

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

TURKEY AFTER THE COUP ATTEMPT:
IMPLICATIONS FOR TURKISH DEMOCRACY,
FOREIGN POLICY AND THE FUTURE OF THE SYRIAN WAR

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. HILL: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for joining us today. We are here to talk about an event that is so recent that it's actually still playing out in real time. So before we begin with our discussion this morning, I do want to just underscore that the topic we're going to be talking about. There are so many aspects of this that are unclear and more information is coming in, so this is going to be our attempt at the first cut of the analysis of the situation, some of the implications and some of the things to be concerned about. But just as I want to, before we begin, make that very clear that this is still an event that is unfolding in real time. So there may be information that some of you get as we're sitting here in the audience.

So I'm Fiona Hill, the director of the Center on the United States and Europe here at Brookings. Turkey is part of our portfolio within Europe. We have a Turkey project that has been running for many years. We have two colleagues here to my immediate left who have been heavily involved in this Turkey project since its inception. The current director, Kemal Kirişci, who many of you are aware of, was also our TUSIAD senior fellow here at the Brookings Institution. Ömer Taşpınar was the former director of the Turkey Project when it started off here at Brookings. He was a faculty member at the National Defense University, also a nonresident senior fellow here at Brookings, and many of you know is a long-time commentator on Turkish-Middle Eastern and many other foreign policy security issues here in Washington, D.C..

We're also joined by two of our other Brookings colleagues. Shadi Hamid, who is with our Middle East program, is the author of a new book which I can highly recommend to everyone—*Islamic Exceptionalism: How the Struggle over Islam is Reshaping the World*. This has literally just come out and I think is obviously very relevant to the topic that we have at hand, and Shadi is an expert on Egypt, the Middle East, and many of the topics.

And then we're joined by Mike O'Hanlon, who I think actually doesn't really need a lot of introduction from us, the audience here, a longstanding senior fellow here at Brookings, working primarily on U.S. military and security issues, but many other topics. And Mike has obviously been closely following the U.S. military and diplomatic and political interventions and discussions around Syria. And this clearly

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has—the events in Turkey have some serious implications for what's likely to happen next in Syria at a time when we've just had Secretary of State John Kerry in Russia talking to Vladimir Putin, Sergey Lavrov, the foreign minister of Russia, and others about how we might be able to move forward in dealing with the ongoing civil war in Syria.

So we want to try to touch upon many of these different issues here today, so we're going to stick to this more as a discussion, but I'll start off with each of my colleagues in putting a couple of questions to them to get started, and then I see in the audience here there are many veteran Turkey watchers and there are many people who are involved in all different aspects of regional affairs. So I'd like to bring you, the audience, in to the discussion after a couple of rounds of questions to my colleagues here.

I'd like to start with Kemal for an assessment of what's really happening inside Turkey. And as I said with a caveat that this is very much a moving event, and even this morning there have been a lot of other revelations about the counter coup, the efforts by the Turkish government to deal with the aftermath. We're still getting a lot of information about what's happening. But Kemal, I wonder if you can share with us your best assessment of the developments, including, you know, the shocking news that we all had on Friday as we were all heading out of our offices in the afternoon about the coup unfolding.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Well, I'd like to start by saying thanks to you all for joining us at such a short notice. But then I suppose your presence also suggests how serious what is happening in Turkey is.

I, personally, as an academic since 1983, I would have never, never thought and expected something of this kind to happen in Turkey. So I think the first observation that I'd like to make very quickly is that this coup attempt did catch the country, maybe the world and people like us, by surprise. And it was a shock. It really was a shock to see what was being reported by TV stations that Friday. Here it was late afternoon; there, late in the evening.

What is also shocking is the level of violence. Never had previous, and I shall say a few quick words on that, too, previous coups or coup attempts targeted the Parliament. People are very shocked by that, too. I wish there was time to go into the details of it. But people have been raising the question, how can a pilot on whom one million dollars have been spent to train go and hit the Parliament

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the way they have done it. This is a big question and it will need to be answered to be able to understand how this happened.

Retrospectively, it doesn't seem that surprising because Turkey is a country that has experienced many coups, many in my lifetime, all of them in my lifetime. 1960. 1971, I was just starting university. 1980, I had just finished university. I vividly remember hearing BBC World Radio in England where I was doing my master's degree announcing in December this coup. I was young. I don't think I was appreciative of what it actually meant. And then subsequently, in the midst of my career came 1997, the so-called post-modern coup. And then one as recently as 2007, the so-called eCoup, electronic coup. I will spare you the details. And then I'm sure some of you have followed this Erdogan and sledgehammer case, indictments that to me seem to have some connections to what happened on Friday, too.

Nevertheless, it still came as a surprise because this is the government and a government led by Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who did see through many EU-related reforms, which, again, part of my career I followed very quickly. And those reforms, even if some of them were being eroded in recent years, gave us the impression as if the days of military coups were really for good behind us.

Now, a very controversial aspect of this coup is that the government is alleging that the coup was instigated by the Gulenists. I again am not going to go into the details of it. I suspect many of you are familiar, but Fetullah Gülen is a preacher based here in the United States since 1997, and the government claims, alleges, that he attempted or his movement attempted to build a state within a state. There is a lot that's being said about it. And then as I'm sure you're also following, the government right now is leaning very, very heavily on the U.S. government to extradite him, and the U.S. government appears to be cooperative but rightly is saying that it has to be done within the rule of law.

A pleasantly surprising aspect of this coup was also the way in which the public and the opposition political parties in the parliament, without hesitation, instantly reacted to the coup, how they condemned it, and stood behind the principles of democracy, as well as the fact that you can't do this to an elected government, especially one elected with such a clear majority. However, the extent of the detentions right now that are taking place, dismissals, is creating a very powerful impression that what you're watching is a witch hunt, and raises question marks about whether the rule of law, at least

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eventually after the initial storm is over, will be respected.

Right now, there's talk -- the figures keep changing constantly, so don't take the figures I'll be citing on their face value, but there's been around 50,000 detentions or dismissals. And again, figures are fluctuating. 180 to 150 generals have been detained, and some of you may want to know what the number of generals in Turkey is. It's 325. So one-third of the upper echelons of "the" Turkish military, and I'm underlying "the" in capitals, is under detention or has been dismissed.

On top of it, on top of it there are about 1,400 officers who have been detained, and the total number of officers in Turkey is 40,000. This is not something very nice to say, but if Turkey had a very nasty enemy in its neighborhood, the Turkish military is probably at its weakest in its history right now.

But it doesn't stop with the military. The Ministry of Education has purged 15,000 teachers out of 50,000 teachers roughly. And then there is the judiciary. When you add all these up, it comes to roughly one-third of these institutions, major institutions of Turkey, that have been purged.

These are critically dramatic times, and I've already mentioned the rule of law aspect of this. And Fiona, I realize time is limited and Fiona did whisper to me that we may have a second round, so I'll reflect on the implications later on. Thanks.

MS. HILL: Thanks very much, Kemal. As you have underscored with this, the magnitude of the reaction to the coup is in many respects revolutionary. I think many of us that are sitting here, these kinds of numbers of expulsions or detentions of people are the kinds of things that happen in a revolution when you're changing over an entire system historically.

Now, Mike, you've been obviously watching all of this for some time and writing a great deal about all of the developments that have led up to this. I mean, the backdrop to the events that Kemal is describing in the aftermath has been a long one. We've had two rounds of elections in Turkey after contestation of election (inaudible) position and the ruling party, the AKP. We've, of course, had a renewed civil war as one might call it with the Kurdish opposition and terrorist movements, the PKK, and serious military action has been going on for some time inside Turkey against the PKK of recent months which, of course, has spilled over into Syria where, of course, Turkey has been heavily involved and very

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much concerned about the activity of Kurdish terrorist movements inside of Syria as well. I mean, that's just a snapshot of many things that we could talk about. But what do you think is some of the biggest issues that we should be paying attention to here as we think about the broader reverberations to this and the run up to this coup?

