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Turkey condemns killing of Palestinian minister- TRT 11 December

Turkish Foreign Ministry issued a statement condemning the killing of Palestinian Minister Ziad Ebu Ayn by Israeli troops.

The written statement said "We are deeply saddened by the death of Ziad Ebu Ayn, Palestinian Minister in charge of the illegal settlements and the Separation Wall, who lost his life during the clashes which took place today between the Palestinians and the Israeli occupation forces at the West Bank. We wish God's mercy upon him and convey our condolences to his family and relatives. We wholeheartedly share the pain of the Palestinian people on this tragic day."

Foreign Ministry statement strongly condemned Israel due to the incident, which reportedly occurred as a result of the ill treatment of the Israeli soldiers and said Turkey expects the case to be investigated impartially and thoroughly and those responsible are brought to justice.

Turkish FM: Greece must grant Turkish minority's rights- Anadolu Agency 12 December

Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has urged Greece to "grant the Turkish-Muslim minority in Western Thrace their rights. This is Turkey's biggest request from Greece," Cavusoglu said, adding that the Turkish-Muslim community in Western Thrace constituted

in fact "a bridge of peace between the two countries, just like the Greek community in Turkey".

"Turkey respected the rights of the Greek Orthodox community in the country, but that this practice was unfortunately not reciprocated by Greece. Greece is doing just the opposite, both with the legislation it approves and in its practices. This is not fair."

Cavusoglu said that the two governments could differ on various policies, but the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights were non-negotiable, and had to be respected.

"However, Greece has not abided by the Court's decisions in years. When someone says 'I am Turkish,' you just can't tell them 'No, you are not.' This is against international law," he said.

Greek authorities prohibit the use of the word "Turkish," and minority groups have been closed down for making use of the term.

"All Turkey wants from Greece is to have a sincere dialogue to discuss all issues with a view to resolving them to the best of each other's interests. Do we want a solution or not? Do we want to live together or not?"

The Council of Europe warned Greece in June to comply with the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights in cases concerning the Turkish minority living in Western Thrace.

This was the second time the council's Committee of Ministers warned Greece, after a warning in December last year.

Italy and Turkey to work together for peace in Libya- TRT

12 December

Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu and his Italian counterpart Matteo Renzi agreed to work together to find a solution for the conflict in Libya.

Davutoğlu: "We will jointly work towards a comprehensive reconciliation process in Libya that will bring together all the parties in the country. Italy and Turkey will create working groups on illegal immigration and refugees from Libya."

Davutoglu noted that Italy is Turkey's fourth-largest trading partner, with a trade volume of about \$20 billion in 2013.

"To improve relations, we agreed to promote mutual investments, and jointly to develop projects in third countries," he said.

Further, Davutoglu proposed establishing a Turkish-Italian University.

"As two friends and allies, we both believe with our whole hearts that our cooperation will in the next years contribute to both nations as well as peace in the Mediterranean Sea, Europe, and the international arena."

Renzi: "I believe that the international community needs to support Turkey more," referring to Turkey's providing shelter for 1.6 million Syrian refugees.

Renzi has also expressed his support for Turkey's bid for EU membership. "We will continue to work so that the EU opens its doors more decisively to Turkey." He said that he would press for the opening of new chapters -- key agreements-- in the negotiation process. So far, 14 chapters have been opened for discussion, while 17

remain blocked and another four have yet to be discussed. Only one chapter has been

Renzi said that Italy should invest more in Turkey.

"We agreed to work together on a number of strategic projects, mainly in defense industry sector," he added.

The two leaders will move on to Istanbul on Friday to attend the Turkey-Italy Business Forum, and will address Turkish and Italian businesspeople.

Turkish FM dismisses international isolation claims- Anadolu Agency

13 December

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has dismissed claims Turkey is getting isolated internationally. In an interview with CNN Turk Friday, Cavusoglu said the impression that Turkey was isolated was only because of its principled stand on certain issues.

"I would prefer such principled solitude," the Foreign Minister said.

He specifically mentioned Egypt, where Turkey has criticized the ouster of former elected Egyptian president, Mohamed Morsi, and Abdel Fattah al-Sisi taking over in his place.

"There is no normalization of relations with the coup regime of Sisi, however, commercial relations and low level diplomatic contact can take place," he said.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said on numerous occasions that Morsi's removal was an "unacceptable coup."

Turkey: Police detain Zaman chief editor in crackdown- Anadolu Agency

14 December

Police detained the editor-in-chief of Turkey's Zaman daily Sunday, bringing the total number of people in custody to 24 in an ongoing crackdown on local media figures and police officials in 13 provinces across Turkey.

All the people detained have been alleged to be linked with the U.S.-based cleric Fethullah Gulen and his so called Gulen movement.

Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor Hadi Salihoglu said it ordered the detention of 31 people on charges of forgery, fabricating evidence and forming an alleged crime syndicate to overtake the sovereignty of the state. Earlier, it was reported that the prosecutor's office had given the order for 32 detentions, but Salihoglu revised down the figure to 31.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has vowed to take to task the alleged Gulen movement group members on numerous occasions. The government has described the movement and its supporters as the "parallel state" since late 2013.

Referring to the alleged parallel structure, Erdogan told Turkish businessmen in Istanbul on Dec. 6 that there would be "no mercy" for any type of treason.

Also, on Dec. 1, an Ankara court approved an indictment prepared by a public prosecutor as part of an investigation into the alleged wiretapping of Erdogan's office when he was Turkey's prime minister.

