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EDITORIAL OFFICE

Nenehatun Caddesi No: 66 GOP/Çankaya, 06700 Ankara/Turkey
Tel: +90.312.551-2100 • Fax: +90.312.551-2190
editor@insightturkey.com • www.insightturkey.com



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EDITOR'S NOTE

MUHİTTİN ATAMAN

Turkey is located between some of the most penetrated and volatile regions in the world, namely the Middle East, the Balkans, Caucasia and the Eastern Mediterranean. Political and economic instability, historical and cultural problems, and the interference of global powers make it difficult for regional countries to pursue an independent foreign policy since these regions are among the main geographies used and sacrificed for the global power calculations. Having to define Turkey's foreign policy, it can be said that throughout the 20th century Turkey followed a mainly pro-Western foreign policy. Accordingly, as a member of the NATO alliance, as well as many other European institutions, Ankara followed a Western-oriented foreign policy in the context of the Cold War.

In the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Cold War, similar to many international actors, Turkey attempted to restructure its foreign policy. Ankara has been pursuing a proactive, dynamic, Ankara-centered, multidimensional, multilateral and balanced foreign policy at both the regional and global levels since the early days of the 21st century. For this purpose, the AK Party governments, since 2002, initiated a comprehensive reform program in economic, political, social and cultural spheres in both domestic and foreign settings. As a geographical bridge, Turkey began to balance its Westward and Eastward relations. While traditional orientation such as the accession process with the European Union and the continuation of being a member in the Western alliance, Turkey began to implement new strategies such as the "zero problems policy with neighbors" and to initiate new openings towards different regions such as the Balkans, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and East Asia in its foreign policy. New areas, dimensions, regions, subjects and actors appeared in Turkey's foreign policy.

Turkey has established new governmental and sub-governmental institutions in order to achieve its newly defined foreign policy strategies. The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) was established in 1992 to improve cooperation between Turkey and Turkic Central Asian Republics. Today it is one of the most well-known actors of Turkey's of soft power. Yunus Emre Institute, the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) are some other new actors and instruments of the soft power of Turkey. Besides, some old state institutions such as the Turkish Red Crescent (*Türk Kızılayı*) and the Presidency of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*) have redefined their areas of

activity and truly become international and transnational actors contributing to Turkey's foreign policy.

Most notably in the last few years, Turkey has strengthened the humanitarian dimension of its foreign policy. Hosting more than three million refugees, Ankara is now one of the leading donor countries to the humanitarian crises of the Middle East, Africa, South Asia and even Latin America –the most distant lands to Turkey. As it is argued in this issue by Fuat Keyman, Turkey has established a balance between its realist strategies and humane/moral dimensions. Turkey's open door policy regarding the Syrian crisis has resulted in more than 3.5 million refugees settling in the country to whom the Turkish government still provides shelter and food without much international support. Similarly, Turkey has been providing food and other humanitarian assistance to Somalia which still faces a serious threat of famine. Overall, Turkey's direct humanitarian and developmental assistance spreads from Haiti in the Caribbean Sea to the Arakan region in Myanmar.

Nevertheless, realism has been shaping the current Turkish foreign policy in terms of the struggle that Turkey is facing against terrorist organizations such as FETÖ, PKK/YPG and their offshoots or ISIS. Operation Euphrates Shield has been a successful strategy followed by Turkey not only to protect its national interests but at the same time to help in solving the bloody quagmire in Syria and Iraq.

In recent years, Turkey began to attach greater emphasis on regional states and its neighboring countries. Turkey, who defines its neighborhood in an inclusive way, has established "joint cabinet meetings" which are called "high-level cooperation councils" with 21 different countries including Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Greece, Ukraine and Russia, in order to improve cooperation mechanisms at both regional and global levels.

