

COMBATING INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

Turkey's Added Value

Edited by James Ker-Lindsay and Alastair Cameron



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OCCASIONAL PAPER

About the Study

Support for this study was provided by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who in partnership with RUSI, held a conference in March 2009 entitled 'Combating International Terrorism: Turkey's Added Value'. The event provided an opportunity for a bilateral exchange on counter-terrorism best practice between the UK and Turkey, as well as a relevant forum to discuss the various dimensions of the terrorist threat in Turkey and the country's response to it.

This RUSI European Security Programme study is intended to look back on some of these themes and the evolution of the debate.

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The views expressed in this paper are the authors' own, and do not necessarily reflect those of RUSI or any other institutions to which the authors are associated.

Comments pertaining to this report are invited and should be forwarded to: Alastair Cameron , Head, European Security Programme, Royal United Services Institute, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2ET, United Kingdom, or via email to alastairc@rusi.org

Contents

Foreword	v
Turkey's Vision of Combating Terrorism Inan Ozyildiz	1
Some Perspectives on Turkey's Counter-Terrorism Strategy Yonah Alexander	4
The Dimensions of the Terrorist Threat in Turkey Jim McKee	6
PKK Terrorism in Turkey Nihat Ali Özcan	9
Turkish Foreign Policy towards Iran and Syria İhsan Bal	13
Protecting the Key National Utilities and Energy Infrastructure Mitat Çelikpala	16
Protection of Energy Infrastructure Gareth M Winrow	19
Counter-Terrorism, Political Reform and EU Conditionality Gülnur Aybet	22
Turkey's Strategic Position and the Need for Dialogue James Ker-Lindsay	26

Foreword

Arguably, there is no other country with quite the range of experience of terrorism and political violence as Turkey. Over the course of the past four decades, the country has grappled with extreme left and right-wing groups. Indeed, it was the growing prevalence of these organisations that led to the military intervention in 1980. However, Turkey has also experienced other forms of terrorist activities. Some of these have been a part and parcel of the emergence of militant Islamic-inspired terrorism, both indigenous and exogenous. The massive bomb in Istanbul, in 2003, which injured over 700 people, was the most prominent example of this. But Turkey has also been the victim of other attacks. In the 1980s, a number of Turkish diplomats were murdered by the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA). More recently, the country has found itself drawn into regional conflicts. For example, Chechen terrorist groups have staged operations in Turkey.

However, perhaps the most notable battle Turkey has fought against terrorism has been against the separatist guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers Party, the PKK. Listed as a terrorist organisation in the UK, US and the EU, it first emerged as a significant insurgent organisation in 1984, waging a multifaceted terrorist campaign against the Turkish state and society. The bitter and bloody fighting seen in the south eastern provinces forced many thousands of people from their village homes into the major cities of Turkey, which in turn has seen the emergence of more traditional terrorist tactics, such as bombings and shootings. This has not only sought to instil fear into the hearts of ordinary Turkish citizens, the bombing of tourist resorts has been a deliberate attack on the economy. And although a ceasefire was called in the campaign in 1999, when Abdullah Öcalan, the terrorist leader was captured, since 2004 the group has once again come to the fore.

Up until recently, Turkey's trials and tribulations in combating these terrorist groups was given little attention by its partners in the West. In large part, these issues were seen as domestic in nature.

To be sure, they were a sign of a troubled polity, but were never seen as anything that the Turkish authorities could not handle by themselves with minimal external involvement. In this sense, there is more than an element of truth in the title used by Andrew Mango in his book on Turkey and terrorism, 'Turkey and the War on Terror: For Forty Years We Fought Alone'.

This collection of papers is an attempt to draw together some of the latest thinking about ways in which Turkey can and should cooperate with its international partners in tackling terrorism. Drawn from a conference held at the Royal United Services Institute in March 2009, it explores a wide range of topics, ranging from the ways in which Turkey is seeking to secure its energy infrastructure, through to the ways in which it has built a co-operative relationship with neighbours who once supported terrorist activities in Turkey. The conference discussions were based at the time on the UK's long-term CONTEST strategy and its four main pillars: PREPARE, PURSUE, PREVENT and PROTECT as they applied to Turkey, bringing experts together to explore the issues and ways of tackling them.

About the Papers

In the opening paper, Minister Inan Ozyildiz explains the profound nature of the threat posed to Turkey by all manner of terrorist organisations, and builds a strong argument for the international community's continued assistance in helping Turkey to eradicate terrorism through the variety of security and co-operative frameworks available.

Yonah Alexander then offers some introductory thoughts on the question of terrorism in general before opening up the examination of the ways in which Turkey, in particular has been affected by international terrorism.

The sheer variety of terrorist organisations in Turkey is a point stressed by Jim McKee in his contribution. However, as he also notes, the Turkish Government needs to concentrate on tackling the real threats, rather than perhaps become sidetracked with

other issues. At the same time, he notes that the Turkish Government is also making great strides in learning from its past mistakes and recognising that tackling the threat of terrorism requires attention to be paid to wider economic and social factors.

From the start of the 1970s, Turkey has encountered a wide number of terrorist organisations. The longest lasting, most well-known and best organised of these has been the Kurdistan Workers Party, the PKK. In his article, Nihat Ali Özcan examines and analyses the development and evolution of the PKK, exploring its political objectives and strategies in order to explain the current situation and the future of the PKK issue in Turkey.

One of the most remarkable diplomatic transformations to have taken place in the past decade has been Turkey's relationship with Syria and Iran. For many years these countries were active supporters of terrorist movements in Turkey. However, today, Turkey maintains a close relationship with both countries. Ihsan Bal examines how this transformation occurred, showing the degree to which it relied on the full range of political techniques from the threat of the use of force, through to economic co-operation and cultural interaction.

In his contribution, Mitat Celikpala examines the growing importance of energy as a security factor and explores the very real dangers posed by terrorist organisations to oil and gas pipelines, most notably the Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan pipeline that runs through Turkey. As he notes, while steps have been taken to improve the security of critical infrastructures in Turkey, policy makers need to give the issue far more thought and investigate the possibilities for greater public-private co-operation in this sphere.

Following on from this, Gareth Winrow explains how attention has increasingly been paid to the protection of energy infrastructure in Turkey from possible terrorist attack. In addition to oil and gas pipelines and their associated facilities, he stresses that attention must also be paid to the substantial oil tanker traffic navigating the Bosphorus. His article also refers to NATO's increasing interest in energy security, and the possible significance of this for Turkey.

In her contribution, Gulnur Aybet explores the ways in which the process of Turkey's accession to the European Union can shape counter-terrorism efforts in Turkey. There is little doubt that the reforms required for EU integration can help to mitigate some of the underlying causes of discontent in the country. However, the eventual success of these efforts is not just predicated on political will inside Turkey, but also on support for Turkish membership from outside. In this sense, the longer term battle against terrorism requires Turkey and the EU to work closely with one another.

The concluding contribution by James Ker-Lindsay looks at the wider question of Turkey's place in the world, and how this will shape the debate over counter-terrorism. It argues that Turkey is, in three distinct senses, a vital transit country. First of all, it is an increasingly important route for energy coming to Europe and beyond. Secondly, it is also seen as an important transit point for terrorist groups. Thirdly, it is also a vital link in terms of ideas, acting as a bridge between the West and the Islamic world. In a very real sense therefore, Turkey is a key country in the global fight against terrorism. However, in order to pursue an effective counterterrorism strategy, there quite clearly needs to be greater dialogue between Turkey and its international partners.

Turkey's Vision of Combating Terrorism

Inan Ozyildiz

Over the last thirty years, the fight against terrorism has been one of the priorities of the successive governments in Turkey. During this period Turkey has had to face many aspects of terrorism, ranging from extremist left to extreme right movements, including many of its international dimensions. Most particularly, Turkey has been fighting against the terrorist campaign of the Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (PKK, Kurdistan Workers' Party), a ruthless separatist terror movement which has claimed the lives of more than 35,000 citizens since 1984. Due to the countless terrorist attacks perpetrated by this organisation, public sensitivity to this particular problem is indeed very high in Turkey.

For Turkey, the transnational nature of terrorism became obvious a long time ago. Likewise, the connection between organised crime and terrorist groups has been detected, widely investigated and proven by Turkish agencies. Through this experience, Turkey has repeatedly underlined the importance of international co-operation as a prerequisite for achieving success in this area, and highlighted the connections between organised crime and terrorist organisations.

Turkey does not make any distinction between terrorist groups and expects the same from its friends and allies amongst the international community. Turkey believes that in order to ensure broader co-operation, all terrorist organisations should be combated with equal determination and regardless of their motivation. No state, today, can on its own fully ensure the security of its citizens against this complex and asymmetrical threat. Thus, the fight against global terrorism can only be successful through co-operation on a global scale.

A striking example of this form of global terrorism is Al-Qa'ida and its affiliate groups, which represent a real threat to Turkey. The Istanbul bombings in 2003 were the deadliest and most destructive in Turkey's history. Turkey, with its democratic, secular and open society, as well as a predominantly Muslim

population, is at odds with the ideology and aims of Al-Qa'ida. Since the Istanbul bombings, Turkish agencies have therefore intensified their efforts to prevent terrorist groups linked to, or inspired by, Al-Qa'ida from conducting their activities in Turkey. As a result of operations carried out after these attacks, many people linked with Al-Qa'ida were captured and their plans foiled. Yet, the Turkish authorities remain vigilant regarding the activities of all religiously motivated radical groups.

Turkey actively takes part in multilateral efforts to fight terrorism by making best use of its experience in this domain and believes that the United Nations has the primary role in formulating the international community's response to terrorism. Having assumed a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council for the period of 2009-2010, one of Turkey's main priorities as a UN Security Council Member is to lend its added value towards the various counter terrorism efforts conducted within the UN framework. During its term, Turkey has thus continued to support and contribute to the work of the UN Counter Terrorism Committee, as well as called for strict implementation of relevant Security Council Resolutions on counter terrorism.

Turkey has signed and ratified all twelve UN conventions on combating terrorism, as well as recently signed the convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. Turkey is also contributing to the budget of the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the UN Office for Drug Control (UNODC) and Crime Prevention in Vienna, as well as conducting efforts within NATO, whether acting as Chair of the Working Groups on the Financial Aspects of Terrorism or hosting the NATO Centre of Excellence on Defence against Terrorism in Ankara.

Priority areas for counter-terrorism co-operation today include:

- The comprehensive sharing of intelligence
- Ensuring the application of deterrent penalties to terrorist crimes

- The establishment of uniform practices for effective judicial co-operation
- The introduction of deterrent measures for the prevention of the financing of terrorism
- The elimination of conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism.

To this end, Turkey sees particular value in bilateral engagements and has concluded bilateral co-operation agreements with seventy-two countries. These agreements provide legal frameworks for intelligence sharing, police co-operation, etc. Similarly, Turkey has regular consultation mechanisms at different levels in the field of co-operation against terrorism. The Turkish International Academy against Drugs and Organised Crime (TADOC) in Ankara functions as a regional resource centre and consultation forum for drug and organised crime related issues. More than 1,600 law enforcement personnel from fifty-seven countries from Central Asia, the Black Sea Region, the Balkans, Caucasus and Africa have already received training with TADOC.