Erdogan revealed in late 2012 that a bug had been found in his office and charges

of political spying were brought against 13 suspects, including senior police officers.

Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Yalcin Akdogan on Nov. 18 also described the alleged parallel structures within the state as harmful to democracy and the nation's will.

In December 2013, an anti-graft probe targeted several high-profile figures, including the sons of three former government ministers and leading Turkish businessmen.

The government then denounced the December probe as a "dirty plot" constructed by a "parallel state," an alleged group of bureaucrats embedded in the country's institutions, including the judiciary and the police.

Since then, hundreds of police officers have been detained on charges of eavesdropping on Turkey's top officials, disclosing highly-sensitive information; forming an organization to commit crime and being a member of this organization; violating privacy; illegally seizing personal information and forgery of official documents.

Turkish PM: All against democracy to be held accountable- World Bulletin

14 December

Everyone will be held accountable for their acts against democracy, Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said Sunday.

"Everyone will be brought to account for their acts and attitude against democracy in this country, or get their reward if they take sides with democracy."

Davutoglu also spoke about his government's approach for carrying out Turkey's progress in all fields.

He spoke of the three pillars of "New Turkey," first of which is a "mentality of democracy that respects advanced democracy, human rights and freedoms along with the human itself."

The second pillar "is an economic development that will make the nation dependent neither on cowards nor on brave ones," he said.

The third pillar, the premier said, was about building the "New Turkey" together with the Turkish people by means of foreign policy that "flies the AK Party flag alongside the Turkish flag throughout the world, from Middle East to Caucasia, from Balkans to Central East, and from central Africa to Latin America."

President Erdoğan praises unity and solidarity- TRT

14 December

President Erdoğan attended the Şeb-i Aruz ceremony, which is held to commemorate the 741st anniversary of Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi's meeting with the lover.

Speaking at the ceremony, President Erdoğan said "Troops of love, like Rumi, who came to Anatolian lands 7 centuries ago, have a great share in the establishment of brotherhood, love and compassion."

President Erdoğan said they are in an effort to transmit conscience of tranquility, peace and brotherhood, which is the deposit of our ancestors, to future generations.

Elaborating on the philosophy of Mevlana, Erdoğan said Mevlana considered his own death as a wedding night, on which he met his spiritual lover.

Guests from Bulgaria, Greece, and Balkan countries like Kosovo have also attended the ceremony.

Singers performed hymns alongside swirling dervishes.

FM Çavuşoğlu says new process to begin in Syria-TRT

14 December

Speaking about the recent developments in Syria, Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said the upcoming developments in Syria will occur as a package. Minister Çavuşoğlu said negotiations will be held on the use of İncirlik Airbase.

Stating that Russia will not be kept out of the loop and Iran's concerns will be addressed, Çavuşoğlu noted that elaborations and negotiations will continue with the USA.

Stating that they will come up with a comprehensive action package, Çavuşoğlu said "Security forces and intelligence elements will discuss what needs to be done."

Istanbul To Get Turkey's Largest Wind Power Plant- Daily Sabah

15 December

The largest wind power plant in Turkey, which will meet the demand for electricity of 280,000 residences, will be constructed in the Çatalca district of Istanbul and named the Istanbul Wind Power Plant.

The plant will produce 770,800,000 kilowatt-hours annually with 88 wind turbines, with 64 of these 88 wind turbines capable of producing 2 megawatts, while 24 will produce 3 megawatts of electricity,

adding up to 200 megawatts of installed electricity production capacity.

The budget required for the foundation of the wind power plant is estimated to be around \$558,245,400 and 30 employees will be assigned for the preparation and construction work and 15 for the operation of the plant.

Istanbul: City of pride and promise- Dr. Muqtedar Khan, Turkey Agenda

11 December

Istanbul is in many ways the capital of human civilizations. It has inherited the best of the Roman, the Byzantine, the Islamic, and modern civilizations. Istanbul has preserved so much of so many human traditions that every step you take in this city, you are stepping on the remnants of some civilization. Everywhere you look you can soak in the beauty of what was beautiful and grand about a previous culture.

In the past three years I have come to Istanbul more than a dozen times. Some parts of this sprawling global city, feel like home. The beautiful by-lanes of Sultanahmet; every lane eventually leading to the Blue Mosque is a delight to get lost in. Every turn springs a charming surprise, a spectacular mosque or a quaint and beautiful boutique hotel, a delightful pastry shop or an enticing 'kofta' place. I now know the area quite well, but I still try to get lost, so that I can discover more of old Istanbul's charms. With every visit, the city shares a new dimension of its charm and signals that there is more to discover. Come again beloved, it smiles, come again.

I also like the area in *Uskudar* near ISAM (Center for Islamic Studies), where I have stayed several times. The area is so intellectually rich with many Universities in a very small area. Walk into any restaurant or café and you will run into experts on Ottoman history, Sufis, Islamic law, Western politics or even an expert on African American Islam. Most Muslim intellectuals have nostalgia in their hearts for a glorious city where Islam is the dominant culture and philosophy, mysticism, and poetry its handmaidens. Between Sultanahmet and *Uskudar*, in Europe and in Asia, I have found palpable traces of this nostalgic dream.

More and more Muslims, especially from the West are looking to Istanbul and Turkey for pride restoration. On a daily basis, we are hammered by bad news from Muslim lands – suicide bomber blows up a bus, Israel bombs Gaza, American drones devastate a wedding party, journalists jailed by a government, journalists beheaded by a Muslim gang, hopes for democracy crushed, Muslim mob lynches someone accused of blasphemy – headlines such as these are now routine. One of the few places from where one gets frequent good news is Turkey. So Muslims are zooming in on Turkey.

