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Moderator:

OMER TASPINAR
Nonresident Fellow
Director, Turkey Project, The Brookings Institution

Panelists:

HASAN CEMAL
Senior Columnist, *Milliyet* (Turkey)

O. FARUK LOGOGLU
President, Eurasian Strategic Studies Center

ALIZA MARCUS
Reporter, *Bloomberg News*
Author, *Blood and Belief: The PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence*

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PROCEEDINGS

DR. TASPINAR: First of all, let me give you a brief update to the Turkey Project here at Brookings. As you all know, Ambassador Mark Parris joined Brookings last year, and we had a very successful program during 2007, which we called Turkey 2007, and we had, like today, several panels, roundtables, and seminars on Turkey. The logic of having a Turkey 2007 project last year under the direction of Ambassador Parris was to basically remind people that 2007 was going to be a crucial year for Turkey, and we were proven right. Last year turned out to be a very important year for Turkey, and yet what we did not realize is that there's no such thing as just one crucial year in Turkey. Every year seems to be, in its own right, very important; and 2008, already in its first couple of months, is shaping up to become as important as 2007. So, we're very happy that Ambassador Mark Parris decided to stay. We are both now involved with the Turkey program, and we will be both hosting these roundtables; and 2008 will be also an important year for Brookings and the Turkey Project, and we are very happy to continue our partnership with our two institutional sponsors, namely the Smith Richardson Foundation and TUSIAD, the Turkish Businessmen's Association, so I would like to thank these two institutional sponsors. Also the growing number of Turkish private sector support for Brookings.

The plan today is to talk about the Kurdish question. Now,

we were joking before, saying that when you cover the Turkish question and Islam and secularism, basically you're covering the two most important issues in Turkey. However, the challenge is that sometimes you don't get the timing exactly right when you focus on the Kurdish problem. It's the other question of secularism and Islam that pops up as the most pressing, important news issue, and this is what happened last week. We had basically news coming on the front of secularism and Islam, and now there is a case opened by the chief prosecutor of the Turkish Court of Appeals against the AK Party. It's basically a case to shut down the AK Party. It remains to be seen whether the Constitutional Court will accept the case, and we'll follow it, but suffice to say that the agenda of Turkey is very, very charged. There's never a dull moment.

But still, we're focusing to -- we've decided to focus on our original topic, the Kurdish question, and we're very lucky to have three very distinguished speakers today, and it's my privilege to introduce them right now. In fact, they don't need much introduction, and you do have their biographies, so I'll be very brief, and they will be also very brief in their introductory remarks so that we can have a maximum amount of time for the Q&A.

We will start with Hasan Cemal, who is now a senior columnist for *Milliyet*. For those of you who follow Turkey, he is one of the most important columnists in Turkey. He has a brilliant journalistic career,

but he's also the author of seven books, and one of his latest books was on the Kurds, (inaudible), and he is a frequent visitor to Northern Iraq. He often interviews Jalal Talabani and Massoud Barzani, so he's a keen observer of Kurdish politics, as well as the AKP and Turkish political dynamics. So, Hasan will talk for about five to ten minutes on the general political situation in Turkey.

And then we'll switch to Ambassador Faruk Logoglu, who really needs no introduction to this audience. He was the Turkish ambassador in Washington from 2001 to 2006. He has a very distinguished, brilliant diplomatic career, including ambassadorships to Denmark, Azerbaijan, and, of course, Washington. He also has a PhD from Princeton University, and he briefly had an academic career right here. So, it's my pleasure to welcome him once again to Brookings, and I kindly ask Ambassador Logoglu to also briefly talk about the Kurdish question from the prism of -- although he's no longer with the government -- from the prism of the civilian and military bureaucracy: How does the civilian and military bureaucracy perceive this problem? And now that he is at ASAM, a very important think tank in Ankara, he's still following these issues and we're very happy that we can have a view from Ankara in addition to the view from Istanbul from Hasan Cemal.

Finally, we have also Aliza Marcus, who is the author of a brilliant book on the PKK called *Blood and Belief: The PKK and the*

Kurdish Fight for Independence, and Aliza has covered Turkey for about 20 years now, Turkey and Kurdish politics. She speaks perfect Turkish. She's been Istanbul based for a number of news agencies. And we're very, very happy that she's here able to join us, and I asked Aliza to also give brief introductory remarks on the question of essentially what do the Kurds want? What does the PKK want? What is the DTP about? The connection between the DTP and the PKK. So, she will cover these issues in her brief introductory remarks from Bangleoff to Kurdish viewpoints.

So, with this, I'll just leave the floor to Hasan.

MR. CEMAL: Thank you very much, Omer.

Really, I have been an active journalist for the last 39 years, and, as Omer said, I have never had a dull moment in our country, and always a very hectic time we are having, and every time the edge and the role of Turkey is changing very rapidly. Is not easy to catch up with that edge in the -- changing edge in the -- what, for the 39 years or 40 years I have been trying to follow.

A couple of weeks ago, my wife told me, look, Hasan Cemal, don't run that much, because that film will continue after you. I mean -- or that this end -- you won't see the end of that film.

DR. TASPINAR: That movie.

MR. CEMAL: That is the movie, yes. That movie would run

after (inaudible). What -- I have been trying to focus on the problem of democracy in Turkey all the time. My focus is on democracy, and especially for the last one year there's a fierce fight in Turkey between bureaucratic power and the elected power. That's a real, real fight and battle between these two powers -- the elected one and the bureaucratic one. And that fight, without understanding the nature of that fight, it is impossible to grasp what is going on in Turkey.

Now, and in the meantime, it would be impossible to bring any kind of solution -- a political solution or the civilian solution to the Kurdish problem or the PKK problem without having a kind of first-rate democracy in Turkey and the first-rate on a real, not-a-fake, rule of law, and that is the real buttons growing on that -- I mean, whether Turkey will have a first-rate democracy and a real rule of law.

The bureaucratic power in Turkey says that Turkey should not have a first-rate democracy and a real rule of law. Why? Because first-rate democracy would accelerate the breakup of Turkey; and, secondly, the first-rate democracy would strengthen the hands of political Islams or radical Islams in Turkey. And for this reason, for Turkey it would be much better to turn its back to E.U. That is the fight that has been going on.

