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P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. HILL: I just want to welcome all of you here today for our discussion on the outcome of the Turkey elections. I'm Fiona Hill, the director of the Center on United States and Europe. We're very pleased to see so many people turn out on a Friday afternoon, especially since it's one of a series of events on these rather momentous elections that took place last week. I hope all of you have been able to help yourself to cookies and coffee.

We're very pleased to have with us today Fuat Keyman, who is the director of the Istanbul Policy Center and also a professor at Sabanci University. Some of you may have been here in May for our annual Sabanci lecture, and Fuat and some of his colleagues were instrumental in helping us put that together. As you may recall, that was Javier Solana, the former high representative of the EU and former NATO secretary general and one of our distinguished fellows here at Brookings, who was the keynote speaker, and then our very own Kemal Derviş, the vice president of Brookings, who was a commentator.

There's actually an article available outside that Javier Solana has just written on a reset of Turkey-EU relations, and this is one of the issues that Fuat is going to talk about in his opening remarks today.

We also have with us one of our fellow leaders of a local think-tank, Nuh Yilmaz, the director of the Foundation for Political, Economic, and Social Research, SETA, a Turkish foreign policy think-tank, which is based here also in D.C. And Nuh had one of his own events on this and other topics this week. So, we're very glad that he's able to join us. He's been the moderator of events. This is a chance for Nuh to say what he actually thinks about the recent developments.

And then we have our own Ömer Taşpınar, our director of our Turkey

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Project here at Brookings and also a professor at the National Defense University, as well as at SAIS across the road. Some of you actually may have taken some of Ömer's classes, and I hope he graded you well at the end of the semester. And Ömer also has a new article out in analysis of the outcomes of elections, which is also available outside and on our website. And Ömer will wrap up the discussion and then it will be over to you for questions and discussion.

So, we'll start with Fuat. Thank you so much for coming, and we're very grateful that you could join us.

MR. KEYMAN: Thank you, Fiona. I had a long presentation, but I have to shorten it. So, let me make actually three points about the elections. Three important points that I think important to understand what's happening right now in Turkey and what will happen in the near future.

First, actually, the election is an election without incidents, without corruption, without any suspicion about the results. So, it was a really fair, democratic election. The reason I actually started with this, that is my first point, the Turkish electorate (inaudible) diversity in terms of religion, ethnicity, culture, gender, and age acted so brilliantly and responsibly and rationally, that is the election not only a historic one, but also useful and trustworthy guideline or if you like, roadmap that has to be read very carefully by the four parties right now in the parliament, and followed by all of them. And I'd like to actually substantiate this point by making briefly five points.

First, the Turkish electorate cared passionately about politics, went to rallies, and took the elections seriously and participated in the election with a record percentage, 87 percent, which is something that Western democracies just dream of. So, it's a very, very big participation.

Secondly, in addition to this, they voted in such a way that they actually

increased what can be called a representational capacity of the parliament, despite antidemocratic 10 percent threshold. So, right now, Turkish Parliament is a pretty good representational capacity, which is very, very important because we are talking about a new constitution that has to be made in a democratic and participatory way.

And, thirdly, the way they voted, they gave both awards and warnings to all of the parties. It was not a win-lose kind of election. Every party wins a bit, but they all actually get warnings from the electorate, too. So, that was actually title of my paper, awards and winnings that are given to parties by the Turkish electorate, that I will explain this in a second.

And, fourthly, in actually doing so, they voted in a way to shape the parliament, not only increasing its representation of capacity, but they brought in the parliament newcomers in terms of women's percentage increase up to 15 percent. More Kurds, and we know that we cannot do the new constitution without Kurds. More young people, and even actually a symbolic Syriani Christian that actually sort of symbolizes the multi religious structure of a Turkish society.

So, in this sense, the Turkish Parliament, despite all this 10 percent anti-democratic threshold, is really to serve a platform or a forum for democratic deliberation among political parties in terms of dealing with or tackling effectively with the Kurdish question first and then with the making the new democratic constitution.

And, fifthly, they actually voted in such a way that, as opposed to the pre-election time, where deep political and social polarizations in Turkey were being reinforced by the leaders of the political parties. They are really assertive, very clash-y, very actually strong tone of criticism in their voices.

On the contrary to these actually assertive and clash-y in a structure of the pre-election time, post-election Turkey right now is the parliament, which can go

beyond or which can actually overcome the problem of societal and political polarization. I have actually PowerPoints to show this that should make this point. It's a very suitable parliament as a result of the Turkish electorate, and they are really brilliant and rational voting pattern. And it's very suitable to tackle with actually these significant problems of Kurdish question and the new constitution.

My second point, of course, is there are winners and losers of this elections, and, of course, the big winner is the AKP, and the second winner is the Kurdish, Pro-Kurdish BDP. The losers actually, of course, there are losers in such a way that they lost the elections, but the first loser is CHP, although they increased their awards up to 6 percent, but that was much behind what people expected to. But it was important sort of move that came from CHP. MHP, the Turkish Nationalist Party, just they actually gathered to 13 percent of the popular award, and they're in the parliament, but, of course, they actually lost to 4 percent, according to 2007 elections.

And referring to Javier Solana and the *Time* article by Jack Straw, as far as I'm concerned, the Turk loser was the EU by actually excluding Turkey and by actually thinking about Turkish electorate and Turkish society and not rational and not democratic, but very traditional, very, you know, Muslim or whatever you call it, and EU didn't get actually Turkey's importance that way, but I will actually elaborate on this.

But, of course, we have to actually substantiate the fact that the main winner is the RKP. It's a big, landslide victory, and the first time in Turkish history a political party won three times in a row by increasing its awards. So, it was actually as opposed to the 1950s, actually there's a sort of party winning and actually increasing its awards, and, of course, the Prime Minister Erdogan turned out to be the most popular leader in Turkish political history by winning all the elections he entered. And, well, of course, by giving 50 percent mandate to the AK Party, the election result indicated that

there is no alternative to AK Party, politically speaking, because the aggregator of awards of CHP plus MHP plus BDP plus 6 percent makes 50 percent. So, the AK Party collected 6 percent more than the aggregator of all the awards that these political parties actually got.

And, secondly, 50 percent indicates that the electoral gave a mandate to Mr. Erdogan for his presidential election, most likely 2012, and the AK Party's electoral strategy was towards 2023 Turkey. And, of course, it looked a bit -- the topic talking about 2023 in the year of 2011, but this 50 percent with this actual mandate given to Mr. Erdogan that the topic turned out to be reality that can be achieved because if Mr. Erdogan becomes the president in 2014, presidential insistent as such that you have to actually have that 5 years plus 5 years. So, in this sense, it is likely and it is possible that in 2002 and '03, Mr. Erdogan might make (inaudible) speech, balcony speech. So, in this sense, we are talking about a very serious success coming from the AK Party, but, of course, great successes come with great responsibilities.

And Turkish waters, while giving a majority mandate for the parliament, did not give the mandate, what can be called for the referendum majority, the AK Party actually cannot do the referendum by itself. So, the directorates said that you have to compromise with other political parties; you have to consult with civil society organizations. As a matter of fact, that's actually the demand that comes from civil society in Turkey anyways. So, in this sense, the warning that is given to the AK Party was you cannot act unilaterally in dealing with the Kurdish question and in making the new constitution, compromise and consultation and deliberation with political parties and civil society organizations are actually needed.

There are, of course, reasons for the victory of the AK Party. I will actually pass that because of limited time. But, of course, three of them, very briefly,

should be mentioned in order to actually indicate the sociological background of this victory.

