

DRK SNAPSHOT

Overall Security Conditions in Turkey's Proximity - 2017

In the midst of the evolving strategic transformation of the Middle East, Turkey has been passing through yet another stage of its longstanding Kurdish quest, activated by the agile tactics of PKK. However, the current security dilemma is not only limited with this longstanding internal policy dispute, but is also increasingly associated with the evolution of the political-military developments over Iraq and more prominently over Syria. Due to concerns of the possibility of a



stand-alone Kurdish entity in Syria and a likely-to-be Kurdish state in Northern Iraq, Turkey encounters three different Kurdish-related security problems in Syria, in Northern Iraq and South-eastern Turkey, which are interconnected with each other. Additionally, current conditions over the wider region give further clues regarding the emergence of an unprecedented source of atrocities between ISIS and Turkey.

Looking at the practical picture of security dynamics, the current government, backed by the advantageous political climate attained in the June and November 2015 elections and the unsuccessful Military Coup attempt of July 2016, appears to be benefiting from



the inherent flexibilities of “a strong government” posture. On the Kurdish side, it was observed with the “Urban – Trench Warfare” in many districts of South East Turkey in 2016 that PKK, seemingly in accordance with the theoretical phasing of Guerrilla Warfare Strategy, had tried to elevate its claims to a so-called mass upheaval of the overall Kurdish population in the region. However, we rather consider that these attempts were constituting an

effort of engagement of Turkish Security Forces as to distract their attentions and impair their operational tempo and balance while the PYD forces passing to western Euphrates areas from Munjib in Syria. Against the questionable realism of PKK's claims, it has been demonstrating quite asymmetric means of warfare both in the selected urban and the traditional rural areas. As PKK's motives concerning the continuation of engagement in the interior front, government-backed security forces have thus far been applying great deal of attrition against PKK in 2017 so far.

Consequently, in addition to the current power balance and the tactical picture between PKK and the Turkish security forces, the status of the evolving Kurdish gains in Syria and future repercussions of Kurdish referendum in Northern Iraq are anticipated to be further determinant in the options of Turkish policy makers as well as the future security environment in Turkey. Thus, it may be soon expected to witness a dissolve in vagueness, an increased rigidity and determination in the security fronts of Turkey's southeast, in Northern Iraq, and in Syria.