

From the Desk of the Editor

The acute economic crisis that has negatively impacted countries across world, has not only affected global business and international trade; it has also influenced the dynamics of geostrategy and politics in unprecedented ways. This issue of TPQ takes stock of key events in 2008 and analyzes upcoming opportunities for the resolution of unsettled regional disputes.

During the 2008 annual World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) meetings in Washington DC this fall, heated discussions were held on how the developing financial landscape and decelerating world economy would effect lower income countries. Economically developed countries were called upon to honor pledges to fight poverty. In November, an international conference on Financing for Development took place in Doha, Qatar. An article based on Justin Lin's presentation at this conference is included.

As Bretton Woods institutions augment the participation of civil society in their circles, civil society, in turn, needs to spur informed debate on topical subject matter. This upcoming year, TPQ will include articles relating to the priorities and perspectives of the World Bank and IMF in its issues. We hope that by raising awareness of World Bank and IMF issues in this manner, we can contribute to breaking ground for World Bank and IMF meetings to take place in Istanbul October of 2009.

In 2009 a NATO Summit will celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of its founding in 1949. We hope to discuss the future of NATO and transatlantic relations as they relate to our neighborhood in the upcoming issue, in March, corresponding with the Summit. In the current issue, Turkey's position on NATO-EU cooperation is addressed by İhsan Kızıltan in an article in which the principles and grievances of the Turkish side are clarified.

This issue of TPQ emerges as a backdrop to another significant development for the international community: Barack Obama's election as President of the United States. Richard Giragosian analyzes the Preseident Elect's choices for his incoming cabinet with a particular view towards their implications for Turkey-US relations and within Turkey's region at large. Ali Gunertem evaluates the voting habits of Turkish Americans with a critical approach, arguing that values and domestic priotities *should* form the basis of votes cast among this community.

While we face significant global challenges, our region is also undergoing a serious re-shuffling of power balances. A resurgent Russia and new international allignments pose serious questions of regional security; and some geostrategic opportunities also appear on the horizon for Turkey. The need fort he EU "to have readiness to apply hard power" if it is to be an effective player in its Eastern neighborhood is argued by Michal Tim. Otherwise, he argues, it appears to those in the region that the EU is merely appeasing Russia.

Regarding regional faultlines, we include an article from Fariz Ismailzade on the developments towards the resolution of the conflict in Nagorno Karabag and an evaluation from Barcin Yinanç on Turkey's role in the great energy game of Eurasia. Nicolas Danforth discusses the changing (and unchanging) parameters of Turkish foreign policy.

Turkey's EU orientation is also important for Turkey's being a center of attraction for the people of the South Caucasus. The EU also remains Turkey's "miracle drug" in overcoming many deep rooted domestic challenges. However political will and societal enthusiasm towards this end appear to have waned. In this issue of TPQ, Mehmet Ali Talat discusses prospects for the resolution of the Cyprus deadlock. A breakthrough on this front would be the single most effective phenomenon to bolster Turkey's EU momentum and integration process. Another issue important for Turkey's EU credential is that of minority rights, which two of our authors, Ceren Ak and Asli Bilge, take up respective dimensions of. Nirj Deva points to the accomplishments of Turkey in terms of modernization however underlines that Istanbul or Ankara elites do nothing to engage the European people and Turkey is not successful in persuading Europeans of Turkey's added value.

As was the case in our Summer 2008 issue, we have a section authored by Richard Giragosian outlining regional events and developments since our last issue. In addition, Mr. Giragosian adds an analysis of a recently released US Intelligence Report.

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