

# Role of Turkey in the Leadership of Muslim World

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## Introduction

After the demise of the Prophet (S) in 632, the Muslim community failed to reach consensus on who should succeed him as the caliph. A majority of Muhammad's (S) close followers supported the idea of an elected caliph, but a minority believed that leadership, or the imamate, should remain within the Prophet's family, passing first to Muhammad's (S) cousin, son-in-law, and principal deputy, Ali ibn Abu Talib (R), and subsequently to Ali's sons and their male descendants. The majority, who believed they were following the *sunna* of the Prophet, became known as Sunni Muslims. To them, the caliph was the symbolic religious head of the community, so he should be chosen by the scale of Takwa and competence of taking the responsibility of Muslim Ummah. It is not necessary that he must be a member of the Prophet's family. To follow this criteria by the Muhammad's close followers, they select Hazrat Abu-Bakr (R) the first caliph of Islam and Muslim democracy has started in practice. The partisans of Ali--the Shiat Ali--evolved into a separate Islamic denomination that became known as the Shia. However, caliphs would also rule as the leaders of a major empire for six centuries. The first four caliphs-- Hazrat Abu Bakr (R), Hazrat Omar (R), Hazrat Osman (R), and Hazrat Ali (R)--were chosen by a consensus of Muslim leaders. Subsequently, however, the caliphate was converted by its holders into a hereditary office, the first two dynasties being the Umayyad, which ruled from Damascus, and the second being the Abbasid, which ruled from Baghdad. After the Mongols captured Baghdad and executed the Abbasid caliph in 1258, a period of more than 250 years followed when no one was recognized as caliph by all Sunni Muslims. During the sixteenth century, the Ottoman Dynasty resurrected the title, and gradually even Muslims outside the Ottoman Empire came to accept the Ottoman sultan as the symbolic leader--caliph--of Sunni Islam.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>. <http://countrystudies.us/turkey/36.htm>

## Development of Islam in Turkey

By the end of the seventh century, conversion to Islam had begun among the Turkish-speaking tribes, who were migrating westward from Central Asia. The initial wave of Turkish migrants converted to Sunni Islam and became champions of Islamic orthodoxy. As warriors of the Islamic faith, or *gazis*, they colonized and settled Anatolia in the name of Islam, especially following the defeat of the Byzantines at the Battle of Manzikert (1071). Beginning in the twelfth century, new waves of Turkic migrants became attracted to militant Sufi orders, which gradually incorporated heterodox Shia beliefs. One Sufi order that appealed to Turks in Anatolia after 1300 was the Safavi, based in northwest Iran. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Safavi and similar orders such as the Bektasi became rivals of the Ottomans--who were orthodox Sunni Muslims--for political control of eastern Anatolia. Concern about the growing influence of the Safavi probably was one of the factors that prompted the Ottomans to permit unorthodox Bektasi Sufism to become the official order of the janissary soldiers (see *The Ottoman Empire*, ch. 1). Although the Bektasi became accepted as a sect of orthodox Sunni Muslims, they did not abandon their heterodox Shia beliefs. In contrast, the Safavi eventually conquered Iran, shed their heterodox religious beliefs, and became proponents of orthodox Twelve Imam Shia Islam.<sup>60</sup>

## The Ottoman Sultanate

The Ottoman Sultanate was an empire that lasted from 1299 to 1923. At the height of its power (16th–17th century), it spanned three continents, controlling much of Southeastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. The Ottoman Empire contained 29 provinces and numerous vassal states.<sup>61</sup> During the Ottoman centuries, Istanbul was the center of the Islamic world, and its ruler. The conquest of the Byzantine capital of Constantinople—which the Turks called Istanbul (from the Greek phrase *eis tin polin*, "to the city")--in 1453 enabled the Ottomans to consolidate their empire in Anatolia and Thrace. The Ottomans later revived the title of caliph during the reign of Sultan Selim.<sup>62</sup> The caliph being the person

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<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Cleveland, William L. "The Ottoman and Safavid Empires: A New Imperial Synthesis" in *A History of the Modern Middle East*. Westview Press, 2004. p37. [ISBN 0-8133-4048-9](#)