MR. TAŞPINAR: Thank you, Fiona. I think Kemal did a great job in terms of summarizing and giving us a snapshot of what's going on right now. And we should be paying attention to the institutional collapse of Turkey. I mean, this is unprecedented. This is no longer just a governance crisis; this is uncharted waters for a country where the military used to be the most important, the most professional, the most respected institution in the country. This used to be a country where there was a sense of law and order. Turkey was always an ideological state to a certain degree. Kemalism, the founding principles of the republic were always important but we were going through a very difficult transition to a post-Kemalist Turkey under the leadership of a very charismatic, but also very populist leader, who kept winning elections, and he appeared to be in control. However, Turkey was very polarized, extremely polarized, and there were already signs of institutional failures and potential chaos in Turkey when you saw the problems in 2013, the way the government tried to handle the corruption allegations by purging Gülenist elements from the judiciary, by going after the police force. There was already a sense that something was very wrong in Turkey in the institutional framework of the country. There was a lack of professionalism. The rule of law looked increasingly absent. But Erdogan appeared to be in control. This is why what happened, and I cannot emphasize this enough, is shocking. Erdogan appeared to be in control because he was basically able to win election after election, and he won the elections last summer, the repeat elections by close to 50 percent, and he seemed well on his way to establishing a presidential regime.

The opposition, the civilian opposition was in disarray, and I think we should always pay attention to the problem of the civilian opposition in Turkey, the failure of the civilian opposition and the way people were basically desperate for a stronger, more organized opposition in Turkey. And Erdogan basically appeared to have a hand-in-glove relationship with the top brass of the military, which is probably why he survived the coup, because the top brass was not involved. Yet, the middle rank officers,

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and here the focus is on the Gulenists, were heavily involved, but there is also a big question about, okay, maybe the force commanders were not involved but why do we have so many generals, so many admirals arrested? And this tells me that this coup goes beyond the Gulenists attempt. There were probably elements of the traditional Kemalists, ultra-secular establishment also involved. So the government and the military will do its best understandably to blame the Gulenists for what happened, but the sheer number of people arrested within the military, not just middle-rank officers, but within the upper echelons, shows that there was a much wider level of participation and that Turkey narrowly escaped this coup.

And we need to have a conversation about the Gülen organization, the Gülen movement. What is it? Is it, as supporters of the Gülen movement claim, a civil society organization composed of individuals who are inspired by the theological and religious views of Fetullah Gülen? Or is it as the Turkish government and the AKP now are saying a terrorist organization which intends to basically overthrow the government, which has a secret agenda, which is a centralized organization, which takes orders from up. If it's the latter, as Turkey claims, why isn't the United States extraditing Fetullah Gülen? The United States is expecting basically a clear, legal case. But in my opinion, it's very hard to prove directly Fetullah Gülen's involvement in all this because this, as far as I'm concerned, is not a typical hierarchical, centralized organization where basically decision-making is coming from the top and where basically the spiritual leader of the movement is involved organically and operationally in all the steps that the organization is taking.

We should also have a discussion about who is a Gülenist? Graduating from these schools and then getting a job in Turkish government qualifies you often as a Gülenist. But then are all the members, are all the graduates of this organization basically guilty of plotting, overthrowing, organizing, having this secret agenda? This is a very nebulous entity, and we need to have a discussion about why there is lack of transparency within the Gülen movement. And this is a longer conversation, but it has a lot to do with the fact that the Gulenists, for a very long time, were suspects in the eyes of the Turkish state and the Turkish military. In the eyes of the Turkish military, the Turkish generals in the heydays of Kemalism when they defined the threat of Islamic fundamentalism, they focused on political

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Islam represented by the predecessors of the AKP, the (inaudible) movement, political Islam, closer to the Muslim Brotherhood type in Turkey. But I think what the Turkish generals, the Kemalists really feared when they said Islamic fundamentalism was the Gülen movement because these guys were very good at having a long-term agenda of basically working the educational system, the media, the social aspect of their agenda, and they were not interested in overtaking the state but they were more interested in working with society, working with civil society. So in the eyes of the critics of the Gülen movement, they were very good at slowly infiltrating the government. But there was this fear of the Gulenists, which fueled in return the fear that the Gulenists had of the state, so there was a lack of transparency. And these mutual fears fed each other and created this kind of schizophrenic Turkey right now that we're in. So we can't understand what's going on without understanding this deeply-rooted fear that Turkish secularism had of the Gülenist movement, and the secrecy of the Gülenist movement, which was partly in reaction to this fear.

So to wrap up, what is the implication for all this for Turkey right now? Well, Kemal said Turkey was in a nasty neighborhood with neighbors looking out for a weakness. Well, Turkey is in a nasty neighborhood, and Turkey is fighting actually an ethnic insurgency in the southeast. Who is fighting this insurgency? The very generals we're talking about. There is no esprit de corp. There is no morale. There is no cohesion left in the Turkish army. This is unprecedented. And in that sense, how this army will fight now with a clear sense of mission, a clear sense of mission, when such massive purges are happening, the PKK, how it will fight the PKK, how will you establish interagency coordination between the police, between the intelligence, between the military, when you have to fight ISIL cells which have just managed to have a spectacular terrorist attack in Istanbul airport only a few days before the coup. How is this country going to fight ISIL cells at home? How is it going to fight the Kurdish insurgency at home? Forget about Syria. Forget about the regional dynamics. We're talking about an institutional failure, potential collapse of Turkey as we know it. This is a major crisis for Turkey. It will have huge implications for Turkey's relations with the European Union. If Turkey reestablishes the death penalty, the EU is over. The EU dream is over. There were already signs that it was not going to happen anyway because there were major problems in terms of this refugee deal and the anti-terrorism law that the EU wanted Turkey to

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reform. Well, forget about the anti-terrorism law now. Turkey is fighting terrorism as it knows how to fight terrorism by purging everything. And the United States. Fetullah Gülen is here. In the eyes of the government, Fetullah Gülen is no less than Osama bin Laden now. And in the eyes of the Turkish government, the United States is refusing to extradite someone that they consider as dangerous as Osama bin Laden. This can go very far in terms of Turkish-American relations, and Turkey can react very irrationally, the way it reacts to certain things.

Imagine the way Turkey reacts to the Armenian genocide issue whenever there is a problem. This is much more serious for Turkey. This is an existential, literally existential problem now for the government. Erdogan escaped a coup. He escaped assassination, and he's a wounded tiger and he will extract revenge, not just domestically but externally. So I don't want to sound alarmist, but this is really uncharted waters for Turkey.

MS. HILL: Well, I don't think Bond could actually overestimate the problems that we're facing right now given the circumstances.

I do want to come back to Kemal when we've gone through everything because I know that you want to add a few things, but before I move on to Shadi, there is one thing that I do want to ask you just to elaborate on just for this opening session. That is, at one point, Erdogan, President Erdogan actually saw the Gülenist movement as an asset. So, I mean, you talked, you know, very clearly about the rift that has developed between them, but there was a time several years ago when there was a different nature of that relationship, which also did in many respects I think feed into the problems that we have now. Maybe you could just comment on that briefly just so that we make it very clear for the audience that it's even more complicated perhaps than it looks right now.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Of course. Of course. Very good.