Further improvement in the field of combating international terrorism is nonetheless required, and Turkey is of the opinion that work within the UN in creating a universal legal instrument needs to be completed and that a Comprehensive Convention on Terrorism should be concluded as soon as possible. Meanwhile, existing international instruments – especially in the field of extradition and mutual legal assistance – should be properly implemented. While recognising that political asylum and the admission of refugees are legitimate rights enshrined within international law, it should be stressed that such rights are not enshrined in order to be taken advantage of by terrorists and criminals. The lack of uniform practices in implementing the provisions of international agreements on judicial co-operation and extradition of criminals, the use of the ‘political crime’ concept to evade extraditing terrorists sought through Interpol Red Notices, as well as the granting of sanctuary and asylum to persons involved in acts of terrorism without serious investigation, all constitute major handicaps towards achieving counter terrorism results and thereby contribute to encouraging terrorists. The principle of ‘extradite or prosecute’ (*aut dedere aut judicare*), which is embodied in UN

Security Council resolutions binding all countries, should be strictly implemented in order to ensure that terrorists are given appropriate sentences to their crimes. Divergent approaches, especially in relation to the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1373 should be avoided in so far as possible and all terrorist organisations combated with equal determination.

The UK Foreign Secretary David Miliband pointed out the very complex nature of counter terrorism in an article published in the *Guardian* on 15 January 2009 by stating that ‘Terrorist groups need to be tackled at root, interdicting flows of weapons and finance, exposing shallowness of their claims, channelling their followers into democratic politics.’ This view touches the very core of the problem and corresponds to Turkey’s approach as well.

The north of Iraq is of high priority in the fight against the PKK. Over recent years, and in the midst of a power vacuum, the organisation took refuge in this region, acquired weaponry, logistical support, provided armed training and was given a free hand to dispense terrorist propaganda. The Turkish Armed Forces have thus been conducting successful operations against the PKK’s presence and safe havens in Iraq since December 2007. Nevertheless northern Iraq still serves as an operational base, shelter and safe haven for terrorists. Currently, around 3,200 armed terrorists and the leading cadre of the PKK organisation are carrying out their activities with full impunity within these camps. The PKK presence in northern Iraq poses not just a serious threat to the security of the Turkish people, but at the same time jeopardises stability in Iraq. For this reason, and since last year, Turkey has intensified the dialogue with the northern Iraqi leadership and Baghdad Government, as well as resumed trilateral talks in order to increase intelligence sharing with the sole aim of eradicating the PKK.

However, while focusing on the PKK presence in northern Iraq, a very important connection between this region and the activities of PKK related groups within other European countries should not be forgotten. In order to reinforce its operational apparatus and capability in Iraq, the PKK also relies heavily on its activities within Europe through such

activities as extortion, human trafficking, drugs and arms smuggling, as well as money laundering, thereby raising huge amounts of revenue in the process. The PKK in short raises money, recruits militants and distributes its propaganda throughout European countries with this terrorist network's lifeline therefore extending to, and feeding from, other European countries.

Turkey is seeking greater co-operation in countering this particularly atrocious terrorist organisation as it poses a threat to all societies in which it disguises itself. Such cooperation necessitates the prevention of all PKK affiliated activities throughout Europe, and in line with the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions: cut off the finance sources and sever the logistical supply lines of the organisation in Europe once and for all, prevent PKK propaganda which incites hatred and violence, and put an end to the free movement of PKK members by ensuring their arrest, prosecution or extradition.

Over the past few years, Turkey has increased its contacts with a number of European countries to better explain its concerns and expectations from the EU. Mr Gilles de Kerchove, the EU Counter-Terrorism

Coordinator, was in Ankara in December 2008 for consultations on terrorism related matters and the work he is carrying out on the PKK, which is listed among the terror organisations recognised by the EU, is of key importance. The United Kingdom, most especially, has also been supportive of Turkey's efforts in raising its concerns with individual member states; whilst the United States has extended its support in the context of the trilateral mechanism re-initiated in November 2008 with a view to eliminate the PKK presence in northern Iraq. It is hoped that every such contact will yield positive results.

Yet the Turkish Government also sees the issue in a much broader perspective and Turkey is fully aware that the fight against terrorism cannot be won by security and military means alone. With this understanding, the government has developed a wide range of measures covering judicial, social, economic and cultural areas, and is hopeful that these measures will reduce the support given to the PKK.

Minister Inan Ozyildiz is Deputy Director General of the Directorate General for Security Affairs at the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Some Perspectives on Turkey's Counter-Terrorism Strategy

Yonah Alexander

Since modern terrorism is an inexpensive, attractive and effective instrument for achieving political, social, economic and strategic objectives in violation of law, it has been repeatedly employed by a variety of sub-state groups and even nations in the post-World War II era. Currently, it is becoming a permanent fixture of international life, threatening every community, state, and region. Unlike their historical counterparts, contemporary terrorists have used tactics of propaganda and violence on an unprecedented scale, with serious implications for global security concerns.

This form of asymmetric warfare is characterised by an ideological and theological fanaticism, an education in hatred towards one's enemy, which has been coupled with rapid technological advancements in communications (e.g. the Internet), transportation (e.g. modern international air travel), as well as conventional and unconventional weaponry to create a truly lethal threat. Indeed, this threat has become much more decentralised, as it now emanates not only from established terrorist organisations, but also from individuals with the motives, means, and opportunity to visit harm upon civil society. As a result of these developments, modern terrorism presents a multitude of threats to the safety, welfare and civil rights of ordinary people; the stability of the state system; the health of national and international economic systems; and the expansion of democracies.

Turkey is a classic case study of the nature of this particular challenge to civilisation. It has been a prime victim of terrorism over the last 40 years and will continue to suffer from it in the unforeseeable future. With the changing global and regional political environment, the Turkish state is attacked by virtually all kinds of terrorism present in today's world, namely ideological, religious and ethnic terrorism. Flourishing in the impoverished parts of the country and supported by the foreign powers at odds with Turkey, terrorism has inflicted much damage on the Turkish people particularly during the last three decades.

The PKK (Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan, Kurdistan Workers' Party) terrorist group emerged as the most

serious threat against the national security of Turkey after the Eruh and Semdinli raids in 1984. It has been waging a terror campaign for thirty years, claiming the lives of around 40 thousand Turkish citizens. This sustained campaign traumatised the domestic political, social, cultural and economic dynamics of Turkey and has affected her foreign policy, both directly and indirectly.

Although the PKK announced a so-called unilateral ceasefire on October 1, 2007, terrorism has in fact escalated, particularly as a result of attacks originating from terrorist bases in Northern Iraq. In response to the intensification of hostilities across the border, Turkey undertook successive air strikes and deployed troops against terrorist targets inside Iraq. In all feasibility, Turkey's military actions appear to have been sanctioned by the United States, who provided its NATO ally with the actionable intelligence required for such operations.

When terrorism in Turkey turned into a low intensity conflict toward the end of the twentieth century, the government was forced to develop new military and legal methods to fight it, while remaining determined not to negotiate with or make concessions to the terrorists. This, in turn, led to legal and diplomatic programs that came close to making Turkey a pariah state on account of its human rights record. Fortunately, the government strategy against the separatists provided an environment of reconciliation and peace, which made it possible to improve human rights and democratic practices.

It should be noted that the "Kurdish problem" is, indeed, controversial in Turkey. Consider some recent developments. Discussions on this issue began when President Abdullah Gul remarked that "we should not miss this opportunity" to continue with the process that included expanding rights for Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin. This approach was supported by both the Ministry of Interior and the National Security Council. On the other hand, Turkey's Chief of the General Staff and subsequently AK Party Group supported the principle of "one language, one state,

and one flag,” rejecting efforts to “divide” the country. Yet, regardless of the outcome of this debate, the fact remains that the Turkish government will not negotiate with the PKK.

What remains of a particular concern are the operations of the PKK in Europe. Using an elaborate network that was set-up in the 1990s to smuggle terrorists from Turkey into European safe havens, the PKK has established a significant record within criminal activities, such as smuggling drugs, trafficking illegal immigrants into the European Union, and running prostitution rings to raise funds. These activities provide a major source of income for the PKK. It has been estimated, for instance, by the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime that narco-trafficking from Central Asia into Europe generates a \$5 billion per year revenue, with about one-half of this reportedly used by the PKK. In light of this, it would seem that Turkey’s terrorism problem is expected to mutate into a transnational narco-criminal one in the future, which will be much harder to fight than its previous form due to its economic dimensions. Nevertheless, the determination of the civilian and military authorities to overcome this new form of terrorism is promising better days for Turkey.

A noteworthy aspect of Turkey’s role in combating terrorism relates to other relevant regional and global security concerns. For example, representatives from EU member states and twelve Mediterranean

partners, including Turkey, met in Barcelona, Spain, in November 1995 to begin the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Though the ultimate goal of the dialogue was to secure improved political, economic and cultural relations in the Mediterranean region, it did focus on maritime security cooperation. This initiative complemented NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue initiated by the North Atlantic Council the previous year. Also, on June 29, 2004, at the Istanbul Summit, NATO members decided to elevate the Mediterranean Dialogue to a full partnership with associate countries under the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative. The ICI aims at promoting military-to-military cooperation, fighting terrorism through information sharing and maritime cooperation and fighting illegal trafficking on a bilateral level with Turkey, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.

Moreover, from 1 January 2009 through 2010, Turkey is serving as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, whose primary responsibility is to maintain international peace and security. The selection of Turkey for this important Council seat is a testimony of the world body’s confidence in Ankara’s ability to carry out this task.

Yonah Alexander is Professor Emeritus of International Studies at State University of New York and director of the Inter-University Center for Terrorism Studies (Washington, DC).

The Dimensions of the Terrorist Threat in Turkey

Jim McKee

One morning in late April 2009 police officers attempted to enter an apartment belonging to a suspected member of the Revolutionary Command, an obscure leftist organisation that had only emerged the previous year. The terrorist inside emerged to throw a grenade at the officers and shoot the team leader dead at point blank range. A fierce gun battle ensued with the terrorist and an onlooker being killed.

Two days later in the district of Lice in eastern Turkey a landmine exploded, destroying a passing armoured personnel carrier and killing nine Turkish soldiers. Although the death toll was unusually high for a single attack, this same stretch of road has been bombed countless times by the PKK in over three decades of bitter conflict. Later that same day a former Minister of Justice arrived to deliver a lecture at a university outside Ankara. A female suicide bomber approached him from behind and attempted to detonate herself. The device failed, although the stunned terrorist made an attempt to reach for a concealed handgun before being overpowered by the police. This was the work of the Revolutionary Peoples Liberation Party / Front (DHKP/C), the reincarnation of Dev Sol that has engaged in a sporadic campaign of assassinations for thirty years.

