

Antwort
der Bundesregierung

auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Ulla Jelpke und der Gruppe der PDS
– Drucksache 13/6883 –

Geheimkonferenzen zur „Lösung des kurdischen Problems ohne die PKK“
und die Umsetzung des Programms „Winning of hearts and minds“

Laut „Kurdistan aktuell“ (herausgegeben von der Menschenrechtsorganisation „medico international“) vom September/Oktober 1996 fanden in der ersten Jahreshälfte 1996 Geheimkonferenzen in Oslo, Paris und Lugano statt, die vom Internationalen Friedensinstitut PRIO veranstaltet worden sind. Thema dieser Treffen war die Vorbereitung einer „Lösung des kurdischen Problems ohne die PKK“. Hierzu soll laut Beschluß dieser Konferenzen eine „alternative Kraft“ gegen die PKK geschaffen werden. Zu dem Teilnehmerkreis dieser Konferenzen gehörten u. a.: ein ehemaliger türkischer Luftwaffengeneral, eine Mitarbeiterin des türkischen Geheimdienstes MIT, zwei Funktionäre der gewaltbereiten rechtsextremistischen MHP und ein ehemaliger stellvertretender Ministerpräsident. Von kurdischer Seite nahmen teil: Behlül Yavuz (Vorsitzender der Handwerkskammer Diyarbakir), Herr Sakir (Vorsitzender des Industriellenverbandes von Diyarbakir), der Vorsitzende des Flüchtlingsvereins Mersin, der ehemalige HEP-Bürgermeister von Cizre und heutiges Refah-Mitglied und ein ehemaliges Mitglied der HEP. Der ehemalige Bürgermeister von Diyarbakir, Mehdi Zana, nahm an diesen Treffen ebenfalls teil, distanzierte sich jedoch später hiervon.

Diverse geplante Projekte auf dem Bildungs-, Agrar- und Justizsektor sollen in den kurdischen Gebieten entstehen, um in der Bevölkerung schrittweise Akzeptanz und Vertrauen herzustellen für die „neue“ Partei.

Laut „Kurdistan aktuell“ soll im Anschluß an diese Konferenzen ein Treffen in Ankara zwischen dem kanadischen Botschafter, einem Vertreter der EU-Türkeikommission sowie einem Mitarbeiter des UNHCR stattgefunden haben, um die Pläne zur Umsetzung der Projekte als Vorstufe einer neuen Partei zu konkretisieren. Den Ausführungen von „Kurdistan aktuell“ zufolge soll die Deutsche Botschaft diese drei Geheimkonferenzen mit 15 000 DM mitfinanziert haben.

Das Auswärtige Amt und die „Gesellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit“ (GTZ) sind offenbar seither bemüht, türkische, kurdische und europäische Nichtregierungsorganisationen (NRO) für die Umsetzung des Programms mit dem Titel „Winning of hearts and minds“ zu gewinnen.

Die Antwort wurde namens der Bundesregierung mit Schreiben des Auswärtigen Amts vom 19. Februar 1997 übermittelt.

Die Drucksache enthält zusätzlich – in kleinerer Schrifttype – den Fragetext.

1. Sind der Bundesregierung die drei genannten Geheimkonferenzen bekannt?
 - a) Haben an diesen Begegnungen auch Vertreter der Bundesregierung und/oder von Einrichtungen des öffentlichen Dienstes teilgenommen?
Wenn ja, zu welchem konkreten Zweck?
 - b) Auf wessen Anregung hin erfolgte ggf. eine deutsche Teilnahme an diesen Konferenzen?

Der Bundesregierung liegen Informationen des norwegischen Friedensinstituts „PRIO“ vor, wonach 1996 drei vertrauliche Treffen (Round-table-Gespräche) stattgefunden haben, und zwar im Mai in Beauvines bei Paris, im Juni in Lugano und im September bei Brüssel.

Zu a) und b)

Vertreter der Bundesregierung oder von Einrichtungen des öffentlichen Dienstes haben an diesen Veranstaltungen nicht teilgenommen.

