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The Conflict Resolution and Counterterrorism Dilemma: Turkey Faces its Kurdish Question

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This article considers the relationship between two processes—conflict resolution and counterterrorism—which conceptually share many common points, yet in practice do not necessarily proceed together easily towards a common goal. Considering particular cases of ethnic conflict in which terrorist factions exist, the article argues that while neither conflict resolution nor counterterrorism alone can adequately address the problem, simultaneously conducting both must keep in mind the processes' inherent differences and avoid excessive prioritizing of one over the other. By exploring recent Turkish governmental initiatives to address the Kurdish question, the article attempts to provide an outline for how to successfully cope with the two processes simultaneously.

Keywords conflict resolution, counterterrorism, Kurdish question, Kurds, PKK, terrorism, Turkey, Turks

Introduction

Research on conflict resolution and counterterrorism rarely seems to consider the relationship between the two processes,¹ though often—for example, when one party to the conflict is an ethnic-based terrorist group—the two may be inextricably connected. In such cases, conflict resolution and counterterrorism share a basic bond in the sense that both seek an end to some kind of conflictual behavior, and indeed, much of the literature conceptualizing effective counterterrorism attributes success to factors that are also a part of conflict resolution processes. Particularly in recent years, counterterrorism studies have stressed the need for more proactive political responses² and for rhetorical efforts to delegitimize political violence.³ They have discussed the need to increase public spending for services in the terrorist group's

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constituency area,⁴ and revealed the overall counterproductiveness of harsh, militaristic government responses.⁵

This connection does not mean, however, that conflict resolution and counterterrorism will easily proceed side by side towards a common goal. On the contrary, the two processes may very well clash at fundamental levels, from how they define their aims and foci, to how they are perceived and acted upon. Traditionally, counterterrorism has been conducted as an immediate response to a particular act and is therefore executed on a fairly short-term basis, whereas conflict resolution is a broader process, involving a “longer-term series of moves to implement [an initial] decision and to surround it with ties of acceptance.”⁶ The latter part of this definition also raises questions about the participants involved with each process—who is to be included in the “ties of acceptance”? Counterterrorism is usually decided upon at the bureaucratic level, while conflict resolution, though also demanding bureaucratic-level decisions and actions, requires a more consensus-based, societally-backed, national political agenda. Finally, counterterrorism is ultimately focused on terrorists, in other words, people with a primarily criminal, “bad guy” image, who need to be caught or eliminated. Conflict resolution, if it is to succeed, cannot afford to be as single-minded; it must be comprehensive enough in its approach to accommodate everyone and everything, from dissidents’ demands to those of the broader society, from economic issues to cultural and political ones, and so on.

Underlying the complications that may arise between conflict resolution and counterterrorism at a more philosophical level are what we might call opposing centripetal and centrifugal pressures. Conflict resolution demands consensus-building and a pulling together of all members of two or more groups, whereas counterterrorism seems characterized by separation or pulling apart. To begin with, counterterrorism is generally focused on the activities of a politically motivated and armed faction of one of the conflicting groups. While that faction may itself seek some kind of distancing (for example, separating their broader ethnic group from another ethnic group), the counterterrorism response also has centrifugal tendencies, as it tries to physically and psychologically isolate the armed elements from the rest of their own group, so that they either fade by themselves or can be more easily eliminated. In other words, while the counterterrorism forces would like to build on and expand the existing gap between the demands of the armed faction and those of the masses who may potentially support it,⁷ the armed faction wants to expand any gap between “their” masses and the other societal group.

Thus, while the processes of counterterrorism and conflict resolution may share conceptual commonalities for true effectiveness, this does not mean in practice that either one alone is adequate to deal with contexts of ethnic conflict in which terrorism is involved. Counterterrorism aimed at wiping out a terrorist faction without addressing broader ethnic community issues cannot be expected to fully solve the problem, perhaps because it is practically impossible to completely isolate an armed “terrorist” faction of a particular ethnic group from its broader potential constituency. Whether we speak of the Basques in Spain, the Palestinians, or the Kurds in Turkey, even the most accommodative group members cannot easily sever entirely some feelings of sympathy or appreciation for the armed faction of their community—particularly because it is often due to such armed groups’ actions that the broader ethnic community’s overall cause is brought to the national or global agenda.

On the other hand, the broader ideal of conflict resolution is equally inadequate for managing ethnic conflicts in which there remains a terrorist threat. Engaging in

conflict resolution in the hope that it will also resolve terrorism problems is not feasible for the obvious reason that terrorists are armed. They have the power and potential to keep themselves on the public agenda at all times, and if they do engage in terrorist activities, public reaction is certain to complicate if not derail a conflict resolution process. Moreover, a conflict resolution process involving a political, accommodative approach that acknowledges the needs of different groups may unwittingly even help an existing terrorist group, in part by providing it the means to claim that such a “soft” accommodative approach constitutes recognition of their armed efforts and thus of their own success. Any such boost to the terrorist faction is likely to have divisive and polarizing results: if the terrorist faction gains strength and popularity within its local community there will be further separating of the larger communities; and simultaneously, evidence of growing strength and popularity among the terrorist faction will naturally provoke a negative reaction from the generally much larger moderate sectors of society whose position and support are key for successful conflict resolution.

If, therefore, in cases of conflict resolution when an active terrorist group exists, the two processes must be conducted simultaneously and yet somehow not succumb to their inherent differences, how best is this to be done? This article explores this problem by looking at the case of Turkey, and specifically at recent government efforts to address the “Kurdish question.” It first shows how the chances for success of the Turkish government’s early initiatives for conflict resolution, a process referred to as the *açılım* or “opening up,” were reduced because this dilemma was not carefully considered and thus the terrorist PKK organization and its leader were allowed to become active participants in the process. The article then sets out to provide a roadmap for how such a simultaneous process can best take place. It should be noted that the aim of the roadmap suggested in this article and the understanding behind its supporting assumptions is that a realistic solution is needed: one that moves beyond wishful thinking and tries to minimize the risk of an outcome that would hurt all parties involved. It also must be acknowledged up front that it would be destructively reductionist to view the process as taking place between “Turks” and “Kurds,” as though the two were homogenous groups. Divisions in Turkey’s Turkish population are well documented, with many recent discussions focusing on a widening gap between secularists and Islamists. With respect to Turkish Kurds, a history of exposure to democratization, free economy, secularism, and nation-state policies, attached to a belatedly developed nationalism in an internationally penetrated region, has contributed greatly to a fragmented societal structure not only between them and the wider regional Kurdish population, but among Turkey’s Kurdish community itself. The proposed roadmap attempts, therefore, to suggest a route for marginalizing more radical factions without alienating the broader Kurdish community from the conflict resolution process.

The Kurdish Case

The fate of the widespread Kurdish population in the Middle East remains one of today’s major unresolved ethnic issues. Initiatives launched in Turkey in 2009 may not only have effects on the future of Turkey’s Kurdish population but may also offer a model for future patterns of ethnic-based conflict resolution in the extended Middle East. If Turkey can cope with its Kurdish question successfully, it may become an exemplar of successful peaceful conflict resolution for dealing with

minority issues, insurgencies, and even terrorism. Of course the reverse also holds true. If Turkey fails in this effort and the result is a breakdown of the current conflict resolution process, it will still present an example, but this time a negative one. Any such failure will send a message to the rest of the Middle East about the fatal risks of an accommodative, liberal conflict resolution approach based on democratic principles.⁸

The majority of Turkish citizens and institutions have in past decades considered the “Kurdish Question” as only a terrorism issue, in which the “answer” to the “question” was to be found in the successful elimination of the separatist terrorist organization, the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK).⁹ In doing so, Turkish governance, both the security establishment and political rulers, revealed a failure to distinguish between countering terrorists and countering terrorism. In the face of terrorist activity, there is of course a need for a quick response to those acts, including capturing the individuals behind them in order to remove the immediate threat and to comfort the society. But the larger issue does not end there. To fully counter a terrorism threat requires understanding the root causes of the social mobilization that produced the offending terrorists—a process more closely aligned with conflict resolution. Without addressing the deeper issues, the need to cope with the terrorists will never end.

