

# Turkey, terrorism and double standards

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Bruce Fein - The United States is imploring Turkey to desist from invading northern Iraq to combat the PKK, a Marxist-Leninist terrorist organization that keenly relishes the slaughter of Turkish teachers, doctors, technicians, engineers, Kurdish village guards and police, and otherwise.

Concurrently, the United States asserts its own right to invade the sovereignty of any country in pursuit of suspected international terrorists. Thereby hangs a tale of United States double standards and the failure of the State Department's public diplomacy. A staggering 83 percent of Turks hold an unfavorable view of America. The corresponding figure in Germany is 66 percent.

The PKK sheltered by Iraq's Kurdish Regional Government threatens Turkey's military and civilians with mayhem and death every bit as much or more than al Qaeda threatens the United States. And the lives of Turks killed by PKK terrorist are worth as much as those of the victims of the September 11, 2001, abominations.

In its aftermath, the United States invaded Afghanistan for aiding and abetting al Qaeda. It kidnapped the Egyptian Abu Omar in Milan, Italy, and dispatched him to Egypt where he was tortured. The United States also kidnapped a German citizen, Khaled el-Masri, in Macedonia and detained and brutalized him in Afghanistan. Another terrorist was killed in Yemen in a U.S. rocket attack. President Bush has held international law empowers the United States to use its military anywhere on Earth to capture or kill al Qaeda suspects because the entire world is an active battlefield. Osama bin Laden has pledged to kill Americans any time, any place.

The United States acting as world policeman to protect its citizens was presaged by Army Gen. John "Blackjack" Pershing's punitive invasion of Mexico in 1916. Escalating border incidents early that year culminated in a raid of Columbus, New Mexico, by Pancho Villa's band of bandits on March 8. They killed 24 Americans. In retaliation, Gen. Pershing invaded Mexico with 10,000 troops in mid-March to capture Villa. The futile American expedition penetrated as far as Parral, 400 miles south of the border. U.S. clashes with Mexican Army units ensued. American troops were not withdrawn until February 1917, or 11 months after their entry into Mexico.

The PKK's murderous provocations against Turkey from the safety of the Kurdish Regional Government or elsewhere make Pancho Villa's villainies against the United States pale in comparison. With about 5,000 members under arms, the PKK has been responsible for the killings of tens of thousands, including Kurds horrified by its indiscriminate violence. The PKK also seeks dismemberment of Turkey despite its political, economic and cultural openings.

Exemplary of Turkey's broad political space, the Kurdish Democratic Society, which features a nationalist agenda uncritical of the PKK, captured 24 seats in parliamentary

elections last July. Moreover, Kurds are well-represented in government, business and industry. They have been presidents and prime ministers. In the southeast where Kurds predominate, the government has invested more than \$150 billion over the last three decades to spur economic development, vastly more than in any other region. On a parallel path, Turkish civil society organizations, particularly education and health-care charities, have focused their programs on aiding the needy there.

The ethnic identity, language and local cultures of Kurds are also respected. In recent years, radio and television broadcasts in Kurdish have been authorized; the Turkish Public Television broadcasts in Turkish; and private instruction in Kurdish is permitted. In sum, Kurds enjoy equal political, economic and cultural opportunities in Turkey, which makes PKK's terrorism even more reprehensible.

The United States lists the group as a foreign terrorist organization. Mr. Bush also has proclaimed there is no middle ground in the conflict with terrorism: If you are not with the United States, you are an enemy.

The State Department's 2007 Country Reports on Terrorism assailed the PKK and noted its operation in northern Iraq under the nose of the Kurdish Regional Government: "Most prominent among terrorist groups in Turkey is the... PKK. Composed primarily of Kurds with a historically separatist agenda, the PKK operated from headquarters in northern Iraq and directed forces to target mainly Turkish security forces, government offices, and villagers who opposed the PKK."

To borrow from George Orwell's "Animal Farm," the United States will win few friends by cynically insisting that all nations are equal in battling terrorism, but the United States is more equal than others.

Turkey's right to occupy or invade northern Iraq to capture and kill PKK terrorists is clear. The only question is whether exercising that right would be prudent.

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