

2. Critically evaluate the role of military in Turkish politics.

01. INTRODUCTION

The military has played a pivotal role in shaping modern Turkish politics. Rooted in the legacy of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of Republic of Turkey, the military has historically been seen as the guardian of secularism, nationalism and modernization. However, this involvement has often led to tensions between democratic governance and military oversight. Over the decades, Turkey has witnessed multiple military interventions, shaping its political landscape and influencing governance structures.

02 Role Of Military In Turkish Politics

- ⇒ Guardians of Kemalism
- ⇒ Military as an Institution: Structural Dominance
- ⇒ Challenges to Civilian Rule
- ⇒ Democratization and the Decline of Military Influence
- ⇒ Contemporary Dynamics: Civil-Military Relations

02.1 Guardians Of Kemalism

The Turkish military's political influence can be traced back to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who envisioned the armed forces as protectors of his reforms. These reforms were aimed at establishing a secular and modern nation-state. The military

perceived itself as the defender
of the principles of kemalism-
secularism, nationalism, and moderni-
zation. Coups ^{interventions} of 1960, 1971, 1980, and 1997
were ~~justified~~ under the pretext of
preserving democracy and secularism,
yet they also undermined
democratic processes.

(02.2) Military as an institution: Structural Dominance

The Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) maintained significant institutional power through:

(a) National Security Council:-

Nsc established to formalize the military's advisory role, it often acted as a parallel decision-making body.

(b) Constitutional Framework

Post-1980, the military secured

constitutional provisions that legalized its influence over civilian politics.

(1c) Judicial Immunity:

Military officers enjoyed protections that limited accountability, further strengthening their autonomy.

This structural dominance institutionalised the military's role as a key actor in policy-making, overshadowing elected governments.

(02.3) Challenges to Civilian Rule

While the military justified its actions as safeguarding democracy, critics argue that its interventions reflected a mistrust of civilian governance.

(a) Weak Democratic Institutions

Frequent interventions hindered the development of robust democratic norms.

and institutions.

(b) Civil Liberties:-

Military regimes often curtailed freedoms, imposed censorship, and conducted purges against political opponents.

(c) Economic Policies:-

Use specific and self explanatory headings

Military rulers prioritize stability over economic reforms, leading to stagnation during periods of Martial Law.

These challenges created a long-term vulnerabilities, raising questions about the legitimacy of the military's role in politics.

(02.4) Democratization And the Decline of Military Influence:

The 21st century witnessed a gradual decline in military influence, driven by political and legal reforms.

under the Justice and Development Party (AKP) led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

(a) Legal Reforms:

Constitutional amendments (2007-2010)

reduced the military's role in the NSC and curtailed its judicial autonomy.

(b) Ergenekon And Sledgehammer Trials (2008-2013)

High-ranking military officers were accused of plotting coups, resulting in arrests and trials, further weakening the military's political authority.

(c) Failed 2016 Coup Attempt:-

The July 15, 2016, coup attempt by a faction within a military marked a turning point. It led to widespread purges of military personnel and strengthened civilian control under Erdoğan.

1025) Contemporary Dynamics Civil-Military Relations:-

Post-2016, Turkey's civil-military relations have undergone significant transformation:

(a) Centralization Of Power:-

Erdogan's government has consolidated control, reducing the autonomy of the armed forces.

(b) Military Reorganization:-

Structural changes, such as placing the military under civilian ministries, have reinforced civilian oversight.

(c) Erosion Of Democracy:-

Critics argue that while civilian supremacy has been established, it has come at the cost of authoritarian governance.

These shifts highlight the paradox of reducing military influence while raising concerns about democratic backsliding.

Minimum description under a heading should be 5 lines

Add more arguments

3. CONCLUSION

The Turkish military has historically acted as both a stabilizing force and a disruptor of democracy, its interventions, justified under often intervening to protect secularism and stability. While these actions hindered democratic development, recent reforms and the failed 2016 coup significantly reduced its political influence. Despite stronger civilian control, concerns about authoritarianism persist, highlighting the need for a balanced democratic framework with effective civilian oversight of the military.