

HISTORICAL INFLUENCES AND A MODERN ALTERNATIVE FOR LEADERSHIP MODELS IN CENTRAL ASIA*

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ABSTRACT: The 1991 demise of the Soviet Union that led to the emancipation of many Central Asian states, also led to a grab for power by a variety of leadership types. Although the characteristics of leadership types in the 1990s were diverse, few followed the pattern of Samuel Huntington's Third Wave of authoritarian transition, whereby authoritarian regimes were abandoned in favor of democratically elected and democratically oriented governments. Historically, Eurasia has had little experience with popular government. This is reflected in the general characteristics of leadership types in the post-Soviet era, which closely follow three regional historical influences – the early Islamic Emperors, the Mongolian Khans and the Russian Tsars (and later Soviet leaders). This article examines the historic influences on Eurasian leadership types and the impact of these types on the politics, societies and economies of these same states. It will be argued that at the current stage of political development, it would ultimately benefit the states of Central Asia to follow, at this time, the most successful Eurasian model to date, that of Kemal Atatürk and Turkey, rather than to push for a fully participatory democracy or sustain the post-Soviet personal dictatorships that have prospered throughout Central Asia.

Keywords: *Central Asia, democratic transition, Kemalism, leadership models.*

ÖZET: Sovyetler Birliği'nin çöküşü Orta Asya'da bir çok yeni devletin ortaya çıkmasına ve çeşitli yönetim modellerinin oluşmasına neden olmuştur. 1990'lar sonrası yönetim modelleri çeşitlilik göstermesine rağmen bunlardan çok az bir kısmı Samuel Huntington'ın otoriter rejimlerin dönüşümünde Üçüncü Dalga olarak adlandırdığı yolu izlemiştir. Bu tez, demokratik sistemler ve demokratik yollarla seçilmiş hükümetlerin otoriter rejimlere her zaman tercih edileceğini savunmaktadır. Ancak, tarihsel olarak bakıldığında Avrasya bölgesinde seçimle gelen hükümetlere ilişkin deneyimin çok az olduğu görülmektedir. Bu durum Sovyetler Birliği'nin yıkılması sonrasındaki yönetim modellerinin özelliklerinde de gözlenmektedir. Söz konusu yönetim modelleri esasen üç tarihsel dönemin etkilerinin sonucunda ortaya çıkmıştır. Bunlar İslam imparatorları, Moğol Hanları ve Rus Çarlarının (ve daha sonraki Sovyet liderlerinin) dönemleridir. Bu çalışmada, Avrasya yönetim modellerinin tarihsel etkileri incelenmekte ve bunların söz konusu bölge ülkelerindeki siyasete, topluma ve ekonomik yapılara ne şekilde yansıdığı tartışılmaktadır. Bu çerçevede, halihazırdaki siyasi gelişim seviyeleri çerçevesinde söz konusu ülkelerin, günümüze kadar görülen en başarılı Avrasya modeli olan Türkiye'yi ve Kemal Atatürk'ü örnek almalarının, tam katılımcı demokrasiye geçiş veya Sovyetler sonrası diktatörlük rejimleri alternatiflerine göre çok daha yararlı olacağı belirtilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Orta Asya, demokratik dönüşüm, Kemalizm, liderlik modelleri.*

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Introduction

The aftermath of the September 11, 2001 events brought a spotlight to bear on the states of Central Asia. This light focused not just on Afghanistan, which had become a breeding ground for terrorism and instability, but on the rest of the region, as well. It seemed as if the West had just become aware that a region of the world that for the most part had been controlled by the Soviet government in Moscow for seven decades was now independent and in need of attention. This closer examination exposed the world to the reality that few of the states in this region had followed the pattern of Samuel Huntington's Third Wave of democratic transition, whereby authoritarian regimes were abandoned in favor of democratically elected and democratically oriented governments. The increased scrutiny of Central Asia made it painfully obvious that the democratic transition from Soviet rule, as documented by Prof. Huntington, had not penetrated the hinterland of Eurasia (Huntington, 1993). While this had been known by both scholars with research interests in the area and policy makers with agendas to keep, the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks revealed that this lack of democratic institution building was cause for alarm now that the restraints of bipolarity were no longer in place.

