

FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR

This issue of TPQ comes at a time when global instability is arguably at its highest point since the end of World War II. The Western-led liberal world order that emerged in its wake, anchored by NATO and bolstered by multilateral institutions such as the European Union and the World Bank, is fraying, and the principles upon which the order was founded are being undermined. Furthermore, the predominance of populist rhetoric is swinging the political pendulum in an illiberal direction.

US President Donald Trump, under his “America First” platform, is doing his own part to upend the multilateral international order, by questioning America’s security commitment to its European allies, and withdrawing from the traditional role of US leadership on issues like trade, human rights, and climate change. With the US’s abdication as the guarantor of the liberal order, heavy responsibility falls to leaders in Europe – namely German Chancellor Angela Merkel – to uphold it.

The vacuum of international leadership poses a daunting challenge to the EU, which is under pressure from both domestic and external factors. Internally, the rise of populist/nationalist forces is shaking EU solidarity to its core and is casting doubt on values such as tolerance and openness. Externally, the EU is contending with Russia’s aggressive actions to stoke populist fervor and influence domestic elections, as well as the dramatic uptick in terrorist attacks being carried out by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Western Europe. The fragile EU-Turkey deal to stem the flow of refugees adds another layer of uncertainty to Europe’s security environment.

Against the backdrop of a rebalancing global order, Turkey’s position remains tenable. What is becoming increasingly clear though is the fading away of Turkey’s EU accession prospects, as well as its commitment to reform. Negative rhetoric between the two sides sharply escalated in the run-up to the 16 April 2017 presidential system referendum in Turkey, after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s ministers were barred from giving campaign speeches in several German cities. With Erdoğan now having clinched an executive presidency with 51.4 percent of the vote, it remains to be seen how EU-Turkey relations will develop.

In this issue of TPQ, our authors take stock of major fault lines in the Western liberal order – both on a geostrategic and normative level – to provide more insight into the seismic shifts taking place across the international system, and their wider implications for stability, global governance, and open discourse.

In his article, Ambassador Tacan İldem, Assistant Secretary General for NATO's Public Diplomacy Division, analyzes the adaptability of the NATO Alliance since its inception in 1949. After the end of WWII, NATO primarily acted as a deterrent against Soviet aggression in Western Europe; a role that evolved in the Post-Cold War era to include the principle of cooperation with non-member countries and other institutions, points out İldem. Today, more so than at any point in its history, NATO is facing unprecedented challenges, underlines the author. From rising jihadist terrorism to Russia's aggressive action in Ukraine, and the growing threat of cyber attacks, today, there is greater urgency for the Alliance to continue adapting in order to meet changing geostrategic realities. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea rendered 2014 a "watershed year for the Alliance," claims İldem, which led NATO to bolster its collective defense capabilities, and establish a more militarized forward presence along its Eastern flank. Discussing the NATO leaders' meeting in Brussels in May, Ambassador İldem concludes that the Alliance made progress on two critical issues: the fight against terrorism and fair defense burden-sharing. These developments, and the solidarity and resolve of NATO allies, are an indication of the Alliance's adaptability in the face of an increasingly fragile security environment.

Ambassador Selim Yenel, Undersecretary at the Ministry for EU Affairs of Turkey, provides an overview of the complex EU-Turkey relationship since the latter was given candidacy status in 1999. In the late 1990's and early 2000s, Turkey made important leaps and initiated numerous reforms in order to meet the political requirements of the Copenhagen criteria, culminating in the decision of the European Commission to open formal accession negotiations in October 2005. However, as Yenel explains, this period was also accompanied by growing opposition among EU leaders to Turkish membership, and mired by the dispute with Cyprus and France's decision to block five accession chapters. Turkey's EU membership prospects started to dim in the mid-2010s, but the migration crisis provided an opportunity for the EU and Turkey to get their relations back on track, posits the author. He points out that the period between September 2015 and June 2016 was characterized by increased dialogue and engagement on all levels. Despite the reinvigoration of relations over the refugee crisis, the July 15th failed coup in Turkey and its aftermath, had an "unfortunate cooling effect" on relations, claims Yenel. In Ankara's view, the EU leadership failed to denounce the coup and express support to the democratically elected government of Turkey swiftly enough. While relations may be strained, the Ambassador emphasizes that Turkey still believes in the EU ideal, and that relations should be rebuilt based on trust and realistic expectations moving forward.

