

## THE MILITARY, THE SOCIETY AND DEMOCRACY (\*)

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### Introduction

1 – In the historical course of events, there has been a similarity, a kind of parallelism between the formation of society and state and the military. This development can particularly be observed ever since the formation of the Ottoman Empire.

The Turkish tribes coming to Anatolia since the beginning of 10 th century, especially the Oğuz, have been settled at the Byzantine frontiers by the Selçuk Sultans and all the people in these frontier regions have been living in a continuous state of war and in a way, they all, including women have become soldiers. During the existence of the Ottoman State and society in the historical course, there has always been the factor of military and the military tradition.

It is from the beginning of the 19 th century that the old military tradition and the traditional army have been abolished, and military officer's occupation became a profession. Although there has always been a military class in the Ottoman Empire, since the beginning of the 19 th century, military has become an exceptional profession that had extraordinary importance and prestige. It is not the main purpose of this paper to explain the above mentioned historical course.

We just want to state that, in spite of all the changes, transformations the world and the societies have been through, the characteristics of (being) a state and the existence of the military are two essential factors going together as well today.

We, in our paper are going to explain military as the most important institution, for the existence of state, an institution that is identified with the state. We will also explain some subjects and problems which the military have caused sociologically in the existence and the functioning of the society and state

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as a social and political system. We will particularly be discussing the social change phenomena. We will try to make our evaluations by taking a democratic regime functioning in order into consideration. In this case, of course, the explanation of the relationship between the military and social change will be very important. The relationship between the political regime and the military can be taken into consideration from the structural functionalist point of view, but this might cause the arousal of some problems.

In fact, a model, that covers all these relationships, should be developed. This model should not be based upon the observation of the military power of a specific state or society, it should be universal. It should also be open to discussion that whether such a model can be developed or not.

### **Military Professionalisation and Social Change**

2 – We are not going to talk about the social changes which lead to the formation of the military as a profession since there is a lot of written work and publication on this subject.

In the history, social changes, industrial revolution, the development of weapons and the novelties occurred in the military profession and professionalism and on the other side, the military profession's developments have produced social changes and even today are continuing to do so.

The formation of the military profession has made preparations for war a continuous preoccupation in the state and the continuous renovation of weapons has given importance to industrial efforts and is continuing to do so today as well.

In order to achieve its goals, the military profession, like all other professions, should make continuous, credible efforts for the projection and appropriation of military values to the public, especially in a democratic regime. All these efforts have made the military a tool of social change in some countries like Turkey. We do not always agree with the opinion that military professionalism always means conservatism.

It might be possible to say that in the Ottoman Empire, the military profession first existed with the Janissaries, even though it consisted of a limited Hassa Army. It should be stated that Military profession coexisted with the foundation of the Janissaries in the 15 th. century.

The training, organization and judicial system (jurisdiction) of the Janissaries had led to the existence of a profession that was sociologically meaningful.

The Janissaries were occupied with this career exclusively, they had their

own rights and privileges

They were permanent soldiers who were directly dependent on the Sultans having a steady wage. Even though the Janessaries should have been loyal subjects to the Sultan, by the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup>. century, they started to get involved in the state affairs so much that the whole Janessary organization, together with all the members was abolished in 1826. Starting from this date, a western type military organization with all its professional academies has been established in time. Ever since then, the military organization has been existing in the Turiksh society, with extraordinary importance, and functioning as a pressure group sociologically.

### **Military As a Profession**

3 – Sociologically, the position of the military in the global society and social system can be defined in different ways:

The officers, the fundamental factors of the military, are the members of a profession, called the military as a whole. Although this profession has some sociological features in common with the other professions, it also has its own distinctive characteristics. This profession has some consequences and problems in functioning as a sub-system within a social system as a whole.

Autonomy is one of the fundamental feature of this profession.

Autonomy means the insulation of the members of a profession from the other factors and sub-systems of the society to an extent as with their sociological rights and previliges. The means and efforts to increase professionalism, the social groups and classes the members belong to, the necessary education to be completed in order to be a member in the profession, the norms and values internalized by the members, and some similar subjects result in some consequences and problems in the functioning of the political and social systems.

The main problems are the relationship between the military and the political regime and the civil staff (cadre) being in charge of the control of the military.

