



Getting to ZERO
Turkey, Its Neighbors and the West

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Preface

Turkey is a key ally to both the United States and Europe. A long-standing member of NATO and a candidate for membership in the European Union, Turkey has strong ties to the West and has long served as a bridge to the East in a volatile, yet strategic, region. Today, Turkey is undergoing a transformation internally in terms of its politics, economics, and identity. A new era of regional diplomacy means the nation is now engaged in its own neighborhood more deeply than at any time since the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923. This new engagement has benefits for the West, but has also raised concerns about the possibility of Turkey drifting farther to the East in its ideology and policies. In the words of Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, the current Turkish foreign policy doctrine aims at pursuing “zero problems with neighbors.” But can Turkish foreign policy achieve such a goal, in relations with both its neighbors and its transatlantic allies? Are Turkish foreign policy problems “getting to zero”?

The Transatlantic Academy Fellows have studied this transformation and its implications for the international community. I am pleased to present their key findings here in *Getting to Zero: Turkey, Its Neighbors and the West*, the 2010 Report of the Transatlantic Academy Fellows.

The Academy serves as a forum for select scholars in various academic and policy disciplines on both sides of the Atlantic. Working from a geographically diverse and interdisciplinary perspective, the Academy Fellows strive to make relevant contributions to policy debates facing the transatlantic community through research, publication, and the presentation of new ideas.

This report represents the collective efforts of the second group of Academy Fellows. They follow on the work of the first group, which focused on immigration policy, and which published a report titled, *No Shortcuts: Selective Migration and Integration*. The report is built on contributions from the Bosch Fellows, who were in residence at the Academy and provided a practitioner’s perspective. Through collaboration in an intensive research environment, the Fellows presented and critiqued their own work, as well as that of their

colleagues. They interacted with a wide array of experts and policy makers to conduct research for this report. In addition to these findings, they have coauthored a book, tentatively titled *Turkish Foreign Policy in Transition*, to be published in 2011.

The Academy would like to acknowledge the support of its donors in making this study and the broader Academy possible. Their support enabled the Fellows to spend ten months in Washington, DC, collaborating on this theme, while taking study trips to the Middle East, the Black Sea region, and Turkey. It also made possible their participation in numerous workshops and discussions with academics, policy analysts, business people, journalists, and government officials in Turkey and its surrounding region, as well as throughout North America and Europe. We hope these findings represent just the beginning of the dialogue, and ultimately lead to a series of studies, conferences and other meaningful contributions to the transatlantic learning community.

Sincerely,



Dr. Stephen F. Szabo, Executive Director
The Transatlantic Academy
Washington, DC



It is time to move **beyond** the debate
over "Who Lost Turkey?"

What is at Stake? Key Questions and Policy Issues

Ask an American or European policymaker to name the most challenging issues facing the transatlantic community today and you are likely to hear: stopping the proliferation of nuclear weapons; containing conflict in the Middle East; dealing with Russia; ensuring a stable energy supply; and defining the nature of the European Union (EU) and its relationship with the United States. At the center of all of these, in some cases literally, stands Turkey.

There once was a time when the United States and the European Union could take Turkey – a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member since 1952 and a European Union aspirant since 1963 – for granted. There was also a time when foreign policy was the exclusive domain of Turkish diplomats and the military, who ensured Ankara’s participation in regional and global struggles that were defined, primarily, in Europe and the U.S.. That time has passed.

The recent activism and independence of Turkish foreign policy has caused political repercussions throughout Europe, the United States, and in Turkey’s immediate neighborhood. In the West, there are fears that Turkey is being “lost,” that it is becoming more oriented toward Russia or the Middle East, and that it is drifting away from secularism and toward Islamism. At the very least, Turkey is seen as a more autonomous actor pursuing greater regional and global influence, and a less reliable partner of the West. Indeed, Turkish foreign policy, particularly under the influence of current Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu, conceptualizes Turkey as a central country in the midst of Afro-Eurasia, one that attempts to pursue “strategic depth” and “zero problems” with its neighbors. It does so by fostering bilateral and multilateral ties, by using the country’s Ottoman heritage as a foreign policy asset, and by exerting “soft power” in its region. Actions in support of these policy goals include Turkey’s engagement of states and movements shunned by the West, such as Iran, Syria, and Hamas. More broadly, by contributing to the integration of its immediate neighborhood into the global environment through trade and movement of people, Turkey’s democracy and liberal market economy are having a demonstrative spill over effect on its neighbors, however modest. At the global level, as a nonpermanent member of the United Nations Security Council, a G-20 founding member, and current

holder of the post of Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Turkey is in a position to make a difference in a way unprecedented in its Republican history.

What are the consequences of Turkey’s increased foreign policy activism and independence? Turkey has the economic and political potential to be a trans-regional actor that promotes regional peace, prosperity, and stability or an inward-focused regional state, whose domestic turbulence exacerbates problems abroad. Which course it follows depends on changes in Turkey’s neighborhood, and on the outcome of critical domestic political struggles. Turkish democracy in fact is not consolidated. EU-driven reforms, such as greater freedom of expression, have changed the political landscape within Turkey dramatically over the last decade, but the transformation toward liberal democracy is far from complete. Turkey’s foreign policy course will also be shaped by the evolution of its relations with its long-time allies in the West: the European Union and the United States. Turkey’s new regional activism has made it a potentially powerful force for peace and regional development. But to be successful, Turkey’s drive for “zero problems with its neighbors” requires active support from the EU and the United States. It is time to move beyond the debate over “Who Lost Turkey?” and the tendency to see Turkey as acting out a role in a play written elsewhere. It is now time to respond constructively to Turkey’s pursuit of its own foreign policy goals and orientation by recognizing how those goals may align with transatlantic policy objectives, even if they come from a different perspective.

To this end, this report addresses Turkey’s changing role in its immediate neighborhood, including the Black Sea region to Turkey’s north and the Middle East to its south, in a variety of policy areas. These topics include energy policy, conflict resolution, the promotion of democracy, trade and migration. It discusses the underlying causes of Turkey’s current foreign policy, including changes in its immediate neighborhood, as well as changes within Turkey itself.

Turkey's Evolving Global and Regional Role

Geopolitical Changes in the North and South

For Turkey, the end of the Cold War produced dramatic changes in its neighborhood. In the following two decades, global political and strategic developments redrew the geopolitical landscape surrounding Turkey, and thus, its regional foreign policy. In the Middle East, the 1990-91 Gulf war exacerbated Turkey's Kurdish dilemma while complicating relations with Iraq, Syria, and Iran. The conflict also generated considerable aversion within Turkey to foreign military intervention in the region. Subsequently, a worsening of the Arab-Israeli conflict began to change the tenor of Turkey's rhetoric in the Middle East. The Oslo process had provided the space and cover for a bilateral Turkish-Israeli security relationship in the 1990s. Since the beginning of the millennium, however, the deterioration of Israeli-Palestinian relations has provoked Turkey's outspoken criticism of Israel. Turkish domestic policy aside, one can reasonably argue that had Israeli-Palestinian tensions eased, instead of growing more contentious, Turkey's vocal condemnation of Israel, which has caused shock waves in the West, would never have found a voice in Ankara.

Drastic political transformations also occurred to Turkey's north and west. The Balkans were shaken in the 1990s by the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the violence that ensued. Alongside Turkey, the Black Sea area now includes two additional NATO members – Romania and Bulgaria – which are also members of the EU. While Turkey is itself currently a candidate member and engaged in prolonged negotiations with the EU, none of the other Black Sea littoral or Caucasus countries have a near-term prospect for membership, though several are part of the European Neighbourhood Policy and Eastern Partnership initiatives. Most, including Russia, are post-Soviet in domestic and international behavior and are subject to pressure from Moscow to keep Western involvement limited. In 2008 such pressure culminated in the invasion and dismemberment of Georgia, a use of force that neither the United States, EU nor Turkey were in a position to prevent. Nearby, Turkey finds itself involved in one of the region's more intractable “frozen conflicts,” between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Armenian-occupied region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

To the north and south, progress on democratization in Turkey's neighborhood has been mixed. Bulgaria and Romania, two former communist dictatorships, have been completely transformed into democracies, even if both still face challenges in fully implementing the EU *acquis communautaire*. The “color revolutions” brought hope of reform and democratization in Ukraine and Georgia. Yet both countries are still struggling to consolidate their democracies. The situation in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Russia is far less promising. Early hopes of reform have faded, and have yielded to varying degrees of authoritarianism. Perhaps most troubling, the Russian leadership has been affirming an alternative model of “sovereign democracy,” characterized by an uneasy mix of nominal democracy and *de facto* authoritarianism. In Iran, the mood of reform and greater liberalization spurred during the presidency of Mohammed Khatami has given way to one of rigidity and deep political instability under President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad. The initial interest in political reform in the Arab world after 9/11 quickly waned, along with American and European policies toward it. Political chaos and instability in Iraq played an important role in this setback. This mixed bag of democratization in the region carries with it important challenges for both Turkey and its transatlantic allies.

Since the 1990s, the West's push to diversify its energy supply sources from Russia and the Middle East, the Black Sea, Caucasus, and Caspian regions has featured prominently in global energy politics. In the 1990s, this imperative generated the political momentum underpinning the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline. Over the last decade, Europe's dependence on Russia for natural gas and the uncertainties of the Russian-Ukrainian relationship have induced the EU and the United States to explore alternative, i.e., non-Russian, routes for the transport of Caspian gas. At the same time, Russia is eager to diversify its supply routes to foreign markets, and sees the Black Sea as its best chance to do so.

TABLE

1

GDP for Turkey and Its Neighborhood in 2008

All data for 2008	GDP per Capita in PPP-\$	GDP per Capita as % of total avg.
 Greece	28470	244
 Cyprus	24040	206
 Russian Federation	15630	134
 Turkey	13770	118
 Romania	13500	116
 Bulgaria	11950	102
 Iran, Islamic Rep.	10840	93
 Azerbaijan	7770	66
 Ukraine	7210	62
 Armenia	6310	54
 Georgia	4850	42
 Syrian Arab Republic	4350	37
 Moldova	3210	27
 Iraq
Average	11685	100
 Euro area	33228	284
 United States	46970	402
All data for 2008	GDP in billion \$	GDP USA = 100
 Russia	1608	11.3
 Turkey	794	5.6
 Iran	385	2.7
 Greece	357	2.5
 Romania	200	1.4
 Ukraine	180	1.3
 Syria	55	0.4
 Bulgaria	50	0.4
 Azerbaijan	46	0.3
 Cyprus	21	0.1
 Georgia	13	0.1
 Armenia	12	0.1
 Moldova	6	0.0
 Iraq
Sum	3727	26.2
 US	14204	100
 Euro Area	13565	96

Source: World Bank, Quick Query Data Source.
(<http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/DDPQQ/member.do?method=getMembers&userid=1&queryId=135>)

Economic Transformation and Human Mobility in Turkey's Neighborhood

In Turkey's neighborhood, the end of the Cold War coincided with the adoption of market economies and intensified globalization. The development of new telecommunication and information technologies, along with faster modes of transportation, has led to the increased flow of trade, capital and people across borders. Consequently Turkey's external economic environment has changed significantly.

To the north, the collapse of the Soviet Union led to the emergence of new sovereign states entangled in transitioning from communist to market-oriented economies. For Turkey, these countries represent important export markets, as well as a source of energy and cheap labor – either as migrants to Turkey or as workers for foreign-based Turkish plants in the former Soviet countries. To the west, the EU has grown geographically while extending its economic infrastructure and reach; in 1995 Turkey gained access to the EU market by signing a Customs Union Agreement. Finally, the Middle East has become more important as a supplier of energy to Turkey, the EU, and beyond. Unparalleled wealth from increased energy exports has transformed the region into a growing market for Turkish exports and investment.

Turkey's neighborhood is thus a rapidly growing economic marketplace.¹ The aggregated GDP of Turkey and its 13 immediate neighbors has increased from less than 10 percent of U.S. GDP in 2000 to more than 26 percent in 2008. Turkey itself has grown by a staggering amount, from roughly 2 percent of U.S. GDP in 1970 to 5.6 percent by 2008. It is clear that Turkey is a regional economic power in its immediate neighborhood; its GDP amounts to about one fifth of the entire region's. Turkey's GDP is half as big as Russia's, and twice that of Iran or Greece (see Table 1).

An important but less publicized consequence of this economic change in Turkey's neighborhood can be seen in new types of migratory flows in the region. Turkey has always been both a country of emigration – with large numbers of Turkish citizens emigrating to Western Europe to work, follow family, or seek asylum – as well as immigration – with more than 1.6 million migrants coming to Turkey (mostly from the Balkans) between 1923 and the mid-1990s. However, in the last decade the scale and shape of movements of populations between Turkey and its neighborhood has transformed significantly.

TABLE 2

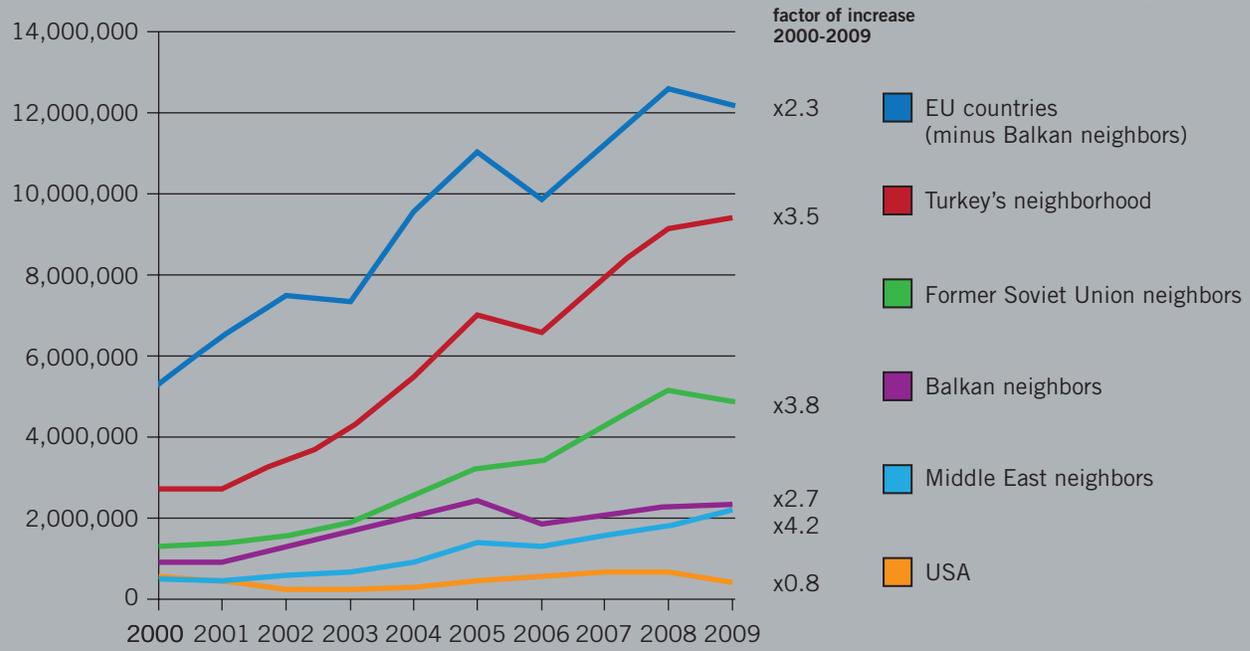
Turkish Migrants Abroad in 1985, 1995, 2005 and 2008

	1985		1995		2005		2008	
	# (x 1000)	%	# (x 1000)	%	# (x 1000)	%	#(x1000)	%
Austria	75.0	3.1	147.0	4.4	127.0	3.8	120.0	3.5
Belgium	72.5	3.1	79.5	2.4	45.9	1.4	42.3	1.2
France	146.1	6.2	198.9	6.0	208.0	6.3	220.0	6.5
Germany	1400.1	59.3	2049.9	62.0	1912.0	57.9	1890.0	55.9
Netherlands	156.4	6.6	127.0	3.8	160.3	4.9	168.3	4.9
Scandinavian Countries	41.2	1.7	73.0	2.2	51.6	1.6	56.1	1.6
Switzerland	51.0	2.2	79.0	2.4	79.5	2.4	77.5	2.2
Other European Countries	42.0	1.8	87.0	2.6	130.0	3.9	160.7	4.7
Total Europe	1984.6	84.0	2841.3	85.9	2714.3	82.1	2734.9	80.9
The ME Countries	200.0	8.5	127.0	3.8	105.0	3.2	110.7	3.2
Australia	35.0	1.5	45.0	1.4	60.0	1.8	67.1	1.9
CIS Countries	0.0	0.0	50.0	1.4	75.0	2.3	77.3	2.2
Other Countries	140.0	5.9	245.0	7.4	350.0	10.6	390.1	11.5
Total	2359.6	100.0	3308.3	100.0	3304.3	100.0	3380.1	100

Source: Icduygu, Ahmet (2009). SOPEMI Report for Turkey 2008/2009. Istanbul: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Table 20.

