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**TURKEY'S ELECTION RESULTS  
AND TAYYIP ERDOGAN'S ALTERNATIVE SCENARIOS**

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**Abstract**

This paper examines how even after the June 7th, 2015 elections in Turkey and the shuttering of Erdoğan's dreams to form a strong AKP government and transform the role of the Turkish Presidency the latter still has the upper hand to change political events and return AKP to power once more. Namely, through Turkey's political parties differences to get together and to cooperate along with his ability to change events through their weakness and similarities with his own AKP platform. MHP's Kurdish Phobias, CHP's inability to transform itself into a modern Social Democratic platform and abandon its past policies along with HDP's wishes to become a

main stream Turkish political party might be enough to sustain AKP into power and continue its Neo Ottoman agenda. Finally, this paper is concluding with Erdoğan's ability to manipulate events through his intelligence services and AKP's state managing apparatus by projecting a forged sense of security and economic stability that was prevalent prior the elections vis-à-vis uncertainty and chaos scenarios resulting from weak coalition governments.

On June 7, 2015 during Turkey's General election day Justice and Development's Party (AKP) voting constituency saw a dive from 49 to 40.8 percent, giving it only 258 seats out of 550 seats at parliament. Leaving the party 18 seats short of forming a single-party government as it has done since 2002. However, in spite of the electorate outcome and the immediate derailing of Erdoğan's planned constitutional reforms to strengthen the role of the Turkish presidency due to HDP electoral success, the game for AKP's control of Anatolia is far from over.

More precisely, the Kemalist leftist Republican People's Party (CHP) did not see any increase in its support. It remained static at its 2011 election results (25%) while from the status quo parties, just the extreme right wing Nationalistic Movement Party (MHP) increased its percentage from 13 percent to 16 percent. It acquired an extra 3 percent mainly from AKP's conservative Islamic voting pool that became dissatisfied with AKP policies or by Erdoğan's political behavior since the Presidential elections of 2014.

Only Turkey's pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) saw a significance increase of its electorate percentage from 6 percent since the last elections, to almost 13 percent currently. Thus, obtaining a negotiation tool that could be used for its political purposes and Kurdish self

governing aspirations especially now that no party has the necessary electorate majority to form a government. Few analysts have doubts of what is at stake for the future of this nation's domestic and external policies vis-à-vis the Turkish people and the surrounding international environment. This raised the question which Party from the Turkish opposition (CHP, MHP, HDP) will share power with Erdoğan's AKP and what will be given in return for this act to take place.

The alternative is having President Tayyip Erdoğan declaring new elections after 45 days due to lack of forming a minority government between the opposition and the AKP. This would prove to the masses of Anatolia that there is no alternative for political stability other than the rule of AKP as a single entity once more. A nightmare scenario for the opposition in Turkey, knowing in fact that this current political setting might bring after a brief break a triumphant AKP back to power.<sup>1</sup>

Tayyip Erdoğan's party might have had its wings clipped but its legacy left inside Turkey is still alive. Despite Turkey's lira downfall vis-à-vis the Euro and the dollar, the overall economy is not so bad, compared with other neighboring countries in the region. After all, Turkey is a member of the G20 major economies block, which became possible mainly by the liberalization of the Turkish financial system and by the “*Arab Gulf Monarchies oriented Green Islamic*” funding. In return, Turkey has promised to provide cooperation on matters of security and intelligence issues and above all, a “Sunni sword protection” in times of need against any

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<sup>1</sup> " Erdoğan, master tactician, seen angling for new election", 12 July,2015, [www.todayszaman.com](http://www.todayszaman.com), available at: [http://www.todayszaman.com/national\\_erdogan-master-tactician-seen-angling-for-new-election\\_385823.html](http://www.todayszaman.com/national_erdogan-master-tactician-seen-angling-for-new-election_385823.html)

potential enemies of its Gulf donors, namely that of Iranian influence in the area. Turkey's mutual defense military agreement with the Qatari government to station Turkish troops into that small Gulf Monarchy is a statement by itself of what might follow in the near future.<sup>2</sup> In addition, notable is the rise of Turkish military presence as well in the Republic of Albania.<sup>3</sup>

But above all, the Justice and Development Party has managed to increase Sunni religious conservatism and solidify it into the Turkish society inner psych. It legitimized the İmam Hatip Okulları (Islamic High Schools) allowed women wearing head scarves into public places, forced CHP leadership<sup>4</sup> to even accepting the value of these religious schools into the Turkish society, purged high echelon Kemalist military officers that could cause issues to his

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<sup>2</sup>Serkan Demirtaş, "Turkey to deploy troops in Qatar in line with military deal," hurriyetdailynews, available at: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-to-deploy-troops-in-qatar-in-line-with-military-deal.aspx?pageID=238&nID=83677&NewsCatID=510>.