2. Trifft die Behauptung in „Kurdistan aktuell“ zu, daß die Botschaft bzw. das Auswärtige Amt die Konferenzen mit 15 000 DM kofinanziert hat?
 - a) Wofür genau wurde dieser Betrag gezahlt?
 - b) Aus welchem Titel des Bundeshaushalts wurde der Betrag zur Verfügung gestellt?

Nein.

3. Welche weiteren über die in der Vorbemerkung erwähnten Personen hinaus haben an den Konferenzen in Oslo, Paris und Lugano teilgenommen?
Waren auch Vertreter der türkischen Regierung anwesend, und wenn ja, aus welchen Ministerien/Behörden?

Den Auskünften des norwegischen Friedensinstituts „PRIO“ zufolge nahmen neben dem Direktor von „PRIO“ von türkischer und kurdischer Seite jeweils sechs Personen teil. Offizielle Vertreter der türkischen Regierung seien nicht anwesend gewesen.

4. Wie bewertet die Bundesregierung die Teilnahme von zwei Funktionären der MHP/„Graue Wölfe“ an den Geheimkonferenzen?

Die Zusammensetzung des Teilnehmerkreises der genannten Round-table-Gespräche liegt in der Verantwortung der Veranstalter.

5. Welche Ergebnisse hatten die Konferenzen aus Sicht der Bundesregierung?

Als Ergebnis der drei Treffen wurde eine „Stiftung für gesellschaftliche Problemforschung“ als parteiunabhängige „nicht profitorientierte Bildungsorganisation“ unter Vorsitz des Direktors von „PRIO“ gegründet (ein Grundsatzpapier der Stiftung ist in Kopie als Anlage beigelegt).

6. Hat an der Begegnung im Anschluß an die Konferenzen zwischen dem kanadischen Botschafter, dem Vertreter des UNHCR und der Türkei-Kommission der EU auch ein Angehöriger der Deutschen Botschaft in Ankara teilgenommen?
 - a) Wenn ja, wann hat das Treffen stattgefunden, und welches war die Aufgabe der deutschen Teilnehmerinnen und Teilnehmer?
 - b) Haben an diesem Treffen auch Vertreter der türkischen Regierung oder/und Angehörige sonstiger staatlicher Stellen teilgenommen, und wenn ja, welche?
 - c) Folgt dieser Zusammenkunft weitere Termine, und wenn ja, wann und auf welcher diplomatischen Ebene?
 - d) Welches waren die jeweiligen Ergebnisse, und was wurde anläßlich dieser Beratungen konkret vereinbart?

Über diese Begegnung und ihre Ergebnisse ist der Bundesregierung nichts bekannt.

7. Welchen personellen und finanziellen Beitrag leistet die Bundesregierung zum beschlossenen Aufbau einer „alternativen Kraft“ gegen die PKK in Kurdistan?

Welche konkreten Vorschläge im Hinblick auf Personen und bereits existierende Gruppen/Organisationen/Parteien oder noch zu schaffende Organisationseinheiten hat die Bundesregierung unterbreitet bzw. wird sie unterbreiten?

Die Bundesregierung leistet keinen personellen oder finanziellen Beitrag zum Aufbau einer „alternativen Kraft“ gegen die PKK. Die Initiative zur Aufnahme eines Dialogs zwischen den Konfliktparteien muß von diesen selbst unternommen werden, sie kann nicht von außen organisiert werden.

8. Betrachtet es die Bundesregierung als ihren Auftrag, die Gründung von Parteien in anderen Staaten materiell zu unterstützen?

Wenn ja, auf welcher rechtlichen Grundlage?

Nein.

9. Welchen zeitlichen Rahmen zur Verwirklichung einer „Lösung des kurdischen Problems ohne die PKK“ haben sich die Beteiligten sowohl an den Konferenzen als auch an dem in Frage 6. genannten Treffen gesteckt?

Hierüber ist der Bundesregierung nichts bekannt.

10. Trifft es zu, daß in den kurdischen Gebieten diverse Projekte auf dem Bildungs-, Agrar- und Justizsektor unter dem Programmtitel „Winning of hearts and minds“ entstehen sollen?

