

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

PREVIEWING TURKEY'S PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION:
STATUS QUO, EXECUTIVE PRESIDENCY, OR
PROGRESSIVE NEW CHAPTER?

Washington, D.C.

Friday, June 5, 2015

Introduction and Moderator:

KEMAL KIRIŞCI
TUSIAD Senior Fellow and Turkey Project Director
The Brookings Institution

Panelists:

SUAT KINIKLIOĞLU
Mercator Senior Fellow
Center for American Progress

NORA FISHER ONAR
Transatlantic Academy Fellow, 2014-5
German Marshall Fund

ÖMER TAŞPINAR
Nonresident Senior Fellow, The Brookings Institution
Professor, National War College

* * * * *

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. KIRIŞCI: I'm sorry; we're running a wee bit late. Apologies.

I'd like to welcome you to our event on Turkish Parliamentary elections that will take place on Sunday, hopefully. I have to underline the word "hopefully." Some of you may already be aware that a bomb has exploded in Diyarbakir during the campaign of the leader of the Kurdish political party, and I'm afraid there are a large number of injured people, as well as one person who's deceased. Inevitably, this is going to impact the coming few days left to the elections. This is, in a way, what Turkey deeply, deeply, deeply feared.

Nevertheless, I do still hope that we will have a discussion that will be enriching and still manage to implant with us some seeds of hope for the future.

The outcome of the elections is going to impact Turkey, Turkey's future, and, I think, the neighborhood, as well as U.S.-Turkish relations in a way I suspect none of the previous elections had done.

We're lucky that we have today the panel here. These are all very good friends.

Suat Kiniklioğlu has served in the Turkish Parliament between 2007 and 2011. He has an experience from within the Parliament. He was an M.P. for the governing political party. He has reconsidered his thoughts about his experiences and, I suspect, will be reflecting on them. He's currently a Fellow at the Center of American Progress, and has been spending the year here in Washington, D.C., and has been writing very informative columns on Turkish politics.

Ömer Taşpınar, you're very familiar with him now. He's an established name of our program. He, too, follows the elections and Turkish politics very closely, and teaches at the National Defense University here in Washington, D.C.

Nora Fisher is a very good friend who was a Fellow at the Transatlantic Academy here that is operating under the umbrella of the German Marshall Fund, and just finished with her colleagues a project and a large publication on religion and the future of the Western liberal order.

I am Kemal Kirişçi. I'm the Director of the Turkey Project at Brookings.

But before I turn to the panel, I had a few very quick remarks that I'd like to share with you as a backgrounder. These remarks were naturally prepared before what happened today in Diyarbakir, but I wanted to highlight that this is the 16th time that the Turkish electoral will be going to the ballot boxes.

The first one was held back in 1950, in a very different Turkey -- a Turkey that, at the time, was energetically striving to join the Western alliance and become a member of the transatlantic community. It was Turkey's geographical location that had become valuable for the West. And the striving of Turkey and its geographical importance played an important role in bringing the two together.

Today, though, we're living in a very different world. Turkey has changed profoundly. The rest of the world has followed suit, as well. But Turkey's importance has gone beyond its geographical location. It's become an important foreign policy player in the neighborhood. Its economy, especially when it was doing well, had become important, in terms of the world economy, and this year, Turkey's actually hosting the G-20 Summit.

Turkey has been transformed deeply domestically, as well. It's not any more the Turkey of the '50s, '60s, '70s that I grew up into. The governing AK PARTİ gave Turkey a taste of liberal democracy, a buoyant economy in the mid to 2000s.

However, the picture sadly has changed dramatically in Turkey. Turkey's democracy is under deep stress. Its economic performance is not any more where it

was. Between 2002 and 2006, the Turkish economy grew by, on average, seven percent a year, when the American economy was growing only at three percent. Last year, the Turkish economy grew by exactly 2.588 percent.

To make matters worse, a lot of the reforms that the governing party had introduced in Turkey with respect to the functioning of the Turkish democracy, as well as the economy, have been rolled back. And the current President of Turkey, formerly the Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, wants to turn Turkey into a presidential system. And that's one factor that makes these elections so special and important.

Another factor is that the Kurdish political party may well cross the 10-percent threshold that a political party in Turkey has to overcome to have seats in the Parliament. And depending on whether it can cross that 10-percent threshold or not, the composition of the new Parliament will change dramatically, and it will, in turn, impact on whether the transformation that the current President is seeking in Turkey will occur or not.

I'd like to very quickly share with you a couple of slides, to give you a background. These slides shows to you the performance of the political parties that are currently represented in the Parliament over three general elections that have occurred -- 2002, 2007, 2011 -- as well as local elections in between.

As you can tell, the governing political party, AK PARTİ, has performed dramatically well, and its percentage of votes has constantly increased over these elections, with some fluctuation.

The runner-up is the Social Democratic Party, the main opposition party, which has been winning votes over the elections little by little.

The critical party is the one at the very bottom. That line there is not very representative. I won't go into the details of it, but the predecessors of the political party

TURKEY-2015/06/05

that is running in the upcoming elections have usually tallied around six, seven percent, but now polls show very differently, and I would like to share those polls' results.

Currently, the governing political party has 311 seats. The rest, you can see there. What is critical is that the President of Turkey wants his party -- technically, this is not any more his party; I wouldn't want to go into the details of it, but a President in Turkey constitutionally is supposed to be neutral. But he needs those 330 seats to be able to push through the Parliament a new constitution and submit it to a referendum.

These are some public opinion results up to the mid of last May, and you will see that the electorate holds roughly a very steady position as far as the preferences of political parties go. And by the mid of last May, it looked like AKP is expected to win around 43 percent. However, these are (inaudible) results, and you can appreciate that poll results vary from one to the other, and their reliability is not always certain, as the British elections in May showed to us.

My final two slides before I turn to the panel is the following: If HDP, the Kurdish political party, cannot cross the 10-percent threshold, then AKP is expected to win seats between 311 or 325 seats, according to the polls; again, need to be taken with a pinch of salt. However, if the Kurdish political party crosses the 10 percent, Turkey will be facing a very different political scene and very different political dynamics.

And it is with those remarks that I'd like to turn to the panel, and we will get our discussion started as soon as the micros are installed.

As we get set up with the micros, I'd like to turn to Suat, as the most experienced amongst us, as far as politics in the Turkish Parliament goes. I can't help but start with a very broad question, Suat.

In the light of what has just happened in Turkey today, how do you assess the broad picture as the Turkish electorate goes to the ballot box on Sunday?

MR. KINIKLIOĞLU: Right. Thank you. Thank you, Kemal.

MR. KIRIŞCI: You have eight minutes.

MR. KINIKLIOĞLU: Okay, I'll try to be as precise as possible.

Let me thank you, Brookings, and the estimated panelists with whom I will be sharing this panel. It's a great pleasure to be back.

I think for those in the room who do not follow Turkish politics as closely as some of us do, I think you need to know that this is a very extraordinary election. This is the last election before 2019. When this election is over, there won't be any elections or any democratic means for a correction to take place to the anomaly that we have right now in Turkey. So, therefore, a lot is at stake.