Countries of Origin for Entrants to Turkey, 2000-2009²

FIGURE 1



Source: Icduygu, Ahmet (2009). SOPEMI Report for Turkey 2008/2009. Istanbul: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. And data obtained from the Foreigners Department of MOI.

As shown in Table 2, about 3.4 million people with Turkish background live outside Turkey today, an increase of about 1 million people since 1985. While the total has not changed much since the mid-1990s, the geographical distribution has. In the mid-1990s, about 86 percent of Turkish migrants abroad lived in Europe. Today this share has declined to about 80 percent. Turkish citizens have emigrated increasingly to the former Soviet republics or to the Middle East. Flows to these two destinations, however, remain relatively small (2.2 percent and 3.2 percent, respectively, of all Turkish migrants abroad in 2008).

The change in incoming flows has been more dramatic. The number of foreigners arriving in Turkey has more than doubled in recent years, from about 10.4 million in 2000 to 25.6 million in 2009. During this period, more than 182 million foreign nationals entered Turkey, double its current population. A breakdown of foreigners entering Turkey (see Figure 1) shows that most still come from EU member states. However, entries from neighboring countries, especially from the former Soviet republics, has steadily increased. In contrast to Western European entrants coming for visits or tourism, these people often come to Turkey to engage in “suitcase trade,” pursue seasonal labor, or gain employment in private households. Tourism has started to play a greater

role with respect to entries from Russia. With the exception of Iran, the number of entries from the Middle East have been relatively low, but rising steadily.

To these impressive numbers of people entering Turkey temporarily for leisure, business or work, one should add the approximately 250,000 people who enter Turkey each year with the intention of staying longer, be it for education, employment, or retirement.³ There are also a growing number of nationals from the neighborhood who enter Turkey legally but then overstay their visa and work illegally. In addition, Turkey has also become a country of transit migration toward Western Europe. While it is difficult to estimate their true numbers, the Turkish government apprehended approximately 700,000 illegal migrants between 1998 and 2008. Asylum seekers, mainly from Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan, are also entering Turkey: almost 60,000 between 1995 and 2008. These changes in the number, type, direction, and motivation of people entering and exiting Turkey have also had a marked impact on relations with its neighbors.

The Sea Change in Turkey's Policies

The changes in geopolitics, economy, energy, and human mobility in Turkey's neighborhood have presented the country with complex challenges, as well as opportunities. In response, over the last decade Turkey has defined a new foreign policy doctrine. Understanding this doctrine helps put its recent actions, and reactions, in context.

Zero Problems with Neighbors and Strategic Depth: A New Policy Doctrine for a New Era

Turkey's geopolitical rise has coincided with the emergence of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in its domestic politics. Elected in 2002 and reelected in 2007, the AKP government has undertaken a foreign policy driven by the concepts of “zero problems with neighbors” and “strategic depth.” Championed by Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu, the policy advocates repositioning Turkey through multiple alliances while asserting its regional and global influence and independence. It also calls for taking on a larger role in its former Ottoman territories, and prioritizes “dialogue and cooperation” over “coercion and confrontation.”

Davutoğlu and the AKP's foreign policy strategists contend that rather than being peripheral, Turkey is a centrally positioned international player. For them, “Turkey is a country at the epicenter of the Balkans, the Middle East, and the Caucasus, the center of Eurasia in general and is in the middle of the Rimland belt cutting across the Mediterranean to the Pacific.”⁴ Turkey, Davutoğlu contends, “has no chance to be peripheral, it is not a sideline country of the EU, NATO or Asia.”⁵

As part of this new strategy, Ankara has sought good relations or “zero problems” with its neighbors. By embracing previous rivals such as Armenia, Greece, Iran, Iraq, Russia, and Syria, Turkey has replaced the Cold War strategy of regional isolation with an increasingly assertive role of regional leadership. The AKP is highly critical of Turkey's Cold War strategy, dismissing it as a misguided, myopic reluctance to embrace the country's obvious advantages – namely, its rich history and geographical location.

The doctrine's appeal has created some unlikely allies for the AKP. The country's nationalist and secularist factions have embraced the concept of leveraging Turkey's Ottoman past

and strategic geopolitical location, despite a distaste for the AKP's conservative religious roots. The policy approach has also gained favor with business and industry, which are eager to develop close ties with Turkey's neighbors, and the Turkish public at large.

This self-confident approach to foreign policy is also perfectly suited to Prime Minister Erdoğan's personality. His political rhetoric has resonated in Turkey and beyond. He was hailed as the “conqueror of Davos”⁶ after openly criticizing Israel during the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, while his remarks there served as a catalyst to increase his populist appeal both domestically and throughout the Muslim world. Seen in this context, the doctrine of building “strategic depth” has provided a guiding paradigm for Turkey to develop deeper and stronger ties with its neighbors. It also gives explicit form to a more proactive foreign policy agenda, which has been in the making since Turkish Prime Minister and President Turgut Özal and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ismail Cem held office in the 1980s and 1990s.

Turkey is now pursuing a more open foreign policy towards its own diverse and turbulent neighborhood, including the Middle East, the Black Sea, and the Caucasus. It is doing so in a variety of policy areas, ranging from diplomacy to trade, energy, and immigration.

Turkey and the Middle East

The 1990-91 Gulf war ushered in a new era of Turkish activism in the Middle East. In the 21st century, Turkey has remained engaged in the region, but the nature of its role has changed. Far from being the combative antagonist of the 1990s, today Turkey presents itself as a cooperative player intent on pursuing peace and regional integration in the Middle East. Its success in mediating the manifold conflicts of the Middle East is limited. Yet the distinct improvement of relations with its southern neighbors positions Turkey as a constructive actor in the region.

Turkish-Iranian relations have historically been strained by two issues at the heart of Turkey's own security dilemma: political Islam and the Kurdish question. After the fall of the Shah in 1979, Turkey became hypersensitive to what it saw as Iranian attempts to “export” the Islamic revolution to its more secular populace. Turkish-Iranian competition in the

Caucasus, and Iranian accusations against Turkey of inciting separatism amongst its Azeri minority while harboring opponents to the Iranian regime, further exacerbated relations. In the past decade, however, this tension has abated considerably, with deepening energy ties, burgeoning bilateral trade, and intense social interaction between Turkey and Iran. Above all, Turkey and Iran have become security partners; the Kurdish question now represents an area of convergent interests between the two.

Improved Turkish-Iranian relations can elucidate Turkey's position regarding Iran's nuclear potential. Turkey does not feel as threatened as its Western partners by Iran's nuclear program, in the same way that it does not feel imperiled by Israel's nuclear arsenal. But Turkey is concerned about a nuclear arms race in the region, as well as the disastrous potential of a nuclear attack in its back yard. This duality of perspectives helps explain why Turkey advocates for a nuclear-free region, while simultaneously voicing its objections to sanctions against Iran. These would hinder the burgeoning commercial relationship with its neighbor, while doing little to bring about a nuclear-free Middle East.

After a prolonged period of nonengagement, Turkey's relations with Iraq have also improved. Turkey fought alongside the West in the 1990-91 Gulf war, cutting all trade and energy ties with Iraq. It also conducted frequent military incursions into Northern Iraq against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Turkey has long opposed the creation of a Kurdish state in Iraq because of fears that such a development would fuel secessionism in its own Kurdish regions. Its greatest fears almost came to pass in March 2003, when the United States declared war on Iraq. Largely in response to public opposition to the war and the lack of a UN-mandate, the Turkish parliament refused to approve American use of the country's territory to invade Iraq. Turkey's concerns with Iraq's territorial integrity delayed cooperation with post-Saddam Iraq (and Northern Iraq in particular). Turkey accused the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) of complicity with the PKK.

However, since 2007 there has been a marked rapprochement between Turkey and Northern Iraq. Extensive Turkish-U.S. intelligence sharing since late 2007 and the KRG's cooperation in the fight against the PKK have led to the establishment of official ties between Turkey and the KRG. This new era of engagement has also helped create a robust economic and social relationship, including a burgeoning trade environment and rapidly increasing Turkish investment

in Iraq. In September 2009, Turkey and Iraq established a High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council, and signed over 40 bilateral agreements.

Even more dramatic has been the change in Turkey's relations with Syria. Syria had represented Turkey's prototypical hostile neighbor, given its claims to the Turkish province of Hatay (Sanjak of Alexandretta), resentment over Turkey's water policies along the Euphrates, and Syria's backing of the PKK. Deteriorating relations throughout the 1990s culminated in a Turkish military mobilization along the Syrian border in 1998, leading to the expulsion of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan from Syria in October of that year. However, as put by an interlocutor in the region, subsequent conciliation between the two nations showed that "talking Turkish meant both credible threats but also massive engagement thereafter."⁷ This process led to the possibility of improved bilateral relations, which materialized following then Turkish President Necdet Sezer's participation in the funeral of former Syrian President Hafez al-Assad in 2000, as well as the historic visit by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to Turkey in 2004. Joint concerns over Iraq's territorial integrity paired with Turkey's defiance of U.S. and EU efforts to isolate Syria⁸ further fostered relations, and culminated in the signing of a bilateral, visa-free agreement and the formation of a Strategic Cooperation Council in the fall of 2009.

By contrast, Turkish-Israeli relations have deteriorated from active cooperation to a decidedly cooler, arm's-length affiliation. The two were closely aligned in the 1990s, signing a series of bilateral agreements on tourism, education, environment, trade and communications, and above all, security and defense. Turkey's military agreements with Israel were aimed at flexing Turkish muscle vis-à-vis Syria, while also raising collateral concerns throughout the region. In the past decade, Turkish-Israeli cooperation has continued in the fields of intelligence sharing, defense, energy and water.⁹ In November 2007 Shimon Peres became the first Israeli President to address the Turkish parliament. However, with the outbreak of the second intifada in 2000 and the aggravation of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Turkish-Israeli relations began to languish. There have been sharp Turkish condemnations of Israel,¹⁰ and successive diplomatic crises in 2009-10.¹¹ Turkish (and Israeli) diplomacy has scrambled to avoid further deterioration, and it is worth noting that neither has downgraded formal diplomatic relations, as Turkey had in the past. Nonetheless, the Turkish-Israeli relationship, in stark contrast to the unbreakable alliance of the 1990s, has become troubled and volatile.

Consequently, Turkish-Palestinian relations have also changed. Turkey has aided the Palestinian and international legal struggle against Israeli house evictions and demolitions by opening Ottoman archives regarding property certificates. It has supported the report of the UN Human Rights Council headed by Justice Richard Goldstone, which accused Israel (and Hamas) of war crimes in Gaza (and southern Israel). Turkey has also maintained contact with Hamas, recognizing the Hamas government since 2006, after the latter won the elections; the AKP invited Hamas' Damascus-based leader Khaled Meshal to Ankara in February 2006.

While Ankara has failed to trigger meaningful breakthroughs in view of its limited leverage, the transformation of Turkey's role in the Middle East has positioned it to be a mediator in the region, and Turkey's efforts at mediation have been persistent. Its mediation between Israel and Syria dates back to January 2004, even though that process had been held back by the Western isolation of Syria, the 2006 Lebanon war, and the 2007 Israeli bombing of Syria. Between May and December 2008, four rounds of indirect talks took place via Turkish shuttle diplomacy, with both sides saying they achieved greater progress than expected. The crux of those talks came at a dinner between Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan and his Israeli counterpart Ehud Olmert in December 2008, after which the launch of direct talks appeared imminent. Five days later, however, Israel launched Operation Cast Lead into Gaza, and the process broke down.

Turkey has also mediated between Israel and Hamas on two occasions, albeit without meaningful results. Turkey's first interjection came in the aftermath of Hamas' capture of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in June 2006, when Davutoğlu traveled to Damascus to try to broker a deal to release Shalit and a disputed group of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel. The second was during Operation Cast Lead in December 2008-January 2009, when Davutoğlu shuttled between Damascus and Cairo to persuade Hamas to agree to a ceasefire in return for Israel's ceasefire and lifting the closure of Gaza.

Beyond the Arab-Israeli conflict, Turkey has been drawn into mediation regarding the Iranian nuclear question. Turkey sought to facilitate P5+1¹² talks in 2006. Since then, Ankara has consistently relayed messages between Washington and Tehran. However, Turkey's efforts have thus far yielded few results and have raised concerns about lack of solidarity with the West.

There are examples of Turkey's success in mediation, particularly within the Arab world. In 2005, Turkey encouraged Sunni leaders to participate in the national elections in Iraq. In 2009, Ankara reconciled Syrians and Iraqis after Iraq lodged initial accusations against Syria for the August 2009 bombings in Baghdad. While these cases are limited in scope, they are nonetheless emblematic of Turkey's new, conciliatory role in the Arab world, a position which would have been unthinkable in the past.

Turkey, Russia, the Black Sea, and the Caucasus

To the north and west, differing internal developments, Turkey's changing fortunes with regard to the EU, and, most importantly, the rise of an assertive Russia, have presented Turkey with both risks and opportunities. As in the Middle East, achieving the aim of "zero problems" in a conflict-prone neighborhood has not always been possible.

In the 1990s, Turkey responded to instability in the Balkans by participating in a variety of peacekeeping and peacemaking missions under both NATO and EU auspices. At the same time, the opening of the Turkish economy and the collapse of the Soviet Union allowed for the expansion of economic ties with Russia, a country rich in natural resources, which had previously been cut off from Turkey. In the Black Sea region, Turkey took the opportunity to sponsor the creation of numerous Black Sea-only organizations, such as BSEC and BLACKSEAFOR, designed to improve economic and military cooperation and try to limit great power struggles in the region.¹³

In the last several years, expanded economic ties with the Balkan states have continued, while ties with Russia have grown exponentially – at least until the economic downturn of 2009 hurt all Turkish trade (see Figure 2 and Table 3). Russia is also the source of roughly three million tourists a year to Turkey, and has received more than \$17 billion in Turkish investment. In 2009 and 2010, reciprocal visits between Prime Ministers led to even greater levels of planned cooperation between Turkey and Russia, on energy, on arrangements for joint cabinet meetings, on agreeing on visa-free travel, and on building a Russian nuclear power plant in Turkey.¹⁴

While motivated by geostrategic and economic considerations and strongly supported domestically by Turkish businesses, this level of cooperation with Russia has caused concern in the West and appears to limit Turkey's foreign policy options.

