

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HELSINKI ACCORDS

Banned Turkish Parliamentarians Discuss State of Democracy in Turkey



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**Briefing of the
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
Washington, DC**

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CONTENTS

WITNESSES

FRIDAY, JULY, 22, 1994

Remzi Kartal, Acting Chairman of the Democracy Party (DEP) in Turkey	Page 3
Ali Yigit, former DEP Member of the Turkish Parliament	8

APPENDIX

Hon. Dennis DeConcini, Chairman, CSCE, statements from the Congressional Record:	
August 4, 1994	21
August 11, 1994	23
Hon. Steny H. Hoyer, Co-Chairman, CSCE, statement from the Congressional Record, August 4, 1994	24

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Friday, July 22, 1994

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The discussion took place in room 2167 of the Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC, at 10 a.m., Samuel Wise, Moderator, presiding.

Present: Samuel Wise, Moderator, Staff Director, Helsinki Commission

Also present: Remzi Kartal, Acting Chair of Democracy Party, Ali Yigit, Representative of Democracy Party, and Kani Xulam, acting as interpreter, American Kurdish Information Network

Moderator Wise. Well, good morning, everyone. On behalf of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Helsinki Commission, I am Sam Wise, the Staff Director for the Commission.

And I welcome you here on behalf of our Chairmen, Senator DeConcini and Representative Hoyer. We are pleased this morning to be able to hold a briefing of this kind as it is in the tradition of activities that we have had over the years in the Helsinki process of examining important human rights issues. I saw one of our commissioners here, but I think he's probably left. Mr. McCloskey was here briefly.

The Helsinki Commission has closely followed human rights issues in Turkey since issuing a report on the subject in 1982. An updated report was published in 1988.

Commission delegations have visited Turkey on numerous occasions. In 1989 Chairman DeConcini led the first official U.S. delegation to ever visit the Ankara closed prison, where meetings were arranged by the Turkish government with alleged political prisoners and prison officials. During this visit, the delegation also visited camps housing Turkish refugees from Bulgaria and Kurdish refugees from Iraq.

In early July of this year, Chairman Hoyer and Commissioner, Helsinki Commissioner, Benjamin Cardin met at the CSCE parliamentary assembly meeting in Vienna with Turkish parliamentarians for two and a half hours to discuss human rights questions.

At the end of this parliamentary assembly meeting, which consisted of parliamentarians from 53 countries, resolutions were passed over the objections of the Turkish delegation, which called for, among other things, a mission to be sent by the parliamentary assembly to Turkey to look into the question of possible human rights abuses. The par-

liamentary assembly presumably will contact the Turkish authorities to see if they will permit such a visit in the future.

In May the Commission had scheduled a hearing with Turkish parliamentarians to be held here in Washington on the Kurdish issue, but it had to be canceled because of disagreement over the list of witnesses.

Today free speech in Turkey has fallen victim to the government's war against terrorism. The arrests and detention of Democracy Party parliamentarians and others who speak out in support of rights for Turkey's Kurdish citizens raise questions, serious questions, about Turkish government's professed commitment to free speech and other basic human rights.

While Turkish history naturally differs from that of the United States and other Western democracies, there is no justification for stifling open discourse in a democratic system.

Successive Turkish governments have committed themselves to numerous international human rights standards, including the Helsinki Final Act. It is, therefore, incomprehensible that a staunch democratic ally would subject duly elected parliamentarians to criminal prosecution because of their statements or writings. Two of these individuals, Leyla Zana and Ahmet Turk, allegedly face death sentences for statements made before this Commission, the Helsinki Commission.

Today we have two Democracy Party Deputies who fled Turkey to avoid arrest. They have been in this country for two weeks. And we are most interested in hearing their views regarding the situation in Turkey.

On my right is Mr. Remzi Kartal, who was elected to Turkish Parliament in October 1991 from the City of Van. On March 3rd, 1994 he became Acting Chairman of the DEP, the Democratic Party, when its chairman was arrested.

On June 16th, the Democratic Party was banned by the Turkish Constitution of Court, and Mr. Kartal and five other DEP parliamentarians fled to Belgium.

Mr. Kartal became involved in politics in 1975 as an activist of the Republican People's Party. Following the 1980 military coup, he was arrested and, under torture, had his jaw broken twice. From 1973 to 1975, he served as an officer in the Turkish army. Before his election to Parliament, Mr. Kartal maintained a private dental practice.

On my left is Ali Yigit, who was elected to Turkish Parliament in October 1991 from the City of Mardin. When he and other DEP parliamentarians were stripped of their status, he joined the group which fled to Belgium.

Prior to being elected to Parliament, Mr. Yigit ran a wholesale business in Nusaybin. Following the 1980 military coup, he was arrested on numerous occasions and freed without being charged.

Before turning over the floor to our speakers, I would inform you that after each of them has had an opportunity to speak, to make some prepared remarks, we will open the floor to questions. And at that time I would ask anyone who has a question to please raise his hand, be recognized by me, go to one of the microphones, and before asking the question identify themselves and any organizational affiliation they might have. And I would urge in the interest of all of us learning and benefiting, that questions be kept short.

But now I'll turn first—Mr. Kartal, will you begin?

Mr. Xulam. Mr. Wise?

Moderator Wise. Yes.

Mr. Xulam. For the record, they have a joint statement.

Moderator Wise. All right. I am informed they have a joint statement for the record. Are you going to read it in English?

Mr. Xulam. Yes.

Moderator Wise. Mr. Xulam will read it in English or will you, Mr. Kartal?

Mr. Kartal (Via Interpreter). Before I start my remarks, I would like to thank the Helsinki Commission for this meaningful invitation to me and to my friend, Ali Yigit, to this briefing.

In order to save time and enable you to ask more questions, I am not going to read you my speech, but, rather, allow my translator to read you the same text in English.

Ladies and gentlemen, Turkey today faces two major crises. One is a political problem, and the other is the state of its economy. The political problem stems from the absence of democracy. Although 20 million Kurds live in Turkey, Kurdish identity is officially denied by the Turkish Constitution.

The war being waged against the Kurdish people has bankrupted the country. Last year, for instance, the government spent \$7 billion to finance the ongoing war.

Unemployment and inflation rates are reaching dangerous levels. The government in the near future may have serious problems meeting its payments to its employees.

About a third of Turkey's population is Kurdish. Most Kurds live in the east and in the southeast, which we call northwest Kurdistan. A state of emergency exists in the region.

The Kurds are administered by the military. Many times before the Kurds have had to deal with the long arm of the Turkish army. Turkish President Suleyman Demirel has gone on record stating that the conflict raging on in the southeast is the 29th Kurdish uprising. "The Turkish government has crushed all previous Kurdish rebellions," he said, "and this time will be no different."

This legal denial of the Kurdish existence and the forceful submission of the population has turned the Kurdistan of Turkey into a wasteland. Since 1991 more than 1,360 Kurdish villages have been destroyed. Over 1,550 civilian Kurds have been murdered, and none of their assailants have been arrested.

More than two million Kurds have been rendered homeless. Although most have fled to western Turkish cities, recently some have sought refuge in Iraqi-Kurdistan. There are also reports emerging from Turkey that the Kurds are being forced into concentration camps.

