Is it ripe yet? Resolving Turkey's 30 years of conflict with the PKK

Mustafa Coşar Ünal

To cite this article: Mustafa Coşar Ünal (2016) Is it ripe yet? Resolving Turkey's 30 years of conflict with the PKK, Turkish Studies, 17:1, 91-125, DOI: [10.1080/14683849.2015.1124020](https://doi.org/10.1080/14683849.2015.1124020)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683849.2015.1124020>

Published online: 23 Dec 2015.

Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)

Article views: 1359

View related articles [↗](#)

View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Citing articles: 5 View citing articles [↗](#)

Is it ripe yet? Resolving Turkey's 30 years of conflict with the PKK

Mustafa Coşar Ünal

Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey

ABSTRACT

Turkey has lately been in the midst of trying to resolve its three-decade old struggle with the *Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan* (PKK). Elaborating on the history of this conflict, this study analyzes why previous attempts to resolve it failed and why other conflict-resolution opportunities were not taken until 2007. It devotes particular attention to the emergence and failure of the latest resolution process and analyzes prospects and challenges of a potential resolution by analyzing the context, content, and conduct of Turkey's latest peace attempt. This study finds, first, that the PKK has been open to a negotiated settlement since 1993, but the state regime rejected reconciliation and pursued unilateral military solutions until 2007, when Turkey finally recognized the military stalemate and costly deadlock. Second, it argues that what really forced Turkey to search for a resolution are—in addition to the hurting stalemate—recent national and regional power shifts, which have also destabilized the resolution process itself. Third, this study asserts that despite the ripe conditions for resolution, the context and the content of the latest process revealed crucial deficiencies that require a complete restructuring of the central government as well the need to develop greater institutionalization and social engagement for a potential conflict resolution. Finally, this study claims that the nature and characteristics of the current phase of the conflict, as they stand, indicate significant fragilities and spoiling risks due to both internal and external dynamics and actors, as recent developments have indicated in the failure of the latest resolution attempt.

ARTICLE HISTORY Received 29 April 2015; Revised 13 September 2015; Accepted 16 September 2015

KEYWORDS Turkey; Kurds; PKK; ethnic conflict; conflict resolution

Introduction

Having lost some forty thousand lives and nearly \$400 billion,¹ Turkey has recently attempted to resolve its bloody three-decade conflict with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (*Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan*, PKK), an insurgent group that employs terrorism. This more recent strategy—which as of 2015 looks in jeopardy—represents a break from Turkey's historically more rigid stance toward the Kurdish issue, which produced a political culture that largely

CONTACT Mustafa Coşar Ünal cosar.unal@bilkent.edu.tr

© 2015 Taylor & Francis

rejected conciliatory strategies. This was largely due to an unconsolidated democratic structure, underdeveloped democratic institutions with heavy military tutelage, and nation-state-themed policies. The official approach toward the Kurdish issue consisted, in this context, of mere *containment* and *securitization*, denying deep-rooted Kurdish grievances. In this regard, Turkey's response revolved around *counterterrorism*, dominated by *extermination* and *incapacitation*.

When the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) government took office in 2002, Turkish policy gradually switched from counterterrorism to counterinsurgency (COIN), in which the political, social, and economic aspects of the PKK issue were given deeper consideration. Although most reforms emerged from Turkey's efforts to become a full member of the European Union (EU), these policies were highly related to the Kurdish issue since most of the ontological grievances of the PKK and Kurds more broadly were directly related to the quality of democracy in Turkey. Despite the fact that deterrence continued to be main tool for reducing conflict behavior, Turkey also implemented responsive/accommodative policies to address certain PKK grievances, reminiscent of COIN approach.² However, Turkey kept pursuing a unilateral solution to the conflict and this did not end or mitigate the conflict. The PKK, recognizing its military defeat in the early 1990s, resorted to asymmetrical warfare, including use of terrorist attacks to undermine state power by attacking Turkey's *will* to fight rather than its *capacity*. This proved to be quite threatening to the government's reform agenda and thus pushed Turkey for a negotiated settlement.

By the late 2000s, after a prolonged struggle, the Turkish state finally recognized the costly deadlock of the conflict and became more resolute and determined to tackle the conflict employing a different and more conciliatory approach. In 2007, Turkey's persistence in applying unilateral means has come to an end. Turkey's decision not to continue the costly stalemate was based not only on the human loss that was damaging the social fabric as well as the Turkey's economic development but also on the political instability and potential power shifts in the Middle East region. The Turkish government switched to *conflict management* approach and initiated a secret dialogue with PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan in 2007. In this regard, Turkey's first solid resolution effort, the Kurdish Opening (or Democratic Opening) was unveiled in the summer of 2009, but culminated in a disappointing failure in 2010–11 due to its unilateral and ill-managed nature. After intermittent fight until the late 2012, the Turkish Government explicitly took a new stance in a *conflict-resolution* framework³ toward the PKK and started overt negotiations⁴ with the PKK through its incarcerated leader. These negotiations were publicly declared on March 21, 2013 in a message from Öcalan during "Nevruz"⁵ celebrations in Diyarbakir Province. Violence stopped with an informal ceasefire and a new negotiation period, "The Resolution Process," commenced. This,

however, was crippled in July 2015, subsequent to the national elections held on June 7, 2015.

Given the problems of the past as well as the aforementioned more positive steps, this article attempts to address several interrelated questions. First, why did the previous resolution efforts fail and opportunities for peace were not taken in the various conflict phases? Second, when and how did parties perceive the stalemate, both unilaterally and mutually/jointly? Third, how did the latest two resolution processes emerge in light of the mutual stalemate? Next, why did the Kurdish Opening (2009–11) and latest resolution process (end of 2012–15) fail? Finally, and more importantly, what are the prospects and challenges of a possible resolution attempt as reflected within the context, content and the conduct of the latest resolution process, which is, as of this writing, has been seriously harmed by recent developments within Turkey and in the region?

This study starts with a brief conceptual framework on conflict resolution developed by William Zartman. Next, it analyzes the conflict starting from 1993, when the confrontation phase—the direct challenge between the parties—ended. In this section, it also identifies Turkey's previous weak attempts and missed opportunities for a possible resolution. Next, it analyzes the conflict employing Zartman's Theory of Ripeness, and the attendant concepts of a mutually hurting stalemate (MHS) with its different forms of "plateaus" and "precipice" and the different dimensions of intensity (i.e. vertical and horizontal). This section also critically reviews the PKK's internal dynamics and its different strategies to coercing Turkey into a negotiated settlement. Particular focus is devoted to the resolution processes of Kurdish Opening of 2009–11 (Kurdish/Democratic Opening or National Fraternity/Brotherhood Project) and the latest resolution process that has begun in the late 2012 and was crippled recently in July 2015. In so doing, it identifies the factors that led the emergence and failure of these resolution processes. And finally, by questioning the three crucial encompassing perspectives of the *context* that is provided by the conflict itself (both the current conditions and the overall character), the *content* (the resolution formula, bargaining items, etc.) and the *conduct* (how the resolution process is being handled/implemented), it identifies current and potential obstacles toward a sustainable resolution and peace.

Conceptual framework

Before delving into the analysis, it is useful to explain the theoretical grounding and the conceptual framework that guides this article.

A starting point is that the perceived strength and weakness of warring parties' decision-making for political compromise and their negotiating behavior in intrastate conflicts is of vital importance. States, for instance,

may perceive “sitting around the table” as a sign of weakness if they are convinced they are likely to prevail in the conflict. They, thus, tend not to prioritize engaging in political compromise in expectation of a victory through unilaterally available means.⁶ This is what hinders states’ compromising behaviors in long lasting internal conflicts. Motivation for a negotiated settlement between the parties requires a tricky equilibrium in the perception of weakness and strength.⁷ Failure by states to properly evaluate strengths and weaknesses is the very reason for the misconception of persistently seeking unilateral victory. Such a relative power gap in favor of the state, as argued by Mack, results in states being less agreeable to political compromise, largely because states lack the problem of existence/sovereignty as non-territorial insurgencies do in intrastate conflicts.⁸ However, insurgencies—in their strategic communication of indirect-direct context—rely more on asymmetrical or indirect violence in which states’ kinetic, direct counterterrorism approach remain insufficient and produce popular support from the related population for insurgencies. Such conditions not only bring more sustainability and longevity for insurgent groups but also result in more political vulnerability for states due to a frustrated public and/or competing elites working to end insurrectionary violence.⁹

Moreover, the evolution of different phases and different stages of intrastate wars and related peace processes reveals critical information on the future of the conflict. Decision-making toward compromising behavior is based critically on such information that reveals strengths and weaknesses.¹⁰ This information, as Findley argued, is revealed only through fighting battles.¹¹ He further claimed that despite the fact that negotiations and peace agreements might occur in uncertainty, resolving conflicts with sustainable agreements does require solving the information problem.¹² Certain intermediate results, such as stalemates, might occur, but they cancel information revelation, which might thus impede conflicting parties to fully agree and implement agreements.