Wenn ja, welchem Zweck sollen diese dienen?

Über ein solches Programm ist der Bundesregierung nichts bekannt.

11. Welchen personellen und finanziellen Beitrag soll die Bundesregierung bei der Planung dieses zivil deklarierten Programms leisten bzw. hat sie bereits geleistet?

Siehe Antwort zu Frage 10.

12. Trifft die Behauptung in „Kurdistan aktuell“ zu, daß die Bundesregierung seither auf der Suche nach NRO ist, die den Auftrag zur Umsetzung der Pläne übernehmen sollen?

Wenn ja, welche Organisationen wurden diesbezüglich zu welchem Zweck angesprochen?

Siehe Antwort zu Frage 10.

13. Ist es richtig, daß das Auswärtige Amt bereits mit Rupert Neudeck von „Cap Anamur“ entsprechende Vereinbarungen getroffen hat (Frankfurter Rundschau vom 10. September 1996)?
- a) Wenn ja, wann wurde ein entsprechender Vertrag mit Rupert Neudeck abgeschlossen?
 - b) Welche konkreten Projekte soll Rupert Neudeck im Auftrag der Bundesregierung in welchen unter Ausnahmerecht stehenden kurdischen Provinzen/Regionen/Orten realisieren?
 - c) Wie hoch war die finanzielle Projektunterstützung durch das Auswärtige Amt für das Jahr 1996?
 - d) Welche finanziellen Anforderungen liegen der Bundesregierung für das laufende Haushaltsjahr 1997 für welche konkreten Vorhaben vor?

Nach Kenntnis der Bundesregierung leistet die Organisation „Cap Anamur“ in Diyarbakir humanitäre Hilfe. Das Auswärtige Amt hat hierzu keine Vereinbarungen mit Rupert Neudeck getroffen. Im übrigen siehe Antwort zu Frage 10.

14. Welche weiteren deutschen NRO haben Interesse bekundet, sich an dem Programm „Winning of hearts and minds“ zu beteiligen?
- a) Mit welchen dieser NRO hat die Bundesregierung inzwischen Vereinbarungen getroffen?
 - b) Wo sollen diese Organisationen eingesetzt und mit welchen Projekten konkret betraut werden?

Siehe Antwort zu Frage 10.

15. a) In welcher Höhe wurden Mittel aus dem Bundeshaushalt 1996 zur Verfügung gestellt (bitte nach Projekten auflisten)?
- b) Liegen für das laufende Haushaltsjahr 1997 bereits Finanzierungsanträge vor, und wenn ja, für welche NRO bzw. Projekte?

Keine. Anträge für 1997 liegen nicht vor. Siehe Antwort zu Frage 10.

16. Liegen der Bundesregierung Informationen darüber vor, welche europäischen, außereuropäischen (USA, Kanada), türkischen und kurdischen NRO an dem Programm „Winning of hearts and minds“ beteiligt werden sollen bzw. beteiligt sind?

Siehe Antwort zu Frage 10.

17. Wurden sämtliche beschlossenen Projekte und Aktivitäten in den kurdischen Gebieten mit der türkischen Regierung abgestimmt und vertraglich geregelt?

Siehe Antwort zu Frage 10.

18. Welche Projekte außer denen des „Winning-of-hearts-and-minds“-Programms hat die Bundesregierung in den Jahren 1993, 1994, 1995 und 1996 in Türkei/Kurdistan aus Mitteln des Bundeshaushalts gefördert bzw. finanziert (bitte auflisten, um welche Projekte es sich in welcher Provinz/Region handelt)?

Die Bundesregierung hat 1993 bis 1995 wegen der angespannten Sicherheitslage keine Projektzusagen für Ostanatolien gemacht. Zusage 1996: 27 Mio. DM Finanzielle Zusammenarbeit für das Klärwerk Diyarbakir.