And you also need to figure in that the electorate is also fatigued. The local elections, March 2014 and then the presidential election in August 2014 have not produced the correction that many Turkish citizens were expecting after the Gezi Park protests, the corruption scandals that broke out, and the overall authoritarianism that we see these days in our country.

Therefore, this election this Sunday is the last chance, in my view, of the Turkish electorate to make a correction. And what is a correction?

A correction is a more balanced Parliament that certainly would not allow President Erdoğan to become Dayura, an Executive President, as he wishes to be. And, also, in my view, if the HDP will make the 10-percent threshold, I think Turkey will win time -- another four years -- to normalize again, because since 2011 -- but, more importantly, since 2013 -- the Gezi Park protests and the corruption scandals afterwards - - Turkey, in my view, is going through a very extraordinary, abnormal political climate.

And the fact that you have, today, two bombs going off at the center in Diyarbakir two days prior to an election, with, I mean, dozens of people being injured --

it's still a developing story, so we're not sure exactly what's happening -- but is in itself, I think, an indication how ugly this campaign has been. I mean, the HDP's party offices have been raided. There have been mobs in the rallies. To the best of my knowledge, two people have been killed -- drivers who were driving HDP cars. There were death threats against the leadership of the party.

And today, what we've seen today, is again, I think, demonstrating what an extraordinary election we're going through.

This is probably going to be one of the most remarkable elections in recent memory, as far as fairness and a fair election climate is concerned. Unfortunately, the Turkish radio, television, and the Anatolian News Agency -- the overall state and the government's state assets fully being employed at the municipality levels, et cetera, to cut the stories short. This is an election that was fought under extremely unfair conditions.

But the electorate, I think, has made up its mind. We will see on Sunday night.

I think it would be also fair, given what has happened in March 2014 in Ankara, and in Üsküdar, and maybe in other places, as well, that ballot box security is also a major issue at this election. We need to watch -- and I think there are many NGOs who have organized -- but, also, the parties themselves are taking precautions that no foul play will take place. This is extremely important, given how close the figures that Kemal just showed to you.

The HDP's passing the 10 percent totally changes the pie chart that will determine how many seats each party will have. So, technically, you could have 9.9.9 percent -- which is around 5 million voters -- but you would not be represented. I hope that's not going to happen, either through normal vote or through foul play.

But what is important is that we remember that a 10-percent threshold

quota, regardless of who is involved, whether it's a predominantly Kurdish party or it's someone else -- it's just simply not democratic anymore. Where you can exclude 5 million voters to be represented is just simply not acceptable, especially in a country that is as diverse as ours. I think the 10-percent threshold should be, in my view, the last time that we go in an election.

You know, it's also tough for me to speak this way, because I used to be a member of this party, and I actually was in this room, probably many times, speaking on mostly foreign policy issues. It's tough to be here, but I think the truth needs to be told. And the truth is, the party is no longer the party that I joined in 2007. It has become a very different outlet, and especially after 2013. What we are seeing is extremely worrying and dangerous for our country and for our democracy.

While we were thinking that we were about to consolidate our democracy, negotiate with the European Union, we have now turned into a full authoritarian sort of Middle East type of country who's a system I have a difficulty in describing.

I don't know how many minutes I've used up already, but let me just continue.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Two more.

MR. KINIKLIOĞLU: Two more -- great. Let me just give you, also, a bit of a dimension that will matter of how this outcome will shape.

The HDP, under normal circumstances, as Kemal said, used to -- or the predecessors to HDP -- used to have around 6.5 percent. So, why is it that today, this party is above 10, 11? I've seen some polls that were showing 12 percent of support. Whatever it is -- I mean, even if you take the lowest number which I saw, 9.2 percent -- it's still almost 50 percent more than what they used to get.

The fact is that there are many strategic voters in this election who may not be necessarily HDP supporters, but who see the larger picture and are very much concerned about what might happen if the HDP does not pass the threshold. So, therefore, you see a lot of strategic voters. I wrote about this in *Foreign Policy* this week. These strategic voters will probably vote for the HDP -- or maybe they will lend their votes this time, and see how the party performs.

But this is something that needs to be watched. And I think it would also be fair to say that the CHB also ran a very good campaign -- to much of a surprise to many, they did a good job. The MHP has done less well, but it's benefitting from those who are upset about the AKP's performance, and are shifting their votes in that direction.

But let me conclude with this: I ran the mayorship campaign of Mr. Mansur Yavaş in 2014 in Ankara. And what I've observed is, the Turkish electorate is very sensitive to the perception of chaos and disorder. And the bombs that exploded today in Diyarbakir are actually -- you know, you will probably see, as I speak, tonight on television, a lot of chaos/disorder footage on Turkish television, especially pro-government television.

This is exactly what conservative voters are scared of. And if you have conservative voters who are getting a little bit doubtful about the AKP and Erdoğan's performance, and you're sort of, you know, thinking whether they should vote for something else -- or they shouldn't vote at all -- so the moment you see on television bombs going off, police, riot police, et cetera, the conservative electorate withdraws back and votes for the ruling party. That is the natural tendency you see among the electorate.

When we ran the campaign in Ankara in March 2014, unfortunately, Berkin Elvan died while he was struggling for his life in hospital. And we were doing daily polling in our campaign for the last 33 days prior to Election Day. The moment Berkin

Elvan died, and there were protests on the street -- and as legitimate as the cause and the tragedy of this child was -- we saw our numbers going down, because the conservative electorate immediately withdraws to the ruling party for order and for stability when they see these kind of images of instability and disorder.

So, I think what happened today in Diyarbakir is extremely important. I just want to conclude that I hope this will be a fair and clean election, and that, hopefully, the Turkish electorate will make the appropriate corrections, and that our country will continue to be a normal democracy.

Thank you.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Thanks, Suat.

Ömer, Suat just focused on today and the challenges that await the election on Sunday, in terms of its safety and fairness. I know you have a great interest on the Kurdish issue, but I plead with you to hold yourself back for the second round. And can you go beyond what happened today, and what are some of the issues that you feel will determine the votes that the electorate will be casting on Sunday?

MR. TAŞPINAR: Thank you, Kemal, and it's also a pleasure to be here. Can you all hear me? Is it working? It's not? Is it working?

MR. KIRIŞCI: You'll have to shout a bit --

MR. TAŞPINAR: All right, okay.

MR. KIRIŞCI: -- and then they'll fix it in the meantime.

MR. TAŞPINAR: Well, Kemal asked me about the overall picture, and what will impact, really, the outcome of these elections? I think it's fair to start with where Suat left, in terms of the picture that he painted, with which I fully agree.

He said that Turkey, which used to negotiate membership with the European Union -- which was, according to many people, on part of becoming a more

democratic country today -- is a fully autocratic country, which fits basically the Middle East and perhaps Central Asia more than the European Union.

The question that we should be asking is, if there is such gloom and doom in terms of where Turkish democracy stands today -- and add to this the image of basically an economy where corruption scandals are now a known factor -- why is it that this political party, the AKP, and why is it that the leader of the AKP, who's now the President of the Republic, and who, by definition, should be neutral but is not, is able to still command such power, such majority?

In this gloom and doom picture, you would expect that this political party would be in decline; that it would not be able to receive, as we see in the polls, 45 percent of the vote. Yet, in the 2014 local elections and in 2015 in the presidential election, basically, Erdoğan managed to win 45 percent in the context of the local elections and then 52 percent in the context of the presidential election.