<sup>62</sup> Creasy, Sir Edward Shepherd. *History of the Ottoman Turks: From the beginning of their empire to the present time*. R. Bentley and Son, 1877.

who followed Muhammad the Prophet as Islam's leader and the servant of Islam's three holy cities: Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem. The Sultan spoke of Allah as having entrusted him with the guardianship of the people.<sup>63</sup> The Ottoman Sultan was widely acknowledged as the Caliph, or spiritual leader of Islam.<sup>64</sup>

### Some basic information about Ottoman Sultanate

Period of Ottoman Empire:	1299 – 1923	
Capital	Sogut	(1299–1326)
	Bursa	(1326–1365)
	Edirne	(1365–1453)
	Constantinople (Istanbul)	(1453–1922)
Government	Monarchy	
Sultans	1281–1326 (first) Osman I	
	1918–1922 (last) Mahmud VI	
History	Rise	(1299–1453)
	Growth	(1453–1683)
	Expansion and apogee	(1453–1566)
	Revolts and revival	(1566–1683)
	Stagnation and reform	(1699–1827)
	Decline and modernization	(1828–1908)
	Dissolution	(1908–1922) <sup>65</sup>

The Ottomans, and their precursors, the Seljuk Turks, made significant contributions to Islamic life and theology. Many Sufi (mystical) orders were born in Turkish lands, including the Mevlevi ("whirling dervish") order inspired by Mevlana Jelaledin Rumi and founded in Konya during the 1200s.<sup>66</sup>

The Ottoman Empire was a theocracy. The law of the land for Muslims was *shari'ah*, the holy law of the *Qur'an-ul Karim* (Holy Qur'an).

<sup>63</sup> Turkey and Islam, 1900-1930: [www.fsmitha.com/h2/ch09tu.html](http://www.fsmitha.com/h2/ch09tu.html)

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.turkeytravelplanner.com/Religion/Islam.html>

<sup>65</sup> Cleveland, William L. op.cit. p38

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.turkeytravelplanner.com/Religion/Islam.html> ,Retrieved on 01/01/2009

Christian and Jewish minorities were governed by their own laws, based on their own Scriptures, subject to the ultimate rule of the sultan. Religious law had governed, or at least significantly influenced government, in most countries until the 18th century.<sup>67</sup>

### **Economic Systems of Ottomans**

Ottoman government deliberately pursued a policy for the development of Bursa, Edirne (Adrianople) and Constantinople, successive Ottoman capitals, into major commercial and industrial centres, considering that merchants and artisans were indispensable in creating a new metropolis.<sup>68</sup> To this end, Mehmed and his successor Bayezid, also encouraged and welcomed migration of the Jews from different parts of Europe, who were settled in Constantinople and other port cities like Salonica. In many places in Europe, Jews were suffering persecution at the hands of their Christian counterparts. The tolerance displayed by the Ottomans was welcomed by the immigrants. The Ottoman economic mind was closely related to the basic concepts of state and society in the Middle East in which the ultimate goal of a state was consolidation and extension of the ruler's power, and the way to reach it was to get rich resources of revenues by making the productive classes prosperous.<sup>69</sup> The ultimate aim was to increase the state revenues as much as possible without damaging the prosperity of subjects to prevent the emergence of social disorder and to keep the traditional organization of the society intact.

The organization of the treasury and chancery were developed under the Ottoman Empire more than any other Islamic government and, until the 17th century, they were the leading organization among all of their contemporaries.<sup>70</sup> This organization developed a scribal bureaucracy (known as "men of the pen") as a distinct group, partly highly trained ulema, which developed into a professional body.<sup>71</sup> The effectiveness of this professional financial body stands behind the success of many great

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<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> Halil İnalcık, *Studies in the economic history of the Middle East : from the rise of Islam to the present day* / edited by M. A. Cook. London University Press, Oxford U.P. 1970, p. 209 [ISBN 0197135617](https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511513561.017)

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*, p.217

<sup>70</sup> Antony Black (2001), "The state of the House of Osman (devlet-i al-i Osman)" in *The History of Islamic Political Thought: From the Prophet to the Present*, p. 199

