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Politics and Military in Turkey into the 21st Century

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For further information:

Mediterranean Programme
Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies
European University Institute
via dei Roccettini, 9
50016 San Domenico di Fiesole (FI)
Italy
Fax: + 39 055 4685 770
http://www.iue.it/RSC/MED/

In Turkey of the second half of the 1990s, civil-military relations reached a new stage in their evolution. It may be too early to think that military coups are a thing of the past, but it appears clear that military's political role has entered a new era which may well be carried into much of the twenty first century. Given a historical context of two full-blown and two quasi- interventions into politics in the last 38 years of a 76-year-old Republic, it may not be thought surprising that the political clout and position of the Turkish military has risen sharply in the aftermath of its last intervention on February 28, 1997. On this last occasion, the military dominated National Security Council (Milli Guvenlik Kurulu- NSC from now on) handed down the constitutionally elected coalition government of the day a 20-point list of measures to clamp down on "reactionary Islam" (*irtica* in Turkish) that forced Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, the leader of the pro-Islamic RP (the Welfare Party) which led the coalition with Tansu Ciller's DYP (the True Path Party), to resign. Despite some positive political openings precipitated by domestic and international trends since then, there has been a threshold shift in the political autonomy of the Turkish military in its self-identified role as the ultimate custodian of the western, secular and modern parameters of the regime and of the unity and integrity of the nation itself.

It is important to note that in the "February 28 Process", as the aftermath of the NSC's intervention- by- memorandum is called in popular parlance, the increasing involvement of the military in the antics of political life turned out to be fraught with risks for the credibility and legitimacy of the military as an institution. Nor did its attempts to restructure Turkish politics bring fully satisfying results for the military. However, the fundamental dynamics, mechanisms, agreements and understandings reached explicitly or implicitly during the February 28 Process by the major actors have continued to govern the Turkish political life. In other words, the immediate post-transition era after the Process may be over, but transition to normal politics is yet unfinished.

The political autonomy of the military is defined in the literature as the ability of a military to go above and beyond the constitutional authority of democratically elected governments on matters pertaining to its institutional properties, political goals and influences.[1] Throughout the Republic, the military's autonomy has historically taken the form of the maintenance of a privileged position vis-à-vis the non-military groups, the initiation and vetoing of political issues while staying outside the democratic control of governments.[2] The autonomous role of the armed forces can include not only direct but also indirect influences on the government. While the model of interaction between civilian governments and the military in Turkey in the 1980s provides evidence of indirect influence, in the 1990s, fresh developments have caused a more direct political role and the greater autonomy of the armed forces in key policy

areas. Since its last intervention into politics on February 28, 1997, the parameters of the Turkish military's political prerogatives have radically grown.

There are countless variables, some predispositional (coming from history), some triggering (conjunctural) that can explain the guardianship role for the Turkish armed forces as embedded in the constitution, laws, political rhetoric and practices. The most oft quoted source of its beacon role are the historical context and a culture of army and society which legitimize the political predominance of the military institution and laid down the normative and legal foundations for a protected democracy. The military's guardian role, in turn, has informed a political culture mythologizing and rationalizing a "benign" political role for the armed forces in national politics.

The Turkish army defends the official ideology known as Kemalism,[3] named after the founder of the republic, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, of which inviolable components are the secular foundations, modern facets, territorial unity and integrity of the nation-state. More importantly, this defence has necessarily involved the upholding of a certain life-style as modern, a specific understanding of politics and a democracy discourse.[4] When the westernizing/civilianizing cosmology of this ideology is deemed threatened, so the explanation goes, the military intervenes.[5]

At first sight, the ideological impetus behind the February 28,1997 ultimatum and the developments in the political landscape in its aftermath are quite in keeping with this tradition. One central problematic, however, is that the enlarged political profile of the Turkish military especially since its last intervention into politics on February 28, 1997 can not be explained by the continuity perspective only, that is, by the historical-cultural role of the Turkish military as the ultimate guardian of the republican principles as if they are existential, permanent and timeless. Historical idiosyncrasies, the weaknesses and erosion of the legitimacy of the democratic institutions and civilian political sphere, and Turkish military's participation in the regional security concerns of the western alliance can partly explain the enhanced strategic position and the overtly politicized discourse of the armed forces since 1997. It is the growing influence of political Islam and Kurdish nationalism which legitimize an expanded political role for the Turkish armed forces since the mid-1990s. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the military's assessment of these forces as being less containable, more threatening and nastier national security threats than in the past, as well as part of the violent reshaping of the international system. The instrument for coping with *irtica* and Kurdish insurgency is a new "National Military Defence Concept" which feeds into and is fed by a loud beating of the nationalist impulse. This paper will exclusively focus on the

question as to why a security-first state took precedence over democracy and other developmental objectives in Turkey of the late 1990s and why it continues to dominate the parameters of political life in 2000.

In accounting for the unprecedented political role of the armed forces in Turkey since 1997 one must not lose sight of the new power strategy the military has developed since then with the society which aims at changing mass perceptions about the rules of the political game by addressing everyday social relations, conceptions and practices that shape citizens' understanding of and approach to the self, society and politics. In discovering the sources of the widespread public approval for the military's involvement in politics, mainstream arguments connect the rising public confidence in the military establishment with the declining belief in the center-right and left forces. However, this must be supplemented by another argument: the structure, routes, scope and sources of military effectivess at present must be sought more and more within the societal dynamics and mechanisms which the military has come to manipulate and articulate than within the sphere of the relationship between the armed forces and the civilian political class. In the late 1990s, in other words, the real secret for military strength lied not just in its control oriented discourse but in the inroads it has made within the social fabric.

The new and distinct form of social control the military has devised is deeply rooted in informal areas and everyday social practices. The fundamental characteristics of the new social control strategy is to redefine, transform and reconstruct the social by forming subjects that consent to it. Thus, the "February 28 Process" has not aimed at achieving a zero-sum domination over a unified society. Instead, it has come to acknowledge the different needs of a differentiated society and targeted certain social groups within the society and has established a new relationship with them in such a way that the priority has shifted from invoking societal indifference and fear of military policies to one of producing popular support for and affinity with the military's goals in the political/public space.

The fact that the military's self-identified role as the reservoir of the nation's modernity and the ultimate bastion of secularist principle goes unchallenged by the elected governments and civilian actors also seems anachronistic and at worse incongruent with the regime's commitment to fully integrate with the western world, promote free-market capitalism and some selected notions of liberal democracy. Clearly, one chief reason for Turkey's increasing difficulties on the issue of its full admission into the European Union as a candidate country in the 1990s was the preponderant role the armed forces play in the political system in terms of its involvement in the logic of an internal

war not compatible with western democratic norms. Nor is this role in keeping with the professional standards of western military organizations. The acceptance of Turkey as a candidate state for membership in the EU in Helsinki Summit between 10 -11 December 1999 has not alleviated the EU's misgivings about many aspects of Turkish political practice ranging from human rights violations to double-digit inflation and the overt political power of the armed forces. The Helsinki decision, however, has also raised hopes for creating an externally-induced motivation for the Turkish system to meet the standards upheld by the EU in the realm of democracy-economy-military. That the philosophical, constitutional and attitudinal foundations of a protected democracy and military guardianship remains strong in the Turkish regime also contradicts the global post-Cold War trend which has caused institutional retrenchment, mission redefinition and loss of political and professional power of most militaries in the world. Indeed, in many non-western contexts as well, the end of the bipolar tension and the new global buzzwords of democracy, human rights and the rule of law have transformed old thought patterns which have guided civil-military relations. Contrary to this global trend which has limited the usefulness of the militaries as instruments of national policy and subjected their missions, identity and expenditures to heated debate, Turkish military's national importance has risen to unprecedented levels.

The Changing Features of the Turkish Military's Political Autonomy

From a number of perspectives, the defining features of the Turkish military's political autonomy in the 1990s and early 2000 go against the army's traditional observance of the principle of remaining behind the curtains. This tradition goes back to the formative years of the republic: it is clear that the formal separation of the military institution from politics in the early republic[6] did not intend to establish civilian supremacy in a way commensurate with Western European and North American models. Its basic aim was to preclude the potential of the military as a rival source of power to challenge the ruling elite.[7] Although the officers were deprived of the right to vote and the number of retired officers in the parliament declined, Ataturk's opposition to the military's political role, however, did not produce a subordinate or neutral military mainly because, they were, in the meantime, indoctrinated with a modernizing public philosophy and socialized into considering themselves as the guardians of the republic.[8] The roots of this guardianship role went back to the revolution of 1908 and the Young Turk military activism that succeeded it.

