

**BUSINESS AND POLITICS IN THE MUSLIM WORLD  
TURKEY**

Weekly Report on Turkey's Political, Geo-Strategic,  
Economic and Social Issues,

Period: 17<sup>TH</sup> September –23<sup>th</sup>September 2010.

Submitted By: Aasia Khatoon khattak

Presentation: 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2010

Report no.138

---

**News Outline**

**SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

**4-9**

**Political news**

**10**

- Turkey's ruling party goes to camp to brainstorm on future
- Experts in Turkey express concern over decentralized exam system
- Two Turkish journalists face risk of jail time for reporting
- High numbers of forced migrants to Istanbul homesick, study says
- Parents stage education boycott in NW Turkey after school change
- Inequality of Opportunity Grows in Turkey's Educational System

**GEO-STRATAGIC NEWS**

**20**

- Turkey to continue efforts in Balkans, says Davutoğlu
- Turkey Wants to Become Observer to OAS
- Turkey to establish industrial zone in Serbia's Muslim Sanjak

- Turkish FM attends NATO-Russia Council meeting in New York
- Turkish govt collects nearly 183 million TL for Pakistan so far
- Turkey wants all Balkans states to join NATO
- Turkey nearing end of nuclear talks with South Korea
- PKK leader urges Israel to cut Turkey military ties
- Turkish Speaker says Israel should apologize for deadly raid
- Turkish president voices concern over military action on Iran
- Turkey, Germany prepare for long-awaited university in Istanbul
- PKK reaches out to Israel, says Turkey common enemy
- UN Gaza aid probe finds 'clear evidence' against Israel

**ECONOMIC NEWS 39**

- TÜSİAD chief calls for more democracy in Turkey
- American business world ready to support investments in Turkey
- Turkey's employment figures on rise while EU's unemployment rate climbs in Q2

**SOCIAL NEWS 43**

- Three seas gather under Tekfen Philharmonic Orchestra in Istanbul
- Activists cry foul in covering of ancient city in Turkey
- Injured animals released back into the wild

**COMMENTARY 48**

- Presidential debate

- Has Erdoğan changed Turkey?
- From the Bosphorus: Straight- President Gül's 'presidential' wisdom
- Education in mother tongue
- Water wars and Turkey
- Cyprus talks (I)
- A historic opportunity
- Secular' doesn't mean 'liberal'
- Overview on Turkish constitutional referendum process
- Has the Gülen movement become political?

## **SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **SUMMARY –POLITICAL NEWS**

#### **Turkish Government New decisions for future**

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is taking his representatives to camp at Kızılcahamam to discuss the presidential system, President Abdullah Gül's tenure and the date of the general elections.

#### **Decentralized Exam System**

Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç's remarks suggesting decentralized exams instead of a central examination system have created controversy about the motives behind such a proposal coming along with the recent exam cheating scandal.

#### **Sentence against two journalists**

A public prosecutor in Istanbul has asked for a sentence against two journalists from the daily Milliyet on charges stemming from a story they published containing a declaration from a member of Turkey's most prominent outlawed organization.

#### **353 families forced to migrate to Istanbul**

Some 353 families forced to migrate to Istanbul were surveyed in the study, including 260 children between the ages of 12 to 17 and 267 young people from 18 and 24. They would like to return back "home" due to a "sense of belonging.

#### **Edirne parents of 33 students boycott for the present opportunities**

The parents of 33 students in a village in Edirne have been taking part in a school boycott since Monday – not in

search of Kurdish-language rights like their boycotting counterparts in Southeast Anatolia – but because of a plan to send their children to a new school. They want to benefit their children from the [present] opportunities such as security, health and school supplies.

The increasing role of the private sector in Turkey's education system is contributing to an increasing amount of inequality of opportunity, according to a new report from an education watchdog group.

Families with money can educate their children in private schools where resources are plentiful and class sizes are small, while shabby state schools are the only chance for low-income families, said the "2009 Equal Access to Education" report by the Education Reform Initiative, or ERG. When schools do not receive enough books from the Education Ministry, they ask families for additional books. In addition to food and transportation expenses, schools also ask for contribution fees even if it is not legal. This situation increases the monthly educational expenditures for families.

## **SUMMARY-GEO-STRATAGIC NEWS**

### **Turkey to continue efforts in Balkans**

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu said Thursday Turkey will take every step necessary to realize security, peace and stability in the Balkans. The Turkish president expressed on Wednesday Turkey's wish to see all Balkan states in NATO.

### **Turkey Expressed desire to establish relations with OAS**

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meeting expressed Turkey's desire to enhance its economic and commercial relations with the Organization of American States (OAS) and become an observer member to OAS in the future to coordinate its relations with countries in those regions.

Insulza, who is former foreign minister of Chile, welcomed Turkey's desire to enhance relations with OAS.

### **Turkey would Establish Industrial Zone in Serbia**

Turkey's labor minister said that Turkey would establish an industrial zone in Sanjak region of Serbia.

### **NATO-Russia Council meeting in New York**

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu attended NATO-Russia Council meeting in New York, the United States on Wednesday. The meeting was an important phase in regard to improvement of relations with Russia ahead of NATO-Russia Summit that would take place in Lisbon, Portugal on November 20. The meeting especially focused on economic and strategic cooperation areas between NATO and Russia, officials said.

### **Aid campaign for flood-hit Pakistan.**

Nearly 183 million Turkish Liras have been collected so far within the framework of an aid campaign aiming at helping flood-hit Pakistan.

### **Turkey and North Korea Nuclear Power Plant Talks**

Energy and Natural Resources Minister Taner Yıldız said Wednesday that talks with South Korea were nearing an end as plans for a nuclear power plant in Turkey proceed.

### **PKK urge Israel to cut off her military ties with Turkey**

The commander of the terrorist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) urged Israel on Tuesday to sever its military ties with Turkey, which he described as a common enemy.

### **Israel should apologize from Turkey**

Turkish Parliament Speaker Mehmet Ali Sahin said on Thursday that Israel should apologize from Turkey and accept to pay compensation to the relatives of those who were killed in Israel's attack on Mavi Marmara ship.

### **Military action against Iran and Turkey**

Possible military action against Iran is a major concern, Turkish President Abdullah Gül said Wednesday, but added that he believed a diplomatic solution could still be found.

### **Turkish and German governments establishing Joint University**

The Turkish and German governments are moving ahead with plans to realize a long-awaited joint university project.

### **U.N. probe report-clear evidence against Israel**

A U.N. probe said Wednesday there is clear evidence to back prosecutions of Israel for killing and torture when its troops stormed a Gaza-bound aid flotilla in May.

## **SUMMARY-ECONOMIC NEWS**

### **TÜSİAD chief calls for more democracy in Turkey**

According to Ümit Boyner, chairwoman of the Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen's Association, or TÜSİAD, If Turkey does not improve its lack of democracy, neither regional developmental differences nor unemployment problems will be solved.

### **American business world ready to support investments in Turkey**

On Wednesday during a visit to the United States, Turkish President Abdullah Gül met Turkish-American business figure and Coca Cola President Muhtar Kent. Kent said after his meeting with Gül at The Plaza Hotel in New York City, The American business world was ready to support investment in Turkey, as the country is performing well economically.

### **Turkey's employment figures on rise while EU's unemployment rate climbs in Q2**

The Turkish deputy premier said on Wednesday that Turkey's employment figures had increased while the European Union's unemployment figures had been on the rise in the second quarter of 2010.

## **SUMMARY-SOCIAL NEWS**

### **Three seas gather under Tekfen Philharmonic Orchestra in Istanbul**

Seventy artists from 21 countries within the body of the 18-year-old Tekfen Philharmonic Orchestra want to give the world a message of friendship and peace. 'We are like a happy family,' says Saim Akçıl, the orchestra's chief conductor

Even though their countries are in dispute and sometimes go to war against each other, these musicians do not hesitate to appear on stage shoulder to shoulder and give messages of friendship and peace.

### **Injured animals released back into the wild**

Istanbul Environment and Forestry Manager Mehmet Emin Binpinar has released injured wild birds treated at Istanbul



University's Faculty of Veterinary Medicine back into nature at a reserve in the district of Polonezköy.

## **POLITICAL NEWS**

### **Turkey's ruling party goes to camp to brainstorm on future**

Wednesday, September 22, 2010

ANKARA - Hürriyet Daily News

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is taking his representatives to camp at Kızılcahamam to discuss the presidential system, President Abdullah Gül's tenure and the date of the general elections.

Justice and Development Party, or AKP, representatives will convene at a thermal hot springs hotel for three days between Oct. 15 and 17.

The party members will brainstorm strategies for the 2011 general elections, decide whether Gül will serve for five years or seven years and discuss the Sept. 12 referendum results and the new constitution.

As well, provincial reports will be examined for cities that voted "no" in the referendum.

It is also expected that an evaluation will be carried out on the matter of a possible presidential candidacy for Erdoğan. The representatives will be joined by their wives during the camp, which will likely mark the last time the party members convene before the 2011 elections.

The general election date, which could be pulled back a month due to it falling during the summer, is also expected to be determined.

---

### **Experts in Turkey express concern over decentralized exam system**

Wednesday, September 22, 2010

İZGİ GÜNGÖR

ANKARA — Hürriyet Daily News

Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç's remarks suggesting decentralized exams instead of a central examination system have created controversy about the motives behind such a proposal coming amid the recent exam cheating scandal.

“Any shift from a central examination system to decentralized exams will have political implications and result in partisan elections and appointments,” Zübeyde Kılıç, chairman of the Education Personnel Union, or Eğitim-Sen, told the Hürriyet Daily News & Economic Review.

Professor Ünal Yarımağan, head of the Student Selection and Placement Center, or ÖSYM, resigned from his post Tuesday in the wake of allegations of widespread cheating on a nationwide placement exam, the Public Personnel Selection Examination, or KPSS.

The ÖSYM administers Turkey's most crucial exams that are required for admission to university as well as employment in public institutions including state ministries and police academies.

Along with all teacher and police candidates, judge and prosecutor candidates as well as candidates for local administrations must take the ÖSYM's exams under current implementation.

Partisan practices

Arınç's proposal, however, holds that all public institutions, including ministries as well as universities, should make

their own exams to determine their respective personnel or students.

Such a system would affect teacher candidates the most, as they constitute around one-fourth of overall applicants taking the ÖSYM's tests.

To Kılıç, Arınç's proposal has two negative implications, one political and one technical.

“Such scandals are taking place even in a credible place like the ÖSYM. These types of scandals, partisan elections and appointments are likely to increase if the public institutions and ministries, which are largely run by the ruling AKP [Justice and Development Party], hold their own exams. The ongoing appointments are already a sign of it.

“Moreover, I am concerned about whether the Education Ministry, for instance, has the technical capacity to hold its own exam.”

For Kılıç, the recent developments are just part of the government's “previously designed plan” to make a shift from central examinations to a decentralized system, as the government gave hints of this several months ago.

“Education Minister Nimet Çubukçu, for instance, expressed her disappointment in the KPSS system a few months ago, voicing her ministry's demand to hold its own exam,” Kılıç said.

“And Yarımağan is just a scapegoat. The Higher Education Board [YÖK] likewise preferred not to interfere in the recent incidents although ÖSYM runs under its authority. YÖK President Yusuf Ziya Özcan already said some time ago that they would wait for a proper time to make a shift.”

