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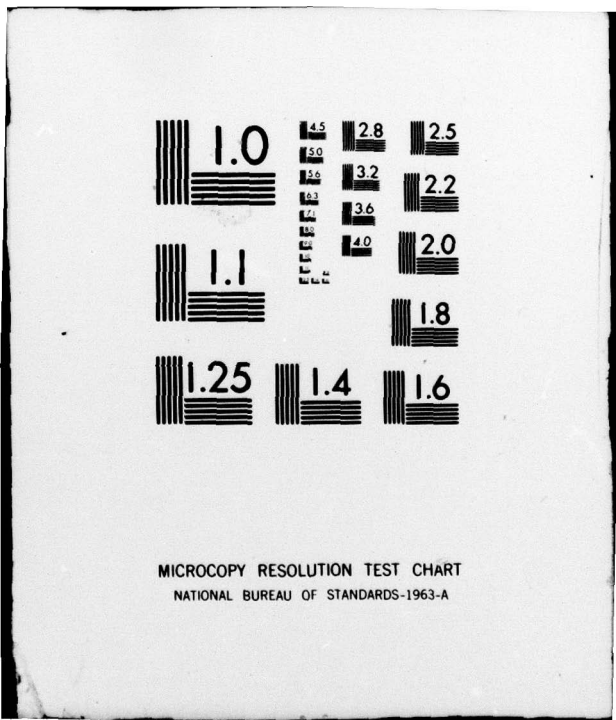
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Senate election?

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Parties and Politics

Turkish politics, like Turkish society and the economy, is in a period of transition. Over the past decade the electorate has been experiencing a process of realignment characterized by the proliferation of small parties and a resurgence in the political fortunes of the Republican People's Party (R.P.P.). The Justice Party (J.P.) vote has been declining since 1969, although, as Professor Frey pointed out, the party continues to appeal to voters in areas characterized by either urban or rural modernity. The left-of-center movement in the R.P.P., however, has brought the party new support in these same areas so that the two major parties are more directly competitive now than they were in the past. At the same time, the electorate in the more rural and less developed regions of the country has become more fragmented offering a potential base of support for the small parties in the immediate future. Over the longer term, however, the two major parties may well increase their share of the vote as the population becomes more and more urban in character and the benefits of development are distributed more evenly throughout the country.

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There seemed to be general agreement that a coalition government is the most likely outcome of the 1977 general elections. I would agree with that assessment without ruling out the possibility of an R.P.P. majority. The revitalization of the R.P.P. provincial organizations is one of the results of the left-of-center movement in the party and the splits to which it subsequently led. Younger, more energetic cadres have been introduced into the party's ranks in recent years and the mobilizational potential of the organization appears to be greater now than at any time since the single-party period. The Justice Party, on the other hand, continues to rely on former Democrat Party personnel. Its local leadership is, therefore, much older and less in tune with the times. Thus, unless the National Front parties are able to coordinate their efforts in the 1977 campaign, the R.P.P. could make significant gains and even win a narrow majority of the vote.

The Political Role of the Military

Two developments have altered the role of the military since 1960. The first is the greater involvement of the military in politics and the economy. The military's participation in political decision-making has been institutionalized through the National Security Council; its participation in the economy has taken the form of investment of the military retirement fund in various real estate and industrial projects. Thus, the military has a vested interest in political order and economic stability

and growth. It will also be increasingly involved in the debate about alternatives for organizing the economy and distributing income.

The second change concerns the weight of the military in Turkish society. In the 1950's and earlier, the military was one of the largest and best organized social groups in Turkey and it was, therefore, very influential in the modernization movement even apart from its coercive power. Since the Revolution, however, a number of interest groups (e.g. labor, esnaf, professionals, civil servants, businessmen, and farmers) have appeared whose interests and demands must be recognized and reconciled along with those of the military. Thus, as influence is diffused, mechanisms for bargaining are becoming more complex, just as conflicts of interest are becoming more intense. But, whether a corporatist or pluralist solution is sought for resolving these economic tensions, the attitude of the military will certainly be crucial to the outcome. Nevertheless, it will become increasingly difficult for the military to intervene unilaterally.

The Economy: Conditions and Problems

Although there is some reason to be optimistic about the continued growth of the Turkish economy, there are problems which bear watching. Professor Schacter mentioned a number of these, but the one which could have the most serious political repercussion in the coming years is unemployment in the urban economy. Turkish planners are consciously pursuing a strategy of industrialization that emphasizes the expansion of capital intensive,

technologically modern industries. As a result, these planners estimate that unemployment in the urban sector will be at least 15% through 1987. A small part of that labor surplus is already being siphoned off into the schools and is probably responsible in part for the rapid expansion of the number of university students in the 1960s and the rising tide of violence on university campuses in recent years. This situation could also be aggravated by plans to channel more and more students into skilled trades and away from lycees. The students are likely to resist this effort just as they are presently doing in France.

A more important factor, however, will be the capacity of European economies to absorb Turkish workers in the late 1970s and beyond. If the stream of Turkish workers to Europe does not increase significantly over the next decade, unemployment could become an explosive political issue. Moreover, increasing demands for a more equal distribution of income and investment among regions and classes will certainly complicate economic decision-making in the years ahead and increase pressure on the government to alter its present industrialization strategy. If "trickle-down" is to have any meaning, it will have to be in terms of increased employment.

Turkish Foreign Relations

The limited discussion on this topic centered on the recent base agreement with Turkey. Professor Rustow and others pointed out the decreased strategic importance of Turkey in recent years and advocated a reduced American presence. In response, some others implied that the agreement was strongly desired by the

Turks and that the U.S. wanted to satisfy that demand. It seems to me that the United States needs to review the contribution of Turkish bases to Western security. If it is true that Turkey's strategic importance is less given the present relationship with the Soviet Union and the current state of arms and intelligence technology, then it might be more rational to reduce the level and extent of bilateral agreements with Turkey and concentrate on financial and institutional arrangements within the NATO alliance.

However, to the extent that the base agreements with both Greece and Turkey can contribute to a reduction of tensions in the Aegean and promote constructive talks on the Cyprus question, then the money would probably be well spent. Nevertheless, such talks must consider the needs and desires of the Greek and Turkish Cypriote communities, if a settlement is to lead to a stable political arrangement on the island.

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