Shadows of Empire:
HOW POST-IMPERIAL SUCCESSOR STATES SHAPE MEMORIES

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Abstract

Empires may be dead; however memories of empire are alive and well. The list of incidents involving the remembrance and contested memories of imperial experiences across the globe include every modern empire that has fallen in the last century and resonate in almost every nation in the modern international system. In almost every realm of international politics, the importance of memories and national narratives can be felt. As recent interdisciplinary literature and scholarship have emphasized in very different ways, collective memories are the organizing principles and basis on which national identities, political cultures, and ideas are shaped. This dissertation seeks to lay out a research agenda centered on memories of empire or “imperial memories.” Developing this concept into a usable variable and framework for analysis has implications beyond the focus of the present project. The mid-level theories this dissertation develops and tests through in-depth case studies concern the factors and conditions under which memories of empire are initially shaped in post-imperial metropolis states and then evolve. This research offers insights into an area that has long lain outside the scope of traditional political science while drawing on the work of comparative politics and international relations research to systematically incorporate the study of imperial memory.

This dissertation lays out an argument and framework for understanding the evolution of successor states like Japan and Turkey where ideas about their contemporary place in the world co-exist within the historical framework of by-gone empires or what I define more broadly as “imperial memories.” The scale running from extreme and moderate glorification to extreme and moderate rejection of a former empire by a post-imperial successor state is developed in this dissertation as a contribution for future
scholarship. This research highlights the interaction between international structural constraints in the aftermath of empire and the resulting domestic political landscape in metropolis successor states. I hypothesize that strong material factors such as demographics, economies, geographies, and militaries are necessary, but not sufficient conditions for predicting a change in imperial memories. In combination with being an independent power, the presence of a weak domestic regime in a successor state leads to the nationalist appeals of “glorifying” a previous empire while a cohesive domestic regime will choose to “reject” its former incarnation. For example if the successor state has not been able to surpass its former imperial greatness, which rarely happens, the incentives for counter-elites and outside forces to glorify the past grows as a way of delegitimizing the post-imperial regime. Once the selection of imperial memories is explored and understood, domestic identity and politics can be better contextualized.

By putting Japan and Turkey into comparative perspective, this dissertation finds that their contemporary strategic decisions are informed not only by international structural conditions, but most importantly by the domestic politics surrounding their imperial legacies and their inherited perceptions of self. Examined in isolation, Japan and Turkey often seem exceptional and unique cases; however, when put into a comparative perspective, the trends that led to changes in imperial memory are strikingly similar. Imperial memories can serve as both a constraint and as an opportunity for Japanese and Turkish leaders. Imperial memories are not just ancient history; rather, they are the ideas, interpretations, and motivations that permeate the landscape of international relations and require the sustained attention of scholars if we are to truly understand the nations that will shape the 21st century.
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Chapter One

*Imperial Memories Looming Over the Antipodes of Asia*

Turkey, characterized by its longest-serving democratically elected leader, is brimming with self-confidence. In the midst of historic developments sweeping the Middle East in the spring of 2011, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stood before the Turkish parliament to encourage the “Arab uprisings” in an area he referred to as “our neighborhood” repeatedly as he made the case for Turkey’s regional leadership in former Ottoman domains that would have been unthinkable even ten years ago.¹ “Which country were they inspired by?” Erdoğan rhetorically asked. He promptly answered his own question: “Turkey, of course, with its advanced democracy, mix of secularism, free elections and economic dynamism.”²

The “new” Middle East and its current realities represent the most malleable and dynamic frontiers for Turkish foreign policy of the last decade. A new approach based on glorification of the country’s imperial past has transformed Turkey into a regional leader. Shedding its former policies of disengagement, Ankara has become an active participant in all of its regions over the last decade to create “zero problems” and foster regional stability. While this new Turkish foreign policy includes the preservation of national integrity, modernization along Western standards, and non-involvement in the domestic issues of neighboring countries, it also involves a healthy degree of reconstructed

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memories and histories of common Ottoman experiences and heritage. As a result, Erdoğan has been transformed into a regional and now global leader speaking on behalf of the Muslim world in a way not seen for the Turks since the days of the Ottoman Empire.

An exemplary story of this phenomenon involves a private gift Erdoğan gave to French President Nicholas Sarkozy on the occasion of his 300-minute visit to Turkey amidst strained relations over differences of policies in Libya. The Turkish Prime Minister presented the French President a handwritten letter by the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent dating from 1526, in response to a plea from the King of France, Francis I, when he was captured by the Spanish, asking for the assistance of the Ottoman state. Suleiman assured him that he would save him; and indeed, as history would show, the Sultan sent a military force, which freed him. Similar in symbolism, but differing in scale, Erdoğan’s approval of Turkey’s involvement in Libya despite being initially snubbed by the French echoed the triumphant return of the Turks back to the region that Sultan Suleiman once commanded from Istanbul.

These gestures and statements by Erdoğan represent a powerful phenomenon in Turkey today that have captured the imagination of the average Turks: a rediscovery of an imperial mindset and nostalgia for a time when Turkey was among a handful of great powers that determined the fate of its region. It is a phenomenon reflected in the business districts of Istanbul, where billboards of smiling Sultans selling new cellphones now appear on the occasion of the Ottoman dynasty’s founding. The ubiquitous face of

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3 This version of the story was told to author by member of the Prime Minister’s foreign policy team in Washington, DC May 16, 2011. This gift exchange did not receive wide press circulation despite a lot being written about the visit by Turkish columnists such as http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=sarkozy-for-300-minutes-2011-02-25.
Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of Turkey, is being joined by an array of Ottoman faces, paraphernalia, and statues in a way unknown in modern republican history.

Turkey’s rediscovered memories of the Ottoman Empire are all the fashion in Turkey, but are also having a direct impact on its immediate neighbors in Southeastern Europe and the Middle East who once were ruled by the Ottomans. More importantly, and far less understood is how the modern Turkish nation remembers its former imperial incarnation and how these events indicate broader shifts in collective memories from the recent past. Understanding contemporary Turkey’s politics of memory about its empire serves as a powerful window into the republic’s national identity formation and history. Once disparaged by its founder as being antithetical to modern civilization and a rallying point for a new type of Turkish nationalism, the Ottoman Empire now has come full circle to being the historical memory that offers the most compelling view not only of Turkey’s past, but of its present and future trajectory as a pivotal regional power.

Focus

With the evolution of global power, the “rise of the East” and the corresponding debates on the “return of history” have focused attention on the fundamental character of nation-states and the historical underpinnings of actors such as Turkey. However, Turkey is not alone. Observers of the international system have commented that the world of the 21st century most closely resembles the world of empires in the 19th century, with various
regional powers carving out spheres of influence that often roughly correspond to their former imperial domains.\(^4\)

From the ashes of modern empires have emerged heirs in the form of post-imperial successor states; the imperial metropolises that reorganized themselves in the form of nation-states. Examples such as Erdoğan’s Turkey from the Ottoman Empire and Sarkozy’s France from the French Empire have already been offered but can also be supplemented with the likes of China from the Chinese Empire, Russia from the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom from the British Empire that all sit today on the United Nations Security largely as a result of inherited legacies. Westphalian norms and principles enshrined from European histories have held in an American-led international order, however imperial baggage in a number of non-Western successor states shapes the undercurrents and terms of nationalism throughout the world today.

Western nations developed their identities by coalescing city states into nations, then developing colonies, then becoming imperial powers, and eventually discharging their colonial proxies while keeping an identity of power, influence, and cultural superiority. The narratives of cultural identity are selective, often omitting nasty and brutal acts of empire building. This dissertation looks at the emerging republics that arise from the ashes of empire as an object of study, to see how they develop their identity in the context of its imperial past and national future. By defining the phenomenon of “imperial memories” and seeing its various manifestations in history textbooks, individual leaders, museum exhibits, nationalist appeals, political discourse, and societal

con sciences a prism through which to systematically evaluate the changing narratives about former empires is offered.

The primary puzzle motivating this endeavor is the varying impact of international and domestic factors on the origins and reshaping of imperial memories in metropolis successor states. How do defeated empires emerge as independent regional powers and ultimately choose their own relationship with their pasts both among domestic political forces and regional former colonies? As will be developed in subsequent chapters, the struggles over identity and reconciliation of a glorified past with a defeated and humiliated imperial structure give rise to new regimes and permeate all levels of metropolis successor states. At the level of official history and narrative, the domestic regime’s cohesion and dominance is posited to be the most determinative factor in explaining when and how a successor state begins to change its memories of its imperial past. Assuming a state is an independent power with geopolitical strength, not under occupation, and can make its own decisions, the presence of a weak divided domestic regime in a successor state leads to the “glorification” of its previous empire. In contrast, a strong, cohesive domestic regime leads to a “rejection” of its former incarnation, regardless of geopolitical factors.

Citizens and nations make choices about which aspects of their history they wish to remember. So do political elites. This dissertation focuses on the choices political elites have made in grappling with effects of empire on their successor states and key turning points in the histories of their republics. As in the case of Erdoğan and Turkey, the importance of historical memories for shaping national identity and narrative is manifest at every level of a successor state’s political landscape, not just in historical sites
or textbooks. Scholars have offered a variety of insights, observations, and stories about different aspects of memories on both an individual and collective level depending on the discipline of inquiry. However there remains a void for a compelling explanation or framework of how a former empire reorganizes itself in the contemporary international system to deal with its past as a modern republic and how in turn the politics of these memories domestically and internationally are shaped.

The implications of imperial memories for successor states are far-reaching and important for understanding how these states view their own place in the international system. While empires in their literal and structural sense may be long dead, they serve as a potent backdrop against which contemporary policies and politics play out.

**Comparing the Antipodes of Asia**

Modern states struggling with memories of their halcyon days at the center of great empires are prone to sharp vicissitudes in international relations and national identities. This is especially true of states caught between identification with the West and its post-World War II repudiation of empire building and embrace of universal values, and re-strengthening of bonds in a neighborhood that once fell under their imperial rule but suffers from uncertain consolidation. The best-known cases of current imperial nostalgia are Russia coping with the collapse of the Soviet Union and China’s “100 years of shame” since the dismemberment of the Qing Dynasty. Yet, two other cases of non-Western regional powers struggling with a similar predicament have been far less appreciated or well studied.
Turkey, a member of NATO and a re-energized force in Middle East affairs, and Japan, the lynchpin of the U.S. hub and spokes system in Asia and aspirant for leadership in the “East Asian Community,” make for a compelling comparison for policymakers and scholars alike. By tracing the stunning transformation in these republics’ imperial memories and the way these recollections fit into their regional policies, we learn not only about two separate cases of ambivalence in national identity, but also about parallels that reveal a common phenomenon of our time.

The simplistic framework of “East” or “West” does not capture the nuances of the Japanese and Turkish empires and nations that were very much shaped by their experiences with the West but ultimately defined in opposition to it. The roots of the modern Japanese and Turkish nations are firmly connected to their respective empires, despite initial attempts by their founding fathers to sever these ties. Despite being at the opposite ends of Asia, Japan and Turkey share far more than initially meets the eye. Scholars beginning with William McNeil and Dankart Rustow continuing with Cemil Aydin and Ayse Zarakol have explored both the past and contemporary comparisons at the antipodes of Asia.

The fact that the modern republics of Japan and Turkey emerged after defeat of their empire and in world wars has left an emotional trauma that Ayse Zarakol, who has written most recently about the commonalities between these former empires in *After Defeat*, has characterized as an internalized “stigmatization.”5 As a result, the characterization of Japan and Turkey being overly preoccupied with international stature, recognition, and acceptance makes more sense in comparative perspective. Yet lessons

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learned from similar experiences can be varied. For example, under Ataturk’s republican secular-nationalist narrative of Turkey, the failure to modernize and become fully Western is seen as the primary reason for the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. At the other extreme, it is precisely because of technological modernization without checks and balances on the military, that the Japanese believe the West defeated their empire. Thus, for Turks, the pain of losing an empire is fused with the feeling of inferiority due to being not Western/modern enough, whereas in Japan there is a sense of accomplishment at having dominated Asia through its own modernization process that continued even after-empire. Today previous imperial attempts at “Pan-Islamism” and “Pan-Asianism” are invoked and studied like at no other time in Turkish or Japanese modern history.6

The relationship between Turkey and Japan and their respective regions has long been tenuous. Japan’s Asianism and Turkey’s “Islamism,” or what might be more accurately referred to as Easternism, have been challenged in a variety of ways in their contemporary history because of the decisions of political elites in both countries to follow a path of Westernization post-empire.7 However, the struggle between East and West, or “traditional” and “modern,” is not a new phenomenon in either country. At its peak, the Ottoman Empire included almost all of southeastern Europe and wielded significant cultural and political power over Europe, while still claiming its Eastern heritage. Similarly, Japan’s claims of pan-Asian identity grew from an opportunity to extend influence through Asia that was afforded by the collapse of a strong Chinese

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7 Islamism is the traditional term used to emphasize an alternative to Westernization, however I believe it is mistakenly used given that it is not a secular vs religious debate but rather a cultural and geographic discussion. Therefore to capture this concept I use Easternism to refer to Turkey’s Muslim worldview and traditional Asian orientation denoting a non-Western regional orientation. Clearly creating such stark dichotomies and simplifications are problematic but for the sake of the argument I have stylistically referred to it as such.
Empire and was accomplished through adopting Western military technology and “liberal” imperialism.

The way in which these nations have sought to reconcile their present with their pasts has been varied and schizophrenic at times, but generally followed the same causal logic and direction. The long dominant Liberal Democrat Party of Japan and the Kemalist elites of Turkey defended a tradition of rejecting the empires as a source for Japanese and Turkish identity. In turn bureaucracies and the military in these modern republics through a top-down approach favored a more narrowly conceived notion of Western modernization and progress.

At the end of the Cold War and 20th century, emerging elites and coalitions in both countries have challenged the existing regimes and let the proverbial imperial genie out of the bottle. The domestic political ramification of this trend has been rising levels of revisionist conservative nationalism in both countries that feed off of a glorified narrative connecting the modern states to their imperial experiences. Such nationalism has in turn affected international relations between former colonies and the metropolises. As the case studies will outline, the incentives and speed at which Japan and Turkey have changed their memories and narratives vary greatly. However the comparison and analytical framework offered by imperial memories in these two pivotal actors present unique insights worthy of further research and replication in other cases.

Turkey Today

Turkey recalls the Ottoman Empire, which straddled the frontier between the civilizations that best defined East vs. West for centuries. Since the 1980s, memories of
that empire are most closely associated with efforts to reposition Turkey in a renewed struggle between the “modern” secular bastion of Europe and a resurgent “traditional” Muslim world centered in the Middle East. Imperial memories establish an innovative ideational framework for contemporary Turkey’s subsequent shift in national identity as well as its (re)orientation in foreign relations. Rejection of centuries of imperial leadership facilitated the modern republic’s desperate push for inclusion in the West. In contrast, reviving pride in an imperial past as the leader of the Muslim world and defender of the faithful wins renewed support in the emerging contours of the Middle East.

Having emerged from the shadows of isolationism before World War II and dependency on the West during the Cold War, Turkey today is asserting itself in unprecedented ways. Given the power vacuum in the Middle East and Turkey’s current political leadership, there is a greater incentive for Turkey to play a larger role in its region with a particular focus on its Muslim identity and history. While the reception of Turkey back into the Middle East by its former colonies has been viewed with caution and suspicion, it has managed to turn its Ottoman legacy into a positive asset. Having once unified much of the Sunni Muslim world through the caliphate in Istanbul, many in Turkey today, including almost all political leaders, argue for a greater role that is possible only through a reconceptualization of the secular regime put in place by its founder Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.

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8 Turkish national identity and foreign relations have been individually studied, but rarely brought together in a systematic way. For the exception to the rule see Lerna K. Yanik’s “Constructing Turkish “exceptionalism”: Discourses of liminality and hybridity in post-Cold War Turkish foreign policy” Political Geography Volume 30, Issue 2 (February 2011): 80-89.
Driving this trend towards glorification of the Ottoman Empire is a hegemonic domestic coalition led by Prime Minister Erdoğan that has elevated the prestige associated with playing an active regional and symbolic role in Turkey’s former imperial space. The current Turkish government through promoting a glorified narrative of the empire seems intent on re-capturing Turkey’s Ottoman past, further demonstrating the importance of understanding how this memory is being shaped and driven for the years ahead.

As this dissertation will show, Turkey’s contemporary strategic decisions are informed not only by its military and economic power, but also by its Ottoman legacy and the perceptions of self, inherent in its current imperial memories.9 Turkey’s imperial memory can serve as both a constraint and as an opportunity for Turkish grand strategy.

The country’s historic place between East and West has often led to “identity crises.” If studied in isolation from its Ottoman past, contemporary Turkey’s culture, values, and institutions seem to offer few clues to contemporary policy. However, by including Turkey’s Ottoman memory into discussions about Turkey’s strategic culture and decision-making, scholars of international politics and policymakers can better understand this successor state’s historic place in both the West and the East, and its role in shaping current Turkish thinking both domestically and internationally. The challenges facing Turkey as it seeks to reconcile and leverage these imperial memories mirror those confronting another successor state at the opposite end of Asia, Japan.

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9 As further evidence of this Ibrahim Kalin, the prime minister’s chief foreign policy advisor argued that “Turkey’s post-modernity lies in the Ottoman Empire,” further bolstering the importance of the Ottoman legacy in the current government’s strategic thinking. Ibrahim Kalin, Interview with the Author, October 16, 2009.
Japan Today

Japan, when it chooses to remember its empire, oscillates between seeing it as a period of unmitigated disaster leading to its ultimate defeat in the “Great East Asian War” (World War Two) or as combining entry into the West with defense of Asianism against European imperialism. Japan’s post-World War Two leaders have struggled to define their nation outside the scope of the defeated Japanese Empire without fully dealing with the imperial legacy in the region. The Japanese emperor still presides in Tokyo, along with most of Japan’s prewar functioning bureaucracy, owing its existence to the American occupation over 60 years ago. While observers have marveled at how Japanese citizens seem to have internalized anti-militaristic norms and created a consensus-based one-party democracy, the variation in memories of Japan’s brief domination of East Asia has always created divisions right below the surface.

By the time the Cold War ended, hopes for renewed Asianism were growing alongside resurgence in selective memories of the empire that might have helped Japan assert its leadership in the East Asian region. Given the dynamism of East Asia, Japan is at the crossroads of today’s civilizational divide between the old center of modernity and the emerging region as the leader in modernization. Complicating Japan’s quest are negative memories of its imperialism harbored by other leading East Asian states. Given the rapid rise of China, whose memories are particularly hostile, forging an East Asian community faces many hurdles. Complicating the revival of positive memories of imperial Japan is the security alliance afforded by the country’s close relationship with the United States. The insecurity aroused by use of the “history card” against Japan and
the fear that China is twisting Asianism into an anti-Western creed to serve its own hegemonic agenda has directly affected Tokyo.

Despite Japan’s successful business and investment ventures throughout its neighborhood in the 1980s, the effects of Japan’s two-decades long recession has taken the shine off of any type of Asian leadership it sought to exert during its heyday. Having become increasingly focused inward, Japan’s actions in its own region have been extremely subdued. Given the gradual shift toward acknowledging its imperial past, which has been subtle compared to the Turkish case, Japan has still not crossed the critical threshold in its imperial memories. While anger and resentment toward Japan have not disappeared within China or Korea, there are pragmatic incentives for regional integration and solving the remaining political concerns that underlie the “history issue.” The challenges still associated with Japan’s imperial past continue to temper the resurgence in revisionist nationalism on the domestic level so that while Japan is moving in the same general direction as Turkey, Tokyo remains on a much more gradual glorificationist imperial path than the abrupt shift seen in Ankara. The debates within Japan about being a “beautiful” or a “normal” country are direct responses to the rise of China and the need to deal with an imperial past that has often been swept under the rug in domestic debates.¹⁰

A new generation of Japanese leaders has struggled to move beyond criticisms of Japan’s imperial legacy and overcome the entrenched bureaucracies. Reactions in East Asia have been cautious whenever Japan has attempted to take on regional or global

leadership roles further frustrating Tokyo and its allies in Washington. Consequently, recent events have made the domestic scene in Japan for the first time in its modern history unpredictable and worthy of far greater attention and research. Whereas the fear in the 1980s was about a resurgent Japan dominating the regional and international order, now a deeply pessimistic and isolated Tokyo is increasingly difficult to engage with.

Japan and Turkey emerged from the Cold War largely isolated and without a strong connection to the West besides the United States. Given the interaction between domestic and international politics in democratic systems, the new leaders in Tokyo and Ankara have sought to demonstrate their independence from Washington while seeking greater regional relations with mixed results. As regional leaders, Japan and Turkey are now seeking to carve out new roles for themselves in their “rediscovered” neighborhoods with varying degrees of success, as will be traced throughout this dissertation.

**Whether West or East?**

The domestic narrative in Japan bears a striking resemblance to those in Turkey. Both countries are torn between East and West, and in each case this condition is alternatively seen as a weakness to be overcome or a blessing to be respectively exploited. This similarity may be surprising given the differences between these countries’ geographies and material conditions, but it is no accident. Certain characteristics set these states apart from both the “East” and the “West,” and it is no coincidence that scholars beginning with William McNeill and continuing to Ayse Zarakol have singled out these countries, along with Russia, as examples of states that
were unable to eliminate “tell-tale traces” of older patterns despite their “heartfelt efforts.”

Japan and Turkey, along with other post-imperial successor states such as Russia which will be dealt with in a final comparative chapter, are political entities that pre-date the Westphalian system. As empires, they produced their own comprehensive worldviews that were in turn used as universal standards throughout their domains well before their incorporation as nation states. The challenge of accepting new normative standards in a Western-led international order after empire casts a shadow over each of these post-imperial successor states. Yet key differences remained which would eventually shape the interactions between these nations and define the fault lines for Western inclusion and identity. Japan’s geography, for instance, sets it apart from both Turkey and Russia. The Ottoman Empire’s trauma of being “betrayed” by Christian communities distinguishes Turkey from Russia and Japan, which suffered their own unique stigmas. While Russia’s Christian heritage sets it apart from Turkey and Japan. Still, as far as state identity from a systemic perspective is concerned, the similarities of having emerged after defeat that Zarakol highlights is seen to be the most determinative as this dissertation carries these comparisons further down the causal line.

Turkey and Japan increasingly have to face the reality that in today’s international context, regional rivals such as Iran and China – states which are more secure in their

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12 Ayse Zarakol in her work has found that Japan, Russia, and Turkey shared the experience of stigmatization as a result of comparative “backwardness,” as well as the difficulty of living in the shadow of a greater past. Zarakol uses the words of Norbet Elias, a German sociologist, to argue that “it is a proven fact that the members of states and other social units which have lost their claim to a position of highest rank...often require a long time, even centuries, to come to terms with this changed situation and consequent lowering of their self-esteem.” *The Germans* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 19; See Zarakol, *After Defeat* 102.

13 Ibid.
“Asian”/“Eastern” identities as Zarakol defines them – have more cachet with non-Western populations increasingly disenfranchised with the state of international affairs led by the West and its “Western imitators.”\(^{14}\) Therefore, Turkey and Japan are constrained by choices and memories they developed in the twentieth century, and cannot completely engage in the anti-Western rhetoric that their rivals are offering, without risking their hard-earned semi-“Western” position.\(^{15}\) Therefore, it is not surprising that both countries have adopted a tone of being a “bridge” or “crossroads” of civilizations as a way forward. Turkey and Japan see an opportunity in the “Clash of Civilizations” discourse to turn what was once thought to be their weaknesses, i.e. relations with the East, into an explicit strategy to redefine their importance for the West.\(^{16}\)

How Turkey and Japan position themselves in the ongoing transformations of the Middle East and East Asia is critical to the balance of power in both regions, particularly the presence of the West as a force shaping these regions. It is no less significant for the two civilizational struggles that are likely to be defined as East vs. West over the coming decades. In reassessing their historical memories, each state is in the forefront of weighing competing notions of a Western-led international community and an assertive regional community poised to challenge the West and its narrative of history. These two stellar cold war success stories for the universal reach of Western values are being tested in the post-Cold War era of regional challenges to Western leadership that offer enticing opportunities for both more independent status and reconstructed national identity.

Japan and Turkey’s “rediscovery” of their imperial past and space has already had a profound impact on the domestic discussions about Japanese and Turkish self-

\(^{14}\) Zarakol *After Defeat*, 251.

\(^{15}\) Ibid

\(^{16}\) Ibid
perceptions and international involvement, rekindling debates about East vs. West and traditional vs. modern which can be traced to before the foundation of both republics.\textsuperscript{17} As a result, one of the most salient domestic issues in these countries is how their respective empires and histories should be remembered. In a globalized world, these internal debates have implications far beyond the modern boundaries of the republics and in turn affect Japanese and Turkish policy on a variety of different levels. The general trend observed towards greater imperial identification worldwide can be attributed to the end of the Cold War and the significance of these imperial memories for both leaders and publics alike. The domestic political ramification of this trend has been rising levels of revisionist hyper-nationalism that feeds off of a glorificationist narrative, which in turn affects international relations between former colonies and metropolises.

Today as Japan and Turkey seek to chart independent courses for themselves in a post-Cold War environment, imperial shadows loom large over their respective memories and narratives. The direction and path Turkey chooses for itself have direct implications on the broader question of how the Muslim world will be defined, just as Japan’s response to China’s resurgence will set the tone for East Asian regionalism. As this dissertation reveals, the keys to understanding the future of Asia may rest at its antipodes in Japan and Turkey as they engage and struggle with their imperial pasts.

\textsuperscript{17} For two recent examples of this genre of literature see Tsuyoshi Hasegawa and Kazuhiko Togo \textit{East Asia’s Haunted Present: Historical Memories and Resurgence of Nationalism} (London: Praeger Press, 2008) and Malik Mufti \textit{Daring and Caution in Turkish Strategic Culture: Republic at Sea} (New York: Palgrave Press, 2009).
Theory Chapter

Theorizing Imperial Memory Politics

The most important actors in the international system have one thing in common: most great power and almost every regional power is a successor state to an empire.\textsuperscript{18} This observation should come as no surprise since historians have emphasized the critical role that empires have played throughout history in shaping the international system. Therefore, it follows that the only way to understand these nations and their behavior is to start by understanding their histories and how they view the world in which they operate.

As laid out by the French sociologist and “father” of historical memory research, Maurice Halbwachs, the difference between history and memory is that the actual facts matter less than the shared perceptions of the facts.\textsuperscript{19} Following this logic, if history is an objective set of facts about what accurately happened in a given period of time, remembering is the political choice of what or, perhaps more accurately, which history to commit to memory. This chapter develops a theory about the choices made by states and their leaders about their collective memories of former imperial greatness, which is applied in subsequent case studies as a way to examine the political calculations made by national leaders about their imperial memories.

Historical memories of former empires within metropolis successor states are defined in this dissertation as “imperial memory” and are subsequently developed into an

\textsuperscript{18} The major exception depending on the definition of empire is the United States and on the regional level arguments can be made for Brazil, Nigeria, and South Africa which are post-colonial rather than imperial. However China France, Germany, India, Iran, Japan, Russia, United Kingdom, and Turkey all are imperial successor states.
area for further research. Using in-depth case studies, this dissertation explores both the original development of imperial memories and the way in which they change over time. As laid out in the introduction, the puzzle of why any country chooses to reject its imperial past when others choose to glorify it is what motivates the theory that this chapter seeks to develop. The dilemmas faced by countries seeking to glorify their past without arousing the ire of former colonies and the subsequent international constraints that follow in the modern context are numerous. The choices faced over time in selecting memories of the former empire, which were the immediate incarnation of the modern successor state we see today, constitute the area for theory-development. The framework constructed envisions these imperial memories as representing how a successor state deals with its former empire on a scale ranging from extreme rejection to glorification of its past.

Pioneers of the idea of historical memories emphasize that memories matter because they are the bedrock from which national identities, political cultures, and states are formed. By specifying the formative memories for a nation that emerged post-empire, the assumptions for “imperial memories” builds on the themes identified by sociologists such as Halbwachs in a broader context and apply it to the evolution of post-imperial nationalism and national identities in comparative cases in international relations today. In this dissertation’s usage, imperial memories are a specific and definable snapshot in time that makes up a crucial part of the overall psyche of a successor state that emerges after empire. These memories of empire are of particular importance because they are the ashes from which most states in the international system as we know them today were born, and are the nations’ most recent experience in international relations. The way in
which successor people think about their time at the head of an empire and the narrative that is constructed to explain the loss of this entity both in the aftermath and over time is what this dissertation explores as imperial memories.

Memories of the imperial past and how post-imperial leaders use them clearly matter on both the societal and national level. The distinctions between cultural memory and official memory studied by sociologists often blur when put to the test in the environments that concern scholars of political science such as domestic politics and international affairs. Therefore, the challenge for political scientists is to understand the process by which post-imperial successor states choose to interpret and develop their respective memories. Given that culture, history, and national identity all stem largely from memories, it is a particularly important task to develop mid-level theories about how these memories are shaped and changed across time by political elites. The politics of memory is an emerging field of research therefore being able to connect it to the broader debates in both the literature and international affairs through imperial memories would be a major advancement.

The scope and universe of cases for a theory of imperial memories reveals the relevance of it for the field of international relations. Imperial memories by their very nature span disciplinary lines. While the literature on nationalism points toward the importance of many of the elements that will be used to develop our theory, traditional international relations theory has not systematically engaged or included imperial memories as an area of study as we do here. Being able to focus research on the official and public domain is critical in contributing to the ongoing debates concerning both
domestic and international politics, and introducing imperial memories as a replicable research area and promising contribution toward future scholarship.

In developing a framework for imperial memories and the subsequent emergence of post-imperial nationalism, I first begin at the structural level of the international system by explaining how systemic forces and relative material capabilities shape the way in which a successor state remembers or forgets its former incarnation in the aftermath of empire. In particular the way in which the collapse, defeat, or dissolution of empire occurs is the greatest marker for a post-imperial nation’s short-term memory. The leaders and institutions that are established during this period are formative in establishing a particular narrative that can either take hold and be reinforced by domestic and international conditions or be built in opposition to these factors, which ultimately leads to a reinterpretation and a change in shared understandings of the past. It is important to first identify the scope of a national history prior to developing a universe of theory.

Scope Conditions

History shows that certain entities within an empire have centralized government, differentiated economies, and a shared sense of political loyalty. As a result, scholars have shown that these attributes permit and encourage such states to dominate other political societies, and thus define “imperial metropolises.” Other societies are vulnerable to domination and collaboration. These “imperializable peripheries” have at best highly divided governments and often no governments, undifferentiated economies, and absent
or highly divided political loyalties.\textsuperscript{20} For the purposes of this dissertation and subsequent theory, I am interested in the memories of post-imperial successor metropolises that have clear successor states. Therefore, this includes at least fourteen modern empires, which correspond to an equal number of modern nation states, the majority of which are great and regional powers.\textsuperscript{21}

The literature on empires points to the importance of particular periods of imperial rule in a successor state’s identity formation, actions, and historical narratives not only because it signifies the zenith of its power, but also because of the collective remembrance of it as the moment in a nation’s history. The fact that people who were conquerors remember a certain period in a positive light despite unpleasant objective realities makes sense given that humans are selective in self-remembrance and self-examination.\textsuperscript{22} Additionally, while most nations and people can look back to a particular moment in history and fondly remember it as a “golden age,” modern imperial rule represents not simply nostalgic or psychological remembrance, but an objectively and globally acknowledged moment of prominence on the world stage.

The Modern empires of the nineteenth and twentieth century were an acknowledged group that competed around the globe for domination and codified a balance of power by respecting each other’s imperial spheres of influence.\textsuperscript{23} The act of establishing an international club of empires since the Peace of Westphalia when the

\textsuperscript{20} These terms are taken from Michael Doyle’s Empires, (New York: Princeton University Press, 1985), which remains the seminal work on empires in international relations.

\textsuperscript{21} My list includes Belgium, France, Germany, India, Iran, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Russia, United Kingdom, Turkey, China, and Japan.

\textsuperscript{22} See James Wertsch, Voices of Collective Remembering (London: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

\textsuperscript{23} The distinction between modern and premodern empires is made in reference not only to the time periods but also the method of imperial expansion and rule. All European empires were considered modern, yet only a few non-Western empires including the Japanese, Russian, and Ottoman Empires were included in this group despite predating the Westphalian system and being more similar to traditional agrarian empires.
world was split into the conquered and the conquerors established the rules of international play until the 20th century. This is a critical contemporary distinction between post-colonial and post-imperial, with the majority of regional powers emerging from the ruins of empire and these new nation states having decidedly different views of the former empire depending on their place within it. Therefore, while many Arab and African states claim the mantle of an ancient imperial dynasty or rule, each of these colonial states emerged from modern empires that post-dated their own indigenous ancient empires. Thus, their births as nations were more shaped by their colonial than their imperial memory in comparison to the progeny of modern empires.

What makes these post-imperial moments different from the nostalgia of ancient “glory days” is the extent to which this modern history continues to affect other actors in the international system. The DNA of the current international system emerged from a post-imperial and Westphalia context that established national narratives along either colonial or imperial struggles within a relatively short timeline in which all nation-states were born. Given the current political environment, understanding how these empires are remembered and incorporating them into a sophisticated understanding of international relations is of particular value for scholars and policymakers alike.

Imperial memories have received little attention from scholars of international relations and therefore must be first developed within the field by drawing from concepts and scholarship developed in other disciplines. Given the Western bias of international relations theory building, which has been based in no small account on the European experience with empires, nation states, and historical trajectory, it is important to incorporate lesser-studied examples of non-Western empires and historical memory
making into the broader field. Unfortunately a cursory survey of international relations theories might lead one to conclude that non-Western states are simply the “decorative plants of modern international society.”²⁴ As Ayse Zarkol has outlined, “The overall thrust of the discipline has thus far been to ignore the non-West in theory formulation because non-Western states are either assumed to be static and therefore indistinguishable from the environment, or assumed to be easily covered by theories extrapolated from the Western experience.”²⁵ However, given the changes in the world and the shifting power dynamics, there is added value to include non-Western cases, if possible, into the realm of international relations theory.

Given the importance of understanding how post-imperial states view their own historical places in the international system, China, India, Iran, Japan, Russia, and Turkey represent six of the most important modern examples of non-Western collapsed empires that have bequeathed their successor states with imperial memories that have at various times puzzled and confused scholars. Despite consistent refrains from historians and scholars highlighting the importance of these nations’ imperial memories, this factor has rarely been studied in a systematic or comparative way. Historically, these countries were major players in their regions. As a result, there are shared cultural and historical connections with their respective regions that make their understanding of imperial memories carry weight far beyond the former metropolises themselves.

With the reshaping of the international system – where the “rise of the East” has been felt most prominently – scholars of international politics must develop a deeper understanding of the fundamental character of key non-Western nation-states and the

²⁴ See Ayse Zarakol, After Defeat, 241.
historical underpinnings of these actors. While imperial memories are equally applicable in the Western context and pre-modern context, and in some cases more easily applied, given the nature of international relations today that privileges the role of regional powers, this theory focuses on two non-Western modern post-imperial metropolises for practical cases of theory-development. Despite this fact, imperial memories offer an avenue of scholarship that can be replicated in any of the aforementioned post-imperial successor states that dominate international affairs, but require a depth of research that lends itself to a deeply qualitative methodology and careful selection of comparative cases, some of which will be explored after the initial theory-development.

Urgency of Memories Today

Understanding how metropolis successor states deal with and shape memories their post-imperial histories reveals a great deal about present-day national identities. Additionally, the memories a state chooses to remember and the myths it creates can be indicative of national intentions that scholars of international relations continually search for. Yet political scientists as a whole and scholars of international relations in particular have overlooked the critically important role imperial memories have played within successor states and not factored them into the existing scholarship and theories. While the manner in which both leaders and nations deal with their past has implications that can eventually be drawn out, the primary focus remains on explaining the changes and

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26 Often I use the terms interchangeably, however when referring to non-metropolis successor state I make this point explicitly.
turning points in imperial memories so as to lay a solid foundation for their inclusion into the field for future scholarship.

The historiography of post-imperial successor states reveals a serious disconnect between the official narratives on the emergence of the modern nation-state and the societal perceptions of where it had come from that constitute the imperial successor state’s evolving identity and memories of its former empire. Historical memories have often been overlooked in favor of strictly ideological, geopolitical, or strategic explanations to explain what has motivated modern nations for the majority of their existence since memories do not fit nicely into any analytical box. However, in the current environment, the increasing importance of regional powers that are also post-imperial successor states is being recognized, and a more nuanced understanding of the context and ideas that shape these decision makers’ attitudes is needed. It is no longer possible to simply ignore a post-imperial successor state’s historical memories because they are too complicated or filled with paradoxes. Today there is a growing interest in the imperial legacy for modern republics and a need to understand the resulting implications and international visions of these choices of memory that have rarely been examined or systematically understood by scholars of international relations.27

Scholars from diverse disciplines have noted that we are witnessing a sharp increase in the number and intensity of disputes over history and the official historical

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27 A good summary of this interest that captures this frustration from both a European and Asian perspective can be found at Daniel Steinvorth, “Nostalgia for the Ottomans: Disillusioned with Europe, Turkey Looks East,” Spiegel Online International, [http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,660635,00.html](http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,660635,00.html) and Sami Moubayed, “Turkey Embraces Role As Arab Big Brother,” Asia Times. [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/LA14Ak01.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/LA14Ak01.html).
narratives of different countries. The research outlined here highlights the importance of creating historical narratives that can weave together a multitude of people into a single “imagined community” and galvanize them for action. In this way, the nationalist project, understood as an ongoing effort to create and maintain such hegemonic narratives, has become a central feature of modern politics. As scholars of nationalism have outlined, the emergence of nation-states in which the state predates the nation has significant political consequences. As a result, the emergence of the modern international system post-Westphalia has had a tremendous impact on the way in which nation-states have promoted laudatory depictions of their history. In turn, how empires were defeated and subsequently nations were created from the ashes of empires helps us further develop our own understanding of these entities of change and remember their previous incarnations.

From the existing literature in political science we can deduce that domestic elites would drive the development and change of imperial memory. While this is partially true, it is equally important to incorporate international factors that matter since these nations exist not in a vacuum but rather in an interconnected world. Just because scholarship,

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which privileges international factors and discounts the normative power of framing that historical memories would fall under, has not directly addressed the questions being raised does not mean these insights are any less valid. After all, empires were and are transnational entities that spawned almost all of the current nation-states in the world. As a result, we must consider international factors when considering the construction of memory. Imperial memory construction is important, not only because it affects the developments of post-imperial successor states and their domestic politics, but also because it affects interregional relations. Therefore, while the study of imperial memory has something to say about international relations in the twenty-first century, it also follows that the discipline of international relations has something to say about the study of imperial memory.

Yet, to date, political scientists, and international relations scholars in particular, have had surprisingly little say about issues of imperial history and historical memory. As Thomas Berger has outlined in his research, history and debates over history are presumed to be suitable subject matters for historians and cultural critics, while state policies regarding history are seen as essentially symbolic sideshows with little real value. Political scientists have preferred to focus on the more concrete forces that they believe drive politics, especially the balance of power and considerations of material interests. What has been missing, particularly regarding nations that have lost empires in

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32 There are some important exceptions, however. Political scientists and other scholars concerned with the issue of restoring order in post-conflict societies have in recent years paid a great deal of attention to the issue of historical justice. Samuel Huntington has helped pioneer the discussion in his book *The Third Wave* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

the last century, is a critical understanding and appreciation for the importance of historical memories, which are the basis of the constructed identities.

**International Relations Theory on Memory**

The boundaries of international relations continue to move with time, yet the basic theoretical perspectives that drive the discipline have remained the same. The major debates in the field have been defined by leading scholars such as Peter Katzenstein, Robert Keohane, and Stephen Krasner as being between rationalists and culturalists. According to these leading scholars both of these approaches offer relevant variables and causal patterns that provide “heuristics” for developing specific research programs. These theoretical orientations, despite being seminal in the field of international relations, were derived interdisciplinary from economics and sociology. Rationalists adopted the economic’s approach to formulating puzzles as being problems for rational actors with unproblematically specified interests, competing in a situation characterized by scarce resources while culturalists, in contrast, tend to look toward sociology for insights into how “reality,” including interests that partially constitute the identity of actors, is socially constructed. While the specific research programs yielded by these schools of thought offer differing methodological approaches and explanations, they both agree on the necessity of moving beyond the strict separation of international and domestic politics that defines much of political science. Both approaches can easily engage historical

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34 This articulation was made most clearly in the special issue of IO’s introduction that Peter Katzenstein, Robert Keohane, and Stephen Krasner wrote “International Organization and the Study of World Politics,” *International Organization* 52 (Autumn 1998): 645-684.
35 Ibid, 647.
36 Ibid, 646.
memories, albeit from varying ends of the spectrum. Rationalists would simply see memories as being symbolic, while culturalists would see them as being formative in their own right. Therefore, in seeking to build a specific research agenda on imperial memories we can test the insights of rationalist accounts of international relations, most notably realism, while also tempering this with a strong sympathy for culturalist constructivism. Rather than choosing sides, imperial memories can draw from both schools and offer a compelling area of research on its own merits.

While little explicit research has been done on historical memories in international relations theory, constructivism comes closest to prioritizing the importance of historical memories in understanding nations and their resulting identity formation within an “imagined community.”37 However, given the difficulty of working with historical memories, scholars in international relations have typically chosen to black-box these memories as causes rather than to study them on their own merit as effects. Put differently, historical memories have almost always been seen as independent or intervening variables rather than as dependent variables that need to be systematically researched.38 This has typically led to inconclusive results because with a variable as large and as inclusive as historical memories, almost all plausible explanations have been subsumed into a single cause. The fact that the past and memories of it are used to construct national identities and enhance nationalism makes understanding historical memories all the more important.

Constructivist authors have developed theories that use ideas, norms, or culture to

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37 Benedict Anderson’s famous imagery that also serves as an important reminder of why memories which are also imagined or remembered are crucial in constructing a community like a nation.
38 The best examples of this can be found in the East Asian and Near Eastern area studies literature along with individual works that focus on the formation of nation states in Japan and Turkey. Carol Gluck, *Japan’s Modern Myths* (Princeton University Press, 1985) is an exemplary work in this regard.
explain political outcomes by thinking in terms of a “backstory:” previous events that
gave rise to the ideas and were then used to influence politics.³⁹ With imperial memories
the task is to explain the backstory of empires, why certain memories are chosen and
become salient at particular moments and not others in successor states. As Sheri Berman
has noted, “Since no true intellectual vacuum ever exists, what is really at issue here is
ideational change – how individuals, groups, or societies exchange old ideas for new
ones.”⁴⁰ Ideas that guide national strategies and shape national identity have received
comparatively little systematic or theoretical attention despite their relative importance
because it is difficult to create credible research agendas around ideational variables.⁴¹

Given that realists dismiss ideational factors as being epiphenomenal,
constructivists have focused on disputing this point and proving that ideas can be
researched as independent variables. Rather than exploring ways ideas are affected and
interact with other factors some scholars go so far as to argue that exploring how ideas
function, as dependent variables would amount to a concession.⁴² However, there is an
emerging body of research and scholarship that believes that ideas, norms, and culture
can be both dependent and independent variables depending on the context, just like
historical memories.⁴³

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³⁹ See Sheri Berman, “Ideas, Norms, and Culture in Political Analysis.” Comparative Politics 33 (2)
⁴⁰ Ibid.
⁴¹ A notable exception here is Jeffrey Legro’s work particularly Rethinking the World, (New York: Cornell
University Press, 2005).
⁴² Berman, “Ideas, Norms, and Culture in Political Analysis,” 233.
⁴³ Berman explicitly makes this point on page 233 and highlights area for future research. Two of the best
examples of this type of scholarship can be found in Peter Katzenstein’s edited volume The Culture of
National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996) and
David Laitin’s Identity in Formation: The Russian-Speaking Populations in the near Abroad (Ithaca, NY:
Despite lack of well-developed body of research in international relations theory explicitly on memories, the two dominant theories are applicable and worthy of engagement with imperial memories. Realists would most likely argue that historical memories are defined by material and structural factors while constructivists would point to the underlying construction of identities and ideas as being the primary factor in shaping historical memories. Realists would dismiss memories as being subsidiary to international structural factors whereas constructivists would argue that memories are symbolic tools of competing elites that could be outcomes of larger underlying trends.\textsuperscript{44}

The problem with such arguments are that they assume the utility and volatility of nationalist claims, that they will be naturally appealing to domestic groups and that this will in turn have explosive consequences which are taken for granted \textit{a priori}, without explaining why or how.

Research on imperial memories and the utility of these shared remembrances draws on the work of both realists and constructivists, and makes claims that can be contested by both. However, what distinguishes this research is the extent to which imperial memories identify the underlying assumptions and the way in which particular ideas about a nation’s former incarnation lead to the present-day political contestation. Post-imperial national identity by itself may seem archaic, but when charged with the political realities of the present, becomes a salient feature that helps us to contextualize and understand these states in the international system today.

Drawing on the work of many comparative scholars who have grappled with the question of identity I adopt a view of identities that are constructed by historical

\textsuperscript{44} Articulations of this view can be seen in Jack Snyder’s work on domestic politics and international ambition in Jack Snyder, \textit{Myth of Empire} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991) and Stephen Van Evera’s work on nationalism and war \textit{Causes of War} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).
memories. The literature on identity seems to be divided between those like David Laitin, who view the phenomenon as ultimately being about strategic choice, and those like Lisa Weeden, who see identity in formation as being about how “inter-subjective communities” constitute and generate “felt” identification. While both views have substantial evidence from which to draw, for the purposes here the theory is less interested in the substantive ontological debates in the field and more on the practical implications of how people in a particular state conceive of themselves and how their nation’s past as an empire affects their choices for remembering today.

Imperial memories therefore are not only affected by interpretations and understandings of the past but of the present identity as well. Recent work by scholars trying to lay out a coherent framework for working with identity as a measurable variable in international relations work has demonstrated how difficult this task can be. As Steven Smith has argued, “…subjective perception and understanding of the communal past by each generation … is a defining element in the concept of cultural identity.” Memories also can shape ideas about the future; as a paper from a group of Harvard political scientists laying out a research agenda for identity have recently been developing:

*Cognitive models affect not only broad worldviews and temporalities but also understandings of self, group, and other. The literature has also produced many cases demonstrating how identities can affect understandings of political*

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and economic interests. In the realm of politics, identities can affect conceptions of legitimacy, shared interests, and policy choices, as well as preferences for political leaders and parties.\textsuperscript{48}

Given that identities are based on memories, it follows that memories have a similar affect on political interests and preferences as well.

International relations scholars in studying European identity formation have argued that memories, “Define and shape how actors view their perceived instrumental and material interests and which preferences are regarded as legitimate and appropriate for enacting given identities.”\textsuperscript{49} These collective identities in turn are ultimately shaped by the “outcome of a process of social contestation within a given group.”\textsuperscript{50} Therefore given this logic and research it follows that the content of collective remembering of memories is neither fixed nor predetermined. “Cognitive content, rather than implying an alternative theory of action, implies a theory of interpretation.”\textsuperscript{51} This demonstrates both how memories play a role in providing nations and people their understanding of the world, but also how their, “…material or social incentives for particular actions will be influenced by their identities.”\textsuperscript{52} Along with those scholars who have laid out this framework for identity as a variable, the theory of imperial memories accepts the implication that memories are dynamic and fluid over time. In line with this thinking given that collective memories are constructed, there will be “…periods and places where inter-subjective understandings of social facts are stable enough that they can be treated

\textsuperscript{48} Abdelal et al, “Identity as a Variable,” 8.
\textsuperscript{50} Abdelal et al, “Identity as a Variable,” 9.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{52} Abdelal et al, “Identity as a Variable,” 9.
as if they are fixed and can be analyzed with social scientific procedures.”

Understanding when and why these changes in memories occur complicates the research task, but draws from the same logic as any variables that are contested and necessarily means they are snapshots of the larger phenomena being studied.

Beyond the literature on identity, research on nationalism in international relations and the way it is used by political elites offers the most promising realm for the incorporation of memories within existing theory. Jack Snyder and Stephen Van Evera demonstrate that memories matter beyond a simple leadership transaction because even as instruments in the hands of elites they take on a life of their own through the types of nationalism that can mobilize and lead to ends that exceed their original intentions.

Given that Snyder and Van Evera’s cases are largely drawn from great powers, which also all happen to be post-imperial successor states, it stands to reason that arguments about imperial memory would be complementary and similar to the arguments of these authors by adding explicitly the imperial piece to the story and emphasizing the international structural factors. Snyder in his work notes the accidental international consequences of domestic nationalist spirals that eventually lead to war. Imperial memories take these insights one step further by considering the domestic causal mechanisms and the international constraints that lead to a particular type of memory selection over time. In addition, Van Evera’s definition of nationalism mirrors my own specified conception of post-imperial nationalism as a salient tool within a population.

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53 Ibid, 10.
55 See particularly Snyder’s Chapter Two “Three Theories of Overexpansion,” 21-65.
that is predisposed to remembering a glorified past when they were the dominant power at the expense of their colonized neighbors who reject this interpretation.\textsuperscript{56}

Research focused on decision makers and the lessons they draw from the past have come closest to tracing how historical memory matters. This research led by Snyder shows how statesmen pick and choose among the available lessons of history until they find one that fits the strategy that they want and adopt it.\textsuperscript{57} In addition, various policy analysts and area studies scholars have framed their research in terms of history and explained specific sets of relations between nations and within societies in terms similar to historical memory, yet there have been few comprehensive research programs that have situated historical memory in a broader framework.

\textbf{Towards Developing and Incorporating a Theory}

Imperial memories are systematically researchable because they offer a specific and definable context in which states assess their fundamental objectives and link them to explanations and narratives about the way their past, present, and future intersect in a manner distinct from other states. Similar to the more overarching research agendas on national identity studies, historical memory research programs are underdeveloped. Interdisciplinary and interregional works are infrequent, and rigorous comparative analysis remains rare.

There are well-developed research programs from both psychology and sociology that trace how memories can affect behavior in individuals, yet this has rarely been

\textsuperscript{56} Van Evera, “Hypotheses on Nationalism and War,” 5.
incorporated within the study of international relations because there is little agreement on how to define memory for a nation as opposed to a human being. For the purposes of this dissertation, the imperial memory of a nation is deduced by amalgamating history textbooks officially sanctioned and published by the ministries of education, public statements delivered by leaders, official commemorations, and museum exhibits. Nations that once dominated a particular region tend to either completely isolate themselves or seek to reassert leadership based on their experiences post-empire. The field of historical memories may draw attention from diverse perspectives, but there is scant recognition that substantial benefits may lie within reach from a coordinated investigation of how historical memories evolves, how various components of a nation’s imperial legacy fit together, and how a region’s modern history and international relations are poised to be newly understood by applying this approach systematically.58

Work on emotions and prestige in international relations has covered various types of nonmaterial incentives for countries to act in the ways that they do.59 Yet, rarely can these be traced back to any one particular variable. With memories of empire, nations not only draw lessons from their past but share conflicting views of the same history with neighbors and regions. The theory of imperial memories maintains that a certain level of material capability and geostrategic independence is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for explaining narratives of past empires. The crucial explanatory variable, therefore, must be found in the domestic political landscape of successor states.

58 For more on these ideas see Gilbert Rozman, Chinese Strategic Thought Toward Asia (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
59 For an excellent summary of this literature see Daniel Markey, “The Prestige Motive in International Relations,” PhD Diss. (Princeton University, 2000).
As Thomas Berger’s work has highlighted, nation-states in modern times have been able, by and large, to suppress critical or dissident versions of history, at least within the realm of public discourse (what has sometimes been referred to as “public memory”). The tremendous organizational resources of the modern state – in particular its ability to control commemorations, education, the various cultural institutions – have given ruling elites considerable power with which to shape public discourse on the past. While this power has not eliminated the multiple narratives and memories that exist in society, it has made the selection and cultivation of particular official narratives or memory a powerfully salient feature of the modern nation state. By specifically focusing on the instrumental value of imperial memories, I am principally concerned with the narrative texts, symbols, and official commemorations that the modern state uses at its principle tools.

In this regard, issues of modernizationloom large over the study of historical memories, particularly concerning empires that often are the rubble from which “modern” nation states emerge. Particularly in a non-Western setting in which empires that were legitimated by religious or monarchical domains were defeated in war or collapsed due to international pressure, a clear juxtaposition emerges between past “traditional” greatness with the “modern” status quo. Additionally, the stigmatization of being outside the “Western norms” in a post-World War II environment puts added stress on nations that used to be a part of an imperial club but now find themselves outside both the “West” and “East.” Thus much of the contentious identity politics that is studied

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today in these non-Western states can be traced to the struggle over who shapes the official memory and narrative of a given post-imperial successor state.\textsuperscript{62}

Recently, theorists of postmodernity have begun to focus not on the rise of memory within nations, but on its demise. In the words of Jeffrey Olick, a leading scholar reflecting on the field he helped found:

\begin{quote}
This is not old-style modernization theory, which sees nationalism as an intermediate stage in a progression from enchanted to disenchanted worldviews, though it does occasionally reverberate teleological overtones. Rather, these authors have problematized the role of memory as one component in a complex and shifting amalgam of perceptions that form the pervasive and permanent, though ever changing, historicity of the world.\textsuperscript{63}
\end{quote}

History, identity, memory and a nation are intrinsically linked with a peculiar synergy, which warrants further research. Clearly national identities are constituted and challenged over time and with competing histories and memories of the past. As Olick and his colleagues’ research shows, “…even when other identities compete or supplant the national identity in postmodernity, successor states draw on and are increasingly nostalgic for the uniquely powerful forms of memory generated in the crucible of the nation-state.”\textsuperscript{64} As powerful “new” histories written by Pierre Nora, one of the key inspirations and founders of the field of national identity research, shows through his examination of the French experience with nation, historical narrative is critical for

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[62] Erving Goffman writes about stigmatization in his seminal work \textit{Stigma} (New York: Touchstone Publishing, 1986) and Ayse Zarakol applies it to the cases of non-Western states entering the international order in her \textit{After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West.}
\item[64] Ibid, 2.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
providing continuity for France’s national identity. Nora hereby directly links memories and identity in his work on French nationalism and history.

Based on the existing research in the field of international relations we can deduce that the redistribution of power in the aftermath of empires is the starting point from which post-imperial successor states seek to maximize their relative strengths and find a new place in the international order. At the same time, scholars of comparative politics and nationalism have emphasized that the internal workings of these states facilitate a grand debate on a new nationalist narrative led by political elites. The ultimate confluence of these international and domestic trends leads to the construction of a nation that must reconcile a victorious narrative with the loss of empire narrative. In short, we must conceive of a framework that treats the change of imperial memory within the successor state as the outcome of two steps: achieving sufficient material strength to choose an independent memory and constructing an incentive structure within domestic politics in which historical memories are shaped into post-imperial nationalism. Toward this end, we now must lay out imperial memories by constructing a simple typology scale running from rejection to glorification, and finally defining the explanatory variables that leads to these choices. After this, we can develop a set of hypothesis and predictions about the change of historical memory under different values of the explanatory variables.

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based on the issues we have just outlined and then move into examining the implications and consequences of these changes.

**Operationalizing Imperial Memory – Dependent Variable**

Historical memories of former empires within metropolis successor states, previously defined as “imperial memory,” constitute our dependent variable. Scholars of historical memory emphasize that the recollected knowledge of the past is conveyed and sustained through vehicles such as commemorations, narrative texts, performances, and rituals. Examining these tools and seeing how they are used by leaders and in specific domestic contexts will allow us to better understand the political and social order of a particular nation. As Paul Connerton has asserted:

*We experience our present world in a context, which is causally connected with past events and objects, and hence with reference to events and objects, which we are not experiencing when, we are experiencing the present. And we will experience our present differently in accordance with the different pasts to which we are able to connect that present.*

Therefore understanding how memories of collapsed empires are initially shaped and, in turn, how contemporary post-imperial successor states have gone from rejecting to glorifying their imperial pasts over time is the focus here.

The original development of imperial memories and the way in which they change over time is what this variable seeks to capture. Our framework envisions these

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69 Ibid, 2.
imperial memories as representing how a successor state deals with its former empire. The ideas and viewpoints regarding the former empire are conceived of as a five-point scale that consists of the following: 1) extreme rejection 2) moderate rejection 3) ambiguous 4) moderate glorification 5) extreme glorification of the former empire. In developing this scale through in-depth cases, this dissertation analyzes the way a nation portrays its imperial past through statements by officials and elites, education, particularly through textbooks, and commemorations such as monuments, museums exhibits, ceremonies in five-year increments. Given that this is a qualitative indicator, the following are the extreme and stylized poles intended to help define and frame imperial memory:

*Rejectionist* - One idealized position for an imperial memory is rejectionist, defined here as the rejection and distancing of a successor state from a former empire. There is a clear break in history from empire to nation, and continuities between the two are typically downplayed. In general, advocates of this position tend to be historically poignant about their role in past atrocities and want to define their nation as going beyond the period of imperial rule in question. Acknowledging past mistakes of the empire is justified on the grounds that the successor state has little culpability as a new entity that is not related to the former empire. As a general rule, rejectionists blame the collapse of the empire on a former regime and turn their backs on this part of their history. The exploitation of national sentiment or expansionist policies of the former empire has left this imperial legacy bereft of positive value. Typically rejectionism leads the post-imperial nation to distance itself from the region once dominated by the empire.
**Glorificationist** - Another idealized position is glorification, defined here as the embrace and/or remembrance of the former empire as being the best moment for the people of the successor state. Glorification tends to involve whitewashing the historical record of imperial times to highlight the significant achievements and downplaying any embarrassments such as atrocities. Admitting past failures or problems is difficult, because doing so in turn reflects on the current successor state. For glorificationists, there is a clear continuation from empire to nation-state and the notion of a break in history makes little sense. The collapse of the empire is usually seen as being a result of external factors that cut the empire short of its “full potential.” A natural corollary of this outcome is that glorificationists see the successor metropolis as being the natural leader of its former space.

**Ambiguous** – This position is considered to be too volatile and unbalanced to last very long. Extreme elements of both rejectionism and glorificationism exist but neither has hegemony even in their moderate forms. Ambiguity is seen as being a transitional stage in which elites and society are contesting official memories where the indicators have not fully switched in sequence. So although a particular leader and party may have emerged with a glorificationist view and begun to give speeches and commemorate their own chosen “history”, they have not been able to quickly change textbooks or rituals. While this position is theoretically necessary for a five-point sliding scale, it is the most difficult since the idea of rejectionism and glorificationism perfectly co-existing and balancing is seen as being highly unlikely and problematic for the timeframe being researched.
The threshold at which a state’s imperial memories change will be context specific, but must be able to be applied with each of the cases outlined. Given that every year, textbooks are published and distributed by ministries of education, tracing changes through textbooks and the portrayals of former empires is one such methodology. In cases where there is a sudden shift, the press can be a useful litmus test as well. For example, the ruling regime’s mouthpiece or officially sanctioned newspaper will carry rejectionist or glorificationist editorials, which can be useful. Equally important are the individual views of leaders who control the mechanisms of power and influential elite circles. By examining the debates and thoughts of the leadership in each country, we can gain a better understanding of imperial memories. Finally, the timing of state actions such as official apologies or commemorations will be critical in understanding when imperial memories have changed. Deducing extreme rejectionist or glorificationist memories are relatively straightforward, yet being able to detect the existence of moderate mixed legacies will be equally important. In order to understand how to define a national identity on particular memories one must understand how national memory manifests itself. Understanding which groups in society have particular memories and how they were created helps identify the changes and timing of collective imperial memories that are then aggregated to the national level.

As outlined previously, this understanding is based on the assumption that states have control over the institutions and mechanisms that shape imperial memories. Societies will always hold conflicting memories and narratives, but a state must settle on an official memory and narrative based on the political choices made by leaders. While the exact involvement and nature of this choice may vary, the way in which state elites use the
state apparatus to remember particular memories focuses our attention on the outcomes described. Admittedly, this does not capture every instance of imperial memories, but the hope is to capture a representative sample on the official level. The stronger the state and more top-down the reforms instituted, the more accurate this scale can be.

**Keep It Simple: International and Domestic Explanations for Change**

Explanations for why imperial memories change can be as nuanced and complicated as a researcher’s capacity. However, being able to identify the broad trend lines and drawing from the literature in international relations previously highlighted focuses us on two sets of variables: 1) a state’s geopolitical position within the international system and 2) domestic politics. By keeping the explanation simple and focusing only on these two variables, clear hypotheses emerge that are falsifiable, observable, and testable.

**International**

*Geopolitical.* Material power is the purvey of realist within international relations theory with proponents such as Kenneth Waltz and John Mearsheimer emphasizing the economic, geographic, and military capabilities of a state. Power defined by structural realists would be expected to singularly determine state behavior and identity construction, including memory selection, is seen as being subsidiary. However, in the initial aftermath of empire, the material power of a successor state would be expected to

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matter and over time the level of “independence” a state enjoys in the international system is a direct correlation of this power. In addition to the respective state measurements that we can track over time, we also can measure the relative power of these countries in their regions along various sets of indicators.

The structure of the international system and the geopolitical position of a post-imperial successor state require a treatment that takes into account both relative power and levels of independence vis-à-vis global hegemons. There is no absolute threshold, necessarily, to reach a particular level of “weakness” or “strength” since this refers to a relative scale in both a region and international system at a particular moment in time. The basic distinction between “Weak” and “Strong” indicators is the material power that realists promote along with the relative independence enjoyed vis-à-vis the international system. Much like the distinction between “great” and “middle” powers in the literature, material strength as measured by demography, geography, GDP, military capabilities, and expenditure define this measure. In addition to this absolute value that can be measured every year, relationships with allies or enemies and ability to implement divergent and independent policies will be looked for as an indicator of geopolitical strength in this international variable. Given that each of the post-imperial nations examined is a regional power the relative scale of strength will be coded with guidance from various secondary sources and area experts so as not to rely on arbitrary indicators that may work in one context but not in another.