With respect to the Kurdish Question, Turkey's leaders have generally not wanted to face the root causes of terrorist activity because it would mean directly acknowledging the existence of a very big minority population, and coming to terms with the possibility that the unifying policies that were part of the Republic's founding ideology—policies of a single nation, single language, and centralized power—were perhaps neither well-founded nor realistic. To be fair, this avoidance was not solely the result of short-sightedness or refusal; historical experience has also not been helpful in promoting self-reflection or open appraisal. Turkey received a lion's share of the major global terror waves of the 20th century, in particular that of the Cold War-provoked, left-wing wave of the 1960s and 1970s. That learning experience contributed to the general view of terrorists as agents of foreign influence, thereby slowing down any move towards introspection and towards focusing on the underlying causes of terrorism, even when the nature of that terrorist activity changed. The countering terrorists framework that may have seemed appropriate for “foreign-based” terror was at least familiar; the culture of security that it stemmed from, its predominant institutions, and the techniques to be used within it, were in place and ready to be applied in the face of new waves of terror. In a curious way, the discourse of “anti-terrorism” also served to numb public opinion and thus alleviate successive governments from having to devise overarching policies to deal with the broader Kurdish question. Ultimately though, the repeated failure to move beyond an “anti-terrorist” paradigm generally served to produce more violence, and to make a transition to conflict resolution even more difficult.

With the “opening up” (*açılım*) debate launched in mid-2009 by the Turkish government leadership, we finally see evidence of a desire to shift from an anti-terrorist approach towards a deeper addressing of the root causes of the problem: accepting that the “Kurdish Question” goes beyond the PKK, and therefore necessitates a political conflict resolution process that prioritizes non-military instruments and takes into consideration ethnically motivated issues and demands. With a shift to a conflict resolution mindset and an ethnicity-based political framework, however, Turkey is entering uncharted waters. These waters are not only unfamiliar, but

anxiety provoking, since the framework's basic premises and the questions it raises revive societal and institutional fears of the historical destruction of the Ottoman Empire via ethnic revolts and separation efforts.

Anxiety is exactly what arose in the months since the launching of the "opening up," but the fact is that despite a lengthy period of inaction, there is no turning back. First, the old framework was an anachronistic avoidance of a reality that can no longer be ignored; second, the genie is out of the bottle. Now that questions are being raised in every sector, from the political, to the judicial, to popular society,¹⁰ about what needs to be or should be done with respect to Turkey's Kurdish population, it is no longer possible to return to the days when the only question asked was "how can we defeat the PKK?" Turkey stands therefore on the brink of an unavoidable process of conflict resolution; the only real question is, what direction will this process take?

It appears that conflict resolution between Turkey and some portions of its Kurdish population can take one of two main routes. The first lies in the assumption that continued political liberalization can allow for a formulation of co-existence between Turks and Kurds within a fully democratic nation of Turkey. The second is a more confrontational route aimed at some kind of formal separation of Turks and Kurds. This second outcome would be highly complicated given the extreme intermixing of the two societies both physically (large numbers of Kurds live outside of Turkey's most heavily Kurdish populated areas) and socially (the two groups have lived among each other and intermarried over the centuries). It also runs a distinct risk of bringing about a radicalization of Turkish politics, rising efforts to crush Kurdish separatist activism, and a resulting protracted, violent, ethnic conflict, all of which would inevitably lead to a weakening of the democratic standards achieved to date.

Only the first option seems both desirable and feasible, but one factor seems to present a problem for its successful achievement. When one draws on the experiences of other attempts around the world to resolve ethnic conflicts that have been accompanied by low-intensity conflict and terrorism, it seems clear that Turkey would have been in a much better position to start this conflict resolution period had the armed and violent Kurdish group, the PKK, first been marginalized.¹¹ With the PKK and its leader remaining as key players in the conflict resolution period, the probability of protracted conflict and violence is increased. Unfortunately, the opportunity to preemptively marginalize the PKK was missed, so now a counterterrorist process of marginalizing the PKK and a process of conflict resolution must take place concurrently.

A Botched Opening

In July 2009, the Turkish government announced its determination to initiate an *açılım* (opening up) with respect to the country's many decades-long Kurdish Question.¹² In doing so it launched an important and arguably much overdue attempt to address the issue of the country's Kurdish population in an entirely new manner. What is also evident, however, is that the initial moves for this discussion were flawed. The first flaw was timing.¹³ Such a claim is not an attempt to rationalize a further postponing of this discussion; in fact it could easily be argued that it should have been launched even earlier. However this *particular* timing was problematic in various ways. In economic terms the timing could not have been

worse. In the middle of an economic crisis period,¹⁴ the government lacks the resources that could help comfort both sides in this tricky process. There is insufficient money, for example, to comfortably fund developmental projects in the country's poorer Southeast and gain the support of that region's large Kurdish population. On the other hand, if extra monies were to be set aside for that region,¹⁵ it could risk negative reactions among the Turkish population in other parts of the country, which are also undergoing tight times.

While it might be argued that there could never be a perfect moment with respect to economic matters, the timing of the initiative was also flawed in its apparent suddenness. The initial announcement in July seemed abrupt and ill-prepared, and was immediately followed by sharp criticism from the opposition parties in Parliament.¹⁶ An apparent lack of pre-synchronization and pre-negotiation among the parties increased the harshness of the responses, and ratcheted up the accusatory rhetoric, including assertions that the government, in making such a "rash" move, must have had either an ulterior motive (e.g., seeking popularity and ultimately votes among the large Kurdish population) or was being externally pressured (e.g., that this was an American plot).¹⁷

Even more important than questions of timing, there was the major structural flaw of an apparent lack of an overall framework prescribing how the discussion should ensue.¹⁸ In other words, the government failed to put forth a clear outline of what the boundaries of the "opening up" discussion should be, how the discussion should be conducted within those boundaries, and, perhaps most crucially, who should be the primary participants in the discussion.¹⁹ In terms of participants, it seems self-evident that a major conflict resolution negotiation period after years of bloody struggle will unfold more smoothly if dominated by the less radical representatives on both sides. And in fact, the Turkish government has been making steps to reduce radical elements on the Turkish side. For example, through the legal investigation known as *Ergenekon*, extreme figures among the civilians as well as the military (what could be considered the "hawks" with respect to the Kurdish question) are being tried and imprisoned, and thus their ideas are being limited. Moreover, the Turkish military has shown a willingness to accommodate democratic advances and to adapt into a more Western understanding of civil-military relations. This has included voicing the need for non-military solutions, arguing, for example, that the heavily Kurdish-populated southeast region was "secured enough" to allow non-military engagement—e.g., social, economic, psychological, and political tools—with the Kurdish Question.²⁰ More radical voices among the Turkish public also seem to be diminished, as a growing number of the public media have shown support for the process,²¹ and public surveys have shown increasing approval for a discourse of "opening up"²² (despite the equally notable increasing anxiety).