Not long ago Turkish Chief of Staff Dogan Gures called the conflict in the southeast a war and said the state has weapons in its arsenals that it has not used so far. From now on, he warned, it will use three weapons. He was referring to weapons of mass destruction, implying that his forces were ready to use them.

Today any statement about the Kurds that doesn't reflect the official Turkish state ideology is construed as a crime, and the person who makes such a statement is prosecuted under the anti-terror law.

For this reason, many Turkish and Kurdish scientists, intellectuals, journalists, writers, trade unionists, and politicians, Ismail Besikci, Fikret Baskaya, Haluk Gerger, and Munir Ceylan, just to give you a few names, are behind bars.

Turkish Constitution does not allow one to state that there are peoples other than Turks with political rights in Turkey. Eight political parties have been closed because they had platforms that addressed the enduring Turkish problem: the Kurdish question. Among these parties, three: the People's Labor Party, HEP; the Freedom and Democracy Party, OZDEP; and the Democracy Party, DEP, were founded by us.

Two speeches by our former chairman, Yasar Kaya, and a "Peace Now" communique by our party were cited as grounds to ban Democracy Party by the court. Its verdict and our communique are in our information packages for your perusal outside.

Mr. Kaya's speeches and the "Peace Now" communique urged a democratic solution to the Kurdish question. DEP advocated a nonviolent, democratic alternative to the military solution that is now being pursued in the Turkish Kurdistan.

DEP stands for peace, democracy, and human rights. We do not have any contacts with the Kurdistan Workers Party, PKK. We advocate political rights for the Kurds within the boundaries of Turkey, and we do not believe that this problem can be solved through military means.

We are duly elected representatives, and many of us have won in our districts with 50 to 70 percent margins. The closing of DEP means the Turkish government has no respect for the will of the Kurdish people.

Seven of our party's deputies, Ahmet Turk, Leyla Zana, Hatip Dicle, Orhan Dogan, Sirri Sakik, Sedat Yurtdas, and Selim Sadak, are in jail because of speeches they made espousing Kurdish rights. As this is considered high treason under Article 125 of the Turkish penal code, they face the death penalty. Their trial is set for August 3, 1994.

Ahmet Turk and Leyla Zana are, in addition, charged for participating in a CSCE briefing on the Kurdish issue that took place in this building on May 17, 1993.

Since the Democracy Party was banned in June, the same charges of treason have been leveled against the remaining DEP deputies, including myself. This led six of us to flee Turkey and seek refuge in Europe. We are now at the "International Bureau for Solidarity with DEP" in Brussels, Belgium.

This bureau was opened by Belgian senators in April of 1994. Our parliamentary colleagues in our host country wanted us to have a voice abroad to keep the democratic aspirations of the Kurdish people alive. We are grateful to them.

Our advocacy of democratic rights has not only triggered government prosecution, it has cost us lives. Since 1990, 78 members of our party have been killed.

I personally witnessed the murder of Mehmet Sincar, the deputy representing Mardin province, on September 4, 1993. We were in Batman, a Kurdish city, paying our condolences to the family of another party member who had been murdered earlier.

We were attacked while walking in the city center around 6:00 o'clock in the evening. A person leapt out and shot Sincar and another party member, Metin Ozdemir, at close range. Both were killed, and another DEP deputy Nizamettin Toguc was also injured. As is usual with these kinds of political murders, no one was arrested.

To date 21 of our party offices have been bombed. On February 18, 1994, an explosion at our party headquarters in Ankara killed a Kurd and injured 17 others. DEP party secretary, Murat Bozlak, was attacked on March 6, 1994 in his home and received five gunshot wounds.

When we realized that there would be no end to these relentless attacks on our party, we withdrew from the local elections, scheduled for March 27, on February 25, 1994.

The attacks on our party members are a part and parcel of the Turkish government's policies towards the Kurds. It is becoming impossible to keep track of the evacuated and destroyed villages, the number of the Kurds who are murdered by unknown assailants, and the disappearances.

It is a known fact within Turkey that many of these gross violations of human rights are perpetrated by a group known as the Contra Guerrillas, which has ties to the government.

If these abuses were not enough, there are now more disturbing developments in the Kurdish regions. Beginning last March, when the much-heralded Turkish Spring Offensive began, many Kurds began to flee to Iraqi-Kurdistan. A fact-finding mission undertaken by our party delegates estimated that over 10,000 people had sought refuge in the Allied Protected Zone.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees did provide some shelter to these Kurds, and when the news that the Kurds were fleeing from the Turkish democracy made headlines in some European newspapers, the Turkish authorities closed the borders to prevent damage to its image abroad.

But Kurdish villages are still being destroyed, and now the Turkish soldiers have set up concentration camps for Kurds. No outsiders are allowed to see these, but according to the Turkish journalist and editor Ismet Imset, there are now at least three camps.

Two camps are in the Diyarbakir province: one in the village of Damlatepe and the other in Topcular near Hani. The other camp is in the Sirnak province in the Mezra region near Beytusebab.

Starting on July 6, Turkish troops have been destroying villages in Hani Genc and Lice. There are reports that even chemical weapons have been used against the Kurds. In many other areas, the amount of food purchased by the Kurds is limited.

Kurdish villagers who want to go to the cities now have to get a permit from the local military officers to do so. Turkey's determination to culturally and politically extinguish the Kurdish race, if not by forced assimilation, then through forced encampment and death, constitutes a form of genocide.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are appealing to all of you from here. Tomorrow may be too late for us, and we are urging you to take immediate steps on this issue.

The United States government should cut its foreign aid to Turkey. The Foreign Assistance Act empowers the Congress to do so because of the gross human rights violations. Encouraging Turkey towards a more democratic position will benefit the people of Turkey by reducing the risk of civil war and allowing the country to spend its resources on development, instead of war.

The U.S. government should recognize the duly elected Kurdish deputies as the true representatives of the Kurdish people. For stability to come to Turkey, the Kurdish people must be recognized and allowed to participate in the democratic process. The Turkish Constitution should be changed to embrace Kurdish cultural, social, and political rights.

The CSCE was established to prevent conflicts, create opportunities for democratic dialogue, and ensure human rights are respected. Its November 23, 1993 resolution urges member states not to sell conventional weapons to a country that is waging an internal war against its own people.

Turkey, a signatory to the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, is blatantly disregarding its obligations. It is rejecting the democratic aspirations of the Kurds by means of an undeclared war and in so doing is violating the Copenhagen Document.

We call on the CSCE to use the Vienna Human Dimension Mechanism to request information from Turkey concerning its human rights record and the closing of DEP, that the need to call for such a bilateral meeting is urgent; that a mission of three rapporteurs from the resource list established by the Moscow Human Dimension Mechanism be sent to investigate the plight of the Kurds in Turkish Kurdistan immediately; that a mission of long duration be established in Diyarbakir to monitor and report the abuses visiting the Kurds; that the governments of CSCE member states recognize us as the duly elected representatives of the Kurdish people.

If Turkey is not held accountable to its commitments to human rights, the credibility of the CSCE itself will be seriously undermined.

If the CSCE enforces its charter and holds the Turkish government accountable, it will pave the way for peace, help resolve the Kurdish question, and lay the foundations for a lasting democracy.

