

At the brink of a chaos : Kurds, EU, Army and poor intellectuals of this country

Thursday 7 June 2007, by [Orhan Kemal Cengiz](#)

Are we cursed ? Why do we always have to live in conflict, in tension, in fear, and in terror ? What is wrong in this country ? What is wrong with us ? Why we cannot solve any problems of this country ? Why do we always repeat everything we have lived through before ? Why do we, on the one hand, boast that we have such a strong army and why, on the other hand, we are so afraid of “our enemies” ? Why is everything defined in this country as a security matter ? Why is the army being glorified while civilians and politicians are underestimated and humiliated ?

There is an election in two months and we are not sure if there will be any election at all ! Nothing is sure, anything can happen!

Now, we have “suicide bombers” once again. It is evidently clear that some elements in the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) are desperately trying to drag Turkey into Northern Iraq to accelerate the already existing alienation of Turkey’s Kurds from Turkey; to get Turkey to confront Iraqi Kurds; to weaken Turkey’s ties with the Western world and worst of all to trigger a bloody slaughter between civilian Kurds and Turks in Turkey.

Why is there always almost a complete match of the agendas of the hawks on both sides? We were talking about joining the European Union the other day and now we are talking about military interventions! We, defenders of human rights, democrats, intellectuals and civil activists of this country, have been working every single day for the last ten to twenty years to get this country to take some steps to improve human rights, to get real democracy and more freedoms. And what we come up with is just the bitter reality that all we did means nothing! What a blow to our self-esteem! Over these years, we have sacrificed many things believing that we are doing something and that we are contributing to the well being of our country. We have come to the point from which we started.

Europe has part in Turkey’s chaos

I am personally angry with the EU and the European countries. The EU and the European countries have played a big part in the current unfolding chaos here in Turkey by not putting a clear route before Turkey, not making a clear promise to Turkey in case she fulfills her obligations whereby she can definitely join the club and by discussing everyday whether Turkey is European or not. That is really shameful for the EU, too. A democratic and secular Turkey, which lives in peace with its Islamist and Kurdish factions could make a notable contribution to the dream of a democratic and a cosmopolitan European Union.

We have always had external and internal enemies who are determined to break up our country. These are our neighbors. These are Communists, Kurds and Islamists. I am 39-years-old and have been listening to these fears and paranoid whisperings since I first became self-aware. For the last 30 years, we have been struggling with terror. For the last 30 years, we have been listening to our generals (including retired ones) with their “strategic plans” on how to finish terror. Why cannot we say to them: “Look, sir, okay, the PKK is a terrorist organization which has a totalitarian ideology. But this organization has become bigger and bigger over the years. When the PKK started its bloody campaign, it had a handful of sympathizers. Today the story is completely different.

If you only have a hammer, everything looks like a nail

Have you ever considered, Sir, that your operations in South East Turkey, some of which caused shameful human rights violations for Turkey before the European Court of Human Rights; that your understanding of the matter, which is based on the complete denial of the Kurdish identity and your approach, which completely blocks political arenas for Kurds, may somehow be contributing to the success of the PKK? Would there be any truth in this, Sir?

I have never heard, Sir, that any of your officials have either made any self-criticism or else put anyone on trial for their wrongful acts in the struggle against terror during these 30 years? Okay, Sir, we have Islamists now, we may have more public appearances of Muslim people in comparison with the situation, let's say, in the 1970s and 1980s. But was it not your generals who were reading verses from the Koran and opening Imam Hatips (religious schools) everywhere in Turkey just after the 1980 coup d'état believing that Turkey was under the threat of communism, so that an "Islamic green belt" must contain the "Turkish Communists"! This social engineering does not work, Sir!

There is a saying, Sir, if the only tool you have is a hammer, everything appears to you as a nail! For you, Sir, there are enemies and allies, but we cannot rule this country with this! You are our dear soldiers, Sir. Please, do your own job only and let politics somehow mature in this country, let this country benefit from politics, Sir! We are begging you, Sir!"