You have to pay attention to that dimension, and when you look at the three cases, which is brought to the (inaudible) Constitutional

Court or the Supreme Court, you could see these three recent cases and you could easily put them within the framework of that fight for democracy and rule of law. The first thing is the case which brought against the Ruling Party, AKP; the second case which brought against the Kurdish Party, DTP; and the third case is waiting whether to lift or to continue the ban on the head scarf. And then you look at these three cases. In the meantime, something to do with the -- not only with the secular reason but in the meantime it's something to do with the Kurdish problem, because AKP, which got 47 percent of the vote six months ago but, in the meantime, 55 percent of the Kurdish votes. And DTP, the Kurdish Party, got 2 million votes and 21 MPs in Parliament.

When you close these two Parties, it would be a big blow not only to democracy in Turkey, but in the meantime that would be a real blow to a kind of civilian or the political solution of the Kurdish problem as well. And the -- finally, I would say this. If you want to solve the Kurdish problem and the PKK problem in a peaceful way, in a civilian way, and if you want to see Turkey not going over these (inaudible), you have to have the first-rate democracy and the rule of law. Otherwise, on the contrary, your fears of breakup of Turkey and the Turkey going to Islamism -- these two fears would easily materialize, and for this reason the present -- the happenings in Turkey in the political arena and they all (inaudible) gist of the matter is democracy. And you have to accelerate and deepen the

democratic reform in Turkey in order to bring a solution to the Kurdish problem, the PKK, and to bring about (inaudible) confrontation between secular reason and democracy.

Thank you.

DR. TASPINAR: Thank you, Hasan, for giving us a broad framework. We'll go in detail into Q&A.

But let's continue with you, Ambassador.

AMB. LOGOGLU: Thank you. It's really a very good feeling to be among so many friends in Washington, D.C. For all of us here on the panel and for a few of you in the audience, this is a repeat performance. We've discussed some of the issues earlier today, so I will feel like I'm repeating myself, but if you'll bear with me.

First, I want to take issue temporarily with the way this discussion has been titled the Kurdish question -- Turkey's Kurdish question. I don't reject the idea there is a Kurdish problem in Turkey, but calling it Turkey's Kurdish issue or Turkey's Kurdish question I think prejudices the nature of the question, because there a lot of people who designate the problem by other names, and some people strenuously object to its being called the Kurdish question. Nonetheless, there is a problem, and that's what we have to address. All I am pointing out to is that loading -- characterizing the issue in a certain way really intimidates an objective, a completely free and useful discussion of the matter. That's

all the intention of my point with regard to the title of the discussion this afternoon.

In terms of the Turkish establishment, political authority, and Turkish military stand -- vis-à-vis the Kurdish issue -- I think there is one important dimension of convergence between the civilian political authority and the Turkish military establishment about the fact that you cannot resolve this problem, especially terrorism, by military means alone, that you need other measures in order to render the PKK irrelevant, at least make it an unattractive address by providing incentives and opportunities to especially the young people elsewhere in society that they would no longer want to join the PKK terrorist organization. There is agreement in this regard that this point has been made by many military leaders, retired and currently serving in the Turkish armed forces, and this is good. This means there is an improved level of understanding of where Turkey must go in order to really resolve what is an intractable problem.

Now, there are three parts about the Kurdish issue in Turkey. One is that there is really no (inaudible) consensus, not even sufficient clarity, on what the Kurdish problem in Turkey is. There are many aspects to it. There are many interpretations of what it is and what it is not, but in my judgment Turkish society is not at the point where there is a general agreement as to what constitutes the Kurdish problem.

The second point, the second fact, is there is even less

agreement and less appreciation of the connection between the Kurdish issue on the one hand and terrorism and PKK terrorism on the other hand. Obviously, there are causal links between the two, but what they are and what they mean is not sufficiently debated and certainly not appreciated in Turkey -- and elsewhere. I mean, it's not just in Turkey. The same applies to Washington in (inaudible).

And the third point follows from the first two. Because you don't agree on the nature of the problem, on the relationship between PKK and terrorism, there is a very little agreement on how you want to solve this problem and the resolution of the problem.

Now, that is the conceptual background. In terms of what were the Turkish government stance and the Turkish military stance beyond the point of agreement between the two on the pact that you need to do more than just a military struggle against terrorism, there are some important differences. The Turkish military is particularly keen about -- negatively keen -- about any ethnicity-based solutions to the problem. They would not want a solution that is founded on a greater or further recognition of the Kurds as an ethnic group, as an ethnic identity, certainly not to the extent of it being reflected in the Turkish constitution, which is being currently debated in Turkey. The military is also extremely sensitive about the unitary character of Turkish states. This means that they would be reticent, even opposed, to any real devolution of power to the

provinces or to local administrations.

Even though this process is taking place all over the globe, local administrations are becoming more important, because they have more revenues and they have more authority, so that is this natural process. But when you globalize it in terms of giving more power to the provinces, to the local administrations, that is not aligned, that is, to the liking of at least the Turkish military, plus some other circles in Turkey.

As far as the government is concerned, and as far as this particular government is concerned, I think there are basically two aspects of AKP's approach to the Kurdish question. One is pragmatic, that is, measures to include the quality of life of the Kurds, along with everybody else; some cultural measures, like broadcasting in -- TV broadcasting in Kurdish; and some talk of a legal, political amnesty for at least some of the people associated with the PKK terrorist organization. The other aspect of this government's approach and understanding of how to tackle this problem is based on religion -- Islam -- that Islam offers an (inaudible) identity, because in the doctrine of Islam there are no nations and therefore there are no ethnic groups. It's only the community of believers. And the AKP government and the Party has really made use of this, and has successfully made use of this, and has increased its votes in this region. It will probably increase its votes in the local elections. But this represents a danger, because --

Is that my phone?

DR. TASPINAR: No.

SPEAKER: I don't know where it is --

AMB. LOGOGLU: That's okay. She's always a busy lady,
so I don't blame her.

The religious -- the systemic dimension to the current government's approach to the Kurdish issue is, of course, not accidental. It is part and parcel of the role perspective of the current government in Turkey. It was -- as we have seen in the recent debate over the (inaudible) issue, there is a constant and steady expansion of the space of religion in Turkey at the expense of all other (inaudible) spaces, however you characterize them, and this I think poses great dangers to Turkish democracy, because all these policies, which really affect the dynamics of Turkey, undermine Turkey's secular character. Take away secularism, we can add democracy.

That is my final point at this stage, and I look forward to your questions.

DR. TASPINAR: Thank you, Ambassador. We already have two quite polarized views, and we'll be happy to go further into Q&A on these two issues but now, Eliza.

MS. MARCUS: Okay.

