

COUNCIL *on*
FOREIGN
RELATIONS

Independent Task Force Report No. 69

Madeleine K. Albright and Stephen J. Hadley, *Chairs*
Steven A. Cook, *Project Director*

U.S.-Turkey Relations

A New Partnership

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Foreword

The relationship between Turkey and the United States was built in the throes of the Cold War. For decades, their interaction was dominated by political and military considerations relating to Europe, especially how best to meet the Soviet strategic challenge and how best to manage the complex and frustrating Turkey-Greece-Cyprus triangle. More than twenty years after the end of the Cold War, however, those traditional priorities are making way for a new agenda that reflects not just changes in the international system but also Turkey's remarkable transformation from a military-dominated society to a fledgling democracy and rising power in a greater Middle East experiencing unprecedented upheaval.

Since the Justice and Development Party came to power in 2002, the country has achieved far-reaching, albeit still incomplete, reforms. The political system is more representative than it was a decade ago and the role of the military in the political system has been substantially reduced. The country's GDP has more than tripled, making Turkey one of the world's top twenty economies; plans to join the top ten economies within the next ten years appear ambitious but not out of the question. Turkey is also playing a larger role on the diplomatic stage, featuring in negotiations over Iran's nuclear program and serving as an example for many in a Middle East searching to find a larger role for Islam in political life.

To be sure, Turkey's transition is not yet complete. Journalists and government critics are arrested in troublingly high numbers and progress on concluding a new, more fully democratic constitution has been unnecessarily slow. The government has not gone beyond small, initial steps to better integrate its Kurdish minority. While economic growth has been impressive—on the order of 6 percent per year over much of the past decade—much of the dynamism has been fueled by buoyant

consumer spending that is unlikely to be sustainable. Concerns also remain within and outside Turkey about the influence of Islam in the country's politics.

This Council on Foreign Relations–sponsored Independent Task Force report examines the various trends in Turkey and assesses their consequences for U.S. policy toward the country and the region more broadly. The report begins by taking stock of the modern U.S.–Turkey relationship, noting strains over the past decade stemming from differences over policy toward Iraq. The Task Force then considers the political, social, and economic reforms Ankara has made in recent years along with threats to further progress. The report also includes a discussion of Turkey's potential role as a regional energy hub and its growing importance to foreign policy debates within and beyond its traditional reach in NATO and Europe.

Within each section of the report, the Task Force offers recommendations on how the United States can support Turkey's continued emergence and build a deeper working relationship that acknowledges Ankara's growing importance. It encourages the United States and other democracies to urge Turkish leaders to follow through with their commitment to writing a new constitution that better protects minority rights and basic freedoms and clearly defines the relationship between military and civilian authorities.

The Task Force further recommends exploring a Turkish-American Partnership to deepen trade and economic ties and calls on the two countries to expand bilateral trade and investment. The Task Force advocates continued liberalization of Turkish law on intellectual property, tax, and business regulations. And it calls on the United States to work with Turkey as it becomes a more important actor in the energy sphere.

There is much the United States can do, the Task Force says, to promote constructive collaboration in foreign policy, from partnering with the Turkish development agency on regional aid to supporting Turkey's burgeoning role as a regional economic engine. Close consultations are warranted on regional challenges, including stopping the violence in and bringing political change to Syria and frustrating Iran's bid for nuclear weapons and regional primacy. American support for rapprochement between Turkey and Israel is also encouraged.

I would like to thank the Task Force's chairs, Madeleine K. Albright and Stephen J. Hadley, for their dedication to and active involvement in

this project. I am thankful to all of the Task Force members and observers whose expertise on Turkey helped shape the report.

I am grateful also to Anya Schmemmann, CFR's Task Force Program director, whose contributions and efforts have been instrumental since the project's inception. I would finally like to extend my thanks to Project Director Steven A. Cook for his keen work incorporating many different perspectives into a valuable report on this critical country.

Richard N. Haass

President

Council on Foreign Relations

May 2012

Acknowledgments

The report of the Independent Task Force on Turkey is the product of much work and effort by the dedicated members and observers of this Task Force, and I am appreciative of the time, attention, and expertise they devoted to this project.

In particular, I would like to thank our distinguished chairs, Madeleine K. Albright and Stephen J. Hadley, for their strong leadership and attentive direction. It has been a true pleasure to work with both of them and the members of their staffs—in particular, Fariba Yassaee, Robyn Lee, Katie Jackson, and Abbey Watson.

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I am thankful to several people who met with and briefed the Task Force group, including Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasian Affairs Philip H. Gordon, Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for European Affairs Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, and Daniel Freifeld of the Office of the Special Envoy for Eurasian Energy. In addition, Task Force member Greg Saunders gave a presentation to the group.

The chairs and I had the fortunate opportunity to travel to Turkey for consultations that informed this report. We benefited from briefings by government officials in Ankara as well as by representatives from the private sector and civil society in Istanbul. The Task Force delegation is also appreciative of the numerous Turkish officials who offered their time and insight as well as of U.S. ambassador Francis J. Ricciardone and his staff.

CFR members also provided valuable input on the report. The Washington Meetings team organized an event in Washington, DC, with Task Force member Henri Barkey; the New York Meetings team organized an event in New York, led by Task Force member Aliza Marcus; and the Corporate Program organized a roundtable in Washington, DC, led by Task Force members Greg Saunders and Ross Wilson.

I extend additional thanks to CFR's Publications team, which assisted in editing the report and readying it for publication, and CFR's Communications, Meetings, Corporate, External Affairs, Outreach, and National teams, who all worked to ensure that the report reaches the widest audience possible.

Task Force Program director Anya Schmemmann was instrumental to this project from beginning to end, offering invaluable advice and guidance. She and Kristin Lewis of CFR's Task Force Program accompanied us on our trip to Turkey; Kristin was extremely helpful on several fronts and ensured that the Task Force ran smoothly. My research associate, Alexander Brock, who authored the appendix on Fethullah Gulen, deserves huge credit and thanks for his research and assistance with the report. His predecessor, Lauren Linakis, helped get this project off to a strong start.

I am grateful to CFR President Richard N. Haass and Director of Studies James M. Lindsay for giving me the opportunity to direct this effort.

While this report is the product of the Independent Task Force, I take responsibility for its content and note that any omissions or mistakes are mine.

Steven A. Cook
Project Director

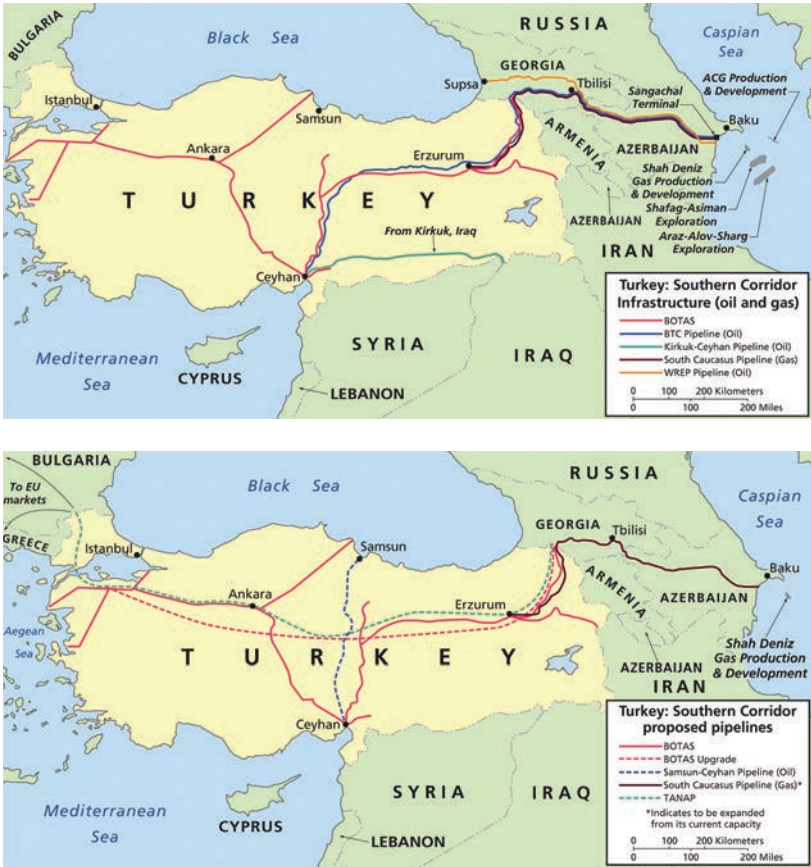
Maps

TURKEY IN THE REGION



Source: CIA World Factbook, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/graphics/ref_maps/pdf/middle_east.pdf.

TURKEY: CURRENT AND PROPOSED PIPELINE INFRASTRUCTURES



Source: Christopher Robinson, cartographer.

Task Force Report

Introduction

Among the most important developments in international affairs of the past decade is the emergence of Turkey as a rising regional and global power. Turkey has long been an important country as a stalwart member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), an aspirant to European Union (EU) membership, and an important link between the West and the East. Yet the changes in Turkey over the past decade have been so dramatic—with far-reaching political and economic reforms, significant social reforms, and an active foreign policy—that the country is virtually unrecognizable to longtime Turkey watchers. Today Turkey is more democratic, prosperous, and politically influential than it was fifteen, ten, or even five years ago.

Although left out of the exclusive club of countries widely regarded as rising powers—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and, most recently, South Africa (the BRICS)—Turkey very much belongs in the category of economically successful countries that are emerging global powers.¹ If current trends in Turkey persist and the international system continues to undergo a redistribution of power, Turkey will in the coming decade be among the most important actors in the broad region surrounding and beyond it. Turkey is rapidly becoming a critical energy link between Europe and Asia. It has sought to play a constructive role in the Middle East as that region undergoes unprecedented change, especially in Iraq, where—despite recent tension—Ankara has become a force for stability. As other American allies prepare to leave, Turkey has remained steadfast in its support for NATO's mission in Afghanistan. And on the economic front, Turkey is an increasingly visible player in the Group of Twenty (G20).

Some trends are worrying, however: the prosecution and detention of journalists, the seemingly open-ended and at times questionable pursuit of military officers and other establishment figures for alleged conspiracy against the government, the apparent illiberal impulses of

some Turkish leaders, the still-unresolved Kurdish issue, and the lack of progress on a new constitution. How these issues are resolved will have a major impact on the future of Turkey and its democracy. Indeed, for all the positive political change that the Justice and Development Party (AKP) oversaw in 2003 and 2004, Turkish leaders have sometimes resorted to authoritarian measures to intimidate and curb opposition to their agenda.

On the economic front, dangers lurk in Turkey's consumption-fueled growth, which has led to a large and growing deficit in the current account, and in its robust links to the ailing economies of the EU. Turkey's dynamic foreign policy has, at times, also raised tension between Washington and Ankara. Still, these problems do not diminish the significance of Turkey's transformation or the potential opportunities for the future of U.S.-Turkey relations.

The goal for the United States, which has long-standing diplomatic, political, and military ties with Turkey, based in large part on the vestiges of the Cold War, is to modernize the bilateral relationship in a way that reflects not only common American-Turkish interests but also Turkey's new stature as an economically and politically successful country with a new role to play in a changing Middle East. Turkey may not yet have the status of one of Washington's traditional European allies, but there is good strategic reason for the bilateral relationship to grow and mature into a mutually beneficial partnership that can manage a complex set of security, economic, humanitarian, and environmental problems. This is precisely what the United States wants from Turkey. Although a vibrant bilateral relationship already exists, there is an opportunity to institutionalize the relationship further and expand issues of common interest.

Ankara was never a client of Washington in the traditional sense of the term, but nevertheless the asymmetry of power between the two countries frequently dictated a particular pattern of relations in which Turkey often believed it was pursuing policies in favor of U.S. interests at the expense of its own. Given the emerging changes in the international order, especially the political dynamism in the Arab world, a new partnership is needed between the United States and Turkey, given their shared interests in Europe, the Balkans, the Middle East, the Caucasus, the eastern Mediterranean, and Central Asia.

Despite general agreement in both Washington and Ankara of the value of a strategic partnership, precisely what this means and entails

remains subject to debate. Certainly on a range of issues, especially in the Middle East, the United States and Turkey have in recent years had different expectations of each other. These differences should not preclude the development of a partnership, particularly since Ankara has moved closer to Washington's position on Syria and Iran. The new Turkey, however, is not well understood by U.S. administration officials, members of Congress, or the public. This report seeks to promote a better understanding of the new Turkey—its strengths, vulnerabilities, and ambitions—in order to assess its regional and global role and make recommendations for a new partnership of improved and deepened U.S.-Turkey ties.

U.S.-Turkey Relations: A New Partnership with a New Turkey

Overall, the political, diplomatic, and military ties between the United States and Turkey are robust. In particular, the personal relationship between President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been important in moving bilateral relations forward. Unlike in the past, Turkey is among the first group of countries that American officials call on regarding foreign policy issues of importance to the United States. Indeed, President Obama spoke with Prime Minister Erdogan by telephone at least thirteen times in 2011, signifying a strong working relationship between them.

There should be no doubt that Turkey is a close ally of the United States, albeit one with an independent outlook. In this respect, it resembles some of Washington's traditional European allies.

The truth is that Turkey is unlike most other countries: it is both a formal ally and a country with which the United States has had difficult relations from time to time, and this will continue to some extent. At the root of this reality is Turkey's distrust of the United States, which is deep and the result in part of an asymmetry of power. Washington, too, is distrustful of Ankara, but much less so, partly because the United States is the superpower and approaches issues with a level of confidence (which may be off-putting) that enables Washington to be or appear to be "magnanimous." In trying to move forward in this relationship, the United States needs to begin to build trust, which is among the most difficult tasks ahead.

POLITICAL, DIPLOMATIC, AND MILITARY TIES

A mythology surrounds U.S.-Turkey relations, suggesting that Washington and Ankara have, through six decades, worked closely and with little friction. It is true that Turkish soldiers fought and died along with

Americans in Korea in the early 1950s, and that Turkey was an important NATO partner during the long Cold War. Yet as close as this relationship was, it was hardly ever smooth.

Difficulties arose over Cyprus in the 1960s with the Johnson administration and again in the early 1970s, when, after Turkey's invasion of the island in response to a Greek-led coup that Ankara believed placed the minority Turkish Cypriots in danger, the United States placed an arms embargo on its NATO ally. The efforts of the Armenian-American community to convince the U.S. Congress and successive administrations to recognize the 1915 mass killing of Armenians as genocide have often resulted in bilateral tension. In the 1990s, differences concerned human rights. The U.S. invasion of Iraq also created tension between Washington and Ankara—the result of both the Grand National Assembly's inability to pass legislation allowing U.S. forces to use Turkish territory to open a northern front against Saddam Hussein, and the post-invasion instability in Iraq that coincided with a resumption of PKK terrorist attacks on Turkey. Ankara's 2010 trilateral Tehran Research Reactor agreement with Brazil and Iran, as well as Ankara's subsequent vote against applying United Nations Security Council (UNSC) sanctions on the Iranian regime, raised questions in U.S. policymaking circles about Turkey's commitment to the Western alliance.

