



CABINET: Adnan Menderes

KCLMUN'25

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1. Letter from USG

Dear Delegates,

It is my distinct honour to welcome you to this unique and immersive conference of KCLMUN'25 where we will take a step back to the 1950s in order to deeply experience and process this pivotal decade in Turkey's history. This period marked many firsts and lasts in Turkey's history regarding political, economic and social transformations which I think will affect the way you see leadership, diplomacy and consequences of decisions which may help you in your decisions throughout life.

Our focus on the Democrat Party era lets us explore a crucial and controversial chapter in Turkey's modern history. Without any boring and dry parts, you will dive straight to the key events such as the multi-party democracy, economic modernization, Cold War dynamics and increasing tension with political polarization leading to the 1960 Coup. As the representative of most important figures, you will have a chance to re-live, discuss and reflect the difficulties of governance in an era of both promise and instability.

Apart from the conference itself, this event is not only about the act of re-living history; it is about developing your diplomatic, analytical and public speaking skills while also having lots of fun during both the conference and the breaks. I tried my best writing the most plain and not-having-useless-details kind of study guide providing you just enough information to both read quickly in case of any last-minute guide reading attempts and be able to participate actively in the conference itself and its crisis part with any kind of extra research is appreciated.

Above all, let us enjoy every part of the conference to its last bit. I am looking forward to witness your insight, passion and thoughts without having any doubt that these will inspire me with the whole committee.

Best regards,

Your USG, Taylan Göz

2. Introduction

The 1950-1960 era was an important time period not only for the social but economic, religious and political state of Turkey as well. This decade marked a transformative era in Turkish Republic shifting to multi-party democracy which started with Democrat Party (DP) winning Turkey's first free elections while İsmet İnönü was the current leader of Republican People's Party (CHP). This period was dominated by Prime Minister Adnan Menderes affecting Cold War-era Turkish political alignment; agricultural, urbanizational, religious and modernizational changes, various tensions and the 1960 coup leading to the trials in Yassıada along with other DP members and his dramatic end of execution.

3. Historical Background

a. Before 1950s

The period before 1950 was defined as the single-party ruled period in Turkey under CHP which dominated politics from the founding of CHP until 1950. This era was focused on establishing a secular, modern and centralized state shaped by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and later progressed by İsmet İnönü.

During this period there has been:

Kemalist reforms concerning replacing Islamic laws with a secular civil code, introducing Latin script to replace the Arabic alphabet, encouraging Western dress, education, and cultural norms which generally faced resistance from rural and religious communities

- World War II during a time in which İsmet İnönü was leading Turkey maintaining neutrality until the very end phase of the war. This war affected the economy concerning shortages, inflation and public discontent and also highlighted the limitations of centralized governance.
- A post-war transition under the influence of the global trend of democracy resulting with international pressure particularly from the US encouraged Turkey to adopt multi-party politics to align with the democratic ideals of the emerging Cold War order. These events resulted with CHP allowing the formation of opposite parties leading to the foundation of DP in 1946. The DP quickly gained fame and popularity with the support of those who were unsatisfied with CHP policies.
- The first multi-party election in Turkey, the 1946 election, which resulted with CHP retaining power but made DP's rise and public's demand of change clear.

The key problems leading to change were serious economic struggles with widespread poverty, desire for representation and the secular-religious distinction.

b. 1950-1960s

i. Political Situation and Economic Fluctuations

This decade marked the transition to a multi-party era in Turkey with the economic, political, and social changes led by the Democrat Party dominated by Adnan Menderes. After decades of one-party dominance, the general elections of 1950 brought a devastating victory to the Democrat Party. Adnan Menderes became Turkey's first freely elected prime minister with Celal Bayar serving as the president. The DP prioritized rural development, religious freedom, and economic liberalization. Even though the party was initially popular, DP became increasingly authoritarian over time restricting press freedom, suppressing opposition, and centralizing power.

