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ANOTHER EMPIRE?

A DECADE OF TURKEY'S
FOREIGN POLICY UNDER THE
JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY



İSTANBUL BİLGİ UNIVERSITY PRESS

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EDITED BY
KEREM ÖKTEM - AYŞE KADIOĞLU - MEHMET KARLI



İSTANBUL BİLGİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ YAYINLARI

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Edited volumes are always a bit of an experiment, particularly if they are based on the proceedings of an academic event. *Another Empire* indeed draws on a conference with the title ‘Turkey’s foreign policy in a changing world: Old alignments and new neighbourhoods’, which the editors and Dr Othon Anastasakis, Director of Southeast European Studies at Oxford, convened in May 2010 at St Antony’s College. Yet, we have also incorporated papers from other authors to respond adequately to the momentous changes, which the Arab uprisings have meant for Turkey, its neighbourhood and the world. It is a veritable challenge for editors to keep lively, constructive debate and diversity of opinion—the ideal case scenario for a collection—from deteriorating into a cacophony of mutually disinterested voices and disjointed ideas. As editors, with different disciplinary backgrounds ranging from political science and international relations to social and legal studies, and with different subject positions, we experienced this challenge first hand among ourselves and even before we embarked on the book project. When we did sit down to prepare the book, however, we realised that we were already equipped with the necessary discursive means to ensure a mutually challenging but fruitful debate. Our greatest thanks, hence, go to our authors, who have made the extra effort to tackle the complexities of the contested and hotly debated issue that is Turkey’s foreign policy.

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Preface

A Proactive Policy with Many Hunches on the Back

BASKIN ORAN

‘**A**re you changing axis?’ This question dates back to 1967. Meant to be an admonishment of then Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel, it was allegedly uttered by the US ambassador to Ankara.¹ Demirel, considered to be among three of Turkey’s most pro-American Prime Ministers, along with Adnan Menderes and Turgut Özal, had tried to obtain US loans for a series of heavy industry projects. When his request was refused, Demirel attempted to strike a deal with the USSR instead. Despite having a reputation as Turkey’s archenemy, the Soviet Union only too readily complied and provided the grant (Yetkin 1995, p. 113).

Turkey’s foreign policy has changed significantly since the advent of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in November 2002, but certainly not in the way Western observers have posited. It is possible to distinguish three distinct arguments made thus far. The first suggests that Turkey is changing axes, or alliances, by replacing a transatlantic one with an Islamic orientation. The second argument proposes that the Turkish government is

1 This “dialogue” between Demirel and the US ambassador was mentioned by Demirel himself in an interview with Güneri Cıvaoglu, and is referred to in Çetin Yetkin’s *Türkiye’de Askerî Darbel-er ve Amerika*, 27 Mayıs, 12 Mart ve 12 Eylülde Amerika’nın Yeri [Military Coups in Turkey and the US—The Place of the US in the 27 May, 12 March, and 12 September Coups] published in 1995. The very same comment was used by Robert Wexler, co-chairperson of the Friendship Group with Turkey, in 2003 in a news report entitled ‘Delicate warning from the American delegation: “I can say that we were shocked by Turkey’s dialogue with Syria and Iran. We wondered if Turkey is changing axis”’ in the daily *Cumhuriyet*.

pursuing a policy of Neo-Ottomanism—tantamount to executing an imperial policy similar to that of the Ottoman Empire. And the final argument asserts that Turkey should serve as a model for the democratisation of Muslim majority societies. Since these claims have often framed the debate on Turkish foreign policy *for* the last decade, it is worth critically reflecting on them at the outset before we dwell on a critical summary of Turkish foreign policy *during* the last decade.

IS THERE A “CHANGE OF AXIS”?

The claim that Turkey might be changing its alliances has been heard many times before. The slogan “Turkey is going Bolshevik!” was used when Mustafa Kemal tried to obtain gold and weapons from Soviet Russia during Turkey’s war of independence (1919-22) against Greek invaders backed by Allied forces. “Turkey is slipping towards the Nazis!” was the contention in the early 1940s when President İsmet İnönü tried to appease the German government, whose forces had reached the Turkish-Bulgarian and Greek borders, less than 300 km from İstanbul. “Turkey is going communist!” was the US response when Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, frustrated by American refusal of further loans, declared that he might undertake a trip to Moscow in 1959.

The fearful sentence “Turkey is turning non-aligned!” was voiced by Western commentators to suggest that Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit was moving away from NATO when he sought to establish better diplomatic and economic ties with a number of Third World countries in 1974 and 1978. “Turkey wants to establish a Turkic world!” was suggested by many in the late 1980s, when *The Economist* declared that Prime Minister Turgut Özal was trying to create a ‘Turkish world from the Adriatic to the China Sea’ by attempting to establish closer ties with the newly independent Central Asian states following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The final headline, this time under a Turkish government generally considered to be strongly pro-American and accused by many Turkish commentators for selling out to international capitalism, makes the allegation that “Islamists are changing Turkey’s axis”.

Keeping in mind that, since Ottoman times, Turkey and Turkish foreign policy have always been orientated towards the West—towards Western Europe, and then towards the US—one is inclined to wonder why these critical headlines have appeared with such regularity, particularly when pro-American governments were in power in Turkey. Then, the initial response

would be to state that these allegations were made by official spokespeople for the US, or for certain European states, or else by individuals with vested interests in maintaining the status quo in terms of Turkey's relations with these states, fearing a Turkish deviation from an uncompromising Westernist course, taken all too often for granted by the West.

Next, it is important to note that these alarmist statements gain currency every time Turkish governments attempt to diversify their staunchly Euro-Atlanticist position in order to cope with massively changing global conditions, and also in order to secure *relative autonomy* through regional balances of power, a *sine qua non* policy for any *strategic medium power*.

As a third point, it should be added that this deviation from US-policy has always resonated with structural domestic developments in Turkey, corresponding to the transition from a phase of national capitalism, characterised by statism and import substitution, towards the global capitalist system. By the early 21st century, this shift was accompanied by an aggressive export policy; the gradual phasing out of military tutelage and orthodox Kemalism; and by the transition from a supposedly homogenous, and definitely monist, to a diversified and pluralistic society. These domestic changes were deeply intertwined with—and causally related to—the global processes of détente, non-alignment, the end of the Cold War, the rise of state-groupings like the BRIC, the conversion from imperialist occupation to a global financial system, and the transition symbolised by the ideological change from the Bush to the Obama administration in the US.

Most importantly, the diversification, which has necessitated a certain deviation from US policy, has always been harmonious with the interests of Euro-Atlantic actors. An orientation to the West and conformity with Euro-Atlanticist policies and regional balance of power politics are ultimately two sides of the same coin. Western powers have dominated the status quo during the last two centuries at least, but this domination is rooted in the fact that, in the post-bipolar world, the power and hegemony of the West can only be secured through the employment of Western-allied countries and their elevation to the role of pivotal states. A pivotal state, in this context, is a fairly important regional power, also defined as “a rising market”, through which the hegemon exerts regional impact. It should also not be forgotten that claims of an axis change owe a lot to Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's harsh policy against Israel. Finally, it is an irony of history that those in Turkey who want a “change of axis” in foreign policy are not

the “Islamists”, but people diametrically opposed to them, a section of Kemalist nationalists (*ulusalcılar*) who, under the banner of Eurasianism, use anti-Western discourse which accuses the EU—which has neither an army nor a foreign policy—of imperialism.²

THE QUESTION OF NEW-OTTOMANISM

It is true that AKP leaders like Erdoğan, Ahmet Davutoğlu and Ali Babacan have endorsed a discourse that evokes the glory of the Ottoman Empire. Davutoğlu, the author of *Strategic Depth* (2001) in which he longs for a *Pax Ottomanica*, spoke in Sarajevo about reintegrating the Balkans and the Middle East into one globally significant region, as it had been in the time of the Ottoman Empire. At the *Al-Jazeera* Forum in Doha in March 2011, he related how there were no borders before, and how Damascus and Bagdad were linked to one another. Erdoğan has also been on record asserting that neighbouring capitals from Sarajevo to Ramallah would also profit from the AKP’s victory in Turkey’s 2011 elections.

Conversely, we know that after the Arab Spring in particular, this discourse has lost its initial power—both in Turkey and in the West. First of all, Davutoğlu wrote what has come to be considered by many as the “bible” of Turkish foreign policy more than a decade ago, in the context of a very different international conjuncture, and also when the academic had not yet faced the realities of global politics. On the other hand, the AKP needed a catchy symbolic project to motivate its socio-economic class base, namely the “Anatolian Tigers” (also called “Islamist Capital” or “Green Capital”). Second, this socio-economic base would naturally go to the neighbouring Muslim countries first, as the European markets had already been patronised by the great bourgeoisie of Istanbul. This capital represented the once hidden

2 Leftist ideology, globally influential after the 1960s, has been prominent among the Kemalist Turkish youth who discovered that socialism and the Kemalist nationalism of the 1930s shared an important factor: “anti-imperialism”. They crossed the bridge of imperialism to accede to socialism all the while staying staunch Kemalists. However, they did not know this at the time. I, personally, was one of them. After the monist structure built by Kemalism in the 1920s and 30s began to give way to pluralism in the 2000s, an important section of these “leftwing-Kemalists” (*ulusalcılar*) began to take the same *bridge* to make a “definite return” to their nationalist origins. I am using this term as it was inspired by the Turkish “gastarbeiters” in Germany who returned to Turkey in the 1980s and 90s. The difference between Kemalists of the 1930s and those of the 2000s, however, is quite striking: while the former, once in power after independence, attempted to “clone” Western Europe, the former are now definitely anti-Europe, to the point of xenophobia. It is this important segment of the Kemalists that now suggests a Eurasian foreign policy instead of a foreign policy aligned with Western interests.

savings (“the gold under the pillow”) of conservative and Islamist Anatolian notables. It was first “unearthed” by Turgut Özal’s cheap banking credits in the mid-1980s. This discovery transformed it, in less than ten years, into huge local, than national, and then international investments.

THE “MODEL” QUESTION

Normative discourse on the “Turkish model” has also surfaced at least three times before, and the attempts to promote Turkey as a model have thus far all failed. The first time the model was invoked was under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk with regard to Afghanistan and Iran. Amanullah Khan, who had visited Turkey in 1928, was greatly impressed by the Kemalist reforms and invited medical, military and educational experts from Turkey to simulate Kemalism. However, that was the end for him in a country where tribal politics dominated. The Iranian Reza Shah Pahlavi had visited Turkey in 1934, and was similarly inspired. He abolished the capitulations granted to Western powers in Iran, enacted hat and dress laws banning the veil. Yet he was confronted with harsh reactions from the Shia religious establishment (the Mullahs); he, and later his son, had to pay dearly for their attempts at a social revolution in what was then a largely feudal country. Turkey’s second life as model began in the 1950s, with President Bourguiba, a declared Kemalist. But after him and after decades of authoritarian rule, Tunisians are now discussing whether to mention “Islam” or “laicism” in their new constitution. The third attempt came immediately after the collapse of the USSR, when Turkey and the Western alliance desperately wanted Turkey to be a “model” for Muslim-majority countries in ex-communist Central Asia. The end was a failure as Turkey, a quite feeble economic and political actor back then, tried to behave more or less as a Big Brother—the last thing these countries needed.

Again, today, the “model” discourse has reappeared on the agenda. Turkey has a majority Muslim population, is fairly democratic, and is also fairly developed now. For a number of Muslim countries, Turkey is “the distant cousin who has made it”. At least the Turkish example could serve to prove that Islam, democracy and development are not incompatible. But again, and notwithstanding the fact that it strongly contradicts the first two contentions (change of axis and Neo-Ottomanism), this Western allegation seems to be doomed to fail. The Ottoman overlord image is vivid in the Mashrek, remembering that in the Maghreb, as well, appreciation for Turkey

has its limits. The Algerian Prime Minister Ahmet Ouyahia snapped at Erdoğan for inciting references to French colonialism in Algeria in his speeches against the Armenian genocide bill in France. He reminded Turkey that being a NATO member, it had failed to support Algerians during their war of independence. On the other hand, Islamic references are important in many Arab societies, and Turkey is often seen as not sufficiently Muslim. Last but not least, these countries are not the same! Some are kept under military tutelage, some are not, some have minorities, some are fairly homogenous, some are more or less secular, others are theocratic, some are rich and some are poor.

THE MOST IMPORTANT POINT

But all these are minor disadvantages for the “Turkish model” compared to its principal problem in this area: Turkey now has a more or less stable economy, but the same cannot be said for its domestic structure. When Erdoğan asked for an apology for the nine Turks killed by Israeli commandoes on the humanitarian relief boat *Mavi Marmara*, he was easily rebuffed by Israeli officials, who suggested that Turkey should apologize for the hundreds of thousands killed in 1915. Had he said that Israel is treating Palestinians badly, the response would have reminded him of the way Turkey is treating the Kurds. And when Erdoğan scolded Israel for invading Gaza, did the retort remind him of Turkey’s invasion of northern Cyprus? Erdoğan would have to deal with the same sort of responses when he criticised Armenia’s occupation of Nagorno Karabakh. How in the world could any country become a “model” with all those hunches on its back? Therefore, one could conclude that neither Turkish history nor the nature of regional and global politics have been appropriate for the realization of these three attempts at promoting Turkey as a model.



From the very start, one should really render unto Davutoğlu the things that are Davutoğlu’s. For the first time in history, the Foreign Ministry benefited from a far-reaching perspective and a vision, instead of drifting along an endless train of events, which it failed to influence. For the first time, the Turkish government behaved as a concerned actor as soon as conflicts in its region erupted. The government tried bringing together conflicting parties, acted as mediator between Israel and Palestinians, and participated in the Af-

ghanistan-Pakistan talks. Turkey's reputation rose also within international organizations. Profiting from this positive energy and from the new multipolar world in which it was engaging, Turkey began to act like a textbook case of a "strategic medium power". By this term, I mean a regional power that is unable to influence global politics but that is able to impose its regional solutions even on a global hegemon, especially when its existential interests are at stake, by profiting from its strategic importance. To be able to fit this role, Turkish foreign policy actors attempted to rid themselves of age-old conflicts with neighbours. This was the "Zero Problem" policy, which, however, had its limits. First, there was no coherence between Turkey's targets and capabilities, especially when the Turkish government attempted to solve long-standing conflicts of the Middle East, where many superpowers had failed. As a January 2010 Wikileaks cable of American diplomats put it, 'Turkey has Rolls Royce ambitions but Rover resources'. Second, the "Zero problem" strategy could not possibly be accomplished through the strength of Turkey's will alone, even if its capabilities were sufficient. There has always been a regional and an international dimension to Turkey's actions.

The AKP government inherited a favourable foreign and domestic context when it came to power in 2002. Concerning foreign policy, many disagreements with neighbours had already been addressed under its predecessors. Good neighbourly relations had been established with Bulgaria after it dropped its assimilation policy targeting the Turkish minority in 1990. Relations with Greece improved significantly thanks to the efforts of then Foreign Ministers Yorgos Papandreu and Ismail Cem in the late 1990s. In fact, the late 1990s were a key period in this respect: the 1998 Adana Protocol opened the way for a rapprochement with Syria, while the 1999 Helsinki Summit heralded the era of a committed relationship with the EU as an accession candidate. In 2001, the Action Plan for Cooperation in Eurasia marked the beginning of intensive relations with Russia. In November 2002, the Turkish-Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş lost his control over the Turkish-Cypriot North as a result of the Annan Plan. Moreover, the US needed Turkey as a strategic ally, and Turkey had gained more importance as its actions were coordinated with those of the US, especially in the Balkans. Davutoğlu's "Zero Problem" policy found fertile ground for its implementation under these conditions. The only two remaining headaches, one could say, seemed to be the poor human rights record inherited from the 1980 military coup, and the Armenian question. Concerning domestic policy, Abdullah Öcalan,

the leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) was apprehended in 1999, and the PKK retreated to northern Iraq. These developments assured a relative peace that was to last well until 1 June 2004, when Öcalan, frustrated by the lack of vital reforms on the the Kurdish front, declared the end of the cease-fire.

But almost as soon as the "Zero Problem" policy came to the fore, the regional and international dimensions changed significantly. The Arab Spring showed that good relations with Arab countries were actually established with the autocratic leaders of these countries. Concerning the Libyan intervention, the AKP government's policy was oscillating for far too long to meet the demands of such an acute situation. The policy towards Bashar al-Assad in Syria, however, turned out to be unexpectedly aggressive. This situation was probably caused by the government's resolve to regain sympathy with the Obama administration. These reasons became particularly clear after Erdoğan expressed how cheated he felt by Israel's assault on Gaza at a moment when Turkey was trying hard to act as a mediator. Similarly, Turkey's good relations with Iran and the Brazilian-Turkish initiative to defuse Western impatience with that country were disrupted, probably because of Turkey's decision to host NATO's Missile Shield against Iran on its territory. Again, this was a policy necessitated by the goal of appeasing the United States over Israel.

In summary, the AKP government's "Zero Problem" policy seems to have faltered in the face of the clash with Israel; probably, again, this owes more to Prime Minister Erdoğan's rhetoric than to Davutoğlu's policy. The Protocols between Turkey and Armenia, which many hoped would substantially alter the dynamics of Turkish-Armenian relations in October 2009, faltered in much the same way. Looking back at a decade of AKP majority rule, it appears that most of Turkey's chronic problems have evaded treatment. Domestically, the Kurdish issue remains far from any resolution. Internationally, next to no progress has been made on Cyprus or with regards to relations with Armenia and Armenian claims for genocide recognition. These also affect relations with France now. Today, all these challenges remain unresolved, while new fronts open with Syria, and regional developments are moving fast.

At this conjuncture, despite all lip-service to Turkey being the leader of a 'Single economic region from Albania to Kuwait and from Bahrain to Morocco' (Anadolu Ajansı 2012) and despite the country's relative economic

success vis-à-vis the European crisis, it seems that Turkey's foreign policy actors will have to settle for a *pivotal state* position rather than achieving the much more desired role of a *strategic medium power*.

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Introduction

KEREM ÖKTEM - AYŞE KADIOĞLU

‘Bearded Celal’ (*Sakallı Celal*) was a prolific thinker of the late Ottoman Empire and the early Turkish Republic. He was known as the author of wise idioms, and for his metaphor of ‘the Turkish elite’ as ‘a man running westwards on the deck of a ship heading east’. Today, it may appear that Turkey’s new elites are not so much running westwards on the deck of a ship heading east – they seem to be streaming in all directions on a vessel that cruises full steam ahead, with an unconventional compass, and flying a rather imperial flag. But this image may not be much more than a momentary snapshot at the time of the final corrections of this collection. It is February 2012. Not even a year ago, the global foreign policy community, the European Union and the State Department were discussing Turkey’s emergence as a regional power in its neighbourhood, the rise of its economic prowess and its middle classes, and its proactive, multi-faceted and dynamic foreign policy. Turkey seemed to surpass the crises-ridden European Union in terms of dynamism and international standing; the European political elites, however, failed not only to find a way out of the institutional and economic impasse of the Union, but, significantly –and despite dissenting views– also refused to grant Turkey a firm membership perspective.

And indeed, within the time span of a decade, Turkey has changed beyond expectations: what has been a rather inward-looking, regionally isolated country uneasy with the challenges of post-Cold War globalisation, has become a generally respected member of the international community. In

terms of its economy, Turkey has completed its transformation into an export-oriented, industrial producer, characterized by a vibrant market place that now ranks sixteenth among the world's largest economies, despite massive regional and income disparities. This economic rise was undoubtedly helped by the start of accession negotiations with the European Union in 2005. With Abdullah Gül, and then even more forcefully with Turkey's Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, Turkey, for the first time since the rule of state-founder Mustafa Kemal, based its foreign policy on a home-grown doctrine shaped by the two key concepts of 'strategic depth' (Davutoğlu 2001) and 'zero problems with neighbours'. This proactive outlook was even carried into international institutions, when Turkey became one of the members of the United Nations Security Council for a two-year term between 2009 and 2010. U.S Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton was bold enough to refer to Turkey as an 'emerging global power' (*Today's Zaman* 2009), while numerous authors, some of them in this collection, have wondered whether Turkey, with its G-20 membership and economic output, should be regarded as a 'middle power'.

The decade of Turkish foreign policy from 2002-2012 coincides with three terms in government of the Justice and Development Party (AKP, *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*) and has been profoundly shaped by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Ahmet Davutoğlu, first as his foreign policy advisor and then as his Foreign Minister. It is a decade of unexpected twists and turns both domestically and internationally, a period of Turkey's recent history that has been likened by some to a never-ending roller coaster ride and described by others as a decade of 'relative stability'. Turkey's visibility and international reputation have certainly improved over the last decade and some long-standing conflicts have been defused or put on hold, especially with Greece. Nevertheless, many regional and international disputes remain, ranging from Cyprus to the challenge of Armenian genocide-recognition. New conflicts, above all with Israel, have come as a reminder of the limitations of policy choice in Turkey's regional environment. Even more importantly, the weakening relationship with the European Union looms over the future of Turkey's place in the world.

This book is an attempt to make sense of these contradictory turns –the complexities, idiosyncrasies and the tensions inherent in Turkey's troubled journey– by looking at the actors of Turkey's foreign policy as well as the domestic and global structures within which they operate. The idea for

this collection emerged during an international conference, which the editors convened at the University of Oxford in May 2010. Based on a collaboration of the programme of South East European Studies at Oxford, the European Studies Centre at St Antony's College and Sabancı University, we attempted to map out '*Turkey's Foreign Policy in a Changing World*' and charted '*Old Alignments and New Neighbourhoods*'. Turkey's much-talked about Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu was the keynote speaker. Some of the conference papers made their way into this collection, and many more authors joined us in our effort to elucidate what is often a rather opaque and contradictory set of processes – Turkish foreign policy and Turkey's relations with its neighbours and allies.

As editors hailing from a range of disciplines, from politics and law to regional studies, we are particularly concerned with the intersection of foreign policy and domestic politics. We also believe that the analytical dissection of Turkey's growing leadership ambitions in its region is crucial for our understanding of Turkey and its neighbourhood today and in the near future. With a collection of twelve papers from different fields and academic traditions, *Another Empire* seeks to present an interdisciplinary and critical analysis of Turkey's changing role in the world and the societal transformations and shifts in the global order that have brought it about. Some of the contributions attempt to understand whether these transformative experiences have been as consequential and significant as they have been made to look, particularly by some actors of the Turkish foreign policy community and the Turkish government itself. In so doing, they inquire into the new conceptual dimensions of Turkey's interaction with the world –soft power, economic interdependence and mercantilism, as well as conservative politics– while also seeking to address one of the big 'elephants in the room', Turkey's imperial past. This history conditions modern-day Turkey's relations with its neighbourhood, all the more so as observers believe that the Justice and Development Party's cadres hold an enthusiastic view of the Ottoman Empire.

Another Empire seeks to achieve this critical appraisal of a decade of Turkish foreign policy by focusing on three key debates that explore the interrelated dimensions of empire, orientation and normativity. With 'empire', we mean Turkey's role as successor of the Ottoman Empire; we also refer to the political mindsets and policy choices inspired by, or referring to, this imperial heritage. By 'orientation', we allude to the debates on Turkey's 'axis shift' and the regional direction of its strategic alliances. Finally, with the

‘normativity’ dimension, we discuss the role of a ‘model’, which Turkey has seemingly begun to play in its neighbourhood, both by choice and by the design of foreign policy shapers in the United States, and to a lesser extent in the European Union.

The question of empire has made a comeback in both academic and public debates, whether in forms of a positive re-evaluation of European imperial projects (Ferguson 2004), or in post-Marxist works on a world ‘Empire’ centred on the U.S (Hardt and Negri 2000). More akin to the former debate, a positive re-evaluation of Turkey’s imperial past appears to inform Turkey’s new foreign policy in the 21st century, as well as intersecting domestic developments. Prime Minister Erdoğan’s speech after the victory of his party in the June 2011 parliamentary elections not only blurred distinctions between domestic and foreign policy, but also made a clear case for a larger imperial mental map:

Believe me, Sarajevo won today as much as Istanbul, Beirut won as much as Izmir, Damascus won as much as Ankara, Ramallah, Nablus, Jenin, the West Bank, Jerusalem won as much as Diyarbakir (BBC 2011).

This quote gives us valuable hints for reconstructing the mental map of Turkey’s new foreign policy elites. In geographical terms, it spans from the Balkans to the Mashreq, and gives particular weight to Palestine. In religious terms, it is a map made mostly of Muslims, and to be more precise, of Sunni Muslims, mostly of the Hanafi school. This is no doubt a selective image of the empire, excluding above all the memory of the non-Muslim *millets* and hence of the Christian Balkan nations, as well as of the overall torturous last decades of the empire’s disintegration. Yet, is this emotive reference to the golden days of the Ottoman Empire really a quest for ‘Another Empire’? Is Turkey mutating into a neo-imperialist actor, armed with neo-Islamist ideology, religious networks, neo-Ottoman fantasies and political influence, as critics particularly in the Balkans and secularists in the Middle East suggest? Or, are these the actions of a peaceful, proactive, trading state that employs smart power to contribute to the formation of a neighbourhood of security and prosperity? The authors of this volume have different answers to this question, but few doubt its pertinence.

The direction of Turkey’s foreign policy orientation has come to the fore particularly since the second half of the decade, first due to the waning prospects for the country’s EU membership, and then more dramatically with

the deterioration of relations with Israel. In December 2008, Turkey's attempts at mediating between Israel and Syria suffered a heavy blow when Israel invaded Gaza, 'humiliating and infuriating Erdoğan' (Traub 2011). A year later, Prime Minister Erdoğan walked out of a panel at the World Economic Forum in Davos after harshly criticizing Israeli President Shimon Peres. Relations with Israel deteriorated further when Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon berated Turkish ambassador Ahmet Oğuz Çelikkol in Tel Aviv in January 2010 in an unseemly breach of diplomatic etiquette. Yet it was the killing of nine Turkish citizens by Israeli commandos on the Gaza-bound aid ship Mavi Marmara, and the Israeli refusal to apologise, which led to the near complete degradation of diplomatic relations with Israel and to the suspension of all military ties in September 2011. These events prompted certain commentators to sound the alarm. *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman recalled that he had been impressed in 2005 to observe government efforts to join the European Union, while already in 2010, he saw Turkey's 'Islamist' government as more interested in the Arab league and in 'joining the Hamas-Hezbollah-Iran resistance front against Israel' (Friedman 2010).

Prime Minister Erdoğan's personal friendship with Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh is certainly no secret, and even Iran's President Ahmadinejad received a much warmer welcome in Ankara than any Israeli representative had recently received. Now and again, Erdoğan's view of the world as neatly divided between a Muslim and a non-Muslim domain has compromised his government's pragmatism. This sentiment was most clearly evident in his defence of Sudanese President Omar al Bashir, a war crimes suspect, with the assertion that a 'Muslim cannot commit genocide' (*Today's Zaman* 2009). European Minister Egemen Bağış' sometimes outright hostile asides against European leaders like French President Nicholas Sarkozy indeed suggest that the European Union has lost the almost existential allure it has had towards Turkey for so long. But is this sufficient evidence to agree with Friedman's proposition that Turkey has lost its rooting in transatlantic structures and joined a 'regional anti-Zionist front' instead? Can the Turkish-Brazilian effort to arrange a face-saving nuclear deal with Iran be dismissed as anti-Western adventurism, especially since the EU supported this policy? Few of the contributions in this volume would go as far. But they do emphasise the significance of this shift in Turkish attitudes towards unilateralism, self-confidence and ostensible autonomy vis-à-vis the U.S, as well as Washington's rel-

atively straightforward acceptance of this newfound autonomy. U.S President Obama, after all, counts Prime Minister Erdoğan among a few statesmen with whom he has forged ‘friendships and... bonds of trust’ (Zakaria 2012). Rather than a shift of axis, on the basis of this collection, we can speak of an adjustment of course, which appears to prioritise the United States over the European Union, and hence, the logic of security over the logic of EU accession and political reform.

This brings us to the third key debate that has shaped perceptions of Turkey’s new international role – not for the first time in history, Turkey has been hailed as a model for the Muslim world in general, and for the Arab world in particular, as a country that has successfully reconciled political Islam and democracy. The first such ‘model moment’ came after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, when the U.S endorsed Turkey as the democratic alternative to Iran’s theocratic Shia mission. It may not come as a surprise, then, that the second ‘model moment’ followed the series of uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Bahrain and Yemen in 2011. And indeed, the Turkish government supported the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, even if it was slow to do so in Libya, where it had considerable business interests in the form of investments exceeding 15 billion USD and an expatriate population of 25,000 (Tocci 2011, p. 3). In Syria, the AKP government was initially oscillating between appeasement and significant concerns over the developing civil war before it decided to support the Syrian National Council and host the Free Syrian Army.

Turkey’s response to the Arab uprisings has been varied, as have the region’s responses to Turkey. Rachid Ghannouchi, leader of Tunisia’s moderately Islamist Ennahda Party who has spent long years in exile in Europe, opined that the Turkish democratic model was very close to what they would like to establish in Tunisia (*Hürriyet Daily News* 2011). Ghannouchi even made a point in preferring to be compared to Erdoğan rather than to the leaders of Iran’s Islamic Revolution (*The Global Muslim Brotherhood Daily Report* 2011). Turkey’s Prime Minister Erdoğan has at times been humble when it came to the Arab struggles for democracy: ‘We are not seeking to be a model or whatsoever, but we can be a *source of inspiration* since Turkey has shown that Islam and democracy can co-exist perfectly’ (*International News* 2011; emphasis is our own). Might the ‘demonstrative effect’ of Turkey’s economic success become a major soft power pull for the countries of the Arab world? After all, the rise in trade with immediate neighbours from about

4 billion USD in 1991 to 82 billion USD in 2008, and the increase from 11.5 per cent to almost 25 per cent of Turkey's overall trade is certainly impressive (Kirişçi 2011, p. 37). However, one should not forget that much of this growth is owed to the massively expanding trade volume with Russia. There are indicators supporting the idea of the demonstrative impact of Turkey's economic might and presence in the Arab world. Yet relations with the Arab neighbours have been conditioned as much by soft power, economic relations and popular culture as they have been by Prime Minister Erdoğan's interventions. When he embarked on a celebrated visit to Tunisia, Egypt and Libya in September 2011, Erdoğan alienated Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafist parties by emphasising Turkey's secular character:

A Muslim can govern a secular state in a successful way. In Turkey, 99 per cent of the population is Muslim, and it did not pose any problem. You can do the same here (*Hürriyet Daily News* 2011).

The Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafists, however, did 'not see the Turkish AKP as a model, not even as a real Islamic party' (Nafaa 2011), and hence did not welcome the speech. Nevertheless, it is obvious that Prime Minister Erdoğan enjoys considerable popular support among Arab populations, not least due to his stance on Palestine. In *Another Empire*, we seek to decentre the analysis of Turkey's relations with the Middle East through a thorough analysis of how convincing Turkey's normative role and its quest for regional leadership –both self-desired and externally imposed– appears from the Arab world and Iran.

THE CHAPTERS

Another Empire is divided into three parts, whose chapters in turn respond to the three aforementioned debates on empire, orientation and normativity. The first deals with the recent societal transformations in Turkey and the emergence of new classes and identities, as well as of unconventional foreign policy actors and networks. The growing role of a conservative 'Muslim middle class', the expansion of capitalist modes of production, and rapid wealth generation are at the roots of this transformation and of the diversification of the domestic sources of foreign policy. Concentrating on the interrelations and mutual dependencies between Turkey's contentious politics at home and its rise abroad, this part sets out the conceptual and empirical frame of what is new about the country's international role and what is not. The questions of ideology, conser-

vatism and religion, as well as those of economy and democratic reform and authoritarian restoration constitute the core matter of the chapters.

The second and third parts of the collection explore Turkey's regional engagements in a more straightforward International Relations perspective. Inspired by Philip Robins' characterisation of Turkey as a 'double gravity state' (2006), the section focuses on Turkey's Western allies, the European Union and the United States of America, as well as on the immediate neighbours in the Balkans, Greece and Cyprus, on the one hand. On the other, the emphasis is on the Eastern neighbourhood: the Middle East, the Caucasus, as well as Russia and Central Asia, if only implicitly. Both neighbourhoods operate according to different sets of normative and institutional logics: NATO and the EU create relatively clear rules for engagement in the Western neighbourhood, and it is mostly in the region of Southeast Europe, with its relatively thin embeddedness in Western institutions, where Turkey has been acting more as a trendsetter, or, in Ahmet Davutoğlu's words, an 'order setter'. Turkey's Eastern neighbourhood, however, is dominated by the established regional hegemons of Russia and Iran, as well as by the semi-dictatorships or weak states of Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Middle East. This relatively volatile environment has created more opportunities for the projection of Turkish power, whether discursive, economic or cultural. Yet, as the chapters in this section show, the risks that Turkey will be facing in its relations with Iran, Syria or Israel are high considering Turkey's limited power resources.

Part 1 on the intersection between domestic transformations and foreign policy change begins with Fuat Keyman's 'Pro-activism in Turkish foreign policy', which explores the global-local nexus of Turkey's international relations. Significant transformations in the country's economic base and in its socio-economic organisation under conditions of advanced globalisation, argues Keyman, have created a new framework for the country's international engagement. This engagement is driven by a policy outlook that is more sensitive to domestic constituencies, which tend to be organically linked to cross-border communities and hence push for a less belligerent and more pragmatic, business-oriented engagement with neighbouring countries. If today's foreign policy under Ahmet Davutoğlu needed to be boiled down to two key concepts, it would be pro-activism as a general strategy, and Turkey as a 'trading state' in the global world as an empirical reality.

In the 'Limits of conservative change', Ayşe Kadioğlu delves deeper into the intersection of domestic and global processes, exploring the promises

and the constraints of reform by the post-Islamist actors of the Justice and Development Party. Caught in the paradox of ideological conservatism and the innovative policies of the reform years between 2002 and 2005, when the AKP became a flag bearer for democratic reform and Europeanisation, she detects a deep political pragmatism in the party's policies, which may border, at times, on spinelessness. Rather than insisting on reform, the party has engaged in a paradoxical 'conservative reform choreography' that combined pro-activism with a Fabian 'wait and see' approach. The adoption of such conservative reform choreography ensured the survival of the AKP as the governing party during the past decade, while leaving the reform process incomplete.

'Democratic Depth', suggests Nora Fisher Onar in her contribution, is 'the missing ingredient in Turkey's domestic/foreign policy nexus'. Based on her reading of Carl Schmitt's insight that the effectiveness of a policy discourse needs to be judged both on cognitive and normative grounds, she proposes that Davutoğlu's 'strategic depth doctrine' excels in the former and falters in the latter. As a heuristic framework that enables policy-making elites and publics to make sense of emerging agendas and their roles within them, 'strategic depth' and 'zero problems' have helped refashion Turkey's foreign policy outlook, infusing it with a great degree of openness. However, on the normative level –in terms of the reassurance that the new Turkish project is in tune with the underlying values of a liberal, democratic and secular society, which it propagates in the Arab world– Turkey is a mixed case at best.

Kerem Öktem takes these insights on the domestic-global nexus as a point of departure for his exploration of the new actors and networks performing Turkey's foreign policy. He argues that in stark distinction from the preceding decades when foreign policy was determined by the non-civilian National Security Council (*Milli Güvenlik Kurulu*), this domain is now populated by a multitude of actors. They range from non-governmental organisations and religious networks to governmental agencies, whose foreign policy interest is relatively recent. Proposing a three-dimensional matrix, he suggests that Turkey's new foreign policy under successive Justice and Development governments has been shaped by the interplay of post- or neo-Islamist thought infused with a strong imperial mind-set; by the emergence of unconventional state agencies such as the Turkish Development Agency, the Presidency of Religious Affairs, and the Yunus Emre cultural centres; and, above all, by non-state actors like the Gülen movement. In all these "actors", as well as in the realms of popular culture and economic attraction, argues Öktem,

lies Turkey's soft power. Despite such appeal, Turkey's power projection in its region and beyond faces limitations due to 'self-referential information loops' within conservative foreign policy networks and between foreign policy actors. Signs of hubris among the ruling elites of a party in its third term in government, and of "imperial overstretch" in its foreign policy, have been accruing recently. More than anything, it is these signs of wear that might herald the collapse of Turkey's multi-regional attraction.

This critical assessment of the Justice and Development Party is also reflected in Mehmet Karlı's analysis of Turkey's economic performance in the last decade and of the two inter-related narratives that characterise the government's discourse on the international trade front. One portrays Turkey as a dynamic global economic power while the other stresses the importance of Turkey's new geography of influence, comprising the MENA region, the Balkans, the Caucasus and, if on an altogether different scale, Russia. Karlı subjects these two discourses to what he calls 'reality check' and suggests that it may be too early to talk about a 'Turkish miracle'. Turkey has performed well over the last decade, he argues, yet this performance was largely in line with growth trends in other emerging markets. The structure of Turkish foreign trade and investment flows has changed, and the share of trade with the new geography has indeed expanded massively. Thus, if not a global economic power, Turkey might well be termed a regional economic power in this new geography. This new space of opportunities, however, has its limits. Due to their structure, argues Karlı, the markets of the new geography may complement the 'old geography' made up of the EU and EFTA, but they cannot replace it.

Part 2 explores Turkey's relations with its Western allies and with the immediate Southeast European neighbourhood. Joshua W. Walker discusses the most important of the Western allies in 'The United States and Turkey in a changing world'. Emphasising the significance of historical context, Walker argues that the alliance of the Cold War years, often referred to as the 'golden age' of Turkish-American relations, was far from a permanent alignment of strategic interests – it could much more succinctly be described as a close relation of necessity with occasional ups and downs. Turkey has now become an 'autonomous actor, seeking greater regional and global influence', he argues; but even under the constraints of the Cold War years, Turkey's foreign policy had been determined as much by strategic alliance as by autonomous, interest-based national policies, which did not always overlap. It is within this context of relative realism, and behind the discourse of the

Obama administration's 'model partnership', that Walker sees the future of Turkish-American relations, based on both national and common interests in the Middle East and beyond.

Nilgün Arisan-Eralp and Atila Eralp pose a crucial question regarding Turkey's once most important strategic partner: 'What went wrong in the Turkey-EU relationship?'. They ascertain that the long lasting Turkey-EU relationship suffered a significant setback in the late 2000s, above all as a result of the contextual shift in the process of European integration, which has severed the linkage between the logics of deepening and widening. The resulting institutional stalemate was reinforced by recurrent cycles of economic crises, conjointly leading to a rather gloomy outlook for Europe and to an escalation in anti-Turkish sentiment. As the EU's enlargement policy became the major victim of this downturn, the domestic ownership of the accession process became increasingly blurred in Turkey. Even though the EU anchor has helped transform Turkey's international standing and introduce notions of its own neighbourhood policy into that of Turkey, the stalling of the accession process has prevented effective channels of dialogue from being established between Turkey and the EU on issues of foreign, security and neighbourhood policy. Arisan-Eralp and Eralp hence make a case for the foundation of new mechanisms that would integrate Turkey gradually into the common foreign and security policy and into the neighborhood programmes of the EU. This integration would also help re-establish trust, allowing for more effective multilateralism in a common neighbourhood.

Turkey's engagement with Southeast Europe, according to Othon Anastasakis, is a continuation of foreign policy decisions going back to the fall of Communism in 1989 and to the destruction of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. Focusing particularly on the binary themes of identity politics and elite pragmatism, he discusses three aspects of Turkey's foreign policy in Southeast Europe: the role of history and diplomacy, economic interaction, and identity and grassroots politics. At the conventional diplomatic level, he argues, Turkish foreign policy worked through successful mediation and good neighbourly relations; at the economic level, it was able to employ, if at a relatively low level, economic diplomacy through direct investment; and at the grass roots, civil society and cultural levels, through a growing soft power presence and examples of solidarity with Muslim communities. The latter, however, often came at the price of alienating the political elites of Christian majorities. The ideological justification for Turkey's multi-dimensional for-

eign policy –with an ambitious narrative of Turkey’s historical links, cultural affinities and economic interdependence with the Balkans– may hence be novel, but not yet appreciated universally. The sustainability of this policy, he suggests, is based more on regional conditions and pragmatic considerations than on Turkey’s policy doctrine.

Dimitar Bechev, in turn, elucidates the ‘very long engagement’ between Turkey and the Balkans and asks whether Turkey, under the leadership of the Justice and Development Party, is aspiring to become an alternative power centre, alongside –or even in competition with– the EU and the U.S. Based on an appraisal of the frantic Balkan diplomacy under Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu since 2009, he establishes that in the Balkans, Ankara now acts in a much more unilateral manner than it has since the end of the Cold War. A range of conditions has contributed to this unilateralism: the fading EU anchor, robust economic growth, and rising global confidence in the ruling AKP and Turkish society at large. Economic clout, popular appeal and –where energy diplomacy is concerned– geographic location, all bolster Turkish foreign policy in Southeast Europe. And even if the ambitions to act as a power broker in former Yugoslavia do not match actual leverage or indeed achieve results, Turkey will continue to be a key factor, especially in the energy, tourism, trade and transport sectors. For the time being, Bechev concludes, activism vis-à-vis former Yugoslavia has been largely in tune with Western preferences – in spite of a unilateral attitude. Thus, the potential for a clash with the EU and U.S has been lower than in volatile regions such as the Middle East. This possibility might change if the EU anchor is altogether lost, whether for Turkey or for some of the Western Balkan states.

In part 3, authors examine Turkey’s relations with the Arab world and with the Caucasus region. Reem Abou-El Fadl summarises Arab perceptions of contemporary Turkish foreign policy in terms of ‘cautious engagement’ with what is viewed by some as a ‘surrogate actor’ at most, in the absence of a strong Arab power. Abou-El-Fadl asks to what extent Turkey can be described as an emerging middle power by inquiring into the three necessary conditions of ‘willingness, capacity and acceptance’. Her analysis focuses on the levels of acceptance of Turkish foreign policy by political actors in Egypt and Syria, by two sub-state actors (Hamas and Hizbullah), as well as in three different strands of Arab politics (Islamists, pro-American accommodationists, and the Arabist-leftist bloc). Abou-El-Fadl finds that ‘Arab approaches to Turkey range between engagement and enthusiasm, but that this remains

cautious, and even conditional, particularly where Turkey's fluctuating policy on Israel is concerned'. In the final analysis, it is crucial to understand that despite this new interest, Turkey is no replacement for a strong and relatively united Arab voice, which can convincingly represent Arab regional and global interests. Turkey's regional role is hence very much dependent on the course of the transformations in the Middle East.

Turkish-Iranian relations, argues Karabekir Akkoyunlu, are a 'delicate balancing act' and often a litmus test for Turkey's ties with the 'West'. Yet, despite all the talk of Turkey's 'shift of axis', the main determinant of Turkish-Iranian relations remains the balance of geopolitical interests. Throughout the first decade of the 2000s, mutual interests between the two countries outweighed disagreements. Booming trade and energy ties and strengthening security co-operation against Kurdish militant groups have been the main drivers of Turkish-Iranian relations throughout the decade. These mutual interests, coupled with a shared political and bureaucratic culture that perceives stability in the other country as an important part of its own security, account for Turkey's policies vis-à-vis the Iranian nuclear programme as well as Turkey's hasty recognition of Iran's contested 2009 elections. For the second decade of the 2000s, which we are now entering, Akkoyunlu sees more disagreement: Turkish participation in the NATO missile defence shield programme, Turkey's engagement in the Arab uprisings, and diverging positions on Syria are important challenges to their relationship. In the future, Turkey will need to walk an ever-tightening rope in order to preserve the stability of its relations with Iran. This delicate walk will require exceptional strategic prudence and diplomatic pragmatism on the part of Turkish decision makers.

Another 'litmus test for Turkey's new foreign policy' in its Eastern neighbourhood, argues Aybars Görgülü, is the 'historical rapprochement with Armenia'. Analysing the recent changes in Armenia-Turkey relations, Görgülü makes two propositions on the regional and domestic levels. The first suggests that the rapprochement is a critical development for the South Caucasus with the potential to transform it from a fragmented, war-torn region steeped in enmity and suspicion to a space of cooperation and regional integration. The second proposition is that Turkey's stance towards Armenia is crucial for its own democratization, simultaneously enabling and forcing Turkey to face its own contested history. The first proposition necessitates the establishment of official ties and the opening of the border – ironically, this is the easier task. The second is dependent on societal reconciliation as a

process. Even though the protocols concerning the official rapprochement between the two countries agreed in 2009 are now frozen, the societal rapprochement is noteworthy. For the first time since 1915, the two societies have begun to rediscover one another, and new channels of dialogue and discussion have been established between their respective civil society actors. Nevertheless, suggests Görgülü, without the technical normalization process, societal reconciliation can only decelerate.

The stalled state of affairs between Turkey and Armenia and the weight of their mutual historical baggage are an apt metaphor for the somewhat contradictory trends of Turkey's new place in the world at the end of the first decade of AKP rule. Today, Turkey is struggling to be many things at once, from regional hegemon, order setter and middle power to trading state and model democracy, in the Middle East and North Africa, in South-east Europe, in the Caucasus, in Central Asia and beyond. It does so with varying success, as its ties with the European Union are becoming increasingly tenuous and Turkey's international role is reshaped by creeping re-Atlantification as well as growing unilateralism. The policies of empire, the debate on Turkey's orientation, as well as its convincingness as a model of democracy –while it experiences an unprecedented authoritarian restoration domestically– remain at the heart of the paradox of Turkey's foreign policy and its role in the world. From now on, Bearded Celal's ship will enter uncharted waters, which might or might not carry Turkey further away from its known partners and allies, and bring her to new shores.

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PART ONE

Turkey's Transformations: New Classes and Identities, New Actors and Networks

Proactivism in Turkish Foreign Policy: The Global-Local Nexus¹

E. FUAT KEYMAN

Globalization is in a profound and severe crisis. It is a multiple crisis consisting of a grave economic predicament, including the European sovereign debt emergency; increasing security risks; a lack of global leadership; and unsolved social justice problems in the areas of poverty, basic needs and exclusion. Moreover, challenges stemming from energy, climate change and food scarcity are widening and deepening the multiple crises of globalization. As globalization is confronted by unprecedented challenges, feelings of uncertainty and insecurity begin to stain the mood of international, regional, and national politics. Our globalizing world is increasingly shaped by these sentiments. While uncertainty about the future and ontological insecurity of our lives and living conditions increase, trust is being replaced by suspicion and doubt, leading a German social theorist, Ulrich Beck, to coin the term ‘world risk society’ – an apt description of the present (2005). In fact, we are living in a global risk society generating unprecedented global challenges and shaped by uncertainty and insecurity (Ibid.). No society, including those of the hegemon and great powers, is immune from the global crisis; Turkey does not constitute an exception.

In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1882), Karl Marx asserts that,

¹ I would like to thank Kerem Öktem for his valuable editorial comments and suggestions, and William Nazif Keyman for his contribution.

Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given, and transmitted from the past.

Marx's valuable interpretation has constituted a paradigm-constitutive statement in various fields of the social sciences, giving rise to what has come to be known as the "structure-agency debate". Marx's suggestion indicated first that even though actors, their decisions and their choices, matter in the process of making their own history (the importance of agency), they do so 'under circumstances existing already', referring to the conditioning or enabling impact of the structures in which they act. A dialectical relationship exists between agency and structure – agency always operates under the conditioning or enabling impacts of structure. Starting from Marx's insight, it would be possible to approach Turkey's recent proactive and multidimensional foreign policy, aimed at initiating constructive regional and global engagements to enhance dialogue, cooperation, and interdependence among countries in the world, as a "rational choice", founded theoretically and analytically on Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's concept of 'strategic depth' (2001), and made not under self-selected circumstances, chosen by the AK Party, but rather 'under circumstances existing already, given, and transmitted from the past' – experiences of Turkish foreign policy.²

There is no doubt that the circumstances under which Turkish foreign policy was reconstructed were "global" in nature and scope, and, more importantly, have been shaped by, as Zbigniew Brzezinski has correctly termed, 'global turmoil' (2004). "Global turmoil" refers to the crisis-prone, uncertain, insecure and risky nature of globalization and its multiple crises. Global security risk-zones, such as the Arab Spring, Syria, Iran, the Middle East, the Balkans and the Caucasus, as well as global terrorism; global economic crises including the contemporaneous problems of financial instability, recession and unemployment; global poverty and disparity in the human condition; and global climate change, constitute four interrelated dimensions of global turmoil (Ibid.). As Brzezinski suggested, 'Global turmoil manifests itself in a vari-

2 By rational choice, I mean that the decision to make Turkish foreign policy proactive by increasing regional and global engagements was neither ideological nor cultural. Instead, it was a decision based on a political calculation regarding the changing nature of globalization and its challenges. It was a rational decision to strengthen the place and capacity of Turkey in a globalizing world, one that had little to do with the Islamic part of the AKP and its cultural affinities with the Middle East, the Balkans, or Eurasia.

ety of ways', and 'recognition of global turmoil is the basic challenge of our time' (Ibid., pp. 18-20); searching for effective and realistic responses to these challenges constitutes the basic aim of the foreign policy of each and every country of our globalizing world. "Global turmoil", while paving the way to feelings of uncertainty and insecurity for the future, also produces challenges that are global in nature, ones that require global solutions. The key issue is to establish 'a global community of shared interest' to promote global cooperation and dialogue, to weave together a broader fabric of multilateralism and soft power, and to build a number of 'enhanced strategic partnerships' with which to respond effectively to global challenges (Ibid.).

It is this global context that has shaped and reshaped Turkey's rational choice to pursue and develop a proactive and multidimensional foreign policy in recent years. Pro-activism and active globalization constitute Turkey's response to global turmoil. Rather than reactionism and isolationism, Turkish foreign policy behaviour can best be described as "active globalization" – engaging in global problems and debates actively, and responding in a proactive and committed fashion to strengthen its place and position vis-à-vis "global turmoil". From security to economy, from identity to modernity, from energy to water, in the broader spectrum, Turkish foreign policy has paid special attention to the construction of regional and global communities of shared interests, and to regional and global multilateralism. In so doing, Turkey has attempted to employ "soft power" (cf. Öktem in this volume). It has also gone beyond the state-centric space of foreign policy by opening it to societal actors, ranging from think tanks and civil society organizations to economic institutional actors, representing the interests and demands of the new economic classes, and economic actors emerging from the rapid urban transformation of many Anatolian cities (Keyman 2009, 2012). The rational choice of active regional and global engagement on the one hand, and proactive and multidimensional foreign policy on the other, paved the way for an upsurge of global interest in Turkey. Throughout the 2000s, Turkey's active globalization has gone hand in hand with increasing global interest in Turkey – a trend that seems to continue over a decade later.

The debate about proactive foreign policy dates back to the 1990s and then Foreign Minister, the late İsmail Cem, and even to the 1980s, when Turkey's exposure to globalization began with the Motherland Party Government and its leader Turgut Özal. Turkey's search for an effective response to the end of the Cold War initiated the debate in the 1980s. By the end of the

1990s, it became a central issue for İsmail Cem's Foreign Ministry. The debate at that point, however, centered on state foreign policy elites and excluded think tanks and actors from the public realm. In this sense, proactive Turkish foreign policy should not be reduced to a rational choice made by the AKP. This "choice" was a long, historically contingent one; but, without any doubt, it has become crystallized and consolidated during the 2000s with the AKP majority party government. Proactivism also symbolizes Turkey's expected role in the new global imagination – the conviction that only through multilateralism, based on enhanced strategic partnerships, and by forging a more just, humane and interdependent world vision, can the challenge of global turmoil be met. Proactive and multidimensional Turkish foreign policy is in fact a rational choice made to strengthen Turkey vis-à-vis global turmoil through enhanced strategic partnerships with various actors in various areas of the world. The rational choice to enlarge Turkey's strategic depth in globalization through global interdependence; to employ soft power to complement Turkey's geopolitical power; to initiate regional engagement through diplomatic activism; and to link economic dynamism, cultural affinities and geopolitical security in a way that increases Turkey's sphere of influence regionally, as well as globally, is a choice made in a suitable environment, and, in this sense, *pro-activism and multidimensionality characterizes "Turkish foreign policy in a globalizing world"*.

There are three conditions that must be met for a country's decision to engage in a proactive and multidimensional foreign policy to be successful: (a) a suitable "environment" for it; (b) "capacity" to implement the policy effectively; and (c) an appropriate and feasible formulation of a "strategy". In today's uncertain, insecure and risky global affairs, Turkey meets nearly all three of these conditions. Global turmoil in general, and the Arab Spring in particular, constitute a suitable environment for active globalization and proactive foreign policy. Turkey's multi-dimensional roles, and, as will be elucidated later, its identity-based perceptions both regionally and globally, have been key components of this capacity. Nevertheless, Turkey must have a realistic and sustainable strategy in order to realize and implement its capacities effectively. This realm is dominated by serious and continuing debate. In what follows, elaborating on the proactive and multidimensional identity and operation of Turkish foreign policy in response to global turmoil, I will focus on the questions of *capacity* and *strategy*.

CAPACITY: IDENTITY-PERCEPTIONS OF TURKEY

However suitable the environment is, successful pro-activism and multidimensionality in foreign policy require capacity – the capacity of Turkish foreign policy, with various policy actors, to carry out their regional diplomatic engagements in a way that cultivates and enhances strategic partnerships with global actors, increases global cooperation, and contributes to regional stability. The achievement of these objectives is tantamount to the effective management of global turmoil. Of course, the most important dimension of Turkish foreign policy is the relationship between the Turkish state and the EU, involving full accession negotiations, domestic administrative and democratic reform processes, and strong economic interactions. In addition to Turkey-EU relations, Turkey's increasing presence and roles in “global turmoil” have occurred in the areas shown in **Table 1.1**.

Since the beginning of the 2000s, Turkey has been active and constructive in these areas, both diplomatically and in terms of its soft power. Moreover, its pro-activism has gradually increased, regionally and globally. Through its pro-activism and multidimensional foreign policy initiatives, Turkey has tried to contribute as a “mediator” to resolve ongoing problems and conflicts in the Middle East, in the Balkans, and in the Caucasus, working to create an enhanced regional and global economic and cultural interdependence that will lead to stability and peace in global affairs; to the betterment of the human condition in war-torn and underdeveloped societies, such as Afghanistan and some of the least developed countries in Africa, through humanitarian aid activities and civil society-based engagements; and to the promotion of open border policies by abolishing visa requirements to enhance cultural dialogue with as many countries as possible. In so doing, Turkish foreign policy has aimed not only to contribute to the resolution of particular regional and global problems, but also to increase the possibility of creating better and more just global democratic governance. In realizing these engagements and activities, Turkish foreign policy was founded on the principle of ‘zero problems with neighbors’, the use of ‘soft power’, and an attempt to de-securitize conflicts through enhanced economic interdependence, the employment of cultural and historical affinities, as well as through the means of popular culture. Moreover, Turkish foreign policy has been opened to, and has been fed by, civil society organizations, think tanks and media. Moreover, economic actors, namely those of business organizations, commerce chambers, and regional or city-based industrial and commerce organi-

TABLE 1.1
Turkish Foreign Policy Challenges and Proactivism

Security	Economy/fair globalization	Diplomacy/mediation/cultural dialogue
The Arab Spring in general, the regime change or regime restoration problems in Syria and Libya	Global Economic Crisis and G20	Open Border Policies with neighboring countries
The future of Iraq after the withdrawal of US armed forces, and the increasing risk of state collapse or disintegration	European Debt Crisis, Enhanced Economic Interactions, and the Customs Union	The UN Alliance of Civilizations Initiative initiated by Turkey and Spain* as a response to Huntington's the clash of civilization thesis and related discourses in global politics
The Kurdish Question in relation to Northern Iraq, Syria and Iran	Enhancing global and regional economic relations in new areas like Africa, Latin America and South Asia	Enhanced humanitarian and development efforts particularly in Afghanistan and Somalia, and in Africa, Caucasus and the Middle East
The Iran Problem and the Future of the Middle East	Global Energy Politics	Contributing to Global Democratic Governance in general and the role of Europe as a global actor in it
The Israel-Palestinian Question	Regional economic engagements in the Balkans and the Caucasus	A proactive response to the problem of Islamophobia and the crisis of multiculturalism in Europe
The Afghanistan-Pakistan security zone		Contributing to the initiatives to construct a Mediterranean Identity and enhancing cultural and economic dialogue in the Mediterranean geography
The Armenian Question and the Azerbaijan and Armenian Conflict		Membership in the Security Council of the United Nations
		The UN-Turkey initiative Least Developed Countries and their economic and cultural development and welfare
		Using Popular Culture as a means of Soft Power

(*) Cf. <http://www.unaoc.org>.

zations (mainly in Anatolia), have become increasingly engaged in foreign policy activities and debates.

As Turkey has been pursuing its active globalization and proactive foreign policy, it has attracted increasing global interest. A quick glance at recent global academic and public debates concerning Turkey reveals the emergence of a number of what I call “identity-based perceptions of Turkey” that have been attributed to its regional and global roles and engagements, which can be outlined in the following ways³:

- (a) As a modern nation-state formation with secular and democratic constitutional governance with a largely Muslim population, dynamic economic development, and a highly mobile, young and entrepreneurial population, Turkey is a “model country” or “an aspiration” for the future of democracy, stability and peace in Iraq in particular, and in the Middle East and Muslim world in general. In fact, with over 100 years of modernizing reform and constitutional democracy, and despite past regime breakdowns and the existence of a strong state tradition, Turkey is the most successful example today of a secular and constitutional democracy within a Muslim society. It made an important step towards modernity in 1923, towards democracy in 1950, and is now striving to consolidate its democracy and to make its modernity plural and multicultural. Of course, one should recognize that in order for Turkey to sustain its role as a model, or as an aspiration, its political actors, state elites and societal actors must internalize democracy, demonstrate their political and normative commitment to democracy and its consolidation, and accept the plural and multicultural nature of Turkish society;
- (b) With its ability to sustain, and even deepen, its secular democracy in a peaceful manner, along with its “dual identity as both a Mid-

3 This part is based on my research on *Turkey in a Globalizing World: Actors, Discourses, Strategies*, which has focused on the different perceptions of Turkey in the post-9/11 world. The research is based on discourse and content analyses of books, articles, newspaper columns and reports written about Turkey since 2002. The content analysis aims to discover how Turkey has been perceived and what kind of identity-based perceptions have been attributed to Turkish foreign policy in global academic and public discourses. This research is still in progress, and the findings will be published as a book, tentatively titled *Turkey in a Globalizing World: Identity, Democracy and Foreign Policy*.

dle Eastern and European country”, Turkey’s recent governance by the AKP, with its electoral victories and its proactive foreign policy engagements, has made Turkey a “pivotal state/regional power” in the uncertain, insecure and risky globalizing world. Turkey is the only country that can talk both to the West and to the Rest, to the Western leaders and to the Middle Eastern leaders, and to the North and to the South, at the same time. While going through full accession negotiations with the EU, Turkey’s regional and global engagements have been widening and deepening. Turkey’s Europeanization, on the one hand, and its regional engagements with the Middle East, the Balkans, and the Caucasus, as well as with Africa and with the Muslim world, on the other, have been going hand in hand. In responding to global turmoil, Turkey has initiated a number of multiple and multilayered engagements. Of course, this double identity is difficult to implement and sustain successfully, and sometimes even gives rise to skepticism about the intentions of the AKP government, as in the case of the “shift of axis debate”, the debate about whether Turkey is drifting away from the West and secular modernity. Yet, this double identity has also been an asset for Turkey, and it has increased its soft power capabilities. Turkey’s modern history has been perceived as an asset that constitutes both an ‘alternative to the clash of civilizations thesis’ (as in the case of the Alliance of Civilisation Project, led by the United Nations, Spain, and Turkey) and a ‘significant historical experience’ from which the Arab Spring in particular, and the Islamic world in general, can learn in their attempts to democratize. Particularly instructive may be the AKP and its ability to establish an electoral victory through its claim as a “conservative-democratic center right party”, with its strong commitment both to economic dynamism and charity-based politics;

- (c) With its successful economic performance, with a young and economically dynamic population, with its capacity to adapt globalization and Europeanization, and with its increasing regional and global economic engagements, Turkey’s active globalization and proactive foreign policy have accompanied its transformation into a “trading state”. During the 2000s, Turkey’s economic growth rate has been high. Turkey’s commercial activities have widened

regionally and globally, including in such new geographies as Africa and Latin America, and Turkey has become an important player in international organizations like the G20. Turkey has become one of the important, but not pivotal (such as India, Brazil), emerging market economies of today's economic globalization. To ensure that its trading state identity would be successful, Turkey has dropped its visa requirements with an increasing number of countries, and has attempted to enhance its economic and cultural engagements with them.

- (d) In the deepening of Turkey-EU relations and the beginning of full accession negotiations, there is an increasing perception, especially among economic and foreign policy actors, that Turkey is a "unique case" in the process of European integration, with the ability to help Europe become a multicultural and cosmopolitan model for deep regional integration. In this reading, Turkey could become a space for the creation of a post-territorial community on the basis of post-national and democratic citizenship, and also a global actor with the capacity to contribute to the emergence of democratic global governance. The possibility of Europe to gain these qualities depends to some extent on its decision about Turkey's accession;
- (e) The global turmoil that has been generating significant challenges to global security and requiring global solutions has made humanitarian intervention and assistance one of the central concerns of international relations. With its soft power, Turkey has been a regional and global force in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations. It has become one of the key "global humanitarian actors of world politics" (Bayer & Keyman, 2012). Turkey has been increasingly involved in humanitarian assistance in different regions of the world, and in so doing has contributed to global security and strengthened new "human-based" norms of democratic global governance. Turkey's civilian humanitarian aid to Palestinians in Gaza, its involvement in Afghanistan, its peacekeeping contributions in different parts of the world, and its recent engagement in Africa in general, and in Somalia and Sudan in particular, especially in terms of the very serious problem of health, all demonstrated Turkey's increasing global humanitarian role and identity

in global affairs, and its multilateral and humanitarian efforts to implement humanitarian assistance-based norms to make globalization fair and humane;

- (f) Even though Turkey does not produce oil or natural gas, it has recently begun to act as an “energy hub” for the transmission of natural gas between the Middle East, the post-Soviet Republics and Europe. An increasing global interest has emerged in Turkey’s role in global energy politics. A small Turkish town, Ceyhan, has become a center, or a hub, for the transmission of energy. A country with significant energy dependency on Russia and Iran has begun to act as a strategic hub in the area of energy politics. Moreover, as energy politics and its role in globalization have increased, the energy hub-identity of Turkey has begun to generate significant impacts on Turkish foreign policy, especially with respect to Turkey-EU and Turkey-U.S relations.

All of these identity-based perceptions of Turkey constitute the sources of Turkey’s increasing capacity of involvement in regional and global politics. Turkey emerges as a regional power and as a pivotal state, widening its sphere of influence through its soft power, and contributing to the widening and deepening of global consent to enhance global cooperation as a way of responding to the challenge of global turmoil. In fact, in our uncertain and insecure globalizing world, Turkey, with its multidimensional identities, with its ability to achieve a secular and parliamentary democracy within a society with a predominantly Muslim population, appears to be one of the very few examples of combining soft power and hard power (economy and military), of linking modernity, democracy and security, and articulating economic dynamism and cultural identity with geopolitical security concerns. All of these identities have made Turkey a model, or a point of aspiration for the Arab Spring, a key actor of the future of the Middle East, the Balkans, the Caucasus, Afghanistan and Somalia.

CONCLUSION: REALISM AND SUSTAINABILITY

It should be pointed out, however, that these capabilities of Turkish proactive foreign policy must be complemented by realistic strategies to be effective and sustainable. Realism in strategy is of utmost significance in implementing Turkey’s soft power in a way that allows the state to make a contribution to

the creation of better, fairer and more humane global governance. Of course, a realistic strategy should be derived from a correct reading of the global context and its rapidly changing nature, as well as of Turkey's capacity and of its limits to achieve the expected results. In other words, as Joseph Nye (2011) has correctly suggested, soft power should be smart power, and actors should be smart in making decisions and putting them into practice, calculating their power and capacity, and developing their strategies. Without a realistic strategy, capacity can be neither an asset nor leverage. The impact of the severe global economic crisis on the trading state and an emergent market capacity of Turkish foreign policy has forced Turkey to calculate its capacities rationally, and construct its strategic acts realistically. The same impact has come from regime-resistance in Arab countries, and in Syria in particular, and from the instability in Iraq. Calculating and determining what is possible, as well as, and more importantly, the limits of the possible are difficult questions confronting the pro-activist dimension of Turkish foreign policy. It is in this sense that Ian Lesser has suggested that with the significant changes in the global context, the Arab Spring and the severe global economic crisis that will shape globalization in the 2010s, there has emerged the "Third Wave" in Turkish foreign policy, after the consecutive waves of "alliances" and "commerce", where security risks in a highly uncertain environment will confront the soft power, and especially the trading state identity of Turkey. I agree with Lesser that the changing and crisis-prone global context will confront the pro-activism of Turkish foreign policy and its efficacy. Turkey, however, may respond to the Third Wave successfully by attempting to transform its soft power into a smart power.

To be a smart power, two conditions have to be met. First, success in foreign policy depends to a large extent on stability in domestic policy. Second, proactive and multidimensional foreign policy should be determined and sustained by realistic choices. Turkish foreign policy is no exception in this context, and it is here that the significance of democratic consolidation at home and the choice of pro-activism with a strong EU anchor in a transatlantic strategic partnership lies. In both areas, Turkey faces serious problems. As for domestic stability based on democratic consolidation, as I have explored elsewhere in detail (Keyman, 2008), unless democracy becomes "the only game in town" in Turkey, that is, unless political actors, state elites and civil society organizations internalize democracy both in their own discourses and strategies, as well as in their interactions with one another, Turkey remains

vulnerable to instabilities, polarizations, and separations in its domestic life. The Kurdish question remains to be shaped by violence and terror, and the language of security seems to win over democracy. Despite the efforts of the AKP government to initiate democratic openings in religious communities, such as those of the Alevis and non-Muslim minorities, as well as those of the Roma, the question of the recognition of cultural difference remains unsolved. Moreover, Turkey's democracy has also been confronted by significant problems stemming from the politicization of the judiciary. Attempting to consolidate Turkish democracy will be one of the biggest challenges confronting the actors of Turkey's proactive foreign policy. The extent to which the AKP government will cope effectively with the problem of domestic stability through democratic consolidation will determine the efficacy of Turkish foreign policy as smart power.

The second dimension of smart power concerns the importance of realism in foreign policy choices. Herein lies the significance of what Ian Lesser has correctly termed 'priority setting' in the process of multidimensional regional engagements, in order to make proactive and constructive foreign policy realistic and effective. Lesser argues that:

The entente with Greece, openings with Syria and even with Iran, the prospect of a real opening with Armenia. These are meaningful things but these are all things in Turkey's neighborhood. If you look at the scope of Turkey's foreign policy activism in recent years, it does sometimes seem as if Turkey is trying to do all things at once and be all things to all people. Under certain conditions, that could be a perfectly valid approach. When I look ahead, I see the climate for Turkey becoming more difficult and less encouraging to that kind of strategy. Turkey has had the luxury of not having to choose, for example, between Eurasia and the West, between the Muslim world and Europe, etc. In coming years, *Turkish foreign policy will be more about priorities and less about general activism* (2008, pp. 1-6, emphasis is mine).

In fact, Turkey should place the issue of 'priority setting' at the center of its foreign policy orientation. Herein lies the significance of Turkey's historical European vocation that has taken the form of full accession negotiations since 3 October 2005. Despite uncertainties, and the existence of serious distrust between Turkey and the EU, Turkey's European transformation should remain the "effective anchor" or the "main axis" of Turkey's new foreign policy identity, rather than Turkey-U.S relations, Turkey-Eurasia rela-

tions, or Turkey's unilateralism. Contrary to these three options, Turkey-EU relations are about deep integration, constructed historically and institutionally, and generating a number of economic, political and identity-based system-transforming impacts both in Turkey and Europe.⁴ The need to emphasize general activism also requires an effective EU anchor for Turkish foreign policy, which is compatible with and useful for Turkey's regional power and pivotal state role. The more Europeanized Turkey becomes, the more it is perceived positively in the rest of the world, especially in its greater regional engagements. Turkey still looks West and attempts to strengthen its transatlantic strategic partnership, which is crucial to realizing its Eastern engagement with sustainability and success. It is in this sense that I would suggest that a viable Turkish foreign policy requires (a) proactive, constructive and multidimensional state behavior; (b) taking the concept of smart power seriously; (c) having the EU anchor as the main axis of foreign policy in a transatlantic context; and (d) coming to terms with the fact that it is not only geopolitics, but also, and more importantly, an articulation of modernity, culture and security, sustained by a consolidated democracy, that constitutes the basis of efficacy in pro-activism.

Marx is right in suggesting that a reciprocal and dialectical relationship exists between agency (actors make history) and structure (but not in the circumstances that they choose). Turkey, in responding to global turmoil in general and in contributing to the Arab Spring in a way that it evolves towards a successful transition to democracy and its consolidation, in particular, should learn from Marx, and in doing so, it should attempt to reconsider its soft power as a smart power making its pro-activism effective and efficient with a strong emphasis always on fair and just globalization abroad and democratic consolidation at home.

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⁴ For a detailed analysis of these system-transforming impacts, see F. Baban and E.F. Keyman, "Turkey and Postnational Europe", *European Journal of Social Theory*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2008.

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Limits of Conservative Change: Reform Choreography of the Justice and Development Party

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In the early days of the summer of 1999, one could not help but notice the posters affixed on the rear windows of many cars in Istanbul. The posters had a picture of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, current Prime Minister of Turkey, along with the slogan ‘He is now in prison’. In Turkey, it is quite common for people to attach a picture of their relatives or friends in military combat gear to the rear window of their cars, with the words ‘He is now a soldier’. This is a way of portraying a sense of pride when a member of the family or an acquaintance is performing his obligatory military service. The poster of Erdoğan, which was quite visible in the streets of Istanbul in 1999, implied a celebration of a rather different virtue. It depicted Erdoğan in a suit with a tie, and was undoubtedly the portrayal of a non-militaristic sense of pride. It was also one of the first signs of a very popular leader in the making.