The same week, local press reports made mention of arrests across the country of networks of religious extremists, with speculation of attack planning against foreign interests. The public meanwhile remained captivated by reports of further detentions in the Ergenekon investigation, a shadowy collection of alleged right wing extremists, including leading figures in the military, police, media and academia, who are accused of masterminding a convoluted conspiracy to bring down the Islamist-leaning AKP government.

Whilst perhaps not a typical week in Turkey, these events are a stark reminder of the multi-faceted terrorist threat which exists in the country;

counting separatist, Islamist, leftist and ultra-nationalist. Terrorism in Turkey is almost unique in this respect. The reasons are complex and controversial, not least because at their heart are the two most sensitive issues in the national consciousness: the role of Islam within the secular state and the Kurdish identity. Rather than looking at the causes of these variants of political and religious extremism, this paper looks at how the threat from terrorism in Turkey is changing and the challenge that it presents to the authorities.

Forms of Terrorism in Turkey

The government sees the greatest threat to the nation as coming from the PKK and, certainly in terms of blood and treasure spent, this is the case. Almost 40,000 lives lost since the start of the insurgency (although a large portion of these have been PKK members themselves). The PKK however are in crisis. They have never properly recovered from the capture of their leader Abdullah Öcalan and each year find it more difficult to operate on the ground and to deliver political messages that appeal outside a small minority of Turkey's 12 million Kurds. As the government has pressed ahead, albeit haltingly, to increase Kurdish language and cultural rights, the PKK has lost sight of what it is fighting for. The group has long since abandoned aspirations for an independent Kurdistan and more and more the rhetoric has focused on the treatment of Öcalan in prison. Whilst demonstrating their political weakness, the cult of Öcalan does make the PKK highly volatile. Orders are constantly changed, with cease-fire declarations being followed by indiscriminate bombings, often claimed (unconvincingly) by various alias 'organisations.'

However, whilst PKK bombers, including the occasional suicide operative, do occasionally evade detection to carry out spectacular attacks, most are picked up by the security forces. The PKK can furthermore no longer rely on the sanctuary of its camps in the remote mountains along the

Iraq-Iran border. The Turkish border incursion last year was a psychological blow to the organisation; the Turkish military proving themselves able to penetrate well into PKK territory in the depths of winter and PKK leaders forced to flee further south. Just as serious is the fact that the group can no longer be sure of ethnic solidarity from the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) on whose territory it is based.

The threat from Islamist terrorism was dramatically demonstrated in November 2003 when Turkish extremists linked to Al Qaida drove suicide truck bombs into two synagogues, the British Consulate and the headquarters of HSBC in Istanbul. However, religious extremism in Turkey was not a new phenomenon. For over a decade, Turkish Hezbollah and several obscure off-shoots had been variously fighting the 'infidel' PKK and the secular state (with a number of its most outspoken proponents in the media and academia being killed in a series of car bombings), before engaging in a frenzy of blood-letting within their own ranks. Over 5,000 Hezbollah members were arrested in a series of police operations in 2000-2003 before the group abandoned its armed activities. Whilst essentially parochial in their aims, the nihilistic violence of Hezbollah was ahead of its time. The group retains a significant following and the potential for it to align with the global Jihad remains a very real threat. Meanwhile, Al Qaida has since returned to Turkey to carry out a water-borne attack on an Israeli cruise ship. Whilst this failed when their bomb-factory blew up hours before the operation, statements made by Ayman Al Zawahiri clearly continue to place Turkey in Al Qaida's sights.

The threat from Islamist extremism does not just come from established organisations. The individuals who carried out an armed assault on the US Consulate in the summer of 2008 demonstrated the risk of amateur low-capability attacks. Similarly, the high-profile murders of an Italian priest, Armenian journalist Hrant Dink and three Christian missionaries were all carried out by teenagers, motivated by the uniquely Turkish fusion of religious extremism and ultra-nationalism. The risk with such individuals not associated with

established groups is that they are more likely to appear under the intelligence radar.

Other *tekfir* networks opt for an introverted existence, placing their children in unofficial *madrassas*, and refusing to undergo military service or to carry the identity cards of the secular state. Whilst their aspirations usually fall short of attack planning, these groups clearly provide fertile ground for the extremist message to take root. Turkey is also made vulnerable by its geographical location, which serves as an attractive overland route for extremists travelling to Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan, some of whom have returned, better trained or brutalised by conflict, to carry out extremist activities in Turkey.

The radical left are an anachronism but one whose threat is occasionally deadly. Whilst once some 70 such organisations fought for various interpretations of Marxism-Leninism and Maoism, there now exist only five groups that retain an armed, albeit limited, capability. Two of these consist of a few dozen fighters roaming the province of Tunceli, which has a long history of rebellion against Ankara. The other three are urban-based and seek to target both the 'fascist' Turkish state and the 'imperialism' represented by foreign diplomatic and commercial interests. The death of Dursun Karatas, for many years the doyen of leftist terrorism, in exile last year led some to speculate on the final demise of this variant of armed struggle. However, the attempted suicide bombing in April 2009 demonstrated that it is not over yet. The DHKP/C is the only group in Turkey to have consistently attempted to carry out assassinations of high profile political leaders and the only leftist organisation in the world to deploy suicide bombers. Their internal security and planning are meticulous and, whilst recent attempts have been characterised by incompetence, one successful attack could clearly have a major impact.

Most public and political attention remains focused on the Ergenekon investigation. Whilst the secular opposition cries foul and alleges a political witch-hunt, many are prepared to believe wild conspiracy theories that would have the 'deep state' holding the strings of all the country's terrorist organisations. Even informed observers remain confused. Whilst a

recent history of elements of the state acting outside the law is beyond doubt, Ergenekon may serve as a convenient scapegoat for past wrongs. It remains to be seen whether it is either terrorist or indeed an organisation at all.

Focusing on the Key Threats

More important is that attention is not diverted from the very real terrorist threats. Factors of geography, international geo-politics, history, ethnic make-up and the secular system all play a role in shaping this into a distinctly Turkish terrorist threat. Whilst the radical left are in their dying throes, the threat of a one-off spectacular hit has not totally disappeared. The PKK may also be in terminal decline but the end of this low-intensity war is not yet in sight. The traditional rural Kurdish constituency of the PKK has moved on; either making do with what amounts to a normal life in this poor (but improving) region or using extended family links to move to western Turkey and Europe. The PKK is left as a result fighting for its physical and political survival. The rank and file, bullied (and worse) into staying in the organisation, are surrendering in increasing numbers to the security forces, and are being treated with lenience. Whilst the PKK will be able to adapt (as it always has done) to the increased threat of Turkish air-strikes, the more progressive approach of the government is clearly a far bigger challenge to its existence. It was perhaps no coincidence that the April landmine attack occurred at a time when there were indications that the government was considering expanding the scope of the Repentance Law to encourage fighters down from the mountains. The truth is that the PKK wants war not peace because it is violent struggle that defines the organisation and keeps it together. Incapable of strategic victory the group has resorted to attacking civilians; their aim being to incite sectarian conflict and polarise the Kurdish question between Turks supporting an over-enthusiastic crackdown on terrorism and Kurds seeking the protection of the PKK. Whilst there are occasional outbreaks of ethnic violence, which have more to do with competition for jobs rather

than politics, this scenario is unlikely to occur. The government, and increasingly the army, know that pursuing the military solution without economic packages and a hearts and minds offensive only serves the interests of the PKK and are unlikely to fall into this trap.

Turkey of course faces the same threat from international terrorism as other countries in Europe. However, it does not suffer the inherent instability of its eastern neighbours. With no tradition of the radical Salafi or Wahabbi interpretations of Islam and a language that separates it from the Arab Middle East, Turkey has some protection against the appeal of religious extremism. Whilst extremists may condemn the way the state runs official Islam, there is little doubt that the overall effect of the secular system has been to reduce the potential for radicalisation.

Crucial in its war against terrorism is the law enforcement and intelligence apparatus, which is large, proficient and is learning from the mistakes of the past, with a vastly improved record on human rights. Less effective has been the lack of co-ordination and institutional rivalry (police versus Gendarmerie) and relatively new counter-terrorism legislation that seems to serve more to please Brussels than provide the security forces with the tools they need to fight terrorism outside the military theatre. Political will in fighting terrorism is not in doubt. But political party point-scoring and the no-go areas relating to the Kurdish issue curb healthy debate, as well as limit the options available to address these threats with a more progressive and imaginative approach. The 1980 military coup came against a back-drop of political violence that approached civil war. Turkey has moved far since that time and informed commentators believe that the army, whilst ever anxious about creeping Islam, will remain in its barracks. Turkey needs to continue this progress in its campaign against terrorism, and rightly should be supported in this endeavour.

Jim McKee is a British terrorism expert.

PKK Terrorism in Turkey

Nihat Ali Özcan

As a typical ethno-nationalist structure, the PKK has consistently argued that it represents all Kurds, regardless of ideological, religious or sectarian and dialectical differences. However, the reality is that the Kurdish groups in the region are extremely heterogeneous. Although it aspires to represent trans-Kurdish nationalism in Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria, most Kurdish groups in these countries have not accepted the PKK as a legitimate organisation. In truth, the PKK's hopes of building a homogeneous Kurdish nation-state have come too late. It missed the favourable course of history in the early 20th Century when this might have been possible.

Even within Turkey, the scope of the PKK's appeal is limited. For a start, one must consider the heterogeneity of Turkey's Kurds in terms of class, religious beliefs, dialects, political attitudes and sub-ethnic affiliation. Broadly speaking, Turkey's Kurds can be divided into three groups; namely integrated Kurds who accept the Turkish Republic, ethno-religious Kurds and ethno-nationalistic Kurds. The first group is fully integrated into the political system and does not have any identity-based political demands from state. The second group, the ethno-religious Kurds, are also divided. Some adopt the extremist ideological line of Kurdish Hezbollah. However, most support the right wing parties that have traditionally had religious undertones, such as the ruling Justice and Development Party. It is only the third group, Kurdish ethno-nationalists, who support the PKK and its legal front organisation, the Democratic Society Party, in the political arena.

Meanwhile, the PKK's influence is limited by two other factors. First of all, the Turkish political system and the country's liberal economic system have curtailed the PKK's influence. The ability to participate in the democratic process, to enter into public service and to establish businesses have all led to the integration of Kurds into society, as has the prevalence of inter-ethnic marriages. At

the same time, the process of globalisation, along with regional developments, has served to fetter the secessionist aspirations of the PKK.

Kurdish Ethno-Nationalism and PKK Terrorism

The PKK was established as a Marxist-Leninist organisation in 1973 under the leadership of Abdullah Öcalan. However, it did not start its terrorist activities until 1978. Soon after the declaration of martial law in Turkey, Öcalan escaped to Syria. In 1979, he passed to Lebanon, where he gained support from various pro-Soviet terrorist organisations, such as George Habash, Cibril and Havetme and from Syrian intelligence. Meanwhile, the Iran-Iraq War between 1980 and 1988 and the first Gulf War, in 1991, created a power vacuum in Northern Iraq, which became a safe haven for the PKK as it began its attacks on Turkey.

