

Turkey's Identity and Strategy – A Game of Three-Dimensional Chess

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With a reaction by Hüseyin Bağcı

About the Contributors

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About the Project

The aim of the Stanley Foundation's project on **Powers and Principles: International Leadership in a Shrinking World** is to identify plausible actions and trends for the next ten years by which the international community could become more unified. The foundation asked contributing authors to describe the paths by which nine powerful nations, a regional union of 27 states, and a multinational corporation could all emerge as constructive stakeholders in a strengthened rules-based international order. For each case, the writers discuss how their given country might deal with the internal and external challenges posed by international norms for the global economy, domestic governance and society, and global and regional security.

Each essay in the series represents an assessment of what is politically possible (and impossible), supported by a description of the associated pressures and incentives. Unlike other future-oriented projects, there were no calculations of probability; we were interested in a particular global future—an international community with broad respect and support for norms—and how it might take shape. Authors were expected to address the particular challenges, pressures both for change and continuity, as well as natural leadership roles pertinent to their actor's geostrategic position, economy, society, history, and political system and culture.

The project did not apply a checklist or rating system to the question of stakeholdership. A responsible stakeholder can be an upholder, critic, and shaper of the rules-based order all at the same time. But while stakeholdership is not a matter of accepting the entire set of norms, if a powerful nation opts out of too many rules, it will undermine rather than uphold the order. To provide a perspective from the inside and counterweight to each essay, a commentator from the given country (or other actor) has been enlisted to provide critical reactions to the coauthors' piece.

Modern Turkey sees itself as a responsible stakeholder, keen to adhere to international norms. Indeed, republican Turkey's national experience has been closely entwined with the issue of the country's identity, and with the explicit aim of becoming fully part of the West, including its norms and institutions. This drive for convergence with Western attitudes and practices in fact began well before Atatürk's secular revolution and the establishment of the modern republic. Turkey has been part of the European system for centuries, and this geopolitical "membership" has had significant internal and external policy implications. The Turkish case is compelling in the context of the "stakeholdership" debate because these issues of identity, affinity and behavior remain unsettled, and because the country has entered a period of pronounced social and political flux.

A few factors and dynamics are discernible as constants in the Turkish experience with regard to norms, stakes, and behavior on the global scene. First, the interplay of domestic and external factors is critical. The more problematic aspects of the Turkish case arise mainly in the internal arena, where questions of incomplete democratization, human rights, and identity politics are central to Turkey's own debate about norms. And these are even more central to the Western debate about Turkey in light of the country's troubled EU candidacy. With a few notable exceptions—such as the Cyprus intervention of 1974 and periodic cross-border operations in northern Iraq—Ankara's foreign policy behavior has been considerably less controversial.

Second, there is a continuous tension between Turkey's desire for full integration with leading institutions on the one hand, and an extraordinary sensitivity to any infringement on national sovereignty on the other. Turks across the political spectrum tend to be highly patriotic, and their notion of Turkish nationalism is often of an unreconstructed variety. Most Turks, including those in official circles, remain uneasy with the weaker, post-modern concept of national sovereignty popular within the EU. Where Turks see risks to national interest, especially in the area of national security, the ideal of multilateral action can be cast aside. In this and other aspects of Turkish strategic culture, there are some notable similarities with the United States. This sovereignty-consciousness sometimes manifests as a wary, highly legalistic approach to international affairs in Ankara. Even sophisticated Turks can be hyper-suspicious about Western intentions toward their country, and an abiding fear of threats to that Turkish sovereignty and territorial integrity lies just below the surface.

Third, the question of responsible stakeholdership for Turkey is only partly about the Turks themselves. Many Turks believe that for all of the country's interest in adherence to international norms and institutions, it is unclear that the West is prepared to accept Turkey as a full member of the club. Europe is deeply ambivalent about Turkey, and many Europeans see Turkey as emblematic of the historic "other." Muslim opinion, especially in the Arab world, is just as mixed. Russia may see practical value in closer relations with Turkey, but in geostrategic terms, the two countries are traditional competitors. The US also takes a strategic interest in Turkey, but hardly a trustworthy sponsor from the Turkish perspective. So where does Turkey really fit? Should we even expect it to fit? After all, the sense of distinctiveness (evident in another famous Kemalist slogan, "we resemble ourselves") is an important theme in Turkish discourse.

Measured against the full spectrum of international behavior, Turkey is a conservative, *status quo* actor: slow to move unilaterally and firmly attached to international norms. Turkey belongs to leading Western organizations, including NATO, the OECD, and the Council of Europe, and is a candidate for EU membership. Yet, in recent years there has been a perceptible shift in Turkey's foreign policy, toward what some call a "neo-Ottoman" approach, in which Islamic identity and Middle Eastern interests play a greater role. According to this vision, which is popular across the ideological spectrum, Turkey should draw on its special cultural, historic, and religious links to its former possessions and rise to major power status through deeper involvement across this vast geography. This view calls for Turkey to act independently in accordance with Islamic or Turkic culture and norms—not necessarily Western ones. The widespread support for this approach has, for instance, pushed Turkey toward a more active role in non-Western institutions such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), which brings together 57 mostly Muslim-majority countries.

As part of this self-confident vision, Ankara aims to take part in the full panoply of intergovernmental institutions. For example, Turkey has put itself forward as a candidate for a two-year elected seat on the UN Security Council in 2009 (it succeeded). In its associated diplomatic campaign, Turkey has established unprecedented government, business, and civil society relations with countries in Africa, South Asia and Latin America, including Caribbean and Pacific states with few if any previous ties to Ankara.

Looking ahead, we believe the key areas to watch are Turkey's internal evolution, the related consequences for Ankara's foreign and security policies, and the completeness of Turkey's integration in the West, and possible alternative postures.

Kemalist Turkey and the Pressures for Change

Ever since its founding, the Turkish state defined Kurdish separatism and Islamic fundamentalism as existential threats to the Republic. The Kemalist establishment has swung into action—at times with military force—when any perceived "red lines" were crossed on either of these issues. These two issues are also at the heart of the Turkish debate on political and human rights, including freedom of speech and minority rights, as well as general reform initiatives.

The reforms that began with Turgut Özal in the 1980s were interrupted when an Islamist party came to office in 1996 in a coalition and then was ousted by a "post-modern" coup a year later. The 2002 elections brought to power its more moderate successor, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), which garnered enough seats to rule without coalition partners. The AKP owes its success partly to other parties' loss of legitimacy as well as to its own pro-EU, pro-reform, and pro-economic liberalism platform. The AKP received strong support from reform-minded democrats and from the business community, which had suffered greatly during the economic crisis of 2001. Turkey had endured a string of no fewer than seven tumultuous coalition governments stretching back to 1983. This degree of political instability is deadly to investment; as a result, the Turkish economy

tottered along a roller coaster track—though on average, in the decade between 1991 and 2001 annual real GDP growth averaged 3.7 percent. The AKP heavily promoted and then successfully implemented the economic recovery program introduced in March 2001 by former World Bank vice-president and later economy minister Kemal Dervis. In 2004, inflation fell to single digits for the first time since 1976. Average growth during the AKP’s first five years in office was 7.4 percent. Following a fairly strong five-year record of economic performance, the AKP was returned to office in July 2007 with an unprecedented 47 percent of the vote.