The economy, with a special focus on sources of energy has been another driving force of the Turkish foreign policy. Turkey has been following a liberal economic foreign policy to complement its resolve for diplomatic rapprochement. While trying to increase its exports by following an export-led economic strategy, Turkey is also attempting to attract more foreign direct investment to the country. Due to its emphasis on economic development and economic growth, many analysts have labelled Turkey a trading state. Moreover, Turkey aims to become an energy hub, and considering the latest developments, it can be argued that Turkey can soon achieve this goal, which will further increase its role in the region and beyond.

As a result, Turkey is now a pivotal regional state as well as an increasingly global power and emerging market. It takes initiatives in almost all regional issues and has begun to get involved more in global issues. However, at the

same time, it faces too many challenges and threats emanating mainly from the neighboring states and regional conflicts. The main challenge for Turkey is to overcome these security threats.

There are many regional crises such as those in Syria, Libya, Yemen, Iraq and Ukraine that constitute vital threats to Turkey as well as to other regional countries. Since there is no consensus or joint commitment to engage in these regional issues between regional and global powers, Turkey needed to take unilateral steps in order to maximize its national security and/or to minimize its costs. Turkey has been proposing solutions to regional problems that will satisfy all related actors and will provide regional stability. It asks for gradual political change and appeals for a more participatory political order at both regional and global levels.

Taking all these developments into consideration, this new issue of *Insight Turkey* focuses on Turkey's dynamics and transforming foreign policy orientation and addresses a salient question: Reform or reset? What has happened with Turkey's foreign policy in the last few years? Three commentaries and six articles –that focus mainly on Turkey's foreign policy– will help the readers to answer this question.

As we entered in a new year, which inherited the burdens of its predecessor, the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, H. E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, in his commentary lays out the challenges that came from 2016 and briefly presents Turkey's main goals for 2017. Çavuşoğlu contends that the Syrian crisis will remain the main challenge for Turkey; and while arguing the necessity of the consolidation of the basic foreign policy tenets of Turkey, he emphasizes that Turkey should uphold its common values and the spirit of cooperation to help bring peace, hope and prosperity to humankind.

The article of E. Fuat Keyman, through an academic perspective, provides an in-depth analysis on the main parameters of Turkey's new foreign policy. Keyman opens a new discussion in this area, by indicating that in the last two years it can be argued that there has been an emergence of a new Turkish foreign policy whose proactive nature and main principles are shaped by what he calls 'moral realism.' A term used for the first time in this regard, Keyman's moral realism denotes an amalgamation of humanitarianism and realism in Turkey's foreign policy.

Malik Mufti, by focusing on the Middle East and its impact on Turkey's domestic and regional dynamics, asserts that these have changed as a result of external developments, mainly the collapse of central authority in Syria and Iraq, rather than from any fundamental change in Turkey's strategic vision. Mufti concludes by stating that the complicated relations between developments in northern Syria and Iraq and Turkey's own internal dynamics will prove consequential for the future of the Turkish state.

The analysis of Turkey's foreign policy would be incomplete if no special focus was put on its bilateral relations with global or regional actors such as the U.S., the European Union, Russia or the Balkans.

Going back to the Second Cold War, Çağrı Erhan and Efe Sıvış provide a historical perspective of Turkish-American relations, with a special focus on the Obama administration, which had an immensely deteriorating impact on the bilateral relations. The extradition of Fetullah Gülen –the mastermind behind the July 15 coup attempt– and American support to the PYD/YPG are the two main issues on which Ankara and Washington strongly disagree. Furthermore, Erhan and Sıvış evaluate the bilateral relations under the Trump administration; accordingly, even though Trump's emphasis on radical Islam may be a separation point for the Turkish-American relations, the common security and economic issues may bring the two states closer.

On the other hand, Meltem Müftüler-Baç focuses on Turkish-EU relations. In her article, Müftüler-Baç argues that Turkey's foreign policy towards the EU has altered and a new pattern of cooperation is emerging between these two players. According to Müftüler-Baç, the main reason behind the change of Turkey's policy towards the EU can be found in the alterations of the EU's own conditions, i.e. its enlargement policy, decline in its economic attractiveness, and the external geopolitical environment around Turkey.

