Islamism, Kemalism, and the Future of Turkey

Introduction

The Islamist (or Islamic revivalist) movement has inspired support in Turkey for a more overtly political expression of Islam but the Turkish context differs from that in other predominantly Islamic countries in that the Kemalist Revolution in Turkey put in place an explicitly secularist politics limiting public expressions of religious faith. The Kemalist movement has emphasized the aspect of Turkey as a European state, has supported an explicitly Turkish nationalism to the point that even the existence of a Kurdish nation and language is denied, and has supported the movement for Turkish membership in the European Community. In contrast, Turkish Islamists have emphasized the aspect of Turkey as an Islamic and Middle Eastern state. For the Kemalists, an improvement in Turkey's human rights record and some sort of accommodation with Kurdish nationalists may be the price of admission into the European Community, and for the Islamists, influence in Turkish politics in an enduring way as more than a periodic voice of protest or a momentary beneficiary of a fragmented vote among secularist

parties may be dependent on some accommodation to the secularist orientation of contemporary

Turkish political culture so that non-Islamists will, at least, be inclined to accept an Islamist

party or government as legitimate. It need not, of course, necessarily follow that simply because

compromise is in the interest of both sides that it will necessarily take place but indications at

this point are encouraging.

The approach adopted in this paper is one that seeks to explore the politics of identity, and

to relate political development to political culture and to frequently contested notions of identity.

Whether one roots Turkey's identity in its Turkish or in its Islamic identity carries implications.

Whether one views Turkey as a European or as a Middle Eastern state possesses implications in

regard to contemporary public policy and foreign policy debates. Such an essentially

anthropological approach has antecedents. Fallers' The Social Anthropology of the Nation-

State (1974) includes a chapter on Turkey.[1] A more recent example, which does not include a

chapter on Turkey, is Telhami and Barnett's Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East.[2]

In the discussion on Israel in this latter work, Barnett employs an approach that focuses on

four concepts --- identity, narrative, frames and institutions.[3] If these are applied in a discussion

of Turkey, it is clear that Kemalists and Islamists differ in their understandings of the identity of

Turkey, with the Kemalists viewing Turkey as, in somewhat simplified terms, a modern

European-style nation-state, and the Islamists viewing Turkey as, again in somewhat simplified

terms, part of a community of believers that transcends state boundaries. In some ways, each

vision both includes and excludes. Each notion of identity is supported by, and inspires a

particular narrative. Kemalists seek to link a pre-Islamic, pre-Ottoman past that is specifically

Turkish with a present represented by a dynamic technologically-advanced Western-oriented

Turkish nation-state. Islamists, too, adhere to a notion of history in which past and present are related to an understanding of Turkey's identity but it is one that is less dismissive of Turkey's Ottoman past and that sees Turkey's history as part of the history of Islam and of Moslems seeking to avoid what they fear may be the potential loss of the values of the Islamic tradition in the face of globalization and Westernization. In each case, notions of identity and narrative frame the context for debates on issues like that surrounding, for example, the politics of clothing, and in each case, these notions impact on the manner in which Turkey's political institutions confront the challenges faced by Turkey.

Modern Turkish Nationalism

Cornell observes that "To modern and self-assured Turks it is self-evident that they belong to Europe and the West --- a view against which Westerners often react with astonishment and perhaps naivety, despite the fact that Turkey has long belonged to the western group in many international connections and participates in a great variety of western cooperative organizations."[4] This assumption is certainly integral to Kemalism. Ataturk set out to create a Turkey out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire modeled on the European nation-state.

Ironically the reservations of many Western Europeans about the notion of Turkey as a European state, reflected, for example, in the reluctance of the members of the European Community even to set a date for the commencement of discussions between Turkey and the European Community on Turkey's bid for membership, represents effective agreement with

Islamists who are more inclined to identify Turkey as part of the Middle East and the Third World, rather than as part of Europe and the First World. European attitudes may reflect the residue of a history of European Christendom in the Middle Ages fearing the threat of "the Turkish infidel", along with the more pragmatic concern about the impact of the admission of Turkey on the costs of and continuing viability of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the European Community. If Turkey were to join the European Community, it would be, after Germany, the second most populous state within the European Community, and, given current demographic trends, it could, in the foreseeable future, be the most populous. In spite of the view expressed by Valery Giscard d'Estaing in his advice to the European Commission that Turkey is not Europe, given that most of the country is situated in Asia, the conventional Turkish view and certainly the Kemalist view is that Turkey's future is as part of Europe.