I'm obviously going to give the position -- the Kurdish

perspective based on my research, and I'd like to start off by building off what the ambassador said, which is that inside Turkey, Turks don't necessarily know what the Kurdish problem is, and they don't even really know whether they should call it the Kurdish problem. I think perhaps we could start off by saying, then, there is something called a Turkish problem, and that problem is not listening to what Kurds have to say, because Kurds are very clear that there is a problem and, as Kurds, they're probably in the best position to say that there is something called the Kurdish problem. They're also very clear about what this is. It's about military and political repression of Kurdish identity and activities.

Now, because they feel that there is nobody in Turkey listening to them or willing to actually speak about something called a Kurdish problem or they're not willing yet to take serious concrete action, I think this leads into my next point, which is something I like to stress, because I think it's important for understanding the Kurdish problem, which is that the PKK is the dominant political organization of Turkey's Kurds. It's the one organization that Kurds feel has consistently fought for them, and I don't just mean militarily, although it has, but also it has stood up for them politically during years when Kurdish political parties were being shut down by the Turkish courts, and currently, as has been mentioned, the DTP Kurdish Party is also facing closure by the courts. And in this sort of insecure political environment, Kurds look to the PKK as

their leading spokesman, as the group that cannot be done away with very easily.

The other reason why the PKK remains so dominant and popular among Kurds, despite various setbacks, including Erdogan's capture in 1999, is that it's a very pragmatic organization. It does dictate to Kurds. It can be incredibly violent, both externally and internally. Nonetheless, it's pragmatic. It listens to what Kurds say. It changes its policies often based on that.

In the late '80s, the PKK was heavily criticized by Kurds for killing Kurdish civilians. Erdogan publicly renounced this in an interview, in fact, with Hasan's colleague, Mehmet Ali Birand, and called for that to end. Now, it didn't stop necessarily. The PKK continued to kill civilians, but nonetheless the fact that the PKK took this public stand and the fact that these killings did decline helped the PKK gain support among Kurds, and this happened again most recently politically a few years ago when Kurds on the ground were clearly dismayed with the PKK's call for something like cultural rights.

After Erdogan's capture, Erdogan came up with a very sort of disparate group of claims that had to do with cultural rights, environmentalism. It was very unclear what he wanted to say. And after the U.S. invaded Iraq and the Iraqi Kurdish mini-state, as I call it, was created, Kurds on the ground in Turkey began to look to that as a model

for themselves. They took great pride in what was going on in Iraqi Kurdistan, and they were very displeased with what they saw as the PKK's refusal to embrace this, to speak out more publicly. The PKK changed its position after that. It's now speaking out in favor of this. It's come out with a stronger political platform that has to do with autonomy. And so in this sense the PKK is able to keep its support. At the same time, the PKK has an extensive group of front organizations in Europe and inside Turkey. This helps it spread its message.

And, finally, one of the main reasons why the PKK remains so popular and dominant is that there really is no Turkish policy towards the Kurds, and in the absence of that, the PKK is able to be the spokesperson for the Kurds.

Now, most recently the AK Party Prime Minister Erdogan came out with a package for the Kurds, and this was very much eagerly awaited by Kurds. In fact, one reason that AK Party did so well in the Kurdish region in the last elections, as Hasan mentioned, is because they expected something from AK Party. AK partyists had provided certain things to Kurds -- to everybody in Turkey -- better economic measures and medical clinics, things like that. But for a certain number of Kurdish voters, what they were looking for was movement on the Kurdish issue, and Erdogan had given many signals that he was interested in doing something. Last week he announced a package -- 24 hours of Turkish

state television in Kurdish and \$12 billion for the GAP project over the next few years.

It probably would have been better if Erdogan had not mentioned this, because a lot of Kurds became very disappointed very quickly, and if anything this will help boost the PKK's stature in the short run. The idea of a 24-hour Turkish television station in Kurdish is not exactly what Kurds were talking about. It's a nice step. But, frankly, it doesn't begin to get to the heart of the problem. And what this does is it convinces or it helps convince Kurds that the Turkish political sphere -- Turkish politics are not ready to really deal with the Kurdish issue seriously. It feeds into this belief that without a serious military pressure on the Turkish government, on the Turkish state, there will be no resolution of the Kurdish issue. This comes also at a time when the courts are trying to close down DTP, which, once again, weakens Kurds who say that we should -- that they should fight in the political sphere, that there is room in the legal political sphere for Kurds to demand their rights, to win their rights. According to the Turkish courts, there shouldn't be apparently, so this does push them -- radicalizes Kurds. It's sort of a circular thing that's been going on now for years in Turkey.

At the same time, the Turkish military invasion of Northern Iraq a few weeks ago -- it -- Kurds saw that as an attack not just on the PKK but an attack on Iraqi Kurdistan. They saw it as a sign that Turkey

wasn't willing to accept any Iraqi Kurdish autonomy even if it's not in its own orders. And something like this, again, radicalizes the Kurds.

So, who does -- does Ankara have a counterpart? I mean, that's another question. Do they have to talk to the PKK? Because I think it's pretty obvious that Ankara would never talk to the PKK, and nor do I think that it is necessary given the way Kurdish politics have developed. There is a legal Kurdish party. If the party is shut down, there probably will be another Kurdish party, because this party has been shut down almost four or five times since 1993. This party doesn't have an organic link to the PKK. It is officially independent from the PKK. It is heavily influenced by the PKK, however, and that has good things and bad things in terms of negotiating a settlement of the PKK issue. You want a party that has links to the PKK that is sympathetic to its views, that can respond to what the PKK may be able to accept or not accept. At the same time, you want a party that can think independently, that can make good politics, because the PKK is not experienced at making politics. And this is where I think the Kurdish political party has a certain amount of weakness, which is that it gets a lot its legitimacy from the PKK's fight.

The main players in the Kurdish political party currently are people who grew up with the PKK struggle. These are people who got their experience and training in PKK affiliate organizations, (inaudible) organizations, or publishing houses that were sympathetic to the PKK.

They don't know anything but the PKK struggle, and they don't have any independent power base apart from the PKK supporters who make up the mass of the party.

This wasn't always the case. In the early 1990s, the preceding Kurdish political parties had many Kurds who brought with them experience that they had gained in the Turkish left or in Turkish political parties who had former parliamentarians. These were people who could chart somewhat of an independent course who knew how to do politics, who knew how to speak the Turkish political game.

Unfortunately, nobody was listening at the time, and many of these politicians -- they were either sent to jail, the party was shut down, they went into exile, some were mysteriously murdered, others simply died of old age. And so now you're dealing with a party that is very sympathetic to the PKK. It's difficult for it to separate itself from the PKK. But, nonetheless, it's not the PKK. And the fact is the PKK is an integral part of the problem. It is, in many ways, the problem, and it's useful to have a party that -- this is a party that Turkey could speak with -- the DTP that is; I'm not talking about the PKK -- if it wanted to solve the problem.

