

Turkey:

The Road to Sharia?

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The following is a FrontPageMagazine.com symposium moderated by Jamie Glazov and featuring remarks by Washington Institute senior fellow Soner Cagaptay.

As Turkey drifts toward Islamization, some serious questions arise: Is Turkey even our ally? Is Turkish accession to the EU in America's interests? Does the Justice and Development Party (AKP), which leads Turkey's government, threaten Turkish secularism? What policy should the Bush administration pursue toward Turkey? To discuss these and other issues with us today, Frontpage Symposium has assembled a distinguished panel of experts. Our guests today:

Soner Cagaptay, a senior fellow and director of The Washington Institute's Turkish Research Program. He has written extensively on U.S.-Turkish relations, Turkish domestic politics, and Turkish nationalism, publishing in scholarly journals such as Middle East Quarterly, Middle Eastern Studies, and Nations and Nationalism;

Dr. Hans-Peter Raddatz, a scholar of Islamic Studies and author of four books, the recent being "Die Türkische Gefahr?" (The Turkish Danger?);

Michael Rubin, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and editor of the Middle East Quarterly. He was previously an Iran and Iraq staff advisor in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. His latest book, Eternal Iran: Chaos and Continuity (co-authored with Patrick Clawson) will be published in June 2005 by Palgrave;

and

Daniel Pipes, (www.DanielPipes.org (<http://www.danielpipes.org/>)) the director of the Middle East Forum and author of Miniatures (Transaction Publishers).

FrontPage: Soner Cagaptay, Dr. Hans-Peter Raddatz, Michael Rubin and Daniel Pipes, thank you for joining Frontpage Symposium. It is a pleasure to have you here. Mr. Cagaptay, let's start with you. Let's begin with a few general questions first. What do you think are the main issues facing Turkey today? Where is Turkey headed? Where do you think Turkey should be headed?

Cagaptay: The major issue facing Turkey this year is successfully starting accession talks with the European Union (EU) in October. Last December, the EU established that pursuant to its recent political reforms, Turkey meets the EU's accession rules sufficiently to begin accession talks with the Union. Yet, hurdles, such as the unresolved Cyprus

issue, which is a problem the EU has exacerbated, have raised doubts whether talks will be in October.

Even if the talks begin on time, that does not mean Turkey is on the way to the EU. Negotiations will take at least a decade to complete; hence nobody is talking about Turkey's immediate EU accession. Yet, the talks are important to maintain Turkey's European/Western orientation. Besides, Turkey will benefit from the accession talks. Whether by bringing in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) or increasing political instability, accession talks help candidate countries. All countries that have entered accession talks with the EU, I have in mind Spain in the 1980s and Poland in the 1990s for instance, have emerged from the talks with more prosperity and stability and this will happen also in the Turkish case.

Having said this, one should not assume that the EU is the only game in town. Turkey needs to patch up its relationship with the U.S. (The EU may be an economic power, but the U.S. is a global power with unprecedented might). Besides, there is the issue of what Turkey's Justice and Development Party (AKP) government is planning to do with the country's Middle Eastern neighbors, Iran and Syria. At a time when Ankara is improving its relations with these two countries, especially Syria, these two countries, especially Syria, are coming under increased international isolation and pressure. Will the AKP successfully balance these two developments?

FP: Dr. Raddatz? Raddatz: I may elaborate a little on Mr. Cagaptay's major points, namely the accession talks and Turkey's relations aside from EU. Needless to say that both are connected and in themselves multilaterally structured. It is true, of course, that the US is the world power as such and good relations with it are most important in the long run. On the other hand, however, the Turkish government will not be able to negotiate on reforms successfully without at least a basic understanding with domestic Islamic voters as well as with international Islamic partners, mainly in Saudi-Arabia. It is continually neglected that AKP's first loyalty lies with its orthodox Islam version, its good relations to the Muslim Brotherhood and an extremely important project connected to both: an independent Turkish-Islamic settlement in Germany and at least 10 million Turks ready for emigration during the next decade. Aside from the so-called reforms which have not been too convincing yet, and Turkey's still difficult economic-financial situation, the upcoming accession talks have to be led very carefully. The EU public in general and the German one in particular have become quite sensitive as far as the credibility of Turkish officials is concerned. As for your aspect of Turkish secularism being jeopardized, one may wonder indeed in how far this country has been secularized at all. The doubts are twofold: Turks are ethnic nationals in the first place. There may be negotiable room in Islamic questions but there is none as far as Turkey's dominant ethnical position is concerned. The connection between state and religion has always been very close, even through the Kemalist period. Only recently Mr. Erdogan - an Islamist - stressed that he would "pursue the Kurds into Argentina", should they continue dreaming of their own state. Moreover, it is a Turkish specialty to keep governmental affairs inside a traditional oligarchy of political parties, big corporations, real-estate tycoons, powerful bureaucrats and leading representatives of Islam. So far, the leadership of egalitarian interests has merely shifted from Kemalists to Islamists without jeopardizing the oligarchic understanding. For the time being, secularism and democratic institutions in the Western meaning will certainly stay very weak. Only since recently the EU officials have started to grasp the situation beyond their usual "win-win"-horizon, let alone the current German government which is running a distinct pro-Islamic if not outright Islamist policy.