Zartman argues that whether the conflicting parties have reached a MHS is the prerequisite for moving toward a negotiated settlement.¹³ He presents a framework with three interrelated and overlapping key concepts for conflict resolution: MHS a “ripe moment,” and “ripe for resolution.”¹⁴ According to him, the perception of MHS can emerge due to relatively more intense levels of conflictual behavior,¹⁵ namely “plateaus” and “precipice.”¹⁶ In the former, both parties realize that they have reached a costly deadlock in which neither side can gain a victory with their current available means, nor can they hold a stalemate at an acceptable cost.¹⁷ MHS occurs at the time of perception of the suffering, cost and deadlock in winning over the other side. In condition of precipice, parties, already stuck in a costly deadlock, recognize an incoming *catastrophe* (e.g. the Aceh case in Indonesia) that would not only cause a big loss but also dramatically shift their relative

power positions.¹⁸ Zartman makes no clear definition of a catastrophic event; he basically identifies it as an event that underscores the value and urgency (i.e. cost and pain can be dramatically increased if necessary response is not given immediately) of the ripe moment.¹⁹ In short, while plateau refers to the pressure of a costly mutual deadlock, precipice refers to a deadline of an impending catastrophe and potential big loss.²⁰

However, deadlock by itself is not enough for ripeness; rather it has to be hurting both sides simultaneously enough to make them feel uncomfortable and unable to avoid or escape. Yet, the MHS has to be brought to the attention of conflicting parties in a potential catastrophe that yields a deadline or a warning alert of a big loss and change in the power positions of both parties.²¹ In this regard, Zartman conceptualizes ripeness as a time when the unilateral efforts of both parties to find solutions are blocked and there exist conceivable bilateral solutions. He also underlines that conflict is ripe when the power positions of both parties are shifted by ups and downs.²² Zartman, Clark, and Paul's taxonomic analysis (master narrative) of 13 cases of insurgencies that were settled through negotiation recognized mutual stalemate as the initial prerequisite phase of a negotiated settlement.²³

Violence is an important measure of strength of parties in conflict. While violence can bring direct (in a conventional military sense) victory to one side of the conflict, this is very rare. In most cases, violence brings parties into a hurting stalemate in which parties engage in re-evaluating their situation, role, strength in the conflict and start seeking reconciliation, resolution through dialogue and negotiation.²⁴ Zartman's "5S" formula of soft stable self-serving stalemate comes into play where, despite the fact that parties reach a deadlock, they get stuck in a long polarizing process with a vicious cycle of violence.²⁵ A long duration in the confrontation phase is highly likely to evolve into a 5S situation, in which the means overcome the ends; greed overwhelms the aim, since, *ceteris paribus*, the aim seems no longer attainable.²⁶ Thus, as the conflict continues to unfold, parties bring new layers of grievances along with different complications that all require resolution. This is largely due to the dynamics of identity conflict, in which radicalization is vertical (ethno-nationalist ideology is a self-serving structure in a conflict atmosphere for new generations) compared with other ideologies such as socialism, which is horizontal and requires great deal of effort and organization in terms of indoctrination and recruitment to prevail.²⁷ Lasting peace in ethnic civil wars remains elusive for these reasons.²⁸

At the end, identity-based intrastate conflicts, a.k.a., "sons of the soil," tend to last a long time²⁹ since such conflicts risk the existence of one or both parties. Parties struggle fiercely, and more importantly, as the conflict continues, the stakes get bigger and the behavior of both parties gets tougher.³⁰ In other words, when greed (belief of win through unilateral means)

imprisons parties, it is very hard to take them out of the conflict.³¹ While ripeness may explain the initiation of a negotiation process or dialogue that progresses to that phase at a particular time, it does not explain whether negotiation would be successfully completed.³² However, the ripeness concept, within the boundaries of this study, is considered not to be sufficient, but one of the necessary conditions for engaging in negotiated settlements, and it is applicable for the PKK conflict, which is not yet settled but is has been under resolution process, which seems to be suspended in light of recent events in mid-2015.

Evolution of the conflict and attempts at resolution

This section analyzes different phases of the Kurdish conflict starting from 1993, when the confrontation phase of the conflict ended with the PKK's military defeat in its aim to gain territorial control of the southeastern region of Turkey, where the PKK aimed to found an independent Kurdish state. In doing so, this section identifies the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the conflict parties due to both internal and external dynamics and their related actions/reactions, along with certain windows of opportunity that came along during the conflict history. It puts particular focus on the period after 2007, when Turkey's two most comprehensive attempts to resolve the conflict (based on a mutually recognized stalemate in 2007), occurred, first in 2009 and the second, which began in 2012, but, as of 2015, seems not to be moving forward.

Initial resolution attempt and window of opportunity

In its guerilla fight, the PKK applied the three-echelon structure of Maoist Theory but could not go beyond the *strategic balance* even if they symbolically attempted strategic attacks by claiming control of small pieces of land to become a territorial insurgency. The Turkish Army harshly squashed these efforts. As portrayed in [Figure 1](#) the aggregate level of violence shows a steep increase from 1984 (the outset of confrontation) to 1993–94 (acknowledgment of military defeat). Typical of a confrontation phase, the goal of territorial victory (in a top-down approach) drove the conflict as the substantive issue.

The end of the confrontation/direct challenge phase in the early 1990s became clear with Öcalan's press conference in 1993 with Jalal Talabani (leader of the Iraqi Kurdish Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, PUK) in which Öcalan stated, "after 9 years of war [since 1984] time has come for non armed political means ..."³³ Another confession came in his public statement in 1994 to the Kurdish language periodical, *Serxwebûn*, Between the lines, he suggested that to accomplish its goals the PKK would have needed at least

Figure 1. Aggregate level of violent incidents that resulted from both PKK attacks and security force operations.

50,000 guerillas, whereas the actual PKK force was approximately between 11,000 and 13,000.³⁴ In this period both the aggregate level of violence and PKK-initiated violence started decreasing as shown respectively in Figures 1 and 2. PKK-initiated violence started decreasing two years earlier due to the lagged effect of large-scale military operations by Turkey that brought about the PKK's military defeat in a conventional sense.

Figure 2. Number of PKK-initiated violent incidents in 1984–2010.

The year 1993 constitutes a critical milestone in the entire conflict. There were two significant developments. First, the PKK reached the tipping point and perceived that it could not escalate the conflict to achieve a victory in a direct fight with its available resources. Thus, the PKK shifted to a different path to reach its aim through indirect means, that is, political coercion via the international arena, using intense terror activity over indirect targets to force Turkey to a political compromise. Second, the PKK started to concentrate on political activities, which Öcalan had strictly rejected in the beginning when he had foreseen a military victory. Pro-PKK political activities that loosely started in 1989 accelerated in the mid-1990s. Öcalan established a group of Kurdish intellectuals under the name of “Kurdish Parliament in Exile” in 1995 and sent them to Europe to seek international recognition, legitimacy and support to put international pressure on Turkey for political reconciliation. Consequently, the PKK has been open to a negotiated settlement from this point on in the conflict.

In 1993, the Turkish government’s first attempt to set up a dialogue process was put forward by President Turgut Özal just before his death. Özal, in fact, first mentioned in 1991 that he would resolve the Kurdish issue as his last service to his fellow citizens. Despite the state’s tough discourse on the Kurdish issue and continuing securitization/counterterrorism policies, Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel and his deputy Erdal İnönü (representing the leadership for the respective coalition government that comprised of the True Path Party (*Doğru Yol Partisi*, DYP), and Republican People’s Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP) recognized Kurdishness in Turkey in a visit to Diyarbakir Province in 1993. After the government officials’ secret interactions with the PKK via pro-PKK political actors, Öcalan, as affirmed in his court statement, ordered the PKK’s first unilateral ceasefire on March 20, 1993 as a positive response to President Özal’s initiative. However, just after the PKK extended its first unilateral ceasefire in a press conference held on April 16, 1993, President Özal died. In this context, his death spoiled hopes for a possible resolution. This was underscored by the killing of 33 unarmed soldiers traveling home for vacation in Bingöl Province nearly a month after Özal’s death. Turkey’s first effort to resolve the conflict ended abruptly in a very unfortunate manner, along with the unilateral ceasefire.

Initial military defeats of insurgencies constitute a significant opportunity for states to get to the negotiating table in a stronger position.³⁵ In this regard, the PKK’s military defeat coinciding with President Özal’s incomplete initiative should be noted as an important milestone and a missed opportunity in the conflict’s history. Since pursuing a unilateral win, the Turkish state was not inclined to seek a negotiated resolution, as Areguin-Toft conceptualized, because of its perceived strength and the misconception that the PKK’s defeat would result in its demise.³⁶ However, the reduction and end of violence are

two separate issues, in which the former does not always lead to the latter, particularly in a protracted “sons of the soil” insurgent war context.³⁷

The post-1993 period

Once reaching the tipping point, the PKK shifted to a more indirect strategic interaction with the Turkish state,³⁸ pursuing a more *asymmetrical* approach.³⁹ By so doing, the PKK strove to deflect the state’s authority wherever it was weaker in the region. The PKK resorted to variants of *revolutionary terrorism*, each suited for a different purpose. Some were systematic *provocation* and *attrition* of incumbent political authority, and *survival* of PKK’s campaign, maintaining in-group *solidarity*, and *intimidation* of the populace.⁴⁰ To illustrate such a shift, Figure 3 depicts PKK attacks in eastern and southeastern areas⁴¹ (that were under emergency rule and pre-dominantly inhabited by Kurds) and the PKK’s terror attacks in other (mostly western) regions, where the two trends slope toward each other after 1994. Figure 4 supports these findings showing that civilian casualties in western cities in emergency rule and non-emergency rule areas,⁴² whereby in the latter the amount of casualties experienced a proportionate increase after 1994. Conclusively, the PKK expanded its attacks to areas outside its focus and where it claims authority, both to sustain its campaign and weaken government authority.

In contrast to the confrontation phase, means overcame the ends for the PKK from its military defeat in 1994 to Öcalan’s capture in 1999. The Turkish state pursued a unilateral win and heavy military action that culminated in a cycle of violence. From this point on, the conflict started to evolve

Figure 3. Geographical locations of PKK-initiated violent incidents in the emergency rule provinces vs. other provinces (1984–2000).

Figure 4. Trend of civilian casualties in emergency rule vs. non-emergency rule areas.

into the Zartman's 5S of a soft stable self-serving stalemate⁴³ until 1999, when Öcalan was captured. Violence became a self-reinforcing spiral, not only encouraging identity reinforced polarization and alienation but also consolidating group solidarity against any reconciliatory approach.⁴⁴ State elites, including the politically powerful army, derived power and benefited from the continuation of the conflict by reducing the whole issue to the indivisibility and unity of the state. These elites put all other grievances aside and found considering them as too risky. While the PKK was in transition from a heavy military organization to a politico-military organization with supplementary use of indirect/strategic violence, the state strictly pursued unilateral solutions, ironically through military means.

In such an atmosphere, suggesting resolution, let alone any rational public policies for removing legitimate grievances, was considered treason in Turkey. However, there existed certain additional attempts to initiate a dialogue with the PKK before Öcalan's capture. Necmettin Erbakan, the political leader of the religious right-wing "National Vision" (*Milli Görüş*) Movement and the Welfare Party voiced his positive stance toward resolution of the Kurdish issue in 1996. Thereafter, Mesut Yılmaz, the prime minister in 1997, underlined that addressing the PKK problem was necessary to make progress on Turkey's full membership in the EU. However, these intentions were largely rhetoric due to the lack of collective consent of the state elites and political parties in the parliament, the unprepared psychology of mainstream Turkish society, and non-starter spoiler groups in the PKK. Attempts to reach out to the Kurdish populace by the respective governments in those years did not go beyond developing political relationships with Kurdish

local elites for political gain in elections by incorporating them into their parliamentary group.