From its earliest stages, the PKK envisaged defeating the Turkish Armed Forces in South Eastern Turkey, which would then lead to the formation of a separate Kurdish state. In order to do this, it adopted the Maoist Protracted People's War Strategy. According to this strategy, there would be three phases: strategic defence, strategic balance and strategic attack. The strategic defence phase would include guerrilla activities and armed propaganda. At the same time as it sought to strengthen its armed militia groups, the PKK would also attempt to separate the Kurdish people living in the region from the state. Thus the hope was to establish a mutually supporting political front and a strong militia organisation.

Following on from this, during the strategic balance phase, the PKK planned to continue terror and guerrilla activity as well as deploy regular forces in order to establish control over a specific area. In order to do this, it was necessary to have gained widespread support from the Kurdish people, who would become partners

in the enterprise. Finally, in the strategic attack phase, the PKK would defeat the Turkish army and establish a socialist Kurdish state.

Between 1984 and 2008, the PKK conducted 43,455 terrorist activities in Turkey.¹ During this period, 4,967 personnel of the Turkish armed forces, 1,335 voluntary village guards and 217 police officers died. Meanwhile, 44,553 PKK members were killed or captured. At first, the PKK sought to ensure the highest possible impact on the wider population by targeting civil servants and others who were seen to be colluding with the Turkish state. These included teachers, religious figures, village headmen and other prominent figures in the region. As a result, 5,669 civilians also died during this period. This tactic was particularly effective as it diminished the power of the Turkish state amongst Kurds and increased support towards the PKK among them.

Although the PKK adopted hybrid terrorist tactics ranging from street demonstrations to advanced guerrilla, it could not pass from strategic defence to the second phase of strategic balance. Despite the fact that it gathered a force of 16-17,000 militia, and established vital safe heavens in Northern Iraq, the PKK never succeeded in establishing permanent militia installations in Turkey. Moreover, the PKK sustained heavy losses whenever it was caught in open battles with the Turkish army. But even though a central plank of its Maoist strategy failed, the organisation nevertheless managed to achieve some goals during this period. For instance, it managed to establish a legal political organisation and strengthen its support in Turkey and amongst the Diaspora. However, it was not enough. At its fifth Congress, held in late 1994, the PKK was forced to alter its strategy.

This change can be attributed to three main factors: Turkey's counterterrorism strategies, dynamics within the PKK organisation itself, as well as global and regional developments. Most prominently, Turkey adopted a State of Emergency – a constitutional regulation – to combat PKK terrorism. Although the State of Emergency did not give direct responsibility

for all aspects of state security to the Turkish Armed Forces directly, the Turkish army *de facto* assumed these responsibilities. At the same time, the Turkish Armed Forces – which were organised and equipped to meet the conventional threats of the Cold War era – restructured, re-equipped and adopted asymmetric counter-terrorism strategies. In particular, the Army pursued a 'clear and hold' doctrine, whereby an area would be cleared of PKK militia before measures were taken to ensure that they could not operate in the region again. Needless to say, this necessitated a large-scale mobilisation of security personnel. Approximately 350,000 soldiers and gendarmes, 70,000 village guards and 35,000 police officers were mobilised.² This put considerable pressure on the PKK and reduced its operational capacity.

At the same time, the PKK faced structural problems. As it grew, the quality of the militia started to decrease and the poor quality of its leadership became obvious. Meanwhile, the fact that increasing attacks were not generating greater support for the PKK, forced Öcalan to reconsider the military strategy of the PKK. Terrorism and violence began to be seen as a potential hindrance to the PKK's political aims. Similarly, global and regional developments forced the PKK to reconsider its strategies. As the PKK increased its strength, Iran and Syria became more nervous about supporting the organisation, eventually limiting their support. Furthermore, as competition between Turkey, Iran and the Russian Federation over the Caucasus and Central Asia started to ease, so Moscow and Tehran's support for the PKK decreased.

However, in other ways, the PKK continued to achieve partial success in establishing a Kurdish national identity and achieving political influence. This process was also assisted by the growth in ethno-nationalist conflicts following the end of the Cold War. It was also facilitated by the democratisation and the EU reform process, which enabled the PKK to establish legitimate and legal political organisations. This allowed the PKK to become an umbrella-type organisation and an active front organisation, both in Turkey

and abroad. This legitimisation also changed the mindset within the PKK. For the first time, the idea started to emerge that political power should be built upon the popular support determined at the polls.

As noted, therefore, the PKK abandoned its Maoist Protracted People's War Strategy in its fifth Congress on 1995, adopting a strategy centred purely on ethnic identity. Under this new approach, and following the successful campaign by the Turkish Army, terrorism was downgraded to a tactical level. Politics took over as the PKK sought to change Turkey into a constitutionally bi-national state system. In line with this reformed strategy, and depending on the conditions, the PKK declared occasional unilateral cease-fires and adopted a new language that emphasised democracy, brotherhood and freedom. However, this did not mark the end of terrorism altogether. As became clear, the organisation altered its approach according to the general political climate.

Meanwhile, in 1998, Turkish pressure succeeded in forcing the Syrian Government to expel Öcalan from Damascus, where he had been living. A few months later, in February 1999, the PKK leader was arrested as he left the Greek Embassy in Kenya. Just before the start of his trial, Öcalan declared a ceasefire and ordered some of the PKK to leave Turkey. Also, as Turkey continued its efforts to join the EU, the PKK found new political opportunities. Added to this, the 9/11 attacks also created concern within the PKK about the negative political ramifications of employing terrorism as a tactic. However, this rethink was short lived. Following the US invasion and occupation of Iraq, which created an even safer haven for the PKK in the north of the country, the organisation began to increase its terrorist activity once again. This decision was also shaped by growing differences within the organisation over tactics and policies.

At present, the PKK has 5,000 to 6,000 fighters and uses terrorism for three main objectives. Firstly, it is used to control its members and the

Kurdish people of South East Turkey. Secondly, it carries out attacks in response to the demands of sponsors, both at the state and sub-state level. Thirdly, the PKK still sees terrorism as a bargaining power against the state and used terrorism in order to influence government policies. However, there is a real debate, if not crisis, within the organisation over the use of terrorism. Over the last 14 years the PKK has not been able to increase its political support. Especially since 2004, some have argued that terrorist activity needs to increase, while others argue it should be abandoned altogether. However, the reality is that unless it can attract Islamist Kurds and integrated Kurds, who do not currently support terrorism, the PKK cannot grow and achieve its ultimate political aim.

Future of PKK Terrorism

Looking ahead, the future of the PKK terrorism depends on three main factors. The first of these is its structure and capacity. The PKK is an 'old' organisation. Its founding-leader cadre is around 60-65 years old. Their mindsets were shaped during the Cold War era. This appears to now show signs of changing. Coupled with this, and despite the fact that he has been in prison for ten years, Öcalan still carries significant importance within the PKK with his decisions and messages still influential on PKK policies. Meanwhile, its ability to reach out to wider Kurdish society is limited. As a late-emerging ethno-nationalism movement, the PKK has not been able to influence Islamist and ordinary Kurds in Turkey. Thus its ability to gain stronger support appears to be limited.

Secondly, the regional and international political developments have an effect, particularly the situation in Iraq and Iran. In particular, relations between Turkey and the Kurdish Regional Government are crucial as Northern Iraq is still a major safe haven for the PKK. In this context, US policies in the region, and its withdrawal strategy from Iraq will also shape future developments.

Thirdly, and finally, the future of the PKK will be determined by Turkey's counter terrorism

strategies and its ability to manage tensions with the Kurdish population as a whole. The Government and the Army appear to have agreed on the need to disarm the PKK and adopt a more comprehensive approach to the question, but have not reached a consensus on the strategy for doing so. This affects the government as much as the army. After all, some decisions could well

have an effect on their levels of support within the wider population. As a result, the PKK problem is not expected to be solved in the short run.

Nihat Ali Özcan is Senior Researcher at the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV), and lecturer at TOBB University of Economics and Technology, Ankara, Turkey.

Notes

¹ The peak came between 1993 and 1996, when there were approximately 5000 incidents per year.

² The main unit of the area control strategy is the rapid operations battalion. However, various brigades, which were equipped as light infantry with single or dual howitzers and tanks, as well as equipped with night vision equipment and helicopters, were also posted to the strategic corridors. This severely limited the PKK's mobility in and out of Turkey. Owing to compulsory military service, the areas could be re-supplied with fresh troops on a regular basis.

Turkish Foreign Policy towards Iran and Syria

Ihsan Bal

As Paul R Pillar eloquently states in *Terrorism and U.S. Foreign Policy*: 'Diplomacy touches at least as many aspects of counter terrorism as does any other instrument.' In the case of Turkey, diplomatic efforts were made particularly difficult by the fact that some neighbours supported those terrorist movements Ankara sought to fight.

Throughout the Cold War, Iran and Syria both supported terrorism against Turkey, with Tehran supporting extremist groups and Damascus promoting the PKK. In contrast, today there is a completely different picture: these countries do not support terrorism against Turkey, but cooperate with Turkey against terrorism, and even fight against the terrorist groups in their own territory. The key question, therefore, is why have these countries changed their attitudes and begun to act in a completely opposite way?

In part this change is due to external and internal factors affecting both Iran and Syria. A change in the region's power balances and the existence of new threats pushed these countries to review their relations and policies regarding terrorism. The external threat was the US presence in the region and its increasing influence. This represented a major threat to Iran and Syria, both of which were named in the 'axis of evil' rhetoric and were thus potential targets. Meanwhile, both countries were facing growing internal challenges to their regimes.

At the same time, changes were also taking place in Turkey. For many decades, Ankara had a tendency to avoid the Middle East with all its troubles. However, starting with the Özal era, in the late 1980s, this 'escape the region' policy, as it was known, started to change. The primary reason for this was the recognition of the country's geopolitical importance and the need to develop regional policies in accordance with Turkey's geographical position. Thus the Ecevit government made an attempt to develop a relationship with Greece and

furthered its relationship with the Middle East, especially with Syria. It also reached agreements with Iran. This all provided the kernel for the Justice and Development Party (JDP) government's 'zero problem' approach with neighbours – a term coined by Ahmet Davutoğlu, current Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey. Today, Turkey attempts to have good relations with its neighbours – including Armenia – and facilitated cooperation with Iran and Syria in order to alienate the PKK and extremist terrorist organisations.

This shift in perspective therefore allowed Turkey to develop the groundwork for further cooperation through different means. Turkey's diplomatic manoeuvres, using various tools from coercive diplomacy to deepening economic relations and public diplomacy, have played a crucial role in this process. Turkey used coercive language when necessary, and after bringing these countries to the same page on counter terrorism, increased the intensity of the relations. This took place in spite of negative public perceptions in each country towards the other. Thus, the animosity between the countries was eliminated to a certain extent.