These facts, of course, have some global, common features in the countries who have reached a certain cultural level. They also have processes which can be explained by social sciences in the cause-consequence frame work. In addition to these, there are some consequences which result from each societies specific characteristics.

By taking this into account, it is not always possible to say that there is a common proportion for all societies between the degree of professionalization and the control mechanism that the political regime exerts upon the military.

Although an increase in the degree of professionalization might cause the reinforcement of the control of the civil regime in some societies, it might be just the reverse in some others. Starting from this point of view, it would be appropriate to make some careful and specific research on the sociology of the military and to attain some conclusions and then to make some final, scientific observations out of these conclusions which would be acceptable, valid and common in most of the countries.

For example, in the countries where education is not very widespread and the level of collective knowledge is low, if the academies founded for the military officers are very improved and are above the levels of the civil ones, then there will be a greater tendency and orientation for military to intervene in the politics.

In our opinion, this is one of the main reasons of the military interventions in some underdeveloped and developing countries, The military intervene, because they think that as they have an educational level which is far beyond those of the politicians who have attained certain ranks in the government as a result of a democratic process, they are more capable of executing than those politicians and they think of more important concepts such a nationalism, patriotism, rather than just the execution of state affairs.

### **Difficulties in Making Research**

4 – In the above paragraph, we mentioned some difficulties in making research. Some of these difficulties have been mentioned in some other written work. Such as, the confidentiality the military profession necessitates, causes the military institution to look like an "opaque box" and sometimes even like a taboo. This situation gets to be incoherent with the condition of scientific independence which is a must for scientific research. Although the main control mechanism of the control on the military institution is the budget, even in the countries where legislator is very powerful, such as the U.S., they cannot make a decent control on the budget proposals about defense expenses. There are so many other works on this subject explaining different causes as well.

### **The Military As a Social Sub-Group**

5 – The military is a very effective sub-group in the society. This sub-group is being organized in the expertise framework that the contemporary militarism necessitates and at the same time, it is divided into some sub-groups within itself, proportional to the population of the country. Contemporary war technics necessitate the existence of thousands of sub-groups in the military organisation, based on knowledge, skill, expertise and arts and sciences.

As we have tried to explain above, the military sub-group is a large organization, organized with respect to some specific norms of its own and shows some differences from the other sub-groups of the social system. Sub-groups, especially the dynamics of small groups, while tightening the bonds among their members and uniting them, can cause some members to deviate from group norms as well, which might produce social changes. One of the main features of contemporary large organizations is bureaucracy and military organizations is highly bureaucratic too.

### **Civil and Military Bureaucracy**

6 – In a contemporary democratic rule of law, there are two main bureaucracies civil and military. If we try to elaborate the main characteristics of these two bureaucracies, we can end up with lots of common ones.

But the subordination of the junior officer to the senior officer is more reinforced in military bureaucracy. As the military bureaucracy represents the armed power and as it functions as a means of the civil rule to force the society to obey the orders and norms, especially in the democratic state, it should be under the control of the political regime and should strictly execute the decisions and orders of the civil authorities. But the military should have an autonomy that necessitates from its functions which makes it more difficult for its functions. This qualification makes it more difficult for the civil bureaucratic mechanism to be executed on the military and might cause some tension between the civil rule and the military. This might lead to the question of determination (assignment) of the military authorities competences and places in a democratic society and might in the end produce a social change.

### **The Military Professional's Part in the Political Decision-Making**

7 – The idea of reducing the probability of war and peaceful resolution of disputes between the contemporary societies and states is gaining new grounds each day. As time passes, the disasters brought about by the wars on nations is realized more and more by the people. Even then, shoving difference from past centuries, continuous making of military preparations and taking into consideration of the military information and expertise in making political decisions arouses problems. Especially in the relations of nations when a decision has to be made, political decisions are being taken or altered according to the military experts. In this way, strong influence of armed forces on the making of political decisions can be seen. The members of military bureaucracy should have reached a high degree in professionalism, for their military observations are to be considered in political decision making. It can be seen that the increase in the degree of professionalism in armed forces, makes the control of civil and politi-

cal regime more difficult and on the other hand, high degree of professionalism increases the influence of military bureaucracy on political decisions. This concept is very important from the point of the power and establishment of democratic developments in countries. Often due to the lack of competition military officers have the last word in decision making due to the military professionals expertise. In some countries to create competition, civil strategy institutes and civil strategy logistic experts and analysts are being educated and their role in military observation is provided thinking that an increase in influence of military bureaucracy in civil life might cause damage in democracy in time. The expertise which the military brings to the decision-making should be cautious, especially about the ones on foreign affairs and foreign policies, and these should not only be dependent upon military observations. On the other hand these might sometimes be less cautious:

