

Committee/Council: Security Council

Issue: The situation in the Republic of Turkey

Student Officer: Monika Patriarchea

Position: Deputy President

Introduction

In 1920s the modern secular republic was established by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the nationalist leader and since his death in 1938 Turkey has been trying to establish a democratic state as well as boost its economy.

The army has been playing an important role in the stability of the state as it has been the guarantor of the constitution as they see themselves. For this reason, there is this long history of Turkey's army conducting Coups in order to oust governments which according to them are not respecting the values of the already existing constitution.

Despite these efforts and the progress made by Turkey during the past years, Turkey is finding itself in a position in which problems exist both concerning their internal and the external affairs.

These issues have also been the reason for which Turkey hasn't gained yet the EU membership, which constitutes a longstanding ambition of this state. Talks started in 2005 leading to this result due to the doubts showed by numerous states.

But Turkey also needs to deal with the Kurds, who make up to 1/5 of Turkey's population and are facing some issues with the government, as well as with the ISIS which is posing a serious threat to the security of the state especially close to the borders of Turkey with Syria.



Turkey, a country connecting Europe and Asia, has a strategically important location which is making the country not only being able to influence the region around it but also control the Black Sea.

Definition of Key-Terms

Coup d'état

As defined by Oxford Dictionaries "A sudden, violent, and illegal seizure of power from a government"¹

Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)

Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) is a militant Kurdish nationalist organization founded by Abdullah Öcalan in the late 1970s. PKK's aim is the creation of an independent state within Turkey and that's why it started fighting for that against Turkey in 1984.

Secularism

According to secularism, the state rejects or shows indifference to religion as it supports that religion should not be a part of the political affairs.

Secular state

A secular state is a concept of secularism according to which a state is neutral on any topic concerning religion. This principle first appeared after the 1928 amendment of the Constitution of 1924 which took away the part stating "Religion of the State is Islam".

ISIS

ISIS stands for Islamic State in Iraq and Syria and is a radical Sunni Muslim organization or even an extremist militant organization that strictly follows a Wahhabi doctrine of Sunni Islam. In Arabic, the group is also known as Daesh.

YPG

YPG also known as the People's Protection Units or the People's Defense Units can be considered to be the main armed service in the region of the Northern Syria – Rojava. Members of the YPG are mainly Kurdish but there are also Arabs, Turks, and Westerners.

¹ Definition of Coup by Oxford Dictionaries,
www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/coup#coup_3

Background information

The Turkish war of independence

After the Turkish defeat in the World War I, the Turkish war of independence was mainly an effort of Turkish people to recreate a state as the old empire was ruined. Kemal Ataturk, appearing for the first time in the history of Turkey after World War I where he proved his military talents, joined the ottoman army in 1905 as one of the captains.

After Ottoman's empire was defeated in the World War I, Kemal was given the position of the commander of the thunder armies but when he returned to Istanbul his army was destroyed. For this reason, he decided to leave again in the search of a new army so he traveled across Anatolia and collected his military personnel. He realized that only a new army could be proved to be efficient, as a political solution would not be able to combat the invaders that were causing problems to the government of Istanbul.

Presented in the beginning as a Turkish resistance movement it didn't take long until the conflict transformed into an actual war leading to the independence of Turkey. That happened when Mustafa went to Samsun being the Inspector of the 9th army. He managed to achieve the success of his army against powerful enemies from around the world. This period of time in Anatolia (May 1919) when Ataturk landed at Samsun was hard as the Southeastern Anatolia was invaded by the French and the Italians, the Mediterranean by both of them as well as by the British, the Aegean by the Greeks, the Marmara, straits and Istanbul by the allies and the central Anatolia was occupied by the Turks. Kemal's first victory was in the Battle of Marash against the French army having as a result to push the Armenians even further out. One year later, in 1922, he managed to win the battle against the Greeks in the Battle of Dumlupinar.

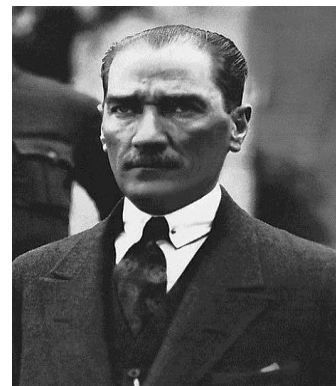


Due to the fact that the nationalist forces started getting more and more powerful, Britain was forced to sign a peace treaty. The Republic of Turkey was recognized with the Treaty of Lausanne which also ensured the equality of Muslim and non-Muslim Turkish. It was On 29th October 1923 that Turkey proclaimed independent as it was then that the allies were all defeated.