Most importantly, the AKP campaigned on themes of hope and optimism for the future. Clearly, the opening of EU accession talks made Turkey attractive to foreign investment, and overall global market trends certainly helped. But what is most significant is that the AKP government showed unprecedented openness to privatization. Business interests were pleased with the AKP’s pro-EU policies and the boost that they gave to international investment. Liberal democrats also looked to EU norms and saw Turkey’s future rightful place as being within the EU. Even though the EU’s favorability rating among Turks has wavered—going from some 58 percent in 2004 to 27 percent in 2007, and roughly 41 percent in late 2008—businesspeople, liberals, and Islamists still consider the EU one of their best levers against what they see as the rigid Kemalist establishment.¹

The AKP has also been most eager to integrate the traditionally marginalized Kurds and Islamists into the mainstream—as part of what the government has declared to be a much-needed process of “normalization.” Following the arrest of PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan in 1999, there were attempts at extending wider political and cultural rights to ethnic Kurds. Then Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz went so far as to declare “the road to the EU goes through Diyarbakır.” During a landmark August 2005 visit to Diyarbakır, Prime Minister Erdogan broke further ground in forthrightly stating that Turkey has a “Kurdish problem” which could only be solved by “more democracy, more civil rights, and more prosperity.” Kurds were pleased by the premier’s apparent recognition that the issue transcended the terrorism and national security concerns with which it was usually framed. Many of them voted for the AKP in 2007 elections. In addition, for the first time since 1991, a pro-Kurdish party (Kurdish Democratic Society Party-DTP) was able to gain a position in the Grand National Assembly—at a time when Turkish patience with PKK terrorism had reached its limits.

The third and most important support base for the AKP has come from a nexus of devout Muslims and Islamists. Disappointed in the AKP’s first term, they wanted “one of their own” to be elected president, and expected the party during its second term to deliver on unfulfilled promises—above all, constitutional changes to permit women to wear the Islamic headscarf. As concerns arose about AKP having a “hidden Islamist agenda,” mass demonstrations took place against the election of an AKP president that would extend the party’s power to full control over the executive and the legislature along with the ability to influence the judiciary, effectively putting an end to the separation of powers. Following the military’s so-called “e-coup,” which backfired, the soldiers took a low profile. The most memorable slogan of these rallies, “No *shari’a*, no coup!” perfectly

¹ See German Marshall Fund of the United States, *Transatlantic Trends*, 2008.

summed up the two poles pulling the country apart and the desire of the majority for a democratic consensus. In 2007, the main split was between those whose greatest fear was the threat to democracy (from a military coup) and those whose greatest fear was the threat to secularism (from the Islamists).²

The Islamist base was emboldened after the July election results and chose confrontation instead of compromise on a number of issues. A president with an Islamist past, Abdullah Gul, was chosen right after the parliamentary elections—thus opening a new chapter in Turkey’s democratic evolution. For the first time, the Turkish Republic has both a president and a prime minister from Islamist backgrounds whose wives wear the Islamic headscarf. With no time to digest such a major change, the AKP commissioned the drafting of a new constitution. While many people wanted to see a new “civilian” constitution eventually replace the one drafted by the military after its 1980 coup, the timing and the process aroused concerns about a religious agenda. In the event, AKP focused heavily on the headscarf issue, neglecting other significant reform proposals, including on issues of concern to liberal Muslims. For example, the Alevi community, some 20 percent of Turkey’s population, has been mostly ignored; Alevi children still have no choice but to follow the Sunni religious curriculum. Civil liberties such as freedom to dissent came under increasing attack from nationalist circles, civil service promotions appeared to be based increasingly on piety rather than merit, and more and more establishments stopped serving alcohol to prove their Islamic credentials—an anathema for secular Turks.

In March 2008, Turkey’s chief prosecutor filed a case with the Constitutional Court, charging that AKP had become “a center of anti-secular activities” and asking that AKP be shut down and 71 of its members banned from elected office for five years. In June the Court overturned the controversial headscarf law. But contrary to domestic and international expectations, on July 30, 2008 the court opted to sanction rather than close AKP. A further closure case is pending against the Kurdish DTP, accused of praising and aiding the PKK and also of serving as “a center of activities aimed at damaging the independence of the state and the indivisible integrity of its territory and nation.” The threat of an AKP closure provoked a complex debate inside and outside Turkey about norms and practices, especially in the context of Turkey’s EU candidacy. The consensus among observers across the spectrum is that the deeper social and political divisions behind the political crises of 2007-2008 are unlikely to be resolved by the July 2008 verdict. The potential for further political and legal clashes over secularism remains very real.

In recent years, the nationalists and the AKP have found themselves on opposite sides of almost all of Turkey’s most sensitive issues. As the AKP’s position has often been aligned with that of the West, anti-AKP groups evolved into anti-Western ones. Some key points of contention have included the AKP’s willingness to reopen the Greek Orthodox seminary in Halki (secular nationalists fear this will set a precedent for opening new Islamic institutions outside the control of the state); and the AKP’s acceptance of the Annan Plan for Cyprus—a deal that nationalists view as a “sellout” of Turkish interests.

² Zeyno Baran, “Turkey Divided,” *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 2008

As ethnic and religious identities become bigger drivers of politics (and conflict) the world over, Turkey is in the midst of a clash of its multiple identities; the outcome of this battle will shape the nature of its international “stakeholdership”. One clash is between Western and Islamic identities, with the Islamic periphery coming to the center, and Islamists gaining influence in many Muslim societies. In addition, Turkey’s strong state is also challenged by forces of globalization, which benefit transnational Islamist groups among others. In the short term, there is likely to be a continued backlash from the secular and nationalist establishment, and this will certainly not lead to a more liberal political culture.³

The prevailing mood of Turkish nationalism and xenophobia is reflected in the latest Pew poll results.⁴ Those with a positive view towards the US stand at 12 percent—up from 9 percent in 2007, but still the lowest in the world. Those with a negative view towards the US stand at 77 percent. The percentage of Turks who consider the US an “enemy” stands at 70 percent, and only 8 percent consider it to be “partner”. By way of comparison, 60 percent of Pakistanis, 39 percent Egyptians, and 34 percent Russians consider the US to be an “enemy.” These figures, worrisome in their own right, take on added significance in light of the steadily growing role of public opinion in Turkish foreign policy—a point of convergence with Western societies.

Geostrategy with a Diversified Portfolio

With relatively few exceptions, Turkish foreign policy has been essentially moderate, predictable, and multilateral. A highly professional and well-respected diplomatic service has also enabled Turkey to “punch above its weight” in many settings. Outside of some rarefied liberal circles, the notion of international relations as a source of public goods is not central to the Turkish debate. Turkish foreign policy is much closer to the realist approach, with a healthy dose of suspicion and ambivalence toward the other players thrown in. But even these concerns about identity and orientation have prompted Turks to keep an eye on the country’s international reputation and on opportunities to play a constructive regional role. This component of Turkish foreign policy has expanded in recent years—a process that started with the Özal government’s forward-leaning stance in the 1990-1991 Gulf War coalition.