First, actually, economy mattered. AK Party had no alternative in terms of its economic platform performance not only economic growth rate, but also providing the infrastructural basic needs of the people in terms of housing, in terms of health, in terms of education. So, they actually very successfully employed what I call philanthropic new liberalism in the sense that it is very market-oriented, but also providing the people with their basic needs, especially housing, education, and health should be underlined.

Secondly, it managed to establish a very functioning balance or relationship between traditional modernity, tradition and globalization by redefining tradition in a way that the tradition becomes integral element of Turkey's active globalization, Turkey's market oriented, oriented economy, and, of course, this functioning relationship between traditional modernity and globalization has created what we call new active conservative middle classes coming from (inaudible) cities, and in that sense, tradition in actually being integral to modernity and globalization is not only passive recipient of it, but turned out to be an active actor that actually attempts to redirect the pace and direction of globalization. So, that was actually quite important, socially speaking.

And of course, thirdly, Turkey's active globalization not only in terms of its proactive foreign policy, but, of course, the increasing global visibility of Turkey in different realms of society.

But, of course, we have to also talk about the second winner because that's the BDP, the pro-Kurdish political party. BDP increased its independent MPs up to 36 and actually got 5 out of 9 provinces where we have a Kurdish question.

Very briefly, actually, the success of BDP should be read off in such a

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way that the Kurdish question has become not only a cultural reality of Turkey, but as a result of the Turkish electorate, Kurdish question has also become a political reality of Turkey. So, in this sense, the recognition of the Kurdish question as cultural reality has a now a new tune that it is not only a cultural identity question, it's the political question that has to be dealt with politically within the parliament.

And, also, Kurdish-Turkish electorate as a whole gave the mandate to BDP that BDP is one of the main actors of the Kurdish question that has to be actually incorporated in the process of deliberation about the Kurdish question.

But the warning was like the RKP, the Turkish electorate in its diverted set, this success comes with responsibility. That means the disarmament of the Kurdish question, taking the parliamentary solution seriously, and the BDP action takes what can be called or what I call democratic responsibility in actually formulating and voicing its demands about the Kurdish question in terms of the democratic autonomy, in terms of schooling in the mother tongue, too.

And, more importantly, RKP and AK Party actually, as the winner in those southeastern provinces, so the Turkish electorate said that in addition to BDP as the main actor, RKP is the main actor, too. So, the AK Party has to be recognized by BDP and by PKK as one of the main Kurdish political parties. The Kurds, more than BDP, voted for the RKP. So, in this sense, when I say the Kurdish question has become a political reality, that political reality involves multiple actors right now, not only BDP and PKK, but RKP is also the main actor.

The CHP, of course, entered into the race in the middle with the change in the leadership and Kemal Kilicdaroglu, he was really very hardworking, even in a frantic way, and the CHP, the first time actually in its life, passed the RKP and made actually almost 200 rallies, and it increased its popular vote up to 26 percent. So,

therefore, is the award even to CHP by the Turkish elected, but Turkish elected said that you have to work harder. This is not actually enough frantic industrious work in rallies, is not enough to catch up with the RKP and MHP state.

So, my third point, very briefly, is this: Even though we have a very suitable parliament to tackle with the serious challenges approaching Turkey's society, Kurdish question, and in the new constitution, but, of course, there are also real factors that hinder the possibility of dealing with these questions, and I could actually give you two of them.

One actually is in terms of the losers, interparty conflict might actually take over these parties' engagement with Turkey's problems, and it's already started in CHP in interparty conflict, it started, and while actually we are expecting CHP to talk to the RKP, to actually get more active, more actually engaging in terms of dealing with this question, but now my fear actually is the CHP might be subject to very serious interparty conflict. Similarly, MHP actually will have the same kind of interparty conflicts. So, interparty conflict in terms of the losing political parties might be a hindrance to this post-election Turkey.

And the second one actually is all parties have red lines that are actually incommensurable as they actually assert them. For instance, RKP, CHP, and MHP have red lines in terms of the first three articles of the constitution. They don't want to negotiate about the secular structure of Turkey, Turkey's mother tongue, and Turkey's capital. There are various BDP, actually, wants to actually have a purely new constitution. And, secondly, BDP wants cooling in mother tongue, whereas the other political parties are completely against it. So, in this sense, red lines are also hindrance for this.

I think if political parties, Turkish media, and Turkey's scholars read the

election results carefully and correctly by focusing both awards and warnings given to them by the Turkish electorate, there is a chance that in post-election Turkey, we could actually tackle with these two questions. But if political parties rely exclusively on the awards, then we will have a big crisis, and, of course, Turkey doesn't have a luxury to face crisis in a time when we have actually big turmoil in the Middle East, big turmoil in Syria or Arab World, in all of which actually, Turkey is one of the main actors. So, there are serious challenges confronting Turkey, but Turkish electorate in this election said that I am giving you the most suitable parliament to actually talk, compromise, consult, and tackle with these questions.

Thank you.

MS. HILL: Thank you very much, Fuat. You've given us a very in-depth and detailed discussion of the, as you've put it, the "winners" and the "losers" and the various rewards and warnings that have come out of this election, and I think that's a really great frame for them thinking about the challenges that Turkey is facing.

You didn't have much chance to talk about the EU, but I think that will come out in the course of our discussions, and Ömer will probably pick up on some of the foreign policy challenges, as well.

But, Nuh, over to you.

MR. YILMAZ: Okay, thank you. Thank you for inviting me for this discussion.

Since I knew our core panelists will talk about the details of the election, results of the election, so I wanted to more focus on the strategic implications of these elections on Turkish foreign policy.

So, because there are now many issues, many policy issues that really Turkey is now faced with: its new constitution, zero problem with neighbor's policy,

Kurdish problem, further democratization, the Arab Spring, Turkish economy, new CHP, new MHP, new BDP, and maybe AKP. But I think more importantly, now we really have to focus on what is the political meaning of these results? So, all of the answers given to these questions are mainly policy answers. So, but I think the real result of these elections is Turkey voted for what will be the destiny of Turkey or maybe what will be the future of Turkey? So, I think the result of the elections show that now Turkey is no longer insubordinate power.

So, what does that mean? I think now after these elections, it is not only political and state elites of the country, of Turkey that agreed on Turkey should have an independent position in its foreign policy, but also Turkish voters who backed and supported almost half of them, back and supported AKP, supported this independent foreign policy agenda.

So, after nine years of AK Party government, I think AK Party achieved many domestic or international policy agendas, but mainly it would be a mistake to reduce AK Party's achievements, the economy, social services, or foreign policy. But the most important issue was during this nine years, Turkey pursued an independent position in foreign policy.

So, I think the result of these elections show that now in the next term, Turkey will be a more result-oriented, a more assertive, and also more active player in the issues that are mainly related to Turkey's broader neighborhood. So, Turkey will no longer be a just player in the international affairs arena, but will be a critical player as well as a game-maker in the international affairs.

So, what has changed? I mean, many people wrote about these issues, many analysts, strategists wrote about this issue, and many of them said Turkey is following an independent foreign policy agenda. But with this election now, at least half

of the voters supported this policy line, and this should be read as an endorsement of the current foreign policy.

So, what is the proof of that? The first proof is foreign policy was not even an issue during the elections. It was not a campaign issue. First Prime Minister Erdogan tried to bring that issue on the table, but opposition did not want to go onto that issue.

So, even Foreign Minister Davutoglu, for example, campaigned that the members of CHP and MHP to prove that ownership of the current foreign policy by the opposition. So, this answers, I think, some of the questions that were asked by analysts whether the current foreign policy of the AK Party or Turkey just belongs to AK Party or is owned by the other sectors of the society. So, I think now these elections show that it's owned by the people of Turkey with a large majority.