The Kemalist Revolution entailed a conscious reconstruction of Turkey's identity. Karpat contends that "Turkish official nationalism in the Republic rejected Ottomanism and Islamism but, when necessary, made extensive references to the Turks' Islamic and pre-Islamic past --- seen now in ethnic terms --- to lend that vital historical support to its claims."[5] Karpat suggests that "Specifically, the nationalists held that, while the ancient Turks possessed inherently modernistic and democratic tendencies and a pure ethnic culture, they were prevented from keeping up with the world (Western) civilization and from founding their national state by imperial dynastic regimes and Islam."[6] It should be noted that Karpat observes that, with recent intellectual liberalization, newer works by Turkish historians provide a richer and more complex sense of national history.[7] McCarthy notes that ". . . the Turks rejected Ottoman traditions so that they could more completely become a part of the West. It was the fundamental ideology of

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the new Turkish state that the Republic had begun anew and owed little to the Ottomans."[8] Lewis observes that ". . . the political and intellectual leadership of Turkey made a conscious choice for the West and for a Western identity. Once the scene of their greatest triumphs, the Middle East had become associated in their minds with decline, defeat and betrayal. The West, on the other hand, seemed to offer the means of economic development and of social and political liberation."[9] In his study of Turkish foreign policy, Hale notes that after 1923 " With the establishment of an officially secular republic, any idea that Turkey should act primarily, or even partially, as a Muslim state was definitely abandoned. Ataturk's clear aim was to establish Turkey as a respected nation state, on the Western model, with sufficient economic and military strength to sustain that role."[10] Shadid observes that, with the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the new republican regime under Ataturk ". . . sought to replace it with an unremittingly secular, pro-Western nation state that would draw together its disparate elements --- Kurds in the East, Muslim refugees from the Balkans, peasants displaced by war from the Anatolian hinterland --- under the banner of Turkish nationalism."[11]

The figure most prominently associated with the Turkish Republic is, of course, Mustafa Kemal who took on the name Ataturk. Many of the developments associated with the Kemalist Revolution did, in fact, represent trends originating in the nineteenth century but the founding in 1923 of the Turkish Republic provided considerable impetus to them. In his recent biography of Ataturk, Mango relates how resentment at the treatment of Turkey in the aftermath of the First World War and the limited resistance to that treatment on the part of the Ottoman regime inspired Ataturk and others to organize in Anatolia.[12] Ataturk had been associated with the Young Turk movement but, whereas others in the movement who had participated in

government before and during the war were discredited by their involvement in the misguided policy of entering the war on the side of the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires, Ataturk had distinguished himself in military service. Like the other Young Turks, Ataturk was frustrated at the backwardness of Turkey compared with Western Europe. While frustrated with the post-war treatment of Turkey by states like Britain and France, Ataturk saw hope for Turkey's future in imitating those states, and in developing in Turkey a modern Westernized nation-state. Ataturk himself was not particularly religious, and this may have made it easier for him to identify the influence of Islam as one of the causes of Turkey's backwardness. The Turkish Republic established in 1923 was secular but this did not mean simply that state institutions were formally non-religious but, rather, that public expressions of religious belief were discouraged. Westerners may not appreciate the political symbolism of clothes but, in Turkey, the new republic, for example, actively discouraged the fez, traditionally worn because it permitted men to touch the floor with their foreheads in prayer without removing their headwear, and encouraged the Western European and American-style hat, and recent years have witnessed female university students, for example, being expelled for insisting on wearing traditional Islamic attire. Ironically the fez had been an earlier Western-inspired innovation, supplanting the turban. The new Turkish nation-state, replacing the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire, inspired efforts to generate a new history building on a pre-Islamic and pre-Ottoman Turkish past. A conscious effort was made to replace the use of Arabic with an expanded Turkish language using the Latin alphabet. In a controversial decision, it was decreed that the call to prayers would be in Turkish, rather than the traditional Arabic. Time itself was reorganized with the introduction of the 24-hour clock, changes in the calendar, and dating years

from the birth of Christ. Mango writes of Ataturk that "He is said to have steered Turkey towards Europe and the West. This is true to the extent that the civilization to which he aspired had, and still has, its centre in the West. But his allegiance was to an ideal, not a geographical area. The ideal of catching up with modern civilization wherever it may be found, and of contributing to its further development, continues to inspire most Turks."[13]

The Young Turks, Ataturk and his successors consciously sought to foster a specifically Turkish nationalism. What was seen as distinctive about Turkey was not its character as an Islamic society but its Turkishness. While Ataturk did not seek to prohibit individual personal adherence to Islam, he did see Islam's influence on politics, culture, education and economics as being inherently conservative and potentially an impediment to the imitation of European manners required if Turkey was to catch up economically, technologically and strategically with the West. Esposito writes that "Turkey, under the leadership of Kemal Ataturk (president, 1923-38), embarked upon a comprehensive process of Turkification and Westernization, and a secularization that transformed language and history as well as religion and politics."[14] History was re-interpreted to emphasize the central place of the Turkish nation in world history both prior to and subsequent to the arrival of Islam, and the ties between the Turkish peoples and the territory of the Turkish Republic. The use of the Turkish language written using the Latin alphabet, in place of Arabic, was encouraged, and a conscious effort was made to expand the number of Turkish words. Anderson notes that ". . . in their origins, the fixing of print-languages and the differentiation of status between them were largely unselfconscious processes resulting from the explosive interaction between capitalism, technology and human linguistic diversity. But as with so much else in the history of nationalism, once 'there', they could become formal

