



Turkey's Partnership for Security: **The Next Phase**

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Turkey's Partnership for Security: The Next Phase

Program

Turkey has developed an overall strategy tailored to meet the political and security challenges in every region of the world. In light of the unfolding uncertainties in the Middle East, the Caucasus, Central Asia and elsewhere, Turkey's partnership for peace is becoming more critical than ever before. The panel of experts will focus on these issues, particularly focusing on the implications of the Arab Spring, the Syrian Crisis, Iran's nuclear ambitions, identification of terrorism, and relations with the US, Europe, NATO, and the United Nations.

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The seminar summary was prepared by the research team at the International Center for Terrorism Studies. For further information, please contact: icts@potomacinstitute.org.

Speaker Transcript

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Tuesday, August 28, 2012.

Dr. Gönül Tol: Good afternoon, I would like to thank the Potomac Institute and Dr. Alexander for inviting me. The last time I was here I talked about Turkey's flourishing relationship with Iran and Syria, and that wasn't a long time ago so things change really fast in the Middle East. Today I would like to talk about five things but don't worry, very briefly.

The first one is the state of Turkish Syrian bilateral relationship before the Syrian Crisis. Second, Turkey Syria relationship after the Syrian crisis, and third, the challenges the Syrian Crisis posed for Turkish security. Fourth, how has Turkey responded, in other words what is Turkey's Syria policy. Fifth, mistakes and limitations of Turkey's Syria policy and what should Turkey do to address all these challenges.

Syria and Turkey almost went to war in 1998 because the Syrian regime sheltered the leader of the PKK which has been waging a war against the Turkish state for more than three decades, so Turkey threatened military action if Syria continued to shelter Abdullah Ocalan. In 1999 there was an agreement signed between Turkey and Syria called the Adana Agreement. So with the agreement, Turkey and Syria started cooperating against the PKK. Then, the AKP government came to power in 2002 and Syria has become a test case for Turkish foreign minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's "Zero problems with neighbors" policy. Visa requirements were lifted, free trade agreement was signed, there were joint cabinet meetings, and Turkey invested heavily in Syria. Then the Syrian uprising started in March 2011. At first Turkey was very cautious, Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan asked Bashar Assad to carry out reforms. But starting from the end of August, Turkey joined the anti-Assad camp, because by August it became clear that Bashar Assad was not going to carry out reforms. So openly, starting August and beginning of September, Turkish Prime Minister openly asked Assad to step down and the Syrian crisis became a security problem for Turkey.

So what kind of security challenges does the crisis pose for Turkey? First, there are almost over 80,000 Syrian refugees in Turkey on the Turkish border and the majority of them they stay in refugee camps, but of course this is an infrastructural challenge for Turkey so some of them are placed on university dorms and recently there has been some conflict between locals and the refugees and it is reported that crime has been on the rise among refugees. So this is the first challenge.

The second one which is much more critical—PKK members infiltrate Turkey through Turkey's southern border. Hundreds of PKK members infiltrated Turkey in the last six months.

Third, Turkey Iran relations are strained, and Iran now turns a blind eye to PKK activity on the border, and in fact there was an attack last week, a PKK attack, which killed nine people when a car packed with explosives blew up close to a police station in Gaziantep which is a town 50 km from the Syrian border. According to the reports the PKK members who were responsible for the

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attacks used Iranian outposts. The Syrian crisis has caused a rift between Turkey and Syria and Iran. Iranian and Syrian support for PKK has led to a spike in PKK attacks, which causes a domestic security challenge.

Fourth challenge is the challenge posed by the PKK's Syrian offshoot, PYD. It has gained ground in northern Syria after Assad forces withdrew from those towns. They hoisted the Kurdish flag over Syrian government buildings along with pictures of the imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan. Starting from September the PYD has been operating schools and youth organizations in northern Syria. All these dilemmas are quite concerning to Turkey because with the help of the Syrian regime, the PKK has a freer hand in the region and that's partly why there has been an increase in PKK attacks in Turkey.

The second reason for Turkey's concerns is that Turkey fears an autonomous Kurdish region in Syria might lead to similar demands among its own Kurdish population.

