

CHANGING ROLE OF ARMY IN TURKISH POLITICS (1960-1983)

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SHAHID M. SIDDIQUI

**Centre for West Asian And African Studies
School of International Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110 067**

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जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI - 110067

CENTRE FOR WEST ASIAN AND AFRICAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation entitled, "**CHANGING ROLE OF ARMY IN TURKISH POLITICS (1960 - 1983)**", submitted by **Mr. Shahid M. Siddiqui**, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) of this University is, to the best of my knowledge, his own work and may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Dr. Girijesh Pant
Chairperson

Chairman
Centre for West Asian and African Studies
School of International Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
NEW DELHI-110067.

Prof. Mohammad Sadiq
Supervisor

**To
My Parents**

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I	INTRODUCTION : HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	1 - 18
CHAPTER II	GUARDIAN OF THE NATION OR DECISION MAKERS ?	19 - 42
CHAPTER III	ARMY AND CIVILIAN WORLD	43 - 63
CHAPTER IV	RETREAT TO BARRACKS	64 - 90
CHAPTER V	CONCLUSION	91 - 99
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	100 - 106

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION : HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

From the very inception of the Ottoman polity the military had been either the dominant or an integral part of the state elite. During the early institutionalisation period of the Ottoman polity (from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century), the military constituted the dominant state elite - so much so that the Ottoman ruling institutions was then referred as askeri or the "military".¹

From the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, the military largely replaced as modernisers in the (civilian) bureaucratic elite of the tanzimat period.² Historian Lyber wrote,

"the Ottoman Government had been an army before it was anything else... infact, Army and Government were one. War was the external purpose, Government the internal purpose, of one institution, composed of one body of men".³

1. See H. Inalcik, "The Ottoman Empire : The Classical Age, 1300-1600", (London : Weidenfeld and Nicholson 1973).

2. See C.V. Findley, "Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire : The Sublime Parte, 1789-1922", (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1980).

3. A.H. Lybyer, "The Government of the Ottoman Empire in the Time of Sulaiman the Magnificent", (Cambridge, Mass 1913), pp.90-91

It is also true, that under the Ottoman Empire, while the vigour of the ruling institution waned, the military corps had taken a large hand in modernization and institutional innovation.

The present chapter is a brief survey, of the historical role of the army from the foundation of the Empire in 1299 to it's fall in 1918. However the emphasis is on the republican period until the opening of pluralist democracy after the second world war. From the foundation of the Ottoman Empire in 1299 to it's fall in 1918, the army always played a major role. The early history of the Ottoman Empire is rooted in the exploits of the Janissary Army which was the principle source of strength that enabled quick conquests on three continents. Like everything else in the land, the Janissary Army belonged to the sultan and performed indispensable services for him. The Janissaries fought battles, collected taxes, and governed the regions that were conquered. As the boundaries grew wider, the Empire became stronger and the Janissaries richer with the spoils of the conquests.

The Ottoman rulers always felt it necessary to keep the Janissaries contented. For instance, they were given

bounty by the sultan on his accession to the throne, and raised their voices when given less than expected, or none at all. Unrest among the Janissaries grew under the reign of less powerful rulers when there were fewer conquests and fewer spoils. For one reason or another, five sultans and forty-three viziers were removed from power or killed by the Janissaries in times of revolt.

The active part played by the army in dethroning sultan Abdulaziz was the clearest indication that the element of military interference in politics had not been eliminated despite the suppression of the Janissaries⁴ Unlike the Janissaries, who were reactionary, officers of the new - style army, in the course of military modernization, were influenced by liberal ideas from the West, and led the way in progressive movements and innovations. With a totally different outlook they renounced personal interests in favour of patriotism and the salvation of the Empire. But they also became much more involved in politics as the pace of modernization quickened.

4. W.E.D. Allen & Paul Muratoff, "Caucasian Battlefields", (Cambridge University Press 1953), pp. 23-34

Following Abdulhamit II's accession to the throne in 1876, the Young Turks and Ottoman liberals proclaimed the First constitution with the support of the army.⁵ Military involvement in politics increased even more when Abdulhamit closed down the Assembly on the pretext of the Russian War and re-established absolute powers. In 1889, Young Turks and students from the Army Academy and the School of Medicine and Political Science formed the Committee for Union and Progress, which soon also included members from the Officer Class. The Committee was started as a movement against the repressive rule of Abdulhamit II, and succeeded in overthrowing him in 1909 with the substantial support of the army. However, the following years were full of examples showing the disastrous consequences of political involvement on the part of the army.

The collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1918 ushered in a period which the Turks look back on as the heroic epoch

5. M. Philips Price, "A History of Turkey : From Empire to Republic", (London : George Allen and Unwin Ltd. 1961), pp. 110-11

in their modern history. From the outside, it must have seemed that the Turkish State was dead. Its armies appeared to be shattered, its economy in ruins. What the world failed to anticipate was the emergence of a solidly supported and skillfully led Turkish nationalist movement which turned their(allies) plans upside down. There was, a 'sensational contrast between what the (western) statesmen thought in 1919 and what happened in 1922'.

The nationalist resistance was not the work of one man, but it was eventually led and inspired by a single individual. Mustafa Kemal (later Ataturk), he was one of the few Turkish generals who had come out of the Great war with his reputation enhanced rather than tarnished. His crucial role in the defense of the Dardanelles in 1915 had already won him national acclaim. Ataturk directed the military campaign against the Entente during the war of resistance of 1919-22, and then rebuilt the political and cultural institutions of his country. The sultanate, and the state's official with links, were abolished. Turkey became a secular-democratic-republic.

Once installed, he moved in a radically new direction. Shortly after the peace was signed in 1923, he

obliged the liberals of the revolutionary government to divest themselves of military office. Kemal's position on this point had been made abundantly clear as early as 1909 when he, along with Ismet Inonu (Kemal's successor as President and chief assistant and confident throughout) argued vigorously in the Council of the Committee of Union and Progress against the direct participation of army officers in political affairs. At the annual party meeting in Salonica in the Summer of 1909 Kemal declared, "as long as officers remain in the party (i.e., Party of Union and Progress) we shall neither build a strong party nor a strong Army. In the third army most of the officers are also members of the Party and the third army cannot be called first class. Furthermore, the party receiving its strength from the Army will never appeal to the nation. Let us resolve here and now that all officers wishing to remain in the Party must resign from the Army. We must also adopt a law for bidding all future officers having political affiliations.... "

6. Quoted in I. Orga, Phoenix Ascendant (London, 1958), p. 38

Army in the background, 1926-38

After the turbulent events of the early 1920s, the story of the Turkish army's political role during the following two decades comes as an interval of unwanted calm. The army's withdrawal from active political involvement was generally maintained, and the soldiers remained strictly in the background. Ataturk was thus left free to broaden and deepen the internal reconstruction which had begun during the 1920s. After an unsuccessful attempt to set up a loyal opposition party in the shape of the Free Republican Party of 1930, Turkey reverted to a single party system until 1945. In securing the loyalty of the army to Ataturk's republic, Fevzi Cakmak played a crucial role. His term as a Chief of the General Staff lasted so long - almost twenty two years - that his name became virtually synonymous with that of the office, rather like that of J. Edgar Hoover and the directorship of the FBI. He was showered with honors by his country, receiving the unique title of Marshal by vote of the Grand National Assembly. In spite of the formal separation of his office from the Cabinet, he regularly attended Cabinet meetings, thanks to his long association with Ataturk and Inonu. He enjoyed wide

autonomy in his conduct of military affairs.⁷ On the other hand, he does not seem to have been in particularly close to Ataturk during the 1930s - less so, for instance, than former officers who had now entered politics, including some who had once clashed with the President, like Ali Fuat Cebesoy.⁸ Fevzi Cakmak's main assets were his experience and political reliability; both religious and, more crucially, professional.

The 1930s were an era of vast social change in Turkey. Indeed, the transformation of society outside the military was beginning to set the stage for the eventual upset of the Kemalist politico-military equilibrium. A middle class of businessmen and professional men was coming into being to fill the void left by the departed minorities. As a result of the reforms of the 1920s, the religious institutions had been completely displaced from the ruling establishment. Even more significant, the spread of education was broadening the

7. Dankward A. Rustow, "The Army and the Founding of the Turkish Republic", World Politics, vol. 11 (1959), p.549

8. Walter F. Weiker, "Associates of Kemal Ataturk, 1932-1938", Belleten (Ankara, Turkish Historical Society), vol. 34 (1970), pp. 635-639

elite, producing an alternative leadership cadre to the officer corps. The steadily decreasing number of retired officers serving in the Assembly during the First Republic only testified to this decline of the officer as the preponderant force in the power structure. Nevertheless, this was a slow process, and the military continued to enjoy great popular respect and prestige. Thus retired officers remained widely sought after as deputies and administrators.

Although the predominance of the military establishment was gradually being eroded in this way, the armed forces continued to attract new blood. The military profession provided entry into the elite for provincial youths who would otherwise have had little chance to improve their status. The system of military high school feeding into the Military Academy offered the way into the officer corps on the basis of merit. In fact, ability was rewarded early in one's career by selection for staff officer training which was the key to top command. Yet during these peace time years, advancement was slow in the small professional army, as vacancies occurred only by deaths or retirement, and resignation for the lower ranks was precluded by the long term of service

required of commissioned officers

In principle, the formal separation of the army from government was adhered to during the inter-war period. Although he had the powers of Supreme Commander, Ataturk always seems to have appeared in civilian dress and this custom has been followed by his presidential successors. On the other hand, the Ottoman tradition of mixing civilian and military authority in the provinces was maintained, as military commanders in frontier regions sometimes doubled up as provincial governors.¹⁰ Military considerations also seem to have played some role in the formulation of the etatist (one of the six cardinal principle of Kemalism) programme of industrial development - for instance, in the location of Turkey's first iron and steel mill, opened in 1939 at the hopelessly uneconomic inland sight of Karabuk, primarily because it was easier

9. Sydney N. Fisher (ed.), "The Military in the Middle East", (Columbus, 1963), p.29; Kemal Karpat, "Turkey's Politics" (Princeton, 1959), p.341. Karpat notes that interests in the army as a career had greatly diminished in the large urban centres where there were more opportunities for work.

10. Rustow, 'Army' Op. Cit. p. 550

to defend against an invader. On the other hand, it seems to be going too far to say that military interests directed economic policy at this time; if they had, then one suspects that far greater sums would have been devoted to the defense budget.

Politically, a vital function of the army was to serve as one of the regime's most important agents for the spread of the ideas of modernization and secular nationalism, especially among the conscripts. Virtually all young men served for one to two years, depending on the branch of the services to which they were attached.¹² A poster issued by the Republican People's Party in the 1930s lauds the army as 'the school for the people' with graphic illustrations. A recruit goes in the army as an inexperienced youth and comes out as a vigorous young man; in the army, he is taught to read and write, he enjoys sports and health services, and his love of the

11. Max Weston Thornburg, et al, 'Turkey, an Economic Appraisal', (New York, Twentieth Century Fund, 1949), p.107

12. August Ritter von Kral, "Das Land. Kemal Ataturks", (Vienna and Leipzig, Wilhelm Braumuller, 1937), p.252

fatherland is increased.