<sup>71</sup> *ibid*

Ottoman statesmen.<sup>72</sup> The economic structure of the Empire was defined by its geopolitical structure. The Ottoman Empire stood between the West and the East, thus blocking the land route eastward and forcing Spanish and Portuguese navigators to set sail in search of a new route to the Orient. The Empire controlled the spice route that Marco Polo once used. When Christopher Columbus first journeyed to the Bahamas in 1492, the Ottoman Empire was at its zenith, an economic power that extended over three continents. Modern Ottoman studies think that the change in relations between the Ottomans and central Europe was caused by the opening of the new sea routes. It is possible to see the decline in the significance of the land routes to the East as Western Europe opened the ocean routes that bypassed the Middle East and Mediterranean as parallel to the decline of the Ottoman Empire itself. The Anglo-Ottoman Treaty, also known as the Treaty of Balta Liman that opened the Ottoman markets directly to English and French competitors, should be seen as one of the staging posts along this development.

By developing commercial centres and routes, encouraging people to extend the area of cultivated land in the country and international trade through its dominions, the state performed basic economic functions in the Empire. But in all these the financial and political interests of the state were dominant. Within the social and political system they were living in Ottoman administrators could not have comprehended or seen the desirability of the dynamics and principles of the capitalist and mercantile economies developing in Western Europe.<sup>73</sup>

## **Military System of Ottomans**

### **Army**

The first military unit of the Ottoman State was an army that was organized by Osman I from the tribesmen inhabiting western Anatolia in the late 13th century. The military system became an intricate organization with the advance of the Empire.

The Ottoman army was once among the most advanced fighting forces in the world, being one of the first to employ muskets and cannons. The Ottomans began using *falcons*, which were short but wide cannons,

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<sup>72</sup> Halil İnalcık, Donald Quataert (1971), *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914*, p. 120

during the Siege of Constantinople (1422). By the mid-15th century, the Ottomans started using long-range siege cannons, named *Balyemez*, which were more advanced versions (with larger caliber and longer range) of the *Faule Metze* cannons that were invented by the Germans and introduced to the Ottoman Turks by Hungarian converts.<sup>74</sup>

## **Navy**

In 1321 the Ottoman fleet made its first landings on Thrace in southeastern Europe, and vastly contributed to the expansion of the Empire's territories on the European continent. The Ottoman navy was one of the first to use cannons, and the Battle of Zonchio in 1499 went down in history as the first naval battle where cannons were used on ships. It was also the Ottoman navy which initiated the conquest of North Africa, with the addition of Algeria and Egypt to the Ottoman Empire in 1517. The Battle of Preveza in 1538 and the Battle of Djerba in 1560 marked the apex of Ottoman naval domination in the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>75</sup>

## **Air force**

The Ottoman Air Force was founded in June 1909, making it one of the first combat aviation organizations in the world. Its formation came about after the Ottoman Empire sent two Turkish pilots to the International Aviation Conference in Paris. After witnessing the growing importance of an air combat support branch, the Ottoman government decided to organize its own military aviation program. For this purpose, officers were sent to Europe by the end of 1910 to participate in the study of combat flight.

The Ottoman Air Force fought on many fronts during World War I, from Galicia in the west to the Caucasus in the east and Yemen in the south. Efforts were made to reorganize the Ottoman Air Force, but this ended in 1918 with the end of World War I and the Occupation of Constantinople (Istanbul).<sup>76</sup>

## **Fall of the Empire**

After the first world war the occupation of Constantinople along with the occupation of Smyrna mobilized the establishment of the Turkish

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<sup>73</sup> Halil inalcik, Studies in the economic history of the Middle East : from the rise of Islam to the present day, op.cit,p. 218

<sup>74</sup> Mandel, Gabriele: "Storia dell'Harem" (1992). ISBN 8818880322

<sup>75</sup> Turkish Navy Official Website: History of the Turkish Navy - Operations in the Atlantic Ocean, Retrieved on 23/09/2008