‘Prejudice should be avoided’

For Ahmet Gündoğdu, head of the Civil Servants' Trade Union, or Memur-Sen, a union regarded as close to the government, said a decentralized system shouldn't be prejudiced against because the way the exams are conducted is much more important than who conducts them.

“It is important to test ability and knowledge based on objective criteria in all branches. Teachers are recruited with the KPSS, but it lacks questions that test their knowledge about their profession,” Gündoğdu told the Daily News.

“If the right questions testing the right knowledge are asked, it is not that important who asks them or whether it is the ministry or not. The institutions may cooperate with the ÖSYM to hold their own exam if necessary.”

Gündoğdu said the Education Ministry, for instance, has the sufficient technological capacity, expertise and experience to administer its own exam.

“I don't know whether other ministries have enough technological experience, but the Education Ministry has years of experience doing that. It administered exams in the past, it has a test bank and it still guides other institutions in this respect.”

Emine Ülker Tarhan, chairwoman of the Judges and Prosecutors Association, or YARSAV, said the proposed system would result in political influence on the candidates' selection.

“There are two steps in the selection of judges and prosecutors: a written test and an interview. The written test has been done by ÖSYM, which is an impartial administrator. The interview, however, is not based on

objective criteria given that it is held by a group of bureaucrats under the Justice Ministry.

“The political influence may be significant in interviews so we have already filed many cases protesting this aspect,” she said, implying that the two-step selection system held by the ministry is likely to increase the influence.

“Likewise, I don’t think the ministry has the sufficient technical infrastructure to administer its own written exam.”

---

## **Two Turkish journalists face risk of jail time for reporting**

Wednesday, September 22, 2010

ANKARA - Hürriyet Daily News

A public prosecutor in Istanbul has asked for a sentence against two journalists from the daily Milliyet on charges stemming from a story they published

A public prosecutor in Istanbul has asked for a sentence against two journalists from the daily Milliyet on charges stemming from a story they published containing a declaration from a member of Turkey’s most prominent outlawed organization.

The prosecution has asked for separate sentences of up to seven years and six months for reporter Namık Durukan and Managing Editor Hasan Çakkalkurt for carrying part of a declaration of Duran Kalkan, a senior member of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK.

Meanwhile, the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecution's Office is pursuing a separate case against Durukan and Çakkalkurt and has demanded two years in prison for other charges related to their article.

The pair has been on trial since July 30, 2009.

---

## **High numbers of forced migrants to Istanbul homesick, study says**

Thursday, September 23, 2010

ISTANBUL – Daily News with wires

Some 30.9 percent of children and 43.8 percent of youth forced to migrate to Istanbul would like to return back “home” due to a “sense of belonging,” a new study has revealed.

The project “You have a choice, hear my voice” was carried out with the cooperation of the Başak Culture and Art Association and Istanbul Bilgi University’s Center for Migration, Anatolia news agency reported Wednesday. Project coordinator Ayşe Tepe said they conducted their initial research in 2004 to determine the influence of forced migration on children. This year, they conducted a new poll with the same families.

The main goals of the project were to diminish urban tension and cultural conflicts created by migration, encourage societal serenity and peace, illustrate the problems of children and young people affected by migration and provide solutions by creating ground for scientific research.

For male students, friendships established in Istanbul were the main reason they did not want to return. On the other hand, female students cited education opportunities as their reason to stay.

The problems of children who are victims of migration should be solved within the spheres of education and business life, Tepe said, adding that the demands and

reasons of families wanting to return should also be considered. “Steps taken in this issue should be reassuring and persuasive.”

Some 353 families forced to migrate to Istanbul were surveyed in the study, including 260 children between the ages of 12 to 17 and 267 young people from 18 and 24. Tepe said 45 percent of the people participating in the poll did not have any social security and underlined that the number of houses where at least one child had died was 122.

Noting that the socioeconomic level of the families was low, Tepe said the incomes of 167 of the families were not enough for their basic needs.

“While 116 families could barely make ends meet, 57 families could not buy anything extra. Only 11 families had sufficient incomes to live comfortably,” said Tepe.

The research was carried out in Istanbul’s Anatolian districts of Sultanbeyli, Ümraniye, Üsküdar, Beykoz, Ataşehir, Sancaktepe, Kadıköy, Maltepe, Kartal, Pendik, Tuzla, the European districts of Esenler, Sultangazi and Şişli, as well as the Kocaeli district of Gebze.

---

### **Parents stage education boycott in NW Turkey after school change**

Thursday, September 23, 2010

ISTANBUL – Daily news with wires

The parents of 33 students in a village in Edirne have been taking part in a school boycott since Monday – not in search of Kurdish-language rights like their boycotting counterparts in Southeast Anatolia – but because of a plan to send their children to a new school.



“We do not want our children to go [to the new school]. We want to benefit from the [present] opportunities such as security, health and school supplies. The children were going to that school for four years with the approval of the governor. This year that did not happen,” Ertan Tutluel, head of the village development cooperative, said in detailing the reasons behind the boycott.

After a school in Akardere village of the northwestern province’s Süloğlu district was shut four years ago due to insufficient class sizes, parents enrolled their children register at a school in the district center of Süloğlu, Anatolia news agency reported.

Villagers paid for the students’ food and transportation fees on their own. To reduce the cost of transport to the school nine kilometers away, the village development cooperative bought two vans and won the bid to provide transport to the school.

This year, however, officials ordered the parents to register their children at a school in the neighboring village of Gerdelli, which is eight kilometers away. The families opposed the order and said they would not stop sending their children to the Süloğlu school.

The parents refused to send their children to the neighboring village school, while the district school could not enroll the students because their registration information had been officially transferred to the Gerdelli school.

Tutluel said they sent their complaint to the governor through the district education directorate.

The children from Akardere have been helping their parents at home and playing since the boycott began Monday.

“My friends have already started school; I miss them,” said Sercan Akalan, who is to start seventh grade this year and has been helping his father in his coffee house. “We do not want to go to the school in Gerdelli village.”

However, the district governor of Süloğlu district, Şeref Albayrak, called on the villagers to end their boycott, saying the parents were committing a crime by not sending their children to school.

Akardere’s village headman demanded that the children be allowed to continue attending the Süloğlu school, saying the villagers would continue to cover the necessary food and transport costs.

Albayrak, meanwhile, said he was waiting for Education Ministry approval of the village’s request.

---

### **Inequality of Opportunity Grows in Turkey’s Educational System**

The increasing role of the private sector in Turkey’s education system is contributing to an increasing amount of inequality of opportunity, according to a new report from an education watchdog group.

Families with money can educate their children in private schools where resources are plentiful and class sizes are small, while threadbare state schools are the only chance for low-income families, said the “2009 Equal Access to Education” report by the Education Reform Initiative, or ERG.

When schools do not receive enough books from the Education Ministry, they ask families for additional books. In addition to food and transportation expenses, schools also ask for contribution fees even if it is not legal. This

situation increases the monthly educational expenditures for families.

“I cannot allocate enough money for my children’s education,” said Türkan Aslan, whose husband is a television repairman, speaking to the Hürriyet Daily News & Economic Review. “We can give our children only pocket change, if we have any money at all.”

Noting that her children’s teachers in the elementary school want additional books, Aslan said, “They do not ask for a contribution fee, but there is the book expenditure.”

According to data from Turkish Statistical Institute, or TurkStat, the number of non-formal education institutions has increased to 20,045, representing a 7.6 percent increase between the 2006-07 and 2008-09 school years.

1 percent increase in education budget

According to the ERG report, the top 20 percent of income earners in Turkey spend 21 times more on education than the lowest 20 percent. ERG is a part of the Istanbul Policy Center at Sabancı University.

According to the government’s Ninth Development Plan, prepared for the period between 2007 and 2013, some improvements have been provided in access to education. “With the extension of compulsory elementary education to eight years, a great increase in the number of students has been obtained and the proportion in passing from elementary school to secondary school has boosted,” the development plan read.

And not everyone has experienced all negative effects of the government’s budget. Kıyasettin Kök, who is a cashier in Istanbul, said he spends 400 liras every month for each

of his two children, aged 10 and 14. With the AKP government, there has been a decline in educational expenses, Kök said.

“Book expenses were very heavy before. The cost for my children’s education has declined a little bit because the government now offers the books,” Kök said.

Even though the percentage of the budget allocated for education expenses has increased during the period of the Justice and Development Party, or AKP, in real terms the share has declined, according to a report by the Education and Science Personnel Union, or Eđitim-Sen.

The share reserved from the government’s budget for educational expenses was 27.9 billion liras last year and has only increased to 28.2 billion liras despite the increases in the number of schools, classrooms, teachers and students. This represents only a 1 percent nominal increase, Eđitim Sen said.

In 2002, when AKP came to power, the Education Ministry allocated 17.2 percent of its budget for educational investment. This figure has declined to 6.32 percent in 2010, according to the union.

As the share of the government’s budget allocated for education drops, equality of opportunity in education and access to high-quality education fade away, the ERG report said.

USAK PUBLICATION

Monday, 20 September 2010

---

## **GEO-STRATAGIC NEWS**

**Turkey to continue efforts in Balkans, says Davutođlu**

Thursday, September 23, 2010

NEW YORK – Anatolia News Agency

Turkey will take every step necessary to realize security, peace and stability in the Balkans, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu said Thursday.

The country has been working for some time to turn the Balkans into an area of stability, prosperity and security, said Davutoğlu.

Asked if Turkey would act as a mediator between Serbia and Kosovo, Davutoğlu said: "Turkey will take every necessary step. Relations with Serbia gained a lot of momentum in the past year and Turkey is pleased that it has turned into a strategic relationship. However, both parties know that there are differences of opinion between Serbia and Turkey. Turkey was the first country that recognized Kosovo and supported the country."

Davutoğlu said the foreign ministers of Turkey, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina had held a tripartite meeting and added that the foreign ministers of Turkey, Serbia and Bosnia would meet Friday.

"When we look at the leaders of the Balkans, we see that almost all the presidents are professors and have a strong intellectual knowledge. Maybe the most intellectual leaders in Europe are in the Balkans. This is a chance for the Balkans. A very positive relationship was formed among them. We are very hopeful about the future of the Balkans," Davutoğlu said.

Referring to his meetings with Serbian President Boris Tadic and Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic, Davutoğlu said: "We may have different views, but we have shared them in a friendly way. Turkey has made important contributions to Balkan peace so far. We have an assertion about the

Balkans; it will no longer be a region remembered for crises."

Touching on problems over Bulgaria's reinstatement of a chief mufti for the country, Davutoğlu said he and his Bulgarian counterpart, Nikolay Mladenov, had discussed the issue.

"Those are matters that can be discussed in a friendly way. There should not be a crisis on the matter. A solution will be found to this," he said.

The Turkish foreign minister also said a four-way meeting of the foreign ministers of Jordan, Turkey, Syria and Lebanon would take place soon. "A free trade and free visa region was declared among those four countries. And now the basis of this has been founded."

Davutoğlu also discussed the recent Black Sea Economic Cooperation foreign ministers' meeting, as well as a meeting in New York among transatlantic countries. The Turkish foreign minister said his busy schedule would continue at the U.N. with nearly 60 bilateral talks.