The DTP has put out a political proposal. A few months ago it came out with a proposal for autonomy, for devolution of power on a regional base inside Turkey. This is fairly -- pretty much ignored inside Turkey, and in fact this week a court case was opened against the party

for this proposal.

So, what I'm trying to show with all this is that Kurds feel that their political options are closed, that even when they do try to speak out, when they do try to put forward nonviolent platforms, nonviolent requests, these are not being dealt with seriously by their counterparts on the Turkish side.

So, in conclusion, what sort of solutions are possible? I think that one issue, and something that has come up before, is this idea of a PKK ceasefire as being necessary, because without a PKK ceasefire how can Turkey talk during a time of violence? On the one hand, that is true; on the other hand, a PKK ceasefire in a vacuum does nothing. If the PKK tomorrow were to lay down their arms and declare a permanent ceasefire, I have no doubt that the prime minister would stand up and declare the PKK problem -- the Kurdish problem solved.

The fact is that you need some sort of political process underway, and in that case the PKK, being as pragmatic as I believe it is, would be more than willing to declare a ceasefire, and it has declared numerous ceasefires in the past. I'd like to remind everybody that after Erdogan's capture, Erdogan in fact declared a ceasefire and demanded that the PKK withdraw all its rebels from inside Turkey, which was no small thing for the PKK. It took it about six months to do that. That ceasefire lasted until 2004. In that period, Turkey essentially took no

steps. It made some very minor changes. It did it largely for the European Union, and Kurds did not accept this as a serious gesture toward solving the Kurdish problem.

So, this is why the PKK is unlikely to declare another ceasefire without -- another serious ceasefire and actually lay down its arms -- a permanent cease fire, let's say -- without a true political process. At the same time, I want to add that Iraqi Kurdistan has now become an important model for Kurds throughout the region and no more so than in Turkey. I mean, it's something they like. They admire it. But at the same time, it's something they take a as a model for themselves. It gives them a real -- a concrete example of what they might hope to strive for in one way or another in their own country. It doesn't mean they want exactly the same thing, but for the first time they can look across the border and they can see what it means for Kurds to run their own lives. And what this has done is -- in a way I feel that the Iraqi Kurds have developed their own policy, they're developing their own mini-state as it were. Turkish Kurds are developing an independent political perspective quite apart from the PKK, and this is the first time it's happening, that Kurds themselves are able to speak out about what they want independent of being dictated to by the PKK.

But Turkey's the only one without a Kurdish policy. Of the three major players we're talking about here, Turkey lacks a Kurdish

policy. In the absence of a Kurdish policy, things move on. Turkish Kurds develop a more concrete view of what they want. The process doesn't stop just because Turkey doesn't have a Kurdish policy. If Turkey wants to be a player and it wants to be able to have a part to play -- a real part in this -- and put forward something that it finds that it can accept, it needs to develop a policy.

DR. TASPINAR: Thank you, Eliza.

I will open the floor to questions, but using the prerogative of the Chair, I will ask one question to Ambassador Logoglu and one to Hasan Cemal and Aliza just to open it.

Ambassador, if we can try to tie the two primary agendas of Turkey right now, the question about the future of the AK Party and our current topic, for the lack of a better term, the Kurdish question, how would the closure of AK Party impact the future or the Kurdish question in Turkey? In the current Turkish political scene in the absence of AK Party, who are the actors who can solve this issue?

And to Hasan and Aliza, what is the nature of the relationship between the Northern Iraqi leadership or the new Iraqi Kurdish leadership and the PKK?

AMB. LOGOGLU: It's like a million dollar question. First of all, my personal hunch is that the Constitutional Court will accept to make a moving on the case by the chief prosecutor, but I think the AK Party is

not going to be closed down. But if it is, it's going to create more problems than it's going to solve (inaudible) Constitutional Court is it's going to create problems more than it solves.

In terms of what would happen to the Kurdish question, (inaudible) without the closure of the government party, Turkish democracy would still be there. I know this doesn't sound right to many ears. How can you talk about democracy when the party that has (inaudible) to vote is closed down and you can still claim to have a democracy? Well, we have seen it before. We have seen party closures before. It's true. We have not seen the closure of a government party. But in matters --

DR. TASPINAR: There's always a first.

AMB. LOGOGLU: There is always a first in the context of -- the important thing is will the institutions that make Turkey a democracy survive the decision, the ruling of the Constitutional Court? My answer is yes. If that is the case and that's the answer to the Kurdish question to be found in the context of Turkish democracy, in the context of the institutions of Turkish democracy -- or from what remains of Turkish democracy.

DR. TASPINAR: That's a good point.

MR. CEMAL: As the relationship between Northern Iraq, Iraqi Kurdistan, and PKK -- of course the -- to some extent a complicated relationship. What's happening in Northern Iraq for the last, say, 16 years,

as Aliza said, mini-state they have there, and that -- for this reason, the Kurdish -- Iraqi Kurdish leadership doesn't want to have a confrontational relationship with Turkey.

And when I first interviewed General Talabani in 1992, and this was the same year, it was my first interview. They said they don't want to see PKK doing trouble, and the obvious reason -- they were very critical 16 years ago, and they cooperated with Turkish armed forces, and the real military operations carried out while Turkey and the Iraqi Kurds were (inaudible) in those years. And the last time that I interviewed both leaders -- Barzani and Talabani in last November, they said the same thing as our common trouble or common problem. They were very sincere on that. Of course they had their own, because they like to run their own state. They want to run their affairs, and they don't want to see Turkish armed forces in Northern Iraq.

But PKK activities -- cross-border activities -- and using Northern Iraq as a base at the end, Turkish armed forces started roaming and the land operation took place at that time. And now after the fifth of November meeting between Erdogan and President Bush here in White House, something started changing, and after the last visit of President Talabani to Ankara on the eighth of March, we had a chat -- a couple of journalists -- we had a chat with President Talabani, and he said many positive things -- cooperation or start a kind of new mechanism between

Washington, Iraqi Kurds, and Ankara.

And the same thing authored by Massoud Barzani last weekend in (inaudible) after he met General Talabani in (inaudible). He said a new chapter open between Ankara and Iraqi Kurds. That means the relationship of Iraqi regional Kurdistan government towards PKK is changing. But of course, then, that means the Iraqi Kurds will start exerting Russia of PKK not to use Northern Iraq as a base for cross-border assaults. But -- and in the meantime, after that land operation of Turkish armed forces, that psychological message went to PKK, and the important -- the most important thing is the message from Washington to the PKK, because under the (inaudible) authority of the region, PKK is destabilizing effects around the relations of United States, Turkey, and Iraqi Kurds. Nobody wants to see that.