So, why do I focus on this particular point? So, I think most of the policy issues that were discussed here, including constitution Kurdish issue, et cetera, is closely tied to understanding of this new foreign policy and Turkey's new standing in the international arena. So, we can discuss further what are the details of this, but I think this strong mandate, that mandate given to AK Party proves that now Turkey wants to play an independent game after this moment. So, if this simple fact, this very simple fact is forgotten or disregarded, then it will be really difficult to discuss further issues that are closely related to this framework.

My claim is, I mean, this recognition, recognition of this simple fact is a structural one because once it's recognized, it changes almost everything in the current structure. In a sense, it creates a psychological effect or a change in perception, if you like, changes every single issue that we deal with regarding Turkey.

So, I want to put that in a more conceptual framework in the sense that I

just wanted to recourse Zbigniew Brzezinski's reading of Eurasian politics. He first, like almost a decade ago, defined Turkey as a geopolitical pivot that sometimes acts as a geopolitical player in the sense that geopolitical players are the states that have the capacity and the national will to exercise power or influence beyond their borders in order to alter the existing geopolitical state of affairs. I think these elections prove that now Turkey turned into a geostrategic player from geopolitical pivot. So, in the last nine years of economic stability really allowed Turkey to play or gain that position in the international politics.

So, there are similar comments down by Ambassador Ross Wilson, George Friedman, Ömer Taşpınar, sometimes he (inaudible) the concept of (inaudible) foreign policy. So, this has been brought into a discussion many times, but I think what is different right now is Turkey has been pursuing independent foreign policy and there's a high support from Turkish people on this foreign policy line.

So, let me just give a couple of examples to show how this is related to policy issues.

Starting from the Turkish-America relations, I think this is important to recognize Turkey has an independent player because Turkey now wants to be -- there's a view to be recognized as an equal partner or maybe as an independent power in Turkish-American relations. So, when two years ago this was first brought to the discussion, many people thought that the idea of model partnership that was to define Turkish-American relations was limited to Turkey's relations with U.S. But I think this was not only limited to Turkish-American relations, but this was all about Turkey's identity and Turkey's position in broader international affairs because Turkey wanted to define itself as an independent player and then wanted to modify its relationship with United States by asking for a seat at the decision-making table. So, once we recognize this fact, I think it

will be easier to solve all of these foreign policy or policy issues.

So, my point is this is a kind of new political subjectivity that's arising from Turkey. So, Turkey wants to be recognized as an independent power and elections of 2011 now seal this process by giving a 50 percent support to Erdogan and his party.

So, I think most of the questions and their traditional, conventional answers needs to be reformulated in the light of this basic, simple fact. I do not argue that the policy problems that we have been discussing, such as Kurdish issue, constitution, and all those things are not real problems. They are real problems, they are burning problems of Turkey, however, they are not existential problems anymore.

Just to give you an example, the suburbs of France all burned down five, six years ago. So, youth of (inaudible) almost setting parties to fire. But nobody argued that France was about to die, France was about to change its direction, or France was going to be more authoritarian or this was a test for France.

Or, similarly, we witness close relations with Russia or Germany. Who claims that Germany is changing its axis or betraying to NATO or to the Transatlantic Alliance? Or when Germany does not support the Libyan War, who claims that Germany is not supporting this war because of its religion? All of these questions, I think most of the time, were taken as political, social, diplomatic, or security-related problems in the case of these countries, but as existential problems in the case of Turkey.

So, with this election, I think this process, this way of understanding, this way or perceiving Turkish foreign policy needs to be ended. So, this is not a means to minimize the importance of these problems. Nevertheless, now the perception of Turkey should be normalized in this way. Every foreign or domestic policy decision should not be aggrandized, exaggerated, or even formulated as a test for Turkey. So, whenever we see a new problem, so everything is formulated as a test for Turkey or for Turkish foreign

policy. But I think these elections show that these are not tests for Turkey, but Turkey now is pursuing a different kind of foreign policy.

So, once this perception is changed, I think especially in this town, this will affect not only perception of Turkey, but also perception of Turkey's role in the Middle East, Turkey's role in the broader neighborhood of Turkey, and also in Turkish-American relations.

So, the policy problems of Turkey. I think many of those problems have been addressed this week in many different outlets in this town. So, but my question, my interpretation is all of these questions, all of these policy problems now should be seen in a position that if Turkey reacts to these problems in a positive way, then Turkey's position will remain as a geostrategic player. If not, then Turkey will struggle a little bit more to protect its position. Whether Turkey is going to be able to secure its position as a geostrategic player. I mean, this question will be answered through all these discussions, all these policy discussions that we have been really asking. Whether our party governments will be able to address these problems in a way that may institutionalize the gains of this last years will be the key question.

So, I think these questions are perfectly legitimate questions in the sense the problems that Turkey faces with economy, Kurdish issue, or new constitution are all challenges that may prevent Turkey to guarantee its status as a geostrategic player in the next decade or so. These are not the signs of crisis that needs to be solved, otherwise, Turkey will be doomed, et cetera. These are the problems that, if solved, may strengthen Turkey's position in the world and secure it's an independent player as a player in the region. From that perspective, we can further these questions in detail.

For example, new constitution. In the case of new constitution, the current metrics of the parliament forces Turkey into at least two options: interstate elites

and political elites. When I say "political elites," this should include MHP, BDP, AK Party, all the political parties, and also state elites, i.e., all the bureaucratic structure of Turkey will reach to a consensus and there will be a new constitution.

So, what would be the result of this? If Turkish elites manage to be able to draft a new constitutions, this will mean that Turkey learned after a decade-long struggle that national consensus is possible. So, then if Turkey cannot manage to deliver this new constitution, then this will show that Turkey will have a couple more years to struggle inside and the inter-elite struggle will continue for some time.

So, I think this is the kind of strategic dialogue that will generate mutual benefits for Ankara and Washington. It should start with not turning every single issue to an existential threat or to an existential test. Having said that, I want to wrap-up my discussion with a quote from Brzezinski to modify that question onto Turkey's position. So, does Washington truly desire a Turkey that's genuinely equal partner in world affairs or does it prefer an unequal alliance? I think the answer of this question will determine what's going to happen in the Middle East and Turkish foreign policy.

MS. HILL: Well, thank you, Nuh. That's quite a provocative question, and I'm sure Ömer might find a way of answering it.

MR. YILMAZ: Thanks.

MS. HILL: Here at the end. And, also, Ömer, if you might like to pick up a little bit on the end of the issue that Fuat left us about whether the EU is one of the losers out of this. You touched upon that a very small bit in your paper, but we left that discussion hanging, and I'm sure we can come into that a little further in the Q and A, but, perhaps, you might also reflect on that.

MR. TAŞPINAR: Sure, I'll try to link that in.

Thank you all for coming on a Friday afternoon. I'll try to be brief so that

we have time for Q&A. We just heard two very interesting, very good, in my opinion, analyses of the Turkish elections. The first one was quite descriptive, but also analytical in terms of explaining the ramifications of what happened, and from Nuh, we had analysis that, in my opinion, emphasized, perhaps overemphasized the importance of foreign policy in these elections.

I personally think that this is a very impressive victory for AKP, but perhaps because I'm more of an economic determinist, I really think the big story in Turkey is the economy and that people essentially do not vote when they go to the ballot box thinking about foreign policy.

This country, in great part thanks to structural reforms undertaken after the 2000, 2001 financial crisis in Turkey, and we have Kemal Derviş here to thank for these structural reforms, has been growing at the very impressive level, and it managed to -- whether the global financial crisis in a, again, impressive way without signing an IMF agreement, without really succumbing to some of the problems that other Mediterranean countries, surely Greece, Portugal, Spain are facing. So, overall, because Turkey managed to make structural reforms in 2000, 2001, especially in the banking and financial sector, it was relatively untouched by the global financial crisis, and if a country is growing with 9 percent and if consumption is on the rise, if people can spend, if there is a perception that you have living standards increasing and infrastructural projects are there are better roads, better hospitals, better health care services, affordable housing, these are the big stories that, in my opinion, explain why this political party, AKP, is so popular after all these years.