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models to be imitated, and, where expedient, consciously exploited in a Machiavellian spirit."[15] He goes on to observe that "The fate of the Turkic-speaking peoples in the zones incorporated into today's Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and the USSR is especially exemplary. A family of spoken languages, once everywhere assemblable, thus comprehensible, within an Arabic orthography, has lost that unity as a result of conscious manipulations. To heighten Turkish-Turkey's national consciousness at the expense of any wider Islamic identification, Ataturk imposed compulsory romanization. The Soviet authorities followed suit, first with an anti-Islamic, anti-Persian compulsory romanization, then, in Stalin's 1930s, with a Russifying compulsory Cyrillicization."[16] Brown observes that "Pan-Turanism (or the concept of a common Turkicness extending into Central Asia) was abandoned in favor of an Anatolian Turkish nationalism."[17]

The twentieth century witnessed many examples of nationalism. In many cases, this was reflected in policies aimed at the replacement of Western influences with the indigenous. In some of these cases, this entailed some reconstruction of the past in the search for an indigenous tradition. In the Turkish case, there was a conscious reconstruction of the indigenous employing some reinterpretation of history and a search for local words and usages to develop an expanded vocabulary for the Turkish language. In the Turkish case, however, this policy of revitalizing the indigenous, which took the form of highlighting the specifically Turkish and downplaying the Islamic, was accompanied by a conscious policy of imitating the West and encouraging, rather than replacing, Western influence in a range of fields. National pride was offended by territorial losses in the post-World War I peace settlement but such losses could be accepted, except when they involved the Turkish homeland itself and here the failure of the imperial regime to resist more strongly resulted in the nationalist reaction that culminated in recovery of certain territory

and the replacement of the imperial regime by a republican regime. This republican Kemalist regime took the view that national pride demanded what they viewed as a restoration of Turkey's rightful status in international politics, and that that restoration was only possible if Turkey made itself more modern economically, strategically and technologically.

The approach to religion was one designed to rein in the influence on Turkish society of Islam. The public expression of Islam was to be controlled because of what was perceived as its potentially conservative influence, and the possibility that the Islamic identity, the dominant identity under the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire at least until its later years, might distract from the new Republic's dominant identity, namely that associated with a Turkish nation. The consequence was that the exclusion of religion from the public sphere did not take the form of an American-style separation of church and state, but the form of a bureaucratization within the state of Islam, and impediments in law and regulation which did not prohibit other faiths but which did make the upkeep of old buildings and construction of new buildings difficult. Hunter suggests that "The most extensive and thorough secularization, de-Islamization, and cultural and political nationalization occurred in post-Ottoman Turkey. Ataturk was a firm believer in Turkey's European destiny and in the theories that attributed to Islam the greatest part of the responsibility for the economic and military backwardness of Muslim countries."[18] Lewis observes that "The basis of Kemalist religious policy was laicism, not irreligion; its purpose was not to destroy Islam, but to disestablish it --- to end the power of religion and its exponents in political, social, and cultural affairs, and limit it to matters of belief and worship."[19] He notes that "During the 1930's the pressure of secularization in Turkey became very strong indeed. Although the regime never adopted an avowedly anti-Islamic policy, its desire to end the power

of organized Islam and break its hold on the minds and hearts of the Turkish people was clear. The prohibition of religious education, the transfer of mosques to secular purposes, reinforced the lesson of the legal and social reforms. In the rapidly growing new capital, no new mosques were built."[20] Santa Sophia, which had been a Christian church in the Byzantine days and had been converted under the Ottomans into a mosque, was converted under the Republic into a museum. The bureaucratization of Islam is noted by Pope and Pope, who suggest that:

> A country cannot really be called secular when it pays, every month, the salaries of 60,000 imams and dictates the contents of their weekly sermons at Friday prayers, sometimes down to the last word. This curious paradox is reflected in society, where defenders of secularism insist on maintaining state control over religion, believing the 1,300-year-old laws and social dictates of Islam to be incompatible with modern pluralist democracy. The Islamists, on the other hand, have been in favour of a more liberal attitude that would make religion truly separate from the state.[21]

In regards to the relation between religion and the state, the Turkish Republic represents a somewhat unusual case. In some states, such a relationship between religion and the state might reflect a situation in which religious leaders dominate the state, or in which the state is used as a vehicle through which a particular religious faith is promoted. In some states, such a close relationship might suggest that a regime is exploiting religion for purposes of legitimating the regime. In the case of the Turkish Republic, however, the intention is one of restraining the religion in order to inhibit its potential capacity for challenging the state and its efforts at modernization and Westernization.