So how does Turkey respond? What is Turkey's Syria policy? After a Security Council meeting in July, foreign minister Ahmet Davutoğlu laid out the general framework of Turkey's Syria policy which can be summarized in three points: first, Turkey opposes Kurdish autonomy in northern Syria as long as the Assad regime stays in power. But Turkey will accept it afterwards only if such autonomy is enshrined in a new constitution approved by the Syrian people. Second, Turkey will continue to support the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq (KRG) and the Syrian opposition represented by the Syrian National Council (SNC). This is important—the Syrian opposition represented by the SNC. And encourage them to contain Kurdish demands and the PKK. Third, Turkey will use military power if the PKK establishes itself in northern Syria. So these three points actually mean one thing—Turkey will continue relying on Barzani, the president of the KRG, and the Syrian National Council to keep Syrian Kurds demands for autonomy and the PKK activity in check. And of course, Turkey has good reason to believe that this strategy will work because over the last year if you look at Turkey's relations with the KRG, Turkey has cultivated very close ties with Barzani. And as you all know after the US withdrawal there has been some tension between Barzani and Maliki. So Turkey serves both as a gateway for the KRG's oil exports to the west, and also Turkey serves as a good ally in Barzani's fight against Maliki. And there is one more thing that adds to Barzani's strategic importance to Turkey and that's Barzani's increasingly troubled relationship with the PKK. The PKK has been mounting attacks against Turkey and Iran from northern Iraq and this invites retaliation from both Iran and Turkey. And this of course violates KRG's sovereignty and this is very important because Barzani has been talking about having an independent Kurdish state so he has to be able to demonstrate that he has control over his own borders, so the PKK attacks are increasingly problematic for Barzani. And there's one more reason—the KRG needs investment, and if there is conflict going on, because of the instability, that will jeopardize investment and it frightens away badly needed investors.

So relying on Barzani is the first part of Turkey's Syria policy. And the second part is just as important for Turkey's strategy calculation in Syria: the Syrian National Council which is the umbrella group leading the fight against Bashar Assad regime. The Syrian National Council was established in Turkey and has since been using Turkey as an organizing hub. Turkey is confident that the Syrian National Council will block Kurdish demands for autonomy or any form of

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political decentralization given that the Syrian National Council has already refused to offer written guarantees for political decentralization and the right to self-determination for Syrian Kurds. The current president for the Syrian National Council who is of Kurdish origin is known for his deference to perceive Turkish wishes. So these are the two legs of Turkey's Syria strategy.

Without a doubt, Turkey has leverage over both Barzani and the Syrian National Council, and yet I think there is still one major problem with Turkey's strategy of containing the PKK and Syrian Kurdish demands through these actors. The influence of Barzani and the Syrian National Council over Syrian Kurds is quite limited. I would like to start with Barzani—he is without a doubt a very important actor in Syrian Kurdish political movement and still most Kurdish parties in Syria have offices in Erbil and Barzani has clout in their internal affairs. In 2008 for instance, Barzani appointed Abdulhakim Bashar as the new head of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Syria and now he is leading the Syrian Kurdish National Council which is the opposition group front in October in 2011 and is sponsored by Barzani and the Syrian Kurdish National Council. So through the Syrian Kurdish National Council Barzani wants to expand its influence over the Syrian Kurds. After downgrading its formal links to the Syrian Kurdish parties in a gesture to Ankara, Barzani's influence over these Syrian groups is quite limited. He only has some influence over the Kurds in Syria who are living close to the Iraqi border.

Also Kurdish National Council's standing among Syria's Kurds is not better, it's a coalition group of 12 Kurdish parties, but they are very small and very divided and they have little influence especially in the western part of the Kurdish enclave. The PKK's Syrian offshoot PYD on the other hand, has expanded its power in northern Syria at the expense of Barzani and also the Kurdish National Council since the beginning of the Syrian uprising. It's the most organized, best armed, and single largest Kurdish party in Syria. So it has the capacity to mobilize large crowds. The PYD's strong standing poses a threat to Turkey's strategic interests in Syria. The party was formed in 2003 by former members of the PKK and it has adopted Abdullah Ocalan's policy and it calls for Kurdish self determination. To the great concern of Turkey and Barzani and also the Kurdish national council the PYD's influence is likely to grow if the Syrian National Council fails to address Kurdish national demands, into its post Assad vision of Syria. So far, the Syrian National Council has failed in that regard. Although the Kurds are involved in attempts to unify the opposition into the Syrian National Council there has always been tension between the Arab opposition and Kurds within the Syrian National Council. Arabs have accused Kurds of not participating or supporting the revolution effectively and the uprising against the regime while Kurds have accused Arabs of turning a blind eye to Kurdish national rights and also inviting Turkish intervention in Syria.

