

## FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR

With the inauguration of my first editorial for TPQ's 55th issue, I would be remiss not to acknowledge Nigar Göksel's 13-year tenure as Editor in Chief. Under her direction, TPQ has evolved into a strong platform for constructive and critical debates on Turkey and its neighborhood, all the while maintaining its independence through changing political climates. In her new capacity as Chief Editorial Advisor, Nigar will continue to play an active supporting role in TPQ and its future development. The high standards she has set for the journal will only be a small part of the legacy I am proud to inherit as her successor.

The last several months have seen critical developments take place both in the Turkish domestic scene and on a regional scale. In a reversal of the 7 June vote, Turkey's 1 November repeat elections produced the sweeping comeback of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), jumping from 40.8 percent of the vote to 49.5 percent, which restored the party's parliamentary majority after five months of coalition-talk wrangling. Meanwhile, the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), widely recognized as the star of the June 7 election, lost more than a million votes and managed to only narrowly pass the 10 percent election threshold.

The results need to be viewed within the context of the precipitous rise of violence in Turkey – both by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and due to renewed clashes between the state and the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) – and reflect the electorate's primary concern for stability. The inter-election period was marred by other problems as well: widespread suppression of press freedom, the absence of a fair campaign climate, and the detainments of and attacks against HDP-affiliated activists. With effective one-party rule reinstalled, the question remains how the government's new mandate will address imminent policy challenges in and around Turkey's borders. These include the Kurdish peace process, the war in Syria, the refugee crisis, and the ISIL threat – several of which the opposition parties have claimed an AKP-led government helped stoke.

ISIL terrorism has not only seeped over the border to Turkey, but has also struck other countries around the world, most recently in a series of targeted attacks on the French capital that have left the world reeling. In the wake of the Paris attacks, there is a stronger impetus to develop a coordinated ISIL strategy between the US and its coalition partners, as well as Russia. Turkey is an important player in this strategy; it has recently indicated its willingness to open additional air bases for US-led coalition airstrikes against ISIL. However, the deterioration of Ankara-Moscow

relations over Turkey's downing of a Russian jet is likely to cast a shadow over Washington's efforts to coordinate with both Ankara and Moscow.

Furthermore, there is widespread concern that the fallout of the Paris attacks will prompt the scaling back of liberal values that have long been the bedrock of Europe's free and open society. The potential negative repercussions of this rollback are particularly concerning for the continent's increasing refugee population.

This issue of TPQ explores many of these pressing, transatlantic challenges: from the global fight against ISIL to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, and from information warfare to energy security and geopolitics. Confronting hybrid threats of concern to the entire international community is one of the key themes highlighted in this issue. In assessing the increasingly complex security landscape, our authors take stock of the pitfalls and opportunities for leadership efforts on the international, inter-regional, and domestic levels.

In an exclusive interview with TPQ, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg engages the theme of hybrid warfare by sharing his own insights into Russia's actions in Ukraine. While Secretary General Stoltenberg asserts the illegality of Russia's annexation of Crimea and voices concern over the country's military-build up in Syria, he also maintains that NATO's objective is to encourage Russia to become a more cooperative player on the international stage. For a peaceful outcome in Ukraine, this means supporting the full implementation of the OSCE Minsk Agreements, which went into effect on 15 February 2015 but have not been observed to their fullest extent. On the subject of defense capacity, Stoltenberg emphasizes that the Alliance is not only undergoing the largest reinforcement of its collective defense since the end of the Cold War, but is also taking measures to deter and defend against hybrid warfare together with its Euro-Atlantic partners.

Delving further into the topic of hybrid warfare, Barbora Maronkova, Program Officer of NATO's Public Diplomacy Division's Engagements Section, argues that while hybrid tactics have been in use for centuries, developing the capabilities to effectively deal with hybrid threats has taken on greater policy urgency for NATO as a direct result of Russia's actions in Ukraine. She identifies propaganda and "disinformation" as important tactics in the hybrid tool-kit Russia has used to control the narrative of territorial aggression and fashion a false image of the West, which is primarily wielded through Russia's propaganda organ *RT* (formerly known as Russia Today.) Underlining the importance of not fighting propaganda with more propaganda, Maronkova explains that NATO's strategy is geared towards enhancing

transparency and supporting independent media outlets and grassroots organizations in the Eastern neighborhood.

Hanna Shelest, a curator of the Ukrainian Peacebuilding School and Editor in Chief of UA: Ukraine Analytica, assesses the impact of Russia's hybrid warfare on the post-Soviet states of the EU's Eastern Partnership program. Dr. Shelest argues that there needs to be better correlation between the revision of the Eastern Partnership and the EU's policy towards Russia. She specifically highlights Russia's sophisticated and multi-pronged information war campaign as being a powerful weapon against the Eastern Partnership states that acts to undermine local governing structures, reinforce the perception of dependence on Russia, and damage the EU image. Countering hybrid threats from Russia requires EU involvement as a counter-balance and should not be exclusively military-centric, argues Shelest.

