

## From the Desk of the Editor

This issue of TPQ comes at a time when the relationship of the West with Russia is at its most difficult since the Cold War, and a new cold war is said to be in the making in the Middle East. Turkey is between the two hotspots where this geopolitical upheaval is playing out most dramatically: Crimea and Syria.

Twenty five years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the optimism it engendered, Euro-Atlantic resolve is being severely tested in the East. In the Levant, four years after the so-called Arab Spring began (creating its own share of optimism), ethnic, sectarian, and tribal divisions are challenging the Sykes-Picot borders and the regional order. The points of contention are not only geostrategic but also normative – contestation between democracy and tyranny, between liberal democracy and managed democracy, between secularism and sectarianism. Specifically for Turkey, the upheaval comes in the wake of a decade of unfortunate wavering on the part of both Ankara’s leadership and leaders in the EU about Turkey’s civilizational belonging. At a time when trust between Turkey and its allies is most important, it is regrettably at its lowest point.

As underlined by Ambassador Thrasyvoulos Terry Stamatopoulos, Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy of NATO, there are major security challenges pressing in on Alliance territory from the east and the south that risk spreading into NATO countries.

Addressing the other main source of regional and global contention spotlighted in this issue, Ambassador Stamatopoulos highlights that NATO does not seek confrontation and poses no threat to Russia. He asserts that NATO’s objective remains to encourage Russia to choose a path of cooperation and responsible behavior, to be a country that works within the international community to solve common problems. However, the Ambassador also makes clear that NATO is carrying out its biggest reinforcement of Collective Defense against challenges – including those posed by Russian actions – since the end of the Cold War. Overall, he stresses that NATO will not cooperate with Moscow to the detriment of NATO’s fundamental principles.

Ambassador Stamatopoulos also explains NATO’s response to threats from the Middle East, highlighting the deployment of Patriot missile batteries to defend Turkey against a possible missile attack from Syria. The Assistant Secretary

General outlines NATO's structured dialogue and capacity-building activities with countries in the region, geared at empowering them to deal effectively with challenges to the security of their own region and strengthening their ability to participate in international peacekeeping and crisis management operations. He stresses, though, that NATO has no ambition to be the principal provider of security in the wider Middle East.

Focusing on Turkey's foreign policy in the Middle East, Ambassador Murat Özçelik, Vice Chairman in charge of foreign relations of the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), attributes the loss of credibility of Turkey in the region to a series of blunders by the AKP government – including its dispensing with secular principles. Providing an overview of Ankara's missteps, some of which were taken in tandem with Western partners, he explains how a counter bloc has come about, comprised of Iran, Russia, China, and supported by actors within Iraq and Syria. Özçelik, who previously served as Undersecretary for Public Order and Security and as Turkey's Ambassador to Iraq, also points to some of the ways in which the US contributed to the current turmoil – such as its mismanagement after the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Assessing the deeper reasons for the situation Turkey finds itself in today, Özçelik argues that the AKP capitalized on the progress Turkey made throughout its republican history – progress that was a function of being anchored to the value system of Europe – to present Turkey as a model and a central player in the region. However, particularly after 2011, the AKP prioritized its own Islamic outlook in regional policymaking and, according to the Ambassador, has caused irreparable damage to Turkey's relations with its neighbors to the south. Ambassador Özçelik also illuminates the links between the so-called Kurdish peace process in Turkey, Ankara-KRG relations, and the plight of Kurds in Kobani.

In this issue of TPQ, we feature a summary of the discussions that took place at Chatham House's fifth annual Istanbul Roundtable in September 2014, where changes sweeping the MENA region were debated by a diverse group of political, economic, media, and civil society leaders from Turkey and across the world. Participants of the event highlighted the emergence of three oppositional blocs within the region: a Shi'ite bloc, including Iran and Hezbollah; a Muslim Brotherhood-friendly bloc, including Turkey and Qatar; and a third, a *status quo*-supporting bloc, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the UAE. The potential for a viable Kurdish state, the state of the Egyptian economy, the dimming hope

for democracy and political reforms in the region, the backsliding of secularism and liberalism in Turkey, and other compelling issues are addressed in this issue's summary of the Chatham House Istanbul Roundtable. I would like to reiterate our thanks to Chatham House for the opportunity to attend this roundtable discussion. We are proud as TPQ to consistently engage with such international efforts to foster analytical dialogue on pressing developments in Turkey's neighborhood.