19. Welche Initiativen hat die Bundesregierung ergriffen, um die türkische Regierung zu einer Beendigung des militärischen Vorgehens gegen das kurdische Volk zu bewegen und andererseits um die sofortige Aufhebung des erst kürzlich erneut verlängerten Ausnahmezustands in den kurdischen Provinzen bemüht zu sein?

Die Bundesregierung setzt sich seit langem für eine friedliche Lösung der Kurdenfrage ein. Sie verurteilt den Terrorismus der PKK nachdrücklich. An die türkische Regierung appelliert sie, im legitimen Kampf gegen den Terrorismus die Verhältnismäßigkeit der Mittel zu wahren sowie rechtsstaatliche Prinzipien und das internationale Recht, insbesondere die Menschenrechte, zu beachten und zugleich nach einer politischen Lösung zu suchen, die den berechtigten Anliegen aller Beteiligten gerecht wird und zu einer Beendigung militärischer Maßnahmen, einschließlich des Ausnahmezustands, führt.

20. Welches ökonomische Interesse für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland verfolgt die Bundesregierung in den kurdischen Gebieten der Türkei?

Die Außenwirtschaftspolitik der Bundesregierung hat die Förderung der wirtschaftlichen Beziehungen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zur Türkei allgemein zum Ziel. Eine Differenzierung nach Regionen im Partnerland findet nicht statt. Die Entscheidung über konkrete Projekte liegt grundsätzlich in der Verantwortung der Privatwirtschaft.

21. Setzt sich die Bundesregierung auch für die politischen, kulturellen und sozialen Rechte des kurdischen Volkes in der Türkei ein?
Wenn ja, mit welchen konkreten Projekten?

Die Bundesregierung setzt sich seit jeher für eine Verbesserung der Situation der Kurden in den Ländern ein, in denen sie leben. Vorrangige Forderung ist dabei die Möglichkeit der Bewahrung der kulturellen Identität. Die Bundesregierung macht deshalb gegenüber der türkischen Regierung immer wieder deutlich, daß die Kurdenfrage nicht mit militärischen, sondern mit politischen Mitteln gelöst werden muß.

Anlage
zu Frage 5

FOUNDATION
for the
RESEARCH OF SOCIETAL PROBLEMS

HISTORY:

In 1995 Prof. Dr. Dogu Ergil, a member of the Faculty of Political Science at Ankara University, completed a field research program which concluded that an overwhelming majority of Kurds reject terrorism and disavow demands for independence. Ergil and his colleagues discussed plans to institutionalize their interests promoting democracy and strengthening civic society in Turkey at workshops in France, Belgium and Switzerland. As a result, the Foundation for the Research of Societal Problems was established in accordance with provisions of Turkish law. In Turkey, it is the first non-governmental organization entirely designed, governed and managed by Turkish citizens including those of Kurdish origin.

GOVERNANCE:

The Foundation is a not-for-profit educational organization without party affiliation. Its board of directors is made up of prominent persons with careers in politics, government, academia and business. Its executive committee includes men and women, Shia and Sunni, as well as Turks and Kurds. In addition, the Foundation is establishing an International Advisory Board of prominent persons knowledgeable about Turkish affairs with background in public policy, media and various areas of scholarship. It is chaired by Dan Smith, Director of the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO).

GOALS:

The board of directors has adopted a "Statement of Principles" which describes its vision for Turkey as a peaceful and prosperous society (Attachment A). In order to advance this vision, the Foundation works with political elites and at the grass-roots to organize projects which further multiculturalism, tolerance and political pluralism. Activities emphasize:

- Civic education through public outreach.
- Advocacy of socially responsible policy.
- Use of media and communications tools.