Those who can admire only from far, relish the aggressive posture of Turkey's President Erdogan who stands tall among his peers. The rest of the Muslim world seems to specialize in picking losers as leaders. The fortunate ones, who can actually visit Turkey, are beginning to see it as the global hub of Islamic identity. Tourism, spirituality, investment opportunities or political networking, Istanbul has something to offer to everyone. Any visit to Istanbul, real or even virtual, invigorates Muslims with

pride and reassures them that there is still hope for the Muslim World.

For Muslims growing up in the West, in an age of Islamophobia, Istanbul has become a magnet. Islam as one finds in Istanbul belies the false claims of Islamophobes who malign a great human tradition. In 2012, I travelled to Istanbul with my entire family. We planned to spend a week in Turkey, visit the great city, Konya and Cappadocia and then head to Greece and Bulgaria. Two days in Istanbul and my children, who fell instantly in love with Istanbul, wanted the itinerary revised, they wanted to stay and soak in the city and go nowhere else. I was outvoted; my son would not support me and three generations of women, my wife, my mother and daughter rejected my East and West plan. As I watched my children learning from this great city; its museums, its palaces, its gorgeous mosques and its culture, I realized that for young children two weeks in Istanbul teaches them more about Islamic faith and inculcates more Islamic pride, than probably two years in an Islamic school.

Now scores of American and European Professors are taking tours to Turkey to introduce their students to an Islam that contrasts so spectacularly from that which is portrayed in Western media. Muslim preachers and Sufi leaders are organizing *Rihlahs* – study tours – that take young upper middle class professionals to sacred places in Istanbul and in Konya to immerse in the culture of mystical and imperial Islam that was the hallmark of the Ottoman age.

Whenever I am in Istanbul, whether for an academic conference or for an international symposium, on a Thursday night there is only one place to beat the *Jerrahi Tekke*, a Sufi lodge of the Jerrahi order. Hidden in the by-lanes, past little *beklava* shops in

the religious neighborhood of Karagumruk in Fatih; this beautiful, sacred place is a spiritual haven. Every week hundreds of *dervishes* gather for the night prayer and then spend hours in loud *zikr*, remembrance of God. It is an amazing spiritual experience; beautifully choreographed and executed with such deep devotion that is hard not to get a taste of mystical bliss. It is also remarkable that in this materialist age so many young people take so many hours out of their life, every week, to remember God. It speaks volumes about the culture and spirit of this city and the enduring appeal of Islam. For hours the place echoes with the chants of *Al Hayy* -- The Living; one of the 99 names of Allah -- and for months it resonates in my heart until the next visit, God willing.

Istanbul's majestic and beautiful mosques and their minarets share the city skyline with ugly modern high-rises. Its Sufi traditions thrive along with a vibrant film industry. Social science conferences and academic symposiums compete for attention with diplomatic and political conclaves. Traditional life thrives, side-by-side, with the explosive growth of the modern economy. Above all democracy thrives reassuring Muslims that Islam and modernity, tradition and commerce and politics and piety can coexist. Progress, Istanbul screams, is possible without the loss of faith.

I have visited many great Muslim cities: New Delhi, Cairo, Casa Blanca, Marrakech, Mecca, Medina, Dubai, Doha, Amman, Tunis, to name but a few. None is like Istanbul. Those cities remind me of the past and lost glory of Islam, Istanbul alone promises a bright future. Dubai and Doha are rich and thriving, but neither is what Ibn Khaldun might call as *khalb al-Hadharah* – the heart of civilization.

For Muslims today, Istanbul has indeed emerged as the city of joy and hope, pride in a glorious past and a promise of a future with faith and progress.

The 2015 Election In Turkey- Taha Özhan, Daily Sabah 12 December

What will be the distinguishing features of the 2015 general election in Turkey? The event will mark the end of a trilogy of elections that began with local races on March 30, 2014. This, of course, seems only relevant to the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) since opposition parties had declared the upcoming election's outcome when they decided to reduce their platforms to second-hand materials from the Gülen Movement's ill-fated attempt to overthrow the government.

The March 30 local elections, which effectively represented the first round of the 2015 presidential race, produced the first signs as the opposition's heavy defeat in municipal races rendered the presidential election completely meaningless for them. It was probably therefore that opposition leaders opted to sit the presidential race out. The nightmare, however, continues. Having started the countdown through the Gezi Park protests in May 2013, the opposition now watches time fly by with the general election fast approaching.

The Republican People's Party (CHP) and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) will pay a heavy price in next year's election for having failed to field their own champions in the 2014 presidential race. Considering that their leaders have already consumed all leftovers in their two most

recent campaigns and, on top of it all, launched a joint presidential campaign in August 2014, their demise will be impossible to miss. For the first time since the Dec. 17 operation, the people will have the opportunity to respond to the coalition between CHP and MHP leaders in a parliamentary election.

It is, of course, no secret that the two parties, that did not exactly do a great job in the presidential race, do not need to hold their breath. During the first two episodes of the electoral trilogy, the alliance not only caused the MHP to suffer major losses but also forced the nationalists to camouflage the CHP's complete failure. In most high-volatility districts, the CHP exploited its majority stake in the partnership to funnel votes out of the nationalist camp. At the same time, the Republican-Nationalist alliance effectively marked the expansion of the CHP's fragmented composition into a multi-party bloc. In 2015, both parties will have to enter the parliamentary election against the backdrop of increasingly obsolete internal and external alliances.