Rubin: Turkey is a friend. The question is how deep the friendship is. Is Turkey a friend like Canada, Britain, and Israel are friends? Or is Turkey a friend like Egypt and Tunisia are friends? No doubt our relationship has taken a hit. While both sides can point to specific grievances, I'm not sure I believe anymore that the AKP really wants the special relationship to continue. If unintentional, Foreign Minister Gul's criticism of the Bush administration in the weeks before the U.S. Presidential election was a sign of professional incompetence. If intentional, then Gul was interfering in our elections in a manner that Turkey would never tolerate itself. It seems that the AKP sometimes

sees relations as a zero-sum game: Want to improve relations with the EU? Kick the US. Have rapprochement with Syria? Undermine the Lebanese democracy movement. Develop business ties to Malaysia and Saudi Arabia? Downgrade the partnership with Israel.

No one in the U.S. government has ever doubted Turkey's independence and its democracy. But policy is best based on principles rather than shaped by a desire to react against other states' policies. We know that Turkey stands for democracy and secularism at home, but it is unclear what Turkish foreign policy stands for. What troubles me most, is that so many recent Turkish actions undercut Turkey's own war against terrorism and separatism.

Pipes: Turkey has been a friend; but I have grave doubts about its future status. Let me explain. I see Turkey as a uniquely pliable country. What Atatürk accomplished, changing so much of the country in fifteen brief years, 1923-38, is a unique development (with the partial exception of the Meiji restoration leaders a half-century earlier). He wrenched the country from one way of life and pushed it toward another, with considerable effect. I see Recep Tayyip Erdogan as the anti-Atatürk. He is young enough, clever enough, and popular enough to stay in power as long or longer than Atatürk and step-by-step, almost imperceptively, to undo the entire Atatürk revolution. We have already seen the fruits of this in his two and a half-years in power: the refusal to help the American-led coalition eliminate the noxious Saddam Hussein regime, *Mein Kampf* becoming a bestseller, and the Turkish public having among the most anti-Bush attitudes of any population in the world. I do not know where this transformation will end, but if things go as they have the past few years, I expect Turkey before long to be more in the "foe" category, along with Saudi Arabia, than the "friend" one.

FP: Mr. Cagaptay, feel free to respond to what you feel needs a rejoinder in terms of what the rest of the panel has said. But kindly include your view on the developments Dr. Pipes has referred to.

Cagaptay: First, let me take on some of Dr. Raddatz's points: having doubts on Turkey's secularism seems an uniformed way of looking at Turkish politics. Turkish secularism is modeled after French laïcité --the founders of the Turkish republic found much inspiration in the modern French state-- offering citizens freedom from religion. Second, state-religion relations in Turkey are rooted in the Ottoman tradition which basically foresaw subjecting religion to state authority. The end product is Turkish secularism which Dr. Raddatz doubts. You may argue that this is not secular in the way Germany is, but then when you look around Europe, you see that there are almost as many models of secularism as there are states. For instance, the Queen of England is the head of the Church of England, the Dutch government funds religious education, the Nordic Countries have official state religions, and in Germany, citizens pay a "church tax." None of that is the case in Turkey and yet we are not suggesting that Germany or these other countries are not secular. The ultimate question is, does Turkey separate religion and government? Yes, it does. How Turkey does this is a product of its unique history just as British secularism is a product of British history.

Second, the fear of massive migration of Anatolian peasants to Germany. Totally, unfounded. Why? Capital moves faster than labor. There were similar fears before Spain joined the EU that millions of poor Andalusian peasants would flood France and Germany. Well this did not happen. Before, poor Spanish peasants could pack up, and move to Germany and rest of Europe, European capital flooded Spain, creating jobs and opportunities and tying the Spanish peasants to their country. This will happen also in the case of (likely) Turkish accession to the EU.