The AKP government took this approach several steps further by broadening the scope of Turkish foreign policy to build closer relations with the Arab and Muslim worlds, and Eurasia. Leading advisors in the AKP government, notably Ahmet Davutoglu, have argued for a policy of “strategic depth,” balancing relations with the West and immediate neighbors with new relationships, mainly economic and political, further afield.⁵ This

³ One example is the fate of Article 301, criminalizing the denigration of Turkishness, the Republic, and the foundation and institutions of the State. It is a major concern for freedom of expression, and one the EU and the US have urged AKP to amend. In the face of nationalist opposition and priorities elsewhere, the reforms to Article 301 introduced by AKP have been haphazard, and more cosmetic than real.

⁴ <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=260>

⁵ Ahmet Davutoglu, *Stratejik Derinlik*. Ankara: Küre Yayınları, 2001; “An eminence grise,” *The Economist*, Nov 15 2007, http://www.economist.com/world/europe/displaystory.cfm?story_id=10146653

policy has had its controversial aspects, most notably in Ankara's close contacts with Hamas and Iran. In August 2008, Iranian President Ahmadinejad made a controversial, high-profile visit to Istanbul. The visit had little tangible significance, but the symbolism of the event was trumpeted by AKP supporters and detractors alike. Other steps have been more positively received, including Turkey's ongoing role as a facilitator in negotiations between Jerusalem and Damascus, and between Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah. Sometimes, though, this desire to act as interlocutor can seem ill-considered or haphazard, as in the widely criticized visit of the Sudanese president to Ankara in January 2008.

Turkey values its self-described role as a "bridge" between continents and cultures, and within limits, seeks a leadership role in international initiatives around this theme. Turkey co-chairs, with Spain, the UN-sponsored Alliance of Civilizations, and the AKP government has been more eager than its predecessors to embrace the country's Islamic, Middle Eastern, and Eurasian identities, alongside engagement with the West. Without question, the Turkish public has become more interested in international questions affecting Muslim interests—most notably the Palestinian issue, but also in Chechnya and the Balkans.

While officials in Washington and Europe have generally been keen to see Turkey play the role of civilizational interlocutor, it is a role that makes many members of Turkey's secular foreign policy establishment profoundly uncomfortable. For these traditional elites, a new emphasis on relations to the south and east can only come at the expense of Turkey's western orientation.

Turkey's Immediate and Extended Neighborhoods

Since 2002, Turkey has also embarked on a policy of "zero problems with neighbors." More a slogan than a fully operational policy, it nonetheless captures a trend toward relaxation traditionally tense relations with neighbors such as Bulgaria and Syria. Even more significant has been the rapprochement between Ankara and Athens, break with a long history of confrontation stretching back to the birth of modern Greece and Turkey. The détente followed a period of dramatic brinkmanship over the Aegean and Cyprus in the 1990s. The initial political opening was engineered by Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem and his Greek counterpart Andreas Papandreou following the "earthquake diplomacy" of 1999, and has been reinforced by successive governments in both countries. The internationally minded Greek and Turkish business communities have also played an important role, alongside military leaderships keen on risk reduction and, in the case of Turkey, eager to focus on threats from other quarters. The backdrop for this Aegean détente has been Turkey's European candidacy, and observers now worry that rising nationalism and friction in relations between Ankara and Brussels could erode the progress of recent years.

Turkish external policy beyond the Aegean shows a combination of tendencies—generally cautious and favoring the preservation of the territorial and political status quo, but with some persistent frictions and occasional forays into intervention and unilateralism. To Western eyes, Cyprus has, for instance, been the setting for some of the most problematic Turkish behavior. Turkey's 1974 military intervention may have

protected the Turkish population of the island from absorption and abuse, as Ankara has asserted, but it also left in its wake a permanent Turkish military presence and a political entity, the “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus,” recognized (and subsidized) only by Turkey. Other repercussions of this show of force included the imposition of UN sanctions, a US arms embargo, and decades of Congressionally-mandated scrutiny.

Cyprus has been a nationalist cause *par excellence* for Turks, and the Cyprus problem continues to bedevil Turkish relations with Europe. Indeed, notwithstanding an improved situation on the island itself, the costs of the Cyprus issue have arguably grown, rising to a strategic scale, particularly as Turkey has become a candidate for EU membership. Cyprus is now a political rather than a security question for Turkey and others. It is also a focal point for the tension between Turkish nationalism and the requirements of integration with Europe. Ankara may regard the accession talks with Europe as a negotiation, a search for a mutually agreeable solution, but in fact, Turkish accession is contingent on the assent of other EU members, including the Republic of Cyprus—in other words, a non-negotiable item and a *sine qua non* for membership. As it seeks the proper balance between national interest and international responsibility, Turkey is still burdened with the costly legacy of 1974. Ankara’s willingness to make further compromises in the interest of a Cyprus settlement will thus be a key specific “milepost” for Turkey over the next decade.

Other neuralgic aspects of Turkish policy concern relations with Armenia, Syria, and Iraq. Together with the Cyprus dispute, the debate over the history of the Armenian “genocide” has been among the most problematic points of friction between Turkish policy and international opinion. The Turkish narrative regarding the events of 1915 and the years following still contrasts strongly with perceptions in Europe and Canada, where several parliaments have adopted Armenian genocide resolutions, some with legal force. In the US, the annual Congressional debate over the issue has strategic as well as normative dimensions. While successive US presidential administrations have been sensitive to the threat such resolutions pose toward bilateral relations, there is growing awareness within Congress of what is at stake, given Turkey’s vital logistical contribution to operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and in assistance to Georgia.

On the ground, the border with Armenia remains closed, if rather porous. Bilateral political dialogue between Ankara and Yerevan has been vociferously opposed by the Armenian diaspora—even as Turkey’s own debate over the Armenian question actually has become more active and open. Turkish President Gul even visited Yerevan in September 2008 at the invitation of his counterpart, officially to watch the soccer match of their national teams. This first ever visit to Armenia by a Turkish president has created optimism among the liberals who hope for the establishment of bilateral relations. Yet the Armenian issue, in both its historical and contemporary dimensions, remains a leading obstacle to the liberalization of Turkey’s international posture, and will be another test of Turkey’s evolution in the coming years.

Until very recently, Turkey has tended to see the Middle East more as an area of risk than opportunity.⁶ The Kurdish issue remains the principal lens for Turkish perceptions of the region, particularly for policy toward Iraq, Syria, and, to an extent, Iran. The PKK insurgency and counter-insurgency led to some 40,000 deaths on all sides in the 1990s, and the displacement of large numbers of people. This searing experience contributes to the continued focus on PKK violence and the existence of safe havens for insurgent activity across the border in northern Iraq.

In the 1990s, Syria was the leading supporter of the PKK, whose leadership was based in Damascus. In 1998, at the height of Turkey's confrontation with Syria over the PKK, Ankara openly threatened large-scale military operations if the Assad regime did not close down the PKK presence (it did). This episode illustrated Turkey's willingness to act unilaterally where its security, and especially internal security, was at stake. Since 2003, northern Iraq has been the focal point for Turkish concerns about the PKK and Kurdish separatism. Despite the large-scale Turkish economic presence in northern Iraq, the idea of an independent Kurdistan remains a "red line" issue for Turkey, at least as a matter of declared policy. The international community's stance toward the future fate of Kirkuk is therefore seen as critically important. In the 1990s, Turkish forces launched a series of ground and air operations across the border to create a security zone to fend off PKK infiltrations (Israeli strategy in southern Lebanon was a model). In 2007-2008, Turkey has conducted further cross border strikes—although on a smaller scale, and with the tacit approval of the US.

