

An Examination of Turkey's Relations with Europe and the United States

A Monograph

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Abstract

An Examination of Turkey's Relations with Europe and the United States, by LTC Travis A. Jacobs, US Army, 48 pages.

In 2023, Turkey will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the republic. The celebration of that anniversary may be fraught with ambiguity as Turkey searches for a stable sense of itself in a turbulent region and world. Turkey's inability integrate into Western political and economic institutions threaten to fracture Turkey's relations with Europe and the United States. Three key factors contribute to contemporary Turkish identity: its Ottoman legacy, the secular Kemalist tradition, and its pursuit of a Western identity. Today, all three of these characteristics compete to shape Turkish domestic and foreign policy. Turkey's legacy of military, political, and economic cooperation with Europe and the United States has long roots, but it does not guarantee a future of stable relations. Turkey's inability to meet the criteria for EU membership does not diminish its role in NATO or as a regional security partner, but it suggests ambivalence between the idea of Europe and Turkish identity. It is incumbent on NATO and the United States to understand how Turks view themselves in the region and in the world. Despite political disputes, military-to-military engagement and security cooperation assure Turkey of the strength of the transatlantic alliance. This monograph examines the factors that contribute to contemporary Turkish identity and their worldview. These factors include: Turkey's Ottoman heritage, the republic's fight for independence, its diplomacy through conflict, its role in the containment of communism, and its pivotal role in Western security institutions. This monograph also provides insight into current Turkish perceptions of Europe and the United States.

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Acronyms

AKP	Justice and Development Party
CAP	Center for American Progress
CFR	Council on Foreign Relations
CHP	Republican People's Party
CUP	Committee of Union and Progress
EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union
HDP	People's Democratic Party
IRBM	Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missile
MHP	Nationalist's Movement Party
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NSC	National Security Council
OEEC	Organization for European Economic Cooperation
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
YPG	People's Protection Units

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Introduction

In 2023 Turkey will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the republic. The celebration of that anniversary may be fraught with ambiguity as Turkey searches for a stable sense of itself in a turbulent region and turbulent world. Turbulence and Turkey's inability to fully integrate into European political and economic institutions threaten to fracture Turkey's relations with Europe and the United States.

Three key factors contribute to contemporary Turkish identity: its Ottoman legacy, the secular Kemalist tradition, and its pursuit of a Western identity. Today, all three of these characteristics compete to shape Turkish domestic and foreign policy. Turkey's legacy of military, political, and economic cooperation with Europe and the United States has long roots, but it does not guarantee a future of stable relations. In 2004 and 2007, Turkey was excluded from successive rounds of EU expansion, while former Warsaw Pact states were admitted. Perceived inconsistencies in EU expansion turned Turkey's enthusiasm for EU admission into ambivalence between the idea of Europe and Turkish identity.

Turkey hearkened to its Ottoman legacy in 2003 when it pursued a foreign policy aimed at greater Turkish influence throughout the Middle East region. Turkey's Middle East foreign policy failed in the wake of the Arab Spring movements of 2011 and now Turkey has few allies in the region. Today, Turkey pursues a much more pragmatic foreign policy. Turkey's NATO membership becomes more valuable as President Erdogan struggles to assert Turkish influence in the Middle East and EU accession remains unlikely. It is incumbent on NATO and the United States to understand how Turks view themselves in the region and in the world. Despite political disputes, military-to-military engagement and security cooperation assure Turkey of the strength of the transatlantic alliance.

This monograph examines the factors that contribute to contemporary Turkish identity and their worldview. These factors include: Turkey's Ottoman heritage, the republic's fight for independence, its diplomacy through conflict, its role in the containment of communism, and its

pivotal role in Western security institutions. This monograph also provides insight into current Turkish perceptions of Europe and the United States.

Literature Review

This review of literature on Ottoman and Turkish history are sources used within this monograph and useful sources for further research. The sources are arranged into the following categories: the period of Ottoman decline, the general history of Turkey, the Cold War era, and the impact of Erdogan.

The Ottoman Heritage

In the Cold War, many Western scholars treated the Ottoman legacy as a historical shackle to be thrown off as Turkey emerged as an exemplar of secular modernization. However, in recent decades the Ottoman legacy has been recast by some Turkish politicians no longer satisfied with treating the past as an unsuccessful prelude to the Turkish Republic. Bernard Lewis examined the Ottoman reaction to western influence beginning in the 16th century in *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*.¹ Lewis provided valuable analysis of the Ottoman reaction to western culture and its impact on modernization and revolution. Lewis did not provide in depth analysis on the Ottoman reaction to European diplomacy and the impact of conflict in the Near East. Lord Kinross's, *Atatürk: The Rebirth of a Nation*, analyzed Turkish modernization from the perspective of the Young Turk revolution and the Turkish military campaigns lead by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.² Kinross provided valuable analysis of Atatürk's struggle for independence and pursuit of secular Turkish identity. Kinross concluded his analysis in 1938 with the death of *Atatürk* but did not adequately address the future challenges of a multi-party Turkish democracy.

¹ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

² Lord Kinross, *Atatürk: The Rebirth of a Nation* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1964).

Modern Turkish History

Writers of modern Turkish history tend to begin their analysis in the period of Ottoman decline in the 17th and 18th centuries when the empire began losing territory to European armies. They place special emphasis on the ‘Eastern Question’ and Europe’s concerns over the balance of power in the Near East and transition to Turkish foreign policy and domestic politics. William Hale took a realist approach to analyze Turkish foreign policy in *Turkish Foreign Policy since 1774*.³ Hale’s research is an essential source for understanding Turkish foreign policy in the context of great power competition. Hale analyzed Turkish foreign policy in the context of both World Wars, the Cold War and up to the twenty first century. Hale published three editions (2002, 2003, 2013) of *Turkish Foreign Policy since 1774*. Hale acknowledged that portions of the book, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, were shortened to accommodate newer material. The post-Cold War sections in the 2013 edition are very brief. While Hale’s general history focused on Turkey’s security policies, Erik Zürcher’s, *Turkey: A Modern History*, focused on a general history of Turkey’s domestic policy.⁴ Zürcher analyzed late-Ottoman era reform, Nationalist politics, democratization of the republic, and the domestic policies of the Justice and Development Party. Zürcher provided valuable insight into Turkey’s struggle to implement multi-party political system.

The Cold War Era

In the Cold War, Turkey became part of a long-term western security alliance which distinguished itself from many other states in the Black Sea region and the Middle East. With a shared threat of Soviet expansion, Turkey and the United States developed a long-term program for Turkish economic and industrial development. Bruce R. Kuniholm provided readers with a thorough understanding of early American Cold War policy toward the Near and Middle East in

³ William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy Since 1774*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2012).

⁴ Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 4th ed. (New York: I.B.Tauris, 2017).

his 1980 work *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey, and Greece*⁵. Kuniholm grouped Iran, Turkey, and Greece into a group of buffer states against Soviet expansion called the Northern Tier. Kuniholm referenced key documents from the Joint Chiefs of Staff and The US State Department that informed President Truman's containment policy in Turkey and Greece. Kuniholm's analysis ended at 1947 and did not assess President Truman's Point Four program—the American commitment of modernization assistance in underdeveloped nations. Begum Adalet's 2018 work, *Hotels and Highways: The Construction of Modernization Theory in Cold War Turkey*, analyzed the implementation and effectiveness of the Point Four Program.⁶ The theory of modernization in Turkey was that aid and technical expertise would modernize the nation so capitalism could flourish. Turkey, as a test site for modernization, would become a model ally of the U.S., and modernization would appeal to its Arab neighbors. Adalet's analysis revealed a large gap in theory and practice, where modernization efforts did not produce the desired effect in Turkey. Much of Adalet's analysis focused on the technical aspects of modernization theory, including optimism indexes, polling data, and media research.

The Erdogan Era

Turkey's integration into NATO did not guarantee its full integration into Western economic and political institutions. As such, Turkey pursued a foreign policy in 2003, focused on pursuing greater Turkish influence throughout the Middle East. Also during this time, Turkey's exclusion from EU expansion contributed to rising populist resentment for the EU accession process. Aaron Stein's 2014 study titled *Turkey's New Foreign Policy: Davutoğlu, the AKP and the Pursuit of Regional Order* explored Turkey's regional foreign policy after the collapse of the

⁵ Bruce R. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey, and Greece* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980).

⁶ Begüm Adalet, *Hotels and Highways: The Construction of Modernization Theory in Cold War Turkey* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018).

Soviet Union.⁷ Stein's analysis focused on the AKP's 'strategic depth' foreign policy. The AKP believed that Turkey limited its diplomatic potential by appealing too much to western powers and should expand Turkish power and influence throughout the Middle East. Stein's arranged his analysis by the AKP's regional approach: first, the policy of zero problems with any neighbors, second, consolidate power and influence to become a regional hegemon, and third, the disastrous consequences of the failed foreign policy. Stein concluded that Turkey isolated itself in the region, rather than uniting it. He did not assess the future of Turkey's foreign policy following strategic depth. Kemal Kirisci's *2018 Turkey and the West: Fault Lines in a Troubled Alliance* is a study of contemporary issues surrounding Turkey's transatlantic alliance.⁸ Kirisci identified waning Turkish democracy, the Syrian conflict, uncertain EU membership, and declining western economic integration as major fault lines in the Turkish-Transatlantic Alliance. Given that Turkey has been a part of the liberal international order for over seven decades, Kirisci asserted that Turkey will probably seek to improve relations with the West. While Kirisci's assertion is valid, western states may not seek improved relations with Turkey if the political process and human rights do not improve.

The Ottoman Legacy

The first several centuries after the arrival of Central Asian Turkish tribes into Anatolia witnessed their conversion to Islam and the expansion of territory under their control. From the 15th -17th centuries, Ottoman power expanded from the Balkans into East Central Europe. The end of this expansion came in 1699. Thereafter, both the Austrian (Hapsburg) and Russian (Romanov) empires began to counter Ottoman expansion.