There are many complex links between the challenges in the Levant and in the Black Sea Region – not to mention the fact that Turkey and Russia are players in the forefront of both scenes. While Ankara and Moscow are on different sides of the polarization in the Levant, their divergence in the Black Sea region is less distinct. Western powers are charged with complexity of reckoning with Ankara and Moscow in both neighborhoods. That being said, Ankara's divergences with Moscow over the Syrian regime seem also to be spilling over into contestation over the Black Sea region. Combined with the ramifications of Crimea's annexation, Ankara may be prone to align more with the Euro-Atlantic containment measures against Russia.

Clearly characterizing many of the struggles currently witnessed in both regions, the concept of security versus liberty runs through many of the articles of this issue of TPQ: whether the West should support strong states capable of combating ISIL in the Levant, even if at the expense of democracy; whether supporting Baku for geopolitical reasons at the expense of Azerbaijani human rights activists is justified; whether Western short-term security interests are the primary reason behind the rise of radicalism in the Middle East, as well as a factor in the regression of democracy in Turkey; and whether measures aimed at preventing ISIL recruitment and controlling information in the West are undermining the very features of freedom that the West claims to be defending in its ongoing "battles against tyrants and terrorists."

Picking up this theme of the West's unrealistic efforts to promote political reform without endangering so-called stability, European Belarus Foundation Chairman Andrei Sannikov points to the actions of the EU that contributed to the current crises in its own neighborhood. Mr. Sannikov argues that Europe's engagement with authoritarian regimes in neighboring countries, with the hopes that if engaged they would pursue reforms, finally culminated in protests, then crackdown, in Belarus in 2010-11, and the Arab Spring in early 2011. Today the

EU is being undermined by Russia's undeclared war playing out in Ukraine and by neo-totalitarian regimes in the region that are modeled after the Lukashenko regime in Belarus. According to Mr. Sannikov, who served as Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus in 1995-96, the EU needs to revisit the paradigms of its engagement, exhibit strong reactions to violations of human rights, take the people who want freedom and dignity – not the dictators – as the EU's primary counterpart, and participate more effectively in the propaganda war Russia has waged. Mr. Sannikov critically elaborates on the EU's prioritization of stability in its neighborhood, a choice that he believes disregards the very values on which the EU was built and developed. The former Deputy Foreign Minister also highlights Moscow's hostile attitude to the European integration of countries within the Eastern Partnership, and its ability to dominate the domestic politics of many of these countries.

Although negative outlooks dominate, Roncevert Almond, an international lawyer and partner at The Wicks Group offers a more positive outlook on the West's efforts to engage countries of the East. Mr. Almond looks at how cooperation in aviation can serve the West's constructive efforts in Russia's near abroad, and eventually Russia itself. He details how the US and the EU have helped countries such as Ukraine and Azerbaijan build capacity – human, technical, and legal – and engage more fully in the global aviation system. Mr. Almond argues that these relationships provide Washington and Brussels with avenues of influence, without provoking Moscow.

Across the former Soviet Union, however, the desire of countries to join the Euro-Atlantic sphere has as of yet been met with exploitation by Moscow of their internal conflicts. Armenia has fallen prey on the basis of both its long-running dispute with Turkey and also its conflict with Azerbaijan. Having formally joined the Eurasian Economic Union in October 2014, Armenia is now further consolidated within Moscow's grip. Ambassador David Shahnazaryan, Senior Analyst with the Regional Studies Center in Yerevan, argues that Ankara's management of relations with Armenia and Azerbaijan played into this eventuality. According to Dr. Shahnazaryan, because Turkey linked the normalization of relations with Armenia to the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and attempted to resolve historical disputes at the state-to-state level, the protocols signed between Armenia and Turkey five years ago fizzled without ratification. As a result, he states, Russia has been able to increase its military presence and political leverage in the South Caucasus.

Ambassador Shahnazaryan, who was Special Representative of the President of Armenia from 1992-95 and Armenian Minister of National Security in 1994-95, explains that the resolution of issues between either Turkey-Armenia or Armenia-Azerbaijan would create real dangers for Russia, as the region would irreversibly break out of Russia's neo-imperial influence.

Another topical debate related to potentially curbing Russia's hold in the South Caucasus involves the so-called de-isolation of Abkhazia. In recent years, trade between Turkey and Abkhazia conducted by vessels crossing the Black Sea, in violation of Georgia's embargo, has been creating tension between Tbilisi and Ankara; as such, it plays into Moscow's hands. However, the absence of this trade would increase the Russian domination of the Abkhaz economy and weaken the links between the Abkhaz diaspora in Turkey and its motherland, neither of which would be in Georgia's interests.