The Ottoman-Turkish practice of providing a political role for the military officers, however, produced the isolation of the military from day-to-day

politics. The boundaries between civil and military spheres became impermeable[9] and the military refrained from directly wielding legislative and executive power, which it considered lethal to its professional cohesion and above-politics position. In fact, the army coup of 1980 and the NSC ultimatum of 1971 were "heavily influenced by a growing concern that the armed forces were being drawn into partisan politics"[10] through the involvement of the military in the enforcement of martial law declared in many provinces against left-right violence.

The military's self-perception that it is "above political conflict" has also derived from its social autonomy. In the Ottoman Empire, the officer corps formed weak links with society through their special pattern of recruitment and by virtue of their membership in the political ruling class. Soldiers, the Janissaries, were selected from the Christian population, with those most distinguished in service being promoted to higher bureaucratic positions. This system of recruitment broke down by the eighteenth century, and until their destruction in 1826, the janissaries were able to form links with society. The conditions that caused the isolation of the republican army from society, however, were brought about by the vanguard role of the military and the civilian bureaucracy in building the republic and modernizing it along the western path. This mission turned the military into the political symbol of nationhood and the instrument of preserving its pillar principle of secularism and westernization. Beginning from the 1971 intervention, the military increasingly began to identify itself with the state and the status quo. A rift subsequently developed with the political elite, the civilian society's organized political expression.[11]

The army's recruitment policies which favour the sons of military personnel and civil servants[12] have helped to perpetuate its commitments to Kemalist principles and maintain its social distance from the society. Its institutional autonomy is also manifested in the weak or total absence of control the governments have exerted over military education, appointments and promotions, military budget, organization of defence, arms production, procurement and military modernization.[13] The aloofness from the mainstream society is further observable in the total isolation of working, living, shopping and entertainment quarters of the officer corps.[14]

Yet, the most crucial feature of the Turkish military's political autonomy which has distinguished it from armies elsewhere in the Third World, has been its acceptance of the legitimacy of both democracy and civilian rule. In the past, it adopted a refined concept of autonomy by which it controlled politicians according to its own ideas and maxims without having a praetorian character

usurping the bases of civilian supremacy. The maintenance of civilian rule has always been a historical fact of the first order. Late Ernst Gellner speaks of this paradox positively but highly ironically as well, when he singles out Turkey as a country where the tradition of constitutionally elected government is both interrupted but deeply rooted.[15] The military's acceptance of the civilian regime's legitimacy and staying power has required it to use unobtrusive mechanisms to disguise its political weight. One significant method the military has used to achieve this end has been to restructure the political process after each coup in such a way as to equip itself with more 'constitutional' powers.

It is true that after the 1980 coup, the conservative logic of transition into a civilian democracy gave rise to a new pattern of increased military influence. The 1982 constitution narrowed the bases of political participation, strengthened state institutions and enhanced the role of the NSC. While extensively restricting individual rights and freedoms, the constitution entrenched the military's veto power in the political system to such an extent that it made crude military intervention into politics redundant. But, 1980s was also the period when the military seemed to withdraw from the political arena, although the civilian governments gave it a free reign in its combat against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (the PKK) which escalated its violence for a greater autonomy since 1984. The party instrumental in this turn was the ANAP (The Motherland Party) which became the fastest growing political party of the 1980s, consolidating the center-right forces within its folds.

In direct contrast to its past thinking and acting, perhaps the most significant new characteristics of the military's involvement in politics even before 1997 ultimatum, has been its open disregard for the integral boundaries between civil and military realms. After the 1995 general elections, in defiance of its past practice of asserting its voice mostly through the constitutional channel of the NSC and staying out of visible political activity, the military brokered a coalition government between the two center-right parties of the ANAP and the DYP to prevent the pro-Islamic RP from being included in the negotiation and formation of any coalition as its election results mandated.[16] When that attempt failed and the RP became the leading partner of a coalition government formed with the DYP on June 28, 1996, the tone, mode and channels of expressing military's voice underwent a change which has now become a permanent feature of Turkish political landscape: senior commanders could be heard making oral public statements or issue formal declarations in public either individually or jointly reiterating their position on safeguarding the republican cornerstones of secularism and a unitary state. In addition, to curb the RP's influence while it was in office, the military assumed a visible role in undermining the public support for the DYP-RP coalition government. The RP's

inflammatory rhetoric was also instrumental in this role in terms of alienating a strong section of secular body politic. In a memorable incident, the army did not refrain from showing its muscle by sending a column of tanks through the streets of an Ankara suburb when the mayor, elected under the RP banner, and the Iranian ambassador to Ankara made speeches in support of Sharia law. During its February 28, 1997 meeting, the military members of the NSC[17] presented a 20-point list of measures to the existing government ranging from tighter restrictions on religious dress in public places to the clamping down on Islamic broadcasting channels, Koran courses, Islamist organizations and asking for a new bill on extending compulsory primary school education from 5 to 8 years.

Secondly, in its combat against Islamic activism in public sphere and Kurdish nationalism, the level from which the armed forces exercise its political power has changed: it has become entangled in politics on a "narrow", "low" or "micro" level by making and breaking governments, being directly involved in political intrigues, issuing public demands and warnings to the civilians, structuring new bills through their own research units and departments, launching 'briefing' campaigns to key societal groups on the threats of political Islam acting as cover for reactionary intentions, and continuously impinging on the everyday operations of the elected governments. The chief motive is to influence the content of the redefinition of public interest/will or common good in such a way as to keep the governing public philosophy intact. The key instrument is a redefinition of national security in a far more comprehensive way than ever attempted in the past.

In the third place, contrary to the theoretical position the military sustained in the past with regard to the respect it showed for the ultimately democratic bases of politics, its discourse on electoral democracy has been undergoing some important changes since the mid 1990s. It seems that there is a much greater questioning of the logic and institutions of representative democracy and the majority principle. Multi-party democracy and the electoral processes are now being perceived as being used by Islamic activists instrumentally to seek to subvert the modernizing cosmology of the Kemalist model: "following the transition into multi-party system, as a result of the concessions made against Ataturk's principles and reforms, the reactionary Islamic circles (*irticai kesim*) have stepped up their organizational activities within the society and the principle of secularism has been diluted despite being a legal provision".[18] It is clear that the military has adopted a more critical and confrontational style against the existing political channels and politicians. The civilians are accused of creating "an authority vacuum" which subsequently disqualifies them from leading the fight against Islamic reactionism. As a

corollary to this, given that the armed forces consider themselves as the bulwark of the nation's foundational principle of secularism, they put themselves in charge of the fight against reactionary forces. This is so self-evident as to push the problems of nonsubordination to the civilian authority and the resultant politicization of the armed forces to the background. If the military's distrust and contempt of the political class entails an implicit call for change, this does not however refer to a radical alteration of the power structure. The objective is to replace the existing cadres with wiser, more prudent, less populist, more secular and common-interest oriented actors and institutions.

The crucial point to note in the new democracy discourse of the Turkish military in the late 1990s is the gap it has created between parliamentary/party democracy and the civil society.

In the days prior to and after the February 28 ultimatum, in its attempt to undermine the support for the RP led coalition government, the military directly appealed to the organized groups of modernized urban-secular sectors,-the business, media, academia, public prosecutors, judges and the leaders of civil associations- and held briefing meetings with them to warn about the extent and magnitude of the Islamic threat. The rising salience of the civil society for the military has been instrument. However, it has not necessarily emerged from the need to seek support from the critical strain of Turkey's civil society that upholds a firm belief in free individual choice expressed in a free public space, the establishment of the rule of law, the limitation of state power, democratic consensus and a compromise on power sharing. On the contrary, it has drawn from those sectors who believed that the intensity of the Islamic threat required the suspension of the expansion of democracy and the limitation of representational principles. To this end, the urban-secular sectors have given the military a strong hand to crush what they see as a threat to the republic's existence identified with their own power, status and life-styles.