Imagine for a minute how long they've been in power in Istanbul under the leadership of Tayyip Erdogan as mayor first in 1994 and then with AKP running since 2002, this political party has been running a city of close to 17 million people for the last

17 years. So, Istanbul, you can think about it as large as Greece and Bulgaria combined. So, they've been running a city for 17 years as large as Istanbul, and they've been in power now for 9 years, and they're still increasing their votes.

So, yes, perhaps foreign policy matters, perhaps people are confident and we have seen the kind of self-confidence expressed in Nuh's take on Turkish foreign policy. There is a certain level of now almost hubris in Turkey in terms of what Turkey can do, Turkish grandeur, that we need to be respected. We're not going to take basically European answers that humiliate Turkey by saying no to Turkey as basically something that we should be bothered with.

There is a sense in Turkey that Turkey deserves much better and that the west does not respect Turkey. The United States does not respect Turkey. And I think implicitly in Nuh's remarks, we heard that. There's this sense that there may be a kind of an orientalist prejudice towards Turkey because these achievements have come under the government of Tayyip Erdogan, which has Islamic roots. There's always this certain prejudice about whether there's a secret agenda and Nuh termed it as "existential" questions. Is Turkey turning more Islamist? I think people overall resent that, and there's a level of confidence, but the reason why there is such confidence in Turkey, the reason why people are satisfied with overall the AKP is because the country is well-governed because there is a level of prosperity that is visible, and I think that's the big story. That's why AKP has won.

Just to give you an example, in 2009, just 2 years ago, in early 2009, Turkey had municipal elections. And in 2009, the economy was showing signs of some recessionary dynamics. Unemployment had an uptick. Guess how much AKP received in the 2009 municipal elections. Thirty-eight percent. Twelve percent below of today.

This is, I think, strongly correlated to the economy. When the economy

goes down, you will have opposition parties in Turkey that will be able to challenge the AKP in a much more effective way. It is very difficult to challenge an incumbent when the economy is doing so well. And the fact that just 2 years ago when there were some recessionary dynamics in Turkey, AKP had 38 percent, I think proves the point. So, this is why I think the economy is the big story.

The second story of these elections, and I think Fuat Keyman emphasized it correctly, is the Kurdish question. The Kurdish question has reached a critical level in Turkey. The PKK may not be as powerful as it was during the 1990s, but Kurdish nationalism as a political force has reached a point of no return. A political party that most Turks consider as the political wing of the PKK, that is the pro-Kurdish peace and democracy party, has won 36 seats. They have most of the municipalities in the Kurdish parts of Turkey. So, you have a situation where there is a very ethnically conscious Kurdish generation in Turkey, a very young, frustrated, Kurdish population with high expectations, and not much political space for ethnic expression. This is, I think, a very combustible mix. There's just a very dangerous situation. So, there needs to be more political space for Kurdish ethnic identity in Turkey, and this is the challenge of Tayyip Erdogan, this is the challenge of AKP, the new constitution, if there's one major question that it needs to address is the question of identity, citizenship, the Kurdish question.

Can we define Turkey's citizenship as something different than what it is today? Can we agree that we are citizens of Turkey, but not Turkish citizens? Can we agree that this is multicultural country? Can we agree that there should be bilingual litigation? Will you be able one day to call the Turkish minister of Interior and have an automatic phone service that will say press one for Turkish, two for Kurdish? These are the big, I think, questions that Turkey will have to answer with the constitution. Is the

project of assimilation over? In my opinion, it is over. And this constitution will have to grapple with these questions.

Now, the government believes that the economy is the answer. Tayyip Erdogan, before the elections, has took a very nationalist tone. He was frustrated with the Kurdish opening of 2009, 2010, after the border incident where former PKK Kurdish fighters received a hero's welcome. You had a situation where basically the worst scenario emerged. Turkish majorities angry with the Kurdish minority, and the MHP was basically the nationalist action party, was capitalizing on this situation. And Erdogan, being the political genius that he is, he immediately sensed that he needs to stop this Kurdish opening.

One victim of this nationalist turn of Turkey was the opening with Armenia. Armenia opening also stopped. And Turkey turned the leadership of the party and AKP turned into a kind of more nationalist discourse narrative. Now is the time to change that narrative. Can he do it? He's pursuing that nationalist narrative, in my opinion, over the last year and during the campaign was to keep the MHP below 10 percent so that he could have the super majority in the parliament. He wanted to have the super majority in the parliament for, in my opinion, essentially in addition to solving some problems also for his own presidential ambitions and to change Turkey into a presidential system because no one wants to go to (inaudible) and sit there as a ceremonial speaker. You want to be in charge of the country when you are there, especially Erdogan wants to do that. So, he wanted to change the system.

Now, the good news is that without the super majority, will not be able to do that. That's, I think, wise message that the Turkish voters sent, impressive victory, but you will not be able to change the constitution unilaterally. And now the presidential ambitions, I think, of changing Turkey into a presidential system need to be shelled. The

real question is the Kurdish question.

The political party will also have to realize that the economy will not be able to solve the Kurdish problem. You cannot solve identity issues with just economic growth. Otherwise, you would not have a problem in Catalonia. You would not have the Basque problem in Spain. You have to address the identity dimension of this.

And I think the parties should be also concerned, and this is my last point about domestic issues. I'll just conclude with foreign policy. The political party in charge of Turkey should also be concerned about an overheating Turkish economy. The economy is a big story, as I said, is the most important driver of the success of self-confidence, but if the Turkish economy all of sudden faces a crisis, if there is the current account deficit that is now reaching 8 percent of GDP, that is a very high number, turns into a kind of major political risk situation and the capital flows are no longer there, you have a situation where I think everything changes, and the popularity, the political stability and the kind of prosperity that we've seen may be jeopardized. So, overheating of the economy is a big story here, is a big problem. There needs to be a kind of soft landing cool down of the economy. There are bubbles in many areas, real estate, et cetera. So, the economy also needs, I think, some special attention at this point.

Let me conclude with foreign policy. I kind of disagree that we know that foreign policy was the big story of these elections, but foreign policy is very important right now for Turkey, not because voters think so, but I think Turkey is in urgent need of fine-tuning its approach to the Middle East, but also to the European Union. Part of the problem with the hubris, the self-confidence of Turkey, is that there is a sense that we don't need the European Union anymore. In fact, many Turks believe that the EU needs Turkey more than Turkey needs EU. This is, I think, dangerous and bordering on arrogance now. If there is a problem in the economy, if there is a problem with the

Kurdish question, if we face another political crisis, I think Turkey will need the EU. Most importantly, Turkey will need EU to solve the Kurdish problem.

The AKP should be aware and willing to accept that past reforms in Turkey were greatly thanks to the EU agenda. When you put the EU agenda on top of your political ambitions, be it on the question of solving religious freedom issues, head scarf issue, the Kurdish problem, or other issues, foreign policy, et cetera. There's a consensus emerging. People may resent right now the European Union, but it's not because they don't want to be part of the European Union. Turks still want to be part of the European Union, and I think there has to be a new public relations campaign in the country that would put the EU back on the agenda.

It was unbelievable to see that no political leader, no political party mentioned the word EU in the election campaign. It's as if it doesn't exist. But I think this will have to be put back on the agenda, first by trying to find a creative breakthrough to the Cyprus problem, but also by trying to revitalize Turkey's reform agenda.