And the -- but, Iraqi Kurds or Iraqi Kurdish government would not take anything militarily against the PKK, because they are Kurds. PKK Kurds are very -- the popular and very strong organization of the Turkish Kurds, as Aliza said, and in the meantime of course the Iraqi Kurds or Turkish Kurds are Kurds. I mean -- and -- but if Turkey starts -- Turkish government starts doing something positive -- what is positive (inaudible) - - but if it starts doing that, that could lead in the final analysis (inaudible) could lay down arms as well. But, it takes time. But if you don't know, maybe a new mechanism started working in Turkey to close AKP maybe

because of the intention of a political solution or because something is cooking in the kitchen after the fifth of November meeting at the White House. Maybe they don't want some bureaucratic forces in Turkey. It doesn't want to see a kind of political solution of that problem, because a solution of that problem would lead to a first-rate democracy in Turkey. They don't want to see it maybe. Anyway, that's --

DR. TASPINAR: Thank you. Aliza, briefly.

MS. MARCUS: Yeah, very briefly.

I agree with a lot of what Hasan said, so I'll just add a few points. Obviously the relationship between the Iraqi Kurdish leadership and the PKK is really one of uneasy co-existence. If the Iraqi Kurdish leadership could make the PKK disappear tomorrow, I have no doubt that they would. But they can't. They're not about to take military action against the PKK. They tried that in the 1990s with the backing of the Turkish army, which is a much stronger military than the Iraqi Kurdish peshmerga ever can be, and they failed to dislodge the PKK. So, there's - - obviously the Iraqi Kurds understand now that on their own, even with the backing of the Turkish military, they're not going to get much further. They know those mountains very well, and they know how difficult it is to push them out.

At the same time, you know, Iraqi Kurdistan has also become a magnet for Kurds from all over the region. Turkish Kurds go to

the -- they go to university. They're not just Turkish Kurds; they're Syrian Kurds, Iranian Kurds. They go to university there. They work there. They marry and settle there. They travel back and forth to see friends. A lot of the ex-PKK people have settled there. It's not so simple anymore to take serious -- to take real action against the PKK.

MR. CEMAL: Like Jews in Israel.

MS. MARCUS: Well --

DR. TASPINAR: (Inaudible)

MR. CEMAL: Everywhere in the world? The Jews everywhere in the world as a special interest for Israel.

MS. MARCUS: Well, I'm not an expert on Jews, but --

(Laughter)

MS. MARCUS: But I think it's difficult, and I think also we have to accept the PKK is a violent organization. They do -- they have been known to attack urban centers, and I have no doubt that Iraqi Kurdish leadership is well aware that in a head-to-head conflict of the PKK, there's a danger the PKK could set off bombs in Arabil and Solomonia . It'd be very destabilizing without any positive end for the Iraqi Kurds. So, I think the Iraqi Kurdish leadership has been very intelligent in that it disowns the PKK. It has no organic link to the PKK. It doesn't supply the PKK. But, at the same time, it calls on Turkey to address this inside Turkey on political grounds, and it's made it very clear that that's

where the solution lies.

DR. TASPINAR: Great.

We'll open it to Q&A. We have about 30 minutes now. If you could, please wait for the microphone and identify yourself before the question. Let's start with the front here.

MR. TALABANI: Kobah Talabani, a representative of the Kurdistan regional government in the United States. Welcome to the distinguished panel, and welcome Ambassador Logoglu back to Washington. I'd like to wish the panel and everybody in the audience also a happy Nowruz, as it is the start of our -- the Kurdish new year.

A two-sided question. Given the fact that there have been probably around 24 military -- Turkish military operations inside Iraqi Kurdistan, and the recent raids in December and the most recent incursion just a few months ago have not really led to a severe damage to the PKK's infrastructure or morale, don't you see this only -- these efforts as only radicalizing the Kurds in Turkey and also boosting the morale of the PKK? And don't you -- on the flip side, don't you see that now maybe Turkish public opinion, the press, and even the elite and the government have come to a realization that there has to be a more comprehensive solution to this problem that involves more than just a few hours of Kurdish TV a day but something that is more substantive and that is more in tune with the demands of the Kurds of Turkey?

DR. TASPINAR: Would you like to address it to a specific person?

MR. TALABANI: I think anyone is -- feel free to answer the question. Thank you.

AMB. LOGOGLU: Of course the assessment of various cross-border operations by the Turkish armed forces could be different from your point of view and different from my point of view. In our assessment, the Turkish cross-border operations have dealt a very significant blow to the physical facilities of the PKK in Northern Iraq. It has diminished its ability to move around in Northern Iraq. It certainly does not and never has in the past and never will in the future eliminate the terrorist threat as such whatever the magnitude of your or the duration of your cross-border operations there might be. I think that this is best known by the Turkish military. They have done so many times before, and the PKK is still there.

But you cannot allow a terrorist organization to stage attacks in Turkey with impunity, thinking that well, since the military attacks is not a solution, that they will have their way. It's not the way it works. If the government of Iraq and if the Kurdish authorities in Northern Iraq had taken a proper attitude toward the PKK in Northern Iraq, Turkish incursions into Northern Iraq would not have been necessary perhaps, and I think that's something to ponder about.

In terms of the second part of your question, commentary, I absolutely agree with you. I think that the Turkish government has been presented, actually, a window of opportunity by the Turkish military to address the terrorism problem on the one hand and the Kurdish issue, however you define it, on the other hand -- an integrated comprehensive vision, including economic elements, political elements, legal elements, social elements, cultural elements -- something debated and taken ownership by the entire community, not just the Kurds but also by the Turks, and implemented simultaneously as the military struggle goes on. Unfortunately, the Turkish government is very slow in this respect. It's offering piecemeal measures, like the last package of \$12 billion. Well, it's something, but that's a very narrow approach to the problem. You need a bigger approach with the full participation of all the elements of Turkey.