Unfortunately, the lack of proper preparation before launching the discussion meant that no efforts were taken to marginalize the radical elements on the Kurdish side. Instead, their voices have remained in the forefront, and the discussion has been dominated by the PKK and its rhetoric.²³ Even the Kurdish political party, the Democratic Society Party (DTP), is felt by many to be acting as the mouthpiece for the PKK.²⁴ This heightened visibility of the PKK has run the risk of giving them extra legitimacy in the eyes of some Kurds who, heretofore, may have been hesitant to support the organization, and has also given the impression that they are necessarily a part of the process. Not only is it not the case that they have to be part

of the discussion, but their participation is in fact anathema to the process' successful conduct and conclusion.

No Room for This PKK

In Principle . . .

Several arguments can be made for why the PKK and its jailed leader Abdullah Ocalan should not be a part of the conflict resolution process. First, at the ideological level, the PKK's clearly stated desire continues to be a legally established state with two nations.²⁵ Such an outcome would necessitate not only a new political framework, but a new understanding of what "Turkey" is—a formulation not compatible with the first route of coexistence within a democratic Turkish nation.

The PKK also carries with it tremendous baggage. With its 30 years of confrontational history, its involvement in the volatile geopolitics of Iran and Northern Iraq, and the resulting image it has among the Turkish population, the PKK's participation risks further polarization of both the Turkish and Kurdish sides—possibly even more so among the Kurds.²⁶ The group's presence therefore increases the risks of both sides falling back on old practices: in other words, reverting to terrorist/counterterrorist tendencies. The PKK might, under certain circumstances, continue to commit terrorist acts that could upset the discussion process. Likewise, the Turkish side might be led back into exclusively counterterrorism practices and perspectives, and the ethnicity-based paradigm of addressing the Kurdish Question could be overshadowed.

Finally, the PKK's presence in the discussion increases the chance of a rising Turkish resistance to what may be construed as an imbalanced process of rehabilitation. As noted above, Turkey seems to have gained some control over its more radical actors from the previous era, but the Kurdish side, with the PKK and Ocalan at its head, does not show signs of similar changes. It is not reasonable to expect the Turks to easily agree to a process in which they are going through a cleaning up, normalization effort, distancing themselves from the trauma of a 30-year low-intensity conflict, while the Kurds are seen as having not yet begun to do so. This is not to say that such an effort may not be equally desired on the Kurdish side, but given the PKK's long history and prestige among some for the role it has played in bringing Kurdish issues to the table, its continued presence makes it much more difficult for alternative representatives to be strengthened or to develop.

It also seems impossible to envisage a "PLO-ification" of the PKK, in other words, an attempt to encourage the PKK to develop and transform into an entity that could be a part of a conflict resolution process. The primary reason why it seems virtually impossible for the PKK to reform in a manner that would significantly change the picture presented above, is that the group suffers from a generational problem. Namely, those who started the PKK, with its particular strategies and ideas, still control the movement. If one looks at successful cases of transition of former insurgent or terrorist movements into partners for conflict resolution, it becomes apparent that such major transitions come about after the removal of the first generation.²⁷ There was a chance for such a transition in 1999 when Ocalan was captured and jailed and the group appeared faced with genuine marginalization, but that window of opportunity closed, and now the PKK is strong and Ocalan is

back in charge—with a unique capacity to manipulate the political process from inside his prison cell.²⁸

And in Practice . . .

Indeed, in the early months of the *açılım*, it became evident that the PKK's presence would be a hindrance to progress. The events of one week in particular show how a conflict resolution process with PKK involvement runs the risk of failure. In mid-October 2009, it was reported that a group of PKK militants would come from Iraq and surrender in Turkey as a sign of good will and support for the overall process. In response, the understanding was that Turkish authorities would ensure their safe entry and release in Turkey. This peaceful surrender and release was intended to be a major step towards a gradual full disarmament of the PKK, and in the days leading up to the arrival the Prime Minister made speeches stressing the positive message that would be sent by this move. Although the political opposition in parliament was cautious, the mood was in fact generally hopeful.

On Monday, October 19, a group of 34 PKK militants arrived at the Turkish border with Iraq. Tens of thousands of people were there to meet them, including DTP officials and numerous members of the press. While officially the event went smoothly—a special court was set up to question the incoming militants and “release” them on Turkish soil—details of how events unfolded proved highly problematic. Perhaps most damaging, live nationwide broadcasts revealed images of PKK militants arriving in their familiar battle fatigues, cheering and making victory signs, and being saluted and praised by those greeting them. Both PKK and DTP members speaking to the press referred to the arriving militants as “peace ambassadors,” and attributed credit for the possibility of such an important event to Abdullah Ocalan and his longtime efforts. Almost immediately, commentaries began to emerge that the management of this “surrender” had been poor,²⁹ and that it had turned instead into a political show to proclaim victory by the PKK, an organization that has been legally, politically, and socially considered a terrorist network. The decision of the court to release the militants also garnered criticism that they constituted a deviation from routine legal procedures.

On Tuesday, October 20, the Turkish National Security Council met for nearly seven hours. Even though the resulting statement avoided significant mention of this particular issue, insider reports revealed that the previous day's show and the widely broadcast image of the PKK as a victorious organization were discussed in the meeting, and considered by many as unacceptable behavior. As the day wore on, media commentaries became even more condemnatory of Monday's “show,” and intimations began to emerge of a major societal reaction on the Turkish side to the images of a victorious PKK.

By Wednesday, October 21, statements were released by governmental leaders, including the Prime Minister, saying that Monday's display had not been helpful to overall progress, that it was provoking a backlash, and that within this context the government was considering putting a halt to planned future arrivals of other PKK militants. The next day, in light of increasingly bitter public commentary, the Turkish Prime Minister announced that if the radical elements on the Kurdish side refused to act in a more accommodating manner, the entire process would go back to square one. Reports also emerged that the government was sending a message to the PKK, telling them to cancel a scheduled arrival of PKK members from Europe.

By the end of the week, there was widespread indignation on the Turkish side with how things had progressed. The political opposition was up in arms, accusing the government of “treason,” of being “hand in hand with the PKK,” and of violating the Constitution by setting up puppet courts.³⁰ Public opinion of the process was also in a spiral, and the government was openly backpedaling on the whole issue. On the other side, the DTP had become completely marginalized, appearing only as a sidekick to the PKK, while the PKK had emerged even more concretely as the primary political representative of the ethnically mobilized Kurdish population. Overall, the hopes for a smooth solution to the conflict resolution process were essentially dashed, and the emphasis had switched to damage control to keep the process from folding completely.

This is a picture of one week of attempted conflict resolution. There can be little question but that the negative outcome was due to the large, visible role played by the PKK. Clearly, with the PKK on the frontlines, the conflict resolution process is hampered because the organization does not wish to or cannot move away from what it was. The more visible the PKK, the more contentious the reaction, and in such an environment the Turkish government is less able to act courageously, and chances for a successful conflict resolution are reduced. In the year and a half following that critical week, the process has ground almost entirely to a standstill. As noted earlier, however, there can be no turning back on the opening up. Whatever threats the government might make about going back to “square one,” the fact is that the process must go on, and it must do so with the added handicap of a revitalized PKK. How then can the conflict resolution process best be resumed, and what role should counterterrorism play in the process?

A Road Map

General Principles

In prescribing how best to proceed from here, two main points must be made at the outset. First, there is the need to reiterate that a successful roadmap to deal with the Kurdish question is vital for Turkey, but also has important implications for the region and for the international community—the EU and USA in particular. Turkey’s route to dealing with its Kurdish population will likely serve as an example for other regional powers dealing with domestic ethnicity issues. If Turkey achieves a successful outcome of peaceful integration under a democratic rubric, it will provide a positive reference point for others to follow. If Turkey follows a route of separation, then others may be more likely to do so as well. As noted earlier, our starting assumption is that a separation route will, in this case, heighten the chance for conflict, and is not therefore a good solution for anyone. If separation and conflict emerge in Turkey, not only will democratic conflict resolution become associated with the potential for provoking additional problems, but regional security overall will be further disrupted, as Kurds and other minorities in neighboring countries draw on this example. The following roadmap therefore is one that aims for a solution within a framework of coexistence in a democratic Turkey.

