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Coup Regime in Turkey May Form New Political Party

The military regime in Turkey continues to be concerned over the political vacuum that has resulted from the arrest and discrediting of leaders of the former regime. If national elections are held within the year, it is doubtful that the former ruling Democratic party could present an opposition force of any significance.

The controlling National Unity Committee (NUC) is giving priority attention to the problem of producing a viable opposition party. Most members of the committee agree that the Republican People's party (RPP) of Ismet Inonu must not be allowed to establish a one-party dictatorship, and RPP leaders also regard an opposition party as an essential ingredient of government.

Although they profess "extreme reluctance," some members of the NUC apparently believe they may have to form a new party headed by NUC leaders in order to assure the existence of a two-party system. NUC members may also be offered temporary or permanent status in the new Turkish Senate, according to reports regarding the new constitution. While the NUC would thereby be guaranteed continuing influence in the government, most NUC members are said to view such a proposal with considerable misgiving.

The date for national elections remains undetermined, but most NUC members favor the first anniversary of the coup--27 May 1961. Meanwhile, interim chief of state General Gursel, other NUC members, teachers, students, and government officials have been touring the eastern provinces explaining the aims of the new regime.

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