The deterioration of Turkey-Israel relations since 2008, which has complicated U.S.-Middle East policy and increased tension in the eastern Mediterranean, has also drawn the interest of a U.S. Congress that has not always been friendly to Turkish concerns. In addition, public opinion polls in Turkey consistently reveal unfavorable impressions of the United States among the Turkish public, an attitude that vexes American policymakers. This is a problem that can damage the bilateral relations, especially now that public opinion matters more than ever before in Turkish foreign policy. Although Turkish leaders clearly value the relationship, with the exception of former prime minister and president Turgut Ozal, they have rarely defended the U.S.-Turkey alliance. That must change.

Yet even though some tension and mistrust mark the history of the U.S.-Turkey relationship, Ankara's geostrategic importance to Washington remains undiminished. For example, Turkey has gone from being a potentially destabilizing factor in Iraq to being an important partner in the reconstruction, economic development, and territorial integrity

of the country. Turkey was among the first allies to offer troops to the American effort in Afghanistan and has been a mainstay of the international force there, although most Turkish troops do not participate in operations beyond Kabul, with the exception of provincial reconstruction teams in Wardak and Jawzjan. And, after initial stumbles, Ankara and Washington have worked collaboratively to respond to the uprisings in the Arab world, particularly in Libya and Syria.

Finally, Turkey has agreed to base a critical NATO anti-missile system radar on its territory, which Washington considers an important component of European security. Ankara had initially hesitated for fear of antagonizing Iran, but Tehran's apparent complicity in Syria's bloody crackdown has convinced Turkish policymakers to alter their approach to Iran. Still, controversy remains concerning the radar installation. Turkey has insisted that no data may be shared with Israel, but Prime Minister Erdogan's domestic opposition has raised concerns that Israel could nevertheless receive tracking information. At the Munich Security Conference, however, U.S. defense secretary Leon Panetta told the press that the radar in Turkey is intended for the defense of NATO and that the United States has a separate and robust program of missile defense cooperation with Israel.

As Turkey's current dispute with Israel and its approach to Iran (for a time) suggest, there will be areas of geopolitical importance where Ankara and Washington, as well as Brussels, are likely to disagree. This is not unusual, even for close allies, but to mitigate potential friction at those inevitable moments of heightened tension, Turkey and the United States must build a stronger infrastructure of bilateral cooperation.

The Task Force believes that the United States and Turkey have, for the most part, common goals on issues of mutual importance. When Washington and Ankara have diverged, such as in the dispute over UNSC sanctions against Iran during the summer of 2010, the ability of the two states to handle the fallout has paid dividends for an enhanced relationship going forward. The situation demonstrated to both countries that a public dispute between Washington and Ankara has no political or diplomatic upside—an invaluable lesson for future differences between the United States and Turkey.

For that reason, the American and Turkish governments must deepen the process of consultation that President Obama and Prime Minister Erdogan established and institutionalize it across both governments

from the highest levels down. This will place Turkey and the United States in an advantageous position to deal with problems and crises as well as cushion the inevitable disagreements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The United States needs to recognize that today it is dealing with a dramatically changed Turkey and that, as a result, the bilateral relationship between Washington and Ankara is undergoing fundamental change. American officials, members of Congress, and other observers must jettison their stereotypes of Turkey. In particular, the decline in the role of the military in Turkish political life does not mean that Turkey is inexorably headed toward theocracy or movement away from NATO. The rise of the religiously oriented AKP party is not inconsistent with democracy, modernization, or economic liberalism. The United States must not view the sum of U.S.-Turkey relations through the narrow prism of particular issues, whether they be Armenia, Israel, or ties to NATO. On the contentious issue of Armenia and the massacres of 1915, for example, the United States has a moral interest in working with all sides to clarify the historical record. But the U.S.-Turkey relationship is much broader than the Armenian tragedy, the parlous state of Turkey-Israel relations, or the false debates about Turkey's place in the West. And the relationship can and should be expanded further as well as deepened. The overlapping strategic interests and potential for greater U.S.-Turkey cooperation should not be forfeited for specific political interests.

Indeed, the United States needs to see Turkey as a potential strategic partner with which it has a relationship comparable not only to that with newer partners, such as India and Brazil, but ultimately to that with its closest allies, such as Japan and South Korea. Turkey needs to see the United States in the same way, recognizing, however, that for all the potential in the new U.S.-Turkey partnership, there are limitations to what the two countries can effectively achieve without adherence to the following principles:

- equality and mutual respect for each other's interests
- confidentiality and mutual trust
- close and intensive consultations to identify common goals and strategies on issues of critical interest that will provide mutual benefit

- no surprises in their respective foreign policies, especially in important areas of interest to either country
- recognition that there will inevitably be differences, and therefore that they must work together to manage them so that they do not damage the relationship

To convert these principles into practical policies and concrete results, the United States and Turkey need to further strengthen the close relationship forged by their two national leaders and extend the principles to their respective administrations at every level and across all relevant departments and agencies. Toward that end, Washington and Ankara should establish a government-wide forum for cabinet-level engagement on the model of the Strategic and Economic Dialogue with China or the strategic-level consultations with Israel.

In a departure from the dialogue with China, which includes only the highest levels, Turkey and the United States should also conduct frequent and routine talks between their foreign policy and national security organizations to develop a common strategic framework and long-term perspective on the core issues of common concern. This dialogue on foreign policy and national security issues should be deepened to the level of U.S. assistant secretaries and their Turkish counterparts and should become frequent and routine at that level. In addition, intensive interaction and cooperation between the two countries in the field and between their respective diplomats, military personnel, and intelligence officers is critical.

Beyond these process-oriented recommendations, the United States and Turkey have resources, assets, and skills that will be complementary in places that have not historically been areas of U.S.-Turkey cooperation, including helping various Arab countries achieve democratic transitions; ending the bloodshed in Syria through the departure of President Bashar al-Assad and the creation of a democratic, cross-sectarian outcome; and dealing with the challenge posed by Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons, support for terror, and intervention in the affairs of its neighbors. Ankara and Washington must continue cooperating to help sustain the economic and political progress in Iraq and to assist Iraqis in resolving the remaining cross-sectarian problems and tensions. In addition, both countries continue to have a mutually reinforcing role to play in working to bring about stability, security, and peace in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Washington must also try again to help the Turks and Armenians move forward with the 2009 Turkey-Armenia protocols, which held out the possibility of normalization of relations between the two countries. Change to the status quo will likely improve Ankara's relations with Yerevan, which will ease the periodic tension between Turkey and the United States over the Armenian issue and help pave the way for the leadership role in the Caucasus that Turkey desires. It would also improve the atmosphere for a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem, and the United States should be actively encouraging such a resolution.

Also, the United States must not neglect the Cyprus problem just because it seems intractable. The discovery of large deposits of natural gas off the island's southern coast has the potential to increase tension between Nicosia and Ankara, given Turkey's insistence that Turkish Cypriots share in any economic benefits resulting from the island's natural resources. Finally, as Turkey becomes more active commercially and diplomatically in Africa, Washington and Ankara should develop cooperative programs and initiatives there.

ECONOMIC RELATIONS

Although political, diplomatic, and military ties are well developed, trade and investment remain a weak link in the U.S. relationship with Turkey. Bilateral trade reached only \$15 billion in 2010 and remains overly dependent on large U.S. defense and aircraft sales. The parties are giving increased attention to the economic relationship. During President Obama's April 2009 visit to Turkey, he and President Abdullah Gul pledged to strengthen the economic pillar of the relationship. In October 2010, the United States and Turkey launched a cabinet-level economic commission, the Framework for Strategic Economic and Commercial Cooperation, and a Turkey-U.S. Business Council. In December 2011, Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. reinforced Washington's interest in economic ties with Turkey when he traveled to Istanbul for the Global Entrepreneurship Summit that Turkey hosted. Indeed, Turkey is a priority country for numerous U.S. economic efforts. As part of the National Export Initiative, it is one of six next-tier markets to which the United States hopes to double exports by 2015. Turkey's active entrepreneurial sector makes it an ideal partner country for

entrepreneurship initiatives, which led to its hosting role for the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in December 2011.

A strengthened economic partnership not only advances U.S. commercial interests, it also reinforces the broader relationship. Increased trade and investment can also contribute to increased people-to-people ties, helping build constituencies for the relationship in both countries.

High-level focus sends an important signal of interest in the economic relationship, but without concrete steps and private sector interest, this component of the relationship will continue to be pushed off the agenda by more pressing political and military issues. As a result, the United States and Turkey must explore new ways of deepening an underdeveloped economic relationship that will not only benefit both countries financially but also provide a cushion for ties during times of stress.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For a start, a long-term vision for bilateral trade is needed. Pursuing a U.S.-Turkey free trade agreement (FTA) would be the best approach. There is a widely held view, however, that Ankara's relations with the EU preclude such an agreement. But it is unclear whether the barriers are political or legal. Given the benefits to both countries, the matter should be seriously explored to see whether these barriers, if real, could be overcome—especially since Turkey seems to have been able to enter FTAs with many other states. In any event, Turkey and the United States should adopt a variety of other measures to enhance their economic relationship.

It is time for the United States and Turkey to expand on the 1990 Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) and the 1999 Turkey-U.S. Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA). One way to do this is to negotiate a new BIT with improved provisions for dispute resolution and investor protections. Another is to increase the frequency of the yearly discussions that take place under the TIFA in an effort to overcome obstacles that U.S. companies have had in the areas of alternative energy, genetically modified foods, and pharmaceutical industries in Turkey, and that Turkish companies have encountered while exporting their goods to the United States in the areas of steel and other sectors.

Yet policymakers in the United States and Turkey should not be limited to the BIT and TIFA frameworks. Rather, officials in Washington and Ankara must think bigger. The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) that the United States envisages for Asia contains a variety of elements that are applicable to the U.S.-Turkey economic relationship. To be sure, the TPP has a much broader scope than a “Turkish-American Partnership” (TAP), but incorporating the TPP’s emphasis on market access, regulatory compatibility, business facilitation, assistance for small and medium-sized enterprises, and promotion of trade in cutting-edge technologies would significantly bolster economic ties.

Establishing a TAP of course poses certain technical challenges, some of which may involve the EU-Turkey Customs Union agreement. As a result, the TAP could be part and parcel of larger discussions about the establishment of a transatlantic free trade area, but it should not be held hostage to them. A TAP would strengthen what is currently considered the weakest link in the U.S.-Turkey relationship; potentially spur deeper economic ties across the Atlantic; and serve the Turkish-American diplomatic, political, and military alliance. If obstacles to a TAP prove insurmountable, the parties might try a more limited agreement focused on services, investment, and an intellectual property rights accord.

Beyond these broad policy initiatives, U.S. officials should encourage governors, mayors of large cities, and business association leaders to undertake trade missions to Turkey. The Turkish market of almost eighty million consumers is largely unknown to most American businesses, save large firms such as Boeing, Microsoft, Citibank, IBM, Ford Motor Company, and Motorola. Although some well-developed Turkish business organizations are dedicated to promoting small and medium-sized enterprises, there are no corresponding U.S. organizations, which hampers American access to Turkey’s dynamic and growing market.

Turkey's Transformation: Recent Reforms

To understand Turkey's external relations, one must understand Turkey's internal political, social, and economic development and its recent history. Over the course of the past decade, Turkey has simultaneously become more European, more Muslim, more democratic, and more modern. In addition, Turkey—an economic underachiever only ten years ago—now boasts the world's seventeenth-largest economy and has ambitions to be one of the world's top ten economies by 2023.

POLITICAL REFORMS

The AKP's most significant achievements are the political changes the party presided over shortly after coming to power. Indeed, the reforms that Ankara undertook in earnest to meet the EU's criteria for beginning membership negotiations in 2003 and 2004 had a dramatic effect on Turkish politics.

During this time, the Turkish Grand National Assembly passed no fewer than seven comprehensive legislative reform packages and a variety of major constitutional amendments under the auspices of two AKP governments. The changes fell under broad categories of judicial, human rights, economic, minority rights, and foreign policy reforms. And though many of these legislative changes are not controversial, a significant number helped undermine the semiauthoritarian core of what had been Turkey's military-dominated political system.

In an effort to expand personal freedoms and rights, Turkey's mixed civilian-military state security courts were abolished, an entirely new penal code was established, the death penalty was banned, amendments to the antiterror law made it more difficult to prosecute citizens based on speech alone, and some prohibitions on broadcasting and teaching in Kurdish were lifted.

The reform packages also chipped away at the ability of Turkish elites—military officers and the civilian establishment—to undermine their political opponents. For example, the new AKP-dominated parliament amended Articles 76 and 78 of the constitution, making it more difficult to ban political parties and politicians from the political arena. Without these changes, Prime Minister Erdogan, who had been banned from politics and imprisoned, would have been able to serve as party leader but not as prime minister.

The reform packages also included a series of changes that either diminished the Turkish General Staff's autonomy or compromised the channels through which the military had historically influenced politics. The AKP pushed through the Grand National Assembly several changes to various government boards through which the armed forces exercised influence. Military representatives were removed from Turkey's Council of Higher Education and High Audio-Visual Board. Established after the military coup of September 12, 1980, these bodies were useful platforms from which the senior command could ensure Kemalist orthodoxy by prohibiting Islamism, Kurdish nationalism, and socialism in university curricula and the media.

By far the most significant alterations to the military's capacity to impose its will on civilian politicians were made to the National Security Council (known by its Turkish acronym, MGK). First, the parliament increased the number of civilians on the council to outnumber the five officers who held seats. Second, a civilian was appointed secretary-general of the MGK, a position that had always been reserved for a senior officer. In addition, to further limit the influence of the MGK, the Grand National Assembly reduced the number of council meetings from monthly to bimonthly, unless the prime minister or president of the republic specifically requests the MGK to convene.

Finally, the new regulations significantly downgraded the power of the MGK and its secretariat. Article 118 of the military's 1982 constitution directed the government to "give priority consideration to the decisions of the National Security Council," which, given patterns of civil-military relations, was tantamount to an order. Under the AKP's seventh political reform package, however, the duty of the MGK was redefined: "Reaching advisory decisions regarding the designation, determination, and implementations of the state's security policies within the prescribed frameworks, determining a method for providing the necessary coordination, and reporting these advisory decisions

to the Cabinet Council.” Moreover, the MGK secretariat, which the military staffed, was stripped of its executive powers. Consequently, the secretariat no longer has the capacity to conduct its own national security investigations.

One way of ensuring that officers adhered to the new regulations was through control of the budget. The funds allocated to the MGK secretariat were placed under the exclusive control of the prime minister rather than the chief of the General Staff. The new regulations lifted the veil of secrecy on the decrees that “governed the activities of the National Security Council General-Secretariat,” which would henceforth be published in the *Official Gazette*.

The practical effect of these reforms on Turkish politics and Turkey’s four-decade effort to join the EU was dramatic. In October 2004, the Commission of the European Union found that the institutional changes that Turkey had undertaken met the EU’s Copenhagen criteria, which laid out clear benchmarks that Ankara had to meet to begin membership negotiations. As a result, the commission recommended that the European Council begin accession talks with Turkey, which opened in 2005.

Certain powerful political actors—the military, in particular—were opposed to the political changes that the AKP undertook. Yet the Turkish General Staff was constrained from undermining either the EU-related reforms or the AKP because of the extraordinary popularity of the reforms at the time (2003–2004). By some measures, between 60 and 70 percent of the Turkish public supported the AKP’s constitutional reform packages. Had the military moved against the AKP or blocked the reforms, it would have risked the standing of the armed forces with the public—which perennially stood at 90 percent approval—and damaged the military’s long-standing narrative that it was the engine of Turkey’s modernization and democratization.

