

University of Louisville

ThinkIR: The University of Louisville's Institutional Repository

College of Arts & Sciences Senior Honors
Theses

College of Arts & Sciences

5-2018

The case for management in the Turkish-Kurdish conflict.

Devin P. Brown
University of Louisville

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.library.louisville.edu/honors>



Part of the [International Relations Commons](#), [Near and Middle Eastern Studies Commons](#), and the [Peace and Conflict Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Brown, Devin P., "The case for management in the Turkish-Kurdish conflict." (2018). *College of Arts & Sciences Senior Honors Theses*. Paper 165.

Retrieved from <https://ir.library.louisville.edu/honors/165>

This Senior Honors Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Arts & Sciences at ThinkIR: The University of Louisville's Institutional Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in College of Arts & Sciences Senior Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of ThinkIR: The University of Louisville's Institutional Repository. This title appears here courtesy of the author, who has retained all other copyrights. For more information, please contact thinkir@louisville.edu.

The Case for Management in the Turkish-Kurdish Conflict

by

Devin P. Brown

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Graduation *summa cum laude*

University of Louisville

March 27, 2017

The Turkish-Kurdish conflict has ravaged Turkey for nearly 34 years. It is one of the world's longest enduring rivalries, garnering significant international attention. Since 1984, experts estimate that at least 30,000 people have died in this conflict.¹ In just the past two years, the fighting has killed 3,362 people² and displaced another half million people. Although the parties have attempted to resolve this dispute multiple times, a comprehensive peace deal has remained elusive. So what should be done about this conflict? Is there a way to compel these parties to forge a lasting peace deal? Or, should the international community focus on ameliorating the most pernicious effects of the conflict until peace seems more attainable?

This paper will begin by recounting a short history of the Kurds in Turkey, the beginnings of the insurgency, and the former attempts at peace negotiations. Then, it will analyze the most recent negotiation between Turkey and the PKK, followed by a discussion of the reasons that those negotiations collapsed and recent developments in Turkey. This paper will then elucidate four primary strategies that the literature has suggested to resolve ethnic conflicts and discuss why each of those models seems unlikely to resolve the Turkish-PKK dispute. This paper will conclude by anticipating the possibility for another round of peace negotiations and will introduce a new, conflict-management model to promote cooperation between the parties until they can reach a comprehensive peace deal.

I. The History of the Kurds in Turkey

The Kurds are one of the oldest indigenous groups in the Middle East and are the largest stateless nation in the world today. They speak various dialects of Kurdish and have a rich cultural history in the region. The Kurds have lived in the southeastern region of present-day

¹ Nigar Göksel, "A New Cycle begins in Turkey-PKK Conflict," *International Crisis Group*, 11 August 2015, <http://blog.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/2015/08/11/a-new-cycle-begins-in-turkey-pkk-conflict/>.

² "Turkey's PKK Conflict: The Rising Toll," *International Crisis Group*, last updated 21 February 2018, <http://www.crisisgroup.be/interactives/turkey/>.

Turkey since before the founding of the modern Republic of Turkey. In fact, after the fall of the Ottoman empire in 1918, the Kurds were poised to establish their own state. The Sèvres Treaty set a course for the Kurds to declare independence in the wake of the Ottoman empire's collapse: "A Commission...shall draft within six months...a scheme of local autonomy for the predominantly Kurdish areas."³ However, in the aftermath of the Turkish war for independence in 1923, a new treaty—the Treaty of Lausanne—demarcated the modern boundary for Turkey. The newly established state of Turkey covered much of the land promised to the Kurds under the Treaty of Sèvres. Soon after, the modern borders for Syria, Iraq, and Iran were drawn, dividing the remaining Kurdish land and separating the Kurds among four foreign states.⁴

Under the revolutionary leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the new Turkish republic sought to establish a strong nation state by embracing a coercive ethnocentric nationalism. Since Kurds constituted roughly twenty-percent Turkey's population at that time, the Turkish government viewed Kurdishness as a potentially grave threat to Turkish nationalism.⁵ Thus, the Atatürk government introduced a program of Turkification which was "aimed at eradicating non-Turkish allegiances and suppressing non-Turkish culture and expression."⁶ This program specifically targeted ethnic Kurds and outlawed all forms of Kurdish culture and language. In response, the Kurds launched more than thirty separate revolts beginning in 1925 and ending in 1937.⁷ In each instance the Turkish military squashed the insurrections, hoping to extinguish all aspirations for a sovereign Kurdish state. This program was so successful that a British diplomat traveling

³ Treaty of Sèvres, Part III Section III Article 62, Signed 10 August 1920.
<http://www.hri.org/docs/sevres/part1.html>.

⁴ Kerim Yildiz and Kurdish Human Rights Project, *The Kurds in Turkey: EU Accession and Human Rights*, (London: Pluto Press in association with Kurdish Human Rights Project, 2005): 7.

⁵ Ibid, 2.

⁶ Ibid, 14.

⁷ Åsa Lundgren, *The Unwelcome Neighbour: Turkey's Kurdish Policy*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007): 43.

through Turkey in 1956 remarked: “I did not catch the faintest breath of Kurdish nationalism.”⁸ However, this program failed to completely eliminate Kurdish hope for autonomy.

From 1940 until the early 1970s, the government continually excluded the Kurds from public life and refused to recognize their existence, referring to them as “mountain Turks.”⁹ Although the repression of the Kurds had softened during the 1950s and 60s, extreme political unrest in the 1970’s and a slow rebirth of Kurdish nationalism prompted the creation of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK). Founded and led by Abdullah Öcalan, the PKK sought an autonomous Kurdistan and “called for a national revolution to overthrow the Turkish state.”¹⁰ Although displaced by the heightened repression following the coup of 1980, the PKK flourished in northern Iraq and Syria, and in 1984 it initiated a full-scale civil war against Turkey. The Turkish military responded with devastating violence, routinely burning Kurdish villages and indiscriminately massacring militants and civilians. Aliza Marcus, a journalist during the war recounts: “At that time, the state didn’t distinguish active fighters from everyone else... They were all viewed as being PKK and they were arrested, tortured, shot, or chased out of the region.”¹¹ The war halted in 1999 when Turkish security forces captured Öcalan in Kenya, and the PKK declared a unilateral ceasefire. Although broken up by intermittent ceasefires and attempted negotiations, the fighting has continued until today.

The Kurds and Turks have attempted to resolve this conflict multiple times, yet every effort so far has been unsuccessful. Surprisingly, Turkish president Turgut Özal tried to open peace talks with the PKK in March 1993, but these intentions never materialized since Özal

⁸ Aliza Marcus, *Blood and Belief: The PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence*, (New York: New York University Press, 2007): 18.

⁹ Lundgren, *The Unwelcome Neighbour*, 46.

¹⁰ Marcus, *Blood and Belief*, 46.

¹¹ Aliza Marcus, "The Kurds' Evolving Strategy," *World Affairs* 175, 4 (2012): 19.

suddenly died the following month.¹² The 1999 ceasefire seemed to be a sign of good faith by the PKK, but “Turkey continued to dismiss PKK offers to negotiate and demanded what amounted to a total surrender. By the summer of 2004, violence had erupted again.”¹³ The renewed conflict continued until the summer of 2009 when President Recep Tayipp Erdoğan and his foreign minister, Abdullah Gül, announced the “Kurdish opening.” In a momentous speech, Erdoğan and Gül declared that the Kurdish question is Turkey’s “biggest problem.”¹⁴ However, the Kurdish opening was short-lived. Before the negotiations began, far-right nationalist groups sharply criticized the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), charging the AKP with weakness and even treason.¹⁵ The public backlash, coupled with the government’s insufficient preparation, effectively closed the Kurdish opening. This pattern has characterized all subsequent peace talks. In 2011, the Turkish government entered secret negotiations with top PKK officials in Oslo, Norway, which similarly failed.

II. 2013-2015 Peace Talks

On December 31, 2012, the Turkish government announced the most recent attempt at resolving the Turkish-PKK conflict. An advisor close to Erdoğan said, in an interview, that talks had resumed at Imrali Island, where PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan is imprisoned.¹⁶ Soon after, the PKK released eight Turkish prisoners,¹⁷ and Öcalan urged the PKK to disarm, declaring a unilateral ceasefire. “We have reached the point where weapons should be silent and ideas and

¹² Michael Gunter, “The Turkish-Kurdish Peace Process,” *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 14, 1 (2013): 102.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 102.

¹⁴ Michael Gunter, “Reopening Turkey’s Closed Kurdish Opening?” *Middle East Policy* 20, 2 (2013): 89.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 89.

¹⁶ Jake Hess, “Turkey’s PKK Talks,” *Foreign Policy*, 8 January 2013, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/01/08/turkeys-pkk-talks/>.

