

## Introduction to Fethullah Gulen –

Please read the supplemental article by Steven Elwert.

As you learn more about Mr. Gulen and his organization network you will understand that Mr. Gulen is not a “terrorist”, as some bloggers have labeled him. His approach is quite the opposite and he may indeed be truly seeking to “modernize Islam” and advance his idealized vision of it through education and cultural means. That said, as a sincere and good Muslim is compelled to do, his objective is to advance Islam, similar to the Muslim Brotherhood’s declared “culture jihad” outline. [1] Islam thinks “generationally”. It is very patient. It also knows how to exploit weaknesses such as our open, tolerant, and pluralistic society. While Mr. Gulen’s exercise of his faith may be considered by the West as a “moderate Islam”, perhaps Turkey’s President Erdogan put it best, “These descriptions are very ugly, it is offensive and an insult to our religion. There is no moderate or immoderate Islam. Islam is Islam and that’s it!”

(Frankly, of perhaps greater concern should be that Mr. Gulen’s successor, whomever he may be, will have the benefit of Mr. Gulen’s propagated reputation as ‘harmless educator’ and the already in place network system. Gulen is 72 and is reported to have come the US for health related issues.)

## Theology

Fethullah Gulen, along with many of the Turks operating in America, is a Sufi Muslim. *Sufism* is an Order of Islam that, while not completely unorthodox, is a “mystic” experiential type sect, that is not much accepted by either orthodox Sunni or Shia scholars.[2] (Even so, most if not all of the Islamic Schools of thought have some members who practice Sufism.)

Within the Sunni order of Islam are 4 basic schools of thought, and several in the Shia order. Sufism is quite a different order, being more mystical and independent it is more of an experiential nature where the others are quite legalistic. Perhaps for comparison we could say something like Pentecostal in relation to Christianity. While mostly inside the realm of orthodoxy, practitioners may experience a broad variety of application and worship style, sometimes leaving those more grounded to traditional orthodoxy questioning the legitimacy of those involved. Sufism also tends toward a quest for higher learning and pursuing the deity through knowledge. Many Sufi’s profess seeking a “relationship” with Allah and that is definitely out of the realm of orthodoxy. Allah of Islam is transcendent and would never condescend to a relational intimacy with mankind. This is Islam’s greatest problem with Christian theology.[3]

Most Arabs are Sunni. Historically speaking, Turks and Arabs don’t much like each other (think Ottoman Empire-Ruled Arabs for 400 yrs.) even though both can be Sunni Muslim.

## Muslim Brotherhood Connections

There does not appear to be a *direct* connection between CAIR or other MB org’s and the Turks in the United States.

MB and the Turks generally differ in methodology, sometimes crossing over in cultural and political tactics, but the ultimate objective is enlightenment of all to “the right path” (Sharia). This is key to understanding what the potential threat may be and where it may come from. While CAIR may have known terrorist ties and attract/encourage jihad of a more violent nature, the Turks are more suave and while perhaps coy when pressed on things of a sensitive nature, nonetheless quite amiable. They have not been linked to any terrorist activities in the US to date and prefer to further their agenda by education and “relationship building” with American elected officials and civil servants.

However, it does appear on a global scale that there are relations and alliances being formed between groups like Muslim Brotherhood and the Turkish Government [4], involving some Saudi financing as well, in order to attain the ultimate goal, re-establishment of the Caliphate.

(Muslim American Society (MAS), a MB affiliate, was operating the Tarek ibn Zayad Academy (TiZA), a charter school in Minnesota, which was sued by ACLU as a result of federal investigation for using public funds to blatantly teach religion in a public school.

## Brief Tutorial of Sharia Application

With Islam comes Sharia ("the right path"). It cannot exist without Sharia, and it cannot co-exist with other religions[5], although it will cohabitate until it gains the advantage. The fundamentals of Islam do not allow for separation of Islam from Sharia. Since Quran is Allah's words as revealed to Muhammad, and Quran makes up the founding authoritative legal framework of Sharia, a separation of Allah's words from Allah's laws is impossible. The Quran, which contains Allah's Law, was given for all people for all time, and unless specifically stated otherwise, it is decreed for all [6] thus it is for the benefit of Mankind that "the right path" has been given. (*Sunna* and *Sira* found in *Hadith* make up the balance of Sharia, along with commentary by Islamic Scholars)