SOCIAL CHANGES

The AKP’s success between 2003 and 2005 was, in part, a function of the fact that although the principles of Kemalism—the ideology espoused by Atatürk—remained important political and cultural touchstones for many, Turkish society had become more complex and

differentiated, and many Turks wanted a more liberal and democratic political order.²

The AKP did not initially attract a broad spectrum of voters, however. Urban cosmopolitan elites, big business, and large numbers of average Turks turned out for the AKP only after the party established a track record. Indeed, in 2002, the AKP rode to power a somewhat disjointed coalition composed primarily of pious Muslims, Kurds, and Turkish nationalists. The party received only 34 percent of the vote, but its 363 seats in parliament made it possible to pass the EU-inspired reforms with relative ease.³

Overall, some of the most important social changes to occur in Turkey during the AKP era are related to religion and the expression of it in the public sphere. The AKP has made it more acceptable and safer for Turks to express their Muslim identity. For example, with the help of the opposition Nationalist Movement Party, AKP passed a constitutional amendment in 2008 lifting the ban on the wearing of the hijab (headscarf) at public universities. Even though the courts overturned the amendment, it is clear that pious women are showing up in fashionable areas of Istanbul, restaurants, and professional offices—places they were previously unwelcome. Even though there is no hard evidence that more women are donning the hijab, this development, which is related to the rise and confidence of a new, more religiously conservative middle and upper-middle class, has unsettled Turkey's secular establishment, which fears the Islamization of Turkish society.⁴

Indeed, Turkey's long-running *kulturkampf* between religious and secular Turks has not been settled. Turks are undoubtedly freer to express their religious beliefs in ways they were unable to before—a positive development, representing an overall improvement in personal and political freedoms in Turkey. And though the AKP has given impetus to a process in which Turks are discarding the political and societal constraints of Kemalism in favor of a more diverse and complex society, secularist concerns are not entirely overblown. Pious Turks feel more comfortable under the changes the AKP has wrought, but secular Turks feel less secure. To ensure social stability and a democratic trajectory, it is thus incumbent on the new establishment to reassure secular-minded Turks that their way of life has a place in Turkish society, even if secularists failed to do the same for observant Muslims during their long period of ascendancy.

ECONOMIC REFORMS

Turkey's strong economic growth over the past decade has contributed to the dramatic changes in Turkish society and solidified the AKP's political dominance. A combination of reforms, International Monetary Fund (IMF) discipline, and the AKP's overall management of the economy has produced a remarkable economic transformation. Indeed, the Turkish economy has gone from being perennially troublesome and IMF-recidivist to a European and global success story.

When the AKP first came to power, Turkey's gross domestic product (GDP) was \$231 billion; in 2010 it stood at \$736 billion. From 2002 through 2007, the Turkish economy grew by an average of over 6 percent a year. Exports have more than tripled, annual inflation has dropped from highs of 60 to 80 percent in the 1990s to a more palatable 6 to 10 percent in the past decade, and interest rates have dropped dramatically. In 2010, GDP expanded by 9 percent—placing Turkey among the top ten fastest-growing global economies.⁵ Foreign direct investment (FDI), which amounted to \$684 million in 1990, increased exponentially to \$9.1 billion in 2010. Turkey also now boasts a vibrant and expanding middle class.⁶

The groundwork for Turkey's economic transformation was actually laid three decades ago when then prime minister Turgut Ozal began tearing down Ankara's experiment with the policy of import substitution industrialization in favor of a free-market economy. In many ways, Ozal set the stage for the emergence of the so-called Anatolian Tigers—small and medium-sized businesses in central cities such as Konya and Kayseri that over time have become major exporters and have challenged the predominance of Turkey's traditional, large holding companies, which are under the control of a relatively few prominent families.

Ozal's reforms received a boost three years after his death when, in 1996, Turkey and the EU signed a customs union agreement that paved the way for a dramatic increase in Turkish exports into Europe. The agreement was a boon to Turkish business, which gained greater access to the EU's vast market, and, in response to European competition, Turkish firms were forced to become more efficient and productive. This, in turn, helped Turkish producers in other parts of the world.

The foundations for Turkey's more recent economic success were laid during a wrenching economic crisis in 2001 and 2002, when World Bank economist Kemal Dervis was lured home to Turkey and given

wide latitude to undertake an overhaul of the economy as minister of economic affairs under then prime minister Bulent Ecevit. Dervis most importantly instituted sweeping deregulation and banking sector reform. The latter, in particular, sought to root out corrupt practices within state-owned financial institutions that benefited politicians but led to a collapse of confidence in the banking sector.

The AKP has been the primary political beneficiary of Dervis's reforms, and the relationship with the IMF has disciplined Prime Minister Erdogan's populist impulses. Initially, the prime minister and his team sought to temper the IMF's conditions as the AKP sought to increase wages and pensions for civil servants; maintain price supports for the agricultural sector; delay a proposed public procurement law, which was intended to clean up the crony capitalism and nepotism that was rife in public contracting; and undertake a tax amnesty. Ultimately, the exigencies of instilling confidence in international investors and Ankara's need for further IMF assistance forced the AKP to drop or dramatically alter its policies in these areas.

Despite concerns within the Turkish business community that the appeal of populism might be too great for Prime Minister Erdogan, when Turkey finally ended its IMF program in 2007, the AKP maintained macroeconomic discipline. Indeed, the AKP's economic team has proved pragmatic, working both to ensure the conditions necessary for Turkey's spectacular growth and to help Turkey weather the 2008 global economic downturn. Finally, the party's pro-business policies have been a significant source of domestic support, particularly from the emerging class of global entrepreneurs.

Turkey's Transformation: The Way Ahead

For all of the AKP's achievements over the past decade, Turkey boasts a political system, foreign policy, economy, and society that remain very much in transition. For example, although Turkey is more democratic today than it was when the AKP first came to power, it is not a consolidated democracy—a condition under which “democracy is self-enforcing . . . when all the relevant political forces find it best to continue to submit their interests and values to the uncertain interplay of institutions.”⁷ Both Turkey's authoritarian legacies and the nondemocratic remedies to which the AKP has sometimes resorted during its tenure (discussed below) indicate that it is too early to declare Turkey a mature, liberal democracy.

There are other challenges as well. The positive press surrounding Ankara's “new foreign policy” and its potential leadership role in a changing Middle East hide a more uneven track record in Turkey's foreign relations. Although Turkey has become the seventeenth-largest economy in the world, it continues to confront economic challenges, such as high unemployment and a yawning current account deficit. Additionally, Turkish society continues to struggle with a number of complicated fault lines, including religious-secular, Turkish-Kurdish, and wealthy-poor.

DEMOCRATIC REFORM AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Among these issues, it is perhaps Turkey's political trajectory—which is intimately related to the religious-secular, ethnic, urban-rural, and socioeconomic divides—that raises the most questions, but this is also an area ripe for opportunity.

Despite the AKP's early achievements, Ankara's record is by no means uniformly positive. It must be recognized that the AKP was under political assault at times during its first six years in power. In 2008, for example, the party confronted the possibility of closure for allegedly seeking to undermine the secular nature of the Turkish state. The Constitutional Court found evidence supporting the charges, but the AKP was not closed because the judges fell one vote short of the seven (out of eleven) required to close a party. Instead, the AKP was forced to pay a \$20 million fine. Even taking such political assaults into account, the fact remains that since the party's landslide reelection in the summer of 2007, the government has backtracked on reforms and displayed at least a majoritarian view of democracy, if not an authoritarian streak. Still, democracy is a continuous process, not an end point. Turkey finds itself in the sometimes difficult process of a transition to more democratic politics, which will have both strides forward and setbacks.

For example, the government has imposed an enormous and seemingly punitive tax fine on the Dogan media group, which is owned by an opponent of the AKP; it has taken legal action against Koc Holding, Turkey's top industrial conglomerate, in a manner that suggests the case is politically motivated; and Prime Minister Erdogan has used a legal investigation that initially targeted Turkey's so-called deep state—an alleged partnership of military, security, and intelligence officials who guard Ataturk's legacy—to go after the AKP's critics in the media, academia, and the bureaucracy. Indeed, many Turkish liberals initially supported what has come to be known as the Ergenekon Case as a critical step toward uprooting Turkey's national security state. Yet in time some liberals soured on the investigation because of what they perceived to be defects in the government's case against certain suspects and a lack of due process, which has fueled suspicion that the prosecution is politically motivated. More generally, the AKP has started to employ and rely on many of the same abusive judicial tactics that previous governments used to silence critics, including long detentions of suspects pending trial and indictments that appear to be based on innuendo and gossip.

In addition, the AKP has used its parliamentary majority to alter the constitution with little regard for the opposition. For example, the constitutional amendments of September 2010 raised some concerns in Turkey and the West, although both the EU and the Obama administration praised the changes affecting the judiciary. Few disagree that

Turkey's judicial system has for decades failed in important ways to meet international standards, and it is generally accepted that Turkey's judicial selection process needs to be less politicized. When secular-nationalist parties held power, they packed the courts with judges who shared their worldview. After these parties were voted from power, the judiciary prevented the new electoral majority from implementing policies that reflected the popular will. The 2010 reforms will give the Turkish government the ability to appoint new judges and fill future vacancies with judges who better reflect the views of the majority. The AKP insists that its reforms will both improve the quality of the judiciary and make it more representative. Critics worry, however, that the judiciary will become too responsive to the current political majority, and their concerns need to be taken seriously.

The AKP's frustration with the existing judiciary was understandable, but some argue that the reforms nevertheless have the potential to replace one politicized group of judges with another. Some Turkish and Western critics charge that the amendments do nothing to bolster the independence of the judiciary or the judicial system more generally, though other observers argue that the criticism is overblown and point out that the changes conform to EU criteria. Regardless, the best solution to the problem of a politicized judiciary would be to establish appointment procedures that give people confidence in the quality and impartiality of judges, such as through requirements of supermajority votes for appointments to important courts. A new appointment process must be coupled with checks and balances that both ensure an independent judiciary can function without improper interference from the legislative or executive branches and is limited to a sphere of authority appropriate to the judicial branch.

The government has sought similar types of solutions with other state organizations that had become bastions of Kemalist orthodoxy, such as the Turkish Academy of Sciences. Again, as with the judiciary, the AKP's answer to the ideological imbalance of the academy was to implement a rigged and politicized process rather than establish regulations and norms that would have protected Turkish science from politicization.

The Turkish government has also sought to impose mandatory Internet filters that were, spokesmen argued, intended only to protect children. After a public outcry, fueled by suspicions that the AKP was actually interested in quelling political dissent, the restrictions were

made voluntary. Compromising Internet freedom is not confined to the AKP, however. In 2007, the Turkish judiciary—after a legal case was brought before the courts by hardcore Turkish nationalists—ordered a ban on the video-sharing website YouTube, because of videos that disparaged the memory of Atatürk.

Although the public was able to alter the government's approach to the Internet, freedom of the press and freedom of expression remain serious concerns. More than ninety journalists are currently in Turkish jails. The arrests and general sense that freedom of the press has been eroded—despite reforms in 2003 to strengthen press freedom—prompted protests in Istanbul's Taksim Square in the spring of 2011.

This also caught the attention of the Obama administration. In a July 2011 appearance on CNN-Turk, U.S. secretary of state Hillary Rodham Clinton rebuked the Turkish government for its treatment of the press and its policies on the Internet:

If there is an area that I am concerned about with recent actions in Turkey, it is . . . the area of freedom of expression and freedom of the media. I do not think it is necessary or in Turkey's interest to be cracking down on journalists and bloggers and the Internet, because I think Turkey is strong enough and dynamic enough with enough voices that, if there are differences of opinion, those will be drowned out in the marketplace of ideas.

Clinton also strongly suggested that it was actually the responsibility of the Turkish government to defend freedom of expression and freedom of the press.

On balance, it is clear that though the AKP took dramatic steps in 2003 and 2004 to forge a more open, modern, and pluralist society, questions remain about Turkey's democratic transition. In some areas, the AKP-led government has used the same nondemocratic tools as its predecessor, making it appear no more liberal than previous Turkish governments.

Despite the AKP's June 2011 electoral success, in which the party garnered 49.95 percent of the popular vote, the idiosyncrasies of Turkey's electoral law are such that even though Prime Minister Erdoğan currently commands a majority in the 550-seat Grand National Assembly, it represents the smallest number of seats since the AKP came to power in 2002. The government will thus be forced to pursue a pragmatic

approach to critical issues for Turkey's future—notably, a new constitution. This is good news, given that the prime minister's critics harbor fear that Prime Minister Erdogan, whom they accuse of having authoritarian tendencies, will use the process to aggrandize his own political power. This will be much harder in the current Grand National Assembly, which, even as the AKP remains the dominant party, is unable to pursue fundamental political change on its own without having to rely on a referendum.

At the same time, questions about the AKP's commitment to liberal democratic practices is not the only problem in Turkish politics. Turkey's opposition parties are generally weak and deeply divided internally. Turkey's transition to democracy would be aided immeasurably by the regeneration of traditional parties or the development of new ones invested with democratic ideals that can serve as viable alternatives to the AKP. Without such parties, the AKP will continue to be the only serious choice for many Turks who, though they may not completely share AKP's worldview, nevertheless find even less to support in either the Republican People's Party or the National People's Movement Party, which hold 135 and 53 seats in the parliament, respectively.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the past decade, Turks have demonstrated that they are capable of undertaking a wide range of political and economic reforms. In light of recent concerns about democratic reversals, however, the Task Force recommends that the United States and Turkey's other partners in the Community of Democracies—which was created in part for precisely this purpose—offer Turkey support and advice toward reenergizing its political reform program. It would be best if the EU could, as it did in 2003 and 2004, serve as an anchor of Turkish political change, but the stalled EU membership negotiations make that impossible.

In its place, the United States and other democracies have a role to play in encouraging Turkey to write a constitution that will advance and deepen Turkish democracy. They should encourage their Turkish colleagues to ensure that the drafting process is open, inclusive, and transparent. The resulting document should enshrine the principles of both majority rule and protection of minority rights, recognizing that democracy does not mean that those with the most votes can impose their values on others.

The constitution can help establish the proper relationship between military and civilian authority—enshrining respect for the military but keeping the government under civilian control, free from military tutelage. It can also codify Turkey's unique approach to the relationship between religion and the state—using Prime Minister Erdogan's September 2011 statement in Cairo about the importance of secular politics in Muslim societies as a starting point—and thus provide a useful model for postrevolutionary Middle Eastern states struggling with this question.

The enduring protection of political rights requires that they be embedded in a system of checks and balances: not just a popularly elected parliament but also a free press, independent political parties, mechanisms for citizens to pursue their grievances through politically neutral institutions, and an independent judiciary. As discussed earlier, this last element requires a judicial appointments process that provides public confidence in the quality and impartiality of those appointed and constitutional provisions that spell out clearly an appropriate but limited role for the judiciary that is consistent with a democratic system.