So, why is it that his party's still able to command such majority, despite this gloomy picture that we're talking about?

And I think the easy answer is to look at the alternatives. People look at the alternatives all the time and people look, also, at the state of the economy, and compare living standards today in Turkey with where things were maybe 10, 15 years ago. And in that sense, I'm a strong believer in economic determinism and in the fact that people vote bread-and-butter issues. People vote based on the economy; based on the services that they receive.

And on that front, the AKP is still, by far, the most attractive party -- not only for lower middle-class people who have a hope of becoming middle class and upper middle class, but, also, the urban and rural poor who are still benefitting from the clientelism patronage networks that the AKP's able to provide.

So, in many ways, the secret of AKP's success lies in a culture where the party is well-connected with the periphery. It's well-connected with its economic populist program with the downtrodden, with the urban poor, rural poor, and lower middle classes. And the alternatives were not very great.

And here, I will do something that will not surprise you. I will bash the opposition. The opposition, the CHP -- it took 15 years for the CHP to realize that the real issue is the economy in Turkey, not secularism, not lifestyle, not Kemalism. Finally, in this last election, the CHP realized that they need to talk about the economy. And finally, they're making inroads into the lower middle classes that want to hear concrete proposals, instead of issues about lifestyle.

As late as few months ago in the presidential election, the CHP had the brilliant idea of nominating Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, who basically, in their eyes, represented a conservative figure. Why did they nominate Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu as their presidential candidate? Because they believe people want a conservative candidate. Why would you vote for a conservative candidate when you have the original conservative candidate, Erdoğan, in front of you?

The choice of Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu was clear evidence that CHP failed to get the picture. They could have easily united behind someone as charismatic as Demirtaş, maybe. Demirtaş, despite all the problems, received -- Selahattin Demirtaş, the leader of the CHP -- 9.8 percent of the vote. And that gave him the hope of running the HDP, his party, as an independent party. And thank God they're doing that, because now the best hope for Turkish democracy has become the Kurds.

If the Kurds manage to pass the 10-percent threshold, most of the votes they will win will come from the AKP constituency. We're in a stage where basically the alternative to the current system is not coming from basically a center-left political party

TURKEY-2015/06/05

or a center-right political party. The left, unfortunately, has been in disarray in Turkey, and the non-Islamic right -- I don't know where it went.

What happened to the non-Islamic right? We used to have a center-right in Turkey. There used to be political parties called (inaudible) the Motherland, True Path. Where are these voters?

Well, the answer is that, actually, they are in AKP. They're still in AKP. But they're not very happy. They're not very happy with the performance of the party. They're not very happy with the authoritarianism, but they still don't find an alternative. The AKP manages to monopolize the center right, the religious right, in many ways, and has basically adopted the center-left economic populist policies, which left no room for an alternative political party.

This is why the AKP hegemony has become the reality of Turkey. Now add to this the institutional weakness of Turkey. What we're facing today in Turkey is the institutional weakness of basically the judiciary -- rule of law, the media. We don't have institutions that provide checks and balances in Turkey. In the absence of these checks and balances, one basically may have some nostalgia for the old days, when there was a major checks and balance in the country. And that was called the military.

One good thing in today's Turkey is that no one is talking about whether there will be a military coup again. And that, I would say, is still the biggest achievement of the AKP.

But even on that ground, I think Turkey has squandered an opportunity, because the demilitarization of Turkey politics and the establishment of full civilian supremacy over the military has been tainted in Turkey by the Gulen-AKP fight.

The Gulen-AKP fight has revealed the institutional weaknesses of Turkey, especially in terms of the rule of law. People have doubts in the past that the

Gulenists basically were in the judiciary, were in the intelligence. Now it is the AKP that is running the judiciary.

Well, what happened to an independent judiciary? We don't have an independent judiciary. If you don't have an independent judiciary, you can't have rule of law. So, what we're facing in Turkey is basically a country -- because of the Gulen-AKP fight -- that has basically lost all sense of credibility in the Western world. It looks really as a bizarre country where strange coalitions have happened, and the emasculation of the Turkish military -- this very good thing that finally happened; the fact that Turkey finally is no longer -- Turkish democracy is no longer running at gunpoint -- has happened in an illegitimate way.

That's the perception that people have. The legacy of the Ergenekon trial, of the Balyoz trial, is that it was tainted by these fights between the Gulenists and the AKP. Even the corruption issue, which should be a more neutral issue, is perceived as a fight between the AKP and the Gulenists. Why?

Because it's the Gulenist movement that has revealed the corruption; therefore, there is a level of distrust in terms of the genesis of this movement, the way it was revealed -- that it was a product of the Gulenists going after the AKP, rather than independent media, rather than civil society, rather than Turkish society itself coming to terms with the fact that there is corruption in the country.

So, I am pessimistic on the grounds that the Gulen-AKP fight is not creating, really, a more democratic country; instead, it is revealing the weaknesses of the Turkish institutions. And where we go from here -- I think we'll have a second round.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Yes, thanks. Thanks, Ömer. As you have noticed, he's gotten quite fired up. I can appreciate the reasons behind it. I also appreciate the way in which you gave a bit of background to the economic picture there.

I do apologize that there are lots of Turkish words and names that are being fired at you. You may be missing out on some, but if there are any questions about those names and words, we'll come back to it in the Q&A.

Now I'd like to turn to Nora. Ömer addressed the issue of, why do people still continue to support the AK PARTİ, the governing party? Nora will do the opposite. She will look at the other side of the medallion. That's the deal we had -- and look at the other sort of 50 percent. Who are they, and what drives their electoral behavior?

Nora?

MS. FISHER ONAR: And I look forward to doing so, if I could just (inaudible).

So, yes, who are these other 50 percent? This is a term that's entered into the lingo of Turkish politics almost exactly two years ago, when Erdoğan returned from a visit to find that many people (inaudible) across the country had mobilized in response to what were perceived as being increasingly heavy-handed policies, and he declared that he -- in response to the protestors, he said, you know, "I'm really having a hard time restraining the other 50 percent -- restraining my supporters from coming out on the street, and taking you on."

So, it was a threatening tone, and the term entered into circulation and appeared to be validated, as mentioned, when Erdoğan was the first President to be elected by popular mandate, with 52 percent of the vote, last August.

But, as anyone who did the numbers when Kemal was showing on the graph where the polls anticipate this election is going, by any conservative count, there's actually over 50 percent who are not likely to vote in line with Erdoğan. So, who are these people?

Anyone who's been watching Turkish politics in Turkey for the past year, you'll notice there's been an inordinate number of quite colorful protests. And so, you know who are all these disruptive men and women who are going onto the street?

And, as we've heard a little bit about, there are really sort of three groups we can talk about. There's the old establishment, which was more or less displaced in a power struggle with AKP during the 2000s -- represented by these two parties, the Republican People's Party and the Nationalist Action Party. There's the old opposition, represented by the Kurds, who I'll talk a little bit about -- and we'll continue to have a conversation about -- and then there's new forms of opposition that don't represent a new voter's block per se, but I'm going to show how they've had a tangible impact on the platforms of at least two of the older, more established forms of opposition, the CHP and the Kurds.