On the Middle East problems, are more urgent. I think here I may also disagree partly with Nuh. I think Turkey's advantage in the Middle East, the fact that Turkey was such an important country with growing soft power, growing strategic depth, importance in the Middle East was partly because Turkey was filling a strategic vacuum in the Middle East.

There was a leadership problem in the Middle East, partly because Egypt was not there. The natural leader of the Arab World, of the Arab Street is not Turkey, it's Egypt. Now you have a situation where Egypt is slowing coming back, and, unavoidably, this will have to change Turkey's approach to the Middle East. I'm not saying this needs to be a zero sum game where there's this rivalry between Egypt and Turkey. But I think with Egypt normalizing itself and becoming more for democracy, more

of a powerhouse, more of a player in the Israeli-Palestinian issue, Turkey will no longer be or have to be the leader of the Arab Street.

And the fact that, for instance, on the Palestinian question two weeks ago, reconciliation agreement between Fatah and Hamas was brokered by Cairo is very telling. It was not brokered by Turkey. Turkey tried hard for a very long time to get Hamas and Fatah at the table and to basically have a reconciliation agreement, unitary government. Cairo did it.

So, the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, which is the Palestinian wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, is now going back to Cairo. It's finding its natural habitat. After all, the Muslim Brotherhood is in Egypt. So, you have basically Egypt slowly emerging as a democratic country, and Egypt will be the model for the Arab World, not Turkey. Turkey is too different, Turkey's political evolution, Turkey's economy, Turkey's political history is unique. It's not something replicable really in the Arab World, but Egypt, in many ways, is more relevant for the region.

So, under these circumstances, I don't think Turkey will pursue the same kind of foreign policy in the Middle East. It will have to recalibrate its position, and already on Syria, we're seeing that. With Syria, we have a big problem with the Ahmet Davutoglu concept of zero problems with zero neighbors. You cannot have zero problems with a neighbor that is like Syria now, creating a refugee crisis, killing innocent people, and destabilizing the country. So, Turkey's finding out or discovering that the zero problems foreign policy has its limits.

It's also discovering that its strategic influence over Damascus has reached limits. When a regime like the Damascus Regime is faced with regime survival, it's in no mood to listen to Turkey. It's in no mood to listen to the United States. Regime survival is regime survival. You have to do what you have to do to survive, and that's

exactly what Bashar al-Assad is doing, to the frustration of Turkey.

Perhaps, that was the sense of naivety in Turkey, that we could play a major role, that Turkey could play a major role and tell Bashar al-Assad to reform, and all of a sudden, Bashar al-Assad would call democratic elections. No. So, we're seeing a situation where Turkey's zero problems policy is also creating problems. And it's reaching its natural limits. And, in that sense, Turkey needs to find what its comparative advantage in the Middle East.

And I will conclude by saying that Turkey has two, major comparative advantages that Egypt does not have, that other Middle Eastern countries do not have.

First, Turkey is a Western country. It is a member of NATO. It's a member of Council of Europe. It is the only Muslim country represented in Western institutions, such as NATO, Council of Europe. It is talking to the European Union as a candidate. It can speak on behalf of the Islamic World, despite the secular identity in these Western institutions, but its comparative advantages, it stems from being a Western country. So, this needs to be utilized, this needs to be capitalized. And I would not be surprised if Turkey becomes more active on the transatlantic front from now on.

The second big advantage of Turkey is that it's the most democratic and the most secular country in the Middle East. Therefore, it is able to transcend the sectarian divides and the religious divides in the Middle East. By "sectarian," I essentially mean the Sunni-Shiite divide.

The fact that Prime Minister Erdogan, two months ago, visited Najaf, became the first Sunni leader to visit the Shiite holy sites in Iraq. And the first Sunni leader who talked to Ayatollah Ali Sistani is very telling. Turkey can transcend the Sunni-Shiite divide in a way that Egypt can't. Yes, Turkey is a Sunni country, but, more importantly, it is a secular country. And Turkey should also realize that it should

contribute to solutions in the Israeli-Palestinian problem. It should not be part of the problem in the Israeli-Palestinian issue.

So, therefore, as the most democratic and secular country, I think Turkey's comparative advantage is that, up until two years ago, it used to have a strategic military partnership with Israel. It's the only country in the Islamic World that has that kind of relationship with Israel. Turkey needs to find a solution to its crisis with Israel. It's in Israel's national interest, but also in the Turkish national interest to solve this issue so that Turkey can once again be a player on the Israeli front, as well.

So, those are areas where I think Turkey has more advantage than Egypt. I will conclude with this and be happy to answer questions later.

MS. HILL: Thank you very much, Ömer. I will give everyone in the panel a chance to make some comments, including on what everybody else has said. I want to take a couple of questions and comments from the floor.

Now, we do have some of the commentators here who work on Turkey, and if anyone would like to say something please let me know. But I'll just take two or three questions and comments right now, and then come back to the panel again. We have a mike up. Yes, sir? The mike's coming in your direction.

MR. TYNO: I have a few questions.

MS. HILL: Could you introduce yourself, as well, please?

MR. TYNO: Okay. My name is Turel Tyno. I'm a professor of sociology at (inaudible) University, visiting D.C.

So, I had some questions, but most of them have been answered by Mr. Taşpinar. I still have one question. I think the outcome of the elections are mainly tied to the new constitution. Everybody speaks of a new constitution. And people expect more democratic constitution, but I think there is a void there. We don't know what will be in it.

Of course, Kurdish problem, but that's all what you're talking about, Kurdish problem.

I have a concern. First, what do we expect from the new constitution? Will it be more democratic? How do we think a government will write a better constitution in a country where there are more journalists in prison than there are in China? Where media is under heavy control, there is heavy intrusion of privacy and many other problems nowadays in Turkey, and nobody thinks about that, nobody tells anything about that. We're just discussing the outcome of the elections, but there are too many problems to be discussed.

That's my point. Thank you.

MS. HILL: Thank you very much. That's a very important point and question.

Yes, sir, at the back. The mike's coming in your direction.

MR. MUFANASAM: I am Alidad Mufanasam, and my question has to do with the structure of the AKP. I'm talking about the way the institution of the AK Party has set up its fundraising methods, the leading individuals in it, apart from the prime minister himself, and the extent to which you think the AKP is a model for budding democracies in Arab countries, especially upcoming Egyptian election in September.

MS. HILL: Thank you.

Yes? Here.

MS. COSMOND: I'm Kathy Cosmond. I have heard some discussion on the constitutional reform question vis-à-vis secularism, and I was curious whether or not that, in fact, can be on the table or whether that's considered part of the outer Turk legacy that can't be touched, especially in light of the fact that, as I understand it, Erdogan promised in his first post-election speech that the question of freedom of religion would be addressed. Thank you.

MS. HILL: Is there another question or comment at this point? Yes?

Please, yes.

SPEAKER: I'm Meray and I'm a columnist for the *Turkish Daily*

(inaudible). I had one question and observation.

Turkish public is not a very active society, as we see. They only show their reaction and the ballots, but interestingly, before this election, thousands of people were marching on the streets protesting the ban on Internet, the filterization that's imposed by the government. The dubious discussions on what happened with the university entrance exams and many, many other things. Also, in (inaudible), you know, the school teacher was killed during the protests of the government. However, we haven't seen a significant percentage of these protests in the election results, and, interestingly enough, everybody is expecting the opposition to increase the votes, however, the government increased the votes.

So, and it's also observed in Turkey, and some commentators underlined this in in newspapers that Turkish public do not have a concern of democracy, which brings us to what Ömer said. They only vote for economic growth and stability, which the AKP campaign was based on. The slogan was the growth should grow, the growth should go on, the stability should move on.