When the AKP came to power in 2002, they were totally unprepared to run the country. They did not have the human capital, the social capital, the educated segments. They did not have a loyal Intelligencia behind them. But the Gülen movement had this, all this, because they had invested for decades in education. So there was a group of pious religious individuals that were distant to a certain degree to AKP, to Erdogan, because they always saw themselves as a different religious movement than

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the political Islamic movement of Erdogan. Yet, as Erdogan moved the party to the center and claimed that he wanted the European Union, democratization, there was a convergence between the Gulenists and Erdogan. And the Gulenists provided basically the human capital that the AKP desperately needed. That's why they worked together for almost 10 years, from 2002 to 2012, 2013, and the agenda that they had was very clear. To a certain degree it was to create a post-Kemalist Turkey. And what was the most Kemalist institution that was resisting that? The military. So they had a common enemy. The common enemy were the secularist generalist. And they emasculated together, hand in glove, with the Erdogan trial, with the values, the generals, the military. This is why what is coming is a shock. And this is why to a certain degree the Gülen movement is becoming the victim of its own success.

What do I mean by that? They were so successful at purging, I think, certain elements from the Turkish military or creating the sense of fear within the Turkish military that anyone who was even dreaming about a coup would be suspected. When finally things changed in the last three years and the Gulenists went after the AKP and the AKP went after them, and when finally these elements within the Gülen movement and elements, I think, of the old Kemalist establishment tried to engineer this coup, the reason why the chain of command collapsed, the reason why there was no unity of Gülen was that there were several generals who were actually concerned that this would collapse, that this could not happen, and Erdogan and values issued at the Erdogan trial were so recent that I think it caused a lot of skepticism in the top brass who at critical moments decided not to support the coup. So they did not support the coup because of, I think, the trauma of Erdogan of what happened, because of the Erdogan trial, and in many ways the Gulenists are guilty of conducting a witch hunt against all secularists, together with the AKP. This is why the AKP lacks credibility now. They worked with the Gulenists in creating this witch hunt against the generals, and when the Gulenists turned against the AKP with corruption allegations, the AKP claimed that basically they had nothing to do with the Gulenists. But in fact, they worked together, they destroyed their common enemy, which was the secularist, I think, generals, the more aggressive militant wings of the military. And once they destroyed their common enemy, they lost basically a sense of unity. And this is why the AKP lacks credibility with the world right now when they say the Gulenists are a terrorist organization and that Fetullah Gülen is in the United States just like having

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Osama bin Laden here. Well, the world can say you worked with the so-called Osama bin Laden. You worked with the Fetullah Gülen organization for a decade. If this was a terrorist organization, didn't you know that it was such an organization intending on over throwing the government? This is why to a certain degree the AKP lacks credibility right now and it's a very gray story. There's no black and white in this.

MS. HILL: So, I mean, this really fits into the work that you've been doing, Shadi, on the broader Middle East, and I'm sure from your perspective a lot of this seems quite familiar but with different characters and in a different group, and it's very much on the top of your book about the struggle of Islam, how to define it, the role it should play in civil society, as well as the politics that is really shaping the world.

There's just one thing I also wanted to mention, that the schools that the Gülenist movement have set up are global. They're not just inside of Turkey. I don't know how extensive they are elsewhere in the Middle East, but they certainly have been a major factor in educating whole new generations of professionals and students in Central Asia and Russia, Azerbaijan, Africa, and here in the United States. Well, I mean, they've been like any other parochial school in many respects. And they've had very high educational standards, especially in mathematics and other issues that, you know, parents are very interested in. I think all of us here probably know people who have been to those schools and have also fed people into universities.

This is actually a global issue now. We'll have broader reverberations because Turkey's backlash against the movement will also have implications on all of the neighbors where these schools are too. And, of course, it will feed in, Shadi, to many of the issues that you've been looking at with the struggle of the Muslim Brotherhood and particularly, Egypt. So I mean, I would really appreciate your perspective on how this looks from outside Turkey.

MR. HAMID: Yeah, sure. Thanks, Fiona.

So I'll just start off with a little anecdote. So I'm born and raised in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, and you may think that this is irrelevant to our discussion, and I never thought that being from Pennsylvania would be an issue in the Middle East, but it actually is. So last year I had a meeting

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with one of President Erdogan's top advisors, Ibrahim Kalin. So I went to the presidential palace, the so-called white palace, quite extravagant in Ankara. And as I was going in the guard there was checking my credentials and he saw my American passport, and it says Pennsylvania. So he looked at it. He gave me this very weird look and he actually said, "Pennsylvania?" So it's all a little bit surreal that Pennsylvania has been seen as the center of the conspiracy. That's one aspect of it.

But for me, it was also Friday night, I had this sick feeling all throughout Friday night because I felt I've seen this before. It felt so similar to me the way people were talking about it and the sense of dread and foreboding. It reminded me exactly of how I felt, the sick feeling I had on July 3, 2013, the day of the military coup against a democratically Islamist government in Egypt. My assumption in the Middle East is that if it can get worse, it will, so my starting assumption was that the coup would succeed. This is one of the few times where things didn't turn out as bad as they possibly could have been, and I think in some sense we averted a disaster for a lot of reasons, but I think one of them more regionally is that this would have offered further definitive proof that there is literally nowhere in the Middle East, or perhaps even the world, where Islamist parties can come to power through democratic elections and stay in power without some kind of military coup or civil war or whatever else. And I think that's a narrative that would strengthen obviously more extremist groups throughout the region, and that is, in fact, an argument that groups like ISIS constantly use, that democracy cannot work. It cannot achieve a more Islamic state. The only way to have a true Islamic state is through brute violence, through savagery, through terrorism, so on and so forth.

So I think that that's one aspect that we have to keep in mind, and I think that if the coup was actually better executed, if it was actually close to succeeding, I think it would have been painful to watch because I assume that the Obama administration, including Secretary Kerry, would have made their peace with it rather quickly, just based on previous history. And I think we have to be honest with that. Let's not forget that Secretary Kerry called Sisi a restorer of democracy just a month after the military coup in Egypt, and actually after two small massacres, successive massacres in July and early August before the big one on August 14, 2013. So that to me was, oh, are we really going to have this whole déjà vu conversation again where the U.S. is kind of forming itself into a pretzel to not call this a coup because

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of the legal implications, so on and so forth?

And I think that—so that's one thing. I think a couple other things I wanted to mention are on how we sort of—where Erdogan sort of fits in kind of the regional perspective. I think Erdogan has obviously had increasingly authoritarian tendencies, and we all know that and it's been very concerning. But as bad as Erdogan has been in various ways over the past few years, one of the positive legacies that he could point to, and Kemal touched on this, was that he could still claim that he and the AKP party had definitively sidelined the military. And there should be no doubt. If that was in fact the case, that would have been a major lasting gain for Turkey and one of the most important of past decades. But the very fact that the one thing the AKP party could claim turned out not to be true I think is suggestive here. And it really tells us more broadly that shaking the tradition of military coups is very, very difficult. And it makes me wonder, for example, in the case of Egypt, if or when there is a democratic opening again in Egypt and you have a move in a more positive direction. With the fact that the precedent has been set for military intervention in Egypt, we could really be living with 50 to 60 years of successive coups. And I was very struck by the way Kemal talked about essentially living through one coup after another and all you know is coups. That's part of what it means in a way to live—to be Turkish, to live in Turkey, and to experience that, which is why once you start going in the direction of military coups—in this case in 1960 – it's very difficult to undo that.

The positive aspect though is that what was different this time is that secular parties were united against the coup. So this leads me to a little bit of a more positive lesson which is that the norm against coups was able to entrench itself in civilian life in Turkey rather quickly, because as recently as 2008, the AKP party was very close to being basically banned and shut down with some degree of secular support. So the fact that Turkey was able to further entrench the coup, the norm against military coups, basically from 2008 until now I think shows that norms can change quite quickly and that should give us some hope, not just in Turkey but also in the broader region in terms of how to spread a culture of not supporting coups. And it's, you know, one way of thinking about this, you know, as an American, is it's actually—you probably won't be arrested if you call for a military coup against a democratically elected government here, so it's not necessarily illegal, but we, as Americans, we don't think about coups. We

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don't think about calling for military coups because we've absorbed those norms just in the process of growing up American. It would never occur to me to think that way, although it's interesting that with the rise of Trump people are making half jokes about military coups against illiberal democrats coming to power. So not Islamists in this case but Donald Trump.