The DP gave importance to mechanization, infrastructure and rural electrification leading to increased agricultural productivity. Importing massive amounts of machinery like tractors transformed these rural areas with the downside of economic inequalities. Meanwhile, urban cities grew with the migration from rural areas for work opportunities, some government-led initiatives aimed to develop infrastructure like roads, bridges, etc. Even though DP enjoyed this growth in economy and productivity, financial mismanagement, inflation, and the growing debt created various economic difficulties in the late 50s.

Turkey, as a key ally of the West in the Cold War, had military aid from the US under the Marshall Plan and Truman Doctrine. Marshall Plan aimed to provide economic aid to rebuild war-torn European economies and stabilize governments to prevent the spread of communism. Even though Turkey wasn't severely affected by WW2, Turkey received significant financial support to infrastructure building projects as well to strengthen Western alliances. Truman Doctrine aimed to keep the Soviet Union away from the Mediterranean initially targeting Turkey and Greece as the way to do the prevention. Through this plan, Turkey received 100 million in military and economic aid. There was huge initial benefits which caused long term dependence to foreign assistance through loans. By the late 1950s, declining US aid exposed the vulnerability of the Turkish economy. The financial support to agricultural activities promoted by the foreign aid harshly decreased leaving rural areas vulnerable to droughts and global price fluctuations. The Cold War influence also affected Turkey's bond with the Western bloc ensuring Turkey's place in NATO and the Baghdad Pact.

ii. Social Changes

Along with all the political and economical changes the social life of Turkey has been significantly affected. In the early 50s, through Adnan Menderes' rule's focus, rural communities and those with suppressed religious needs had been represented and empowered. DP was maybe the first if not one of the first parties in the Republic of Turkey to gather followers using religion. Most popular initiative for the religious population was the reintroduction of Arabic for the call to prayer. This focus led to a building tension between

secular and conservative sides followed by discrimination and various anti-government movements. *{If you have been reading this far, send a mail to taylangoz22@gmail.com stating you have, This will help me understand broadly how far are you into the subject}* While Menderes prioritizes agricultural mechanization, which have been specified above, small-scale farming got displaced resulting in large-scale migration to bigger cities such as Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir which led to rapid urbanization, urban sprawl, overcrowded cities and these migrations overpaced the development of housing giving birth to the huge rise of the informal settlements named “gecekondu”. This large-scale migration offered some new opportunities at a (low price of 50 cents) cost of deepened division between urban and rural population both socially and politically.

iii. Foreign Policy

As mentioned before, Turkey aligned with the West during the Cold War joining NATO in 1952 and these events led to the economic and military (several missiles got placed on various military bases also been built by these foreign countries sometimes. Eg: Incirlik Air Base (Adana), Izmir Air Station (Izmir), Kürecik Radar Station (Malatya), Sinop Listening Station (Sinop), Balçova Military Base (Izmir) etc.) support of foreign countries especially US making Turkey a strategic ally on containing Soviet influence in any kind. Through this alliance, tensions from the USSR were quite high however no direct confrontation occurred. Along with this western alliance, Turkey played an important role in an eastern pact: Baghdad Pact (1955) a regional alliance against communism with Iraq, Iran, Pakistan and UK.

iv. Later Polarization and Authoritarianism

Adnan Menderes the leader of DP initially enjoyed widespread support from the population particularly from the rural population who had been represented with the rule of DP however the political and social tensions mainly caused by economic struggles had risen. Along with the growth of the opposition to the DP, the government became more and more restrictive imposing strict censorship, closed newspapers, imprisoned critics and restricted university activities leading to protests by students and academics. This tension reached its peak in the late 50s during the time period which Menderes tried to pass laws strengthening his place and granting him greater authority. With the building tension, this law-passing became another brick in the wall (1950s Remastered) leading to a combination of economic instability, social unrest and political polarization by 1960. On May 27th 1960, a *coup d'état* was made. The Turkish military who positioned themselves as the guardian of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's legacy intervened overthrowing Menderes and his government. This marked the end of a strongly active era of a good rise and a horrific downfall which became the first of different matters in Turkey covering the first freely elected leader, one of the first religion powered governments, first use of television for propaganda, first IMF loan and first attempt to suppress opposition via law. Following the coup, various DP members had been judged in an island called Yassıada, officially renamed “Democracy and Freedom Island”, one of the members being Adnan

