

*Turkey in the 1960s and 1970s through the Reports of American Diplomats.* Rifat N. Bali. İstanbul: Libra Kitap, 2010. P/bk 284 pp. ISBN 978-605-43261-9-8. Price TL 30.00.

This book contains a collection of 37 U.S. diplomatic reports and cables written by consular and embassy officials in Turkey during the 1960s and early 1970s. These critical years in Turkey's evolution were marked by political instability, violent clashes between extremists on the right and left, a military coup, a period of military rule, labor strikes, university student unrest, the crafting of a new constitution, and angry outburst of anti-Americanism. Most of the reports appear to have been classified. The compiler Bali neither explains how he acquired them nor offers an analysis of them. He arranges the reports into five categories: Turkey's socio-political situation; the period after the 27 May 1960 coup; the Turkish General Staff's Ultimatum of 12 March 1971; the Kurdish issue, and the situation of minorities.

Different readers will find some reports more interesting and valuable than others. A few of the assessments offered by the Americans are that Turkish villagers will accept modern agricultural technology without abandoning Islam; Atatürkism is an incomplete philosophy that Turkish intellectuals must supplement by other bodies of social, political and economic thought; during the one-party period the élitist Republican Peoples Party (RPP) ruled, while others obeyed; the Democrat Party of Adnan Menderes brought about profound socio-economic change by promoting private enterprise; many Turks had canonized Menderes; contrary to the RPP, the Justice Party of Süleyman Demirel pushed policy-making down to the grass roots; and Turkey must deal with the Kurdish issue in a more progressive manner.

With respect to the Kurdish issue, one diplomat wrote: "The Turkish officials assigned to the East regard the natives [i.e., Kurds] as simple, uneducated people who speak a barbaric tongue. They

avoid the local inhabitants as much as possible, clustering in little Turkish enclaves in a vast Kurdish sea" (237-238). Two reports offer demographic estimates of minorities in Turkey. Their accuracy, however, cannot be verified.

The reports contain no hint of an alleged American conspiracy to hold Turkey back. To the contrary, most of the American diplomats display a genuine interest in Turkey achieving socio-political stability and economic progress within the NATO alliance.