Ataturk's rise and reforms

Turkey has a long history of troubled times both before and after the creation of the state in 1923. The first president appointed in turkey was Kemal Ataturk. As the first president, he was hoping that he would change Turkey in a way that he would westernize the new state both politically and culturally. He was labeled "the founder of modern Turkey" or even "Father of the Turks" as the name Ataturk means.

Kemal launched reform programs in different sectors including the political, the economic as well as the cultural. Struggling to transform the Ottoman Empire to a new secular state, he introduced new laws that totally changed the way of living of Turkish people and he tried a lot to actually separate state and religion.



Some of his main reforms are the following:

1. Political reforms

- a) The abolishment of the sultanate (1922)
- b) The declaration of the Turkish republic (1923)
- c) The caliph was abolished (1924)

2. Social reforms

- a) Equal rights for men and women (1926-1934)
- b) The state closed the mausoleums as well as the places of worship (1925)
- c) Introduction of the international numeric system(1928)
- d) The state adopted the international hours and measurements (1925-1931)
- e) Part of the social reforms is also the clothing reform. After Kemal women instead of wearing veils started wearing clothes like women in Western societies and men replaced fez with hats.

3. Legal reforms

- a) Closing the religious courts
- b) The state gave two basic rights to women:
 - i) Right to be elected to the parliament
 - ii) Civil rights (1926)

4. Educational/Cultural reforms

- a) Establishment of schools around the country
- b) Alteration of the Turkish language by the introduction of an alphabet which was actually the Latin alphabet adapted to Turkish and he personally taught people in the parks of Ankara. This alteration was put into practice by the Law on the Adoption and Implementation of the Turkish Alphabet (passed on November 1, 1928) this took effect on January 1, 1929.
- c) Regulation of the university education (1933)
- d) Establishment of Turkish language and history institutions (1931-1932)

5. Economic reforms

- a) Establishment of new farms
- b) Establishment of industrial facilities

The Armenian Genocide

The Armenian Genocide refers to the extermination of approximately 1.5 million Armenians living within the Turkish borders.

Turks discriminated against Armenians long before the genocide began. Seeing the constitutional progress in Europe of the 19th century, Armenians decided to ask for more equal rights from the Ottoman government. After the losses caused by World War I and a decline in the power of the Ottoman Empire the Ottomans escaped from their problems with the beginning of the Armenian Genocide.

The genocide took place in 1915 (and lasted until 1918) when numerous Armenians were murdered and others were deported to Syria and Anatolia. The Armenians were publicly massacred and the Armenian community was totally ruined after that. The Ottoman Empire never got punished for its actions while Turkey (as the state that we know today) never acknowledged it as a genocide.

There were serious problems starting before the actual genocide. From 1894 to 1896 there were approximately 150,000 Armenians killed while more than 100,000 were forced to leave

their homes. Kurds and Turks confiscated the property of approximately 500,000 Armenians that were impoverished.

Coup d'état

When Kemal became the first president of Turkey, he set the army as the one responsible for ensuring that the values of the system that he created were respected. Exactly because of that, there have been a great number of coups occurring in Turkey after his death.

- 1960

In 1960, the military conducted the very first coup. This period was full of tensions as the Democratic Party (that was ruling back then) changed some of the rules proposed by Atatürk. They allowed mosques to reopen, they made legal praying in Arabic instead of Turkish, etc. The tensions with the opposition increased as the ruling Party censored the press by not allowing critical articles to be published. Then the army started the coup and overthrew the government on May 27. The president, prime minister and several cabinet members were arrested. Later, Menderes (the PM) was executed.

- 1971

Turkish economy wasn't going that well during this period. This situation led to unrests, demonstrations as well as attacks conducted by right-wing groups. In order to restore the order, the army started the second coup. Demirel (the PM during this period) resigned hours later, after meeting with his cabinet.

- 1980

Even after the coup of 1971 stability wasn't established in Turkey where in the 1970s there were 11 different PMs. The economy was still suffering and right-wing groups continued their attacks. The discussions for a possible coup started in late 1979, and in March 1980 some generals proposed to begin. It was delayed until September when the army, after declaring that they were moving forward with the coup and that they were imposing a martial law, dissolved the government. The next president was Evren and Bulent Ulusu was the new Prime Minister.

