**In Turkeys Unrest, Some See an Extreme Version of Post-9/11 America - The New York Times**

ISTANBUL ” An Islamic State disciple kills 39 New Years revelers at an Istanbul nightclub. A gunman with a police badge assassinates Russias ambassador at an Ankara reception. Kurdish separatist bombers kill 14 soldiers on a bus in central Turkey and dozens of police officers at an Istanbul soccer match. Those assaults were just in the last few weeks, which made a car bombing on Thursday in the city of Izmir, where at least two civilians were killed, seem relatively minor. The 75 million people of Turkey, the NATO member and European Union aspirant that straddles Europe and Asia and was once seen as a stable democracy, are facing a ferocious onslaught of terrorist attacks unlike anything that has been seen in the West. Add to that the tumult from roughly three million Syrian war refugees, a resurgent Kurdish insurgency and a failed military coup ” all tied, in the eyes of many Turks, to American negligence, or malice, or both. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has responded with a furious crackdown on an array of perceived enemies, including the news media, and has lashed out at what he regards as Western complicity. While Mr. Erdogans critics have denounced what they see as a bald usurpation of power that has subverted democracy and polarized the country, many Turks, frightened and uncertain, are not complaining. They view his authoritarianism as reassuring and angrily reject outsider comments about paranoia and conspiracy theories. Some are even embracing the advent of Donald J. Trump, despite his statements, viewing him as a decisive strongman sympathetic to Mr. Erdogan, an Islamist with little tolerance for those who dispute him. In some ways, political historians and scholars say, what is happening in Turkey parallels the aftermath of the 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, the 2015 attacks in France and, most recently, the response to attacks in Germany. In all of them, many citizens were willing to overlook or forsake civil liberties, government powers grew, fringe groups strengthened and spread intolerance, and dissent was regarded with suspicion. I think there are a lot of similar tendencies, and it leads to, in an extreme case, what were seeing in Turkey, said Steven A. Cook, a senior fellow for Middle East and African Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington. Still, Mr. Cook said, Its not that far a leap to go to an extreme ” can you imagine if the attacks in Turkey had happened in the United States? On Friday, Hilal Kaplan, a columnist for Daily Sabah, a newspaper close to the government, lashed out at Western news coverage, including an article in The New York Times, that has emphasized conspiracy theories coursing through Turkish society that the United States is behind terrorism in Turkey. Describing the article as an attempt to condescend and affront rather than reflecting an effort to understand Turkey, Ms. Kaplan said that Turks have good reason to be suspicious of the United States. She pointed out that Fethullah Gulen, the cleric and former Erdogan ally who many Turks believe was behind the coup attempt, lives in Pennsylvania, and that a former C. I. A. official had once vouched for Mr. Gulen on his green card application. In addition, she called attention to something else: The United States has provided military support to a Syrian Kurdish militia fighting Islamic State extremists, a militia that Turkey considers an ally of the P. K. K. the outlawed Kurdish separatist organization regarded as a terrorist enemy. In her Friday column, headlined Why Turkey is looking forward to Trump administration, she added, do they really need such details if their only wish is to represent the Turkish people as paranoid and Erdogan as a villain? In another parallel to America, the Turkish government has aggressively exploited tragic events to stoke patriotic feelings and to frame the broader struggle within the country as a fight to secure democracy, even if democratic practices are eroded to do so. The comparison was not lost on Turkish scholars, even those critical of Mr. Erdogan, who were in the United States when the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were attacked. I couldnt believe the extent to which there was a rise in nationalism, even among academics, said Kemal Kirisci, a senior fellow and director of The Turkey Project at the Brookings Institution, recalling his own memories of living in America. I felt intimidated intellectually, almost felt censured. After the coup attempt, the government moved quickly to memorialize victims and places rived by violence, renaming a bridge in Istanbul and a square in Ankara, and changing street names to