But anyway, and the last thing I'll just say kind of looking forward is I think that this coup is not about Islamist against secular. But there is still a broader Islamist-secular cleavage in Turkey which has contributed to a lot of polarization, and my view is that it's likely to get worse, and this will, I think, persuade many in the AKP party, including, of course, Erdogan and his circle, to push harder on what they call the normalization process. Essentially, undoing the Kemalist legacy of many decades. And what I was struck by as someone who works on Islamists movements, and I've spent a lot of time with Brotherhood-types in the Arab world, there is something that strikes me about my conversations and meetings with some AKP party figures, not all of them but some of them. And I had many of these conversations last year and I was struck by the bitterness that I heard from some of these AKP party figures. So normally Islamist movements in other countries, they at least pretend to sound conciliatory. They might not actually believe it but they feel there has to be a pretense of saying, oh, we'll work with liberals and secularists. We don't hate them. You know, that sort of thing. But I heard from several quite important, influential people, pretty much, that we want to destroy the secularists. We're not going to apologize for it. This is what we want and we've earned the right to do that because we've won four or five consecutive elections. And this is democracy. This for us is justice. And the bitterness was so raw, and there was one senior advisor to former Prime Minister Davutoglu who had a very kind of striking phrase he used with me. He said -- just so I get it right, he said, "We need to carry Mr. Ataturk to his grave." That's what he said last year to me, and he was also -- it was very personal to him and he was getting very emotional. His wife, who wears the head scarf, she couldn't work at a state hospital until I believe either 2013 or 2014 just by virtue of the fact that she covers her hair. So for him, it wasn't just about politics or the role of religion. It wasn't some theoretical, academic debate. For him, it was a personal struggle. The fact that he and other Islamically-oriented Turks couldn't live the way they wanted to for their entire lives, basically.

Another way of looking at this is that even Erdogan's daughters, despite the fact he was the prime minister and one of the most powerful figures in modern Turkish history, couldn't go to university in Turkey and went to study abroad because they wear the head scarves. So again, I think that captures the rawness that's involved here, and that's why going forward there are a lot of different issues. The Gulenists we've talked about and so on, but there is still this unresolved issue of what it means to be Turkish. What is the nature of the Turkish state? What does it mean to undue the legacy of Kemalism? What does it mean to have a more Islamically-oriented ideological state? And this is why Erdogan has prioritized capturing state power so much because the Turkish state is very, very powerful. It's very centralized. And everyone across the political spectrum sees the Turkish state as a kind of vehicle for societal transformation. So whoever captures the state can then reimagine Turkey in their own image.

MS. HILL: Well, Shadi, that actually provides a very good segue into some of the questions I'd like to turn to Mike for consideration. I mean, clearly the United States government has relied very heavily on this Turkish state that as we've heard has been ridden with conflicts and contradictions certainly for a good decade, but you know, for obviously much longer as we've had processes of demographic, political, and social change. We've put a great deal of stock in Turkey as a leading NATO member, and next to the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, Turkey is the NATO member with the most significant military, or was until the aftermath of the coup. Turkey was a country that could be relied on in a NATO context. We just had the summit in Warsaw on the future of NATO, and Turkey has been playing a key role in the neighborhood in Syria, not to mention as Omar has said, you know, given the state of institutional collapse, we're looking to Turkey for the next steps in Syria, for the fight against ISIS. We're very concerned about what happens with the internal conflict with the codes which, of course, goes much further beyond the borders. And we've also been relying on Turkey as a key element in dealing with the refugee crisis in Europe. And we haven't really even mentioned that (inaudible) and you know, the implications about Turkey itself and refugees coming out of Turkey at a critical point when we have been looking forward to Turkey taking back refugees from Europe and this idea of saving Europe from an overwhelming migration flow.

So this is a pretty complicated set of issues, Mike. And I mean, how do you think it looks

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right now from the perspective of the U.S. military and the U.S. administration as they try to pass this?

MR. O'HANLON: Well, thanks, Fiona. It's an honor to share the stage with you and these three outstanding scholars on the region. I've learned a lot this morning.

I guess I want to make three broad points. First, I want to build on Shadi's point and think about the state of democracy in the world at large very briefly. Then I'll look at some immediate military implications of what's going on in Turkey, and then think about Syria. I see my good friend Ted Piccone in the audience who has written an excellent book on the state of democracy around the world. There's some hopeful stuff in his book but there's also some concern, and we all share that as we look around the world.

Just very briefly, you know, regardless of what was the least bad outcome of the last week, it clearly hasn't been a good week for democracy in Turkey, or at large I would argue. We know that is also true in the general Middle East after the Arab Spring. Our friends in Brazil are struggling. We just did an event yesterday on President Obama's legacy towards Africa and there have been net setbacks on democracy in Africa in the last decade. We don't even need to talk about your friend, Mr. Putin, to make the point in regard to Russia. We've already alluded to the state of democracy even in the West these days. And so we're going to have to somehow tough it out. In the broad sweep, if we take a big enough perspective, I still think that democracy, which I believe in fairly strongly, is sort of on the ascent, but it has certainly taken some tactical setbacks and just a point sort of to start the conversation from my point of view.

Secondly, on military matters, I actually worry less about Incirlik than some people. I think we Americans have to be careful. There's always a tendency whenever we have a crisis with one key ally in a key region to decide that the base that we've got there that we've been using so much is irreplaceable. I actually think this is a good example of when that is not the case. It's much easier and better to fly out of Incirlik than out of Qatar. Maybe we should rely less on Qatar, by the way, for other reasons. Maybe we should try to diversify our presence. But we have a lot of options in the broader Middle East. We have Kuwait. We have Bahrain. It has its own issues but it's another option. We have aircraft carriers coming from either direction with planes. And we have other European allies—Italy. Now,

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all of these involve flying several hundred miles instead of several dozen miles to get to the battlefield, and that's not good, but several hundred miles is still less than an hour, and we can do it. It's not as if the access to bases is the constraining factor on our military effectiveness in this war in Syria or Iraq.

Having said that, we still rely enormously on Turkey on the ground. And we are not going to be successful in Syria, in my judgment, unless and until we can get to a much greater level of collaboration with Turkey in terms of how we do things, most of which I don't know about, you don't know about, and if we did, we couldn't talk about them in this room. A lot of the covert things, a lot of the smaller things, apparently we have some 300 Americans on the ground in Syria today. I saw that number in today's newspaper. That was news to me. I thought the number was more like 100 to 200. I don't know what the right number is. I don't even know if that 300 is all-inclusive. But the point is that when you try to access specific insurgent groups within certain parts, especially of northern Syria, you rely on Turkey. Yes, you can come in through Iraq. Yes, you can come in by airplane. But if you're imagining a larger operation that ultimately tries to create the kinds of safe havens that Secretary Clinton has talked about, as well as General Petraeus and others, if you're thinking ultimately about trying to provide relief on the ground inside of Syria to mitigate the refugee flows, the kinds of things that we're trying to get going now with these small numbers have to expand if we're going to be successful. And I don't believe that airlift or access exclusively through Iraq is a particularly good way to think about how we're going to have to operate in the future. So I think the collaboration between the United States and Turkey on the ground is crucial, even if there are workarounds for Incirlik.

So my second broad point is that I think the military dependencies and the U.S.-Turkish relationship is pretty important but it's not quite what's being commonly described as I look at it from just a sort of independent defense analyst perspective.