However, while there is a big fuss about journalists' arrests or concerns about democracy in the media or in the Western World, this doesn't seem to reflect on the majority of the public. They do not care about the Erdogan investigation or the journalists' arrests as much as the media does. We can see in the media, you don't see these news on the Internet sites. They are not clicking on these news even. They have no interest.

So, in the future in another four years with Erdogan, and I believe we're

going to be under Erdogan's leadership for many, many long years to come, as the campaigns, until the hundredth celebration of the republic 2023, and really, we're going to have to live with Erdogan and he's going to be the leader of Turkey unless there's a major change, and but this is not foreseeable for now.

So, these concerns that do not touch the public are democratic concerns. Do you think that they will have to implement, they will have to reform and they will have to redo these democratic issues by force of the European world or the Western world, or will they just simply ignore them, saying that since the majority don't care about these things and we have majority of the votes that we could just not focus on democratic reforms or freedoms in Turkey anymore?

MS. HILL: Thanks. I'll come back to the panel now, on actually the point that you all have made about the prospects up to 2023 against the backdrop of what's happened, of course, in the Middle East, where a lot of the upheaval has been precisely because the very top of the state has been captured by gerontocracy and Prime Minister Erdogan is young and vigorous now, relatively speaking, but not with the relationship to the broader Turkish population. I mean, how does that bode about having the same person in power out to 2023?

As Nuh said, you, Ömer, for example, have written about Gaullism, and one of the features of Gaullism is, of course, the veneration of the leader who stays in place. But we've seen not just in the Middle East, but across other major European countries formidable leaders of the political capacity and charisma of Erdogan, like Helmut Kohl, Margaret Thatcher, and many others who, frankly, Winston Churchill, stayed in power rather too long, and the electorates got fed up with them. Is it somewhat dangerous to actually project oneself so far into the future? So, and that's a provocative question to put here, but, perhaps, we'll go in the reverse direction here, and, Ömer, your

responses to these questions, and also invite Nuh and Fuat to react to what others have said, as well.

MR. TAŞPINAR: Let me try to answer Meray's question with the question about authoritarianism in Turkey. Because I think they're related. It's a remarkable thing that after eight, nine years in power, this political party can still appear to be the underdog, and that's what differs, I think, Turkey from Russia. In the Western media, just today when you read the *Washington Post*, you have concerns about Turkey becoming like Russia and Erdogan being put in and this kind of same monocratic tendencies in both countries.

The difference between putting in Erdogan is that in the person of put in, you have the KGB in power in Moscow. In the person of Erdogan, you have the antithesis to the deep state, the kind of victim of the deep state of the military coups of the February 28, 1997, process that ousted the Islamic Party in power, but despite the fact that he's been running the country, he doesn't identify with the state. The state, the civilian military bureaucracy is something else. He is the leader of the people, and he can win these big elections and he can still have this narrative of victimhood, the narrative of basically the underdog, identifying himself with the people against the regime, against the status quo, and that's an amazing thing to do.

That enables Erdogan to also challenge his critics as elitists, autocrats, as people who are nostalgic of the past, when the military was able to actually dictate certain things. And he can still manage to be the real, the true democrat, the man of the people. I personally think there are problems with this understanding of democracy because he has a very majoritarian understanding of democracy. He does not really, I think, grasp the importance of minorities and the question of liberalism. He has very illiberal tendencies, which is the big problem for the whole Turkish political system.

Nevertheless, Turkey is different than Russia. That way, this duality of the power structure, the civilian-military dimension, the fact that the deep state, up until three years ago, just three years ago, this political party that we're talking about as autocratic party was under the threat of being shut down by the judiciary. Not too long ago, we were still questioning whether there would be a generals coup in Turkey. So, you have a situation where the dynamics are radically different than compared to Russia.

Or the question of authoritarianism and secularism, it's interesting that secularism and the question of basically secularism is no longer really on the agenda. People do not talk about the Islamic secret agenda of AKP. But people are worried about authoritarianism of AKP and the media question, the press freedom.

Now, here we have a very interesting situation because I think we can all agree that Turkey overall compared to the 1990s is a more democratic country today. We're able to talk about the Kurdish problem, about the Armenian genocide issue, about all the taboos of Turkey in a much more democratic, free way. The media is there, people can criticize the government.

The problem that happens is that there's this problem of self-censorship that some journalists are very afraid of criticizing in a very vocal way, sometimes the prime minister himself. And here, I think there's a problem with the Turkish media where media owners are not just owners of newspapers and televisions, they're also owners of energy companies, construction firms, banks. They basically go for contracts with the government, and when the government does not give them these contracts, they either attack the government or they try to basically cut a deal with the government so that the government would give them the contracts. There's a big story of crony capitalism and that's a problem with the nature of the media in Turkey more than a question of authoritarianism or liberalism. So, I'll just leave it there.

MS. HILL: That's actually a very important point, and that is actually one area that (inaudible) in Russia where there is some similarity, and but I think that you've made some very important distinctions there. But that's actually one issue that doesn't really get discussed in many fora here, and perhaps it's something that we should put on our agenda as something to look forward to for the future, to really take on seriously because it does dovetail, this is where we've seen actually Russia is a much more dangerous country for journalists, not that that's any consolation for any journalists who are sitting in jail elsewhere. (Laughter) But it's precisely at the root of because of the crony capitalism and the fusion between business, the state, and the top media.

I hope Ömer is not running away now. You're getting water and coming back.

MR. TAŞPINAR: I'm getting water. (Laughter)

MS. HILL: You're getting water and coming back. Yes, we've run out of water, which I don't know what that tells us about our discussion today.

But, no, I would like to invite you to comment on some of the questions from the floor, but also I know that you would like to take issue with Ömer.

MR. YILMAZ: Yes.

MS. HILL: I'm sure he's listening out there. I hope he hasn't gone too far.

MR. YILMAZ: He will. I'm going to try --

MS. HILL: I think he's running away when you were trying to confront him.

MR. YILMAZ: So, let me start with a couple of issues. First, new constitution. So, I think new constitution is important, but, at the end of the day, any kind of new constitution in Turkey should be a result of a consensus between JDP, AK Party,

and CHP. So, all the rest are the details. I mean, we can talk about BDP, the Kurdish Nationalist Party, or MHP, Turkish Nationalist Party, but those are not the really like game-makers in Turkish politics. They have to abide by or they have to follow or to add some of their points, but, at the end of the day, they have to follow these two parties because AK Party represents the people and half of Turkey. I mean, that's, I think, the bottom line.

So, what else? I mean, the 50 percent means 70, 80 percent in American politics. So, when we are really talking about 50 percent in Turkish politics, it's not that there is going to be a consensus forcing AK Party to reach an agreement that is mainly shaped by other actors, but AK Party and CHP, CHP as the representative of the state elites in Turkish politics, will create some kind of consensus, and, at the end of the day, BDP and MHP will join that, will contribute to that consensus, and then we will get a constitution. But if that doesn't happen, if CHP and AK Party cannot really agree on this, there's not going to be a new constitution.

So, because why Erdogan having got like 50 percent of votes and has to really follow the other actors, which their persons are smaller than Erdogan and has to really like leave its own objectives. But my reading at the end of the discussion is there's going to be a minimalist constitution and that will try to please all of the actors.

But the key issue here is how all the other actors will really agree on this. How CHP will get over its own status and secularist prejudices. And how BDP really will come to the table when they are not even able to condemn the attack on Prime Minister Erdogan's motorcade and is not able to condemn that attack.

I mean, so, what are the real limits of this? Will BDP be a real political party who has real say in Turkish politics and will come to the table and will agree on all of these things without being provocative and without being really disassociating itself

from PKK? I think this is one of the biggest questions about a new constitution.