Dr. Şafak Oğuz, a Security Expert at the International Strategic and Security

Research Center (USGAM in Ankara, evaluates Europe’s collective defense capabilities based on two models: NATO and an EU army. Ever since the end of the Cold War, the idea of an EU army has consistently appeared and receded on the agenda of European leaders. According to Oğuz, the rise of transnational threats, particularly a resurgent Russian threat and jihadist terrorism, have shifted the security paradigm in Europe and reinvigorated discussions about a pan-European military. While this may be the case, the author argues that the difficulty in reaching consensus among the 27 members of the EU will impede the process of establishing an EU army for the time being. NATO – bolstered by the Readiness Action Plan – has assumed increased responsibility for European security and ultimately will remain the main security provider for the Continent, argues Oğuz.

In his article, Dr. Maxim A. Suchkov, a columnist for Al-Monitor’s Russia-Mideast coverage, evaluates heightened tensions between the West and Russia. Dr. Suchkov, who is also an expert of the Valdai International Discussion Club and the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC, a Moscow-based think-tank, traces the source of deep-seated tension to the security paradigm that emerged in the aftermath of the Cold War. This also includes NATO’s position as the leading Euro-Atlantic security guarantor, bolstered by an American military presence. In Moscow’s view, NATO’s development and enlargement represented the “outsourcing” of European security to the Americans, which served US interests above all else. The author draws attention too the fact that during the early 2000s, Russia in fact had an interest in joining NATO and the post-Cold War security architecture, but that those hopes were dashed with the US-led invasion of Iraq and the “color revolutions” in former Soviet Republics. Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014, argues Suchkov, was an act of defiance against the European security order, and a psychological shift in foreign policy for President Vladimir Putin towards a “post-West world order.” Expanding his frame of analysis to discuss how Turkey fits into this order, the author posits that the feeling of being rejected by the West is ultimately a unifying factor for Russia and Turkey, and as a result, the two countries will continue to pursue policies that are independent and possibly divergent from Western interests. Despite the vacillation in the bilateral relationship, Turkey is likely to remain a vital partner for Russia’s foreign policy.

Megan Gisclon, Managing Editor of Istanbul Policy Center (IPC), takes stock of e-
valuates the US-Turkey relationship, focusing her analysis around US President Donald Trump’s first 100 days in office. Gisclon notes that Trump’s election inspired optimism among the Turkish leadership that bilateral relations could only improve from the where they stood at the end of the Obama administration. The fact that President Trump was the first Western leader to congratulate President Recep

Tayyip Erdoğan for his controversial referendum win, and the personal similarities between the two leaders – a mutual distaste for the political establishment, wariness of NATO, and preference for “barbed political rhetoric” – only reinforced Ankara’s expectation in this regard, argues the author. However, despite the parallels between the two leaders – and Trump’s disregard for Turkey’s human rights issues – Gislou underlines the fact that the US and Turkey remain at odds on several important issues. In this regard, she highlights the US’ decision to arm the Syrian Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG), the issue of Fethullah Glen’s extradition, and the arrests of Reza Zarrab and Hakan Atilla, as major sticking points between the two countries.

While several of our authors discuss emerging security trends and realignments, others take stock of the factors that have begun to weaken and fracture the multilateral international order’s normative underpinnings.

Sebahat Demirci, who works at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, comments on the fragility of the EU, the profound challenges facing the Union, and a recipe for pulling it out of its existential crisis. Reflecting on the Union’s inception in the aftermath of World War II as a peace project and a core pillar of the international order, Demirci stresses that seven decades later, the fundamental values of that order are being tested. Britain’s decision to leave the EU dealt a heavy blow to the Union’s solidarity, and will carry significant political economic and institutional implications, the author claims. She points to several factors that coalesced to result in the Brexit decision: increasing poverty and sustained unemployment brought on by the economic crisis of 2008-09; the influx of refugees to the Continent; and growing public discontent over the inability of politicians to provide adequate policy responses. The answer to increasing uncertainty is to strengthen the EU, and Demirci touts the Union’s acceptance of new members as a key instrument in this regard. Registering disappointment over the EU’s decision to halt new memberships enlargement policy until the mandate of the current Commission ends in 2019, Demirci argues that the EU is sending a “confusing message” to countries aspiring for EU membership. She also stresses that increasing instability and geopolitical crises demand a more dynamic European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). Strengthening the ENP, continuing enlargement policy, and changing the mindset of EU leaders are crucial ingredients to shoring up the Union, concludes Demirci.