The New National Security Discourse

On April 29, 1997, the Turkish General Staff announced a radical change to the National Military Defence Concept embodied in the National Security Policy Document: henceforth priority would be given to combating internal threats from Islamic activism and Kurdish separatism rather than safeguarding against interstate wars and external threats. This new document replaced that formulated on November 18,1992 which singled out Kurdish terrorist acts as the primary security threat to the state. Both documents were prepared by the secretariat of the NSC and became governmental policy. During its October 31 meeting in

1997, the NSC announced that "reactionary Islamic movements" were a greater threat to the state than the terrorist acts of Kurdish separatism. After the capture, arrest, trial and conviction of Abdullah Ocalan, the leader of the armed organization for Kurdish nationalism, the PKK, this perspective continued to have currency. In a recent report prepared by the High Command of The War Academies, the same order of hierarchy in threat perception is reiterated: "[...] political Islam with its social bases, financial resources, companies, foundations and media network has reached the position of being a state within the state".[19]

To cope with the perceived magnitude of the threat, new organizational devices were put into effect: a new unit called the Western Study Group (WSG, *Bati Calisma Grubu*) was instituted within the general staff headquarters to collect information about the political orientations of civil societal groups, mayors, governors, provincial employees of central government, the political party cadres and media personalities. The WSG warned the populace not to patronize business firms owned by Islamists and assigned army officers' families the task of keeping an eye on the activities of radical Islamists.[20] It also prepared a report on religious reactionism in universities and presented it to the NSC in its April 29, 1998 meeting. Moreover, by a governmental decree published in the official gazette on January 9 1997, a new organ called the "Prime Ministerial Crisis Management Center" (*Basbakanlik Kriz Yonetim Merkezi*) was formed within the NSC secretariat to observe and report on the "crises" caused by Islamic reactionism and formulate responses to them. As the Center was placed within the NSC but was called "Prime Ministerial", it had an ambiguous structural and functional position. While, on the one hand, it completely bypassed the parliamentary oversight, for its activities, it was seemingly responsible to the Prime Minister but, was, in reality, answerable to the NSC. This shows that the formulation and coordination of national security policy with other policy areas have been carried out without the effective use of democratic institutions.

Internal Security Notion in the Post-Cold War Era: The West and Turkey

The reluctance to employ the military to combat against internal security threats in western liberal democracies stems from a basic historical tradition and highlights a theoretical dilemma. The theoretical question revolves around the contradictory tasks the state faces between the need to counter security threats to its survival and the requirement to preserve democratic legitimacy: "state power is legitimate to the extent that it appears to be exercised in accordance with the principles of constitutional democracy".[21] The best guarantee against the abuse of democratic legitimacy is the tradition to maintain a clear distinction between military and police roles, using the latter to respond to internal threats while

restricting the role of the military to external defence. Objective civilian control over the western militaries requires that covert intelligence operations are carried out under civilian jurisdiction in such a way as to avoid a militarization of politics, the erosion of civilian control over the militaries and the expansion of the role of the militaries.

In non-western contexts, however, national security concept has provided the military with a different rationale than that of the western armed forces: it has helped the military to fuse policing role with that of national defence against internal enemies and legitimated regimes of exception together with the suspension of civil liberties and rights. Military intelligence services, under such conditions, rather than carrying out surveillance and compilation of information under the oversight of civilian parliamentary institutions, target businesses, universities, labour unions, local government levels and political parties for reasons known to themselves. In Turkey, in addition to the military's own intelligence operation units, The National Intelligence Agency (*Milli Istihbarat Teskilati,* the acronym MIT) serves as the civilian-based intelligence center subject to prime ministerial control. Despite its civilian character, however, it is customary to recruit the head and key cadres of the MIT from amongst officers and generals. Elected officials and the parliament have not established effective control over its policies and operations, supposedly on account of its sensitive nature. It is this fusion of civilian-military functions within the intelligence structures which lies behind the setting up of the Western Study Group in Turkey as well.

According to Paul W. Zagorski, the Latin American experience in the second half of the twentieth century shows that "internal security is [...] a systematic, theory-based response to the problem of internal order"[22] rather than an ad hoc intervention initiated on the basis of personalistic judgments of the military leaders. As such, although "titles and formulations vary, [...] virtually all such theories share a number of common perceptions and basic policy recommendations [...] part of a global approach to the issue of national defence".[23] In many parts of the non-western world, regardless of how small the actual or the potential threat is, national security is not seen as a police matter of maintaining law and order but regarded as a military function: the military assesses the threat posed by "political dissent" and formulates strategies and responses to it.

Moreover, national security doctrine is "more than an objective, sociological phenomenon; it is also a matter of subjective perception and intellectual conviction",[24] that is, it represents the crystallization of the hegemonic discourse of a given military on democracy, people and politics. To

Zagorski, this, in most cases, "leads to the subversion of the political process"[25] in terms of leading to regimes of exception, restriction of political participation and cultural expressions. All this is not to say that certain countries do not face objective and serious challenges to their well-being as the examples of Peru's Sendero Luminoso and Turkey's PKK show. It is clear that when confronted with a physical threat to its foundation, the domestic security concerns of a state will take precedence over the constitutional rights of its citizenry. However, the real problem still remains: who will define the threat, the set of acceptable risks and the appropriate responses to it? The western tradition, in this regard, is definitely on the side of the constitutionally elected authorities: "the military can describe in some detail the nature of the threat posed by a particular enemy, but only the civilians can decide whether to feel threatened and so how or even whether to respond. The military quantifies the risk, the civilians judge it [...] in other words, civilians have a right to be wrong".[26] Although, in the Turkish case, it is the Council of Ministers which is responsible to the parliament for national security decisions taken in the light of the priority recommendations made by the NSC on the formulation, establishment and implementation of these policies, the Turkish Grand National Assembly was not fully informed about the changed substance of the National Military Defence Concept in April 1997. In fact, NSC's reformulation of the security policy became entangled with the larger process of removing the pro-Islamic RP from power and realigning country's center-right forces under the ANAP which then became the leading party of the new government. In this sense, breaking one government while making another turned into a national security issue.

The renewed concept of national security in Turkey also draws strength from the evolving post-Cold War security environment. The considerations shaping the international system since the collapse of the former Soviet Union have also changed the formulation of security threats globally. The end of bipolarity and the strategic threat of global nuclear war and the internationalization of economies have eroded the importance of inter-state wars as the main sources of insecurity. In its place came the "new wars"[27] as the main threat within the borders of the states but which spill over the borders and involve global actors. According to Mary Kaldor, they are different from traditional wars in three ways: "first, they are about identity politics, that is, the exclusive claim to power on the basis of identity".[28] Secondly, the methods of fighting have changed. "[...] Battle is avoided and violence is often directed against civilians. This goes back to the guerilla strategies of the Cold-war era. Conspicuous activities, population displacement, burning homes are all part of a strategy".[29] Moreover, "these new wars have a characteristic 'informal war economy' in terms of generating political and economic vested interests in the perpetuation of the violence".[30]

As of 2000, the Islamic question is considered on the basis of parameters quite different from its formulation as a security threat by the army during the republic. So much so that we can now think of a redefinition of the political role of the Turkish armed forces vis-à-vis the Islamic threat. Among the basic features guiding the behaviour of the army, four are of extreme importance: first, the threat is defined in *apocalyptic/subversive* terms. Unlike the Kurdish subversion, the Islamic threat is not seen as spatially confined, but, instead, is regarded as being potentially present everywhere, in all spheres of life, at all levels of society and in all forms: "the reactionary sector has been continuing its activities towards broadening its power of appeal in the society through 19 dailies, 110 journals, 51 radio and 20 TV stations [...] they have 2500 associations, 500 foundations, over 1000 business corporations, 1200 student dormitories, over 800 private schools and courses [...]. The figure of those attending officially registered Quran courses is 1,685,000 and this figure multiplies by two every five years [...]"[31] Since the aims and activities of the Islamic activists supersede the tactics, methods and techniques of a conventional war, it becomes impossible to draw the line between politics and war, as described by Clausewitz.