Menderes. Through Yassıada Trials, several members sentenced to death and three of them; Adnan Menderes, Fatih Rüştü Zorlu, Hasan Polatkan were taken to İmralı Island where they were executed in which resulted with the last execution of a Prime Minister in Turkey.

c. Post-Executions

Following the execution of Adnan Menderes Türkiye entered a period of political and social questioning. The military junta had overthrown the government and justified the executions as a means to protect the Republic's secular democratic foundations; however, this act deeply divided the population. Menderes' execution left a lasting effect while some see him as a martyr for democracy, others see him as a cautionary tale of political extremism. Presented by the military government the 1961 Constitution's goal was to prevent authoritarianism and separate powers granting greater freedoms. Despite these reforms, the political status of the country remained unstable with increasing polarization and military interventions in the time period to come. Menderes' policies and leadership style is still a subject for debates regarding democracy, secularism and the balance between civilian and military authority making him remembered as a pivotal figure in Turkey's democratic history.

4. Key figures

a. Adnan Menderes

- Prime Minister of Turkey (1950-1960)
- Since Adnan Menderes was one of the biggest focal points. There will be details that hadn't been mentioned before to avoid repetition and to ensure clarity of the text as a whole.
- “Dörtlül Takrir”: Menderes first came to prominence as a member of the Republican People's Party (CHP). However, dissatisfaction with the CHP's authoritarianism during the single-party era led him to present the Quadruple Memorandum (Dörtlül Takrir) in 1945, together with Celal Bayar, Fuat Köprülü and Refik Koraltan. This document asked for greater democratic freedoms and the loosening of state control over political and social life. The rejection of this memorandum led to the establishment of the Democrat Party (DP) in 1946 and served as the beginning of Turkey's transition to multi-party democracy.
- The Cyprus Issue: During Menderes' premiership, the Cyprus issue emerged as a major foreign policy issue. Turkish Cypriots faced increasing tensions as the Greek Cypriot campaign for enosis (unification with Greece) intensified. Menderes advocated strongly for the protection of Turkish Cypriots and proposed *taksim* (division of the island) as a solution. His leadership during the 1959 Zurich and London Conferences played a major role in the establishment of Cyprus as an independent republic with constitutional protections for both communities.

However, the issue also strained Turkey's relations with Greece and reflected the geopolitical complexities of the Cold War.

- **September 6-7 Events:** The 1955 Istanbul pogrom, triggered by false reports of an attack on Atatürk's birthplace in Thessaloniki, was one of the darkest periods of Menderes's governance. Organized mobs targeted Greek, Armenian, and Jewish communities, resulting in widespread destruction, deaths, and mass exodus of minorities. Although the government officially condemned the violence, allegations of state complicity or negligence tarnished Menderes' image. The events severely damaged Turkey's international reputation and deepened domestic ethnic and social divisions.
- **The Plane Crash and the “Mehdi” Phenomenon:** In 1959, Adnan Menderes survived a plane crash near Gatwick Airport in England while en route to the London Conference in Cyprus. While most of the passengers, including key members of the delegation, lost their lives, Menderes escaped relatively unharmed. This miraculous survival led some to label him as the "Mehdi", symbolizing divine goodness. This incident temporarily increased his public support amidst increasing political and economic hardship.

P.S.: Your USG laughed so hard writing the Mehdi matter.

- **Charges and Trial at Yassıada:** Adnan Menderes faced multiple charges including:
 - Embezzlement
 - Undermining the Constitution
 - Responsibility on September 6-7 Events
 - another 10 accusations. He was found guilty on every accusation except “Bebek Davası” stating of a murder regarding a newborn baby.