MR. CEMAL: I start -- the last point made by my friend, dear friend, Faruk Logoglu, that he has been presenting Turkish military in such a way that has opened a window of opportunity for the government, but that the government could make use of that window of opportunity is too optimistic or is a bit distorted. Well, I don't think so. I mean, I don't think the military in the real sense has opened such a window of opportunity for a kind of comprehensive plan. I mean, it's a little bit blah-blah. It's --

(Laughter)

MR. CEMAL: And, secondly, whether cross-border --

whether the land operation of the Turkish armed forces would radicalize the Kurds of the region I don't think so, because it's a limited time and limited scope, and the -- it's not going to radicalize this, but -- that kind of operation -- but it would have been very different if the Turkish government had started just at the beginning and the very big one like in 1995 when 14,000 people and the whole tanks and the whole (inaudible) was something else. But now I don't think that would radicalize the Kurds of the region. And in the meantime, I tell you that -- for instance, I give you as an example I was in Kirkuk in last November. We had lunch with the chairman of the Kirkuk Relief Emergency Council's -- I don't remember his name now. He told me look -- he said: I was at the mountains as a peshmerga for so many years; I was in the mountains of Iraq or Turkey, Iran, Syria, and in those years I had nothing to lose. I fought always. But now for the last 16, 15 years I settled down in Kirkuk. I have my job. I'm raising my children. I have home. And I have too many things to lose now. And for this reason I don't want PKK to get me in trouble with Turkey.

That is a very sincere (inaudible). And then you go to the Diyarbakir and you go to (inaudible) in the southeastern part of Turkey. When you start talking with the man on the street or the people at the café, they will -- no, we don't want to see the same film of the 1990s. They got fed up. And the leadership of Bakakar knows that, knows that

very well because they came to the end of the arms struggle. They can't do this. I mean, the arms struggle, terrorists, (inaudible). They can't lead anywhere. If PKK continues with the arms struggle, with the terrorists, and the cross-border assaults on the Turkish military, that would strengthen the hands of the hardliners in (inaudible), hardliners in the Turkish side, not to see first rate democracy, hardliners who doesn't want to -- who do not want to see Turkey's path to E.U. or a first-rate rule of law. And for this reason -- and the U.S. (inaudible) comprehensive plan, and the comprehensive -- I might the same question on the eighth of March to your father in Ankara, and whether he has an impression of the comprehensive plan being cooked between Ankara, Washington, (inaudible), and Baghdad was going on, he did not deny. I don't know. Something should be done. But now they want to close down the Party. They want to close down the kitchen. That's it. I mean, that's the -- all right.

MS. MARCUS: I'd just like to add in relation to -- I was going to say that they're burning down the kitchen now, so there's no way to imagine what's going to be cooked up. But that's -- we're very likely to see the PKK continue its armed attacks over the next few months, because again it gets back to the issue in the absence of a political dialog certainly at a period of such political instability where Erdogan's party is facing closure, where Kurds really can't hope anymore that something's going to

come out of AK Party, where a military operation, such as took place recently, I would say that does raise Kurdish suspicions I think on both sides. I think from the Iraqi Kurdish side, too, raises suspicions. This isn't directed solely at the PKK, that it's also a message to Iraqi Kurds that we can enter when we want; we can destabilize if we want to.

MR. CEMAL: Well, I'll tell you what.

MS. MARCUS: Please.

MR. CEMAL: Tell you what. As a precondition, PKK should announce as laying down the arms. That is the precondition. Without such a step, it is impossible to start mechanisms to sow.

MS. MARCUS: Yes, but as has been discussed before, they're more than willing to lay down arms once there's something there. But for the PKK to lay down arms now as they did in 1999 for five years --

MR. CEMAL: No, I'm just saying --

MS. MARCUS: -- and nothing out there. Why would they?

MR. CEMAL: There's a new chapter, and the -- in Turkey and interregional conditions of today, PKK cannot continue with civilian politics on the one hand and -- or (inaudible) on one hand and the veteran on the other hand. That is impossible.

MS. MARCUS: It's probably not very practical but --

MR. CEMAL: -- that only (inaudible).

MS. MARCUS: They can't, because the Party's about to be

shut down.

MR. CEMAL: What?

DR. TASPINAR: We're just witnessing a historic moment where Hasan and the (inaudible) are arguing, and that's their (inaudible) an agreement with (inaudible).

(Laughter)

SPEAKER: (Inaudible) My question is to Aliza Marcus. First of all, about your conception of Turkish problem -- not the Kurdish problem -- or both of them, and in fact just a -- I mean, it's an example but are you thinking that for example in a (inaudible) or Catalan question can be called also a Spanish question, although it's internal and external dimensions are different than the problem that they have?

MS. MARCUS: Well, this --

SPEAKER: And --

MS. MARCUS: Sorry.

SPEAKER: Okay, sorry. And the second question is about your ideas that I have read in one of your articles in your column that you are saying that United States should strengthen the democratic (inaudible) Kurdish officials as potential alternatives to the PKK. So, what are you thinking about the democracy that can be important from other countries, or do you think that this kind of democracy can be important from different countries, or what are you giving it role to -- what kind of role are you

giving to United States?

MS. MARCUS: I know -- I didn't mean that the U.S. should, you know, import something and then pose it, but rather that these are democratically elected representatives of the Kurds. They're isolated politically inside Turkey. Erdogan himself has said he won't meet with them unless they renounce PKK violence, although they have renounced violence on both sides, and they often say this problem can't be solved through violence. What I meant in that (inaudible) is that the United States has to accord them the same legitimacy that it accords other political players inside Turkey. U.S. congressmen, U.S. Embassy officials meet with various members of different political parties in Turkey, and I think a sign that the U.S. takes this party seriously or takes the Kurdish issue seriously would be if they also met with these Kurdish -- these elected Kurdish officials. These are legal people. They are not members of the PKK. And I think the U.S. could send a strong signal, and at the same time it could give them a little bit of a boost, a little bit of a legitimacy boost that would help them develop -- to develop as an alternative to the PKK. It doesn't mean the PKK would disappear, but it means that they could make serious politics that would then affect the PKK and give Turkey a way to address this Kurdish issue.

On the Catalan problem -- I mean, when I said, you know, we could call this a Turkish problem and not a Kurdish problem, I was

being slightly ironic, but, I mean, but to a certain extent, yes, there still is a certain segment in Turkish society that doesn't want to openly discuss this. There have been many changes in Turkey over the past 15, 20 years. I mean, there's no question. Things that you couldn't discuss before in Turkey you can. Kurds have many more rights than they did before, so I would never deny that. But the fact is that as long as we continue -- as long as people in Turkey continue to say well, we don't really know how to define it, we're not really sure if there's a Kurdish problem, there are really other issues, but, I mean, you need to talk to the players. And if the Kurds themselves say there is a Kurdish problem, I think that's a pretty good sign there is a Kurdish problem.

DR. TASPINAR: Carolyn Benson.