Ankara is well aware of the negative reaction these operations have sparked in Europe and the US, but the high stakes for Turkey's internal security and the neuralgic Kurdish issue has placed the government and the military establishment under strong pressure to act, regardless of international sentiment. Looking ahead, it is hard to imagine that Turkey's sensitivity to security risks emanating from northern Iraq will diminish, barring a comprehensive approach to the Kurdish problem in Turkey and the region—the sort of grand bargain advocated by some Western and a few Turkish analysts. Arrangements of this kind could well involve international guarantees, and possibly a role for NATO or other institutions in monitoring the border: all representing significant sovereignty compromises for Ankara.

It is worth stressing the singular nature of Turkish policy where the Kurdish issue is concerned. These are issues on which Turkish nationalism and national interest are at their most intense. The Kurdish dimension is perceived as "existential" for the Turkish state and society (Cyprus, while still an emotive issue, is no longer in this category for most Turks. This may be because the issue has been frozen for some time. Cyprus could once again become a major issue, if for example, NATO accession talks begin)

The Iraq War illustrates other aspects of Turkey's perspective on international stakeholdership as well. Turkey's failure to agree with Washington on the opening of a northern front in Iraq in 2003 stemmed from a combination of political mismanagement

⁶ This point has been emphasized by Alan Makovsky in various analyses, and is captured in Soli Ozel's writings about the perils of a unilateral Turkish policy in the Middle East ("on not being a lone wolf").

in Ankara, a clash of negotiating styles, and American failure to convince strategic elites in Turkey. It is also clear that Turkish public opinion, as in Europe, played a part; both were deeply opposed to the war. The absence of a UN or NATO mandate further complicated Turkish decision-making. Turkish thinking and behavior might have been quite different against the backdrop of a solid international mandate (as in 1990). For Turkey as a regional stakeholder, American efforts to “shake things up” in the Middle East, through regime change or vigorous democratization efforts run contrary to Ankara’s interest in stability and the territorial *status quo* in the neighborhood.

The Turkish perspective on Iran reflects similar concerns. Turkish security elites are concerned about Iran’s nuclear ambitions, and some observers worry about the export of Iran’s revolutionary Islamic ideology. But regime change is far from the Turkish mind, and Ankara has a long tradition of peaceful relations with Iran, including significant economic ties. While Ankara is concerned about the rising Iranian influence in the region, Turks often mention that their long border with Iran has remained unchanged since 1639. Ankara is also increasingly inclined to cooperate directly with Tehran in Kurdish matters, including coordinated strikes against the PKK (and PJAK). Therefore Turkish policy toward Iran is likely to remain firmly in the European mainstream—with a strong preference for engagement over confrontation.

In the Balkans, the Turkish approach will probably continue to be shaped by affinity politics and cautious multilateralism. During the 1990s, and through successive Balkan crises, Turkey emerged as a far more prudent and constructive actor than many in the US and Europe imagined. In the Bosnian crisis, where Turkish affinities with Bosnian Muslims were involved, American policymakers were especially concerned that conflict along religious lines could pull Greece and Turkey into the fray. In the event, no such spillover occurred. Both Athens and Ankara demonstrated a marked preference for working within an international framework, and both contributed to multinational peacekeeping and humanitarian operations. This remains the Turkish approach to the region, with Ankara playing a leading role in NATO and regional security initiatives. Notably, Ankara extended diplomatic recognition to Kosovo, despite the associated precedent with regard to borders and self-determination—a sensitivity Turkey shares with Russia and others. Affinity with the Muslim Kosovars is part of the explanation; the existence of a general European and Western consensus on the issue is another. Here again, international opinion plays an important role in Turkish thinking.

Energy Security and a Modern “Silk Road”

A similar calculus operates with regard to the Black Sea, the Caucasus and Central Asia, tempered by even sharper sovereignty concerns. Turkey has been a leader in supporting the development of strong regional organizations in this area, most notably Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC, headquartered in Istanbul), and in Black Sea Harmony, a maritime collaboration with Russia and others. Ankara has been firmly resistant, though, to any expanded role for extra-regional powers, for instance opposing the extension of NATO’s Operation Active Endeavor (in the Mediterranean) to the Black Sea. Looking ahead, Turkey could be quite open to a Turkish-Russian condominium for the region, with strict attention to the existing legal regime governing passage through the Turkish

Straits. That said, Turkey has welcomed, even sought, international opinion and organizations as part of its campaign to limit the environmental consequences of increased tanker traffic through the Bosphorus.

In the Caucasus, Turkey has a longstanding special relationship with Azerbaijan. The two countries share so many historic, cultural, religious and ethnic links that they often refer to each other as “one nation, two states.” Turkey closed its Armenian border during the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh in 1993, and is unlikely to open it until the conflict progresses toward resolution.

Bilateral relations with Azerbaijan were really solidified with cooperation on two new major oil and gas pipelines to carry Azeri hydrocarbons to Turkey via Georgia. Turkey looks toward expansion and extension of regional energy pipelines, especially penetrating further into European markets, in order to become a major energy hub. The Russian invasion of Georgia, and the prospect of heightened Russian-Western friction, certainly clouds the prospects for new projects of this kind.

These pipelines are but one element of a wider vision for an east-west “new Silk Road” corridor including highway, railway and pipeline connections from Central Asia to Europe via Turkey. The transportation of Azeri and Central Asian (mainly Kazakh and Turkmen) energy to Europe is nonetheless at the core of this vision. There is already a line connecting Turkey with Greece, and it will be further extended to Italy in the coming years. There is also a massive gas pipeline project called Nabucco that would stretch from Turkey to Austria, passing through Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary. This pipeline could contribute significantly toward the EU’s energy diversification strategy and would reinforce Turkey’s interdependence with Europe. Georgian stability and sovereignty – now in question – have been seen as critical for the east-west corridor, and Turkey has supported the notion of Georgian and Ukrainian membership in NATO.⁷

Nor Turkey does want to limit its efforts to east-west pipelines; it is also actively cooperating with Russia, Iran, Iraq and Egypt to transport their gas to European markets. While Turkey’s increased energy cooperation with Iraq (especially the Kurdish region) is widely praised, its burgeoning partnership with Iran and Russia raises eyebrows in both Europe and the US.

The Turkish approach to relations with Moscow is complex and informed by a long history of geopolitical competition and mutual wariness. The economic relationship with Russia, both energy and non-energy, has burgeoned over the last 15 years—Russia is now Turkey’s largest trading partner—and this has been accompanied by an expanded political relationship. Some Turkish strategists even argue for a strategic relationship with Moscow as preferable to what they view as hollow and unpredictable ties to the West. It should be quickly added that this is still a minority, even eccentric, view. Turkey has a long-term stake in reassurance and deterrence vis-à-vis Moscow, especially given current uncertainties regarding relations between Russia and the West. In the wake of the Russian

⁷ In late August 2008, Turkey approved the passage of American vessels through the Turkish Straits to deliver humanitarian assistance to Georgia. The possible delivery of military assistance will pose more difficult dilemmas for Ankara.

operations in Georgia, a more confrontational Russian posture would only reinforce the Turkish need for a predictable NATO guarantee, as any new east-west competition would likely unfold in Turkey's immediate vicinity this time around.