In response to Mr. Pipes' doubts about Turkey's system coming undone in an anti-Ataturk spree, I believe secularism is strong enough in Turkey that it cannot be undone. After all Turkey has eighty years of that (and more than 50 years of multi-party democracy). However, something else seems to be under strain is the country: Turkey's ability to have good, healthy relations with the Western world. This is one of the three characteristics that, together with secularism and democracy, distinguishes Turkey from all other Muslim countries. The ripple effects of the Iraq War, which has angered literally every Turk, secular Turks who are the majority constituency in the country, are as upset with the US as are Islamists, has caused a deterioration in US-Turkish relations. The concomitant rise of the AKP has

widened the spectrum of acceptable political discourse. When you add the two factors together, you get pent up resentment against US in the Middle East, which are not tampered at all. This is where Turkey's very fragmented, secular elite needs to assert itself and take ownership of the relationship with the US.

Raddatz: Our discussion so far has shown that there are widely differing concepts of what secularism basically means. Mr. Cagaptay seems of the opinion that secularism comes into existence by an administrative act. The mere fact that Turkey has separated state and religion officially, has not really changed the attitude towards religiously motivated customs. The recent extremely violent police action against a demonstration of women in Istanbul did not look very secular. Mr. Pipes has made a similar point. As long as we have to register a Turkish government led by orthodox Islam rules we may doubt a dominant democratic motive. Unfortunately, Mr. Cagaptay did not take up my indication towards the old antagonism between nationalists and Islamists which has hampered constructive policies since the last army intervention back in 1980. The ongoing nation-wide discussion of the so-called "Turkish-Islamic-Synthesis" shows how seriously the Turks themselves take their division between old traditions and the necessities of a new democratic order. Also Mr. Rubin takes the matter too lightly if he thinks that the Turkish democracy is already a complete affair. If he knew about the pressure on liberal journalists as well as the everyday circumstances in Anatolia with arbitrary police action still going on he would think differently. When we concur on secularism as a common agreement on religion being excluded from political decision making in its practical sense, Turkey has certainly started to move away from it since the Islamist takeover in 2002. This has had some impact on Germany as well. Contrary to France and England we have a different approach here towards religion in general and the Middle East in particular. It is not a short-term zeitgeist indication when the green-left government supports Mr. Erdogan where it can. There is a serious congruence among the two in anti-US and anti-Israel attitudes. I said it before and I repeat it again: the German government is running a distinct pro-Islamic policy which on the European scale is starting to stand out as some sort of ideological and unprofessional encumbrance. In other words: as far as secularism is concerned Germany is becoming a political problem herself. Meanwhile our politicians lack the necessary objectivity and distance they need to judge what we are talking about here. For them Turkey is simply a friend regardless of what happens. The lack of competence has very important consequences for the migration situation as such. Mr. Cagaptay is right about capital flowing faster than people which is the major reason why our migration management will come under growing scrutiny. In the global era we certainly cannot afford financing the domestic Turkish demographic surplus migrating into Europe and Germany. You would not blame an entrepreneur for "fears" when he closes a deficitary business segment. Globalization means competition for markets and competition means innovative people. So far Germany has been the only immigration country in the world who preferred illiterate to educated people. Needless to say that meanwhile one third of them live on welfare. The palliative language of "cultural enrichment" and other slogans does not really convince any longer. The more serious result of this kind of selection is the very unsecular accumulation of Islamist led ghettos in the big cities where German law has stopped being applied. You can observe demonstrations of Islamist organizations in Berlin and elsewhere burning the US flag and calling Jews "animals" and worse while at least one member of the German parliament is marching with them. Meanwhile in the official language the approx. 100 Muslim women murdered annually are called cases of "honour murders" which may show a somewhat unsecular sympathy with Muslim motivations. By the same time Erdogan and his Foreign Minister are pushing their radical mosque organization Milli Görüş (National Vision) with big money indeed. Wherever necessary they combine it with their "secular" religion ministry (diyanet) in order to smooth the local German environment. Mind you, I do not blame the Turks for taking advantage of this very favourable situation, I want to direct your kind attention to the very fact that German policies have a severe problem with democratic rules of checks and balances. The majority interest is simply not on their agenda. When some prosecutors are currently looking into our Foreign Minister's visa affair of uncontrolled immigration of at least 4 million people as well as his possible involvement in perjury cases attached you might stop talking about "fears". Rubin: It would be a mistake to suggest that, because Turkey separates religion and