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan spent four months in prison in 1999 (March-July). He was found guilty on the basis of an article in the Turkish Penal Code, which states that it is a crime to ‘provoke animosity and enmity among the people on the basis of religion and race’. He was convicted because he recited a revised version of a poem by Ziya Gökalp in a demonstration in Siirt in 1997, when he was still the Mayor of Istanbul.

Erdoğan started his political career in the youth organization of the National Salvation Party (the first Islamist political party of the National Outlook Movement) in 1976.¹ After the 1980 military coup, he continued his

¹ The origins of the National Outlook Movement can be traced back to the National Order Party that was formed under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan with the support of some Sufi orders

political career by joining the newly formed Welfare Party. One of the peaks of his early career was his election as the Mayor of Istanbul in 1994 as a member of the Welfare Party. Afterwards, his political career was shaped by the dynamics of what is commonly called the Process of February 28.

On 28 February 1997, the National Security Council forced the government to accept severe measures in defense of laicism in Turkey. Soon afterwards, a case was brought against the Welfare Party by the Chief Justice of the High Court for being the focal point of anti-secular activities. Erdoğan had made the speech that led to his conviction only a month before the Constitutional Court closed down Welfare Party in January 1998. He then joined the newly founded Virtue Party, which was also closed down, in June 2001, through a similar process. Two months later, in August, Erdoğan led the group of reformers who called themselves “innovationists” (*yenilikçiler*) to form the Justice and Development Party (AKP).

When the AKP was formed out of the ashes of the Virtue Party by the innovationists, Erdoğan declared their dissociation from the political parties that upheld the ideas of the National Outlook Movement. Hence, the AKP was portrayed as a party of reform and change from the very outset. Erdoğan, whose popularity was on the rise since his days as the Mayor of Istanbul, became the first leader of this new party. The aforementioned posters were almost like a secret code among his supporters. These cars, with Erdoğan's posters, were travelling in the midst of heavy Istanbul traffic in 1999, signaling the rise of a political leader whose popularity and charisma was enhanced by what was perceived as the unfair punishment of the Turkish state.

The Justice and Development Party, this brand new party of the innovationists, formed the government after winning 34.3 per cent of the votes and almost two-thirds of the parliamentary seats in the 3 November 2002 national elections.² Although it had entered the realm of politics as the party of innovationists interested in change, AKP also defined itself primarily as a

in 1970. This party was closed by the Constitutional Court after the military *coup d'état* of 1971. The successive political parties that were attached to the National Outlook Movement were the National Salvation Party (founded in 1973 and closed after the military *coup d'état* of 1980); the Welfare Party (founded in 1983 and closed by the Constitutional Court in 1998 during the Process of February 28); the Virtue Party (founded in 1997 and closed by the Constitutional Court in 2001); and the Felicity Party that was founded by traditionalists out of the ashes of the Virtue Party in 2001.

2 The party of the traditionalists that continued within the parameters of the National Outlook Movement, the Felicity Party, stayed far behind with only 2.5 per cent of the vote.

conservative party. Interestingly, ever since it formed the government, AKP paradoxically initiated and led a set of serious reforms that changed the dynamics of Turkish politics. A change initiated and led by conservatives undoubtedly had its limits. This chapter highlights the limits of this process of conservative change by exploring how the international and domestic context influenced some of the policy choices of the AKP. In so doing, it reveals the nature of the peculiar choreography of the AKP that seems to be the key secret of the survival and stamina of this government.

In the first section of this chapter, the AKP's claim to reform and innovate is examined by highlighting how the party positioned itself *vis-à-vis* the National Outlook Movement tradition. Secondly, the impact of international dynamics in enhancing and weakening the AKP's reform agenda is explored. The third section addresses the domestic impediments that have curtailed AKP's reform agenda. In the concluding section, the peculiar choreography of the AKP is described in light of its domestic and foreign policy choices, elaborated upon in the preceding sections.

THE REFORMIST AND INNOVATIVE NATURE OF THE AKP

The political parties of the National Outlook Movement have been a constant feature of the Turkish political landscape since the 1970s. The spiritual father of this movement was Mehmet Zahid Kotku (1897-1980), who became the leader of the Gümüşhanevi Nakşibendi Order in 1952.

It has been argued that 'Kotku transformed the structure of the mosque-based community into a semi-political movement. The mosque, in this case the İskenderpaşa Camii, was no longer a place for elders to sit and pray. It became a center for shaping young people...' (Yavuz 2003, p. 141).

Some former Prime Ministers and Presidents of Turkey, such as Turgut Özal, Necmettin Erbakan and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, had their roots in this movement. Kotku placed much emphasis on economic progress. It was his ideas that made it possible to envisage a symbiosis between Islam and economic modernization (Yavuz 2003, p.142).³

Kotku thought that Muslims had to control technology in order to control their destiny. He pointed to the flexibility of Islam and hence its har-

3 Hakan Yavuz argues that Kotku transformed the Sufi expression "Bir lokma, bir hırka" (all a person needs is a morsel of food and a cloak to cover oneself) by adding 'one Mazda (a brand of automobile)' to the list.

mony with daily modern practices. Kotku was succeeded by Esat Coşan, who went even further when he said,

As far as I am concerned, those who do not have trade experience do not turn out to be good humans. The most pragmatic and realistic people are businessmen and merchants. If a businessman is also a Muslim, he is the most in tune with his religious station in life (quoted in Yavuz 2003, p. 143).

These ideas were an inspiration to a new generation of Turkish Muslim businessmen known as Anatolian Tigers. These devout Anatolian businessmen have increasingly challenged the monopoly of the Istanbul industrialists since the 1990s. They are among the main supporters of AKP.

The competition between Istanbul and Anatolian industrialists has sharpened in the course of the past decade. This is a competition that duplicated the conflict in center-periphery relations, which is a “key” in understanding Turkish politics (Mardin 1973). In this conflict, the center has been represented by the urban Westernizing elite in big metropolises, who have traditionally been under the patronage of the bureaucratic-military cadres of the state. The periphery, on the other hand, was laden with religious symbolism rooted in small towns as well as in the outskirts of the big metropolises, and it was situated in opposition to the civil-military bureaucracy. While the center was keen on the adoption of Sunni Islam under the patronage of the state, the periphery glorified folk Islam that was not controlled by state authorities.

Religious symbolism emerged in the Ottoman-Turkish political tradition as a reaction to the Westernization attempts promoted by the center. Religion came to be associated with the discourse of the just in a collapsing empire in which the social classes were not adequately prepared for class rebellions (Mardin 1991). Hence, rebellious activity against the Westernizing central elite took the shape of religious activity. The dynamics of this conflict are crucial to grasping the subsequent tension between the laicist Westernizers and the religious opposition. Accordingly, Islam came to be regarded as the nemesis of Westernization in Turkey.

One of the major institutional reforms that symbolized laicism in Turkey was the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924 (Berkes 1998, pp. 450-460).⁴

4 The Caliph claimed leadership of all Muslims in the world. The story of the Ottoman Caliphate dates back to the sixteenth century, when Ottoman Sultan Yavuz Sultan Selim's incorporation of Egypt into the empire led to the end of the Abbasid Caliphate, and the Sultan bestowed himself

This was followed by a series of other reforms in 1924 within legal, educational and cultural institutions, such as the bill abolishing the Ministries of Religious Law and Endowments (*Şeriat* and *Evkaf*), another bill closing institutions of religious education (*medrese*) and unifying education under the Ministry of Education as well as the abolishing of religious orders (*tariqas*) (Ibid., p. 463). The abolition of the Caliphate was accompanied by the foundation of the General Directorate of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı* – abbreviated as *Diyanet*), designed to place religion under the authority of the state. *Diyanet* became responsible for the administration of all the mosques and the appointment of all the religious employees of the state such as preachers (*imams*), callers to prayer (*müezzins*), and orators (*hatibs*) (Gözyayın 2009).

Laicism in Turkey did not lead the way to the separation of the matters of state and religion. Instead, laicism made religion subservient to the state. Laicism produced an official state Islam by excluding all other types of Islam. By being placed into the service of the state, religion in republican Turkey was turned into a tool that would ensure obedience to the state (Kadioğlu 2010).

Lütfi Doğan, who was the Director of *Diyanet* from 1968 to 1971, maintains that at the time of the foundation of the National Salvation Party in 1973, Mehmet Zahit Kotku invited five people and told them the following:

...you are all men dedicated to the cause of protecting and advancing this nation. The core identity (*kimlik*) and character (*kişilik*) of this *wounded nation* is Islam. Your main heritage is Islam and as Muslims you can heal this wound by listening to what our Turkish Muslim people want. What they want is an Islamic sense of justice and the restoration of their Ottoman-Islamic identity (cited in Yavuz 2003, p. 207, emphasis mine).

Kotku had set the twin pillars of the National Outlook Movement as identity and justice (Ibid., p. 207). The political parties rooted in this tradition strove to reclaim the Islamic heritage of the Turkish nation. This was reflected in the form of a *tier-mondism* (third-worldism) in their foreign policy agendas. The Welfare Party, for instance, espoused closer relations with Is-

with the religious title of Caliph in 1517. Since then, Ottoman Sultans claimed to be the Caliph of all the Muslims. In fact, after the abolition of the Sultanate in 1923, the last Sultan still claimed the title of Caliph and placed himself under British protection. The abolition of the Caliphate in 1924 was an important step in giving legitimacy to the new Turkish state on the basis of a national identity that superseded religion.

lamic states as well as 'an Islamic common market, an Islamic NATO, an Islamic UNESCO, and an Islamic monetary unit' (Özbudun 2006, p. 545). The Welfare Party not only adopted anti-American, anti-European, anti-Zionist and even anti-Semitic foreign policy discourses, but also opposed Turkey's accession to the European Union (EU) (Ibid.).

The political parties of the National Outlook tradition have also emphasized heavy state controls of the economy. The Welfare Party, for instance, popularized the expression "just order" (*adil düzen*) that was professed as better than both capitalism and socialism.⁵

Erdoğan, who became the Prime Minister in March 2003, repeatedly said that the innovationists had 'taken off the shirt of the National Outlook Movement'. Accordingly, the Justice and Development Party differed from the National Outlook Movement in terms of identity – the conception of justice coupled with the adoption of a novel style of politics. It is possible to delineate three focal differences between the National Outlook Movement and AKP.

First of all, contrary to the political parties of the National Outlook, the AKP did not embrace an Islamic identity. It had accepted to act within the framework of laicism. One author refers to AKP as a 'post-Islamist' party that has abandoned Islam as a political program (Dağı 2005). The party's cadres have repeatedly opposed the utilization of the expression "moderate Islamist" in describing the AKP. They rather systematically referred to themselves as a "conservative democratic" political movement (Akdoğan 2003). In sum, the AKP engaged in a 'discursive denial of its Islamist pedigree' and adopted 'a moderate and non-religious discourse in its place'. (Cizre 2008a, p. 4). This was reflected nowhere more clearly than in AKP's foreign policy agenda.

The former chief advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the current Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmet Davutoğlu (2004) stressed the AKP's determination to have 'zero problems' with Turkey's neighbors while reaffirming Turkey's long commitments to EU accession. His foreign policy vocabulary included quite a number of electrifying notions like 'proactive', 'dynamic', 'multidimensional', 'integrated', 'all-inclusive', 'zero problems with neighbors', 'constructive' and 'rhythmic diplomacy' – all of which point-

5 Ahmet Yıldız (2008, pp. 50-1) points to a change within the National Outlook Movement after the Process of February 28. He argues that the political parties of the National Outlook Movement tradition formed in and after 1997 were different from the former ones in that they had begun to acknowledge the significance of global capitalism and free market economy.

ed to a new era in Turkish foreign policy that had its roots in the party's rejection of a predominantly Islamic identity (Aras 2009). Instead of specifying priority areas in foreign policy, Davutoğlu declared that the idea of 'strategic depth' was fluid yet resilient enough to respond to changes in the international context (Ibid.).

Secondly, the AKP government abandoned such introverted ideas as the "just order" that was adopted by the political parties of the National Outlook Movement before 1997. Instead, it tried to adapt itself to the requirements of a global economic order by embracing economic liberalism. In a text published in 2002 and entitled *The AKP Development and Democratization Program*, it was declared that AKP will seek close relations with the USA, EU, NATO, Central Asian Republics and Islamic countries (cited in Özbudun 2006). After the 2002 elections, the party's resolution to pursue policies geared towards Turkey's accession to the EU was matched with concrete steps as its members of parliament approved the adoption of substantial reform packages harmonizing Turkish legislation with EU standards between 2002 and 2005.

A case in point is the Penal Code that was passed by the Parliament on 26 September 2004. The process that led to the adoption of the new Penal Code was conducted through intense deliberations between the government and women's organizations. The new law, as opposed to the old one, treats sexual crimes as violations of the individual rights of women rather than as crimes against society, the family or public morality. The new law criminalizes rape in marriage and sexual harassment in the workplace; it eliminates sentence reductions for honor killings (European Stability Initiative 2007). The successful deliberations towards the new Penal Code, however, were overshadowed by the Prime Minister's abortive efforts to criminalize adultery (Ibid.).

The adoption of democratizing reforms during this period (including the abolition of the death penalty; the expansion of the freedom of expression; the permission of teaching and broadcasting in Kurdish; and the recognition of the supremacy of international agreements over domestic legislation) brought Turkey to the point of commencing the official negotiations towards membership in the EU on 3 October 2005.

It is obvious that the AKP's detachment from an Islamic identity and its claim to be a conservative democratic party signifies a major discursive shift from that embraced by the National Outlook Movement. Moreover, the party promoted global capitalism and free market economy, and set out to in-

tegrate Turkey into the world economy. AKP was able to situate itself as a political party adopting policies that were attuned to the pace of a global market economy. The differences between Justice and Development and the preceding Islamist parties of the National Outlook Movement seemed 'real and profound' (Özbudun 2006, p. 547).

Thirdly, in addition to such substantive differences from the National Outlook Movement, the AKP rejuvenated the political realm by adopting a political style and language that glorified compromise over conflict. This 'posture of compromise' is probably one of the secrets of the survival of the AKP governments despite repeated attempts from the judicial establishment to close the party (Yıldız 2008, p. 48). The National Outlook Movement leaders, on the other hand, had utilized a language of conflict towards their political opponents. In 1994, the leader of the Welfare Party, Necmettin Erbakan, famously said, 'Will the transition to the order of the Welfare Party be bloody or amiable? We say let us make it amiable' (*Milliyet* 1994). Erbakan seemed to suggest that the road to Just Order would be bloody unless his opponents cooperated with his party.

All in all, AKP was born as a political party that was identified as 'conservative democratic' by its leading cadres. It denounced its Islamist background despite the fact that its leading cadres paid lip service to the significance of respecting religion. It embraced global capitalism and a free market economy. It opted for positive relations with the USA and NATO as well as the Central Asian Turkic Republics and Islamic countries. The party and its members embraced a style of compromise rather than conflict and emerged as a pragmatic and flexible political movement.

THE INTERNATIONAL SETTING AND ITS IMPACT ON THE REFORM PROCESS

There were various international factors that facilitated AKP's rejuvenation of Turkish politics, especially during the party's early period in government between 2002 and 2005. It was such a reinvigoration of democratization efforts that led *The Economist* to appear with a cover on 18 September 2004 that asked quite bluntly: 'Why Europe Must Say Yes to Turkey?' On 4 October 2005, the day after the opening of official negotiations with the EU, the cover of the *Independent* depicted a map of Turkey with the stars of EU on its Eastern border. Its headline was 'Europe's New Borders'. Those days of excitement, however, were short lived.

After the end of 2005, there was a visible slowdown in AKP's EU bid. In the course of the past few years, increasing concern has been voiced in the Turkish and international media about the changing direction of AKP foreign policy. This concern reached its climax in 2009 when Prime Minister Erdoğan walked out of a panel at the World Economic Forum in Davos, after harshly criticizing the Israeli President Shimon Peres. By that time, some authors had already begun to ask questions like 'Who lost Turkey?' (Moisi 2009). What were the pivotal international factors that facilitated AKP's orientation towards domestic reforms between 2002 and 2005?

In a key article published in 2005, Jeffrey Haynes argued that the post-9/11 era epitomizes the last stage of the 'political return of religion' (Haynes 2005). He claimed that prior to the onset of the modern international state system, rooted in the predominance of secularism in the eighteenth century; religion was a key source of conflict within and between states. Modern political ethos in the West had been distinguished by the relegation of religion and piety to the private realm so that 'religion would no longer be an important public actor' (Ibid., p. 400). Haynes maintained that the political return of religion was not sudden; it had begun six or seven decades ago. In the course of the two decades following the Second World War, religion accompanied anti-colonial struggles as a political actor. Religion continued this role in the 1960s and 1970s, especially in the Israel-Palestine conflict. The 1980s were the years that witnessed the rise of political parties with a Muslim social base in the Middle East, which were challenging secular authoritarian regimes. Olivier Roy suggested that while secularization has been seen as a prerequisite for democratization in the West, it is mostly associated with dictatorships in the Middle East (Roy 2004, p. 3). In the post-Cold War era, the Western academic world was taken aback by declarations of irreconcilable differences between Western and Islamic civilizations. The potential for conflict was expressed in the adamant language of the "clash of civilizations" thesis of Samuel Huntington (1993).

Religion's role as a political actor returned to stay in the post-9/11 world when coordinated suicide attacks hit New York City and Washington D.C. on 11 September 2001, killing about 3,000 people. 9/11 constituted the pretext for U.S.-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Islam became increasingly associated with terror in the Western popular media. Some analysts in the Western world began to ponder into questions along the lines of 'Why they Hate Us?' (Zakaria, 2001) or 'What Went Wrong?' (Lewis 2002) in re-

flections concerning the potential for conflict between the Western and the Muslim worlds. Others began to argue that it is impossible to speak of only one manifestation of Islam. As Haynes (2005, p. 411) puts it,

It is one thing to argue that different brands of political Islam offer qualitatively different perspectives on liberal democracy compared to 'western' thinking. But it is quite another thing to claim –as Huntington does– that Muslims *en masse* are poised to enter into a period of conflict with the West. There are many 'Islams' –militant, conservative and liberal– and only the malevolent or misinformed would say the terrorist attacks perpetrated by al Qaeda are singularly representative of the faith.

When AKP formed the government after the November 2002 national elections in Turkey, policy makers in the USA turned to finding friendly allies among religiously-oriented actors in the Muslim world. This action was deemed to be essential in order to circumvent –or prevent– the catastrophic vision of Samuel Huntington. Many political actors began to emphasize inter-civilizational and inter-faith dialogues.⁶

International dynamics encouraged the government's policies towards revising the civil-military balance in Turkey in favor of the former. The reform package that was put into effect in August 2004 included major amendments about the status of the National Security Council, the council through which the military exercised control over politics (Cizre 2008b, p. 137). These amendments increased civilian control of politics and were supported by the EU. They were also significant in transforming Turkey into a key actor in the new U.S foreign policy bid for the Broader Middle East and North Africa, a project that uplifted democratization in the region. It was a highly debated theme in the NATO meeting that was held in Istanbul in 2004 (Akçapar et al. 2004).

The positive energy in domestic democratization backed by international dynamics peaked at the time of the start of official negotiations between Turkey and the EU on 3 October 2005. The following five moments contributed to the decline of this positive process.

6 It was towards this end that the Turkish government took the hand of the Spanish government in 2005 to establish an inter-civilizational dialogue. This collaboration led to the project called the Alliance of Civilizations, which aims to foster understanding and cooperation as well as to counter polarization and extremism in the world.

Five Moments of Decline

First of all, the Turkish government supported the plan of the UN Secretary General in March 2004, the plan that envisaged an independent Cyprus in which Turkish and Greek Cypriots would coexist as citizens of a bi-communal federal republic. The Turkish government's support for this plan went against the strong winds of concerted opposition from both conservative-nationalist circles and the Turkish military. The plan was voted on in a referendum; the result was an "approval" of the plan by the Turkish Cypriot community and a "rejection" by the Greek Cypriots, overall marking its failure. Nevertheless, a few weeks later, on 1 May 2004, the Republic of Cyprus became a member of the EU.⁷

Secondly, despite the quite substantial reforms and a visibly constructive shift in foreign policy portrayed in the attitude towards the Annan Plan, in 2006, the EU Commissioner declared that unless Turkey keeps up with such reforms and makes the Turkish ports available for Cypriot planes and vessels, the possibility of a 'train crash' on the track to EU accession was quite possible (cited in Cizre 2008b, p. 155). The EU Council indeed suspended negotiations on eight of the remaining thirty-two chapters in December 2006.

Thirdly, some European leaders, including French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, commenced to voice their opposition to Turkey's accession to the EU rather openly. The phrase 'privileged partnership' began to be heard much more often.⁸

Fourthly, on 12 October 2006, the French National Assembly approved a bill that criminalizes denial of genocide against the Armenians during the First World War. This is a development that was quite widely covered in the Turkish media and enhanced the feeling of Euro-skepticism in Turkey.⁹ The AKP government did not stay oblivious towards such Euro-skepticism.

7 The overall sentiment of the time was reflected in the title of Philip Robins' (24 April 2004) commentary in *Daily Star*: 'Whatever the Outcome in Cyprus, Erdogan Wins'.

8 Still, there were some European leaders who maintained a positive stance regarding Turkey's membership in the EU. Former German Foreign Minister/Vice Chancellor Joschka Fischer, for instance, emphasized the bridge building role of Turkey between the West and the Islamic world as well as between Islam and democracy. Fischer stated, 'I think that Europe has the strongest leverage in its hand – it's Turkey. If Turkey were to be firmly bound to the West, it would be the key battle in the fight against Islamic radicalism and terrorism, because it would demonstrate that Islamic culture and tradition is not in contradiction with the rule of law, with the market economy, with the modern society...That Islam fits into the modern reality in the 21st century'. (*The Washington Note* 4 September 2008).

9 A similar decision was passed by the French National Assembly once again on 22 December 2011, but it was met with a much harsher diplomatic reaction on the part of the Turkish government.

cism. Later, the U.S Council on Foreign Relations and the National Parliament in Sweden made similar decisions. The Turkish government reacted by calling back its ambassadors for lengthy consultations.

Fifthly, in a key decision on 10 November 2005, the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights upheld the ban on wearing religious headscarf, in university campuses (Choudhury 2007). Deciding that Turkey did not violate the human rights of Leyla Şahin by excluding her from university education on the basis of her religious attire, the court frustrated both pious Muslim women in Turkey and the AKP rank and file.

By 2007, the negative factors that were contributing to the slowing down of the reform process were amplified by domestic crises that seemed to jeopardize the AKP's very survival.

DOMESTIC IMPEDIMENTS TO REFORM

Turkish politics has been structured around a constant tension between the appointed state elite of the bureaucratic-military establishment and the elected political elite in the parliament. The appointed state elites have always regarded themselves as the true guardians of the Turkish nation-state. They have taken the role of safeguarding laicism as one of the founding principles of the Turkish Republic. The members of the state elite have traditionally displayed a suspicious attitude towards the elected political elite, and this attitude was expressed in an anti-political language. The political elite experienced outright criminalization in the course of several military *coup d'états* throughout the history of modern Turkey. Some elected political leaders were even subjected to death penalty in the 1950s.

Politics has hardly been a sustainable activity in Turkey. In the period of multi-party politics (post-1946), about 25 political parties were closed (Kaptıkaçtı et al. 2008). This tension between state and politics had a negative impact on the ethos of the Turkish political elite in that they, too, developed a sense of anti-politics by defying the very basis of their vocation. Political elites have occasionally felt tempted to conquer the space of what they viewed as "real power" (i.e. the state) by appointing their party supporters to key bureaucratic positions. While in government, the AKP also adopted this approach of "state capture".

During its early years in government, the AKP cadre's determination to denounce an Islamic identity seemed to contribute to its legitimacy in the eyes of the state elite. However, the ongoing Ergenekon case trials have been ex-

posing various secret plots within the military, plots geared towards creating unrest in the society in order to rationalize military intervention into politics, dating back as early as 2003.¹⁰ Hence, the state elites were not fully convinced by the declarations of the AKP being a conservative democratic rather than an Islamic political party. Still, the party's skillful dance with the state elites and a number of European partners and its ability to please them brought Turkey to the point of the beginning of negotiations with the EU in October 2005. The descent commenced from this peak point in only a few weeks.

On 9 November 2005, a bookshop in the predominantly Kurdish town of Şemdinli was bombed. Two low-ranking officers of the Turkish armed forces were identified as assailants by the locals. The owner of the bookstore was an informant of the Kurdish Workers Party, PKK (*Partiya Karkeren Kürdistan*). The public prosecutor of the city of Van prepared an indictment that implied the then-Land Forces Commander Yaşar Büyükanıt (who became the Chief of the General Staff in July 2006) for trying to prevent the peaceful resolution of the Kurdish conflict and aggravating the tensions in the region by becoming implicated in such bombings. In a few months, the public prosecutor was not only dismissed from his office, but was also barred from practicing legal profession by the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors (*Hakimler Savcılar Yüksek Kurulu*, HSYK) (Kaya 2009, pp. 104-5). The Minister of Justice went along with this decision, clearly showing that the AKP government lacked the determination to stand by the prosecutor.¹¹

¹⁰ Ergenekon is the name of a clandestine organization. Its members within the military, judiciary, academy, bureaucracy, media, parliament and civil society are currently being charged with engaging in operations to topple the popularly elected AKP government. They are also charged with plotting operations geared towards creating unrest in the society, which would ultimately rationalize the intervention of the military. The structure and activities of the Ergenekon are akin to those of the Italian Gladio.

¹¹ The prosecutor was returned to legal office in April 2011 by the newly elected HSYK in accordance with the Constitutional amendments accepted in a nationwide referendum on 12 September 2010. This was a reform that was long sought by European officials who emphasized the HSYK's involvement in politicized dismissals of the prosecutors of high profile cases (Bali November 5 2010, p.3). Prior to the amendment, the HSYK was composed of seven regular and five substitute members, with the Minister of Justice and his/her Undersecretary serving as regular members. The remaining five regular members were all drawn from the senior judiciary. The new HSYK has 22 regular and 12 substitute members, with the Minister of Justice and his/her undersecretary still serving as members. In addition to such expansion in membership, some of the new members are drawn from a new pool of candidates to be selected by judges and prosecutors who are at lower-level administrative and judicial institutions across the country, thus making HSYK more representative nationwide (Ibid.). Most of the concerns of experts about this reform of the HSYK stemmed from the fact that such increase in representation was expected to benefit the AKP cadres.

Perhaps it was the survival instinct that kept the Minister of Justice away from investigating the matter further.

The Şemdinli incident was a microcosm of Turkey's political dynamics. A political party at the high point of reform was reminded of the everlasting presence of the guardians of the Republic, situated in the military and the judiciary. By the end of March 2006, riots broke out in Diyarbakır during funerals of PKK militants who were killed by the security forces. The riots spread to other cities such as Batman, Siirt and Istanbul. In the midst of the mounting violence and a rising death toll, the opposition parties attacked the AKP government for its inability to redress the situation and for a soft posture in the fight against terrorism. To make matters worse, on 16 May 2006, an attack on the Council of State led to the death of a judge. The assailant justified his attack with the Council's earlier decision against the right to wear a headscarf. The Ergenekon case, however, exposed the assailant's links to retired military officers, who were conspiring to topple the AKP government by resorting to extra-political and violent means.

By the end of June 2006, AKP-initiated amendments to the Anti-Terror Law dating back to 1991 were adopted by the parliament. The new law brought imprisonment for shouting slogans and carrying banners in demonstrations in favor of terror groups. Not only did it constitute a major setback to the freedom of expression, but it also made it possible to imprison minors.¹² The same law allowed the security forces to shoot suspects who failed to cooperate (Öktem 3 June 2006; *Milliyet* June 30 2006). In sum, the law reduced Turkey's Kurdish problem to an issue of terror. The fact that the Minister of Justice emphasized that they were 'sorry' to come up with such an 'unpleasant' set of legal arrangements did not change the reality (*Milliyet* June 30 2006). The reformist AKP that had been taking impressive steps of reform since 2002 took a huge step backwards. The passing of the amendments of Anti-Terror Law in June 2006 went into history as one of the darkest and most undemocratic moments of the AKP government.

In 2006, it seemed as if AKP cadres had chosen to trade in reform for

12 Hundreds of Kurdish children aged between 12 and 15 were imprisoned in Turkey on the basis of the draconian measures of the Anti-Terror Law of 2006. The children who were convicted were charged with taking part in demonstrations, throwing stones at the security forces and shouting slogans. The government recently (July 2010) passed an amendment to the Anti-Terror Law so that children cannot be tried on the basis of the same law as adults. These amendments were largely prompted by unrelenting pressure of civil societal organizations using the motto "Justice for Children".

political survival. They surrendered to nationalist appeals in order to alleviate the condemnation of the opposition parties and the state elite. This was one of those moments when anti-militarist, liberal and democrat intellectuals in Turkey, who had been silently or openly supporting the government's reform agenda, could clearly see the party's conservative and nationalist ethos. The reform process was severely curtailed.

On 19 January 2007, Hrant Dink, an Armenian-Turkish journalist and the editor in chief of the weekly newspaper called *Agos*, was shot in front of his office in a busy street in Istanbul. About 200,000 people marched at his funeral, carrying banners reiterating, "We are all Armenians". These banners were reciprocated by antagonistic ones that aggressively pronounced "We are all Turks" (Kadioğlu, 2007).

The early months of 2007 were difficult for liberal and democrat intellectuals who sought to attract attention to the atrocities committed against Armenians during the First World War as well as to the agonies of the Kurdish citizens of Turkey. In public opinion, they were increasingly regarded as traitors who were stabbing the Turkish nation in the back.¹³ Many of these intellectuals faced lawsuits for "denigrating Turkishness" on the basis of Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code. Some of them were harassed in front of courts where their cases were heard; others received death threats. Orhan Pamuk, Turkey's Nobel laureate in literature in 2006, had to leave Turkey due to concerns for his safety. Critical intellectuals were forced to lead fearful lives under the watchful eye of their bodyguards, assigned by the state.

The year 2007 was the year of the flags and nationalist demonstrations in Turkey. In the midst of the Presidential elections, "Republic Marches" were organized in major cities like Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. The fire of these demonstrations was ignited by the fact that the wife of the presidential candidate, Abdullah Gül, was wearing a headscarf. On 27 April 2007, the Turkish Armed Forces issued a memorandum on their web site: they reminded the elected political elite that the military officers were the guardians of the Republic and that they would not tolerate anti-secular activities on the part of the government. The memorandum implied that the armed forces could interfere with the government as long as Abdullah Gül remained a presidential

¹³ In May 2005, the Minister of Justice, Cemil Çiçek, openly said that the intellectuals who were trying to convene a conference on the Anatolian Armenians during the decline of the Ottoman Empire were 'back-stabbers'. This expression was reminiscent of the *Dolchstosslegende* in 1918 Germany (Kadioğlu 29 May 2005).

candidate. The Constitutional Court blocked Gül's election by annulling the first round of voting. The government was now cornered by the military and the Constitutional Court. As a way out, they called for early elections to be held on 22 July 2007.

The AKP emerged victorious from these elections by increasing its electoral support to 47 per cent. Yet, the pressures the party had to face were not eliminated since the top prosecutor in Turkey filed a law-suit in March 2008, demanding the closure of AKP for being the focal point of anti-secular activities. This time, the Constitutional Court ruled against the closure of AKP.¹⁴ However, it did decide that AKP had become the focal point of anti-secular activities and hence, its funds were to be cut in half.

The above sequence of events illustrates how the government's main venture after the autumn of 2005 was mere survival. This was the main domestic factor that curtailed the reform process. Yet, while the AKP gave up on the reform process and relinquished the Kurdish issue into the hands of the military after 2006, the democratization efforts of intellectuals and the civil society remained strong. In December 2008, a group of intellectuals announced a website that contained a statement of apology addressed to their Armenian brothers and sisters for the atrocities committed against them in 1915. By the end of 2009, about 30,000 people had signed this statement.

After securing its electoral support base in the local elections of March 2009, the government made an effort to return to the path of reform. It had already made a bold decision in launching a state television channel (TRT 6) in Kurdish in January 2009.¹⁵ By the middle of 2009, the government announced a "Kurdish opening" as well as an "Armenian opening." Relations between Turkey and Armenia had begun to thaw through the so-called "soccer diplomacy" of 2008 and 2009, when the Presidents of both countries visited one another for football matches between Armenian and Turkish teams (Aktar 25 August 2008). At the societal level, privately owned SU TV, based in Turkey, started to broadcast a news program in Armenian after 28 December 2009. Yet, the AKP government's Armenian opening was circumvented during the signing of Protocols that would have led to Turkey's official recognition of the Republic of Armenia. The AKP government lacked the strong will to complete

¹⁴ A qualified majority of seven out of ten votes was required for the decision to close the party. Six members favored closure, falling short only by one vote.

¹⁵ Various political commentators also viewed this action as a maneuver to secure the Kurdish votes in the March 2009 local elections.

the opening. The Armenian opening failed by the beginning of 2010, leading *The Economist* to ironically refer to ‘zero-progress’ on the Turkish-Armenian rapprochement at the official level, implying that Foreign Minister Davutoğlu’s policy of “zero problems” with neighbors had failed and that relations were once again growing frosty (*The Economist* 18 February 2010).

Yet another dramatic development took place on 19 October 2009. Thirty-four people –all members of the PKK– came to Turkey from various PKK camps in Northern Iraq. They entered the country at the border in Habur and surrendered themselves to the Turkish authorities. They were pardoned on the basis of the Article 221 of the Turkish Penal Code that outlines the parameters of ‘active regret’.¹⁶ The arrival of these 34 militants was the most important accomplishment of the AKP government since the beginning of the rhetoric of a “Kurdish opening”. Their arrival was described as the “descent of the Kurdish terrorists from the mountains” in the Turkish media. The militants were welcomed as heroes by thousands of Kurds along the road from Silopi to Diyarbakir, in Cizre, Nusaybin and Kızıltepe. The crowds cheering them were portrayed in the Turkish media in a state of joyous celebration. These sights offended nationalists as well as families of soldiers who were killed during clashes with the PKK militants or by mines planted by them. The government had a plan to extend this move to some other Kurdish members of the PKK in Europe, who would also make use of ‘active regret.’ The greeting ceremonies held for the 34 members of the PKK, however, backfired. Members of the opposition parties blamed the AKP for collaborating with terrorists. The Prime Minister had to announce the postponement of the new arrivals. Afterwards, some PKK members who expressed “active regret” ended up being arrested while others returned to their units in the mountains. Hence, “the descent of the Kurdish terrorists from the mountains” was indefinitely put on hold.

The “Kurdish opening” was once again tested by the closure of the Democratic Society Party (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi*, DTP) on 11 December 2009 by the Constitutional Court. The DTP had been the main political party representing the Kurdish pleas. Members of the Constitutional Court voted unanimously for the closure of the party. Soon after its closure, some DTP members were arrested for alleged engagement in or for echoing the stance of the PKK-organized Kurdish network known as the Union of the

¹⁶ Accordingly, those people who have joined an organization that engages in illegal, criminal activity are pardoned provided that they voluntarily express regret prior to committing a crime.

Communities in Kurdistan (*Koma Ciwaken Kurdistan*, KCK) (International Crisis Group Report 20 September 2011). Many of the arrested were acting mayors of the DTP. They were publicly humiliated – depicted handcuffed, waiting in front of a police station for hours. Their photographs in plastic handcuffs presented a veritable paradox at a time when the AKP was still using the language of the “Kurdish opening.” It appeared that the government preferred to move along with the “Kurdish opening” without hearing the views of the key Kurdish political actors. Most AKP cadres lacked the will to change the Anti-Terror Law, a *sine qua non* of any opening regarding the Kurdish issue. Over time, the number of people arrested in such operations –referred to in the media as the KCK operations– increased in number. By the autumn of 2011, the number of those arrested in the KCK operations was estimated to be more than 3,000 (Ibid.).

By mid-March 2010, the AKP announced a reform package that involved various amendments to the 1982 Constitution. The most controversial amendments involved the selection processes of the members of two key bodies of the judiciary, namely the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors (HSYK). Some of the other amendments aimed at making it possible to file lawsuits against military commanders who were involved in past military *coup d'états*; forbidding the trial of civilians by military courts at times of peace; protecting children from abuse; and making positive discrimination for women possible. Opposition political parties voiced major criticisms against the draft of this package containing a wide range of unrelated constitutional amendments.¹⁷ Some of the criticisms were of the very idea of a “package”, maintaining that it was more meaningful to consider these amendments individually since they addressed a wide range of issues. The package received an approval of 58 per cent in a national referendum that was held on 12 September 2010, which, ironically, was the 30th anniversary of the 12 September 1980 military *coup d'état* that prepared the ground for the 1982 Constitution. The Constitutional amendments were evaluated as commendable in the European Commission Turkey 2010 Progress Report that was dated 9 November 2010. The report states:

Overall, the constitutional amendments are a step in the right direction. They address a number of priorities of the Accession Partnership in the ar-

¹⁷ For a review of the tense political climate before the referendum, as well as an evaluation of the Constitutional amendments, see Bali (5 November 2010).

ea of the judiciary, fundamental rights and public administration. However, broad public consultation involving all political parties and civil society, with their full engagement, is needed to strengthen support for constitutional reform. The implementation of the amended constitutional provisions through legislation, in line with European standards, is key.

The positive outcome of the referendum increased expectations of a renewed momentum for domestic reform. Instead, the government adopted a nationalist discourse during the campaign for the national elections that were held less than a year after the referendum, on 12 June 2011. Prime Minister Erdoğan, for instance, argued that if he were to decide, he would have hanged the leader of the Kurds who is serving multiple life sentences at the Imralı Penitentiary (*Hürriyet Gündem* 10 June 2011). Some analyses (Erdem 15 June 2011) explained this shift in AKP policy by its election strategy, which aimed to prevent the Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, MHP) from garnering enough votes to pass the national threshold of 10 per cent.¹⁸ Nevertheless, the AKP was the clear winner of the June 2011 elections and received 49.9 per cent of the national vote. This was the third national election that the party had contested since 2002. It achieved a historical success in the sense that it became a political party that secured almost half of the national vote while still in government in Turkey. The candidates from the new Kurdish Party, called Peace and Democracy Party (*Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi*, BDP), participated in elections independently in order to avoid the 10 per cent national threshold. Independently, they garnered about 6 per cent of the national vote. Accordingly, the BDP secured –currently– 29 active members of parliament.

The political atmosphere in Turkey before the 2011 elections had already encouraged mutually antagonistic policies on the part of the AKP and BDP. In fact, in early May, during the election campaign, security forces had killed seven PKK fighters in Tunceli (Dersim) and twelve more in Şırnak, at the Iraqi border (International Crisis Group 20 September 2011, p. 3). The PKK then attacked Erdoğan's bus during the election campaign in May, followed by further attacks in Hakkari and Diyarbakır, killing many more security officers. PKK raids continued after the elections. In the aftermath of a PKK attack in Hakkari, killing eight soldiers, the Turkish military began to

¹⁸ MHP made it to the parliament with a national electoral backing of 12.99 per cent at the 12 June 2011 elections.

bomb the PKK bases on the Qandil Mountains in northern Iraq. Military operations deepened in a major way in the aftermath of the PKK attack in Çukurca, killing 24 members of the security forces. Such escalation of military conflict in the course of the election campaign and in the aftermath of the elections firmly reframed, once again, Turkey's Kurdish issue as a security issue, undermining the government's reform agenda.

This shift away from a reformist approach is clearly expressed in the following comparison of statements by Prime Minister Erdoğan in 2005 and 2011. In a historical speech in Diyarbakir in August 2005, Erdoğan said:

The Kurdish problem is my problem too ... we will relax this area. Turkey has always looked through the security window; we will look through a different window. (Ibid., p. 6).

The clear shift in Prime Minister Erdoğan's position in 2011, on the other hand, was summed up in an election campaign speech that he gave in Muş on 30 April 2011: 'There is a problem of my Kurdish brothers in this country, but there is no Kurdish problem' (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi web site 30 April 2011, Muş speech).

The best years of AKP reformism occurred between 2002 and 2005. The party entered Turkey's political scene as an innovative conservative political party and led significant legislative changes during this time. Between 2005 and 2009, it was the struggles between the government and the military-bureaucratic elite that left their mark. It was also an era in which international incentives of reform – particularly hopes for EU accession – were significantly weakened. In the aftermath of the Turkish Armed Forces' 2007 memorandum and the ensuing court case against the party, the government fought for its survival. These external manipulations of the government paradoxically strengthened its electoral base. In the aftermath of these developments, the Justice and Development Party attempted to reshape civil-military relations. Many top and junior officers of the Turkish Armed Forces (about 250 of them) were arrested on charges of involvement in plots that aimed at toppling the government and began to face trials as part of the Ergenekon investigations and other such cases (Letsch 30 July 2011). In mid-2009, if for a brief interlude, the reformist AKP returned, announcing its intention to launch a "Kurdish opening".

This time, there were two significant factors that encouraged the reform initiative of the AKP. The first was international. With the election of

U.S President Barrack Obama, the withdrawal of troops from Iraq came in sight. This development lent credence to the increasing role of Turkey as a regional power. The second factor that encouraged the AKP's move towards a "Kurdish opening" was marked by unprecedented revelations in the Ergenekon Case.

The process leading to the Ergenekon trials was long and thorny. The publication of the diaries of a retired Chief of the Naval Staff in March 2007 was the first critical development that revealed the dark workings of the Turkish "deep-state". The Turkish daily *Taraf*, which published these diaries, continued to publicize one secret operation after another, all aimed at toppling the AKP government. It became obvious that members of the military had begun to leak serious information to the media. Hence, by the middle of 2009, the AKP not only fortified its electoral base during the local elections of March 2009, but also felt confident enough to go ahead with a new reform initiative. Ümit Cizre (2009, p. 4) a long time student of the civil-military relations, maintained that:

The new opportunities now available to the AK Party could hardly have emerged without the explosion of the Ergenekon incident, which has offered a persuasive critique of the closed, dark, intolerant and secret communities friendly with the military bureaucracy and state officials but insidiously devoted to destroying the government.

Yet, as indicated above, although there were some important steps taken in Turkey regarding the demilitarization of politics, the new reform initiatives were short-lived.

The demilitarization of politics in Turkey was heralded at the end of July 2011, when the top military brass stepped down, blaming the government for instigating the nation against the armed forces. The Chief of the General Staff, İlker Başbuğ stated that it had become impossible for him to defend the rights of his brothers in arms who were arrested and detained as a result of a flawed judicial process (Letsch 30 July 2011).¹⁹ A case of a military top brass resorting to retirement rather than issuing memorandums or revolting against the government was interpreted by many as the end of the era of military *coup d'états* (see, for instance, Werz and Evans 2 August 2011).

¹⁹ Başbuğ was arrested on January 6, 2012. As this chapter was copyedited, he was still under arrest.

Nevertheless, the European Commission's 2011 Progress Report remained unsatisfied with the demilitarization policies of the government. Although the report maintained that there was good progress made in terms of external audits of the armed forces' expenditures and a decrease in the number of instances where the military exerted formal or informal influence on political issues, there was still need for further progress in terms of demilitarization in Turkey. The Report stated:

Overall, good progress has been made on consolidating the principle of civilian oversight of security forces. The Supreme Military Council of August 2011 was a step towards greater civilian oversight of the armed forces. Civilian oversight of military expenditure was tightened and a revised National Security Plan adopted. In addition, Supreme Military Council decisions were opened to civilian judicial review. However, further reforms –on the composition of the Supreme Military Council, military justice system and the Personnel Law of the Turkish Armed Forces– are still needed. In several instances, legislation intended to increase civilian oversight of the military (the Court of Accounts Law and the draft Ombudsman Law) was amended in parliament, weakening such oversight. On some occasions, the General Staff made comments on ongoing court cases.

Not surprisingly, by the end of 2011, Turkey's Prime Minister, in the midst of a new debate on conscientious objection uttered the words, 'Military service for this land is considered one of the holiest duties of this nation'. (*Hürriyet Gündem* 22 November 2011). In short, it appeared that the AKP's efforts at demilitarization were mainly geared towards strengthening the party's power in politics rather than towards democratization in general. It was clear that the government had reached the limits of the conservative change process that it had initiated. Demilitarization was congenial for the government in order to secure the realm of politics. Nevertheless, AKP was clearly not interested in the demilitarization of the society. From the promises of a civilian Kurdish opening, the government had regressed to a militarist position that underlined a security discourse over the rights of the Kurdish citizens of Turkey.

CONCLUSION: THE AKP'S REFORM CHOREOGRAPHY

The Justice and Development Party's choreography from 2002 onwards reveals that the most effective stimuli for reforms were injected when conditions in the international environment seemed conducive. The role of the EU accession processes was critical in this regard. In the course of the past few

years, many analysts have stressed the importance of maintaining the EU as the main anchor of Turkish foreign policy in order to ensure the continuity of democratization in Turkey (Gordon and Taşpınar 2008; Keyman 2009).

After October 2005, the government's reform initiatives were slowed down by its concern for survival. The AKP government has been conducting an awkward dance of one step forward with reform and another step back, in order to strengthen its foot in politics. In the meantime, the government proved itself capable of dancing with a number of international partners. While it has taken significant steps towards the EU in its early years in government, after 2005, it has gradually moved away from the EU as an anchor in its domestic reform endeavors.

By the winter of 2011, the AKP government's domestic reform processes had visibly slowed down. Some commentators even argued that it had come to a halt (Altan 16 November 2011). As the AKP began to slow down its domestic reform agenda, it simultaneously began to emerge as a pivotal actor in regional politics, especially in the aftermath of the onset of the street uprisings and political revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Yemen and Syria.²⁰

The new security rhetoric of the government in its approach to the Kurdish issue is highly likely to lead to a reversal of demilitarization in Turkey. Such reversal will inevitably bring the democratization process to a halt and is likely to intensify the militaristic language of the AKP government, a government that once stood as the champion of demilitarization in Turkey. However, the role that AKP can play as a pivotal regional actor largely depends on its ability to continue with democratization in Turkey.

This chapter maintains that the successive AKP governments have followed a peculiar choreography. A prominent Turkish intellectual likened this method of movement to the 'trench war', originally described by the prominent Italian thinker Antonio Gramsci (Belge 8 November 2009). Accordingly, the AKP tried to avoid outright conflict with its adversaries for the sake of survival as a political party. Hence, after taking a few reformist steps, it went back to its trenches in order to avoid conflict. This does not necessarily mean that the AKP gives up on reform. Until now, the AKP government has tended to recede

²⁰ It is still not clear that the developments that are popularly labeled as the "Arab Spring" can be called revolutions. It is indicated in a note by the editors of the Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP 258): 'The resolution of the Arab revolutionary situation is unknown and unpredictable, a fact that does not mandate optimism, but does command rapt attention'. Although political transformations were realized, 'forces of counterrevolution rally to ensure that redistribution of wealth, in particular, does not transpire'.

until the initial tantrum of the opposition parties as well as the state elites subsided and then brought back the controversial reform issues to the agenda.²¹

The government's persistent adoption of this choreography has a Fabian character, in the sense that it employs the defensive "wait and see" tactic of Roman General Fabius, who skillfully weakened the invading forces of Hannibal until they were defeated.²² This is a rather paradoxical Fabianism in the sense that it is also proactive. It is, then, possible to say that proactive Fabianism is the most distinguishing feature of AKP. There is no doubt that this style of movement has contributed to its survival as a governing political party when faced with tensions generated from the reform processes.

There is no doubt that a paradoxical conservative change has its limits. Arguably, some of the leading cadres of the AKP are less interested in reform than others.²³ The conservative yet innovationist AKP has become one of the most paradoxical political parties in Turkish history. While it has initiated major changes in Turkish politics by initiating processes of political demilitarization, albeit with reservations, it concurrently prevented societal demilitarization by opposing the right of conscientious objection in Turkey. The possibility of military *coup d'états* may well have ended in Turkey during the era of AKP governments. Nevertheless, while taking giant steps towards the demilitarization of the political realm, AKP clearly portrayed the limits of conservative change by reducing Turkey's Kurdish issue to a security problem at the same time.

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- 21 Other commentators have also acknowledged AKP's peculiar style of movement. One columnist in *Taraf* says that AKP leaders bring issues into our political agenda as if lifting a dusty book from its shelf, shaking the dust off a little bit and then putting it back on the shelf (Çakır 23 March 2010). Ahmet Altan in *Taraf* maintains that AKP is turning people into spectators in a soccer game who are applauding the undertakings of their team one minute followed by loud protests the next. Watching AKP is like watching an unpredictable soccer team play (Altan 18 March 2010).
- 22 The English Fabian Society, established in 1884, also relied on time, education and political action in the context of parliamentary institutions in an effort to establish a socialist society.
- 23 The significance of the divisions within the leading cadres of AKP was raised by Cizre, 2008b, p. 156. See also the questions that were raised by Kardaş (2008, p. 180) concerning this issue.

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‘Democratic Depth’: The Missing Ingredient in Turkey’s Domestic/Foreign Policy Nexus?

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INTRODUCTION

The “strategic depth” foreign policy doctrine developed by Ahmet Davutoğlu has proven to be highly influential in recent years. A powerful force in the ongoing transformation of Turkey’s national project and international persona, the doctrine has engendered both accolades and outrage on the part of domestic and international observers. Proponents believe that pursuit of strategic depth enabled Turkey to move proactively beyond its ambivalent and, at times, humiliating Westernist orientation to flex soft power muscles across multiple regions. They contend, moreover, that this policy can yield positive-sum dividends for Turkey’s allies in the West. Critics, on the other hand, believe the project to be a zero-sum attempt to “switch axes”, and fear it will culminate in Turkey’s enduring alienation from the West and the suppression of those within the country wedded to a westernized lifestyle. Such readings, like the doctrine of “strategic depth” itself, testify to the importance of ideas, ideational frames and political culture in serving, as Max Weber put it long ago, as a sort of “switch” on railway tracks, determining how actors understand and act upon their interests. It is therefore crucial to develop a levelheaded understanding of the promises, trade-offs, and dilemmas associated with this foreign policy vision, which has played such a crucial role in the apparent transformation of Turkey’s national and international identity.

To do so, I will draw on Schmidt’s insight that the power of a policy discourse may be assessed on the basis of two key criteria. The first is cogni-

tive. This dimension addresses the degree to which a doctrine provides a heuristic framework that enables policy-making elites and society at large to make sense of the emerging agenda and their roles therein. The second is normative – the degree to which such a framework provides reassurance that the project is in tune with the underlying values of the society in question. Such a policy sustains coherence among decision-makers, and ensures successful communication strategies towards the public (Schmidt 2008; Schmidt & Ra-daelli 2004). I will argue that Davutoğlu's "strategic depth" fulfills the first criterion in no uncertain terms, offering policy actors and their interlocutors a lucid frame for (re-)reading Turkey's place in world affairs, and pinpointing a range of instruments for the realization of this vision and its conveyance to the broader public. However, the policy is only partially successful in fulfilling the normative criterion for an effective policy. The highly diverse and polarized nature of Turkish society means there is no substantive set of norms which can encompass everyone's aspirations. As such, only the inclusive and relatively thin, i.e. the procedural, normative platform offered by democratic values and practices, can ensure the participation of potential spoilers across the polity. The normative underpinnings of "strategic depth", however, do not sufficiently fulfill this function because its "historical" and "geostrategic" pillars are informed by a certain conservative communitarianism on the one hand, and interest-maximizing opportunism on the other. Since the Foreign Minister sensibly downplays the former, given the great diversity, complexity, and sensitivity of Turkey and its neighborhoods, and since the latter is effectively amoral, the "strategic depth" doctrine lacks normative traction. Therefore, it has been only partially successful in capturing the imagination of those within and beyond Turkey. Moreover, when other foreign policy actors, like the Prime Minister, impulsively mix conservative communitarian and interest-maximizing metaphors, the result can be explosive and shake Turkey's international standing in both the "East" and the "West".

I will go on to show that the very same dilemma circumscribes the mixed success of Davutoğlu's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) in its attempt to rewrite the national project. For, if playing up the party's conservative roots alienates significant segments of the population, eschewing a moral message and stance can provoke charges of avarice, not least on the part of various vulnerable groups who stand to lose from Turkey's increasingly consolidated position in the neo-liberal global economy. What is needed then is an inclusive commitment to democratic norms and practices to as-

sure those outside the AKP's core constituency that they are not caught between a conservative rock and a neoliberal hard place. By infusing the domestic/foreign policy nexus with "democratic depth", Turkey stands to consolidate its position as a rising star on the global scene.

FRAMING STRATEGIC DEPTH: A HEURISTIC SUCCESS

In 2001, the year that moderates within the political Islamist movement split from the hardline old guard to create the AKP, a seemingly mild-mannered professor published a book called *Strategic Depth*. In 2009, it went into its thirty-ninth edition, and its author was appointed Foreign Minister, crowning a decade during which he had steered foreign policy and, by extension, Turkey in unprecedented directions, many of which he had set forth in the book. The vision outlined therein was predicated on two pillars – "historical depth" and "geographic depth" – which, he argued, could be amplified through the diligent application of a series of principles.¹ Taken together, these were said to endow Turkey with the "strategic depth" necessary to make the country a soft power in and beyond its region(s). While I would contend that the jury is still out with regard to soft power status, it is clear that Davutoğlu's approach served as a highly effective cognitive or heuristic framework for policymakers and the public. Its prime achievement may have been to offer a timely formula for navigating Turkey's perennial identity crisis at a time of structural shift in international relations. Its second, crucial function has been to provide a rubric for formal and informal foreign policy actors to coordinate their initiatives and communicate these programs to the public.

Historical depth, Davutoğlu explains, is a characteristic of countries that have found themselves at the epicenter of world historical developments, such as Britain, France, Russia, China and Turkey. Thus endowed states have the capacity to pursue intensive diplomatic, economic and cultural relations in their traditional spheres of influence on bi- and multi-lateral platforms. The resulting enhanced international profile also enhances the resonance of historical referents for domestic audiences. It deepens their sense of collective identity and, in turn, their amenability to projection of a strong international persona based on that identity. In the Turkish case, pursuit of historical depth entails rehabilitation of the Ottoman era for both domestic and international audiences. In this way, Davutoğlu argues, Turkey can abandon the Sisyph-

¹ My review of the doctrine itself will be fairly cursory, as it is covered in great detail elsewhere in this volume.

an project of becoming, literally, Western, and instead embrace its position at the crossroads of civilizations.

Its embeddedness in “cross-border spheres of influence” is also the source of Turkey’s geographic depth. This view is steeped in the logic and language of geopolitics, and situates Turkey at the interstices of contiguous land and sea basins (i.e., the Balkans, Caucasus, and Middle East; and the Black and Caspian Seas as well as the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf). Geographic depth is also said to give Turkey a seat from which to project its presence and preferences onto Europe and Africa. It thus enables Turkey to play a key role as a “bridge” between states and civilizations rather than serve as a second-rate, front line buffer state or a barrier, as it was compelled to do during the Cold War (Murinson 2006).

Historical and geographical depth can be leveraged, Davutoğlu maintains, through the application of five guiding principles. One is the balance between concern for freedom with concern for security, a formula that speaks to the salience of the domestic/foreign policy nexus given the persistent and transnational nature of the Kurdish question. The second is the pursuit of “zero problems” with neighbors that enabled the AKP to pursue rapprochement with longstanding nemeses like Syria and Iran, with whom bilateral ties are now vibrant, as well as with Cyprus and Armenia, with whom accord has not yet been achieved. Two further principles –multi-lateral foreign policy and rhythmic diplomacy– empower a wide range of actors, from businessmen to NGOs, to engage in initiatives intended to enhance Turkey’s diplomatic, economic and cultural reach. Also related to dynamism in a rapidly changing environment is the principle of firm flexibility, according to which policy-makers should be tough on important questions, but receptive to creative repackaging on secondary matters.

Assessing the terrain almost a decade after Davutoğlu’s transition from theoretician to practitioner reveals that the twin components of strategic depth and the principles through which they are activated have indeed served the heuristic function that characterizes effective and transformative policy. Above all, the formula offered a timely and rather nuanced answer to agonizing questions about Turkey’s rightful place in an increasingly polarized –and multi-polar– world. Its emphasis on plural, overlapping and cross-cutting affiliations was empowering in the face of heightened Islamophobia in the West and culturalist skepticism as to Turkey’s European credentials in many quarters of the EU. Indeed, by insisting that foreign policy initiatives towards the

North, South and East would constitute added value if and when European actors finally recognized Turkey's importance, Davutoğlu's policies in the late 2000s garnered both implicit and explicit approval in pro-Westernist quarters within the country otherwise suspicious of the AKP agenda. Until recently, many outside Turkey were also impressed, from bloggers in the Balkans, Caucasus and Middle East, to the editors of the lofty *Economist* who ran a series of features on Turkey's visionary foreign minister. In short, the vision appeared to capture 'an array of feelings... calling out for a slogan' (Buliet 2004)² at a time of unnerving structural shift.

At the same time, "strategic depth" offered a framework for coordinating foreign policy initiatives and ways of communicating them in a fashion resonant with the broader population. For starters, the vocabulary in which it was couched, namely the language and logic of geopolitics, reinforced what Bilgin (2007) identifies as a tendency on the part of Turkish decision-makers to perceive the discipline as a hard science. Traditionally, the aura of science that surrounds geopolitical discourses was employed by policy elites, especially the military, to make the case that the country must maintain massive reserves of hard power to ensure survival in its "tough neighborhood". In Davutoğlu's rendition, however, the halo of legitimacy bestowed by the "science" of geopolitics was channeled towards calls for Turkey to act as a soft power. The coordinative and communicative framework supplied by the doctrine is also evident in the emphasis on multilateralism and multiple diplomatic tracks, which permitted the co-option of a range of domestic actors with an interest in foreign policy outcomes. This bore fruit, *inter alia*, to unprecedented activism towards regions previously ignored by elites beholden to Turkey's traditionally introverted and exclusively western orientation. A case in point is the initiative of the AKP-friendly TUSKON (Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists) to organize an Africa Summit that brought a large number of African statesmen and business leaders to Turkey (Öniş & Yılmaz 2009).

Arguably, the principle that best served the coordinative and communicative functions of "strategic depth" as a successful foreign policy heuristic was the notion of "zero problems". By invoking a categorical imperative, the theory permitted officials, analysts and the media to rationalize outreach to

2 Buliet employs this turn of phrase to refer to Huntington's "clash of civilizations" thesis whose popularity he attributes to a cluster of concerns engendered in the United States, and in the West more broadly, by the Iranian revolution.

long demonized actors. This constituted a step towards transcending the existential and exceptionalist prisms that had long characterized Turkey's engagement of neighbors from Greece, Cyprus and Armenia, to Syria and Iran. It also ensured that the turn-of-phrase "zero problems" has become a component of the vocabulary of any citizen with a modicum of interest in Turkey's international role. The upshot is that Turkey has sought to contribute to the de-securitization of its relations with most of its immediate neighbors. In this respect, and as I will argue below, the principle of "zero problems" with neighbors, even if increasingly difficult to realize given the tectonic shifts occurring in the Middle East, is the element of the formula which contains the logic necessary for the inclusive, democratic platform that, I argue, is necessary to render the "strategic depth" doctrine truly compelling.

That logic is all the more important as Turkey enters a phase where it can hardly boast of "zero problems" with neighbors, as demonstrated by the fallout in relations with Israel after the war in Gaza in 2008-2009. These developments suggest that for all of its resonance as a heuristic framework, in practice, the pursuit of a policy as complex and multi-dimensional as strategic depth had unleashed by the late 2000s and early 2010s a series of unintended consequences which may be pulling Turkey into unmanageable "depths", and spurring at least some in Washington and Brussels to question the long-term sustainability of its alliance with the West. In the following section, I will show that we can conceptualize the ambivalent responses which the pursuit of strategic depth has engendered in certain quarters by recognizing that the 'programmatic success' of a policy 'does not just depend on the presence of cognitive ideas capable of satisfying policy makers [and publics] that a given program will provide robust solutions. It also depends on the presence of complimentary normative ideas capable of satisfying policy makers and citizens alike that those solutions also serve the underlying values of the polity' (Schmidt 2008, p. 308).

UNPACKING STRATEGIC DEPTH: THE NORMATIVE DILEMMA

Turkey, like the many regions with which it is "contiguous", is highly diverse and ridden with intense ideological, ethnic and religious cleavages. As such, the normative content of any policy intended to speak to and across this troubled diversity must be steeped in a profound inclusivity. This may *–but does not have to be–* the Achilles' heel of the "strategic depth" vision. For the doc-

trine relies, on one hand, on “historical” sources of normativity steeped in conservative communitarianism, which –while compelling for many and perhaps even the majority in Turkey– are only in their most idealized form genuinely inclusive vis-à-vis a sizable and heterogeneous minority within the country and almost all of Turkey’s partners abroad. On the other hand, the “geographical” pillar, informed as it is by the amoral logic of costs and benefits, is weak on normativity. In this section, I will unpack the tensions associated with historical sources of normativity, and show how this can lead to counterproductive positions when combined with a foreign policy predicated on the more mercantile geographical logic. In so doing, I will also capture the salience of the domestic/foreign policy nexus in determining what may or may not be the enduring resonance of Davutoğlu’s vision.

To understand the ambivalence that inflects historical sources of normativity, I first turn to a trend that has characterized domestic/foreign policy debates since at least the 1980s, and gained salience in recent years, namely nostalgia for the Ottoman past as a referent for reframing national identity and purpose (for an extensive discussion see Fisher Onar 2009a, 2009b). This hankering for Ottoman referents is apparent at the social/sociological level, as well as in debates between public intellectuals, municipal and national authorities, and, of course, at the level of foreign policy. In the pro-religious social milieu, which furnishes the core constituents of the AKP, it is evident in an attraction to the Ottoman-Islamic past, which is believed to offer more authentic ethical and cultural referents with which to embed Turkey’s engagement with modernity than the Westernist laicism of the founders of the Turkish Republic.

That being said, there are at least two distinct strands of pro-religious Ottomanist nostalgia. One points to the *millet* system as a formula for managing diversity and as a source of tolerance today and is thus, in principle, inclusive. The focus tends to be on the pre-Tanzimat era before the defection of the non-Muslim *millet* and later of non-Turkish Muslims. It may be for this reason that pro-religious pundits who cite Ottoman pluralism are often critical of nationalism as a Western import that tore apart the fabric of Ottoman society. This too is suggestive of a post-nationalist perspective that may be useful in sustaining a normative message, which can encapsulate diverse groups in Turkey as well as project the message to other nation-state successors of the Ottoman Empire who have long felt threatened by Turkish nationalism. Pro-religious Ottomanist nostalgia may also entail skepticism towards

European formulae for managing diversity such as multiculturalism and minority rights. This is evident in the argument that a neo-millet system entailing legal pluralism for religious defined communities is more appropriate to Turkey's socio-cultural context (Bulaç 2005). Based on thoughts Davutoğlu put to paper before moving into the realm of policy, his own vision of Ottoman legacies runs along these lines. In *Civilizational Transformation and the Muslim World* (1998), for example, he engages in a critique of the Eurocentric paradigms which frame our visions of international order. As counterweight and the ideal political community, Davutoğlu upholds the universal community of Muslims. In his commentary on extant Ottoman historiography, he also consistently argued for the de(Euro)centring of epistemology and methodology (see, for example, Davutoğlu 2005).

The search for “authenticity” and “indigenous” codes of conduct to guide governance can also give rise to hubris. This is evident in the flurry of publications from pro-religious quarters that eulogize the Ottomans, a view pithily attested to by the title of a book by popular amateur historian Mustafa Armağan (2002) called *The Last Island of Humanity* (i.e., the Empire). This reading, moreover, can all too easily morph into a glorification of Empire. While this is precisely the attitude that Davutoğlu seeks to downplay, its purchase for other prominent members of the AKP as well as segments of the party's constituency is undeniable, as exemplified by Minister of State Cemil Çiçek's call for Turkey to follow in the path of other erstwhile empires by forming a Commonwealth with former dominions (Fisher Onar 2009a). A striking rendering of this position was articulated by social psychologist Erol Güngör:

What is the force that is causing a Yugoslav historian to declare one hundred and fifty years after Turkish rule came to an end, ‘Before our empire fell we were so happy and dignified?’ Who is making a Greek military attaché say: ‘The fault is yours because you abandoned us?’ Why do the Anatolian Rums (Greek-Orthodox) who went to Greece in the population exchange complain that they were ‘thrust into the arms of the infidels?’ The Hungarian historian cries at his nation's fate in front of the tomb of Gül Baba [an Ottoman saint.] The Lebanese historian says ‘There was Arab unity only at the time of the Turks.’ The Yemeni says ‘Together with the Turks went peace and plenty.’ The Baghdadi elevates the Ottoman governors to the status of saints. What yearning is causing the Syrian to hang a Turkish flag on his home declaring ‘The Turks are coming’ (cited in Çolak 2005).

As this perspective on Ottoman legacies reveals, flagging the Ottoman-Islamic past as a source of pluralism can easily evolve into a rationale for, at best, benign tolerance on the part of a paternalistic state. At worst, it can devolve into neo-imperial arrogance. Neither outcome is likely to further a soft power agenda.

Davutoğlu, however, is well aware of the potential pitfalls of Ottomanist sources of normativity and has been diligent in customizing historical referents to the interlocutor in question. For example, he invoked Turkic and to a lesser extent Muslim brotherhood with Azerbaijani and Central Asians counterparts, and emphasized Muslim fraternity with Arabs and Persians. Meanwhile, he tended to eschew historical references altogether in interactions with actors likely to find them off-putting, such as Serbia and Armenia. Cognizance of the prickliness, which Ottoman legacies can evoke, may also be the reason he has systematically rejected the term “neo-Ottomanism” with which observers have sought to label his vision. As he told one reporter,

...we have become active in our historical hinterland, our geographical region. [For this reason some] desire to create fear. That is, at precisely a time when we have become active in the Balkans, the Middle East, and the Caucasus, [they are trying to give the impression that] the ‘Turks want to establish hegemony again.’ This is not an approach which we adopt. (Yeni Osmanlı Sözü İyi Niyetli Değil, 2009).

This statement testifies to the overwhelmingly pragmatic, rather than normative, thrust of the “strategic depth” approach. Schmidt suggests effective policy requires a normative thrust to make it palatable to broader society. If this is the case, then reliance on the geographical pillar of the doctrine is insufficient. As noted, its “scientific” underpinnings and cost/benefit logic do not offer a great deal of normative traction. To be fair, the emphasis on interest-maximization can open the door to win-win situations in which repeated and mutually profitable interactions might enhance trust between public and private actors in Turkey and with their counterparts abroad. At the same time, it can open the door to a zero-sum “race to the bottom”. It can serve as a source of assurance for those who do not endorse AKP values regarding social life, but who, like the party, are winners from Turkey’s dynamic performance in the global economy, such as the large industrialists’ association TÜSİAD. Yet the doctrine also places in a precarious position those

—like workers, unions, and public university students— who may display both incongruent social habits and who are likely losers from globalization.

Above all, the formula can go awry when metaphors are mixed, namely when claims of (Ottoman-)Islamic moral superiority are used to justify transparently interest-driven behavior, a reflex more evident in foreign policy positions taken by Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan than Davutoğlu himself. A spectacular example of this was the engagement of Sudan's Omar Al-Bashir, a man who stood to offer lucrative construction contracts despite being wanted for genocide by the International Criminal Court. Erdoğan rationalized the move on the grounds that Muslims do not commit genocide. Similarly, the recent attempt to take the moral high ground by condemning Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarek at a time when Western actors were decidedly ambivalent about massive popular protests lost resonance when Erdoğan, at least initially, came down on the side of the status quo in Libya, presumably to safeguard Turkish investments. For outside observers, such inconsistencies can suggest that Turkey's leaders are either engaged in a game of mirrors, seeking to mask a conservative agenda with pragmatism, or, alternatively, opportunists who invoke conservative —and democratic— values only when they serve ulterior purposes. Without a more inclusive normative thrust, the “strategic depth” policy will have difficulty capturing the imagination of cross-cutting segments of the population in an heterogeneous country and region where conservative communitarianism will alienate key players, and where the message ‘business-as-usual’ —however profitable— will thwart aspirations to soft power. On the other hand, as I will go on to show in the next section, domestic and international stature could be achieved by infusing the project with an unequivocal commitment to democratic norms and practices.

DEMOCRATIC DEPTH: THE MISSING INGREDIENT?

Turkey today, like its multiple regions, is caught at the interstices of globalization and identity politics, forces that are increasingly calling into question visions of the national project and purpose held sacrosanct during the twentieth century. As noted, the strategic depth doctrine has served admirably as a heuristic to navigate these turbulent waters. The doctrine has borne fruit in terms of the exponential increase in volume and scope of mutually beneficial regional interactions. But it has also yielded ambivalent outcomes, especially when simultaneous invocation of (Ottoman-)Islamic moral superiority and

geo-pragmatism have sent mixed messages to Turkey's counterparts across the Middle East, Europe, and the United States, not least in the context of overtures to figures like Al Bashir. In this section, I will show that comparable tensions wrack Turkey's unfinished project of putting its domestic house in order. The ruling party's embrace of the logic of democracy has been dogged by an inclination towards majoritarian populism and the equation of its own interests and conservative values with those of the polity. So long as Turkey remains a 'democracy without democrats', the possibility of projecting the strong, inclusive, normative message necessary to catapult Turkey to the status of *bonafide* soft power will be limited (Keyman 2010).