Öcalan's capture in 1999 and another window of opportunity

Öcalan's capture constituted the second significant window of opportunity in the conflict process in which the PKK declared its longest ceasefire. With Öcalan's call for a possible resolution on August 2, 1999, the PKK withdrew its armed militants from Turkey. One of the concerns for the PKK at the time was guaranteeing Öcalan's survival.⁴⁵ To demonstrate and institutionalize his role in the PKK, Öcalan sent a letter to the PKK leadership calling for an end to the armed struggle and suggesting that their future struggle would be through democratic, non-violent, means as of September 1, 1999. However, instead of taking the opportunity to engage in a resolution process, respective governments again perceived this as some kind of victory and tried to take advantage of the withdrawal. During the withdrawal, 300–500 PKK militants were killed. In fact, it should be noted that assuming the PKK was sincere in ending armed struggle, it would be optimistic given the PKK's collective judgment at the time. Rather it was more of a pragmatic move to guarantee Öcalan's survival. It was, however, another mismanaged opportunity for a resolution, considering the PKK's perceived weaknesses and concerns for Öcalan's survival, as well as his eagerness to achieve peace that was implied by his unforgettable initial words in that he underlined his readiness to serve the country.

In alignment with Öcalan's call, the PKK transformed itself in its 7th Congress held in 2000 by reiterating its longest unilateral ceasefire. The PKK abolished itself twice and respectively founded KADEK (Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress) in its 8th Congress in 2002 and renamed itself KONGRA-GEL (Kurdistan People's Congress) in 2003, officially embracing non-violent means and revised goals, such as constitutional recognition of Kurds in Turkey. Between 2000 and 2004, the PKK focused on political recognition as a legitimate and official representative body for Kurds in the international arena by accelerating its front activities in Europe, backed with mass demonstrations in Turkey. The low level of violence due to the unilateral ceasefire in 1999–2003 can be seen in [Figures 1](#) and [2](#). Non-violent pro-PKK public events increased between 2000 and 2003, as shown in [Figure 5](#). In doing so, the PKK aimed to force Turkey into a political compromise through international pressure. However, starting in 2002, as a result of Turkey's diplomatic efforts, the PKK was recognized as a terrorist organization by numerous European countries, the United States, Canada, Australia, and the EU. The PKK's frustration during this period resulted in recurrence of old practices, including its resort to violence starting from 2003, as indicated in [Figure 1](#).

Figure 5. The trend of non-violent civil disobedience and public events.

Emergence of stalemate and ripeness

The ruling AKP, in office since the 2002 general elections, took a different stance toward the PKK uprising, particularly since 2005 when Prime Minister Recep T. Erdoğan officially announced in Diyarbakir Province, a predominantly Kurdish area, that the Kurdish problem is his own problem. It was for the first time in the conflict's history that the head of the government released a clear and official discourse recognizing the Kurdish question and embracing the long-standing grievances of the Kurds that had long been denominated not as a "Kurdish issue" but a "PKK problem." This was a clear shift from using primarily military means; instead the spectrum was expanded to include, above all, political and social dimensions that needed to be addressed. So, this can be considered as a shift from a sole enemy-centric (iron fist) approach to a population-centric one toward recognizing legitimate grievances (winning hearts and minds).

The ruling AKP commenced a democratization process as Turkey sought full membership in the EU. These efforts included certain civil rights improvements (e.g. abolition of State Security Courts and Emergency Rule proclamation) that also covered Kurdish grievances, including legitimization of the Kurdish language. The government, in this period, hoped to reduce tensions in the region with the removal of grievances, in turn mitigating support for the PKK. Despite the fact that military counterinsurgency operations continued throughout, the Turkish military's leading role gradually evolved into a supplementary role. However, as shown in Figure 1, aggregate violence steadily increased from 2003 to 2009 when the AKP officially inaugurated a

Democratic Opening Project (aka the Kurdish Opening). As shown in [Figure 2](#), PKK-initiated violence also increased in this earlier period. However, due to the Kurdish Opening and subsequent elections, the PKK's unilateral ceasefires show a later decrease in PKK-initiated violence between 2007 and 2009. The increasing trend in violence in 2003–07 had multiple reasons, one of which was the PKK's perception of decreasing popular support in easing tensions without getting anything in return.⁴⁶ Since violence is one of the crucial commodities for insurgents to mobilize popular support and political gain,⁴⁷ the PKK responded with escalated attacks rather than conforming to EU-induced democratization efforts. The PKK's negative response is partly related to the factions that emerged in the PKK after the 2000–03 ceasefire to mobilize in-group solidarity and differentiating identity during 2003–05. The main reason, however, is that as the dominant character of the fight changed, so did the conditional dynamics of the conflict. The PKK shifted to more of a social and political confrontation to coerce Turkey into a political compromise. Within this context, Turkey continued to seek unilateral solutions, and another 5S process (greed and deadlock in violence) occurred between 2003 and 2007.

In 2007, the PKK created the Union of Kurdistan Communities (KCK), which it designed as an umbrella organization to act as a quasi-state authority in economic, social, political/ideological, and self-defense realms in preparation for establishing situational/de facto autonomy in the region. As plotted in [Figure 5](#), non-violent pro-PKK events increase after the KCK's founding in 2007. With the KCK, the PKK commenced a bottom-up approach to establishing situational autonomy. To back its campaign, in addition to its guerilla attacks upon army outposts and bases, the PKK mostly resorted to typical urbanized terrorist attacks, such as targeting civilians, extortion, kidnapping (of businessmen, government staff, teachers, etc.) to wear down the legitimate government authority, thus reinforcing the costly deadlock of a 5S stalemate. Primarily, the PKK targeted the state's *will* to fight with more asymmetric warfare and indirectness as opposed its direct challenge to diminish the state's *capacity* to fight, as was the aim in the confrontation phase.⁴⁸ So it became quite clear for Turkey that military means alone were not a solution but just a self-reinforcing cycle of violence, and that Turkey should also employ political means toward a solution to end the violence. In the end, the PKK has kept the conflict as a priority item on the government's agenda and asserted urgency for a negotiated resolution.

Turkey has felt the heavy cost of conflict in political, economic, social, and diplomatic terms, and the conflict created high tensions in society due to violence and human casualties almost every day. Over 22,000 violent incidents occurred between 1984 and 2013. The fatality rate reached 39,476 over the same period. Out of this figure, 5478 were civilians and 6764 were security

personnel including provisional village guards (GKKs).⁴⁹ In counterinsurgency operations throughout the conflict, a total of 26,774 PKK militants were killed, 922 were injured, 6727 were captured, and 4781 surrendered.⁵⁰ As to economic impact, estimates range from US \$300–450 billion, or approximately \$15 billion per year.⁵¹ Half of the annual budget of Turkey is allocated for defense expenses, which hinders rational social investments and economic development.

The opportunity cost of Turkey's stance and potential role in the Middle Eastern region, along with regional developments that were prone to significant power shifts, Turkey, in its diplomatic efforts, is trying to pursue a dominant role in the Middle East as a democratic state with Islamic roots and values. However, the PKK problem constitutes a major obstacle and a risk due to the instable and highly dynamic conditions in neighboring countries of Syria and Iraq as well as the role of Iran with its related Kurdish population. Conditional dynamics indicate a strong potential for changes in Kurdish actors' role, strength and impact in the region.

So, with regard to the aforementioned, reconsideration of the conditions in the PKK conflict led Turkey to realize the costly deadlock and opportunity cost of holding the 5S stalemate, which was admitted by the head of National Intelligence Organization (*Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı*, MIT), Hakan Fidan, who led the state delegation in secret Oslo meetings (elaborated later). From the minutes that were leaked to the media after 2009, he clearly underlined that no unilateral effort from either side would be sufficient for victory, and a two-sided compromise for a sustainable and durable peace is inevitable.⁵² He further conveyed the collective consensus of the perceived stalemate in the entire state, including the Turkish Army.

Perceived stalemate and the Kurdish opening⁵³

Recognizing the heavy toll of the stalemate in the second 5S period of 2003–07, Turkey secretly commenced its first solid attempt at resolution in the history of the conflict. Starting in 2007, top-level MIT officials agreed on the generic framework of a resolution through a series of backchannel talks with the incarcerated PKK leader Öcalan on Imrali Island, and afterward started meetings in Oslo with a PKK delegation, comprised of both the political leadership in Europe and military leadership from Qandil/Northern Iraq. A set of dialogues, known as the Oslo peace process, between the state and the PKK started in coordination with an undisclosed third party, which were possibly officials from the United Kingdom or from the peace activist organization [Norwegian] Peace Research Institute Oslo, (PRIO).

Öcalan's communication, as a focal point, was maintained by conveying his own words to the PKK delegates in arbitration with the MIT. What was specifically discussed with Öcalan and with the PKK delegation is not

known, except the confessed stalemate and a strong will by the Turkish government to resolve the conflict, according to the minutes of the Oslo gathering that were leaked to public media. The Turkish government officially commenced the Kurdish Opening and made its intention public in 2009. Not only did it inaugurate a state-run broadcast channel in Kurdish, but also implemented certain economic projects. Erdoğan even dropped stipulating that the pro-PKK political party—Democratic Society Party's (DTP) at the time—officially declare and condemn the PKK as a “terrorist organization.” This can be considered Turkey's switch from seeking unilateral solutions to reconciliation in the context of *conflict management and resolution*.