<sup>3</sup>The naval base of Avlona (Pasa limani) was built in 1957, initially as a naval base for Soviet Submarine presence in the Adriatic Sea and could accommodate 12 submarines of mixed Albanian and Soviet personnel. However the removal of Albania from Moscow's influence in 1961 by Enver Hoxha Soviet Naval Assistance was terminated. Nevertheless, the same period along with the construction of the main base of the Pasa limani, the Soviets manufactured approximately 40 kilometers further South in the region of Cheimaras, another underground submarine base that of Porto Palermo which is often confused with the Pasa limani. Ironically this base if fitted accordingly could host components of Turkey's attack U-209 Submarine fleet since it is large enough and easily hidden from public scrutiny. Another surprising factor of the Turkish Albanian military cooperation is the continuous training of Albanians pilots to flight F16. Thus, signifying Greek fears that Turkey might hand over to Albania a substantive surplus from her third generation of air force planes. For more information about Turkish Albanian military collaboration on both issues and many more is including the upgrading of Albanian airport facilities. See: Turkish Albanian Cooperation: A potential threat of Greek Sovereignty (Greek Translation), greek-nation, 27 February 2013, available at: [http://greeknation.blogspot.com/2013/02/blog-post\\_2380.html](http://greeknation.blogspot.com/2013/02/blog-post_2380.html). See, also, Επεκτείνεται η τουρκική στρατιωτική βοήθεια στην Αλβανία, 29, October, 2013, strategyreports.wordpress.com, available at: <https://strategyreports.wordpress.com/2013/10/29/%CE%B5%CF%80%CE%B5%CE%BA%CF%84%CE%B5%CE%AF%CE%BD%CE%B5%CF%84%CE%B1%CE%B9-%CE%B7>. See, also, APH Άρης Αμπατζής, "Τουρκική βάση στην Αδριατική", 26, May, 2010, Enet.gr, available at: <http://www.enet.gr/?i=news.el.article&id=166172>

<sup>4</sup> CHP leader vows imam-hatip religious schools won't be closed down, 28, April, 2015, todayszaman.com, available at: [http://www.todayszaman.com/anasayfa\\_chp-leader-vows-imam-hatip-religious-schools-wont-be-closed-down\\_379186.html](http://www.todayszaman.com/anasayfa_chp-leader-vows-imam-hatip-religious-schools-wont-be-closed-down_379186.html). See, also, Confiscation of media is covert martial law, main opposition leader says, 17, May, 2015, todayszaman.com, available at: [http://www.todayszaman.com/anasayfa\\_confiscation-of-media-is-covert-martial-law-main-opposition-leader-says\\_380940.html](http://www.todayszaman.com/anasayfa_confiscation-of-media-is-covert-martial-law-main-opposition-leader-says_380940.html)

agenda, and simultaneously pleased the military apparatus with huge indigenous defence procurement projects. It also placed the foundations for an autonomous defence production that has the potential also to elevate Turkey into the Nuclear weapons family of nations.

Last but not least, he reintroduced the Ottoman Legacies of the Imperial past along with its religious connotations that are equally shared by the Nationalistic party of MHP, the religious Conservative Felicity Party and the Islamic Nationalistic Great Union Party alliance (Saadet Partisi ve Büyük Birlik Partisi) and also even by small segments of the CHP and HDP parties voting population. Pax Ottomanica is alive and present in the current political system. One has only to look at Hürriyet; a secular news paper that similarly follows conservative newspapers on the neo-Ottoman Cultural Revolution on matters of Osmanlı, (Ottoman) past endeavors.

This historical trend was totally unheard some years ago, since the Ottoman period was looked by the Kemalist elite as demeaning and a backward example for the 20th century Republican Turkey to follow. Finally his Turkish Intel Spy Chief Dr. Hakan Fidan sat down to the negotiation table with Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) Kurdish separatist movement imprisoned leader Abdullah Öcalan and its political wing KCK (Kurdish Communities Union) in order to find a peaceful resolution to the Kurdish question, that seeks more cultural and political autonomy from Ankara's grip. The PKK has been fighting an armed insurgency with the Turkish Armed forces that has taken the lives of more than 40.000 people and with the potential if it remains unchecked to cost even more in lives and possibly parts from the territorial integrity of Turkey.

However, despite, the above mentioned successes, Tayyip Erdoğan's rise into the Turkish political pantheon did not last long enough to accomplish his final dream of strengthening the Turkish Presidency, allowing him to rule as the sole power inside Anatolia. The reasons of this failure are twofold. First, his egoistic autocratic policies and polemic competitiveness versus certain former political allies namely that of former Turkish president, Abdullah Gül and that of Islamic religious preacher Fethullah Gülen. Policies that chipped away points from certain Islamic audiences, which instead voted for the National Alliance (*Millî İttifak*) between Felicity Party and the great Union Party or MHP's political platforms. Secondly his failure to initially support the Kurdish enclave of Kobaniyê against Islamic States' of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) forces.

Kurdish Nationalism versus ISIS atrocities proved a strong paragon that was ignored by Erdoğan's Geopolitical aims in the Levant concerning the support of Al Nusra and ISIS forces against Assad's regime. At least 4 to 5 percent of Kurdish traditional AKP Kurdish voters switched allegiance to HDP allowing it to pass the ten percent threshold and enter as a single political entity into the Turkish parliament.<sup>5</sup>A deadly political miscalculation on his behalf that cost him the majority rule in the Turkish Parliament.

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<sup>5</sup>Etyen Mahçupyan, "where have the nine points gone?",13,June,2013, dailysabah.com, available at: <http://www.dailysabah.com/columns/etyen-mahcupyan/2015/06/13/where-have-the-9-points-gone>

## **Possible Coalitions**

Returning to the original question of which political platform can hold a coalition government with AKP the best answer lies primary with MHP's elite governing ambitions and its foreign policy similarities shared by AKP's geopolitical agenda.