The emphasis in Kemalism on Turkish unity and nationalism has been associated with a lack of tolerance for minorities, whether ethnic and linguistic minorities like the Kurds or religious minorities, denied permission until very recently to build new buildings or to renovate existing ones, like the Christians and even Alevi Moslems. Bozarslan reflects that "The

Kemalist state aimed to transform Turkey into a country that was 100 per cent Turkish and considered any war waged towards this end as almost a holy war. It was also a state which saw itself as the vehicle of a mission: the civilizing mission of the Turkish nation, and it used this vision to justify its provision of education and civilization to other nations --- by force, if necessary."[22] For example, in regard to the Kurds, a people who inhabit parts of Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria, Entessar writes, "No country has been as preoccupied with the eradication of Kurdish national identity as Turkey in the twentieth century. Consequently, the Turkish government coined the term 'Mountain Turks' to refer to the country's Kurdish population. Republican Turkey's Kurdish policy was outlined by Mostafa Kemal Ataturk, the nationalist founder of modern Turkey, and has been followed by his successors."[23] The response of the Turkish Republic to Kurdish nationalism has been to deny the existence of a Kurdish nation, preferring to see the Kurds as "Mountain Turks", and to deny the distinctness of a Kurdish language, preferring to view it as a dialect of Turkish. The Turkish Republic has pursued a strategy of assimilation and relocation. Certainly the Kurds are divided. Some see themselves as Turkish, others would be happy with a degree of autonomy and the right to preserve their language and culture through institutions like their own school system, and others want an independent Kurdish state. Turkish lack of sympathy for autonomy and cultural preservation has tended to result in a polarization between supporters of the status quo and supporters of Kurdish independence. Howe observes that "The Kurdish question has poisoned Turkish life, resulting in around 40,000 deaths. It has monopolized the attention of the armed forces, drained the economy, changed the demographic map, blackened the country's human rights record, and strained relations with Western allies and neighbours."[24] The military are especially sensitive

about any possibility of concessions to the Kurdish nationalists.

Any discussion of the politics of the Turkish Republic would have to include reference to the role of the military. Like many of the other Young Turks, Mustapha Kemal was a military officer. In the midst of the debacle that was the First World War for the Ottoman Empire, one of the few successes was the defence of the entrance to the Dardanelles at Gallipoli where Mustapha Kemal, who years later when his government made surnames compulsory would himself take on the name of Ataturk or "Father of the Turks", distinguished himself as a commander. When the Sultan and the Ottoman regime was prepared to accept the terms of the Treaty of Sevres, dissident military units rallied in the Anatolian hinterland under the overall leadership of Mustapha Kemal, and organized a military resistance that restored to Turkey territory in Asia Minor that had been ceded to Greece, and resulted in a new settlement in the Treaty of Lausanne. The military has come to see itself as the guardian of the legacy of Ataturk and the Kemalist Revolution. Mayall writes that the Turkish Republic ". . . began its existence stripped of an empire, but conscious of imperial greatness and now defined by a strong national identity based on the military reversal of Great Power impositions and the rallying cry of 'Turk'. The Ottoman tradition of the closest identification of the military with the state continued, giving the armed forces a pre-eminent role in society. In time, not only would they remain defenders of the Republic, they would also arrogate to themselves the guardianship of Kemalism, Ataturk's legacy to Turkey."[25] Combined with the disrepute in which most citizens, including members of the military, hold politicians, this image of the military not only in its own eyes but in the eyes of many Turkish citizens as the ultimate keepers of the Kemalist flame has culminated in a number of interventions by the military into domestic Turkish politics. Until 1950, Ataturk's Republican

People's Party controlled the government. In the first genuinely free elections, the Republican People's Party was defeated, and a new government was formed by the Democratic Party. This government was removed from power by a military intervention in 1960. Another military intervention took place in 1971. The military took power briefly as a result of a coup in 1980. In 1997, military pressure contributed to the fall of the Erbakan Government. Under the current constitution, the military has a continuing role as one-half, the government of the day constituting the other half, of the National Security Council.

