

Bomb the Kurds, curb the Muslims, save the Republic !

mercredi 6 août 2008, par [Mustafa Akyol](#)

Have you seen the news about how the Turkish military plans to restrain Turkish society ?

If you haven't, here is the gist : bomb the Kurds, purge the conservative Muslims, manipulate the judiciary, and create a military-friendly media.

This exposure came out when daily Taraf, a newly-established liberal newspaper that has fast become a staunch critic of the Ankara autocracy, published a secret military document called "Lahika-1." (Lahika means "document.") After Taraf published the document in a full front page breaking news story about a week ago, the Chief of Staff issued a curious disclaimer saying that such a document was not "approved by the high command." In other words, the existence of the document was not denied. Many Turkish commentators note that this means that the document is real — and quite disturbing.

Against the 'Islamic way'

The 11-page "information outline and working paper" was apparently penned in September 2007, just a little while after the victory of the incumbent AKP (Justice and Development Party) in the general elections held on July 22 of the same year. And it starts by noting the threat from the "backwardees," which include the Sufi orders and other Islamic communities. (In Turkey, any sort of civil religious movement is by definition illegal and considered lethal to the secular Republic. Religion is fine only when it is organized by the state.) The Islamic movements are trying to "spread the Islamic way of life in society," the document alarmingly warns, by using "schools, dormitories, companies, societies, foundations, and media sources." They are using "the legitimate mechanisms of democracy," the document notes, "and they are even infiltrating the state institutions."

(A side note : This term "infiltration" tells us a lot about the nature of the regime in Turkey. When practicing Muslims come to official positions in this country, it is often said that they have "infiltrated" the system. This, of course, implies that the system is made only for the citizens with a "secular way of life." Others are supposed to live in their cultural ghettos, and, preferably, become extinct as soon as possible.)

Anyway, the crucial thing in Lahika-1 is that it says the "backwardees" are doing all this "infiltration" thanks to the support of the AKP government. « The government itself is actually organizing these developments, » the officers who penned the document alarmingly note. Therefore, the Turkish military, which would be under the command of the elected government if Turkey were a democracy, needs to launch a campaign to save the Republic.

The rest of the document explains how this will be done. There is a need to organize a secularist front in society, which will consist of the usual suspects : university administrations, members of the high judiciary, and national NGOs that are either "under full control" or "that can be manipulated." (These NGOs, I guess, would be the ones who organize rallies in which both the "Islamist" AKP and the "imperialist" European Union are cursed and denounced.)

The importance of the "high judiciary" here is self-evident. Perhaps it was not really a coincidence that the vice chairman of the Constitutional Court, Osman Paksüt, held an undisclosed meeting with the commander of land forces, Gen. İlker Başbuğ, just a short time before the closure case against the AKP.

One of the interesting topics in Lahika-1 is how the media will be used. The writers note that there are “pro-military” sources in the media, along with the “anti-military” ones, and the latter needs to be silenced ! It is not very clear how the silencing will be done, but the promotion of pro-military “writers and artists” is said to be feasible by “giving them financial support” from the budget of the military. (It is worthwhile to mention here that the military’s budget is not under parliamentary control in Turkey : it is a totally closed box.)

The document also suggests that the image of the military can be polished by using TV programs and even soap operas. “Movies, TV series, cartoon films and documentaries that promote the Atatürkist system of thought need to be supported and financed,” the creative officers argue. “Or, in the ongoing programs, pro-military insertions can be made.” These are listed as scenes that will capture the heroism of the military, suffering of the war veterans and their families, and memoirs from battlefields.

The measure of all things

My favorite line in the whole document is the emphasis made on the “need for religion” to keep that militarist spirit alive. The officers quote Atatürk, “Religion is a necessary institution,” and say that it is especially helpful “to the motivation of Turkish soldiers during battle.” This, I believe, captures the essence of the general policy toward religion in the Turkish Republic : a certain dose of religion is good if it serves the state. If people become too religious, or if their religious interpretation deviates from the state line, then they become harmful “backwardees.” The state is simply the measure of all things.

There is a final suggestion in Lahika-1, which, unlike the ones I mentioned above, involves the more conventional tools that our military possesses : guns and bombs. This, as you can guess, is about the Kurdish question. The document mentions the outlawed PKK (Kurdistan Workers’ Party), a terrorist organization, and the need to fight back. That would be completely fine — terrorism deserves a military response — but when you read the scope of this counter-insurgency, you can get a cold shiver down the spine. It is not just the PKK terrorists that need to be hit, the document notes. “The people of the region” (i.e., Kurds in southeastern Turkey) should be harassed by “searches and operations,” in order to make them understand that “support to terrorism will not go unpunished.” For the same reason, the document adds, the “Kurds near the Turkish border in Iraq,” should be “hit by heavy artillery.”

Thus, the decades-old methods to save the Turkish Republic from its “internal enemies” (i.e., citizens with the wrong ideas and identities) seem not to have changed much : bombing the Kurds, curbing the conservative Muslims, and mastering society through totalitarian means. It is a war that never, ever, ends.

Sources

Source : Turkish Daily News , Saturday, June 28, 2008

<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/...>