In one famous incident, Kurds walked out of the Syrian opposition conference in Istanbul in July when Arab opposition members insisted on keeping the name "Syrian Arab Republic" and most recently there was a meeting in Cairo and the meeting collapsed into chaos when a Syrian Kurdish group again walked out of the meeting because the conference rejected an item that says the Kurdish people must be recognized. So currently, the Kurdish opposition has very little representation within the Syrian national council.

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So ultimately, I think Turkey's strategy of controlling Syrian Kurds through Barzani and the Syrian National Council might not yield any tangible results and I think instead Turkey should do three things to secure its interest in Syria.

First, instead of doing it through Barzani and the Syrian National Council, I think Turkey has to engage in direct relations with Syrian Kurds. Second, instead of pressuring the Syrian National Council to contain Turkish demands, I think Turkey should use its leverage to pressure the Syrian National Council to recognize Kurdish rights and incorporate Kurds into the political process. The more Syrian Kurds are excluded from the democratic process, the more radicalized they will become, and the more the PKK will expand its influence among Syrian Kurds. The third point, which I think is the most important point: Turkey has to permanently address its Kurdish problem. This will not only make Turkey less vulnerable to its neighbors' Kurdish policies, but also I think, strengthen Turkey's hand in a region where the Arab Spring has almost made it impossible for rulers to be deaf to the democratic demands of their own people.

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Hillel Fradkin: Thanks Yonah for the invitation and thank you all for coming. Yonah would like me to speak about the Arab Spring in relationship to our general and main topic. And I will. But it is most appropriate if I begin with our main topic. This is Turkey's partnership for security and the next phase.

At the outset I have several questions: Partners with whom? For who's security or for what kind of security, and with what? What does Turkey have to contribute to this partnership? There is a conventional view of these issues and it is repeated rather endlessly and it goes along the following lines: Turkey is a great success story and a rising power under Erdoğan and the AKP. It already plays a big role and is destined to play an even bigger one, maybe a neo-Ottoman role. This was a view apparently endorsed by President Obama who lavished special attention and praise upon Erdoğan. For example it is sometimes overlooked that the President's first major speech in a Muslim country was in Turkey rather than in Cairo. And of course we all have been told that the president and Erdoğan speak frequently. As a result it is sometimes suggested that we are outsourcing our policy to Turkey; and further that we ought to; that this is the corollary of our new intention to play a diminished and diminishing role in the Middle East combined with the view that Turkey can in fact play a more influential role in the region than can we. This view, that Turkey can be more influential than we, was expressed directly by Secretary of State Clinton and Secretary of Defense Panetta. Secretary Clinton expressed this back when the Syrian crisis began. Then she said something like this: "no one care what the United States says, but they will listen to Turkey or Saudi Arabia."

In my opinion, there are several flaws with this view. They might even have been evident at the outset of the new relationship in 2009. They are certainly evident now or should be. At a minimum lots of Turks have noticed the flaws and they've been a major subject of discussion in the Turkish press. I would say this discussion is growing rather than weakening.

I want to make a few points by way of illustration of the problems and where they may lead.

First, under its new management, Turkey did not sign up to helping the US or NATO. At the beginning and at most it proposed to be a bridge as it put it; a bridge between civilizations, between continents, between various countries. This would be the result of its new and brilliant foreign policy already referred to here today called "Zero Problems with Neighbors." As it was first put forward this policy was meant to help Turkey as it would be the central actor and beneficiary. That it might help others was secondary.

At all events there was a lot of indignation and irritation expressed in Turkey at the notion that Turkey would be an instrument of American or NATO policy. Indeed it was not. For example Turkey sided with Iran against the US over the nuclear dispute. And there has been similar indignation expressed quite frequently in the Turkish press and different parts of the political spectrum with regard to Turkish policy towards Syria as being somehow determined by American views, interests and pressure.

