



26.10.07
FRIDAY

The Fethullah Gülen Movement as a Transnational Phenomenon

by Bill Park

Panel:
The Gülen Movement in Redefining Turkey and Anatolian Muslimness

Venue:
Lecture Theatre,
Brunei Gallery, SOAS

26.10.07 Panels	Parallel Session 1	Parallel Session 2
9:30-11:30	Presentation 03	
13:00-15:00		
15:10-17:00		

This paper investigates the apparent paradox thrown up by the distinctively Turkish roots and contents of Fethullah Gülen's philosophy on the one hand, and the movement's educational activities beyond Turkey and its promotion of interfaith dialogue on the other. It considers how far the movement has been able to transcend its 'Turkishness'. In the Turkic world, primarily in Central Asia and Azerbaijan, the paper offers an assessment of the extent to which the movement generates an emulative or transformational response, perhaps contributing to the emergence of a non-territorial 'Turkic' nation or identity. In that context, the paper considers the degree to which the movement can be seen as 'pan-Turkic' in terms of its aspirations and effects. Turning to its activities in the non-Turkic world, the paper tries to establish whether the movement should be regarded as a primarily Turkish or primarily Muslim agency, and what kind of impact this creates in host countries. In chiefly Islamic host countries, to what degree is the movement engaged, intentionally or otherwise, in a competition with more radical interpretations of Islam? Or is the movement's approach to Islam rooted too exclusively in a Turkish context? This leads into a consideration of whether the movement is an agency for a 'Turkish model' approach to blending Islam with modernity and democratisation, and whether this suggests either competition or tacit alliance with the Turkish state in this regard. Finally, with respect to interfaith dialogue, is the movement's contribution seen as narrowly Turkish in its applicability, or as resonating in and of utility to the wider Muslim world?

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