Legally speaking, the role of the armed forces was defined by the Army Internal Service Law, enacted in 1935. Article 34 of the law stipulated that 'the duty of the armed forces is to protect and defend the Turkish homeland and Turkish Republic, as determined in the constitution'. Later army activists were to interpret this clause (which was repeated in the Turkish Armed Forces internal service law of 1960 as article 35) as meaning that they were obliged to intervene in the political sphere if the survival of the state would otherwise be left in grave jeopardy. Ataturk himself sometimes encouraged this wider interpretation of the army's role, by urging the younger officers to think of themselves as the vanguard of the revolution. A speech he delivered at the Army Club in Konya in 1931 may perhaps be seen as contradictory to the passage in the six - day speech.¹⁴ He first suggested that, in World history, armies has generally opposed progress. Turkey, however, was differ-

13. Lilo Linke, "Allah Dethroned : A Journey through Modern Turkey", (London, Travel Book Club, 1938), p.329

14. For the text of six day speech see, Rustow, 'Army', Op. Cit., p.546

ent. " In our history, in Turkish history, an outstanding exception appears. You know that whenever the Turkish nation has wanted to stride towards the heights it has always seen its army, which is composed of its own heroic sons, as the permanent leader in the forefront of this march, as the permanent vanguard in campaigns to bring lofty national ideals to reality.... In times to come, also, its heroic soldier sons will march in the vanguard for the attainment of the sublime ideals of the Turkish nation".¹⁵

This indoctrination in a radical reformist consciousness was enhanced by the system of military education. Courses on the Turkish revolution were a compulsory part of the curriculum at the Military College in Ankara. In some cases, this radicalization went too far for the government; the Turkish army even had a few sympathiser with Marxism, who supported the avowedly communist views of Nazim Hikmet, Turkey's most distinguished modern poet. Such commitments seem to have been rare, however, as the majority of young officers were still committed to the

15. George S. Harris, "The Role of the Military in Turkish Politics", Part I, Middle East Journal, vol. 19 (1965), p.56

16

official ideology of reformist nationalism. In his memoirs, General Sitki Ulay recalls his days as a young officer in the Presidential Guard in the 1930s. He and his brother officers regularly received lessons from some of the leading nationalist intellectuals of the day and were taken on visits to the villages, to bring them home. For this generation, an outstanding hero, after Ataturk himself, was the young reserve officer Mustafa Fehmi Kubilay, who was shot and decapitated by the ring leader of a reactionary religious demonstration in the small town of Menemen, near Izmir, in December 1930. Kubilay became the honoured martyr of Ataturkism - a symbol for the young officers that they should be prepared to lay down their lives for the revolution, not just the defense of the country against foreign invaders.

Inonu and the Army, 1938-45

On Ataturk's death in 1938, Inonu succeeded him to the presidency. In all essentials, Inonu preserved the political system and ideological commitments of the 1930s, as well as the army's position within them. His greatest test came with the outbreak of the Second World

16. *ibid.*, p.62

War. To cope with the crisis, martial law was declared in Istanbul, and the army placed on a war footing. Both these changes inevitably enhanced the role of the army in government. What is not certain is Inonu's relationship with his military chiefs, especially Cakmak. So far as one can see, all important decisions were taken by Inonu himself. Outwardly, at any cost, Inonu's relation with Cakmak were harmonious. The Chief of the General Staff had been a possible successor to the presidency when Ataturk died, he had not only stood aside, but had actively supported Inonu's nomination. In public, the two men affirmed their mutual loyalty.¹⁷ Behind the scenes, however, it is suggested that Inonu undermined Cakmak's authority by settling important questions through his Assistant Chief of Staff, and that 'no love was lost between Cakmak and Inonu.'¹⁸ Certainly Inonu seems to have been instrumental in securing Cakmak's final retirement in January 1944.

17. Lord Kinross, 'Ataturk, the Rebirth of a Nation', (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), p. 498

18. Zeki Kuneralp, "Turkish Foreign Policy, 1934-1945 : Small State Diplomacy and Great Power Politics", (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1973), p.249

However, at a meeting in Cairo with Churchill and Roosevelt in December 1943, Inonu had come under strong pressure to join the allies in the war and had accepted this proposal 'in principle'. In these circumstances, it was natural to remove the aged and conservative Marshal, since he was seen as an obstacle to the modernization of the forces which was now so badly needed.¹⁹ More critically, it is suggested that Cakmak had pro-German sympathies and his dismissal was thus a necessary sacrifice, to secure a rapprochement with the Allies. Coincidentally with Cakmak's retirement, an attempt was made to reduce the independence of the Chief of the General Staff,²⁰ and thus of the army establishment as a whole, by making him responsible to the Minister of Defense, rather than directly to the President. This attempt underlined the point that although Ataturk reforms had extricated the army from day - to - day involvement in politics, they had not established effective institutional control by the government over defense policy or the army's performance of its professional functions. The new proposal clearly ran into stiff opposition from the

19. Kinross, 'Ataturk', Op. Cit. p.498-99

20. Harris, 'Military', Op. Cit., Part I, p.63

top of the military hierarchy.

In essence, however, the experience of Inonu's presidency preserved Ataturk's principles that the army should remain loyal to the civilian political establishment. At the same time, the radical political education which the young officers went through had some crucial long-term effects. As a disillusion ex-officer was to write later,

" The method of training for Turkish officers is not at all like that in other armies. Being an officer in other armies is just a professional job, like any other form of state service. With us, however, it is much more than just a job, it is a national duty it is the Guardianship of

22

the State."

In effect, the training and socialization of the young officers preserve the self-image, of the vanguard of enlightenment, which their predecessor had adopted during the years of the Tanzimat. The immobilise at the top of the army under Fevzi Cakmak probably strengthen the radicalism of the junior officers. These commitments

21. Harris, 'Military', Part I, Op. Cit. p.63; Mehmet Ali Birand, "At Your Command, Commander !", (Istanbul, Milliyet Yayinlari 1968), p. 429

22. Mehmet Ali Birand, "Shirts of Steel : An Anatomy of the Turkish Armed Forces", tr. Saliha Paker and Ruth Christie, (London, I.B. Tauris, 1991), p.92

and divisions were to be of critical importance as Turkey entered a new political era with the opening of pluralist democracy after second world war.

CHAPTERS II

GUARDIAN OF THE NATION OR DECISION MAKERS ?

The armed forces have occupied a special position in Turkey. Their political weight enters into party and government calculations on a range of matters far beyond military interests. The political influence they wield, derives in part from their monopoly of legal force and their status as the de-facto last recourse in domestic conflict, and in part from the peculiar history of the military establishment in the Turkish reform movement and their centrality in the creation of the Republic.¹

Not only did Mustafa Kemal Ataturk settled his position as Inspector of the Ninth Army into that of paramount leader of the independence movement; but military officers filled most of the other important positions of power under him.² In order to understand Kemal's political thought, however, it is also necessary to take

1. For details see Dankwart A. Rustow, "The Army and the Founding of the Turkish Republic", World Politics (July, 1959), pp. 513-522; Fredrich W. Frey, "Arms and the Man in Turkish Politics", Land Reborn (August 1960), pp. 3-14; Sydney N. Fisher (ed.), The Military in the Middle East (Columbus, 1963), pp. 21-40; D.A. Rustow and R.E. Ward (ed.), Political Modernisation in Japan and Turkey (Princeton, 1954), pp. 354-88.

2. George S. Harris, 'Turkey : Coping with Crisis' (Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, 1985), pp. 154-156

account of his speech at Konya:" this apolitical army, totally subordinated to the civil power, is at the same time entrusted with the mission of securing the unconditional defense of the political institutions of the state against both external and internal attack. The system is placed beneath its protection, and the internal regulation of the army recognises its right to intervene in case of danger". The three military interventions of 1960, 1971 and 1980 were, according to their leaders, carried out in accordance with this provision. It is therefore, necessary to analyse the political situations which were regarded by the leaders of the Turkish army at the time as triggering the application of the Konya speech as an 'order of the day'³.

The 'threshold' which seems to constitute the critical point in activating an eventual military intervention was in these three cases the same : the proclamation by the politicians currently in power, legally and by parliamentary vote, of a state of siege. Menderes, the

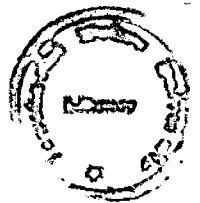
3. Ataturk Speech delivered at the army club in Konya in 1931, quoted in George S. Harris, 'The Role of the Military in Turkish Politics', Part-I, Middle East Journal, Vol. 19 (1965), pp.56-57

4

Democratic Party Prime Minister in 1960, decreed the 'state of siege' essentially in order to curb the opposition in the face of a movement of voters towards the rival Republican Party. One month later, he was overthrown by the army, arrested, and eventually hanged. Ten years later, it was the liberal Prime Minister Demirel who decreed the state of siege in order to contain extreme left wing trade union opposition. He was ousted by the army on 12 March 1971. In 1978 it was a Social Democrat Prime Minister, Bulent Ecevit, who decreed the State of Siege in the face of this government's inability to contain violence from both left-wing and right-wing extremists. The army took power on 12 September 1980, and arrested all the main political leaders including both Ecevit and Demirel. In all three cases, the army was officially invited to associate itself with the civil power, in order to maintain order in the face of that power's evident incapacity to do so on its own. The military thus fulfilled its role as protector of the political order⁵, while formally indicating its lack of

4. Frank Tachau and Metin Heper, 'The State, Politics and the Military in Turkey', Comparative Politics, Vol.10, no. 1, October 1983, pp. 17-18

5. Guardian (London), 21 August 1981.



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confidence, and warning that the system was entering a danger zone.⁶ In each case official letters, signed by the Chief of Staff and the other principal commanding officers of the armed forces, were sent to the responsible civilian leaders : the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, party leaders, and so forth.⁷ These leaders, best described as warning notices, called on the political leaders to reestablish civil peace. A few weeks later, the army took over. In a country such as Turkey, whose army is the second largest in NATO after that of the United States, intervention generally takes place in the form of a simple declaration to the mass media, without the need to fire a single shot.

A military intervention in Turkey is thus not only highly predictable, but one can also detect in the military a certain reluctance to intervene. In almost every interview, military leaders insist that they have been

6. Eric A. Nordlinger, "Soldier in Politics : Military Coups and Governments (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1977), pp.21-27; Christopher Clapham and George Philip (ed.), 'The Political Dilemmas of Military Regimes', (London and Sydney, Croom Helm, 1985), pp. 8-10

7. William Hale, 'Turkish Politics and the Military' (Routledge : New York - London, 1994), pp. 19-20

forced in to power against their own wishes. A military intervention in Turkey is perceived by its authors as a serious and dynamic act in a political situation close to total collapse, when the sole alternative seems to be civil war. During the two years which seems to be immediately preceded the most recent intervention, terrorism⁹ had resulted in some five thousand political killings. On some days, the number of death rose to more than a hundred, with a daily average of thirty in the period immediately before the takeover. There was no equivalent degree of violence before the 1960 and 1971 interventions, but no objective observer was in any doubt that the country was sliding towards a division into hostile camps which could unleash a civil war. A military takeover in Turkey is therefore seen by public opinion more as an accomplishment than as an affront to democracy. It helps to overcome a major crisis, and at the moment of takeover, the army thus appears in the public eye in a doubly favourable light : it has fulfilled its historic mission, and at the same time saved the country from a serious threat of which citizens were immediately

8. *ibid.*, p.324

9. Bangladesh Observer (Dacca), 31 October 1986

10
aware.

