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**THE KURDISH QUESTION in
TURKISH DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY**
during the
AKP ERA

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• ONE:

BACKGROUND TO
AKP's KURDISH POLICY

- Prior to AKP's accession to power in Nov. 2002, Turkey's Kurdish policy can be summed up in two periods:
 - During the Independence War (1919-23): Kurdish identity is honored and Kurds are promised autonomy (1921 Constitution, Art. 11). (*)
 - After victory: Denial, suppression, massacres. Efforts to assimilate the Kurds (1924-2001). (**)

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(*) Assistance of the Kurds was indispensable to the Liberation War (1919-1922). According to Article 11 the gov't in Ankara would conduct domestic & foreign policy, justice, national defense, int'l economic relations, matters pertaining to more than one province, and would leave foundations, education, public health, economy, agriculture, public works and social assistance to provinces.

(**) After building the monist nation-state (24 July 1923) and the authoritarian regime (29 Oct. 1923), Kemalism declares "Turk" the official supra-identity, and bans the Kurdish infra-identity. Afterwards, repeated military coups (1960, 71, 80, 97) prevent Kemalism from coming down to room-temperature: Revolution from Above is a single-shot gun that destroys itself if fired again.

• TWO:

AKP's FIRST PERIOD (2002-2013):

KEMALISM EXITS,
AKP ENTERS

- Domestic Policy:
 - Radical democratic reforms under EU Harmonization Packages;
 - Cleanup of military tutelage.
- Foreign policy:
 - “Zero Problem With Neighbors”, “Soft Power”
 - Excellent relations with Arab countries, especially with Syria
 - Rapprochement with EU (*)
- Kurdish Policy:
 - Detente, dialogue, and rapprochement (2009-2013).
 - Internationally evaluated as: A success story of moderate Moslems, bringing together conservative Islam and democracy.

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(*) To fight military tutelage, AKP tries to gain legitimacy by approaching EU, carefully keeping its Islamism under wraps.

• THREE:

AKP'S SECOND PERIOD (2013 →):

AKP EXITS,
ERDOĞAN ENTERS:
A STORY OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

Domestic Policy

- Erdoğan tries to set up a One Man Regime in lieu of the actual Parliamentary system, a constitutionally symbolic and unaccountable presidency.
 - For this he tries:
- To dominate public life by Islamizing secular institutions, and specifically public education, (*)
- To destroy Checks and Balances by changing the Constitution to replace the 'separation of powers' system (Montesquieu) with 'unification of powers' (Rousseau) (**)
- To apply a policy of polarization and provocation, and cultivate an atmosphere of insecurity to ensure continued support of his Islamo-nationalist electorate. (***)
 - a) By deactivating the **Legislative Body** (5 months);
 - b) By dominating the **Judiciary** through a judicial body placed under the direct control of the Justice Minister;
 - c) By immobilizing the **Media** using police force and other illegal means. (****)

(*) Slowly eliminates coeducation in primary/secondary schools, allows religious attire (headscarf) for female judges and teachers, greatly increases the number of religious high schools (During the AKP period [2002-2014] their number grew 4,6 fold [from 450 to 2074] and the number of their students grew 7,6 fold [from 64.534 to 490.969]).

(**) Rousseau's "*Volonté Générale*" (General Will) is called "*Milli Irade*" (National Will) by majoritarianist Erdoğan, which he equates simply with the ballot box (so long as it yields favorable results).

(***) This method is easy to understand for an American citizen: Senator Vandenberg said to President Truman in 1947: "[to sell the idea of Cold War] Scare the hell out of American people!" Bush Jr's approval rating rose from 51 % to 90 % after 9/11 because of security psychology. After the March 2003 invasion of Iraq, it rose from 58 % to 71 %.

(****) Methods used right now: Imprisonment of journalists, , confiscation of press issues, ordering media bosses to fire journalists, partisan mob attacks on opposition newspaper buildings, placing opposition media groups under the management of a pro-government trustees (kayyum) (to be payed \$ 37.500 a month at the expense of the seized media group), banning cablecasting or satellite relay of the opposition TV channels. The same confiscation method is being applied to holding companies of opponent Islamist firms related with the Gülen Movement, which is assumed to have disclosed serious corruption claims on December 17 and 25, 2013. This movement Erdoğan calls «Terrorist», although it has nothing to do with terrorism.