¹⁷ Karlos Zurutuza, “New Chapter in PKK-Turkey Ties?” *DW*, 20 March 2013, <http://www.dw.com/en/new-chapter-in-pkk-turkey-ties/a-16685829>.

politics should speak," announced Öcalan in a message delivered at a Kurdish new year celebration in 2013. "A new phase in our struggle is beginning. Now a door is opening to a phase where we are moving from armed resistance to an era of democratic political struggle."¹⁸

Erdoğan welcomed this announcement cautiously, promising that if the PKK faithfully disarmed, Turkish security forces would cease military operations in southeastern Turkey—a predominantly Kurdish region and home of the PKK headquarters.¹⁹

However, by September 2013 the peace talks seemed to be collapsing. President Erdoğan alleged that the PKK had not honored its commitment to disarm and withdraw. At the same time, many Kurds felt frustrated by the Turkish government's lack of reciprocation.²⁰ On September 5, 2013 the PKK halted its phased withdrawal.²¹ Yet later in the same month, Erdoğan announced his "democracy package," which included limited mother-tongue education for Kurds. Kurdish leaders sharply criticized it, however, for failing to change anti-terrorism laws, remaining silent on the future of Kurdish prisoners, and stopping short of constitutional guarantees for Kurdish rights.²²

Nonetheless, the talks continued into 2014 and seemed to be gaining momentum. At a joint press conference in late February 2014, the PKK and Turkish government announced the beginning of negotiations, marking a formal change from "talks" to "negotiation."²³ Yet, Kurdish

¹⁸ James Reynolds, "Turkey Kurds: PKK chief Öcalan Calls for Ceasefire," *BBC*, 21 March 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-21874427>.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Mahmut Hamsici, "Is Turkey's peace process with the Kurds collapsing?" *BBC*, 9 September 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-24014555>.

²¹ David L. Phillips, "The Quest for Peace in Turkey," *World Policy Blog*, 11 November 2013, <http://www.worldpolicy.org/blog/2013/11/11/quest-peace-turkey>.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Murat Yetkin, "ANALYSIS: Turkish government states negotiations with the PKK for Kurdish peace," *Hurriyet Daily News*, 28 February 2015, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/analysis-turkish-government-starts-negotiations-with-pkk-for-kurdish-peace-79001>.

leader Zeki Shengali²⁴ expressed reservations about the future of the talks: “We took every single agreed step toward a peaceful settlement... Ankara has been trying to gain time through words, and not tangible moves, so we believe the process is reaching a dead end.”²⁵ Nevertheless in July 2014 talks moved forward when the Turkish parliament approved a framework for negotiations with the Kurds—a watershed development in the long history of Turkish-Kurdish peace talks.²⁶ Many hoped that this would accelerate tangible reforms on the Turkish side; however, some pundits argued that this was a bid by Erdoğan to win Kurdish support for the upcoming presidential election.²⁷

Following the election, some felt assured that Erdoğan’s victory would ensure that peace talks would continue. On August 15, 2014, Deputy Prime Minister Besir Atalay announced that a roadmap for future negotiations would be announced in late September. But this roadmap contained “nothing new” according to Altan Tan, a pro-Kurdish member of parliament.²⁸ Around this time, the Turkish government and PKK confronted the first fatal blow to the peace talks: the Islamic State (IS) siege of Kobane.

In mid-September 2014 Islamic State militants attacked Kobane, Syria—a predominantly Kurdish town on the southern border of Turkey. Refugees began to flood into Turkey, where

²⁴ Shengali is chief executive member of the Kurdish umbrella organization known as the Union of Kurdish Communities in Kurdistan or KCK.

²⁵ Karlos Zurutuza, “‘The peace process is reaching a dead end’,” *DW*, 23 April 2014, <http://www.dw.com/en/the-peace-process-is-reaching-a-dead-end/a-17582262>.

²⁶ “Turkey approves framework for PKK peace talks,” *Aljazeera*, 10 July 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/07/turkey-approves-framework-pkk-peace-talks-201471019443811435.html>.

²⁷ Orhan Coskun and Gulsen Solaker, “Turkey’s Kurdish peace process key to Erdoğan’s presidential hopes,” *Reuters*, 3 April 2014, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-election-kurds/turkeys-kurdish-peace-process-key-to-Erdogans-presidential-hopes-idUSBREA3218L20140403>.

²⁸ “War-war, not jaw-jaw,” *Economist*, 18 October 2014, <https://www.economist.com/news/europe/21625798-amid-fallout-iss-continuing-siege-kurdish-forces-kobane-turkish-government>.

they clashed with Turkish armed forces.²⁹ The Turkish military stood by, refusing to allow fighters or supplies to enter the city through the Turkish border crossing,³⁰ effectually sacrificing the city to IS and forsaking the Kurds who lived there. This sparked Kurdish protests across Turkey, some of which turned violent,³¹ leaving a strong impression on both parties:

For the Kurds, Kobane showed that the government's perception of the PKK-related Kurds as the main threat rather than Islamic State had not changed, especially at the start of the siege. The violent demonstrations proved to the government in Ankara that the PKK could easily resort to violence and mobilise large numbers of people around it. Turkey, along with a number of Western countries, regards the PKK as a terrorist organisation.³²

Despite this setback, the negotiations continued. On February 28, 2015 in a joint press conference, the People's Democratic Party (HDP³³) and the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) announced the beginning of formal negotiations between the government and the PKK. This seemed promising at first. Öcalan had proposed a ten-point plan known as the "Dolmabahçe consensus"³⁴ and called for the PKK to continue upholding the ceasefire and

²⁹ Patrick Cockburn, "Isis in Kobani: Turkey's act of abandonment may mark an 'irrevocable breach' with Kurds across the region," *Independent*, 7 October 2014, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-in-kobani-turkey-s-act-of-abandonment-may-mark-an-irrevocable-breach-with-kurds-across-the-9780941.html>.

³⁰ "War-war, not jaw-jaw," *Economist*.

³¹ Cockburn, "Isis in Kobani," *Independent*.

³² Guney Yildiz, "Turkey-PKK peace process 'at turning point'," *BBC*, 12 November 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30000969>.

³³ The HDP is the primary pro-Kurdish party in the Turkish parliament. The HDP and its predecessor, the BDP, have been a key intermediary between the PKK and the Turkish government, regularly visiting Öcalan at Imrali Prison and propelling the negotiations forward. "Turkish gov't, HDP herald 'new phase' in Kurdish peace process," *Hurriyet Daily News*, 22 December 2014, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-govt-hdp-herald-new-phase-in-kurdish-peace-process-75914>.

³⁴ Nigar Göksel and Berkay Mandıracı, "New Turkey-PKK Peace Talks: An Inevitability Postponed," *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 14, 4 (Winter 2016): <http://turkishpolicy.com/article/785/new-turkey-pkk-peace-talks-an-inevitability-postponed>.

enacting disarmament operations.³⁵ The ten-point plan called for the government to explicitly define its aims and to publicize its plans to institutionalize reforms. It also proposed solutions to the democratization process and to the socio-economic dimensions of the conflict.³⁶

Disagreements soon arose over the creation of a monitoring panel and a date for full PKK disarmament. On March 22, 2015 Erdoğan announced that full PKK disarmament is a prerequisite for negotiations to continue. “Peace is not possible under the shadow of arms ... We cannot move forward in an environment in which promises are violated repeatedly unless we see concrete steps.”³⁷

As expected, the Kurds found this position untenable. In a *Hurriyet* news report, “Bayik [leader of the PKK] also said asking Kurds to lay down arms, amid continuous attacks against Kurds in the Middle East, would mean ‘death’ for them.”³⁸ In this same interview Bayik reiterated the PKK’s willingness to negotiate with Turkey. On April 5, the Turkish government rejected an HDP application to visit Öcalan on Imrali island, beginning a new isolation policy which ultimately halted the negotiation process.³⁹

By July 2015 vigorous fighting renewed. A Crisis Group report declared: “from July 24 until the end of the month, the Turkish military conducted eight waves of airstrikes against PKK positions in northern Iraq and within Turkey, killing, according to Turkish military sources, around 250 PKK militants. Inside Turkey, police arrested more than 800 alleged PKK

³⁵ “Öcalan urges PKK to convene congress to lay down arms,” *Hurriyet Daily News*, 21 March 2015, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/Öcalan-urges-pkk-to-convene-congress-to-lay-down-arms-79988>.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ “No further step before PKK lays down arms: Erdoğan,” *Hurriyet Daily News*, 23 March 2015, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/no-further-step-before-pkk-lays-down-arms-Erdoğan-80084>.

³⁸ “Senior PKK leader says organization can end armed struggle with steps from gov’t,” *Hurriyet Daily News*, 31 March 2015, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/senior-pkk-leader-says-organization-can-end-armed-struggle-with-steps-from-govt--80428>.

³⁹ “Turkey’s pro-Kurdish HDP says Isolation of Öcalan must end immediately,” *Ekurd Daily*, 15 July 2015, <http://ekurd.net/hdp-says-isolation-of-Öcalan-must-end-immediately-2015-07-15>.

associates.”⁴⁰ Additionally, Erdoğan initiated criminal probes into numerous HDP parliamentarians for “inciting violence and carrying out terrorist propaganda.”⁴¹ Despite multiple calls to resume negotiations, the situation has only worsened. Crisis Group estimates that 1,700 people died in the first year of renewed fighting.

III. Diagnosing the Collapse

In order to diagnose why this most recent round of negotiations collapsed, it is best to begin by looking at the structural conditions which precipitated the collapse. The most important include the Syrian civil war, parliamentary elections in Turkey, and various legal and procedural faults.

The IS siege of Kobane represented a central turning point in the negotiation because it informed destructive fears on both sides. From the Kurdish perspective, the siege of Kobane revealed that Ankara would not defend endangered Kurds. By refusing to allow PKK fighters to cross the border to aid the Democratic Union Party (PYD),⁴² Turkey, in effect, abandoned the embattled Kurds in Kobane and allowed IS to take control of the city. This sparked massive protests across predominantly Kurdish regions in southeast Turkey including clashes with Turkish security forces which led to fifty deaths.⁴³ Although Turkey eventually allowed Kurdish fighters to cross the border and assist the PYD in Kobane, this initial reluctance fueled Kurdish concerns that Turkey would not protect them and even led some Kurds to allege that Turkey was covertly aiding IS.⁴⁴ Erdoğan’s statement that, “For us PKK is what IS is,”⁴⁵ compounded these

⁴⁰ Göksel, “A New Cycle begins in Turkey-PKK Conflict.”

