

Contributions to the Protection of the International Peace and Stability and Defence Against Terrorism

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1.0 THREAT DIMENSION OF TERRORISM AND THE INEVITABILITY TO HOLD AN INTERNATIONAL EFFORT IN FIGHTING AGAINST IT

One cannot oppose to the fact that terrorism is not a new event peculiar to our age. It's been there for centuries and killed thousands of people. However, the recent developments have clearly indicated that terrorism has become the main challenge threatening humanity. Therefore, a common understanding and cooperation is needed to successfully carry out the determined international effort in fighting against it.

Social, political and economic problems together with ethnic and religious disparities can be counted as the potential causes of terrorism. In fact, the actual reason behind terrorism is quite different. The real reason is the use of terrorism by some countries as a legitimate source for reaching political objectives. The important thing here is that terrorism is revitalized by exploitation of one or all of these potential causes. This is what creates terrorism. The most common motive behind this exploitation is the interests of some countries.

Such practices seriously hinder the possibility to create a common ground for combating terrorism. The lack of a common ground in turn encourages terrorists and leads to more violent and bloody activities. Today, even the countries using terrorism as means of foreign policy are not able to hold the control over it. In other words, terrorism harms the ones using it as much as everybody else with its "boomerang" effect.

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 against the US and recent terrorist activities in Istanbul have displayed that terrorists do not only use conventional weapons. Chemicals and vehicles like airplanes or ammonium nitrate designed for civilian peaceful purposes only can easily be manipulated and abused for the destruction of human civilization.

In just 7 terrorist attacks (USA, Bali, Tokyo, Kenya, Istanbul, Madrid and North Osetia) 4300 people are killed and over 11 thousands are injured. In short it appears that terrorism has become a problem not only for countries exposed to terrorist attacks but also for humanity.

September 11 and recent North Osetia terrorist attacks have made all to question the assessment of threat against countries and brought about new perceptions to fight against such challenges. Terrorism, now, acquires an international character. Hence, proactive defense measures emerge as necessary means for effective counter-terrorism.

Lastly, I would like to touch upon the importance of intelligence in counter-terrorism. The main pillar of proactive fight against terrorism is the establishment of an effective intelligence network. This network should embrace a continuously updated database and information exchange amongst nations.

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2.0 TURKEY'S WAR AGAINST TERRORISM

As a former flank, now a front country, Turkey was compelled to struggle against a variety of terrorist challenges both during the Cold War and in its aftermath.

Among these, ASALA, the Armenian terrorist organization, executed 153 attacks all around the world against Turkish citizens in a systematic way and killed 34 Turkish diplomats between 1974-1984.

Another scourge that Turkey is forced to overcome is leftist terrorism that reached its peak around 1970's and whose certain fractions still continue to be a challenge. These organizations are linked to a number of supportive elements around Europe, too.

Besides these ideological terrorist networks, Turkey continues to struggle against religious terrorist groups that aim at converting the secular and democratic structure in Turkey into an Islamic order. Recent Istanbul suicide bombings on November 2003 has demonstrated that these groups have an organic link with well-known Al-Qaeda terrorist organization.

Now, I would like to mention very briefly the PKK/KONGRA-GEL terrorist organization that has caused more casualties and injuries in our society than all the networks mentioned before. PKK/KONGRA-GEL (Kurdish People's Congress) terrorist organization, established on 27th of November 1978, has begun its armed operations in 1984, supported essentially by some European and neighboring nations.

This organization conducts its terrorist activities on the basis of micro-nationality (racial discrimination) (*like ETA in Spain and IRA in the UK*).

In terms of brutality of its activities, PKK/KONGRA-GEL has never discriminated among innocent citizens, be it children, babies, elderly or women. Since 1984, 11,611 innocent people are killed or disabled as a result of violent terrorist attacks of PKK/KONGRA-GEL, not to mention losses of security forces.

PKK/KONGRA-GEL is actively involved in drug-trafficking including procurement, transport and distribution. The annual income of the terrorist organization from the drug deals is estimated as more than 600 million dollars.