Foreign Policy

- Erdoğan interprets the Arab Spring as an opportunity to become the Caliph-like leader of a Muslim Brotherhood bloc, from Tunisia to Syria.
- “No problem with neighbors” becomes “No neighbors without problem”.
- «Soft power» becomes “hard power” again, especially against Assad who prevented Muslim Brotherhood in Syria.
- Turkey sends arms and ammunition to ISIS to overthrow Assad (*), and turns a blind eye to Turks’ buying ISIS oil.
- Very poor relations with practically all neighboring countries, except Qatar and Saudi Arabia.
- Very hostile attitude towards the Syrian Kurds. (**)

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(*) Soldiers, policemen, and prosecutors who stopped the trucks, and journalists who published this news are actually in prison.

(**) Syrian Kurds are an extension of the Kurds of Turkey and they fight ISIS which fights Assad.

Kurdish Policy

- While secret peace talks with PKK go on intermittently, armed hostilities continue.
- Nevertheless, a ten-point Dolmabahçe Palace Agreement on Feb. 28, 2015 is declared between Davutoğlu government and the Kurdish party HDP.
- After AKP lost majority in June 7 elections, Erdoğan says: "I don't accept such a thing as the Dolmabahçe Agreement." (July 2015) (*)
- He declares on Nov. 11, 2015: «Our struggle will last till the terror organization surrenders, buries its weapons, and pours concrete on them" (**)
- Right now Kurdish towns are still under siege and curfew for weeks. Because they are unable to go out of their houses to bury them, people keep killed family members in iceboxes while Special Teams write humiliating graffiti on house walls (***) .

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(*) After AKP lost the majority in the June 7, 2015 elections, approx. 150 HDP building are attacked, and some burnt (see pictures below). AKP re-won majority at the snap elections of Nov. 1 in an atmosphere of total insecurity.

(**) He had said in Aug. 2005: «Kurdish question is the issue of everyone in this nation, it is also my issue”.

(***) See pictures below.

Where Does Erdoğan's Islamo-Kemalism Stem From?

- It stems from his character affected by power-intoxication (4 consecutive terms) and extreme pride in himself, resulting in:
- Aggressiveness, severe anxiety, and fear from anything or anybody that doesn't obey him
 - After Assad prevents a Muslim Brotherhood takeover, two incidents that Erdoğan interprets as coup d'état against his person trigger the whole process in 2013:
 - 1) In May, Gezi Park protests: The Turkish equivalent of Zuccotti Park/OWS
 - 2) On December 17 and 25, disclosure of very serious corruption charges encompassing Erdoğan, his son, and his close political & business circle (*)
- But Erdoğan greatly profits from:
 - The insecurity atmosphere he created,
 - The absence of serious opposition,
 - PKK's armed attacks on military garrisons and convoys, killing soldiers and policemen.
- When such a personality is considered, the idea of "give us autonomy, get the presidency" that is heard from time to time amongst some Kurds, will inevitably lead to a dangerous pipe dream:
- Erdoğan's governing philosophy refuses to recognize any kind of checks and balances.

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(*) After this event Erdoğan charged the Gülen Movement, a close Islamist ally until that time, with disclosing this scandal, and devoted himself to destroying it, calling it "The Parallel State".

- **FRIGHTENING CONCLUSION FOR
THE NEAR FUTURE:**

Repeating Failed Old Policies Will Lead Turkey to
Disintegration
(... and the Western World to
Deeper Problems with ISIS and Russia)

- 1) New partners for peace talks declared by Erdoğan on Nov. 8, 2015:
 - Kurdish «tribal and religious opinion leaders», and
 - Village guards
- **This is back to 1890 Ottoman Hamidiye Regiments, and to the U.S. policy in Vietnam**
- 2) At a time when HDP declares itself «Turkey's Party», (*) Erdoğan's Regime leaves armed struggle the only alternative for the Kurds:
 - Tries to kill as many PKK militants as possible,
 - Terrorizes & humiliates the Kurdish population, (**)
 - Excludes the Kurds from political participation. (***)
- **This is back to Kemalist policies of the 1930s, with an Islamist sauce.**
- 3) In two international soccer games, AKP supporters booed and chanted "Allahu Akbar" when players were observing a minute of silence in honor of ISIS terror in Ankara and Paris.
- **This is back to nowhere...**

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(*) At a time when Iraqi Kurds are almost independent, and Syrian Kurds almost autonomous.

(**) By using water canons and tear gaz in every peaceful protest, bombing PKK cemeteries, dragging dead bodies behind armored cars, imposing curfew on Kurdish towns for weeks destroying them with helicopters, tanks, and snow masked Special Teams (see pictures and videos below).