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² The PYD is the main Syrian Kurdish political organization. The militant branch of the PYD is called People’s Protection Units, or YPG.

⁴³ “A Sisyphean Task? Resuming Turkey-PKK Peace Talks,” *International Crisis Group*, Briefing 77 (17 December 2015): 4.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Kurdish fears. This revealed the government's perspective that the PKK is solely a terrorist group, no better than IS, and underscored fears that Erdoğan would not remain faithful to the peace negotiations.

From the Turkish perspective, PKK-PYD solidarity and victory in Kobane represented a grave security concern. When the Kurdish coalition freed the city, it created an autonomous Kurdish region just across Turkey's southern border. This fueled Turkish fear of Kurdish separatism and led the Turkish government to heighten its security presence in predominantly Kurdish areas. The Kurds interpreted this as a harbinger to continued fighting.

Thus, the peace process seems to have collapsed, in part, on account of partisan perceptions. When two parties are opposed, they tend to interpret the other's actions in a negative way, perceiving malicious intent and untrustworthiness when, perhaps, none exists.⁴⁶ Thus, the Turkish government perceived that the Kurds were gaining ground militarily in the Syrian civil war. Turkish officials feared that, once the civil war ended, the Kurds would launch a similar military operation in Turkey. The Turkish government sought to weaken the PKK and its affiliated groups in order to prevent them from trying to establish autonomous regions within Turkey. Concomitantly, the Kurds perceived that, if they disarmed, the Turkish government would not protect or support their people against security threats.

Furthermore, both sides refortified their military positions alongside the peace negotiations, reinforcing perceptions that neither side was truly committed to the negotiations. The International Crisis Group reports that, during the two-and-a-half-year ceasefire, the PKK tacitly supported a militant Kurdish youth movement in southeastern Turkey. These Kurdish

⁴⁶ Michael Fowler, *Mastering Negotiation*, (Durham, North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press, 2016): 200.

youth groups picked fights with security forces, blocking them from entering “autonomous cities.”⁴⁷ Turkish security forces cracked down on these Kurdish groups while building heavily fortified outposts throughout southeastern Turkey. These clashes intensified after the Kobane incident. In the wake of these developments the Turkish government passed a new security law, which expanded police powers to suppress protests.⁴⁸ This perpetuated violence between Kurds and the security forces, portending future escalation and surely accelerating the negotiation’s eventual demise.

Kurdish participation in the Syrian civil war contributed to the collapse of the peace negotiations in another way as well. American support for the PYD in Syria upset the distribution of power between Turkey and the Kurds. Sensing their growing importance for the American coalition, the Kurds anticipated that this new-found power position would enable them to militarily coerce Turkey to recognize and address Kurdish grievances.

Another explanation for the collapse of the negotiations relates to the Turkish parliamentary election, which took place on June 7, 2015. Before the election, then Prime Minister Erdoğan campaigned vigorously so that his party—the AKP—would win enough seats to unilaterally approve constitutional changes creating a presidential system.⁴⁹ Some scholars have argued that the Kurdish peace process was primarily a ploy to draw Kurdish voters to the AKP to expand its electoral base and secure this capability.⁵⁰ However, the HDP lambasted Erdoğan’s presidential aspirations, routinely attacking the AKP’s legacy and performance.

⁴⁷ A Sisyphean Task? Resuming Turkey-PKK Peace Talks,” *International Crisis Group*, 3.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁹ Simon Tisdall, “Erdoğan plan for super-presidency puts Turkey’s democracy at stake,” *Guardian*, 25 March 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/25/Erdoğan-plan-for-super-presidency-puts-turkeys-democracy-at-stake>.

⁵⁰ Constanze Letsch and Ian Traynor, “Turkey election: ruling party loses majority as pro-Kurdish HDP gains seats,” *Guardian*, 7 June 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/07/turkey-election-preliminary-results-Erdoğan-akp-party>.

Although many Turks viewed the HDP as the party of the Kurds, it also managed to draw a large swath of disaffected, left-leaning voters who were attracted by the HDP's message of minority protections, religious freedom, and LGBT rights.⁵¹ The competition for votes thus fomented a bitter political rivalry between the AKP and HDP, which broke out into violence during the campaign.

During the election season, it became very clear that the HDP was benefitting much more from the Kurdish peace process than the AKP. This led the ruling AKP to abandon the peace process and restart military operations against the PKK in order to appeal to the ultranationalist electoral segment.⁵² A report by Şehir University published in May 2015 encapsulates the goal of this change in strategy:

The speeches of AKP members and pieces written by columnists close to the AKP suggest that the government aims to change both its own and the HDP's current images. The image of "the AKP which negotiated with the PKK but failed to disarm it" is to be replaced with "the AKP determined to fight against terrorism." The current image of the HDP is targeted as well. The current image of "the HDP as a new alternative in Turkish politics" and "the HDP as the only antidote to Erdoğan's authoritarianism" is to be replaced with the image of "the HDP messing with terrorists."⁵³

When the HDP won more than 13 percent of the vote in the June election, slashing the AKP's share of parliamentary seats, violence resumed full force against the PKK and HDP. According

⁵¹ Letsch and Traynor, "Turkey election," *Guardian*.

⁵² Mesut Yeğen, "The Kurdish Peace Process in Turkey: Genesis, Evolution and Prospects," *Istanbul Policy Center*, Working Paper 11 (May 2015): 6.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 14.

to this explanation, the Kurdish peace process collapsed because it was not serving the AKP's electoral purposes.

These two contextual concerns dealt significant damage to the process; however, other scholars have pointed to a variety of other possible causes. In a Brandeis University report, Dr. Serra Hakyamez pinpointed a lack of legal protection for the negotiation: "In the absence of legislative ratification, the legitimacy conferred upon the negotiations...has been revoked."⁵⁴ According to Hakyamez, legal protections could have added legitimacy and assuaged the power disparity between the parties by allowing the PKK leaders to negotiate without fearing criminal charges or reprisals. This power disparity between the parties eventually caused the negotiations to stall entirely when the government revoked the Imrali Delegation's application to visit Öcalan in prison. This lack of legal protection for the PKK and the publicity of the process subjected the negotiations to changing political attitudes. This is clearly shown by the AKP abandoning the peace process and criminalizing the HDP, once the negotiations stopped appealing to the AKP's electoral segment.

Finally, the lack of a clear agenda for the negotiation invited deadlock. According to Crisis Group, the parties never established a concrete roadmap. Thus, numerous misunderstandings and mismatched expectations plagued the negotiations, causing the parties to accelerate their back-up plans.⁵⁵ Although Öcalan suggested a series of recommendations and talking points in the Dolmabahçe consensus, this failed to propose a specific timeline. Ultimately, the parties never agreed upon a concrete roadmap, rendering the process disorganized and fragile.

⁵⁴ Serra Hakyemez, "Turkey's Failed Peace Process with the Kurds: A Different Explanation," *Brandeis University Crown Center for Middle East Studies*, Middle East Brief 111 (June 2017): 6.

⁵⁵ "Sisyphean Task," p. 5.

IV. Attempted Coup and Presidential Referendum

Since the collapse of the most recent negotiations, two central events have damaged possibilities to resume negotiations. On July 15, 2016, a portion of the Turkish military attempted to overthrow the Erdoğan government in Turkey. The group seized multiple news agencies and declared that it was protecting Turkish democracy from Erdoğan.⁵⁶ However, the group's attempted assassination of Erdoğan failed, and security forces restored order within hours. The ramifications of this attempted coup are still being felt today. Immediately thereafter, the government declared emergency rule. The AKP alleged that Fetullah Gülen—an exiled Islamic cleric—plotted the coup and that all Gülen-affiliated Turks should be removed from government positions. Initially, the Turkish government proposed emergency rule for six months; however, parliament has extended emergency rule numerous times, and even in March 2018, Turkey is still under a state of emergency

The AKP has used this emergency rule to crack down on all its opponents. According to an Al-Monitor report, “in the aftermath of the July 2016 coup attempt, 26 decrees were issued, 111,240 public servants were discharged and 32,180 were suspended with or without pay. In the same period, hundreds of organizations and companies were seized by the state.”⁵⁷ The primary targets of this country-wide crackdown were academics, Kurds, and news agencies critical of the Turkish government—most prominently, the Daily Zaman.

⁵⁶ “Turkey’s coup attempt: What you need to know,” *BBC*, 17 July 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36816045>.

⁵⁷ Al-Monitor is a very popular and reputable news agency which covers the entire Middle East. However, it is currently reorganizing its archives, and this news article is temporarily unavailable. Page currently inaccessible, *Al-Monitor*, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/11/turkey-rising-dissent-against-prolonged-emergency-rule.html#ixzz54wfwzWHws>.