Local/municipal elections in March 2009 resulted in the DTP's victory, taking control of 96 municipalities, including winning the mayorship of Diyarbakir metropolitan municipality. The DTP's electoral success raised hopes for a negotiated political settlement and the PKK announced a unilateral ceasefire on April 13, 2009. In the summer of 2009, the AKP government officially inaugurated the Democratic Opening (aka Kurdish Opening) as the final step in this covertly managed process. However, 2009, the would-be year of resolution, featured many contradictory events. The state's progressive efforts to remove grievances and employ peaceful rhetoric were interrupted by the arrest of numerous civilian Kurds including lawyers, activists, civil society members and 53 members of the DTP. Arrests were made on the grounds of organic ties with the KCK, which under Turkish law was deemed the legal equivalent of the PKK. More than 400 individuals (225 in April, 116 in May, and 73 in June) were arrested in 2009, with the waves of KCK arrests continuing for the next four years. Subsequently, mutual confidence between parties deteriorated.

Not surprisingly, opposition parties and groups accused the AKP of granting legitimacy to the PKK. The Turkish Army also renounced the Kurdish Opening with an official message posted on its institutional website. However, what really crystallized the mismanagement of the process, illustrative of how the social psychology of mainstream society was not yet ready for such an attempt, was the return from Iraq of a pre-designated “Peace Group” of 34 PKK members. On October 18, 2009, the first peace group was welcomed by a big crowd at the Habur border gate and welcoming celebrations were perceived as the PKK's victory parade rather than a “return to home” from the mountains. This provoked a negative reaction in mainstream Turkish society, including even among moderates. The government took immediate actions to neutralize the aforementioned perception. After bitterly acknowledging the unintended consequences of its ill-defined and unorganized effort, the AKP backed off both in action and in discourse by accusing of the DTP and the PKK of spoiling, misusing and exploiting the peace process. All other subsequent steps to return to the home project were abruptly canceled.

What consolidated the halt of the resolution effort was the closure of the DTP by the Turkish Constitutional Court (as had also been done to its four predecessors) on December 11, 2009 on the grounds of its close ties with the PKK. Ahmet Turk, a well-respected and moderate Kurdish politician, was also banned from active politics in Turkey for five years. Osman Baydemir, the elected mayor of Diyarbakir province in 2009 local elections, was charged with being a member of a terrorist organization. KCK operations reached their peak in May 2010. The government launched anti-KCK operations and declared that these operations were requisite actions to cut the bond between the PKK/KCK and Kurdish society and thus to eliminate the KCK threat against the people so that resolution efforts could flourish in the region. However, as happened many times in the conflict's history, the perceived illegitimacy of arrests of activists, political party affiliates, and elected officials resulted in Kurdish entrenchment rather than dissolution of the movement.

In March 2010, the break became clearer when Öcalan—through his attorney—commenced a new era called “Strategic Lunge” through the use of an “All-Out People’s War” strategy for developing de facto autonomy in the region. The PKK, however, declared another ceasefire on August 13, 2010 due to an upcoming referendum for constitutional amendments in September and then gradually extended the ceasefire up to the parliamentary elections on June 12, 2011 in an effort to seek compromise on the release of KCK prisoners. However, violence increased starting from 2010 and steeply increased in 2011 as seen in [Figure 1](#). On July 14, 2011, the PKK, through its legal NGO apparatus, the Congress of Democratic Society (DTK) led by politically banned Ahmet Turk, officially declared “Democratic Autonomy” in the region during a press conference in Diyarbakır province. Thirteen Turkish soldiers were killed by the PKK on the very same day in the very same province. The PKK’s declaration of autonomy seemed to be symbolic and premature, and precipitated reaction against the peace process.

Despite the failure of the resolution process, secret talks with the PKK delegation continued until 2011, when the “Oslo Peace Process” totally ended. Parliamentary elections in 2011 resulted in both parties’ increased political support, indicating a record of 36 seats for the Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), the successor to the DTP, while the AKP gained 326 seats out of 550 in the National Assembly and nearly 50 percent of the vote. However, six of the BDP parliamentarians were jailed due to the KCK operations. They were subsequently released with the decision of Constitutional Court in when the latest peace process commenced in the late 2012.

Emergence of the latest resolution process

After the 2007–11 resolution process was broken off, the government again attempted to quell the PKK from mid-2011 to the end of 2012. In 2012

alone, a total of 1926 violent incidents occurred in which 131 members of security forces (107 soldiers, 24 police) and 13 GKK members were killed, while 239 PKK fighters were incapacitated. However, internal and external dynamics, along with costly stalemate, induced riper conditions for resolution and put more pressure on Turkey to tackle the issue.

Turkey's latest resolution attempt came out in an escalated conflict environment that occurred after the failed attempt in 2011 and 2012, and once again highlighted the costly stalemate. The mistaken killings of 34 Kurdish smugglers by the Turkish Air Force in Şırnak/Uludere in December 2011 established a *recent precipice* by provoking high tensions nationally and criticism from the international community showing the bitter stalemate constituting *plateaus*. More importantly, the regional dynamics alerted an *upcoming precipice (catastrophe)* that signaled the urgency for a resolution. This was mostly because of regional dynamics that made the conflict conditions more complicated and beyond Turkey's control. Developments in the wider Middle East, including the Arab Uprisings, led to unstable conditions that were highly conducive to power and role shifts for the actors in the region. Among these, as a *forthcoming precipice*, the uncontrollable civil war in Syria had the highest potential to complicate the PKK issue. The Syrian Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD), aligned with the PKK, gained de facto autonomy in northern Syria. Allowing the PYD to control and rule a territory was considered a risky condition by Turkey, since Turkey had strictly objected to the creation of a Kurdish Government in Northern Iraq and the PKK had never been able to control its own territory. The rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, (ISIS) and increasing political instability in Iraq also raised the potential for an increased threat level and new role(s) for regional actors including the PKK. Turkey reconsidered both its domestic and diplomatic stance toward the Kurdish issue in the region, including relations with the Kurdistan Regional Government in northern Iraq ruled by the Kurdistan Democratic Party (PDK).

Finally, the latest resolution attempt came out of a complex situation from both a national and regional context in August 2012. Öcalan's call for ending the massive hunger strike that was performed by KCK prisoners in Turkey provided a window of opportunity to again make use of Öcalan's influence for another resolution attempt. Öcalan's regular meetings with his attorney, which were cut off in mid-2011, resumed following the official MIT talks with Öcalan for a more concrete and better managed peace attempt.

The latest process actually began in the last days of 2012 but was announced at the 2013 Nevruz celebrations in Diyarbakir Province in a direct message by BDP members. Öcalan, in this message, explicitly recognized that the moment was ripe for a resolution to bring the stalemated conflict to an end, indicating—as he did in the past—that political action (implying a negotiated settlement and abandoning armed struggle) toward

a democratic solution is vital to Turkish and Kurdish societies. Öcalan also made a call for a ceasefire and withdrawal of armed militants out of Turkish territory as part of the three-stage road map. Withdrawal started in spring 2013 but stopped later, after about 20 percent of the forces were withdrawn, because the PKK objected to the government's inaction toward certain reforms and continuation of KCK arrests while the ceasefire continued.

Learning from its earlier peace initiative about the importance of securing public support, the AKP Government formed a "Wise Men Commission" (comprised of 63 intellectuals, scholars, and members of certain NGOs) and sent them out across the country to convey the government's intention, to gain popular support for the resolution initiative, and to obtain feedback. A parliamentary commission comprised of all parties to supervise the process was also proposed by the AKP, but the major opposition parties of the Turkish National Grand Assembly did not welcome it.

Contrary to the previously failed attempt in 2007–11, in which all opposition parties, including the politically powerful Turkish Army and bulk of the civil society organizations, did not back the ruling AKP and even accused it of betraying country's "martyrs" who died in the conflict, the main opposition party, the Republican Peoples' Party (CHP), supported the talks between the state intelligence service and the PKK. However, details about what was negotiated between the government and Öcalan is not known, and thus there might be certain bargaining items related to the AKP's political interests added into the resolution formula. The extreme nationalist wing of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) is in total opposition to the process and considers it treason. However, many non-governmental organizations of both Kurdish and Turkish sides have supported the overall process. In the end, Turkish officials opened a new round of negotiations with the PKK through its incarcerated leader, Öcalan. Contrary to the earlier covert attempt in Oslo, which was leaked to the media, a publicly known series of meetings between Öcalan and the PKK have commenced under the arbitration of the MIT and Kurdish political actors from BDP, whose members were transferred later to the People's Democracy Party (HDP).

Public polls revealed that since the first attempt (2007–11) became known in 2009, support for the resolution has increased. For instance, while the pro-resolution rate in 2009 was 48.1 percent (36.4 percent against and 15.5 percent hesitant), in 2013 public support increased to 58 percent while 34 percent objected and 8 percent were hesitant. Support reached up to 67.7 percent in March 2015.⁵⁴ The real issue thus remains to convince mainstream Turkish society. Pro-PKK and other Kurdish segments that inhabit the predominantly Kurdish-populated region already had a very high level of support for the resolution/normalization process, which they consider to have been long overdue. While the support level was 42.7 percent among ethnic Turks, it

was 75.7 percent among minority Kurds in 2009. It increased to 57 percent among Turks while it reached up to 83 percent among Kurds in 2014.⁵⁵

Prospects and challenges

This section analyzes the prospects and challenges of a resolution attempt in the case of the PKK conflict by illustrating certain dynamics from the latest resolution process, which has stalled recently. To this end, it respectively reviews crucial encompassing aspects of the *context* referring to generic characteristics and current phase/conditions that are provided by the conflict itself; the *content* analyzing the parties' red lines and prolonged demands to question whether there ever existed a "resolution formula" that would be enticing to the parties given what were possibly on the table for the latest peace attempt; and the *conduct* of the conflict denoting how the peace and post-conflict processes were managed. Among these aspects, the analysis of the context relates to overall conflict while the content and the conduct are specific to the latest resolution that appeared to be frozen just before the 2015 national elections.

Context

The context of a conflict indicates two crucial aspects: one being what grievances and opportunities caused or causes the conflict, and the other being what is the current phase of the conflict in its evolution. Both reflect certain characteristics that are provided by the conflict itself. In these regards, the PKK conflict characteristically reflects certain difficulties for a sustainable peace. First and the foremost, the PKK conflict is an *identity conflict* (i.e. related to nationality, religion, sect, ethnicity, etc.) with a deep-rooted historical background about the Kurdish identity and sovereignty over a territory that has a problem of "existence." This is similar—in nature—to cases such as Northern Ireland and the Basque issue in Spain.