Turkey's Monthly Trade with Russia in Billion USD

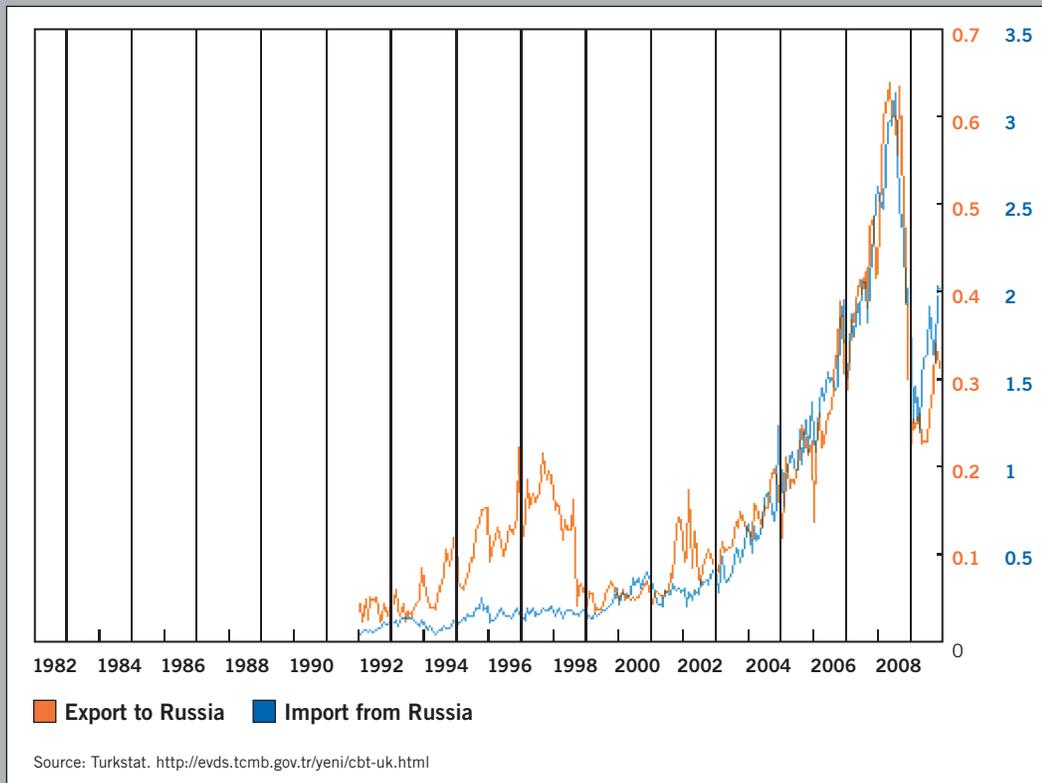


FIGURE 2

After the 2008 Russian invasion of Georgia, with which Turkey has strong historical and economic ties, Ankara issued only cursory criticism of Russia and confined itself to urging respect for Georgia's territorial integrity. In Moscow soon after, Turkey offered a "Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform (CSCP)," which envisioned a multilateral framework among several foes in the region. Not surprisingly, the initiative was stillborn.

When the United States pressed Turkey to allow its naval forces to move through the Turkish Straits to provide economic and humanitarian aid to Georgia, Turkey clung – as it has for decades – to the sanctity of the 1936 Montreux Convention governing the length of stay, size, and number of naval forces in the Black Sea. Defending Turkish foreign policy during this episode, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu was candid: "Any other European country can follow a certain isolationist policy against Russia. Can Turkey do this? I ask you to understand the geographical conditions of Turkey... Unfortunately we have to admit this fact. Turkey is almost 75-80 percent dependent on Russia [for energy]. We don't want to see a Russian-American or Russian-NATO confrontation... We don't want to pay the bill of strategic mistakes by Russia or by Georgia."¹⁵

Turkey rejects categorically the idea that its policies involve choosing the "East over the West."¹⁶ It sees its actions as serving Turkish interests in an attempt to create a peaceful and stable neighborhood by utilizing complementary, not competitive, policies. In the Balkans, for example, Turkey quickly recognized the independence of Kosovo, something Russia, in support of Serbia, has not done. Still, much of what Turkey has attempted to make its "zero problems" doctrine a reality has been blocked by forces beyond its control.

This has been the case with its overture toward Armenia. Turkey accepted an invitation for a presidential visit in 2008, then participated in negotiations to normalize relations between the two countries, signing protocols to that effect in October 2009. But Turkey may have underestimated the difficulties of achieving this goal, and has been forced to step back in the face of fierce criticism from Azerbaijan, and a backlash domestically. In order to placate the Azeris, the Turkish Prime Minister linked Turkey's ratification of the protocols with Armenia to the progress on the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process (see Box 1). That linkage, in turn, has imperiled reconciliation with Armenia, while greatly disappointing the United States and the EU, both of which stood to gain from

Nagorno-Karabakh: Soviet Legacy, Frozen Conflict

By Ronald Linden

As part of its policy to prevent national challenges to their rule, the communist rulers of the Soviet Union created the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous region, whose population was predominantly Armenian, inside the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan. As the Soviet Union unraveled, longstanding hostility to this arrangement erupted in violence in Armenia and Azerbaijan. In 1991, the Armenian population of the region, which is roughly the size of Delaware, declared itself independent. In the resulting warfare, between 20,000 and 30,000 people were killed, while nearly 1 million Azeris and Armenians were displaced. In addition to expelling the Azeris from the region, Armenian forces conquered territory connecting the enclave with Armenia (the “Lachin corridor”) alongside several other districts of Azerbaijan, occupying roughly 13 percent of Azerbaijan’s territory outside the enclave. A ceasefire was arranged in 1994, but violations have occurred continually.

Under the auspices of the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE), France, Russia, and the United States have chaired the ‘Minsk Group’ whose aim is to convene a conference in that Belarusian city, and more broadly, try to convert this unsteady ceasefire into a permanent peace. It has so far been unable to accomplish those goals, despite numerous initiatives, statements of principle and even repeated meetings between the Azeri and Armenian presidents.

Since the war in Karabakh, Turkey has sealed its roughly 200-mile border with Armenia, as has Azerbaijan. At the same time, Armenia has shut its border with the Azeri enclave of Nachichevan, leaving Armenia dependent on its ties with Russia. Turkey had cut off diplomatic ties with Armenia until the beginning of “soccer diplomacy” in 2008. The resulting protocols signed by Armenia and Turkey in October 2009 envision the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border, full diplomatic and economic relations, and the establishment of a joint commission of historians. But respective parliamentary approval has been stalled by Turkish (and Azeri) insistence on – and Armenian rejection of – linking the normalization of relations to progress on solving this frozen conflict.

the success of this initiative. In the Black Sea region as in the Middle East, with its intersection of great and middle powers, politics, economics and energy, Turkey has found that achieving a state of “zero problems” can be problematic.

Turkey’s Foreign Energy Policy

Over the past several years, as Turkey’s relationships with particular geographic regions have changed, so have its energy policies. As part of its economic liberalization in the 1980s, Turkey began to open up to its neighbors. An energy-poor country adjacent to over 70 percent of the world’s proven hydrocarbon reserves, Turkey has had to rely on pipelines and tanker routes for its energy supplies. In 1987 it achieved its first pipeline connectivity through Bulgaria to import Soviet gas for domestic consumption (see Map 1).

The first major project in the Middle East with significant impact for Turkey was the Kirkuk-Ceyhan oil pipeline, the first phase of which became operational as early as 1977. With a parallel line completed a decade later, it became the largest operable pipeline to carry Iraqi oil exports to the southern Turkish port of Ceyhan. Because of wars, sanctions, and sabotage in Iraq, however, it was never able to reach its full capacity of 1.6 million barrels a day.

The demise of the Soviet Union opened the possibility of Western access to the Caspian basin. Ankara developed the concept, with strong U.S. backing, of an East-West corridor for bringing Caspian oil to global markets independent of Russian-controlled pipelines, and took the lead in promoting this concept in the region.¹⁷ A consortium of Western oil companies, in which Turkey also took a stake, signed an agreement in 1994 with the government of Azerbaijan to develop oil fields in the Caspian basin. Four years later, Turkey invited the heads of state and government of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan to finalize an agreement that acknowledged the need for multiple pipelines along the East-West corridor. The Ankara Agreement served as a basis for the Baku-Tiblisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline, as well as the parallel gas pipeline to Erzurum (BTE), which provided the essential linkage for carrying Caspian gas to Europe (see Map 2).

Another component of this energy corridor was the interconnector between Turkey and Greece, which would later extend under the Adriatic to Italy. A direct pipeline connection from Turkey to Central Europe, however, was the essential component for the East-West corridor. Dubbed Nabucco after the Verdi opera, this major pipeline was promoted as a means

for contributing to Europe's energy security by allowing direct access to Caspian gas resources.¹⁸ Despite its geostrategic implications, the Nabucco project has proceeded very slowly in the face of uncertain sources of supply, financing difficulties, the lack of unified EU support, and Russia's concerted efforts to block it. According to the original plans from 2002, Nabucco would also attract Turkmen gas by means of an underwater trans-Caspian pipeline, which Russia has also opposed (see Map 1 and 3).

A pipeline connecting Iran and Turkey, which was supposed to provide Turkey with an alternative supply source, is not considered reliable because of Iran's ongoing sanctions, as well as its inadequate infrastructure. As a result of the 2008-09 financial crisis, and the concomitant reduction in demand for natural gas, the likelihood of raising funds for major projects such as this appears small. Moreover, the discovery first in the U.S. and then parts of Europe of large reserves of shale gas, which can be extracted by new, cheaper technologies, has fundamentally altered market expectations, as have improved techniques for the conversion and transport of liquefied natural gas (LNG). These two developments, which could potentially diversify sources and supply routes to meet Europe's gas needs, have reduced the strategic significance

of Nabucco. In spite of the signing of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Nabucco in 2009, it is far from certain whether Nabucco will be built in the foreseeable future.

The Nabucco project exemplifies the complexities and contradictions that characterize Turkey's neighborhood, especially when it comes to energy policy. As a major energy consumer with rapidly increasing domestic demand for natural gas, Turkey's energy policy has primarily focused on ensuring its own security of supply. Another important objective for Turkey is to become an energy hub and major trading center. Turkey's plans for gaining access to the Caspian basin were seen as a way to pursue both. However, Turkey's role as a transit corridor in practice runs counter to its domestic energy security and commercial interests. Specifically, Turkey's insistence on keeping a share of the gas to be transported through the Nabucco pipeline at preferential prices has been inconsistent with its declared ambitions to act as a transit corridor and allow direct European access to Caspian energy supplies. Moreover, Turkey's overriding emphasis on its engagement with the region continues to attract attention to its "Janus-like" geography¹⁹ and policies of pursuing EU accession on the one hand, while aspiring to an increasingly independent regional role on the other.

Black Sea Pipelines and Tanker Routes

BOTAS Projects: Turkey as an East-West Energy Corridor, East-West Energy Terminal



MAP 1

Source: Energy Information Administration (EIA)

Oil Import Pipelines

M A P 2



Source: European Dialogue. (<http://eurodialogue.org/Russia-Joins-The-Samsun-Ceyhan-Pipeline>)

Proposed Gas Pipelines

M A P 3



Source: IFEA Istanbul (http://www.ifea-istanbul.net/website/index.php?option=com_wrapper&Itemid=74)

Driven by different priorities, Turkey's energy policy can be viewed as contradictory.²⁰ Turkey's own dependence on Russian energy has detracted from its potential for reducing Europe's dependence on Russian gas. Ankara and Moscow have reached several agreements, described by Russian leaders as a "strategic partnership."²¹ Turkey has signed up to Russia's South Stream project (see Map 3). Turkey and Russia have also agreed to supplement the Blue Stream pipeline under the Black Sea with Blue Stream II to supply additional gas to the Turkish domestic market and beyond. As a result, Nabucco, if built, may also be fed by Russian gas, a possibility that would undercut its original purpose, but one with which all major players appear satisfied. Dependency on Russia weakens Turkey's claim that it is a central power with an equally neutral standing to all parties in its neighborhood.

Turkey, Trade, and Regional Economic Integration

Turkey's regional engagement has opened new economic horizons. If Turkey's neighborhood prospers economically, it should become more stable, and Turkey would benefit. Turkey's own economic performance can have positive effects on the standard of living in the immediate neighborhood, through intensified cross-border trade, transfers of money, capital, and knowledge, and increased immigration. These phenomena, however, also highlight some of the limitations of Turkey's ambitious policies.

Between 1991 and 2008, Turkey's trade relations within its neighborhood increased considerably. In 1991, the level of trade was relatively small, barely a quarter of Turkey's trade with the EU at the time. But while Turkey's level of trade with the EU grew eightfold between 1991 and 2008, it increased more than twentyfold in its immediate neighborhood (see Table 3), while the potential for further growth remains. An indication of Turkey's openness to its neighborhood is the dramatic increase of Turkish Airlines (THY) flights to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and the ex-Soviet World in recent years. In 1971, THY flew to 17 destinations in 11 countries, overwhelmingly in Western Europe. There were no flights whatsoever to the former Soviet world until 1989, when the first flight to Moscow was added, along with a route to Lebanon and Israel, respectively. By 2009, the airline offered a total of 113 flights to 70 countries, including 39 destinations to the former communist block and 23 destinations to the MENA countries.²²

Turkey's trade with the region is highly skewed, with Russia accounting for 11.3 percent of its total (see Table 3). Russia,

together with Germany, is now Turkey's largest trading partner and supplies two thirds of Turkey's imported gas and nearly one third of its imported oil. This has created a considerable level of Turkish energy dependence on Russia, as well as a trade deficit with the country.

On the whole, Turkey's main trading partner remains the EU, particularly Germany, the United Kingdom, France, and Italy.²³ The EU 27 accounted for about 55 percent of Turkish exports and 45 percent of Turkish imports over the last ten years. This led to a trade deficit with the EU of about USD 11 billion in 2008. Increasingly, however, other partners such as China, India, and the Gulf nations are becoming part of Turkey's trade landscape.

Turkey's Migration Policy

Besides trade and energy policies, Turkey has used migration policy to further its foreign policy goals. On both emigration and immigration, Turkey has become more proactive. It has done away with its past neutral policies to take advantage of newly opened regions. Its new policies have led to higher levels of overall interaction between Turkey and the countries in its neighborhood.

Since the early 1990s, the Turkish government has sought to promote Turkish entrepreneurs and workers in the Black Sea, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. While the Turkish government had been neutral regarding the emigration of Turkish labor to Europe and the Gulf, by the 1990s, under Prime Minister Özal's leadership, it recognized the need to proactively encourage investment in the construction sector within its neighborhood. To do so, it established a liberal visa regime to facilitate the movement of people in and out of Turkey, as well as reciprocal market penetration.