⁷ Aaron Stein, *Turkey's New Foreign Policy: Davutoğlu, the AKP and the Pursuit of Regional Order* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015).

⁸ Kemal Kirisci, *Turkey and the West: Fault Lines in a Troubled Alliance* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2017).

In a broad sense the Austrian Empire and Russian Empire prevented the late Ottoman Empire from gaining new territory and holding much of its existing European territory. As the Ottoman Empire was driven out of Europe from the 17th–19th centuries it was forced to enter peace treaties with great powers. After nearly two decades of war in central Europe, which included failed sieges of Vienna, the Ottoman Empire was forced to accept military defeat and negotiate with a European great power.

The nature of conflict in the Near East between the Ottomans and European powers should not be broadly categorized as an eastern reaction to modernity or as a clash of civilizations. These factors do not account for external drivers of conflict. In Bosnia, for instance, Muslim and Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire lived together peacefully in the 16th and 17th centuries. However, as Svein Monnesland explained:

Earlier in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, wars in Bosnia were fought between Austria and the Ottomans. Armed conflicts were imposed from the outside. Not the civilizational fault lines but the politics of the Great Powers made Bosnia a battleground. Due to the religious cleavages in Bosnia, as a borderland between East and West, the forces behind the wars could use these differences for instrumental purposes and for mobilizing their potential forces.⁹

In 1699 Sultan Mustafa II (r. 1695-1703) was forced into a peace treaty with the Hapsburg monarchy. The Treaty of Carlowitz was an early instance where an Ottoman sultan had to recognize an outside power and rival as an equal. Eighteenth and nineteenth century ideologies, especially nationalism, coupled with growing disparities between Ottoman society and some European states contributed to undermining the legitimacy of the Ottoman sultan.

Ottoman officials were unfamiliar with European diplomatic practices as they negotiated peace terms with another great power. Lewis explained, “In negotiating the Treaty of Carlowitz, the Ottomans had, for the first time, to resort to that strange art we call diplomacy, by which they

⁹ Svein Monnesland, ed., *The Borders of Islam: Exploring Samuel Huntington's Faultlines, from Al-Andalus to the Virtual Ummah* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 220.

tried, through political means, to modify, or even reduce the results of the military outcome.¹⁰

The Ottoman Empire complemented military might with diplomacy as its influence in central Europe waned. Diplomacy, not military might or the sultan's power, was an essential feature of preserving the empire in the 18th and 19th century.

The Eastern Question

As Ottoman influence receded in the Balkans, the region gradually became an epicenter of great power competition which threatened the balance of power in Europe. As such, the European diplomatic system had to respond to preserve peace on the continent and prevent any other empire from becoming a regional hegemon in the Near East. Initially, Europe's great powers were reluctant to address the emerging issues of the Near East in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars. M. S. Anderson described how European affairs were more pressing than Ottoman affairs, "Its problems occupied only a very secondary place in the minds of the statesmen who met at Vienna in October 1814 to redraw Europe's frontiers and provide new guarantees of European peace."¹¹ Europe's great powers were not compelled to address the looming Eastern Question during the Congress of Vienna, despite Russia's expansion into the Black Sea and Balkans following their victory in the 1768-74 war with the Ottomans.¹²

The Ottomans made significant territorial and diplomatic concessions following their defeat in the 1768-74 war with Russia. Russian expansion in the Black Sea and Balkans threatened the balance of power in the region and underscored the Eastern Question for Europe's

¹⁰ Lewis, *What Went Wrong*, 19.

¹¹ M. S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923* (London: Macmillan, 1966), 47.

¹² Professor of Turkish Studies, Erik J. Zürcher, defined 'The Eastern Question' as the question of how to satisfy competing Balkan nationalisms and the imperialist ambitions of the great powers without causing the destruction of the Ottoman Empire, or, if this destruction was inevitable (something of which the majority of European statesmen were convinced), to dismember it without upsetting the balance of power in Europe and causing a general war. Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 4th ed. (New York: I.B.Tauris, 2017), 32.

great powers. The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca Treaty in 1774 gave Russia freedom of navigation in the Black Sea, passage through the Turkish Straits for merchant vessels, and access to ports on the Western Black Sea. Russia's diplomatic gains included the right to build an Orthodox church in Istanbul, earned it the ambiguous title as protector of Orthodox Christians throughout the Ottoman Empire, and secured Crimea's independence from the Ottoman Empire.¹³

The thought of Muslims in Crimea under Orthodox Russian rule was unacceptable for Sultan Abdul Hamid I (r. 1773-1789). This dilemma caused him to reconsider the sultan's authority to rule over the Muslim *umma*. Hugh Kennedy explained, "In Ottoman times it seems to have been generally accepted that the power and authority of the Ottoman sultan justified his taking of title caliph, but in doing so the force of the title was largely lost, subsumed in the wider rhetoric of Ottoman power."¹⁴ As sultan, Abdul Hamid I lacked the military might to resolve the dilemma in Crimea. However, he reasserted himself as caliph to represent a spiritual authority over the *umma*. Kennedy continued, "After this, the idea of the caliphate was increasingly developed by the Ottomans to allow them to claim a spiritual leadership of Muslims beyond their political borders. [The distinction] was essentially new to Muslim political thought but served useful purposes in the diplomacy of the time."¹⁵ As the balance of power between these empires shifted, religion played an increasing role in their respective identities.

In the remainder of the 19th century, Balkan affairs increasingly became a focal point for great power rivalry. By mid-century even Britain and France were drawn into closer association to the long-standing rivalry between Austria, the Ottoman Empire, and Russia. Britain and France were the only European powers to commit military forces to defend Ottoman territory against Russian expansion in the Crimean War of 1854-55. However, Prussia and Austria would take part

¹³ Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, xi.

¹⁴ Hugh Kennedy, *Caliphate: The History of an Idea* (New York: Basic Books, 2016), 254.

¹⁵ Kennedy, *Caliphate*, 254.

in the ensuing peace process. At the Paris Peace Treaty of 1856, European diplomats agreed the Ottoman Empire would join the Concert of Europe to deter further Russian expansion. Anderson explained, “In the future any state in conflict with the Ottoman Empire was to seek the mediation of a third power before resorting to arms. The sultan for his part was to give guarantees of good treatment to his Christian subjects.”¹⁶ The decisions at the Paris Peace Treaty preserved Ottoman independence in the Balkans and Black Sea region and overturned the Ottoman concessions to Russia contained in the 1774 Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca. The Paris Peace Treaty excluded all nations’ warships and coastal defenses from the Black Sea, it opened the Black Sea to any merchant vessels, and stipulated that no nation could proclaim themselves as the sole protector of the Ottoman Empire’s subjects. The Treaty of Paris restored power to a financially and militarily weak Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans, however, could not contain the spread of Balkan nationalism and prevent various uprisings in the region from developing into a running crisis.

The Balkans were at the very center of the Eastern Question in the late 19th century. The Concert of Europe lacked a consistent Balkans policy to help the Ottoman’s stabilize the region. Further, European diplomatic efforts did little to settle competing interests in the Balkans. Negotiations on how to partition the Balkans and preserve Europe’s interests in the region failed, shifting and fracturing alliances.¹⁷ A series of Balkan revolts beginning in 1874, followed by the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-78, brought the Eastern Question to the forefront of Europe’s great powers once again. Russia’s victory over the Ottomans threatened the balance of power in the Balkans.

The Congress of Berlin assembled in June 1878 to prevent Russia from dictating the terms of peace with the Ottomans unilaterally. However, the Congress of Berlin faced a dilemma

¹⁶ Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, 143.

¹⁷ On European diplomacy and conflict surrounding the Balkans crisis in the late 19th century, see M. S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question: 1774-1923* (London: Macillian, 1966).

Hale described as, “None of the western powers wished to preserve the Ottoman Empire unaltered, but Britain opposed any settlement which would leave Russia in a strong position to take over the straits. With Germany now emerging as an important power-broker, Bismarck also wished to prevent a war between Russia and Austria over the Balkans.”¹⁸ The decisions made at Berlin significantly weakened Ottoman authority over Christian subjects in the Balkans and strengthened nationalistic movements. By the 20th century nationalism spread throughout the Ottoman Arab territories, as well.¹⁹ Anderson described the implications of nationalism within the empire, “Thus in the years before 1914 it was not merely the subject-peoples of the empire, the Arabs, Armenians, Slavs and to some extent Albanians, who were turning their backs on the Ottoman past. The ruling race itself was adopting new political ideas and models. The disintegration of the empire, held together merely by a tenuous feeling of loyalty to the dynasty and by physical force, was certain to continue.”²⁰

The emergence of Turkish nationalism, initiated by mid-grade officers within the Ottoman army, eventually gave rise to the revolutionary Young Turk movement. The European reaction to the Young Turk movement was varied. The Young Ottomans compelled Sultan Abdul Hamid II (r. 1876-1909) to promulgate an Ottoman Constitution in 1876 and hold parliamentary elections. Minority subjects throughout the empire were hopeful that their delegates would find a voice in Ottoman politics. The British reaction to this prospect was initially optimistic. William Miller explained, “Even the cautious British, which might have been expected to regard with scepticism the results of this sudden conversion of an Oriental autocracy into a constitutional monarchy, hastened to prophesy, through the medium of [British Foreign Secretary] Sir Edward

¹⁸ Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, 21.

¹⁹ On Arab and Middle Eastern history, see Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991).

²⁰ Anderson, *Eastern Question*, 278.

Grey, that “the Macedonian question and others of a similar character will entirely disappear.”²¹ British optimism quickly turned to skepticism. The results of the 1908 parliamentary elections revealed the Young Turks never intended for the empire’s minority subjects to play a significant role in government. Miller continued, “Efforts were made to gerrymander the constituencies so as to favor the [Muslim] element, and the majority of the deputies elected [280 in total] were [Muslim]; but 18 Greeks, 4 Bulgars, 2 Serbs, 2 Jews, and 2 Armenians sat in the legislature.”²² The Young Turks political practices did little to help their diplomatic efforts in the years just before World War One.