Sergi Kapanadze, Director of the Tbilisi-based Georgia's Reforms Associates (GRASS), assesses the prospects of putting the illegal trade between Turkey and Abkhazia into a legal framework. Kapanadze, who was in charge of the negotiations with Turkey over the captured vessels in 2009-10 as Deputy Foreign Minister of Georgia, provides an overview of the negotiations between Tbilisi and Ankara over modalities of trade between Turkish and Abkhaz ports. Though an agreement was not reached, Kapanadze expresses his conviction that with political will and creativity, a solution can be reached and will strengthen trust between Tbilisi and Ankara. While there is opportunity to build upon past negotiations, both sides appear to have forgotten the solution almost forged four years ago, Kapanadze observes.

Taking up another so-called frozen conflict, Transnistria in Moldova, Kamil Calus, Specialist in Moldovan Affairs at the Warsaw-based Center for Eastern Studies (OSW), explains that Moscow meant for this conflict to serve as an obstacle to the affiliation of Moldova with the West – i.e., integration with the EU or NATO. In the context of these new political realities, Calus estimates that the status of this breakaway region may very well change because of the new conditions created by Russia's annexation of Crimea and Moldova's signing of an Association Agreement with the EU. Kiev's switch from an ambivalent attitude towards Tiraspol to a position supportive of Chisinau obstructs Russian activities in Transnistria, and Moldova has changed its posture to one that is more assertive *vis-à-vis* Russia.

Focusing on another conflict in the Black Sea region, Filiz Tutku Aydın, a Lecturer of Political Science at the University of Toronto sheds light on the situation of the Crimean Tatars – a Turkic-Muslim population indigenous to the Crimean peninsula – after Russia’s annexation of Crimea in March 2014. Dr. Aydın illuminates many dimensions of the status of legal rights of the Crimean Tatars, pointing out, for example, that after the annexation Moscow did not recognize the status of the Crimean Tatars as indigenous people; even though it promised “rehabilitation” in vague terms, Moscow still has not specified steps that will be taken in this direction. She relates that in Crimea today, reporting harassment by Russian authorities or using the words “annexation” and “occupation” in relation to the Russian regime in Crimea is deemed “extremism,” and is acted upon accordingly. She describes a dramatic, overnight turnaround in which the Crimean Tatars were living in a democratic state one day, and in an authoritarian state the next.

Turkey’s reaction to the Russian annexation of Crimea was subdued, Dr. Aydın explains, whereas more substantive support was expected by the Crimean Tatars and their diaspora in Turkey. She notes that some Turkish nationals object to the fact that Turkey is paying less attention to the Crimean Tatars than to other human rights crises, such as those experienced by Palestinians and Syrians. The Crimean Tatar diaspora demands that Turkey join the bandwagon of states that apply economic sanctions to Russia, whereas Turkey continues to engage with an increasingly isolated Russia. Sooner rather than later, Dr. Aydın concludes, Turkey might need to conform to the EU policy of containing Russia.

The Crimean Tatar issue is also taken up by Evgeniya Goryushina, Junior Research Fellow at the Southern Scientific Center of Russian Academy of Sciences, who asserts that Moscow and Ankara are likely to make mutual concessions to ensure that their bilateral cooperation is not jeopardized, as they have established a pattern of doing. From a wider perspective, Ms. Goryushina examines how the crisis in Ukraine is affecting competition among various powers in the Black Sea region, and how new alliances are being forged with a view of rebalancing the distribution of power. She argues that the “reserved attitude” of Ankara towards the Russian-Ukrainian crisis is largely motivated by its loss of confidence in the Middle East. Ms. Goryushina also notes that the “dwindling prospects” of Turkey’s EU membership have called into question EU enlargement more generally, creating an uncertainty with repercussions for regional geopolitics. With the backdrop of Turkey’s EU accession derailment,

the Eurasian Union will further hinder Turkey from assuming a position of superiority over Russia in the region. Turkey is now faced with a shift in balances of power in the Black Sea, and more open competition with Russia, she concludes.