The alternative is a civil war in which both the Kurds and the Turks will be the real sufferers. In such an eventuality, we should only blame ourselves for not stopping this march of folly towards the abyss.

Tomorrow will be too late. We must work for peace, democracy, and the human rights. With these hopes, I thank you again, respectfully.

Moderator Wise. Thank you.

Well, now we've heard the general statement by our two speakers today. Before opening the question period to you, I'm going to begin myself with a question.

This is one that either of you can respond to, however you decide. But there are allegations that you and other members of the Democratic Party are supporters of the PKK, including their methods.

I have three brief questions. One, do you agree that the PKK is a terrorist organization? Two, have you condemned the terrorist actions of the PKK in the past? Three, do you condemn these actions now?

Mr. Kartal (Via Interpreter). We say at every opportunity that we do not have an organizational link with the PKK, and we have always said that we are against the political violence.

There is a very good case of our being against the political violence. Three of our parties have been outlawed. Seventy-eight of our members have been murdered, and we still struggle. And our struggle is this, because we do not believe that force could resolve the Kurdish question.

At every opportunity we have said that the Kurdish question is not one of military, but one of politics. As the members and the founders of these three parties that have been banned, I'd like to reiterate that our struggle, our resistance is because we believe in political solution of this question.

There was a big pressure on us that we should openly denounce the PKK in Turkey. We did not denounce the PKK because we believed it was wrong. And we believe, had we done so, had we denounced the PKK, the Turkish government or the government forces would have been much harsher on the Kurdish people.

Because PKK uses political violence, there are acts of terror in its activities. But we do not view PKK as a terrorist organization. Because the democratic roads or democratic paths of the Kurdish people have been blocked, we do not see it of any importance or of any value to say that PKK is a terrorist organization.

I repeat again that force and violence will not solve the Kurdish question. I oppose violence. I side with the democratic, open, peaceful solution of this question.

I believe when the environment for the democratic aspirations of the Kurds has been established, the Kurdish people themselves will reject the option of violence. And then we could all call the PKK a terrorist organization.

Moderator Wise. All right. There's the answer to the first question. Question from the floors now? Yes, in the back there. Please go to the microphone. And, as I asked at the beginning, I hope that you could keep your questions brief and to the point.

Mr. Kahn. I'm Louis Kahn, former U.S. diplomat, now retired. I have a question for Mr. Kartal.

I believe it's customary for people coming up here and seeking to influence legislation—and you have mentioned some legislation that you're interested in—to reveal the sources of their finances.

Would you please comment as specifically as possible on the source of your finances? Who has funded your trip here? And who is paying for your stay in Washington? What precisely are the origins and sources and the nature of your support, your financial support?

Mr. Kartal (Via Interpreter). Democracy Party is an organization. Like any organization, it has income and expenses. All of our expenses in the past and today have been met by our party's money. Our trip here was financed by our party as well as by some patriotic Kurds, who believe in our message.

Make no mistake about it. The Kurdish people in Turkey and Europe and the United States want to own the Democracy Party, want to help the Democracy Party.

Moderator Wise. Other questions? Yes, the gentleman over there.

Mr. Haynes. I'm an American citizen. I'm Fred Haynes, Mr. Chairman. I'm the President of the American Turkish Council. I have heard both of our guests from Turkey in an earlier incarnation over at Patton, Boggs and Blow. I have a couple of comments to make, if I may. None of this is in the form of a question except to you, the Chairman.

First of all, the particular organization that I represent is dedicated to a democratic, stable, secular Turkey in a very turbulent part of the world.

And I myself for many, many years have fought for human rights. I fought in three wars: the second war, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. I know what it's all about. And I recognize propaganda on any side when I hear it.

A couple of points. Number one, terrorism, which is clearly the case in southeast Turkey and is clearly fostered by the PKK, is very hard to combat. I have tried it in a couple of other cases. It's very difficult to combat, and it's hard to avoid difficulties with the civilian population.

It's very sad. And I agree that, by whatever reasonable means, it has to be stopped. But the war in the southeast is not, as Mr. Kartal said, causing the economic difficulties in Turkey.

Turkey took 500,000 Kurds during the Persian Gulf War into their country. Turkey is running what's known as "Provide Comfort" to protect the Kurdish population from Mr. Saddam Hussein. And it goes on and on.

The economic issue is different. The Turks have a major, as you know very well, Mr. Kartal knows this and Yigit knows it.

But my final point is that—and it's to you, sir—why the human rights groups, why Helsinki would bring a man like Mr. Kartal here, who is clearly a hostage to the PKK. He has a son who is in the Bekoa Valley who is training as a guerrilla. And it's clear to anybody who has any sense, not Mr. Yigit. I don't think he has any connection with it. But there's a direct threat for this youngster who is joining the force.

I really think—I won't say it's reprehensible, but I don't think you should bring the individuals like this to talk to us. Mr. Yigit, OK, but not Mr. Kartal. He's too connected.

Moderator Wise. All right. I'll reply to your question.

Mr. Xulam. Should I translate?

Moderator Wise. If you can.

Mr. Xulam. Thank you.

Moderator Wise. All right, but let me reply first. As far as the Commission's involvement in briefings of this kind, hearings of this kind, it has long been our policy to hear as many sides of a question, particularly in the human rights area, as we can.

We have tried to arrange, as I mentioned earlier in my introductory remarks, a meeting with some Turkish parliamentarians designated by the Turkish Parliament. We had discussions going back and forth for some time, and eventually they withdrew because they were not assured of the conditions that they insisted upon.

In the past, in the days when there was the communist world, we have had both sides of every question in human rights appear before the Commission, either in hearings or briefings of this kind.

And we feel that there is more than one side to the question in this issue, and we think it is a public service to have these issues expressed.

Mr. Yigit (Via Interpreter). I'd like to just make one brief statement. Ladies and gentlemen, members of the CSCE, these member states at their Vienna meeting on July 4 took two decisions. They decided to send a delegation to look into the closing of the Democracy Party as well as the Kurdish situation. And the second decision was that the Moscow Mechanisms should be enforced relative to Turkey.

Because of that, a delegation will be going to southeast Turkey and monitoring the events, writing a report, submitting it to the CSCE members.

When that decision was reached, only the Turkish government and the Turkish republics voted against it. Before that, the parliamentary assembly also reached a decision. The decision the European parliamentary assembly reached was that a delegation under the direction of Martinez should also go to the southeast Turkey and monitor the events.

I'd like to make you privy to the arguments by the states against the Turkish position in those two meetings. They were telling this to Turkey. They were saying that Turkey says Europe doesn't understand this. They were saying that what's implied cannot be true.

I ask you: Is it possible for all of these countries to be wrong and for Turkey to be right? Ladies and gentlemen, I urge you or I think you should also agree that all of these countries are right and the Turkish position could not be right. Is it possible for all of these countries to be wrong and for Turkey alone and the few Turkic republics to be right?

I'd like to give you my personal view on this, too. I don't believe that people who are enforcing the present policies in Turkey or who are supporting those present policies in Turkey are the true friends of Turks. And if this is a friendship, it is, unfortunately, a blind friendship and a meaningless friendship.