Second, even the notion of serving as a bridge is in shambles. In the first place Turkey has nothing but problems with neighbors. Iran, Iraq, and of course Syria and others including Russia with which new tensions have emerged. This is besides those countries which were formerly

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friends with which Turkey has gone out of its way to be hostile to, Israel in particular. It is hard to say to whom it still is or could be a bridge at present. Some would suggest the new Arab regimes, especially the ones headed by Islamist parties. But that seems pretty weak at this point. Egypt has made it fairly clear that under its new Brotherhood government it is capable of taking care of itself and making up its own mind about what it wants to do. I think all of these circumstances are well known everyone in Turkey. Everyone, whether friendly or hostile to Erdoğan, has noticed.

Third, the net result of all this is that it now appears reasonable to ask whether Turkey can help itself, let alone others. When Syrian forces fired into Turkey, Erdoğan insisted on an emergency meeting of NATO to invoke article 4 or possibly article 5 which are operative with regard to the common defense of NATO members. This is the same Turkey which we are constantly reminded has the second largest military force in NATO. So it seems passing strange that to defend itself from Syria, militarily anyway, that it requires the entire force of NATO. Nor do I think that should one understand the agreement to put the special radar that goes with our new missile defense on Turkish soil to be a Turkish benefaction to NATO. Rather it reflected the fear that Turkey began to have that it would need NATO protection against Iran, notwithstanding its claims to have new friendship with Iran. In other words it's not clear who's supposed to help whom here. Of course, the situation which most clearly represents Turkish problems and liabilities is the Syrian Civil War.

As Dr. Tol mentioned, in Turkish public discussion of foreign affairs the main topic is Syria. It's Syria, Syria, and Syria all the time. It either was or has become a critical issue for Turkey. It was indeed, and almost from the outset of the crisis, said by Erdoğan and also Davutoglu to be a domestic issue and in some sense it is or has become that. There was a presumption that both because of its proximity and the importance of the issue to Turkey, that Turkey - and I think the presumption was shared by Turkey, the US and NATO - that Turkey would take the leading role and contribute to a favorite outcome: the fall of Assad, a new regime, and so forth. This presumption has proven false. Turkey has been unable to accomplish much if anything. In fact it feels threatened by Syria, the Kurdish problem, Iran and others. Maybe this situation will change but at the moment Turkey, Turkish policy is a failure in this and other dimensions.

Fourth, why has this happened? I think there are a variety of considerations. First, if I may put this simply and bluntly, Turkey did not know what it was doing. It based its policy on a false analysis of the terrain and its challenges and based its policy on a false analysis of its own strengths. Those strengths seemed three years ago to be very great. Even now they are mentioned all the time in the conventional view I mentioned before and as a basis for the notion that the role of Turkey in the world is and will be substantial. What are these strengths: a stable politics - Erdoğan's three unprecedented victories in the elections - economic success and traditional military power. All of them have looked shakier when put to the test.

First, with regard to internal politics there remains the Kurdish problem for which Erdoğan claimed to have a political solution three years ago. But he has failed to produce one.

Second, and as for the military there also remains the Kurdish problem, which also seems to lack a military solution. At all events it seems hard to say that on any given day much progress has

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been made against the PKK and its capacity to inflict major harm against not only Turkish citizens but Turkish soldiers. On top of which it would be fair to wonder whether the Turkish military is more than a trifle demoralized at the moment owing to the experience that the military as such has undergone over the last few years: the trials, the imprisonment of various officers and so forth. I say fair to wonder. I can't state directly what that effect has been.

The second consideration regarding why this has happened is that Erdogan and his colleagues presumed, and presumed heavily, that they did know what they were doing; they boasted of this and allowed their vanity to blind them to the possible deficiencies of their understanding of their situation, its vulnerabilities, its weaknesses and its strengths.

My last point is to raise the question - especially from the point of view of Turkey's security, our security, whatever partnerships that might be entered into - is there a remedy for the failures which have occurred? There is at least partially a remedy if one means in the first place serious reflection on the errors that the Turkish government has made and a serious attempt to come to a more sober assessment of its strengths and weaknesses as well as what it might need from others and how it might need to accommodate them. And this assessment - it seems to me at this point - would also have to be shared with and justified to the public. Because the public rhetoric has been so self-confident about Turkey's capacities to deal with its problems, to deal with foreign issues, that it would need now to be explained why that has been a failure and what the government needs to do about it. This is especially so if it wants to change policies at this point. All of this is doable, it happens to governments; they make mistakes and have to rethink their policies. It happens to our government from time to time and it also happens that if and/or when our government doesn't realize they've made mistakes, the voters remind them of it. The question is whether Erdoğan is capable of this. Or for that matter, whether Turkey is open to this given the present political sensibility and the dynamic he has created and also the fact that the success of his party over the last three elections has given him complete control of the government for the foreseeable future.