The Young Turks knew that Turkey needed a strong ally to prevent Europe’s great powers from partitioning the empire, but Sultan Abdul Hamid II opted for neutrality. Young Turk leaders lacked an appreciation for the balance of power in 20th century Europe and tried to form an alliance with many of the great powers, “During October 1908 they made approaches to the British, French, Germans, and Austrians, although this blunderbuss approach lacked logic, given the mutual hostilities of the European states,” Hale wrote, “Hence, their hopes were disappointed.”²³

Turkish Nationalists hedged against the greatest threat to Turkish territory and allied with their rival Austro-Hungary and Germany in World War I. Sean McMeekin explained the Nationalists’ logic, “The decision by Turkish statesmen to enter the war in 1914 is best understood as a last gasp effort to stave off decline and partition by harnessing German might against the more dangerous powers with designs on Ottoman territory—Russia, Britain, and

²¹ William Miller, *The Ottoman Empire, 1801-1913* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1913), 476.

²² Miller, *The Ottoman Empire*, 479.

²³ Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, 24.

France (in roughly that order).”²⁴ The Turkish Nationalists could have opted for neutrality in WWI, but they knew their defense forces were weak. They risked entering the war on the wrong side as opposed to remaining neutral and being partitioned by the war’s victors.

Diplomacy under Atatürk and İnönü

The partitioning of the Ottoman Empire after the defeat of the Central Powers in WWI was complicated by two factors that the victorious Allies did not account for. The first was the strength and resolve of the Turkish Nationalist movement, emboldened by Mustafa Kemal’s own sense of self-determination. The second was the Russian Revolution, which drastically altered the course of Turkish foreign relations with their former rival. Despite these advantages, the Ottoman Empire and rising Nationalist movement had to confront the harsh terms of the armistice, a lengthy peace settlement, and finally resolve the issue of a powerless sultanate.

The Allies and the Ottoman Empire signed the Armistice of Mudros on October 30, 1918. The terms of the armistice were deliberately vague to allow the Allies to interpret them as they saw fit. The armistice stipulated the Ottoman Empire would: demobilize its army, surrender its war ships, open the Turkish Straits, and allow the Allies to occupy the forts that protected the critical waterways. Sean McMeekin described the full extent of the settlement, “Individually, the clauses of the Mudros armistice might have sounded reasonable. Collectively, they amounted to a thoroughgoing dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. Mudros effectively reduced the Ottoman Empire to its Anatolian rump, even if this was not yet enshrined in a formal treaty.”²⁵ The ratification of a formal peace treaty occurred nearly eight months into the arduous Paris Peace Talks, with the signing of the Treaty of Sevres on August 10, 1920. Three of Sultan Mehmed Vahdettin’s (r.1918-1922) Ottoman statesmen signed the Treaty of Sevres. The peace terms were

²⁴ Sean McMeekin, *The Ottoman Endgame: War, Revolution, and the Making of the Modern Middle East, 1908-1923* (New York: Penguin Press, 2015), 495.

²⁵ McMeekin, *Ottoman Endgame*, 409-10.

much harsher than armistice terms. Turkey gave control of the straits to an international commission and warships of all nations could transit them freely. An Armenian state, with access to the Black Sea, was to be created within Anatolia. All Arab lands of the Ottoman Empire were surrendered. The islands of Imbros and Tendos in the Aegean Sea were given to Greece and Greece was to administer Smyrna (now Izmir). In addition to territorial losses, Ottoman finances were placed under the control of Britain, France, and Italy.²⁶ The peace talks and resulting treaty emboldened Mustafa Kemal and the Turkish Nationalist movement.

The Paris Peace Talks were an early example of substantive U.S. diplomacy toward the Ottoman Empire. Before departing for Paris, US President Woodrow Wilson presented Congress with his peace program for Europe on January 8, 1918. In his renowned “Fourteen Points” address President Wilson proclaimed,

What we demand in this war... is nothing peculiar to ourselves. It is that the world be made fit and safe to live in; and particularly that it be made safe for every peace-loving nation which, like our own, wishes to live its own life, determine its own institutions, be assured of justice and fair dealings by the other peoples of the world as against force and selfish aggression.”²⁷

The concept of self-determination and the formation of a League of Nations were central to President Wilson’s peace program. Margaret Macmillan described President Wilson’s intent for the League of Nations: “At the heart of Wilson’s vision was a League of Nations to provide the collective security that, in a well-run civil society, was provided by the government, its laws, its courts and its police.”²⁸ Turkish Nationalists believed that President Wilson abandoned the notion of self-determination and his fourteen points, favoring, instead, a League of Nations solution for

²⁶ Anderson, *Eastern Question*, 368.

²⁷ “Woodrow Wilson: Address to a Joint Session of Congress on the Conditions of Peace,” The American Presidency Project, accessed February 12, 2019, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-joint-session-congress-the-conditions-peace-the-fourteen-points>.

²⁸ Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months That Changed the World* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2003), 13.

peace in Europe. George Herring described his rationale, “Committed above all to establishing a workable League of Nations, Wilson justified concessions on other issues to attain that goal. He also hoped that a strong League in time would modify the harsh terms of the treaty and resolve issues left unsettled.”²⁹ Mustafa Kemal did not believe President Wilson’s peace plan represented Turkish interests, but rather the interests of the empire’s Christian minority. Mustafa Kemal objected to League of Nations approach in a *New York Times* article, published on May 4, 1920: “Have President Wilson’s Fourteen Points Survived?...Why was the principle of self-determination applied to the Armenians and Greeks in Turkey and not to the Turks? Mr. Wilson’s note on the Turkish terms the Pasha described as a ‘willful intent to deceive or a distressing display of ignorance to the situation.’”³⁰ Kemal warned the delegates in Paris that the Turkish Nationalists were unlikely to accept their peace terms, particularly as the borders as defined by the Mudros armistice were unacceptable. Kemal was true to his word. In Istanbul, Sultan Mehmed Vahdettin accepted the terms of the Treaty of Sevres. In Ankara, however, Kemal and the fledgling Nationalist government adamantly rejected the treaty.

While traveling to the Paris Peace Talks, President Wilson shared his personal doubts about his Fourteen Points with one his delegates. Macmillan continued, “The whole world was turning to the United States but, he went on, they both knew that such great problems could not be fixed at once.”³¹ President Wilson’s League of Nations concept faced fierce opposition in the Republican-controlled U.S. Senate. By excluding Republicans from his delegation at the talks, President Wilson went to Paris at odds with the Senate over his peace plan for Europe. “He had done little during the war to build a bipartisan coalition behind his proposals. His appeal for the

²⁹ George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776*. The Oxford History of the United States (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 423.

³⁰ Paul Williams, “Kemal Presents Nationalist Views,” *New York Times*, May 4, 1920.

³¹ MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, 15.

election of a Democratic Congress in 1918 gave them the opening they readily exploited,” Herring observed, “by the time Wilson returned home, the lines had formed.”³² The President Wilson’s and his delegation’s work in Paris in 1919 was highly criticized in Washington and in US newspapers. Ultimately, the Republican-majority Senate voted down the League of Nations proposal as part of the peace plan President Wilson submitted. The idea of a US mandate for Ottoman territory also developed during the Paris Peace Talks. President Wilson was prepared to present Congress with a proposal for a US mandate to protect the vulnerable Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. The enthusiasm for a US mandate, however, did not carry over from the peace talks. There was little domestic interest in committing US forces to occupy the Ottoman Empire, regardless of how noble the cause was, and the idea of a mandate was quickly dismissed.

Turkish Nationalists needed a strong ally to back their revolution and to finance their Nationalist army. Since Vladimir Lenin and the Bolsheviks dropped their claims on Ottoman territory, Kemal looked to Russia for support. Halil Karaveli described the similarities between the Russian and Turkish revolutions and Kemal’s willingness to accept Russian aid: “The reaction in Russia to what was described as the ‘Turkish Revolution’ was highly favourable. It was interpreted as a counterpart and extension into the Muslim world of the Russian Revolution...Kemal had no compunction in opportunistically appealing to different ideological constituencies when political expediency was required.”³³ Kemal’s ties with the Bolsheviks complicated the Treaty of Sevres and forced the Allies to reconsider their ambitious plans to partition Anatolia. Hale wrote, “The only *entente* state with a clear national and territorial interest in Anatolia was Greece, but in the long run Greece was too weak to defeat the Turks without effective military support from Britain, which was not forthcoming.”³⁴ Entering into a formal

³² Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 427-28.

³³ Halil Karaveli, *Why Turkey Is Authoritarian: From Atatürk to Erdogan* (London: Pluto Press, 2018), 22.

³⁴ Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, 34-35.

friendship treaty with the Soviets in March of 1921 provided Kemal the impetus to renegotiate the terms of the Treaty of Sevres with European powers. Hale explained, “It [Treaty of Friendship] was of undoubted value to the Kemalists, since it strengthened their material resources, freed them to concentrate on their military efforts and helped to convince the entente powers that they would be a permanent force to be reckoned with.”³⁵ Lenin hoped the Treaty of Friendship and financial backing of Kemal’s movement would help spread communist ideology throughout the Nationalist movement. Kemal believed communism was a direct threat to his Nationalist movement. Subsequently, the Turkish Communist Party leadership in Anatolia was murdered and tossed into the Black Sea. Kemal then formed his own, more complaisant Communist Party within the Grand National Assembly. At this point Kemal and his Nationalist government in Ankara were bold enough and viable enough to conduct middle power diplomacy with European powers, even while Sultan Mehmed VI (r.1918-1922) and his Ottoman government remained in Istanbul.

Turkish Nationalists did not recognize the terms of the Treaty of Sevres. They readily accepted surrender of Arab territories to British and French mandates but were unyielding on other terms. They did not accept Turkish territorial losses in Anatolia, especially to the Greeks, would not assume all of the Ottoman Empire’s foreign debt, and did not agree with the administrative terms of the Turkish Straits.

