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The changing role of the military in Turkish politics: democratization through coup plots?

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The exposure of alleged coup plots in 2007 has shaken the guardian role of the Turkish military in politics. What were the conditions that led to the exposure of the coups and what is their significance for the future of Turkish democracy? Drawing on insights from southern Europe, the article argues that failed coup plots can lead to democratic civil–military relations especially if they work simultaneously with other facilitating conditions, such as increasing acceptance of democratic attitudes among officers, consensus among civilians over the role of the military, and the influence of external actors, such as the European Union. The article focuses on such domestic and international factors to analyse the transformation of the Turkish military, the splits within the armed forces and the resulting plots. It argues that one positive outcome of the exposed conspiracies in Turkey has been the enactment of new institutional amendments that would eradicate the remaining powers of the military. Yet, a negative outcome of the coup investigations has been an increase in polarization and hostility. Turkish democracy still lacks mutual trust among significant political groups, which creates unfavourable conditions for democratic consolidation.

Keywords: Turkey; southern Europe; democratic consolidation; civil–military relations; democratic control of the armed forces; failed coups; *Ergenekon*; *Balyoz*

Introduction

Since the beginning of the last decade, Turkey has been going through an important transformation in its civil–military relations, and the position of the armed forces in politics and society is being widely questioned by the public. The events that led to this sea change gained a new momentum in March 2007, when a weekly magazine published the alleged diaries of a former commander of the navy.¹ The diaries contained information that could be interpreted as evidence of a military conspiracy against the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government in 2003–2004. The publication of the diaries was followed by other alleged coup

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conspiracies and eventually by the start of an investigation, known as the *Ergenekon* case, in June 2007. More than 300 people, including journalists, academics and retired and active duty military officers from various ranks, have been implicated in the coup plans and have been put on trial since October 2008. In early 2010, another alleged plot entitled *Balyoz* (Sledgehammer) was discovered, resulting in the start of a separate trial in December against close to 200 suspected officers. The number of armed forces personnel that are being prosecuted is unparalleled in Turkish history especially once it is considered that the *Balyoz* and *Ergenekon* cases have led to the arrest of one-tenth of the Turkish Armed Forces' generals and admirals.² The court cases have raised doubts about the intentions of the AKP and whether the government is using the allegations to weaken and harm the reputation of the military. Even though it is still uncertain how the trials will be resolved and if all of the accused officers will be found guilty, it is by now clear that several officers within the military were involved in coup plots in 2003–2004.³

Military coups, even when they fail, are directly linked to questions of democracy. In cases like Turkey, where the military has intervened in politics several times and has prerogatives and autonomy, civilian control over the armed forces is a necessary condition for democratic consolidation. There are several possible routes to civilian control of the armed forces, and failed coup attempts can function as one such route. Exposed coup plots can lead to democratic civil–military relations especially if they work simultaneously with other facilitating conditions, such as increasing acceptance of democratic values among officers, consensus among civilians over the role of the military, and the influence of external actors, such as the European Union (EU).

The first part of this article will focus on such domestic and international factors to map out the transformation of the Turkish military. It will be argued that the changes in the attitudes of the general staff were due to external dynamics, such as prospects of membership in the EU and changing circumstances in Turkey's neighbourhood after the end of the Cold War, especially in Iraq and Cyprus. Domestically, the economic and political success of the government and changing public attitudes toward the military also led to a shift in the perceptions and attitudes of some military officers. However, the article will argue that this transformation did not cover all of the factions in the armed forces, resulting in a split in the military. Hardliner officers were disposed to a military intervention in the early 2000s as a result of their perceptions of threat in domestic and foreign politics. Yet, these plots were exposed without having a chance to be executed because they faced a strong reaction from the government and public opinion, and the political context was not right for an intervention.

The second part of the article will address the significance of the exposed plots for the future of Turkish democracy. The routes to democratic civil–military relations and the possible influence of failed coups can be analysed by comparing Turkey with southern European cases.⁴ Even though this article does not aim to provide a detailed analysis of democratic consolidation in Portugal, Spain and

Greece, it nevertheless draws insights from these successful cases of civilian control over the military. The three southern European countries completed their transition from authoritarian regimes in the 1970s. Because their previous repressive regimes were either directly or indirectly controlled by the military, one of the biggest challenges during democratization was civilian control over the military. Although Turkey has never had an authoritarian regime since its transition to multiparty politics in 1946, it still shares with the southern European countries the influence of the military in politics as a challenge to democratic consolidation.

Simultaneously with their democratization processes, Spain, Portugal and Greece were also negotiating their membership in the European Economic Community (EEC). Since the 1980s the EEC has transformed into the European Union (EU), and membership criteria, as well as the *acquis* that candidate countries are expected to adopt, have evolved into a thick framework of conditionality. In the case of Turkish accession, the prospect of full membership and the EU's credibility is comparatively low since the EU as a whole disseminates mixed signals on eventual Turkish membership. Yet, the possible role the EU could play in Turkish civil–military relations is similar to the southern European cases, especially in the early 2000s when the credibility of the EU was higher. Thus, given parallel domestic problems and the influence of an analogous external actor, we can ask if civil–military relations could be reformed and thereby democracy could consolidate in Turkey in comparable ways to southern Europe.

The experience of failed coup plots during democratization in Turkey is similar to the southern European cases. In Turkey, civilian control of the military has started to increase, partially as a result of the coup attempts. This is certainly an important step toward democratic consolidation. However, in contrast to southern Europe, the exposed plots have also led to polarization among political groups, which is not conducive to consolidation. One of the arguments of the article is that the changing role of the military in politics leads to mixed results for democratization. While the civilian control of the armed forces is increasing, mistrust and suspicion among political actors about each other's loyalty to democracy is growing, bringing about the continuation of unconsolidated democracy.

The significance of civilian control of the military for democratic consolidation

By definition, one of the components of liberal democracy is civilian control of the military. As most scholarly definitions of democracy stress, in a liberal democracy no unelected group can have reserved domains and hold tutelary or veto powers that can obstruct the policy-making capabilities of the elected officials.⁵ In other words, if in a country the military exercises political powers and restricts the decision-making capabilities of the executive and the legislature, it is not possible to refer to that country as a democracy. Turkey has not fulfilled this condition of a liberal democracy since the first military intervention in 1960. Yet, except for brief interludes of direct military rule, Turkey has held relatively free and fair elections, qualifying it as a limited electoral democracy.⁶ Thus, in the Turkish case, any

improvement in the civilian control of the military is significant because it indicates a move away from a minimal democracy to a more substantial liberal democracy.⁷

After a country has fulfilled the procedural conditions of democracy, the process of democratization does not come to an end and there are certain 'attitudes and habits that must be cultivated before democracy could be considered consolidated'.⁸ Consolidation refers to attitudinal and behavioural support for the regime among all significant actors, including strategically located members of the military, political parties and a sizeable portion of the population that can be mobilized by political elites.⁹ There is widespread attitudinal and behavioural support for democracy in consolidated regimes, where all actors mutually trust each other and feel secure. In contrast, unconsolidated democracies are characterized by vicious circles, where political actors mutually suspect each other's intentions and loyalty to democracy, and therefore look for non-democratic means to secure their positions.¹⁰