In September 2016, the Turkish government replaced twenty-six elected Kurdish mayors with government trustees. The Interior Ministry officially stated that “24 of the 28 mayors were removed for aiding and supporting the Kurdistan Workers Party.”⁵⁸ Additionally, the Turkish government sacked nearly 12,000 teachers in southeastern Turkey on the same grounds. This has inflamed Kurdish anger and frustration.⁵⁹

Less than a year after the failed coup, Turkey held a presidential referendum. Conducted amid a state of emergency and numerous reports of media repression,⁶⁰ the referendum approved multiple constitutional changes, transforming the Turkish parliamentary system to a presidential system. The referendum abolished the position of prime minister and concentrated the prime minister’s powers in the presidency. Additionally, the president can pass decrees, which carry the force of law, can dissolve the parliament, and can appoint more than half of the judiciary.⁶¹ The referendum also hobbled legislative and judicial checks on presidential power. Most scholars agree that the government proposed these changes with Erdoğan in mind.⁶² In fact, according to the new rules of election, Erdoğan could legally serve as president until 2034. In short, the referendum solidified “a populist, one-man system that jeopardizes legislative and judicial independence and consolidates them in the office of the president. Indeed, the dramatic changes proposed would set in motion the most drastic shake-up of the country’s politics and system of governance in its 94-year-long history.”⁶³

⁵⁸ Page currently inaccessible, *Al-Monitor*, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/09/turkey-emergency-rule-stokes-kurdish-separatism.html#ixzz54wh6d9FF>.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Kareem Shaheen, “Erdoğan clinches victory in Turkish constitutional referendum,” *Guardian*, 16 April 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/16/Erdoğan-claims-victory-in-turkish-constitutional-referendum>.

⁶¹ Sinan Ekim and Kemal Kirişçi, “The Turkish constitutional referendum, explained,” *Brookings*, 13 April 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/04/13/the-turkish-constitutional-referendum-explained/>.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

Since the end of the peace process in 2015, the parties' rhetoric has stayed largely the same. The Turkish government maintains that the PKK is a terrorist group, which must be defeated militarily. However, just as the situation in Syria precipitated the collapse of the 2015 process, it has, again, complicated and exacerbated the current conflict between Turkey and the PKK. The uncertain outcome of the Syrian Civil War has sustained Kurdish hopes for a military solution to the Turkish-PKK conflict.

As mentioned previously, the American coalition in Syria has utilized the armed wing of the Syrian Kurdish group—the YPG—to combat IS. As part of the gradual retreat of IS, the Kurds have slowly consolidated a semi-autonomous region along the Turkish-Syrian border called Rojava. In January 2018, Turkey launched an invasion into Afrin, Syria to break up this autonomous region and to prevent the Kurds from uniting their eastern and western territories. “It is time to block the separatist terror group from forming a terror corridor along Syria,” declared President Erdoğan.⁶⁴ In this way, Turkey continues to securitize the Kurdish issue, impeding any possibility of resuming peace negotiations.

V. Four Common Ethnic Resolution Models

In his article, “Ethnic Conflict Resolution: Routes Towards Settlement,” John Coakley prescribes four broad formulas for resolving ethnic conflicts. The first method entails military defeat of one of the ethnic groups followed by some sort of ethnic cleansing or population-exchange program. Bosnia and Sri Lanka utilized this strategy when resolving their ethnic conflicts. In Bosnia, the ethnic cleansing developed into genocide. Sri Lanka, however, opted for

⁶⁴ Muhammet Emin Avundukluoglu, “Turkey will block PKK’s Syrian terror corridor,” *Anadolu Agency*, 9 January 2018, <http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkey-will-block-pkks-syrian-terror-corridor/1026033>.

a repatriation scheme⁶⁵ to restore the Tamils into Sri Lankan society. While it differs in a few key ways, the Sri Lankan conflict represents the most salient analogue for the Turkish-Kurdish conflict. Both involved disaffected minorities that sought to overturn the existing political order by establishing some form of autonomy within the borders of the already-established state. Each minority formed similar paramilitary structures and drew support from cross-border kin. Additionally, the governments in each case wielded overwhelming military and economic power. Although Sri Lanka achieved a decisive military victory over the Tamils, a few central factors suggest that this outcome is unlikely in the case of Turkey and the Kurds.

First, the United States has partnered with the Kurds in Syria, offering training and resources and effectively buttressing Kurdish military power. Thus, Turkey's incursion into Afrin threatens to morph into open conflict between Turkey and the United States.⁶⁶ Furthermore, by allowing Kurdish reinforcements to travel through government-controlled territory, the Assad regime in Syria has tacitly supported the PYD against Turkish encroachments.⁶⁷ In this way, multiple international actors have started supporting the Kurds, at least for the time being, complicating Turkey's military strategies.

Even in the absence of international support, the Kurds are significantly larger than the Tamils and have weathered crushing military defeats in the past. In 1999 the Turkish government decisively defeated the PKK and captured PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan. However, Turkey failed

⁶⁵ While this repatriation scheme sounds significantly better than ethnic cleansing, the Sri Lankan government still perpetrated serious human rights abuses against the Tamils following their military defeat. Meenakshi Ganguly, "Sri Lanka After the Tigers," *Human Rights Watch*, 19 February 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/02/19/sri-lanka-after-tigers>.

⁶⁶ Louisa Loveluck, "Turkish president threatens to 'drown' U.S.-backed force in Syria," *Washington Post*, 15 January 2018 https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/turkish-president-threatens-todrown-us-backed-force-in-syria/2018/01/15/e7789850-f9e7-11e7-b832-8c26844b74fb_story.html?utm_term=.62646bc370d4.

⁶⁷ Laila Bassam and Tom Perry, "Friend or foe? Assad quietly aids Syrian Kurds against Turkey," *Reuters*, 11 February 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-turkey-kurds/friend-or-foe-assad-quietly-aids-syrian-kurds-against-turkey-idUSKBN1FV078>.

to address the political dimensions of the PKK, resulting in continued support for the PKK and a renewed insurgency in 2004.⁶⁸ The Kurds' broad and robust international kinship network supports and shelters them in such a way that makes decisive military victory exponentially harder.

Furthermore, many scholars doubt the long-term effectiveness of a military solution to ethnic conflict. "Complete military victories bring their dangers, in that they may create martyrs whose memory may be used to animate later generations."⁶⁹ This surely contributed to the relatively quick recovery of the Kurds after 1999—the PKK retained broad support from Kurds throughout the region. Pusane suggests that a broader political-military solution is needed to effectively resolve ethnic conflicts in this way: "in order to end the insurgent violence in a country, it is necessary to formulate an effective response to the political subversion as well as achieve military success against the insurgent forces... The state must have a clear political goal from the very beginning of the counterinsurgency...in addition to the coercive measures, it must adopt political, economic, and social programmes in order to end the violence."⁷⁰ Thus, if Turkey wants to achieve military victory over the Kurds, it must also address the Kurds' legitimate grievances.

The next broad strategy focuses on some sort of dispute resolution method leading to territorial separation and autonomy. The particular method of dispute resolution can range from negotiation at one pole and violence at the other. Various other methods exist as well, such as conciliation, mediation, or arbitration. Territorial separation and autonomy was used in Cyprus

⁶⁸ Özlem Kayhan Pusane, "Turkey's Military Victory over the PKK and Its Failure to End the PKK Insurgency," *Middle Eastern Studies* 51, 5 (2015): 728.

⁶⁹ John Coakley, "Ethnic Conflict Resolution: Routes Towards Settlement," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 15, 3-4 (2009): 477.

⁷⁰ Pusane, "Turkey's Military Victory," 736.

and between India and Pakistan. Ultimately, this strategy separates the disputing factions and bestows autonomy on both groups. This usually includes some sort of population exchange or forced migration.

Regarding Turkey and the Kurds, this seems like the least plausible option. First, Turkey has long reacted strongly against the possibility of an independent Kurdish region which would suggest Turkey conceding a portion of its territory. In September, 2017, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)⁷¹ in northern Iraq held an independence referendum. While Turkey had cooperated with the KRG in the past, Turkey strongly opposed the referendum and sought to dissuade the KRG from holding the referendum.⁷² Additionally, Turkey's military operations in Afrin seem to suggest that it is taking concrete steps to preempt the development and consolidation of an autonomous Kurdish state in northern Syria. Moreover, most political parties in the Turkish parliament are fiercely nationalistic and would surely denounce a separate, autonomous Kurdish region within Turkey. Any political leader who sought to retain popular support in Turkey could not advocate an autonomous Kurdish region.

Conversely, some ethnic conflicts have been resolved through some sort of negotiation or mediation leading to a radical power-sharing regime or consociational government. The Cyprus conflict briefly used this strategy in 1960 when it declared independence and ratified a constitution that divided power between Turkish and Greek Cypriots.⁷³ Additionally, consociational government was implemented in Northern Ireland.⁷⁴ This strategy includes

⁷¹ The KRG is located in northern Iraq.

⁷² Galip Dalay, "Evolution of Turkey-Iraqi Kurdistan's Relations," *Aljazeera*, 20 December 2017, <http://studies.aljazeera.net/en/reports/2017/12/evolution-turkey-iraqi-kurdistan-relations-171220092851950.html>.

⁷³ "Cyprus profile – Timeline," *BBC*, 7 February 2018, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17219505>.

⁷⁴ Coakley, "Ethnic Conflict Resolution," 478.

constitutional protections for the minority group(s) and ensures that each ethnic group is represented in both representative and administrative arms of the government.