In January 2000, this apocalyptic vision of the Islamic threat gained a renewed momentum when the country was shaken with the discovery of 45 bodies in the hideouts of Hizbullah, a militant Kurdish Islamist group, working for an Iranian style of regime. As its murders were directed against the sympathizers of the secular PKK in the southeast, Hizbullah was rumoured to have been sheltered by the state for many years. It is also widely believed that with the PKK threat been definitely warded off and as Hizbullah had now outlived its usefulness for the state, time had come to launch a massive operation to crush the organization.[32] With the full scale of the violent torturings and murders committed by Hizbullah coming to public attention via the media, reactionism with provable Iranian links, once more proved to be considered more dangerous and threatening than the PKK. In fact, against the reports in the media that the Turkish General Staff was considering several reforms, the Secretariat of the Staff Headquarters issued a statement arguing for the irrelevance of these news at the spectre of Hizbullah savagery: "it is thought that those who assess the decisive attitude of the Turkish Armed Forces against reactionism as "paranoia of *irtica*" are either ignorant or being willful".[33] The statement then rejects any links the Turkish Armed Forces were accused of having formed in the past with Hizbullah and warns that "the latest actions of Hizbullah, a terrorist organization, shows what are the consequences of the politicization of religion are".[34]

What makes political Islam's activities so subversive and not merely seditious is its "identity" dimension: the Islamist movement is seen as representing a serious challenge to the foundational principle and legitimizing ethos of the Turkish republic which was to construct a western-like identity. Secularism, understood as the disestablishment of Islam as the public religion and making politics independent of religious considerations, has been seen as the fundamental instrument to achieve that end. Looked at from this perspective, political Islam is considered not just "aiming...to break the Turkish Republic"[35] in terms of ruining its institutions, but "at an internal insurgency"[36] capturing the hearts, spirits and values of the body politic with a view to imposing its own counterhegemonic political order which underpins an Islamic public identity.

Through the 'headscarf' issue, Islamic reactionism is regarded as infiltrating into schools and government departments. The state apparatus, local governments, judiciary, treasury, and security forces are claimed to have become the locus for entrenching and institutionalizing Islamic cadres. More seriously, by way of liaison with the brotherhoods, Islamic reactionism is seen as operating within the Kurdish region as part of an attempt to Islamicize the Kurdish question and establish contact points with the terroristic Kurdish group of the PKK.[37] The diffuse aspect of the Islamic question in also manifested by the cooperation and support it is believed to receive from regional neighbors; Iraq, Libya, Iran and Sudan being the chief examples. The magnitude and the urgency of the threat to the unity, peace and security of the country then stems not from the struggle being waged between two fighters employing physical force but by being fought on almost all levels of the domestic and global theatre. It is the perceived magnitude of the threat as apocalyptic that makes it possible for the military, as the ultimate guardian of the republic, to set the standards of measuring and judging the Islamic threat as a life or death issue for the survival of the existing regime.

Secondly, Islamic identity politics is conceived as focusing itself on the *everyday existence of people through symbols*, taking advantage of economic deprivations, unfulfilled aspirations, human weaknesses and malleability to gain ground. Political Islam is believed to achieve this through ideologizing religious cultural symbols like headscarves for women and beards for men. Indeed, in the war against Islamic reactionism, both sides heavily resort to symbolic use of politics: while in office, the RP's leaders made symbolic promises of building a mosque in Taksim, one of the prominent sites of tourist attraction in Istanbul. Necmettin Erbakan, the party leader, invited the leaders of religious brotherhoods in their religious attire at the Prime Minister's official residence. Secular-modern sectors, in turn, adopted the wearing of Ataturk badges, singing the national anthem and holding patriotic marches symbolizing the republic at

public meetings of all kinds, and visiting the mausoleum of Ataturk. In particular, the official celebrations of the republic's 75th anniversary on October 1998 and the following year which came soon after the assassination of a prominent Kemalist academic/journalist Ahmet Taner Kislali, by uncaught assassins, were turned into symbolic spectacles demonstrating the military's clout against Islam. In the funeral possession for Kislali, the generals and the Ankara garrison turned out in full uniforms and were applauded by the crowds while the government officials were jeered and their speeches heckled. During the 75th celebrations, for the first time since the military coup of 1960 when the War School cadets had marched in their uniforms in the streets as a show of force against the existing government, uniformed officers took up to the streets to march with thousands of civilians as part of their show of determination to guard the secular character of the regime against Islamists. These symbolic acts were, in fact, reflections of a struggle over the essential constituents of the identity of the nation. In the ongoing war of symbolism between the Kemalist republican forces and political Islam, there is also the element of copying methods, tactics and strategies from the other side.

The third new feature of the fight against Islamic threat as perceived by the military is its *moral nature* involving two antithetical visions of the world, one presented by the "anachronic" vision of reactionary Islam, the other by "contemporary" life values of Kemalism. In the communiqué issued after the 28 February meeting of the NSC, this dichotomic portrayal is made clear: "secularism in Turkey is not only the guarantee of the regime but also of democracy , but it is also a way of life". [38] The moralization of national security turns the struggle against Islamic reactionism into a total war in which official forces of the "good' confronts the Islamic forces of the "evil" in an all or nothing situation. As it is the moral integrity of the nation which is at stake, negotiation, reconciliation, moderation, indifference and taking third positions are regarded irreconcilable with the military's reading of the conflict. This zero-sum-game thinking, however, is at odds with the historical pattern of state-Islam relations which, in the past, allowed for compromises and reconcilation of interests between the two sides.

Another important feature of this moralist crusade is that as Islam has proven itself to be a "historic enemy", lying in wait and ready to subvert the cosmology and institutions of the republic, there is, no possibility to make temporal distinctions between periods of peace and war. The Turkish military has to be in a permanent state of alert as the last instance hope of the regime. In the meantime, as the armed forces strongly believe that political Islam builds a strong grassroots support in the secondary schools for preachers and orators (Imam Hatip Okullari) by brainwashing young children and turning them into

potential reactionaries, one of the first bills the new government succeeding the RP-led coalition government passed was the 8-year mandatory schooling act which scrapped the system of secondary schools and merged them with an extended system of primary schools.

Finally, conceiving national security along these lines has had important implications for the internal structuring of the armed forces. Historically speaking, the guiding principle of the armed forces as an institution was that only a strong (Kemalist) ideology closed to and uncontaminated by the outside world could form the basis of shared values, visions, myths and rituals of the military establishment and achieve the resocialization of the officer corps. In the late 1990s, the traumatic combat the military has undertaken against reactionary Islam seems to have led to the erosion of old certainties about its unity. There is now a new trend in the form of unprecedented *purges* within its ranks of those elements suspected of Islamic activism. The army's successive purges in April and December 1996 and in May, August and December 1997 reached a record breaking figure in 1998 when 61 regular and 101 non-commissioned officers were expelled.[39] These purges can also be seen as a sign of disunity within the hierarchy against the top brass, which is disquieting for the image of the institution which remained largely exempt from the power of appeal of Islam. The military institution, however, takes pains to demonstrate to the outside world that it maintains internal unity to involve itself directly and successfully in politics as the last resort when the occasion arises.

The Kurdish Internal Threat: New Realities, Old Insecurities

Islamic question is not the only security threat that has put the Turkish military at the center stage of political life and impeded the process of normalization of civil-military relations.

The fight against the PKK is also fundamental in enhancing the role of the armed forces as the political symbol and instrument for preserving a unitary state. Moreover, the issue acts as a catalyst in Turkey's relations with the outside world, that is, in her foreign policy position and discourse. Both wars share some elements: they emerge out of a combination of historical legacies combined with present global realities. They are also fought on the basis of a conspiratorial vision that some neighboring countries actively encourage the Islamic and Kurdish causes to undermine the Turkish state. Notwithstanding the role of external instigators, however, both represent a deviation from conventional security threat management in terms of being characterized as variants of internal threats. Both therefore lend legitimacy to the suspension of democratic procedures. The military's struggle against both take the tone of a

moral crusade with the result that the other in both cases are defined as "the enemy".

The most distinctive commonality between the Islamic and Kurdish questions, however, is that like most wars in the Transcaucuses or the Balkan theatre, both are about identity politics. As such, they challenge the core principle of Turkey's public philosophy that there are no identities in Turkey other than the one covered by the Turkish national identity. In an important sense, Kurdish nationalism serves to unify the polity around this core principle and provides coherence to the Turkish identity. The effect that Kurdish nationalism has on constructing a homogenous sense of Turkishness bears a striking resemblance to the impact that "reactionary Islam" has on closing the ranks of secular Turks.