---

### **Turkey Wants to Become Observer to OAS**

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu who met Tuesday with Jose Miguel Insulza, secretary general of the Organization of American States (OAS), on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meeting, expressed Turkey's desire to enhance relations with this organization.

Davutoglu told Insulza that Turkey desired to enhance its economic and commercial relations with Latin and Central American countries under its new policy of rapprochement towards those regions, and therefore wanted to establish relations with OAS and become an observer

member to OAS in the future to coordinate its relations with countries in those regions.

Insulza, who is former foreign minister of Chile, welcomed Turkey's desire to enhance relations with OAS. Davutoglu, who informed Insulza about Turkey's rapprochement to these regions, also gave information on the new embassies Turkey is planning to open in Latin and Central America.

Davutoglu said the organization could reach out to other regions through Turkey.

Wednesday, 22 September 2010

USAK PUBLICATION

---

### **Turkey to establish industrial zone in Serbia's Muslim Sanjak**

Turkey's labor minister said that Turkey would establish an industrial zone in Sanjak region of Serbia.

Thursday, 23 September 2010 09:25

World bulletin

Turkey's labor minister said on Wednesday that Turkey would establish an industrial zone in Sanjak region of Serbia.

Labor & Social Affairs Minister Omer Dincer visited Tutin town in Serbia's Sanjak region, which is overwhelmingly Bosnian, ahead of a Turkish-Serbian Joint Economic Cooperation Council meeting due on Thursday.

"The industrial zone will be established in Sanjak region with Turkey's contributions, and we are planning to grant some 30 million Euro to the project," Dincer said.

Dincer said Turkish and Serbian relations had improved in recent years, and Turkish President Abdullah Gul, Prime

Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu had visited this country and signed several agreements.

"Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TIKA) has implemented 15 projects in Serbia, eight of which were in Sanjak region," he said.

Dincer also said TIKA would also construct a hospital and school in the same region.

The name Sandzak (Sanjak) derives from the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, a former Ottoman administrative district that existed until the Balkan Wars of 1912.

AA

---

### **Turkish FM attends NATO-Russia Council meeting in New York**

Turkish FM Davutoglu attended NATO-Russia Council meeting in New York, the United States.

Thursday, 23 September 2010 11:18

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu attended NATO-Russia Council meeting in New York, the United States on Wednesday.

Diplomatic officials said that today's informal meeting was an important phase in regard to improvement of relations with Russia ahead of NATO-Russia Summit that would take place in Lisbon, Portugal on November 20.

Today's meeting especially focused on economic and strategic cooperation areas between NATO and Russia, officials said.



Delivering a speech in the meeting, Davutoglu said that Russia sent ship to assist operation against pirates in Somali and it extended a great support to NATO.

AA

---

### **Turkish govt collects nearly 183 million TL for Pakistan so far**

Nearly 183 million Turkish Liras have been collected so far within the framework of an aid campaign aiming at helping flood-hit Pakistan.

Thursday, 23 September 2010 11:55

Nearly 183 million Turkish Liras (TL) have been collected so far within the framework of an aid campaign aiming at helping flood-hit Pakistan (One U.S. dollar equals 1.50 TL).

According to a written statement released by the Turkish Directorate General for Disaster and Emergency Management, as of Wednesday, a total of 183.15 million TL have been collected in the aid campaigns launched by Turkey's Prime Ministry, Directorate General of Religious Affairs and Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT).

The statement said 78.4 million TL have been collected in the prime ministry campaign, while the religious affairs authority has collected 102.3 million TL and state-run TRT has raised 2.4 million TL.

Floods, caused by Monsoon rains, have killed thousands of people and left millions homeless in Pakistan.

As many as 17 million acres of farm land have been submerged and billions of dollars of crops destroyed, Pakistani authorities announced earlier.

So far, Turkey has sent an \$10 million financial aid and 244 tons of relief support that included vaccines, medicine, medical stuff.

Turkey has also sent a 42-member medical team, two fully equipped mobile hospitals, an ambulance, and a 4x4 truck for medical rescue efforts.

---

### **Turkey wants all Balkans states to join NATO**

The Turkish president expressed Turkey's wish to see all Balkan states in NATO.

Thursday, 23 September 2010 12:28

World bulletin

The Turkish president expressed on Wednesday Turkey's wish to see all Balkan states in NATO.

President Abdullah Gul said a more stable situation would occur if all Balkan states united under Euro-Atlantic organization.

"NATO has many other functions than security and defense, and therefore, we wish all Balkan states to take place in NATO," Gul said during a Balkan Leaders Summit in New York, the United States.

Gul said Turkey was one of the oldest members of NATO, and it supported every Balkan state that wanted to become a NATO member.

"We are sure that non-NATO member Balkan states will complete their accession process soon, and take their place in NATO," Gul said.

"The Balkans is in the middle of Europe, not on its edge and therefore, it is out of question to exclude the Balkans when we look at EU's map," he said.

Gul said EU member states should support memberships of Balkan states to that end, and what non-EU Balkan states should do was to make required reforms and fulfil criteria.

### **Solution in dialogue**

Gul said Balkan states should be in solidarity and cooperation among themselves, and solve their problems in dialogue and through diplomacy.

President Gul also said nobody should doubt about the bright future of the Balkans, and diplomatic efforts, bilateral and trilateral meetings would all have a fruitful outcome.

Also speaking in the meeting, New York's Governor David Paterson said they would open a trade and investment office in Istanbul on October 4 to open to the Balkans.

The Federation of Balkan American Associations (FEBA) and the Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists of Turkey (TUSKON) organized the meeting in New York. Founded by a group of Balkan Americans, FEBA's goal and mission are to promote Balkan culture and languages in an effort to strengthen the cultural and educational ties between the people of the United States and the Balkans.

AA

---

### **Turkey nearing end of nuclear talks with South Korea**

Wednesday, September 22, 2010

ANKARA - Hürriyet Daily News

Energy and Natural Resources Minister Taner Yıldız said Wednesday that talks with South Korea were nearing an end as plans for a nuclear power plant in Turkey proceed. “South Korea has different conditions, we are at the end of evaluating them,” said Yıldız, who met with Jean Lemierre and other representatives of the Movement of the French Enterprises, or MEDEF, to talk about the Turkish energy sector.

Yıldız revealed plans to build two additional nuclear plants in the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions by 2023.

Regarding the Mediterranean region, Yıldız said Turkey has made a deal with Russia. He said for 15 years half of the electricity produced will have a purchase guarantee in decreasing rates and the remaining will be sold in the open market.

Referring to talks with South Korea regarding a nuclear plant planned for Sinop, Yıldız said the standard for nuclear plant construction is that a company builds it and does not interfere with its operation afterward.

However, “We want them to be somewhat involved with the operation, because we are new to this,” Yıldız said.

Turkey is also working to synchronize its electricity distribution with Europe.

When complete, the new system will allow France and Turkey to receive electricity from each other. The same system will be set up with countries such as Libya, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Algeria.

“Think about it: An electricity market encompassing the north and south of the Mediterranean. This means investors will find the market for the next 20-30 years,” said Yıldız.

“Turkey has important projects and we hope to join them,” said Lemierre, adding that French companies are following Turkey closely.

---

### **PKK leader urges Israel to cut Turkey military ties**

The commander of the terrorist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) urged Israel on Tuesday to sever its military ties with Turkey, which he described as a common enemy.

"We demand that Israel stop assisting those seeking to crush our struggle for freedom," Murat Karayılan, deputy leader of terrorist PKK, said in a rare interview with Israeli Channel 2 television from his mountain hideout in northern Iraq.

Relations between Israel and Turkey hit a historic low after nine Turkish activists were killed in May in an Israeli commando raid on a Turkish-backed aid ships en route to the Gaza Strip in international waters.

The PKK has been declared a terrorist organization by a large majority of the international community, including the United States and the European Union.

Despite the spat, the two countries still have military and economic ties and Israel has in the past supplied Turkey with military equipment, including unmanned drones that Ankara uses against PKK terrorists.

"Our problem lies in the military ties between Israel and Turkey. Those ties harm us," the terrorist leader said. "The most advanced (military) technology that Turkey uses against our guerrilla fighters and Kurdish civilians comes from Israel," he claimed.

More than 40,000 people have been killed since the terrorist PKK took up arms against Turkey in 1984.

"Our enemies are also the enemies of Israel," Karayılan said, referring to Turkey's warmer ties with Iran and Syria, which are Israel's foes.

22 September 2010, Wednesday

REUTERS WITH TODAY'S ZAMAN JERUSALEM

---

### **Turkish Speaker says Israel should apologize for deadly raid**

. Turkish Parliament Speaker Sahin said that Israel should apologize from Turkey for its troops killing 9 activists in attack on Mavi Marmara ship

Thursday, 23 September 2010 13:18

World bulletin

Turkish Parliament Speaker Mehmet Ali Sahin said on Thursday that Israel should apologize from Turkey and accept to pay compensation to the relatives of those who were killed in Israel's attack on Mavi Marmara ship. Sahin who attended the opening of an international symposium titled "The Changing Role of Parliaments in the Budget Process: Experiences of PUIC Countries and EU Member States" in the central Anatolian province of Afyonkarahisar, later responded to the questions of reporters.

Asked to comment on report of UN Fact Finding Mission regarding Israel's attack on Mavi Marmara ship, Sahin said the report stated that Israel violated international law.

"The report reaffirms what Turkey has been saying. Israel should apologize from Turkey and accept to pay compensation to the relatives of those who were killed in the attack. The world public is expecting it from Israel," Sahin said.

Nine people, including eight Turkish and one U.S. citizen of Turkish descent, were killed when Israeli forces raided a Gaza-bound aid flotilla in international waters on May 31. Around 30 people were wounded in the attack. The United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council set up the international fact-finding mission on June 2 to investigate violations of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, resulting from the Israeli attacks on the flotilla of ships carrying humanitarian assistance.

AA

---

### **Turkish president voices concern over military action on Iran**

Wednesday, September 22, 2010

NEW YORK – Anatolia News Agency

Possible military action against Iran is a major concern, Turkish President Abdullah Gül said Wednesday, but added that he believed a diplomatic solution could still be found.

"I don't say that there will be a war, but yes, I am concerned. But we are all focused on a diplomatic solution and promising steps are being taken," Gül said on the Charlie Rose show on Tuesday.

Gül said United Nations sanctions against Iran were binding on Turkey as well, adding that his country had imposed the sanctions, submitting regular reports to the U.N.

"But I think imposing sanctions is not the right way to get results. We have seen that it did not work out for Iraq," Gül said in response to a question on whether the sanctions against Iran were working.

Gül said Turkey would oppose an Iran with full nuclear weapons capability. "An Iran with nuclear weapons is much more dangerous for Turkey than it is for the United States."

The Turkish president said Turkey had the capacity to facilitate a diplomatic solution to the problem. "We can talk to the Iranians quite openly and frankly because we are their neighbors. We are in NATO and we have strong relations with the U.S. We have the capacity to help settle the problem and we are doing our best to that end."