Since 1923, the Turkish Republic has demonstrated an impressive record of progress. Whether such progress could have been achieved in a less authoritarian manner is a matter for debate. Certainly a backward country characterized by a high degree of poverty and a low level of literacy has been turned into a modern technologically-advanced society. Gunter remarks that "Despite his authoritarian legacy, Ataturk inspired the Turkish people with his vision of a modern, secular, independent, and ultimately democratic Turkey."[26] Howe points out that ". . . for over half a century Turkey has developed democratic institutions, which, although flawed, provide hope and channels for change. There are real political parties and generally free elections, a judiciary that often corrects political actions, a powerful, vocal press, independent labor unions and management associations, and a broad array of nongovernmental organizations, including human rights groups that dare to denounce official abuses."[27] The path was not always smooth or pretty. Much was achieved through force of will, rather than consensus. A 1976 study found that Turkey represented an anomaly in that ". . . rapid socio-economic modernization of the last two decades coincided with a substantial decline in voting turnout."[28] Kinzer argues that, whatever the justification in the 1920s and 1930s for such an approach, many

Kemalists, especially in the military, in their zeal to protect the Kemalist legacy effectively undermine the democracy that represents a major element of that legacy.[29] Kinzer's view is that "Unlike many of those who today claim his mantle, Ataturk eagerly grasped the opportunities presented by a rapidly changing world. He understood that Turkey can become modern only by embracing modern values. It is in his true image, not in the distorted one promoted by the modern Kemalist elite, that the new Turkey must be shaped."[30] Howe similarly takes the view that ". . . for all their good intentions, the military have weakened Turkish democracy by their regular interventions and constant supervision. They should show their faith in Ataturk's revolution."[31] Sayari reflects that ". . . Turkey has shown a basic commitment to democratic institutions and processes. . . . Nevertheless, the democratization process that began in the late 1940s has not yet resulted in the consolidation of Turkish democracy. The complex tasks of strengthening political institutions and increasing accountability, implementing the much needed constitutional and political reforms, and limiting the military's role in politics still lie ahead."[32]

Islamic Revivalism in Turkey

The growth of Islamic revivalism (or Islamism) in Turkey can be ascribed to many of the same influences that have shaped it elsewhere. Humans naturally feel a need for spiritual meaning. Change and globalization put pressures on people that lead them to seek a sense of identity and community. Tibi suggests that "The more rapid the social change, the more indeterminable the environment becomes for individuals as personal systems living in a state of

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transition, and the more marked the need for religion to maintain identity in the process of change."[33] Islamic revivalism, however, is not identical to traditional Islam. Proponents of Islamic revivalism fault traditional Islam for its alleged deference to civil authorities. It will be necessary to examine both those considerations that influence the development of Islamic revivalism in the Middle East in general, and those considerations that are more specific to the Turkish context. Cornell and Svanberg suggest that "The Turkish public, which on the whole --- this is especially true for the secular establishment --- has a poor knowledge of Islam both generally and in Turkey, is suddenly exposed to extensive media coverage of the activities of Islamist groups. . . . In Turkey, this ignorance has led to the spontaneous support for the military-led efforts to suppress religious radicals and conservatives, which many secularists adopt without questioning its virtues and drawbacks."[34]

It is frequently hypothesized that, as economic development and modernization take place, the influence of religion will wane, and there will be a trend in the direction of secularization. The influence of Islamic revivalism would seem to contradict this hypothesis. Berger observes that the influence of religion, especially that of the so-called "fundamentalist" form of various religious traditions, would appear to be on the rise throughout the world.[35] Gellner argues that development and education has been conducive, rather than detrimental, to the propagation of strict observance of the practices of Islam because in the past strict observance tended to be limited to more affluent, educated and urbanized members of Islamic societies, while the practices of the rural poor were mixed, to a degree, with superstition and remnants of pre-Islamic practice.[36] Today it is possible, he suggests, for a much broader segment in such societies to adhere to the strict practice once associated by many with those they deemed their social

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superiors. Strict observance, rather than being perceived as a sign of being backward, is viewed

by some as a sign of being able to adopt the lifestyle once identified with the more educated and

more affluent.

Religious and moral conservatives support the notion of adherence to the Sharia or Islamic

law, and throughout the Middle East and North Africa the poor, the disadvantaged and the

unemployed, increasingly skeptical about promises on the part of ineffective and, in some cases,

corrupt regimes to reduce economic and strategic disparities between the Islamic world and the

West and to open up opportunities for the poor to improve their lot, have turned to Islamic

revivalist parties as an alternative. Kepel suggests that much of the energies of the Islamist

movement have shifted from its initial phase of seeking Islamization from above, as in the

Islamic Revolution in Iran, towards a phase of Islamization from below through ministering to

needs at the grass-roots.[37] Esposito observes that during the late 1980s and 1990s such a

development was taking place throughout the Islamic world as "Islamic movements and

associations became part and parcel of mainstream institutional forces in civil society. Islamic

activist organizations and NGOs created networks of mosques, hospitals, clinics, day-care

centers, youth clubs, legal aid societies, foreign language schools, banks, drug rehabilitation

programs, insurance companies, and publishing houses."[38] Esposito, as well, notes that "The

wide participation of religiously motivated Muslims (political and apolitical) in Islamic

professional associations and other private voluntary organizations has led to the gradual