The roots of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict go back to a problematic history. It is true to say that there were some objective historical "realities" that formed the genesis of the fears and anxieties of the Turkish ruling class about Kurdish separatism. The Kurdish issue is conceived as a territory-aspiring and counter-national force challenging Turkey's political existence, its territorially circumscribed geography, the Turkish rectangle. The new entity called Turkey came into existence by the disintegration and contraction of the predecessor state, the Ottoman Empire. This contraction remained as a major source of trauma for the popular and official imaginations. Thereafter, the memory of the historical crises and the ensuing dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire dictated and justified the fundamental rules of Turkey's political life after independence. The popular parlance on "unity and integrity" (*birlik ve beraberlik*) evokes this historical scar. David McDowall captures this sentiment when he says, "it (Turkey) has an emotional and ideological view that its frontiers... cannot be changed without threatening the foundations of the Republic [...]. The integrity of Turkey within its present borders has acquired an almost mystical quality for those faithful to the legacy of modern Turkey's founder, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. As a result, the loss of Kurdistan, despite its poverty would be perceived as a grievous blow to the spatial identity of Turkey".[40] The mindset of the Turkish military is still framed by insecurities stemming from the "ear of the past".

Examining the historical sources of insecurity and anguish which the Kurdish question invokes would be incomplete without connecting it with the democracy discourse adopted by the republican elite to cope with it. If " [...] the reality cloaked in the metaphor of boundaries is the containment of democracy",[41] then, the notion of nonnegotiability of Turkey's territorial conditions brought with it a certain understanding of integration which found its

expression in a "hegemonic" idea of Turkey and Turkishness, penetrating into psyches, becoming an existential issue, subsuming all other identities within it and refusing to recognize pluralities of existence. Parallel to the territoriality fixation, this is the other discourse that dominates the minds of the military. The problem with this outlook is that the Turkish State has had to deal with a series of uprising since the advent of the republic. As the Turkish system is also seen by most foreign analysts as a "model" democracy in a geography marked by predominantly corrupt and authoritarian regimes, the political system "should have already found a way of absorbing the demands and interests of its Kurdish citizens through regular representational procedures".[42] It is only when the dominance of these dual assumptions -a nonnegotiable Turkey and Turkish identity- in the military mind is brought into the picture that a full response to the questions about the failure of the Turkish state to manage the Kurdish conflict in an integrative and peaceful way may be discovered.

Following Mary Kaldor's characterization of post-Cold War intrastate wars as "new wars", the Kurdish conflict can also be said to involve new features which can go some ways to explain the enlarged parameters of the army in national politics. The 14 year war has been fought basically in the predominantly Kurdish region of the southeast with heavy violence on both sides. It cost 37.000 lives and $6 to 9 billion every year and involved about 200.000 Turkish soldiers. The armed forces has formulated its strategic response to the PKK's threats on two sequential steps: first, the enemy's capacity to make war would have to be destroyed; next, after the military victory is won, social and economic modernization of the region would have to be undertaken by the civilian authorities to eradicate the bases of Kurdish discontent towards the central government. With regard to the first step, contrary to the diffuse nature of the Islamic threat, the PKK's radius of influence was deemed to be concentrated in the southeastern region. However, as is the case in "new wars", the war against the PKK spilled beyond the Turkish territory in two senses: Syria, Iran and the authority-vacuum in Northern Iraq were the instrumental factors which provided physical and moral assistance to the Kurdish rebels. In addition, in ways quite unforeseen by the military, both before and after the capture of the PKK's leader, the Kurdish question was internationalized and its hub of activity was carried to Europe.

To cope with the spillover effects of the war, a combination of diplomatic alliances and also conventional assault tactics used in guerilla warfare were employed. Against the PKK rebels in Northern Iraq, for instance, an interesting alliance was formed with the Peshmerghas of Massoud Barzani's Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party, one of the two rival factions in northern Iraq, while Turkish troops made frequent incursions into Northern Iraq to destroy the bases

of the PKK. Together with the Cyprus question, the Kurdish conflict provided the main justification for the centrality of maintaining a military prowess as well as a high budget allocated to the Turkish General Staff and meeting their modernization costs.[43] In addition, the Kurdish war provided the rationale for abondoning plans for an all-volunteer force by the year 2000 and reversed an earlier decision to cut conscription from 18 to 15 months as a first step towards reducing the armed forces' reliance on conscription, a development which would be in keeping with the trend in the west.[44]

The second level on which the military conceived the management of the Kurdish conflict seems, at first sight, to include a broadened form of national security concept in such a way as to address the root causes of the Kurdish discontent which is conceived to be the socio-economic backwardness of the region. The same theme is mirrored in the attempt to combat the threat of Islam. In a report prepared by the Western Study Group, for instance, the appeal of political Islam is attributed to the socio-economic questions which are said to weaken Turkey and pave the way for Islamic activity and reaction.[45] But as the emphasis has been more on the Islamic promotion of a non-contemporary identity/life-style pitted against the existing framework, the issue of improving the existing social structure has not really come up. With the Kurdish question, however, in view of the underdeveloped status of the region, the conflict seems to be intertwined with a search on the part of the military elite for a wider meaning "security". It is interesting to note that in a speech he made in OSCE meeting on January 26, 1998, in Vienna, the then Chief of general Staff, General Ismail Karadayi, gave signs of not only broadening the scope of internal threats in such a way as to now include environmental damage, intolerance, radical nationalism and all kinds of discrimination, but he also drew the conclusion that the military-civilian division of labour may be disappearing and the officer corps should be able to understand and improve the socio-economic sources of these threats: " a general should sometimes act like a diplomat and a diplomat should have a good background of military matters. But they should all be economists".[46]

It is doubtful if the NATO strategists would fully endorse General Karadayi's statement, which sees the socio-economic underdevelopment but not that of "irregularities in democracy" as a security threat and reflects a particular tradition in calling for a more ambitious role for the officer corps. In fact, regarding the redefinition of security, a careful comparison between Karadayi's stand and that of the former secretary general of NATO, Javier Solana's shows striking differences. For Solana, "today, the meaning of the concept of security is very broad. An important part of it still covers naturally the classic meaning. But beyond that, it embodies a new security concept in terms of the economy,

democracy, human rights and ecology which stem from the understanding of a new society".[47]

There are other problems surrounding the military's discourse on the promotion of socio-economic modernization in the southeast as a policy device to address the Kurdish conflict after the defeat of the PKK. It suffers from being an instrumental rhetoric: it is employed by the military when it wants to demonstrate to the public the inability of the civilian elite to fulfill its responsibilities which, then is used to justify the hard-line policies followed in the region by the military forces or an expanded role for the armed forces in the political life of the country. The best example comes from the then Deputy Chief of General Staff, Cevik Bir's warning to the RP led coalition government, soon after the February 28 memorandum, to improve the socio-economic conditions in the Kurdish region.[48]

Moreover, the PKK suffered physical defeat and humiliation after the capture and trial of its leader. The repercussions on the Kurdish rebel front were far reaching: on February 9, 2000, the remaining leadership of the PKK issued a statement announcing that they had given up their war and would press their cause within the framework of peace and democracy.[49] Furthermore, in the same statement, the PKK pledged to drop the word "Kurdistan" from the names of their affliated organizations as a gesture of peace to Turkey which rejects the term. The state elite, however, have rejected these overturns and continued their operations against the PKK militants who have not heeded Ocalan's call for laying off their arms, both in Turkey and the Northern Iraq, demanding that the PKK forces surrender unconditionally to Turkish security forces. When the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg issued a request for a stay of Ocalan's execution on November 30, 1999, the government, on the other hand, acted with restraint and caution by giving its assent. The strategic goal there was not to jeopardize Turkey's chances of being considered as a candidate state for membership in the EU, in the approaching summit in Helsinki. The Kurdish question is still considered as primarily a hard-security issue without any specific policies designed to deal with it. President Demirel, who has been acting in full concordance with the military since the February 28 intervention, can be regarded as expressing the military hierarchy's conviction when he is quoted as using the notions of subversion and internal enemies: "the decision by the terrorist organization to retreat from Turkey and abandon armed struggle does not alter the potential threat of terrorism".[50]

At the close of the last century, perhaps the most important development with regard to the "military solution" -as the war against the Kurdish rebels came to be called- is the emergence of a new perspective within public opinion

that sees the state security forces as having developed a stake in perpetuating the Kurdish conflict: " a growing number of people from across the social and political spectrum have come to believe that this conflict has become intractable not because of the strength of Kurdish nationalism or the unscrupulous nature of their terrorism but because of the widespread corruption that has engulfed the government, the military and the PKK".[51] This development is quite in tune with Mary Kaldor's portrayal of intra-state wars in the post-Cold War age as having a characteristic "informal" war economy in terms of producing new war lords with political and economic interests in the continuation of the violence.[52]

