

## **TURKEY'S KURDISH OPENING: LONG AWAITED ACHIEVEMENTS AND FAILED EXPECTATIONS**

*Turkish state actors have used mainly military means to first suppress the Kurdish rebellions and then to end the PKK violence from 1984 onwards. However, after the Justice and Development Party came to office in 2002, it challenged the hardline state policy and initiated a Kurdish opening. This policy has the ultimate goal of disarming the PKK and resolving the Kurdish question. However, the Kurdish opening so far has failed to bring about the desired policy outcomes because the parties to the Kurdish question have been highly divided both on the side of the state and the Kurds in Turkey.*

*Keywords: Turkey, Kurdish question, AKP, Kurdish opening*

Turkey's Kurdish question has a long history, which has its roots in the Ottoman Empire. Under Ottoman rule, Kurdish rebellions commenced and persisted into the early years of the Republic of Turkey. In 1984, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) added a new dimension to the Kurdish question when it initiated an armed insurgency against the Turkish state.

Both in the Ottoman times and also after the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, military means have characterized the state actors' response, first to the Kurdish rebellions and then to the PKK violence from 1984 onwards. However, after the Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to office in November 2002, new expectations began to emerge about the resolution of the Kurdish question. The AKP challenged the long-established hardline state policy towards the Kurds and promised a new and courageous approach to the Kurdish question.<sup>1</sup> In the summer of 2009, the AKP initiated the policy of the "Kurdish opening" (aka democratic opening or national unity and brotherhood project). This policy mainly aimed at disarming the PKK and finding a peaceful resolution to the Kurdish question. However, the Kurdish opening so far has failed to bring about the desired policy outcomes and turned into a disappointment both for the state actors and Kurds in Turkey.

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This paper discusses one of the major reasons why the AKP government's Kurdish opening gave way to a period of renewed and increased violence by the PKK. It argues that although the AKP government has the necessary political resources to develop a peaceful solution to the Kurdish question, it has not been able to achieve this outcome, yet, because the parties to the Kurdish question have been highly divided both on the side of the state and the Kurds in Turkey. On one hand, the AKP government has not made a real effort to receive the support of the opposition parties in its Kurdish opening and failed to build a consensus on the part of the state. On the other hand, the PKK front, which is composed of a number of different centers of power, including the jailed PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, the PKK's armed militants in northern Iraq, and the pro-Kurdish political parties, has had a hard time acting in a unified manner in its dealings with the state. As a result, both the PKK violence and the efforts to resolve the Kurdish question are still going on.

The divided nature of the actors on both sides of the conflict is a serious problem that significantly constrains the prospects of a possible solution to the Kurdish question in Turkey. First, the government's failure to achieve a broad political consensus on how to resolve the problem puts the government in a vulnerable position and decreases its freedom to maneuver in the policy making process. Without the support of the opposition parties, the AKP's policies regarding the Kurdish question, which is a sensitive issue, remain open to political exploitation. It has been observed in the past that after every major wave of government criticism by the nationalist circles, the AKP felt concerned about the political consequences of its bold steps and began to opt for hardline policies towards the PKK. Second, the PKK's appearance as an organization with multiple centers of power also has been quite problematic because this situation raises the question of who the real interlocutor is in the PKK front. This makes it difficult for the government to decide with whom to talk and whom to take seriously

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in its efforts to resolve the Kurdish question. This situation brings in additional unknowns to a possible conflict resolution process.

The rest of the paper proceeds as follows: First, the history of the Kurdish question in Turkey will be presented. This section will summarize the developments starting from the Ottoman times until the early 2000s when the AKP government came to office. This historical background will be followed by a discussion of the AKP's initial policies regarding the Kurdish question and the subsequent Kurdish opening, which the government initiated in 2009. Then, empirical evidence will be presented as to how divisions on the part of the state and the PKK created obstacles for the successful conduct of the Kurdish opening. The paper will conclude with a summary of the findings and policy recommendations for the government.

### **The Evolution of the Kurdish Question in Turkey**

The Ottoman Empire identified its minorities based on their religion rather than ethnicity. Thus, for a long time, the Kurds lived in the Ottoman Empire as part of the Muslim majority. The Kurdish tribes, however, had a significant level of autonomy in their internal affairs. In return for this autonomy, they provided the Ottoman Sultan with taxes and soldiers.<sup>2</sup> This system worked without major problems until the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the ideas of nationalism and national independence began to spread among different ethnic and religious groups of the empire.

From the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, local Kurdish religious leaders organized numerous rebellions in response to the Ottoman Sultan's efforts to centralize his rule.<sup>3</sup> These rebellions were mainly suppressed by military means. However, despite the turmoil in the Kurdish regions, Turks were able to receive the support of the Kurds both in World War I (1914-18) and in the ensuing War of Independence (1919-22) against the occupying European states.

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However, the Republic of Turkey began to acquire a distinctly Turkish character soon after it was founded, and the policy of granting autonomy to the Kurds was abandoned. This was partly the result of the Turkish Westernization project. Turkish state elites saw the Kurds as backward with their peculiar social and administrative traditions and they began to perceive them as an obstacle to the Westernization process of the early Republican years.<sup>4</sup> The ruling elite's efforts to build a Western, secular, and centralized system of governance in Turkey created a feeling of disappointment among the Kurdish notables, resulting in violent outbreaks against the state in the 1920s and 1930s. These rebellions were suppressed with the heavy hand of the state. After the state's harsh response to the Kurdish dissent, this issue remained dormant until the 1960s.

In the aftermath of the 1960 coup, the Kurdish question entered into a new phase. Under the liberal atmosphere of the 1961 Constitution, the Kurdish question went beyond the control of local religious and tribal leaders, and it came under the influence of the Leftist movement. From the 1960s onwards, the leftist groups became the central venue for forming a Kurdish national identity and raising awareness about the Kurdish question.

The PKK was one of the leftist Kurdish groups that emerged within the politicized atmosphere of the 1970s. It was founded in 1978 under the leadership of Abdullah Öcalan as a Marxist/Leninist organization. In its early years, the PKK's main goal was the establishment of an independent Kurdish state. However, from the mid-1990s onwards, the PKK stated that it would also be open to solutions within a democratic Turkey.