But visa policy has varied in the 2000s. Between 2002 and 2005, Turkey tightened its visa policies in order to comply with the restrictive EU Schengen system. Beginning in 2005, however, the Turkish government started reversing and expanding its liberal visa policy toward most neighbors. Since 2009, Turkey appears to have pursued a systematic policy of visa liberalization by signing a series of bilateral visa-free agreements with countries in its neighborhood. Visa-free agreements have been reached with Lebanon, Albania, Jordan, Libya, Qatar, and even long-time foe Syria. Strikingly, in May 2010, an agreement on visa-free travel was also reached with Russia (see Map 4). These agreements have led to increased Turkish travel within the neighborhood, as well as a sharp increase in the number of people entering Turkey

Foreign Trade Relations Between Turkey and Its Neighbors in USD millions, 1991 and 2008²⁴

TABLE 3

	Export	Import	1991 TOTAL	% of Grand Total	Export	Import	2008 TOTAL	% of Grand Total
 Greece	144	77	221	0.6	2,430	1,151	3,581	1.1
 Bulgaria	76	140	216	0.6	2,152	1,840	3,992	1.2
 Romania	105	199	304	0.9	3,987	3,548	7,535	2.3
 Moldova	0	0	0	0.0	198	70	268	0.1
 Ukraine	0	0	0	0.0	2,188	6,106	8,294	2.5
 Russia	611	1,097	1,708	4.9	6,483	31,364	37,847	11.3
 Georgia	0	0	0	0.0	998	525	1,523	0.5
 Azerbaijan	0	0	0	0.0	1,667	928	2,595	0.8
TOTAL EX SOVIET WORLD	792	1436	2228	6.4	17673	44381	62054	18.6
 Iran	487	91	578	1.7	2,030	8,200	10,230	3.1
 Iraq	122	492	614	1.8	3,917	1,321	5,238	1.6
 Syria	264	67	331	1.0	1,115	639	1,754	0.5
 Egypt	169	48	217	0.6	1,426	943	2,369	0.7
 Israel	79	78	157	0.5	1,935	1,448	3,383	1.0
TOTAL MIDDLE EAST	1121	776	1897	5.5	10423	12551	22974	6.9
TOTAL NEIGHBORHOOD*	2,057	2,289	4,346	12.5	30,526	58,083	88,609	26.5
 EU	7,348	9,896	17,244	49.8	63,390	74,802	138,192	41.4
 US	913	2,255	3,168	9.1	4,300	11,976	16,276	4.9
GRAND TOTAL	13,593	21,047	34,640	100	132,027	201,964	333,991	100

* including Egypt and Israel
Source: Turkish Statistical Institute, Foreign Trade by Countries Report. (<http://www.tuik.gov.tr>)

(see Figure 1). The current Turkish government sees visa-free travel as a strategic tool for greater economic integration in the region that benefits, *inter alia*, Turkish business. The intimate link between liberal visa regime and economic integration has indeed been demonstrated by the EU's restricted visa policy toward Turkish citizens (including students and business people), which has undermined the smooth functioning of the Customs Union between Turkey and the EU.²⁵

Beyond visas, Turkey has also altered its policies toward irregular migration and asylum. In the early 1990s, policies regulating these two issues were almost nonexistent. Recently, Turkey has engaged more actively in fighting illegal migration and human trafficking, and has signed readmission agreements with neighboring countries. In a major policy reversal, Turkey has also revitalized negotiations over a readmission agreement with the EU Commission in January 2010. Turkey is also on the verge of establishing its own asylum policy, with a draft law currently under consideration. On both asylum and irregular migration, Turkey has changed

its policies to align with EU regulations while trying to gain momentum for its membership process. But on the other hand, Turkey has also distanced itself from the EU Schengen model, paradoxically by applying some of the norms underlying internal EU migration policies, i.e., visa-free travel. In doing so, Turkey has improved relations with its neighbors.

M A P 4

Visa Requirements to Visit Turkey by Country



● No Visa Required ● Sticker Visa¹ Required ● Regular Visa Required

¹ A sticker visa is a visa that is issued directly upon entrance at the border and almost systematically granted. It is considered a facilitated visa.

² For Moldova and Iraq, a simple sticker visa is required at airport borders, while a regular visa is required at land borders.

³ There are on-going negotiations over a visa-free agreement with Egypt.

Source: Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/yabancilarin-tabi-oldugu-vize-rejimi.tr.mfa>) and <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25057859/>



The Underlying Changes at Home

While the external environment has both enabled and constrained Turkish foreign policy, many of these aspects could not have been realized had Turkey not also undergone a profound domestic transformation. Changes in its economy, institutions, political culture, leadership, and indeed, its own national identity, all played a part.

Identity: The Ottoman Legacy and Islam

Turkey and its citizens are in the midst of an identity crisis. While not the first instance of such self-redefinition, the rapid changes in the country are causing many Turks to revisit their past, and question their identity in the new century. One aspect of this collective soul searching has been referred to as “Neo-Ottomanism.” Turkey’s Ottoman legacy is a critical part of broad strategy formation in contemporary Turkish policy, though it does not mean that Turks are interested in reconstituting a new Ottoman Empire. Rather, Turkey is coming to terms with its past, including its Ottoman heritage, while being sanguine about the problems it has inherited with that legacy.

Glorifying its Ottoman past as a cultural and foreign policy strategy is not a new concept in Turkey. While its roots go

back to at least the early 1980s with then Prime Minister Turgut Özal, the flourishing of the rediscovered Ottoman heritage coincides with the AKP’s rise to power in 2002. The emergence of the AKP as a political force in Turkey has rekindled the debate over Turkey’s historical roots and its identity as a successor state to the Ottoman Empire. As a result of its Islamic past and Muslim outlook, the AKP has focused on the unifying character of the Ottoman Empire and Muslim values inherent in the Turkish Republic. Articulating a new vision for Turkey that is not dependent on the West, while actively seeking ways to balance its relationships and alliances within the region, has almost unavoidably driven the AKP to harken back to the nation’s Ottoman legacy.

While the traditional instruments of Turkish foreign policy tended to overlook the cultural links of a shared common history, the AKP emphasizes Turkey’s connections to its former Ottoman space in the Balkans and the Middle East. It even includes Central Asia, given certain cultural, ethnic, and linguistic affinities. The AKP has promoted these “privileged” relationships to the Turkish public as part of Turkey’s historic responsibility, while leveraging them to increase the importance of Turkey regionally and globally. As part of this

From Empire to Republic



Source: Hammond Atlas of the Middle East (Union, NJ: Hammond World Atlas Corp. 2001), p. 37.

MAP 5

Degree of Openness of the Turkish Economy 1970 to 2008 as a Percentage of GDP

Turkey	1970	1980	1990	2000	2008
Exports of goods and services (% of GDP)	4.4	5.2	13.4	20.1	23.6
Imports of goods and services (% of GDP)	6.4	11.9	17.6	23.1	28.7
Degree of Openness (Exports plus Imports in % of GDP)					
Turkey	10.8	17.1	31.0	43.2	52.3
Euro Area	40.3	52.8	54.7	72.9	80.1
Low Income Countries		44.3	57.3	79.8	44.3
Middle Income Countries	19.7	32.5	39.3	52.8	59.7

Source: World Bank, Quick Query Data Source. (<http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/DDPQQ/member.do?method=getMembers&userid=1&queryId=135>)

TABLE 4

effort, the AKP has argued that Turkey is the natural heir to the Ottoman Empire that once unified the Muslim world, and therefore has the potential to become a transregional power to unify and lead the Muslim world once again. Accordingly, Turkey is not simply an “ordinary nation-state” that emerged out of various circumstances or the designs of foreign powers. Rather, Turkey is a regional power in its own right, having strong traditions of statehood and broad strategic outreach.

The AKP’s reading of Turkey’s history and identity differs markedly from the traditional narrative that sought to sever all ties with the pre-republican past. In fact, the AKP champions a deliberate revival of the Ottoman past both as a matter of cultural enrichment and as a source of a more diverse Turkish identity. In this view, it follows that Turkey should strive to take on a greater role in its former Ottoman territories (see Map 5) and neighbors should welcome Turkey’s “return” and willingness to take on greater responsibility for regional stability.

Given their imperial history, Turks can be particularly nationalistic and prickly when dealt with on less-than equal footing. Other countries’ using Turkey as a means to an end can lead to diplomatic failures; for example, U.S. attempts to “buy” Turkey’s support for its operations against Iraq, or the EU maneuvering to offer Turkey anything less than full membership. Having ruled for the better part of six centuries as the Ottoman Empire, Turkey as a post-imperial successor state has now come to demand a certain level of respect in its international dealings.

The Turkish Economy

The changes in political culture, historical memory and identity in Turkey have been mirrored by changes and growth in its economy as well.

The last decade has seen dynamic growth in the Turkish economy, which has expanded by an average of 5.9 percent annually between 2000 and 2008.²⁶ While this is less than the excellent performance of the BRIC countries, it is much more pronounced than the increases in the Asian, European or Latin American “tiger” states. The main Turkish constraint on growth is the relatively slow capital accumulation process. And like most economies, Turkey has been hit by the 2008-09 economic crisis, which caused its growth rate to plummet by almost 6 percent in 2009, and to climb only about half way back in 2010.²⁷

Turkey’s economic growth has been the result of the country’s shift to an open market economy (despite the persistence of a large share of government-owned enterprises). In 1970, the openness indicator for Turkey (defined as the sum of imports and exports of all goods and services divided by GDP) was about 10 percent. Over the last 20 years, this indicator has risen to more than 50 percent, although compared to other countries with a similar level of development, it is still modest (see Table 4).

The opening of the Turkish economy and its rapid growth has fostered equally rapid social and political change. When Turkey operated as a closed-import, substitution oriented

economy, it was dominated by a small elite closely allied with the state. The liberalization of the Turkish market and the transformation of the economy into an export-oriented system saw the rise of the “Anatolian Tigers.” The term came to be associated with cities in Anatolia where a productivity and capital boom occurred: Kayseri, Konya, Yozgat, Denizli, Çorum, Aksaray and Gaziantep.

The opening and growth of the Turkish economy has led to the transformation of the traditional actors in Turkish foreign policy-making, the emergence of new players capable of affecting the style as well as substance of Turkish foreign policy, and a greater responsiveness from the ruling AKP government to Turkish public opinion. Without Turkey's domestic transformation and the willingness of the AKP to transform Turkey's historic isolation from its immediate neighborhood, few of the developments noted in this report would have been possible.

Domestic Political Transformation

The opening up of the Turkish economic and social space has led to the transformation of some of the traditional players in Turkish foreign policy-making as well. The military does not enjoy the influence it once had at home and abroad, as evidenced by the U-turn in Turkey's policy toward Cyprus in 2002-04, or the relative restraint displayed by Turkey toward Northern Iraq since late 2007. Institutionally, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has abandoned its conservative ways and become a critical player supportive of Turkey's expanded international role. Other state bodies such as the ministries of energy and natural resources, environment, interior, and transportation, and the under-secretariat for foreign trade, as well as the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA), have become involved in shaping Turkey's external relations.

Alongside Turkey's economic growth, there has also been a substantial rise of civil society organizations and businesses. Many business organizations, such as the Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (MUSIAD), Turkish Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEIK), Turkish Exporters Assembly (TIM), Turkish Union of Chambers (TOBB), the Turkish Businessmen's Association (TUSIAD), and the Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists (TUSKON), have sought domestic reforms and integration with the EU.

As far as the neighborhood is concerned, business interests have played a critical role. Any explanation of improving Turkish-Syrian and Turkish-Iraqi relations would be incomplete if economic actors were not taken into account, including the role of the Diyarbakır Chamber of Commerce (DTO), Turkish businesses operating in Northern Iraq, or the business community in Gaziantep, located close to the Syrian border. Relations with Iran have also been driven by economic considerations. In contrast to most of Turkey's neighbors, Iran, together with Russia, is the only country with which Turkey runs a major foreign trade deficit. Business interests have been pushing the government to overcome high levels of protectionism of Iranian markets. In this context, the government is keen to support membership for Iran and Russia in the WTO. Turkey's attempt to compensate for its trade imbalance with Iran also explains why Ankara is eager to retain visa-free travel with that country.

The influence of civil society on Turkish politics, and foreign policy has grown considerably in the last decade. The failure of the state and military to effectively respond to disastrous earthquakes in 1999 was an important turning point. It shattered the image of the omnipotent Turkish state, while creating space for private undertakings in civil society. The emergence of independent TV and radio stations in the early 1990s enabled the public to follow and become involved in the national debate, while being exposed to the reformist ideas of a new generation of intellectuals and journalists.

There are also a growing number of Turkish think tanks with international links such as the Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA), the Turkish Economic and Politics Research Foundation (TEPAV), and the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV). A plethora of public advocacy groups, some based on nationalism, and others on ethnicity, have also made their voices heard on foreign policy issues.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are also beginning to develop transnational links, including links with countries in Turkey's neighborhood. These activities are mostly dominated by development and humanitarian assistance groups such as the Anatolian Development Foundation (AKV), the Foundation for Humanitarian Relief (IHH), and the International Blue Crescent Relief and Development Foundation (IBC). But there are also NGOs involved in projects in Turkey's neighborhood that at least indirectly support democratization, ranging from promoting women's rights to the protection of the environment and cultural diversity.²⁸

One group that has attracted controversy recently is the Gülen Movement. The movement supports an extensive network of schools and businesses around the world through which it disseminates its political views. It is seen by some, particularly in the United States, as contributing to the notion of “Muslim democracy” (together with the AKP).²⁹ At the same time, others look at the movement with growing skepticism, as they question its genuine commitment to liberal democratic values.³⁰

All these developments have provided a conducive environment for the emergence of the AKP. The AKP gained prominence after the abolishment of two Islamic parties – Welfare and Virtue – by the Turkish Constitutional Court in the 1990s on the grounds that they constituted a threat to Turkey’s secular order. The AKP’s electoral victory in 2002 was based on promises of reform and closer ties with the EU. This victory was called “a political tsunami,” one that held the promise of becoming “the agent of Turkey’s transformation from a spotty and in too many ways illiberal democracy into a fully fledged specimen of the liberal breed.”³¹ By and large, the AKP delivered on its promises of reform and improved Turkish democracy significantly between 2002 and 2005. These changes included greater tolerance for expressing Turkey’s diversity of cultural, ethnic, and religious traditions, while softening more rigid notions of Turkish national identity and secularism.³²

The party leadership has insisted on maintaining a distance from political Islam and many members of the AKP have tended to reject being labeled as “Islamists,” “moderate Islamists,” or even “Muslim democrats.”³³ Instead they have preferred to define themselves simply as “conservatives.” Yet the party’s roots, its policies and the exponential rise in its domestic power have spawned acute concerns among the country’s secular elites. Turkish society and politics have become polarized between growing religious conservatism and advocates of secularism. A striking manifestation of this polarization has been a pending legal battle, known as the Ergenekon case, taken up by the AKP against a pro-military group based on allegations of plotting a coup against the government. The government’s problematic prosecution of this case has generated accusations of authoritarianism and fueled polarization. Against this background there are some who have questioned the resilience of Turkish democracy and its ability to cope with the resulting conflicts.³⁴ A once optimistic observer of Turkey’s transformation under the AKP has also become critical of the governing political party’s recent politics, and noted that the party was still a “democratizing force but not necessarily a democratic one.”³⁵

In a country that has experienced four military coups, attempts to discredit or ban the AKP through military or judicial means have ominous overtones. Substantively, the AKP argues that it speaks for a large portion of the Turkish people who want to see changes made in the approach and character of both their republic and its international relations. With a majority of the Turkish parliament and municipal administrations controlled by the AKP for the better part of a decade now, the nature of the secular Turkish Republic is indeed changing. Yet the AKP has played by the rules set by the secular establishment and has relied on Turkish voters to be their final arbiters. Nevertheless, debate over Turkey’s identity will continue to polarize domestic politics (see Box 2) and affect Turkish foreign relations.

The Turkish political transformation has also made the AKP government more accountable and sensitive to public opinion, and this has been particularly critical in some key foreign policy decisions. While past governments could ignore public opinion, today it shapes both populist sentiment and electoral results. The backdrop to the parliamentary vote in March 2003 denying the United States the ability to attack Iraq through Turkish territory was massive public opposition to the looming war. Similarly, without an engaged public and greater freedom of expression, the debates that enabled Turkey to reverse its policy toward Cyprus in 2004 and Armenia in 2008-09 would have been hard to imagine. Without democratization, it is also doubtful that Prime Minister Erdoğan would be as openly critical of Israel; the government and especially the Prime Minister have responded to public outrage over civilian casualties in the region.

Turkey’s greater responsiveness to public opinion, as well as to multiple state and non-state interests, has underpinned Turkey’s increased foreign policy independence and its willingness to say “no” to the United States and the EU. In contrast to the post-Cold War climate, when Turkish army generals and diplomats could be counted on to support the West, Turkish leaders now see themselves as more accountable to the Turkish people for their foreign policy decisions. At times, this has led to appeals to populism, as seen, for example, in Prime Minister Erdoğan’s heated rhetoric on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Turkey’s current foreign policy perspective has been three decades in the making. Then Turkish Prime Minister and President Turgut Özal led Turkey’s transformation toward an export-oriented liberal market, took the first steps toward democratization, and opened the way to Turkey’s engagement within its neighborhood. Ismail Cem, as Minister of Foreign

Turkey's New Elites

By Michael Thumann

Is Turkey turning Islamist? To describe Turkey's current political scenario as a dichotomy of Islamists versus secularists is misleading. To begin with, the Turkish state is not secular in the broadest sense; it maintains tight institutional control over mosques and religious education. And the AKP is not an Islamist party, but a collective of devout conservatives, Turkish nationalists, liberal reformists and pious businessmen. The AKP's most powerful political base does not consist of Islamists but rather the rising middle class in central Anatolia. Here, a new class of pious entrepreneurs has emerged to challenge the dominance of classical Kemalist elites. The latter have shaped Turkey's central institutions since the 1920s and are now gradually losing their political stronghold as the AKP begins its ninth year in power.