These articles and others emphasize that a powerful propaganda campaign is a key component of hybrid warfare. Al Qaeda and ISIL, both successful propaganda machines, employ this method to recruit radical militants from all over the world, including the West. Particularly focusing on their presence in the North Caucasus, Kristine Margvelashvili, a Research Fellow at the Center for Social Sciences in Georgia, and Z. Asli Elitsoy, a PhD candidate in Political Science at Bilkent University in Turkey, examine the transformation of the Al Qaeda-ISIL relationship and the two organizations' struggle for leadership of global jihad. In comparing and contrasting the two jihadist groups, the authors point to an important difference: while Al Qaeda operates through a decentralized system of cells spread out over a wide geographical area, ISIL has established a de facto state with a hierarchical governance structure. This strategic advantage, together with the group's social media presence, has contributed to ISIL's ascendancy over Al Qaeda, with ISIL-affiliates mushrooming in the Caucasus region. In order to halt the recruitment and flow of hundreds of militants from the Caucasus to the Middle East, Margvelashvili and Elitsoy argue that regional cooperation should be enhanced among the key countries under threat in the region – Russia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey. Strengthening border security and implementing transnational security measures are two of the most important steps to that end.

As the international community is stiffening its resolve to defeat ISIL, questions abound about what a robust and comprehensive strategy should look like. Tomáš Kaválek, a PhD candidate in the Department of Political Science at Masaryk University in the Czech Republic, argues that the current strategy has so far aimed to “contain” ISIL, whereas it should aim to destabilize its governance capabilities.

According to Kaválek, ISIL's power over its controlled territories derives from its effective and centralized state-like structure, complete with governing elements such as bureaucratic services, a system of courts, agricultural production, and the provision of basic goods to the population under its control. This system is supported by the revenues from ISIL's two main sources of income: oil and taxes. Kaválek argues that in order to dislodge ISIL's rebel governance, international efforts should focus on disrupting its economic system and cutting off its supply lines, which will in turn cause the standard of living in ISIL-controlled territories to decline and make its population less compliant.

Energy infrastructure is largely susceptible to the overall security environment – as exemplified by ISIL's taking over of oil fields in Iraq and Syria and the bombing of the Kirkuk-Ceyhan oil pipeline by the PKK. For Ankara, this may require weighing its energy hub ambitions against the need to focus on security and reliability of supply. Micha'el Tanchum, nonresident Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council's Eurasian Energy Futures Initiative and Global Energy Center, analyzes Turkey's energy diplomacy in light of these security challenges. According to Dr. Tanchum, through the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP), Turkey is not only taking steps to reduce its dependence on Russian natural gas, but has been able to secure advantageous energy partnerships, namely with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and Turkmenistan, that curb the influence of another one of its geopolitical rivals: Iran. This "semi-encirclement" of Iran provides Turkey with the opportunity to offset the Islamic Republic's expected enhanced regional role in a post-sanctions environment. However, due to both infrastructure vulnerabilities and political uncertainties inherent in the Turkmenistan and KRI pipeline projects, both of which are susceptible to both Russian and Iranian interference, Tanchum argues that in the long run it is in Turkey's best interest to encourage some form of Iranian participation in TANAP.

Also taking up the topic of Turkey's energy strategy is Emre Tunçalp, a Senior Advisor at Sidar Global Advisors (SGA), a Washington, D.C.-based research and risk advisory firm. Tunçalp assesses Turkey's efforts to diversify its natural gas mix in light of its projected demand growth and dependence on Russian imports, citing Azerbaijan, the KRI, and Turkmenistan as the most viable sources that can provide additional supplies in the medium term. Tunçalp also highlights several important domestic market challenges including a lack of competition and transparency in the Turkish market, BOTAŞ's monopoly, and infrastructure issues, each of which carries implications for Turkey's ability to be a reliable, regional gas transit country. In regards to Turkey's ambitions of becoming an energy-trading hub, Tunçalp argues

that this is indicative of the policy gap between geopolitical targets and market realities, and signifies the need for Turkey to adopt a more balanced approach.

Two of our authors take up perspectives from key basins to the north and south of Turkey: the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. In her article, Sophia Petriashvili, an Assistant Professor of International Relations at Tbilisi State University in Georgia, assesses Turkey's Black Sea regional policy, making the claim that Turkey's priorities are limited to the preservation of maritime security and the maintenance of its absolute control over the Turkish Straits. Citing examples from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Petriashvili argues that Turkey's foreign policy doctrine does not in fact have a vision for the Black Sea region as a whole. In order to be a leader in the region, Turkey must first establish a comprehensive approach to it, she opines.