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71 This will be tricky since defining what region a particular country sits in is difficult, but I will simply specify particular countries that make up a region like the Middle East, Eastern Europe, or East Asia.
72 For example to derive a single measure of national capabilities, the COW composite index divides a state’s share of each indicator over the world total and computes the average of these scores.
73 See Mersheimer, Tragedy of Great Power Politics.
Domestic Politics

Regime Cohesion. Understanding the cohesion or strength of a domestic regime requires understanding the coalition in power and political elites. Elites are broadly defined as a relatively small dominant group within a large society that enjoys a privileged status and are in a position of leadership. Each country or society may have differences in terms of who is in the ruling elites and if counter-elites exist, so mapping and defining the main actors in each case and seeing the level of conflict between these groups captures the relative strength or weakness of the regime in place. Drawing from the literature in sociology on elites and adapted to the study of state bureaucracy, scholars of comparative politics such as Ezra Suleiman have laid out the context and political environment in which ruling elites have taken shape historically. Based on this work, we can conceive of the battles being waged over various interpretations of history as rising and falling on the strength of elite regimes. In a democracy, measuring the strength of a particular regime can be accomplished by simply tracking elections, parliamentarians, or percentage of the vote of various political parties that are either in power or in opposition. However, to control for regime type, the measure must also be able to capture the strength of democratic, hybrid, and authoritarian regimes. Following scholars’ work on elite theory and political cleavages, our domestic politics variable focuses on the role of elites.

A regime is not conceived of as being simply one political party versus another (although in a one-party system this certainly could be the case). Rather, it is meant to

74 See Snyder, Myth of Empire (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991) and the way he uses elites and domestic political variable there for leverage on explaining overexpansion.
76 For a good summary of the literature see Alan Zuckerman, Comparative Political Science (New York: Sage Press, 2008).
denote a ruling coalition that has a coherent set of elites who run the state, whether that is a military dictatorship, bureaucratic consensus, or pluralistic democracy. If one group of elites captures the state and excludes others from joining the regime through nondemocratic means, then the strength of the regime is measured in relation to the society as a whole rather than within the regime. While in a representative democracy the regime would be expected to mirror the society and different sets of elites assume power depending on the results of elections.

Broadly speaking, I am interested in capturing the divides within a regime and seeing how the regime’s different constituencies operate. In other words, is the ruling party able to co-opt elites into the broader political process through elections or party membership to further strengthen the regime, or do key constituencies such as the business community, military, or religious establishment abandon the regime to challenge its legitimacy and authority as a counter-elite?

Understanding the elite dynamics at play in each country and context requires serious attention to detail and cannot be easily abstracted to a generalizable theory. However, by systematically understanding the key players and institutions and how they reach out to form ruling coalitions we can compare the various strategies being utilized in domestic politics. The extent to which imperial memories are explicitly or implicitly used in the service of leaders or parties is telling along with the larger issues that subsume and guide political elites. Calibrated strategy, which brings in particular groups and support, is critical for understanding how precisely domestic politics affects the ultimate formation of imperial memories. Coalitions are formed along with a strategy to maintain

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power often legitimated by particular imperial memories in the broader eye of domestic politics. Understanding why and how these dynamics are at play is critical. Why any one actor or institution selected a particular strategy or approach is a necessarily descriptive process, but when put into a comparative context patterns tends to be telling in and of itself.

By mapping the political terrain for a nation’s particular development through extensive research of secondary sources to see how area specialists and historians have dealt with particular movements and leaders, we can identify the key coalition partners and the main opposition figures. Once these actors have been identified the relative importance that each player has within the system can be determined. The case studies outline the way in which ruling regime cohesion fluctuates and map imperial memories onto them thereby creating a political landscape of the shifts that occur over time in ideology and power politics. For an open democracy, all elites, both ruling and opposition, can compete in elections; the strength of the opposition, then, can be found simply by tracking the number of parliamentarians elected for ruling vs. opposition parties. Even in democracies election results only tell part of the story. Beyond the final vote count, the relative strength of bureaucracies, key institutions, and external forces that shape the final domestic political map are crucial in determining a regime’s final cohesiveness. For authoritarian regimes or one-party systems, it can either be with a single state apparatus or a much more convoluted process; however, the research must be equally systematic in mapping out the elites from an entire society and seeing the relative level of strength that a coalition enjoys based on the available sources and secondary research that has been done.
Causal Mechanisms: Reconciling and Scapegoating Regimes

As developed here, the choice of imperial memory for a successor state can be framed as a cost-benefit calculation on the part of the ruling regime, whether occupied or fully independent. The shaping of a new national narrative is undertaken by the ruling regime and the political elites starting in the aftermath of a defeated empire, sometimes even before the old rulers have left. Having suffered defeat or collapse, the assumption is that the old constellation within the elites of the empire has been discredited and a new regime will emerge that must deal first and foremost with its international environment. In other words, the redistribution of power created by the loss of empire externally affects the dynamics internally. Of course, these dynamics are in large part determined by the way in which the empire was lost.

“Defeat follows war as ashes follow fire,” wrote the German sociologist Wolfgang Schivelbusch in the introduction to his Cultures of Defeat. In this classic, Schivelbusch lays out three seminal cases of defeat – the American South after the Civil War, France in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War, and Germany following World War I. Analyzing different levels of society, the book follows the narratives of defeated nations much like a psychologist would chart a patient as these entities construct and find a new narrative for themselves that share remarkable similarities across cultures. Through his work we see that, “At the heart of both defeat and war lies the threat of extinction, a threat that resonates long past the cessation of hostilities.” War and defeat take on the dimensions of a social Darwinist struggle for national survival in Schivelbusch’s telling.

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79 Ibid.
However, what happens when the organism that enters a given war, an empire, emerges forever changed in the form a republic?

After empires is the starting point from which the modern discipline of international relations developed its notions of an anarchic global system inhabited by states that seek to maximize their relative strengths and impose their will on other states.\textsuperscript{80} States out-competed alternative forms of political organization such as city-leagues, religious orders, and empires, at first in Europe and then throughout the world. The mechanisms credited with producing this convergence on the Westphalian state operate primarily, though not exclusively, via military pressure, while the internal workings of these states facilitated a nationalist narrative led by political elites.

The causal mechanisms at work shaping imperial memories can be seen starting in the immediate aftermath of defeat and loss of empire. The ruling elite must coalesce around a single narrative of scapegoating the former regime to legitimate their own rule. However, over time as the sting of imperial defeat evaporates, and if the successor state has not been able to surpass its former imperial greatness, which rarely happens, the incentives for counter-elites and outside forces to glorify the imperial past grow as a way of delegitimizing the post-imperial regime. The linkages between memories of the empire and the nationalism that propels new movements and ideologies that can dislodge incumbent parties are complex but can usually fit within rejectionist or glorificationist views.

The overthrow of an imperial regime is naturally experienced as a type of victory for the newly created nation that scapegoats them for the empire’s defeat. The more popular the revolution and the more dynamic the new political elite, the more definitive

\textsuperscript{80} See Waltz, \textit{Theory of International Politics.}
the triumph will seem. As described in the literature on the culture of defeat, “For a moment, the external enemy is no longer an adversary but something of an ally, with whose help the previous regime and now deposed system has been driven from power.”

The attachment, legitimacy, and parameters of the citizens’ new nationalist connections are altered and in need of explanation. The construction of imperial memory becomes a nationalist project that directly interacts with the new state’s conception of itself.

If and how imperial memories are used by political elites in the public realm to achieve their goals are key areas of exploration for this dissertation. Historical memories of the empire are viewed as being one of the key domains of elite contestation. As such, the character, legitimacy, and length of any particular empire directly impact the initial successor regime and state that arise from its ashes. It is instructive to look at the differences and similarities between the various empires.

Within the literature on empire one of the major points of distinction and contention is between the so-called land-based vs. sea-based or agrarian premodern vs. modern empires. The distinction made is typically between the European model of Britain and France vs. the Eurasian Russian and Ottoman Empires. For our purposes here, let us think about it not in terms of land vs. sea-based, but in terms of the areas being colonized. If an empire colonized its neighbors like most of the non-Western empires, we will classify this as a “neighborhood empire” vs. a “distant empire.” Drawing from the literature on threat perceptions such as work by Robert Jervis, the emphasis should be between areas colonized near the metropolis rather than on the more historical

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81 Schivelbusch, *Cultures of Defeat*, 11.
distinctions of geography such as water or land.\footnote{See Robert Jervis’ seminal work, \textit{Perception and Misperception in International Politics} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976.)} By making this distinction versus the land/sea empire definitions seen in the field of history, we have more analytical leverage with empires like the Japanese that colonized across the water but in a contiguous space in the twentieth century where the striking speed between the Japanese mainland and Korea could be measured in minutes and not days like in years past. In this way the Japanese empire – unlike most European empires – would be considered part of the category of neighborhood empires. The saliency of imperial memories in a neighborhood empire is expected to be higher given the geographic proximity and historic relations, versus distant empire that can simply retreat and “forget” about empire. The fact that the majority of European nations have been able to maintain relatively good relations with their former colonies in Latin America, Africa, and Asia suggests that these countries are not scared of being re-colonized, whereas the sensitivities on display in Asia with Japan and Eastern Europe with Russia suggest the opposite.

The initial formation of a republic are very much context dependent on the way in which an empire collapses - whether it is the result of external or internal forces. In general, empires are either defeated in war by a rival or are forced after victory to cede independence after the emergence of protracted nationalist movements.\footnote{For the classic articulation of this view and a comprehensive summary of the work on empires see Michael Doyle, \textit{Empires} (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1986).} The speed at which an empire is lost impacts the way in which said empire is perceived by the new regime. Therefore while it is impossible to discuss imperial memories without understanding the empires themselves, the theory seeks to draw on these factors only to the extent to which they relate to the resulting imperial memories and national narratives.
Characteristics and elements of post-imperial successor states will be compared, but only to the point at which they directly impact imperial memories.

The historic case of empires being defeated and subsumed into a new entity was modified in a post-World War I environment in which nation-states became the norm for the international system versus multiethnic empires. Unlike past periods in which people switched allegiances to a new king or emperor, nations created a shared experience in a way that empires had rarely done. The immediate impact of this on newly created post-imperial successor states was an assessment of the country’s relationship with its past empire. If based on a total defeat in war, new leaders saw value in creating a scapegoat out of the former empire and the decisions that led to the loss of empire; this would naturally lead to domestic incentives for a rejectionist view of the empire. Conversely if entrenched elites and bureaucrats seamlessly transitioned from empire to nation, their rhetoric would have to reflect a rejection of empire to become a functioning member of the international system, yet domestic conditions would not be created to keep these memories for long.

Given the structural weakness of being defeated and the immediate need to constitute a nation-state from the ashes of empire, the theory assumes that the immediate narrative in the aftermath of empire will be informed by rejectionist imperial memories. There are no cases of a post-imperial successor state in the modern era emerging from total defeat and its ruling coalition calling for an immediate return to empire or even a glorification of its immediate predecessor. Having lost a war and an empire, the newly

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84 The idea of total defeat is that the polity has no choice but to accept unconditional surrender. The case of Germany post-WWI here is an interesting one. Scholars have argued both sides of Germany’s defeat and Hitler’s usage of the Germany’s experience in World War One to recreate his Nazi empire. However the extent to which Hitler represented the same old elite is debatable and open to interpretation.
formed successor state lacks the material capabilities and is constrained by the international system in creating a historical narrative that unifies its nation and does not provoke further outside intervention. In the absence of structural constraints, it is assumed that most nations and people are inclined to glorify its past; however, what makes these post-imperial nations different is the extent to which this process affects other actors in the international system. Unlike post-colonial experiences in which nation-states can establish a historical narrative by glorifying a colonial, ethnic, or tribal heritage which does not cause international concern, post-imperial states have to approach their experiences from the perspective of both the metropolis which benefited from the previous international system of empire and the peripheries that suffered.

The idea of reconciling a domestic narrative that satisfies the costs of defeat and trauma of a loss of empire while internationally conforming to the new world order is a difficult process even for victorious post-imperial states. In the words of French general Galliffet’s: “In order to be reconciled, we must fight again or, better still, fight together against a common enemy.” As Schivelbush shows in his work the desire to find a common enemy is most commonly transformed into an “othering” of the former empire by rejecting all that was bad with the previous regime while joining the victorious side as a subordinate member. By taking to the field of battle side by side with its former conqueror against a new enemy, countries can confirm their own long-coveted acceptance into the ranks of the victors. This was the same mechanism that Turkey used in joining the Korean War with the United Nations in the 1950s and West Germany happily applied after the demise of Nazism, in its passionate identification with the West.

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during the Cold War, and imposed even more happily on East Germany after 1989, this
time on the “right side of history” and more importantly victory.86

Like Germany or Japan after World War II that immediately “reconciled” with
the West to fight a common enemy in the Soviet East, it is easier to scapegoat the former
empire than the victorious side that dictates the term of the reconciliation. However if the
reconciliation is not immediate – think of the Ottoman or Russian case – the result is not
cathartic but rather a stigma. Freud, who defines a successful (that is spontaneous) act of
revenge as the cathartic aberration of a traumatic effect, categorizes such a block as
hysterical neurosis.87 He goes on to call the decision to wait for a later and more
promising opportunity for revenge or retribution, in contrast to immediately striking
back, repressed resentment, and references the concept of vindictiveness within human
nature, which he says applies to a similar notion.88

Being reconciled and then incorporated into the international system also involves
a degree of learning from the victor that is not just a process of simple adoption or
imitation but a complex, multivalent process of assimilation and cultural adaptation
similar to what Thorstein Veblen describes in the context of technology and economics as
“borrowing.”89 The only superiority that “borrowing” societies grant their “creditors” is
that of greater material progress and modernity, above all in technology and organization.
This takes on an added dimension of symbolism and meaning when there are major
civilizational differences between the two. For example, in Japan’s postwar recovery its

86 Ibid, 33
87 Freud, Sigmund, Basic Writings of Freud. (London: Modern Library, 1995), see particularly Book Five
Chapter 2 beginning on page 789.
88 Ibid
89 For more on this see Veble Thorstein, Conspicuous Consumption (Great Ideas in Paperback) (London:
leaders were not interested in the soul, the spirit, or the cultural identity of the Western creditor nations it took from. While this history of modernization in Japan and other non-Western nations has been chronicled and reflected exhaustively\textsuperscript{90}, the psychological and cultural fallout in post-imperial successor states’ memories remains largely under-explored and underappreciated as part of the understanding for why nations remember the way they do.

While the notions of rise and decline summon up grand yet gradual movements up and down the scale of power, the fall of empire evokes a sudden and drastic plunge. Edward Gibbon, the father of modern imperial history, used this distinction in the title of his book *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.\textsuperscript{91} The age-old human fascination with falls from power explains why the dominant image of the end of the Soviet Union is not the stately lowering of the red flag with its hammer and sickle over the Kremlin in 1991 but the dramatic collapse of the Berlin Wall two years before.\textsuperscript{92} Similarly, the dominant image of the end of the Ottoman Empire is not the stately negotiating of the Treaty of Lausanna by Ismet Inonu that was the birth certificate for the new Turkish Republic, but rather the more traumatic Treaty of Sevres three years before in which the Ottoman Sultan was humiliatingly forced into capitulating and codifying the empire’s sudden fall. There is usually a time-lapse between the official historical event and the image by which it was remembered and transmitted, but this final image is formative in many ways for shaping the domestic political context.\textsuperscript{93}

\textsuperscript{90} For a good summary see Dankart Rustow’s introduction in his classic *Political Modernization in Turkey and Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964).
\textsuperscript{91} Originally published in 1776 this book has gone through six printings, the last one was Edward Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993).
\textsuperscript{92} Schivelbusch, *Cultures of Defeat*, 292.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid.
In the fall of an empire, most of the ruling elite is usually, although not always, removed either through internal revolution or international pressure. Given the weak conditions in which successor elites must come to power, they are most likely to scapegoat and blame the former empire and its regime for the nation’s predicament. The worse the defeat, the more likely that the nation will rally around a rejectionist leader who seeks to establish a clear line of separation between the former empire and the emerging nation-state. Rejecting an empire and making the clear lines of continuation between empire and nation a taboo does not mean that these leaders do not find particular aspects of an empire to glorify; however, on balance, it means that they reject the basis of legitimacy on which the empire ruled and the methods by which the empire existed. Given that empires, almost by definition, controlled their lands and expanded through both coercive military means and attraction of economic benefits, the character of the empire in this regard is particularly important. However, in the first instance, given the costs associated with glorifying an empire in the aftermath of defeat, these domestic considerations are secondary. In an international environment that has been anti-imperial since at least 1945 (i.e. associates empires with war and negative characteristics), only a strong and independent successor state has the choice of glorifying, while weakness leads to the selection of a rejectionist imperial memory.

The particular way (economic collapse, military defeat/occupation, or internal revolution) in which a post-imperial successor state emerges from its former empire is important, but the bottom line is that every post-imperial metropolis state begins with a rejectionist memory; otherwise it would attempt to hold onto empire. Whether an empire

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is compelled or chooses to disintegrate matters tremendously as international relations
theory might predict, while the impact on the domestic political level is focused on by
comparative politics. For example, if an empire is defeated in war and occupied by
foreign troops it has a very different effect on the development of domestic politics and
the ruling regime than a nation fighting for its independence against foreign occupation.
These founding moments and experiences play themselves out in domestic politics such
that the outside forces become active participants on the domestic level in addition to
being part of the international constraints placed on the defeated nation.

Conversely, an empire that collapses or dissolves because of internal pressure will
have a very different relationship with its former self like in the case of Britain or France
versus Japan or Turkey. Being forced to create a particular narrative by outside force or
domestic necessity is very different than having an ongoing struggle or debate within the
ruling coalition about how to frame the loss of empire. The specific contexts of each lost
empire is different, however the bottom line is that post-imperial states all begin as
rejectionists and then the factors identified become critical in understanding the eventual
tendencies and changes seen within a nation’s imperial memories over time.

Besides the crucial context in which the empire is lost, the domestic factors of the
ruling coalition and relative level of regime cohesion is seen to be the single most
important variable in explaining when and how views of imperial history change in
successor states. The resulting actors and institutions frame official memories for
societies, and while there is an iterative process, it is generally driven from the top down.
The relative cohesion of the regime is important; if ruling elites feel threatened and
believe that they might lose power not just to an opposition that will replace them but that
will exclude them by creating a new regime, they will use every tool at their disposal to remain in power including attempts to change imperial memories to serve their own means. Understanding which memories bind the ruling coalitions and are promoted in turn is key in any country. Once this is understood, examining how strong the ruling elite and counter elites are within a particular context becomes critical. Finally, outlining the strategies utilized by these various actors brings the process full circle. Through process tracing, the case studies that follow show how the development of various elites, political actors, and institutions in a nation and their alliance formations affect the historical memories of the nation.

Observations and Hypotheses

Developing clear hypotheses about the dynamics and mechanisms based on what has been outlined thus far is an important first step in explaining the phenomena being described in more concrete terms. Perhaps, more importantly, being able to create a replicable roadmap from the loss of empire to the modern battles on the landscape of imperial pasts is crucial for future research and scholarship. Given the uniqueness of each empire, having a broadly comparative framework is needed for the exploration of imperial memories and the subsequent national narratives, but there should be overall consensus at critical decision points.

The first observation is that in the aftermath of defeat, an imperial successor state will be compelled to adopt a rejectionist position. Built into this initial condition is the assumption that a successor state with weak structural or material capabilities will always
be forced to adopt a rejectionist view of its empire simply because of the international costs associated with glorifying it. This presumption is not to diminish the domestic factionalization that might occur between old and new elites that have different sets of interest in the previous empire, but simply to say that structural weakness supersedes all of these considerations in the first instance.

Structural factors therefore predetermine a rejectionist imperial memory for a defeated or weak successor state. However, what happens when a state’s material capabilities begin to grow? What then determines the imperial memory and under what conditions can we expect change? I argue that as the initial historical narrative takes hold in the successor states, incentives are created to maintain the rejectionist imperial memories for the ruling group of elites. Given the fact that the incumbent regime was created in the aftermath of a defeated empire, they have to de-legitimate the previous regime in power. For example, if the previous empire had been legitimated based on religious or monarchical power, part of the legitimacy of a new regime could be the very rejection of an unrepresentative empire that is now reconstituted into a nation-state that gives voice to the larger society in which it is formed. In this way, imperial memories become sticky and are resistant to change. Rejectionism is the default position for successor states.

A strong state with increasing geopolitical clout can either have a 1) strong and cohesive ruling regime that does not worry about challenges to its authority or a 2) weak and splintering regime that is continually being challenged. In the case of a strong regime, there are few incentives to glorifying the imperial past since it will only cause international resentment and stoke hypernationalist sentiments that can easily get out of
control and lead to regime instability. It is assumed for an international audience that since 1945 has been anti-imperial, there are few incentives for glorificationism, whereas rejectionism is the prevailing international norm. Domestically these incentives are reversed. The ruling elites associated with the rejectionist position have little incentives to change a state’s imperial memory to a glorificationist one, unless they face a dire threat to their authority. Manipulating imperial nationalism can reap domestic benefits for both the ruling elites and counter elites, whichever acts to break the proverbial glass and pull the alarm first. On the one hand, given the fact that imperial successor states once dominated their regions and the international system, glorifying a past empire allows a unifying way to galvanize nationalistic pride. Glorification of an imperial legacy, therefore, can either bolster the authority and political power of an incumbent regime if utilized by these elites, or can allow counter elites to shine in the reflected luster of their predecessors’ imagined achievements and the imagined glory of the national institutions (like the military) they seek to control. These points build directly on the nationalism literature alluded to previously and are made most explicitly by Van Evera in his work on nationalism and war.\textsuperscript{95} Of course, on the other hand, what makes pulling this glorificationist lever costly is the international outcry and specifically problems with former colonies. Therefore, only in the domestic political climate of a weak regime that faces a serious threat to its power do I hypothesize that a successor state will attempt to change imperial memories from rejection to glorification.

\textsuperscript{95} Stephen Van Evera makes these same points in explaining why self-glorifying myths are used by political elites regarding hyper nationalism. See Stephen Van Evera, “Hypotheses on Nationalism and War,” \textit{International Security} Vol. 18, No. 4 (Spring, 1994), 5-39; and for a survey see Anthony D. Smith, \textit{Theories of Nationalism} (New York: Harper & Row, 1983).
In this way we can see that international structural factors are necessary but by themselves not sufficient to determine a change in imperial memory. Only when strong structural factors and weak domestic political factors align will a successor state glorify its imperial past. This is counterintuitive given that increasing material power does not automatically lead to glorification of a past empire and that it is only in the face of domestic weakness and relative state strength that countries adopt a glorificationist position. This assumption is consistent with my underlying logic that sees historical memories as being instruments used by elites to try and mobilize popular sector-support. Invoking the former greatness of one’s empire pays domestically but costs internationally. The specific cost-benefit ratio is different depending on the particular circumstances of the successor state and its former empire. However, the broader incentive structures created by regimes in the aftermath of empires are similar and can be studied in a comparative sense. As developed in the individual case studies, the causal mechanism by which regime constituencies can be peeled off and alliances formed to undermine the ruling regime directly lead to conflicting views of imperial memories.
Without understanding the independent effect of imperial memory as an intervening variable no direct causal line can be drawn from increased structural factors to state behavior. I see imperial memories as being a prism that refracts relative material capabilities. Without understanding all the factors, including the domestic conditions, I draw out concerning regime strength, any other outcome, including foreign policy, that flow from imperial memories cannot be understood. The hope is that by understanding and clearly defining imperial memories, future research can incorporate this overlooked variable in further examinations of post-imperial nation-states. Imagined visually, the observations and hypotheses that have been outlined can be crafted into a flow-chart such as this:

Table 2: Visualized Decision Process: Summary of Hypotheses

Walking through this decision process, we start with the initial condition of a defeated polity that rejects its empire to form a state in the modern international system. From this point, a state either increases or decreases its material capabilities to move along the chart. In the case of a weak state in the international system, the imperial memory will be rejectionist simply because it lacks the independence and capabilities to
resist the international costs of adopting a glorificationist view of its empire. For a realist, the story of imperial memories ends here. However, borrowing from the comparative and constructivist literature previously highlighted, the domestic context of a regime’s relative strength must be accounted for and therefore we move down our chart. In the case of a strong geopolitical state with a strong regime, the rejectionist view of its empire will prevail, whereas in the case of a weak regime, a glorificationist view of its empire will emerge. Only in this latter case does our theory predict a change in imperial memory from rejectionist to glorificationist. Once here, however, the previously weak regime may be able to consolidate its position with or without the new glorificationist memory and constitute a strong regime that may not change the memory. This chart simply addresses the critical moments or turning points in this process as they occur not after the fact.

In the aftermath of empire, regardless of whether it is caused by defeat, collapse, or withdrawal, historical memories have to be shaped into an official narrative to legitimate the resulting polity and remember its past. The critical juncture following the fall of an empire creates the initial conditions under which this narrative is shaped. Understanding why successor states choose to reject or glorify their former empire by creating a clear separation or continuity from empire to republic affects not only national identity and nationalism, but also might eventually provide clues into the rationale for the state’s behavior in the modern international system. The policy implications of a change in imperial memory for a metropolis successor state become particularly important in a post-Cold War environment and lead to further questions about what glorification versus rejection means for successor states’ foreign policies.
Universe of Cases

From the ashes of a modern empire usually emerges an heir in the form of a post-imperial successor state; the imperial metropolis that reorganized itself in the form of a nation-state. Examples offered at the outset of Turkey from the Ottoman Empire and Japan from the Japanese Empire come immediately to mind in the modern world but can also be supplemented with the likes of China from the Chinese Empire, France from the French Empire, Russia from the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom from the British Empire that all sit today on the United Nations Security largely as a result of inherited legacies. In cases where no single dominant successor state emerges like in the case of the Hapsburg Empire, countries like Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia all attempt to claim the mantle of the empire and selectively form imperial memories. Even in the case of countries like China, India, and Iran, where Western influence reduced once great empires to colonies or areas of great power rivalry, memories of empire shape the contours on which contemporary policymakers must tread. Being able to understand these memories and apply our theory offers critical insights into areas of identity formation and nationalism that are often discussed but rarely systematized. The universe of cases is much larger than the fourteen post-imperial successor states I have included, however this is simply a starting point to test our understanding of how these nations deal with their former international incarnations as modern empires and the saliency they still have through historical memories in their successor states today.

As a result of the claim that there is a minimum threshold of material capabilities needed before a country can be considered fully independent and unconstrained in
shaping its imperial memories, we are most interested in regional powers. This does not
mean that our theory is any less valid in other cases, just that the more interesting and
important cases will give us the most selection on the geopolitical variable highlighted as
being explanatory in the first instances. Given that it is time-sequenced, having a strong
geopolitical state become weak does not tell us anything theoretically, whereas a
geopolitical state that goes from being weak to strong allows us to test our initial
hypothesis. As a result of the advent of the European Union, which has bound the former
imperial powers of Europe together, there seems to be a qualitatively different type of
historical memory being pursued collectively in Europe with that of other Eurasian
nations.96 Unlike European nations that managed the collapse of their empires more
gradually and, as a result, were able to establish preferential agreements in their spheres
of influence through economic and linguistic ties, non-Western states that collapsed
suddenly or were colonized themselves did not enjoy similar benefits. The British model
of the Commonwealth in which former colonies join willingly has been emulated by the
French, and immigration patterns in Holland, Portugal, and Spain reinforce the “special”
relationships forged between metropolis and periphery that has helped to alleviate much
of the historical baggage from the imperial past.97 Most importantly, the integration of
these post-imperial successor states within the European Union has meant that the
saliency of glorifying a past infused with conflict and competition has decreased in favor
of a supranational unified future.

96 Tony Judt, *Postwar* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005) has an interesting chapter on how the memory of
victimization and Holocaust apology has become an important informal criterion for membership in the
European Union which gets at many of the points that distinguish European post-imperial states from their
Eurasian counterparts. Thanks to Michael McKoy for bringing this to my attention.
97 Herfried Munkler, *Empires: The Logic of World Domination From Ancient Rome to The United States*
Lacking an anchor or identity project like the EU, non-Western successor states largely have only their own imperial experiences to draw upon in an uncertain twenty-first century that increasingly looks more similar to the nineteenth rather than the twentieth century. While this does not discount the applicability of our theory or hypotheses to Western cases, this dissertation focuses on the non-Western Eurasian former imperial successor states since they have rarely been grouped or researched systematically.

Of the non-Western cases, the most powerful and independent at the turn of the century were the Japanese, Russian, and Ottoman empires, while the Qing dynasty in China and the Qajars in Iran barely made it to the dawn of the twentieth century as the British and Russian Empires competed for influence in both places. India, of course, was already fully colonized by the British in the nineteenth century. In terms of similarity in starting point and scale, Japan and Turkey offer the best comparison given the unique trajectory of Russia, which lost an empire first in the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 and then again after the Cold War in 1991. By exploring the two cases of Japan and Turkey in-depth in this dissertation, I hope to highlight the existence and usefulness of imperial memories as an important aspect of understanding the modern republics. However, given the importance of the European and Russian experiences with empire in the international system, they will serve as a useful shadow case for comparison after the cases of Japan and Turkey are treated in-depth. The cursory treatment of other cases of post-imperial successor states, with a particular emphasis on Russia as a peer non-Western Eurasian successor state, is done simply to highlight areas for future comparative research. As two of the most important modern non-Western empires, the timing of the collapse of Japan

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and Turkey, and their contemporary importance, make them ideal cases for further comparative investigation just as China and Russia are for future scholarship.

_Japan and Turkey: Basis for Comparison_

Turkey and Japan are rarely compared in any systematic way. Given their geographic distance from each other, the lack of comparative focus should come as no surprise. However, these two nations have more in common than meets the eye. They are both successor states of former non-Western Empires that challenged and eventually were defeated by the West around the same historical moment. The resulting states formed in 1923 and 1945 respectively aligned themselves with the West and the United States in particular, but have always had a strong sense of history, identity, and nationalism that grew from their respective imperial legacies. Within our framework from both a policy and theoretically rich perspective Japan and Turkey become a valuable comparison that can offer key insights into how two critical non-Western post-imperial successor states have chosen to remember and shape their imperial memories over time.

Scholars such as historian Cemil Aydin, political scientist Ayse Zarakol, and sociologist Dankwart Rustow have all developed compelling comparisons of Turkey and Japan that this work builds upon. However none of these scholars has attempted to focus on how collective imperial memories get established and re-established in these nations. Aydin’s exploration of universal values of pan-Asianism and Islamism is grounded in the histories of the Japanese and Ottoman Empires without directly engaging the politics of today. Rustow’s classic work on political modernization in Japan and Turkey set the

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99 Notable exceptions of Cemil Aydin, Dankart Rustow, and Ayse Zarakol.
standard for modern comparative work, but did not deal with the nations’ respective imperial legacies and resulting nationalist appeals given his focus on democratic transitions from authoritarianism that began with the formation of the state rather than disintegration of empire. Zarakol’s book *After Empires* most directly informs this dissertation, but is focused more heavily on the emotional trauma and psychological elements inflicted by the defeat of empire rather than the use of history and shaping of memories by nationalist elites. As the first attempt at systematically outlining and theorizing on imperial memories, this dissertation is indebted to, but substantially different than each of these excellent comparative works.

The relationship between Turkey and Japan and their respective regions has been tenuous since they emerged as nation-states in the aftermath of empire. Japan’s Asianism and Turkey’s Easternism\(^{100}\) have been challenged in a variety of ways in their contemporary history because of the decisions of political elites in both countries to follow a path of Westernization post-empire. However, the struggle between East and West, or “traditional” and “modern,” is not a new phenomenon in either country. At the time of its peak, the Ottoman Empire included almost all of southeastern Europe and wielded significant cultural and political power over Europe, while still preserving its Eastern heritage. Similarly Japan’s claims of pan-Asian identity grew from an opportunity to expand influence through Asia that was afforded by the collapse of a strong Chinese Empire and that was accomplished through adopting and assimilating Western military technology and “liberal” imperialism. The simplistic dichotomization of East or West does not capture the unique qualities of these two empires and nations that

\(^{100}\) For a lack of a better term I have used Easternism to refer to Turkey’s Muslim worldview and traditional Asian orientation so as to denote a non-Western regional orientation.
were very much shaped by their experiences with the West but ultimately defined in opposition to it.

By tracing how the Japanese and Turks initially shaped and continue to shape their imperial memories, these two countries that began at the same starting point have gone on to remember very different memories of their imperial history. As highlighted in the introduction and developed in the contemporary chapters, one of the most salient domestic issues in both countries is how to view the past empire in a period of international flux and regional dynamism. Turkey’s turn to glorificationist “Neo-Ottoman” memories has implications far beyond the modern boundaries drawn for the republic, particularly in an age of changes and revolutions throughout its post-imperial space. Meanwhile, despite the attention the Yasukuni shrine gets in Japan and its obvious haunting past in East Asia, Japan has remained strongly rejectionist in its view of its former empire. While there have been periodic outburst of glorificationism within Japanese society, its collective imperial memories have remained surprisingly constant in its rejectionism. This sharp difference requires explanation, which I seek to do by using these two cases as part of explaining a larger trend of understanding imperial memory selection in successor states.

By testing the propositions and hypothesis outlined in this chapter through the comparisons that follow, I hope to strengthen the claims about when and why glorificationist memories emerge over rejectionist tendencies. In addition to the general trajectory of imperial memories that international factors necessitates, the following case-studies make clear that it is the combination and interaction of domestic factors that ultimately prove formative in shaping memories, narratives, and nationalism in post-
imperial successor states. In bringing Japan and Turkey and their experiences into comparative focus further light can be shed on how imperial memories might impact foreign policies, particularly in former imperial spaces that the final chapter concludes with.

Resurgent imperial nationalism in Japan and Turkey are particularly important when set against the backdrop of post-Cold War challenges facing the international system and Asia in particular. The challenge of shaping a positive narrative full of dignity and pride for the Muslim world begins with the decline of the Ottoman Empire, while the resurgence of China feeds on its “Hundred Years of Shame” directed mostly at the Japanese Empire. Therefore understanding how the antipodes of Asia are rediscovering their imperial pasts and re-engaging with their former space is critical to understanding the trajectory of international relations both globally and regionally. Something is going on from Southwest Asia, through Eurasia, and into East Asia that has resulted in the return of the imperial past that was largely suppressed during the Cold War. We now turn to the cases themselves to analyze the phenomena and explore a new way to think about these shadows from a nation’s imperial past.
Chapter Three

Out of the Ottoman Ashes: The Rise of the Turkish Republic 1923-1960

Turkey’s turbulent birth and the way Turks have internalized that history have been subjects of much debate. Unlike Imperial Germany after World War I, whose fundamentally unchanged structure would reassert itself in World War II, or the collapsed Tsarist Empire, which was in a sense revived into the Soviet Union following the Bolshevik Revolution, Turkey ceased to be a global player both by losing its empire in World War I and by choosing to focus internally on transforming Turkish society and culture rather than trying to reclaim its lost lands. Many have compared the defeat of the Hapsburg and Ottoman Empires at the end of World War I, but there is one fundamental difference: The Hapsburgs lacked a clear successor state that could marshal both the resources and the legacy of the former empire, while Turkey stands alone as the former heart and heir to the Ottoman Empire.

More than any other post-imperial metropolis, the modern republic of Turkey is most shaped by its identity as the successor state to the collapsed Ottoman Empire. It is the natural heir to the imperial space inherited from the former Roman and Byzantine

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101 In this regard the field of Turkish studies as an academic discipline can be viewed through the prism of how Turks have internalized the defeat of the Ottomans and emergence of Atatürk’s Republic. See Donald Quataert and Sabri Sayari, *Turkish Studies in the United States* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003).

102 The pioneering comparative historical work in this regard is Karen Barkey and Mark Von Hagen’s *After Empire* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997).

103 For a compelling argument of how Turkey as an heir to the Ottoman Empire behaves internationally see Mustafa Aydin “The Determinants of Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkey’s European Vocation” *The Review of International Affairs* Vol. 3 Issue 2 2003, pages 306-331.

104 For more on the Ottoman Empire and its relevance to the modern Republic of Turkey see classic works such as Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*; Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domain*; Inalcik, and Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1914*; Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*; and Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History 3rd Edition* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004).
Empires that made the Ottomans the center of Eastern and Western world interactions for more than six hundred years. No political entity has been able to exert a hierarchy of order in the international system stretching from the Balkans down into the Middle East and through North Africa since the Ottoman Empire. Having been the heart of the Ottoman Empire, the Turks today look back on their history with a mixture of pride and ambivalence. Despite Turkey’s Ottoman Islamic roots, the modern republic was established as a secular, exclusively Western-looking democracy from the top down. The highly structured and state-centered evolution of the Republic of Turkey stood in contrast to the tribal fractionalization experienced by many other national movements in its neighborhood. A consequence of this experience was an almost immediate estrangement from its predominantly Muslim neighbors. Many Turks developed a sense of elitism and superiority toward those who were once subjects of the Ottoman Empire as they looked to modernization as embodied in the European experience with nationhood. Given the Ottoman Empire’s long and painful decline, Turkey’s decision to abandon its imperial ambitions and settle into a nation-state that rejected the Ottomans in favor of a new construct of Turkish nationalism served as a unifying narrative.

As a result, the imperial legacy of the Ottoman Empire and the historical memory of modern Turkey are filled with paradoxes. On the one hand, the Ottoman Empire is remembered in Turkey largely for its first three hundred years of expansionist history.

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105 The Ottoman Empire lasted from the decline of the Byzantine Empire in the fourteenth century until the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. Present-day Turkey sits at the heart of the old Ottoman Empire, whose imperial capital was also located in Istanbul. The empire grew as the lands of Byzantium and beyond were conquered, eventually including the countries of the Balkan Peninsula; the islands of the eastern Mediterranean; parts of Hungary and Russia; Iraq, Syria, the Caucasus, Palestine, and Egypt; parts of Arabia; and North Africa through to Algeria.

106 Not just Turks, but Arabs also rejected the Ottomans as a way to unify in the aftermath of defeat which also caused a backlash from early Republican Turkish leaders. See Ahmet Serdar Akturk’s “Arabs in Kemalist Turkish Historiography” Middle Eastern Studies Vol. 46, Issue 5(2010): 633-653.
This period saw the Osman Tribe expand from along the Selcuk-Byzantine border in the late thirteenth century to rule throughout Anatolia and the Balkans in the following centuries.\textsuperscript{107} On the other hand, the series of almost uninterrupted defeats at the hands of the West, including particularly the Hapsburg and Romanov Empires that began after their second siege of Vienna (1683), are remembered as symptomatic of the decline and backwardness of the Ottoman empire.\textsuperscript{108}

The historiography of modern Turkey reveals a serious disconnect between the official narratives on the emergence of the republic and the societal perceptions that constitute the state’s evolving identity and memories of its former empire. The majority of analyses and writings on contemporary Turkey neglect or superficially treat the impact of having once been the head of the Ottoman Empire and the Muslim world’s Caliph. Traditional discussions about Turkish domestic and foreign policy focus on the changes and differences between imperial and republican formations of the state. However in many ways, the continuity exhibited from empire to republic in the Turkish case has often been underestimated until recent times when the paradigms of “change” and “continuity” have begun to be applied to Turkey almost a century after its creation.\textsuperscript{109}

Simple and parsimonious explanations of Turkey’s evolution have been tempting given the lack of serious attention traditionally paid to non-Western powers as

\textsuperscript{107} The teaching of Ottoman history in Turkey has been a constant source of academic debate, particularly the relative lack of treatment of the last 300 years of Ottoman history when compared to the first 300 years or the early years of the Turkish Republic. For an interesting study on the teaching of history in Turkey see Yildirim, Ali “An Assessment of High School History Textbooks: Teachers and Students Perceptions.” \textit{American Educational Resource Paper} (Ankara, Turkey, 1999).

\textsuperscript{108} See for example Ziya Gokalp’s writings where he represents these views in constructing Turkish nationalism. \textit{Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization: Selected Essays of Ziya Gokalp} (New York: Greenwood Press, 1981).

\textsuperscript{109} This has become the subject of an active debate within the Turkish International Studies Association as exhibited by panel dedicated to the concept of “change” and “continuity” within Turkish Foreign Policy with Melih Altnisik, Mustafa Aydin, Fuat Keyman, Hasan Kosebalan, Halit Tagma, and Joshua Walker on March 19, 2011 in Montreal, Canada for the International Studies Association.
independent actors. However, in the current environment, the increasing importance of
Turkey as a regional power is being recognized, and a more nuanced understanding of the
context and ideas that shaped and are shaping Turkish decision-makers’ attitudes is
needed. Since imperial memories do not fit nicely into any analytical box they have been
overlooked in favor of strictly geopolitical or strategic explanations as to what has
motivated the republic for the majority of its existence. Today it is no longer possible to
simply ignore Turkey’s historical memories because they are too complicated or filled
with paradoxes. The politics of memory in Turkey today have erupted into the modern
consciousness and permeate almost every aspect of Turks’ ambitions and identity. As a
result, there is a growing interest in the Ottoman legacy for modern Turkish policy and a
need to understand the resulting implications and international visions, which have rarely
been examined or systematically understood by scholars of international relations or of
Turkish studies.¹¹⁰

The irony of Atatürk and his last generation of Ottoman officers seeking to save
the empire through establishing the republic left Turkey with extreme ambivalence about
its Ottoman past. Atatürk simultaneously tore down the central pillars of the Ottoman
political and religious tradition by abolishing the caliphate, while reinforcing his top-
down “imperial” modernization approach by strengthening the Turkish military’s
institutional role in Turkey. This ambivalence toward imperialism has led to a contested
legacy and tensions in Turkey over its identity, in particular when dealing with its
imperial past.

¹¹⁰ A good summary of this interest from both a European and Asian perspective can be found in Daniel
Steinvorth’s “Nostalia for the Ottomans” in Der Spiegel November 12, 2009:
http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,660635,00.html
and Sami Moubayed’s “Turkey Embraces Role as Arab ‘Big’ Brother” Asia Times January 14, 2010:
http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/LA14Ak01.html
Turning Points

There are critical turning points in the story of a successor state’s conceptions of identity and imperial memories. For Turkey they coincide with the two major World Wars and the end of the Cold War. By focusing on these turning points this case-study is broken into two chapters that trace the evolution of Turkey’s own view of its Ottoman past and the impact this has on its own conception of what it means to be “Turkish” in different time periods. In chronologically outlining the evolution of Turkey I alternate between presenting the salient domestic and international pressures that shaped the imperial memories of the time. These factors are often intertwined, however by presenting the most important actors, issues, and outcomes I hope to systematically trace the phases that Turkey has gone through.

In the first chapter I focus specifically on the formative years of the early nation and the construction of a Turkish republic that rejected its Ottoman imperial predecessor. Starting with the most significant turning point of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire I seek to analyze the rejectionist imperial memory that was put in place by the modern founder of Turkey and its ruling elites using tools such as education, history narratives, institutions, and political configurations. This chapter outlines how in the 1920-30s, the Republican elites, led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, through the state apparatus sought to actively reject Turkey’s Ottoman Islamic past in favor of a “new” pre-Islamic secular history. The group of secularist elites who self-identified themselves as Kemalist and defined themselves in ideological terms as promoting Kemalism, fashioned their new rejectionist memories on the reforms focused on modernity and secularism instituted by
Atatürk in the early Republic. Through a close examination of the various reforms instituted by Atatürk and Kemalists, the culmination of these efforts can be seen in the policies adopted and evident most strikingly in the new history and nationalism that was created during this time.

The underlying domestic political dynamics put in play by Atatürk’s reforms, including modernization and secularization, were formulated in a particular international environment that changed in the 1940s and 50s in which Turkey enters the Western camp through the geostrategic necessity of the Cold War. Prime Minister Adnan Menderes’s attempts to re-appropriate Islam into the public space and the influence of Turkey’s military and economic elites therefore come to be viewed in light of Cold War geopolitical realities. Ultimately the impact of these developments does not reverse Turkey’s rejectionist view of its Ottoman past, but it does serve to moderate and eventually neutralize its imperial memories. It is important to emphasize at the outset the two different versions of Turkey’s national identity that emerge from the struggle over it imperial memories. The version promoted by the Kemalists, which included almost every relevant political actor from the 1930s through the 1950s in the early Republican period, was a more radical and secular version that emphasized the culture, language, and geography of the “New Turks” at the expense and rejection of the Ottomans. While Kemalism was the only officially sanctioned nationalism, below the surface lay a Turkish-Islamic nationalism that was discredited in the aftermath of empire because of the extreme rejectionist memories fostered by the ruling Kemalist elites.

This case study attempts to systematically categorize the ways in which Turkey’s views of its Ottoman past have evolved over time. Drawing on a large array of primary
Turkish-language sources from the National Library and Ministry of Education in Ankara along with interviews with many of the principal actors and participants, the evolution of Turkey’s Ottoman memories is traced chronologically. The amount of information and evidence available easily overwhelms any effort to systemize it. Yet by carefully reading the primary sources and original history textbooks available and by supplementing this research with secondary sources, I attempt to paint an accurate and full picture of the data. This is not a full chronological history nor is it simply focused on one particular moment in time, it is intended to be a theoretically informed narrative that traces the major developments in Turkey throughout the time periods highlighted so that further light can be shed on the conditions under which Turkey’s imperial memories have shifted or changed. As this case study will demonstrate, Turkey’s historical memories are fluid, yet often lag behind the primary political events that caused these changes. The primary aim of this initial section is to lay out the framework for understanding the causal mechanisms at work in the change of official historical memories in one post-imperial successor state that bridges both East and West.

**Backdrop of the Ottoman Empire**

The unique predicament of the Ottomans in a Western context is instructive given the changing power dynamics of the empire with its rivals. In the beginning, the Ottomans emerged from an Eastern tradition that embraced Islam and then appropriated the rhetoric of Muslim holy warriors. Through the expansion of the empire, in particular the capture of Constantinople in 1453, the Ottomans assumed the combined legacies of
the Roman and Byzantine Empires to legitimate their arrival on the international scene. No longer simply a nomadic tribe of warriors from Central Asia, the Ottomans combined their military prowess with the symbolic weight of the Muslim caliphate after Selim II defeated the Mamluk Empire in 1517. By combining the Caliphate and the Sultanate, the Ottoman Sultans claimed the mantle over the entire Islamic civilization. 

The Ottoman Empire had the distinction of being the first non-Western member of the Westphalian system, informally at the start, then formally from the time of the Crimean War onward. The transformation from offensive to defensive imperial strategy for the Ottomans began after the Treaty of Karlowitz (1699), which confirmed Austria’s reconquest of Hungary from the Turks. The balance of military power, which had until this point favored the Ottomans, began to change rapidly as Western military technology outpaced the formerly terrifying Turkish cavalry and infantry. Thereafter, Ottoman leaders sought security by pitting the European powers against one another, a policy that preserved the empire’s independence for close to 300 years even as it steadily lost territory.

Ottoman identity was always fluid and pragmatically drew from the strengths found in the ambiguities and paradoxes of being a “Western” power in Europe from the “East” in Asia. Having subsumed the Byzantines and subdued the Persians, the Ottomans looked to the West for further expansion through the Balkans rather than to its hinterland. As various Turkish scholars and an entire sub-field of “Europeanization” has explored, the paradoxical relationship between the Ottomans fighting the West while simultaneously trying to emulate and modernize the empire in line with the West came to

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111The debate over whether or not the Ottomans were successful in appropriating these former empires and championing an Islamic civilization is an area of open and heated debate.
a head in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century.\footnote{Rasim Ozgur Dönmez, “The paradoxical image of the west in different ideologies and essentialism in Turkish politics,” \textit{South-East Europe Review}, Vol. 10 Issue 1:108.} Ottoman international diplomacy at the turn of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century was largely framed as being about a balance between East and West. While the Ottomans were originally considered a direct threat to the West and only grudgingly included into the European Great Power structure of the time, they were never fully considered equals as the only non-Christian members of the imperial club. The oft-quoted phrase for the Ottoman Empire as “the sick man of Europe,” which was coined in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century by Russian Tsar Nicholas I, summed up the Ottoman Empire’s precarious position in its last century. Many features of the new Republic were present well before World War I and can be seen as a continuation of the Ottoman paradoxes inherited. However the collapse of the Ottoman Empire also radically overturned previous assumptions and allowed for a new set of ideas to emerge that had never been fully explored during imperial times. Key to this was a change in the source of legitimacy for the new nation.

The legitimacy of the Ottoman Empire and personage of the Sultan or leader was predicated on maintaining absolute military control. Originating from the steps of Central Asia in the tradition of Genghis Khan, the concept of military leader was transformed into the religiously infused \textit{Gazi} or \textit{Sultanate} with the Turks conversion to Islam.\footnote{The classic work on the early Ottomans and Central Asian political traditions can be found in Cornell Fleischer’s \textit{Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire} (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986).} The Sultan retained the loyalty of his \textit{Janissary} forces along with his regular fighting forces through the construction of a personal household fighting force from selected youths of conquered populations. The Sultanate changed considerably over the 600 years of Ottoman rule due to its morphing from the nomadic tradition of warrior leader to...
administrator, yet it was always based on military rule and moral authority as the standard-bearer of Islam.\footnote{See Selim Deringil, The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and Legitimation in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909. (London: St. Martin’s Press, 1998); An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1914 ed. Halil Inalcik and Donald Quataert (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Erik J. Zurcher, Turkey: A Modern History 3rd Edition (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004).} As the Ottomans suffered defeat after defeat, the very basis for the empire was questioned and new revolutionary ideas began to spread as the basis for competing versions of nationalism began to be openly discussed in the empire.

In the decade before World War I, Turkish nationalism, associated almost exclusively with the Young Turks, was forged as a tool to unify an increasingly ethnically divided empire. Even within a homogenous population this would have been difficult, thereby laying the fault lines that would go on to divide even contemporary Turkish politics. Ironically this version of \textit{Turkishness} was a secular Muslim communalism more than ethnic nationalism, as articulated ideologically through the writings of intellectuals such as Ziya Gokalp in a context in which ethnicity was marked more by religion than by language.\footnote{See Ziya Gokalp, Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization: Selected Essays of Ziya Gokalp (New York: Greenwood Press, 1981).} However it was not clear which version of nationalism would emerge post-empire, because while the Ottoman dynasty seemed to be heading toward certain destruction it was not a foregone conclusion what type or types of nation or nations would emerge in the aftermath.

**Critical Turning Point: Emergence of the Nationalist Movement and Atatürk**

As the Ottoman Empire dwindled and the European nations modernized their armies at the turn of the nineteenth century, the Ottomans became embroiled in a series of
wars that ultimately led to their entrance into World War I on the side of Germany. This led to disaster and defeat. It was from the rubble of the Ottoman Empire that the Turkish Republic was founded. From a defeated, desolate, and occupied people, a revolutionary Turkish leader, Mustafa Kemal, emerged. As the one shining exception to the disaster of the war for the Turks, Kemal was determined to work toward a new nation and start a new populist movement against the Sultan and the remaining vestiges of the Ottoman Empire, which had accepted the harsh settlements of the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres. Kemal became the logical figure around whom the defeated nation could rally. With his newly formed national army, Kemal, later renamed and honored as Atatürk (“father of Turks”), declared war on the Western occupiers who had arrived in Anatolia in the aftermath of World War I and began to drive them out of Turkey.

For Atatürk and his followers who became the new elite of Turkey, the Ottoman Empire meant “…endless defeat, retreat, and suffering.” To add further insult to injury, rather than rallying around Atatürk and his growing nationalist movement, the Ottoman Sultan dissolved the Parliament on April 11, 1920. Following this move, on April 23, 1920, the Grand National Assembly was opened in Ankara and Mustafa Kemal elected its first president. The empire was identified with backwardness and weakness, the nation with modernity and pride. By contrast, the new republic and the nation-state of Turkey represented, “…success, victory, and the beginning of a new life.” As Bernard Lewis, perhaps the most quoted historian of modern Turkey, has written, “In Turkey there was

117 The story behind the opening of the first national parliament is preserved in the original building in Ankara as a museum and a narrative of Atatürk’s leadership of this period. Old Parliament Building in Ankara, Turkey accessed by author August 18, 2008 and online at http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/english/about_tgna.htm#FOUNDING%20OF%20THE%20TURKISH%20GRAND%20NATIONAL%20ASSEMBLY.
118 Lewis “Aftermath”, 27.
not only a renunciation of empire; there was a positive revulsion.”\textsuperscript{119} Effectively for the defeated Turks of Anatolia, the Sultan’s decision to work with the Allies turned the Ottomans into the “enemy” to fight against along with the occupying European powers. The involvement of these outside helped to legitimize Mustafa Kemal’s struggle against the imperial Ottoman dynasty and its remaining institutions. The Nationalists in Ankara began to organize an armed resistance to defend and fight on behalf of the Turkish people whom the Ottomans had abandoned to the invading European armies.\textsuperscript{120}

Sensing the growing strength of the nationalist movement, General Refet Bele, a conservative who favored continuity under the Ottoman Empire, tried to persuade the Sultan to dismiss his government in Istanbul and to follow the Nationalists’ lead. However his advice was not heeded and the struggle for control over the new Turkish state eventually led to an open split between Istanbul and Ankara. The leaders of the nationalist movement were well aware of the realities on the ground and spoke of areas, “…inhabited by an Ottoman Muslim majority, united in religion, in race and in aim” in the National Oath of 1919-20, a document outlining their basic demands, so as not to antagonize the masses whose help they desperately needed.\textsuperscript{121} The use of religion and religious rhetoric to justify and then legitimate actions was employed on all sides.

As a final act of defiance, the Sultan’s supporters issued a \textit{fatwa}, a religious edict, from the Ottoman Palace in Istanbul denouncing the Nationalists as infidels and stating that it was the duty of believers to kill them. The Nationalists responded by having the

\textsuperscript{119} Lewis “Aftermath”, 30.
\textsuperscript{120} For an overview of the impact of this narrative see Mustafa Aydn, "Determinants of Turkish Foreign Policy: Historical Framework and Traditional Inputs", \textit{Middle Eastern Studies}, Vol. 35, No. 4(1999):152-186.

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mufti of Ankara issue a counter fatwa, declaring that the caliph was a captive of infidels and stating that believers were duty-bound to fight to save him. The attempts to separate Islam from the “corrupt” Ottoman dynasty on the part of the Nationalists demonstrates just how powerful religion was during this time. Under the Ottomans religion and politics had been intertwined so as to legitimate the ruling dynasty for six centuries. As the Nationalists sought to reject and defeat the former vestiges of empire, they had to separate Islam from the Ottomans by reclaiming it as their own regardless of their privately-held views.\(^\text{122}\)

**Constructing the Turkish Nation**

Scholarly accounts of nationalism in Turkey traditionally begin with an explanation of the extent to which the Ottoman Turks submerged their identity in Islam with a focus on how comparatively more significant this was than for any other Islamic people, and as a result regarded themselves first and foremost as Muslims.\(^\text{123}\) Given the religious legitimacy of the Ottoman Empire whose “raison d’être was to extend and protect the realm of Islam” and the way in which the empire itself was viewed by the European powers of the time, this is not surprising.\(^\text{124}\) The Ottomans took great pride in their contributions to Islam, bragging about saving Islam from the decay of Abbasid rule and the backwardness of the Arabs who could not preserve it from the Europeans and

\(^\text{122}\) See full account in Feroz Ahmad, *Turkey the Quest for identity* (New York: OneWorld Press, 2004), 81.
\(^\text{123}\) For the best articulation of this view see Serif Mardin’s *Religion, Society and Modernity in Turkey* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2006).
Russians who sought to destroy it. This thread of nationalism and pride underlined the symbiotic relationship between Turkishness and Islam throughout Ottoman times and was only belatedly confronted by Atatürk’s Nationalist as they debated whether they were to perceive Islam as an ally or threat to their newly constructed version of Turkish nationalism.

Bernard Lewis’ definitive account draws from the original sources of the time and outlines the fact that during the Turkish War of Independence from 1919 to 1922, the Islamic character of Turkish identity was prevalent throughout:

Many of Kemal’s supporters certainly saw themselves as fighting for Islam against the unbeliever rather than for Turkey against the foreigner. But the influence of Islam was much weakened by the defection of the Islamic establishment, which in the eyes of many Turks was guilty of collaboration with the occupying powers.

This perception facilitated Atatürk’s rejection of the Ottoman state and Islamic establishment as being contrary to the ideals of his new Turkish nation.

Atatürk was convinced that the survival of the new Republic depended on stripping itself of Ottoman conventions. Atatürk’s first priority, therefore, was to consolidate his power and begin work on a new socio-political infrastructure based on his

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125 The exhibits at the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul offer a fascinating insight into these views as the religious relics are displayed with descriptions of how the Ottomans protected and promoted Islam at every available corner. Istanbul, Turkey August, 2010.
127 Lewis, “The Ottoman Empire and its Aftermath,” 30.
new ideology. Atatürk had set his general objective: to create a nation-state on European lines. For this his preferred tools were nationalism and secularization. In the final analysis, Atatürk’s nationalism was not imperialistic but rather a matter of “Turkey for the Turks.”

The ideology espoused by Atatürk, which came to be known as Kemalism situated modernization and civilization within a Western model of development along with a particularly strict interpretation of Turkey as a secular state. The establishment of a modern, secular, and constitutionally-based nation-state under the leadership of Atatürk created a fundamental shift in the bases of political legitimization and a redefinition for Turkey. Both internally and externally, many saw this Turkish transformation as a transition from a traditional into a modern society.

The core members of the new Turkish elite enjoyed prestige as a result of their leading roles in the “national struggle.” Most had been raised in the modernized schools of the late Ottoman Empire, were exposed to western ideas due to their education, and had adopted westernization – although with varying definitions – as the means for modernization and progress. The regime sought to capture the essence of pre-existing loyalties rooted in Islam and transfer this allegiance to the Republican state, its ideals, and Turkishness, which was envisioned as superseding all identities without directly attacking religion.

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128 Atatürk’s sayings such as this or “Ne mutlu Turkum diyene” (How happy is he who calls himself a Turk) became part of this new nationalism and can still be found written on statues in city centers and school yards across Turkey.

129 For more on this see Esra Özyürek, Nostalgia for the Modern: State Secularism and Everyday Politics in Turkey (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).
Rejectionist Policies of Kemalism

Turkishness under the Nationalist Movement had come to be comprised of three layers: religious, ethnic, and territorial. The trickiest of these layers to reconcile with Atatürk’s agenda of the Kemalist elites was the role that Islam should play in the new republic. Having played a major role in the mobilization of the Anatolian masses by the nationalist resistance movement, Islam needed to be put in service of the state. While it may have been true that Atatürk and his upper echelon of Turkish leadership had a long-term agenda of secularization, for the rank and file and the majority of the cadres, the new republic had a religious air. In the final analysis, according to many historians of this period, the mobilization of the national struggle was accomplished along religious lines and “we,” as it occurred in Atatürk’s many speeches and in the National Oath, continued to mean we, the “Ottoman Muslims Turks.”

The Republican regime recognized that religion was too powerful a force to be left in the hands of potential opponents. Islam would either be eliminated or subordinated to the Republican regime. One of the trickiest questions for the early republic was what to do with the caliphate. The Caliphate was the traditional Islamic form of government inherited by the Ottoman Empire that had unified the Muslim world since the time of the prophet Mohammad. After the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I, the National Assembly abolished the monarchy, yet the caliphate was left in place and continued to enjoy much popular support within the nationalist movement and among the Turkish people given the importance of Islam as societal glue. As a result, the focal

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point for much of the elite debates surrounding Turkish identity and role of Islam within the new republic and its ideology centered on the political role for the Caliphate.\textsuperscript{131}

In January of 1923, religious leaders distributed a booklet calling for the Caliph to rule not only the Turkish nation, but also all Muslim lands. Atatürk could see that the ideology of political Islam had become a tangible threat to the ideology of Kemalism and to the new Republic. Atatürk chose to address the issue in the same way he had during the independence war, by subsuming the rhetoric of defending Islam from political opponents who wanted to drag the new republic back to its dark past. By framing the issue in terms of progress and leveraging his own charisma as defender of the Turkish nation Atatürk made himself the defender of Islam by declaring on the fourth anniversary of the establishment of the Grand National Assembly in early March, 1924:

\begin{quote}
It has now become a plainly evident truth that it is necessary to
liberate and elevate the Islamic religion from its position of being a
tool of politics, in the way that has been traditional for centuries. In
order to secure the revival of Islamic faith, religion must cease to be a
political instrument.\textsuperscript{132}
\end{quote}

The fact that Atatürk chose to come out as a defender of religious freedom even rhetorically demonstrates the power and saliency of Islam even in the early Republic.\textsuperscript{133}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[131] For a more detailed reading on the history and symbolism of the Sultanate and Caliphate in the early modern Turkish republic see Niyazi Berkes' \textit{The Development of Secularism in Turkey. Revised Edition} (London: Routledge; Press, 1999).
\item[133] Debates about Atatürk’s view on Islam continue to this day and are an active part of the historical revisionism in Turkey today. For a fascinating read that compares the political philosophies of Thomas
\end{footnotes}
The opposition in Istanbul urged Atatürk to maintain the caliphate as an institution treasured by the entire Islamic world, a kind of Muslim pope, who would project Turkey’s influence far and wide. However Atatürk had already set his course and rejected Islam as a basis for political legitimacy for his new republic. Atatürk responded by arresting the opposition party dissidents and abolishing the caliphate on March 3, 1924, and sending members of the Ottoman dynasty into exile two years after he had abolished the Sultanate. In Lewis’ words:

*With the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924, the Turkish state formally renounced the Islamic religious leadership, which had been embodied in that office. In the debate on the subject, which took place in the Turkish parliament and elsewhere, the question of whether to retain or abandon Turkey’s role as the leading Islamic power was discussed at length, and the renunciation of Islamic empire expressed in the abolition of the office was conscious and explicit.*

The abolition of the caliphate cast a shadow over Turkey’s place within the Muslim world and continues in many ways to temper its own ambitions. Not until the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), which will be discussed in a subsequent chapter, did Turkey have any other formal connection to the Islamic world after abolishing the caliphate.