The Greeks made additional claims on Ottoman territory following the Treaty of Sevres and occupied Thrace, Smyrna and Western Anatolia. Turkish Nationalists actively resisted the Greek occupation of Ottoman territory, starting the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1922. The ethnic violence, waged by both sides, and the destruction of infrastructure, devastated Anatolia.³⁶

³⁵ Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, 37.

³⁶ On the Greco-Turkish war, see Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. 2: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

Inevitably, the terms of the armistice following the Greco-Turkish War prompted a revision of the Treaty of Sevres. Britain, France, and Greece initiated peace negotiations with the Turks in November 1922 at Lausanne, Switzerland. The Soviet Union, Ukraine, Georgia, Romania, and Bulgaria were invited to negotiate their interests.³⁷ Mustafa Kemal abolished the Ottoman sultanate the day prior to the start of negotiations to ensure Nationalist were the only Turkish voice at the conference. Turkish Nationalist were eager to end Greek claims on Thrace and Anatolia, renegotiate for greater control of the Turkish Straits, and rid themselves of Ottoman foreign debt.

The Turkish delegates accomplished an impressive diplomatic feat at Lausanne through their assertiveness and sheer determination. The new treaty established the Turkish border and stipulated:

General supervisory powers were given to a straits commission under the League of Nations, and the straits area was to be demilitarized after completion of the Allied withdrawal. Turkey was to hold the presidency of the commission. Turkey, however, assumed [only] 40 percent of the Ottoman debt, the remainder being apportioned among other former Ottoman territories. The Treaty of Lausanne reaffirmed the equality of Muslim and non-Muslim Turkish nationals. Turkey and Greece arranged a mandatory exchange of their respective ethnic Greek and Turkish minorities.³⁸

The compulsory population exchange between Greece and Turkey after Lausanne was incredibly difficult, but it established a largely-Turkish population within defined borders. This allowed Kemal to pursue sweeping domestic and social reform.³⁹

The Republic of Turkey was founded in 1923, less than five years after the Ottoman Empire surrendered to the Allies in World War I. By 1924 the Allied occupiers, by force of arms,

³⁷ Zurcher, *A Modern History*, 161.

³⁸ Helen Chapin Metz, ed., *Turkey: A Country Study*, 5th ed. (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1996), 36.

³⁹ On the ratification of the Treaty of Lausanne and the impact of Greek-Turkish population exchanges, see Renee Hirschon, ed., *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003).

were driven out of an independent Turkey and the Ottoman caliphate and sultanate were abolished. Between 1923 and 1940 Turkey pursued a peaceful foreign policy to focus on domestic issues. Lord Kinross described Kemal's foreign policy during this period, "Peaceful co-existence, 'Peace at home and peace abroad', were Kemal's watchwords. The Turks were the friends of all civilized nations. The hatchets of the past, with its lust for conquest, were buried."⁴⁰ To achieve his peaceful foreign policy, Kemal entered into multiple peace and non-aggression pacts with Turkey's neighbors in the mid-1920s and 1930s including: the Balkan states; the Soviets; and a combined pact with Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan. In 1932 Turkey was admitted into the League of Nations, thus solidifying its diplomatic standing.

With the prospect of another massive conflict in Europe, signaled by the rise of fascism in Germany and Italy, Kemal anxiously initiated a conference to renegotiate the Treaty of Lausanne terms regarding the Turkish Straits. A convention of ten nations, Bulgaria, France, Great Britain, Australia, Greece, Japan, Romania, Turkey, the USSR, and Yugoslavia met in Montreux, Switzerland, in June 1936 to draft the Convention Regarding the Regime of Straits. The articles of the convention addressed merchant vessels, warships, aircraft, and general provisions for the administration and defense of the Turkish Straits. The Montreux Convention restored Turkey's sovereign right to defend and administer the straits.⁴¹

The Republic of Turkey passed through a critical formative period between the two world wars. Successful compromises at Lausanne and Montreux demonstrated the viability and diplomatic acumen of the new Turkish republic. A peaceful foreign policy allowed Kemal to carry out sweeping domestic change, to transition from an Islamic caliphate to a secularize the Turkish population under one-party republic, and to foster peace throughout the region. Turkey

⁴⁰ Lord Kinross, *Atatürk: The Rebirth of a Nation* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1964), 458.

⁴¹ For the official text of the Montreux Convention refer to "1936 Convention Regarding the Regime of the Straits," Center for International Law, accessed March 25, 2019, <https://cil.nus.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/formidable/18/1936-Convention-Regarding-the-Regime-of-the-Straits.pdf>.

was a stable middle power by 1939, resting in the balance of great powers and able to determine its own fate in future conflicts. Its good relations with the major powers of Europe and control of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles were favorable circumstances for the young republic at the onset of the next world war.

None of Turkey's friendship treaties and regional security pacts could shield Turkey from external pressure to enter WWII on the either the Allied or German side of the conflict. While Kemal's focus during the early decades of the Republic remained on domestic reform, little progress was made to modernize Turkey's military. With Kemal's passing in 1938, Ismet İnönü was elected President of Turkey. İnönü, head of Turkey's delegation at the Lausanne Peace Conference and former Turkish Prime Minister, pursued a peaceful foreign policy at the beginning of WWII and remained neutral in the conflict until the last possible moment. Turkey's neutrality in the war was diplomatically costly, but a far better alternative to entering the conflict on either side. Hale explained this dilemma: "Turkey's armed forces were too ill-equipped to hold off a counter-attack by either Germany or the Soviet Union effectively. Its political leaders were above all anxious to protect the security they had won in 1923. Turkey had practically nothing to gain and everything to lose by joining the war."⁴²

As a militarily weak middle power, it was a very calculated and difficult decision for Turkey to enter into a wartime agreement, particularly when Europe's great powers were shifting their own alliances. Helen Metz described the volatility of European alliances at the beginning of WWII: "The Nazi-Soviet nonaggression pact of August 1939 prompted Turkey to sign a treaty of mutual assistance with Britain and France in October. Hedging its bets, the government concluded a nonaggression treaty with Nazi Germany on June 18, 1941, just four days before the

⁴² Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, 56.

Axis invasion of the Soviet Union.”⁴³ Throughout the remaining years of the war Turkey resisted Allied pressure to intervene in the Balkans, to provide the Allies with basing rights for its air force, and to disregard the Montreux Convention by allowing Russian warships to pass unrestricted through the straits. However, the Yalta Conference of 1945 provided Turkey with a sobering sense of its own vulnerability if it remained neutral throughout the entire war. The prospect of remaining isolated after the war threatened Turkey’s hard-fought independence and social reform program. Hale explained how the prospect of joining the United Nations prompted Turkey to finally enter the war on the side of the Allies: “Meanwhile another decision taken at Yalta, to the effect that membership of the proposed United Nations would be restricted to those states that had joined the war on the Allied side before the end of February 1945 induced Turkey to take the formal step of declaring war on Germany and Japan on 23 February.”⁴⁴

Relations between the Turks and Soviets were tense immediately after World War II. In March 1945, the Soviets annulled the 1925 Treaty of Friendship with Turkey. The Soviets specified the only way to renew the treaty was for Turkey to return territory in northern Anatolia to Georgia and Armenia, permit the Soviets to build military bases in the Turkish Straits, allow Soviet warships unrestricted access to the straits, and for Turkey to close the straits to warships from non-Black Sea nations. Turkey could not amend the Montreux Convention bilaterally with Soviets and flatly rejected the Soviets’ demands on Turkish territory.⁴⁵ Stalin petitioned Winston Churchill and President Truman for military bases in the Turkish Straits in July 1945 at the Potsdam Conference. Winston Churchill and President Truman opposed Soviet bases and all three agreed to include the Turks in future discussions on the straits.

⁴³ Helen Metz, ed., *Turkey: A Country Study*, 5th ed. (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1996), 40.

⁴⁴ Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, 75.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 80.

While President İnönü's post-war security policy focused on the Soviet threat, his domestic policy focused on reforming Turkey's one-party political system. Committed to the democratic principles of the United Nations charter and to increase Turkey's appeal to the United States, President İnönü pursued a multi-party democracy. Simon Mayall provided a glimpse of civil-military relations in post-war Turkey, "In 1946 President İnönü consulted the military over the decision to allow the establishment of opposition parties, assuring them that a multiparty system would pose no threat to Atatürk's reforms and that the military would continue to be the custodian of the state."⁴⁶ The transition to a multi-party political system had long-term implications for the Turkish military. The military intervened in Turkish politics in 1960, 1971, and in 1980, not to establish permanent control of the government, but to prevent the republic from becoming authoritarian.⁴⁷

Navigating the Cold War

By 1946, US policy makers, much like Turkish policy makers, were anxious about Soviet ambitions for expansion. In February 1946, the US *Charge d' Affaires* in Moscow, George Kennan, provided U.S. policymakers with his detailed assessment of Soviet intentions. Kennan's "long telegram" had a tremendous impact on U.S. policy towards the Soviet Union. John Gaddis described the impact as, "Rarely in the course of diplomacy is it given to one individual to express with the compass of a single document, ideas of such force and persuasion that they immediately change the direction of a nation's foreign policy."⁴⁸ Kennan organized his detailed analysis into five distinct parts: the basic features of post-war Soviet outlook, background of the

⁴⁶ Simon V. Mayall, *Turkey: Thwarted Ambition* (Washington, DC: Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1997), 29.

⁴⁷ On the Turkish multi-party system and military coups, see Metin Heper and Jacob M. Landau, eds., *Political Parties and Democracy in Turkey* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1991).