These preconditions help to explain why some interventions succeed and are welcomed by the public, whereas others fail. The two coup attempts made by Colonel Aydemir in 1962 and 1963 provide an example of failure. None of the necessary structural conditions for a successful intervention were present. The democratic institutions were working normally, the country was in no danger, and political life was calm.¹¹ The leader in power, Inonu, held a deep respect for democratic principles and the rights of the opposition. When Aydemir came out on the streets of Ankara with his cadets and his armoured cars, no one in an army of six hundred thousand men could be found to support him. Knowing that public opinion would be entirely opposed to an intervention, Turkish officers did not follow Aydemir, but on the contrary arrested and sentenced him. The first time, he was pardoned; when he

10. Metin Heper, 'The State, the Military and Democracy in Turkey', Jerusalem Journal of International Relations, vol. 8, (1987), p.57; C.H. Dodd, 'The Crisis of Turkish Democracy', 2nd Edition (Wistow, Eothen Press, 1990), p.28

11. Karakartal Bener, 'Turkey : The Army as Guardian of the Political Order' in Christopher Clapham and George Philip (ed.), 'The Political', pp. 51-52

tried again the following year, he was hanged.

At a structural level, the Turkish case certainly provides one example of the political role of the military. Historically, Turkey has always had a large army, whether justified by the urge for conquest or by the need for self-defense against an external enemy. This army has always been subordinated to the civil power.¹² Changing political ideas have no doubt penetrated the army along with the rest of society, and have left soldiers with very varied individual political opinions : during periods of pluralist democracy, one can see quite a number of officers resigning in order to stand for election on the most diverse political platforms. But the intervention in politics of the army as an institution takes place at a very different level; as a dramatic response to a perceived public need. Were it not for this, military coups would not gain the level of support which they evidently receive. They take place only when this need is felt both by public opinion and by most of

12. See for details Daniel Lerner and Richard R. Robinson, 'Swords and Plough Share : The Turkish Army as a Modernizing Force', World Politics, vol. 13 (1960), pp. 19-21

the officer corps. In summary, the Turkish army acts according to an entrenched set of norms. This army established too constitutional monarchies, fought a war of national independence, created the modern secular Turkish State, presided over the transition to pluralist democracy, and supervised the preparation of the three constitutions of 1924, 1961 and 1982.¹³ It is nonetheless in normal times an apolitical force. Only the post of President of the Republic is traditionally held by soldiers, the sole civilian President, Bayar, having been ousted in the coup of 27 May 1960. Politics in normal times is the domain of civilian politicians.¹⁴ Even though the army is the guardian of the system; it has never sought in any way to influence the results of elections', Military intervention takes place at a different level, as a check on the pluralist system itself. Once the army is in power, it seeks to correct the system and pull out as rapidly as possible. The period of military rule is felt to be exceptional and anomalous.

13. William Hale, 'Turkish Politics', pp.327-29

14. Kemal H. Karpat, 'Military Interventions : Army - Civilian Relations in Turkey Before and After 1980' in M. Heper and A. Evin (ed.), 'The State, Democracy and Military : Turkey in the 1980', (de. Gruyter, 1988), pp.140-42

It would however be a mistake to take this as a starting point for conclusions applicable to all countries or interventions. The Turkish case must be understood and explained in terms of its own specific cultural and historic characteristics.

Variables

Environmental Differences - One of the first factors which contributes to the specific nature of each inter-¹⁵vention is simply its date. Passing time dramatically changes the environment in which intervention takes place.

The interventions of 1960, 1971 and 1980 fell within the pluralist democratic era introduced by the People's Republican Party (PRP) in 1946, but within a political structure marked by an increasing level of differentia-¹⁶tion. Before the first of these interventions, the

15. Christopher Clapham and George Philip, "The Political Dilemmas", pp.5-8; George S. Harris, "The Role of the Military in Turkey in the 1980s: Guardian or Decision Makers", in M.Heper and A.Evin (ed.), 'The State', pp. 115-17.

16. For details see Kemal H. Karpat, "Turkey's Politics : The Transition to a Multi Party System", (Princeton, 1956), p.

political scene was dominated by the two parties : the PRP, the former single party now led by Inonu, and the new Democratic Party (DP) formed by four PRP dissidents and led by the Prime Minister, Menderes. A political upheaval resulted from the Democrats intention to outlaw the Republicans, and the Republicans struggle to overthrow the Democrats. By 1971, the political structure was still more diversified, since the party system was supplemented by a Marxist Party, the Turkish workers Party by two Trade Union Organisations, Turk-Is and DISK, and by hundreds of pressure groups containing some hundreds of thousands of members and militants.¹⁷ The liberal Prime Minister, Demirel, was leader of the Justice Party, which had inherited the mantle of the old Democratic Party dissolved by the previous military regime. He and the JP were assaulted by the political strikes and violent demonstrations organised by the extreme left in conditions of rapidly escalating political terrorism. The period before the 1980 intervention was marked by a process of political polarisation, leading to a multiplication of groups on the left and extreme

17. Andrew Finkel and Nukhed Sirman (ed.), "Turkish State, Turkish Society", (Routledge, London and New York, 1990), pp.57-58.

left, and on the Islamist and Ultra-nationalist right . This led to an escalation of violence resulting in more than five thousand deaths, among politicians (including a former Prime Minister), journalists, academics, leading trade unionists, industrialists and others. The two main parties, the PRP and JP, were caught up in this process, in the course of which each side established its respective zones of occupation in a situation rapidly escalating towards civil war.

In all five cases, the army claimed to have acted in order to 'save', 'protect', 'renew', 'purge' or 'cure' the political system, but in each case within a fundamentally different political context.¹⁹ The level of institutionalisation, the nature of the problems facing the system, and the kind of crisis which prompted intervention varied substantially. These situational variables must thus be related to the permanent political culture of the military.

18. Guardian (London), 21 August 1981.

19. William Hale, 'Turkish Politics', pp.323-24.

Leadership : The temperament, character and behavior of leaders vary from one intervention to another, quite apart from the considerable changes induced by the tenure of power itself. The main problem which they face concerns the length and outcome of the intervention. Should they stay in power or leave it ? If the latter, when and how ? Military rulers are likewise divided by the type and scope of the institutions which they seek to establish, and the thoroughness of the reforms which they try to put into effect. In a sense, they are transformed into 'politicians' whether they like it or not : they need to manage their relations with the press, appear on television, and manipulate essential contacts with interests groups and even with the politicians whom they have²⁰ overthrown. Frequently they look for allies at the opposite end of the political spectrum from that which they have purged, and the political coalitions which they constructs may therefore differ sharply from one

20. Metin Heper, 'The State, the Military and Democracy in Turkey', Jerusalem Journal of International Relations, vol. 8 (1987), pp. 61-62

intervention to another , even if some of the soldiers involved are the same in either case. In 1960, when the Democrats were deprived of power, the military regime sought allies on the left, among the Republicans, the youth associations, and the trade unions. In 1971, when the soldiers struck at the left, they co-operated with liberal politicians. In 1980, they imprisoned extremists of both, left and right, while at the same time purging centrist groups; as a result, they had no natural political allies, and instead built up clientelist networks of a new kind at many levels, including for example both the trade unions and the Universities. Proclaiming a general scepticism towards the entire political class, they sought an institutional and organisational reconstruction and the creation of a new political leadership.

22

The leadership variable thus influence the character of each military regime. In 1960, power was exercised by the thirty-seven officers who formed the committee of

21. George S. Harris, 'The Role of the Military', in M. Heper and A. Evin (ed.), 'The State, Democracy', pp. 179-80

22. Saying and Speeches by General Kenen Evren's (President of the Turkish Republic) between 12 September 1980-12 September 1982 (Ankara, Basbakanlit Basimev, 1982).

national Union. There were two main factions within the committee: the moderates led by General Gursel who wanted to hand over power to the politicians, and the radicals led by Colonel Turkes group who sought to institute a lasting and authoritarian military regime²³. The moderates eventually arrested the fourteen radicals, and expelled the Turkes group from the committee; as a result, power was restored to civilians. In 1971, the army operated virtually in a vacuum; having induced the resignation of the Demirel government, it did not formally assume power, but allowed civilian groups to form administrations, which was on each occasion passed by the National Assembly which had been elected before the takeover. In 1973, two and a half years later, Demirel and Ecevit got together in order to block the election of the army Chief of Staff to the presidency of the Republic, and the army returned to barracks. 1980 was different again : the Demirel government was once more overthrown by a communique issued by the general staff, but this time the intervention threw up an unchallenged leader, General Kenan Evren. It was always he alone, surrounded

23. S. E. Finer, 'The Man on Horse back : The Role of the Military in Politics', 2nd edition, (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1976), p.

by the commanding officer of the three services and the gendarmerie, who spoke in the name of the government, and he was elected President at the same time as the referendum which approved the new constitution in 1982.

Political Participation after the Intervention

No general conclusion can be drawn as to the attitude of military regime towards the level of participation which they wish to promote after their seizure of power.²⁴ Each intervention appears to have its own particular character, derived from a mixture of structural and situational variables. Among the most important of the latter, are the nature and scale of the crisis immediately preceding the intervention, the degree of authoritarianism within the military leadership, the scope and target of any purges the political alliance sought by the regime and the degree of conflict or co-operation among civilian politicians. Turkey provides

24. Dankwart A. Rustow, 'The Military in Middle Eastern Society and Politics', in Sydney Nettleton Fisher (ed.), 'The Military in the Middle East' (Columbus, Ohio State University Press, 1963), p.19

examples drawn from across the entire spectrum.

The three interventions since the transition to pluralism evidence sharp contrasts in the level of direction and the type of participation allowed by the military authorities. After the 1960 intervention, the Democratic Party was dissolved, its members arrested, and its Prime Minister hanged along with his ministers of finance and foreign affairs. The military then sought a coalition with the other end of the political spectrum. Not only the Republicans, but also the youth associations and trade unions were encouraged to participate. The right to strike, previously denied by the civilian government, was thus enshrined in the new constitution drafted by a constituent assembly which had been drawn by the military from the ranks of its allies. The 1971 intervention directed against a set of left wing groups including some former allies, purged all of these and strictly prohibited their participation in politics. The Chiefs of Staff then looked for help to the liberal

25. S.E. Finer, 'Military Disengagement from Politics' in collected Seminar Papers on the Politics of Demilitarization. (University of London, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, April-May 1966), p.6

politicians, in whose hands was left the task of farming governments and enacting restrictive amendments to the 1961 constitution.²⁶ In 1980, the military restricted participation not only from both extremes, but even from the whole political elite which they blamed for the crisis which had led to the intervention. The military rulers then drew up a timetable for a gradual transition back to pluralism, by way of a referendum, new laws on political parties, and the creation of a new political elite.

Demilitarization

The duration of a military intervention likewise depends on a multiplicity of structural and situational variables.²⁷ In the case of a regime which seeks to institutionalize itself, the most important factor is the breakdown of communications with the previous governing elite. This is accompanied by a continual changing of

26. William Hale, 'Turkish Politics and the Military', p.324

27. Alain Rouque, "Demilitarization and the Institutionalization of Military - Dominated Politics in Latin America", in 'Transition from Authoritarian Rule : Comparative Perspectives' (ed.) G.O. Donnell, P. Schmitter and L. Whitehead (Baltimore, Md. John Hopkins University Press, 1986), p.3

goals by the regime. Institutionalisation is a process which takes place over time. In order to maintain the support needed for survival it is necessary to create constantly renewed sources of legitimacy. The 'enemy' in the rulers' meaning changes its identity.²⁸ At the start it is the disorder which led to intervention which justifies the military's presence; later, this may be replaced²⁹ by the need to overcome underdevelopment. It takes different forms at different level.