With respect to the strategies prescribed here, the main underlying idea is that they must be multisided and simultaneous. Any roadmap that suggests unidimensional policies, or concentrates singularly on dealing with the different groups or problems in a linear manner, stands little hope for success. Therefore, even though

we argue that the PKK is a primary concern, this does not mean that the conflict resolution process can succeed by only concentrating for now on the PKK dimension. It must simultaneously deal with this issue and all other dimensions as well. The strategies must first, help to liberate the process as much as possible from the confrontational tendencies of radicals and fringe elements of all kinds; and second, attempt to satisfy as many non-radicals as possible. The latter include the average Turk, as well as the majority of Kurds in Turkey, who must be kept as much as possible a part of the democratic, secular, liberal, Western-oriented, country. What, therefore, can and should be offered within democratic norms and practices to keep the middle ground satisfied while at the same time minimizing the extremes?

Identifying Target Groups

In a combined counterterrorism/conflict resolution process, a starting point is to get a general idea about what is meant by the middle ground and extremes. In this case, with respect to Turkey's Kurds, three general groupings can be identified—albeit with some inevitable overlap: 1) Integrated Kurds; 2) Islamist Kurds; and 3) Active Ethnic/Separatist Kurds. While the first clearly represent the moderate group (generally satisfied with the status quo) and the last can be considered politically revisionist (to varying degrees, from wanting to secure autonomous group rights, to seeking regional autonomy, to wanting a separate state), the middle group has elements of both.

So-called “Integrated Kurds” can be found represented in virtually all Turkish political parties and, recently, have been participating with greater acknowledgement of their Kurdish identity, and thus their sensitivity to Kurdish affairs. They are said to represent around half of Turkey's Kurdish population.³¹ Across the board, they reject violence as a means for Kurds to achieve political goals in Turkey. Their overall demands with respect to Kurdish issues are to increase individual rights, and to level democratic and economic standards in Turkey; within such a picture, the rights of traditionally underrepresented groups will be more surely guaranteed.

Islamist Kurds may represent up to one-fifth of the Kurdish population.³² The majority of Islamist Kurds have been a part of the country's pro-Islamist political parties, and have typically supported the AK party in the last two elections. There is a tendency towards some violence among fringe elements of Kurdish Islamists, with some ideological influence coming from Iran. At points in the past, some radical members of related groups have gotten into violent struggles against both the PKK and later against the Turkish government.³³

Finally, the third group is that of active, ethnically mobilized/separatist Kurds, who can be considered as possible supporters of the PKK and its agenda. Since the DTP party is widely believed to be politically dominated by—some argue under the control of—the PKK, many DTP supporters can also be grouped in this category. To get a sense of the amount of support this group has, therefore, we can consider the results of the last national election. The DTP received 5.6% (2.6 million) of the total votes.³⁴ This represents roughly 40% of the overall Kurdish population.³⁵ Even though there have been slight variations in the political demands of active ethnic-separatist Kurds over the years, in the final analysis, we can say that they seek some type of autonomy, whether a strong, distinct ethnic autonomy within Turkey, a regional autonomy within a federated Turkey, or a fully independent Kurdish state.

Rescuing the Conflict-Resolution Process From Radicalization: A Multidimensional Approach

Given such an understanding of the primary identities of Kurds within Turkey, what can be done to isolate the fringe elements, without alienating their moderate counterparts? Looking first to the so-called “integrated” Kurds, policies must be in place to keep them invested in the idea of belonging to a democratic, unified nation. Despite a general sense of pessimism that often seems to cloud discussions about Turkey’s Kurdish problem, there are positive notes. Turkey’s journey of integrating with the West, specifically its accession process to the EU, as well as opportunities that have arisen as part of liberal economic consolidation, have put in place a framework in which integrated Kurds should continue to be satisfied. Rising democracy standards with an even greater sensitivity to individual rights will presumably strengthen their existing stance against violent approaches or separatist arguments, and will also promote their increasing participation in political parties and civil society organizations. In other words, continued integration of this group can be encouraged by conceptualizing today’s problems as “Turkey’s problems,” and by seeking solutions accordingly. “Turkey’s problems” are those that can be best solved by deeper democratization and greater economic growth—outcomes that benefit everyone within Turkey’s borders. Such an approach is not only best suited to assure the continued integration of this first group of Kurds and to minimize the chances that they will turn against a peaceful solution, it also helps ease the psychological struggle of those Kurds who want recognition without separation—a delicate balance not easily addressed. At the practical level, therefore, Turkey’s campaign for democratic opening up must move forward on all levels, overall economic growth in the country must be supported, and existing economic policies with respect to the Kurdish regions of the country should continue, from subsidized loans for construction and economic development to infrastructural investments in health services, roads, education, and so on.³⁶

For the Islamist Kurds, again, the current picture is cautiously positive, because pro-Islamist politics have been in power for several years, and Islamist Kurds have a clear role within that picture. The ruling AK party government now has around 50–75 Kurdish parliamentarians,³⁷ and a maintaining of the government’s pro-Islamist discourse and policies should be enough to keep their constituents satisfied and averse to separatist, conflictive routes. On the other hand, though the radical elements within the Islamist Kurds may not be significant in number, they are dangerous and present a clear risk to a smooth conflict resolution process. Fortunately, because their numbers are small, it is feasible to try and reduce them to an ineffectual fringe; therefore the criminal countering measures that have been put in place against radical Kurdish Islamists in violent organizations like Kurdish Hizbullah need to continue.³⁸ One cautionary note to Turkish authorities is that they be careful not to simply dismiss the radical Kurdish Islamists as being the lesser of two evils in comparison with the PKK. The radical Islamist Kurdish groups are much more closely linked to the radical Islamist circles in Iraq and the larger Jihadist networks than are any other groups in Turkey, and must therefore be kept under tight control.

Finally, with respect to those Kurds who can be identified as active ethnic-separatists, there are two dimensions to the roadmap: what do you do with the PKK as a terrorist organization,³⁹ and how do you promote an alternative representative for non-Islamist Kurds that is independent from the PKK?

Addressing the second point first, within the general politics of the country there has to be a movement of capacity building for legal and legitimate, PKK-free (to the extent possible) representation of Kurds. This effort should target the political core, and therefore be aimed at the DTP. There is no denying that assuming this position will be difficult for the DTP, and any realistic plan must be aware of how great the challenge is. The biggest problems for the DTP or other Kurdish political parties seem to stem from their strong ties with the PKK itself. The founding rationale and energy that helped shape the basic culture of the Kurdish political parties is essentially the same as that of the PKK, namely, a separatist ideology with Marxist-Leninist, revolutionary left-wing origins. Within this philosophy, armed activity and an authoritarian ideology are the norm, and the role given to legal, political extensions is minimal. In the case of the PKK, for example, the political wing is in charge of civilian, political propaganda. The impression therefore—if not practice—is of political parties that are not independent actors, but institutions basically serving as propaganda wings in counterpart to the military side of a shared movement.