The PKK initiated its armed struggle against Turkey in 1984. From 1984 onwards, the organization conducted numerous terrorist acts both in the Southeast and in other regions of Turkey. At first, it was an organization with 200-300 armed militants; but over time the PKK professionalized, its recruitment levels increased, and it began to establish a significant level of control in certain provinces of southeastern Turkey with thousands of militants.

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Turkey initially reacted to the PKK attacks with military means. The Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) conducted several military operations both in the Southeast and across the Iraqi border. Alongside the military response, Turgut Özal also attempted to formulate a political solution to the Kurdish question. First as the Prime Minister (1983-89) and then the President (1989-93) of Turkey, Özal made a great effort to remove the ban on the public use of Kurdish language and also to decrease restrictions on the freedom of thought and expression. He initiated a secret dialogue with the Iraqi Kurdish leaders and arranged indirect meetings with the PKK leader Öcalan.

However, Özal's sudden death in 1993 brought the resolution efforts to a halt. From 1993 onwards, Turkey almost exclusively returned to coercive methods in order to end the PKK violence. The policies of the post-Özal era included the intensification of cross-border operations into northern Iraq, increase in village evacuations in the Southeast, and a significant increase in extrajudicial killings conducted or tolerated by the security forces.<sup>5</sup> With these hardline policies, the Turkish state committed significant human rights violations. That notwithstanding, the PKK weakened militarily, and deaths caused by the PKK decreased steadily from 1994 onwards.

In the late 1990s, Turkey took action against Syria as a final step to end the PKK violence. Öcalan had been living in Damascus since the 1980s, and in 1998, Turkey threatened the Syrian government with military action if it did not expel Öcalan out of Syria. The Syrian government eventually felt obliged to oust Öcalan, which initiated a set of events that gave way to his arrest in February 1999.

Abdullah Öcalan's arrest and the PKK's subsequent unilateral ceasefire provided an important window of opportunity for Turkey to resolve its Kurdish question. This favorable atmosphere was further enhanced by the European Union's (EU) declaration of Turkey as an official candidate for membership during its Helsinki Summit in 1999. In the aftermath of the

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Helsinki decision, Turkey's need to fulfill the EU's Copenhagen political criteria in order to start accession negotiations created an important incentive for the governments to formulate reforms that could further democratize Turkey in several issue areas, including the Kurdish question. Accordingly, in the aftermath of Öcalan's arrest, the coalition government, which comprised the left-wing Democratic Left Party (DSP), right-wing Nationalist Action Party (MHP), and the center-right Motherland Party (ANAP), put into effect important EU harmonization reforms regarding the Kurdish question. These reforms included gradually ending the emergency rule in the Southeast, allowing television and radio broadcasts in Kurdish, making Kurdish language education possible, and removing the death penalty from the Turkish Criminal Code.<sup>6</sup> During this period, the government also began to implement a policy of helping Kurds to return to their villages, which they had to leave due to the fight against the PKK.

These positive changes constituted an important starting point for the subsequent reforms that the AKP government carried out. However, they usually reflected the lowest common denominator among coalition partners.<sup>7</sup> Although the partners of the coalition government were willing to work towards Turkey's EU accession process, they had very different positions on the Kurdish question. Thus, despite being very important, these steps remained slow and limited.

### **The AKP's Reform-Oriented Policies and the Kurdish Opening**

The reform process accelerated after the AKP came to office with a landslide victory in the 2002 national elections. Especially with respect to the reforms in the area of Kurdish cultural rights, this acceleration was closely connected to the AKP's more flexible perspective about the Kurdish question compared to its political opponents. This political party was established in 2001 by those politicians who previously served in the pro-Islamist Virtue Party (RP), which was closed by the Constitutional Court on the grounds of its anti-secular

activities. In its early days, although the AKP insisted that it was not a representative of the political Islamist movement (i.e., National Outlook Movement) in Turkey, it still identified itself as a conservative democratic party. Accordingly, the AKP was critical of the traditional Turkish state policy of holding “a tight grip on society,” particularly regarding the issue of secularism. It was of the opinion that the idea of cultural unity should be relaxed and the position of the individual vis-à-vis the state should be strengthened.<sup>8</sup> In order to achieve this goal, the AKP wanted to “change the structure of the state towards more pluralism, human rights, and fuller democracy”.<sup>9</sup> The democratization agenda that the AKP pursued was enhanced with the requirements of Turkey's EU accession process and the AKP's need to establish itself as a legitimate political party in the eyes of the secular circles in the country.

The AKP's emphasis on democracy and human rights also shaped this political party's approach to the Kurdish question in its early years in office. The leading AKP figures' support for cultural pluralism helped the party perceive Kurdish cultural demands as reasonable requests. Behind this perception was the AKP's emphasis on Islam as a unifying bond between Turks and Kurds. According to the AKP, granting cultural rights to the Kurds was not a step that would impair national unity. Rather, cultural pluralism and social diversity would act as a connective ingredient in Turkey and bring further richness to the society.<sup>10</sup>

In line with this view, the AKP government passed five major EU harmonization packages through the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) in 2003 and 2004. These harmonization packages included important steps with respect to the Kurdish question. They aimed to eliminate the practice of torture and ill-treatment, extend the freedom of expression and association, amend the broadcasting law to allow for broadcasting in languages other than Turkish by public and private radio and television stations, and permit the granting of Kurdish names to children. The AKP also prepared a partial amnesty law, the goal of which was to integrate some of the PKK militants into society and implemented the “Return to Village and

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Rehabilitation project” in order to facilitate the return to the villages of those who had to leave their homes due to the fight against the PKK. The government amended the anti-terror law in order to expand the freedom of thought and expression. Moreover, in line with the ruling of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), Kurdish politician Leyla Zana was released from prison in 2004.

Unfortunately, the year 2004 also marked the PKK's renewal of its commitment to violence. The organization decided to put an end to its unilateral ceasefire on June 1, 2004 and restored its attacks against Turkey. The revival of the PKK terrorism from 2004 onwards created a nationalist backlash and increased demands among the public for a harsh response against the PKK. In the face of the upcoming national elections in 2007, the rising Turkish nationalism also found a quick response in the AKP government's attitude towards the Kurdish question. Prime Minister Erdoğan adopted a nationalistic and hardline rhetoric during the campaign period.