So, who's the CHP? It is the old Kemalist party. It still has an unreconstructed Kemalist wing, but it also has a social democrat reformist wing. The leader, Kemal Kiliçdaroğlu, is inclined towards the -- can you hear me? Okay, sorry. The leader is inclined towards supporting the more progressive side, and has started to make moves in this regard in this election. Is it -- can you hear me?

But the polls show that the party is -- going to the poll, it's sort of quite stable -- quarter, quarter plus of the electorate.

Then there's the Nationalist Action Party. And this is the party that, in Central Anatolia, competes closest with the AKP for votes from pious Sunni Turks -- and the difference being that while the AKP is ethno-religious nationalist in orientation -- and so, really, foregrounds Islamic dimension of the national identity -- the MHP is ethno-religious nationalists, foregrounding the Turkish element -- although it presumes that all Turks are indeed Muslim.

And they look like they will benefit a little bit from some of the disappointments within, also, the AKP constituency vis-à-vis the government and the fact that there's just also fatigue with the party that has been in power over a decade. But they don't look to make any really dramatic gains or losses in this election.

The big story, as you all know, is the HDP -- the Kurdish party. And here, I refer to it as the old opposition, but it's an old opposition that is really in the process of reinventing itself in a very intriguing way. There's been a discussion and an ongoing conversation brokered by (inaudible) in the bottom corner, with followers of Öcalan, who is the old leader of the PKK, imprisoned on an island, who has great gravitas and charisma among Kurdish voters -- but whose ongoing conversation with the government has not yet led to any meaningful outcome in the peace process with the Kurds.

And there's also a third wing waiting in the background, the militant wing.

But Demirtaş, for the moment, has actually brokered a fascinating conversation between Kurds -- and between Kurds and Turks -- about whether we perhaps would prefer, rather than going down the (inaudible) path, to instead build a new multicultural Turkey together.

And this is why the bomb today and the election results on Sunday are so very critical -- because he's hoping to appeal to swing votes from the AKP on one hand and from the CHP on the other, towards making it through this very high 10-percent electoral threshold.

But there are new forms of opposition, as well. And it is actually these new forms of opposition that have informed the HDP strategy and (inaudible) strategy. And there's really three groups.

There's urban millennials. And these are people, you know, who may be

from what is sometimes called the sort of old privilege -- you know, white Turk background -- but at the same time, they are also a new generation of, you know -- second-generation urban middle classes who have prospered under the AKP, but who have basically been living under AKP and Erdoğan tutelage since they were born, since they've come of age politically. And like youth everywhere, they do expect and demand change.

And this is one thing that, certainly the Chinese authorities have had to come to grips with in Hong Kong, at least. Heightened prosperity does not necessarily lessen and may whet the appetite for greater freedoms and voice. So, you see this, you know, number of different examples of expressions that this type of opposition has taken -- notably, in Gezi -- and including among critics of capitalism among pro-Islamic youth. That's the slide in the corner. It says, "Property belongs to God," and so it's a critique of the sort of excesses of Turkish (inaudible) restructuring by Islamist youth.

These are groups who are bolstered by the consummation of women -- and, again, among both urban millennials and women. We're talking about a mostly pro-secular constituency, but there are pro-religious actors very much involved. Women have felt increasingly threatened under given trends that have unfolded over the past decade in Turkey, including a 1,400-fold rise in reporting of domestic violence and violence against women.

There have been legislative changes that have raised concerns. There have been -- and there's a general climate that we see in the statements of prominent public figures that lead women to believe that they will not fare well under an executive-style presidency driven by Erdoğan, who appears committed towards sort of greater Islamicizing policies in state and society.

Then there's the last group -- Alevis. Again, I want to emphasize, these

are not a new voting bloc. Most of these people would vote for the CHP or the HDP anyway, but it's interesting in terms of the impact that they've had on transforming CHP and HDP politics.

This last group is Alevis. They're about 8 to 10 million people out of Turkey's 75 million strong population. It is a Muslim minority group that is viewed as heterodox by many Sunnis. They have some affinities with Syrian Alawites, but are very much an Anatolian phenomenon, and have sort of Sufi and sort of secular elements. They don't believe, for example, that it's necessary to fast through Ramadan. They don't believe that it's necessary to pray five times a day to be a good Muslim. They have gender-integrated congregations, for example.

And Alevis have become increasingly insecure in the face of Sunni primacy, represented by the AKP, and we see this in the fact that the Gezi protests were, in fact, very much driven by Alevi anxieties and protests. This was evident in the Istanbul and Ankara theaters to a certain extent, but especially in the protests across Anatolia, and in the border regions that are the Alevi heartland, where you've had an influx of 2 million mostly Sunni (inaudible) refugees over the past years.

The sectarian tensions and traumas have been imported from the other side of the border into Turkey. So, there's a potential tinderbox going on there, but the President's assumption seems to be that these groups are marginal and can be suppressed until they become assimilated to their natural orientations under the new Turkey.

So far, the degree to which they've insisted on mobilizing over the past years, to the extent that they have changed the approach and the strategies of the opposition in important ways, suggests that they will continue to resist, even if we see an Executive Presidency.

MR. KIRIŞCI: (inaudible) hear your view, as far the other side (inaudible) are on AKP supporters. If you will allow me, I would like to go for a very quick second tour, no more than three, four minutes.

Again, I'll start with Suat. He's had experience out there. Suat, let's say we survive the elections, and a picture emerges where, clearly, AKP still receives the majority of the votes. And can you take us through two scenarios where HDP passes and doesn't pass the threshold? What kind of politics do you foresee? Do you really see the country waiting until 2019 for the next elections -- prospects of an early election, or maybe no elections at all?

MR. KINIKLIOĞLU: Okay. Well, let me put it out first. The AKP will win the majority. There is no doubt about that. It's only the margin -- whether it will be 39 percent or 44 percent. The public opinion polls that I've seen range from 39 percent to 44 percent.

So, it is certainly a given -- I mean, unless all of these polling companies are wrong -- that the AKP will win a majority again.

So, therefore, you know, what is key, really, is the size of this majority, as, I think, you said earlier on. In our system, a constitutional amendment, which Erdoğan wants, needs to have at least 330 votes.

And for that to happen, you know, the priority or the path to that is the HDP falling below the threshold. You know, a lot more sophisticated polls are being done. Even if the HDP fails to pass the threshold, the numbers don't add up to 330.

So, in my view, it looks extremely difficult for President Erdoğan to push through a constitutional amendment that would make him Dayura, an Executive President, as well.

That said, I think, you know, the difference between the two scenarios

are considerable. The first one, of course, as I alluded in my first statement, is the question of legitimacy. I mean, 10-percent threshold is simply no longer acceptable -- and especially when it comes to a party that has a very ethnic coloring, like the HDP. Then it also takes another tone of legitimacy. So, you know, the legitimacy aspect will be there.

And most of the so-called early election scenarios are really based on this legitimacy deficit that would arise if, let's say, the official outcome of the election would be 9.8 percent and the HDP is not in, and then you have a huge majority again of the AKP -- which would create a political crisis.