## Turkish Politics and Kansas ties

The Turkish Friendship Network Resolution (6013) offered on Mar 7, 2012 stated many wonderful things about how Turkey shared the United States interests in "cherishing the universal values of freedom, democracy and human rights...and has demonstrated...tolerance of others in the secular and religious venues...". These statements are misleading if not blatantly false. Turkey has faced a number of issues which has kept it out of the European Union, not the least of which is human rights issues, including freedom of religion, and freedom of speech. Furthermore, Turkish journalists have been jailed for speaking out against the current government, which has become increasingly "Islamized" in recent years.[7]

The resolution began by speaking of Turkey as a "secular...republic", which, while for the previous 70-80 years it was indeed a secular government, balanced by a secular military which enforced that secularist state, in 2002 an Islamist sympathizing party known as AKP (Justice and Development Party) gained a majority of seats in Parliament, and still holds the majority as well as the Presidency and Prime Ministry.

(A modified version of 6013 (6016) was offered in which the disputed language was omitted, but was never brought to the floor.)

On Feb. 22, 2010, 49 Turkish Military Officers were arrested, pre-empting military action that had historically kept the government of Turkey balanced in opposition to Islamists, sending a new message that this government will not tolerate opposition from civilian or military dissidents. See this article in Foreign Policy Magazine by *Sonar Cagaptay*. [8]

The Constitution of The Republic of Turkey may be secular in letter but the government itself is no longer secular in practice.[9] Researcher Bingul Durbas, PhD researcher for the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, says that "honor killings" in Turkey have risen 14 fold since 2002 in this interview.[10]

The article by Steven Elwart (The Gulen Movement) gives a good summary of Gulen's activities in the US. Gulen groups in America such as Raindrop House, have strong ties to AKP politicians in Turkey, and most if not all those Parliament members attending the Turkic-(your state) Receptions held in many American cities belong to AKP (Justice and Development Party-a decidedly Islamist majority party in Turkey's government).

## Charter Schools

While a caliphate and the sharia may well be the impetus of the Turkish Movement, the key method of penetration at present is charter schools. Twenty-six states now host Turkish charters. Texas is home to 43 and most of those are run by Harmony Public Schools, which in turn is under the umbrella of the

Cosmos Foundation based in Pune (India). (It should be noted that not all Charter Schools are Islamic or even Turkish run. According to the TCSA website Texas has 390 charters which makes only 11% of those run by Harmony. Still, they account for about 18% of the students enrolled in Texas Charters.) There are currently more than 130 such charter schools around the United States (2 in Kansas City, MO) and according to a NY Times article, the contracts for building them mount into the scores of millions for contractors, many with roots in Turkey and subsidiary offices in the US. [11] Several of these schools are currently under Federal Investigation for financial irregularities. While funded by taxpayers, there are numerous cases of mishandling of funds. [12]

The following Gulen quote is excerpted from an article by Guy Rodgers, ACT! For America:

*"What makes Gulen particularly dangerous is his strategic and tactical means to achieving this goal. He oversees a worldwide network of businesses, schools, foundations and media outlets, with an estimated budget of 25 billion dollars. **Here's what Gulen had to say in a sermon in 1999 aired on Turkish television:***

***You must move in the arteries of the system without anyone noticing your existence until you reach all the power centers ... until the conditions are ripe, they [the followers] must continue like this. If they do something prematurely, the world will crush our heads, and Muslims will suffer everywhere, like in the tragedies in Algeria, like in 1982 [in] Syria ... like in the yearly disasters and tragedies in Egypt. The time is not yet right. You must wait for the time when you are complete and conditions are ripe, until we can shoulder the entire world and carry it ... You must wait until such time as you have gotten all the state power, until you have brought to your side all the power of the constitutional institutions in Turkey ... Until that time, any step taken would be too early—like breaking an egg without waiting the full forty days for it to hatch. It would be like killing the chick inside. The work to be done is [in] confronting the world. Now, I have expressed my feelings and thoughts to you all—in confidence ... trusting your loyalty and secrecy. I know that when you leave here—[just] as you discard your empty juice boxes, you must discard the thoughts and the feelings that I expressed here.*** [Fethullah Gulen]

*Simply put, he is brilliantly and patiently employing taqiyya [Islamic ordained tactic of deception] on a global scale, because this strategic approach is not confined to Turkey."*

There are two more articles on "Middle East Forum" that are required reading on this matter:

1. <http://www.meforum.org/2045/fethullah-gulens-grand-ambition> Rachel Krispen gives excellent background on Gulen.
2. <http://www.meforum.org/2628/islamist-gulen-movement-charter-schools> Author Stephen Schwartz, wrote "Two Faces of Islam" in 2002 which was basically an indictment of "Wahabbism" for all of Islam's ills, giving a pass to everyone else. The Turks were handing this book out to Kansas Legislators at the Turkic-Kansas reception. That is fascinating in light of Schwartz's recent article here. The Turkish Delegation, representatives of TCAE or Harmony Schools will inevitably be approaching Kansas about Charter Schools, if not already. Gulen has over 130 in the US, and 1,000 including universities and madrassas around the world.

