

3 August 2010



PRESS RELEASE:

TESEV'S NEW PUBLICATION:

Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV) Democratization Program, under the aegis of its Security Sector Reform project activities launches a series of policy reports, which attempt to offer policy proposals to inform and advance the reform processes that will yield a more democratic, accountable, and transparent security sector institutions. The second report in the series, ***Military-Economic Structure in Turkey: Present Situation, Problems and Solutions***, is authored by **İsmet Akça**, professor of Political Science at Yıldız Teknik University and one of the authors of *Almanac Turkey 2006-2008: Security Sector and Democratic Oversight*.

On the Content of the Report entitled *Military-Economic Structure in Turkey: Present Situation, Problems, and Solutions*

Turkey's military operates in an expansive area, where it performs both the primary roles performed by all modern militaries in foreign security provision as well as additional political, commercial, cultural and ideological roles, and enjoys legal and practical autonomy from supervision by civilian public authorities. Therefore, Turkey is characterized by praetorian militarism. One of the striking features of praetorian militarism is that because militaries exercise their "relatively" autonomous power within larger and complicated power networks, which include along with them other social and political actors, they constantly seek to nourish their sources of (political, administrative, financial) power.

This report locates the military, the central actor in Turkey's militarism, within the economy and economic and financial processes, and offers a breakdown of the military-economic structure in Turkey. The report is built on findings revealed in TESEV's "Security Sector and Democratic Oversight" almanacs (2005, 2009), past studies published on this theme, and recent developments following the two almanacs.

Turkey's military-economic structure stands on three pillars. The first pillar is the military corporation, *Army Solidarity Fund (OYAK)*, which affirms the military's presence as a financial actor. The second pillar is *defense spending*, which reaches extremely high levels and is controlled almost absolutely by the military. The third pillar is the *defense industry*, where fast paced development is encouraged and leads to the militarization of the whole of Turkish industry. These three pillars share one characteristic, which is that they are all steered by the military.

The existing military-economic structure counteracts civilian efforts to challenge the "politics of (national) security". In fact, the military-economic structure is dependent upon a politics and a culture of (in)security for its survival. A democratic socio-political and socio-economic life cannot thrive without realizing demilitarization of the politics and culture of security. Therefore, the deconstruction of the military-economic structure is critical for the democratization of the military, at least to the extent that it is confined to its immediate and core area of authority in foreign security, and of those "civilian" spaces which continue to reproduce militarism.

The report concludes with a section on the problems generated by each one of the three pillars of Turkey's military-economic structure and on the proposals for short-to-long-term solutions. These proposals have two basic propositions: 1) Lifting the almost absolute control of the military on all three pillars and to open these pillars to democratic oversight of the



parliament and civilian organizations; 2) Deconstructing the existing military-economic structure so as to pave the way for the utilization of Turkey's economic resources according to democratic social needs and not according to the needs determined by a military rationale.

To read please click here:

http://www.tesev.org.tr/UD_OBJS/PDF/DEMP/ENG/gsr-2-eng.pdf