---

### **Turkey, Germany prepare for long-awaited university in Istanbul**

Thursday, September 23, 2010

FULYA ÖZERKAN

ANKARA – Hürriyet Daily News

The Turkish and German governments are moving ahead with plans to realize a long-awaited joint university project. The details will be discussed during PM Erdoğan's meeting with Chancellor Merkel next month, which will be followed by German President Christian Wulff's upcoming visit to Turkey to lay the foundation for the university alongside counterpart Abdullah Gül

Turkey and Germany are moving fast with plans to inaugurate a long-awaited Turkish-German university expected to open its doors for its first students next year. "Everything is ready. We are just waiting for the rector of the university to be nominated and then appointed by the [Turkish] president," a well-placed source told the Hürriyet Daily News & Economic Review on Thursday.



The university will be discussed during Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's visit to Germany on Oct. 8-9. Erdoğan will speak with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and, following that meeting, Turkish President Abdullah Gül and German counterpart Christian Wulff are expected to break ground for the university, it has been learned.

Turkey's Higher Education Board, or YÖK, met Thursday under the leadership of Professor Yusuf Ziya Özcan to evaluate rector candidates for the university. Three candidates are expected to be submitted for the consideration of Gül, who will then appoint one as rector. The three nominees had not been declared when the Daily News went to print late Thursday.

Diplomatic sources said the university, which does not yet have an official name, could offer language courses this year in a provisional building, as the new building's construction starts from scratch next month. There are several options for the provisional building, noted the sources, while it is understood the location will be one of the topics of the Erdoğan-Merkel meeting.

When complete, the new university will be located in Istanbul's Beykoz district on land granted by the Turkish government.

Asked if the German government had any hesitations due to the long delay in the university's establishment, the source said, "No," adding that Germany was pushing forward together with the Turkish government.

"The German consortium is ready. There is no element of hesitation at all," the source said.

The university project dates back to the 1990s but plans were first made public in September 2006, when Gül was foreign minister.

The Turkish-German university will follow the rules and regulations of Turkish state universities but will enjoy the advantages of being a Turkish-German venture.

The university was originally intended to be either a foundation or a private university, but the plans were not realized due to a number of reasons, including insufficient financial resources.

All state and private universities are established by law in Turkey and operate under the supervision of YÖK.

Professors from Germany's best universities are expected to contribute to the project.

The Turkish-German university is an Ernst Reuter initiative launched to promote understanding and cooperation between the two peoples.

Like a number of other victims of Nazi persecution, Reuter found a safe haven in Turkey in the 1930s and 40s, spending more than 13 years in exile from his homeland. He later became the mayor of Berlin in the young Federal Republic of Germany. Reuter's son, who grew up in Ankara and speaks Turkish fluently, is one of the leading supporters of the joint initiative.

---

### **PKK reaches out to Israel, says Turkey common enemy**

The outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) has urged Israel to stop military cooperation with Turkey and said Ankara was a common enemy, remarks that analysts say confirm widespread speculation that Israel has links with the terrorist group.

"We demand that Israel stop assisting those seeking to crush our struggle for freedom," Murat Karayılan, deputy to jailed PKK chief Abdullah Öcalan, said in a rare interview with Israeli Channel 2 television from his mountain hideout in northern Iraq. "Our enemies are also the enemies of Israel," said the PKK leader, referring to Turkey's warm ties with Iran and Syria, which are Israel's enemies.

The PKK – whose bloody campaign for, initially, independence and then greater rights for Turkey's Kurds has cost tens of thousands of lives over the past three decades – is classified as a terrorist group by not only Turkey but also the EU and the US. Israel has indirectly supported Turkey's fight against the PKK, selling unmanned drones to the Turkish military for use against the terrorist group. Turkey's relations with Israel took a nosedive in the aftermath of a deadly Israeli attack on an aid flotilla trying to break the Israeli siege of the Gaza Strip on May 31.

Israeli commandos killed eight Turks and one Turkish-American aboard the Mavi Marmara ship and Turkey's calls for an Israeli apology have remained unanswered since.

Karayılan's remarks are likely to feed public mistrust of Israel, a country which the Turkish public widely sees as a supporter of the PKK campaign for the separation of Turkey. "The PKK-Israel links are coming up to the surface in an undisputedly clear way," Sedat Laçiner, who heads the Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at the Ankara-based International Strategic Research Organisation (USAK), said of Karayılan's remarks. "If the

PKK declares that an Israeli-PKK alliance has been created, and if Israel makes no statement on that, then all we can say is that there is a new alliance in the Middle East.”

Suspicious about Israeli-PKK links most recently surfaced when the PKK killed seven soldiers in a rocket attack on a naval base in İskenderun, in the southern province of Hatay. The attack took place just days after the bloody flotilla raid. Some in the media have claimed that Israeli secret services may have contracted the job to the PKK to send a message to the Turkish government.

Laçiner said the state of Israel’s relations with the PKK was not known in detail, but added that the Israeli government had clearly taken steps to deepen its ties with the terrorist group, following the crisis in its ties with Turkey, threatening that it could use these ties to harm Ankara.

An Israeli official, however, dismissed the charges. “With all the respect to Professor Laçiner; his remarks are baseless and false. The Israeli position is known and clear. We see the PKK as a terrorist organization and we support the Turkish fight against terror,” an Israeli diplomat, who requested anonymity, told Today’s Zaman on Wednesday.

In northern Iraq, Karayılan said the Israeli military cooperation with Turkey was a “big mystery” to him.

“More than any other people in the world, I would have expected Israel to understand and identify with us. After all, you, who have experienced the Holocaust, massacres, expulsions and persecution, now see our people, the Kurdish people, experiencing that same fate. Everyone in this area – Syrians, Turks and Iranians – wants and is trying to destroy us, and you, of all people, are the ones providing

them with the weapons to destroy us,” he said in the interview.

The PKK leader also said he found it bewildering that even after the flotilla raid, Israel was still trying to reconcile with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. “More than any other Turkish head of state, this prime minister openly shows how he is tightening relations with Hezbollah and Syria,” he said. “He hugs [Iranian President Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad and praises Hamas. Are you sure this is your friend?”

23 September 2010, Thursday

TODAY’S ZAMAN İSTANBUL

---

## **UN Gaza aid probe finds 'clear evidence' against Israel**

Thursday, September 23, 2010

GENEVA - Agence France-Presse

A U.N. probe said Wednesday there is clear evidence to back prosecutions of Israel for killing and torture when its troops stormed a Gaza-bound aid flotilla in May.

In a scathing report, the panel also threw out Israel’s argument that the aid activists were violent, thereby justifying the decision by Israeli soldiers to open fire. The incident left eight Turkish nationals and one American of Turkish descent dead and drew global condemnation.

Saying some were victims of actions “consistent with ... summary execution,” the inquiry ordered by the U.N.

Human Rights Council said Israel’s military used “unnecessary violence.”

These actions “constituted grave violations of human-rights law and international humanitarian law,” it said, adding

there was “clear evidence to support prosecutions” of crimes including “willful killing; torture or inhuman treatment; and willfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health.”

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu hailed the U.N. report Thursday, the Anatolia news agency reported.

The report by the U.N. Human Rights Council “is extremely unbiased and based on sound evidence. We appreciate it,” Davutoğlu was quoted as telling reporters in New York on the sidelines of the U.N. general assembly.

“It meets our expectations. I hope the Israeli side will ... from now on act within international law,” he added.

Israel rejected the report as “biased” and “one-sided.”

“As expected of a democratic country, Israel has been – and still is – investigating the events of the Gaza flotilla,” the Israeli Foreign Ministry said in a statement released late Wednesday night.

The ministry added that its own committee of inquiry, which includes two international observers, was still at work and that Israel had also agreed to take part in an inquiry set up by the U.N. secretary-general. “The report ... is as biased and as one-sided as the body that has produced it,” the statement said. “Israel ... is of the opinion that the flotilla incident is amply and sufficiently investigated as it is. All additional dealing with this issue is superfluous and unproductive.”

Israel has insisted that it acted in line with international law, arguing that it had the right to retaliate against ships attempting to breach its blockade of the impoverished Gaza Strip. However, the probe said Israel’s enforcement of a

blockade was itself unlawful, since Gaza was suffering from a humanitarian crisis at the time of the deadly raid. “For this reason alone, the blockade is unlawful and cannot be sustained in law. This is so regardless of the grounds on which it is sought to justify the legality of the blockade,” said the report, which will be presented to the rights council Monday.

The report said even those activists who did not try to stop Israeli soldiers from boarding the aid ships “received injuries, including fatal injuries” and that “it is apparent that no effort was made to minimize injuries at certain states of the operation and that the use of live fire was done in an extensive and arbitrary manner.”

“The circumstances of the killing of at least six of the passengers were in a manner consistent with an extra-legal, arbitrary and summary execution,” it added. “The conduct of the Israeli military and other personnel towards the flotilla passengers was not only disproportionate to the occasion but demonstrated levels of totally unnecessary and incredible violence.”

The fact-finding mission, chaired by Karl Hudson-Phillips, former judge of the International Criminal Court in The Hague, had traveled to Turkey, Jordan and Britain to interview witnesses and officials for the probe.

Desmond de Silva, former chief prosecutor of the Sierra Leone War Crimes Tribunal, and Shanthi Dairiam, a Malaysian human-rights expert, are the other members of the panel.

---

## **ECONOMIC NEWS**

### **TÜSİAD chief calls for more democracy in Turkey**

Wednesday, September 22, 2010

ISTANBUL – Daily News with wires

If Turkey does not improve its lack of democracy, neither regional developmental differences nor unemployment problems will be solved, according to Ümit Boyner, chairwoman of the Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen's Association, or TÜSİAD.

Speaking Wednesday in the eastern province of Tunceli at a conference titled “The Relative Advantages of Tunceli and Progress Strategies,” Boyner addressed Tunceli by its previous name “Dersim,” which is still commonly used and preferred by the locals.

Pointing to Tunceli’s 18-percent unemployment rate and 18.5-percent ratio of active workers working within the scope of social security compared to the province’s population, Boyner said Tunceli could not realize its potential in agriculture and mining because of infrastructure deficiencies and security reasons.

Another issue Boyner addressed was terror, particularly a unilateral cease-fire declared by the outlawed Kurdistan Workers’ Party, or PKK, that is set to end Sept. 27.

“The cease-fire today, which we hope will continue, should be prolonged indefinitely,” said Boyner. The cease-fire is a must in creating stable peace and an atmosphere of serenity, she said.

“At least can’t we take small steps? Can’t the name of the Muğlalı Paşa Barracks be changed? Can’t an apology for the incidents that happened in the Diyarbakır prison be made?” asked Boyner, referring to a military barracks in the eastern city of Van named after a commander who was convicted of the killing of 33 villagers in 1943 and cases of



torture at the Diyarbakır Prison during the 1980 military coup era.

Boyner said all citizens want to live in a country where terrorism is not on the national agenda.

The PKK is listed as a terrorist organization by Turkey, the United States and the European Union.

---

### **American business world ready to support investments in Turkey**

Thursday, September 23, 2010

**NEW YORK - Anatolia News Agency**

Turkish President Abdullah Gül met Turkish-American business figure and Coca Cola President Muhtar Kent Wednesday during a visit to the United States.

The American business world was ready to support investment in Turkey, as the country is performing well economically, Kent said after his meeting with Gül at The Plaza Hotel in New York City.