Second, three decades of PKK conflict has different layers of problems that aggravate any resolution processes. On one level, one could say that the longer the fight, the harder to put forth compromising behavior and move toward a negotiated settlement. From another perspective, however, the long fight led to the point that there is no informational problem and parties clearly perceived their relative strengths and weaknesses as well as their incapacity to attain a unilateral victory. In that respect, following the confrontation (military defeat, 1984–94), first 5S (1994–99), unilateral ceasefire and international political recognition (1999–03), second 5S (2003–07) and mutually perceived stalemate (2007-onward), the PKK transformed itself from a purely military organization into a more political one. With a more asymmetrical and indirect use of violence, the PKK aimed to drive Turkey into a political compromise

(negotiated settlement) by mitigating its will to hold a costly deadlock in fighting. In alignment with this, the PKK leaned more on political ties to strong social organizations, particularly the KCK, to proclaim de facto applications of a political autonomy and develop a quasi-state structure. Thus, the current phase of the conflict reflects a mutually acknowledged costly deadlock concerning a unilateral military victory for either party since 2007, when MIT officials commenced backchannel talks with Öcalan. This resembles the British Army's realization that it could not escalate to gain a military advantage after the Provisional IRA killed 497 people in 1972 and secret talks began.⁵⁶ Or, in the Philippines, following the bloodiest fighting that occurred in 1973–74 (known as the Jolo and Cotabato battles), the violence reached its peak with the Philippines Government counteractions (e.g. Operations Sibalo and Bagsik).⁵⁷ In 1975, both parties of the Republic of the Philippines and the MNLF perceived the stalemate.⁵⁸

In addition to the costly deadlock in military terms, the ripeness of the PKK conflict is rooted more in social, economic and political terms based upon recent and forthcoming *precipices* of national and regional dynamics that have constituted urgency for Turkey to resolve the conflict. Rather than a recent national catastrophe (e.g. natural disaster) as in the Aceh case, sudden regional developments and forthcoming power shifts in the Middle East constituted a large part of the *precipice* for Turkey. These include regional instability in neighboring Iraq and Syria, potential conditions/dynamics that might present different roles for the PKK and for other Kurdish actors in the region, and related ups and downs in power relations (e.g. Iran's stance) in Turkey's national security concerns as well as Turkey's desire to hold a stronger position in the Middle East. However, these developments and instability also indicate challenges for a sustainable peace by providing different roles for regional actors like the PYD. The PYD's control of territory in north Syria bordering Turkey is another critical issue because for the first time in its history, the PKK (through its PYD allies) maintained territorial control and its fight against ISIS gave it a more legitimate role in the international realm, since Western states are intent to disrupt and deter ISIS's violent escalation.

More importantly, socio-political changes in Syria and Iraq, such as ISIS terror and sectarian violence, inflict unstable power shifts among regional actors, including the Iraqi Kurdish militias, the PKK, and PYD. Being in the middle of a geo-politically hot spot, regional dynamics that signal swift dramatic changes can also have potential impacts on the Kurdish population (approximately 30 million) disseminated across Syria, Iraq, Iran, and Turkey. Given that the Kurds of Iran and Iraq have historical ties, Iran's potential impact (including spoiler effect) in the process is inevitable.⁵⁹

The current phase of the conflict presents certain other important challenges that make resolution attempts fragile, as reflected during the latest

peace process of 2012–15. As a fairly large organization, certain PKK branches exercise their own independent role, as seen in the latest process. Despite that, Turkish security forces, as unofficially ordered by the government, acted in a very repressive manner in predominantly Kurdish regions in order to not to damage the latest resolution process, the PKK's youth apparatus, YDG-H (Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement) quite often challenged the political/governing authority in the region with illegal street demonstrations, road-blocks, and illegal security checkpoints, and vandalizing public facilities and government properties. What happened on October 6 and 7, 2014 in the Kurdish inhabited provinces portrayed a significant example. Events to protest the siege of the northern Syrian city of Kobani by the ISIS and Turkey's alleged inaction toward this situation resulted in around 40 civilian deaths and many other injuries during the riots organized by the KCK as a result of a protest call (not aiming such a result) from HDP's co-chairman Selahattin Demirtas. Kobani protests yielded another significant precipice that clearly crystallized what is at stake. Therefore, as indicated by the Wise Men Commission Southeastern Report, PKK sympathizers—raised in the conflict environment—reflect a sentimental and hot tempered character and these sympathizers need to be specifically adapted into the resolution process where the PKK is to be in transition from an armed group to a non-violent political entity.⁶⁰ In fact, some of these incidents were organized and even instigated by the KCK. More importantly, these happened when security forces even suspended (or canceled) preventive (ex-ante, proactive) security operations, and conducted only criminal/judicial investigations toward occurred incidents (ex-post, reactive).

While the government had tolerated these developments for the sake of the resolution process, things have greatly changed. The ISIS threat to Turkey became clearer with the killing of a soldier in the Syrian—ISIS controlled—borderline and a suicide attack in Suruc/Sanlurfa Province on July 20 resulting in 32 deaths and nearly 100 injuries. This has also made a dramatic impact in Turkey and even has led an implicit change in Turkey's foreign policy that has long been criticized with staying idle against the ISIS for the sake of exterminating Assad regime in Syria. The government toughened official discourses against the PKK and HDP by blaming them of spoiling the process due to the upcoming national elections in June 7, 2015. The AKP lost the majority vote in the Turkish Assembly in June 2015 national elections, and the People's Democratic Party (HDP) cast a shocking rate of 13.1 percent and send 80 members to the Parliament by crossing the 10-percent threshold.

In the end, due to the Turkey's both internal and regional security concerns; PKK's exploitation of the process; and negative reflections of these developments into the domestic politics against the ruling AKP government have all led to the failure of the latest resolution process. Turkey not only started air strikes targeting ISIS controlled region (where Turkey have long

demanding a safe/buffer zone) but also conducted drone attacks on the PKK's safe-haven in Northern Iraq in July 2015. In addition, security forces carried out numerous counterterrorism operations within the country that resulted in considerable number of arrests. Hence, just after the national election in June 7, the resolution process has clearly stalled in July 20 and Turkey furthered its already toughened approach toward the PKK. The government accused the PKK for undermining the process when declaring that the latest resolution process was "put into the refrigerator." The incidents initiated by pro-PKK youth groups particularly put a great challenge—as happened during the Kobani protests—on the perceptual authority of the government in south-eastern region and served as a damaging impact upon both the AKP government and the mainstream society (in particular the nationalist segment) and laid ground for impairing the resolution process that added to the failure of the latest [peace] initiative.

Once the conflict reignited, violence dramatically escalated in both urban and rural areas. While nearly 2000 PKK members were killed as a result of military operations and air strikes (particularly in Northern Iraq), numerous security force members from military and law enforcement units and were killed and a number of civilian lost their lives in a short period of time. Along with the violence, harsh discourses of 1990s between the parties have also reemerged. Turkey held another (early) national elections in November 1 due to election results not enabling one party majority and failure of forming a coalition by political parties. Another shocking result emerged and Turkish society responded to these current and potential security concerns by opting for the AKP to have the majority in the parliament with 49 percent share in the latest elections in November 2015 (as opposed to 41 percent in June elections that was held only 147 days ago) indicating how regional instabilities, national security concerns, domestic politics, and related societal perceptions influence the reciprocation between the conflict and its possible resolution attempts.

Another significant challenge about the current phase of the conflict is the PKK's new strategy. PKK greatly shifted from typical rural guerilla attacks to more urbanized violence indicating strategic move from "physical" to "human" terrain. Contrary to its earlier rural attacks or individual urban attacks carried out by militants from rural cadres, the PKK started to employ purely urban attacks through its members assigned to urban areas as well as its militants based in rural areas. PKK killed police and soldiers either in their homes, in the middle of downtown (of certain Kurdish areas) during daytime. The PKK dramatically refrained from direct confrontation (e.g. used IEDs supplemented urban attacks and ambushes). The PKK deliberately switched from physical realm to human realm as part of its adaptation to Turkish Army's new COIN strategy (i.e. technology based toward better surveillance, monitoring, detection and engagement) that brought a

deterrent impact to PKK's flexibility, mobility, and attacks in rural areas. PKK not only urbanized its violence but also strengthened and started to use its local cadres and infrastructures to initiate community resistance in provinces where pro-PKK support is high. They have strived to hide amongst civilians within counties wherein predominantly pro-PKK Kurdish civilians inhabit. In that, the PKK started to employ the autonomous controlled area concept (named "öz yönetim" meaning self-administering) in these areas in which they hallowed fosses to physically block security force entrance to consolidate their physical and psychological impact in the human terrain. As a result, certain intermittent curfews were declared (e.g. in Sirnak-Cizre, Diyarbakir-Sur and Silvan) and state security forces conducted strict security operations reminding of the early 1990s in the region. This has led not only less confrontation but also hindrance on their detection and isolation from civilians in security operations. All of these recent developments consolidated the stalemate—particularly for the state side—in ending, marginalizing, or significantly deterring PKK violence. Thus the cost that is induced by the conflict violence increased in social (human loss) and political (instability) terms.

It is also crucial to note about the current phase that recent developments have dramatically influenced the social fabric. For example, some civilian demonstrations in western Anatolia against PKK terror resulted in some attacks against Kurds. The Kurdish question in Turkey has never become an ethnic conflict in which civilians engaged in clashes. Rather, it had always been between PKK militants and security forces in addition to certain illegal public riots, gatherings and demonstrations by Kurdish people in the southeastern and southern regions. So, the characteristics of the PKK's strategic shift makes the current phase more vulnerable given any security operations in urban areas has a potential of civilian loss and unrest as a byproduct that would make the process fragile.

Moreover, the PKK's large and complex organizational structure and illegal income network from the Middle East to Europe set forth another potential for a spoiler effect. The illegal human trafficking and narcotics activities of the PKK yield not only a large amount of money but also a network profiting from it (i.e. war lords in conflict economy) that would not exist in peacetime. Related to this, there might be spoiler effects originating from the PKK's inside, hardliner faction groups. The heterogeneous structure of Kurdish groups might have a base of conflict with each other that would spoil the process; for instance, the reemergence of the inactive Turkish Hezbollah that long fought with the PKK earlier in the conflict, now represented by the Free Cause Party, HUDA-PAR. In December 2014, an armed conflict between this group and YDG-H resulted in four deaths with escalated tensions jeopardizing the resolution process.