Finally, the other alternative lies with HDP's self governing dreams and that of swallowing its political pride in order to acquire cultural autonomy inside Turkey. How far will HDP leader Demirtaş go to achieve a loose federal self-government inside Anatolia, but always under the banner of the Turkish flag despite his refusal to join or support an AKP minority government, is another question.

As far as CHP goes, despite certain foreign policy overlapping concerning Greece, Cyprus, the Balkans and Turkey's Defence projects, there is a huge societal chasm that has its roots since Mustafa Kemal's times. Not to mention the Alevi Sunni dichotomy that perceives CHP as the Alevi's main political platform of resistance against the total Sunnification of Anatolia. It is not a secret that Assad's Baathist Alawite administration has been openly identified by the AKP and the conservative populace as having many commonalities with CHP's structure and its Alevi voters. On balance AKP is what CHP is not. Religious, conservative, anti-Kemalist and above all an advent admirer of the Ottoman past.

Yet, in politics nothing is impossible but currently as the world turns, this probable coalition seems unfeasible to materialize, unless [Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu](#) (leader of CHP) agrees to

Erdoğan's conditions about strengthening the role of the Turkish Presidency and AKP in return gives something of equal value to its Kemalist political nemesis.

After all, it maybe the Kurdish threat in Syria and in Turkey that might bond them together to face it. Of course for many Turkish politicians, businessmen, intellectuals, journalists, as Murat Yetkin claims, a CHP and AKP minority coalition would have been the ideal one.<sup>6</sup> One that could bring about a new constitution, including a reasonable solution to the Kurdish problem as they claim. However, they fail to answer how reasonable is a Kurdish resolution with CHP's domestic agenda since CHP has equally historic nationalistic tendencies that also oppose a political solution to Turkey's Kurdish issue, like MHP, despite its recent opening on the Kurdish question.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, a possible MHP minority coalition, with HDP and CHP is out of the question as well. Devlet Bahçeli chairman of the MHP and his party are the biggest polemics of the latest AKP's peace initiative with the Kurdish insurgence. Turkish nationalism versus Kurdish self government is a topic that MHP cannot budge on at all. MHP's Chairman Bahçeli openly identifies the Kurdish peace initiative as Turkey's dissolution talks.

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<sup>6</sup> Murat.Yetkin, "The condition for an AKP-CHP coalition", 9, June 2015, hurriyetdailynews, available at: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/the-condition-for-an-akp-chp-coalition.aspx?pageID=449&nID=83684&NewsCatID=409>

<sup>7</sup> According to Ceren Kenar: "Turkish nationalism is the founding tenet of both the Republican People's Party (CHP) and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) — both of which have been reluctant to meet Kurdish demands and label the PKK as an illegitimate, terrorist organization.... In an ironic twist, however, these very same opponents of the peace process now see the HDP as the last hope to avert Erdoğan's goal of implementing a presidential system. The daily newspaper Hürriyet, for instance, runs the slogan "Turkey belongs to the Turks," and has long been an adamant defender of the Turkish army's oppressive and bloody campaign against the Kurds.... Quoted from, Ceren Kenar, "[Erdogan's Kurdish Chickens Are Coming Home to Roost](#)" 4, June, 2015, foreignpolicy.com, available at: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/06/04/erdogan-turkey-elections-kurds-akp-hdp-executive-power/>

Thus, sharing power within a HDP and CHP coalition will mean the end of MHP as we know it. Therefore MHP or HDP joining or supporting an AKP minority government are the only clearly feasible alternatives. Of course, each party has its own reasons and the end justifies the means, but what the future will entail for them is another question that needs to be seen in the near future as well.

### **MHP's Platform similarities with AKP's overall political Schema's**

Regardless of what the future has in store for Erdoğan's political career, nobody can deny that AKP has transformed Turkey religiously and more geopolitically assertive. Nationalism along with Islam has become more entrenched into Turkish society. Its Ottoman glorious past has been revived into the new generations' aspirations to see their nation leading once more in the Levant and in the eastern Mediterranean basin. In recent times Turkey has witnessed a Sunni cultural Blitzkrieg revival by the AKP that converted former Christian churches turned Museums into mosques again.<sup>8</sup> Attempting to project the victory of the Ottomans versus the infidel Byzantine Greek legacy for a second time. The subliminal neo-Ottoman message here does not

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<sup>8</sup> In a similar fashion like the Hagia Sophias in İznik, Nikaia (western Turkey), and in the Black Sea province of Trabzon, that were converted back to mosques in 2011 and 2013 respectively the Hagia Sofia of Edirne (Adrianople) will share the same fate of becoming a mosque. Serdar Korucu, "Historic Hagia Sophia in a Turkish province to be re-opened as mosque", 30, April, 2015, hurriyetdailynews, available at: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/historic-hagia-sophia-in-a-turkish-province-to-be-re-opened-as-mosque-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=81776&NewsCatID=375>. See also, Islam center stage as Turkish election campaign enters final week, 31, May, 2010, todayszaman.com, available at: [http://www.todayszaman.com/national\\_islam-center-stage-as-turkish-election-campaign-enters-final-week\\_382196.html](http://www.todayszaman.com/national_islam-center-stage-as-turkish-election-campaign-enters-final-week_382196.html)

remain only in the Byzantine side but also to all potential enemies of the new rising Hegemonic Turkey.