(***) This not because of Erdoğan's anti-Kurdish policy only , but also because HDP divides AKP votes in Kurdish areas. Unlike their fathers and grandfathers, teenage "Young Kurds" no more consider themselves "*Türkiyeli*" (from Turkey).

Burnt HDP Headquarters in Ankara (Sept. 2015)



Houses in Silvan After a Twelve-day Curfew (Nov. 2015)

<https://www.google.com.tr/search?q=devlet+silvanda&tbn=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwix9yh3qzJAhVLEiwKHancCv8QsAQIGw&biw=1920&bih=911>



Graffiti by the Special Team:

«If You Are A Turk, Be Proud. If You Are Not, Obey!»



Graffiti by the Special Team:

«Even If We Have to Spill Our Blood, Islam Will Be Victorious!»



Şırnak, Oct. 3, 2015:

Photo: Special Team's Armored Car Dragging A Dead Militant

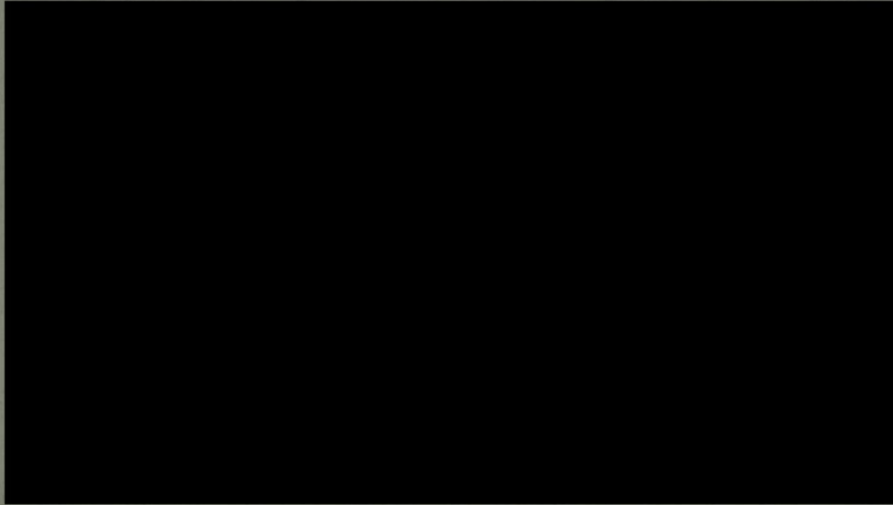


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Şirnak, Oct. 3, 2015:

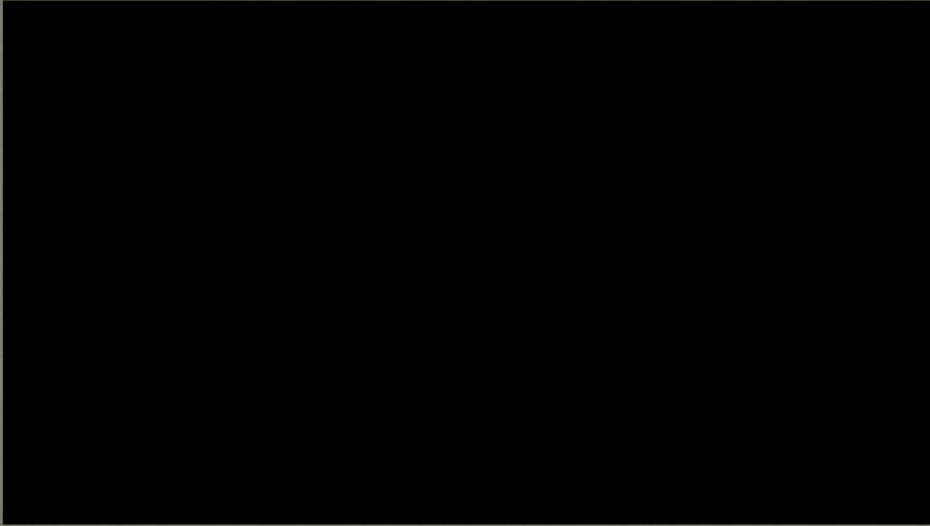
Special Team's Armored Car Dragging A Dead Militant
(video taken from inside the armored car:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LzAvPOpiv9U>)



Special Teams Celebrating a Successful Operation

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PNIYwGVOMo8>)



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