Islamization of society from below, increasingly evident throughout much of the Muslim

world."[39]

Kepel argues that Islamist political movements typically attract supporters from two

groups. On the one hand, social and moral conservatives have been attracted to Islamist political movements. On the other hand, the poor and dispossessed, increasingly frustrated with what are seen as corrupt and/or ineffective governments, have been attracted by Islamist political movements because of their critique of the status quo. Kepel suggests that there has been a shift in the form in which Islamic revivalism is taking political expression.[40] Where Islamist movements have achieved political power, however, as in Iran, Sudan and Afghanistan under the Taliban, many of this second group of supporters have become disillusioned as Islamist regimes have demonstrated more interest in promoting a morally conservative agenda than in economic redistribution. There has been a movement away from the more militant and more extreme forms of Islamism towards a newer generation of leaders who organize political parties and pursue power through electoral politics. One of the theses effectively of Kepel's most recent work is that the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 reflect not the strength of the militant forms of Islamism but, rather, their weakness and desperation as grass-roots support among supporters of Islamism shift towards those elements of the movement working through electoral politics, through civil society, and with an agenda focussing on the spread of social justice and economic opportunity.

Shadid advances a similar theses in his recent work, asserting that "The rhetoric and exploits of wandering militants like bin Laden, while appealing to a small segment of a Muslim world disenchanted to the point of hopelessness, rings hollow to the overwhelming majority. . . . The real force of Islamic politics is represented by movements that have incorporated the new currents of thought with the persuasive and successful application of da'wa, an Islamic brand of welfare and social activism."[41] Shadid does observe that, in respect to some of their activities,

groups like Hamas and Hezbollah do reflect elements of this but, he observes, "In their most mature form, they can take on the visage of electoral politics, as with Islamists in Turkey."[42] Kepel shares with Shadid the sense that a new generation of Islamist leaders are parting with the ways of a former generation of leaders who rejected conventional politics, and are pursuing electoral politics.[43]

The controversy over headscarves has been one manifestation of the tension between Kemalists, on the one hand, and Islamists, on the other.[44] There was some dispute about the interpretation of the 1925 prohibitions on the wearing of religious dress in public places. Starting in 1981, female Islamist university students began wearing headscarves. In some cases, female students have accepted expulsion from university and from medical schools rather than compromising on the practice of their religious beliefs. Kemalists suggest that the young women have been pressured to wear scarves. Islamist groups make considerable effort to recruit young people but the young women insist that they are exercising a free choice on their part. In the current climate in Turkey, headscarves have become, for some, a symbol of a potential return to an era in which women were confined to traditional roles, and for others, a sign that they can, even as they pursue university studies, practice their own understanding of their faith.

The Islamist political movement has expressed itself in Turkey through political parties of a number of names. One party becomes prohibited for allegedly violating the restrictions in the constitution on the intrusion of religion into the public sphere. What has happened is that the movement re-emerges through a political party of another name some years later when restrictions have been relaxed. The Party of National Order (Milli Nizam Partisi or MNP) was founded in 1970, and outlawed in 1971. In 1972, the Party of National Salvation (Milli Selamet

Partisi or MSP) was founded, and the twelve percent of the vote it received in the 1973 election gave it the balance of power in the Turkish parliament. All political parties were abolished in the wake of the 1980 military coup, and the MSP leader Necmettin Erbakan was arrested. The Prosperity Party (Refah Partisi or RF) was founded in 1983, and Erbakan became leader in 1987 when prohibitions on political participation by those arrested in 1980 were relaxed. The Prosperity Party eventually became the most prominent partner in a coalition government with Tansu Ciller's Right Path Party. This government fell largely as a consequence of opposition from the military. The Virtue (or Fazilet or FP) Party was founded in 1997, and banned in 2001.

The success of religiously-inspired parties in the face of obstacles has owed something to organization and to leadership. Shankland observes that "The Welfare Party was further helped by having what is without the slightest doubt the most advanced and modern party organization in Turkey."[45] The fragmentation of the party system and the disillusionment with other parties stemming from cases of corruption has certainly contributed, as well. Some voters have been attracted by the reputation for integrity earned by Islamist mayors throughout Turkey. Yesilada, tracing the history of Refah and Fazilet, concludes that "The rise of this Islamist political party is a success story because despite constant attacks from the secular establishment, especially from the military, it keeps returning to politics albeit under a new name."[46] Yesilada sees differences between the older generation of leaders, like Necmettin Erbakan, and a younger generation of leaders, like Tayyip Erdogan and Abdullah Gul, and suggests that, since the effective military ouster of the Erbakan Government in 1997, ". . . the FP has toned down its criticism of secularism and has even embarked on a campaign to present a new image for itself as a pro-system party."[47]

Recent changes now permit teaching the Kurdish language in non-state schools, broadcasting in Kurdish on non-state stations, buying and selling property by non-Muslim religious foundations, and greater freedom of expression.[48] Capital punishment, except in wartime, will be abolished. Such changes, initiated under the government of Bulent Ecevit prior to the recent election, seem to have been designed to allay some of the European Community's concerns.