The opposition parties had to enter the most recent parliamentary election before they could recover from the heavy defeat they suffered in the 2010 constitutional referendum. In 2015, they will have to compete for seats less than a year after a brutal presidential race. In next year's general election, opposition parties will experience the downsides of having commissioned a proxy candidate in August 2014. CHP Chairman Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu and MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli - whose electoral performance currently stand at, respectively, 0-4 and 0-10 - will have to show voters that they mean business. After all, they have to overcome the crisis of

authenticity stemming from siding with the Gülen Movement in the local elections and the use of proxies in the presidential race. The AK Party, in turn, could possibly consolidate its position as a dominant party if it wins the 2015 election. The intersection of these two trends would obviously mean the beginning of a new era.

The probable outcome of the 2015 election will establish the AK Party as a dominant party and further limit the reach of opposition parties into particular political, social and geographical niches. Furthermore, the ruling party will enter the race under new management and with an almost entirely new administrative elite. In any other country, of course, one would expect the opposition leadership to experience comprehensive change. The 2015 election will reveal deeply repressed, painful truths.

Overcoming The East-West Divide- İbrahim Kalın, Daily Sabah 13 December

When Muslims were ordered to pray for the first time in Makkah, they turned east to Jerusalem. This practice continued for about a year and a half after Prophet Muhammad migrated to Madina in 622. Then Muslims were ordered to turn to Kaaba in Makkah for prayers - a practice they have been keeping up ever since. When people asked about this change, the Quran answered with the following verse: "To God, belongs east and west; wherever you turn, you will see the face of God. Behold, God is infinite, all-knowing" (Baqara 2:115) In the seventh century and in the centuries that followed, the words "east" and "west" did not have the same

meaning they have today. For the followers of Islam, Kaaba is not in the east. The same holds true for Jerusalem for Muslims and Jews. Sacred places are above geographical limitations. Beyond east and west, they are the "center" for those who turn to them for prayer and blessings.

Before the rise of modernity, the universalist language of Islam did not produce cultural categories such as east and west to understand the world. East or west, all belonged to God, which meant only one thing: there is a higher order of reality that transcends east and west, south and north. In their quest for knowledge, Muslim scholars, scientists and philosophers turned to the earth as a whole and took knowledge from the Greeks, Indians, Chinese, Africans, Sasanids, Jews, Christians and others. They sifted through ancient lore and took what they considered to be essential and appropriate for them. There was no stereotyping, discrimination or demonizing in regards to religion, race or location.

Al-Kindi, considered to be the first Muslim philosopher, famously expressed his debt to "all those who preceded us and produced knowledge for the good of humanity." Later thinkers made critical studies of the works of ancient Greek and Hellenistic philosophers, Chinese sages and Indian scientists but did not see them as "eastern" or "western." Disregarding their ethnic or religious background, they focused on what was essential in their works. Muslims today have mostly lost this universalist outlook and succumbed to the temptations of binary oppositions. In their praise of the east or condemnation of the west, they miss out the essential element of any serious intellectual debate and scholarly pursuit. Binary categories cloud

our minds and create confusion, distance and ignorance.

Interestingly enough, the verse quoted above caught the attention of European thinkers during and after the Middle Ages. The German poet Goethe referred to the verse to overcome the east-west divide and named his book of poetry "West-östlicher Diwan," the East-West Diwan. Joseph Hammer-Purgstall, the prominent Austrian historian and orientalist of the 18th century, was so impressed with the message of the east-west verse that he frequently cited it in his works. But he also did something dramatic and had it engraved on his tombstone.

For traditional Muslim scholars, it would have been strange to be called "eastern." Just because Ibn Sina lived in what is now called the Middle East today does not make him an "eastern" philosopher. Likewise, the fact that Ibn Rushd lived in Andalusia in what is now Spain does not make him a "western" philosopher either.

East and West are modern categories that have clouded the minds of both Muslims and non-Muslims since the 18th century. They have turned into a-historical categories with clusters of homogenous beliefs, attitudes and perceptions. They have erected barriers of misunderstanding. Muslims need to draw a lesson from this. In dealing with issues of political injustice, cultural imperialism or economic exploitation, they have to avoid irresponsible generalizations and shallow categorizations. The sense of dispossession and denial needs to be channeled into a constructive discourse for justice, equality and dignity. The "us-versus-them" stance is harmful whether they emanate from American, European or Muslim corners.

The key challenge is to overcome Euro-centrism without falling into the trap of "occidentalism." It is to produce a critique of imperialism without turning a blind eye to one's own weaknesses. It is to step outside the blame game and not fear self-criticism. The late Alija Izzetbegovic was among a handful of Muslim intellectuals in the modern period to challenge the east-west categorization from an Islamic point of view. His book "Islam between East and West" sought to place the Islamic tradition above both east and west without demonizing either one of them.

Many Muslim scholars and thinkers have done so. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Tariq Ramadan, Hamza Yusuf, Timothy Winter (Abdulahkim Murad), Sayyid Naquib al-Attas, Khaled Abou el-Fadl, Ingrid Mattson and numerous others that I cannot count here have been engaged in the critical reading of the modern world as well as the Islamic tradition without creating walls of misperception. While the media headlines turn to the murderous advertisements of ISIS, these scholars work with wisdom and patience to keep the middle ground intact because they think east and west, and everything else, "belongs to God."

Muslim societies need to overcome the siege mentality and the sense of victimhood that have shaped their thinking about the world and their place in it. Even in the face of the greatest injustice, one needs to remain anchored in knowledge, wisdom, patience and virtue. Before asking anyone else, Muslims themselves should overcome the east-west dichotomies that have produced nothing more than intellectual laziness and moral laxity.