In the 2007 elections the AKP won the majority of seats in TBMM with 47 percent of the votes cast.<sup>11</sup> The party also received more than 50 percent of the Kurdish votes in eastern and southeastern Turkey. This outcome showed that despite the AKP's increased hardline rhetoric, Kurds actually welcomed its previous efforts to improve the socio-economic conditions in the Southeast and its promises of finding a lasting solution to the Kurdish question.<sup>12</sup>

In the immediate aftermath of the elections, nationalist feelings, fuelled by attacks of the PKK, continued to dominate the political processes in the country. As a result, the government eventually felt obliged to pass a motion in October 2007, which enabled the TSK to conduct cross-border military operations into northern Iraq. The Turkish military's operations against the PKK, when combined with the AKP's focus on finding a solution to the headscarf ban in the wake of the elections decreased the emphasis on the political aspect



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of the Kurdish question.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, the AKP continued to take steps to protect its pro-reform image during its second term in office. In February 2008, Prime Minister Erdoğan declared that a Kurdish television channel would soon be introduced as part of the state-owned Turkish Radio Television network. Later in 2008 the public use of the letters 'q', 'w', and 'x' was authorized and in February 2009, Ahmet Türk, DTP Chairman, made a speech in Kurdish to his party's group in the TBMM.<sup>14</sup>

The AKP government initiated its Kurdish opening in July 2009, with the ultimate goal of disarming the PKK and resolving the Kurdish question. Although the details of the opening were never clear, this policy was expected to involve measures such as restoring the original Kurdish names of certain cities in the Southeast, allowing elective Kurdish courses at schools, granting an amnesty to the PKK militants, and eventually amending the constitution in order to redefine the concept of Turkish citizenship. However, the Kurdish opening has been limited in its results.

The problematic nature of the Kurdish opening became evident in October 2009, when 34 PKK militants and their family members from the Makhmur Refugee Camp in northern Iraq and from the Qandil Mountains entered Turkey through the Habur border gate and surrendered to the Turkish authorities. The government envisaged this event to be the beginning of a process of disarming the PKK in which the rest of the PKK militants would also return to Turkey in the subsequent months. However, the Habur incident turned into a "road accident" in the words of Interior Minister Atalay. In October 2009, the PKK militants entered Turkey in guerrilla clothes and they stated that they felt no remorse for their previous acts. Cheerful Kurdish crowds, who expressed their support for the PKK and Öcalan, welcomed the PKK militants to Turkey. This scene created a strong nationalist backlash and led to a lot of criticism about the government's handling of the Kurdish opening.

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As a result of the disappointment that the Habur incident created both among the government circles and among the Turkish society, the AKP government lost its enthusiasm for the Kurdish opening. Instead, a hardline discourse once again began to dominate the government's policies. The government's hardline discourse strengthened even further after a PKK's attack in Reşadiye, Tokat killed 7 Turkish soldiers in December 2009.

Without a doubt, the Habur process, as well as the PKK's Reşadiye attack, had a negative impact on the Kurdish opening. However, the subsequent developments showed that these events did not bring an end to the opening policy in 2009. In September 2011, the press leak of a voice recording from a meeting between the National Intelligence Organization (MİT) representatives and a number of leading PKK members showed that despite the problems of the opening process, the government kept its communication channels open with the PKK and Öcalan. But, it preferred to conduct these talks without the public's knowledge. In the meantime, the government continued to conduct military operations and air strikes against the PKK.

Turkey's June 2011 national elections did not change the course of developments regarding the Kurdish question. In fact, Öcalan and the PKK announced a unilateral ceasefire in August 2010 and later extended this ceasefire until after the 2011 elections. Moreover, for the post-election process, the AKP promised a new civilian constitution, which would be more sensitive to different ethnic and religious groups in the country. However, in the run-up to the elections, the AKP continued to use a hardline discourse regarding the Kurdish question with the goal of appealing to the nationalist voters.

The AKP won a huge mandate in the elections by receiving 50 percent of the votes. However, the escalating PKK violence overshadowed this outcome. Several PKK attacks between July and September, including the ones in Silvan and Çukurca, which killed a total of 21 soldiers, a rocket attack in Siirt, which killed four women, and an attack on a group of

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policemen playing soccer in Tunceli, which killed 1 police officer and his wife, significantly decreased the possibility of peace. In retaliation, the government increased military operations against the PKK targets.

In November 2011, Turkish newspapers once again began to publish articles about the possibility of a new peace process regarding the Kurdish question in which Massoud Barzani, President of the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq, got involved and provided help.<sup>15</sup> In the subsequent months the government also outlined a new strategy towards the PKK, which involved confronting the PKK militarily, but being open to a process of dialogue with the BDP as the PKK's political wing.<sup>16</sup> This strategy became outmoded after a video that showed a group of BDP deputies hugging PKK members in Şemdinli was released. However, from time to time high level government officials still voice the possibility of restarting the talks with Öcalan and the PKK.

Today the PKK violence and Turkey's military operations against the PKK are still going on. Developments such as the Uludere incident, in which 34 Kurdish smugglers in the Turkish-Iraqi border were accidentally killed by the Turkish military's air strikes in December 2011 based on misleading intelligence,<sup>17</sup> the increasing violence during Nevruz last spring and the 69-day long hunger strikes of those inmates convicted of or under arrest due to having connections to the PKK and the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK)<sup>18</sup> show that there are still serious obstacles to deal with in the process of resolving the Kurdish question. Thus, the AKP government has a difficult task in its hands and a long way to go in order to achieve a lasting solution. The following two sections discuss how divisions on both sides of the conflict complicate the AKP's task.

