

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## Answer to Question

Question: What is the issue of planting mines along the Syrian-Turkey border? How and when did it happen? To what extent is this linked to the international conflict? May Allah reward you for it.

Answer:

1. A decision to plant mines on the Syrian-Turkey border was taken in 1956 and the implementation of this decision was carried out between 1957 and 1959 in the 513 Km length out of the total border of 877 Km between the two countries according to the maps drawn under the colonialists' agreements after the fall of the Khilafah, the width of this border is 350 m. This area is measured as 216 km<sup>2</sup> out of which 186 km<sup>2</sup> is owned by the state and the rest is owned by the state railways and other establishments including some citizens. Land mine referred to as "615145" is planted in the above region in addition to the "75115" mines planted on Turkey's borders with Iraq for a stretch of 42 kms. Then on the 109 kms stretch of Turkey-Iran border, landmines "191428" have been planted and mines "21984" have been planted along the Turkey-Armenian border. Similarly, mines were planted along the borders with Bulgaria and Greece but were removed before these countries entered the NATO alliance.

2. In fact it is the Anglo-American conflict in the region that prompted Turkey to intensively plant the landmines along the Syrian border and the threat of this entering Turkey. Syria had seen coup after coup which brought agent rulers of US and Britain one after another starting from 1949 and well into the 1950's. This situation affected Turkey especially since the US was seriously trying to infiltrate Turkey to establish its influence there. The British and their agents were concerned that Turkey and especially its 'army' may be exploited by the Americans and this may affect Syria and infiltration of its 'enemies' into Turkey. American moves towards Turkey were clearly evident and this was the period when the star of US's big agent Jamal Abdul Nasser was shining brightly in the region and he was confronting Turkey and other British agents. Nasser had hijacked the Baghdad Alliance which was crafted by Britain and Turkey was its founder and chair. Turkey was then led by its president Jalal Bayar and dominated the Baghdad Alliance in the region and was working to incorporate Jordan Hussein and Lebanon's Camille Chamoun who were Britain agents, into the alliance. Although the Turkish Prime Minister Adnan Mondreas was pro- US, the actual power and authority in the country was concentrated in the hands of the armed forces which were intricately allied with the British. This was accompanied by the British defeat in their onslaught on the US agents in Egypt which it launched in 1956 and as a result of which the British were thrown out of Suez and there remained no military base for them in Egypt. Iraq, which was colonised by the British then, was also under threat of falling into the American hands. In addition to this, the Arab nationalists were demanding the restoring of the Iskenderoun region which was annexed to Turkey in 1929 under the terms of an agreement reached between France which had colonised Syria and Britain in exchange for Turkey ceding 12 Aegean Sea islands in favour of Greece.

In view of these threats, the British and the Turkish armed forces saw that the best solution to protect Turkey from the potential danger from the Syrian border was to plant mines and they began work seriously to find justifications and pretexts for this project. Jalal Bayar was keen on preventing the communists infiltrating from Syria to sabotage his regime in Turkey and this was clearly evident in the Soviet Union's efforts to come closer to Syria and mislead the people, because at that time, the Soviets were not very close to the Syrians so they could further worsen the atmosphere. They exploited the sentiments about the Iskenderoun region which were created by Jamal Abdul Nasser.

The Turkish armed forces found these pretexts useful to justify the planting of the landmines most of which were planted in the region of Liwa Iskenderoun. It may be mentioned that versince the region of Liwa Iskenderoun was merged into Turkey, it has been scared from the Syrian side because when Ismat Inounou became Turkey's president in 1939 after the death of Mustafa Kemal Pasha, he said in a speech that year, he stated that Turkey faced two threats: one from Syria and another from the "revisionists", by which he meant the natural deen, Islam. This famous speech by Inounou is regarded as historic since he in this speech he laid out the milestones of Turkey's foreign policy. He iterated that Turkey's foreign policy was based upon the friendship treaty with the British in 1939. This matter was highlighted in 1998 when Turkey began concentrating its armed forces along its border with Syria and allied with "Israel" and Jordan and was all set to launch attack on Syria and topple the regime of Assad's family and their cohorts, the agents of America.

3. These mines remained planted for a long period of time killing and wounding a large number of people, both Turkish civilians as well as security forces during the decades since the mines were planted. The official statistics reveal that in the ten year period between 1993 and 2003, the number of armed forces men killed were 299 while 289 civilians were killed during the same period, and the number of wounded persons included 1524 armed men and 739 civilians in addtion to a large number of cows and other cattles. People were always complaining about these and demands to remove the mines were raised citing that the mines caused more losses than they were useful for and that these were of no particular advantage. Further it was argued that these mines cut-off brotherly relations between the two peoples as well as ties of kinship and relations between them since the people on both sides of the border, especially those in the region of Iskenderoun and its surroundings were related to each other either by blood or family and there was widespread marriages between them across the borders. At the mines prevented the people from trading with each other on the pretext of smuggling and as such this consolidated the division and separation between the two people.