In the November 3, 2002 election, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) under Recep Tayyip Erdogan won 34.3% of the popular vote and 363 seats out of 550.[49] The Kemalist Republican People's Party won 19.4% of the popular vote and 178 seats, and independents won nine seats. A previous conviction for allegedly violating prohibitions against inciting religious hatred for reading a poem in public precluded Erdogan, a former Islamist mayor of Istanbul, from becoming prime minister, and the new AKP Government will be led formally by Abdullah Gul. Within Refah and Fazilet, Erdogan and Gul challenged a number of the approaches taken by Erbakan, and, as a consequence of their more pragmatic style, Erdogan and Gul are seen as representing a new generation of Islamists. This was the first time in fifteen years that one party has won a majority of the seats.

Conclusion

In many ways, Turkey has established a substantial record as a democracy, unfortunately marred by a number of interventions by the military and by a level of ongoing military

participation in the making of public policy that is at odds with the practice typical of other democracies. Paradoxically perhaps, the military is perceived by many, including itself and within the secular establishment, as the ultimate guardian of the Kemalist legacy. In other words, many of the most affluent and best educated hesitate to criticize military intervention in the political system because of the threat which they perceive from Islamists. The European Community is not likely to consider seriously Turkey's application for membership as long as the military's efforts against Islamists and Kurdish nationalists raise human rights issues. Accommodation with ethnic and religious minorities, which some would argue are in the Turkish public interest to begin with, may be required by the European Community. During the past year, even prior to the recent election, some progress in this direction was initiated, and this would appear to be an encouraging sign.[50] Kemalists and the military need to display more confidence in the durability of the pluralist democracy that has developed out of the Kemalist Revolution, and to accept that that may mean that the tides of public opinion may ebb and flow, bringing this election one party into office and next election another party into office. One consequence of the military's intervention was a somewhat retarded emergence of civil society, which in recent years has begun to play a role in Turkey. Islamists can accomplish a good deal as a consequence of their religious inspiration so long as they do not violate the limits necessary if a democracy is to be viable in a society that may appear relatively homogeneous by Western standards but which, nevertheless, has ethnic and religious minorities. The majority of Turks may be adherents of Islam but that is not the same as being Islamist. An Islamist Government that ignores this does so at its own peril, given the prevalence of nominal adherents to Islam, the laws against religion in politics and the commitment of the military to upholding those laws, and

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Islamists appear to have recognized this as the most recent expression of the Islamist political movement, the Justice and Development Party, has attempted to avoid being labelled as an Islamist party. The Felicity Party, which adopted a more unambiguously Islamist stance, failed to win any seats in the 2002 election. While one can never rule out the unpredictable, it would seem to be in the interest of all the relevant actors to develop a political system which can be seen by Kemalists and Islamists alike as essentially legitimate.

Notes

1. See Lloyd Fallers, <u>The Social Anthropology of the Nation-State</u>, (Chicago: Aldine, 1974).

2. See Shibley Telhami and Michael Barnett, (ed.), <u>Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East</u>, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2002).

3. See Michael Barnett, "The Israeli Identity and the Peace Process: Re/creating the Un/thinkable" in <u>Ibid.</u>

4. Erik Cornell, <u>Turkey in the 21st Century: Opportunities, Challenges, Threats</u>, (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2001), p. 23.

5. Kemal H. Karpat, <u>The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State</u>, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 353.

6. <u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 353-354.

7. <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 354.

8. Justin McCarthy, <u>The Ottoman Peoples and the End of Empire</u>, (London: Arnold, 2001), p. 216.

9. Bernard Lewis, <u>The Multiple Identities of the Middle East</u>, (London: Phoenix, 1999), p. 136.

10. William Hale, <u>Turkish Foreign Policy, 1774-2000</u>, (London and Portland, Oregon: Frank Cass, 2000), p. 332.

11. Anthony Shadid, <u>Legacy of the Prophet: Despots, Democrats, and the New Politics of Islam</u>, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2002), p. 145.

12. See Andrew Mango, <u>Ataturk</u>, (Woodstock, New York: Overlook Press, 2000). For other works on Turkey by Andrew Mango, see Andrew Mango, <u>Turkey: A Delicately Poised Ally</u>, (Beverly Hills and London: Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., and Sage Publications, 1975); and Andrew Mango, <u>Turkey: The Challenge of a New Role</u>, (Westport, Connecticut and London: Center for Strategic and International Studies, and Praeger, 1994).

13. Mango, <u>Ataturk, op. cit.</u>, p. 538.

14. John L. Esposito, <u>The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?</u>, (rev. ed.), (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 78.