Of the seven states that make up Central Asia (narrowly defined), five are former Soviet Republics and all are predominantly Muslim. If the Caucasian republics are included as well, three more newly independent states complicate the math with two predominantly Christian countries and one more Muslim state. At the time of the Soviet collapse, Pakistan was the only country of Central Asia with a democratically elected government, while the other non-Soviet state, Afghanistan, was entrenched in civil war. The Soviet collapse created a power vacuum in the remaining states that was quickly filled by those with access to the instruments of power, namely control of the military and government apparatuses. Those who took power following the disintegration of the USSR established regimes that generally reflected the historical influences on leadership roles that were common to the region, however much they espoused doctrines of democracy. The general characteristics of leadership types (and the resulting styles of government) in these post-Soviet states of Eurasia closely followed three regional historical influences – those of the early Islamic Emperors, the Mongolian Khans, and the Russian Tsars (and later Soviet leaders), which will be discussed shortly.

Why Discuss Leadership Types?

The recent events in Afghanistan, namely the American-led efforts that displaced the Taliban regime, have raised numerous questions about the type of leadership needed to bring stability not only to Afghanistan but to Eurasia as a whole. The implied assumption, of course, is that by providing these states with strong and legitimate leadership, Eurasia can be brought into the international community as an important contributing region, and not a part of the globe that fosters terrorism, instability and backwardness. Add to this the more practical desire of exploiting the vast natural resources located within a number of Central Asian states, and discussions of regime stability and accessibility take on a greater importance.

This paper argues that at the current stage of political development, it would ultimately benefit the states of Central Asia to follow, at this time, the most successful Eurasian leadership (and subsequent institutional) model to date, that of Kemal Atatürk and Turkey, rather than to push for a fully participatory democracy or sustain the post-Soviet personal dictatorships that have prospered throughout Central Asia. By creating systems of government that develop sustained economic growth and gradually moves towards fuller democracy, leaders in Central Asia will encourage foreign investment and trade, modernization and economic development, and establish an historical legacy which is often the unspoken goal of all leaders.

The first section of this article briefly recounts the current status of the Central Asian states and their post-Soviet leadership histories. The second section examines the historical models that have influenced leaders and leadership styles in Eurasia. The third section considers the Kemalist model, identifying both its strengths and weaknesses. Finally, the conclusion suggests reasons for and ways in which the states of Central Asia can adapt the Kemalist model to their own particular systems.

Post-1991

The 1991 demise of the Soviet Union that led to the emancipation of most of the states of Central Asia, also led to a grab for power by those with a vested interest in maintaining power. Of the eight former republics in the region (five from Central Asia and three from the Caucasus) all but three have the same leader as at the time of the Soviet collapse, and of those three that differ, two have leaders (presidents in each case) that represent the same party or authority as at the time of transition. Only Tajikistan has had a different leader and this is due mainly to the internecine conflict that wracked the country for five years in the mid-1990s. From Nursultan Nazerbayev in Kazakhstan to Islam Karimov in Uzbekistan to Heydar Aliyev in Azerbaijan, Central Asian heads of state in the post-Soviet era have for the most part followed in the steps of a number of historic figures by establishing regimes based on personal and military power, coercion and terror, and control of the economy and the creation of dynastic systems of government. Following are brief political biographies of each Eurasian state during the previous decade (see Karatnycky, et. al., 1997; Bremmer and Taras, 1997; Brown, 1990; The CIA World Factbook, 2002; Encyclopedia Britannica, 2002 for complete cited material).

Armenia. In September of 1991, Armenian independence was approved by popular referendum. Lev Ter-Petrosyyan, the former parliamentary chairman was elected president with 83 percent of the vote. From 1991 until 1995, Armenia operated under much the same form of constitution that it had inherited from the Soviet era. In July of 1995, a new constitution was adopted, one that was highly criticized by opposition parties for shifting power away from the legislative body to the office of the President. That same month, elections were held for the National Assembly, with the largest opposition party banned by the Ter-Petrosyyan controlled Central Election Commission. Ter-Petrosyyan's Republican Party won the greatest majority of seats, allowing him to govern nearly unhindered until the next presidential elections of 1998. In these elections, Ter-Petrosyyan's ally Robert Kocharian (the former President of Nagorno-Karabakh), was elected president with nearly 60% of the vote. In parliamentary elections the following year, Kocharian's Republican led

Unity Bloc captured 46% of the vote. Since 1999, the Kocharian Unity Bloc has dominated the politics of Armenia.