Turkey's struggle to establish and consolidate its democracy dates back to the country's traumatic transition from empire to nation-state, which resulted in the rejection of earlier modes of social and political organization based on multi-communitarianism. In its stead, the early nation-builders enshrined a vision of national identity, which –though inclusive on paper– in practice advantaged secular-Sunni Turkish-speakers and disadvantaged those who did not fit neatly into these categories. Since the 1950s, stop-and-go political and economic liberalization empowered diverse groups who increasingly challenged the dominant understanding of Turkish-ness as ethnicized Muslim-ness. These trends gave rise to social movements spearheaded by communities from pious Sunnis and heterodox Alevis, to liberal Turks and nationalist Kurds, as well as gender and gay rights activists. Although all of these groups challenged the primacy of secular-Sunni Turkish-speaking men in the public sphere, their demands aligned in tense ways with those of other revisionists. Pro-religious Sunnis, for example, could take issue with aspects of Alevi, secularist feminist and LGBT agendas and vice versa. However, so long as these groups shared a common nemesis in the overbearing state, *ad hoc* coalitions could survive.

Such coalitions coalesced during, and were empowered by, the legal reforms and the opening of spaces for contestation at the peak of the EU accession process in the early 2000s. It was at this juncture that the AKP appeared to most fully embrace the inclusive language and logic of democracy and human rights, winning admirers and voters well beyond its core constituents. Indeed, Erdoğan's acceptance speech following the party's sweeping victory after the 2007 general elections appeared to flag cognizance of the democratic rather than conservative thrust of many how had voted for the party. Having garnered 47 per cent of the national vote and an even higher

percentage of parliamentary seats given Turkey's high electoral threshold, AKP looked set to pursue the EU accession process in earnest.

However, momentum faded from the EU process over the course of the AKP's second term in power, not least because of the strong resistance to the prospect of Turkish membership on the part of many a European actor. An ironic consequence of this was that a party that had come to power on an inclusive, EU-oriented platform was able to consolidate control of most of the country's institutions of governance (though fierce battles with the last bastions of the old guard persisted), and pursue unprecedented policy objectives beyond Europe. It was in this period that Davutoğlu's formula reassured and/or inspired many in Turkey that liberalization would proceed apace in a world where European/Western anchors for democratization were increasingly unreliable. It was also in this context that the principle of "zero problems" –with its heuristic function as well as normative thrust– emerged as a potential building block of an inclusive platform on which to predicate relations not only with neighbors abroad, but also with neighbors at home. The government appeared to take a leaf from Davutoğlu's page in its pursuit of a series of democratic "openings" towards traditionally vulnerable groups like non-Muslims, Kurds and Alevis. The party likewise employed the language of democratization in its campaign during a nation-wide referendum in September 2010, which culminated in a mandate for comprehensive constitutional reform.

Yet, since then, a number of party figures as well as elements from the rank and file appear to have eschewed an inclusive stance. Hence, none of the democratic "openings" of the pre-referendum period have been fruitful, and responses to protests on the part of workers and students have been characterized by increasingly draconian measures. A number of measures affecting those who opt for open lifestyles have also been implemented from both top-down and bottom-up quarters. These range from a steep hike in taxes and a limited ban on alcohol, to initiatives like that of the district governor of a western Anatolian province who recently announced that cursing and slang –argued to negatively affect the quality of life and children's well-being– would henceforth be prohibited through a ban to be enforced by security personnel. Such developments pique concerns about "neighborhood pressure" (*mahalle baskısı*), situations in which citizens' ability to exercise their formal rights are obstructed by pressure from the community. The prominent sociologist of religion Şerif Mardin first flagged the danger. Then empirical evi-

dence as to its increased salience, especially in Anatolia, emerged through a nation-wide study led by social scientist Binnaz Toprak. To be sure, the study was critiqued for 'coding on the dependent variable', i.e., registering the views of a self-selected sample of informants; it nevertheless spoke to the concern of the 'worried modern' – a term coined by Toprak – that the right to opt out of a conservative lifestyle might be slipping away ('Endişeli Modernler' ve Sınırlayıcı Modernler' Tanımlamaları üzerine, *Radikal* 2010) Though AKP leaders like Erdoğan insist there is no such thing as neighborhood pressure in Turkey, the persistence with which relevant phenomena are reported attests, at the least, to the anxiety felt by non-negligible segments of the population. Also worrisome is the tendency to lump together and dismiss as reactionary substantively differentiated critiques of AKP policies on the part of hardline Kemalists, ultranationalists, liberals, Alevis, feminists and secular, nationalist Kurds. In short, while authoritarian laicism may have been a major obstacle to democratic consolidation, the main challenge facing Turkey today is whether a democratically empowered conservative majority led by leaders with a flair for populism can sufficiently protect the rights of the "others" that constitute almost half of Turkey's society and polity.

The challenge of ensuring that an overbearing state is not simply replaced by an overbearing society (and backed by a reconstituted overbearing state) will be the litmus test of Turkey's ability to consolidate its position as a rising star and an exporter of democratic peace in a militaristic neighborhood. In weighing the prospects, Turkish policymakers should reflect on EU and U.S attempts to project democracy and human rights as well as free trade arrangements onto their spheres of influence. Such platforms have spurred critics to charge Washington and Brussels with self-serving hypocrisy. Yet incredulity would run far deeper if the actor seeking to project democratic norms was patently unable to tolerate the diversity and demands of its own citizenry. Tellingly, few people in the parts of the world where skepticism towards Western democracy promotion is understandably diffuse would turn down a Green card or Schengen visa. This testifies to the enduring power of the attraction of consolidated liberal democratic systems. At the same time, while suspicion of democracy promotion is typically rooted in the view that "universal" values are being instrumentalized, the values themselves have a resonance that transcends the agendas of their purveyors, as attested to by the immense courage recently displayed by Arab protestors in their challenge to dictators – many of whom had been backed by the West. Such activism

would appear to invalidate the “Asian values” line proffered by non-Western authoritarian leaders, namely the inverse Orientalist argument that non-Western peoples favor communitarianism over individual rights and liberties. This is a lesson that AKP must take to heart, if it is to project a definitive power of attraction towards the Arab world and beyond.

CONCLUSION

In sum, I have argued that Davutoğlu’s “strategic depth” doctrine has played a pivotal role in guiding Turkey’s transformation over the past decade. The doctrine’s historical and geopolitical foundations help elucidate Turkey’s place in the world and its relations with the Balkans, Caucasus and Middle East, as well as with Europe and the West, in refreshing and empowering ways (at least, for Turks). The doctrine also delineates principles that permit coordination between multiple foreign policy actors and communication strategies vis-à-vis the public – it thus fulfills the heuristic function of an effective policy. If, however, normative purchase is also imperative for policy success, Turkey’s leaders would do well to recognize that the heterogeneity of their polity and region(s) necessitates an inclusive and relatively “thin” or procedural normative platform upon which individuals and groups with divergent preferences can agree to disagree. Such a formula is furnished neither by the conservative communitarian underpinnings of the historical pillar, nor by the pragmatism of the geographic pillar. And while Davutoğlu has sought to assuage concerns by invoking “historical depth” intermittently and emphasizing notions like “zero problems with neighbors” and soft power, other foreign policy actors like Prime Minister Erdoğan have mixed conservative communitarian metaphors with apparent opportunism in ways which have alienated several of Turkey’s key partners. At the domestic level, a congruent tension is evident in the gap between AKP commitment, in principle, to democracy, and what in practice looks to many to be majoritarian equation of its own interests and with those of the polity. If, however, Turkey can address this normative gap by infusing its domestic/foreign policy nexus with democratic depth, then it stands to become an unprecedented and compelling beacon for its region(s) and beyond.

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Projecting Power: Non-Conventional Policy Actors in Turkey's International Relations¹

KEREM ÖKTEM

Joseph Nye's book *Soft power: The means to success in world politics* was written at a time when U.S soft power was waning rapidly, both in the Middle East and in some "old" European countries. Following from his earlier rejection of the thesis of the decline of American power in *Bound to Lead* (Nye 1990), part of his argument was the realisation that George Bush's "triumphalism" might endanger U.S hegemony in the post-9/11 world. In particular, Nye was concerned about the inability of the U.S administration to receive Turkish, Mexican and Chilean support for the U.S war effort in Iraq in 2003. It would almost seem ironic that the very Turkey, whose growing resistance against U.S soft-power Nye was lamenting, emerged as a new regional actor with hegemonic ambitions in the overlapping geographies of the Middle East, the Balkans and the Muslim world, and engaging soft power resources in a fashion which would suggest an enthusiastic reception of Joseph Nye's work. Hence, this chapter addresses Turkey's soft power resources and the actors mobilising them, and I will discuss them critically after a brief exploration of the crucial concepts and terms.

Nye summarises succinctly the two core dimensions of power in international relations: 'Whereas hard power –the ability to coerce– grows out of a country's military or economic might, soft power arises from the attractiveness of its culture, political ideas and policies' (Nye 2004, p. x). In Nye's

¹ I would like to thank Karabekir Akkoyunlu, Dimitar Bechev and Ayşe Kadioğlu for their thoughtful comments and criticism.

view, soft power is a 'nation's ability to attract and persuade... to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments' and in this it is complementary, rather than alternative, to 'hard power' (Ibid.). Barnett and Duvall, based on their reading of the eminent E. H. Carr's differentiated analysis of power in international relations, distinguish between compulsory power (coercive and/or soft) on the one side, and institutional, structural and productive or discursive power on the other (2005). If the modes of institutional and structural power are beyond the capabilities of a "middle power" like Turkey, the prisms of both compulsory and discursive power appear to promise analytical insight into the workings of Turkey's non-conventional foreign policy tools and into Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's approach to his country's international relations. This approach is expressed in both his doctrine of 'Strategic Depth' (Davutoğlu 2001) and through his foreign policy activism since 2007, first as advisor to the Prime Minister and since 2009 as Foreign Minister (see also Onar in this volume). In Davutoğlu's intellectual universe, a country's 'strategic depth' is determined as much by military considerations (and, historically, the resources and the territory, within which it could deploy its armies within a reasonable time window), as by history and cultural affinities with other countries. In the context of modern Turkey and Davutoğlu's model, history is the Ottoman Empire and culture roughly, but not exclusively, equals high Sunni Islam (Gözyayın 2012).

This chapter examines Turkey's soft power and its different modes of power projection, particularly in the overlapping regional neighbourhoods of Southeast Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East. Based on my current research in the Balkans, and to a lesser extent in the Middle East, it investigates four areas of non-conventional power projection, for which the current AKP government has been lauded by many U.S and European decision makers in search of a "moderate Muslim country", and scolded by others² – from the power of ideological persuasion, to non-conventional foreign policy instruments, religious and educational networks, and finally, to popular culture

2 Below, I will discuss the external dimension of Turkey's ideological power. As for the criticism of the Justice and Development Party's foreign policy, we can cite a wide range of actors. Certainly the most influential among them are U.S neo-conservatives and their think tanks and commentators, who used to be strong supporters of the AKP and have now turned squarely against them. This has been aggravated by Turkey's policy change towards Israel and the termination of her co-operation with the Israel lobby, which used to support Turkey's policy of denial of the Armenian Genocide, and has now begun to campaign against Turkey on this matter. On a regional level, political elites in both the Balkans and the Middle East are at best cautious, and at worst dismissive of Turkish meddling in internal politics (cf. Anastasakis, Bechev and Abou-el Fadl in this volume).

and the famous Istanbul-based soap operas, Turkey has become visible in many spheres, from which it had been largely absent before the early 2000s. Mapping these four areas of interaction, I argue that Turkey's international visibility, as well as its reputation, have indeed progressed significantly, even if few of the policies can be credited to the AKP government alone. In fact, most of the non-conventional foreign policy instruments aiming at "attracting and persuading" date back to the pro-active and globally oriented leadership of Prime Minister and later President Turgut Özal, in the late 1980s (Altunışık 2008; Ataman 2002 as well as Keyman in this volume). It would be fair to assert, however, that such policy instruments have been perfected and developed by AKP foreign policy actors.

Turkey at the dawn of the millennium was an inward-looking, economically and culturally uninspiring country, engaged in some degree of conflict with most of its neighbours. It suspected many of these countries of conspiracy and support for Islamist or Kurdish terrorist groups, not always without reason. The country's foreign policy was constrained by its NATO membership, as well as by its ethno-centric self-imagination (cf. Öktem 2011a). As importantly, the public perception of Turkey in most countries in its eastern and western neighbourhoods was shaped by memories of anti-Ottoman liberation struggles and nationalist historiographies, the activism of Diaspora organisations commemorating the Armenian genocide and other acts of mass violence committed in the last years of the empire, as well as by popular movies such as *Midnight Express*, which depicted the inhumane conditions in Turkish prisons with shocking accuracy, but also with a measure of cultural essentialism. The 12th of September military regime, which took over in 1980, and the tens of thousands of Turkish and Kurdish refugees it created, further aggravated the image of a brutal military state that tortured and killed its very own people. Today is indeed a far cry from the 1990s. It can be said with some certainty that Turkey has become a major hub of attraction for a region stretching from Southeast Europe to the Black Sea, the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East, 'an actor, an economic pole, and perhaps and aspiring regional hegemon' (Bechev 2011, p. 9) – or 'order setter' in Davutoğlu's own terminology, or 'agenda setter' in Nye's (Nye 2004, p. 5).

A key question, however, which this chapter seeks to address is the extent to which unconventional foreign policy tools –the 'cacophony of messages' (Hocking 2005, p. 34) from a multitude of actors or the rather fuzzy workings of popular culture and TV series– really have a decisive impact on

how a state projects itself, on how it 'attracts and persuades'.³ Based on a more constrained reading of Nye's understanding of power as *inter alia* 'the changed behaviour of others' (Nye 2004, p. 2), one would probably come to the conclusion that they do only ever so slightly. Turkey's considerable soft power presence in the Middle East has so far had less impact on political elites than Turkish foreign policy actors would have hoped for. Within the strategic 'zero-sum' environment of the Middle East, and even more so in the context of the yet inconclusive series of Arab uprisings, Turkey's 'zero problem' strategy has wavered (Krastev 2011, p. 79). From Turkey's negotiation in the Syria-Israel proximity talks that were disrupted by Israel's invasion of Gaza in 2008/9, to its demoted role in the release of the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit by Hamas, and from its inability to stop a UN panel from adopting the rather blatantly pro-Israeli 'Palmer report' on the killing of nine Turkish nationals by Israeli soldiers in international waters (the Mavi Marmara incident; cf. Finkelstein 2011), Turkey's persuasive power seemed to have had only little impact. Even less successful were the cases of the well-meant but ultimately suspended rapprochement with Armenia, after Turkey succumbed to Azeri behind-the-scenes politics (cf. Görgülü in this volume) and in Cyprus, where Turkey's legitimate protestations against the Republic of Cyprus' deep sea drilling exercise failed to induce action from the European Union. And even the Kurdistan Regional Government under its leader Massoud Barzani, which is arguably heavily dependent on Turkish economic and political support (Shadid 2011), recently refused to heed Turkish requests for military cooperation against the PKK (Taraf 2011).

In the more controlled environment of the Balkans, Turkey's foreign policy actors seemed to have succeeded in contributing to regional peace and stability. For instance, the long delayed accreditation of the Bosnian Ambassador to Belgrade and the apology of the Serbian Parliament to the victims of Serb violence in Srebrenica, are generally seen as successful examples of mediation by a regional third party (Türbedar 2011). The Serbian-Turkish accord not to refer to Srebrenica as genocide, however, has been criticised fiercely by many Bosniaks (Kovać 2010). Even though it has not yet led to substantive outcomes, Turkey's mediation between the leaders of two Muslim communities in Serbia's Sandžak province (one leaning to Belgrade, the

3 The distinction between "soft power" and "rebranding" (Hocking 2005, p. 31) is an important one, which needs to be kept in mind and to which I will return in the conclusion. In fact, much of the soft-power sources might be concerned with rebranding more than anything else.

other to the *Islamska Zajednica* of Sarajevo) is also seen in this more positive light. Yet, Turkey's peace-keeping and conflict resolution in Serbia, Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina do not touch upon the country's key strategic interests, and neither have they been able to go much beyond the areas with predominantly Muslim populations (Petrović & Reljić 2011, p. 166). One should, however, not underestimate the very fact that Turkey has been able to project itself as a patron of the Muslims in the Balkans. Neither can we belittle the massive political investment which the Turkish government has made in Islamist movements like Ghannouchi's *An Nahda*, the Moroccan Justice and Development Party and factions of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, even though it is yet too early to evaluate the impact of this policy.

The next sections explore four sites of Turkey's soft power by looking at discursive and ideological power, development aid, religious networks and popular culture.⁴ They demonstrate that the resources of Turkey's soft power are many-fold. Hence, one question, which runs through the following empirical discussion, is why these many actors seem to have had only limited impact in real terms of power projection. Another thread explores whether the foreign policy relevant lobbying and media networks, which have emerged within the last decade or so, might not be acting in an increasingly self-referential fashion, and create what I will call 'self-referential information loops', projecting the image of a new Turkey above all onto the Turkish public.

IDEOLOGICAL POWER: NEO-OTTOMANISM AND A CONSERVATIVE MODEL OF MUSLIM DEMOCRACY

Even though pragmatism often dominates Turkey's foreign policy, it is fair to say that the current government and its neo-Islamist elites do derive their inspirations from a larger ideological project, in whose centre stand Islam and a positive reference to the Ottoman domination of the Balkans and the Middle East. It overlaps with the idea of Turkey as a 'moderate Muslim country',

4 Two important areas of soft power projection are excluded due to the limited scope of this chapter: Turkish TV programming in Central Asia and the Middle East (TRT AVAZ, the Arabic channel *Al Turkiyya* and the Kurdish channel *TV Şeş*) is an important phenomenon, however it has not generated anything close to the "Al Jazeera effect" during the Arab revolutions, and fades in comparison to the exploits of Turkish soap operas. Humanitarian organisations such as IHH (The Foundation for Human Rights and Freedom and Humanitarian Relief) are providing humanitarian relief particularly in parts of the Balkans, Africa and the Middle East, and have a very immediate impact on the lives of people in need. Turkey's humanitarian operation in Somalia in September 2011, for instance, made a lasting impression on Arab public spheres.

based on Collin Powell's (then U.S secretary of state) 'innocent' introduction of a 'moderate Islamic formulation' in 2004 and in the face of the invasions and occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq (Aydintasbas 2010). The idea was adopted by George Bush and fellow neo-conservatives, for whom, at least in the mid-2000s, the Turkish government under the 'moderate Islamist' Justice and Development Party seemed to represent its best realisation. Event though leading cadres of the AKP repeatedly distanced themselves from playing the role of a 'moderate Muslim democracy' in the service of U.S interests, they eventually bought into the discourse of Turkey's model character, even though they refrained from calling their ideological outlook anything but 'conservative'. This has been the case particularly after the election of Barack Obama as President of the United States, who offered a clean slate in foreign policy, at least discursively, and thereby rescued the 'model debate' from the Bush administration's anti-Muslim rhetoric.

The model debate of Turkey as a 'Muslim majority country' that successfully combines Islam with democratic institutions was finally elevated into a near-hegemonic discourse in the international media in response to the revolutions and uprisings in the Arab world. As is the case with all polarised and symbolically charged debates, however, the 'Turkish model' means different things to different actors, who use its allure to further their own political interests (cf. also Abou-El-Fadl in this volume). In this section, I will briefly explore the sources of the 'Turkish model' debate in Turkey's foreign policy outlook, and then look at how it has been received by different actors in the neighbourhood.

Even if Colin Powell's desire was for Turkey to be a moderate Muslim country, i.e. a pro-Western Muslim majority country, where Islam is in harmony with larger U.S interests, and even if the AKP's mantra was that of a synthesis of Islam, democracy and capitalism, the core ideological focus of the model debate, at least in the eyes of the AKP government, is what many critical observers have called 'Neo-Ottomanism'. The term does not appear in Ahmet Davutoğlu's works, and is in fact vehemently renounced by him, and yet there is little doubt that the Ottoman reference is key to his strategic thinking, as well as central to the ideological tradition of Turkey's mainstream Islamist movement, *Milli Görüş* (National View), from which the AKP split in 2001.

The lecture, which Ahmet Davutoğlu delivered at the Sarajevo Centre for Advanced Studies in October 2009 demonstrated a clear vision for a '*Pax*

Ottomanica' in the Balkans.⁵ He argued that the only time the Balkans had escaped the fate of being a periphery to large empires was during the 16th century Ottoman Empire, and that this central status could be re-established with a new Ottoman commonwealth:

Because of this, when we speak of the Balkans, we say it's the periphery of Europe. But is the Balkans really a periphery? No. It is the heartland of Africa-Eurasia. Where does this perception of periphery come from? If you asked Mehmet-Pasha Sokolović, he wouldn't have said that Sarajevo or Salonica were the periphery, whether of Europe or the Ottoman state. Look at history. The only exception in history is the Ottoman state. During the Ottoman times, in the 16th century, the Balkans was at the centre of world politics. That was the golden age of the Balkans. This is a historical fact.

Who created world policy in the 16th century? Your ancestors! They weren't all Turks. Some were of Albanian origins others were Greek converts. Mehmet-Pasha Sokolović is a good example. Were it not for the Ottoman Empire, he would have been a poor Serb peasant with a small farm or whatever, because farming had not developed in this part of the world then. Thanks to the Ottoman state, he became a leader in world politics. Ottoman history is Balkans history, in which the Balkans held special importance in the history of the world. ...

We desire a new Balkans, based on political values, economic interdependence and cultural harmony. That was the Ottoman Balkans. We will restore these Balkans. People call this 'neo-Ottoman'. I don't point to the Ottoman state as a foreign policy issue. I emphasize the Ottoman heritage. The Ottoman era in the Balkans is a success story. Now it needs to come back.⁶

This rendering of historical geography and geo-strategy is rooted in the worldview of Turkish Islamist thinking. In fact, and in a degree of variation from the tradition of political Islam in much of the Arab world, political Islam in Turkey in its most influential version, the *Milli Görüş* tradition, has had a strong reference to the Ottoman Empire as a positive point of identification. This pro-Ottoman, and hence also anti-Kemalist world-view was regarded as obscurantist by official Turkey well into the late 1940s, and by the left until very recently. It was taken up by the Democrat Party and its prede-

5 Even though Davutoğlu had stressed at the time that it was not the Ottoman state he was trying to re-establish, but the historical centrality of the Balkans, 'for weeks, if not months, Serbian newspapers and TV programmes went mad about the idea of "reintegration" into the empire. Nor did the reference to Sokolović go down well with Bosniaks' (Alibašić 2010, cf. also Somun 2011).

6 The speech was first published in the Bosnian journal *BH Dani* and then in English translation at <http://grayfalcon.blogspot.com>.

cessors ever since, and further normalised in the educational and political institutions of the Turkish republic, particularly since the military coup of 1980 and the introduction of the 'Turkish-Islamic synthesis' (cf. Yavuz 1997 and 1998) as a religious-nationalist alternative to Kemalism. With the AKP election victory, it was turned into a near-hegemonic discourse, which is now shared by large parts of Turkey's population and reproduced in all walks of life, from clothing and interior design to popular culture.

The model then, which AKP foreign policy evolves around, sometimes more implicitly than explicitly, is a synthesis of the government's socio-economic "Turkish model" and a "neo-Ottoman" project of Islamic hegemony, which has its roots in the Milli Görüş tradition. The first is based on a successful amalgamation of religious piety, social conservatism, entrepreneurship and individual achievement, paired with a predilection for neo-liberal economic policies, and the trust-based networks of Islamic brotherhoods and religious networks such as the Gülen movement. The second is probably more a distant reference, which, however, carries significant symbolic capital. It is a mix of Davutoğlu's 'Islam as *Weltanschauung*', i.e., as a distinct alternative to Western philosophy (Gözaydın 2012) with a romantic '*Wunschdenken*' for Turkey's return to imperial splendour. It is committed to the ideal of a global Islamic renaissance under the leadership of Turkey, in fulfilment of its role as the heir to the institution of the Caliphate. These are the two crucial components of the "Turkish model", as it is imagined by the party rank and file, by foreign policy actors on the ground and by significant segments of Turkish society.

What has often been received as the "Turkish model" in Egypt or Tunisia has differed according to country and political origin of the recipient. Three areas of the model debate stand out: constitutional arrangements (i.e. relations between the state and religion and the question of secularism, as well as the role of the army); political legitimisation, particularly by the parties of the Muslim Brotherhood or the Al Nahda of Rashid Ghannouchi; and political charisma, particularly Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan's vocal support for the Palestinians, his strong rhetoric vis-à-vis Israel, and Turkey's humanitarian intervention in Somalia. Hence, the model debate at home and the one abroad does not always overlap – in most cases it actually does not. Especially in terms of Turkey's leadership of the Islamic world, which remains a second-level discourse and is not normally expressed in public forums, there may be little appetite in the Middle East or elsewhere. When tested, many su-

perfidious references to the AKP as brothers in arms turned out as unfounded. A case in point is the consternation, which Prime Minister Erdoğan caused among leading members of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood during a landmark visit to Cairo, when he praised 'secularism' as a state form that allows for Islam as well as other religions to flourish (Hürriyet Daily News 15 September 2011).

Despite the shaky foundations of the "model debates", however, it would be fair to establish that a combination of the attraction of the AKP's socio-economic model, together with a positive appreciation of Erdoğan's charisma⁷, seems to resound with a wide cross-section of societies throughout the Middle East and among large parts of the Muslim communities in the Balkans, while it is followed with caution by political elites and governments, particularly in non-Muslim societies. This dichotomy in the views of elites versus those of the public is almost the reverse image of the Arab Middle East's relation with the U.S, where it is political elites that are not only supportive of but are also dependent on the U.S, and the larger public that is highly critical of U.S meddling. Turkey's soft power seems to resound with the masses more than with the governments.

FOREIGN POLICY INSTRUMENTS OF THE PRIME MINISTRY: DEVELOPMENT AID, CULTURAL COOPERATION AND RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Three different institutions stand out when moving from the ideological sources of Turkey's soft power to more concrete cases of non-conventional foreign policy actors – non-conventional at least for Turkey: the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency, (*Türkiye İşbirliği ve Kalkınma İdaresi*, TİKA) which provides aid to developing countries; the Yunus Emre Cultural Centres; and the Presidency of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet*). These institutions offer education, religious literature and organisational support to Muslim communities, particularly in the Balkans and Central Asia. Both TİKA and the Cultural Centres are very much modelled on European and American institutional models of development aid and cultural ex-

7 During his "Arab Spring" tour to Egypt, Tunisia and Libya in September 2011, ecstatic crowds welcomed the Turkish Prime Minister. In the first two countries, part of the welcome was organized by individuals or associations close to the Gülen network, yet outbursts of popular support and sympathy were visible everywhere during his tour. One of such iconic moments was the PM's participation in a public Friday prayer in Libya, together with the leaders of the Transitional Council (Ghosh 2011).

change, such as USAid or the German Association for International Cooperation (*Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GIZ*), as well as the British Council, the Goethe Institutes and the *Institut Français*. Unlike their European counterparts, however, which are either attached or answerable to their respective foreign ministries (Saunders, 2011) these institutions are associated with the Prime Minister Office rather than the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This is a new constellation of foreign policy making, which shifts the decision making from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (and Turkey's formerly omnipresent National Security Council) to the Prime Minister.

Development aid by the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency

The Agency was initially established during Turgut Özal's Presidency as an instrument for proactive foreign policy and "soft power" projects aimed at gaining goodwill and popular support in the Central Asian republics and in the Balkans. After the AKP's election victory, when the charismatic career bureaucrat Hakan Fidan⁸ began to chair the organisation in 2003, TIKA re-emerged as a central tool for the conduct of Turkish foreign policy, while the volume of development aid through TIKA grew tenfold from 76 to 780 million USD in 2008 (Nurdun 2010, p. 7). Compared to one of the world's leading development aid organisations, the German GIZ, this is indeed a notable sum. In 2010, GIZ's annual turnover was 1.85 billion Euros, or 2.6 billion USD; hence, TIKA's reached almost a third of GIZ's turnover (Geyer 2011).

The organisation is particularly active in South and Central Asia, in the Middle East and in the Balkans, where it engages in a wide range of health, education, agricultural and infrastructure projects. In addition to its focus on Afghanistan, Pakistan and Kazakhstan, TIKA's areas of focus reflect preferences of Turkey's foreign policy: Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina in the Balkans, and Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq in the Middle East are some of the top beneficiaries (Nurdun 2010, p. 9). More recently, TIKA has also played a major role in a well-publicised aid campaign for Somalia. Especially in the Balkans, in Central Asia and in the Caucasus, and in addition to its conventional projects in the areas of capacity building, infrastructure construction and agricultural development, the agency has also followed a policy to support existing Islamic communities, their formal institutions, and, in

⁸ Hakan Fidan's prominence within government circles was confirmed when he was appointed as Director General of the National Intelligence Agency (*Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı*, MIT) in 2010.

particular, the restoration of Ottoman heritage and particularly mosques.⁹ To this end, several agreements concerning the reconstruction of Ottoman heritage buildings have been made between Turkey, Macedonia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Bosnia-Herzegovina in the Balkans and Syria in the Middle East (Dışişleri Bakanlığı 2011).¹⁰

Cultural Diplomacy

The Yunus Emre Cultural Centres began to operate in 2007, first in the Balkans and more recently in the Middle East. Part of an eponymous state-owned foundation, they aim at promoting the knowledge of Turkish and the culture of Turkey through language education, film screenings, concerts, exhibitions and conferences. At the same time, and particularly in the Balkans and Western Europe, these centres also aim at providing educational and language services to Turkish-speaking communities.

TABLE 4.1
Turkey's Cultural Diplomacy - The Yunus Emre Cultural Centres

Region	Country	City
Balkans	Albania	Tirana (Branch in Shkoder)
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Sarajevo (Branch in Fojnica)
	Kosovo	Prishtina (Branch in Prizren)
	Macedonia	Skopje
	Romania	Bucharest (Branch in Constanza)
Central Asia	Kazakhstan	Astana
Western Europe	Belgium	Brussels
	United Kingdom	London
Middle East	Lebanon	Beirut
	Syria	Damascus
	Egypt	Cairo
	Iran	Teheran

Table based on documents available in the public domain and the websites of the Yunus Emre Foundation.

⁹ TİKA has contributed significantly to the Islamic Unions in Kosovo and Albania, as well as to Islamic NGOs such as Merhamet in Macedonia (Çoruh 2010). Since the mid-2000s, TİKA has been overseeing building projects that restored the main Friday mosques in Prishtina, Prizren and Skopje to their former glory, as well as dozens of secondary mosques. According to a bilateral agreement between Turkey and Albania, TİKA will restore twenty Ottoman mosques in Albania that survived the rule of Enver Hoxha (Kruja 2010; Oruç 2010).

¹⁰ In Skopje, the cooperation between TİKA and the Yunus Emre Foundation resulted in a protocol for the restoration of the Ottoman "Kapan Han" in the old town and its conversion into a Turkish Cultural Centre. In addition, Turkey's Culture Ministry, together with TİKA, is restoring several mosques in Skopje, Tetovo and Bitola, as well as example of Ottoman civic architecture (Resmi Gazete 2005).

It is probably too early to evaluate the activities of the Yunus Emre Centres, as they have only been operating for a few years. Anecdotal evidence suggests a much lower aspirational profile than, for instance, the British Council's cultural and educational initiatives. In many such centres, activities are indeed limited to Turkish language classes, traditional painting and calligraphy courses and occasional literature and film evenings. In smaller countries like Kosovo, Albania and Bosnia, where the foundation runs two centres each in the capital and in a second city, they might have some impact on the local cultural scene. Elsewhere, Turkish courses and films may attract a following, yet at this point, they have not reached a level from which they could speak to intellectual elites and create spaces of cultural interaction.

'Religious Diplomacy and the Diyanet (Presidency of Religious Affairs)

The third area, in which the Turkish Republic has been a rising actor ever since the end of Communism and even more so since the early 2000s, pertains to religious services provided by the Presidency for Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*) for Muslim communities in the Balkans, Central Asia and the Caucasus. The Presidency is a government body that regulates and controls all religious matters concerning the country's Sunni Muslim majority (cf. Gözaydın 2008 for a historical overview). It employs the imams, pays their salaries, organises religious life and acts as the highest religious authority in questions of doctrine and practice. With around 100,000 employees, more than 76,000 mosques in Turkey alone (Gümüş 2010, p. 2; Korkut 2010, p. 118), and a budget larger than that of many service ministries of the Republic, the Diyanet is probably the world's largest and most centralised Muslim religious organisation, comparable in scope and capabilities only to the Vatican. Like TİKA, it is a Presidency subordinate to the Prime Ministry and hence is directly affected by 'policy changes made by the government' (Korkut, 2010: 120). It began its international activities first in the 1980s, to regulate the religious life of Turkish immigrant communities in Western Europe (Aydın 2008, p. 170), and expanded massively in Central Asia and the Balkans in the early 1990s with the aim to establish religious administrations modelled on the Diyanet's administrative structure (Korkut 2010, p. 123).

Since 1995, the Presidency has been organising the 'Eurasian İslam Şura' (*Avrasya İslam Şurası*) to bring together heads of the Islamic administrations of 38 countries and 12 autonomous republics in Russia and the

Commonwealth of Independent States, in the Caucasus and in the Balkans. At these meetings, issues of Islamic practice –from higher education to the accreditation of university degrees and the organisation of pilgrimage– are discussed and often resolved by extending the Presidency's religious services to the Islamic administrations of other countries (Kılıç 2010).¹¹ As a complementary forum to the Eurasian Council, the Presidency has also hosted an annual meeting of the leaders of the Balkans' Muslim communities since 2007. Above all, the *Shuras'* and Councils' aims are dominated by the mission to spread the *Diyanet's* assistance and services to other Muslim communities. In addition to the organisation of the *haji*, the education of preachers and religious scholars rests at the heart of *Diyanet* policy and is realised through the provision of scholarships, the organisation of educational programmes for religious personnel and the publication of books, as well as translations of the Qur'an in the languages of the host country.¹²

The scholarships cover introductory Qur'an courses in Turkey for students and professional training for imams; studies in religious high schools (*Imam-Hatip*); graduate courses at faculties of theology; and post-doctoral courses. As shown in Table 4.2, the *Diyanet* grants full scholarships to 1,000 religious students from the Balkan region every year. When distributed among the countries of the region, this number may not appear significant, but in the medium-run it will result in a considerable pool of religious personnel with a background of Islamic education and preparation for clerical service acquired in Turkey.¹³

The most visible contribution of the *Diyanet* to Muslim communities in the Balkans has been its role as facilitator of the reconstruction and construction of mosques. In these cases of symbolic restoration projects, the Presiden-

11 Where no formal administrative structures were existent or where capabilities were limited –as in most countries of the Balkans and all countries of the CIS– the *haji*, or the pilgrimage to Mecca, has often been organised by Salafi organisations. In a number of countries, including the entire former Yugoslav space, the pilgrimage is now organised by the Turkish *Diyanet*.

12 In all Islamic communities that I visited, I came across publications of the *Diyanet* Foundation (*Diyanet Vakfı*) in Turkish and local languages. Many of the books are introductory manuals on Islamic doctrine and practice. Often geared towards children, they are produced in high quality, illustrated appealingly and well translated and revised by leading religious scholars.

13 In addition, there are several hundred scholarships for 'Turkish and related communities' that are made available by the 'Great Student Project' (*Büyük Öğrenci Projesi*) of the Ministry of Education. One hundred students are admitted annually from Kosovo alone, albeit seventy per cent of the places are reserved for Turkish students (Karabaxhakiu 2010). In Bulgaria, 60 to 80 students are chosen annually for study in Turkey, and many of the returnees become influential in their countries' political systems (Ismailov 2010).

TABLE 4.2
Scholarships granted by the Diyanet in the Balkans in 2009

Country	Number of Muslims	Recipients of grants
Kosovo	1,800,000	195
Albania	2,300,000	174
Bosnia-Herzegovina	2,200,000	135
Macedonia	700,000	59
Bulgaria	1,100,000	310
Serbia	500,000	23
Montenegro	110,000	–
Greece <i>Western Thrace only</i>	130,000	280
Total		1176

Based on the Diyanet country statistics for the year 2010 (Diyanet, 2010a).

cy collaborates with TIKa and the Turkish Ministry of Culture, which regards mosques of the Ottoman period as part of the Turkish-Islamic heritage.

The *Diyanet*'s roles in hosting the Eurasian and Balkan Shuras, in addition to the reconstruction and construction of mosques, are indicative of the role of the Presidency and Turkey as the symbolic leader of the Muslim communities of the Balkans and Central Asia. This is a message which is generally well received, especially by the small and underfunded Islamic Communities of the Western Balkans and those of the former Soviet space. Kemal Kılıç, director of the Office for Eurasia in the *Diyanet*, stressed that relations are 'generally excellent. When Ali Bardakoğlu visited Sarajevo on the occasion of the 600th anniversary of the arrival of Islam in Bosnia, he was applauded unanimously by all leaders of the region' (Kılıç 2010). This, however, does not mean that the Turkish *Diyanet* enjoys unequivocal support from all Muslims in the region. Particularly in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where the *Rijaset* is well organised and chaired by the charismatic Reis Mustafa Efendi Cerić, the supremacy of the *Diyanet* is not universally welcome. Despite these tensions, however, most Balkan Muslim elites seem to agree that 'among all Muslim countries, cooperation with Turkey is most advanced' (Omerdić 2010).

This relation with the '*primus inter pares*' is a complex one indeed – welcomed by most, eyed suspiciously by others. Yet, there is little doubt as to the Presidency's strong position in competition with Iranian and Arab Gulf missionary efforts, particularly in the Balkans, Central Asia and the Caucasus. There, the importance of Turkey's religious role is conditioned by histo-

ry and doctrine – by the dominance of Sunni-Hanefi Islam; the presence of religious brotherhoods and Sufi orders; the primacy of the Istanbul Meşihat (the office of the Sheykh-ul Islam) for the Balkans; and the leading role of the Diyanet in the construction of official Islamic Communities in Central Asia after 1991 (Öktem 2012). The Diyanet's 'global vision' (Aydın 2008) fully overlaps with Turkey's 'proactive foreign policy', as well as with the aim to stand against Wahhabi and Salafi missionaries in the region (Korkut 2010: 122), an altogether commendable mission.

THE NEW NETWORKS: MUSLIM MISSIONARIES, BUSINESSMEN AND LOBBY GROUPS

In addition to the state agencies discussed above, hundreds, if not thousands, of civil society groups, business associations, religious brotherhoods, missionaries, lobby groups and social-religious networks have emanated from Turkey in the last two decades. The first wave of this Turkish 'globalisation from below' began in the 1980s under Prime Minister and later President Turgut Özal (Park 2008; Balcı 2003, p. 154), and it was massively reinforced in the 2000s with the successive Justice and Development governments and the emergence of the 'Islamic bourgeoisie' (cf. Öktem 2011a; Özcan and Turunç 2011) it engendered. This is a phenomenon that is almost impossible to quantify or even to describe exhaustively, even though it is very much at the root of Turkey's visibility on a global scale, and hence, at the root of much of the soft power it calls its own. For the sake of conciseness, the focus in this section will be on the networks of the Gülen movement, an extensive and globally operating network of religious, educational and business actors inspired by the charismatic Muslim spiritual leader Fethullah Gülen. The discussion will focus on the 'vast media and education empire, with high-quality schools in numerous countries, geared to the creation of a pious and disciplined elite' (van Bruinessen 2009, p. 143). To a lesser extent, I will also look at Turkey's new lobbying landscape, particularly in the U.S. The Gülen movement is at the heart of Turkey's emerging power structures both domestically and globally, and it bears both opportunity and risk emanating from its peculiar organisational structure.

Educational Networks

The phenomenon of the 'Turkish schools' has been discussed widely and controversially (Park 2010; Ebaugh 2010; Gözaydın 2009; Agai 2008; Turam

2007; for schools in Central Asia cf. Peuch 2004) as part of a larger debate on the Gülen movement. Even though the organisation of these schools and business networks is neither hierarchical nor standardised, they are based on a set of organisational principles and ideological references rooted in the tradition of the Muslim thinker Bediüzzaman Said-i Nursi, who made the case for a 'golden generation armed with modern sciences and Islamic ethics' (Gözüaydın 2009, p. 1222). The histories of these schools show variance according to the country and the communities within which they operate and according to the conditions under which they entered the scene, yet they share the ethos and worldview of what has often been likened to the Jesuit educational mission (Gözüaydın 2009, p. 1221; Balcı 2003, p. 161).¹⁴

They mostly teach national secular curricula, with a particular emphasis on sciences, yet there are also some religious schools and academies, particularly in Albania and the U.S. They are coeducational, where this is socially accepted, and single sex in conservative Muslim societies. In all of these schools, Turkey is present above all through Turkish directors and teachers, but also through references to Turkey as a positive role model, through the singing of the local as well as the Turkish national anthem and through cultural activities focussing on Turkey. International science and language competitions between the schools, for instance, often have Istanbul-based finals, which receive heightened media attention and support from the government.¹⁵ Probably most importantly, these schools are fee-paying private schools, in fact 'elite schools' (Ebaugh 2010, p. 97), proud of educating the children of the political and economic elites of their country of operation.¹⁶

¹⁴ Generally, educational entrepreneurs close to the movement come to a country together with businessmen intent on investing there. They establish contacts with local Muslim and Turkish communities if present, and then set about founding a school. This will often be a nursery or primary school and is then followed by a college and sometimes also a university. In the founding phase, the schools are financed by Turkey-based businessmen from a particular town or neighbourhood, however, all these schools are expected to break even and finance themselves after a certain period of support from Turkey (for a detailed description of this process cf. Balcı 2003, p. 154).

¹⁵ Samanyolu is a TV station that is an important hub for the network, where experience is transferred. I have watched 40 feature films on this station that introduce schools in different parts of the world and represent the work of the founding directors—exclusively young men from Turkey's conservative heartlands—as pioneers in education and bridge building between nations and religions. Undoubtedly, these "founding myths" are alternative narratives to the foundational stories of Kemalist women teachers taking on ignorance and superstition in Anatolia in the first years of the republic.

¹⁶ It is far from surprising that critics of the Gülen schools see this elite-orientation as a cynical policy of targeting members of the elite and educating them in a pro-Turkish environment. This is indeed the case in a number of countries, where the schools are among the top educational institu-

To gauge the potential impact of these schools in terms of 'attracting and persuading' political elites and in creating a 'reservoir of goodwill' (Nye 2004, p. 45), we can use only approximations and engage in informed guesswork. Many of the schools are new, and little comparative research on these institutions exists, and is in fact not encouraged by the network itself. Observers of the Gülen movement speak of estimates of around 1,000 schools in up to 130 countries, with no less than 2 million students (Ebaugh 2010, p. 97; Stourton 2011). While this does sound like a great number, **Table 4.3**—which shows only a limited selection of the more important schools—indicates that there are regions as well as countries, where the schools are particularly well represented, and where their cumulative impact on the way Turkey is seen and Turkish actors might exert influence over local elites might be considerable. Here we see regional foci in Southeast Europe, where some of the best international schools are associated with the movement, in the Caucasus and Central Asia with its mostly Turkic-speaking communities, where the Gülen community schools are thought to provide up to 10 per cent of secondary schooling opportunities in some countries (Peusch 2004).¹⁷ Significantly, in the United States, there are close to 130 colleges catering to Turkish, Muslim and other immigrant communities. In Asia, Indonesia, Pakistan and Afghanistan stand out; all countries with trying religious and political conflicts. It appears that the movement demonstrate its commitment to dialogue and peaceful coexistence in these conflict-ridden societies. Finally, a concentration of primary and secondary schools in the Kurdistan Regional Government in Northern Iraq is also noteworthy, if not surprising, as it mirrors the economic and political clout Turkey has built up there in the last few years.¹⁸

Table 4.4 shows Turkish universities operating outside Turkey, which are associated with the Gülen movement. It further strengthens the impression that Turkish educational institutions are most present and capable of projecting themselves above all in the Balkans and Central Asia and the Caucasus. It should also be noted that the universities rarely mirror the academic

tions (esp. in Kosovo and Bosnia) or where they have an extensive network of primary and secondary schools (i.e. in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan or Northern Iraq).

17 This number is based on an early estimate by Bayram Balcı (cf. also Balcı 2003), but is probably too high, especially when considering that all Gülen schools in Uzbekistan and most schools in Russia were closed in the mid-2000s.

18 After a change in policy towards Iraq, already before Davutoğlu's appointment as Foreign Minister in 2009, Turkey has become the major economic, and to an extent political, partner of the Kurdistan Regional Government (cf. Shadid 2011).

TABLE 4.3
Gülen Schools According to World Regions

World regions	Country	Schools
West Europe	France	College Educ'active Paris and Study courses
	Germany	12 High schools, support centres, several kindergartens
	Netherlands	Turkish Education Centre
	Switzerland	Sera Schule Zuerich
	UK	London Turkish College, Corral College, Wisdom Schools
East Europe	Poland	Warsaw Meridian International School
	Romania	International School of Bucarest
	Russia	Several schools in the Muslim regions
	Ukraine	Simferopol International School, Crimea Turkish College
Southeast Europe	Albania	Fondacioni Sema, 2 High Schools, 5 Religious Colleges
	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Bosna Sema Foundation, 2 Colleges and several primary schools
	Bulgaria	1 College (Druzhba), Sofia
	Kosovo	2 Colleges
	Macedonia	Yahya Kemal College and primary schools
Middle East	Egypt	Salahhadin International School, Cairo
	Jemen	Turkish International Schools
	Northern Iraq	Fezalar Schools (Isik and Nilufer Colleges) 25 Primary and High schools
Caucasus and Central Asia	Azerbaijan	Çağ Azerbaycan-Türkiye Özel Liseyleri, 12 High schools
	Georgia	Çağlar Educational Institutions, 4 High schools
	Kazakhstan	KATEV Education Foundation, 28 schools
	Kirgizistan	Sebat Education Foundation, 15 schools
	Tadjikistan	Selale Egitim Sirketi, 6 Schools
	Turkmenistan	Turkmen Turk College, 13 colleges, 1 University
	Mongolia	5 schools
Americas	Argentina	Colegio Hercules
	Brazil	Colegio Belo Futuro
	Canada	Nil Academy
	USA	Up to 130 academies and colleges with different foundations

TABLE 4.3 (continued)
Gülen Schools According to World Regions

World regions	Country	Schools
East, Southeast and West Asia	Afghanistan	Afghanistan Türk Çağ Eğitim Kurumları, 8 schools
	Burma	Horizon International School, 3 schools
	Cambodia	Zaman International School
	India	Learnium Schools, 8 Schools
	Indonesia	Bandah Aceh Simista Turk Koleji and others, 8 Schools
	Japan	Horizon Japan international School Yokohama
	Malaysia	Semesta Bilingual Boarding Schools, 6 schools
	Nepal	Kathmandu International Meridian School
	Pakistan	PAK-TURK International schools and Colleges, 7 schools
	Philippines	Fountain International School Manila
	Taiwan	
	Thailand	Wichay Wittaya Bilingual School, Several schools
Australia/Oceania	Papua	
	New Guinea	The Paradise High School
	Australia	Sule College
Africa	Benin	Ecole Internationale UFUK Cotonou
	Burkina Faso	College Horizon International Ougadougou
	Cameroon	Yaounde International Friendship College
	Central African Republic	Turkish College
	Chad	International Turkish College
	Gabon	Ecole Turco-Gabonaise
	Ghana	Galaxy International School
	Guinea	La Citadel Turkish College
	Ivory Coast	Safak Group Scolaire, Abidjan
	Kenya	Light Academy
	Kenya	Light Academy Schools Kenya
	Laos	Eastern Star Bilingual School
	Liberia	Light International School Monrovia
	Malawi	Bedir College
	Mali	Bamako Turkish College
	Niger	Turkish College
	South Africa	Horizon High School Johannesburg
	Sudan	Khartoum Turkish College
	Tanzania	Feza Schools
	Togo	Lome Ecole Internationale Zodiaque
	Uganda	Turkish Light Academy Kampala
	Zanzibar	Sebil Primary School

Based on data available in the public domain and the websites of the aforementioned schools.

TABLE 4.4
Turkish International Universities Associated with the Gülen Movement

Region	Country	City	Name
	Turkey	Istanbul	Fatih University
Southeast Europe	Albania	Tirana	Epoka University
	Bosnia Herzegovina	Sarajevo	Burch University International University of Sarajevo (not Gülen associated)
	Macedonia	Skopje	International Balkan University
Caucasus and Central Asia	Azerbaijan	Baku	Qafqaz University
	Georgia	Tblisi	International Black Sea University
	Kazakhstan	Almaty	Suleyman Demirel University
		Turkistan	Ahmet Yesevi University*
	Kyrgyzstan	Bishkek	International Ataturk Alatoo University Kyrgyzstan-Turkey Manas University*
	Kurdistan Regional Government	Erbil	Ishik University
	Nigeria	Abuja	Nigerian Turkish Nile University
	Cambodia	Phnom Penh	Zaman University
Americas	United States	Fairfax	Virginia International University

(*) Indicates Turkish universities associated with the Turkish Republic.

Based on data available in the public domain. [Compare CASILIP (2011) and individual websites. The number of universities close to the Gülen movement in Turkey has been expanding massively in the last few years, both among new foundations of state universities (Mardin Artuklu, Tunceli) as well as private ones.]

success of many of the international Turkish schools. All three universities in the Balkans, for instance, are small teaching-based institutions with a couple of thousand students and courses mostly in management and engineering.¹⁹ In some countries, the Turkish schools are considered to be the best international schools, with a rigorous academic curriculum and bi- or trilingual education. In others, they operate as small mission schools, where dedicated, pious teachers aim at impressing local communities through their hard work and their commitment to the ideas of the founding fathers Fethullah Gülen and Said-i Nursi. These mission schools have indeed a lot in common with the American Presbyterian mission schools, which operated in the Ottoman Empire from the mid-19th century and played a key role in the education of the Christian communities (cf. Doğan & Sharkey 2011).

¹⁹ Local observers in Bosnia tend to dismiss the university as an institution set up for pious Turkish students wearing the headscarf, who were not allowed to study in Turkey until recently.

To answer the question of how these schools influence political debates and the decision-making of elites in their respective countries of residence goes beyond the remit of this paper. What we can nevertheless establish is that the Turkish schools associated with the Gülen movement have now educated hundreds of thousands of students worldwide. For them Turkey is a known entity, Turkish a language of interaction, and Istanbul 'occupies the aspirational place in students' imagination that New York City does elsewhere in the world' (Turgut 2010). This might have little significance in most countries, apart from creating small pockets of Turkey-friendly, pious and conservative individuals, especially but not exclusively among Muslim people and Muslim immigrant communities. In other key countries of Turkish interest, in Central Asia and the Balkans especially, the schools and the religious-economic networks around them might lead to the emergence of conservative, pro-Turkish political and business elites, who will want to employ their existing personal and institutional connections with Turkey and the Gülen movement.

Lobbying

The educational networks are further complemented by associations of businessmen such as the Gülen-inspired Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists of Turkey (TUSKON), whose members often play a key role in financing the Turkish schools and are the first to benefit from contacts with local communities. Such community-based organisations have increasingly replaced lobbying groups like the longstanding Turkish Coalition of America,²⁰ which were enlisted in the attainment of one of Turkey's key policy objectives in the U.S, i.e., to prevent the recognition by Congress of the Armenian genocide.²¹ A case in point is the Turkic American Alliance, which emerged as the leading community organization of Turks in the United States and represents a growing number of local Turkish-American federations.²² In its mission, it

20 The Turkish Coalition of America, though also representing the American-Turkish community, was much more of a top-down organization that was established to act, above all, in the interest of Turkey's perceived foreign policy goals; cf. <http://www.tc-america.org/>.

21 The Turkish government worked with key lobbyists and spent more than 3.5 million USD in 2008, mostly for activities against the recognition of the Armenian genocide (Narayanswamy and Rosiak, 2009). The Israel lobby in Washington, and particularly the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, were enlisted as key allies by the Turkish government up to the unraveling of Turkish-Israeli relations after the Gaza War 2008.

22 Note that this is not the Turkish but the Turkic alliance, as it aims to represent 'citizens from Central Asia, Anatolia and Balkans'; cf. <http://www.turkicamericanalliance.org>.

is complemented by the public diplomacy-oriented Rumi Forum that organises conferences on cultural dialogue and aims at promoting a Turkish-Islamic identity based on the teachings of Fethullah Gülen (cf. Gözaydın 2010). In the UK, the “Dialogue Societies” of the Gülen movement operate both as local lobby groups and cultural and social centres for the Turkish community. In all three, the promotion of a Turkish identity based on the tenets of Fethullah Gülen and the Islamic thinker Said-i Nursi goes hand in hand with cultural and academic initiatives to foster a “dialogue of religions” and capacity-building for Turkish-Muslim immigrant communities. In this respect, these new networks have a much richer, more complex and more locally rooted appeal than the Kemalist, ethno-centric and often single-issue lobby groups of olden days. They also create spaces of action for members of the community, who can move between institutions, as has been the case, for instance, with the director of the Rumi Forum, who was appointed as the founding director of the Islamic College in Chicago (Lepeska 2011).

The question, however, remains to what extent the Gülen organisations are as influential, harbouring ‘grand Islamist ambitions’, as their critics suggest (Sharon-Krespin 2009). Can we, for instance, establish a causal link between the pro-Turkish and pro-Muslim curriculum of Gülen schools, or the lobby activities of the Dialogue Society and the emergence of pro-Turkish political elites in the UK or the U.S? This question is particularly pertinent because the deeply communitarian character of the movement and the faith of its members in interpersonal trust rather than formal administrative procedures has engendered a series of investigations by the FBI and congressional hearings in the U.S on grounds of accounting irregularities; breach of visa and procurement laws; as well as allegations of indoctrination in publicly funded schools (cf. Lepeska 2011; Saul 2011).²³ Considering the slow workings of such networks, it is too early to come to reach a definitive answer, but so far, the overall scope of the movement’s operations is limited to some foci, particularly in Washington.

POPULAR CULTURE: PROJECTING POWER

In the multitude of voices of Turkey’s new soft power actors and agencies, there is one that is incomparably more colourful and probably also more in-

23 Critics of the Gülen charter schools in the U.S have set up a website, which contains a wealth of largely accurate information, if delivered in a rather conspiratorial language; cf. Citizens Against Special Interest Lobbying in Public Schools (2011).

fluent than the others – the voice of popular culture and television series. Turkish soap operas ‘give Turkey soft power in the Muslim world’ (Ghosh 2011, p. 31), with the final episode of the love story *Noor* (the Arabic name for the TV series ‘Gümüş’) reaching an audience of 70–80 million Arab viewers (Bilbassy-Charters 2010). The series’ success in the Arab world has been explained, above all, through the ‘cultural translation-effect’, which was particularly well received by female Arab audiences. While Arab viewers have had access to U.S. soaps with comparable story lines, the Turkish soaps helped accommodate what had been considered as culturally alien. In the series, it were Turkish –and hence Muslim– characters that displayed more equal gender roles, engaged in pre-marital sex and drank alcohol, signalling that these deviations from the norm could be reconciled with a Muslim identity (Yanardağoglu & Karam 2012).

The presence of the soap operas is, however, not limited to the Arab Muslim market, where the series were first aired on the Saudi-owned MBC network, synchronised into an intimate Syrian colloquial, rather than being aired in classical Arabic. These shows are watched in a wide geographical region stretching from Slovakia to Malaysia. In many countries of the Balkans, Central Asia and the Middle East, Turkish soap operas have become veritable pop culture phenomena. The visits of stars and starlets of TV series such as *‘The foreign Groom’* or *‘Ezel’* to Macedonia, Kosovo or Lebanon turn into huge public events, spectacles attended by tens of thousands of fans. Symposia and public debates are dedicated to the pros and cons of watching Turkish TV series and their influence on national culture. Religious authorities voice concerns about the corrosive effect on traditional moral values. Some Iranian commentators went as far as suggesting that the soaps are ‘the first act of a political and cultural plot devised by Turkey and certain Arab countries of the Persian Gulf region’ to subvert the cultural and religious influence of Shia Islam (Hanizade 2008).

Unlike the Gülen network, which is most effective in countries where its members can build on local Turkish or Muslim communities, the soap operas have been particularly successful in countries where strong political currents exist that can be described as anti-Turkish. In Greece, the final episode of the thriller *‘Ezel’* was watched by 68 per cent of the viewing public (Can 2011), while the drama *‘Menekşe ile Halil’*, a love story between a German-Turkish girl and a young Bosniak man stretching from Germany to Istanbul, has become prime time viewing in Israel. In Greece, Facebook fan pages for

the series have several thousand members, and it has been suggested that their popularity stems from the series' escapist romance and excitement, capable of giving crisis-ridden societies a sense of respite. Bechev emphasizes the massive success of Turkish soaps in Bulgaria in this volume.

Turkish soaps have become a veritable economic factor, with a turnover of close to a billion Turkish Lira (i.e., around 500 million USD) in 2010 (İlayda & Ertürk 2010), and an export volume of 4 million USD, with one episode of the best-placed series reaching market values of up to 25,000 USD (Şit 2011). Such television series are now an integral part of Turkey's export-oriented economy, in terms of product placement as well as in terms of the promotion of Istanbul, the Bosphorus and its historical skyline as major foci of attraction and desire.²⁴ In 2009, when 'Noor' reached cult status in the Arab world, the number of tourists from Saudi Arabia, the Gulf countries and Morocco rose by 30 per cent and more (Bilbassy-Charters 2010), even though it would probably not be accurate to attribute this growth in tourism only to the airing of TV series.

While the success of Turkish popular culture has been widely welcome in Europe and the U.S, with the journal *Foreign Policy* suggesting that the U.S 'leave it to Turkish soap operas to conquer hearts and minds' (Bilbassy-Charters 2010) of the people in the Arab world, not all products of Turkey's popular culture industry were viewed so positively. Two series, which were aired in some countries of the Balkans and the Middle East, projected a very different image from the romantic scenes of Istanbul's blend of natural beauty, Ottoman heritage and neoliberal wealth. Consider the popular responses abroad to the mafia thriller 'Valley of the Wolves' and the semi-documentary 'Separation – Palestine in War and Peace', which narrates life and death during the Israeli assault on Gaza. 'Valley of the Wolves' is based on a plot of deep-state related Turkish agents avenging the rights of Turks and Muslims in the Middle East, in an eternal fight with MOSSAD agents, the U.S and the state of Israel. Like 'Separation', the 'Valley of the Wolves' combines crude anti-Semitism and xenophobia with fast acting and breath-taking pursuits. Employing a more psycho-analytical approach, one could argue that these films take symbolical revenge for the humiliation Turkey has been subjected to by the U.S, whether in Alan Parker's 'Midnight Express' or during the so-called "hood incident" in 2003, when the U.S mil-

²⁴ The clothes worn by its actors, the interior designs as well as venues such as cafés and restaurants are all Turkey-produced and advertised at the end of each episode.

itary interrogated and hooded Turkish soldiers during a reconnaissance mission in Iraq.

Both series were at the centre of two important episodes in the gradual deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations: In October 2009, Israel's Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman criticised the film as presenting 'Israeli soldiers as murderers of innocent children' (BBC 2009). Simultaneously, the series also caused uproar among Palestinians and the Popular Committee against the Siege in Gaza, due to the depiction of the rape of female Palestinian prisoners and because of a rather unfriendly portrayal of the Palestinian resistance movement (Yeni Şafak 2009). What made this series particularly controversial was the fact that it had been produced by the public broadcaster TRT –i.e. through state funding– and its producers worked with the prominent Islamist activist Hakan Albayrak, who disowned the project after the airing of the most compromising scenes (Zaman 2009). In January 2010, Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon used the screening of *'Valley of the Wolves'* to publicly humiliate the Turkish Ambassador to Jerusalem, an act which he came to regret when he was eventually forced to deliver a formal apology to Turkey. Both events became cornerstones for the deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations.

Thus, even though Times Magazine recently likened the influence of Turkish soap operas to being 'worth a hundred battleships' (Ghosh 2011, p. 30), the soap operas are not immune from the polarised political atmosphere that shapes Turkey's domestic agenda. Over all, however, their impact has been largely positive, particularly in terms of economic and touristic effects, and in promoting Turkey in general and Istanbul in particular as a repository of dreams, wealth and modernity beyond the "West". Indeed, they have functioned very much like U.S popular culture in the world, which has 'made the United States seem to others "exciting, rich, powerful, trend-setting – the cutting edge of modernity and innovation"' (Nye 2004, p. 12).

CONCLUSION: THE RISK OF SELF-REFERENTIAL INFORMATION LOOPS

Considering that Turkey had a rather miserable reputation internationally only a decade ago, whether due to its contested Ottoman legacy, its violent politics or its relative economic backwardness, one can safely argue that the country today is considered a respectable member of the international community. And indeed, the newfound self-confidence and "pro-activism" of its

actors is impressive, whether we think of the Gülen schools, of cultural centres and religious initiatives, or of trivial but emotive soap operas, which have played a key role in the “rebranding” of Turkey, and in the global marketing of Istanbul. Yet, we have also seen that Turkey’s soft power as the ‘ability to get what you want through attraction rather than through coercion or payment’ (Nye 2004, p. x) has been limited: where Turkey has excelled, it has done so as mediator of conflicts in which it was a third party, such as in the Balkans. There, Turkish actors worked within the normative framework set by the European Union and the international community. In Turkey’s eastern neighbourhood, the account is more mixed. Considerable public sympathy in many Arab countries has given the Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan regional weight, yet much of it is due to his charisma and belligerent stance towards Israel rather than the appeal of Turkish soft power. Much of the “Turkish model” debate in the Arab revolutions has been superficial, while the discursive attraction of neo-Ottoman rhetoric and the quest for Turkey’s leadership of the Islamic world has found only few friends.

Based on the empirical discussion in this chapter, I would like to conclude by summarising the constraints and limitations of Turkey’s soft power initiatives in particular and its foreign policy in more general terms. A key structural phenomenon is the concentration of state-based soft power actors in the Prime Ministry. Institutions such as TIKA or the Yunus Emre Cultural Centres would, at least in all major European countries, be affiliated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The fact that they are not creates a duality of actors as well as a loss of synergy between the diplomatic service and the Prime Ministry’s agencies. If one adds to these the Presidency of Religious Affairs and the importance of its role particularly in non-Arab Muslim countries, one cannot but conclude that a structural tension exists between the Prime Ministry and the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Under the current conditions of almost complete AKP hegemony, this may not produce too much dissonance in the system, but under different political conditions, it could seriously limit the effectiveness of both sets of actors. In any case, however, this concentration of power in the Prime Ministry, and hence in Erdoğan’s hands, echoes worrying trends of authoritarian centralisation in Turkey’s domestic politics.

A second limitation to Turkey’s appeal is the ideological content of Turkey’s conservative domestic and international model, which combines growth-oriented social conservatism with a neo-Ottomanist or even neo-Im-

perialist imagination, even if the latter is mediated by a strong sense of pragmatism, particularly in the business community. Let us take the Gülen schools and their associations, which have the most coherent global presence of any Turkish non-government actor. The schools and the civil society associations close to the movement have been likened to a wide range of religious movements, from the Jesuit educational mission and the American Presbyterian movement to Opus Dei and the trust-based trade networks of the Quakers. Beyond polarising polemics, the Gülen schools can safely be described as prime institutions with a high sense of discipline and a deep commitment to conservative morals and obedience to authority. Students, often from rich and influential families, are encouraged to hard work and high achievement particularly in the sciences, both in the secular schools, as well as in more religiously inspired dormitories and study circles which complement these schools. Male teachers from the conservative heartlands of Anatolia attempt to instil into foreign students warm feelings towards a rather parochial sense of Turkishness that is defined by Islam, Turkish nationalism and folklore. Based on my own research, I can say that what these schools do not support are critical thinking, a vigilant attitude towards authority and hierarchy, and an empowerment to seek individual fulfilment. They are also not reflective of Turkey's cosmopolitan culture and the richness of its history. In short, they are not liberal institutions. In this coherently conservative world-view, the Gülen schools mirror the AKP government's and Ahmet Davutoğlu's vision of the world, and place Turkey in the centre of a conservative Muslim universe, which is ontologically separate from, if in peaceful dialogue with, the "West".

At best, this approach will create some leverage among the more conservative segments of smaller Muslim majority countries particularly in the Balkans, and particularly in Kosovo, Albania and among the Albanians of Macedonia, where the concentration of Turkish schools, development projects, missionary activities by Turkish religious networks and support for local Islamic communities by the Presidency of Religious Affairs is considerable. This, however, is unlikely to have any impact on the firm orientation towards the European Union and Europe more generally, which the secular elites' of these countries hold. Elsewhere, the soft power networks may create small pockets of pro-Turkish actors and civil society organisations, as well as lobby organisations, which also act as focal points for Turkish immigrant communities in these countries. At worst, however, this multitude of conser-

vative actors and institutions may create a foil where Turkey projects itself, above all, onto itself. A case in point encompasses Turkey-related events organised by associations close to the Gülen network, which are publicised in Gülen newspapers, which are then taken as evidence by Turkish foreign policy actors. Indicators are accruing that such self-referential information loops inform government action. Yet, reinforcing information loops can only obstruct fact-based policy formulation.

With this increasingly hegemonic conservatism, amplified by the aforementioned information loops, Turkey's foreign policy parallels trends towards authoritarianism in Turkey itself. And as in its domestic political scene, there is now a growing need for an alternative vision for Turkey's place in the world that can act as a corrective, or at least as a complementary, to the country's current conservative strategy. This would be a liberal cosmopolitan and post-imperial vision of a Turkey that acts responsibly, taking into consideration its own ethnic and religious fault lines, and with humility, in full awareness not only of its various past achievements but also of the many crimes committed against its own citizens, whose progeny now form the very diasporas which campaign against Turkey. It would be inspired by the spirit rather than by the current practice of EU neighbourhood policy and seek for closer ties with the European Union. Such a foreign policy would not project itself through conservative institutions and an Islamic *Weltanschauung*, and it would shed the remnants of pro-Islamic fantasies of Turkish leadership of the Muslim world, which have been carried over from the *Milli Görüş* tradition.

In the absence of such an alternative to the "conservative model", as is currently the case, the future of the foreign policy actors discussed above raises important questions. For one, will the Prime Ministry's competition with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continue, or will the attachment of agencies like TİKA, the Cultural Centres or the Presidency of Religious Affairs be reconsidered, as their remit and scope grows? Even more fascinating is the question about the future of the Gülen network, its schools and civil society organisations. Considering the eventual death of its charismatic, yet aging leader Fethullah Gülen, will these organisations keep their opaque organisational structures and remain focused on Turkey, or will they eventually become institutions answerable to external oversight in their countries of operation? Will they remain caught in their particular synthesis of parochial Turkish and Islamic traditions, or will they be able to reach out to universal

humanistic values? And probably most importantly, will the ideological hardening of the AKP government, the reflections of which can clearly be seen in its foreign policy, continue, or will moderating forces intervene and recommence the disrupted path towards reform and the European Union? The answers to these many questions notwithstanding, it would be fair to suggest that Turkey's standing in its overlapping neighbourhoods and its soft power leverage would suffer tremendously in the moment that the country's policy makers fall into the policy trap, against which Nye was warning the Bush administration in 2004 – triumphalism and the self-delusion of ideological supremacy.

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Discourse vs. Figures: A Reality Check for Turkey's Economic Depth

MEHMET KARLI

Turkish foreign policy (TFP) has undergone important changes since the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP) came to power in 2002. One of the key features of this change has been the ever strengthening role played by economic factors in the formulation of foreign policy. Economic interests are not only cited by Turkish foreign policymakers as one of the main purposes of foreign policy, but are also used to emphasize the importance of Turkey on a global scale.

There are many examples to illustrate that economic factors influence the decisions of TFP-makers more than they have in the past. Kirişçi (2009) provides an authoritative analysis of these issues. One example comes from the Fourth Conference of Ambassadors of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in December 2011, a forum in which all Turkish ambassadors gather with the Minister of Foreign Affairs to discuss annual developments and evaluate TFP. Ahmet Davutoğlu, the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, in his opening address to all Turkish ambassadors, made this position crystal clear with the following words: ‘... you should act like a businessman. Businessmen, you are all businessmen. You are businessmen on behalf of the country’ (Davutoğlu, 2011b).

THE DISCOURSE OF TURKEY AS A GLOBAL ECONOMIC POWER

The rise of references to economic factors in the formulation of TFP led some observers to conclude that Turkey has been transforming from a “post-Cold

War warrior” into a “trading state”. According to those observers, this new foreign policy makes less use of hard than soft power and prioritises the realization of economic interests. However, this transformation faces important challenges and has not yet been consolidated (Kirişçi 2009, pp. 52-55). It should also be noted that the process of the formation of the trading state started long before the AKP came to power. Turkey radically changed its economic policies in 1980, adopting an export-led growth strategy and abandoning import-substitution policies. In line with this change, economic factors started playing an important role in the formulation of TFP during the governments of Turgut Özal in 1980s. The AKP’s policies form a part of this historical continuum (Ünay 2010, pp. 25-26).

Therefore, the distinguishing feature of the AKP’s discourse is not necessarily the emphasis that it places upon economic interests in TFP. It is rather the increasingly self-confident, if not self-glorifying or even hubristic, tone of this new discourse (Krastev 2011, p. 77). An analysis of the statements by the key actors of TFP indicates that they increasingly assert Turkey as “a global economic power”. For instance, writing in 2007, Davutoğlu states that:

Turkey’s aim is to intervene consistently in global issues using international platforms, which signifies a transformation for Turkey from a central country to a *global power*. It should also be underlined that this transformation is the result of the performance of all actors involved in foreign policy. Turkey’s success is not only the result of state policies, but also the activities of civil society, *business organizations*, and numerous other organizations, all operating under the guidance of this new vision (emphases added; Davutoğlu 2007).

In this statement, Davutoğlu refers to the activities of TUSKON (Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists of Turkey), TÜSİAD (The Turkish Industrialists’ and Businessmen’s Association), and MÜSİAD (The Independent Industrialists and Businessmen’s Association) as examples of Turkey’s rise to the status of “a global power”.