The trouble for the classical elites of Turkey is the centralized state they have created. Once a politician has climbed to the heights of the Prime Minister's office or the President's palace in Ankara, mountainous Turkey looks completely flat. The overly-centralized system was resented by Erdoğan and his political associates for a long time. Now that they are at the top, however, they seem to like it.

As Prime Minister, Tayyip Erdoğan has assumed some rather traditional positions in the Turkish central state – for example, in dealing with the PKK, in media relations, and more recently, his policies toward the Greek minority and Armenia. President Abdullah Gül has used his executive power to appoint the president of YÖK, the powerful agency in charge of the nation's universities. Likewise, the general director of the state television network TRT was appointed by the President in 2007, and Gül will also appoint three new judges to the Constitutional Court before the end of 2010. After eight years with the same government, a majority in parliament, and an AKP president, Turkey has changed from top to bottom.

The Turkish constitution was written under the tutelage of the army in the early 1980s. Tayyip Erdoğan has often mentioned the need for constitutional change but has achieved little so far. Therefore, strains of authoritarianism are still entrenched in many regulations and the structure of leading institutions. Ironically, the AKP government's strength and authority emanates from the institutions that the Kemalist elites built to safeguard their own supremacy.

Yet, the fact that those institutions are being used against them now indicates that the Republic will always face challenges balancing the interests of different groups competing for power. The rise of the new elites from Anatolia is a development the Turkish political system will be hard pressed to cope with. Turkey has seen four *coup d'états* in forty years, each of which restored a rough political equilibrium. But in the current climate, popular support for coups has plummeted. Instead, permanent obstruction of reforms and destabilization through political confrontation appear more likely. Today, Turkey needs profound constitutional reform to simultaneously decentralize and democratize the country.

Affairs, was essential in improving relations with Greece, and encouraged cooperation with Syria and Iraq's neighbors in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Similarly, the impact of Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan, President Abdullah Gül and current Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu has been profound. Erdoğan will long be recognized for his leadership role in pushing EU-related reforms during his first term of office. More recently, he has been credited with introducing additional political reforms that address the Kurdish problem, as well as improving conditions for the Alevi minority in Turkey. However, he has been criticized for his handling of two legal battles, the tax case against media group Doğan Holding and the Ergenekon case. President Gül has played a prominent role both in Turkey's U-turn on Cyprus in 2004 and in initiating a process of rapprochement with Armenia.

Davutoğlu has also had a far-reaching impact on Turkish foreign policy. The decision in 2004 to support the UN plan to hold a referendum for the reunification of Cyprus was extremely progressive, as were the protocols signed with Armenia in 2009 and his numerous efforts mediating conflicts in the Middle East. Yet, his policies are receiving growing criticism for being too ambitious and even unrealistic. Moreover, his mantra that Turkey should always “be one step ahead of the adversaries” made in the context of the Annan Plan for Cyprus, for example, appears to have been sidetracked in the attempt to implement the protocols with Armenia.



...Turkey may represent an
asset to the Western alliance
precisely because its policies in the neighborhood are distinct...

Turkey from a Transatlantic Perspective

Evaluating Turkey's Foreign Policy

Observers in Turkey, the EU and the United States have offered different interpretations of Turkish foreign policy. Critics have claimed that Turkey is drifting East because of strategic or cultural affinities with Russia or the Middle East, and that the West is therefore “losing Turkey.”³⁶ A more neutral interpretation would suggest that Turkey is now an autonomous regional power that acts according to its own national interest and foreign policy objectives, which often align with EU and U.S. goals, but occasionally differ. Optimists would argue that Turkey is now a model for its region, and a channel through which the West can nurture liberal ideas and practices. To do so, however, Turkey needs to be engaged and anchored in its neighborhood.

Which of these interpretations is “right” is a matter of perception. Most frequently, Turkey's policies are judged by how much they converge or diverge from those of the United States and the EU. Using this metric, Turkey can be praised for the improvement of its relations with Iraq, its attempts at normalizing its ties to Armenia, and its efforts to mediate conflicts in the Middle East, particularly between Israel and Syria, Israel and Hamas, and even the United States and Iran. But Turkey can be criticized on other issues: its increased overtures toward Iran, Syria or Russia; its open political channels with Islamist movements such as Hamas and Hezbollah; and its pro-Islam double standards in denouncing genocide in Xinjiang while denying it in Darfur.³⁷

But this approach misses the point that Turkey may represent an asset to the Western alliance precisely because its policies in the neighborhood are distinct and not simply a replica of (often unsuccessful) American and EU policies in these regions. Thus, Turkey's policies and the impact they have on the region should be evaluated in their own right to determine if they are complementary or run counter to EU and U.S. aims.

For example, Turkey's ties to Syria and Hamas could complement U.S. mediation efforts in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Solutions to the Middle East's problems are unlikely to emerge without the engagement of these players.³⁸ Turkey alone does not have the influence to broker a breakthrough. But it could pave the way for more effective U.S. involvement and impact. Turkey could also help insert the logic of conditionality in relations with Israel – i.e., putting conditions on Israel based

on Israel's actions in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The United States and EU have persistently shied away from doing so, a fact that has repeatedly detracted from the prospect for peace in the region.³⁹ Turkey's “tough love” toward Israel, if proportional (i.e., not excessive) and consistent (i.e., toward all parties based on similar criteria), would mark a potentially constructive contrast to U.S. and EU policies in the Middle East.

As a democratizing state, Turkey can complement U.S. and EU democracy assistance policies in the neighborhood, which suffered a considerable credibility blow during the presidency of George W. Bush. The most striking aspect of the Turkish experience in this regard is that the government does not have an openly declared policy of promoting democracy. Instead it relies heavily on the idea of leading by example, while noting that Turkish democracy is a “work in progress.” This avoids the hierarchical relationship that inevitably exists between well-established democracies and those countries on the receiving end of democracy promotion policies.

The Turkish government also emphasizes the importance of extending democratic assistance indirectly. For example, the Turkish development agency TIKA in 2008 channeled almost USD 800 million to 98 countries, many of them within its neighborhood. A portion of these funds was directed to “good governance” programs, as well as those that empower women. Since a Turkish national was elected as Secretary General of the OIC, there have also been efforts to pursue similar projects among OIC members.⁴⁰ Unlike with the EU and the United States, there is a conscious effort in these programs to avoid using the term “democracy” aggressively; they favor a more indirect approach. Further, Turkish NGOs have engaged in activities and projects in neighboring countries promoting the diffusion of democratic values and entrepreneurship, more often than not in an indirect manner.

In this light, the United States and the EU ought to consider tapping into the Turkish experience in development and democracy assistance by partnering with Ankara on official and civilian fronts. Doing so would generate positive influences on Turkey's own democratization efforts, which need external support because of Turkey's position between two geopolitical regions: one characterized by democracy to the west, and the other by either very weak democracies or authoritarianism to its north, east, and south.

Finally, unlike the United States and EU, Turkey is a player “of” and not simply “in” the Middle East and Eurasia. Its policies can help realign these regions geopolitically and ideationally by fostering bilateral and regional integration and unsettling their balance of power logic. In pursuing its policies of openness and engagement with all parties, for example, Turkey’s ambition of “zero problems” with its neighbors may be viewed as fanciful and unrealistic. Given that Turkey’s neighborhood is conflict-ridden, Ankara will not be able to improve relations with some players without hampering its ties to others. Yet to the extent that Turkey, by engaging all parties, succeeds in making the net effect of its policies positive, it will represent a constructive influence in its neighborhood and an asset to the EU and United States. More specifically, in the Middle East, Turkey’s rapprochement with Syria and Iran can help Syria diversify its alliances, a goal supported by the United States and the EU, without triggering aggressive counter-moves by Tehran. In the Caucasus, Turkey’s improving relations with Armenia, its developing ties to Russia, and its efforts at damage control with Azerbaijan could inject positive momentum in the stalled Karabakh peace process, and help Armenia diversify its international ties.

At the socio-economic level, Turkey’s potential lies in deeper integration of the region into the global system through increased economic and social interaction via Turkey, and thus, with the West. By enabling closer relations between its neighborhood and the West, Turkey would contribute to integrating the countries of the region into the international system economically and politically. To some extent, Turkey has been involved in this exercise since the end of the Cold War. As a result of Turkey’s openness to its eastern neighbors, large numbers of nationals from the former Soviet bloc were able to travel to Turkey relatively freely to engage in “suitcase trade.”⁴¹ The initial low-level commercial contacts between Turkey and the former Soviet world⁴² evolved into significant economic relations (see Table 3). These contacts were not limited to trade; they opened the way to an ever-growing number of joint ventures, Turkish investment around the Black Sea, and student and labor migration into Turkey. Interestingly, these developments received little attention in the Western media and policy circles. Unlike the anxiety provoked by Turkey’s current policies toward the Middle East, there was little concern at the time about the expansion of Turkey’s relations with the ex-Soviet world.⁴³

Today, Turkey is just beginning to extend its earlier policies toward Eastern Europe to the Middle East. Turkey’s relations

with Syria and Iran highlight Turkey’s potential to integrate Middle Eastern countries into the global economic system. Following the Turkey-Syria free trade agreement in 2004, bilateral commerce has picked up. It doubled between 2000 and 2008, and is expected to grow even more substantially in the coming years. During and after his visit to Syria in December 2009, Prime Minister Erdoğan outlined his vision of Turkey becoming Syria’s economic gateway to Europe, and Syria becoming Turkey’s gateway to the Arab world. He even espoused support for the free movement of goods, services, and people between the two countries and throughout the region.

In this context, it should be noted that Turkey’s opening to Syria took place amidst considerable American and EU resistance in the mid-2000s. Notwithstanding, Erdoğan stood his ground and made clear that Turkey would not support any efforts to isolate Syria economically.⁴⁴ By 2008-2009, Turkey’s efforts vis-à-vis Syria have started to be recognized by Turkey’s partners in Europe and the United States.⁴⁵ Similarly, Turkey continues to be the only country in the West that Iranians can visit without visas.⁴⁶ The visa-free policy has enabled large numbers of regime opponents to flee the country and enjoy temporary protection in Turkey before settling elsewhere in the West. More broadly, Turkey is one of the few countries that the Iranian middle class can visit freely, and in which they can enjoy the benefits of a liberal economy and society. Not surprisingly, soon after he came to power, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad banned direct flights from Tehran to the Turkish Mediterranean city of Antalya, saying the values displayed on Antalya’s beaches were incompatible with the those of the Islamic revolution.⁴⁷

The role of Turkish television in the Arab world is also noteworthy. Arab commentators have observed that Turkish TV unintentionally constitutes a bridge between the Arab world and a Western way of life, as it is depicted in Turkey’s Muslim but democratic, liberal, and secular society.⁴⁸ There is also growing interest in Turkey’s political experience as a model to extract lessons for political and economic reform in the Arab world. A prominent observer of Arab politics noted how Arabs of all political inclinations “have come around to a new and different look at present-day Turkey.”⁴⁹ This point is supported by the results of a recent public opinion survey, which revealed that 61 and 71 percent of respondents from seven Arab countries believe that Turkey represents a potential model for reform, and enjoys growing influence in the Arab world, respectively.⁵⁰

Turkey's current relations with the Middle East mimic what transpired with the former Soviet republics following the end of the Cold War. Turkey has promoted a "ring of friends" in the Middle East through increased economic integration and more liberal visa policies. In many respects, Turkey can be viewed as "doing the European Neighborhood Policy for the EU."⁵¹ By indirectly mediating Western influence in the Middle East, Turkey represents a potentially vital asset to accomplishing U.S. and European goals.

In contrast, the energy sector is pulling Turkey in a different direction. While Turkish foreign policy toward the region emphasizes increased engagement, the realities of its energy supply needs require the fostering of special relationships that appear at odds with Turkey's EU membership goals, as well as its participation in the transatlantic alliance.

Turkey's role in Europe's energy security came to dominate Turkey's EU membership discussions just as Turkey was given candidate status in December 1999. Between 2001, when Turkey embarked on a serious reform process, and 2005, when the EU opened membership negotiations with Turkey, the security value of the East-West corridor was widely cited in favor of Turkish admittance. But after 2005, when Turkey's relations with the EU began to cool, the idea of energy cooperation began to lose influence in promoting Turkey's EU aspirations, eliciting a guarded reaction from the Commission, and skepticism by those opposed to Turkey's European goals.

The discrepancy between Turkey's energy policy and its pursuit of EU membership proved more difficult to reconcile as progress toward Turkey's membership came to a near standstill. Turkey's attempts to play its energy security card to accelerate its membership process met resistance from the EU, which would not compromise membership criteria on the basis of geopolitical arguments. Furthermore, Turkey's economic considerations, such as its demand for retaining at discounted prices 15 percent of the gas pumped through its territory and reselling unused portions from Caspian sources, stalled the Nabucco negotiations for a long time. Ultimately, Turkey's ambitions to become an energy hub have stood in sharp contrast with Europe's goal of improving energy security via a large market governed by transparent regulations. The EU's emphasis on direct access to Caspian resources depended on Turkey providing an energy corridor. Turkey's priorities, however, of ensuring its own security of supply while enhancing its commercial interests, have contradicted

its declared goal of serving Europe's energy security needs by providing an alternate transit route.

In the post-Soviet era, Turkey's external energy policy was shaped with strong transatlantic support. Today, Turkey's realist policy of favoring its own energy interests, however, has overshadowed its potential to contribute to the West's energy security. Turkey's increasing cooperation with Moscow on energy issues aggravates Washington's concern with Europe's (and, for that matter, Turkey's) overdependence on Russian energy supplies. Turkey's recent deals with Moscow, unlike pipeline financing or long-term, pay-or-take deals agreed to with some EU member states, have gone beyond mere dependency on gas supplies. Turkey's favorable disposition toward Iran also runs counter to Washington's anxiety over Iran's nuclear ambitions. Although it has not violated the U.S. Iran Sanctions Act, Turkey has signed deals to develop Iran's energy resources and to import increasing quantities of energy from Iran.

EU Accession as a Guarantee for Turkey's Democratic Consolidation

Turkey's increasingly active and independent foreign policies can represent an asset to its transatlantic partners. Yet, as this discussion illustrates, they are not always perceived that way. While Turkey's policies have a clear impact on EU and U.S. goals in Turkey's neighborhood, the United States and the EU also hold important leverage on Turkey. There is thus much that the EU and United States can do to take advantage of Turkey's increasingly prominent regional role, while furthering transatlantic aims in the region.

The prospect of EU accession has been a major factor in Turkey's internal reform process. The major impetus for reform came after Turkey became a candidate for membership in December 1999. The reform process initially started in 2001 with a series of critical constitutional amendments. A series of reform packages followed. They brought, among other things, freedom of expression and association, banned capital punishment, reduced the influence of the military over civilian government, and improved the rights of minorities. The EU, through these reforms, also helped to spark the growth of civil society discourse in Turkey. In this period, many taboo issues such as the Kurdish question, the Armenian genocide claims, the rights of non-Muslim minorities, the Cyprus problem, and the limits of secularism became subjects of debate. The EU's conditionality clearly contributed to Turkey's democratic transformation.⁵² Reform packages adopted in the context of

EU accession also steadily reduced the military's influence, and precipitated a revolutionary change in the military's mindset.⁵³ EU engagement also helped transform the Islamist movement from strongly opposing EU accession to embracing the idea, as well as the reforms associated with it.⁵⁴ As Turkey transformed domestically, its allies in the EU grew in strength and number, leading to the opening of negotiations in 2005 on the grounds that Turkey had "sufficiently" fulfilled the Copenhagen political criteria.