Stefanos Vallianatos, Head of the Department of International Relations at the Hellenic Foundation for Culture in Athens, discusses the dynamics between political leadership and governance structures in striving for change in the Mediterranean region. Dr. Vallianatos highlights several common leadership trends that can be observed in the region as a whole: the resilience of autocratic regimes, the emergence of civil society as a distinct challenge to the status quo, and the return of populism. For countries on the European shore – Greece, Italy, and Spain – the Eurozone crisis and the harsh austerity measures introduced in its wake had a profound effect on political power structures, leading to a decline in the popularity of traditional parties and the rise of civil society organizations (CSOs) as key actors. For countries on the South bank – particularly Egypt – Vallianatos argues that power structures have been influenced by the predominance of autocracy. Although the Arab Spring contested these autocratic tendencies, ultimately they prevailed.

Parsing the roots of rising Islamist fundamentalism, Lotfi Maktouf, founder and President of Tunisian NGO Almadanya, argues that the Western concept of the separation of Church and State is an insufficient lens through which to evaluate the dynamics between secularism and Islam. According to Maktouf, Islam as a religion has been distorted by Islamism, which is an “ideology based on faith as a platform for political struggle.” He explains that in answer to the modern Muslim world's self-perceived backwardness, a schism occurred whereby one approached touted modernism and nationalism while the other espoused returning to the pure version of Islam, or Salafism. The latter approach has given rise to groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, Al Qaeda, and now ISIL, each of which have laid claim to what Maktouf dubs the “Islamic Protocol.”

This year's Fall issue is the eighth security-focused issue we have published with the support of NATO's Public Diplomacy Division. We are proud of this long-standing partnership, which has enabled us to provide our audiences with multidisciplinary approaches to security, and analyses on NATO's evolving role in the region and Turkey's place within the Alliance.

Since the release of the Summer issue, we have uploaded two blog posts – one on Greece's elections and one on Turkey-Russia tensions – in an effort to provide our readers with increased analysis of topical issues as they develop. We continue to welcome blog submissions from our readers.

On 14 October 2015, TPQ organized its sixth annual energy geopolitics roundtable with the support of BP Turkey. Titled "Regional Natural Gas Game-Changers: Securing Supplies amid Volatility," the event focused on the current development status of the Southern Gas Corridor (SGC) and its expansion prospects, the potential game-changing effects of US LNG exports, and Turkey's ambition to become an energy hub. The importance of renewable energy sources was also brought up during the discussion, which took on particular relevance ahead of the Paris Climate Conference in December 2015. An in-depth analysis of the event is featured in this issue of TPQ. The complete recording of the discussion can be found at: <http://www.turkishpolicy.com/event/33/regional-natural-gas-game-changers-securing-supplies-amid-volatility>

In addition to the energy event, TPQ was involved in two important events held in Istanbul: Atlantic Council's Energy and Economic Summit and Energy Exchange's Black Sea Oil and Gas Conference. We are grateful to the Atlantic Council, once again, for the opportunity to distribute issues of TPQ at the Summit. For the first time, we collaborated with the Energy Exchange on their Black Sea Oil and Gas Conference this year, and we look forward to continued partnership as part of our ongoing efforts to reflect more nuance and depth in our energy-related debates.

Three authors in this issue – Barbora Maronkova, Hanna Shelest, and Stefanos Vallianatos – are speakers from the 5th International Neighbourhood Symposium (INS) at Heybeliada, organized by the Center for International and European Studies (CIES) at Kadir Has University in June 2015. We are happy to have collaborated with CIES in featuring their perspectives in this issue of TPQ.

With this Fall issue, we are honored to welcome a new advisory board member, Eka Tkeshelashvili. Currently the President of the Georgian Institute for Strategic

Studies and formerly holding senior ministerial positions within Georgia's government including Deputy Prime Minister of Georgia (2010-12), Secretary of the National Security Council of Georgia (2008-10), Minister of Foreign Affairs (2008), and Minister of Justice (2007-2008), Tkeshelashvili brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to TPQ's board.

A special thank you goes to the premium corporate sponsor of this issue – Generali. We appreciate the continuing support of our corporate sponsors: Akbank, Borusan Oto/BMW, BP Turkey, Citroën, Esen Yacht, Finansbank, Monaco Tourism Authority, Odea Bank, STFA, TEB, Turcas Petrol, and Tüpraş. We are also pleased to have Central European University's support for this Fall issue.

We are particularly grateful for the generous support of Kadir Has University, and the outreach-based partnership we have with *Hürriyet Daily News*.

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

Süreya Martha Köprülü