

From the Desk of the Editor

For this Fall 2011 issue of TPQ, we have centered the debate around security in Turkey's neighborhood, with a particular focus on NATO's role therein. In keeping with our 10-year track record of covering debates on Turkey's neighborhood from diverse perspectives, in this issue, we reflect a wide spectrum of views on the region's security challenges.

TPQ has consistently approached the economy and foreign policy as intertwined fields. As a background in the analysis of Turkey's relations with its neighbors and the West, we highly value the contribution of Turkish Minister for Economy, Zafer Çağlayan, who outlines how Turkey's economic trends have transformed the nation into a vibrant attractor for the region, and indeed, for the world. Minister Çağlayan's article centers on the factors driving Turkey's economic growth, such as the adaptive capabilities of the Turkish private sector and policies aimed at increasing export and foreign direct investment. Given the importance of exports to Turkey's economic growth, he explains that Turkish commercial counselors abroad have been augmented. In addition, Çağlayan notes the deliberate focus of Ankara's international relations strategy on attracting foreign investment.

Turkey's Minister of Defense, İsmet Yılmaz, provides an overview of NATO's place in Turkey's security and defense policy from the Cold War onwards. He emphasizes Turkey's support for NATO enlargement in order to consolidate the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area. Yılmaz also asserts the importance of NATO building stronger relationships with countries beyond the Euro-Atlantic zone. Pointing to the recent developments in the Middle East and North Africa, Minister Yılmaz stresses that unless democracy is achieved, radicalization will inevitably follow. Mediation activities are a "natural task" for the country, he argues, given that Turkey embraces the cultures of its north, south, west, and east and has become a model for evolving nations in the region.

There are also a number of strains in Turkey-NATO relations, and one is the common view that Turkey blocks NATO-EU cooperation. An overview of the events that led to today's stalemate, provided by Münevver Cebeci, Assistant Professor at the European Union Institute of Marmara University, reveals that the issue is more complex than would appear at first sight. Cebeci points out that "the essence of the problem regarding Turkey and the ESDP was the loss of rights that were not replaced adequately." The EU could have designed mechanisms similar to those of WEU (Western European Union), such as "making the participation of non-EU European Allies in EU-only operations possible through Council invitation to be decided by simple majority instead of unanimity, or their involvement in European Defense Agency possible by simple majority voting," she argues.

Clearly, how the EU has dealt with this issue has prompted questioning among Turkish diplomats and politicians about European intentions when it comes to including Turkey into their club. Assessment of Faruk Loğoğlu, Vice President of the Republican People's Party (CHP), who is also a member of TPQ's Advisory Board, is that "the EU sacrifices a more collaborative relationship with NATO in favor of a choice to impose on Turkey certain Cyprus-related demands." He points out that a more active participation for Turkey in European security and defense affairs would benefit the EU's influence as an international actor as well as strengthen strategic collaboration with NATO.

Due to it being the 60th anniversary of Turkey's NATO membership, the drop in the last several years of NATO's favorability among the Turkish public is attracting more attention. To exchange constructive ideas on how to develop a stronger understanding of NATO among the Turkish public, a meeting was held at Kadir Has University on 21 September 2011 entitled "NATO and Turkey: Implementing Ideas for Strengthening Public Support for the Alliance." Some participants of the meeting suggested that the low support registered towards NATO in opinion polls in Turkey should not be overdramatized. They noted that poll results are not the only indication of what the alliance means to Turkey, and that low support levels are also observed in other NATO ally countries. True as this may be, the Turkish public stands out as exceptionally negative on issues pertaining to NATO, as recent *Transatlantic Trends* poll results demonstrate.

As pointed out in the discussions, many Turks arguably feel that NATO has little use for them in encountering the security threats they face – such as PKK terrorism – and, thus, is not "necessary" for – and might even be detrimental to – peace in Turkey's neighborhood. Reasons for this cynicism are thought to range from Turks not knowing what it is like to be outside of NATO, to the lack of recall of alliance activities that served ends Turks felt strong support for – such as in Bosnia.