Robert Kennedy (in his book *Thirteen Days*, New York, 1969, Signet Books, p. 119) wrote about his souvenirs on the missile crisis in Cuba. He, in this book, wrote about President Kennedy's observations on the attitudes of the military experts from whom he got consultations. "The military officers had the opinion that the Russians and the Cubans would not be able to retaliate to a military operation and even if they did, the war would still be on America's side. One of the rank officers told me that he believed in the benefit of a preventive attack against the Russians. On that Sunday morning, when the Russians informed that they withdrew their missiles, a high rank military consultant suggested me to assault on Monday morning no matter what happens. Another consultant thought that we had been betrayed."

Robert Kennedy in the same book, also stated that the President got very much annoyed with these opinions based only on military requirements.

8 – Above we mentioned that the military formed numbers of sub-groups as a result of its organization.

The functioning of group dynamics inside these subgroups and dealing with politics to a degree that would disrupt the military activities might cause the existence of cliques for political purposes within the group. This situation might result, especially on high rank officers a kind of continuous uneasiness, and waste of energy for extra control within the mechanism.

Against these facts caused by social dynamics, a reinforcement in the degree of professionalization of the officer cadre is recommended.

The facts which have been produced by the contemporary technology and ultramodern weapons, extended the limits of the technical branches within the military and also necessitated a high degree of professionalization and this brought the civil and military professions closer.

Military and civil doctors, engineers, chemists and jurists are almost of a common profession.

Increasing professionalization might produce some new values, norms and moral precepts within the military. This might reinforce the democratic principle that the military should be subject to the civil political regime. The education programmes for training professional soldiers have extraordinary importance in relation to the above factors. The education given should reinforce the democratic approach, but some consideration might make this rather difficult.

### **Military As a Pressure Group**

9 – Military, too, functions as a pressure group in the society, like all the other organized sub-groups. It is also known that organized profession groups with their own norms, would function as a pressure group whether they wish to do so or not.

As long as they belong to the institution, the military cannot take any active role in politics as a prerequisite of professionalism.

Retired officer's Associations, ex-combatants clubs and similar associations function as pressure groups and in this way the military have some influence on politics.

It is impossible not to get benefit from the expertise of such an organization in domestic and foreign affairs .

As a result of professionalism, the military might constitute an important pressure group in the fields of extension of some social values and the acceptance of these values by larger groups of people and most important of all, in the taking place of a social change. While professionalization causes the military to be under control of the political regime, it also allows them to promote processes which build the military functioning as a pressure group: Professionalization allows the military officers to form a military mentality, crystallizes military values and makes it sur that these are internalized, motivates them and provides the transfer of all of these to the new members of the profession.

The values and goals upon which the military profession would be based are hence produced and accepted by the members of this career might lead to their functioning as a pressure group.

Although some authors have noted that professionalism brings nationalism, alarmism, conservatism and sterility along, in fact, we have no doubt about the functioning of the professional military as a pressure group no matter where or to what extent.

It was Atatürk's fundamental military principle that the military should not be involved in politics.

Some members of the officer's cadre of the Ottoman Empire which had been defeated in World War I were also members of the committee of Union and Progress who were aiming at dethroning Sultan Abdülhamit II. This was the cadre which was in the war of Independence with Atatürk. After this, Atatürk had certainly discarded the relations between the military and politics.

General William T. Sherman of the U.S. Army pointed out the necessity of the separation of the military and the politics, and stated that "The army should be a live machine, and a means, a tool of duty which would execute the law and to protect the honour and dignity of his nation."

In fact, the separation of military and political issues is not possible. As explained by an author, the military as a professional group would always try to achieve the approval of some values, to reach some goals and to protect their own interests.