government, that there is not a threat to Turkish secularism. The very fact that we need to debate the AKP's intentions suggests there is. The two basic questions are whether the AKP really respects traditional Turkish values and whether Turkish secularism is strong enough to withstand the AKP agenda. The answers to these questions will determine to what degree Turkey will remain a friend to the West's democracies. The AKP's commitment to secularism is unclear. In May 2004, Erdogan pushed an education bill which aimed to ease entry of religious school graduates into Turkey's university system, basically allowing them to bypass secular state schools. While Erdogan eventually withdrew the bill, its impact would have been enormous. If religious school graduates can enter regular universities, then they can win government jobs and yet never have had a secular, technocratic education. There are other troubling signs. There is nothing wrong with wearing head covering as an expression of religious identity, but not all head coverings are the same. That Erdogan's wife and daughter wear a style much closer to that promoted by Saudi Arabia rather than that traditionally worn in Turkish conservative circles is worrying. So too is Erdogan's choice of advisors. The U.S. Department of Treasury has frozen the assets of Yasin al-Qadi because of links to al-Qaeda. The Turkish newspaper Hürriyet has reported that Erdogan's closest advisor Cüneyd Zapsu was a business partner of al-Qadi. Erdogan's continued reliance on Zapsu at a minimum suggests a lack of judgement, and at worse suggests his values are not always consistent with Atatürk's legacy. The embrace of conspiracy theories by Abdullah Gül indicates a basic irresponsibility that is unbecoming not only on the world stage, but which also should be in Turkey itself. At present, Turkey's democracy is strong enough to withstand threats. But, it's important not to be complacent. The Turkish electorate wants many reforms. And the AKP is ushering in many in the name of EU accession. But, Erdogan's delay in appointing a chief negotiator (besides himself) suggests an insincerity of purpose. There exists a real danger that the reforms will dismantle the system of checks and balances which have always preserved the core values of the Turkish state, without replacing them with new checks and balances to protect democracy against all threats, whether the importation of a foreign ideology, an influx of agenda-based foreign capital, or a single party's desire to consolidate its control. Pipes: I am pleased to learn that so astute an observer of Turkey as Soner Cagaptay believes "secularism is strong enough in Turkey that it cannot be undone." I see secularism, however, as a work in progress, the cherished ideal of a rather small elite, and as Turkey becomes more democratic and less guided by that elite, an ideal that lies in distinct peril.

The current burst of antagonism to the United States is of less concern to me, as that could well be transient, the symptom of momentary factors. But I no longer have the sense I first had in 1973, when I lived in Istanbul, that Turkey is a country apart from the rest of the Middle East and Muslim world. It appears to be rapidly turning in that direction, becoming increasingly like its neighbors to the east.

As for democracy, I expect the Islamists who run the AKP will ride the democratic process until the day arrives that they no longer find it serves their purpose, at which point they will circumscribe political participation or even terminate it. The people running Turkey today are not true democrats, who accept the vox populi, but soft totalitarians who learned their lesson from the failed Erbakan prime ministry of 1996-97 and intend not to repeat it. I have full confidence that they will not. FP: Ok, so Mr. Cagaptay, let's crystallize this discussion and everyone put their cards on the table:

1. Yes or no, is it possible that when the Islamists running the AKP feel they are strong enough -- and the circumstances are convenient enough -- they might very well institute an Islamic state? Is it possible to deny that this scenario is realistic? Surely this should be a matter of great concern?
2. What specific policies can the U.S. best pursue vis-à-vis Turkey to try to slow its drift toward Islamism?
3. Is Turkey joining the EU in America's interest? If EU membership means more prosperity and stability for Turkey does this automatically mean that Islamism will be weakened? Or could it work against the U.S.?

Cagaptay: First let me briefly touch on some points raised by the other participants. I think, in referring to Islamist

ghettos, Mr. Raddatz has in mind Arab ghettos in places such as Hamburg, where the attacks of September 11 were planned. This is a point that escapes even the most acute observer: a majority of Turks in Europe, just like most Turks in Turkey, are not Islamists. How else could we explain the rise of Islamism and anti-Semitic attacks in France, whose Muslim community is overwhelmingly North African, and the absence of such phenomena in Germany, whose Muslim community is mostly Turkish. Despite Germany's blood-based citizenship law -- dating back to WWII, this law taken off the books only a few years ago, has granted citizenship only to people with "German people", and has excluded Turks, even second and third generation German-speakers, hindering their integration into the German society -- the Turks in Germany have done a phenomenal job in integrating into the German society. Why, because of all the Muslims on the continent, the Turks are the most European in cultural and political terms. Germany is lucky it got the Turks in the 1960s.

Now, let me take the questions.