The attitudinal dimension of democratic consolidation is the second reason why civilian control of the military is important for democratization. If a faction in the military thinks of overthrowing the government by threatening, planning or executing an intervention, this is a clear indication that democracy is not the 'only game in town'.¹¹ Democracy fails to consolidate when there are conspirators who do not adhere to democracy and do not 'regard [democracy's] key political institutions as the only legitimate framework of contestation'.¹² In this respect, the exposed coup plots in Turkey in the recent years are an indicator that Turkish democracy was not consolidated in the early 2000s.¹³

Changing attitudes of military officers as a source of civilian control

If the military must come under the control of civilians for the consolidation of liberal democracy, how can the civilians curtail the powers of the military, especially in cases like Turkey where the military already has important political prerogatives? Certainly, one way of initiating civilian control is by introducing legal changes in the constitution and relevant laws with an attempt to eliminate the tutelary powers and reserved domains of the military.¹⁴ While such privileges of the military may be entrenched in the system by legal documents and institutions, they can also be the result of deep-rooted and informal beliefs, such as the military's definition of its own duty as the custodian of the nation. As a result, official mechanisms of civilian control and changes in the legislation are hardly sufficient to guarantee military compliance with civilian authority. Moreover, legal changes are not enough to eradicate interventionist tendencies in the armed forces and facilitate support for democracy. Thus, for complete civilian control of the military and democratization, the attitudes of the officers must also be transformed.

The early literature on civil–military relations, in fact, drew attention to the value of officer corps as an important mechanism of civilian control. Huntington, in his seminal book *The Soldier and the State*, argued that military professionalism

would guarantee control because the 'professional military ethic' upholds obedience to civilians as a supreme military virtue.¹⁵ Writing a few years after Huntington, in his analysis of the American officer corps, Janowitz similarly maintained that the officer 'is subject to civilian control, not only because of the "the rule of law" and tradition, but also because of self-imposed professional standards and meaningful integration with civilian values'.¹⁶ Despite their differences in approach, both Huntington and Janowitz¹⁷ reasoned that civilian control could be achieved through the internalization of certain values and ethics of professionalism by officers.¹⁸

The subsequent literature on civil–military relations has identified two inter-related developments that explain modifications in the attitudes of officers: external context, such as changes in international threats or membership in international organizations; and domestic factors, such as changing societal attitudes toward the military.¹⁹ A comparative analysis of western democracies, for instance, has shown that the end of the Cold War and collapse of the communist threat have 'ushered in a new era in international relations and . . . concomitant changes in the structure and culture of the armed forces'.²⁰ Public attitude in western democracies is now 'indifferent' toward the military and today's 'postmodern' militaries do not regard defending the homeland as their only duty.²¹ Indeed, the 'postmodern' military model demonstrates that the values of the officers are subject to change due to international and domestic circumstances irrespective of democratization and even in countries that do not have regime-threatening problems in civil–military relations.

However, changes in the attitudes of the officers can also have a significant impact on democratization in countries that are struggling to prevent military interventions. As Danopoulos argues for the southern European cases, 'the values and beliefs of the military do not exist in a vacuum; instead they are the sum of general societal or environmental adaptations (including international factors), perceived by the military. . .'.²² After the southern European transitions from authoritarian regimes in the mid-1970s, the international context, external threats and membership in international organizations, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the EEC, led to important adjustments in the perspective of military officers, with positive repercussions in democratic consolidation. In Spain, Portugal and Greece, 'NATO provided an opportunity for redirecting military missions to external professional concerns, and this certainly aided democratization'.²³ Although Greece and Portugal were already members of NATO before the transition, external threats from Turkey and the African colonies respectively preoccupied the armed forces with non-domestic missions.²⁴

Albeit through different mechanisms, EEC membership in the three southern European countries had a parallel impact on civil–military relations. Because civilian control of the military was one of the implicit accession criteria of the Community, civilians were keen on initiating mechanisms of control and formally eliminating the military's reserved domains and tutelary powers. This was nowhere more apparent than in Portugal, which had a constitution written under military tutelage and therefore objected to by the EEC. In 1982, Portugal carried

out important reforms and reduced the powers of the president, abolished the Council of Revolution and redrafted the National Defence Law.²⁵ These legal changes that eliminated the privileges of the military contributed in important respects to the consolidation of democracy in Portugal.

The influence of the EEC in southern Europe, however, was not only institutional, but also attitudinal. In the late 1970s and early 1980s gradually the majority of society started to perceive EEC integration as a guarantee of democracy and all major political parties reached a policy consensus on membership.²⁶ One indirect consequence of this convergence over the EEC was the unacceptability of military interventions that would stand in the way of accession. In both Spain and Greece, for example, the number of citizens who preferred authoritarianism to democracy in the 1980s was quite low.²⁷ The previous authoritarian regime in Spain was established after an intense conflict between the left and right,²⁸ and in Greece the colonels initially attempted to justify their junta by the internal threat of communism.²⁹ But by the early 1980s, when the centre-left socialist parties of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) and Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) won the elections in Greece and Spain respectively, there was no perception of threat that legitimized an overt military intervention and the establishment of an authoritarian regime.³⁰ Moreover, the electoral strength of the socialist governments of Greece and Spain resulted in the persistence of reforms in civil–military relations.³¹ Thus, EEC membership, combined with a decrease in the internal perceptions of threat, led to new attitudes among the officers indirectly, through changes in the behaviours of political parties and society toward democracy and the military.

While some military officers adjusted to democratization, there was still a faction in both the Spanish and the Greek militaries that felt threatened by the transformation of politics and civil–military relations. These hard-line officers, who had not given attitudinal support for democracy, envisioned overthrowing the civilian government and planned coups in order to restore the prerogatives of the military. In southern Europe, as elsewhere, the perceived challenges to national or corporate interests provided the motives disposing the hardliners to an intervention. But success of military interventions is eventually contingent on the political context and especially on the existence of civilian elite support and a general pro-coup climate in public opinion.³² In Spain and Greece the resistance of civilian elites and society to the coup attempts were among the most important factors that led to their failure, which started the final chain of events that eventually completed the transformation of the officer corps.