Similarly, Davutoğlu, in his opening address to the Third Conference of Ambassadors in January 2011, listed Turkey as among the first ten countries that might reshape the global order. He underlined the importance of Turkey’s membership in the G-20 as an illustration of this power and described Turkey as “the shining country, the most spoken about country” of

the G-20 Summits (Davutoğlu 2011a). His words reflect TFP decision-makers' perception of Turkey as an "economic pole" and an "order setter" [düzen kurucu] (Bechev 2011, p. 9).

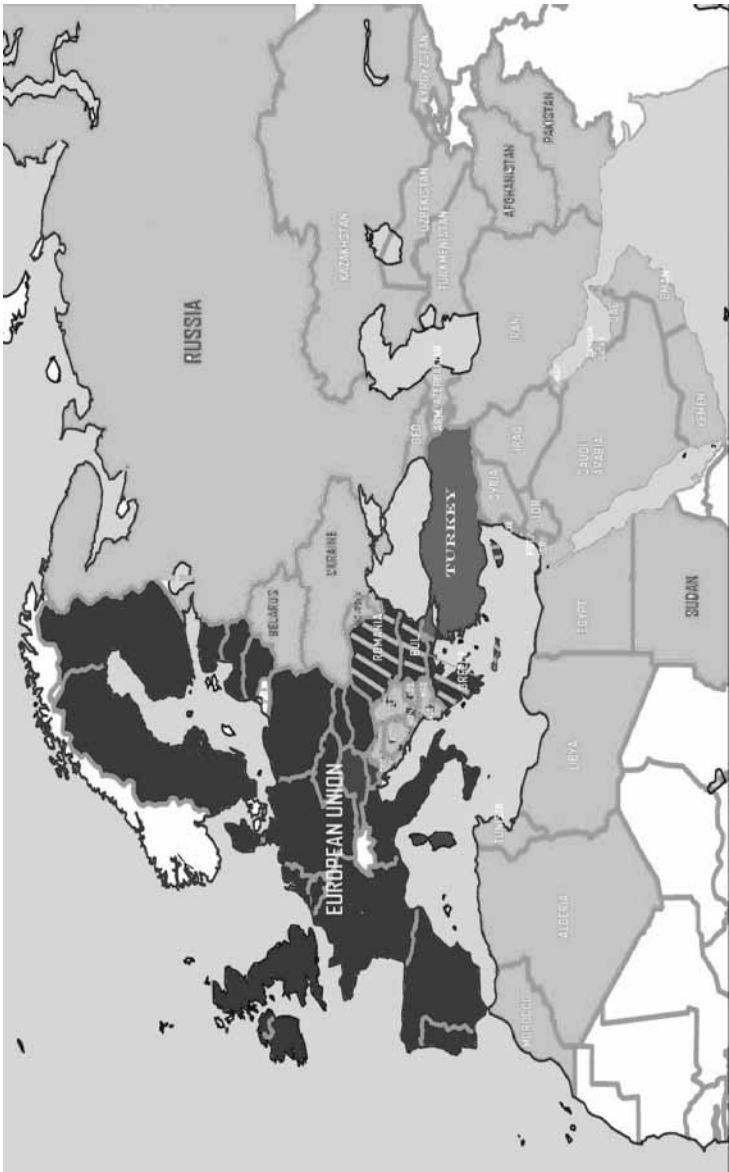
Similar statements can be found in the speeches and writings of such important figures as İbrahim Kalın, the senior advisor to the Prime Minister of Turkey on Foreign Policy, and Ali Babacan, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs and the current Deputy Prime Minister in charge of the Treasury (Kalın 2011, p. 52; *The Washington Times* 2011). They both equivocate Turkey to such powers as China, India and Brazil and proclaim that Turkey is one of the new poles of the emerging multipolar world. All these statements are perfectly in line with the monthly statements by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan –the so-called *Ulusa Sesleniş* [Address to the Nation] speeches that are broadcasted nationwide– in which he increasingly contrasts Turkey's economic performance with the crisis of Western economies and stresses the global importance of the Turkish economy.

The Rise of a New Geography

A corollary of this "Turkey as a global economic power" discourse is a new geo-economic perspective emphasized by TFP decision-makers. It is widely accepted that TFP under the AKP governments has gone through a "mental repositioning" that provided for a "novel geographic imagination" (Davutoğlu 2007, pp. 78-79; Kınıklıoğlu 2011, p. 64; Ünay 2010, p. 30). The new geographical emphasis of TFP is upon a region that comprises the Balkans, the Caucasus, Russia, Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa. TFP's focus has shifted from its old or traditional geography, i.e., the European Union (EU) and the European Free Trade Area (EFTA), to this new geography.

This reshaping of the so-called "mental map" of TFP has inevitably affected the discourse on Turkey's foreign economic relations as well. The diversification of Turkey's external economic relations, that is, the relative increase of the new geography's share compared with the traditional geography, has been described as one of the main successes of TFP (Kınıklıoğlu 2011, p. 65; Ünay 2010, pp. 30-31). This economic repositioning has been used to explain Turkey's economic power (*The New York Times* 2 b010). Although decision-makers tend to pay lip service to the importance of the accession to the EU, the rhetoric is not matched by actual political emphasis. As Krastev (2011, p. 78) puts it:

MAP
The New Geography of Turkish Foreign Policy



Source: Prepared by the author.

For the moment, the EU is not the major strategic objective of the government's policy, but rather its insurance policy... At the moment, the EU is perceived in Turkey as a declining and retirement-minded power.

Similarly, such decision-makers as Ali Babacan state 'they now expect Turkey to do just fine regardless of its status in Europe' (*The Washington Times* 2011). Krastev's words capture well the prevailing mood of Turkish decision-makers with respect to Turkey's foreign economic relations:

For now, the official line is that moving away from the EU has helped Turkey to recover quickly from the global economic downturn. The Turkish imagination is fascinated by trends rather than volumes, and politicians tend to underestimate their dependence on Europe and its market (Krastev 2011, p. 78).

In light of these developments, this article examines two inter-connected discourses: the discourse of Turkey as global economic power and the discourse of new geography, and subjects them to a reality check. The first section examines Turkey's economic power and contextualizes its growth in the context of both the world and the new geography of TFP.

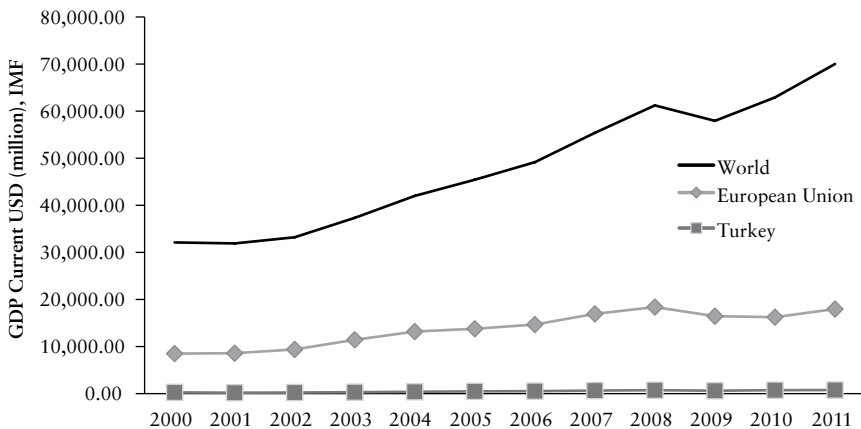
The second section focuses on Turkey as a trading power. It examines Turkey's power as an exporter and importer of merchandise, and compares the old and new geographies of TFP as export and import markets for Turkey. It then describes the changes in the composition of Turkey's external trade and contextualizes them within global developments over the last decade.

Finally, the third section focuses on flows of foreign direct investment (FDI). It compares Turkey and its old and new geographies as exporters and importers of capital. It then analyzes the composition of FDI flows to Turkey. The choice of trade in goods and FDI flows as the main indicators of external economic relations is not coincidental. As Ülgen puts it, currently, one of the main objectives of TFP 'is to ensure that exporters get new export markets and that the country receives more foreign direct investment' (*The Washington Times* 2011). Therefore, examining Turkey's performance on these two issues, as well as the potential of the new geography with respect to the same issues, enables a sound assessment of the success of TFP in light of the criteria that it has set for itself.

TURKEY AND GLOBAL ECONOMIC POWER BALANCES: SIZE MATTERS

The best and most straightforward way to examine Turkey's economic power is to consider its economic size in its regional and global contexts. The size of the Turkish economy is often cited by TFP-makers as an important component of Turkey's power. They often stress that Turkey is 'the world's 17th largest and Europe's sixth largest economy' (Kalin 2011, p. 54). Davutoğlu reiterates in his speeches the target set by Erdoğan: Turkey becoming one of the ten largest economies by 2023, the centenary of the Turkish Republic, with a gross domestic product (GDP) of two trillion USD or more (Davutoğlu 2011a). The growth rates achieved by Turkey over the last decade are cited as the principal source of current optimism.

FIGURE 5.1
GDP: World, EU & Turkey



Source: IMF September 2011, World Economic Outlook Database.

However, an analysis of Turkey's relative economic weight reveals a more nuanced story. Although Turkey ranked as the 18th largest economy in current USD terms in 2010, it constituted only one per cent of the global economy (IMF, September 2011). Similarly, Turkey is home to one per cent of the global population. The IMF's estimates for 2011 rank Turkey as the 19th largest economy after Indonesia (IMF, September 2011). This ranking is indeed very much in line with Turkey's historical trend. Turkey was the 19th

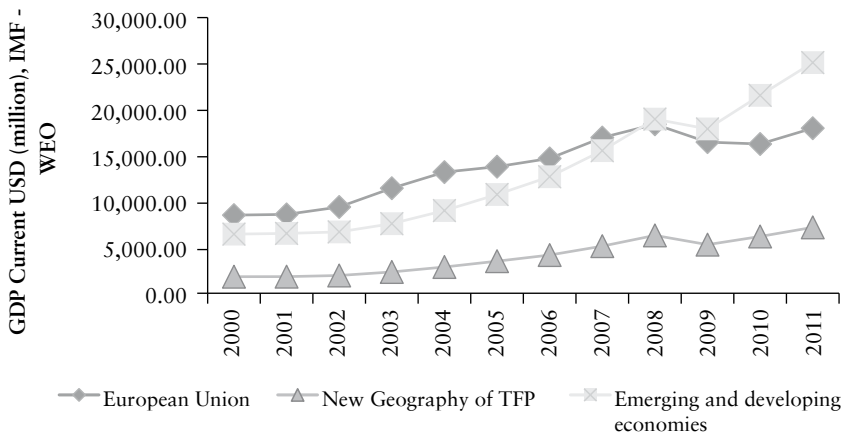
largest economy in 1990; it became 17th in 1993. It entered the new century as the 18th largest economy in the year 2000.

In comparison with the combined size of the EU as an economic bloc, 25.8 per cent of the global economy in 2010, the size of the Turkish economy appears to be modest. Despite the downturn, the EU is still the largest economic bloc in the world.

THE NEW GEOGRAPHY IN CONTEXT

Another interesting fact concerns the new geography of TFP. **Figure 5.2** shows the combined economic sizes of the EU, the group of emerging and developing countries –a grouping of 150 countries including the so-called BRIC countries– and the new geography of TFP as calculated by this author.¹

FIGURE 5.2
GDP: Selected Regions



Source: IMF September 2011, World Economic Outlook Database.

It is clear that the first decade of the 21st century witnessed the rise of emerging and developing economies. The combined size of these economies overtook that of the EU for the first time in 2008. In 2010, these economies provided 34.2 per cent of global output, compared with 25.8 per cent of the EU. On the other hand, in 2010, the new geography of TFP made up 9.8 per

¹ It must be noted that there is a degree of overlap between the EU and the new geography of TFP. Greece, Bulgaria, Romania and Cyprus (both North and South) partake of both groupings.

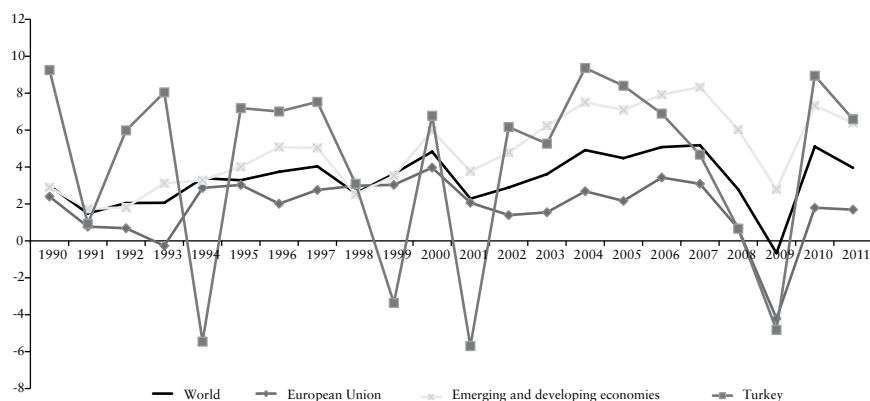
cent of the global economy. This geography has a combined population of slightly more than a billion people and had a combined GDP of 6,178 million USD as of 2010. It follows that the GDP per capita of the new geography of TFP is around 6,000 USD (IMF, September 2011).

In comparison, the EU-27 has a combined population of slightly more than 500 million people with a GDP per capita of around 32,000 USD. The EU's combined GDP was 16,242 million USD in 2010. Thus, the new geography's aggregate GDP equals 38 per cent of the EU's GDP, and an average citizen in the EU is more than five times richer than an average citizen in the new geography. Considering the evidence, it is fair to contend that it is too early to consider Turkey a "global economic power". It is also too early to write the EU off as an economic hegemon.

THE MYTH OF THE TURKISH GROWTH MIRACLE

Another important part of the discourse of "Turkey as a global economic power" is the emphasis it places upon Turkey's growth figures. Such claims as Turkey "tripling its GDP in seven years" are used frequently by TFP-makers (Kınıklioğlu 2011, p. 65). However, just as with the size of the economy, these figures should be placed in their proper context.

FIGURE 5.3
Growth: World, EU, E&D, and Turkey



Source: IMF September 2011, World Economic Outlook Database.

Figure 5.3 shows the growth rates of the global economy, as well as the economies of the EU, the group of emerging and developing countries, and Turkey. The characteristic feature of the Turkish growth trend is that it is prone to sharp ups and downs. Turkey's economy has averaged a growth of 4.2 per cent in the 1980s, 4 per cent in the 1990s, and 3.7 per cent in the first decade of the 21st century. This compares with 3.4 per cent, 3.3 per cent, and 6 per cent of the group of emerging and developing countries for the same periods, respectively. The numbers for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are 1.3 per cent, 4 per cent, and 4.8 per cent for the same periods (IMF, September 2011). It follows that Turkey grew faster than the emerging and developing countries in the 1980s and 1990s. It also grew faster than the MENA countries in the 1980s, and they grew at the same pace in the 1990s. However, during the first decade of the 21st century, both the MENA countries and the aggregate group of emerging and developing countries grew faster than Turkey. This is largely due to the 2001 economic crisis, during which the Turkish economy contracted by almost 5.7 per cent.

It must be noted that similar findings are also valid for the 2003-2010 period, that of the AKP. During those years, the Turkish economy grew at an average rate of 4.9 per cent, while the number for the emerging and developing countries was 6.6 per cent, and 5.1 per cent for the MENA countries. The fact that Turkey grew only 0.6 per cent in 2008 and contracted by 4.8 per cent in 2009 are the principal factors that lowered Turkey's average growth rate. Although Turkey grew by a strong 8.9 per cent in 2010, this has not been sufficient to heighten its average above those of MENA, and the group of emerging and developing countries. Nevertheless, this recovery has managed to increase Turkey's average above that of the Central and Eastern European countries, which have grown at an average rate of 4.2 per cent between 2003 and 2010.

Turkey's growth following 2001 owed a great deal to Kemal Derviş, a World Bank economist who became the strongman of the Turkish economy following the 2001 crisis. In the words of *The Economist*, '[b]esides rescuing the banks, he devised a new framework for Turkish monetary and fiscal policy. When the AK Party came to power in November 2002, much of the hard work of repairing Turkey's battered economy had already been done. Sensibly enough, Ali Babacan, the new finance minister, continued with these policies' (*The Economist* 2010, p. 5).

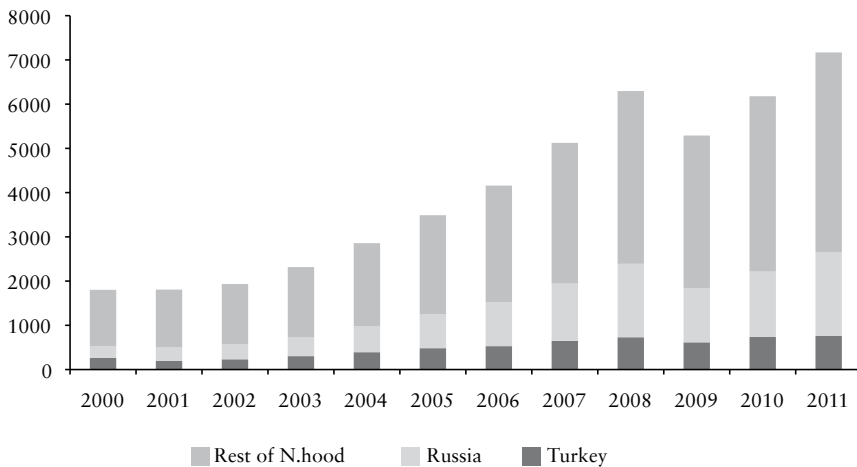
The inevitable conclusion drawn from the aforementioned statistics is

that although Turkey has managed to attain a steady and robust level of growth in the years following its 2001 economic crisis, it has ‘failed to produce a “miracle story” reminiscent of the Asian tigers’ (Ünay 2010, p. 24). Its growth largely followed the trends in the developing world.

TURKEY AS A REGIONAL ECONOMIC POWER

The final step of the contextualization of Turkey’s economic power is to compare it with the other economies of TFP’s new geography. This analysis reveals that, although Turkey may not be characterized as a global power, it is a very important power in this new geography.

FIGURE 5.4
Turkey as a Regional Economic Power



Source: IMF September 2011, World Economic Outlook Database.

Turkey is the second largest economy of this new region. With its share of 10.6 per cent in 2011, it is second only to the Russian economy, which constitutes 26.2 per cent of this new geography’s combined economic size. The relative size of the Turkish economy in this new geography, however, has actually decreased. It used to make up 14.7 per cent of this region’s aggregate economy in 2000, almost 4 percentage points more than it did in 2011. In contrast, the Russian economy has significantly increased its relative

weight within this region. It used to constitute 14.4 per cent of the region's economy in 2000 (less than Turkey's share); now, it has almost doubled its relative weight within the new geography of TFP (IMF, September 2011).

It may hence be confidently asserted that Turkey is a very important regional economic actor. Yet, from an economic perspective, it would not be prudent to characterize Turkey as a 'regional hegemon' (Kınıklioğlu 2011, p. 66). Due largely to sharp increases in energy prices, Russia has emerged as the largest economy of this new geography of TFP. It should also be reiterated that the entire geography's economy constitutes a mere 38 per cent of the EU economy.

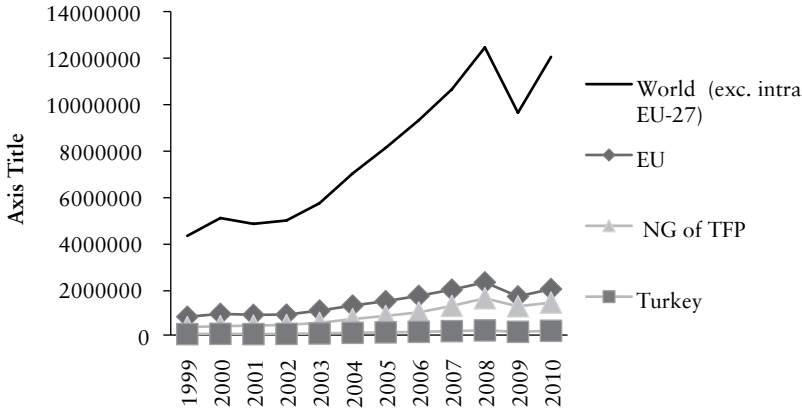
THE EVOLUTION OF TURKISH FOREIGN TRADE: CONTEXT MATTERS

The discourse on Turkey's foreign trade is very similar to the discourse on Turkey's economic size and growth. Turkish decision-makers make frequent references to the increases in Turkey's foreign trade. References to the three-fold increase of Turkish foreign trade during the first decade of the century are heard often in speeches. In addition to the sheer increase in volumes, the diversification of foreign trade partners is also mentioned as the success of TFP (Ünal 2010, pp. 30-34). The most visible statement of purpose on the homepage of the Turkish Ministry of Economy is the goal of attaining 500 billion USD in export volume by 2023. A similar, although certainly more cautious and nuanced rhetoric, may be seen in mainstream journalistic analyses of Turkey (*Newsweek* 2010, p. 22; *The Economist*, 2010, pp. 5-6, 17).

CONTEXTUALIZING THE SIZE AND GROWTH OF TURKISH FOREIGN TRADE

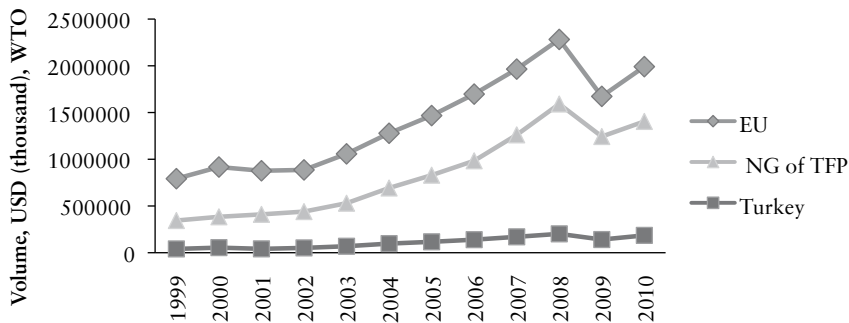
These numbers must, however, be examined in their global and regional contexts. **Figures 5.5a-b** and **5.6a-b** show the evolution of global trade between 1999 and 2010. Over this period, the global trade volume increased three-fold, from around 4 trillion USD to 12 trillion. Surfing on this wave, Turkey managed to increase its foreign trade from around 70 billion USD in 1999 to 300 billion in 2010. However, even after this upward trend, Turkish exports made up a mere 0.96 per cent of global exports in 2010 (**Figure 5.6b**), and 1.5 per cent of global imports (**Figure 5.5b**). These figures represent a 45 per cent increase in Turkey's share in global exports between 1999 and 2010, and a 64 per cent increase in her share in global imports.

FIGURE 5.5a
Imports: World, EU, New Geography, and Turkey



Source: WTO 2011, International Trade Statistics.

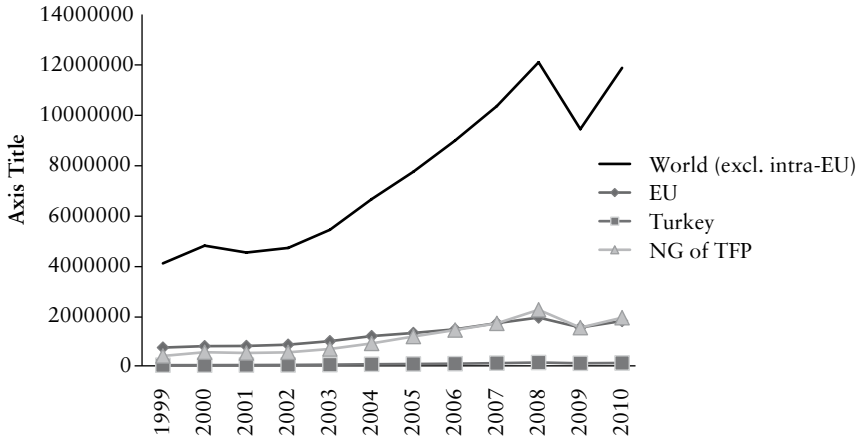
FIGURE 5.5b
Imports: EU, New Geography, and Turkey



Source: WTO 2011, International Trade Statistics.

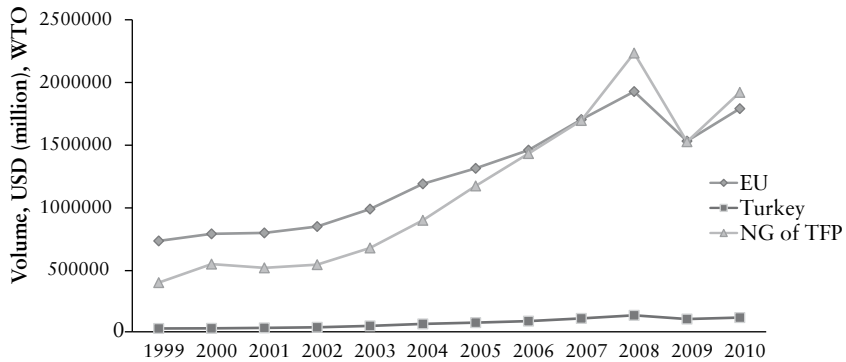
Likewise, Turkey is the 33rd largest exporter in the world, if the EU countries are counted individually, and the 22nd largest, if the EU is considered as a bloc. The corresponding rankings are 21st and 15th for Turkish imports (WTO-ITS 2011, pp. 24-25). The EU was still the largest exporter and importer globally in 2010, with 15.1 per cent of the global export market, and 16.5 per cent of the global import market (WTO-ITS 2011, p. 25).

FIGURE 5.6a
Exports: World, EU, New Geography, and Turkey



Source: WTO 2011, International Trade Statistics.

FIGURE 5.6b
Exports: EU, New Geography, and Turkey



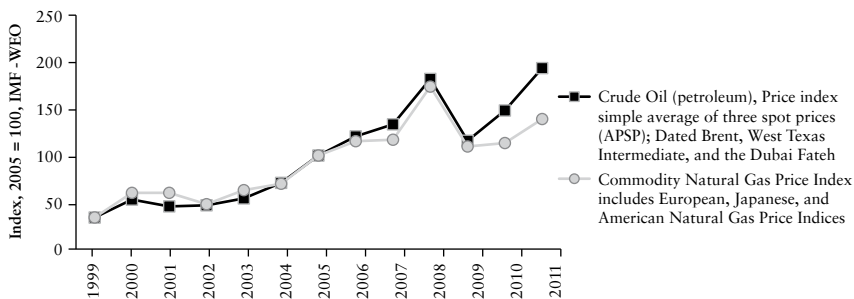
Source: WTO 2011, International Trade Statistics.

As such, the EU exports 15 times more, and imports 11 times more, than Turkey.

Another important comparative benchmark is certainly the new geography of TFP. The countries forming this geography, with the exception of Turkey, made up 11.6 per cent of the global import market (13.2 per cent

with Turkey) in 2010, and 15.2 of the global export market (16.1 per cent with Turkey). An important finding is that the aggregate exports of the new geography caught up with those of the EU in 2007, and overtook it in 2008 (Figures 5.6a-5.6b). Within this region, Turkey was the fourth largest exporter in 2010, after Russia, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and the second largest importer following Russia (WTO-ITS 2011, p. 25).

FIGURE 5.7
Energy Price Indices



Source: IMF September 2011, World Economic Outlook Database.

The increase in the shares of the new geography is largely due to the sharp hikes in energy prices that have characterized the 21st century so far. In the period 1999-2011, the average price of crude oil shot up six-fold, while the average price of commodity natural gas increased four-fold (Figure 5.7). As the new geography contains all countries of the Middle East and North Africa, as well as such energy giants as Russia, it is no surprise that they have performed well in terms of export numbers.

Consequently, the share of the new geography in global exports has risen by 68 per cent between 1999 and 2010. Its share in global imports increased at a slower pace, by 48 per cent over the same period. The changes in the relative weight of the new geography have been very much in line with the evolution of the shares of the emerging and developing countries in global trade in general. Emerging and developing countries have increased their share of global exports from around 29 per cent in 1999 to 47 per cent in 2010. Likewise, their share of global imports has risen from around 26.5 per cent to 41 per cent over the same period (WTO-ITS 2000, p. 20; WTO-ITS

2011, p. 25). The group of emerging and developing countries have increased their share of global exports by 62 per cent and their share of global imports by 54 per cent between 1999 and 2010.

These numbers help contextualize the growth of the relative weight of Turkish exports (45 per cent) and imports (64 per cent) in global trade over the same period. The relative weight of Turkey's exports in global trade has indeed increased less than those of the new geography (68 per cent) and of the aggregate grouping of emerging and developing countries (62 per cent). However, the relative weight of Turkey's imports has increased more than those of the new geography (48 per cent) and of the aggregate grouping of emerging and developing countries (54 per cent). These findings indicate that, just like the growth of its economy, the development of Turkish foreign trade has also followed the broader trends in the developing world, and in that sense, Turkey has not produced a miracle.

Finally, it should be noted that the flipside of the story of the ever-increasing shares of developing countries in global trade has been the weakening of the positions of advanced countries. Accordingly, the EU's share in global exports decreased 16 per cent, from 18 per cent in 1999 to 15 per cent in 2010. Similarly, the bloc's share in global imports has gone down by 11 per cent, from 18.5 per cent in 1999 to 16.5 per cent in 2010. Likewise, the combined share of the EU/EFTA in global exports has decreased from 20.2 per cent in 1999 to 17.7 per cent in 2010. Their share in global imports, on the other hand, has decreased from 20.5 per cent in 1999 to 18.6 per cent in 2010. The rate of decline has been 12.3 per cent for the share of their exports and 9.2 per cent for their imports. However, the EU is still the largest exporter and importer in the world. It is also important to note that, although the new geography's exports have overtaken those of the EU, the former's import market is still 30 per cent smaller than the European import market. Thus, the new geography's market potential for Turkish exports is still 30 per cent less than that of the EU.

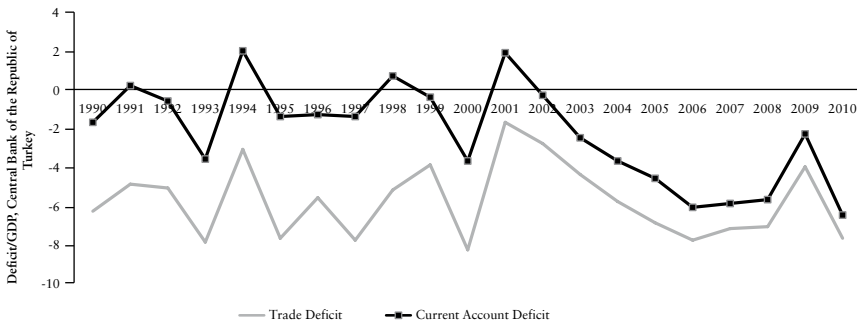
STRUCTURAL VULNERABILITIES OF THE TURKISH ECONOMY AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

The previous sub-section demonstrated that Turkey's imports have increased at a faster pace than its exports. In fact, during the AKP period, Turkey's imports increased annually by an average 16 per cent, whereas the corresponding number for exports was 14.4 per cent (Eren 2011, p. 193). The ratio of ex-

ports to imports was 61 per cent in 2010. These numbers point to the structural weakness and vulnerability of Turkey's external economic relations.

The Turkish economy has constantly been running a trade deficit since 1946 (Eren 2011, p. 193). Similarly, the Turkish economy is also characterized by a steady current account deficit. **Figure 5.8** shows the evolution of the trade and current account deficit since 1990. Over this period, Turkey did not run a current account deficit only in 1991, 1994, 1998, 1999 and 2001. **Figure 5.8** also illustrates an upward trend in Turkey's current account deficit that dates back to 2001, seeming to stop temporarily in 2009 due to the 2008 economic crisis but then resuming its established pattern from 2010 onwards. Many economists view this steady increase in current account deficit as the principal vulnerability of the Turkish economy (Rodrik 2012).

FIGURE 5.8
Turkish Trade and Current Account Deficit as a Share of GDP



Source: Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey - Electronic Data Delivery System.

This is not the place to examine in detail the root causes of this structural problem in the Turkish economy. However, two common explanations for this structural problem are particularly relevant for Turkey's external economic policy-making and hence need to be mentioned. The most common explanation that accounts for Turkey's current account deficit is the low level of domestic savings. Turkey may be typically characterized as a financing-restrained economy. Therefore, Turkey has been relying heavily on foreign borrowing to finance its growth. Moreover, '[a]s it came out of the 2001 crisis, Turkey came to rely increasingly on foreign borrowing to fuel its growth'. To make things worse, the ratio of domestic savings to GDP has been steadily de-

creasing over the 2000s and it is still 'quite depressed' (Rodrik 2012, pp. 53-57). What these findings indicate is that if Turkey continues its current growth strategy, it will have a steady need for inflows of foreign capital. This, in turn, underlines the importance of both foreign borrowing sources and foreign direct investments for Turkey. Accordingly, the issue of FDI flows shall be examined in the following section.

Another common explanation for Turkey's steady current account deficit –which is not mutually exclusive with the first– is its natural resource endowment, or lack thereof, and the structure of its industries. In terms of the former, Turkey is an energy-dependent country. In contrast with its Middle Eastern and Northeastern neighbours, Turkey does not possess such natural resources as oil and natural gas. Hence, the import of oil and gas occupy a very important place in Turkey's foreign trade structure. Moreover, this place has been constantly expanding over the last decade due to the sharp increases in energy prices (**Figure 5.7**). While the share of mineral fuel and oil products in Turkey's imports had reached 21 per cent in 1989 due to a hike in energy prices, it subsequently went down to 4.4 per cent in 1998. However, since then, the strong upward rally of the prices brought about the rise of this share to 24 per cent in 2008, which went down to 20 per cent in 2010 (Eren 2011, pp. 227-228). These numbers indicate that such countries as Russia and Iran, as well as other natural resource rich Middle Eastern countries, will continue to enjoy an important place in Turkey's import structure.

While Turkey's natural resource endowment pulls its trade eastwards, the structure of its industry pulls it more towards the advanced economies of the West due to the technology infrastructure of the country. According to the OECD Science, Technology and Industry Scoreboard statistics, the technology intensity of Turkish production is still quite low. Only 3.7 per cent of Turkish manufacturing had high technology intensity in 2009; 29.9 per cent had lower-middle technology intensity, and 42.1 per cent had low technology intensity (Eren 2011, p. 224; Yiğidim 2009, pp. 212-213). This, in turn, denotes that Turkey needs to import high technology intensive, and hence high-value added, capital and interim goods in order to continue its growth and its exports. Imports of capital goods and non-oil interim goods accounted for 81 per cent of Turkish imports in 2010, with the former's share being 15.5 per cent and the latter's being 65.6 per cent (Eren 2011, p. 228). This situation is aptly described as the 'middle-of-the-table predicament' by Bechev, who submits that Turkey 'cannot compete with the Asian Tigers in terms of cheap la-

bour anymore, but it is still far from the knowledge-driven economies of the West' as well. Hence, 'it is too early to write the EU off' (Bechev 2011, p. 14).

Finally, the latest numbers released by the Turkish Statistical Institute in January 2012 revealed that Turkey's trade and current account deficit has reached new and unprecedented highs. According to these numbers, Turkey's imports increased 29.8 per cent in 2011 and reached 240,833 million USD. The exports, in the meantime, rose only by 18.5 per cent and ended the year with 134,954 million USD. The trade deficit has reached the alarming level of 105,879 USD, which corresponds to an annual change of 47.7 per cent (Turkish Treasury, 31 January 2012). In 2011, Turkey's trade deficit reached a worrying 13.7 per cent of its GDP.

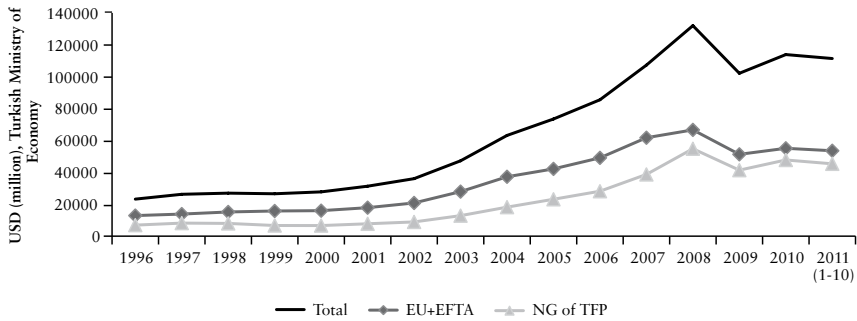
THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE COMPOSITION OF TURKISH EXPORTS AND IMPORTS: A STRUCTURE-DRIVEN PROCESS

The final part of this section will focus on the changes in the composition of Turkish foreign trade. In fact, much ink has already been spilled over these changes. As expounded upon above, the prevailing discourse in government circles characterizes these changes as a much-needed diversification and as a success of government policy. However, there is another trend in the literature that tends to characterize this shift as a sign of Turkey's turning East, or of the "Islamization" of the state's foreign policy (for a discussion of these points: Habibi-Walker 2011, pp. 6-9; *Newsweek* 2010, p. 22; *The New York Times* 2010). However, both views suffer from a very important flaw: they both prioritize an agent-driven explanation of the change, attributing the changes to the decisions of policymakers in Turkey. In contrast, the view defended here is that the change has mostly been shaped by structure, by global economic developments and factors extraneous to Turkey, rather than by the policies of decision-makers.

Figures 5.9a-b and **5.10a-b** summarize the changes in the composition of Turkish exports and imports. Both sets of figures start from 1996. The choice of the year is not coincidental: this is the year when the customs union between Turkey and the EU became operational, abolishing most of the barriers to trade from the EU.²

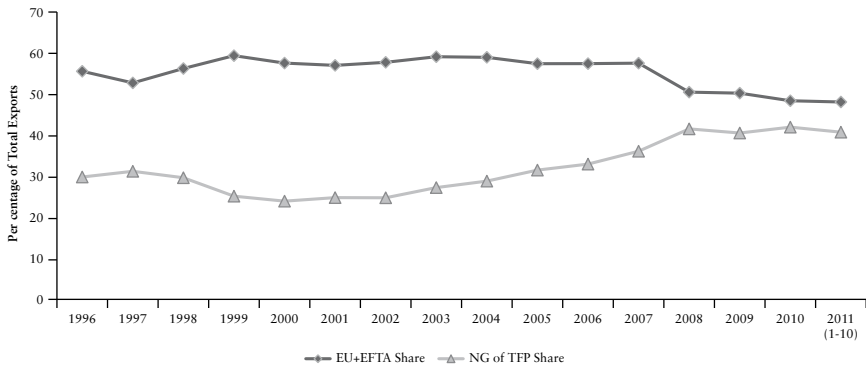
2 The so-called decision 1/95 of the EC-Turkey Association Council provides for the elimination of barriers to trade on the parts of both Turkey and the EU. However, as the EU had already abolished most of its trade barriers on industrial goods vis-à-vis Turkey in 1971 as part of the imple-

FIGURE 5.9a
Geographic Distribution of Turkish Exports



Source: Turkish Ministry of Economy Database.

FIGURE 5.9b
Geographic Distribution of Turkish Exports (Shares)

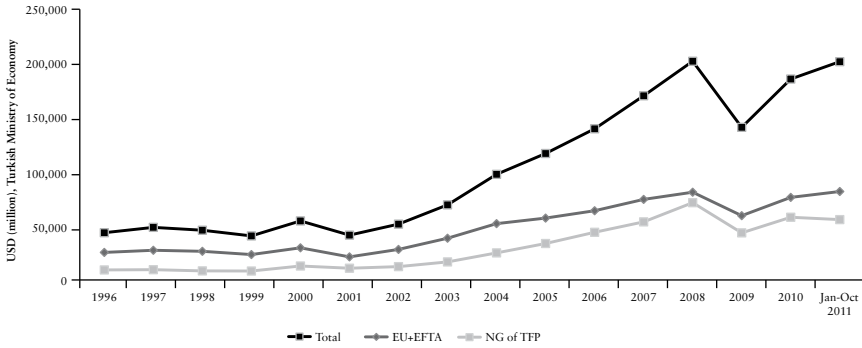


Source: Turkish Ministry of Economy Database.

In both cases, a clear convergence exists between the respective shares of the new geography and the traditional geography, that is, the EU and EFTA. In both cases, again, there is a decline in the share of the EU/EFTA that contrasts with the rise of the new geography. These are the trends that have generated most of the debate on this issue.

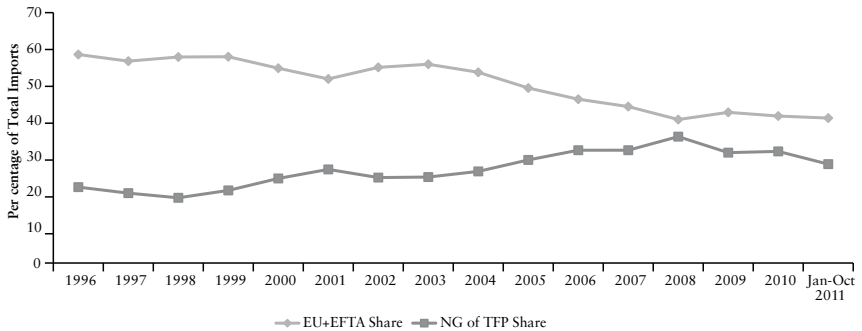
mentation of the 1970 Additional Protocol to the 1963 Ankara Association Agreement between Turkey and the EC, the internal effect of the customs unions has been most visible with respect to Turkish barriers to trade (Togan 2005, p. 94).

FIGURE 5.10a
Geographic Distribution of Turkish Imports



Source: Turkish Ministry of Economy Database.

FIGURE 5.10b
Geographic Distribution of Turkish Imports (Shares)



Source: Turkish Ministry of Economy Database.

TURKISH EXPORTS

In line with the general approach adopted in this article, these figures must also be read in their global context. Such a reading makes it clear that most of the change was structurally driven. For instance, at their peak, 59 per cent of Turkish exports were destined for the EU/EFTA in 1999. This share fell to 48 per cent in 2010. Similarly, the share of the new geography was 25 per cent in 1999 and rose to 41 per cent in 2010. Hence, over this period, the new geography exports increased 64 per cent whereas the EU/EFTA exports decreased 18.5 per cent.

Analysed in isolation, these numbers would be misleading. They ought to be compared with the relative changes in the sizes of these groupings as import markets, since Turkey's exports are imports for the rest of the world. As explained above, over the same period, the share of the new geography in global imports went up by 48 per cent. When this general increase is compared with the 64 per cent increase of this geography within Turkish exports, it becomes clear that at least three quarters of the increase in the share of exports to the new geography may be connected with global developments.

The aforementioned explanation is certainly not the sole structural reason that accounts for the transformation of the distribution of Turkish exports. In light of the rankings provided in **Table 5.1** below, two more specific extraneous factors also emerge as causes for this transformation. **Table 5.1** shows that the rising star for Turkish exports in the new geography is Iraq, which became the fourth largest export market for Turkey over the first ten months of 2011. This is naturally in stark contrast with the 1990s, during which the Iraqi economy was crippled by embargos. It is clear that trade with Iraq resumed only after the U.S occupation of Iraq in 2003 (Habibi-Walker 2011, pp. 7-8). Although the activism of the Turkish government in its relations with Iraq must have made a positive contribution to this increase, it is also clear that the trigger for this process was an extraneous development, that is, the occupation of Iraq. Moreover, it should also not be forgotten that a large portion of Turkish exports to Iraq were destined for the consumption of American occupation forces. For instance, 40 per cent of the trade of Gaziantep, the economic powerhouse of Southeastern Turkey, was with the U.S forces in Iraq (*The Washington Times* 2011).

The second extraneous factor that pushed up the relative weight of the new geography was the so-called Dubai construction boom. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) emerged as the third largest export market for Turkey in 2009. An analysis of Turkish exports to the UAE reveals that most of the exported products were construction materials (Habibi-Walker 2011, p. 3). While government activism may have played a role in the choice of suppliers from Turkey, the real defining factor was the boom itself. Consequently, when the financial crisis hit Dubai in 2009 and the construction boom came to a halt, the UAE dropped from third to ninth place in 2010 (Habibi-Walker 2011, p. 3).

These two specific factors may explain why the share of exports to the new geography within Turkish exports has increased even more strongly than

TABLE 5.1
Rankings of Turkey's Export Markets – Top 10

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 (Jan-Oct)
Germany	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
USA	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	4	4	4	7	7	7	7
UK	5	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
France	6	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5
Italy	4	5	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	3	2
Spain	10	-	9	7	7	6	7	6	6	6	6	6	8	10	8	8
Russia	3	2	5	9	10	7	6	8	8	9	7	7	5	6	6	6
Saudi Arabia	9	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Algeria	-	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Israel	-	-	-	10	8	10	9	9	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Greece	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Romania	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	10	10	8	9	-	-
UAE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	3	9	9
Iraq	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	7	8	8	-	10	5	4
Iran	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	10

Source: Turkish Ministry of Economy Database.

the general increase of the global import share of that region. Conversely, they may also explain why the share of the EU/EFTA countries has decreased more than the global decrease of these regions as importers.

Finally, the “distance” factor must also be considered. Although the share of the new geography in global imports has increased 48 per cent, it is only normal that this increase is not evenly distributed over the globe. Distance is still an important factor for trade in goods, all the more so for such heavy goods like construction materials. Therefore, it is normal that countries in close proximity benefit more from this increase. Accordingly, the distance factor is also an additional structural reason that accounts for the current change.

The composition of imports to Turkey has also changed significantly over the period between 1996 and 2010. Turkish imports from the EU/EFTA countries had constituted slightly more than 50 per cent of Turkey’s global imports before the customs union entered into force in 1996. The elimination of barriers to the trade of industrial goods from the EU pushed this share up to 58 per cent in 1996. However, the share has been in near steady decline since then. During the period between 1999 and 2010, the share of the EU/EFTA in Turkish imports declined from 57.5 per cent to 41 per cent; EU/EFTA share decreased around 28.5 per cent.

In contrast, imports from the countries of the new geography constituted around 20 per cent of Turkey’s total imports in 1999. This share became 31 per cent in 2010; the share of the new geography in Turkey’s total imports rose by 55 per cent over this period. As **Table 5.2** shows, this increase was largely led by Russia and Iran, two principal providers of energy to Turkey. What is striking is that this rate of increase is below the global rate of the increase of exports from the new geography countries to the rest of the world which was, as stated above, a staggering 68 per cent. Therefore, it is plausible to argue that almost the entire increase in the relative weight of imports from the new geography was due to structural reasons related to the global economy.

What needs to be accounted for in this picture is the rate of the decrease of imports from the EU/EFTA. As mentioned before, this rate was 28.5 per cent between 1999 and 2010. However, the rate of decrease of EU/EFTA exports to the rest of the world was only 12.3 per cent. The challenge is to understand the additional decrease, the difference between 12.3 per cent and 28.5 per cent. The first relevant finding is that, since the increase in the share of new geography imports has not been any higher than their global trend, it

TABLE 5.2
Rankings of Turkey's Import Markets - Top 10

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 (Jan-Oct)
Germany	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1
USA	3	3	3	4	3	4	4	6	5	6	6	5	4	4	4	4
UK	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	5	7	7	8	8	10	8	10	-
France	4	4	4	3	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	6	6	6	6	7
Italy	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	5	5
Spain	-	9	9	10	7	9	9	9	9	9	10	-	-	7	8	9
Russia	6	6	6	5	4	3	3	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2
Saudi Arabia	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Algeria	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Iran	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	7	7	9	7	6
Ukraine	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	8	10	-	-
China	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	8	6	4	3	3	3	3	3	3

Source: Turkish Ministry of Economy Database.

is not these imports that account for this additional decrease in the EU/EFTA imports. It is, then, mainly the increase in developing country imports from outside the new geography that must have caused this additional decrease. Analysis of the share of these imports actually supports this finding. The share of the so-called “other Asian countries”, a grouping that covers South East and South Asian countries, in Turkish imports was around 12.5 per cent in 1999 and had become almost 22 per cent in 2010. The rate of increase was a staggering 76 per cent. The case of China has been even more remarkable. The share of Turkish imports originating in China was 1.5 per cent in 1996 and had become 9.3 per cent in 2010 – the increase was more than six-fold. Hence, **Table 5.2** shows that China is going up in the rankings. Other major players such as India and South Korea are also performing well.

The question, then, is whether this increase in the share of Asian countries in Turkey's imports is a policy-driven process. It is difficult to spot any deliberate Turkish policy that aims at favouring Asian imports at the expense of imports from other countries and regions, let alone the EU/EFTA. Indeed, this staggering performance of Asian countries, a performance that outpaces their general global performance, may well be explained as a “side effect” of Turkey's customs union with the EU. The customs union between Turkey and the EU imposed upon Turkey an obligation to harmonize its external trade policy with that of the EU. Hence, for instance, Turkey had to adopt the Common External Tariff of the Union (Pirim 2012, p. 417). This, in turn, meant that Turkey had to liberalize its external trade regime, since the EU has very low protection levels against imports of industrial goods.

The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs had announced that, as a result of this harmonization, Turkey's weighted rate of protection for imports of industrial products from third countries has decreased from 10.8 per cent to 6 per cent (<http://www.mfa.gov.tr>). The World Trade Organization, on the other hand, holds that Turkey's weighted average tariff rate has decreased from 12.3 per cent before the customs union to 8.3 per cent after the formation of the customs union (WTO 2006). Both findings indicate an important liberalization of Turkey's external protection, and this trade liberalization should be the principal policy reason for the performance of Asian imports to Turkey.³

3 Additionally, the levels attained immediately after the formation of customs union, e.g. 58 per cent, could very well be a result of the trade diversionary effect of the customs union which was subsequently to be offset by the liberalization of Turkey's external trade protection vis-a-vis third countries.

In conclusion, both discourses –the discourse of Turkey as a global economic actor and the discourse of a new geography– find their reflections in the field of Turkey's foreign trade relations too. The increases in Turkey's foreign trade are cited as examples of Turkey's ever increasing power. However, once these numbers are contextualized, it becomes clear that Turkey has indeed followed the broad trends of the developing world. On the other hand, it is a fact that the new geography has been steadily increasing its relative power in international trade due largely to booming energy prices. Yet, even after this strong rally of energy price hikes, the market that the new geography offers for Turkish exports is 30 per cent smaller than the EU/EFTA market.

Similar findings are valid for the changes in the composition of Turkey's foreign trade. Although there are views that try to attribute these changes to government policies, the analysis reveals that these changes are mostly the result of structural factors, global economic developments, and of some specific extraneous factors, such as the occupation of Iraq and the Dubai construction boom. These factors combine to increase the importance of the new geography for Turkey. However, even after this process of convergence, 48 per cent of Turkey's exports are destined for the EU/EFTA, and 41 per cent of Turkish imports originate in the same region. The corresponding figures for the new geography are 41 and 31 per cent, respectively. It is also noteworthy that, as evidenced by the most recent Syrian crisis or by the bust of the Dubai construction boom, trade relations with the new geography are more vulnerable towards political and boom-and-bust risks.

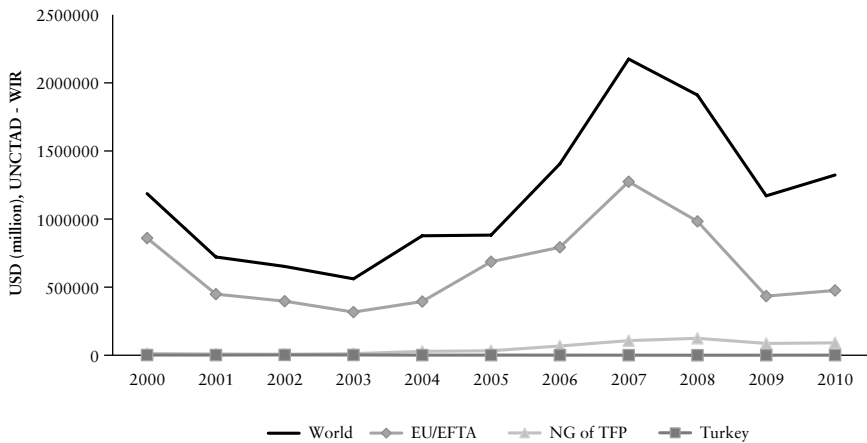
Finally, behind this story of increasing foreign trade volumes, Turkey suffers from a serious vulnerability that is the current account deficit. Turkey's growth strategy seems to generate constant current account deficits, and the latest trade deficit figures increase worries about the sustainability of Turkey's march forward.

FINANCING TURKISH GROWTH THROUGH FDI: OLD FRIENDS ALWAYS MATTER

This last section focuses on Foreign Direct Investments (FDI). FDI is certainly the preferred means of funding the growth of financing-restrained developing economies. In light of the structural vulnerability of the Turkish economy, its perennial current account deficit problem, having access to FDI is of specific importance for the country.

There are two connections between the foreign economic policy discourses analyzed in this article and the flows of FDI. The first connection relates to the “Turkey as a global economic actor” discourse. For this discourse to be backed concretely in the field, Turkish FDI must be present globally, if not, at least regionally. Within the government circles, there is, indeed, much talk of Turkish businessmen setting up outlets all around the new geography. These assertions and the real potential of Turkey in this regard must be examined. The second connection, on the other hand, concerns the discourse on the new geography. For this geography to live up to the expectations of TFP-makers, it must be providing Turkey with FDI. There is indeed much talk of Gulf Arab funds’ potential to contribute to Turkish growth. These assertions must also be put to test.

FIGURE 5.11
FDI Outflows: World, EU/EFTA, New Geography, and Turkey



Source: UNCTAD 2011-2007-2006-2005-2004, World Investment Report.

Even a cursory look at **Figure 5.11** gives the answer to the first test: Turkey cannot qualify as a global actor in terms of its FDI outflows. Turkish direct investment abroad has not even reached one per cent of global FDI outflows in any period. In 2010, the Turkish share in global FDI outflows was an almost negligible 6 per ten thousand. The new geography of TFP is not a powerful capital exporter either. Despite its almost seven-fold increase, the share of the new geography in global direct investment exports reached only

6.8 per cent in 2010. These actors pale in comparison to the EU/EFTA grouping which accounted for almost 36 per cent of FDI outflows in 2010 despite the economic crisis. Before the crisis, it had even reached the level of 77 per cent in 2005. When the FDI outflows of 11 years between 2000 and 2011 are considered cumulatively, the EU/EFTA accounted for almost 55 per cent of global FDI exports, whereas the new geography's share has been a meagre 4.5 per cent (UNCTAD-WIR 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2011).

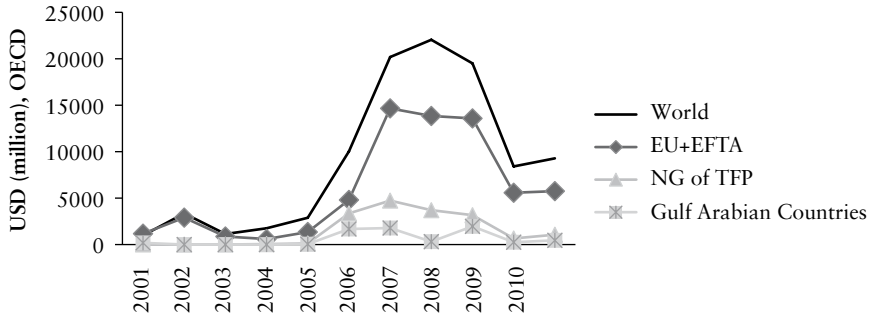
With its current level of FDI outflows, Turkey may not even qualify as a regional power. Turkey's share within the FDI outflows of the new geography was an almost negligible 0.9 per cent in 2010, 0.5 per cent in 2009, and 0.1 per cent in 2008. In 2010, Turkey was the ninth largest capital exporter within the new geography after such countries as Israel, Greek Cyprus and Kazakhstan. It was the tenth in 2009 and ninth in 2008. The underlying logic of these numbers and rankings is clear: Turkey does not possess enough capital to become a global, or even a regional, economic actor. As a financing-restrained economy with low levels of domestic savings, whatever capital Turkey has is predominantly destined for domestic investment and consumption. While the aforementioned findings already provide some explanation as to the potential of the new geography for Turkey as a source of FDI, **Figures 5.12** and **5.13** further clarify the argument.

Between 2001 and 2010, the EU/EFTA has been the unchallenged leader of FDI inflows to Turkey. Its share was a strong 62 per cent in 2010, dwarfing the 11.4 per cent share of the new geography. When those ten years are assessed cumulatively, the EU/EFTA has provided 65 per cent of FDI inflows to Turkey, whereas the share for the new geography was 16 per cent.

There are, moreover, three important caveats that further emphasize the importance of the EU/EFTA. **Table 5.13** shows that the steepest rise in FDI inflows from the new geography took place in 2006 and 2007. However, when analyzed in depth, it becomes clear that this increase was due to capital inflows from Greece, an EU member of the new geography. Moreover, the share of Greece within the cumulative 2000-2010 new geography capital inflow to Turkey is an astonishing 38 per cent.

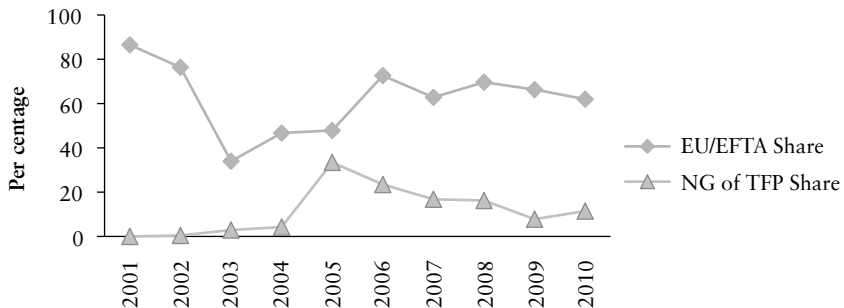
The second caveat relates to the method of calculation that the OECD uses to prepare its FDI statistics. **Figures 5.12** and **5.13** are based on these statistics. The OECD adopts a broader definition of FDI that includes not only equity capital but also the purchases of real estate and flows of other capital. However, when a stricter definition of FDI is used that only adopts equity

FIGURE 5.12
FDI Inflows to Turkey



Source: OECD Statistics.

FIGURE 5.13
FDI Inflows to Turkey (Shares)



Source: OECD Statistics.

capital as FDI, the share of the EU/EFTA becomes 77 per cent in 2008, 83 and 79 per cents in 2009 and 2010, respectively (TC Ekonomi Bakanlığı 2012, p. 15). This is a clear sign that the EU/EFTA FDI goes more into the productive sectors.

The final caveat relates to the quality of the FDI that Turkey receives from the EU/EFTA countries. In comparison to the FDI from the new geography, EU/EFTA FDI is more likely to result in technology transfer and related positive spill overs. This is a strategic priority for Turkey, which needs to increase the technology intensity of its production in order to move up on the value chain.

In conclusion, an analysis of FDI flows reveals clearly that Turkey's inadequacy of capital prevents it from having a well-founded claim to the status of global economic actor. Turkey lacks the capital that would enable it to establish a long-term, durable economic presence in the new geography. The flipside is that the new geography is not a prolific capital exporter either. The share of the new geography within FDI inflows to Turkey is very limited. There is, hence, no credible alternative to the EU/EFTA. In other words, there is no credible alternative to good old friends.

CONCLUSION

This article examined two interconnected discourses –the discourse of Turkey as a global economic power and the discourse of a “new geography”– and subjected them to a reality check. It did so on three accounts, namely, the size and growth of the Turkish economy, the evolution and composition of Turkish foreign trade, and the FDI flows to and from Turkey.

The results of these analyses indicate that the evolution of Turkey's relative economic weight and the state's external economic relations have mostly followed broad global trends. Contrary to the first discourse then, Turkey has not managed to generate a miracle. Much of the development with respect to Turkey's foreign economic relations appears to be attributable to structural factors: the global economy, rather than agency. Moreover, Turkey faces important structural vulnerabilities, such as its current account deficit, that risk the stability and sustainability of her growth. In a similar vein, the inadequacy of Turkey's capital accumulation restrains its capacity to project economic power abroad.

Analysing the second discourse, the conclusion is a very straightforward one: it is too early to write off the EU/EFTA. Although the new geography has been increasing its relative place both in the global economy and in Turkey's external economic relations, the EU/EFTA is still the undisputable economic hegemon of this part of the world. This is most visible in an analysis of FDI flows. For such developing countries as Turkey, the EU/EFTA is the main provider of the external capital needed to finance development.

Critically, the discrepancy between the discourse on economic relations and the realities on the ground may risk reducing the credibility of Turkish foreign policy discourse in general. If Turkey starts being seen as constantly trying to punch above its weight, this might eventually reduce the power of all the punches. Self-confidence is an asset insofar as it does

not reach the level of hubris. Hubris, on the other hand, is a burning liability. As the ancient Greeks knew very well, hubris almost always results in nemesis.

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PART TWO

The Western Alliance and Turkey's Southeast European Neighbourhood

The United States and Turkey in a Changing World

JOSHUA W. WALKER¹

Relations between Turkey and the United States (U.S) have always been dynamic and reflective of the historical moment in time. Today is no exception. The roller-coaster that has characterized U.S-Turkish relations reached the peak of being a “special relationship” during the Cold War with a series of American proclamations that included Turkey in such seminal partnerships as the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine and its accession into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The relationship has also seen valleys during pointed disagreements over Cyprus and Iraq. While the historical roots of the U.S-Turkish relationship can be traced to a time far before the beginning of the Cold War, this chapter attempts to situate the U.S-Turkish alliance within a historical context while laying out the parameters of this “special relationship” for the future that continues to be affected by the shifting dynamics of Turkey’s new foreign policy and international environment. Given the saliency of Turkey’s actions and more activist foreign policy over the past several years with its “rediscovery” of its neighborhood, particularly in the Middle East, this chapter assesses the potential points of divergence and convergence that confront the U.S-Turkish relationship today.

The rise of the conservative Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, abbreviated as AKP) and its Muslim worldview as the dominant and unrivaled force in Turkish politics, as demonstrated by its

¹ Much of this chapter was adapted and updated from a Crown Center Middle East Brief 46 “The United States and Turkey: Can They Agree?” that was written in November of 2010.

successful passage of the constitutional referendum on 12 September 2010 and the party's third consecutive electoral victory eleven months later, has heightened fears among many in the West that Turkey has been "lost" (Rubin 2010). Rather than seeing further democratization in Turkey and taking note of the domestic pressures facing a populist AKP government, such critics see a final nail being placed in the coffin of the military and secular elites that once protected American interests; they have concluded that Ankara has already switched sides from the West and turned its back on the historic U.S.-Turkey alliance (Friedman 2010).² This chapter argues that Turkey has played and continues to play a critical role in a region long seen important to American and global interests. Whether Turkey and the U.S. continue as allies or competitors in Turkey's neighborhood will be determined by the degree to which Ankara and Washington's interests converge more than they diverge.

No relationship as complex as the U.S.-Turkish alliance can be analyzed statically; unfortunately, that is exactly how commentators and scholars have viewed this relationship over the years. Analysts continually express their surprise that Turkey is not as willing as it once was to do the bidding of the U.S., often losing sight of the fact that Turkey's own national interests no longer perfectly compliment America's aims. Therefore, turbulence in the U.S.-Turkey relations should always be expected, and is ignored only at each democracy's peril. However, it would be equally wrong to ignore the important strategic role that this partnership has played for both allies.

THE CONTEXT OF THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC AND THE TURKISH REPUBLIC³

Prior to World War II (WWII), the U.S.' traditional foreign policy, with a few notable exceptions,⁴ had always been that of isolationism. Since its founding in 1776, the U.S. had prided itself on being a new type of nation built in opposition to the European imperial and colonial legacy against which Ameri-

2 Most prominently *New York Times*' Thomas Friedman (2010) recently devoted a column to sounding the alarm bell about Turkey's shifting alliances under Erdoğan and the consequences for U.S.-Turkey relations.

3 For further information, see Joshua W. Walker's chapter 'The Forming of the U.S.-Turkish Special Relationship' in *American Turkish Encounters: Politics and Culture, 1830-1989* Editors: Nur Bilge Criss, Selçuk Esenbel, Tony Greenwood and Louis MazzarB Cambridge Scholars Press, UK September, 2011.

4 Notably the Monroe Doctrine, the Spanish-American War and World War One.

cans had fought. The U.S' formation from the original thirteen colonies of the British Empire solidified a shared sense of national identity rooted "liberty and the pursuit of happiness" for all of America's multicultural citizens who sought their destinies in the open western expanses of a new continent. Like the American Republic, the Republic of Turkey, founded in 1923, emerged from a European empire with a historical distaste for imperialism and colonialism. Having been born from the ashes of the six-hundred year old Ottoman Empire, or the pejoratively nicknamed "sick man of Europe", the modern Turkish Republic focused its attention internally on Anatolia and sought to avoid foreign entanglements at all costs in line with the renowned vision of its founder, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who stated, 'Peace at home, peace abroad' (Mango 2002). With this dramatic transformation from a European, Middle Eastern, African and Asian multicultural empire to a geographically and culturally vague nation-state of "Turks", Turkey sought to find its place in the world. This search for self-definition was answered forcibly by Atatürk who articulated Turkey's place in the "modern" world – by which he explicitly meant Western civilization and turning Turkey's back on its cultural roots in Asia and the Middle East (Lewis 2002).

American and Turkish history includes a surprising level of overlap, which unfortunately lies outside the scope of this chapter. The unique historical sense of exceptionalism that the U.S and Turkey share led to a common understanding as World War II came to a rapid end and the Cold War began to emerge. While U.S-Turkish relations would have certainly continued in the absence of the Cold War, the degree and conditions in which the U.S and Turkey established comprehensive alliances immediately after WWII would have been far from a foregone conclusion. Thus, the immediate causes of the special American-Turkish relationship must be understood in their historical context, in which both countries experienced radical transformations in their global positions and in their traditionally pursued foreign policies. The total defeat of Nazi Germany and the crumbling British Empire altered Europe's traditionally central role in international affairs, ushering in the two most powerful nations in the world –who sat on the Eastern- and Western-most peripheries of Europe– the U.S and the Soviet Union. Alexis de Tocqueville's century old predictions that these two nations would come to dominate the world had finally come true in the wake of World War II (Tocqueville 2001).

In this bipolar post-WWII environment, the U.S was forced to give up its traditional isolationist policy and to undertake new global responsibilities.

As a result, the main aim of American foreign policy was to confront and contain the Soviet Union and its allies across the globe. The alliance with Turkey was consistent with this new American approach of containment. By aligning with the U.S, Turkey, too, abandoned its traditional neutralist policy, which had prevented it from establishing alliances, especially with great powers given its former experience in World War I. Turkey's main concern was to be a part of the Western world, which the U.S now was mobilizing against the Eastern communist threat. Thus, the foundation of the modern U.S-Turkish "special relationship" was set (Hale 2000).

THE U.S-TURKEY PARTNERSHIP IN THE COLD WAR⁵

During the Cold War, the common strategic threat posed by the Soviet Union bound the two countries together. Yet, even then, relations were not immune to regional developments and domestic politics in both capitals. The traditional bedrock of the U.S-Turkey alliance has always been the countries' armed forces, which are highly integrated in a common NATO framework and as the result of sustained bilateral cooperation. Turkey's strategic location on Europe's southeastern flank and as part of the "Northern Tier" (with Greece, Iran, and Pakistan) reinforced America's policy of containment throughout the Cold War, while Turkey's inclusion in the "West" protected the country from Soviet aggression (Kuniholm 1980).

The Cold War period is retrospectively remembered fondly by both countries as the "golden age" of U.S-Turkish relations. The narrative of a stalwart Turkey guarding the southeastern flank of Europe and the northern tier of the Middle East against the "evil" communists entered the popular discourse on Turkey in the U.S. Similarly, accounts of U.S protection against the Russian empire and the shared experience of fighting shoulder-to-shoulder in the Korean War permeate Turkish accounts of this period. However, such accounts simplistically neglected the difficulties of maintaining the relationship and internal changes in Turkey (Rustow 1987).

Despite Turkey's stagnant economy and considerably lesser geopolitical capabilities in the 1970s compared to today, Ankara –under a Social Democrat government– chose to intervene militarily in Cyprus in 1974, over Washington's objections and despite the punishment subsequently imposed by Congress' ban on military aid. The nationalist military that instigated a

5 For further information, consult Joshua W. Walker's chapter in *American Turkish Encounters: Politics and Culture, 1830-1989*.

coup in 1980 and ruled until 1983 downgraded Turkey's ambassador to Israel and oversaw the tensest period of relations between the two countries since the founding of the Jewish state.

In hindsight, the Cold War, and in particular the early consummation of the U.S-Turkish alliance may have been the exception and not the rule for future cooperation. The Cold War did not represent a permanent alignment of strategic interests between the U.S and Turkey. Thus, as the Soviet Union faded into the pages of history, the U.S-Turkish relationship has become more normalized. As in any bilateral relationship, natural ebbs and flows exist within the U.S-Turkish alliance, and must be analyzed in their proper context. Trying to apply the Cold War model to U.S-Turkish relations may be the very problem that hinders analysis today because no matter how closely the U.S and Turkey work together, they may never be able to achieve the level of strategic cooperation reached in a bipolar Cold War.

POST COLD WAR

The collapse of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 was met in Ankara with fear that Turkey was no longer relevant to the West, and to Washington in particular. Having been unequivocally part of the West since joining NATO in 1952 during the Cold War and based on the strategic logic of the time, Turkey expected its European credentials to hold up. Having been a part of almost every European organization from its inclusion in the Council of Europe in 1949 to the Ankara agreement of 1963 that created a customs union with Europe, Turkey looked to Europe as its logical home and partner. However, Turkey's war in the 1990s against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) led to an inward focus, while European protests concerning human rights violations further strained relations. Meanwhile, America actively supported Turkey's military efforts through arms sales, intelligence cooperation and joint exercises (Robins 2003).