<sup>76</sup> Turkish Air force Official Website: History, Retrieved on 23/09/2008

national movement, which won the Turkish War of Independence (1919–1922) under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Pasha.<sup>77</sup> Mustafa Kemal, celebrated by the Turkish State as a Turkish World War I hero and later known as "Ataturk" or "father of the Turks," led the founding of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 and collapse the 600-year-old Ottoman Empire after a three-year war of independence.<sup>78</sup> The Sultanate was abolished on November 1, 1922, and the last sultan, Mehmed VI Vahdettin (reigned 1918–1922), left the country on November 17, 1922. The new independent Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNA) was internationally recognized with the Treaty of Lausanne on July 24, 1923. The GNA officially declared the Republic of Turkey on October 29, 1923. The Caliphate was constitutionally abolished several months later, on March 3, 1924. The Sultan and his family were declared 'persona non grata'<sup>79</sup> of Turkey and exiled.<sup>80</sup>

Thus, for the first time in Islamic history, no ruler claimed spiritual leadership of Islam and World Muslims became guardianless up to establishment of OIC in 1969.

### **Secularization**

Secularism or laicism (laiklik ) became one of the "Kemalist ideology" of Atatürk's program for remaking Turkey.<sup>81</sup> By the early 20th century, it was clear to Kemal Atatürk, father of the Turkish Republic, that religious government was hampering Turkey's social, commercial and diplomatic progress. The republic he founded was staunchly secular, with the separation of government and religion as one of its fundamental tenets. According to the constitution, the Turkish armed forces are charged with preserving democracy and secularism.<sup>82</sup>

Mustafa Kemal wanted Turkey's citizens to change their educational institutions and leave behind the traditional religious schools that had dominated education. He wanted his fellow countrymen to open their

<sup>77</sup> Mustafa Kemal Pasha's speech on his arrival in Ankara in November 1919

<sup>78</sup> Mohammad Anisur Rahman, Turkey: A Long Train of entering to the EU, *Thoughts on Economics*,

Islamic Economics Research Bureau, Dhaka, July-Sept 2008, P.77

<sup>79</sup> 'Persona non grata' is a diplomatic term by which a government can expel somebody from the existing country.

<sup>80</sup> L. Kinross, *The Ottoman Centuries: The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Empire*, p 281

<sup>81</sup> Republic Period, [www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/th.html#people](http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/th.html#people), Retrieved on January 21, 2008

<sup>82</sup> Secular Republic, <http://www.turkeytravelplanner.com/Religion/Islam.html>

minds to the most advanced learning, including science. Kemal's government began to reform education. Primary education was declared compulsory. From grade school to graduate school, education was to be free, secular, and co-educational, with the education of females equal to that of males.<sup>83</sup>

Kemal had seen the religious schools in Turkey bogged down in the teaching of Arabic by people who did not themselves understand the language. People who want to learn Arabic, he said, should study that language in Syria, Arabia or wherever it is commonly spoken.<sup>84</sup>

Kemal was less interested in defending Islamic tradition than he was in economic development. "The economy," he said, "is everything. It is the totality of what we need to live, to be happy."<sup>85</sup>

Kemal had already abrogated Islam to be the state religion. He wanted Islam to be a private creed, separate from government authority or economic influence, and a conflict was brewing over the caliphate. With the sultanate abolished, the caliphate had passed, monarchy style, to Mehmed's cousin, Abd al-Majid. Many Muslims continued to see the caliph as the head of state, in keeping with the tradition of Islam, while the relationship between the caliphate and the National Assembly remained unclear. Kemal did not want the caliphate as a rival influence, slowing down the advances he wanted in education.<sup>86</sup>

When the National Assembly proclaimed Turkey a republic, Islamic conservatives saw it as a death knell for the caliphate. In March 1924, soon after the National Assembly opened for the new year, it abolished the old monarchical way of transferring power and authority, and parliament exiled from Turkey all members of the Ottoman (royal) dynasty - the family that had ruled over Ottoman territory for 625 years. The republic's constitution, created in 1924, left all power with the National Assembly, which was the only legitimate representative of the sovereign will of the nation. And the National Assembly abolished the caliphate.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, Oxford University Press, 2002, p.81

<sup>84</sup> *ibid*

<sup>85</sup> A quote used by Andrew Mango in his book *Ataturk*, published by Overlook Press 2000, p. 375.

