

INSIGHT

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Contents

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Editor's Note

4

COMMENTARIES

Turkey's Last Electoral Rite of Passage for a Post-Stress Democracy

ERTAN AYDIN

7

Arab Reactions to Turkey's Regional Reengagement

MALIK MUFTI

15

The New Era in Turkish Foreign Policy: Critiques and Challenges

MURAT YEŞİLTAŞ

25

Turkey and the EU: Looking Beyond the Pessimisms

ERHAN İÇENER and DAVID PHINEMORE

37

Why Did Iran Diplomacy Work this Time Around?

TRITA PARSI

47

The Crisis and Governance of Religious Pluralism in Europe

IAN MORRISON

55

The Kurdistan Regional Government Elections: A Critical Evaluation

SARDAR AZIZ

67

ARTICLES

The Evolution of Turkey's Foreign Policy under the AK Party Government

JOERG BAUDNER

79

Civilizational Discourse, the 'Alliance of Civilizations' and
Turkish Foreign Policy

NURULLAH ARDIÇ

101

The Rise of Radical Liberal Discourse in Turkish Foreign Policy

ZUHAL MERT UZUNER

123

Bringing the European Union Back on the Agenda of Turkish Foreign Policy

ÖZGE ZİHNİOĞLU

149

Can the Kurdish Left Contribute to Turkey's Democratization?

ÖDÜL CELEP

165

Russia, Ukraine and the Eastern Partnership:
From Common Neighborhood to Spheres of Influence?

ANDREY MAKARYCHEV

181

Introducing the FPC-TR Dataset: Dimensions of AK Party Foreign Policy

NİMET BERİKER

201

BOOK REVIEWS

The Worlds of European Constitutionalism

GRÁINNE DE BÚRCA and J.H.H. WEILER

Reviewed by Bertil Emrah Oder

217

Institutional Change in Turkey

LEILA PIRAN

Reviewed by Haitham Saad Aloudah

220

The Wisdom of Syria's Waiting Game

BENTE SCHELLER

Reviewed by Jinan Bastaki

223

Turkey and the Arab Spring

GRAHAM E. FULLER

Reviewed by Andrew A. Szarejko

225

The EU's Democracy Promotion and the
Mediterranean Neighbors

ANN-KRISTIN JONASSON

Reviewed by Suna Gülfer İhlamur-Öner

227

Biography of an Empire

CHRISTINE M. PHILLIOU

Reviewed by Azize Fatma Çakır

230

The Ottoman Origins of Modern Iraq

EBUBEKİR CEYLAN

Reviewed by M. Talha Çiçek

232

Understanding Turkey's Kurdish Question

FEVZİ BİLGİN and ALİ SARIHAN

Reviewed by Mehmet Uğur Ekinci

234

No Establishment of Religion

T. JEREMY GUNN and JOHN WITTE, Jr.

Reviewed by Brett G. Scharffs

236

Return of a King

WILLIAM DALRYMPLE

Reviewed by Sabeen Ahmed

239

Healing the Nation

YÜCEL YANIKDAĞ

Reviewed by Sanem Güvenç Salgırlı

241

The Berlin-Baghdad Express

SEAN MCMEEKIN

Reviewed by Faruk Yaslıçimen

243

The Young Turks' Crime Against
Humanity

TANER AKÇAM

Reviewed by Hazal Duran

246

Türkiye Dış Politikası

ALİ BALCI

Reviewed by Selma Bardakçı

248

EDITOR'S NOTE

TALİP KÜÇÜKCAN

THE INTERNATIONAL community faces a series of serious challenges, which need to be urgently addressed otherwise the ongoing conflicts will become entrenched and will have increasingly dire spillover effects on the region and globally. The crises in Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Ukraine are at the top of the agenda of world leaders. However, there seems to be a lack of consensus and commitment to engage in these conflict marred countries to achieve a sustainable solution that will stabilize the region and satisfy all actors involved.

It seems that the leading powers are in a dilemma, reflecting the paradoxes of the global security architecture and the current international balance of power. As the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq have demonstrated, such actions may lead to human tragedy and political disintegration, resulting in a long lasting catastrophe. However, avoiding intervention, even in the mild form of supporting legitimate claims of the opposition in Syria, has led to not only serious damage to the social fabric of the country but to a protracted civil war. In turn, this has produced a fertile ground for the emergence of extremist groups and organizations, such as ISIS. Unless the root causes are addressed head on, any action to defeat these groups will be met with limited and short-term success. Political stability by the establishment of legitimate governments and administrations are the key to resolving these political and military conflicts. The international community, which appears to be trying to establish a core alliance to fight ISIS and similar groups under the leadership of the US, should take this reality very seriously.

Turkey's position and its relations in the context of regional developments became even more critical after the presidential elections of August 10, 2014. This is the first direct election of a president in Turkey. So, while Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is the new President of Turkey, Ahmet Davutoğlu, the architect of Turkey's more pro-active foreign policy was elected as the Chairman of the ruling Justice and Development Party and has been appointed as the new Prime Minister of Turkey. He is now not only in charge of foreign policy but he is also responsible for preparing his party for the 2015 general elections. Davutoğlu's term in office will be a period of "tests" in many respects.

Whether Turkey's foreign policy direction will remain the same or whether new options will be considered greatly depends on what happens regionally.

Turkish foreign policy is heavily oriented towards humanitarian aid, economic and political integration, negotiation and conflict resolution as well as mobilizing the international community to respond to the people of the region's legitimate demands for democratization. As the new President and new Prime Minister have both already underlined, Turkey will mainly pursue a policy aiming at regional stability in cooperation with local and international actors. As such, Turkey established closer contact with the KRG and stated its readiness to assist the new Iraqi government under Haidar al-Abadi.

The new issue of *Insight Turkey* focuses on Turkish foreign policy perspectives and options as well as other regional developments such as the Russian policy towards Ukraine, the Iranian nuclear issue, and the recent elections in Iraq. In the Commentary section, Ertan Aydın analyzes the results of the presidential elections and argues that Turkey has matured politically though there are still challenges ahead. Malik Mufti touches on a contested topic both in Turkey and beyond, which revolves around the perception of Turkish foreign policy options in the Arab world. He concludes that there is no monolith and fixed reaction towards Turkey's regional reengagement. Murat Yeşiltaş looks at the critiques of Turkish foreign policy centered upon the Islamist ideology, geopolitical codes, and the lack of capacity in foreign policy. Erhan İçener and David Phinnemore analyze the reasons for the frustration and pessimism regarding Turkey – EU relations. Ian Morrison's critical contribution focuses on crisis and governance of religious pluralism in Europe.

Articles in this issue are products of long-term research and critical thinking. Joerg Baudner and Zuhail Mert Uzuner, in their contributions, evaluate Turkey's foreign policy on practical and discursive levels; Baudner reflects on the main changes in Turkey's positions with special reference to regional policies; Uzuner demonstrates that Turkey promotes a global consensus based on cosmopolitanism and multilateralism; and Nurullah Ardiç skillfully provides a discourse analysis on the concept of civilization arguing that this concept has increasingly been employed in Turkish foreign policy.

We hope that you will enjoy reading the current issue. ■