Yet a new constitution should not be the only measure of Turkish political reform. After all, given the particularities of Turkey's electoral laws, it may not be politically possible for the Turks to write a new constitution. As a result, Washington and Ankara's other international partners should urge the Turks to abolish or reform nondemocratic laws, regulations, rules, and decrees that, in tandem with the existing constitution, undermine Turkey's democratic practices. These include Article 301 of the penal code, which makes insulting Turkishness a crime. Despite the limited use of Article 301 recently, it remains in place and thus contributes to persistent questions about Turkey's democratic transition. In addition, Turkey needs to abolish the internal service codes of the armed forces that previously served as the legal justification for the military's intervention in politics and legal provisions constraining freedom of religion, including those that prevent the reopening of the Greek Orthodox Halki Seminary, which was shuttered in 1971. There has been progress on this latter issue. At the March 2012 Seoul Nuclear Security Summit, President Obama congratulated Prime Minister Erdogan on the Turkish government's apparent decision to reopen the seminary, though the Turkish government has not yet given a date when Halki will finally happen. As a final matter, Ankara should reduce the threshold for parties to enter parliament, which stands at 10 percent and limits the voices represented in the Grand National Assembly.

Turkey could go a long way toward putting to rest questions about the rule of law, criminalization of political differences, and press freedom in Turkey by ending the investigations of the Ergenekon case—either completing the legal proceedings against those accused of crimes or releasing them—and resolving the cases of the ninety-six journalists now detained in Turkish jails. Turkey should also restructure its court system to ensure timely trials that do not drag on for years, or even decades.

Finally, recognizing that a vibrant opposition is central to democratic political systems, a major challenge to Turkish democracy is the weakness of the opposition parties. A number of measures could be undertaken to address this problem and would benefit or be available to all political parties, including the AKP itself, especially when it faces the challenge any party faces in making the transition from its founders to a long-lasting institution. Indeed, as the party is now into its third term, questions have arisen in Turkey about leadership succession within the party—a particular concern if the prime minister or president leaves the political scene in the next few years. Whether part of the constitutional drafting process or not, Turkey's political-parties law needs to be brought in line with those of its fellow members in the Community of Democracies. In addition, Turkey's partners within the Community of Democracies that sponsor organizations such as the International Republican Institute or the National Democratic Institute should make them available to legal Turkish parties to offer technical advice on party building. They can also promote exchanges between political parties from countries in the Community of Democracies and the full range of legal Turkish parties on issues such as human rights, rule of law, and the protection of minorities. This could be part of a broader program of people-to-people exchanges, exchanges between civil society groups, and congressional and parliamentary exchanges.

THE KURDISH ISSUE

In the past, much of the underlying rationale for Turkey's semiauthoritarian political system was the perceived threat of ethnic separatism—notably, Kurdish nationalism. When Mustafa Kemal founded the Turkish Republic, he based his new political order and social setting in part on the idea of Turkishness, which did not accommodate other

ethnic groups in the state carved from what remained of the Ottoman Empire. Almost from the beginning, many Kurds resisted efforts at assimilation and repression of their language and unique culture.

The Kurdish conflict is one of the most sensitive issues in Turkish politics because it has often been violent. As a result, successive Turkish governments have sought largely nondemocratic solutions to the challenge that Kurdish political, social, and cultural consciousness is perceived to pose to the security and integrity of the Turkish state. To be sure, Turkey's leaders and citizens have had good reason for these fears. At one end of the spectrum, Kurdish nationalists have espoused separatism and used violence in pursuit of their goals. The conflict has killed more than forty thousand people since the mid-1980s. At the other end, many Kurds have sought redress of their grievances and have demanded cultural and linguistic rights through Turkey's political institutions. Neither violence nor politics has been successful.

Prime Minister Erdogan and his party have attracted large numbers of Kurds because the AKP is widely regarded as relatively more progressive on the Kurdish issue than other parties, except those political groups based on Kurdish identity, such as the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) and its now-shuttered predecessors. In 2008, Prime Minister Erdogan proposed a \$12 billion development program in Turkey's Kurdish southeast as a way of giving residents of the area, which has been a bastion of support for the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a stake in the Turkish economy and thus, it was hoped, in the political system. The plan was never implemented because of political opposition.

The problem with this approach, however, was its underlying assumption that economic success would result in political quiescence. In 2008 and 2009, the AKP began promoting what was called a Kurdish opening, which observers suspected would address in fundamental ways the Kurds' demands for a more inclusive politics. Ultimately, the opening proved far smaller than initially hoped for, if only because it was purposefully ambiguous and thus easily left to wither and die once opposition grew to any fundamental alteration of the status of Turkey's Kurdish citizens. It remains unclear exactly why Prime Minister Erdogan dropped the initiative, although subsequent PKK violence made it all the more difficult politically for the government to revive the opening or pursue new outreach to the Kurds.

Although many Kurds are well integrated into the political and social life of the country, resolving what is universally known as the Kurdish

problem would do much to improve the quality of Turkish democracy. This issue is among the biggest obstacles to Turkey's democratic ambitions and the root of many of its illiberal practices.

Currently, Turkish society remains deadlocked politically over extending greater cultural and political rights to Kurds, offering Prime Minister Erdogan little incentive to tackle the issue again. However, the overwhelming mandate the government received in the July 2011 elections—even if the vote did not give the AKP enough parliamentary seats to change the constitution on its own—provides an opportunity for Prime Minister Erdogan to pursue a new Kurdish initiative.

The United States and other partners of Turkey should encourage Prime Minister Erdogan to pursue a more progressive approach to the Kurds of Turkey. With the armed forces now less of a factor in Turkish politics, a major obstacle to a political solution for the Kurdish problem has been removed. Turkey's two main opposition groups, the Republican People's Party and Nationalist Movement Party, have often opposed initiatives related to Kurdish rights, yet recent elections indicate that their political appeal is limited. Still, for all of the AKP's emphasis on Muslim solidarity, it too has a core nationalist constituency that makes it hard to advance a solution to the Kurdish problem, especially when PKK violence is on the upswing.

The United States does not have a direct role in Turkey's historic conflict with the Kurds but has shown its support for Turkey by remaining steadfast in its opposition to the PKK. In the past, the Kurdish issue marred Ankara's relations with Iraqi Kurds. Turkey's efforts to improve relations with Iraq's Kurdistan Regional Government has paid off, as the Iraqi Kurdish leadership has, in turn, encouraged a peaceful settlement of Turkey's Kurdish issue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

American policymakers must be mindful that the relationship between the Kurds and the Turkish state is perhaps the most sensitive issue facing Turkey, but given the current improved relations between Washington and Ankara, President Obama has an opportunity to use his warm relationship with Prime Minister Erdogan and his personal prestige among Turks to persuade them that a new Kurdish opening would be worthwhile. The United States should encourage Prime Minister Erdogan to build on the steps he took in late November 2011,

when he apologized for the massacre of approximately thirteen thousand Alevi Kurdish residents of Dersim (now Tunceli) between 1936 and 1939, and make a new gesture toward Turkey's Kurdish community. Although some Kurds were suspicious of Prime Minister Erdogan's Dersim gesture, believing it was more about competition between the AKP and the opposition Republican People's Party, which controlled the government at the time of the killings, a taboo has been broken. There is an opportunity for the prime minister to build on the Dersim apology and the 2009 Kurdish opening to renew efforts to resolve the Kurdish problem.

At the same time, support for the PKK both inside and outside Turkey has not occurred in a vacuum. It is a natural response to decades of estrangement and disaffection. While continuing to demand an end to PKK violence, Washington should privately encourage Ankara to undertake economic, educational, and cultural initiatives to ameliorate the alienation of large numbers of Kurds and answer their demands for official recognition of their identity. This is not only an imperative for the less developed and predominantly Kurdish southeast but also a national issue, as the combination of urbanization and decades of violence has moved large numbers of Kurds to other parts of the country. For example, Istanbul is now the largest Kurdish city in the world after Irbil, Iraq. Washington should encourage Prime Minister Erdogan to follow through with his intention to hold talks with the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), which currently holds more than thirty seats in parliament and controls almost all major municipalities in the southeast.⁸ Talks between the government and the BDP would be a welcome development because many Kurds look to the BDP to speak on their behalf and regard it as a natural partner for Prime Minister Erdogan in pursuing a solution to Kurdish demands for greater official recognition and rights.

The United States can also use its influence with the Kurdish leadership in Irbil to double its efforts to pressure the PKK to abandon its armed struggle against Turkey.

THE ECONOMY

The Turkish economy has tripled in the past decade on the strength of unprecedented levels of foreign investment, export growth, and rising domestic consumption. Yet the country's rapid economic expansion poses significant risks, and analysts remain concerned about

overheating. The current account deficit, which in 2011 was \$77.2 billion, ballooned to nearly 10 percent of GDP before declining in early 2012. It and domestic credit growth have made Turkey vulnerable to external shocks.⁹ Reflecting this reality along with weak European economies, the Turkish lira was the second-worst-performing emerging-market currency in 2011. Inflation, which ruined Turkey's economy and reputation in the 1980s and 1990s, rose in 2011. Some analysts warn that a speculative bubble has developed in the real estate market. Observers expect economic growth to slow in 2012; how much and whether the government can manage a soft landing are significant questions.

Turkey's economic decision-makers are well respected internationally, but concerns exist that Prime Minister Erdogan's political calculations have led the government to prioritize high growth at the expense of macroeconomic stability. Analysts have questioned the Turkish Central Bank's decision to not tighten monetary policy by raising interest rates in the latter half of 2011. Rating agencies have raised concerns about the bank's unorthodox monetary policy. The prime minister's public pronouncements that interest rates should be at zero, coupled with recent comments by Minister of Economy Zafar Caglayan complaining about what he called the interest rate lobby, reinforce reservations about the independence of financial institutions such as the Central Bank. In the fourth quarter of 2011, however, the Central Bank did raise short-term interest rates, which had the desired effect of reducing consumer demand for credit and domestic production. This may have been precisely what the Turkish economy needed to avoid overheating.

Turkey's economic success has both enabled and motivated a more activist foreign policy. Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu's approach to Turkish foreign policy combines diplomatic engagement with commercial diplomacy. Consequently, Turkey has concluded seventeen free trade agreements, with many more in negotiations, as well as numerous agreements on visa-free travel for business people and tourists. Large Turkish business delegations traveling abroad have become a prominent feature of Turkish commercial diplomacy. Ankara has also pursued a sophisticated campaign to attract foreign direct investment. Turkish trade with the Middle East is now 26 percent of its total foreign trade, a figure that is likely to grow. In Africa—not a traditional arena of Turkish foreign policy—Turkey opened twenty-one new diplomatic missions in 2010 and 2011 and completed customs union agreements with South Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Cameroon.

Moreover, as evidence of Turkey's attractive business climate, in December 2011 Amazon.com signed a partnership deal with Ciceksepeti.com, a Turkish e-commerce site that allows customers to send flowers and gifts all over Turkey; several major initial public offerings will be floated in 2012. The government also plans legislation related to stock and shareholding that will make Turkey an even more attractive investment.

With all the buoyancy of the Turkish economy, potential problems loom, such as keeping inflation manageable (the IMF projects a 5 percent inflation rate in 2012), reducing unemployment, and grappling with the continuing problem of the current account deficit. In addition, despite the considerable growth in trade and investment with and in the Middle East and burgeoning commercial ties to other regions, the bulk of Turkey's economic activity remains with the EU, which is itself grappling with massive debt and slowing economies.¹⁰ A struggling EU is an obvious problem for Turkish traders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The United States can do little to help shield the Turks from Europe's slowdown, but it should do more to facilitate collaboration between U.S. and Turkish firms in third markets that can help Turkey, generate opportunities for American firms, and promote better economic futures for countries of common interest. The United States needs to make clear that it recognizes and supports Turkey's enormous economic progress and potential. It should also recognize that Turkey can be a force for the greater regional economic integration that is so essential to bringing peace and prosperity to Afghanistan, Pakistan, Central Asia, and the Middle East.

Indeed, in recognition of Turkey's new role, the United States should join with other nations to sponsor seats for Turkey in the IMF executive board and an enhanced role in the G20. These institutions, as well as the finance ministries or treasury departments and central banks of important countries (including those of the United States), should intensify their interactions with their Turkish counterparts so as to assist Turkey in addressing the main threats to its future economic health.

Washington can also do more to promote further liberalizing economic reform in Turkey that will spur next-generation economic

growth and more effective partnerships with U.S. and Western businesses. Important steps include more modern intellectual property rights legislation and enforcement; deregulation and other steps to promote markets and competition in the energy sector; more transparency and predictability in the areas of taxes, tax enforcement, other state regulatory functions, and the rule of law; and labor market reform. To give this teeth, the United States should consider proposing some kind of agreement or agreements to facilitate freer trade in services, strengthen investor protections, and/or bolster competition, any of which would be substantively useful, send important signals to traders and investors, and avoid what may be policy or legal barriers to a bilateral free trade in goods agreement. Consideration should also be given to an Overseas Private Investment Corporation-backed fund for Turkish entrepreneurs.

ENERGY

Turkey is poised to become a more important actor in the global energy market, but not because of any major find of resources. Indeed, Turkey is energy-resource poor. Instead, it is Turkey's strategic location—literally, in the middle of major energy producers and consumers who are eager to diversify their supplies—that makes Turkey influential in this area.

Already approximately 4 to 6 percent of global oil supplies passes through Turkey via the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline that connects Turkey to Azerbaijan and the Caspian countries, the Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline that connects Turkey and Iraq, and shipping through the Bosphorus Straits.¹¹ Turkey, however, would like ultimately to decrease tanker traffic that passes through the Bosphorus, citing environmental hazards and dangers to the Istanbul population. The Turkish government, for example, has revived plans to build a thirty-mile canal from the Black Sea to the Marmara to bypass Istanbul, while others herald the importance of a new Samsun-to-Ceyhan pipeline project. Both projects, however, face considerable commercial, technical, environmental (in the case of the Marmara), and political challenges.

Supplying Europe—still the world's largest economies—with critical supplies of natural gas will be the next "Great Game." Turkey will

play a more substantial and, at times, indispensable role in European and global trade for two interrelated reasons: Turkey's increasing demand for gas to meet its rapidly growing economy, and Turkey as a transit point for gas supplies coming from newly emerging producers—initially, Azerbaijan and possibly later Central Asia and the Middle East. At the same time, Turkey and Europe seek to diversify domestic energy supply, a central component of both national energy security and their foreign policy agendas.

The Turkish government projects that its own gas needs will double in line with Ankara's projections of Turkish GDP and income growth. The economic problems in Europe—Turkey's largest export market and the source of much of its FDI—may ultimately force the Turks to revise their projections downward, but Ankara (and the Europeans) will still need to import gas to satisfy and diversify their energy needs. Under present conditions, Turkey will be short on gas toward the end of the decade.

As an example of the new Great Game, there are six competing proposals for shipping gas to Europe, initially from the giant Shah Deniz gas field offshore of Azerbaijan (the largest natural gas field in the Caspian Sea) and potentially in later years from Central Asia and the Middle East.

In late October 2011, a major breakthrough took place. The Turkish prime minister and the Azeri president signed a landmark Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) that, for the first time, permits the transit of gas across Turkey to Europe. The IGA also provides six billion cubic meters per year of Azeri gas for Turkey's growing domestic market, in addition to the initial transit of ten billion cubic meters per year of Azeri gas through a gas network upgraded by BOTAS, Turkey's pipeline owner and energy trading company, and/or through a new stand-alone Trans-Anatolian Gas Pipeline project (TANAP). Azerbaijan's state oil company, SOCAR, and BOTAS initiated engineering studies in the spring of 2012 and intend on finalizing a suitable transit option by the summer of 2013. In parallel, SOCAR and BOTAS invited the Western companies of the Shah Deniz consortium (BP, Total, and Statoil) to take equity stakes in the TANAP.