Azerbaijan. Azeri independence was declared in August, 1991. In September of that year, Ayaz Mutalibov, First Party Secretary, was elected President. After several chaotic years of political turmoil (mostly associated with Nagorno-Karabakh), the ouster of Mutalibov, and the reinstatement of the Supreme Soviet, Heidar Aliyev, the former First Party Secretary purged by Mikhail Gorbachev, was elected president in October 1993 with 98.8% of the vote. Aliyev was re-elected in October 1998 with 78% of the popular vote. As with the previous election, international observers declared this election to be “undemocratic.” In November 2000, Aliyev’s New Azerbaijan Party (NAP) and its allies captured 86% of the seats in the parliament. While Aliyev remains in firm control, his age (79 years) has lessened his authority to a certain extent.

Georgia. In the late 1980s, Georgia faced strong nationalist challenges from the constituent components of Georgia (proper), Abkhazia, and Southern Ossetia. Most of the smaller regions of the Soviet republic (15 total) had significant minority populations (primarily Armenian Azeri, and Ossetian) that chose to support the state. The largest group of the fractured Nationalist movement was led by Zviad Gamsakhurdia, whose Round Table-Free Georgia bloc won 54% of the vote in the parliamentary elections of October 1990. By March 1991, Georgia had declared its independence from the Soviet Union and Gamsakhurdia was elected president in May of the same year, with 87% of the vote. Of note is the fact that Abkhazia and Southern Ossetia did not participate in this election. Gamsakhurdia quickly adopted an authoritarian model of government that favored ethnic Georgians. This naturally led to increased violence by minority groups and the eventual ouster of Gamsakhurdia in March 1992, when power was transferred to the government of Eduard Shevardnadze, the former Soviet foreign minister. From 1992 until 1995 Shevardnadze essentially led his country in a civil war, not cementing his hold on power until the reported death of Gamsakhurdia in early 1994, and Shevardnadze’s election as President in late 1995. In April 2000, Shevardnadze was returned to the office of President with electoral support of 80%. His Citizens’ Union of Georgia (CUG) won 42% of the seats in parliamentary elections. Since mid-2000, Shevardnadze has managed to keep ethnic tensions below the boiling point, while at the same time attempting to diversify the power of the government.

Kazakhstan. As with many of the former republics, Kazakhstan voted to remain in the Soviet Union after the attempted coup against Gorbachev in August 1991. However, as the collapse of the USSR became imminent, Kazakhstan declared independence in December 1991, one week after having elected Nursultan Nazarbayev (the First Party Secretary and Supreme Soviet President) President of Kazakhstan with 98% of the vote. Nazarbayev quickly forged close ties with the Russian Federation and used his influence with Yeltsin to strengthen his personal position at home. In 1994 and 1995 Nazarbayev faced trouble from the independent Constitutional Court over irregularities discovered by international observers in the 1994 parliamentary elections. However, the parliament (composed of a majority of Nazarbayev supporters) turned aside the trouble, further increasing Nazarbayev’s

hold on power. In January 1999 Nazerbayev was again returned to office by a landslide victory (81%), and continues to dominate the political scene.

Kyrgyzstan. In August 1991 the Kyrgyz Republic declared its independence from the Soviet Union. Two months later Askar Akayev (the former president of the republic) was elected President in uncontested elections, receiving over 95% of the vote. In 1993, a new constitution was introduced and Akayev again ran for office in 1995. Once more elected to office, Akayev worked to further consolidate his power. Relative stability in the country, and an uncanny ability to pin difficulties on political fall guys, helped Akayev to retain his popularity, allowing him to be elected a third time in October 2000, with 74% of the vote.

Tajikistan. In the several years before Tajik independence was declared (late 1991), the political arena of Tajikistan had been troubled by conflict between communists, nationalists, and Islamic reformists. A series of leaders and three new governments lead to a fierce civil war that finally ended in 1997. The president for much of the civil war, Emomali Rakhmonov, had been elected in 1994 as part of the agreement intended to end the war. He was again elected in November of 1999 with 97% of the vote. His party, the People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan (PDPT) won 60% of the seats in the parliamentary elections that same year. While Rakhmonov's party dominates the political arena of Tajikistan, significant inroads have been made by opposition groups.