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PROJECTS:

These strategies will be brought to bear through the following projects:

- Public Announcement: The Statement of Principles will be released and set-up of the Foundation will be announced in Istanbul (April, '97). The Board of Directors will convene the domestic and international advisory boards to finalize the first year's strategies/activities.
- Local Support Groups: Workshops on Civic Society and Democracy will disseminate the statement of principles to local community leaders who will initiate satellite offices and/or grass roots activities. Istanbul, İzmir and Diyarbakir are initial target cities for establishment of local support groups.
- Workshops/Task Forces: Topical priorities are (a) Migrants Welfare, (b) Women's Issues, and (c) Economic Opportunities/Employment in the Southeast. Workshops will develop program/policy recommendations and task forces will be formed for each topic in order to mobilize public support through the Foundation's newsletter, special media campaigns and targeted outreach to policy makers and opinion leaders.
- International Speakers Program: Distinguished experts will visit Turkey to address university, business and media audiences. Proposed topics include (a) Self-determination in International Law, (b) Conflict Resolution Techniques, (c) Decentralization and Local Governance, and (d) Human Rights and Helsinki Principles.
- Newsletter: A quarterly newsletter will be prepared highlighting the organization's activities and providing a forum for intellectual debate. As the primary vehicle for communicating to in-country constituencies and representatives of the international community, the newsletter will be published in Turkish and English.
- Media Relations: The Foundation will establish regular contact with leading journalists in print, radio and television media. In addition to highlighting projects/activities, efforts will be made to place opinion pieces in leading journals. Board members will benefit from media exposure and other high profile opportunities.
- Leadership Education: In order to impact public policy, a systematic outreach program will involve regular contact between staff/board members and important figures in the government, bureaucracy and Turkish Grand National Assembly.

DOCUMENT OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING
OR
COMMON SET OF PRINCIPLES

Turkey is experiencing serious difficulties in overcoming her systemic problems due to the bureaucratic nature of the political institutions that have been shaped since the creation of the Republic in 1923. As a result of these conditions, Turkey is increasingly unable to keep up with the complex changing structure, needs, and demands of the Turkish society.

In addition, the persistence of the state-centered structure of the polity has become too centralized, restrictive, and authoritarian. Hence, neither individual, nor group expectations and demands (including cultural freedoms) are fully understood nor met by the central authority (the state). The detachment of the "center" has led to the estrangement of society from the state. As a result, this has had an adverse effect on political unity and social solidarity.

Furthermore, there is an established belief that "Whatever the state does, gives, or decides is good; neither its motive nor the consequences of its deeds can be questioned." The state is sacred (this statement was in the preamble of the Turkish constitution until a year ago). Its actions cannot be criticized. Its mistakes cannot be questioned and corrected. The perception of any popular demand or objection to policies of the government represents an unjustified rebellion, undeserved demand, or outright subversion. The centralist system looks upon the emergence of new social power centers or alternative policy proposals as extraordinary, subversive, and even deviant. As a result, popular demands are addressed inadequately, tardily or are simply suppressed.

The fact that social expectations are met callously or simply suppressed causes violence in the society: The social fabric is seriously damaged when both the official method of problem-solving and the method of conveying popular demands to the central authority are both violent. Violence "from above" and "from below" reinforces and legitimize each other.

At the root of this society's problems lies the process of our nation-building which progressed not from the nation towards the creation of the state, but rather evolved as a process of building a nation with the initiative of the existing state apparatus and bureaucracy. In the Turkish example, the state preceded the nation.

The forbearer of the Republic of Turkey, the Ottoman state, was not a nation-state. It was a cosmopolitan political union of diverse nationalities, ethnic and religious groups. The Republic of Turkey was founded as a nation-state. However, the already existing state and powerful bureaucracy took on the mission of creating a new concept of nationhood which was created and shaped by the state. The state's role as the creator, rather than the coordinator still persists. This phenomenon renders the state omnipotent and omnipresent vis-à-vis the society.

While a culturally rich and diverse society grow both in size and complexity, the authoritarian state structure that was created to

meet the needs of the early 1920s remained to a great extent loyal to its policy of uniformity over unity which resulted in an increasingly incompatible relationship between the state and society. Tension and conflict which arises between the tutelar central authority and the populace can be likened to the immature son (the populace) of the house (the state) in which the latter induced the former to be rebellious. Further problems arise from the perception that the "son" – who is neither satisfied nor free in his father's home wishes to leave. Moreover, the Republic of Turkey has several children! Some of whom believe that they are treated like stepchildren.