⁴⁸ John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 19.

outlook, its projection in practical policy on official level, its projection on unofficial level, and practical deductions from the standpoint of US policy. Kennan asserted that attempts to rationalize or persuade the Soviet Union to alter its foreign policy were useless. The Soviet Union had to maintain the notion of a persistent, external threat to conceal its own internal insecurity. The Soviet government's greatest source of insecurity was Western political and economic ideals penetrating the Soviet Union and the consequences of its citizens learning about an advanced world outside its borders. For Kennan, Western ideals would expose the flaws of Soviet rule. Turkey, in Kennan's assessment, was the ideal target for Soviet expansion and the target of official and non-official subjugation. Regarding official Soviet policy implementation in Turkey he warned of the intent to, "Advance the official limits of Soviet power. For the moment, these efforts are restricted to certain neighboring points conceived of here as being of immediate strategic necessity, such as Northern Iran, Turkey, possibly Bornholm [Denmark]."⁴⁹ Using unofficial or "subterranean" means he warned the United States government that Turkey and Iran may be directly threatened: "Where individual governments stand in the path of Soviet purposes pressure will be brought for their removal from office. This can happen where governments directly oppose Soviet foreign policy aims."⁵⁰

Kennan's argument prompted the United States to change its "*quid pro quo*" foreign policy towards the Soviets to one of "patience and firmness." The new policy included the following changes: The United States would no longer conceal tensions with Russia. The United States would not make any concessions to Russia. It would defend nations against Russian expansion. The United States would strengthen its military and thoroughly consider financial support for countries threatened by Soviet expansion. Lastly, the United States would negotiate

⁴⁹ "George Kennan: Long Telegram, February 22, 1946," Wilson Center Digital Archive, accessed January 8, 2019, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116178.pdf>.

⁵⁰ Kennan, *Telegram*, 13.

with the Soviet Union for the purpose of exposing Soviet intentions to the United States and its allies.⁵¹ The Soviet Union's persistent pressure for concessions on the Turkish Straits would test the US policy of "patience and firmness" in the following year.

On March 18, 1946, the U.S. Ambassador to Turkey, Edwin Wilson, sent a telegram to the US Secretary of State, James Byrnes, and warned the secretary of Soviet intentions for Turkey, "[The] Soviet objective regarding Turkey as I have reported to Dept [US State Department] is to break present Turkish Government, install "friendly" government, resulting in closing Turkish gap in Soviet security belt from Baltic to Black Sea, giving USSR physical control of Straits and putting end to Western influence in Turkey. In short, domination of Turkey."⁵² Ambassador Wilson's assessment echoed Kennan's warning that the USSR would attempt to remove governments that oppose Soviet foreign policy.

On August 7, 1947 the Soviet Union sent Turkey an official letter demanding a greater Soviet presence in the Turkish Straits. Bruce Kuniholm summarized the most contentious points in Russia's bilateral attempt to control of the straits, "The fourth principle called for the establishment of a regime on the Straits under the competence of Turkey and the other Black Sea Powers. The fifth principle called for a joint Turco-Soviet system of defense for the Straits—a system which implicitly contained the idea of Soviet Bases."⁵³ Turkey rejected the demands on the basis that it would alter the Montreux Convention.

Soviet expansion in the Black Sea and Mediterranean threatened American interests in the Near and Middle East. The Truman Administration stationed additional naval forces in the Mediterranean and established policies in Greece and Turkey to confront the Soviet threat.

⁵¹ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 21.

⁵² "Edwin Wilson: Telegram to the Secretary of State, March 18, 1946," *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1946, Vol. 7., accessed March 28, 2019, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/>.

⁵³ Bruce Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey, and Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 360.

Kuniholm summarized the strategic situation in 1946, “By year’s end, the Mediterranean command would include one aircraft carrier, three cruisers, and eight destroyers, and the United States would be recognized [by the Soviets] as the dominant sea power in the Mediterranean. Iran, Turkey, and Greece constituted a bulwark which protected American interests in the Near and Middle East as a whole, the focal point of which was Middle East oil.”⁵⁴ The institutionalized presence of the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean became a Cold War feature of the US commitment to the region.

President Harry Truman addressed the US Congress on March 12, 1947, when he emphasized the strategic importance of Greece and Turkey. He proposed \$400 million dollars in military and economic assistance for the two nations to resist communist pressure. Greece, actively fighting Communist forces since 1945, would receive \$300 million in assistance, with the remainder going to Turkey. President Truman feared that if Greece surrendered to communist forces, Turkey would surrender next, and the Middle East would surely follow. Gaddis explained President Truman’s sense of urgency regarding Greece and Turkey, “What was new in 1947, was Great Britain’s abrupt notice of intent to end its own military and financial support of those countries, and the need that imposed for quick Congressional approval of aid to replace it.”⁵⁵ On May 9, 1947, Congress approved legislation for aid to Turkey and Greece.

On July 12, 1947, US and Turkish representatives signed an aid agreement in Ankara. The agreement for aid and technical assistance was a historically significant, albeit lesser known, part of the Cold War. With the agreement, the United States had an active policy for containment, almost one year before Congress appropriated any funds for European recovery. For Turkey, the agreement, signified the beginning of a long relationship with the United States, a relationship that would assure its sovereignty and its security. Hale emphasized the significance of the

⁵⁴ Kuniholm, *Origins of the Cold War*, 373-74.

⁵⁵ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 23.

agreement: “Turkey’s inclusion in Truman’s programme was a clear signal to the USSR that the USA was prepared to make a material rather than purely symbolic contribution to the defence of Turkey.”⁵⁶

In 1948 Turkey received Marshall Plan aid. Turkey, an original signatory to the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) convention, was one of the original sixteen European nations eligible for Marshall Plan aid. The OEEC member nations received loans and subsidies for modernization of agriculture, industry, economic institutions to promote a rapid recovery of the post-war European economy. Turkey received Marshall Plan aid, as part of the European Recovery Program, to increase industrial development and stimulate its economy. Turkey received farming equipment and technical assistance to mechanize agriculture production and increase food exports. Marshall Plan money also went towards massive road construction projects and machinery to improve Turkey’s textiles industry.⁵⁷

By 1949, the Turkish government sought more than Marshall Plan aid from the United States. Melvyn Leffler explained that, “President Ismet İnönü wanted a binding commitment either through a political defense pact or through a formal association of the military staffs. ‘We need assurances now that we would not be abandoned should Turkey be attacked,’” İnönü wrote Truman.”⁵⁸ Policy makers and defense officials, in 1949, did not agree on how to respond to President İnönü’s security concerns. The bi-lateral aid agreement, Marshall Plan aid, and military cooperation with the United States, put Turkey at greater odds with the Soviet Union. However, absent of an imminent threat of Soviet invasion, the United States pursued a cautious security policy with Turkey. Leffler continued:

⁵⁶ Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, 83.

⁵⁷ On the European Recovery Program and American aid to post-war Turkey, see Charles L. Mee, *The Marshall Plan: The Launching of the Pax Americana* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984).

⁵⁸ Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 289.

Policymakers were not eager to make new commitments to Turkey... Yet defense officials were more inclined than ever to use Turkey for the defense of the Middle East. Its willingness to fight the Russians continued to impress visitors from the Pentagon... [Secretary of State] Acheson wavered. He wanted to reap the strategic advantages without incurring new obligations or provoking the Soviets.⁵⁹

Turkish efforts to get the United States to provide additional grants for defense spending were unsuccessful. Instead, US policymakers preferred Marshall Plan aid for technical assistance for economic and agricultural development over direct funding for the Turkish military.

In underdeveloped Turkey, American diplomats, business owners, and political scientists tested modernization theory as part of Marshall Plan recovery. Through modernization efforts, American policymakers envisioned Turkey as, first, a model ally and, second, as an exporter of modernization and democracy throughout the Middle East. Begüm Adalet described the US policy for modernizing Turkey, “Turkey was an important site that enabled the simultaneous construction and validation of postwar developmental thought and practice. It was a venue for fact-gathering, theory development, and experimentation but one that could also paradoxically serve as a ready-made model for the world, especially for its neighbors across the Middle East.”⁶⁰

An important aspect of the Marshall Plan was to stabilize European economies and create overseas markets for American goods and services. Hotel mogul, Conrad Hilton, believed his hotels played a critical role in the containment of communism and modernization of underdeveloped nations. Adalet explained Hilton’s perspective, “The hotel, as Hilton and company envisioned it, was to be a strategic deployment in a broader ideological conflict with the Soviet Union, a conflict that was nonetheless fought out in material terms. Each hotel in his international chain, Hilton insisted was to be a first-hand laboratory where local and foreign tourists may inspect America and its ways at their leisure.”⁶¹

⁵⁹ Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, 289.

⁶⁰ Begüm Adalet, *Hotels and Highways: The Construction of Modernization Theory in Cold War Turkey* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), 3.

⁶¹ Adalet, *Hotels and Highways*, 1.

The US commitment to Turkey's modernization was much deeper than a luxury hotel. The long-term modernization program in Turkey included a massive highway construction project, agricultural equipment modernization, land reform, and development of the Turkish tourism industry. Modernization and development efforts had limited success in bringing about widespread economic prosperity. In 1957, the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) reviewed the progress of Turkey's economic development. Adalet cited the following factors the CFR identified as hindrances to modernization, "Problems such as fatalism, a short time horizon, submission to authority, and inability to cooperate as the culprits for the persistence of traditional patterns in the country."⁶² Despite the limited success of modernization efforts in Turkey, US policy helped foment Turkey's desire to institute democratic processes and belong to Western institutions.

In 1950, Turkey held its first democratic elections. The Republican Party, which ruled since the founding of the republic, was easily defeated by the Democratic Party which appealed to agricultural and industrial laborers. The newly elected Democratic Party continued Turkey's pursuit of inclusion in Western, collective security. The first and noble gesture was Turkey's contribution to United Nations forces at the beginning of the Korean War. Invoking collective defense, as Hale explained:

The new Democrat Party government led by Adnan Menderes announced the despatch of a Turkish brigade of 5,090 men...as a clear sign of its commitment to the western camp...[Menderes proclaimed,] 'If, today, we remain indifferent to the aggression against South Korea who, tomorrow, will come to our rescue when our mighty neighbor attacks us?'⁶³

In January 1951, General Dwight Eisenhower, the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, appealed to President Truman for Turkey's inclusion in NATO. He argued that Turkey

⁶² Adalet, *Hotels and Highways*, 46.