Turkmenistan. In August of 1990, the Turkmen Supreme Soviet declared independence. One month later, Saparmurat Niyazov, the Communist Party First Secretary, was elected president with 98% of the vote in an uncontested election. In 1999 he was declared President for Life, and now governs the country as an absolute dictator. While there is a parliament, all members are subject to Niyazov's approval, and must be a member of his Democratic Party of Turkmenistan (DPT).

Uzbekistan. As late as March 1991, the vast majority of Uzbek citizens voted to remain in the Soviet Union. The Union's demise later that year led to a round of presidential elections, which were won by Islom Karimov, the former First Party Secretary, with 86% of the vote. In March 1995, Karimov's term was extended until 2000, at which time elections were again held. Karimov once more emerged victorious, this time receiving 92% of the popular vote. The decade of Karimov's rule has been characterized by increased centralization of power, accusations of human rights violations, strong arm tactics and the suppression of political opposition. Since December 1999, Karimov has had a parliament, the Supreme Assembly (Oliy Majlis), where all parties (and all parliamentarians) have declared support for his government.

Some scholars may argue that the leaders in each of these states had little choice in the political systems they established. The death of the Soviet Union was something of a surprise, and while there had been deep internal divisions, few people, in the East or the West, thought the end result would be the implosion of the USSR. Under such circumstances it is only natural that the likes of Akayev, Karimov, and Nazerbayev filled the power vacuum. After all, they were the individuals with the experience to govern the newly independent states and in positions that allowed

them to take advantage of the situation. It is, as some have argued, simply a matter of misfortune that the only system of government they knew how to lead was one based on authoritarian rather than democratic principles. As Richard Rose, William Mishler and Christian Haerpfer have noted:

“The collapse of communist power meant that [former republics] were forced to create [new governments] at short notice and in unexpected circumstances. It is unrealistic to expect the choices made to produce an ideal democracy.” (Rose, et.al., 1994: 43)

It is my contention that it was not only the circumstances of the collapse of the Soviet Union that led the leaders of these states to adopt authoritarian systems of government. It was, in fact, due to the long existing historical influences of leadership in the region and not just the suddenness of the transition that compelled leaders to install governments based on the systems with which they were familiar.

Historic Leadership Models

Historically, Eurasia has had little experience with popular government. Prior to the Mongol invasion of the late 13th Century, tribal systems of government, themselves predominantly patriarchal, were the norm for the pastoral peoples of Central Asia. Eventually replaced by foreign systems of government, the peoples of Eurasia lived under foreign control for nearly eight centuries. The collapse of the Soviet system of government provided the first sustained opportunity for self rule and the development of democracy. However, the tendency in the post Soviet era, as seen above, has been towards centralized authoritarian rule rather than democratically oriented systems of government. The historic precedents for authoritarian rule in the region are numerous. Until the 13th Century, Central Asia was primarily the domain of numerous tribes of wandering nomads, who split their time between herding and warring with other tribes. The southern parts of Eurasia (Ghazna, Khorasan, Persia, and Anatolia) had been under the domination of a variety of Islamic empires since the 8th Century, most notably those of Salah al-Din and of the ‘Abbasids, and later the Seljuks. Beginning in the 13th Century, Chingiz (Genghis) Khan, Timur Lang, Bohdan Khmelntsky (the Ukrainian Cossack leader), the Tsarist conquerors of the 17th through 19th centuries, to name a few, organized all or parts of Central Asia under authoritarian regimes essentially based on the sets of principals described above. Some systems, for example those of Timur Lang and Khmelntsky, lasted for only a few years, while the Islamic, Mongolian and Tsarist influences remained for hundreds of years. All systems, regardless of origin, contained the same basic elements of government: a reliance on militarism and terror for maintaining order and control, hereditary accession based on some God-given right of rule, and a distinct demarcation between the governors and the governed.