This period Turkey stabilized a bit because of the military rule. Turgut Ozal who succeeded Ulusu in 1983 was the one that stabilized Turkish economy by making many state-owned industries. People were arrested by the military, many were executed, while others were either tortured or disappeared.



- 1997

The Islamist welfare party won in the election of 1995 and took the power the following year. In 1997, the government was forced to accept the proposals of the military. The Prime Minister, Necmettin Erbakan, followed an 8-year educational program and numerous other measures including the ban on the headscarf in universities. The Prime minister was forced to resign by the military in order to save people's religious freedoms. This party stopped existing in 1998 and the PM wasn't allowed to participate in the political scene for five years. Other members of the Party including Erdogan joined the Justice and Development Party.

- 2016

On 15 July 2016, there was an attempt by the military to conduct a coup d'état against state institutions including the government. The attempt happened by the Turkish Armed Forces that were reorganized as Peace at Home Council. They tried to take control of important places around Turkey like in Ankara, and Istanbul but they were stopped by the forces of the government. This coup affected the lives of many people leaving over 300 people dead and more than 2,100 injured.

How did the failed coup of 2016 affect Turkey?

After the coup Erdogan signed a state of emergency and under its auspices he ordered the shutdown of some media. Among them there were:

- 3 news agencies,
- 16 television channels,
- 23 radio stations,
- 45 daily newspapers,
- 15 magazines and
- 29 publishing houses,
- more than 20 news websites

Another consequence was that dozens of journalists were arrested.

Furthermore, Erdogan's government decided to dismiss military involved in the failed coup. More specifically, 1,684 members of the military, including 127 generals and 32 admirals were forced to leave the armed forces.

Current president- Erdogan



The existing president of Turkey, Erdogan used to be a member of the Islamic Welfare State. While now, he is in the Justice and Development Party. He has been playing an important role in the political scene of Turkey for more than the last 16 years. He spent 11 years as Turkey's prime minister before becoming the country's first directly-elected president in August 2014.

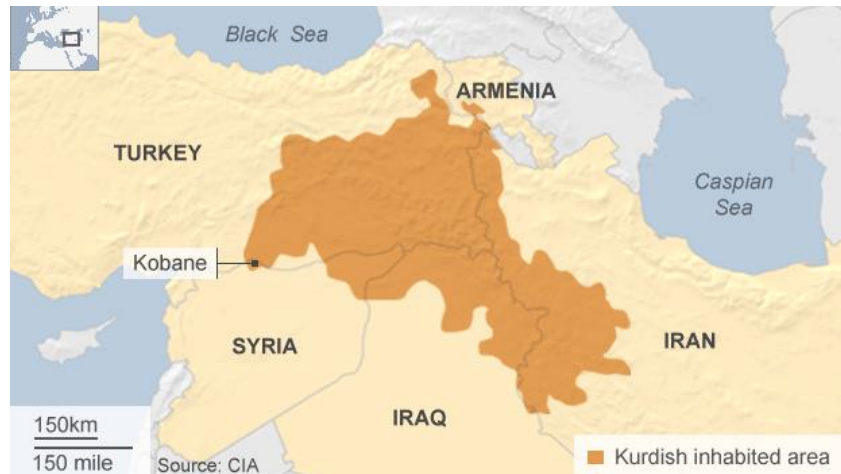
He was also serving as the mayor of Istanbul over a 4-year period from 1994-1998. During his rule, he's been trying to make Turkey a more religious state. The number of mosques built has increased as well as the religious groups have been able to freely practice their religion in public.

Kurds and Turkey

Another internal problem Turkey has to face is the issue of the Kurds. The region of the borders of Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Iran and Armenia is a mountainous region in which there are approximately 25 to 35 million Kurds.

This ethnic group despite its constant efforts as we will see has never had an actual national state.

Being the fourth largest minority currently living in the Middle East, the Kurds come from the Mesopotamian plains and the highlands. In our days these places are parts of Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Armenia and Iran.