### **The Opposition and the Kurdish Opening**

The AKP government initiated its Kurdish opening from a position of strength. This political party received a crucial mandate from the public in the 2007 elections with 47

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percent of the votes. The AKP's election victory also included a significant level of support from the country's Kurdish districts. In addition to this, the Kurdish opening came at a time when the TSK was also open for non-military options to end the PKK violence after having experienced that coercive methods alone are not effective.<sup>19</sup>

In the months following the announcement of the Kurdish opening in 2009, the government initiated a public campaign to inform the society about the elements of this policy. In order to do this, Prime Minister Erdoğan met with different groups in the society such as journalists, writers, and actors in a number of breakfast meetings. Moreover, the AKP published a booklet about the Kurdish opening and publicized it on the party's website. However, the government failed to demonstrate a similar effort to receive the support of the opposition parties for this policy. It expected that the successful implementation of the Kurdish opening, as well as the societal and international support for this initiative would pressure the opposition parties to eventually side with the government.<sup>20</sup>

The Kurdish opening did not have this influence on the opposition parties. The main opposition party in the TBMM, namely the Republican People's Party (CHP), criticized the Kurdish opening as an irresponsible initiative of the government from the very beginning and expressed its concern that this policy carried the risk of giving way to the ethnic disintegration of the Turkish society.<sup>21</sup> Such a high tone of criticism was somewhat surprising on the part of the CHP. For, the CHP is one of the first political actors in Turkey which deliberated on a possible political solution to the Kurdish question in the 1990s, a period dominated by the state's hardline approach towards this problem. In fact, the CHP's proposals about finding a political solution for the Kurdish question in the 1990s were more ambitious compared to the AKP's Kurdish opening.<sup>22</sup> However, in response to the Kurdish opening, the CHP leaders put their party's political interests first and expressed strong opposition to the government. They based the party's strategy on the fear that the government's policies were threatening the

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national unity and territorial integrity of the country. The CHP's position in fact reflected the idea that if the government "was successful in solving one of the most difficult problems of Turkey, it would easily win the coming 2011 general elections,"<sup>23</sup> and the AKP would strengthen its position tremendously in Turkish politics.

Since the MHP has been regarded as a radical right wing and ultranationalist political party, its opposition to the Kurdish opening was less surprising and more in line with this political party's ideological and historical background. The MHP has always promoted a hardline approach towards Turkey's fight against the PKK. It has been of the opinion that cultural openings towards the Kurds endanger Turkey's identity as a unitary nation-state. According to the MHP, since the Turkish state has never discriminated against the Kurds, the latter's demands for cultural rights have no legitimate basis.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, this political party expressed strong opposition to the government's Kurdish opening.

In response to the AKP's policies, the MHP accused the former of committing treason and encouraging separatism in the country. Devlet Bahçeli claimed that the Kurdish opening "aimed to legitimize ethnic separatism fed by the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK."<sup>25</sup> During the parliamentary debate on the Kurdish opening on November 13, 2010, he emphasized the Turkish character of the Republic of Turkey. Bahçeli argued that with its Kurdish opening, the AKP was being part of a global plot against Turkey, which was pursued by the United States and the European countries.<sup>26</sup> He even referred to the Kurdish opening as a "PKK opening".<sup>27</sup> In sum, the MHP showed a strong nationalist reaction against the AKP's Kurdish opening and put the government in a very difficult position in the eyes of the nationalist circles.

The government was caught unprepared for the harsh nationalist reaction that came from the MHP and CHP. This nationalist reaction also negatively influenced the public opinion. In the face of these strong criticisms, especially after the Habur incident, it became

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very difficult for the government to insist on the opening policy with the same enthusiasm. With the 2011 national elections approaching, the AKP government began to feel concerned about losing the nationalist voters to the opposition parties. Indeed, the public support for the Kurdish opening significantly decreased in this period. While the public support was 45.6 percent on the initial days of the opening, this support declined to 32.1 percent in the immediate aftermath of the PKK militants' entrance in Turkey and even to 27.1 percent in December 2009.<sup>28</sup>

In the face of this nationalist reaction, the AKP government began to use a hardline discourse about the Kurdish question. Additionally, in this atmosphere of increased frustration with the opening, the Constitutional Court made its decision to close the pro-Kurdish DTP and imposed a political ban on the DTP deputy Aysel Tuğluk and Chairman Ahmet Türk, who are actually moderate Kurdish politicians. In the post-Habur process, several Kurdish political figures and DTP members also were arrested based on charges of their connections with the KCK.

In the run-up to the June 2011 national elections, the government further reinforced its hardline discourse with the goal of increasing its support among the nationalist voters. Through this strategy, the AKP wanted to push the ultranationalist MHP below the ten percent election threshold, which is required to enter the TBMM. As a result, during the election campaign, Prime Minister Erdoğan made numerous nationalist statements, such as “[t]here is no Kurdish problem anymore, but rather problems of our Kurdish citizens.”<sup>29</sup> He even asserted that if he had been part of the government during the process of Öcalan's capture in 1999, he would have hung him.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, in the absence of solid support from the opposition parties, the AKP government's policies regarding the Kurdish question remained open to political exploitation. The CHP and MHP took advantage of the government's bold steps and mistakes in the

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Kurdish opening and used these to spark off nationalist reactions. This was most obvious in the Habur incident. In response to the nationalist backlash, the AKP felt obliged to reconsider its policies and slowed down the opening process. Although the AKP initially seemed willing to take a number of major steps to move forward towards the resolution of the Kurdish question, it had to take into account electoral politics. The government showed a similar defensive attitude in 2010 when the opposition parties brought up the issue that the government was in a process of dialogue with the PKK. In response, Prime Minister Erdoğan made sure to distance his government from these discussions and argued that the government would never negotiate with the PKK.<sup>31</sup> As a political party, the AKP naturally wanted to maintain its appeal to the nationalist circles in the upcoming elections and prevent a loss of electoral support.

This is actually a common problem seen in conflict resolution processes. For example, in the case of Sri Lanka's struggle with the Liberation Tigers of the Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the government's several attempts to resolve this conflict through peaceful means failed in part because of its inability to reach an agreement with the main opposition party.<sup>32</sup> Likewise, the socialist government in Spain had a difficult time during the process of peace talks with the Basque Homeland and Freedom (ETA), because the Popular Party strongly opposed to negotiating with ETA until the terrorist organization was demobilized.<sup>33</sup> The AKP government has been no exception to these dynamics. The AKP's failure to take the support of the opposition parties behind its policies has significantly constrained its policy making process and pushed the government away from reform-oriented policies after every major wave of criticism.