The Turkish public is hardly ever reminded by the country's leadership of the tangible benefits of NATO and remain largely unaware of the many new areas NATO is active in, such as energy, cyber security, or the struggle against piracy. This situation raises questions about whether having negative sentiments prevail among the Turkish public is "instrumentalized" by Ankara to strengthen its hand at the negotiation table with the West. NATO also loses support as perceptions of the U.S. or Turkey-EU relations deteriorate – Turkish people barely differentiate between these different pillars of the "West."

Yurter Özcan, who heads the Turkish Policy Center in Washington, DC, argues that the rhetoric used by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) towards the Western world has played a role in the negative public opinion trends in Turkey.

“With a political leader who virtually receives half of the votes in the country continuously using such anti-Western rhetoric, it would be unrealistic to expect any significant positive turnaround in public opinion towards the West,” he states. However, Özcan also points out that contrary to its rhetoric, the AKP’s actions have been in line with the Western demands. With the exception of the 2003 resolution (which would have allowed American troops to enter Iraq from Turkish land had it been accepted in the Turkish parliament), the AKP has assisted the U.S. in virtually every major occasion since it came to power in 2002, he points out.

One issue in which Turkey played an essential role for NATO, recently, was the agreement, reached on September 2011, on placing of a radar system for missile defense in eastern Turkey. Representing the leading opposition party, CHP, Loğoğlu states that the governing party made the correct decision by agreeing to host the radar; however, it has not been transparent to the public about the details of this decision.

İlhan Tanır, a journalist in Washington representing two daily Turkish newspapers, Vatan and Hürriyet, reviews the fluctuations in Turkey-U.S. relations since the Iraq war, focusing on how the relationship transformed from crisis to collaboration in the course of the Arab Spring, and gives a sobering account about how Turkish democracy relates to Turkey-U.S. relations. Tanır also covers Ankara’s changing position on NATO’s intervention to the Libyan rebellion. The “temporary divergence” with Washington, he argues, was a result of Turkish interests, and in particular, businessmen’s lobbying. Though Turkey was slow to get on board, eventually it participated in the naval arms blockade on Libya and carried out humanitarian aid missions, as well as implementing a freeze of the assets of Qaddafi regime representatives. However, Tanır points out, AKP never explained the basis of their initial accusations of the West being driven by the goal to “exploit Libya’s rich natural resources.”

The case of Libya brought to the fore challenges within NATO itself – both in terms of politicking among NATO members and in terms of capabilities. Alex Tiersky, Director of the Defense and Security Committee of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, elaborates in this issue of TPQ on the cautionary lessons to be derived from Operation Unified Protector (OUP).

President of the European Stability Initiative Gerald Knaus, in his article based on the book he co-authored with Rory Stewart, “Can Intervention Work,” examines the patterns of military intervention and post conflict occupation, analyzing ‘what works and what does not,’ and focusing on lessons learned from the international deployment in Bosnia that started in 1995. Knaus points out that all missions since

have been referred to with similar conceptual frameworks – such as nation building, state building and the like, creating a false impression that universal lessons can be drawn. Whereas, the context in each case is dramatically different, and the ambition to *build* nations or states in a post-conflict environment is “foolish” he reflects, because outsiders lack the knowledge and authority to implement social change. He ends his assessment by outlining some of the limited successes, which are viable for *outsiders* to achieve.

Transition in Afghanistan continues to be a central issue for NATO. Afghan security forces have started taking over various provinces and cities from the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). This handover is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2014. Bolstering Afghanistan’s security forces with training and equipment has been the centerpiece of U.S. transition strategy.

NATO representatives point out that the strengthening of the insurgents in 2005 has been ‘arrested and reversed.’ The nature of the violence and tactics of the insurgency is changing: targets that will attract the most publicity are being chosen, purposefully. These targets do indeed receive publicity but they, otherwise, have limited military or strategic effect. Meanwhile, access to health services and schooling for Afghans is strengthening and the army, police and infrastructure are developing. The ‘transition’ of NATO is framed as being from the lead combat role to supporting local security forces. In other words, ISAF is not exiting completely, but Afghans are taking security into their own hands.