honor citizens who died defending Mr. Erdogans government. At years end, the prime ministers office delivered packages to foreign correspondents in Turkey. Inside a black velvet box, with a silver clasp, was a small marble chunk, described as rubble from the Parliament building in Ankara, retrieved after an attack was carried out during the coup attempt. A note said that the rock is presented to you as a symbol of Turkeys devotion to democracy. And like American leaders who exhort citizens to maintain daily routines after terrorist attacks, the Turkish prime minister, Binali Yildirim, urged Turks this week to carry on. Our citizens should not change the flow of their normal lives, Mr. Yildirim said in a speech. If they do, it will be serving the purposes of the terror group. Mr. Erdogan and his allies see a double standard in the Wests reaction to Turkey, and say that some of the same measures Turkey is taking to combat terrorism, like resorting to emergency rule, have been embraced in the West, particularly in France. It is this disconnect ” between how Turkey perceives its own experience and the Wests reaction to events in Turkey ” that has contributed to Turkey pulling away from its NATO allies, and moving closer to Russia. In France there is emergency rule for three months, and again for three months, and lately for six months, in total for a year, Mr. Erdogan said in September. Is anyone from around the world asking France, ˜why did you declare emergency rule for a year? Mr. Erdogan emphasized that the violence Turkey has faced is far greater than in countries like France. My brothers, Turkey was the scene of terror incidents so heavy that they cannot be compared with France, and more importantly we faced a coup attempt, he said. From this perspective I believe my country will understand the extension of emergency rule, and support it. In a speech on Friday, Mr. Erdogan underscored the deep traumas Turkey has suffered in recent years. I do not believe any other country exists that went on its way standing upright after living with what we have gone through since 2013, Mr. Erdogan said. We became a unique example in history. We showed democracy can be protected together with security challenges. Mr. Erdogans supporters say they are especially upset over how the West has reacted to Turkeys response to terrorism, saying they had expected solidarity, not criticism. This is an obvious, very serious and problematic disrespect against Turkeys right to defend itself against terror, said Mustafa Yeneroglu, a member of Parliament with Mr. Erdogans Islamist Justice and Development Party. Mr. Yeneroglu, the head of Parliaments human rights committee, said Turkey faced the same conundrum any country faces when traumatized by terrorist acts. If there is no security, there would be no room to enjoy the liberties, he said. This situation leads to prioritizing security while answering questions, ˜security or liberty? This is not only valid for Turkey but for all other liberal democracies. Turkish liberals say they understand the need for extraordinary measures, but they make two counter arguments. One is that Turkeys broad crackdown ” in putting so many journalists and intellectuals in jail ” has gone too far, and is seemingly unrelated to fighting terrorism. Another is that, even with emergency rule, the country has become less safe. On the contrary, we have faced more attacks, more terror, said Yaman Akdeniz, a lawyer and professor at Bilgi University in Istanbul who represents many jailed journalists. He continued, there is emergency rule in France, but there is no other country limiting fundamental rights and freedoms on this scale. Orhan Kemal Cengiz, a prominent human rights lawyer who was briefly detained after the attempted coup, put it this way: Yes, ISIS is attacking. The P. K. K. is attacking. There was this coup dÃ©tat attempt. But what is this to do with all these journalists? There are over 150 journalists in jail. And with every passing day, they arrest more and more people. Marc Pierini, a visiting scholar at Carnegie Europe in Brussels who was a former European Union ambassador to Turkey, said the purges in the military, the courts and the police have, paradoxically, compromised the countrys ability to protect the public. Mr. Pierini also took issue with the governments contention that its response to threats has been appropriate. As weve seen after the coup, the reaction is way outside of the formal rule of law. You started arresting police and gendarmes, now writers, actors, journalists ” so there is no limit, he said. When you start pulling the thread on the rule of law, the whole sweater can come off. And thats where we stand.

**Tim Arango and Rick Gladstone**

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