

A new dawn for Turkey: Developing foreign policy quickly is essential

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OPINION

HARUN YAHYA

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Many critics have agreed that the month of March 2016 was a critical milestone in Turkish political history. For the first time in 90 years, a Turkish politician, Ahmet Davutoglu gave up his position as prime minister and called for a party congress, resulting in the election of another member of his party, Binali Yildirim, as prime minister.

The change of the office took place swiftly. The former and new prime ministers described the change as a handover of the flag for the same cause. A new era has begun with the party congress last week. The congress enthusiastically opened with the speech of Davutoglu and closed with that of Yildirim, marking the beginning of the period of the third chairman of the AK Party. And, the one who planned and directed the whole process was the President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the founder of the AK Party. Many pro-AK Party politicians argue that the upcoming period will be a kind of semi-presidential period. The polls carried out immediately after the change of the office indicate that the AK Party holds about 55 percent of the votes. Many circles believe that this serves as evidence that voters consider Erdogan as the leader of the AK Party.

There are several considerations in regard to this change of the office. Davutoglu is known for his ideologist and strategic personality while Yildirim has a background more based on his activities. At this point, it is obvious that the strategies to shape the future of the party and Turkey will be set by Erdogan once again, as it was in the period before the 2014 presidential election.

With the new era, it will be favorable for our country that Erdogan develops Turkish foreign policy rapidly. There are a number of issues yet to be resolved in our region. The civil wars in Syria and Iraq have been getting worse every day; the U.S. is about to become a party to the shooting war in Libya, and peace is still not in sight for the civil wars in Afghanistan and Yemen. Everyone continues to say something different in regard to the refugees and immigrants are losing their lives on their way. Erdogan believes that the U.S., the EU and the West have fallen behind and failed in exerting their full authority in the resolution of these problems. He announced the course of action for the new era in the article penned by himself in a Turkish newspaper for the First World Humanitarian Summit held in Istanbul on May 23-24. The title of the article outlines his message clearly: "We do not lack a

solution, we are the solution." The article includes the following statements: "The underlying reason for many problems in the world is not the shortage of financial means, but the lack of compassion and empathy. We must stimulate the global conscience."

Many Muslim countries have been caught up in the conflicts based on the world's economic, geopolitical and political interests for the last 15 years. Oil and power struggles, political conflicts and economic interests have turned the lands of Muslims into a war zone. The Middle East is in urgent need of new policies to put an end to the conflicts. The world today must give precedence to peaceful politics to stop people from being killed. The foreign policy of Turkey must serve that purpose and embrace all people in the new era.

Turkey has the capability to develop these policies along with the Muslim world. In April, Turkey took over the OIC presidency. In the summit, Erdogan and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani made a call to end the severe conflicts between Shiites and Sunnis. This was the first step taken in good faith. Turkey should make good use of the opportunity of cooperation

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with the Muslim countries, and turn the Organization into a center for developing and implementing joint policies for peace.

The summit of the Organization in March addressed many issues, primarily the issue of water and joint development policies. Given that 22 of the 49 least-developed countries, six of the 15 richest countries worldwide are OIC members, it is an undeniable fact that the world of Islam is in urgent need of the spirit of solidarity and brotherhood.

The new Cabinet and Turkey's leadership also put a strong emphasis on domestic issues other than the foreign policy. Erdogan and Yildirim have stated several times that there will be further progress on the fight against terrorism in the upcoming period until the safety of all Turkish citizens is ensured. The implementation of any political project to divide the country, including forms of federation, confederation, autonomy, self-government, a cantonal system or strong local management, regardless of what it is called, serves as a red line for the Turkish

government as well. And the Turkish people predominantly, support these policies in the fight against terrorism and unitary state.

The 2016 agenda of Turkey also includes the system of party-member presidency and new civilian constitution. The current constitution was prepared in the wake of the 1980 military coup. Although there were many improvements in time, the constitution is considered to have failed in reflecting the values of the civil society of the 21st century. Almost all of the Turkish people believe in the necessity of a new constitution. However, a consensus on the content of a new constitution seems to be far from being reached.

It is beyond question that the most controversial issue in regard to the new constitution is the presidential system, indicating a radical transformation in the Turkey's regime. However, despite other changed policies, the public opinion does not support that transformation enough. The Turkish people have not embraced the idea of a presidential system on the grounds that it may lead to the division of the country, which is a justified concern. Indeed, the Turkish nation, struggling with the issue of terrorism, will not tolerate any political changes that may well risk such a division at all. The presidential system poses a great risk for Turkey at this stage.

Hence, there is an intermediate solution, which has been raised in recent times: The system of party-member presidency. Making the office of the presidency the highest level of the execution, rather than being a symbolic rank, such a system may be submitted for the appreciation of the Turkish people, as it will not lead to division or federation. Certainly, the decision will be the Turkish people's.

As of the 2000s, Turkey has taken important steps in regard to various rights involving economic, industrial, medical, political and social rights. There has been an increase in the level of welfare of the people. Aid, which is a requirement of being a social state, has become more easily accessible to millions of people, young and old alike. The Turkish people anticipate that the government will assume a leading role in gathering Muslims under a single economic and social roof in the upcoming period. We all wish that the coming days contribute to joint projects that will bring peace, welfare, prosperity and friendship to the world of Islam.

Harun Yahya is an influential Turkish spiritual leader and opinion shaper. He wrote this commentary for THE DAILY STAR.

THE DAILY STAR

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With the new era, it will be favorable for our country that Mr. Erdogan develops Turkish foreign policy rapidly. There are a number of issues yet to be solved in our region. The civil wars in Syria and Iraq have been getting worse every day; the US is about to become a party to the shooting war in Libya, and peace is still not in sight for the civil wars in Afghanistan and Yemen. Everyone continues to say something different in regard to the refugees and immigrants are losing their lives on their way. Mr. Erdogan believes that the US, the EU and the West have fallen behind and failed in exerting their full authority in the resolution of these problems. He announced the course of action for the new era in the article penned by himself in a Turkish newspaper for the First World Humanitarian Summit hold in Istanbul last week. The title of the article outlines his message clearly: "We do not lack of a solution, we are the solution." The article includes the following statements:

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Adnan Oktar's piece in The Daily Star:

<https://www.dailystar.com.lb/Opinion/Commentary/2016/Jun-06/355467-a-new-dawn-for-turkey-developing-foreign-policy-quickly-is-essential.ashx>

<https://www.harunyahya.info/en/articles/a-new-dawn-for-turkey-developing-foreign-policy-quickly-is-essential>