In early November 2011, we, as TPQ, hosted Ambassador Simon Gass, NATO’s civilian representative to Afghanistan, in İstanbul for a roundtable focused on the Transition in Afghanistan. (The press bulletin of this discussion can be found on our website at <https://www.turkishpolicy.com/page/6/roundtables/>). Sir Gass stressed that Pakistan needs ‘to put as much pressure as possible’ on insurgents. Leading up to 2014, he explained, NATO has two strategies: One would be that an Afghan-led process of dialogue with the insurgents leads to a political process that ends with insurgents laying down their weapons, and the other that Afghan security forces are able to take full responsibility for security, continuing to struggle against the insurgency. Meanwhile, he stressed, it will be crucial that the international community supports economic development in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan was an issue high on the agenda at a conference entitled “NATO Trans-Regional Approach: Challenges and Ramifications,” organized in January 2011 by Iran’s foreign ministry affiliated think tank, the Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS).

A conviction reiterated by a number of speakers was that NATO needs Iran as an enemy because it has lost its old enemy, the USSR, and now has no “conceptual basis” for its existence. A resonating theme was that Iran, situated between Iraq and Afghanistan, and with a U.S. base to its north in Turkey, is *encircled* by NATO (which essentially is seen to be the U.S.). The sense of Iran being under threat was prevalent among all speakers, with one elaborating as follows: “With *out-of-area operations* justified by NATO, there is no end to what it can justify as being a threat to its members’ security.” In short, NATO in the neighborhood is seen as a threat from these voices in Tehran.

While appreciation of Turkey’s new foreign policy was widespread among participants attending the conference on NATO in Tehran, and cooperation between Turkey and Iran was advocated enthusiastically, it must be recalled that this was January 2011, since which time this embracement is likely to be reserved, at best.

A number of Ankara’s regional moves – such as ensuring Iran not be referred to as a threat to NATO in official documents, and the attempt to mediate a resolution to the nuclear crisis in 2010 - appeared to ‘enable’ Iran, from the perspective of many Western observers. However, the stances Ankara has taken in the course of the Arab Spring have led to divergences with Tehran, most recently towards the Syrian leadership. Turkey is being promoted as an inspiration in the MENA region, and as such is seen as a rival to Iran. Advocacy of the Palestinian cause is another front on which Iran and Turkey are said to compete.

In his article for this issue of TPQ, Director General of IPIS, Mostafa Dolatyar, describes the problems in NATO’s engagement with ‘partners’ in the neighborhood. “If NATO, or any other organization, is looking for enhancing its meaningful engagement in this part of the world, it must seek to develop a more balanced relationship with all regional countries as well as stakeholders, which have legitimate interests in the region,” he states. He makes the point that NATO’s selectiveness between partners reflects a ‘divide and rule’ approach and neglects the reality that security is an ‘indivisible common good.’

Turkey’s recent agreement to host a NATO radar system has been met with deep concern not only in Iran but also in Russia. In contrast to Iran and Russia, another neighbor of Turkey, Georgia, derives a sense of security from NATO involvement in this neighborhood. In late October 2011, the annual ‘Georgia Defense and Security Conference’ (GDSC) was held in Tbilisi. The message emanating from the hosts of the event was that for Georgia, the European model is *the* key state-building project, and Georgia is eager to join “the strongest defense alliance in history,” ie. NATO.

Giorgi Baramidze, Vice Prime-Minister and State Minister on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, pointed out that the Georgian public “has consistently and overwhelmingly supported Georgia’s NATO membership throughout all these challenging and difficult years.” While the public support never fell below 65 percent, the latest polls depict 77-81 percent of Georgia’s citizens support the country’s NATO membership, he noted.

Since the Bucharest Summit, it is not a matter of “whether Georgia will become a member of NATO,” but rather “how” and “when,” Baramidze stressed. Though the April 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest fell short of granting Georgia a Membership Action Plan (MAP) – which establishes criteria for countries’ accession into the Alliance, the Summit established that Georgia *will*, if it reforms accordingly, become a NATO member in the future. In fact, “Georgia is trying to act as if it is already a member of NATO, because, we share not only values and challenges with NATO, but also the responsibility of ensuring common security. We consider NATO’s success a mutual victory,” Baramidze stated.