Ottoman classes should not scare Turkish Republicans- Nihal Bengisu Karaca, Turkey Agenda 13 December

Turkey's National Educational Council voted to make Ottoman language classes compulsory at religious high schools and optional at all state secondary schools last weekend. Tensions in Turkey are escalated after the media introduced the recommendations of the council regarding Ottoman language courses as a law. The proposal for the Ottoman classes is the most reasonable advisory ruling among "debated" decisions taken by the council. Finding it acceptable that our younger generations are not familiar with the language, writings, songs and art used by their ancestors by degrading the Ottoman language to Arabic alphabet or the Islamic ideology, absolutely is the most selective ignorance.

Learning Ottoman language does not necessarily imply bypassing alphabet reform.

The vote of the council to make the Ottoman language courses a requirement only for the religious high schools must be due to drawbacks caused by the reservations towards the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) by the opponents. **Yet, this language is most required for those who express concern about the connotations of it. It should have been the families that are against the current rulers, religion and opposition in the country, demanding to learn this language.**

In fact, if the prejudices for "those who went to religious schools" are actually real, then it is a fact that their choice will not be reading the ideas of people who had diverged from the mainstream Islamic interpretations such as Mansur Al-Hallaj and Imadaddin Nasimi through the language. Those who oppose the "pious generation" description made by the President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, are thinking to continue opposing this generation through the ideas of Marx,

Sartre and Habermas, then let it be it. We should only be contended with reminding that this method does not work out and mock those who are trying to make a relation between Ottoman courses and “Islamism.”

Interpreting learning Ottoman as a return to Islamic ideology is also a product of a false political and historical reading. For instance, “smart enemies of Islam” think that the ideas, language and culture of the Ottomans as an antidote of Islamism instead of seeing it as its processor or successor. I cannot really say there is no rightfulness in that. **While being envisioned on a humane and moral values based on Islam, Ottomans were more closer to universal values as well as manners and forms that could be regarded as secular even more than today’s Islamists, nationalists and Kemalists.** Let’s not get into details, but I presume the young generations won’t suddenly become “radicals” after being capable of reading and understanding an old song lyrics written on ‘wine’ by a musician like Recaizade Mahmud Ekrem back then. Maybe their views on themselves and materials will be more sound and elegant due to being influenced from those times when even more seducing world demands were expressed extremely pleasant. Is there any harm in that?

If they say “absolutely no,” you will have continued to stay upset over “why can’t we film something like Downton Abbey.” The reason English language exists to this day stems from the fact that the Brits taught children the antiquated English language. As a result, that is why even we still use phrases such as “Victorian tone”, “English country style”, “gentleman”, “Robin Hood and His Merrie Men”, “being snobby”, “Devonshire Tea”, or “coolness” as a British trait, “gardening” “five o’clock tea”, creative “two-facedness” as a symbol of civilization; which are all product of British. The fantasy world of the children was being shaped by “Alice in Wonderland” in the past, but today it is being influenced by Hogwarts and Harry Potter. Since the sense of a society about

themselves maintains the sociology, culture and even popular culture alive.

The reason images belonging to the Ottomans being limited to battle and conquest on our minds is because we fail to spread descriptions of cities, neighborhoods, houses, shopping, kitchen and daily life. In fact, the only image belonging to Ottoman times in the minds of a person who was born in the 1980’s is limited to one or two scenes from a few Turkish movies.

This disgrace can only be left behind by overcoming the language barrier.

In order for new generations to become curious and follow up on information, they must at least have a grasp of what an inscription in the Ottoman language is saying. Perhaps if they have a comprehension of these texts they might move deeper in studies and it would spark the curiosity of contemporary generations after this point.

Energy Lines As A Means Of Peace And Integration- Cemil Ertem, Daily Sabah 13 December

The energy issue continues to be an area of conflict, both in terms of wealth and politics, in the Middle East and Caspian region, with the Eastern Mediterranean being recently added. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has said recently that Turkey, from now on, can carry out seismic exploration with its own vessels in the Eastern Mediterranean and that it will not take a step back from this. Today, the problem with energy sharing in Caucasia, the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean is becoming a question of politics rather than economy, as new energy lines mean new borders and new market networks.

At present, oil and natural gas pipelines can be visualized as a chess game among

the EU, Turkey and Russia. The U.S. is closely monitoring this energy game, as the creation of new energy lines outside Russia's initiative and the exclusion of Iran from this game are important signs and steps for the U.S. For example, the realization of the Trans Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) project by Azerbaijan and Turkey is not an energy move alone, but it also reveals political change and a step taken toward the integration of a vast geography that spans from the Caspian region to Austria. It also marks the beginning of the EU's expansion to the east. This beginning means the emergence of new hubs of energy supply in the Caspian region and Middle East, apart from Russia and Iran; however, it is also a development that will disturb the traditional alliance between Germany and Russia in the EU. Especially after the annexation of Crimea, Russia understands that the U.S. and the U.K. will steer the EU toward the Southern Gas Corridor (SGC) for energy. Furthermore, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced during his recent visit to Turkey that they would scrap the South Stream pipeline project and would take it to Europe through Anatolia. As stated above, this move from Russia will terminate the energy cooperation between Germany and Russia, and make Russia a part of the SGC. The SGC will go beyond becoming a project of Azerbaijan and Turkey alone; it will also be realized as a project of Caucasia, Anatolia and Europe, marking a new economic and political situation. Furthermore, the diversification of the SGC in such a way will create a new energy market and pricing in the whole world, as we foresaw well in advance. Since 2011, Russia's natural gas extractor Gazprom has been taking steps toward competitive pricing rather than monopoly pricing. In an article