1. Yes or no, is it possible that when the Islamists running the AKP feel they are strong enough -- and the circumstances are convenient enough -- they might very well institute an Islamic state? Is it possible to deny that this scenario is realistic? Surely this should be a matter of great concern?

No. To continue with my point above, as conservative as they may be, a majority of the Turks are not Islamist. Opinion polls since the 1990s show that over 85 to 90 percent of the Turks regularly object to Islamic Sharia law in the country. Hence, Turkey is secular not only in its administrative practices, but also in its popular *Weltanschauung*. Sanctioned by the constitution and the bulk of the people, Turkey's secularism will be in situ even when there is an Islamist government in place.

2. What specific policies can the U.S. best pursue vis-à-vis Turkey to try to slow its drift toward Islamism?

Since I suggest that Islamism is only one aspect of Turkish politics, and certainly not the dominant one, let me rephrase this question, what specific policies can the U.S. best pursue vis-à-vis Turkey to try to slow its drift toward anti-Americanism? The rise of anti-Americanism is bothersome to me, just as it is to Mr. Pipes. Here is how I think the U.S. can address this issue:

The largest constituency in Turkish politics is the nationalists constituency. The U.S. seems to have lost this group as a result of the Iraq War. In this regard, the Kurdish issue is the major factor, and it is here that the US needs to make inroads if it wants to repair relations with Turkey. The quickest way of doing so is by addressing the issue that most excites the nationalist majority in Turkey, namely the PKK, a group on the State Department's List of Foreign Terrorist Organizations. The PKK currently has 5,000 terrorists in northern Iraq. If the US showed commitment against the PKK, a Turkish majority would quickly be swayed back in favor of America. That would entail taking action against the PKK in northern Iraq. The PKK is very hierarchical, and if the US acts against its leaders, it will be paralyzed as it was after Turkey captured erstwhile leader Abdullah Ocalan in 1998.

But such action carries a political risk for the US, dependant as it is on the Kurds of Iraq. While it is the most effective way of swaying Turkish public opinion, it demands a relatively stable Iraq, which appears to be still some way down the line. In the meantime, the US, however, has another, politically risk-free option. The fate of Turkish Cyprus is very important to Turkey, as it appears to hold the key to membership of the EU. Turkish Cypriots showed a spirit of compromise during the April 2004 UN vote on the future of the island that Turks feel has gone unrewarded. In this referendum, which offered both sides the minimum of their political demands, Turkish Cypriots voted to accept the plan, while Greek Cypriots rejected it. If the US stepped in, by offering trade links, cultural contacts, and tourism, and acted to ease the economic and humanitarian sanctions Northern Cyprus has endured, it would play well in mainland Turkey and go some way to improve the image of American policy in the eyes of Turks.

.3. Is Turkey joining the EU in America's interest? If EU membership means more prosperity and stability for Turkey

does this automatically mean that Islamism will be weakened? Or could it work against the U.S.?

We may have a lot of different opinions on Turkey's EU accession. Turkey's joining the EU is in its interests first. However, since EU accession will anchor Turkey in this Western club, it is also in Washington's and Brussels's interest. The bottom line is whatever our views on transatlantic politics, better Ankara closer to Paris than to Tehran. Why the need to choose Paris? All this time, we have been worrying about whether AKP's rise to power is damaging the two qualities that make Turkey unique, i.e. the country's democracy and secular regime. Really not so much to worry there. Yet, there is something we have been ignoring: the third issue that makes Turkey unique, its ability to conduct normal, healthy relations with the Western world. This is where I think AKP has moved some stones whether Turkey's deteriorating relations with the U.S., or rapprochement with Syria or Iran, or the fact that if Ankara's EU accession is derailed, we will see a massive anti-EU backlash in Turkey -- remember the Turks are fiery nationalists first. That is why the U.S. needs to win Turkey back and that is why EU accession ought not be derailed.

