

<http://mailchi.mp/chp-usa/chp-representative-to-usa-on-vice-news-2490617?e=fe248c662c>

Main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu has accused the Turkish government of pursuing "hostage policy" against the U.S. in retaliation to an ongoing probe into Iranian-born Turkish businessman Reza Zerrab in the U.S.

"There is a case in the U.S. on Zarrab; the deputy manager of Halkbank is in prison and [Former Economy Minister] Zafer Çağlayan is also [in the case file]. Now, they are trying to solve the problem with a hostage policy. The hostage policy would only deepen the problem rather than solve it," Kılıçdaroğlu said, addressing his party group in parliament on Oct. 10.

His comment came after the U.S. and Turkey imposed visa restrictions on each other's citizens in an escalating diplomatic spat after a U.S. consulate official was arrested by Turkey and another official was summoned for questioning as a suspect in an unidentified case.

Kılıçdaroğlu referred to a case in which U.S. prosecutors broadened an investigation into Zarrab, filing a new indictment charging Çağlayan and former Halkbank General Manager Hakan Aslan with "conspiring to use the U.S. financial system to conduct hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of transactions on behalf of the government of Iran and other Iranian entities, which were barred by United States sanctions."

The CHP leader claimed the recent diplomatic spat between the two countries stemmed from the broadening of the case, criticizing the ruling Justice and Development Party's (AKP) foreign policy of "lacking reason, calm and dialogue."

He called on the government to adopt a "backtrack diplomacy" and use a "more careful language."

Kılıçdaroğlu also urged both countries to "act in common sense."

"The measure the U.S. has adopted is wrong. We do not support it. There are thousands of students aiming to go to the U.S., there are patients going for medical treatment and businesspeople going to pursue their interests. All of them have been blocked. Those punished are not the government, it is the 80 million people," Kılıçdaroğlu said, referring to the population of Turkey.

"I want to express our wish for common sense to prevail and the adaptation of rational policies," he added.

"There should not be such implementations that could cause heavy sanctions to this extent. I hope the crisis will be solved as soon as possible," he said.

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/chp-accuses-govt-of-pursuing-hostage-policy-against-us-120623>