MS. McDONOVITZ: Hi, Carolyn McDonovitz. Two related questions. Is there an organic link between the PKK and PJAK, the party for free life in Kurdistan that is operating in Iranian Kurdistan. And this related problem is, is there concrete evidence of any kind that the United States is supporting PJAK as a way to undermine the Iranian regime? And I'll take my answer from anybody.

MS. MARCUS: Okay, I'll start of with that first. As far as I understand, yes, there is an organic link between the PKK and PJAK. PJAK's creation was thanks to the PKK. They share allegiance to Erdogan. They apparently have separate military structures, separate

fighting forces. Nonetheless, they do operate in the same areas -- the PKK -- and I think it would be correct to say there is an organic link between the two.

In terms of U.S. support, this a constant rumor that goes around that the U.S. is somehow backing PJAK. The only way to really answer that I think is to say well, what -- you know, what could the U.S. give PJAK, or what do we see that PJAK has that would come from the United States? The fact is PJAK is as lightly armed as the PKK. They don't have any advanced weaponry that they could have gotten from the United States. So, I think there's no reason to think that they're getting actual support from the United States. Or I don't see any proof that they are.

DR. TASPINAR: (Inaudible)

MS. ZALAM: My name is Connie Zalam. I'm with the American Kurdish Information Network, an advocacy office in Washington, D.C. I think it was Dr. Freud who once noted our ancestor who first threw an epithet at his adversary as opposed to his spear initiated the birth of civilization. With all due respect to Aliza Marcus, who is courageously urging conversation within the Kurds and the Turks, everybody on the panel is still engaging in self-righteous monologues.

DR. TASPINAR: Connie, can you ask the question please.

MS. ZALAM. Ambassador Logoglu says the Turkish military

doesn't want the Kurdish question to be resolved along the ethnic lines, nationality lines. Every democracy that I know of military takes its orders from the civilian authority. When do you think the Turkish military will come to its senses to listen to ambassadors such as yourself?

AMB. LOGOGLU: It's a compliment. Thank you.

I think you'll have to accept the fact that the Turkish military is a major, a very significant institution in Turkish politics. There are many other institutions -- official, civil -- and each institution is entitled to its own point of view. When I say this is what I think the military thinks about this issue, that's all I'm saying, and in order to have an objective appreciation of what you can do with this problem, you have to take into account all the different ideas, all the different approaches for the problem. If you say ah, this is what the military thinks, then there is no way to resolve this problem, then that means you have no confidence in Turkish democracy, which my good friend Hasan keeps emphasizing, and I agree with him. Ultimately, the answer to the Kurdish question and to all the other questions that they are facing in Turkey must be and will be within the context of Turkish democratic processes.

MS. BAIN: I'm Oya Bain with the Turkish American -- Assembly of Turkish American Associations. Fifteen years ago there was a huge GAP project in the southeast. What is the economic impact of that project on the Kurds of that region? And this new project that Erdogan is

proposing, the 12 billion, is that adding more to the dam project, and how was that project used? Was that efficient? And my -- and it appears like from the votes of Kurds that the majority voted for Erdogan, and they wanted a more fair economic and political solution to the issue. They are not identifying with ethnic issue. So, that's my question.

DR. TASPINAR: In addition to the GAP question, maybe we can have one more question from Tunney .

MS. GADO : Thank you, Omer. This is Tunney Gado with the *Washington Times*. My question goes to Hasan Cemal, which is going to be a follow-up to the previous question actually. You also showed that, you know, a slight reaction to Ambassador Logoglu's comment on the recent cross-border operation, and you had this lovely "blah-blah", you know, component in your answer. I'm not sure I got what you meant exactly. So, I just wonder whether you meant that this recent cross-border operation was a unilateral decision by the military, that the military tried to outsmart the government, or what kind of picture that you have taken in Turkey on this cross-border operation?

MR. CEMAL: I think I was misunderstood, because I when I was talking about "blah-blah" something like that, I said what my dear friend Faruk said, that military (inaudible) operation opened a window of opportunity to the government.

AMB. LOGOGLU: Absolutely. I stand --

MR. CEMAL: And I said I found it's a bit naïve. I mean, it's -
- I don't think that it is a window of opportunity and now the (inaudible) the
cause of government after (inaudible). I mean, I did not agree with that. I
mean, I did not say anything about the nature of the land operation. That's
something else.

AMB. LOGOGLU: Let me just clarify exactly what I mean by
the window of opportunity created by the Turkish incursions into Iraq. I
mean the following. Because of the recent attacks by the PKK staged in
Turkey, and because of the losses, the casualties we suffered, and
everyday funerals on Turkish television and Turkish press really infuriated
and frustrated and angered the Turkish public, and the Turkish public was
insisting on the government doing something. The government did what it
could do, which was to relegate the issue to the Turkish military. So, the
Turkish incursions, among other things -- among other things -- relieved
this pressure on the part of the Turkish public, that timely somebody took
some action against the PKK in Northern Iraq. That was the end product
of these operations by the Turkish military. A window of opportunity
means frustration and anger being relieved to a very significant extent and
the Turkish public would now be ready to see, from its government -- the
government in power -- some really -- real comprehensive approaches to
the resolution of the Kurdish issue, and the government has not taken it
up. That's my point.

On the southeast (inaudible) project, it's one of the most ambitious projects ever taken by any country, and this government is rightly thinking of providing additional resources for its completion. As it is completed and when it is completed, it's going to change the entire political culture and economic map of that region for the better, for all the people that live in that region.

SPEAKER: Ambassador, if I could push you a little bit further on the question of opportunity. Arguably, 1999, when Abdullah Harjula was finally in jail, there was a window of opportunity. There was a sense of military victory against the PKK. In your opinion, between 1999 and 2004, was this window of opportunity satisfactorily exploited by the politicians or the Turkish system in general?

AMB. LOGOGLU: Obviously not. I mean, previous coalition governments failed in the same sense, but this government that had a very comfortable majority in the first five years and now has even a stronger majority in their second term -- is simply -- well, in my judgment, they're not using properly the conditions, the circumstances, for making a massive attack on the roots of this problem. So, it is the continuation of the same kind of failures and not being keen to seize the opportunities presented by the circumstances.

DR. TASPINAR: Maybe we'll take two more questions.

SPEAKER: Me? Aseeah Kyah. My question goes to Faruk

Logoglu. You were talking about two different approach to the Kurdish problematic. One of them was the pragmatic and the second, religion. But I'm not sure if I got what you meant, because there was an air-conditioner problem in front. Could you please tell me more about that? Thanks.

DR. TASPINAR: Do you mean the second one? The religious one?