The Case of Syria

Syria began actively supporting terrorism in the 1960s. During the Cold War, state sponsored terrorism was a vital tool for the competing blocs, and Syria, along with the Soviet Union, promoted various terrorist organisations. As a member of NATO, Turkey was a natural target, while at the same time, Syria laid claim to Hatay – a city bordering Syria – and to water resources in Turkey. In pursuing its battle against Turkey, Syria used terrorist groups to exert pressure on Ankara. For instance, it assisted and trained extremist leftist groups in the Bekaa Valley. Likewise, it also supported ASALA, an Armenian terrorist organisation. Later on, and most notably, it worked closely with the PKK. This was done in a variety of ways, such as by sheltering the leadership of the movement, providing training

camps, turning a blind eye to the bureaus of the terrorist organisation and even providing training assistance through its intelligence services and military. Damascus also facilitated the terrorists' infiltration of the Turkish border in order to carry out their attacks and return to their hideouts in Syria. All the while, Syria also prevented Turkey from pursuing the terrorists and from conducting cross border operations.

Syria began to change its position regarding the terrorist organisations in the late 1990s. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Syria lost its major ally and supporter in the region. Moreover, the country's economic problems, coupled with the health problems of Hafez al-Assad, weakened the ruling regime. Seizing on this, Turkey adopted a tougher stance in order to convince Syria that it was increasingly unwilling to accept Syrian support to the PKK. For example, soon after his appointment as the Commander of Land Forces, General Atilla Ates visited the Syrian border in September 1998 where he issued a severe warning to Damascus. Following on from this, the then Chief of the General Staff, General Huseyin Kivrikoglu, and former President Suleyman Demirel repeated the warnings at the inauguration of the 1998 Turkish Parliament, stating that Turkey's 'patience was running out.' These messages were further reinforced through other channels, with for example, the Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak warning Syria about Turkey's serious intent to use force.

In response, Syria declared its compliance and readiness to cooperate and, on 20 October 1998, the parties signed the Adana Accord. Syria now accepting that the PKK was a terrorist organisation the country expelled its leader, Abdullah Öcalan, who was captured a few months later. In the period that followed, Turkey strengthened its relationship with Syria by expanding security cooperation and by reaching a series of endorsements on other issues, such as trade, tourism and cultural cooperation. These agreements not only served the economic interests of both parties but also increased their interdependence. In time, soft power techniques replaced the previous hard power tactics. Bashar Asad's decision not to mention the city of Hatay

in his inauguration contributed to this growing climate of trust, as did his emphasis on economic liberalisation and cooperation with neighbouring countries.

Although much counter-terrorism diplomacy takes place through specialised service-to-service or department channels, public support for the bilateral co-operation has also been vital. In recent years, Syrians have started to follow Turkish TV series and an increasing number of Syrian tourists have come to Turkey. According to statistics produced by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the number of Syrian citizens entering Turkey in 1996 was 92,278. In 2007, this had increased to 332,840. Likewise, there has been a growth in economic co-operation. From 2000 until 2006, foreign direct investment from Turkey to Syria totalled just 300 million dollars. In contrast, in 2007 alone, the volume of investment reached 200 million dollars. Similarly, the trade volume between Turkey and Syria, which was 800 million dollars in 2006, reached \$1.1 billion in 2007. According to the Turkish Foreign Trade Department, it is expected to reach \$2.5 billion in 2009. All this has contributed to a new climate of trust between Turkey and Syria.

The Case of Iran

The case of Iran proved to be slightly different. In part, this was because Tehran had different reasons for supporting terrorism against Turkey. At first, and in line with its revolutionary ideology, Iran supported religious-based terrorist organisations. However, following its failure to export its ideas, and the collapse of the Soviet Union, it began to support the PKK against Turkey in an attempt to compete against Ankara for regional leadership. This support was believed to be provided mainly by the informal radical wing of the state apparatus and was not as substantial, or as evident, as Syria's support for terrorism.

The primary reason for the rapprochement was the end of competition between the parties in the late 1990s. Despite the importance of Central Asia after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Iran and Turkey accepted their limitations in the region, which in turn removed a key element of competition

between the two countries and removed one of the major obstacles to improved bilateral relations. Following this, the presence of the US in Afghanistan and Iraq changed the balance of power in the region. Both Iran and Turkey saw this as a threatening development, albeit for different reasons. Iran feared that it could face invasion, especially after it was declared to be a part of the 'axis of evil'. Turkey, on the other hand, interpreted the American presence in Iraq as a destabilising factor in that country, which would inevitably affect Turkey's security regarding the PKK.

But here again, changes in some of the internal dynamics were another reason for rapprochement. The Iranian Islamic regime faced serious threats from student movements and growing criticism by the intellectuals. This internal threat subordinated the external issues. Moreover, the informal radical groups in the Iranian state machinery lost power. The formal state institutions, now more open to cooperation, gained power at the expense of these groups. Moreover, different factions of the PKK, such as PJAK, began to operate against Iran with other opposition groups in Northern Iran. The probability of an Iraqi disintegration and the possible establishment of a Kurdish state increased concern both in Iran and Syria, which also have Kurdish populations. This separatist threat was even more pronounced in Iran, where sectarian differences exist between the predominantly Shiite Iranians and Sunni Kurds.

These internal and external dynamics provided the catalyst for improved relations between Iran and Turkey. A security agreement between Turkey and Iran was signed in 1992, which established a Joint Security Committee consisting of sub-committees of high-ranking security bureaucrats and the governors of border cities. These committees come together every six months, and they have helped to break down prejudices between the parties and provided an established structure in which to implement cooperation projects.

Meanwhile, as in the case of Syria, business and commerce are also proving to be an important factor in improving relations. An economic agreement

signed between Iran and Turkey in 2001 similarly proposed regular six-monthly meetings between officials. Moreover, an energy agreement increased the interdependence of the two countries. In accordance with its energy diversification policy, Turkey has bought Iranian gas since 2001. Both sides have crucial reasons to be cooperating on the gas issue, and thus seek to minimise their differences on other matters. At the same time, trade volumes have reached 10 billion dollars, up from \$200-300 million just a few years ago. In part, this is because of the high prices of gas and oil. Yet, even discounting this, the increase in trade volume has been enormous. Also, tourism has rapidly increased. According to the official figures from border controls, the number of Iranians entering Turkey in 1993 was 119,692. In 2007, it has risen to 1,058,206 – nearly a ten-fold increase.

Turkey's Regional Role

Turkey's experience with its neighbours shows the importance of international cooperation when countering terrorism. Turkey has managed to implement different diplomatic tools in order to persuade Iran and Syria to cooperate against terrorist groups. These tools have included confidence-building measures, public diplomacy, fostering economic and commercial interaction, coercive diplomacy, multilateral diplomacy, as well as the use of soft power and smart power. Meanwhile, the US presence in Iraq and Afghanistan afforded Turkey new opportunities to open a dialogue with Iran and Syria, providing them with a common platform on which to build new relationships. These relationships in turn help to bolster Turkey's desire to become a regional peace broker, which also helps Ankara rally support from its neighbours against a common threat, such as the PKK. After the establishment of specific cooperation strategies against terrorism, deepening the relations with economic and cultural incentives provides an irreversible path to cooperation instead of conflict.

Ihsan Bal is Associate Professor at the Police Academy in Ankara and Deputy President of the International Strategic Research Organisation (USAK).

Protecting the Key National Utilities and Energy Infrastructure

Mitat Çelikpala

On 5 August 2008, an explosion occurred on the Turkish section of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline. Pumping one million barrels per day (bpd) of Caspian crude to the Turkish port of Ceyhan on the Mediterranean Sea for export to Western markets, the pipeline is widely regarded as one of the most important alternative paths carrying Central Asian and Caspian oil to the international market. Although the pipeline is dug underground along its entire route, the blast occurred on a pipe gate valve near the eastern Anatolian town of Refahiye in Erzincan province, and caused a 1 per cent drop in daily international oil transportation, as well as closed the pipeline for 15 days. Officially it was claimed that the explosion was a technical failure caused by a systemic malfunction which had been detected prior to the blast. However, the separatist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) claimed responsibility for the explosion and it is widely believed that it was PKK sabotage.

Assuming it was a terrorist attack, the asymmetric nature of the incident rapidly becomes apparent. An educated guess would suggest that the entire operation may have cost the PKK as little as \$500. In contrast, the cost to the owners of the pipeline is arresting with the loss estimated to be around \$1.68 billion (taking 1 million barrels a day at \$120 per barrel, and spread over 14 days = \$1.68 billion). When one adds in the other outlays as a result of burned oil in the pipelines, fire fighting and personnel costs, suspension of oil flow, repairs etc, the overall bill is somewhere closer to \$2 billion.¹

Energy Transit and the Security Question

Turkey is now emerging as one of the key links between the main oil and gas producing countries and the key consumer markets. Already, Turkey has emerged as the main alternative route for energy transportation towards the EU. Indeed, EU sources mention that the biggest 10 gas suppliers, holding 35 per cent of global gas reserves, either are, or might potentially be, interested in using Turkey as a transit country. Thus the international energy market is readily redefining Turkey's regional and global position. Responding to

this, Turkish policy makers have made it a key policy priority to raise Turkey's profile as a transit country,² recognising that the development of new pipelines will increase Turkey's wealth and regional significance.

In order to accomplish this, Turkey however needs to address some underlying security questions. These are in part related to political developments in the neighbourhood. The BTC explosion took place just days before the start of the Russo-Georgian War in August 2008. This in turn raised awareness of the need to take into account regional issues, such as the strategic balance in the Caucasus, the construction of alternative pipelines, and political differences in the area. At the same time, and as the August blast on the BTC highlighted, there is a real possibility that terrorist organisations, such as the PKK, have started to revise their policies. The BTC pipeline, along with others, is an ideal target for militants wishing to destabilise Turkey. Thus, when planning new pipelines, attention must also be given to the threats posed by terrorists groups – and not just the PKK. Even though many terrorism experts argue that state-sponsored terrorism is not as common as it was during the Cold War period, in Turkey's neighbourhood, where local conflicts still have strategic significance, one cannot exclude the possibility that this remains a factor.

The explosion therefore requires us to re-define the public and private critical infrastructure and develop common security policies to protect them.³ The basic questions are squarely on the agenda: In which way does Turkey protect those already existing pipelines and what kind of infrastructure is needed to protect new ones? Is the existing security structure sufficient for the protection of new pipelines? And how can Turkey establish an efficient security system to protect those pipelines in coordination with its partners?

The Current Security Regime

Defining and securing Turkey's critical infrastructure, including energy-related networks, is now seen as a core part of the nationwide legal, administrative and security system. This makes both central authorities

and local bodies – such as municipal administrations, provincial governors and sub-governors – responsible for defining and protecting these assets.

The main central body responsible for protecting critical infrastructures in Turkey is the Ministry of Interior. In rural areas, dams and refineries are protected by the General Command of the Gendarmerie (GCG). In urban areas, or within the municipality boundaries, police forces take over the responsibility. Coast Guard, national intelligence bodies, Turkish Armed Forces, border protection units and occasionally private security companies, also play some role. Meanwhile, in each province of Turkey, a Provincial Security Commission, composed of local officials (either appointed by the central government or elected locally) and under the authority of the provincial governor, is responsible for defining critical infrastructures. These Commissions are also responsible for taking necessary measures to protect already defined infrastructures within their area of jurisdiction and responsibility. This may lead to very different definitions of critical infrastructure as well as different outcomes in terms of implementing related security policies at the local level. Once we take some other local bodies – such as small local municipalities, fire fighting bodies, regional environmental commissions, etc. – into account, the subject becomes even more complicated. In sum, there is a fragmented security structure that leads to coordination problems.