To put the matter simply, Erdoğan and his most senior colleagues do not seem much inclined, to put it mildly, to self-reflection and self-criticism even in their own interest. Perhaps something serious goes on behind closed doors but in their public pronouncements they are never wrong. They are seconded in this by all the people around them. Of course they are still exposed to criticism but they react with ferocity to all such criticism. I think it's actually a remarkable fact the number of suits that Erdoğan has outstanding against Turkish citizens for allegedly slandering him. The last time I heard the number was in the hundreds. But the number has no doubt grown since because he picks fights with anyone who says BOO. But even if they do have private discussions about their errors their public rhetoric has done and continues to do great damage to their capacity for the leadership of Turkey and partnership with any kind of grouping of countries with which they might cooperate – especially the US and NATO.

A problem on the level political leadership is Erdoğan's habit of making various threats: some against various other countries; sometime against other politicians. Some perhaps are justifiable, others not. But in almost all cases he fails to follow through. He threatens and then does nothing. The net result is very few if any of his adversaries take him terribly seriously and that's

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especially manifest with Iran. They have ignored all his protests; they've ignored all his appeals. The Iranians have actually directly threatened Turkey. Still nothing happens.

Another case of course was the Turkish jet that was shot down by Syria. Much was made in the 48 hours after the jet was fallen about a stern response Turkey would mount. To date, nothing much has happened. So as I said I don't think his adversaries take him terribly seriously. It is a wonder that his allies do.

On the moral level, which is after all sometimes important to leadership and partnership, he and his colleagues have revealed themselves to be extreme hypocrites. Two cases in point that I'll focus on and then end with are Libya and terrorism.

Libya: Turkey was a most reluctant proponent of the overthrow of Gaddafi at least partially for economic reasons. We'll leave out the fact that he was the winner of the Gaddafi prize for human rights. Turkey joined up only after all the heavy lifting was done - by France, Britain and the United States. Nevertheless he had the temerity to claim that unlike them, Turkish interests were pure and he went out of his way to warn the Libyans over the conspiracies that Western oil companies might have or designs that they might have.

Terrorism: Turkey of course has suffered – suffers from terrorism. Actually it suffered a very great deal and last week a very terrible terrorist attack occurred in Gaziantep in which unarmed civilians including women and young children were murdered.

Erdoğan made the following statement; it's a very moving statement, quote: “the deplorable incident in Gaziantep has shown once again that terrorism does not distinguish between children and adults and it targeted civilians as well, terrorism that targets our unity and peace is doomed; sooner or later in the face of the determination of our beloved people and security forces.” This is, as I said, a very moving statement. It is also the kind of statement that numbers of Israeli leaders have been obliged to make for many, many years.

Yet Erdoğan has been happy to embrace anti-Israeli terrorists, most notably Hamas but not limited to Hamas. Worst still he conspired with terrorists in the Mavi Marmara incident. And now has the temerity to claim that he was the victim. He has also had the temerity to denounce Germany for its allegedly insufficient efforts to stop funding for the PKK. I have no independent judgment about that; but if you're hosting terrorist groups yourself that seems to be a glass house in which you are living. Now all of this may make Erdoğan master of his own house and that is of course always the first and most important bottom line of politics, at least for politicians. Although I should add that that house seems more tumultuous every day by which I mean there's really a lot of debate over whether Turkish policy is a success - either domestically or internationally - and some of that debate is now occurring in papers that were very friendly to Erdoğan and the AKP. There's a sense it seems to me that even on the friendly side of the media that something is not right here.

But, I will leave to other people who know more about the internal policy say to what degree there's likely to be a real internal domestic political conflict. What I do know is that because of all of these things, the merits of current Turkish policies from the point of view of security

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partnerships are rather few. That is that Turkey has relatively little to contribute to such partnerships and actually presents a rather large number of liabilities. None of that is to say that it wouldn't be useful to find a new ground for rectifying the balance and that, I think, is doable. Of course that depends not only on Turkey but partially on our own government and its own good sense.

