

NATO, Hands off Syria! Hands off Turkey! Turkish People Take Action against deployment of Patriot Missiles Against Syria

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On Jan. 10, the Communist Party of Turkey launched a new campaign against the deployment of Patriot missile batteries in Turkey. Members of TKP have set up a tent in a park in downtown Ankara to gather signatures against the deployment of Patriot missiles and NATO intervention in Syria. They will be on a symbolic and non-stop guard duty until Jan. 20 which is the expected date of arrival for the missiles. The petitioning campaign appropriately named “Stand guard against Patriot Missiles” has been received with great interest and support by the people of Ankara.

Using the so-called threat of a Syrian attack, in December 2012, the ruling AKP (Justice and Development Party) had requested that NATO deploy missiles along its border with Syria. After the approval of the request by NATO, a total of six missile batteries, from Holland, Germany and the United States, along with hundreds of NATO soldiers, are now on their way to Turkey. They are expected to arrive by the end of January.

While AKP claims the Patriots are needed to protect Turkey against the spillover of the conflict in Syria, as a NATO member and a loyal defender of the imperialist interests in the region, it is in fact the AKP government which has been the aggressive party towards Syria. Since the start of the conflict, AKP has provided shelter, funding and arms to the Free Syrian Army fighting against the Syrian government. Additionally, AKP has more than once attempted to provoke war with Syria, sending a military reconnaissance jet into Syrian airspace in June, and launching an artillery attack against Syria in October and calling NATO to action in each incident.

The Syrian government has called the deployment of missiles a provocation by the government of Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

In total contrast to the hostile policies of AKP against Syria, the Turkish population overwhelmingly opposes any form of intervention in Syria. Even those who support the ruling AKP believe that Turkey should not take sides in the conflict.

The deployment of Patriot missiles violates the Turkish Constitution

On Jan. 7, The Communist Party of Turkey sent a letter to the members of the Parliament, pointing to the fact that the deployment of the Patriot missiles and NATO troops in Turkey is unconstitutional and that the ruling AKP government is guilty of violating the constitution. According to the Turkish constitution, the authority to grant permission for the deployment

of foreign troops and military in Turkey belongs to the parliament. The request from NATO to deploy the Patriot missiles is the result of a unilateral decision by AKP, completely bypassing the parliament, making a total mockery of even any illusion of bourgeois democracy in the process. The letter sent by TKP to the members of the parliament emphasized that the deployment of Patriot missiles has nothing to do with the defense of Turkey against a Syrian threat as claimed by AKP. The TKP's letter further pointed out that the interests of the people of Turkey dictate that the Patriot missiles and the foreign troops be sent back to where they came from. The letter ended by demanding that the members of the parliament take action and immediately send the missiles and NATO troops back.

March against NATO in downtown Ankara repressed by the police

On Jan. 13, the TKP called for a march against NATO in solidarity with the petition campaign. Held in downtown Ankara and attended by over a thousand people, the march was to be followed by a rally at the site of the petition campaign. When the protesters attempted to enter the park in downtown Ankara where the campaign tent is set up, the police set up barricades to block the march from proceeding into the park. The protesters refused to stop the march and pushed towards the police barricade to proceed forward. The police intervened with excessive force using tear gas launchers and batons to disperse the crowd. In the mayhem that followed, five TKP members were wounded. Despite the police violence, the protesters succeeded in breaking through the barricade and continued on to the rally at the campaign site.

Addressing the militant and victorious crowd, TKP Central Committee Member Aydemir Güler said:

"The police must have forgotten who we are, who the communists and the patriots of this country are. We are not to be told 'Stop here, walk there.' Members of TKP are not keen on tear gas but if needed, as we have done today, we will push through and move on. They think patriotism is the Constitution they have been trampling on. TKP will teach them once again what patriotism is all about. If the parliament stays silent, we will do the talking. The deployment of Patriot missiles in this country is illegal. The claim that Syria is a threat against Turkey is nothing but a huge lie. The truth is that there is an attempt to subjugate the people of Turkey and to turn them into mercenaries for NATO and the USA. You can choke us by tear gas but how will you manage to choke the conscience of Turkey?"

The crowd responded to Güler's speech by cheering the slogan "This country and its people are not for sale!"

If the AKP government and its imperialist masters assume that they will easily be able to march their NATO soldiers to occupy Turkey and point their missiles towards Syria, they are dead wrong. The people of Turkey have opposed and resisted this dirty pending NATO war against Syria from the very start and they will continue to do so. They know very well that their resistance against NATO in Turkey and the heroic resistance of their sisters and brothers in Syria against NATO-backed mercenaries are part of the same struggle, the struggle against imperialism.

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