<sup>86</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, op.cit

<sup>87</sup> *ibid*



Destruction of the old Islamic order shocked the country and offended Sunni Muslims outside of Turkey.<sup>88</sup> Adding to the unrest was a breakdown in relations between the government and Turkey's Kurdish population. The Kurds were Muslims and had felt linked to the caliphate. With the caliphate gone their bond with the state was broken. The government was alienating the Kurds further by forcing upon them an identity with the Turkish nation. The public use of Kurdish and the teaching of Kurdish were prohibited. Kurdish tribal chiefs and other influential Kurds were resettled in western Turkey. And Kurdish resistance was met by governmental repression.<sup>89</sup>

In a further effort to secularize society, the National Assembly closed religious shrines and dervish convents. And Kemal moved to abolish the hat called the fez. The Turks had been wearing western clothing for more than a century, but they had kept the fez as identity with Ottoman rule and for religious identity. To wear a Western hat had become a symbol of separation from Islam. Despite this repression the government banned the fez in November, 1925.<sup>90</sup>

In 1926, Kemal's government initiated judicial reforms. It replaced religious courts with Swiss and Italian penal law rather than Islamic law - the Sharia. Previously, theologians had had a monopoly on the legal profession. Now, only those who had studied Western law could pass the bar examination. Also in 1926, the government replaced the Islamic calendar with the calendar used in the West.<sup>91</sup>

In 1926, an attempt was made on Kemal's life, the planned assassination accompanied by plans for a *coup d'etat*. Many were arrested, including former politicians. Four were hanged and others sent to prison.<sup>92</sup>

Mustafa Kemal was reelected president on November 1, 1927. Then, in 1928, parliament moved in favor of improved literacy and comprehension at the expense of the use of Arabic. The Arabic alphabet was replaced with Latin symbols, The Holy Qur'an was translated into Turkish and the new alphabet, and Kemal spoke in favor of mosque

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<sup>88</sup> Andrew Mango, *Ataturk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey*, Overlook Press 2000, p. 376

<sup>89</sup> *ibid*

<sup>90</sup> Erik J. Zücker, *Turkey: a Modern History*, 1994. p.39

<sup>91</sup> *ibid*

<sup>92</sup> Andrew Mango, *op.cit*, p.380

sermons being delivered in a language that people understood - Turkish rather than Arabic.<sup>93</sup>

In 1929, the government felt secure enough to let the Law on the Maintenance of Order lapse. Kemal favored the creation of an opposition party - a loyal opposition, such as exists in Britain and the United States - but the attempt was too much an attempt at superimposition rather than a rise from opposing interests, and the attempt came to nothing.<sup>94</sup>

In 1934, the National Assembly abolished the veil. The headscarf was seen by Turkey's government as a symbol of political Islam, and government regulation banned it from public buildings, including universities, its use to be preserved for religious services.<sup>95</sup>

After months of illness, Kemal died on November 10, 1938 at the age of 57. He was remembered by his fellow citizens as the creator of modern Turkey. And by the Islamic Intellectuals Atatürk has been remembered as a traitor and an infidel.

### **Sufism and Mystical Interpretations**

From the earliest days of Islam, some Muslims have been attracted to mystical interpretations of their religion. In Turkey, at least since the thirteenth century, Islamic mysticism has been expressed through participation in Sufi brotherhoods that serve as centers of spiritual and social life.<sup>96</sup>

Many Sufi *tarikats* established institutional bases, called *tekke* or *dergah* (lodges) that lasted for several generations and, in some instances even for centuries. For example, two of contemporary Turkey's largest *tarikats*, the Naksibendi and the Kadiri, date back at least to the fourteenth century. Some *tarikats* carry the name of the founding Sufi master, the *seyh* (in Arabic, *shaykh*). One example is the Mevlevi brotherhood. Its members popularly are called whirling dervishes because of the rhythmic whirling they engage in as a spiritual exercise and a means to achieve ecstatic proximity to God. The brotherhood is named after its founder, Mevlana (Jalal ad Din Rumi, d. 1273).<sup>97</sup>

During 1946 the relaxation of authoritarian political controls, a large numbers of people began to call openly for a return to traditional

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<sup>93</sup> *ibid*

<sup>94</sup> Arnold Toynbee, *Turkey*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927.p.27

