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Rana Deep Islam

Turkish Foreign Policy – Reaching Out for New Frontiers?

In the past years, Turkey was able to readjust the relations it maintains to the states of its neighbourhood. Approaching regional security – be it on the Balkans, be it in the Middle East, be it in Central Asia – can no longer afford to disregard the strategic role being played by Turkey.

However, Ankara's declining relationship to the West raises serious doubt whether the country will really be able to position itself as a reliable partner on the global stage. The structural alienation between Tel Aviv and Ankara or Turkey's hidden agenda on Iran, deliberately overriding US and European interests, illustrate the country's emancipation from Western considerations.

In the end, Turkey might be able to maintain a policy of regional leadership, especially in its Middle Eastern neighbourhood, however, such an approach goes to the disadvantage of its Western anchoring.

Eduard Soler i Lecha

EU-Turkish Relations in a Fast Changing Global Scene

The article explains the EU and Turkey's adaptation to a changing global reality and to what extent fostering the integration of Turkey in the EU could be part of the adaptation strategies of both actors in such a new context.

Taking note of recent international and domestic events, the article presents Turkey's evolution as becoming more self-confident while an inward-looking EU risks being sidelined in global affairs. Taking this into account, the author argues that there is little chance to regain momentum in EU-Turkish relations in the short run despite both Turkey and the EU could benefit from it.

Mehmet Ögütçü

Turkey's Energy Policy: Prospects and Options

Turkey has emerged as an important actor, as a consumer, transporter, investor, regional hub and security provider in energy geopolitics. Various recent energy deals Turkey has concluded are all adding to Turkey's potential to expand its geostrategic weight.

In this new landscape, Turks are increasingly acting in pursuit of their own self-interest rather than following the dictates from Washington or Brussels. On the basis of a thorough elaboration of these current and future trends the paper concludes with a number of policy recommendations for government and business leaders in promoting further cooperation and partnership rather than fanning confrontation in search of energy security for all players.

Semih İdiz

Public Opinion as a Determinant of the New Turkish Foreign Policy

Whereas Turkey's foreign policy was traditionally considered to be a domain of the state, it has today – after eight years of AKP rule – become a subject for the public domain and an extension of domestic politics.

Indeed, Turkey as a fast growing economy needs new markets and investment opportunities, a fact that necessitates an opening up to countries and regions previously neglected. While this is the main driving force behind the AKP's new foreign policy, it is also true that the sentiments of the public, and the Islamic public in particular, are too evident in some of the choices made by the government. The author demonstrates these dynamics by looking at Turkey's ties to Armenia, Israel, Syria and Iran. Thus, for example, Turkey's growing ties with Iran are extremely popular among the AKP's Islamic supporters, who admire the Iranian President Ahmedinejad. Ankara's dealing with Iran's nuclear pretensions has eventually left Turkey seriously at odds with the US and other Western allies.

The author concludes that, while more democratic input in foreign policy administration may be positive in principle, political populism and opportunism can also change the orientation of countries and raise serious questions about where they are headed.

Hubert Faustmann / James Ker-Lindsay

European Union, Turkey's EU Aspirations and the Cyprus Problem since 2004

The article examines the role the European Union has played in the Cyprus Problem since the EU accession of the Republic of Cyprus in 2004. Its main thesis is that six years of EU membership (and the accession process) are – with respect to the Cyprus Question – littered with false hopes, miscalculations and misperceptions by all main actors.

The paper focuses on two aspects that have dominated the relations between the EU and Cyprus: Firstly, it reconstructs the failed attempts of powerful actors within the European Union to overcome Greek Cypriot resistance in its efforts to implement the EU pledge from 2004 to end the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots. Secondly, it examines the repeated attempts of the Greek Cypriots to utilise their EU membership as well as the Turkish aspirations to join the Union in order to press Ankara for concession in the Cyprus Question.

Sören Keil

Bosnia and Herzegovina in Autumn 2010: Elections without Effect?

An analysis of the Bosnian parliamentary, entity, cantonal and presidential elections of 3 October 2010

In October 2010 the Bosnian peoples were asked to vote once again for a new state parliament, entity and cantonal parliaments as well as for the members for the Bosnian Presidency and the President of the Republika Srpska.

While these elections resulted in a number of surprise gains by moderate candidates and parties, it is unlikely that the newly elected representatives will be able to overcome the political deadlock that has paralysed Bosnia over the last years. Too deep are the political cleavages between the parties and (more important) between the different ethnic groups and too little has been done by international actors including the European Union to push for reform and a consolidation of the state. While there is some hope that the radical rhetoric will calm down in the future, real progress and reform will need an active engagement of the EU, the USA and of Bosnia's neighbours as well as its three constituent peoples (Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats). The key for future progress is an agreement on the nature and structure of the common state of Bosnia and Herzegovina among its constituent peoples.

Lindita Arapi

Insight into the Overshadowed Past of the Albanian Visa Saga

The saga of the Albanian exodus to Europe is long and sometimes tragic. Since the collapse of communism in 1990, many Albanians headed towards different European countries searching for a better life. After the first big wave of refugees had subsided, the EU countries set strong rules for Albanians to enter. It was not easy to get a visa. Many Albanians tried the illegal way, often using the "visa mafia", and failed. The difficult years of Albanian transition until the beginning of the new century regularly caused streams of refugees.

In the last years, the improvement of law and order brought the country to stability and a visa-liberalisation process with the EU was initiated. Albania had to fulfill the requirements of the European Commission concerning travel documents, security, migration and border controls, law and order, reintegration of victims of human trafficking and returning emigrants, foreign affairs and human rights. On 15 September 2010, a Report of the European Commission, based on experts' evaluation, gave Albania good grades for fulfilling these criteria and green light for visa-liberalisation.

The last word came from the Council of the EU Interior Ministers at their meeting in November 2010. They sanctioned visa-liberalisation with Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina by majority decision, opening the way for their people to travelling visa-free for 90 days in the Schengen zone by the end of 2010.