

The Turkish equivalent of *Megali Idea* was *pan-Turanism*, namely the idea of uniting all Turkic-speaking peoples under the same state. *Pan-Turanism* was one of the three political programs, the others being Ottomanism and Islamism, heatedly debated during the second Constitutionalist period (1908-1918). Among its supporters were Ziya Gökalp, the leading nationalist theorist of the Union and Progress (CUP) regime and Enver Paşa, the most powerful member of the ruling triumvirate. Indeed, Enver Paşa lost his life in 1926 in Central Asia, leading an insurrection against the Soviet regime. The founders of the Republic realistically and wisely refrained themselves from such irredentist claims. However, *pan-Turanist* ideas survived even during the single-party years among a small but influential group of intellectuals. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of the Turkic-speaking Central Asian states, many

Turks seemed to have entertained the hope of establishing some kind of commonwealth of Turkic-speaking states. It became clear in a few years, however, that in international relations *realpolitik* was a much more important factor than ethnic and linguistic affinities.

In conclusion, the volume is a valuable contribution, the product of a commendable collaboration among a team of Greek and Turkish scholars. It provides important insights into the fascinating but also problematic processes of nation-building in the two countries. As such, it surely contributes to the comparative studies on nationalism and nation-building. Another, no less important, virtue is that it helps to correct many overtly nationalistic and stereotyped accounts of a number of historiographers in both countries, and thus promotes a better understanding between the two neighbors.

Türkiye’de Militarist Devlet Söylemi (Militarist State Discourse in Turkey)

By Ali Balcı

Ankara: KadimYayinlari, 2011, 168 pages, ISBN 9789759000240.

Reviewed by İbrahim Efe

ALI BALCI’S *Militarist State Discourse in Turkey* is an adaption of the second chapter of his PhD thesis that surveyed the period between 1960 and 1983 in Turkey, which witnessed three military coups in row. Following Michel Foucault’s understanding of discourse, Balcı analyzes the militarist discourse between 1960 and 1983 that thoroughly dominated the state discourse. The main argument of the study is that the milita-



rist discourse dominated all spheres in Turkey, from the state apparatus to society and the economy, in this period of history. Although the book can be read as part of the growing critical literature on civil-military relations in today’s Turkey, it differs from other studies by situating the dominant militaristic discourse within a specific period.

The first part of the book accounts for the term “militarism” and elaborates on the global

context of militarism, namely the Cold War period. “Militarization” and “militarism” are used interchangeably to denote the intervention of the army in politics and the prevalent military-inspired practices in state institutions and society (pp. 20-1). Both terms are also replaced by a “militarist discourse” which refers, rather ambiguously though, to a comprehensive set of discursive practices embodying the military’s effect(s) on politics and society. Therefore, Balcı uses the term “militarist discursive period” (*militarist söylemsel dönem*) to refer to a specific time span in the political history of Turkey when militarism, militarization and militarist discourses were not challenged by any notable opposition. The book also challenges existing analyses of military takeovers in Turkey which view them either as inevitable results of an evolutionary process or historical characteristics of society, and instead argues that the militarist discourse of the period can only be understood by looking at concomitant conditions of the day and their fusion in Turkey and the world (pp. 11 and 33-41).

The rivalry between the US and Russia and its ramifications on global politics sets the historical ground for the emergence and spread of militarist discourse all over the world. The examples of military takeovers from Third World countries are evidence of how comprehensive the effects of this rivalry were in the Cold War era (pp. 19-32). Therefore, the militarist discourse prevailing in Turkey in the aforementioned period is contextualized in the global context of the Cold War. And the increased power of the military is not independent of global power relations of the time. The Truman Doctrine of 1947 and Turkey’s entry into NATO in 1952 are significant cases in point. Both were conducive to the proliferation and institutionalization of the Turkish army (p. 44). An extensive body of literature is also surveyed in this section to unfold this

relationship. For example, the book quotes some examples from other studies to reveal the direct involvement of US intelligence in the formation of paramilitary groups in Turkey against the so-called threat of communism as in other NATO countries (p. 45).

In the second and main part of the book, Balcı provides a thorough historical account of the “conditions of possibility” that led to the toppling of the Democratic Party (*Demokrat Parti*). This, indeed, is where the strength and weakness of the book lies. In this section, Balcı argues that the period under question has a conspicuously distinct character from other periods of the modern Republic of Turkey by suppressing all dissident voices to silence and militarizing all aspects of political and social life, yet at the same time the author concedes that the very conditions that led to this period are also inseparable from the previous conditions. In support of his argument, the author takes on board a considerable amount of literature and examples from various texts that are critically analyzed.

The foundation of the National Security Council (*Milli Güvenlik Kurulu*) and the OYAK Bank are analyzed in detail to emphasize the political and economic aspects of militarization. The legal adjustments that intensified the silence imposed by the army, for example banning any criticism of the Turkish Armed Forces, are exemplified duly. More significantly, what Balcı foregrounds consistently is the fact that the deferential attitude of the political parties of the time did not only contribute to the legitimacy of the presence of militarism but also exacerbated it by their hostile stance towards the Communist movements of the day. This argument is vital because it challenges the image of political parties as subordinate entities and puts them under scrutiny as active agents of this

silent period which Feroz Ahmad famously described as “democracy of political tutelage” (cited on p. 75). The silence that cuts across boundaries within the trajectory of political groups in Turkey, i.e. leftists, rightists and Islamists, amounts to an internalization of the army’s role as a protector of the country not only against foreign enemies but against the country “itself” (p. 56).

Balcı concludes that no matter how much the influence of the militarist discourse has di-

minished, it has remained and still remains to be a debilitating sub-category of state discourse in Turkey. Without a doubt, this book is very relevant in understanding today’s Turkish politics inasmuch as the remnants of this military discourse are deeply ingrained in all aspects of life in Turkey. And more importantly, the author’s invariable emphasis on “silence” subtly illuminates the suppression imposed through the militarist discourse; nevertheless, it needs to be developed further as an analytical category.

İncirlik Üssü: ABD’nin Üs Politikası ve Türkiye (İncirlik Military Base: Military Base Politics of the US and Turkey)

By Selin M. Bölme

İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012, 430 pages., ISBN 9789750509940.

Reviewed by Müjge Küçükkeleş

AMERICAN military bases, long identified with US interests, have always been a controversial subject among scholars. A significant increase in the number of military bases possessed by the United States around the world following World War Two is striking to observe. Many different arguments have been developed to try to understand the dynamics and motives behind the establishment of such a great number of these bases, the most commonly held one is that these military bases serve the strategic and geopolitical interests of the United States. But don’t they also help expand the US’s sphere of ideological influence?

Turkey, as a country that began to host US military bases when it joined NATO, hasn’t stayed outside discussions over military bas-



es. Their legal status and the functions of the bases have led to heated debates among the political elite of the country. Given the high levels of anti-American public sentiment in the country this is nothing but normal. However, despite how long the bases have been around and the high visibility of the issue in

the country, it is striking to see the absence of academic studies that delve into the role of American military bases in Turkey in an analytic and systematic manner. *İncirlik Military Base: Military Base Politics of the US and Turkey* by Dr. Selin Bölme sets to fill this gap in academic literature and paves the way for further research on the military aspects of Turkish-American relations.

With reference to the Incirlik military base, the book examines a wide array of issues