### **The PKK Front and the Opening**

There has been a similar problem of consensus in the PKK front with respect to the AKP government's opening policy. The PKK movement includes a variety of actors such as

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the jailed PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, the BDP, which is regarded as the political wing of the PKK, Qandil, which refers to the PKK's mountain establishment headed by Murat Karayılan, a strong diaspora in Europe, the Democratic Society Congress (DTK), which brings together several Kurdish non-governmental organizations, the Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (TAK), which is a Kurdish group conducting terrorist acts in major cities, and the KCK, which is an umbrella organization encompassing the PKK and aiming to create a parallel local administrative structure in Turkey.

The Turkish state has been in contact with the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan since he was arrested in 1999. These contacts were first conducted by the members of the TSK. After 2005, the MİT representatives took over the effort to maintain a dialogue with Öcalan with the ultimate goal of disarming the PKK and resolving the Kurdish question in Turkey.<sup>34</sup> For quite some time, the Turkish state secretly pursued a process of dialogue with Öcalan. However, after the government's announcement in July 2009 that it was willing to resolve the Kurdish question through its opening policy, the Turkish public began to learn more about the state's contacts with the PKK leader.

Abdullah Öcalan, who is in jail on the İmralı Island in the Marmara Sea, was successful in building a personal cult from the 1980s onwards. Today he has a huge symbolic power among the Kurds in Turkey. Both the state representatives who took part in the plans to resolve the Kurdish question from 2006 onwards and the members of the Kurdish movement stated several times that it is Öcalan who could say the last word about disarming the PKK and convince the organization to leave the mountains.<sup>35</sup> From time to time Öcalan sent mixed signals about the government's Kurdish opening. While he expressed his support for the peace initiative, he also talked about the necessity for Kurds to have their self-defense forces and their own flag,<sup>36</sup> which are sensitive issues for the Turkish public opinion. However, since the early 1990s, Öcalan has been part of the efforts to find a political solution to the



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Kurdish question through his dialogue with the Turkish state representatives. Thus, there is no question about his central role in this process.

Despite Öcalan's key position, the Kurdish movement produced a number of different centers of power over the years, which sometimes made it difficult for this movement to function as a unified actor. This situation also put the AKP government in a difficult position in its efforts to resolve the Kurdish question. On one hand, Öcalan continues to be an important figure although he has been in jail since 1999. On the other hand, this does not stop other major factions of the PKK from acting independently from time to time. For example, in the past the radical and hawkish elements in the PKK promoted the use of violence despite the ongoing process of dialogue between Öcalan and the state. Although Öcalan is the unconditional leader of the PKK, this hawkish wing has developed enough capacity to shape his behaviors. It is argued that Öcalan's warlike statements from time to time result from the presence of these radical elements in the PKK because Öcalan does not want to give the impression that he is not able to keep the PKK under his control. Therefore, he sometimes tries to reflect the PKK's mood with his messages, rather than his genuine thoughts.<sup>37</sup>

Another key actor is the pro-Kurdish BDP. Although the BDP is a legal political party, it does not have an autonomous standing and it is, to a great extent, under the control of Öcalan and the PKK. Several pro-Kurdish political parties have emerged in Turkey since 1990. However, the Constitutional Court closed all of them based on charges of separatism. The BDP is the successor of the DTP, which was closed in 2009. In both the 2007 and 2011 national elections, the DTP and BDP achieved considerable success by gaining 20 and 36 seats in the TBMM, respectively. Moreover, in the 2009 local elections, the DTP gained municipalities in 99 districts.

The pro-Kurdish DTP initially appeared in favor of the Kurdish opening. However, neither the DTP nor its successor BDP has played a significant role in the government's

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initiative. There are two major reasons for this. First, from the very beginning, the DTP and BDP members pointed to Öcalan as the main interlocutor and argued that the government should talk with him during the opening process. This position kept the pro-Kurdish political parties out of the dialogue between the state and the PKK. Second, the AKP has pursued a policy of isolation towards the DTP and BDP since the 2007 elections. This is mainly because the AKP and the pro-Kurdish political parties have an obvious rivalry in the Southeast due to their eagerness to appeal to the Kurdish constituents in the region. This political rivalry became more evident when the AKP showed significant success in the Southeast in the 2007 national elections.<sup>38</sup> With its Kurdish opening, the AKP government wanted to isolate the BDP even further.<sup>39</sup> Thus, the DTP and BDP have had a difficult position in the Kurdish opening. On one hand, these pro-Kurdish parties have been subject to the government's policy of isolation and marginalization. On the other hand, they have been under pressure from the PKK to follow the organization's position and stay away from independent action.<sup>40</sup> As a result, the DTP and BDP failed to act as the legal interlocutor of the PKK front in the Kurdish opening and mainly stayed within the limits drawn by Öcalan and the PKK. However, from time to time these political parties increased their voice and contributed to the image that the PKK front was having a difficulty in acting as a unified manner in its relationship with the state.

Since the beginning of the Kurdish opening, this problem has been observed through various occasions. Examples go back as early as the Habur process in October 2009. Öcalan was mainly involved in the formulation of the Habur process in which 34 PKK militants and family members returned to Turkey from northern Iraq. He wanted this process to be a show of good will for both parties. Although the government talked with the DTP leaders in order to prevent problems that could damage the smooth working of this process, Kurds who entered Turkey were not well-informed about why they were there, and what was supposed to

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happen.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, there were actors in the PKK front who wanted to publicize this event as evidence that the Kurds have achieved victory in convincing the state to accept its demands.<sup>42</sup> As a result, the demonstrations got out of hand, frustrated the Turkish public opinion, and ended up significantly ruining the government's initiative. In another occasion, when Diyarbakır Mayor Osman Baydemir argued in November 2010 that "the time for armed struggle has come to an end," Öcalan responded to Baydemir with a harsh warning and stated that "Baydemir would not be in his position for two months without the support of armed militants."<sup>43</sup>

The observation that there are different centers of power within the PKK front became more widespread in 2011, especially around the time of the elections. Despite the importance attached to the June 2011 national elections by the PKK leader Öcalan, Duran Kalkan, another leading figure of the PKK, stated that revolution, rather than elections would determine the fate of the Kurds.<sup>44</sup> Even after the BDP achieved considerable success in the elections by gaining 36 seats in the TBMM, this line of thought persisted among some groups in the PKK. For example, in response to Öcalan's call to extend the unilateral ceasefire after the elections, Murat Karayılan did not automatically announce the continuation of the ceasefire. Instead, he declared that the KCK would assess the circumstances and respond to Öcalan's decision in a week.<sup>45</sup>