Now whether that would precipitate an early election, I'm not so sure. I think the early election scenarios are more wishful thinking, rather than based on concrete analysis. I don't think there would be an appetite by the AKP or Erdoğan to go to an early election based on that.

And what that would mean -- a lot of tension in society. I mean, there would be -- it's a no-brainer. The HDP would probably have a lot of difficulty in controlling their younger and probably more aggressive elements inside, which probably could translate into violence in the cities.

You know, I think the healthier scenario is that the HDP would pass the threshold, that the AKP either become a majority government with a smaller margin of -- or there might be a coalition. You know, there's a lot of speculation. And given how tainted and ugly this campaign has been, all of the opposition parties are distancing themselves from the AKP. So, it's tough to see -- the CHP and HDP do not seem to be at all interested in the coalition.

The only option for a potential coalition would be an AKP-MHP coalition, which would be the Nationalist MHP. And even that, given how Mr. Bahçeli's tone is

during the campaign, seems to be difficult, but I don't think it's out of question. So, if there is a quick coalition that involves the AKP, the most likely scenario is an AKP-MHP scenario.

If an AKP and MHP scenario does not work, and there is a state of crisis that we all feel, it's difficult to predict what might happen. What I'm mostly concerned about is, in our society right now and in the public discourse, election fraud is very much out there. So, you know, even if election fraud doesn't happen, you know, people are very eager and prone to interpret the slightest sort of irregularity that something fishy is going on.

And the reason for that is because what happened in 2014 in Ankara, in Üsküdar, and other places -- and a lot of people have been writing about it, including myself -- so, you know, you will be hearing on Sunday night all kinds of things, but what really matters is, you know, the HDP may not pass the 10-percent threshold. We don't know. All of these public opinion firms are within the minus/plus two margin. But it's highly likely that they will.

But if the perception is that they actually did and there was true vote-rigging, their vote was put down below 10 percent -- that is the worst-case scenario for Turkey, because then, I think you will not be able to only control Kurds, but there will be a lot of Turks, also, who will be outraged because of that.

So, you know, what is really key, whatever, you know, the Turkish electorate decides, that it appropriately reflects to the result. And in that respect, there rests a lot of responsibility with the parties themselves, the NGOs who monitor it, the OSCE is monitoring it, and, of course, the High Election Council, who is, you know, charged with that.

But, as I said, if the HDP does not pass the threshold -- or the perception

is through vote-rigging that it could not pass the threshold -- I think it would be very unpredictable then, God forbid; not a very rosy scenario for Turkey.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Yeah. And what I think is very disappointing is that if there was one democratic institution and value that Turkey had deeply consolidated through those 16 general elections was the perception and the belief that the elections in Turkey are fair and free. Losing that, I suspect, is something that's huge -- at the end of the day, no political party would really want, in terms of the long run, especially.

MR. KINIKLIOĞLU: No.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Ömer, I promised you more words on the Kurdish issue, but then, at the end, you also raised a very interesting question as you surveyed the political scene in Turkey. You mentioned how, within AKP, you feel that there is still the center right of classical Turkey, let's say. How do you see the outcome of the election impacting on what happens to that center right?

MR. TAŞPINAR: I guess one way to look at the center-right issue in Turkey is to understand why Erdoğan has been able to really monopolize the party, despite the presence of more moderate figures within the party -- less polarizing figures, such as Abdullah Kun. Someone like Abdullah Kun, for instance, could have played a major role within the AKP by either establishing his leadership in the party or forming a new political party that could have presented some of the center-right discontent within the AKP.

But one thing that the AKP is good at -- and here, I will resort back to my economic analysis -- is to produce what I call this Chinese model in Turkey. The Chinese model is basically the dream of all authoritarian regimes. The Chinese model is about basically how a political party, in the context of China -- the Chinese Communist Party -- can maintain power through strong economic performance. If you provide security, and if

you provide economic services, economic growth, the question of legitimacy is taken care of, to a certain degree, automatically.

You know, when you think about governance, I encourage you to think about governance as a three-layered concept. Countries that fail to have good governance usually have a security problem. Without security, you cannot have good governance. The second layer is usually capacity, and the third layer is legitimacy. If you're able to provide basically security and capacity, legitimacy comes naturally, and that's why the Chinese Communist Party is able to have legitimacy -- because it's good at providing security and capacity.

Erdoğan has been good at providing security and capacity. He has been good at silencing the Kurdish problem, at creating a semblance of solution to the Kurdish problem. That has been a major achievement -- the fact that we did not have major bloodshed in Turkey comparable to the 1990s, comparable to six, seven years ago, when there was actually the beginning of a major fight between the PKK and the Turkish military.

The last few years, thanks to the so-called peace process -- which was more of a semblance, in my opinion, which lacked the fundamentals of a true peace process, as we have seen what happened in Kobani, as we have seen the discontent of the Kurds -- the Kurdish question is still there, but Erdoğan has been good at basically taking the Kurdish question out of the equation in Turkey and providing security. He's been very good at providing capacity -- economic services. And then that translated into legitimacy automatically.

Now there is something tragic about the failure of establishment parties in Turkey to change the system. I asked the question of, what happened to the independent judiciary in Turkey, in the context of the AKP-Gülen fight?

Well, one can argue we never really had an independent judiciary in Turkey. Turkey was an ideological state. During most of the Cold War, during the 1980s and 1990s, Turkey primarily was a state where there was, for the lack of a better word, a Kemalist consensus where the military played a major role behind the scenes, and when there were certain dimensions of the Turkish politics which meant that the Islamists and the Kurds were out of the picture.

The first wave of democratization in the post-Cold War era in Turkey came from the Islamists, from the AKP. It came basically in 2003, when they came to power and decided that the European Union should be their main goal. That was unbelievable. The Islamist party, the AKP, decided to basically bring a post-Kemalist system by pushing for a new membership. This is why people like Suat, people like myself -- liberals -- basically had hoped that this party could change the system.

But then something tragic happened. The AKP became the establishment. The AKP became the state. It was no longer an antiestablishment party, but it basically became a party that started to use the privileges of power, and itself began its own networks of patronage clientelism, and became a victim of this entity called the state. It became the state.

Now we're at a situation where the second wave of democratization may also come from an antiestablishment party, the Kurds. The most democratic, the most liberal, the most progressive narrative that you hear in the elections in Turkey today is coming from Selahattin Demirtaş, from the HDP -- not the CHP, not the MHP, not the AKP.

This gives me hope that, in Turkey, only antiestablishment parties can actually improve the system. The old AKP was an antiestablishment party. What gives me hope about the HDP is that the HDP, even if it enters the Parliament, even if a

TURKEY-2015/06/05

miracle happens and it enters a coalition government, it will never become the state -- because, by definition, it is known as a Kurdish political party. The Islamists could become the state, because Turkey is 99 percent Muslim, and people could establish basically a sense of supremacy based on Muslim identity.

The Kurds will never be able to represent the majority. They will never be able to become the state. They have vested interest -- their survival depends on rule of law. Their survival depends on minority rights. Their survival depends on checks and balances. This gives me hope about the HDP and its agenda.