published on Caspian Strategy Institute's magazine called Caspian Forum, Energy Security Specialist John Roberts says, "...And this is where the Southern Gas Corridor really does come to the fore. Russia may have plenty of gas, in terms of both reserves and actual production, but both its ability and willingness to increase its levels to actual supply to the European Union can be questioned. Immediate supplies are impacted by Gazprom's continued belief in the proposition, so clearly enunciated by Vice President Alexander Medvedev in 2011, that "the oil linkage provides the best balance buyers of natural gas. At a time when hub pricing is becoming ever more prominent in European gas deals. What this means is that Gazprom considers the retention of the link to oil prices - which in current terms means higher prices than those offered by its competitors - to be more important than the pursuit of specific export volumes."

As John Roberts suggests, Gazprom's price adjustment is not a state of balance in terms of economy and markets, but, it is also a state of balance in terms of politics and a sign of normalization in politics. I would like to underscore that the increase of actors in energy markets, the diversification of supply and the escalation of price competition all speak of the free market economy, which is something good and a preferable situation for consumers. This also points to further democracy and stability in the Middle East and Caspian region. It should not be forgotten that democracy does not only mean politicians come to power with elections, it also means less monopoly, less intervention in markets by nation-states and the use of natural resources for the benefit of humanity. From this standpoint, it also indicates the end of the old energy game,

of which the leading actors are Germany and Russia, with Iran the understudy in the entirety of this territory, as well as a new journey from war to peace for the region. What is needed is a political will that will make this journey real and support it to the end. Today, the TANAP has become the SGC's most important project. The inclusion of Russia and Iran in this pipeline means the process of new peace and integration in the region. Therefore, Turkey, as Erdoğan said, is continuing to explore energy in the Eastern Mediterranean and striving to commercialize the resources of the Caspian region, Mosul and Kirkuk. Apart from this, Turkey is establishing a new energy exchange that will price this energy market. This energy exchange, in the near future, will determine oil and natural gas prices with a free competitive approach, rather than monopolistic and speculative motives.

The energy lines and commercial transits that pass through Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey as well as Azerbaijani gas and Kurdish oil, which reaches directly to European markets apart from Turkey, is not only an energy move alone, it is also an important step for Europe's expansion toward its east. For Turkey, these projects are not only energy projects, but projects of peace, democracy and integration as well.

The parallel structure's code- Prof. Dr. Yasin Aktay, Yeni Şafak 15 December

A structure, which had started the journey to reach a certain objective and was formed to realize those objectives, losing sight of the objective, while glorifying it in the first

place, is actually one of the typical results in political movements.

Because of that, when the Gülen movement is the point in question, nobody should think that we are face to face with a one-of-a-kind movement. Many examples of this movement and course of events can be found with many of its aspects.

Maybe one difference is; the Gülen movement had experienced a sterner drop to the situations, which are completely adverse to the movement's asserted or emphasized matters.

Also on those matters, there are obvious changes between the initial statements of the movement and the expressions spoken during certain phases of the journey.

The disperse from chauvinist nationalist expressions even spread to and affect the Islamic understanding, to a point where the toleration and dialogue notions are heavily exaggerated and where activities that might be regarded excessive in this sense are being conducted in a short time....

Besides, synchronously, the toleration and dialogue, which is shown to the people who are counted as "outsiders", and, the intolerance and closure, which is shown to the people who are regarded as "insiders", are apparent.

Even in the times when they had laid the most emphasis on tolerance and dialogue, the Gülen movement stands out by erecting thick walls between themselves and many Islamic congregations, and by not making any contact with them. Besides, they are not only doing this in Turkey. All around the world, they are presenting a similar

attitude against other Islamic movements or congregations.

When observed from this angle, it's necessary to remark that determining "how much the Gülen movement had diverged from their objectives at the beginning" is not that easy. Fundamentally, until now, no one had managed to determine what the real objectives of the movement are. Because, the movement had never shared their real intentions and objectives to the outsiders. The most characteristic quality of the movement is the excessive occultism that reflects an impression that they possess certain secrets that are protected in every layer.

As it's customary in structures, in which the secret is opened according to the hierarchic system, the movement hasn't told their real objective even to the people whom they regard as "insiders". Because of this, it is highly likely that only the people at the top of the movement know of the real objective in secret. This is actually the worse part of the case. In a movement, in which only the people at the top know of the secret, there is nothing in hand other than the instituted trusting relationship.

In a movement, which is based on blindly obeying the leader, while opposite objectives are being designated within two days, the followers are accepting both of them without questioning them. It's clear that this relation style doesn't belong to a Muslim culture, and is special to the esoteric movements. No Muslim, who knows oneself and Islam, can trust anyone this much.

The first perfect generation of the Muslims, "Ashab-I Kiram" (Companions of Prophet Muhammad) used to obey our

Prophet unconditionally, because of the revelation he received; however, even they could object to the personal opinions of the Prophet that are not based on the revelation. They used to ask, "Oh His Messenger, is this from you, or Allah?" When the opinion was the opinion of the Prophet, they wouldn't abstain from asserting their alternative opinions, and thus clear the way of both the Prophet's and Ashab's opinions.