In terms of protecting pipelines, the security regime is legally regulated by the 'Transit Flow of Petroleum through Pipelines Act', which came into force in 2000. The act vested, 'related security forces of government', that is gendarmerie and police forces, with primary responsibility for protecting the pipelines. At the same time, the 'Private Security Services Act' (Act number 5188, 2004) permits the private sector, specifically the bodies that own the infrastructure in question, to establish private security institutions for purposes of protecting their assets. In this framework, the General Command of the Gendarmerie and the Petroleum Pipeline Corporation (BOTAŞ) are responsible for protecting the pipelines and related facilities in Turkey. Apart

from these two laws, there are no other regulations in Turkey relating to the security of the pipelines.

Thus, in rural areas, the existing pipelines in Turkey are protected by Gendarme stations established in cooperation with BOTAŞ. The essential infrastructure of these stations is provided by BOTAŞ but the stations are managed by GCG in accordance with a signed protocol between these two bodies. This protocol indicates that BOTAŞ is only responsible for the protection of the pipelines and other related energy facilities – such as gate valve facilities, pumping stations, observation facilities, etc. – inside their service areas. On the other hand, the GCG is responsible for protecting everything else outside of BOTAŞ facilities. In addition to gendarme forces, legally defined village guards, who are selected among the local settlers, also take part in the protection process by patrolling pipelines that pass through their villages and surroundings. Additionally, in order to enhance physical security conditions of those facilities, necessary investments such as fortification of the buildings, increasing of the walls, monitoring by CCTV and infrared cameras are being undertaken by BOTAŞ. Road blockers, vehicle controls, optics, infrared cameras and facility alarm systems are monitoring the facilities 24 hours a day.

At the moment, GCG have 35 teams and 33 stations to protect the pipelines and other related facilities all over the country. As noted above, all those stations were built by BOTAŞ and run by GCG. Moreover, BOTAŞ is responsible for the cost of maintenance. The first or framework Protocol was signed between GCG and BOTAŞ after the construction of Kirkuk-Yumurtalık pipeline in 1986. Later on, over the construction of BTC pipeline a similar protocol was signed by the parties in 2003.

However, because of its international character, the BTC pipeline has a special status amongst the pipelines running through Turkey. The protection of BTC's Turkish section is guaranteed by the Turkish state in accordance with Article 12 of Home Country Agreement, signed in October 2000. The security of the BTC pipeline, similar to the other pipelines in Turkey, is provided by 11 Gendarme stations – consisting of 22 teams charged exclusively with the protection of BTC pipeline – built in cooperation with

BOTAŞ. Meanwhile, at Ceyhan, ships of the Turkish Coast Guard Command protect BTC shipment facilities and tankers.

It should be noted that, apart from the 2008 Erzincan-Refahiye blast, there has not been any serious incidents against the pipeline. Until then, almost 30 cases of vandalism or attempts to steal oil had been reported, but the pipeline had essentially been successfully protected by the security forces. However, the intention to increase the number of pipelines running through Turkey makes the protection of pipelines and other related critical infrastructure a sensitive issue. Problems of cooperation, the lack of efficient communication between the responsible bodies and a lack of investment in the security structure for protecting the pipelines are the main concerns confronting Turkish decision makers. In order to address these issues, there is now better co-ordination between the GCG and Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Energy and Interior Affairs. Security Coordination Meetings organised by these bodies, with the participation of representatives from the Turkish Armed Forces, Turkish Intelligence Service and BOTAŞ, have been held. By and large, this system works well; however, some problems continue to arise due to lack of coordination and timing.

It is also worth mentioning that, although the Gendarme forces have been appointed to protect the pipelines and other related facilities, these forces are also responsible for providing public order. The heavy burden on the Gendarmerie thus necessitates a fresh outlook on critical infrastructure protection that will include the participation of the private sector. This is particularly important in western Turkey where there

Notes

¹ We can compare this amount with the 2008 budget of security organisations that are responsible of protecting the pipelines in Turkey. For instance, the General Command of the Gendarmerie's 2008 budget was \$2.5 billion and General Police Forces' 2008 budget was \$4.5 billion.

² The main pipelines running through Turkey are BTC, Kerkuk-Yumurtalık, Samsun-Ceyhan or Blue Stream and Iranian natural gas pipelines. In addition to those main pipelines there is a 12,000 km internal pipeline network carrying oil and natural gas for Turkey's domestic consumption. Currently

are no Gendarmerie stations exclusively responsible for the protection of the pipelines and other facilities. In western provinces all critical infrastructure security is incorporated into the general security framework and structures.

Taking Adequate Measures

Turkey's policy of becoming an energy transit country, or even a hub, is still on the table. However, if it is to emerge as a hub or as an alternative route for both producers and consumers, potential risks, including terrorist attacks, need to be considered. Security will be a central issue when making new investments in pipeline routes running across Turkey. As the statements by various terrorist organisations have shown, they clearly realise this. Thus, in order to become a central energy transit route, Turkey will need to take steps to tackle terrorism and minimise the perceived threat that it poses. Sufficient amounts of money and human capital should be allocated and security must be professionalised and coordinated with the relevant partners. Turkey will need to cooperate with its allies – most notably the EU and the US – and will have to develop its financial, administrative, institutional and technical capacity to protect its critical infrastructure efficiently. Within this context, Turkey has to become a part of a common European energy policy outlook and the EU should allocate resources to fight terrorism together with Turkey. The PKK is not Turkey's problem alone; its elimination should be a common essential.

Mitat Celikpala is Associate Professor of International Relations, TOBB University of Economics and Technology, Department of International Relations, Ankara, Turkey.

4 per cent of the world's oil passes through the Bosphorus and 1 per cent via BTC. This means that 1 in every 16 barrels of oil consumed in the world passes through Turkey.

³ It has been reported that there have been more than 170 attacks, attempted attacks or suspected attacks on energy infrastructures in Turkey since 1989. Although there are no officially recorded attacks on the BTC, there have been approximately 30 theft and vandalism incidents, with 8 of them having happened during the project phase.

Protection of Energy Infrastructure

Gareth M Winrow

According to the Oklahoma City-based National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism there were at least 330 terrorist attacks on oil and gas facilities worldwide in the period 1990 to 2005. The energy infrastructure which requires protection from possible terrorist attack includes pipelines, oil and LNG (liquefied natural gas) tankers, pumping and compressor stations, oil platforms and refineries, storage units, liquefaction plants, regasification facilities, railways and trucks.

There has been much talk of Turkey becoming a key energy hub, with several pipelines already running across Turkish territory. Natural gas pipelines include the Iran-Turkey pipeline, the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum pipeline (or Shah-Deniz Pipeline), the Turkey-Greece Interconnector, and pipelines running through south Eastern Europe and across the Black Sea from Russia. There are also plans to realise the Nabucco project which would entail the laying of a line to connect Turkey with Vienna with an annual capacity of 31 billion cubic metres (bcm). The crude oil pipeline network includes twin pipelines connecting Kirkuk with the Turkish port of Ceyhan, and the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline. Ankara is finally hoping that a large capacity oil pipeline will be constructed to connect Samsun on the Black Sea with Ceyhan on the Mediterranean coast. These pipelines may be targeted by terrorist groups such as the PKK and units affiliated with al-Qaeda.

Attacks on Pipelines in Turkey

The PKK has indeed already attempted to damage pipelines on Turkish territory. For example, the Kurdish terrorists struck twice against the Kirkuk-Ceyhan oil pipeline network in November 2008. And in May 2008 the Iran-Turkey gas pipeline was attacked on two occasions by the PKK, apparently in response to Turkish and Iranian sorties against their positions in northern Iraq. These sabotage attempts were carried out in south eastern Turkey – an area where the PKK traditionally operates.

A terrorist attack against the prestigious BTC major export crude pipeline would be a source of particular concern for Ankara. This 50 million ton (mt) capacity pipeline (which could be upgraded to carry 80 mt/y) is the first to transport oil from the Caspian region which bypasses Russia and provides an alternative to conveying crude by tanker through the Bosphorus. For security reasons the pipes have been laid underground and the above-ground pumping stations (four in Turkey) are well-protected with concrete blast walls, closed circuit cameras and armed guards. The governments in Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia have established a Joint Pipeline Security Commission to coordinate their work, and in order to save money and enhance its security the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline runs parallel to the BTC.

On 5 August 2008 an explosion and fire damaged the above-ground valve number 30 on the BTC pipeline near Refahiye in the province of Erzincan in north eastern Turkey. Two days later the PKK, which had earlier threatened to attack the BTC, claimed responsibility for the explosion. Turkish officials have strenuously denied that the PKK was responsible for the damage and have claimed that the fire occurred due to a technical failure. Most outside observers, however, believe that the PKK had carried out their first attack against the BTC.

From interviews the author has conducted with a number of academics, journalists and other commentators both in and outside of Turkey, it does appear that the PKK had succeeded in disrupting the flow of oil – albeit only briefly – along the high-profile BTC. One may contend that the authorities in Ankara did not want to give the PKK credit for the explosion out of concern that energy companies may in future be less willing to support pipeline projects in Turkey because of security fears. Yet the attack was significant in that it took place in territory well beyond the areas in which the PKK customarily operated. As a result of increasing intelligence sharing and security

cooperation between Turkey, Iraq and the US within a trilateral mechanism, further PKK attacks against pipeline networks in Turkey may prove to be more difficult to perpetrate. The Turkish authorities are also now discussing cooperation with the Kurdish regional administration in northern Iraq, with the northern Iraqi Kurds having claimed to have formed a security belt around the Qandil Mountain where the PKK are holed up.

Threats to Tanker Traffic?

Turkish officials must nevertheless ensure that tanker traffic through the Bosphorus chokepoint is well-protected. Approximately 10,000 tankers transit through the straits each year carrying three million barrels of oil every day – i.e. around four per cent of daily crude oil production passes through the Bosphorus. Oil tankers manoeuvring through the narrow, winding straits that run through the centre of Istanbul could provide a passing opportunity for PKK or al-Qaeda operatives.

An attack on tanker traffic by sea in or near Turkish coastal waters is less likely. In the Mediterranean, vessels serving as a part of NATO's Operation Active Endeavour are monitoring shipping to prevent the movement of terrorists. A similar exercise is being mounted by Turkey and Russia in the Black Sea within the framework of Operation Black Sea Harmony, which shares intelligence with NATO officials in Naples. Operation Black Sea Harmony also involves the use of maritime patrol aircraft. Close to the Mediterranean port of Ceyhan, the Turkish navy has finally deployed vessels within its Mediterranean Shield operation to protect tankers and other shipping.