In Spain, after the February 1981 coup attempt ‘gradually but steadily a larger number of officers realized that democracy was there to stay and that the military ought to accommodate itself within it’.³³ In Greece, after the collapse of the 1967–1974 junta that was opposed by the majority of the political groups,³⁴ the officers learned ‘about the destructive consequences of political involvement’. The experience also led some Greek officers to feel ‘embarrassed and ashamed of the military’s seven years in government’.³⁵ Even though after the transition to

democracy there were several attempts of military intervention, with the passing of time, purges of officers and the imprisonment of coup-makers, the attitudes of the majority of the officer corps changed.³⁶

In sum, for the consolidation of liberal democracy in a country with several experiences of military interventions, such as Turkey, legal mechanisms of civilian control over the armed forces must be accompanied by attitudinal changes in the military and a belief among the majority of the officers that democracy is the 'only game in town'. There can be several paths that lead to this transformation. International context and prospects of membership in international organizations, such as the EU, might lead to a reassessment of the role of the armed forces in politics both within the military and among the civilians. Changing attitudes of the public toward the military might also provide the extra drive for the officer corps to alter their perceptions. However, not all officers will readily accept the new role of the military. In fact, hard-liners might perceive the changes as a threat to the corporate interests and autonomy of the military. Under those circumstances, a failed coup can prove to be the undesirable mechanism through which the remaining hard-line elements within the military are forced to accept civilian control over the armed forces.

A historical synopsis of Turkish civil–military relations

Civilian control of the armed forces is an important issue in Turkey given the country's history. The influence of the military in politics could be traced as far back as the Young Turk revolution of 1908 that forced the Ottoman Sultan to limit his rule by a constitution.³⁷ Following the defeat of the Empire in World War I, the remnants of the Ottoman military and bureaucracy under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founded a secular nation-state in the 1920s. Even though in the subsequent years of single-party rule the military did not intervene in politics directly, some of the leaders of the Republican People's Party and the first two presidents, Atatürk and İsmet İnönü, were military generals that had resigned from the armed forces. During the single-party era, the military was given the duty 'to protect and defend the Turkish homeland and the Turkish republic, as determined in the Constitution'.³⁸ In these early years of the Republic, with the encouragement of Atatürk himself, the military assumed the role of the guardian and vanguard of the Turkish revolution with its nationalist and secular ideology.³⁹

During Turkey's transition to democracy in 1950, the armed forces stayed in the barracks and did not intervene against the electoral victory of the Democratic Party (DP). However, the first overt coup that constituted a turning point in Turkish civil–military relations came a decade later in 1960, and was followed by other interventions in 1971 and 1980.⁴⁰ After each coup, the military oversaw the drafting of a new constitutional and legal framework, increasing also its own autonomy and political powers within the system.

The National Security Council (MGK), which was first established by the 1960 coup, provided the military with important tutelary powers and reserved domains.

In the 1961 constitution, the MGK was envisioned as an institution that would advise the government. Its monthly meetings were composed of the military commanders, the president and government ministers. Changes in the constitution after the 1980 coup increased the powers of the MGK and required the cabinet to give priority to the decisions of the council meetings. In the subsequent years, the generals used the MGK and the military-dominated secretariat of the council as a mechanism to determine the security policies of the county, veto government policies and even force cabinets out of power.⁴¹ These institutional mechanisms allowed the military to perform its guardian role, without resorting to direct interventions or forceful coups.⁴²

In the aftermath of the 1980 coup, the military was especially sensitive in protecting the unitary and secular characteristics of the Republic against what it perceived as threats of Kurdish separatism and Islamist activities. This position of the military was supported, or at least not openly contested, by the majority of the public and elites.⁴³ In fact, since the first overt intervention of 1960, the military's involvement in politics had been acceptable for the majority of society when the civilians failed to bring order and stability and when as a result public confidence in the politicians faltered.⁴⁴

Since the late 1990s, however, similar to the southern European militaries, the Turkish military has started going through an important transformation. As identified above, there are two interrelated reasons for this change: one is external to the polity, and results from international threat perceptions and membership in international organizations; the other comes from domestic dynamics and relates especially to the changing attitudes of the civilians toward the military.

The transformation of the Turkish military and splits due to external dynamics

The changes in the attitudes of the general staff in Turkey could be traced back to the prospects of membership in the EU between 1999 and 2006, changing circumstances in Turkey's neighbourhood after the Cold War and especially in Iraq, and policy modifications in Cyprus. Surely, it is not possible to isolate these changes from one another, from domestic circumstances or from broader conjectural dynamics that affected most western militaries after the Cold War. Indeed, taking into account all of these sources of change, Nil Şatana argues in a comprehensive analysis that the Turkish military, although not perfectly, seems to fit with the postmodern military pattern in important respects.⁴⁵ Among the elites and civil-society organizations, there is rising opposition against military interventions in politics⁴⁶ and 'the behavioural changes in the military toward democracy seem possible because of [these] changes in the mother society and the military's desire to keep up with their peers in NATO and the EU'.⁴⁷ Even though the transformation of the military after the Cold War was not due only to circumstances that uniquely affected Turkey, the effects of EU candidacy, the war in Iraq and changing circumstances in Cyprus must still be analysed exclusively in the Turkish case.

These issues are significant not only because they led to a transformation of the perceptions and policy choices of some of the officers in the early 2000s, but also because they laid the foundations of the split within the military.

In the 1999 Helsinki Summit of the European Council, the EU reversed its 1997 decision and recognized Turkey as an official candidate of the European Union. This positive development triggered a reform process in Turkey, first under a coalition government and then more significantly under the AKP government.⁴⁸ The amendments were geared toward implementing the political criteria of the EU, in particular strengthening democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Consequently, important institutional amendments curtailed the powers and autonomy of the military. These reforms can be grouped under three broad categories, namely: civilian oversight of the defence expenditure, the role of the military in the judiciary and amendments to the MGK (which in effect brought the Council to its original position envisioned by the 1960 constitution).⁴⁹ In addition, the reforms aimed at increasing democratic liberties, such as freedom of speech and minority rights. Several packages that were enacted in the early 2000s changed the anti-terror law and granted the right to broadcast and obtain education in languages other than Turkish, including Kurdish.⁵⁰

The issue of minority rights was also related to changing circumstances in Turkey's eastern border due to the invasion of Iraq by the United States. Since the first Gulf War, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) had been using northern Iraq as a base for its separatist activities and operations in Turkey. As a partner of the Pentagon in the war, the Turkish military had free access in the region after 1991, and therefore could retaliate by crossing the border. This privileged position of the military in the region was eliminated in March 2003, when the parliament rejected opening up Turkish lands to US troops. Even though the AKP government supported the decision to cooperate with the US, the unpopularity of the war among the public affected the final vote in parliament.⁵¹ After the start of the war, the humiliating detainment of eleven Turkish soldiers by Americans in July 2003 provided evidence of the changing circumstances. The military had not only lost influence in northern Iraq, but also could not work against Kurdish elements with its previous ally, the United States.⁵² As a consequence, the AKP adopted a European rhetoric on foreign policy with neighbours, emphasizing the use of soft power, dialogue and economic cooperation.⁵³ In the subsequent years, in order to solve the Kurdish problem, the AKP government started to embrace a policy that balanced two strategies: one foreign and consisting of dialogue with the Kurdish regional government in northern Iraq; and the other domestic and emphasizing individual rights and freedoms to minorities.