Raddatz: Our forum seems to lack little from respective argument acknowledgement. Otherwise Mr. Cagaptay's views of Turkish integration into the German society would not veer as widely from reality as it does. Clearly we are faced here with a typical elite type of wishful thinking which does not take into account neither German state security warnings nor democratic Turkish interests over here. The latter are under severe AKP-led Islamist pressure and left alone by our own government. Also the Arab element is represented by the Muslim Brotherhood which maintains traditionally good relations to AKP. We are talking about a very simple and very old question: how successful will the interested parties be in pushing the pro-Islamist propaganda down peoples' throats? Another old tool in this respect is playing down the influence of the party one wants to promote. If it is the Turkish version of Islamism, Mr. Rubin's remarks on its governmental behaviour should be taken quite seriously. Mr. Pipes brought it to the nitty gritty again: the current Turkish policy is bluntly exploiting the EU expansion process on an oligarchic, non-democratic basis. As for the US angle I may add that AKP is capitalizing skilfully on the German-French-Spanish "axis" trying to develop some sort of "independent" Middle East policy. The additional question here is how long the "axis" ideologists will be able to counteract against the US pragmatists, thereby currently producing a growing pro-US opposition in Europe anyhow. The difference between the two is obvious: the "axis" needs some marketing concept to import Turkey while the US can live with both options - accession or non-accession. By the way, the new opposition does not stop at the mere question Turkey yes or no - it goes beyond that and attacks the oligarchic financial interests inside EU which are one of the very reasons for the strong pro-Islamist standpoint. Thanks to Mr Cagaptay's frankness, we learn what could even top that: a clear position against the Kurds which has always united Turkey, Islamists and Nationalists alike, be it PKK or non-organized, non-armed Kurds. Rubin: Mr. Cagaptay is correct that perhaps 85-90 percent of Turks object to Islamic law, but what people object to is meaningless if checks-and-balances erode. This is more dangerous given the lack of viable opposition in Turkey. Because parties must achieve a ten percent threshold to win seats in parliament, those that do can win disproportionate power. In 2002, for example, the AKP won slightly over one-third of the vote, but took two-thirds of the seats in parliament. Most voters cast their lot with the AKP as a reaction against the corruption of the establishment. Perhaps only ten percent of the Turkish population agrees with the ideology of the AKP. But, under guise of pleasing its constituency, the AKP may pursue policies that impinge on the values that most Turks hold dear. The inability or unwillingness of the AKP to explain the sudden influx of undocumented money during its first year in office should also raise questions, not only of legality, but also of foreign influence on Turkish politics. The AKP has been masterful at channeling Turkish nationalism. Whenever AKP diplomacy goes awry, anonymous party officials blame outsiders. One example of AKP officials fanning nationalist flames for rather cynical reasons was Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul's decision to tell Seymour Hersh that Israeli intelligence and Kurdish peshmerga were collaborating in northern Iraq. Bluntly, Gul lied. Iranians, Turks, and Syrian intelligence are active in Iraqi Kurdistan. But Gul created a story to whip up nationalist support for his own policy, in this case a desire to downgrade

the Turkish-Israeli relationship. Mr. Cagaptay is correct that Washington should do more about the PKK. How can we expect others to cooperate in the War against Terrorism, if we ignore terrorists that target them? It is embarrassing not only that the PKK retains camps in Iraq on our security watch but that, according to Iraqi Kurds, the Central Intelligence Agency now has contact with the group. Likewise, it is unfortunate that we allow a PKK front group to maintain offices in Washington. The AKP has set Turkey up for a train wreck. The special relationship between Washington and Ankara is a thing of the past. As Mr. Raddatz pointed out, there will be a strong nationalist backlash in Turkey when the EU talks derail. European racism made Turkish accession a long shot, but the AKP has also mismanaged its end, whether because of incompetence or by design, I don't know. If European referendums turn Turkish membership down, the AKP will find it impossible to complain, having made "respect for the democratic will" a mantra after the March 1 vote. If Turkey disparages all of its friends, it will be left alone. Perhaps Erdogan and Gul will continue to reach out to Russia and the Arab world, but they are deluding themselves if they believe that either Moscow or Damascus and Riyadh respect Turkey. For Washington, Turkey will always be a friend but, I'm afraid, an increasingly distant one. FP: Dr. Pipes, go ahead. In your rejoinder to the other panelists' comments, kindly include what you would say to President Bush if he asked you for advice on what policy his administration should pursue toward Turkey. Pipes: In reply to your questions:

1. I do expect that when the Islamists AKP feel strong enough and the circumstances are right, they will go attempt to reverse the Atatürkist state and impose the Shari'a in its full scope. This prospect should be a matter of huge concern.

2. U.S. options are not terribly attractive. One step is vocally to appreciate the military's role in staunching radical Islam. A second one is to urge a change in the minimum needed for a party to win parliamentary representation, thus cutting into the AKP's huge majority.

3. I used to be in favor of Turkey joining the EU but changed my mind in 2003. I now see this as bad for Turkey (being more influenced by Europe) and bad for Europe (its historic identity being further eroded). Will prosperity and stability weaken Islamism? No; there is no indication that these developments diminish the attraction of radical Islam – just look at its success in the United States, a prosperous and stable country. My advice to Mr. Bush is to stop pushing the EU to accept Turkey as a member; and I would also cool relations with the Islamist rulers of Turkey.