Ironically, the launch of EU accession negotiations in October 2005, after an acrimonious debate in the EU over Turkey's membership and the problematic terms of Turkey's Accession Negotiations Framework, actually triggered setbacks in the reform process in 2006 and 2007. The decisive victory won by AKP at the July 2007 national elections ushered in short-lived expectations of a renewed period of reform. However, the government's enthusiasm for drafting a new constitution was undercut by resistance from the opposition and the judiciary's party closure case against the AKP in 2008. This resistance was partly provoked when the government became distracted from its constitutional reform agenda and instead pushed through legislation to lift a ban on the use of headscarves in universities.

The setbacks in Turkey's reform efforts were also partially provoked by the EU's increasing skepticism of Turkey's EU membership prospects. Until 2002-03, EU skepticism of Turkey's membership was rarely voiced openly. European declarations normally focused on Turkey's shortcomings in the areas of democracy and human rights. However, when the prospects of Turkey's membership became more tangible with accession negotiations in 2005, the underlying concerns of member states came out, and they went well beyond Turkey's compliance with EU criteria.⁵⁵

The French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, has repeatedly called on the EU to offer Turkey a "privileged partnership," instead of full membership (see Box 3). German Chancellor Angela Merkel, although a little more guarded in her public statements, has taken the same line. Such statements have not only poisoned the atmosphere of the accession process, they have also led to very practical impediments to progress. Although Sarkozy stopped openly pushing the "privileged partnership" idea in 2009, France is blocking five of the chapters of EU *acquis communautaire* that it sees as relevant to the accession process.

The French government is not the only one using its national veto to stop Turkey and the Commission from opening new chapters. Germany has signaled that it does not want to talk about the free movement of workers between the countries. Moreover, beyond hindering EU-NATO cooperation (see Box 4), the Cyprus conflict risks grinding Turkey's accession talks to a halt (see Box 5). Cyprus is vetoing half a dozen chapters, because of bilateral disputes with Turkey. A further eight chapters have been frozen by the EU because of Turkey's non-implementation of the Additional Protocol extending the EU-Turkey Customs Union Agreement to Cyprus. Much as Greece stymied progress in EU-Turkey relations in the first two decades of Greek membership, the Republic of Cyprus is behaving similarly today, while failing to recognize that an EU-member Turkey would be the best (if not the only) genuine guarantee of its own security. As a result, there are currently only four chapters left to talk about – all of them pertaining to difficult topics, and all containing tricky "opening benchmark" criteria.

Some may believe that Turkey, having embarked upon an unprecedented path of domestic change, no longer needs the EU. Turkey's reform momentum has certainly acquired a life of its own. The 2009 Kurdish and Alevi "openings" are the best example of this; both are clearly aimed at Turkey's democratization, but were not spurred by the accession process. That alone underscores the importance of the EU process for Turkey, rather than the destination itself. Having pursued EU accession and the domestic change it has brought about, Ankara and Brussels may well mutually concur that membership is not the desirable end point.

These problems notwithstanding, Turkey's accession process continues to represent the best guarantee that the country's domestic transformation will proceed toward higher standards of democracy. Of course, even without an EU anchor, Turkey is unlikely to turn into a Russia or Iran. Yet given its history (and not unlike some EU member states), Turkey does run the risk of succumbing to authoritarian and populist tendencies. The EU is not and cannot be the sole driver of reform. Yet the ongoing travails in Turkey's democratization suggest that the EU anchor is still strongly needed. Having it will help rebuild trust within the country and reconstitute the pro-reform grand coalition that the AKP succeeded in promoting in its first years in office.

Rather than being blinded by ambitions of grandeur, Turkey must thus realize that its value-added in the neighborhood

A Privileged Partnership Between Turkey and the EU: What Does It Mean?

By Kemal Kirişci and Nathalie Tocci

Opponents of Turkish membership to the EU have been advocating the notion of a “privileged partnership” as an alternative. In both Turkey and the EU, many have rejected this idea, arguing that such a relationship already exists and that the actual content of the “relationship” being offered remains terribly vague. Indeed, there are no specific proposals that articulate what such a relationship might entail.

More importantly, the existing “privileged partnership” in the form of the EU-Turkey Customs Union is not a privileged relationship at all. It allows EU business people to travel to Turkey freely, while enabling Turkish goods (such as consumer durables, cars, buses, textiles, etc.) to enter the EU. While the same cannot be said about Turkish businessmen (let alone all citizens), who are prevented by the Schengen visa requirements from traveling hassle free to Europe to promote their products.

Furthermore, the Customs Union requires Turkey to implement the EU’s Common External Tariff. This works to the disadvantage of Turkey, especially when the EU signs free trade agreements with third-party countries. In such cases, Turkey is bound to implement the terms of these agreements, but third-party countries are not obliged to open their markets to Turkey. This penalizes Turkish business enormously and prevents it from competing for a fair share of third country markets. Ironically, this has helped spur Turkey’s recent entrance into markets in its immediate neighborhood, as well as in Africa and Asia.

If advocates of a “privileged partnership” with Turkey hope to advance their cause, they need to address these problems first. Turkish officials and business interests argue that Turkey accepted the imbalance present in the Customs Union agreement only with the understanding that it represented a first step toward full membership. In the absence of membership, the imbalance becomes a burden, and an additional source of distrust with the EU.

Finally, proponents of the “privileged partnership” argument undermine the credibility and effectiveness of Turkey’s EU accession process, which, to date, remains the only framework in which EU-Turkey relations exist. Turkey does not have a “right to membership.” Yet, it does have a right to being treated according to the EU’s norms, rules, and procedures as determined by Turkey’s Accession Negotiations Framework, which stipulates that, as with other candidates, Turkey’s negotiations are “open-ended.”

Yet the open-endedness of the process and the parameters of failure are determined by the negotiating process itself: i.e., Turkey’s compliance or noncompliance with EU conditions. Hence, emphasizing the open-endedness of negotiations and airing concepts of “privileged partnership” are either an affirmation of the obvious – that Turkey’s full membership is not a foregone conclusion – or they are an expression of bad faith. Both undermine any semblance of trust between the EU and Turkey, while casting a dark shadow over the EU’s reputation in the broader region.

largely hinges on its ongoing domestic transformation, which in turn is highly dependent on the EU accession process. An additional plus for Turkey's continuing accession process is the country's enhanced value to its Middle Eastern neighbors. This is best captured by Arab perceptions of Turkey. A survey of Arab public opinion recently uncovered considerable positive attitudes toward Turkey, and revealed that 64 percent of those surveyed believed that EU membership prospects made Turkey an attractive partner for the Arab world.⁵⁶

As for the EU, now that its constitutional challenges are over (for the time being), it should become more aware that the world around it is changing, and that its influence in its own neighborhood has decreased over the last decade. Whereas Turkey needs the EU for its own domestic and foreign policy projects to succeed, the EU needs Turkey in order to meet the dramatic challenges in their broader neighborhood. This should open the space for a long-needed, rational debate on Turkey in the EU, one which accounts for the complex interplay between identity and institutional, political, economic, and social interests, and above all confronts these questions in an open and outward-looking manner. Mixed signals from the Union have exacerbated the sluggishness of Turkey's domestic reforms, to the detriment of the EU as well as Turkey. Productive relations need to resume, both for Turkey's democratic future, and for the EU to become an effective global power in the 21st century (see Box 6).

U.S.-Turkish Relations in the 21st Century

Today, Turkey represents a critical partner to the United States on its three most urgent strategic issues: Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran. On Afghanistan, Turkey might be reluctant to commit more combat troops, but recognizes the priority of extinguishing the Afghan-Pakistani fires before they spread. In 2008, TICA provided more than 45 percent of its overall developmental assistance, amounting to USD 800 million, to support the "reconstruction of Afghanistan Program."⁵⁷ The Turks have taken command for the second time of the International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) in Kabul and doubled their troop levels over the last year. Every area the Turks have controlled has seen considerable and consistent improvements in ways that few other European allies can claim. Considering that Turkey boasts the second largest military in NATO and is the only functioning Muslim-majority democracy in the alliance, Turkey is well-placed to play a leading role in Kabul. Ankara has close historic ties to Afghanistan that date back to the 1920s. Often referred to as Afghanistan's "closest neighbor without borders," Turkey

also shares considerable cultural, ethnic, and linguistic links that make it an important partner for President Obama in Afghanistan.⁵⁸

On Iraq, the imminent U.S. withdrawal is removing a central point of tension in U.S.-Turkish relations. As the United States withdraws, Turkish fears of a U.S.-sponsored, autonomous Kurdish region have faded and have been replaced by a new impetus to resolve long-simmering Kurdish issues. Moreover, U.S. cooperation with Turkey in the battle against the PKK has facilitated Turkish rapprochement with the KRG, which in turn has generated economic interdependence along the border and increased Turkish influence throughout Iraq.

Ankara is determined to prevent a nuclear arms race in the region. In view of its lack of confidence in sanctions, it will support President Obama's attempts to resolve the standoff with Iran diplomatically (see Box 7).

The recent activism in Turkey's foreign relations coincides with the U.S. administration's focus on regional solutions to many of the nation's strategic interests around the world. This regional approach on the part of the Obama administration strengthens Turkey's role. U.S. policies toward Turkey cannot alone be expected to fundamentally alter Turkey's political *zeitgeist* and operational principles. Yet, rather than shying away from the nation's complex domestic scene, the United States has the ability to embrace the flexible and ambiguous identities that Turkey's players have carved out for themselves. By utilizing this strategic ambiguity, the United States can define its goals in a mutually beneficial way, and ultimately forge a stronger partnership between Ankara and Washington. Engaging both the AKP and the military simultaneously is key for any new strategy on Turkey.

The United States, through its relationships with Turkey and others in its neighborhood, also plays a critical role in ensuring that Turkey's transatlantic potential is fulfilled. With the advent of President Barack Obama's administration, the power of U.S. policy to influence Turkey's domestic political behavior has improved.⁵⁹ Given the legitimacy and popularity of President Obama, the new administration's ability to appeal directly to the Turkish people and combat anti-Americanism has received a further boost. Unlike the Bush administration, President Obama has demonstrated an ability to apply pressure on Turkey's elected leaders and officials as well as the public at large through his broad-based personal appeal and charisma. Focusing American attention on Ankara and its region by seeking to depoliticize and support Turkey's

(...Continued on page 37)

A Way Forward for NATO-EU Cooperation

By Sinan Ulgen

The existing framework of cooperation between the EU and NATO comprises the following elements:

- Berlin+ arrangements for the EU's use of NATO assets and capabilities
- Arrangements for a NATO-EU Strategic Partnership
- Arrangements regarding inclusion of non-EU European allies in the Common Security Defense Policy (CSDP) (as stated in the Nice Implementation Document)

This framework was based on a mutual understanding defined by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in 1999 as the "3Ds." That is, the purpose was not to "Duplicate" NATO assets, not to "Discriminate" against non-EU NATO members, and not to "Decouple" the EU from the transatlantic security architecture.

Launched in 2003, this framework of cooperation was undermined as a result of the EU's 2004 enlargement, in which a divided Cyprus became an EU member. Turkey prevents Cyprus – a state that it does not recognize – from participating in NATO-EU meetings. In return, Cyprus blocks the administrative arrangements that need to be implemented between the European Defense Agency (EDA) and Turkey. These impediments to NATO-EU cooperation cannot be solely attributed to the Cyprus problem alone. The EU is itself not ready to be more inclusive and transparent on ESDP matters. Institutional rigidities only provide one excuse. The real issue is the lack of political will to include non-EU allies. Hence, it is not certain that all NATO-EU issues and Turkey-ESDP issues would go away if the Cyprus problem were resolved.

NATO will review its Strategic Concept in 2010. Consultations have already begun. This exercise will be an opportunity for the parties to agree on a number of principles for the future of the European security environment. The EU reviewed its Security Strategy at the end of 2008. If the two institutions genuinely consider working together, the NATO Strategic Concept and the European Security Strategy need to complement one another. Twenty-one EU members are able to voice their concerns during the negotiations over the NATO Strategic Concept. In the same vein, they should be able to further review the European Security Strategy taking into account the new NATO Strategic Concept. Therefore, the review of the NATO Strategic Concept offers a unique opportunity for the parties to bridge their differences.

Following an agreement on a new NATO Strategic Concept, the EU needs to take similar steps to embrace all non-EU European allies. The renewed arrangements need a new and open mindset. The artificial distinction between participation in military and civilian operations, for instance, needs to come to an end. Mechanisms that allow consultation with non-EU allies are also needed. Only through these steps can the EU move toward accommodating the concerns of Turkey, a candidate with a vision for shared security that has endured over 50 years.

Cyprus Talks Hang in the Balance

By Hugh Pope

The future of talks begun in 2008 to reunite the divided island of Cyprus hangs in the balance after presidential elections on 18 April 2010 brought a dramatic change in the Turkish Cypriot leadership.

Veteran nationalist Derviş Eroğlu became president after winning over 50 percent of the vote. His predecessor, Mehmet Ali Talat, who had done more than any predecessor to try to reunite the island, won less than 43 percent. Many voters thought his strategy of compromise had failed and the rising share of the population of Turkish origin firmly favoured the more nationalist candidate. Commentators ascribed the main reason as a bitter Turkish Cypriot reaction to Europe's and the Greek Cypriots' continued reluctance to reward them for their 65 percent approval of the Annan Plan for reunification in 2004 – a plan that the Greek Cypriots rejected with 76 percent of the vote.

The international community would be well advised to engage in order to make sure the talks continue and reach a conclusion. Turkey immediately pledged its commitment to try to finish the talks this year, and has voiced its conviction that they will restart where they left off – a message that Eroğlu, whose government is paid for by Turkey, must clearly take into account.

International and Turkish support might just be enough to sustain the most promising new dynamic of the past year: a series of initiatives from Turkey to reach out to Greek Cypriots, not just to reach a conclusion in the Cyprus talks but also to solve a problem that has blocked half its negotiating chapters with the EU. The first two years of talks had quietly marked considerable progress, albeit mostly in the form of understandings rather than final agreements. In January 2010, the Turkish Cypriots, with Ankara's blessing, accepted Nicosia's demand for cross-voting in future elections for a united Cyprus leadership. This was a nod to previous concessions by the Greek Cypriots, who had offered a rotating presidency for the Turkish community, which represents 20 percent of the island's 1 million people, and Cypriot citizenship for 50,000 Turkish immigrants.

In February, there was another breakthrough: direct contact between Turkish leaders and Greek Cypriots. The Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister for EU Negotiations and the Prime Minister all met with Greek Cypriot civil society delegations. They underlined that Turkey's priority remains a reunified island, a withdrawal of almost all Turkish troops subject to the deal, and full integration of Turkish Cypriots into EU structures within a new Cypriot federal republic. For the first time, the Turkish leaders also offered to allow an EU state, Spain, a role in bringing them together with Greek Cypriots. If multi-party meetings are initiated and sustained, it will do much to dispel the mutual distrust that has plagued the talks for so many years, especially regarding the question of the 1960 Treaties of Guarantee and Alliance, involving Turkey, Greece, and the UK.

However, if this Turkish outreach to the Greek Cypriots comes to naught, and these two sides fail to bridge the crisis of trust between them, it is hard to see how the talks can reach a successful conclusion whoever the Turkish Cypriot leader is. Anything less than real momentum towards a settlement will leave Cyprus drifting even further toward indefinite partition; Turkey's EU negotiations would enter a deep freeze; any hopes of EU-NATO convergence would be shelved; Greek Cypriots would forego the big economic boost of reunification; and the Turkish Cypriots would gradually scatter and their part of the island will be absorbed into Turkey.