Other factors also contribute to the argument that the PKK holds considerable behind-the-scenes control over the legal Kurdish political parties. The PKK's first generation leaders remain alive and active; therefore their seniority, prestige, and power naturally shape the political atmosphere within legal Kurdish politics. Cultural issues play a role as well. Patriarchal cultural structures within Kurdish society facilitate single-power cults, therefore favoring the PKK's hierarchical management style over such practices as consensus building and competition of ideas. In light of such pressures, legal political parties seem unable to nominate candidates that are clearly disassociated from the PKK, but rather, seem forced to agree to nominations supported by the PKK's leadership.⁴⁰

A process of capacity building for the DTP must therefore begin with an official setting aside of feelings that the DTP is indistinguishable from the PKK. The entire political system in Turkey, from political parties, to bureaucrats and other state authorities, must try to embrace the DTP and its leaders. In the parliament or at other political gatherings, DTP leaders should be properly acknowledged and treated as important partners in the political process. Their stature and self-confidence must be boosted, since isolating or ostracizing them only pushes them further towards the PKK. Embracing the DTP places the onus on them to more carefully consider and balance their affinities to the PKK with their full participation in the government. Of course the fear is real that such a legitimizing of the DTP ultimately spells a legitimizing of the PKK, but this risk can be afforded if it is done as part of a multi-dimensional approach. In this case, for example, a boosting of the DTP that coincides with pressure and effective policies against the PKK is a risk that can be taken.

At the practical level, to help improve the DTP's democratic and legal accountability among Kurds, there must also be a promotion of the party's connection to issues of social welfare and services, rather than to just those of ethnicity and politics. In other words, the government needs to promote and support DTP representatives (currently in charge of nearly 96 municipalities)⁴¹ to speak about building roads, clean water projects, improved sewage systems, or other municipal services, rather than focusing only on Kurdish rights. If necessary, DTP-represented municipalities should receive additional aid—provided it is guaranteed that this aid is spent for infrastructural development and social or municipal services.

It is true that if any conflict resolution plan is to possibly succeed, the imbalanced relationship between the PKK and the legal Kurdish political parties needs

to be fully taken into consideration when deciding to boost the DTP's role as political interlocutor. Promoting the DTP must therefore be done simultaneously with a pushing back on the PKK. How, then, can the PKK be effectively marginalized?

Dealing With the PKK

The policies recommended above, if performed in a cohesive and integrated manner, will contribute to maintaining the support of the already integrated Kurds and the peaceful Islamist Kurds, and will help to isolate the radical Islamists and the armed PKK. But these efforts alone will not be enough to fully marginalize the PKK and eliminate the risk that it could interfere with and disrupt the conflict resolution process; additional concrete steps must be taken to reduce the armed potential. The focus of these concrete steps must be that they serve to minimize the PKK's violent armed power, without upsetting or alienating moderate Kurds within or outside of Turkey.

Key to this effort is the removal of the PKK's safe haven in Northern Iraq. As long as the armed PKK maintains a safe haven this close strategically to Turkish territory, it will inevitably continue to securitize and radicalize the entire process, thus keeping its success in constant jeopardy. The presence of armed PKK forces safely ensconced across the border essentially guarantees a continuation of logistical support, effective propaganda, and violence that will keep Turkish authorities embedded in a counterterrorism understanding, and will overshadow any emerging, evolving, PKK-free practices by the DTP. To wax poetic, under the shadow of arms, no political roses can emerge.

Many may argue that it is not possible to eliminate the PKK presence in Northern Iraq, the argument being that during the 1990s Turkey repeatedly sent thousands of troops into Iraq and even maintained a continuous military presence there until 2003, and was still unable to achieve this goal. Granted, such efforts alone are insufficient to cope with the overall issue, but this does not mean that military measures should not at least be kept on the table, as they too can have a role to play. It would be inaccurate, for example, to say that previous Turkish military operations were complete failures. In 1992, following operations by cooperating Turkish and Northern Iraqi (Talabani) forces, the PKK was forced to withdraw to the Zele region near the Iranian border. This move dramatically disrupted the PKK organization and forced it to declare a cease-fire. In 1995, Turkey's second major military operation led the PKK to declare a change in strategy, away from a protracted people's war, and then in 1997, a third major operation launched the process that ended with the removal of PKK leader Ocalan from his refuge in Syria. Despite these relative successes, the military's inability to control the entire terrain on a permanent basis, together with fluctuating political developments, have enabled the PKK's resilience. Clearly, therefore, the military approach is a limited one, something not to be dismissed entirely, but something that will be meaningful only when used as part of a larger strategy.

The most realistic goal of such military operations, therefore, is not to aim for total elimination of the PKK, but rather to significantly damage the PKK's logistics and training potential in Northern Iraq, which can in turn help produce greater political confidence for both accommodative Turkish politics and for PKK-free Kurdish politics. Ultimately, for a successful conflict resolution process to take place in Turkey, the PKK should be prevented from feeling safe and comfortable when in Northern Iraq. A destabilized PKK will be less able to sabotage a peace process.

There are a number of other reasons why the PKK's safe haven in Northern Iraq is extremely harmful for the resolution process, beginning with the role it plays in helping the PKK maintain its arms and then use that strength for various kinds of leverage. Maintaining arms and strength just across the border helps them have social, political, and economic control over the broader Kurdish population in Turkey. It enables them to threaten and even punish those Kurds who disagree with or act in opposition to their violent separatist efforts.⁴² They also use those arms to guarantee their institutional continuity,⁴³ in other words, the occasional violent acts they commit are a visible reminder that the group is still intact and in power, and thus serve to help boost internal recruitment. Such acts can even be used for bargaining purposes and leverage against the government. Armed attacks, from hit and run acts, planting roadside bombs, or targeting pipelines and touristic centers, make the governing AK party appear incompetent in their new efforts to deal with the PKK and with the broader Kurdish Question. A sense of government failure combined with the aftereffect of the attacks themselves, breeds increased Turkish nationalism, strains civil-military relations, lowers Kurdish support for the government, and risks a loss of votes from moderate Turks who just want stability. Continued attacks therefore make sense for the armed faction, since an AK party government feeling such pressure might be expected to conduct more accommodating policies to the ethnic separatist Kurds in order to bring an end to the attacks.

In light of these arguments, it is clear that the PKK's armed forces' threatening potential must be minimized. To accomplish this, there must be a two-pronged approach of awards and threats. The award must be based on guarantees that militants who give up their arms can go back to their countries (primarily, but not exclusively, Turkey), and that their legal, safe return will be supported by economic and political incentives. In Turkey, for example, support and rehabilitation centers must be established and, crucially, a system must be in place to help returned combatants find employment. The level of trust necessary for such a policy to work is admittedly tremendous. A framework of guarantees would therefore have to be certified state policy, ultimately based on consensus among political parties, the military, the government, the presidency, and intellectuals/the media. To achieve this, however, there must first be an internal consensus on the details of the economic, legal, and political arrangements within the Turkish state establishment. Negotiations must be conducted outside of public view, for as similar previous resolution processes have shown, an excessive multiplicity of voices should be avoided. Moreover, once an agreement is achieved, it should be conveyed discreetly and through closed channels to the representatives of the armed groups in Turkey and outside.

In order to guarantee that the conflict process proceeds and that as many PKK elements as possible agree to it, there must also be a threat. The first dimension of the threat must include a convincing imposition of an internationally accepted image that all legal and political barriers have been lifted from Turkey to deal with the PKK's safe havens beyond Turkey's borders. The second dimension of the threat must be that those militants who refuse the above offer will be the target of counterterrorist operations. Such operations would by nature be painful, but would be necessary to marginalize these radicals and protect the conflict resolution process. Any such operations would have to be conducted in a manner designed to minimize civilian casualties, and in line with all international and national legal standards.