"USA's approach to Turkey has changed a lot in the last 20 years. Turkey's economic successes are remarkable," he said.

Kent said increasing U.S. interest in Turkey was reflected in the recently launched project aiming to improve entrepreneurship in Muslim countries, with Turkey slated to be one of the first countries included in the project.

"This is a new beginning and a long-term project. I have no doubt that this initiative would improve entrepreneurship in Muslim countries," Kent said.

The project was announced by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright Wednesday.

---

## **Turkey's employment figures on rise while EU's unemployment rate climbs in Q2**

The Turkish deputy premier said on Wednesday that Turkey's employment figures had increased while the European Union's unemployment figures had been on the rise in the second quarter of 2010.

Speaking at a forum organized by Foreign Policy Association in New York, USA, Turkish State Minister & Deputy Prime Minister Ali Babacan said Turkey's employment figures had increased by 1.6 million and unemployment rate had dropped 2.6 percent in Q2 of 2010 compared to the same term of 2009.

Babacan said the total number of unemployed people within the EU had grown 1.8 million in the same period. Commenting on the actions taken by Turkey to overcome the global economic crisis, Babacan said Turkey had implemented numerous reforms in public and private banking sectors, moreover, the country's strong public finance as well as low public debt and budgetary deficit provided it the opportunity to perform manoeuvres during the crisis.

Babacan said Turkey had recorded a 11 percent growth when the first half of both 2009 and 2010 were taken into consideration, adding that such figure constituted the highest rate in Europe.

Turkey's growth rate would be around 6-8 percent this year, the minister added.

Pointing to the constitutional amendments approved at the latest referendum in Turkey, Babacan said such result carried Turkey's democracy to a level further and it meant

higher standards and a more civilian democracy for the country.

Babacan said the reform process in Turkey was not limited with the country itself, but it also was a source of inspiration for the countries in Turkey's region.

Upon a question on Turkey's EU process, Babacan said Turkey's membership would make the union stronger and turn it into a more active global actor.

Babacan said EU's "German-French axis" would change if Turkey became a member, adding the new axis would be formed between "Germany, France and Turkey" as the most populated countries of the union.

Replying to a question on relations between Turkey and USA, Babacan said Turkish-U.S. relations constituted one of the basic pillars of Turkey's foreign policy.

The minister said Turkey and USA had a very close cooperation on critical matters although they faced problems from time to time.

23 September 2010, Thursday

THE ANATOLIA NEWS AGENCY NEW YORK

---

## **SOCIAL NEWS**

### **Three seas gather under Tekfen Philharmonic Orchestra in Istanbul**

Wednesday, September 22, 2010

VERCIHAN ZIFLIOĞLU

ISTANBUL - Hürriyet Daily News

Seventy artists from 21 countries within the body of the 18-year-old Tekfen Philharmonic Orchestra want to give the world a message of friendship and peace. 'We are like a

happy family,' says Saim Akçıl, the orchestra's chief conductor

Even though their countries are in dispute and sometimes go to war against each other, these musicians do not hesitate to appear on stage shoulder to shoulder and give messages of friendship and peace.

The Tekfen Philharmonic Orchestra, which was formed by the initiative of its chief conductor in 1992 with the sponsorship of Tekfen Holding, includes 70 artists from all over the world.

Speaking to the Hürriyet Daily News & Economic Review, maestro Saim Akçıl said: "It was an ordinary day, I went home. As I turned the television on, I saw that there was a signature ceremony. The Black Sea countries were signing a common declaration in order to come together under the roof of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation."

He said an interesting idea came to his mind at that moment. "I wanted to bring together artists from those countries under the roof of an orchestra. I prepared a project, offered it to Tekfen Holding and it was approved." Even though the orchestra included just artists from Black Sea countries in the first stage, later the countries of the Caspian and Mediterranean seas were included. "I did not want messages of friendship and peace to be limited to one sea only. I have met artists from many countries over the years," said Akçıl, adding that many artists have accepted his proposal.

In addition to Turkey, the orchestra includes artists from Romania, Greece, Moldova, Ukraine, Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Albania, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon,

Iraq, Israel and Palestine. Noting that he is happily married to one of those artists, Akçıl said, “You see that we are a big happy family.”

Tastes of 23 countries

Asked if artists from disputing countries have conflicts from time to time, Akçıl said: “The only thing we talk about is music, that’s all. Our orchestra is for peace. We don’t have time for war and politics.”

Akçıl said they wished people could see their celebrations that continue until morning after concerts. “Tasty beverages are brought from 23 countries. We sing songs while sipping our drinks.”

Akçıl said many ethnic and authentic instruments were played together in a symphony orchestra for the first time under the roof of the Tekfen Philharmonic Orchestra.

“Instruments that had been almost forgotten even in their own culture have come to life thanks to the artists of the Tekfen Philharmonic Orchestra.”

Before the concerts, the flag of each country represented is put on the stage in alphabetical order. Depending on the content of concerts and the budget, sometimes all artists and sometimes half of the artists perform at the concerts.

No rehearsal is held before the concerts.

When asked if it is hard to take the stage without having a rehearsal, Akçıl said: “Our artists are all leading names in their own countries. Therefore we don’t need to rehearse.”

Akçıl mentioned an interesting anecdote: “We invited Israeli and Palestinian artists a few years ago for a concert. It was their first time; we had to be careful to prevent any problems. But we saw that the artists of both countries

entered the hotel joyfully. We learned they had met on the plane and had become friends.”

---

## **Activists cry foul in covering of ancient city in Turkey**

Wednesday, September 22, 2010

İZMİR - Doğan News Agency

The ancient city of Allianoi will be buried in sand that was illegally excavated from nearby İlya Creek, according to environmental protestors and municipal authorities.

After the reports, Hasan Gürsel Altuğ, a mayor in Ayaskent, which is close to the ancient city close to Turkey's Aegean coast, and the gendarmerie went to the creek, filing a complaint about the sand, which came from a prime agricultural area.

To protect Allianoi from being destroyed with the water of the Yortanlı dam, it was decided that the ancient city should be first covered by a protective layer of sand.

Six activists who chained themselves to a crane to protest the destruction of the city were taken into custody Monday morning by the gendarmerie after accusing the contractors of taking the sand illegally.

An investigation revealed that the sand the officials intend to use was collected from the İlya Creek. At the same time, the investigation revealed that the sand for the nearby Çaltıkoru Dam also came from the same source.

Authorities in the province of İzmir said the gendarmerie had confirmed that even though the State Waterworks Authority, or DSİ, has a designated place in the Zağanoz district from which to take sand, they took it from İlya.

Altuğ claimed that DSİ officials met the demand for sand by taking first quality soil from the Bakırçay lowland,

adding that dam officials dug 25 different areas in the municipality.

“They meet the demand of sand need from our adjacent area to use in Çaltıkoru dam, Yortanlı dam and Allianoı. Sometimes they entered our residential zones, so we fought with them,” said Altuğ.

“They give money to the locals and they cut the olive trees, products and so on overnight,” said the mayor, adding that DSİ officials opened big holes of between 15 and 20 meters depth in the agricultural areas.

According to Altuğ, the DSİ does not consider the value of the soil or where it is comes from. “They even took the sand from first-degree protected areas.”

The mayor said the most valuable soil from the area was being used in the construction of the dams.

---

### **Injured animals released back into the wild**

Thursday, September 23, 2010

ISTANBUL - Anatolia News Agency

Istanbul Environment and Forestry Manager Mehmet Emin Binpınar has released injured wild birds treated at Istanbul University’s Faculty of Veterinary Medicine back into nature at a reserve in the district of Polonezköy.

Binpınar said a marsh harrier that was poisoned by agricultural pesticides was saved in Turkey’s northwestern province of Tekirdağ.

“We warn people, you should inform us about any injured wild animals you see around. We take care of them and release them into nature,” said Binpınar, adding that people should not release dogs in the forest in order to prevent

them attacking wild animals. He urged the public to protect wild life.

Binpınar said Istanbul is situated along a significant route for animal migration. “Birds fly between three and four kilometers without resting, and many use this area to rest,” Binpınar said, adding that these animals should not be hunted.

Ahmet Emre Kütükçü, a vet at Nature Protection and National Parks General Management, also said most of the injuries sustained by wild animals are caused by humans, both directly and indirectly. “Storks sometimes fly into electrical cables or are hit by cars, while many other wild animals are shot or poisoned by hunters,” he said.

---

## **COMMENTARY**

### **Presidential debate**

Font Size: [Larger](#)|[Smaller](#)

Tuesday, September 21, 2010

YUSUF KANLI

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan let the cat out of the bag days ahead of the Sept. 12 referendum, instructing parliamentary constitutional commission chief Burhan Kuzu to start work on a new constitution in his referendum victory speech, and since then Turkey has been engulfed in a presidential system discussion.

Even if President Abdullah Gül might be right that starting such a discussion “was not a pre-planned move,” that it is not a “premeditated action” of the prime minister and the ruling party, it has been known for a long time that like all previous strong political figures Erdoğan is aspiring to become president and retain— if not further increase — the



powers he has as prime minister and thus wants to carry Turkey to a presidential governance.

Almost all constitutional professors of the country – excluding Burhan Kuzu and a handful devoted supporters of Erdoğan or the Justice and Development, or AKP, governance – are skeptical of Turkey, a country with a long imperial history and a tradition of worshiping power, moving on to a presidential governance, fearing that sooner or later the country might land into an elected dictatorship. Before the Sept. 12 referendum many analysts, including this writer, indeed expressed fears that the public vote might indeed be a rehearsal for the first-ever election of the president through a popular vote according to the 2007 amendment made in the constitutional procedures of the presidential election. Even though the term of office of current President Gül is still ambiguous or being intentionally kept ambiguous by the ruling AKP, it is a fact that Turkey will popularly elect its next president at the earliest in 2012 or the latest in 2014, depending whether Gül will serve a single seven-year-term under the regulation he was elected to office on or a five-year term with the possibility of running for a second term as per the new regulation.

If Erdoğan has said his party will complete preparations of a new constitution by the scheduled 2011 parliamentary elections and submit it to the next parliament and if popular presidential elections are to be held at the earliest in late July or August 2012, why then has Turkey started to debate the presidential system now?

Obviously, in part the discussion is a reflection of an iceberg: The power struggle between Erdoğan and Gül,

who somehow have managed to keep it away from general public eyes, or the fight for dominance between the two “first ladies,” Emine Erdoğan and Hayrünnisa Gül. Perhaps that was why, commenting on the issue, President Gül felt it necessary to underline that he did not take the discussions on the presidential debate seriously. Furthermore, he warned that many of the people talking of the issue were unaware of what they were talking about. “If you ask ‘What is the presidential system?’ everyone has some ideas according to themselves ... but if existing presidential systems are examined, you will see that each is different than the others...” Gül stressed that if Turkey is ever to move on to a presidential governance system, the issue first must be discussed and what kind of a presidential system might be suitable for Turkey’s political reality determined. Then came a rather interesting warning, which indeed shared by this writer as well as many leading constitutional law professors. “In a presidential system parliament, congress, powers of congress, election methods must be totally different [that that of the current Turkish system] ... That is, in a presidential system there is need for a totally different checks and balances system... And of course this requires something further than a law [an amendment in powers or the president]... it requires a far detailed work. Particularly, the method of election of parliamentary deputies must be different [than the existing system].” Yet Gül stressed as well Turks might approach a presidential system with sympathy (most probably because of the strong tradition of worshipping power), it indeed might have some great advantages compared to parliamentary democracy, but it should not be perceived as

some way of establishing an elected sultanate. That was indeed a strong comment that may land Gül in some serious problems with Erdoğan.