During the 1970s, a group with Marxist-Leninist roots was created, the PKK. In 1984 this group decided to start an armed fight opposing the Turkish government asking for:

- A) The separation of a specific region of Turkey currently occupied and inhabited by Kurds for the creation of a Kurdish national state which would be independent or the creation of a Kurdish state which is going to be independent inside the borders of Turkey,
- B) The establishment of both political and cultural rights as long as Kurds are concerned in the Turkish state.

Since the time that Kurds made the aforementioned requests the situation influenced both sides negatively.

- As an armed conflict started there were numerous casualties as well. More specifically more than 40,000 people have been killed fighting.
- Villages were destroyed as well during this conflict especially during the harshest years of the conflict around the mid-1990s.
- People were forced to leave their homes and look for a shelter in different parts of Turkey as houses were destroyed both in the region inhabited by Kurds and in the rest of the Republic of Turkey.
- Tourism has decreased as well, due to the number of unexpected attacks taking place that would threaten people traveling there.

- This decline of tourism combined with the money spent for military purposes by the Turkish state, which is estimated 300 to 4500 billion dollars, has hurt the Turkish economy.

During the 1990s the Kurds decided to give up on trying to create their own state and they started making efforts to gain some autonomy while living in the Turkish state. When their former leader, Abdullah Ocalan, was arrested for treason in 1999 the group passed in a troubled period.

In 2013, a great step towards solving this issue was made when a ceasefire was called and PKK forces had to leave Turkey. This ceasefire has been characterized as “historic”. In 2015, when Turkey started airstrikes hurting people in PKK camps the ceasefire came to an end.

Since these airstrikes, there have been more attacks happening on both sides that haven’t helped to solve the issue.

Turkey and the YPG

The reason why Turkey has been hostile to the YPG is because of the fact that this group is considered as an extension of the Kurdistan’s Workers Party (PKK) by Turkey.

Turkey and PKK are still fighting against each other and in the meantime, the YPG is gaining the trust of Turkish allies internationally in the fight against ISIL. However, the relations with Turkey remain hostile as the Syrian Kurds are still trying to gain an autonomous state in the region of Rojava.

Turkey's government has previously stated that they wouldn’t only fight against ISIS but against the YPG as well. The issue of the YPG has been complicating the relations of Turkey and its respective allies including NATO and the USA as they have been supporting the YPG seeing that it is a group that can help eradicating ISIS.

ISIS and Turkey

Between ISIS and Turkey, there has been an ongoing conflict characterized by numerous attacks conducted by both sides. More specifically as long as ISIL is concerned there have been the following attacks the past years:

- 1) Attack in May 2013 in Reyhanlı
- 2) Attack against Turkish police March 2014,
- 3) Rally bombing on 5 June 2015 Diyarbakır,
- 4) The Ataturk airport attacks, etc.

As long as Turkey is concerned:

Turkey until the summer of 2015 engaged in military operations against ISIL once in January 2014. In September 2014, Turkey decided to join the US-led coalition in order to fight against ISIL. Led by the US with the aid of numerous countries participating including Belgium, Jordan, Germany, etc. it aims at cutting off ISIL's monetary help as well as help in any type of military operation against it.

Going back to Turkey's role against ISIL, Turkey decided to give access to the US in 2 air bases located in Turkey the Incirlik and the Diyarbakir in July 2015.

Turkey was forced because of the mass killings inside its borders to take action and help to eradicate ISIL.

"Daesh should be completely cleansed from our borders, and we are ready to do that," Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said.

After numerous clashes and continuous attacks Turkey is finally in the position, on 5th September 2016, to claim that ISIL is not a threat to its borders anymore as the campaign to eradicate it as they said was successful. ISIL lost control of key regions close to the Syrian-Turkish borders.

This is an important step towards stabilizing Turkey but since ISIL is an organization still active no one knows how it is going to develop if it's not eradicated as soon as possible.

Major countries and organizations involved

EU/other organizations and Turkey

Turkey has a long history of efforts trying to become a member of the EU starting on 14 April 1987.

- Turkey joined the Council of Europe (1949),
- The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)(1961),
- the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)(1973)
- Turkey was an associate member of the Western European Union (1992-2011)
- Turkey is a part of the "Western Europe" branch of the Western European and Others Group (WEOG) at the United Nations
- Turkey became an associate member of the EU since (1963)
- Turkey signed a Customs Union agreement with the EU(1995)

- Turkey was firstly seen as a candidate for full membership on 12th December 1999, this happened at the Helsinki summit of the European Council.