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Dr. Christopher C. Harmon: Thank you, Yonah. It's a pleasure to work with Dr. Alexander and I'm one of the many scholars in Terrorism studies who grew up reading his books.

Let me say that I will focus on terrorism insurgency issues.

Secondly, I don't speak for the Marine Corps. I am an independent academic who has the privilege of holding a chair with the Marine Corps University.

I'd like to (watching the clock here) say just a few things in three areas. I'll say one word about the insurgency and terrorism problems Turkey's faced in recent decades. I'll say two or three words about the strategic options they have, with such a problem. And lastly I'll go on to what they've decided on to do; what they've done--which I think of as a grand strategy approach although I can't say I hear lots of Americans call it that but it seems to me that's what they're doing.

All states wrestle with violent separatism: the Canadians had their Quebecois problem; we Americans have our Puerto Rican issue which has never ceased to percolate during my thirty years in terrorism studies. And they [Turkey] also have a problem with a particular moral and political evil, which is terrorism. I don't mind saying that, I think it is an important principle about why they've treated the counter-terrorist fight so seriously in Turkey. Folks before me here have referenced different kinds of terrorism that the country has faced in recent decades: the right wing, the left wing, the religious, and a lot of the Marxist-Leninist, both indigenous and some very much encouraged by the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, and Syria in times past.

So there have been phases--and this isn't one of them thank goodness--there have been phases in Turkish life where it was not unusual to see a thousand people murdered in the year in the course of "political activity" if we should dignify it like that. The country has a very serious problem and it has a legacy of dealing with it in lots of different ways. Naturally the biggest challenge remains not Syrian refugees – although we're all watching that now – but of course the larger Kurdish insurgency within the country.

It has been an adept organization. If the Germans are unhappy it is because they truly do see the extortion level is very high among Kurdish communities in Germany for funding of the PKK. They're also unhappy about the narcotics trafficking in the country, which has been extensive and which the PKK does in many other areas. It's a sophisticated organization in lots of other ways. They have their own media channels: some have been above board; others have flourished on the Internet and so forth. They have been able to use both guerilla warfare on the one hand, and terrorism on the other to make political space in which they've established some shadow governments within the country. Although I doubt now that they're anywhere near what they were at one time, they have strategies for political mobilization and the like. The short of it is, it is truly a very serious enemy even though there might only be, say, three score attacks last year by the PKK inside the country. Well what are state options when such a problem has been a driving serious problem before and remains now as an important problem for Turkish authorities?

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Other states facing this kind of press within have considered options like full independence; it sometimes happens. There were reasons for the dissolution of states like Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. In our own Civil War we wrestled, badly and with great problems of conscience, about the great question of secession once the sort of dominos begin and you see a West Virginia secede from Virginia. Where does that process really stop? The process of granting independence or something less has some consequences, which any capital would consider closely. What about something less? If Dr. Fradkin is right-- I was hoping we agreed on this and we do—then we could say about the Hamas government in Gaza, that it basically has full autonomy. If “full autonomy” is a fair description of that entity, I leave it to you to think about just how well that’s worked out for all parties concerned. I remember plenty of gunfights just with other Palestinians. There are severe problems that all face in the area despite the fact that full autonomy has been given to Hamas in Gaza. There are degrees of lesser autonomy, which I think any reasonable statesman would think about and consider as models in the world. So when we think about terms like “semi-autonomy” or considerable decentralization, we can see why it was, a Prime Minister suggested about 1991, that maybe even the Basque solution that Spain was working on might help with the Kurds. She was “beaten up” publicly for such views and changed her policy. But I think those who did the political beating were worried about a kind of dismemberment or decentralization process that would go so far that somehow perhaps they [Turkey] couldn’t recover. It’s a serious, serious issue, even as we examine smaller the lesser strategies for dealing with internal problems.

