

## Turkey and the West: Fault Lines in a Troubled Alliance

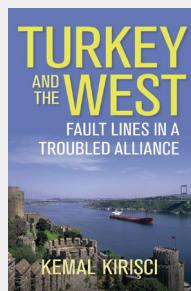
By Kemal Kirişci

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Reviewed by Ali Balçı, Sakarya University

Turkish-American relations are currently witnessing their deepest crisis. Even in 1975 when the U.S. put an arms embargo on Turkey, Ankara had some supporters in Washington. Then President Gerald Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger opposed the embargo and did their best to convince the Senate and Congress to change the decision. Four decades later, in 2015, relations were tested by a new crisis, but this time Ankara had no friend in Washington. Starting in 2013, the current crisis has not only lasted comparatively long, but has gradually worsened into a possible breakup. What makes this crisis so deep, durable, and progressive in its worsening? Such a puzzle deserves meticulous study. Kemal Kirişci's book is a timely and highly contribution whose purpose is to explain the recent crisis between Turkey and the U.S.-led order.

The book starts with a description of the "growing instability" the transatlantic alliance has experienced on "multiple fronts" for a long time. Borrowing from G. John Ikenberry, Kirişci defines the U.S.-led order as an "international liberal order," and puts forward that this order is encountering "challenges from within, as both the United States and the EU [European Union] [have] experienced economic difficulties, and challenges from outside powers, especially China and Russia, which sought an alternative order" (p. 4). According to Kirişci, this structural dynamic has



played an important role in the recent shifts both in Turkish domestic politics, as Turkish democracy began to recede and its economic dynamism started to fade, and in Turkish foreign policy, as noted in its security rapprochement with Russia (p. 4). Although the structural crisis of the international liberal order made Turkey's crisis with the U.S. possible, the same crisis is also the source of possibility for a reset in Turkish-American relations. For Kirişci, "ensuring Turkey's cooperation and support will be critical" in countering "Russia's growing assertiveness," and in managing to solve security issues in the Middle East (pp. 7, 14, 22).

The book aims to explain the factors driving "the deterioration in Turkey's ties with its traditional allies" (p. 14). Unlike previous crises, in the current era Turkey has profoundly questioned its security commitments with the West and has made high-technology military agreements with Russia. For example, it signed an accord for Moscow to supply Ankara with S-400 surface-to-air missile batteries. And Turkey started to work with Russia in response to the Syrian crisis, in which the U.S. and Russia continue to vie for influence. As a NATO member, why does Turkey look to Russia as a source of stability and protection? For Kirişci, the answer is simple. Turkey's deviation from international liberal order is the outcome of its change in 'identity.' Kirişci ar-

gues that the Justice and Development Party transformed after the 2011 elections. On the one hand, prominent advocates of liberal policies lost their positions both in the party and in national governments (p. 15). On the other, the remaining elite within the party capitalized on the notion of the *umma*, the broader Muslim community, and accordingly problematized Turkey's identification with the West (pp. 15-16). Although Kirişçi cites the war in Syria as "a key turning point" in Turkey's deteriorating relations with the West (p. 72), he notes that it is Erdogan who made Turkey surrender its Western orientation in favor of a pivot to the east. It was not security issues that pushed Turkey and the West further apart; rather, Turkey's drift from "the values that have long constituted the international liberal order" (p. 122). As long as actors who disassociate Turkey from Western values and oppress "the secular, Western-oriented segments of the society" remain in the power, there is no "hope for any improvement in the near future" (pp. 121-122, and see also 149).

Kirişçi mentions the possibility of Turkey's return to the liberal international order because "Erdoğan does have a long track of record of pragmatism and a demonstrated ability to make U-turns" (p. 187). However, this scenario does not look likely (p. 188). For Kirişçi, to expect Erdogan to overcome his "ideological preferences" (p. 191) seems somewhat unrealistic (p. 188). The most likely scenario, therefore, is "a state of constant tension" with the West and its liberal international order. The only exit from this tension is the emergence of "a reformist movement" favoring closer relations with the EU within the Justice and Development Party (p. 192). This is so simply because a leader rising to power in Turkey from any of the opposition parties looks unlikely. However, there is an alternative way of reading Kirişçi's book. The EU's

reluctance to truly embrace Turkey and the U.S.' failure to mitigate Turkey's security concerns are two important dynamics pushing Turkey away from the West (pp. 193-195). If this is the case, positive change in the policies of the EU and the U.S. towards Turkey could play a critical role in mending relations. Such an alternative reading leaves readers with confusion: is Erdogan's recent drift from Western values the outcome of systemic imperatives? Kirişçi, however, is very clear in his argument that Erdogan's non-democratic slide is the source of all.