James Appathurai, who serves as the NATO Secretary General’s Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia, outlined, at the GDSC conference in Tbilisi, that as the May 2012 Chicago Summit nears, there are four areas of particular focus for NATO: managing transition in Afghanistan, settling plans for the missile defense system, managing budget cuts without reducing the capabilities of the Alliance, and reaffirming the commitment made in 2008 in Bucharest to NATO’s partners. Deputy State Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, Elene Khoshtaria pointed out Tbilisi’s expectation of “a small and significant step” from the Chicago Summit. Pressed to elaborate, she pointed out that Tbilisi expects Georgia’s progress to be recognized and for NATO to stress that Georgia’s integration with NATO is “a performance-based process and one over which no third country has a say.”

As was noted by one participant, “if it does not perform well in terms of democratic progress, this weakness will be used against Tbilisi by skeptics in Europe.” This message, broadly taken, has relevance for Turkey, Ukraine and other candidate or neighbor countries of the EU. But the virtuous cycle of reaping win-win results between partner/candidate and the EU requires a constellation in which the leadership and elites within member states too put in effort to dispel rather than perpetuate stereotypes and myths about the nations currently on the periphery of the EU.

A central question is whether Russia can be inspired to change, over time. Until Russia agrees to provide a fair playing ground that enables diverse actors to flourish both domestically and within its ‘sphere of influence,’ its neighbors will be motivated to break out of its demands for political compliance.

In line with TPQ's consistent efforts to provide all sides of the topics at hand, we indeed had a strong official perspective from Moscow confirmed as an author. However, when, on very late notice, we were informed that his schedule had not permitted an article contribution, time was too limited to arrange an alternative. Thus, the Russian view is admittedly missing from the debate that we reflect.

While the 2008 August War is seen in Tbilisi as Russia's attempt to turn back the Bucharest summit decision of NATO, it also had a far-reaching effect on dynamics in the wider Black sea region - and beyond. At the GDSC event in Georgia, Iulian Chifu, newly appointed advisor to the Romanian president, argued that the fact that MAP was not provided to Georgia and the reality of the August war are all the more reason to devise a security concept for this region. He went on to point out that stabilizing the wider Black Sea is the first step in stabilizing the greater Middle East.

Assistant Professor at Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy (ADA), Anar Valiyev explains the effect of the August war on Azerbaijan, which he marks as a turning point in Azerbaijan-Russia relations. Russia's moves against Georgian territorial integrity "shocked" and created fear among the Azerbaijani public, he notes. Baku subsequently became more cautious about pursuing Euro-Atlantic integration and emphasized the 'neutral' nature of its strategic positioning. The most significant stick Moscow holds against Baku is its influence on the Karabakh conflict. "If the frozen conflicts of Azerbaijan and Georgia remain the same, or worsen, both states will exhaust their foreign policy opportunities and fall prey to growing Russian influence in the Caucasus," Valiyev argues. The conflicts benefits Moscow, enabling it to keep Armenia and Azerbaijan in the "orbit of its influence" to varying extents, Valiyev points out. Moscow's demand to deploy Russian peacekeepers was likely the reason Baku appeared to back out of a Russia mediated peace deal, Valiyev states.

The repercussions of the August war on Ukraine are elaborated upon in this issue of TPQ by Hanna Shelest, on behalf of Ukraine's National Institute for Strategic Studies, who points out that rising concerns about the risks of "de-freezing" conflicts in Transnistria or in the Crimea. Shelest argues that Ukraine's Black Sea policy has been "short of both strategic vision and consistent activity." Ukraine, Romania, and Turkey compete for regional leadership, and these countries are also developing strategic alliances amongst each other to certain ends, Shelest points out.