134 Lewis, “The Ottoman Empire and its Aftermath,” 28. The Grand National Assembly Archive of Minutes on March 3, 1924 are fascinating and in need of further exploration as of now the only English language source that refers to these is Bernard Lewis’ work.
Atatürk’s response portended the aggressive nature that secularism would take for the nascent republic. Kemalist policies were aimed at removing religion from all public institutions not directly concerned with worship. Republican statesmen did not tolerate any autonomous religious organizations or activities. The state remained responsible for all appointments and salaries of Muslim preachers and clerics. And to stem any religious opposition to the government, the Parliament promulgated the Law for the Maintenance of Order in 1925; Article 1 made “exploitation of religion toward political ends” a capital punishment.\footnote{\textsuperscript{135}} Immediately following this law, the government outlawed all religious brotherhoods and closed down religious shrines and sectarian convents, which were often the centers of religious protests. In 1928 the Parliament repealed from the constitution Article 2, which had stated that the “religion of the Turkish state is Islam.”\footnote{\textsuperscript{136}} Most importantly the \textit{Diyanet} or “Presidency of Religious Affairs” of Turkey was established to maintain secular state control over Islam and a Muslim society where to this day it controls all sermons delivered by \textit{imams} in their official capacity as state servants.\footnote{\textsuperscript{137}} Moving forward Turkey would officially be a secular republic where state controlled religion. The secularization of the political culture reached its peak in 1933 to 1935; the government transformed the Theological Faculty at the University of Istanbul into the newly formed Islamic Research Institute, banned the wearing of ecclesiastical garments outside places of worship, abolished traditional religious titles, turned the mosque of Aya Sofya into a museum, and proscribed books connected in any

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid, 685.
\textsuperscript{137} The best book on this subject is unfortunately only in Turkish Iştar B. Tarhanlı, “Müslüman Toplum, ‘Laik’ Devlet, Türkiye’de Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı (Muslim Society, "Secular" State, The Presidency of Religious Affairs in Turkey), (Istanbul: Afa, 1993.)
way with religion from the libraries to thousands of cultural centers being set up around the country.\textsuperscript{138}

The reforms were not simply limited to state institutions but were also expanded to include the traditional fez and religious outfits of the Turkish citizen, which became symbols of backwardness. They subsequently came under attack and were banned in public buildings. Secular state education replaced the traditional Muslim schools of Ottoman times. The 1928 language reforms replaced the Arabic script with a Latin alphabet that severed Turkish from Ottoman. Atatürk’s reforms stemmed from his desire to help Turkey progress and develop into a “modern” nation-state fashioned after the Western European model.\textsuperscript{139} By rejecting the country’s link to the Muslim world and its former empire, however, they also led to alienation in its own neighborhood.

The ideology espoused by Atatürk situated modernization and civilization within a Western model of development along with a particularly strict interpretation of Turkey as a secular state. The establishment of a modern, secular, and constitutionally-based nation-state under the leadership of Atatürk created a fundamental shift in the bases of political legitimization and was a major redefinition for Turkey. Both internally and externally, many saw this Turkish transformation as the transition of a traditional society into a modern one. Accordingly—given that both Turkey’s geopolitical and its ideological orientations faced Westward—Turkish foreign policy has traditionally been skewed toward Europe and away from Turkey’s east.\textsuperscript{140}


\textsuperscript{139} For more on this see Mardin, \textit{Religion, Society and Modernity in Turkey}.

Throughout the early Republic and its single-party regimes of Atatürk and İsmet İnönü, Islam was no longer perceived as an integral component of Turkish national identity. For scholars such as Sina Akşin this is the defining “revolution” of Atatürk’s republic despite seeing continuity in all institutional senses of the Ottoman state infrastructure. Republican statesmen and policy makers did their utmost to disassociate themselves from the duality of state and faith (din-u devlet), which had served as a viscerally powerful mechanism for political consensus in the Ottoman Empire. Scholars of early Republican nationalism such as Banu Helvacıoğlu have pointed out that the Ottomans were disdained for their backwardness, particularly religiosity and their imperial culture was denounced as the source of all evils. The drastic reforms outlined were taken by the Turkish state to erase and reject the legacy of the Ottomans. By secularizing Turkish society, as already mentioned, this also entailed major changes such as the adoption of the Gregorian calendar, the creation of a western-style penal code, and the purging of Persian and Arabic influences from the language.

Having adopted wholeheartedly the Western notions of modernization and secularization, Kemalism became synonymous with rejection of the empire for the Republican elites. While many of these elites were not necessarily anti-religious, the space for Islam was restricted from the public to the private, a clear repudiation of the Ottomans, which had publicly carried the banner of Islam since its arrival on the world scene. The sultan no longer reigned as caliph or spiritual head of Islam. The removal of religious elites from within the governing coalition and the policies aimed at “radical”

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141 Sina Akşin, *Turkey from Empire to Revolutionary Republic: The Emergence of the Turkish Nation from 1789 to the Present* (London: C. Hurst and Co., 2007), 41.
143 For more on this see Mardin’s 2nd chapter.
secularism, or perhaps more appropriately the French version of laicism, were all aimed at moving the country away from its imperial past into its Republican future.

One of the most striking features of the Kemalists’ policies in the early Republican era was their radical nature in their attempt at and self-professed goal of creating a break with the past. Toward this end, history and language were significant tools for shaping a favorable domestic environment in which a single political party could dominate. Having abolished the Ottoman Empire after the War of Independence victory with the stroke of a pen, Atatürk set about reeducating the Turkish people about its past. In one of his many speeches Atatürk proclaimed, “The new Turkey has no relationship to the old. The Ottoman government has passed into history. A new Turkey is now born.”

Kemalist nation-building, as part of the Republican modernization project, came to be based on the creation of this new Turkey, which promoted itself as a de-legitimization of the past and the Turks’ Ottoman-Islamic heritage.

The central feature of the Republicans’ efforts to construct a new past was through education and language reforms. National and international congresses provided a unique forum – indeed the Kemalists’ favorite tool – for introducing and propagating reforms in both history and language. The Republican elite sought to reinvent the Turkish language and history in a nationalist mold that would serve their present ambition. The Turkish History Society (Turk Tarih Kurumu) and the Turkish Language Society (Turk Dil Kurumu) were two important institutions of the early Republic that continue to exist as official societies in Ankara, which took on the task of creating an official Turkish

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history and a standardized “bona fide” Turkish language to aid in the nation-building process. This led to the formulations of the *Turkish History Thesis* (*Turk Tarih Tezi*) and the *Sun-Language Theory* (*Gunes-Dil Teorisi*), which are dealt with in-depth in the next section, but were nationalist myths designed to give Turks a new history and identity independent of the Ottoman one, from which they could feel proud and from which they could derive self-esteem. To disseminate these new state ideologies and “history” to a largely illiterate population Atatürk’s newly created Republican People’s Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, abbreviated CHP) set up the “People’s Houses” (*Halkevleri*) all across Anatolia to reach out to the broader population particularly in the rural countryside.

The dismissal of the Ottoman-Islamic past as a reference point for modern Turkey was the crux of the Republican efforts for identity transformation and hence, cultural change. The ideological expression of this rejection can be found in the regime’s perspective on and articulation of history. The connection between the regime’s rejectionist attitude toward the Ottoman-Islamic past and its ideological expression materialized in its official history project entitled *Turk Tarihinin Ana Hatlari*, (*The Main Feature of Turkish History*). The Turkish Historical Society developed this project, which was eventually termed the “Turkish History Thesis” or “Thesis” for short. This seminal text officially marked the modification and the redefinition of Turkishness and the ascendancy of Kemalist extreme rejectionism.

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146 The literature on *Halkevleri* is an extensive one, a good summary of it can be found in Sefika Zorlu-Durukan, “The Ideological Pillars of Turkish Education,” PhD dissertation, (University of Wisconsin, 2006), 70-71.
147 While considerable scholarship has been produced on these seminal works of Turkish history, little of it can be found in the English language. For a great synopsis see M. Zafer Cetin. “Tales of Past, Present, and
The thesis needs to be understood in the context of the broader Kemalist project, which entailed a complete break with the immediate Ottoman-Islamic past. The void created by the demise of institutionalized Islam and the dynasty, which had pervaded the fabric of everyday life for more than six centuries, needed to be filled. In addition the new regime needed to acquire legitimacy in which it was the ultimate arbitrator of the nation’s past. The answer that the regime came up with was history. It thus turned the clock back and focused on the Turks’ pre-Ottoman, pre-Islamic past, projecting onto it the principles it was trying to inculcate in the present.148

From the scholarship on and writings of Atatürk it is clear that he believed that the only possible way for Turkey to reach the level of contemporary civilization and to become an integral part of the civilized world – the West, and more specifically Europe – would be through a total break from the Ottoman-Islamic past, which the elite saw as contradicting advancement and modernization.149 Although there is minimal scholarship in English on this seminal period, Sefika Zorlu-Durukan’s dissertation devoted to the construction of Kemalist history education lays out how, “The realization of this goal would only be attainable by creating an ideology that would guide the people towards modernity and win their allegiance, so that they would be able to substitute patriotism for religion.”150 Consequently, the revolutionary ideology of Kemalism came to function as a
surrogate for the rejected traditional religion and turned into a semi-religious dogmatic belief structure of its own that was in need of its own definitive history.\textsuperscript{151}

**Rewriting History: Turkish History Thesis and The Outline of Turkish History\textsuperscript{152, 153}**

The appearance of *The Main Feature of Turkish History*, which served as the guiding historical principles for the Kemalists, was written in the 1930s and fundamentally defined the Turkish nation by reinterpreting the history of the Turks.\textsuperscript{154} This new thesis, which was to serve as a guideline for Turkish history teaching, rejected the Ottoman and Islamic periods by downplaying their role in favor of a strong emphasis and glorification of a distant, pre-Islamic Turkish past.\textsuperscript{155} In Zorlu-Duruğan’s words, “The translation of the title actually speaks for itself: *The Main Features of Turkish History* attempted to chart out the major characteristics of Turkish history by reevaluating the role of the Turks and their services to world civilization.”\textsuperscript{156} This new interpretation of history argued that all civilizations came from the Turks or were profoundly

\textsuperscript{151} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{152} Unless specifically noted otherwise, each of the primary sources referenced were accessed through the Ministry of Education Archives or National Library in Ankara the summer of 2008 by author.
\textsuperscript{153} The copy of the *Outline* I accessed was one of a few remaining originals published in 1931. *Outline*, 1931. Ministry of Education Archives.
\textsuperscript{154} In particular see Ersanlı-Behar, *Iktidar ve Tarih: Turkiye’de ‘Resmi Tarih’ Tezinin Olusumu, 1929–1937* (Power and History: The Development of the ‘Official History’ Thesis in Turkey) (Istanbul: Afa Yayınları, 1992) to get a sense of how seminal this work was and how it was developed. For an English summary of work on this period and construction of official narrative see Howard Eissenstat. “History and Historiography: Politics and Memory in the Turkish Republic”. *Contemporary European History*, 12 (2003): 93-105.
\textsuperscript{155} See Chapter VII Zorlu-Duruğan, “The Ideological Pillars of Turkish Education,.”
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid, 133.
influenced by them. It presented the Turks as an ancient nation, superior to their neighbors, and put them at the center of civilization.

The actual structure of the original the *Outline of Turkish History (Outline)*, which served as the actual history and academic research of the Thesis, is a fascinating case study into the way in which the Kemalist elites sought to shape memories of the past in the Republic. This work, about 605 pages in total, devoted only 50 pages to Ottoman history, while 200 pages talked about other pre-Ottoman Turkish states and civilizations. In addition, 100 pages dealt with the Turkish sources of other civilizations with the remainder devoted to Chinese, Indian, Iranian, and Egyptian civilization. Interestingly, the section on the Ottoman Empire argued that the empire received its strength from Turkishness and that Islam was “saved” by the Turks. In the few pages devoted to the demise of the Ottoman Empire, the emphasis is placed on the empire’s disintegration in the 18th and 19th centuries, which is attributed to its Ottoman-Islamic characteristics, not its Turkish qualities.

The *Outline* argues that the Turks had created the earliest civilizations and the “Turks were the first civilized nation of the world.”Filled with references to the fact that Anatolia was “as old as the world” the strategy employed was to connect all of the early Anatolian civilizations such as the Hittites, Phrygians, Lydians, and Greeks directly

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158 Zorlu-Durukan, “The Ideological Pillars of Turkish Education,” 133.
159 In addition to author’s observations see Chapter 4 of Zorlu-Durukan’s dissertation and Aral Berdal’s discussion in “Turkey's Insecure Identity from The Perspective of Nationalism,” *Mediterranean Quarterly*, (Winter 1997), 92.
160 Alev Cinar’s work in this regard has been seminal and the translations from the original are taken from his scholarship particularly “National History as a Contested Cite,” *Society for Comparative Study of Society and History* (2001): 370.
inline with an “eternal” Turkish civilization. Rather than focusing any attention on the
Ottoman period, antiquity is treated as Turkish history and the Republic as its natural
heir. The only attention the Ottoman period does receive is to explain the incompetence
and corruption of the empire in contrast to the noble and incorruptible character of the
Turks. Subsequent editions of the Outline, which locate the foundation of the Turkish
nation in Central Asia to 9000 BC, trace the Turks’ history all the way to the twentieth
century with barely a mention of the Ottomans. A closer reading of the Outline reveals a
telling disconnect without any chapter devoted to the 600-year empire and out of the 467
pages total only 26 pages referencing them. As Alev Cinar has laid out in her work the
fact that this constitutes about five percent of the total history is a telling indicator that
Republican elites sought to forget or distance themselves from the empire in creating
their new entity.

The Outline was the basis for all textbooks and the compulsory education taught
in history classes throughout Turkey. The official history taught in Turkish schools
consisted of four parts based on the Outline model that corresponded to different grades
in which textbooks dealing with those parts would be taught. The actual textbooks varied
by grades, but were all based on the same officially mandated Thesis. History was
therefore structurally broken into four distinct sections. Section one dealt with pre-
historic and ancient times that corresponded to 349 pages and 14 chapters. Section two
dealt with the Middle Ages until the Ottoman period and consisted of 365 pages and 33

161 Ibid. For more one the revision of Turkey’s textbooks see “Fostering Peaceful Co-Existence Through
Analysis and Revision of History Curricula and Textbooks in Southeast Europe,” UNESCO Special Report
2006.
162 Cinar, 370.
163 Alev Cinar describes the process through which national history permeates all aspects of Turkish
society in her book Modernity, Islam and Secularism in Turkey: Bodies Places and Time, (Minneapolis:
University of Minnesota Press, 2005).
chapters. Section three dealt with the Ottoman Empire until its collapse in World War 1 and is the shortest at 300 pages and 5 chapters. Section four was devoted entirely to the formation of the new Turkish Republic with 349 pages and 11 chapters.\textsuperscript{164}

Reading these early textbooks reveals a consistent rejection of the Ottoman period in comparison to other aspects of Turkish history. For example, a series of textbooks from 1934 reveal that while the first, second, and fourth volumes of \textit{Outline} are of 400 pages each, the third volume dealing with the Ottoman Empire is only 200 pages long. This volume occasionally refers to the Ottoman Empire as the ‘sick man of Europe’, and talks about it as a foreign empire with no relations to Turkishness. The fourth volume confirms the existence of the Turks, before the Turkish Republic, and talks about a series of successful states, but implies that the Ottoman Empire was, in a way, the weakest link in this long line of succession.\textsuperscript{165} The teaching of history such that the Ottoman history was taught as being separate from the Turkish Republic is a structurally important factor to consider. As sociologists and scholars of educational curriculum emphasize this topical – and seemingly technical – organization of the way history is presented frames the overly narrated histories of leaders and states with proper beginnings and ends for Turkish students.\textsuperscript{166}

The conclusion of the \textit{Outline} is particularly revealing given that it was reportedly personally written under the direction of Atatürk and published by the Turkish History

\textsuperscript{164} Numbers change based on edition of the Outline, these correspond to original from 1931 available only in Ankara.
\textsuperscript{166} In particular see Yasemin Soysal’s recent work on textbooks at \url{http://www.gei.de/en/research/textbooks-and-conflict.html} accessed June, 2010.
Committee in 1930. The memories of the new republic and its elite on its former empire are clear when they write:

_The sons of Osman had long lost the ability and the honor to rule the Turkish nation. During the Armistice the Turkish nation encountered the worst devastation that it had ever faced in its history, which is as old as the history of the whole world. Almost no one contemplated the possibility of overthrowing the enemy armies and establishing an independent national Turkish state. But knowing the heroism of the Turkish nation in battlefields, the hardships it is facing and its need Mustafa Kemal took on the leadership of the nation and initiated an opposition in Anatolia...Mustafa Kemal who saved the Turks from the sons of Osman and the worthless Caliphate, formed the Republic._

The Turks’ failure versus Europe in the 19th century is attributed to the Ottoman failure to follow traditionally Turkish elements in favor of Islamic aspects. Following this logic, the Thesis argues that “Islam had not been a positive contributing factor to Turkish developments, rather Turks had provided invaluable services to it.” When taken as a whole, the unmistakable overall picture that emerges from these textbooks is one in which the “good” and “noble” Turk is oppressed by “evil” and “regressive” Ottoman

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167 Turkish reprinted edition of original The Outline of Turkish History read in Ankara, (Istanbul: Kaynak Yayinlari, 1996) and can be found on pages 466-467. English translation taken from Cinar article, 370.
168 Zorlu-Durukan, “The Ideological Pillars of Turkish Education,” 140.
influences. As a result, the Ottoman dynasty and everything it represented, including Islam, needed to be rejected in favor of a new history and past.

The Thesis and the Outline was used to show that the Ottoman Empire had lagged behind contemporary levels of civilization. This portrayal was reinforced in CHP propaganda and in history textbooks that juxtaposed the idea of “old” versus “new”—the latter being the approach used in relating the Republican history, especially its “modern” reforms—with Ottoman history. As laid out convincingly by Zorlu-Durukan’s archival work, “Anything remotely Ottoman is despised or frowned upon as obsolete, not dynamic, archaic, oppressive, tainting Turkishness, and against the will of the people. In contrast to it, anything introduced by the Republic is presented as contemporary, dynamic, progressive, democratic, and in line with Turkish values and the will of the people.”

History textbooks used in the early republic point out the unforgivable and irreparable crimes committed in the wake of World War I by the Ottoman dynasty in the person of the sultan. The foremost accusation repeatedly leveled at the end of Part Two of the Outline was that the Ottoman dynasty betrayed the nation. “Instead of protecting the nation and the homeland, the Ottoman Sultan succumbed to the will of the Allied enemies with nothing else in mind than the well-being of his dynasty and throne by signing the Armistice of Mondros on October 30, 1918 and the Treaty of Sevres.” This type of language and portrayal of the Ottomans, and the sultan in particular, served to discredit the old empire and legitimize the modernizing reforms of Republican Turkey.

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169 The actual words in the original textbooks vary by year of publication, these are a sampling from 1931.
171 Translated by author from Outline, 158.
The most interesting characteristic of the Turkish revolution, as noted by scholars, lies in the totality of its modernization project.\textsuperscript{172} For Atatürk, modernization meant westernization, secularization, and autonomy of religion for the individual.\textsuperscript{173} According to Bernard Lewis, “Two dominant beliefs of Atatürk’s life were in the Turkish nation and in progress; the future of both lay in civilization, which for him meant the modern civilization of the West, and no other.”\textsuperscript{174} Atatürk’s vision of a Westernized Turkey was not a mere facade. He believed strongly that superficial modernization was worthless and that fundamental changes were necessary in the structure of Turkish society and culture if the nation were to hold its own in the modern world. Rejecting Turkey’s Ottoman legacy allowed Atatürk to reshape a new nation unhindered by the historical baggage and problems that he experienced in the last days of the Ottoman period. As a result, his legacy of the republican revolution subsumed the Ottoman legacy by rejecting the new republic’s immediate past and transformed itself into a nationalist ideology that has guided Turkey for the past eighty years of existence.

**Concluding the Initial Phase**

The tumultuous birth of the Turkish Republic would not have been possible without the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the emergence of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The coalition of ruling elites assembled in the aftermath of empire shaped the new republic’s bureaucracy, education, history, and military to fit their needs. Above all

\textsuperscript{173} Atatürk never used the term “westernization,” rather he referred to “contemporary civilization.”
\textsuperscript{174} Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 292.
else one force guided the nation’s transition from empire to republic—that of its founder and supreme leader Atatürk. His inclinations and thoughts became part of the Kemalist ideology that became synonymous with the Turkish state. Given the autocratic nature of Turkish domestic politics and the fragile nature of Turkey’s international position, there were no viable political alternatives to the rejectionist path that Atatürk had chosen for his Republic.

The permeation of Kemalist ideals that inculcated a rejectionist view of the Ottoman Empire within the Turkish Republic reached far beyond the circle of ruling elites to become a tool leveraged by them against their domestic opponents. As evidenced by the short-lived experiment with a loyal opposition party, the CHP could not accept any alternative views of Turkey’s past. The Caliphate and the religious establishment that had been a traditional and public part of Ottoman life was abolished and forced into the private life of Turkey’s citizens. While Islam continued to play an important role in many Turks’ lives, it ceased to be a political force and was replaced by the Kemalist ideology of modernization and secularization.

This shift was helped by the rewriting of history that helped shape Turkey’s new generations for years to come. The radical revisions of history and the narrative shaped by Turkey’s founders detached Turks from the Ottomans and sought to separate Turkishness from Islam. The clear rejection and repudiation of its Ottoman past was made possible because of the new character of the state and national identity that Atatürk sought to foster. Having lived through the decline of the Ottoman Empire, the new leaders of Turkey sought a clean break that included cultural, history, language, and societal reforms. The curriculums and textbooks of the time tell the story of these radical
reforms through the politicized portrayals of Turkey’s new leaders and the rejection or revulsion of the Ottomans.

Given the geopolitical conditions of the time the fact that Kemalists chose to reject their Ottoman past is not surprising, rather the degree and extreme to which they rejected their imperial legacy cannot simply be tied to the international environment. Having established a hegemonic narrative, Turkey’s ruling Kemalists set their sights on domestic reforms that drew legitimacy from this portrayal of Turkish history and actively sought to institutionalize this departure that would remain in place unchallenged for as long as the one-party system remained in place. Thus it seems that Turkey’s extreme rejection of its Ottoman past was pursued by Kemalists to maintain their power and crush any would-be opposition whether it came from religious groups that had been excluded from power or rebellious Kurdish leaders that sought greater rights like they had enjoyed under the Ottoman Empire.

The initial phase of Turkey’s evolution and transformation after empire did not come to an abrupt end with Atatürk’s death. In fact it continued until the next major turning point that coincided with the beginning of the Cold War internationally and domestically, a multiparty system in Turkey. The foundation was laid for Turkey in which the initial moderate and pragmatic rejection of the Ottoman Empire transformed into an extreme ideological rejection of the Turks’ immediate past. Understanding this rejectionism, which permeated all aspects of Turkey, is critical to understanding the Republic’s subsequent evolution. Embedded in the changes, ideologies, and policies instituted by the Kemalists lay the roots for all subsequent challenges that Turkey has faced throughout its history.
After Atatürk: Cautious Independence

Atatürk’s death in 1938 did not change the fundamental balance of power in Turkey and in fact served to further solidify the Kemalist position under the guidance of Atatürk’s trusted deputy İsmet İnönü, who became Turkey’s second president. Although İnönü was a national hero he did not have the same reservoir of affection and charisma to rely upon in moments of crisis like Atatürk. As a result, he exercised extreme caution in all of his policy decisions. İnönü’s own personal views of the Ottoman Empire seemed to have been less rejectionist than Atatürk’s, but there was little discernable impact this had on his policies. However his experiences as a military leader and disdain for the Ottoman actions during World War I had a direct impact on the most important decisions that he would have to make in the wake of Atatürk’s death.

İnönü came to power in a time of deep international uncertainty and danger for Turkey. Having pursued a policy of “Peace at Home, Peace Abroad” which dictated a more inward and isolationist focus, Turkey now had to adjust to a vastly different international environment. Domestic issues were deprioritized as elites rallied under the leadership of İnönü and the CHP tried to navigate regional conflicts and the rise of European facism that threatened to engulf the Turks again just like in World War One. Having personally negotiated the Treaty of Lausanne, İnönü intuitively understood the international dynamics at work in Turkey’s neighborhood. Similar to Atatürk, İnönü took
a deep and abiding personal interest in Turkey’s foreign policy and as a result almost all of his most significant decisions were made in this realm.

Having learned from the Ottomans’ experiences with European alliances in World War I, Ankara desired neutrality and isolation. In the lead up to World War II Turkey once again found itself in an undesirable position as a buffer state between the Soviet and British Empires. However, just like in the lead up to World War I, the emergence of Germany in the heart of Europe threatened to overthrow the precarious balance of power in the Eastern Mediterranean through its alliance with Mussolini’s regime in Italy. In much the same way that Hitler’s designs in Europe had led to the Grand Alliance, Stalin’s designs in the Middle East had led the United States and Britain to recognize that their national and strategic interests in the region were synonymous.175 As described by Bruce Kuniholm, the United States had already assumed the role of the British Empire in the Middle East by the end of World War II.176

The United States emerged from World War II as a superpower without a full awareness of the simultaneous decline of Great Britain’s mobility and influence. Franklin D. Roosevelt’s conception of the post-war global order that he expected to emerge was one approximating a nineteenth-century classical balance of power system based on a globalized concept of the “Concert of Europe.” But, as events turned out, Great Britain rapidly began demonstrating signs of imperial fatigue from 1945 through 1947. Greece and Turkey played a special role in this transitional period because control over their strategic territories – about to be abandoned by the rapidly waning British – was passed

175 The seminal work on this is Bruce R. Kuniholm’s The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), where he outlines the geopolitical ramifications of this policy for the eventual contours of the Cold War.
176 Ibid, 382.
on to the United States. The United States, by accepting the responsibility, was raising its foreign policy profile from traditional isolationism to one of global activism and transoceanic involvement. It was through the Truman Doctrine, proclaimed on March 12, 1947, that the U.S. formally assumed the role of a peacetime presence overseas involving elaborate bases, U.S. troops, advisers, equipment, and psychological commitment.\footnote{177 Theodore A. Couloumbis, The United States, Greece, and Turkey: The Troubled Triangle (New York: Praeger Press, 1983), 8.}

After the declaration and the unofficial beginning of the Cold War, the attitude of the West, especially of the United States, towards Turkey changed. The Truman administration recognized that Soviet designs were clearly aimed at undermining Turkish resistance and their ultimate goal was to extend Communist control over the Middle East. As described by Kuniholm, “Events along the Northern Tier, consisting of Greece, Turkey, and Iran, had educated Washington on the balance of power politics and served as a forge for the administration’s emerging policy of containment – a policy inherent in the idea of an equilibrium of forces and a cornerstone of British diplomacy in the Near East for more over a century.”\footnote{178 Kuniholm, “The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East,” 431.} After Turkey’s diplomatic “rope-dancing” during World War II, it could have reverted to the neutralist and isolationist attitude practiced under Atatürk.\footnote{179 Ferenc Vali, Bridge across the Bosporus. (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1971), 35} However in the words of Ferenc Vali, a Hungarian diplomat serving in Turkey at the time:

\begin{quote}
It was the Soviet threat, more menacing in its modern Stalinist form than the Tsarist pressures experienced in the past that compelled Ankara to seek close political and military ties with the West. How to avoid the
\end{quote}
embrace of the Muscovite giant, whose victims in Eastern and Central Europe provided tragic precedents, was rightly conceived as a question of life and death. The threatening shadow of Moscow determined Turkey’s basic policy lines during the decade following 1946 and, with a reduced emphasis, still determines it at present.\footnote{180}

As the world was split into the “Free West” and the “Communist East,” Turkey found itself on the frontline with an either or proposition. The concept of a neutral or “Third World” alignment was not possible for a country like Turkey and would only belatedly emerge as the contours of the Cold War further solidified. Given Turkey’s own domestic and economic position, it was clear from the beginning that Ankara could not follow its isolationist path of the previous two decades, the time had come to make a choice. Given the foundational Kemalist impulses and Ataturk’s vision of Turkey as a member of Western civilization along with the more practical matters of technological assistance and development, the choice was an easy one. Turkey’s choice to be a part of the West during the Cold War was as much about the guarantees for its territorial security, development assistance, and economic well being as it was about its own national identity. However it also had a direct impact on its imperial memories by focusing exclusively on the Western rather than Eastern elements of its Ottoman past and creating a clear break between the secular republic and the Islamic empire.

\footnote{180}{Ibid.}
Domestic Developments: Re-emergence of Islam and Shifting Alliances

World War Two critically shifted the domestic balance of power in Turkey. Unlike most of Europe, it was not an invading external force that shattered the ruling coalition, but rather internal disputes over economic policies that brought down the one-party system that had ruled Turkey since its foundation. The war years forced the weak Turkish economy to take radical steps to survive. In order to create sources for the economy, the bureaucratic elite pushed for two economic policies that were harmful for the interests of the economic elite. First, the bureaucratic elite enacted the Capital Tax Law in 1942 to tax businessmen who accumulated significant amounts of capital during the war years. Not long after, in 1945, the bureaucracy enacted a land reform that threatened the interests of the rural landlords. The antagonistic interests of the bureaucratic and economic elite, which were reflected in these two laws, precluded the future of the coalition. Accordingly, in 1946, only a year after the end of World War II, the ruling coalition disintegrated after some members of CHP left their party to found the first truly autonomous opposition party, the Democrat Party (DP), to represent the interests of the economic elite.181

The mood in Turkey had changed drastically since Atatürk’s death in 1938, and the party that had played such a critical role in the creation of the new Turkey was no longer trusted. The CHP was no longer seen as capable of leading Turkey in the postwar new world order. However, Republican Party leaders did not see this change coming. The

stage was set for an “Islamic” comeback in the wake of the Second World War, with the transition to multi-party politics. The electoral challenge of the center-right DP, which appealed to the Islamic sensibilities of the masses, was critical in this context. Competing in the first competitive election in Turkish history, the charismatic leader of the DP Adnan Menderes combined a populist call against a stagnant incumbent party during a time of economic difficulty for the average Turk while cultivating an image as a pious Muslim. The CHP responded to this challenge by trying to co-opt Islam despite being a party of secular elites that did not understand the average voter like Menderes did. As a result, throughout the election both parties sought to reintegrate Islam into discussions of Turkish identity and trying to outdo the other in redefining Islam as a crucial component of Turkishness.

Whereas during the interwar years Europe continued to dominate Turkey’s strategic agenda as it sought a path of neutrality throughout World War Two, the shadow of the Cold War began to force domestic changes in Turkey, which would ultimately allow for a gradual re-interpretation of nationalism. In 1946, the principle of multi-party politics was finally recognized. This has been seen as a partial concession to democracy, though it was primarily about a redistribution of power between the state elite and other elites who had been kept outside of the state since the formation of the Republic. In particular, the re-emergence of economic and social elites from outside the major urban hubs of Ankara, Istanbul, and Izmir brought new diversity to the Kemalist bureaucracy, intelligentsia, military, and secular elites that had dominated Turkish political life up until this point. As historian Gokhan Cetinsaya has written on

political liberalization in Turkey after 1946, the state’s understanding and treatment of nationalism was affected largely by the threat of Communism.\textsuperscript{184}

Since Kemalism had excluded Islam from its own interpretation of Turkish nationalism, it seemed particularly vulnerable to the infiltration of communist ideals that were popular during this time. As a result, democracy and Islam were seen as the natural antidote that led to the 1946 election, which officially ended the single party regime in Turkey with the foundation of the DP. The more conservative and traditional elites manifested themselves through the formation of this new political party that challenged the dominant CHP in the first free, multiparty election in Turkish history. Islam emerged in Republican political discourse for the first time since Ottoman times along with competitive politics that the CHP was forced to hold in the country’s first multiparty election.\textsuperscript{185}

The newly formed DP was made up of a loose coalition of the national bourgeoisie and rural notables, and claimed to represent the national will (milli irade) and actively appealed to the electorate’s religious sentiments.\textsuperscript{186} As a result, the incumbent government since 1923 of the CHP found itself on the defensive and unwittingly introduced religion back into the national debate by mandating classes on religion for fourth and fifth grades in 1949. The DP pounced on this reform and immediately pushed to do more by tapping into the latent complaints of the average Turkish citizens whose voice had not been heard since the founding of the Republic. As a result, the stable yet autocratic one-party system led by President İnönü’s CHP was democratically challenged

\textsuperscript{185} Ibid, 370.
and in the first free election in Turkish lost power. Winning 52% of the vote on May 14, 1950, a feat that still has not been surpassed in modern Turkish history, Adnan Menderes became prime minister and in 1955 he simultaneously assumed the duties of foreign minister.\textsuperscript{187} Besides his initial 1950 victory, Menderes led the DP to win two more multiparty elections, one in 1954 and the other in 1957. Up until Recep Tayyip Erdoğan succeeded in matching this feat, no other politician had ever been able to win three general elections in a row in multiparty Turkey.\textsuperscript{188}

Menderes was considerably more tolerant towards traditional lifestyles and held a much more lenient view towards the role of Islam in Turkey than Atatürk or İnönü of the CHP. He explicitly campaigned in the 1950 elections on a single-issue platform to legalize the \textit{ezan} (Arabic call to prayer), which had been translated into Turkish initially and then banned all together by İsmet İnönü. By campaigning on this issue, Menderes was able to appropriate an important religious symbol used by traditional Muslim circles in Turkey. Combined with this issue, Menderes offered the hope of bringing Turkey back to a day of greatness, while treading a fine line between being pro-Western and pro-Muslim at the same time. Menderes was able to combine his traditional worldview with Turkey’s realities by focusing on securing foreign aid and liberalizing Turkey’s economy while trying to strengthen the country’s democratic process. Part of Menderes’ strategy was to re-establish the presence of Atatürk as a counterweight to İnönü and the CHP. Upon assuming office, one of Menderes’ first orders was to exclude pictures of İnönü from Turkish banknotes, stamps, and public buildings in favor of ubiquitous Atatürk.

\textsuperscript{187} Still one of the best articles on the Menderes years is Dwight J. Simpson. “Development as a Process: The Menderes Phase in Turkey” \textit{Middle East Journal} Vol. 19, No. 2 (Spring, 1965): 141-152.
\textsuperscript{188} The significance of Erdogan equaling Menderes’ feat was not lost and a variety of parallels have been made as I will discuss in the contemporary section.
pictures, which had been phased out when İnönü became President in 1938.\textsuperscript{189} Menderes’ abrasive style and combative spirit created many political enemies, but thanks to the support of the public, he was able to initiate most of his changes with very few problems. By balancing his domestic agenda of reforming Turkey’s authoritarian tendencies and jumpstarting the economy with pro-Western foreign policy Menderes seemed to represent a new type of Turkish leader that could be both proud of Turkey’s Muslim heritage and its Western vocation.

On June 16, 1950, barely a month after the DP came to power, they passed a law restoring the call to prayer (ezan) in Arabic; since June 1941 the ezan had been permitted only in Turkish. The Democrats also restored the language of the constitution to its original Ottoman and away from the reformed Turkish of the Kemalist era, and began the process of coming to terms with Turkey’s Ottoman past. In the prevailing climate of the Cold War and anti-Communism, all parties left-of-centre were made illegal, and many of their leading members put in jail or exiled. Following the landslide victory of the DP, exactly one year later the new government began opening religious-track Imam-Hatip junior and senior high schools while also offering Qur’an courses as a way to re-integrate Islam into the political culture of the country. Their electoral success had led the Democrats to believe that the people supported their program and that they represented the milli irade to which they would be held accountable every four years at election time. For this reason, they did not take the opposition or its criticism seriously. During the

\textsuperscript{189} One of the more interesting, but as of yet, unstudied aspects of this period of Turkish history is the timeline of changes to banknotes and stamps. In the Summer of 2008 in the Museum of the Republic in Ankara there was an exhibit showing the changes outlined and corresponding to the election of Menderes, yet to date there has not been anything written about it.
early years of DP rule, the country seemed to be growing rapidly, thanks to the demand for Turkish products in Europe and the Korean War boom.

**Moderating Forces: History Education in the 1950s**

The domestic forces that were unleashed in Turkey after World War Two did not have an immediate impact on the extreme rejectionist views still being transmitted through the Turkish educational curriculum, however Turkey’s entrance into the Cold War on the side of the West did have its effects. Research on Turkish education and history curriculums in the Cold War is an underdeveloped field, yet there have been some important findings that are relevant to understanding official memories during the beginning of the multiparty era in Turkey.

The 1950s is typically described as a period of continuity in Turkey’s officially sanctioned narrative. Avonna Swartz, in a dissertation, completed one of the few studies that systematically researched history textbooks from 1929-1999. After a careful examination and content analysis of secondary history textbooks that were officially sanctioned by the state, the study concludes that in contrast to the major upheavals in educational curriculum and history textbooks that took place in the 1930s and 1980s, little significant change was found between the 1930s textbooks and the editions that

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190 Unless specifically noted otherwise, each of the primary sources referenced were accessed through the Ministry of Education Archives or National Library in Ankara the summer of 2008.
followed them into the 1980s. The study does highlight however that out of the six principles of Kemalism (republicanism, statism, populism, laicism, nationalism, and reformism), “nationalism was ranked first among all categories in the 1950s textbooks.” In addition, content analysis of textbooks from the 1930s, 1950s, and 1980s revealed that this emphasis in the 1950s was unusual. This focus is attributed, in part, to the changing attitude on the part of the Menderes DP government toward the Turkish Ottoman legacy. According to the revised textbooks, Atatürk and İnönü, among many other leading Kemalist elites, “despised the Sultans referring to them as madmen and spendthrifts.”

A close examination and reading of history textbooks from the 1930s through the 1950s reveals no major structural changes, yet specific phrases and words have been changed in the 1950s textbooks. The blanket attacks on Ottoman culture and institutions found in the 1930s textbooks were not in the 1950 editions. The authors of the 1950s textbooks included nationalistic passages and images praising Ottoman cultural, military, political, and economic achievements, which cannot be found in the earlier editions. Given the extreme changes that came to education and the officially sanctioned narrative of Turkey in the 1980s, the 1950s are typically glossed over. Rather than focusing on these small nuances, which indicate a shifting view of its Ottoman past, commentators have typically focused on the views of the European “other.” However it is important to understand that despite being a period of relative continuity in the rejection of

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192 Avonna Deanne Swartz, “Textbooks and National Ideology: A Content Analysis of the Secondary Turkish History Textbooks Used in the Republic of Turkey Since 1923,” PhD. diss., (University of Texas at Austin, 1997).
193 Ibid, 73.
194 Ibid.
195 In fact content analysis done by Avonna Deanne Swartz in her dissertation confirms and deals with this issue on its own merit. See particularly Table 4.3 and chapter starting on page 73.
Ottomans, the more nationalistic tone did lay the groundwork for what was to come in the 1980s. The most important distinction that emerged during this time was between the two parties that is particularly revealing, as it is the first indication of a major divide domestically among the political elites. As the study of 1950s concludes, “Atatürk censored Ottoman art, music, and literature, prompting many to worry that the richness of Ottoman history would be lost to a new generation. While the Republican People’s Party believed the former imperial system jeopardized their agenda, the Democratic Party sensed that the Ottoman past and history posed no threat to their programs.” Therefore the seeds for changes in Turkey’s imperial memories were laid early on just like the roots of its democratization that would take decades to finally take hold.

Sense of Belonging: NATO and the Baghdad Pact

During Menderes’ ten years as prime minister, Turkey went through phenomenal changes. Industrialization and urbanization, which were started by Atatürk, but had stagnated under the protectionist and nationalization policies of İnönü were rapidly being realized in Turkey. GDP in Turkey more than doubled thanks to Menderes’ economic politics of allowing more private businesses and enterprise. Menderes left his mark on both domestic and foreign politics in Turkey.

As a result of both his electoral and domestic successes, Prime Minister Menderes is a critical figure to understand for Turkish imperial memory formation during this time. The cornerstone of Menderes’ foreign policy was Turkey’s inclusion in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which was seen as being a natural outgrowth of

\[196\] Ibid.
Atatürk’s identification with the West and a necessity of the Cold War. Yet the lesser-known Baghdad Pact is an equally important part of this story. Both President İnönü and the Turkish military were wary of the Baghdad Pact from the very beginning, arguing that being entangled with the Middle East was precisely what Atatürk had warned against.\textsuperscript{197} Even prior to the Baghdad Pact, Menderes had been far more active than his predecessors in building relations with Muslim states. According to U.S. reports, Menderes was eager to bring other Arab countries, such as Jordan, into the Baghdad Pact. The Prime Minister even made calls to leaders in Amman and Cairo, which greatly upset both the president and military leaders in Turkey. Menderes in his conversations with American officials insisted that Turkey’s historical role in the Middle East would give him the leverage needed to convince other Middle Eastern leaders to join Turkey in the Baghdad Pact. However, Menderes misjudged the aspirations of Arabs from North Africa (Algeria to Egypt), and failed to recognize that the Baghdad Pact’s inclusion of Britain was perceived as an extension of Britain’s colonial rule.\textsuperscript{198}

Consequently, the only Arab country to join the pact was Iraq, but Turkey’s own progression to joining the pact is instructive. In contrast to the Turkish military’s strong support for Turkey’s inclusion into NATO, Menderes worked closely with the Americans to convince Turkey’s political elite that the Baghdad Pact was in Turkey’s interest and essentially a pro-Western strategic alignment. Further study is needed of Menderes, but one possible explanation is that his enthusiasm for the Baghdad Pact seemed to come

\textsuperscript{197} The seminal biography on İsmet İnönü was done by Metin Heper, \textit{İsmet İnönü: Yeni Bir Yorum Denemsi} (İstanbul: Tarih Foundation Press, 1999).


\url{http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/FRUS/FRUSidx?type=turn&entity=FRUS000101691070&isize=L&q1=turkey}
from his own ideas about Turkey’s natural role in the Muslim world. In discussions with U.S. embassy officials, Menderes responded positively to American attempts to include Turkey in its Middle Eastern strategy of containment, whereas the Turkish military elites continually chided U.S. officials for not simply putting Turkey with its other Western allies in Europe.  

Menderes’ traditional inclinations and view of Turkey’s place in both the West and the Middle East were a radical departure from the 1930s Turkish secular elite view of an exclusively Western Turkey, but appropriate for the geopolitical environment he found himself in. The symbolism of Turkey joining the Baghdad Pact instead of a “Northern Tier” was contentious for various Turkish leaders, yet Menderes persisted on emphasizing Turkey’s natural role in the Middle East. Perhaps most controversially, Menderes never explicitly denounced the notion that Turkey was part of the Middle East culturally, historically, and religiously, rather than simply geographically and strategically. As a result, Turkey joined its first and last Middle Eastern security alliance with the Baghdad Pact in 1955.  

As a consequence of Iraq’s bloody revolution in July 1958, the Baghdad Pact collapsed. In response, Turkey’s ruling elites affirmed that it would disengage from intra-Middle Eastern disputes, yet simultaneously seek cordial relations with all states in the region. The long-term result of this disengagement has been that, to this day, Turkey has not created a single bilateral or military agreement with another Arab country.

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199 Ibid, 1145-60.
200 As of this writing despite talk of extensive agreements in the so-called “Middle Eastern Union” which consists of Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and Turkey there has not been any equivalent given ongoing regional problems.
201 In many ways this was the predecessors to the contemporary “zero problems with neighbors” policy that will be discussed in the subsequent chapter. Robins, Suits and Uniforms, 100.
The shift from European to American leadership in the West allowed new space for Turkey and bolder action on the international level by Menderes that would have been unthinkable under Atatürk or İnönü. Had the U.S. not been in full support and pressuring Turkish leaders to sign up for the Baghdad Pact, no amount of popular will or strong leadership on the part of Menderes would have been able to change the isolationist status-quo in Turkey concerning the Middle East. U.S. support allowed Menderes to legitimize himself in front of the Republican elite and emphasize the strategic interests of supporting the Western alliance against the Soviets through the Baghdad Pact much the same way that Turkey had joined the Korean War despite having none of its own vital national interests at stake. However, even with strong U.S. support for Turkey to play a larger role in the Middle East, international conditions in the 1960s still did not lend themselves to giving a civilian leader free reign. The major complicating factor for the DP and Menderes specifically were the domestic changes and the affect that they were having on the Turkish military.

**The Demise of the DP and Rise of the Military**

In order to win popular support, the DP indulged in patronage-based economic policies specifically targeting its electoral base including workers, farmers, and economic elite. Even though these policies allowed the DP to strengthen its power base in the short run, in the long run, these patronage relations engendered two detrimental consequences for the DP and Turkey. First, the populist economic policies mismanaged

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202 See David Waldner, *State Building and Late Development* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1999) for more on this.
the economy by disregarding necessary economic planning. Consequently, within only a few years, the Turkish economy went into a tailspin with unprecedented inflation rates and increasing dependency on foreign capital. Secondly, the DP’s policies, which targeted certain societal segments, excluded two important elite groups, the military and secular bureaucracy, while distributing economic benefits. Making matters worse, due to the nature of their profession, these groups were dependent on government salaries, which were tied to the inflation-ridden economy. This situation brought the military and bureaucracy together to take a unified stance against the DP government. In the meantime, the worsening of the economic situation forced economic groups, which were one of the main pillars of support for the DP, to stand against the party.

On May 27, 1960, the military overthrew the democratically elected DP government. The junta accused the DP politicians of undermining the secular legacy of Atatürk and thus turning the republic into a theocracy. Despite Menderes’ overwhelming popularity and the Democrats’ majority in parliament, the military met no resistance from the population as it removed the democratically elected government for the first time in Turkish history. Menderes was clearly not an Islamist politician by any standard definition of the term and was executed for reasons of “corruption,” but the ideas that informed this leader were marked from this time onward as being dangerous. It was not until after a twenty-year period and the end of the Cold War that another popular Turkish leader would turn back to the legacy of Menderes.

The 1960 coup d’état staged against the DP-run government was the beginning of the new ruling coalition between military, bureaucracy, and economic elites crowned the

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military as Turkey’s ultimate political arbitrator. The decisions leading to the coup reflected the interests of the elite groups that had formed the new coalition. First and foremost, the military, which was subordinated to the political sphere in the early Republican period, acquired a new political tool to impose its views on the future governments. This tool was the National Security Council which was a military council founded after the coup, with the purpose of “assisting in the making of decisions related to national security and coordination”. ²⁰⁴ Secondly, the State Planning Organization (SPO) was founded to benefit the remaining coalition partners, the bureaucracy and economic elite. The SPO simultaneously served two purposes: to strengthen the autonomy of bureaucracy over politics and ensure a more stable economy. Even though the new coalition, represented by the coup, overthrew the DP-run government, persecuted its leaders, and enacted decisive reforms, Turkey was still not stabilized.

Conclusion

Despite the tumultuous events and changes in Turkey from the 1930s onward through World War II and into the Cold War, the nation’s curriculum, identity, ideology, and narrative kept its Kemalist rejectionist form with little changes. Looking at history textbooks from the 1930s through the 1970s reveals a striking level of continuity in memory and narrative for the Turkish Republic. The changing societal attitudes toward Islam and the shifting pattern of elites moderated Turkey’s negative view on its Ottoman

past but did not fundamentally reverse its rejectionist memories that had been instilled by Atatürk and his reforms of the 1930s.

The political history of Turkey during its multiparty years reveals a weaker elite coalition than during the one-party years. Without the charisma and leadership of Atatürk, the CHP – which had once seemed invincible – struggled to maintain a strong ruling coalition leading to the emergence of Menderes and DP. This new group came from within the Republican elite but was never fully trusted by its most important members, the military. However, by appealing to the economic elites and championing the societal causes of the masses, this new ruling coalition was able to win elections and control the reigns of civilian power. During the ten years of DP rule, Turkey’s official ideology and rhetoric of Kemalism did not change; however, the ideas about Turkey’s modernization and secularism were fundamentally altered and the seeds planted for future changes that will be explored in the subsequent chapter. Internationally, Turkey joined its first comprehensive security organization in NATO while also joining its first Middle Eastern security pact. Domestically, a more open and nuanced discussion about the role of Islam in Turkey was allowed for the first time since the birth of the Republic. Yet it was on the domestic level that the DP ultimately met their match in the form of a military coup that was tacitly supported by its former economic elite allies and its enemies in the bureaucracy. This coalition made common cause against Menderes, but after his removal could not agree on a stable ruling establishment which led to the further strengthening of the Turkish Armed Forces role as a political stabilizer.

Amid the turmoil, Turkey’s official memory had moved from an extreme rejection of its imperial past to a more moderate rejection that did not carry the same
normative weight. The ground had been prepared for a shift in its memory of the imperial past and intellectuals were already laying the framework for a new history thesis to replace the 1930s *Turkish History Thesis*. The thesis, called the “Turkish-Islam Synthesis,” was formulated by right-wing academics in the 1950s. However, as the next chapter will outline, it took more than two decades to enter into the official history curriculum and textbooks of the Republic.\(^{205}\)

To conclude this section, it is important to re-emphasize the two different versions of Turkey’s national identity that have been outlined. On the one hand, the version promoted by the *Kemalists*, which included almost every relevant political actor from the 1930s through the 1950s in the early Republican period, was a more radical and secular version that emphasized the culture, language, and geography of the “New Turks” at the expense and rejection of the Ottomans. On the other hand stood a Turkish-Islamic nationalism that had been initially discredited in the aftermath of empire as a result of the negative portrayals of the Ottoman Empire and the extreme rejectionist memories fostered by the ruling *Kemalist* elites. Despite being discredited and prevented from entering Turkey’s public arena given the authoritarian nature of the early Republic’s political system, this second strand re-emerged under Menderes in the 1950s. While still separating itself from the Ottoman past, this emerging identity emphasized the importance of Islam to the Turks if for no other reason than being a unifying factor. The distance between the Republic and Empire was thus shortened over time as *Kemalism* became further democratized and more flexible to meet the needs of the various ruling elites.

The evolution of Turkey’s imperial memories followed the general trajectory of the nascent republic. While the shifts in memory traced to 1928 and 1946 were never as major as the rupture in 1923, they are instructive in understanding the development of early Republican Turkey. It was clearly a successor state to the Ottoman Empire, yet Turkey had moved from a moderate to an extreme rejection five years after its birth to a slowly accepted rejection of imperial means. Atatürk’s disdain and association of all things negative with the Ottomans had given way to Menderes’ populist imagining of Turkey reconciling with its Islamic past. While still on the secular and modern path prescribed by Atatürk, Turkey was not simply a clone of the West. Its unique history and memory of its past contributed to the evolving pathway that led into the 1980s.
Chapter Four

Resurrecting Imperial Glory: Shifting Memories in Turkey 1980-2010

The traditional narrative of a clear separation between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic outlined in the previous chapter is easy to understand given the existing historiography and the rhetoric about the construction of a Turkish identity from an imperial to national one. Yet, as also described, there has always been a tension between the claims of modest national interest and imperial ambition within Turkey that is not easily explained without an understanding and appreciation for the inherited legacy of the Ottoman Empire. The ideas that have been privileged by Republican Turkish leaders had been traditionally imported from the West and received an enthusiastic response among the *Kemalist* secular elites of the country. However, other ideas persisted within Turkish society that often drew more directly from its past experience as rulers of the Ottoman Empire. Samuel Huntington’s characterization of Turkey as a “torn country” is representative of this identity-crisis thesis that sees Turkey’s struggles in terms of civilizational paradigms being stuck between the West and Islam.\(^\text{206}\) If studied in isolation from its Ottoman past, contemporary Turkey’s culture, values, and institutions seem to offer few clues to contemporary policy.

Turkey’s changing memories of the Ottoman Empire, which was once vilified as being a “backward” Islamic empire by Turkey’s founding secular modernizers, offer a compelling view not only of its past, but of its present and future trajectory as a regional power. Turkey’s newly rediscovered Ottoman memories are having a direct impact on

how the modern republic views itself. Broken down to its most simplistic element, Turks have two different ideas about where Turkey belongs. The first, as outlined and imposed by Atatürk, is its Western vocation as a “normal” secular nation-state. The second worldview for Turkey harkens back to its days as the leader of the Muslim world and can be seen as an alternative to the West as a traditional society that privileges its Islamic heritage and faith. Using the metaphor of two different roadmaps, these maps end in either Brussels with Turkey being fully accepted in the Western community of nations (by becoming a member of the European Union) or in Istanbul under an Eastern alignment of Muslim nations led by a resurgent Turkey that has been referred to for lack of a better term, “Neo-Ottoman.” In addition, the features of the map are very different and the space in which the roadmap is conceived is radically different. The Western template, which marks Brussels as a destination, privileges international organizations that are centered in transatlantic relations and only incorporates areas to Turkey’s south and east, namely the Middle East, as it pertains to Western security interests. The Eastern roadmap emphasizes the shared cultural sites and heritage of Turkey’s Muslim neighbors and even looks beyond Turkey’s immediate neighbors to a broader community of Muslim-majority and ethnic-kin who see Turkey as a central part of this world versus the country’s peripheral treatment in the West.

The juxtaposition of these two worldviews offers the most stark and stylized views of Turkey, thereby creating a false dichotomy. However, as two competing ideas for the future of Turkey, they draw from very different memories and narratives of the past that directly stem from the relationship between the empire and republic. This chapter seeks to understand the struggles inherent in this relationship and the
considerable area between these two roadmaps. The contemporary policy relevance of the shifts seen in Turkey’s imperial memories are treated in this chapter, while a fuller discussion of implications and predictions for modern Turkey are dealt with in the concluding chapter.

The chapter addresses Turkey post-Menderes and the emergence of the *Turkish Islamic Synthesis* in the 1980s, which epitomizes the reversal of the early Republic’s initial rejectionism, and solidifies Turgut Ozal’s imperial view of Turkey’s place in the world. With the end of the Cold War and Turkey’s ideas about itself changing at an ever-quickening pace, I conclude with a look at contemporary Turkey. Analyzing the rise of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and its “strategic depth” doctrine of re-engaging with its former colonies, it is clear that the internal schisms in Turkey have not disappeared. However the terms of the debate have changed from whether Turkey should glorify its Ottoman past, to how it should do so. As a result, memory politics far from being confined to the past have become the most important aspect of Turkish policymaking that has yet to be systematically defined or researched.

**The Emergence of the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis**

Despite the tumultuous events and changes in Turkey from the 1930s onward, the nation’s education curriculum and history courses kept the *Kemalist* form with few changes until the mid-1980s. Turkey’s participation in the Cold War on the side of the Western allies led to an allying of military and religious heritage akin to what existed during the Ottoman Empire between the janissaries and *ulema* (religious leaders). The
connection between Islam and the Ottomans, which had been severed by Republican leaders, mounted a comeback during the Cold War years as a reaction to the Communist threat. The changing role of the military in Turkish political life allowed for a more nuanced understanding of the Ottoman legacy in Turkey. The portrayal of Ottoman backwardness associated with Islamic theocracy began to give way to a more secular understanding of an empire that embraced strategic alliances with Christian powers to preserve its domain at key moments in history.²⁰⁷

Turkey seemingly overcame the hurdles that the Ottomans had never been able to overcome when it was welcomed into the West to combat a common enemy. Despite being the “sick man of Europe,” given various Orientalist interpretations and prejudices against Islam, the Ottomans were never fully part of Europe. The symbolic role of Islam as the guiding identifier for the Ottomans made it the ideal “other” for Christian Europe, whereas against the Godless Communists Turkey was a welcome addition into the American-led Western camp. As a result, internally, the role of Islam in Turkish public life became the flashpoint on which a generation of Turks began to create a clear dichotomy between “secularists,” who sought a cultural and private practice of Islam, and “Islamists,” who sought an active and public way of life. The usage of Ottoman symbols began to serve as a proxy for the role of Islam on a variety of levels as imperial memories became subsumed into this debate.

In this regard, Turkey’s first coup in 1960 represented a watershed since it was the first time that the military had directly intervened for purely political reasons. Umit Cizre’s groundbreaking work highlights the fact that the “…new constitution of 1961

²⁰⁷To trace this history see Carter Vaughn Findley’s *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity: A History.* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011)
incorporated measures of liberal democracy and political pluralism in reaction to the policies of the Democrat Party which had turned increasingly authoritarian. The factors leading to this coup were previously discussed, but it is important to emphasize two points that Cizre makes:

First, political liberalization and democratization in this period facilitated the rising voice and salience of political Islam in national issues, conflicts, and policy processes. The genesis of political versus cultural Islam lies in the formation, in 1969, of the first explicitly pro-Islamic political party of the republic, whose lifespan has extended, with interruptions, to the present. Second, however, the growing political appeal and autonomy of Islam did not mean that the state ceased to exercise its control over Islam, only that the regime saw how it could use the popularity of the Islamic movement to its advantage and so became more accommodating to the movement.

The years following the first coup marked an anarchic and unstable period in Turkish political history. İsmet İnönü, who had previously served as prime minister and then president from 1938 to 1950, re-emerged as an important political figure along with a

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209 Cizre notes that the first pro-Islamic party to be formed was the National Order Party (NOP) in 1969, which was dissolved after the military intervention in 1971. It was followed by the National Salvation Party (NSP) in 1972, which became a key partner in three coalitions between 1974-1977, and was the third-largest party in the political system in terms of seats occupied in the National Assembly. Following the dissolution of the party in 1981, after the 1980 coup, the Welfare Party (WP) was formed in 1981. Cizre, 231.
210 Ibid, 238.
series of other Turkish leaders, who would continue to reappear throughout the next 20 years. Once democracy was restored in 1965, a political party following the DP line was founded; the Justice Party, and it began to implement similar economic policies.

The 1960-1980 periods twice witnessed the recurrence of the same cycle that had occurred from 1950 to 1960: a populist party came into power and implemented policies with an appeal to certain electoral groups but also created an economic crisis, and the military staged a coup in return and reorganized society and the economy in line with the ruling coalition’s demands. During this time in Turkey, history was not simply repeating itself. With each cycle, both the nature of the elite groups and the configuration of power among them changed. These cycles had critical impacts on Turkish society. The bureaucracy became politicized and lost its coherence; the military increased its autonomy in the spheres of the economy, politics, and ideology; and the turbulence of the period, along with the attempts of political parties in power to get social support, allowed Islamist groups to begin flourishing. This period provided breathing space for Islamic groups that reconciled capitalist and Islamic worldviews, initially with the Nakşibendi sufi brotherhood and then the Nur and Gülen movements, which led to the reemergence of a religious elite in Turkey.  

Despite the radical reforms and policies of the early Republic, Islam had been brought back into the political space in Turkey through the multiparty competitive elections that forced parties to compete for popular support. The uneasy intra-elite

211 The Nakşibendi brotherhood is the predecessor to the Gülen movement of modern Turkey which is a civic society movement that is based on the teachings of Fethullah Gülen. The movement’s members highlight service to the common good. The movement is popular among many people in Turkey and Central Asia. For more on Nakşibendis and their evolution in Turkey see Hakan Yavuz’s Islamic Political Identity in Turkey. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). On Gülen see Jean-François Mayer, “The Gülen Movement: A Modern Expression of Turkish Islam; Interview with Hakan Yavuz,” Religioscope, http://www.religion.info/english/interviews/article_74.shtml for information on The Nur movement.
alliances that led to troubles in civilian-military relations made the relevancy of these discussions seem negligible until the old Ottoman-style alliance of military and religious elites reemerged in the aftermath of the 1980 military intervention. By 1980, the Turkish bureaucracy that operated in an apolitical world and organized itself to take action as an independent actor, as opposed to being captured by any particular political party, disappeared from the scene. Instead, a completely politicized bureaucracy took its place, yet it lacked the potential to establish long-term plans and disentangle itself from patronage relation. Secondly, the military managed to keep its hierarchy intact by warding off threats of politicization. As a result, each successive coup accumulated new powers for the Turkish military. These ranged from economic powers, by owning one of the biggest corporations in Turkey, to political powers, vested in the National Security Council that superseded governments. The reemergence of an Ottoman-like system in Turkey did not translate directly into a glorification of its Ottoman past but did pave the wave for important shifts in Turkey’s imperial memories.

After three successive military coups in 1960, 1971, and 1980, Turkey’s democracy and prevailing political elites struggled to maintain power beyond urban centers without the support of the military and the state bureaucracy. This led to the emergence of a counterbalance with the rise of religious elite in the countryside and conservative Turkey. Their reemergence was matched also by a new ideology that sought

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213 Interviews with retired bureaucrats who served during this time who requested their names not be used conducted by author in Ankara and Istanbul August, 2008.
215 The Turkish National Security Council is the highest decision making body in Turkey. It is compromised of the president, select members of the Council of Ministers and the chief of staff. A new website was launched as of August 2009 and can be found at [http://www.mgk.gov.tr/](http://www.mgk.gov.tr/) accessed August, 2009.
to revise the *Kemalist* relationship between Turkishness and Islam. This ideology was first formulated by right-wing nationalist academics in the 1950s. However, the actual ideological articulation, which came to be known as the *Türk-İslam Sentezi* (Turkish-Islamic Synthesis), was not expressed publicly until 1972, in a history conference, by a small advocacy group called the *Aydınlar Ocağı* (Hearth of Intellectuals), which became extremely influential. As articulated by its members and publicly declared at that conference, the Hearth maintained that “true Turkish culture” was a fusion of the Turks' nomadic and Central Asian traditions and Islam. What the Hearth tried to do through its Synthesis was promote Islam as a central component of Turkishness and then to increase the proportion of “true Turkish,” meaning Central Asian, history instead of more general and broad world history. This replacement for the old Turkish History Thesis brought with it a much more ethnocentric approach to teaching Turkish history and identity. Ultimately, the Synthesis was to lay the foundation for a reformulation of the 1930s *History Thesis*, which had guided Turkey’s rejectionist view of its past for the previous five decades. However the *Hearth* and its *Synthesis* needed to find the right type of leader that could exploit the exceptional moment in time and confluence of geopolitical and domestic factors that favored the type of imperial memory shift they desired.

**A New Opportunity and Type of Leader: End of the Cold War and Turgut Özal**

At the end of the 1970s, Turkey enjoyed a renewed sense of strategic importance internationally because of the Islamic revolution in Iran and the Soviet intervention in

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Afghanistan. Turkey’s closest ally, the United States, continually pressured Ankara to play a bigger role in the Middle East to combat efforts by the Soviets in Syria and other areas of Turkey’s near abroad. Washington concluded that under civilian control, Turkey could not play the regional role that was being assigned; only the military could. Therefore America, unlike Europe, fully supported the military coup of 1980 and worked actively with the military throughout this period. Unlike after World War I when pressure from European powers made it costly for Turkey to glorify its Ottoman past, America seemed to actively encourage cultural and political endeavors throughout the end of the Cold War since a more internationally engaged Turkey served to counteract regional players such as Iran and the Soviet Union, which were hostile to U.S. interests.

As only the second Turkish president (1989–1993) to have no military ties and the first to be an overtly devout Muslim, Özal represented the shift from Turkey’s rejectionist memories to a more glorified vision of its Ottoman past. Through his life, policies, pronouncements, and writings, it is clear that Özal not only embraced the Ottomans but also looked back on that period for inspiration. Following on the heels of the 1980 military coup, he found common cause with the military when it came to the rehabilitation of the Ottomans in Turkey’s official memory and narrative. The international environment since at least the 1970s had placed Turkey in a position to independently chart its own course regarding its historical memory. With the Cyprus Intervention of 1974 Turkey acted on its own despite Western sanctions. With a resurgent Soviet Union in Afghanistan and Islamic Revolution in Iran, America supported the 1980 military coup in Turkey precisely because it valued stability in a tumultuous region. By

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217 This is not without controversy given Özal’s proclivities toward alcohol, but the fact that he unabashedly defined himself as Muslim and was the first Turkish prime minister or president to make the hajj to Mecca is what “devout” means in this context.
this time the West had more pressing issues to deal with than Turkey’s internal debates about its historical memories and narratives of empire. Therefore it was not until Özl that a true shift could be detected in Turkey’s official memory and historical narrative. The change was not a dramatic restructuring like the type experienced under Atatürk, but rather a more gradual shift similar to that of the 1950s under Adnan Menderes.

