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Cook is a columnist at *Foreign Policy* magazine. He has also published widely in international affairs journals, opinion magazines, and newspapers, and is a frequent commentator on radio and television. His work can also be found on CFR.org.

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Cook holds a BA in international studies from Vassar College, an MA in international relations from Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies, and an MA and a PhD in political science from the University of Pennsylvania. He speaks Arabic and Turkish and reads French.