### **Military As a Social Change Agent**

10 – We have no doubt that the military acts as a social agent in the formation of society and state in producing social structural changes. Especially in the Turkish society, the military has acted as a social agent in the social changes which the society has been through since 1830's.

Turkish society has started to go through social changes towards westernization since 1800's. After 1920's, these changes became more distinguished and powerful and were named as Atatürk reforms. The most important of these changes can be defined as laicism, which took place in a country where % 99 of the population is muslim. Reformism is one of the main constitutional principle in the Turkish State as well.

Here, we are not going to make a detailed description of social change, but should add that if one of the most important periods in the societies which are forming a social system is stability, then the other is the transformation, change mechanism which provide a change in social structure and hence facilitates it for the society to be in harmony with the changing conditions. These mechanisms provide a continuity to the system by changing, transforming, structural elements where the present ones become dysfunctional. Hence, change becomes unavoidable for continuity. This is why reformism is highly ranked among Atatürk principles of state.

Likewise, social changes which occur in the structural elements and the functioning of the social system and social changes which occur in the relative importance of these structural element and in the execution of the function of

the system are products of different factors.

But theories of social change might be brought up by entities and organizations as well. These are called (Change Agent) in social science.

In our opinion, the military might also act as a change agent:

In social sciences, it has been observed that change proposers are of great importance in the approval of the change proposals.

The acceptance of a proposal for change by the public becomes easier and quicker when social prestige and power coexist. Planning might have an influence on social change as well.

The influence of the military on social change in some countries should be noted; It is known that the military plays an important role in the collapse of the authoritarian political regimes. But starting from the second half of the 19 century, the experiences Turkish society had had, showed that democratic regime takes its part a short time after the military intervention.

In 1876, the first Ottoman Constitution has been formed with the intervention of civil and military high rank bureaucrats. Abdülhamid II's absolutist regime has been abolished by an intervention of military bureaucrats, and a parliamentary regime was established to be executed.

The civil and military cadre of the Independence war have formed the parliamentary system and declared the foundation of the republic. The military interventions of 1960 and 1980 have produced constitutional laws on the principle of protection of human rights. The intervening officers have always stated that, their fundamental goal was to establish the functioning of a democratic regime, but not to establish any continuous authoritarian regime and they have always kept their words.

Anyway it can be clearly observed that military professionalism will bring up conservatism, as some social scientists have claimed, is not valid all the time and for every society.

In Turkey, it is a fact that the military has acted as a change agent at least in the fields of law and constitution-making and in formation of a democratic movement.

### **Change in Social Values and the Military**

11 – Change in social values indicates that a social change has taken place. It is known that it takes a long time for changes in social values. Permanent, continuous wars have a great influence on the approval of radical reforms. As state of war produces some necessities perceived by everybody in the society, social changes are approved easily. There is no doubt that wars accelerate the periods of change.

## **Conclusions and Summary**

12 – We just want to make some conclusions, a short summary as we are concluding this communication.

People of today are living in a new period, a new age, which we call as the age of Human Rights, where democracy is accepted as a moral and global regime. The fundamental principles of contemporary societies and the United Nations are the respect to human rights and democracy.

There still is not a global, worldwide security system although respect to fundamental human rights have reached high levels.

The resolution of conflicts in a peaceful manner necessitates the nations possessing a powerful and deterrent military power; international military power is a means in the execution of cooperative security system.

This necessitates the existence and permanency of the civil and military bureaucracy and the separation of power.

The functioning of democracy in good order is dependent on the civil-military relationship and the military be dependent on the civils. If the relationship cannot be continued in spite of the group dynamics and periods, then the continuity, permanency of democracy is in danger; hence social change will no longer be democratic.

Historical process have proven that a high degree of military professionalization has an influence on the formation of democratic society, at least for some countries.

In the obtaining of a high degree of professionalization, the education submitted in military academies and schools and the inspirations given to the young officers are of great importance.

It is necessary for a democratic social change without damaging national security requirements, that the taboo of "opaque box" for the military should be removed and more clarity transparency provided.

Military should be an accelerating factor of social change for societies and ways and means to secure this should be implemented.