The Turkey-Russia relationship actually offers prospects for convergence in their posture toward "stakeholdership," on the grounds of their common nationalist/realist approach and the search for an alternative to Western liberalism on the one hand, and unfettered globalization on the other. As a matter of shared historical roots and evolution, the Leninist and Kemalist systems emerged at roughly the same time, with some similar characteristics, including a statist policy bent and a tough-minded approach to sovereignty questions. The potential combination of a hollow EU candidacy, estrangement from the US, and a continued rise of nationalist sentiment in Turkey (and elsewhere) could propel a drift away from Western values and institutions, and even a growing affinity for Moscow. A more confrontational relationship between Russia and the West could pose difficult dilemmas for Turkey, with growing tension between the country's economic and security interests, and sharply competing visions of Turkish identity and orientation.

The two already share concern about US-backed "color revolutions" across Eurasia and the broader Middle East. Both are traditionally *status quo* powers and dislike change—especially if change runs counter to their interests or promotes instability of a more general kind. At the same time, leaders in both countries (Putin and Erdogan) have shown new activism in their neighborhood. Russia would like Turkey, for instance, to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as an observer. While Ankara has stayed away from the SCO thus far, a growing number of Turks seem to view the SCO countries as more aligned with Turkey's interests than either the US or the EU is. They call for a close partnership with Russia coupled with a strong but pragmatic policy in Eurasia, giving priority to economic ties over pan-Turkic sentiment. This new Russo-Turkish rapprochement and partnership in Eurasia holds an appeal for some conservative Islamist groups, secular nationalists, and as well as members of the military leadership. In this vein, retired General Tuncay Kilinc, a former Secretary General of the National Security Council, even said that "Turkey should quit NATO" and he singled out Russia as Turkey's most logical strategic partner. The Turkish discussion on these questions is set to become more pointed and difficult after the August 2008 Georgia crisis—and in light of looming debates about NATO's strategic concept, relations with Russia, and the costs and benefits of further enlargement.

The West, Turkey, and Its Alternatives

The overwhelming thrust of Turkish strategy since the end of the Second World War has been to align with the West, via membership in NATO, a close strategic relationship with Washington, and aspiration to full membership in the EU. The durability of these ties over the next decade will be a key factor determining Turkey's commitment to responsible international stakeholdership, informed by Western norms. Turkey's EU prospects may well be the most critical factor. The long-term and open-ended nature of the accession path offered to Turkey, and growing ambivalence on all sides cast real doubts over Turkey's to full membership. The pace and extent of reform in Turkey is one

factor in the equation. The evolution of the EU is another. A tighter, more integrated Europe—tired of costly new enlargements and with close attention to norms and behavior—will be a tough Europe for Turkey to join. A looser, multi-speed EU tolerant of a range of political practices will be an easier fit for Ankara. Overall, the future of Turkish convergence with Europe in key sectors (norms, practices, policies) may be more important than the question of membership *per se*. Few observers in Turkey or the West would disagree that “Europe” has been a key incentive for change in Turkey’s internal and external behavior.

Europe’s critique of Turkish behavior will likely continue to focus on internal developments and deviations from accepted European norms. The AKP closure case episode illustrated this concern, as does the controversy over the infamous Article 301 on insults to “Turkishness.” With the notable exception of Cyprus, Europe is much less inclined to criticize Turkey’s foreign policy behavior. On the contrary, periodic European Commission reviews underscore the close alignment between Turkish and European policies. On Iran, the Middle East peace process, Iraq, the Balkans, and other issues, Turkey is very much in the European mainstream, and often far closer to Brussels than to Washington.

The relationship with the US, seen as strategic on both sides, has experienced marked but not unprecedented strain since 2003. These strains have been extensively analyzed and debated in Turkey and the US.⁸ They are the product of proximate policy disagreements, most notably on Iraq, as well as structural problems in a relationship predicated on security and strategic real estate rather than true partnership based on affinity and shared values. Public opinion has been another key element. Public sentiment matters in contemporary Turkish policymaking, and as noted above, this sentiment has turned starkly anti-American in recent years. As striking, and perhaps more consequential, has been the deterioration in elite attitudes toward US leadership, and the deepening suspicion among Turks of diverse background.

What has filled this vacuum of alliance and affinity? Polling and much anecdotal evidence suggests that this “space” has been filled in part by rising Turkish nationalism and a more inward-looking disposition. Turks have become more suspicious of the international community as a whole: Americans, Israelis, and Europeans, above all, but also Russians, Iranians, and even Palestinians.⁹ Turks are intently focused on their own questions of identity, religion, class, and power, and these long-simmering tensions are unlikely to be resolved any time soon. The result may be a distracted and less engaged Turkey—a less active and responsible stakeholder by default rather than inclination.

Since 9/11, and especially after the Iraq war, the Islamic coloration of Turkish perceptions and policy has increased. There is a widespread awareness now among Turks of their Islamic identity, culture, and norms. With the US increasingly seen by Turks as a negative and less influential force, and with the EU focused on its own identity and enlargement issues, Turkey has stepped up its diplomacy across the former lands of the

⁸ See Ian O. Lesser, *Beyond Suspicion: Rethinking US-Turkish Relations* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2007).

⁹ See GMF, *Transatlantic Trends*, 2007 and 2008

Ottoman Empire. Almost all the ethnic groups of the Middle East, Balkans, the Caucasus, and Central Asia are also significantly represented within Turkey's own population. Davutoglu and other AKP advisors argue that any instability in these regions is consequential for Turkey, requiring Ankara's active commitment to regional security and development. The underlying objective is to boost Turkey's influence as an "independent" actor and recognized interlocutor for the Muslim east and south. Turkey's recent activism in the OIC and other Islamic groups is a clear element of this strategy (in 2005, the OIC elected its first Turkish secretary general).

One prominent Turkish foreign policy analyst has characterized Turkey's entrepreneurial diplomacy with Lebanon, Hezbollah, Syria, and Israel as "the return of the Ottomans."¹⁰ For Davutoglu and other members of the neo-Ottoman school, the main argument against joining directly in the Iraq war was that Turkey should not be aligned with powers that would inevitably be perceived as occupiers. He considers this strategy to have paid off. Similarly, Turkey's initiative to bring Israel and Syria together has shown that at a time when the US is not able to exert effective influence in the region, countries like Turkey can go their own way to good effect.¹¹ Influential Turks close to AKP as well as nationalist circles are becoming convinced that the norms and institutions defined by the West during the Cold War are no longer working and outmoded for an emerging international order in which Asia, the Muslim world, and the global south are gaining much greater influence. In other words, Turks who aspire to a leading role in this new—less Western than before—geopolitical order will be working with a different concept of stakeholderhood.

How Ankara Looks At Threat Assessment

Turkey is a security-conscious state, and the security dimension weighs heavily in Turkey's international calculus. As noted above, Turkey does not shrink from using its substantial military strength unilaterally in the Middle East, but has adopted a much more cautious and multilateral posture elsewhere. The Turkish approach to the use of force carries broad international significance, though, not least because Turkey's ability to project power and the breadth of its diplomatic reach extend its influence across several critical regions.