And the third and last point, and here I'm just going to offer a blunt opinion and, you know, is a little less analytical perhaps than some of what we've been saying. It's a little bit more prescriptive. I think it's time to recognize that containment of the Syria crisis, which I think is essentially President Obama's policy and what some people also advocate in the scholarly community, is not working. We haven't even mentioned the word Nice today. That was six days ago. And we haven't even

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talked about the Republican convention where law and order is understandably a concern. And I think in the Western world we are seeing a growing threat from extremism which has its home base in Syria. Yes, there are other places where ISIS and al-Qaida have important redoubts, where they could move to, where they're trying to move to, but as our colleague Will McCants has written in his great book, *The ISIS Apocalypse*, Syria really is the epicenter. Not only in terms of operational hold on territory but in terms of how it fits into the narrative and the vision, the apocalyptic fight against the infidels which will then sort of liberate the Middle East to become this broader caliphate that ISIS will control. And I'm sure there are people on the stage who can explain this better than I, but this is a crucial part of the ISIS vision. And we are, as David Ignatius wrote in today's *Washington Post* about Secretary Kerry, try to pull off these three-cushion pool shots trying to get Putin and Assad and all of our allies and King Hussein of Jordan, everybody cooperating with us in this extremely clever way to put pressure on one group here and then one group there, and finally it's somehow going to come together. I applaud Secretary Kerry for trying to find some way forward, but it's not going to work. It's not going to work any better than the peace process that he's been orchestrating for these last few months because fundamentally we are weak on the ground militarily and we don't have a serious strategy for changing that.

So to my mind, we can hope for the best with 300 people on the ground and Secretary Kerry working his tail off with—I don't know where he gets the energy—but the problem is he doesn't have the structural forces or realities or fundamentals on his side.

And just to be brief, we can come back to this in more details later on, but the kinds of tools and the kinds of changes I believe we're going to need in our Syrian policy just to tick them off include the following: on the diplomatic front, I think we need to envision some kind of a confederation model as our political goal. There is to my mind no other realistic way to square the fact that we don't have any major allies on the ground except the Kurds who have any kind of military potential at the moment, and yet we are still hoping to simultaneously defeat ISIS, defeat al-Nusra, and replace Assad. I don't get it. To me it is the least compelling strategy that I have seen the United States undertake in a conflict of this scale and of this importance perhaps since the Vietnam War in terms of the illogic of the basic way we're proceeding.

And secondly, in terms of military assets on the ground, we're going to need to be—there are a number of things that have to happen—we need to be a little bit more willing to work with groups that are tainted by past association with al-Nusra, as long as we can vouch for the fact that they are not themselves al-Nusra. It doesn't mean we give them anti-aircraft missiles, but I think we do need to give them anti-tank missiles, a lot more help with not only supplies for ammunition and so forth but also supplies of logistics and food and help them try to build up their forces. We're going to have to be clever about employing various kinds of options for no-fly zones. You don't go up there in the sky and try to shoot down an airplane that you see 200 miles away not knowing if it's Russian or Syrian. But if you see an aircraft that you can later identify to have been a Syrian airplane barrel-bombing a neighborhood, after the fact you destroy it on the ground, that's the way you handle this. Yes, it's a little harder than that, but the point is that we have tied ourselves in knots saying we can't do a no-fly zone with Russian aircraft in the area. We don't have to do it the way we've done it before. There are other options.

And then finally, in terms of the creation of these safe havens, I think we need to push the debate about what this means. I don't think we should start declaring safe havens. I think we should try to help them emerge. And that's the right way to think about it. So where you see the Kurds doing better in the northeast, where you see some of the southern front doing better, what you want to do is at that time accelerate and intensify your own involvement on the ground, and then after the fact, you've essentially seen a safe haven emerge. You don't put American credibility on the line publicly by saying here is the place thou must not come, Mr. Assad or Mr. Putin, but you help the local allies build up. Where you see the beginnings of success, you reinforce. That's not a panacea. It's going to be harder to do, obviously in real life than that kind of a theoretical argument would imply or do justice to, but those are some of the elements of I think how we have to change our policy.

MS. HILL: Thanks, Mike.

I want to go back to Kemal before I come to you in the audience. I mean, Mike, as you have outlined here, you know, we've got a very stark issue right in front of us on how to deal with the war in Syria. There is the military aspect, and as you've talked about here, the U.S. has to make in the military frame lots of structural assumptions. And as you noted, there's an acute lack of allies and the Kurds,

because you didn't basically differentiate the Kurdish groups here, are part of this equation for the United States. That, of course, brings us right back to Turkey again because Turkey, we haven't talked about this in the press because of the fixation on the coup, but we still have the ongoing civil war and conflict, military conflict with the Kurds inside of Turkey, and of course, Turkey's anxiety about this across the borders.

Against the backdrop then of the purge of the military and the collapse of the institutions in Turkey and everything else that we've talked about here, it's very difficult to make structural assumptions about Turkey, and frankly, as Shadi has pointed out about many of the neighbors, there are some positive aspects of what has happened, but I think the negatives, if I'm putting the scales here, far outweigh the positive aspects of this.

And Kemal, it's always difficult to go first and try to kind of lay something out in real-time about what's happening, but I want to come back to you for some observations on, you know, what you've heard our colleagues talk about. Just trying to get your head around—all of us to get our head around this is very difficult. I mean, I'm thinking back to some parallels of the Soviet Union, and I don't want to make these too acute, but there was a huge purge carried out of the Soviet military on the eve of World War II, which for all kinds of other internal reasons, which set back the Soviet military years in terms of being able to—literally years in terms of dealing with the Nazi invasion in 1941, because the purges were taking place in the late '30s and early 1940s. And here is Turkey also in real-time in an existential threat in many environments. And it was, as we've been talking about there, purging its military. Purging its key institutions at a time where, you know, we need some kind of anchor in the region, and Turkey itself needs to be able to deal with this crisis on every front.

Kemal, I know it's very difficult and you have to live this personally as well. I mean, this is not just for you an academic exercise, but just some more thoughts from you.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Thanks. I really heard three great presentations and remarks. The way I'm going to address them all and what Fiona has raised is to make some brief comments on the implication of all this for Turkey, the region, and maybe the world at large. A very huge three topics.

On Turkey, I'd like to say that for a long time Turkey was put forward as a model to

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precisely address this very difficult issue that Shadi made references to on reconciling Islam and democracy. We, many of us, you know, Ömer, me, and lots of other people talk genuinely that the AKP and Tayyip Erdogan were going to do this. And all the evidence seemed to point in that direction. But to hear what Shadi just quoted from the previous prime minister is really, really scary. Very scary. I think just as Ömer made references to the importance of trying to understand what the Gülen movement is, as important as that question is trying to understand why the AKP failed. If you ask them today, it's all about conspiracies. It's about the U.S. It's about the EU. About the interest rate lobby. About lots of others. Why is it that the AKP failed to question itself, to be self-critical, to be able to succeed to bring about what the world and a good part of Turkey had hoped for?

Fiona's remarks about the late '30s and early '40s in the Soviet Union, not to mention Germany in the 1930s, on some parallels there between what Turkey is going through and the Germany at the time is really, really scary. Is there something about the human nature that when in a grip of paranoia and fear that moves in that direction? That's beyond my capability of understanding. How is it possible that AKP people and supporters of Erdogan, et cetera, failed to see that Turkey, amongst all the other countries in the Muslim world, was the one who made the greatest progress in terms of these democratic values but also in terms of economy and in terms of social life at large? Iranians, Arabs, Israelis, Russians, Europeans poured into this country precisely because for this reason. How do you just with the back of your hand sweep that away, that whole history, and reach the conclusion that Shadi has quoted? I really, I have no answers to it but it's worth investigating.

I would still like to believe that Turkey is still out there in spite of all these knocks, in spite of all that beating it has taken. I still have deep inside me this what may be wishful thinking or hope that Turkey is going to emerge from this experience, and that's precisely what was captured in the many columns and TV debates that took place on Saturday. It was fascinating. It's there. It's on the record. That's the positive thing with which I would like to leave us on the Turkey bit.