However, what I'm really puzzled is the failure of establishment political parties to challenge the system. It would have been wonderful for a center-right party or a center-left party -- it would have been wonderful for someone like (inaudible) to have taken Turkey to the post-Kemalist phase, to post-military, pro-E.U., pro-progressive face. These political parties have failed. The establishment of Turkey has failed. The Kemalist order in Turkey has failed.

The agent of change has become the Islamists, and now the agent of change has become the Kurds.

So, we should be asking, what is it that creates this mental block of establishment political parties? Why it took so many years for the CHP to understand that it can become an agent of change, too? In the absence of a left-wing movement in Turkey, we'll never have a balance. We need a left. We need a progressive left. We need something that can challenge this right coalition. The HDP alone cannot be there.

One thing that is not being discussed in Turkey is the possibility of a CHP-HDP coalition. Yet, this is the most natural coalition. It should be happening. The CHP, if it's a progressive political party, it should be able to actually get rid of its Kemalist, neo-nationalist, (inaudible) baggage, and embrace the progress of liberal, democratic

agenda of the HDP. For that, I think the HDP needs to change. The HDP has proved that it can change. The CHP has yet to prove that it can really change.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Thanks, Ömer. Ömer shows his professor side, and it's very difficult to stop once you get going.

MR. TAŞPINAR: I haven't started yet.

MR. KIRIŞCI: The observations are very valid, and I really wish we could expand on that. And please don't hesitate to come back to some of the points he raised during Q&A.

But I'd like to turn finally for a quick question to Nora. Nora, you are an up-and-coming professor, too, but try to be brief, if you can. I was fascinated with the project you ran. You were part of the Transatlantic Academy about religion and the Western liberal order. One aspect of the last 10, 15 years of politics in Turkey that we have not referred to so far is the way in which religion has come to play a very central role. You've touched on the edges of it, as you tackled the earlier question there.

Can you just take us through, very briefly, in a couple of sentences, where do you see religion going in Turkish politics after the elections on Sunday?

MS. FISHER ONAR: Sure. Well --

MR. KIRIŞCI: I realize it's a big topic, but you worked on a project, and I highly recommend you to have a look at the report and the book that they produced recently. Yeah.

MS. FISHER ONAR: Sure. Well, thank you very much. And, indeed, it's available online. Just go to the Transatlantic Academy or GMF website, and you can certainly download my -- and the other Fellows' contributions. It's really touched on all aspects -- or a range of aspects of challenges and opportunities that religion presents to transatlantic partners in a changing world.

And in the case of Turkey -- I mean, I can just sort of briefly summarize my findings as showing that over the past 10 years -- but especially over the past two or three years -- there was a process that began with liberalization, which included self-determination for people who wanted to express their religious sensitivities in public. And this is something that was very intelligible to liberals, for example, and that project was advanced in the first and second terms of the AKP in power.

But in the third term, there is a discernible empirical trend towards what one could call Islamization. We can come back to definitions and what I actually mean by that. But in a nutshell, it's basically official moves that seek to amplify the role of religion in the public sphere. And we see trends in these directions in fields like education, and in the area of religious governments, and in the area of -- as I alluded to -- sort of gender roles.

And so much depends on the outcome of the elections, but, in a nutshell, if those four scenarios -- scenario one, you already went through the possibilities quite cogently -- but if there is -- basically, the less of a mandate there is for the AKP -- and I'm not doing this in sort of a deterministic way by saying that all AKP Parliamentarians and voters are necessarily pro-Islamization, but in terms of the overall program, the less of a mandate there is for the AKP, the less Islamization you will see; the more of a mandate there is for the AKP -- and especially the more of a mandate there is for Erdoğan towards the referendum or an Executive Presidency, the more likely we're likely to see heights in Islamization in these key areas of governance.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Thanks, Nora (inaudible) --

MR. KINIKLIOĞLU: Can I just do one sentence to what Ömer said?

MR. KIRIŞCI: All right, you go ahead, but, you know, there are lots of questions waiting.

MR. KINIKLIOĞLU: (inaudible) one reason why there is no central-left or central-right party that you are looking for is a 10-percent threshold. That's it.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Great; thanks.

Let's have three questions, and then we'll go for a second round.

Yes, sir.

MR. WALTHER: Hi -- Neil Walther, with the German Marshall Fund.

I am curious how this election and its various outcomes will affect Turkish foreign policy writ large, but specifically its relationship with the United States and European Union, as well as its stance towards the war in Syria, and Iraq, and the Pan-Kurdish movement that's really gained momentum out of those conflicts.

Thank you.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Great; thanks.

There's a question in the back, and then here in the front. Yes, yes, yes.

SPEAKER: Hi -- (inaudible). I'm a PhD candidate at University of Pittsburgh.

My question is more about the AKP, actually, and what has been going on within AKP after Erdoğan became the President. There are many reports that, actually, there are factions within AKP now. Some of the people in the Parliament, actually, opposes or are not pro-Erdoğan any more, that much. There have been visible issues. One was in the corruption (inaudible) in the Parliament. So, there is also a fight between the (inaudible).

What would you expect if HDP passes the threshold? What would happen within AKP -- and if you could see, actually, more factions against Erdoğan?

MR. KIRIŞCI: Very good; thanks.

Yes, sir -- in the front here. Yeah.

MR. COOPER: Robert Cooper, from American-Turkish Association.

I read recently that in the event the 10-percent threshold is crossed, they may be approached for a deal of greater support for the peace process in exchange for supporting the amendment process. What is the likelihood of that?

MR. KIRIŞCI: Okay, thanks.

We have three really very good questions. Ömer, I'd like to start with you -- maybe the foreign policy one, if it interests you -- although Suat was a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs at the Parliament. So, I'll let you decide which one -- maybe the Kurdish deal, the last question.

MR. TAŞPINAR: In terms of foreign policy, the most urgent question facing Turkey is, of course, the Syria crisis. And the AKP's Syria policy, as far as I've been able to follow it, is not very popular in the eyes of the public opinion.

In that sense, if AKP wins with a comfortable majority, I expect that the AKP would see this as partly a stamp of approval on its foreign policy, and that would be the wrong interpretation. But I'm afraid that there will be a wrong interpretation, and they will continue their foreign policy of basically supporting what Turkey has been doing in Syria -- which, if I can understand correctly, lately has been to partner up with Saudi Arabia and Qatar in terms of helping (inaudible) against ISIS and the regime.

I think, overwhelmingly, the CHP -- even the MHP -- wants Turkey not to play an active role in the Middle East. There is a sense of Middle East fatigue in Turkish public opinion, and Turkish public opinion is not a strong supporter of AKP's very activist, so-called neo-autonomist attempt to play the leadership role in the region.

I don't think Turkish public opinion supports the AKP's very confrontational attitude with the Egyptian regime, for instance. Why should Turkey be so supportive of the Muslim Brotherhood in the region? That policy does not resonate.

If there is a level of support for AKP's foreign policy, that level of support was for the zero problems with neighbors' policy -- or the good old days when Turkey basically prioritized in a kind of realpolitik way good relations with its neighbors in the name of improving trade and economic relations. But I suspect that if the AKP wins, there will be more of the same, in terms of Turkish foreign policy.

As far as the Kurds are concerned, the Kurds -- Selahattin Demirtaş has made it very clear that he will not enter into a Faustian bargain, in any kind of bargain with the AKP allowing Erdoğan to forge a presidential system.