The regime of 1923 turned itself into a democratic pluralist political system in 1946, after which the opposition party gained power peacefully and legally in the 1950 elections. The 1960 military regime demilitarised at the price of an internal coup in which the moderates eliminated the authoritarian radicals and returned power to the civilian politicians after holding free elections.³⁰ In 1971 the army had to retreat from power

28. S.E. Finer, 'Military Disengagement', in collected Seminar papers, p.6; C.H. Dodd, 'The Turkish Experience' in *ibid.*, p.29

29. *ibid.*, p.8

30. Richard R. Robinson, 'The First Turkish Republic' (Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1965), p. 268

following its failure to get the Chief of staff elected to the Presidency, when the two principal political leaders, Ecevit and Demirel, joined forces to block the election in parliament. The 1980 regime organised its demilitarisation by stages in the manner just described, while leaving its leader behind as the new President.

Politics after Transition:

In a political system such as Turkey's, which vary between elections on one hand and military interventions on the other, professional politicians must manage their tactics in such a way as to take account of these various eventualities. When a military regime seeks to demilitarise, while at the same time laying down the party structure which will succeed it, these tactics may upset the best laid plans, and lead to results quite the opposite of what the military intended.³¹ As a whole, Turkish politicians adopt a stance of total hostility to the army during the period leading to civilian rule; a dialogue with the ruling regime, while leading to a smoother return to democratic pluralism and strengthening the

31. Henri J. Barkey, *Why Military Regimes Fail : The Perils of Transition, Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 16, no. 2, Winter 1990, pp. 180-81

position of moderates over radicals within the armed forces, may well prove costly in electoral terms.

A stance of opposition to the military authorities has conversely been shown to pay off. This certainly does not facilitate as easy transition, but may well lead to eventual electoral victory even though it delays it. Inonu provides an example of the politicians, anxious for the preservation of democracy, who has been prepared to compromise with the military in order to hasten the return to civilian rule; but this cost him victory at the polls in 1961 and the leadership of the PRP in 1971. Ecevit, who went to the opposite extreme, succeeded in gaining the PRP leadership after the 1971 intervention, and established the party at subsequent elections as the dominant national political organisation. The policy of distancing himself from the military regime which Demirel adopted after 1960, likewise enabled him to establish the electoral supremacy of his party in the period after 1961, and to become Prime Minister in 1965.

The return to pluralism following the 1980 interven-

tion is particularly interesting³², since the level of polarisation before the takeover had led the military regime to ban all existing political parties. The framework for the transition was established by the 1982 referendum, in which the new constitution was adopted with 91.5% of the votes; General Evren being in the process elected to a seven year term as President of the Republic.

The military subsequently authorised the formation of new political parties, and after a period of uncertainty during which several prospective parties were banned; five main contestants eventually emerged³³. Two of these were linear descendants of the two dominant parties of the post 1946 era: the Social Democratic Party was led by Erdal Inonu, son of the former President Inonu, the Right Road Party was widely regarded as the successor to the Liberal Party of former Prime Minister Demirel. General

32. Mehmit Ali Birand, 'Emret Komutanim' (At Your Command : Commander), (Istanbul : Milliyet Yayinlari 1984), p. 297 as quoted in Henri J. Barkey, 'Why Military Regimes', Armed Forces and Society, vol. 16, no. 2, Winter 1990, pp. 177-78.

33. See Andrew Mango, 'Turkey : Democracy under Military Tutelage', World Today, vol. 39 (1983), pp. 431-34

Evren's National Security Council allowed these two parties to form, but none the less refused to let them contest the first legislative elections held on 6th November 1983³⁴. The three remaining parties which contested the elections were all new ones: the National Democratic Party (NDP), which presented itself as the party of continuity with the intervention of 12th September 1980; the Populist Party (HP), which took a social democratic stance; and the Motherland Party (AP), which in contrast to the other two presented an ultra-liberal platform opposed to all forms of state intervention in the economy.

Following the pattern of the previous post-military elections, it was the party most clearly disapproved by the regime, Turgut Ozal's Motherland Party won with 211 seats in the new parliament, NDP, the party most favoured by the military, ran a poor last in the three party field. The result may be seen as confirming the long standing separation in Turkish political culture between the military and civilian politics.

34. William Hale, 'Transition to Civilian Government : The Military Perspective' in M. Heper and A. Evin (ed.), 'State, Democracy', p.1117

The most remarkable feature of all three military interventions in Turkey's post-war politics is the fact that, on each occasion, the military returned power to civilians after a fairly short period. To recast this in terms of regime typology, it appears that all three regimes corresponded to the moderator or guardian categories, and that all attempts to establish a ruler regime were defeated. As virtually all writers on the political role of the military have remarked, coup leaders nearly always announced in their broadcasts that they will not hang on to power indefinitely, but seldom live upto their promises.³⁵ On this basis, the Turkish army appears to have a rather atypical record.

Nevertheless, there were some important differences between the guardian regime of 1980-83 and that of 1960-61. In the first place, in 1980 there was apparently no serious challenge from would be rulers, and thus far less conflict within the junta than on the earlier occasion. Secondly, the combination of political power and military

35. Dankwart A. Rustow, "The Military in Middle Eastern Society and Politics" in Sydney N. Fisher (ed.), 'The Military in the', p.13

command in the National Security Council prevented a recurrence of the earlier conflict between the junta and the serving commanders. Thirdly, the regime of 1980-3 was more ambitious than its predecessor in seeking to shape the subsequent political order in its own image.

CHAPTER III
ARMY AND CIVILIAN WORLD

The maintenance of civilian supremacy in Republican Turkey has been a historical fact of the first order.¹ In the Arab lands of the Middle - East, as throughout the underdeveloped world, military takeover has been a regular feature of the post war scene. Turkey's nearest non-Arab neighbours - Greece in the west, Iran in the east - passed through their most severe post-war crisis by means of the military coup d'etat. Only in the Turkish Republic had there been no military coup, nor indeed any effective military challenge to civilian supremacy. The coup of May 1960 was the first significant break with the Ataturk tradition.²

To explain this unique separation of the political

1. Joseph S. Szyliowicz, 'Elites and Modernization in Turkey', in Frank Tauchau (ed.), "Political Elites and Political Development in the Middle East", (Cambridge, Mass : Schenkman, 1975), pp.32-33. For an extensive discussion, see Robert E. Ward and Dankwart A. Rustow (ed.), 'Political Modernization-Japan and Turkey', (Princeton, N.J : Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 352-88.

2. R.D. Robinson, "Upheaval in Turkey", Foreign Policy Bulletin XXXIX, no.20 (July 1, 1960), p.153.

and military requires a comprehensive view of the process which has governed civil-military relations in the Turkish Republic. Civilian supremacy had been maintained in Turkey because the governing code of the Turkish Republic was founded upon the mystique of civilian supremacy (which gained the force of a tradition under to civilian presidents who were also the acknowledged military leaders). That mystique had been tolerably well sustained by its visible results; three generations of Turks had acquired values and institutions that flourished better under civilian than military control. in short, by contrast with many other modernizing societies, the military sector in Turkey had been contained because the civilian sector had been relatively successful and the military had nothing better to offer. Since Ataturk and Inonu were the ranking military figures of their day, military interests were well represented at the highest administrative and political level. At the same time, both men were convinced personally of the necessity of civilian supremacy, and they acted consistently on that conviction.

The May 1960 Coup d'etat

The first military takeover opened a new chapter in the relationship between civilian and military elites. The takeover of 1960, justified as a move necessary for the preservation of democracy, the actions appear to be chiefly designated to answer a threat to the Republicans People's Party (RPP).

Strains within the civilian-military coalition had begun to develop as early as 1946³; with the establishment of the opposition Democrat Party (DP). The DP sought electoral support among the masses by offering economic incentives, such as credit, subsidies, road-building programmes etc. In fact, Menderes attitude toward the military was rather ambiguous. He was aware and appreciative of the military's historical role as the defender of the State; he, nevertheless, also thought that the military had become mainly a guarantor of the highly centralized, statist - elitist system since the founding of the

3. Umit Cizre Sakalliogly, 'The Relations between the Justice Party and the Military : The Anatomy of a Dilemma' (Ankara : Ilitism Yayinlari, 1993).

Republic and that it was unfriendly to landed notables and other groups favouring a degree of administrative decentralization. moreover, he felt that the military was a non-productive group that demanded a larger than legitimate share of the national income.

Despite promises made during his years in opposition, Menderes did not try to amend the constitution of 1924 when the DP came to power in 1950, for he did not really disapprove of its provisions. In fact, he made use of the constitution to concentrate power in his own hands. He did try to down grade the role of the military and the bureaucracy while he worked diligently to increase the power and influence of the nascent entrepreneurial groups, businessmen, and the special class of countryside merchant- land owners⁴.

On the other hand the RPP did not take kindly to being out of power. Until the elections of 1954, the RPP maintained its old posture as the party that "represented the entire nation" and was the guardian of Ataturk's

4. C.H. Dodd, 'Politics and Government in Turkey' (Berkeley, California : University of California Press, 1969), pp. 26-8.

legacy and reforms. Although the RPP continued to hold the same position after 1954, in practice it identified itself increasingly with the new generation of intellectuals and their ideology, which began to acquire social-economic overtones that manifested themselves in a more radical definition of economic statism leading some intellectuals to socialism .⁵

Menderes had expected the RPP to accept the new leadership developing in the ruling coalition in the same way that the entrepreneurs, agrarian groups, conservatives, Muslim fundamentalists, etc. had accepted the leadership of the secularists, Kemalists, statistes, and the military in the past, although they had held own views. To Menderes, this was the meaning of democracy.

However, to the new generation of RPP members, the DP ideology and policies were unacceptable, the RPP challenged the Democrats forcefully with mass demonstrations as well as political speeches. Menderes responded with harsh measures, his fatal mistake was to use the army against some demonstrations (partly just to show the Republicans, and Inonu especially, that the military was

5. *ibid.*, p. 28.

controlled by the government). At this point Inonu decided to issue his famous statement calling vaguely for the intervention of the army to "save democracy" (that is, the RPP) from the wrath of the DP leadership.

However, it did not appear that the DP's relations with the military were so antagonistic as to engender support for a takeover⁶. Further, in view of the army's old tradition of political neutrality, which had been reinforced by Ataturk's firm opposition to military involvement in politics, it seemed unlikely that the army would choose to intervene.

In 1960 accompanied by statist intelligentsia a handful of officers did decide to act, proclaiming that the takeover represented the desire of the entire military establishment and that they were safeguarding democracy and the state, and protecting the legacy of

6. J.C. Hurewitz, 'Middle East Politics : The Military Dimension', (New York : Praeger, 1969), pp. 214-15. For a detailed analysis see George S. Harris, 'The Causes of the 1960 Revolution in Turkey', Middle East Journal, vol. 24, no.4 (Autumn 1970), pp. 438-54.

7
Ataturk .

In fact by the fall of 1960 the government was virtually in the hands of the RPP once more, although there were military personnel in a number of important positions. It should, however, be emphasised that the military rule of 1960, unlike the intervention of 1980, was wide open from the beginning to cooperation and intercourse with civilians, and these civilians belong overwhelmingly to the RPP.