Problems continued in the aftermath of the elections. The Supreme Electoral Board did not allow 6 of the BDP representatives to enter the TBMM because they were in prison at the time of the elections. Hatip Dicle was convicted of "disseminating PKK propaganda" and his prison term was still going on during the election process. Moreover, 5 other BDP representatives were under arrest in connection with the KCK trials.<sup>46</sup> In order to protest the situation, the newly elected BDP deputies boycotted the TBMM after the elections and refused to attend any parliamentary activity. Despite Öcalan's message that the BDP deputies

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should go back to the TBMM, and problems about the imprisoned BDP deputies could be resolved over time, the deputies did not enter the TBMM until October 1. This move created the impression that the BDP was either acting on its own or taking orders from pro-violence groups in the PKK.

Further examples were experienced with the increasing PKK attacks in 2011. The PKK's Kastamonu attack in May 2011, which targeted Prime Minister Erdoğan's convoy after an election rally and ended up killing a police officer, came at a time when Öcalan mentioned that "the contact with the state is in its final stage; making a deal is a matter of time."<sup>47</sup> Moreover, the PKK's kidnapping of 2 Turkish soldiers and 1 health officer in July 2011; and the subsequent Silvan attack again in July, which killed 13 soldiers all took place after Öcalan stated that he had an agreement with the state about the establishment of a peace council and the revolutionary people's war was no longer necessary.<sup>48</sup> Contrary to Öcalan's statements, in the wake of the Silvan incident, Cemil Bayık, who is the second in command in the PKK after Murat Karayılan, declared his support for this attack and stated that the state was stalling Öcalan with the peace process, and the negotiations were unlikely to lead to a peace deal.<sup>49</sup> The timing of these attacks, as well as Bayık's statements illustrated the presence of disagreements within the PKK about the usefulness of the peace process. During this period, even Prime Minister Erdoğan made the assessment that Öcalan did not have full control over the PKK.<sup>50</sup>

Similar arguments regarding the capacity of the PKK front to behave as a unified actor were made after two terrorist attacks in Taksim, İstanbul in November 2010 and Kızılay, Ankara in September 2011, for which the Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (TAK) claimed responsibility. After both of these attacks, the PKK stated that it had nothing to do with them.<sup>51</sup> The TAK is a terrorist group whose connections with the PKK are dubious. According to some experts, the TAK is a specialized unit of the PKK, and the latter uses the

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former for its acts in major cities without having to take responsibility. But regardless of the discussion about whether the TAK is connected to the PKK or not, this organization's attacks in Taksim and Kızılay once again clearly showed that certain groups in the PKK front did not support the efforts to resolve the Kurdish question through peaceful means, and instead wanted to pursue a violent strategy to achieve their goals.

That the PKK front does not always seem to act in a unified manner has had major consequences. First, the violent PKK attacks that took place at critical junctures gave the impression that not all factions of the PKK movement are ready to give up violence. This means that the prospects for peace are grim in the near future. Second, this situation raised serious questions about the extent to which Öcalan constitutes a potent interlocutor in Turkey's efforts to resolve the Kurdish question. From the early days of Öcalan's capture onwards, representatives from the Turkish state institutions talked to Öcalan in a variety of efforts to end the PKK violence. The state took Öcalan seriously because he continued to act as the leader of the PKK despite the fact that he was in prison. However, developments since 2009 have shown that Öcalan may not have total control over the PKK. This has been a significant challenge to Turkey's policies.

These dynamics, of course, are not unique to Turkey. In conflict resolution processes, there are always winners and losers and it is natural to observe that not all parties to a particular conflict see the end of violence as beneficial for their interests.<sup>52</sup> Thus, there are often those who want to make sure the violence goes on despite the efforts otherwise. In the case of the PKK, what we observed several times after the initiation of the government's Kurdish opening can be understood within this broader dynamic. Since 2009, while a number of Kurdish actors have made positive remarks about the prospects for peace, there have always been those who consistently promote the persistence of violence. However, the AKP government failed to take into consideration these divisions and differences of opinion within

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the PKK front in its attempts to resolve the Kurdish question. This created serious obstacles for the government's efforts.

### **Conclusions and Policy Recommendations**

The Kurdish question has been one of the most important problems of the Republic of Turkey since its foundation. The Turkish governments have tried to resolve this issue mainly through military means. Although a number of political leaders made efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Kurdish question, until the AKP government's Kurdish opening, Turkey had not witnessed a determined and systematic effort to resolve this issue through political means.

When the AKP government first announced the initiation of the Kurdish opening in July 2009, both the society and the government itself developed high hopes for this policy. The widespread feeling in the society was that finally a government with political strength was making a real effort to end the PKK violence and searching for ways to resolve the Kurdish question. However, this policy faced serious problems. First, the AKP government tried to go it alone in the Kurdish opening and it did not try to gain the support of the opposition parties. The lack of a broad political consensus remained as the soft belly of this policy, and its adverse consequences became evident with the Habur incident in October 2009. The AKP kept the main opposition parties, namely the CHP and MHP, outside the process of formulating this policy. As a result, the opposition parties became concerned about the unclear goals and methods of the Kurdish opening. Moreover, they felt threatened by the possibility that the government's possible success in its opening policy could eliminate their chances of victory in the 2011 elections. As a result, the Kurdish opening turned into an issue of political exploitation. On one hand, the CHP and MHP have used every opportunity to appeal to the public's nationalist feelings and criticize the government for being soft on the PKK. On the other hand, in the face of these reactions the AKP tried hard to maintain its

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electoral support by highlighting a nationalist and hardline discourse in the area of the Kurdish question.

Second, the Kurdish opening came at a time when it was difficult to talk about a unified position in the PKK about the future of the organization. Since the beginning of the Kurdish opening, there have been different tendencies within the PKK front as to whether to stay within the communication channels opened by the government or pursue a violent strategy. Therefore, optimistic statements about the possibility of a peaceful solution to the Kurdish question sometimes have faced with the violent terrorist acts of the more radical Kurdish actors. Today, it is not easy to judge whether there are really those actors within the PKK front who sincerely believe that violence is not a useful strategy anymore or they all promote the strategic use of violence in one way or another in order to strengthen their bargaining position vis-à-vis Turkey. Regardless of the answer to this question, it is safe to argue that the presence of multiple attitudes and actions in the PKK front has brought too many unknowns to the AKP's Kurdish policy. This situation made the government question its decision to focus on Öcalan as the leader of the PKK.

