

Headlines:

- **Screams from Aleppo Face Silence**
- **Iraqi Government Nearly Collapses**
- **Fistfight in Turkish Parliament**

Details:

Screams from Aleppo Face Silence

Over the last 2 weeks, Syria's largest city, Aleppo which is part controlled by rebel groups has been under siege by the Assad regime. The regime has launched a campaign of indiscriminate killings targeting women, children and even hospitals packed with hundreds of wounded patients. So far more than 250 people have died in a bid by the government to dent the confidence of the persistent rebels who refuse negotiations and continue to demand regime change. Western countries continue to ignore the pleas of those on the ground and instead push with the Geneva talks to ensure the survival of the bloody Assad regime. It is clear that in the face of secular interests which ultimately lie in suppressing the possibility of real change, the West just sits back and watches as a dictator slaughters his own people. Only time will tell how much longer the rebels will hold onto Aleppo or even drive the regime out.

Iraqi Government Nearly Collapses

Thirteen years to the day after Bush's "Mission Accomplished" speech, the heavily-fortified "Green Zone" compound of government buildings in Baghdad (including the US Embassy complex) is occupied by anti-US Iraqi protesters. As the ultimate stronghold of the US-installed Iraqi government was taken without a fight by unarmed marchers, the last shred of that "Mission Accomplished" banner symbolically went up in smoke. The demonstrators that flooded Baghdad are followers of Muqtada al-Sadr, the wildly popular Shia cleric, politician, and militia leader. Under Sadr's urging, they are demanding an overhaul of the Iraqi government: the replacement of many of the corrupt and sectarian ministers with impartial "technocrats." After effectively carrying out a coup, having proven their point, they voluntarily withdrew. This has been a common trend with Sadr, who since the US invasion began has always carried action such as these, but always stopped short of toppling the system and only demanded a role in any future government. It would seem this is exactly what is taking place again.

Fistfight in Turkish Parliament

The planned constitutional changes in Turkey, which has long been an Erdogan plan that would give the president much power, the effort to strip members of parliament of their legal immunity sparked an ugly brawl in parliament, with several MPs reportedly injured.

As with most nations with an elected parliament, Turkish law grants lawmakers considerable immunity from prosecution. This is meant to prevent the ruling government from using its power to persecute elected MPs they don't get along with. The HDP is seen as a pro-minority party, and virtually all of their MPs are from the ethnic Kurdish southeast, where the government is carrying out a highly criticized military campaign. Erdogan has condemned the HDP as "terrorists," and has openly promised to send Turkey's military after members of parliament associated with that party as soon as immunity is stripped, presenting that as part of the ongoing war against the Kurds.