In the Gülen movement, we see a blind obedience to the leader, which motivates siding against the great majority of the Muslims and even opening a war against them, feeling sorry for the things that make the Muslims happy and to be happy with the things that make Muslims sad, without questioning what he does. This obedience, moves the people away from the general course of events of the Muslims, and rips their feelings from the feelings of the oppressed and simple believers.

If there are no other indicators, then even only this situation should open people's eyes, don't you think so?

We don't really know how much the movement had really diverged from their objectives. We don't know how and to what extent Gülen had been affected by a series of relations in the 60s and his relations with the Association of Struggling with Communism and Kasım Gülek, and what vision Gülen had adapted and taken on the road.

Today, from the board, which is gradually becoming clearer, we can guess that those relations had an indicative effect on the vision and mission of the movement. Fethullah Gülen and his movement have a secret, a code, which goes back many years

and which includes their objective and vision....

Because of this, without knowing that code, everything we mentioned about the extent which “the things we said about socialism and Islamism in the matter of the objective-instrument balance” are valid for this movement, will hang in the air.

However, the situation shouldn't be this vague for the ones who are dependent on Gülen, because they seem to have heard the values, humanistic and oneness vision of Islam from him and thus became dependent on him for that reason.

They are required to question how much every move, statement they see is complying with the mission, which should be obvious and transparent for all the Muslims. Otherwise, all the services they had conducted - without knowing to whom or to what they are serving - will amount to nothing and will be ruined.

**In one word: wrong- Abdülkadir Selvi, Yeni Şafak
15 December**

We began the day with news of an operation.

Ekrem Dumanlı, the editor-in-chief of Zaman newspaper, and Hidayet Karaca, the head of the STV broadcasting group, were detained.

Was I saddened? Yes, I was saddened.

I was saddened in the same manner that I was saddened when I received the news

four years ago when Mustafa Kaplan was taken away in the middle of the night.

I also don't find the manner in which the operation was conducted to be proper.

I don't like to twist words.

Just like I thought it was improper when Ahmet Şık, Müyesser Yıldız and Türkan Saylan were detained as part of the Ergenekon operation.

The Ergenekon process was a historic showdown for Turkey. My country, which is one of coups and murders that remain unresolved, for the first time found the opportunity to settle scores with deep-rooted structures like Ergenekon and the perpetrators of unresolved murders.

This lasted until the time that the police officers belonging to the parallel structure (the term used to refer to the Fethullah Gülen-led movement) started using Ergenekon as a weapon. That was when the struggle against Ergenekon was diverted from what it was originally intended for. This was how Turkey wasted the historic opportunity it had been presented with.

We waged a struggle against members of the parallel structure in the same manner that we waged a struggle against members of Ergenekon.

Because what we believed in was the following.

A community would not get involved in carrying out a coup.

A community would also not get involved in an intelligence-based war.

They preferred this dirty war.

That is why we now gather in front of the gates to Zaman newspaper just like we used to gather at the gates of Silivri prison. (The prison where a special court complex was set up to hear most of the Ergenekon-related cases.)

The Hizmet (Service in Turkish, and the term used by the Gülen-led movement to refer to itself) movement was replaced by a criminal structure.

A tragic situation.

The parallel structure started using the power it gained from the struggle against Ergenekon on two fronts.

1-After the targets it would try to take over in the Turkish Armed Forces, the bureaucracy and the business world were determined by the community's "mastermind;" operations would be launched by resorting to the intelligence services, the counter-terrorism units, the anti-smuggling and organized crime branch of the police force, and with cooperation from within the judiciary.

2-It structure embedded in the police force and judiciary would spring into action to prevent potential criticism of Fethullah the preacher by the media, and particularly by the Nur communities (followers of the Said Nursi).

The Tahşiye operation that led to yesterday's detentions is linked to this.

The Tahşiye group defines itself as one that interprets and clarifies the Risale-i Nur collection. They adopt as their basis the

style of Hulusi Yahyagil, a student of His Excellency Bediüzzamman Said Nursi. The same Colonel Hulusi Yahyagil who had a conscience, and said, "Allah save me" when he was included in the Dersim Operation.

They criticize the Gülen group primarily on its stance toward dialogue between religions, and the form the group's actions of service takes. But it is not just the Gülen group that they criticize. They have "radical" objections to other Nur groups, particularly the Yeni Asya group.

Let's come to the operation.

I learned about the Tahşiye Operation four years ago upon receiving a letter from Mustafa Kaplan, which he sent from prison.

In his letter, Kaplan mentioned the injustices he had faced.

They did face injustice. These people faced a lot of persecution at the hands of the parallel structure. They remained in prison for 17 months. It was claimed that they had ties to Al-Qaeda. The claims could not be proved. This was because Al-Qaeda was just used as a veneer to legitimize the operation.

The police officers belonging to the Gülen-led community used despicable methods during the operation against members of the Tahşiye group.

An operation was conducted against a private-tuition course where members of the Tahşiye group would gather to read the Risale-i Nur collection. Two hand grenades, bullets and some sketches were

found. A total of 122 people were detained as part of the operation.

The fingerprints, blood and clothing samples taken of the 122 people, however, did not match those found on the grenades. The fingerprints on the grenades matched those of three police officers who participated in the operation, while one set of fingerprints belong to an as yet unidentified person.

Will accountability not be sought in this case?

The people who were inconvenienced have been applying to the judiciary since Sept. 30 on the grounds that they are victims of a conspiracy and that the criminal evidence against them was fabricated.

It is imperative that the chiefs of the Istanbul Police Department's Counter Terrorism Branch and the Anti-Smuggling and Organized Crime Branch, who contrived this crime, be held accountable, and if guilty tried for those crimes, along with the police officers who planted those grenades, who should be tried as accomplices to the crime.