The growth of public presence of an active citizenry and the surge of NGOs have been triggered by two specific events in recent years, the Susurluk accident in 1996 and the catastrophic earthquake in August 1999. It was a road accident on November 3, 1996 in Susurluk, a small township in northwestern Turkey, that was instrumental in awakening public's consciousness to the reality of a criminal triangle of mafia bosses, politicians and security forces engaged in the war against the PKK. The three passengers killed in the accident were an ultra-nationalist mafia boss, a high ranking member of the civilian security force and a young woman who was taken in for a joy-ride. The only survivor of the crash was a Kurdish tribal chief, whose tribe collaborates with the state in the fight against the PKK and who is also a member of the parliament. It was gradually unraveled that security forces have been sharing the lucrative network of black money laundering and drug trafficking and have also been involved in the extrajudicial killings of the PKK sympathizers. The public anger at Susurluk incident turned into an avalanche of societal pressure to reform the police, bureaucracy, and justice system and to establish a more transparent and accountable public realm. The incident also called into question the ethics of the means used by the security forces in the southeast. What is more important perhaps is that, as the revelations of the full facts behind the Susurluk incident is blocked by the judicial system which is not fully independent with regard to national security issues, the incident has driven home a new awareness that the Kurdish issue is part of a broader issue of democratization of Turkey's state system. The calamity of the August earthquake, on the other hand, by demonstrating the inadequacy and inefficiency of the government paved way to the critical appearance of NGOs undertaking the government's tasks and therefore shifting the balance of public's confidence in civil society's favour.

On the other hand, the capture of Abdullah Ocalan helped deliver a serious blow on the Kurdish movement. This has given a tremendous boost to the morale of the state security forces which the Susurluk incident had badly shaken three years ago. It has also reinforced the official position that there is no Kurdish problem but a problem of terrorism which could never have reached the

level it did without external support. At a time when the power vacuum the PKK leaves behind in the southeast provides a visible incentive for prudent policy makers to create a new politics to respond effectively and efficiently to the contemporary Kurdish claims, the increased self-confidence of the military, the election victory in April 1999 of the most nationalist forces in the country and lack of any serious civilian political project regarding the political solution of the Kurdish issue block hopes for a new beginning of a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the short-run. The fact that the center of Kurdish activism has shifted to Europe, which means a further internationalization of the problem means a more visible presence of the Kurdish issue on the world scene.

The Emerging Pattern of Civil-Military Relations at the Threshold of the 21st Century

New Trends and Advances Since 1997

What model of civil-military relations best fits the post-1997 Turkey? The question has relevance not only for analyzing the contours of democracy in Turkey but also for a refined understanding of the present character of the regime. The current state is neither a full-blown democracy, nor a national security state with a military president, extensive repression and dissent. While the armed forces retain veto power over a wide range of policy areas and criticism of the military, debate over their formulation and enforcement of national security doctrine are limited in public, there is a long list of reasons to think that the regime articulates pluralist and monistic features: civil society has increasing latitude but no real strength; the parliament contains oppositional forces but no real teeth; the judiciary operates with some independence at times but is by and large controlled politically; media can uncover the dark connections of organized crime-ranging from unknown murders to drug rings related to state security forces- but is itself oligopolitically owned and is prone to nationalist and populist influences. These contradictory components of the Turkish political system makes it difficult for us to characterize it unambiguously.

Yet, do some hopeful developments since 1997 render irrelevant the analysis of Turkish politics against the backdrop of February 28 process? Do we see the emergence of a new paradigm which enables us to dismiss the military factor as a minor caveat to the country's political landscape? Has Turkey set itself on a pro-European course which will inevitably relegate its military to the same place it occupies in Western democracies? Answering these questions require a close look at the new sources of optimism and pessimism since 1997:

as such, there seem to be three developments which have raised the level of optimism and confidence for a move towards a new model of democracy in the country. The first is some modicum of stability the new coalition government is said to have brought to the country since the 1999 elections by scoring successes on the PKK level and in the area of economic reform. The second is the EU's new strategy of including Turkey as one of the 7 candidate states in its Helsinki summit on 10-11 December, 1999. The final one is the calamity of the August 1999 earthquake which spurred the surge of NGOs to such an extent as to demonstrate the bankruptcy of traditional structures and modes of conducting politics.

It is true that the public wish for a new variety of politics has been gathering momentum for a long time. The reforms EU makes conditional for Turkey's acceptance as a full member pertain to the alteration of the fundamental rules of the game of the regime. That is why the elements that favour the EU membership in the country are the ones who also favour a upgrading of the country's democracy. The demystification of Abdullah Ocalan and the RP has undermined the theoretical justification for the maintenance of security-first state and the military's responsibility to sustain it. Moreover, the military has only partially succeeded to transform the structure and outlook of the political scene in its own image. Its goals of removing the RP from office, getting it banned by the Constitutional Court [53]and sapping the electoral strength of its successor party, the FP (Virtue Party) succeeded. Where it failed was in the realignment of the center-right under the leadership of ANAP so as to overcome the fragmentation of the centrist forces. However, the outcome of the 1999 elections was not too distasteful for the military: by fusing the issue of security with secularism, the Process had contributed to an upsurge of nationalist impulses, culminating in the 1999 election victories of the two most staunchly nationalist political parties of the spectrum, the MHP (Nationalist Action Party) and the DSP (Democratic Left Party). The enhanced political autonomy of the military and its involvement in day-to-day issues has brought with it the risk of losing popular acceptance of its position and role which its claim of being above politics has brought about.

These are hopeful signs, but the system still faces many of the same difficulties it faced in the previous decades in terms of the overcoming of historical legacies: despite its declining legitimacy and more sustained calls for democratic reforms, the regime has not been discredited in a radical way and its resilience and capacity to handle even the serious challenges to its legitimacy should not be underestimated. In other words, power politics is built into the status quo. Therefore, it is too early to say whether the old regime's constraints, the military's role being the most central, will be relaxed to allow a democratic

civil-military interaction to grow. But as the idea that the armed forces are the ultimate guardians of the regime is, at bottom, a question of the true strength of civilian politics, an analysis should also be made of the theory of civil-military interaction as it pertains to the reality at present.

The Turkish Military: "Praetorian" or "Tutelary?"

It seems clear that in Turkey, as elsewhere, internal security missions exacerbate the problems of civilian control. But there are, on the whole, two important variables that are as effective in strengthening or weakening civilian control over the armies. The first is the political system itself, the other is the military doctrine. The first set of factors involves the existence of publicly shared values and norms on securing the political subordination of the military to the domestic regime, whereas the second argument focuses on self-restraint as part of the concept of professionalism on the part of the military. Behind the explanations provided by internal security, public values on the legitimacy of democracy and the military self-restraint lie different theories on civil-military relations.

In his seminal work, Samuel Huntington claims that the military institution would be responsive to civilian control when it has institutional autonomy characterized by high professionalism.[54] From another perspective, as "order" is the priority concern for Huntington in modernizing societies where rapid socio-economic change is not paralleled by institution building, he places confidence in the military as a political institution builder.[55] In this view, the military's emphasis on professionalism, discipline and hierarchy is seen as immunizing it from politicization.[56] Since then, the overwhelming evidence from the Middle East and Latin America suggests, however, that a quantitative and qualitative increase in professional skills under conditions of Cold War security concerns has enhanced the military's influence in political as well as in purely defence matters.[57] Reformulation of national security in response to internal insurgencies caused by rising religious and ethnic aspirations in the post-Cold war era has led to a role expansion by some militaries in non-western contexts. This casts further doubts on the ability of a professionally autonomous officer corps to assume an apolitical posture in the way predicted by Huntington. Since in most cases, organizational strength is a function of the scope and structure of the political power and autonomy of the military, it would be safe to suggest that the most effective source of civilian control is the degree of that regime's legitimacy. The struggle to establish civilian oversight over the militaries involves a struggle against historical, political and social traditions and relations in which militaries operate. It is these specific conditions which provide motives and pretexts for the military to undermine institutional and normative civilian supremacy. Persistence and rearticulation of national security

threats and the continuation of social isolation of the officers from the larger society are facilitating factors for the control by military institutions over policy areas normally under the authority of civilians and their penetration of state and society.