In Turkey, 11 September 2001 was perceived as a watershed for the alliance. Washington's post-9/11 "Global War on Terror" (GWOT) appealed to a Turkish audience all too familiar with terrorist activities of the 1990s. The importance of Turkey in the U.S-led GWOT went beyond its geo-strategic location to the symbolism of the involvement of a Muslim-majority state. Turkey, with the second-largest army in NATO, contributed a significant number of troops and even led the UN and NATO mission in Afghanistan for a period of time. The U.S used Turkish participation in the GWOT to defuse

charges of a “crusade” against Islam and stressed that this was a war against “Islamofacism”.

President Bush actively encouraged the promotion of Turkey as a beacon of democracy for the Middle East and Muslim nations around the world. Accordingly, Turkey’s role as a secular, Muslim democracy increasingly became the most important factor for the U.S, despite the Turkish secular establishment’s own hesitation towards being offered as a model. It was precisely this question of Turkey’s Muslim identity that soon came to the forefront of domestic Turkish politics as the elections in 2002 brought AKP to power.

With AKP’s electoral victory, the U.S administration immediately began to court AKP leaders, culminating in official visits by U.S Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and Undersecretary of State (and former Ambassador to Turkey) Marc Grossman to Ankara in December 2002 to make official requests for Turkish cooperation in the Iraqi war planning efforts. Over the course of the meetings and press events, both the new Turkish Prime Minister and Foreign Minister reiterated their commitment towards cooperation with the U.S, but insisted on the importance of “international legitimacy”, which to them represented both the exhaustion of all diplomatic solutions and the securing of a UN mandate before any action in Iraq could be taken. The radically different perspectives on what “cooperation” entailed on both sides of the Atlantic subsequently led to a series of negotiations in which Turkey stressed the importance of the financial losses that it would inevitably suffer from any invasion of Iraq. No concrete agreement was reached between the U.S and Turkish administrations, but each assumed that the other partner clearly understood their definition of “cooperation” (Loeb & Vick 2002).

In a dramatic session on 1 March 2003, the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) convened to consider the AKP government-sponsored motion, which requested that the U.S forces be permitted to use Turkish soil as a staging ground for a possible campaign in Iraq. In an unusually complex outcome, 264 of the 533 deputies in session voted for the motion, while 250 voted against it, and 19 abstained, bringing the motion only four votes shy of the majority required by the constitution. As a result, the legislature refused to authorize the motion, and the AKP government failed to pass its most important international agenda to date. While this vote was not the first time that the TGNA had voted on American military action involving Turkey, it

was the first time that the parliament had explicitly hamstrung its “strategic ally” in defiance of government pressure (Walker 2008). In another unprecedented move, the Turkish military did not seek to influence the outcome of the vote at any point as the Americans had been hoping and requesting.

The shockwaves of this momentous decision were felt immediately in both Washington and Ankara, where headlines in the U.S negatively portrayed the refusal as being a snub⁶, while in Turkey the headlines focused on the civilian and democratically reached decision that accurately reflected Turkish popular opposition.⁷ The March vote left Washington feeling betrayed by a Turkish establishment that had assured them that they could pass the motion and effectively cut Turkey out of the decision-making process in Iraq, which would have serious consequences for Turkey’s own national security interests.

The contrasting styles and presidencies of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush clearly led to vastly different outcomes with respect to relations with Turkey. The pinnacle of U.S-Turkey relations was reached during President Clinton’s emotional visit to Turkey in November 1999, after the devastating earthquake in Izmit. The trip resulted in an outpouring of Turkish affection and support for the U.S. By contrast, George W. Bush’s invasion of Iraq caused a major rift in relations that many worried would ultimately rupture the alliance (McNamara 2010). Heedless of Turkish domestic politics, the Bush administration was caught off guard by the internal dynamics that led to the parliament’s refusal to allow U.S forces to pass through Turkish soil in its invasion of Iraq.

The vote on 1 March 2003 has been widely blamed for the subsequent downturn in U.S-Turkish relations, though analysts do not agree on whether the vote itself constituted a “crisis”, “accident”, or even a “vote of no-confidence” in the states’ relationship. Regardless of the semantic classification, the vote represented a significant break in the shared strategic vision for the U.S and Turkey, which has only been exacerbated in the wake of the U.S-led invasion of Iraq. More than any other recent event, the U.S-led invasion of Iraq has shaped the tone of the U.S-Turkish relationship for the first decade of the 20th century.

6 For example, the Boston Globe and Chicago Tribune respectively published headlines with ‘Turkey Snubs U.S, Rejects Troops’ and ‘In Blow to U.S, Turks Deny Bases’ (2 March 2003).

7 For example, the headline of *Yeni Şafak* on 2 March 2003 read ‘Demokrasinin Zaferi’ [A Victory for Democracy].

CHANGES IN ANKARA

Successive American administrations have consistently reiterated that the U.S. does not get involved in the domestic matters of other states, and remains impartial. In reality, however, Washington has embroiled itself in Turkey's domestic politics from time to time. The prime example of such intervention was the Bush administration's decision in December 2002 to invite then party leader Erdoğan for an official visit to Washington. Many have subsequently credited this visit with solidifying warm relations between Erdoğan's AKP and the U.S (Walker 2008).

When Turkey's governing AKP directly challenged the military in 2007 by selecting a conservative Muslim presidential candidate with a headscarf-wearing wife and the party was not closed or swept out of power by the military, it was a first in Turkish politics. The Turkish military had always positioned itself as a guardian of Turkey's secular character and had promoted itself as the protector of American interests in Turkey. When the Cold War ended, the logic of politics in Turkey began to change from leftist/Communist versus rightist/ultranationalist to a secular versus Muslim identity polarization. With greater democratization within the country and the newly emerging conservative ruling elite represented by AKP, many formerly pro-American secularists began to reveal an ultranationalist tilt that made them instinctively xenophobic – and anti-American.⁸ Washington's old Cold War calculus of trying to maintain strong relations with the Turkish military while remaining silent with respect to various domestic issues was no longer viable. The argument floated by the secularist bloc's allies in Washington, that "speaking out would cause the U.S to 'lose' the military", no longer carried weight because, in a sense, the military had already been lost as a result of Turkish domestic political realities, including a resurgent civilian administration.

The primary focus of the, for lack of better terms, "secular" versus "Muslim" political elite struggle in recent years has centered on a historic court case known as *Ergenekon*, which continues to threaten the status quo framework of Turkish politics. In that case, Turkish civilian authorities arrested former and current military officials on charges of instigating coup attempts against the government, beginning with the "e-memo" that the military issued in late April 2007 against the selection of Abdullah Gül to the presidency on the grounds that he was a closet Islamist – which triggered an

8 See *Economist* special section on Turkish nationalism 'Waving Atatürk's Flag' May 2007.

early election, with extremely high voter turnout, in which AKP captured close to half of the popular vote.

Washington's non-reaction to the "e-memo" and to the subsequent *Ergenekon* case in general signaled America's ambivalent response towards the challenges to democratization in Turkey (Walker 2008b). Unlike the EU, which immediately condemned the e-memo and the allegations made in the *Ergenekon* case, the State Department waited a full week before finally issuing a statement that simply reiterated America's policy of non-interference in domestic Turkish politics and was widely seen in Turkey, given Washington's rhetoric in support of democracy, as cynical and hypocritical, further souring relations between the two countries.

A MODEL PARTNERSHIP FOR THE 21ST CENTURY?

The election of President Obama ushered in what many in both Turkey and the U.S hoped would be a new era of relations that might redress the difficulties encountered during the Bush years. Making Turkey his first bilateral overseas visit, Obama gave a speech to the Turkish Parliament emphasizing the importance of Turkey, stating, "Turkey's greatness lies in your ability to be at the center of things. This is not where East and West divide – this is where they come together. ... In the beauty of your culture... In the richness of your history... In the strength of your democracy..."⁹

In his speech, delivered on 6 April 2009, the President used the term "partner" or "partnership" no less than five times. A day later, Obama officially inaugurated the concept of a "model partnership" during a joint news conference with Turkish President Gül.¹⁰ The reformulation of Turkey from "strategic" to "model" partner was never fully fleshed out but refocused a historic Cold War alliance of necessity into the framework of an alliance based on converging regional interests along with shared democratic principles and values.

Turkish leaders reveled in their newfound "model partnership", despite not knowing what it meant in concrete terms. As Prime Minister Erdoğan remarked during his subsequent visit to Washington, "[t]he fact that the President visited Turkey on his first overseas trip and that he described and characterized Turkish-U.S relations as a model partnership has been very important for us politically and in the process that we all look forward to in

⁹ For the full text of the speech delivered on 6 April 2009, see <http://www.whitehouse.gov>.

¹⁰ For a transcript, see <http://www.whitehouse.gov>.

the future as well. And important steps are now being taken in order to continue to build on our bilateral relations so as to give greater meaning to the term “model partnership”.¹¹ At a moment when Turkey’s leverage and help with respect to America’s three most urgent strategic issues –Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran– was never more needed, Ankara appeared to be Obama’s ideal partner. At the same time, Turkey, under the leadership of Erdoğan and his foreign minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, was eager to prove its importance as a rising regional power (Owens 2009). The confluence of these factors in 2009 led to the highest number of bilateral visits between the U.S and Turkish officials in any one year since the creation of Turkey in 1923.

PROBLEMS IN WASHINGTON

Unfortunately, post-2009 was anything *but* a model partnership for the U.S and Turkey. Since the House Foreign Relations Subcommittee voted in March 2010 to pass the Armenian Genocide Resolution, Ankara has been upset with Washington.¹² In turn, Ankara’s rhetoric and behavior with respect to both Iran and Israel have caused anger and confusion in Washington. The linkages between domestic American politics and foreign policy have rarely been understood in Turkey, but have become increasingly difficult to manage in light of recent events. The summer of 2010 was particularly brutal for the “model partnership”. Turkey’s fiery rhetoric following an Israeli raid on the Gaza-bound ship *Mavi Marmara*, and its subsequent decision in the wake of the UN-sanctioned Palmer report to recall its ambassador and banish Israel’s ambassador until the Israeli government officially apologizes, has all but collapsed strategic relations with Jerusalem. At the same time, Ankara has been actively engaging with Tehran, culminating in its “No” vote against additional United Nations sanctions on Iran, which Washington championed and on which it was able to achieve transatlantic, Chinese and Russian consensus.

As a result, many in Washington have begun to openly question Ankara’s future as an American ally and its commitment to a Western vocation. Congressman Michael Pence, chairman of the House Republican Conference, spoke for many when he delivered a fiery statement on 9 June, condemning

11 For a transcript of remarks by both President Obama and Prime Minister Erdoğan, see <http://www.whitehouse.gov>.

12 The Subcommittee passed the resolution 23 to 22, but never made the full house where proponents are now once again seeking recognition: <http://bradsherman.house.gov>.

Turkey for the Gaza flotilla incident and arguing on the House floor that ‘Turkey needs to decide whether its present course is in its long-term interest’¹³. Democratic Congressman Gary Ackerman took these criticisms one step further when he wrote on 15 June that ‘Turkey’s foreign policy under Foreign Minister Davutoğlu’s leadership is rife with illegality, irresponsibility and hypocrisy’¹⁴.

POINTS OF DIVERGENCE FOR THE U.S AND TURKEY

AKP’s broad regional strategy of seeking good relations and “zero problems” with its neighbors has typically been understood in Washington as being in line with America’s own desire for stability in the region.¹⁵ When applied towards non-state actors such as Hamas and Hezbollah, or to the current regimes in Damascus and Tehran, however, the strategy has put Turkey directly at odds with the American goal of containing and isolating these actors. There is an affinity between AKP and the conservative Muslim movements like Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Muslim Brotherhood. High-level officials, including Prime Minister Erdoğan and Foreign Minister Davutoğlu, have met with leaders of these groups and made the case for engaging with them so as to bring them into a political process and thereby moderate them. Turkey has also served as an interlocutor between Israel and these groups.

While AKP has argued that these relationships strengthen Turkey’s foreign policy options –and outreach to these groups serves Turkey’s agenda as a regional actor and would-be mediator– Turkey has as yet to persuade these groups to lay down their arms and recognize Israel’s right to exist. Washington’s belief that Ankara has been emboldening Hamas and Hezbollah has placed Turkey at odds with the U.S, and its lack of success in obtaining concessions from these groups or integrating them into a peaceful political process has occasioned resentment both in the U.S Congress and in Israel, putting Ankara in direct conflict with policymakers both in Washington and Jerusalem. Moreover, Turkey’s engagement with these groups has only exacerbated the sensitivity of working with non-state actors, which is ironic given that Ankara reacts strongly when outsiders reach out to its own domestic non-state actors, such as the PKK.

¹³ Available at <http://www.gop.gov>.

¹⁴ Available at <http://www.ackerman.house.gov>.

¹⁵ “Zero problems” is a principle articulated by Foreign Minister Davutoğlu as being a core value of seeking no problems with any of Turkey’s neighbors. See Evinet, A et al. 2010, ‘Getting to Zero: Turkey, Its Neighbors, and the West’, available at <http://www.transatlanticacademy.org>.

The value of AKP's close working relationship with these groups is credible to Washington only if Ankara is seen as an unbiased and unaffiliated mediator, which is increasingly difficult given the state of Turkish-Israeli relations. Since Israel's 2009 attack on Gaza, a wave of anti-Israeli sentiment has engulfed Turkey's political discourse. Even as they have insisted on the difference between legitimate criticism of Israel and anti-Jewish sentiment, the Turks have been particularly harsh, and engaged in what some have called a crude form of "Jew-baiting": Erdoğan averred, for example, that Americans did not see what was really happening in Gaza because 'Jews control the media' (Walker 2010). Reports of threats made to Jewish-owned businesses in Istanbul and Izmir as well as the appearance of billboards plastered with anti-Semitic messages have alarmed Jews around the world, particularly Turkey's 27,000 Jews, whose ancestors escaped the Inquisition for the safety of the Ottoman Empire. As a result, Sylvio Ovadya, the leader of the Turkish Jewish community, who generally keeps a low profile, has asked President Abdullah Gül to make anti-Semitism a crime.

In light of the already inflamed sentiments toward Israel in the aftermath of its treatment of the Palestinians in Gaza, broadcast daily on Turkish television since 2009, the killing of nine Turkish citizens in international waters aboard the Gaza-bound ship *Mavi Marmara* helped bring about an explosively toxic domestic environment in Turkey. The reaction of the government was actually restrained when compared with that of the "Turkish street", and of opposition parties that called for revenge and even for war with Israel. The nexus of Israel's Gaza policy and resentment towards the way Turks have been treated by Israel has produced a nasty strain of Turkish nationalism, of which anti-Israeli rhetoric –a phenomenon historically alien to Turkey for the most part– has become a central component. The incentives for attacking Israel were further enhanced by the portrayal of the *Mavi Marmara* incident, both by the media and by opposition parties, as superseding politics by bearing directly on national pride. Given the resurgence of nationalism, along with a political movement galvanized less than a year away from upcoming national elections, it is not surprising that Turkish leaders, particularly the politically savvy prime minister, indulged in Israel-bashing.

Given the timing of the deterioration of relations with Israel and the *Mavi Marmara* incident in the lead-up to the Iran sanctions vote at the UN, many in Washington have linked these events and simplistically pointed to AKP's "Islamist" roots rather than looking at the tough domestic realities

confronting Erdoğan. The prime minister's sustained attacks on Netanyahu and Israel and his simultaneous support for Iran and Hamas have galvanized nearly all Israeli and some American public opinion against him and his party. While joint military exercises with Israel as well as permission for Israel to use Turkish air space for such exercises have been canceled, and Turkey remains without an ambassador in Tel Aviv, diplomatic relations and unofficial channels between the two countries remain intact. Deep-seated bureaucratic, historical and military ties between Turkey and Israel have limited further political fallout, and the worst seems to be over, as evidenced by the restraint shown by Erdoğan even after the release of the Palmer report in the fall of 2011. Turkish-Israeli relations may never reach the level of their historic cooperation (which included the signing of a strategic partnership) in the 1990s, but they appear to be leveling out after an exceptionally difficult period.

With respect to Iran, a clear difference exists in the actions and approaches of Turkish and U.S. officials, despite the same publicly stated desire to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran. In an attempt to head off coercive action that would hurt its own citizens living near Iran, who are dependent on cross-border trade for their economic livelihood, Turkey attempted its own trilateral diplomacy, with the help of Brazil, to deal with Iran. These attempts, which were originally encouraged by the Obama administration, have led to discord with regard to the means necessary to secure the end goal of a nuclear weapons-free Iran (Keating 2010). The subsequent recriminations over the "Tehran agreement" achieved by Turkish mediation, along with the rhetorical outbursts of Prime Minister Erdoğan in defense of the agreement and of the Turkish-Brazilian process, have further clouded Turkey's stance with respect to the Western consensus on preventing a nuclear-armed Iran.¹⁶

Turkish officials, who insist that their approach represents only a difference in tactics, have clearly not internalized the fact that the Obama administration regards preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons as one of its primary strategic goals. The complex workings of Washington, which comprise legislative as well as executive pressures, make coordinating with Ankara exceedingly difficult, given the two countries' divergent threat per-

16 The final history of the "Tehran Agreement" has yet to be written, but Brazil leaked a letter purposely sent by President Obama and the Turks have vigorously defended their position with no official answer from Washington to date. For more information, see: <http://www.todayszaman.com>.

ceptions regarding Iran. Despite its “No” vote at the UN, Ankara insists it will uphold the letter of the law concerning sanctions. Given Turkey’s efforts to triple its trade with Iran, many in Washington complain that Ankara is undermining the very spirit and intention of the sanctions, which is to isolate Tehran and persuade it to change its present course (Parkinson 2010). Indeed, many Western diplomats and officials have begun to feel that the Turkish prime minister’s rhetoric of closer relations between Turkey and Iran is at odds with its transatlantic obligations and partnership.¹⁷ The Obama administration has increasingly sidelined Erdoğan on account of his perceived bias toward Iran and his repeated calls for a nuclear-free Middle East that single out Israel, instead turning to President Gül to deliver messages and warnings. Unfortunately for Washington, Erdoğan represents the majority view in Turkey, which is not one that sees a nuclear Iran as detrimental to Turkey’s interests.¹⁸ This is short-sighted; however, a nuclear Iran would be a long-term destabilizing factor that would ultimately change the existing strategic calculus, which currently favors Turkey’s considerable conventional military advantage over its competitors. Perhaps even more damagingly, it would dangerously alter Ankara’s relationship with Washington.

At no time since their days at the helm of the Ottoman Empire have the Turks been as actively involved in the Middle East as they are today. Turkey’s leaders have had difficulty balancing the competing interests of the region while trying to stay above the fray, particularly given the enormous change with the so-called “Arab Spring”. The breakdown in Turkish-Israeli relations represents a significant blow to Turkey’s role as the regional mediator even as its relations with the Arab world had been flourishing prior to the Arab Spring, particularly regarding vacillating policies in Libya and Syria. In many ways, Turkey’s regional standing is dependent on how it reconciles its complex relationship with Israel as much as what role it now plays in places like Syria. With the ongoing protests in Turkey’s closest neighbors, the Arab

17 Turkey and Iran have historically had tense relations, and privately many Turkish diplomats voice concern about how the prime minister’s support for the Iranian regime may be counterproductive vis-à-vis their efforts to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran. Author interview with senior officials in Istanbul and Ankara, 15–19 May 2010.

18 The most recent Transatlantic Trends survey, conducted by the German Marshall Fund, found that Turkey is most out of step with the West with respect to the issue of Iran’s nuclear weapons program. One in four Turks were willing to accept Iran’s acquiring nuclear weapons, while only 6 percent of EU respondents and 4 percent of American respondents were willing to do so. See Transatlantic Trends, ‘Key Findings 2010’, p. 24, available at <http://www.gmfus.org>.

world is where Ankara's regional role will either be made or broken and is an important litmus test of the U.S-Turkish partnership for potential in the evolving dynamics of the new Middle East.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONVERGENCE FOR THE U.S AND TURKEY

Turkey's engagement with Athens, Baghdad, Beirut, Damascus, Erbil, Nicosia, Sarajevo and Yerevan –unlike its proactivism with respect to Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran– has been a major asset to U.S policymakers in a difficult region. As demonstrated by Ankara's moves toward rapprochement with Armenia through the signing of protocols in Switzerland and the establishment of High-Level Strategic Cooperation Councils (HLSCC) with Syria and Iraq in 2009, Turkey has been seeking to transform itself from a static Cold War bulwark into a paragon of regional stability.¹⁹ Turkey's rising self-confidence and regional prominence have led to major mediation efforts to end sectarian violence throughout its neighborhood.

Turkey's involvement in the Middle East has increased since the 1990s, but the nature of that involvement has changed in recent years. In the 1990s, Turkey's military ties with Israel; its coercive pressure on Syria over its patronage of the PKK; and its participation in Western sanctions against Saddam Hussein's Iraq, were largely framed within a realist understanding of the Middle Eastern balance of power. Today, Turkey presents itself as a mediating power in the region, intent on developing relations with all actors in order to promote peace and regional integration. To date, Ankara has mediated between Israel and Syria, Fatah and Hamas, Syria and Saudi Arabia, and within the broader Sunni and Arab world, as well as between the U.S and Iran. In addition, the continuing withdrawal of U.S troops from Iraq has changed the regional dynamics for Turkey, and provided Ankara with new space for maneuvering – a space that Turkey has seized by promoting a Kurdish regional initiative.²⁰ The 2009 HLSCC agreements between Turkey and Syria, and Turkey and Iraq are unprecedented, as would be a possible one with Iran in the future. The mere discussion of cooperation between Turkey

¹⁹ The HLSCC is a mechanism to coordinate cooperation on culture, economics, energy, transport, tourism, education, science, customs, defense, water and the environment, presided over by the heads of state and administered by reciprocal and regular ministerial meetings.

²⁰ While the initiative began with great optimism, it has run into a series of domestic challenges from Turkey's nationalists. In spite of the challenges, it continues. See Nicholas Birches' report for *Eurasia Group* at <http://www.eurasianet.org>.

and Syria, Lebanon, Jordan or Iraq would have been unthinkable in any other period of Turkey's modern history.

Most strikingly, in Lebanon, Ankara has actively intervened to help maintain the delicate balance achieved under the March 14 coalition that has held the country together despite all odds. As Washington decides how to best support a democratic and non-radicalized Beirut –given Congressional attempts to limit American support– Ankara offers a more attractive, responsible and willing partner than either Damascus or Tehran. Similarly, the transformation in Turkish-Syrian relations, which went from a near war in the 1990s over Damascus's support of the PKK to an HLSCC, has had important benefits in terms of American interests, such as Ankara's mediation attempts between Syria and Israel. Additionally, as the largest and most dynamic economy in the region, Turkey has championed the idea of an economic Middle Eastern Union modeled explicitly on the European Union, comprised currently of Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and, one day in the future, Iraq.²¹ These countries have all already established free movement, free trade and no visa areas with Ankara. Greater economic interdependence in the Middle East augurs well for regional stability and also limits Iran's influence in the wake of America's withdrawal from Iraq. Even as relations between Ankara and Damascus officially deteriorate, Syrian-Turkish relations will be critical regardless of what the future of Assad's regime is, given Turkey's new regional role.

The most successful venue for Turkish foreign policy, judging by agreements signed and conflicts resolved but rarely noted, have been the Balkans, where agreements with Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Macedonia, Kosovo and Serbia over their complicated pasts and future linkages have allowed the region to take a major step towards further integration with Europe. In the Black Sea, Turkey's interest in open markets and transparent governance so as to enhance trade relations converges with America's own interests. In the Caucasus, there is cautious room for optimism, despite the lack of progress since the signing of historic protocol agreements in 2009, which promised to normalize ties with Armenia by addressing the outstanding issues of history dating from the breakup of the Ottoman empire and the tragedies of 1915 that have led to the mutual non-recognition of borders and the lack of diplomatic representation between Ankara and Yerevan. There is

21 For more on the Middle East Union, see: <http://www.todayszaman.com>.

clearly a determination, however, demonstrated particularly by President Gül, to keep the process alive until domestic tensions in both countries subside, and the protocols have simply been frozen rather than out-rightly rejected. In addition, the economic linkages to Turkey being created in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia via land borders and by the opening of transit connections and the laying of energy pipelines point toward an integrated region in the near future that would also enhance U.S and NATO interests in the area.

The Obama administration has been keen to focus Turkish activism and support on its own trouble spots in Afghanistan and Iraq in a way that has emphasized Turkey's role as a vital transatlantic connection and its newly emerging leadership role in the Muslim world. Washington has been supported in this endeavor by a broad consensus within Ankara –one that is rarely found– between the ruling AKP and the military establishment about the potential for Turkish influence in Afghanistan and Iraq and Turkey's responsibility for exercising that potential. AKP sees these "neighbors" as offering positive examples of the constructive role Turkey's newly activist post-Cold War foreign policy can play in producing regional stability. Indeed, Turkey was and is both internationally and domestically well positioned to play a larger role in both Afghanistan and Iraq as America continues its withdrawal.

Ankara has close historic ties to Afghanistan that date back to the 1920s when the founder of the modern Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, served as a model for modernization – one that collapsed only after great power interference in Kabul carved up the country. Often referred to as Afghanistan's "closest neighbor without borders", Turkey also shares numerous cultural, ethnic and linguistic links with Afghanistan that make it an ideal partner for the U.S The Turks have taken command for the second time of the International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) in Kabul and doubled their troop levels in the last few months.²² Each place the Turks have controlled has experienced considerable and consistent improvement in ways that few other Western allies can claim, mostly because of the emphasis placed on civilian infrastructure, such as the building of hospitals and schools.²³ At one point having contributed the third largest number of troops in Afghanistan, the Turks, with their 2.5 million soldiers, are today an unde-

22 For the most recent troop increases, see 'Turkey Extends ISAF Role in Afghanistan', *WorldBulletin.net*, 1 October 2010.

23 Afghanistan has been one of the largest recipients of Turkish developmental aid and assistance – from TIKA, Turkey's equivalent of America's U.SAID.

rutilized potential ally for Washington. With respect to Iraq, there is renewed impetus to resolve the long-simmering Kurdish issue, given Ankara's battle against the PKK and continued Turkish military incursions into northern Iraq. Given the tensions in domestic Turkish politics and civil-military relations, the Kurdish issue has the potential to be the biggest spoiler for Turkey, and for the region, and a viable and sovereign Iraq is in Turkey's as well as America's vital interest (Barkey 2010). As the largest economic and military power in the region, Turkey can, working in coordination with U.S. actions and policy, be part of a political solution in Iraq, rather than being a principal irritant to both Baghdad and Erbil.

The remarkable improvement in Ankara's attitudes toward the Kurdish Regional Government since the 2007 intelligence-sharing deal struck with Washington concerning the PKK was one of the most positive developments in U.S.-Turkish relations that has continued from the Bush to the Obama administrations. As demonstrated by the droves of Iraqi officials of all sectarian stripes who continue to come to Turkey, Ankara is becoming a hub for Iraqi business and politics. Given the logistics involved in removing American equipment and troops from major combat operations, Turkey is the logical geographic route and continues to be a major asset to the U.S.

Erdoğan and AKP, at the start of the Arab revolutions of 2011, tentatively placed Turkey on the side of the pro-democracy movements starting with Tunisia and then Egypt. In contrast to its stand in 2009 with the Iranian Ahmadinejad regime, Turkey was the first country to call for Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to step down at a time when other leaders, including President Obama, were hedging their bets. In so doing, Erdoğan set Turkey as a regional leader encouraging democracy in other Muslim countries based on its own experiences and lessons. However, Turkey's role as an "inspiration" was jeopardized as a result of its inconsistent policy in Libya and Syria, which put a damper on Turkey's momentary popularity within the Arab world. Protesters in Syria do not want overt American support, since it would surely backfire as it has throughout the region; however, Turkish pressure and support have been belatedly welcomed and are being encouraged by America and the international community. Pressuring places like Damascus and Tehran through Ankara and Turkey's considerable business community that has already benefited concretely from its engagement with its neighbors represents the region's key to future success. Having sought the role of regional mediator, Turkey's litmus test of leadership comes in the Arab world,

beginning with how Erdoğan deals with regimes that brutalize their own people and adjusts the concepts of “zero problems” with these types of neighbors. Working together, Washington and Ankara have a lot more to gain than to lose.

CONCLUSION

Turkey is at the center of one of the most critical regions of the world, and recent changes to the country as well as the region have only heightened the country's confidence on a global scale. With the second fastest growing economy in the world –surpassed only by China in the second quarter of 2010– Turkey is clearly no longer a European backwater, but a regional hub that is defining dynamic change in its neighborhood. As a G-20 founding member, holder of a European seat on the UN Security Council, European Union aspirant, and head of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Ankara has transformed itself into a more autonomous actor, seeking greater regional and global influence. There are real causes for concern regarding changes in Turkish domestic politics and foreign policy that could lead to even greater tensions in U.S-Turkey relations down the road, but it is clear that Turkey continues to offer the U.S. numerous opportunities for strategic cooperation and support and thus remains a critically important partner for the U.S. in the Middle East.

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What went Wrong in the Turkey-EU Relationship?

NİLGÜN ARISAN ERALP - ATILA ERALP

The year 2005, when the accession negotiations between Turkey and the European Union (EU) begun, was deemed a very important turning point for Turkish-EU relations since – it was regarded as the beginning of a process that would carry Turkey to EU membership. In principle, the initiation of accession negotiations constitutes the beginning of an irreversible process in which the candidate country’s membership perspective becomes clearer gradually; however, this has not been the case for Turkey.

Although Turkey has been a negotiating country for more than six years, the EU has become almost a non-issue in Turkey, with the accession process having almost no effect on the internal transformation process. Even the EU summits –like the December 2010 summit,¹ which was qualified as a critical appointment between Turkey and the EU– went unnoticed in Turkey. No significant decision regarding Turkey’s accession process had been taken in recent years.

1 In principle, the end of the 2010 EU Summit was important for Turkey because at the end of 2009 the EU leaders postponed a critical decision to 2010. This decision was about further sanctions or possibly even a total suspension of the negotiation process, since Turkey keeps its ports and airports closed to Greek Cyprus. In line with the decision it made at the end of 2006, the Union could have suspended the whole accession negotiation process given that Turkey persists in not implementing the additional protocol of the Ankara Agreement by keeping its ports and airports closed to Greek Cyprus. However, at the end of 2009, the EU decided to postpone its aforesaid decision to the end of 2010. As anticipated, the 2010 EU Summit concluded without the addition of new sanctions to the negotiation process. Thus, the summit did nothing to ameliorate Turkey-EU relations.

According to the latest Transatlantic Trends Survey, completed in 2011, the percentage of Turkish citizens who think that Turkey's EU membership "is a good thing" is 48, compared to 73 per cent in 2004.

Foreign Ministers of the four EU member states (i.e., Foreign Minister of Finland Alexander Stubb; Foreign Minister of Italy Franco Frattini; Foreign Minister of Sweden Carl Bildt; and Foreign Minister of Great Britain William Hague) must have worried about the possibility of a deterioration in Turkish-EU relations. In an op-ed article published in *The New York Times* and in the *International Herald Tribune* on 10 December 2010, these ministers invited Europe 'to look outward again'. Their statements drew attention to the danger of excluding a country like Turkey, which respects European values, plays an influential role in its region, and has a strong economy. In this regard, the ministers' concerns are 'European interests in security, trade and energy networks from the Far East to the Mediterranean'. The most striking paragraph of this article read:

The crucial question is not whether Turkey is turning its back on Europe, but rather if Europe is turning its back on the fundamental values and principles that have guided European integration over the last 50 years.

In a recent article written by the Turkish Prime Minister for *Newsweek* magazine in January 2011, the EU was chastised as being 'near geriatric' and 'comatose', and was warned that the country's relationship with the EU was 'fast approaching a turning point' as Turkey could no longer wait at the door as a 'docile applicant' (Strauss 2011). Hence, relations between the EU and Turkey took a negative turn following the initiation of negotiations, making the case a unique and challenging one in terms of the history of the EU's enlargement, one that requires further explanation.

The long lasting Turkey-EU relationship is cyclical with many ups and downs. Over the fifty-year duration of this relationship, one of the key challenges has been to synchronize the time frames, i.e. the development stages of the EC/EU and Turkey. The convergence of these time frames has been the exception, as the relationship between Turkey and the EU has been defined more by divergence (Eralp 2009a). Following 2005, increasing divergence in terms of time frames as well as a down period characterized the relationship. Moreover, this period also coincided with the start of Turkey's EU accession negotiations.

This chapter shows that the long lasting Turkey-EU relationship suffered a negative turn for various reasons. First of all, the break of the crucial linkage between deepening and widening policies of the EU via integration has resulted in institutional stalemate dominating the EU's agenda for the last decade. The recent economic crisis reinforced the institutional stalemate, creating an atmosphere of despair and pessimism all over Europe. This paper argues that the enlargement policy of the EU became the major victim of the downturn in the process of European integration. In this context, the debates in Europe about enlargement and Turkey affected Turkey, while debates in Turkey about political reform affected Europe negatively, creating a "vicious cycle". This chapter demonstrates how the domestic ownership of the project became increasingly more problematic with the changing nature of the interaction between Turkey and the EU after the beginning of the negotiations in 2005.

The chapter starts by examining the changing enlargement policy of the EU in the downturn phase of European integration after 2005. The argument focuses specifically on the debates in the leading member states of the EU, in France and Germany, concerning enlargement policy and Turkey. The chapter then turns to the lessening of trust in the relationship by carefully exploring the negotiation process and the internal debates in Turkey about its relationship with the EU. The chapter concludes by assessing the prospects in the Turkey-EU relationship.

CHANGING CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND ENLARGEMENT POLICY

Since Turkey started negotiations after a long waiting period, an unfortunate downturn occurred in the process of European integration. The EU was immersed in prolonged institutional problems for the last decade, augmented by the rejection of the "Constitutional Treaty" in the successive referenda in France and in the Netherlands, which are both founding members of the EU. The institutional stalemate continued as attention was turned to formulating a "Reform Treaty" to overcome the crisis of the Constitutional Treaty's rejection. The Lisbon Reform Treaty emerged as the lowest common denominator, but even this compromise solution had to endure a turbulent period before it was adopted in December 2009. The long-lasting institutional stalemate of the EU was reinforced by the recent economic crisis, which has been affecting the EU countries since 2008. It is the worst economic crisis faced by

Europe in the post WWII context. The crisis challenged the belief that European integration and the creation of Eurozone had created major buffer mechanisms to overcome economic crises, leading to a feeling of gloom concerning the future of European integration, primarily among Europeans.

In this rather negative context, the enlargement policy became both scapegoat and victim of the EU's prolonged institutional stalemate and mounting economic problems. Since the EU's agenda was dominated by issues of economic governance and economic competitiveness on a global scale and by challenges of internal cohesion, the political momentum of enlargement waned and became dominated by discussions of "enlargement fatigue". While enlargement has never boasted enthusiastic support from the European public, it was met with unprecedented apathy, if not outright hostility, towards current and potential member countries, amongst which Turkey has been able to garner the least support (Şenyuva 2009). The role of the public became more important with the conclusion of the "elitist" phase of enlargement policy and the increasing possibility of the public's involvement in referenda regarding future EU accession processes, specifically in the case of Turkey.

In this climate, one of the most successful policies of the EU was increasingly challenged and criticized. The accession process, which had always meant full membership, underwent revisions and politicization in this context. Member states started to use the process to resolve bilateral disputes with candidate countries to their advantage and to formulate all kinds of permanent safeguard clauses and specific arrangements. These formulations could open the door for a category of partial membership and create "second-class" memberships.² These changes made the accession process less attractive from the viewpoint of aspiring candidate countries.

The support base for enlargement particularly diminished in the EU's leading member states. The most significant change has been in Germany, which used to be the staunchest supporter of the enlargement policy, only to adopt a reluctant attitude towards enlargement. While Germany played a crucial role in creating a positive attitude towards enlargement, convincing France and various other countries to follow suit, it now cooperates with the same countries to discourage enlargement (Lippert 2010). Germany, together with France, the Benelux countries, and Austria, makes the hardcore of the

2 For an extensive analysis of the changes in the EU enlargement policy, see Lippert 2009 and Huszka 2010.

skeptical camp (Lippert 2009, p. 1). The Franco-German axis, which has been one of the main backbones of European integration as well as that of the enlargement policy, now serves as a force of opposition towards one of the most successful policies of the EU.

As critical attention focused on the enlargement policy, Turkey became an easy target; it was one of the two remaining countries at the negotiation table – and the more problematic one.³ Unfortunately, Turkey's negotiations with the EU coincided with the contextual shift in European integration. The negotiation context within the EU reinforced skeptical attitudes towards Turkey's accession, which had previously lain dormant, souring relations between the state and the EU. Turkey's situation invaded domestic debates in the leading member states, such as Germany, France and the Netherlands, particularly during periods of elections and referenda. Furthermore, these dates started to refocus around major identity issues, primarily concerning the "European-ness" of Turkey, based on essentialist orientations. In this debate, the "European-ness" of Turkey was defined in terms of cultural/religious identification rather than through political/economic references. Debates bearing on Turkey were increasingly contextualized in terms of Islam versus the West (Caldwell 2010).

In both France and Germany, leading political parties and politicians started making strong statements that Turkey was not European – neither geographically nor culturally. These orientations concretely led to the adoption of notions of "privileged partnership" and to a search for alternative projects as substitutes to full membership negotiations, such as the "Union for Mediterranean". These debates in leading member states undermined the credibility and effectiveness of Turkey's accession process, leading to a deterioration of trust in the relationship itself.⁴

Changes in the broader international climate, resulting from the U.S invasion of Iraq in 2003, reinforced these negative tendencies at the European level. The U.S invasion de-stabilized Iraq and the Middle East in general, and caused major problems for Turkey. Iraq's destabilization affected Turkey's Kurdish problem, leading to its resurfacing following a period of dormancy. The destabilization of Iraq also stimulated debate concerning Tur-

³ There were two candidate countries in 2005, Turkey and Croatia. Currently, there are four candidate countries, following the addition of Macedonia and Iceland.

⁴ The decline in the level of trust has been a crucial indicator of the downturn in the relationship, reaching its lowest point, below 30 per cent, in 2010 according to the European Commission.

key's "turbulent neighborhood". Those in the EU who had often portrayed Turkey as a liability found a more conducive environment in which to voice their opposition to Turkey's accession to the EU. Furthermore, the U.S invasion of Iraq increased anti-American sentiments all over the world, which reached their highest levels in Turkey, surpassing 90 per cent (Transatlantic Trends Survey 2007). In this context, U.S support for Turkey's accession to the EU influenced the process rather negatively, while the rise of anti-American attitudes in Turkey began to negatively influence Turkish public perceptions towards the West in general.

THE CYPRUS FACTOR

In the long lasting Turkey-EU relationship, the ups and downs are inextricable from the Cyprus problem (Eralp 2009b). The EU had hoped that the incentive of membership for both Cyprus and Turkey would work as a catalyst for resolution on the island, becoming a significant step in yet again securing peace. Instead, it was the Cyprus problem that negatively impacted the relationship between Turkey and the EU. Concomitantly, the negative turn in the Turkey-EU relationship coincided with periods in which the Cyprus problem became more pronounced. Therefore, in addition to the rather negative contextual shifts at the European and international levels, the continuation of the Cyprus problem and Cyprus' accession to the EU in 2004 without a resolution, aggravated the already problematic relationship.

In the aftermath of Cyprus' accession and in the absence of a resolution, the EU adopted a legalistic approach, emphasizing the signature and implementation of the Additional Protocol of the Ankara Agreement, which extends Turkey's customs union to the newly acceding states – including the Republic of Cyprus. In practice, "implementation of the additional protocol" is synonymous with opening Turkey's ports and airports to the Republic of Cyprus. The EU demanded the implementation of the additional protocol because even though Greek Cypriot goods, within the scope of the customs union, could enter Turkish soil without being subjected to customs duties or quantity restrictions, they could not be transported to Turkey directly, since its ports and airports had been closed to Greek Cyprus since 1987.

In the presidency conclusions of the EU Summit of 16-17 December 2004, where the decision was made to initiate negotiations with Turkey, the EU welcomed Turkey's decision to sign the Additional Protocol (Brussels European Council 1 February 2005). Turkey, despite signing the protocol on 29

July 2005, declared that ‘the signing, ratification and implementation of this protocol by no means implies the recognition of a “Cyprus Republic” as referred [to?] in the text of the Protocol’⁵. In response to this statement, on 21 September 2005, the EU stressed that Turkey’s reluctance in implementing the additional protocol would impact the negotiation process as a whole. Turkey made its position clear in an action plan announced in January 2006⁶, where it demanded ‘mutual abolition of all limitations on the free movement of commodities, persons, and services, including those related to transportation, in the framework of a schedule to be agreed on’. In short, Turkey wanted the EU to implement the decision of the Council of Ministers, taken on 26 April 2004, to end the isolation of Turkish Cypriots. Since then, however, the request has been blocked by the Republic of Cyprus. Turkish politicians insist that until the EU implements its commitment, Turkey would not feel bound by its signature of the additional protocol.

Since the Turkish government criticized the EU for not upholding its promises regarding the implementation of trade and aid protocols to Turkish Cypriots, the EU focused its attention on Turkey’s legal commitment concerning the implementation of the additional protocol. The dispute between the EU and Turkey regarding the interpretation of the additional protocol’s implementation strained the relationship between Turkey and the EU to the point of collapse. The Finnish Presidency worked hard in the second half of 2006 to prevent this possibility. A *détente* was finally reached at the EU Summit of December 2006, when it was decided to suspend negotiations on eight chapters⁷ and not even provisionally close any chapters until the Turkish government met its commitments regarding the additional protocol. The state of affairs was to be reviewed annually until the end of 2009. While the decision prevented a potential collapse of relations, it further impeded an already decelerating negotiating process and announced 2009 as the deadline by which the Turkish government had to implement the additional protocol. Until now, the EU has been unable to take any further punitive steps despite Turkey’s failure to implement the additional protocol.

In such a complicated environment, in March 2010, the European

5 For the declaration made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, see <http://www.mfa.gov.tr>.

6 For the declaration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, see <http://www.mfa.gov.tr>.

7 Free Movement of Goods, Right of Establishment and Freedom to Provide Services, Financial Services, Agriculture and Rural Development, Fisheries, Transport Policy, Customs Union, and External Relations.

Commission applied the recently acquired powers of the European Parliament⁸ to end the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots through the approval of Direct Trade Regulation,⁹ which nevertheless could not be adopted because of a veto by the Cyprus Republic. The Commission re-tabled the Direct Trade Regulation by submitting it to the Parliament. Had the European Parliament and the EU Council approved the Regulation, it could have marked an important step towards smoothing the impasses both in the Cyprus conflict and in Turkey's accession negotiations. However, the Parliament (judicial committee) succumbed to Greek Cypriot pressure¹⁰ and suspended the negotiations on the draft regulation on 18 October 2010, citing the non-binding opinion of the legal service, which argued that the adoption of the draft regulation necessitates unanimity since it is deemed a matter of enlargement, thereby removing the Parliament from the decision-making procedure (Tocci 2010, p. 4). An undisclosed diplomat from a big EU member state was quoted saying, 'Once the direct trade regulation is passed, the Northern Cypriots will no longer feel isolated and they will lose all interest in a settlement. It's better if we leave the regulation in the limbo of the European Parliament' (cited in Barysch 2010, p. 2).

For a while, the continuing negotiations provided an opportunity to resolve the persisting Cyprus conflict between the Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities. Christofias' election in 2008 heralded a change of attitude on the Greek Cypriot side, bringing together to the negotiating table two leaders with a historical personal relationship and creating a climate of optimism. The following two-year negotiation, however, failed to result in a successful outcome. Changes in Northern Cyprus and the upcoming election in Southern Cyprus have made it increasingly more difficult to resolve these historical grievances. Reports from the island as well as those of the UN Secretary General convey a sense of the entrenchment of the stalemate and a growing sense of disillusionment on the island (UN Secretary General Report 23 November 2010). The Cyprus problem has consumed much valuable time and resources on the part of all relevant actors. The Greek Cypriot leadership, and pub-

8 After the signing of the Lisbon Treaty, according to the legal service of the European Commission, the adoption of the direct trade regulation became a matter of international trade, falling under the co-decision procedure of the European Parliament and the Council. The ultimate approval of the proposal no longer requires unanimity but a qualified majority voting in the Council.

9 To better understand the significance of the Direct Trade Regulation, see Eralp 2010.

10 See Sopinska 2010, where the Cypriot Foreign Minister Markos Kyprianu is quoted declaring 'we will use all the institutional and political procedures we have at our disposal, and even the regulation is promoted in the end, we will appeal to the Court of the European Communities'.

lic, began to see the prolonged stasis as beneficial and lost the incentive to solve the problem. As one analyst clearly put, ‘they had an attractive, better alternative to a negotiated agreement’ (BATNA) (Tocci 2004). With the membership of the Republic of Cyprus, the EU started to lose its catalyst role in the resolution of the Cyprus problem, while the persistence of the issue began to affect the Turkey-EU relationship rather negatively.

THE STATE OF ACCESSION NEGOTIATIONS

A brief look at the negotiation process reveals its current state of hopelessness (Arisan Eralp & Eralp 2010). Turkey’s EU accession negotiations are stalling mainly ‘because of the unresolved Cyprus issue and the French unilateral veto on several chapters¹¹’ (Allessandri 2011), which are claimed to predetermine membership. France’s stance clearly contradicted the negotiation framework that had been adopted on 3 October 2005 with a unanimous vote of the EU Council of Ministers. France’s violation of the *pacta sunt servanda* principle has seriously harmed the credibility of the EU in Turkey. The damage has been exacerbated by the other member states’ tacit acceptance of this situation (Kramer 2009). The negotiation process has not been purely technical for any of the previous candidate countries; nevertheless, none of the previous negotiation processes have been influenced to this extent by political factors.

More than six years after the start of negotiations, Turkey has only been able to open only thirteen chapters and to provisionally close only one.¹² The Science and Research Chapter was opened and provisionally closed in one day on 12 June 2006.¹³

As the table above shows, the EU Council of Ministers was unable to reach a common position concerning Education and Culture for over five years. The Council has not been able to come to a consensus regarding Economic and Monetary Policy for over four years. These chapters were blocked by the Republic of Cyprus and France, even though Turkey’s performance was considered adequate to open negotiations on these matters.

¹¹ These chapters are: Agriculture and Rural Development, Economic and Monetary Policy, Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Instruments, Financial and Budgetary Provisions, and Institutions.

¹² See the enclosed table in **Annex 7.1: Current Picture of Turkey’s Accession Negotiations** (22 December 2010).

¹³ None of the chapters will be closed—even provisionally— if Turkey does not implement the Additional Protocol that extends the customs union to all new member states in line with the Council Decision dated 11 December 2006.

TABLE 7.1
Date of Opening of Chapters

Name of the chapter	Date of opening
Science and Research	June 12, 2006
Enterprise and Industrial Policy	March 29, 2007
Financial Control and Statistics	June 26, 2007
Trans-European Network	December 19, 2007
Consumer and Health Protection	December 19, 2007
Company Law	June 12, 2008
Intellectual Property Law	June 12, 2008
Free Movement of Capital	December 18, 2008
Information Society and Media	December 18, 2008
Taxation chapter	June 30, 2009
Environment chapter	December 21, 2009
Food Security, Veterinary and Phytosanitary Policy	June 30, 2010

Until now, Turkey has received the official screening reports of 23 chapters. There are 22 technical opening benchmarks¹⁴ in eight chapters and 47 technical closing benchmarks in thirteen chapters. The screening reports of nine chapters remain in the Council, and one is held up in the Commission. Among the chapters that have been on the Council's agenda for over four years, three (Free Movement of Workers, Energy and Financial, and Budgetary Provisions) are those for which the Commission has not envisaged any opening benchmark. These chapters are being blocked by some member states. Although other chapters have technical opening benchmarks envisaged by the Commission, they have no immunity from political blockages. In December 2009, the Republic of Cyprus declared that it would formalize its blockage on six more chapters¹⁵, which it has already been obstructing. Consequently, 17 negotiation chapters are off limits to the negotiators.

There are only three negotiation chapters (public procurement, competition, and social policy and employment) that can be opened in the technical sense. The Competition Chapter, which was expected to be opened during the Belgian Presidency in the second half of 2010, will have to be dealt with during the Hungarian presidency or later presidencies due to Turkey's failure to fulfill all the opening benchmarks of this chapter. As such,

¹⁴ Aside from the non-discriminatory implementation of the Additional Protocol, which was made an opening benchmark for all chapters with the Council Decision dated 11 December 11 2006.

¹⁵ Free Movement of Workers; Energy; Judiciary and Fundamental Rights; Justice, Freedom and Security; Education and Culture; and Foreign Security and Defense Policy.

this would be the second EU presidency, following the Finnish presidency in the second half of 2006, during which no chapter could be opened. The greatest obstacle in opening negotiations on the Competition Chapter is the lack of transparency in the Turkish state aid system. Apparently, the EU is rescinding its recently established tradition of opening a negotiation chapter if the majority of benchmarks are met, especially if there is only one chapter that can be opened during a presidency. Now, the EU requires the fulfillment of all opening benchmarks to open a negotiation chapter. This new approach of the EU makes it very difficult to open the other two chapters, Public Procurement and Social Policy and Employment. In terms of the Public Procurement Chapter, the political conjuncture does not lend itself to repealing all exemptions to the existing procurement legislation, which is one of the opening criteria for this chapter. The number of these exemptions – which is currently around 70 – has a tendency to increase continuously via legal amendments. On the other hand, the main opening benchmark of the Social Policy and Employment chapter requires the adoption of full trade union rights in line with EU norms and the relevant conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO), particularly with regards to the rights to organize, strike, and collectively bargain in both public and private sectors. Achievement of these prerequisites seems problematic as well. Social parties cannot reach an agreement on trade union rights in the private sector. Furthermore, the preliminary legal work that would grant the public employees the right to strike could not be finalized, necessitating an amendment in the public personnel regime first.

These three chapters happen to be difficult chapters, which were left aside by the previous negotiating candidate countries until the prospect of membership became clear (Barysch 2010, p. 2); however, Turkey has no other chapters to work on at the moment. This situation clearly reflects the current deadlock in the accession negotiations between Turkey and the EU.

NEGATIVE TURN IN TURKEY

In addition to the Cyprus problem and contextual shifts in Europe and at the international level, the specific nature of the negotiating framework between the EU and Turkey also impacted the decline in trust and enthusiasm towards accession, raising scepticism in terms of the process. The negotiation framework for Turkey, adopted on the same date that negotiations began, states that ‘the shared objective of the negotiations is accession’, but it also stresses

the 'open nature of the process (Council of the European Union 2005). The document is definitely as vigorous as it is strict, enabling the EU to determine opening benchmarks for every negotiation chapter, as well as closing benchmarks. The negotiation framework itself heralded a tough time ahead, challenges and difficulties like long transition periods, derogations, and even permanent safeguard measures. The document was also riddled with grey areas like the "absorption capacity" of the EU, the rediscovered fourth membership criteria. The fact that the framework could not be deconstructed into objective, measurable criteria, applicable to all candidate states, made the negotiation process ambiguous. The severity of the negotiation framework was evaluated as the probable outcome of the following factors: Turkey's so-called differences in terms of size, population, geographical location, culture and religion; the negative experiences of the previous enlargement; enlargement fatigue; and a certain level of mistrust towards Turkey.

The EU, deriving important lessons from the big-bang enlargement towards central and Eastern Europe, formulated stricter conditions and fewer incentives in the context of Turkey's negotiation framework. This policy exacerbated the extant imbalance between conditionalities and incentives, and the Turkish elites as well as the public perceived this as a double standard on the EU's part. The emphasis on "open-endedness," and potentially permanent derogation of people's mobility, agricultural subsidies, and structural funds fuelled major resentment and led to an extensive debate on whether the EU discriminated against Turkey (Esen & Bölükbaşı 2008; Avcı 2005; Çarkoğlu 2003, p. 1).

Statements that Turkey had not been treated equitably with other accession-countries in terms of the Copenhagen Criteria became common. This criticism towards the negotiating framework was further aggravated by the membership of the Republic of Cyprus – a country that had vehemently said "no" to the Annan Plan in a referendum was a member of the EU and would have veto power over Turkey's accession process. The Turkey-EU relationship was also adversely affected by the unique characterization of the Copenhagen political criteria in the Turkish context. The classification used was "sufficient", meaning that Turkey met the political criteria *sufficiently*, but not completely. As a result, Turkey-EU negotiations began in a manner quite different from those of other acceding countries. At the time, a compromise to begin negotiations was probably the only politically feasible solution. Furthermore, "sufficient" was considered a short-term characterization. This classification,

however, is still with us, as the most recent progress report on Turkey emphasizes (EU Commission Regular Report from the Commission on Turkey's Process Towards Accession 2010). This characterization has had a considerable impact on the "politicization" of even the most technical chapters. Since the political criteria have not been fully met, they have affected all aspects of the negotiations. As a result, the negotiation process, which had been difficult to begin with, became even more problematic. This "politicization" made it difficult to sustain the process as a "technical" one based on objective criteria. In this context, the EU process began to lose its attractiveness, not only in the eyes of the bureaucracy, but also in terms of public support. The discussions concerning identity issues in Europe, emphasizing religious and cultural values and constantly stressing that Turkey is not "European", exacerbated the downturn in the Turkey-EU relationship, marking a pattern quite different from that which characterized the early years of the relationship.

The contextual shift at the international and European levels and the stalemate in the accession negotiations affected the pro-reform coalition in Turkey – it led to the disintegration of the consensus on the European vocation and resulted in the rise of a more skeptical coalition of forces. Unfortunately, as Turkey started negotiations, the EU came to be seen as less of a transformative power, and enthusiasm for the reform process declined sharply. As conditionalities, rather than incentives, seemed to dominate the negotiation process, the accession process lost its attractiveness for Turkey. As such, the political costs of supporting the process increased, leading to a dramatic decline in the domestic ownership of the project.

As skepticism became prevalent among the public, the governing Justice and Development Party (AKP, *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*) began to understand the political costs of its commitment to enlargement. The party's rank and file was not particularly enthusiastic about the EU process from the beginning, and the leadership followed suit in the changing climate after 2004, particularly after the disputes regarding Cyprus. The leadership started to frequently voice their reservations about the EU's attitude concerning religious freedoms, particularly the freedom of expression, symbolized by the infamous Article 301 on the "denigration of Turkishness". As the electoral cycle superseded other concerns after 2006, the governing party started to welcome the deceleration of the reform process, since the EU process lacked public support. Within the governing party, the accession process was no longer seen as a transformative process, but as a slow, technical one.

The accession process lost its bipartisan nature as the opposition parties became increasingly skeptical. The opposition parties adopted a more nationalistic outlook, primarily on critical political issues such as Cyprus, and became less sensitive towards the “democratic” aspect of EU accession. The main opposition party, the Republican People’s Party (CHP, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*), focused its criticism of the government particularly on how it managed politically sensitive issues such as Cyprus, rather than challenging the government on stagnant political reforms. Other major political parties – Nationalist Action Party (MHP, *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*), Democratic Left Party (DSP, *Demokratik Sol Parti*), Motherland Party (ANAP, *Anavatan Partisi*), and True Path Party (DYP, *Doğru Yol Partisi*) – all adopted more skeptical or anti-European political stances. In this climate, the traditional pattern shaping Turkish politics re-emerged, with the opposition parties adopting more skeptical positions. The issue of European integration became a half-hearted concern, rather than being a bipartisan matter.

The consensus in the business community also started to disintegrate. Increasing frictions between big, medium and small-sized businesses weakened overall business sector support for the EU process. The small and medium-sized firms felt that the accession process was influenced more by big businesses and that they stood to lose. After 2005, members of civil society also felt excluded and marginalized. Unfortunately, civil society organizations have not been institutionally incorporated into the screening and negotiation phases. As the government lost its enthusiasm, it did not devote enough attention to creating a substantial dialogue with civil society. Members of civil society felt that they were told about the process, rather than being consulted concerning it. The military establishment joined the skeptical coalition and started to voice its reservations, focusing on issues of territorial integrity. Even the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was not able to continue its pro-EU policy as strongly as before. The rise of Euro-skepticism and nationalism in the country affected nearly all political parties and institutions in this period.

After 2006, as Turkey entered an electoral cycle with presidential, general and local elections, political polarization resulted in a common condemnation of outside forces – the EU became the primary target. All political actors, especially the Turkish government, lost crucial time, and the reform process decelerated even further. The government pronounced 2008 as “the year of reform”, but reality has negated these past hopes of achievement. The

same was true for 2006 and 2007. Six years have already passed since Turkey started negotiations, and only 13 chapters have been opened, and one provisionally closed, during this time. In the same period, Croatia completed accession negotiations and was guaranteed to be an EU member state in 2013. As before, the increase in domestic polarization led Turkey to lose its drive for reform and distance itself from the EU process. This pattern has re-surfaced, and Turkey is again losing valuable time that should be spent on the reform process. As time is lost, the divergence between the dynamics of European integration and developments in Turkey becomes more pronounced.

PROSPECTS OF THE RELATIONSHIP

The institutional stalemate and the downturn phase of European integration are coming to an end with the ratification of the Lisbon Reform Treaty. The Treaty's ratification could revitalize the crucial linkage between the deepening and widening policies of the EU, opening new horizons for enlargement. A more positive climate in the transatlantic relationship creates an environment conducive to American and European cooperation. As a result of the militaristic, unilateral policies of the USA under the Bush administration, transatlantic relations underwent major fissures, not only in Europe, but globally. Both the USA and Europe share a widespread expectation that the new American administration will focus more on multilateral policies, cultivating a better relationship with Europe. Such changes in the European and international contexts open new possibilities for the EU to revitalize its role in the changing international system. Until now, the European integration process has been more insular, focusing on crucial problems on the continent and the promotion of peace, welfare and democratic inclusion. These were remarkable achievements, but it is now time for the EU to deepen its role in the international system through a more outward-looking phase, focusing effectively on the problems of globalization and conflicts in the international system. There is an increasing need for effective multilateralism in the international system, and the EU should direct its energy to the growing economic and political problems of the global system of which it is a part. As the EU focuses more on arising global and regional challenges, it could assuage its introverted image and foster its attractiveness both regionally and globally. Its neighboring regions pose a critical test for the EU in the present international context. To be an effective and attractive model, the EU has to show that its model of multilateralism is relevant for contiguous regions – it should find

ways to link its multilateralism to neighboring regions and to create multilateral regionalism. The possibilities of these regions range of a spectrum from immersion in major conflicts and “power-politics” to stability within a durable multilateral system. The EU’s actions are extremely important in shaping these trajectories for its neighboring regions. The recent events in the Mediterranean and in the Middle East put more pressure on the EU to take a more active role in the neighborhood.

These policies will require more collaboration with Turkey, elevating the state’s geo-political significance. With a more active foreign policy orientation relying on soft-policy measures, Turkey is increasingly becoming a “regional actor” in its tempestuous neighborhood. The recent ambivalent period in the Turkey-EU relationship also coincided with “activism” in Turkey’s foreign policy regarding its neighbors. Turkey is involved in many initiatives in the Middle East and the Caucasus regions, working to establish good relations to secure “zero-problems” with its neighbors. In the turbulent international system, there is an increasing need for the EU and Turkey to cooperate on critical neighborhood issues. The relationship between Turkey and the EU could be fostered by gradually integrating the former into the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), and the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). The problems in their joint neighborhood pressure both the EU and Turkey to focus more on concrete mechanisms of cooperation. In the Lisbon Reform Treaty, the area of foreign and security policy is an important sphere comprising new institutional initiatives. The provisions of the Lisbon Treaty allow more room for “structured cooperation” and “enhanced-cooperation” in the area of foreign and security policy; unfortunately, however, these mechanisms are still restricted to members of the EU. The Treaty emphasizes coherence on foreign and security matters, but remains unclear concerning flexibility, despite the urgency to secure more flexible mechanisms. If more flexible mechanisms become viable in the area of foreign and security policy, the development may bring countries like Turkey closer to the EU in terms of foreign and security matters, fostering more effective channels of dialogue relating to neighborhood issues. Considering the high level of support for CSDP within the European political elite and the public (76 per cent), Turkey’s inclusion in the CSDP would alleviate uncertainty concerning the Turkey-EU relationship and would help to revitalize the accession process. Furthermore, the findings of the Turkish Elite Survey of 2009, conducted by the Centre for European

Studies at Middle East Technical University, also demonstrated that the Turkish political elite is open and willing to be engaged in enhanced cooperation and further integration with the European Union regarding foreign policy and security issues (Şenyuva 2009; Eralp 2009c).

New initiatives and studies are being promoted to bring Turkey closer to the EU in the area of foreign policy and defense to overcome the “vicious cycle” in the relationship. These proposals focus on the creation of an informal but regular and parallel track between Turkey and the EU on foreign policy and defense (Grabbe & Ülgen 2010; Krastev et al. 2010). Leading member states like France and Germany are also more supportive of collaborating with Turkey in those areas. Such collaboration could build much-needed trust and revitalize the relationship, yet it should be reinforced by positive measures like visa liberalization, as occurred in the Western Balkan countries and has been recommended by the European Stability Initiative (2010). Furthermore, collaboration in the area of foreign policy and defense should not be a substitute for, or an alternative to, the accession process. It must be noted that Turkey acquired a new role in its neighborhood through soft-power capabilities, and it was because of the EU accession process that Turkey was able to enhance those capabilities. Thus, the EU anchor is crucial for Turkey to maintain its newfound role in the neighborhood. As the EU anchor lost its significance, we witnessed an increasing divergence between Turkey’s orientations in the neighborhood and those of the EU – as well as the rise of “unilateral” tendencies in Turkey’s foreign policy.

In the last two decades, Turkey’s role as the “frontier state” in the Cold War context has become one of a potential “regional keystone” in its neighborhood. In this process of transformation, the EU anchor has been quite critical – it has provided Turkey with a more positive image in its neighborhood and increased the state’s role as a regional soft power. However, Turkey’s role has remained a potential one due to the lack of effective channels of dialogue between Turkey and the EU on CFSP, CSDP and ENP. The changes and the prolonged problems in the neighborhood and in the international system pressure both the EU and Turkey to create more effective mechanisms of cooperation on CFSP, CESP and ENP. The Lisbon Treaty, with its emphasis on foreign policy and security issues, reinforces such tendencies in the international system. The EU and Turkey need to create new mechanisms to gradually bring the latter into CFSP and ESDP and to increase areas of collaboration on neighborhood issues. Such developments could refocus the de-

bate on the EU-Turkey relationship from identity-immigration issues, which tend to portray Turkey as a liability, to foreign policy-security-neighborhood issues, which would increase the role of Turkey as an asset in the process of European integration. The realization of such a possibility could help both in building the badly needed trust in their relationship and in creating more converging orientations and policies of effective multilateralism in their common neighborhood.

ANNEX 7.1: CURRENT STATE OF TURKEY'S ACCESSION NEGOTIATIONS (as of 22 December 2010)

Chapters Opened and Provisionally Closed		Chapters where Turkey was invited to submit its "Negotiation Position Paper"	Chapters Whose Screening Reports Were Approved by the Council of the European Union	Draft Screening Reports are to be Approved by the Council of the European Union	On the Agenda of the Commission
25. Science and Research Opened and closed 12/6/2006.		17. Economic and Monetary Policy	1. Free Movement of Goods /(OB:4) Suspended at the end of 2006.	2. Free Movement of Workers Blocked by Germany/Austria/ Cyprus.	31. Foreign, Security and Defence Policy Blocked by Cyprus.
4. Free Movement of Capital / CB:4*		Negotiation Position Document submitted 9/3/2007.	3. Right of Establishment and Freedom to Provide Services /(OB:1) Suspended at the end of 2006.	13. Fisheries Suspended at the end of 2006.	
6. Company Law / CB:5 (6/12, 2008)		Blocked by France.	5. Public Procurement / (OB:3) 8. Competition Policy/ (OB:6) 9. Financial Services	14. Transport Policy Suspended at the end of 2006	
7. Intellectual Property Law / CB:4			Suspended at the end of 2006.	15. Energy Blocked by Cyprus.	
26. Education and Culture Negotiation Position Document submitted on 25/5/2006.			11. Agriculture and Rural Development / (OB:5) Suspended at the end of 2006.	22. Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Instruments	
Blocked by Cyprus.			19. Social Policy and Employment /(OB:2)	Blocked by France. 23. Judiciary and Fundamental Rights	
16. Taxation / CB:3 Opened 30/6/2009.			29. Customs Union / (OB:1) Suspended at the end of 2006.	Blocked by Cyprus. 24. Justice, Freedom and Security Blocked by Cyprus.	
18. Statistics / CB:2 Opened 26/6/2007.				30. External relations Suspended at the end of 2006.	
20. Enterprise and Industrial Policy / CB:1 Opened 28/2/2007.				33. Financial and Budgetary Provisions Blocked by France.	
21. Trans-European Network / CB:1 Opened 19/12/2007.					
28. Consumer and Health Protection /CB:5 Opened 19/12/2007.					
32. Financial Control / CB:6 Opened 26/6/2007.					
27. Environment / CB:5 Opened 21/12/2009.					
13 Chapters 47 Closing Benchmarks					

(*) CB: Closing Benchmark; OB: Opening Benchmark

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Turkey's Assertive Presence in Southeast Europe: Between Identity Politics and Elite Pragmatism

OTHON ANASTASAKIS

In recent years, the AKP government has given a dynamic impetus to Turkey's Southeast European regional position and Balkan foreign policy orientation. Within a multi-dimensional and multi-directional foreign policy, the Balkans figure prominently in the AKP's strategic considerations, and have included the strengthening of bilateral relations; mediation in conflicts; investment in important infrastructural projects; and cultural influence. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Turkish Foreign Minister since 2009, has been much more active than his predecessors in the Balkans with his mediation efforts between Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia, as well as with the rapprochement between Ankara and Belgrade. The increasing importance of Turkey as a regional interlocutor in the Balkans is raising interesting questions regarding the causes, nature and repercussions of this particular regional focus. Why is Turkey interested in the post-conflict fragmented Western Balkans? Why is it investing in these small size markets, whose economies are dominated by EU trade and investment? Is Turkey pursuing the revival of a "neo-Ottoman dream" in a region that was part of its past Empire? Is it following a distinctly Muslim agenda in the Balkans to attract the diverse Muslim communities in the region? And how do the elites and the people of the Balkan states perceive these developments? These are the questions that this chapter will address.

While it is true that Turkey's involvement in the Balkans has been given a major boost by the AKP government, it is not, by any means, a new or sudden interest, given that the Balkans had attracted Turkey's attention soon

after the collapse of communism, and successive Turkish governments had to react to the major changes that took place in the former Yugoslav territory. Turkey's post-communist Balkan policy has been addressed through three approaches. The first focuses on the historic significance of the region for contemporary Turkey, emphasizing the existence of a conscious (or unconscious) neo-imperial foreign policy whose legitimacy is rooted in the Ottoman Empire's historic role in the Balkan lands. This view is based on identity politics, arguing that Turkey rediscovered its Balkan profile after 1989. The frequent references to the Ottoman legacy in the Balkans made by Minister Davutoğlu and other AKP political figures have been used to justify Turkey's activism in the region. The second approach emphasises cultural explanations and is based on Turkey's religious identity and the country's special links with Muslim communities in the region. Turkey is portrayed as the "patron" and the "big brother" of the Balkans' Muslim populations. On the one hand, it is argued that Turkey is better at understanding the interests of the Muslims in the Balkans, whose background and history are deeply intertwined with the Ottoman presence in the region. On the other hand, it is argued that Turkish foreign policy has to take into account the domestic pressure of a large number of Turks, themselves descendants of Muslims who fled the Balkans from the late 19th century onwards. More broadly, in a region dominated by Christians, Turkey aspires to be the most prominent point of reference for European Muslims of the Balkan countries. The disintegration of Yugoslavia and the weaker position of Muslims in Bosnia, FYR Macedonia or Kosovo (as province of Serbia) allowed Turkey to become the "protector" of these communities. The religious sensibilities of the AKP government made this cultural connection a pivotal aspect of the AKP's Muslim "agenda" in the Balkans. The third approach focuses on economic arguments and looks at the increasing role of economic diplomacy and business considerations in the planning of Turkey's foreign policy. This turn towards the economic dimension has its origins in the Özal years of the late 1980s and early 1990s, and has been broadly adopted by subsequent governments. The relative internal political stability and the rising economic power of Turkey under the AKP government helped Turkey make its economic presence felt in the areas of investment, trade, energy and infrastructure in the Balkans.

The purpose of this chapter is to show that all these views –historical, cultural and economic– are relevant to Turkey's approach to the post-communist Balkans. Furthermore, historical continuity exists between the AKP's

“strategic depth” philosophy and Turkey’s activism in the Balkans. This chapter, however, argues that beyond the so-called “neo-Ottoman”¹ historical, cultural and economic drive, AKP activism in the Balkans is based on a pragmatic approach, seizing a geopolitical “window of opportunity” and a “power vacuum” in the Balkans, which allows Turkey to exert a more forceful influence. This “window of opportunity” is related to the existence of some remaining “pockets of instability” in Kosovo, Bosnia and Sandžak, which are not as inflammatory as they were in the 1990s, but still invite some external engagement and arbitration. It is also connected to the faltering Europeanisation and the uncertain EU accession process of most of the Western Balkan states. Finally, this space of opportunity is based on the absence of other regional competitors, like Greece or other external influences coming from Russia or the United States. In view of these parameters, the Balkans are a safe and “low cost” area in terms of Turkey’s foreign policy engagement, one in which Turkey can exercise its “strategic depth” and “zero-problem” policies with relative success. Beyond the historical, cultural and economic explanations, there is a solid geopolitical argument that explains AKP activism in the Balkans and presents this area as a rational and pragmatic choice for Turkish foreign policy makers. This Balkan orientation can bring benefits to Turkey’s international profile, irrespective of whether it is perceived as a post-imperial neo-Ottoman policy or not.