The AKP government also reversed Turkey's long-held policy toward Cyprus by supporting UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's plan on the unification of the Greek and Turkish communities under a federal state. The status quo on the island had become a major obstacle to eventual Turkish membership in the EU since Cyprus was set to join the union in May 2004. Any major changes required the approval of the two communities that had been living separately on the island

since 1974, as well as the acquiescence of the Turkish military which maintained troops on the island. Despite public declarations by some military officers,⁵⁴ the AKP government supported a solution on the island and, along with the Turkish Cypriot government, advocated a vote of yes in the referendum on the Annan plan. However, the expected solution never materialized as a result of the rejection of the plan by the majority of Greek Cypriots in the April 2004 referendum.⁵⁵

EU candidacy, changing circumstances in Turkey's region and new dynamics in Turkish-US relations necessitated reforms at home and in foreign policy. But, alterations of the external context in the neighbourhood and possible membership in the EU were interpreted by some sections of the military as threats to national and corporate interests. According to the alleged coup diaries of Admiral Özden Örnek, the critical event that led to the planning of the military interventions was 'the positive turn in the negotiations for Turkish accession to the EU'. It was believed that the EU would provoke Kurdish separatism, 'break-up the republic' and 'require Turkey to grant concessions on Cyprus'.⁵⁶ The contemporary secretary general of the MGK, General Tuncer Kılınç, for example, argued in the summer of 2003 that the EU reforms 'rendered the MGK functionless', 'would incite ethnic separatism' and were 'granting capitulations to foreigners'.⁵⁷ Similar statements were made in 2003 and 2004 by the Land Forces Commander Aytaç Yalman, Commander of the Gendarmerie Şener Eruygur, Commander of the First Army Çetin Doğan and Commander of the Aegean Army Hurşit Tolon.⁵⁸ Since it was believed that relations with the EU and the USA were damaging national interests, some members of the Turkish military also started to call for a fundamental shift in foreign policy away from the West. These 'Euroasianist' officers advocated getting out of NATO and searching for new alliances with Turkey's eastern neighbours, such as Iran and Russia.⁵⁹

While the disposition to intervene erupted among hard-line officers in the late 1990s and early 2000s, prospects of EU membership and the changing international context led to a transformation in the attitudes of the general staff and moderate officers at around the same time. Even though the individuals in this camp are more difficult to delineate, Chief of the General Staff Özkök is usually considered as the leading figure of the moderates. However, as Demirel argues 'it would not be a mistake to infer that Özkök was not alone and that the anti-coup inclination was echoed in the lower ranks of the hierarchical structure'.⁶⁰ As the top ranking general of the armed forces, Özkök probably represented the beliefs of a considerable number of officers when he declared in August 2003 that: 'from now on, we should have greater trust in the people. The [Turkish Armed Forces] should have a new vision'.⁶¹ As most observers of Turkish civil-military relations argue, in the early 2000s, Özkök and the Turkish general staff supported (or at least did not oppose) Turkish membership in the EU and the reforms that it required, including decreases in the tutelary powers and reserved domains of the military.⁶²

The acceptance of the reforms among the moderates can be explained by two factors, both indicating a changing calculation and an accompanying

transformation of attitude. First, the generals started to believe that the EU could help solve the economic and political problems that Turkey has faced. The EU was perceived as a mechanism that could tame rising Islamist activities and Kurdish separatism, and bring the dispute in Cyprus to a successful conclusion.⁶³ In other words, 'the costs of tackling these major problems alone seemed to surpass those of meeting European demands, even though compliance would inevitably transform the Turkish armed forces'.⁶⁴

Second, the EU accession process created a situation in which the guardian and vanguard roles of the military contradicted each other. The overall outlook of the Turkish military emphasizes principles of national unity, sovereignty and secularism, but at the same time also stresses westernization, Europeanization and modernization as the ultimate aims of the Turkish nation.⁶⁵ Even though in the past both missions of the armed forces could be carried out simultaneously, such a combination in a Turkey on the road to EU membership was not possible any more. Leading the country to EU membership (vanguard role) necessitated giving up some aspects of the guardian role.⁶⁶ Any explicit turn away from the goal of westernization in order to protect the corporate interests of the military would oppose the *raison d'état* of the past coups and contradict the image that the military tried to portray.⁶⁷ That is also why proposals to seek alliances other than the US and Europe were not an option for the general staff. Such a policy shift would eventually cause the armed forces to lose their credibility completely. Thus, as Demirel argues, the moderates in the military did not necessarily advocate the complete dissolution of the military's autonomy and tutelary powers, but they believed that the reform process must be controlled as much as possible so that the armed forces would not lose all of their privileges.⁶⁸

Transformation of the Turkish military and splits due to domestic dynamics

The transformation in the perspectives of the military hierarchy and the general staff was also due to changes in the relations between society and the armed forces. As in the southern European cases in the late 1970s and early 1980s, in Turkey as well, the popularity of possible EU membership until 2006, the electoral support of the government and changing public attitudes toward the military led to a shift within the armed forces. In the early 2000s, public posture toward military involvement in politics was negative, signalling that a coup would not be legitimate for the majority of society.⁶⁹ This resulted in the re-assessment of the role of the military in politics by the moderates in the armed forces.

The AKP had won around 35% of the votes in the November 2002 elections and had received the mandate to form the new government. This was the largest amount of votes any party had received in general elections since 1987. From the early 1990s onwards, Turkey was governed by unstable coalition or minority governments. The formation of a single-party government gave the impression that there would be some sort of political stability at the executive level.⁷⁰

Moreover, during the election campaign and after it came to power, the AKP government adopted a pro-EU stance and successfully tied the reform process to EU accession.⁷¹ In the early 2000s, public opinion surveys indicated that a clear majority of the people was in favour of Turkish accession to the EU.⁷² Aware of this support for the EU, Chief of General Staff Hilmi Özkök declared that '70 percent of the people want EU membership. Nobody can resist this kind of majority ... we are ready to compromise and undertake risks to harmonize with the EU values'.⁷³ Thus, the electoral success of the AKP and support for EU membership among the public led the general staff to reconsider its relations with society. It was clear for some of the generals that opposing the reform process and AKP rule would not be welcomed by the majority of the Turkish citizens.

More significantly than the prospect of EU membership, for considerable numbers of people in Turkey, the AKP government was received positively because of the economic stability that accompanied the party's first term in office. Turkey had experienced a financial crisis during the coalition government in 2001. But the AKP came to power when the economy was picking up due to the measures that the previous government had taken against the crisis. In coordination with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the AKP government privatized inefficient state economic enterprises, and reduced and rationalized public spending. As a result of the stabilization programme, the rate of inflation decreased, exports increased, and foreign direct investment more than tripled in just one year.⁷⁴ Given that Turkey had been ruled by coalition governments for around a decade, the economic and political stability of the AKP's term in office was a breath of fresh air for the majority of the population and business community.