One of Turkey's major political problems emanates from what we attribute to the notion of nationhood¹⁾, a fundamental concept in our political culture. At the time of the declaration of the Republic, the pluralistic nature of the population and the multi-cultural richness of the society inherited from the Ottoman Empire was accepted by the republican elite. Disregarding their ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic heritage, the "nation" was deemed to be the political union of all groups living in Turkey. This understanding could have created a pluralistic political structure out of a plural demography in which the nascent pluralist political organization would inevitably be democratic. However, creating a nation based on pluralist principles out of a poor, backward, uneducated and cosmopolitan populace was not realized by the political elite of the time.

The urgent need to create a common political culture as the basic of the envisaged nation prompted the ruling elite to adopt the policy of uniformity (liquidating cultural differences) rather than unity (respecting and reconciling differences). The preference led the republican elite to the acculturation of the "nation" with the qualities of the majority, namely Turkishness and Sunni, even Hanefi branch of Islam.

Based on the decision to standardize the population, the political elite or the central authority took on the task of defining "Turkishness" and "Islam" as well as the qualities of a "Turk" and "Muslim". Once these qualities were determined, they became the arsenal of nationalist and secularist standardization. This intense effort of the last seventy odd years has been partly successful. However, it is becoming clearer this process is flawed because it emanates from a fictive reality rather than the existing realities of the country/society.

Failure to eliminate imbalances in life-styles due to differential development of regions (especially Eastern Anatolia, which still suffers from the yoke of tribalism and feudal landownership); the widening of inequalities amongst social strata; perception and treatment of cultural differences as deviant (this policy exhibited itself as an exclusionist attitude against non-ethnic Turks and non-

1) A Nation is a political union of social groups and communities with differing ethnic, religious, cultural roots and special histories. A nation is a solidarity group that has forged a political union regardless of these differences. The nation-state is the organized, institutionalized form of the consensual political union achieved by the nation.

Muslims and non-Sunnis among the Muslims) were combined with underdevelopment, unemployment and the insensitivity and inefficiency of the state thereby giving rise to criticism of the system. Successive military interventions, the first of which was staged in 1960, and authoritarian laws could not halt increasing opposition which from time to time took on a violent character. Violence, on the other hand, served as a dirty shawl concealing corruption and moral decadence.

Had the armed struggle been a conflict between security forces and a group of bandits on remote mountain tops, then the society would not have been much affected by it, and the matter would not be regarded as a national security issue. But we are confronted with a widespread economic disaster that impoverishes the nation, minimizes investments, and aggravates inflation.

Furthermore, the bloody struggle going on for years has long ago become more than a mere conflict between two armed groups. It causes strike between the Turkish and Kurdish citizens of this country and damages social solidarity. On the other hand, this problem, which cannot be, or rather, is not solved domestically has become a regional (Middle-Eastern), and even international phenomenon which creates opportunities for outside intervention. This very fact makes the need to find a solution even more urgent.

Because the problem is seen merely as a security issue and not as a "social conflict", we suffer from an unnamed war fought on our own lands, amongst our own people in which citizens kill each other. Should this war not be controlled, it may migrate from the countryside to urban centers, further polarizing the society.

Every society may have its share of fanatics who choose violence as a means of political expression. Effective police measures are needed to deter such people. However, when violence becomes a widespread method of protest involving thousands of armed peoples supported implicitly or explicitly by hundreds of thousands, then such a phenomenon is of a social character. Therefore, the social dimension of the conflict needs to be taken into consideration and the roots of the conflict need to be examined.

Primarily and most importantly, the parties to the conflict should meet independent of the official institutions which are the creators of the conflict. These parties should work together to define the problem and formulate solutions. Their common assessment must be translated into policy proposals and presented to the public, the real . . . of the problem(s).