In that sense, I'm confident that a Selahattin Demirtaş who establishes himself as the leader of the Kurdish movement will try very hard not to engage in a kind of cooperation with the AKP for a constitutional amendment which will allow Erdoğan to push for the presidential regime.

In that sense, I really think that the dream of Erdoğan, in terms of establishing an Executive Presidency, is over. He will not be able to achieve that. However, there are fears that, somehow, Abdullah Öcalan can overrule Selahattin Demirtaş; can basically see the constitutional amendment for a presidential executive system as a quid pro quo for his release from jail and becoming the leader of the Kurdish movement -- in a way, his get-out-of-jail card may be accepting the presidential executive regime. That's been the fear for months, for years of Turkish liberals.

But Selahattin Demirtaş, as a very good politician, has sensed this fear, and has run a very effective public communication campaign saying that he will not allow this to happen. And he presented himself as the alternative to AKP's hegemony. And he basically managed to convince a lot of people, including myself.

So, that's why I see them as the best hope, in terms of AKP establishing that kind of a system.

However, let me end with a note of pessimism. Erdoğan doesn't need a constitutional amendment to run the country from the Presidential Palace. Why? Because he has been doing so already. In the absence of rule of law, in the new Turkey, this so-called new Turkey, you don't need constitutional change; all you need is actually good economic performance -- this Chinese model that I'm talking about -- and some security, some economic performance. Then people will acquiesce. People will accept Erdoğan's hegemony.

And (inaudible) is not someone who can challenge that. He may even emerge weakened from the elections. If AKP gets in the lower 40s or definitely higher 30s, he will emerge very weakened, and that may strengthen Erdoğan's hand, to a certain degree, in the absence of someone like Abdullah Kun, who may decide to enter the politics.

Thanks.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Nora?

MS. FISHER ONAR: Sure. Why don't I take on a couple of interesting questions there?

In terms of Turkey-U.S. relations, I think it's important to bear in mind that there's an idiosyncratic dimension, related to personalities involved, and then there's the structural dimension, related to a core alliance in a part of the world where the U.S. has key interests and it is very volatile at the moment. So, the idiosyncratic dimension may reflect upon the sort of regional dimension.

We see this in, for example, the Turkish leadership's criticism of Western performance or engagement -- or lack of -- in Syria.

But the structural dimension is always there. So, for example, as much as there's been a lot of Israel-bashing in the series of reelection campaigns, economic

relations with Israel have never been stronger. And so there's a certain resilience to these types of interest-driven relationships that can maybe weather the rollercoaster of both the domestic politics and the personalities involved.

On the E.U. question, I think that any move towards, you know, heightened authoritarian practices in Turkey, any further dissolution of checks and balances, rule of law, and so forth, is really making this already almost rhetorical prospect of Turkey's E.U. accession even more remote. There's no face-saving exit strategy for anyone, so it may remain on paper, but, certainly, the best outcome for Turkey's E.U. prospects would be HDP making it through the threshold at, you know, 12 percent, 12.5 percent levels, which would really be a strong mandate from the Turkish people as a corrective, as Suat said, towards a more inclusive, pluralistic system.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Thanks.

Suat, you're the experienced person, as far as --

MR. KINIKLIOĞLU: You keep saying that.

MR. KIRIŞCI: -- inside the party rules. Please take the question that came from the back there.

MR. KINIKLIOĞLU: Okay. Well, I don't associate with the party for a long time now, but from what I hear and from friends that the feedback's coming, look, the party had many successful, very centrist personalities in the system prior to 2011. And those people continue -- many of them continue to associate with the party. And they are obviously upset with how Erdoğan has taken this authoritarian role, and how much that is creating tension in society.

And don't think, despite the numbers -- what we have here -- the AKP is extremely uncomfortable, because that's not really the project that was set out at the beginning. The AKP was not formed as a leadership party. It had four main pillars, who

TURKEY-2015/06/05

were all, over time, (inaudible) you know, eliminated. And, you know, Erdoğan emerged later on as the sole, unquestioned leader.

But I think, regardless of what the outcome of this election will be, that the internal soul-searching will continue, very much. If the HDP passes the threshold, and there will be a more balanced Parliament, you can be assured that that soul-searching would be more intense and visible in the short term.

If that's not the case, given how dangerous it could be -- and, you know, it could have impact on everything in your life in Turkey these days, including your job and et cetera -- people will probably be more reluctant and wait out, perhaps.

But I think, you know, how the American system has two term limits for your President -- I think, you know, these have been measures taken after long times of experiences. I think what we will see, when Turkey normalizes again and a new constitution will be written, there will be term limits -- because given how Erdoğan has progressed over the years, I think it makes sense for making a two-term limit for the Turkish Prime Minister. It should be the executive power.

MS. FISHER ONAR: If I could just add that the Chinese government also has term limits. You talked about the Chinese model of 10 years before.

MR. KINIKLIOĞLU: Yeah, but -- so that might be an incentive to imitate the Chinese.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Let's have a quick -- two more (inaudible).

Yes, one there -- the young lady, please -- and then right from the front, we'll take it.

SPEAKER: First, I just wanted to thank --

MR. KIRIŞCI: (inaudible).

SPEAKER: Okay. First, I just wanted to thank all of our panelists and

TURKEY-2015/06/05

for Brookings to create this event for us. I'm here with the Hellenic American Leadership Council, and I wanted to extend the question on Turkey's foreign politics.

And so we are wondering -- in Cyprus, we have the most promising peacekeeping settlement talks happening right now. And we do have this hovering Turkish spectra. And so moving forward in both option A and option B, what will Turkey's contributions to the settlement processes be?

MR. KIRIŞCI: Very good question; okay.

Yes, sir -- your question.

SPEAKER: (inaudible) has mentioned that there is one thing (inaudible) -- I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

There is one thing that is not being talked about in Turkey, which is HDP and CHP coalition. Why do you think it's not being talked, and what would happen if there was a coalition between CHP and HDP? What would really public reaction to it? Would they get, like, more support -- or would it decrease the votes for the next elections?

MR. KIRIŞCI: Okay. Well, thank you. I think we have just enough time for each of you taking 2.3 minutes.

Suat, let's start with you. The Cyprus question -- you know, it reminded me of a Turkish saying, but you --

MR. KINIKLIOĞLU: Well, I -- to be honest with you, we are so overwhelmed with the domestic agenda -- you know, although I know Mustafa Akunja is, you know, as you say, all the stars are lined up in the right place for a solution, there's little public attention to that.

I am sorry to say, you know, the domestic turmoil is so overwhelming -- and it's been so depressing on the foreign policy front. I mean, there is not a single issue

where we can be optimistic on the foreign policy front.

So, it's difficult to foresee, given how Erdoğan reacted to Akunja from day one, to see that Erdoğan would let Akunja sign a deal with the Greek Cypriots that he is not okay with.

And given how Erdoğan is capable of projecting himself as a very nationalist -- and he is nationalist, in many ways -- but, you know, prior to this election -- I mean, four or five months ago -- he was more seen as the peacemaker with the Kurds. But, you know, today, you know, things are totally shifted, and I don't see -- you know, as long as he is de facto the Executive President of the Country, I don't see Mustafa Akunja a deal that he wants unless it's okay with Erdoğan.