As public opinion supported the economic and political stability that the AKP brought, it also started to turn against military interventions in politics. Although this shift among the public and especially the elite began in the early 2000s, it became more evident especially with the April 2007 presidential crisis. The AKP nominated Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül to the presidency to replace President Ahmet Necdet Sezer when his term concluded. This move resulted in the fear that the AKP would capture both the parliament and the presidency. The general staff reacted to this possibility and implied in an announcement from its website that the military would take action to prevent such an outcome.⁷⁵ Spurred by the crisis of presidential elections, several demonstrations and rallies were held against the AKP. Thousands of people poured out onto the streets in several cities in order to show their opposition. The numbers reached 1,000,000 in Istanbul and 370,000 in Ankara. These rallies demonstrated that the AKP was perceived as a threat to the secular principles of the Republic among some segments of society. However, it was also possible to observe in the rallies the common outcry that a coup would not solve the problem, but make things even worse. It became publicly clear that a coup would be opposed even by staunch secularists that shared the military's sensitivity on the visibility of Islam in politics.

The AKP government also responded to the declaration fiercely, opposed the military's move and 'issued a counter-statement reminding the [military] that the

[AKP] government was the civilian authority and that, in democracies, it is not acceptable for the armed forces to intervene in politics'.⁷⁶ The AKP decided to overcome the crisis by holding early elections, and at this stage, the website declaration of the military played into the hands of the AKP. The party ran a campaign stressing democracy and won 47% of the votes.⁷⁷ Shortly after the elections, the new AKP-dominated parliament elected Gül as the 11th president of the Turkish Republic. Confronted by the AKP's determination to thwart the military and the reaction of the electorate at the ballot box, the generals backed down and failed to carry out the threats of the website declaration.

The public protests and election result of 2007 revealed what was already apparent for some observers of Turkish politics: society's perceptions of the military's role in politics had shifted.⁷⁸ As Aydınli notes, EU candidacy, in combination with 'relative political stability and strong political leadership', led to a reassessment of the military's involvement in politics among people with quite diverse ideological backgrounds, representing intellectuals, media, civil society groups and the business community.⁷⁹ A survey of parliamentary debates on military budgets and national security between 2002 and 2007 also reveals that for an increasing number of deputies the formal and informal roles of the armed forces in politics had become unacceptable.⁸⁰ Even political parties in opposition that are traditionally more in concert with the military, such as the National Action Party (MHP) and the Republican People's Party (CHP), started to criticize the armed forces.⁸¹ Analysing the attitudes of parliamentarians and the media, Narlı concludes that by 2007 the security culture in Turkey had transformed significantly and 'the new political culture is not very friendly with the idea of a coup'.⁸²

As in southern European cases, in Turkey as well, while some officers accepted and adjusted to this new culture and relations with society, some hard-line military officers viewed these changes with contempt. At the core of the problem also lay the belief among the hardliners that the AKP had Islamist tendencies. From their point of view, the reforms and changes in public perceptions were taking place under the rule of a dangerously anti-secular party. In the words of Cizre and Walker, a segment of the high command 'regards the ruling party's project of inserting itself into the EU fold as a ruse, intended to disguise its Islamist agenda'.⁸³ The relative success and sustainability of the AKP rule at the beginning of its first term in office intensified the divergence of opinion in the military. The non-interventionist stance of the general staff toward the AKP government and its reforms were interpreted by the hard-liners as leniencies and sanctioning of religious activities.⁸⁴

For officers in both camps of the military, the ultimate aim remained probably the same, that is, protecting military and national interests. However, the two sides had different opinions on how to pursue the same goal.⁸⁵ In the end, the stance of the general staff had important consequences for the military officers who had a different interpretation of the events. It intensified the disposition to intervene for pro-coup officers, who started to believe that the intervention should also oust the chief of general staff and his allies in the armed forces.⁸⁶ By 2007,

however, the AKP was strengthened by the presidential crisis and the election results. As a result, it could show more resolve in thwarting the efforts of the hard-liners. Faced with an unfavourable political context and public attitude toward the role of the military in politics, the faith of pro-coup officers was sealed and their opportunity for staging a successful intervention was closed.

The *Ergenekon* investigation started shortly after the website declaration of the general staff, in June 2007. The investigation is still an ongoing process. In the past four years, 18 operations were conducted, 318 individuals were formally charged and 15 indictments were prepared.⁸⁷ As of summer 2011, the court cases have not been concluded yet, therefore none of the accused individuals have been convicted even though some of them are still kept in prison. Moreover, some of the suspects have been detained without being formally charged. In January 2010, a separate investigation on the alleged *Balyoz* coup plan began, following a set of documents that the *Taraf* daily published. In July 2010, 196 military officers were sued for attempting to overthrow the government.⁸⁸ More arrests have taken place since the summer of 2010 and at the time of writing, similar to the *Ergenekon* case, the *Balyoz* investigation has not been concluded either.

The long duration of the investigations and the trials, as well as the number of individuals alleged with the crime of staging a coup has been criticized both at home and abroad. Several journalists critical of the AKP government have been implicated in the coup plans, apart from military officers, civil society activists and others. The arrests of the journalists have especially led to the accusation that the cases are not an attempt to clean out the pro-coup elements within the state and the military, but a convenient tool for the AKP government and its sympathizers to repress the opposition, pressure the media and disgrace and trap the secular military.⁸⁹ Besides these controversies, the investigations are important turning points in Turkish history since retired and active officers are being charged with anti-democratic activities for the first time. There is no doubt that the exposure of the coup plots will have significant consequences for Turkish democracy.

Consequences of the exposed coup plots

In southern Europe, failed coup attempts facilitated the consolidation of liberal democracy by two interrelated mechanisms: first they helped strengthen civilian control over the military by legal amendments, and second, they expedited attitudinal support for democracy among politically significant civilian groups and within the military. In Turkey, the exposure of the coup plots produced similar results in the first mechanism by providing an impetus to legal reforms in civil–military relations. The AKP was strengthened by the 2007 election results, the military’s decision not to intervene against Gül’s presidency again, and by the trials of suspected officers after 2008. Consequently, it rolled up its sleeves to introduce more reforms in civil–military relations and eliminate some more areas of military autonomy.⁹⁰

In January 2010, the government abolished the Police-Public Security Cooperation (EMASYA) protocol, which had formed one of the legal bases for the military to carry out internal security operations. Later in the year, the government prepared a constitutional package, which was approved by the majority of the electorate in a referendum on 12 September. The package included the following changes: armed forces personnel would be adjudicated in civilian courts for non-military offences; it would be possible to try the generals who had staged the military intervention of 1980; and the decisions of the High Military Council on purges from the military would be subjected to judicial review. Accompanying these legal changes, civilians' willingness to challenge military autonomy in practice has also increased. In August 2010, for the first time in more than two decades, the AKP government got involved in the decisions of the High Military Council regarding promotions. It is possible that in the near future civilian control over the armed forces will further increase in practice and more reforms will be introduced.

