



Diplomacy

for international Peace and Security

umut oran

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Pomegranate is a symbol of
fertility and unity.

Just like all countries that come together
at Socialist International.

Good morning Comrades.

It is an honor and great privilege to be a speaker here at the Socialist International and to be able to share my views on the recent developments in Turkey and the Middle East.

I will not touch upon the major domestic risks of Turkey such as erosion of democracy, slowing economy and failed foreign policy.

CHP believes we can offer an alternative to this authoritarianism, economic stagflation and the collapse of the foreign policy.



Syria: Chances for the diplomatic solution in 2015?

Let me start with the Syrian conflict. As you know, Turkey has been negatively impacted from the civil war in Syria.

In the beginning, Turkish Government was quite confident that the Assad regime could easily be toppled. It is proved to be a big mistake and lack of diplomatic foresight.

I was one of the politicians in the country who outspokenly said that the Government's short-term perspective was doomed to fail.

There was a major need of a comprehensive strategy. Time proved us to be right.

We believe that the crisis in Syria could only be resolved through a comprehensive diplomatic process that involves all the relevant actors.

We supported the Geneva-2 process and hope that the dialogue will restart once the ISIS threat has been contained. I am also happy to be here in Switzerland where many diplomatic achievements have been made. History could be repeated.

Limiting the mission into solely on toppling the Assad regime will not work.

In Syria, meanwhile, the Turkey's ruling party may see itself as a stabilizing force, unfortunately the reality is quite the opposite.

The Turkish government's interference there has exposed the fact that it has abandoned not only its impartiality, but increasingly its secular values as well.

In coming to the aid of the Free Syrian Army (FSA), the AKP government has thrown its support behind various factions—including al-Nusra. It is no secret that some of these specific groups later joined into the ISIS. While opening its borders to Syrian refugees was the right thing to do, Turkey has also provided safe haven to radical Islamist fighters. It was a major mistake risking the lives of the fellow Turkish citizens and the regional stability.

If the international community cannot formulate a peace deal in Syria, the Syrian conflict will create a spill-over effect and we will face many other problems in the region.

Iraq: Unity is a must!

With another neighbor, Iraq, AKP Government has apparently decided to pursue a divide-and-conquer strategy, directly negotiating oil deals with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and sowing deep enmity with the Baghdad government.

We believe in the unity of Iraq representing all the ethnic and sectarian groups on an equal and fair basis.

The collapse of Iraq would mean the collapse of the region.

International community must work hard to keep the unity of the country.



Turkey's secular democracy, that my party strongly advocates for, would be a better model for the troubled Middle East.

Turkey, long a bridge between the West and the Middle East, can still be this bridge—but not if it is playing favorites and helping to widen divides in countries torn by the conflicts of the Arab Spring.

ISIS is a major regional, and potentially global threat and must be dealt internationally.

As CHP, we believe that Turkey should support the international coalition against the ISIS. Erdogan's hesitation in joining the coalition created question marks in the country's orientation.

We are worried by the sectarian nature of the conflicts in the Middle East.

Turkey seems to be importing the Sunni-Shia divide from the region.

Turkish President Erdogan's former statements on the subject alienating the Alevite citizens made it only worse.

Syrian Refugees in Turkey: A need for a long-term strategy

Turkey has been hosting approximately 2 million Syrian refugees who are the victims of the conflict in Syria.

To receive Syrian refugees with an “open door policy” and to offer them education, health and housing services of “temporary protection status” was one of the rare good decisions of the government in its Syria policy.

As opposition parties, we left this issue outside of daily political squabbles, acted responsibly as well.

But it is now time to put the facts on the table and take the requisite steps. Although our government defines them as “guests,” Syrians are not guests. They are staying. Most of them will not go back to Syria.

It is sad to say that Turkish Government lacks a coherent strategy on how to deal with this issue in the long-term.

We witnessed in various cities how the tolerance and hospitality of the local people for the Syrians was running out.

Along with the worsening economic situation in the country, we may face a dangerous situation of inter-communal conflict in Turkey. This is something we need to work hard to prevent.

It is very difficult for Turkey to maintain its support of Syrians in the camps with available financial resources. The state's financing of these services is not sustainable. We must find external financial support for refugees, which is an international issue.

But we have to admit that Turkey's policies for the last two years; its anti-West narratives and authoritarian tendencies domestically have impaired and shaken the confidence of the outside world in this country. This can indirectly affect the support we may seek for Syrian refugees



Turkey`s Kurdish Problem

I believe that Kurdish problem is major setback for Turkey reaching into full democracy and realizing its enormous economic potential.

The problem must be resolved by assuring the equality of all the citizens of the Republic of Turkey. Also, the social and economic development priorities must be set accordingly.

The sustainable solution of the problem would require a dialogue among all the actors of the Turkish Government, Parliament and the elected representatives of the Kurdish Politics.

It is not possible to resolve the democracy problems of the country once the macro political climate becomes more oppressing, closed and authoritarian.

We need to create a democratic environment that all the problems in the areas of the freedom of speech, lack of rule of the law and separation of powers could be fixed.

Without assuring these general principles, it is not possible to have a solution. The eradication of the election threshold will be also an important gain in increasing Kurds` participation into the domestic politics.

Resolving the Kurdish problem wont be an easy task but my party and I will work hard to resolve the issue through a process that respects all the stakeholders of the long-standing problem.

I would like to thank everyone for your attention. I hope to be able to work hand in hand with all of you for a better world in the New Year. You will see a Pomegranate in your desks. Pomegranate represents a fresh start for the New Year.

Because this fruit contains an enormous amount of Seeds, it is regarded as a Symbol of fertility, prosperity, Abundance and generosity. I hope you all, your countries and the globe a prosperous, fertile and peaceful new year. I also hope our solidarity, Socialist International will be a major unitary platform to raise up its voice for democracy, human rights and global peace.



fertile and peaceful
new year



Umut Oran, Republican People's Party (CHP) Istanbul deputy of the Turkish Parliament.

After 25 years of NGO and business career, he participated politics in 2008 by being a candidate for the CHP Presidency.

Between since May 2010 he was one of the vice presidents of the CHP.

As a progressive, he is a close follower of the democratization agenda of Turkish Republic, particularly in the perspective of EU Accession.

Born in 1963, Umut Oran is married.