I'd like to say that I share Mr. Kartal's abjurations of this question, and I'd like to answer you, too, very briefly. I'd like to do that in Kurdish.

Mr. Haynes made a remark that Mr. Kartal may not be a PKK but his son is a PKK. Apart from Mr. Kartal's son, there are 35,000 Kurdish sons and daughters in the mountains.

These people did not come from the sky. These people are of the Kurdish people. These sons and daughters belong to the Kurds who are rich, poor, all walks of life.

One of these kids or one of these youngsters is the son of True Path Party, the deputy for True Path Party, Mustapha Zeydan. I'd like to draw your attention to the fact that Mr. Zeydan, the deputy for True Path Party, is the head of a 7,000 force, village guards force, working together with the Turkish government fighting against the PKK. And his son is a commander in the PKK ranks. I wanted you to know this.

It is wrong to assume that the Kurds love violence or are trigger happy or inherently, by nature, are violent. There is no democratic path allowed to them. This is an eventuality that comes out of this.

How would one account for the death of thousands of civilian Kurds in the streets of Diyarbakir and the cities in the Kurdish region? These are unarmed Kurds, without guns, and in someday the number of the death reaches 20 to 30 persons per day. Wouldn't you call this a war? Wouldn't you call this a major crisis?

One thing else I'd like to draw your attention to I have witnessed in person many of these Kurds who have been killed or portrayed in the Turkish press and in the Turkish television as the members of the PKK. When I go to my areas, my constituency, and investigate this in villages, these are Kurds doing their daily chores, it is wrong for the world to close its eyes to this slow, painful death of the Kurdish people.

Thank you.

Moderator Wise. Very briefly. All right? I'd like to continue with the questions.

Mr. Kartal (Via Interpreter). It is wrong for the Turkish youth to be killed in this war, for the Turkish soldiers to be killed in this war, for the Turkish police to be killed in this war.

It is wrong for us to characterize as who's PKK and who's not PKK. The issue at hand is peace. Let us work together for peace.

Moderator Wise. OK. Other questions? The gentleman here.

Mr. Hassan. Voice of America, Saleh Hassan, Kurdish Service. I have a question for you, Mr. Wise, and a question for Mr. Kartal. I will ask my question in Kurdish to Mr. Kartal first.

Moderator Wise. Interpret that in English now.

Mr. Hassan (Via Interpreter). Could you tell us, please, about the Kurds who have fled to Iraqi-Kurdistan. How many of them have done that? I understand you have undertaken a fact-finding mission to investigate the nature of this tragedy.

Mr. Kartal (Via Interpreter). The fact-finding mission that our party undertook and its report, it's in the information folder outside for your information.

There is also another report by the Turkish human rights associations as well as some European human rights associations who have joined them. And their report has been published, too.

I sense there are some members of the audience who consider the policies that are being continued in Turkey as right. I'd like to ask them a question.

The Turkish government officials have stated that these Kurds who have migrated to Iraqi-Kurdistan have done so under the threat of PKK, PKK has threatened them, and they have done so. If that is the case, why don't the Turkish government officials go to Iraqi-Kurdistan and investigate if that is true?

There are many Turkish soldiers, many Turkish intelligence officers, many Turkish police officers in Iraqi-Kurdistan, meaning they have the capability to generate such a report.

Can you imagine a country where its peoples have migrated to another country and that country doesn't even express a concern for the well-being of those people, doesn't even own them? Maybe there are some other reasons for not doing so.

Moderator Wise. Yes? You have a question?

Mr. Hassan. Mr. Wise, apparently Turkey is finding some difficulties obtaining military equipment from the West because it's conditioned not to be used against the Kurds.

But according to some reports, Russia is willing to repay a part of its \$400 million debts to Turkey in military equipment. And there is a tendency in Turkey to accept the offer.

Do you have any comments on that?

Moderator Wise. Well, I'm not directly familiar with the information that you provide, but I am, of course——

Mr. Hassan. It was in the news, sir, and——

Moderator Wise. No. I don't doubt it. I just say that I'm not personally familiar with it. I think that the military equipment which is provided not only to Turkey or in other areas that causes more death and destruction of population or suffering in a human rights sense is regrettable.

Other questions?

Mr. Medialli. Mr. Wise, my question is to you. I'm a Kurd. I'm a U.S. citizen. As you stated before——

Moderator Wise. Would you give us your name, please?

Mr. Medialli. Nuri Medialli.

As you stated, the last two Kurdish members of the Turkish parliament who testified in front of the Commission, where you are sitting now, face the death penalties for the statements that they made here.

And since Kurdish and some Turkish and international organizations of human rights consistently report gross human rights violations in Turkey, do you think it's time

to apply 502 Foreign Aid Acts to Turkey, which is the third biggest recipient of U.S. aid—and which should be the concern of taxpaying U.S. citizens?

Thank you.

Moderator Wise. Well, I think that a question of suspension of assistance to Turkey is a question that needs to be considered. We are at this point trying by briefings such as this, by meetings such as I've described between our chairmen and Turkish officials and Kurdish officials to get at the truth of the situation and to propose that an international delegation go to Turkey to look into the questions there, to form a firsthand view of the problems.

What you suggest is obviously something that, depending on the results of all of these investigations, might be considered.

Yes, please?

Ms. Karadaghi. My name is Dr. Pary Karadaghi. I'm from the Kurdish Human Rights Watch. And my question, I could address it in Kurdish, but so that everybody understands, I can manage in English. I guess my question is for Mr. Yigit and Mr. Kartal.

For the past 10 years since PKK has been in existence, everybody is accusing the Kurdish human rights—the people who are advocating human rights in Turkey are members of PKK. But what about six years ago when a lot of Kurds among them—there's a gentleman here whose family was deported and they went to Lebanon. Thousands of Kurds went to Lebanon when Turkey started deporting everybody and relocating everybody.

So I think there is a perception. And Mr. Kartal and Mr. Yigit should answer that question of whether the perception is new and everything that deals with movements of human rights is being addressed as a PKK.

And I guess my question is: Don't you feel that there is an injustice here, that you are here defending your liaison with PKK when you have been wrongly, your party has been wrongly, counseled, if I may say so, and also colleagues of yours, among them Leyla Zana, whose husband spent years in prison, is also in prison? When she came here, she was very moderate. She didn't say anything that I would think against the Turkish government. So please.

Moderator Wise. Could you translate?

Mr. Xulam. There's a perception that the Kurdish problems have started in the last 10 years.

Moderator Wise. Tell them. It's in English.

Mr. Xulam. Oh, I'm sorry.

Mr. Kartal (Via Interpreter). If we do not know the Kurdish history, I don't believe we could appreciate the question, the Kurdish question, today. There are some 35 million Kurds in the Middle East. Their geography has been divided into four countries.

And in the 70 years' history of the Turkish Republic, there are many Kurdish uprisings. The republic was founded on the promise of equality between the Kurds and the Turks by the Turks and the Kurds.

Unfortunately, the 1924 Constitution disregarded these promises that were made earlier. The Kurds have resisted that and since 1925 have risen against the Turkish Republic.

Unfortunately, to the much pain of the Kurdish people as well as the Turkish people, there have been 28 uprisings. It's for that reason that the President of Turkey, Suleyman Demirel, calls this Kurdish uprising as the 29th.