For MHP, a Turkish Geopolitical ascends among the rest of the nations and transforming itself as a *Middle Power* is a vision that MHP likewise cherishes. In issues concerning Greece, Cyprus, the Turkish geopolitical infusion into the Balkan Peninsula, MHP rides along with Erdoğan's strategic agenda. In addition, MHP seems to concur with Ankara's strategic dealings with Moscow, despite past and current historical enmities from the treatment of Turkish allies like the Crimean tartars or the Chechen cause. Both MHP and AKP know that acquiring nuclear, military and infrastructural technology, China and Russia is the way to go. According to Professor Ziya Öniş: "*Turkey has recently moved towards the China-Russia axis*".<sup>9</sup> Putting into action Lord Palmerstone quote that "there no friends in international relations but permanent interests that drive foreign policy relations."

The current Russian isolation from the west due to the Ukrainian crisis has presented Ankara with a major opportunity not to be missed regarding the latter's ambition of becoming a major energy global hub. Since the South Stream project was cancelled by Putin during his visit to Turkey in December 2014 and instead a Turkish stream was proposed aiming to transfer Russian natural gas to Europe via Turkey in its place, Ankara looks to score high on energy

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<sup>9</sup>Kamil Arli, Turkey's loosened ties with EU negatively affects its foreign policy, Öniş says , 22 May 2015, [todayszaman.com](http://www.todayszaman.com/anasayfa_turkeys-loosened-ties-with-eu-negatively-affects-its-foreign-policy-onis-says_381508.html), available at: [http://www.todayszaman.com/anasayfa\\_turkeys-loosened-ties-with-eu-negatively-affects-its-foreign-policy-onis-says\\_381508.html](http://www.todayszaman.com/anasayfa_turkeys-loosened-ties-with-eu-negatively-affects-its-foreign-policy-onis-says_381508.html). See also Eve Conant Turkey Goes Nuclear, "Thanks to Russia", 21 November,2012, PulitzerCentre.org, available at: <http://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/russia-turkey-nuclear-technology-energy-reactors-government-economy>.See also, Turkey to send 100 students to Russia for nuclear education, 26,May,2015, hurriyetdailynews.com, available at: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-to-send-80-students-to-russia-for-nuclear-education-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=82977&NewsCatID=348>

routes diplomacy. Possible even persuading Iran and Azerbaijan to contribute with their gas resources in this major project.<sup>10</sup>

Overall, MHP foreign agenda does not differ from AKP's. The only foreign scheme that MHP had an objection to is with Erdoğan's Syrian regime policy change due that he failed to foresee Bashar al-Assad's survivability skills along with the dangers it might have on Kurdish nationalism in the neighborhood. If unchecked it might open Pandora's Box on matters of Kurdish national determination and Turkish interests in the region. The recent gains of YPG (Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units) with the help of U.S.-led coalition airstrikes against ISIS jihadists concerning the capture of a strategic pass along with the town of Tal Abyad (Girê Spî in Kurdish) justified MHP's Kurdish fears.

This not only eliminated an ISIS major hub for volunteers entering from Turkey into Syria and then to ISIS Syrian Capital Raqqah, but it also allowed for the unification of self declared Syrian Kurdish cantons of Cizîrê and Kobaniyê to get together. Also an YPG victory means automatic Kurdish control over 300 kilometers of the Syrian-Turkish border. It should be noted that Kurdish forces declared autonomy in the three cantons of, Efrînê, Cizîrê and Kobaniyê in Rojava Syrian Kurdistan after Assad's' government forces withdrew from the region during the start of the Syrian Civil War. Thus, opening the eventuality of uniting with Efrînê canton in the near future. More accurately if Syrian Kurdistan gets unified putting aside independence dreams

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<sup>10</sup>Rufiz Hafizoglu, "Azerbaijani gas in 'Turkish Stream'"23, June, 2015, trend news agency, available at: <http://en.trend.az/business/energy/2409654.html>. See also, Iran might use Turkish Stream pipeline to deliver gas to Europe: official, 3,June,2015, Daily Sabah, available at: <http://www.dailysabah.com/energy/2015/06/03/iran-might-use-turkish-stream-pipeline-to-deliver-gas-to-europe-official>

there is always the suggestion of making a new pipeline from Northern Iraq into the Syrian Port of Lattakia under an agreement with Damascus in the near future.

It is not coincidence then, that one of the three conditions of MHP's to form a minority government with AKP is the termination of the settlement process, which the MHP maintains is a process that would lead to the disintegration of the country.<sup>11</sup> Another MHP demand is that Erdoğan must remain independent as Turkey's president and not get occupied, in the affairs of the government thus violating the constitution and lastly, those allegedly involved in corruption (graft case) are called to account to the Turkish Justice.<sup>12</sup> As far as the first condition it happens to be a little complicated given the fact that PM Davutoğlu has declared explicitly that the AK Party is determined to go ahead with the settlement process with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) regardless what the outcome of coalition negotiations with opposition parties might be. However, both Parties can use the Kurdish process for the benefit of their own political interests. More precisely AKP in case of a coalition government with MHP can adhere to its Kurdish voters and the rest of the Turkish populace that supports it, but MHP is the main reason for postponing the Peace process. Similarly MHP can declare openly that recent Kurdish

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<sup>11</sup> Umut Erdem, " MHP presents conditions for formation of coalition with the AKP", 17, June,2015, hurriyetdailynews, available at: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/mhp-presents-conditions-for-formation-of-coalition-with-the-akp-.aspx?pageID=517&nID=84129&NewsCatID=338>

<sup>12</sup> Four ministers in the former AK Party government left their posts under claims of corruption a week after a graft probe went public on Dec. 17, 2013. See, Bahçeli rules out coalition with AK Party unless graft suspects face trial, 17, June, 2015, todayzaman.com, available, at: [http://www.todayszaman.com/national\\_bahceli-rules-out-coalition-with-ak-party-unless-graft-suspects-face-trial\\_388563.html](http://www.todayszaman.com/national_bahceli-rules-out-coalition-with-ak-party-unless-graft-suspects-face-trial_388563.html).

gains in Syria and stopping the Kurdish peace initiative is above all other previous MHP's demands on AKP.

