

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TO COMBAT TERRORISM

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(Original Text in Turkish)

Introduction:

Until the mid-1990s, what terrorism was to Americans was simply the images they saw on CNN from Beirut, Jerusalem, Northern Ireland or various other parts of the world. For Americans, terrorism was an overseas notion. Americans first came to know terrorism in 1993 with the bomb attack on the World Trade Center in New York. However, we think that American citizens found some consolation in the fact that the accused were not Americans. The 1995 Oklahoma-City bombing showed that American citizens could also be terrorists. When the September 11 attacks occurred, Americans came to know the real face of terrorism, like people in many other parts of the world.

The terrorism that the U.S. encountered on September 11 is not alien to Turkey at all. Turkish people are one of the few societies that can really understand what Americans felt. Very few countries in the world have had the bitter experience which Turkey has had as far as terrorism is concerned. Turkey has suffered much from the terrorism carried out by such organizations as the ASALA, the DHKP/C and the PKK-KADEK, having lost over 30,000 citizens to terrorism and suffered material losses amounting to nearly 100 billion dollars over the past 40 years. The indirect effects of terrorism on the economy, tourism and the balance of payments have been incalculable.

Looking back on the past, Turkey's history of terrorism can be summarized as follows:

The emergence of terrorism in Turkey coincides with the establishment of the Constitutional Court in the early 1960s. The reason for this was that the 1961 Constitution guaranteed extensive fundamental rights and freedoms. Taking advantage of this, terrorist groups intensified their terrorist activities in Turkey during the 1960s under the protection of constitutional guarantees. Beginning in the late 1960s, Turkey was subject to almost every kind of terrorism such as politically motivated terrorism, religious terrorism, ethnic terrorism and terrorism originating outside the country. As a result, increased incidents of political violence could not be prevented in the early 1970s, when the Turkish Armed Forces had to intervene to take over the administration. A new Constitution prepared and adopted in 1971 brought some restrictions to fundamental rights and freedoms. Some individuals who had sought to divide the country were sentenced to capital punishment.

After 1975, the Armenian terrorist organization ASALA engaged in armed attacks on Turkish diplomatic missions overseas and killed many of our diplomats. This organization aimed at forcing the Turkish State to admit to what is called the "Armenian Genocide," which they claimed had taken place in Turkey in 1915. They demanded compensation for damages on account of this so-called genocide, and the return of Turkish territories in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia, which they claimed were occupied by Turkey, to their so-called legitimate owners, i.e. to Armenians. They wanted to establish an independent Armenian state on those territories and, ultimately, to annex them to the Republic of Armenia.