This is the PKK's preferred strategy. Since 1999, Öcalan has advocated for the Turkish government to decentralize and democratize.⁷⁵ In his pamphlet, "Democratic Confederalism," Öcalan lays out a government in which political power is concentrated in communities and the central government coordinates the wills of these communities.⁷⁶ This would, in effect, allow predominantly Kurdish areas local autonomy without challenging Turkey's territorial integrity. Some of the central aspects of a more democratized Turkey would include a lowering of the 10% parliamentary threshold, expanded Kurdish language and cultural rights, and a restriction on ambiguous terrorism laws.⁷⁷

For a while, it seemed like Turkey was progressing toward this type of democracy. Despite a long history of intolerance of religious parties in Turkey's government, in 2002, the AKP—a professed Islamist party—came to power. This seemed to suggest that Turkey was starting to respect democratic norms. Furthermore, the possibility of EU accession seemed to portend a strengthening of democracy in Turkey. From 1999 to 2004, the Turkish parliament passed eight harmonization packages which liberalized political parties, the press, and association laws. Additionally, these reforms allowed for broadcasting in Kurdish and recognized the standing of the European Court of Human Rights.⁷⁸ In many ways, this seemed to be a prime opportunity for democratization to precipitate the successful resolution of the Turkish-PKK conflict.

⁷⁵ "Who are Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) rebels?" *BBC*, 4 November 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-20971100>.

⁷⁶ Abdullah Öcalan, "Democratic Confederalism," (London, Cologne: International Initiative, 2011), 33.

⁷⁷ Latif Tas, "15 steps for Turkish-Kurdish peace," *Open Democracy*, 6 May 2016, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/latif-tas/15-steps-for-turkish-kurdish-peace>.

⁷⁸ Güneş Murat Tezcür, "When Democratization Radicalizes: The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey," *Journal of Peace Research* 47, 6 (November 2010): 778.

However, in recent years, Turkey has reversed course. In the wake of the failed coup in 2016, the AKP replaced numerous elected officials, shut down news agencies, and cracked down on dissenters, slowly eroding freedom of speech and respect for elections. Part of this crackdown included imprisoning HDP parliamentarians for alleged connections to the PKK and for spreading terrorist propaganda.⁷⁹ Even now, nearly two years after the failed coup, Turkey is still in a state of emergency. The presidential referendum of 2017 exacerbated this situation by eroding judicial and parliamentary independence. In these ways, the current trajectory of the Turkish government excludes the possibility of a radical power-sharing resolution to the Turkish-PKK conflict.

Moreover, democratization engenders some potential pitfalls. First, democracy was partly to blame for the collapse of the peace talks in 2015. Fierce campaigning and the erosion of the AKP voting bloc led to renewed violence between Turkey and the PKK. In this way, democracy exposes a peace negotiation to public whims, rendering it exponentially more fragile. Second, a study by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace shows a correlation between the corrosion of democratic principles in Turkey and progress in peace negotiation.⁸⁰ From 2013 to 2015, Turkey's democracy regressed significantly; however, this was also the period which witnessed the most progress toward resolving the Turkish-Kurdish conflict. Thus, a lack of democracy does not fully explain why the fighting has continued, which suggests that democratization is not the skeleton key for ethnic conflict resolution.

⁷⁹ "Opposition HDP deputy Özkan arrested by court in Turkey's Muş," *Hurriyet Daily News*, 20 April 2017, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/opposition-hdp-deputy-ozkan-arrested-by-court-in-turkeys-mus-112240>.

⁸⁰ Senem Aydın-Düzgün and E. Fuat Keyman, "Turkey's Kurdish Conflict and Retreat From Democracy," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 10 July 2014, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2017/07/10/turkey-s-kurdish-conflict-and-retreat-from-democracy-pub-71453>.

Finally, scholars have argued that decentralization and democratization may exacerbate ethnic mobilization and secessionist movements. Brancati finds that decentralization can be a useful tool in reducing intercommunal violence and rebellion; however, the growth of regional parties can mitigate these positive effects.⁸¹ Since the PKK's base of support is localized in southeastern Turkey, radical decentralization, such as that proposed by Öcalan, could actually spur ethnic mobilization and secession efforts in these areas. Furthermore, Tezcur argues that the great democratic opening in Turkey in the early 2000s led the PKK to radicalize rather than to moderate: "democratization may have the ironic and unintended consequence of generating a process of radicalization when it introduces nonviolent competition over the ethnic constituency."⁸² By competing with the PKK for Kurdish political loyalties, the AKP pushed the PKK to take a more hardline stance to shore up its constituents and ensure its survival, even though this contradicted the PKK's announced goal of democratization. In these ways, intense competition for votes could actually impede a peace negotiation and exacerbate Kurdish secessionism.

The final broad ethnic conflict-resolution strategy includes a negotiation or mediation leading the parties to implement a traditional democratic framework. This strategy is "based on the principle of majority rule, with implications of ethnic hegemony hiding behind advocacy of conventional principles of democracy and possibly accompanied by de facto policies of assimilation."⁸³ South Africa implemented this type of regime in the wake of apartheid. After uprooting the Afrikaner regime, South Africa held elections which brought Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress to power. Since South Africa is overwhelmingly black, the new

⁸¹ Dawn Brancati, "Decentralization: Fueling the Fire or Dampening the Flames of Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism?" *International Organization* 60, 3, (Summer 2006): 653.

⁸² Tezcür, "When Democratization Radicalizes," 785.

⁸³ Coakley, "Ethnic Conflict Resolution," 478.

democratic process redistributed political power according to the ethnic makeup of South Africa, thereby creating a democratically legitimized system of ethnic hegemony.

This method of resolution, in some ways, reflects the current situation in Turkey. Theoretically, Turkey holds democratic elections and allows Kurds to participate.⁸⁴ Yet, Turkey's assimilation practices and repression of the Kurds are one of the primary reasons why the PKK continues to fight the Turkish government. In this way, the Kurds would hardly find this type of resolution satisfactory and would likely reject a peace deal of this nature.

VI. Three Central Impediments to Peace Negotiations

While it may seem that each of these strategies could not work in the Turkish-Kurdish conflict, upon reflection, a handful of salient points for possibly resolving the conflict emerge. However, in order to understand what might work, we must first examine the central impediments to a comprehensive resolution of the Turkish-PKK conflict.

First, the power disparity between Turkey and the PKK is formidable. While power is a slippery concept, especially in negotiation and international relations, Turkey is plainly preponderant in this situation. Turkey enjoys the privileges of sovereign statehood, and has overwhelming military and economic strength allowing it to combat the Kurds without exhausting its resources. Statehood imparts legitimacy to most of Turkey's actions and enables it to draw international funding from non-governmental organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or intergovernmental organizations such as North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Furthermore, Turkey controls how often and in what capacity the Kurds

⁸⁴ Many international actors have serious misgivings about the openness and fairness of Turkish elections. Additionally, the AKP regularly detains and outlaws critical voices, such as the HDP, which necessarily impinges on democratic representation. Furthermore, the presidential referendum and constitutional changes have damaged the democratic foundations of the Turkish government.

can communicate with Öcalan. In this way, the PKK cannot strategize freely, compounding their weakness vis-à-vis Turkey.

Furthermore, the Kurds' only bargaining chip is violence. By continuing the insurgency, the PKK can impose moderate costs on the Turkish government; however, beyond this, it has very little to offer the Turkish government in exchange for its numerous demands. This power disparity creates serious disincentives to negotiate: "under such conditions the strong will feel no compulsion to negotiate while the weak will be fearful of the results of such negotiation."⁸⁵ In order to overcome these disparities, Jensen details two possible developments that can assuage power asymmetry. The first—democracy—promises mixed results, as discussed previously. The second strategy focuses on the long-term decline of state power and sovereignty coupled with the strengthening of international organizations and society. This can exert pressure on the government and on the insurgent group to moderate and negotiate. While this might propel the successful resolution of the Turkish-PKK conflict, the development of a multicentric international atmosphere is a distant and gradual process that cannot be relied upon to precipitate a successful negotiation.

The second current impediment to a comprehensive peace deal is the ongoing conflict in Syria. Since the Kurds enjoy broad international support, they still maintain hope that they can consolidate an autonomous region in Syria. While the recent Turkish incursion into Afrin complicates this strategy, the ultimate resolution of the Syrian civil war remains ambiguous. If the Kurds realize their goal of establishing an independent state in northern Syria, it may trigger heightened violence in Turkey, further postponing or excluding peace negotiations between Turkey and the PKK. As Forsberg explains, this could also lead the PKK to increase its demands

⁸⁵ Lloyd Jensen, "Negotiations and Power Asymmetries: The Cases of Bosnia, Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka," *International Negotiation* 2, 1 (1997): 22.

in Turkey: “Given ethnic conflict in a state, groups across borders that have kinship ties to actors involved in the ethnic conflict may be inspired to increase their own demands, which enhances the risk of armed strife.”⁸⁶ Conversely, if Turkey successfully prevents an autonomous Kurdish region in Syria, it could trigger either intensified PKK operations in Turkey or cause the Kurds to moderate and seek a peace deal. However, both sides are committed to the current confrontational strategy; thus, a peace negotiation seems unlikely, while the ultimate fate of Syria remains unknown. In this way, the final resolution of the Syrian civil war will surely hold significant implications for the Turkish-PKK conflict.

The final impediment involves domestic pressures within Turkey. Since its founding, Turkey has been fiercely nationalistic. Discussions about Kurdishness and the possibility of minority rights were scarce until around 2002 when parliament lifted restrictions on teaching Kurdish in schools and allowed restricted Kurdish-language broadcasting. Even today, Kurdishness is stigmatized. Dixon and Ergin find that 66% of Turks perceive that the Kurds have a negative effect on society.⁸⁷ Anti-Kurdish sentiments are “more pronounced among Turks who hold nationalist and strongly secular attitudes”⁸⁸—two of the foundational principles of Turkish identity. Anti-Kurdish sentiment has flared in recent months as Turkey invaded Afrin: “Turkish media and public opinion have rallied around the government, stirring nationalist sentiment... tapping into years of public anger with the militant Kurdistan Workers’ Party.”⁸⁹ Erdoğan has so

⁸⁶ Erika Forsberg, “Polarization and Ethnic Conflict in a Widened Strategic Setting,” *Journal of Peace Research* 45, 2 (March 2008): 288.