Hello? Am I Speaking to the European Union?

By **Katinka Barysch**

Turkey is one of the most important countries that the EU deals with: Turkey is not only a country negotiating for EU accession, it is also one of the EU's biggest trading partners, a key regional player, a potential hub for European energy supplies, and an indispensable partner in solving global issues from climate change to Iran's nuclear program. Inevitably, the relationship between the EU and Turkey is complex. Yet there is a lot the EU could do to manage it better.

The day-to-day accession negotiations with Turkey are handled by the European Commission, or more precisely by the "Directorate General for Enlargement," headed by Stefan Fule. Fule needs the consent of all 27 EU governments (usually through their Brussels-based representatives) before starting negotiations on a particular area of EU law. On the Turkish side, accession negotiations are led by Egemen Bağış, the country's experienced chief negotiator, and his increasingly professional EU Secretariat General in Ankara. On some of the more political questions, such as rights for women or religious minorities, the Commission prefers to talk to the Turkish foreign ministry, often through its ambassador to the European Union based in Brussels. The accession process is, in theory, rather technical, with Fule's and Bağış' people expected to plough through the 35 "chapters" of EU law that Turkey needs to adopt and implement before it can join. Twelve of these chapters are already on the table; only one has been provisionally closed.

In practice, EU enlargement has become highly politicized. Although all EU members gave the go-ahead for Turkey's accession negotiations in 2005, some EU leaders are having second thoughts. Leadership will be required to prevent the accession process from grinding to a halt in 2010. Even the very pro-enlargement Spanish government, which holds the rotating presidency in the first half of 2010, will struggle to keep the negotiations going unless the political atmosphere improves. The rotating presidency is no longer in charge of the overall political relationship with Turkey (or other non-EU countries). With the ratification of the EU's Lisbon Treaty, that job has gone to Cathy Ashton, the EU's new high representative for foreign policy.

Ashton will not get involved much in the accession process. But she is now in charge of managing relations between the EU and third countries. Her predecessor, Javier Solana, had a more limited mandate, staff, and budget. Ashton will be assisted by a new EU diplomat corps: the External Action Service (EAS), which, once it is up and running, will have a dedicated Turkey desk.

Ashton will handle the political dialogue with Turkey, in particular meetings with Foreign Minister Davutoğlu to discuss regional and international issues. Chief Negotiator Bağış and Commissioner Fule will continue managing the accession process. The two must be closely coordinated. Both are pragmatic, pro-enlargement and happy to acknowledge Turkey's growing regional role.

But they will not be able to escape the turf battles that are raging over the new EAS between the EU members and various bits of the EU machinery. Turkish diplomats are already moaning that they no longer know who to talk to in Brussels. The EU must simplify its internal structure regarding its foreign and enlargement policy, and quickly. The relationship with Turkey is difficult enough without bureaucratic infighting.

Strengthening U.S.-Turkish Security Relations: An Agenda for Action

By Stephen Larrabee

Revitalizing U.S.-Turkish relations should be a top U.S. strategic priority. Turkey plays a critical role in four areas of increasing strategic importance to the United States: the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, the Caucasus and Central Asia, and Europe. While U.S.-Turkish relations have recently begun to improve, a number of steps would further strengthen U.S.-Turkish security ties.

Northern Iraq

The United States should strongly support Turkey's efforts to open a direct dialogue with the leadership of the KRG in northern Iraq. There can be no stability on Turkey's southern border over the long term without a Turkish accommodation with the KRG. This does not mean that Turkey should recognize an independent Kurdish state, but for regional stability to exist, Turkey needs to work out a *modus vivendi* with the KRG. Ultimately, this can only be achieved through a direct dialogue with the KRG leadership. The Erdoğan government has taken important steps in this direction since late 2008. However, Turkey and the KRG appear to be moving by fits and starts toward rapprochement, which continues to need strong U.S. support.

Iran

The United States and Turkey need to develop a common approach to Iran, especially Iran's desire to acquire nuclear capability. A nuclear-armed Iran could upset the strategic balance in the Middle East and Persian Gulf, sparking a highly dangerous regional nuclear arms race. It could also stimulate the beginnings of a nuclear debate in Turkey itself, which would arouse serious concerns among some of Turkey's neighbors, especially Greece and Armenia. Turkey should be encouraged to use its good ties to the Iranian leadership to underscore the negative consequences a nuclear-armed Iran would have for Turkish and regional security. Turkey's failure to support a tightening of sanctions against Iran if Tehran continues to refuse to comply with IAEA regulations would damage Turkey's reputation and reinforce the perception in many Western capitals that Ankara was drifting further from the West.

Eurasia and the Caucasus

The United States should encourage and support recent Turkish efforts to promote an improvement in relations with Armenia, particularly the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border. The normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia would significantly contribute to enhancing peace and stability in the Caucasus. It would also enable Armenia to reduce its economic and political dependence on Russia and Iran and open the possibility of involving Armenia in key regional energy projects from which it has been excluded to date. However, this process needs to take into consideration the legitimate security interests of Azerbaijan and should be complemented by an intensified effort to resolve the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. Failure to make progress in resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict could not only jeopardize the normalization process between Turkey and Armenia but could result in renewed tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia that could seriously undermine regional security in the Caucasus.

Turkish Membership in the European Union

The United States should strongly support Turkey's membership in the EU. Turkey's integration into the EU would strengthen the EU and help put to rest the claim that the West—especially Europe—is innately hostile to Muslims. This could have a salutary effect on the West's relations with the Muslim world. Indeed, a moderate, democratic Turkey could act as an important bridge to the Middle East. On the other hand, rejection of Turkey's candidacy could provoke an anti-Western backlash, strengthening those forces in Turkey that want to weaken Turkey's ties to the West. Such a development is in the interest of neither the EU nor the United States. This support can be most effective, however, by sustained quiet diplomacy behind the scenes rather than public lecturing and badgering the EU.

Turkish-Greek Relations and Cyprus

The United States should intensify its support for recent efforts by Greece and Turkey to resolve their differences over the Aegean. Although Turkish-Greek relations have significantly improved since 1999, differences over the Aegean continue to mar bilateral relations and represent a threat to stability in the Eastern Mediterranean. Unless these differences are resolved, there is always a danger that some incident could escalate out of control and lead to armed conflict, as almost happened over the islets of Imia/Kardak

in February 1996. At a time when NATO faces serious challenges in Afghanistan and the post-Soviet space, the last thing the United States and its NATO allies need is a new crisis in the Aegean.

The United States should also encourage and support the intensification of the inter-communal dialogue being conducted under UN auspices between the two Cypriot communities. Progress toward a settlement of the Cyprus dispute would give Turkey's membership bid critical new momentum at a time when accession negotiations have visibly slowed. It would also contribute to greater overall security and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean.

BOX 7 CONTINUED

various “democratic openings” is an important further step. Given the fact that the resolution of the Kurdish issue is a key component of Turkey's EU membership, and that the United States has a comparative advantage in this area in terms of providing loans, security, and training, it is a natural area for further cooperation. If Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and President Obama get involved – if only by simply acknowledging the opportunity that currently exists – it would go a long way toward supporting the progress made so far.

While the U.S. withdrawal from Iraq has created positive momentum in addressing the Kurdish issue in Turkey, it has also opened the way for improved relations between Turkey, Northern Iraq, and the broader region. Beyond the Middle East, pushing for the ratification of the protocols signed between Armenia and Turkey, and engaging more actively in the Minsk group peace process for Nagorno Karabakh would lend to help Turkish-Armenian reconciliation. This would also have the added value of eliminating the most aggravating aspect of U.S.-Turkish relations: the recurring Armenian Genocide Congressional Resolution.

Finally, the United States must continue to support Turkey's reforms and its EU accession process if it wants change to be permanent rather than fleeting.⁶⁰ Discreet dialogue with Europeans on Turkey's foreign policy potential will be critical, while refraining from the EU-bashing that plays well with Turkish audiences but backfires in EU capitals. Working toward a permanent solution in Cyprus would alleviate the biggest thorn in the side of Turkish-EU relations and put increased pressure on the EU to fulfill its accession process commitments to Turkey. As both Turkey's and the EU's leading strategic partner, the United States has the responsibility, but more importantly the opportunity, to deepen transatlantic relations by highlighting the importance of keeping Turkey's

democratic reforms on track. At the same time, it has the ability to wake up Europeans to the fast-changing nature of global trends, while demanding a deeper and wider integration process.

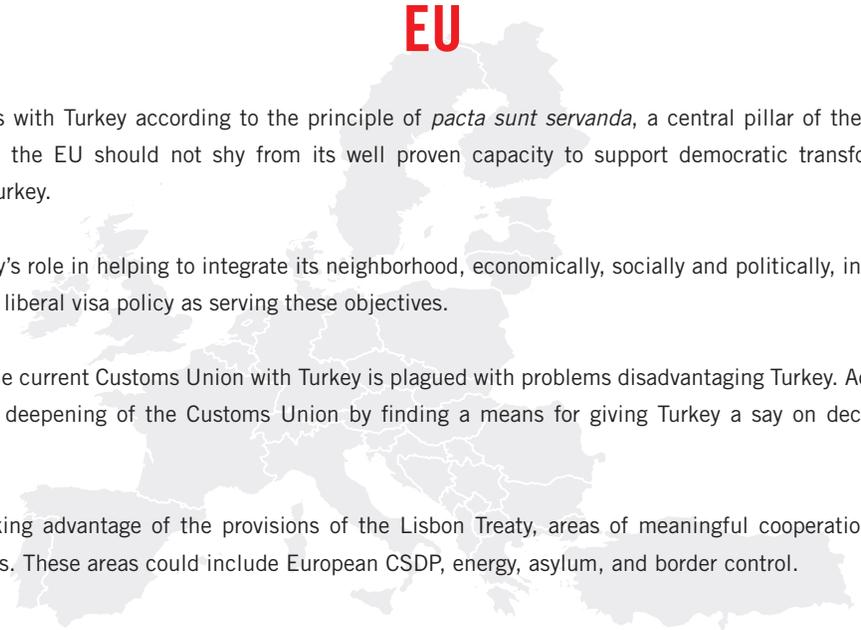
Of course, even a more democratic and independent Turkey may at times formulate policies differently from those of the United States. In other words, as Turkey democratizes and gains in self-confidence, it can no longer be expected to blindly follow Washington's lead. Turkey can no longer be taken for granted; its identity and survival are no longer solely bound to the West. Today, Turkey has become more European and more democratic, more conservative and Islamic, and increasingly more nationalistic, all at the same time. Ankara finds itself at the intersection of Asia, Europe, the Middle East, the Balkans, and the Caucasus; it is attempting to develop a new position for itself as a transregional power not exclusively dependent on any one of these regions. Precisely because of this, Turkey's relations with both the United States and the EU hold the promise of becoming stronger, more complex, and more mature.

Policy Recommendations

Turkey

- ★ Recognize that continued democratization at home and adherence to universal values in foreign policy is what makes Turkey a source of inspiration and allows Turkey to act as a constructive force in its neighborhood. Populism undermines Turkey's image and its contribution to its neighborhood.
- ★ Remain committed to the EU accession process acknowledging its importance both for Turkey's domestic transformation and for Turkey's regional role and relevance.
- ★ Seek increased trade and investment with the European markets while continuing to promote economic ties with the neighborhood and beyond.
- ★ Appreciate that Turkey is increasingly becoming an immigration as well as transit migration country. This necessitates the reform of the country's laws and administrative structures to better manage these flows in a manner that serves both human and national security.
- ★ Acknowledge that achieving "zero problem with neighbors" will require careful management of complex relations which necessitates a frank and constructive approach to all parties.
- ★ Seek to broaden cooperation with the U.S., taking advantage of the Obama administration's openness to fresh ideas, and reaffirm Turkey's transatlantic commitments within a coherent regional and foreign policy framework.

EU



- ★ Conduct relations with Turkey according to the principle of *pacta sunt servanda*, a central pillar of the European integration project. Furthermore, the EU should not shy from its well proven capacity to support democratic transformation in accession countries including Turkey.
- ★ Appreciate Turkey's role in helping to integrate its neighborhood, economically, socially and politically, into the global economy and view the Turkey's liberal visa policy as serving these objectives.
- ★ Recognize that the current Customs Union with Turkey is plagued with problems disadvantaging Turkey. Address these problems and work toward the deepening of the Customs Union by finding a means for giving Turkey a say on decisions it is obliged to carry out.
- ★ Maximize, by taking advantage of the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty, areas of meaningful cooperation with Turkey beyond accession negotiations. These areas could include European CSDP, energy, asylum, and border control.

US



- ★ Support Turkey's EU membership through quiet diplomacy by encouraging Turkey's reform efforts and indicating to its European partners that the notion of "privileged partnership" lacks credibility and undermines the letter and the spirit of the accession process.
- ★ Recognize that economic factors, the need for markets and for energy increasingly shape Turkish foreign policy. The downside may be that it induces Turkey to seek good relations with neighbors with whom the US has difficult relations with. Yet this is outweighed by that upside, whereby Turkey is compelled to pursue a policy of "zero problems with neighbors", which benefits the West.
- ★ Remain engaged in the Turkish-Armenian reconciliation process by pressing Turkey (and Armenia) to ratify the protocols, while concomitantly engaging in the Nagorno- Karabakh peace process both within the Minsk Group and beyond it.
- ★ Step up involvement in the Cyprus peace process. In view of the critical importance of a Cyprus settlement for Turkey's EU membership prospects and the EU's limited ability to engage as at third party actor, the United States should be more active.