Ultimately, at the national level, one of the greatest challenges to success in this effort may be the government's lack of experience or inability in galvanizing state and politics behind a cohesive, national strategic plan. One contributing factor to this ineffectiveness may be that since Turkish democracy and democratic politics remain still quite young, and have yet to develop a mature tradition of crafting bipartisanship, the role of the opposition is generally understood as simply opposing everything the government proposes. On the other hand, governing is still seen to some degree as practicing power without necessarily trying to build up pacts and seek consensus. Such understandings seriously handicap the potential solutions for national problems such as the Kurdish question, and others. Various other problems, from the over-compartmentalization of Turkish governance—even within the security establishment—and the historical faultlines and lack of trust between the security establishment and the political realm⁴⁴ (not to mention within the political realm itself), present additional stumbling blocks to the managing of a multi-level roadmap. Nevertheless, if ever there was a time that Turkey could manage this, it is now. Domestically, the marginal extremists on the Turkish side are at their lowest level of visibility ever, and internationally, expectations are high for Turkey to assume a role of regional stabilizer rather than disturbance. One question remains: what should the role of the international community itself be in this process?

The Role of the International Community

The roadmap above has emphasized certain principal features necessary for a successful conduct of the conflict resolution process being launched in Turkey, and has identified particular measures and approaches that must be carried out to ensure the benefit of different parties in the process. There is also an underlying reality that for many of the recommended steps in the roadmap, the international community, and the United States in particular, has a crucial role to play. The first step of this concerns the safe haven in Northern Iraq. As argued above, minimizing the PKK's armed potential cannot be done without dismantling their Northern Iraq safe haven, and this cannot be done without American engagement and cooperation. American policies which indirectly serve to protect a safe haven in northern Iraq for a group that threatens not only an American ally but also the greater stability in a critical region is against American interests.

Helping Turkey deal with the PKK's presence in Northern Iraq is not only important for dealing with the direct problem of reducing the organization's armed forces, it has an important role in providing moral support for Turkey in what is a challenging process overall. American engagement with the PKK issue has the power to give a major psychological boost to a Turkish government and political system that may be feeling hesitant and cautious about the impending process, and can help increase its will to move ahead—even with those dimensions of the roadmap that are not directly aimed at the PKK. Helpful moves by the Americans and the rest of the international community can strengthen the Turkish government's resolve, and undercut accusations by opposing Turkish voices that the international community serves only to block Turkey's efforts vis-à-vis the PKK. Such efforts would thus indirectly benefit the United States, by helping reestablish a more positive image of America in Turkey.

Helping the Turkish government in this effort seems to carry few risks for the United States. Some might warn that they will upset the Kurdish population in

Northern Iraq, but the only element there that is truly likely to be offended and angered is that of the armed PKK itself. As long as such efforts against the armed PKK forces in Northern Iraq are conducted within a multi-dimensional roadmap, both within a framework that supports democratic and economic development and in coordination with efforts like support for the DTP and amnesty for those PKK who disarm, it is unlikely that average Kurds in either Turkey or Northern Iraq will take offense. The key to success remains a simultaneous isolating of the radical marginals, with a continuing support of the moderate majority.

It is true that the U.S. is in many ways already cooperating with Turkey, particularly in terms of sharing intelligence, which is utilized to support Turkish air raids. But the limitations of this cooperation are paralleled in the limitations of the resulting air raids. As is clear from the American experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, air operations are not completely effective against guerilla groups and insurgents, which, like the PKK, operate in small numbers and take advantage of the rough terrain. Combating such groups requires land capabilities and surgical attack operation potential, which means controlling the land and keeping the insurgent group continuously on the run. Accomplishing this with the PKK can only be realized by a willing Iraqi government and northern Iraqi authorities, for which American influence is key. The current U.S. attitude towards the Kurdish question in the region appears to be a rather passive one of "wait and see."⁴⁵ Such a position will need to become more proactive if it is to serve both Turkey's and America's interests.

Conclusion

Conflict resolution processes are never easy, and they become more complicated when one of the participating parties contains an armed and active terrorist faction. Experiences from the Turkish case point to certain suggestions for successful conflict resolution in contexts with existing terrorism problems. First among these is that engaging in conflict resolution efforts alone is not an adequate approach to solving a terrorism problem. It is similarly not feasible to move abruptly from a counterterrorism paradigm to one of conflict resolution—abruptly dismissing the institutions, rules, and policies of the counterterrorism establishment and moving into an exclusively political, negotiation-based approach. Rather, one needs a simultaneous management of conflict resolution and counterterrorism, but with certain conditions.

The Turkish case suggests that throughout such conflict resolution processes, the government must maintain both the discursive and physical upper-hand against the terrorist faction. Public opinion on all sides must continue to believe that the government remains strong, and that traditional counterterrorism policies can and may continue if necessary. The potential to defeat the terrorists militarily should be real, and to manage this, the counterterrorism establishment should emotionally and physically maintain a determined capacity to strike back if necessary. This show of strength potential is necessary to keep the terrorist faction from being able to use their own armed potential as leverage during the political negotiations. For successful conflict resolution, the terrorists must be kept in check, and only by having a working counterterrorism strategy in place and poised to activate can this be accomplished.

Having said this, however, there must equally be a very clear understanding that such counterterrorism readiness is very much a part of a larger conflict resolution process. Ultimately, while neither process can stand alone, conflict resolution can

also not serve to counter terrorist activities. On the contrary, effective resolution of such conflicts seems to demand a multifaceted policy in which counterterrorism serves to further conflict resolution.

Notes

1. An exception may be Jacob Bercovitch and I. William Zartman's chapter on "Terrorism and Conflict Resolution" in *The SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution*, eds. Jacob Bercovitch, Victor Kremenyuk, and I. William Zartman (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2009), 437–454; even that work, however, focuses on the use of conflict resolution (negotiation) techniques for use in counterterrorism, specifically in hostage negotiations, not on the actual relationship between the two processes. Since conflict resolution is also sometimes associated with democratic expansion and liberalization, another possible exception might be Chenowethi (2010), which looks at democratization and terrorism, and shows that more political competition (democracy) correlates positively with more terrorist activity. Erica Chenowethi, "Democratic Competition and Terrorist Activity," *Journal of Politics* 72 (2010): 16–30.

2. Luis A. Gil-Alana and Carlos P. Barros, "A Note on the Effectiveness of National Anti-Terrorist Policies: Evidence from ETA," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 27, no. 1 (2010): 28–46.

3. Arjun Chowdhury and Ronald R. Krebs, "Talking about Terror: Counterterrorist Campaigns and the Logic of Representation," *European Journal of International Relations* 16, no. 1 (2010): 125–150.

4. Kevin Siqueira and Todd Sandler, "Terrorists versus the Government: Strategic Interaction, Support, and Sponsorship," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50, no. 6 (2006): 878–898.

5. B. Peter Rosendorff and Todd Sandler, "Too Much of a Good Thing? The Proactive Response Dilemma," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48, no. 5 (2004), 657–671.

6. Berkovitch, Kremenyuk, and Zartman (see note 1 above), 10.

7. For example, the Basque public has not always supported the actions and goals of the ETA. See Gil-Alana & Barros (note 2 above).

8. It should be noted that there is a qualitative difference between an environment in which liberalism is relatively embedded and the people can rationally defend and shift their free political will, and one in which the social and political life is determined by religious, tribal, ethnic, and/or primordial hierarchies that limit people's individual assessments and political maneuvering capacity. The northern Middle East, despite newly experienced opening up to the influences of liberalization, remains largely under the influence of traditional social and political structures, which inevitably affects the fate of conflict resolution efforts.

9. For more on the Turkish state's historical handling of the PKK, see Ersel Aydinli, "Between Security and Liberalization: Decoding Turkey's Struggle with the PKK," *Security Dialogue* 33, no. 2 (June 2002): 209–225.