Despite the reforms, the question remains: will democracy be consolidated in Turkey? There is no simple answer to this question since, as Turan nicely put it, 'less military may not mean more democracy' in Turkey.⁹¹ Even though there is now an emerging consensus against the role of the military in politics, the same type of accord on democracy does not exist among political parties, especially regarding their perceptions of each other. According to some political groups, and most notably the main opposition Republican People's Party, the AKP has roots in parties that were closed down by the Constitutional Court because of their anti-secular activities. Some of the leaders of the AKP had been previously active in these banned political formations. This prior record concerns secularists in Turkey, who fear that the AKP uses a liberal discourse and participates in the elections only as a means to an anti-democratic end, namely to turn Turkey into an Islamic republic.⁹² These opposition groups suspect that the AKP is infiltrating the state and has taken over the police forces in order to execute its religious agenda. The reforms that the AKP implemented after 2002 have raised considerable doubts about the true intentions of the party in carrying out these constitutional changes. The opposition believes that the discourse of democracy has provided a safe cover and concealed the real motivations of the AKP government.

The groups that perceive the AKP as dangerous for Turkey's secular state do not necessarily support the continued influence of the military in politics. On the contrary, they are mostly against military interventions and in principle support the reforms in civil-military relations. However, they suspect that the reforms and the exposed plots are used as a suitable instrument to weaken the military in order to advance an Islamist agenda.⁹³ The manner in which the investigations of the plots have been proceeding does not help alleviate concerns. Suspected individuals have been kept in custody for days without any formal charges, prominent individuals with severe health problems have been detained under unacceptable conditions, and well-known journalists and civil society activists (some of them quite outspoken in their opposition to coups) have been accused of being part of

a clandestine organization. Most of those who have been implicated, including civilians, have been tied together as members of a terrorist organization. The accused individuals seem to be from such diverse backgrounds that some observers have argued the only common element that brings them together is their opposition to the AKP and the party is using the case to repress and intimidate its opponents.⁹⁴

Some of the alleged crimes sound absurd to outside observers. The suspects are claimed to have planned false flag operations, such as attacking religious minority groups, planting explosives in mosques, assassinating prominent secular individuals or bombing secular left-wing newspapers, in order to incite chaos and opposition against the AKP. Even though 15 indictments were written as of summer 2011, and the first three ran to thousands of pages, the official accusations for the *Ergenekon* case produced uncertain evidence. The *Balyoz* suit raised similar doubts about the impartiality of the prosecutors as well. It appears that the courts are divided into two factions too. The judiciary in Turkey has been seen as another bastion of the secular republic; therefore such accusations lead to perceptions of threat that the AKP has also succeeded in infiltrating one more state institution and politicizing it.

In southern Europe, the transformation of military attitudes was completed with failed coups that helped identify and clean out hardliners and that led to feelings of shame among neutral officers. But such an important change was made possible by a consensus in society, where widespread attitudinal and behavioural support for democracy led to mutual trust, respect and feelings of security in the late 1980s. In contrast with the experience of Greece, Portugal and Spain, Turkish politics today is characterized by a vicious circle. Political actors, represented mostly by the Republican People's Party and its electoral supporters, accuse the AKP of not being loyal to democracy and supporting the regime as long as it serves the interests of the party. The AKP, on the other hand, charges the opposition with the same felony of not being truly democratic. The AKP blames its opponents for not recognizing the party's electoral success and undermining the liberal reforms. Such a political context of mutual accusations and suspicions is not conducive to democratic consolidation. Rather than help bring political actors together, the alleged coups actually intensified polarization in Turkey. It is true that neither of the groups advocates a military coup any longer, and the transformation of the general staff is unlikely to be reversed completely. But the role of the military in politics and the failed coup plots are at the centre of polarization in Turkish politics.

Conclusion

This article attempted to identify the conditions under which further democratization can be achieved in Turkey. Civilian control over the armed forces and attitudinal support for the regime among military officers are necessary conditions for democratic consolidation in Turkey. The literature on civil–military relations point to changes in the international context, membership in international organizations and civilian consensus against military interventions as facilitating factors

that lead to a transformation in the attitudes of the officers. Failed coup attempts, like in Spain, and the humiliating experience of an unpopular military regime, like in Greece, can also help eliminate remaining hard-liners in the military and pave the way for consolidation. Coup attempts fail especially when there are no opportunities for an intervention, that is, when there are no major crises that lead to a pro-coup climate among the public.

In Turkey, the transformation of the military started in the late 1990s with EU candidacy, and reforms that membership would require in domestic politics. The end of the Cold War, the war in Iraq and a possible solution to the conflict in Cyprus led to a reassessment of Turkish foreign- and security-policy concerns. Domestically, the electoral support for the AKP, economic growth and a shift in public opinion against military interventions also resulted in the reconsideration of the armed forces' relations with society. In the early 2000s, the general staff supported Turkey's EU bid and did not stand in the way of reforms in civil–military relations, minority rights and foreign policy. The attitude of some of the generals toward the AKP, however, was not shared by hard-line officers who planned to stage coups. Closed opportunities led to the exposure of coup plots and, ironically, hastened and cemented the reform process in civil–military relations that the conspirators attempted to prevent.

Civilian control of the armed forces and eradicating their political autonomy, tutelary powers and reserved domains are necessary for democracy. The importance of this point cannot be minimized, and most certainly the exposure of coup plots and changing civil–military relations can be perceived as positive democratic developments. Yet this is hardly enough. Attitudinal and behavioural support for democracy among all significant actors is also a necessary condition for further democratization. Perhaps more importantly for Turkey, all groups must mutually trust each other and believe that democracy is the 'only game in town' for everybody else as well.

Turkey is currently far from achieving these conditions of democracy and the prospects for consolidation in the short run look bleak given the vicious circle in which the political parties are caught. Opposition groups maintain that their anti-AKP position is necessary in order to save the republic, without which the regime would not be able to function. From this point of view, there is now no EU anchor to guide Turkish democratization. Since the 2006 decision of the EU to suspend eight chapters of the *acquis* that would lead to Turkish membership, there is no external actor to prevent the authoritarian tendencies of the AKP government. Indeed, despite the reforms, Turkey still faces important obstacles in fulfilling the other important elements of a liberal democracy, including freedom of expression, minority rights and free access to information from the press and the internet. Thus, for important elements in Turkish society, the AKP purposefully selects the areas in which it wants to further democratization for its own self-interest (such as reforms in civil–military relations) but shows signs of increasing authoritarianism in other areas (such as limited changes in the conditions of Kurdish rights or rising pressure over the media).

Thus, even though the AKP argues that it is strengthening democracy, opposition groups believe otherwise. When both sides accuse each other of not being democratic, however, it is in the end Turkish democracy that suffers. More than the possibility of another military coup or the return of authoritarianism, perhaps the most immediate danger Turkey faces now is increasing polarization. As long as mutual attacks and charges continue, the liberal centre and democracy in Turkey will be hollowed out. This is a real possibility that unfortunately overshadows the recent developments in civil–military relations.