Therefore is not a surprise to anybody that MHP has already taken the initiative and advised the government to announce the formation of a security belt in the region in order to protect both its borders and the security of Turkmens in Syria. According to Bahçeli *“This so-called Kurdistan corridor between northern Iraq and the Mediterranean is a chemical bomb thrown at Turkey. This is a national issue and above parties,”* he said.<sup>13</sup> A goal that President *Erdoğan* is equally looking to achieve since the start of the Syrian Civil war despite continuous US objections on the matter.<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, apart from the National Security reasons that prompt MHP to cooperate with AKP, Devlet Bahçeli is also familiar with other two main causes that push the party apparatus on this direction. First according with the recent polls taken by IPSOS for CNN TÜRK after June elections suggest that the AKP would have seen 4% increase if voters had known the election results beforehand.<sup>15</sup> While the MHP would have seen 2% decrease, the CHP would had remained static and the HDP would have seen 1% decrease. But also it indicated the possibility that some 22% of MHP voters would have voted for the AKP if they had known the success of

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<sup>13</sup> Umut Erdem, " MHP presents conditions for formation of coalition with the AKP", 17, June,2015, available at: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/mhp-presents-conditions-for-formation-of-coalition-with-the-akp-.aspx?pageID=517&nID=84129&NewsCatID=338>

<sup>14</sup> Tolga Tanış, "US: Safe zones in Syria linked to Turkey's steps", 8May,2015, hurriyetdailynews.com, available at:<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/us-safe-zones-in-syria-linked-to-turkeys-steps-.aspx?PageID=238&NID=82102&NewsCatID=352>

<sup>15</sup>Slight rise in AKP support after results announced: IPSOS poll, June 10,2015, hurriyetdailynews, available at: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/slight-rise-in-akp-support-after-results-announced-ipsos-poll.aspx?pageID=238&nID=83759&NewsCatID=338>

HDP along with the inconclusive result ahead of time.<sup>16</sup> Secondly, like in any political party in the world, MHP followers, and the party's provincial organizations know that the party has been absent from power for many years, therefore this opportunity should not be missed.<sup>17</sup> Given the fact that its electoral power is enough to keep AKP and MHP combined for a long time into influencing Turkish politics and geopolitical affairs in the region.

As Daily Sabah claims, there are already reports that MHP and AKP have started dealing behind closed doors despite initial objections by Bahçeli and his political cadres to cooperate with AKP. It is said that, MHP wants nine ministries to be run by the party while AK Party heavily insists on holding the Justice and Interior Ministries in order to continue its fight against Gülen's parallel structure into Turkey's civil and government institutions.<sup>18</sup> But what the past has taught Turkish political life is that MHP has been there for AKP when it was in dire need for political support. The best example lies with the 2007 Presidential Abdullah Gül, candidacy and the massive popular secular outrage against it. Secular Turks objected to his candidacy on the fact that his wife wore a head scarf. An anathema from the Kemalist's point of view especially for the Presidents posture in a secular Turkey and his image vis-à-vis the rest of the world. Here,

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<sup>16</sup>Slight rise in AKP support after results announced: IPSOS poll, June 10,2015, available at: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/slight-rise-in-akp-support-after-results-announced-ipsos-poll.aspx?pageID=238&nID=83759&NewsCatID=338>

<sup>17</sup>Merve Aydoğan, "MHP supporters urge party to come into power with a coalition", 10, June, 2015, dailysabah.com, available at: <http://www.dailysabah.com/politics/2015/06/10/mhp-supporters-urge-party-to-come-into-power-with-a-coalition>.

<sup>18</sup> AK Party and MHP discuss conditions of coalition behind closed doors, 17,June,2015, dailysabah.com, available at: <http://www.dailysabah.com/politics/2015/06/17/ak-party-and-mhp-discuss-conditions-of-coalition-behind-closed-doors>

MHP took a neutral stance on the matter and most importantly did not side with the Kemalist organized mass demonstrations on this issue repeating the same policy once more during the 2013 Gezi Park demonstrations.

Therefore, only time will tell if and when the Anatolian political bargaining will grant results concerning the possibilities of seeing a MHP and AKP coalition come into power. For sure the chemistry is there however it takes two to tango.

