11.2012
Plenary Sessions: 09:30 – 16:30

**Peasants and
Agriculture**
Jan Douwe Van Der Ploeg
Murat Öztürk
Joost Jongarden

Food
Paul Nicholson
Ahmet Atalık
Berin Ertürk
İlhan Koçulu
Ali Kerem Sıysel

**Gender perspectives
on rural development**
Ayşe Gündüz Hoşgör
Özgün Akduran
Melda Yaman Öztürk
Gülbahar Örmek

Saturday, 17.11.2012
Workshops: 10:00 – 15:30

Place: Kadir Has University Istanbul
Detailed information can be found at: www.kalkinmamerkezi.org, www.tr.boell.org

TOHUM İZİ DERNEĞİ

HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG
TÜRKİYE TEMSİLCİLİĞİ

#1.12

PERSPECTIVES

Political analysis and commentary from Turkey

FEATURE ARTICLES
TURKEY'S DEEP STATE

CULTURE
AKP's Cultural Policy
Arts and Censorship
Pinar Ergonen
Page 14

INTERNATIONAL POLITICS
Syria: The Case of the
"Arab Spring"
Transforming into the
"Arab Revolution"
Güngör Çakır
Page 15

ECOLGY
Seasonal Agricultural
Workers in Turkey
Güngör Çakır
Page 16


HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG
TÜRKİYE TEMSİLCİLİĞİ

HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG
DERNEĞİ TÜRKİYE TEMSİLCİLİĞİ

Nükleer Enerji Masalı
Nükleer enerjiye neden karşıyız

Yazarlar: Arslan Bozdemir, Anthony Froggett, Mykelt Schneider, Steve Thomas, Offred Nussamer ve Henry D. Solanki

Previous issues of Perspectives magazine and our publications such as "Myth of Nuclear Power" are available in digital form at www.tr.boell.org



Heinrich Böll Stiftung
Turkey Representation
İnönü Cad. Hacı Hanım Sok.
No. 10/12, Gümüşsuyu İstanbul

T +90-212-2491554

F +90-212-2450430

W www.tr.boell.org

E info@tr.boell.org