⁸⁷ Jeffrey C. Dixon and Murat Ergin, “Explaining Anti-Kurdish Beliefs in Turkey: Group Competition, Identity, and Globalization,” *Social Science Quarterly* 91, 5 (December 2010): 1341.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Erin Cunningham, “In Turkey, soaring support for Syrian offensive and rising anti-Americanism,” *Washington Post*, 4 February 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/turkish-support-for-offensive-soars-standing-of-longtime-ally-america-tumbles/2018/02/03/0612e970-06a2-11e8-aa61-f3391373867e_story.html?utm_term=.3b837101a8f4.

securitized and demonized the PKK that any sort of conciliatory transition would surely be met with staunch opposition in Turkey.

Considering all of these broad strategies for resolving ethnic conflicts and the main impediments for resolving the Turkish-PKK conflict, the prospects for a comprehensive peace deal seem remote at best. The most likely scenario would take place within the context of a grand, multilateral negotiation at the end of the Syrian civil war. This would accomplish a few key things that could help propel the negotiations toward success. First, the Turkish-Kurdish negotiations would have numerous third parties that could mediate, incentivize, or guarantee a solution to the conflict. These third parties would assist the parties in setting a firm agenda and maintaining momentum. Additionally, the presence of third parties would “enlarge the pie”⁹⁰ creating more opportunities for cross-issue trades, concessions, and sweeteners. Finally, the third parties could serve as arbiters and monitors to help implement a negotiated settlement. This would discourage backsliding and promote transparency, ensuring that both sides remained faithful to the terms of their agreement.

This situation would also allow Turkey to establish peace, not just with the PKK, but with Syrian Kurds as well. Negotiating with both Kurdish groups would ameliorate the issues of cross-border mobilization and contagion, preventing the conflict from spilling over from Syria into Turkey and establishing a more resilient peace. Finally, negotiating the Turkish-Kurdish peace in this large multilateral framework would equalize the power asymmetry between the parties. This would mitigate Kurdish fears of being bullied, while compelling Turkey to negotiate in earnest.

⁹⁰ Roger Fisher, William Ury, and Bruce Patton, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving*, (London: Penguin Publishers, 2011): 61.

However, this possibility confronts some problems as well. Obviously, Turkey would have to agree to participate in this type of negotiation despite its declared public aversion to including the YPG in future peace talks.⁹¹ Furthermore, both Turkey and the Kurds would have to agree on a neutral mediator to facilitate the negotiations, which could be particularly challenging. This also leads to the possibility of one of the third parties acting as a spoiler, upsetting the peace process to serve its own interests. For instance, the Syrian government may undermine the Turkish-Kurdish peace talks in order to perpetuate the conflict, thereby impairing Turkey's ability to project power in Syria. Although the end of the Syrian civil war seems to be the most promising opportunity for resumed peace talks, it still carries significant barriers and possible costs.

VII. The Case for Conflict Management

Although a grand resolution seems unlikely in the near future, most commentary on the Turkish-PKK conflict continues to recommend paths to a comprehensive peace deal. I would argue that the parties can take concrete steps to improve their relationship and to ameliorate the most pernicious effects of this conflict by implementing a conflict-management mechanism known as an island of agreement.

In her book *Islands of Agreement: Managing Enduring Armed Rivalries*, Gabriela Blum develops a novel concept in the conflict-resolution literature: "Islands of agreement are areas of asylum from which the conflict may be excluded and within which the rivals may be able to exchange some mutual commitments and be reminded of their respective interests."⁹² Blum views armed rivalries as a broad relationship rather than narrowly focusing on the conflict. By

⁹¹ "Turkey gives nod to 'Kurds but not the YPG' in Syria talks," *Hurriyet Daily News*, 12 December 2017, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-gives-nod-to-kurds-but-not-the-ypg-in-syria-talks-123978>.

⁹² Gabriella Blum, *Islands of Agreement: Managing Enduring Armed Rivalries*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007): 19.

conceptualizing the relationship in this way, it opens the possibility for the parties to cooperate alongside their ongoing dispute. She emphasizes “relationship management” rather than a simple conflict management or limitation scheme. Some of the characteristics of an island of agreement include: divisibility, symmetry of costs and benefits, practicality, formality, clarity and ambiguity, and enforcement mechanisms.

Divisibility refers to the ability to separate areas of cooperation from the central dispute. Thus, in the conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, an island could not include any agreement on the border disagreement; however, India and Pakistan were able to cooperate regarding water resources in the region since it did not impact the central conflict. In the Turkish-Kurdish conflict, an island of agreement will have to remain divisible from the main Kurdish grievances.

Additionally, islands must balance the cost of compliance with the possible gains. Asymmetry of costs and benefits will surely upset the cooperative agreement. Islands must not be overly ambitious. They cannot overestimate the parties’ willingness or capabilities for cooperation. Blum describes an American-brokered moratorium on air raids between Ethiopia and Eritrea as a prime example of an overly ambitious island of agreement. By failing to set an end date for the moratorium, the island inevitably collapsed when the peace talks failed. In this case, the island overestimated the parties’ willingness to cooperate indefinitely.

Islands must also determine the proper the level of formality needed to achieve the parties’ goals. In some cases, a signed and publicized agreement best ensures compliance and eases while other times, a formal agreement can invite criticism. For instance, in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the parties created an island of agreement that prevented either side from destroying water resources. Although the parties already complied with this island, by signing a

formal agreement, Israel and Palestine temporarily eased tensions by publicly expressing their joint interest in preserving water infrastructure.

This same argument applies to the level of clarity or ambiguity in the agreement. Enumerating concrete obligations and costs can be useful for ensuring compliance; however, ambiguity allows for changing circumstances and improvement to the cooperative scheme. During the Cold War, the small, and relatively ambiguous, Limited Test Ban Treaty allowed the U.S. and Soviet Union to initiate limited cooperation which eventually blossomed into more robust and clear agreements such as the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.

Finally, most islands include an enforcement mechanism whereby some cost is imposed on non-compliant parties. This will vary depending on the nature of the island of agreement and the willingness of the parties to submit to an enforcement regime.

Blum envisions a host of possibilities for crafting and implementing islands of agreement. An island of agreement does not necessarily require the direct cooperation of the government. It may involve subgovernmental actors or bureaucrats “working under ‘technical’ or ‘professional’—rather than political—colors.”⁹³ Conversely, it may include non-governmental or international actors which can pressure, incentivize, and guarantee cooperation. Involving third parties may also help the disputants “save face,” decreasing the possible costs of cooperation.

Islands, however, come with potential costs as well. First, the creation of an island of agreement functions as a public expression of the parties’ inability to reach a comprehensive agreement. In this way, it may seem as if the parties are admitting defeat and resigning themselves to management rather than resolution. Second, an island can be perceived as a “litmus test of trustworthiness.”⁹⁴ Thus, if the cooperative agreement fails, it risks compounding

⁹³ Blum, *Islands of Agreement*, 39.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 46.

mistrust and escalating tensions. Third, an island may relieve pressure in one area of the conflict, allowing the parties to intensify their efforts in other areas, and thereby undercutting positive progress. Blum calls this the “pressed balloon effect.”⁹⁵ Finally, multiple successful islands of agreements may ultimately create a tolerable status quo, impeding a comprehensive resolution.

As mentioned previously, Blum’s framework focuses on “relationship management.” Just as many people view the relationship between interstate rivals solely in terms of the ongoing fighting, ethnic disputes, including the Turkish-Kurdish conflict, are reduced in the same way. This obscures potential areas of the relationship which engender cooperation. So, although many of Blum’s examples focus on interstate cooperation, we can use her general framework to think about possible productive cooperation between Turks and Kurds.

The Turkey and the PKK share a few joint interests upon which the parties could build an island of agreement. Both parties are concerned with economic development, specifically in southeastern Turkey. Turkey suffers from tremendous levels of income inequality, especially concentrated in the agrarian, Kurdish-dominated southeast. Although Turkey has taken steps to address this disparity, these rural areas remain incredibly poor, fueling support for the PKK.⁹⁶ Thus, development projects in southeastern Turkey would benefit Kurds while correcting economic stratification.

Furthermore, Turkey has an interest in promoting and preserving economic ties with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in northern Iraq. Although it has historically been a tenuous relationship, Turkey and the KRG significantly strengthened their relationship between

⁹⁵ Blum, *Islands of Agreement*, 46.

⁹⁶ Seltem Iyigun, “As Turkey’s economy booms, deep inequality persists,” *Reuters*, 28 November 2012, <https://www.reuters.com/article/turkey-unemployment/as-turkeys-economy-booms-deep-inequality-persists-idUSL5E8MGBB420121128>.

2008 and 2015. Turkey was the primary importer of KRG oil and cooperated with the KRG to thwart Iranian influence in Iraq.⁹⁷ However, the KRG's independence referendum significantly strained this relationship. Despite this setback, relations have slowly normalized, and Turkish-KRG cooperation may provide an opportunity to cooperate alongside the Turkish-Kurdish conflict.