Having precipitated the takeover, the top leadership in the RPP, headed by Inonu and his associates of the time, now tried to defuse the charged atmosphere and to extricate the military from politics altogether. The ousting in the summer of 1960 of the fourteen officers supposedly of radical bent prevented the further radicalisation of the military rule, and eliminated the officers⁸ opposed to RPP . It also had the effect of keeping the ideologically oriented young radicals in the party from gaining direct access to government power.

7. Keesing Contemporary Archives, July 2-9 (1960), pp.17501-504.

8.J.C. Hurewitz, Middle East Politics', pp.219-20.

Unlike the constitution of 1924, which accepted pluralism but failed to provide the mechanism for achieving it, the constitution of 1961 did openly recognise the existence of some social groups, such as labour, and acknowledged workers right to organise themselves politically on the basis of occupations and interests.

The elections of 1961 were held with the expectations that they were to give the RPP a comfortable majority, that is, a form of popular mandate to enforce the new constitution, did not go as planned. The Justice Party (JP) and the New Turkey Party (NTP), both of which were successor to the Democrat Party won a majority in the Assembly. In effect, the voters returned to power the party ousted by the military only the previous year. The internal politics in Turkey, now more than ever, was being decided essentially through the struggle of the same two groups as before: the statist-elitist intelligentsia and bureaucracy, on the one hand, and the entrepreneurial free-economy oriented group, on the other.

One may state rather categorically that the grand ruling coalition which had in one form or another governed Turkey since 1923 had vanished, to a large extent

because it could no longer accommodate all the conflicting new ideologies and the new social groups. What was needed was a coalition put together with some degree of selectivity but broad enough to encompass all the new forces and ideas, and able to bind these together through some sort of supra-parliamentary mechanism. Indeed, the political history of Turkey after 1971 is the history of the final collapse of the old coalition with the military emerging as the supreme arbiter above political parties and social groups.

The military takeover of 1960, however raises certain questions about the fundamental compatibility between a vigorous military institution, on the Turkish model, and the principle of civilian supremacy in government. Why, after such a splendid history of service under civilian authority did the Turkish army takeover power in May 1960? ⁹ Doubts were raised whether it intends to install long term military rule or will it, as it claims cast a new conditions under which a democratic polity and civilian supremacy can function efficiently. In order to understand these questions we have to look into the

9. R.D.Robinson, "Upheaval in Turkey", Foreign Policy Bulletin, XXXIX, no.4, November, 1952, p.451.

historic phase through which Turkish society, and its military institution, have passed.

The Turkish army has been nourished by, and in turn has nourished, that type of modern materialism which places a high value upon personal well being. This "revolution of rising expectations", which has been spreading rapidly around the world, has turned out to be extremely treacherous in many areas. Expectations are raised long before they can be satisfied. The result is quite often a "revolution of rising frustration". In one underdeveloped area after another, the inadequately satisfied aspirations of the new literates have cumulated into a persistent discontent that makes stable parliamentary government under civilian political leadership impossible. This has led , in one country after another, to military takeover and the imposition of stability by force.

Until May 1960, the Turkish case was exceptional. The army, while adding its bit to the rising tide of expectations, had helped provide the perspectives , the skills, and the roles which could satisfy these expectations. In so doing, it had moved farther and faster than

the army (or the civilian sector) had been able to do in many other underdeveloped countries. The evidence seemed clear that the Turks had used the army successfully as a lever for general development while maintaining republican institutions and civilian supremacy.

The Turkish army seemingly had, almost uniquely, abandoned the military prerogative of standing aloof and civilian institutions crumble; and then taking over after civilian elites have been brought to a complete impasse. It had, rather, committed itself to the firm and efficient support of a rapidly modernising and democratising society under the rule of civilian supremacy. This was exemplified by its commitment to recruit, train, assign, promote, and release the four hundred thousand men under its charge on the democratic basis of merit and the efficient bases of ability. Such commitment, in any military coups, acknowledges civilian supremacy in defining the goals and regulating the larger processes of the society as a whole.

INTERVENTION BY ULTIMATUM: March 1971.

The march 1971 intervention drew its impetus from the old tradition of army's association with the statist-elitist and the RPP, although it was a rather premature, only half thought out action. Once more its pretended aim was the preservation of secularism and the legacy of Ataturk, in addition it was supposed to speed up the implementation of the socio-economic reforms decreed by the constitution. Once more the RPP was given preference in the army's arrangement for governing the country as shown by the recent memoirs of General Muhsin Batur, a member of the ruling junta who subsequently joined the RPP .

For the second time a properly elected JP was ousted and its premier, Suleyman Demirel deposed . This time the move was welcome to some people, who were glad to see

10. Anilar Ve Gorusler: Uc Donemin Perde Arkasi (Istanbul, Milliyet Yayinlari, 1985), as quoted in M. Heper and A. Evin, "State, Democracy and the Military" (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988), p.175.

11. Keessing Contemporary Archives, June 24-July 1, 1971-72, pp. 25329.

the military come to grips with the spreading violence¹² and anarchy . Inonu reluctantly gave his public endorsement to the intervention, while Bulent Ecevit denounced it as a blow to the RPP effort to transform itself into a mass social - democratic party.

After the natural death of Inonu in 1973, the RPP gradually discarded Kemalism as an ideology and took a position opposed totally to the basic tenets of the republican regime. It sought for a solid social foundation on the basis of which it could call itself a true socialist mass party. It is clear thus , the deviation of the RPP to the left, its rejection of the Kemalist principles, and its support to "oppressed" minority and potentially explosive causes (for eg. Kurdish nationalists found favour with the party) alienated the military from the RPP in general and from Ecevit in particular.

FINAL TAKE OVER: Characteristics

The first outstanding feature of the intervention of 1980 that sets it decisively apart from the 1960 action

12. A. Haluk Ulman and R.H. Dekmejian, 'Changing Patterns in Turkish Foreign Policy, 1959-1967', Orbis, vol.11 (Fall 1967), pp. 780-1

was that it had been planned well ahead of time by the General Staff in consultation with the field commanders. As has been pointed out by Mehmet Ali Birand, that there had actually been a sort of planning staff that not only worked towards achieving the consent and cooperation of all the leading military field commanders but also designated individual officers to perform specific tasks during the takeover and after¹³. Also quite unlike its predecessors, the military seemed to have determined in detail the basic constitutional principles that would be established, the division of labour between the "state" and the government, and the sort of mechanism that would be needed to ensure smooth functioning after the return to civilian rule¹⁴. General Kenen Everen declared that the takeover had been carried out in accordance with article 34 of the military by-law, which charged the military with the defence of the Turkish Republic and that it was an act taken on behalf of the entire nation.

On analysis it appears that 12th September takeover

13. Mehmet Ali Birand, The General's Coup in Turkey: An Inside Story of 12 September (Brassey's Defence Publishers: London, 1987), p.71.

14. *ibid.*, p.72.

was not foreseen as a permanent military regime but aimed towards the eventual reestablishment of civilian parliamentary rule once the army had put the government house in order¹⁵. Demirel and other politicians claimed, however, that had the military adequately used its martial law authority to put down the anarchy prior to 1980, the government could have managed to put its own house in order. Demirel's view is that the military deliberately created a situation of instability, just in order to discredit the civilian government, so that intervention would be received well and their orders followed with no opposition. The charges leveled are true to some extent, the military has great discretionary authority to quell disturbances under martial law but one should not forget that at the same time that, the full cooperation and participation of police and other civilian bodies would have been necessary which was not coming forth.

It is most important to remember that the military's plan for the takeover, and for the civilian regime that would replace it afterwards, did take into consideration public opinion. Unlike the military chiefs of 1960 and

15. Times of India, (New Delhi), 14 September 1980.

1971, the leaders of 1980, showed their concern for the public. Evren succeeded in becoming very influential, not only because of his rather effective speaking ability but also because he conformed to the average Turk's image of a leader, seeming to combine both traditional and modern characteristics¹⁶. He attempted to speak on behalf of the nation as a whole, without attacking by name the old leaders or the political parties but merely condemning the 'politicians' in aptitude and their disregard for the national interests. He was also able to convey to the public his feelings of trust, respect, and consideration for them by keeping them informed about the important developments concerning the nation as a whole.

The trust which people have bestowed on the military was particularly necessary in 1980 because, unlike the 1960 and 1971 intervention, this one did not have the organised support of a political party or a social group¹⁷. The most significant aspect of the takeover was the lack of identification with any specific civilian or bureaucratic group. Under the military's plan for govern-

16. Bangladesh Observer (Dacca), 31 October 1986.

17. William Hale, 'Turkish Politics and the Military' (Routledge : New York - London, 1994).

ing the country, basic decisions were made by the National Security Council (NSC).

As compared to the previous coup of 1960 and 1971, in 1980 the military establishment had a very limited participation in the government¹⁸. The ideas put forward by the commanders were passed on directly to the council without being reviewed by any intermediaries. There were, ofcourse, few instances when the officers expressed dissatisfaction with the attitude of NSC. Recommendations from the Army were normally passed up through hierarchical channels, leaving the ultimate decision to the discretion of the top leaders. This procedure seemed to have been planned well in advance in order to prevent the rank- and -file from becoming directly involved in politics. Its ultimate purpose was to prepare ground for the permanent extrication of the military from the political arena, which was time and again emphasised by the leaders themselves.

The NSC in the beginning did not abolish the two major political parties (RPP and JP) or arrest deputies,

18. Times (London), 22 September 1980.

although a few party leaders were detained temporarily and some deputies associated with radical groups and Kurdish separatists were taken into custody. The initial plan was to have cabinet composed entirely of civilians. However, Turhan Feyzioglu, the leader of the Reliance Party, was replaced at the very last minute, as prime minister designate by retired admiral Bulent Ulusu, ambassador to Rome, because some officers objected to giving the Premiership to another politician. The NSC did its best to insulate itself from direct civilian influence and from personal prejudice within the army. Oddly, the isolation from outside influence seems to have increased the popular respect for the military. One can assume that the few Army commanders in whose hands the power was concentrated with no intermediaries between them and the general public, was seen as incorruptible and dedicated to the national interests.

The military's view of the civilian sector as an undifferentiated nation-mass and the categorical segregation of the ruler from the ruled, at least in the initial phase of the takeover, determined its actions with regard to the political parties. A substantial number of the army officers as well as the extreme rightists and

leftists, viewed the political parties as either hotbeds of strife and distention or simply as convenient means of achieving power. In 1980 the prestige of the parties was at an all time low due to their pitiful performance in the years from 1960 to 1980. In general, the military considered that political parties should be instruments of national unit, order, and stability rather than vehicles for the expression of special interests of socio-economic groups or particular regions of the country. Yet, the military did not immediately abolish the middle-of-the-road parties. However, when Suleyman Demirel and Bulent Ecevit, despite restrictions imposed on political activities, appeared determined to hold on to the leadership of their parties and perhaps use them to carve roles for themselves in the new government, both the JP and RPP were summarily abolished.

Meanwhile, as tranquility and public order were restored and the economy began to revive, the military's popularity reached a new peak¹⁹. In 1981 a time table for the return to civilian was announced. The decision at this point to settle upon a time table was no doubt

19. International Herald Tribune (Paris), 3 December 1981.

hastened by the relentless pressure from Turkey's western allies. In the same year, a Consultative Assembly was convened, charged with drafting a new constitution. The constitution turned out to be fully satisfactory to the average voter in Turkey, as demonstrated by the overwhelming acceptance of it in the popular referendum held on November 6, 1982, and by the endorsement of Kenan Evren as President for a seven year term²⁰.