Given the geopolitical conditions of the time,\textsuperscript{218} the fact that the Turkish military leaders and then Özl chose to glorify their Ottoman past seems consistent.\textsuperscript{219} Turkey had experienced domestic turmoil and instability since the 1960s, and the reincorporation of Islam into Turkish political life seemed to offer the stability that political elites so desperately sought and opened a new chapter in Turkey’s evolving political identity. Having reshaped a previously unassailable narrative, Turkey’s leaders adapted Kemalism to suit the environment in which they found themselves. For the military this included guiding a revival of state-controlled Islam to combat atheistic communism and more radical strands of Islamism within the country. Rather than clinging to a rejectionist view of the Ottoman past, which clearly was not as dominant as it had been during the one-party years, Özl tapped into populist feelings among Turks to guide his Motherland Party to multiple electoral victories with a mix of religious nationalism and imperial glorification.

Turgut Özl’s political career spanning from 1983 to 1993 was far from orthodox. He did not come from within the establishment and in fact began his career as a

\textsuperscript{218} In light of both the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, Turkey entered the 1980s stronger than it had ever been, with a powerful military yet an underperforming economy. Turkey was seen as relatively more stable but susceptible to ideologies that could be exploited unless otherwise controlled by the ruling elites.

\textsuperscript{219} Memoirs and books of important elites including Turgut Özl are filled with accounts nostalgically glorifying the Ottomans. See the various entries in the Turkology Update Leiden Project Working Papers Archives, which can be found at www.tulp.leidenuniv.nl.
technocrat working in various government agencies. He ran unsuccessfully for parliament as a member of Turkey's leading Islamist party, the Justice Party in 1977, and then joined the center-right government of the day to oversee a major economic reform program that it was seeking to implement before street riots caused the government to implode. As an American-trained economist and engineer who worked as a consultant for the World Bank, Özal became a well-respected technocrat. As a result, when the military overthrew the civilian government in 1980, it kept Özal on for his economic expertise. After three years of military rule, which included writing and forcing through a new constitution, the military choreographed a controlled return to civilian rule via two newly created parties – both led by retired military officers. The only part of the script they didn’t write but thought was harmless was Özal's request to form a third party and run in the elections.

In 1983, Turgut Özal founded the Motherland Party and became its leader.220 Motherland won the first post-1980 coup elections the same year and Özal became the 19th Prime Minister by forming the government on December 13, 1983. In 1987, he was reelected, and in 1989 he became Turkey’s 8th president. Until Özal, an electrical engineer by training, acceded to the presidency in 1990, all the presidents of the Turkish Republic had been army officers who had graduated from Turkey’s military academies (Harp Okulu).221 Özal transformed the Turkish economy by paving the way for privatization and instituting the most consequential and successful trade liberalization policies that Turkey had ever seen. First as Prime Minister and later as president, Özal was instrumental in improving relations with the West, especially the United States most

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220 Türgüt Özal’s Motherland Party (ANAP) was a center-right nationalist party that was committed to limiting the government’s role in the economy. In 2009 it merged to create the Democrat Party similar to Menderes’ party with its merger with Dogru Yolu Partisi.

221 Mufti, Daring and Caution in Turkish Strategic Culture: Republic at Sea, 58.
famously for unilaterally shutting down the Iraqi pipelines during the first Gulf War and supporting the coalition against Iraq despite the hesitation of Turkey’s military planners. Özl’s close personal relationship with Western leaders such as President Bush and Prime Minister Thatcher along with his activism in “pro-Western” foreign policy irritated the Turkish Armed Forces that had become used to operating with little to no oversight from civilian leaders. In many respects, Özl was far from orthodox in his foreign policy decisions. Rather than allowing the military to dictate the rules of the game, he continually pointed to his electoral mandate to transform Turkish foreign policy.

Özl was one of the least likely candidates to dominate Turkish politics. In direct contrast to the political norm of being Western in appearance and attitude, Özl was a short man of Kurdish origin who was also a devout practicing Muslim. Rather than being a part of the Turkish elite, Özl reveled in coming from outside the establishment. Özl has been called a daring reformist whose vision combined political and economic liberalization with a desire to recapture the cosmopolitan and expansive spirit of his country's Ottoman imperial past. Özl looked to Adnan Menderes who served between 1950 and 1960 as a populist prime minister who sought to open the Turkish economy, but had been hung by the Turkish military in its first coup. Often invoking Menderes’ image throughout his campaign speeches Özl facilitated the rehabilitation of Menderes’ image to the point that the main airport in his hometown of Izmir was renamed in his honor and the military admitted that “excessive” force may have been premature, although

defending the coup as ultimately necessary for Turkey’s democracy. While Özal understood how to deal with the military establishment, he rarely talked about the Republic's core values of secularism and unitary nationalism.

**Turkey’s Imperial Vision: Neo-Ottomanism**

Malik Mufti has laid out two paradigms of Turkey’s foreign policy ambitions as either “republican” or “imperial” in which the country is either isolationist or assumes its “rightful” place within the Muslim world. While the traditional Kemalist elites had espoused a “Republican” vision of isolationism as a result of the traumatic experiences of the Ottoman Empire’s collapse and dismemberment after World War I, Özal's foreign policy ambitions drew upon these experiences in a completely different way towards an imperial vision. Rather than retreating into isolation since external events could have a negative internal consequence, Özal reasoned that since developments abroad had consequences at home, isolation was not an option – Turkey would have to shape its environment if it did not want to be shaped by it.

Özal’s worldview prioritized Turkey’s immediate neighborhood just like Menderes’ who had attempted a similar feat with the ill-fated Baghdad Pact in 1955. The extreme caution and isolation in Turkish foreign policy, which characterized the 1960-1980s with the exception of the Cyprus intervention in 1974, was reinforced by a strong

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224 Mufti, *Daring and Caution in Turkish Strategic Culture: Republic at Sea*, 3.
military preference for non-involvement in Turkey’s immediate neighborhood. Özal sought better relations with Greece and expanded trade relations with the Arab world and Iran, all while simultaneously initiating a rapprochement with Israel and Europe. It was under Özal that Turkey officially began seeking full membership in the European Community in April 1987. While Turkey’s secular elites’ enthusiasm for Europe came from the dream of fulfilling Atatürk’s vision of a modern and Western Turkey, Özal’s motivations seemed to flow more from the economic and financial benefits of being a candidate country to the EC/EU.

The Özal government’s promotion of neoliberal economic policies and efforts to join the European economic space transformed the Turkish economy. Özal made Turkey’s future membership in the EU “a central theme of his policy pronouncements.” Özal used Turkey’s EU membership bid to link his economic reforms with accompanying political reforms to enhance Turkey’s democracy and civil-military balance of power. In other words, for Özal the aim of his economic liberalization program and his sponsored political reforms was to facilitate Turkey’s integration into the European Community as a full member.

In response to critics who accused Özal of uprooting Turkey’s traditional Western focus he responded:

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225 The Cyprus intervention in 1974 was a Turkish military invasion in response to a Greek backed coup in Cyprus, which was led by the Cypriot National Guard.
226 Muftular-Bac Meltem, Turkey’s Relations with a Changing Europe (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 77.
Turkey cannot put all its opportunities in one basket. ... If we commit all
the burden of our trade to Europe, it will mean surrendering a great deal
of our ability to control events to them. We need to diversify.\textsuperscript{227}

Özal’s approach to foreign policy represented a dramatic break from the Republican
foreign policy establishment not simply because of his pragmatic opportunism but
because of the underlying ideas that seemed to be guiding him.

Özal was the first Turkish president to attend Friday prayers and perform the
pilgrimage to Mecca officially. The issue of reorienting Turkey’s foreign policy to be
more balanced between East and West became a personal mission. The age-old conflict
between Kurdish and Turkish nationalism within the Turkish Republic was also a
personal issue, given his own ethnic makeup. (Özal may not have been the first president
of mixed Kurdish heritage, but he was the first to openly embrace it as part of his
identity.) In Özal’s mind, the solution to that festering problem was the acceptance of a
shared imperial past and a common religious brotherhood. He repeatedly referred to the
Kurds as being “part of us” and considered them to be Ottoman citizens, which, in his
mind, translated to Turkish citizens.\textsuperscript{228} He was a political force to be reckoned with;
however, he was not able to transfer his personal popularity to his party or institutionally
change the character of the Turkish state. As a result, his reforms and foreign policy
visions were tied directly to him and, while they laid the groundwork for subsequent
politicians, did not directly outlive his tenure.

\textsuperscript{227} From a 5 November 1991 speech published as Turgut Özal, Cumhurbaşkanı Turgut Özal'ın Dış Politika ve Ekonomi Açılışlarından “Türkiye'nin Stratejik Öncelikleri” Adlı Uluslararası Sempozyumun Açılışında Yaptıkları Konuşma (İstanbul: no publisher, 1991), p. 18.

\textsuperscript{228} For more on Özal read Malik Mufti’s excellent chapter “Turgut Özal and the Gates of Desire” in Daring and Caution in Turkish Strategic Culture, 58-86.
Özal took the reconciliation between the Turkish state and Islam to its natural personal conclusion in his own politics and tried to broadcast it as part of state doctrine. A 1986 State Planning Official report on national culture commissioned by Özal said:

The sources of our national culture-Turkish culture and later

Islamic culture – attained a complete synthesis in Anatolia with the Seljuks and especially with the Ottomans. A mature synthesis about as Islamic and Turkish components of the people’s culture complemented and strengthened one another. This synthesis gave strength, form, and spirit to the Ottoman Empire, one of the largest and most powerful empires in the civilized world.²²⁹

As part of his attempts to reconcile Turkey with its past, Özal wanted Turks within the state regardless of ethnic origin, to celebrate the glories of Ottoman history. In Özal’s view sooner or later Turkey would dispense with the Kemalist tradition of rejecting its Ottoman heritage and have to come to terms with the most recent legacy of the modern republic. The Ottoman experience, to Özal, contained many lessons in tolerance and pluralism.²³⁰ At the core of Özal’s historical narrative was a nostalgic view of Turkey’s past that looked at the pre-republican Ottoman society as a source of considerable inspiration. A direct corollary to this view was that only religion can effectively link ever changing material culture with an invariant native essence.

Glorifying Turkey’s Islamic Past: Thesis to Synthesis

Özal’s own view of Turkey’s past would have been an interesting footnote to Turkish history had he not arisen at the time that he did. The international environment and domestic politics in Turkey were changing, which allowed his ideas to flourish and for him to have a lasting impact in particular through his educational reforms. Having subscribed early on to the views of the Heath and being the posterchild for the Synthesis it was perhaps inevitable that Özal would have such a profound impact on shifting Turkey’s imperial memory. However as previously described with Menderes, Özal was not the only Turkish leader to begin pushing the country toward a new understanding of its historical narrative. The seeds for much of Özal’s later reforms began with the military government in the early 1980s.

The glorification of Turkey’s Islamic past helped to rehabilitate the Ottoman Empire in the telling of Turkey’s official history. Rather than being the “enemy” as originally portrayed by the Kemalist narrative, the Ottomans were seen as noble warriors who embraced Islam and protected it from the West. While many of the structural aspects of the official narrative remained the same, the emphasis and words used to describe the Ottomans were changed. Rather than focusing on the corrupt nature of the Ottomans, the Synthesis focused on the structural weakness and international pressures that the empire faced. Instead of being active agents of the empire’s demise, the Ottoman dynasty

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231 Unless specifically noted otherwise, each of the primary sources referenced were accessed through the Ministry of Education Archives or National Library in Ankara the summer of 2008.
232 Textbooks from this timeframe constituted a radical change from previous teaching and entirely new sections were added so that the textbooks from 1986 onward were no longer comparable in terms of page numbers in the way that the textbooks from 1950-1980 had been. In particular new sections on “international events” and “rivals” were included to dilute the original blame placed on the
became an unwitting boat buffeted by the winds of change. The most striking narrative change from the 1930s and 1950s involves the telling of the Ottoman decline in such a way that links the Kemalist Republic as the natural heir of the “great” imperial tradition of the Turkish people. In this telling, Atatürk assumes the role of Gazi (chief-warrior) and is placed alongside the great Ottoman sultans as an exemplar of Turkish strength and leadership quality.

The clear ideological imprints of the Synthesis can be seen in almost every aspect of the educational curriculum analyzed from this time period. Educational scholars, who have studied this period, have recorded similar findings and see a concerted effort to reshape Turkish identity on a similar scale to the original Kemalist project of the early Republic. However, this time, rather than breaking away from its past, Turkish leaders seemed to be trying to reconnect and embrace their Ottoman heritage in a way that is unprecedented by official standards in the modern Republic. In addition to Turgut Özal’s well-known views, the memoirs of the military leaders and technocrats throughout this time period confirm a concerted effort to reconcile the modern Republic with its Ottoman past through a state-controlled version of Islam.

Changing Nature of the West and Turkey’s New Activism

Prior to Özal, few leaders openly advocated for Turkish involvement or activism that was not coached in the terms of multilateral organizations. Having emerged from mismanagement and poor leadership of the Ottomans as they are cast in a more sympathetic light. Accessed at the Ministry of Education Archives Ankara, Turkey July-August, 2008.


almost complete isolation under Atatürk, the Republic remained wary of any type of foreign engagements, which explains why Turkey stayed neutral throughout World War II. With the changed global environment in the 1950s, Turkey cast its lot with the West by joining NATO and making the Alliance the primary tenant of security and foreign policy. However, even with Turkey’s NATO commitments and involvements, there was little activism or activity that went beyond the multilateral frameworks that anchored Turkey’s Western orientation.

Özal arrived during a time of international change that also was affecting the nature of transatlantic relations between the United States and its European allies. The 1980 military coup in Turkey came as political, rather than strategic issues began to acquire increasing weight within the European Community, which included the promotion of democracy as a foreign policy objective. As a result, the military intervention in Turkey exacerbated the divergence between Turkey and the EU thereby further complicating Turkish bids for incorporation in Europe, thus ushering in a new phase in Turkish-EC relations. At the very moment that Europe began to prioritize democracy and foreign policy issues, geopolitical issues that anchored Turkey in the Western alliance began to lose their importance. While the view from Europe focused on these new objectives, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and the Islamic revolution in Iran of the same year increased Turkey’s importance in the eyes of the United States and resulted in an upgrading of relations between these two countries.

following the fallout of the Cyprus affair in 1974. Thus as Europe tried to distance itself from the U.S. a further gap began to widen between Turkey and the EU.  

Until the end of the Cold War, the West seemed to have acknowledged Turkey’s European identity, which led Turkish political leaders to believe that the West had recognized Turkey’s Western identity. After the end of the Cold War, however, “Europe began to emphasize cultural factors in their self-definition, creating fundamental differences between Turkey and Europe in terms of basic characteristics, values, opinions, attitudes, experience, and historical commonalities, which brought Europeans together.” This shift identified by scholars eventually led to further isolation of Turkey from Europe and an identity crisis on the part of Turkey. The most important result of this identity crisis was instability and uncertainty in Turkish foreign policy beginning in the early 1990s. In the words of Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, “In the 1990s, it was clear that the basic aim of Turkish foreign policy was to get recognition as a European state through the establishment of more links with Europe without any serious consideration to the possible negative effects of such relations.”

As the Berlin Wall fell and the Soviet Union collapsed, Turkey was faced with increasing indifference from Europe, and yet a new set of opportunities was presenting itself toward the nation’s east. The emergence of post-Soviet Turkic states that shared linguistic and ethnic ties with Turkey represented a new sphere of influence for Turkey in Central Asia. Özal famously proclaimed that the 21st century would be a Turkish one

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236 See Yucel Bozdağlıoğlu’s description in *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity* (London: Routledge Press, 2003), 75.
238 In addition to Atay and Ece, see Turkey and Europe literature indexed by Heinz Kramer in *A Changing Turkey* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2000).
239 Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach*, 79.

Subsequently, Turkey’s role in this region has become hotly debated, not only within Turkey but also in the West. The underlying reason for this attention stems from a fear that radical Islam might fill the power vacuum that occurred in the region with the demise of the Soviet Union. This led to strong encouragement from the West to the newly independent states to adopt a “Turkish model” of secular democracy, combined with a liberal economy.\footnote{To read more about this “Turkish Model” please see Mustafa Aydin and Tareq Y. Ismail, “Between Euphoria and Realpolitik: Turkish Policy toward Central Asia and the Caucasus,” in Turkey’s Foreign Policy in the 21st Century (London: Ashgate, 2003).} However, Özal did not see the bonds tying Turkey to Central Asia and the Middle East as being simply an ethnic one, but rather what bound these peoples together was what bound them together during Ottoman times; religion. In Özal’s own words:

\begin{quote}
As a post-imperial country and society, we have been able to create a cultural and political identity that transcends ethnic differences. I believe that the most important element in the formation of this identity today,
\end{quote}
just as it was in the imperial period, is Islam. ... Islam has been the
cement unifying the diverse ethnic groups belonging to this religion.  

It is important to emphasize, however, that Özal's "Neo-Ottomanism" was not a
fundamentally religious pan-Islamic vision (as evidenced by his explicit exclusion of the
Muslims of Iran and Russia, for example) any more than it was a re-articulation of an
essentially Turkic-Muslim nationalism.  

It was instead a pragmatic political agenda –

based on real, historically-grounded identity networks and political culture legacies –

aimed at capitalizing on the new regional dynamics of the 1990s in a manner impossible

within the nation-state structure that had held sway since World War I in Turkey.

Özal elaborated on the basis for a neo-Ottoman reorientation in his
pronouncements on the collapse of Communism in East Europe and the Soviet Union
during the late 1980s and early 1990s. He pointed out that these developments had led to

the emergence of an “Ottoman ... Muslim belt” extending from Bulgaria to the Adriatic,

comprising millions of Muslims who “look to Turkey. ... If Turkey is to be a great
country, it has to pursue a more active policy on such matters.”

Elsewhere, Özal included inhabitants of Cyprus (where he also advocated a loose federation as part of a

242 Quote from M. Hakan Yavuz "Turkish Identity and Foreign Policy in Flux: The Rise of Neo-
243 See M. Hakan Yavuz, "Turkish Identity and Foreign Policy in Flux: The Rise of Neo-Ottomanism,"
Critique, no. 12 (Spring 1998): 19-41, p. 23. For two early considerations of Neo-Ottomanism, see David
Barchard, Turkey and the West (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), 91; and Ola Tunander, "A New
Vol. 26, No. 4 (December 1995): 413-426. For the argument that due to its cosmopolitan essence Neo-
Ottomanism is likely to serve as a "bulwark" against radical fundamentalism, see Ali Fuat Borovali, "Post-
Modernity, Multiculturalism and Ex-Imperial Hinterland: Habsburg and Ottoman Legacies Revisited,"
244 Turgut Özal speech delivered on the occasion of international symposium opening September 28, 1984
Cumhurbaşkanı Turgut Özal'ın Dış Politika ve Ekonomi Açıklarından "Türkiye'nin Stratejik Öncelipleri"
Adlı Uluslararası Sempozyumun Açılışında Yaptıkları Konuşma Presidential Archives Ankara, Turkey
final settlement) and the northern “Fertile Crescent” which he used to conjure former Ottoman glory as well.  

“This is the thesis I've been openly proposing since 1988: Turk, Kurd, Albanian, Bosnian, whatever – whoever was previously an Ottoman citizen and remained in those lands after we left there, are kinsfolk of our citizens today and are the people beyond our borders who concern us in the first degree.”

While there clearly were material interests to pursue in a power vacuum left at the end of the Cold War, Özal’s motivation seemed to go beyond simple economic or strategic interests. “I say, Turkey's primary objective during the coming ten years is to become one of what will ultimately not exceed ten or fifteen leading countries.” He spoke those words in June 1992, less than a year before his death, but the theme of national greatness was one that dominated his pronouncements throughout the final phase of his life. The revolutionary upheavals in the Balkans, Caucasus, and Middle East represented an opportunity to Özal who explicitly saw this as the post-Ottoman zone which constituted, “…the greatest opportunity to our nation in 400 years. ... Truly it is the kind of extraordinary fortune and blessing that is made available to a nation once in several centuries.” In order to grasp this rare opportunity, Turkey would have to abandon the "timid" stance characteristic of the Republican era: "this has been the animating spirit of Republican policies – a closed society, a closed economy, and as a

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245 The “Fertile Crescent” refers to Mesopotamia and the Levant. It includes present day Jordan, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Israel and the Palestinian Territories. It was coined by James Henry Breasted, an archeologist.


result we have become an inward-looking country that has isolated itself to a great extent from the rest of the world.”

Despite Turkey’s initial enthusiasm for its long lost “Turkic and Muslim brothers,” Turkey soon discovered that these states did not want to be dependent upon any single regional power. In fact, most of the post-Soviet Central Asian states preferred to deal directly with all the regional actors independently and saw no need for a particular model. Therefore, while Turkey under Özal established a series of rotating meetings for the Turkic countries to discuss energy, cultural, and economic issues, to date they have not resulted in any formal institutions.

Özal's sudden death in office on April 17, 1993, of a heart attack left a political void in Turkish foreign policy making that went unfilled for over a decade. He was buried in a lavish state ceremony in Istanbul next to the mausoleum of Adnan Menderes, whom he had politically resurrected and greatly revered. Özal’s vision and policies were prematurely cut short by death, and while it is still too early to say what impact his particular vision ultimately had, the direct legacy and ideas of neo-Ottomanism as defined by Özal have continued to reemerge along with the theme of Turkey’s Muslim worldview up until the present day.

**Shifted Imperial Memories**

Led by Özal, Turkey weathered the end of the Cold War and emerged with a new sense of self-confidence that partially built upon its rediscovery of its imperial past. No country since the end of the Cold War has seen its position and role as quickly

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transformed as the Republic of Turkey has in the last two decades. The loosening of international constraints on Turkish foreign policymaking with the collapse of the Soviet Union was not met with an immediate flurry of activism across its various regions; rather it was a slow and cautious process that was instigated in stages by Prime Minister and then President Özal. The evolution of civil-military relations throughout the Cold War allowed for a uniform approach to foreign policy that included the various levers of state control. The coalition of ruling elites assembled in the aftermath of the various coups maintained the inherited bureaucracy, education, history, and identity while being responsive to the needs of a more democratic landscape. In this respect, Kemalism as an ideology was opened to include previously irreconcilable forms of Muslim nationalism and a more public role for Islam.

The opening of Kemalism as an ideology and as a power base for Turkey’s elites led to a shift in Turkey’s view of the Ottoman Empire that sought to reclaim certain aspects of its glorious past while ignoring some of its shortcomings. As evidenced by the new type of discourse promoted by the Hearth through its Turkish-Islamic Synthesis, the stark break between Turkey’s Ottoman “Islamic” past and the new secular republic was reformulated throughout this period. Given the external and internal pressures for stability in Turkey, there was a confluence between Turkey’s civilian and military leaders on the need to reincorporate Islam into the lives of the average Turk. The attempt to reconcile Atatürk’s vision of a modern and secular republic with the cultural and historical affinities rooted in Islam was personified most dramatically by Turgut Özal.

As the first Turkish president both to have no military ties and be an overtly devout Muslim, Özal represented the shift from Turkey’s rejectionist memories to a
moderate glorification of its Ottoman past. Through his life, policies, pronouncements, and writings, it is clear that Özal not only embraced the Ottomans but that he looked back on this period for inspiration. Following on the heels of the 1980 military coup, Özal found common cause with the military when it came to the rehabilitation of the Ottomans in Turkey’s official memory and narrative. The international environment since at least the 1970s had placed Turkey in the position to independently chart its own course; however, it was not until Özal that a true shift could be detected in official memory and historical narrative. The change was not a dramatic restructuring like the type experienced under Atatürk, but rather a more gradual shift similar to the 1950s under Adnan Menderes.

Given the geopolitical conditions of the time, the fact that the Turkish military leaders and then Özal chose to glorify their Ottoman past seems consistent with our original theory. Having experienced domestic turmoil and instability since the 1960s, the reincorporation of Islam into Turkish political life seemed to offer the stability that political elites so desperately sought and it opened a new chapter in Turkey’s evolving political identity. Having reshaped a previously unassailable narrative, Turkey’s leaders adapted Kemalism to suit the environment they found themselves in. For the military, this included guiding a revival of state-controlled Islam to combat atheistic communism and more radical strands of Islamism within the country. Rather than clinging to a rejectionist view of the Ottoman past that clearly had not been as domina as it once had been during the one-party years, Özal tapped into populist feelings among Turks to guide his Motherland Party to multiple electoral victories with a mix of religious nationalism and imperial glorificationism in his public pronouncements.
More than any other Turkish leader, Özal represented the unique paradoxes in Turkey. A close personal friend to President George H.W. Bush and Margaret Thatcher, Özal continually looked to the West for economic inspiration for Turkey. However, when it came to Turkey’s place among the great nations, he believed from the beginning that it should rely upon its Ottoman heritage. The lessons learned from Özal confirm that individual leadership can have a profound effect on foreign policy orientation; however, the entrenched official memories and narratives of the state are not easily swept aside. Özal’s initiatives on reaching out to the Central Asian Republics were possible as long as Western support was evident while they were sold to the Turkish public as being part of Turkey’s reclaiming of its imperial past. Consensus around reaching out to Turkey’s Central Asian ethnic “brothers” proved much easier than many of Özal’s ideas about the Muslim world. In fact Özal’s crowning foreign policy achievements were almost all Western oriented where he could win unanimous approval from the various factions within Turkey such as opening Turkey’s EC membership application and supporting the U.S. during the first Gulf War during the early 1990s. Özal’s sweeping foreign policy engagements and dynamic leadership made the period that he dominated Turkish politics among the most formative in modern Turkish history while the subsequent ten years returned to the divided politics of polarization.

Utilizing Strategic Depth: New Imperial Direction?
Glorifying Turkey’s Ottoman past as an intellectual movement and a foreign policy strategy is not a new concept in Turkey, as the 1950s and 1980s reveal. While its roots go back to at least the early 1980s with President Turgut Özal, the true flourishing of the rediscovered Ottoman heritage coincides with the current ruling party’s rise to power in 2002. The emergence of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) as a political force in Turkey has rekindled the debate over Turkey’s historical roots and its legacy as a successor state to the Ottoman Empire. As a result of its Islamic roots and Muslim outlook, the AKP has focused on the unifying character of the Ottoman Empire and the Muslim values inherited by the Turkish Republic. Articulating a new vision for Turkey that is not dependent on the West, while actively seeking ways to balance its relationships and alliances, the AKP harkens back to the days of the Ottoman Empire.

In particular, the work of Ahmet Davutoğlu, chief foreign policy advisor to Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and current foreign minister, can be pointed to as the most elaborate articulation of the importance of imperial memories on the strategic thinking of Turkish decision makers. Davutoğlu’s academic writings as professor of international relations and his influential book *Strategic Depth* argue that a nation’s value in world politics is predicated on its geostrategic location and historical “depth.” Following the logic of Davutoğlu’s proclaimed theory, Turkey is uniquely endowed because of both its location in geopolitical areas of influence, particularly its control of the Bosporus, and its historical legacy as heir to the Ottoman Empire.²⁵¹

²⁵⁰ For more see Suat Kiniklioglu, “The Return of Ottomanism,” *Today’s Zaman*, March 27, 2007. For a thoughtful discussion of the emergence of neo-Ottomanism, see Yavuz, “Turkish Identity and Foreign Policy in Flux.”

²⁵¹ See Davutoğlu, *Strategik Derinlik* (unfortunately there is no English translation available at this time).
While traditional measures of Turkey’s national power tend to overlook the cultural links fostered by a shared common history, Davutoğlu emphasizes Turkey’s connections to the Balkans, the Middle East, and even Central Asia. In the same vein, he argues that because Turkey is the natural heir to the Ottoman Empire that once unified the Muslim world, it has the potential to become a transregional power that helps to once again unify and lead the Muslim world, echoing many of the themes heard in the Turkish parliament concerning the abolition of the caliphate. Accordingly, Turkey is not simply an “ordinary nation-state” that emerged at a certain point as a result of the play of circumstances or the designs of the outside powers—like, for example, many new states in Central Europe in the aftermath of World War I. Rather, it is a regional power in its own right, having strong traditions of statehood and broad strategic outreach. Thus, Davutoğlu concludes, “It has no chance to be peripheral, it is not a sideline country of the EU, NATO or Asia.”

Davutoğlu and the AKP foreign policy strategists contend that rather than being peripheral, Turkey is a centrally positioned international player. For them, “Turkey is a country with a close land basin, the epicenter of the Balkans, the Middle East and the Caucasus, the center of Eurasia in general and is in the middle of the Rimland belt cutting

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252 Interview with Ahmet Davutoğlu, August 18, 2009, in the Foreign Ministry in Ankara. While Davutoğlu denies and disavows any notion of neo-Ottomanism his use of Ottoman history and one interpretation of this period in time is interlinked with his analysis of the contemporary international affairs. For example as he was explaining the sectarian divides in Bosnia or Iraq he would continually refer to “Turkish” actions and rulers in Ottoman times to explain his current approach to find a common understanding because of their “shared pasts” which includes culture, history, and religion.

253 In addition to articulating these points in numerous author interviews see “The Power Turkey Does Not Use Is That of ‘Strategic Depth’ Interview with Ahmet Davutoğlu,” Turkish Daily News, June 14, 2001.

across the Mediterranean to the Pacific” (emphasis added). Such a geostrategic vision reflects a newly acquired self-confidence on the part of the AKP, which is supportive of a more proactive foreign policy—particularly in what it calls the Ottoman geopolitical space. This orientation is highly critical of Turkey’s Cold War strategy for its myopic reluctance to embrace the country’s obvious advantages—namely, its rich history and geographical location.

Beyond the academic discussions surrounding Turkey’s potential and place in the world, strategic depth advocates seek to counterbalance Turkey’s dependencies on the West by courting multiple alliances to maintain the balance of power in its region. The premise of this argument is that Turkey should not be dependent on any one actor and should actively seek ways to balance its relationships and alliances so that it can maintain optimal independence and leverage on the global and regional stages. The approach exhibited by this foreign policy doctrine is perfectly suited to the prime minister’s personality, and his political rhetoric has resonated in Turkey as a whole. It also stems directly from the political power accumulated by his party. Given the AKP’s unrivaled position domestically, its foreign policy doctrine of strategic depth has also been hegemonic within the country.

The AKP’s reading of Turkey’s history differs markedly from the traditional pre-Özal republican narrative that sought to sever all ties with the pre-Kemalist past and reject all things Ottoman. The appeal of this interpretation has allowed Davutoğlu to

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256 Here the distinction between the academic discussions surrounding where the Ottomans had actual control and whether these areas should be considered “colonies” given the Orientalist narrative of Western imperialism matters less than how policymakers incorporate a vision of cultural, historic, and religious affinity.

work with many nationalists and ardent secularists within the Turkish state who actively seek to embrace both Turkey’s Ottoman past and its former geopolitical space, those who champion a deliberate revival of the Ottoman past “both as a matter of cultural enrichment, but also as a source of an enriched Turkish identity as a political actor.” In this sense, the proposed new strategic outlook is not merely national but regional, and it shifts Turkey’s self-perception of being on the periphery to an understanding that the country is in the very center of important historical developments. Taking this line of reasoning further, it follows that Turkey should strive to take on a larger role in its former Ottoman territories. In this view neighbors should welcome Turkey’s “return” and its willingness to take on greater responsibility for regional stability. Given the tenuous nature of Turkish politics, these developments follow our original proposition that the AKP, though a strong party, represents a weaker overall regime than its Kemalist predecessors given its ongoing conflict with the military and the judiciary, a regime that would seek to strengthen its position by glorifying its Ottoman past and emphasizing its populist credentials. The distinction here is that while the AKP has been a stronger party than any other party in Turkey’s multiparty period, it has been met with the strongest opposition from both the military and the judiciary, thereby creating a contested regime. The counterintuitive result is that while uncontested, weak Kemalist parties enjoyed the full support of the bureaucracy, military, and judiciary institutions, which led to a strong domestic regime, a strong, contested party like the AKP has led to a weaker domestic regime.

In post-World War II Turkey, greater democratization, openness, and competition played a critical role in determining the makeup of particular elite coalitions. To best visualize domestic politics and understand the specific dynamics of the modern Turkish electoral system, a table is extremely helpful. Drawing from the available sources of all Turkish elections and governments formed since the advent of multiparty and free elections in 1950, this table represents a map of the political landscape that was outlined. I accounted for the years of the government by grouping them by leader and number of elections, and then provided some statistical information in terms of the percent controlled in parliament and the number of seats held by the government. For duration, I calculated the approximate number of years a particular leader maintained control over his coalition. As a result, many of the years in which there were multiple elections won by different parties and leaders, the duration is extremely low even if the leader’s cumulative time in office might be higher.\textsuperscript{259} The coalition column simply indicates if the leader relied on a coalition for creating his government. The major events column was populated through a close reading of Turkish diplomatic history and corroborated by a chronology of important events in Turkish history included as an appendix in Feroz Ahmad’s \textit{Turkey}.\textsuperscript{260} The coding for the rest of the table was done from a close reading of major works on Turkish foreign policy and histories.\textsuperscript{261} By breaking the variables into a

\textsuperscript{259} Therefore, for example even though Ismet Inonu spent more time as Prime Minister before 1950 this was not counted since it was under a one-party structure, nor did Suleyman Demirel or Bulent Ecevit’s cumulative times as Prime Minister add up to more than either Adnan Menderes, Turgut Ozal, or Tayyip Erdogan.

\textsuperscript{260} For the most relevant section see Ahmad, \textit{Turkey the Quest for Identity}, 196-212.

\textsuperscript{261} Among this list were the classics on Turkish foreign policy beginning with William Hale, \textit{Turkish Foreign Policy 1774-2000} (London: Frank Cass Press, 2000); Bernard Lewis, \textit{The Emergence of Modern
simplified dichotomy of Yes or No, I simplified the coding. Democratization was coded as a ‘Yes’ if free and fair elections were held and the military did not choose the parties and candidates allowed to participate. Clearly the coding of democratization changed by decade: for example, in 1950 in the initial elections and in every subsequent election after a military coup, the military had to approve every party running. However, the restrictions put in place between the 1960 military intervention and the 1980 coup were unprecedented as compared to the less restrictive party guidelines post-1980 and post-1997 elections. Given the extreme violence and meddling of the military during these periods, almost every commentary has described these times as ones of “troubled” democracy, which I code as “No” for democratization. Similarly, the 1997 “soft coup” removed the popularly elected leader Necmettin Erbakan and banned him from politics, while handing the government back to more secular leaning leaders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3</th>
<th>Years/ Leader</th>
<th>Elections</th>
<th>Coalition?</th>
<th>Seats?</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Major Events?</th>
<th>Democratization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950-1960 Menderes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>470/539 502/541 424/610</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>NATO Baghdad Pact</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960 Coup</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-1965 Inonu</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>173/450</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Johnson Letter</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965-1970 Demirel</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>240/450 256/450</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Left-Right Violence</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971 Coup</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-79 Demirel/Ecevit</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>185/450 213/450</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>1 year intervals</td>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980 Coup</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-1991 Özal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>211/399 292/450</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>PKK War EC Applied</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From this long table, it is possible to group the various governments into roughly ten-year intervals between the various coups and see a clear pattern emerge concerning imperial memories as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4 Years</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Coalition?</th>
<th>Period Democratization</th>
<th>Imperial Memories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950-1960 Menderes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Ambiguous/Rejectionist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960 Coup</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-1971 Inonu/Demirel</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Moderate Rejectionist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971 Coup</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-79 Demirel/Ecevit</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Moderate Rejectionist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980 Coup</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-1991 Özal</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Ambiguous/Glorificationist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-2002 Demirel/Ciller/Erbakan/ Ecevit/Yilmaz</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Ambiguous/Rejectionist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-2008 Gul/Erdoğan</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Moderate Glorificationist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at these tables, a relationship between changes in democratization and imperial memories seems to emerge, as might be predicted by our original theories and the way imperial memories have been traced and coded throughout our case study. While less than perfect, the fact that the three longest serving consecutive prime ministers all implemented at least one Eastern oriented initiative and also dealt with the role of
Turkey’s Ottoman past is consistent with the importance of imperial memories for both domestic politics and foreign policy. The fact that these same prime ministers commanded the largest percentage of the parliament and did not rely on a coalition is also consistent with the idea that Turkey’s imperial memories are embedded within the Turkish population and change as levels of participation and democratization rise. However, moving beyond these broad generalizations, it is important to understand the specific cases of the most “successful” politicians and their corresponding foreign policy initiatives and imperial memories. As defined by duration in office and percentage commanded of the Turkish parliament, the three most “successful” Turkish leaders also implemented three of the most significant Eastern initiatives in Turkish foreign policy history, which points to the importance of ideas about Turkey’s connection to its past in its foreign policymaking.

From the starting point of Atatürk’s Westernizing vision of a modern Turkey and with deference to his legacy, subsequent leaders slowly began to reshape historical memories of the Ottoman Empire and attempted to glorify Turkey’s imperial experiences. During the 1960s and 1980s populist leaders such as Adnan Menderes and Turgut Özal invoked religious and cultural affinity to help serve their own domestic purposes while seeking to broaden Turkey’s memory of the Ottomans beyond the last years of humiliation and defeat. Since the end of the Cold War, when the Soviet Union, Turkey’s main geostrategic rival and threat disappeared, a newly assertive Turkey, informed by Özal’s convictions about Turkey’s role in its former Ottoman space, has become a more important regional player. Prime Minister Erdoğan has built on the legacy of Özal and has begun to promote Turkey as the natural leader of the Muslim world, largely on the
basis of its economic capabilities underpinned by his convictions about imperial memories. By analyzing these particular periods in time and understanding the shifting rhetoric and ideas about Turkey’s imperial memories, this case study has shed light on the connections between Turkey’s changing memories and its engagement with the neighborhood it once dominated as the greatest empire of the region. Eight decades later, the Anatolian heirs to the Ottoman Empire looks poised to play a greater role in its neighborhood and reassert a regional order once controlled from Istanbul. Like any modern nation, the Turkish Republic selectively constructed its historical narrative and focused attention on the moments of triumph rather than the anguish of defeats which has led to a new relationship for Ankara with its neighborhood that will be revisited in our concluding section.

In each of the cases examined, Turkish political leaders took their country’s traditional worldview and translated them into a particular vision of Turkey’s place in the wider neighborhood that was reinforced by changes in imperial memories. While each leader should be viewed within his own individual context, the emergence of similar ideas can be seen by grouping these leaders together. In fact, in many ways, each of these leaders built on each other’s attempts and took Turkish foreign policy further into its past at each step. Beginning with Menderes and the Baghdad Pact, Turkey had its first significant encounter in the Middle East post-World War One. Building on Menderes, Özal would promote his neo-Ottomanism and policy of Central Asian engagement. The present culmination and synthesis of these two leaders in many ways can be found in Erdoğan and his ideas about strategic depth. As indicated from our macro-sketch, none of these leaders would have been able to implement their ideas without their electoral
success and relative levels of democratization they enjoyed. These case studies are particularly instructive when taken as a whole and examined from the perspective of lessons learned and the ideas that shaped their understanding of how their electorates viewed Turkey in relation to its former regional leadership.

Engaging Turkey’s Ottoman History

The reverence and kinship that Turkey’s modern leaders feel toward the Ottomans come from a personal understanding of their history and the societies from which they are elected. General trends in Turkey point toward an increased role for history, as demonstrated by the mushrooming of Ottoman museums and exhibits in every conceivable corner of Anatolia. Even well-established museums that have played an active role in trying to periodize and distinguish republican Turkey from its Ottoman past, such as Istanbul’s Military Museum, have begun to glorify and modify their narratives to present a story of continuation from Ottoman legions to Turkey’s modern battalions.

Similarly, celebrations in the hometown of Ertuğrul Gazi, the father of Ottoman Empire founder Osman Bey, where the empire was first established as a dynasty in 1299, have ballooned into national events and gained political significance. For example, on September 14, 2008, all major political leaders of the modern Turkish Republic came to

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pay their tribute to the Ottomans at a commemoration held in Bey’s hometown. This commemoration, which up until ten years ago was merely a local event with no national significance, has taken on a new aura in Turkey today. Given the highly contentious nature of domestic Turkish politics, the appearance of the president, the prime minister, and all opposition leaders extolling the greatness and glory of the Ottoman Empire is seminal.\textsuperscript{264} Turkey’s changing memories of the Ottoman Empire, once vilified as a “backward” Islamic empire by Turkey’s secular modernizers, offer a compelling view not only of its past, but also of its present and its future trajectory as a regional power. Turkey’s newly rediscovered Ottoman memories are having a direct impact on how the modern republic views itself.

Portrayal of the Ottomans has become almost a national pastime in Turkey with every citizen, commentator, and politician offering a viewpoint on what the former empire represents for the modern republic. Broken down into their simplest form, the perceptions of the Ottomans can be represented by two views, mirroring splits in Turkey’s national identity. In the first portrayal, the Ottomans were pragmatic strategists who used the office of the caliphate to increase their symbolic strength against a resurgent Russia while forging secular alliances with various Christian European empires. The second view is of an empire that drew its inspiration from Islam and, while less than perfect, represented the best attempt at unifying the Muslim world. Neither view can be disproved by historical arguments or facts, and the advocates of both seek to gain

\textsuperscript{264} For example see President Gul’s speech at the event “President Gul Calls for Unity on Ottoman Anniversary” \textit{Today's Zaman} September 15, 2008: http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=153152
prominence based on the realities of the day.\textsuperscript{265} While it is difficult to simplistically categorize individuals and political parties on the whole, the historically secular CHP would clearly prefer to promote the former view, while the more “Islam-friendly” AKP would undoubtedly choose the latter, given its own political calculations and views of Turkey. Since the AKP controls almost all of the levers of foreign policymaking and continually emphasizes Turkey’s responsibility toward its neighborhood, this is an increasingly interesting area of research.\textsuperscript{266} While the diplomatic advantages of being able to point toward a common history and past are fairly obvious on the international level, the domestic consequences of this Ottoman resurgence remain to be seen.

The new sense of self and burgeoning confidence personified by Prime Minister Erdoğan draws directly from a view of history in which Turkey has always been centrally located. The historical anomaly from this viewpoint is not the Ottoman period, but the republican period, in which Turkey chose to isolate itself from its neighborhood in favor of alliances with the transatlantic world. While Turkey has traditionally been labeled as either a “bridge” or a “barrier” between its region and the West, it now finds itself playing the role of a catalyst.\textsuperscript{267} In the words of the prime minister, Turkey under the AKP seeks to bring the principal actors of the region together to transform the Middle East in the same way that U.S. involvement helped transform Europe from “a hotbed of continental and world wars into a geography of peace.”\textsuperscript{268} However, many in the region

\textsuperscript{265} Clearly the Ottoman empire was a mix of both Islamic and pragmatic statecraft, however the ways in which it is portrayed are often both orientalist and stylistic, as represented here.

\textsuperscript{266} This does not mean that the AKP always makes unilateral moves even if it controls Cankaya Palace, the Foreign Ministry, or the Turkish Grand National Assembly because other actors such as the military and judiciary continue to exert influence.

\textsuperscript{267} For more on this concept see Joshua Walker, “Turkey’s Role in the Middle East,” \textit{International Affairs Review} 14,1 (2005): 119-136.

are wary of Turkey being nothing more than an agent or functionary of the United States; thus, it must build its assets as a “bridge” of trust for both sides.\textsuperscript{269} In this respect, drawing on Turkey’s reservoir of Ottoman past has great symbolic value.

Given the Muslim character of Ottoman rule, most of Turkey’s Middle Eastern neighbors have a less contentious view of the empire than do the Balkan states that waged wars of independence against the Ottomans.\textsuperscript{270} Also, it is important to note the influence of the Ottoman system of distinguishing between Muslim and non-Muslim citizens in the way the \textit{millet} system functioned. The overall impact seemed to be greater resentment on the part of the Ottoman Empire’s Christian minorities than in its Muslim ruling class, regardless of ethnic differences. Historically, given Turkey’s domestic realities and sensitivity toward the role of Islam, it has proven easier for Turkish leaders and successive governments to not engage at all internationally or only at the request of the West. As a result, Turkey’s major activism in the 1990s was in the Balkans in the context of Bosnia and Kosovo, former Muslim colonies, but not in the Middle East.\textsuperscript{271} Under the AKP there has been an attempt to focus equally on all surrounding regions on the basis of perceived national interests, that now includes shared histories and responsibilities towards former Muslim colonies in North Africa, the Middle East and the Balkans. The fact that Muslims held a privileged place within the Ottoman Empire and the lack of grassroots nationalist movements among the Arab states until World War I has made Turkey’s reemergence as an actor under the AKP less threatening for the Middle

\textsuperscript{270} To understand the historical context and precedent for this development see Hasan Kayalı, \textit{Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918}, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997).
\textsuperscript{271} This included the dispatch of peacekeeping and police forces to various parts of the former Yugoslavia.
East, as the AKP has actively used the shared Ottoman heritage and history to its advantage. The AKP has been equally active in the Balkans despite the attention paid by the West and the domestic opposition to the AKP’s Middle Eastern activism.

The Middle East and its current realities represent the most malleable and dynamic frontiers for Turkish foreign policy. Although Turkey has had difficulties developing a comprehensive and consistent policy that would serve both its national and its regional interests, a new approach by the AKP has been attempted. This new Turkish Middle Eastern policy includes the preservation of national integrity, modernization along Western standards, and noninvolvement in the domestic issues of neighboring countries. Turkey has shed its former policies of disengagement and become an active participant in all of its regions in order to create “zero problems” and foster regional stability. Engaged Turkish behavior in its immediate neighborhood has thus far represented a key driver for its own domestic economic success. As both a uniquely Western and Muslim actor, Turkey has been seeking to create new opportunities for pragmatic deal making in the region, which begins with a shared views of an Ottoman past. These opportunities could contribute to the creation of a more stable neighborhood, one based on mutual cooperation rather than mutual destruction. Turkey has presented itself as the only country able to play the role of both mediator and bridge. In these multiple roles historical memory facilitates a more inclusive regional framework.

With its Ottoman legacy Turkey has uniquely positioned itself to utilize less intrusive offers of assistance and diplomatic help to its Middle Eastern neighbors. As alluded to in another recent work, indicators such as the number of Turkish television programs watched by Turkey’s neighbors; trade, energy, travel, and investment in its
former empire; and the reemergence of various Ottoman artifacts and architecture throughout Turkey’s neighborhood point toward new incentives to find common ground through Turkey’s Ottoman past. The AKP has been trying to play a positive role in pushing forward Turkey’s European credentials while embracing the positive aspects of Turkey’s Middle Eastern cultural and religious connections, which often involves invoking Ottoman history and imagery.

**Janus-Faced – Looking East and West**

The AKP’s major foreign policy agenda beyond the EU has been re-engaging with its Ottoman neighborhood and fostering regional cooperation. Ankara’s role in providing a venue for dialogue for Israelis and Palestinians in the run-up to the 2007 Annapolis Conference was a function not only of Turkey’s strategic interests in the region, but also of its growing influence in shaping the dialogue of civilizations that Erdoğan has been active in promoting. Through the United Nations, Turkey has hosted a series of dialogues of “Alliance of Civilizations,” which have yielded no material or economic benefits, but have emphasized Turkey’s critical position between East and West. President Abdullah Gül’s 2008 whirlwind diplomatic tours to the Middle East and Central Asia emphasized common understanding and heritage rather than military or

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272 In particular see recent coauthored book with Evin, Ahmet, Kemal Kirişci, Ronald Linden, Thomas Straubhaar, Nathalie Tocci, Juliette Tolay and Joshua Walker *Turkey and Its Neighbors* (New York: Lynne Reiner, 2011) for a discussion of various indicators that show Turkey becoming a hub for its region and for a proposed way to integrate its region through globalization.

273 The Annapolis Conference that took place in 2007 is a Middle East Peace Conference that took place in Annapolis, MD, USA. It was the first time that all parties agreed to a two-state solution in regards to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. Arabs, Europeans and Americans pressured Turkey to attend and take on a greater role in the region and the conflict. Additionally, Palestinian President Abbas spoke with Perez.

274 A full history of the evolution of the “Alliance of Civilizations” and Turkey’s involvement can be seen at [http://www.unaoc.org/about/history/](http://www.unaoc.org/about/history/) accessed October 10, 2011.
diplomatic cooperation. By most measures, the ubiquitous growth of Turkey’s civil society and economic ingenuity has done more to promote Turkish culture and interests in Turkey’s near abroad than any other government-led initiatives.

In line with this new vision of Turkey’s place in the Muslim world, Erdoğan and Gül lobbied and eventually succeeded in electing a Turk as the head of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in June of 2004. In a move that would have been unimaginable as little as ten years ago Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu, who is extremely close with the AKP government, took the reigns as Secretary General in an international institution that most Kemalists in Turkey openly reject and the elites historically isolated. Emphasizing Turkey’s unique role as a Muslim democracy, Turkish leaders have frequently attempted to work within the framework of the OIC to encourage internal reforms. In his speech before the OIC in Istanbul, Gül argued that, “If we don’t take the reins…and prefer to cover up and ignore our problems, then others (referring to the US) will try to solve them their way and interfere in our affairs….And this interference will take place in the wrong way because they don’t understand our sensitivities, our habits, our cultures and our social structure. [Emphasis added]” Echoing these shared characteristics and making particular use of Ottoman imagery, Gül has made similar calls in most of his state visits to Muslim states throughout the Middle East, while Erdoğan has emphasized Turkey’s important place in the Muslim world to Western leaders at every chance.

275 Abdullah Gül became the Turkish president in 2007 as an AKP leader after he served as the AKP Prime Minister in 2002. American and European leaders congratulated President Gül; however, he was not favored domestically by CHP or the military. Some argue that Gül’s appointment and AKP’s success highlighted the end of the “deep state” in Turkey.
276 Murinson, “The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy,” 953.
277 President Gül, interview with author, Ankara, Turkey, August 4, 2009.
In addition to the OIC, the AKP has been actively promoting a little known agency within the Turkish bureaucracy called the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA). Originally established under Özal in 1992, TIKA’s objectives were to enhance cooperation and Turkish aid to 20 underdeveloped nations that have some sort of tie to Turkey through Ottoman or ethnic ties. The countries initially supported by TIKA can be found throughout mostly Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, and also happen to be former Ottoman colonies. While TIKA has had a relatively minor role and focused mostly on small economic development projects for most of its history, under the AKP, TIKA and the Ministry of Education (ME) have been targeting countries in Central Asia, North Africa, Albania, and Bosnia to offer substantial amounts of aid. The two-fold increase in TIKA’s budget and emphasis in the ME’s most recent educational strategy to target countries in which Turkey’s role will be both welcomed and influential points to the AKP’s desire to play a larger role within its own neighborhood and the wider Muslim world, largely as a result of its growing economy.

Concluding Thoughts

This case study began by tracing the way in which the Republic of Turkey emerged from the ashes of empire rejecting its Ottoman past in favor of a more narrowly focused national identity centered on Atatürk’s vision of a Westernizing modern Turkey. From this starting point and with deference to the legacy of Atatürk, the sections have

279 Further confirmed by author interview with former TIKA president Hakan Fidan, Ankara, Turkey, August, 2009.
shown how subsequent leaders have slowly begun to reshape historical memories of the Ottoman Empire and attempted to glorify Turkey’s imperial experiences. During the 1960s and 1980s populist leaders such as Adnan Menderes and Turgut Özal invoked religious and cultural affinity to help serve their own domestic purposes while seeking to broaden Turkey’s memory of the Ottomans beyond the last century of humiliation and defeat. Since the end of the Cold War, when the Soviet Union, Turkey’s main geo-strategic rival and threat disappeared, a newly assertive Turkey, informed by Özal’s convictions about Turkey’s place in its former Ottoman space, has become a more important regional player. Prime Minister Erdoğan and the AKP have built on the legacy of Özal and begun to promote Turkey as the natural leader of the Muslim world, largely on the basis of its new Ottoman memories that celebrated rather than denigrated its Middle Eastern roots. By studying these particular periods in time and understanding the shifting rhetoric and ideas about Turkey’s imperial past, this case-study has shed light on the connections between these changing imperial memories and Turkey’s engagement with its neighborhood. Having once dominated its neighborhood as the greatest empire of the region, these legacies, memories, and narratives continue to have implications for Turkey and its relations with its neighbors.

The fact that Turkey has begun to look beyond its traditional Cold War space for influence should be unsurprising to any analyst. The structural constraints that faced Turkey both in the Middle East and Central Asia have largely disappeared. However, the timing of the major Eastern initiatives launched by Özal and the AKP have been far from coincidental. The writings and speeches given by the current leadership of the AKP point toward an ideational motivation for re-engaging Turkey’s neighbors. The unifying role
that religion has played has been on display in almost every Muslim country that Turkish leadership have visited most recently in the Prime Minsiter’s visit of the “Arab Spring” capitals, despite their continual attempts to downplay the role of religion. Even in the Balkans with minority Muslim populations Turkey has been actively involved in former Ottoman domains culturally, diplomatically, and economically.\textsuperscript{280} As a result, emphasizing shared cultural and historical Ottoman legacies have taken the place of explicit religious rhetoric. However, as in most analysis of Turkish foreign policy, the ultimate constraint against the AKP has come not in the form of material or international factors, but from within.

Turkey’s Ottoman legacy is critical for explaining the role of identity and grand strategy formation in contemporary Turkey. Turkey sees itself as an important international actor that has more to offer than simply its military and economic capabilities. Given their proud history, Turks can be particularly nationalistic and prickly when dealt with as less than equals. Insulting the pride of the Turkish nation by using Turkey as a means to an end can lead to diplomatic failures; for example, the U.S.’s attempts to “buy” Turkey’s support for its operations against Iraq, or current attempts to offer Turkey less than full membership in the EU.\textsuperscript{281} Having ruled for the better part of six centuries as the Ottoman Empire, the Turks expect a certain level of respect in their international dealings. The current mood in Turkey of anti-Americanism and anti-EU sentiments could lead to a more isolationist or regionally-focused foreign policy in response to electorally popular ultra-nationalist sentiments. Understanding and being

\textsuperscript{281} Ahmet Evin, Kemal Kirisci, Ronald Linden, Thomas Straubhaar, Nathalie Tocci, Juliette Tolay, Joshua W. Walker; \textit{Getting to Zero: Turkey, Its Neighbors and the West} (Washington: Transatlantic Academy, 2010).
sensitive to the Turks’ sense of fairness would go a long way in defusing the current mood in Turkey.

Turkey now finds itself simultaneously in the democratization process in the Middle East and at the doorstep of the European Union. Laden with its history as part of the Ottoman Empire and its more recent past in the Cold War Western alliance, Turkey has been forced to formulate a new strategy for a post-9/11 world that has shifted the emphasis from Turkey’s geography to its historic role as regional leader. By broadening its horizons and seeing the positive role that it has to play in Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia, Turkey is beginning to realize its full potential as a versatile, multiregional, and increasingly powerful international actor. As a result, this newfound confidence in Turkey is bringing about an imperial recollection, memory, and interest in the Ottoman experience as a great power in the region, just as other regional leaders globally such as China and Russia draw from their imperial legacies.

Having emerged from the shadows of isolationism pre-World War II and dependency during the Cold War, Turkey is now asserting itself in a way unprecedented by modern Turkish Republican standards. Given the current political leadership in Turkey, there does seem to be a will for Turkey to play a greater role in its region, particularly the Middle East. It is highly unlikely that this role will be imperial in nature, given the prevailing norms of sovereignty and the cost of imposing Ottoman-style rule in this day and age. That said, the prestige associated with playing an active regional role seems to be driving the resurgence in the glorification of imperial memories and emphasis on recapturing Ottoman thinking on the part of the current government.
Turkey recalls the Ottoman Empire, which straddled the frontier between the civilizations that best defined East vs. West for a millennium. Since the end of the Cold War, memories of that empire are most closely associated with efforts to reposition Turkey in a renewed struggle between the modern Western world and a resurgent Muslim world centered in the Middle East. Imperial memory established the ideational framework for Turkey’s shift in national identity as well as orientation in foreign relations. Rejection of centuries of imperial leadership abetted inclusion in the West. Revival of pride in this leadership and at the same time in standing as a bulwark against Western penetration of the Muslim world serves, in contrast, to win support in the Middle East.

As the final two chapters build on, Turkey’s contemporary strategic decisions are informed not only by its military and economic power, but also by its Ottoman legacy and the inherited perceptions of self. Turkey’s imperial legacy can serve as both a constraint and as an opportunity for Turkish grand strategy. Turkey’s historic place between East and West has often led to various “identity crises” in the country. If studied in isolation from its Ottoman past, contemporary Turkey’s culture, values, and institutions seem to offer few clues to contemporary policy. However, by including Turkey’s Ottoman legacy into discussions about Turkey’s strategic culture and decision-making, scholars of international politics and policymakers can better understand Turkey’s historic place in both the West and the East and its role in shaping current Turkish foreign policy. Turkey, in this case study, juxtaposed with another non-Western

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282 As further evidence of this Ibrahim Kalin, the prime minister’s chief foreign policy advisor argued that “Turkey’s post-modernity lies in the Ottoman Empire,” further bolstering the importance of the Ottoman legacy in the current government’s strategic thinking. Ibrahim Kalin, interview with the author, Istanbul, Turkey, October 16, 2009.
imperial successor state that collapsed and struggled with its own past in roughly the same timeframe as Turkey offers new insights. We now turn to the case of Japan before coming back into a comparative perspective to test our broader theoretical framework from where we began followed by concluding thoughts on recent dramatic events in Turkey’s neighborhood.
CHAPTER FIVE

Memories of a Defeated Asian Empire: Japan 1945-1980

Japan’s presence in world affairs is a relatively new phenomenon. As an isolated chain of islands sitting on the furthest edge of Asia next to the historically dominant Chinese civilization and empire, Japan for most of its history has been inwardly focused. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as China crumbled, Japan emerged for the first time as a major military power by carving out an Asian empire for itself on the model of European overseas empires that it sought to emulate. Despite having an imperial institution in the form of the Chrysanthemum Throne that was predicated on Chinese doctrine, this was a largely ceremonial role until the Meiji Restoration in the late nineteenth century. Unlike European monarchs or the Ottoman Sultan, the Japanese emperor or tenno did not play a significant political role until the turn of the century.

Japan’s experience with empire was in many ways the inverse of Turkey’s and, in a comparative sense, was very short-lived and singularly disastrous for the Japanese people. Given the historic isolation of the Japanese homeland, the impetus and opportunity for empire did not occur until much later than the Turkish case. As a result, compared to Turkey, Japan’s imperial memories have been far less intertwined with domestic politics and sense of self. They are, however, critical for understanding Japan’s difficult relations with its Asian neighbors. Tokyo has often sought to compartmentalize and forget its imperial past, but doing so has not been possible in an interconnected...

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283 The role of the emperor will be dealt with in subsequent sections but for a comprehensive institutional history see Herschel Webb, The Japanese Imperial Institution in the Tokugawa Period (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968).
world. Domestic conservative and nationalist forces see double standards being applied to Japan’s experience with empire versus that of other Western empires that colonized in the same geography and timeframe. Japan remembers its short-lived empire as having combined entry into the West with defense of Asianism against European imperialism at the turn of the nineteenth century. However, the lasting legacy of Japan’s brief encounter with empire is its complicated place in its own neighborhood.

By the time the Cold War ended, hopes for renewed Asianism were growing along with selective memories of an imperial model that might help Japan assert a leadership role in emergent East Asian regionalism. Given the dynamism of East Asia, Japan is at the crossroads of today’s civilizational divide between the old center of modernity and the region emerging as the leader in modernization. Complicating Japan’s quest are negative memories of other East Asian states during its decades of imperialism. Given the rapid rise of China, whose memories of imperial Japan are particularly hostile, forging an East Asian community faces many hurdles. Reviving glorificationist memories of imperial Japan is complicated by the security afforded by alliance ties with the United States and the insecurity aroused by use of the “history card” against Japan and the fear that China is twisting Asianism into an anti-Western creed to serve its own hegemonic agenda.

As demonstrated in the case of Turkey, there are critical turning points in the story of a successor state’s conceptions of identity and imperial memories. The most consequential and important turning point for our purposes is the initial collapse of empire and how the modern nation-state is shaped in its aftermath. Japan’s turning points coincide with the end of World War II and the simultaneous fall of the Berlin Wall and
the Showa era with the death of Emperor Hirohito in 1989. By focusing on these turning points the chapters that follow trace the evolution of Japan’s view of its past and the impact this has had on its conception of what it means to be “Japanese” and Japan’s place in the international and regional order at different periods of time. In chronologically outlining the evolution of modern Japan this case study presents the salient domestic and international pressures that shaped the memories and narratives of the time. These factors are often intertwined; however, by presenting the most important actors, issues, and outcomes, I hope to systematically trace the key turning points that Japan has traversed while focusing on the changes in imperial memories that ensued.

**Turning Points**

Periodization of modern Japanese history is typically presented in pre- and post-war terms with the end of World War II and the collapse of the Japanese empire. Within the post-war time frame historians focus on the American occupation defined by General MacArthur’s supreme rule and then Japan’s transition into the “San Francisco System.”284 The defining moment for Japan’s post-imperial rehabilitation was when Japan signed the 1951 peace treaty with forty-eight nations at San Francisco, hence the name, formally ending its occupation and aligning itself with the United States for the remainder of the Cold War. The strategic parameters of Japan’s domestic and international alliances were set by its all-encompassing bilateral Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security with Washington that made Tokyo dependent for all critical

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284 Historian John W. Dower is credited with coining this term in his considerable body of work on Japan and reflects on its common usage in his introduction to *Postwar Japan as History*, ed. Andrew Gordon (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 4.
foreign and security policies. Without the economic constraints of a full security apparatus and the United States’ patronage, Japan’s post-war recovery was rapid, as it became an economic power by the 1970s. At the same time, Tokyo consolidated under the so-called “1955 System” which in that year brought together the formerly fractious bureaucratic, business, and conservative elites under the political umbrella of the newly established Liberal Democrat Party (LDP) to rule for the next four decades.\textsuperscript{285} The end of the Cold War and Showa period (death of Emperor Hirohito) provided a useful reflective point for Japan, but much remained the same. The internally competitive but hegemonic conservative establishment of the LDP guided Japan, more or less uninterrupted, until well past the end of the Cold War into the twenty-first century, only recently coming to an end with the 2009 electoral victory of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ).\textsuperscript{286}

This case-study outlines the origins of Japan’s modern empire and its ultimate defeat in World War II and focuses on how this laid the groundwork for the modern Japanese nation and perceptions of itself. Embedded in this history are choices about memories and narratives that have been forged by modern Japan’s leaders and society. In laying out the evolution of Japan’s empire and subsequent defeat, the initial chapter begins by tracing the effects and impact of this experience on the Japanese narrative and how this was dealt with by a defeated nation. I then analyze the rejectionist imperial memories and pacifistic narratives that were put in place by occupation authorities and its collaborators by using tools such as education, history narratives, and political party configurations. As will be demonstrated, throughout the late 1940s and 50s, led by Prime

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\textsuperscript{285} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{286} John W. Dower presents the terms and arguments here in his introduction to \textit{Postwar Japan as History}, ed. Andrew Gordon (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), while others have argued about whether the “1955 System” is really over since the DPJ has in many ways merely replaced the LDP rather than dismantled the entire system.
Minister Yoshida and his successors, the ruling elites through the state apparatus sought to ignore Japan’s immediate imperial past in favor of a more isolated and inward focused history with its focal point in pre-imperial history.