Eastern Influences. The influences on the states of Central Asia from the East require little explanation. These influences almost exclusively represent the story of the expansion of the Mongol Empire (first by Chengiz Khan, a title of the leader Temujin meaning “Universal Chief”), and its later conversion to a Chinese Empire. In 1219, Chengiz Khan swept out of the East to attack the Muslim regimes governing Persia and Transoxiana. He united much of the Eurasian landmass under his rule, bringing together the sedentary peoples of the region with their nomadic

brethren. Khan's mandate of "One sun in Heaven, one lord on Earth" firmly established the power relationship that was to exist between the leader and the people under Mongol rule (Kishlansky, et.al., 1995: 445) and his use of terror tactics to force reluctant or recalcitrant populations into submission became the *de rigeur* practice of future leaders of the region.

The death of Chingiz Khan did not end the harsh, despotic rule of Eurasia by the Mongols. His successors continued his policies of war, conquer and expansion until only the periphery of Eurasia (Western Europe, Southeast Asia, and Japan) remained outside direct Mongol influence. By 1243, the Mongols had invaded western Iran, Armenia, Georgia, and northern Mesopotamia, while defeating the Seljuk rulers of Anatolia, and finally stopping with the defeat and death of the 'Abbasid caliph, al-Musta'sim (Lewis, 1996: 96-97). According to Bernard Lewis, this Mongol defeat of the Caliphate ended an era in Islamic civilization by reifying the power of a single leader – in this case the Mongolian Khan – that later influenced the rulers of the various empires of Eurasia and the Middle East (Lewis, 1996: 97).

Northern Influences. Like the eastern influences on leadership, northern influences were fairly simple and straightforward. The model originated with the Czars of the 16th Century, who had styled their pattern of leadership partially from their experiences with the Mongol overlords of the previous centuries, and partially from the influences of Christian Europe. Due to a number of complimentary factors (principle among them geography), the peoples of Russia, and later the Soviet Union, had developed a tendency to seek government protection at the hands of the strongest and most despotic leaders, even prior to the invasion of the Golden Horde. In addition to geography, culture and material wealth also played a role in the establishment of a powerful, authoritarian tradition in the lands of Russia.

The open spaces of Russian territory that extended across the plains of Central Asia to the steppes of western China were an invitation from the East for invasion and presented great difficulty in providing protection for the peoples of Russia. Due to the sheer size of the Empire, it was physically impossible to monitor and defend every access point from invaders. The great diversity of cultures living under Moscow's rule also precluded more democratically oriented rule, as strong leaders were better able to encourage the cooperation of its people and mobilize forces to stand up to the intruders. As Geoffrey Hosking notes, the improvisation of political structures during times of urgency and adversity tended to favor personal power relationships in the form of patron-client interactions (first in the *druzhina* and *kormlenie* in Kievan Rus and the Muscovite Principality, later in the institution of serfdom in imperial Russia and the *nomenklatura* system of the Soviet Union) (Hosking, 2001: 7).

The lack of material resources (and subsequent lack of wealth) of the common Russian further increased their dependence on those who could offer them the protection they could not otherwise afford (Almond and Powell, 1996: 428-429). In all forms (whether Kievan, Muscovite, or Imperial), Russian societies have been poor, with the ownership of wealth concentrated in few hands, and the rest to fend as communities as best they could. The inability of even the local elite to raise funds to pay for protection, as their European counterparts did, meant a reliance on those

who had the wealth to offer their protection. This exploitation was further reinforced with the collusion of the Russian Orthodox Church who, in need of the same patronage as the Russian masses, supported the strengthening of the patriarchic aspects of Russian society and culture. As the Russian Empire expanded into Central Asia after the retreat the Asian overlords in the 16th Century, this system of authoritarian rule was brought with them and found fertile ground on the windswept plains of Eurasia.

Southern Influences. Southern leadership influences on the region of Central Asia were the most complex of the three. Not just because the extent of the influences varied from leader to leader, but also because Islam played such an important role in what type of leadership existed. Islam is as much a philosophy of government as it is a philosophy of life and established strong, multi-directional influences (the religion, the culture, the history) on Middle Eastern leaders. The primary tenet of Islam, however, being submission to the will of Allah, (Goldschmidt, Jr., 1988: 43) this had a deep impact on the source and style of leadership within the growing Islamic world. Characteristically, the rulers of Islamic regimes were strong military despots, segregated from their people (the *ra'aya* or the "flocks"), and dependent upon enslaved soldiers to enforce their will (Kishlansky, et. al., 1995: 443). Much of these traditions had first been learned from the encounters Muslims had with the Sasanids of Iran in the early 7th Century and reinforced as the *ummah* (the community of the followers of Mohammed) grew larger and more powerful.