Turkey will continue to value its NATO membership, including the nuclear guarantee and Article V commitments. Nonetheless, Turks worry about the credibility of the NATO commitment in relation to the extra-European and non-traditional risks they confront. The slow NATO response to Turkish requests for air defense reinforcements in both Iraq wars has, however, left a bitter residue of doubt and mistrust. Because Turkish contingencies are so prominent in contemporary NATO planning, and most of these contingencies have focused on the country's Middle Eastern borders, Ankara has favored revisions to the NATO strategic concept to enhance the Alliance's ability to act rapidly outside Europe. After initial ambivalence, Turkey has also emerged as a supporter of NATO enlargement, in the belief that a wider NATO will stabilize areas on the periphery of Europe—i.e.

¹⁰ Cengiz Çandar. "Yeni Ortadoğu denklemi, Lübnan'daki Türkiye, Türkiye'deki Türkiye." *Referans*, 27 May 2008. http://www.referansgazetesi.com/haber.aspx?HBR_KOD=97873&YZR_KOD=15

¹¹ Going Their Own Way in The Mideast, David Ignatius, June 1 2008. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/05/30/AR2008053002517.html>

Turkey's neighborhood. The experience of Russian military intervention in Georgia could serve as a spur to renewed emphasis on core NATO Article V commitments and the capacity for territorial defense.

Turkey is also the NATO member most affected by proliferation trends in the Middle East, with Iranian and Syrian missile programs a particular concern. Most Turkish population centers are within reach of Syrian and Iranian missiles. Turkey's well-developed strategic relationship with Israel, expanded in earnest in the 1990s, was aimed largely at the containment of Syria, then a major backer of the PKK. Turkish-Israeli cooperation has included intelligence sharing and air defense coordination in relation to Iranian WMD risks as well as extensive defense industrial cooperation. Absent a direct threat to Turkish territory, Ankara is highly unlikely to help with any Israeli or American strikes against Iranian WMD facilities, but Turkish strategists might quietly favor such an action.

For decades, Turkey has lived with nuclear weapons on its borders, and the Turkish reaction to the prospect of a nuclear or near-nuclear Iran tends to be restrained. But Turkish concern is mounting, not least because of the potential for one or more new nuclear powers in the region to profoundly alter the strategic equation, with cascading effects on military perceptions and balances in multiple directions. Turkey is unlikely to respond to a nuclear Iran by pursuing a nuclear capability of its own—as long as the NATO guarantee remains credible—even though the country possesses the technical wherewithal to pursue a weapons program.

Détente with Athens has eased a major challenge for Alliance cohesion in the eastern Mediterranean, and Ankara retains a strong stake in NATO membership as a hedge against high-end threats emanating from Russia and the Middle East. Turkey has also been a good NATO “citizen” with regard to peacekeeping operations in the Balkans and Afghanistan. In other respects, Turkey's position is more complex and less helpful to Alliance objectives. Most notably, Ankara continues to obstruct closer defense coordination between NATO and the EU in protest over Turkey's exclusion from European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) decision-making. It is also strongly opposed to Cyprus becoming a NATO member without prior resolution of the island's status. These situations are added signs of Turkey's incomplete integration, and its effect on Turkey's own strategic perceptions and behavior. The vexed matter of Turkey's EU candidacy, and the potential for further estrangement from Europe, suggest that the standoff over NATO-ESDP cooperation will persist for some time to come.

Over the next decade, Turkey's security priorities are likely to be driven by more tangible concerns such as counter-terrorism and irregular warfare. Turkey has not been immune to the threat of Islamic extremism, as bombings and assassinations in Istanbul and elsewhere attest (most notably the 2003 bombings of the British consulate, a synagogue, and the headquarters of HSBC in Istanbul). Homegrown groups such as Turkish Hizbollah, as well as networks with Al-Qaeda links are active within Turkey, although heavily monitored and contained by the Turkish security services. The return of jihadists from Iraq and Afghanistan in the coming years could also affect the security situation in Turkey and elsewhere. Turkey continues to face a low level terrorist threat from extreme

leftist and nationalist networks as well. More serious, especially in terms of Turkey's European ties, has been the growth of diverse criminal networks involved in drug smuggling and human trafficking.

Foremost, the absence of a comprehensive approach to the Kurdish problem suggests that Turkey will continue to face a threat from the PKK or related groups. This threat is unlikely to be eradicated without the close cooperation of Kurdish leaders in northern Iraq, where the local Kurdish leadership has shown little inclination to incur the costs of closing down PKK operations on their side of the border. As a result, Turkey will likely be in the counter-insurgency business for some time to come, and the containment of the PKK and its offshoots will be difficult or impossible without substantial help from Turkey's allies. The EU will be critical to curtailing PKK fundraising and organization, much of which takes place in Europe. The US will be key on the intelligence and operations side of the equation in Iraq. Iran, too, will be an important partner for Ankara. In short, the leading security challenges facing Turkey over the next decade will require a considerable degree of engagement with international partners. National approaches by themselves are unlikely to suffice.

Turkey and Globalization

Despite strong opposition from nationalist rivals, the AKP government has advanced Özal's program of large-scale privatization, and has generally emphasized economic engagement in regional and global settings. In addition to a steady flow of European investment, in recent years Turkey has attracted unprecedented levels of investment from Arab states, especially from Qatar, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia.

The groups that have benefited most visibly from AKPs liberal economic policies are those from Anatolia, and small and medium-size enterprises from Turkey's heartland have forged partnerships with companies all over the world—Africa, Latin America, Japan and China. This can also be seen as a risk diversification strategy: if talks with the EU come to a halt, then Turkey may reconsider the Customs Union agreement, which has served as a constraint on Turkish business outreach and strategic partnerships. In addition to forming regional free trade zones and joining existing organizations, there is also talk of Turkish participation in a proposed TAFTA (trans-Atlantic free trade agreement).

Turkish small and medium scale businesses, and new NGOs, have all taken full advantage of globalization to help build Turkey's soft-power. Through economic and cultural links, Turkey's influence and standing is growing throughout many parts of the world. Turkish television draws audiences across Eurasia and the Middle East and in the Turkish diaspora in Europe. The schools that Islamic cultural groups such as the Gulen movement have established throughout the world focus on the spread of a Turko-Islamic worldview. In 2008, the 6th Turkic Olympics were held in Istanbul with participation from 110 countries. Students, mostly from Gulen schools, demonstrated their Turkish language skills and their knowledge of Turkish folk culture.

This new soft power is reverberating, above all, through South and Central Asia. Turkey is taking a lead role in reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and helping improve Pakistan-

Afghanistan relations via economic cooperation along the border. Turkish troops are not deployed in combat zones like Helmand province, instead focusing on building infrastructure and supporting health and administrative services. Turkey and Pakistan are close political partners, often taking common positions in international platform such as the UN and OIC. With India, too, Turkey recently established a strategic partnership—and there is growing Indian investment in the Turkish energy sector. The possibility of sending oil from Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan via the existing Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan or the planned Samsun-Ceyhan oil pipeline and onward via Ashkalon to India is being discussed.

Under AKP, Turkey is opening entirely new frontiers of economic partnership. Foreign Minister Ali Babacan explained to an American audience that in 2007 became an official “Strategic Partner” to the African Union, and Turkey is planning to open 15 new embassies in Sub-Saharan Africa.¹²

Turkish businesses see Brazil as a gateway for increased ties with the rest of Latin America. Ankara hopes that its support Brazil’s bid for permanent UN Security Council membership will be repaid with Brazil’s support for its own campaign for a rotating seat. A similar gambit is being tried in East Asia with Japan. In all these regions obtaining support for its UN Security Council membership bid also played a significant role in expanding business and cultural links.