Within this context of increasing uncertainty, it is not easy to make an optimistic statement about the short-term prospects of reaching a solution to the Kurdish question. Since the PKK's Silvan attack in July 2011, the AKP government has already reinforced its hardline discourse and it has pursued an increasingly coercive policy towards the PKK. There is also not much effort on the part of the government to pursue an all-inclusive policy making process regarding the Kurdish question, which could include the opposition parties and may even take place on a parliamentary platform. Prime Minister Erdoğan and the CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu discussed the latter's policy proposals in a meeting in June 2012 and this raised hopes temporarily. However, this meeting has not brought any concrete results, yet. Finally, despite a number of Kurdish actors' recent calls that a process of dialogue should

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restart between the state and the PKK, the PKK violence has been growing tremendously. The PKK caused the deaths of 144 security forces and civilians in the first 9 months of 2012 and the number of deaths has been rising.<sup>53</sup> New fatalities are reported from different parts of Turkey every day. Thus, it is difficult to show optimism with respect to the resolution of the Kurdish question anytime soon.

Under these circumstances, there are a number of points that the AKP government needs to take into account in its future efforts to end the PKK violence and resolve the Kurdish question. First, the government should remember that since the 1980s coercive methods have marked Turkey's struggle against the PKK and this policy has so far failed to end the PKK violence. In the past few years, even several military officers declared that it is not possible to end the PKK only through military means. Thus, alternative policies need to continue. Second, since the PKK and the Kurdish question are politically sensitive and highly salient issues in electoral politics, they are easily open to political exploitation. This makes it very difficult for different political parties to reach a common ground for possible conflict resolution mechanisms. Today, political parties in Turkey still tend to accuse each other of working for the PKK's cause in an effort to criticize each other's policies. In order to prevent this, the AKP government and opposition parties should find a way to work together to come up with a lasting solution to the Kurdish question. The government should pursue an inclusive policy making process as much as possible. Finally, the government should carefully assess the divisions and differences of opinion within the PKK front. Studies in peace and conflict resolution show that especially when there is a real possibility of peace, parties to a conflict tend to develop diverse preferences and interests with respect to the continuation of violence. A number of actors often work against the attainment of peace whenever there is an effort to achieve this. Therefore, the government should carefully calculate how to handle these



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divisions in the PKK front and how to work towards the empowerment of pro-peace actors in its efforts to resolve the Kurdish question.

All in all, although the AKP's Kurdish opening initiated an important process in Turkey, it has failed to fulfill the high expectations that it created at the beginning. However, this should not prevent the government from taking additional steps towards the resolution of the Kurdish question. In light of the lessons learned from the past few years, the government should work hard and continue to take bold steps to end the PKK violence and resolve this prolonged problem.

**Acknowledgment:** This work was supported in part by the EU FP7 Marie Curie International Reintegration Grant (Grant Agreement number: PIRG07-GA-2010-268255). I would like to thank Salih Bıçakcı, Rabia Karakaya Polat, Ödül Celep, Tara McKinney, and the anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments and suggestions on this paper. I also would like to thank Deniz Yılmaz for her research assistance.

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<sup>1</sup> In fact, in the 1990s both Turgut Özal and Necmettin Erbakan governments tried to establish communication channels with the PKK and find a peaceful solution to the Kurdish question. However, these earlier attempts suffered from serious disagreements among the state institutions regarding the need for a peaceful solution.

<sup>2</sup> Henri J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Metin Heper, *The State and Kurds in Turkey: The Question of Assimilation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 122.

<sup>5</sup> The only exception during this period was Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's efforts to pursue a secret dialogue with Öcalan in 1996 with the goal of resolving the Kurdish question through peaceful means.

<sup>6</sup> This last change resulted in commuting Abdullah Öcalan's death sentence to life imprisonment.

<sup>7</sup> Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, "The Turkish-EU Odyssey and Political Regime Change in Turkey," *South European Society and Politics*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (June 2011), p. 272.

<sup>8</sup> Sultan Tepe, "Turkey's AKP: A Model Muslim-Democratic Party," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (July 2005), p. 70.

<sup>9</sup> Ayşe Güneş-Ayata, "From Euro-scepticism to Turkey-scepticism: Changing Political Attitudes on the European Union in Turkey," *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (August 2003), p. 217.

<sup>10</sup> Ertan Efegil, "Analysis of the AKP Government's Policy Toward the Kurdish Issue," *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (March 2011), p. 31; İhsan D. Dağı, "The Justice and Development Party: Identity, Politics, and Human Rights Discourse in the Search for Security and Legitimacy," in M Hakan Yavuz (ed.), *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Party* (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2006), p. 97.

<sup>11</sup> The high level of public support that the AKP received was partly the result of the party's strong stance in the face of the April 27 e-memorandum, which was interpreted as an implicit threat of military intervention.

<sup>12</sup> Tozun Bahcheli and Sid Noel, "The Justice and Development Party and the Kurdish Question," in Marlies Casier and Joost Jongerden (eds.), *Nationalisms and Politics in Turkey: Political Islam, Kemalism and the Kurdish Issue* (New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 112; Ertan Efegil, "Turkey's New Approaches toward the PKK, Iraqi Kurds and the Kurdish Question," *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (2008), p. 56.

<sup>13</sup> Rabia Karakaya Polat, "The Kurdish Issue: Can the AK Party Escape Securitization?" *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (2008), p. 81.

<sup>14</sup> Kemal Kirişçi, "The Kurdish Issue in Turkey: Limits of European Union Reform," *South European Society and Politics*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (June 2011), p. 344.

<sup>15</sup> Murat Yetkin, "Kürt Sorununda Bir Gelişme Daha" [One More Development regarding the Kurdish Question], *Radikal*, November 10, 2011; Markar Esayan, "Why Does the PKK Want a Treaty?" *Today's Zaman*, November 20, 2011; Avni Özgürel, "PKK'da Yolun Sonu Göründü" [The End of the Road is Seen in PKK], *Radikal*, January 2, 2012.