In the same light, Ali Fuat Yılmaz, who signed off on many illegal wiretaps and ordered wiretaps in this case as well, should be made to appear in front of a judge.

It was Fethullah Gülen who first said that the Tahşiye group represented a threat. In a speech on April 6, 2009, Gülen said, "They invent something called Tahşiye, and arm them whenever they get the opportunity."

In a TV show titled "Tek Türkiye" broadcast on STV, the Tahşiye group is

investigated as a threat. The Zaman and Bugün newspapers print articles and news items similar to the TV show. In the wake of all this, an operation against the Tahşiye group is carried out on Jan. 30, 2010.

It could be claimed that Fethullah Gülen, via his April 6 speech, gave the green light to conduct the operation against the Tahşiye group. It could be said that this operation was conducted on the basis of instructions issued from Pennsylvania. (The name used for Fethullah Gülen, a reference to the U.S. state where he lives in self-imposed exile.)

But what does the detention of the administrators of Zaman and STV mean? Is it right that the police go to the offices of Zaman newspaper and take Ekrem Dumanlı away in a police car? Isn't this just providing more ammunition to those who raise hell in the world by saying the press is being muzzled? Are those who carried out this operation aware of the type of perception management methods they end up serving? What they did served no purpose other than embarrassing Turkey in front of the world.

In any event, even if no one protests against detaining a journalist in this manner in front of the offices of a newspaper, I will protest against it. What was done was wrong.

What crimes are journalists accused of as long as they have no involvement in acts of violence and are not guilty of fabricating crimes and evidence? Do you go around arresting executives of the TV channel that broadcasts the "Valley of the Wolves" (a Turkish TV series which contains lots of violence) series?

It might have come to your attention that I haven't been writing articles about the parallel structure for a while now. This is because just like it happened with Ergenekon in the past, a sack named the parallel structure has been opened and everyone wants to fill it with something. I believe this harms the struggle against the parallel structure and I am opposed to such actions.

I want to state very openly and clearly that it was wrong to raid the offices of the Zaman newspaper and STV, and escort Ekrem Dumanlı and Hidayet Karaca off the premises. I protest against wrongdoing regardless of who it is committing the wrongdoing.

Foreign Policy and Ideology- Burhanettin Duran, Turkey Agenda 15 December

When Russian president Vladimir Putin, along with 10 cabinet ministers, recently paid an official visit to the Turkish capital, BBC was quick to identify his meeting with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as "a meeting of valuable isolation." Drawing on the similarities between the two leaders, the story pointed out that both countries experienced certain troubles in their relations with the West. Another popular conversation relates to questions about Turkey's credibility as a NATO ally and a member of the Western alliance in light of Ankara's agreement with Moscow, which is currently being targeted by EU sanctions, to build a new pipeline. Over the past five years, we have grown more and more accustomed to the international media's sharp criticism of Turkish foreign policy, which the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) government has pledged to reform and revise.

Domestic advocates of the axis shift/authoritarianism campaign, too, are quick to mobilize around a range of issues from the anti-ISIS struggle to the papal visit and the new presidential palace. Such fierce criticism, it goes without saying, is part and parcel of competitive democracies. After all, certain groups find the AK Party's seemingly endless run increasingly unbearable. Reducing the foreign policy debate to ideological differences, however, inevitably numbs one's powers of observation. At the end of the day, accounting for Turkey's position on ISIS and the Syrian civil war, among other issues, requires a more complex approach than the absolute duality between pro-Westernism and anti-Westernism. There is certainly nothing that warrants the identification of Turkey and Russia, vocal critics of the international order, as one and the same. Drawing parallels between Erdoğan and Putin, in particular, does more to blur the facts than to explain political phenomena.

It is important to point out the following: It has been a long time since Turkey stopped considering its partnership with the West a static relationship - which, for the record, had nothing to do with the EU's reluctance to extend an offer for full membership. Over the past years, Ankara has developed its cooperation with various countries on particular issues whilst seeking to further its goal of "critical integration" into the Western-centric international system. As such, the country's foreign policy decisions have been informed by the nation's economic and commercial interests - which accounts for Turkey's close relations with countries like Russia, Iran and Israel. It is these economic networks that facilitated

the stability of Turkey's domestic politics and foreign policy.

Surely enough, the Arab Spring-induced chaos in the region has added a new item to Turkey's long list of foreign policy priorities: To side with the people of other countries. In Syria and Egypt, our commitment to this principle has proven costly. Yet this principled position reflects long-term strategy as opposed to sheer idealism. In other words, Turkey's position, which government officials prefer to explain with value-based references, cannot be analyzed with no reference to real-life calculations. The rapprochement between Baghdad and Ankara, for instance, represents a great example of such considerations. Likewise, Turkey's relations with its neighbors remain open to change in light of the potential intensification or end of regional turmoil.

Notwithstanding the above assessments, one thing is clear: As long as the AK Party remains in charge of Turkish foreign policy, the national conversation pertaining to these issues will remain ideologically charged. That strategic priorities, not ideology, guides the country's new foreign policy will continue to be irrelevant for many observers. At the end of the day, the international community remains reluctant to come to terms with two key components of Turkish foreign policy: The commitment to putting national interests first and to critical integration into the West. At a time when great powers and regional players are ostensibly keen on issue-based partnerships rather than wholesale alliances, this game plan is perfectly sustainable. If anything, turning back would prove more costly than moving forward.