Yet despite the centralizing tendencies of Islam, the Muslim world was by no means unified under a single system of government. Soon after the death of the Prophet, the *ummah* split into two factions, each favoring a different heir to Mohammed's seat of power. This conflict of *Sunni* vs. *Shi'ite* was further compounded by the numerous political dynasties that were to spring up across the Muslim world. From the Umayyads in Syria to the Mamluks in Egypt and the Ottomans in Anatolia, the Muslim lands were inundated by a plethora of empires over a 1,200 year period. Extending from India to Morocco and Hungary to Sudan, no less than 32 Islamic "dynasties" existed during this time, several of which had competing claims to the Caliphate (Goldschmidt, Jr., 1988: 373-384). Yet, the one characteristic that nearly all of these kingdoms shared was authoritarian (and mostly despotic) leadership based on the primacy of Islam in the culture. As much of the southern part of Central Asia came under Islamic control, these leadership tendencies were transferred to the region.

The Kemalist Model

Given the historical influences on leadership in the states of Eurasia, why then can it be suggested that the system of government, and the pattern of leadership, established by Kemal Atatürk in the 1920s represents the best model for Central Asian leaders to utilize in bringing their states into the international community and completing their post-communist transition phase? Atatürk was very much set on establishing a western-oriented system of government, and had a strong aversion to the "traditional" politics that he had witnessed at the court of the Sultan. He saw the history of the Ottoman Empire as an anchor weighing down the development of Turkey, and worked diligently to rid Turkey of its historical reliance on tradition, culture and religion, all of which remain strong elements (and at times tools) in the

states of Central Asia today. What then is the justification for suggesting a Kemalist model, which appears to run counter to the natural historical tendencies of Eurasia?

The reasons are fairly simple. First, what many of the countries of Central Asia are experiencing today – the uncertainty brought about by the collapse of the only government (and an empire at that) most citizens have ever known, the efforts to join the international community on equal footing, the pull of historical circumstances, the influence of Islam – these have all been part of the Turkish experience at the time of Turkey’s formation. What most of the Eurasia states are now suffering through, Turkey has had first hand experience with, and has survived more or less intact, thanks in great part to Atatürk and his established model of government. Second, Turkey has close cultural ties with the region of Central Asia. At the least, we can see that if it is applied correctly, the Kemalist model does have the possibility of meshing well with the political and social culture of the peoples of Central Asia. Third, the Kemalist model, as is discussed below, is not so much about establishing democracy, but preparing the groundwork for the growth of democratic tendencies. The Kemalist model does not presume that citizens know what democracy is, have a sense of civil society or are inclined towards democratic behavior. As Lord Kinross has noted, Atatürk himself was a conflicted individual with his Occidental outlook and Oriental habits (Kinross, 1995: 32). Yet he understood the long-term need for democratic progression and development and thus established a state that, for all of its flaws, is centered on democratic principles and evolutionary growth of democratic behavior.

What exactly then is the Kemalist model? In 1923, Kemal Atatürk founded the new Republic of Turkey from the remnants of the Ottoman Empire. Much like the Soviet Union seven decades later, the Ottoman Empire had collapsed as a result of internal social distress, external pressures and ineffective government. The complexity of problems facing Atatürk forced him to adopt a loosely structured doctrine of development, one that could avoid the pitfalls of ideology (which Atatürk distained), yet provide a cohesive program for the citizens of this new state to follow. These guiding principles of the new Turkish state came to be known by 1931 as the “Six Arrows” of Kemalism, and were represented on the banner of the Republican People’s Party (CHP), the party of Atatürk (Kinross, 1995: 457).

Republicanism, populism, nationalism, and secularism were the first of the “arrows” of Kemalism. They were introduced at a time when Atatürk was attempting to build support for his newly founded republic. Elements within Turkish society were inclined to favor the past system of government over the radical new form introduced by Atatürk. The Gazi had to further contend with a significant foreign presence on Turkish soil (primarily Greek, French, Italian and British). These first four principles of Kemalism brought the people of Turkey together by asserting several new notions that were easily linked: the idea of a Turkish people, with their own land (nationalism), who can participate in the governing of the country (populism) and have a voice in its direction (republicanism) (Kramer, 2000: 8).