- ¹ All data in this section are taken from: World Bank, Quick Query Data Source. <http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/DDPQQ/member.do?method=getMembers&userid=1&queryId=135>
- ² The data on the EU countries include: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, and after 2004, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. About 70 percent of EU citizens coming to Turkey come from countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, or Belgium, all of which have a significant number of citizens of Turkish origin. The data on the Former Soviet Union neighbors include: Russia, Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. The data on the Balkan neighbors include: Greece, Bulgaria, and Romania. Finally, the data on Middle East neighbors include Syria, Iraq, and Iran.
- ³ Icduygu, Ahmet (2009). *SOPEMI Report for Turkey 2008/2009*. Istanbul: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.
- ⁴ See Davutoglu, Ahmet (2001). *Stratejik Derinlik, Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu* (Strategic Depth, Turkey's International Position) Istanbul: Kure Yayinlari.
- ⁵ Davutoglu, Ahmet, *Stratejik Derinlik*. See also his articles: "The Clash of Interests: An Explanation of the World (Dis)Order," *Perceptions* 2:4 (December 1997-February 1998); "Türkiye merkez ülke olmalı," *Radikal*, February 26, 2004; and "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007," *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (2008), pp. 77-96.
- ⁶ At the Davos World Economic Forum in January 2009, Erdoğan accused Israel (and his co-panelist Peres) of crimes against humanity in the conduct of Operation Cast Lead in Gaza. For more on the Davos incident see Joshua W. Walker's "What's the Matter with Turkey?" *Foreign Policy*, March 6, 2009. <http://experts.foreignpolicy.com/blog/4800>
- ⁷ Interview with expert on Syria, Damascus, October 2009.
- ⁸ Syria appreciated Turkey's opening particularly at a time when Damascus was facing increasing isolation from the United States through the December 2003 Syria Accountability Act, followed by broader American and European accusations of Syria's involvement in the assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Refik Hariri in February 2005.
- ⁹ Bengio, Ofra (2009) 'Altercating Interests and Orientations between Israel and Turkey: A View from Israel', *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 43-55.
- ¹⁰ In 2002, then Turkish Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit described Israel's attack on Jenin as "genocide." In 2004 Prime Minister Erdoğan accused Israel of "state terrorism," and in 2009 at Davos of crimes against humanity.
- ¹¹ Including Turkey's withdrawal of an invitation to Israel to participate in the military exercise "Anatolian Eagle," Israel's abhorrence at an episode of a Turkish TV series showing Israeli forces targeting Palestinian children, and the public humiliation of the Turkish Ambassador to Israel by the Israeli Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.
- ¹² The 5+1 contact group includes the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany.
- ¹³ For a discussion of Turkish policy see Winrow, Gareth (2007). "Turkey and the Greater Black Sea Region," in Nursin A. Guney, ed., *Contentious Issues of Security and the Future of Turkey*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, pp. 121-36.
- ¹⁴ "The Future of Turkey-Russia Relations," *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*, Jan. 23, 2010; "Ankara Moves Toward 'Privileged Partnership' with Moscow," *Today's Zaman*, Oct. 21, 2009.
- ¹⁵ Quoted in Torbakov, Igor (2008). *The Georgia Crisis and Russia-Turkey Relations*. Washington, D.C.: The Jamestown Foundation, p. 21.
- ¹⁶ See for example Suat Kınıklıoğlu, "'Neo-Ottoman' Turkey?"; <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/kiniklioglu2/English>; "Turkish Premier Rejects Shift in Foreign Policy Direction," *Today's Zaman*, Jan. 7, 2010.
- ¹⁷ Cornell, Svante E. and Niklas Nilsson (2008). *Europe's Energy Security: Gazprom's Dominance and Caspian Supply Alternatives*. Washington, D.C. and Stockholm: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, Johns Hopkins University – SAIS and Institute for Security and Development Policy.
- ¹⁸ Aras, Bülent and Emre Işeri (2009). *The Nabucco Natural Gas Pipeline: From Opera to Reality*. Ankara: SETA Policy Brief.
- ¹⁹ Kınıklıoğlu, "'Neo-Ottoman' Turkey?" March 12, 2009
- ²⁰ Winrow, Gareth (2009). *Turkey, Russia, and the Caucasus: Common and Diverging Interests*. London: Chatham House Briefing Paper.
- ²¹ Kardaş, Şaban (2010). "Erdoğan Fosters Nuclear Cooperation with Russia," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Volume: 7, Issue: 10, January 15, 2010.
- ²² Nergiz, Abdullah (2008). *Türkiye'de Sivil Havacılığın Gelişimi ve THY*, (Master's thesis, presented at Marmara University, Social Science Institute, Istanbul) and data obtained from the head offices of Turkish Airlines. THY's international passengers increased from just under half a million in 1971 to 13 million in 2009.
- ²³ All data in this section are taken from: EU Commission, DG Trade, Sept 22, 2009.
- ²⁴ Notes on Table 3. Réunion, Guadeloupe, Martinique and French Guiana are also added to the EU values for 1991. For 1991, the values for Russia are values for USSR. Therefore, separate data do not exist for Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, and Azerbaijan for 1991. For 2000, no data exist for Iraq.
- ²⁵ For study of the visa problem between Turkey and the EU see Doğan, Erhan (2009). *Impact of Visa Regimes over Travel Decisions and Patterns of Turkish Citizens*. MireKoç Report, Istanbul, Koç University.
- ²⁶ All data in this section are taken from: World Bank, Quick Query Data Source. <http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/DDPQQ/member.do?method=getMembers&userid=1&queryId=135>
- ²⁷ World Bank: Prospects for the Global Economy Data Bank, January 2010.
- ²⁸ These include the Women for Women's Human Rights (WWHR) and the Association of Art, Culture and Ecology (GOLADER). Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV) and the Corporate Social Responsibility of Turkey (TKSSD) are two NGOs directly involved in democracy promotion projects in the Middle East.
- ²⁹ Turam, Berna (2007). *Between Islam and the State: The Politics of Engagement*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 20.
- ³⁰ Probably the most striking criticism of the movement comes from a Turkish-American academic, Hakan Yavuz. Yavuz, in his previous writings had described the movement as one contributing to pluralist democracy. However, more recently he has become critical of the movement on the grounds that its commitment to democracy, freedom of thought, and secularism is becoming suspect. For these views see a series of articles by Özdemir Ince in *Hürriyet*, June 13-15, 2008.
- ³¹ Özel, Soli (2003). "Turkey at the Polls: After the Tsunami," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 14, No. 2, (April), p. 93.
- ³² Turam, 2007.
- ³³ Yavuz, Hakan (2009). *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ³⁴ Carkoğlu, Ali and Ersin Kalaycıoğlu (2009). *The Rising Tide of Conservatism in Turkey*. New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, p. 149.

- ³⁵ Soli Ozel quoted in Sabrian Tavernise, "As Army Fades, Turks Fret Over What's to Come," *International Herald Tribune*, March 3, 2010.
- ³⁶ See for example Menon, Rajan and Enders Wimbush (2007). "Is the United States Losing Turkey?" Hudson Institute Special Report (March) or Sullivan, Andrew. "Losing Turkey?" *Atlantic*, October 2009. http://andrewsullivan.theatlantic.com/the_daily_dish/2007/10/losing-turkey-1.html
- ³⁷ See "Prime Minister Erdoğan Reiterates 'No Genocide' in Darfur," *Today's Zaman*, November 9, 2009; and "China Tells PM Erdoğan to Withdraw Uighur Genocide Remark," in *Today's Zaman*, July 15, 2009.
- ³⁸ Scham, P. and O. Abu-Irshaid (2009). " Hamas: Ideological Rigidity and Political Flexibility," Special Report, Washington, D.C., USIP. <http://www.usip.org/resources/hamas>
- ³⁹ As argued by a former Israeli official and negotiator: "Turkey is currently doing what neither the U.S. nor the EU have the courage to do." Interview with the author, October 2009, Jerusalem.
- ⁴⁰ Interview with an official from the OIC Secretariat, October 2009.
- ⁴¹ Aktar, Cengiz and Nedim Ogelman (1994). "Recent Developments in East-West Migration: Turkey and the Petty Traders," *International Migration*, Vol. 32, No. 2, pp. 343-353.
- ⁴² The term "ex-Soviet world" is used here to refer to both successor states of the Soviet Union as well as those states that were regarded as being part of the Soviet Bloc such as Bulgaria and Romania.
- ⁴³ The exception was Graham Fuller who noted how Turkey was developing new relations to the "south, east, and north" and expressed concern that if accompanied with "chauvinist and anti-Western positions" this may be "in no one's interest." See Fuller, Graham (1992). *Turkey Faces East: New Orientations Toward the Middle East and the Old Soviet Union*. Santa Monica, Calif., Rand, p. ix.
- ⁴⁴ Interview broadcast by TRT1 (2009). "Ankara Gündemi," January 26.
- ⁴⁵ Interview with U.S. diplomat, Damascus, October 2009.
- ⁴⁶ Kirişçi, Kemal (2005). "A Friendlier Schengen Visa System as a Tool of 'Soft Power': The Experience of Turkey," *European Journal of Migration and Law*, Vol. 7, No. 4, pp. 343-367.
- ⁴⁷ The president of the Iranian Trade and Industry Chamber said in a meeting that though he was very supportive of Iranians visiting Turkey, direct flights to Antalya and Bodrum would not be looked upon favorably because of "topless beaches," reported in *Akşam*, February 7, 2007.
- ⁴⁸ Al Sharif, Yousef and Samir Saha (2009). "Turkey's European Membership: The Arab Perspective, Notes from the Arab Media," in *Reflections of EU-Turkey Relations in the Muslim World*, Istanbul, Open Society Foundation, p. 25.
- ⁴⁹ Al-Azm, Sadik J. (2005). "Islam and Secular Humanism," in *Islam and Secularism*, Antwerpen, The Dialogue Series No. 2, Universitair Centrum Saint-Ignatius, p. 48.
- ⁵⁰ Akgün, Mensur et al. (2009). *The Perception of Turkey in the Middle East*. Istanbul, TESEV Yayınları, pp. 21 and 23.
- ⁵¹ Aydın Düzgüt, Senem and Nathalie Tocci (2009). "Transforming Turkish Foreign Policy: The Quest for Regional Leadership and Europeanization," *Commentary*, Brussels, CEPS, November.
- ⁵² Aydın, Senem and Fuat Keyman (2004). "European Integration and the Transformation of Turkish Democracy," *EU-Turkey Working Papers*, (Centre for European Studies), no. 2.
- ⁵³ Aydınli, Ersen, Nihat Ali Özcan and Doğan Akyaz (2006). "The Turkish Military's March Towards Europe," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 1, January-February, p. 84.
- ⁵⁴ Yavuz, Hakan (2006). "Islam and Europeanization in Turkish-Muslim Socio-Political Movements," in Byrnes, Timothy and Peter J. Katzenstein, eds. *Religion in an Expanding Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ⁵⁵ Tocci, Nathalie, ed. (2007). *Conditionality, Impact and Prejudice in EU-Turkey Relations*. Rome: IAI Quaderni.
- ⁵⁶ Akgün, Mensur et al. (2009). *The Perception of Turkey in the Middle East*. Istanbul, TESEV Yayınları, p. 25.
- ⁵⁷ TİKA (2009). *2008 Annual Report*. Ankara, TİKA, p. 10
- ⁵⁸ The American emphasis on combat troop levels is not shared in Turkey where the fact that not a single Afghan has died from a Turkish bullet is continually cited as a major reason for the success of Turkish troops in the country. For more on Turkey's role in Afghanistan, see Joshua W. Walker <http://wonkroom.thinkprogress.org/2009/12/04/turkey-obama%E2%80%99s-ideal-partner/>
- ⁵⁹ The most recent indicator of this was the Transatlantic Trends survey (<http://www.transatlantictrends.org/>) that showed a considerable "Obama Bounce" throughout Europe, including Turkey, that indicated the most positive public opinion on the new U.S. president in the last four years of polling in Turkey.
- ⁶⁰ Pope, Hugh (2009). "What Obama Should Say to Erdoğan," Washington, D.C., Transatlantic Academy. <http://www.transatlanticacademy.org/view/resources/uploaded/Hugh%20Pope%20-%20What%20Obama%20should%20say%20to%20Erdoğan.pdf>
- ⁶¹ Lesser, Ian. O. (2006). "Turkey, the United States and the Delusion of Geopolitics," *Survival*, Vol. 48, No.3, pp. 83-96.

Transatlantic Academy Fellows (2009-2010)

Senior Fellows

Ahmet Evin is the founding dean of Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Sabanci University. As director of education of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, a Geneva-based international development foundation, he coordinated the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and in cooperation with that US-based resource center assisted in the development of architectural education in Asia and Africa. Prof. Evin initiated, with the European Commission's support, a policy dialogue on the future European architecture, EU's eastward expansion, its Mediterranean policy, and the customs union agreement with Turkey. His research interests include theories of the State and elites; Turkish political development; and democracy and civil society. He currently works on current foreign policy issues related to the European enlargement, its significance for Turkey and the region as well as its effect on Transatlantic relations. He received his BA in English and Comparative Literature from Columbia University in 1966. That same year he was named William Mitchell Fellow at Columbia where he continued his graduate work and received his Ph.D. in Middle East Studies and Cultural History in 1973. Prior to his appointment at Sabanci University, Dr. Evin taught at New York University, Harvard University, Hacettepe University (Ankara), University of Pennsylvania (where he also served as director of the Middle East Center), University of Hamburg, and Bilkent University in Ankara (where he headed the Department of Political Science).

Kemal Kirişçi is a professor at the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Boğaziçi University, Istanbul. He holds a Jean Monnet Chair in European Integration and was also the director of the Center for European Studies at the university between 2002 and June 2008. He received his Ph. D. at City University in London in 1986. He has been a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Minnesota and has also taught at Carleton University, Webster University in Geneva, the University of Michigan and the General Staff Armed Forces College, Istanbul. His areas of research interest include European integration, asylum, border management and immigration issues in the European Union, EU-Turkish relations, Turkish foreign policy, ethnic conflicts, and refugee movements. He has previously taught at universities in Britain, Switzerland and the United States. Kirişçi has written numerous reports on immigration issues in EU-Turkish relations that can be accessed from www.carim.org.

Ronald H. Linden is Professor of Political Science at the University of Pittsburgh. A Princeton Ph.D. (1976), Dr. Linden is the author of "Balkan Geometry: Turkish Accession and the International Relations of Southeast Europe" *Orbis* (Spring, 2007) and "EU Accession and the Role of International Actors," in Sharon Wolchik and Jane Curry *Central and East European Politics: From Communism to Democracy* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2008). During 1984-89 and 1991-98 he was Director of the Center for Russian and East European Studies at Pitt. From 1989 to 1991 Dr. Linden served as Director of Research for Radio Free Europe in Munich, Germany. He is currently the Associate Editor of *Problems of Post-Communism* and in 2008 edited a special issue devoted to "The New Populism in Central and Southeast Europe." Dr. Linden has received research grants from the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research and its predecessor, the National Council for Soviet and East European Research, and from the International Research and Exchanges Board. He has been a Fulbright Research Scholar, a Fulbright Distinguished Lecturer, a Research Scholar at the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies of the Woodrow Wilson Center, a Senior Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace under the Jennings Randolph Program on International Peace, and a Guest Scholar of the East European Studies Program of the Woodrow Wilson Center.

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Helmut Schmidt Fellow

Thomas Straubhaar is the Director of the Hamburg Institute of International Economics (HWWI) and Professor of Economics at the University of Hamburg. Research Interests: International economic relations, governance, education and population economics. He is a member of the Expert Advisory Board for Integration and Migration (Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration). Straubhaar has the following affiliations: Policy Fellow at the Institute for the Study of Labor, Bonn, Member of the Council for Foreign Trade Theory and Policy at the Verein für Socialpolitik, Director at the Hamburg European College, an institute for integration research of the University of Hamburg, Member of the Council for Economic Policy at the Verein für Socialpolitik, Ph. D. Advisor at the Friedrich-Naumann Foundation, Member of the Council for Population Economics at the Verein für Socialpolitik, Member of the Academy of Sciences Hamburg, Responsible for programme planning of economics at the Bucerius Law School, Hamburg, President of the ARGE (Arbeitsgemeinschaft deutscher wirtschaftswissenschaftlicher Forschungsinstitute - Working Group of the German Economic Research Institutes); Executive board member of the ARGE, since 2001 CEPR Research Fellow, Centre for Economic Policy Research, London. Straubhaar completed his PhD at the University of Berne, Switzerland.

Post Doctoral Fellows

Joshua W. Walker is a PhD doctoral candidate in Politics and Public Policy at Princeton University focusing on international relations and security studies. Joshua's dissertation focuses on the role of historical memories in post-imperial successor states' domestic and foreign policies with particular focus on Turkey and Japan. Walker is a fellow of the Pacific Council on International Policy, a former fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, a graduate fellow at the Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination and Bradley Foundation. Joshua is the co-founder of the Program on Religion, Diplomacy, and International Relations at Princeton and the Young Professions in Foreign Policy in New York. Prior to Princeton, Joshua completed a Master's from Yale University in International Relations and received two graduate certificates in International Security and Middle East studies. Joshua completed a year long Fulbright Fellowship in Ankara, Turkey where he researched this country's foreign and security policy, particularly its European Union aspirations and North Atlantic Treaty Organization membership, in relation to questions about its national and cultural identity. He received his BA from the University of Richmond in Leadership Studies and International Economics.

Juliette Tolay-Sargnon is completing her Ph.D in political science and international relations at the University of Delaware. Her dissertation looks at Turkish approaches to immigration, and studies the historical and cultural sources of these complex attitudes and policies. A French national, Ms Tolay-Sargnon has also studied at Sciences Po in Paris, from which she has received a B.A and M.A, as well as at INALCO, where she received an M.A in Turkish studies. She has studied or conducted research in Turkey, Tajikistan and Iran. She has authored a number of papers and a book chapter on migration flows in the Middle East and North Africa. Her research at the Academy will deal with the movement of population in and out of Turkey and the implications of migration for Turkish foreign policies.

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