Currently, PKK/KONGRA-GEL has 1800 armed terrorists in Turkey and 3400 abroad, majority of which are in the North of Iraq. Besides, its front network that supports the armed organization politically, financially and logistically is active in about 30 countries generally in Europe.

After attacks of September 11, PKK (Kurdish Workers Party) changed its name as KADEK (Kurdish Liberty and Democracy Congress) in 2002 and as KONGRA-GEL (Kurdish People's Congress) in 2003 in order to avoid international condemnation and reaction. In any case, all these names signify the same terrorist organization. Besides the infrastructure, methods, armed elements, aim and the symbol of the terrorist organization had never changed.

Lastly, PKK/KONGRA_GEL has commenced armed operations after announcing that it stopped its so-called cease-fire on the 1st of June 2004. Since then, 271 people are killed or injured again as a result of violent terrorist attacks of PKK/KONGRA-GEL just as before which shows that this terrorist organization has not change its attitude and it never will. Therefore, the nations that sympathize with the terrorist organization because of his so-called cease-fire have no grounds to defend it now.

With this scope I would like to give a concrete example of this. Since January 2003, our search of support for the removal of the PKK / KONGRA-GEL terrorist organization from north of Iraq continues.

However, despite many negotiations and meetings between both the governments and the military authorities at different levels, no substantial development has been achieved so far.

Although USA takes the most severe military measures against the terrorist organizations that she considers as a threat all over the world and especially in Iraq and Afghanistan, The fact that she does not take any compelling measures against PKK/KONGRA-GEL interrupts our common struggle against terrorism.

USA is presently the de facto authority in Iraq and the elimination of all terrorist organizations from the region is a necessity in accordance with her commitments. So removing PKK/KONGRA-GEL from Northern Iraq where it is located and standing by Turkey, a long term ally, at her fight against terrorism is accepted as a gesture of friendship and keeping promises.

On the other hand, after the attacks of September 11 some “list of terrorist organizations” were designated on certain platforms and some “decisions and agreements” have been implemented for combating terrorism. In this context, USA and Britain designated a list of terrorist organizations including PKK, DHKP-C and Hesbollah. After PKK changed its name to KADEK, Germany, USA, Canada and England announced KADEK as a terrorist organization, too. USA included KONGRA-GEL in its “terrorist organizations list” after KADEK’s name has changed to KONGRA-GEL.

NATO has finished working on the subject and expressed its decision about combating the terrorist organizations, like PKK/KONRA-GEL, DHKP-C, AFID and Hesbollah, which have committed terrorism acts towards Turkey, in the documents concerned.

Some of the nations reluctancy, that have already accepted PKK as a terrorist organization, to treat PKK/KONGRA-GEL as a successor of PKK/KADEK, comes to mean that these nations give political support and encourage this terrorist organization. Thus, such a situation has prevented the conduct of a successful struggle against terrorism in the international fora.

The European Union included PKK/KONGRA-GEL, in its terrorist organizations list with its recent names by publishing “The EU Declaration On Combating Terrorism” on the 25th of March 2004 including subjects like preventing the financing of terrorist organizations and organizing of intelligence services, after the terrorist attacks in Madrid.

Although, it is very important for these countries to import those contributions to their domestic law and act accordingly, this step taken by the EU is accepted as an inspiring and promising development that would contribute to the necessary mutual perspective on combating terrorism.

3.0 THE ROLE OF TURKISH ARMED FORCES IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST TERRORISM

In Turkey, we have two different organizations namely, Police and Gendarmerie, responsible for internal security under the Ministry of Interior. Since the threat posed by terrorism could not be countered within the means and capabilities of these two organizations, Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) played an active role in the fight against terrorism upon the formal request by Civilian Authority in accordance with the Constitution.

According to Turkish Law aside from her primary responsibility to defend against external threats, Turkish Armed Forces is responsible for assisting:

- Law Enforcement Units in dealing with domestic threats,
- Civilian authorities in their natural disaster consequence management and humanitarian aid operations.

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Turkish Armed Forces did not only serve as the driving-force for the comprehensive effort against terrorism but also helped easing the work of Civilian Authorities by creating the necessary synergy. It also participated in rehabilitative activities in areas like infrastructure, health, education, etc.

