

## **Turkish Military's Perspective on Regional Security and Border Control**

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### 1. The Effects of Political, Social and Economic Events to the Border Security of Turkey:

The recent developments such as conflicts in the Middle East, Collapse of the Soviet Union, Changes in Regimes in Iran and the Balkans, Collapse of Yugoslavia, long lasting Iran-Iraq war, the Gulf War, Afghan Civil War, the policy and attitude of the Iraqi regime and the drastic economic problems in Africa and Asia have increased the immigration mainly from East and South to the West.

Turkey setting a bridge between east and west due its geographic location has been directly affected by these international developments and consequently has become a transit country and a migration region.

Currently, the citizens of poor Asian and African countries migrate towards the wealthy western, especially the European Union countries through Turkey.

### 2. The information of the Borders of Turkey:

Turkey has a common border of 8,578 KMs with 13 different countries. 2,875 KMs of this is land border and 5,703 KMs is coastal borders.

Most of the land forces, especially those of eastern, south eastern and north eastern regions, lies through mountainous areas, constituting difficulties to monitor. In addition, the length of the coastal borders and the structure of the separated Aegean coastal borders require an erective coastal guard capability.

### 3. Illegal Transits During the Recent Years in Turkey

During the last three years in total 46,471 people (13,055 in 1998, 19,920 in 1999 and 13,496 in 2000) have been captured on illegal transits in Turkey. Of these people 21,141 were captured when entering and 25,330 while departing. The illegal transits have an increasing tendency.

The illegal transits are from almost all neighboring countries. It has been noted that most of these transits have been through Greek, Iranian, and Iraqi borders. Of these people 33,785 were captured on Greek border, 8,215 on Iranian and 3,465 on Iraqi border.

Most of these immigrants have been captured while departing from Turkey (25,330).

Most of the immigrants belong to 13 countries, with Iraqi citizens constituting the greatest number. Only 835 Turkish citizens have been captured on illegal transitions. Illegal departures are mainly done through Thrace, Aegean and Mediterranean regions while the entries are made through Thrace, south eastern and eastern Anatolia regions.

### 4. The Responsibility of Border Security:

Border security is a basic responsibility of the government. The government carries out this responsibility through ministry of internal affairs at the official entry gates and border security troops of the armed forces in other parts.

#### 5. The Duties of Border troops:

The main tasks of Border troops are:

- to protect the borders and maintain the security,
- to prevent the smuggling,
- to control the military restricted zones,
- to conduct the emergency processes and hand over the captives to the local security forces.

The border security forces use their weapons only in the cases dictated by the law. Border troops perform their duties in close cooperation with civil and legal authorities and other judicial institutions.

#### 6. The Forces responsible in Border Security:

The security of the land borders is being carried out by the border security units and the coastal borders by coastal guards.

The border security units are organized as "border regiments". They are part of Turkish army. There are 13 border security regiments and three independent border security battalions. The border troops have necessary weaponry, material and equipment to ensure an effective control over the border areas. They have been equipped with thermal cameras, radars, night vision devices and other devices needed for border security. In addition to these equipment, these regiments have various wire obstacles in order to establish the physical obstacle.

#### 7. The Studies on Border Security:

The studies in order to procure and install the electronic border security systems in Turkish borders are continuing. This security system includes the underground sensors, wire obstacles, illumination systems, cage wires, track fields, patrol routes, and the electronic observation system.

Additionally, unmanned aerial vehicles and observation aircraft projects have also been developed.

Seventeen KMs electronic security system, excluding infrastructure, cost 39 million dollars. The system covering all land borders which is 2,876 KMs long costs 7 billion dollars. Turkey continues to procure and install physical security devices. But the financial aspect of the project is of an amount that might cause difficulties for Turkey in the short and midterm. In addition to these national arrangements, Turkey participates in all meetings and international efforts, and cooperate with other countries.

In the year 2000, the Bulgarian proposal, covering a mutual arrangement in Turkish and Bulgarian borders was welcomed by Turkey and studies for the application are underway. In the recent years, Turkey made legal arrangements on various issues contributing the security of borders, such as application of visas, the enhancement of authority of the governors, the processes for the persons captured on the borders, protection and security of the borders.

#### 8. Problems faced by Turkey on Border Security:

I would like to point out some international problems related to border security from Turkish point of view.

Turkey has common borders with various countries which have very different rules and implementations on border security.

During the captures, Turkey has difficulties to find a responsible authority in the country from which the immigrant enters Turkey.

There are not efficient agreements between Turkey and her neighbors. Smugglings are being organized in an increasing manner by illegal persons or organizations in order to have high earnings and by the terrorist organizations to gain militia.

Sometimes, some countries provoke political refugee flows and illegal migrations as a result of their political aims.

There are some neighboring countries, not acting in a sensitive manner and avoiding from the required expenses and investments on the border security.

The low prosperity of the Turkey's eastern neighbors provokes the migration to the wealthy western countries.

During the last two decades, Turkey has undergone six mass migrations. These are the migration from Afghanistan, the forcing out the Turkish origin people from Bulgaria, the migration of northern Iraqi residents as a result of massacres before and during the gulf crisis, and the migrations during Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo crises. Turkey on the ground of human senses, accepted and sheltered these great human masses in spite of her scarce resources, since the international society had an insensitive manner in general.

The south eastern part of Turkey, on which illegal border transits have occurred intensively, was exposed to foreign supported extreme terrorist events during the last two decades, and the infrastructure investments which Turkey is willing establish on these borders were not accomplished due to the hindering of terrorists. But upon the control of terrorism in the southeastern Turkey, the activities for maintaining border security were enforced.

#### 9. The contribution of Turkish Border Security to the European and Global Security:

Turkey doesn't consider the border security as a "one country issue". An effective border control might only be provided if all the countries attach the required importance, act in sensitive manner, make the required investments, and the most important of all - behave in transparent mood and maintain an effective cooperation and coordination. In this approach, although it requires a great amount of resources and finance, Turkey attempts to maintain her border security by all means in spite of the ignorant attitudes of her southern neighbors. Additionally, Turkey participates in all activities related to border security and pay great importance to international cooperation on this issue.

Turkey is very much aware about trafficking of illegal arms, human beings and drugs, which set a serious threat to the peace and security of the countries and Turkey is very much determined to prevent such activities in her borders. It's obvious that Turkey's attempts in preventing such activities and securing her borders are very closely related to the European peace and security. But, only the efforts of Turkey might not be insufficient. All the countries, especially the European

countries which mostly attract the migration with their prosperity, should support Turkey by all means in the protection of the borders.

Turkey is not only a transit country for such actions, but those illegal transits harm the peace and security of Turkey herself.