However, that was indeed why many people fear the probability of Turkey moving on to presidential governance without establishing an adequate checks and balances system to limit the powers of the elected president so that s/he could not eventually turn into an elected autocrat. That is, rather than being for or against the presidential system Turkey should first thoroughly discuss whether there was a need to move on to such a system; in view of Turkey's rich history and past experiences with strong sultans, what the checks and balances system to prevent a presidential system landing Turkey in an elected dictatorship should be.

### **Has Erdoğan changed Turkey?**

21 Font Size: [Larger](#)|[Smaller](#)

Tuesday, September, 2010

MEHMET ALİ BİRAND

Foremost in the United States the same issue is being discussed all over capitol cities. “Where is Turkey headed? Is it estranging itself from the West and changing priorities?”

The latest survey conducted by the German Marshall Fund was an indication of how these discussions have spread.

We may say “Turkey does not change its priorities. It just fine tunes its general attitude” as much as we want. No one will believe it.

Now let's ask ourselves the same question.

I think the answer is crystal clear. Yes Turkey is changing rapidly, adopting brand new value judgments, attitudes and priorities. If the most important driving power of this

change is Prime Minister Erdoğan then the other one is changing international conditions.

You may like it or not but the Justice and Development Party, or AKP, leader has to a great extent influenced and reshaped Turkish society within the past eight years.

Today's Turkey is not the same as in 2002. This speed of change is progressively changing. If this tempo continues rest assure that there will be a totally different Turkey 10 years from now.

The precondition in this process is that Erdoğan is able to continue sitting in the deckhouse of this great ship, in deep waters, and sailing it into shallow waters by protecting it from storms and the danger of hitting the shore.

What kind of Turkey might this be? We have some clues of course. I'll make an analysis of where we are today. And please let me know if you agree or not. Tomorrow I'll share with you how Turkey might look like 10 years from now.

### **Self-confidence increases, enrichment waits**

The greatest change lies in the attitude of society. Of course I speak about the tendency or perception of an important part of society and not society in general. In the past the majority of society used to be afraid of the state. Lately this segment seems to have stepped forward. It became loud. It increased its self-confidence.

Even if it didn't know if it would come true it believed that one day the economic situation would get better. Maybe because no other leader in the past raised hopes – but Erdoğan has. Despite unemployment it still keeps its hopes high.

It is not only the suppressed segment but also the sovereign and rich segment whose self-confidence has increased.

Even if they don't like some of Erdoğan's politics they still trust him.

One change that Erdoğan brought about in Turkish society is a decreased fear of the state. The old fear of the gendarmerie, the military and the police has vanished. Some developments in the relation of the military and civilians have, because of recent developments, been affected positively. Those who previously used to fear the gendarmerie passing in front of a café now realize that Erdoğan is the real person in charge. (It has not, as of yet, been decided whether or not this is the case but he will observe and make up his mind later on.)

For now at least this segment of society is not shy of becoming loud and looking for its rights. Or, in short, this segment found a leader with whom it can identify.

### **The pious becomes courageous**

One other important change within the Turkish society is that the pious segment started to become courageous. I'm not talking about the number of headscarves increasing – I mean the presence of the pious in science, the media, politics and other sectors of the country.

This segment was formerly present but it was either afraid or concerned about equal opportunities. Turkey together with the AKP administration has encouraged the pious segment and paved their way.

Religious aspects started to show up in almost every area of our daily lives. There is a tendency of conservativeness in every corner of our lives, be it the language spoken on TRT channels or the prohibition of cheer leaders during the basket world championship, or decrease of the degree of nudeness in advertising, or prayers before any ceremony.

In the end, if an administration that distributes jobs and food is conservative one segment really agrees with it and the other, in order to get a share, does not see any harm in becoming pious.

In short, Turkey's value judgments are becoming progressively pious.

### **He tries to establish a world outside the Western world**

This change to the outer shell of society is also visible in external politics. When administration and society look in the same direction and smell the same, share the same values, this approach reflects itself in external politics as well.

The AKP that has increased its self-confidence, has become rich and pays more attention to religion has set sails for other waters by backing itself up with the Turkish society. And international conditions also contributed to it.

It started dealing with issues like the Middle East, Iran, Caucasus and the Balkans. Relations with Middle Asia Republics have become more intensive.

This way Turkey's focus shifted from the EU and the United States in other directions. It does not want to give them up but it increased interest in other directions. Old habits changed places.

Turkey has not turned its back on the West. Previously it used to act together with the West but now it applies its own politics. So now there is a conflict of interest in politics and economy started to surface. Turkey has exited the limited space and set sails for greater waters.

### **Of course some things never change**

- The AKP creates its own rich. It prefers its own staff. If you are pious and your spouse wears a headscarf you'll find

a job more easily. The same way big tenders are determined by religious values.

- In the past those who were concerned about their headscarf, religion, pioussness and conservatism left their place to secular western life style people who now sit on their own island amid an Anatolian sea of conservatism and monitor with great concern where this change is going to lead the country.

- The AKP has been very successful in relations with the pious segment and community to establish its own media.

- The AKP is becoming stronger by the day and as it gets stronger it obtains more authority. They accept no criticism and do not restrain from shutting up those who are adverse to their view and using old methods. Erdoğan is in a position of the only selector of the country. His every word is and will be treated like an act of congress. No change there.

### **From the Bosphorus: Straight- President Gül's 'presidential' wisdom**

Font Size: [Larger](#)|[Smaller](#)

Wednesday, September 22, 2010

The remarks Monday regarding the United States-style presidential system made in New York by President Abdullah Gül are... well, presidential. Gül cautioned against a rush to embrace a new architecture of governance without thorough discussion. He is right.

Yes, for at least two decades the notion of a more federal system, something modeled along the lines of America's semi-autonomous states, with a strong executive at the center, have periodically appeared on Turkey's agenda. The first to seriously suggest such was the late President Turgut

Özal, assumed in retrospect to be seeking a system of regionalism within which the long elusive accommodation of Kurdish aspirations might be realized. There may be merit in such an argument. It should take place. But any notion of a panacea through such tinkering should immediately be dismissed. Gül's warning about the dangers of a "sultanate" emerging from strong presidential power cloaked in the guise of federalism is one to which we pay heed. We have other concerns.

The presidential system praised for its promise of regional autonomy was the very one used to deny the rights of American minorities for a century after the country's civil war ostensibly ended slavery. The white majority relentlessly oppressed the black minority under the defense of "states' rights." Even in supposedly progressive and open-minded California, "states rights" made inter-racial marriage illegal until 1948.

The virtues of America's "two-party" system are often hailed in Turkey as a source of political stability and consensus-building. True enough. But in the last U.S. presidential election, more than 20 parties took part. That you probably never heard of the Reform Party, the Independence Party or the Peace and Freedom Party is due to the fact they struggle to be placed on the ballot, an impediment to democracy imposed by tacit agreement among the "mainstream" parties.

The experience of countries that have imported the American model is hardly encouraging. In Mexico, the world's only party with an oxymoronic name, the "Party of the Institutional Revolution," or PRI, used the presidential system to keep a lock on dissent and opposition for



decades. And let's not forget Fernando Marcos, the dictator of the Philippines who did exactly the same with the presidential system imported into his country.

There are successful models of relatively democratic presidential systems outside the United States. France's comes to mind, ironically the source of the same laicism much derided by many of those advocating Turkish presidentialism today. Russia's system is hardly an inspiration today, but it may evolve in that direction and we are in fact encouraged by reforms sought by Russian President Dimitry Medvedev.

As Gül suggests, let's think through these matters coolly and calmly.

### **Education in mother tongue**

Font Size: [Larger](#)|[Smaller](#)

Wednesday, September 22, 2010

CÜNEYT ÜLSEVER

Recently, I've been analyzing a taboo leading nowhere: "No bargaining with terror."

However, readers of this column remember that since the minute a concept of Kurdish initiative has been introduced, I've wrote, "You should convince those who is involved in armed struggle to lay their arms in order for mothers not to cry anymore." And I emphasize that we should act boldly. My recent purpose is to stress the fact that the Sept. 12 constitutional amendment referendum gave us a really historic opportunity.

Today I want to warn Kurdish politicians.

In the last one year, some demands voiced under the Kurdish initiative have almost turned into asking the impossible.

In fact, the one who asks impossible does not want to have conciliation.

If we live together:

Turks should of course approach carefully to the Kurdish sensitivities and vice versa.

The real landmine, so to speak, targeting whole country is the escalating conflicts between the state and the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, that morph into a "Turkish-Kurdish" conflict.

Today, I'll talk about "education in mother tongue."

But first let me make the following distinction that is confused maybe on purpose:

- 1) Education for mother language,
- 2) Education in mother language.

In a democratic country everyone is entitled to learn his/her mother tongue beside the official language, if different.

And for that it is the state's duty to have selective courses on mother tongue and it should be private schools' right to provide such education.

However, education in mother language means education of all courses (history, literature, mathematics, etc.) in the mother tongue.

And such demand is the reason for a split.

For education is not about learning a language but also acquiring information.

Education is, at the same time, a process of discussion and absorption of common culture, values, traditions, beliefs, aspirations, pains; in short, all elements keeping a community together.

If we will live under the Republic of Turkey umbrella, we should jointly claim these elements as a whole!

If our children have education in separate schools, we will raise generations who are not familiar with each other's not only language but also culture, values, traditions, customs, beliefs, aspirations and pains etc.

No one can keep them together around a common denominator. Within the process, separation comes automatically and naturally.

If Kurds insist on education in mother tongue, let's not waste resources, let's not waste time.

Let's split now.

And then let's allow everyone to go his/her own separate way!

### **Water wars and Turkey**

Font Size: [Larger](#)|[Smaller](#)

Wednesday, September 22, 2010

RICHARD REID

Water wars are the talk these days – as well they might be, since freshwater has become as strategic a global commodity as petroleum, but a scarcer one. In already more than 30 countries, a liter of water costs more than a liter of oil. New oil deposits will be found. Not so with water. The earth's present freshwater stock is all it will ever get, or has ever had.

Turkey is in luck with water. It's the only "wet" country in a legendarily dry region. It's also one of the three countries most mentioned when water-war scenarios are discussed.

More on that later.

Our planet's water arrangement is a closed system. The sun takes water droplets up into the atmosphere as evaporation: they cool and come down as precipitation: rain or snow.

The quantity of water cycled and recycled in this system is

essentially the quantity of water that was available at the time of the dinosaurs. While one can cloud-seed and desalinate here and there, our basic water stock is finite. It steadily diminishes as we and millions of new humans draw down on it.

Turkey's luck is the possession of nine major rivers – the Tigris, the Euphrates, and seven others. Having them makes Turkey as naturally rich a location as Saudi Arabia. The Saudis have capitalized on the blind good fortune of their oil since 1930s. Ankara has only marginally begun to recognize and exploit its freshwater wealth, which besides its rivers includes Anatolia's lakes and wetlands.