Through a close examination of the various reforms and political deals made in the creation of the ruling LDP coalition, the culmination of these efforts can be seen in the policies adopted regarding modernization, the rise of big-business and bureaucracy, and even the new role for the Emperor that was chosen by MacArthur as a way to “control” Japan. I seek to trace the evolution of modern Japan and the coalitions that sought to lead Japan by forgetting and rejecting its imperial past despite having been shaped by it. In seeking to understand why modern Japan chose to initially forget its imperial past I explore the connection between militarism and the Japanese empire along with the conservative nationalism that fueled Japanese imperialism and was ultimately channeled to reconstruct Asia’s new economic leader. The manifestation of these changes was most prominently felt in international relations where Japan subordinated itself to the U.S.-led Western order, which allowed for a protective umbrella that resulted in a domestic focus reflected in history curriculums that largely ignored Japan’s troubled past with its Asian neighbors and only became internationally salient in the 1980s.

The final chapter moves from Japan’s initial after-empire phase as a pariah nation to the emergence of a self-confident and outward looking dominant Asian economic giant that was still an international and political dwarf. I seek to understand Japan’s memory and debates about its past that resonated far beyond the Japanese archipelago throughout Asia in its international relations. The underlying domestic political dynamics put in place by the “1955 System” and formulated in an international environment, in which
Japan benefited from U.S. patronage throughout the Cold War, began to change as a result of shifting regional and international dynamics that in turn shifted imperial memories. In the 1980s Prime Minister Nakasone’s attempts to reinvigorate Japan’s role in Asia are viewed in light of regional geopolitical realities such as the rise of China and the continued animosity toward Japan by its neighbors despite official apologies. Although Japan has undergone rapid change since 1945, it is still possible to speak of a “post-war system” because the constitution of Japan has remained unchanged for more than half a century and the official narrative is only now being challenged in an open manner with the rise of glorificationist rhetoric among influential but still fringe right-wing revisionists.

The case study concludes with a section focused on contemporary Japan. Analyzing the rise of the DPJ and its “East Asian Community” approach of reengaging its former Asian colonies, it is clear that the internal schisms in Japan have not disappeared even though new actors and constellations have replaced old ones. Despite these facts, unlike in Turkey where glorification of its Ottoman past has become commonplace, Japan still has not overcome its own rejectionist tendencies that are increasingly ambivalent on the historic role of Japan in Asia. Focusing almost exclusively on the period between 1931 and 1945, glorificationists in Japan have called for a revision of Japan’s official history to help the country overcome its pacifist and “unpatriotic” tendencies. Politically personified by Prime Ministers Koizumi and Abe, but most popularly defended by conservatives such as General Tamogami, these voices have become increasingly more mainstream in Japan. Rather than focusing on Japan’s imperial memory, per se, glorificationists have sought to make common cause with the ruling
coalition of conservatives to stress the need for a more proactive and independent foreign policy as a manifestation of Japan’s new sense of self-awareness and understanding.

Drawing on various primary Japanese-language sources from the Ministry of Education, National Diet Library, and Tokyo University libraries in Japan, this chapter systematically categorizes the ways in which views of Japan’s imperial past have evolved over time. In addition, I had the opportunity to interview influential actors and leaders in the ongoing debates over Japan’s checkered past. Similar to the Turkish case, the amount of information and evidence available easily overwhelms any single attempt to categorize it. Yet by carefully reading the primary sources and original history textbooks available and by supplementing this research with secondary sources and relevant interviews, I attempt to paint a picture of the data that is as accurate and full as possible. In addition, I seek to trace the major developments in Japan’s political history throughout the time periods highlighted so that further light can be shed on the conditions under which Japan’s imperial memories have shifted or changed. As this case study demonstrates, Japan’s historical memories are fluid, and while far less extreme in their shifts than the Turkish case, they are nonetheless valuable to examine.

**Modernizing Through Empire: Japan’s Experience in Asia as a Reaction to the West**

The intellectual history of Japan’s “rediscovery” of Asia has been an area of ongoing research for at least the last 50 years. As historians such as Cemil Aydin have

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pointed out, Japanese leaders in many ways imitated the West by reversing the Orientalist discourse and appropriating many of the Western racist arguments used against non-Western peoples. The claim that Japan’s “Greater East Asian Expansion,” a term that gained popularity in the late 1930s thanks to the work of scholars such as Fusao Hayashi and whose meaning changed over time, was a response to Western imperialism and very much triggered by a desire to defend Asia. A popular narrative at the turn of the century was that it was Japan’s responsibility to “save Asia” from Westerners, almost like a reverse of Rudyard Kipling’s famous “white man’s burden” being undertaken by Europeans in Africa. The European narrative of East-West conflict was not challenged by Japan, but rather appropriated by it so that it could frame itself as the leader of Asia and facilitate a pan-Asian identity throughout its emerging empire. The primary goal of Japanese reformers was to enable Japan to compete with the Western colonial powers by creating their own empire to “protect Asia.” This goal arose both as a function of international realities and Japan’s own internal transformation from a peripheral island kingdom to an emerging Asian powerhouse. From the perspective of the Japanese elite, given that the Chinese were unable to defend themselves against European imperialism as in the case of the Opium War (1839-42), they had lost their claim to represent Asian civilization and instead proved themselves to be in need of “rescuing.” Many Japanese intellectuals and political leaders began pushing for a civilizing or rescue mission for Asia, some sincerely and others simply utilizing the

discourse to provide legitimacy to Japan’s emerging “liberal” empire.291 In the words of Hasan Kösebalan who has studied the motivations for Japan’s empire, “The Japanese elite felt that it was Japan’s duty to “liberate” Asians from their state of inferiority.”292 Thereby creating a “protective” empire for Asia centered in Tokyo. Tellingly, similar claims were used previously to legitimize European imperialism in Asia and Africa throughout the 19th and 20th century.

Seen in this light, Japan’s experience with empire began very much as a reaction against the West while at the same time being modeled on the Western experience of empire at the turn of the nineteenth century. The challenge posed to Japan, and to all non-Western empires for that matter, was to modernize in a military sense without losing one’s identity to the West. Unlike the Ottoman Empire that had once challenged the West directly at the gates of Vienna, Japan was in a weaker position and never threatened any of the Western empires existentially that it came in contact with. Japanese elites recognized the need to adopt Western military techniques and technology if they were to modernize and effectively neutralize any foreign threat that might emanate from the West. Having been forcibly “opened” in 1853 through the gunboat diplomacy of the United States’ Matthew Perry, Japan’s modernizers were determined to never face such a humiliation again.293

The Japanese Meiji Restoration of 1868 was in many ways a response to Perry’s arrival and utilized anti-Western rhetoric to mobilize against the ailing Tokugawa Shogunate and “restore the emperor.” The defeat of the samurai, or warrior class, by the

291 For more see Cemil Aydin’s book.
292 Kösebalan, 10.
newly emerged Westernized military elite did not eliminate the traditional warrior-spirit of *bushido*, but it did channel it into a modern rather than a traditional framework. The new elites determined that any program of modernization would depend heavily upon the adoption of Western science, technology, and industrialization. They were willing to adopt Western political and social systems if they were deemed necessary for national survival. In striking contrast to this rather pragmatic approach on the part of the Japanese military class, the Chinese ruling class was immersed with cultural superiority and ethnocentrism.\footnote{Mikiso Hane, *Modern Japan: A Historical Survey* (New York: Westview Press, 2001), 187.}

In 1890 Japan adopted its Meiji constitution, opened a new legislature, and issued a document of vital importance, the so-called Imperial Rescript on Education, which laid out the basic principles for the new empire. This document is significant historically because it is the first explicit text to lay out a set of principles that draws a direct connection between the people of Japan and its empire. As highlighted by scholars of Japan, beginning with the basic Confucian relationships, it exhorted the people to:

*Be filial to your parents, affectionate to your brothers and sisters; as husbands and wives be harmonious; as friends, true; bear yourselves in modesty and moderation; always respect the constitution and observe the laws; should emergency arise, offer yourselves outrageously to the state; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth.*\footnote{Translation in Kenneth Pyle, *Japan Rising: The Resurgence of Japanese Power and Purpose* (New York: Public Affairs, 2008), 121. For further study on the Imperial Rescript see Roger F. Hackett, “The}

\addcontentsline{toc}{section}{References}
The Rescript is considered by many scholars to mark the beginning of Japan’s imperial indoctrination given that it became part of daily school exercises. From this point onward education became a primary tool of imperial indoctrination. The Meiji oligarch Yamagata Aritomo, the key foreign policy strategist of the time, envisioned that “in due course, the nation will become one great civil and military university.” Therefore as a result, in readying the nation for empire, the Meiji elite emphasized education as the most important preparation and tool to transform Japan from state to empire.

The speed at which Japan transformed itself from an isolated national kingdom to Asian empire was impressive. However, the extent to which the population was prepared through major transformation within Japan’s educational and imperial apparatuses is often overlooked. The mentality of Japanese during the Tokugawa versus Meiji was night and day. Unlike the Ottomans, who arose from a long tradition of nomadic empires that had conquered the steppes of Central Asia and continued its search for identity through its expansion, the Japanese had a well-forged identity that through circumstance rather than design began to assume an imperial mindset that would eventually propel them to conquer lands beyond their own islands. The task of creating a single-minded imperial mission in Japan and then focusing this beyond its own archipelago proved to be too successful in many ways that forced the Japanese beyond their own traditional domains.

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Quoted in Pyle, Japan Rising: The Resurgence of Japanese Power and Purpose, 121.
Mobilizing an Empire

The Sino-Japanese War of 1895 is generally the date marked as the beginning of Japan’s empire. However this victory would not have been possible without the newly established Meiji professional bureaucracy that took on the challenge of mobilizing the populace for empire. Going far beyond education, this mobilization included all different types of grassroots organizations, including youth groups, veterans associations, and women’s groups, as well as religious orders, particularly Shinto shrines. All were harnessed to the work of spreading the imperial mission and the supporting ideology. As part of this mission there was an emphasis placed on the foreign policy goals of the state as paramount with religiosity and loyalty to the emperor that would inhibit political opposition and dissent in favor of a unified Japan in a fractious Asia and world.

Japan’s imperial destiny was an invented myth of the Meiji period that the ruling elites adopted to further their own goals of dominating the state and region. The new bureaucracy set about undertaking social policies designed to dampen unrest, preempt radical ideologies, and integrate the lower classes into the political community. Village headmen, Shinto priests, elementary school principals, prominent landlords, and other local actors were charged with instilling a new imperial ideology. As a result, these imperial fortune-tellers became interpreters of the national mission to the masses. Because reverence for the emperor, the values of the family, and suspicion of foreigners struck a responsive chord in a post-Tokugawa period and resonated with long-held
traditions of the social system, people outside the government became some of the most fervent purveyors of the ideology.  

Having laid the groundwork for Japan’s empire, the modernizers’ victory over China brought the kind of honor and prestige that no other Japanese had achieved internationally. Subsequently this recognition of status and power became the essence of Japanese imperial purpose. Japan’s victory over Russia a decade later in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 was even more significant because it destroyed the racial myth that no white empire could be beaten by a non-white race. This victory set Japan on a path to colonize Korea and establish its sphere of influence in Manchuria and brought even more imperial pride and self-assurance within Japan. Defeat of a European power by an Asian nation captivated the world’s attention and brought the Japanese validation in their newly found identity as an empire and world power. The speed at which Japan had gone from being an isolated kingdom to regional empire was stunning and unprecedented historically. 

Japan’s victory in the Russo-Japanese War stunned the West, but never fully legitimized it. Even after World War I, the European empires refused to grant Japan special permission to act as its Asian representative and began to see Japan as the major threat to Western interests in Asia.  

Similar to Western responses to the Ottoman and Russian empires, a double standard appeared to exist for Asian modern empires that confounded the Japanese leadership. Japanese leaders chose to draw on an ideology of pan-Asianism and anti-Western rhetoric that led to attempts by Japan to create a Japan-centric pan-Asian economic and security order in the 1930s. By this point in time, Japan

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298 For more, see Hasan Kosebalan, “Torn Identities and Foreign Policy: Case of Japan and Turkey,” Insight Turkey, Vol. 10, No. 1, (2008), 5-30.
perceived itself as superior to Asia and assumed for itself the role of liberator from Western imperialism. When Asians refused to accept “liberation” willingly, the rapidly expanding Japanese Imperial Army imposed its will. Despite Korean or Chinese nationalist accounts to the contrary, the ultimate demise of the Japanese empire had less to do with the cost of subjugation and more to do with the United States. The eventual over-extension and militarization of the Japanese Empire put it on a direct collision course with the United States, which led to World War II and Japan’s defeat.

The history of Japanese imperialism is relatively short considering that it only lasted 50 years from after the Sino-Japanese war in 1895 to the end of World War II in 1945. Despite its short-lived life there are two stages to Japan’s empire that affect the way in which it would come to be perceived and remembered in modern Japan. The initial stage of empire from 1895 to 1930 was considered the so-called “liberal” era, while the period from 1931 to 1945 came to be regarded as the “militaristic” era. Compared to the almost infinite reign of the Chinese Empire, the Japanese response to its own imperial legacy would seemingly be much more restrained. The speed at which the Japanese empire was created and subsequently lost is part and parcel to Japan’s evolving imperial memory. Japan had never been colonized by Western empires or suffered an internal revolution like other non-Western empires entering World War II. Therefore the way the Japanese were defeated in a major war and then occupied by a non-Asian power would leave a lasting impression on the Japanese successor state that emerged from the ashes of empire.

Collapse of Empire and Embracing Defeat

The collapse of the Japanese Empire was a dramatic and sudden event. Within the space of less than a month after the Emperor announced that Japan accepted the terms of the Potsdam Declaration, Japan lost control over its entire overseas empire in Korea, Taiwan, and large swathes of China, much of which was conquered by the Red Army in a surprise offensive launched in the closing days of the war. As part of the final peace settlement, Japan was forced to relinquish its territorial claims on these and other territories, although a significant number of disputes over surrounding islands and territorial waters would linger on to the present day as reminders of Japan’s imperial past. In Japan the victorious Americans singularly, as opposed to collective Allied powers in Germany, took over administrative control of the Japanese home islands while former colonial territories were distributed to China and European powers. The Chinese nationalist government under Chiang Kai-Shek regained control over Taiwan. Chinese and Korean communist forces took power in the regions that had fallen in the last minute drive by Soviet forces and South Korea entered into a tumultuous period where a number of different political forces vied for supremacy while under loose American military supervision. The Allied Powers, represented by the United States, were not content with winning a military victory over Japan and dismantling the empire; they sought to win a moral victory as well.\textsuperscript{300}

\textsuperscript{300} For some of the best work on these issues see Thomas Berger, unpublished manuscript “Imperial Legacy,” presented at the Boston University Conference on Empires (2006).
The American occupation, which was originally expected to last about two years, ended up lasting seven years.\textsuperscript{301} Cooperation with the Americans was facilitated by the fact that the conquerors themselves displayed very little hostility toward the Japanese people and more of a fascination with the differing cultures. The general friendliness and spontaneous warmth manifested by the occupying troops made the relationship between the two peoples a relatively harmonious and successful one. The U.S. military did not display the overbearing haughtiness and superiority complex that had so frequently characterized the imperial rule of the Japanese military over conquered peoples. In the words of Michiko Hane, “…no other conquered people in history was treated more humanely and benefited more at the hands of the conquerors.”\textsuperscript{302}

The American occupation regime sought to destroy Japan’s militaristic political and economic structure. Under the circumstances, Japan had no choice other than accepting the terms imposed by the United States. However, as John Dower has chronicled, Japan “embraced its defeat” and set out to benefit from the Cold War and the liberal international economic system as a close ally of the United States.\textsuperscript{303} While the military defeat of Japan did not lead to a complete restructuring of the political system or divide the country like it did in Germany, it did lead to the complete exclusion and expulsion of the military elites that had led Japan from 1931 onward.

The American purge was both facilitated and constrained by the fact that Japanese militarists were organic to the old elite. Though they were heavily concentrated in the military, they were also represented in the media, segments of the business world, the

\textsuperscript{301} The US since Pearl Harbor had been planning to occupy and transform Japan, but the speed at which reforms and changes could be made were underestimated at almost every step yet in comparison to Germany, the occupation of Japan was relatively well-planned and thought out proactively.

\textsuperscript{302} Hane, \textit{Modern Japan: A Historical Survey}, 344.

\textsuperscript{303} Term comes from John W. Dower, \textit{Embracing Defeat} (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999)
bureaucracy, and the political parties. Whereas the German Nazis were voted into power, and thus could claim broader political legitimacy, the Japanese militarists took over through a far more insidious and protracted process of “…political assassinations, attempted *coup d’etat*, and engineered military emergencies abroad.” The independent position of the army under the Meiji constitution allowed it to evade civilian control over Manchuria. This isolated Japan internationally, weakened more moderate Japanese political forces, and eventually led to a militarist takeover. While the military as an institution enjoyed broad popular support, especially in rural areas, no one ever freely voted for a militarist government or for a single charismatic leader like Hitler or Mussolini. Instead policy emerged out of struggles among elite groups and was promoted as being part of the Emperor’s wishes. Therefore, as Thomas Berger has noted in his comparative research, it was far easier for individual Japanese than for most Germans to feel, in the war’s devastating aftermath, that they had been the victims of political forces beyond their control. Creating a narrative of collective victimhood at the hands of Japanese militarists became an important part of the rehabilitation of modern Japan. However, the question of whether the Emperor in whose name the Japanese Empire had expanded and waged war should or would be included was an open one as the Americans sought to create a new Japan from the ashes of its empire.

An important, yet often overlooked, aspect of Japan’s defeat and the American occupation was the resilience of the conservative ruling elite. As in the case of the Meiji Restoration, traditional members of the old ruling class reemerged. Despite the revolutionary reforms that the Americans imposed during the early years of the

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305 Ibid, 133.
occupation, conservative leaders, values, and institutional practices survived the upheaval and served as central features of post-war Japanese politics and foreign policy. Given the fragility of Japan and also the willingness of the old elites to conform to the measures being issued by Occupation authorities, American planners tended to overlook most non-military collaborators.

The postwar political order was not as radically new as many observers thought at the time. By largely sparing the civilian bureaucratic elite from purges, the Americans permitted an unexpected level of continuity in the prewar conservative hierarchy. Unaware of the potential power of the bureaucratic elite, which in the prewar period had drafted more than 90 percent of the legislation submitted to the Diet, the occupation forces kept the bureaucracy intact to run the day-to-day business of government. Seasoned bureaucrats emerged in a dominant position from the postwar order. In addition to their traditional power base in the ministries, these veterans of the pre-war conservative establishment moved into leadership positions in postwar political parties and provided continuity of both personnel and purpose. Despite the fact that the postwar political regime was, in many respects, quite distinct from its predecessor, the traditional values of the pre-war state such as bushido, hierarchy, and ageism survived albeit in a new setting. New civilian elites had replaced the military but the regime itself was largely unchanged.

The significance of this development was profound. The survival of the conservative elite resulted in the continuation of the strategic principles and logic of Japan’s pre-war approach to the international system. In other words, Japan’s realpolitik

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orientation and attempts at seeking stability through alliance politics was left firmly in place. It also created a sense of continuity and normalcy that led to an ambiguous relationship with empire that was associated with the military and therefore moderately rejected, but largely forgotten rather than actively opposed. The fulcrum of this relationship between empire and military was to undergo a series of changes, but conservatives had little incentive to deal with their past or modern Japan’s memories of empire since dealing with them would have involved a level of soul-searching they were not ready for nor forced into.

Under Occupation

Japan’s defeat in 1945 was as devastating as any suffered by a country in the twentieth century and domestically the survival of the state was in question as it came under foreign occupation for the first time in its history. The question of what to do with the Emperor who faced indictment by the Japanese people for the national disaster and was blamed by the victims who had been colonized in his name was an open one. The Americans decided that rather than eradicating the Chrysanthemum throne they would instead radically alter its position within the country. In many ways, what they had in mind resembled pre-Meiji Japan where the Emperor was no more than a symbol. In particular, MacArthur had a radically new constitution in mind that the emperor would thereby serve to mask the political revolution taking place as a result of occupation reforms. In the words of Kenneth Ruoff, “In early 1946, just months after the surrender, the American occupation authorities settled the monarchy’s fate by pressuring a
conservative Japanese government into accepting a draft constitution authored by the
Government Section of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) that
ensured the throne’s survival but radically redefined the emperor’s position.”

The postwar constitution concentrated decision-making power in the Diet, which was to
represent the “sovereign people.”

With the passing of the new constitution Japan was converted from an empire to a
republic. “Preserving the monarchy maintained an illusion of continuity that made the
sweeping reforms, from equality under the law (Article 14) to universal adult suffrage
(Article 15) to freedom of assembly and association (Article 21) to the right of workers to
organize and to bargain and act collectively (Article 28), appear less radical and soothed
the psyche of conservatives.” Most uniquely Japan’s new constitution, with approval of
the Emperor, was enshrined with the so-called peace clause stating simply that:

Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order,
the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the
nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international
disputes. To accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea,
and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained.
The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.

309 For the official English translation see The Constitution of Japan,
http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html
310 Ruoff, 83.
311 For the official English translation see The Constitution of Japan,
http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html
The renunciation of war for a sovereign nation was a first not only for Japan but the world. No other constitution to this day in the world so clearly refutes the right to use military means. As a result, the Japanese created for themselves a unique space in international relations that is predicated on a particular interpretation of this clause. Even within the confines of the wording of this clause there have been attempts to stretch it for a more “normal” Japan. However, perhaps the most important link that was broken as a result of this clause was that between Emperor and military. Creating a clear rejection and distance between the throne and military became the most important task after it was enshrined in the new constitution.

From the day after Japan’s surrender, Emperor Hirohito was disassociated from the war through a campaign undertaken by Japanese crafters of the new Japanese image and the American occupiers who shared the same interest in preserving the symbolism and power of the throne. Amazingly, not only was he separated from the war, he was also recast as Japan’s foremost pacifist. This was accomplished largely by never having Hirohito address or even acknowledge his role in World War II. The tacit agreement for the Emperor to support the new constitution in exchange for his more symbolic role was enthusiastically embraced. As Ruoff notes:

*The reign of the reconstructed Hirohito lasted four decades into the postwar era. Even as the onetime sovereign remained on the throne, an increasing number of representatives of the political right came to accept the Occupation-era reform of the emperor that had so shocked the political elite in 1946. In fact, interpreting the postwar symbolic monarchy as a return to tradition provided conservative political elites with a face-

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312 Ruoff, 12.
saving way not simply to accept the symbolic monarchy but to champion it.\footnote{Ibid.}

As a result, to this day in Japan, the emperor is at the center of symbolic politics, which at times are no less important than the day-to-day politics. For most Japanese, the monarchy became the symbol of Japan’s timeless culture or the embodiment of traditional customs and beliefs that many longed to return to having tried to modernize through empire which was not controlled by the emperor himself.

For decades Japan had an emperor who simply refused to accept any responsibility for the war publicly and played along with the official account that blamed militarists. As long as the symbol of the nation chose to do so, it was easy for the Japanese to collectively evade the question of how an indeterminate but still narrowly defined group of militarists could be fully responsible for fifteen years of war that resulted in so much suffering in Asia and, in the end, brought disaster to Japan. This argument never won much approval outside of the ruling class in Japan. On the left, whose history prevailed for at least two decades, the focus was on class struggle and the militarists were only one part of an unjust elite who took advantage of an incomplete revolution to gain and misuse power. On the right, there was mostly silence with many biding their time to recast blame on the global imperialist setting. While Chinese and U.S. views highlighted an argument focused on the military and militarists, within Japan itself there was a more nuanced perspective that rarely made it to the international arena.

Turning from the institution of the emperor and the writing of a new constitution, the American occupation authority turned its attention to the role of education. General
MacArthur called in the first post-war Prime Minister Shidehara and handed him a memo outlining his plans for liberalization of education. The objective was to remove “militaristic” and “ultra-nationalistic” influences from the schools and to foster democratic values in the students. In order to accomplish this, MacArthur directed that “…new curricula, textbooks, teaching manuals, and instructional materials be designed to produce an educated, peaceful, and responsibly citizenry.”

Having made his decree, MacArthur turned the implementation over to the Japanese government, which set out to revise the textbooks on its own. The Japanese Minister of Education insisted that Japanese textbooks must “defend and promote the mythic imperial polity and high moral education.” The revisions based on these principles were found unacceptable by SCAP officials and thus subsequently rejected. As a result, the Americans took a more direct interest in the censorship and molding of postwar Japanese education. As historian Carol Gluck’s work on the occupation of Japan emphasizes:

> The Americans immediately forbade “false history,” ordering children to ink out passages about sacred emperors and sacrificing samurai from their textbooks. They suspended historical instruction in the schools and began their censorship of the press. Having halted one history, the occupation restarted another using what it called guidance to “re-
interpret” Japanese history objectively in light of ascertained facts and without bias or hero-worship.\textsuperscript{316}

As a result, the education system that was constructed under the occupation and based on the 1947 Fundamental Law on Education actually is one of the most enduring legacies of the American Occupation that formally ended in 1952. From this period onward, domestic political trends would dominate educational reform policies with occasional international pressure exerted by the United States that had originally set the rules of engagement for the battles over Japan’s history.

The (Re) Emergence of a Political System – Yoshida Doctrine “Strength in Weakness”

Japan had come under the first foreign occupation in its entire history. The basic parameters of its domestic politics and foreign policy emerged in the context of this occupation. Japan was now a country without military power, and there was little desire among Japanese elites or demand by the public to change this fate. There were different views in Japan on how to respond to this new era with different interpretations of Japanese history. On the left side of the political spectrum, the Socialist and Communist parties, supported by leading intellectuals such as Masao Maruyama and Ikutaro Shimizu, believed that any involvement in military ventures could lead to hyper-nationalism that

would least straight back to empire-building and war. In their opinion, Japan’s destiny was to be a “peaceful nation” with neutrality in the Cold War. This would make Japan a role model that would inspire the world through its principled renunciation of war as a tool of foreign policy devoted to the principle of unarmed neutrality. On the right side, there was a dispute between two conservatives groups: moderate conservatives led by Shigeru Yoshida and the right-wing conservatives led by “Class A” war criminal Nobusuke Kishi. Unlike the left, these two conservative groups shared a similar perspective of economic development and saw the alliance with the United States in positive terms even if their short-term approaches differed.

The consolidation of conservative domestic power in Japan was made possible by the weakness of the country’s geopolitical position and the emergence of a new type of leader that could thrive in this environment. Starting from the first postwar election, Yoshida Shigeru distinguished himself as one of modern Japan’s key post-war leaders and the architect of modern Japan’s reemergence as a nation despite his service and connections to imperial Japan. Among the surviving conservatives, the key figure in shaping postwar politics and the conception of national purpose was Yoshida, who was prime minister for most of the first decade of the postwar period and who served concurrently as foreign minister during much of this time. As scholars of Japanese politics have emphasized, Japanese political culture does much to discourage the emergence of a strong charismatic individual leader. However, Yoshida was an exception that came at the right time in modern Japanese history.

Yoshida’s formative experience with empire had been that of opposing militarism and seeking to reassert civilian control over Japan’s extensions, which shaped his core
belief that the key problem in Japan was militarism and not nationalism. As a former diplomat, Yoshida had served as ambassador to Great Britain in the late 1930s. He was known to be an effective proponent of the Japanese empire who argued for Western acceptance of Japan’s hegemony in Asia on geopolitical grounds. Yoshida’s saving grace was the distance he kept from the military during the war. He was one of the most important supporters of Prince Konoe’s direct appeal to Emperor Hirohito seeking peace and an early surrender in 1945. For his troubles, Yoshida was jailed in April 1945, which gave him tremendous postwar credibility as a conservative who had stood up and opposed the military.

Yoshida’s pro-British ideals and his knowledge of Western societies from having been a former diplomat made him a perfect candidate in the eyes of the postwar Allied occupation despite his connections to the imperialist movement. As a result of the Allies backing, Yoshida was able to emerge as Japan’s most accepted and able political leader. In the first postwar election of 1946, the Liberal Party, led by Yoshida, managed to form a cabinet working together with the other conservative parties. Given the devastating consequences of defeat in World War II, Japan was seen internationally as nothing more than an appendage to the United States during most of Yoshida’s time in office. However, Yoshida was able to skillfully turn Japan’s weakness into its greatest strength against its ally that was being confronted in Asia by both an aggressive Soviet Union and resurgent China. 317

Yoshida was a realist and nationalist, determined to preserve as much as possible of the old traditions and set Japan on a path that would restore the nation as a great power, albeit a non-military one. In the desolation and despair of the postwar days, when Japan was an international pariah and the nation’s fortunes were at the lowest point in history, Yoshida succeeded in projecting a sense of national purpose that guided the country for the next four decades. He was an advocate of Japan not being simply a “normal” nation, but a postmodern nation that to a unique degree, institutionalized norms that would shape and sometimes frustrate Tokyo’s pursuit of national security. Yoshida’s ideas about Japan and its place far outlived his own political career in part because he installed a powerful group of followers in the conservative ruling party and in the bureaucracy to carry on his politics in the decades after he left office.318

In one of Yoshida’s most consequential foreign policy decisions, U.S. Secretary of State John Dulles broached the concept of a Pacific Pact similar to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization that bound the states of Western Europe to the U.S. in a multilateral security guarantee. Despite being pressured by Dulles, Yoshida refused to accede to these demands. This option of integration with neighboring Asian nations was unappealing to Yoshida both because of his personal sense of nationalism and Japanese pride and, importantly, the opportunity he saw for a special bilateral U.S.-Japan relationship. In marked contrast to his contemporary Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in Germany, who sought to resolve the “German question” and the fear of German rearmament by integrating West Germany in NATO, Yoshida had no interest in a regional alliance that Japan did not lead. Yoshida also had no interest in nor did he attempt to deal with war

guilt by taking initiative in reaching out to former victims of wartime aggression. In the words of Otake Hideo “Yoshida never desired cultural or political integration of Japan with the West or with neighboring Asian nations. Although he was eager for international economic integration, he wished to maintain a distinctive cultural identity for the Japanese people.”

Given America’s role as leader and lack of unity among Asians, Japan was able to emerge as a regional leader without having to deal directly with its neighbors. Given the international context and regional environment, Yoshida refused to accede to U.S. demands for a Pacific Pact, opting instead for a stronger bilateral relationship. By seizing the opportunity for what Nagai Yonosuke has termed “blackmail by the weak,” Yoshida bargained tirelessly from a position of weakness with Dulles. As Kenneth Pyle lays out:

_Yoshida established his bargaining position with Dulles by making light of Japan’s security problems and intimating that Japan could protect itself through its own devices by being democratic and peaceful and by relying on the protection of world opinion. After all, he argued, Japan had a constitution that, inspired by U.S. ideals and the lessons of defeat, renounced arms, and the Japanese people were determined to uphold it and to adhere to a new course in world affairs._

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321 Pyle, _Japan Rising_, 229.
In hindsight many scholars have argued that Prime Minister Yoshida’s strategy represented the most realistic and rational decision available to Japan at that time.\(^{322}\) Yoshida had skillfully sidestepped the thorny issues of dealing with imperial collapse by creating a collective environment of amnesia concerning Japan’s former empire given the present situation they found themselves in.

**The End of Occupation and Yoshida’s Enduring Influence**

Yoshida was able to remain in office for six years, which was a remarkable feat and longer than any previous or subsequent prime minister in Cold War Japanese history. Yoshida’s main objective and primary achievement was the signing of a peace treaty to end the presence of U.S. occupation forces, which was also a priority for the United States given its own shifting geostrategic interests. The U.S. policy toward Japan had evolved from the original objective of keeping Japan from reemerging as a military power to rebuilding its economy instead. With the outbreak of the Korean War and the stage set for the Cold War, the United States began to see the transformation of Japan in a different strategic light. Japan now had become an important bastion in the anti-communist bloc that the United States wanted to forge. Thus, from the U.S. perspective, the conclusion of a peace treaty with Japan was essential to strengthen ties in preparation for confrontation with the Communist powers.

\(^{322}\) Kenneth Pyle and Richard Samuels are the two biggest proponents that have shaped the academic literature in this direction.
Yoshida followed Meiji Japan’s strategy of adaptiveness and flexibility to the changed international system while still bringing his own special flair. In circumstances that required the utmost deftness, he more than any other modern Japanese statesman possessed the tactical insight to make the best of the desperate situation. When he formed his first cabinet in the spring of 1946, Yoshida observed to a colleague that “history provides examples of winning by diplomacy after losing in war.” That is, a defeated nation, by exploiting the shifting relations among world powers, could contain the damage incurred in defeat and instead win the peace much like Turkey after World War I under Ataturk.

As the American Occupation was coming to a close, the national political map remained divided into two major camps, referred to at the time and now in the literature as “conservative” and “progressive.” They opposed each other bitterly, and their all-out clashes were the most important political events of the 1950s. But these groups were also divided sharply within themselves. One cannot understand the outcome of these political struggles and later settlements without recognizing the major schisms within. At the head of the conservative forces, with intimate links to the bureaucratic and business elites, stood the Liberal Party. Yoshida as prime minister had pushed tirelessly for a final peace treaty to end foreign occupation in Japan and restore the country to its “rightful place” in the international system. The progressive forces were led by the Japan Socialist Party though there was a split between a “left” and a “right” faction. Although Yoshida was a strong leader, he was not very popular personally. He could often be tactless and his critics charged him with conducting a “one-man” autocratic government. The left-wing parties in particular constantly clashed with him, but lacking the voting strength to

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323 Quoted in Pyle, Japan Rising, 227.
prevent him from passing his preferred measures, they could only demonstrate their opposition by physically disrupting Diet proceedings. Labor leaders were also hostile to Yoshida for actions such as passing the law prohibiting strikes by electric power and mine workers.  

The San Francisco Peace Treaty crafted in 1951 served to formally end World War II and Japan’s position as an imperial power by allocating compensation to Allied victims. The treaty was crafted to make extensive use of the United Nations Charter and the newly adopted Universal Declaration of Human Rights and was simultaneously drafted in the same year with a bilateral U.S.-Japan Security Treaty. Taken in tandem these treaties became known as the “San Francisco System” signifying the impact they would have on Japan’s role in the international arena.

The conservative parties favored ratification of the “San Francisco System,” but the progressives divided on the question. Right-wing Socialists favored ratification of the peace treaty without Soviet participation but opposed linking the treaty to any security agreement with the United States. Left-wing Socialists opposed signing the peace treaty without Soviet participation and objected to the security treaty on principle. The Communist Party opposed ratifying a treaty that did not include all the powers concerned and rejected a security treaty that provided for the continued U.S. military presence in Japan. Despite these divides, Yoshida had sufficient support in the Diet to get the treaties ratified in 1951; the treaty went into effect on April 28, 1952.

324 Hane, Modern Japan: A Historical Survey, 38.
326 As alluded to previously John Dower coined this term which has gained widespread currency and is used to signify postwar Japan’s international relations until the end of the Cold War. Postwar Japan as History, Ed. Andrew Gordon (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1993).
327 Hane, Modern Japan: A Historical Survey, 38.
Freed from the authority of SCAP in April 1952, the Yoshida government moved to revise some of the reforms that had been introduced, thus giving rise to a trend that the opposition labeled a “reverse course.” The confrontation between the government and its critics, led by the opposition parties, labor unions, students, and intellectuals, became increasingly acrimonious. Having lost his primary backers in the SCAP Yoshida was on his own.

The ratification of the peace treaty and departure of the SCAP from Japan came with a high price for Yoshida. Opposition to Yoshida from within his own party led by Ichiro Hatoyama was fierce. Hatoyama had been slated to be the conservatives’ choice for prime minister when he was barred from politics for five years by the SCAP because they thought he had cooperated with the militarists in the 1930s and 1940s. The Americans also preferred Yoshida, which was not lost on his opponents, thereby creating an anti-Yoshida faction within the conservative party. Hatoyama was released in 1951 and rejoined his party with strong support to challenge Yoshida’s rule from within the conservative party. Kishi Shinsuke, who had also been incarcerated as a war criminal for his pre-war and wartime activities, was released from prison earlier. He joined the Liberal Party in March 1953 and became a supporter of Hatoyama. The two men formed the Japan Democratic Party in November 1954 with the intent to oppose Yoshida. Then, in cooperation with the Socialist parties they called for yet another no-confidence vote against Yoshida in the Diet. Yoshida sought to counter this by dissolving the Diet, but big business interests opposed the move because they favored unity, not conflict among the

\[328\] Ibid, 41.
conservatives. Faced with opposition from members of his own party as well, Yoshida was forced to resign in December 1954.\(^{329}\)

The lessons of history were deeply ingrained on the national conscience of Yoshida and the Japanese people. The postwar elite led by Yoshida under the American occupation knew that it must seek a new path for rebuilding Japan. “The searing experiences of defeat and occupation demonstrated the futility of pursuing autonomy and great power status through military means.”\(^{330}\) For a defeated “pariah” nation to find a way to rebuild its national power was not an easy undertaking, yet Yoshida steered Japan toward an emphasis on concentrating on domestic developments, and relying on the United States for Japan’s defense.\(^{331}\) The strategy devised and implemented came to be called the Yoshida Doctrine, which reflected this desire to leave Japan’s security to the United States and focus fully on Japanese domestic projects.\(^{332}\)

Yoshida had guided Japan for six years that spanned the difficult occupation period and set the nation on the path to self-sufficiency and independence. He maintained close ties with the United States, kept military spending to a minimum by relying on the United States to protect Japan, concluded the peace treaty, and signed the security pact with the United States. Yoshida’s influence endured because of his extraordinary skill in perceiving world trends and in using them to Japan’s special advantage. His legacy lived on in the Yoshida Doctrine that institutionalized Japan’s priority on economic rather than military development, while at the same time keeping a low diplomatic profile. The

\(^{329}\) Ibid, 44.  
\(^{331}\) Ibid.  
Yoshida Doctrine was to become the guiding principle of Japan's foreign policy throughout the Cold War.

**Battles Over History**

The official postwar agenda set by the LDP and adopted from the Yoshida Doctrine had the twin goals of domestic reconstruction and recovery of international stature, or “regaining the trust of the world.” Part of this included the recovery of a positive past that Japanese could take pride in. Whereas the progressives were critics who yearned for change, conservatives were unrepentant nationalists who sought continuity. Yet, the progressives clung to the status quo verdicts and the conservatives longed for a different history. For both of these groups the modernizing achievements of the Meiji Restoration, pre-empire, were an obvious starting point from which postwar Japan could build yet the final narrative was less than certain. While progressives attacked the Meiji period as being part of the imperial problem that modern Japan needed to overcome, they were more focused on the issues of class struggle and hypernationalism. Having discredited the military, yet restored the Emperor, nationalist intellectuals held up the Meiji period as being Japan’s most formative. Having rejected its empire as part of the San Francisco Treaty, Japanese leaders under the occupation had ignored their past to concentrate on their future in way that was no longer possible.

Confronting the issue head on Prime Minister Yoshida sought to strengthen conservatives by calling for education into Japan’s “peerless history” as the basis for

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strengthening patriotism that could be extended before the Empire. In a series of speeches Yoshida called for a glorified rendering of modern Japan that began with statements such as:

The extraordinary progress made within a half century after the Meiji Restoration was when Japan became one of the five great powers. But then the military, parties, and intellectuals abused political power and embarked on a ‘reckless war’ that was neither militarily wise nor in accordance with the intentions of Emperor Meiji.\textsuperscript{334}

Yoshida was able to combine the “positive” pre-war past, namely Meiji that ended in 1912, with his postwar realities thereby for the most part ignoring and rejecting the bulk of Japan’s “negative” imperial history.\textsuperscript{335}

Yoshida played to each of his constituencies without severely offending any of them. For domestic consumption the reminder that the Japanese had once been among the great powers served to reinforce his belief that despite Japan’s defeated status it could once again achieve this status albeit through economic rather than military means. For the international audience he signaled that World War II had been a mistake for Japan and recast Japan’s role in more modest terms. The focal point for these two messages was a reconstructed understanding of Japan’s international place. Whereas prior to the Meiji Restoration Japan had been an isolated kingdom, as a result of Western modernization and domestic stability Japan quickly expanded into a great power. The fact that the Meiji period saw Japan become an empire and win an international war against Russia in 1905,

\textsuperscript{334} Quote from Carol Gluck in Gordon, Postwar Japan, 71, which is a translation from Yoshida’s original speech “Bankoku ni kantaru rekishi,” (History Speech) Asahi Shinbun, September 1, 1952.

\textsuperscript{335} For more see Carol Gluck, Japan’s Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).
while simultaneously maintaining good relations with the West as seen through the Anglo-Japanese alliance which Yoshida had been personally involved in, signified what many thought Japan was capable of. However this view was not universally accepted and new ideological groupings began to emerge to try and influence the way that Japan would remember its past and ultimately shape its future course.

Within Japan’s political cleavages, two main groups emerged, each with very different interpretations of Japan’s past and holding very different visions for Japan’s future. The left idealists were associated largely with the Japan Socialist Party and the Japanese Communist Party. Rounding out this more left-leaning group were the progressives who were to be found in the Democratic Socialist Party and in parts of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. In the other camp were the right-wing conservatives who for the most part could be found in the LDP. Unlike the dominance the conservatives enjoyed through the LDP in Japan’s domestic politics, the struggle between these groups was hotly contested, shaped the direction of Japan’s historical memories, and made particularly interesting bedfellows at different points in time.

The idealists and progressives located the peak of their postwar experience from 1945 to 1947, when radical reform had seemed possible. Having always been opposed to Japan’s conservative tendencies and emperor-worship, they saw renewed prospects of a modern democratic politics in the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty protests of 1960 and some reduced hopes for participatory democracy in the citizens’ movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s. However, these hopes were dashed entirely with the postwar-high-growth rates in the 1970s, and the progressives’ ideas waned with it. As the group most committed to a firm rejection of Japan’s imperial past and advocating the most radical

\[336\] Berger, “From Sword to Chrysanthemum,” 137.
changes to ensure that Japan would never again be a menace to its neighbors, they actively worked to revise the postwar system into a more liberal and open system. At the same time, this group actively campaigned for a more self-reflective and exemplary Japan that would lead by example and not economic or military power. Having always been unhappy with Japan’s pre-war status as Asia’s leader they had opposed Japanese imperial expansion and now protested any expansion of Japan’s international role arguing that the postwar work of rebuilding and consolidating liberal democracy was far from over. Personified in the writings of various scholars who championed the original postwar narrative set by the Allied forces, the progressive movement in Japan felt betrayed by a new narrative set by the conservatives who emphasized economic high growth above all else.

The year 1945, which many Japanese had assumed would be an irreparable turning point from empire to republic, seemed to fade once the occupation ended. The initial promise of a new postwar order in Japan had been betrayed by the bureaucratic state and conservative middle-class society represented by the conservatives and the LDP, instead of the idealists that had hopes for more radical changes. Having long given up on the United States as being an agent of change within Japan, by the 1980s leftists felt that the purpose of their original cause as reformers was in full eclipse and that their battle with the Japanese state and within society had been lost. In the words of historians they practiced “history as opposition.” 337 They remained in opposition to the intrusions and revisions of the prewar past, but conservatives who supported rather than opposed the postwar status quo and chose to ignore rather than deal with Japan’s imperial past increasingly took their place in the media and intellectual elites.

Having always dominated Japanese politics and society, conservatives were initially far less vocal than the progressives, but steadily recovered from their association with the events that lead to World War II. The recovery of Japan’s right-wing, including ultranationalists, was well underway with the tacit support of the Americans by the 1950s. Much of their initial success was fostered by Americans nervous about the progression of Cold War events. With the victory of the Chinese revolution and the outbreak of the Korean War, the U.S. occupation policy elevated the importance of anti-communism above democratization in Japan. Given a new lease on life conservatives quickly established the rules of the Japanese political game by supporting strong U.S. relations at almost any cost while avoiding social issues that could potentially unleash divisive forces. A pragmatic and business-like model characterized the Japanese state and a set of unspoken rules and principles guided the “1955 System” put in place by the conservatives.

Conservatives sought continuity wherever possible and chose to ignore rather than deal with most aspects of Japan’s imperial past. Unlike the leftists who insisted on distancing and rejecting the imperial from the modern Japan, the conservatives maintained a high level of ambiguity by focusing on less controversial periods of Japanese history. They championed the Emperor as being the “essence of Japan,” but never discussed him or the institution directly, particularly when accusations of atrocities from China and Korea became more pronounced. Never engaging these discussions, conservative chose instead to focus on the infrastructure and investments made by Japan during and after imperial times in its former colonies. As a clear reflection of their general attitude of “letting bygones be bygones,” after the San Francisco Peace Treaty
became effective, the Japanese government repealed the laws to purge militarists and
ultranationalists, and some of those purged in the earlier postwar years were then
appointed or elected to important government posts. The lack of self-reflection on the
part of Japan’s conservatives meant that many of the “lessons of history” that Occupation
forces took for granted and Japanese idealists continually tried to reiterate were lost on
conservatives who focused exclusively on the economic recovery of Japan. Reverting
back to the Meiji tradition and emphasis on strengthening citizens’ allegiance to the state
by fostering national consciousness, conservatives began to focus on the construction of a
“bright” national history to achieve these ends. By seeking to de-politicize Japan the
conservatives simply ignored some of the most contentious issues surrounding the
nation’s wartime past and actions in its region.

The Emergence of the “1955 System” and the Rehabilitation of Old Elites

Ichiro Hatoyama succeeded Yoshida as prime minister. Hatoyama appointed
mainly prewar politicians to his cabinet, in contrast to Yoshida, whose key cabinet
members were bureaucrats who had not previously served in political roles during the
empire. Hatoyama’s Democratic Party lacked a majority in the Diet, which he dissolved
shortly after taking office, hoping to strengthen his party’s position. In the election held
in February 1955, his party emerged with 185 seats, becoming the largest faction, though
still lacking a majority. The political map was simplified when the two main factions of
the Socialist Party reunited creating a formidable progressive block within the Diet.
Concerned at the new unity and rising appeal of the socialists, the business elite promoted
a merger among the conservatives by using its power as the chief financier of conservative candidates. Thus pressured by business organizations, the leaders of the two major conservative parties set aside their personal rivalry, agreeing to the merger. In November 1955, the Liberal and Democratic parties joined forces to found the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). This merger set the basis for the one-party control that dominated the Japanese political stage until 1993, referred to as the “1955 system.” At this point in 1955, the conservatives held roughly two-thirds of the Diet seats, and the Socialists one-third. This configuration remained more or less intact for four decades of uninterrupted rule in which competition was waged within the LDP.  

The contours of the Japanese political landscape was set with close ties between elite groups of politicians, businessmen, and bureaucrats which came to be called the “iron triangle.” Within this “iron triangle” the LDP was the new kingmakers and now no longer faced serious political challenges from a weak opposition. The LDP was supported by a concern on the part of the business community for good relations with Washington, the challenge posed by the JSP, and intensifying demands from labor. In the late 1950s, the LDP received covert financial support from the American CIA like many other allied conservative governments competing with socialists and communists, demonstrating how concerned the U.S. was about the socialists in the 1950s. In this environment it was thought that unity among conservatives was necessary in order to promote stable government. The philosophy of

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338 Hane, Modern Japan: A Historical Survey, 45.
339 The coining of the actual term “iron triangle” is still hotly debated but one of the enduring classics on this concept can be found in Karel van Wolferen, The Enigma of Japanese Power (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1989).
the LDP was rather vague, but most politicians who belonged to it favored a centralized and efficient government that exercised an important role in the economy. Modeling itself on a management model used in business, the LDP did not favor local initiative but rather privileged a centralized top-down approach. LDP ideology was pragmatic and followed Yoshida’s lead by substituting an economic definition of national security for a military one that meant a wholehearted embrace of Keynesian economic policy, a paternalistic free-enterprise system, and a foreign policy that remained generally pro-Western and anti-communist, despite certain sectors that favored trade with the Soviet Union and China.341

Despite the greater formal unity of conservatives and progressives after 1955, significant differences continued within each camp as well as between the two sides. All conservatives wanted economic stability and growth, but bureaucrats, LDP politicians, and their economic advisors differed fundamentally on how to achieve this. Through the next several decades, the most important debate concerned how intimately Japan should link its economic fortunes to an integrated global economy.342

In tandem with Japan’s political consolidation around a powerful bureaucracy and a one-party system that guaranteed domestic stability and an alliance with the U.S. during the Cold War that guaranteed international security, the education system closely followed domestic developments. As described previously, the most significant adjustments in the Japanese education system and state came about as a result of American occupation and rule. However, the paradoxical nature of the changes resulted in post-war class struggles and history education becoming flashpoints in modern Japan

in a way that did not exist prior to 1945.\textsuperscript{343} Led by leftist intellectuals, who proclaimed class struggles in almost every political fight they waged, education became a particularly divisive area for policymakers.

When U.S. policy shifted from a pro-democracy emphasis to a primarily anticommunist focus, Japan’s conservative and right wing nationalist forces, which already formed a power bloc in the 1950s, quickly succeeded in seizing control of the state. Their successes included the conservative capture of the Ministry of Education through which, by the end of 1950s, the right wing was able to “reverse” many aspects of the postwar educational reforms instated by MacArthur. This move was significant because in the words of Yoshiko Nozaki, “It enabled right-wing groups to partially impose nationalist narratives on the schools, especially in the area of history textbook content.”\textsuperscript{344} As a result of the competing strengths of the progressives and conservatives in Japan and the emphasis they placed on education and history teaching in particular, there was a stalemate that left a void in coverage. A survey of fifteen junior high school textbooks on Japanese history published in the early 1950s reveals that twelve used the term “aggression” in one way or another to describe Japanese military conflicts with China that took place in the early 1930s, whereas this term was replaced in the 1980s.\textsuperscript{345} Unlike the Turkish case where an extreme rejection gave way to a moderate rejection in the 1980s, Japanese textbooks reflected a general trend of ambivalence as time lapsed.

from the original defeat of empire and little interest in the past was exhibited domestically.

**The LDP and the Bureaucracy**

Within the new 1955 system the Japanese bureaucracy emerged as a powerful force in its own right. The power of the bureaucracy was not a new development in Japanese politics but the product of long-standing political style and tradition. The bureaucracy was an important element of the political modernization process that had launched the Japanese empire in the first place. Yet, the bureaucracy as an institution was left unaffected by World War II and the subsequent occupation which simply reinforced its critical role in the Japanese system. In the words of TJ Pempel, “The historical record shows that little direct effort at bureaucratic reform was ever considered by the United States.” As a result, the LDP consolidated enduring alliances not only with business leaders but also with leading state bureaucrats. The bureaucrats offered policy expertise and manpower to the party. They wrote most of the laws that the LDP passed. They played key roles in the party. Beginning in the late 1950s, several served as prime minister.

This again may be taken as a reflection of the continued influence of the old party and economic and political elites who had led the country into the war in the first place and who still believed in the justice of their cause. While the SCAP purges had been intended to remove these people from power, in practice these purges were very difficult

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to implement because guilt was often difficult to determine, and because the skills and
knowledge of the old elite was desperately needed to rebuild the country, a goal which
received growing priority with the start of the Cold War. In addition, since the militarists
had far more successfully co-opted the old political elite, there were far fewer domestic
victims of the wartime regime who could bear witness against their oppressors than was
the case in Germany. 347 A key indicator of this was that as early as 1957, Nobusuke
Kishi, who had been arrested for war crimes and signed the original declaration of war on
the United States, became prime minister of Japan. As Thomas Berger has explored in his
comparative work on Germany and Japan, even though many “…old Nazis not only
survived but even prospered in postwar West Germany, none could have hoped to
achieve this kind of rehabilitation.”348

Ironically, Prime Minister Kishi’s government arranged to publish Japan’s first
explicit foreign policy doctrine with the Diplomatic Bluebook of 1957 to reformulate the
nation’s postwar diplomacy.349 It identified “three basic principles” for postwar
diplomacy: “United Nations centrism,” “cooperation with free countries,” and “holding
fast to being a member of Asia.”350 Couching the U.S.-Japan alliance as “cooperation
with free countries” and sandwiching it between the United Nations as a symbol of

347 Berger, “From Sword to Chrysanthemum,” 135.
348 Ibid, 133.
350 Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Publications: Gaimusho, Waga gaiko no kinkyo (Tokyo:
Gaimusho, 1957), 7-10. For full contents, see <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/bluebook/1957/s32-
contents.htm>. See also Gaimusho hyakunenshi hensan iinkai, eds., Gaimusho no hyakunen (Tokyo:
Harashobo, 1969) pp. 934-38. Kitaoka Shinichi first emphasized the importance of the “three basic
principles” in “Furuku katsu atarashii gensoku,” Gaiko Forum, (October 1993). In contrast to his stress on
the U.S. alliance, others have placed more emphasis on the “three basic principles” doctrine. See Sakamoto
Kazuya, “Dokuritsu koku no joken,” in Sengo Nihon gaikoshi, ed. Iokibe Makoto (Tokyo: Yuhikaku,
gaikoshi handobukku: kaisetsu to shiryo, ed. Masuda Hiroshi and Sato Susumu, rev. ed. (Tokyo:
Yushindo, 2007) 165; Hatano Sumio and Sato Susumu, Gendai nihon no Tonanajia seisaku (Tokyo:
Waseda University Press, 2007), 52-56.
internationalism and Asian membership as a sign of autonomous aspirations in its own neighborhood was more than coincidence. It was a diplomatic manifesto that articulated for the first time that the newly independent Japanese government intended to diversify its dependency on the U.S.

What was conspicuously lacking, both in 1955 and for thirty years thereafter, was unity of leadership. The groups that had existed among conservatives at the time of the party’s formation were incorporated into the LDP as factions, which retained their own identity and funding. Because the differences between them were concerned less with policy than with political ambition, they have always been identified with the names of senior politicians, not with issues; but the regularity of their place in Japanese politics is demonstrated by the fact that one can trace a quasi-genealogical lineage for the principal ones over the whole period since 1955. Their rivalries focus on the election of a party president, who is destined eventually to become prime minister, provided the LDP retains a majority in the Diet’s Lower house. This transition, which is usually short-lived, puts him in a position to dispense patronage, that is, government posts to reward his followers and cabinet offices to some from other factions, in such proportion as he sees fit.

The intra-party factionalism that characterizes the LDP, as well as the other parties, has kept the LDP from developing into a steamrolling power machine. The presence of factions within the party makes it necessary for party leaders to make compromises and effect mutual accommodations. The factions are not divided over ideological or policy matters, although differences in emphasis do exist.\textsuperscript{351} The common pattern for the LDP’s complex factional structure, grassroots constituency-sensitive orientation, and strong domestic interest-group ties is to inhibit the party from

\textsuperscript{351} Hane, \textit{Modern Japan: A Historical Survey}, 66.
undertaking decisive, independent policy initiatives. This status-quo approach has allowed big business and the bureaucracy to essentially shape the political landscape in Japan through a consensus-based approach to politics. From 1955 until 1993, the LDP, big business, and high-level bureaucrats ruled Japan. In the mid-1980s, one out of every four LDP member was a former high-ranking bureaucrat. A vast majority of the postwar prime ministers were former bureaucrats. Between 1955 and 1979, 40 percent of cabinet members came from the same group. As a result, party leaders and high-level bureaucrats have traditionally worked closely together.\textsuperscript{352}

**Creating a New Narrative**

The post-war chronology of official history in Japan traced an ever-rising national trajectory from destruction to prosperity, from international humiliation to the status of economic superpower. The official narrative created by the Japanese state identified with a steady progression of “high growth” rather than national interest. It defined high-growth economics to include not only a world-class GNP, but also the myth of an entirely middle-class society and the triumph of Japanese-style modernity. In differentiating between Western and Japanese modernity, the official narrative created a special category for Japan as an associate member of the West in the East. It also created a natural symbiosis for modernity and traditionalism that privileged economic growth while acknowledging the uniqueness of approach, culture, and tradition within Japan. The implication being that postwar Japan would by its very nature be modern yet respectful of

\textsuperscript{352} Ibid 69.
tradition, which allowed for continuity rather than a sharp rupture from empire to republic.

Construction of this unique Japanese identity and narrative relied on a self-serving definition of self and a stylized “other.” With Japan’s success came a tendency to turn inward and argue that the differences between the Japanese and other nations, races, and cultures was more important to focus on than the many commonalities. As detailed in scholarship of this insular and usually narcissistic preoccupation with so-called traditional values took on a life of its own in the mass media – primarily in the runaway genre of writings and discussion devoted to the uniqueness of “being Japanese” (*Nihonjinron*).\(^{353}\) Conservatives cultivated discussions such as these to promote their own agendas such as in 1968, when on the centennial celebration of the Meiji Restoration the LDP turned it into an occasion for repudiating the most progressive ideals of the early postwar period including constitutional and educational reforms.\(^{354}\)

By commemorating and celebrating Japan’s economic rise, the Japanese leadership sought to emphasize the importance of both modernity and tradition. Toward this end they marked 1956 as a year of jubilee, when the government first declared, on economic grounds, that the “postwar is over.”\(^{355}\) The Tokyo Olympics of 1964 were seen as a major international test for Japan and were described by the prime minister at the time as enabling “the nations of the world to engage in peaceful competition on our shores and observe the progress we have made in our society.”\(^{356}\) Finally, 1968 was important in that it commemorated postwar Japan’s “favorite” period with a centennial

\(^{353}\) Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*, 557.

\(^{354}\) John W. Dower picks up on this theme in his second chapter in *Postwar Japan as History*, ed. Andrew Gordon (Berkley: University of California Press, 1993), starting on page 32.

\(^{355}\) Gluck, “Past in the Present,” 72.

\(^{356}\) Ibid.
celebration of the Meiji Restoration, but also brought a Nobel Prize in literature and the third highest GNP in the world. By the 1970s, Japan already had much to be proud of in the quarter century since its loss of empire.

At Expo 1970 Prime Minister Sato invited foreign visitors to view Japan, “…where we are building a new modern civilization on the foundations of an ancient tradition.”\(^{357}\) The juxtaposition of a new Japan being founded on the basis of ancient traditions avoided and skipped over the ashes of Japan’s problematic imperial legacy. Except for a few die-hard nationalists, the Japanese public had accepted the verdict of World War II. Given the nature of Japan’s defeat at the hands of its external rather than internal enemies there was little talk that the war had been lost because of a “stab in the back” by any generals or nationalist movements. Japan lost the war and its empire because the enemy had been stronger. Thus there was little popular support for efforts to “correct the mistakes of history,” at least not by using the failed militaristic methods of the 1930s and 1940s or glorification of its imperial past.\(^{358}\) As a result, there was not an extreme rejection of the empire in the same way that other post-imperial successor states such as Turkey experienced.

Every victim needs to have its story told and to assign blame in some way, even if conflicting narratives persist. The Japanese were no exception; so while the world and the region focused on the victims of the Japanese empire, modern Japan created a narrative of victimization that focused on the devastating effects of the atomic devices released over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Rather than simply blaming the U.S., which would have been difficult for the political elites to maintain internationally given the prominence and

\(^{357}\) Gluck, “Past in the Present,” 72.
importance of the U.S.-Japanese security alliance, the Japanese assigned blame to a military regime that led a “noble” nation to a disastrous war, but also to outside forces including the science and technology that was used to create these new weapons of mass destruction. Ingrained within this narrative was a deep pacifist hope of idealists and progressives who hoped to forever solidify Japan’s stance as a non-military power.

Japan’s postwar leaders also fostered the perception that the war in Asia was a response to Western imperialism by focusing on the stories of Southeast Asia where Japan had replaced the British, Dutch, and French empires with its own rather than the more brutal stories of Northeast Asia. Coupled with the lack of popular involvement in the militarist takeover of the government and efforts by the ruling elites to pin the blame of the war exclusively on the Imperial Army, the result was that most Japanese felt less recrimination over Imperial Japan’s role in starting World War II and over the atrocities that Japanese forces had committed throughout Asia. Instead of feeling remorse over Pearl Harbor or Nanking, most Japanese felt like victims of their own imperial military and their Western opponents.359

Imperial Japan’s professed mission had been to liberate and unite all of Asia in order to protect Japan and the rest of Asia from outside aggression. This message ultimately was not accepted by most other Asian peoples, because it turned out the Japanese were merely replacing the yoke of the white Westerners with an even more brutal and equally racist yoke of their own. Nonetheless, at least within Japan’s official narrative this bestowed on Japanese expansionism a degree of legitimacy even among many on the left who were opposed to any type of military adventure on principle.360

359 Berger “Sword”, 135.
360 Berger, “Sword”134.
Therefore, rather than focusing on the outcomes of this imperialism, most Japanese focused on the intentions of the empire. The ultimate cost for the Japanese empire was too high to justify for a small island nation. Having been created at a historically anomalous moment in which other empires lay weakened, after it had passed it made sense for the Japanese to reject empire. As a rational calculation and outcome of history, Japan never fully dealt with or confronted its uncomfortable imperial actions.