Does the Turkish civil military relations correspond to the well-known "praetorian" model developed by a number of writers engaged in a comparative-theoretical model of civil military relations in some modern contexts marked with instability, illegitimate civilian actors and underdeveloped structures and processes?[58] If we note that "the military in praetorian conditions is deeply concerned with preventing the seizure of power by its rivals and in consolidating the military intervention (or coup), or in establishing conditions that will not threaten the corporate integrity of its organization"[59] in the absence of a legitimate political framework, there are two prime movers in praetorian civil-military relations: the structural self-interest of the military and the absence or near-absence civilian authority. The military institution, under these conditions, intermittently deposes governments to perpetuate its own "venal" or "corrupt" character. [60] The analysis presented so far in the Turkish case suggests, however, that civil military relations in this specific geography are shaped more by a complex series of dynamics unleashed by a substantial process of modernization and electoral democracy than with venal, fearful and corrupt military acting out of its own narrow self-interest in conditions of minimal exposure to the global developments. The political role of the army as either the defender of the status quo or an agent of change which is organized around a specific transformative ideology is justified by its self-assigned historic mission as the ultimate guardian of the regime, an idea shared by the general population and civilian political elites. Although the idea of military guardianship has always been an integral part of Turkish socialization transmitted in schools and at all levels of society, no legitimacy has historically existed for a permanent military rule. Explaining civil military relations in Turkey, therefore, requires reference to a wider and more diverse array of variables than is the case with less developed contexts.

For the current model of civil-military relations in Turkey, J. Samuel Finch's formulation which is devised for the Latin American continent[61] provides some insights. It seems that pre-1997 model of "conditional military subordination" has given way to a "tutelary pattern". In the former model, armed forces abstain from overt intervention in political questions, but enjoy a high degree of institutional autonomy and quasi-monopoly on security policy and reserve their right to intervene to protect national interest in times of crises.[62] In "tutelary regimes", armed forces participate in the policy process; their veto power is respected and the leaders speak publicly on a wide range of national policy issues which they regard as relevant to national security.[63] The rallying

points for military's tutelage are " a certain degree of military consensus around a 'particular project' which serves as the reference point for military attempts to steer civilian policies 'in the right direction'"[64] and "counterinsurgency wars"[65] which are run by the military rather than the government and in which human rights violations are often massive and rarely punished. With regard to the involvement of the military in day-to-day politics which may injure their above-politics image, Finch concludes that "the further removed the issue from the military's 'natural' concerns, the more likely the outcome will depend on whether the military's position is supported by important civilian groups".[66]

Finch's tutelary model can be said to have acquired a new feature in Turkey: the geostrategic position of the country as a member of NATO, OSCE and a candidate country of the EU has made it necessary for the military to try to reconcile its tutelary role with that of building and maintaining a respectable image in eyes of Western leaders and institutions. One such initiative is the military's presentation of secularism "not only as a guarantee for the regime but at the same time of democracy, societal peace and as a life style".[67] In the official declaration of the historic NSC meeting on February 28, 1997, rather than repudiate democracy, the military high-command took pains to publicly endorse western democratic values and justify the intervention on the grounds that it was made for the defense of Turkey's commitment to being a full member of the EU: " Turkey's goal of being added to the list of candidate countries joining the EU in 1997 continues. In this conjuncture, it is necessary for the civilian institutions to contribute to this process and for this end, it is essential to stop speculations that will lead to doubts about our democracy and damage its external image and practice [...]"[68]. Moreover, the rhetoric of "contemporariness", an imagery derived from being western-like, is pitted against the opposite imagery of "Islamic anachronism".

It would also be true to say that in their dealings with the west, the generals also rely on Turkey's strategic importance in regional security, which they believe is appreciated more by the U.S.A than Europe. At a time when defence budgets are dwindling, NATO's efforts to expand southwards are thought to present the alliance with challenges. As the regions in question cover the countries bordering the Mediterranean, Aegean, Black and Caspian Seas which are lying on Turkey's doorsteps, in addressing the instabilities and uncertainties there, Turkey's strong and credible military machine and her leadership role in strategic planning are thought to be valuable assets for NATO.[69] "Turkish leadership in the Balkans and Turkey's role in training the newly independent states' officers through NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP), [...] Turkey's consideration of coordinating an on-call force drawn from the Black Sea littoral states, as well as leading a focus group on the NATO-Eastern

Mediterranean dialogue in the near future"[70] are listed as proof of the country's proactive approach to the problem of instability in the regions within NATO's concern.

Another discourse adopted by the military to stave off criticisms on its tutelary role is the "specificity" argument: in an in-service circular distributed to the military units after the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) Istanbul summit meeting on November 18, 1999, where some speakers brought up the issue of lack of civilian control over the military as an obstacle for Turkey's bid for full membership in the EU, the army general staff reaffirmed the exceptionality argument: "while it is not true, as has been insinuated by certain circles, especially by certain members of the media that the military exerts its authority over the civilian government or has an undue influence in civilian political affairs [...] these assertions give foreigners the wrong message about Turkish democracy. It must not be forgotten that every country has a system peculiar to itself ".[71] It seems clear that the military high command is unhappy about the debate about Turkey's full admission into the EU revolving around the sensitive issue of its enlarged role in politics and defends its position on the basis of specificity of Turkey's conditions.

It is interesting to note, however, that while being defensive, the general staff implicitly accepts the validity of the international norms of human rights and democratic control over the armed forces: "we, as the Turkish armed forces have no doubt that our responsibilities regarding issues of great importance such as international cooperation against terrorism, democratic control of the armed forces, recruitment regulations, defence policy, guidelines for using the armed forces in matters of internal and external security, human rights and rules of engagement- shall be fulfilled most effectively".[72] No longer denying the existence of global norms, but at the same time far from internalizing these standards, the armed forces continue to reject allegations of the violations of these norms and argue with their critics that they are engaged in norm-abiding behavior. The exercise can be taken as evidence that the Turkish military is concerned about its international image.

Umit Cizre

JMF (Mediterranean Programme)
RSC-EUI
Florence (Italy)

E-mail:cizre@iue.it

Dept. of Political Science
Bilkent University
Ankara-Turkey

E-Mail: umit@bilkent.edu.tr

ENDNOTES

[1] David Pion-Berlin, "Military Autonomy and Emerging Democracies in South America", *Comparative Politics*, 25 (October 1992), 83-102.

[2] Umit Cizre Sakallioglu, *"The Anatomy of the Turkish Military's Political Autonomy", Comparative Politics*, 29 (Jan.1997), 153.

[3] The official Republican ideology gradually became known by the name of the founder in a series of general congresses of the secular, bureaucratic state party, the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*- CHP), beginning in 1927 and culminating in 1935, as a project of politically constructing and manipulating a modern Turkish nation-state on secular and western precepts.

[4] For the military's conception of democracy "as a means of preserving and promoting state", see Ali Karaosmanoglu, "Officers: Westernization and Democracy", in Metin Heper et. al., (eds.) *Turkey and the West*: *Changing Political and Cultural Identities* (I. B. Tauris: London, 1993), 24-29.

[5] Ben Lombardi, "Turkey- the Return of the Reluctant Generals?", *Political Science Quarterly*, 112 (Summer 1997), 209.

[6] In 1924, the Ministries of Shari'a and of the Chief-of-General-Staff were simultaneously abolished and turned to government departments on the grounds that "for religion and the military to be interested in politics leads to various undesirable results". Quoted from Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in Mahmut Gologlu, *Devrimler ve Tepkileri, 1924-30* (Reforms and the Reactions to Them, 1924-30) (Basvur Matbaasi:Ankara, 1972), 9.

[7] This is the view shared by majority writers on the Turkish military. Examples are Dankwart A. Rustow, "the Army and the Founding of the Turkish Republic", *World Politics*, 4 (July 1959), 549; Daniel Lerner and Richard O. Robinson, "Swords and Ploughshares, the Turkish Army as a Modernizing Force", *World Politics*, 13 (1960-61), 22; William Hale, "Transition to Civilian Governments in Turkey: the Military Perspective", in Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin, (eds.) *Democracy and Military in Turkey in the 1980s* (de Gruyter: Berlin, 1988), 174.

[8] George Harris, "the Role of the Military in Turkey in the 1980s: Guardians or Decision Makers", in Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin, (eds.) op. cit., 181; Jacob M. Landau, "Turkey, Democratic Framework and Military Control", in J. Chelskowski and Robert Pranger, (eds.), *Ideology and Power in the Middle East* (Duke University Press: Durham and London, 1988), 314.