Creatively engaging the concept of shifting power balances by using a “Game of Thrones” analogy, CEO and Founder of Strategy International Dr. Marios Efthymiopoulos forecasts a dramatic alteration of the balance of power in the region that has the Black Sea at its center. Separatist movements in the region are the starting point of other shifts to come, and new alignments will be forged in this process, he predicts. Following from this, he opines that Georgia and Ukraine have an opportunity now more than ever to join the Euro-Atlantic institutions. In both cases, however, Russia will try to hold onto the separatist regions of these countries for the sake of its own interests. Dr. Efthymiopoulos, who is currently a Visiting Scholar at Columbia University’s Harriman Institute, predicts that security-oriented cooperation will increase between Israel, Cyprus, Egypt, and Greece, and raises the question of whether Turkey will join forces with this quartet in light of new strategic realities in the Mediterranean region.

Since 2010, TPQ has held an annual roundtable discussion in Istanbul on the energy geopolitics of Turkey’s neighborhood. This year, we hosted a roundtable discussion on 15 October 2014 in Istanbul, entitled “A Critical Juncture for the Southern Corridor: Will All Pipelines Lead to Turkey?” The discussion primarily focused on current developments regarding the Southern Gas Corridor (SGC) – its contribution to European energy security, the important role of Azerbaijani natural gas, and the prospects of new supplies joining the SGC from Iraq, Turkmenistan, the Eastern Mediterranean, and Iran. The event was sponsored by BP Turkey, as has been the case annually since 2010. The roundtable was held in academic partnership with the Caspian Center for Energy and Environment (CCEE) of ADA University and also supported by the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP). An in-depth analysis of the event is featured in this issue of TPQ. The complete video of the event is also available – made possible with the support of IQTV – at the following link: <http://www.iqtv.tv/haber/genel/turkish-policy-quarterly-tpq-roundtable-discussion-part-1.aspx>

For next year’s event in 2015, we have begun reaching out to potential sponsors, and are looking forward to the prospect of collaborating with new partners.

Every Fall for the past seven years, TPQ has published a security-oriented issue with support from NATO's Public Diplomacy Division. Over the years, we have covered NATO's adaptation to emerging security challenges, the security implications of energy dynamics, and Turkey's evolving contribution to regional stability. We are proud of this long-standing relationship, which has enabled us to consistently provide our readers with cutting-edge analyses on security developments. We would like to thank the NATO Public Diplomacy Division for supporting us for the seventh time with this issue.

As was the case last year in the Fall, we have introduced some circulation into our advisory board, to which we are delighted to welcome Ambassador Marc Pierini. Ambassador Pierini worked his entire career as an EU diplomat, including a five-year stint in Turkey as EU ambassador. Ambassador Pierini is currently a Visiting Scholar at Carnegie Europe, where his research focuses on developments in the Middle East and Turkey from a European perspective. We would also like to thank Alan Makovsky, Philip Mansel, and Jeffrey Gedmin for being on our advisory board since TPQ's founding in 2002. We have been honored to have them as members and hope they will remain a part of the TPQ family.

We also welcome a new editorial advisor to our team with this issue: Associate Professor Zeynep Alemdar. Dr. Alemdar is Professor of international relations at Okan University, as well as an EASI-Hurford Next Generation Fellow at Carnegie Endowment, specializing in the role of civil society, democratization, and women's participation in politics in Turkey.

As TPQ, we try to improve on ourselves with each and every issue. We do all this with a very small and dedicated team, motivated by being one of the few outlets for independent, in-depth analysis in Turkey at a critical juncture for our neighbourhood. Our improvements are not only geared at reflecting more nuance and depth in the debates, but also in presentation and branding. With our Summer issue this year, we remodeled TPQ's cover design. We are also in the process of designing a new website.

As always, we are grateful for the generous support of Kadir Has University, and the outreach support provided by *Hurriyet Daily News*.

We would like to thank the Atlantic Council for once again giving us the opportunity to present our journal at their sixth annual Energy & Economy Summit in

Istanbul in November 2014. We also appreciate the support granted by *Natural Gas Europe* this Fall in enabling our content on energy geopolitics to reach wider audiences.

A special thanks goes to Genel Energy – the premium corporate sponsor of this issue. With this issue, we welcome Akkök Holding, Bayraktar Holding, Esen Yacht, STFA, and TEB among our corporate sponsors. We would also like to extend our appreciation to other corporate sponsors that advertise with TPQ: Akbank, AvivaSA, BP Turkey, Finansbank, Odea Bank, Turcas Petrol, and Tüpraş.

As always, we welcome feedback and contributions from our readers.

D. Nigâr Göksel