The Fethullah Gulen Community includes many groups including: EbruTV, Atlas Foundation, Gulen Institute, Institute for Interfaith Dialog, Turquoise Council of Americans and Eurasians, Raindrop Turkish House. If you go to their websites you will find links to all these groups and more.

#### Sources and References:

- [1] *Government Exhibit* 003-0085/3:04-CR-240-G, United States v. Holy Land Foundation, et al.; An Explanatory Memorandum On the General Strategic Goal for the Group In North America, 5/22/1991
- [2] [http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/subdivisions/sufism\\_1.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/subdivisions/sufism_1.shtml)
- [3] *Al-Quran* 17:111-18:4, Translated by Dawood
- [4] *MB Chairman and Delegation visit Erdogan* <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=29034>
- [5] *Al-Quran* 8:38-40; 9:29, Dawood

- [6] True Islam, Useful hints for reading Quran, Rule Three: Universal Address - [http://www.quran-islam.org/main\\_topics/useful\\_hints\\_\(P1208\).html](http://www.quran-islam.org/main_topics/useful_hints_(P1208).html)
- [7] <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/04/world/europe/04turkey.html>
- [8] [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/02/25/whats\\_really\\_behind\\_turkeys\\_coup\\_arrests](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/02/25/whats_really_behind_turkeys_coup_arrests)
- [9] <http://tribune.com.pk/story/196723/turkey-back-in-the-muslim-world>
- [10] <http://www.aina.org/news/20110710160625.htm>
- [11] [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/07/education/07charter.html?\\_r=2&pagewanted=all](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/07/education/07charter.html?_r=2&pagewanted=all)
- [12] [http://articles.philly.com/2011-03-20/news/29148147\\_1\\_gulen-schools-gulen-followers-charter-schools](http://articles.philly.com/2011-03-20/news/29148147_1_gulen-schools-gulen-followers-charter-schools)

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**More information for Turkish sourced news and commentary** as well as some information pulled off Mr. Gulen's own website.

**From Fethullah Gulen website:**

Purposes of Education in the Light of Fethullah Gulen's Teachings

<http://www.fethullahgulen.org/conference-papers/323-gulen-conference-in-indonesia/3721-purposes-of-education-in-the-light-of-fethullah-gulens-teachings>

[Excerpt in blockquotes:]

"Conclusion

To sum up we have enough arguments to say that Fethullah Gulen promotes "**educational Islamism**" as opposed to "political Islamism" (Park: 5). Those who want to reform the world must first reform themselves. In order to bring others to the path of travelling to a better world, they must purify their inner worlds of hatred, rancour, and jealousy, and adorn their outer worlds with all kinds of virtues. Those who are far removed from self-control and self-discipline, who have failed to refine their feelings, may seem attractive and insightful at first. However, they will not be able to inspire others in any permanent way, and the sentiments they arose will soon disappear. **Goodness, beauty, truthfulness, and being virtuous** are the essence of the world and humanity. Whatever happens, the world will one day find this essence. No one can prevent this (Gulen 2000). **This service is our right; conveying it to others is our responsibility** (Gulen 2004: 201)."

**[Re: Conclusion]**- One must keep in mind that Gulen's world view is that Islam is the way to bring about "goodness, beauty, truthfulness, and...virtue..." and therefore as an 'enlightened' Muslim it is his "responsibility" to bring it to the world.]

<http://www.thememriblog.org/turkey> Turkish Politics from perspective of Middle East Media Research Institute

[http://www.thememriblog.org/turkey/blog\\_personal/en/4687.htm](http://www.thememriblog.org/turkey/blog_personal/en/4687.htm) Erdogan's designs on the Caliphate.

<http://rastibini.blogspot.com/2008/07/thought-that-is-silenced-is-always.html> Kurdish blog covering Turkish politics and current events. Interesting perspective from a people who have felt the dominance of Turks for 500 years.