And here I want to respond to Ömer before he responds me back. But, for example, just one example, BDP in 2002 gets votes around, were 1,960,000. In 2007, they got 1,638,000 votes, and 2011, they got 2,165,000 votes. This shows that. I mean, BDP was successful in terms of its campaign strategy and got the most of out that independent candidates strategy, but at the end of the day, in the nine years, the votes they got, the rise they got, 200,000, which if you remember, there are almost 10 million more voters in the last years.

So, what does that mean really? It's two persons. If you really think about the natural growth of Turkey, I mean, that means nothing in terms of closing the Kurdish opening, closing the Kurdish issue, and all of those things. In that sense, I disagree with Ömer that Kurdish opening is done, but Kurdish opening will continue, and it continued actually for a long time because there is no real clear sign that Kurdish opening was closed. There is no policy sign; there is no concrete example that can really prove that Kurdish opening was closed. I think Erdogan will continue with that Kurdish opening, but not with the vocabulary of BDP, not with the vocabulary of identity politics of Kurdish nationalism, but will bring a new patriotism, if you like, but not nationalism, and try to solve this issue through deepening modernization, deepening democratization. So, in that sense, I disagree with Ömer, as well.

I mean, just touching on a couple of different points. Economy. Of course, economy is an issue in any single country. Of course, people vote like 40 incumbent party when economy is good. But at the end of the day, we are talking about half of the whole country. How can half of the country vote for economy? I mean, that's -

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MR. TAŞPINAR: If the economy is well. (Laughter)

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MR. YILMAZ: No, but I think that's a little bit not giving enough importance to Turkish voters and assuming that Turkish voters do not think, but they only have stomach. I mean, I really disagree with --

MR. TAŞPINAR: Americans are the same.

MR. YILMAZ: Not really. I mean --

MR. TAŞPINAR: (inaudible) Turkish voters are right wing voters.

MR. YILMAZ: Yeah, that might be, I accept that, but I don't accept the economic determinism issue.

The hubris thing, Ömer might have felt that I might have hubris, but this is a response, this is a reaction to Euro-centric and Orientalist reading of Turkish politics.

For example, when we start discussing Kurdish issue here, I mean, can you imagine any country that there's a political party that has military wing in the mountains and they keep coming to the streets and trying to assassinate the prime minister, and they still have a seat in the parliament and they still are part of the democratic discussion in Turkey? I'm not saying that this is the best democracy we can ever get. Of course, there needs to be many things that should be done. But, I mean, opening up the discussion from authoritarianism is a little bit excessive.

I think that was really the point of my whole discussion. I mean, Turkey is now a geostrategic player. At the end of the day, I mean, when you discuss these problems of democracy, we really have to discuss the problems of democracy as certain single policy issues, not as turning to authoritarianism, shift of axis, and all those ideologically and prejudicial kind of analysis. So, Egypt, Hamas, and I will be done with this.

So, Egypt thing, I think what happened in Egypt really? I mean, it's now four months, five months. What has changed? (inaudible) left, Mubarak left. Who else

left? I mean, all the bureaucracy, all the political, whatever, the -- all the elites are there. Do you think that really Hamas has some outreach to those guys to broker a deal with Egypt? I mean, the Muslim Brotherhood, everybody is thinking about whether Muslim Brotherhood is going to be part of the Egyptian government or they will be designated as a terrorist organization. This is the Egypt that we are really talking about. How can this Egypt bring Hamas to the table in that kind of negotiations?

I mean, my point is Turkey knows to share its role in the Middle East. That's the issue. But the thing is Turkey really tried hard to give a boost to Egyptian diplomacy to achieve that goal, and, also, that was Israel's reason pretext not to really sit at the table with the Palestinian side because they thought that they keep using the same rhetoric saying that there is no one single government on the Palestinian side, so they cannot really negotiate with that. So, Turkey cleared that argument by forcing and encouraging all the sides to reach a deal on like Hamas and Fatah reconciliation. So, this shows that now Turkey is not trying to score points, not just trying to do something by itself, but rather defining its own strategic goals and trying to share gains of those things and also trying to encourage other partners to solve problems together.

So, I think that's why Turkey is a strategic player and not a geopolitical pivot anymore. So, that's why I focused on more the strategy part. Thank you.

MS. HILL: Thanks, Nuh. And, actually, you've pointed to, perhaps, an interesting discussion that we could have here on the BDP because, actually, I see one of our colleagues here from the Spanish Embassy here, and I think that if we also had some representation from Ireland, we could actually have a good discussion about the role of parties in political arenas and in the parliament that do in fact have behind the scenes terrorist wings.

In Ireland, of course, Sinn Fein was a great controversy about Sinn Fein

first being represented in the parliament because of its close links that have never been completely and utterly disassociated with the IRA, and the same, of course, with the parties that represent Basque interests in Spain. And while, perhaps, Ireland is not a major, strategic player, Spain certainly is a major player in Europe.

And I think this was the point that Ömer was trying to make about there being lessons in the European context for how to deal with the Kurdish problem because there are, indeed, a lot of parallels in major European countries with the emergence of a party that has terrorist roots that is trying to move into a bigger political framework, but we, perhaps, could do that a little later.

Fuat, we're going to give you the wrap-up.

MR. KEYMAN: Thank you.

MS. HILL: And, also, I think given some of the issues that have been raised here, given your such thorough analysis of the electorate end of the votes, it may also be interesting to hear from you of how much you think the economy did play to voters' preferences.

MR. KEYMAN: Yes. I answer the questions, and also make two points in relation to --

MS. HILL: That's great, thank you.

MR. KEYMAN: -- these two guys. (Laughter)

MS. HILL: And I guess we can see there's still plenty of excitement in Turkish politics just in case we were worried.

MR. KEYMAN: (inaudible) coming from Turkey. The first, your question, what is in or what is going to be in the new constitution? There are at least five constitutional proposals coming from civil society in Turkey, and I work in some of them, and we know what will be in the constitution, and we have actually vote benchmarks and

references.

What is interesting, as Istanbul policy enters, we are working on it. Now you put these civil society-based proposals for the new constitution, you see that despite differences, slight differences, the common denominator among them is to strengthen or consolidate Turkish democracy in a parliamentary way. So, in this sense, all these constitutional proposals both for deepening, consolidating, strengthening Turkish democracy and Turkish parliamentary democracy to make it more participatory, to make it more deliberative, rather than talking about some sort of super structural shift towards the presidential regime.

So, in this sense, right now in Turkey, at the level of civil society, there is a very serious, deep constitutional debate and proposals and all of them actually go for parliamentary, participatory, democracy. And, of course, secularism is actually in it, but we have to democratize secularism in such a way that it will be opening up itself to otherwise non-Muslim minorities and the others.

So, in this sense, the kind of irony or paradox embedded in Turkey's secularism, on the one hand, it attempts to control religion, but, on the other hand, it is very, very Sunnite. This has to be solved with the new constitution. And Jose Casanova has a famous book, *Public Religion in America [sic]*, he wrote a piece on religion and politics in comparative perspective. He has one line in it which actually describes the problems of Turkish secularism more than all of the debates put together. It says that it's the system that makes everybody unhappy. Sunnite is too actually secular. Otherwise, too Sunnite, Kurds to Turks and non-Muslims to Muslims. So, in this sense, there is a need to reform secularism, but secularism will be the basis of the new constitution. And the new consolidated democracy.

Which actually brings to your question. Of course, there is a big work on

the AK Party and how AK Party learned from the South Asian experience of bringing together free market norms with communitarian values. Although, of course, the success of AK Party, now those guys and also the Egypt and the others try to learn from the AK Party. They actually completed the triangle; free market norms, communitarian, religious values and parliamentary, democratic victories. So, how a party in terms of its organizational structure has been able to achieve that. Of course, that is actually a big, big question, and this is the research question right now in terms of how to help Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and the others in terms of making change in their political systems.