FP: Mr. Cagaptay, let's start the final round. Feel free to make your final remarks. Cagaptay: In closing, I see three issues to address. First, I am puzzled that Mr. Raddatz suggests Turkey is united against non-armed Kurds. Turkey is united against the PKK, a terror group that targets civilians, killing children, people at malls, nurses in government clinics and teachers in schools. The country has no problems with Kurds. Otherwise, how else could you explain the fact that Turkey has had two Kurdish presidents and many Kurdish Prime Ministers in its modern history? Or that, well over 30 percent of the deputies in the Turkish parliament are of Kurdish origin -- even by liberal estimates, Kurds are only about 15-20 percent of the Turkish population-- and that among the many generals and soldiers who fought the PKK in the Turkish army, there were more than a few Kurds.

Second, Mr. Raddatz is right that Turks are not 100 % integrated into the German society. But, in relative terms, they are better integrated than let's say the North Africans are into French society. For instance, the Turks, who are less than 5 percent of the German population have 2 seats in the German parliament, while the North Africans, who are over 10 percent of the French population, have no representatives in the French parliament. There is a burgeoning Turkish middle class in Germany and more than a few Turkish writers, film makers have been successful in producing works appealing to the mainstream German society. The point is that despite discriminatory --blood-based-- legislation that was in effect until recently, the Turks are moving into the German society faster and in bigger numbers than Muslims in other European countries. The reason: they are European-leaning Muslims.

Third, should the U.S. stop supporting Turkey's accession? Mr. Raddatz suggests the AKP government is playing to a

Franco-German-Spanish axis in the EU. while Mr. Pipes says Washington should stop pushing Turkey's EU accession since Ankara's foreign policy is being influenced by the EU. These arguments are based on the assumption that there is something such as one single EU foreign policy. That is not the case, and wishful thinking aside, it will not be the case for a while. As we saw in the run up to the Iraq War, when Britain, Italy and Eastern European nations supported the war going against France, Germany, Belgium, Austria, and Luxembourg, and Greece, the EU is far from being unified on foreign policy issues. Turkey destined for the EU will have room to manoeuvre between different opinions the option to not take cues from any capital. Under a more pro-U.S. government, for instance, Ankara would easily side with Britain, and increase U.S. leverage in the EU. Now, that is in Washington's interests.

Staying focused on the EU is also in Turkey's interests. Given the current foreign policy environment in Turkey, which we have discussed, the alternative is Turkey alienated from both the EU and the US, i.e. the entire Western world. Our interests dictate making sure that the ship called Turkey sails westwards, regardless of who its captain is.

Turkey's EU membership is not only in Washington's and Ankara's interests, but also in the EU's interest. First, there is the demographics issue. Currently, the EU is a moribund club with a severely shrinking and greying population. At today's rates and according to conservative estimates, by the middle of the century, the EU population will have shrunk by more than 20 million people. (Not even the accession of new countries will resolve this problem. The way some countries are losing people, by the middle of the next century, for instance, there might as well be fewer Bulgarians than there is Monegasque). Resolving this demographic problem is important if the EU wants to maintain the cherished European welfare state. You cannot sustain this institution if you have more people on the welfare system than there are people paying towards the system. And that does not look likely given the current demographic dilemma. With its young population, Turkey would be a boost to the EU. What is more, there is the grand geo-strategic picture: without Turkey, the EU is at best a regional club, with Turkey, Ankara giving Brussels access to the Middle East, Central Asia, and Caucasus, as well as the energy fields in these areas, the EU is a candidate for a global player. Raddatz: Like it or not, Turkey is quite united against Kurds whenever their question comes up seriously. If you take the time and go into Kurdish villages - if allowed at all - you may see for yourselves and hear from the people what the result of Turkish "minority policy" is. I agree, however, that the US policy merely continuing the old play between radical and moderate parties follows old straits which will not suffice anymore in the future. Interestingly, though, the Turkish government is railing against the "two-tongued" American language in the Kurd case while it stays mute about the Saudi-Arabian one which is, by the way, one source of the money Mr Rubin was wondering about. The signs of integration that our domestic prayer-wheels are praising incessantly are very superficial indeed and mainly restricted to the fields of press, TV and film which can be and effectively are designed to quite an extent. Integration Turkish style in Germany means integration into a Turkish community, separating itself from the German society and establishing its own legal system under Islamic law and AKP control. There is an almost tragic absurdity about this. By pushing its distinct pro-Islamic policy further on, the Euro-"axis" - mainly Germany, France, Spain - thinks to set a counter-weight against the US-type of Islam pragmatism, thereby only weakening itself in the long run. For those who believe that French Muslims are less integrated than others one may mention the French experience with Jacobinian thinking which utilizes democratic institutions for installing a radical movement. Little by little the moderate forces (i.e. the majorities in Europe) start realizing that it is not always "in their interest" to follow elite interests and that the Islamic question could grow into an overall European question. Mr. Cagaptay spoke it out: Why should Turkey really care about Europe, an area whose people are shrinking away anyhow? I may add: Why should the Turks pay for non-Muslim pensions and welfare while even inside EU the respective solidarity does not exist? As I pointed out in my recent book, due to a well-established pro-Islamic ideology in Europe and by its sheer demographic weight, Turkey does not really need the EU accession to gain an important position in Euro policies. What it badly needs, though, are better educated people who play things