⁶³ Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, 85.

would play vital defensive role on the southern flank of a Soviet incursion into Central Europe. Convinced that Turkey could contribute to the collective security of Europe, the North Atlantic Council met in Lisbon in 1952 and accepted Turkey's full membership into the NATO alliance. "After six years, Turkish post-war policy had finally realized it's paramount objective." Hale wrote on the monumental occasion, "In retrospect, the process of transition to full membership of the Western alliance could be seen as Turkey's most important foreign policy change since the 1920s."⁶⁴

Following Turkey's accession into NATO, the Menderes government granted the United States access to several air bases, naval facilities, equipment storage sites, and listening sites across the country. An early test of Turkey's commitment to the NATO alliance came when President Eisenhower sought to station intermediate range nuclear weapons in Turkey. President Dwight Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles offered intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs) to the heads of NATO nations in December 1957 at a North Atlantic Council meeting. Nash described the Turkish enthusiasm for NATO missiles, "Prime Minister Adnan Menderes went out of his way to say that the IRBMs and other nuclear weapons should be stationed in as great numbers as possible in all NATO countries which [could] use them in an effective and satisfactory manner."⁶⁵

Some members of the Turkish General Staff did not share the Prime Minister's enthusiasm for the missiles, fearing they would provoke a confrontation with Russia. Not only were the missiles provocative, they were also obsolete. Submarine-launched Polaris missiles were operational in 1961, before the ground-launched missiles in Turkey became operational. These issues did not deter the Turkish Prime Minister from accepting NATO missiles. Nash continued,

⁶⁴ Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, 87.

⁶⁵ Philip Nash, *The Other Missiles of October: Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the Jupiters, 1957-1963* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 65.

“That the United States would shoulder most of the financial burden helped, as did the relatively authoritarian political system in Turkey: the ruling party had no coalition partners or powerful opposition to worry about and could accept IRBMs with relative impunity.”⁶⁶ Fifteen Jupiter missiles became fully operational near Izmir in June 1961, but by April 1962, the missiles would be dismantled to help bring a peaceful end to the Cuban missile crisis.

Turkey enjoyed the security and the powerful status the Jupiter missiles provided, but Premier Khrushchev detested their presence on Turkish soil. President Kennedy’s decision to remove the Jupiter missiles risked damaging US-Turkish relations. Nash summarized the Jupiter decision, “After all, fear for U.S. credibility lay at the root of Kennedy’s insistence that his Jupiter concession remain a secret. To be sure, credibility with Turkey and other allies had supplanted credibility toward the Soviet Union, but it is credibility that most influenced what decision was taken, in the first instance, and how the decision was carried out, in the second.”⁶⁷ Turkey proved early on that it valued NATO membership and was committed to make meaningful contributions to the collective security of the alliance.

Turkey never fully developed into the ally the United States hoped to model for the Middle East. Economic development and democratization proved to be a long-term endeavor, well-beyond the scope of the Marshall Plan. In the democratic elections of 1950, the Democratic Party harshly suppressed political opposition in its attempt to retain power. Halil Karaveli wrote, “After the 1950 election the Democratic Party embraced economic liberalism, but not, as it turned out, political liberalism, and in power became increasingly authoritarian.”⁶⁸ In the Kemalist tradition, the Turkish military was the guardian of the constitution. In May 1960, the Turkish military seized control of the government in a bloodless coup and dissolved the Democratic Party.

⁶⁶ Nash, *The Other Missiles of October*, 67.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 171.

⁶⁸ Halil Karaveli, *Why Turkey*, 109.

Prime Minister Menderes was tried for violating the constitution and hung. In 1960, Turkey failed to have a peaceful transition of power following a democratic election. This reinforced for the United States that the Turkish democratic process was not a ready model for Middle East nations to emulate.

Although US efforts to modernize Turkey's economy and strengthen its democratic processes were not as successful as envisioned, the early Cold War period was a formative time in the US-Turkey security alliance. Through close cooperation Turkey became a full member of NATO and developed into a vital ally in the containment of the Soviet Union. Between 1948 and 1964, US assistance to the Turkish military totaled \$2.3 billion.⁶⁹ Military to military cooperation remains the cornerstone of US-Turkish relations today. However, as the Turkish republic approaches its 100th anniversary in 2023, political and economic tensions reinforce the importance of the military alliance between the two nations.

For Western Europeans, economic integration, and later, economic and political integration, became increasingly central from the 1970s on. While Turkey was an early NATO member, it has always had more of an outsider's role respective the European Economic Community (EEC) and, since 1993, the European Union. When the EEC was primarily a Western European organization, this was understandable. Successive periods of EEC and EU expansion, however, brought the economic and political community closer to Turkey. The Turkish decision to invade and partition Cyprus in 1974 intensified Greco-Turkish friction, which would become more problematic when Greece joined the EEC in 1981. Ongoing Greco-Turkish frictions have complicated Turkey's relations with the European Union.

The EU Accession Process and Erdogan's Reforms

In 1987, Turkey started the formal accession process to join the European Economic Community. The formal process to integrate into Europe, as an equal economic, political, and

⁶⁹ Hale, *Turkey*, 257.

legal partner, has lasted over three decades. Successful accession into the EU would formalize Turkey as a European nation and bring it in line with the Copenhagen Criteria for legal, social and economic norms, preserving rule of law and human rights. Turkey's Justice and Development Party (AKP) and Recep Tayyip Erdogan rose to power during the time of EU enlargement.⁷⁰ The AKP's pursuit of EU membership influenced and altered Turkish political and social structure more dramatically than any event since the founding of the republic.

In 2002, Istanbul Mayor Erdogan and the AKP used EU accession as a platform to win general elections for the Prime Minister position and the parliamentary majority. The AKP came to power on the basis of moderate change, but eventually implemented sweeping change in civil-military relations and rule of law. Erik Zürcher described how the AKP leveraged EU accession to sway Turkish voters, "For the mass of the population, however, it was a more pragmatic desire for a better and more affluent lifestyle, but it meant that the AKP could now defend its own political agenda—bringing the state under control—by referring to the demands of the EU."⁷¹ Thirty-one years after submitting its first application for accession into the European Economic Community, Turkey is farther away than ever from acceptance into the European Union. In 2004, Hungary and Poland were admitted into the European Union and in 2007, Bulgaria and Romania were admitted. These four former Warsaw Pact states were admitted, while Turkey, a stalwart NATO ally remained excluded from EU expansion. The Turks perceived this as inconsistency in EU admission. Stable democratic institutions are criteria for EU admission. Military interventions in Turkish politics in 1960, 1971, and 1980, purges of government, and martial law caused the EEC and EU to question the stability of Turkey's democratic institutions.

⁷⁰ On Turkish politics in the 1980s and 1990s, see Metin Heper and Jacob M. Landau, eds., *Political Parties and Democracy in Turkey* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1991). Also see, Umit Cizre, *Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey: The Making of the Justice and Development Party* (London: Routledge, 2007).

⁷¹ Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 4th ed. (New York: I.B.Tauris, 2017), 340.

Prime Minister Erdogan sought to curb the power of the military to meet the criteria for EU accession and to advance his party's right-wing, Islamist agenda. Alan Macokvsky explained Turkish civil-military relations prior to Erdogan's reforms: "In a formal sense, the military exercises its influence through a constitutionally mandated body called the National Security Council (NSC). Under the chairmanship of the president of the republic, it consists of the top five military and top five civilian leaders. All-important security and foreign policy issues are reviewed, discussed, and usually decided by the NSC."⁷² The Turkish General Staff were in favor of EU accession, but were suspicious of Erdogan's Islamist agenda and the implications of reform.

National Security Council reform from 2002-06 was sweeping. Erdogan replaced a Turkish General as head of the NSC with a civilian appointee and placed the NSC under the deputy prime minister. Zürcher described how Erdogan's subjugation of the influential NSC altered the role of military advice, "The cabinet's legal obligation to act on its advice was dropped and its powerful secretariat lost its right to do research, collect information from all state organs at all levels, as well as to monitor the execution of its own recommendations."⁷³

Several important trends in the early 21st century threatened to rupture Turkey's long-standing alignment with Europe and the United States. First, Turkey approved the US-led invasion of Iraq, which stressed the traditional US-Turkish alignment. Second, successive rounds of EU expansion that excluded Turkey made it clear that inclusion in the transatlantic security alliance did not guarantee Turkey's inclusion in the European Union.

From 2004-2007, Turkey was excluded from EU enlargement designated for Balkans and Eastern European countries. Turkey's accession process was hindered by three significant factors

⁷² Alan O. Makovsky, "Turkey", in *The Pivotal States: A New Framework for U.S. Policy in the Developing World*, Robert S. Chase, Emily Hill, and Paul M. Kennedy, eds. (New York: W. W. Norton & Co Inc, 1999), 104.

⁷³ Zürcher, *A Modern History*, 340.

during that period. France and Germany, powerful voices in the European Council, opposed Turkey's accession. Turkey refused to recognize the legitimacy of the Greek Cypriot government. Lastly, the EU Parliament believed the AKP's political reforms and efforts to expand civil liberties were inadequate.⁷⁴ Soner Cagaptay described the unintended consequences of Turkey's exclusion from expansion: "This also gave the AKP grounds to solidify its spurious approach toward Europe: it paid lip service to EU accession to eliminate the military's formal political power and maintained good ties with Europe, while nurturing anti-Western sentiments at home."⁷⁵

The EU still recognizes Turkey as a candidate for accession, but many leaders within the European Council strongly oppose its accession. The EU's most pressing concerns over Turkey are its volatile economy, human rights record, and questionable democratic processes. However, in March 2016 Turkey and the EU reached an agreement to work together to help stem the flow of Syrian refugees arriving in Greece. The agreement stipulates that for every refugee transferred from Greece to Turkey, one refugee from Turkey is admitted to the EU. The EU also agreed to pay Turkey up to six billion euros to help offset costs for the refugees. Additionally, the EU vowed to speed up Turkey's accession process and grant Turkish citizens visa-free access to the Schengen Zone.