In the years since the AKP assumed power in 2002, economic growth has averaged 7.5 percent. Inflation has fallen from 70 percent to just below 10 percent. The net public debt ratio has been cut in half, and banking system indicators have improved. Turkey’s GNP is now around \$400bn. Sustained growth boosted the country’s per capita income to an impressive \$5,000. A successful privatization program not only reduced government spending, but also brought additional revenues, significantly shrinking the budget deficit and public debt. Foreign investment also rose from \$6 billion to over \$100 billion during the AKP government’s tenure. These results are mostly the product of aggressive reforms anchored to Turkey’s application for European Union membership and its loan program with the IMF. Like other emerging markets, Turkey has benefited from a strong world economy and favorable external financing conditions—both questionable in the years ahead.

All that said, any future economic stability and growth will be closely linked to continuing political stability, progress in EU accession talks, and keeping a lid on domestic and foreign debt during a downward global cycle. Rising oil and food prices, a return of inflation, and slower growth could pose the most serious threats to the Turkish economy. The global economic slowdown that began in the summer of 2007 has already affected the Turkish economy negatively: GDP growth dropped to 4.5 percent in 2007 and is forecast to dip further, to 3 percent, in 2008. The rapidly growing current account deficit, which ballooned due to the expansionary fiscal policy of the past few years, as well as the mounting trade deficit, have heightened Turkey’s vulnerability to global shocks. Turkey continues to attract large inflows of “hot” money, but given the nature of this capital, any elevation of political risk and deteriorating external conditions could

¹² Turkey: ‘Silent but Effective’ Partner, Speech by Foreign Minister Ali Babacan at The Atlantic Council of the United States. <http://www.acus.org/about-news-Turkish-PM.asp>

trigger a quick liquidation of assets held in Turkish lira. Such conditions could bring the boom in Turkish prosperity and globalization to a screeching halt.

The Diverging Roads Ahead

Looking ahead, Turkey will likely remain a responsible international stakeholder, however flawed and ambivalent on occasion. Turkey's foreign and security policy outlook strikes a careful balance between an essentially national and realist approach and a longstanding concern for the country's Western identity and reputation, along with a basic commitment to international norms. At the same time, Turkey seeks to update these norms to reflect the interests of the Muslim world and the "south" more broadly. Regardless of its orientation, Turkey will almost certainly continue as an essentially conservative, *status quo* nation rather than a revolutionary actor in international affairs.

The most problematic aspect of the Turkish case concerns the country's internal evolution and governance, rather than its foreign and security policy. With the exception of Cyprus and northern Iraq, it is Turkey's internal social and political struggle, and the haphazard progress toward European standards of democratization and governance, that inhibit Turkey's full participation in an international liberal order. More narrowly, these same factors will determine the European and American response to Turkey, and potentially limit Turkish integration within Western institutions such as the EU. Many of the key "mileposts" over the next decade will, thus, be internal—including civil-military relations, the Kurdish issue, and resolution of the country's deepening religious-secular divide. Externally, Turkish policy on Cyprus, Armenia, and northern Iraq will be the key tests. On Russia, Turkey is apt to be wary and ambivalent toward any harsher NATO policies. On energy, Turkey will pursue its interest in becoming a hub and transit country for Caspian and Middle Eastern energy.

In a grand strategic sense, possible further convergence with the EU, and ultimately, the outcome of the membership process, will have the most profound effect on Turkey's posture with regard to international norms. Depending on the evolution of Turkish politics and identity over the next decade, Ankara could be drawn to alternative norms and international alignments, possibly centered on Eurasia or the Muslim world. If the country's essentially secular orientation holds, Turkey will almost certainly remain part of the transatlantic community, with external policies informed by Western norms—notwithstanding a balanced Turkish foreign policy with deeper Eurasian engagement. Yet, growing Islamic identity in Turkish society and politics could point the country in a different direction, in which case, the neo-Ottoman impetus, and its associated values, could become more entrenched and significant in determining external behavior. A more serious risk stems from potentially virulent Turkish nationalism, estrangement from the West, and the emergence of a more sovereignty conscious, inward-looking Turkey—in short, a fundamental difficulty in undertaking international cooperation and less responsible stakeholdership by default.

HÜSEYİN BAĞCI'S REACTION

Indeed, Turkey sees itself as a responsible stakeholder, as Baran and Lesser rightly emphasize. Turkish foreign minister Ali Babacan said as much in a July 2008 major policy speech in which he offered the carefully crafted formulation that Turkey aims to become a global player using her soft power capabilities as a regional hard power.

Turkey's geographic location has always offered strategic advantages, but in the last 20 years it has been particularly effective at making the most of its position as a bridge country in every direction; in the process, it has enhanced its reputation as an internationally responsible actor to a higher level than ever in its modern history. It's true that Turkey is a country faced with complex questions of identity, alignment, and governance, but within these issues also lie significant opportunities.

The pursuit of Turkey's maximal integration internationally remains a cornerstone of Turkish foreign policy, and it is unlikely that any Turkish government in the coming decades will renounce this traditional goal. Turkey's supposedly "urgent" candidacy for the EU is no longer really expected to succeed, and in a sense is irrelevant since the associated democratic and economic reforms have succeeded enough to acquire their own momentum. The process may have left Turkey in the position of "the other" with regard to Europe, as Baran and Lesser put it, but it is also clear that for the foreseeable future, the EU needs Turkey as much, if not more, than Turkey needs the EU. The EU debate over Turkey's candidacy certainly arouses concerns among Turks—and prompted a dramatic decline in Turkish public support for EU membership—but that does not change the fact that Turkey is firmly on a course of convergence with Europe. In the words of an old Turkish proverb, the EU caravan still goes on with Turkey behind it despite the belling dogs.

The authors portray Turkey as a conservative, status quo actor, but that isn't quite accurate. In fact, Turkey is a fast changing, liberal and active player, especially in recent years. The idea of "neo-Ottomanism" in Turkish foreign policy remains more of a fantasy than a real policy option. Turkey's foreign policy ambitions have indeed found a conducive environment, or larger playground, due to regional and global changes, but Turkey's Western drive continues unchanged contrary to expectations that Turkey would adopt more "Islamist" policies. Turkey is not Iran, and with her involvement in western institutions from Council of Europe to NATO and many others, will not become like Iran. And while Turkey's new orientation after the end of the Cold War prompted concern among western countries, Turkey's democratic process made it a model to be emulated rather than feared. Today's Turkey is much more reliable, manageable, and responsible than 30 or 20 or even ten years ago.

It is not an exaggeration to say that there is a new Turkey and new Turks with more management capabilities in domestic as well as in foreign policy matters. Turkey's domestic and economic reforms since early 1980's under Turgut Özal had a deep impact on the country, engendering strong self-esteem and self-confidence. In the 1990s, Turkey

had a series of coalition governments, but the political stability since 2002 under AKP government has borne fruit, in the economic field particularly. Turkey's exports exceed 136 billion dollars, with a total GDP of more than 600 billion dollars. In a few years Turkey will reach a 1 trillion dollar economy. Globally Turkey is already the world's 15th largest economy, and in sixth place in the EU.