The Role of NATO and Regional Organisations

Increasingly mindful of the terrorist threat, regional organisations have recently assumed a more pronounced interest in protecting energy infrastructures. The EU, for example, established in 2004 its Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection (EPCIP). The adoption of a Green Paper by the European Commission the following year eventually resulted in 2007 in the setting up within the framework of the EPCIP of a programme by the Council titled "Prevention, Preparedness and

Consequent Management of Terrorism and Other Risks". Of more immediate interest for Turkey, though, has been NATO's growing concern in energy security.

In paragraph 24 of NATO's Strategic Concept announced in April 1999 on the occasion of the summit meeting of the Alliance in Washington D.C., it was noted that the security interests of member states could be affected "...by the disruption of the flow of vital resources". NATO officials would become much more interested in issues of energy security with the rising threats posed by terrorists and with the impact of the Russian-Ukrainian gas crisis in January 2006 which disrupted natural gas deliveries to Europe. The NATO Summits in Riga in 2006 and in Bucharest in 2008 also referred to the Alliance's possible role in energy security. Speaking on 26 January 2009, then NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer declared that the Alliance was very much interested in energy security. Although he admitted that the protection of critical infrastructure was primarily a national responsibility, the Secretary General added that in the event of a crisis, or upon the request of a member state, NATO could help to protect pipelines. The Secretary General finally urged that energy security should be a key component of the Alliance's new Strategic Concept currently being prepared and which is meant to address the key challenges to security in the twenty first century.

NATO's possible role in energy security has been the subject of some debate within the Alliance however, with consensus having been difficult to achieve. France and Germany, especially, have been reluctant to antagonise Russia, as Moscow remains particularly suspicious of NATO's role in the post-Cold War world. Several NATO member states would otherwise prefer to handle matters of energy security themselves without coordinating their position with other NATO allies. It seems that Turkey, for its part, comes within this grouping of states. Officials in Ankara appear confident that they are able to protect the pipelines running across Turkish territory with their own security units, and that Operation Black Sea Harmony (in cooperation with NATO) and the Mediterranean Shield operation will protect coastal waters.

However, on matters of energy security in general and for Turkey specifically, NATO could 'add value' while not necessarily playing a leading role. This could entail, for example, more intelligence gathering and the training of specialist armed units. In the event of an identifiable or immediate threat NATO could also escort ships and tankers, as well as contribute assets to help protect energy infrastructure.

National vs International Response

Clearly, the threats posed by terrorists and the need to protect critical energy infrastructures will remain high on the agenda for Turkey and other states. In spite of improved security mechanisms with Washington, Baghdad and Arbil in northern

Iraq, the authorities in Ankara will still have to continue tackling the threats posed by the PKK and also be vigilant with regard to the threats posed by al-Qaeda affiliates. In the mean time, NATO is attempting to come up with its own views on energy security which will probably be more sophisticated than the typical 'Guards, Gates and Guns' approach. But officials and the military in Ankara, sensitive to issues of national sovereignty, will most probably not call upon NATO to provide support to protect energy infrastructures in Turkey or shipping within coastal waters, unless Turkey is facing an imminent and grave security threat.

Gareth M Winrow is an independent analyst based in Oxford.

Counter-Terrorism, Political Reform and EU Conditionality

Gülnur Aybet

Although Turkey has suffered its fair share of international terrorism, such as the Al Qaida related attacks in Istanbul in 2003, the main terrorist threat to Turkey comes from the PKK/KONGRA-GEL organisation which has been involved in a Kurdish separatist movement in the South East of the country since 1978. While the Kurdish issue in Turkey is placed within the context of cultural rights and democratic reforms, these were not the original objectives of the PKK. As a separatist organisation, the PKK have been involved in a violent terrorist campaign to obstruct all efforts by the Turkish Government aimed at the development of the South East region. Their attacks have included the destruction of schools and clinics, the murder of teachers and doctors, sabotages against power stations, railways and bridges, and the South East Anatolia Project (*Güneydogu Anadolu Projesi – GAP*) which aims at modernisation and development of the South Eastern Anatolia region. The terrorists' campaign and the Turkish military's heavy handed reprisals particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, undertaken without the complementary track of political and economic reform, has perpetuated the economic backwardness and poverty in the region. The mentality and atmosphere of mistrust lingering from the 15 year long State of Emergency, which was lifted at the end of 2002, still endures.

Notes

¹ The DTP is a Kurdish nationalist party whose candidates ran in the 2007 Parliamentary elections as independents. After reaching the required number of 20 MPs, they formed a Parliamentary group under the DTP, although if the DTP had ran as a party in the elections, they would not have been able to win above 10 per cent of the national vote in order to be represented in the Grand National Assembly.

² Article 14 states that, 'None of the rights and freedoms embodied in the Constitution shall be exercised with the aim of violating the indivisible integrity of the State.' Article 83 covers the immunity of parliamentarians but exempts this if there is a link to Article 14. Therefore, an elected parliamentarian accused of crimes under Article 14 before

Therefore, political reform becomes an important tool in tackling disadvantages and turning alienation to involvement in civil society and a common vision for the future, which is one way to erode support for terrorism.

Political Reform through Crisis

Internal political reform will play an important part in the settlement of a perpetuating peace in the region. Parallels with Northern Ireland are thus sometimes drawn, such as between Sinn Fein and the DTP (Democratic Society Party).¹ Although the Chief Prosecutor initiated proceedings in the Constitutional Court for the closure of the DTP in November 2007, the DTP are not subject to a government broadcast ban in the Turkish media (as Sinn Fein was in Britain), despite their open support for the PKK. Nevertheless, the suspended case against a DTP MP for making pro-PKK remarks in 2006 was overturned by the Supreme Court, which means that failing the appeal the MP could go to prison. That being said, the same MP urged the Kurds to recognise a solution to the Kurdish problem within the borders of Turkey. Although the DTP were instrumental in securing the release of captive Turkish soldiers by the PKK in Northern Iraq, they were shunned for shaking hands with PKK militants when making the deal.

taking office can be prosecuted without immunity.

³ The CHP (Republican People's Party) is a centre left party and the MHP (National Action Party) is an ultra right wing nationalist party.

⁴ While the Progress Report acknowledges the amendments made to Article 301 on freedom of expression, it states that the amendments do not go far enough.

⁵ Turkey has implemented 1/3 of GRECO recommendations but the government have not yet prepared a comprehensive anti corruption strategy.

How to deal with the DTP has become a growing dilemma for Turkey. While the party's entrenched position of not denouncing the PKK remains very sensitive and controversial, it is also clear that any political solution has to involve some kind of iterative dialogue with the DTP. While President Abdullah Gül has met with the DTP leader Ahmet Türk, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has so far refrained from doing so. Meanwhile, the High Criminal Court has charged five DTP MPs with supporting terrorism, and has asked for their testimonies. The MPs have refused to give testimonies citing their immunity from prosecution as elected members of Parliament. A possible scenario is now that the Court could have them forcibly removed from the Parliament, as in a similar incident which took place in 1994 when MPs from the then Kurdish Party, DEP, were arrested in the Parliament building. The AKP (Justice and Development Party) government having made it clear that they would not like to see a repetition of the events of 1994, have been trying to work out a solution.

This recent crisis could pave the way for a reform of the constitution which under Articles 14 and 83 exempts the implementation of immunity for parliamentarians if the crime was committed against the unity of the State and before their term in office began.² Constitutional reform is moreover also being pushed further up the agenda by legal experts who have questioned the validity of the Penal Court's case against the President for fraud charges dating over a decade ago.

The Window of Opportunity to Solve the Kurdish Issue

Despite these twists and turns in the political situation, increasingly some analysts see a window of opportunity to move forward, because of improved international collaboration on the Kurdish issue but also because of an enhanced cooperation between the various state institutions, both political and military. Much of the 'window of opportunity' discourse was initiated by President Abdullah Gül's comments that the time was ripe for positive developments of the Kurdish issue and

that this had become Turkey's number one priority (*Milliyet*, 9 May 2009), although his remarks were initially received with scepticism from the MHP and CHP opposition parties.³

According to the journalist Cengiz Çandar, in his column in *Radikal* on 12 May 2009, the PKK no longer have a reason to stay 'in the mountains' because their original goal of separatism is no longer applicable. The problem for the PKK, he says, is that they do not seem to be able to find a way to 'come down from the mountains' either. An amnesty is indeed still a controversial subject and is not likely to be on the cards in the short term. But if the PKK are 'stuck' in the mountains, as Çandar claims, then terrorism continues to perpetuate their existence. Of course, for a purely practical reason, that could not be sustained without the obvious support in logistics and supply that they continue to receive.

A fresh approach to counter terrorism in Turkey was also reiterated by the Chief of General Staff, İlker Başbuğ, in his annual address to the war academies on 14 April 2009. General Başbuğ stated that counter terrorism is a parallel process of various converging factors such as security, economic development, social-cultural factors and international collaboration. Furthermore his call for understanding the pain of parents, whose children have joined the PKK, was interpreted as a hint to a possible amnesty.

Close on the heels of the military statement, came the announcement of a solution package to the Kurdish problem from the CHP opposition leader Deniz Baykal. The CHP's proposed package comprises an amnesty as a confidence building measure only after the end of terrorist activities. It also includes changing the mentality of public institutions, such as the judiciary and the police, and advocates equal opportunity and in some cases positive discrimination to develop the South Eastern region especially in terms of health and education. Finally the CHP package proposes going further than the government's recent state

controlled broadcasts in Kurdish and advocates Kurdish private channel broadcasts to the region under the same RTÜK (Supreme Board of Radio and Television) regulations that apply to all channels in Turkey. The CHP move has come as a surprise, given the party's opposition to the President's earlier overtures to a political solution to the Kurdish problem.

Therefore, it would be fair to say that a new momentum of cooperation from all sectors of Turkey's establishment, military and civilian alike, is gathering to find a common approach to solving the Kurdish problem. In this context, Turkey's internal political reform process is crucial because unlike the case of the Northern Ireland peace settlement, the political input of third parties is limited. While the Northern Ireland case was solved with the cooperation of Ireland as a regional third party, none of Turkey's neighbouring countries have a claim to Turkish territory in their constitution. The Good Friday agreement of 1998 was made possible with the Republic of Ireland's amendment to its own constitution which saw the unification of the island as one territory. In the case of Turkey, regional third parties, such as Iraq, where the PKK are presently based, can only have an input in terms of security. For Turkey, the vacuum in Northern Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government's reluctance to oust the PKK is perceived as a security problem, not a political issue. Therefore, a political solution can only be achieved in Turkey from a bottom up process of internal political reform and further engagement with civil society.

However, the AKP government's gradual and cautious approach to a political solution to the Kurdish problem may be slowed down or even derailed due to nationalist objections. While it would be wrong to expect the issue to be desensitised over night, the leader of the MHP (Nationalist Movement Party) still criticises the government's opening to a possible resolution of the Kurdish issue through political means. The party has also remained silent about the military's positive tone and the CHP's proposals. Meanwhile, the PKK would not likely wish to see the reforms succeed, because it would draw away key support from the Kurdish communities.