Notes

1. “2004” te İki Darbe Atlattığımız’.
2. For a critical assessment of the number of generals and admirals under arrest, see İnce, ‘Bu Nasıl Darbeci Ordu?’.
3. The April 2009 testimony of the former Chief of General Staff Hilmi Özkök that during his term in office he was informed about possible coup plans added plausibility to the existence of extra-hierarchical plots in the military during the early 2000s. See ‘Delil Yoktu’.
4. For a comparison of democratization in Turkey, Portugal and Spain, see Yılmaz, ‘External-Internal Linkages in Democratization’.
5. For definitions of democracy, see Dahl, *Polyarchy*, 3; Linz, ‘Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes’, 182–3; Linz, Stepan, and Gunther, ‘Democratic Transition and Consolidation’, 78; Schmitter and Karl, ‘What Democracy Is’, 76–82.
6. For the distinction between electoral and liberal democracies, see Diamond, *Developing Democracy*, 8–13.
7. On the conceptualization of civilian control of the military and its significance for democracy, see Croissant et al., ‘Beyond the Fallacy’.
8. Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, 5. The move from democratic transition to consolidation does not always take place smoothly and sequentially. Carothers, ‘The End of the Transition Paradigm’, 15; Schneider and Schmitter, ‘Liberalization, Transition and Consolidation’, 81–4.
9. Gunther, Puhle, and Diamandouros, ‘Introduction’, 17.
10. *Ibid.*, 9–10. For vicious cycles in unconsolidated democracies, also see Valenzuela, ‘Democratic Consolidation’, 67–8.
11. Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market*, 26.
12. Gunther, Puhle, and Diamandouros, ‘Introduction’, 7.
13. Following Guillermo O’Donnell’s model, Özbudun defines the regime in Turkey as a ‘delegative democracy’, which refers to a democracy that is relatively stable but not consolidated. For an overview of problems with democratic consolidation in Turkey, see Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics*, 149–54.
14. Tutelary powers grant the military the authority to ‘exercise broad oversight of the government and its policy decisions’. Reserved domains refer to specific policy areas that the government cannot make decisions in and control because of an explicit or implicit threat of a military intervention. Valenzuela, ‘Democratic Consolidation’, 62–5.
15. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 70–9.
16. Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier*, 420.
17. For an overview of this debate, see Feaver, ‘The Civil–Military Problematique’.
18. Also see Welch, ‘Two Strategies of Civilian Control’.

19. For an overview of this literature, see Forster, Edmunds, and Cottey, 'Introduction', 3–6.
20. Moskos, Williams, and Segal, 'Armed Forces after the Cold War', 3.
21. Moskos, 'Toward a Postmodern Military', 17–20. On the influence of external threats to civil–military relations, see also Desch, *Civilian Control of the Military*.
22. Danopoulos, 'Democratising the Military', 31.
23. Agüero, 'Democratic Consolidation', 161. Also see Pridham, 'The International Context', 196–7.
24. Agüero, 'Democratic Consolidation', 162–3; Veremis, *The Military*, 171.
25. Pinto and Teixeira, 'From Africa to Europe', 30.
26. Pridham 'The International Context', 174–5, 188–90.
27. Table 7.1 in Morlino and Montero, 'Legitimacy and Democracy', 236. Also see Danopoulos, 'Democratising the Military', 32–3.
28. For a concise analysis of the rise of General Franco's regime in Spain, see Mann, *Fascists*, 297–352.
29. Veremis, *The Military*, 153.
30. For the opposition of the elites to the 1981 coup in Spain, see Gunther, *Spain*, 74–6; for the moderation of political parties and the evolution of PASOK in Greece, see Linz, Stepan, and Gunther, 'Democratic Transition and Consolidation', 112–5.
31. Agüero, 'Democratic Consolidation', 151.
32. Finer, *The Man on Horseback*, 23–85; Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Politics*, 85–95.
33. Agüero, *Soldiers, Civilians, and Democracy*, 174; Gunther, Puhle, and Diamandouras, 'Introduction', 27–8.
34. Gürsoy, 'Civilian Support and Military Unity'.
35. Karakatsanis, *The Politics of Elite Transformation*, 157.
36. *Ibid.*, 163; Veremis, *The Military*, 173.
37. For an overview of the military's role in the last years of the Ottoman Empire, see Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, 35–58. For a similar argument on the historical antecedents of the military's central role in Turkish politics, see Demirel, *2000'li Yillarda Asker*, 4.
38. Quoted in Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, 80.
39. *Ibid.*, 80–1.
40. For more on the interventions between 1950 and 1980 see *Ibid.*, 88–275.
41. The generals in the MGK ousted the coalition government of the Welfare and True Path parties in February 1997. For more on this intervention, see Heper and Güney, 'The Military and the Consolidation of Democracy', 642–7; and Jenkins, 'Continuity and Change', 342–6.
42. On the institutional mechanisms that provided the military political autonomy after the 1980 coup, see Cizre-Sakalhoğlu, 'The Anatomy of the Turkish Military', 151–66.
43. Demirel, 'Soldiers and Civilians', 133–43; Demirel, 'Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri'nin Toplumsal Meşruiyeti Üzerine', 345–81; Sargil, 'Deconstructing the Turkish Military's Popularity', 709–27.
44. For such an argument, see Jenkins, *Context and Circumstance*, 9–20; Michaud-Emin, 'The Restructuring of the Military High Command', 32–8; Narlı, 'Civil–Military Relations', 117–21.
45. Şatana, 'Transformation of the Turkish Military'. Also see Park, 'Defence Transformation'.
46. Şatana, 'Transformation of the Turkish Military', 364–71.
47. *Ibid.*, 382.
48. Although EU candidacy gave major impetus to the legal amendments, there was domestic pressure for the reforms as well. See Ulusoy, 'Turkey's Reform Efforts Reconsidered', 472–90.