So, I'm afraid to be more pessimistic on that.

And as I said, you know, Turks are quite fatigued with Cyprus. They don't care about Cyprus any more. And, you know, under normal circumstances, the news that Akunja won the election would be great and people would be optimistic, but we are at a stage where we're bombing each other on political rallies. Forget about talking about the European Union or anything else.

I'm afraid it will not -- whatever Akunja will negotiate, it will not go through unless Erdoğan will say okay.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Unless the attention is taken away from Cyprus, and he managed to squeeze through a deal.

MR. KINIKLIOĞLU: Yeah. You know, I mean, I just looked. I mean, there were two people killed on the bombing that I was talking about already. So, I mean, people's first priorities are there. Two people are killed in a rally, and, God forbid, maybe more. So, people don't have any energy or oxygen left for Cyprus at this time.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Nora, maybe the question that came from the front --

yeah.

MS. FISHER ONAR: Sorry, the -- okay, I was --

MR. KIRIŞCI: But feel free, yeah.

MS. FISHER ONAR: Okay. Well, just very quickly, want to address the question that was raised, actually in the earlier round about the sort of domestic political scenarios. And I do think what will be interesting -- because I think the polls show -- and, of course, we know from U.K., Israel, and U.S. midterm elections that, you know, the polls can deceive us -- but the polls showed that, really, an Executive Presidency from the get-go is kind of off the table. And we've heard sort of some very dire scenarios about what would happen if HDP doesn't make it through.

But in the kind of other two scenarios, where you have a weak but single-party AKP government or a coalition government -- this actually kind of creates a space that is quite empowering for some of these centrist political actors who we've been talking about, such as (inaudible), who may be, you know, privately reconciled to a less-than-overwhelming victory -- I mean, because otherwise, their campaign needs to write itself out of a job, right?

So, there may be more space for politics as normal after this electoral cycle comes to an end. And if we see that sort of an outcome, which then concludes your HDP-CHP coalition question -- but the sort of outstanding question remains -- the fact that so much power is already accrued to the executive, in terms of special administrative courts, in terms of pressure on the media, in terms of privileged access to components of the intelligence community and so forth -- so it's not as if such a sort of normalized outcome will be expected mildly by Erdoğan on the HDP-CHP coalition front.

I mean, I think it's also a lot of posturing right before elections. So, although polls are coming in that suggests that the HDP will make it over the threshold,

(inaudible) very, you know, passionate talks about being on the knife's edge. I mean, he says that in order to, obviously, draw swing voters from the CHP and from other parties who are voting strategically and want to make sure that this structural source of opposition and pluralism makes it into the Parliament.

And by the same token, there's that same incentive for CHP. You know, this is the party you're coming for votes with at this point, among some of your potential swing voters.

So, there may be a different conversation after the elections.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Very interesting.

MR. KINIKLIOĞLU: And, also, the CHP-HDP numbers don't add up. You can't form a coalition on CHP and HDP. It's not enough numbers.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Ömer, please?

MR. TAŞPINAR: I'll quickly start with the Cyprus question, and gravitate to the HDP-CHP one.

The urgent always trumps the important.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Yes.

MR. TAŞPINAR: And as Suat said, the urgent in Turkey is not Cyprus. The urgent is not the Armenian genocide issue. The urgent are not these side issues, but as far as foreign policy's concerned, it's primarily Syria and the Middle East.

In that sense, I don't expect, really, the question of Cyprus -- especially since the European Union question is no longer there as a major issue to enter the agenda.

But one word of optimism there: When things go badly in Turkey, in terms of economy and politics, people usually look for an external anchor. And that external anchor -- guess what -- is not Iran, is not China, is not India; it's the European

Union. The support for E.U. membership is beginning to increase in Turkey. There is more enthusiasm among the disillusioned middle classes-upper middle classes of Turkey for a return to the E.U. agenda.

And it is in that framework that the Cyprus question may one day become also part of the issue. Remember, the old AKP was the one that challenged (inaudible). The old AKP was the one that really wanted a solution in Cyprus. That was the good old days when the AKP was the antiestablishment, and the establishment wanted the status quo.

Now if you want evidence that the AKP has become the establishment look at Erdoğan; how it treats Mustafa Akunja. It treats him basically as someone who is not loyal to him, and he would prefer someone like (inaudible) to be there. So, that tells you something about how it's dangerous to become the establishment in Turkey.

On HDP-CHP -- one reason why the CHP voters and the CHP itself is unable to really embrace the HDP is because the CHP, deep down, is still the party of Atatürk, still the party of Kemalism, still the party of nationalism. And what the Kurds want in Turkey -- make no mistake -- what the Kurds want in Turkey is autonomy. They want nothing short of an autonomy.

The days when you could basically solve the Kurdish question with some cosmetic cultural reforms are over. They want democratic decentralization. And to me, that translates into autonomy. And this is a very difficult step to digest for the CHP. Add to this the fact that the disgruntled CHP voters are voting for the HDP, the fact that people who usually could vote for a central-left progressive party -- they're so disillusioned with the CHP that they're gravitating to the HDP, also on the grounds that a couple more votes for the CHP may not make a huge difference, but a couple more votes for the HDP may make a huge difference. Therefore, there is also a tactical obstacle, in

terms of cooperation between the HDP and the CHP right now.

But down the line, I think the best reconciliation between Turkish nationalism and Kurdish nationalism would come from a CHP-HDP coalition. Turkish nationalism needs to reconcile itself with the fact that the Kurdish genie is out of the bottle. The good old days of assimilating the Kurds are over. The Kurds want autonomy. They will probably get it, hopefully in a bloodless way.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Thanks, Ömer.

Just before we close, I think there's just enough time for me to squeeze in a word, too, on Cyprus.

On Cyprus, I see a fascinating sort of dilemma for Erdoğan. I was struck by the way in which he responded to Mustafa Akunja. But then Mustafa Akunja got a very clear majority of the votes, and you have an Erdoğan that, for the last couple of years, has emphasized majoritarianism, Ömer -- that he has toed the line that, "I got the majority, and that entitles me to rule on the basis of that."

Now sidelining Mustafa Akunja, I feel, is a challenge there. It creates an internal contradiction in terms of his own politics.

I'd like, also, to end with a slight optimistic observation. Ömer made references to the E.U. and the trends as far as public opinion goes, and this need to latch onto an external anchor there.

I believe it's already happening from within the government and the state (inaudible). It's not any more the E.U. membership process, but it is modernizing, upgrading the customs you need. And bureaucracy, as well as government, is engaged in there, and an important step was taken earlier in May in that direction.

The irony is that the success of the process will, at some point, depend very much on whether some solution emerges from Cyprus, because upgrading the

customs union, the final agreement on it, will necessitate (inaudible) decision within the European Union, and it would be difficult to do it without the support of Cyprus there, as well.

And I hope that that tiny little optimistic note there will help us to overcome some of the unfortunate news that we've heard from Turkey today.

And thank you for being with us this afternoon. Thanks.

* * * * *

CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

Carleton J. Anderson, III

(Signature and Seal on File)

Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of Virginia

Commission No. 351998

Expires: November 30, 2016