In a 2017 referendum, Turkish voters narrowly decided to abolish the office of the prime minister, make the president head of government and head of state, extend presidential term limits, give the president greater powers to appoint High Council judges, and appoint the head of the central bank.⁷⁶ What began as a popular decision to pursue EU membership and conform to

⁷⁴ Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, 187-90.

⁷⁵ Soner Cagaptay, *The New Sultan: Erdogan and the Crisis of Modern Turkey* (New York: I.B. Tauris and Co Ltd, 2017), 98-99.

⁷⁶ Sinan Ekim and Kemal Kirisci, "The Turkish Constitutional Referendum Explained," The Brookings Institution, April 13, 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/04/13/the-turkish-constitutional-referendum-explained/>.

its political and economic accession standards, resulted in a radical transformation of the Turkish constitution and a degradation of rule of law and human rights.

Erdogan's harsh response to the July 2016 coup attempt and Europe's reaction to the April 2017 constitutional referendum were a turning point for negotiations. Germany's powerful Member of the European Parliament, Graf Lambsdorff, clarified the outlook for Turkey's accession in October 2017, "Nobody believes in Brussels or in Ankara for that matter that Turkey will eventually join the European Union. We should all realize that Turkey has imprisoned more journalists than either China or Iran. The arrests of people who are said to be related to the attempted coup – 47,000 over the past few months. All of this is not compatible with our standards for the rule of law."⁷⁷ Subsequently, the EU Parliament voted to temporarily suspend Turkey's formal accession process. In 2018 Erdogan accused the EU of "Islamophobia" for suspending accession and threatened to hold a referendum vote to withdrawal Turkey's EU application.

Unfavorable democratic trends in Turkey indicate the country will not join the EU anytime soon. Freedom House, a US-based non-governmental organization (NGO), assesses civil liberties and human rights throughout the world. Freedom House assigns nations an aggregate score and overall freedom rating based on political rights, civil liberties, personal autonomy, individual rights, and rule of law. The NGO assigns three freedom ratings: "free," "partly free," and "not free." In 2018, Turkey's freedom rating was downgraded to "not free," with a freedom score comparable to Algeria, Iraq, Thailand, and Venezuela. Each EU member state received a "free" rating in 2018 from Freedom House. Turkey's degradation of political rights and civil liberties was attributed to mass replacement of elected mayors with government appointees, AKP control of the judiciary, police and the media, and torture of citizens considered to be terrorists or

⁷⁷ "Turkey Is No Longer an EU Candidate, Mep Says," euronews, last modified October 04, 2017, <https://www.euronews.com/2017/04/10/turkey-is-no-longer-an-eu-candidate-mep-says>.

associated with the 2016 coup attempt. Similarly, the country's Internet freedom score slipped in 2018 based on a government-imposed ban of Wikipedia and high rates of content removal requests to Facebook and Twitter.⁷⁸ A human rights watch group, Amnesty International, published a dismal 2017-18 assessment of Turkey. Amnesty International was critical of Erdogan's decrees imposed during the two-year state of emergency. Their report cited, "An ongoing state of emergency set a backdrop for violations of human rights. Dissent was ruthlessly suppressed, with journalists, political activists and human rights defenders among those targeted. Instances of torture continued to be reported, but in lower numbers than in the weeks following the coup attempt of July 2016."⁷⁹

It is clear to Turkey that inclusion in the transatlantic security alliance does not guarantee inclusion in the European Union. As Turkey was excluded from successive rounds of EU expansion, its uncertainty about accession grew. Turkey's inability to meet the criteria for EU membership does not diminish its role in NATO, but it suggests ambivalence between the idea of Europe and Turkish identity.

The Search for Strategic Depth

When the AKP came to power in 2002 its foreign policy focused on EU accession and improving foreign relations throughout the Middle East. The prevailing thought within the party was that if Turkey improved economic ties outside of Europe, it would increase its chances for EU accession. One ambitious Justice and Development Party member believed that Turkey's foreign policy aims were too limited.

⁷⁸ "Turkey," Freedom House, accessed January 26, 2019, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/turkey>.

⁷⁹ "Turkey 2017/2018," Amnesty International, accessed January 26, 2019, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/turkey/report-turkey/>.

In 2001, Turkish political scientist and AKP member, Ahmet Davutoğlu, wrote a book entitled *Strategic Depth*. Davutoğlu argued that Turkey limited its influence by appealing too much to Western powers. Additionally, Davutoğlu believed that with its geostrategic location and Ottoman heritage, Turkey could expand its influence, first, throughout the region and eventually across the globe.⁸⁰ Davutoğlu's vision for Turkey was similar to the vision the United States had for Turkey in the early Cold War period. Zürcher explained, "Turkey would be able to use its economic strength and role as a democratic Muslim country as 'soft power' to bring about a new 'Pax Ottomanica' in the region. Once that had been achieved, it could become the voice of the region and a natural interlocutor for global powers like the USA and China."⁸¹

Davutoğlu developed the strategic depth foreign policy while serving as Erdogan's chief foreign policy advisor and in 2002, the AKP implemented the policy. The first phase of strategic depth was to foster good relations with all country throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Dubbed the "zero problems policy," Turkey worked to resolve conflicts with regional governments and showcase itself as the model of democracy in Islam. Davutoğlu was appointed as Turkey's foreign minister, in 2009, after a period of limited foreign policy success. Stein commented on the early results of the zero problems policy: "The most dramatic of these was the increase in trade with Syria and Iran. Ankara's ambitious diplomatic efforts in relation to the to Israel-Palestine question, however, were unsuccessful, owing to the difficulties in the relationship with Jerusalem and Turkey's decision to ally with Hamas."⁸²

In 2011, Erdogan traveled to Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt to encourage the Muslim Brotherhood movements. Davutoğlu believed the Arab Spring would rapidly and dramatically

⁸⁰ Zürcher, *A Modern History*, 363.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 363.

⁸² Aaron Stein, *Turkey's New Foreign Policy: Davutoğlu, the AKP and the Pursuit of Regional Order (Whitehall Papers)* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 32-33. Also see, Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991).

change the regional order and Turkey would emerge as its unifying figure. Kemal Kirisci, described Davutoğlu's enthusiasm for the movement, "Thus he welcomed the Arab Spring as an event signaling a change of course of the "river of history," as he called it, and an opportunity to establish a "post-Western international order" in the Middle East, to be led by Turkey."⁸³

The AKP's zero problems policy did more to isolate Turkey than it did to unify the region. Two key factors led to the policy's failure. First, the AKP failed to recognize Arab resentment of Turkey's Ottoman legacy. Makovsky explained, "The backwardness and oppressiveness of Ottoman rule has assumed mythic proportions in Arab national histories, serving as both an ongoing inspiration for Arab nationalism and a scapegoat for Arab problems."⁸⁴ Second, Turkey's support for the Muslim Brotherhood in the Arab Spring left Turkey at odds with Egypt, Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia. Erdogan quickly abandoned his policy to spread democracy throughout the Arab world by supporting the Muslim Brotherhood. Schanzer and Tahiroglu summarized, "Ankara is not solely responsible for the failure of the Arab Spring. Indeed, the autocratic forces that feared the rise of the Brotherhood played an outsized role in that. But Turkey's full support for the Brotherhood, as opposed to a commitment to pluralism, rule of law, and other democratic values, helped fuel the anxiety that led to the counter-revolutions."⁸⁵

Erdogan and the AKP's Middle East policy was viable, but the execution of it was flawed. Erdogan skipped the critical first step in his policy, zero problems in the region. Instead, Erdogan believed the Muslim Brotherhood movement would spread democracy throughout the

⁸³ Kemal Kirisci, *Turkey and the West: Fault Lines in a Troubled Alliance* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2017), 201.

⁸⁴ Makovsky, *Turkey*, 98-99.

⁸⁵ Jonathan Schanzer and Merve Tahiroglu, "Ankara's Failure: How Turkey Lost the Arab Spring," *Foreign Affairs* (January 25, 2016), accessed, February 5, 2019, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2016-01-25/ankaras-failure>.

entire region and, in its wake, resolve the region's problems. As Vali Nasr explained, "Before the Middle East can arrive at democracy and prosperity, it will have to settle these conflicts—those between ethnic groups such as Kurds, Turks, Arabs, and Persians, and, more importantly, the broader one between Shias and Sunnis."⁸⁶ Erdogan and the AKP misjudged the reaction to the Arab Spring, particularly in the Arab Gulf States where the popular movements threatened long-standing monarchies.

Nasr also refuted the notion of a hegemon, Turkish or otherwise, unifying the Middle East. He continued, "Peace and stability will come to the Middle East only when the distribution of power and wealth reflects the balance between the [sectarian] communities and the political system includes all and provides for peaceful ways of resolving disputes."⁸⁷ Erdogan and the AKP failed to anticipate a varied reaction to the Arab Spring movement and wagered the success of their foreign policy on the movement's ability to change the balance of power in the region.

The Syrian crisis exposed the flaws of Turkey's strategic depth foreign policy and sheds light on Turkey's new foreign policy. Turkey is in a dilemma over the post-Islamic State Syria. Erdogan still wants to portray himself as power broker in the region—a legacy of his former ideological policy. Erdogan, however, has pressing security matters stemming from Syria including: terror attacks in Turkey, millions of refugees, and the potential for the Kurdish groups to control more territory in Northern Syria.

Because of the legacy of the US-led invasion of Iraq, several US presidents have now taken a position toward the Kurds that puts them at odds with long-standing Turkish concerns. Anthony Cordtsman summarized how Turkish and American policies are at odds in the Syrian conflict:

The U.S.-backed Syrian Kurdish fighters pursue their own ethnic goals and territorial ambitions, have ties to the PKK in Turkey, and ties to the Kurds in Iraq. The key element

⁸⁶ Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts Within Islam Will Shape the Future* (New York: Norton, 2006), 24.