In Japan it was the military institution itself that became the primary target of criticisms after the war, not the empire. Nationalism, while viewed as a destructive force, especially by the political left, was seen more as an instrument of militarist control than as a root cause of the demise of Japan’s brief prewar democracy and its catastrophic entry into World War II. This point of view was greatly encouraged by the non-military elites, who were all too happy to make the military into a scapegoat in order to direct blame away from their own culpability. By deflecting blame and rejecting the military as being the primary consequence of Japanese imperialism, the political elites were able to solidify their new positions both domestically and internationally through a history that rejected but did not deal with their imperial past.\(^{361}\)

While a new group of elites had replaced the Japanese elites at the end of World War II, they quickly began to work closely together to maintain a narrative that could serve all groups in Japan even if it resulted in the lowest common denominator. In addition, Japanese leaders knew that the strong nature of the Japanese state and hierarchical way in which the state dictated information to society meant that their new version of Japanese history would immediately become part of the official narrative and be hegemonic. Given the fact that conservative intellectuals within the LDP and

\(^{361}\) Berger, “Sword”134.
bureaucracy wielded the greatest institutional and political power through their dominance of the state apparatus they were in the best position to shape the official narrative. The progressives may have been preeminent in the academy and intellectual discourse, but the *status quo* view dominated official public memory. Like the LDP it was conservative, but it was not imperial history of the wartime sort. That mantle was inherited by right wing revisionists, which produced latter-day glorificationist history that sometimes interacted with, but did not prevail in, official memory or narrative. The establishment instead produced a moderated form of rejectionist history and memory. Given the extent to which the Japanese establishment had embraced defeat, the ability to disassociate Japan with its imperial past was critical. Focused on the years 1931-1945 of military rule, but leaving out the Meiji period and particularly the Russo-Japanese war, which were seen as being separate from imperial history, this history was for the most part ignored rather than rejected outright the Japanese Empire in substance and character.

The Japanese and Ottoman Empires emerged in different geographies and moments in time. Yet they collapsed around the same time as a result of world wars that resulted in clear successor states arising from their respective empires. The initial shock of losing an empire after such devastating global conflicts left the Japanese and Turks at the mercy of their Western occupiers. The subsequent occupation of Japan by American forces from 1945 to 1952 versus the Turkish War of Independence from 1919 to 1923 put the two nations on seemingly different paths but similar starting points in terms of imperial memories. As has been developed and will continue to be illuminated in the next chapter, the tensions inherent within Japan were fought on different levels including cultural, political, and societal. However, history and imperial memories rarely surfaced
on the political agenda until the 1980s when events and reactions beyond the Japanese islands provoked reactions from within Japan. Given the strength and success of the conservative coalition in Japanese politics, the LDP were able to focus on Japan’s economic recovery and future while sidelining many of the lingering issues from its past. Domestically, by quietly working to reestablish the credibility of the Japanese state within society by working closely with big business, the conservatives were able to create a sense of continuity that had been lost during the 1940s. Internationally, by working within the confines of the American-led “free world,” Japan became an invaluable partner of the West. As a result, with the rise of Japan’s economy came a new sense of self-confidence, as conservatives advocated greater Japanese leadership and a new type of role that would ultimately be characterized in the form of Nakasone, who we turn to in the next chapter. Japan’s leadership of Asia, however, could only be realized if the Japanese were able to reconstruct an honorable past that was domestically appealing and internationally contrite. Since its defeat, Japan had largely ignored its imperial history and as a result was largely unprepared for the way in which imperial memories would erupt onto the political scene in 1980s.
Chapter Six

*Rising Sun and Imperial Ghosts: A More Self-Confident Japan 1980-2010*

Until the 1980s, Japan had never confronted nor dealt fully with the issues surrounding its imperial collapse. Except for a short window of time at the beginning of the U.S. occupation and in the wake of full independence, Japan’s official narrative had been formed by domestic consensus and rarely challenged internationally. As a result, rather than having extreme imperial memories, the Japanese actively sought to install collective amnesia by simply ignoring and not talking about the most consequential period of imperial expansion in the 1930s and choosing to ignore its imperial past. Instead of dealing with its past by reaching out to its former colonies, Japan reverted back into itself and the island kingdom that had characterized the nation for the majority of its history. Constructing a new national project and identity through Japan’s economic recovery, the Yoshida Doctrine and 1955 System allowed the Japanese to create a new national narrative that kept it detached from its region and its imperial past.

The Yoshida Doctrine was unchallenged throughout the Cold War and was built upon by successive prime ministers despite the grumblings of some hard-line revisionists within the LDP and idealists within the JSP. Given the predisposition toward harmony and consensus, issues that could prove divisive such as constitutional reforms or the U.S.-Japan security alliance, which sparked some of the worst rioting in the 1960s, became politically taboo. Despite this fact, socialists kept the U.S.-Japan relationship very much on the agenda, although they were unable to get much traction because of the geopolitical environment. As a result of the insular nature of the Japanese state, the official narrative
remained strikingly consistent and was not seriously challenged from within the system. Japan’s policy of subordinating foreign and security policy to economic policy, however, was beginning to seem outdated and callously deceptive on the part of the international community. Remaining aloof from the international system as a defeated pariah state was one thing in the 1950s, but having fully recovered and become an economic superpower in its own right in the 1980s Japan struggled with a predisposition toward being inward-focused. Big business had already led the way for Japan globally and the bureaucracy increasingly found itself involved in a series of intertwined webs thanks to its organic connections to business.

In 1965 and 1972, Japan re-established relations with South Korea and China respectively as a result of American diplomacy, which allowed Tokyo to ignore its imperial past in its normalization talks. Heading into the 1980s Japan sought to achieve similar breakthroughs with the Soviet Union and then North Korea. Ironically, despite having more in common in terms of culture and heritage with Asia, Japan became closer to its American occupiers than it was to the areas it had once occupied as a result of its checkered past, the occupation reforms instituted, and the outbreak of the Cold War. In the words of political psychologist Minoru Karasawa, “Commitment to national heritage was associated with conservatism, whereas internationalism was related to a liberal ideology, a high level of media exposure, and knowledge of international affairs.”

Japanese leaders were therefore able to keep foreign policy and security issues away from

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the average citizens’ consciousness.\textsuperscript{363} Given Japan’s preoccupation with self-examination, it became an accepted explanation for Japan’s ambiguous status between East and West to stress the distinctiveness of Japan as a nation.\textsuperscript{364} This distinctiveness was predicated on the belief that the Japanese character was the product of a deeply rooted tradition that predated the modern international system. However, as has already been discussed, many of modern Japan’s traditions are fairly recent inventions, leading historian Irwin Scheiner to argue that, “Over the past several decades Japanese have shown a vast capacity to create an idealized past. Even more apparent has been their effort to establish this past as an ideological basis for present conceptions of the Japanese state and people.”\textsuperscript{365}

Having been historically isolated from the outside world, many Japanese “learned” from their imperial experience that the differences between the Japanese and other nations, races, and cultures were greater than the similarities and that Japan’s contemporary accomplishments derived primarily from Japan’s unique characteristics.\textsuperscript{366} This suited a rebuilding nation that once had its dreams of empire shattered. Japan had failed to create an Asian empire and saw little benefit in developing a new relationship with its own region. As a result, beyond simply rejecting its empire, Japan sought to disengage and focus on its relationship with America post-World War Two, much like Turkey had attempted with its focus on Western rather than Middle Eastern alliances.

\textsuperscript{363} For a fascinating discussion and in-depth exploration of this idea see Tang Siew Man, “Japan’s Grand Strategic Shift from Yoshida to Koizumi: Reflections on Japan’s Strategic Focus in the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century,” \textit{Akademika} 70 (January, 2007): 117-136.
\textsuperscript{366} This reasoning was made mainline by prominent historians on Japan such as Marius B. Jansen in his classic work \textit{The Making of Modern Japan} (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002) and more recently by Andrew Gordon in his \textit{A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).
With a new generation of Japanese leaders came a new attitude personified by LDP Prime Minister Nakasone who was far more assertive and willing to take international initiatives in new places such as the G-7. Reluctance to rock the boat on the history issue or the imperial past was still strong, but more assertive ideas were spreading in the LDP and in textbooks and statements by ministers. In this climate, there emerged a new debate about the Japanese identity consistent with the preferred centrist image of Japanese history promoted by the idealists and progressives in liberal elite circles. Japanese of all political stripes, not only on the left, but on the right and in the center as well, came to believe that not only was modern Japan not a martial culture, but that in fact it never had been one. This belief rooted in the previously mentioned *Nihonjinron* (usually translated “theory of Japaneseness”) debate of the 1960s and 1970s, on what features distinguished Japan from the rest of the world.  

Following in the same line of argument as the official narrative that rejected Japanese militarism as being exceptional rather than symptomatic of the Japanese state, this new strain saw the Japan of 1980 as being more consistent with the norms of the Japanese people than the imperial structure had ever been. While this trend strengthened a rejection of Japan’s imperial military ambitions, it simultaneously worked to reinvigorate a debate about Japan’s proper place in Asia. The effect of this debate was to heighten Japan’s sense of self-confidence and competitive drive, while at the same time re-igniting tensions between progressives and conservatives who had a fundamentally different view of what Japan should learn from its immediate past and whether it should reject or glorify its former imperial self.

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As a result, Japan in the 1980s seemed less interested in its past than in its future which looked bright. With the fastest growing and second largest economy in the world, Japan was poised to compete with the United States on equal, if not superior, footing capping an unprecedented turnaround from the devastation it had faced in 1945. Having devoted its entire energy to reconstruction and development, Japan began to look abroad for the natural resources that it would need to continue to fuel its economic growth. With this economic strength came increasing pressure to take on more responsibility from the United States and “share the burdens” of international leadership. Having never truly developed an independent international path since its occupation and subsequent subordination of foreign and security interests to the United States, Japan was in unchartered and unfamiliar territory. However, at the very moment that Japan was about to re-emerge in a major way on the international scene, an intensification of domestic power struggles about Japan’s place in Asia that drew from ignored imperial memories resurfaced, causing successive prime ministers to fall and leaving Japan with a lack of clear leadership and vision.

Re-emergence of Asia in Japan

The debate within Japan about the nation’s place in the international system as an independent actor had long been predicated on a strong U.S.-Japan alliance and a rejection of imperial Japan’s strategy of Asian domination. The idea of “Asianism” that had once been prevalent in the 1920s and 1930s had been associated with imperial expansion and therefore played down by the Yoshida School, though strands of it
pervaded different nationalists who thought Japan’s destiny lay as being leader of Asia. Asianism remained dormant for decades because Japanese politicians in the face of repeated obstacles realized that it was not a winning strategy within its own region. In 1960, when massive demonstrations protested agreement on the U.S.-Japan alliance for the next decade, fear of not winning U.S. approval for the return of Okinawa and losing preferential access to the world’s largest market led leaders to stick even closer to Japan’s sole ally. Although after China’s first nuclear test in 1964 and President Lyndon Johnson’s escalation in the Vietnam War increased debate about following a more independent path, such as developing Japan’s own nuclear weapons and shifting to a more autonomous diplomacy, there was no obvious partner in Asia in which to turn in order to overturn the prevailing logic of the decade. In 1971 when Sino-U.S. reconciliation shocked Japan, there was little prospect for the ideas put forward by some politicians that Tokyo could stay aloof as a partner of Taipei or could outdo Washington by forging a closer bonds with Beijing. By the 1970s Japan’s plans had become to benefit from the U.S. defeat in Vietnam by filling the vacuum left, especially in Southeast Asia, and to use its growing leverage as an economic great power to lead the “flying geese formation” in which China would remain near the back.

As a result, from a low point in relations with Asia in the mid-1970s, the Japanese government made substantial efforts to improve its relations with the countries in the region. The return of Asianism within Japan’s foreign policy, which had been long ignored under the Yoshida Doctrine, was becoming increasingly proactive leading into the 1980s. With the rapid increase in trade with Asian countries and rapidly growing

368 See Gilbert Rozman’s, Chinese Strategic Thought Toward Asia (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
Official Development Assistance (ODA), Japan sought to “Asianize” its foreign policy; however, anti-Japanese sentiments were still prevalent throughout the region. Many Asian people feared that Japanese overt economic expansion would lead to “neo-colonialism” where the Japanese empire had previously established the “Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.” This served as an important lesson for successive Japanese governments and became the genesis of the Fukuda Doctrine, enunciated when Fukuda Takeo, who succeeded Tanaka, sought “to widen the framework of Japan’s diplomacy.”

Fukuda believed that Japan “…is a member of Asia, and the peace and stability of this region is indivisible with the peace and stability of the world.” As American forces evacuated Vietnam, Fukuda felt it important to stabilize Southeast Asia by boosting Japanese influence there, and, in the background, hopes grew that the quest for an Asian component to national identity could be fulfilled. In addition, by re-engaging with Asia and its former imperial space, Japanese leaders such as Fukuda hoped that historical memories and narratives of Japan’s wartime aggression could be replaced with a more positive economic future outlook.

In Manila in August 1977, Fukuda outlined the foundations of Japan’s new Asian policy, highlighting three principles. He promised that 1) Japan would never become a military power again, 2) emphasized the need for “heart-to-heart understandings” between Japanese and Asian peoples, and 3) re-enforced the importance of creating a

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371 Ibid, 277.
peaceful and stable Southeast Asia through institutions in the wake of the Vietnam War. The so-called “Fukuda Doctrine” is regarded within the literature as an important turning point in Japan-Southeast Asian relations and was seen as being key for combating anti-Japanese sentiments during a time in which Japanese companies were rapidly expanding their business in the region. In many ways, the Fukuda Doctrine signaled a modification of the Yoshida Doctrine that had emphasized international and American cooperation over regional cooperation. In contrast to Yoshida, Fukuda showed respect for equal, rather than paternal, relations with Asian countries. Fukuda’s thinking was already seen in predecessors such as Kishi, and many had awaited an opportunity after agreeing with Yoshida to lie low for a time.

Until the 1980s, given the tumultuous nature of Japanese domestic politics, principal ministries and bureaucrats, in the Foreign Ministry, Ministry of Finance, and Ministry of International and Trade Industry largely determined and shaped foreign policies in the region. In contrast, prime ministers traditionally did not have a strong voice in Japan. Given the lack of attention paid to Japan’s own imperial history domestically, it was difficult for Japan’s elites to predict the reaction they would receive from their former colonies. In response to Japan’s proactive Asian strategy, suspicions were openly displayed toward Japan. Some Asians went so far as to claim that, “The Greater Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere of World War II vintage had come out of mothballs.” As a result, whenever Japan, by word or deed, bruised the feelings of its former colonies even unintentionally it became an international crisis for Japan.

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Until the 1970s, the center of Japan’s Asian policy had been the negotiations on “war reparations” and economic cooperation related to them. While Cold War tensions caused the United States to pressure non-communist countries to cooperate with Japan despite their anti-Japanese sentiments once Sino-U.S. rapprochement softened U.S. pressure, Asian countries could now strengthen their voices on claims toward Japan. Especially after conclusion of the peace and friendship treaty with Japan in 1978, Beijing’s voice gained more weight in East Asian international relations.

In contrast to the new dynamics in Japanese foreign policies, domestic Japanese politics of the 1970-80s were mired in old feuds and scandal. This was epitomized by the Lockheed bribery case, which became public early in February 1976, when the US Senate Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations investigating foreign payoffs reported that the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation had spent $12.6 million in Japan to promote its aircraft sales through middlemen and the Marubeni Corporation, a trading firm that served as Lockheed's sales agent in Japan. The money included legal commissions, but most of it consisted of unreported and illegal payments. Some of the illegal funds were paid to All-Nippon Airways (ANA), Japan's largest domestic airline, which in 1972 decided to buy Lockheed L-1011 TriStar jets; and at least $2 million was funneled to "high government officials" who approved ANA's choice of Lockheed planes. Some of these government officials included influential factional leaders within the LDP that lead to direct political consequences and a shake up of the elites. While the LDP and big business had always been close and it was widely accepted that deals were being made, the explosion of the Lockheed scandal onto the national scene seemingly

375 Japan refused to discuss these and got around the term, but the general understanding was that payments were being paid in a similar fashion as war reparations that countries such as Germany had been forced to pay after their defeat.
offended the sensibility of the Japanese people and had direct political consequences for those who would ultimately win the power struggle within the LDP and even whether the LDP would continue to enjoy its one-party rule.

The Japanese general election of December 5, 1976, was the first time in 21 years of its unbroken rule that the LDP failed to win a majority in the lower house of the Diet. With its strength in the upper house already reduced to a slender majority, the outcome of the latest election appeared to foreshadow the end of one-party rule in Japan. The election was the first opportunity for Japanese voters to react to the LDP following the revelation of the Lockheed payoff scandal, in which prominent LDP members, including influential factional leader Tanaka, were implicated. The incumbent Prime Minister Miki Takeo, who based his election strategy on public exposure of the scandal in order to cleanse his party's image, accepted the election setback as "the verdict of the people." As a result, Fukuda Takeo the leader of the “anti-mainstream” movement of conservatives took over the presidency of the LDP from Miki after the election results. The LDP was able to remain in office, but was forced to rely on the support of smaller coalition parties to maintain its parliamentary majority. Given this outcome, many in the LDP blamed the factional system for the less than stellar results leading Fukuda to introduce primary elections for the first time within the party. In an all-to-common Japanese twist of fate, Ohira Masayoshi the rival leader of the “mainstream” progressives for the presidency of the LDP beat Fukuda in the first primary organized.

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Emergence of Nakasone and the New Japan

This set in motion a period of instability culminating with a heart attack that killed Ohira in the midst of a hectic general election campaign. The sympathy vote caused by Ohira's sudden death resulted in a landslide victory for the LDP, giving the party its greatest numbers in parliament since its initial creation. As a result of factional wrangling and an ensuing deadlock within the ruling party, Nakasone Yasuhiro, a longtime critic of the Yoshida School, was chosen to become prime minister. Nakasone was the first anti-mainstream LDP conservative to enjoy popular support since Prime Minister Kishi in the 1950s. In addition to being a proponent of an independent and proactive Japanese defense agenda, Nakasone maintained the then-radical view that the US-Japanese alliance should be based on genuine equality thereby negating the parameters of the security treaty that had been in place since San Francisco. Furthermore, he believed that the constitution should be “…independently drawn up by the Japanese people.” Close to thirty years after World War Two, Nakasone remained unhappy with the choices Japan had made after “Yoshida’s Peace Treaty,” declaring in his inaugural address:

*The first necessity is a change in our thinking. Having “caught up,” we must now expect others to try to catch up with us. We must seek out a new path for ourselves and open it up ourselves.”*

378 Nakasone’s conservative and unorthodox views are expanded further in his memoirs, which was published in Japanese, but has never been translated. Yasuhiro Nakasone, *Seiji to Jinsei* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1992), 324.
Unexpectedly, the minority of conservatives who had quietly opposed the Yoshida Doctrine found an opportunity to attempt to overturn the national strategy and historical memories that had successfully guided Japan since the beginning of the Cold War. Nakasone Yasuhiro had been a powerful player in the LDP since election to the Diet in 1947 when this son of a lumber dealer was only twenty-nine years old. In 1947, he chose to run for the fledgling Japanese Diet as its youngest potential member over accepting a guaranteed job in an elite government ministry. Highly unusual by all-standards Nakasone explained his choice by saying that he believed that Japan was in danger of discarding its traditional values and that its postwar remorse must be overturned.\textsuperscript{380} He burnished his conservative and nationalist credentials from the very beginning when as a freshman lawmaker in 1951 he boldly criticized the American occupation, going so far as to deliver a scathing 28-page letter to General MacArthur.\textsuperscript{381}

Grandstanding such as this was uncommon in Japanese politics and established Nakasone’s credentials as a unique type of conservative politician. However, unlike many conservatives that revered the Emperor, he blamed Emperor Hirohito personally for the Japanese defeat in World War Two. Nakasone believed in the importance of maintaining Japan’s uniqueness and restoring its pride in itself, which was partly based on a differing interpretation of Japanese history. Rather than seeing the Japanese empire and military as being the root of the problem, he saw outside forces and leadership mistakes as being to blame.

\textsuperscript{380} Nakasone Yasuhiro, Interview with Author, June 2009.
\textsuperscript{381} The original copy of Nakasone's petition to MacArthur can still be seen in the Justin Williams Papers, University of Maryland Library Accessed October, 2009
Nakasone was a gifted and hardworking politician who ambitiously climbed the LDP's ranks, becoming Minister of Science in 1959 under the tutelage of Kishi Nobusuke, then Minister of Transport in 1967, leader of the Defense Agency in 1970, Minister of International Trade and Industry (MITI) in 1972 and Minister of Administration in 1981. He was such a central member of the well-oiled, Lockheed scandal-tainted Tanaka faction that critics called Nakasone’s administration “Tanakasone.” Unhelpfully his predecessor Prime Minister Tanaka explained once, “Nakasone is the jockey and I own the horse.”

The new prime minister, however, ran his own race – especially after 1984, when Tanaka was finally convicted for taking $1.6 million in bribes.

Nakasone’s high profile, top-down style of leadership was unusual for a system that valued conformity and consensus. Unlike many of his predecessors, who shied away from the foreign stage, Nakasone capitalized on the foreign policy dimensions and responsibilities of the prime ministry to engage in high-level diplomacy. In the words of Kenneth Pyle, “Though often more rhetoric than reality, more show than substance, more promise than performance, these diplomatic activities gave Japanese foreign policy a more activist cast.”

Given the mood of the 1980s Nakasone fit the spirit of the time perfectly with his more engaged personality and cultivation of friendships among world leaders such as Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, Helmut Kohl, François Mitterrand, and even Mikhail Gorbachev. Raising Japan’s international profile through his own leadership style, Nakasone sought a new role for Japan that reflected its rising self-

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383 Ibid
confidence and sense of national identity that was no longer predicated on remorse for the actions of its former imperial self.

Nakasone’s career path allowed him to understand Japanese foreign policy and Japan’s international role better than any modern prime minister. In contrast to most of Japan’s politicians since the end of World War Two, Nakasone had been the head of the Japanese Defense Agency, which instilled in him a belief in a strong independent military force that was less dependent on the US. At MITI, Nakasone implemented Japan’s first trade liberalization towards its neighbors and constantly reiterated his belief that Japan’s political and military maturity now had to equal its economic performance. Nakasone’s high profile, leadership style, and his determination to change Japan's foreign policy made him rare in modern Japanese political history. He spoke repeatedly about attacking taboos, settling postwar accounts, and “overhauling the postwar socio-economic framework of the nation to meet the challenge of the twenty-first century.”

The general contours of Japan’s foreign relations in Asia were confusing to a Japanese public that had been so internally focused. The two flashpoints for Asian sensitivity came in 1982 with the protests in China and Korea over the wording in Japanese history textbooks and in 1985 when Nakasone went to Yasukuni shrine for the first official visit. The re-internment of World War II “Class A” war criminals in 1978 had already paved the way for a flare up. The importance of Sino-Japanese relations from Ohira to Nakasone’s bonding with Chinese Premier Hu Yaobang was at stake. In 1985 Nakasone stepped back from his Yasukuni visit to promise no more visits in order to help Hu. The personality and leadership of Nakasone cannot be underestimated in this

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relationship or as the early cooperation between Nakasone and President of South Korea Chun Doo-Hwan demonstrates. With Sino-Korean-Japanese relations in the forefront, Asianism proceeded cautiously for Japan.

The timing of these rising regional tensions between Japan and its former colonies in the 1980s was consequential. Had these events arisen a decade earlier a less popular or nationalist leader would have deferred to Japan’s bureaucracy to deal swiftly with these issues and they probably would never have reached the public agenda. Under Nakasone, however, there was an incentive to simultaneously raise them as part of his strategy to create a more “normal” Japan internationally. The Japanese debate about Asianism in the 1980s gained momentum from the waning of the Cold War, the elevated hopes of its strong economy, and the emergence of a new type of Japanese political leader. As Nakasone Yasuhiro, hitched Japan’s rise to Ronald Reagan’s global strategy from 1982, prospects for Asianism were brightening, but they were perceived as part of a steady transition in a Cold War environment, where the U.S. need for Japan’s assistance kept growing and Japan’s leadership in Asia rapidly expanded from economics to politics and culture, leaving the U.S. military still on top.  

The extent to which Nakasone personified Japan during this time was reflected in his relationship with the Japanese media. Mirroring his self-styled hero John Kennedy, Nakasone often talked about the new “television democracy” in Japan and was found of taking ultimate responsibility often saying:

388 For more on the idea of Nakasone’s cultivation of the media see Yamamoto Tsuyoshi, “Hoshu seiji no tokushitsu to Nakasone gaiko,” *Sekai* (July 16, 1986).
In the age of mass democracy, the leader bears all the responsibilities.

The leader must write the script himself, be the lead actor, do the choreography, and plan the PR.\textsuperscript{389}

Nakasone’s style, though unorthodox, was popular as he won a landslide re-election in 1986 that slashed the Socialists to all-time post-1955 lows.\textsuperscript{390}

After his victory in July 1986, Nakasone gloated to an admirer, "For the first time in Japanese political history, I was able to bypass the government and party bureaucrats and take my case directly to the Japanese people."\textsuperscript{391} Unlike previous prime ministers who relied on their bureaucratic or factional power within the system to maintain control, Nakasone used his popularity to act outside the self-contained political straightjacket that Japan had inhabited since 1955. To work around the bureaucracy and systems of checks-and-balance within the “iron triangle” that had restricted every previous leader in Japan, Nakasone used an unprecedented number of ad hoc commissions, semi-private study councils, and private advisory boards to push forward his most important agenda items. Neither the Diet nor the LDP had any formal role in these appointments and even when official ad hoc councils were set up, Nakasone found ways to influence their composition. By choosing likeminded academics, business and opinion leaders to deal with such controversial issues as defense, economy, education, and history, Nakasone was able to adopt the predetermined policy recommendations of the group without bearing political liability.\textsuperscript{392}

\textsuperscript{390} Lafaber, The Clash: US-Japanese Relations Throughout History, 372
\textsuperscript{392} For more on Nakasone’s approach see Pyle, “In Pursuit of a Grand Design,” 254
Imperial Ghosts of Asia

In the immediate postwar period few Japanese were directly concerned with coming to terms with Japan’s past in Asia. While Japan did acknowledge its war guilt in the 1951 peace treaty of San Francisco, in these early years most Japanese continued to regard the war as unavoidable, as historical revisionists still claim today. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Japan upheld what some scholars have called a “double standard:” acknowledging war responsibility and the judgment of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTFE) as confirmed by the San Francisco treaty as the official stance for external consumption, while within Japan, responsibility for the war was denied or at best unquestioned. Nakasone remained firmly against this type of double standard which he saw most prominently represented by the Yoshida School.

While the normalization of relations with South Korea in 1965 and with China in 1972 had necessitated changes in Japan’s attitude to its own past, it was the arrival of Nakasone in combination with globalization and the information revolution of the 1980s that finally brought an end to the “double standard.” Now, Japan-watchers in China, South Korea, and the Western countries paid careful attention to statements on history by Japanese politicians, including those made in a domestic context. Statements offering evidence of affirmative views of the war or of Japan’s legacy in Asia tended to be noticed

393 For a detailed discussion of these issues and the way they have been framed from a sociological perspective see Franziska Seraphim, War Memory and Social Politics in Japan 1945-2005 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).
abroad and carried implications for Japan’s reputation in international society.\(^{394}\) In an effort to cushion the impact on national pride, some important language used for the imperial period had already been altered in Japan by the bureaucracy. Japanese military actions in northern China in the 1930s were typically described in the media and textbooks, with approval of the Ministry of Education as “advances” rather than “aggression” as the authors of earlier texts had written. Only in the 1980s as the Chinese and Koreans, in particular, began to take strong exception to such language as being symptomatic of Japanese efforts to obscure the nature of their imperial behavior, did the issue of Japan’s imperial memories reach the international arena.\(^{395}\)

Nakasone captured the spirit of Japan in the 1980s and exuded a self-confidence that Japan had lacked throughout the postwar era on the political level. He did not publicly apologize for Japan’s past, yet was critical of the mistakes made leading up to World War II. As seen in his dealings with Chinese and Koreans leaders, Nakasone had a personal touch where in private he apologized but publicly remained firmly focused on the future. He was pro-American yet yearned for a more equal partnership that might include a harder line against the Soviet Union. At the same time Nakasone saw in Gorbachev earlier than most others the chance for improved ties. In both disposition and actions, Nakasone was an exceptional Japanese leader that forced the issue of Japan’s imperial past onto the public agenda and out of the shadows it had been lurking in since the consensus 1955 system was put into place. Of course, with this came resurgence in nationalism in both its benign and right-wing form. Nakasone’s self-described mission to

\(^{394}\) Sven Saaler, Politics, Memory, and Public Opinion. The History Textbook Controversy and Japanese Society (Munich, Germany: Iudicium Verlag, 2005), 130.

increase Japan’s pride in itself and national identity was clearly successful, however many accused him of “rocking the boat” and having opened Pandora’s Box. In particular, the virulence of Japan’s right-wing revisionists, who wanted to overturn four decades of consensus on Japan’s official narrative and memories, became an issue of growing domestic and international importance.

Nakasone’s attempts at reformulating Japan’s role in the world were predicated on a conviction that self-confidence began with an appreciation of traditional institutions and history. As part of this commitment, he placed a very high-level of importance on the Yasukuni Shrine issue along with history education reform in Japan. Placing these two issues within his broader agenda of a more “international” and “responsible” nation is thus critical for understanding how Japan’s own sense of self was changed during this time. Leveraging the general sentiment in Japan, which reveled in economic success and the international clout that came with this, Nakasone sought to capitalize by pushing against the forty-year consensus of the Yoshida Doctrine. While he believed strongly in the importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance, Nakasone sought a more equal partnership that did not rely on “weakness as strength,” but included a real component of Japanese strength that was anathema to an entire segment of progressives within Japan.396

History Issues

Controversy over Japan’s history has been a persistent cultural and political struggle between progressives and conservatives. Mapping conservatives and progressives onto Japan’s imperial memory is problematic given the periodization of the Japanese empire in which 1895 through 1920 is typically considered a period of “good empire” worthy of glorifying, while the period after the 1930s is vilified and rejected as being the “bad empire” led by the imperial military. Progressives that pride themselves on pacifism equates all vestiges of Japan’s imperial past with militarism, therefore have adopted an extreme rejectionist memories. Given the outcome of Japan’s imperial experience, progressives reject all vestiges of empire even if individual leaders or experiences are worthy of remembrance. By focusing their efforts on remembering and rejecting Japan’s imperial experiences of 1930 to 1945, progressives reinforce their central point that militarism and great power politics lead ultimately to war. Meanwhile, conservatives focus on the positive aspects of Japan’s empire such the Russo-Japanese war that heralded Japan’s great power status and the intentions behind Japan’s new type of liberal Asian “protector” empire, regardless of outcome. Revisionist forces within the conservative movement often react to the prevalent progressive narrative of Japanese history by attempting to justify and glorify Japan’s empire as being forced upon Japan and fundamentally “better” than Western imperialism. These opposing views of empire and the struggle over Japan’s past have always been fierce, but were contested right below the surface of public debates.
While progressives dominated the teacher’s union and controlled much of the local levers of curriculum change, the conservatives had always focused their attention on the national level at the Ministry of Education (MOE). Thus, domestic politics strongly influenced the history textbook controversy, as the struggle has been a constant give and take between progressives and the conservative nationalist camps. The main actors in this struggle all had their differences, but can generally be grouped as the various factions within the LDP, leftist political parties, and the bureaucracy - mainly the MOE. The LDP in the late 1970s was rife with internal power struggles after the Lockheed affair, and in the mid and late-1980s the party was increasingly becoming corrupt and its internal struggles irreconcilable thereby creating a toxic political arena. As previously described, the link forged between empire and military made by Japan’s postwar leaders has led to a tenuous relationship between modern Japan and its past which has manifested itself in the way that imperial Japan’s history is taught in the republic.

From the inception of the 1955 system some conservative politicians, leading up and including Nakasone, began complaining about Japanese school textbooks being under the influence of “Marxists” in the Japanese Teachers Union. Having adopted a textbook authorization system in 1947 under the SCAP, MOE was in charge of screening all drafts of history textbooks, but not writing them. Starting in 1965, Professor Ienaga Saburō challenged the constitutionality of this arrangement by bringing the first of three lawsuits that lasted until 1997 against the government and its textbook authorization system, which he accused of “unconstitutional censorship.” These domestic struggles, however, were largely contained within the 1955 system and did not spill over into the international arena. As Nakasone and conservatives began to push beyond the consensus
of the Yoshida Doctrine, progressives began to see the rules of the game being changed with significant consequences for Japan’s bilateral relations toward its former Asian colonies.\footnote{For more on this see Yoshiko Nozaki and Mark Selden, “Japanese Textbook Controversies, Nationalism, and Historical Memory: Intra- and Inter-national Conflicts,” \textit{The Asia-Pacific Journal, Japan Focus}, http://www.japanfocus.org/-Yoshiko-Nozaki/3173, Accessed June 10, 2010.}

In the summer of 1982, Japanese textbooks became part of a major diplomatic row for the first time. The \textit{Asahi Shimbun}, the largest progressive-leaning national newspaper in Japan, reported a story in which the MOE was alleged to have demanded that a textbook which had stated that the Japanese army “invaded” (\textit{shinryaku}) Northern China, be rewritten using the phrase “advanced” (\textit{shinshutsu}).\footnote{Tanaka Akihiko, \textit{Ajia no naka no Nihon} (Tokyo: NTT Shuppan, 2007), 162-63; Yinan He, “Remembering and Forgetting the War: Elite Mythmaking, Mass Reaction, and Sino-Japanese Relations, 1950-2006,” \textit{History & Memory} Vol.19, No.2 (Winter 2007): 43-74.} Though seemingly a semantic and minor point, the intentionality behind the rewording triggered a strong response both from outside and inside Japan.

Chinese and South Korean Governments denounced this rewriting of history and accused the Japanese government of a lack of sensitivity. This incident marked the beginning of the difficult bilateral relationship between Japan and China concerning historical issues. It is important to note that this history textbook incident largely reflected domestic politics in both Beijing and Tokyo, as hard-line nationalists were gaining influence within both governments. When the LDP won the general election in June 1980, some right-wing conservative politicians began to raise their voices on educational issues for the first time. LDP legislators such as Mitsuzuka Hiroshi criticized government education guidelines for insufficient patriotism, leading the MOE to create new
guidelines on school textbooks. This reflected growing tension within the LDP between the younger generation of progressives and elder, old-fashioned conservatives who strove to defend Japan’s prewar national glory. Domestic ideological tensions in both Japan and China seemed to undermine the Sino-Japanese relationship on historical issues.

**Yasukuni Shrine**

The ongoing controversy and issues surrounding the Yasukuni Shrine (*Yasukuni Jinja*) in Tokyo symbolizes the disputes surrounding the commemoration of the war dead and the views of Japan’s past in the public arena. The shrine has become the focal point for the politics of imperial memory in Japan. Originally established as the Yokto Shokonsha, the Yasukuni Shrine was given its present name in 1879. The memorial was originally dedicated to those killed in action during the period of turmoil leading up to the Meiji Restoration (1853-1868), as well as government troops who died during the civil wars of the 1870s. Later soldiers, sailors and airmen who died “in defense of the nation in Japan’s wars with other countries” were included. Today, “the divine spirits” of all members of the Japanese military and individuals affiliated with the military who died for the “Emperor and the nation” between 1853 and 1945 are “worshipped” at the

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399 Hideo Otake has an entire section dealing with this issue in his *Sengo Nihon no Ideologi Tairitsu* (Post-War Japan's Ideological Conflicts) (Tokyo: Sanichi. Shobo, 1996), 148-53, and in addition a helpful comparative set of curriculum guidelines can be found at Sven Saaler, “History Textbooks in Postwar German and Japanese Education,” (presentation at University of Tokyo, August, 2009), [http://www.japanesehistory.de/docs/%20Education%20Germany%20and%20Japan.pdf](http://www.japanesehistory.de/docs/%20Education%20Germany%20and%20Japan.pdf).


In many regards the amalgamation between tenno and nation that is symbolized with Yasukuni highlights the problems faced in drafting a new constitution that had to deal with how to separate a sovereign nation from its emperor.

The issues surrounding the Yasukuni Shrine revolves around who should be commemorated and worshipped as “gods” and “heroic souls” in the Japanese understanding of these concepts. Upon initial review the problem would seem to be that the shrine includes several individuals sentenced for committing war crimes by the IMTFE, such as wartime Prime Minister Tojo Hideki but excludes civilian victims of the war – Japanese as well as Asian. However the irony of Yasukuni is that it has a long history as a central institution of the state-sponsored Shinto religion of being used as a symbol of militarism and Japanese wars in general. Therefore one might have expected the issue to fade with the settling of accounts after 1945 as the military lost its privileged position within the Japanese state. Instead of fading, however, Yasukuni has become an important representation of historical revisionism for Japanese conservatives and right-wingers.

In the aftermath of World War II, progressives and conservatives sparred over the types of commemorations that the Japanese state should endorse with conservatives taking the lead in trying to “rehabilitate” traditional spots such as Yasukuni, whereas progressives emphasized new sites for commemoration such as Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Okinawa as being places to remember the destructiveness of war and class struggles. Each group had its own pet projects and tried to push through their ideas at varying levels.

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402 These are quotes translated by the author over the course of several days spent reading the various plaques and materials at the Yasukuni Shrine in June 2009, Tokyo. The Shrines’ website can be accessed at (www.yasukuni.or.jp/). Accessed June 2010.
403 Saaler *Politics, Memory, and Public Opinion*, 94.
of local and federal bureaucracy and politics. Perhaps as a result of a more coordinated focus on Yasukuni the right wing has been far more successful at keeping it on the agenda. Time and again, highly publicized visits by conservative politicians highlight the contentiousness of the issue in the spheres of politics, society, and the media.\footnote{Saaler \textit{Politics, Memory, and Public Opinion}, 95.} Adding fuel to controversial fires, fourteen Class A war criminals were reinterred in 1978 with very little fanfare until the 1980s when a spotlight was shown upon this controversial decision and the role that revisionist conservatives had played in this decision. This in many ways changed the context for Yasukuni and many of its greatest critiques pointed to this action as being the most critical of all.

Starting with Yoshida, Japanese prime ministers had visited Yasukuni but none had done so in an official capacity on the actual day commemorating the end of World War II. Families of the war dead, a powerful LDP constituency, had long lobbied for restoration of the Yasukuni’s prewar official status but it wasn’t until Nakasone that they found a personal ally. As a result of personal convictions about the sacrifices made by soldiers fighting in World War Two, Nakasone appointed a special commission in 1984 to look into the issue of an official prime ministerial visit.\footnote{In an interview with the author Nakasone insisted he understood the political consequences but felt personally convicted to honor the war dead with an official visit as prime minister. He flatly denied any political motivation for his actions. Nakasone Yasuhiro, Interview with Author, June 2009.} Given Nakasone’s views the committee unsurprisingly found that formal worship at the Yasukuni by the prime minister was constitutional. According to Nakasone, his visit to Yasukuni was meant to refocus Japan on its traditional reverence for the spirits of the war dead and put aside the issue of the Japanese empire as a source of national shame and embarrassment. In his own words, “The Yasukuni issue is important precisely because it shows the gratitude of
the people for the sacrifices made by their forebears.”

By focusing on Japan’s identity and its relationship with its empire, Nakasone pushed the domestic debate beyond where it lay naturally.

Few issues galvanize the conservative base in Japan more than that of the Yasukuni Shrine. A search of the content database of MagazinePlus (Nichigai Associates) resulted in 753 hits (articles) for the search string “Yasukuni jinja (shrine)” between 1982 and May 2003. Debate about the shrine picked up traction in 1985 (65 articles), as a result of the visit of Prime Minister Nakasone in that year, and again in 1986 (73 articles), and then peaked with Koizumi in 2001 (257 articles) and 2002 (107 articles). An examination of the publications involved shows how the issue has polarized the political media. Most articles were published in the conservative to right-wing journals that support the Yasukuni shrine, such as Shokun! (64), Seiron (50), Voice (37), Jurisuto (24), Bungei Shunju (17) and Sapio (14) or in the liberal to left-wing journals that oppose it, such as Sekai (42), Shukan Kinyobi (28), Sunday Mainichi (20), Asahi Journal (16) and Ronza (14). Apart from these journals, only Shukan Shincho (20), Asahi Journal (16), Chuo Koron (12) and the Economist (12) had significant hits. All the other magazines listed published fewer than ten articles on the subject between 1982 and 2003.

Nakasone, as a smart and savvy politician, recognized the popular appeal of his visits to the shrine and as a result used them to maximum political advantage. In addition

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406 Nakasone Yasuhiro, Interview with Author, June 2009. Translated by author.
407 MagazinePlus is an online database of Japanese language media which can be searched in a variety of formats. These numbers are for all weekly publications. http://web.nichigai.co.jp/
to his personal convictions about the inevitability of World War II for Japan, Nakasone has an emotional connection to Yasukuni. Candid expressions from this former politician reveal that he believes that honoring one’s war dead is a separate issue from the acts committed in the name of the empire. Continually referring to various American examples such as Arlington Cemetery, Nakasone offers a Japanese-centric view of the relationship between “divine spirits” that are a critical part of the Shinto religion and worldview. However Nakasone also acknowledges the political nature of the Yasukuni issue while defending his actions and convictions as being genuine and not simply politically motivated. In reaction to international outcries over his visit Nakasone dismisses this as being about misunderstanding more than serious disputes. “No two nations or peoples can see eye-to-eye on every issue of history. Therefore the friendship and tone underlying these issues is most important to understand.”

In response to Nakasone’s August 15, 1985 official visit the Chinese did not express their anger immediately. However after students at Beijing universities protested on September 19, possibly with the government’s permission and a spokesman at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs criticized the visit for hurting the feelings of the Chinese people. Many analysts have linked the Chinese reaction to domestic political struggles, whereby this issue was used to damage the political status of “pro-Japanese” Hu Yaobang, who had cultivated close personal ties with Nakasone. After receiving this harsh criticism and seeing how it was being politically used in China, Nakasone announced that he would make no further official visits, explaining that he did so to

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409 Nakasone Yasuhiro, Interview with Author, June 2009, Translated by author.
410 Ibid.
protect Hu.\textsuperscript{412} “It was not in the interest of Japan for me to continue visiting as head of government,” Nakasone insisted. Given the close working relationship that Nakasone developed with Hu and several other Asian leaders he instead chose to continue his visits as a regular private citizen. Emphasizing the difference between a politician and statesman, Nakasone also attached little real importance to the issue of Yasukuni to Japan’s international relations. “They (Asians) may complain, but if it is a choice between economic cooperation and disputes over history, we will always choose our future.”\textsuperscript{413} In addition he blamed politics for the polarization his visit caused. Meanwhile, domestic politics in Japan became more important for Nakasone to tend to. Conservative nationalists were infuriated by Nakasone’s decision to back down so easily and characterized it as an unacceptable concession to Beijing and as Chinese meddling in Japan’s “domestic affairs.” This marked the beginning of the rise of anti-Chinese nationalism within Japan and the beginning of the end for Nakasone as he lost support among many of his former conservative supporters.

Seen from Nakasone’s point of view, Yasukuni was a symbolic issue that captured the stagnation of postwar Japan and continued to prevent it from assuming its rightful place on the world stage. As a site of commemoration, discussions over Yasukuni only increased with the exposure that Nakasone bestowed on it through his visits. While internationally there was little support for such a “provocative” and “insensitive” action, domestically it began a broader discussion and soul-searching for the Japanese. However, it did not come to dominate the headlines like the previous textbook controversy until the tenure of Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro, who made annual visits throughout the

\textsuperscript{413} Nakasone Yasuhiro, Interview with Author, June 2009, Translated by author.
2000s. For Nakasone, another issue, how Japanese talked about their imperial past in history textbooks, came to dominate the agenda and became intertwined with the issue of education reform, which had always been a driving force for the Prime Minister.

**Education Reform**

Reform of the educational system was a key part of Nakasone's desire to overhaul institutions and make Japan "an international state." Bypassing the MOE, which he decided was too tradition-minded to share his vision, and capitalizing on a widespread sense of malaise in the education system, Nakasone persuaded the Diet to establish an Ad Hoc Council on Education as an advisory board to the prime minister in August of 1984. It was yet another example of his use of commissions to get across his ideas. He filled a substantial number of positions on the 25-person panel with those whose views coincided with his own, including many of his own brain trust; and he passed over representatives of the Japan Teachers' Union whose active involvement in the textbook controversy and progressive views epitomized the postwar attitudes toward education that Nakasone sought to change.

By opening up a debate about Japan’s education system that had been left more or less intact since the end of the American Occupation, particularly on the heels of the 1982 textbook incident, Nakasone unleashed a firestorm of domestic criticism from the progressive movement. In characteristic fashion, Nakasone shrugged it off and framed the debate as being less about history and all about competiveness for Japan’s future. The Council on Education Reform engaged in a three-year program of deliberations that led

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414 In particular see Kenneth Pyle’s chapter “End of an Era,” in *Making of Modern Japan*, 269-283.
to a final set of conclusions presented to Nakasone in the summer of 1987. These conclusions all took aim at a school structure characterized by standardization, centralization, and insulation from international influences. The purpose given was to liberalize and deregulate the educational system so as to permit greater diversity, flexibility, and even competition among schools. Nakasone's rational for targeting the existing educational system was that it represented a pro-growth consensus that was no longer suited for Japan in the 1980s. As one of his key advisors explained:

During the stage when Japan was still catching up to the world, companies welcomed a mass produced supply of workers equipped with a uniform, homogeneous education. The resounding success of total quality control is closely tied to the uniform educational background and ability of Japanese workers. The big question now is whether what has succeeded in the twentieth century will also lead to success in the twenty-first century.\(^{415}\)

Nakasone, however, did not stop with structural educational reform but also attempted to raise Japanese national consciousness through a series of symbolic reforms. The most significant of these was the compulsory singing of the national anthem and flying of the national flag at school events, along with a reintroduction into school textbooks of military figures as role models for Japanese children, and finally the creation

\(^{415}\) Pyle *Making of Modern Japan*, 259
of a national center for the study of Japanese culture.\textsuperscript{416} Taken individually and without the backdrop of the wider conservative-progressive movements, these reforms could be dismissed as idiosyncratic to Nakasone, but they clearly were indicative of a larger trend being pushed by a more assertive conservative-nationalist agenda that had not fully been awakened during the Cold War.

Nakasone’s leadership in the 1980s coincided and presided over an increasingly self-confident mood in Japan. Having re-asserted itself on the international stage as a major economic player, Japan was set on a path by Nakasone towards breaking free of its self-imposed rejectionist narrative of its imperial past and international limitations under the Yoshida Doctrine. Nakasone had always encouraged Japan to create a new image for itself and put its historical actions in context rather than accepting a “victor’s narrative.”\textsuperscript{417} As Japan’s third longest serving Prime Minister, Nakasone personified the newly assertive Japan of the 1980s and was critical for stirring the debate that would eventually erupt with the historical revisionist movement in Japan. Domestic intrigue and scandal from within the LDP brought Nakasone down in 1987 on the eve of some of the most significant changes in Japan’s international and domestic environment. However the most relevant aspect to consider in understanding Japanese educational reform is the fact that Japanese children were learning little about the imperial period, and conservatives were mainly fighting against negative views of the teachers and the left without yet pressing for their positive images.

\textsuperscript{416} This center is referenced in front page articles in \textit{Japan Times}(February 11, 1989); \textit{Asahi} (February 29, 1988); and \textit{Asahi} (March 28, 1989).
\textsuperscript{417} This term comes from Barry Buzan, “Japan’s Future: Old History Versus New Role,” \textit{International Affairs} Vol. 64, No. 4 (Autumn 1988): 557.
End of an Era: Cold War and Hirohito

Emperor Hirohito, who had ascended the Chrysanthemum Throne as Japan prepared for its largest imperial expansion in the 1930s and in whose name the Pacific part of World War II had been waged, died on January 7, 1989. The emperor who had witnessed and presided over the destruction of Japan’s empire and the emergence of a new modern republic had provided a much-need sense of continuity throughout his Showa reign. As Japanese mourned the loss of their national symbol, who had ruled for over sixty two years, a renewed debate about the value of the imperial family and its relation to Japan was re-opened at a moment in which everything seemed to be in flux. At the end of 1989 the Berlin Wall came down and the Soviet empire began to disintegrate. The international system that Japan had known since 1945 seemed to be crumbling around it without a strong leader in place. At the very moment Japan’s faced these unsettling international events, the LDP suffered a crushing defeat in the upper house Diet election. The party lost its majority in that chamber for the first time since it was founded. In 1990, the speculative bubble of the eighties burst in spectacular fashion, leading to more than two decades of economic stagnation that continues to haunt Japan to this day. Both the global context and the domestic spirit of the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century differed markedly from the 1980s.

Since the end of World War II the Japanese government controlled by the LDP had never been forced to come to terms with either the question of war responsibility, including that of accountability for colonial rule, or the voices of people in Asia who suffered both physically and mentally because of Japanese conduct during the war.
Without the Cold War logic of maintaining unity in the face of Soviet aggression, victims of the Japanese empire began to step forward with the support of their national governments. Meanwhile in Japan a second insurgency of grassroots nationalism had been unleashed. One such moment had occurred in the 1950s, when the Allied occupation ended, and another was now brewing as the Cold War framework collapsed.

During the Cold War, international crises served to reinforce the necessity of maintaining domestic unity and a low international profile. Now in a post-Cold War environment the first major crisis served to aggravate Japanese nationalism and negatively impact its precarious international position. The Gulf War in 1991 painfully exposed the limitations of Tokyo’s Cold War *modus operandi* – securing its overseas interest through the exercise of economic power. Pressured by the international community to contribute rear-area support, the Japanese government attempted to pass legislation that would have facilitated this. The constitution and pacifist public opinion prevented the government from fulfilling its international promises to play a larger role in the Gulf. The Diet balked at the prospect of Self Defense Forces (SDF) being dispatched overseas for the first time since World War II, forcing the government to withdraw the bill. As a consequence, Japan underwrote 20 percent of the war’s expense, yet received neither gratitude nor respect. Media accusations of “checkbook diplomacy” and “too little, too late” stung Japanese officials, many of whom had struggled in vain to

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418 Nozaki *War Memory, Nationalism, and Education in Postwar Japan*, 153.
implement SDF deployment. Government officials accepted, and later embraced, the idea that Japan’s global status required a more significant international security role.\textsuperscript{419}

Ozawa Ichiro, the Secretary-General of the LDP, regarded “the war as the coming of the Black Ship in the closing days of the Tokugawa period.”\textsuperscript{420} The mishandling of U.S. requests for support shocked many Japanese leaders and intellectuals, resulting in what many called the equivalent of a “major defeat” for Japan.\textsuperscript{421} The Japanese Ambassador in Washington, Murata Ryohei, recalled, “The time of the Gulf Crisis and War was one continuous nightmare.”\textsuperscript{422} Although the government had tried to contribute to the U.S.-led international coalition, Japan was left looking helpless. Closer to home, the North Korean nuclear crisis of 1994 shocked the Japanese and further reinforced the serious security threats surrounding Japan in the post-Cold War era. Japan was unable to respond effectively to these sorts of crises, and it was widely felt that economic policy alone could not suffice for its international responsibility. Japan’s impotence ignited controversy that produced an understanding in both the government and public opinion that Japan needed to transform its diplomatic doctrine in the post-Cold War era.\textsuperscript{423}

In response to the crises, Ozawa, who left the LDP to establish the Hosokawa Morihiro coalition government as secretary-general of the Shinseito, proposed that Japan become a “normal state.” In Ozawa’s thinking this was predicated on two things: 1)

\textsuperscript{419} For more on this see Daniel Kliman, \textit{Japan’s Security Strategy in the Post-9/11 World} (Washington DC: Praeger Press, 2006), starting on page 75.
\textsuperscript{422} Murata Ryohei, \textit{Murata Ryohei kaisoroku: Sokoku no saisei o fisedai ni takushite} (Kyoto: Minerva shobo, 2008), 121.
participating in the field of common security and taking responsibility in international society for Japan’s own destiny and 2) aiding those who want to live in prosperity and tranquility, as well as cooperating on issues on the global agenda such as environmental protection. Ozawa argued forcefully that, “we need to free ourselves from the Yoshida Doctrine as soon as possible,” adding “we need to create a new strategy.”

Both the right-wing nationalists and the new conservative “normal statists” criticized the Yoshida Doctrine as an outdated relic of the cold war. Likewise, resurgent Asianists denounced U.S.-Japan bilateralism, proposing new strategies for Asia. Supported generally by rightists who didn’t like the moderate-conservative line that depended on the United States, these Japanese believed in an Asian focus for Japanese foreign policy that would allow for a more independent and dominate position for Japan in Asia. Thus, the government began to search for a national identity that had once dominated Japan during its empire. Abandoning the economic-oriented diplomatic doctrine of Yoshida Shigeru in search of an alternative source of national pride other than rapid economic growth, Japan was beginning to look back to Asia. As a result, the theme of national identity and reinventing a “bright” past rose to the forefront of Japanese policy.

**Official Apology**

In August 1993, the LDP, Japan’s ruling party since 1955, was defeated. One of the key events that resulted from the LDP’s fall from power was the movement by the

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progressive coalition that had formed to issue an official apology from Japan to its former colonies. While Japanese prime ministers as far back as Kishi had expressed personal statements of remorse and regret, there had never been a government-wide effort to apologize on behalf of the nation for imperial Japan’s actions. The preceding Ozawa coalition was not truly progressive, but it had served to weaken the conservative and right within Japan. On the heels of this coalition, Socialist Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi cut through the bitter debate and insisted on putting the issue of an official apology squarely on his agenda and began to work towards a Diet resolution in preparation for the 50th anniversary of the ending of World War II.

Despite having been voted out of power only briefly, right-wing politicians within the LDP along with some members of other parties, attempted to block any Diet resolution of apology that might be issued on the fiftieth anniversary of Japan's surrender. Even though Murayama was more progressive as a socialist, his ability to remain prime minister was very much dependent on his LDP coalition partners agreeing to his every move. Therefore in mid-1995, when members of the Diet proposed passing a resolution of apology for wartime aggression and atrocities, 70 percent of the LDP members banded together with other opponents to kill the measure. After considerable hand-wringing, in August 1995 Japan’s first Socialist prime minister in nearly forty years, Murayama Tomiichi, cut through the bitter debate. On August 15, 1995 Murayama made a statement in which he acknowledged that:

During a certain period in the not-too-distant past, Japan, following a mistaken national policy, advanced along the road to war, only to ensnare the Japanese people in a fateful crisis, and, through its colonial rule and aggression, caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of many countries, particularly those of Asian nations.\(^{426}\)

He also expressed his “sense of profound remorse” and added that he felt “feelings of deep regret and state my heartfelt apology.”\(^{427}\) The significance in domestic politics that for the first time a top Japanese official had offered an “apology” for the suffering and devastation Japan had inflicted during the war was monumental. Murayama especially offered a “heartfelt apology” to other Asians. His contrition was also interpreted as a Socialist warning against Japanese involvement in any future conflict resembling the Gulf War. The statement was endorsed as a cabinet decision and became the official position of the Japanese government regarding Japan’s wartime past. Murayama’s successor, Hashimoto Ryutaro, despite being known to support affirmative views of the war, was the first member to endorse the Murayama statement in the House of Councilors on January 26, 1996. The significance here is the fact that the 1996 ruling coalition in Japan were firmly dominated by the LDP unlike the Murayama coalition. As a result, every Japanese head of cabinet, including Prime Minister Koizumi, quoted at the outset


\(^{427}\) Ibid.
of this book, has followed the Murayama Statement and made it an official statement of Japan.  

Yet this official apology and subsequent attempts on the part of the Japanese government, did not satisfy Japan’s neighbors and nor lead to a consensus within Japanese society. The first reason for this fact was that fewer than half the 511 members of the House of Representatives attended the Diet session of June 1995 in which the apology resolution was adopted, despite its compromise character. Many conservative members of the LDP, which opposed the adoption of any resolution, stayed away from the Diet rather than be forced to either vote against the resolution – and so provoke a political crisis – or vote against their conscience. As a result, the resolution was not even tabled in Japan’s upper house, the House of Councilors. To add insult to injury, politicians opposing the resolution formed a variety of lobby groups, giving evidence of the strength of apologetic views of the war in Japanese politics and the paucity of “genuine” remorse.

Already by 1994, approximately half of the LDP Diet membership had formed an organization known as the Parliamentarians League on the 50th Anniversary of the End of World War II that was led by ultra-conservative Okuno Seisuke and included Mori Yoshiro (LDP general secretary) and Hashimoto Ryutaro (former MITI minister and soon to be prime minister.) The League’s sole purpose was to torpedo Murayama’s attempts. In its guidelines, the organization stated: “We cannot approve of a resolution containing words of remorse, apology, and the renunciation of war because it would be tantamount

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428 Saaler Politics, Memory, and Public Opinion., 73.
429 There is a burgeoning literature on the issue of apologies in international relations and specifically on the case of Japan with Alexis Dudden’s exemplary work Troubled Apologies Among Japan, Korea, and the United States. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008) and Jennifer Lind, Sorry States (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).
to reconfirming biased post-war interpretations of our history, thereby creating
difficulties for our nation’s future.” Perhaps the greatest insult to Asians who had been
hopeful about Murayama’s statement representing a real change in Japanese attitudes
about its past actions, was the fact that at the same time the cabinet approved the apology,
many of Murayama’s ministers made a pilgrimage to the Yasukuni Shrine to honor the
Japanese soldiers who died in battle publicly singling out the six thousand kamikaze
pilots who in their “tragic bravery struck terror into their foes.” The contradictory
messages being sent mirrored the resurgence of glorificationist memories of the Japanese
empire that had always been superceded by the rejectionist position adopted by official
Japanese narratives that generally simply ignored these periods of Japan’s past.

Subsequent to Murayama’s official apology, a glorificationist view of the empire
began to gain ground in Japanese politics and the public sphere post-Cold War in a
process that was enforced by a strong political agenda. The resulting similarities between
historical revisionism and the historical views displayed in many areas of the public
sphere are striking. Most sites of commemoration of the war and imperial memorials,
especially those run or sanctioned by institutions of the government and therefore
expressing the self-understanding of the Japanese state, support a strongly glorificationist
view of the war, which in historical exhibitions is presented as a defensive war, a war
waged for the sake of Asian liberation, and a war that victimized the Japanese people.

A Defensive War for Asians and Creeping Glorificationist narrative

430 Saaler Politics, Memory, and Public Opinion., 74.
The most influential proponent of a defensive war and glorificationist narrative has been the Yushukan Museum attached to the Yasukuni Shrine, which reinvigorated itself after the Murayama apology.\textsuperscript{432} As previously outlined, justification of the wars pursued by the Japanese Empire is provided by presenting them as defensive wars and wars of Asian liberation. The museum seeks to confirm the belief that the soldiers commemorated at Yasukuni fought a fair and just war and gave their lives in fulfillment of a just mission for the Emperor, Empire, and their families. Hence, the Yushukan exhibition fosters not only a justification of Japan’s wars but also the refusal to assume responsibility for war.\textsuperscript{433}

The museum presents an affirmative interpretation of the war from the display of the First Sino-Japanese War 1894-1895 to depictions of the end of the war in 1945.\textsuperscript{434} A blue line extends throughout the entire exhibition as a way of underlining historical continuity. Moreover, the Japanese wars are presented as a centuries-long struggle against Western colonialism and imperialism, as is clearly shown at the start of the exhibit. The main exhibit begins with the Battle of Plassey of 1757 and the “penetration of European imperialism” into East Asia. Following a presentation of the “heroic battles” of anti-Tokugawa and anti-foreigner movement of the late Edo period as well as of the civil war of the Meiji-Restoration in 1868-1869, the founding of the Shrine itself and its relationship to the imperial household is depicted in a special exhibition.

\textsuperscript{432} Over a series of three days the author spent studying the various exhibits in June 2009, Tokyo. The Yushukan Museum aims to “communicate to its visitors a more accurate truth about modern Japanese history” according to its website (http://www.yasukuni.or.jp/index.html). Accessed June 2010.

\textsuperscript{433} Saaler \textit{Politics, Memory, and Public Opinion}, 99.

\textsuperscript{434} Unless otherwise indicated the information that follows was all observed by the author over the course of three days spent at the museum studying the exhibits in June 2009, Tokyo. In addition to author’s observation Saaler’s \textit{Politics, Memory, and Public Opinion} has similar observations that will be footnoted.
The continuity of Japanese history is emphasized by tracing an unbroken line from the legendary first emperor Jimmu – represented in the form of a statue – up to the “Rescript of Education” of 1890, as described and dealt with previously as one of the founding documents of the modern nation-state. The historical narrative that unfolds in later displays presents the Japanese empire as expanding between 1894 and 1945 as a constant struggle for independence and liberation of Asian “brother nations” from Western colonial rule. The Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 is depicted in a multimedia display in a special exhibition room which is given an extremely militaristic slant. Details about the consequences of this war, the dark side of Japan’s colonial rule in Korean beginning in 1910, or the problematic issues surrounding the “Greater East Asian War” waged between 1937 and 1945 – such as the Nanjing incident in 1937 – are either omitted or are depicted in distorted fashion. Thus, the treatment of Nanjing is limited to a depiction of the city’s capture by Japanese forces with no mention of the massacre of the civilian population.

Following a detailed depiction of the “Greater East Asian War” spanning five exhibition rooms, the conclusion is presented that the war was fought to secure Japan’s independence and livelihood and that it was a war of liberation for Asia from the Western colonial powers. Moreover, an exhibit calls attention to the fact that the war “attained these goals indirectly since after 1945 a significant number of Asian nations achieved independence or at least a degree of autonomy.” After viewing the historical exhibition, visitors are ushered into the “large exhibition hall” where they are confronted with weapons, helmets pierced with bullet holes, and other pieces of equipment used by

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436 Ibid.
the Imperial Army and Navy. There is a puzzling contradiction between the putative role of the Yasukuni Shrine as a “memorial for peace” and the displays and their accompanying texts – including military fighter aircraft from the Pacific War, artillery, tanks, and one-man submarines used for suicide missions. According to the curator, the museum exists “to correct the false impressions about Japan’s empire.”

As a result, notwithstanding the ongoing official affirmation of the Murayama Statement, Prime Minister Koizumi explained on a personal level that the “welfare of Japan today is due to the sacrifice of those who died in the war.” As Michael Pye has written, “Viewed historically and economically, this statement is completely false. The historical effect of the actions of the war dead, in general, was to lead Japan to catastrophe, including complete economic destruction.” However, it is an affirmative view of the war that dominates public memory in Japan – in memorials and museums run or sanctioned by the state – and, apart from some prefectural museums, Japanese responsibility for war is not raised in them, and the victims of Japanese aggression are nowhere memorialized or even considered.