The IGA fundamentally altered the political and commercial landscape for the Great Game. First, it provides the essential political assurance to Europe that Turkey is committed to contributing to European

energy security. Second, it not only opens the door for the transit of Azeri gas but also encourages the development of additional sources of natural gas for European markets. Third, it signals another critical step in the operationalization of the Southern Corridor. Equally important, Turkey's landmark political commitment effectively closed the door on efforts among some to access and develop Iranian energy supplies. Turkey and Azerbaijan must complete and implement IGA soon, or potential suppliers from Central Asia and consumers will hesitate to make the investments needed for gas to flow.

Finally, it is important to highlight that Turkey does not necessarily perceive or certainly separate its energy policy from its foreign and economic policies. The IGA reflects the integration of Turkish foreign and energy policy, satisfying Turkish domestic demand and promoting regional imperatives while demonstrating again Turkey's attachment and commitment to Europe. Moreover, the importance of Iranian supply to Turkey will decrease. This is in line with the Turkish perception of Iran as an increasingly problematic neighbor. Turkey now has more energy options, and its commitment to the development of the Southern Corridor will give Ankara greater flexibility in its foreign and economic policymaking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

If the complicated politics and economics of Caspian Basin gas reveal anything, it is that Turkey's role in supplying gas to Europe will be critical. Still, Turkey has a long way to go before it becomes the energy hub that Turkish leaders envision. Turkey needs investment in its energy infrastructure, and even with the enormous new supplies coming from Shah Deniz II, there will still not be enough gas for the storage and trading activities necessary to properly consider Turkey a hub. Further, producers will be reluctant to allow Turkey to reprice their gas, preferring instead to pay a transit fee. To have any hope of becoming an energy hub, Turkey will need to liberalize its energy market, gain the necessary foreign investment to make significant infrastructure investments in such things as storage facilities, and gain access to adequate, assured energy supplies.

In the meantime, Ankara can be a regional energy link and play an important role in Europe's efforts to diversify its supplies. To achieve

this goal and secure the energy resources it needs, Turkey should, on a regional basis, encourage the development of diverse energy transport routes, work to prevent the emergence of choke points and monopolies en route, and develop a range of sources for oil and gas.

Overall, the United States can continue to play an important role in facilitating the arrangements needed among suppliers and consumers. If these are obstacles moving forward, Washington may need to become involved at political levels, as it did in the development of the BTC oil pipeline.

Foreign Policy: Turkey's New Role

Turkey's transformation has not been confined to economic and domestic policy alone. After years of being an important but somewhat cautious international actor, with varying degrees of success, Turkey is pursuing a more dynamic foreign policy that has ranged well beyond areas of traditional concern, such as Europe, NATO, the Balkans, and the security of the Aegean and Black Seas.

Today, Turkey is an influential player in the Middle East and North Africa, plays important roles in Afghanistan and Pakistan, is deepening its ties with Russia, and is active in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Ankara is also expanding its presence in Africa and Latin America, following the lead of Turkish business professionals who have made modest investments in these regions. Despite Turkey's aspirations, the Task Force has chosen to focus its analyses and recommendations on the Middle East—an area of Turkish foreign policy activism—the EU, NATO, and the United States. Given all the focus on Turkey and its relations with the West against the backdrop of the AKP's Islamist roots and Ankara's changing role in the Middle East, it is only appropriate to highlight these areas.

THE MIDDLE EAST

Although it seems entirely appropriate for Turkey to want to broaden and deepen its relations with its neighbors and other countries to the south and east, the shift in policy under the AKP has been so dramatic that it has led both Western and some Turkish observers to question whether Turkey is shifting away from its traditional foreign policy posture.

That the AKP's lineage can be traced back to the founding of Turkey's Islamist movement in the late 1960s only accentuated concerns

about Ankara's efforts to forge a new path in the Middle East. After all, Turkey had long been a tepid and wary observer of Middle Eastern politics, devoting most of its diplomatic energy to the institutionalization of relations with Europe and the United States.

This Western orientation, especially Ankara's NATO membership, was—before the rise of the AKP—a source of mistrust in the Arab world. More profoundly, the combination of the Ottoman colonial legacy in the Middle East and Kemalism's official policy of *laïcisme*—which seemed irreligious to many in the Middle East—sowed a divide between Turkey and the Arab world. Finally, the insular quality of Turkish politics after World War I resulted in a foreign policy that traditionally sought to avoid entangling Ankara in the politics, rivalries, and conflicts of the Middle East. That has now changed.

THE ARAB WORLD

At the same time that the AKP was actively engaged in EU-related reforms, the Turkish government began pursuing a multidimensional foreign policy that included renewed relations with Russia, the Caucasus, and, in particular, the Arab world and Iran. As part of this strategy, Ankara sought to use its good offices in negotiating Arab-Israeli peace, especially on the Syria track; held itself out as a problem solver in Lebanon; played a constructive role in Iraq beginning in 2008; sought to broker a Saudi-Syrian rapprochement; and took a hard line on Israeli policy in the Gaza Strip. This outreach came in tandem with renewed Arab interest in Turkey and its politics, which was primarily a result of the AKP's electoral success.

The AKP's rise intrigued political activists in the Arab world, who wondered whether any lessons were to be learned from Turkish Islamists' accumulation of political power in an officially secular political system. For both Arab liberals and mainstream Islamists, the AKP had something important to offer. From the perspective of Arab liberals, if the AKP could be emulated in the Arab world, it would go a long way to resolving a central problem of Arab politics whereby citizens were often forced to choose between the authoritarianism of prevailing regimes and the perceived theocracy of Islamist groups. Indeed, an Arab AKP-type party would give people a way out of this dilemma, providing hope for a more democratic future. For Islamists, the AKP

provided a lesson on how Islamists could not only overcome barriers to political participation but also come to power and, with broad public support, embark on a wide-ranging program to dramatically remake a once-hostile political arena.

Arabs were also keenly interested in the West's response to the AKP, regarding the AKP as a proxy of sorts for the Muslim world's relations with Europe and the United States. The first test came when the Turkish government brought to parliament a request to allow American forces to traverse Turkish territory to invade Iraq. Although 264 deputies voted for the resolution and 250 voted against it, there were 19 abstentions. Those abstentions were critical, because Article 96 of the Turkish constitution requires that "[u]nless otherwise stipulated in the Constitution, the Turkish Grand National Assembly shall convene with at least one-third of the total number of members and shall take decisions by an absolute majority of those present." The combination of "no" votes and abstentions was actually more than the number of deputies who supported the measure. Consequently, the American 4th Infantry Division was denied access to Turkish territory, forcing an alteration of U.S. war plans. The Grand National Assembly's action, which was widely interpreted in the Arab world as a "no" vote that reflected both Turkish public opinion and the emergence of a new, more democratic Turkey that was not a client-state of the West, was warmly received in many Middle Eastern countries, where opposition to the invasion of Iraq was near universal.

A second trial came in the summer of 2007, when the General Staff sought to prevent Abdullah Gul from becoming president. The EU was critical of the military's move, and after an initial stumble, the United States also clearly signaled its disapproval of the attempted intervention in Turkey's political process.

The Arab world's interest in Turkey dovetailed well with Ankara's interest in strengthening its links to the Arab states and Iran. Although some observers questioned whether Turkey's approach to the countries of the south and east was related to the Islamist roots of the AKP, the party's approach to the Middle East showed more continuity than these critics suggested.

Although no Turkish government has tried to play the kind of role in the Middle East that Ankara has sought since the AKP came to power, that Turkey's outreach to the Arab world predates the AKP's

rise suggests that something other than ideology is driving Turkish foreign policy in the region. Indeed, deeper structural reasons for Turkey's activism in the Middle East—which has become more pronounced in the past decade—explain divergent policies between Washington and Ankara in a number of significant areas.

For example, the end of the Cold War—a conflict whose overarching security threat bound Washington and Ankara together—has allowed Turkey to explore new opportunities not just in the Middle East but also in Eurasia. In addition, as noted, Turkey's need for natural gas gave impetus to improved relations with Iran. Those energy needs only intensified with Turkey's economic boom over the past decade. There were also economic factors that led to Ankara's deepening relationship with Syria (now soured). As discussed above, Ankara reasoned that increased cross-border trade would contribute to economic development in Turkey's southeast, which would diminish Kurdish separatism.

Finally, public opinion has mattered more in the formulation of Turkish foreign policy since the AKP came to power. This was bound to be a problem for the United States, given the anti-Americanism that has long been a feature of Turkish politics combined with a more generalized hostility toward Washington after the invasion of Iraq, which had an adverse effect on Turkish security. Anger toward the United States and a public that is sympathetic to the Palestinians—and does not necessarily regard countries like Iran and Syria as foes—have translated into an approach to the Middle East that has sometimes conflicted with that of the United States, particularly with regard to Iran and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In addition to the structural determinants of Turkey's foreign policy, which have propelled Turkish activism in the Middle East, propitious timing has benefited Prime Minister Erdogan and his three foreign ministers—Abdullah Gul, Ali Babacan, and currently Ahmet Davutoglu—in their efforts to remake Turkey into a regional leader. For example, by the time the AKP came to power in 2002, the power of the leading Arab states was on the wane. Moreover, the United States was increasingly preoccupied with Iraq (and Afghanistan) in the past decade. This yawning gap in regional leadership presented an opportunity for the charismatic Prime Minister Erdogan, who was only too happy to step in where others would not or could not.

ARAB UPRISINGS

Turkey's emerging regional leadership seems to place Ankara in a strong position to help influence the trajectory of politics in countries like Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, and potentially others as the Arab uprisings move beyond their one-year anniversary. Among observers in the Middle East, Turkey, and the West, much discussion has centered on the Turkish model, in which a party with Islamist patrimony presides over liberalization of both the political system and the economy. Thus it seems that Turkey is well placed to offer insights and lessons to Arabs struggling to achieve their revolutionary objectives.

Still, for all the investment, goodwill, and concomitant influence it has developed over the past decade, Ankara was unable to leverage that prestige to sway the behavior of either Libya's Muammar al-Qaddafi or Syrian president Bashar al-Assad, two leaders the Turks studiously cultivated during the AKP's tenure.

After initially opposing NATO military action in favor of a negotiated solution between Qaddafi and Libya's Benghazi-based rebellion, Ankara was forced to accept that its powers of persuasion with the Libyan leader were limited. In Syria, Turkey was slow to move away from President Assad, seeking a solution to the Syrian uprising through dialogue and reform. Yet as the Syrian regime stepped up its use of force against peaceful protesters with the assistance of Tehran, Ankara's good offices proved of little value in bringing the insurrection to an end. In addition, Syrian efforts to quell the protests through violence have created a flow of refugees across the Syria-Turkey frontier.

The Assad regime's continuing use of violence against its people—by the early spring of 2012, the UN estimated that more than nine thousand Syrians had died at the hands of Syrian forces—precipitated a suspension of diplomatic relations between Ankara and Damascus and the imposition of Turkish sanctions on Syria.¹² The measures include a 30 percent tax on products coming from Syria, a freeze of Syrian government assets in Turkey, and a ban on financial transactions with Syria's central bank. Developments in Syria have both contributed to sharpening an implicit competition between Turkey and Iran and provided, in the words of one Turkish interlocutor, “a more realistic view of the region.”

After the failure of a UN Security Council resolution and a range of initiatives that demanded President Assad delegate his authority

to the Syrian vice president and establish a national unity government, Ankara has amplified its anti-Assad rhetoric and has been at the center of discussions about humanitarian corridors and possibly arming the Free Syrian Army. Ankara's steady rhetorical pressure on Damascus and apparent desire to be a leader in resolving the Syrian crisis is a welcome sign. Turkish activism will bolster the Arab League and could help provide political cover for Western countries nervous about the consequences of international humanitarian intervention in Syria. Yet Turkey remains deeply concerned about a full-fledged international effort to arm the Syrian opposition, fearing civil war and chaos along its borders and the likely attendant refugee flow. Instead, Ankara is seeking to play a leading role within the Friends of Syria group, which is trying to isolate the Assad regime and pressure Damascus through increased sanctions, and is supporting UN envoy Kofi Annan's efforts to find a political solution to the Syrian crisis. As the situation in Syria deteriorated just prior to the tenuous April 12, 2012, ceasefire, Turkey's foreign minister Ahmet Davutoglu sought to rally international action to stem the tide of Syrian refugees across the border. There are rumors that Ankara, in response to Syrian shelling that landed on Turkish territory, might invoke Article 5 of the North Atlantic treaty, which states that "an armed attack against one or more of them [NATO allies] in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all."

Prime Minister Erdogan's tour of Cairo, Tunis, and Tripoli in fall 2011 was intended to demonstrate that Turkey—as major powers such as Egypt struggle to realize their revolutionary promise and Saudi Arabia seeks to contain regional political upheaval—can play an influential role in nurturing Arab transitions. Prime Minister Erdogan was greeted with a hero's welcome in Cairo both because he called for former Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak to listen to the demands of the Egyptian people early on in the January 25, 2011, uprising and because of what many Egyptians regard as his principled stand on the Palestinian issue. While in Cairo, Prime Minister Erdogan made important statements about the compatibility of secular politics and pious societies, which angered Egyptian Islamists but encouraged Egyptian secularists.¹³

Still, even as Egyptians struggle to build a new political system and grapple with a collapsing economy, they are likely to look internally for solutions to their own political problems. To be sure, Turkey is not

totally devoid of influence. After all, the Egyptian Current Party—an offshoot of young Muslim Brothers—fashions itself as the Egyptian version of the AKP, and former Muslim Brother Abdel Monem Abul Futouh regards himself as an “Egyptian prime minister Erdogan.” But Cairo maintains its pretensions of regional leadership dating back to the Nasser period and is unlikely to allow the non-Arab Turks to usurp a regional leadership role that Egyptians believe is rightly and naturally theirs. Consequently, Egyptian officials were noticeably cool toward Foreign Minister Davutoglu’s proposal to establish a strategic partnership in the region, arguing that although Cairo welcomed Turkish investment, Egypt was not interested in the alignment that Turkey sought.

It is, however, Egypt’s rejection of strategic ties that highlights what will most likely be Turkey’s most enduring source of regional influence: investment. Turkey, with its spectacular economic growth rates, fearless entrepreneurs, flush balance sheets, well-developed banks, and a government with pretensions of regional leadership, can be an engine of Middle Eastern economic growth. Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya (as well as possibly Syria and Yemen) need investment, infrastructure development, and technical assistance to put their economies back together, and Turkey could be a source of all three.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The United States and Turkey have an opportunity to cooperate in helping forge a more democratic and prosperous Middle East. The United States has already identified this opportunity and has sought to work with Turkey on “soft landings” for Arab countries that have experienced uprisings. Turkey is not only a good partner in this effort but also Washington’s only partner with enough clout in enough countries in the region to play this role. Arabs are genuinely interested in the political reforms Turkey undertook in the early 2000s and its recent economic development. Yet the Turks are not the only regional players. The Qataris, Saudis, and Egyptians would all like to play leading regional roles, and the Turks will confront a number of challenges, including the historic Arab distrust of Turks dating back to the Ottoman Empire and the simple fact that they are not Arabs.