### **HDP's possible motives for joining or supporting an AKP minority government**

For the first time in modern Anatolian History the Kurdish question has transformed itself into an elected political Party, one that broke the chains of a 10 percent threshold placed by the earlier shadowy periods of the Turkish deep state in action. A dark era of Turkish and Kurdish history, that is connected with numerous acts of violence and mayhem that has the potential to repeat itself if neo-Ottoman aspirations and Turkish ultra nationalism prevail over Peace and common sense. More precisely during the late 80's and 90's a terror campaign had been waged between the PKK and the Turkish state but also between Kurds themselves. In the 1990's a Kurdish Islamic terrorist organization named Hezbollah (not to be associated with one in Lebanon) was recruited by Turkey's "deep state", *"an allegedly antidemocratic group of senior spooks, military officers and members of the judiciary, to murder hundreds of PKK members and supporters"*.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Huda-Par's emergence, 23,November,2013,Economist,available at:<http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21590595-islamist-party-turkeys-kurds-huda-pars-emergence>

A phenomenon that has the potential to recur itself, this time between HDP and Hûda-Par (Free Cause Party) the legalized since 2012 Kurdish Islamic wing of Hezbollah. Hûda-Par uses Sunni Islamic traditions and religion as unified platform between Kurds and Turks in order to create an Islamic state under Sharia (Islamic legal System) rule, while HDP adheres mainly to Kurdish Nationalism as means of self determination.<sup>20</sup> For Hûda-Par priority has been to radiate itself as an Islamist party rather than a Kurdish party. [Burcu Ozcelik substantiates her claims by denoting that:](#) *"Its program was published in Arabic and Turkish before Kurdish. When Huda-Par explicitly defends Kurdish rights, it does so within a wider discussion of Islamic social justice values".*<sup>21</sup> Furthermore Hûda-Par has been accused of compliance with AKP aims since both parties are governed by a sense of commonality that draws upon rhetoric of shared Islamic principles.<sup>22</sup> What is more alarming is the murderous ferocity between HDP and Hûda-Par sympathizers that took place in October of 2014 during the Kobaniyê crisis. Stemming from Hûda-Par, indirect support of ISIS and Ankara's idle, reaction against the atrocities committed by the Jihadists in Western Syria versus HDP / YPG supporters in the area.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Huda-Par's emergence, 23, November, 2013, <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21590595-islamist-party-turkeys-kurds-huda-pars-emergence>.

<sup>21</sup>[Burcu Ozcelik](#), "Turkey's Other Kurds: Between the Islamists and a Hard Place", 4, May, 2015, [foreignaffairs.com](http://foreignaffairs.com), available at: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2015-05-04/turkeys-other-kurds>

<sup>22</sup>[Burcu Ozcelik](#), "Turkey's Other Kurds", available at: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2015-05-04/turkeys-other-kurds>

<sup>23</sup> It should be noted that 50 percent of ISIS recruits in Turkey are sympathizers of the Huda Par party and of Kurdish origin. See, William Armstrong, "INTERVIEW: Critical period for Hezbollah in Turkey's tense southeast " 20, June, 2015, [hurriyetdailynews](http://hurriyetdailynews.com), available at:

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/interview-critical-period-for-hizbullah-in-turkeys-tense-southeast.aspx?pageID=238&nID=84243&NewsCatID=338>

During the recent electoral run up there was a series of bombings on HDP political offices in Adana and Mersin, days before the June 2015 elections and ended with the deadly explosion in Diyarbakir on June 5.<sup>24</sup> The attack wounded more than 100 people and caused the life of four people. The attacks culminated with the recent assassination of Aytaç Baran a Huda-Par leading member only to be followed with the reprisal assassination of three HDP affiliates the same night. Immediately HDP denied any connection with the killing of Baran with only Huda-Par taking a negative approach on this matter by blaming PKK as the sole proprietor behind Baran's death.<sup>25</sup>

All these events could open the Pandora's Box for possible similar intimidations that could easily culminate into disorder and anarchy in Turkey's area of Kurdistan. Many political commentators claim that uncertainty and chaos in south-eastern Turkey or even to the rest of Anatolia will benefit mainly the AKP's performance if new elections are to be declared, due to the absence of forming a minority government. Thus, Turkish nationalism and a forged sense of security that was prevalent prior the elections accompanied by AKP economic success in

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<sup>24</sup> The Turkish government accused the DHKP/C a leftist terrorist organization as being the mastermind of those terrorist actions, while the CHP and HDP parties took a different approach on this matter. CHP accused that AKP's provocation policies were behind on this affair while HDP moved one step further by openly naming AKP's and Huda /ISIL sympathizers as the main culprits of these attacks. See, Fingerprints point to ISIL in bomb attacks against HDP, not DHKP/C,22,May,2015, [todayszaman.com](http://www.todayszaman.com), available at: [http://www.todayszaman.com/anasayfa\\_fingerprints-point-to-isil-in-bomb-attacks-against-hdp-not-dhkpc\\_381510.html](http://www.todayszaman.com/anasayfa_fingerprints-point-to-isil-in-bomb-attacks-against-hdp-not-dhkpc_381510.html). See also, Fourth victim dies from attack on Turkey party rally,13,June,2015, [hurriyetdailynews.com](http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com), available at:<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/fourth-victim-dies-from-attack-on-turkey-party-rally.aspx?pageID=517&nID=83940&NewsCatID=335>. See also, CHP's Sağlar: Turkey facing imminent threat of Erdoğan's 'deep state' 14,June,2915,[todayszaman.com](http://www.todayszaman.com),available at: [http://www.todayszaman.com/anasayfa\\_chps-saglar-turkey-facing-imminent-threat-of-erdogans-deep-state\\_386564.html](http://www.todayszaman.com/anasayfa_chps-saglar-turkey-facing-imminent-threat-of-erdogans-deep-state_386564.html)

<sup>25</sup>Sibel Hurtas, "Can PKK, Turkey's Hezbollah reconcile?"24,June,2015,[al-monitor](http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/06/turkey-syria-kurds-turkish-hezbollah-reconcile-isis-pkk.html) available at: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/06/turkey-syria-kurds-turkish-hezbollah-reconcile-isis-pkk.html>

comparison with the Kemalist past will in the short run benefit Erdoğan's electoral goals.<sup>26</sup> These political conditions are easily identified by the pious Muslim population of Anatolia that could easily retract votes from MHP and even nullify the (*Millî İttifak*) National Alliance's recent 2% gain back into the fold.