**Rise of the Revisionist Movement – Media and Popular Imagination**

A revisionist movement in the works since the textbook controversies of 1982 had been in formation, but only truly began to flower in a post-Cold War environment rife

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437 Ibid.
438 Interview with Yushukan Museum Curator. Author, June 2009. Translated by author.
439 Koizumi Junichiro, Interview with Author, August 2009.
441 Saaler Politics, Memory, and Public Opinion, 121.
with international crises and a domestic environment in which the LDP had lost its absolute power. Whereas in the past, the LDP was held together by a common consensus to stick to a moderate conservative line, having lost power there were new incentives to re-invigorate the party base by engaging the revisionists. This movement shared a lot in common with the more established conservative movement particularly regarding its emphasis on strengthening citizens’ allegiance to the state by fostering national consciousness, national pride, and patriotic sentiment. However, the new addition to the revisionist movement was the attempt to construct a “bright” national history to achieve these ends. In their view, “A proud future for the nation is at stake.” The revisionists and their political allies cannot envisage forgetting the Japanese Empire except for its war crimes. Toward this end, integrating the empire into a positive national narrative and historical memory – even if this involves discarding previous historical research and jeopardizing efforts for international reconciliation – is necessary. In constructing this “bright” narrative, it is essential for them to reject the “dark” interpretation of Japan’s imperial history and to re-interpret the Empire in a positive way.

Within the framework of Japan’s revisionist efforts to fashion a “bright” national narrative, there is no room for reflection on Japan’s wartime past or controversial topics such as war crimes. The central question in discussions between the historical revisionists and their opponents is whether Japan’s wars on the Asian continent and in the Pacific between 1931 and 1945 were wars of aggression or rather wars of liberation conducted for the sake of Asian “brother peoples” subdued by Western imperialism. Historical revisionists insist that the Asia-Pacific War was a war of liberation, an interpretation that
has provoked criticism both within Japan and overseas. What makes the revisionist position particularly difficult in a political environment is their claim to exclusive knowledge of “the truth” about Japanese history. This claim has been made explicitly, but usually is implicitly accepted by many Japanese. Reviewing media coverage of recent developments in Japan, one could be forgiven for thinking that the majority of observers both inside and outside the country consider the revisionist perspective as embodying the authentic historical view of Japan.\footnote{Ibid, 16.}

The 1990s were a period of great uncertainty and turbulence in Japan, beginning with the death of Hirohito, end of the Cold War, beginning of the Gulf War, and the fiftieth anniversary of defeat in 1945.\footnote{For a detailed analysis of this nationalism and post-war complacency see Rikki Kersten, \textit{Democracy in Postwar Japan} (London: Routledge Press, 1996), starting from page 191.} This provided a favorable atmosphere for glorificationists who favored a more positive portrayal of Japan’s past as they sought to revise their past to suit the present. As articulated by studies on this period, “Analysis of 1990s revisionism [in Japan] reveals a closer affinity with pre-war and wartime nationalism than with any kind of ‘new’ post-war nationalism. It has revived a state-centered nationalism that explicitly regards post-war democracy as its ideological enemy.”\footnote{Ibid, 191.} Conservative Japanese leaders have long sought to purge the stain of guilt from the Japanese Empire’s aggression in the 1930s and 1940s and instill a sense of national pride in the young generation. Popular depictions about the empire and the Asia-Pacific War have proliferated since the 1980s including blockbuster movies and TV
series that focus on individual leaders and themes of sacrifice for country despite all odds.\textsuperscript{447}

Indifference rather than outright denial of war responsibility has been identified by scholars as a central element in important cultural medium that have contributed greatly to the formation of the historical consciousness of the Japanese in both historical novels and movies.\textsuperscript{448} According to the authors of a report on Japanese popular portrayals of history, directors and writers tend to focus on the “noble” chapters of the pre-imperial period and the years leading up to the Meiji Restoration in 1868 but do not engage any aspect of Japan’s history after 1905.\textsuperscript{449} In much of the Japanese popular past, the historical center was neither the social politics pursued by the progressives nor the traditional culture celebrated in conservative circles. Instead, individual heroes were what history was all about. There were the heroes who made history, or tried to, and the common people, who endured it, and tried too.

The most glorified and least controversial periods were the \textit{Sengoku} and \textit{Bakumatsu}, the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries respectively, much like they had been in the 1920s. “Both represented periods of change, when upheaval and opportunity were the rule and before order descended in the form of the Tokugawa system or the Meiji state.”\textsuperscript{450} Similar to the British Broadcasting Corporation in Britain, NHK (\textit{Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai})...

\textsuperscript{447} Various institutes and studies have been conducted on Japanese wartime films such as the US Naval Institute that highlights in English-language some of the factual distortations in various Japanese movies to inform an American audience: \url{http://www.usni.org/through-japanese-eyes-wwii-japanese-cinema} accessed September 10, 2011.

\textsuperscript{448} Saaler, \textit{Politics, Memory, and Public Opinion}, 151.

\textsuperscript{449} Ibid, 153.

\textsuperscript{450} Carol Gluck in her chapter in Andrew \textit{Postwar Japan as History}, ed. Andrew Gordon (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 74, deals with these issues and focuses on these TV shows as being indicative of changing Japanese identities.
*Hoso Kyokai* is a publicly owned media-broadcasting agency linked to the government through funding but generally considered independent.

The more contemporary NHK’s annual historical series deals mainly with themes drawn from the late Tokugawa and the early Meiji period. While materials from this period formed the basis of nine separate series, imperial topics have never been dealt with and post-Meiji material was featured on only four occasions in 43 years. A study by a German institute interested in portrayals of Japan’s past on television found that there were 8 full-length series dealing with Japanese history before 1467, 16 full-length series on the Period of Warring States (1467-1573), 7 full-length series on the *Edo* period before 1840, 9 full-length series on the *Bakumatsu* period (1840-1868), and only 4 full-length series after 1868, which focused on pre-1905 history. 451 Clearly in a globalizing world, Japanese have resurrected pre-imperial heroes from their past. In particular, Saigo Takamori, who led a samurai rebellion against Western modernization in the 1870s, has become a popular figure to glorify as evidenced by a series of books that sold 8.4 million copies and the number of TV shows focused on this period. As some analysts have noted, the culture of the past has been refurbished to defend the miracle of the present against American-style modernization of the future. 452

By relying on historical revisionism and the glorified narrative of Japanese history it proposes – with the affirmative view of the war as its centerpiece – conservative politics aimed at strengthening patriotism in society and fostering the allegiance of the citizen to the state. Some observers have placed this agenda within the context of a striving for an “Orwellian state” whose institutions reflect the slogan: “Who controls the

451 Saaler, 165.
past, controls the future; who controls the present controls the past.” Against the glorified historical narrative utilized by conservative politics, a strong progressive opposition in Japanese society at large still promotes rejectionist views of history, denying the need to generate “pride” in the nation or “patriotism” in the first place. This deep rift in discussions on history and patriotism mirrors the polarized positions adopted on a raft of related political issues – revision of the Constitution vs. retention of protection of the existing text; revision of the Basic Law on Education vs. retention; loosening restrictions on the deployment of the SDF abroad vs. strict adherence to Article 9 of the Constitution, and so on. In all of these issues, conservative politics faces strong resistance from societal opposition, and the discussions around them are closely linked to the controversies over the interpretation of Japanese wartime history as the central facet of the history textbook debate.

The Japanese in the post-Cold War still lack consensus about interpreting their recent imperial past, the views promoted by historical revisionists by no means broadly accepted in Japanese society; notwithstanding their omnipresence in the political arena and the public sphere, they clearly reflect the views of an influential minority of the population about the war. In analyzing the movement of historical revisionism, some observers have reached the conclusion that it enjoys a degree of support – if not “a formidable social base” – in a wider Japanese society and that the historical views it advocates – particularly the claim that the Asia-Pacific War was a war of Asian liberation – are spreading among the Japanese people. A number of books authored by historical

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454 Saaler, Politics, Memory, and Public Opinion, 165.
revisionists have become bestsellers, and the media continue to pay considerable attention to the revisionists. However, notwithstanding their prominence in the public’s historical consciousness as exhibited by the majority of ordinary Japanese, revisionist views of history seem to be anything but representative.\footnote{For a full discussion of revisionist views see Perilous Memories: the Asia-Pacific Wars, ed. Takashi Fujitani et al. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).} As the vehemence of the ongoing debate suggests, however, historical revisionism is strongly championed by a variety of vocal lobby groups with connections to powerful conservative political groups, wealthy business circles, and influential sections of the media. Revisionists bent on historical pride and realists concerned about new security policies have, as a result, been able to make common cause against progressives who were opposed to both issues.\footnote{Also see Akira Iriye, Across the Pacific (New York: Imprint Press, 1992).}

Historical revisionism has become a factor in politics, since the construction of a glorificationist historical narrative celebrating a strong Japan is seen by some politicians as a means to counter pacifism and generate support for Japanese participation in military activities on the international stage. New momentum has been gained since the 1990s towards revising Japan’s “pacifist” constitution and normalizing Japan’s Self-Defense force’s rules of engagement. While there have been no empirical studies of a direct correlation between Japan’s economic development, fluctuating levels of national self-confidence and the rise of historical revisionism, politicians have not shied away from emphasizing the connections. Japanese conservative leaders have begun using a perceived decline in national self-confidence as a pretext to espouse revisionist views of the past. This strengthens the original assumption that the explanation for the recent growth of historical revisionism of glorificationist memories can be explained by the shifting domestic political interests and priorities triggered by international changes.
rather than in any crisis of national identity or attitudes toward state and nation within Japanese society that some authors have emphasized.458

**Weakening LDP**

Since the establishment of the Yoshida Doctrine and the one-party rule practiced by the LDP it was assumed that Japan would pursue its strategic interests and diplomatic objectives through economic growth. Throughout the Cold War this was largely harmonious with Japan’s alliance with the United States. As concerns intensified from the 1990s about the rise of China and then the threat of North Korea, the alliance became an even stronger component to Japan’s international and national identity. Its vitality continued to limit any outburst on extreme rejection or glorification of Japan’s empire. Since Nakasone, Japan had not had a strong voice to articulate its place in the world. Concurrently, the LDP was no longer an unstoppable force.

The pragmatic conservative coalition of big business and bureaucracy established in 1955 waged fierce political battles internally and through factions rather than through national elections, where it went mostly unchallenged and was unprepared for the challenges it was now facing. The end of the Cold War for Japan did not uproot the underlying domestic political structure even when, in 1993, the LDP suffered its first electoral defeat to the socialists. Rather, it was the stagnant economic growth that undid the LDP and brought a desire for a new type of politics.

Simultaneously, the most serious domestic challenge to LDP rule came with the founding of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) in 1996 and its unification with all of

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the smaller leftists/socialist parties in 1998. By creating a credible alternative and contender for power for the first time in postwar Japanese history, the DPJ was set to benefit from Japan’s economic problems. Without a credible leader or consensus with the main opposition anymore the LDP found it difficult to govern. “By the beginning of the new millennium, the LDP was in danger of becoming relegated to a rural party that had to rely mainly on the advantage of incumbency patronage for many of its Diet members and links with support groups at the local and national level.”\(^{459}\) However, the biggest problem facing the LDP was Japan’s stagnant economy. As the economy shrunk in Japan, the LDP faced greater challenges with its former practices of rewarding loyal members of its “grand coalition.”\(^{460}\) Japan was in need of a visionary leader, yet its electoral system seemed to prevent any individual leader from emerging without earning the factional loyalty through hierarchy rather than merit. Therefore in 2000, the LDP was able to barely capture a majority in the Lower House largely due to the popularity of its junior coalition partners, against the DPJ causing many sense a greater sense of urgency than at any previous time in LDP memory.\(^{461}\)

**Koizumi’s Popular Appeal**

In this moment of crisis, a new face appealed directly to the party base on the basis of his image of freshness and reform. Koizumi Junichiro won convincingly in the LDP primaries to ensure his election as the party’s 20th president in April, 2001.\(^{462}\) As

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\(^{461}\) Ibid, 247–248.

previously outlined, the Japanese prime minister has never been the only voice in Japan and traditionally is not even the strongest voice. However, over time, the prime minister’s importance as an international leader has grown as power has shifted away from the principal ministries, including the Foreign Ministry. Yoshida was an exceptional leader for his time that left his imprint on Japan through his careful cultivation of his doctrine and disciples, rather than his personal style. Nakasone represented a new type of leader that exhibited extreme self-confidence and a sense of national pride that had not been seen in Japan since the end of the empire. Koizumi followed this tradition by combining his popular appeal with a serious reform agenda to assert a degree of personal leadership unprecedented by modern Japanese standards and in time to prevent the complete dismantling of the LDP as might have happened had he not emerged.

A large part of Koizumi’s appeal and style was to simplify ideas for the Japanese electorate, which he did particularly well through the media and in the international arena where previously prime minister’s had struggled. He singularly emphasized the importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance, thereby damaging much of the leadership potential of Japan within Asia. While he lent support to the idea of an “East Asian Community” in his Singapore speech in 2002, he damaged Japan’s relations with China and Korea by visiting the Yasukuni Shrine every year.\textsuperscript{463} When asked about his visits, Koizumi emphasized the importance of these visits to core constituencies within his ruling coalition.\textsuperscript{464} Given the fact that he did not come from a conservative pedigree like

\textsuperscript{463} There is a burgeoning literature in Japanese that deals the “Koizumi effect” on Asian international relations represented by works such as Tanaka Hitoshi, \textit{Gaiko no chikara} (Tokyo: Nihon keizai shimbunsha, 2008.),169; Taniguchi Makoto, \textit{Higashi Ajia kyodotai –keizai togo no yuke to Nihon} (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2004).x-x; Ito Kenichi and Tanaka Akihiko, eds., \textit{Higashi Ajia kyodotai to Nihon no shinro} (Tokyo: NHK shuppan, 2005), 56-65.

\textsuperscript{464} Koizumi Junichiro, Interview with Author, August 2009.
Yoshida or Nakasone, Koizumi needed the support of the conservatives within the LDP to pursue his reform agendas and therefore prioritized domestic public opinion at the expense of good relations with neighboring countries in Northeast Asia. Unlike Nakasone, who actually believed in the importance of worshipping Japan’s fallen imperial soldiers and reversing the trend of rejecting Japan’s empire more broadly, Koizumi seemed to be more concerned with staying in tune with Japan’s vocal revisionists and conservatives. Tsuneo and Wakamiya Yoshibumi, editorial chiefs of the two largest Japanese newspapers, *Yomiuri* and *Asahi*, jointly denounced Koizumi’s visit to the Yasukuni Shrine.\(^465\) Even many of Koizumi’s closest allies in the LDP distanced themselves from the visits, which represented a clear glorificationist memory of Japan’s empire.\(^466\)

Koizumi’s diplomacy to maintain a strong alliance with the United States, even at the price of deteriorating relations with China and South Korea led to an unprecedented crisis in Asian policy. Tanaka Akihiko argued that, “Japan-China relations reached the most abnormal stage since 1972 when the two countries established formal diplomatic relations,”\(^467\) adding that this deterioration of relations also affected Japan’s policy toward the United Nations. As evidence of this, after the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 without a clear UN authorization, Koizumi one-sidedly stressed the importance of the U.S.-Japan alliance, arguing that the United Nation alone could not defend Japan’s national security.\(^468\) At the cost of deteriorating relations with China and South Korea and


the tradition of “UN Centrism,” Koizumi reinforced the alliance mainly through his personal amity with Bush. This left in tatters the “three basic principles” of postwar Yoshida diplomacy, as it also raised new complications for Japanese national identity. After Bush’s Asian diplomacy shifted sharply from 2006 and then President Barack Obama forged a new diplomatic course from 2009, the Koizumi legacy left Japan’s diplomacy in tatters.469

Comparing the last four LDP prime ministers views on Japan’s relations with Asia reveals the importance of imperial memories and the rise of the revisionist narrative to Japan’s foreign diplomacy. Koizumi Junichiro represented a prototypical Cold War prime minister, putting priority on relations with the U.S. at the expense of Asia. The next leader of Japan, Abe Shinzo, reflected an even more rising right-wing nationalism, while also reviving the thinking of his grandfather Prime Minister Kishi in seeking an assertive approach to Asianism while not directly challenging the U.S. alliance. The fact that a right wing revisionist like Abe was able to develop a close working relationship with China by not visiting Yasukuni or provoking other symbolic issues is telling. Given his conservative credentials he was able to work within his coalition to play a complicated two-level game where he implied, but never explicitly stated, his sympathies to his domestic constituents who assumed he was one of them, and then drawing closer to China on economic and trade issues by leaving contentious items off the agenda. Abe’s short-lived term as prime minister collapsed as a result of personal fatigue, but his successor Fukuda Yasuo followed him with a similar moderated form of Asianism reminiscent of his father Prime Minister Fukuda Takeo. Finally, Aso Taro held this post

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without taking a strong posture toward either the United States or Asia, although he refrained from challenging Japan’s ally in line with his grandfather Yoshida Shigeru’s approach.

While Koizumi, Aso, and Abe encouraged glorificationist sentiments, they operated within the confines of the traditional Japanese diplomacy. Koizumi hesitated to voice strong nationalist views toward China or South Korea despite his Yasukuni visits, and Abe and Aso reinvigorated diplomatic ties with China. Although conservative politicians continue to air sentiments that cast doubt on Japan’s various orientations, the history of postwar diplomacy shows how successive Japanese governments have constructed Japan’s place in the world by striking a balance among between East and West.

**Conclusion: Japan in Asia**

The nation-state structure imposed by the Americans fit nicely on Japan given that it had always been an isolationist kingdom prior to 1895. In many ways, Japan’s experience of empire was an anomaly. It was only during this imperial period that Japan sought to expand into Asia through liberal imperialism and then sought to consolidate its empire through liberal internationalism. When its Western foes and its allies rejected Japan’s imperial designs, Japan turned to a stronger and more punitive pan-Asianist ideology. Japan’s imperialist policies before World War II caused considerable damage to relations with its Asian neighbors which were only reinforced in a Cold War environment that emphasized Japan’s exceptionalism. Having shown little interest in
Asia, Japanese only seemed to “rediscover” their former neighborhood when it became economically profitable further reinforcing “neo-imperialist” fears among their former colonies.

Japan has remained aloof from Asia and concentrated on investment and production at home and trade with the West for the majority of its post imperial history. When a remarkable confluence of economic forces in the mid-1980s made it profitable to transfer many Japanese manufactures offshore to other Asian countries, propelling Japan into an unanticipated, deep involvement in Asia, Japan approached Asia with characteristic paternalism. Reactive Japanese economic diplomacy, and the intensifying foreign pressures that motivate it, have led to fateful consequences within Japan. Most importantly, they are stimulating Japanese revisionism and nationalism, as the Japanese people become increasingly aware of their country’s relatively high economic efficiency and global prominence just as the barrage of global criticism against Japan intensifies.

Many see foreign criticism as unjustified. Although the Japanese government continues to respond, at least formally, to most demands from the major Western nations, popular support for such action is growing thinner. Many in Japan who are concerned about the country’s prestige consider public statements of apology ingenuous and merely empty words intended to mollify critics. Privately they deny Japan that committed any atrocities and contend that Japan’s colonial rule was fundamentally positive. More sanguine than their Turkish glorificationist counterparts, the Japanese revisionists have actively begun to question the officially constructed rejectionist imperial memories that have been

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471 Reflected in author interviews with former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi June 24, 2009 Tokyo, Japan. And General Toshio Tamogami June 30, 2009 Tokyo, Japan.
in place since the end of the empire. This debate within a globalized environment has led to recriminations among former Asian colonies that in turn have become domestic issues. As Japan’s own domestic system has changed from the strong regime of the LDP to the weaker DPJ, the incentives for glorificationist memories – despite the international constraints – have grown, leading to its current ambiguous imperial memories.472

The tensions inherent in Japan have less to do with a contested identity and more to do with the nature and intentions of Japan’s role in Asia. For the majority of progressives the answer is simple: isolation in Asia and independence from the U.S. For conservatives in 2010, leadership in Asia with the support of the U.S. is the future. However, for both groups there is a lack of understanding about how its neighbors have viewed the history of Japan’s imperialism. In opposition to the Japanese narrative of pan-Asianism and brotherhood, Korean and Chinese narratives focus on the exploitative elements of Japan’s imperialism and victimization. Having embraced defeat, Japan now must look back to its imperial past to deal with the lingering ghosts that continue to haunt its regional relationships while also realizing that memories domestically have particular consequences on the international level.

Japan’s post-World War II leaders have continued to struggle to define their nation outside the scope of the defeated Japanese Empire without fully dealing with its own legacy in its region. The Japanese emperor was left in place along with most of Japan’s functioning bureaucracy under the American occupation. While Japanese seemed to internalize anti-militaristic and pacifist norms, the variation in how memories of Japan’s domination in East Asia were viewed has led to significant divides within Japan’s domestic political world. Now led by a new generation of Japanese leaders who want to

move beyond criticisms of Japan’s imperial legacy, the reactions in East Asia have been cautious whenever Japan has attempted to take on regional or global leadership roles.\(^{473}\)

As will be explored in the next and final chapters, the comparative stories of Japan and Turkey’s re-engagement with their imperial pasts allow us to better understand what their paths in their neighborhoods might look like in the future.

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Chapter Seven

Comparing the Progenies of Empire

The Japanese and Ottoman Empires emerged in different geographies and moments in time. Their ultimate collapse, however, was around the same time by the West in world wars that resulted in clear successor states arising from their respective empires. The initial shock of losing their empires after such devastating global conflicts left the Japanese and Turks at the mercy of their Western occupiers. The subsequent occupation of Japan by American forces from 1945 to 1952 versus the Turkish War of Independence from 1919 to 1923 put the two nations on seemingly different paths but similar starting points in terms of imperial memory construction. While it is impossible to discuss imperial memories without understanding the empires themselves, this chapter focuses on the most salient comparative features as they relate to imperial memories and national narratives that were formed in the aftermath of empire. Characteristics and elements of the Japanese and Ottoman Empires will be compared to the extent that they impacted resulting imperial memories. As discussed in the theory chapter, the difference between history and memory is that the actual “history” matters less than the choice of which history a nation chooses to remember.

The emergence of modern nation-states at the antipodes of Asia in the twentieth century from the ashes of World Wars with memories of their defeated empires has been the overarching theme through which Japan and Turkey have been treated throughout the case studies thus far. Having explored the evolution and narratives of the two resulting nation-states in-depth it might seem easy to dismiss them as interesting, albeit
exceptional cases on the basis of the unique national features that were highlighted. However, by creating a broader comparative framework for post-imperial successor states illuminates the common elements and trends in factors that led to changes in imperial memories. By focusing on the shifting memories and narratives of their immediate past, the mechanisms and causes of these changes emphasized in the theory chapter have been highlighted in the case studies.

The original claim that international constraints and domestic forces interact to consolidate into rejectionist or glorificationist memories has been traced throughout the individual cases to show the relative importance of similar variables such as the Cold War, individual leaders, and Westernization. In comparing these progenies of empire directly, what else might we find if we examine other cases of post-imperial successor states? Western post-imperial successor states generally lost their empires gradually and today share a common project in the European Union. Whereas the non-Western experience of sudden collapse and defeat of empire combined with an ambiguous sense of belonging to an international system created by the West plays directly into differing imperial memories and deep-seated insecurities that shape the resulting national narratives.

The interaction between international structural constraints after the empires collapsed and the resulting domestic political landscape in Japan and Turkey were formative and necessitated rejectionist memories of their immediate pasts. Both became critical allies for the United States during the Cold War and stalwart members of the West through bilateral and multilateral security agreements. The role of the United States and the degree of independence from U.S. foreign policy interests in this regards became
the most important, although not the only, proxy of geopolitical strength for these post-imperial successor states. As hypothesized, international independence was in both cases a necessary, but not sufficient condition for predicting a change in imperial memories. As traced in-depth in previous chapters, the end of the Cold War did not immediately lead to a shift in imperial memories. Rather, it emboldened existing forces that had been waging internal battles since the founding of the republics. The weakened domestic regimes formed in the aftermath of empire could no longer simply point to the existential threat of the Soviet Union to silence their critics and, as a result, risings levels of glorification became the norm. While the scale and specifics of this glorification depend on the context, the general trend lines are clear when put into a broader, comparative framework.

Putting Japan and Turkey’s post-imperial evolution and experiences into comparative perspective allows for an innovative frame of reference. Commonalities and differences have emerged in Japanese and Turkish imperial memories despite similar experiences. To conclude these detailed case studies, the focus will remain on these two countries, but this chapter will also draw upon other illustrative examples from post-imperial successor states in order to demonstrate the saliency of the ideas outlined. The treatment of new cases will be illustrative rather than exhaustive given the detailed nature of the research necessary for a full discussion; however, the hope is to highlight areas for future comparative research. By testing the earlier propositions and hypothesis made in the comparisons that follow, this chapter strengthens earlier claims about when and why glorificationist memories emerge over rejectionist tendencies in the immediate aftermath of empire. In addition to the general trajectory of imperial memories that the international
environment necessitates, the following comparison makes clear that it is the combination and interaction of domestic developments that ultimately prove formative in shaping imperial memories. By juxtaposing post-imperial experiences this research agenda hopes to shed further light on how imperial memories might affect foreign policies, particularly in former imperial domains. The interaction between Japan, Turkey, and their former colonies has in many ways colored modern international relations in East Asia and the Middle East. As we have seen through detailed case studies, the impact of their respective imperial experiences and how they are now remembered has clearly shaped, and continues to shape, the Republics of Japan and Turkey.

**Comparative Lens of Imperial “Rediscoveries”**

The Japanese and Ottoman Empires challenged the West before they were eventually defeated by it. The resulting successor states have sought to accommodate themselves as associate members of the West from their distinctive geographic locations in the Far and Middle East. The resulting states formed in 1923 and 1945, respectively, aligned themselves with the West and with the United States in particular, but have always had a strong sense of history, identity, and nationalism that grew from their imperial legacies. As a result, Japanese and Turkish exceptionalism and uniqueness begin to pale when compared with each other, and common themes and similarities become evident. In addition, significant differences emerge that will be examined and explored throughout the course of this chapter. The critical turning points in the stories of Japan’s and Turkey’s imperial memory formation are similar. They coincide with the major
World Wars and the end of the Cold War. In chronologically outlining the evolution of Japan and Turkey in the previous chapters, the various salient domestic and international factors that shaped the identity and imperial memories of the time have been presented.

The choice and intensity of imperial memories is the subject of domestic power struggles shaped by broader international conditions. As seen with the Justice and Development Party’s (AKP) rise to power and its differing historical narrative about the Ottoman Empire from the Kemalists, Turkey today has rapidly sought to reposition itself. Most notably, Turkey has become a major player in its neighborhood and fully engaged its role as a leader in the Muslim world, even taking the chairmanship of the Organization of Islamic Conference. Prime Minister Erdoğan’s language of common heritage and history has found receptive ears in former colonies precisely because of the tangible economic benefits his visits bring. Japan’s economic engagement with its former colonies in Southeast and Northeast Asia has long sidestepped the difficult issues surrounding Japanese imperial encounters in the region by focusing on pragmatic business opportunities. However, as domestic incentives to glorify its past increase, Japan’s integration in Asia becomes more difficult, as demonstrated by riots in China over Prime Minister Koizumi’s visit to Yasukuni Shrine. As a result, despite the recent change of government in Japan and the demise of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), there is still little consensus regarding the past and a desire to ignore it rather than actively engage it in the way the Turks have.

In terms of foreign policy, Japan and Turkey have, until recently, been the least likely states to draw on their imperial memories. In its most dramatic form, extreme glorification on the part of a successor state can lead to imperial behavior as
demonstrated by Russia in 2008. The justification offered in the wake of Russia’s invasion of Georgia and continued threats from Moscow toward any former colony that would challenge its influence clearly demonstrated the importance of retaining power in its former imperial space by a variety of means.\textsuperscript{474} Even in less overt forms, post-imperial successor states continue to exert considerable influence over and in their former imperial spaces, such as the British through their Commonwealth of Nations or the French Union. By cultivating “special relationships” with former colonies based on shared histories, both Britain and France offer economic and educational aid along with preferential treatment that has sought to strengthen their positions in former imperial spaces.\textsuperscript{475} This has been possible largely due to the way in which these former empires transitioned into nation-states that “gave up” or internally collapsed versus suffering a major defeat that defined the Japanese and Turkish empires as international enemies.

Based on international relations theory it would seem logical that a former imperial metropolis would seek to exert influence, whether through overt aggression of the Russian variety or hegemony of the European type, over their respective spheres. What is unique about the Japanese and Turkish experience with empire is the extent to which both republics distanced and rejected their former spheres of influence. The initial imperial memories of both Japan and Turkey focused mainly on the constraints and costs associated with a collapsing and defeated empire. Modernization and the way forward for both post-imperial elites focused on the West at the expense of their immediate

\textsuperscript{474} President Medyev’s address after the invasion is particularly instructive in this regard “Dimitri Medvedev. CNN/AP,” YouTube (8 August 2008), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcXY2D1AQYY>.
\textsuperscript{475} The literature on the British and French Empires are massive and constitute entire sub-disciplines in the field of history, but for a short summary of the main arguments see Norman Etherington, Oxford History of Empire Series (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).
neighborhoods, which has resulted in regional estrangements. Rather than benefiting from a rejectionist narrative that might reconnect Japan and Turkey to their regions, they reconstructed a past to institutionalize their Western orientation and alliance with the U.S. throughout the Cold War.

**Loss of Empire**

The scholarship on modern empires continually points to the importance of the way in which an empire is lost whether it be from abandonment or collapse by external or internal forces. Typically, empires are either defeated in war by a rival or are forced after victory to cede independence after the emergence of protracted nationalist movements. Among the cases of modern empires, Russia is perhaps the most well-researched non-Western imperial successor state. The emergence of the modern Russian Federation followed two imperial experiences back-to-back with the Tsarist and Soviet Empires. The creation of the Soviet Union in the aftermath of the Tsarist Empire represented a shift from one imperial polity to another, not the creation of a post-imperial successor state in the manner that Japan and Turkey represent. Despite its anti-imperial rhetoric, the Soviet Union was Russia’s most recent experience with empire, which lasted from 1917-1991 and correlates with the most recent timeframe of any modern empire. Given the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union, the extent to which it was a “defeated”

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478 For the classic articulation of this view and a comprehensive summary of the work on empires see Doyle, *Empires*
empire in the way that the Japanese or Ottoman Empires were is a debatable point. Regardless of the relative importance of the role the U.S. played in “winning” the Cold War versus the Soviet systems’ internal problems that led to its eventual “loss,” there is a qualitative difference in not having been defeated in a World War like the Japanese or Ottomans. Despite this difference, however, the case of Russia is illustrative of the importance of imperial collapse and its consequences.\textsuperscript{479}

The Soviet Union collapsed mainly as a result of internal factors that were exasperated by external factors represented in the Cold War rather than a world war, which is unique among non-Western empires, but quite common in the European experience of empire. In 1918, as the Allied powers marched to victory, nationalist movements throughout the defeated and victorious empires alike began to press for their own independence. Given that the German, Hapsburg, and Ottoman Empires were defeated in the same war and at the mercy of the Allied powers, their imperial spaces became the most vulnerable and subsequent nationalist movement swept their lands. Emboldened by American President Wilson’s Fourteen Points, separatist movements of ethnic minorities in all of these former imperial lands emerged to finish off any remaining hopes of keeping these empires alive.

The Austro-Hungarian Empire, a contemporary of both the Ottoman and Tsarist empires and similar in structure, was itself a compromise made in 1867 between the empires of Austria and Hungary. It lasted until it suffered military defeat in 1918 during World War I and was fragmented by the emergence of nationalist movements throughout its territories. Having survived just 51 years, it was similar to the Japanese empire in

\textsuperscript{479} For a clear articulation of these views and a comparative analysis of Russia’s experience with empire see Lieven, \textit{Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals}. 

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length. However, once the empire broke up, the states of Austria, Hungary, Czech-Slovakia, and the Kingdom of Serbia emerged without any clear successor metropolis like Japan after its empire was defeated. Instead these European independent states vied for the Hapsburg imperial legacy while the successor states of the Ottoman Middle East became European mandates under the League of Nations.\footnote{See Karen Barkey and Mark von Hagen, \textit{After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-building: The Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman and Habsburg Empires} (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997).}

At the end of World War I, the Turks were under occupation by British, French, Greek, and Italian forces, with independent states promised in Armenia and Kurdistan that the U.S. was to mandate through the League of Nations. The rest of the Ottoman territories were transferred through the mandate system to various European victors. In the aftermath of World War I, the League of Nations mandate system established a legal framework for territorial transfer from one empire to another. Tellingly, the first group or “Class A Mandates” were territories formerly under the domain of the Ottoman Empire.


[These mandates] …were deemed to have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory.\footnote{See Article 22 of the League of Nations Mandate signed June 28, 1919. MidEast Web Historical Documents, “The League of Nations Mandate System,” \textit{MidEast Web}, http://www.mideastweb.org/leaguemand.htm.}
As a result, while the Balkan countries gained their independence from the Hapsburg and Ottoman Empires, the Middle Eastern nations were created from Ottoman provinces according to the Sykes-Picot agreement as either British or French mandates. This distinction is significant for contemporary international relations given the fact that the Arab experience with empires and decolonization outlived the Ottoman legacy, unlike the Balkan experience that was very much in response to it.

In contrast, Japan’s empire in many ways was a beneficiary of the collapse of the Chinese empire as European powers divided East Asia among themselves and Britain used Japan in particular to prevent further gains by the Germans and Russians. Japan was given mandates and protectorates by the international community, most notably the Korean peninsula after the Russo-Japanese war. Therefore, while streaks of anti-Western rhetoric continue to thrive in former colonies of Japan, the majority of the animosity in East Asia is targeted at the Japanese whose agency and strength make it the focal point rather than these European powers. Having modernized in spite of empire the Turks looked with envy to the Japanese who had modernized through empire and seemed to have been able to blend tradition and modernity in a way that inspired many of the Young Turks at the end of the Ottoman reign.

**Collapse of Empire**

The relatively sudden breakup of the Soviet Union is an interesting modern example that fits within the European framework of losing empire and stands in stark contrast to the Japanese, Ottoman, or Tsarist cases. After a failed attempt to reform the
Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev yielded on Christmas day 1991 to imperial collapse by resigning and declaring his position as the president of the USSR officially extinct. Symbolically, the next day, the Supreme Soviet, as the most important governmental body of the Soviet Empire dissolved itself as Boris Yeltsin, president of Russia assumed the role of revolutionary leader. While the Russian Federation was nominally just one of 15 successor states, its size and historic role made it the natural successor state to the Soviet Union when it inherited the main institutions of state. Unlike in cases of defeat or occupation where key institutions were either demolished or rehabilitated, institutions such as the army and police remained intact initially, until being phased out or divided among the newly independent states. As a result, there was considerable continuity from the Soviet Union to the Russian Federation even in the initial aftermath versus the change that characterized most defeated empires. 482

Russia emerged as a former non-Western empire that challenged the West and was left with a lasting legacy of resentment toward the existing international order that had never favored it. The nationalist and prickly attitude of Russia was created by what many saw as a calloused response by the West in trying to exploit the nation’s weakness through “economic imperialism.” Even initially pro-Western leaders like President Boris Yeltsin found it hard not to turn back to populist feelings of resentment. The aftermath of the Soviet Union was chaotic but not facilitated by an invading or occupying force like in Japan or Turkey, which made Yeltsin’s attempts at rejecting the Soviet Union difficult to

Yeltsin rejected the Soviet Union under Gorbachev, but he had extreme difficulty rejecting many of its institutions such as the Communist party that he left put could not ban or the military establishment he relied on to keep his power. Troublesome regions, such as the South Caucasus, made Russia’s transition even more difficult. Russia found itself without an empire, which was similar to the European cases in which metropolises lost empires as they became increasingly anachronistic and costly to maintain. However, unlike the Europeans, who in the face of a global struggle between the world’s two superpowers during the Cold War embraced the concept of Europe to continue being globally relevant, the Russians did not have a European community or union to rely upon. As Europeans began to draw closer for purposes of integration and the pooling of sovereignty into a larger European identity, Russia reverted back to its old tendencies of regional domination and leadership. This has in turn translated into an aggressive regional power that views the world with suspicion and mistrust. In many ways, this tendency is beginning to be seen in all of the non-Western post-imperial successor states that lack a Western anchor.

As a result, Russia has continued to challenge the West in many important aspects, and its national identity in many ways is a direct outgrowth of its own recent imperial memories. Similar to Japan and Turkey after their loss of empire, after the Cold War Russia found itself rejecting the old Soviet model of regional and global engagement in favor of a more westernized and integrationist approach. Under President Yeltsin, Russia emerged from the shadow of the Soviet Union with a convoluted sense of national purpose and confusion about Russia’s new role in the world. The lack of institutional

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reform and a toxic combination of internal and external factors led to a rise in nostalgia for the old imperial Soviet identity. Championed by Vladimir Putin, who himself is a product of the Soviet Empire and part of the traditional elite, Russia has begun to assume some of the former characteristics of the old regime while glorifying the memory of the Soviet era. As most recently demonstrated in its conflict with Georgia and subsequent behavior in its near-abroad, imperial memories are alive and well in Russia.

The implications of Russia’s aggressiveness toward its former colonies in response to the glorification of its Soviet empire are striking for a Eurasian neighbor like Turkey that has always been torn geographically and ideologically between its European and Asian vocations. Given Turkey’s NATO membership during the Cold War and accession negotiations with the EU, there has always been a clear Western alternative that Russia lacked. However, without credible EU prospects and with the rising levels of Ottoman glorification being seen in Atatürk’s Republic today, the re-assertion of an aggressive Turkey in its former space seems increasingly likely. The self confident re-emergence of modern Turkey in its former space does not constitute a new Ottoman Empire or necessarily lead to Russian-style aggression; however, the former rejectionist constraints on the national consciousness and narrative have been eroded and replaced.\textsuperscript{484} Seemingly a cautionary tale for a European Union that wants to promote stability, this is all the more reason to encourage Turkey’s membership as a guarantee for balanced and constructive regional leadership.

The way in which an empire collapses is arguably one of the most important factors in the way a former empire thinks about itself and its past. The speed and way in which a metropolis is forced to lose its empire is a product of both international and

\textsuperscript{484} See earlier chapter on contemporary Turkey Chapter 4.
domestic factors. Europeans struggled with nationalist movements for decades in their colonies with a less than sympathetic Cold War patron in the United States who pushed for greater decolonization, while the Russians lost their Soviet empire from internal disintegration facilitated by the pressures of the Cold War. In both cases, the process was more gradual and controlled by the metropolis. In contrast, the Japanese and Ottoman Empires were defeated suddenly and totally through world wars that brought about a new international order. Unlike sovereign states that could choose the style and timing of their imperial retreats, the Japanese and Turkish Republic were formed in collaboration or reaction to their occupiers.

The Turks waged a war of independence that was facilitated by the lack of unity on the part of the European occupiers, whereas the Japanese worked within the American imposed system to construct a new state. Both states immediately adopted rejectionist memories of their former empires. However, unlike in the Turkish case where Atatürk’s regime adopted an extreme rejectionist narrative to legitimate and separate the republic from empire, the Japanese rejected their military but never fully engaged in rejecting the legacy of its empire, even leaving the institution of the Tenno in place, all of which was facilitated by its American occupiers. The resulting shifts can be traced to the major international and domestic factors that often mirrored each other in a Japanese and Turkish context; however, the collapse of empire continues to be a reference point for all discussions of imperial memories to this day in both successor states.
Character of Empire

The Japanese created an empire from the spoils of the 1895 Sino-Japanese war and the 1905 Russo-Japanese war both of which established Japan as a great power. While Japan was seen as an associate member of the “imperial club,” particularly when it suited individual European empires’ interests – such as when the British sought to counter Germany’s forays in the Pacific during World War I – there was a different standard for Japan. In the case of Korea, Japan was accepted as the hegemonic imperial power. In the case of China, it was not. Similar to Western responses to the Ottoman and Russian Empires previously, Europeans considered Japan to be in a different league given the nature of racism and European superiority at the time. The demise of the Hapsburg, Ottoman, and Russian Empires after World War I left Japan in a league of its own as the last sovereign non-Western empire, and on that was increasingly seen as a major threat to Western interests in Asia. Since arriving on the imperial scene, Japan exploited Western divisions in Asia and sought out alliances with the preeminent power, beginning with the British, continuing with the Germans, and eventually with the Americans.

In contrast to the Japanese, the Ottomans engaged with the West by necessity from when their empire was founded. The Ottomans assumed the combined legacies of the Roman and Byzantine Empires to legitimate their arrival on the international scene. They were able to achieve this status through the expansion of the empire, which was necessary to maintain a state that was created based on military conquest and a tribute

485 As part of the “New Imperialism” powers were divided between imperial and non-imperial powers. The classic articulation of this was John Hobson, Imperialism. (London: Nisbet Press, 1902.)
system, in particular the capture of Constantinople in 1453. By combining the Caliphate and the Sultanate in 1517 after defeating the Mamluk Empire, the Ottomans also claimed the mantle over the entire Muslim world. The resonance of becoming the seat of Islam’s most revered ancestry and leadership is unique in modern imperial history and gave the Ottomans considerable domestic and international prestige. Even as just a symbol, the Caliphate commanded the respect of all Muslims in the way the Pope commanded respect in Europe until the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. In contrast to the universal and worldwide impact of the Islamic faith and tradition claimed by the Ottomans, the impact of the Japanese Shinto faith and imperial deity personified by the chrysanthemum throne was much more limited and only focused on the islands of Japan. Although Japan was heavily influenced by Confucianism in the Tokugawa and Meiji eras it was unsuccessful in picking up the Chinese mantle, in the way that the Turks were able to assume the Muslim mantle. The impact of Islam on the Ottoman Empire was considerable and continues to be the subject of heated debates in Turkey given that it has direct relevance to the national identity of the Turks.

The institution and personage of the Sultan and Tenno is a telling point of comparison. Originating from the steps of Central Asia in the tradition of Genghis Khan, the Turkish concept of military leader or Gazi was transformed into the Sultanate with the conversion of the Turks to Islam. The Sultan retained the loyalty of his Janissary forces along with his regular fighting forces through the construction of a personal

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486 See in particular Selim Deringil’s discussion of Sultan Abdulhamid II reinventing the title Caliphate for the Ottomans in his *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and Legitimation in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909.* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1999)

487 According to David Nicolle’s *Janissaries* (New York: Osprey Publishing 1995) “The Janissaries comprised an élite corps in the service of the Ottoman Empire. It was composed of war captives and Christian youths pressed into service; all of whom were converted to Islam and trained under the strictest discipline. In many ways, Jannisaries reflected Ottoman society, which was itself dominated by a military
household fighting force from selected youths of conquered populations. The Sultanate changed considerably over the 600 years of Ottoman rule due to its morphing from the nomadic tradition of warrior leader to administrator. While the Sultan remained the supreme authority of the Ottoman Empire, the decentralization and devolution of power within the empire led to a weakening of the institution.

The Tenno, by contrast, was a largely ceremonial role before even during the Japanese empire. The samurai class that had led Japan for almost all of its pre-imperial history transitioned into the elites of the empire after the Meiji Revolution, controlling the imperial court, and permeating almost all aspects of society through its system of ethics known as bushido. When war was declared in the name of the Tenno it was both political and religious in nature. So when the empire was eventually defeated and the Japanese people heard Emperor Hirohito’s voice for the first time declaring he was not a deity, it left a lasting impression. In Turkey, where the proud traditions of the military had snatched a republic from the jaws of imperial defeat, the incompetence and lack of leadership of the Sultan was scapegoated and resulted in the abolishment of the elite and where there was much greater social mobility than in Europe. On top of this, the Turks looked upon Europe much as the early Americans viewed the Western Frontier – as a land of adventure, mission and opportunity.”

488 The classic work on this is Bernard Lewis, The Emergence of Modern Turkey (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). See particularly pages 21-40. Also on the origins within the early Ottoman Empire see Cornell Fleischer’s Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986).


490 Bushido directly translated as the “Way of the Warrior” refers to a strict moral code practiced by Japanese traditional warriors or samurai that emphasized loyalty, honor, obedience, self-sacrifice, and duty over anything else. It has been compared to early Western concepts of chivalry. The most powerful and systematic articulation can be found in Inazo Nitobe, Bushido: Soul of Japan (Tokyo: Teibi Publishing, 1907).

institutions. Meanwhile, in Japan, the military was put on trial and blamed instead of the *Tenno*, who was left untouched thanks to American support.

The issue of whom to blame for Japan’s loss and adventurism exceeded even the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers’ (SCAP) authority and continues to haunt modern Japan. Though General MacArthur protected the *Tenno* from standing trial, many Japanese resented the lack of responsibility assumed by the emperor in whose name they had waged war. At the same time many Japanese also blamed the military leadership. Failure to agree on whom to blame and the lack of consensus reached in the aftermath of empire, even after the Tokyo Tribunals, effect memory politics that continue to be relevant today.

The structures of the Japanese and Ottoman Empires are also instructive in understanding the framework inherited by their successor states. The centralization and militarization of Japan’s empire was its strength at the beginning and its undoing at the end. The heavy-handed approach of the military in Japan’s Asian colonies and its defeat left it tainted as an institution in a post-imperial environment. While the military was the backbone of the Ottoman Empire, it adopted a more decentralized system in which reliance on indigenous forces and loyalties of tribal leaders took precedence.492 Particularly given the long centuries of Ottomans rule, they learned how to play tribal politics to ensure their interests without necessarily resorting to the military option given how costly it was for the empire. Only towards the end of its rule with increasing pressure from nationalist movements throughout the Balkans did the Ottomans have to

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492 For more on this see Serif Mardin’s discussion on replacing of the ‘superstructure’ of Turkish society starting on page 203 of his *Religion, Society and Modernity in Turkey* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2006).
begin financing military campaigns that eventually led to greater European influence over the Sublime Court through the loans they gave to various Sultans.493

The irony in Turkey was an Ottoman Sultan being led into World War I by a group of military officers that resulted in defeat and the emergence of a republic that vilified both the emperor and the empire while venerating the military as the ultimate national guardian.494 Meanwhile in Japan, despite being able to maintain absolute control and suppress several Asian nationalist movements, the military was scapegoated as the main aggressor and the reason for imperial defeat. The Tenno, in whose name World War II was launched and who led the empire as head of state, remained on the throne as the military was abolished. The mirror-images represented by Japan and Turkey are instructive for the way in which they subsequently developed and the institutional roles found for the emperor and military respectively. The impact these have had on the resulting nation-states can be seen to this day. The military in Turkey remains the most trusted institution versus in Japan where the military is a non-factor and the imperial household is consistently rated among the most popular institutions.495

The West vs. the East

The way in which the Japanese and Ottoman empires were defeated in world wars versus the way in which the British, French, or Russians lost their empires left an

493 Lewis Emergence, 40-74.
494 This is of course the nationalist interpretation after the Kurtulus Savasi or War of Independence and historians have since provided a greater level of nuance and pointed to inadequacies of this explanation, in particular see Mustafa Aksakal’s Ottoman Road to War in 1914 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) or Michael Reynolds’ Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
495 The imperial household has its own website that includes popular polling and links to events held throughout Japan by different members of the family. http://www.kunaicho.go.jp/. Also see series of articles written on the connection of Imperial family to Japanese people in Japan Times from January, 2009. –to???http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/fl20090118x3.html.
indelible impression on the successor states. In each case, the nationalist movements that challenged the empire’s internal cohesion led to different types of reactions. Given the non-Western character of the Japanese and Ottoman Empires, the way in which Orientalist, racist, and religious overtones influenced global perceptions should not be underestimated. In particular, the distinction between the Christian and Muslim domains of the Ottoman Empire are important to point out since most of the indigenous independence and nationalist movements erupted from the “Christian” Balkans while in the “Muslim” Middle East it was only after the empire was on its deathbed that it began to arise with help from the West. The resulting “Sevres Syndrome” of feeling encircled and constantly victimized by the West has left its mark on Turkey much like on the Russians after the fall of the Soviet Union.

The Ottoman Empire had the distinction of being the first non-Western member of the Westphalian system, informally in the beginning and then formally from the Crimean War in 1853 onward. The Ottoman attempts at modernization and Western reform took place at a similar moment in world history to Japan’s Meiji Restoration, beginning in 1839 and lasting through 1876 with end of the Tanzimat’s first constitutional era. Unlike the Japanese state that was able to exert complete control to institute all its reforms and accomplish modernization within several decades, the Ottoman state was unsuccessful and suffered a century and half of military defeat and decline. Rather than being a military threat to the West, the Ottoman Empire was a

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496 Rebellions in Albania and Yemen along with smaller Wahhabi uprisings throughout the Arabian Peninsula prove exceptions to this larger rule.
497 This references the Treaty of Sevres that the Ottoman Empire was forced to signed in 1920 by the victorious Western forces in the aftermath of World War One that would have divided and partitioned Anatolia into seven separate states. Sevres is consistently referenced as one of the most important explanatory factors in Turkish foreign policy and is most articulately laid out by Kemal Kirisci and Gareth Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey* (London: Frank Case Press, 1997), 210.
liability as the “sick man of Europe” who was simply kept on life-support by the Europeans so as to keep the Russians out of the vacuum that would be created by complete collapse. Despite these structural differences, the result was the same in the form of political domestic struggles in which Japan and Turkey’s Eastern vocations have been set up as dichotomous to their Western orientations.

Reformers in both republics point to the *Meiji* and *Tanzimat* periods to support their proposition that there is an inherent contradiction between modernization and traditions that even their predecessor empires realized. As a result, Japan’s historical Asianism and Turkey’s embrace of the Muslim world have been challenged in a variety of ways in their contemporary histories because of the decisions of political elites in both countries to follow a path of Westernization post-empire. Clearly the idea of Asianism and Islamism refer to very different ideologies and “others.” The changing notion of the “other” is critical to understanding Japanese and Turkish responses to their empires and fallout. The fact that Japan substituted Asianism for a Sinocentric world indicated that Japanese were always conscious of Asia as a region under someone else’s main influence, whereas the Turkish notion of regionalism is less well defined. Given the centuries of Ottoman de-centralized rule and vanguard of Islamic order that it brought to the Middle East, Turkey’s claim as regional leader is historically strong. Whereas Japan’s short-window of military expansion into Manchuria and Korea is seen as a historical anomaly rather than a compelling or legitimating factor for its leadership of Asia. As a result, the struggle between East and West, or “traditional” and “modern,” is an inherited legacy of empire that permeates all discussions of national identity.498

498 See Ayse Zarakol and Cemil Aydin’s work that highlights these discussions in different ways.
The figurative discussions of Japan and Turkey between “East” and “West” also involved a geographic element. The geographic differences between the centrally located Chinese and Ottoman heartland versus the Japanese islands on the periphery of Asia meant there was a significant difference between threats coming from nomadic barbarians versus seafaring expeditions, which also translated to the way in which imperial expansion occurred. The Japanese Empire was relatively short-lived, and like the German Empire, emerged during a time in which newly emerging “late-comer” empires could only acquire territory from crumbling empires since most of the globe had been already colonized.\footnote{See Michael Sturmer, \textit{The German Empire} (New York: Random House, 2002).} Japan’s claims of pan-Asian identity, therefore, grew from an opportunity to expand its influence through Asia; this was made possible by the collapse of the traditional Sino-centric order. The fast speed at which the Japanese empire expanded and subsequently lost is part and parcel to Japan’s evolving imperial memory, just like the slow speed at which the Ottoman Empire declined and the painful dissolution that left an indelible mark on the Turkish psyche. The major difference with the European empires overseas and Japan was that the Japanese colonized their immediate neighbors in Asia and sought to impose a regional order as the leader of Asia, which has left a lasting impression. In addition, Japan attempted to assimilate Chinese and Koreans by forcibly abandoning their original names and language in favor of Japanese.\footnote{See Hyangjin Lee, \textit{Contemporary Korea: Identity, Culture, and Politics} (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).} Protecting national identities for these people became part of a broader geostrategic struggle that left a particularly negative legacy. Europeans conquered lands overseas such as in Africa and the Far and Near East rather than the lands of their neighbors based on the early establishment of nation-states in
Europe and the continent’s lack of raw materials. Drawing on the focus of threat perception in international relations, previous chapters argued that the Japanese were seen as a bigger threat to the Chinese and Koreans than the British were to the Indians and Nigerians based on their geographical proximity to their colonies. In a world in which the striking speed between the Japanese mainland and China or Korea are measured in minutes by bomber planes and not days like years past of European naval expeditions, this perception is understandable. In this way, the Japanese empire unlike most European empires should be considered part of the category of neighborhood empires that was laid out previously and included the Ottoman and Russian empires. Clearly the saliency of imperial memories in Japan’s neighborhood empire has remained high given the geographic proximity and historic relations, versus European empires that simply retreated in the face of rising nationalist movements and have subsequently had the luxury of “forgetting” about their overseas empires. The fact that the majority of European nations have been able to maintain relatively good relations with their former colonies in Latin America, Africa, and Asia suggests that these countries do not fear being recolonized, whereas the sensitivities on display in Asia with Japan and Eastern Europe with Russia suggest the opposite.

**International Factor: Relations with the US**

The structure of the international system and the geopolitical position of Japan and Turkey played a major role in the formation of their respective imperial memories as demonstrated throughout each of the case studies. But the question remains: When can a
post-imperial successor state begin to independently shape its imperial memories regardless of international costs it might be forced to pay? For Japan and Turkey the critical international factor and answer to this question can be amalgamated into one indicator -- relationship with the United States.

The default position for Japan and Turkey in the aftermath of empire was rejectionism, which was reinforced by incentives provided by the United States to maintain a strong state and a cohesive pro-American ruling regime that did not worry about challenges to its domestic authority in a security climate like the Cold War. The Japanese and Turkish regimes had few incentives to glorify their imperial pasts given their new relationship with the West, which had generally opposed their empires and now embraced them.\textsuperscript{501} Given the dominance of the United States within the West and the “free world,” and the fact that Japan and Turkey became associate members through both the U.S.-Japan security alliance and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), it is a natural part of the Japanese and Turkish post-World War narrative. The relationship with the U.S. was not the only international factor, but as the super-power ally for both Japan and Turkey it dominated the attention for how these countries engaged the international system. Both the Japanese and Ottoman Empires had been in varying stages of Westernization before they had been defeated; thus, an alliance with the U.S. allowed each republic to go further than their predecessors ever had in finally “joining” the West. However, the extent to which both countries became reliant upon the U.S. is crucial, particularly when framed in light of their imperial experiences with the West. When put into comparative perspective, the key variable for Japanese and Turkish foreign policy

\textsuperscript{501} Exceptions such as British support against Russia or Russian support for the Ottomans against Mehmet Ali were few and far between.
throughout the Cold War, and even beyond, has been each country’s relationship with the United States. Thus, it is useful to reflect upon the U.S.-Japan and U.S.-Turkey bilateral relationships as a proxy for the geopolitical and international structural position of the respective successor states.

Despite differences in imperial character, legitimacy, and lengths, the modern Japanese and Turkish nation shared a common birth and Cold War experience that shaped their imperial memories. Japan and Turkey arose out of the ashes of their respective empires into a world that was in flux. Former geopolitical balances had been off-set by World Wars and the rise of the world’s first “super powers,” the United States and the Soviet Union, which would shape the new global order. Japan and Turkey became an integral part of the United States’ containment strategy in both Asia and the Middle East in a post-World War II environment that saw the aggressiveness of Stalin’s Soviet Union through the prism of the Cold War.

Modern Japan was born into its embrace with the United States, while Turkey nominally chose its own path. Despite this seemingly different pathway, the real options available to Ankara given Stalin’s territorial threats and demonstrated behavior around Turkey’s neighborhood made the decision relatively simple. Turkey was not strong enough to remain a belligerent neutral in the way it had during World War II, and it was geographically too important to be part of the non-aligned movement in the Cold War. Therefore, Japan and Turkey entered into formal alliance with the United States around the same moment in history, though under very different circumstances. While communist parties were active in both countries that were leveraged to focus
Washington’s attention on Tokyo and Ankara respectively, they never had a high likelihood of succeeding given the proclivity toward conservative and pragmatic politics.

Having rejected their respective empires in the aftermath of defeat, Japan and Turkey pragmatically interacted with their international environments by leveraging their close bilateral relationship with the U.S., despite problems along the way. This led to a general estrangement from their former spheres of influence and reinforced negative views of their former empires; the ghosts from their imperial pasts had never been fully dealt with and there was little incentive provided by the U.S. to do so. In fact, as the Cold War turned into “hot” conflicts such as the Korean War and the Arab-Israeli Wars, U.S. strategic interests aligned with traditional elite thinking in Japan and Turkey that argued for forgetting the past in favor of focusing on the present and future realities of their difficult neighborhoods. Japan and Turkey remained detached from Asia and the Middle East arguing that they were zones of instability thus making them invaluable hubs for U.S. strategic interests in the region.\(^{502}\) A crucial difference between Japan and Turkey for the U.S. was the role of economic versus military factors that helped to shape the relationship.

The U.S. provided Japan’s security in exchange for Tokyo footing the bill and serving as a major hub for U.S. activities throughout Asia. In other words, the U.S. was not just interested in protecting Japan; it was also interested in projecting its influence and power into Asia through Japan. Additionally, the U.S. opened its enormous markets to Japanese businesses at preferential rates and collaborated with Japan early on to open

\(^{502}\) Peter Katzenstein has even argued that they were part of the American imperium in his book *A World of Regions* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2005).
various Asian markets. The impact of Japan’s economic rise was both beneficial and troubling to Washington. The fact that Washington continued to hold ultimate sway over all major foreign or security policy and the priority with which Japanese policymakers dealt with U.S.-Japanese relations made the situation workable. In the case of Turkey, the immediate need was for development assistance and the transformation of the Turkish Armed Forces into a modern military force structure. With Marshall and Truman aid and the inclusion of Turkey into NATO the U.S. was able to create institutional ties that helped to slowly transform the Turkish military, but never took as active a role as it had in Japan. The difference in scope and intensity of U.S. involvement facilitated the domestic changes that were able to take place and go largely unnoticed by Washington.

Beyond the pragmatic reasons for embracing the United States as a strategic ally, both Japan and Turkey had ideational and identity reasons for wanting to join the West in a way that had never been possible in their imperial incarnations. Having struggled to join the Western club for centuries in the case of the Ottomans and decades in the case of the Japanese, the Cold War created the conditions for the fulfillment of modernizers’ dreams in both nations. After the devastation of war, Europe was no longer the center of gravity and the United States was the new leader of the West who could incorporate allies without the historical baggage of the Europeans. In place of European racism, Ankara and Tokyo found a Washington that openly embraced and welcomed both nations into the West through a series of bilateral and multilateral frameworks. The Turks, who had been sitting on the sidelines of Europe, were invited to join every European economic

and security organization that the United States had a hand in,\textsuperscript{505} while the Japanese secured their own special agreement with the U.S. and became Europe’s main economic competitor.\textsuperscript{506} Having constructed the world order after victory in World War II, the United States was in the unique position of being both an international and domestic actor for its allies.\textsuperscript{507} The level to which this was true in Japan and Turkey has been the subject of numerous studies, but for our purposes the impact of the U.S. was seminal in consolidating the moderate rejectionist imperial memories from the aftermath of empire until the end of the Cold War.\textsuperscript{508}

\textbf{Cold War Ebbs and Flows}

In a Cold War environment, the ebbs and flows of U.S. foreign policy and the international system had a disproportionate impact in Ankara and Tokyo. Major crises in U.S.-Japanese and U.S.-Turkish relations occurred during the period of \textit{détente}\textsuperscript{509} in the 1970s over the recognition of China and Turkish intervention in Cyprus respectively.\textsuperscript{510} Japanese and Turkish strategic thinkers were forced to think about their own national interests as being different from U.S. interests in a significant way -- which laid the

\textsuperscript{505} Including most important NATO and OECD, but including over 20 different regional organizations. Full list can be seen at https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2107.html.


\textsuperscript{507} For more on the restructuring of world order in the aftermath of major conflicts see John Ikenberry, \textit{After Victory} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

\textsuperscript{508} Most of these studies have been referenced in the contemporary chapters on Japan and Turkey in this dissertation, but can also be seen in the bibliography.

\textsuperscript{509} \textit{Détente} is traditionally defined as the easing of tensions between powers, but is most frequently used to describe a period of time during the middle of the Cold War where there was an easing of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. For more see John Gaddis, \textit{Cold War} (New York: Penguin Press, 2006).

\textsuperscript{510} See the most recently edited volume by Melvyn Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, \textit{The Cambridge History of the Cold War} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
foundations for the revisionist and glorificationist thinking that emerged subsequently in
the 1980s toward the end of the Cold War. Deep institutional connections between
bureaucrats and military officers led to the successful maturation and navigation of U.S.-
Japanese and U.S.-Turkish relations; however the rising strength of both Japan and
Turkey during this period of time allowed domestic politics to take precedence for the
first time in the 1980s when it came to imperial memories.

The coalition of pro-U.S. bureaucrats, officers, and politicians carefully cultivated
during the Cold War remained strong and guided foreign policy in both countries
throughout this period. Given the changing international and regional dynamics that
brought Soviet troops into Afghanistan, an Islamic Republic of Iran onto Turkey’s
borders, and a communist China closer to Japan, incentives to reject previous imperial
designs regionally remained high, while growing nationalist sentiments continued to
entice populist leaders to toy with glorificationist rhetoric on the fringes of domestic
politics. However, in both cases, the domestic regimes were reinforced by the
international environment and American support at critical junctures. The density of
relations with the United States has led to entire fields of scholarship in both Japan and
Turkey focused on bilateral relations, which is similarly reflected in the complexity of
linkages between relations with the U.S. and imperial memories. 511 Whereas the U.S.
single-handedly preserved the emperor as an institution in the aftermath of the Japanese
empire, it had no involvement with the dismantling of the Caliphate and Sultanate in
Istanbul. The U.S. shaped modern Japan through its occupation, which allowed the U.S.

Asia Pacific, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004); Bilge Criss, Bruce Kuniholm, and Selcuk
Esenbel, ed., The History of American Turkish Relations: 1833-1989 (Istanbul: Bogazici University Press,
forthcoming).
to influence the writing of the constitution and formation of the Diet that, persists to this
day, in a way that it never did in Turkey. Yet the U.S. was the single greatest
international constraint on Japan and Turkey throughout this history and indirectly
affected how the national narrative and imperial memories were constructed in both
countries.

Given the history of World War II and the animosity generated in the aftermath of
Pearl Harbor, the U.S. chose to gloss over many of Japan’s past issues in favor of
blaming the Japanese military and ultranationalism for the excesses of Japan’s empire
that continued to haunt its relations with its Asian neighbors. By developing a hub-and-
spoke model for its many bilateral alliances in Asia, the U.S., with mixed results, tried to
facilitate Japan’s reintegration into the region by encouraging relations in spite of the
history between its other client states such as the Philippines, South Korea, or Taiwan. 512
Taiwan under Chiang Kai-shek was desperate for Japan’s support and needed little US
encouragement while South Korea resented U.S. efforts. The U.S. worked for 30 years to
going Japan to normalize ties with South Korea with only moderate levels of delayed
success.