As the republican model met stronger reaction from the more traditional elements of Turkish society, Atatürk introduced his fifth and six principles, those of revolution and statism. The former principle (nowadays translated as “reformism”) was

intended to instill into the people a living sense of the democratic revolution that Atatürk had initiated, much as was done in Mexico in 1921 under the Institutional Revolutionary Party of the so-called Sonoran Dynasty. The latter principle was introduced as a means of guiding the economic development of Turkey that Atatürk knew would be followed by liberalized social mores.

At times, Atatürk had need to operate in a heavy handed manner, one that violated most of the principles of democratic government, but was allowed (to a certain extent) within the structure of Kemalism, as any deviance from the six principles stood in need of correction. As Atatürk was the president, and as the principles of Kemalism were open to interpretation, corrective measures that did seem to go against the notion of democracy were found acceptable within this context. Essentially Atatürk used authoritarian methods to achieve his goals – which were democratically oriented. He was looking at the “Big Picture” and understood that if Turkey wanted to achieve the level of development of the Western powers, the people needed to be coerced occasionally into acting properly (Kramer, 2000: 7). The ultimate goal of Kemalism was really to teach the people how to govern themselves, based on democratic means and free from the chains of the past. Kemalism emphatically was not liberal nor inherently democratic. It was tool used by a father to educate his “children” and to create a stable “homelife” where, when adulthood had been achieved, democracy and modernity would reign.

The Weaknesses of Kemalism

For all the benefits that Kemalism provided for the Turkish state, in the 70 years since its inception, Kemalism has foundered due to certain weaknesses in the doctrine. One of the main problems is that Kemalism itself is a transitional ideology on which to model government that was based on the state of the world in the 1920s. These basic principles that Atatürk introduced were intended to strengthen a nascent Turkish state, not to become the permanent mantra of a heavy-handed government. They were created as functional tools for the period, not as substitutes for the natural development of popular government (Kramer, 2000: 1). Many of the challenges that Atatürk feared would tear apart the country he had worked so hard to create, now no longer exist. The communist threat has vanished, the notion that European powers wanted to dissect Turkey no longer holds water (although some may argue that the process of globalization and the involvement of the IMF in Turkish affairs are simply a 21st Century version of the Capitulations which played such a devastating role on the economy and the psyche of Turkey), and Turks now appreciate, to a certain extent, the idea of democratic rule and popular participation in government. While it is true that Islamic fundamentalism has been on the rise in Turkey, this should be understood more in the context of democratic development than reactionary reversal.

A second problem that has been attached to Kemalism is its openness to interpretation. As an example, right-wing nationalists cite his pride in Turkey’s ancestry as a call for pan-Turkism, while socialists see his placing the state at the head of the economy as a sign of his leftist tendencies (Pope, 1997: 67). Those who followed Atatürk as the leaders of the Turkish government were able to use the intentional ambiguity of the Kemalist principles to justify almost any unpopular

action, the most obvious of which are the several military coups that Turkey has experienced over the last 40 years.

Finally, a lasting problem that has no real solution rests on the fact that Kemalism forced democratic development on the people of Turkey, many of whom were uncomfortable with the clash between modern (and Western) democratic values and those traditional values associated with a Muslim society. Democracy works best when it is developed at the grass roots and grows to encompass a political system. Atatürk understood this, but he also understood that the people of Turkey needed help in developing democratic tendencies. Thus, when the people balked at the actions of the government, Atatürk forced the issue, essentially letting his people know that they would become democratic and like it, or else. Unfortunately, Atatürk died at a stage of development that tended to emphasize the authoritarian aspects of Kemalism rather than the populist features. Thus, those who followed in his giant footsteps (most notably İsmet İnönü) were guided by a false (and incomplete) representation of the path that Atatürk had intended.

The Future of Central Asia

While it took the tragic events of September 11th, 2001 for the world to notice Central Asia, hopefully such another clarion call will not be needed to ensure the continued participation of developed countries in completing the transition from authoritarianism to “democracy” that is self-sustaining and viable. The ability of leaders in the great number of Eurasian states, particularly those of strict authoritarian bearing, to recognize the benefits of the Kemalist model is certainly and obviously not an easy task. And the model itself must be handled with care or many of the same failures that plague Turkey today could emerge at this important stage of transition. The Kemalist model is by no means perfect, but it does offer guidelines that can be used in an area of the world with similar, albeit lengthier, historical tendencies.