49. The amendments in civil–military relations due to the EU accession process have been documented well in the literature. For examples, see Akay, ‘Avrupa Birliği’; Cizre, ‘The Justice and Development Party and the Military’; Michaud-Emin, ‘The Restructuring of the Military High Command’; Ünlü Bilgiç, ‘The Military and Europeanization Reforms’.
50. Şahin, ‘Türkiye’nin Avrupa Birliği Uyum Süreci’, 148–51.
51. Güney, ‘An Anatomy’, 350–3.
52. Özcan, ‘Facing the Waterloo’, 93–7.
53. Müftüler Baç and Gürsoy, ‘Is There a Europeanization of Turkish Foreign Policy?’.
54. Özcan, ‘Facing the Waterloo’, 92–3.
55. Dodd, ‘Constitutional Features’, 39–51.
56. Cizre and Walker, ‘Conceiving the New Turkey after Ergenekon’, 94. See also Heper, ‘The European Union, the Turkish Military and Democracy’ on the difference of opinion in the military with regard to the EU.
57. Quoted in Heper, ‘The European Union, the Turkish Military and Democracy’, 38.
58. These officers were later implicated in the exposed coup conspiracies, although they seem to have different mindsets and types of involvement in the plots.
59. Özcan, ‘Facing the Waterloo’, 85–9; Demirel, *2000’li Yillarda Asker ve Siyaset*, 14.
60. Demirel, *2000’li Yillarda Asker ve Siyaset*, 17. According to several scholars, the chiefs of staff who followed Özkök, Yaşar Büyükanıt and İlker Başbuğ, resembled him in their progressive and moderate attitudes. See Aydınli, ‘A Paradigmatic Shift’, 591–4 and Heper, ‘The Justice and Development Party Government and the Military’, 227. Even though this general conclusion holds true, the attitude of Büyükanıt has been more controversial due to the 2007 website declaration of the general staff during the presidential crisis (see footnote 75 below).
61. Quoted in Heper, ‘The European Union, the Turkish Military and Democracy’, 41.
62. See Aydınli, Özcan, and Akyaz, ‘The Turkish Military’s March toward Europe’; Demirel, *2000’li Yillarda Asker ve Siyaset*, 6, 12; Güney and Karatekelioğlu, ‘Turkey’s EU Candidacy’, 452–5; Sarıgil, ‘Europeanization as Institutional Change’; Toktaş and Kurt, ‘The Turkish Military’s Autonomy’, 392–3; Ünlü Bilgiç, ‘The Military and Europeanization Reforms’.
63. For the changing stance of the Chief of Staff İlker Başbuğ on the Kurdish and Cyprus problems, see Demirel, *2000’li Yillarda Asker ve Siyaset*, 20.
64. Aydınli, Özcan, and Akyaz, ‘The Turkish Military’s March toward Europe’, 87.
65. Heper and Güney, ‘The Military and Democracy’, 619–20.
66. Cizre, ‘Problems of Democratic Governance’, 107–8; Ünlü Bilgiç, ‘The Military and Europeanization Reforms’, 817.
67. Sarıgil, ‘Europeanization as Institutional Change’, 48. Also see Aydınli, Özcan, and Akyaz, ‘The Turkish Military’s March toward Europe’, 77–90.
68. Demirel, *2000’li Yillarda Asker ve Siyaset*, 19. Ünlü Bilgiç argues that, in fact, the military was able to control the reform process quite successfully. See her article entitled ‘The Military and Europeanization Reforms in Turkey’.
69. There is no public opinion survey that can outline societal attitudes toward the military in Turkey in a comprehensive manner. In more general surveys, the military always comes off as the most trusted institution; however, it should be kept in mind that this question does not necessarily measure support for military interventions. In fact, in a 2005 Eurobarometer survey that excluded the military, the most trusted institution was the government. In another survey in 2006, respondents were specifically asked whether or not they approved of military interventions in politics and while 58% said that they did not, only 14.5% did approve of them. See ‘İçinde Ordu Olmayan Soru’ and ‘Anket’, also quoted respectively in Aydınli, ‘A Paradigmatic Shift’, 587; and Narlı, ‘EU Harmonisation Reforms’, 446.

70. Sarıgil, 'Europeanization as Institutional Change', 48.
71. Özel, 'Turkey at the Polls', 93.
72. The number of people who support EU membership in Turkey declined significantly after 2006 partially because of the EU's decision to freeze eight of the 35 negotiation chapters. However, the transformation of the military, the split in the armed forces and the alleged coup plots took place in the early 2000s, when public opinion toward the EU was quite positive. Therefore, the decline of support for EU membership after 2006 is beyond the scope of this article. For a complete assessment of public opinion towards the EU since 1996, see Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu, *The Rising Tide*, 122–9.
73. Quoted in Cizre, 'The Justice and Development Party and the Military', 142.
74. Heper, 'The Justice and Development Party Government and the Military', 222; Turan, 'Unstable Stability', 319–20.
75. There is considerable controversy over the reasons behind this website pronouncement of the military. It has been variously suggested that the Chief of Staff Yaşar Büyükanıt attempted to put down a possible coup among hard-line junior officers, that he was not the one who actually authored the declaration or that he knew that this declaration would eventually benefit the AKP and increase its popularity. Even though the latter two lines of reasoning were refuted by Büyükanıt himself, both explanations are in concert with the belief that Büyükanıt was a moderate, similar to his predecessor Özkök. Amidst existing speculations, we still do not have enough information to truly assess the reasons for the declaration and why a moderate (if this is in fact a correct assumption) adopted such a contradictory move and threatened the government with a coup. For an assessment of the declaration, see Kışlalı, 'Erdoğan-Büyükanıt Niye Konuşmaz?'; for Büyükanıt's own interpretation of the events, see 'Dolmabahçe Görüşmesini İlk Kez Anlattı'.
76. Toktaş and Kurt, 'The Turkish Military's Autonomy', 395.
77. Baran, 'Turkey Divided', 63–7.
78. For an overview of this change in public perceptions, see Demirel, *2000'li Yillarda Asker ve Siyaset*, 8–10.
79. Aydın, 'A Paradigmatic Shift', 586–7.
80. Narlı, 'EU Harmonisation Reforms', 447–60.
81. Demirel, *2000'li Yillarda Asker ve Siyaset*, 9.
82. Narlı, 'EU Harmonisation Reforms', 465.
83. Cizre and Walker, 'Conceiving the New Turkey after Ergenekon', 94. Also see Heper, 'The European Union, the Turkish Military and Democracy', 38.
84. Chief of Staff Özkök, for example, was accused of not being sensitive enough to secularism. See Demirel, *2000'li Yillarda Asker ve Siyaset*, 12.
85. *Ibid.*, 19.
86. Jenkins, 'Between Fact and Fantasy', 12. Also see Ünver, 'Turkey's "Deep State"', 1–25.
87. '318 Sanık Hakkında 15 İddianame Hazırlandı'.
88. 'Balyoz İddianamesi Kabul Edildi'.
89. 'Press Freedom in Turkey'.
90. Cizre and Walker, 'Conceiving the New Turkey after Ergenekon', 95.
91. See his policy analysis with the same title. Turan, 'Less Military May Not Mean More Democracy'.
92. Demirel, *2000'li Yillarda Asker ve Siyaset*, 7. On Islam as a central dividing issue in Turkish politics, see Grigoriadis, 'Islam and Democratization in Turkey', 1194–213.
93. For such a view, see Çağaptay, 'What's Really behind Turkey's Coup Arrests?'; and Çağaptay, 'Behind Turkey's Witch Hunt'. Çağaptay agrees with the view held by some factions of Turkish society that the AKP is supported by an Islamic order led

by Fettullah Gülen. According to this point of view the Gülen movement controls the police and important elements of the judiciary and bureaucracy. Together with the AKP, these groups are behind the allegations of coup plots in order to intimidate the secular military and the opposition.

94. Toktaş and Kurt, 'The Turkish Military's Autonomy', 397–8.

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