The second term of AKP government will be much harder than the first term. Baran and Lesser highlight the problems which AKP will face and, in the process, overestimate the dangers. Turkey's domestic reform and likewise its economic reforms will continue. And whatever role emerges for Islam, Turkey is nowhere near anything resembling Sharia, which, given the country's social composition would be impossible. Even the debate on a new constitution has run aground and thus doomed prospects for a new constitution in foreseeable future. The AKP government is highly pragmatic and is bound to recognize that pressing a religious agenda will only threaten its domestic political survival. The religious views of AKP government will more likely be "secularized" by the pressure from a strengthening opposition. The 2007 election giving the AKP government a 47 percent plurality was deemed by some observers as a social revolution, but instead of revolution there are more tensions—brought on by terrorism, corruption cases, and the Constitutional Court's verdict on the AKP's Islamist policies (a ruling that, as the Turkish public suspects, was political rather than juridical).

As to other threats and factors, PKK terrorism remains as the most important problem, with no solution in sight. The current spike in anti-Americanism is superficial and not as deeply rooted as in other countries. There is no enduring tradition of hatred toward the US, but rather a fluctuation from one US administration to the next (President Clinton was, after all, quite popular). Turkish nationalism is still limited and poses no danger for neighboring countries. Indeed, contrary to expectations or perceptions, Turkish nationalism is not on the rise. That said, however, Turkish nationalism is a given and could at any moment be aroused by PKK terrorism or other provocation.

Turkey's Foreign Policy

Turkey's foreign policy confronts a wide range of challenges at multiple international levels and from various geographic directions. On the other hand, Turkey's role as a "civilizational bridge" has contributed to Turkey's positive image worldwide; indeed Washington and Europe consider this role essential for Western-Islamic relations. Baran and Lesser rightly emphasize Turkey's new policy "zero problem with neighbors", which has significantly changed Turkey's image in the region. Its efforts to serve as an honest broker in several regional conflicts have also enhanced Turkey's image as a peacemaker. Another indication of Turkey's enhanced international stature was its election into the United Nations Security Council as a non permanent member after a 47-year wait.

Even so, a number of concerns linger. Turkey's relations with its neighbors are not yet resolved permanently and likely to remain so for some time. Time will tell whether the Cyprus issue, Armenian issue and Syrian—Turkish relations will remain relatively calm or flare up. If nothing else, the uncertain situation in Iraq and the future of the middle East is increasing Turkey's international stakeholdership. Turkish-Iranian relations are

quite good at the moment despite the nuclear issue. Iran is second only to Russia as a source of oil and gas imports. This does not mean the most Turks agree with Iranian policies, but in broad terms, Iran enjoys the highest level of political sympathy since the heyday of former president Hatami's reform push. Also, Turkey and Iran face PKK terrorism as common threat and it will continue to do so.

In the wider region, the Balkans, Black Sea, Caucasus and Central Asia will enjoy increased focus in Turkish foreign policy. President Gül is de facto foreign minister and he will develop presidential foreign policy to those regions as the former presidents with the exception of previous one Ahmet Necdet Sezer, like Turgut Özal and Süleyman Demirel have followed. Indeed there is a strong back-to-the-future element to Turkish policy in those regions—part of a more broadly ambitious geostrategic posture since the end of the Cold War of increased cultural, economic and political influence and an attempt to be the leading power in that regional arc. This ambition only makes Turkish-Russian relations more attractive as an area of opportunity. For the first time in contemporary Turkish perceptions, Russia has a very positive image, and is in fact Turkey's top trading (conversely, Turkey is Russia's fourth largest trade partner).

That said, the relationship with Russia is not an alternative to Turkey's EU membership aspirations. The essay authors portray Russia and West as an either/or dilemma for Turkey. Yet despite the minority view of some intellectuals that the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation is an alternative alignment, Turkey will not be forced to choose between good relations with Russia and its rock-solid overall alliance with the West. As a NATO member and integrated in nearly all the Western institutions, Turks consider the EU and US as absolutely fundamental, and the AKP government itself has repeatedly reaffirmed that EU membership remains Turkey's ultimate goal. And from a security point of view, the United States and Turkey remain, despite ups and downs in their relationship, bound to each other. From a responsible stakeholder standpoint, Turkey has long been an important peacekeeping troop contributor country both for NATO and the UN—deploying its forces in several missions since 1990s, from Somalia to Afghanistan. This is very much a neglected area where Turkey's contribution is overlooked or underestimated.

It is true that since September 11 Turkey discovered the “Islamic card” and has played it very successfully. All the talk about a new Ottomanism, however, proved to be more amusing speculation than operational Turkish diplomacy. No doubt, AKP has strong connections with all Islamic states and organizations, and prime minister Erdogan enjoys the most political sympathy any Turkish foreign minister ever enjoyed. Therefore, it does not qualify Turkey as a “neo-Ottoman state” on the contrary; Turkey is a democratic state with realistic aims.

Despite the continuing extended delay in Turkey's accession to the EU, Turkey's relevance for EU security is on the rise. Therefore, both the US and Europe remain Turkey's security pillars, particularly, the US security umbrella, including Turkey's security and fight against terrorism.

Turkey as a Global Player

Turkey's international economic and social activities are key drivers of its growing prominence. Its success in attracting foreign investments is thus an important quantifier of its regional and global and global impact. Baran and Lesser are correct that Turkey's economic and political reforms will enhance it as a global player and soft power. Turkish nongovernmental organizations, small and medium size business, and even recently the TV and film industry are all contributing to Turkey's international image. In the scientific and technological fields, Turkey has made huge strides in recent years and is one the few Islamic countries with satellites in the orbit, which will be added to significantly in coming years.

Turkey became also a donor country in recent years, providing technological and economic help to Third World countries. As an emerging market and soft power, Turkey is considered in the "second circle," just below the G7 countries, of economies with strong prospects. Given Turkey's strong economic performance, one can say that Turkey is one of globalization's principal winners. The recent global financial crisis has only confirmed the wisdom of the economic and banking reforms of the last eight years. In the context of the EU process Turkey, will certainly continue these reforms. Since 2005, Turkey has been a relatively expensive country for foreign investment, but at the same has been a real center of attraction for foreign capital. And as the privatization process in Turkey continues to progress, this will only encourage further investment, which has already broken all the records in her economic history.

Turkey's challenges are daunting, but with her strong liberal economic and political system and record, Turkey remains a responsible international stakeholder. Turkey will remain squarely on a path to the West, but it will also retain significant influence in the South and in the Islamic world, as well as in Africa in particular. Turkey's role as a Mediterranean power will also help make the Mediterranean Union a strategic success.

In sum, Ankara's policies are not splintering but rather the continuation of "traditional realistic policies" of the Turkish Republic. Far from undergoing an Islamization of its foreign policy, Turkey is preserving a realistic and pragmatic one. In the final analysis, Turkey aspires to become a global player, but she continues to juggle all its advantages as well as limitations.

Turkey seeks more democracy, more prosperity and more security in a world that each day seems to get more and more *insecure*. Turkey absorbs her fair share of these negative developments, but still remains indispensable for the EU and the US—not to mention the neighboring countries, which seem very happy with the soft power Turkey and her new policy of "zero problems with the neighboring countries."