States such as Azerbaijan, with the elderly Heydar Aliyev, Turkmenistan, where Saparmurat Niyazov governs as an absolute dictator, and Uzbekistan, where the strong arm political style of İslom Karimov holds sway, will be hard pressed to adopt the Kemalist model. They have been entrenched in their systems of government for too long and their leaders are too old to readily contemplate such dramatic change. Aliyev, Karimov, and Niyazov are all too aware of the Pandora’s Box which may be opened should they introduce more liberal policies, and are unlikely to fiddle with the mechanisms of their governments.

For Kazakhstan and Kyrgystan there is greater hope, as both leaders in these states are younger and moderately more progressive than their peers. Nursultan Nazarbayev, who has governed since the Gorbachev era, is young enough (born in 1940) to adjust his methods of government and old enough to be concerned about his historical legacy. Much the same can be said for Askar Akayev (born 1944), the President of Kyrgystan. Although he was a new comer to the political field (having been the former head of the Academy of Sciences), he has quickly built a following for himself and remains quite popular. Nazarbayev, while representing the old Soviet school of government, was also a late entry into the system and is considered a benevolent contemporary dictator. By guaranteeing elections free from the taint of

corruption, by bringing together the two main ethnic groups (Kazakhs and Russian), and by opening up the political process, Nazarbayev can guide the people of Kazakhstan towards eventual democracy. Akayev, too, must deal more openly with his constituency, ending the activities that typify authoritarian rule, which in his case means primarily tinkering with the constitution and creating political infighting to weaken prospective opponents. By strengthening the trust of the people in the system of government, both Akayev and Nazarbayev can move their states towards more open and representative democracy.

Both Georgia and Tajikistan have had difficulty with open civil conflict. Neither state has a leader that is particularly good at creating a sustained peace, although Eduard Shevardnadze has significant prestige in the international community that, if better utilized, could lead to the involvement of foreign states in assisting Georgia during this time of trouble. The first step necessary for each of these states is constructing a concept of identity that can include all segments of each of these societies. The excesses of the 1980 Turkish revolution and its aftermath aside, one strength of the Kemalist model was that the principle of nationalism created an image of the Turk that was worthy of a people with such a long history and such a rich culture. Circassians, Laz, and even Kurds identify very much with being a Turk and being "Turkish." If the leadership of both Georgia and Tajikistan could create an identity of their peoples that was inclusive rather than exclusive then the foundations would be built for construction of a state where civil conflict would not be a concern.

Of the Central Asian states discussed in this paper, only Armenia seems poised to make a leap to the Kemalist model. Robert Kocharian's succession to the Presidency in 1998 brought new leadership to power that has the benefit of a strong political machine behind it, and significant support from the population (even with factoring in voter fraud). As a country, Armenia also benefits from strong external support, particularly in France and the US, and a homogenous ethnic population. Economic development has increased dramatically since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the political instability that characterized the Lev Ter-Petrosyan administration has diminished (although it has not ended). What is left to do is for Kocharian to encourage the positive aspects of social and political development that have surfaced in Armenia and to forgo the desire to deal with troubles in a swift, authoritarian manner.

Conclusion

Suggesting that the states of Central Asia adopt models of government that are not completely democratic may not be the most popular idea in a post-communist world, but it is in fact what is needed in the region. The historical experiences of the peoples of Eurasia do not lend themselves to the development of democratic institutions that are capable of functioning for the benefit of the citizens of the region. However, by suggesting a model of government that is not inherently democratic does not mean that democracy will not develop in Central Asia. It simply means that it will take time to foster the growth of systems of government that are responsive to the people and not the tools of the authoritarian elite. The Kemalist model can work in Central Asia, if it is applied carefully and if its growth is monitored closely. While after the death of Atatürk the model fell into misuse in

Turkey, this need not be the case in the states of Eurasia. And as with Turkey, change will take time, but democracy eventually can flourish in a region that is not yet ready for democracy (Lane, 2002).

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