An event in October 2011 in Washington, DC, titled "Ukraine's quest for mature nation statehood roundtable XII: Compelling bilateral ties – Poland-Ukraine and Turkey-Ukraine" highlighted the geostrategic powerplay in the Black Sea region, as well as the domestic developments in Ukraine and Turkey.

Though not widely taken up, the histories of Ukraine and Turkey are intertwined by virtue of experiencing the region together through wars, truces, inter-marriages, trade, and more. Their present day conundrums are also linked in various ways. Situated along the current edge of 'Europe,' the direction these two countries take could tip balances in the Black Sea region, and affect the future of the EU in a multitude of ways.

Economic, political, and strategic relations between Turkey and Ukraine have been intensifying in recent years. The two countries are working on establishing visa free travel and free trade. Both countries are integrating with the EU – Ukraine as an Eastern Partnership neighbor, Turkey as a candidate. Accordingly, both Kiev and Ankara struggle with ambiguity in the prospects offered by Brussels, as well as fallout from political will and policy coherence deficits among EU member states. For both Ukraine and Turkey, it is widely assumed that an integration process with the EU will compel decision makers to pursue reform, but doubts – of different nature – linger.

At the time of the event held in DC to discuss these issues, the Timoshenko case was high on the agenda. Former Prime Minister Yulia Timoshenko was sentenced, on October 2011, to seven years in prison on charges of abuse of office over gas contracts she agreed with Russia in 2009. The trial was seen as a rollback of democracy in Ukraine, while EU representatives expressed the opinion that the verdict was politically motivated and cast a shadow over Ukraine-EU relations.

The question of how the EU should deal with a case they see as the judiciary being used as a tool of political revenge was pondered in the course of the *Ukraine's Quest* conference. The dilemma stems from the fact that derailing Kiev's already shaky EU integration would strengthen those in Moscow demanding political compliance from Kiev and strike a blow more to those in Ukraine who are working towards a European future than to the government itself. On the other hand, as argued by various participants to this conference, if the EU does not 'punish' what it deems a breach of independent judiciary and rule of law, this would weaken the hand of domestic critics, and embolden other Eastern Partnership countries to expect compromise on standards of European values and fundamental rights. One suggestion put forth, was that the EU not waver on offering Kiev an association agreement, yet also apply targeted sanctions such as investigating the bank accounts of authorities, while in the meantime providing more support to critical civil society groups and NGOs.

To ensure that Russia can not decide the future of Ukraine, the importance of the EU engaging with certainty, clarifying what it will offer in return for what, was emphasized by participants to the Ukraine's Quest conference. But it was also

stressed that the future of countries like Ukraine will ultimately be decided by their own quality of leadership and the vision of new generations.

A global trend set to influence the security debates in Turkey's neighborhood is a shift of Washington's attention from the Black Sea periphery of Europe towards Southeast Asia. Indeed, Michael Auslin, of the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) drives home this point: "As American forces withdraw from Iraq by the end of 2011, and continue to drawdown in Afghanistan, U.S. policymakers in Washington, D.C. are turning their full attention to the challenges of maintaining American influence in the Indo-Pacific region." Auslin explains the demographic, political, economic, and security-related reasons for U.S. attention to be drawn to the opportunities and threats Asia poses.

As TPQ, we have collaborated with the NATO Public Diplomacy Division over the years, including views from high-ranking NATO representatives (including two secretary generals), distributing TPQ to official delegations of the 2004 Istanbul NATO summit, and holding regular roundtable events in Istanbul to foster topical debates on related topics. We are delighted to publish this issue of TPQ on the 60th anniversary of Turkey's joining NATO, to take up some of the critical questions for establishing long-term security in Turkey's neighborhood.

Kadir Has University not only hosts TPQ offices as a strategic partner, but also provides invaluable opportunities for synergy with its vibrant academic environment, which we are grateful for.

A special thanks to the institutional sponsor of this issue Yapı Kredi. We also appreciate the continuing support of Türkiye İş Bankası, Garanti Bankası, Akbank, Finansbank, TAV and BP Turkey.

As always, we welcome your feedback about the issues we cover and invite you to our interactive website to share your thoughts.

Diba Nigar Göksel