

Role of military in Turkish Politics

A: Introduction:

The role of military in Turkish politics goes back to the first quarter of twentieth century of Ottoman Empire. After the First World War Turkiye was at risk. It lost many territories to the European powers. Even Istanbul was occupied by Greece forces in World War I. During this critical time, a military general by the name Mustafa Kemal Atatürk came and rescued modern Turkiye from European forces. He emerged as the country political and military leader of Turkiye, so military acquired many military and political powers in Turkish politics in 1924. Much later, as democratic reforms and civilian involvement started/were taking place, the role and powers of military diminished in Turkish politics upto great extent. There were many reasons ^{causes} ~~between~~ behind ~~the~~ shift of powers to the civilians.

3 Historical Background:

Whenever the role of military in Turkish politics is talked about, the attention of many goes to the event 1924. Before 1924, Turkey was Ottoman Empire. During world war I, Turkey existence was at risk because it lost many of its territories to European powers. Even Istanbul was occupied by Greece forces. As the sick man of Europe was in need of protection, there came a military general by the name M. Kamal Atatürk who rescued modern Turkey from western powers. He is the founder of the Republic of Turkey. It cannot be unreasonable, if one says that military has made the modern Turkey. Thus, Mustafa Kamal Atatürk emerged as the country political and military leader and the military role and involvement in Turkish politics occupied prominent place.

C. How much this military institute was powerful?

As military general emerged the country political and military leader, military established ~~to~~ full control over the country and particularly over civilian. Due to the strong position of military, its involvement in Turkish increased and played crucial role in Turkish politics afterwards. The role of military can be seen in the following powers in Turkish ~~now~~ exercised by the military, in the following ~~world~~ powers. In Turkish politics:

⇒
A: military : Guardian of constitution

Ataturk saw the role of military as the guardian of the secular republic. In 1930, the constitution of Turkiye was written. In 1932-33 the word guardian was added and military was declared the guardian of the state. Whenever, Turkiye was experiencing

Crisis, Military ~~was~~ exercised this power. Which can be seen the ~~three~~ martial ~~law~~ laws of 1960, 1971 and 1980. This was big power, guardian of constitution, ~~is~~ which was in the hand of military. Thus, it can be concluded that military played key role in the Turkish politics.

B. National Security Council was headed by Army chief:

The second ~~to~~ important power exercised by the military chief was the ~~head~~ leading of National Security Council. NSC is responsible for every internal and external important policies of Turkey. This institute was headed by Army chief ~~was~~ and who influenced its all decisions. ~~Thus~~, in nutshell, the NSC was under the control of military. The NSC was established after the 1960 military intervention in order to legitimize the place of the army in politics.

C. Military courts:

There were permanent military courts ~~used~~ for the trial of civilians. Although, military courts are ~~many~~ in many countries like USA, UK, India and Pakistan, they are only for the trial of military persons. But in Turkey, civilians were tried in military courts. Where there is military, there is no democracy.

D. Military; Civilian institutions:

Civilian institutions were headed by serving military generals in Turkey. Like in Pakistan FIA, PEMRA, NAB, are headed by civilians but in Turkey such kinds of institutions were headed by ~~military~~^{senior} military generals. This, ~~shows~~ ~~th~~

Thus, this shows that military was too much powerful and enjoyed autonomy in the political sphere of Turkish politics.

No civilian audit of ^{defense} budget:

Generally in the world, civilian audit defense budget. But this was not in the case of Turkish political system. There was no civilian audit of defense budget due to the strong control of military over civilian and particularly over political and civilian institutions.

Criteria/condition for the membership of parliament:

One of the important conditions for becoming member of Turkish parliament for parliamentarian was the two years military training. For example, if a person had wanted to become member of Turkish parliament, s/he would have required two years training of military. This criteria was against and is against the

Spirit of democracy. If you had not fulfilled this criteria, you would not have any chance for the membership of parliament.

Thus, these were some of the important powers in Turkish political system which were under the full control of military.

Therefore, it can be said that the military played important role in Turkish politics whether good or bad but the played its role.

↳ Shift of powers from military to civilian.

C. The current position of military and Turkish politics

OR

How this strong ~~inst~~ institute become powerless.

