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### October 31, 2013: Hypocrisy over Turkey

Bruce Ledewitz

*Duquesne University*, ledewitz@duq.edu

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Title: Hypocrisy over Turkey

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10/31/2013--There was a story in the Post-Gazette on Sunday, October 27, 2013, about the 90th anniversary celebration of the founding of the modern state of Turkey. There was a great deal of trepidation toward the end of the story about the trend toward Islamification by the religious party currently in power there. This issue has come up before and it is relevant to the consideration of the situation in Egypt as well. There are committed Muslims who are willing to give democracy a chance. But, naturally, when they do achieve power, they seek to enact their favored policies into law. In the case of Islamic parties, those favored policies include things like reduction or elimination of sales of alcohol. It is hard to understand why liberals in America feel free to criticize such governments or even call for their overthrow. After all is not the Democratic route precisely what we all hope Islam will take? It would be understandable if these governments were being criticized for denying rights to women or for canceling elections. Then they would no longer be democratically legitimate governments. But, at least in the case of Turkey, that is not really true. The government has not been welcoming to street protests, but it has not clamped down on free speech. Nor are our future elections in any danger. There is a constitutional right to religious liberty and to be free of religion. But there is no fundamental human right to drink liquor. If the government in Turkey bans alcohol, it may be many things, but it is not antidemocratic.