It is with this vision and aim that we, the citizens of Turkish and Kurdish origin of the Republic of Turkey, got together motivated by the belief that watching the enfeeblement of our society, like a patient with internal bleeding, is partaking in the historical irresponsibility. We discussed our mutual problem(s) at length in environments clear of external political influences. As a result of long and heated discussion free of prejudices and ready political menus, we agreed that:

1. Turks and Kurds of Turkey are not the citizens of two inimical states. They are members of the same state. The root cause of the existing conflict is not the two parties/communities, but the official institutions, practices, and ideology.
2. The official (political) institutions have lost their effectiveness. They have become unresponsive to local characteristics and exigencies of the people because of their ultra centralized and hierarchic structures.
3. Official practices so far have reflected an unresponsive attitude to the existence of Kurdish and other cultural realities.
4. The official ideology adopted as the driving force of nation-building, i. e. (Turkish) nationalism has turned out to be perceived as exclusive rather than inclusive for non-ethnic Turkish citizens of the state contrary to the intention of the founders of the Republican regime. Indeed, citizenship has been based on Turkishness.

The Republican regime has restored sovereignty to the people. However, due to inadequate democratization of the regime, the impact of people over the decisions concerning their own welfare has been minimal. The most important reason behind the bottleneck in the system is that the state has never really transferred power to the people.

Despite official doubts, democratization of the regime is possible through the creation of a pluralist political structure without hampering the unitary nature of the state²⁾. However, neither individual politicians nor political parties take responsibility for realizing this outcome. Social conflict continues because of their opportunistic and irresponsible attitude.

The people of Turkey would have been able to solve their internal problems much more easily, we believe that if the political parties had not supported political factionalism and resisted change. The people wish to live together and have the common-sense to produce practical solutions to achieve this end through mutual consensus. Quarrels, lack of understanding, insensitivity, and resistance to popular demands stem more from existing political structures and authoritarian mentality.

The presence of Kurds in Turkey, i. e. "the Kurdish reality", was unfortunately discovered after considerable bloodshed. Nevertheless, recognition of the Kurdish reality represents an achievement in itself. What does the recognition of the Kurdish reality mean? It implies the acknowledgement of the existence of a cul-

2) The Unitary State symbolizes the administrative-political organization of the nation intent on self-rule. The central authority or political-administrative center created out of the solidarity of communities that comprise the nation may be pluralistic and participatory or authoritarian and monopolistic, depending on the level of development of the society. The central authority may be democratic to the degree it relies on a constitution which is built on universal human rights and on the principle of pluralism.

While a democratic and pluralistic unitary state attributes the highest value to indivisibility or unity of the society, it does not reject proliferation of the form of political participation and formation of local governments. In fact it considers them to be instruments sharing power with the citizens and of national unity. A democratic government is conscious of the fact that a strong state can only be built on a strong society. Strength emanates from freedom and competition.

tural group (people), which includes millions of persons. The Kurds have been and are one of the main elements of the Republic and the Ottoman states. They lay claim to unique cultural characteristics and are sensitive about conserving them.

Such acknowledgment of cultural distinctiveness is based on not only a scientific observation, but also on political realities. The Kurds want official/legal acknowledgment of their existence as a unique cultural group (people). They would like this acknowledgment to extend beyond oral commitments to include legal warranties having effect on daily life including the free exercise of their cultural identity.

The Kurds do not want these rights in order to distance themselves from the state or to divide Turkey. Neither do they want to alter the basic qualities of the state. But rather, they want to be able to preserve their cultural heritage and still live in safety as equal and respected citizens of Turkey in spite of the fact that they are from an ethnic group other than the majority.

In summary, a great majority of the Kurds are as loyal to the Republic of Turkey as any other citizen, but they want their Kurdishness to be respected. Unlike democratic and civilized countries, Kurds feel rejected and victimized as the state and political institutions resist the needs of the Kurds. Feelings of victimhood and ensuring wounded self-perception (identity) are the basis of societal problems.

It is impossible to establish stability and solidarity in a society which includes a major group or people who feel politically excluded or victimized, even if such people are of the same race or religion with the majority. The two pillars of stability are justice and equality. Social peace and stability can be achieved only through a democratic state organization and constitutionally based rule of law which guarantees equality of all social groups. Poverty and underdevelopment, while aggravating the situation, are not the primary causes of the problem.