The Kurdish question is a political question. It's not a terror problem, and it's not a problem that could be solved by military.

Moderator Wise. OK. This gentleman here.

Mr. Karadaghi. My name Mustafa Al Karadaghi, and I am President of Kurdish human rights organization. I would like to make a few observations, and then I will ask Mr. —

Moderator Wise. Please be brief.

Mr. Karadaghi. Yes. In Turkey it's my understanding that human rights violations are accepted by everybody and every human rights organization. From Helsinki Watch, Middle East Watch, and international it's accepted.

And it's proven that there is a large-scale, wide-scale human rights violation by Turkish army. There is a death squad, army death squad. There is a security death squad. There is a gentleman death squad. And there is a special death squad. They kill people indiscriminately in the name of PKK.

The Turkish army is in control in Turkey. Under the organization of the National Security Council of Turkey, all the generals are organized. And they are running the country. Tansu Ciller, when she became Prime Minister, transferred the authority of dealing with the Kurdish question to Turkish army.

Now my question to Mr. Kartal is: In a recent municipal election in Turkey, the Islamic Fundamental Party won the mayorship of Istanbul, mayorship of Ankara, and mayorship of many other cities in Turkey. And they won 19 and a half percent of total Turkish vote.

This was a reaction of Turkish people against the policy of Turkish government in treating democracy in Turkey because the Turks are killed as well as the Kurds. There are many Turkish newspapers men. Writers are in jail. And some of them are strangled and thrown on the street.

My question is: With the recent REFAH victory, Islamic Fundamental Party, in Turkey, what will be the position of army in dealing with REFAH? They are now faced with two different problems: problem of the Kurds asking for democracy and cultural rights and problem of REFAH, which is supported by Iran. And they want to change Turkey into a fundamentalist state. What would the Turkish army do regarding REFAH?

Mr. Kartal (Via Interpreter). If I could briefly sum it up, this whole question, Ali Yigit could do that as well, there is a specter of instability, not only in Turkey, but also in the Middle East, with these recent REFAH victories.

The conservatives, the liberals, the progressives in Turkey unfortunately have not resolved the political problems facing Turkey. And not being able to do that, they have paved the way for the radicals to come forth. Because of the inability of the present parties to address the question, because of hopelessness, they have opted for REFAH party.

If the Turkish government doesn't address or solve the Kurdish question by democratic means, the issue of political Islam is a real threat to Turkey.

Many of you may say that and many of the Turks may not view this prospect for REFAH party, may not see REFAH coming to power. And you're right. Many Turks are pretty much secular.

As I said earlier, if the conditions continue to deteriorate and the political in passe prevails as it is now, easily many people could vote for a fundamentalist party. In that eventuality, soldiers will have only one choice; that is, to close the doors of the Parliament.

This will only strengthen the radical Islam: It will bring forth the most radical Islam. Just as in the case of the Kurds, because of the blocks on the democratic transformation, the arms struggle took on roots in Turkey among the Kurds. Attempts by the Turkish military against fundamentalist REFAH party will also bring forth the radical elements, armed elements perhaps, that the REFAH may bring forth.

There is one thing else that I believe the West doesn't quite understand. And that is the victories REFAH noted or REFAH got in the Kurdish regions of Turkey. And what I say may come as contradictory to your ears. But, unfortunately, the present rulers in Turkey are pursuing these contradictory policies.

The government wants to stifle the rising Kurdish national consciousness with the inculcation of the Islamic philosophy in the southeast. In the last 6 to 7 to 8 years, there are noted investments in terms of religious education in the southeast. And what the government wanted to accomplish by these policies was to lower the National consciousness of the Kurds and inculcate the idea of Muslim first and then Kurd or Turk second. The religion would be the primary form of association.

What I say can be substantiated with very concrete examples. All of the village guards were the candidates of the Islamic party. And the election results that we monitored showed us that many of the security forces stationed in the area voted en masse together for the REFAH party seat.

In essence, the problem is a political problem, and the solution is peace and brotherhood between the Turks and the Kurds.

Moderator **Wise**. Thank you.

Next question, this lady here first at the end of the row. You had your hand up first. Thank you.

Ms. **Kehnemui**. Hi. My name is Sharon Kehnemui. I'm from Capitoline IMS and L. And I wanted to make a brief comment.

You said in the beginning that free speech had fallen victim to a decay of democracy in Turkey. But Mr. Schneebaum at a recent conference, International Human Rights Law Group, that the Helsinki Commission sponsored said that he was very impressed by the quality and the openness of political speech in Turkey. So I would like to mention that it still exists, and it is very free.

And for Mr. Kartal, I would like to ask with which articles of the Constitution he disagrees. And I want points. Do you diverge from the opinions of the 118 Turkish parliamentarians of Kurdish origin who are working effectively within the constitutional framework?

Moderator **Wise**. Let me say just a word about the question of free speech. The reference I made was to the evident fact that the Turkish authorities are prosecuting former members or former parliamentarians of the DEP, as far as we can tell for things that they have said and not actions that they have taken. And that was the reference that I had.

Mr. Kartal can answer the other part.

Mr. Kartal (Via Interpreter). I say this not just for the benefit of the Kurdish people but also for the benefit of the Turkish people that the Turkish Constitution, present Turkish Constitution, is of no good value to both peoples. It should be burned in the Kizilay Square in the middle of Ankara.

There have been four Constitutions in Turkey in the 70 years' history of the Turkish Republic. And all of these Constitutions have been a gift of the generals to the Turkish people.

The appearance Turkey gives to the West is one of democracy and the rule of law, but none of the agreements that it has signed are enforced and Turkey pays no respect to any of the agreements that it has signed with international bodies in the country.

Those who are supporting Turkey are supporting the Turkey that I just tried to visualize for you. We are saying Turkey should be in line with the contemporary values that are prevalent in the world.

You said that there were 118 deputies in Turkey with Kurdish origins. If I am not mistaken, there are probably 80 of them. The differences between us and them, these other Kurdish members of the Parliament think like the parties that they belong to and we think like the platform of our party, Democracy Party.

In other words, because of the platforms of their parties, those other deputies do not want anything for the Kurds. And we're saying it's for the benefit, to the good of Turkey to resolve this issue peaceably by political and democratic means.

And please do not make the mistake of saying or thinking that all of these Kurdish members of the Turkish Parliament agree in totality with the party platforms that they belong to.

I would like to make it a point that they are also afraid to speak up their minds. There is no atmosphere for them to truly express themselves. And I will only tell you this: Those who speak for the Kurds, you can tell by now what has happened to them.

Moderator Wise. Lady over there.

Ms. Elahi. My name is Maryam Elahi, and I'm with Amnesty International.

I'd like to thank the CSCE for holding this forum so that we can have open discussion. And it's very unfortunate, in all fairness to the Turkish government, that they can't be sitting up there in order to answer some of the questions; in particular, the questions that I have. I would very much like to hear their response. But at this point I'll be directing them to DEP members.

I think it's really irrelevant whether 100 percent of the members, the Kurdish members, in Parliament would care or not care about the human rights situation in Turkey. The reality is that people who are in the human rights movement would be raising concerns, CSCE would be concerned, et cetera.