<sup>95</sup> *ibid*

<sup>96</sup> Sufism and Folk Islam, <http://www.turkeytravelplanner.com/Religion/Islam.html>

<sup>97</sup> *ibid*

religious practice. During the 1950s, even certain political leaders found it expedient to join religious leaders in advocating more state respect for religion.<sup>98</sup>

A more direct manifestation of the growing reaction against secularism was the revival of the Sufi brotherhoods. Not only did suppressed Sufi orders such as the Qadiri, Mevlevi, and Naqshbandi reemerge, but new movements were formed, including the Nurcus, Süleymançis, and Ticani (Tijani). The Ticani became especially militant in confronting the state. For example, Ticani damaged monuments to Atatürk to symbolize their opposition to his policy of secularization. This was however a very isolated incident and only involved one particular Sheikh of the order. Throughout the 1950s, there were numerous trials of Ticani and other Sufi leaders for antistate activities. Simultaneously, however, some movements, notably the Süleymançi and Nurcular, cooperated with those politicians perceived as supportive of pro-Islamic policies.<sup>99</sup>

### **Emerging of Islamist Parties**

Turkey is the only example of a majority Muslim country to have become a secular-democracy. In Turkey, Islamist parties have been on rise since the 1990s. Four political Islamist parties- the Welfare Party (WP), its successor the Virtue Party, and its successors' the Happiness Party and the Justice and Development Party (AKP, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi), are the actors of this movement.<sup>100</sup>

In elections held in December, 1995, the Islamist Welfare Party won 21% of the vote, a larger proportion than any other party, and earned the right to form a coalition government. (Many people believe that the Welfare Party's success was the result of many "protest votes" being cast not so much for Welfare's Islamist platform but *against* other political parties, which were seen as corrupt and ineffective.)<sup>101</sup>

By 1997, Welfare politicians had stepped over the line in mixing religion and politics. The armed forces told Welfare to step down, and the courts later disbanded the party. The secular parties took over, with disappointing results.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Gregorian, Vartan. "Islam: A Mosaic, Not a Monolith", Brookings Institution Press, 2003, pg 26-38 [ISBN 081573283X](https://www.brookings.edu/books/islam-a-mosaic-not-a-monolith/)

<sup>99</sup> *ibid*

<sup>100</sup> The rise of political Islam in Turkey,

[http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p\\_mla\\_apa\\_research\\_citation/0/8/3/6/7/p83675\\_index.html](http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/0/8/3/6/7/p83675_index.html).

<sup>101</sup> Islamist Parties, <http://www.turkeytravelplanner.com/Religion/Islam.html>.

<sup>102</sup> *ibid*

In November 2002 a new, more moderate neo-Islamist party was given a majority of seats in Turkey's *Grand National Assembly*, and formed the first one-party, non-coalition government in decades. Again, a large proportion of the vote for the new *Justice and Development Party (AKP, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi)* was seen as a protest against the old, ineffective, corrupt political parties rather than as a vote for Islamism.<sup>103</sup>

The new Justice and Development Party government vowed to govern in a strictly secular manner (though guided by the moral and ethical precepts of Islam), and to maintain Turkey's close and friendly relations with its neighbors as well as with Europe, Israel and the USA.<sup>104</sup>

### **General Election in 2007**

The Justice and Development Party (AKP) portrays itself as a moderate, conservative, pro-Western party that advocates a liberal market economy and Turkish membership in the European Union.<sup>105</sup> In 2007 General Election, The AKP led by incumbent Prime Minister *Recep Tayyip Erdogan*, achieved a landslide victory with 46.6% of the vote, translating into control of 341 of the 550 available parliamentary seats. Although the AK Party received significantly more votes in 2007 than in 2002 and only the second time in Turkish Republic's 74-year history whereby an incumbent governing party won an election by increasing its share of popular support.<sup>106</sup> Although the AK Party received significantly more votes in 2007 than in 2002, the number of parliamentary seats they controlled decreased due to the rules of the Turkish electoral system. However, they retain a comfortable ruling majority.<sup>107</sup>

### **Some Policies of Recep Tayyip Erdogan**

#### **Domestic policies**

On 31 August 2007 the new government announced plans to pursue the following policies:

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<sup>103</sup> Binnaz Toprak, Islam and Democracy in Turkey, in: Turkish Studies, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2005, pp. 167-186.