10. See for example an informal poll taken on whether Turkey's next candidate for the Eurovision song contest should sing in both Turkish and Kurdish. Story available at: <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/Yazar.aspx?aType=YazarDetay&ArticleID=1131056&b=Eurovisiona%20Turkce-Kurtce%20sarkiyla%20katilabilir%20miyiz&KategoriID=26>

11. Seth G. Jones and Martin C. Libicki, *How Terrorist Groups End: Lessons for Countering al Qaeda* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2008); Gaga Gvineria, "How does Terrorism End?" in Paul K. Davis and Kim Cragin (eds.), *Social Science for Counterterrorism: Putting the Pieces Together* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2009), 257–298; Nat Colleta, Markus Kostner, and Ingo Wiederhofer, "Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration: Lessons and Liabilities in Reconstruction," in Robert I. Rotberg (ed.), *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 170–182.

12. The first mention of a move towards some kind of initiative came from President Gul, during his visit to Iran in March 2009, when he said, "Good things will happen in the Kurdish Question" [Kürt sorunun da iyi şeyler olacağını] <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/11179281.asp>. Prime Minister Erdoğan assigned the Interior Minister to coordinate the process, <http://www.zaman.com.tr/haber.do?haberno=872350>, and later announced he would himself speak to the Kurdish DTP leader. <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Politika/Default.aspx?t=03.08.2009&i=202721>

13. The timing was bad on several fronts. From the government's perspective, it was bad timing with respect to the Kurdish Democratic Society Party (DTP). The DTP had gained a significant number of municipalities in the Southeast region in the 2007 election—several of which they had won from the AKP. Since the municipalities are the symbol of public power, the DTP was enjoying the psychological upperhand over the AKP. Civil-military relations at the time were tense as the government had passed a late-night surprise legislation paving the way for military personnel to be tried in civilian courts. (July 9, 2009). Moreover, the alleged competition between the Prime Minister and the President themselves was heating up, meaning that consensus was not even likely to be found among the ruling elite.

14. For a detailed analysis on the severity of the economic crisis, see the *TEPAV Economics Follow up Report*, May–June 2009. Available at: http://www.tepav.org.tr/tur/admin/dosyabul/upload/2009_TEPAV_Mali_Izleme_Mayis_Haziran_Raporu.pdf

15. Among these extra monies, the “GAP Action Plan (2008–2012),” made public in 2008, indicated that 12 billion dollars would be invested in the Southeast region. <http://arsiv.ntvmsnbc.com/news/438984.asp>

16. Among the responses were those of then opposition party leader Deniz Baykal, “In the name of solving the problem, let's not dissolve Turkey” [“sorun çözeceğiz diye Türkiye'yi çözmeyelim”]. Available at www.chp.org.tr/HaberDetayi.aspx?NewsID=133; and the National Action Party (MHP) leader Devlet Bahçeli: “We won't fall into the trap the Kurdish ‘opening up’” [Kürt açılımı oyununa gelmeyeceğiz], available at www.stargazete.com/politika/bahceli-kurt-acilimi-bir-oyundur-haber-206595.htm

17. For examples of the two main opposition parties' claims that the “opening up” was an American plan, see: <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/Siyaset/SonDakika.aspx?aType=SonDakika&ArticleID=1132106> and <http://www.cnnturk.com/video/turkiye/2009/08/25/kurt.acilimi.abdnin.plani.mi/15068/index.html>. For a rejection of such claims by the American Embassy in Ankara, see: <http://www.haber7.com/haber/20090824/Kurt-Acilimi-ABD-projesi-iddiasina-yanit.php>

18. The apparent lack of a framework is implied in the ever-changing reference points for the initiative, from early references to a “Kurdish opening up,” <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/Siyaset/HaberDetay.aspx?aType=HaberDetay&KategoriID=4&ArticleID=1120538&Date=23.07.2009&b=Erdogan:%20Kurt%20acilimi%20icin%20calisma%20baslattik&ver=15>, to calling it a “democratic opening up,” <http://www.ntv.com.tr/id/24991846/>, and finally, referring to the initiative as a “National Unity Project,” <http://samanyolu.com/haber/52945/basbakan-mill%C3%AE-birlik-projesinin-ilk-adimini-attik/>

19. In the absence of a clear plan for the boundaries of the discussion, early debate turned controversial on questions of constitutional reform, leading the government to react with counter-claims that they would not touch the constitution. See both: <http://www.haber7.com/haber/20091008/Cicek-Ortak-degerler-ilk-3-madde.php>, and <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/Siyaset/HaberDetay.aspx?aType=HaberDetay&ArticleID=1134188&b=Anayasa%20degisikligi%20gundemimizde%20yok>

20. Chief of Staff İlker Başbuğ, in his speech on 14 April 2009, presented a general outline of the army's approach towards terrorism, and emphasized non-military strategies. He also refers to individual identity rights, and the need to acknowledge those rights. http://www.tsk.tr/10_ARSIV/10_1_Basin_Yayin_Faaliyetleri/10_1_7_Konusmalar/2009/org_ilkerbasbug_harpak_konusma_14042009.html

21. Although the Turkish media tend to be very much divided in their positions on the government itself, on the “Opening Up” issue, there was no clear opposition. For example, the more liberal media, generally considered critical of the government (the Dogan group), by and large supported the process, presumably since it was, at heart, a liberal policy. Also necessary to note are allegations that the media may be becoming more fearful of governmental reprisals for negative reporting.

22. For four different surveys from the past two years see: 25.08.2009: http://www.aksam.com.tr/2009/08/25/haber/guncel/6185/gerilim_duserse_destek_artacak_.html; 25.11.2009: http://www.aktifhaber.com/news_detail.php?id=257469; 11.01.2010: http://www.aktifhaber.com/news_detail.php?id=266258; 14.02.2010: <http://www.haber3.com/acilima-destek,-ergenekona-veto-550779h.htm>

23. An example of this domination can be seen in the words of the Chair of the Diyarbakir Chamber of Commerce, a former politician, who despite his earlier anti-PKK

views, in the course of the Opening Up process came to express far more favorable views to the PKK: “Nothing will work without the PKK” [PKK Yok Sayılırsa Olmaz] and “Ocalan Cannot be Dismissed” [Öcalan Gözardı Edilmemeli]. Available at <http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalDetay&ArticleID=946354&Date=23.07.2009&CategoryID=77>

24. Sources include Leyla Zana’s statement in which she refers to Ocalan openly as the “leader” of the Kurdish movement [Our *Leader* was in Imrali in ’99] “Onderimiz 99’da Imrali’daydı” (*Hurriyet*, 19.07.09, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/6916207.asp?gid=180> and a call from European leaders to the DTP to “distance itself from terrorism.” <http://www.todayszaman.com/tzweb/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=117904>

25. PKK circles were not only very much in opposition to the initiative, but also referred back to their original goals when starting the struggle decades earlier, including the essential ideas of an autonomous parliament, militia—a de facto separate Kurdish state. See articles from the official PKK news portal: <http://www.firatnews.nu/index.php?rupel=nuce&nuceID=14514>. “The *acilim* theater will come to an end”: <http://www.firatnews.nu/index.php?rupel=nuce&nuceID=14953>; “Karayılan: We’ll resist against these classic tactics”: <http://www.firatnews.nu/index.php?rupel=nuce&nuceID=14327>; <http://www.firatnews.nu/index.php?rupel=nuce&nuceID=12070>; “Cemil Bayık: The Kurdish nation should get ready for historical resistance”: <http://www.firatnews.nu/index.php?rupel=nuce&nuceID=15117>

26. The PKK itself was born and developed by drawing on the conflictive primordial potential among Kurdish tribes. For example, the organization was responsible for the deaths of certain Chieftains in order to provoke inter-group enmity, and to promote recruitment. Nihat Ali Özcan, *PKK, Tarihi & idot;deolojisi ve Yöntemi* (Ankara: ASAM Publishing: 1999), 41, 122.