In addition to the contextual challenges, there exist prospective challenges as well. Öcalan's strong leadership and a unifier/assembler role constitute a

chance for the resolution given the multiplicity of pro-PKK actors, such as Qandil, HDP, and the diaspora. Even after his arrest, Öcalan has, on and off, been continuing to lead the PKK through his attorney meetings since the second half of the 2000s. So far, the PKK paid homage to Öcalan even in very critical moves and organizational decisions, such as withdrawals, ceasefires, and the ending of massive hunger strikes. Öcalan plays a unifying role in the complex organizational structures of the PKK and pro-PKK entities, which otherwise might yield complications from veto players with conflicting views. In sum, both the internal and external conditions of the context put forth destabilizing factors, while these factors also push Turkey to resolve the PKK conflict.

Content

The *content/formula* of a resolution constitutes what you build on the *context* to resolve the conflict. These two must be complementary. The resolving formula should be enticing to both parties by offering future procedural political mechanisms, such as power sharing. Otherwise, a resolving formula that coerces the parties into a state dominated status quo would only continue the denial of the basic needs of the conflict and a non-starter.⁶¹

Most conflicts settled through negotiation were reached as a result of establishing different levels of instituted power sharing, which touches the main controversial issue of sovereignty. In Northern Ireland, for instance, the Good Friday Agreement allowed for a referendum to be held in the region (the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland) to determine the sovereignty issue.⁶² In the Lebanese case, the Taif Agreement signed in 1989 officially ended the conflict by granting a 50–50 split in political power between Muslims and Christians. Likewise, the Final Peace Agreement that was signed in 1996 to end the civil war between the MNLF and the Philippines Government through the mediation of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) culminated with the establishment of a new autonomous government in the specific area of autonomy, incorporating MNLF elements into the armed and police forces of the Philippines.⁶³ The Helsinki Agreement of August 2005 settled the conflict between the Indonesian government and Free Aceh Movement (GAM), and offered some degree of political autonomy to Aceh in addition to addressing transitional and restorative justice related issues (i.e. amnesty, and a human rights commission). Aceh also maintained the right to establish local political parties to represent its interests.⁶⁴

The PKK case is no different in this sense. Among the goals and demands, the most important issue is the PKK's overarching aim of founding an autonomous Kurdish State, which has been modified throughout its evolution due to strategic and pragmatic reasons.⁶⁵ With the creation of the KCK, the PKK started to pursue a political campaign for self-determination of some sort,

which Öcalan called for in his first testimony in 1999. However, what is specifically at the bargaining table, the resolution formula, is still not known at the time this study is being drafted. In September 2014, even the Chief of General Staff of the Turkish Army complained about not knowing the details. Opposition parties have also been complaining in the same account. Therefore, it is not possible to fully and critically discuss the *content* of the negotiations to analyze how enticing the formula is for the parties and related societies. In the end, however, the PKK will demand a certain form of self-determination in a decentralized state administration, with certain level of local political authority.

Another significant issue with the *content* is the nature of the resolution formula. It has to be clear-cut, understandable and specific. Otherwise, relying on a framework of good intentions and ideas that leaves the specifics to be shaped as the resolution process unfolds yields considerable risks of failure in the implementation of the resolution,⁶⁶ as clearly experienced in the Kurdish Opening process in 2009. The dialogue with Öcalan and then the PKK (Oslo process) seemed to have a generic framework rather than a specific roadmap or blueprint to be pursued by parties under a legally governed context. For instance, the notion of “Democratic Autonomy” as Öcalan demanded has actually been vague and not clearly understood, even by its supporters.⁶⁷ According to Gunter, by referring to “democratic” he, in the latest peace process, identified a local governance authority, based on the guidelines already listed in the European Charter of Local Self-Government adopted in 1985, granted in the region where inhabitants are predominantly Kurdish.⁶⁸ The International Crisis Group Report “Saving the Peace Process”⁶⁹ suggested, among its recommendations for a successful peace, that the PKK clarify what they wanted among independence, federal autonomy, or some sort of decentralization in political and administrative authority.

In addition, despite the lifting of almost all restrictions on the Kurdish language and even inaugurating Kurdish state television, access to the Kurdish mother tongue in education in public schools remains an important issue. There exist certain other demands in different scales, some of which include: Öcalan’s release from prison into a form of house arrest; abolishment of the Provisional Village Guard System; abolishment of the Turkish Counter-terrorism Law and related amendments to recognize/legitimize non-violent Kurdish dissent, namely the KCK as a political entity (release of all incarcerated KCK members); and lowering the 10 percent threshold in Turkey’s electoral system for parties to make it to the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

Most of these bargaining items that would possibly be in the resolution formula require dramatic structural changes in Turkey’s regime and administrative system. They entail a new Constitution establishing instituted power sharing (regional autonomy) with a new state structure granting political authority to local/provincial governance bodies. This is because the status

quo (1982 Constitution) in Turkey strictly forbids any amendment to the state's regime and administrative structure. It has long been considered an unchangeable red line for the Turkish Republic according to the regime's characteristics of indivisible unity of the country. Although during its time in office, the ruling AKP strived for a new Constitution creating a more ethnically neutral state regime that does not favor Turkishness, it could not realize it due to lack of collective consent in the parliament.

Conduct

The conduct of a resolution process refers to specific set of steps defined and implemented in a roadmap for transition from conflict to peace. These include disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation, reinsertion (e.g. amnesty), and reconstruction, along with maintaining transitional and restorative justice to deal with conflict created violence and injustices (e.g. truth commissions). A legally groundwork to protect and guarantee these agreed upon actions by both parties is necessary to eliminate security concerns.

Among these, burying the guns for insurgents constitutes the principal piece.⁷⁰ It is very typical that insurgents strive to keep the violence or threat of violence alive throughout the negotiations until the settlement is done. Likewise, governments stipulate laying down of arms as a preconditioned step, as it is the case for the resolution process with the PKK, for proceeding to a negotiated settlement. This is based mostly on mutual distrust of the parties, in addition to an attempt to increase the governmental legitimacy in the eye of the public and to prevent marginal pro-violence factions from potentially spoiling the peace attempt.

In the conflict between Philippines and the MILF insurgent group, for instance, despite the MILF declaring a ceasefire as a result of peace talks with the government in 2001, the MILF broke it off in 2003 by killing 30 people in Mindanao. In Mozambique, where a successful resolution was achieved in 1992 between Frelimo and Renamo, one of the earliest peace agreements signed in 1974 lasted only two years. So, not just laying down but also burying guns is crucial for the success and sustainability of a resolution process. However, this is not easy to achieve; it constitutes one of the core issues in conflict resolution. This is because the violence is the only commodity for insurgents to obtain the required concessions.⁷¹ Therefore, as happened in the case of the IRA, this process may take a long time. After a seven-year process from the Good Friday accord in 1998, Gerry Adams announced the end to using arms as a means in 2005. It seems even tougher in the PKK case. Given the porous borders and unstable conditions in ungoverned neighboring territories (Northern Syria and Northern Iraq), easy access to weapons, the PYD controlled territory in Northern Syria and its struggle against ISIS,

Turkey's wish for the PKK's full disarmament seems unrealistic. So, the unstable situation in Northern Iraq and Northern Syria makes the PKK's dumping of arms possible only for their militants located in Turkey, as underlined by the International Crisis Group.

Turkey has been quite reluctant, particularly during the Kurdish Opening (2007–11), to involve legal and political institutions, such as the National Assembly, in the resolution process in order to not grant the PKK any legitimacy, bear any legal responsibility that might be induced by the international law, and risk its political support. The PKK demanded legal reassurance at every step in the process, not only to gain official status in the national and international context but also to prevent the recurrence of heavy guerilla losses during the withdrawal, as happened in 1999. Toward this end, in the latest process, a generic law was enacted in mid-July 2014 to maintain the legal assurance of the process. The law itself defines the aim as “to determine the method and principle of the [resolution] process, which has been administered to end terror and strengthen societal consolidation/union.” It basically grants the authority and main responsibility to the board of ministers for taking necessary steps. However, it is criticized as only being a reassurance for the state officials who will administer the resolution process, in particular when administering return-to-home steps that come up in the transition from conflict to peace.

On the other hand, there exist certain other issues relating to the conduct of the latest process. Öcalan is more involved, sporadically, meeting with HDP members accompanied by MIT representatives. His views, proposals, and suggestions are conveyed by HDP members to the PKK/KCK leadership in Qandil, and interaction is maintained back and forth between Öcalan and the PKK. However, certain issues are under debate. These include, media access, direct contact channels with the council of PKK/KCK in Qandil, a secretariat, and an oversight committee (might be comprised of internal actors in and out of parliament), not only to affirm the transparency and socialization of the process but also to institutionalize it. Learning from the first attempt, the ruling AKP had seemed more cautious in the latest attempt than in the first attempt where they rashly raised expectations and had to step back, as discussed earlier. However, even decreased, an exchange of harsh rhetoric between parties continued. And particularly after the process that began with the Suruc bombing by ISIS and Turkey's air strikes targeting PKK camps in Northern Iraq, violence recurred which indicates suspension of the process. It is a signal for a potential failure of the latest resolution process.

The conduct of Turkey's resolution process compared with the Clark and Paul's master narrative (identifying a sequence of 7 steps/actions that were more or less pursued in 13 settled insurgent cases)⁷² reflects critical inconsistencies except in the perceived mutual stalemate. Contrary to the master narrative, *acceptance* of PKK/Öcalan as a legitimate negotiating entity in rhetoric

is not realistic while it is partly done in action in a de facto manner. Whether or not there is an *official intermediate agreement* and *power sharing* offer is not known. While the master plan indicates *moderation of insurgent leader* as the sixth step, it has been one of the initial steps with Öcalan. However, what is needed for now is the moderation of active leadership of the PKK in Qandil and in Europe. Turkey does not consider (at least for now) a third party (external) guarantor to monitor and check the process with objective criteria.