Finally, both parties are interested in promoting and establishing peace in Syria. Refugee flows have inundated Turkey for several years, sapping its resources and straining its border-control efforts. Furthermore, fighting in Syria has spilled over into southern Turkey, most notably in the IS attack on Suruc, which killed 30 people and wounded over 100.⁹⁸ Thus, continued upheaval in Syria will continue to concern both parties.

Despite their enduring conflict, these joint interests lead to multiple possibilities for Turkey and the PKK to cooperate in one, or more, islands of agreement. One possible island could entail Turkey allowing foreign economic and relief aid to flow into southeastern Turkey to promote rebuilding and economic activity. In exchange, the PKK could agree to abstain from operating in designated economic development zones, or even declare a short-term ceasefire in Turkey until the end of the Syrian civil war. This would allow Kurds in southeastern Turkey to rebuild and recover from the recent years of fighting while allowing the PKK to focus its energies in Syria. The government could justify this by framing it as one project within its broader economic policy. By simply allowing foreign economic relief rather than dedicating its own resources, Turkey could avoid criticism that it was directly helping the PKK while still

⁹⁷ Ranj Alaaldin, "Why the Turkey-KRG alliance works, for now," *Brookings*, 8 November 2016, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-the-turkey-kr-g-alliance-works-for-now/>.

⁹⁸ "Suruc massacre: At least 30 killed in Turkey border blast," *BBC*, 20 July 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-33593615>.

achieving limited peace in conflict-prone areas. Additionally, improving the lives of regular Kurds in Turkey could slowly erode support for the PKK, further supporting a Turkish interest.

Although economic inequality surely reinforces animosity between the PKK and Turkey, it has not been a central grievance. For the most part, the PKK has focused on expanded cultural rights and ethnic protections. Consequently, the parties might be able to separate economic development from the core conflict, allowing an island to develop. Furthermore, this is a *negative* island. Rather than requiring the parties to act in new ways, this island emphasizes inaction. Turkey will not prevent aid from flowing into southeastern Turkey, but it also does not have to contribute either. Similarly, the PKK agree to cease fighting. By imposing negative obligations, this island minimizes the costs associated with complying thereby maximizing the net benefit for each party.

Still, the parties will confront numerous challenges when implementing this island of agreement. The current rhetoric surrounding the conflict is so severe that any cooperation would likely be met with skepticism. However, Turkey's invasion of Afrin allows the parties to use Blum's "pressed balloon effect" to their advantage. The parties can maintain their hardline stances and strategies by fighting in northern Syria while allowing southeastern Turkey to recover and rebuild after multiple years of intense fighting. This would enable the parties to save face and, simultaneously, pursue limited cooperation. Furthermore, this island would require the involvement of a third party to contribute aid. Although multiple actors could fill this role, the parties would have to cooperate in order to find and invite that third party to participate. Ideally, a third party would offer its assistance and initiate this island of agreement.

This island needs to be informal yet clear. Formalizing this type of agreement could generate unnecessary publicity, leading to collapse. However, the parties should be explicit about

obligations. Allowing ambiguity could easily transform these relief zones into hotbeds for violence and rhetorical escalation. Clarity will ensure that each party understands its obligations and what constitutes a violation of the deal. Regarding enforcement, this agreement might utilize some sort of compulsory dialogue arrangement in which the parties agree to meet and discuss potential violations, thereby preventing tensions from escalating unnecessarily.

The Turks and Kurds could also establish an island of agreement by publicly codifying the Turkey-KRG trading relationship, that is, formalizing their existing economic cooperation on oil and other natural resources. This is perhaps the easiest and most feasible island of agreement. Turkey and the KRG are not engaged in open conflict; therefore, this island is easily divisible from the larger Turkish-Kurdish conflict. Furthermore, since this island would only formalize already harmonious practices, practicality and symmetry of costs and benefits are already established and agreeable.

By exposing regular Kurdish and Turkish citizens to one another, such an island would foster mutual trust and engagement at a subgovernmental level, undercutting negative perceptions and establishing norms of cooperation rather than antagonism. This also invites the possibility of expanded trading and collaboration on related issues such as mutual security or the preservation of natural resources. In the same way as the first island of agreement, this type of arrangement would benefit both parties economically while allowing Turkey to combat other Kurdish groups. Additionally, it would create professional networks, which could generate and sustain grassroots support for a future, comprehensive peace negotiation.

Contrary to the previous island, this agreement should be formalized yet remain ambiguous. Formality will showcase Turkey's willingness to cooperate with Kurds while highlighting the differences between the KRG and other Kurdish groups like the YPG and the

PKK. However, ambiguity will allow the trading relationship to react to regular changes in the market and to expand as the parties find more opportunities to cooperate. Turkey and the KRG could devise a trade commission to settle disputes, perpetuating contacts between Turks and Kurds.

Finally, joint security concerns—particularly instability in Syria that threatens both Turks and Kurds—could lead to yet another island of agreement. Although direct cooperation between Turkey and the PKK on these issues would be untenable, the presence of a multilateral military coalition could enable Turkey and the Kurds to cooperate against IS without incurring the public costs associated with direct contact. This arrangement could include intelligence sharing, coordinated military operations, and Turkish border security. In this way, Turkey and the Kurds would not fight alongside one another, but would indirectly work toward the same goal—security and peace in Syria. This could also lead to further coordination on refugee flows and relief aid distribution.

This island of agreement is the least divisible from the central conflict. Since Turkey and the Kurds are engaged in open war in Syria, promoting military cooperation in one area alongside military confrontation in another is plainly problematic. Cross-cutting alliances and interests in the region render the situation volatile, and such an unstable atmosphere may prevent a lasting island of agreement from developing. However, both parties could gain significant benefits from cooperating with the American coalition in Syria without incurring significantly more costs. Insofar as the interests of the Turks and Kurds dovetail, this island remains practical. Furthermore, this cooperation would take place under a large international framework. Therefore, the parties would not have to create formal or clear obligations to the other or design some sort of enforcement mechanism since the coalition would already implement those

procedures. Rather than promoting direct cooperation, ultimately, this island of agreement would highlight joint interests, possibly creating the conditions for a future peace deal.

Each of these islands would promote different varieties of cooperation between Turkey and the Kurds. Although this might not precipitate a grand bargain between the parties, it could reverse the deterioration of Turkish-Kurdish ties and limit the conflict in such a way that a conclusive peace negotiation would eventually become possible once again. Even limited cooperation will enhance the security of more people than inaction. In this way, these proposed islands of agreement perpetuate regional safety and, thus, have intrinsic value apart from their ability to lead to a comprehensive peace deal.

VIII. Conclusion

Although a peace agreement between Turkey and Kurds remains a remote possibility, we should not fail to understand and capitalize on opportunities to improve the conflict in the interim. Islands are not created as part of an ongoing peace process, but they can remind parties of their joint interests while ameliorating some negative effects of violent conflict. By expanding our conception of the Turkey-PKK relationship, we can find ways to promote cooperation and good-faith understanding between the parties without interfering with their chosen strategies. However, even with limited cooperation, the Turkish-PKK conflict continues to destabilize the region and inflict heavy costs on both sides. Thus, cooperative efforts, such as those I have suggested here, are well worth pursuing for their own sake, and may generate enough good faith and momentum to bring about a lasting and comprehensive peace agreement.

Bibliography

- “A Sisyphean Task? Resuming Turkey-PKK Peace Talks.” *International Crisis Group*, Briefing 77 (17 December 2015).
- Alaaldin, Ranj. “Why the Turkey-KRG alliance works, for now.” *Brookings*. 8 November 2016. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-the-turkey-krg-alliance-works-for-now/>.
- Aydın-Düzgit, Senem and E. Fuat Keyman. “Turkey’s Kurdish Conflict and Retreat from Democracy.” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. 10 July 2014. <http://carnegieendowment.org/2017/07/10/turkey-s-kurdish-conflict-and-retreat-from-democracy-pub-71453>.
- Avundukluoglu, Muhammet Emin. “Turkey will block PKK’s Syrian terror corridor.” *Anadolu Agency*. 9 January 2018. <http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkey-will-block-pkks-syrian-terror-corridor/1026033>.
- Bassam, Laila and Tom Perry. “Friend or foe? Assad quietly aids Syrian Kurds against Turkey.” *Reuters*. 11 February 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-turkey-kurds/friend-or-foe-assad-quietly-aids-syrian-kurds-against-turkey-idUSKBN1FV078>.
- Blum, Gabriela. *Islands of Agreement: Managing Enduring Armed Rivalries*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007.
- Brancati, Dawn. “Decentralization: Fueling the Fire or Dampening the Flames of Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism?” *International Organization* 60, 3, (Summer 2006): 651-685.
- Coakley, John. “Ethnic Conflict Resolution: Routes Towards Settlement.” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 15, 3-4 (2009): 462-483.

- Cockburn, Patrick. "Isis in Kobani: Turkey's act of abandonment may mark an 'irrevocable breach' with Kurds across the region." *Independent*. 7 October 2014.
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-in-kobani-turkey-s-act-of-abandonment-may-mark-an-irrevocable-breach-with-kurds-across-the-9780941.html>.
- Coskun, Orhan and Gulsen Solaker. "Turkey's Kurdish peace process key to Erdoğan's presidential hopes." *Reuters*. 3 April 2014. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-election-kurds/turkeys-kurdish-peace-process-key-to-Erdogans-presidential-hopes-idUSBREA3218L20140403>.
- Cunningham, Erin. "In Turkey, soaring support for Syrian offensive and rising anti-Americanism." *Washington Post*. 4 February 2018.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/turkish-support-for-offensive-soars-standing-of-longtime-ally-america-tumbles/2018/02/03/0612e970-06a2-11e8-aa61-f3391373867e_story.html?utm_term=.3b837101a8f4.
- "Cyprus profile – Timeline." *BBC*. 7 February 2018. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17219505>.
- Dalay, Galip. "Evolution of Turkey-Iraqi Kurdistan's Relations." *Aljazeera*. 20 December 2017.
<http://studies.aljazeera.net/en/reports/2017/12/evolution-turkey-iraqi-kurdistans-relations-171220092851950.html>.
- Dixon, Jeffrey C. and Murat Ergin. "Explaining Anti-Kurdish Beliefs in Turkey: Group Competition, Identity, and Globalization." *Social Science Quarterly* 91, 5 (December 2010): 1329-1348.