Now regardless of Selahattin Demirtaş statements made immediately after the June 7, 2015 elections that HDP will not cooperate with AKP in order to form a coalition government should not be taken at face value and the reasons are many.

For the first time HDP will have the ability to influence somehow the Turkish government but above all, it could push Kurdish aspirations of political and cultural autonomy into becoming a reality. After all, AKP is the only party that took the initiative to solve the Kurdish question regardless of its true intentions on the matter. But HDP's greatest victory is that it managed to prove to the world and in Turkey that is here to stay in spite terrorist bombings to its offices and Erdoğan's religious propaganda to persuade Kurdish pious muslim voters to vote for AKP.

According to Erik Meyersson of the overall 13.1% HDP received, [4.2% came from former AKP voters\(1.5 million conservative Kurds\)](#) and 1.9% from former CHP (leftist Alevi)

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<sup>26</sup> Erdoğan, master tactician, seen angling for new election, 12, June, 2015, todayzaman.com, available at: [http://www.todayszaman.com/national\\_erdogan-master-tactician-seen-angling-for-new-election\\_385823.html](http://www.todayszaman.com/national_erdogan-master-tactician-seen-angling-for-new-election_385823.html). See also, Snap vote 'inevitable' if no gov't formed by deadline, says president, 14, June, 2015, todayzaman.com, available at: [http://www.todayszaman.com/national\\_snap-vote-inevitable-if-no-govt-formed-by-deadline-says-president\\_386263.html](http://www.todayszaman.com/national_snap-vote-inevitable-if-no-govt-formed-by-deadline-says-president_386263.html)

voters. But what is more amazing is that about 2% of the votes for the HDP translating into 1.1 million people came from Turkish voters with no Kurdish connection to the HDP.<sup>27</sup> It is no surprise to say then that seeing HDP and Turkish flags together in Kurdish rallies paid dividend to Demirtaş overall policy of portraying the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) as not just a Kurdish party but a party for all citizens of Anatolia. After all, HDP was mainly the first party to include other minorities in its ranks only to followed by CHP and AKP soon after.

Secondly, a HDP into supporting an AKP government might see a small percentage of its people joining the Turkish government institutions thus acquiring a positive role into Turkey's political life and foreign image. It is not a secret that, Abdullah Öcalan's niece Dilek Öcalan, ran as an HDP candidate and won. Stipulating the matter that historical family names along with the political gains stemming from them are equally identified with the ongoing affairs that occur as well in Turkish main stream politics.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Metin Gurcan, Will PKK let Kurdish politics move away from violence?18, June,2015,al-monitor,availableat:<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/06/turkey-kurds-to-decide-armed-struggle-or-civilian-politics.html#ixzz3e9GyGtqZ>

<sup>28</sup> Niece of PKK's Öcalan to serve as acting clerk at parliament, 22, June, 2015, hurriyetdailynews.com ,available at: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/niece-of-pkks-ocalan-to-serve-as-acting-clerk-at-parliament.aspx?pageID=238&nID=84350&NewsCatID=338>.A sign of HDP and AKP possible collaboration might be the fact that HDP deputy Leyla Zana took her oath wholly in Turkish. While at her oath-taking ceremony in 1990, she added a Kurdish sentence to her pledge, devoting her words to the brotherhood of the Turkish and Kurdish peoples, see, Parliament opening marks countdown to arduous task of gov't formation, 23,June,2015,

Therefore legitimizing HDP to the Turkish society is paramount, given the fact that a small amount of about two percent other than Kurds voted also for HDP. In addition, seeing an HDP giving support to AKP might not only bring economic prosperity to the area through restarting the Peace initiative but also manage to lower the ten percent threshold to be in parliament hence fortifying HDP presence in Turkish politics for the long run to come.

Thirdly, Abdullah Öcalan's İmralı island incarceration might play a role of pushing HDP to cooperate with AKP. More precisely HDP as precondition for cooperation with AKP might push for the possible transfer to a house arrest of PKK's leader, somewhere in Turkey rather seeing him dying in isolation. Of course, things might get more complicated knowing that Ankara may additionally require the disarmament of the PKK. Something that is not easy to get accomplished at the moment since the leadership of PKK field structure under Mûrat Karayilan in Qandil Mountains won't agree so easily or because Öcalan may have lost influence over PKK.