<sup>104</sup> ibid

<sup>105</sup> New to Turkish politics? Here's a rough primer - Turkey's Vote analysis and results with Turkish Daily News Jul 22, 2007

<sup>106</sup> *General Elections*, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recep\\_Tayyip\\_Erdo%C4%9Fan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recep_Tayyip_Erdo%C4%9Fan)

<sup>107</sup> Elections - Turkey's Vote analysis and results with Turkish Daily News.

- **The Constitution** will be reformed to make it short and clear, bringing law-making, enforcement and the role of the judiciary in line with parliamentary democracy
- The government will openly work to produce a strong civil society enjoying wider **democracy and freedom**.
- **Economy** - by 2013 the average income will be 10,000 USD, while national income from tourism will be 40 billion dollars. in 2008 VAT for the tourism industry will be reduced from 18% to 8%. Inflation will be kept to single figures.
- **Structural reforms** - priority will be given to reforming local government and the civil service, weighting towards regional support.
- **Education** - 50% of children will be provided with pre-school education. Class-size will be limited to 30 children.
- **2B class forest** - land that is no longer viable forest will be sold (bringing the treasury 25 billion dollars).

### Foreign policies

The government argues that EU reforms will proceed quickly. They say that their goal is to continue the efforts to eliminate disputes with neighbouring countries.<sup>108</sup>

### Proposed Ban of AKP in 2008

On 14 March 2008 Turkey's Chief Prosecutor asked the country's Constitutional Court to ban the AK party and ban Erdoğan from politics for five years. The chief prosecutor of Turkey Özyürek said "According to the laws in effect, if a party is committing crimes and has really become a 'hotbed of 'anti-secular activities,' in accordance with the constitution, the office of the chief prosecutor is left with no other choice but to file this closure lawsuit." The authority and duty of the public prosecutor of the Supreme Court of Appeals of Turkey has to protect the regime. Protection the regime clause is initiated when the principle of secularism, the irrevocable provision of the constitution, is harmed. The chief prosecutor office stated that it was really unfortunate for a ruling

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<sup>108</sup> Prime Ministership, 2007-Present;  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recep\\_Tayyip\\_Erdo%C4%9Fan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recep_Tayyip_Erdo%C4%9Fan).

party to have come to be labeled as a party that has become a center of anti-secular activities.<sup>109</sup>

### Accusations

The prosecutor demanded a five-year ban from involvement in politics for 71 senior AK Party administrators, including Prime Minister Erdogan and President Abdullah Gul for the following major indictments:

1. The Political Islam represented by the AK party claims to change state rules; members of the party have acts at the area between the "Person" and "the God", which is banned to politicians by constitution.
  - i) AK party has arrangements based on sharia. (a) Party leader Erdogan claimed in Spain in January 2008 saying "Even if (headscarf) is a political symbol, constitution and courts do not have right to ban".
  - ii) AK party has changed articles 10 and 42 of the Constitution to change the essence of the principle of secularism.
2. The AK party used the executive powers based on "Public arrangements with religious rules," this form of decision making is banned by the constitution.<sup>110</sup>

### Results after the Prosecution

Turkey's Constitutional Court has decided not to ban the ruling AK Party, accused of undermining the country's secular system. But the judges did cut half the AKP's treasury funding for this year. The AKP, which won a huge poll victory in 2007, denies it wants to create an Islamist state by stealth. It called the case an attack on democracy. The powerful military sees itself as the guardian of the modern secular state founded by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. Court president Hasim Kilic said the financial sanctions imposed on the AKP were a "serious warning".