Despite its empirical richness in examining the history of Turkish-American relations with a special focus on the latest developments, the book suffers from the problem of reductionism, specifically *reductio ad Erdoganum* (p. 187). Kirişçi judges the practices of Turkey both in domestic politics and foreign relations through the criteria of the international liberal order (see for example p. 12). By doing so, he implicitly assumes that the institutions of this order, such as Freedom House, measure developments in Turkey objectively. However, this is not always the case. For example, although the cycle of court cases between 2009 and 2011 was based partly on fabricated evidence, putting hundreds of military officers and journalists as well as politicians and academics in prison, the book is blind about the fact that the same Western institutions described this judicial process as the sign of democratic improvement in Turkey (p. 130). These two different pictures reveal something very critical about the logic of argumentation. Throughout the book, Kirişçi leaves an intriguing question untouched: are all these judgments of western institutions objectively true –or the result of Turkey's crisis with the U.S.-led order?

This question is important because it discloses the fact that Kirişçi puts all the blame

on the individual decision maker (Erdoğan) in Turkey's deepening crisis with the U.S.-led order, leaving systemic dynamics peripheral. Although the book starts with an emphasis on the importance of the systemic variable in explaining the behavior of actors, it paints the political leader as the source of everything

in the final analysis. The book, however, is a very rich source for students of Turkish foreign policy because it provides a very detailed analysis of Turkey's recent crisis with the West. It is also good reading for policymakers wishing to understand the reasons for the crisis and possible solutions to it.

## Solidarity in the European Union

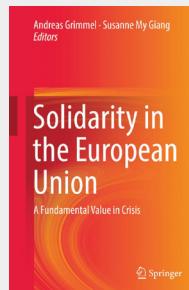
*Edited by Andreas Grimmel and Susanne My Giang*

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This volume originates from a conference on 'Solidarity and its Crisis in the European Union' that was held at the University of Hamburg from June 2-3, 2016, and aims to discuss how solidarity is applied in practice among the Member States of the Union. It is a vital contribution for understanding the solidarity of the European Union (EU). The two main parts of this volume deal with (i) the concept of solidarity and its theoretical and practical meaning, and (ii) how the crisis of solidarity has become a crucial test for the integration project of the Union. This volume brings a multidisciplinary perspective to its analysis of the crisis of solidarity in the EU. The volume stands for the idea that the good intentions of European solidarity are not enough unless the solidarity turns into practice.

The EU is widely considered a pioneer in regional integration. It is often said the Union has faced many crises before, but since recent times "a lack of solidarity in dealing with the many crises" (p. v) –such as financial turmoil, the Eurozone crisis, the rise of separatist and



independence movements, Brexit, migration, refugees, nationalism, right wing populism as well as the threat of terrorism– is present in the Union. A deficit in appeals to solidarity in all of these issues is obvious, and this threatens the existence of the Union in its current state.

Although solidarity is a core value and is in the DNA of the Union, this volume argues that the member states have recently given bad examples. Solidarity was –and should remain– a motor for European integration. In other words, solidarity is the only 'currency' Europe needs as a prerequisite for the inner and true cohesion of the Union. The Union needs to take concrete actions to show what solidarity actually means, and apply it in the context of the EU. Without solidarity there is no cohesion of the Union, and if there is no cohesion, unfortunately, there is no capacity to act either inside or outside the Union. Solidarity and cohesion are intimately connected. Solidarity, as a prerequisite, is contextualized with "democracy, subsidiary, loyalty, sustainability and citizenship" (p. 40), as well as in