more convincingly towards the European public. In this respect also Mr. Cagaptay could serve his country much better if he used less one-sided arguments which are a little frayed over here already. Insofar I have to tend, unfortunately, towards Mr. Pipes' view. As long as AKP is in power and keeps on fighting freedom of religion and gender equality, Turkey's direction will be much more towards Sharia than democracy. Likewise Europe will not be able to solve its migration and Islam influx problems without a basic and long-term strategy including the United States. Rubin: The special relationship with Turkey is over. Turkey will still be a friend, but not a partner. Can Turkey be counted on in the war against terror? No. Turkey is rightly concerned about the PKK, but it has become remarkably soft on terrorism both by Palestinian rejectionists and Iraqi insurgents. It makes the same excuses about Hamas and Hizbullah that European states once did about the PKK. Is Turkey a force for democracy in the region? No. Why else would the Turkish government side with Syria against the Lebanese people? Parliamentary Speaker Bulent Arinc's statement that the National Assembly (in which the AKP holds an absolute majority) has the power to abolish the Constitutional Court undercuts the idea that the AKP really values democracy. Erdogan's intolerance for criticism from even the most mild editorial cartoon increasingly puts him in the same camp as Bashar al-Asad and Hosni Mubarak. For the first time, because of conspiracy theories spread by newspapers like Yeni Safak and pro-AKP columnists, the average Turk is more anti-American than the average Greek. Turkey is a democracy and it can chart its own path. Whether Turkey deserves EU membership and the degree to which America should support it is increasingly moot. France will not shed their fundamental racism. The AKP may have sought to curry Chirac's support by buying Airbuses, but the French government has slapped Turkey down. European officials will try to humiliate Turkey. Ankara is becoming more isolated than it has ever been before. I wonder whether this was the AKP's intention all along. Erdogan and Gul are smarter than they are honest. If the AKP can break the alliance with Washington, Brussels, and eventually Moscow, then AKP strategists may figure that Turks will have no choice but to embrace Damascus, Riyadh, and Tehran. It is a shame that the Turkish-American relationship has fallen so far. I fear we are past the point of recovery. Pipes: I second Michael Rubin's conclusions and add two observations. First, while radical Islam in many ways parallels fascism and communism (the brutal drive to power, the totalitarian goals, the intent to defeat the West), it differs in one key way – radical Islam rides a wave of international popular support the other movements never had. This creates a dilemma for the Bush administration, whose urgent push for democracy turns out to enable Islamists to reach power. Worse yet, Washington is beginning to whitewash the Islamists, and even the terrorist organizations among them. The government of Recep Tayyip Erdogan presents the most advanced and difficult form of this dilemma, however. Though many wish to avert their eyes from his Islamist background, foreground, and future, that ideology defines his prime ministry. Is the U.S. government going to sit by, applauding, as he creates the Islamic Republic of Turkey?

Second, there was a time several centuries ago when the Ottoman padishah, living in Istanbul, wrote Persian poetry; and the Safavid shah of Iran, living in Isfahan, wrote Turkish poetry. I am reminded of that juxtaposition now, when the population of Atatürk's secular Turkey is ever-more seduced by the sirens of radical Islam such as rules in Iran; while the Iranian population of Khomeini's Islamic republic ardently wants to shed its Islamist regime and live more secular lives such as is possible in Turkey. The race is on. Unfortunately, Islamists at the moment rule both in Turkey and Iran. The U.S. role should be to change that dynamic, asking how to wean the Turks of their Islamist proclivities without going through the full Islamist experience.

FP: Soner Cagaptay, Dr. Hans-Peter Raddatz, Michael Rubin and Daniel Pipes, thank you for joining Frontpage Symposium. We hope to see you again soon. ❖

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