All of the previous facts led to the beginning of actual negotiations on 3rd October 2005 to decide whether or not Turkey would gain full membership.



Until today, despite the little progress made by Turkey, there are still issues due to which Turkey hasn't been accepted. A step that actually affected Turkish progress is that after the last coup in July Turkey decided to temporarily suspend the European Convention on Human Rights after announcing a state of emergency.

USA-Turkish relations

The two countries' relations have been troubled over the past years. This concerns differences in the policies applied by the two aforementioned states and mark the most troubled relations that the US ever had with one of the most important NATO allies. However, both states need each other and therefore they keep on having diplomatic relations.

Timeline of events

1915	Armenian Genocide
1921	Ataturk established a provisional government in Ankara

1922	Abolishment of the sultanate
1923	Independence of Turkey with Kemal Ataturk as the President
1938	Kemal died
1949	Turkey joined the Council of Europe
1960	Coup against ruling Democratic Party
1961	Turkey joined the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
1963	Turkey became an associate member of the EU since
1970S	Creation of PKK
1973	Turkey joined the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)
1980	Second successful Military coup, Imposition of martial law
1984	Beginning of the PKK-Turkish conflict
1987	Turkey applies for full EEC membership.
1992-2011	Turkey was an associate member of the Western European Union
1994-1998	Erdogan served as the mayor of Istanbul
1995	Turkey signed a Customs Union agreement with the EU
1997	Intervention of the military in order for the government to accept its proposals

1999	Turkey was firstly seen as a candidate for full membership
2004 (December)	The EU agreed to start talks during 2005 for the admission of Turkey
2013	Ceasefire between Turkey and PKK
2014	Turkey joined the US-led coalition against ISIL
2015	Violation of the ceasefire by Turkey
2016	Failed coup on July - crackdown of media in Turkey

Possible Solutions

Due to the complexity of the situation in Turkey caused by the numerous problems in the region the solutions need to be focused on each problem separately.

Points to be considered by the delegates:

- Is Kemal's aim to create a secular state a valid target in our days?
- How is Erdogan affecting the Human Rights situation inside the borders of Turkey?
- How can tensions with the PKK be eased? Is the military way the most effective one or do we need to establish discussions between the two parties involved?
- Will this loss of ISIS can Turkey be stabilized for a long period of time? Or is it necessary in order to ensure that Turkey will get rid of ISIS to try to reinforce the borders?
- Is the YPG an actual threat to Turkey or do they technically have the main purpose in combatting ISIS?
- How are the relations between Turkey and its allies going to be improved?
- Was the fact that Turkey suspended the EU human rights' declaration even for a specific period of time the right step to deal with the attempted coup?

Another possible threat that Turkey is facing nowadays concerns democracy. Especially after the media's crackdown, an act that is violating freedom of speech, and the decision that Turkey is not going to follow the European declaration of Human Rights because of the state of emergency, the danger is increasing.

- Can the citizens act in order to change this?
- What's the role of global community in this situation?

Bibliography

<http://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21702509-recep-tayyip-erdogan-drifts-away-america-nato-and-eu-running-out-friends?zid=307&ah=5e80419d1bc9821ebe173f4f0f060a07>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17988453>

<http://edition.cnn.com/2016/08/25/middleeast/turkey-isis-syria-explainer-lister/>

<http://www.erkutaldeniz.com/the-war-of-independence/>

<http://allaboutistanbul.tripod.com/ataturk.htm>

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/07/turkey-coup-attempt-reaction-world-160715215141043.html>

<http://www.allaboutturkey.com/reform.htm>

<https://www.quora.com/What-would-be-the-summary-of-the-Turkish-war-of-independence>

<http://www.war-memorial.net/Turkish-War-of-Independence-3.45>

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/greenslade/2016/jul/29/press-freedom-groups-condemn-turkish-media-crackdown>

<http://www.euronews.com/tag/eu-turkey>

<http://www.historyplace.com/worldhistory/genocide/armenians.htm>

http://www.edb.utexas.edu/faculty/salinas/students/student_sites/Fall2008/2/

http://www.debatingeurope.eu/focus/infobox-arguments-for-and-against-turkeys-eu-membership/#.V8a0_5iLShc

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-13746679>

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2012/04/20124472814687973.html>

<https://www.thestar.com/news/world/2016/07/15/turkey-has-a-history-of-military-coups.html>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33690060>