

Erdogan's Crackdown on Kurdish HDP Party Leaders Triggers Terror Bombing



h/t Erdogan Failure

Turkey's Islamist dictator, President Recep Tayyip is out to destroy what is left of democratic opposition and free speech , as well as relations with the EU, NATO and, possibly the US. We say possibly the US, because Erdogan considers the lame duck administration of President Obama as headed by a friend, President Obama. Lest we forget Obama's first overseas foray in his first term was to Ankara to deliver his first in a series of Muslim country outreach speeches and ingratiate himself with then Premier Erdogan. This summer, we witnessed Vice President Biden scurrying off to Ankara to meet with Erdogan making common cause with the Turkish President's incursion into northern Syria primarily to fight Kurds, and, only secondarily, the Islamic State. More recently we have seen Erdogan flexing his military muscle to jump into the fray in Iraq with proxy Sunni militia fighters to 'assist' in the battle for retaking Mosul. He has made it clear he wants to control an independent 'Sunnistan' there, harkening back to the Ottoman Empire when Mosul was a *vilayet*. Erdogan has pretensions of becoming the neo-Sultan of a resurgent Turkish dominated Caliphate.

At home he has jailed more than 100,000 since the mid-July faux coup, including members of the military, judiciary, education sector and taken over virtually all independent media. In that latter instance, we saw this week the virtual shutdown and purge of the entire editorial staff at the last

independent newspaper, [Cumhuriyet](#). Many he has detained he alleges were the equivalent of a fifth column of Hizmet cult followers of his former ally, now enemy, Sheikh Fethullah Gulen, in self exile in Pennsylvania since 1999. Erdogan has pressed the Administration to extradite Gulen for prosecution of fomenting the faux coup. Turkey has retained US counsel to press complaints with state agencies endeavoring to shut down the 150 Gulen sponsored science and math academics funded as charter schools reportedly receiving several hundred million in US taxpayer funding.

Erdogan is currently seizing major Turkish businesses, under the guise of routing out Gulenists, with the result that the Turkish lira has taken a dive on the foreign exchange markets, private foreign direct investment in the \$720 billion economy has shrunk and tourism has swooned. With today's news, "[The Turkish currency sank](#) more than 1.5%, and the main stock market closed 3.15% lower amid fears of rising political unrest."

Erdogan has special animus about the Kurdish – led Peoples Democratic Party (HDP), whose leaders as running digs for the Turkish Workers Party (PKK) that he unleashed an internal civil against in the summer of 2015, when his AKP party lost supermajority control . That resulted in a snap election in September 2015, when he regained power. Then there was the bombing in the Kurdish southeastern city of [Suruc in late July 2015](#) killing 30 Kurdish young leaders injuring over 104 that Erdogan attributed to a radicalized student operative. Many thought otherwise, the Suruc bombing may have been an excuse that triggered another round in the internal civil war between Erdogan's security forces and the PKK.

Today, the war against Turkey's Kurds by Erdogan's regime worsened, as reported by Margaret Coker and Yeliz Candemir in a breaking *Wall Street Journal* report, "[Arrest of Kurdish Leaders Shakes Turkey](#):"

Arrest and Detention of HDP members

The detentions early Friday marked the government's most significant step yet against pro-Kurdish politicians since it began the post-coup crackdown, which initially focused on alleged plotters but later expanded to alleged supporters of Kurdish separatists.

Authorities in overnight raids detained the leaders of the Peoples' Democratic Party, Selahattin Demirtas and Figen Yuksekdag, and 10 others for defying subpoenas to testify in connection with terrorism-related charges. A judge ruled Friday that Mr. Demirtas, Ms. Yuksekdag and several others from the party, known as the HDP, must remain under arrest until trial.

The party's popularity has risen under the leadership of Mr. Demirtas. With 59 deputies in the 550-member parliament, the HDP has helped serve as a check on Mr. Erdogan's expanding power.

The HDP said the investigation against its members involved manufactured charges based on "dictatorial policies" of the president.



Deadly Car Bombing in Diyarbakir, Turkey

Source: AFP-Getty Images

Deadly Car Bombing in Diyarbakir

Following Friday's arrests, a car bomb exploded outside a security headquarters in Diyarbakir, the nation's largest Kurdish-majority city, where Mr. Demirtas lives and was detained. At least eight people, including five civilians, were killed in the blast, according to Turkish officials.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility. The government blamed the PKK.

The HDP has its base in Turkey's Kurdish heartland but also attracts voters from across Turkey's the political spectrum, in part due to its policy of supporting a negotiated peace deal to end the nation's long-running insurgency, which has killed more than 40,000 people.

EU Reacts

EU officials expressed concern on Friday. "Very bad news from Turkey. Again," the European Parliament's Turkey Rapporteur Kati Piri said in a tweet early Friday.

The European Commission called on Ankara "to safeguard its parliamentary democracy, including respect for human rights and the rule of law."

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier suggested the Turkish opposition crackdown could threaten Turkey's path to EU membership.

Statements of HDP and leading Opposition in Ankara Parliament

Mr. Demirtas in a statement submitted to the court Friday denounced the process as political theater.

The leader of Turkey's largest opposition parliamentary bloc chastised the government for jailing his HDP colleagues, saying it was sure to further destabilize the country.

"If you put our elected leaders in jail then you will never bring peace to this country," said Kemal Kilicdaroglu, the head of the Republican People's Party, or CHP. "Turkey is not being managed well, and this is a perception that is damaging Turkey's credibility in the world."