However, with the emergence of the Kurdistan Workers Party (the PKK) which carried the nationalist chauvinist slogan of the Kurd identity and began launching attacks against Turkey from across the Syrian borders blunted and rendered ineffective, the demands for revoving the landmines and the PKK threats were cited as justification or pretext for mainaining the mines. This was despite the fact that htses mines did neither prevent the infiltration of the separatist party's elements, nor their attacks, on the contrarary, its elements were able to recruit people to its ranks inside the Turkish territory.

4. The first person who voiced the call for removing the mines along the Turkey-Syrian border, or the one who resolved to remove the mines, was Turgat Ozal who beacame Turkey's prime minister in 1983 and who was aligned with the Americans, but the armed forces prevented him from realising his objectives. Jalal Hassan Jazal who worked as the prime minister Ozal's advisor during his first term and as the government's official spokesman during the second term wrote on this subject in the "Turk Time" on 26th May, 2009: "Since the 1980's, we began several initiatives to clear the region of the mines and make it useful for agriculture. The person was assigned the task in the governemnt of the late Ozal, but since this project did not comply with the technical demands of the armed forces, the work was halted. It is necessary that this issue be considered within the armed forces only." And as such this matter of removing the mines has continued to remain unfulfilled to this date. He added: "The armed forces have been assigned the task regarding the removing of mines under a decision by the council of ministers in 1992 (during Ozal's tenure) and the preliminary work has continued until 2003." The remarks of the former minister that it is the armed forces who have planted landmines despite [the efforts of] Mondreas, and as such it is the British who support the Turkish armed forces.

5. On 1st March, 1999 an agreement was reached between 146 countries in Ottawa, Canada to remove and prevent the use, storage, production and transport of anti-personnel landmines. This agreement was against the problem of the landmines widespread around the world, it called for "...every country to be responsible for removing every single anti-personnel landmine planted within its territory or jurisdiction within a period not more than 10 years from the date of it signing the agreement."

On 12th March, 2003, the Ottawa agreement was ratified by the Turkish parliament and it was placed to be executed from 1st March, 2004.

Then on 1st March 2008, the Turkish government resolved to remove the landmines before March 1st, 2014, i.e. after 10 years of the agreement being ratified as provided in the agreement.

6. Erdogan used this agreement and prepared the law for removal of these mines and placed it before the parliament where heated debates raged for several sessions over two weeks and it was ratified by majority vote after incorporating certain amendments of the draft presented by the ruling party president and on 4th June, 2009, the Turkish passed a law to remove landmines planted along the Turkish-Syrian border by a vote of 255 in favour and 91 opposed to it and there were 204 absence and abstentions and it became valid when it was published in the official gazette on 17th June, 2009. The Secretariat-General of the Turkish Defence Ministry has issued a statement on 30th June, 2009 regarding the removal of these mines, assigning the project to the national defence ministry to be carried out in 4 phases. The nodal agency supervising the task will be NAMSA, i.e. The NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency. As provided under the agreement, it is the Armed forces chief-of-staff, the National Defence Ministry and the Ministry for external affairs in that order who have the powers to set the process of mines removal and it is with the approval of these agencies that a company that may be commissioned to carry out the task of clearing the landmines in the region will have the right to rent these mines-cleared lands for a period of 44 years.

The fact that the task of removing the landmines is being assigned to an "Israeli" firm and the ambassador of the Jewish entity of "Israel", Gabby Levy visited the city of Urfa when the heated debate was in progress between the government and the opposition has largely ignored from public debate and public opinion, the ambassador stated: "It is very important for every Jew that he visit these lands which were visited by our ancestors and their ancestors." [*Liberties* journal: 26.05.09]. He then visited the Turkish parliament when it was discussing the issue and this is a sign that the Jewish entity of "Israel" is behind such moves.

The Turkish opposition parties have seized the opportunity and accused the government of selling Turkish lands to "Israel" which has been rampaging in Gaza and this has embarrassed the government and moreover Erdogan's reply has confirmed these accusations. Erdogan replied to the opposition's charges that the government was giving these lands to "Israel" i.e. the Jews for free and said in his address to the regional conference of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) held in Düzce that now the Global Investment Company wants to invest in our country but when he saw that this was being opposed, people say: "this is not possible since the company is Jewish...., Listen my friends, this company will bring investment in my country, it will invest 500 million dollars and one billion dollars. Listen, you complain of unemployment! Look, they are going to invest, and when they invest, who will work here? Ishaq will not, but Hassan and Ahmad will work, and who ever works, we will solve the problem of unemployment, do you not like that! Do you refuse a foreign company just because it is from a particular religion! Money has no religion or nationality!" [Source: *Radical* journal: 25.05.09].

This is how Erdogan is misleading his own people on the promise of employment in the company even if the company happens to be hostile to the people. While the people are

blessed by Allah (swt) with Islam and honoured them with the bounty of Jihad in His path for hundreds of years, the president of the republic now wants them to become a mere slave to anyone from anywhere in the world.