- Ekim, Sinan and Kemal Kirişci. "The Turkish constitutional referendum, explained." *Brookings*. 13 April 2017. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/04/13/the-turkish-constitutional-referendum-explained/>.
- Fisher, Roger, William Ury, and Bruce Patton. *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving*. London: Penguin Publishers, 2011.
- Forsberg, Erika. "Polarization and Ethnic Conflict in a Widened Strategic Setting." *Journal of Peace Research* 45, 2 (March 2008): 288.
- Fowler, Michael. *Mastering Negotiation*. Durham, North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press, 2016.
- Ganguly, Meenakshi. "Sri Lanka After the Tigers." *Human Rights Watch*. 19 February 2016. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/02/19/sri-lanka-after-tigers>.
- Göksel, Nigar and Berkay Mandıracı. "New Turkey-PKK Peace Talks: An Inevitability Postponed." *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 14, 4 (Winter 2016): <http://turkishpolicy.com/article/785/new-turkey-pkk-peace-talks-an-inevitability-postponed>.
- Göksel, Nigar. "A New Cycle begins in Turkey-PKK Conflict." *International Crisis Group*. 11 August 2015. <http://blog.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/2015/08/11/a-new-cycle-begins-in-turkey-pkk-conflict/>.
- Gunter, Michael. "Reopening Turkey's Closed Kurdish Opening?" *Middle East Policy* 20, 2 (2013): 88-98.
- Gunter, Michael. "The Turkish-Kurdish Peace Process." *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 14, 1 (2013): 101-111.

Hakyemez, Serra. "Turkey's Failed Peace Process with the Kurds: A Different Explanation."

Brandeis University Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Middle East Brief 111 (June 2017): 6.

Hamsici, Mahmut "Is Turkey's peace process with the Kurds collapsing?" *BBC*. 9 September

2013. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-24014555>.

Hess, Jake. "Turkey's PKK Talks." *Foreign Policy*. 8 January 2013.

<http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/01/08/turkeys-pkk-talks/>.

Iyigun, Seltem. "As Turkey's economy booms, deep inequality persists." *Reuters*. 28 November

2012. <https://www.reuters.com/article/turkey-unemployment/as-turkeys-economy-booms-deep-inequality-persists-idUSL5E8MGBB420121128>.

Jensen, Lloyd. "Negotiations and Power Asymmetries: The Cases of Bosnia, Northern Ireland

and Sri Lanka." *International Negotiation*, 2 (1997): 21-41.

Letsch, Constanze and Ian Traynor. "Turkey election: ruling party loses majority as pro-Kurdish

HDP gains seats." *Guardian*. 7 June 2015.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/07/turkey-election-preliminary-results-Erdoğan-akp-party>.

Loveluck, Louisa. "Turkish president threatens to 'drown' U.S.-backed force in Syria."

Washington Post. 15 January 2018. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/turkish-president-threatens-todrown-us-backed-force-in-syria/2018/01/15/e7789850-f9e7-11e7-b832-8c26844b74fb_story.html?utm_term=.62646bc370d4.

Lundgren, Åsa. *The Unwelcome Neighbour: Turkey's Kurdish Policy*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2007.

Marcus, Aliza. "The Kurds' Evolving Strategy." *World Affairs* 175, 4 (2012): 15-22.

Marcus, Aliza. *Blood and Belief: The PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence*. New York: New York University Press, 2007.

“No further step before PKK lays down arms: Erdoğan.” *Hurriyet Daily News*. 23 March 2015. <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/no-further-step-before-pkk-lays-down-arms-Erdoğan-80084>.

Öcalan, Abdullah. “Democratic Confederalism.” London, Cologne: International Initiative, 2011.

“Öcalan urges PKK to convene congress to lay down arms.” *Hurriyet Daily News*. 21 March 2015. <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/Öcalan-urges-pkk-to-convene-congress-to-lay-down-arms-79988>.

“Opposition HDP deputy Özkan arrested by court in Turkey’s Muş.” *Hurriyet Daily News*. 20 April 2017. <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/opposition-hdp-deputy-ozkan-arrested-by-court-in-turkeys-mus-112240>.

Page currently inaccessible. *Al-Monitor*. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/11/turkey-rising-dissent-against-prolonged-emergency-rule.html#ixzz54wfzWHws>.

Page currently inaccessible. *Al-Monitor*. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/09/turkey-emergency-rule-stokes-kurdish-separatism.html#ixzz54wh6d9FF>.

Phillips, David L. “The Quest for Peace in Turkey.” *World Policy Blog*. 11 November 2013. <http://www.worldpolicy.org/blog/2013/11/11/quest-peace-turkey>.

Pusane, Özlem Kayhan. “Turkey's Military Victory over the PKK and Its Failure to End the PKK Insurgency.” *Middle Eastern Studies* 51, 5 (2015): 727-741.

Reynolds, James. "Turkey Kurds: PKK chief Öcalan Calls for Ceasefire." *BBC*. 21 March 2013.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-21874427>.

"Senior PKK leader says organization can end armed struggle with steps from gov't." *Hurriyet*

Daily News. 31 March 2015. <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/senior-pkk-leader-says-organization-can-end-armed-struggle-with-steps-from-govt--80428>.

Shaheen, Kareem. "Erdoğan clinches victory in Turkish constitutional referendum." *Guardian*.

16 April 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/16/Erdoğan-claims-victory-in-turkish-constitutional-referendum>.

"Suruc massacre: At least 30 killed in Turkey border blast." *BBC*. 20 July 2015.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-33593615>.

Tas, Latif. "15 steps for Turkish-Kurdish peace." *Open Democracy*. 6 May 2016.

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/latif-tas/15-steps-for-turkish-kurdish-peace>.

Tezcür, Güneş Murat. "When Democratization Radicalizes: The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey." *Journal of Peace Research* 47, 6 (November 2010): p. 775-789.

Tisdall, Simon. "Erdoğan plan for super-presidency puts Turkey's democracy at stake."

Guardian. 25 March 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/25/Erdoğan-plan-for-super-presidency-puts-turkeys-democracy-at-stake>.

Treaty of Sèvres. Part III Section III Article 62. Signed 10 August 1920.

<http://www.hri.org/docs/sevres/part1.html>.

"Turkey approves framework for PKK peace talks." *Aljazeera*. 10 July 2014.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/07/turkey-approves-framework-pkk-peace-talks-201471019443811435.html>.

- “Turkey gives nod to ‘Kurds but not the YPG’ in Syria talks.” *Hurriyet Daily News*. 12 December 2017. <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-gives-nod-to-kurds-but-not-the-ypg-in-syria-talks-123978>.
- “Turkey’s coup attempt: What you need to know.” *BBC*. 17 July 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36816045>.
- “Turkey’s PKK Conflict: The Rising Toll.” *International Crisis Group*. Last updated 21 February 2018. <http://www.crisisgroup.be/interactives/turkey/>.
- “Turkey’s pro-Kurdish HDP says Isolation of Öcalan must end immediately.” *Ekurd Daily*. 15 July 2015. <http://ekurd.net/hdp-says-isolation-of-Öcalan-must-end-immediately-2015-07-15>.
- “Turkish gov’t, HDP herald ‘new phase’ in Kurdish peace process.” *Hurriyet Daily News*. 22 December 2014. <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-govt-hdp-herald-new-phase-in-kurdish-peace-process-75914>.
- “War-war, not jaw-jaw.” *Economist*. 18 October 2014. <https://www.economist.com/news/europe/21625798-amid-fallout-iss-continuing-siege-kurdish-forces-kobane-turkish-government>.
- “Who are Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) rebels?” *BBC*. 4 November 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-20971100>.
- Yeğen, Mesut. “The Kurdish Peace Process in Turkey: Genesis, Evolution and Prospects.” *Istanbul Policy Center*, Working Paper 11 (May 2015).
- Yetkin, Murat. “ANALYSIS: Turkish government states negotiations with the PKK for Kurdish peace.” *Hurriyet Daily News*. 28 February 2015.

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/analysis-turkish-government-starts-negotiations-with-pkk-for-kurdish-peace-79001>.

Yildiz, Guney. "Turkey-PKK peace process 'at turning point'." *BBC*. 12 November 2014.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30000969>.

Yildiz, Kerim and Kurdish Human Rights Project. *The Kurds in Turkey: EU Accession and Human Rights*. London: Pluto Press in association with Kurdish Human Rights Project, 2005.

Zurutuza, Karlos. "The peace process is reaching a dead end'." *DW*. 23 April 2014.

<http://www.dw.com/en/the-peace-process-is-reaching-a-dead-end/a-17582262>.

Zurutuza, Karlos. "New Chapter in PKK-Turkey Ties?" *DW*. 20 March 2013.

<http://www.dw.com/en/new-chapter-in-pkk-turkey-ties/a-16685829>.