

Hello, again, and welcome. I'm Jim Tedder in Washington. Today we are off to Turkey to hear about the possibility of peace between the Turks and the Kurds. Then we travel east to Cairo to a part of the city that has huge ecological problems. We will hear about the animals that are part of the solution. And in about ten minutes, we will visit an American city whose citizens are celebrating the life of a "strange visitor from another planet." "As It Is" is on the air!

Groups of professors, media stars and personalities have been traveling around Turkey for the past month. They all belong to the government's "Wise People" movement. They have been explaining the government's attempt to end fighting with the Kurdish rebel group, the PKK.

But the movement is becoming a subject of growing concern to Turkish nationalists. They fear that the peace process will lead to a self-governing state for Kurds inside Turkey, like the one in Iraq.

The leader of the Nationalist Movement Party, or MHP, strongly attacked the peace process at a recent gathering of tens of thousands of supporters. The leader, Devlet Bahçeli, warned against the peace process as the crowd chanted.

"Tell us to strike and we will strike, tell us to die and we will die."

"Don't worry, the time will come for that, too."

For almost 30 years, the PKK has been fighting the Turkish government for greater minority rights. The conflict has killed more than 30,000 people.

But on May 8th, the PKK began withdrawing its forces from Turkey as part of a peace process. The government has yet to say what it is prepared to offer the rebel group in return. Retired Turkish General Haldun Solmazturk says there is deep suspicion over the peace process.

“PKK will never disarm unless they achieve a greater Kurdistan within Turkey. An ambiguous understanding was just imposed on the Turkish state – so, in a sense, blackmailing the future of our coming generations. This is very disturbing. Turks are not aware of the final outcome because of the self-censorship imposed on the Turkish media.”

Cengiz Aktar is a political scientist in Istanbul. He says he believes that opposition to the peace efforts remains limited.

“I don’t think there is a nationalist backlash. I think there are minority groups who are very vocal (often heard) and who are against any deal which will include the Kurds. But there are not as many as they pretend. We see an overwhelming majority of the Turkish public (moving towards approving) the peace process.”

Opinion surveys point to conflicting ideas among the public. A strong majority supports a peaceful settlement to the conflict. But there are equally strong feelings against talks with PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, who is in prison.

Soli Ozel writes for the Haber Turk newspaper. He says the recent protests against the "Wise People" show that the peace process is nearing an important stage. He notes the withdrawal of the PKK forces and the fact that nobody has died in the conflict over the past four months.

The PKK withdrawal from Turkey is to be completed in a few months. By then, the government is expected to start announcing steps it will take to deal with Kurdish demands. But political observers say until then, members of the "Wise People" could have a hard time getting people to accept their ideas.

Hello, I'm Christopher Cruise. A city like Cairo, with 18 million people, produces a lot of trash. Much of that waste ends up in a Coptic Christian area called Garbage City. People there make new products from just about any material. Lately they are getting help from a secret source. The source is pigs, hidden secretly behind walls of trash and armies of flies.

In 2009, the government ordered that all pigs be killed. Egyptian officials said they were dangerous to health, even though world health officials disagreed. Some farmers took action to save their pigs from the death.

Few Egyptians admit that pigs are present. But those leading the recycling efforts argue that the animals play an important part in turning old waste material into new objects.

Adel Ragi is a leader of the garbage collectors' union. He says that non-human organic waste makes up half of Egypt's trash. And, he says the pigs get rid of the trash by eating it.

Since the mass killing of pigs in 2009, Cairo has become much dirtier. Foreign companies have been hired to take care of some of the waste. But Ragi says their methods of dumping waste in landfills is much worse for the environment.

The killings left thousands of pig farmers without jobs. And only a few butchers – people who cut and sell meat – are still in business. They depend on expensive imports that have cut down on their trade.

The majority of Egyptians are Muslim, and the religion opposes the use and eating of pigs. Christians are free to eat pork meat. And farmers have built a new center for slaughtering the animals in hope that the trade will restart. But the government has yet to approve it.

Butcher Saïid Hakim says officials tell them to be patient. He says that makes him wonder if the government will approve the new center.

Father Samaan Ibrahim is with Saint Samaan Church in the hills above Garbage City. He denies that there are pigs in Garbage City. But he sees no reason there should not be.

In some ways, the pigs are being left in peace. The current government is strongly sympathetic to strict Islam. But it has not been able to take strong control of the country's basic rules and regulations. So the pigs live on – as long as they stay out of sight.

I'm Christopher Cruise.

And I'm Jim Tedder in Washington. Thank you for being with us on this Thursday, the sixth day of June. 69 years ago, in the early morning hours, the Allies landed on the coast of France, as thousands of troops began to push Hitler's forces back into Europe. It was probably the most significant military invasion in modern history. "D Day" was the beginning of the end of World War II.

And half a world away, Metropolis, Illinois, begins on this day its "Superman Celebration". 50,000 people are expected to attend the event in honor of the man ..."who, disguised as Clark Kent, fought a never ending battle for truth, justice, and the American way."