During the period leading his execution, various leaders throughout the world called for the stay of the execution.

b. Celal Bayar

- President of Turkey (1950-1960)
- Co-founder of DP, served as the head of state during DP's rule
- He represented the continuation of democratic ideals whilst also supporting Menderes' policies
- Celal Bayar played a ceremonial role also being a great support to Menderes' government
- After the 1961 Coup, he was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment but was pardoned in 1966 due to health issues.

c. Fatih Rüştü Zorlu

- Foreign Minister (1957-1960)
- Zorlu had a great importance on strengthening the bond between Turkey and the West during the Cold War, securing its NATO membership and deepening US relations.
- He was able to negotiate agreements that have brought foreign aid which tied Turkey to the Western bloc during a time period of geopolitical tension.
- After the 1960 Coup, he was executed along with Adnan Menderes and Hasan Polatkan making him a symbol of the era's downfall.
- He was charged by several matters:
 - Violation of the Constitution
 - Misuse of Power in Foreign Affairs
 - Contributing to Economic Mismanagement
 - Political Suppression

d. Hasan Polatkan

- Minister of Finance (1956-1960)
- Polatkan managed the country's economic policies during a period when Turkey experienced rapid modernization and an influx of foreign aid, especially with the Marshall Plan.
- He took various measures to liberalize the economy and encourage private entrepreneurship and rural development.
- With the economic fluctuations in the late 50s, his legacy got tarnished as the government was accused of mismanagement.
- After the coup, he was executed and resulted in many people seeing him as the scapegoat for broader economic challenges.

e. Cemal Gürsel

- Leader of the 1960 Military Coup and Head of State (1960-1961)
- Cemal Gürsel led the military intervention which had overthrown the government, positioning himself as the guardian of the secular and democratic foundation of Turkey.
- He presided the transitional government and oversaw the drafting of the 1961 Constitution, which imposed checks on executive power and guaranteed civil rights
- His leadership asserted the military as a key arbiter of political stability.

f. İsmet İnönü

- Leader of CHP, Former Prime Minister
- İnönü was a towering figure serving as Atatürk's close ally and the second President of Turkey.
- As the leader of the opposition during the 50s he criticized Adnan Menderes for undermining secularism and democratic principles.

- İnönü helped with stabilizing efforts on the political landscape and supported the transition to a new constitution after the 1960 coup.

g. Nedim Ökmen

- Served as the Minister of Finance (1950–1955)
- Focused on agricultural development and rural modernization, in line with the Democrat Party's priorities.
- Personally, didn't like Adnan Menderes.

h. Rifat Börekçi

- Leader of the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet)
- Börekçi had an important impact on shaping Turkey's religious policies during the DP era supporting Menderes' efforts to liberalize suppressions concerning religion.
- His leadership symbolized Turkey's changing approach to religion making conservative and religious groups more active.

i. Refik Koraltan

- Co-signed the "Dörtlül Takrir" in 1945
- Co-founded the Democrat Party
- Speaker of the Grand National Assembly

j. Ethem Menderes

- Minister of Interior (1950-1954, 1957-1960)
- Ethem Menderes, a close friend of Adnan Menderes, played a critical role in maintaining internal order and implementing the policies of the Democrat Party.
- His tenure reflected increasingly authoritarian tendencies within the Democratic Party, which ultimately led to the party's collapse.
- After the coup, Ethem Menderes faced the trials but avoided the harsher sentences given to key figures like Adnan Menderes.

k. Fuad Köprülü

- Co-founder of the Democrat Party
- Served as Minister of Foreign Affairs (1950–1955)

l. Ahmet Tevfik İleri

- Served as the Minister of Education
- Oversaw reforms in education, including expansion of religious schools (*imam hatip*) for the first time after their closure in 1930 and investments in rural education infrastructure.
- Advocated for greater religious expression in public life.

5. Things to Consider

Considering the real-life crises, govern the country in a way that any possible crises are planned to be prevented beforehand without having any utopic ideals and without breaking the ideology of the character you are representing.