THE HISTORICAL APPROACH: THE OTTOMAN LEGACY

One prominent understanding of Turkey’s foreign policy in Southeast Europe is connected with constructivist identity based historical arguments. Following long years of communist alienation, the collapse of communism in the Balkans paved the way for the rediscovery of Turkey’s “Balkan identity” with references to Turkey’s imperial past and its responsibilities towards the former lands of the Ottoman Empire. From the early 1990s, scholars in Turkey embarked upon discussions of the country’s Ottoman identity; many politicians demanded the active engagement of the country’s foreign policy in the post-communist Balkans and in the post-Soviet space. It was argued that the

1 While the notion of “neo-Ottomanism” was introduced soon after 1989 as a way to describe (positively or negatively) Turkey’s engagement in the post-communist space, it has been reinstated lately and connected to the AKP’s growing foreign policy confidence and assertiveness, not only in the Balkan region, but also in the Middle East.

Balkans were a primary source of modern Turkish identity, not only because one fifth of Turkey's population is of Balkan origin, but also because most Muslim minorities in the Balkan countries maintain strong ties with Turkey. Furthermore, the rediscovery of the Ottoman past saw the Balkans as a central part of the Ottoman Empire – the most advanced and sophisticated area from which the Empire drew its economic and administrative strength. It was from this area that the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire spread, and it was in the Balkans where Turks were inspired to pursue the establishment of the Turkish Republic. As an independent country, Turkey drew many of its westernised and educated elites from the Balkans during the early years of the Turkish state, and as Turkish citizens of the new Republic, many citizens with roots in the Balkans felt more “civilized” and “extroverted”, compared to other Turkish citizens who came from the more conservative and backward heartlands of Anatolia.

Despite this significant historical background, Turkey's links with the Balkans during most of the 20th century were rather limited and attracted scant attention from Turkish policy makers, especially compared to other neighbours like Greece, Cyprus, Israel, Russia and the Middle East. Furthermore, little debate existed concerning Turkey's European Ottoman past in the Balkans since the birth of the Turkish Republic, due to the Kemalist dogma of ‘non interference in the affairs of the former provinces of the Ottoman Empire’ (Gangloff 2005, p. 27). After its own war of independence, Turkey sought to integrate the influx of Muslim refugees within the territory of Anatolia and the borders of the new independent state, and to focus on the development of a new national Turkish identity at the expense of the past imperial Ottoman identity. As such, Turkey approached its Balkan neighbours in the context of bilateral or multilateral interaction between independent states. In the 1930s, there were some attempts for regional cooperation in the Balkans. Turkey, along with Greece, Romania and Yugoslavia, founded and became signatories of the non-aggression Balkan Pact in 1934. This Pact strove to maintain the geopolitical status quo, a by-product of the First World War. While the Pact helped ensure peace between Turkey and its former Ottoman territories in the Balkans, it failed to keep the countries on the same side before the start of the Second World War (Hale 2000, p. 63; Degerli 2009).

During the cold war, Turkish foreign policy was bound by the contours of superpower bipolarity and the capitalist-communist ideological divide. Being a firm part of the western alliance, Turkey kept a safe distance

from the Balkans that were seen as part of the ideological “communist other”, but with emphasis on security threats from the Soviet Union. Turkey’s main interest in the Balkans was reduced to the existence of Muslim populations living in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania, and to the migratory challenges of Muslims from the communist Balkans to Turkey. With Bulgaria, relations became particularly tense as a result of the communist regime’s assimilationist policies. The most extreme incident occurred in the 1980s, when the leader of the communist regime, Todor Zhivkov, forced all Turkish Muslims to adopt Bulgarian names and renounce any Muslim customs. The result was a massive exodus of Bulgarian Turks abroad; between June and August 1989 alone, about 312,000 people fled to Turkey (Ibid., p. 169).

With the fall of communism, Turkey’s Balkan identity entered the debate on the country’s self-redefinition, and the Ottoman past regained some currency, especially in nationalist and Islamic discourses. These developments coincided with diplomatic and economic re-engagement with the region, through bilateral agreements and multilateral initiatives and in the wider context of their European orientation. Triggered by the civil war in Bosnia and the subsequent events in Kosovo, the claim of the Ottoman legacy in the Balkans appeared in Turkey’s official discourses with politicians such as Ecevit, Demirel and Cem making frequent references to the historical Ottoman presence in the Balkans (Gangloff 2005, p. 17). Most emphatic of them all, Foreign Minister Davutoğlu openly adopted an Ottoman nostalgia, in the sense of a past empire of multiculturalism and multi-ethnic tolerance. Going one step further in his admiration of the Ottoman Empire, Davutoğlu said:

During the Ottoman state, the Balkan region became the centre of world politics in the 16th century. This is the golden age of the Balkans. ... Ottoman history is a history of Balkan region, a history of the central character of Balkan region in world politics. ... What I am underlining is the Ottoman legacy... The Ottoman centuries of the Balkans were success stories. Now we have to reinvent this.²

While the current idealisation of the Ottoman past may appear to be extreme and overtly stretched, it also shows the desire of official Turkey to fight against prejudice and the “demonisation” of Turks by the Balkan people, and to change the image of Turkey in the Balkans. Some Balkan officials

2 Extracts from Ahmet Davutoğlu’s speech at the opening ceremony of the conference ‘Ottoman legacy and Balkan Muslim Communities today’ in Sarajevo (Friday, 16 October 2009).

have claimed that in bilateral meetings Turkish politicians and diplomats have gone as far as to request the revision of history textbooks and national curricula, in order to show the Ottoman Empire in a more positive light (Erebara 2010). It is true that most Balkan people share a rather contested historical memory of the Ottoman Empire; in fact, all the Balkan states fought against the Ottoman Empire for their independence during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The Ottoman past is rather negative in the national narratives of modern Balkan states, which regard that historical period as a backward time that obstructed their western progress. In the national histories of most of these states, the Ottoman period is viewed as a period of dislocation from European progress. Furthermore, many of the current politico-cultural trends of clientelism, patronage and weak administration are seen as the poor legacy of the Ottoman times. Reading through some of the history textbooks, one realises how most of these countries themselves have tried to re-connect with pre-Ottoman pasts as more glorious historical points of reference: Greece with the Byzantine and states like Serbia and Bulgaria with their own medieval empires. For most Balkan Christians, the Turks remain a historic foe, responsible for crushing their medieval kingdoms in the 15th century and holding them in subjection for the next four centuries (Tanner 2010).

While the Greeks are noted for bearing the strongest anti-Ottoman feelings, one can find similar examples in other countries. Bulgarians, for instance, their country having been a part of the Ottoman Empire for 500 years, still regard this period as backward and uncivilised and celebrate their national liberation from the “Turkish yoke” as a major historical moment. More recently, the nationalist party VMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation) has been calling for a referendum to be held to allow Bulgarians to vote for or against Turkey’s accession to the EU. Bulgarian nationalists remain broadly hostile to Turkish influence over domestic and regional affairs to the point that a diplomatic row was sparked in January 2010, after Bozhidar Dimitrov, a former minister for Bulgarians abroad, threatened that Sofia would veto Turkey’s EU bid if Ankara failed to compensate the 250,000 Bulgarians forced out of their homes in eastern Thrace during the Balkan War of 1913 (Tavanier 2010).

Even Albanians –the most privileged of Ottoman citizens– are at odds with their Ottoman past and often blame it for current problems. As is the case with other nations in the Balkans, not only is the Ottoman presence in Albania seen as an occupation, but it is also regarded as a national tragedy.

Historians have now come to realise that in the wake of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in Europe, Albania's new leaders and nation-builders began deliberately constructing a new, unifying western identity that cast the Ottoman past as a tragic accident. Albanian history under communism portrayed the Ottoman period in an extremely negative way, emphasising underdevelopment, subjugation and the use of violence. The period of liberation was re-defined as a popular uprising against Ottoman rule. The Ottomans are still blamed by many Albanians for arresting Albania's development to such an extent that Albanians still suffer the consequences today (Erebara 2010).

Finally, it should be noted that the historical legitimisation of Turkey's foreign policy has its roots in the Balkan people's recollections of the "Ottoman yoke" as well as in Turkish narratives and perceptions of those Balkan people. Many Turks have retained their own bitter memories of the late Ottoman times when they themselves were forced to flee their homes and become refugees in Anatolia.

THE CULTURAL APPROACH: MUSLIM SOLIDARITY

The cultural argument of Muslim solidarity has served as another powerful explanation of Turkey's post-communist foreign policy in Southeast Europe. This argument is based on Turkey's religious and cultural links with the Muslim communities in the Balkans. This argument has gained major credibility in post-communist, and especially post-9/11, times when "the clash of civilisations" between Christians and Muslims became a threatening possibility. Turkey, with its diverse Islamic tradition, held a special place for some as a "bridge" between Christianity and Islam, for others as a peaceful mixture of different ethno-religious identities, and for yet others as a "model" of democratic Islam. However, it is also important to note that Turkey's attention to the Turks and Muslims in the Balkans has not been exclusively cultural and identity based; this interest has also been political and strategic. High politics and security considerations have traditionally dominated Turkey's foreign policy approach in the cases of Cyprus and Greece, and the concerns for the Turkish Cypriots or the Turks and Muslims living in Greek Thrace were part of a wider web of bilateral issues between Turkey and Greece (Gangloff 2001, pp. 91-102).

As a result of successive migratory waves since the 19th century,³ it is

3 Following the withdrawal of the Ottoman Empire from the Balkans, 1,700,000-2,000,000 Muslim refugees (*muhacirs*) settled in Istanbul and Anatolia between 1878 and 1913, with an additional 850,000 arriving between 1923 and 1945, thereby becoming a major component of con-

estimated that one-fifth of Turkey's population today is of Balkan origin and constitutes a rigorous domestic pressure in times of crises against Muslims in the Balkans (Eroğlu 2005, p. 11). During the a-religious communist times, Balkan Muslims were barely visible, or even noticeable. The Muslim presence in most Balkan states was undermined and suppressed by communist regimes. When opportunity arose or when times got rough, Turkey became the prime destination for many Balkan Muslims. Between 1953 and 1960, a Migration Treaty between Tito and Menderes led to a "voluntary" migration of around 300,000 Muslims of Bosnia and Sandžak to Turkey via Skopje. In 1950-51, around 150,000 Turks from Bulgaria were forced to migrate to Turkey and again in 1989, more than 300,000 were forced to flee Zhivkov's assimilationist policies (Öktem 2010).

With the collapse of communism, Turkey's engagement with the Balkans intensified as a result of the violent break-up of Yugoslavia and as a reaction to the threats to the region's Muslim communities. Throughout the 1990s, much of Turkey's foreign policy concerns were guided by pressure from the Yugoslav wars, and the need to defend the endangered Muslim populations. The disintegration of Yugoslavia and the ethnic wars in Bosnia triggered the rise of domestic religious sentiment in Turkey, and strengthened the influence of Islamic culture on political discourse. The Refah party, under Erbakan, exploited the Bosnian wars quite effectively to reawaken a Muslim consciousness in the public debate. Moreover, domestic public opinion in Turkey strongly favoured the Muslims over the Serbs in the Balkan wars in Bosnia and Kosovo. Most vociferous were the Islamists and the ultra-nationalists, who evoked historical memories to the 4 million Turks of Bosnian origin. During the war in Bosnia, the Turkish public became quite critical of the West's inability to take effective measures to protect the Bosniaks. Within Turkey itself, Bosnia became the most popular stage for playing out the differences between the traditionalist, Kemalist style of cautious foreign policy and the new assertive and interventionist policy initiated by Turgut Özal (Robins 2003, p. 364). In the face of the Bosniak tragedies, Turkish politicians also wavered between unilateral versus multilateral engagement in the conflicts. There were voices, like those from the Welfare Party asking for the unilateral intervention, and others such as Hikmet Çetin, Minister of Foreign Affairs be-

temporary Turkish society. These different waves of migration correspond to various historical events affecting the Balkan Muslim populations, such as wars, campaigns of ethnic cleansing, land reforms, and overall economic and cultural marginalisation. See Bougarel (2005).

tween 1991 and 1994, saying that Turkey should intervene as part of a multilateral military operation (Eroğlu 2005). During those years, Turkey became a safe haven for Bosniak refugees.⁴ Turkey pressured the West to intervene militarily to save the endangered Bosniak communities; it tried some of its mediating diplomatic skills between Bosniaks and Croats⁵; but, predominantly, the state contributed in the context of multilateral organisations, joining the International Force in Bosnia after the Dayton Peace Agreement and assuming a major role in training the Bosniak-Croat Federation Army.

During the Kosovo crisis, Turkish public opinion once again pushed the government to take an active stance to stop Serb aggression. However, in this instance, considerations were more political than religious for Turkey's foreign policy thinking. On the one hand, Turkey was radically opposed to the brutality of the Serbian regime against fellow Muslim Kosovo Albanians and strongly supported NATO action in Kosovo; on the other hand, it was more cautious towards Kosovo secession from Serbia, which could be regarded as a precedent for Turkey's Kurds. Since the beginning, Turkey had been careful about the creation of an independent Kosovo republic and had pushed for the protection of the rights of Kosovo Albanians within Serbia, rather than supporting outright independence (Gangloff 2005, p. 6). With violence erupting in Kosovo, Turkey advocated, yet again, international military intervention and followed the principle of territorial integrity of rump Yugoslavia. During the years of international administration in Kosovo, Turkey participated in the international peacekeeping force KFOR. In 2008, when Kosovo declared unilateral independence, Turkey was among the first countries to recognise the new state.

During the 1990s, a "religious rift" –a perceived antagonism between a "Muslim axis" dominated by Turkey versus an "Orthodox bloc" dominated by Greece and Serbia– assumed a prominent position in many Balkan populist and media discourses. In this climate, Turkey's effort was to fully or partially prevent Orthodox countries, such as Bulgaria, Romania, FYR Macedonia and Albania, from becoming part of an anti-Muslim, anti-Turkish bloc. Among its first foreign policy actions was the signing of a Treaty of Friend-

4 Turkey took by far the most decisive action to aid Muslim victims of the 1990s conflicts, allowing thousands of Bosnian Muslims to flee to the Gazi Osman Pasha Camp –reportedly one of the best-run refugee camps in the world, with trees, a playground and a mosque– during the 1992-1995 Bosnian War. See Dlugoleski (2011).

5 As a broker between the Bosniaks and the Croats in November 1993, Turkey contributed to the American-led Washington Agreement and participated in the monitoring of the ceasefire in Zenica.

ship, Good Neighbourliness, Cooperation and Security with Bulgaria, settling identity, representation and repatriations issues of Bulgarian Turks in order to mend the recent Turkish-Bulgarian rift. Similarly, Turkey was eager to recognise the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia by its constitutional name –in stark contrast to Greece’s negativity towards the name “Macedonia”– to keep the state close to Turkey and continue Turkey’s historical interest in FYR Macedonia, a republic where most Yugoslav Turks were living with cultural and educational rights since 1945.⁶

During the 2000s, Turkey introduced its soft cultural power in the Balkans. The AKP’s cultural-religious engagement intensified, reaching out to local communities through education and popular culture⁷ and cooperating with civil society and religious organisations. As Kerem Öktem argues, the AKP government opted for a new mode of engagement in the region, which significantly widened the scope of the country’s regional influence. By cooperating with religious networks and charities from Turkey, especially the Gülen movement and Turkey-based foundations close to the government, it reached out to the micro-level of community organisations and grassroots politics in the region. The new Turkish presence in the Balkans became quite noticeable in the schools and universities of the Gülen network in Sarajevo and in Tirana, in the restoration of mosques, and in the granting of scholarships (Öktem 2010). Given the substantial number of Muslims in the Balkan countries, the task was challenging. In Kosovo, Muslims reach 90 per cent of the population; in Albania, close to 70 per cent; and in Bosnia, close to 50 per cent.

Most Muslim communities, especially in the Western Balkan states, welcome the AKP’s cultural engagement in the Balkans. This engagement is accepted and tolerated by the official governments who do not object to a discrete assertion of Turkish influence among the Muslim minorities, seeing Turkey’s brand of Islam as more responsible, moderate and European than most Islamic tendencies coming in from the Middle East (Tanner 2010). That being said, Turkish cultural activism has also generated concerns within some

6 It should be noted that Turkey’s traditional good relations with FYR Macedonia have been boosted by the number of Turks from Macedonia who live in Turkey. During the 1950s and 1960s, after the Yugoslav communist regime allowed many ethnic Turks, Albanians and Roma to migrate to Turkey, 160,000–220,000 are believed to have left the country.

7 An important element of Turkey’s “cultural power” is the increasing number of soap operas and other TV shows that have conquered audiences throughout the Balkans. Virtually in every Balkan state, Turkish shows are breaking tele-viewing records. See Turkish Soap Operas Take Balkans by Storm, *Balkan Chronicle*, 31 December 2010. See also Öktem (2010).

TABLE 8.1
Approximate Number of Muslims in South-Cast Europe

Country	Numbers	Share in general population (estimate)	Muslim community
Kosovo	1,800,000	90 %	Muslim majority
Albania	2,300,000	70 %	
Bosnia-Herzegovina	2,200,000	48 %	
Macedonia	700,000	33 %	Very large Muslim minority
Montenegro	110,000	18 %	Significant Muslim minority
Bulgaria	1,100,000	14 %	
Serbia	500,000	5 %	
Greece	130,000	1.5 %	Minority Islam
Croatia	50,000	1.3 %	
Romania	50,000	0.3 %	

Rough estimates based on Öktem (2010).

Muslim communities in terms of Turkey's degree of interference in their internal affairs. Moreover, there are major differences not just between Turkey and the Muslims of the Balkan states at large, but also between these very Muslim communities of the Balkans. Most of these communities have a traditionally secular, as opposed to theocratic, approach to religion, perceiving their religious faith as the most important element of their national or ethnic identity rather than as part of an overall global Islamic community. Most Muslims would welcome Turkey's support if it strengthened their status as minorities in the countries where they live in, or as constituent ethnic groups of common states like Bosnia. In Bosnia, Turkey is seen primarily as the champion of local Muslims and as the enemy of Bosnian Serbs. In many ways, the Muslims of the Balkans have more tactical concerns, namely, the strengthening of their own political positions vis-à-vis the different national political systems in which they live. Muslim communities in Southeast Europe are diverse, localised and fragmented along ethnic or linguistic lines, and divided by distinct historical experiences. Different Muslim communities in the Balkans have kept their own national, local and cultural characteristics (language or folklore); they have different social and political profiles and limited communication with each other.

This diversity between Balkan Muslims complicates the nature of Turkey's regional influence. In the FYR Macedonia, for instance, a part of the country's 500,000 ethnic Albanians fear that Turkish influence could come at

TABLE 8.2
Ethno-Linguistic Differentiation of Muslim Populations in Southeast Europe

Language groups	Presence in countries	Share
Albanian speakers	• Albania • Kosovo • Macedonia • Montenegro	52 %
Slavic speakers	• Bosnia • Torbesh in Macedonia • Pomaks in Bulgaria and Greece • Gorani in Kosovo	32 %
Turkish speakers	• Bulgaria • Greece • Kosovo • Romania	12 %
Speakers of Roma languages	Everywhere in the region, particularly in Bulgaria	4 %

Based on Öktem (2010).

TABLE 8.3
Ethno-Linguistic Differentiation of Muslim Populations by Country

Country	Largest ethno-linguistic group	Other ethno-linguistic groups
Kosovo	Albanians	Turkish, Roma, Gorani (Bosnian)
Albania	Albanians	
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Bosniaks	Turkish, Torbesh, Roma Bosniak, Turkish Roma, Pomak Albanians
Macedonia	Albanians	
Montenegro	Albanians	
Bulgaria	Turks	
Serbia	Bosniaks	
Greece (<i>Western Thrace</i>)	Turks	Pomak, Roma
Croatia	Bosniaks	
Romania	Turks/Tatars	

Based on Öktem (2010).

the price of their identity, while others are more positively predisposed and honour their shared religious and cultural heritage (Duridanski 2011). In Bulgaria, where Turks suffered an abominable fate during Zhivkov and many had to flee to Turkey and elsewhere, the secular Turkish Party for Rights and Freedoms, the most powerful minority party that has participated in a series of coalition governments, has kept its distance from the political influence of

Turkish governments. Similarly, many Albanian Muslims, due to their atheist past, are at odds with the AKP's religious orientation (Raxhimi 2010). Turkey's multi-dimensional engagement often agitates some local ethnic communities that see it as a competing cultural intrusion, one that threatens to complicate their already tense inter-ethnic co-existence.

While the cultural-religious aspect of Turkey's Balkan policy has been quite prominent, most scholars feel it is an exaggeration to talk of an "islamisation" of Turkey's foreign policy under the AKP, arguing that Turkey's primary concern is to surround itself with stable neighbors (Ozel 2009; Larabee 2007). Accordingly, Turkey's Balkan diplomacy and the strengthening of ties with Serbia provide a forceful counter-argument to the views of Turkish foreign policy as pursuing an Islamic agenda (Vogel 2010).

ECONOMIC APPROACH: THE RISE OF A BUSINESS CULTURE

A third important perspective focuses on changes in Turkey's political economy and on their impact on foreign policy. These changes are connected to the growth of a new business elite, which appeared in the liberalising 1980s and placed emphasis on commercial and trade relations with the outside world (Robins 2003). The post-1989 developments offered Turkey new export markets in the former communist world, which Özal - during his Presidency between 1989 and 1993- sought to explore and exploit to suit Turkey's external interests. As such, Özal made a determined attempt to broaden Turkey's foreign policy perspectives by setting up the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) regional initiative, embracing all the Black Sea states, and by inviting Armenia, Azerbaijan, Greece and Albania. Furthermore, Turkey signed a Treaty of Friendship, Neighbourly Relations and Security in 1992 with Bulgaria, and made a move to overcome the severe recent break between the two countries caused by Zhivkov's discriminatory and violent policy towards Bulgarian Turks. The two countries gradually and cautiously built their bilateral relations against a background of mutual suspicion and bad blood. After 1997, the two states began to develop economic relations, including some Turkish investment and a free trade bilateral agreement. Furthermore, Romania became Turkey's most important trade partner in the Balkans and a leading destination for Turkish investment.

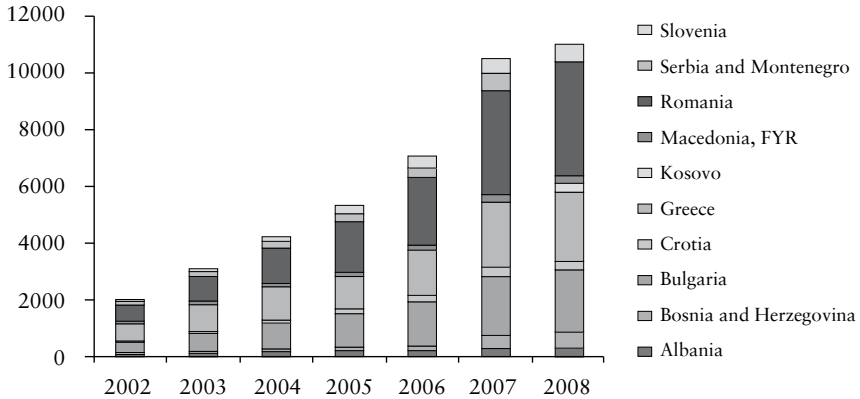
Kemal Kirisci argues that the gradual liberalisation of the domestic economy, the financial sector, external trade and capital movements led to the

transformation of Turkey's foreign policy from that of a 'coercive regional power' to a 'trading partner' through the use of soft power and economic instruments (Kirisçi 2009, pp. 29-57). One important outcome of this trend was the rapprochement between Greece and Turkey, which promoted the strengthening of cooperation in areas like trade, energy, tourism and banking, against the backdrop of a number of unsolved high political issues (Papadopoulos 2009, pp. 289-314). In the Greek-Turkish case, economic diplomacy was used to circumvent high political differences, and went along with Turkey's emerging more extroverted and Europeanised business elite. Political leadership was a very important factor and like Özal earlier, İsmail Cem's (and Greece's George Papandreu's) new approach to foreign policy was crucial. The AKP government followed the same logic of economic interdependence and promoted the establishment of numerous partnerships in the Balkans. Many trips of President Gül, Prime Minister Erdoğan and Foreign Minister Davutoğlu to the region have included the company of various ministers and representatives of the business community. These ventures culminated in the signing of agreements in the fields of energy, tourism, infrastructure and trade.

A growing domestic economy has facilitated the consolidation of this activist economic foreign policy in the region. Despite a series of prior economic crises, Turkey managed an average GDP growth rate of seven per cent between 2002 and 2007. In the following two years, Turkey managed the global economic crisis without the help of the IMF. For a country that had to rely on no fewer than 19 different loans in the recent decades, this was a major boost to self-confidence in its economy and foreign policy.

Since the early 2000s, Turkey's foreign trade with the Balkan countries boasted a noteworthy revival. While other regional investors like Austria or Greece had invested heavily in the banking sector, Turkey's economic presence came from big construction projects and old-fashioned import-export trade (MacDonald 2011). Turkey forged a more systematic approach towards the Balkans within the framework of the "Strategy for Developing Trade with the Neighbouring and Peripheral Countries" (Turkish Radio Television). The free trade agreements signed with Romania and Bulgaria contributed very favourably to such development trends. For their part, during the same period between 2003 and 2007, the Balkan economies also grew at an average rate of over five per cent, which also boosted bilateral trade relations with Turkey. As **Table 8.4** shows, Turkey's exports to Southeast European countries increased substantially in between 2003 and 2008.

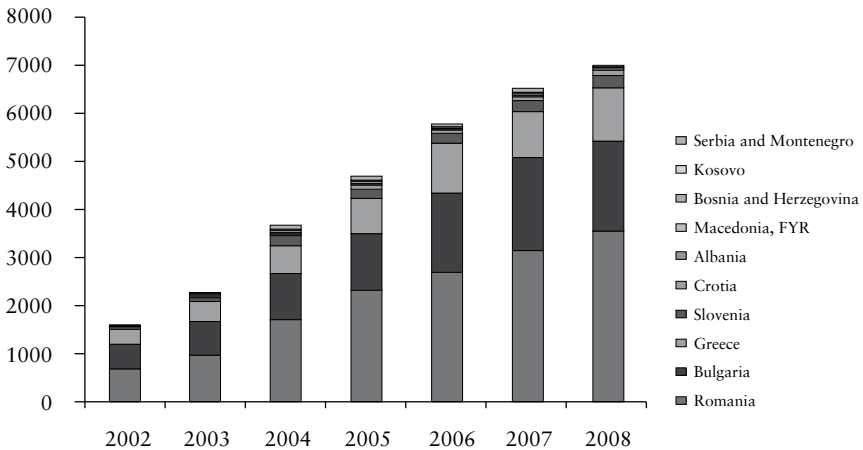
TABLE 8.4
Turkish Exports to Southeast Europe 2003-2008 (mn USD)



Source: IMF Direction of Trade Statistics.

Similarly, the rate of imports from Southeast European countries to Turkey increased significantly, which can be seen in Table 5.

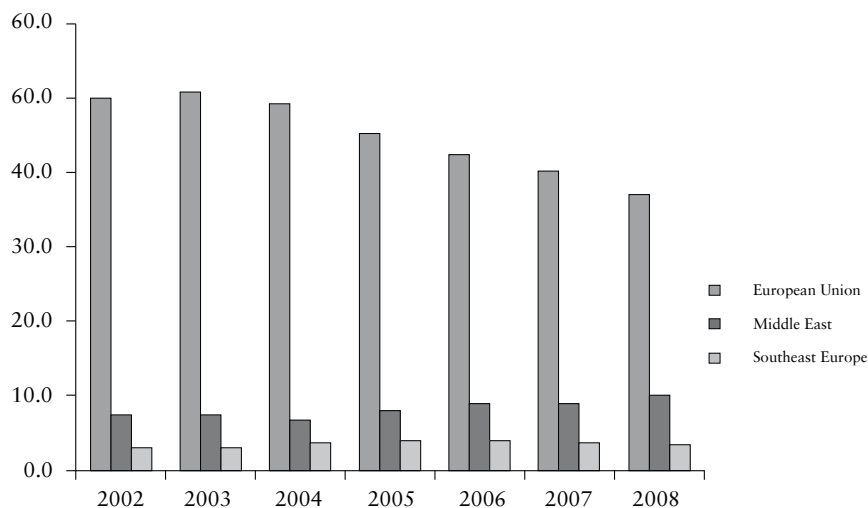
TABLE 8.5
Imports from South-East Europe 2003-2008 (mn USD)



Source: IMF Direction of Trade Statistics.

Romania, Greece and Bulgaria are Turkey's most important trading partners in the region. In Turkey's 2009 exports to the Balkan countries, Romania had a share of 32 per cent, while Greece and Bulgaria had shares of 24 per cent and 20 per cent, respectively. Similarly, 47 per cent of Turkey's total imports from the Balkan countries in 2009 came from Romania. Although Turkey's foreign trade with the Balkan countries rose by 84 per cent between 2000 and 2008, those countries' share in the volume of Turkey's foreign trade remained low. The Balkan countries accounted for only 6.7 per cent of Turkey's total exports in 2009, and for 3.4 per cent of its imports.

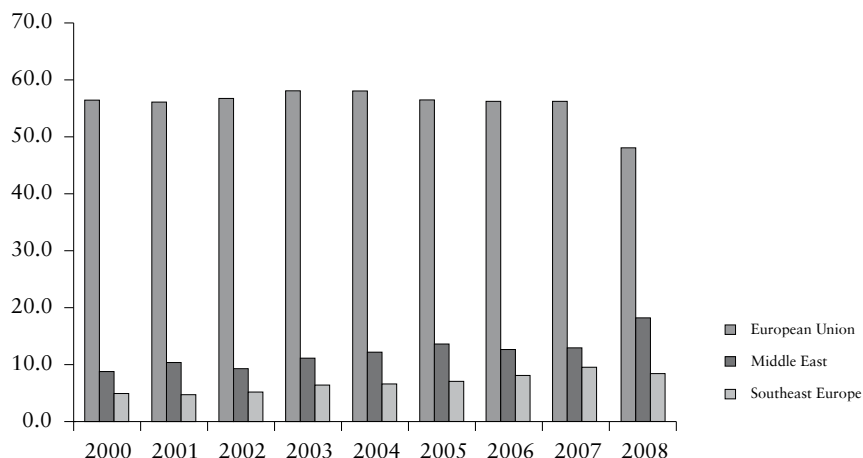
TABLE 8.6
Share of Imports of Total Imports of Turkey (2002-2008)



Source: IMF Direction of Trade Statistics.

While the Balkan region has become more important for the Turkish economy, its impact is relatively limited compared to the country's other regional surroundings – the EU and the Middle East. The cumulative value of Turkish investments in the Balkan countries at the end of 2009 was around 4.6 billion USD. Of Turkey's total investments abroad in 2009 (28 billion USD), only 16 per cent were made in the Balkans (Turkish Radio Television), compared to Greece's investments in the Balkans, which, as of 2009, totalled over 20 billion USD. Turkey's major investments concentrate largely on tele-

TABLE 8.7
Share of Exports of Total Exports of Turkey (2002-2008)



Source: IMF Direction of Trade Statistics.

communications, transportation infrastructure and airport facilities, in an effort to focus on, and dominate, some key sectors.

As for individual countries, dozens of private and state-owned Turkish companies have gone to Bosnia, where Turkey is the fourth-largest investor after Austria, Slovenia and Germany (Stankovic 2010). Turkish investment in the FYR Macedonia has also risen since the mid-2000s, including key contracts like the management of Skopje and Ohrid airports and an investment of 200 million Euros (around 264 million USD) in the country's airport infrastructure.⁸ In Kosovo, Turkish companies are also competing for key stakes in the privatisation of two of Pristina's largest public companies, Kosovo Energy Corporation and Post and Telecommunications of Kosovo.⁹ In Serbia,

⁸ Despite FYR Macedonia's extraordinarily warm political and cultural relations with Turkey, its trade with Turkey remains undeveloped. The Greeks, on the other hand, who are widely regarded as Macedonia's arch political nemesis with the unsolved name dispute, are, ironically, Skopje's biggest investor and business partner, according to the National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia. Greek investment in Macedonia for 2009 totalled €380m, far more than the €49m invested by Turkey the same year. Trade figures tell the same story, with the Skopje-based Macedonian Institute for Statistics valuing the trade volume between Turkey and FYR Macedonia at €210m during 2010. Trade between Athens and Skopje far surpassed those figures, being valued at €484m for the same year during the period of crisis. See Duridanski (2011).

⁹ Two important cases of Kosovo investments include Turkish Limak Holding taking over the management of Pristina International Airport jointly with Airport de Lyons MAS on 1 April 2011 and

major Turkish construction firms have been involved in building part of the planned 445 km highway stretching from Belgrade to Bar in neighbouring Montenegro. Turkish companies have expressed interest in the debt-ridden national carrier JAT Airways, in the retail and leisure sectors. Finally, Turkey is becoming one of the biggest investors in Albania with strategic holdings in the telecommunications and finance industries, public engineering contracts, and higher education.

THE PRAGMATIC APPROACH:

THE BALKAN “WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY”

A country's foreign policy becomes more powerful and influential in the presence of a strong and stable home government. More importantly, foreign policy is most powerful in a context marked by space for regional leadership and limited contestation from other powerful rivals (Öniş 2011). The AKP's assertive style of engagement in the Balkans is sustained not only by its economic success, its skillful cultural diplomacy, and historical familiarity with the region, but also by geopolitical circumstances and the “power vacuum”, which is defined by three main regional developments. First, the international community, the United States, Europe and Russia, have turned their attention to other, more imminent areas of conflict and insecurity. Their interest in the Western Balkans is thin and ill defined, despite lingering pockets of instability and fears of the outbreak of hostilities in areas like Bosnia, Sandžak and Kosovo. Secondly, the European perspective of the Western Balkan states has been suffering from the effects of the EU's “enlargement fatigue” and the disparities and inconsistencies of the Stabilisation and Association process, coupled with the Western Balkan states' lack of progress towards European integration. Third, Greece's diplomatic and economic influence has suffered a dramatic decline as a result of the country's unprecedented economic crisis, which started in 2009.

Back in the 1990s, the Balkans were the number one priority of the international community. The disintegration of Yugoslavia, the fierce wars and ethnic rivalries, and the subsequent post-conflict reconstruction, called for urgent international involvement on the part of the United States, the European Union, Russia, the international organisations and regional neighbours. The United States was crucial in halting the conflicts and contributing to

the Enka-Bechtel consortium, winning the 700 million Euro road contract to link Albania to Kosovo in 2010.

post-conflict peace, either by directly building missions or indirectly through international organisations. The European Union became more constructive in the Western Balkans via the Stabilisation and Association process, the Stability Pact, and the deployment of civilian, police and military missions. Russia's influence was based on the Balkans' dependence on the country's energy resources and international leverage in the Kosovo issue, supporting Serbia's claims at the UN. Individual neighbouring countries, such as Greece, Austria and Italy, engaged economically through investment, trade and the promotion of the EU's perspective. Greece's advantage as the only Southeast European country that was a member of the EU and NATO, and the richest country in the Balkans, made it possible for the state to play the role of "hegemon" in a region that sought foreign direct investment and accession to the European Union as its foremost foreign policy objective (Anastasakis 2005). Within this plurality of actors, Turkey's engagement with the Balkans focused primarily on its multilateral presence and participation in international peace keeping forces in the region as part of the UNPROFOR in Croatia; the IFOR and the SFOR in Bosnia; the KFOR in Kosovo; the ALBA and PROXIMA missions in Albania and the FYR Macedonia, respectively; and in all regional initiatives (Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, Black Sea Economic Cooperation, South East European Cooperation Process) including the preservation of a good level of bilateral ties with most countries in the Balkans.

Compared to this period of active international engagement in the Balkans, the region has currently ceased to be a priority for the international community, which re-focused its attention to more dangerous areas and imminent threats elsewhere. Despite the recent years of stabilisation, economic growth and normalisation, the region still constitutes the most threatening area in Europe, haunted by internal political deadlocks in Bosnia, Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence which is being refused by Serbia and has not been recognised by the majority of the UN member states,¹⁰ or the occasional turmoil among Muslims in Sandzak. Moreover, issues of reconciliation, which emanate from the violence of the 1990s, continue to create divisions among different states and ethnic groups. As for the Europeanisation of the region, with the exception of Croatia, which will become the next member of the European Union in 2013, the rest of the Western Balkans states

10 As of October 2011, only 85 out of 193 UN members (44 per cent) have recognized Kosovo as an independent state.

have bleak prospects of accessing to the EU due to a combination of their own adjustment problems and the EU's procrastination. Following the accession of Bulgaria and Romania into the European Union, the latter has relegated the enlargement agenda to a secondary issue. Turkey is in a similar problematic phase in its EU accession process. While it is the only country that is negotiating chapters with the EU, this process has been blocked by various bilateral obstacles with Cyprus, EU reluctance, and problems with the reform process in Turkey.

This external environment provides the space for the AKP to increase its regional standing. Beyond historical, religious or business imperatives, Turkish foreign policy appreciates the importance of the Balkans; it uses all means at its disposal and is prepared to act unilaterally and mediate among national actors. Moreover, the stability and security of the region is very important for keeping Turkey on its route to Europe. The Balkans is a region where Turkey can show its European credentials, and where Turkish foreign policy of mediation, business activism and cultural engagement is in tune with that of the EU, the United States and Russia. Furthermore, mediating between the Serbian government and Sandžak, or between the Serbs and the Bosniaks, has the potential to strengthen Turkey's standing as a security actor in Europe (Heinz 2010). Because Turkey's relations with Greece have improved as a result of the rapprochement, Balkan governments do not have to choose between Athens and Ankara, as they have had to in the past.

The Serbian case is a clear example of the pragmatic turn in Turkey's foreign policy. Turks regarded Serbia as a main instigator and culprit of discrimination and war against Balkan Muslims, and as a traditional ally of Greece. Despite the historical, religious and ideological differences, Turkey embarked on a process of rapprochement with Serbia, realising that in order to play an important role in the region, it had to become partners with a key country of the Western Balkans (Stankovic 2010). Turkey's foreign policy towards Serbia is consistent with the country's regional activist policy, which seeks to build geographical, historical and economic ties and advocates good neighbourly relations. At the same time, its foreign policy proves that Turkey is not pursuing an Islamic agenda in the Balkans. With such considerations in mind, President Gül visited Belgrade in October 2009, marking the first visit of a Turkish President since 1986, which resulted in the signing of infrastructure, transport and social security agreements. Meanwhile, Turkish diplomats became very active in mediating between the Serbs and the Bosniaks; it

was thanks to Turkey that Bosniak leaders agreed to the Serbian Parliament's text, which recognised Serbian culpability for Srebrenica but refused to use the term "genocide".¹¹ In April 2010, Turkish, Serbian and Bosnian leaders signed a trilateral declaration in Istanbul advocating peace in Southeast Europe and swift integration into the European Union, and conveyed their determination to respect the integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In July 2010, Prime Minister Erdoğan, despite his vociferous condemnation of the Srebrenica massacres of Muslims in Bosnia, visited Belgrade and signed further agreements on visas, infrastructural projects and industrial plants. During that visit, the two leaders opened a new cultural centre in Novi Pazar, the capital of Sandžak, and signed an agreement on a road connection with Belgrade. Having secured some trust, Turkey's next big ambition is to act as a broker between Serbia and Kosovo.

Serbia is also pursuing a pragmatic approach vis-à-vis Turkish involvement in the region. Since the Milosevic years, orthodox Serbia has been isolated and criticised for fighting and discriminating against Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo. By cooperating with Turkey, Serbia is laying some of these prejudices to rest. Serbia also shares Turkey's uncertain prospects of EU accession, placing the two states in a similar position vis-à-vis the European Union. Russia, Serbia's traditional ally, has a limited influence on Balkan affairs, and Greece's regional clout has been injured by the economic crisis. As a result, Serbia needs to ally with another powerful regional player. Moreover, the Serbian government feels threatened by the Muslims in Bosnia, Kosovo and Sandžak, and hopes that Turkey's mediation can facilitate its communication with politicians in these areas. For all these reasons, Serbia's Prime Minister Tadic, a pragmatic and Western-oriented leader, was ready to overcome national historical prejudices and Turkey's eager recognition of Kosovo, and to establish close relations with the country. This rapprochement has affected Serbia's special relationship with the Bosnian Serbs, who are deeply disappointed by Serbia's decision to befriend Turkey-Bosnian Serbs believe that Turkey seeks to undermine the autonomy of their Bosnian-Serb entity, Republika Srpska, from Muslim-dominated central state institutions. Yet, for Serbia, wider national and regional considerations exist where Turkey's assistance and support could be beneficial.

Most Balkan elites are willing to overcome their national historical

¹¹ This development resonated with Turkey's own refusal to apply the word "genocide" to the Armenian massacres during the last years of the Ottoman Empire.

prejudices and engage with the biggest regional player at a time of European indecision, economic crisis and regional volatility. Beyond identity politics and cultural sensitivities, foreign politics and external relations in Southeast Europe are largely based on pragmatic considerations, and calculations of a cost-benefit analysis.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Without a doubt, the AKP significantly increased its presence in Southeast Europe over the past few years. Through diplomatic initiatives and mediation, strategic economic investments, and stronger cultural ties, Ankara tried to establish itself as a key regional player. Compared to the volatile regions of the Middle East, the Caucasus and the Eastern Mediterranean, the Western Balkans is the only area where Turkey can combine its “strategic depth”, “zero problem policy” and pragmatic realism; it can strengthen its European credentials and enhance its international profile, without much risk (Poulain 2011). For their part, most of the Balkan countries’ elites have responded favourably to Turkey’s engagement and presence: they have accepted some of Turkey’s mediation efforts, welcomed Turkish direct investment, and have been consuming some of Turkey’s cultural products. The Balkan countries have a mixed reception at the popular level and a more positive approach at the elite level. In most Balkan states with an Ottoman background, the tension is between elite pragmatism, on the one hand, and the historically charged sceptical public discourses, on the other.

The AKP’s strategy in the Balkans has sought to capitalise on and expand a foreign policy which dates back to 1989 when it was built on three main pillars: at the conventional diplomatic level, it worked through mediation and good neighbourly services; at the economic level, it operated through the use of economic diplomacy and direct investment; and at the grassroots, civil society and cultural level, the policy functioned through a growing soft power presence and/or Muslim solidarity. Additionally, the AKP adopted a more forceful ideological justification for Turkey’s multi-dimensional foreign policy, promoting an ambitious narrative of Turkey’s historical links, cultural affinities and economic interdependence with the Balkans. Ultimately, in the current interdependent and unstable international and regional systems, the AKP’s pro-active policy can be explained through, and legitimised by, historical, cultural and economic arguments, but its success and sustainability is based on regional preconditions and pragmatic considerations.

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A Very Long Engagement: Turkey in the Balkans

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On 11 July 2010, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, along with scores of dignitaries from Europe, attended a ceremony at the Potočari-Srebrenica Memorial that commemorated the fearsome days of July 1995. The remains of 774 recently identified victims –some of the 8,000 Bosniak men and boys murdered by the Serb forces– were being reburied. The Turkish leader’s words to the 50,000 people crowded at the memorial were characteristically emotion-laden and evocative. ‘[T]here is no doubt that those who died in Srebrenica were martyrs’, he said. ‘In our eyes, they are not dead, but alive. Even now, they are with us, listening to us, watching us.’ The speech stirred up an intense, impassioned response from the crowd of Bosniaks and Muslims from around the globe. As Erdoğan was riding high on the mounting sense of deep-felt unity and bereavement, he reached out to Boris Tadić, calling the Serbian president’s presence in Srebrenica, otherwise part of Republika Srpska-Bosnia Herzegovina’s Serb-dominated entity, ‘a historic step for a bright future’ (AFP 2010).

Since the prime minister’s rhetoric mixed pragmatism and symbolism, it appealed to Muslim solidarity. The timing could not have been more propitious. Since the autumn of 2009, Turkey’s Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu had been occupied by consultations with his counterparts from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, Sven Alkalaj and Vuk Jeremić. On 24 April 2010, Tadić and Haris Silajdžić –the Bosniak representative in the three-member collective presidency– signed, together with President Abdul-

lah Gül, the so-called Istanbul Declaration, pledging to resolve conflict and advance regional cooperation. Turkey's mediating efforts were visibly bearing fruit. Four weeks prior to the commemoration, Serbia's Parliament passed a resolution condemning the mass murder, yet fell short of calling it "genocide" – a term as politically sensitive in Serbia as it is in Turkey.

Turkey's overtures did not go unnoticed. In the spring of 2010, it was already common knowledge across diplomatic, media and the think-tank circuits that Ankara was on the verge of a foreign policy offensive in the Western Balkans, mirroring its unprecedented activism in the Middle East (Reljić 2010; Petrović and Reljić 2011; Rüma 2011; Türbedar 2011). The push in Bosnia came after the failure of the so-called Butmir talks between Bosniak, Serb and Croat leaders, which aimed at constitutional reform, midwived by the EU and the US. Turkey was now filling a gap and asserting itself as a peacemaker-in-chief in the troubled and ever divided country at the epicenter of post-Yugoslav politics. A trend was evident by the sheer number of visits by Davutoğlu, Erdoğan and Gül to this corner of Europe.

Turkish diplomacy's focus on Bosnia in 2009-10 and the expanding economic presence in various Western Balkan countries raised numerous questions: What is the meaning of foreign policy activism? Is Turkey under the leadership of the moderate Islamist Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP), aspiring to become an alternative power center alongside or even in competition with the EU? Why would Turkey engage more closely with the region in a unilateral fashion: 1) in order to secure markets for its exports? 2) because of historical sentiments and links to indigenous Muslim populations dating back to the glory days of the Ottoman Empire? 3) because of its ambitions to become a first-rate player in European security at a time when the EU is becoming increasingly more averse to the prospect of accepting Turkey as a full member?

These questions do not have definitive answers. However, the following chapter seeks to identify some long-term trends and contextualize the recent diplomatic efforts in the Western Balkans within a wider perspective. The AKP's unilateral push marks a new turn in Turkey's relationship with the region, but certain continuities date back to processes rooted in the early 1990s. At the outset, it is important to distinguish three moments or periods in Turkey's relations with the post-Cold War Balkans: 1) the time of uncertainty during the heyday of the Yugoslav conflict, 2) the so-called Helsinki moment from the end of the decade to the blockage of the Turkey-EU track

in 2006-7, and 3) the present period of the rise of Turkey's "Neighborhood Policy" (Leonard et al. 2010; Kınıklioğlu 2011), which is the subject of this volume.

DEALING WITH UNCERTAINTY: TURKEY AND THE BALKANS IN THE 1990S

Contrary to media hype, Turkey is not back to the Balkans. It is a Balkan country and has never, even figuratively speaking, left the region. The north-western neighborhood has rarely been off Turkey's diplomatic radar screen in republican history. While Turkey kept at an arm's length from the Middle East for a long period, it never ceased –since the 1930s– to take a proactive interest in intra-Balkan politics. For instance, Turkey was a principal stakeholder in the Balkan Pact of 1934, whose purpose coincided directly with the Kemalist regime's objective to keep aspiring imperialist powers, at that point mainly Mussolini's Italy, away from its confines (Hale 2000, p. 60ff.). The short-lived Second Balkan Pact of the early 1950s brought Greece, Titoist Yugoslavia and Turkey together, but it failed to engineer regional cohesion and was soon undermined by Greek-Turkish tension over Cyprus and Yugoslavia's realignment with Nikita Khrushchev's USSR (Hale 2000, p. 124-5). Yet Turkey was again a pivotal actor in the multilateral schemes of South-eastern Europe from 1976 onwards, not least because they were proposed by its rival Greece, meaning that Ankara could not afford to be excluded. Such intergovernmental forums, looking at issues like transport, investment and trade, crystallized in the late 1990s in a web of pan-Balkan institutions, currently centered on the Sarajevo-based Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) (Bechev 2011).

The end of the Cold War was the defining moment in Turkey's relationship with the region, particularly with the post-communist cluster encompassing Yugoslav successor states – Albania, Romania and Bulgaria. The certainties of bipolarity evaporated. They had already blurred in Southeastern Europe thanks to independent-minded communist regimes in Belgrade and Tirana, and especially because of the Greek-Turkish rivalry, which had driven a wedge through NATO. 1991 was perhaps the most significant threshold: the Yugoslav federation descended into war, and the neo-Stalinist regime in Tirana collapsed. In the absence of a Soviet threat and with instability next door, some expected Turkey to opt for an increasingly assertive policy towards the region. Such a course was determined not only by a sheer

geopolitical weight and security calculus, but also by more intangible factors, like common history and multiple migratory waves from the Balkans to Istanbul, Bursa, Izmir and Eastern Thrace.

In all fairness, the turmoil resulting from the wars of Yugoslav succession caught Turkey off-guard. It was far from clear whether –and *how*– Turkey would pursue intervention or isolation. One potential role for Turkey was that of a patron of up to 9 million Balkan Muslims, whether Turkish, Slavic or Albanian speakers. The Özal government and Turkish society at large were already acutely aware of ties and obligations to kin populations due to the influx of 300,000 Bulgarian Turks, who had been driven out in the summer of 1989 by Zhivkov's assimilationist campaign (Öktem 2011). The ravaging war in Bosnia Herzegovina (1992–95) –marked by devastation, ethnic cleansing, and over 100,000 (mostly civilian) victims– brought the plight of fellow Balkan Muslims and Turks (*dindaş* and *soydaş*, or *co-religionists* and *co-ethnics*) into the public spotlight. Turkish diplomacy, typically exposing a strong status quo bias, was propelled into action. Turkey recognized the new states emerging from Yugoslavia. The country also became a refuge for Bosniaks fleeing from the war, though in 1993 the number was around 16,000 (one per cent of the total refugee flow), much smaller than earlier waves in the 1920s and 1950s (Bulut 2008).¹ Sentiments of solidarity with suffering Balkan Muslims engulfed the country, where about 10 million residents, including political, bureaucratic and commercial elites, could trace their origins to what was once Turkey-in-Europe.

Hard security interest was as important a driver as cultural identity. First, the Yugoslav drama was met with Turkey's consternation because disruptive ethno-nationalism was seen as a major challenge for Turkey itself (Robins 2003, p. 344). The war in Bosnia coincided with the peak of the war with the Kurdish Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan, PKK) in the southeastern provinces. The disintegration of Yugoslavia unsettled the balance of power between Greece and Turkey. In Athens, Turkey was seen as pursuing a policy of bilateral alliances in order to build a "Muslim" axis with Albania, Bosnia and perhaps even Macedonia and Bulgaria, to encircle Greece. Defense agreements with Albania, Macedonia, Bosnia Herzegovina (after the war ended in late 1995) and Bulgaria (in 1993, following a friend-

1 It is claimed that in 2001 out of 800 associations representing migrants and their descendants, roughly 500 were linked to the Balkans, with the remainder related mostly to the Caucasus and partly to Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

ship treaty signed the previous year) exacerbated those fears. Meanwhile, relations between Ankara and Athens intensified to unprecedented levels. In June 1995, the Grand National Assembly in Ankara adopted a resolution authorizing the government to declare war on Greece if it extended its sovereignty over a 12-mile zone in the Aegean (Anastasakis, Nicolaidis & Öktem 2009).

The Greeks' fears were mirrored by apprehensions amidst Turkey's diplomatic elites and military cadre, who had an overwhelming say in shaping security policy at the time. Greece was suspected of cultivating ties with predominantly Orthodox countries in the Balkans to gain advantage over Turkey in bilateral disputes, including those concerning minority issues, in the Aegean and Cyprus (Oxford Analytica 1998). Turkish alignment strategy in Southeastern Europe aimed to counter Greek initiatives, whether real or perceived, to block Turkey's access to key markets in Western Europe and, even more importantly, to reach out to Syria, Armenia and even the PKK, which the Turkish security establishment saw as an existential threat. Notably, the PKK and the Kurdish movement were present in Greece, Bulgaria and other countries in the region, which irritated relations with Ankara (AIM Press 1998). This anxiety explains Turkey's resolution to use military force in handling the Imia/Kardak crisis of January 1996, and accounts for the brinkmanship vis-à-vis Syria in October 1998.

Overall, Turkey's Balkan policy in the 1990s was risk-averse, instinctively multilateralist and firmly anchored in Western institutions (Robins 2003, p. 377). These characteristics, however, apply generally to the posture of all foreign policy in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War. Domestic instability, economic problems, the Kurdish issue and the rise of Islamist politics led the military and bureaucrats in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to opt for predictability and continuity in external relations, avoiding unilateralist moves. Despite strong suspicions concerning American policies towards Northern Iraq and elsewhere in the neighborhood, Turkey reaffirmed its commitment to NATO and pursued deeper integration into the EC/EU. In former Yugoslavia, and in the post-communist Balkans more generally, Turkey acted in unison with the U.S Clinton administration and its Western allies. It is very likely that Ankara supplied weapons to first the Sarajevo government and then to Croatia, in a direct breach of the UN-imposed embargo at the early stages of the conflict. This decision was not representative of a trend, and certainly did not set one. Considering the difficult relations with

Greece, Syria and Iran, in addition to the post-Soviet Caucasus being in flames, Turkey had little incentive to be embroiled in the Balkan quagmire. Ankara responded predominantly through global and regional security institutions – first the UN, the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), and later through NATO. Turkey supported the Alliance's efforts to contain violence in former Yugoslavia and contributed to key operations such as the enforcement of a no-fly zone over Bosnia (the so-called Operation Deny Flight, April 1993 - December 1995). After the Dayton/Paris Accords in November/December 1995, Turkey joined the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) as a representative for OIC, and contributed a brigade to IFOR, NATO's peacekeeping mission, which was stationed around the town of Tuzla.² Three years later, Turkey stood firmly on the side of NATO and the U.S when the crisis in Kosovo unfolded in 1998-9. It supported Romania's, and, after 1997, Bulgaria's bid to join NATO. In 1998, Turkey contributed to the creation of SEEBRIG, a pan-Balkan peacekeeping brigade supported by Washington and anchored in Alliance's enlargement policies (Bechev 2011). Both the Turkish military and the civilian policy-makers sitting in Ankara welcomed NATO's expansion and the institutional arrangements that became instruments for building political stability and fostering a better regional environment.

Despite the heavy focus on security, the real, long-term significance of the 1990s has to do with economic interdependence. Ties with the Balkan countries underwent a qualitative transformation as Turkey became a trading and investment partner. This development was part of a broader trend of building bridges and openings to the post-communist world, very visible in relations with the ex-USSR. In contrast to the Cold War period and to the 1930-40s, relations on both sides of Turkey's borders in Thrace "thickened" thanks to denser trade networks and broader social ties linked to labor migration, tourism and business. Despite the turmoil of the 1990s –cycles of boom and bust accompanied by high inflation– Turkey was in a good position to benefit from the opening of neighboring economies, having experienced a period of liberalization and integration into the global trading system itself in the 1980s.

Figures speak for themselves. Total trade with the region reached 1.75

2 Turkey participated in subsequent peacekeeping missions, contributing 450 troops to KFOR and 250 in EUFOR Althea, the EU-led mission in Bosnia replacing NATO's SFOR in December 2004. Even more officers participate in the ongoing EU police operation, EUPM.

billion USD in 1995, up from 900 million USD in 1992 – or about three per cent of Turkey’s overall turnover. The relative weight of the Balkan countries varied depending primarily on the size of their respective markets. Trade with Albania and Bosnia, despite diaspora connections, was worth only 70-80 million USD in 1995, while trade with Macedonia was valued at 100 million USD. Ankara’s principal partners in the region were Romania (737 million USD in 1998) and Bulgaria (511 million USD in 1998), two countries that, at the time, opted for a liberal trading and investment regime thanks to the combined impact of market reform and EU integration. This state of affairs persists until this very day. EU member Greece, with 500 million USD in trade in 1997, followed the two ex-communist countries (Oxford Analytica 1998). Bilateral disputes clearly obstructed closer integration, given Greece’s economic weight. All in all, the Balkans were at best a secondary destination for Turkish exporters, but the trend was clearly towards expansion, very much in line with the overall growth of Turkey’s foreign trade volumes.

THE HELSINKI MOMENT

One can understand Turkey’s dealings with the Balkans in the late 1990s and the early 2000s as a shift from a security-driven approach aimed at minimizing risks to a more proactive and outgoing policy-based approach with regards to diplomatic engagement, cooperative institutions, and economic and societal interdependence. As analyst Ömer Taşpınar put it, a transition from an ‘Ankara type’ to an ‘Istanbul type’ of foreign policy. That was very much the mood that surrounded the so-called ‘earthquake diplomacy’ in the autumn of 1999.³ It was fortunate that İsmail Cem was at the helm of Turkish diplomacy at the time, as he could respond adequately to the overtures by his Greek colleague, George Papandreou. The Greek-Turkish rapprochement paved the way to the momentous decision at the Helsinki Council in December to grant Turkey candidate status, after the rebuff in Luxembourg two years beforehand. Greece made a U-turn in its approach, changing overnight from a prime obstacle to Turkey’s integration to a leading advocate. This development deepened the ongoing trend of EU commitment to the Balkans, reinforced by the Kosovo war. In Helsinki, Bulgaria and Romania were given a green light to start membership negotiations with the Union. Additionally, the EU re-energized its Balkan strategy through the Stability Pact and the so-

3 Comments made at a conference on *Istanbul in a Globalizing World* held at Bahçeşehir University, Istanbul, 21 December 2010.

called Stabilization and Association Process (SAP), an institutional platform to steer the Western Balkans towards integration into the Union and ultimately accession. With the end of the Tadjman regime in Croatia and especially the Milošević grip on power in Serbia in October 2000, it seemed that integrative dynamics, both in relation to the EU and within the area, had taken an upper hand.

Helsinki ushered in a truly unipolar moment in the politics of South-east Europe. It should be noted that the EU became the dominant pole of attraction for the wider region. In both Turkey and post-communist Southeast Europe, the EU would wield its conditionality to shape domestic developments and to guide reforms. Thus, the EU expanded the scope for regional cohesion, particularly after 2002-3 when the AKP came to power and galvanized political changes in line with the EU's preferences, while the Western Balkans were awarded a clear membership prospect at the Thessaloniki Council of June 2003.

The shared destination was consequential to the strengthening of regional links and to Turkey's opening to the region. Once the Customs Union with the EU was completed in 1996, Turkey was able to conclude free trade agreements with Romania (March 1997), Bulgaria (June 1998) and Macedonia (September 1999), three countries with whom it enjoyed close political and business relations. Dismantling economic barriers gave momentum to the nascent forms of regional cooperation such as the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), a forum of foreign ministers and heads of states and governments that Turkey chaired in 1998. SEECP established the foundations of multilateralism and functional cooperation in the Balkans and further institutionalized Turkey's central role in regional diplomacy. The post-1999 EU commitment to both Turkey and the Western Balkans gave integration a new push. Turkey concluded FTAs with Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina in 2002, and with Albania in 2006. The only ones missing were Serbia and Montenegro, undergoing a process of slow divorce and suffering from major differences in their trade policies. FTAs with both were signed in 2008, two years after the referendum that ratified Montenegro's independence. It is also important to take into account the deepening process of regional integration in the Western Balkans. Mechanisms like CEFTA2006, a multilateral trade liberalization agreement, created incentives for foreign businesses, including Turkish ones, to invest in a larger market that encompassed Yugoslavia's successors and Albania; all the countries benefitted from

privileged access to the EU.

It would be far-fetched to entirely subsume the first half of the 2000s under the rubric of Europeanization, just as the 1990s were not completely about security and conflict management. The liberal moment in Turkish foreign policy, catalyzed by EU “transformative power”, did not rule out the pursuit of more narrowly conceived national interests and meticulous attention to power balances. Nowhere was this more visible than in the rapprochement with old foe Russia. In 2001, foreign ministers Ismail Cem and Igor Ivanov signed the *Eurasia Action Plan*, pledging to expand bilateral cooperation, which was already developing at a steady rate thanks to joint projects like the Blue Stream gas pipeline, inaugurated in December 1997. The AKP continued this policy, not because of its ideological preference, but due to strategic considerations. President Vladimir Putin’s visit in December 2004 cemented the rapprochements. Moscow appreciated Turkey’s opposition within NATO to the initiatives to get in the Alliance more closely involved in Black Sea maritime security. Turkey and Russia emphasized the existing platforms, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and initiatives like BLACKSEAFOR, which focused on naval cooperation.

The new friendship, driven by pragmatism in both Moscow and Ankara and cemented through ever expanding trade and people-to-people ties, had direct implications for Turkey’s presence in Southeast Europe. The new alliance pitched Turkey against recent entrant Romania, which, after 2005, was lobbying for a stronger NATO commitment to the Black Sea area as a way to bolster pro-Western regimes in Georgia and Ukraine (Kınıklioğlu 2006). The Russo-Turkish connection increased Turkey’s weight in regional energy diplomacy. Greece, Bulgaria and Romania took advantage of these developments, as all of them aspired to capitalize on their geographic location as potential transit countries for oil and gas infrastructure, connecting the Caspian Sea and Central Asia with Western Europe. Governments in downstream countries closely monitor Turkey’s attitude to gas pipeline projects such as Russian-sponsored South Stream and Nabucco, inaugurated by an international agreement signed in Ankara in July 2009. Greece built an interconnector linking its gas grid with Turkey’s in hopes of later extending the connection to Italy. Similarly, after the gas crisis of January 2009, Bulgaria launched plans for its own interconnector and appealed to the European Commission for funding. The project was one of the highlights of the outcomes of conversations between Prime Ministers Boyko Borisov and Erdoğan in 2010. Over-

all, in the complex game of energy diplomacy, Turkey has been playing with all sides. In August 2009, Putin used his visit to Ankara to put pressure on the newly elected Bulgarian cabinet, hinting at Turkey as an alternative route for the South Stream. Turkey has since used energy as a bargaining chip. For example, it has chosen to stay away from the so-called Energy Community Treaty (ECT) concluded between the EU and the Western Balkans in 2006, insisting that the EU should open the energy chapter in the accession talks blocked by Cyprus in December 2009 (Leonard et al. 2010).

THE BALKANS IN TURKEY'S EMERGING NEIGHBORHOOD POLICY

Engagement with regional neighbors, from the Middle East to the Caucasus and the Balkans, has come to play an increasingly central role in AKP's foreign policy after the electoral victory in July 2007. The stalling accession negotiations with the EU were an important catalyst for this rebalancing of priorities. The blockage of a number of negotiation chapters by the EU Council as a whole, and then unilaterally by Cyprus and France after December 2006, pushed Turkey to diversify its regional alignments, a trend that became very visible after the war in Gaza in 2008. The architect of this policy is Ahmet Davutoğlu, an academic who had served as the foreign policy advisor to Prime Minister Erdoğan. Davutoğlu was appointed as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in May 2009. The Western Balkans have been one of the regions where his doctrine of "strategic depth" –that is, pursuing deeper economic, societal and cultural links with neighbors once part of the Ottoman Empire– has been implemented. While Davutoğlu himself dismissed the label "Neo-Ottomanism", used by some analysts to describe the policy, he did not shy away from referencing the imperial past as an element of his vision for a regional order.

On 16 October 2009, the Foreign Minister presented his ideas in a speech on *Ottoman Legacy and Balkan Muslim Communities Today*, delivered in Sarajevo, in which he praised the empire as a source of inspiration, if not as a full-fledged model, for resolving conflicts in Turkey's vicinity. He reminded the audience that in Ottoman times the Balkans were not a periphery, as they are in the present – they were the centre of the empire's political and economic geography. It was only in the modern era that the Balkans became a buffer zone contested by great powers. He pointed out that the time had come to rediscover "the true spirit" of the Balkans and unite the fragmented

pieces. Obviously, Turkey was to play a principal part in that endeavor. 'How does Turkey see the Balkans?', he asked, and added, '[w]e want to have a new Balkan region, based on political dialogue, economic interdependency and cooperation, integration and cultural harmony and tolerance'. To him, '[Turkish] foreign policy aims to establish order in all these surrounding regions, in the Balkans, Caucasus and the Middle East. If there is no order, then we will pay the price' (Davutoğlu 2009).

Of course, one could easily dismiss the speech as mere grandstanding fuelled by the Minister's personal interest in imperial history. Besides, there was nothing original in paying accolades to the glory of the past. The reference to the Ottoman period was a staple for very different strands in Turkish political life, and for very dissimilar reasons, since the 1980 coup d'état (Fisher Onar 2009). What is significant is not really the Ottoman label, but the fact that the AKP leadership has been prepared to invest into strengthening relations with the Balkan countries and expanding Turkey's influence on the ground, including through unilateral action.

At the same time, Davutoğlu's activism reflects not only Turkey's ambitions and capabilities, but also realities in the Western Balkans. Though the EU upholds the accession perspective –in clear contrast to the dominant views of Turkey's future in key member states like France and Germany– and remains the most significant political and economic force in the area, it has often been unable to act in a concerted fashion and influence day-to-day politics in the region. Local political elites have postponed political and economic reform because the short-term costs outweigh the long-term benefits. When one adds political problems, such as the conflicts over Kosovo's unilateral proclamation of independence and the name dispute between Athens and Skopje, it becomes clear why EU integration has stalled. The somewhat declining leverage of Brussels has, in turn, created opportunities for other players like Turkey, Russia and even China⁴ to seek a role in the area. Ankara's activism is certainly well timed.

Beyond unilateralism, the new approach to the Western Balkans (and Southeast Europe more broadly) is notable because of its complex design. As other contributing authors have noted, a generic feature of Turkey's neighborhood strategy is its multidimensional character, and the Balkans are certainly a case in point. It operates across several areas (diplomacy, trade and

⁴ Witness Serbia's reluctance to attend the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize Award ceremony honoring dissident Liu Xiaobo.

investment, popular culture), which –as a rule– work synergistically, and is driven by a multitude of actors, from government agencies, businesses and civil society to people-to-people networks.

REGIONAL DIPLOMACY

Because the earlier generation of Balkan initiatives, particularly in the 1990s, aimed at balancing Greek forays and/or political and economic cooperation, they generally focused on “friendly” countries like Macedonia, Albania, Romania and Bulgaria. These initiatives valued Turkey’s close ties to the U.S, whose friendship they solicited as well. Davutoğlu’s diplomacy, by contrast, targets Bosnia Herzegovina and Serbia, which followed a very different trajectory in their foreign policies due to the lasting consequences of the 1990s conflicts. Because of deep-cutting internal divisions and, in the case of Serbia, the Kosovo issue, both countries have been lagging behind in integration into the EU and NATO (Serbia officially does not pursue membership into the Alliance). Bosnia matters are important not only because of their tremendous symbolic value for both western Europeans and Turks, but also owing to the political vacuum left behind after mediators from Washington and Brussels “packed up” in October 2009. The engagement with Serbia is also significant, given the central place the country occupies within ex-Yugoslavia, or indeed within the “Yugosphere”⁵, the relatively large by regional standards market and, last but not least, the low starting point in relations with Turkey, providing an opportunity for Turkey’s Foreign Minister to practically test his “zero-problems” doctrine.

Turkey took a number of steps to establish itself as a mediator. First, it took advantage of the fact that it held chairmanship of the SEECP in the latter half of 2009. On 8 October, Davutoğlu met his Serbian and Bosnian counterparts on the margins of the body’s regular summit, this time held in Istanbul. He emphasized the need for constitutional reform in Bosnia as a prerequisite for phasing out the Office of the High Representative (OHR), the international community’s principal tool instituted by the Dayton Agreement⁶ for intervening in Bosnia’s politics. This strong link was consistent with the preferences of the majority of Bosniaks, though the Minister was careful not to be seen as partial by singling out the very existence of Repub-

5 A term coined by journalist Tim Judah.

6 The Dayton/Paris Accords of November-December 1995 ended the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina and established the country’s constitutional framework based on ethnic power-sharing.

lika Srpska as a problem. Thus, having Serbia onboard was crucial and Davutoğlu sought to involve Serbia in the dialogue. Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremić and later President Boris Tadić, the country's foremost pro-Western politician, represented Serbia. Regular trilateral meetings between Serbia, Bosnia and Turkey, coupled with Davutoğlu's tireless shuttle diplomacy, paid off. In the spring of 2010, Bosnia Herzegovina sent an ambassador to Belgrade, after a three-year break, while Serbia's parliamentary body, the Skupština, passed the resolution on Srebrenica – a major step in the direction of confronting the past.

Despite this early breakthrough, one should remember the limits of Turkish mediation in Bosnia. Turkey has made several mistakes. During the elections in October 2010, it put all its bets on Haris Silajdžić, who lost the race for the Bosniak seat in the tripartite state presidency to Bakir Izetbegović, the son of wartime leader Alija Izetbegović. Both sides had instrumentalized the relationship for domestic gain – the AKP to showcase its support for fellow Muslims, and Silajdžić to boost his electoral campaign with variable success (Reljić 2010).

Turkey took a very risky bet, as Silajdžić is highly unpopular amongst Bosnian Serbs because of his repeated calls for the dissolution of Republika Srpska, or in his own words, the 'genocidal creation' (*genocidna tvorevina*). While Bakir Izetbegović reached out to Ankara after his election, Bosnian Serb leadership remained skeptical, if not outright hostile. It is patent that any progress on constitutional reform or on making central state institutions functional cannot be achieved without Banja Luka, and that Belgrade cannot speak on behalf of Serbs in Bosnia. Building bridges has proven difficult. In January 2011, Nebojša Radmanović, the Serbian representative in the state presidency and a close ally of Republika Srpska's President Milorad Dodik, cancelled a meeting with Davutoğlu when the Foreign Minister insisted that the Serb entity's flag should not be in the room (*Balkan Insight* 2011).⁷ In Bosnia, and in the wider region, Turkey is perceived as a patron of one of the local ethnic groups, rather than as an honest broker. Dodik has openly lambasted Ankara's alleged "neo-Ottoman" policies. Recent publications such as a book by the Middle East Studies specialist Prof. Darko Tanasković, a for-

7 The Turkish embassy in Sarajevo said it was 'surprised' by Radmanović's claim that he had cancelled the meeting with Davutoğlu due to a row over the Republika Srpska flag. According to the statement (placing Republic of Srpska in quotation marks!), Davutoğlu was delayed because of extended talks with Dodik and thus had to cancel a meeting with Radmanović (*Hürriyet Daily News* 2011).

mer ambassador to Ankara, have provided ample ammunition to Turkey-skeptic Serbs (Tanasković 2010).⁸ Efforts to partner with Serbia and, after January 2010, with Croatia (through a series of Turkey-Croatia-Bosnia tri-lateral ministerial meetings), have not produced a sea change in popular attitudes.⁹ As a result, diplomats in Ankara have been mulling a joint initiative in Bosnia with Russia, which is seen as closer to Republika Srpska.