Citizenship and ethnic, religious, and cultural identity should not be confused. Citizenship is a legal phenomenon which includes existing diversities in the society. Cultural identity (belonging), on the other hand, is a personal and/or group phenomenon involving the private domain and the civil society. Official authorities should not intervene in these domains because any intervention would make the state a proponent of one side as it already has. This harms social solidarity.

Freeing the private or cultural domain from intervention by the political domain/institutions is presumed in democratic society which preserves political equality. These conditions must be met if the feeling of "pluralist nationhood" is to be cultivated. A reductionist nationalism based on the ethnic identity of the majority or a privileged minority can not ensure stability. It carries, in itself, the seeds of exclusion and segregation.

Then, what is to be done is obvious:

Institutionalizing of respect for all ethnic and religious values and strengthening democratic institutions which safeguard cultural diversities and political freedoms are necessary steps. We see this as effective measures to prevent further politicization of ethnic and religious differences. We propose the expeditious implementation of the following legal and institutional infrastructure:

- a) To put into practice the requirements of all international agreements on human rights and basic freedoms signed by (successive) government(s).
- b) To rapidly adopt more liberal laws concerning the election system, political parties, and freedom of expression and assembly, in order to widen the base of democracy and to open the way for popular will to influence the decision-making mechanisms. To prepare a new constitution safeguarding such laws based on the principles of multi-culturalism, pluralism, and participatory democracy.
- c) To make the concept of local government a reality and to try to solve local and regional problems which the central government cannot solve with the will and initiative of the local people. To equip and empower local governments with the organs of democratic administration and financial resources. To create elected councils which can make decisions at the local-regional level without contradicting national laws and principles.
- d) To create systems for government accountability including the establishment of an Ombudsman to oversee whether administrations at all levels work in accordance with the law and are harmonized with their designated responsibilities.
- e) To establish regional development administrations in which local representatives elected by regional councils and a body of experts carefully selected by the central government will work together. To ensure the fruitful coordination of these groups without excessive bureaucratic red-laps.
- f) To implement the principle of separation of powers in the central government: to render the judiciary autonomous of other powers; to upgrade the total quality of the judiciary's procedures, personnel, and practices by making the judiciary independent of the other organs/powers of the national state.
- g) To extend constitutional guarantees of the country's cultural richness including the rights of other cultural groups³⁾ to safeguard their traditional values. To this end, the authorities should recognize and support the Kurds' efforts to teach their mother tongue besides Turkish, the official language of the country, and to convey their traditional cultural values to the community's younger generations, and, extend these rights to other cultural groups as a necessary prerequisite of democracy and civic equality.

3) Anthropologically, a Cultural Group may be called a "people", "Society" is culturally a neutral collective concept. Each society consists of diverse cultural groups and religious communities. What keeps them together is the political culture, division of labor and their free collective will to live together as a nation.

h) To refrain from considering, using or praising violence as a problem-solving method; to be cautious of provoking people against each other for the sake of fighting against terrorism; to adopt the habit of solving problems in ways other than violence as a necessary condition of democracy; to ensure that laws relied on in the struggle against political violence are in harmony with universal legal principles based on human rights; to ensure that the personnel employed in the fight against terrorism comply with universal legal principles.

i) Starting from Eastern Turkey, to prepare master plans and related projects that will be put into effect in the short, medium, and long terms in order to reduce the level of poverty and increase the level of employment which act as the incubators of many social ills.

j) To bring together the parties of this ongoing "social conflict" in order to build a "common ground" of understanding; to organize and encourage the silent majority, which do not believe in violence and is ready for a conciliation.

Having agreed on these points, our group, which consists of an equal number of Turkish and Kurdish citizens of Turkey, has decided to share its thoughts and convictions with the rest of the society. We are intent in expanding our activities at the grassroots level so that people are encouraged to cultivate solutions to their problems by discussing and settling their differences. We believe that a consensual solution to mutual problems is the only way to build a stronger and more stable society. We are citizens with responsibility to our country and history.

