

# Critically evaluate the role of military in Turkey politics?

## A) INTRODUCTION:

Role of military is the central question in Turkish politics. Under the AKP government, the power of military diminished since 2002. There was a struggle between Erdogan's government and military. There were difficulties to fully establish the civilian control over military because of strange position of military in politics.

## B) BACKGROUND:

Turkish military has strange position since the time of Ottoman Empire. Constitutionally military was called as "Guardian of Turkish State." Ottoman Empire expand and secure its state with the help of military.



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Military played its role with palattes in 1876 revolution and the Young Turk revolution. During the 1st world war, Turkey was invaded by Greece. To save modern Turkey Mustafa Kemal Ataturk played crucial role.

## C) POWER OF MILITARY:

From 1930 to 1934 there was a modern constitution of Turkey which presents military as the guardian of the state. This guardian word causes three martial laws in Turkey in the year of 1960, 1971 and 1980. Moreover, there was a "soft coup" in 1987. Along the police force, the military control 90% of the country.

### i NATIONAL SECURITY CONCIL:

This institution was responsible for international and internal



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Important policies of Turkey which was headed by military.

## ii Military Court of Trial:

There was a military court for the trial of civilians.

## iii CIVILIAN INSTITUTION.

The civilian institutions such as School; University and hospital are under the control of military.

## iv CIVILIAN AUDIT OF DEFENCE BUDGET:

There was no civilian audit of defense budget.

## v TO BECOME MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

To become member of parliament it was mandatory to serve in military for 2 years.



## D) ROLE OF MILITARY AFTER THE CREATION OF KEMALIAN REPUBLIC

After WWI Ataturk tried to transform Turkey from Ottoman Empire to modern Turkey of Republic. A law was passed in 1923 which obligated serving officers who were elected to parliament to resign from the army. But it was tough to remove military role in politics completely because in constitution, they were mentioned as guardian.

## E) THE CHANGING ROLE OF MILITARY FOLLOWING EU REFORMS

The reforms have been outlined in official EU document, namely the accession partnership documents or regular report. According to this report, civil-military relations reforms have been divided into four parts.



- 1 The Transformation of role and composition of NSC.
- 2 The transparency of defense budget
- 3 The removal of the military representatives from civilian borders
- 4 An amendment concerning military courts.

## 1) POSITION OF NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

It was established in 1960 military intervention and enlarged after 1980 military intervention. The power of NSC has been restricted with the modification of Article 118, the role of NSC diminished. With this amendment it became just advisory body. The composition of NSC has been altered, with an increase in number of civilians.

Composition before Alteration: It has the President, The P.M, The Chief of General Staff, The ministers of foreign affairs, defense and internal



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affairs with the top military commanders  
Now, NSC is headed by the President.

## 2) TRANSPARENCY OF DEFENCE BUDGET:

The court of auditors has been authorized to audit account and transactions all types of organizations, including state property owned by the armed forces. From 2013 onwards, there was a civilian audit of Defence budget.

## 3) REMOVAL OF MILITARY REPRESENTATIVES FROM CIVIL COURT:

Under 6<sup>th</sup> Harmonisation Package of July 19, 2003, the military representatives on the Higher Education Board and Higher Broadcasting board were withdrawn. In 2004, finished last military court. From 2007 onwards, no military general with uniform head civilian institution. From 2017 onwards, if someone has professional



relationship with military then he cannot be a member of parliament

## 4) AMENDMENT CONCERNING MILITARY COURT

The jurisdiction of the military court has been limited. The trial of civilians in military courts was abolished as part of the 7<sup>th</sup> Harmonization Package. Eventually the state security courts (military courts) were totally abolished in 2004.

## F) MUSTAFA KAMAL'S REFORMS:

- Abolition of religious schools and courts.
- Adaptation of a purely secular system of family law.
- Substitution of the Latin alphabet for writing Arabic in Turkey.
- Adaptation of Gregorian calendar instead of Muslim (Hijri) calendar.
- Replacement of Friday by Sunday as a holiday.



The abolition of surnames.

The abolition of wearing of clerical coats and scarf outside the place of worship.

## 4) INFLUENCE OF MILITARY IN CONTEMPORARY ERA

### i) 2007 ELECTION:

Abdul Gul, the AKP candidate, placed a message on the defense ministry's website, threatening intervention. This "e-coup" caused political chaos in Turkey, which resulted in a new general election.

### ii) CHIEF OF GENERAL STAFF

Chief of General Staff of Turkey is directly responsible to the P.M.

### iii) LAST EU PROGRESS REPORT ON TURKEY

This report shows the progress has been made regarding civilian control



of the army.

## H) CRITICAL ANALYSIS:

The role of military in politics has a negative impact on national and international level. Turkey is a member of Nato but still it does not have the membership of EU, Due to military influence. To acquire stable government and to prevent country from martial laws, it is important to limit the role of military.

## I) CONCLUSION:

In the past, Turkey faced many issues regarding stability of a country due to military influence but ~~not~~ currently it has better condition due to civilian government.