Despite these deficits, the Arab world is so politically dynamic and so lacking in regional leadership that the time may well be ripe for Turkey to play a more leading role. This is why Turkey is tightening its ties with Hamas as the organization's previous patron, the Assad regime, falters. Washington may not like the Ankara-Hamas ties, but the development does hold out the possibility that under Turkish tutelage, the organization might be willing to eventually meet the demands of the Middle East Quartet: recognize Israel, renounce violence, and uphold all international agreements between the Palestinian Authority and Israel. This is a tall order, because it is essentially asking Hamas to relinquish aspects of its agenda that have made it successful in the past, but Ankara should be given a chance to pursue this goal. Presently, no other political actor in the region is as well positioned as Turkey to try. Moreover, Ankara's relations with Hamas should be viewed as part of a broader effort—that includes ties to Iraq's Iraqiya Party and, more recently, stepped-up pressure on the Assad regime—to diminish the influence of Iran in the region.

More broadly, Washington and Ankara have several opportunities to work together in supporting the emergence of a more democratic Middle East. Although the Egyptians have been cool to Turkey's regional leadership, a U.S.-Turkey partnership in Tunisia, Libya, and a post-Assad Syria has potential. Although Ankara has increased its development assistance in recent years, the Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TIKA) does not have the capacity of its American counterpart, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). But the two agencies could partner to bring development assistance to the Arab countries that need and want it. Through cooperative ventures, TIKA could build its capabilities, and the United States could benefit from its association with Turkey, which enjoys considerable goodwill in parts of the Middle East. Ultimately, however, USAID and TIKA can do only so much; the uprisings in the Middle East are an Arab story, and outsiders will have limited influence in shaping their outcome.

An important role that Turkey can fill is as a regional economic engine. If Turkish leaders can somewhat insulate the economy from the adverse effects of Europe's troubles—as they are trying to do by diversifying trade and investment to countries south and east of Anatolia—Turkey will be well positioned to provide the kind of investment and employment opportunities so badly needed in North Africa and other

parts of the Arab world. Turkish business is already active in the region, but more is always better. The United States should extend financing, guarantees, and political risk insurance to Turkish businesses that partner with American firms that want to invest in the Middle East. The United States has already announced \$2 billion in financing for projects in the Middle East, but American firms would benefit from partnering with Turkish companies that have more experience in the region and have demonstrated less sensitivity to the region's present political uncertainty.

ISRAEL

It was actually Israel, not the Arab world, that first became a focal point of Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East, reflecting a strategic consensus among the Turkish military establishment, Washington, and Jerusalem in the mid- to late 1990s. The centerpiece of the relationship emerged in February 1996, when the Turkish General Staff announced that it had struck a training agreement with the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

Bilateral military ties made strategic sense for both countries at the time. After all, Israelis and Turks were outsiders in a region that they regarded as either explicitly or implicitly hostile. In particular, the Turkish and Israeli military establishments perceived Syria and Iran as primary threats to their respective national securities. Both militaries believed they had much to gain from the agreements in the area of counterterrorism, where the Turks were battling the PKK and Israel was focused on the challenge from Hamas and related groups. In addition, a robust trade relationship was closely linked to the security relationship.

Yet an undeniable diplomatic and political dynamic also drove Turkey-Israel relations throughout the 1990s. A primary goal of Israeli foreign policy has long been to break out of the diplomatic isolation that resulted from the Arab-Israeli conflict. For Jerusalem, upgrading diplomatic relations with a large, predominantly Muslim country adjacent to the Middle East was a major diplomatic achievement. That the subsequent development of bilateral military ties placed Israel's primary regional antagonists on the defensive further enhanced Turkey's value as a strategic partner.

For Ankara, the political and diplomatic benefits of alignment with Israel lay primarily in Washington. Outside the U.S. foreign policy establishment, Ankara does not have a natural constituency in Washington. The Turkish-American community is not as well organized as Greek Americans and Armenian Americans are. The Turks had long understood that good relations with Israel meant the goodwill of pro-Israel groups in the United States, which could be useful in fending off Greek-American and Armenian-American advocacy efforts so inimical to Turkey. Ankara's strategy was largely successful. In what was to some an astonishing irony, Israel's supporters in the United States—the majority of which are American Jewish organizations—helped shield Turkey from congressional efforts to recognize the mass killings of Armenians in April 1915 as genocide.

By any measure, the relationship between Turkey and Israel benefited both countries militarily, economically, and diplomatically. Of particular importance to Israel, Turkey played a behind-the-scenes role from 2006 to 2008 in trying to secure the release of Sergeant Gilad Shalit from captivity in Gaza, and in 2008 in mediating between Syria and Israel. It was also a benefit to the United States in that the close coordination between Israel and Turkey kept common foes like Iran on the defensive; provided Israel with an additional strategic relationship in the region, which might give Jerusalem the confidence to move forward on the peace process; and established Ankara as another potential trusted interlocutor between Israelis and Arabs.

Subsequent disagreements over Gaza, Iran, and the *Mavi Marmara* incident of May 2010 precipitated a deterioration in Turkey-Israel relations. The outcome was Ankara's decision to downgrade relations with Jerusalem to the second-secretary level in September 2011. The immediate cause for Turkey's decision was Israel's continued refusal to apologize or pay compensation for the deaths of eight Turkish citizens and a Turkish American during an Israeli raid on the *Mavi Marmara*, which was part of a flotilla of six ships that had sought to run Israel's blockade of Gaza. In particular, after the UN investigation into the episode—known as the Palmer Report—reaffirmed Israel's legal right to establish and enforce a naval blockade of the Gaza Strip but still criticized Israel's use of force and treatment of detained activists, the Israelis concluded there was no reason to issue an apology.¹⁴ Turkey, in turn, rejected the report's conclusions as politically motivated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The estrangement of two strategic allies of the United States certainly complicates Washington's efforts to ensure peace and stability in the eastern Mediterranean. Tension over gas exploration off the southern coast of Cyprus raises concerns of possible naval confrontation between Turkey and Israel.¹⁵ It does not seem that either country actually wants to raise the level of tension, but accidents and miscommunications could lead to escalation. The two nations need to communicate through appropriate channels to develop procedures to avoid such undesired escalation. Interested parties, including the United States, also need to engage with Turkey and Cyprus to avoid a confrontation over exploitation of natural gas resources.

Although stable Turkey-Israel relations are important to both countries and the United States, domestic political calculations among leaders in Ankara and Jerusalem block any way out of the Turkish-Israeli impasse, at least currently. One bright spot, however, is trade. Despite the late 2011 downgrading of relations, the overall volume of trade between the two countries has actually risen. Turkey's imports of Israeli products have increased by 54 percent, and exports to Israel have increased by 24 percent. Economic ties may thus be a possible vehicle for rapprochement. The United States should encourage the interests of both Turks and Israelis in maintaining economic links in lieu of the seemingly fruitless search for an end to the estrangement between Ankara and Jerusalem, as beneficial as that might be for the United States. Moreover, promoting economic ties could provide a cushion that will facilitate mending political ties in the future.

THE EUROPEAN UNION AND NATO

Almost since the AKP came to power, a drumbeat of articles have asked, "Who Lost Turkey?" or "Is Turkey Turning East?"¹⁶ Much of this work says less about Turkey and the AKP than the view among some in the West that secular nationalists are always preferable to liberal Islamists. That Turkey has pursued a broader and more independent foreign policy that has upgraded Ankara's ties with the Arab world and Iran as its ties with Israel have cooled has intensified suspicion of AKP and its intentions.

EUROPEAN UNION

It remains a fact, however, that President Gul, during his short stint as prime minister in late 2002 and early 2003, and subsequently Prime Minister Erdogan strongly supported Turkey's bid to join the European Union. Indeed, in 2003 and 2004, when the AKP-dominated parliament passed seven reform packages, both leaders indicated that the reforms were directly related to Europe's criteria for beginning formal membership negotiations. Those negotiations began in March 2005.

Since that time, however, Ankara's experience with Brussels has been generally unhappy. To accede to the EU, Turkey must complete negotiations with the European Commission on the thirty-five chapters of EU law. Turkey and the EU have opened and closed only a single chapter, and individual EU governments have placed holds on a variety of other chapters, including justice, freedom, and security and judiciary and fundamental rights, bogging down Turkey's membership negotiations. This has had a negative effect on the Turkish public, which continues to support membership in Europe but which is deeply skeptical that the EU will ever admit a large Muslim country into the fold.

EU officials have often made the case that the problems with Turkey's membership are related to the divided island of Cyprus, Turkey's still-questionable human rights practices, unfulfilled promises to give greater cultural and linguistic freedom to Turkey's Kurds, and the massive transfer of resources to Turkey from the EU that would be necessary to bring the Turkish economy into line—even with all of its dynamism—given the gap in per capita income between Turkey and EU members. But many European countries simply do not want Turkey in the EU and are using these arguments as an excuse. In fact, there are good reasons to believe that each of the issues can be resolved. Turkey should not let frustration and bitterness at how it is being treated on membership get in the way of entering into beneficial, functional agreements with the EU.

Despite Turkish suspicions about European anti-Muslim sentiments, Turkey remains, at least rhetorically, committed to full EU membership. Indeed, the institutional and economic linkages to Europe that have developed since Turkey struck an association agreement with the European Economic Community in 1963 remain critical to Turkey for both economic and political reasons. Although these ties would continue to grow under the various alternative arrangements that some

European leaders have floated, such as a so-called privileged partnership between Turkey and the EU, Ankara rejects these compromises, arguing that there is no actual political, legal, or diplomatic reason to abandon Turkey's bid for full membership. Turkish leaders also readily acknowledge that the application process has been beneficial for Turkey and has helped propel democratic and economic reforms.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Turkey's bid for EU membership remains on life support only because political disincentives exist on both sides to calling off negotiations and ending Turkey's candidacy. The EU does not want to be accused of being anti-Muslim, and Turkey does not want to give the EU an easy way out of this membership conundrum. As a matter of principle, the United States should continue to support Turkey's bid for EU membership as it works to further institutionalize a Washington-Ankara partnership. As part of this support, the United States should press its EU partners to remove the obstacles for Turkish citizens to obtain Schengen visas. Easier movement of people across borders could improve relations between Turks and the EU and potentially change European attitudes toward Turkey's EU membership.

At the same time, however, the onus is on Turkey to uphold its commitments to Brussels, which include continued political reform and the opening of Turkish ports to Cypriot traffic. The latter issue, in particular, is extraordinarily sensitive, given the conflict on Cyprus and the widely held narrative in Turkey, the United States, and the EU that Ankara and the island's Turkish community did what they could to resolve the problem by voting overwhelmingly in support of the 2004 Annan Plan even as the Greek Cypriots voted against it in large numbers. For Turks, the fact that Cyprus had already gained entry into the EU (though not formally until a week after the failed referendum¹⁷) undermines Brussels' credibility when it comes to the conflict and discourages a reasonable dialogue between the parties.

The impasse in Turkey's bid for EU membership should not preclude the development of robust relations between Ankara and Brussels. Indeed, as the world changes rapidly, it would be a missed opportunity for Turkey and Europe to allow the EU membership issue to stand in the way of cooperation. The emerging rivalry between

Ankara and Paris (and to a lesser extent Berlin) in North Africa should be replaced with cooperation. The French colonial legacy is still too fresh in the area for France to go it alone in the region, and even though Turkish entrepreneurs may be interested in investment opportunities, Turkey's capacity to assist North African political development would benefit from EU partners. It is important to emphasize that the development of Turkey-EU relations is not and should not be a substitute for Turkey's membership in Europe. Rather, better ties between Ankara and Brussels may be a way to improve Turkey's bid to ultimately join the EU.

NATO

The same questions concerning Turkey's place in the West or the East have been asked about Ankara's commitment to the future of NATO. There are no indications that Turkey, which became a signatory to the North Atlantic Treaty in 1952, has lost interest in the alliance. Moments of tension have arisen, of course, including a reluctance to participate in NATO modernization and most recently Turkey's initial reluctance to support NATO's operation Unified Protector, which helped drive Libya's Muammar al-Qaddafi from power. Turkey is not unique in this regard, however. Tensions between NATO and other alliance members are not new, notably with France. In addition, Greece—another NATO ally—has expressed concern over Turkey's military operations in the Aegean, which Athens claims have violated Greek airspace and territorial waters in more aggressive ways than in the recent past. The Turks counter that their patrols are routine and do not indicate a shift to a more aggressive posture. Whether or not Greece's claims about the Turkish military are warranted, Ankara is not seeking a break from NATO by stirring up trouble in the Aegean. It would, of course, be better for the alliance if whatever outstanding territorial issues between the countries were resolved, but that type of breakthrough does not seem to be in the offing.

Concerns circulated in Turkey about the placement on its territory of an early-warning radar for NATO's antimissile defense system. Ankara, which takes seriously the idea of having peaceful ties with all of its neighbors regardless of the character of their regimes—its so-called zero-problems policy—was concerned that hosting the system would

be regarded as a hostile act in Tehran. In addition, given the deterioration of its relations with Israel, Turkey objected to sharing data from the radar installation with Israel.

In the end, however, Turkey, which has a clear interest in demonstrating its commitment to the Western alliance, agreed to the radar station. Although critics of AKP's Turkey would like to seize on the Libya and antimissile system episodes as evidence of Ankara's drift from NATO and the West more generally, Turkey's behavior is similar to that of other NATO members who balance their national interests with those of the alliance. No real evidence suggests that Turkey does not continue to value its NATO membership in the ways it once did. The alliance is one of the primary and most visible institutional links to the West and, as Turkey's relations with the EU remain at a standstill, the ties to NATO are more important than ever.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The tension over territory and territorial waters in the Aegean is long-standing, but Washington should use its diplomatic and political capital to contain the dispute. Greece is wracked with unprecedented political and economic crises and represents no threat to Turkey. Turkey should avoid anything to suggest that Ankara seeks to take advantage of Athens' current troubles. Moreover, the potential for accidents and unintended escalation is great. This would set Turkey-Greece relations back and would make it harder to come to a solution for competing territorial claims in the Aegean. Currently, the best Washington can do is build on previous confidence-building measures that established direct communications between the Turkish and Greek militaries by forming a trilateral military contact group of senior naval and air force officers from the United States, Turkey, and Greece to "deconflict" Turkish and Greek forces and help prevent territorial violations.

Previously, Turkey has played an important role in forging cooperation between the Atlantic alliance and non-NATO members. The United States should encourage Turkey to continue its outreach in regions such as Central Asia and Africa, which would enable NATO to develop stronger links with critical countries in these regions.

Conclusion

Turkey is clearly a country in transition. As with all countries undergoing fundamental change, there have been both dramatic steps forward and worrying developments. Overall, however, Turkey's story over the past decade is a good one. The country is economically more successful and more representative politically and is playing a more influential role in its region and beyond. For the United States, Turkey has always been an important, if at times complicated, ally. Challenges in the bilateral relationship surely remain, but as this report indicates, there is a long list of policies and innovative ideas that will help both countries forge a genuinely new partnership.

As a result, it is incumbent upon policymakers to make every effort to develop U.S.-Turkey ties in order to make a strategic relationship a reality. To do otherwise would be to miss a historic opportunity to set ties between Washington and Ankara on a cooperative trajectory in Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean, Middle East, and Africa for a generation.