Fourthly, there are exterior Kurdish powers that want to see HDP/PKK cooperating with Ankara. Having a HDP that acts independently and as the sole representative of Kurds inside and outside Turkey is an immediate threat to them. Northern Iraqi Kurdistan, the de facto ruler Mesûd Barzanîs not very happy with a powerful Kurdish movement inside Turkey and neighboring civil strife wore Syria that could potentially threaten his Kurdish state's legitimacy in the region. The recent skirmishes between KRG forces and PJAK (Free Life Party of Kurdistan) the Iranian Kurdish branch of PKK, is a recent example of Kurdish dichotomy concerning the leadership struggle among rival Kurdish organizations for the minds and hearts of

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the Kurdish people in Turkey, Iran Iraq and Syria. PJAK openly accused KRG forces that are under the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) of Iraqi Kurdistan that cooperate with the Iranian military against them by betraying their camps inside and outside Iran.<sup>29</sup> These examples of Kurdish civil strife are an important factor that Ankara is using successfully but also reasons that compel HDP to find a *Modus Vivendi* with AKP's political agenda. Both sides have to give something.

Finally, one of the most important factors that have not been fully acknowledged by many security analysts is the perfect cooperation up to date between PKK historical leader Abdullah Öcalan and Turkey's spy Chief Dr. Hakan Fidan. Since the Oslo talks from 2009 Dr. Fidan has played an important role of somehow pacifying PKK's military operational theatre of operations in south-eastern Turkey. Despite some small skirmishes between the PKK and the Turkish army, events point out that since 2013, when the temporary ceasefire proposed by Öcalan due to the initiation of finding permanent solution to the Kurdish question is holding. Pointing out the good chemistry and trust evolved between Dr. Hakan and Öcalan that might even lead to HDP's eventual cooperation with AKP, thus re-energizing the peace process and winning greater constitutional rights for Kurds. After all Dr. Hakan Fidan and PKK leader share one common denominator that of both is from Kurdish origin.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Sharif Falah, "PJAK Warns KDPI "Not to Test Their Patience",6,June,2015,Basnews,available at: <http://www.basnews.com/en/?s=PJAK&lang=en&lang=en>

<sup>30</sup>Ragıp Soylu, "Intel chief tells Gülen to refocus",19 March, 2014, dailysabah available at: <http://www.dailysabah.com/politics/2014/03/19/intel-chief-tells-gulen-to-refocus>

## In conclusion

The Padişah of Anatolia has lost a battle but not the war. He still has certain aces in his sleeves namely political uncertainty or instigated chaos, through ethnic tensions between Kurds and Turks. Both can bring havoc in Turkey or both can bring Erdoğan's AKP into power once more.<sup>31</sup> AKP party apparatus and government mechanisms are still active in Turkish security and intelligence structures, but most importantly there are connecting links between MHP's nationalistic tendencies and CHP's Kemalist's elites on matters of Kurdish nationalism.<sup>32</sup> Tendencies that can successfully be used by Erdoğan to fit his own aims. For certainty, however, the short and long run winner in these Turkish elections is the Kurdish populace. Their time has come to achieve their Kurdish dream of political and cultural autonomy.

As far as the Alevi's demands, for receiving religious equality by the Turkish State they haven't been met yet. However, the major reason lies with CHP's farsighted policies of the past when it failed miserably to satisfy their demands, when it was in its apogee of political power and no one could stop it. Risking the possibility to be absorbed by HDP, if the latter remains a

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<sup>31</sup> Aydın Albayrak, "AK Party might resort to planned chaos to win back voters", 13, June, 2015, todayzaman.com, available at: [http://www.todayszaman.com/anasayfa\\_ak-party-might-resort-to-planned-chaos-to-win-back-voters\\_385623.html](http://www.todayszaman.com/anasayfa_ak-party-might-resort-to-planned-chaos-to-win-back-voters_385623.html)

<sup>32</sup> According with former Greek intelligence officer Savvas Kalenteridis better known during the Öcalan Case Erdoğan's meeting with Deniz Baykal was part due to HDP success and how to deal with it. Given the fact that Deniz Baykal was after all representative of the Deep State Era in Turkish political History See, *Σάββας Καλεντερίδης*, 14, June, 2015, demokratianews.gr available at: <http://www.demokratianews.gr/content/46964/vathy-kratos-anasyntassetai>. See also, Murat Yetkin, "Surprise Erdoğan-Baykal meeting before Turkish coalition talks", 10, June, 2015, hurriyetdailynews available at: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/surprise-erdogan-baykal-meeting-before-turkish-coalition-talks.aspx?PageID=238&NID=83751&NewsCatID=338>

party for all Turks and not just a Kurdish platform. But what is more ironic is that the leader of CHP along with Turkey's intelligence MIT undersecretary chief Dr. Hakan Fidan also shares a Kurdish linkage. A bond of culture that shows how a considerable amount of Kurdish populace has been absorbed into the Turkish society as well as working for the Turkish state. Turkish hero and politician Mustafa İsmet İnönü along with Islamic politician and President of the Republic Turgut Özal are the best examples of the past. Militarism, Ottoman historical bonds and Kemalism were the means of connecting for the first one with the Turkish Republic while Sunni Islam was the platform for the second one. Unfortunately, for the majority of the Kurds a forced Turkishness that prevailed after the establishment of the Republic, as an institutionalized policy was not easily accepted, leading to many uprisings and eventually to the creation of the PKK as means of acquiring their cultural autonomy.

Finally, as far as what Tayyip Erdoğan's currently has in mind there is a Turkish proverb that describes his mentality better than any political analyst in the world. *Yenilen pehlivan gürese doymaz.* (A defeated wrestler always asks for second chance.)

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**Note:** *The article was reviewed by Mrs. Eleni Iatridi, RIEAS internship researcher and senior student at the Department of Turkish and Modern Asian Studies, University of Athens, Greece.*

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