

Happy bayram

Monday 30 November 2009, by [Mehmet Ali Birand](#)

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Tomorrow the Feast of the Sacrifice begins. We will embrace each other for four days. Those who are on bad terms will make peace and kiss the hand of the elders.

I will be abroad for the whole time. But we'll meet again next week. I already wish all my readers a happy and healthy bayram.

The great change since Feb 28

I'm sure you have noticed already. Turkey really changes its shell and changes fast. I wrote this column to remind you of one thing. Think about the period of Feb. 28, 1997.

People got the impression that with the Erbakan-Çiller coalition subversive plans against the government rose from the dead. Especially when in the presidential palace of Erbakan's term some religious sects gathered for dinner, people increased their voices saying, "Subversive plans against the government are on their way." It was a time when tanks used to patrol Sincan to ensure a balanced adjustment.

It was not only subversive plans against the government but also PKK terror that escalated. Security forces were unable to take control, PKK laws persisted in recovered regions. That's when the Turkish Armed Forces took action.

Because the time of directly seizing control of an administration was over, for the first time forcing an administration to resign by manipulating the public was chosen. General Staff briefings were given in succession. These briefings, supported by visual documents, said the country was on the verge of a split due to subversive plans against the government and due to PKK terror. The language used here was extremely impressive and persuasive.

During that period I too was invited to one of those briefings. All leading members of the media were present. Some of them with affection for the military took on an attitude against those who thought differently and those who were liberally inclined. They cynically implied, "Soon you'll see what will happen." And after a while it turned out that they were right. In 1997 the ANDIÇ event took place and people who were in no relation with subversive plans against the government were besmirched.

We all went to the Feb 28 briefings

Nobody who was invited to those briefings objected. Nobody said, "No I'm not coming. It is not the duty of the military to give such briefings." For, almost all members of the media thought this attitude of the military was quite normal. Especially if we, TV show producers, declined such an invitation it would mean a refusal that could then make you earn a place on the hit list. Not joining these briefings was immoral and dangerous. Besides, the common belief was that struggle against subversive plans against the government was within the frame of military duty. We were told that way. We got used to it. This was the way it always was.

I opposed Feb. 28. I understood that what was done was not right and that it meant a hidden military coup. I wrote about it and paid my dues in 1997 when the General Staff misattributed statements to my file,

among others, that I did not say.

Not only newspapers but also non-governmental organizations and different institutions hurried to get to those briefings.

The most brilliant briefing was the one given to prosecutors and judges. The judiciary strongly applauding commanders after the briefing was shown on all TV channels. And this was perceived as quite normal. Everything the military said was right and not even questioned.

As a matter of fact, after the Erbakan-Çiller coalition was forced to resign during a National Security Council meeting, leave aside the media, judiciary or non-governmental organizations, no politician cared about it. Everybody continued with their lives as if nothing has happened.

Today the situation is very different

Let's now think about today's developments. You'll notice how the society in general changed by only looking at the attitude of the Turkish Armed Forces regarding struggle against subversive plans against the government or listening to speeches, statements and disputes at the General Staff regarding the false document incident.

Now people started to question TSK's struggle with subversive plans against the government, what subversive plans mean and where the limit is. All these events show how this country has changed a great deal.

Naturally, AKP being a single party administration having obtained 47 percent of the votes, being a majority government and thus taking control of almost each institution in the country had a great impact. We should not forget that besides those who were uncomfortable with this conduct there was a majority of society who supported it. Turkey is rapidly changing its shell.

Sources

Source: Hurriyet Daily News, le 25.11.09