From a strategic viewpoint, Turkey has achieved much more in bilateral relations with Serbia than in managing the Bosnian stalemate. Rap-prochement with Belgrade gathered pace in 2009 and 2010. First, President Gül visited Belgrade in late October 2009, accompanied by Labor Minister Ömer Dinçer. That was the first such visit since 1986 – when Yugoslavia was still in existence. At the time of the visit, relations had hit rock bottom. The reason was Turkey's early recognition of Kosovo's independence, proclaimed unilaterally on 17 February 2008. Serbia had not forgotten Turkey's role in the Bosnian war, or its involvement in the Kosovo crisis when Turkish F16 fighter jets operating from bases in Italy took part in NATO's bombing campaign. Gül's visit was a game changer, laying the foundation for much more cooperative interaction, and challenging the image of Turkey as exclusively focused on Balkan Muslims. First and foremost, the two sides agreed to disagree on Kosovo, a position Serbia has taken to all "recognizers", and to adopt a pragmatic approach. The Turkish delegation signed five agreements on infrastructure, transport and social security, building on the FTA that had already been concluded. The highlight of the visit was the announcement that three Turkish companies would be involved in the construction of a 445 km-long highway connecting Belgrade with the Montenegrin port of Bar. Dinçer announced that he had secured bank loans for the projects. Importantly, the proposed highway passes through the region of Sandžak (from the Ottoman-Turkish *sancak*), home to Serbia's Muslim minority. Sandžak has been the focus of Turkey's engagement with Serbia.¹⁰ In July 2010, Erdoğan visited the regional center Novi Pazar, opening a cultural center named after Atatürk.

⁸ Tanasković's book was quickly translated into Bulgarian too.

⁹ In 2009, Gallup Balkan Monitor found that only 15 per cent of Serbia's citizens hold a positive view of Turkey. The figure stands at 24 per cent in Croatia, 40 per cent in Bosnia, 73 per cent in Albania, 80 per cent in Macedonia and 85 per cent in Kosovo. See www.balkan-monitor.eu.

¹⁰ Turkey remains popular with the province's population, a good part of which feels a strong bond with Bosnia. When Turkey won against Serbia in the final of the Basketball World Championship in September 2010, many locals rallied in the streets of Novi Pazar, waving Turkish flags and chanting 'Sandžak is not Serbia'.

Davutoğlu was involved in mediation between rival factions headed by muftis Muamer Zukorlić and Adem Zilkić, one supported by Sarajevo and another looking towards Serbia, in the local Islamic community. Erdoğan's trip to Serbia also led to the signature of an agreement for lifting visas with the hopes of boosting travel and trade between the two countries. Speaking at a joint business forum in Belgrade, the deputy head of the Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists (TUSKON), an association linked to the Fethullah Gülen movement, predicted that bilateral trade with Serbia would quadruple from 500 million USD to 2 billion USD in a few years (Şahin 2011).

Serbia is a clear achievement for Turkey's Balkan policy. The challenge is making rapprochement sustainable, especially if the ruling Democrats lose power in Serbia to the nationalist-populist opposition headed by Tomislav Nikolić. Turkey has thus far been unable to use its improved relations with Belgrade to mediate the Kosovo issue. Both Serbs and Kosovars look at Brussels, not Ankara.¹¹

TRADE AND INVESTMENT

The key to Turkey's growing importance in the Balkans is the prowess of its economy, recording steady rates of growth after the banking crisis of 2001. As trade and investment links with the region are deepening, Turkey's neighborhood policy becomes much more intricate. Compared to the 1990s, a much closer interaction, or even coordination, now exists between trade and investment, on the one side, and state diplomacy, on the other. To be fair to the AKP's predecessors, this is a result of a longer process dating back to the thawing of the Cold War. However, the AKP's leadership over a period of robust growth and trade expansion has been able to capitalize on this linkage. As a rule, Turkish government delegations tour the Balkans accompanied, as elsewhere, by an entourage of business people—mostly men rather than women—often coming from *millieux* close to the party itself. For instance, when President Abdullah Gül visited Bosnia on 2-3 September 2010, ahead of the October elections, he was accompanied by 70 businessmen. The group was organised jointly by TUSKON and TIM (Turkish Exporters Union).

Turkey's market presence has become increasingly visible, even if the state plays second fiddle to the EU in the Balkans. Overall, the region is not

11 Prishtina fears that if Turkey steps in, it may lead to Russian involvement. Interview with Kosovar official, 18 November 2011.

that important for Turkish exports, but the Balkan countries (ex-Yugoslav republics minus Slovenia; Albania; Greece; Bulgaria and Romania) trade heavily with their large neighbour. Exports hit a high in 2008 with 10.8 billion USD, contracting by a third in the crisis year of 2009 to 6.9 billion USD. Meanwhile, imports stood at 4.5 billion USD (2008) and 3.4 billion USD (2009).¹² Growth of trade is evidenced by the change in the region's total volume of trade (exports and imports), which stood at 2.9 billion USD in 2000. Though definitive data is yet to be released for 2010, there are indicators that trade volumes are picking up again thanks to strong growth in Turkey (7.8 per cent) and modest recovery in several Balkan economies.

Regarding trade relations, there are two sub regions in the Balkans:

– The *EU members Romania, Greece and Bulgaria* top the list of partners in Southeast Europe. In 2009, the trio accounted for 76 per cent of Turkey's exports and a staggering 94 per cent of imports from the area. Romania, the region's largest country, is Turkey's most important partner, accounting for 47 per cent of Turkish imports and 32 per cent of exports (2009). Turkey is the most significant non-EU destination for Bulgarian and Romanian exports, and has, for the most part, actually run a trade deficit with both (see **Tables 9.1 & 9.2** below).

Since the early 1990s, this cluster's importance, and particularly Romania's, suggests business relations with the region have a logic of their own. Even if Turkish diplomacy worked in tandem with economic players, it would be economic opportunity, business environment, market size and the Turkey-EU Customs Union that would determine the direction of Turkish trade and investment flows in the Balkans – not the choices made in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Ankara.

– *Western Balkans.* A large share of imports to Albania, Macedonia, Kosovo and Bosnia comes from Turkey, facilitated by the FTAs in force. Yet, simultaneously, the region's export performance is improving, even though all countries concerned run a deficit vis-à-vis Turkey. Serbia's exports nearly doubled, from roughly 56 million USD in 2009 to 110 million USD in 2010 (and to 184 million USD in the first ten months of 2011). Bosnia and Herzegovina's exports increased from 52 million USD to 72 million USD, while Macedonia's grew by twelve million USD, from 40 to 52 million USD.¹³

Increased trade flows have encouraged Turkish FDI into Southeast Eu-

¹² Data provided by the Turkish Statistical Institute (www.turkstat.gov.tr).

¹³ Data obtained from the Statistical Institute of Turkey (TÜİK), <http://www.tuik.gov.tr>.

TABLE 9.1
Turkey's Imports from SE Europe (million USD)

Country/year	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
Greece	1,542	1,131	1,150	950	1,045	728
Romania	3,449	2,258	3,548	3,113	2,669	2,286
Bulgaria	1,703	1,117	1,840	1,952	1,663	1,190
Serbia	110	56	62	71	49	97
						(together with MN)
Macedonia	52	40	30	56	56	52
Bosnia	72	52	25	21	9	15
Albania	87	5	37	24	13	16
Kosovo	14	10	5	3	2	9
Montenegro	6	6	1	0.15	0.76	97
						(together with SR)

TABLE 9.2
Turkey's Exports to SE Europe (million USD)

Country/year	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
Greece	1,456	1,630	2,430	2,263	1,603	1,127
Romania	2,559	2,202	3,987	3,644	2,350	1,785
Bulgaria	1,497	1,386	2,152	2,060	1,568	1,179
Serbia	306	306	458	475	279	258
						(together with MN)
Macedonia	263	283	296	272	173	162
Bosnia	224	227	572	445	151	128
Albania	241	237	306	295	214	191
Kosovo	294	278	279	120	76	226
Montenegro	27	26	48	20	8	258
						(together with SR)

rope, although Turkey's role is a modest one compared to the core countries of the EU. As *The Economist* (2011) put it bluntly, 'there has been more talk than cash'. At a time when foreign investment ran dry owing to the global financial and economic crisis, Turkish business expansion made a difference, especially in the Western Balkans (Balkan Insight 2010). Locals welcomed such landmark business ventures as the Ramstore shopping mall built by Koç Holding in Skopje. Others, amongst them Ilir Deda of KIPRED, a respected public policy think-tank in Kosovo, raised concerns that Turkish investors are crowding out businesses coming from France, Germany and elsewhere in

the EU (Balkan Insight 2010a). Turkish firms investing or bidding for public contracts take advantage of close ties with politicians in neighboring countries, such as Bulgaria's (predominantly ethnic Turkish) Movement for Rights and Freedoms, which participated in the two previous governments.

Turkey is now the third largest investor in Albania, superseded only by Italy and Greece. The Istanbul-based Çalık Holding has made significant investments in the telecommunication and banking sectors. In Bosnia, Turkey comes fourth in investment, after Austria, Slovenia and Germany. Still, its total portfolio is estimated at 115 million EUR, which again is a relatively modest amount. Turkey's presence is felt in sectors such as banking (Bosnia, Macedonia, Kosovo) and increasingly transport. In late 2008, Turkish Airlines acquired a 49 per cent stake in BiH Airlines, the national carrier. It has also been involved in prolonged negotiations over the purchase of a controlling stake in Serbia's JAT. Turkish companies have won contracts to operate the airports in Prishtina (consortium between Limak Holding and France's Aeroports de Lyon), Skopje and Ohrid (TAV). In Macedonia, the concession deals feature a clause obliging TAV to invest 200 million EUR into the airports' infrastructure (Balkan Insight, 2010a).

POPULAR CULTURA AND TOURISM

Cultural exports are increasing Turkey's popularity in the region. Ethnic Turkish minorities have long been exposed to its popular culture, but now majorities follow their footsteps. After conquering Middle Eastern audiences, Turkish soap operas command top TV ratings in Bulgaria, Macedonia and Kosovo, beating U.S and Latin American competition. Huge crowds welcomed Necati Şaşmaz, the star of the popular TV series *Valley of the Wolves* (Kurtlar Vadisi), during his visit to Macedonia in September 2009. In February 2011, a survey found that Bulgaria ranks second, after Kazakhstan, in terms of the number of Turkish telenovellas purchased (27), followed by Azerbaijan (23), Macedonia (17) and Greece (8) (Novinite 2011). These programs' mixture of sentimentalism and family drama appeals to Balkan audiences. The average Turkish soap displays glamorous lifestyle in metropolitan Istanbul and challenges long-standing prejudices against Turkey as a backward and conservative society. It adds to Turkey's soft power, even in societies such as Bulgaria, Greece or Serbia, where negative attitudes towards Turkey and Turks persist (cf. Öktem in this volume).

Television has also kept tourist interest high. Turkey is a favoured

summer destination for vacationers from across Southeast Europe, and tourism has grown each year since 1990. Turkey's tourists include visitors from Serbia, despite the state's anti-Muslim propaganda, which has been virulent since the 1990s, even by Balkan standards. Turkey was the third most-popular destination for Serbs after Greece and Montenegro in 2009. For years, Bulgarians have been the fourth, or fifth, largest group of visitors (1.25 million in 2008; 1.4 million in 2009; and 1.43 million in 2010) after Germans, Russians, Britons and, lately, Iranians. Bulgaria's prominence could be partly accounted for by cross-border trips by dual citizens, who number up to 250,000. By comparison, 355,144 Romanian citizens and 670,297 Greek citizens travelled to Turkey in 2010 (compared to 366,698 and 616,489, respectively, in 2009) (Oxford Analytica, 2009). Numbers of Serbs and Montenegrins are relatively lower (113,465 in 2010), but are still double the number of Bosnian and Albanian citizens traveling annually to Turkey.

CONCLUSION

Is Turkey a competing power or still a partner of the EU and the U.S? In the Balkans, Ankara now acts in a much more unilateral manner compared to any point since the Cold War ended. The reasons for that are not difficult to grasp: the fading EU anchor, robust economic growth and rising confidence in the ruling AKP and Turkish society at large. Economic clout, popular appeal and –where energy diplomacy is concerned– geographic location, all bolster Turkish foreign policy in Southeast Europe. Even if ambitions to act as a power broker in former Yugoslavia do not match actual leverage, or results, Turkey will surely continue to be a first-rate factor, especially in areas like energy, tourism, trade and transport. For the time being, activism vis-à-vis ex-Yugoslavia has coincided with Western preferences. Turkey is pursuing, albeit on its own, what the West wants anyhow. The potential for a clash with the EU and the U.S is much lower than in volatile regions such as the Middle East. Yet, this might change in the event accession talks are derailed and the EU anchor is altogether removed.

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PART THREE

The Eastern Neighbourhood

Arab Perceptions of Contemporary Turkish Foreign Policy: Cautious Engagement and the Question of Independence

REEM ABOU-EL-FADL

Since its accession to power in 2002, the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) government has overseen a Turkish ‘opening’ onto the Arab Middle East. The intentions behind this foreign policy, and whether it represents a transformation, have been hotly debated within Euro-American academic and policy circles; less well understood is its impact within the Arab world. Despite peaked international interest in the Arab world since its revolutionary wave of 2011, developments in Arab appreciations of Turkey have still not attracted much attention. Indeed, many have counselled the so-called ‘Turkish model’ for Arab politics since, but few are interested in what Arabs themselves make of this suggestion. This chapter investigates the perceptions of contemporary Turkish foreign policy held by Arab state and civil society actors, as reflected in the Arabic-language media over the past decade, and until the extraordinary opening months of 2011.

The first premise must be that the aggregate ‘Arab world’ is composed of over twenty countries, with a variety of state systems, social movements, and political trends. These are too often conflated, most relentlessly in accounts which invoke ‘the Arab street’, rather than acknowledging the complexity of the Arab political field, and pinpointing what may accurately be considered a pan-Arab concern. This chapter considers a variety of case studies and Arabic sources. The discussion will begin by reviewing Turkey’s Arab policy in historical perspective, and under the AKP. Turkey is examined in terms of the emerging middle or regional power paradigm, and the chapter

then investigates the approach of various Arab state and civil society actors in response.

This chapter argues that the different actors' responses to Turkish foreign policy are characterised by a trend of *cautious engagement*. This trend is conditioned by their evaluations of another issue: the degree to which Turkey has become a mature and independent state, and thus a regional power to be reckoned with. Arab actors are aware that Turkey's overtures, particularly its critical stances on Israel, are bound up with domestic interests, generating soft power gains at relatively low political cost thus far. These gains will reach their limit, however, as Turkey's invocations of cultural unity and its condemnations of Israel are expected to be translated into action. In this context, Turkey's downgrading of relations with Israel in September 2011 was welcomed, but it was also understood to have been prompted by a Turkish national concern, rather than by Israel's policy towards the Palestinians. As 2012 began, Turkey's support for the political and military organisations seeking to overthrow the Syrian regime have shaken the image of Turkey as an actor growing autonomous of U.S.-allied agendas. In the longer run, Turkey's further advance among the regional states will also be influenced by Arab people's first recourse to their own leaders, particularly after the Arab uprisings of 2011. The more that formerly subdued Arab actors, such as Egypt, assert themselves in the future, the more cooperative Turkey's regional role will need to be.

ARAB PREOCCUPATIONS AND THE PLACE OF TURKEY IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

A discussion of Arab perceptions of Turkey would do well to begin with Arab actors' historical priorities, and not with recent Turkish actions per se. With a history of colonisation and external interference, the main preoccupations of Arab peoples and states have been with securing and maintaining self-determination. They have therefore taken note primarily of the actors hindering or facilitating this, such as the superpowers on the one hand, and the regional powers which contest their hegemony, on the other. Turkey has therefore not figured substantially in these evaluations, having followed an isolationist policy in the early republican period that did not conceal its contempt for the former Ottoman Arab provinces, before recognising Israel in 1949, and joining alliances such as NATO and the Baghdad Pact in the 1950s, which sought to bring the decolonising Arab states into the Western

sphere of influence. There is little question that Turkey was seen as distant from the Arab world, if not actively hostile, for the majority of its republican years. This intensified the already troubled legacy of Ottoman Turkish rule.

Against this generalised narrative, specific milestones may be highlighted to nuance the picture, both in terms of Turkey's foreign policy and Turkish-Arab relations. The first of these occurred in the mid-1960s, after Turkish leaders made a concerted effort to amend their U.S-centric approach to the region, mainly to secure Arab support on Turkish priority issues such as Cyprus, and in pursuit of better relations with the oil states of the Gulf. Aware of this context, many Arab analysts still stress that they do not forget Turkey's refusal to allow Israeli use of its Incirlik base in the wars of 1967 and 1973. Furthermore, they recall Turkey's participation in establishing the Organisation of the Islamic Conference in 1969, and the opening of a Palestine Liberation Organisation office in Ankara in 1979 (Matar 2009a).

Arab analysts date the beginnings of Turkey's Arab opening to the Özal period, and his response to the challenges of the post-Cold War global and regional environment (Nafi 2009, p. 71). They agree on the activist nature of Özal's response in the Middle Eastern theatre, whereby he 'believed Turkey could continue to be a valued ally of the West only by expanding its regional role and influence' and this by forging economic and political ties with the Arabs (Sayarı 1997, p. 45).

These analysts also identify the efforts of Necmettin Erbakan to strengthen ties with Muslim and Arab states in this process, although these were short-lived, and his term as prime minister was cut short by the 1997 'soft coup'. The AKP's regional activism is viewed as 'unsurprising' in light of the Erbakan experience (Matar 2009a).

Overall, rather than a principle of non-interference in the Arab Middle East, Turkish policy was understood to be a function of its Western alliances and domestic priorities (Makovsky 1999, p. 92). This was clear in the 1990s, when both U.S precedent, and the explosive potential of the Kurdish issue, caused Turkish policy to change again, this time swinging away from the Arabs once more. In many Arabs' view, Turkey joined the Gulf War, much as it did the Korean War forty years earlier, to entrench its standing among NATO states, in a challenging new environment – this time after the Cold War. Meanwhile, Turkey concluded a rather anomalous security agreement with Israel, motivated partly by the access offered to Israeli military and intelligence knowhow, and partly to intimidate Syria, which was providing

support and shelter to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (known by its Kurdish initials as the PKK) (Sayarı 2000, p. 172). These were the main features of Turkish policy relevant to the Arab world before the AKP's rise to power.

TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS THE ARAB WORLD UNDER THE AKP: TURKEY AS AN EMERGING MIDDLE POWER

Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu called 2003 the 'year of making up for losses in Turkish foreign policy' (see Murinson 2006, p. 953). The rest of the decade saw Turkey move energetically in several regional spheres, from the Balkans to the Middle East. This generated much commentary, most dramatically heralding Turkey's 'change of axis'. In focusing on the reception of these developments in the Arab world, this chapter chooses to conceptualise Turkey as an emerging middle or regional power, and to evaluate the regional acceptance of this role in turn. Before doing so, it is worth briefly reviewing the discursive and practical dimensions of AKP foreign policy.

Contemporary Turkish foreign policy discourse is built on Davutoğlu's vision of Turkey's 'strategic depth', laid out in his 2001 title of the same name. The Arab world is a region of geographical and historical 'depth' for Turkey, which Turkish leaders emphasise does not imply any resurrected imperial ambitions, but rather a constructive and pro-active attitude to regional relations. AKP leaders vigorously deny the term 'neo-Ottomanism' as a misnomer. According to Prime Minister Erdoğan, Turkish policy 'should learn the lessons of the past... we look to maximal economic and trade cooperation to allow coexistence' ('İstanbul'dan', *TRT7*, 4 April 2010).

In terms of foreign policy practice, Turkey's recent opening onto the Arab world was presented along two tracks. The first is the zero-conflict policy. This has involved settling long-standing regional conflicts, whether disputes involving Turkey, or through mediation efforts as a third party. This policy saw Turkey gathering regional leaders in a summit before the Iraq war, as well as mediating between Syria and Israel. Speaking on the Arabic *Al-Jazeera* channel, Advisor to the Presidency Erşad Hürmüzlü stressed that Turkey was not imposing its own agendas: its behaviour merely attracted attention. The government, he said, proceeded on Davutoğlu's premise that Turkey has a 360 degree view, accommodating all, and that Turkey was approaching the region by legitimate means ('İstanbul'dan', *TRT7*, 4 April, 2010).

The second realm of the 'Arab opening' involved fostering regional co-operation through economic, cultural and educational exchange. The most active players here were the investors of the Gulf states, as well as the governments of Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, with whom Turkey concluded free trade and visa exemption agreements in the late 2000s. The launch of TRT's Arabic channel, *Al-Turkiyya* (or TRT7), provided a useful platform for Turkish officials to dwell on these aspects of their approach to the Arab countries. Downplaying its political dimension, they stressed the 'two pillars' of state relations, 'cultural and economic', which the channel would entrench. They emphasised the aim of Turkish foreign policy to close the chasm that had opened up between Arabs and Turks in the past 'against our will', adding that pursuing cooperation with the Arab states was as much in their interest as in Turkey's own (Atwan 2010).

The features of Turkish foreign policy explored above resonate in several ways with the literature on regional great powers, and emerging middle powers.¹ Despite the lack of scholarly agreement on the precise difference between the two, there is some consensus that, in contrast to traditional middle powers, whose role was evaluated primarily in terms of 'world politics', emerging middle power status derives from an active regional role in the first instance (Schoeman 2000). According to Wright, the success of regional great powers in generating leverage with global superpowers makes them candidates for 'middle power' (1978, p. 63) status in turn. In line with such theories, Turkey may be considered a regional great power, and hence an emerging middle power.² Such states are typically assertive – they favour multilateralism and cooperation; they take initiative in areas of conflict resolution; and they promote regional integration. At the same time, they retain their distinct identity, and prioritise their national interests (Jordaan 2003; Van Der Westhuizen 1998; Nolte 2007; Flermes 2007).

Three main conditions can be identified for the role of emerging regional and/or middle powers: willingness, capacity and acceptance (Nolte 2007, p. 11; Schoeman 2000, p. 50). This framework's relevance lies in the criterion of acceptance –which bestows crucial legitimacy upon a regional power's activism– and the question of whether it is in evidence in the Arab world. As Schoeman explains: 'The emerging power should be acceptable to its neighbours... A broader, or extraregional acceptance is perhaps a neces-

1 See Wright (1978), Neumann (1992), Cooper (1997) and Cox (1996).

2 This is acknowledged in recent studies; see Barry Rubin and Kemal Kirişçi eds (2001).

sary condition, but not sufficient, even if supported and promoted by big powers' (2000, p. 50). This chapter contends that among the patterns of response generated by Turkey among Arab regional actors, and the degrees of acceptance possible, the main strand is that of cautious engagement.

ARAB STATES' PERCEPTIONS OF CONTEMPORARY TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY

What, then, is the nature of different Arab states' engagement with Turkish foreign policy? An important distinction can be made here between those Arab states which already enjoy regional power status, and those which do not, and whose political leaders therefore apprehend Turkish overtures quite differently. Another relevant distinction can be made between Turkey's border and non-border Arab states. As states and as peoples, the latter often have understandably lower levels of interest in Turkish affairs than the immediate neighbours do, and fewer entanglements with Turkey. To illustrate these distinctions, this chapter examines the cases of Egypt and Syria.

Egypt

Egypt represents an interesting case study of a non-border state with significant interest in contemporary Turkish affairs, due to its status as a regional power itself, with a history of leadership in the Arab world. Here, a distinction is made between the Egyptian regime under former president Hosni Mubarak, and the rule of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) since January 2011.

Under Mubarak, Cairo's views of Ankara should first be considered in the context of Egypt's relations with Washington, keeping in mind the level of competition between both over their U.S ties. After the AKP's first electoral victory, Washington was pointing to its style of 'moderate Islam in government' as an example that Arab states should follow. Washington's endorsement caused alarm in official Egyptian circles, which resented this demotion and feared potential marginalisation before the Islamist opposition at home. This fear was particularly acute since the Muslim Brothers had made relatively high gains in the 2005 elections, and were known to have had contacts with Washington.

As time passed, however, the Mubarak regime dealt with Turkey as a fellow U.S-allied Middle East state, able to cooperate on regional issues of concern. Within this context, Cairo looked favourably upon Turkey, first as

a buffer state and the only feasible competitor to Iran. Mubarak seemed content to watch Turkey's emerging role, as long as Egypt remained a critical 'factor' in the balancing between Turkey and Iran, and was able to play them off against each other (Al-Labbad 2009, p. 220). Another important consideration which brought Egyptian and Turkish interests in line was the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Iraq, in the wake of the American occupation. On these issues, and with this degree of acceptance of a Turkish role, Egypt resembled other Arab regimes in the American fold, such as Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

The upshot of these overlapping concerns to Turkish-Egyptian relations was the two states' November 2007 signature of a Memorandum of Special Understanding on Strategic Cooperation, and their participation in Strategic Dialogue talks in Ankara in 2008. Egyptian analyst Mustafa al-Labbad comments that Egypt's entry into such talks distinguished it from its other 'moderate' Arab counterparts, who were yet to take Turkish relations to this level. Egypt took these steps 'with its eye on regional balances, and Cairo and Ankara's interest in balancing Iran' (Ibid., p. 219). Indeed, Cairo usually reserved such high-level cooperation for Washington. In November 2010, these efforts culminated in an agreement to establish a Higher Council for Strategic Cooperation presided over by the Turkish and Egyptian prime ministers. The Egyptian leadership's initial wariness of U.S support for Turkey's 'moderate Islamists' was effectively contained through these partnerships. Then Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmad Abul Gheit described the latest accord as an 'important and constructive' step (*Al-Shorouk*, 22 November 2010).

Beyond this 'competitive cooperation', however, two dimensions of Turkish foreign policy impacted on the Mubarak regime differently, precisely because they signalled an assertion of independence from the Western line. The first was Turkey's encroachment on Egypt's traditional role of regional mediator, particularly between Israel and the Palestinians. When Turkish leaders were invited to mediate with Israel during its 2008-9 war on Gaza, Cairo's response was to accommodate this role, and attempt to share the credit for its outcomes. By late 2009, President Abdullah Gül was speaking of the peace process as 'of equal interest' to both Turkey and Egypt as 'partners in its supervision' (*Al-Shorouk*, 15 December 2009). Prime Minister Erdoğan himself stressed to Arab audiences that Egypt plays an 'indispensible role in the region' (Erdoğan, 2009). Arab writers noted that Ankara was aware of

Cairo's concerns, and keen to win its confidence first, in order to convince it that Turkey's return to the Middle East would not be at its expense (Abd al-Magid 2010). Still, the role-reversal is clear given the precedent of the mediation Egypt itself offered between Turkey and Syria in 1998 (Ezzat et al 1998). Yet until 2010, Egyptian officials would affirm, rather defensively, that 'Turkish foreign policy's directions serve the interests of the region' and that 'this Turkish role does not compete with [Egypt's] regional role' (Abul-Gheit 2010).

The second aspect that frequently aroused Egyptian officials' sensitivities was the popularity of Turkey's stance on Israel in recent years. The reception of Prime Minister Erdoğan's statements during the war on Gaza was unsettling for the Mubarak regime, which felt trapped between its dynamics with the U.S and Israel on the one hand, and calls across the Arab world for Egypt to open its Rafah border with besieged Gaza on the other. This recurred in 2009 when it was a Turkish fleet that transported members of the Gaza aid convoy, who had been denied entry by Egyptian security forces. In this context, then Foreign Minister Abul-Gheit was careful to remind his audience of the wider picture, with statements like 'Turkey is moving closer to the Arab world, despite its continuing relations with Israel' (Ibid.). The more Turkey asserted itself vis-à-vis Israel, however, the less convincing such statements became.

These incidents were of particular concern to the Mubarak regime as they involved a direct comparison between Egypt and Turkey. Meanwhile, in scenarios that did not generate comparisons with Egypt, its officials adopted another approach, downplaying Turkish-Israeli relations, highlighting Turkey's pro-Palestinian credentials, and then aligning Cairo with them. In so doing, they sought to gain indirect credibility from Ankara's critical stance. Exemplary here was the Israeli attack on the Freedom Flotilla on 31 May 2010, which saw Ankara take the most hostile steps yet vis-à-vis Israel, and Egyptian officials jump to Turkey's defence, supporting its bid to obtain an Israeli apology (*Al-Shorouk*, 22 November 2010).

With the extraordinary popular revolution of January 2011, Mubarak was ousted, and several senior elites followed. Egyptian foreign policy has since been undergoing gradual but noticeable change. Of the four issues affecting Egypt's Turkish relations mentioned, only the common interest in a united Iraq remains unaffected. The policy of balancing Iran with a Turkish alliance, and seeking Washington's blessing in so doing, was the first to be

modified. Instead, one of the first statements by newly appointed Foreign Minister Nabil al-Arabi affirmed that Iran was not an enemy, and that embassies would shortly open between the two countries (*Al-Masry Al-Youm*, 30 March 2011). Egypt's receding role in mediating on the Palestinian issue received a rapid boost when al-Arabi brokered a widely acclaimed reconciliation agreement between Fateh and Hamas on 27 April 2011. The quietism that characterised Egypt's policy vis-à-vis Israel under Mubarak was contrasted by the opening of the Rafah crossing on 28 May, and by al-Arabi's statements on Israeli obligations under international law and the Palestinians' right to protest.

While the conditions imposed at Rafah have tempered this change, and al-Arabi has since been moved to the post of Secretary-General of the Arab League, analysts argue that he set a trend that cannot be entirely reversed (Moss'aad, 2011). Indeed, the appointment of al-Arabi and his new foreign policy directions were backed by a strong popular mandate. Popular pressure demanding an independent and Arab-oriented foreign policy agenda will continue to make itself felt, and to influence decision-makers in future governments.

Such signs of Egypt's move back to the roles of arbiter and potential Arab leader have begun to modify its dynamics with Turkey. Insofar as Turkey's emergence as a regional great power and middle power was eased by Egypt's weakness, Cairo's relative dynamism since the revolution has altered this process. Where Egypt often appeared as the follower in recent years, the first months of 2011 saw it reclaim the initiative on several regional issues, notably Palestinian national unity, criticism of Israel and the commemoration of the Palestinian Nakba. One indicator was Turkey's invitation by Egypt to attend the initialling of the Egyptian-brokered reconciliation agreement in April, reversing the trend that had developed with the AKP leadership during the last years of Mubarak's rule. These changes –and the popular support driving them– have piqued Turkish interest in its regional ally and rival, as Abdullah Gül became the first foreign statesman to visit Egypt after the revolution (Nouredine 2011). Davutoğlu made several subsequent trips, as did Prime Minister Erdoğan in September 2011, declaring Turkey's desire to see Egypt strong, and to cooperate in regional affairs (Al-Sonouti 2011).³

Under Mubarak then, there was no official acceptance of Turkey's

3 See also 'Video, Erdoğan: Egypt and Turkey Play a Strategic Role in the Middle East', *Al-Shorouk* website, 13 September 2011.

emerging regional status, but rather engagement with it. This reflected Mubarak's desire for partnership within the U.S orbit on certain security issues, and for popular credibility on Palestine. With the revolutionary process launched in January 2011, this engagement has remained cautious, but for different reasons. Egypt is in a transitional period, but in the longer run will likely seek to re-expand its regional role. It could therefore form a check on, or balance to, Turkey's emerging middle power status in the future.

Syria

Syria has long been a pivotal Arab state, but not a regional leader. Its leadership has therefore viewed Turkey through a different prism from that of Egypt. Furthermore, Syria is one of Turkey's border states, with shared, yet potentially divisive, security concerns. Historically, Syrian-Turkish tensions have been high, on both counts. During the Cold War, Syrian governments felt threatened by the superpower rivalry in the Middle East, and sought refuge in an alliance with the regional great power of the time, Egypt. Turkey's policies as a NATO member contradicted the positions of both Syria and Egypt, which had developed relations with the USSR and joined the non-aligned camp. In terms of border disputes, there were Syrian grievances at Turkey's appropriation of Alexandretta in 1938, and more recently at Turkish control over the flow of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. Throughout the 1990s, Turkey's main concern with Syria was its assistance to the PKK. After Ankara threatened military force in 1998, President Hafez al-Asad expelled Abdullah Öcalan, and the arena was cleared for a rapprochement. These developments began before 2002, but were energised under the AKP through its emphasis on zero conflict policy and a soft power approach. What has often been called a honeymoon in Turkish-Syrian relations then followed, but was abruptly halted by each side's responses to the uprisings taking hold of Syria from April 2011.

For the AKP government, Syria represents a border state of particular significance, a coveted 'prize' in Arab regional politics. Syria's alliance with Tehran offered Ankara potential leverage with both Arab and Iranian political players. Syrian interests, meanwhile, lay in the return of the Golan Heights and in solidarity from regional powers vis-à-vis the isolation imposed by the Bush administration. Under the AKP, a Turkish delegation visited Syria in December 2003, followed by President Bashar al-Asad's historic visit to Turkey in January 2004. The Syrian administration deftly balanced its Irani-

an alliance with a budding Turkish friendship, and over 2007-8, it was negotiating with Israel at the same time (Al-Labbad 2009, p. 222). Turkey helpfully mitigated dependence on Tehran: 'Erdoğan came as a blessing for the Syrians, as his policies on a variety of issues mirrored those of Bashar al-Assad' (Moubayed 2008).

The Syrian-Turkish rapprochement involved firstly the economic and cultural cooperation track emphasised in AKP policy. Prime Minister Erdoğan made his historic visit to Damascus in December 2004, and a Syrian-Turkish free trade agreement was signed. As trade increased between the two countries, these efforts were crowned in 2009 with the lifting of visa restrictions, the launch of the Strategic Cooperation Council, and the signing of over fifty bilateral agreements. In April, the two states' land troops even engaged in joint military manoeuvres on the border. The second aspect of the rapprochement involved the tacit downplaying of disputes. The first was the water issue – since the 1980s, dam-building under Turkey's Southeastern Anatolia Project has constricted the Tigris-Euphrates river flow to Northern Syria. Turkey refuses to conclude a binding agreement, but has increased the quotas flowing to Syria; meanwhile Syria has worked with Turkey on the 'Friendship Dam'. Damascus has also allowed the contested status of Alexandretta to fade out of the bilateral relations scene (Oudat 2008; Al-Labbad 2009, p. 223). In the areas discussed above, Syria made good use of the zero-conflict policy. In 2010, President al-Asad described it as 'a reality, not a defensive policy,' and continued:

the amount of mutual trade is in our interests and those of Turkish businessmen. Families' relations on the border were difficult in the past; now there is much movement. The 700 km long border used to be minefields, now we are working on joint projects on either side. This is in addition to our role in dialogue for the sake of Iraq and even Lebanon. This has helped calm many issues which used to be deteriorating... (Al-Asad, 2010; Nouredine 2010).

The second issue of shared interest was the containment of the Northern Iraqi Kurds, and any plans for a sovereign or semi-autonomous Kurdish state, which Turkish and Syrian leaders feared would galvanise their own domestic minorities. Syria was an important participant in the Istanbul summit convened before the war on Iraq, and maintained this interest, which it shared with Turkey far more than with Iran. Indeed, according to one Syrian

analyst, 'On almost every issue, Syria stands closer to Turkey than to Iran. Neither the Syrians nor the Turks would ever support annexing Kirkuk to Kurdistan' (Moubayed 2008, p. 4). In 2010, President al-Asad spoke at length of the ongoing Turkish-Syrian partnership when it came to Iraq, even as Turkish relations with the Kurdistan Regional Government had improved significantly (Al-Asad 2010).

The Arab-Israeli conflict represents the final realm in which Syria and Turkey enjoyed converging geostrategic interests during the 'honeymoon' of their relations. Syria warmly welcomed the mediation role Turkey played with Israel in 2007 and 2008, and, in the words of one Arab writer, had since looked to Turkey 'positively but conditionally' (Al-Labbad 2009, p. 222). Despite the sudden collapse of proximity talks upon Israel's launch of the Gaza War, President al-Asad continued to speak of his hopes in this regard: 'now there is no talk of mediation. [But] what is happening is a search for common ground to launch negotiations and this is what we did with Turkey in 2008' (Al-Asad 2010). When it came to Syria's conflict with Israel, Turkey represented a mediator with relatively higher leverage over Israel than, say, Egypt had commanded, and without the intimate relationship with Israel that America has always had. In his interview, al-Asad stated clearly that the U.S could not mediate due to its well-known bias and lack of cultural knowledge of the region. By contrast, he praised the Turkish role as 'just', and necessary for the peace process' success (Al-Asad 2010).

This harmony was shattered by the clashes between al-Asad and Erdoğan over the Syrian government's reaction to pro-democracy protests in April 2011. When Syrian military and security forces began their crack-downs, Erdoğan combined direct and indirect pressure on al-Asad. After issuing strong calls for restraint, he told Arabic and English media outlets that Turkish delegations had taken translated articles from Turkish electoral law on trips to Damascus, and that he had personally offered 'to host and train Syrians in democratic transitions'. This tone riled the Syrian regime and its supporters.⁴ Erdoğan's statements on 'not wishing to see a fragmented Syria' and 'regarding Syrian domestic affairs like those of Turkey' were received as veiled threats, particularly with speculation on potential military intervention (*Assafir*, 5 May 2011; Atwan 2011). Syrian officials repeatedly warned Turkey against interfering in Syrian affairs (*Tishrin*, 8 August 2011). However,

4 See articles by Muhammad Nouredine and Maher Abi Nader, *Assafir* (Arabic), 29.4.11.

Turkey then began hosting meetings of the Syrian opposition, in Antalya and Istanbul. In October 2011, Foreign Minister Davutoğlu recognised and met with one of the Syrian opposition groups, the ‘Syrian National Council’ (SNC), which includes liberal dissidents, Muslim Brothers and Kurdish politicians, among others. By January 2012, Turkey had imposed sanctions on Syria, and was also hosting the ‘Free Syrian Army’ of defectors battling the Syrian regime, while the SNC coordinated with it on calls for foreign intervention against al-Asad.

Thus in the Syrian case, there was, up until early 2011, far more official acceptance of Turkey’s regional and emerging middle power role than existed in Egypt. Yet once again, its development depended on Turkey’s ability to convey an image of increased independence from U.S policy. This would enhance its credentials in a mediation role, and consequently its potential to become a key player in the Middle East peace process. This rapport changed in mid-2011, as the al-Asad regime came under threat and Turkey moved towards imposing sanctions that would isolate the Syrian leadership. The conflict on Turkey’s border has been described as the AKP’s greatest foreign policy test: its outcome remains to be seen, but it is likely to reactivate issues of bilateral contention which had recently been rendered dormant.

THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS

Turkey’s increasing involvement with the Arab-Israeli conflict also impacted on its image among both the Palestinian and Lebanese resistance: non-state actors who are nonetheless key players. There was much appreciation by Hamas –in stark contrast to the controversy in Turkey and further West– of the AKP’s welcoming of Hamas political chief Khaled Mish‘al to Ankara in 2006, and its refusal to deem Hamas a terrorist group. Mish‘al expressed admiration for Erdoğan, describing him as having stepped into a leadership vacuum, and believing sincerely that he is serving a just cause in Palestine (Mish‘al 2010). These affinities grew steadily as Foreign Minister Davutoğlu contributed to efforts to bring together the estranged Palestinian parties, Fateh and Hamas, into a national unity government. Here, the particular attraction of the AKP politicians’ role was the alternative it presented to the Mubarak administration’s traditional alignment with Fateh. Indeed, there may even have been an element of dependence in Hamas’ relationship with Turkey. Meanwhile, any international recognition was a bonus for Hamas in its ostracised position, since it has been portrayed by so

many, including Egypt until 2011, as the reason for division in Palestinian politics.

Hamas politicians repeatedly spoke favourably of the role Turkey might play in the region. In January 2010, Gaza-based Prime Minister Ismail Hanieh called for 'a new strategy through a new balance of power that involves Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria... which opens onto Turkey' (*Al-Quds*, 15 January 2010). It is doubtful that Hamas seriously expects a state such as Turkey to swing suddenly so far away from its U.S and NATO alliances, but it has fostered Hamas-AKP relations as much as possible in the meantime. The *Al-Qassam Martyrs Brigade* website even appears in Turkish (*Al-Qassam Martyrs Brigades* website, 23 December 2009). In July 2010, Davutoğlu and Mish'al discussed ways of breaking the siege on Gaza, and Mish'al praised Turkey's stand in the wake of the Mavi Marmara attack of May 2010, when Israeli troops raided a Turkish ship carrying humanitarian aid to Gaza, killing nine Turks and wounding over fifty other passengers (*Al-Qassam*, 21 July 2010). The AKP government had reacted strongly, demanding an apology and compensation for the victims' families, while calling for the lifting of the siege (*Ibid.*). The uprisings of 2011 heralded a reconfiguration of regional power balances. For Hamas, one manifestation of this change has been its reengagement with Cairo, rather than Ankara, over Palestinian reconciliation. However, in the case of the October 2011 prisoners' swap with Israel, Hamas was careful to thank both Turkish and Egyptian parties for their efforts. In January 2012, Ismail Hanieh made his first trip outside Gaza since 2007, and was warmly welcomed on the Ankara leg of his regional tour. Hanieh in turn praised Turkey's continuing support for the lifting of Israel's siege on Gaza, and declined to comment on the situation in Syria. Refusing to elaborate on rumours that he might be seeking an alternative base to Damascus, he nevertheless commented, 'Everything remains open for discussion' (*Al-Akhbar*, 6 January 2010).

The case of Hizbullah differs slightly, since it has a stronger alliance with Iran, commands far greater resources, and enjoys a more self-sufficient position within Lebanon. Nevertheless, like Hamas, Hizbullah had cautiously engaged with the overtures of the AKP. Relations have been strengthening since the Turkish-Syrian relationship was cemented, and as Turkey began taking demonstrable stances against Israel. For example, in 2009, Hizbullah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah made it clear that he welcomed Turkey's role if it were to be supportive: 'We want more regional cooperation... we look very positively on the new Turkish role in the region'. He continued:

Some will use the Turkish issue to sectarian ends... and say that Turkey wants to enter the region to diminish the role of Shi'i Iran. If it wishes to defend Palestine... we will be willingly with Sunni Turkey and before Shi'i Iran. Indeed, we are with Communist Venezuela, for its stand with Palestine and Lebanon' (*Al-Quds*, 11 November 2009).

In 2010, Nasrallah made a special speech to mark the Flotilla events. He praised the Flotilla's breaking of the Gaza siege and attributed to this several achievements: returning the siege to the agenda of the international community; causing Egypt to open the Rafah crossing; causing Kuwait to withdraw from the 'Arab initiative'; and exposing Israel's sense of immense pressure (Nasrallah 2010).

There is a limit, however, to Hizbullah's belief in Turkey's regional role, and its willingness to facilitate its emergence. During Erdoğan's 2010 Lebanon visit, he met with Hizbullah and other opposition MPs alongside MPs from the March 14th ruling coalition, in another peacekeeping effort. His official aim was to reduce tensions brewing as the Special Tribunal for Lebanon seemed poised to indict Hizbullah for the 2005 assassination of Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri. In a speech soon after, Nasrallah stressed that 'while he welcomes [the role of] Turkey and Iran and anyone else', he would like their involvement to be directed towards the Syrian-Saudi effort to resolve the issue (*Ibid.*).

Thus it seems that resistance leaders, and particularly those of Hizbullah, have at times been caught between Turkey's potential and their supporters' enthusiasm for it on the one hand, and their own reservations on the other. At the time of writing, Hizbullah has expressed its belief in the Syrian regime's willingness to reform, and has called for regional players to assist with efforts for dialogue (*Al-Quds*, 14 January 2012). This development has added another dimension to Syria's complicated relations with Turkey. Depending on the degree to which Turkey has deviated from the example of its Western allies, then, Resistance groups have extended a hand to Turkey; otherwise, their optimism remains cautious.

ARAB RECEPTION: CIVIL SOCIETY

The perspective of Arab civil society actors is a sound barometer of the success of Turkey's soft power approaches, and of any consequent leverage with Arab states. Until 2011, there was little doubt among civil society actors, like their states, that 'Turkey [was] returning to the Middle East', or in another

writer's words, 'reorienting its intellectual compass' to include its 'historical depth, the Arab-Islamic world' (Nouredine 2009). This had caused a marked increase in attention to Turkey in media and political debate. Despite their different perspectives, these actors' approaches to Turkey at the time could be characterised as a cautious engagement, and sometimes even as an enthusiastic one. The uprisings of 2011 have nuanced this response.

Particularly during the AKP's second term in office, popular engagement with Turkey featured considerable admiration for certain elements of its contemporary foreign policy. After Turkey's criticisms of the 2006 Israeli war on Lebanon, a widespread feeling developed that Turkey had begun rebalancing and displaying a reasonable measure of independence within the American camp, with the intention of serving Turkish interests, and that this has been successful (Al-Labbad 2009, p. 218). Writers across the political spectrum noted Turkey's formation of influential lobbies in Washington, its 'self-confidence' in tussles with European Union Turkosceptics (Matar 2009b; *Al-Shorouk*, 6 October 2010), and its dynamic cultivation of close yet equidistant relations with all regional players (Nafaa 2010).

A second, specific aspect of Turkish policy, its criticisms of Israel, elicited an outpouring of praise and goodwill in several quarters (Al-Sayyad 2010). When Prime Minister Erdoğan gave his first interview to an Arab channel, the headline emphasised his description of the 'earthquake-like response' Israel would receive if it violated Turkish airspace to spy on Iran. Erdoğan went on to speak of Gaza, Israel's illegal settlement building, and resuming mediation talks with Syria and Israel (2009). Besides verbal condemnation, in a rarer, practical move, Ankara disinvited Israel from annual NATO airforce manoeuvres in October 2009. Then came Turkey's downgrading of diplomatic relations with Israel in September 2011, after its failure to apologise for killing nine Turks aboard the *Mavi Marmara* in May 2010.

There was an appreciation of the stature Turkey was gaining while defying Israel in these ways, a combination long considered impossible among some Arab audiences. In analyst Amr al-Shobaky's view, people had grown accustomed either to regimes which claimed radicalism but did not fight Israel (such as Ba'thist Syria), or to self-declared 'moderate' regimes which would admit their inability to impose any solution on Israel, whether through peace or war (such as Egypt under Mubarak). Both regimes being authoritarian, 'the message of Turkey was therefore strong: it crushed the monopoly of the radical and authoritarian regimes on the Palestinian cause, showing that a

state can be democratic and have a regional role...' (Al-Shobaky 2010). In January 2010, Palestinian writer Bilal al-Hassan noted that the Israeli uproar over the *Valley of the Wolves* series coincided with Turkey's signing of its gas deal with Russia: '[Israel] is now quibbling over television programmes while Turkey continues to forge an ever greater regional role over the past two years, from mediation between Syria and Israel to its opposition to the Gaza War to the international role it is now playing with Russia' (2010). In Egypt, Salama Ahmad Salama praised the dignified Turkish response, and the state's success in securing an Israeli apology over the mistreatment of Ambassador Çelikkol in Tel Aviv (Salama 2010).⁵

Thirdly, Arab commentators perceived a connection between Turkey's domestic stability and its strong role abroad (Matar 2009a; Sid-Ahmed 2002; Hamzawy 2007; *Al-Akhbar*, 5 June 2011). Much was made of Turkey's ability to deal democratically with the Islamist political challenge. Turkey's new emphasis on reconciliation with its Ottoman past and Islamic ties certainly encouraged Gulf investor interest, as much as Turkey's outreach to the Gulf states had done (Al-'Awfi 2010; *Al-Ru'ya Al-Iqtisadiyya*, 16 April 2010).

Meanwhile, around 2008-9, the popularity of Turkish cultural production was growing, with increased tourism to Turkey and the launch of *Al-Turkiyya*, though the soft power this has generated is still far from comparable with that of the Arab media (Matar 2009b; Altunışık 2008, pp. 41-54; *Ar-Riyadh*, 7 April 2010). In the Arabic media coverage of both the 2010 constitutional referendum and the 2011 elections, Turkey was generally presented as a dynamic democracy in which the rule of law is respected, and civil-military relations are well regulated (*Al-Quds*, 13 September 2010; Kirat 2010; *Al-Shorouk*, 24 November 2010). These qualities are often seen as the conditions for Turkey's foreign policy successes.

These noises of Arab approval, however, need to be placed in context. They tended to be loudest when implying certain expectations and demands made of Arab leaderships, rather than purely representing an analysis of Turkish behaviour. Events such as Erdoğan's slamming of the Israeli attack on Gaza, his walkout at Davos, and the Israeli apology demanded and received after the mistreatment of Ambassador Çelikkol, all threw into relief the relative absence of a comparably strong Arab voice. Thus Turkey was

5 The ambassador had been summoned for a public dressing down, after Israeli official indignation at depictions of Israeli soldiers in a Turkish television series. He was made to sit on a lower chair, a spectacle which photographers were instructed to capture.

seen as ‘filling a vacuum’, left by Egypt in particular, and by the absence of a collective Arab representative entity in general (Matar 2009a; Salman 2010; Bishara 2009). According to Egyptian editor Gamil Matar, ‘It is thanks to Egyptian myopia, joining the siege on Syria, that Turkey obtained its chance’ (Matar 2009a). According to Palestinian politician and thinker Azmi Bishara, the colonial division of the Arab world had allowed only three states to grow – Israel, Iran and Turkey – but it was still too early to speak of significant change (2009). He bemoaned the ‘lightweight Arab handling’ of Turkish standpoints, which stemmed from the lack of leadership in the Arab world, and many Arabs’ admiration for a ‘self-respecting head of government such as Erdoğan’ (Bishara 2009). What united these accounts were certain rhetorical flourishes aimed at Arab audiences rather than Turkish ones, such as ‘where are the Arabs?’ and ‘will Turkey unite the Arab East?’ (*As-Safir*, 14 January 2010; Magid 2010; *Al-Ittihad*, 11 March 2010; Al-Shobaky 2010).

This enthusiasm for Turkey’s overtures has remained cautious. On the one hand, the Davos incident was described as ‘a catalyst for a new relationship between Turkey and the Arab and Muslim peoples’ (Matar 2009b). On the other hand, Arab civil society has responded to Turkish regional activism with wariness, in three main areas. Firstly, many Arab analysts have stressed that AKP policies emerged in the context of a process ongoing since the 1960s, reminding their audiences that Turkish-Arab relations were not as poor as occasionally depicted before Erbakan and the ‘Islamists’ came to power (Ibid.).

Secondly, there is the question, and indignation at the prospect, of Turkey’s return to the region with nostalgia for its imperialist past and a ‘neo-Ottomanist’ agenda. This question has been asked with particular reference to Turkey’s EU bid, and whether Ankara has been looking to the Middle East as a potential replacement, a temporary alternative, or as a sphere of influence with which to gain more credibility and leverage for EU accession (Al-Labbad 2009, p. 217; *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* 14 January 2010; Matar 2009a). Some writers are certain that ‘Turkey wishes to open its horizons eastwards after the doors were closed to it in the West’ (AbuKhalil 2010).

Third, and arguably most pressing, is the issue of the sincerity of Turkey’s stance on Israel. Since 1967, Arab evaluations of politics have come to turn on the Arab-Israeli conflict, and, as Michael Barnett puts it, states’ ‘labels increasingly depended on where they stood toward Israel’ (1998, p. 166). Arab actors are aware that criticism of Israel is bound up with Turkish do-

mestic politics and interests, and has given Turkey soft power gains at relatively low political cost thus far. Many are aware that 'Turkey does not need to make a real break with Israel... To be recognized as a regional power Turkey should distance itself from Israel without breaking relations with it' (Al-Labbad 2010). This view is particularly prevalent among Arabs of secular pan-Arabist and leftist orientations. Before Turkey downgraded diplomatic ties with Israel in September 2011, many posed questions as to AKP leaders' ability to act on their words, considering the delicate balance between them and the military establishment. In 2009, Azmi Bishara argued that Turkey's opening to the Arabs remained a party rather than a state choice (Bishara 2009). After the deterioration in Turkish-Israeli relations, the mass resignations among the Turkish military that preceded it were noted, as was the ongoing Turkish-Israeli exchange in trade and tourism.

The discussion above should serve to modify the conventional image of an Arab populace captivated by the new directions in Turkish foreign policy and eagerly awaiting the return of the Caliphate. It is now worth detailing this picture further, and considering the variations in opinion across the political spectrum. The two main criteria that can be said to distinguish Arab civil society's receptions of Turkish policy are their positions on Israel, and on religion in politics.

The first group, which comprises various advocates of a form of political Islam, has been the most welcoming of Turkey's contemporary role, and the keenest to assert its novelty and its Islamist credentials. The Egyptian writer Fahmi Huwaydi is a moderate representative of this trend. Describing Turkey's foreign policy strides, he focuses on their domestic foundations, for example the public services offered by the Istanbul municipality, Turkey's waqf charities, the dynamism of its civil society, and its effective democratic system (Huwaydi 2009; 2010a, 2010b). Meanwhile, writers from Hamas, which was swiftly isolated after winning the 2006 Palestinian Legislative Council elections, were also pleased with the AKP victory in 2007. For them,

It signalled a victory over a phenomenon present in many Islamic countries –that of the interference of the military– security establishment in the political process. It should be noted that the AKP did not win through Islamic slogans, but through their call for the return of citizens' free choice, social justice and economic prosperity for all. This is a lesson from which all Arab political parties can learn (Tamimi 2007).

Alongside this praise for competitive politics by the pious in Turkey, advocates of Islamist politics are also the most keen to assert a unity of mores and customs among the Turkish and Arab peoples, and often describe Turkey as having ‘returned to itself’ under the AKP (Huwaydi 2010c). As 2011 progresses, this camp’s voices have been heard invoking the successful ‘Turkish model’. The Muslim Brothers’ new Freedom and Justice Party in Egypt was formed with a tacit nod to the AKP’s example, and has sought to foster ties with it (*IkhwanOnline*, 5 April 2011).⁶

A second group comprises those who reject Islamist politics, promote the goal of a settlement with Israel by invoking realism, and remain loyal to regimes in the American camp. Newspapers affiliated to such accommodationist regimes as Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Jordan have tended to highlight the inadequacy of Turkey’s claims to the position of regional power, and of its challenge to Israel. This is in order to pour cold water over any hopes for a restoration of balance in the region, which would of course demote the governments of these states in the process. Writing in the Lebanese daily *Al-Mustaqbal*, Faisal Alloush described NATO’s 2010 Lisbon summit as a test, and Turkey’s agreement to host rocket shields on its territory as evidence of the limits of its ‘strategic reorientation’ (2010). An editorial in Lebanon’s *An-Nahar* argues that Turkey did not win in its dispute with Israel over the Çelikkol incident, despite receiving an apology, because of ‘the deeper damage caused to Israeli-Turkish relations and to Turkey’s ability to act as mediator – a position which has represented a “soft power” factor in the region in recent years’ (*An-Nahar*, January 2010).

Writing in late 2010, the editor of Saudi-owned *Ash-Sharq Al-Awsat* certainly reflected widespread popular sentiment with his polemic about Turkey needing to keep its promises (Al-Rashid 2010). His article, however, barely conceals its agenda to keep Turkey, the newcomer, out – it threatens to erode traditional spheres of Saudi influence, particularly in Lebanon. He begins, ‘Erdoğan has entered the arena of statements, declaring that he will not be silent at Israel’s attacks,’ and continues, ‘Erdoğan meant what he said exactly, he will not be silent, he will (just) talk. The danger of verbal support is that it encourages more adventures, and causes losses to the Arab side... It is something we must refuse from Turkey or anyone else’ (Ibid.).

6 The new party’s members have at times emphasised the AKP’s Islamic credentials far more than the AKP itself would publicly accept. During Erdoğan’s Cairo tour, his comments on secularism angered the old guard of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Indeed, Erdoğan's November 2010 visit to Lebanon, within weeks of Ahmedinejad's equally high-profile visit, created waves of speculation regarding Turkey's influence in the country. Writers from the March 14th camp were ready to accord Turkey a sectarian role at most (Na'um 2010). One Lebanese writer stated: 'Turkey is not a competitor of Iran's in Lebanon. The real struggle is between Iran... and Saudi Arabia... [Turkey's] only exclusive quality is its economic capability... Syria is the main gate for Turkish presence in Lebanon.' The article declares that Turkey's standpoints ultimately fall short of being independent: it describes NATO as 'Turkey's umbrella' and is at pains to demonstrate that Turkey has fallen in line within NATO on Iran, taking an American 'slap' along with Brazil, and has sought this compliance 'as a counter-balance to its current coldness with Israel' (Al-Zayn 2010; Al-Jisr 2010). Thus, even among the American-aligned camp, Turkey's regional role continues to be judged according to its relative autonomy, which remains the criterion by which the wider Arab public judges any regional power. It should be noted that there is a limit to these critiques, since Turkey remains, like many of these pundits, in the Sunni camp, and thus is not a power to be distanced entirely. Moreover, with Turkey's moves to oppose the Syrian regime throughout 2011, the tone of this camp will certainly change.

A third group comprises the Arabists and leftists, who are concerned with resistance to Israel in foreign policy, and have no time for religious or sectarian politics. Writers in newspapers such as *Al-Quds Al-'Arabi*, *As-Safir* and *Al-Akhbar* have generally expressed moments of enthusiasm amidst an overall caution to, and at times wariness of, Turkey's latest policies. For them, Turkey has been in the Western camp for such a long time that the AKP's record so far represents relatively minor change. Whilst appreciative of several Turkish gestures, they recognise that these serve primarily Turkish national interests. Azmi Bishara has analysed those events which ostensibly pointed to Turkey's notorious 'change of axis' as necessary steps in the AKP's quest for a mediator role. They included Erdoğan's vehement critiques of Israel, the flourishing of Turkish-Syrian relations, and the invitation of Hamas delegations to Ankara. According to Bishara, these steps represented a calculated rebalancing of a previously skewed foreign policy, to facilitate Turkey's emergence as a player in the Arab-Israeli conflict and hence as a regional power (2010). The turning point was Israel's war on Gaza, planned without Turkey's knowledge, and ignoring Turkish mediation efforts. After this slight, the ensuing negative dynamic was hard to avert. Bishara puts this

down to Israeli leaders' arrogance and insensitivity to the AKP's party base, as opposed to being a conscious Turkish decision: 'Reading the deterioration of relations as an expression of a predetermined ideological position' reveals Arab wishful thinking. Rather, Turkey has been increasing its weight in multiple regional spheres, and is thus becoming capable of reorganising several bilateral relations to its own advantage (Ibid.).

Arabist and leftist writers, like those in the first camp above, are also impressed by Turkey's democratic example, but for different reasons. Where the latter celebrate its example of Islamist politics, the former highlight its incorporation instead. In debates on Egypt's democratic transition, for example, many have argued that Turkey was able to produce a 'modern Islamic' party like the AKP due to the Turkish state's strongly institutionalised secularism (Matar 2011). Meanwhile, they emphasise that Turkish democracy works to ensure its autonomy of action abroad. Bishara identifies a pattern in the AKP's challenges to the U.S line: each time, there is an invocation of democracy as an expression of sovereign will that rejects U.S dependency. Its first and greatly celebrated instance was the vote of the National Assembly against the use of Turkish territory in the 2003 war on Iraq (Bishara 2010).

Displaying further caution, Arabist and leftist thinkers have pointed to the contradictions between Turkey's Arab policies and those of its NATO allies: 'some say that the controversial phase of Turkish-Israeli relations is over and that now it is time for Turkey's punishment for its move towards the Arab Middle East' (Matar 2009a).⁷ It was also noted that when Turkey downgraded its ties with Israel, Ankara also agreed to station NATO missile shields on its territory. As'ad AbuKhalil has described what he considers the fundamentals of the Turkish-Israeli relationship as 'recognition of the state, a certain level of military and intelligence cooperation... the quest for peace between Israel and Syria on the one hand, and Israel and Hamas on the other' (2010).

Accordingly, these writers prescribe caution, and discourage the hero worship of figures such as Erdoğan, whose 'sentimental words about Palestine' have been uttered countless times to no effect by Arab leaders in the past (Ibid.). Before the Arab uprisings, Bishara bemoaned the transformation of Turkey into 'a vent for the depressions of Arab societies, and a comfortable peg for the Arabs to hang their hopes upon...' (2010). Different representa-

7 See also 'Behind the News' Programme: 'Israel's Alliance with the Balkan States', *Al-Jazeera* (Arabic), aired 28 January 2010.

tions of the events of Davos were a case in point. As Matar notes, 'The story that was told was the one people wanted to hear: the people are yearning for a hero, and searching for a role they used to play...' (2009b). Writers in this camp are also the most hesitant to assert a unity of identity across the Turkish and Arab communities. Rejecting the notion of a renewed Ottoman Empire or mentality, AbuKhalil writes, 'if we had to draw a historical comparison, we could describe the Turkish role as an expression of Turkish nationalism with an Islamic character, rather than an Islamic nationalism with a Turkish character' (2009).

Nevertheless, it is important not to confuse this caution with dismissal, and to remember that it is accompanied by a sincere engagement with Turkey. The caution is in part a response to others of Islamist, Arabist or leftist inclination whose zeal is deemed excessive and unrealistic. As Bishara urges, 'the question that should be asked is how to encourage Turkey to pursue' positions of genuine solidarity with the Arabs (2009).

Despite these differing strands of opinion, it appears that the majority of the questions posed by Arab actors are linked to the wider issue of Turkey's relative independence within the Western bloc, which is key to its advance as a regional power. There is a consensus that Turkey's 'Arab opening' will become difficult: 'like Armenia and Azerbaijan, it will be hard to win over the Arabs and not lose Israel... to balance the Arabs with the EU, to balance Turkey's increased popularity in the Islamic world with NATO', which is seen to reflect the difficulty of 'balancing neo-Ottomanism with Kemalism and its insularity' (Matar 2009b). Arab analysts depict a particularly clear trade-off with U.S. relations when referring to Turkey's Arab ties: 'Turkey knows it needs some distance from the U.S in order to get closer to the Arabs' (Anani 2009). One Arab writer criticised the Mubarak regime for underestimating Turkey 'as moving only within the Western orbit and incapable of policymaking against it' (Matar 2009b). If Turkey is deemed to fit this description in the long run, it may well lose its influence among civil society, as well as with Arab leaderships, as quickly as it gained it.

Moreover, as of January 2011, a new reality has governed Arab perceptions of regional politics. Since the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions ignited a wave of popular mobilisation across the region, Arab populations are now in a position to invest far more in their own, Arab politics. The 2011 uprisings have hence revealed that people's enthusiasm for Turkey was conditional in great part on the relative absence of their own leaderships in the re-

gion's balances of power. Once the entrenched regimes of discipline were broken in each country, and political power once again contested, the need for a 'surrogate' Turkish actor evaporated.

Indeed, even among Islamist leaning groups, elections in Tunisia and Egypt have generated political parties that express respect for the AKP's style, but do not shy from confrontation with it (*Al-Tahrir*, 13 September 2011). Meanwhile, Turkey's behaviour on the Syrian issue has hewed more closely to the Western line than its previous policies would have suggested, which many leftists and Arabists –while opposing al-Asad's regime– have perceived as interventionist and unwelcome (Al-Amin 2011b). Only the third camp of accommodationists have shown signs of enthusiasm for a potential 'taming' of groups such as Hamas by a pragmatic AKP (Al-Amin 2011a).

Certainly, in countries like Egypt, where the roles of the army and political Islam are important features of the transitional phase, the Turkish democratic experience has been examined as part of the debate on home-grown solutions and alternative systems. Indeed there may be a trend in which Arab actors pay attention to Turkey today more as a result of its domestic political system, than its foreign policy. Nevertheless, particularly as domestic struggles to direct the course of change intensify, there is still no question of 'importing a Turkish model' (Yunis 2011; Zidan 2011).

CONCLUSION

This chapter opened by noting that regional or local acceptance is a crucial criterion for emerging middle power status. In the case of Turkey, 'the view of the Arabs is important, since... it could ease or hamper Turkey's return to regional balances' (Al-Labbad 2009, p. 211). At stake, then, are Turkey's soft power among civil society, its consequent leverage over Arab states, and therefore its ability to advance as a regional power.

The message from Arabic-language media, literature and personal interviews is that Arab approaches to Turkey range between engagement and enthusiasm, but that this remains cautious, and even conditional, particularly where Turkey's fluctuating policy on Israel is concerned. Egyptian writer Gamil Matar has expressed this mix of caution and engagement with the following words: it is 'too early to predict how Turkey's role will unfold, but what is certain is that the new players are neither entirely from outside nor from among us...' (2009b).

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Turkey's Iranian Conundrum: A Delicate Balancing Act

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At the end of the first decade of the 21st century, Turkey stood out as one of the more intriguing and enigmatic countries to watch, thanks to its remarkable economic and political dynamism, as well as its highly convoluted identity issues. Undergoing a profound and yet inconclusive socio-political transformation at home, Ankara is also carving itself a new and more assertive role abroad. One often hears of an emerging Turkish soft power, defined by a flurry of economic, cultural and diplomatic hyperactivity in all directions. Gone is the “reluctant neighbour” that, as recently as the 1990s, acted mostly defensively and avoided taking initiative in its own ‘backyard’ (Barkey 1996). Turkey is now on the offensive, strengthening cultural and commercial ties with countries in every direction, taking action to manipulate conflicts in its immediate neighbourhood, and attempting to mediate crises –so far with little success– further afield, in such diverse terrains as Afghanistan and Bosnia.

For a growing number of observers, both among Turkey's traditional Western allies and in its immediate neighbourhood, this transformation presents as many challenges as it does opportunities. A more assertive, self-confident Turkey is likely to pursue its perceived interests more rigorously, even if this means going against Western interests or upsetting long standing regional balances. For the West, nothing embodies this concern more pertinently than Turkey's thriving ties with Iran, which has been often portrayed as the “litmus test” of the strength of Turkey's ties to the West (Larrabee 2010). It

is no surprise then that the visible improvement in Turkish-Iranian relations during the 2000s, marked by increasing trade, energy and security cooperation between the two countries, elicited a heightened sense of alarm in a number of Western capitals.

Turkey was among the first countries to endorse the disputed re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad in June 2009. Since then, the Turkish government has avoided any overt criticism of the Iranian regime's heavy-handed suppression of the opposition pro-reform movement, even as it lent considerable support to the popular uprisings across the Arab world since late 2010. Ankara maintains friendly ties with a regime that many Western officials view as the "major state-level threat to stability" in the Middle East (Petreaus 2010). A great source of tension has subsequently been Turkey's refusal to back the U.S.-led efforts to impose tougher economic sanctions on Iran for its nuclear programme, which culminated in Ankara's vote against the Security Council resolution on additional sanctions in June 2010. Coupled with the deterioration in Turkey's previously strong ties with Israel since early 2009, epitomised by the deadly Israeli raid on a Gaza-bound Turkish aid ship in May 2010, this picture appeared to fit squarely in an increasingly mainstream narrative that bemoans Turkey's loss to the West under the Islamist-rooted Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, abbreviated as *AKP*) government.

It is indeed difficult to deny Ankara's role in providing crucial support for the hardliner leadership in Iran at a time when the latter was facing a legitimacy crisis at home and further isolation abroad. Still, does this justify the argument that Turkey is abandoning the West for a new coalition of Muslim or Eastern allies? Or is this question a crude ideological dichotomy that fails to recognise the changing geopolitical dynamics and the increasing multipolarity of the post-Cold War world, and Turkey's desire to prioritise its self-interest in a region where it has deep cultural and historical roots?

This paper argues that the main determinant of the Turkish-Iranian relationship is neither regime type nor ideology, but rather a balance of geopolitical interests. For centuries, Turkey has successfully maintained relatively stable ties with Iran, while simultaneously becoming more engaged with the West. In principle, the two do not have to be mutually exclusive today. Furthermore, at least until 2010, there was hardly a united 'Western' policy towards Iran. The argument that Ankara has been facing an existential choice between a neatly defined East and West is, therefore, both inaccurate and

problematic. That being said, as the politico-military standoff in the Persian Gulf intensifies, and the Arab revolts radically reshape regional dynamics, the space for a constructive middle ground appears to be continuously shrinking. Trying to find that space and maintaining a multi-directional foreign policy, Turkey's decision makers have to walk a precariously tight rope that requires exceptional strategic prudence and diplomatic pragmatism. Ultimately, Turkey's emergence as a respected and independent actor depends on its leaders' success not so much in balancing between the West and Iran, but rather in making realistic assessments of their ability to influence the international geopolitical climate.

DETERMINANTS OF THE TURKISH-IRANIAN RELATIONSHIP: BEYOND POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS

Any well-grounded analysis of the Turkish-Iranian relationship needs to venture beyond the popular caricatures of the two countries. For much of the past three decades, it has become all too common for analysts both within and outside of Turkey and Iran to portray these countries as polar opposites in every imaginable way: Turkey, a staunchly secular multiparty democracy, NATO member and a candidate for European Union membership; Iran, a repressive quasi-theocracy ruled by a fiercely anti-Western clergy.