It appears that the overwhelming approval of the constitution and the endorsement of Kenan Evren as President led him to assume that he enjoyed unqualified popular support even in political matters per se. What Evren failed to realise that the citizens were predisposed to support a constitution which endowed the State with strong authority for looking after the "high interests of the nation "but not an authoritarian regime which would dictate the day to day activities of the citizens. The NSC, which ruled the country until a duly elected government took power, used a variety of measures to prevent the establishment of political parties or the election to the Assembly of individuals who were unwilling to agree

20. International Herald Tribune (Paris) 7 November 1982.

with the military and carry out its mandate. President Evren made every effort to help Sunalp and his Nationalist Democracy Party (NDP) to win the elections by launching a personal attack on Ozal. Yet, all this interference did not prevent Ozal from securing a solid victory in the elections of October 1983²¹. Thus the elections were a turning point in civilian-military relations, creating a new and unanticipated situation that necessitated the establishment of a new type of dialogue between the State and the government. President Evren accepted the popular verdict and, perhaps unwillingly entrusted the leadership of the almost completely new ruling coalition to the popularly chosen Motherland Party and its Premier Turgut Ozal.

21. Keesing Contemporary Archives, vol.xxiv, December 1983, p. 32287

CHAPTER IV

RETREAT TO BARRACKS

Military intervention in civilian regimes have become a constant phenomenon in the twentieth century, in third world countries. The conditions that brought about the Turkish military regime in 1980 were strikingly similar to those experienced by Brazil in 1964, by Chile and Uruguay in 1973, and by Argentina in 1976. As in other countries, the military in Turkey had a long-standing tradition of political involvement. This was not Turkey's first intervention; twice before, in 1960 and 1971, the military had overthrown civilian regime's.¹

The first part of this chapter aims to take this enquiry further by discussing the modern historical legacies which appear to have wielded a fundamental influence over the Turkish army's political role. The

second part examines the gradual disengagement of army from active politics after 1980-83.

1. Mehmet Ali Birand, 'Emret Komutanum' (At Your Command : Commander), (Istanbul, Milliyet Yayinlari, 1984), p. 297 as quoted in Henri J. Barkey, 'Why Military Regimes Fail : The Perils of Transition', Armed Forces and Society, Vol. 16, no.2, Winter 1990, pp. 169-92

Legacies

The Turkish army's view of its political task in 1980 seems to have been conditioned by three main factors : firstly, its political inheritance from the Ataturk and earlier periods; secondly, Turkey's international situation; and thirdly, its own experience during and after the two previous intervention of 1960 and 1971. Most discussion of the army's modern historical legacy start from the claim that Ataturk established the "firm principle that the army must take no part in politics" and that "the coup of May 1960 was the first significant break with the Ataturk tradition"². This raises the question of what the Ataturk tradition actually was.

Legally, the answer seems straightforward. Article 40 of the 1924 constitution vested Supreme Command of the Armed Forces in the Grand National Assembly, "Represented by the President of the Republic". Article 23 stipulated that "no person may be a deputy and hold office under the

2. Geoffery Lewis, "Turkey, The End of the First Republic", World Today, Vol. 16 (1960), p. 377; Daniel Lerner and Richard D. Robinson, "Swords and Ploughshare : The Turkish Army as a Modernizing Force", World Politics, vol. 13, (1960), p. 21

government at the same time"; this, presumably, included the tenure of a military commission.³ More specifically, a law passed by the Assembly on 19 December 1923 required all army officers to resign from active duty before running for Parliament. This left those who were sitting in the Legislature entitled to retain their commands, but in October, 1934 Ataturk required them to apply the same rule.⁴ This order was not based purely on considerations of general principles, since Ataturk was apparently suspicious at this time of an incipient "Pasha's Plot" against him,⁵ but it was rigorously applied. While a clear ruling could thus be found in the Ataturkist cannon to the effect that membership of the legislature and the armed forces are incompatible, it can hardly be claimed that it rigidly or totally excludes the army from politics.

3. For an English text of the 1924 Constitution, See G.L. Lewis, "Turkey" (London, Benn, 1955), pp. 197-208

4. Lerner and Robinson, "Swords and Ploughshare", P. 20

5. George S. Harris, "The Role of the Military in Turkish Politics", Middle East Journal, Vol. 19, (1965), Part-I, pp.56-59; Dankwart A. Rustow, "The Army and the Founding of the Turkish Republic", World Politics, Vol. 11 (1959), pp.513-552; Kemal H. Karpat, "The Military and Politics in Turkey, 1960-64", American Historical Review, Vol. 75 (1970), p.1659

A second, and possible crucial factor in determining the Turkish army's political attitude may be the fact that, among the Near Eastern countries, only Turkey is a member of NATO and the Council of Europe, besides having an Association Agreement with the European Community which is supposed to lead eventually to full membership of the community. This involves it in formal obligations to respect democratic principles which do not affect the leadership of most developing countries. Although it is very hard to substantiate this point clearly, it seems extremely likely that the army has on several occasions, been aware of the serious external problems which would be created if it were. Unable to convince the outside world that its intervention would be succeeded fairly quickly by the reinstatement of the democratically elected government.

In the case of the crisis which led to the intervention of 12 March, 1971, we know that such considerations were important to the high command. As General Muhsin Batur tells us, a group of officers had earlier approached him with a plan for the imposition of an outright military regime, which they wished him to lead. General Batur turned the idea down : .ls1

The Western world cannot accept this sort of system and procedure. Its just not good enough to say 'If they do not accept it'. If we give way (i.e., adopt the proposed plan) we will get support from the Eastern Block and Red China, but that would be
6
a disaster for Turkey.

It is hard to prove the importance of this factor in the General's decision before and after 12 September 1980, but its also impossible to dismiss it entirely. Quite naturally, they were unwilling to admit that they bowed to pressure from abroad, since the very idea would have been unacceptable to most Turks. On the other hand, it was important to them to keep their relations with the Western allies as even as possible. A crucial aspect of this was Turkey's relation with the Council of Europe, in which Turkey was suspended from membership of the Parliamentary Assembly after the 12 September coup. In his speech in the closing session of the consultative assembly in October 1983, the retiring Prime Minister Bulend Ulusu maintained that "the Turkish nation has adopted Parliamentary Democracy as her political system without

6. Muhsin Batur, 'Memoirs and Perspective' (Istanbul Milliyet, Yayinlari, 1985), p.71

any external influence".⁷ Certainly, it would be a mistake to suggest that the government was entirely subservient to the western allies. Nevertheless, the importance which the government attached to Turkey's readmission to Parliamentary Assembly (which was achieved early in 1984) and the efforts they put in trying to convince the outside world that the regime established in 1983 met the democratic norms indicated that they were not entirely deaf to foreign opinion.

The third and undoubtedly important influence on the army's political approaches has been the anxiety of the high command to prevent divisions within the army or any disturbance of the military hierarchy. In 1980, the Generals were also anxious to avoid having to intervene again after a few years. This danger had been bluntly referred to by Ismet Inonu, in a reported conversation

7. Quoted, Newspot (Ankara, Directorate of Press and Information) 21 October 1983, pp.31-32

with Bulent Ecevit in 1971 :

"From time to time Turkey enters the period of overhaul. Every time she enters such a period, the army intervenes; it stays (in power) for a time, and then withdraws. Time goes by and we politicians make a mess of things, so the army intervenes again. It will go on like this, and these periods of overhaul will gradually become more and more

9

frequent."

It was precisely because they wished to break the cycle of constant intervention that the military rulers of 1980-83 tried to provide laws and constitutional machinery which, they believed, would prevent an eventual return to anarchy. The complaint against them is that, in doing so, they broke the democratic rules to which they claimed to be committed. The need to preserve unity and the command hierarchy within the army was a connected priority. Eighteen days after the coup of 12 September, General Evren delivered these words to the cadets at the

8. It will be remembered that at that time Inonu had supported the "12 March Memorandum" of 1971, whereas Ecevit did not.

9. Quoted Mehmet Ali Birand, "The General's Coup in Turkey : An Inside Story of 12 September" (Brassey's Defence Publisher: London, 1987), p. 234

War Academy :

Whenever the army entered into politics it began to lose its discipline and, gradually, it was led into corruption. We can observe its most basic example in our recent history during the Balkan War. Therefore, I demand from you once again not to take our present operation as an example to yourselves and never to get involved in politics. We had to implement this operation within a chain of commands and orders to save the army from politics and to cleanse it from

10

political dirt.

Evren's remarks were probably inspired by the army's relatively recent political experiences, as well as those of the Young Turk period, to which he referred. Immediately after the coup of 27th May 1960, Cemal Gursel had apparently expected that the relatively junior officers who had, of necessity, been recruited to the revolution-¹¹ary team would quietly returned to their barracks. But it was not to be. The National Unity Committee, which assumed power in Turkey after 27th May, was a large and unwieldy body which originally had thirty eight members, down to the rank of Captain. It faced a major internal

10. *ibid.*, pp.301-302

11. Feroz Ahmad, "The Turkish Experiment in Democracy, 1950-1975" (London, Hurst, for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1977), p. 162

split in November 1960 when 14 radicals, led by the then Colonel Alparslan Turkes, were expelled from its ranks. Frustrated by their exclusion from power in 1960-61, a small number of officers supported Colonel Talat Aydemir in his two attempted coups of February 1962 and May 1963.¹² One of the senior General's main motives in issuing the proclamation of 12 March 1971 was to head off a prospective attempted coup by their more radical juniors.¹³

In the case of the 1980 intervention the Generals appear to have been extremely careful to avoid such complications. Unlike that of 1960, the 12 September coup involved no alteration of the command structure within the army. The National Security Council, a body established by the 1961 constitution, simply took over as the ruling junta, having been purged of its civilian

12. *ibid.*, pp. 165-172, 177-185; also Walter F. Weiker, 'The Turkish Revolution, 1960-1961' (Washington, The Brookings Institute, 1963), pp.131-138, and C.H. Dodd, 'Politics and Government in Turkey' (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1969), pp.60-61

13. Feroz Ahmad, 'The Turkish Experiment in Democracy', p.292

members. General Evren, as Chief of the General Staff, became head of the state. He agreed with his four force commanders that they would not make separate statements on political matters and that he would speak for all of them; a sharp contrast with the experiences of 1960-61 when junior members of the National Unity Committee had regularly aired their separate views.

Apart from this, the concentration of power at the top probably strengthened the decision not to continue the military regime indefinitely. The longer the army stayed in power, the greater was the risk of ideological or other divisions within the forces coming out into open, and of a "coup within a coup" occurring. This combined with the factors mentioned earlier, deriving from Turkey's international position and the Ataturkist legacy, to ensure that there would eventually be a return to civilian government.

From the beginning, General Kenen Evren, the Chief of Staff and the leader 1980 coup, clearly stated that the intervention was to be of a limited duration. In his speech to the nation on the day following the takeover he said that after rapidly transferring the day to day

running of the country to a cabinet, the military's aim would be to devise a new constitution and laws concerning elections and political parties.¹⁴

In the first day following the 1980 coup, while suspected terrorists and other opponents were sought and jailed, various public and quasi-public offices and institutions were taken over by officers.¹⁵ In addition, political parties and Parliament were suspended, martial law declared every where, and Unions together with the whole slew of associations were closed. A new government, composed of retired military officers and technocrats under the leadership of an ex-admiral, was quickly put into place. While the cabinet was left in charge of running the day-to-day affairs of the country, overall control was maintained by the National Security Council (NSC)-an exclusive military body.