An Internal Process Enhanced with EU Conditionality

All the while, the European Union's potential as an inducer of reform could lose its legitimacy if suspicions regarding the EU in Turkey endure. This is particularly the case through the perception that some EU states take little or no action to curb PKK activities and support bases in Europe. This is significant inasmuch as there is a widespread perception that political reform to manage the Kurdish issue is essentially an EU driven process. In reality, it is not. Turkey has already embarked on a road to deal with the Kurdish issue through a new internally driven momentum. Nevertheless, perhaps this new 'window of opportunity' in solving the Kurdish issue could also be a catalyst to address some of the outstanding issues underlined in the EU Commission's 2008 progress report on Turkey, particularly with regards to constitutional reform and the legislation on political parties. Recently, the European Parliament, in a resolution adopted on 12 March 2009, urged the DTP to distance themselves from the PKK, as well as appealing to all parties 'to contribute to a solution that enhances the stability, prosperity and integrity of the Turkish state'. This kind of supportive role played by the EU in the reform process is not likely to elicit a negative reaction even from nationalist quarters.

While the constitutional reform process has not moved forward since the dispute over headscarves in early 2008, the recent crises over the political immunity of DTP MPs and the possibility that the President may face a trial for fraud over party funding, could kick start a new momentum in constitutional reform. This would be linked to a renewed attempt to amend the existing legislation on political parties, especially with regards to party closure cases and political immunity of elected parliamentarians, bringing the legislation in line with the European Court of Human Rights and recommendations of the Council of Europe's Venice Commission (489/2008) published on 13 March 2009.⁴

Local administration is another key area of reform. The Progress Report urges the implementation of the local administration laws in order to instate a decentralisation of powers in favour of local

governments. Within this context, efforts to strengthen City Councils are seen as ways to enhance citizens' participation in local government. Although the Parliament adopted the new law of municipalities in March 2008, it is still under review by the Constitutional Court. Overall, the Progress Report's main concern within the political criteria was the 'lack of dialogue and spirit of compromise between the main political parties', which have had a 'negative impact on the smooth functioning of political institutions'. The recent compatibility of positions amongst various political parties and the military over the Kurdish issue may be the breaking of the deadlock in a political compromise that has held up the reform process so far. However, constitutional reform and amendment to the legislation on political parties has to be complementary to the process on judiciary reform. Reforms in this area which started in spring 2008 are a priority for the EU Accession Partnership. However, there has been no progress on the establishment of regional courts of appeal, which the EU had also expected to be operational by June 2007.

The report suggests that there is a need for greater public awareness of state sponsored bodies dealing with human rights such as the Parliamentary Human Rights Investigatory Committee, the Human Rights Presidency under the Prime Minister's Office and the Human Rights Boards. The EU benchmarks also link the Turkish reforms to compliance with existing international regimes such as OPCAT (Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture) which Turkey still has to ratify, as well as the GRECO (the Council of

Europe, Group of States Against Corruption).⁵ The EU's acknowledgement of the government's plan to invest substantially in the GAP project for the development of the South East region is an important sign of encouragement and support. However, the lack of an overall government strategy to deal with internally displaced persons (IDPs) remains a cause of concern and is mentioned in the Progress Report. Particularly, IDPs in urban areas are a cause for concern as they suffer from economic and social marginalisation. Furthermore, the return of IDPs has been difficult due to a lack of infrastructure and unemployment in the region.

Therefore, while the EU can highlight priority areas of concern and offer suggestions and guidelines to what is essentially an internal process; the EU's conditionality linked to the accession process becomes important in transforming those guidelines into benchmarks. However, balanced against this, the opposition of some European countries like France and Germany to Turkey's accession to full membership of the EU can certainly damage the power of the EU's conditionality in inducing and guiding internal reforms. This in turn emphasises the degree to which tackling terrorism in Turkey is necessarily an international process as much as a domestic one.

Gülnur Aybet is Lecturer in International Relations at the University of Kent and currently South East Europe Policy Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars.

Turkey's Strategic Position and the Need for Dialogue

James Ker-Lindsay

In recent years there appears to have been a marked shift in the way in which the international community has started to view Turkey and its experience of terrorism. Far from being a peripheral player in the debates on how to fight terrorism, Turkey has come to assume a front and centre role in international discussions. In large part, this is because of the vital strategic position that Turkey occupies as a transit state – in an all encompassing geographical, physical and ideological sense.

Turkey as a Transit State

For a start, Turkey's geo-strategic position has had a major impact on the way in which the question of Turkey's relationship with terrorism is viewed. In recent years, Turkey has emerged as a major player in discussions over European and international energy diversification. Fears of rising over-reliance on Russian energy sources has led to a growing interest in alternative gas and oil supplies in Central Asia and the Caspian. Often, Turkey plays the key role as the transit point for new pipelines. Most notably, we have seen the importance attached to the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline, which provides Azeri energy supplies with an outlet on the Mediterranean Sea. Other pipelines are now in development. However, as has been seen already in other countries, the importance of such projects makes them a high-profile target for terrorist organisations. Indeed, in 2008, a major explosion on the BTC pipeline was blamed on the PKK. In this case, while there were no injuries, the economic consequences of the attack were massive. Thus, in the first instance, if Europe is to ensure that Turkey is able to provide a conduit for new energy supplies, it must also help to ensure that the pipelines that are being built are secure.

The second sense in which Turkey can be considered to be a transit country is in the context as a transit for terrorists and as a base for those planning terrorist operations

elsewhere. It has been noted that Turkey is often viewed by many terrorist organisations as a relatively safe haven for holding meetings and arranging money transfers. More to the point, it is also seen as providing a route for extremists to enter Europe. This is the result of a number of factors. For instance, over in the east, its borders are relatively permeable and in the west it neighbours the Greek islands, which are seen as providing a range of opportunities for entry into the European Union. Indeed, these factors make Turkey not only a key transit route for illegal immigrants trying to enter the European Union, but also a potentially vital route for terrorists to gain access to European member states. To this extent, tackling Turkey's role as a transit point for terrorists and terrorist related activity is a second vital reason why Turkey has assumed a more significant role in recent years.

Thirdly, Turkey has come to be seen as a vital transit point in the battle of ideas. In recent years, considerable emphasis has been placed on Turkey's value as a link between the West and the Islamic world. This process has in part been shaped by geopolitical factors, but is also a reflection of Turkey's willingness to reengage with Muslim states, especially in the Middle East. Add to this its growing strategic and regional role, as evidenced by its election to the UN Security Council, and one can see just how potent a position Turkey holds. It is this role as a cultural bridge – a term that, while rather clichéd is nevertheless true – is likely to prove vital in the years and decades ahead. It is often said that Turkey provides a model for Islamic countries to emulate. True, but the existence of a strong and independent minded Turkey also shows how Europe and the United States can work with Muslim states without those states simply becoming beholden to the West. Co-operation in pursuit of common goals need not be at the expense of religious identity or territorial integrity – although fears about the West's

intentions towards Turkey, as will be explored a little later on, persist and need to be tackled more effectively.

The Need for Dialogue and Understanding

The obvious questions that emerge from this are the following: given the significance of Turkey, what can the international community do to support Turkey in its efforts to tackle terrorism? And, secondly, what added value can Turkey offer in the fight against international terrorism? The answers might appear to be relatively simple. However, the reality is far more complex and complicated than might first appear. One of the key problems that emerges in any discussion over terrorism is the identification of terrorist groups. This is driven by context and specifics. While Turkey and its Western partners will make great claims to regard all terrorist groups as threats and pledge to fight them, the reality proves to be rather different. This is where there appears to be a real need for dialogue.

For instance, and to use a recent example, whereas the United States and the European Union regard Hamas as a terrorist group, the Turkish attitude appears to take a more nuanced view. While the organisation certainly carries out acts of violence, many in Turkey view this as an act of legitimate resistance to Israeli occupation and the blockades and excessive use of force used by Israel against Palestinians. Meanwhile, others will point to its democratic mandate. Ankara appears to be able to view the situation in shades of grey, rather than the black and white applied in Washington. And yet, at the same time, Turkey is angered and infuriated when European countries prove to be unwilling to take an uncompromising stance towards Kurdish separatist groups operating in Europe. To this extent, one of the key problems affecting co-operation between Turkey and its partners in Europe and the United States is the degree to which they approach terrorism in theoretical and practical terms. As a concept, terrorists are accorded equal opprobrium. In reality, differences can be, and are, drawn between groups. This, in itself is a major complicating factor.

Another area in which mutual dialogue might yield results is with regards to the way in which Turkey conceptualises the fight against terrorism. One of the dangers that can emerge in any society is the level at which one sets the bar of extremism. If set too low, it can lead people to be classed as terrorists and treated accordingly, which in turn fosters resentment and can lead to their radicalisation. Thus, in tackling terrorism, there is a need to be aware not to cross the boundaries and instigate a fifth 'P': Provocation.¹ This is a very real danger that exists in many societies confronting terrorism which requires a careful assessment of the bounds of tolerance, and what is and is not considered to be a legitimate realm of debate. In Britain, where this whole subject has been at the forefront of public debate in recent years, the emphasis has been on values. To be British is to respect the rule of law, including the laws in place relating to racial and religious discrimination. This ensures that people who wish to advocate greater minority rights, or even the dissolution of the United Kingdom into its constituent parts or the unification of Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland are free to do so as long as they remain wholly and unambiguously committed to democratic methods. In the view of many outsiders, the bar in Turkey, especially as relates to the question of Kurdish separatism, has been far too low for far too long. Moves that would be seen as legitimate calls for freedom of cultural expression have been interpreted as radical demands for independence. This explains why Europe has often taken such a strong line on minority rights, and perhaps has not been willing to accept all of Turkey's concerns over the PKK. Just as Turkey is willing to see that Hamas may have some legitimate grievances, again there are many in Europe who have an innate sympathy for certain Kurdish aspirations.

However, it is a two-way street. Few outsiders really comprehend the deep fears that most Turks continue to harbour about the possibility that their country may fracture along ethnic or sectarian lines. While the Treaty of Sèvres, which proposed the partition of the Anatolian Peninsula at the end

of the First World War, is little known in the West, where it is seen as a minor historical item of interest, in Turkey it continues to shape public attitudes. There is still an overriding belief that in one way or another, Europe would like to see Turkey dismembered. In this regard, pressing the case for greater Kurdish rights, and being seen to harbour groups that seek an independent Kurdistan, is seen by many in Turkey as proof positive that the European Union is still intent of bringing about a realisation of the Treaty of Sèvres. In Europe, such thoughts appear unrealistic. In Turkey, they are all

Notes

¹ The United Kingdom's long-term counter terrorism CONTEST strategy is based around four main pillars known as 'the Four Ps': PREPARE, PURSUE, PREVENT and PROTECT

too real. Managing the balance between Europe's demand for separate minority and cultural rights with Turkey's fears that the EU is seeking to hasten the dismemberment of the Turkish Republic is something that will need to be handled delicately. However, it will also mean that both sides will have to be more willing to open up to the views of the other side.

James Ker-Lindsay is Senior Research Fellow at the European Institute, London School of Economics and Political Science.