In that case, going back to the secularism question, I think rather than being alternative to clash of civilization teases, Turkey will remain as a model, will remain as a very significant experience to learn from, although, on the other hand, what is learned from Turkey in terms of Arab Spring and what is happening or the turmoil in the Middle East or transformation in the Middle East will be, as Ömer said, more actually in terms of its secular structure, its democratic structure, and mainly, actually, its secular structure open to participation of the alternatives in it.

In that sense, I started with the importance of Turkish electorate and the suitable structure of the parliament because Turkey throughout its parliamentary, democratic experience since 1945 always produce alternatives. Motherland Party in the 1980s, 1950s Democratic Party, 2000s, the AK Party. So, in this sense, the ability of Turkey and Turkish politics to produce alternatives which these guys in the Middle East and the Arab World right now likes comes more from, despite all the problems, Turkey's democratic and secular nature.

So, there will be more actually reference to secularism democracy and participation. And in that sense, actually, we have products, and as far as I'm concerned, if the political parties actually read the situation and the election result correctly, and if the

leaders, beginning with Mr. Erdogan in the balcony speech is sincere in what they have said so far, then there might be a solution to your question, that of course we just finished actually a research on the perception and quality of democracy in Turkey, and all the questions about whether or not you go for stability over democracy, you go for sort of security over democracy. Interestingly, which actually kind of proves Ömer's point, and my explanation of why the RKP has won starts with economy matters not only in terms of economy growth, but the sort of increasing the living standards of ordinary people, especially in the areas of housing and education.

But Turkish people go for stability over economy. But Ömer is also right, too, because when we actually look around and most of the cases, there is a delicate balance between stability and economy, especially when the economy becomes fragile to crisis and stuff like that. But on the other hand, there are European partners and European electorates that went for extremely racist and extreme right parties in the time of economic crisis, whereas Turkish kind of voting pattern, as I tried to indicate, is kind of go for solution, go for new constitution, rather than going for extremes.

And, so, in this sense, if the political parties read the results correctly, then there would be a possibility of tackling with the problems of Turkish democracy. Of course, all of the things that you said about Turkish media, journalists, and the other indicators or the symptoms of it.

But coming back to this question, I'd like to make two points. First actually is, for me, it is difficult, but I have to say that I disagree with Nuh because I'm a big supporter of Turkish foreign policy, Turkish proactive foreign policy, and I actually wrote and spoke about the ideologically-loaded structure of the axis shift debates and stuff like that. But there is no way that one could actually infer from the election result that the Turkish electorate is saying that RKP or Turkish foreign policy should be an

independent. Or Turkey is an independent actor.

On the contrary, if I put all the messages together in terms of the Kurdish question, in terms of the new constitution, in terms of going beyond the societal polarization, strengthening living together, Turkish people actually go for more sort of renewed type of Turkey relations, more multilateral type of Turkey, Turkey acting in relation with the others.

And moreover, of course this is the election result, but we all know that, and this is a discussion in Turkey, if Syria collapses, Turkish foreign policy collapses. And that Turkey has a big investment in Syria, open borders, abolishment of visas, and I was in Damascus, and it has been actually or it was successful, and I think it is successful, and there might be a possibility of actually still sort of initiating or pushing the reform process in Syria, but it is a very, very significant benchmark for the future of Turkish foreign policy.

Nobody is talking about Turkey as an independent player should act independently. As a matter of fact, my expectation is the post-election Turkey will say actually more effort to actually get sort of a multilateral type of relations going on between Turkey and Europe, Turkey and other countries, and in that sense, a little disagreement with Ömer that I think when it comes to what will happen to Arab Spring, what will happen to Syria and the future of Iraq, so on and so forth, I think rather than putting Egypt and Turkey as kind of alternatives or one is the main player and there is the other second player kind of thing, I think we will see more relations between them because Nuh is right that if Egypt comes back, will come back looking more like Turkey or more like democratic kind of a structure, more secular. So, in this sense, I think that there is room for interplay, negotiations acting together between those players other than one is front, one is behind.

I was in Brussels last week, and some of the European friends,

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European guys are quite concerned about Turkey relations, and, as a matter of fact, what is happening in Europe, too. And I will actually predict a push for renewing Turkey relations after the elections so long as the warning, Jack Straw's criticism about EU is not without a reason. Actually, they like to push these relations, and I think right now in terms of Turkey-EU relations, we have come to a point where we could talk about those relations as relations of equals, not Turkey right now needs less Europe or Europe needs Turkey more than Turkey needs Europe.

I think there is a possibility of establishing what I call kind of a new language based on mutual benefit and sort of common sort of response to global challenges. And renew Turkey-EU relations that way. Maybe put aside for a while this full membership thing, not focus exclusively on full membership and get Turkey and EU to act in a coordinated way to respond to global challenges.

Of course, as we all know, what is happening in Arab Spring and what is happening in the Middle East is happening right now between the context of the (inaudible) global turmoil in terms of security and economy. So, in this sense, there will be a push coming from the European centers of Turkey to maybe actually try to renew these relations.

If Turkey acts independently, my actual fear is it might fail in terms of whole Turkish foreign policy and Turkish foreign policy should be effective and should be creating deliberate result. Turkish foreign policy should deliver right now.

What is expected from Turkey is to deliver something about Syria, about the Middle East, and ability and the capacity of Turkey to deliver right now actually depends more on multilateral type of behavior rather than unilateral type of behavior, but I am quite sure, as Nuh said, Turkish foreign policy is kind of a policy of an independent player. It doesn't mean unilateralism; maybe independent player might actually act

multilaterally, laterally, too.

There are real challenges, but I come back to my first point and stop here. I think like 2002 elections, Turkish electorate got rid of all the political parties coalition government and opposition out of the parliament because they created the big 2001 crisis in Turkey. Electorate acted rationally. In 2007 elections, opposition party, CHP and MHP were actually talking about attacking North Iraq, attacking Barzani, and they had a very, very security-oriented election strategy whereas AK Party was saying let's actually move on economically and Turkish people gave actually 47 percent.

So, in this sense, Turkish electorate acts rationally and the Turkish political parties should listen the main message that is actually given to them in this election, and these are actually awards and warnings together. You have 50 percent, but you should compromise, you should consult, you should actually think about what the rest of the 50 percent is thinking, is saying. You have 26 percent CHP, work harder, be more visionary.

You have actually BDP 36 percent, but turn your face to Turkey, too, not be totally ethnically nationalist because if you continue like this, next election you might actually lose, and MHP actually, you are in the parliament, but the way that you do and you act in a very reactive way does not actually correspond to the very dynamic and transformative nature of Turkey's society right now.

So, we have a chance to tackle with our problems by creating this consensus among actors, which is not very, very difficult, actually. Although, they have red lines. But, nevertheless, if everybody goes for it egoistically and sort of go for a unilateral type of action, then, of course, Turkey might face a crisis not only in terms of economy, but also in the other areas, too.

MS. HILL: Well, thank you very much, Fuat. You've managed to wrap

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everything up very nicely. I'm sorry, Nuh, because I know that you probably wanted to say something again --

MR. YILMAZ: Just one word.

MS. HILL: Well, one word because we've, unfortunately, have kept people 15 minutes over.

MR. YILMAZ: When I said "independence," I did not mean unilateral because France is independent, Germany is independent. So, I meant multilateral, but independent.

MS. HILL: Excellent. So, an independent, multilateral Turkey. And, anyway, everybody else, thank you for sitting through with us and have a good weekend. Thank you. (Applause)

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