SPEAKER: Yes.

DR. TASPINAR: Okay. Maybe we'll take two more questions. Ahu and then -- let's take them now and then we'll wrap up, because we have about ten minutes left.

SPEAKER: A quick question to Ambassador Logoglu. You have mentioned that the military is strictly against the solution of a problem -- Kurdish problem -- from the ethnic point of view. Could you a little bit elaborate on it? We know that when military has to carry out certain operations, it's certainly pragmatic and adaptable to the situation on the ground. We know certain soldiers learn Kurdish to get by and survive in the region. What is that red line, if there is one, for the military that shouldn't be crossed in terms of "ethnic" or cultural solutions? I mean, is it the language barrier? Is it -- what is it?

DR. TASPINAR: And -- Ali's question is the last question, and we'll will wrap up. We can use this as concluding remarks.

Can you raise your hand?

SPEAKER: Hi, I'm Ali Kirkner. On the PKK, the Turkish military, AK Party, even PJAK you mentioned the players and this problem, but I notice that all the commentaries omitted one. This is the Hezbollah. Is it because you've completely written them off? Is that why you omitted mentioning them or do you not believe in this -- the continuing reports of their reemergence, especially if the AK Party is shut down? Maybe you could spark their reemergence.

DR. TASPINAR: You're referring to the Turkish as belying this --

SPEAKER: Turkish Kurdish (inaudible).

DR. TASPINAR: Turkish Kurdish, okay, we'll use this as our concluding remarks I think, so why don't we start with you, Ambassador.

AMB. LOGOGLU: On the religion element and AKP's approach to the problem, what I tried to say was this government is offering Islam as the superior connective tissue among the Turks and among the Kurds and that Islam is the uniting element, and that would supersede any references to ethnicity or nationality. You may agree with this or not, but this is what I think they're trying to do.

On the question of ethnicity, if you define the problem as insistence on the recognition of the ethnic identity of the Kurds, as most Kurds -- probably all Kurds do, how do you find the solution? If this is an

issue that has to be addressed at the level of the constitution, when you define what a Turkish citizen is, that's the red line for a lot of people in Turkey, not just the military. But you cannot introduce the element of Kurdish identity into the Turkish constitution in order to please and satisfy the Kurdish population in Turkey. But there are, of course, other solutions. One most frequently referred to possibility is to divest any ethnicity of any kind to the definition of Turkish citizenship. Make it generic, and then you solve the problem -- at least to a certain extent.

DR. TASPINAR: Thank you.

You want to take the question on Hezbollah or the way you see the Kurdish problem and the relationship with ethnicity?

MR. CEMAL: I mean, look, sometimes -- I mean, that -- when we start -- for years in Turkey, it was meant to say Kurds, because in the official language no Kurds living in Turkey. And secondly, we said okay, the Kurds living in Turkey but don't mention the Kurds, Kurdish, or Kurdistan, or Kurdish reality. And the (inaudible) with Kurdish. You could go to jail for 22 months, according to anti-terror law. And the Kurdish language, to speak it in public was banned for years in Turkey, and the Kurdish parents were not allowed to give Kurdish names to their children in Turkey. And still -- still in Turkey -- the mayor of Diyarbakir is before the court because of a selection of Kurdish and Turkish stories -- book.

Hasan, where have you been living the last 60 years?

Which (inaudible)? I mean, what do you -- that they don't speak Kurdish?

AMB. LOGOGLU: (Inaudible) in Kurdish courts, even from the very foundation of the republic.

MR. CEMAL: Really?

AMB. LOGOGLU: A lot of people cannot speak Turkish, so they need Turkish and --

MR. CEMAL: Do you know the know the 12th of September regime? They invented Kurdish language to speak in the public places in 1983, and that then was lifted (inaudible) time in 1991. And the mayor of Sur in Diyarbakir -- you know why at the moment he's at the court? He's being tried. Why? Because that Sur municipality published a brochure in Kurdish about (inaudible).

DR. TASPINAR: Organ donation.

MR. CEMAL: Organ donation on a brochure.

Look, and the -- and do you know so many names, Kurdish names, turned into Turkish names everywhere in the southeast? More than 10,000, my dear friend. You haven't been to Turkey so many years, because you were -- you (inaudible) the state, and you defended the whole -- the official views of the (inaudible) state for many years.

DR. TASPINAR: This is Turkish democracy in action, so.

(Laughter)

MR. CEMAL: And the -- you know what happened during

the military regime of the 12th of September in 1980 in Diyarbakir military prison. That produced militants for PKK. And the --

If I could continue like that, I mean, when you --

DR. TASPINAR: You have a plane to catch.

MR. CEMAL: I will miss the plane, because I have to catch the plane.

MS. MARCUS: I'd just like to ask something.

MR. CEMAL: Look -- the thing -- the problem is that, I mean, no solution on an ethnic basis, as I mentioned. I mean, when you say no solution on an ethnic basis, what does it mean.

DR. TASPINAR: Your English is getting better and better --

(Laughter)

DR. TASPINAR: Let's wrap up with Aliza.

MS. MARCUS: I just want to say that to an extent both Faruk and Hasan are right -- correct at the same time, because one thing that's an issue with the Kurds is you never know whether you're going to be put on trial for something you write. You never know if one day when you use -- when you publish in Kurdish if that's going to be allowed or that's going to be banned, and that's one of the big Kurdish complaints. They want their existence institutionalized. They don't want it to be up to the whim of a prosecutor, of a government, of a military. They want to know their place in Turkish society, and they want an equal place, as

Kurds, in Turkish society, and I think one of the dangers for Turkey in opening a process, because it will be a process for solving the Kurdish problem, is that you don't really know where it ends, and this is a big danger for Turkey, but it's also a big responsibility that I think Turkey at one point will be ready to accept, because you start with something -- you start by negotiating, you start by legalizing the Kurdish position as an ethnic people inside Turkey, and you don't know where in the end what they will want. And I think this process will teach us what Kurds really want.

MR. CEMAL: And this is the last word. I wrote a book, 700 pages, on Kurds, and that starts with the episode of a Kurdish businessman from Diyarbakir, how he was tortured in the military prison of Diyarbakir in 1982 and how he was forced to eat shit as a part of that torture.

DR. TASPINAR: On that happy note --

MR. CEMAL: And that is not a single -- that is not a single story of the Diyarbakir prison.

DR. TASPINAR: I think it's safe to say we failed to solve the Kurdish problem here, but at least we tried, and, please, join me in thanking our speakers, and hopefully we'll come back again to discuss this issue, which has no end in sight. Thank you.

(Applause)

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