Typical water war discussions that feature Turkey also focus on India and Egypt. The three countries are the main users of larger river systems they share with other countries.

Turkey shares the Tigris and Euphrates with Syria and Iraq. Egypt shares the Nile with Ethiopia and Uganda; the river rises from lakes in those countries. India has a treaty agreement with Pakistan to share the water of the Indus.

In the buildup to a conflict over river use it would seem that power would lie with the owner of the river's headwaters, as is Turkey's case with Tigris and Euphrates. Ankara could shut the spigot to fill one of the Southeastern Anatolia Project, or GAP, dams, as it has done briefly in the past, much to the disquiet of Damascus and Baghdad. With the Nile, the shoe could shift to the other foot. Egypt, though not the headwater country, might threaten Ethiopia over three planned hydroelectric dams downstream from Lake Tana. Indeed there has been talk in Cairo of using air power to dissuade the Ethiopians from doing so.

Regarding India, New Delhi's need to feed its economic boom may soon lead it to stretch its treaty with Pakistan and build a string of dams on the Indus in Jammu and Kashmir. These could push Pakistan to the brink. Pakistan has a mere one-month water reserve capacity and is wholly reliant on the Indus. A chilling background factor here is that India and Pakistan have fought three wars and are both nuclear powers.

A sustained shut-off of water to downstream countries from any of these four rivers would probably amount to an act of war. Pakistan's harvest would be lost. The Nile is Egypt's lifeblood. It would mean lights out in Syria, and worse in Iraq. Syria could resort to teaming up again with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, as it did not so long ago when its leader Abdullah Öcalan's militants were hosted by Damascus in the Bekaa Valley.

To recapitulate, global population growth and runaway consumption have given a must-have status to that most God-given of nature's gifts, freshwater. Seventy years ago oil rose to must-have status for Japan, and Tokyo started the Pacific War to get it. Countries that sense they've been driven to a wall do such things.

As tempers fray among the world's river-sharing countries, water-rich Turkey should be able to continue as a steady, treaty-respecting good neighbor, with no need to reach for the spigot. That is political good sense. It is not good sense to ignore the markets Turkey could create through the value-added export of the critically scarce commodity it has in such abundance.

### **Cyprus talks (I)**

Font Size: [Larger](#)|[Smaller](#)

Wednesday, September 22, 2010

YUSUF KANLI

For the next few days, I will be trying to analyze the latest developments in the Cyprus talks. The tentative year's end deadline for a resolution on the island is approaching fast, yet developments indicate that unless Greek Cypriots go through a comprehensive evolution and overcome their mental fatigue, a settlement on the eastern Mediterranean island will not be possible any time soon.

According to some public statements the proposals of the Turkish and Greek Cypriot sides on the thorny property aspect of the Cyprus problem apparently boosted the "hope" of the United Nations team "facilitating" the direct-talks process that there might be a Cyprus settlement. Now, instead of the "end of 2010" deadline, "deep throats" are whispering that U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has started commenting that perhaps the process might be allowed to continue until the end of February 2011.

In private discussions, however, many people involved in the process underline that it might be conducive to the process to tell the public that there is hope for a settlement, but the two sides on the island are as far apart as ever on most key aspects of the problem. If the talks are to succeed there is a need to accelerate the process and get on board Turkey, Greece and Britain – the three guarantor powers under the 1960 accords – and convert talks into a five-party conference on the sidelines of which the EU as well as the five permanent members of the Security Council should sit as observers. Greek Cypriots are staunchly opposing such a conference on grounds that they are the government of the entire island and cannot agree to be relegated to the

community status by attending on equal footing with the Turkish Cypriots. That is indeed the crux of the problem; Greek Cypriots are not yet mentally prepared to a bi-zonal and bi-communal federal settlement where the two peoples of the island are politically equal.

This mental fatigue of the Greek Cypriot side was reflected once again in their proposal regarding the property aspect of the problem. A careful examination of the Greek Cypriot proposals clearly demonstrate that there has not been an inch forward in the Greek Cypriot position since the 1975 National Council decision describing Greek Cypriots as owners of the eastern Mediterranean island and Turkish Cypriots as 500-year-old guests who cannot have any rights in the Cyprus Republic further than some minority rights. Neither the immense sufferings of the Turkish Cypriot people under genocidal practices they were subjected to in the period of 1963-1974, nor the developments on the island since the 1974 Turkish intervention are being taken into consideration in the Greek proposals.

Though Greek Cypriot leader Demetris Christofias described the proposals he presented to the Turkish Cypriot side as “reasonable”, acceptance of the package would mean saying “yes” to Turkish Cypriots becoming landless as over 80 percent of the properties in northern Cyprus would have to be handed over to Greek Cypriots and thus collapse of the socioeconomic structure established in northern Cyprus in the aftermath of the 1974 intervention. Thus, in the “Turkish Cypriot state” of the future federation, Turkish Cypriots would become lessee of Greek Cypriot properties. Naturally, such a demand is in total contradiction with the “bi-zonality” principle.

Secondly, Christofias is demanding that only 50,000 of the mainland Turkish people who settled on Cyprus and have acquired Turkish Cypriot citizenship might stay on the island after a settlement, the rest should be “paid and sent back to Turkey” while up to 100,000 former Greek Cypriot residents of northern Cyprus should be allowed to return to their former properties. That means up to 40 percent of the population of the reduced northern Turkish Cypriot zone would be Greek Cypriots. Is this compatible at all with the bi-communality principle the two sides agreed back in 1977 and 1979 high level agreements or the established U.N. parameters of a settlement?

Under the Greek Cypriot proposals title deeds of all former Greek Cypriot properties would be given back to Greek Cypriots. 90 percent of those properties would be handed back to Greek Cypriots, while the remaining 10 percent might be leased for up to 15 years to “current Turkish Cypriot users.” Coupled with the demand that up to 100,000 Greek Cypriots should be allowed to return north, Christofias is indeed telling Turkish Cypriots they have no place on Cyprus.

Such demands contradict not only with the 1977 and 1979 accords and the established U.N. parameters regarding the bi-zonal and bi-communal character of the future federation but also renders Turkish Cypriots landless in their own homeland. Naturally, these proposals cannot be taken seriously or considered as “reasonable” by anyone in northern Cyprus.

### **A historic opportunity**

Font Size: [Larger](#)|[Smaller](#)

Tuesday, September 21, 2010



## CÜNEYT ÜLSEVER

I wrote yesterday. A shattering taboo: “No bargaining with terror!”

It was shattered by the Sept. 12 constitutional amendment referendum.

In the last one year the Justice and Development Party, or AKP, government has made a hash of the Kurdish initiative. Staunch nationalists, though outraged by such sloppiness, have not turned their votes into a vote of no-confidence and have supported the AKP policies.

The outlawed Kurdistan Workers’ Party, or PKK, as a matter of fact supported the AKP with its "ceasefire."

If soldiers had been killed during Ramadan, nationalist sensitivities could’ve deepened.

This is the historic opportunity!

President Abdullah Gül is the first one who mentioned the “historic opportunity” for the solution of the Kurdish conflict, but what he meant was: i) international conjuncture and ii) the Turkish Armed Forces’, or TSK, policies converging with those of the government.

I think the real historic opportunity has come to life now for people of Turkey -- the grassroots directly gives this chance.

And I hope the government will not miss it this time!

I am of the opinion the government will act more courageously this time. We see hints. If the attack had not occurred in the southeastern province of Hakkâri, Deputy Prime Minister Cemil Çiçek and Justice Minister Sadullah Ergin could’ve held a meeting with the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party, or BDP, co-chairs Selahattin Demirtaş and Gülten Kışanak. The head of the National

Intelligence Organization, or MIT, is in the U.S. to have talks on the issue. It seems that statesmen are having contacts with the PKK, in line with the government directives and information provided.

However, at this point we face a critical turn. “Some groups” are disturbed by these meetings. And they could either be a PKK fraction or “friendly countries.”

As happened on the first day, putting the blame on the TSK because of a bag found at the scene of the attack is nonsense. Considering that those who are behind the attack might have left a trace of evidence after committing the attack or having someone do it and then pointing out the PKK as perpetrators is moronic. And thinking that the TSK might make the same mistake is equally moronic.

However, this is obviously a provocation. Provocateurs had information in advance that the government would have talks with the BDP. Or the BDP has some moles inside the government.

At this point, I want to warn the government: The way to fight against provocations is to invalidate them.

Yes, the government-BDP meeting couldn't have been held on the day of the attack. But it must have been held immediately after.

It should've been put before the eyes of the public, so that whoever attempted such provocation could not reach their target.

The government should have talks with the BDP as civilian-military statesmen with the PKK. No provocation should stop this.

Apparently, the PKK has a multi-headed infrastructure.

Talks with PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan and his group will

make other PKK officials angry but will, at the same time, isolate them.

I have a special request for Mr. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in the upcoming period, if God is willing. He should inform opposition leaders of developments on this front behind closed doors. I do not tell him to secure their approval, but he should inform them.

Erdoğan should try to pull this issue beyond governmental policies.

The opposition, on the other side, should attend meetings and approach the information submitted in an appropriate way.

### **Secular' doesn't mean 'liberal'**

Font Size: [Larger](#)|[Smaller](#)

Tuesday, September 21, 2010

MUSTAFA AKYOL

**Contrary to some deep-seated clichés, 'secular' and 'liberal' don't necessarily go hand in hand in Turkey.**

**Believe it or not, they can even be strongly at odds.**

One of the interesting results of the constitutional amendment referendum that Turkey held the other Sunday was the demographics of “yes” and “no.” Almost all cities whose majority said “no” were on the sunny coastlines of the Aegean and Mediterranean. On the other hand, almost all inland cities opted heavily for “yes.” No wonder Turkish pundits have been discussing the division between “the coasts versus the rest.”

Aslı Aydıntaşbaş, a fellow journalist and a good friend, was also referring to the same division in her recent piece in the Wall Street Journal. “It's a familiar story for Americans,” she noted, with reference to Turkey. “A divided map, red

states versus blue states, with the liberal, secular and more affluent coastline pitted against the conservative heartland.”  
Red versus blue?

I would beg to differ with Aslı, though – albeit only partly. It is true that “coastal Turkey,” like America’s “blue states,” is more secular in lifestyle when compared with the “conservative heartlands” of both countries. But it would be a mistake to perceive, and present, this more secular side of Turkey as “liberal.” For, contrary to some deep-seated clichés, “secular” and “liberal” don’t necessarily go hand in hand here.

You can see this right at the outset by looking at our intellectual wars. In America, the two main sides of those conflicts are “secular liberals” and “religious conservatives.” In Turkey, though, “secularists” and “liberals” are often at odds with each other.

This is not a mere accident, because the self-styled secularism of Turkey, all too popular along the coastlines we are speaking about, is at odds with all the basic principles of liberalism – such as individual freedom, limited government and tolerance of diversity. A Turkish liberal, therefore, would support the right to wear both a miniskirt and a headscarf. The typical secularist, though, would call on the tyrannical powers of the state to eradicate the latter.