Gareth Winrow aimed at analyzing the Turkish-Russian relations while Volkan Ediger and his co-author Duygu Durmaz intended to focus on Turkey's energy policies. However, as can be seen from their articles, the Turkish-Russian relation cannot be understood without taking into consideration the energy ties of these states; while on the other hand, the Turkish energy policy cannot be understood without taking into consideration the Turkish-Russian relations. In his commentary, Gareth Winrow argues that while the downing of a Russian jet by Turkish Armed Forces may have had political implications between the two states, it did not have an impact on the energy ties between them. Winrow, due to a mutual dependency, foresees a poised energy relationship between Ankara and Moscow in spite of any possible future downturns in political ties.

Volkan Ediger and Duygu Durmaz bring a detailed analysis of the role of energy in what they call a rollercoaster relationship between Turkey and Russia. For many years, energy has been the common language of both countries and the impetus is due mainly to the leaderships of Erdoğan and Putin. After the jet incident, an important step was taken in 2016, i.e. the signing of the Turkish Stream, and according to Ediger and Durmaz this is a positive step, which may make the relations between the two states even stronger.

The Balkans has been and will remain one of the strategic regions in Turkey's foreign policy. Scarcely analyzed, the relationship between Turkey and the

Balkans remains of specific importance, and in this issue of *Insight Turkey*, Edith Harxhi presented three different phases of this relationship. According to Harxhi, the reforming of Turkish foreign policy in the Balkans started at the end of the Cold War and now not only has Turkey earned the position of a strong player in the Balkans but has also become a regional regulator and mediator. She also stated that the economic and cultural ties between the Balkans and Turkey are very strong, so even if all the regional states join the EU, Turkey still will remain an important actor in the region.

A different perspective is brought from Alessio Calabriò, who examines the Islamist views on Turkey's foreign policy, with a special focus on the foreign policy writings of two dissimilar figures of Turkey's political Islam, namely Necmettin Erbakan and Sezai Karakoç, both considered central for the development of the Islamist ideology in Turkey. According to Calabriò, both Erbakan and Karakoç are major representatives of Turkish Pan-Islamism and the analyses of these two authors point out the nationalist element characterizing Turkish Pan-Islamism in comparison with analogous non-Turkish expressions of this ideology.

This issue of *Insight Turkey* through two off-topic pieces covers very significant issues such as the Aleppo crisis and the reparation process in Colombia. David Lesch's commentary details how far Syria has to travel in terms of becoming a functioning state again as well as potential options for a workable and sustainable political system in the future. Lesch interestingly presents four alternatives –accompanied by their advantages and disadvantages– regarding how to divide power at the national, provincial, and local levels within Syria. Lastly, Lesch emphasizes that the political and military conditions have to be properly balanced in order to make any attempt at a political settlement halfway viable for Syria.

Juan Guillermo García Serna's article on the reparation process in Colombia is the last article of this issue. This article is a theoretical-reflective component of the triad: Truth, Justice and Reparation. Moreover, as he reflects on the reparation in Colombia, Serna envisions some scenarios in which the Military Forces of Colombia could help to strengthen this process.

In a time of turmoil, many states –not only in the Middle East – find it difficult to follow a proper foreign policy. As in the case of Turkey, the external dynamics are strongly related with the internal affairs, and it is crucial for a state to shape its foreign policy accordingly. This issue of *Insight Turkey* has attempted to bring a comprehensive analysis of Turkey's foreign policy firstly by creating a theoretical perspective of its basic parameters to be followed by specific cases such as the U.S., the EU, Russia or the Balkans. Hopefully, this issue will provide the foothold for all those interested in defining Turkey's new foreign policy. ■