⁸⁷ Nasr, *The Shia Revival*, 28.

in the Syrian Kurdish rebel force—the Kurdish People’s Protection Units or YPG—has proven to be the only effective rebel element in fighting ISIL, and is the key U.S.-backed element in Syria. This has complicated U.S. coordination with Turkey and the Erdogan government, which sees the YPG as an ally to the PKK, and a threat to Turkey. As Syria continued to deteriorate, Turkey became steadily more involved on a military level because of its own civil war with the Kurds within its own borders, a desire to create a security zone in Syria on its southern border, and to keep Syria's Kurds in the West divided from the Kurds in the East.⁸⁸

President Donald Trump warned Turkey not to threaten the Kurds in Syria, while Russia insists that Syrian forces regain control of the entire country, including a zone controlled by US forces and People’s Protection Units (YPG). The best possible outcome for Turkey is that Russia will recognize its security concerns along the Syria-Turkey border and permit Turkish forces to enforce a buffer zone. If Russia changes its position on the buffer zone, Syrian forces may drive Kurdish rebels across the border into Turkey.

Erdogan’s current foreign policy is less-ideological and much more cautious than strategic depth. Dalay described the difference, “Its expectation that the old regional order would crumble and be replaced with a new one more favorable to its interests remains unmet. For now, it is left to deal with challenges as they arise. Managing security concerns tied to regional crises has become the overarching goal of the current Turkish foreign policy.”⁸⁹

Public Opinion

The policy research group, Center for American Progress (CAP), studied broad public opinion of Turkish attitudes towards the EU, the United States, Russia, and NATO ahead of Turkey’s June 2018 presidential elections. The survey’s purpose was to measure public opinion in the weeks before an early election. President Erdogan ordered the elections eighteen months ahead of schedule and under a declared state of emergency. The Turkish polling firm, Metropoll,

⁸⁸ Anthony Cordseman and Aram Neguzian, “The Case for and Against a “Realist” Strategy in Syria,” abstract, *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (January 24, 2017): 3-4.

⁸⁹ Galip Dalay, “Turkey's Post-Arab Spring Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs* (November 24, 2016), accessed February 7, 2019, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2016-11-24/turkey-s-post-arab-spring-foreign-policy>.

conducted 2,534 face-to-face interviews in twenty eight provinces in the weeks leading up to the election and report a margin of error less than two percent.⁹⁰ Survey participants identified their affiliation in one of four political parties. The Justice and Development Party (AKP) is president Erdogan’s party and holds the most seats in parliament. The Republican People’s Party (CHP) is the AKP’s main opposition party. The Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) is Turkey’s right-wing, ultranationalist party. The People’s Democratic Party (HDP) is Turkey’s left-wing party which represents the Kurdish minority. Max Hoffman of the CAP analyzed the survey results and published the following broad trends and figures for voter opinion:

The survey shows deep ambivalence among Turks toward the European Union across party lines. Turkish citizens remain broadly supportive of NATO, but many support building a lasting alliance with Russia, an idea which earned 57 percent support - a new trend in Turkish political attitudes. Despite their support for both NATO and a potential Russian alliance, Turks are deeply mistrustful of both powers, but they trust the United States significantly less than they do Russia.⁹¹

Table 1. Turkish Perception of the EU

Do you want Turkey to be part of the EU?						
Overall	Yes	49%	No	50%	Don’t know/no answer	1 %
Party	Yes		No		Don’t know/no answer	
AKP	46		52		2	
CHP	56		43		2	
MHP	39		61		0	
HDP	60		40		0	

Source: “A Snapshot of Turkish Public Opinion Toward the European Union,” Center for American Progress, last modified September 27, 2018, accessed January 3, 2019, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2018/09/27/458537/snapshot-turkish-public-opinion-toward-european-union/>.

⁹⁰ “A Snapshot of Turkish Public Opinion Toward the European Union,” Center for American Progress, last modified September 27, 2018, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2018/09/27/458537/snapshot-turkish-public-opinion-toward-european-union/>.

⁹¹ Center for American Progress, “A Snapshot of Turkish Public Opinion toward the European Union.”

Table 2. European Perception of Turkey

Do you think European governments want Turkey to be part of the EU?						
Overall	Yes	20%	No	78%	Don't know/no answer	1 %
Party	Yes		No		Don't know/no answer	
AKP	22		77		1	
CHP	18		79		4	
MHP	14		87		0	
HDP	41		58		0	

Source: "A Snapshot of Turkish Public Opinion Toward the European Union," Center for American Progress, last modified September 27, 2018, accessed January 3, 2019, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2018/09/27/458537/snapshot-turkish-public-opinion-toward-european-union/>.

Table 3. Relationship between the EU and Turkey

How would you characterize the current relationship between the EU and Turkey?						
Overall	Strong	8%	OK	38%	Poor	54%
Party	Strong Relationship		OK Relationship		Poor Relationship	
AKP	13		51		36	
CHP	7		28		66	
MHP	5		32		64	
HDP	6		30		64	

Source: "A Snapshot of Turkish Public Opinion Toward the European Union," Center for American Progress, last modified September 27, 2018, accessed January 3, 2019, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2018/09/27/458537/snapshot-turkish-public-opinion-toward-european-union/>.

Table 4. Source of EU-Turkish Tension and Distrust

Who do you think is more responsible for any tension or distrust between the EU and Turkey?						
Overall	Turkish Government and President Erdogan	30%	EU and European National Governments	67%	Don't know/no answer	3%
Party	Turkish Government and President Erdogan		EU and European National Governments		Don't know/no answer	
AKP	9		88		3	
CHP	55		42		3	
MHP	22		73		5	
HDP	68		31		2	

Source: "A Snapshot of Turkish Public Opinion Toward the European Union," Center for American Progress, last modified September 27, 2018, accessed January 3, 2019, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2018/09/27/458537/snapshot-turkish-public-opinion-toward-european-union/>.

Table 5. Turkish-Russian Alliance

Should Turkey build a lasting alliance with Russia?						
Overall	Yes	57%	No	40%	Don't know/no answer	3%
Party	Yes		No		Don't know/no answer	
AKP	63		34		3	
CHP	56		41		3	
MHP	60		39		1	
HDP	30		65		5	

Source: "A Snapshot of Turkish Public Opinion Toward the European Union," Center for American Progress, last modified September 27, 2018, accessed January 3, 2019, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2018/09/27/458537/snapshot-turkish-public-opinion-toward-european-union/>.

Table 6. NATO Alliance

Should Turkey remain in NATO?						
Overall	Yes	55%	No	27%	Don't know/no answer	18%
Party	Yes		No		Don't know/no answer	
AKP	58		24		18	
CHP	59		27		14	
MHP	65		26		9	
HDP	45		36		19	

Source: "A Snapshot of Turkish Public Opinion Toward the European Union," Center for American Progress, last modified September 27, 2018, accessed January 3, 2019, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2018/09/27/458537/snapshot-turkish-public-opinion-toward-european-union/>.

Table 7. Russia or US Trust

Which nation do you trust more: Russia or the United States?							
Overall	Russia, much more	Russia, somewhat more	U.S., somewhat more	U.S., much more	Both equally	Neither	Don't know/no answer
	21%	19%	1%	2%	6%	50%	1%
Party	Russia, much more	Russia, somewhat more	U.S., somewhat more	U.S., much more	Both equally	Neither	Don't know/no answer
AKP	26	20	1	2	4	47	1
CHP	21	22	1	2	6	48	2
MHP	23	16	1	1	4	54	0
HDP	3	10	3	3	17	64	0

Source: "A Snapshot of Turkish Public Opinion Toward the European Union," Center for American Progress, last modified September 27, 2018, accessed January 3, 2019, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2018/09/27/458537/snapshot-turkish-public-opinion-toward-european-union/>.

Conclusion

Turkey's legacy of military, political, and economic cooperation with the western states has long roots. But as many of those states involvement in regional politics has receded, Turkish foreign policy continues to seek a new normal. Regional turbulence has made establishment of this new normal elusive. Three perspectives emerge that impact transatlantic cooperation with Turkey.

The first and most clear perspective pertains to Turkey's accession into the European Union. Turks are ambivalent towards EU accession after other states, including former members of the Warsaw Pact, were admitted before them. The Council of the European Union and the Parliament remain unequivocal on their stance with Turkey—comply with European standards for rule of law and human rights or the accession process will remain suspended. The United States, however, cannot take such a firm stance with its NATO Ally.

Two opposing viewpoints emerge regarding the US-Turkish alliance. The first emphasizes the importance of the strategic alliance. Steven Cook explained, “Some members of the policy community believe that Turkey's large military structures and NATO membership are assets in the great power competition, as they were during the Cold War.”⁹² Turkey makes significant contributions to NATO missions. They host NATO's Allied Land Command Headquarters, radar sites for the alliance's theater ballistic missile defense system, and contribute forces to NATO training missions in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The opposing viewpoint downplays Turkey's strategic importance and contends the US-Turkish partnership was over when the Cold War ended. Cook continued, “Instead, the basic assumption that should guide Washington in its approach to Ankara is that while Turkey remains formally a NATO ally, it is not a partner of the United States. The two countries are linked to

⁹² Steven Cook, “Neither Friend nor Foe: The Future of U.S.-Turkey Relations,” In Council Special Report No. 82, special issue, *Council on Foreign Relations* (November 2018), https://cfrd8-files.cfr.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/CSR82_Cook_Turkey_0.pdf.

each other by the Cold War, but with few common interests three decades after that conflict came to an end, the bilateral relationship is marked by ambivalence and mistrust.”⁹³ These sentiments became prominent during the period of Erdogan and AKP power, coinciding with the wars in Iraq and Syria, which have accentuated opposing US and Turkish policies.

Turkey will remain a NATO ally and regional security partner regardless of the length of Erdogan’s presidency. His foreign policy ambitions will go unchallenged as he settles into his new role as head of government and head of state. His foreign policy ambitions, however, will be checked by his need to focus on pressing security matters associated with the Syrian crisis. These domestic concerns reinforce the importance of bilateral security cooperation with Turkey—to affirm our commitment to our security partner and achieve common policy interests.

⁹³ Council on Foreign Relations, “Neither Friend nor Foe.”

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