Erdogan countered the opposition's accusations and said: "Before we came to power, there was the three-party coalition which included the Nationalist Movement Party of Devlet Bahçeli, the Democratic Socialist Party of Bulent Ecevit and the Motherland Party of Yilmaz and they had concluded several agreements with "Israel". They must not mislead the people now as if they did not enter into any agreement." [Source: Radical journal: 207.06.09]. In effect what Ergogan seems to mean is that all of these parties are fond of the Jewish entity of "Israel" which has usurped Palestine!!

7. At this point, it is pertinent to remind of the words of Khaleefah Abdul Hameed to the Jews with regard to the Palestinian lands and these words must be repeated all over Turkey. In the period when the Palestine issue was a global one, the Jews were hobnobbing with the West and especially with Britain in order to get the Palestinian territory. They tried to exploit the financial crisis which haunted the Othmani Khilafah and thus realise their objectives, so they offered huge sums of money which was enough to cover the deficit of the Khilafah in exchange for Palestinian lands. However, Khaleefah Abdul Hameed rejected their offer and replied to Hertzal, the representative of the Zionist Congress, the Khaleefah said: "Be advised Dr. Hertzal that nothing can change the situation, I cannot give away even a handspan of Palestinian land, it is not owned by me, it is the property of the Islamic Ummah for which our people have fought and their blood has flown over it...let the Jews keep their millions, and if ever the Khilafah disintegrates one day, then they can take Palestine without having to pay for it. But so long as I am alive, that can not happen..." Indeed Khaleefah Abdul Hameed (May Allah have His mercy upon him) was a person of clear foresight and here we have it, after the Khilafah was destroyed, Palestine has been given to the Jews without money! Now the Palestinian story is being repeated on a smaller scale in Turkey, they want to give away the Syrian frontline lands to the Jews for a period of 44 years on the pretext of cleaning those lands of the landmines and thus pierce another dagger into the heart of the Muslim Ummah.

8. This was regarding the government's position on the issue, we know very well the stance of the main opposition party, the Peoples Democratic Party (CHP). If they were to be in power now, they would have served the Jewish interests without any misgiving. This party is the successor to Kemal Pasha who destroyed the Khilafah and was with the Jews down to his heart. After all this is it conceivable that the CHP should be angry that Erdogan wants to gift away land rights to a Jewish company for a period of 44 years on the pretext of clearing the landmines?! Now the CHP wants to generate public opinion on this issue, not with aim of either preventing it but merely to realise its own interests and political objectives and settle their score with the AKP. It is with view that the CHP has been carrying out visits to the southern regions and intensively highlighting the issue to the people in order to generate public opinion against it. It is well aware that the Muslim people of Turkey are full of hatred and anger against the killers of Muslims in Palestine (Israel). The CHP is trying to exploit the emotions and anger of the Muslims against the AKP and has gained considerable grounds to the extent that the Muslims were pleased and even some pro-AKP newspapers praised the CHP!

This is the reason why the opposition is crying foul over Erdogan and exploiting the sentiments of Muslims against the AKP based on leaked reports about the government's no objection to give away those lands to an Israeli company for exploitation. The Muslims of Turkey have a deep and intense anger for the Jewish entity which has usurped Palestine. In effect both the CHP and the Akp have served Jewish interests and both are actually competing to serve the Jews more than the other, and if there was no competition between them on this, no opposition to this deal would have surfaced.

9. Having planted the landmines between two Muslim countries in the first place, it was the government's duty to at least be alert against committing another blunder by giving away the lands and that too to Israel for exploiting them for the next 44 years on the pretext of clearing the landmines. In fact the correct solution which Islam mandates would have been for the state itself or its agencies, especially its armed forces to take up the task of clearing landmines and take benefit of the state and public land and return the small portion of private land to its owners after having cleared the mines.

Indeed what ever is invested in these lands after clearing the mines, they would yield enough produce to more than all the money spent on them for clearing and effect an agricultural and industrial revival because of their petroleum and mineral resources.

These lands have remained abandoned from the last fifty years and thus can be very useful for organic farming which has become very profitable in recent years especially since 80% of this area i.e. 186 km<sup>2</sup> out of 216 km<sup>2</sup> is owned by state and other agencies, while the rest is privately owned by citizens and is suitable for agriculture.

Also, it has potential petroleum reserves of 2500 barrels per day production from the 10 oil field drilled by the Turkish oil company TPAO in the region. Similarly on the Syrian side they have a production of some 450,000 to 500,000 barrels per day production from the 560 wells, and according to the records of the Turkish parliament, the TPAO officials say that if another 12 new wells are drilled, they can extract another 2500 barrels per day.

Thus the non-utilisation of these lands by the government and giving it away to a foreign company for the next half century is a grave crime under Islam. Moreover the said company is owned by the Jewish entity which has usurped Palestine which is our first Qiblah and third Haram al Shareef. It will be another grave crime committed for any one who participates and cooperates in anyway in this deal.

10<sup>th</sup> Rajab, 1430 A.H

3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2009.