Turkish Religious Movements in the Caucasus and Central Asia

with

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In the 1990s-2000s, different Islamic movements had the opportunity to develop and spread their ideas throughout the former Soviet Union. They contributed drastically to the religious revival in both Caucasus and Central Asia. Among them, those coming from Turkey were more influential, especially the Nurcu movement of Fethullah Gülen, which gathers the disciples of Sait Nursi (1876-1960), but also other brotherhoods with pan-Turkish sensibilities. Moreover, the Turkish state was the first to develop significant educational cooperation with the new post-Soviet republics. Even though it was secular, it paradoxically supported these new religious networks and used them to its advantage. The core of this presentation analyzes the extent to which these different Turkish movements have contributed to the formation of new Islamic elites in Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan, and how the new Turkish model may influence Azerbaijan and Central Asia.

Bayram Balci is a visiting fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and is a Senior Researcher at the CERI Science Po in Paris, France. His research focuses on Turkey and Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. He is the founding member of The European Journal of Turkish Studies and recently co-edited *China and India in Central Asia: A New “Great Game”?*.

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5:30-7:00 pm
1957 E Street NW, Room 505
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