So to make personalized attacks, as governments often do when they don't want to deal with core issues, is not the way to deal with the issue here. The real issue is that there are massive human rights violations and enforcement mechanisms are not being used by the Turkish government.

On a daily basis we have seen a massive escalation, unfortunately, of political killings and disappearances and the systematic use of torture, tortures not just in the southeast, but throughout Turkey.

And the real question is there are certainly abuses by the PKK. Why isn't the government prosecuting those abuses that are committed by the security forces and the members of the government?

My second question is the government has accused DEP, as I understand it, of being a secessionist organization. In your statement today, you made it very clear that you are not a secessionist organization.

You talked about the fact that you believe in greater human rights and democracy for Kurds within Turkey's borders. Could you perhaps address why it is that the Turkish government cannot have a dialogue with you if you are not a secessionist organization?

Thank you.

Mr. Kartal (Via Interpreter). The Turkish government officials do not want to speak with us. I don't mean myself when I say "us." When they do talk to us, it will mean that they own the problem or they have the problem, and they would like to address it.

But that's not the perception in Ankara. They are rejecting the problem. So they will not sit down and speak with us.

Mr. Xulam. Maryam, did you have also the first part of the question? I think I missed it.

Ms. Elahi. Why isn't the government prosecuting people?

Mr. Kartal (Via Interpreter). To answer the first part of your question, the Turkish government authorities do not want to prosecute the unknown assailants, as it's known in Turkey, because these unknown assailants have connections with the local security forces. So it would not serve the Turkish government to air its dirty laundry, so to speak.

And to date none of the assailants or unknown assailants have been found. And that corroborates our argument that they have connections with the local security forces.

Moderator Wise. As far as your first comment about wishing you had the opportunity to address your questions to Turkish officials, we've made efforts in the past to have both sides represented, as I mentioned at the outset. And we will continue to do so, and we'll also try to have an opportunity to have, if only Turkish officials alone, an opportunity to speak to them in the future.

Gentleman in the dark suit here.

Mr. Dimillian. My name is Mr. Dimillian. I have a question.

Why did Turkish soldiers or Turkish government or Turkish press writing in the Turkish newspapers report searching the bodies of killed Kurdish guerrillas and examining their sexual organs to determine if they were circumcised or not? Why are they raping the Kurdish woman guerrillas? What for they doing this? And I believe that that body cannot be a terrorist, that body.

And anybody can answer this. I don't know.

Moderator Wise. I don't believe I can.

Mr. Dimillian. Thank you.

Moderator Wise. If either of the other gentlemen want to?

Mr. Kartal (Via Interpreter). We are not the party to answer this question.

Moderator Wise. Let's see. Let me try to find someone who hasn't had a chance. This gentleman back here.

Mr. Darbandi. My name is Jamal Darbandi. I'm a member of KNC, Kurdish National Congress.

Two years ago I went back to Turkey. And through there I went back to Iraqi Kurdistan. When I was in Turkey for quite a while, I've seen American kind of bases on a junior basis, in Kurdish wars especially, with a main city like Diyarbakir. I feel so sad, you know. The reality is there.

That was it. I should note it was a new year, back two years ago. So when the Kurdish people were celebrating the new year in Turkey, Turkey Kurdistan, and the Turks' army they slaughter about more than 100 some odd people, you know, innocent people and children, that was—when the Germany did, they cut the arm to the Turks. We know that. It was in the newspaper and everything.

Unfortunately, the American policy, they never did raise their voice against what they did. What's American policy right now towards the Kurdish situation in Turkey Kurdistan?

My other quick question is that: Isn't it about time we should cut arms, say, what the Germans did to the Turks' army?

Moderator Wise. These questions are to me, is that right?

Mr. Darbandi. Yes, they are.

Moderator Wise. They are?

Mr. Darbandi. I'm sorry, sir. It's just the main thing is that, that that's what I said. The whole thing is that, you know, that American policy has just been quite silent about what is going on.

We keep seeing torture, the slaughter of Kurdish people. Yet, in American media why is nothing or we say "dedicated to" this one, "dedicated to" that one?

We never did talk about policy, only about the Turkish government. Don't we think it's about time at least we should listen to the PKK?

Thanks.

Moderator Wise. Thank you.

As far as U.S. policy is concerned, it is not the business of our Commission to set such policy. What we try to do is to bring out the facts in cases where there are human rights violations. And if these facts as they are revealed cause a shift or a change in policy, that is probably a good thing. But our interest is to bring out the facts as much as we can.

Other questions? I'll get to you in a minute. This gentleman first.

Mr. Greenblatt. As I may have mentioned before, I've been active for many years in what we call the Jewish peace movement. And the peace movement had played a critical role in bringing about the progress that we see in the Middle East between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

They were often a minority, but they were Israelis and Palestinians who got together who said "The policies have to be changed. We have to try to find a new route, not only in terms of dialogue, but in making recommendations to the government," many of which positions have been frozen, largely because governments do not like to say "We change our position." That's a natural thing of all politicians, Turkish, American as well.

What I'm going to ask you is this: Why is there no Turkish, Kurdish peace movement, Turkish people, such as many of the people in the room here, and Kurds getting together

and saying "We have to stop this. Let us think of specific ways that we can find a constructive solution without waiting for developments" and that once a recommendation is made, it would have a tremendous impact on the Turkish and the Kurdish people and, as a result and ultimately, in policy?

So my question is: Why is there no active peace movement between mainstream Turkish and Kurdish individually? What can be done to change that? And would you be willing, because I'm trying to organize something like that, to participate in such a movement?

Moderator **Wise**. Your name, sir?

Mr. **Greenblatt**. Jack Greenblatt.

Mr. **Kartal (Via Interpreter)**. It's a good recommendation. There were many Turks and many Kurds who feel the same, but, unfortunately, the time has not come for them to take this step. And there are some reasons for that. And the reason is because of the official state ideology, the Kurds are not accepted as a side for this conflict, as a partner in this war.

I believe when that day comes when the Kurds are accepted as a party to the other side of the conflict, these auspicious steps that you're talking about will be realized.

For the war that's being continued in the region, the most urgent thing or the most important thing right now is for the guns to be silenced. And I realize this is not an easy task, but the efforts for the open dialogue must be pursued, nevertheless.

I know of some international organizations who are doing exactly what you're saying. I applaud your intention to help resolve this conflict as well. Those of you who helped bring peace between Israelis and the Palestinians have the experience that you could lend to this conflict as well.

Moderator **Wise**. A question?

Mr. **Evinch**. Hello. My name is Gunay Evinch. I'm a Turkish American. I have a Kurdish background on my grandmother's side, but mostly Macedonian. As all Turks are, when we say we're "Turkish," we're saying we're citizens of Turkey. We have various ethnic groups that comprise us.

I was in Turkey for two years on money from the United States Congress as a Fulbright Scholar in international human rights law. I have prosecuted. And contrary to what Amnesty International stated, I helped prosecute police officers and security forces.

I have three questions I would like to ask. I'm here. I'm not paid to be here. I'm a lawyer. And also I'm here because many American friends of mine have come up to me and said I have a moral conviction. I have a moral duty to be here to tell you perhaps my observations and also get some answers.