Coming to the region, references already have been made and Michael has gone into some details. The region is in a state of turmoil. It's not just the Middle East but not (inaudible) similar. Maybe not as bad as in the Middle East. Iran, a fascinating country that many Turks highly respect for

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their culture and history, et cetera, is going through a major transformation. The caucuses, everything is up in the air. I can't help but think of a tiny little country called Georgia that desperately is trying to make it into the West. What will happen to Georgia, not to mention Armenia, Azerbaijan, and the others? The implications of what is happening in Turkey is enormous in terms of the region.

Until only a few years ago, Turkey had become a source of remittances. I lived the days when Turkish workers in Germany and France were sources of remittances for the Turkish economy, and this government in power brought Turkey to a point where it became sources of remittances for countries from Bosnia, Segovia, to Moldavia, to Georgia, to even Armenia given what Ömer said earlier about the Armenian genocide but also some of the Central Asian countries. All these are going to have implications.

Lastly, on the broader geography, and that is in response to Michael's very first remark and our good friend Ted's book, "Five Rising Democracies." I happen to have always argued that Turkey sits right on top of that cleavage. And in the good old days, only until like about a year ago, I worked hard to support the notion that Turkey has to be brought in TTIP if it materializes because I saw it as a strategic chance to not only strengthen Turkey's anchor in the West, but also for Turkey to strengthen the West, the Western form of government. The cleavage, the line, is between the form of government that is weakening from Ted's book and Michael's remark, the one based on liberal democracy, liberal markets, rule of law transparency, accountability. Turkey was the lynchpin. And in the last couple of years there was talk about how Turkey was moving towards the alternative form of government, the alternative model, very much represented by Russia's notion of sovereign democracy, state capitalism in China, not to mention in Iran.

This morning I read a piece from Moscow Times. You know, I read pieces from Moscow Times maybe once in a lifetime, and they are jubilant. And interestingly, the piece is citing how in 2013, I think it was late November or early December, how Erdogan had asked Putin himself to support Turkey's membership to the Euro-Asian organizations, in particular, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization because the EU would not let Turkey onboard. This, I think, is going to be a challenge, and all this is coming at a time when the U.S. is facing its own internal challenges to the kind of model, governance model that I made references to, not to mention the state of affairs in the European Union.

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MS. HILL: Well, that has given us a rather gloomy opening to the discussion with you in the audience. We've got till 11 o'clock. I know that there's a lot of interest in questions. As Ted Piccone kept getting referenced from the stage here, I'll ask Ted to make a question first. There's a lady over here who had her hand up, and there was a gentleman here. And then I'll try to get some other rounds and questions in.

Ted?

MR. PICCONE: I'm Ted Piccone. Thanks very much for the plug on the book. When I wrote it, I was a little more optimistic about not only what was happening in Turkey, but in Brazil and some other cases. And a lot has changed in a short amount of time. But I wanted to follow up with some, two quick questions.

One is, what is the future of the Turkish state given that a third, up to a third of some very key institutions have been dismissed or detained? You know, who is going to fill all those positions? Do they have the human capacity, and will this be an opportunity for Erdogan to put his people in and further take it down the road of a more presidentialist authoritarian state? And no one made reference to his political project, or not much, we didn't get into it. Do you see, do you agree with the general feeling that this is a great opportunity for him now to double down on that quest? And how will he go about trying to achieve it?

And then on the Egypt parallel, Shadi, I mean, I think Turkey is a little different. It has more experience with democracy than Egypt has had, so I'm not sure how far to go with that. And then, of course, there is the other example of Indonesia which in terms of cleavages or trying to reconcile Islam and democracy has been more successful I would say at this point. Any comments on that?

MS. HILL: Thanks, Ted. The lady over here, please, in the front row. And if you could just identify yourself quickly. Thank you.

MS. CROUSE: Hi, I'm Tamara Crouse, and I just wanted to bring up something I didn't hear from anyone. It's kind of the elephant in the room, but Fiona mentioned as far as parallels with World War II and previously in the '30s, and you mentioned conspiracies going all about. I didn't hear anything about Erdogan's extensive repressive yanking everybody out. You kind of touched on it. You touched on

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it just now, but all of the certifications of teachers. We were there this time last year. What this has to do with, it almost sounds to me plausible, that certainly, I think it's questionable who really is behind the coup, what motivated it. The Russians are certainly more assertive in the region now, and it certainly would play out well if they were stirring the pot behind the scenes for the repression that's taking place right now.

MS. HILL: Thanks. There's a gentleman here in the second row.

MR. LUXNER: Thank you. Larry Luxner, news editor of the Washington Diplomat. What are the implications of this attempted coup on Turkey's rapprochement with Israel, which was announced less than a month ago, as well as its relationship with fellow NATO member Greece with which it must cooperate to contain the refugee crisis in Europe? Thank you.

MS. HILL: Thanks. That's a good question. I'll take a few more actually to come back to the audience. Here in the front row and there's a gentleman back here. Yes.

MR. CHECCO: Thank you, Larry Checco, Accountability Central. This morning there was an interesting quote in The Washington Post and I'm surprised nobody mentioned it, that Erdogan said that this was a "gift from God." And I thought that was a very interesting—and I just came back from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan with sponsorship by a group, a Gülen group. And to Fiona's point, yeah, it may have been slanted, but they have built some wonderful schools and wonderful, you know, I mean, it's just—I would like a little clarity as to how this happens because there was no concept. They're frightened of radicalization in these countries and they talked about that. Thank you.

MS. FIONA: We're going to take some more questions and I'll come back. Yes, please. This gentleman here with the tie and then at the very back, the gentleman in the red shirt.

MR. BOROS: Hi, my name is Nick Boros. My question is simply phrased but very complex. How will this affect the PKK conflict?

MS. HILL: Okay. I'm keeping a note of all these questions. The lady just behind you in the white shirt and then I'll go to the gentleman in the back. Yes?

MS. WIENER: Hi, Sharon Wiener. I guess my question is primarily for Ömer. I certainly agree with you, Ömer, that this coup must have been more than just Gulenists within the military. First of

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all, if it really had been only Gulenists, then the Gulenists are way, way more powerful in Turkey than Erdogan had ever admitted, especially given the fact that there have been all these witch hunts since the corruption scandal. So he's had a couple years to supposedly wipe out the Gulenists. I assume, as you said, that there were also some secular elements within the military who supported this. I guess my question is how confident are we that these 1,400 officers and 115 generals really were part of the coup? I mean, that shows a higher level of intelligence about what was going on in the military than Erdogan should have had or the coup wouldn't have happened? And then finally, for a totally disintegrating state, the logistical challenge of rounding up 50,000 people within a couple days is really quite astounding and shows that something is still "working" for Erdogan in terms of the institutions.

MS. HILL: Thanks. These are all linked together. There was the gentleman at the very back in the t-shirt, so I'm just trying to get the people as they put their hands up. Jenny, just behind you. Okay. We'll get both of your questions. Yeah.

MR. THAROOR: Ishaan Tharoor, Washington Post. Just almost since the late hours of Friday night, the Turkish president's office has been very clear about what they say is the initial cause of the coup, the supposedly upcoming reshuffling or purge of the officer corps who had Gülenist sympathies. To the extent we've already been discussing, I mean, how credible a reason is that? Do we know, I mean, what do we know, what do we not know about the extent of Gülenist infiltration or sympathy within the mid-level ranks of the military? And separately to that, have we seen in the past year or two, especially as Syria has gotten worse, any other kind of rifts between the upper echelons in the military and Erdogan? I know that the government has been giving them a fair amount of free range to do what they want in the southeast, but beyond that, had there been other kinds of points of tension that we should be looking at?

MS. HILL: Thanks. And then the gentleman in the t-shirt and then we'll come back to the panel.