APPENDIX A

Recent History: The Rise of the Justice and Development Party

Steven A. Cook

The nature of Turkey's ruling center-right Justice and Development Party (AKP) has been the subject of a polarizing debate in the West. The prevailing discussion has often lacked nuance, complexity, and a sense of history, which hampers a clear-sighted analysis of the opportunities and challenges for the United States in updating its ties with Turkey.

In many ways, the AKP is both the expression and the engine of the new Turkey, given its social conservatism, economic liberalism, and muscular foreign policy. Yet the party is a newcomer to Turkish politics, having been founded only in August 2001. Where did this party, which has had a singular impact on Turkish politics, come from? What were the economic, social, and political conditions that made its rise possible? And what are the prospects for its continued political success?

In May 2001, young reformers under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan (now Turkey's prime minister) and his colleague Abdullah Gul (now Turkey's president) defied the elders of Turkey's Islamist movement when they broke from the group's traditional leadership, promising a new political organization that would be dynamic, reformist, pragmatic, and technocratic and that could lead Turkey to a new, more democratic future. A few months later, the AKP was founded.

Although Prime Minister Erdogan had been an effective ward politician during the 1980s and mayor of Istanbul (1994–97) and President Gul was a high-profile official in Necmettin Erbakan's government (1996–97), the founding of the AKP did not initially bode well for Turkey's Islamists. Indeed, by precipitating a historic schism within the movement, Prime Minister Erdogan and President Gul seemed to be playing into the hands of the Turkish political-military establishment, which viewed the Islamists as a reactionary threat to Turkey's secular, republican system.

Despite doubts among observers, Prime Minister Erdogan and President Gul were good to their word. They brought with them a large

number of existing activists and constituents from the Islamist Virtue Party, leaving a moribund old guard behind; struck a reformist posture; and, when it came time for the 2002 national elections, drafted a party platform that was virtually indistinguishable from what Turkey's right-of-center parties had produced over the previous years.

Critics charged that the leaders of the new party were engaged in dissimulation in an effort to advance the Islamization of Turkish politics and society. Yet many Turks, unhappy over a painful economic crisis that began in late 2000 and after a decade of unstable ruling coalitions, gave the AKP the benefit of the doubt. In the November 2002 parliamentary elections, roughly 34 percent of Turkish voters who went to the polls cast their ballots for the AKP, giving the new party 363 of the 550 seats in the Grand National Assembly.

Yet it was not just the crushing economic crisis of 2000–2001 or the apparent incompetence of the then ruling coalition under Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit that brought the AKP to power. Deeper socio-economic factors were changing the nature of Turkish politics and the electorate well before the spring and summer of 2001, when Prime Minister Erdoğan and President Gül were first outlining their plans for a new party. Over the course of the past two decades, Turkey has experienced two interrelated shifts that have had a profound impact on the country's politics and made the rise of the AKP possible. First, Turkey has become more urbanized. In 1990, only half the population lived in urban areas, whereas today that proportion has climbed to 75 percent.¹⁸ Second, this change is consistent with the Turkish economy's transformation from one based primarily on agriculture to one with a strong manufacturing base.¹⁹

Although rural Turks moved into the cities seeking jobs in the newly emerging economy, they remained largely alienated and shunned by the prevailing political elites. Islamist political parties such as the National Salvation Party of the 1970s and its successor during the 1980s and 1990s, the Welfare Party, sought to mobilize the new arrivals with a worldview and political agenda that matched their values and, importantly, social services that helped ease the rural-to-urban transition. These served as a mechanism of political mobilization that helped form the core constituency of Turkey's Islamist political movement.

Still, this was not enough for the Islamists to come to power in their own right. As much as the AKP was a natural evolution of Turkey's Islamist movement, which traces its roots to 1969 and the election of

Erbakan as an independent parliamentary deputy who represented Konya in central Anatolia, it was also in many ways a novel Turkish political party. Perhaps only Turgut Ozal's Motherland Party of the 1980s, though it was not part of the Islamist camp even if it shared a constituency, had as broad an appeal.

When they established the AKP, Prime Minister Erdogan and President Gul held on to strategies their mentors had previously perfected—notably, provision of social services for political mobilization. They also retained a veneration for Turkey's Ottoman legacy. At the same time, however, the AKP's leaders disposed of the anti-Western shibboleths that had become a hallmark of Erbakan's discourse and the platforms of his parties. The AKP specifically sought a broad-based coalition that included its own pious constituency, Kurds, business leaders from central Anatolia, urban cosmopolitan liberals, left-leaning social democrats, nationalists, and average Turks, all of whom had grown weary of political instability and economic crisis. It is true that large numbers of secularists voted for the Welfare Party in 1995, but Erbakan never commanded the big political tent that Prime Minister Erdogan and President Gul eventually built, especially after the AKP's first term (2002–2007).

Prime Minister Erdogan, President Gul, and their associates had a view of the West distinctly different from that of the elders of the Islamist movement. The leaders of the AKP believed that hostility toward the West had done significant damage to Turkey's Islamists by making it easier for the secular establishment to repress them. With few allies in Washington or western European capitals, few were willing to protest when various coups and other military interventions shuttered Islamist parties and banned their leaders.

In addition, according to AKP intellectuals and activists, the party's ultimate goal was the development of a truly secular society. Instead of a French-inspired system of *laïcisme*, in which the government controls religion to prevent it from entering the public sphere, the AKP sought a secularism more akin to Switzerland, before it banned the construction of minarets, or to the United States, where individuals are free to exercise and espouse their religious beliefs as they see fit without fear of repression. For the AKP's thinkers, the best way to ensure religious freedom was not to distance Turkey from the West but rather to join with it. Even well before a European Union existed, the father of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk), had declared that his ultimate goal

was to lift Turkey to the level of “civilization,” meaning Western civilization. Yet the AKP’s rationale for pursuing integration with the West was a significant twist on Turkey’s long-cherished goal of membership in Europe.

APPENDIX B

What Is the Gulen Movement?

Alexander Brock

The Gulen movement, which is named for its founder, Fethullah Gulen, is a source of controversy in Turkey. Turks have widely differing views of the group and its aims. To secularists, Gulenists pose a threat to the secular foundations of the Turkish Republic. To Gulen's supporters and others, the movement is far more benign, engaged in a broad effort to develop an inclusive and tolerant interpretation of Islam through education (both secular and religious) and good works. The purpose of this brief appendix is to provide some historical context for Gulen, his worldview, and the movement that bears his name. It is certainly not intended to be exhaustive but rather a synthesis of what observers know about these issues so that policymakers can begin to better understand an important debate in Turkish society.

Muhammed Fethullah Gulen was born in 1941 in the village of Korucuk, near the eastern frontier city Ezurum, in Turkey. Gulen's formal education, which was interrupted when his family relocated to a village without an elementary school, resumed during his adolescence, largely through independent study. He obtained deep knowledge in the secular sciences, literature, history, and philosophy. Of the latter, he was attracted to and influenced by Western philosophers such as Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre. His knowledge would deepen in his early twenties during his military service, when his commander encouraged him to read Western classics, which were formative in the development of Gulen's subsequent educational philosophy. His religious education consisted of Quranic recitation and memorization, Arabic language courses, exegetical interpretation (*tafseer*), interpretation of the hadith, and exposure to Sufism. He began preaching in 1958.

Beginning in 1966, when he was managing the Kestanepazari Quran school in Izmir, Turkey, Gulen developed the bases for his educational

philosophy and his movement, which combines spirituality and a commanding knowledge of the secular sciences. Gulen's message was infused with anticommunist and nationalist sentiments, a recognition of the Turkish state as the guardian of Islam, and calls to protect it from both domestic and foreign communist enemies.

On May 1, 1971, in the aftermath of the March 12 "coup by memorandum," Gulen was arrested for his religious activism with Turkish youth, on the charge that he was attempting to alter the religio-political orientation of the state, but he was released in November of that year without a conviction.

Gulen's emphasis on education and altruism appealed to many Turks, and by the mid- to late 1970s, he was one of the most famous preachers in Turkey.

The 1980s were years of rapid growth for the Gulen movement, largely because of a new political atmosphere under Turgut Ozal, prime minister of Turkey from 1983 to 1989 and president from 1989 to 1993. Ozal believed that emphasizing the "Muslimness" of the Turkish national identity would, if properly regulated by the state, provide an appealing alternative to the more radical Islamist groups that had formed during the left-right social conflict of the 1970s. The Gulen movement's worldview made it the perfect candidate for such a policy, known as the "Turkish-Islamic synthesis." Gulen's group subsequently acquired a number of media outlets to spread its message. At the same time, the privatization of Turkey's education system officially opened the door to the movement to establish its own schools, which helped expand its influence in Turkish society.

The February 28, 1997, military intervention, which Turks refer to as the "postmodern coup," targeted Islamist influence in Turkish society, including the Gulen movement. In 1999, Gulen was charged with "establishing an illegal organization in order to change the secular structure of the state and to establish a state based on religious rules." By this time, he had relocated to the United States, ostensibly because of a cardiovascular condition but undoubtedly also to escape almost certain incarceration.

In 2008, a Turkish court acquitted Gulen of the charges dating back to 1999, freeing him to return to Turkey. However, he has chosen to remain in the United States and currently resides in Pennsylvania with a small group of his followers.

THE MOVEMENT TODAY: FETHULLAH GULEN AND THE AKP

Gulen's supporters overlap with supporters of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP). According to critics, the Gulen movement has sought to appropriate the AKP's political agenda through close relationships with the party's leadership. Rumors abound concerning the alleged Gulenist ties to various senior government ministers, including Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and President Abdullah Gul. A former Turkish interior minister once claimed that Gulenists make up 70 percent of the nation's police force.²⁰ Opponents of both the AKP and the Gulen movement express concern that the party's influence over the parliament and executive branch provides the Gulenists with unprecedented reach into government institutions, thereby threatening Turkey's secular political order.

Yet the extent to which, if at all, the AKP and Gulenists coordinate electoral efforts is unclear, though Gulenists overwhelmingly supported the AKP in the 2007 and 2011 parliamentary votes. During the run-up to those elections, movement activists used Gulen-affiliated media outlets to publicly endorse the party, something they had abstained from doing in the past. Even then, however, Gulenist media outlets have been prime vehicles for advancing the AKP's worldview. The daily *Zaman* was the first to publish Prime Minister Erdogan and Bulent Arinc's "new discourse" in February 2000, which was central to what would become the AKP's guiding principles.²¹ The Gazeteciler ve Yazarlar Vakfı (Journalists and Writers' Foundation, GYV), which Gulen established, hosted events and workshops throughout the 1990s that were centered on what would represent the AKP's views on the relationship between Islamism and secularism. The AKP has also facilitated the introduction of Gulenist thought into the mainstream education system.

The Gulen movement and the AKP align on two important substantive policy issues. The first is the embrace of globalization in opposition to isolationism. Both support Turkey's bid for membership in the European Union and champion Turkey's private sector, especially its new trading class and efforts to attract greater foreign direct investment. The second is the AKP's rhetorical commitment to incorporating religious minorities into Turkish society, which dovetails with Gulen's emphasis on interfaith dialogue.

Despite the apparent mutual support, however, there is evidence of tension between the prominent theologian and Prime Minister Erdogan. Gulen criticized the prime minister for reducing sentences given to football officials who were charged and convicted of rigging matches.²² He also spoke out against some AKP officials' expressed concerns about the length of pretrial detentions for persons accused of involvement in the Ergenekon plot.²³ In addition, Gulen assailed the AKP for its handling of the *Mavi Marmara* incident.²⁴ All of that said, the relationship between the Gulenists and the AKP is likely to remain strong despite these periodic spasms, in part because of the strong voter base that the movement provides for the AKP and the protection and relative freedom that the AKP offers Gulenists in their operations.

CONTROVERSY

The evident Gulenist influence in Turkish politics, combined with the secrecy that surrounds Fethullah Gulen, his movement, and its affiliated organizations, fuels suspicions that Gulen's ultimate goals may not be in line with the progressive Islam that he and his followers articulate in public.

The central source of controversy surrounding Fethullah Gulen is that, whatever his worldview, the movement—a term Gulen himself rejects—that he leads seeks to use the organs of the state to indoctrinate Turkish society with his ideas. For example, in one revealing passage from a sermon, which was rebroadcast on Turkish television in 1999, Gulen stated:

You must move in the arteries of the system without anyone noticing your existence until you reach all the power centers . . . You must wait until such time as you have got all the state power, until you have brought to your side all the power of the constitutional institution in Turkey.²⁵

Against the backdrop of the AKP's rise to power in 2002 and the ideological kinship of and alleged personal ties between Gulenists and Turkish government officials, this statement, especially when considered in conjunction with the strong presence Gulenists have in Turkey's

police force, judiciary, and media apparatuses, is central to much of the concern about Gulen and his movement.

An additional source of suspicion is the Ergenekon investigation, which critics argue is a wide-ranging AKP-Gulenist effort to silence their opponents and intimidate the public from speaking out against them, thus ensuring the continuation of their monopoly over the social and political spheres.

CONCLUSION

The suspicion surrounding the Gulen movement almost exclusively arises from its ties to, and its overlap with, the ruling AKP, and its secretiveness and what seems to some an almost conspiratorial character.

According to the movement's detractors, Gulen sympathizers and the AKP are able to carry out smear campaigns, investigations, detentions, and convictions of political opponents through control of large media outlets and a heavy presence in the police force and judiciary.

The degree to which this alleged conspiracy is connected to Fethullah Gulen, however, is ultimately unclear. The financial and practical independence of Gulenist institutions and its members from each other and from Fethullah Gulen himself make determining any such connection difficult. It is also difficult to pin down the interplay and dynamics between the movement and Turkey's ruling AKP. But the Gulen movement is clearly a player in Turkish politics and needs to be better understood by the U.S. policy community.

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William M. Drozdiak has been president of the American Council on Germany since 2005. Previously, he was the founding executive director of the Transatlantic Center in Brussels, Belgium, for the German Marshall Fund of the United States. Drozdiak worked for two decades as an editor and foreign correspondent for the *Washington Post*. He was chief European correspondent until 2001. From 1990 to 2000, he served as bureau chief in Paris and Berlin. For his coverage of NATO's air war on Kosovo, he was part of a *Post* team selected as a Pulitzer Prize finalist for international affairs in 1999. From 1986 to 1990, Drozdiak served as foreign editor and supervised the *Post*'s award-winning coverage of the Middle East and the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Before that, Drozdiak worked as State Department correspondent for *Time* magazine and covered the Middle East while based in Cairo and Beirut for *Time* and the *Washington Star*. He reported on the Israel-Egypt peace agreement, the fall of the Shah of Iran, the assassination of Anwar Sadat, and the Iran-Iraq War. Drozdiak played U.S. and European professional basketball from 1971 to 1978. He graduated from the University of Oregon with degrees in political science and economics, earned a master's degree at the College of Europe in Bruges, and studied at the Institute of European Studies at the University of Brussels.

Stephen J. Hadley is a principal at RiceHadleyGates, LLC, an international strategic consulting firm, along with former secretary of state Condoleezza Rice, former secretary of defense Robert Gates, and former State Department official Anja Manuel. Hadley previously served first as deputy national security adviser and then as national security adviser in the administration of George W. Bush. Before joining the

Bush administration, he was a partner in the Washington, DC, law firm Shea & Gardner and a principal in the Scowcroft Group, an international business advisory firm. Hadley served as the assistant secretary of defense for international security policy under then secretary of defense Richard B. Cheney from 1989 to 1993 and in a variety of other capacities in the defense and national security field, including as counsel to the special review board established by President Reagan to inquire into U.S. arms sales to Iran (the Tower Commission), as a member of the National Security Council staff under President Gerald Ford, and as an analyst for the comptroller of the Department of Defense. Currently, Hadley is a senior adviser on international affairs at the U.S. Institute of Peace and a member of the State Department's foreign affairs policy board. He graduated magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa from Cornell University and received his JD degree from Yale Law School.