Bernd Hüttemann, Vice President of the European Movement International, and Secretary General of the European Movement Germany, discusses the current tension playing out between pluralism and populism, and today’s battle between them for Europe’s soul. Hüttemann, who is also a visiting Lecturer at the University of

Passau and the Berlin School of Economics and Law, draws a parallel between the surge of populist forces in recent years – particularly the election of Donald Trump and Brexit – to the philosophical contestation between French philosophers of the 18th century: Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Voltaire. Rousseau had disdain for the educated elite and the establishment, while Voltaire represented the technocratic elite and embodied secular rationalism, explains Hütteman. He asserts that while the two belief systems are diametrically opposed, they do have one thing in common: both count pluralism as a threat. In that sense, the complexity of Europe’s pluralistic democracy – which is under growing pressure from economic threats, the refugee situation, and rising terrorism – is aggravating both radical populists and national technocrats. Despite pluralism increasingly coming under attack from both sides of the political spectrum, the author opines that the pro-European center is holding its ground. He points to Emmanuel Macron’s victory in France; weekly pro-Europe demonstrations across the Continent; and the Netherlands and Denmark failing to follow in Brexit’s example, as indications of this trend. In order to prevent the pop-ulist surge from taking root, the author calls for a new form of wide-ranging public diplomacy to act on behalf of pluralistic democracy.

Hilal Tekmen, a Project Expert at the Third Sector Foundation of Turkey (TÜSEV) in Istanbul, also takes up the ascendancy of populism, arguing that there is a neg-ative correlation between its rise and civil society. Tekmen attributes the upswing of nationalist/populist parties to growing public dissatisfaction and disillusionment with the status quos, particularly in the US and Europe, and highlights the refugee crisis and the hike in transnational terrorist threats as significant drivers thereof. The author underlines this is bringing about some alarming global trends – restrictions in fundamental freedoms, narrowing civic space, declining press freedoms, and in-creased government control – all of which are posing a critical threat to an open civil society. Reclaiming civic space and strengthening its institutions civil society requires a collective effort on behalf of international organizations, and depends on continued external funding to civil society entities, Tekmen stresses.

Two of our authors take up the ongoing war in Syria, having now entered its seventh year, and the political, humanitarian, and demographic dimensions of the conflict.

In a co-authored piece, Selim Koru and Omar Kadkoy explore the implications of the influx of Syrian refugees in Turkey, and how this demographic shift is influenc-ing Turkey’s social, political, and economic landscape. Koru and Kadkoy, Policy Analyst at the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV) and Research Associate at the Foundation’s Area Studies Program respectively, describe the transition from Syrians being treated as “guests” at the onset of the crisis to the

implementation of the Temporary Protection (TP) Regime. In theory, TP provides Syrians with free health care, access to education, and work permits. According to Koru and Kadkoy, there are two ways to analyze the effect that the influx of Syrian refugees has had in Turkey. The first perspective is based on ethnographic similarities, following the notion that Syrians have been able to settle without conflict because Syrians and Turks come from the same “civilization.” The second view characterizes the influx of Syrians as a traditional migration experience, and therefore posits a culture clash and inevitable “ghettoization” between the two communities. The authors point to several unifying factors as well: the shared experience during the July 15th failed coup attempt, Turkey’s position in the Syrian conflict, civil war, and economic ties. The authors Koru and Kadkoy conclude that the European experience of the Syrian influx is radically different than in Turkey. The rise of European far-right parties, along with their anti-immigration sentiments, hinders the benefits that the Syrian diaspora could bring to the Continent.

In a co-authored article, Serdar Ş. Güner, Associate Professor in the Department of International Relations at Bilkent University and Dilan E. Koç, an undergraduate student at Bilkent University, analyze shifting balances of power in the Syrian theater, with various friendship-hostility dimensions among the US, Russia, Turkey, Syrian and Iran playing out. The co-authors argue that alignment is virtually impossible between the players, which likely raises the specter of a “three-against-two or a four-against-one” configuration. Most likely is a scenario which pits Russia, Turkey, Syria, and Iran against the US, claim Guner and Koç and Dilan. However, US-Russian collaboration with the Kurds in Syria could spell the possible isolation of Turkey. The authors conclude by warning policy makers against making short-term myopic decisions.