Conclusion

This study reviewed Turkey's resolution attempts during its long conflict with the PKK. It analyzed the emergence and failure of the previous attempts, focusing on the underpinnings and respective conditions of the evolutionary phases. It particularly focused on the period after 2007, when Turkey attempted to gradually shift from pursuing unilateral solutions to applying conflict *management* and then conflict-*resolution* approaches to transform the conflict into a non-violent political phenomenon.

Turkey, recognizing the exorbitant stalemate in 2007, secretly engaged in backchannel talks with the PKK's imprisoned leader Öcalan via MIT officials, and commenced the Kurdish Opening in 2009, which failed due to a series of ill-managed and conflicting decisions. Having learned certain lessons, Turkey shifted more to conflict resolution based attempt in late 2012. In addition to the calamitous military and social deadlock, what made Turkey engage in the latest resolution attempt were regional dynamics and instabilities that will affect Turkey in the foreseeable future.

The uncontrollable civil war in Syria and instability and sectarian conflict in Iraq provided potential powerful roles to the PKK and its Syrian equivalent —PYD—along with other Kurdish regional actors (e.g. PDK) that had the potential for scenarios that are clearly out of Turkey's control. These include a possible Kurdish state comprised of the PKK or its allies or a spillover from the Middle East's current ethnic/sectarian conflict opening up a broader fault line in Turkey's southeastern region. However, such instability in the region has enabled the PKK to exploit the situation against Turkey since these recent developments have legitimized the PKK's Syrian affiliates, the PYD, which has taken a lead role in the battle against ISIS. The PKK has also strengthened its role as a regional non-state actor, which poses a threat for Turkey. Together with this, the threat that ISIS poses against Turkey became clearer with suicide attacks in Suruc (July 2015) and Ankara (October 2015) that dramatically increased Turkey's security concerns and thus diminished its tolerance level toward the PKK.

Following these developments, two things became critically important. First, the PYD's control of northern Syria has made the PKK a "territorial

insurgency,” which has provided a legitimate safe-haven for the PKK in northern Syria in addition to the ungoverned space in northern Iraq. Second, and more importantly, a negotiated settlement between the PKK and Turkey has become more complicated due to increased number of actors and parameters as previously noted. Within this context, the PKK also embraced regional dynamics adjusting its strategic moves against Turkey and toward regional and international players that have a dominant role in the region, that is, USA, Iran, the Assad Regime, the PYD, the KDP and so forth.

On the other hand, Turkey had seemed more determined for a peaceful resolution, evidenced in how the latest process changed from unilateral management to multilateral reciprocal reconciliation. In this process, the PKK and other Kurdish groups, including the HDP, have been taken into consideration as negotiating entities. However, as recent developments indicated, Turkey’s conciliatory approach has ended with failure. Given the more bellicose discourse toughened state discourses toward the PKK before and after June and November 2015 elections, it should also be noted that—in addition to the regional power dynamics—recent domestic political concerns for the ruling AKP, in particular losing the majority vote in the parliament in the June elections, have played a key role in the destabilization and failure of the latest resolution process. Therefore, the potential role of domestic as well as regional and international politics reflects a crucial dynamic in Turkey’s resolution attempts in years to come.

Notwithstanding the ripeness for resolution of the current phase of the conflict, the overall context, content and the conduct of the latest resolution process raise certain critical issues. First, the long lasting conflict created different layers of problems that compounded grievances. So, the *context* indicates a long term, identity-based, unfinished, and territorial character. Moreover, dynamic conditions that would induce power shifts among actors present current and potential instabilities for the parties in the resolution process. Second, the *content* (while not fully) appears to be a generic approach rather than a clear-cut and specific resolution formula that would be enticing to both sides given the dramatic gap between conflicting deep-rooted demands and the reconstruction of central authority with a fully consolidated democracy. Reaching an acceptable settlement between the parties requires dramatic changes, remedies, and modifications in the structural sense that includes instituted power sharing. Third, the *conduct* suffers from lack of sustainable peace and post-conflict processes (e.g. truth commissions, transitional justice). The resolution process is not *transparent* and thus not *socialized* since it has been conducted only between the PKK (Öcalan, HDP, KCK) and the ruling AKP government. Thus, it is not institutionalized as an overall state project with full consent of the parliament and the society with wide acceptance of social initiatives. Rather than ad hoc steps, conflict resolution needs a long-term systematic blueprint that specifically defines

each action and step with observable criteria by outsiders to allow viable verification. In this regard, one could recommend better social engagement, including addressing the social psychology of mainstream Kurdish and Turkish societies; legally assured and mutually agreed upon ground rules supported by strong political will with majority consent from the parliament; and a specifically and clearly designed and declared roadmap to allow oversight with objective monitoring criteria are *sine qua non* for a sustainable process covering all transitional elements from conflict to peace normalization.

Finally, despite the fact that Turkey claimed to be on the verge of a solution, it seems to have a long way to go given the discrepancy between what needs to be done and what is actually being done so far for a sustainable resolution. While, the current conditions reflect not just ripeness (since 2007) of a military stalemate with high social and political costs, but also urgency for resolution due to national security concerns and power shifts potentially influencing Turkey, these dynamics itself—have incurred and still incur—destabilization for the process and indicate a fragile process subject to spoiling risks. However, despite these problems, it is probable that Turkey will eventually engage, again, in a conciliatory action and sit around the negotiation table either directly or indirectly. What is crucial, though, is that any resolution effort should be based on a constructive approach and a strong will even if certain parties' actions go off track in the process. If the resolution process is not taken out from the refrigerator—as it was claimed to be put in the refrigerator by the president—the conflict not only reignites in recurrence of terrorist and guerilla attacks, but also escalates societal tensions with violent urban events, resulting in considerable instability in social, economic, and political terms as the recent costly signaling events have clearly revealed.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes

1. *Today's Zaman*, "PKK Could Cost Turkish Economy Up to 400\$ billion."
2. Counterterrorism (CT) in this study denotes a securitization approach in which Turkey aimed at exterminating PKK through incapacitating its member with military and police forces and using special anti-terrorism laws and courts (State security Courts) to repress the related population that is sympathetic to the PKK. Counterinsurgency (COIN) on the other hand refers to Turkey's paradigm shift in which Turkey approached the with accommodative policies along with social and political reforms to remove certain legitimate grievances and more importantly COIN approach indicates Turkey's response to the social and political parts of the problem as opposed to its CT approach of punishment.
3. In this study, conflict management denotes controlling, limiting, and containing conflict behavior in such a way as to make it less destructive or violent. It is still a

one sided approach but it is an inclusive and broadened approach toward the conflict. The conflict resolution, on the other hand, is a reciprocal process and it includes officially recognizing the other side of the conflict. Conflict resolution includes reconciliation in which fundamental differences, grievances, and incompatibilities between the warring parties are disappeared in a great extent.

4. The content of the pre-negotiations and negotiations have not been disclosed to public but first time in the conflict history, government overtly negotiated via the members of pro-PKK political party, People's Democracy Party (HDP).
5. Nevruz (originally spelled Newroz), means "new day" and denotes the arrival of spring, which is celebrated on March 21 every year. It has symbolically become an expression of pro-PKK discourses and yielded mass demonstrations and celebrations in Turkey. The day of Nevruz was marked with violent public events particularly in the late 1980s and early 1990s in 1995, Turkey recognized Nevruz as a national public holiday to ease the tension.
6. Zartman, "Negotiating Internal, Ethnic and Identity Conflicts," 256.
7. Lieberfeld, "Conflict 'Ripeness' Revisited," 80.
8. Mack, "Why big nations lose small wars," 198–9.
9. Arreguin-Toft, "How the Weak Win Wars," 126–8.
10. Filson and Werner, "A Bargaining Model," 820, 834.
11. Findley, "Bargaining," 906.
12. Ibid.
13. Zartman, *Ripe for Resolution*, 1989, 17–29
14. Ibid.
15. Zartman, *Preventive Negotiation*, 4.
16. Zartman, *Ripe for Resolution*, 267–80.
17. Ibid, 276.
18. Ibid, 272.
19. Harris, "Coming to Terms with Separatist Insurgencies," 353.
20. Amer, "The Resolution of the Cambodian Conflict," 732–40.
21. Ibid.
22. Zartman, *Ripe for Resolution*, 272.
23. Clark and Paul, *From Stalemate to Settlement*, 9, 18.
24. Zartman, "Negotiating Internal, Ethnic and Identity Conflicts," 261.
25. It is originally stated as "S⁵" by Zartman, but it is denoted as "5S" in this study for the sake of clarity (not to be mixed up with endnotes).
26. Ibid. 259, 260
27. Byman, "The Logic of Ethnic Terrorism," 151–67.
28. Downes, "The Problem with Negotiated Settlements to Ethnic Civil Wars," 270–9.
29. Fearon and Laitin, "Sons of the Soil, Migrants, and Civil War," 199, 210.
30. Zartman, "Negotiating Internal, Ethnic and Identity Conflicts," 255.
31. Ibid. 255–7.
32. Amer, "The Resolution of the Cambodian Conflict," 740.
33. A documentary on PKK's ceasefires, retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eezt7TaFDLY> on April 1, 2015.
34. Please see the PKK's periodical titled *SERXWEBÛN* for commentary by Öcalan (1994).
35. Bapat, "Insurgency and the Opening of Peace Processes," 713–6.
36. Arreguin-Toft, "How the Weak Win Wars," 96.
37. Fearon and Laitin, "Sons of the Soil, Migrants, and Civil War," 210.