SPEAKER: (Inaudible) I'm a concerned Turkish-American student. I would like to direct my question to Ömer Taşpinar. He mentioned the Osama bin Laden example. Was Osama bin Laden on the scene when 9/11 happened? And also, Zawahiri? And also, in order for the U.S. to extradite Gülen,

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does he have to use the Sikorsky to bomb the Parliament? What kind of proof is the U.S. government expecting from Turkish people? Two hundred forty people killed and still nobody mentioned this. And the Secretary of State Kerry was solely expressing his support. Might Secretary of State for a while have mistaken Turkey with Egypt? Thank you.

MS. HILL: Thanks. The questions actually are all interrelated to a large extent here. Many of them, obviously as we've heard, tied into trying to get to the bottom of what's been happening, and then the long history of comp downs on all different aspects of society beforehand. The lady in the front here mentioned teachers already being targeted. We haven't mentioned the journalists and the press which are—I mean, we've sort of talked around many of these issues because there's an awful lot to cover here, but clearly there was a long back story to the events on Friday with an awful lot happening in terms of societal groups coming under pressure. The quote about the "gift from God," obviously, ties into some of the issues that Shadi mentioned. By the way, it was, Shadi, you said it was an advisor to Davutoglu.

MR. HAMID: Senior advisor, not --

MS. HILL: Senior advisor, not Davutoglu. I just want to be very clear here because I know that this conversation is on the record so I want to make sure that we're very clear not for people to misinterpret this. This is such a sensitive topic that I don't want people running out of here making assertions about what some of our colleagues have said here. Just to be very clear here. There's the big question that Ted has raised about the logistical challenge, which gets into all of this. He's purging so many people, not just in the military but across the society, how do you get the state to function? Is there really a human capital to put in place? And as you've mentioned, a lot of the human capitalists coming out of all different schools, much kind of broader. This is a very big question about the implications going forward.

And then we also got the question about how to deal with the PKK, what this means for Prushmal with Israel, Greece. You know, clearly this is going off in all kinds of different directions here. And the issue that you raised very clearly, Ömer, about what kind of proof needs to be brought up for the United States to extradite Fetullah Gülen.

I want to come back to all of the panel on this. As some of the questions came directly to you, Ömer, I'll start with you but I'll come back to everybody to make some points.

MR. TAŞPINAR: How will Turkey replace all these officers or bureaucrats? I don't have an easy answer to that except that I think some of the people who are detained and arrested will go back to their jobs because this seems to be right now an overreaction to what happened. So I don't think the Turkey state can function by arresting tens of thousands of people. But it shows us to what degree the government believes that the Gulenists have, in their opinion, infiltrated the bureaucracy. And if they're going after all the graduates of Gülenist schools, well, they are going after thousands of people because a lot of, I mean, a big chunk of the graduates of Gülenist schools have found jobs in the government for the reasons that I tried to explain. I think for the Gülen movement it was important to have members of the movement in positions related to political power, bureaucratic power. So to a certain extent that's why we need to understand the Gülen movement and the way they operated for years. They were concerned about the secularist agenda to destroy the Gülen movement, and this is why defensively they wanted to place their members in positions of power within the bureaucracy, within politics, within the military. And if you now have a government which has declared war on the Gulenists after cooperating with them for years, this is turning into a collapse of basically the whole not only rule of law but of the bureaucratic structure.

Now, I would like to underline that a lot of people were concerned about the coup in Turkey and it was very good that there was this popular reaction against it, but I think we have to understand also that coming from some of the questions about how Erdogan saw this as a "gift from God," about this conspiracy-prone culture in Turkey that everything that is happening has an agency behind it that we don't understand. And was the coup staged? There were basically all these rumors about whether Erdogan basically did this in order to pave his way to the presidential regime. I've never been a believer in conspiracy theories and I don't think this coup was staged, but this doesn't mean that in its aftermath now the road to the presidential regime is really paved because Erdogan will basically purge whatever is left of basically the opposition and he will basically say this is the time for a strong leader to establish control. We cannot afford to have a vacuum, and he will basically, I think, use this not just to

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purge the Gulenists and all other oppositions including in academia, civil society, media, government, et cetera, but he will also make the point that this is the time for Turkey to have a strong leader. That we cannot afford. So of course he will exploit and benefit from this, but that doesn't mean he staged the coup. We need to understand why this coup failed, and I tried to explain that it failed because there was no chain of command, and most importantly, it failed because in the past, military coups succeeded when there was popular demand for a coup. All coups that were cited in Turkey -- 1960, '71, '80, 1997 even, had a critical mass of support behind them, popular support, and they had a chain of command.

Right now, what really bothers me is the fact that I think a lot of people in Turkey wanted the coup to succeed because when you look at the history of Turkey, the military has played a role in Turkey but we never had a general who ran the country for 30 years. Turkey never had a Pinochet. Turkey never had a solo czar, a Mubarak, a Saddam Hussein, an Assad that ran the country. The military always acted very professionally after the coups. They stayed in power for short amount of time. They did a lot of damage to democracy, but then Turkey went back to electoral politics. So right now there's a sense of despair amongst Turkish opposition to Erdogan that Erdogan is establishing slowly a system whereby there won't be checks and balances. There won't be any separation of powers. But this is turning into an electoral dictatorship. And based on the past experience of military coups, had they seen, had the people, the majority of the Turks seen that this was a real coup with chain of command, real unity of command, and arrest of politicians, of all the people in power, control of the media, then I don't think the reaction would have been so courageous in terms of going to the streets. But the coup was botched. It was so unprofessional. It had such a lack of unity, such a lack of chain of command that basically they saw that this was not going to succeed. And this led people to the streets, and supporters of Erdogan mostly to the streets. So the country is even more polarized in my opinion right now. And there is this concern among some liberals that, well, was the coup staged? I repeat, I don't think it was staged but even the fact that the question is being asked shows you how much confusion there is. And then the fact that Erdogan will use this now to establish the presidential regime creates even more concerns about where the country is going, and this is why some people, at least I think, would have wished that we would have had the kind of military coup, short-lived military coup, and then return to democracy without

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the AKP. Of course, this is not good for a democracy. We tried this in the past. It never works. It creates traumas. It creates major problems, but the country is, at least the people who don't support Erdogan, are so desperate that I think secretly there was a critical segment of Turkish society that was hoping for the generals to succeed so that they would get rid of Erdogan.

MS. HILL: Kemal, do you want to add to this? And I'll then ask Shadi and Mike to comment on some of the broader implications. And again, just to sort of stress to everyone, this is a moving event and whatever we're saying here is an assessment of this snapshot in time and, you know, just as the gentleman at the back talked about being a concerned Turkish citizen, we have, you know, two of our own colleagues who are concerned Turkish citizens as well. So this is obviously a painful discussion for Kemal and Ömer, and I know that it's very difficult for all of us to really answer all of these questions that have been put here at this particular stage. We don't really know where the reverberations are going to go because we don't know what the next sequence of events is going to be. So Kemal, as best as you can.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Yeah. Lots of very good questions. The way I see it is that Turkey has experienced a huge earthquake and the earthquake is having its aftereffects. I would still like—I would still like, in spite of what Ömer has said in terms of what's going through the minds of many in Turkey—I would still like to believe that eventually the series of earthquakes are going to settle down and rationality will prevail. It's possible as Ömer pointed out that Erdogan will use this, what you called, or Washington Post called, gift of God to consolidate his rule. But at the end of the day, we have to recognize that many people call him a great political mathematician. He has to recognize that his rule has to enjoy a degree of legitimacy and that that legitimacy is critical to running this very complex and dynamic economy. Turkey is not Russia. Turkey is not Iran. Turkey is not Saudi Arabia. Turkey's economy has to work for him to be able to rule. And this is why I am still attributing a lot of significance to rationality other than to emotions, hatreds, and desire of revenge, et cetera.