Proscription is an option with terrorism; in the literature there is almost nothing written about it. John Finn did a nice piece 20 year ago. Nearly every democracy has proscribed certain kinds of violent organizations. Austria does it, Germany does it, and everyone does it. And so proscription is one way to approach it. We all kind of recoil from such a thought, but even we Americans somehow have become comfortable with the notion of criminalizing hate speech--and it’s not too far away from the notion of proscribing an organized separatist entity within. There’s the means of strong law enforcement and you know this is key to how Italy beats the Red Brigades and some of its other enemies. It’s central to how our Federal Bureau of Investigation defeated the right wing in the 1980s within this country: permeating these organizations, penetrating them, wrecking them with intelligence, arresting them, prosecuting them in court. And there’s a sort of raw force method. How many time have you sat in a chair like yours or stood at a podium like mine when giving a speech and known that part of the conversation was that somehow “its amateurish to think that brute force can defeat something as complex as terrorism.” Of course, in spring of 2009 a democracy called Sri Lanka did exactly that to the Tamil Tigers; which were one of the most formidable terrorist organizations in modern times and almost no one ever predicted such a victory. But they won it. So that’s an option.

On a more moderate note, as I finish the list, citizen militias have been tried; many a counter insurgency has featured these entities. The *rondas* in Peru were very successful against Sendero Luminoso and, I think, a very underrated contributor to the success of that counterinsurgency-- although the capture of Abimael Guzman was probably more important.

There are economic aid projects. And there are international negotiations that can be done.

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So what's Turkey done? They've done almost all of these in some way or another; they have implicitly or explicitly pursued a kind of grand strategy against the Kurdish insurgents. It starts with things like the struggle of ideas (and they're pretty good at that, especially against the modern Islamists rather than the old PKK).

They have used proscription--not against just the militarized Kurds but against the [PKK's] open political fronts and they've made that work pretty well. They've tried repentance laws, which are always something that democracy tries to do although the government got few takers when they made an offer in '05, for example. They've been quite tough with law enforcement and policing which is very appropriate when a force is as well armed as the PKK has been in many periods.

They've used militias; they've used the [official] military to counter insurgency within the country. The hardest and most troubling part of the whole experience? And this appears in the case of Sri Lanka. We're all students, I'm sure, of the French failure in Algeria with a half million men under arms and all the results that followed. This is a challenging, desperately expensive and trying experience, and above all it pits one's own military against one's own citizens, and that's never a good thing; it's always best, as Paul Wilkinson and others have argued, to go with police if one possibly can.

The Turks have done strikes outside the country, as into Iraq, and they threatened going into Syria. They've done a decapitation, something counterterrorist's dream about all the time, it's extremely hard to do but they did it and quite successfully in '99; it was spectacular. At that time I became much too optimistic about the death of the PKK movement. A gentleman in the central quadrant (of this seminar) Michael Kraft warned me at the time that I shouldn't be too optimistic, that the PKK was likely to sneak back; sure enough after five years they did and I found myself at a White House briefing in '04 quite surprised to be told that there was "an insurgency" in Turkey according to the White House.

Of course, the Turks have [also] done diplomacy. They do have this Center of Excellence Defense Against Terrorism for NATO and I was privileged to be involved in one of their programs. They have co-chaired with the Americans this brand new thing, an initiative Hilary Clinton is quite proud of, a new "Global CT Initiative" and they do press their diplomacy with leaders of Kurds in Iraq and other neighbors in the area, so they have tried a kind of grand strategy.

I'll now close and say that given the level of threat that the PKK and other terrorism problems have posed I think Turkey has done a fair-to-good job of managing these grand strategy problems and using all the implements of power that a state has. I do think that they need now to try, in the maximum degree that they can, to open political space for new parties which may include a majority Kurd members. I do not say it would be appropriate, given the constitution, to guess that a uniquely Kurdish or an ethnically pure Kurdish party would be appropriate, but I do say if we could open some political space for new political parties including some Kurdish ones, it might be a good thing. And there's clearly a problem with the independent media--which has already been mentioned--and I also think that there is clearly some opportunity for more economic development in Kurdish areas which lack many of the things that we'd like them to have.

The seminar summary was prepared by the research team at the International Center for Terrorism Studies. For further information, please contact: icts@potomacinstitute.org.

Finally, I think that the US is in a position to do pretty good work with them as partners. Hillel Fradkin's views on this were very interesting to me and I know he's better informed than I. I do hope that as we go forward with the Turks, we find ground for continued cooperation. I've seen it in my own work; I think it's been at a respectable level; but that it could be better. I think that, for example, the US is in a nice place to help urge the Iraqis in Northern Iraq to try to deal with the PKK problem when it goes over the border, which it always has. And I do think that there are more general and broader grounds for US military intelligence and diplomatic cooperation. Thank you, Yonah.