27. Gvineria (see note 11 above).

28. Via his lawyers, Ocalan’s ideas are regularly released either in pro-PKK news portals or even in Turkish newspapers. His ideas and positions are allowed to be a part of the discussion and thus shift the debate in various directions. For example, lawyers, after meeting with Ocalan, publish their meeting notes in PKK publications, see e.g., <http://www.gundem-online.net/haber.asp?id=35>. Also see the public debates on whether Ocalan should be forbidden from talking with his lawyers due to fears that these meetings are actually being used for dissemination of his ideas, e.g., <http://www.cnnturk.com/2010/turkiye/02/25/ocalanin.avukatlariyla.gorusmesi.yasaklanabilir/565281.0/index.html>. Ocalan has even been known to scold the Kurdish political leaders, e.g., “I Keep Getting Scolded by Ocalan” [“Öcalan’dan habire fırça yiyip duruyorum”], <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/24970655/>

29. Former opposition Leader Baykal was quoted as saying, “The Law was Assaulted to Protect the PKK.” <http://www.haberturk.com/polemik/haber/500797-pkkliyi-himaye-icin-hukukun-irzina-gecildi> and MHP Leader Bahçeli said, “Erdogan, with [this policy] lit the fuse for Turkey’s ethnic disintegration,” <http://www.haber7.com/haber/20090519/Bahceliden-Erdogana-ihonet-suclamasi.php>

30. In addition to these accusations, other criticisms by various opposition party members can be seen at: <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/12910729.asp>

31. For a historical background to such categorizations see M. Hakan Yavuz and Nihat Ali Özcan, “The Kurdish Question and Turkey’s Justice and Development Party,” *Middle East Policy* 13, no. 1 (2006): 102–119.

32. See for details and origins of the political Islamist movement among the Kurds in Turkey “Kurdish Investigation” [*Kürd Soruşturması*] (Ankara: Sor Publishing, 1992); Fulya Atacan, “A Kurdish Islamist Group in Modern Turkey: Shifting Identities,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 37, no. 3 (2001): 111–144; and *Hizbullah Terör Örgütü* [The Hizbullah Terror Organization] (Ankara: TEMUH Publishing, 2001).

33. Iran’s influence on and involvement in the Kurdish Islamist movement was revealed in documents confiscated during police operations against Hizbullah in 2000. This involvement included the military and political training of the organization’s leaders in Iran. Also in these documents was evidence of the Islamist Kurdish groups’ clashes with the PKK. See for reporting on this: “Iran’s Secret Service Trained Velioglu (Hizbullah’s leader)” [Velioglu’nu İran Gizli Servisi eğitti] available at: <http://arama.hurriyet.com.tr/arsivnews.aspx?id=-127621> and “DGM (State Security Court): Iran Trained and Supported Hizbullah” [DGM: Hizbullah’ı İran eğitti ve destekledi] <http://arama.hurriyet.com.tr/arsivnews.aspx?id=-158015>

34. Results can be seen on the webpage of the Turkish High Election Council: <http://www.ysk.gov.tr/ysk/docs/2009MahalliIdareler/ResmiGazete/IIGenel.pdf>

35. Servet Mutlu, "Ethnic Kurds in Turkey: A Demographic Study," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28, no. 4 (1996): 517–541. Mutlu's study makes projections based on the most recent census that measured ethnic background. According to that census in 1965, 9.98% of the population was of Kurdish origin. Mutlu calculated that in 1990 that would have risen to 12.60%, and by 2000 to 13.82%. If we estimate the population in 2009 as being around 15%, out of the total votes cast of 41 million, the DTP's 5.68% (presumably all coming from Kurdish-origin voters) would equal roughly 40% of Kurdish voters.

36. See, for example, information on Turkey's "Green Card" for free health care and the distribution percentages of these free services in the country's Kurdish regions, <http://arsiv.ntvmsnbc.com/news/352745.asp>

37. <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=238214>

38. Criminalization of the movement cannot be dismissed, as it is not a secret that there is debate among Islamist Kurds about whether to take advantage of the democratic system or to move further underground and follow a more illegal route. For details of the debate see the website of the Mustazafder Islamist organization: <http://www.mustazafder.org/default.asp?sayfa=detay&id=6&Yid=444>. Also see debates about the possible starting of an Islamist Kurdish Party—again reflecting the contradicting views: "Is an Islamist Kurdish Party Being Established?" [İslamcı Kürt Partisi mi kuruluyor?] http://www.8sutun.com/Islamci-Kurt-Partisi-mi-kuruluyor_36287.html.

39. The PKK is categorized as a terrorist organization by both the United States and Europe. For Europe see: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:023:0037:004>, for the U.S. see the Current List of Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations, Available at: <http://merln.ndu.edu/archivepdf/terrorism/state/103392.pdf>

40. As examples of how the PKK and its leaders influence the legal Kurdish political parties, there is the case of the time when the DTP was closed by the Constitution Court and parliamentary members of the party decided to resign from the Parliament in protest. Shortly after, however, they changed their position, upon receiving clear orders from Öcalan saying that they could remain. "Öcalan: DTP'liler Meclise geri donus yapabilirler" [Öcalan: the DTP MPs can return to the Parliament], December 16, 2009, available at <http://www.gundem-online.net/haber.asp?haberid=83803>. Similarly, when DTP parliamentarians declared that they would boycott the referendum for constitutional amendments in 2010, they again seemed forced to backtrack after Öcalan announced a different position. "Öcalan: Demokratik Anayasa sarti ile paket desteklenebilir" [Öcalan: With the Condition of a Democratic Constitution the Government's Proposals can be supported], April 21, 2010, available at <http://www.gundem-online.net/haber.asp?haberid=90197>. Yet another example is that of Öcalan asking for the opening of a "political academy," and the DTP immediately launching the initiative. "Apo: Akademi Kurulmalı diyorum" [Apo: An Academy has to be started], available at <http://www.gundem-online.net/haber.asp?haberid=75032> and "DTP: Siyaset Akademisini yarın açıyor" [DTP: The Political Academy will open tomorrow], available at <http://www.gundem-online.net/haber.asp?haberid=76791>

41. See for the list of DTP municipalities: <http://www.ysk.gov.tr/ysk/docs/2009-MahalliIdareler/ResmiGazete/BelediyeBaskanligi.pdf>

42. The PKK refers to those voices in the Kurdish community who are critical of the PKK as "counter" forces—implying that they are spies for the Turkish forces. After labeling them in this way, attempts are sometimes made to eliminate them. See for an example a press release by a PKK regional command leader containing "counter" allegations: <http://www.firatnews.nu/index.php?rupel=nuce&nuceID=14344> and another piece warning of counter elements: <http://www.firatnews.nu/index.php?rupel=nuce&nuceID=11935>

43. It is generally assumed that terrorist activity improves the sense of belonging and loyalty among terrorist recruits. Conversely, the lack of conflict and activity may reduce the organization's power to control its members. Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walter, "The Strategies of Terrorism," *International Security* 31, no. 1 (2006): 49–79.

44. For a more detailed analysis of the Turkish inner state structure as based on the military's role in Turkish governance, see Ersel Aydınli, "Governments vs. States: Decoding Dual Governance in the Developing World," *Third World Quarterly* 31, no. 5 (2010): 693–707.

45. Henri J. Barkey comments on Washington's seeming obliviousness to the seriousness of the PKK problem in "Turkey's Silent Crisis," *Foreign Policy* 31 (August 2010), available at www.foreignpolicy.com