<sup>16</sup> Fikret Bila, "PKK ve Kürt Sorununda Yeni Strateji" [New Strategy regarding the PKK and the Kurdish Question], *Milliyet*, March 22, 2012; Emre Uslu, "With the Pro-talks Stance Collapsing, Will the New Plan Work?" *Today's Zaman*, March 25, 2012.

<sup>17</sup> The Uludere incident raised several questions, such as who provided the intelligence which led to the deaths of 34 civilians, whether the local military units were consulted before the attack, and whether the MIT and the Turkish Police Force are in agreement about the conduct of the Kurdish opening.

<sup>18</sup> The KCK, headed by the senior PKK commander Murat Karayılan, is an umbrella organization, which encompasses the PKK. It aims to create a parallel local administrative structure and conducts acts in urban areas in connection with the PKK.

<sup>19</sup> See Gökhan Bacık and Bezen Balamir Coşkun, "The PKK Problem: Explaining Turkey's Failure to Develop a Political Solution," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (2011), p. 252; Efegil (2011), p. 34.

<sup>20</sup> Fuat Keyman, "The CHP and the Democratic Opening: Reactions to AK Party's Electoral Hegemony," *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2010); Cuma Çiçek, "Elimination or Integration of Pro-Kurdish Politics: Limits of the AKP's Democratic Initiative," *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (March 2011), p. 23.

<sup>21</sup> Keyman (2010).

<sup>22</sup> Mehmet Ali Birand, "Erdoğan, MHP'yi Dışlıyor, CHP'yi Kolluyor, DTP'ye Göz Kırıyor" [Erdoğan is Isolating the MHP, Protecting the CHP, and Winking at the DTP], *Radikal*, October 7, 2009.

<sup>23</sup> Keyman (2010).

<sup>24</sup> Ödül Celép, "Turkey's Radical Right and the Kurdish Issue: The MHP's Reaction to the Democratic Opening," *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2010).

<sup>25</sup> "MHP Hits Back at Government's 'Kurdish Opening'" *Hürriyet Daily News*, July 30, 2009.

<sup>26</sup> Mehmet Ali Birand, "Ahmet Türk Meclisi İlk Defa Düşündürdü" [Ahmet Türk Made the Assembly Think for the First Time], *Milliyet*, November 17, 2010.

<sup>27</sup> Celép (2010).

<sup>28</sup> Halil M. Karaveli, "Reconciling Statism with Freedom: Turkey's Kurdish Opening," *Silk Road Paper*, Central Asia-Caucasus Silk Road Studies Program, pp. 19-20.

<sup>29</sup> Cengiz Çandar, "Seçim Sonrası: Kürt Sorunu ve Suriye" [After the Elections: The Kurdish Question and Syria], *Radikal*, May 31, 2011.

<sup>30</sup> "Öcalan'ı Asardım" [I would have Hung Öcalan], *Milliyet*, June 10, 2011.

<sup>31</sup> "Erdoğan 'Hükümet Değil Devlet Görüşür' demişti" [Erdoğan had said 'the State, not the Government' Conducts the Meetings], *Milliyet*, September 14, 2011.

<sup>32</sup> Jehan Perera, "Building a Peace Culture After a Vicious Civil War," *South Asia Journal*, No. 3 (January 2012), available online at <http://southasiajournal.net/2012/01/building-a-peace-culture-after-a-vicious-civil-war>.

<sup>33</sup> Peter R. Neumann, "Negotiating With Terrorists," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 1 (January/February 2007).

<sup>34</sup> Aslı Aydıntaşbaşı, "Kandil Görüşmelerinin Perde Arkası" [The Backstage of the Qandil Meetings], *Milliyet*, May 23, 2011.

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- <sup>36</sup> İsmet Berkan, "Eşit Yurttaşlığa Dayalı Demokratik Cumhuriyet" [Democratic Republic Based on Equal Citizensip], *Radikal*, June 24, 2010; Avni Özgürel, "Demokratikleşme, PKK ve Öcalan" [Democratization, PKK and Öcalan], *Radikal*, August 19, 2009.
- <sup>37</sup> Çandar (2011), p. 35.
- <sup>38</sup> Mehmet Ali Birand, "PKK, AKP'den Korktu, Taktik Değiştirdi" [PKK Got Scared of the AKP, Changed Tactic], *Milliyet*, January 1, 2009.
- <sup>39</sup> Cuma Çiçek, "Elimination or Integration of Pro-Kurdish Politics," 21
- <sup>40</sup> Mehmet Ali Birand, "Ya Meydan Okuyor veya Açılımlı İstemiyor" [The PKK is Either in Defiance or it Does Not Want the Opening], *Milliyet*, December 12, 2009.
- <sup>41</sup> Fikret Bila, "Habur ve Oslo Sonrası" [In the Aftermath of Habur and Oslo], *Milliyet*, January 17, 2012; Emre Aköz, "MİT-PKK Görüşmesi: Müzakere Masasında Neler Konuşuldu" [The MİT-PKK Meeting: What was Discussed during the Negotiations?], September 15, 2011.
- <sup>42</sup> H. Akın Ünver, "Turkey's 'Kurdish Initiative': What Went Wrong? (Or did it)," Turkish Policy Center, December 8, 2010, p. 5.
- <sup>43</sup> "Pro-Kurdish Party Leader Confronted PKK Leader," *Haberturk*, 23 November 2010, <http://www.haberturk.com/general/haber/574126-pro-kurdish-party-leader-confronted-pkk-leader> (retrieved March 1, 2012).
- <sup>44</sup> Çandar (2011), p. 31.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32; Cevdet Aşkın, "Öcalan 'Ateşkese Devam' Dedi, Kandil'in Kararı Haftaya" [Öcalan Announced Extension of the Ceasefire, Qandil's Decision Next Week], *Radikal*, June 18, 2011.
- <sup>46</sup> Senem Aydın-Düzgit, "No Crisis, No Change: The Third AKP Victory in the June 2011 Parliamentary Elections in Turkey," *South European Society and Politics*, forthcoming, p. 14.
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