

The Economist

JUNE 22ND-28TH 2013

Economist.com

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So, can we expect the return of the comfortingly familiar “mildly Islamist”?

ODD GUNNAR SKAGESTAD

Oslo

The Turkish paradox

SIR – One thing that Recep Tayyip Erdogan has done well as Turkey's prime minister, you say, is “defanging the coup-prone army” (“Democrat or sultan?”, June 8th). However, that defanging process infringing the most elementary principles of human rights. It is reported that at the army trials known as Ergenekon and Sledgehammer the evidence was manipulated and defence counsel were prevented from defending the accused.

This was so intolerable that the president of the Istanbul Bar Association and its board members intervened in court and requested that the principles for fair trials be respected. This intervention has led to the president and those board members present in court being indicted for unlawfully influencing judges. They face lengthy jail sentences and disbarment.

The conduct of these trials and the blatant denial of the independence of the legal profession infringe the rule of law and the very basis of a democratic society. These are by no means the only examples. In this respect there is no doubt that the government is acting in dictatorial fashion and is thereby destabilising Turkey and putting the democratic stability of Europe as a whole at risk.

For this reason the European Criminal Bar Association has adopted a resolution condemning the persecution of lawyers in Turkey.

SCOTT CROSBY
Advocate
Kemmler Rapp Böhlke & Crosby
Brussels

SIR – I disagree with your analysis about what is going on in Turkey. What is happening is that the country's founder elites can't come to terms with the transformation that has come about under Mr Erdogan's administration. Turkey was founded on a secular and nationalist basis, but now we no longer consider moderate Muslims to be a threat and are beginning to accept the Kurds' identity.

Turkey has become closer to Europe under Mr Erdogan and its economy has opened up to the world. Foreigners find it easier to buy property here.

The protests have nothing to do with freedom. It is the demonstrators who are unable to accept change.

TARIK SALMAN
Izmir, Turkey

SIR – I am puzzled as to why your thoughtful article describing the creeping Islamisation of Turkey (“Not so good for you”, June 1st) was placed in the Europe section. Turkey is geographically 97% in Asia; the Turkish government's attitude to dissent places it 100% in the Middle East.

The British coalition government's policy, favoured also by the Labour Party, to be a cheerleader for Turkey's entry into the European Union is reckless. It should not be supported, even implicitly, by *The Economist*.

WILLIAM DARTMOUTH
Member of the European Parliament for the UK Independence Party
Exeter, Devon

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Britain's migration muddle

SIR – Bagehot's sardonic observation of the British government's huffing and puffing to win the “global race” for prosperity was spot-on (June 1st). In fact, the Conservatives' position seems to be: talk

global, act parochial. There is no policy where this sales technique is more misguided than immigration. Britain does not seem to care about losing its stock of talent. It offers a bamboozling plethora of rules and procedures and a discouraging attitude that beggars belief. As if the bad weather, urban decay and low salaries are not off-putting enough.

Not only must international students endure an unfriendly welcome and distasteful political rhetoric aimed at immigrants in general, but frequent whimsical rule changes means the system is unpredictable. When I commenced my doctorate at Cambridge there was the promise of an unconditional two-year work visa after graduation. Last year this was abolished without a sunset clause. Instead, a reduced one-year conditional visa extension was announced this April. I am now required to leave before even graduating. The message is: give us your money, take your education, and get out.

DAVID CANN
Cambridge, Cambridgeshire

Strengthening global bodies

SIR – You submitted that the reason why there is a general lack of co-operation between the UN and the World Bank is because their bureaucracies and staff members “have chafed at the idea of working together” (“Rare co-operation”, June 1st). The World Bank and the IMF were originally intended in 1944 to be part of the UN and function under its secretary-general. But because of American pressure this link was abandoned and the American government was able to exercise more straightforward influence over the two Washington-based organisations.

How different might have been the history and operations of the UN and the World Bank had they stayed together. The bank would have given more attention to social priorities and been more sensitive to the perspectives of southern countries (as the UN is), and the UN would have been tougher minded in its eco-

nomical operations and priorities (like the bank).

Closer UN-World Bank links might also have prevented the sharp divide between the ways ministries of finance and foreign affairs around the world relate to both of them; the Security Council might have taken a broader approach to peace and conflict resolution. Some of these gains could still be had by changing the mandates and structures that keep the institutions apart.

SIR RICHARD JOLLY
Institute of Development Studies
Brighton, East Sussex

Heated arguments

SIR – Although it is true that incandescent traffic lights are inefficient because most of their output is produced as heat, here in Wisconsin the switchover to LED traffic lights has caused a problem (“Everlasting light”, June 1st). Since the change, many are the times in winter months that I have arrived at a road junction only to find the traffic lights plugged up with snow to the point where you can't tell whether the light is red or green. This is a nuisance that you never had to worry about with the old “inefficient” lights.

STE CORK
Madison, Wisconsin

A bone to pick

SIR – You suggest that there is “little in the way of an upmarket Kentucky Fried Chicken” in London (“On a roll”, June 8th). Have you not enjoyed the pleasures of Nando's chicken? Are you not aware of all that peri-peri sauce can bring? Will an outlet need to be opened in St James's before you give Nando's the praise it deserves?

BENJAMIN WEGG-PROSSER
London ■

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