38. Unal, "Strategist or Pragmatist," 420–46.
39. Arreguin-Toft, "How the Weak Win Wars," 97.
40. For different strategies/purposes of terrorism in general, please see Kydd and Walter, "The Strategies of Terrorism."
41. Non-emergency rule areas include all provinces in Turkey other than Southeastern and Eastern region of Turkey in where the PKK claims independence/secession to identify PKK's terror attacks (to spread the war and to break off Turkish Army's counterinsurgency focus in the region) with different purposes toward civilians other than its attacks toward non-compliant Kurds in emergency rule (PKK-related) areas.
42. The reason for indicating civilian casualties in non-emergency rule areas is to partition out PKK's indiscriminate attacks on non-compliant GKKs and their families (for intimidation, enforcing mobilization and compliance) in emergency rule areas.
43. Zartman, "Negotiating Internal, Ethnic and Identity Conflicts," 251, 259.
44. Zartman and Faure, *Escalation and Negotiation in International Conflicts*, 266.
45. The death sentence was abolished in 2002 (except for war or national security related crimes) and then totally dismantled in 2004.
46. Unal, "The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)," 446.
47. Zartman, "Negotiating Internal, Ethnic and Identity Conflicts," 251–7.
48. Arreguin-Toft, "How the Weak Win Wars," 101–2.
49. Provisional Village Guards (GKK) is a system that was implemented in 1985 and with that, volunteer villagers are trained and armed by Turkish Army to defend their hamlets and villages against the PKK.
50. Casualty numbers are extracted from the Turkish National Police, Intelligence Department Database.
51. Wise Men Commission Southeastern Report, 12.
52. The minutes of leaked the Oslo meeting can be reached via many websites, for instance, <https://www.facebook.com/notes/ilk-ve-son-adim-merak-edilen-oslodayipilan-mit-pkk-gorusmesi-tam-metin/248819375198025>.
53. In this study, first resolution attempt refers to the peace attempt (Kurdish Opening) in 2007–11, and the second one indicates the latest one started in late 2012.
54. Support level for the resolution Process. National Press Sabah News, March 9, 2015. Accessed from <http://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2015/03/09/turkiye-cozume-evet-diyor>.
55. Açık Toplum Vakfı, "Support Level for Resolution Process."
56. Clark and Paul, *From Stalemate to Settlement*, 18.
57. Santos, "Evolution of the Armed Conflict on the Moro Front."
58. Bacani, *The Mindanao Peace Talks*, 8–10.
59. Çandar, "Dağdan İnış-PKK Nasıl Silah Bırakır."
60. Wise Men Commission Southeastern Report, 38.
61. Zartman, "Negotiating Internal, Ethnic and Identity Conflicts," 259, 260.
62. Todd, "Institutional Change and Conflict Regulation," 853–7.
63. Martin and Tuminez, *Toward Peace in the Southern Philippines*.
64. Kingsbury, "Peace Processes in Aceh and Sri Lanka," 110.
65. Unal, "Strategist or Pragmatist," 420–46; Unal, *Counterterrorism in Turkey*, 129–32.
66. Ibid.
67. Osman Baydemir, a popular former mayor of Diyarbakir Province, defined democratic autonomy in one his statements (in Tunceli on July 31). He argued that there

would be parliaments in different regions of Turkey as well as in Southeastern region (he named it as Kurdistan) and their flag would fly next to the Turkish one.

68. Gunter, "Reopening Turkey's Closed Kurdish Opening?" 93–6.
69. International Crisis Group, "Turkey and the PKK."
70. Ibid.
71. Zartman, "Negotiating Internal, Ethnic and Identity Conflicts," 261.
72. Clark and Paul, *From Stalemate to Settlement*, 17–8.

Notes on contributor

Mustafa Coşar Ünal is an Adjunct Associate Professor at Bilkent University. He received his Ph.D. in 2009 in Public Policy and Administration from the University of Maryland. He served for 16 years in the Turkish Intelligence Department and held different managerial positions in which he dealt with strategic level analyses of terrorism and insurgency. He has taught graduate and undergraduate courses on terrorism, intelligence, security, and public policy at several universities, including Bilkent University, Gazi University, and the National Police Academy's Security Science Institute. His research is mostly on terrorism and other types of asymmetric conflict, conflict management and resolution, insurgency, counterinsurgency (COIN), counterterrorism (CT), COIN doctrines and strategies, intelligence, and national security. His recent publications include: *Counterterrorism in Turkey: Policy Choices and Policy Effects toward the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)* (Routledge); "Opening a Door for Return to Home: Impact and effectiveness of Turkish Repentance Laws as a counterterrorism measure," in *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*; "Strategist or Pragmatist: A Challenging Look at Ocalan's Retrospective Classification and Definition of PKK's Strategic Periods of 1973–2012," in *Terrorism & Political Violence*; "The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and Popular Support: Counterterrorism towards an insurgency nature," in *Small Wars & Insurgencies*; "Terrorist or Insurgency: A Conceptual Analysis," in *Crime, Law and Social Change*; and "Counterinsurgency and Military Strategy: An analysis of Turkish Army's COIN Doctrines/Strategies," in *Military Operations Research*.

Bibliography

- Açık Toplum Vakfı. 2015. "Support Level for Resolution Process." October 13. http://www.aciktoplumvakfi.org.tr/pdf/arastirma_sureci_17.09.2014.pdf.
- Amer, Ramses. "The Resolution of the Cambodian Conflict: Assessing the Explanatory Value of Zartman's 'Ripeness Theory'." *Journal of Peace Research* 44, no. 6 (2007): 729–742.
- Arreguin-Toft, Ivan. "How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict." *International Security* 26, no. 1 (2001): 93–128.
- Bacani, Benedicto R. *The Mindanao Peace Talks: Another Opportunity to Resolve the Moro Conflict in the Philippines*. Vol. 31. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2005.
- Bapat, Navin A. "Insurgency and the Opening of Peace Processes." *Journal of Peace Research* 42, no. 6 (2005): 699–717.
- Byman, Daniel. "The Logic of Ethnic Terrorism." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 21, no. 2 (1998): 149–169.

- Çandar, Cengiz. *Dağdan İnış-PKK Nasıl Silah Bırakır? Kürt Sorunu'nun Şiddetten Arındırılması*. İstanbul: TESEV Yayınları, Artpress, 2011.
- Clarke, Colin P., and Christopher Paul. *From Stalemate to Settlement: Lessons for Afghanistan from Historical Insurgencies That Have Been Resolved Through Negotiations*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2014.
- Downes, Alexander B. "The Problem with Negotiated Settlements to Ethnic Civil Wars." *Security Studies* 13, no. 4 (2004): 230–279.
- Esayan, Markar. 2013. "CHP'de Surece Destek." *Taraf*, April 3. <http://www.taraf.com.tr/yazilar/markar-esayan/chp-de-surece-destek-40/25662/>.
- Fearon, James D., and David D. Laitin. "Sons of the Soil, Migrants, and Civil war." *World Development* 39, no. 2 (2011): 199–211.
- Filson, Darren, and Suzanne Werner. "A Bargaining Model of war and Peace: Anticipating the Onset, Duration, and Outcome of war." *American Journal of Political Science* 46, no. 4 (2002): 819–837.
- Findley, Michael G. "Bargaining and the Interdependent Stages of Civil War Resolution." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 57, no. 5 (2013): 905–932.
- Gunter, Michael. "Reopening Turkey's Closed Kurdish Opening?" *Middle East Policy* 20, no. 2 (2013): 88–98.
- Harris, Albert W. "Coming to Terms with Separatist Insurgencies." *Negotiation Journal* 26, no. 3 (2010): 327–356.
- International Crisis Group. 2014. "Turkey and the PKK: Saving the Peace Process." November 6. Accessed November 6, 2015. <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/publication-type/media-releases/2014/europe/turkey-and-the-pkk-saving-the-peace-process.aspx>.
- Kingsbury, Damien. "Peace Processes in Aceh and Sri Lanka: A Comparative Assessment." *Security Challenges* 3, no. 2 (2007): 93–112.
- Kydd, Andrew H., and Barbara F. Walter. "The Strategies of Terrorism." *International Security* 31, no. 1 (2006): 49–80.
- Lieberfeld, Daniel. "Conflict "Ripeness" Revisited: The South African and Israeli/Palestinian Cases." *Negotiation Journal* 15, no. 1 (1999): 63–82.
- Mack, Andrew. "Why big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict." *World Politics* 27, no. 2 (1975): 175–200.
- Martin, Eugene, and Astrid S. Tuminez. *Toward Peace in the Southern Philippines: A Summary and Assessment of the USIP Philippine Facilitation Project, 2003–2007*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2008.
- Öcalan, A. "Newroz kahramanlık şehitlerimiz bahar hamlemize öncülük ediyor." *SERXWEBÜN* 13, no 148 (Jun. 1994), Accessed November 6, 2015. <http://www.serxwebun.org/arsiv/148/>.
- Santos, Soliman. "Evolution of the Armed Conflict on the Moro Front." *The Philippine Human Development Report* (2005). Accessed 18 November 2015. http://hdn.org.ph/wp-content/uploads/2005_PHDR/2005%20Evolution_Moro_Conflict.pdf.
- Today's Zaman. 2001. "PKK Could Cost Turkish Economy Up to 400\$ billion." October 4. Accessed November 8, 2015. http://www.todayszaman.com/business_pkk-terror-could-cost-turkish-economy-up-to-400-billion_258611.html.
- Todd, Jennifer. "Institutional Change and Conflict Regulation: The Anglo-Irish Agreement (1985) and the Mechanisms of Change in Northern Ireland." *West European Politics* 34, no. 4 (2011): 838–858.

- Unal, Mustafa Cosar. "The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and Popular Support: Counterterrorism Towards an Insurgency Nature." *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 23, no. 3 (2012): 432–455.
- Unal, Mustafa Cosar. *Counterterrorism in Turkey: Policy Choices and Policy Effects Toward the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)*. London: Routledge, 2012.
- Unal, Mustafa Cosar. "Strategist or Pragmatist: A Challenging Look at Ocalan's Retrospective Classification and Definition of PKK's Strategic Periods Between 1973 and 2012." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no. 3 (2014): 419–448.
- Wise Men Commission Southeastern Report (*Akil Insanlar Heyeti Guneydogu Raporu*). 26 June 2013. Accessed November 6, 2015. <http://www.mazlumder.org/webimage/akil%20insanlar%20heyeti%20guneydogu%20raporu.pdf>.
- Zartman, I. William. *Ripe for Resolution: Conflict and Intervention in Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Zartman, I. William, ed. *Preventive Negotiation: Avoiding Conflict Escalation*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001.
- Zartman, I. William, and Guy Olivier Faure, eds. *Escalation and Negotiation in International Conflicts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Zartman, I. William. "Negotiating Internal, Ethnic and Identity Conflicts in A Globalized World." *International Negotiation* 11, no. 2 (2006): 253–272.