And that I'd like to tie to the question that Ted raised about the fate of the Turkish state. I see this in a huge historical perspective. This is not a state that was put into place by colonial powers, or this is not a state that emerged from a revolution. This is a state that has been there since the Ottoman

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times. It has a long tradition, and I have come to realize and appreciate that independently of the supporters of AKP and their craving for the legacy of the Ottoman Empire, this state was the continuation of the Ottoman Empire, of the state in the Ottoman Empire until just a few years ago, until maybe when this parallel state infiltrated and damaged it. These were all people, especially in the foreign ministry, the military, they ruled, the Ottomans ruled Turkey physically, in personal presence, until after the Second World War. They were the ones who carried Turkey into the western fold with joining NATO and all the other institutions. And then there were their descendants who ran Turkey. That state is still there I think independently of the damage that is being done there—the socialization, the education, the regulations, all that paperwork, et cetera. And I feel that even though this earthquake has caused a lot of damage, that state will resuscitate, but leadership and rational, balanced leadership that holds Turkey's interest at high regard, and maybe also the interest of the neighborhood is going to play a role.

I see my remarks relating to also the yanking of these certificates and Ömer has partly responded to it by saying that rationality calls for the fact that many will eventually be released and return to—it will be critical then to adopt a policy of reconciliation and dialogue. And these rational requirements I think lead me to allow myself to enjoy a tiny bit of optimism and hope for the future.

Russia. Yes, Russia may have some geostrategic interest in all that's going on, but I think Russia has a huge interest in a stable and secular Turkey. We need to bear that in mind.

Rapprochement with Israel and Greece, good question. Very quickly. I think this earthquake with its after effects will go on, and I would think that as long as they go on, until things settle, these issues are not going to be high up on the agenda of the government as it responds to these aftereffects. However, Erdogan, for example, had a personal, close relationship with Cyprus, and also there is a long, well-established consolidated relationship with Greece. With Israel, while the current prime minister has the slogan of "we need more friends, less enemies," rationality calls for the continuation of that policy there as well.

I realize we are quickly running out of questions. There are lots of others that I should be responding to but maybe I'll let Shadi and Michael have a chance, too.

MS. HILL: Yes, because unfortunately we're running out of time. I know there were lots

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of people who had other questions. I imagine that we'll be doing more of these sessions as time goes on. As you said, a lot of these implications are hard to gauge, but there is certainly a shared interest in all of Turkey's neighbors in having a Turkey that is stable and remains a regional, major regional player.

Shadi, perhaps actually there's one entity, ISIS, and you know, some of the other movements who might not share that interest, of course, but in terms of state actors, I would imagine that the prevailing view is very much of Turkey coming out of this and charting a path forward. There was a question about whether the parallel with Egypt, you know, particularly worked, but perhaps there is something else that you might want to comment on.

MR. HAMID: Yeah, so on Ted's question on comparisons with other countries, so there is actually still one bright spot in the Middle East. It's Tunisia. And I think the best thing that Tunisia has going for it is the fact that its military is relatively weak. And I think for me that's one of the major lessons here. I don't think strong militaries in the long run are good for most of these countries, and there has to be a way basically to weaken them. Of course, that can have negative repercussions in other ways when it comes to say U.S. interests because we tend to like to work with strong militaries. So there is a kind of dilemma there.

You know, and Ted, on your question, your point about the presidential system, there's another dilemma here in the sense that if I was Erdogan, I would push as aggressively as possible for a presidential system. I can see why he would do that. Just knowing a little bit about his paranoia, and I think also the fact that here's someone who woke up every day in the 2000s—and this is a problem that a lot of Islamists have—they spend such a big part of their lives fearing a military coup or fearing some kind of intervention every single day when they wake up in the morning. That messes you up a little bit. It changes the way you view the world, and you can't really undo that once you've absorbed that way of looking at the world. So if I was Erdogan, I would do what he's probably going to do, but as an outsider, as an analyst of Middle East politics, I think one of the worst things for Middle Eastern countries, and for polarized countries more generally, is presidential system. So if I had one bumper sticker policy recommendation it would be "Avoid presidential systems at all costs." They tend to polarize. They tend to concentrate power and makes countries depend more on personalities. It's also harder to undo the

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mistakes of voters because you have to wait for the next election. Parliamentary systems encourage cooperation. A lot of the stuff that some of you may be familiar with. So, I mean, that's an issue here.

On Indonesia, which, just to kind of address, what Indonesia has going for it as a model is that you don't have an entrenched secular elite. I think what makes it very difficult for me to be positive about Turkey is that you have two kind of irreconcilable visions of what Turkey should be. Ultimately, one is going to have to win out over the other. In Indonesia, even ostensibly secular parties are comfortable with Islam and even Islamic law playing a role for public life. Oddly enough, it's actually secular parties in Indonesia that have implemented Sharia ordinances on the local level. That's a longer story. But the fact that you have this normalization of Islam and public life is what bodes very well for Indonesia.

And just lastly on the "gift from God" question, I think, okay, this is a very long discussion so I'll just do it in like a minute, but I don't doubt that Erdogan thinks that this is a "gift from God," literally. And I haven't spent time with Erdogan himself, but spending time with people who know him and know how he's changed and his own piety, I, and this will not sound weird to people who have grown up in a religious, Muslim community. You've probably heard something like this before, but I don't doubt that Erdogan believes that when he dies, God will ask him about what he did as president of Turkey and whether he served God's cause. Now, that might sound like an odd way to do political analysis, and political scientists tend to avoid that kind of assessment, but I think we have to be willing to take religion more seriously, especially when individuals play such a big role. And idiosyncratic individuals. Erdogan is one of the historic individuals in Turkey, for better or worse, so his psychology does matter. That's not to say religion is the prime factor here, but it's one factor among others. So it's not just that he's obsessed with political power. It's not just that he wants to be an authoritarian. He does, as far as I can tell, actually believe—he believes in some of the things that he talks about, and we shouldn't dismiss that as irrelevant. And I think he does want to be seen when he dies as the person who changed the very nature of what it means to be Turkish.

MS. HILL: Well, Shadi, I'll just—Mike will have the last word on the panel, but I mean, I saw, you know, a couple of reactions from the audience, you know, when you talked about parliamentary versus presidential systems. We've just had in the U.K. a parliamentary system that committed, as

someone put it to me yesterday, plebiscite, you know, kind of in a polarized situation, putting everything to a plebiscite and then having a political implosion. And we're in the middle of a very polarized presidential campaign here in the United States, which I think actually fits into all the things that you just said about presidential systems in another setting and where religion is playing actually an important role. I mean, if anyone has been watching the Republican Convention, religion --

MR. HAMID: Ben Carson just linked Hillary Clinton to Satan last night. That actually happened.

MS. HILL: Well, that's right. That's what I was kind of thinking about.

MR. HAMID: Yeah.

MS. HILL: I was thinking that perhaps the presidential candidate himself is not the most pious of individuals but there's certainly a great deal of discussion about the role of religion in public life at the convention and a lot of just invocations. That's not perhaps the drier America that we normally talk about when we talk about the military aspects, but Mike, just a few passing comments from you as we've already passed the magic hour.

MR. O'HANLON: Can I pass?

MS. HILL: Really? But I mean, I think --

MR. O'HANLON: I'm good.

MS. HILL: I think that your observations on what we need to do with Syria still stand, you know, very fairly, but obviously have become much more complicated by everything that we've heard.

I want to apologize for everyone who wanted to ask a question. Obviously, we could have gone on for several hours, but we've got other claimants on this room, and I know there's other claimants on everybody else's time. We'll be doing more events, I'm sure, as we move through this aftermath as Ömer and Kemal have put it, a big earthquake in Turkey and everything that Turkey is prone to.

I want to thank all of you for joining us today, and our panel for a great discussion. Thank you.

(Applause)

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