14. Mehmit Ali Birand, 'Emret Komutanum (At Your Command : Commander), (Istanbul, Milliyet Yayinlari, 1984), p.297. As quoted in Henri J. Barkey, 'Why Military Regimes Fail : The Perils of Transition', Armed Forces and Society, Vol. 16, no.2, Winter 1990, pp. 169-192

15. In the first year alone, more than 43,000 persons were rounded up, and justice was quickly dispensed in military tribunals. See Lucille W. Persner, 'Turkey's Political Crisis, (New York: Praeger, 1984), p.88.

In addition to combating terrorism, the new regime set out to continue the January, 1980 economic liberalization programme of the last Civilian Government of Suleyman Demirel. These were radical and far reaching measures designed to deal with the desperate conditions. The army leadership gave the economic programme an added boost by promoting its architect, Turgut Ozal, to the cabinet. He was the only member of the overthrown government to be retained.¹⁶ By 1983, terrorism had been eliminated. The economy benefited from the new political stability, the continuation of the liberalization policies, and the "fortunate" start of the Iran-Iraq war¹⁷ soon after the coup.

16. The liberalization measures, which included a significant devaluation, a slashing of public expenditures, and liberalization of foreign trade and of the banking system, were very successful in boosting exports and redressing the balance-of-payments crisis facing Turkey at the time. The military, by keeping Ozal and increasing his responsibilities, signalled Western countries of their commitment to the programme and thus avoided any disruption in the flow of necessary external financing.

17. The two warring nations became Turkey's most important customers for its exports. This was in addition to the re-routing of their foreign trade through Turkey. Henri J. Barkey, "The Silent Victor : Turkey's Role in the Iran-Iraq War", in 'The Iran-Iraq War : Impact and Implications, ed. Efraim Karsh, (London: Macmillan, 1989).

Almost immediately after establishing political stability, the NSC went to work on its transition plan. The next step on its agenda was to replace the liberal 1961 constitution, which in its view had been the cause of the political destabilisation. The public debate, however, on the new constitution was very restricted. Through a plebiscite, in which participation was compulsory, the NSC obtained the desired result; the public approved the new Constitution by an overwhelming 91 percent majority. By voting in favour of the referendum, the electorate also enabled General Evren to assume the
18
Presidency of the republic.

The 1982 constitution represented part of the new set of military drafted rules to be adhered to by the incoming civilian leaders. It elevated the presidency from its former largely ceremonial role to an important source of power. An unicameral legislature replaced the bica-

18. While General Evren, riding on a genuine wave of public support, could have easily won a separate vote on whether he should assume the presidency, the NSC chose to have a unified vote on both questions. The Council may have wanted to avoid embarrassment caused by potentially differing levels of support for Evren's candidacy and the Constitution. In September 1980, Chileans were offered a similar choice; in voting for a new Constitution they also voted a nine-year term for Pinochet as President.

meral one, thus, in the military's view, eliminating one more arena of political contestation. In addition, the new constitution contained a great number of exclusionary articles designed to minimize the politicisation of the 1970s. Unions were not allowed to associate or have links with political parties¹⁹, the right to strike was curtailed, corporatist controls were extended to all types of associations, and state appointed local officials were given considerable power over groups within their jurisdiction.

The second set of rules regarding the new political order were encapsulated in the laws governing the establishment of political parties and the rules of contestation. The military had a very specific vision of the post disengagement period. Convinced that the late - 1970 political stalemate was, in part, the result of the proliferation of small parties that tended to pull the mainstream parties towards their extremes, the officers decided to set up a two party system. The new electoral

19. The Argentine military invoked similar rules regarding party union connections as that country prepared to go to the polls on 30th October 1983, marking the end of another military regime.

system, to the benefit of larger parties, required a party to obtain a minimum of 10 percent of the national vote in order to get even one representative elected to the Parliament.²⁰ In addition, the new constitution had been invested with "temporary" provisions that, for periods varying from five to ten years, ban from participation all those politicians who in 1980 were either member of Parliament or party leaders. Finally, the officers also manipulated the rules to ensure the selection of politicians and parties acceptable to them. In a message to his predecessor, Prime Minister Bulend Ulusu stated what kind of two-party system was envisaged : "one of the parties would resemble Demirel's Justice Party. The other one would emulate the British Labour Party and its philosophy".²¹

20. Because of such rules, in the latest national elections of November 1987, the Motherland party, with 36 percent of the vote, managed to capture more than 60 percent of parliamentary seats.

21. Yavuz Donat, 'Buyruklu Demokrasi: 1980-83 (Istanbul: Bilgi Yayinevi, 1987), p. 328. Despite this, Demirel, of course would have no part of the government's plans regarding these new parties. Also, the military had a curious interpretation of British Labour party politics and orientation.

Challenges to the Military

As the threat of terrorism receded and improvements in the country's balance of payments and inflation position were achieved, the military gradually opened up the political arena, and in spring 1983, new parties emerged in abundance. Despite the restrictions on the political activities of organized groups such as unions and students associations, challenges to the officers' conception of the future polity came from different quarters.²² It also became apparent that the ban on politicians and pre-1980 party leaders was not going to be enough of a deterrent to their resurrection. In response to the perceived challenge to its two-party system, the NSC simply proceeded to veto the participation of unwanted persons. Among the victims of this strategy were the Social Demo-

22. In fact, so many new political parties demanded from the state authorities the right to organize and contest the elections that Evren, in a series of hard-hitting speeches, criticized the mushrooming of new parties and politicians and warned that, unless they banded together to fashion organizations in accordance with the objectives of the new constitution, he would have the martial law authorities "deal" with them. Hulusi Turgut, '12 Eylül Partileri' (Istanbul : ABC Yayinlari, 1986), pp.49-54

crats whose leader, Erdal Inonu, was the son of the republic's second president and long time Republican People's Party leaders. Another victim, the Great Turkey Party, which had claimed to Demirel's constituency with his connivance "represented an open challenge to the military's determination that the old parties should be considered dead and buried. On somewhat dubious legal groundsthe Great Turkey Party was closed down by the NSC.... (and) Demirel was placed under detention at a military base"²³. Even if the officers were successful in temporarily eliminating most of the new comers from contention, they were unable to block the emergence of Turgut Ozal and his Motherland Party.

The regime passed through another test in the autumn of 1989 as Kenen Evren's term as president was due to expire on 9th October. Since 1961, all the occupants of the presidency had been retired Senior Commanders and the tradition had grown up that the president should be a

23. William Hale, "Transition to Civilian Governments in Turkey : The Military Perspective", in State, Democracy and the Military : Turkey in the 1980s, (ed.) M. Heper and A. Evin (de Gruyter : Berlin, 1988), p.171. The irony was that the Great Turkey Party suffered the harshest ban despite the fact that, in the absence of Demirel and his lieutenants, it was led by a retired army general.

neutral, non-partisan figure. In February 1988, Evren announced that he would definitely not be seeking a second term. Constitutionally, the Assembly was entitled to elect whomsoever it liked provided he or she possess certain minimum qualifications.²⁴ This left it open to parliament (in effect, to Ozal and his party) to decide whether to allow tradition to die a quiet death.

A few months after he returned to office in 1991, Suleyman Demirel was asked by the financial magazine Euromoney whether there was any risk of another coup in Turkey. He replied confidently :

" For the time being, neither the atmosphere of Turkey nor the atmosphere of the world is suitable for a coup d'etat. Whatever trouble we are having today is the accumulation of our successive (military) interventions did not settle any thing in this country. People in the military know the coups have harmed Turkey. They did not settle terrorism, they did not settle inflation. This²⁵ time we will try democracy".

To some, Demirel's reply was very much expected, keeping in view his past career and attitudes. On close

24. Voting figures from, 'Turkish Daily', 17 June 1991.

25. Interview with Garry Evans : Euromoney, May 1992, p.106

analysis, however, it was not without foundation; Since it seems fair to say that although Turkey had certainly suffered from some serious political problems after 1983, these did not include any risk of an overt military intervention. In fact, the army's withdrawal from the political scene turned out to be far more smooth and complete than most observers had probably expected. This process of disengagement had two aspects. In the first place, the army gradually backed away from trying to control the political system and withdrew from involvement in the day to day administration of the country. In the second place, by the beginning of the 1990s it was apparent that the armed forces Chiefs were beginning to abandon their traditional position of Semi-autonomy within the state structure in which defense policy was regarded as their private preserve, outside the control of the elected politicians. The last development was a particularly striking one since the tradition of autonomy of the military within its professional sphere had survived almost untouched since the beginning of multi-party era in 1946.

In the process of retreat, the mechanism applied by the military regime of 1980-83 (which had planned to

impose its own pattern on later civilian politics) had faded away by the end of the decade. The Nationalist Democracy Party of Sunalp, which the military regime had originally cast in the role of the ruling party, rapidly collapsed since it had next to no popular appeal. The pre-1980 political leaders refused to get off the political stage, as the generals had planned. Without raising the spectre of counter-revolution, they were able to induce the government, as well as the voters, to accept the withdrawal of Provisional Article 4, one of the main features of the military regime's blue print for post-1983 politics. Two years later, the presidential election of 1989 resulted in the appointment of the first civilian president since Celal Beyar had been deposed in 1960. Ozal's election to the presidency provoked a good deal of controversy, but the idea that he should be considered as disqualified simply because he was a civilian politician, was rarely opposed. Finally in 1991, Demirel and Inonu - two politicians whom the generals had tried to exclude from politics in 1983 - stepped back into power, with no overt sound of military dissent. So far as anyone could tell, the Turkish army's political role is now weaker than at any time since the 1950s. The sole exception to the general pattern of civilian control

was in the south-eastern provinces, where the continuation of the Kurdish People Party (PKK) campaign meant that the army had wider responsibilities, and more autonomy, than the democratic system assumes.

The commanders' acceptance of the Post-1983 governments was enhanced by the fact that, since the fall of the first Erim administration in 1971, the military had progressively abandoned its previous commitment to Socialist economic policies. By the 1980s, Ozal's programme of structural readjustment and the ending of interventionist and autarchic development strategies was generally accepted by the military as the only practical option. In a way, economic policy was effectively lifted out of the potential zone of conflict between the military and the government.

In parallel with these changes, the years after 1983 also saw the gradual relaxation of other political restrictions. After appeals, most of the leaders of the Turkish Peace Association and of DISK, the radical left wing labour confederations were released since they had already served many years in prison while their cases

26

were being heard. Meanwhile, the middle of the road Turk-Is, Turkey's biggest trade union confederation, gradually began to nibble away at the restrictions imposed by the 1983 labour legislations - for instance, by publicly expressing views on political matters - although its power was somewhat reduced by ideological divisions among the unions affiliated to it.²⁷ In April 1987, Turkey had officially applied to the European Community for admission as a full member. Eventually in December 1989 the EC Commission issued an official opinion in which it turned down the idea of any negotiations leading to accession before 1993. This opinion was later adopted by the EC Council of Ministers. Besides the predictable economic problems, the fact that 'the human rights situation and the respect for the identity of minorities have not yet reached the level required in a democracy' was

26. William Hale, 'Transition to Civilian', in M. Heper and A. Evin (ed.), 'State, Democracy and the Military', p.253.

27. Ilkay Sunar, 'Redemocratization and Organized Interests in Turkey', paper presented to the BRISMES Annual Conference, Exete England, 12-15 July 1987, pp. 51-2

cited as a reason for this decision. Since the government seemed likely to press ahead with its application to the community if it could, it had to take this criticism seriously.