Taking up the increasingly critical topic of cyber security, Alper Başaran breaks down the emerging threats and challenges and threats in the cyber realm. Başaran, who is the founder of Garnizon Bilgi Guvenligi, a company specialized in cybersecurity consulting services, sets the scene by describing the most recent global cyber attack which took place on 12 May 2017. This global attack was compromised of over a quarter million computers. Cyber attacks can have a variety of different aims, the author explains, such as distributing propaganda, gathering intelligence, or denial of service. In terms of who carries out these attacks, actors can range from criminal hackers to country-led cyber operations. The most well known example of such an operation is STUXNET, a malware which was discovered in 2010 with the aim of targeting nuclear reactors in Iran to hamper the country’s nuclear program. Turkey’s cyber security capacity, Başaran posits, is not as strong as it should be. Turkey’s geopolitical position makes it vulnerable to cyber attacks, and the post-July 15th

climate highlights the need for a stronger cyber security sector. While Turkey is lagging in terms of its cyber security capacities, the author points to some positive initiatives that have been launched such as new jobs, projects, and training.

Since the release of our last issue, we have featured four blog posts on our website to provide you with fresh opinions on world affairs as they unfold. In April, we featured Igor Delanoe's piece, "Russia and Turkey: Competitive Partners," which evaluates the political dynamics of the Turkish-Russian rapprochement. In his blog, Delanoe argues that although bilateral relations are back on track, both countries need to overcome some pointed differences over, for example over Crimea and the Syrian conflict will continue to be points of contention. He also underlines that Turkey and Russia support different sides when it comes to the power struggles in Egypt and Libya. In a second blog contribution by Micha'el Tanchum another blog, titled "Sino-Saudi Red Sea Alignment Presents Opportunity for Turkey-China Cooperation," the author analyzes the regional ramifications of the Chinese-Saudi trade deal and China's increasing sphere of influence in the Middle East. In May, assessing the recent election results around Europe, Caroline de Gruyter in her piece, titled "How the Political Center in Europe Found Its Voice Again," contends that Dutch and French election results are an example of the political center regaining ground from populist victories in 2016. However, she asserts that the political center needs to intelligently address the issues that propelled populists to power. In another blog, Micha'el Tanchum argues that a new Sunni-Arab coalition, described as "Arab NATO," should not be exploited to isolate Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The TPQ's Spring 2017 issue is the 10th annual edition supported by NATO's Public Diplomacy Division-supported edition. We are proud of our long-standing partnership, which has enabled us to provide our audiences with multidisciplinary approaches to security, analyses on NATO's evolving role in the region, and Turkey's place within the Alliance.

In other important institutional news, TPQ celebrated its 15th anniversary with a reception hosted by the Consulate General of Sweden in Istanbul on 25 May 2017. Bringing together a wide range of the journal's stakeholders, including members from the diplomatic, academic, business, and civil society communities, the event provided us with an opportunity to reflect on the journal's achievements and challenges, as well as to forge partnerships and synergies for upcoming projects. After an inspiring introduction by Consul General Therese Hydén, TPQ's former Editor in Chief of 13 years, Nigar Göksel, remarked on TPQ's beginnings and the volunteer culture it has fostered before my anniversary comments.

We wish to express our gratitude to all our former authors, advisory board members, and colleagues who joined us, and of course to the Swedish Consulate for enabling this event to take place. All of this was possible with your support.

This Spring, TPQ was present at a number of domestic and regional events, where we focused our efforts on expanding our network and learning more about the complex issues that we will take up in future issues. These included Atlantic Council's Annual Istanbul Summit, Forum Istanbul 2017, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom Turkey's 25th Anniversary, a panel on Turkish-Israeli relations organized by Friedrich Naumann and supported by the Israeli Consulate in Istanbul, and Future of Freedom's Annual Consultation for East and Southeast Europe in Kharkiv, Ukraine, also organized by Friedrich Naumann.

We are also pleased to have established a partnership with the Flying Broom International Women's Film Festival 2017 for this issue. This collaboration strengthens TPQ's commitment to the debate on women's issues in Turkey.

We would also like to extend a special thanks to Finansbank, the premium corporate sponsor of this issue. In addition, we would like to thank our online sponsor, Garanti Bank. We also appreciate the continuing support from our other sponsors: BP Turkey, Ford, Halifax International Security Forum, Monaco Tourism Authority, Odeabank, TEB, and Turcas Petrol.

We value all of our sponsors for sustaining us for the past 15 years. We look forward to a future together.

A very special acknowledgment goes to our long-standing media partner, *Hürriyet Daily News*, for the outreach they continue to provide.

As always, we are indebted to the authors of this issue for sharing their expertise and opinions. As our readers, please share your feedback.

Süreya Martha Köprülü