When I was in Turkey, one incident happened where a bus was pulled over. These children, when I say "children," these 19-year-olds were in the Turkish armed forces, were visiting their homes on leave. The bus was pulled over, and each one of them was executed. PKK did take responsibility for it.

If this is an act of violence and the PKK did this, I wonder: Why can we not in the Turkish Parliament with these two Turkish parliamentarians denounce the PKK as a terrorist organization? My question is: Would you agree that your comments on the Turkish Parliament floor not only fail to denounce or admonish the PKK for terrorist activity, but also may have encouraged this activity?

My second question is: If you were a congressman in the United States in a similar situation with a terrorist organization operating in the United States, stating that it affiliates itself with a minority group that exists in the United States, would you not believe that in this situation, the Federal Bureau of Investigation as well as the Federal prosecutor would prosecute you for incitement to violence?

My third question is: Have any of the human rights organizations that you're affiliated with, including the Commission, invited you to visit some of our Native American or American Indian reservations or go out on a crime watch with one of our police stations in Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles to figure out the gray area that exists between enforcing the law, domestic security, and civilian rights protection?

Moderator Wise. Thank you.

Mr. Evinch. And would you like to go? I would invite you to go with me.

I'm sorry. If you would like, I can say it in Turkish, too.

Moderator Wise. Well, could you say it a little quicker?

Mr. Evinch. Yes, much quicker.

I'm sorry, sir. You missed my first question, but let me state it in Turkish.

Mr. Xulam. Could you, please?

Moderator Wise. OK. Thank you. Enough of this. Let's answer it.

Mr. Kartal (Via Interpreter). Those who support the present policies of the Turkish government will not take into account the reports of amnesty or human rights organizations, and we understand the reasons.

This gentleman has been to Turkey, I understand. And he has helped prosecutors. You have worked with the government officials. You have helped the prosecutors. It's not possible to learn from the prosecutors in Turkey.

The question was: Why didn't I denounce the people who were killed when the bus was stopped? Is it possible not to denounce such an act? Your silence gave support to the PKK, I don't share this conclusion with you.

We always denounce civilian killings all the time. The government wanted us to basically say this, that only PKK commits acts of terror, that the government has not killed villagers or government security forces have not killed villagers or have done any wrong acts.

I made a few remarks earlier on this issue. Apparently the gentleman did not listen well.

In the acts of political violence, there are acts of terror. And this is a scientific observation. For that reason, we're saying let's put an end to this violence and let's have a democratic platform.

To say that there are acts of terror in political violence and to equate that with the PKK being a terrorist organization is not right. If I think like you, that means I will have to say that I oppose the political solution of the Kurdish question.

You are, in other words, saying that I support the military solution to this conflict. And that, I tell you, is not a solution to this problem. This will lead to the death of thousands of Kurds, Turkish soldiers, and police officers. You will not hear me say that I support such a thing.

You are giving me the example of the Native Americans. Are you saying that what befell the Native Americans should befall the Kurds? If this is what you're saying, this

is not logic. This is illogical. Wrong is wrong, whether it's done in America or it's done in Turkey.

Moderator Wise. Our time is officially up. It's 12:00 o'clock. I will take one more question, the gentleman in the back who has had his hand up for a long time, and then we'll have to close.

Mr. Yildiz. Thank you, Mr. President. I'd like to make a very short statement.

Moderator Wise. Your name, please?

Mr. Yildiz. My name is Kerim Yildiz. I'm Executive Director of Kurdistan Human Rights Project. It's a nongovernmental and independent organization based in London in the United Kingdom.

First of all, let's start with the concept of the terrorism. Especially the last 10 years, the concept of terrorism has been abused by the State of Turkey to attempt to legitimize the violation of human rights.

Let me give another example. The last 70 years, as rightly the President of Turkey said, this is the 29th of the Kurdish revolts. And we were crushed brutally. Let me tell you they called all of these 28 revolts as a terrorist act. The same things happened in Iran, in Iraq, and in Syria.

The second point, I would like to give thanks to the CSCE Commission to provide this democratic platform, which the members of the DEP did not have an opportunity to discuss, to provide this kind of platform in Turkey. That's why we are calling for to provide a democratic platform for the possible solution of the Kurdish questions.

The freedom of expression enables everyone to participate in the free political debate which is the very core of the concept of a democratic society. That is, the first problem starts in Turkey with that.

Whether the Turkish government likes or not, in the Kurdish question is a matter of a public interest. I would like to underline that. It is a matter of the public interest concerning the southeast Turkey affects the life of the whole community, the Turkish, Kurdish, and other minorities in Turkey.

Moderator Wise. I would ask you to please go a little faster because we are trying to conclude.

Mr. Yildiz. Yes.

Moderator Wise. If you have a question, we would appreciate it.

Mr. Yildiz. Well, I think it is important. I'll just make a couple of notes for this Commission to know what is actually happening, what are the Turkish government obligations. And I'll make my notes. I'll quickly read it within two minutes for you in that case and also express my concern that Turkey is not fulfilling the CSCE obligations.

Of particular concern are the violations in the areas of the right of the National minority, including language, culture, and enforced resettlement, as well as the widespread use of torture and violation of the right to life of freedom of expression.

And the characterizations of the reports of the human rights organizations show the current situation in the southeast Turkey is marked by widespread killings, the destruction of civilian property.

I think I would like to underline that, also very important, the destruction of the civilian property and ill treatment of the detainees in Turkey. As probably you know, over 7,000 local prisoners are protesting state security code in Turkey.

Therefore, the situation has to date resulted in the forced movement of large numbers of people which constitute a threat to the regional peace and the stability.

Thank you, President.

Moderator **Wise**. All right. Thank you very much. I didn't detect a question in that statement. So I don't think there's a necessity for a response.

I thank you all for coming. I think the briefing has accomplished the purpose that we had for it, which is to provide some information on this pressing question and to give some informed and other ideas about the problem. I hope it leads us all to better conclusions.

I thank you. And the meeting is closed.

[Whereupon, the foregoing matter was concluded at 12:06 p.m.]

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 103^d CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Statement by Senator Dennis DeConcini
Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

DEMOCRACY ON TRIAL IN TURKEY

Mr. President, this day marks a sad milestone on Turkey's path towards democracy. Today, before a court in Ankara, six Kurdish parliamentarians face capital punishment for expressing political views deemed treasonous by Turkey's civilian and military leadership. Altogether, 13 duly-elected deputies of the Democracy Party (DEP) have been thrown out of parliament, including six who fled the country so they could not be silenced.

Mr. President, I am flabbergasted that such a spectacle is taking place in Turkey, a staunch friend, a NATO ally, and CSCE participating state whose officials regularly express commitments to democracy and international human rights standards. This trial will take place before the world press and hundreds of lawyers, foreign parliamentarians, human rights activists and others on hand to demonstrate their concern and support. In addition to starkly illustrating how free speech and political activity is restricted in Turkey, the trial will bring attention to other underlying obstructions to democracy.