These external pressures, as well as the desire to prevent the Social Democrat Populist Party (SDPP) from stealing the limelight as the main advocate of further political liberalisation, propelled the government into a critical change of course in April 1991 when a 'law for the Suppression of Terrorism' was enacted by parliament.²⁹ This finally withdrew sections 141, 142 and 163 from the Penal code, so that it no longer became an offense to set up a society supporting Marxist principles, or to argue that the political system should be based on religious tenets. The law also withdrew the earlier law, passed by the former military regime in

28. Commission opinion on Turkey's request for accession to the community (Brussels, Commission of the European Communities, SEC [8] 2290, 18 December 1989), p. 7. For a recent review of Turkey - EC relations, see Michael Cendrowicz, 'The European Community and Turkey : Looking Backwards, Looking Forwards', in C.H. Dodd, (ed.), Turkish Foreign Policy : New Prospects (Wistow, Eothen Press, for Modern Turkish Studies Programme, SOAS, 1992).

29. Text in the Official Gazette (Resmi Gazete), no.20843, 12 April 1991.

1983, which banned the use, either in speech or in writing, of any language not recognised as the official language of another country.³⁰ The effect of the withdrawal of sections 141, 142 and 163 was limited by the fact that restrictive provisions contained in the laws governing political parties and the press were left intact. The new law also specified heavier punishment for those convicted of acts of terrorism. What was significant, however, was that this liberalisation was enacted without any overt protest from the military. In the past, any open expression of views which could have been interpreted as support for communism or Kurdish nationalism would have annoyed the generals. By 1991 they were apparently prepared to accept the change as an inevitable indicator of Turkey's closer integration into the western political community.

This slow political liberalisation was accompanied by the progressive disengagement of the military from the government. In this way, Turkey moved away not only from the possibility of an outright military takeover of the

30. William Hale, 'Turkish Politics and the Military', (Routledge : New York-London, 1994), p.259.

state but also from the involvement of the army in the day-to-day running of the country within a formally civilian regime. There was a gradual shift towards a new balance, in which the generals would become the servants of an elected government, as in the western democracies.

In the 1982 constitution, the former military regime had sought to reinforce its role in the successor civilian government by setting up a Presidential Council composed of the five members of the ruling National Security Council at the time of the transfer of power³¹ (excluding General Evren). Officially the Presidential Council was given wide powers to examine laws passed by the parliament and to advise the President accordingly. This gave rise to some doubt that the junta might be trying to hang on to power by establishing itself as a

31. 1982 Constitution, Article 118. See William Hale, 'Turkish Politics and the Military', p.258. It will be recalled that under the 1982 Constitution, the government had been required 'to give priority consideration' to the decisions of the NSC in matter which it 'deems necessary for the preservation of the existence and independence of the state'. This enhanced its power under the previous constitution, under which the NSC was to 'recommend' to the government 'the necessary basic views for decisions to be taken in connection with national security and co-ordination'.

sort of power behind the government. In the event these fears proved unjustified, since there is no clear evidence that it played any crucial role in government after 1983. The Council was in any case wound up in November 1989, according to the timetable laid down in the constitution. Its demise attracted little attention in the press, and its main function seems to have been to serve as a graceful form of retirement for the members of the former junta.

A more important focus of concern was the political role of the reconstituted National Security Council (NSC) within the formally civilian political system. Liberal critics of the regime were concerned that the presence of the top commanders in the NSC (in which they now constituted as potential majority) would give them a continuing role in the political system, which they would use to dictate policy over a wide range of issues, not directly connected with their professional military functions. In effect, the fear was that the post-1983 regime would be civilian only in name. In practice, the NSC did not always confine itself to the military sphere. Predictably, its main ideological concern was the protection of secularism in the face of the government - sponsored

revival of Islam. In July 1986, for instance, it complained about the allegedly anti-secular beliefs propounded by religious programmes on state radio and television. It issued another warning to the government of the dangers of the religions revival in January 1987³². As time went on, however, the signs were that it was gradually restricting itself to advising the government on matters of defense - a role compatible with that of similar bodies in the western democracies.

32. C.H. Dodd, 'The Crisis of Turkish Democracy', 2nd edition (Wistow, Eothen Press, 1990), pp. 107-8

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The dissertation has attempted to highlight the changes in the role of the Turkish armed forces over the years. Nothing on the Turkish political scene can rival the potential importance of the military establishment. A future without the army acting as an occasional moderator to set society and constitution back on course, appears to many Turks to be unthinkable.

Since the Second World War, the Turkish army has intervened three times in national politics - in 1960, 1971 and in September 1980. On each occasion however it has defined its task in narrow terms - to rescue the country from a political impasse, and to set it back on what it was hoped would be a democratic course.

One of the most striking features of the Ottoman Empire was the virtual identity of state authority and military power. There was little distinction between the military and civilian arms of the state; for instance, the same man could on occasion serve as a military ^{commander} then a provincial governor, and finally resume an army command. For long periods the army - and most notably the

Jenissaries - virtually took over the state, so that the Sultans became no more than puppets in their hands.

This Union of authority was virtually affected by the Ottoman reform movement of the nineteenth century. Reform in education, in particular, started in the army and meant that the military accounted for a substantial proportion of such Muslim Turks as there were, who were trained in modern techniques. Faced by the reaction to change by conservatives in the army itself, as well as outside, the products of these new military school began to see themselves as the vanguard of enlightenment, committed to political reforms as well as technical innovation. These currents came to the surface in 1876 with the overthrow of Sultan Abdulaziz, and the subsequent introduction of Turkey's first constitution. The 1876 revolution was, in essence, a coup d'etat and those who had launched it were to be regarded by their twentieth century successors as an important source of inspiration, and historical legitimacy for subsequent intervention.

The Young Turk revolution of 1908 was, in some respects, a repeat performance of 1876. Thereafter, howev-

er, the army was increasingly sucked into the political marsh, via a series of declarations and coups. This led to the Ottoman's disastrous defeat in the Balkans of 1912-30, the takeover of the Young Turk triumvirate of Enver, Cemal and Talat, and the eventual collapse of the Empire at the end of the Great War. The Young Turks experience of political involvement was later generally recognized as disastrous, is indicated by the fact that in recent years it has been specifically referred to as such by people as politically diverse as Kenen Evren and Suleyman Demirel.

Following these disasters, and his establishment of the new Turkish state, it was natural that Ataturk should seek to exclude the army from open involvement in party politics. This principle was enshrined in a law passed in December 1923, which obliged serving officers who were elected to parliament to resign from the army before their election as deputies could be validated. It was reinforced by a section of the Military Penal Code (Article 148) which made it an offence for any soldier to join any political organization, participate in demonstrations, or write or speak in public on political topics. The process was carried further in 1946 and in

1950, when the electoral law was altered so as to disenfranchise all officers, soldiers and cadets.

This effort by Ataturk and Inonu to isolate the military from active politics came as a reaction to the Union and Progress period immediately preceding the Republic, during which the military had direct connections with the political parties. Consequently, at the time the military lost much of its professionalism - a norm that had been carefully nurtured during the nineteenth century. By the time a transition was made to a multi-party politics in Turkey, the military saw themselves as the foremost organizers and the ultimate guardians of the Republic. They wished to see a political regime in Turkey that was a plural system of government but, at the same time, one in which such Republican norms as secularism, territorial - integrative nationalism, and populism would not be overlooked and the necessary measures for further modernizing Turkey would be taken.

On the other hand, Ataturk's removal of the army from politics was never quite complete. Article 35 of the Turkish Armed Services Internal Service Code states that 'the duty of the armed forces is to protect and safeguard

Turkish territory and the Turkish Republic as stipulated by the constitution⁷. This was cited by Kenen Evren after the coup of 12 September 1980 as a legal basis for the argument that the armed forces had the ultimate duty of taking over the government, if the state would otherwise have collapsed. In Ataturk days, military commanders sometimes continued the Ottoman tradition of doubling up as provincial governors, and military views almost carried some weight in fields such as economic planning. On a broader level, the young officers were encouraged to think of themselves as the standard bearer of Ataturkism and the ultimate guardians of its principles. In this way, Ataturk political legacy to the Turkish army was that it should not be responsible for the day-to-day conduct of government; nevertheless the officers saw themselves as continuing the revolutionary vanguard role which they had inherited from the late Ottoman period. It is the clash of these two commitments which has constituted one of the armies major political dilemmas in recent years.

During the four decades since the transition in the mid 1940s to multi-party politics in Turkey, the military's primary role of being guardians of the regime

became even more critical - so much so that by the 1980s the military considered themselves as the sole guardians of the Republic and no longer trusted the country's traditional intellectual - bureaucratic elite (among whom had occurred extensive fragmentation and polarization). Yet, at the same time, the military gradually prepared the conditions for the eventual establishment of unfettered democracy in Turkey. The most favourable sign for the future of the Turkish democracy is the persistence of almost all Turks in pursuing an elective parliamentary process. Although there have been several military interventions of a major sort into the political arena, they have all been brought to an end by the officers themselves. And soon after taking over, the military rulers have on each occasion begun to confront the problem of how to surrender power in an orderly way to leave behind a constitutional structure that would make future military intrusion into the political realm unnecessary. While the Turks have not in the past found the proper formula, they have undeniably gained experience in the various efforts. That too adds reason to hope that the present system will operate more successfully than the one just passed and that consequently Turkish democracy will finally overcome the hurdles that have frustrated

its smooth course. All indications are that the military as well as the civilians want that outcome.

In the course of their two interventions of 1960-61 and 1971-73, the Turkish army had learnt some valuable political lessons. These experiences established certain ground rules which had a major influence on the army's exercise of power after 12 September 1980. Firstly, it was clear that authority must be restricted to the top of the armed forces (in effect, the Chief of the General Staff and the force commanders). The alternative would be a disintegration of authority within the army, as had nearly happened during 1960-63. Secondly, political authority must not be separated from active command of the forces, as it had been in 1960. In other words, the ruling generals would need to retain their military positions as force commanders. Thirdly, a clear plan of action would have to be agreed ^{up} on before the intervention; the generals would not, in practice, be able to share power with the politicians. Fourthly, assuming that the intervention had been preceded by a disintegration of the civilian political system, then some years would be needed to achieve a reconstruction of the party spectrum on lines preferred by the military. Even then,

it was far from certain that a new party system could be willed into existence. This, it can be argued, was the part of ^{the} task which the commanders undertook in 1980 in which they had the least success. So far as the other principles were concerned, however, it seems that the lessons of the past were fully applied.

The most remarkable feature of all three military intervention in Turkey's post-war politics is the fact that on each occasion, the military returned power to civilian after a fairly short period. To recast this in terms of regime typology, it appears that all three regimes corresponded to the moderator or guardian categories, and that all attempts to establish a ruler regime were defeated. As virtually all writers on the political role of the military have remarked, coup leaders nearly always announced that they will not hang on to power indefinitely, but seldom live upto their promises. On this basis, the Turkish army appears to have a rather atypical record.

In conclusion, it can be said that in each intervention of the military into politics since 1960, their foremost concern has been that of restructuring the

political system so that further intervention would not be necessary in the future. And those who carried out the subsequent interventions tried to avoid and correct the perceived mistakes of the past. Today, the military in Turkey keeps a watchful eye on the civilian government to ensure^{that} it does not, once again, stray towards ineffectiveness and factionalism that provoked the most recent intervention. The bottom line is that the Turkish army is a reluctant participant, ensuring it need not again intervene.

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