[9] Robert Pinkney, Right-Wing Military Government (Pinter: London, 1990), 98.

[10] Lombardi, op. cit., 210.

[11] Metin Heper, "Introduction", in Metin Heper and Jacob Landau, (eds.) *Political Parties and Democracy in Turkey* (I.B. Tauris: London, 1991), 7-12.

[12] James Brown, " The Military and Society: the Turkish Case", *the Middle Eastern Studies*, 25 (July 1989), 399.

[13] Cizre Sakallioglu, op., cit., 156-162.

[14] Metin Ozturk, "Orduda Ucretler ve Yapi", (The Salary Levels and the Structure of the Military), *Milliyet* (Istanbul daily), 11 March 1996.

[15] Ernst Gellner, Encounters with Nationalism (Blackwell Publishers: Oxford, 1994), 151.

[16] In 1995 elections, the RP received the largest share (21.3 percent) of the total votes.

[17] NSC was created in 1961. Reflecting the more liberal outlook of the post-coup Constitution of 1961, the NSC essentially embodied the principle of the bureaucrat's primacy over the popularly elected general assembly. As a result, the number of its civilian members exceeded those of the senior commanders. With the 1973 amendments, in the aftermath of 1971 intervention by memorandum, the primary function of the NSC extended to making policy

recommendations to the government. Finally, by Article 118 of the post-coup Constitution of 1982, its position was enhanced to one of submitting to the council of ministers "its views on taking decisions and ensuring necessary coordination with regard to the formulation, establishment and implementation of the national security policy". The council of ministers are then required to give "priority consideration" to the decisions of the NSC. The wording of the article does not, however, absolve the council of ministers -4 members of which are represented in the NSC in addition to the 5 high echelon armed forces commanders, the president and the prime minister- of the function of deliberating on these policy recommendations before and after they are discussed in the NSC. Indeed, Article 117 authorizes the council of ministers as the organ responsible for formulating national security issues and for the preparation of the armed forces for the defence of the country. In practice, however, the council of ministers carry out the NSC's recommendations.

[18] From a briefing given to journalists on June 11, 1997, by General Fevzi Turkeri, the head of the Resistance and Security Department of the General Staff Headquarters, as quoted in Muzaffer Sahin, *MGK, 28 Subat Oncesi ve Sonrasi* (NSC, the Period Prior to and Subsequent to February 28) (Ufuk Kitabevi:Ankara, no publication date), 111.

[19] Evren Deger, "TSK: Irtica Devlet Gibi", (Turkish Armed Forces: Islamic Reactionism Is Like a State), *Radikal* (Istanbul daily), Jan. 19, 1999.

[20] Fikret Bila, "Bati Calisma Grubu" (Western Study Group), *Milliyet*, July 12, 1997; "Iste Tartisilan Gizli Belgeler"(Here Are the Secret Documents under Discussion), *Milliyet*, July 11, 1997.

[21] Kevin Fox Gotham, "Ironies of Oversight: State Power, Democratic Legitimacy and the Creation of Congressional Intelligence Committees", *Berkeley Journal of Sociology: A Critical Review*, XXXIV (1994-95), 35.

[22] Paul W. Zagorski, *Democracy vs National Security-Civil-Military Relations in Latin America* (Lynne Rienner Publishers: Boulder& London, 1992), 123.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid., 127.

[26] Peter Feaver, "The Civil-Military Problematique: Huntington, Janowitz and the Question of Civilian Control", *Armed Forces and Society*", 23 (Winter 1996), 154.

[27] Mary Kaldor, "A Benign Imperialism", *Prospect* (April 1999), 14.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid., 119.

[32] Rusen Cakir, " Hizbullah Batiya Goc Etti" (Hizbullah Migrated to the Western Provinces), *Milliyet*, Jan. 18, 2000; Seyhmus Cakan and Ozgur Cebe, "Guneydogunun Alti Mezar" (underneath the Southeast is a Grave), *Milliyet*, Jan., 23, 2000)

[33] "Genelkurmaydan Tepki", (the Reaction from the Chief of General Staff), *Sabah*, Feb., 25, 2000.

[34] Ibid.

[35] From the briefing given by General Fevzi Turkeri, quoted in Sahin, op. cit., 112.

[36] Ibid., 124.

[37] Ibid., 116.

[38] Ibid., 77.

[39] "Ordudan Rekor Ihrac" (Record Breaking Expulsions from the Army), *Milliyet*, June 17, 1998.

[40] David McDowall, *Modern History of the Kurds*, (I.B.Tauris: London & New York, 1996), 7.
[41] Sheldon Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy", in Seyla Benhabib (ed.) *Democracy and Difference-Contesting the Boundaries of the Political* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1996), 33.
[42] Resat Kasaba, "Why Does The Kurdish War Continue?" paper presented at the Conference on Ethno-Political Warfare: Causes and Solutions Incore, University of Belfast, Londonderry, Northern Ireland, June 27-July 3, 1998.
[43] In the 1990s, the official figures show that defence expenditure accounted for 12 percent of the national budget, 2 percent of the GNP and 4.5 percent of the GDP.
[44] Interview with the then Defence Minister Ismet Sezgin, *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 28 , December 17, 1997.
[45] "Irticaya Yaptirim Yok" (There Is No Enforcement against Reactionism), *Milliyet*, June 4, 1998.
[46] "Ekonomist Asker" (Military as Economists), *Milliyet*, January 1, 1998.
[47] Interview with Javier Solana by Nilgun Cerrahaoglu, "Catisma Degil Isbirligi" (Cooperation Not Clashing), *Millliyet*, Dec., 20, 1998.
[48] "Hukumet Tedbir Almali" (The Government Must Take Measures), *Milliyet*, April 7, 1999.
[49] Stephen Kinzer, "Kurdish Rebels Tell Turkey They Are Ending Their War", *The New York Times*, Feb., 10, 2000.
[50] "Nine Kurdish Rebels Surrender to Turkey", Reuters, October 1, 1999, internet.
[51] Resat Kasaba, "Why Does the Kurdish War Continue?" op. cit., 6.
[52] Kaldor, op. cit., 14.
[53] On January 16, 1998, the Constitutional Court banned the RP on the grounds that it violated the secular principles of the Turkish republic and barred its 7 founding members including Necmettin Erbakan, from political activity for 5 years.
[54] Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 1957), 74.
[55] Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (Yale University Press: new Haven, 1968), 70.
[56] Ibid., 239-40.
[57] Elizabeth Pickard, "Arab Military in Politics: From Revolutionary Plot to Authoritarian State", in Adeed Dawisha and William I. Zartman, (eds.) *Beyond Coercion and Durability* (Croom Helm: London, 1988), 121; Karen Rammer, "The Politics of Military Rule in Chile, 1973-1987", *Comparative Politics*, 21 (January 1989), 152-56.
[58] For praetorian "armies", "political orders", "civil military relations" and "states" see Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies, op. cit.,* Amos Perlmutter, "Civil Military Relations in Socialist Authoritarian and Praetorian States: Prospects and Retrospects", in Kolkowicz and Karbonski, (eds.) op. cit., 310-331 and David Rapoport, "The Praetorian Army: Insecurity, Venality and Impotence", in ibid., 252-280.
[59] Perlmutter, op. cit., 312.
[60] Rapoport, op. cit., 254.
[61] J. Samuel Finch, *The Armed Forces and Democracy in Latin America* (The Johns Hopkins Press: Baltimore, London, 1998), 39-42.
[62] Ibid., 40.
[63] Ibid., 42. Examples are Chile and Brazil under President Sarney.
[64] Ibid., 58.
[65] Ibid., 48.

[66] Ibid., 39.
[67] Sahin, op. cit., 77.
[68] Ibid.
[69] The views expressed by former deputy chief of the Turkish General Staff, retired General Cevik Bir and Admiral T. Joseph Lopez, former commander in chief of Allied Forces Southern Europe, at a CSIS (Center for Strategic and International Studies) Turkish Studies meeting on October 25, 1999, in Washington. Internet.
[70] Ibid.
[71] "Military Reiterates That It Is Protector of Democracy in Turkey", *Turkish Daily News*, November 25, 1999, internet.
[72] Fehmi Koru, "Change Little by Little", *Turkish Daily News*, November 25, 1999, internet.

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