Mr. President, I was initially dismayed at the widespread popular support for the government's dogmatic campaign against the DEP members. But what is becoming increasingly clear is that public opinion is being openly manipulated by major media outlets controlled by government or other political sources. With respect to Kurdish rights issues and the war in Southeast Turkey, informed debate has fallen victim to inflammatory prefabrications or severely restricted information. I believe, as long as major media sources remain controlled by political and military interests, and journalists and others remain silenced, informed public debate will be impossible. Mr. President, free expression and an unrestricted press are prerequisites of democratic societies. The Turkish press must be enabled to report responsibly on Kurdish issues and other human rights concerns.

The DEP trial will also likely underscore the deficiencies of the government's unrealistic military approach to the Kurdish question -- a cornerstone of which is the criminalization of Kurdish-based political parties. When political parties are banned, the pattern in Turkey is that like-minded groups form on their heels or members move to more extreme parties. It would seem that allowing Kurds to form legal political parties would be a plausible way of diminishing support for the PKK and other extremist groups. The CSCE Copenhagen Document clearly outlines commitments taken by 53 participating states regarding unrestricted political party activity. The campaign against the Democracy Party

and its predecessors raises serious questions about the Government of Turkey's commitment to these principles.

Mr. President, while the start of this political trial marks a dark day for Turkish democracy, one can hope that the attention drawn by this event will bring added pressure on the government to pursue non-military resolutions of the Kurdish crisis and to address other pressing rights issues. I would remind my colleagues, that two of the deputies face the death penalty for statements made at a Helsinki Commission briefing in the Rayburn Building. I find it truly unfathomable that a professed democratic government could press capital charges against elected parliamentarians simply for their speeches or writings which advocate neither violence, secession nor solutions outside of a democratic framework. On this inauspicious occasion, I urge my colleagues to join me in expressing to the government of Turkey our disappointment at their irrational campaign to squelch free speech.

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 103^d CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Statement by Senator Dennis DeConcini
Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

PKK ATTACKS ON CIVILIANS MUST STOP

Mr. President, I wish to express my anger and frustration over recent killings of innocent civilians by members of the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK). Yesterday, 12 innocent civilians, including women and children, were machine gunned by PKK guerrillas while riding a bus. This, and similar attacks, only propel forward the senseless cycle of violence responsible now for over 12,500 lives and widespread destruction and dislocation throughout southeast Turkey. I fail to see how the killing of innocent men, women and children serves the interests of anyone who professes to want human rights and democracy.

Mr. President, violence certainly begets violence and murder can never become an acceptable means of achieving political objectives. Mao Tse Tung believed that political power emanated from the barrel of a gun, but Mr. President, in the 21st century, political power will be built on words and the free flow of information. The force of ideas is ultimately more powerful than the force of arms. So, just as I have called upon the Government of Turkey to peacefully and democratically redress the grievances of its Kurdish citizens, so too must the PKK abandon its armed struggle. I cannot understand how PKK leaders expect their calls for political solutions to the Kurdish problem to be taken seriously as long as the PKK slaughters civilians. To the contrary, their terrorist tactics only besmirch the legitimate efforts of Kurdish leaders who are genuinely seeking a peaceful political solution.

Mr. President, the human rights situation in Turkey is not getting any better. A virtual state of civil war exists in southeast Turkey. Kurdish villages burn and tens of thousands are made refugees. Human rights and pro-Kurdish activists are regularly murdered or disappear. A relentless campaign against free speech is silencing parliamentarians, journalists and others and stifling informed public debate. Mr. President, amidst the haze of war and propaganda emanating from all sides, the truth is becoming increasingly difficult to discern.

Mr. President, for the sake of human rights and the future of democracy in Turkey, I urge Turkish and Kurdish combatants to consider an immediate ceasefire. Their military debate must end and a political debate be allowed to begin. Only after the violence and terror have ceased can the process of bringing peace and prosperity to all of Turkey's citizens commence.

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 103^d CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Statement by Representative Steny H. Hoyer
Co-Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

CONDITIONING AID TO TURKEY

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my distinguished colleagues on the Foreign Operations Conference Committee who worked until 3:00 o'clock in the morning last Friday to finalize this important piece of legislation. I wish to particularly praise the leadership of Mr. Obey and Mr. Leahy, as well as the fine work of Mr. Porter, Mr. DeConcini and others who devoted close attention to the sections pertaining to Turkey. I want to express my strong support for the principled position that was adopted with respect to Turkey.

Passage of this bill sends an unequivocal message to the Government of Turkey that this Congress will not conduct business as usual when U.S. supplied equipment is used against civilians and to destroy crops, livestock and villages. Additionally, as the conference report language indicates, this legislation reflects our deep concern over the fact that parliamentarians, journalists, and others face capital punishment simply for their expressing their opinions.

We have long urged Turkey's leaders to seek non-military solutions to the Kurdish question, but our appeals have fallen upon deaf ears. We are making it clear that we cannot unconditionally provide aid which is used by Turkey's military to wage an increasingly costly and violent campaign against Kurdish civilians. Mr. Speaker, recent pressure from the U.S. government has prompted some Turkish officials to claim that U.S. officials and Members of Congress want to change Turkey's borders and contest the right of Turkey's government to defend its citizens against terrorism. This could not be farther from the truth. The U.S. respects both principles. This legislation expresses our belief that the Turkish government must not pursue its war against terrorism at the expense of free speech and other human rights and against civilians.

Mr. Speaker, while I realize that this legislation will cause consternation among some of Turkey's leaders and people, this action is not simply a shortsighted slap on the wrist to express our displeasure with the uncompromising military approach of Turkey's leadership towards its Kurdish citizenry. Turkey is a critical economic and strategic partner whose predominantly pro-Western, secular government makes it a strong ally of the United States. This legislation attempts to promote a long-term, mutually respectful alliance that can only realize its full potential if a peaceful resolution of the Kurdish crisis is reached and the primary threat to Turkish democracy is resolved. Peaceful resolution of this issue would

strengthen democratic institutions and bring Turkey closer to realizing its CSCE and other international commitments. This important bill gives added substance to a growing chorus calling on Turkey to pursue political approaches to the Kurdish situation.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to see that the conferees agreed to keep my language offered during full Committee mark-up that requires the Secretary of State to consult with the Department of Defense in compiling a report on use of U.S. supplied equipment and other pressing rights issues. It is clear that Turkey's military leaders play a critical role in policymaking. Over the years the Pentagon has developed close ties with Turkey's military and holds substantial influence within the Turkish military. DOD has both the expertise and personnel on the ground to contribute significantly to the report. DOD's participation in compiling the report further demonstrates our this body's concern and understanding of a complex and difficult situation.

Mr. Speaker, the central dilemma facing our government is how to encourage the further development of democratic institutions and respect for human rights without isolating Turkey or turning its leaders and people away from a pro-Western orientation. As a proven ally and supporter of Turkey, the United States is in a better position than most to effectuate this diplomatic balancing act. Our shared strategic and economic interests in promoting peace and stability in the former Yugoslavia, Central Asia, the Middle East and in other areas make cooperation between our states critical. So, while Turkey remains a close NATO partner and ally, this legislation is a measured and responsible statement of our concern over the deteriorating rights situation and demonstrates that business as usual is out of the question as long as an uncompromising military approach to the Kurdish question is pursued. Our alliance will be much stronger, as will Turkey's democracy and economy, when the Kurdish situation is peacefully resolved.