The worse news is that the illiberalism of Turkish secularists goes beyond matters of religion. Most of them are also staunchly nationalist – which is, in fact, almost their ersatz religion. That’s why the “secular coastlines” that we are speaking about are also the hotbeds of anti-

Kurdish hype, along with harboring a strong aversion to the European Union.

İzmir, the Aegean town which is Turkey's third-largest city and which gave the highest "no" vote in the recent referendum at 63 percent, is a good case study. The city is famous for being very secular and "progressive," to the level of being labeled (rudely of course) "the infidel İzmir" by some conservatives. But İzmir is also where a peaceful demonstration by a pro-Kurdish political party was literally stoned last year by girls in tight jeans and boys wearing Atatürk pins. And when the unabashedly racist "Toplumcu Budun Derneği" (Socialist Nation Society), an İzmir-based group, organized a rally in 2005 titled "The Increase of the Kurdish Population Should be Stopped!" it found only popular support among the city's residents.

The capital of fascism

Citing such examples, liberal commentator Rasim Ozan Kütahyalı, an İzmir-born Turk himself, recently wrote that the city has become "the capital of fascism in Turkey." Prominent İzmiris, in return, declared him persona non grata. Meanwhile, they keep on electing deputies such as Canan Aritman, the parliamentary deputy who condemned President Abdullah Gül's rapprochement effort with Armenia as high treason and "accused" the president of being a "crypto-Armenian."

And when the ancient Armenian church in Akdamar, Van was reopened last Sunday to worship after being empty for 95 years – a move which I applauded, and found only insufficient – do you know which newspaper voiced a strong protest? Not the Islamic press, not even the boldly Islamist Vakit. It was Yeniçağ – a ferociously nationalist

paper whose motto presents a huge photo of Atatürk. Under a disgusting headline, “Armenian Mass on the Rape Island,” the paper alleged that Akdamar was a place where Armenian militias raped Muslim women during World War I and called it the government’s betrayal to reopen this place “to the grandsons of the rapists.”

Of course, I am not saying that all secular-minded people in Turkey are die-hard fascists like this, or even necessarily illiberal. That would be most untrue and unfair. What is fair to say, though, is that if we are going to speak about “secularists versus conservatives” in Turkey, the former group really does not represent a more liberal or democratic mindset. Quite the contrary: While the conservatives have shown progress in the past decade, evidenced by their support for EU reforms, most secularists have grown growingly paranoid and xenophobic.

This might be a big surprise for some. But it shouldn’t be. There is really nothing, after all, which makes a secular mind inherently more open, civic or tolerant than a religious one – a lesson the world should have learnt by now after its secular experiences under Hitler, Stalin, Mao and the like.

**Overview on Turkish constitutional referendum process  
Turkey has passed very controversial process about  
constitutional referendum and actually, we, firstly,  
should look at the base which led up to changing in  
constitution.**

Wednesday, 15 September 2010 15:51

**By İsmail Duman, World Bulletin**

As is known, Turkey has passed very controversial process about constitutional referendum. As of yesterday, referendum campaigns has replaced with comments on Turkey's new future. While some people who support 'yes' vote welcome this result, opponents are very troubled and worried about uncertain future.

Actually, I think we, firstly, should look at the base which led up to changing in constitution. In its history, The Turkish Republic has constantly been exposed to an intervention of the army into fields of politics. We come across many coups or coup attempts in Turkish political history. They are as follows:

“• The first coup was in 1960 when the army arrested all members of the ruling Democrat Party and put them on trial.

- In 1961, Adnan Menderes, the overthrown prime minister, was hanged together with his foreign and finance ministers.

- In 1971, the army forced the conservative prime minister, Suleyman Demirel, to resign. Martial law was declared and a government of "technocrats" installed.

- The army's last major intervention in politics came in 1980 when the generals took over Turkey after violence between Left- and Right-wing students brought them to the brink of civil war.

- The Junta leader, Kenan Evren, elevated himself to the

presidency and rewrote the constitution to guarantee the army's power.

- In 1997 the army forced the Islamist-led coalition of Necmettin Erbakan to resign on the grounds that he was steering Turkey toward religious rule. But the army refrained from seizing power and allowed secular politicians to form a new government.”

### **Need to change in the Constitution**

So, 1982 constitution was ‘coup constitution’ and as Ihsan Dağı has said in his book entitled "Turkey between Democracy and Militarism: Post Kemalist Perspectives", “there is an important relationship between militarism and the spread of the culture of (in)security and fear in society, as well as the role of the insecurity culture in politics”. In this way, Turkey needed some amendments in the constitution so as to solve problems of restriction of status quo. As Özgür Erkan mentions in Turkey’s ‘Today’s Zaman’ Newspaper, “The AK Party rightfully aimed to put an end to this series of political crises through a new ‘civil’ constitution that would limit the powers of the judicial branch and curtail the powers of the military through several measures, for example, by bringing its budget fully under the control of the legislative branch.”

In the end, people voted the constitution on the 30th anniversary of the 1980 military coup. According to unofficial results issued late Sunday night, the package of



26 constitutional amendments passed with 58 percent of the vote, the semiofficial Anatolian News Agency reported. The turnout, among an electorate of just under 50 million, was put at 77 percent.

## **Amendments**

Okay, I think, before we mention comments on victory of AK Party and supporters of a changing, we should look at the amendments to articles of the constitution. Here are details:

“\* Article 10: Equality before the law

This would be amended to say that measures favoring children, the elderly, the disabled, widows and orphans of martyrs and veterans do not violate the principle of equality.

\* Article 20: Right to privacy

The changes would protect individuals' personal information. Such information could only be obtained with an individual's permission or in certain legal circumstances.

\* Article 23: Freedom of movement

The changes say the right to travel abroad may be restricted only during ongoing criminal probes and upon a judge's order.

\* Article 41: Children's rights

The article would contain the following sentences: "Every child has the right to adequate protection and care and the right to have and maintain a personal and direct relationship with his or her parents unless the relationship is explicitly contrary to his or her best interests.

"The State shall take measures to protect the child against all forms of abuse and violence."

\* Article 51: Right to organize labor

The amendment would repeal a clause that bars membership in more than one labor union.

\* Article 74: Right to petition

The amended version allows individuals to file complaints and requests for information to a government-appointed ombudsman.

\* Article 84: Loss of membership in parliament

The changes would end the practice of expelling members of parliament whose actions were cited by a court as grounds to ban a political party.

\* Article 94: Administration of parliament

The amendment would change the length of the parliamentary speaker's term in office.

\* Article 125: Recourse to judicial review

A new version would allow soldiers discharged by a Supreme Military Council decision to appeal against such decisions.

\* Articles 128, 129: Public service

The articles would include giving civil servants the right to collective contracts and to appeal disciplinary action.

\* Article 144: Inspection of judicial services

The proposed amendment requires Justice Ministry reviews of prosecutors to be conducted by judicial inspectors and internal auditors, who must be judges or prosecutors themselves.

\* Articles 145, 156, 157: Military justice

Crimes against state security and the constitutional order allegedly committed by military personnel would not be tried in military courts but in civilian courts. Civilians shall not be tried in military courts.

\* Articles 146, 147, 148, 149: Constitutional Court

The changes would overhaul the top court to consist of 17

justices, instead of the current 11, each chosen for a 12-year term. They face mandatory retirement at age 65.

Parliament, the president and the Higher Education Council would nominate judges to the court, which will function as two chambers and a General Assembly. The assembly would be empowered to try party-closure cases, as well as prime ministers and other cabinet members. Individuals may appeal directly to the court.

Top generals will be tried for offences related to their duties by the Constitutional Court, acting as the Supreme Court.

\* Article 159: Supreme Council of Judges and Prosecutors

The amended article would change the format of the council and the way its members are selected. It creates 22 regular and 12 substitute members on the board.

\* Article 166: Economic planning

## **Has the Gülen movement become political?**

HUSIYIN GULERCE

The honorable Fethullah Gülen's desire that a "yes" vote be cast during the Sept. 12 referendum is still being criticized by certain people. Can this movement, which is mentioned

using Gülen's name but Gülen himself insists on calling "the movement of volunteers," become political?

There are certain people who even say, "This movement has expanded and in the end it's bound to become political -- one day Fethullah Gülen will either become the prime minister or the president."

Those who read Gülen's books, those who listen to his lectures or those who are in this movement, if they happen to have a conscience and a sense of justice, will be able to say that this movement will never become political. The problem lies in the lack of a prejudice-free understanding of the movement. There are even "academics" in this country who will refer to this movement as a "tarikât" (or Islamic order). Calling the Gülen movement a tarikât shows a total lack of comprehension, to say the least. While this movement is examined in a serious light by sociologists, social scientists and educators in many countries throughout the world, many domestic sources take on an accusatory tone using phrases such as "they have spilled into" or have "taken over and exist" in such and such places. During the Feb. 28 -- the 1997 post-modern coup -- period, similar claims and accusations were thrown at Mr. Gülen, resulting in case being opened up against him. That case lasted nine years. In the end, the General Criminal Chamber of the Supreme Court of Appeals upheld an acquittal. However, despite a legal decision from the uppermost levels, there is no end to efforts to "try" Gülen without legal proceedings.

Let's first say this. In democracies, anyone is free to go wherever they please. Aren't we all equal citizens? Why is

it that when people of a certain mindset come to power, they have not “taken over the state,” but when the Democrat Party (DP), the Motherland Party (ANAVATAN), the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) or the True Path Party (DYP) come to power, they state is under threat of being seized? This is what we should be saying: Some of those who see themselves as the true owners of the republic have taken over the administrative seats and resources of the state; they don’t wish for the order they have established to be ruined and thus try to rile up others by saying things such as, “They’ve taken over the state.” The unease felt by these tutelage system supporters is brought on by the fact that Turkey is slipping out of their grip and they are losing their influence and power in the country. This is why they feel as though they have lost as a result of the “yes” vote in the recent referendum. They don’t wish to wake up from the surreal world that they believe in. The era has changed, Turkey has changed and the world has changed; this is something which they refuse to accept.

Secondly, if Gülen wanted to establish a party and conduct politics, what is preventing him? If this movement is so large and “they” are everywhere and they put a great deal of work into the latest referendum, why don’t they consider engaging in politics or establishing a party?

This is the point that many politicians and adversaries of the movement don’t understand. Because Mr. Gülen has written and spoken on this matter hundreds of times, saying, “The greatest threat for this movement is for it to transform into a political one.” Because transforming this movement into a political one would be fooling the people.

It would be hypocritical; it would be breaking peoples' hopes, disappointing them. Mr. Gülen explained that he has written this in his will as well: "My friends should not be candidates for politics, not now or later. They should not enter politics, even if political posts were to be laid at their feet. Those who care for me and accept my advice should not hesitate to push these posts way with the back of their hands. Even if others don't understand, they move forth for the sake of Allah. ..."

The "yes" in the referendum was certainly not a means of becoming political, because the referendum was not an election. Because the Gülen movement believes that democracy, and a sophisticated democracy at that, is the best foundation for service and that they are supporting the move towards democratization and not the AK Party. It was the Republican Peoples' Party (CHP) and the Nationalist People Party (MHP) that erred.

The services rendered are for our people and humanity. If one were to follow this movement for a lifetime, with the will of Allah, it will be observed that it will not become political.

23 September 2010, Thursday

---