With the case of Turkey, given the lack of history between the Ottoman Empire or
early republic and the United States, Washington was able to play a constructive role in
Ankara’s integration into all European and Transatlantic forums. The aspirations of
Turkey to European Union membership grew out of a need for ideational belonging that
would involve being recognized by the West as an equal member in a way that the
Ottomans had never fully achieved and alliance with the U.S. did not offer given its

512 See John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno. *International Relations Theory and the Asia-Pacific*
strategic nature. In contrast to the divisive regionalism of Asia and the Middle East, regional integration with Europe offered the Turks a national identity anchor that the Japanese eagerly sought but were outright denied. Japanese leaders were eager for a national identity anchor in Asia, grasped for it, claimed it, and dwelt on it. Beginning with Prime Minister Kishi’s 3-sided diplomacy in 1957 and continuing through the Fukuda Doctrine in the 1970s, different leaders sought to re-conceptualize Japan as once again the leader of Asia and speak in terms that would have been unthinkable in Yoshida’s time.

As junior partners to Washington throughout the Cold War, Ankara and Tokyo subordinated foreign and security policies and to a large extent to U.S. priorities, while on the domestic level rising self-confidence regained from post-war traumas began to manifest themselves. The level of economic development aid given by the Japanese government and investment from the business community in Asia further strengthened Japan’s ties. Yet pragmatic interests often ran up against feelings of distrust and frustration over a lack of Japanese contrition and a sense of superiority over other Asians.\footnote{See Tsuyoshi Hasegawa and Kazuhiro Togo East, ed., \textit{Asia’s Haunted Present: Historical Memories and the Resurgence of Nationalism} (Westport: Praeger, 2008).} While less pronounced than Japan’s growth, Turkey’s own relative rise in its region opened a new dialogue in the late 1980s on the relationship between Turkishness, Islam, and the Ottoman Empire. At this critical juncture, the fall of the Berlin Wall and disintegration of the Soviet Union further eliminated constraints on glorifying imperial memories for both countries. The elimination of the Soviet Union as an existential threat to both countries meant that the security-rationale continually offered by the regimes to justify foreign policy and the close relationship with the U.S. disappeared overnight. Yet
the changes in imperial memory were gradual and not directly correlated solely to international factors. The end of the Cold War did not result in an immediate switch from rejectionist to glorificationist memories in either Japan or Turkey, but rather simply created the conditions and backdrop from which individual leaders and coalitions would ultimately affect changes in imperial memory.

**Post-Cold War Environment**

Strategic re-alignment from the U.S. did not immediately follow for Japan or Turkey, but the differences between levels of dependency were reflected through changed regional environments. The elimination of the Soviet Union and the U.S.-led interventions in the first and second Gulf War strengthened Turkey’s relation with its Middle East neighbors, whereas Japan’s two decades of economic stagnation and the rise of China meant that its relative strength in Asia suffered considerably. The changed international environments led to the possibilities of more glorificationist imperial memories, but the major changes did not occur until the traditional domestic political structures and elites began to fall.

September 11, 2001, demonstrated the vulnerability of the U.S. and was seen as a major turning point in a post-Cold War environment, but from the perspectives of Ankara and Tokyo, the event simply reinforced traditional alliance thinking toward the United States and the danger of non-state actors in the international system. President Bush’s global “War on Terror” gave Turkey a new strategic focus for U.S. foreign policymakers as a Muslim-majority NATO ally that could be touted as model for the rest of the Middle
East. Turkey was made a critical partner of the United States’ Broader Middle East Initiative and offered significant aid in the time before the Iraq War. In Tokyo, 9/11 forced a more sustained debate about the alignment of Japanese and U.S. interests in a post-Cold War environment. Prime Minister Koizumi’s close personal relationship with Bush and his push for greater involvement in support of U.S. objectives in Afghanistan stretched the limits of traditional interpretations of Japan’s restrictive constitution, thereby strengthening revisionist forces that translated into greater glorificationist rhetoric.

Relations with the U.S. continue to be important for Japan and Turkey, and even when changing regional dynamics appeared to be moving in similar directions. Turkey’s March 1st, 2003 vote, which prevented U.S. troops from invading Iraq through Turkish soil, was a critical turning point in relations and established Turkey’s ability to say “no” to the United States and demonstrate its independence in the international environment. The regional credibility garnered by this event given subsequent difficulties in Iraq for the U.S. and Ankara’s more active regional diplomacy created a more self-confident and independent Turkish foreign policy. The recent activism of Turkey in its own neighborhood has reinforced and simultaneously built on the glorificationist narrative that began under President Ozal in the 1980s and has been built on by the ruling party since its arrival to power. Meanwhile, the election of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) at the expense of the LDP has resulted in a more Asianist foreign policy for Japan. Prime Minister Hatoyama’s vague ideas about an East Asian Community hinted at a more independent foreign policy at a time in which China’s aggressive behavior and North
Korean threats emphasized the importance of the enhanced U.S.-Japan security cooperation.

The theme of Asianism is not unique to the DPJ and was advanced by various LDP leaders as well. In spite of Koizumi’s prioritization of the U.S. alliance, his successor, Abe, revived the thinking of his grandfather Kishi in seeking an assertive approach to Asianism while not directly challenging the U.S. alliance. Abe’s successor Fukuda Yasuo followed him with a similar theme of Asianism reminiscent of his father Prime Minister Fukuda Takeo, all of which the DPJ has sought to build on while taking credit for a “new” Asia opening, much like the AKP in Turkey has taken credit for its “rediscovery” of the Middle East that Turgut Ozal began.

The overshadowing international event for Japan in the post-Cold War has been the rise of China, which has elicited various responses from domestic political constituencies. As discussed in-depth in the case-study, China is viewed as either an emerging opportunity or a threat depending on the political prism and interests of the parties. Most interestingly, the domestic versus international debate about Japan as Asia’s leader has included dimensions of imperial memories. Issues such as textbooks and the Yasukuni shrine continue to create stark international costs and domestic benefits for Japan’s leaders, but clearly the domestic factors have become far more influential than during the days of the Cold War. Similarly, Turkey confronts a newly “opened” neighborhood that is increasingly looking to it as a regional leader. The changed international environment means that Russia and Turkey have become strategic partners, which defy the historical norm of animosity and hostility. However, economic drivers and domestic politics have increasingly pushed Ankara away from its Cold War
alignment with Washington and its European allies toward a more active regional role. Growing self-confidence and glorificationist memories in Ankara and Tokyo has facilitated these developments. The trends have been clear since the 1980s, but have more closely mirrored domestic than international factors.

Japan and Turkey’s international structural capabilities and dependencies, most critically the relationship with the United States, matter for their respective imperial memories. They determined how and where these countries engaged, Japan in Southeast rather than Northeast Asia and Turkey in Europe rather than the Middle East, which in turn effected how memories evolved domestically. International constrains, however, were not sufficient by themselves to changes in imperial memories rather it was the domestic causes that were unleashed by the international effects that both Japan and Turkey experienced that led to the changes outlined. The weakening of the “1955 System” conservative coalition in Japan and Kemalist regime in Turkey has unleashed forces that glorify their respective empires in ways unthinkable less than a decade ago. In this respect, the election of the AKP in Turkey and the defeat of the LDP in Japan represent the most significant moments for imperial memories as will be compared in the next section where a close comparison of domestic politics will help complete the analysis of imperial memories in Japan and Turkey.

**The Role of Leadership**

The changes in the rhetoric and tone of Japanese and Turkish leaders concerning their imperial pasts have not been as extreme or as sudden as that of Russian leaders in
the aftermath of the Cold War. Given the nature of imperial memories, major shifts take time, and only when there is a clear consensus do the trends become obvious. In the case of Russia and Turkey, this allows us to understand the overwhelming manifestations of glorificationist memories and narrative in a contemporary context, while Japan continues to be in flux.⁵¹⁴

The interaction of global trends and international events with domestic politics in Ankara and Tokyo are highlighted by the personalities of the most formative modern leaders. The father of modern Japanese strategic thinking, Yoshida Shigeru who served as Prime Minister from 1946 through 1954, rose to power at a moment in which the Japanese needed a leader to help them cope with defeat. By embracing defeat and turning weakness into strength, Yoshida gave his nation hope and created delineation from empire that was reflective of his own experience. As a diplomat with Western-proclivities, Yoshida had been sidelined by the military in the empire and argued for an earlier peace that led to his eventual arrest by the imperial regime. Though conservative in his leanings and respectful of his nation’s traditions, Yoshida sought to connect Japan to its pre-imperial history and sideline the more problematic aspects of Japan’s imperial experiences in Asia. Rejecting the militarism and anti-Western imperialism that had led to disaster, Yoshida laid the foundations for modern Japan. In the empire’s defeat Yoshida saw redemption and opportunity for Japan that ultimately guided Japanese foreign policy for the majority of its modern history.

The founder of modern Turkey had a similar vision for a republic independent of its imperial past that sought “peace at home and peace abroad.” As a former Ottoman

officer who had sought to modernize the empire from within, Ataturk was only able to realize his vision in the aftermath of empire. Rejecting the Ottomans for their “backwardness,” he sought to move Turkey forward through top-down reforms that reinforced the Turks’ pre-imperial traditions and downplayed the Islamic leanings of the Ottomans. Without the constraints of Yoshida, both internationally and domestically, Ataturk was able to go further in his rejection of the Ottomans as evidenced by his language and history reforms. Building on the strength of the military and state-traditions of the Turks, Ataturk enshrined modern Turkey’s ideology and Western-orientation that challenged both the conservative landscape of Anatolia and cosmopolitan Istanbul. The legacy of Ataturk enshrined by his one-party rule and zealously guarded by his military ensured that the founder of the republic would remain a force to be reckoned with well beyond his time. The top-down approach treasured in the ideology that drew its inspiration and legitimacy directly from Turkey’s founder went against the grain of the populations’ traditional leanings. However, given the enormous support Ataturk enjoyed, Kemalism was rhetorically supported and guided Turkey until the end of the Cold War.

The differences between Yoshida and Ataturk are as informative as their similarities. While both were very much products of their respective empires, they were also reflective of their nation’s approaches to leadership. Ataturk, the founder and father of the Turks, earned his title and legitimacy from successfully mobilizing and then winning Turkey’s war for independence. Drawing upon the strong leadership traditions of his people Ataturk created a republic in his image that was very much dependent on his legacy and created a clear line of discontinuity from the empire. The reforms Ataturk instituted drew directly from his own leadership style and set Turkey on a pathway of
Ottoman rejection. Yoshida, on the other hand, while also being a strong personality and leader, was not the founder or father of the Japanese. Yoshida had not won any wars and had to conduct much of his politics in the shadow of Japan’s defeat and General MacArthur (1945-1952) who was the ultimate arbiter of Japan during his time. Lacking the mandate and legitimacy that Ataturk enjoyed and emerging three decades later, Yoshida did a remarkable job of shaping consensus and guiding Japan’s conservatives into a winning coalition in 1955 that would dominate the nation’s domestic landscape well beyond his years in power. A key component to Yoshida’s success was his ability to mold Japan to its international environment and strike a balance of continuity from empire with moderate rejectionist imperial memories that never fully engaged the legacy.

In Japan, the end of occupation and beginning of the Cold War led to a strong regime made up of a pragmatic conservative coalition established by the LDP, big business, and bureaucracy that fought their battles internally and through factions rather than outside the system. In Turkey, greater democratization ended Ataturk’s party’s rule in favor of a multiparty system that brought to power the populist Democrat Party (DP) and its charismatic leader, Adnan Menderes. Opening up Turkey’s historically closed political system, Menderes pushed the limits of the military’s tolerance and eventually paid with his life. Having established itself as the ultimate arbitrator of Ataturk’s Republic, the Turkish military guarded the Republic’s identity and narrative from populist politicians that had to play within the rules established by the Kemalist regime.\footnote{See Steven Cook, \textit{Ruling But Not Governing: The Military and Political Development in Egypt, Algeria, and Turkey} (Washington, DC: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).} The Japanese equivalent of Turkey’s military were the powerful bureaucrats in the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of International Trade that formulated policy with
the LDP to maintain Japan’s economic growth which in turn kept the regime in power. However, Japan’s bureaucracy never approached the absolute strength of Turkey’s non-elected establishment given its symbiotic relationship with Japan’s only viable political party. With no serious political threats from outside, the LDP was guided by internal factional politics that rarely challenged the established narrative and guiding philosophy of Yoshida.

Breaking the rapid succession of prime ministers throughout the 1960s until the 1980s, two exceptional leaders emerged simultaneously in Japan and Turkey. Nakasone Yasuhiro’s reign as prime minister from 1982 to 1987 was unexpected given his anti-establishment and revisionist views of Japan’s history, while Turgut Özal, who served from 1983 until 1989 as prime minister and then until 1993 as president, was an untested technocrat from Turkey’s southeast who, for the first time, did not come from a major metropolis like Ankara, Istanbul, or Izmir. Both leaders shared glorificationist memories of the past that permeated all aspects of their rule. Their charismatic leadership styles and self-confident attitudes reflected changed realities for both Japan and Turkey in the 1980s. Nakasone’s official visit to Yasukuni, educational reforms, and handling of the textbook issues that erupted with Japan’s former colonies forced Japanese imperial memories out of the shadows into the public arena and opened the door for subsequent shifts. In the same vein, Prime Minister and then President Özal’s economic liberalization and openings to Turkey’s neighbors set the stage for the eventual glorification of the nation’s imperial past. Özal’s rhetorical flourishes in which he referred to Turkey’s
neighbors as brothers and continually spoke of a shared culture and history were a manifestation of his own belief in “Neo-Ottomanism.”

Emerging out of one of the worst corruption scandals in Japan’s modern history, Nakasone seized the moment by appealing to Japan’s new sense of self-confidence and calling for a re-examination of history. Challenging the established narrative and the tenants of the Yoshida Doctrine, Nakasone used his presence on the international stage to push for a more independent Japan that could effectively capitalize on its economic weight in Asia. Reinforcing domestic policies through foreign policy and vice-versa, Nakasone tapped into a populism that helped rejuvenate the LDP. Unlike the lifelong political career of Nakasone, Özal was a technocrat who the military allowed to create a political party in the aftermath of the 1980 coup that had disbanded all previous political parties in Turkey. Given his Western training and economic savvy, Özal was seen as a non-threatening, non-political alternative to the vicious left-right polarization that had forced the military to intervene and write a new constitution for the country. Working within the system and with the military, Özal helped to rewrite Turkish history by bringing the Ottomans back as a potential model for greater regional integration.

Focusing on the pragmatic benefits of economic liberalization within the neighborhood, Özal also utilized his foreign policy initiatives to strength his popularity and glorify Turkey’s Ottoman past as a way to help unify the divides within Turkish society. Given Turkey’s weak party system that was almost singularly personality driven, Özal was not


517 See in earlier Historical Japan Chapter 5.

518 For the best book on Özal’s accomplishments and strategic vision see Malik Mufti, Daring and Caution in Turkish Strategic Culture (London: Palgrave MacMillian, 2009).
able to fully effect institutional change as a result of his non-military background, and when he became president he ceded much of his political power.519

The international and domestic openings that created space for Nakasone and Özal were exceptional and unprecedented. The way in which both leaders took full advantage and utilized these factors to further their own coalitions shaped the direction of Japanese and Turkish policies for years to come. Most significantly, they opened the door to the reinterpretation of rigid official narratives that neither was able to fully overturn, but rather challenged and probed. The rhetoric and educational reforms utilized by both leaders in addition to their regional policies toward their neighbors set Japan and Turkey on trajectories that would be further expanded with the end of the Cold War. Yet, neither leader was able to singularly change imperial memories overnight given the structural constraints each worked within. However, the direction they pushed and the space they created for changes in imperial memory would be fully exploited after their time in a post-Cold War environment by leaders who drew directly on their legacies.

Drawing on the legacies and lessons of Nakasone and Özal, respectively, Prime Ministers Koizumi and Erdoğan who were in power capitalized on and facilitated the rise of glorificationism to pursue populist and nationalist policies that solidified support for their political parties. Without the constraints of the Cold War and having suffered through the lost decade of the 1990s economic bust and Kurdish terrorism respectively, Japan and Turkey were poised to play a more active role in the twenty-first century. The collapse of the “1955 System” in Japan led to the pursuit of more populist politics that has resulted in politicians espousing views about Japan’s past that would have previously been unthinkable. Accordingly, even Japan’s progressives who had been reflexively

519 Ibid.
rejectionist and pacifist began softening their views and finding points of imperial commemoration such as the 1905 Russo-Japanese war to glorify, while conservatives grew even more strident in their defenses of Japan’s imperial expansion in the 1930s. The active debate within Japan about the merits of its empire and its relationship with the modern republic have not yet led to an extreme glorificationist narrative; however, it is increasingly permeating the thinking and rhetoric of Japan’s most popular leaders.  

The replacement of the LDP with the DPJ which began after the departure of Koizumi has led to a period of uncertainty in Japanese politics unlike any in its modern history. Having lost popular support, the coalition between the LDP and bureaucracy has been replaced with a more reform-minded and electorally conscious DPJ that is seeking to bolster its electoral success with concrete political power. The dismantling of the LDP has been facilitated by the defection of big businesses and institutions in Japan that have ushered in a new period of populist politics, leading to an increase in nationalism and glorification of Japan’s imperial past. The ruling regime in Japan is more fractious than at any time in history, yet the DPJ has simply replaced the LDP rather than challenge the entire system in the way that the AKP has in Turkey.

The changes in Turkey have been far more seismic with the radical shift in civilian-military relations and the extent to which the AKP challenged the traditional Kemalist regime. Since its arrival to power in 2002, the AKP has sought to subordinate the military and recalibrate the calculus of power within the Turkish regime toward more

520 Author interviews with former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi June 24, 2009 Tokyo, Japan. Author interview with Defense Academy President Makoto Iokibe May 21, 2009 Yokotsuka, Japan. Author interview with General Toshio Tamogami June 30, 2009 Tokyo, Japan. Author interview with Koichi Kato July 2, 2009 Tokyo, Japan.
521 Author interview with Yoichi Funabashi March 27, 2010 Brussels, Belgium. Author interview with DPJ Tsuneo Watanabe March 27, 2010.
elected bodies such as the parliament in which it enjoys an absolute majority. The resulting tension between the military and judiciary establishments and the AKP has led to a weakened regime despite the commanding populist support the party enjoys.

Utilizing Turkey’s growing regional clout, the AKP’s leadership has glorified the Ottomans as a way to push its own more conservative Muslim agenda and convince Turks of the benefits of a more active foreign policy. Given the difficulties constantly encountered at home, the AKP has used its foreign policy to reinforce its domestic policies.

The DPJ and AKP are political movements that represent populist coalitions that brought together conservatives and progressives who seek change for the future of their countries while often referring back to their imperial past as a frame of reference. The extent to which this is possible is yet to be seen, but the changes embodied in these new parties and leaders have already shifted the debates in Japan and Turkey. With the emergence of these two parties and the weakening old regimes established in the aftermath of empire in Japan and Turkey, glorification of the empire has been on the rise. Combined with rising historical revisionism, glorificationism has led to a post-imperial nationalism that political leaders in both countries have been quick to exploit for their own purposes.

The end of the Cold War for Japan did not uproot the underlying domestic political structure even when, in 1993, the LDP suffered its first electoral defeat to the socialists and other predecessors to the current ruling Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ). Rather, it was the two-decades of stagnant economic growth that eventually undid the

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LDP and brought the DPJ to power. Despite that political transition, the key to Japanese politics remains consensus-building and pragmatic rule from the center, very much the characteristics of one-party democracy.

The AKP, meanwhile, differs considerably in some respects. It remains dependent on Erdoğan’s charismatic leadership for preserving its identity. The Japanese parties, in contrast, enjoy broad-based support and, as such, individual prime ministers matter less. The AKP, long the leading force behind change, also opted in the latest elections for promoting “stability” and “continuity” so as to sustain Turkey’s remarkable economic performance under its stewardship, which has seen nominal per capita incomes triple.

**Regional Dynamics and Shadows of Empire Today**

Japan and Turkey emerged from the Cold War very differently in Asia and the Middle East. Japan expected to lead Asia and build upon its economic ties in the 1980s that gave it promise, while Turkey was isolated from the Middle East with very few partners. Both countries emerged from the Cold War without a strong connection to the West other than an alliance with the United States. Given the interaction between domestic and international politics in democratic systems, the new leaders in Japan and Turkey have sought to demonstrate their independence from Washington while seeking greater regional relations with mixed results. As regional leaders, Japan and Turkey have sought to carve out new roles for themselves in their “rediscovered” neighborhoods with varying degrees of success.
The differences in regional dynamics are important when analyzing how shifting imperial memories in Japan and Turkey affected their respective neighborhoods. The rise of China as not only a regional but a global power has tempered Japan’s ambitions in Asia perhaps even more than the nation’s continued economic stagnation. It has also reinforced the importance of Japan’s democracy and become a rallying point for many foreign policy elites who now see Japan’s future as being tied to an East Asian community that can incorporate and accommodate both China and Japan. The lack of progress on North Korea’s nuclear program and China’s aggressive behavior have strengthened the hands of conservatives, which has resulted in more active and heated debates in Japan about its past. Constrained by present realities and structural impediments to Japan’s dominance of its region, these debates have increasingly taken on nostalgic glorification of Japan’s empire and sought to revise the terms of the historical debate without evoking the extreme glorification that has taken place in both Russia and Turkey.

In contrast, Turkey is a rising power of the Middle East. Given the vacuum created by the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the nuclear standoff between the West and Iran, Turkey represents a natural regional leader reminiscent of its Ottoman experience in the region. Turkey’s leaders have not been shy about making comparisons and reinforcing their messages of shared culture, history, and tradition with their former imperial space by drawing on its rich reservoir of Ottoman heritage. Acting on the

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global stage in its self-appointed role as regional leader, Turkey has been reinforced with positive signs from many of its neighbors who play on their own Ottoman pasts to secure economic and strategic benefits from their powerful neighbor.

The lessons learned and the opportunities offered by Turkey are unique, yet it is still being offered as a “model” by Western leaders for how its neighbors might be able to transform themselves. The AKP under Erdoğan prefers to be an “inspiration” rather than a “model” given Turkey’s previous experience in the 1990s in Central Asia, has been quick to seize the opportunities presented to it in 2011 by inserting itself in every possible arena and role wherever possible in the region. Under AKP’s rule, Turkey has earned a reputation for being pragmatic and active actor in its former Ottoman space.

Unlike European nations that managed the collapse of their empires more gradually and, as a result, were able to establish preferential agreements in their spheres of influence through economic and linguistic ties, Japan and Turkey do not enjoy similar benefits. The British model of the Commonwealth in which former colonies join willingly has been emulated by the French, and immigration patterns in Holland, Portugal, and Spain reinforce the “special” relationships forged between metropolis and periphery that has helped to alleviate much of the historical baggage from the imperial past.524 Most importantly, the integration of these post-imperial successor states within the EU has meant that the saliency of glorifying a past infused with conflict and competition has decreased in favor of a supranational unified future. Lacking an anchor of this sort, non-Western successor states largely have only their own imperial

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524 Herfried Munkler, Empires: The Logic of World Domination From Ancient Rome to The United States (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), 1-17.
experiences to draw upon in an uncertain twenty-first century that increasingly looks more like the nineteenth century rather than the twentieth.\textsuperscript{525}

The interpretation of history is sensitive for any country, but in post-imperial successor states it is particularly noticeable given the fact that it strikes at the core of their modern national identity and carries with it direct regional ramifications. While Turkey under the AKP has enjoyed a resurgence of regional power and prestige as both a cause and effect of changing imperial memories, there are still problems. Most tellingly, Turkish-Armenian relations have broken down in part over the lack of progress over historical issues directly related to imperial memories. While the discussion of the tragic events of 1915 and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire have become part of the Turkish debate since the first part of this century, the “Armenian Genocide” issue continues to poison not only Turkey’s relations with Armenia but also many of its Western allies including the United States where congressional resolutions are a perennial thorn.\textsuperscript{526} The irony for Turkey is that had the early republic with its rejectionist memories blamed the empire for the genocide and washed their hands of it, the issue would have little salience today. However, given the transition from empire to republic and the continuity of personages involved at all levels, this would have struck at the core of Turkey’s evolving national identity and would have been difficult even for Ataturk’s rejectionist government. As a result, as the AKP glorifies its Ottoman past as a way to bolster and legitimize its nationalist credentials it is attacked by ultranationalists for

\textsuperscript{526} The history of the Armenian genocide debate in Turkey is a complicated and long one, for a contemporary take see Mustafa Akyol’s writings particularly his “Open Letter to the Armenian Diaspora” http://thewhitepath.com/unveiling-turkey/an_open_letter_to_the_armenian_diaspora/
selling out the interests of Turks in both the republic and Azerbaijan, their cousins to the East, for its rapprochement efforts with Armenia.

Similar differences over interpretations of history concerning the issues of “comfort woman” in Korea and the “Rape of Nanking” or “Nanking Massacre” in China continually cast a shadow over relations with Japan.\textsuperscript{527} Despite efforts within Japanese societies to reveal the “truth” about these events, the costs for full apologies and lack of benefits for political leaders has led to continued foot-dragging. The general trend toward glorification has meant that despite commemorations and Prime Minister Koizumi visiting Nanking, the debate has become more political and less scholarly. The causes and justifications of imperial actions have become more prevalent than the human suffering and lives lost. In both cases, Japanese and Turks are sensitive to having their entire empires characterized by such exceptional events and resent reducing debates on imperial memories down to these lowest denominators.

The trend in each of the non-Western successor states examined is clear: rising glorificationist memories of empires. This confirms earlier hypotheses and the theory of imperial memories that has been validated through the in-depth case-studies. Examined in isolation, Japan and Turkey often seem exceptional and unique cases; however, when put into a comparative perspective, the trends that led to changes in imperial memory are strikingly similar. The initial rejection of Japan and Turkey’s imperial experiences lasted throughout the Cold War and only as a result of weakening domestic regimes have glorificationist memories come to dominate. The respective differences in international and regional dynamics along with the domestic factors all point toward the resulting

glorificationist trends with differences in intensity and timing. Yet, how these imperial memories will affect the continued domestic developments in addition to regional and foreign policies depend on the contest and should be the subject of future research. However, even from a cursory view and through the cases outlined, it is clear that imperial memories are an important part of comparative politics and international relations for post-imperial successor states. The concluding section offers some preliminary insights into the areas for future research, policy implications and the impact that imperial memories can be expected to have on the evolution of post-imperial successor states’ international relations in their neighborhoods and former imperial space.
Chapter Eight

Moving Forward From the Past

This dissertation began with the observation that memories of a nation’s past incarnation as a modern empire are an important factor for study in international relations. From there, the focus has remained on the progeny of former empires that used to dominate the international system and now linger on in the memories of their successor states. The puzzle of how and when imperial memories evolve over time has driven the analysis and narrative of successor states that has followed on the antipodes of Asia in Japan and Turkey. As we have seen, imperial memories are an important barometer that requires both international and domestic factors to explain their trajectory. The general trend observed toward greater glorification can be attributed partially to the end of the Cold War and changed international environment. However, the speed and style of these changing imperial memories across cases has been driven by domestic politics.

While context and unique circumstances are critical in understanding the evolution of memories, narratives, and nationalism in places such as Japan and Turkey, there is a broader and universal set of assumptions that have held across cases. At times catalysts and at other times instruments, imperial memories are not as easily categorized in cause and effect terms like many other social scientific concepts used in political science. The distinction made between official versus public memories has been an important one, but often blurred in democracies where populist leaders see the utility of tapping popular sentiment through changes in official memories. The extent to which individual leaders and their memories matter in the formation of official memory has also
been explored through the detailed case-studies, but ultimately, the focus has remained on developing imperial memories and nationalism into useful concepts and mid-level theories to include in the toolbox of international relations and successor state analysis.

On a theoretical level, this dissertation has laid out an argument and framework for imperial memories that have been applied to Japan and Turkey. The claim has not been that “imperial memories” singularly determine behavior or create these states, but rather that they offer a useful prism through which to better understand the evolution of post-imperial successor states. The subsequent research has highlighted the interaction between international structural constraints in the aftermath of empire and the resulting domestic political landscape in metropolis successor states. The original hypothesis that strong material factors are a necessary, but not sufficient condition for predicting a change in imperial memories held. The more detailed and nuanced reading of the particular contexts and conditions in the case studies offered us important insights. The role of outsiders, such as occupation forces or Western designs on territory, shapes the general psyche that arises from the ashes of empire. No less important are the insiders such as leaders and particular institutions like bureaucracies or militaries that seek opportunity in moments of profound change and crisis. The ways in which these players disengaged or engaged memory politics created many of the dividing lines among the rejectionist and glorificationist camps. Therefore, while the individual choices and decisions made among elites on the basis of these factors may differ, the structure in which these battles are waged look familiar between cases.
Focus

This dissertation has traced how defeated empires in Japan and Turkey emerged as truly independent powers that may still have constraints internationally and regionally, but ultimately decide their own relationship with its past. As outlined, the struggles over identity and reconciliation from a glorified past to a defeated empire gives rise to new regimes and permeate all levels of successor states. At the level of official memory, the domestic regime’s dominance and hegemony was seen to be the most determinative factor for when a successor state would move along the rejectionist to glorificationist scale of memories. As seen in the cases examined, assuming a state is an independent power that is not under occupation and can make its own decisions, the presence of a weak divided domestic regime in a successor state leads to “glorification” of a previous empire while a strong cohesive domestic regime leads to a “rejection” of its former incarnation. As argued and explored, once imperial memories are contextualized in the way this dissertation has done, the actions of a state can be better understood.

The trend line in all cases examined goes from rejection to glorification. While there are natural ebbs and flows between moderate and extreme forms of each memory, the likelihood of glorificationist memories being replaced suddenly by a rejectionist past is unlikely in the short-term. Given the iterative process in which memories are formed, even sudden changes in government bring modest changes in imperial memories. History has shown that as turning points are passed, reversing memories become increasingly difficult without major collapses or wars. The challenge, therefore, is moderating imperial memories from reaching either extreme, which is ultimately unsustainable in the
modern international order. Appeals to raw populism and hypernationalism inherent in glorificationism are therefore an important area for future research as the trends identified in this dissertation inevitably progress further.

The impact of international and domestic factors on how imperial memories originate and develop over time in metropolis successor states has been the primary focus of this dissertation. However, there is no denying the importance of imperial memory for a successor state’s foreign policy. As this dissertation has explored in the contemporary and comparative chapters on Japan and Turkey, the “rediscovery” of their imperial pasts and spaces has had a profound impact on the domestic discussions about Japanese and Turkish self-perceptions and international involvement which has rekindled debates about East vs. West and traditional vs. modern that can be traced to before the foundation of both republics.528 As a result, the issue of how their respective empires and histories should be remembered has reemerged as one of the most salient political issues in these countries. In addition, these internal debates have implications far beyond the modern boundaries of the republics and in turn affect the direction of post-Cold War Japanese and Turkish foreign policy on a variety of different levels to which we now turn.

**Comparing the Antipodes of Asia**

This dissertation has demonstrated two cases in which the end of the Cold War revived a strong sense of nationalism throughout Asia that has been growing with a sense of self, given newfound economic growth and freedom from the Soviet menace. The implications of imperial memories on successor states are far-reaching and particularly

528 See earlier comparative Chapter, “Comparing the Progenies of Empire.”
important for understanding how states view their place in the international system. Therefore, while empires in their literal and structural sense may be long dead, they serve as a potent backdrop for contemporary policies and politics to be played out. The history of modern Japan and Turkey serve as particularly important and indicative cases.

As explored in-depth through the chapters, the roots of the modern Japanese and Turkish nation still are firmly connected to their respective Japanese and Ottoman empires, despite initial attempts by their founding leaders to sever or forget these ties. The way in which these nations have sought to reconcile their present with their past has been varied and schizophrenic at times, but generally in the same direction. The long dominant Liberal Democrat Party of Japan and the Kemalist elites of Turkey defended a tradition of rejecting the empires as a source for Japanese and Turkish identity from which the modern republics favored a more narrowly conceived notion of Western modernization and progress. With the end of the Cold War, newly emerging elites and coalitions in both countries have let the proverbial genie out of the bottle. The domestic political ramification of this trend has been rising levels of revisionist right-wing nationalism in both countries that feeds off of a glorified narrative that connects back to their imperial experiences, which has in turn affected international relations between former colonies and metropolises. Interestingly, as this dissertation lays out, the incentives and speed at which Japan and Turkey have changed their memories and narratives vary greatly.

Having emerged from the shadows of isolationism pre-World War II and dependency during the Cold War, Turkey today is asserting itself in a way unprecedented by modern Turkish Republican standards. Given the power vacuum in the Middle East
and the current composition of political leadership in Turkey, there is a will for Turkey to play a greater role in its region and particularly the Muslim world. While the reception of Turkey back into the Middle East by its former colonies has been viewed with a healthy degree of caution and suspicion, it has seemingly managed to turn its Ottoman legacy into a positive asset. Having once unified the Muslim world through the caliphate in Istanbul, many in Turkey today argue for a greater leadership role that is possible only through a reconceptualization of the rigidly secular regime put in place by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. The prestige associated with playing an active regional and symbolic role seems to be driving the resurgence in the glorification of imperial memories and emphasis on re-capturing Ottoman thinking on the part of the current government, which has been predisposed to a more glorificationist narrative of the empire. The challenge inherent in how Turkey reconciles and leverages this legacy internally and externally is the guiding thread that has run throughout this dissertation.

In the case of Japan, the rise of China and the evolving dynamics of post-World War II US-Japanese security cooperation have continued to dominate East Asia. Despite Japan’s successful business and investment ventures throughout its neighborhood in the 1980s, the effects of Japan’s two-decades long recession has taken the shine off of any type of Asian leadership it sought to exert during its heyday. Having become increasingly focused inward, Japan’s actions in its own region have been extremely subdued. Given the gradual shift toward acknowledging its imperial past, which has been extremely subtle compared to the Turkish case, Japan has still not crossed the critical threshold in its imperial memories. The lingering anger and resentment toward Japan has not disappeared within China or Korea but has lingered. Nonetheless, there is room for cautious optimism
based on the pragmatic incentives of regional integration and solving the remaining political concerns that underlie the “history issue.” The challenges still associated with Japan’s imperial past continue to balance the resurgence in revisionist nationalism being seen on the domestic level so that while Japan is moving in the same direction as Turkey, it remains a much more gradual glorification of its imperial past. The debates about Japan being a “beautiful” or a “normal” country are direct responses to the rise of China and the need to deal with an imperial past that has all too often been swept under the rug in domestic debates. Consequentially, recent events have made the domestic scene in Japan for the first time in its modern history unpredictable and worthy of far greater attention and research than at any time in its immediate past.

Implications

Glorification in and of itself need not be a cause for concern. Positively remembering one’s past is an important part of identity, whether on an individual or national level. However, the potency of imperial memories is the tendency toward extremes in the hands of populist nationalists. Official narratives are meant to serve present objectives and in turn lend themselves to political manipulation and utilization in democratic systems. The new sense of self and burgeoning confidence personified by leaders in Japan and Turkey should be seen as a natural evolution and progression for these post-imperial successor states.

Footnote:
How Turkey and Japan position themselves in the transformation of the Middle East and East Asia is critical to the balance of power in both regions, particularly the presence of the West as a force shaping these regions. It is no less significant for the two civilizational struggles that are likely to be defined as East vs. West over the coming decades. In reassessing their historical memories, each state is in the forefront of weighing competing notions of a Western-led international community and an assertive regional community poised to challenge the West and its narrative of history. These two stellar cold war success stories for the universal reach of Western values are being tested in the post-cold war era of regional challenges to Western leadership that offer enticing opportunities for both more independent status and reconstructed national identity.

Turkey, a New Ottoman Empire?

The activism and assertiveness of Turkey has caused political waves both in the West and in its immediate neighborhood. The fact is that in a non-Cold War environment, countries such as Turkey are becoming more autonomous and pursuing greater regional and global influence. For the Transatlantic community, this could make it either a valuable asset or an uncertain partner. Most prominently in the West, there are fears that Turkey is being “lost” and that it is becoming more oriented toward Russia or the Middle East, and that it is drifting away from secularism and toward Islamism at home. Given the critical importance of Turkey politically and its strategic position geographically, it is important for Europe and the U.S. to understand Ankara’s aims and

actions on their own terms, grounded in the historical context, especially with respect to its former empire.

As discussed in previous chapters, Turkey’s immediate neighborhood and its current realities represent the most malleable and dynamic frontiers for Turkish foreign policy. Although Turkey has had difficulties developing a comprehensive and consistent policy that would serve both its national and regional interests, a new approach based on a glorificationist narrative of Turkey’s past seems both possible and necessary. This new Turkish foreign policy includes the preservation of national integrity, modernization along Western standards, and non-involvement in the domestic issues of neighboring countries. Turkey seems ready to shed its former policies of disengagement and become an active participant in all of its regions in order to create “zero problems” and foster regional stability.

The chapter on contemporary Turkey points out that in the 1990’s Ankara’s policies were anchored in cooperation with Washington, a military alliance with Jerusalem, and hostility toward – and even confrontation with – many of its Middle Eastern neighbors, notably in Baghdad, Damascus, and Tehran. But now we see unprecedented levels of cooperation in the political, economic, and social realms between Turkey and these neighbors, a sharp deterioration of ties with Israel, and several attempts by Ankara to mediate crises in the Middle East. The external causes of this profound transformation include a deep regional transformation engendered, *inter alia*, by two Gulf wars and the rise and fall of the Arab-Israeli peace process. Domestically, the rise of new leadership under the AKP and changes in Turkey’s economic, social, and political structure are all responsible for new ties in the Middle East. However, the rhetoric and
language of Turkey’s re-engagement by its leaders have fed into fears of extreme glorification of its imperial past and discussions of “Neo-Ottomanism.”

In all parts of Turkey’s neighborhood, the actions by the Turkish state, its representatives, its military, and its private groups and citizens will likely have an impact on a scale not seen since the days of the Ottoman Empire. That is not to say that Turkey can again be imperial in the same way the Ottomans were—or even that it wants to be. Rather, it is to recognize that Turkey is now actively engaged—economically, militarily and politically—as an actor both “in” and “of” the region. This regional activism, though relatively recent, makes a difference in the neighborhood and reverberates beyond its boundaries, among leaders and publics further away who claim an interest in the region. Turkey’s orientation toward Iran, its initiatives on migration and energy, and its involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict all affect Turkey’s relations with the United States and the European Union. At the same time, the resulting course of Turkey’s Transatlantic relations has repercussions on the overall direction of Turkish foreign policy and, not incidentally, on Turkish domestic politics. While precise prediction of the course of any country’s foreign relations is always risky, in this case the delicate triangular relationship between Turkey, the United States, and the European Union is critical.

Prime Minister Erdoğan draws directly from a view of history in which Turkey has always been centrally located. The historical anomaly from this viewpoint is not the Ottoman period, but the Republican period in which Turkey chose to isolate itself from its neighborhood in favor of alliances with the West. While Turkey has traditionally been labeled as either a “bridge” or a “barrier” between its region and the West, it now finds
itself playing the role of a catalyst. In the words of the Prime Minister, “Turkey under the AKP seeks to bring the principal actors of the region together to transform the Middle East in the same way that U.S. involvement helped transform Europe from a hotbed of continental and world wars into geography of peace.” However, many in the region are wary of Turkey being nothing more than an agent or functionary of the United States; thus, it must build its assets as a “bridge” of trust for both sides. In this respect, drawing on Turkey’s reservoir of Ottoman past has great symbolic value and plays directly into the debates about Turkey’s place between East and West.

As a regional power preeminently focused on building stability and expanding its influence in its region, and one that sees democratic change as a way to serve these primary goals, Turkey has selectively engaged with its neighbors. It has remained notably silent on the need for political change in Iran (although more critical voices are now being heard) – an important economic partner and a neighbor of Turkey. It has been slower than the rest of Western countries on pushing for change in Gaddafi’s Libya and Assad’s Syria, where Turkish economic and political interests were deeper and more concentrated. On the other hand, the Turkish government has outpaced Europeans and Americans in asking for Tunisians and Egyptians leaders to step down earlier in the so-called “Arab Spring.”

Engaged Turkish behavior in its immediate neighborhood has now come to represent a return to its imperial past. As both a uniquely Western and Muslim actor,

Turkey has the potential to create new opportunities for pragmatic deal-making in the region which might begin through shared views of an Ottoman past. These opportunities could contribute to the creation of a more stable neighborhood, one based on mutual cooperation rather than mutual destruction. As such, Turkey represents an important country able to play the role of both mediator and bridge. In these multiple roles historical memory facilitates a more inclusive regional framework. Or it can also lead to a hegemonic structure in which Turkey reasserts its military and political dominance in the region.

Thus far, in glorifying its Ottoman legacy Turkey has uniquely positioned itself to utilize less intrusive offers of assistance and diplomatic help to its Middle Eastern neighbors. As referenced in previous chapters, indicators such as the number of Turkish television programs watched by its neighbors, trade, energy, travel, and investment in its former empire, and the “re-emergence” of various Ottoman artifacts and architecture throughout Turkey’s neighborhood, point toward new incentives to find common ground through Turkey’s Ottoman past. 534 Prime Minister Erdoğan has been trying to play a positive role in pushing forward Turkey’s European credentials, while embracing the positive aspects of Turkey’s Middle Eastern cultural and religious connections, which has often involved invoking Ottoman history and imagery. The challenge for the prime minister is striking the right balance in a country as sensitive and in flux as Turkey.

In the Middle East, Turkey is an actor “of” rather than simply “in” the region. Given its unique culture, geography, and both pre- and post- Cold War history, Turkey’s

534 Also see Ahmet Evin et al., Getting to Zero and Turkey and Its Neighbors, (New York: Lynne Riener Press, 2011). In particular see Kirisci’s chapter in this forthcoming volume where he discusses various indicators, which show Turkey becoming a hub for its region and offering a way forward to integrate its region through globalization.
actions cannot be fit into simple dichotomies of “Muslim” vs. “secular,” “European” vs. “Middle Eastern,” or “Imperial” vs. “Republican.” Precisely because of their unique contemporary context, Turkish actions offer the prospect of realignment in the Middle East and of helping that region break with its own dichotomies of the past. Turkey has, for example, been in a position to develop relations with all parties in conflicts there. This does not mean that Turkey’s mediation efforts will always succeed or that its ties with all actors will always be good. But “tough love” and conditionality, if measured (i.e. not excessive) and consistent (i.e. towards all parties), could mark a welcome difference from U.S. and EU policies in the region. Yet this potential would be squandered if Turkey were viewed as acting purely according to particularistic identity affiliations rather than in the name of international rights and law or if its external policies were to be captured by vocal domestic constituencies. Moreover, Turkish actions do not take place in a vacuum, and as the case studies show, many of Turkey’s neighbors have their own ideas about how best to adapt to a changing political, economic, and energy environment. Whether Turkey will help shape or be shaped by the Middle East, a recalibration of Ankara’s previously exclusive relationship with the West will be part of the future. As President George W. Bush learned the hard way, Western policymakers cannot categorically count Turkey as either “with us” or “against us” and need to take into account Turkey’s views of its own national interests in this region—as elsewhere.

**Japan, Towards an Asian Future**

Japan has been relatively milder in the waves it has caused in the West and its immediate neighborhood, especially in comparison to Turkey. For Japan, the collapse of
the Soviet Union did not fundamentally alter its strategic environment in the same way it
did for Turkey. If anything, Japan’s primary rival in Asia – China – has grown. Unlike in
Turkey, the question of “losing” Japan has less to do with internal identity politics and
more to do with threat perceptions. Will Japan accommodate and work within a Chinese-
lead Asian order or will it exert its own independence and leadership for the region with
the strong backing of the U.S.? Neither scenario has necessarily come to fruition as of yet
largely owing to domestic factors. Much of Japan’s soul-searching is an internal domestic
struggle rather than a geopolitical international shift in the way that Turkey has
experienced.

Interestingly, the end of the Cold War for Japan did not change the underlying
domestic structure until 1993 and even with the defeat of the LDP the resurgence led by
Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi delayed major changes to the system. Despite
predictions of a political tsunami or earthquake brought on by the election of the
Democratic Party of Japan, there is a high-degree of continuity. Domestic politics in
Japan have begun to have international ramification as the DPJ is a less well-known
entity and concerns about the experience of a new ruling elite and party have prevailed in
Washington and other capitals. The domestic political situation, which for the first time
in Japanese history appears to be in flux and unstable, has caused many to question where
the nation is heading or even wants to be headed. The lack of political leadership since
Koizumi and the ever-changing nature of the prime minister and diminishing power of
the bureaucrats have been less than reassuring.

As discussed in the previous chapters, Asia and its current realities represent a
difficult challenge for Japanese foreign policy. The fact that Japan has attempted to reach
out beyond Northeast to Southeast Asia points to the challenges it faces in its own region with neighbors such as China and Korea that continually remind Japan of its brutal past. Japan has had difficulties developing an overarching framework for its region outside of a U.S.-led order that would serve both its national and regional interests. Despite attempts in the 1970s and 80s to leverage Japan’s economic strength and relations with its neighbors, the majority of its policies have remained technical and lack strategic vision for Japan’s future role in Asia. As a result, unlike Turkey, a new approach based on a glorificationist narrative of Japan’s past seems increasingly unlikely and not in its own self-interest. A Japan that is engaged internationally versus one that is inward focused is in everyone’s best interest, but how this engagement should be achieved continues to be a point of major discussion.

Japan was the first challenger seeking economic leadership with aspirations to capitalize on regional fascination with “Asian values.” Yet, it was constrained by memories of its previous colonialism associated with its “East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere” and sullied by the false ring of persistent rationalizations that its sole purpose was to liberate Asia from Western imperialism. Moreover, Japan’s aspirations are restricted by its postwar pacifist constitution and its resulting dependence on an alliance with the United States. After the collapse of its bubble economy, political instability and lack of sufficient will to undertake painful economic reforms have enfeebled remaining regional leadership ambitions.

The strategic environment that spurred the U.S.- Japan alliance and allowed Japan to take a regional leadership role in the 1980s has faded into history. In its place today is

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535 Scholars have written extensively on this concept including Rozman, 1998; Wan, 2001; Pempel, 2005; Katzenstein and Shiraishi, 2006.
a new international landscape with an ascendant China, a nuclear-armed North Korea in the midst of an uncertain leadership succession, an emerging regional architecture of formal and informal institutions, increasingly contested maritime, air, space and cyber commons; and an array of complex environmental and natural resource challenges. In this context the first single-party non-LDP majority leader, Prime Minister Hatoyama Yukio, raised the banner of greater regionalism in 2009 and 2010 as a new concept in Japanese foreign policy. Hatoyama took office in late 2009 enthusiastic about forging an East Asian community, where the U.S. presence was unlikely and security issues would be downgraded as economics stayed in the forefront. Contrary to previous LDP leaders, Hatoyama came from the DPJ and was intent on charting a new course for foreign policy. Yet, his moves to revisit the agreement on where to relocate a U.S. military base on Okinawa caused turmoil in the alliance, and his lack of wariness toward China quickly was rejected by Japanese public opinion. Beijing’s growing assertiveness particularly on issues of maritime security and reluctance to deal with North Korean’s nuclear ambitions caused the Japanese public to become concerned more about China than its traditional ally the United States.

Prime Minister Hatoyama’s dismissive approach to the possibility of a serious clash with China, and his assumption that retaining leverage over China was not as essential as the United States contended, posed a real problem for alliance coordination. Hatoyama’s stress on an East Asian community and rebalancing relations with the United States failed and exposed the futility of idealism in the face of harsh realities. Rather than a regional resurgence, Hatoyama’s tenure resulted in strategic malaise for Japan. The Sino-U.S. divide hardened, Japan drew closer to its ally, and attention was shifting from
economic integration to security stabilization. The downturn in Sino-Japanese relations evident at mid-decade resumed as China aroused distrust on all sides. ASEAN scrambled to adjust, turning in 2010 to another expansionary plan.536

Hatoyama had no choice but to backtrack in his foreign policy before being replaced by Kan Naoto, who pledged to strengthen the alliance with the United States. The late May 2010 trilateral summit at a time of great concern about China’s military intentions demonstrated the limits of this forum for building trust and addressing the most serious regional problems. Japan was not alone in seeking to involve the United States more fully in the region. Views of China in Washington and Tokyo, however, now appear to be converging. As a recent comprehensive study by the Center for a New American Security highlights, a series of incidents including the buzzing of Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force ships by a Chinese naval helicopter and a collision involving a Chinese fishing vessel and Japanese Coast Guard ships near the Senkaku Islands have dimmed the DPJ’s initial enthusiasm about the prospects for cooperation with China. Leading a majority of DPJ lawmakers to display a new level of realism about their rising neighbor.537

Japan’s thinking on regionalism has become defensive in response to China’s assertive cultivation of Southeast Asian states, utilizing ASEAN.538 China had changed course with the Asian financial crisis and stayed one step ahead of Japan in initiatives toward ASEAN, which won considerable favor as its economic promise dramatically rose. In 2005 Japan countered China with a broader approach to the scope of a new

537 CNAS report October, 2010, 18.
538 Ibid, 14.
summit and a values-based interpretation of community to test the limits of China’s multilateralism. Yet, with a booming economy and a critical role when the world financial crisis set back other states, China kept the pressure on Japan to not fall behind with ASEAN. Its prospects were improving before it decided that greater clout allowed it to bypass regionalism through increased bilateralism, especially concerning security. Major Southeast Asian states became alarmed by this, turning to the United States for support. The momentum has now shifted.

Given the new dynamics in Japan after the devastating earthquake on March 11 and the nuclear fallout from the Fukushima plant, the isolationist tendencies have only been further reinforced. The inherent issues in the U.S.-Japan security alliance, which has lasted for almost 60 years, remain. Yet the DPJ’s struggle to deal with a post-3/11 nation and argue for a new type of relationship with the U.S. has been put on the backburner. The way in which populists have drawn from a revisionist version of history is an important trend to observe. The debate within Japan about the levels of Asianism versus Internationalism and how this would impact the U.S.-Japan alliance get to the center of what Japanese foreign policy will look like in the future. The fact that the “history issue” and constitutional revisions still lack consensus within Japanese politics means that the threshold of glorificationism has not been passed.

The Japanese empire, which has always represented contradictory and divergent themes, is remembered domestically as combining entry into the West with defense of Asianism against European imperialism, while internationally it is remembered as a brutal and repressive militaristic regime. This paradox is now a topic of heated political debate having emerged from the shadows of taboo discussions in Tokyo. Now more than
20 years after the end of the Cold War, hopes for renewed Asianism championed by selective memories of that empire that might help Japan to assert a leadership role in emergent East Asian regionalism seems all but dead. Given the dynamism of East Asia, Japan is at an important crossroads of today’s civilizational divide between the old center of modernity and the region emerging as the leader in modernization. Japan’s quest is complicated by negative memories of other East Asian colonies of its empire and Tokyo’s own internal trends toward glorification of this very empire. Given the rise of China and continued slide of Japan, forging an East Asian community remains difficult. Reviving positive memories of imperial Japan is complicated by the security afforded by alliance ties with the United States and the insecurity aroused by use of the “history card” against Japan and the fear that China is twisting Asianism into an anti-Western creed to serve its own hegemonistic agenda. As a result, Japan’s foreign policy remains cautious despite sporadic rhetorical flourishes that have amounted to naught. The foreign policy implications of Japan’s changing imperial memories remain salient, but also more dependent on its neighbors and the U.S. than in the case of Turkey. Given powerful neighbors and the relative weakness of Japan vis-à-vis China, Japan’s internal politics and intra-alliance management will dominate the headlines rather than assertive and bold foreign policy moves.

Navigating the New Tectonic Plates in East Asia and Middle East

Shifting tectonic plates in Japan and Turkey, both literally and figuratively have created new realities in East Asia and the Middle East. As a result, leaders in both countries have been drawing on their imperial memories in very different ways to
confront the dramatic events confronting them. Japan’s magnitude 9.0 earthquake and ensuing 30-foot tsunami on March 11, 2011 that killed close to 30,000 people were the worst in the island nation’s recorded history. The devastation and scale of the March 11 natural disaster, along with the nuclear crisis at Fukushima, constituted what has been called Japan’s biggest crisis since World War II by both the Japanese Emperor and Prime Minister.

On March 15 the echoes and shadows of the past that this dissertation has outlined resonated in the form of the current Emperor Akihito’s first-ever televised appearance. The Emperor’s stoic address, brought back to mind the first time the Japanese ever heard the deity who they had glorified and worshiped until the end of World War II with the Emperor’s father’s first-ever radio address. Emperor Hirohito’s address in the wake of World War II, in which he called on Japanese to “embrace defeat” after the twin nuclear disasters in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, was the last time any Japanese Emperor had made a publicly broadcasted speech to the nation. The similarities in message and tone meant to comfort a devastated nation were etched in Japanese minds because of shared memories of the past. The most recent Imperial proclamations only mention of the Japanese empire was to reference the resilience of the Japanese people in overcoming past disasters, both manmade and natural.

The disaster and the DPJ’s response eventually forced the early resignation of Naoto Kan and the appointment of Yoshihiko Noda as Japan’s 54th Prime Minister, the 6th within a 5 year window. Having no leader to replace the vision of Yoshida, stability of Nakasone, or the charisma of Koizumi, Japan of the 21st century faces a major crisis in confidence both at home and in its region as China continues its rise. Whether or not
March 11th, 2011 will represent a moment of regeneration is yet to be seen, however the rejectionist memories in place are holding and have assumed a lesser role than at almost anytime in post-Cold War Japanese memory. The new Prime Minister Noda, despite some initial comments about history seems to adopt a moderate line by focusing on effective government and internal reforms rather than international activism.

At the other end of Asia, the “Arab Awakenings” has led to a newly emboldened and empowered Turkey whose leadership feels stronger and more confident than ever before as it assumes a larger role in the region on the strength of the so-called “Turkish model.” Turkey did not transform itself from a defeated post-Ottoman Empire state to a flourishing market-based Muslim-majority democracy overnight; it has been almost a century in the making. The lessons learned and the opportunities offered by Turkey are particularly applicable to its neighborhood. Rather than toning down glorificationist rhetoric, Prime Minister Erdoğan has gone to new levels with his Foreign Minister. In Erdoğan’s 3rd consecutive parliamentary vote speech he claimed that his party’s victory was shared throughout North Africa, the Balkans and the Middle East, in other words, all areas that had once been parts of the Ottoman Empire.539

Clarifying the direction of Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East at a moment in which Turkish-Israeli relations have hit an all-time low has become a primary concern for Western policymakers. After initial contradictions and hesitations, Turkey seems to have adjusted its broader Middle East strategy, putting it more in line with the West. On Libya, Turkey’s reversal has been complete from an alignment with Russia against intervention, to a contributing member of ally supporting the rebels against Qaddafi. On

Syria, there has been an important, albeit incomplete, evolution towards putting pressure on the Bashar al-Assad regime. Subsequently, Syria has exposed deep divides between Turkish and Iranian approaches, which the West has welcomed. With Turkey’s most recent decision to contribute to the NATO missile defense shield by stationing U.S. radar in its territory, Turkish-Iranian relations do not appear to be getting any closer. When taken as a whole, these developments should encourage Israel to seek a rapprochement with Turkey. Unfortunately Turkey’s glorificationist rhetoric in the Middle East and stand on Israel hurts its unique role as mediator and further weakens its “zero problems with neighbors” policy, and it seems to have more to do with domestic and regional posturing than principles.

The “Arab Awakenings” are forcing Ankara to confront the new realities of the Middle East. For the last decade, it has sought to open new markets and expand its regional influence through a policy of “zero problems with neighbors.” It put no democratic preconditions on economic partners such as Iran and Syria, and this accommodating approach has sometimes caused friction with its Western allies. While traditional Turkish foreign policy has been conservative and inward focused, a “new” Turkey boasts the fastest growing and largest economy in the region and has far more tools to push a democracy agenda. As a result of its own process of reform, it is uniquely placed to play a decisive role in assisting and encouraging emerging democracies with its vibrant civil society and private sector.

\[540\] For most recent discussion of Turkish-Iranian relations see Soner Cagaptay’s “Next up: Turkey vs. Iran” New York Times February 14, 2012
http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/15/opinion/next-up-turkey-vs-iran.html
States of Contradiction

Japan and Turkey see themselves as important international and regional actors that have more to offer than simply their military or economic capabilities. Given their ambivalence over their histories, Japanese and Turks can be particularly nationalistic and prickly when dealt with as less than equals. Insulting the pride of either nation by using Japan or Turkey as a means to an end can lead to diplomatic failures. For example, U.S. attempts to pressure Japan into continuing operations in support of U.S. forces in Afghanistan and Iraq or trying to “buy” Turkey’s support for its operations against Iraq. Additionally, current attempts to offer Turkey less than full membership in the EU or asking the Japanese to pay the second highest dues to the United Nations without being represented on the permanent Security Council are portrayed as national insults. Having modernized and led Asia for the first part of the 20th century as the only East Asian Empire and having ruled for the better part of six centuries as the Ottoman Empire, the Japanese and Turks expect a certain level of respect in their international dealings. The current mood in Turkey of anti-Americanism and anti-EU sentiments or Japan’s acute sense of depression and irrelevance could lead to more isolationist or regionally-focused foreign policies in response to electorally popular ultra-nationalist sentiments. Understanding and being sensitive to the Japanese and Turks’ sense of fairness would go a long way in defusing the current moods in both successor states.

Faced with a complex world of information overload and multiple variables, people need to simplify and tend to operate on the basis not of a complete picture of the world but a simplified one. Observers and scholars of countries, including Japan and
Turkey, are no less subject to this tendency, maybe more so. We are tempted to ask questions such as, What is our “picture” of Japan or Turkey? What model does it fit? How can we categorize it? Is contemporary Japan “anti-imperial” while Turkey “neo-Ottoman”? Is Japan still “pacifist” and Turkey still “Kemalist”? Is the bureaucracy or military still these countries’ guardian or a guardian only of its own privilege? Is Turkey a “bulwark against radical Islam,” or, more ominously, a subtle and deceptive purveyor of that ideology? Is Japan still a western outpost? Asian anomalies? American partners?

Japan is the most developed Asian economy with the longest continually serving democratic parliament with the highest ratio of foreign direct aid for its region and top global contributor to the UN system, yet it does not sit on the UN Security Council. Turkey has been a NATO member for more than fifty years but it is not yet in the EU. It holds the chair of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and still as of this writing has military ties with Israel. It is an “energy hub” with little energy of its own. Both countries are democracies with one party holding virtually all the reins of power. They are, one might say, states of contradictions.

Japan and Turkey’s contemporary strategic decisions are informed not only by hard power (i.e. economic and military means), but also by soft power potential that flows from their imperial legacies and inherited perceptions of self. Imperial memories can serve as both a constraint and as an opportunity for Japanese and Turkish grand strategy. These successor states’ historic place between East and West, Modern and Tradition, has often led to various “identity crises” in both countries. If studied in

541 As further evidence of this Ibrahim Kalin, the prime minister’s chief foreign policy advisor argued that “Turkey’s post-modernity lies in the Ottoman Empire,” further bolstering the importance of the Ottoman legacy in the current government’s strategic thinking. Ibrahim Kalin, Interview with Author, October 16, 2009.
isolation from their imperial pasts, contemporary Japan and Turkey’s culture, values, and institutions seem to offer few clues to contemporary policy. However, by including imperial memories and legacies into discussions about strategic culture and decision-making, scholars of international politics and policymakers can better understand Japan and Turkey’s historic and contemporary geopolitical place in—and its role in shaping—current Japanese and Turkish domestic and foreign policy.

On a practical policy level, this dissertation has highlighted the important instances in Japanese and Turkish history in which particular types of imperial memories and ideas about their pasts have been fostered by leaders to further their own agendas and champion changes. However, as noted, the process of shaping imperial memories is greater than any individual leader or institution and has typically led to unintended consequences as illustrated by examples offered throughout the dissertation. As suggested, the relationship between imperial memories, political leaders, and societies was seen to be an iterative one. In other words, while a particular leader may seek to instrumentally use a particular type of memory to generate support within the population for a specific policy direction, this memory can in turn constrain and trap the leader into a course of action that was unintended. While history can be selectively crafted through state institutions and education, memories of this history are not the exclusive purview of the state and can often be influenced in democratic marketplaces by a series of entrepreneurial actors. Therefore, as seen through the evolution of Japanese and Turkish democratizations, the state and its preferred institutions lose their exclusive ability to control the narrative of its past. In turn, leaders have an incentive to draw memories from the society and not the other way around.
These insights are not new and draw from well-established literature in the discipline alluded to in previous chapters, but are also critical for bringing area-studies scholarship into an interdisciplinary conversation on successor states. Japan and Turkey’s “rediscovery” of their imperial past and space has had a profound impact on the domestic discussions about Japanese and Turkish self-perceptions and international involvement. These discussions have resonated far beyond national borders and given the growing importance of non-Western players in international relations, further research on imperial successor states will become increasingly important. The domestic political ramification of the general trend observed of increased glorificationist narratives in both countries has been rising levels of revisionist right-wing hyper nationalism, which in turn affects international relations between former colonies and metropolises. Therefore, paying close attention to the ways in which imperial memories have been shaped and used by ruling elites becomes an even more urgent task for scholars as well as policymakers. This dissertation does not resolve the contradictions inherent in modern Japan or Turkey, nor is that the intention. Rather the aim throughout has been to reintroduce some needed complexity to the simplified discussions currently circulating about Japan and Turkey. All such models, being abstractions, are incomplete, as is this dissertation. But the aim here is a contribution, a step, toward an improved appreciation for the complexity and contradictions, in this case, in the realm of neighborhood relations. As can be seen from this dissertation’s component parts, these complexities and contradictions are part of what makes contemporary Japan and Turkey what they are today: countries whose memories and identities are unresolved. For their citizens, this is the focus of an ongoing struggle.
For those who study these countries, it is a challenge to utilize models that are less rigid and more innovative.

This dissertation has only scratched the surface of the potential area of research that exists for imperial successor states and the rich, contextual analysis that can be explored through comparing other cases. Rather than being a definitive work or even conclusive study, this dissertation is an introduction or starting point for research on imperial memories and the various ways they can be utilized. As a concept of imperial memories will remain grounded in the particular cases and contexts of the nations researched, but as a framework they serve as a useful and important organizing set of principles through which to understand successor states.
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Direct Attribution

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Ahmet Davutoğlu, Turkish Foreign Minister, August 5th, 2009 and August 18th, 2009
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Egeman Bagis, Turkish Minister for European Affairs, October 22, 2009 and May 15, 2010
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**Indirect Attribution**

Anatolian Civilizations Museum curator and guides, August, 2008

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