Robert W. Kagan is a senior fellow in foreign policy at the Brookings Institution. Kagan also serves as a member of U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton's foreign affairs policy board, as senior adviser to the Romney campaign, and as co-chairman of the bipartisan working group on Egypt. He writes a monthly column on world affairs for the *Washington Post* and is a contributing editor at both the *Weekly Standard* and the *New Republic*. He served in the State Department from 1984 to 1988 as a member of the policy planning staff, as principal speechwriter for U.S. secretary of state George P. Shultz, and as deputy for policy in the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs. He is a graduate of Yale University and Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and holds a PhD in American history from American University. His most recent book is *The Return of History and the End of Dreams*. His previous book, *Dangerous Nation: America's Place in the World from Its Earliest Days to the Dawn of the 20th Century*, was the winner of the 2008 Lepgold Prize and a 2007 finalist for the Lionel Gelber Prize. His acclaimed book *Of Paradise and Power* was on the best-seller lists of both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*.

Parag Khanna is a senior research fellow at the New America Foundation, a senior visiting fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations, a visiting fellow at the London School of Economics (LSE) IDEAS, and director of the Hybrid Reality Institute. He is author of *The Second World: Empires and Influence in the New Global Order* and *How*

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Clark B. Lombardi is associate professor of law and adjunct associate professor of international studies at the University of Washington in Seattle. He received his JD in 1998 from Columbia University, where he served as editor in chief of the *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law*, and completed his PhD in 2001 at Columbia University's Department of Religion (Islamic Studies). He teaches courses in Islamic law, constitutional law, and law and development. He is the author of *State Law as Islamic Law in Modern Egypt* and of numerous articles on Islam, comparative constitutional law, and the rule of law in the Muslim world. He is senior editor of the forthcoming *Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam and Law*. Lombardi has also worked on numerous legal reform projects in the Muslim world. Prior to joining the University of Washington, Lombardi clerked for the Honorable Samuel A. Alito, then on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, and also practiced law with Cleary Gottlieb in New York.

Aliza Marcus is a foreign policy writer and expert on Turkey's Kurds. She has written about Turkey and regional issues since the late 1980s and was based in Istanbul for Reuters in the 1990s. She has also worked for the *Boston Globe* and Bloomberg, and between 1997 and 2000 reported out of Israel and Germany. Her book on the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK), *Blood and Belief: The PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence*, was translated into Turkish. Marcus currently works as a communications consultant to the World Bank and, separately, continues to write on Turkey and the Kurdish problem both for U.S. and Turkish publications. Her specialty is the PKK, how it wields power and directs the Kurdish movement in Turkey, and what this means for peaceful resolution of the Kurdish problem.

Larry C. Napper is senior lecturer at the George Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University and serves as director of the Bush School's Scowcroft Institute of International Affairs. From March to July 2008, Napper served as co-leader of the

Iraq Governance Assessment Team, which made recommendations to U.S. ambassador Ryan Crocker and General David Petraeus. In 2005, Napper completed a thirty-one-year career in the U.S. Foreign Service, which included ambassadorships in Kazakhstan (2001–2004) and Latvia (1995–98). From 1998 to 2001, Napper was coordinator for U.S. assistance to Central Europe and the Balkans, administering a \$600 million budget for development and postconflict reconstruction. From 1991 to 1994, Napper directed the State Department's Office of Soviet Union Affairs, reorganizing the office following the collapse of the Soviet Union and establishing diplomatic relations and resident missions in each of the independent states that emerged from the former Soviet Union. From 1974 to 1994, Napper served in diplomatic assignments in Romania, Moscow, southern Africa, and Washington. Napper received the Secretary of State's Career Achievement Award, two Presidential Meritorious Service Awards, and the State Department's Distinguished Honor Award for leadership during the December 1989 violent overthrow of the Ceausescu dictatorship in Romania, among other awards. Napper holds a BA in history from Texas A&M University and an MA in government and foreign affairs from the University of Virginia. He served as an officer in the U.S. Army from 1969 to 1972.

Denise Natali is the Minerva chair at the Institute for National Strategic Studies of the National Defense University. Over the past two decades she has traveled, lived, and worked in the Kurdish regions of Iraq, Turkey, Iran, and Syria and has authored numerous publications on Kurdish politics, economy, and identity, including *The Kurdish Quasi-State: Development and Dependency in Post-Gulf War Iraq* and *The Kurds and the State: Evolving National Identity in Iraq, Turkey, and Iran*, which received the 2006 Choice Award for Outstanding Academic Title. Her current research is on federalism and the political economy of post-Saddam Iraq. Natali also specializes in postconflict relief and reconstruction, having worked for the U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and international NGOs in Peshawar, Pakistan, and post-Gulf War Iraqi Kurdistan, respectively. Natali received a PhD in political science at the University of Pennsylvania and a master of international affairs at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. She has also studied at the L'Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales in Paris, the University of Tehran, and Tel Aviv University.

Joseph W. Ralston completed in 2003 a distinguished thirty-seven-year Air Force career as commander, U.S. European Command, and supreme allied commander Europe, NATO. As NATO commander, Ralston contributed to preserving the peace, security, and territorial integrity of the NATO member nations while commanding approximately sixty-five thousand troops from thirty-nine NATO nations and others participating in ongoing operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. He also led the efforts to integrate the three nations that were admitted to NATO in 1999 and oversaw the process to invite seven nations to join NATO in 2002. His previous assignment was as commander of the U.S. Air Force Air Combat Command at Langley Air Force Base, Virginia. He has also commanded the Alaskan Command. Ralston also served as vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (1996–2000), the nation's second-highest-ranking military officer. In that role, Ralston chaired the powerful Joint Requirements Oversight Council, which validated the requirements for nearly every program of the Department of Defense. In September 2006, President Bush appointed him the special envoy for countering the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK), a terrorist organization designated by the United States, Turkey, and the European Union.

Gregory Saunders is the senior director, international affairs, responsible for U.S. and governmental relations in support of British Petroleum's (BP) international portfolio of assets and commercial activities. He joined BP's Washington office in 2004. Saunders was previously posted to BP's global headquarters in London and to BP Algeria. In Algiers, Saunders served as the director for communications and external affairs, responsible for corporate responsibility, reputation management/branding, relationship management, and community outreach in support of BP's \$5 billion portfolio of gas and oil exploration activities. Prior to joining BP, Saunders culminated a career with the U.S. government, including assignments in Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. He has a BS in engineering from West Point, an MA in international relations from the Naval Postgraduate School, and an MBA from the George Washington University. He speaks French and Portuguese.

Patrick N. Theros served as U.S. ambassador to Qatar from October 1995 to November 1998. Theros assumed office as the president and

executive director of the U.S.-Qatar Business Council in March 2000. Theros served in a variety of positions during his thirty-five-year career in the U.S. Foreign Service, including as political adviser to the commander in chief, Central Command (CENTCOM), deputy chief of mission and political officer in Amman, and charge d'affaires and deputy chief of mission in Abu Dhabi. Immediately before his appointment to Qatar, Theros served as deputy coordinator for counterterrorism, responsible for the coordination of all U.S. government counterterrorism activities outside the United States. In 1992, Theros was awarded the president's Meritorious Service Award for career officials and the Secretary of Defense Medal for Meritorious Civilian Service. He also earned four Superior Honor Awards over the course of his career. In 1998, His Highness the Emir of Qatar Shaikh Hamad bin Khalifah Al-Thani presented Theros with the Qatari Gold Medal of Merit for distinguished service.

Vin Weber is co-chairman and partner of Mercury/Clark & Weinstock and Mercury. He served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1981 to 1993, representing Minnesota's Second Congressional District. He was a member of the appropriations committee and an elected member of the House Republican leadership. In 2004, Weber was the Bush-Cheney '04 Plains States regional chairman. He has been featured in numerous national publications and is a sought-after political and policy analyst, appearing frequently on major television outlets. *Washingtonian* magazine named Weber fifth in its list of Washington's top fifty lobbyists. Weber is former chairman of the National Endowment for Democracy. He serves on the Board of the Council on Foreign Relations and co-chaired the Independent Task Force on U.S. Policy Toward Reform in the Arab World. Weber is a former member of the U.S. secretary of defense's defense policy board advisory committee and also served on the U.S. secretary of state's advisory committee on democracy promotion. He is a senior fellow at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute and is codirector of its Policy Forum. Weber is a board member of several private sector and nonprofit organizations, including ITT Educational Services, the Lenox Group, and the Aspen Institute, for which he served on the Middle East strategy group. Prior to opening Clark & Weinstock's DC office in 1994, Weber was president and codirector of Empower America.

Jenny B. White is associate professor of anthropology at Boston University, is former president of the Turkish Studies Association and of the American Anthropological Association's Middle East Section, and sits on the board of the Institute of Turkish Studies. She has received numerous grants and fellowships from, among others, the Social Science Research Council, the MacArthur Foundation, the National Science Foundation, and Fulbright-Hays. She is author of *Muslim Nationalism and the New Turks; Islamist Mobilization in Turkey: A Study in Vernacular Politics*, which won the 2003 Douglass Prize for the best book on Europeanist anthropology; and *Money Makes Us Relatives: Women's Labor in Urban Turkey*. She has written numerous articles on Turkey and on Turks in Germany and lectures internationally on topics ranging from political Islam and nationalism to ethnic identity and gender issues. White has been following events in Turkey since the mid-1970s. All of her books have been translated into Turkish. She writes a blog on contemporary Turkey that averages one thousand visitors a month and was named by *Foreign Policy* as one of two blogs on Turkey that President Obama should read: <http://kamilpasha.com>.

Ross Wilson is director of the Atlantic Council's Dinu Patriciu Eurasia Center and a lecturer in international affairs at George Washington University. A U.S. Foreign Service officer for thirty years, he served as ambassador to Turkey from 2005 to 2008 and to Azerbaijan from 2000 to 2003. Earlier postings abroad included Moscow, Prague, and Melbourne, Australia. Among Washington assignments, Wilson served as chief of staff for Deputy Secretary of State Robert B. Zoellick (2005), an aide to Secretaries Lawrence Eagleburger and Warren Christopher (1992–94), chief U.S. negotiator for the Free Trade Area of the Americas, and principal deputy to the ambassador-at-large for the new independent states of the former Soviet Union (1997–2000). A recipient of the President's Meritorious Service Award and other honors, Wilson holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota and master's degrees from Columbia University and the U.S. National War College. He is chairman of the board of the Institute of Turkish Studies and a member of the Academy of American Diplomacy, the American Foreign Service Association, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, and the Washington Institute of Foreign Affairs.

Nur O. Yalman is a professor of social anthropology and Middle Eastern studies, emeritus, in the Department of Anthropology at Harvard University. He is also a senior fellow of the Harvard Society of Fellows and a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Yalman is a member of the Association of Social Anthropologists of Great Britain and a trustee of Koc University and Robert College, both in Istanbul. He is also a member of the International Relations Forum of Turkey. Yalman was a fellow of Peterhouse at Cambridge University and professor of social anthropology at the University of Chicago before joining Harvard. His fieldwork is in Sri Lanka, India, Iran, and Turkey. He is familiar with the Balkans, the Arab countries, Central and Southeast Asia, and Japan. Yalman speaks French, German, Turkish, some Persian, Sinhalese, Italian, and Arabic. His interests include the anthropology of religion, social and political conditions in the Middle East and South Asia, and political and intellectual developments in other parts of Asia. His publications include *Under the Bo Tree; A Passage to Peace: Global Solutions from East and West* (with Daisaku Ikeda; also in Japanese); “Islam and Secularism—Plato and Khomeini: Questions Concerning the Open Society and its Enemies”; and papers on religion, politics, ethnicity, nationalism, and secularism.

Ahmad Zuaiter is a founding partner of Jadara Capital Partners, LP. He has over nineteen years of experience as an investment professional, serving senior roles in the investment advisory, trading, and portfolio management functions. Most recently, he was a portfolio manager at Soros Fund Management (SFM) in New York and Istanbul, where he managed a long/short emerging markets fund with core emphasis on frontier markets. Prior to SFM, Zuaiter spent four years at Morgan Stanley Investment Management, also as a portfolio manager responsible for several long-only mandates in the emerging markets space, with core focus on Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) markets. Zuaiter also managed the Turkish Investment Fund, the Eastern Europe Fund, and the Emerging Europe, Middle East, and Africa Fund. Previously, he was a portfolio manager and analyst at Scudder Kemper Investments, leading a team of regional analysts covering EMEA markets and managing two emerging markets portfolios. Prior to that, Zuaiter held senior positions at EFG-Hermes in Cairo, serving as head of regional proprietary trading, and at SHUAA Capital in Dubai, as a

portfolio manager and founder of the Arab Gateway Fund. Before that, he served as a senior position trader with Merrill Lynch & Co., where he was responsible for Brazil, Colombia, and Chile trading books. Zuaiteer earned a degree in business administration from Georgetown University and an MBA from Harvard Business School.

Task Force Observers

Alan Makovsky is a senior professional staff member (Democratic) on the House Committee on Foreign Affairs (HCFA), where he covers the Middle East, Turkey, and the Caucasus. At the State Department, where he worked from 1983 to 1994, he variously covered southern European affairs and Middle Eastern affairs for the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. He also served as political adviser to Operation Provide Comfort (1992) and as special adviser to special Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross (1993–94). At the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a private think tank where he worked from 1994 to 2001, Makovsky wrote and published widely on various Middle Eastern and Turkish topics. He also founded and directed the Washington Institute's Turkish Research Program. He has been with HCFA (formerly the House International Relations Committee, or HIRC) since 2001.

James C. O'Brien is a principal of Albright Stonebridge Group, a global strategy firm, and a member of the management and investment committees of Albright Capital Management, an affiliated investment advisory firm focused on emerging markets. O'Brien served in the U.S. government for twelve years, including as special presidential envoy for the Balkans and principal deputy director of policy planning at the U.S. State Department. He earned a BA from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota, a master's degree from the University of Pittsburgh, and a JD from Yale Law School.

Victoria Taylor is an international affairs fellow in residence at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) in Washington, DC. She is a career Foreign Service officer at the U.S. Department of State. Taylor joined CFR from the Department of State's Office of Southern European Affairs. As the Turkey desk and southern European economic affairs officer, she managed a wide range of bilateral policy issues with Turkey

and has worked to promote U.S. economic interests in Turkey, Greece, and Cyprus. From 2008 to 2009, Taylor worked in the Office of Iranian Affairs, where she managed the nonproliferation and Iranian foreign policy portfolio. Since joining the State Department in 2003, she has served as an economic officer at the U.S. Embassy in Tunis, Tunisia (2006–2008); as the political and economic officer at the U.S. Consulate in Lahore, Pakistan (2006); and as a vice consul at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan (2004–2005). Taylor holds a BA in international relations and diplomatic history from the University of Pennsylvania and an MSc from the London School of Economics and Political Science in development studies. She speaks French, Mandarin, and Urdu.

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