The aforementioned powers, exercised by the military, were in the past. ~~The~~ presently, ^{the} position or role of military in Turkish politics is completely different. Due to shift of powers from the institute to civilian. As democratic reforms were taking place in Turkish politics, the role of military diminished gradually ~~fast~~ in Turkish politics.

Apart from this, the strong ~~power~~ control of military over ^{the} civilian also caused dilemma for Turkey - European Union relations, because the European Union's principles are completely opposed to military involvement in politics. Resultantly, military became powerless and civilian occupied prominent place in Turkish politics. The prominent place of the

Civilian control can be seen in Turkish politics in the following developments:

A - Removal of Guardian word.

As it mentioned earlier that the army saw itself as guardian of the republic. But the word "guardian" was thrown out from the constitution in 1987. Military is no more the guardian of the state. After this development in Turkish politics, the Republic has not come under martial law.

B. National Security Council:

The National Security Council is still there and responsible for every internal and external policy, but now it is headed by president not by Army chief and president is civilian. Thus, National Security Council is in the control of civilian now.

C. Ending of Military Courts

In 2004, last military court for civilians was closed/ended. There are no more military courts for the trial of civilians in Turkey.

D. Civilian institutes ~~lead~~ are led by civilians.

From 2007 onwards, no serving military generals are leading civilian institutions.

Presently, civilians themselves are heading the civilian institutions.

Civilians are the heads of civilian institutions.

E. Audit of defense budget!

2013 onward, civilians audit defense budget. Before this, there was no civilian audit of defense budget. ~~is~~ the removal of

F. Membership requirement of parliament:

In 2017, the requirement of two years military training for the membership of parliament was eliminated/dismissed. ~~At the~~ presently, if any one is found in relation with military, he/she cannot become member of parliament. Turkeye political system does not give any role to military in politics.

Conclusion:

Thus, it can be concluded that the military involvement or role in Turkish politics has greatly reduced. The shift of powers from military to civilian can be seen in the removal of Guardian word from constitution, heading of NSC by civilian, End of military courts, leading of civilian institutions by civilians, civilian audit of defense budget, and the end of two years requirement for the membership of parliament.

Reasons behind these changes in
Turkish Politics.

OR
Reasons why this has happened?

OR
Reasons behind shifting from
powerful to powerless institutes

OR
Reasons behind this transformation

Introduction

As military legitimized the place of the Army in politics. As a result, the democratizing of civil-military relations has become one of the most important issues in the process of shifting powers from military to civilians. However, there are some reasons which made these changes in Turkish politics, such as membership of European Union, changing threat perceptions of Turkey, Turkey was failed state before civilian control, and referendum of 2017.

lets discuss the changes in details paragraphs

Membership of European Union

The first and the foremost reason behind the change of ~~the~~ military's role in Turkish politics to civilian was the membership of Turkey in European Union. Turkey wanted to join European Union in 1988 so for European Union's requirement, Turkey surrendered its military powers. Due to Copenhagen criteria, European Union pushed Turkey to reform its civil-military relations.

The European Union's principles are completely opposed to the military's involvement in politics. Military institution should be subordinated to civilian. Following the acceptance of Turkey as a candidate country in 1999, Turkey agreed to the fulfilment of the Copenhagen criteria: democratic control of the ~~and~~ civilian over military.

Thus, for these aforementioned requirements of European Union, the role of military in Turkish politics was diminished and civilian role in Turkish politics increased.

Changing threat perceptions of Turkey

The second reason was that Turkey's threat perception was changed about Europe. Initially, it had an existential threat from Europe. But, after 1980s, Turkey's threat perception changed. Turkey is secured from Europe. Thus, changing of threat perception eliminated the role of military in Turkish politics.

Turkey was failed state before civilian control:

The third reason which has ~~reduced~~ diminished military's role in Turkish politics is the civilian performance. Turgut Erdoğdu Erdoğdu delivered democracy. Before Turgut Erdoğdu, Turkey-

was failed state. Turkey is economically strong, Tpp Erdogan solved all the problems of Turkey such as inflation, unemployment, image in international level.

Referendum :

In 2017, Referendum was carried out in Turkey in which 72 articles was changed. The referendum of 2017, almost completely changed the whole system of Turkey. The referendum gave strength to civilian role in Turkish politics. ~~and~~ Civilian occupied distinguished role place in Turkish politics.