15. Benedict Anderson, <u>Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism</u>, (rev. ed.), (London and New York: Verso, 1991), p. 45.

16. <u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 45-46.

17. L. Carl Brown, <u>Religion and State: The Muslim Approach to Politics</u>, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), p. 112.

18. Shireen T. Hunter, <u>The Future of Islam and the West: Clash of Civilizations or Peaceful Coexistence?</u>, (Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., 1998), p. 85.

19. Bernard Lewis, <u>The Emergence of Modern Turkey</u>, (London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1961), p. 406.

20. <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 410.

21. Nicole and Hugh Pope, <u>Turkey Unveiled: A History of Modern Turkey</u>, (Woodstock and New York: The Overlook Press, 1998), p. 317.

22. Hamit Bozarslan, "Political aspects of the Kurdish problem in contemporary Turkey" in Philip G. Kreyenbroek and Stefan Sperl, (ed.), <u>The Kurds: A Contemporary Overview</u>, (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 103.

23. Nader Entessar, <u>Kurdish Ethnonationalism</u>, (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, 1992), p. 81.

24. Marvine Howe, <u>Turkey Today: A Nation Divided over Islam's Revival</u>, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2000), p. 88.

25. Simon V. Mayall, <u>Turkey: Thwarted Ambition</u>, (Washington, D.C.: Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, McNair Paper 56, 1997), p. 17.

26. Michael M. Gunter, <u>The Kurds and the Future of Turkey</u>, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), p. 7.

27. Howe, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 249.

28. Ergun Ozbudun, <u>Social Change and Political Participation in Turkey</u>, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 218.

29. See Stephen Kinzer, <u>Crescent and Star: Turkey Between Two Worlds</u>, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001).

30. <u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 50-51.

31. Howe, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 249.

32. Sabri Sayari, "Conclusion" in Sabri Sayari and Yilmaz Esmer, (ed.), <u>Politics, Parties, and Elections in Turkey</u>, (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, 2002), pp. 183-184.

33. Bassam Tibi, <u>Islam between Culture and Politics</u>, (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave in association with the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, 2001), p. 125.

34. Svante Cornell and Ingvar Svanberg, "Turkey" in Daniel Westerlund and Ingvar Svanberg, (ed.), <u>Islam Outside the Arab World</u>, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), p. 127.

35. See Peter L. Berger, "The Desecularization of the World: A Global Overview" in Peter L. Berger, (ed.), <u>The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics</u>, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, and the Ethics and Public Policy Center, Washington, D.C., 1999).

36. See Ernest Gellner, <u>Postmodernism, Reason and Religion</u>, (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 2-22.

37. See Gilles Kepel, <u>The Revenge of God: The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity and Judaism in the Modern World</u>, translated by Alan Braley, (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), Chapter 1, "The Sword and the <u>Koran</u>".

38. John L. Esposito, <u>Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam</u>, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 147.

39. <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 148.

40. See Gilles Kepel, <u>Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam</u>, translated by Anthony F. Roberts, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002).

41. Shadid, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 291.

42. <u>Ibid.</u>

43. See Keppel, <u>Jihad, op. cit.</u>, and Shadid, <u>op. cit.</u>

44. See Howe, <u>op. cit.</u>, Chapter 9, "The Headscarf War"; and Feride Acar, "Islam in Turkey" in Canan Balkir and Allan M. Williams, (ed.), <u>Turkey and Europe</u>, (London and New York: Pinter, 1993), p. 230..

45. David Shankland, <u>Islam and Society in Turkey</u>, (Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire: Eothen Press, 1999), p. 104.

46. Birol A. Yesilada, "Realignment and Party Adaptation: The Case of the Refah and Fazilet Parties" in Sabri Sayari and Yilmaz Esmer, (ed.), <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 175.

47. <u>Ibid.</u>

48. See "Turkey's reform: Great --- if they really happen", <u>The Economist</u>, Vol. 364, no. 8285, (August 10, 2002), pp. 45-46; and "Turkey and its Kurds: Getting just a little better", <u>The Economist</u>, Vol. 365, no. 8296, (October 26, 2002), p. 47.

49. See "Turkey's election: Erdogan triumphs --- with plenty of help from his enemies", <u>The Economist</u>, Vol. 365, no. 8298, (November 9-15, 2002), pp. 53-54; and "Turkey's government: so far so good", <u>The Economist</u>, Vol. 365, no. 8300, (November 23-29, 2002), pp. 48-49.

50. For a similar view, see, for example, Henri Barkley, "The struggles of a 'strong' state", <u>Journal of International Affairs</u>, Vol. 54, no. 1, (Fall 2000); and Dogu Ergil, "Identity crises and political instability in Turkey", <u>Journal of International Affairs</u>, Vol. 54, no. 1, (Fall 2000).