At least seven of the 11 court judges would need to vote in favour for the party to be banned. But six judges wanted a ban and five did not want to do so.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> *Proposed ban, 2008;*

*[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justice\\_and\\_Development\\_Party\\_%28Turkey%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justice_and_Development_Party_%28Turkey%29), Retrived on 23/06/08*

<sup>110</sup> Initial Indictment, *ibid*

### **Headscarf issue in Turkey**

In 1934, the National Assembly abolished the veil. During the early 1980s, female college students who were determined to demonstrate their commitment to Islam began to cover their heads and necks with scarves and wear long, shape-concealing overcoats. The appearance of these women in the citadels of Turkish secularism shocked those men and women who tended to perceive such attire as a symbol of the Islamic traditionalism they rejected. Militant secularists persuaded the Higher Education Council to issue a regulation in 1987 forbidding female university students to cover their heads in class. Protests by thousands of religious students and some university professors forced several universities to waive enforcement of the dress code. The issue continued to be seriously divisive in the mid-1990s. Throughout the first half of the 1990s, highly educated, articulate, but religiously pious women have appeared in public dressed in Islamic attire that conceals all but their faces and hands.

For many citizens of Turkey, women's dress has become the issue that defines whether a Muslim is secularist or religious. Also, not all but most of these closed women are using head scarfs as religious symbols against modern Turkish society.<sup>112</sup>

Present Government had taken initiatives to disban the rule, but they did not get success because the Constitutiona restriction is very hard in favour of Secularism.

### **Establishment of OIC**

The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations which has membership of 57 states spread over four continents. The Organization is the collective voice of the Muslim world and ensuring to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world. The Organization was established upon a decision of the historical summit which took place in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco on 12th Rajab 1389 Hijra (25 September 1969) as a result of criminal arson of Al-Aqsa

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<sup>111</sup> BBC, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7533414.stm>, Wednesday, 30 July 2008 16:22 UK.

Mosque in occupied Jerusalem. And after 46 years (1922-1969) of falling Ottoman Empire (abolishing of Caliphate) Muslim Ummah had gotten an identity and guardianship which can tell for the favour of Muslims.<sup>113</sup>

### **Present Leadership of OIC**

Present Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference is Professor *Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu* of Turkey. He has been the first by-vote-elected Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Ever since he took the office as the ninth Secretary General in January 2005, he has provided strong leadership to the 57 member states organization and espoused the cause of the Muslim world in these difficult ti

mes.<sup>114</sup> And we can say in the other view that Leadership of Muslims again has come in the hands of Turkey after 46 years of dissolution of Islami Caliphate.

### **Conclusion**

To discuss about the leadership of Muslim world, we found Turkey has been taken many responsibilities of Muslims since the Ottoman Empire. Turkey is the largest country which represents Muslim majority in Europe. Last Caliphate of Islam was in Turkey. Secularism starts in the Muslim world by the leadership of Mustafa Kamal Attaturk in Turkey. A muslim country can ban wearing Fez and Scarf that stablished in Turkey. Sufism and Mistical Islam stablished in Turkey and we found the most populated Sufi and stablisher of Mevlevi tarikat Moulana Jalal ud din Rumi in Turkey. An Islamist party can get landslide victory in a secular state, its example is Turkey. The headquarters of The Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation (ICYF-DC); The Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA); The Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC) are located in Turkey. The only Organization of Muslim countries is the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Turkey is the founder memeber of OIC and present Secretary General of OIC is also a Turkish. In the present world Turkey

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<sup>112</sup> Headscarf Issue, [www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/th.html#people](http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/th.html#people), op.cit

<sup>113</sup> About OIC, [http://www.oic-oci.org/oicnew/page\\_detail.asp?p\\_id=52](http://www.oic-oci.org/oicnew/page_detail.asp?p_id=52), Retrieved on 07/01/09

<sup>114</sup> Biography of Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, [http://www.oic-oci.org/oicnew/page\\_detail.asp?p\\_id=58](http://www.oic-oci.org/oicnew/page_detail.asp?p_id=58).



is the only country where Islamist party has been elected by full democratic way and achieved a landslide victory with 46.6% of the vote, translating into control of 341 of the 550 available parliamentary seats by the leadership of *Recep Tayyip Erdogan*.

At last we can say Turkey has many things to do for the betterment of Muslim world. Turkey can take the initiatives to organize the Muslim countries to ensure their securities from the evil powers and confirm their socio-economic development through their co-operation and assistance. Turkey can try to make OIC more strong, effective and a common platform of the muslim world. Turkey should not think only about their own development, their economic development and accession to the EU. Turkey has the responsibility of taking leadership of Muslims and it has many duties to modernise the Muslim world in the light of Islam. □