

Abdullah Gül: The New Ataturk

Last week we watched the historical swearing-in of Abdullah Gül as the 11th president of Turkish Republic, who received 339 votes of the 448 cast. The Parliament was tranquil and excitement levels were low due to the fact that Gül's election was certain. In its backdrop we also witnessed the eerie absence of the crafty brasses of the secular (read hysterical) military.

Wow....someone is scared stiff of the flimsy silk scarf on Turkey's First Lady's proud head! And guess who and all are scared of that 2ft-by-2ft innocent piece of cloth? The very armed men in whose hands are entrusted the lives of an estimated 71, 158, 647 Turkish men and women! What baffles one more than anything is this: Are these army morons in Turkey scared of the remotest possibility of Islamization of Turkey? Or, are they scared of the very fabric of the faith, called Islam, which is finding rejuvenating fertile grounds in the hearts of the Turks 80 years apart from the iron-hands of the secular Ataturk? In either case, the behavior is pathetic. Since when, being a faithful Christian in Germany or a devout Jew in Israel calls for trepidation? Interestingly, I searched for the word 'Islam' in Mr. Gül's speech to the Turkish parliament and couldn't find it mentioned even once! Boy, so much for the Big Boys' cold feet.

It is one thing to ban prayers and the call for prayers in the army barracks but drumming up the demonizing tactics against the faith of their forefathers is a far-fetched fantasy. You can trample the glory of your past at the doorstep of the much sought-after entry in the folds of European Union, but attempting unashamedly to obliterate that glory altogether is something only Turkish Army would dream of.

Ironically, thousands of miles away from once-a-proud iconic Islamic State, we felt 'more' Muslim in the very heartland of America than anyone in Turkey ever could!

Mr. Gül's (or for that matter AKP's) troubles are not over yet. More than the Turkish Army, the EU will be keeping a close eye on every move of his and will try to find faults in everything he says or does, as if his personality alone will hereafter be pivotal to Turkey's entry into European Union. He could, if he so chooses could make their task simple. All he has to do is to ask the First Lady to take away her head scarf.

But if one knows this mustached 'George Clooney' of Turkey well, he would rather give his own head than his dear wife's head cover!