4.0 TURKISH CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PROTECTION OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND STABILITY AND THE COMBAT AGAINST TERRORISM

Operation Enduring Freedom: Turkey has contributed (and maintains her contributions) to Operation Enduring Freedom initiated under the leadership of the US after the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001.

International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF): Turkey participated in ISAF since its inception. Turkey undertook the leadership of ISAF II for the period 20 June 2002-10 February 2003. She continues to participate in ISAF VI at various levels with HQ officers and military units. Furthermore, NATO Response Force (NRF-TU) will take over the responsibility of ISAF VII, beginning from February 2005.

NATO: Turkey firmly supports the efforts in NATO for preparing of concepts and plans about the fight against terrorism. Needless to say, these sorts of endeavors will be of great help for the future missions of NATO.

Center Of Excellence-Defense Against Terrorism (COE-DAT): Turkey has proposed to establish Center of Excellence-Defense Against Terrorism in order to contribute the international struggle against terrorism.

The center will not only facilitate the best use of Turkey's experience in Defense Against Terrorism, but also provide our allies with a convenient environment for sharing the lessons learned and experiences through courses, seminars, conferences, and Mobile Training and Education Teams.

We believe that Center of Excellence-Defense Against Terrorism will help to facilitate international cooperation to display political determination in fighting against terrorism in all its forms and contribute to the establishment of a common understanding of terrorist activities.

The Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE): As a member country, Turkey is proactively participating in counter-terrorism activities in the OSCE.

Contributions to Other Regional Organizations: In addition to her afore-mentioned contributions, Turkey participates actively in initiatives of regional organizations that aim to reach to a common understanding on the definition of terrorism and terrorists. In this framework, even though they differed in their ultimate objectives, issues related to combat against terrorism were inserted into the agreements of:

- BLACKSEAFOR (Black Sea Cooperation Force),
- Black Sea Economic Cooperation (OBE),
- Confidence and Security Building Measures in Black Sea,
- Coast Guard Agreements in Black Sea by due cooperation with member countries.

Moreover, as a country having a vested interest in the fight against all forms of terrorism, Turkey forcefully participated in the extensive work aiming at taking the necessary security measures for Athens Olympic Games in 2004.

Seminars, Symposiums and Similar Activities: Turkey has participated in a variety of international events such as seminars, symposia and similar organizations held after September 11. Taking these opportunities, she has shared her experiences with allies.

Turkish General Staff conducted one international symposium in Istanbul in 2002 and one national seminar in Ankara in 2004 on terrorism.

Turkey has trained personnel from 52 different countries all around the world in the framework Partnership for Peace (PfP) program of NATO with a view to contributing to international peace and stability. We have also signed military cooperation and training agreements with 42 countries.

By means of courses on combat against terrorism and smuggling, a total of 731 foreign personnel have been trained. Among these, 145 have attended courses in Turkey and 586 benefited from the training facilities of Mobile Training Teams.

5.0 CONCLUSION

To sum up, as she did in the past Turkey is willing and determined to share her concerns and experiences regarding terrorism on international initiatives in which she is a member or in whose activities she takes a part.

I would like to underline that terrorism has no language, religion, nationality, region or ideology and it is an international phenomenon equally threatening us all. I strongly believe that all nations should be more sensitive to the international war against terrorism.

I think they must see the necessity to act in global unity and cooperation for the attainment of common goal.

Before I conclude my remarks, I would like to summarize Turkey's views for a successful international effort against terrorism:

- An all-agreed definition of terrorism and terrorist should be made.
- An international organization for the struggle against terrorism should be established.
- The loopholes in the international law relating to terrorism should be filled.
- The list of terrorist organizations should be arranged such that security concerns of all countries are duly addressed without any discrimination.
- Internationally accepted agreements should be imported to the nations domestic law and acted upon accordingly.
- The sanctions to impose on the countries violating decisions regarding the fight against terrorism and those harboring terrorist organizations should be clearly identified.

As a nation exposed to most virulent types of terrorism, I would like to emphasize that Turkey will make all necessary contributions to international struggle against terrorism without any discrimination.

This concludes my briefing. Thank you very much for your kind attention.

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