

Daily Views New Problems in Relations With Syria
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[Aziz Utkan report: "Trouble With Syria Again"]

[Text] According to reports, a number of new problems have emerged in Turkey's relations with Syria. These relations had improved remarkably as a result of Prime Minister Ozal's visit to Damascus last July. The new problems are said to be the result of the recent increase in activities carried out in Turkey by separatist organizations based in Syria. While admitting that relations between the two countries have been strained recently, a number of circles close to the Turkish Foreign Ministry have said that a delegation of Turkish experts will visit Syria within the next few days.

Meanwhile, it has been learned that a security report has been drawn up on the infiltration of terrorist organizations into Turkey from Syria, and the necessary steps have been taken to inform Damascus about a number of its points. While detailing a number of terrorist incidents and acts of violence carried out in Turkey as a result of infiltrations from Syria, a Foreign Ministry official has said: "We do not know whether the Syrians are failing to keep their promises, or whether they are unable to do so. Nevertheless, we shall learn that is going on."

A number of circles concerned with the matter have determined that the recent activities, which have disrupted "law and order" in the country, have been carried out by the Turkish and other separatist organizations based in Syria. It has been established that this state of affairs is being closely monitored by the highest authority in the country.

A HURRIYET correspondent has asked a number of experts dealing with the matter to explain the developments in Turkey's relations with Syria. They said that in addition to political and regional security questions, the two countries' relations have a direct bearing on Turkey's long-term economic interests. The experts added: "The matter is very sensitive and various factors are creating a feeling of a lack of confidence."

The experts listed Turkey's problems with Syria as follows:

1. **Muhabarat Activities:** From time to time, Ankara is disturbed by the activities which the Syrian intelligence organization, Al-Muhabarat, carries out in Turkey. Noting Syria's sensitivity about the contribution which southern Anatolia project will make to Turkey's economic development, the experts said that a number of extreme left-wing organizations have received information, as well as material and logistics support, from Syrian sources. They added that the acts of sabotage at a number of military and economic installations in Turkey

over the past few years were the result of this support. Nevertheless, there was a reduction in the number of these activities after Ozal's visit to Syria.

2. **Border Security:** Recalling that the Sunni Kurdish groups living in the border region between Turkey and Syria cooperate with other ethnic groups in the area in smuggling and in kidnapping individuals for the purpose of training them as militants, the experts said that this made the pursuit of PKK activities difficult. They also noted that the Syrian Government's efforts to help Turkey in that regard had decreased recently.

3. **Economic Problems:** Insofar as Turkey's relations with Syria are concerned, regional economic cooperation is more important than the trade volume between the two countries. The Peace Water project, which will require cooperation among the countries in the Middle East, and the plans to lay a gas pipeline from Qatar to Turkey via Syria, a venture which has been regarded as the "project of the century," have given a multilateral character to the two countries' relations. The economic claims Syria has put forward in connection with the two pipelines and the question of their safeguarding continue to be a problem between the two countries. A "water installations delegation" will be in Syria during the next few days to try to resolve technical problems.

4. **Consular Relations:** Many problems exist within the framework of Turkey's consular relations with Syria. It has been determined that delegations from the two countries meet nearly every day to resolve matters concerning passport problems, individual transactions, problems faced by the Turkish highway transport companies, and the unjust treatment of Turkish citizens in Syria. However, an effective way to resolve the problems has not been found.

5. **The Hatay question:** Syria continues to claim that Antakya lies within the Syrian border. This is also part of an effective government campaign intended for the young generations in Syria. The Al-Asad regime, which acts with the idea of creating a "Great Syria," is pursuing an expansionist policy in order to maintain national unity. The reluctance of a number of Arab countries to give visas to Turkish citizens, who were born in Antakya, is an aspect of Syria's foreign policy.

6. **Syria's Foreign Policy:** Syria, which is regarded as a radical Arab country, adopts a policy harmful to Turkey's efforts in the international domain at every opportunity. In addition to its close diplomatic relations with the Greek Cypriot administration, Greece, and Bulgaria, Syria also gives unconditional support to their anti-Turkish behavior in the international domain. Meanwhile, the experts have said that Turkey has been carefully watching Syria's "special relations" with Libya for a long time. On the other hand, Turkey has long been aware of the influence which the consultant establishments guided by the Soviet Union have on the Damascus administration.