Although not an entirely inaccurate portrayal, this is ultimately a misleading simplification that disregards the complexities of the two societies, as well as some of the structural similarities between their seemingly opposite regimes. In both Turkey and Iran, for example, exist traditional institutions of guardianship, whose self-appointed duty is to protect the secular and the Islamic regimes against any threat, be it foreign or domestic, real or imagined. These institutions –namely, the military-bureaucratic establishment in Turkey and the military-clerical establishment in Iran– have coexisted with and exerted limitations on democratic institutions in the name of upholding the ideals of Kemalism and Khomeinism.

It is hardly a controversial claim that, for all its shortcomings, Turkish democracy is more stable and functional than its Iranian counterpart, given the lack of any meaningful democratic institution in Iran for much of the Pahlavi era and the worrying trend towards plain authoritarianism in the Islamic Republic since the June 2009 elections. Yet it is also difficult to deny that for as long as Turkey was a pliant partner of the West, the official tendency –particularly in Washington– was to downplay the illiberal character

and the brutal human rights record of the Turkish state, while at the same time emphasising them in Iran.

If one were to accept the view that ‘each regime is the antithesis of the other, and just by being there, each represents an existential threat to the other’ (Barkey 1995, p. 151), one would most likely expect Turkish-Iranian relations since the Islamic revolution in 1979 to be mired with mutual distrust, conflict and hostilities. Consequently, it would only be logical to attribute the notable improvement in ties during the 2000s to the gradual “Islamisation” of the Turkish state under the AKP government.¹ One of the major flaws of this argument, however, is that it puts ideology at the centre of the two countries’ relations.

Balance of Interests and State Reason

The Turkish-Iranian relationship is based on neither ideology, nor regime type. Instead, it is essentially determined by two factors: 1) geopolitics, which means that the degree of cooperation or rivalry between the two countries depends on a balance of their mutual and clashing interests, and 2) ‘state reason’, or a shared political and bureaucratic culture, that is a product of centuries of interaction (including countless bloody wars) at the state level, which practically ensures that the relationship does not descend into direct hostility even when the clashing interests outweigh the mutual ones.

Let me quickly expand on this second point. When exchanging official niceties, Turkish and Iranian officials often refer to the 1639 Treaty of Kasr-ı Şirin (also known as the Treaty of Zuhāb) as the origin of good-neighbourly ties and the end of hostilities between the two countries. This is both cliché and exaggeration. Turkey and Iran have indeed fought battles and re-adjusted their borders since 1639 (Çağaptay & Yeğenoğlu 2006). That said, the reference is not entirely groundless: although territorial disputes did not quite cease, the main contour of the border between modern Iran and Turkey remained unchanged since the 17th century. This is a significant feat in light of the fact that the entire map of the Middle East has been radically redrawn since the late 19th century.

Turkey and Iran are two former imperial power centres that, unlike most of their neighbours, were not directly colonised by western imperial forces. Despite several episodes of regime change (one in Turkey and two in Iran)

1 This is indeed the conclusion one draws from a string of alarmist opinion pieces about Turkey, including Rubin (2008), Çağaptay (2009), Schenker (2009) and Danforth (2009).

during the 20th century, one can speak of institutional continuity in both entities to an extent that is not possible with the other states in the region. This makes the cumulative experience of a long history of co-existence a valid reference point in the two countries' contemporary relationship, providing a degree of predictability and pragmatism to bilateral ties at the state level.

From the 1980s to the 2000s

Had ideology been the driving force behind the relationship, Turkey and Iran would most likely engage in direct hostilities, as was widely expected, in the early 1980s. Indeed, Iran's new rulers did not refrain from criticising the secular and Westernising ideology of the Turkish Republic and condemning its founder, Kemal Atatürk – a fact that did not go unnoticed by the Kemalist establishment in Turkey (Özbudun 1990). Yet despite the prevailing geopolitical uncertainty and the ideological fervour of the time, pragmatic policies on both sides ensured that the ties remained surprisingly stable, while bilateral trade, boosted by the Iran-Iraq war, reached unprecedented levels (Gündoğan 2003, p. 10). In contrast, the relationship reached its lowest point during the 1990s, in the vacuum created by the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Gulf War, when Turkey and Iran set out to compete for economic and political influence in the Caucasus, Central Asia and Middle East, and, in the process, exploited each other's ethnic and religious fault lines. This was also the period when politicians on both sides started actively using ideology as a weapon of choice against one another.

Wary of a potential surge in irredentism within its own sizeable ethnic Azeri community, Iran became particularly concerned about Turkey's outreach to the newly independent state of Azerbaijan in the early 1990s. Another cause for Tehran's alarm were Turkey's thriving military ties with Israel, symbolised by the signing of an extensive military cooperation deal in 1996 and the joint training operations that Turkish and Israeli militaries subsequently undertook. At a time when the United States and Israel were stepping up their campaign to isolate the Islamic Republic, Turkey's rapprochement with the latter was perceived as an acute threat to Iran's national security (Parsi 2007, pp. 157-171). During this period, Iranian newspapers often included sharply worded rebukes of –and thinly veiled threats against– the secular Turkish regime, accusing Ankara of betraying the Muslim people (Pahlavan 1996, p. 78).²

² For example, an editorial dated 13 January 1998 in the English-language *Tehran Times* read, 'Turkey, which has turned its back towards its Muslim brothers and neighbours, has opted for co-

In turn, Turkish officials accused Iran of trying to destabilise the secular regime and of attempting to export the Islamic revolution by funding radical Islamist organisations operating inside Turkey.³ Ankara frequently pointed the finger at Tehran for its alleged involvement in a number of assassination attempts – some of which were successful – of prominent Turkish secularists, a charge regularly denied by Iranian officials (*Tehran Times*, 11 April 1998).⁴ Finally, throughout the 1990s, Tehran also appeared eager to exploit Turkey's sensitive Kurdish issue by extending financial and logistical support to the Kurdish separatist group PKK, with which the Turkish military had been locked in a bloody conflict.

In contrast to the 1990s, the first decade of the 2000s was one when many of Turkey's and Iran's strategic interests started to converge rather than diverge. Any analysis of the two countries' strengthening ties during this decade, and particularly of Ankara's position on a number of contentious issues where it contradicted the dominant Western view, needs to take into account the changing geopolitical dynamics of the region. Two of these issues are Turkey's staunch opposition to the imposition of new sanctions on Iran for its nuclear programme and its general support for the hardliner leadership in Tehran, especially in the immediate aftermath of the June 2009 elections.

TURKEY AND THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAMME

Ankara persistently opposed the U.S.-led efforts throughout late 2009 and early 2010 to impose additional sanctions on Iran, arguing for a diplomatic solution to the impasse instead.⁵ On 17 May 2010, shortly before the sanc-

operation with Israel, thereby endorsing the Zionist aggression and their hostilities [*sic*] against the Palestinians in particular and the Muslim world in general. [...] The Turkish leaders have ignored the simple fact that their country was situated in a region which is dominated by Muslims, and to turn their back to the interests of these Muslims for the sake of their selfish designs will eventually bring them face to face with these Muslim nations'.

- 3 See, for instance, the report by a leading Turkish national daily titled 'The Iran connection of Islamic Terror', *Milliyet*, 6 March 1997.
- 4 In one of the most high profile cases, Ankara pointed at Tehran for the assassination of prominent Turkish journalist Uğur Mumcu in 1993, although no conclusive evidence was made public (*Milliyet*, 25 January 1995). More recently, the claim that Mumcu may have in fact been murdered by elements within the Turkish "deep state" due to his persistent probes into potential links between the Kurdish separatist group PKK and the Turkish state has gained serious traction.
- 5 'There is still an opportunity ahead of us and we believe that this opportunity should be used effectively. Not less, but more diplomacy (is needed)', Turkey's Foreign Ministry spokesman Burak Özügergin said in a news conference in March 2010. The statement came shortly after the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Philip Gordon warned Ankara of 'consequences if it moves out of step with the international community' (*Reuters*, 24 March 2010).

tions vote at the UN Security Council, Turkey and Brazil persuaded Iran to agree to a uranium swap deal, based on the proposal set forth by the P5+1 (U.S, Britain, France, Russia, China + Germany) in Geneva in October 2009. Hailed as a breakthrough by Turkish and Brazilian diplomats, the agreement caught Western leaders off guard (two days before, U.S Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had dismissed the duo's efforts as futile) and was eventually swept aside as a "delaying tactic" on Iran's part.⁶ On 9 June, the Security Council adopted resolution 1929 on additional sanctions, and Turkey and Brazil were the only countries to vote against it.

In explaining the Turkish stance on the international crisis surrounding Iran's nuclear programme, trade and energy cooperation between the two countries serves as a good starting point. At the root of Ankara's policy on the nuclear issue lie a growing appetite for new markets and the need to secure new energy resources. In fact, it is this very combination that has largely determined the general foreign policy guidelines of an export-oriented and energy-hungry Turkey in the new millennium.

Trade and Energy Ties

The trade volume between Turkey and Iran rose from 1.3 billion USD in 2002 to 10 billion USD in 2008. It was expected to reach 20 billion USD by 2011, although that estimate was made prior to the imposition of the UN, U.S and EU sanctions in 2010. While a large portion of this volume is due to Iran's gas exports to Turkey, Turkish exports to Iran have also risen, reaching 2 billion USD in 2008 (*Reuters*, 9 June 2010). There are plans to sign a free-trade agreement, establish a joint industrial zone, upgrade transportation networks and scrap all fees and limitations on overland transport between the two countries (Poyraz 2009, p. 12). Despite a number of lingering trade barriers, a growing number of Turkish entrepreneurs (many of them pious Anatolian merchants that form the backbone of AKP's leading cadres), see Iran as a natural investment destination with a virtually untapped market and a population with similar tastes and culture, where one out of three people understand their language.⁷

Ankara also sees Iran as a vital part of its plan to diversify its energy resources and establish itself as an energy transit hub in the wider region.⁸ Re-

⁶ See, for instance, Sanger and Slackman (2010) and Borger (2010).

⁷ Iran's Turkic-speaking Azeri community is roughly 30 per cent of its population and is spread across most parts of the country and the economy.

⁸ For a detailed analysis of Turkey's energy policy, see the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, 'Strategic Plan 2010-2014'.

source-poor Turkey imports 93 per cent of the oil and 97 per cent of the natural gas it consumes.⁹ Iran is Turkey's second-largest provider of natural gas after Russia, which accounts for over two thirds of Turkey's overall gas imports. In 2007, the Turkish and Iranian governments signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the construction of a natural gas pipeline between the two countries that would serve as an important supply point for the Nabucco pipeline project. Also as part of the Memorandum, the Turkish state-owned energy company TPAO was tasked with investing up to 3.5 billion USD to develop Iran's South Pars gas field (*Upstream*, 3 October 2007).

Stronger energy cooperation is deemed in the interest of both countries; Iran desperately needs investment in its ailing-energy sector, and Turkey needs energy. Tehran's limited refining capacity means that the energy-rich country has become a net importer of refined products, while its inability to maintain its aging wells and pipelines, partly a result of the international sanctions regime, has made Iran an unreliable export partner for Turkey.¹⁰ Furthermore, as part of its ambition to become a major energy hub, Ankara thinks Iran's participation is crucial for the realisation of the Nabucco pipeline project, which envisions carrying Caspian gas to Europe via Turkey without passing through Russia.

The AKP government has argued that deepening trade and energy ties between the two countries serve not only Turkey's own interests, but also those of the international community. A 2009 report on Turkish-Iranian relations by SETA, a Turkish think tank close to AKP, reflects the government's viewpoint:

Turkey might play a role in integrating the Iranian state into the international community. Turkey's initiatives may have a moderating influence on the Iranian state and would, in any case, be a better policy route to choose rather than a direct confrontation (Poyraz 2009, p. 10).

Consequently, it is no surprise that Ankara considers economic sanctions on Iran as the "biggest political obstacle" on this route.

Although theoretically Turkey is not bound by specific U.S and EU sanctions on Iran, and despite repeated expressions of confidence by Turkish

⁹ 2008 figures, Turkish Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources.

¹⁰ 'In 2006, Iran cut off supplies to Turkey on January 19, due to cold weather in Tabriz, where temperatures fell as low as 12° Celsius below average' (Kinnander 2010, p. 10). Also see Wood (2008).

and Iranian leaders that ties would continue to flourish despite the sanctions, the growing economic isolation of Iran is almost certain to impact its trade relations with Turkey (Strauss 2010). Turkish gasoline sales to Iran dropped by 74 per cent in July 2010, shortly after the UN sanctions came into effect (*Reuters*, 1 September 2010). The individual sanctions are also likely to create further tension between Turkey and the West. Faced with the risk of being blacklisted by Washington, large Turkish-state owned companies, such as Tüpraş and TPAO scaled down their investments in the Iranian energy sector (*Tehran Times*, 3 October 2010). Allegations that Iranian banks use Turkey as a gateway to the European financial system are likely to put Turkish and Western officials at loggerheads in the future (*Reuters*, 21 September 2010).

In the end, Turkish investors may be less persistent on working with Iran than their political representatives. In the words of one Turkish businessman who attended discussions with American and Turkish officials over the sanctions, 'if it comes down to the point of "either Iran or America", we would have no choice but to choose America' (*Hürriyet* [Istanbul daily], 28 August 2010). Yet, having seen their lucrative trade and energy ties with Iraq suffer as a result of the sanctions on Saddam Hussein's regime during the 1990s, this is a choice that few in Turkey would gladly face – and one that would arguably do little to challenge the lingering belief among many Turks that 'Turkey gets much less from the relationship [with the U.S] than does the United States' (Larrabee 2010, p. 8).

Nuclear Concerns

There are two diverging viewpoints within Turkey as to the gravity of the threat a nuclear-capable Iran would pose to Turkey and to the wider region. Kibaroglu and Çağlar (2008) note that while the Turkish security elite are particularly wary of Iran's nuclear ambitions, popular opinion is on the whole more positive.¹¹ Indeed, a wide range of political groups in Turkey, from the Islamists to the leftists and the secular nationalists, view Iran's nuclear programme in a fairly positive light, as a noble defence of its national interests and rights against the imperialist policies of the United States. For its part, the AKP government has acknowledged and echoed both of these view-

¹¹ The former viewpoint has been echoed, among others, by columnist Sedat Ergin (2010): 'An Iran capable of producing a nuclear bomb will be indisputably superior to Turkey. Regardless of which political party in the government, this should be considered as a potential threat and preventive measures should be taken.'

points, admitting that a nuclear-armed Iran is against Ankara's security interests, while also defending Iran's right to a civilian nuclear programme. It has used and emphasised these points interchangeably, depending on the audience and the political environment, in order to maintain its domestic and international balancing act.

That being said, there is no doubt that the Turkish government disagrees with the American and Israeli argument that the Iranian nuclear programme poses an imminent and existential threat to regional security.¹² The SETA report, mentioned above, echoes Ankara's apparent surprise at U.S and Israeli alarmism over the disclosure of a new nuclear facility in the Iranian city of Qom in September 2009:

It is difficult to understand why such a public outcry was triggered over the new Iranian nuclear site in Qom (which is a uranium enrichment site much smaller than the facility in Natanz), especially because this discovery did not dramatically change the situation with regard to the Iranian nuclear program. Iran is a signatory state to the NPT. As a signatory to this treaty, it has legitimate rights to the development of peaceful nuclear energy programs (Poyraz 2009, p. 7).

At a time when its relations with Iran were exceptionally stable, with trade, energy and security ties improving, Ankara simply did not perceive the Islamic Republic as an imminent military or political threat to its own security, nor to that of the wider region. Furthermore, it did not want to jeopardise this newfound stability with what it saw as a needless and misguided attack on Iran. Turkey's leaders have generally appeared more concerned with the sabre-rattling in the U.S and particularly in Israel towards Tehran than the Iranian nuclear programme itself. 'Depicting Iran,' the SETA report argued, 'which did not engage in an "aggressive" war for the last two centuries, as an irrational, bloodthirsty state hell-bent on destroying the Middle East with its nuclear weapons is a great distortion of reality' (Poyraz 2009, p. 8). Likewise, when asked a question on the risk of conflict in the region, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu responded, 'Iran won't attack Israel. Iran may be ideological, but it has strong state reflexes. It knows about the destruction of war. I am worried about Israel instead' (*Radikal*, 25 September 2010). These statements reflect both of the determining factors of the Turkish-Iranian relationship: a sense of predictability on the state level, as well as a careful calculation of geopolitical

12 For examples of such reactions see Kuperman (2009) and Katz (2009).

interests. They may also explain why Turkish policymakers, much to the ire of their American and Israeli counterparts, have made a habit of pointing at Israel's own undeclared nuclear arsenal every time Iran's intentions are questioned.¹³

In the end, what complicates Ankara's sensitive position on the nuclear issue is not so much its disagreements with the West, but rather its leaders' dubious ability to display the level of pragmatism that the country's tightrope diplomacy calls for. Populist and emotive statements often made in spontaneity, such as Prime Minister Erdoğan's declaration of his belief that the Iranian nuclear programme is for humanitarian ends (*Today's Zaman*, 28 September 2009), feed into the hype about Turkey's loss to the West and rock the AKP government's own boat. Turkish decision makers often seem to miss the difference between supporting Iran's right to a nuclear programme and guaranteeing that its programme is in fact peaceful. In so doing, they also ignore the advice of their own diplomats and analysts close to the government, who concede that the complexities of the power struggle inside the political establishment in Tehran make it very difficult to gauge Iran's real position on the nuclear issue (Poyraz 2009, p.8).

TURKISH POLICY POST-JUNE 2009 ELECTION

The Turkish government views the preservation of stable ties with a reasonably functioning and predictable government in Tehran as essential for its own internal security and stability. Consequently, its interest in any Iranian government's nature and domestic policies is limited to the extent that these have an impact across the border in Turkey. This strictly self-interested approach was evident in Ankara's continued support for the hardliner leadership, which tightened its grip over the Iranian regime in the aftermath of the disputed presidential election of 12 June 2009. The AKP government's speedy endorsement of Mahmoud Ahmedinejad's re-election victory, despite widespread allegations of vote-fixing and ensuing mass protests, indeed aroused far greater anger and frustration among liberals in Turkey and reformists in Iran than the Turkish support for the Iranian nuclear programme did.¹⁴

¹³ 'Our position is very clear. We are against any country having nuclear weapons. We want to live in a nuclear free region, and this goes for Iran as it does for Israel, or any other country that may harbour the idea of getting nuclear weapons one day,' responded İbrahim Kalın, the Chief Foreign Policy Advisor to Prime Minister Erdoğan and the founder of SETA, when asked a question on Turkey's view on Iran's nuclear programme (Birch 2009).

¹⁴ In Turkey, this reaction was largely limited to the liberal intelligentsia, which otherwise harbours

Eyebrows were raised in Turkey, in the West, and among the Iranian opposition when the Turkish prime minister publicly referred to President Ahmedinejad as ‘our friend’ and exchanged official visits with the Iranian president only months after the election, at a time when the Iranian security forces were still busy crushing street demonstrations in Tehran. In the West, this further fuelled the debate about whether Turkey was shifting its axis towards the East. It also led to questions regarding Turkey’s role within NATO, as it extended a lifeline to an ‘unfriendly’ regime in the midst of a serious legitimacy crisis.

Historical Context

History may partly explain this attitude: Ottoman and Turkish governments never supported the prospect of upheaval or revolution in Iran, as these usually translated to instability within Turkey. Sultan Abdulhamid II was deeply concerned about Iran’s Constitutional Revolution in 1905 – and with good reason. He was ultimately dethroned by the Ottoman constitutionalists in 1909, a year after the empire’s own constitutional revolution. The Democrat Party, which governed Turkey throughout the 1950s, fully supported the CIA-backed military coup against Prime Minister Mossaddeq in 1953, fearing that Mossaddeq would overthrow the shah in a popular revolt and move Iran towards the Soviet Union.¹⁵ Finally, in drastically altering the geopolitical dynamics of the wider region, the Islamic revolution of 1979 partly paved the way towards the U.S-backed right-wing military coup of 12 September 1980 in Turkey.

Although the 1979 revolution caused great anxiety within the Kemalist establishment in Turkey, it was not primarily because of ideological concerns. The Turkish military and political elite were more concerned by sustained anarchy and the risk of state collapse in Iran than the Islamic nature of

notable pro-AKP tendencies, and to human rights groups. Secular nationalists, like the Islamists, were just as quick to endorse the outcome of the election as the Turkish government. Ironically, President Ahmedinejad is held in high esteem in both of these rival camps. Islamists applaud his populist stance against the U.S and Israel, while secular nationalists praise his resistance against the U.S campaign for regime change, which they argue Washington is also promoting in Turkey by using the AKP as a proxy. The two Turkish newspapers that were the quickest to endorse the 2009 election result were the dailies *Vakit* and *Cumhuriyet*, the foremost Islamist and Kemalist newspapers, respectively. For an example of the liberal view see Çandar (2009).

15 Ironically, the fate of the Democrat Party’s top leaders turned out even grimmer than that of the Iranian premier, as they were tried and executed by a military tribunal following the coup d’état of 1960. For a more detailed discussion see Çetinsaya (2003).

the revolution (one should also note that at the time political Islam was viewed as the more benign alternative to secular left wing ideologies among Turkish and American policymakers). Stressing the need to preserve 'good bilateral relations' with its neighbour, the Ecevit government recognised the revolutionary regime 'within twenty-four hours of its inception' and refused to support U.S sanctions when Iranian revolutionaries seized the American embassy in Tehran in November 1979 (Barkey 1995, p. 151; Gündoğan, 2003 p. 2).

Prime Minister Erdoğan also justified his government's policy towards Iran in the aftermath of the June 2009 election as a 'necessity of bilateral relations' (Tait 2009). It can indeed be argued that the AKP government acted primarily on a conservative, defensive instinct that also guided the policies of its predecessors when responding to turmoil in Iran. That instinct, now and in the past, has called for prioritising the maintenance of domestic stability (strictly defined, of course, from the government's own point of view) and the prevention of a profound shift in regional dynamics.

Security Ties

The transformation of the Turkish-Iranian relationship from one based on sustained geopolitical rivalry to a multifaceted cooperation in less than a decade is perhaps most evident in the security field. Whereas in the 1990s both Ankara and Tehran regularly blamed one another for meddling in each other's internal affairs by supporting and financing subversive groups, the picture during the early 2000s looked remarkably different. The U.S-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 played a considerable role in this turnaround. Tehran and Ankara shared similar concerns regarding the possible outcomes of the invasion: a prolonged civil war that could spill beyond the borders of Iraq; the disintegration of Iraq as a viable nation-state; and the emergence of an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq, bordering both Turkey and Iran. Although Iran's Kurdish minority is smaller than that of Turkey and has been under relatively less severe restrictions on its cultural identity and language, Tehran too has long been concerned about a potential rise in nationalist Kurdish sentiments in Iran, should there be a newly independent Kurdistan in Iraq.

Reflecting these concerns, the Erdoğan and Khatami governments signed an extensive security cooperation agreement in July 2004. Over the following years, the two governments stepped up intelligence sharing and un-

dertook a series of coordinated military operations against Kurdish militant groups, the PKK and its Iranian equivalent PJAK, along the porous border region between Turkey, Iran and Iraq (Larrabee 2007). These developments occurred at a time when Turkish-U.S ties were still reeling from the aftershocks of the Turkish parliament's refusal in March 2003 to allow U.S troops to use Turkey as a launching base for its invasion of Iraq. Shortly after the invasion, the PKK ended a five-year ceasefire, resuming cross-border attacks from their bases in northern Iraq into Turkish territory. The Turkish media largely blamed Washington and its alliance with the Iraqi Kurds for the resurgence of hostilities, contributing to a swelling of nationalist and anti-U.S sentiment amongst the Turkish populace. Against this backdrop, Ankara started viewing its cooperation with Iran as a particularly valuable asset.¹⁶

Although the Turkish-U.S relationship recovered considerably after 2007 when the Bush administration agreed to share intelligence with the Turkish government on PKK activity in northern Iraq, the Turkish government remained reluctant to jeopardise the level of security cooperation it had come to enjoy with Tehran. Arguably, the Turkish state's most immediate concern in the case of a violent regime change or an extended leadership crisis in Iran was a renewed push for further autonomy or independence among Iran's Kurdish minority. From the point of view of the Turkish security and foreign policy establishment, coming on the heels of the quasi-independent status that the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) attained in northern Iraq after the 2003 invasion, this would have a domino effect on Turkey, weakening the government's hand against Kurdish nationalists at home. Therefore, Turkish officials were probably relieved to see that the "Green Movement" –the main pro-reform opposition bloc led by former Prime Minister Mir Hossein Mousavi and former Majles Speaker Mehdi Karubi that spearheaded the post-election uprising in Iran in 2009– attracted surprisingly little support from Kurdish nationalists in Iran.¹⁷

In sum, it is possible to analyse Ankara's Iranian policy in the aftermath of the June 2009 election within the framework of cold-hearted pragmatism, which puts the Turkish government's perceived self-interest above

16 'In [fighting the PKK] Iranians walk the walk and they make it look as if the Americans are only talking the talk. And that's a huge problem' (Çağaptay 2007, cited in McCurdy 2008, p. 96).

17 '[S]ince the leaders of the Green Movement have not expressed any explicit support for democracy or any willingness to address, let alone accommodate, the national rights that our people demand, naturally, we cannot show any support for this movement' (Loghman H. Ahmedi, Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan's representative to the United Kingdom, Ahmedi 2009).

others, including those of its Western allies and the Iranian people. Ideology is hardly a significant factor in this equation. When it comes to anticipating political change in Iran, Turkey tends to hedge its bets with the likely winners. Of course, this also means that should the Green Movement, or any other political group for that matter, eventually gain the upper hand in the on-going leadership struggle in Iran, Ankara would once again be at the front of the line to endorse the new arrangement – just like it was in 1979 and 2009.

BEYOND SHIFT OF AXIS: TURKISH-IRANIAN RELATIONS IN THE AGE OF ARAB REVOLTS

Exposing the axis shift argument as flawed and superficial helps move the debate on Turkey's evolving foreign policy from the framework of an outdated ideological dichotomy to a more dispassionate multi-dimensional analytical basis. Yet this will not answer all the questions arising from the new role Turkey aspires to play in the region. Given, for example, the atmosphere of mutual distrust and hostility between the U.S, Israel and the Arab Gulf states, on the one side, and Iran, on the other, how far can Turkey push its Western allies to respect the historical, economic and geopolitical justifications of its Iranian policy? Furthermore, in the face of growing politico-military tensions in the Persian Gulf, can Ankara realistically hope to maintain an independent position and still keep its multi-directional foreign policy intact?

These concerns came to a head yet again in late 2010 as NATO members prepared to vote on a new missile defence system designed mainly against Iran. Many in the West viewed Turkey's active participation in the system as a crucial test of its allegiance to the alliance. The international press painted a hesitant Turkey at the crossroads (Villegier 2010). In the end, after intense lobbying, Ankara agreed to sign up to the programme upon convincing other members not to single Iran out as a specific target. The result was hailed by many in Turkey as a victory for its delicate balancing act, satisfying the West without seriously alienating Iran and all the while maintaining an independent posture.

However, a sober analysis of the episode suggests that Turkey's achievement was little more than a face-saving measure towards Iran, having accepted to participate in a weapons system that points directly at the Islamic Republic, regardless of whether it was explicitly stated or not. In other words, confronted by a new dilemma four months after the UN sanctions

vote, this time Ankara opted to solidify its place within the Western alliance. Its only –fleeting– diplomatic success was to portray this as a respectable middle ground. In late 2011, as the Turkish government took one step further and agreed to host NATO’s radars on its soil, close to the Iranian border, senior Iranian military officials warned that these would be the first target of their retaliatory missiles, should the Islamic Republic come under attack from the U.S or Israel (*Press TV*, 26 November 2011).

Indeed, the alarmist dualism put forth by the proponents of the axis shift argument has effectively concealed the numerous challenges and pitfalls already testing the budding relationship between Turkey and Iran. As Ankara strives to play a more prominent role in the region, it risks stepping on Tehran’s toes, especially in trying to influence countries like Syria, Lebanon and Iraq, where Iran also has vital strategic interests. There is an emerging narrative of Turkey as a ‘soft alternative’ to Iran’s ‘hard power’ in the region, extending its influence through commercial, cultural and diplomatic channels rather than military-economic alliances based on ideological fault lines (Altunışık 2008; Aras 2009; Ayoob 2011). This perception is also evidenced at the level of personal leadership, as President Ahmedinejad and Prime Minister Erdoğan compete to capture the imagination of the so-called “Arab street” by championing the Palestinian cause and standing up to Israel – a goal that may become more distant for both, should a more assertive post-revolutionary Egypt once again claim the mantle of the Arab world’s leadership.

Subtle signs of a renewed rivalry were detectable prior to the outbreak of mass uprisings across the Arab world, such as when Ankara and Tehran backed rival political factions in Iraq’s long-drawn-out governmental crisis in 2010, or when, during the same year, Prime Minister Erdoğan addressed enthusiastic crowds in the largely Sunni northern Lebanon, only days after President Ahmedinejad had an even bigger rally in the Shi’a dominated south. These signs became much more visible with the sprawling Arab revolts. Turkey’s deepening involvement in the NATO operation in Libya against Muammar Gaddafi was received with quiet suspicion by the Iranian establishment. Yet it was Syria that has presented the two countries with their toughest challenge in many decades.

Turkey and Iran have found themselves on the opposite ends of an increasingly vicious geopolitical tug of war over the fate of Syria, as the popular unrest in that country gradually morphed into what appeared at the time

of writing to be a bloody and dragged out sectarian conflict. Turkey responded to the crisis by abandoning its “zero problems” policy with its southern neighbour and stepping up criticism of its erstwhile friend, President Bashar al-Assad, in Damascus. Increasingly aligning their policies with those of the U.S and the Gulf Arab monarchies, Turkish officials told President Assad to step down (Burch 2011), and allowed the Syrian National Council (SNC), the main anti-Assad bloc, and allegedly other armed opposition groups to mobilise in Turkey.

Meanwhile, fearful of losing a key strategic ally to an emerging pro-Western Sunni axis, Tehran was widely rumoured to be helping the embattled Assad regime, which also represents Syria’s minority Alawite sect, crush the anti-government protests. In a picture reminiscent of the Turkish-Iranian rivalry of the 1990s, regional newspapers alleged that Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei had threatened Turkey with retaliation in case Ankara allowed NATO forces to get involved in Syria.¹⁸ Officials in Ankara confirmed intercepting a weapon-laden Iranian truck en route to Syria, while Turkish intelligence reports indicated an abrupt end to Syrian and Iranian cooperation with Turkey against a resurgent PKK, and renewed Syrian support for the Kurdish militants (Yavuz 2011).

As long as mutual interests continue to outweigh the clashing ones, both Turkey and Iran will prefer to play down the prospects, and manage the signs, of a renewed rivalry. This was certainly the rationale of the Iranian leadership until the Arab revolts, as they remained uncharacteristically silent and accommodating of Turkey’s growing clout in their ‘backyard’ and the AKP government’s decision to participate in the missile defence system. In other words, Turkey benefited from reaching out to an isolated Iran in more ways than one. Yet with the region, including Iran, being once again open to such sudden and profound changes, it no longer seems possible for Ankara to take Tehran’s acquiescence for granted. Far from a pliant lesser partner, the Islamic Republic remains an unpredictable and highly independent player in the international arena that can wrong foot even a sympathetic Turkey. Amidst the uncertainty of the near future, it appears more or less certain that the 2010s will pose much steeper challenges to Turkish-Iranian relations than

18 The Turkish daily *Sabah* reported this allegation with the headline ‘Shocking threat from Tehran’ (‘Tahran’dan Şok Tehdit’, *Sabah*, June 27, 2011). While these reports were subsequently denied by the Iranian foreign office, the very pattern of allegation and denial was also highly reminiscent of the war of words between the two countries during the 1990s.

did the previous decade.

CONCLUSION: THE REAL BALANCING ACT

The temporally fluctuating nature of the Turkish-Iranian relationship cannot be accurately explained by studying political ideologies or regime types, or by looking through a dichotomous lens, assuming there is an existential choice between a neatly defined East and a homogenous West. It can be best understood by observing the shifting social and geopolitical dynamics in the region and beyond, and bearing in mind the existence on both sides of what I previously referred to as 'state reason'. While 'state reason' may provide a blueprint for managing tensions and act as a safety valve in times of crisis, the general trend in bilateral ties is shaped by wider structural dynamics, which lie outside the capacity of any government to determine. Hence, while common security, energy and trade concerns may draw Turkey and Iran closer together, as they did between 2003 and 2010 at the risk of straining Turkey's ties with its Western allies, the sudden emergence of geopolitical power vacuums may pull them apart, which was the case during the chaotic period following the end of the Cold War, and may be so once again in the age of Arab revolts.

There is, of course, a broader lesson to be drawn from this observation for Turkey's ambitious policymakers, who make no secret of their desire to reassert their country's long lost hegemony over its former imperial territories in the Balkans and in the Middle East, through the use of various 'soft power' tools.¹⁹ Although the chief architect of this neo-imperialist vision, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, likes to suggest that Turkey will play a leading role in constructing a new political, economic and cultural world order (Davutoğlu 2001), more often than not, Ankara has found itself having to react to sudden changes in the international political climate. The most remarkable of these changes, the Arab revolts, caught Turkey (like the rest of the world) by complete surprise and effectively forced Turkey's foreign policy community to shelve Davutoğlu's much touted 'zero problems with neighbours' policy (Akyol 2011).

Consequently, the real challenge facing decision makers in Ankara seems to be reconciling their growing regional and global ambitions with the limitations that international and domestic dynamics exert on them. There is

19 See Kerem Öktem's paper in this volume for a comprehensive analysis of these tools.

no doubt that Turkey's overall clout in the wider region has grown over the past decade. This is evident in the emergence of a new foreign policy rhetoric that preaches lofty idealism and is used to legitimise Ankara's involvement in issues and crises beyond its immediate concern. Turkey's critics rightly argue that this rhetoric is applied in a highly selective manner. Having claimed the moral high ground by calling on Hosni Mubarak to step down at the height of the Egyptian revolts in February 2011, Turkey's leaders stood by the Iranian regime merely two weeks later, as the latter crushed yet another wave of street demonstrations (*Hürriyet Daily News*, 1 February 2011). Similarly, the AKP government regularly lambastes Israel for its crimes and oppressive policies against the Palestinians, despite treating Turkey's own Kurdish minority in a similarly authoritarian manner, or turning for years a blind eye to the atrocities in Sudan, where Turkish businesses have secured numerous lucrative energy and trade deals.²⁰ Such blatant duplicity is deeply frustrating, especially for the liberals in Turkey who once put hope in the AKP's commitment to liberal democratic ideals. Yet from a brutally realist foreign policy perspective, it hardly comes as a shock: Turkey is neither the first nor the only country to employ rhetoric in a way that fits its perceived interest.

There is, however, a risk that overly confident decision makers in Ankara might be exaggerating their capabilities and overlooking their weaknesses as they get tipsy on the stories of their country's re-emergence on the world scene. For all its economic and political achievements in recent years, Turkey still has fundamental problems to overcome at home – from the continuing plight of its ethnic and religious minorities to an economy running a record current account deficit sustained largely by foreign capital inflows. With its unresolved and polarising identity issues, it often appears as a schizophrenic nation at imminent risk of implosion. As Turkey's profile as an assertive regional actor comes under increasing spotlight, so do its various fault lines and vulnerabilities. Under these conditions, confidence can carry Turkey's leaders a long way, but hubris could be their undoing.

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The Litmus Test for Turkey's New Foreign Policy: The Historical Rapprochement with Armenia

AYBARS GÖRGÜLÜ

The profound transformation in Turkey's foreign policy started with the USSR's collapse and reached its zenith during the second Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, abbreviated as AKP) government with the nomination of Ahmet Davutoğlu as Turkey's new Minister of Foreign Affairs in May 2009. Davutoğlu became one of the key figures leading the metamorphosis of Turkey's foreign policy following the publication of his ambitious work *Stratejik Derinlik* (Strategic Depth) in 2001. Davutoğlu was already behind the scenes during the first AKP government (between 2002 and 2007) as the Chief Foreign Policy Advisor to the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. As such, he secured the opportunity to play an active role in shaping AKP's, but more importantly, Turkey's new foreign policy vision.

When AKP came to power in 2002, its first strategic move was to embrace the European Union (EU) accession process. This goal shaped the internal and external perceptions of the party and its intentions. The international community appreciated Turkey's EU ambition, and the reform process that begun in 2002 seemed to appease most of the AKP skeptics. Foreign policy was one of the fields where the government was not very experienced. Davutoğlu rose as a key figure, and the "strategic depth" doctrine became one of the guiding factors in the making of Turkish foreign policy.

Needless to say, it is highly problematic to see this doctrine as the ultimate driving force behind Turkey's new foreign policy vision. First of all, the change in Turkish foreign policy dates back to the 1990s. The end of the Cold

War left little choice for Turkey but to move beyond its traditional Western-orientated foreign policy (Larrabee & Lesser 2004). In other words, the systemic transformation following the collapse of the Soviet Union redirected Turkey's foreign policy objectives towards its neighborhood. Turkey's new approach was mostly shaped by factors like security, energy and the economy. It seemed as if Turkey lacked a coherent, long-term foreign policy strategy and there was no clear vision of how to improve Turkey's classical foreign policy.

In the post-Cold War status quo, Turkey located itself at the epicenter of the international system – at the junction of an Arab world in flux; a Balkan peninsula in the grip of deadly conflicts; and a post-Soviet space trying to rid itself of Russian influence. Thus, Turkey's new foreign policy vision involved an effort to become a significant regional power. Accordingly, Turkey adopted an active foreign policy by establishing peaceful relations with its neighbours and being a catalyst in multilateral organizations and bilateral cooperation on security and defence. Through NATO, through its action of peacekeeping under the UN and finally its relations with the EU, Turkey became a credible partner.

Davutoğlu's strategic depth doctrine sought to build a theoretical framework for this new vision. Even though the book received only scant academic attention, Davutoğlu's growing popularity as the mentor of AKP's foreign policy planning after the electoral victory of 2002 popularized the expression "strategic depth" in academic and political circles. Davutoğlu had drawn a theoretical framework for Turkey's post-Cold War foreign policy vision and started to implement this strategy when he had a chance to serve in a political capacity. 'Pro-active foreign policy making' and 'zero-problems with neighbours' became the defining characteristics of Turkish foreign policy (Kirişçi 2009). Turkey's relations with Armenia must be analysed with an appreciation of this background. The rapprochement process with Armenia is a crucial part of this new activism, as well as a test case for the doctrine of "zero problems with neighbours".

This paper evaluates the recent changes in Armenia-Turkey relations vis-à-vis Turkey's new foreign policy aspirations. The study comprises two main propositions, which reflect two different levels of analysis. The first argues that the Armenia-Turkey rapprochement is a critical development in the South Caucasus –possessing the potential to transform the region– and has been triggered by changes in regional dynamics (regional level). In order to

actualize this transformation, Armenia and Turkey should establish diplomatic relations, open their land border (normalization of mutual relations), and facilitate an Armenia-Azerbaijan rapprochement.

The second proposition is that Turkey's stance towards Armenia is important for its democratization and enables a process for Turkey to face its own traumatic history (domestic level). If we consider the normalization of mutual relations as the technical phase consisting of the establishment of official ties and the opening of the border, the societal reconciliation is a second process where both sides will face their common history, overcome mutual mistrust, and prevail over existing stereotypes. This process is more challenging than the technical phase, but one capable of significantly contributing to Turkey's protracted democratization process.

After a brief overview of Turkey's motives in considering a historical rapprochement with Armenia, this paper focuses on the above-mentioned propositions and analyses the regional and domestic implications of the Armenia-Turkey rapprochement for Turkey. In conclusion the current state of affairs and the future prospects of Armenia-Turkey relations are addressed.

TWO DECADES OF DEADLOCK

The nature of official relations between Armenia and Turkey has been problematic since Armenia's declaration of independence in 1991. Even though Turkey immediately recognized the newly independent Armenia, the two countries have not yet established diplomatic relations. In addition to the absence of official ties, the Armenia-Turkey land border has been closed since 1993, following the exacerbation of military conflicts between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the invasion of the Kalbajar region by Armenian military forces. Until very recently, the probability of establishing diplomatic relations and opening the land border remained very small. On the other hand, a number of political contacts have been established over the past couple of years. These political moves increased hopes of finding a solution to a problem that has persisted for nearly two decades.

The most important step in this regard was taken in October 2009, when Armenia and Turkey signed two protocols in Zurich to normalise their relations. Despite their signature, the process has encountered obstacles and the protocols remain un-ratified. In April 2010, Armenian authorities declared their suspension of the ratification process. The challenges are numerous: insufficient dialogue channels and lack of understanding between the two sides;

Turkey's close relations with Azerbaijan and the deadlock in the resolution of the protracted Nagorno-Karabakh conflict; and finally the countries' contrasting and incompatible interpretations of a common tragic past.

Why, then, did Turkey enter a rapprochement process with Armenia despite such challenges? First of all, the deadlock with Armenia directly impacts Turkey's relations with the European Union and the U.S. The EU's Annual Progress Reports, evaluating the reforms and the course of negotiations between Turkey and the EU, emphasized the importance of the normalisation of relations between Armenia and Turkey and the urgency of the opening of the land border. Additionally, influential heads of state, such as the President Nicolas Sarkozy, stressed on various occasions that Turkey cannot be an EU member without recognizing the genocide (Crampton 2006).

In terms of Turkey's relations with the U.S, Armenia has always been a point of contention. Turkey's diplomats serving in Washington spend an incredible amount of time and energy to persuade leading American officials to support Turkey's position on disputed issues, including that of the genocide. April 24 speeches of American Presidents have traditionally become a source of conflict in Turkey-Transatlantic relations.¹ Turkey's officials make great efforts in order to prevent the American President from using the term "genocide" in the commemoration speech. What's more, the Obama administration puts special emphasis on Armenia-Turkey relations, primarily to foster Armenia's integration into Western institutions. Currently, this country is an isolated Russian orbit and normalization of relations with Turkey has the potential to open Armenia to the West. Therefore, a rapprochement could become an important achievement of the Obama administration in foreign policy.

Secondly, the Turkish government sees the possibility of a rapprochement with Armenia as a way to confront the genocide claims that damage its reputation and, in its view, promote anti-Turkey sentiment globally. The year 2015 will mark the centenary of the Armenian tragedy – and it is highly probable that genocide recognition efforts will increase. Such a development would create an unfavourable atmosphere for Armenia-Turkey relations. Following the ratification of the protocols in both countries, seven different sub-commissions on the topics of transport/energy, science/education, legal matters, environmental issue, economic cooperation, and the historical dimension were planned to be established.² Among these, Turkey prioritizes

1 24 April is commemorated internationally as 'Genocide remembrance day'.

2 For more information about the content of the protocols, please visit <http://www.mfa.gov.tr>

the establishment of the sub-commission for historical issues. The commission would investigate archives and records with the aim to identify existing disagreements and offer recommendations to resolve them. Turkish policy-makers believe that the sub-commission has the potential to find a resolution of the conflict over the genocide that poisons its bilateral relations; this was one of the main motivations of the Turkish government to enter into relations in the first place.

A third reason for Turkey to establish relations with Armenia is to increase its regional power capabilities. Armenia is the only one of Turkey's neighbors without any diplomatic ties thus far, a situation that contradicts Turkey's ambitious foreign policy goals. Turkey believes that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and Armenia's occupation of Azerbaijan's territories are major obstacles to political stability and regional cooperation in the South Caucasus. As such, normalizing relations with Armenia has the potential to foster peaceful regional development in this conflict-ridden part of the world.

An important illustration of Turkey's regional power aspirations has been the proposal of a Caucasus Stability Platform initiative, presented by Prime Minister Erdoğan directly following the Five Day War between Georgia and Russia in August 2008. Although the Platform seemed unrealistic to regional and global powers, since its structure and aims were unclear, the process itself may have been more important than the expected results. Yet the absence of official relations with Armenia decreases Turkey's credibility in such initiatives, not to mention its regional competencies.

Finally, the rapprochement with Armenia is important for Turkey's democratization quest, as it creates a space for Turkey to face its past and the many conflicts related to it. Any rapprochement between Armenia and Turkey rests on a combination of two different processes. The first one is technical and includes the opening of the border and the establishment of official relations. The second is societal and consists of a reconciliation phase, which is surely more challenging. It is a long and gradual undertaking. Armenian and Turkish societies have lived together for centuries, but their current perception of each other is characterised by misunderstandings and conflict (Görgülü 2008 p. 36). Thus, any reconciliation process can only be long and painful, and it will only be possible, when both societies will face one another – and their mutual histories.

Most of the time, governments control the normalization of relations, but the reconciliation phase has flourished thanks to civil society organiza-

tions. One cannot overlook the fact that the technical process is a necessary condition for the success of reconciliation. The notable increase in the number of civil society activities as well as the establishment of various new dialogue channels between the two sides following the signature of the protocols are solid examples in support of this argument. On the other hand, the closed land border and the lack of diplomatic relations obstruct civil society initiatives and reinforce the current problematic situation, shaped around the perspective that Armenians and Turks are alien to each other. Bilateral relations between Armenia and Turkey can only be understood when assessed within the context of major regional dynamics.

REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF A TURKISH-ARMENIAN RAPPROCHEMENT

The Caucasus is a broad geopolitical region at the periphery of Europe and Asia where the borders of Turkey, Russia and Iran meet. In this region, an abundance of diverse –and contiguous– languages, cultures and religions converge (Herzig 2000, p. 85-88). After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the international community witnessed the birth of fifteen new states from the soil of the old Soviet Empire. The South Caucasus³, which was one of the most diverse and conflict-ridden regions in the former Soviet Union, hosted three of these new countries: Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Exacerbating the dismal economies and corrupted institutions inherited from the Old Empire, these new states were born into a world of fragmentation, political instability and internal conflicts. During the Cold War years, the frozen disputes were by and large controlled and suppressed by successive Soviet governments. Following the disappearance of this repressive authority, the conflicts erupted (Kurkchiyan 2005). However, the escalation of sharp ethnic tensions and the exacerbation of armed conflicts contributed to both the disintegration of the Soviet Union and to the emergence of the new nation states.

The geopolitical struggle developing in the South Caucasus over its energy resources and energy transport routes has placed the region at the centre of the global power struggle. In this regard, local conflicts in the region entered the great powers' sphere of interest. The dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh between Armenia and Azerbaijan, or the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict, are excellent examples of how local conflicts can serve as the manifestation of

3 In Soviet times, the South Caucasus was called Transcaucasia. It reflected Russia's perception of its geographical position, literally meaning "beyond or behind the Caucasus".

larger power struggles between great powers, in this case for political and economic control of the Caucasus and the Caspian regions (Malysheva 2001).

Wishing to play an active role in the extensive transformation process in Central Asia and in the Caucasus, Turkey was engaged in a very committed form of diplomacy with the states in these regions. The initial intention was to establish good relations with the post-Soviet Turkic Republics, and then to create a new zone of influence for itself. In other words, Turkey decided to offer its political and economic system as a development model to exercise political influence (Akkoyunlu 2008). However, founded on a romantic and idealised notion, this process was not as successful as was initially hoped, since Turkey had little knowledge of the region and lacked the necessary financial resources to meet the needs of these new states. Therefore, Turkey's activism of the early 1990s and the regional focus it adopted were labelled as euphoria, largely because of the gap between its expectations and capabilities in the post-Soviet space (Aydin 2003).

Initially, Turkey implemented a common foreign policy over all of the former Soviet Union, without discriminating between Central Asia and the Caucasus. Later, the government put more emphasis on diplomacy towards the Caucasus and the Caspian Region, since its active foreign policy towards Central Asia did not deliver the desired results. The policies formulated around the rich natural gas and oil reserves of the Caucasus and Caspian Basin, as well as the role Turkey could play in the transportation of energy from these regions, later acquired paramount importance for Turkish foreign policy purposes.

The maintenance of good relations with Azerbaijan remained the backbone of Turkey's foreign policy objectives in the Caucasus, inevitably complicating Turkey's relations with Armenia. Both countries already had serious disagreements over border recognition as well as the "genocide", and relations with Azerbaijan became another source of discord in bilateral relations. Turkey's unconditional support for Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and Armenia's reluctance to withdraw its soldiers from Azerbaijani territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh severely burdened Armenia-Turkey relations. As of today, there has been no change – Armenia still occupies seven Azeri rayons⁴ and Turkey continues to support Azerbaijan in this dispute.

4 These seven rayons are Lachin, Kalbajar, Aghdam, Fuzuli, Zangilan, Gubadli and Jabrail.

The Armenia-Turkey rapprochement began in this negative context; however, the change in regional dynamics left both countries with little choice but to start an official dialogue. The South Caucasus is both a Euro-Atlantic borderland and a crossroads where the interests of many states overlap in a complex pattern. The region used to be known as Russia's backyard; the Five Day War with Georgia in 2008 clearly demonstrated that Russia would not accept any outside interference in the South Caucasus. This war changed the regional background and created a new status quo in the region.

More intense contacts between Armenia and Turkey and the creation of new opportunities for normalization numbered among the byproducts of the war. The conflict reiterated the risks posed by reliance on transport and communication through Georgia. The necessity for an alternative route became increasingly more obvious, simultaneously creating a new motive for Armenia and Turkey to establish diplomatic ties and open the border for an alternative route. During the war, all energy transportation and communication projects via Georgia were suspended, demonstrating the risks of depending solely on Georgia. Armenia could now become an alternative route for gas pipelines running to the West from the Caspian Sea.

ENERGY TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

The completion of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline in 2006 represented a significant development for Turkey's aspirations of becoming an energy hub. The second mega-project that Turkey fiercely supported was the Nabucco pipeline project, worth approximately €7.9 billion. Nabucco was designed as a new gas bridge from Asia to Europe, connecting the world's richest gas regions –the Caspian/Middle East and Egypt– to the European consumer markets.⁵ This mega-project was designed to limit Europe's dependence on Russian gas, especially after EU's decision to diversify its energy sources following the Five Day War.

Armenia's exclusion –on Turkish insistence– from Nabucco was reminiscent of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline. The gas from the Caspian Basin is planned to flow to Turkey via Georgia instead of Armenia, which would have been the shorter and more sensible route. Similarly, the BTC pipeline bypassed Armenia due to the country's ongoing conflict with Azerbaijan and

5 For more information about the Nabucco pipeline project, please visit <http://www.nabucco-pipeline.com>.

Turkish demands. The exclusion of Armenia from these mega energy transportation projects increases the construction costs and pushes Armenia towards Russia's sphere of influence. Additionally, the Five Day War demonstrated that Georgia could easily be destabilized, which constitutes a huge risk for the security and sustainability of mega-energy projects. Hence, the normalization of Armenia-Turkey relations has the potential to contribute to Armenia-Azerbaijan rapprochement, as Davutoğlu has stressed on various occasions (Haberaze 2010).

The Armenia-Turkey rapprochement was strongly supported by euroatlantic actors because the opening of the border between Armenia and Turkey would increase Western influence. Europe's extreme dependence on Russia's gas and oil is a strategic challenge; mega-energy projects like BTC and Nabucco depend heavily on Georgia as a transit destination. As a result, Armenia's integration into Western security structures, as well as the stabilization of its relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey, are strategic priorities of the EU and the U.S. Even though the change in the dynamics of the region goes some way in explaining the reasons for cooperation, the normalization process holds some domestic motivations and implications for both countries.

DOMESTIC IMPLICATIONS OF A TURKISH-ARMENIAN RAPPROCHEMENT

The societal reconciliation phase of a Turkish-Armenian rapprochement is as important as the technical process, which includes the opening of the border and the establishment of official ties. The societal reconciliation process, however, is not a foreign policy priority for either government. Both would prefer to establish official ties and concentrate on "technical aspects".

At the same time, Armenia-Turkey relations have become an issue of domestic politics for both sides. In Armenia, the Dashnaktsutyun Party strongly opposed the road map agreement between Armenia and Turkey leading to the protocols and left the coalition government in late April 2009 (RFE 2009). In Turkey, similarly, the two main opposition parties –the Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi) and the Nationalist Movement Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi)– were hostile to any rapprochement, arguing that Armenia does not recognize the common border and continues to support campaigns for the international recognition of genocide. Some politicians also maintained that Armenia continued to have territorial claims on Turkey (HDN 2009).

The issue of relations with Armenia, despite being a foreign policy concern, carries serious repercussions for Turkey's domestic realm. On the one side, there is the centenarian Armenian question blurred with ASALA⁶ terrorism of the 1970-80s and further clouded by international genocide recognition campaigns that reached their apex about a decade later. On the other side, a strong Azerbaijani lobby exists in Turkey, capable of pressuring domestic politics and blocking the rapprochement as long as Armenia occupies Azerbaijan's territories. Moreover, official Turkish history places all responsibility for the tragedy with Armenians and legitimizes the 1915 deportations as well as the disappearance of Anatolian Armenians in its aftermath.

The rapprochement has triggered a societal reconciliation in which both sides began to rediscover one another. The establishment of some official dialogue channels with football diplomacy, in addition to the signature of the protocols, facilitated second track diplomacy efforts – as well as societal rapprochement. In the past couple of years, the number of civil society projects aiming to enhance bilateral dialogue increased dramatically. Numerous journalists, academicians, students and civil society activists from both countries are involved in these initiatives. On 24 April 2010, a commemoration of the 1915 tragedy was organized for the first time by the 'Initiative to Say Stop to Racism and Nationalism'. More than 1,000 people gathered in Istanbul and declared: 'We call all Turkish citizens who feel this huge pain in their hearts to bow respectfully before the victims of the memories of 1915. The huge pain this great catastrophe puts on our consciences is here. We call all Turkish citizens who feel this huge pain in their hearts to bow respectfully before the victims of the memories of 1915' (*Today's Zaman*, 2010). Through 2011, this initiative continued with simultaneous demonstrations being held in the cities of Istanbul, Ankara, Bodrum, Bursa, Diyarbakır and Izmir.

6 The Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) was established during late 1970s as a terrorist organization that sought international acknowledgment of –and moral, financial and territorial reparations for– the Armenian genocide. The organization killed around 50 people, most of whom were Turkish diplomats serving in foreign countries. ASALA was successful in terms of raising international attention concerning the issue of the genocide. Simultaneously, however, the group's actions engendered a strong anti-Armenian sentiment among the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which plays a central role in the normalization process of Armenian-Turkish relations.

THE FUTURE OF ARMENIA-TURKEY RELATIONS

Following the analysis of regional and domestic implications of a rapprochement, it would be useful to touch upon the current state of affairs and future prospects of the rapport between these two countries. Armenia and Turkey signed an accord on 10 October 2009 to restore official ties and reopen their shared land border. Despite the international community's positive reaction, Azerbaijan's authorities announced that every independent nation has the right to establish relations with other countries, but they emphasized that the normalization of relations and the opening of the land border between Armenia and Turkey must be postponed until after the withdrawal of Armenian troops from Azerbaijani territory (*The Economist* 2009).

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was not officially included in the agreement between the two countries, and there was no direct reference to this issue in the protocols. As a result, Prime Minister Erdoğan's declaration to link the protocols' ratification to progress in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was met with disappointment in Armenia (Armenia Liberty 2009). And indeed, political compromise in this protracted conflict seems unlikely. The OSCE Minsk group, created in 1992 to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict, has been fruitless thus far. The Group is headed by a co-chairmanship of France, Russia and the U.S. Alongside France's symbolic and the U.S.' limited presence in the South Caucasus, the only actor capable of putting pressure on both Armenia and Azerbaijan is Russia. Therefore, the conflict resolution process is highly dependent on Russia's political calculations. Unlike Azerbaijan and Turkey, Russia sees no link whatsoever between the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the normalization of Armenia-Turkey relations (ARKA 2010).

Until the outbreak of the Five Day War with Georgia, Russia's policy has been the maintenance of the status quo, i.e., the freezing of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute. However, Russia revisited this strategy after the war and started to play an active role in the resolution of the conflict, as well as in the rapprochement between Armenia and Turkey. The signing of the Moscow Declaration,⁷ which settled the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, by the Presidents of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia on 2 November 2008 heralded this policy change, made even more evident when Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan invited Turkish President Abdullah Gül to Yerevan during a Moscow vis-

7 The full text of the Moscow Declaration can be found at <http://www.reporter.am>.

it. Russia was also worried that energy transportation projects were extremely dependent on Georgia, and the Baku-Tbilisi-Ankara axis seemed to strengthen too much.

In fact, it could be said that Russia supported the Armenia-Turkey rapprochement in order to 'instigate' Baku against Turkey and attenuate tri-lateral cooperation (Niftiyev 2010), and it seems that the plan worked well. Azerbaijan's officials were provoked against Turkey following the declaration of the "Road Map" between Armenia and Turkey in April 2009. Erdoğan tried to appease his Azerbaijani counterparts, reiterating that the Armenia-Turkey border will not be opened until the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was resolved (Euronews 2009). Despite these messages of support, Azerbaijan and Turkey clashed over energy issues in the following months, which is arguably the most important agenda item in their bilateral relations (Cutler 2009).

In the meantime, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev started hosting his counterparts Aliyev and Sargsyan regularly in order to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. Later, it emerged that Russia was not after a quick resolution, but trying to control both actors in order to hamper a hot war between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Russia was being more careful after the Five Day War, which had once more demonstrated that protracted conflicts can easily turn into military disputes.

In August 2010, Russia signed a military agreement with Armenia that allowed for the Russian military base to remain in Armenia for 49 years instead of 25 (Özertem 2010). Azerbaijani authorities were not pleased and expressed their 'concern about the stalling of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem in terms of expansion of the Russian army in the Caucasus' (Trend 2010). Russia consolidated its position in the South Caucasus after the Five-Day War. It supported the Armenia-Turkey rapprochement and took responsibility in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, improving its post-war image (Niftiyev 2010). However, in the final stage, Armenia became more pro-Russian than ever; Azerbaijan-Turkey relations became worse; and, finally, the Turkish-Armenian rapprochement was suspended.

Concerning the future of the rapprochement, it is important to mention that neither side has officially declared that the "road map" is null and void. On the other hand, we have to face the fact that the protocols are dead. They served a good purpose as the catalysts for official political dialogue after two decades of very limited diplomatic communication. If Armenia and

Turkey will continue the process of normalizing relations, however, it is highly probable that they will need to create new diplomatic tools.

CONCLUSION

The aborted rapprochement between Armenia and Turkey is a multi-faceted foreign policy issue with regional and domestic repercussions. After the Cyprus conflict, it is probably Turkey's most complex foreign policy challenge. It is not surprising that better relations with Armenia would have been a priority for an AKP government that has been seeking to have zero problems with neighbours. Yet efforts from both sides and from Euro-Atlantic institutions have not yielded the desired results – the process is now stalled, and Armenia is still a neighbour with whom Turkey has several problems. Considering that Armenia-Turkey relations have been deadlocked since 1993, it would be too optimistic to expect a sudden normalization after years marked by an absence of communication, or by plain *miscommunication*. Additionally, the changes in regional dynamics that triggered and facilitated the rapprochement have lost their momentum. Russia holds the key to the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and the regional status quo in the South Caucasus after the Five Day War is in this country's advantage. Thus, it would be unwise to expect Russia to accelerate the process.

Even though the rapprochement process was mostly triggered by regional dynamics, its domestic implications are noteworthy. For the first time since 1915, Turks and Armenians have begun to talk to one other. Societal interaction has led to the emergence of new channels of dialogue between the two societies. Yet, the technical normalization process, which is now stalled, proved to be the *sine qua non* of the success of the societal reconciliation phase. Without it, efforts for reconciliation on the civil society level will be much harder to achieve. And without this societal reconciliation, which remains in its infancy, it will be impossible to speak of a true normalisation of Armenian-Turkish relations. The future of relations between Armenia and Turkey, hence, are deeply intertwined with domestic dynamics in both countries, and above all with their democratic consolidations. Considering the symbolic weight of these relations, one could argue that the rapprochement with Armenia is a litmus test for Turkey's foreign policy under the Justice and Development Party.

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Epilogue

KALYPSO A. NICOLAÏDIS

The journey we have shared, dear reader, had no port of departure or destination, merely sporadic beacons sprinkled on our minds' maps. Why should we find this surprising when we agreed from the start to embark on a ship full of bodies running in all directions? So let us steal a last moment together, and venture to this small Mediterranean harbour, in recent past. Can you see her nodding from behind the counter as the shipmaster storms through the door towards his familiar stool?¹ From his favourite crow's nest, he can guess his ship, wrapped in the fog at the very end of the mooring.

Upon each return, he has told her of heroic deeds, tales of uncharted voyages. How unlike Ulysses, he had refused to be tied to the mast as they approached the farthest reaches, west and east, north and south, at the ends of worlds. How his crew was able to drag him back undeterred. Of a ship of fools turned ship of steel. Of tempests unending. And she, in turn, had showed him the ship in her mind's eye, a ship so cunning it would let her see a hundred sunsets in a single night, a ship made entirely of shipwreck beads and bobs, where dreams hang from hammocks and nettings, unscorched by the sun's gaze. Perhaps she didn't say all – how she deciphered far at sea ship logs late into the nights simply to know them safe. His too.

Now she can read the news in his eyes and hide behind thoughts of

¹ Editor's note: we have not been able to ascertain the girl's exact identity. Is she Al Aswany's Bu-thayna, St Exupery's little prince, or Calvino's great Kublai Khan? Or maybe the shipmaster's demon in one of Pullman's parallel universes?

subterfuges: Another glass for the anchor's windlass? A tablemat for his maps? Would he stay?

But he is far already, speaking to her, effervescent. So proud to have pulled it off. Now, no one could tell! Was this truly the same ship of yesteryear, restored to his ancient glory? She knows of his labour – how, over the years, he has changed every bit of the ship, every last peg and every rope, every last nail and every cable. It is a brand new beast, and yet, he whispers with a smile, still the very same ship. The one my ancestors built. Or is it? With nothing left of the original it can fulfil its destiny. This time, they had ca-reened and pampered the ship, breamed and burned off the seaweeds, read-ied it whole: hull scrubbed from under and deck scraped from above, spinna-ker and cargo fastened, sternpole and flagpost polished, planks fixed and pranks fraught. They had agonised over old anchors and antagonised young anchor-men covering the deed. And now it was done. He sits and stares at his oeuvre with eyes shining.

She follows his gaze and sighs: it is beautiful.

But he knows better. That she doubts whether it is new or the same, or whether it matters. He is adamant. For everything to remain the same, every-thing must change. My crew wants new food, my officers new quarters and I...

She likes change, she likes the shine, she does, really. She does not want to rock his boat, especially today... Encouraged, he goes on to praise his crew, marvels at their constancy. As for the passengers, well, they still want to look in every direction. But they don't run around so much anymore. In-stead, they help hail sails and set anchors; there is so much to be done. She nods, 'part of the ship, part of the crew' as they say.

There is more she wants to say. How there used to be much idle gos-sip on that ship of yours, great captain – don't you miss it too... Why has the navigation bridge grown so high? And... can you pick and choose among your pasts and paint over so many ghosts? Your officers long ago cast them overboard and conspired to forget them. But open your palms, great captain; their blood is still on your banisters and will always run in your veins. She casts away the thought – another time.

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So have you decided on your destination, great captain? South! *She frowns.* The gale that swept the southern shores has torn other vessels apart... East! *She laughs.* You say east to make me believe west when I know perfect-

ly well that you are going east. Do I dare say, great captain, your compass has many needles!

Ah but he knows better – an old sea wolf like him stitches his compass in his heart where no one else can reach. He would like to indulge her. Perhaps. But does it matter? All ships' roads lead to some shore and all shores grant me hospitality, my dear. Wherever we stop my sailors run ashore to meet some relative or other. The shipmaster smiles again. This world is our oyster.

Ah, perhaps, but for how long? When you let your crow fly from the top of the mast it will always point towards the closest land. But who says that's where you ought to go? And what if one day the bird smashes down on the deck below, hit by some friendless salvo? Radars are only as good as messages sent, and messages sent are not always messages received. Watch out for dangerous ports, great captain, as you stand at the bow pondering your next stop over. Who will you trust?

The shipmaster protests. He will trust the seagulls that can read the winds before they rise...

... You may have acquired the best, great captain, the sturdiest sails and treenails, pegs, chocks, deadeyes and cordage, but they will not secure your mighty ship if you take on contrary winds.

Look settled girl, I can go where the breeze takes me. Quartersing is my game; this ship was born to sail near the wind! And if the tack is too tight, the waves too choppy, I shall chart a new course – that's all.

Ah, master of the jibe, you can always find another lighthouse as you turn. But it takes much skill to swing your sail from side to side without injuring anyone on board! And what if a bump leads to revolt and revolt leads to mutiny, stalling that great ship of yours?

Who says! *His protests have grown more vehement* – they are happy down in the furnace, my boys; food rations have tripled, and on Fridays they get to play badminton on deck with the passengers, better still, to play with the chains and gun port. And they take pride in my... their... ship. That's the problem with you, old friend: you are romantic and gullible, a lethal combination! Besides, crews are two penny a dozen...

Romantic and gullible, great captain? Perhaps. But am I the one who believes that men can be bought with games in our XXIst century? Or that my dogwatch on deck can track port and starboard all at once? That I can always swiftly take off before any gale? Am I the one who will let the wind slap

my loosened sails against the mast until it snaps, or the one who believes my washboard will keep out seawater forever? How many jurymasts can you carry to replace the ones you've lost?! Am I the one who can't see that in this sea of ours mooring in one port does sometimes bar you from the next? Or who believes that my ship can –with impunity– share mooring, the fresh water and all, with my friends' enemies? Am I the one who doesn't dare ask what happens when the propeller catches stuff, when the ship hits the sand, when... Am I, great captain? *As dusk takes its toll and her tears linger, he feels an urge to put his arms around her shoulders and say those things meant to keep the world at bay.* Don't worry, child, we tend to follow even mightier ships, ocean liners, you know. Their shadow is our silver lining...

She does not want to let him down. She wants to believe. If she had been unkind, she would have interrupted, told him this and more, that whether you deploy your skyscraper or moonraker, whether you crack the whip or oil your oars, your ship will not keep pace with the big mammoth at sea. And you know it.

Instead, she conjures back her playful tone. Ah, so it is all about power for you, great captain! You like to walk a tight rope? Will you try a little game of chicken-at-sea then? Test some other ship on a collision course to see who will budge first – you know what needs to be done do you? Hell, visibly tear out your steering wheel from its wheelhouse and throw it at sea. Who could hope for your ship to change course without a helm?!

He is not sure that even he would risk such an obituary: sunk in a voluntary collision on the high seas.

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They remain silent for a while, watching night fall. She yearns to ask him about the figurehead before he goes. What cheap bazaar pigment has he used to make her so, what high tech shape-shifter? The girl has stood mesmerized on the quay, watching her take on the harbour's every colours, their hidden intonations and insinuations. He guesses her silent question and feels confident again. Whatever truth there may be in her fears, whatever his ship's imperfections, on, inside or under, whatever the other ships, there is the prow, undeniable. When my ship enters a harbour gliding steadily on its even keel, no onlookers, no dockworkers or loaders can turn their gaze away. Why should they know better? What a dramatic sight she makes! Even the other ships bow as we approach: by god, they cannot compete!

He takes her back to these southern shores. Ah yes, his ship too was almost torn apart! But by friendly hands it was. They each wanted a bit of it.

She has drifted to a lighter mood. How will you withstand the onslaught, great captain?! All these well-wishers, sycophants and true admirers trying to board the ship with its sails down... You will need pretty steady anchors, to say the least!

He refuses to take the bait. Anchors are no joking matter. They are demanding and fickle, always complaining about one thing or another: your mooring of choice is too shallow or too deep, neighbouring ships too close or at bad angles, their chains prone to entanglement. And, in the end, anchors can fail you abysmally, forgetting to let you know if your fluke has fastened in the depth of the sea. He has caught himself dreaming more than once of a world free of their tyranny. Sure, the girl has no taboos. Still. Anchors are overrated, *he retorts with full seriousness*, especially when you don't stop for long. All you need are secure bowers and bollards to hook to – as long as the harbourers want you there...

Will they for long, great captain? What if under the new glossy paint they recognise the same old ship that used to sail from the City to levy tax on their elders? What if they come to resent your tight fishnets and their indiscriminate catch? And your sailors, great captain, who can speak among themselves for hours before noticing another?

Our great captain, not prone to prolonged self-doubt, loses patience: And so, if you were right, does it matter! They all want to buy my wares and wikis, and will as long as the waves carry me to their shores. The rest is mere fantasy of a dreamy barmaid.

She understands it is time to change tack, save him from his contrived hubris. Well, maybe sometimes it is better not to go there at all. Send a postcard. How would you like me to draw your ship, great captain, *she asks*. I could show its wonders virtually to my travellers. Shall I focus their gaze on sails capable of withstanding the most powerful winds? Or shall I let them peak in the galleys and the eyes of your moody crew? Shall I dare disturb your universe? Shall I dare?

He brushes her off. I can go further and faster than any dare of yours. I can visit every port and every shore of this sea before my next stop here in less time than it will take you to draw my vessel. Promise.

She frowns. You will be windbound sooner or later, great captain – and then, how will you keep your promise?

The night has fallen; he must go back, ready the jackstaff to hoist the flag, and call everyone on quarterdeck for the ceremonial. His mind is already on board: All hands on deck!

As he hurries to the door, she smiles to herself. You can't be everybody's type, great captain. But you'll always be mine...

2023, SAME PLACE

He sees it immediately as he pushes the door with bursting impatience. Her absence. Later, the barman recounts the day she swam towards the horizon. He sighs. He has allowed his loyalty to the misty harbour to be dissolved in the frenzy of seafaring. He had come back for an anniversary of sorts, a horizon they had oftentimes scrutinized together.

To hell with her, her childish integrity and my foolish promises. She dared dream that horizons could be reached. She did not have the right to tolerate my whims. To pretend. He suddenly notices her drawing on the wall: helm thrown to one side, bodies falling on the other, cracks on the hull, fire from the furnace but sails all out, still. As he unpins it carefully he knows his ship will never look the same.

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