

Closed
Session
2019



Globalisation in Retreat:

Risks and Opportunities



TRT
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forum
2019



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The New Great Game: China, Russia and the US in Central Asia

Counter-Terrorism in the Post-Daesh Era

Turkish Foreign Policy: Facing Regional and Global Shifts

North Africa's Political Unrest: The Cases of Algeria and Libya

Geopolitical Dimensions of Energy Resources in the Eastern Mediterranean

Environmental Security: Tragedy of the Commons

The Predicament of Political Legitimacy in the MENA Region

The Decline of Collective Action in International Politics:

The End of Multilateralism?

The Future of EU - Turkey Relations

Responding to the Humanitarian Crisis in the 21st Century:

A Failure of the International System?

The Future of the Global Liberal Order: Challenges and Prospects

The Gulf Crisis Two Years On: What Does the Future Hold?

The United States and Iran: Beating the Drums of War?

The New Fault Lines in Turkey's Security Strategy

India and Pakistan: A Case Study in Crisis Management?

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Closed Sessions 2019

Globalisation in Retreat: Risks and Opportunities

The TRT World Forum 2019, recognised as one of the most significant political events of the year, took place from October 21st- 22nd at the Istanbul Congress Center with over one thousand esteemed guests and panellists. Consisting of 6 Keynote Speeches and 3 Exclusive Talks, 8 Public Sessions, this year's Forum succeeded in providing a platform for serious engagement with the most pressing challenges of our time. The themes of the sessions ranged from the rise of far-right terrorism, populism and nationalism, environmental issues, the future of the Middle East, trade wars, the future of the European Union and cooperation of emerging powers. Uniting all of these themes was a focus on the fragmented state of today's world and a sincere desire to offer meaningful solutions.

This roundtable meeting was held in English under the Chatham House Rule. This rule stipulates that 'Participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.'

FOREWORD

Under the theme 'Globalisation in Retreat: Risks and Opportunities', the third annual TRT World Forum took place on 21-22 October, 2019. Since the launch of the TRT World Forum in 2017, we have made significant progress in becoming a strong and respected voice examining global issues from alternative angles, including from the perspective of the oppressed. Within a short period, the TRT World Forum has become a leading international conference.

The theme of this year's forum arose from extensive discussions about the world's most pressing challenges, often linked to a decrease in global cooperation. Our focus on the retreat of globalisation was in some ways prophetic, as the coronavirus pandemic has now made clear. A decline in globalisation may continue into 2020 as the world begins to face the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic. If there is one lesson that we can already take away from this, it is that the world is deeply interconnected. Unfortunately, in light of a lacklustre and poorly-coordinated international response, a deficit in the ideal level of productive cooperation in addressing global issues has been revealed. Even before the pandemic, TRT World Forum 2019 discussed the realities of the decline in globalisation from various angles.

TRT World Forum 2019 explored many issues: from conflict and security, regional and international cooperation to humanitarian and environmental policies, as well as topics related to the economy and media. The 'Closed Session' concept allowed for in-depth and methodical analysis, facilitating a platform whereby experts from various backgrounds, including policymakers, researchers, academics, journalists, representatives of NGOs and activists could candidly offer their perspectives. These valuable discussions were documented by experts in order to share the fruits of these discussions with international audiences. The TRT World Research Centre, which supplies TRT's coverage with an academic and analytical perspective, contributed to the TRT World Forum project and its subsequent publications.

I am happy to announce that the TRT World Forum has carried our media network to a new level, in both reach and in impact. With the attendance over 120 speakers and 1400 participants from all over the world, TRT World Forum 2019 hosted 6 Keynote Speeches, 3 Exclusive Talks, 8 Public Sessions and 15 Closed Sessions along with numerous meetings that took place among diplomats, participants and speakers. We believe that this collection, the Closed Session Reports of TRT World Forum 2019, will shed light on important global issues. Coming at these issues from an academic perspective, this book presents compelling contributions from distinguished speakers and participants and offers an in-depth and analytical examination of some of the core dynamics shaping today's world.

İbrahim Eren

Director General and Chairman, TRT

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping strokes that form a stylized, abstract shape.

PREFACE

The TRT World Forum convenes annually to discuss the most significant global themes of the year. It represents an opportunity for global leaders to come together and discuss solutions and alternative approaches to some of the world's most pressing issues. TRT World Forum 2019, 'Globalisation in Retreat: Risks and Opportunities', examined key topics through 6 keynote speeches, 3 Exclusive Talks, 8 Public Sessions and 15 Closed Sessions that took place on 21-22 October, 2019 in Istanbul.

As one of the world's leading international conferences, TRT World Forum selects its annual theme very carefully. The theme for 2019 comes at a time when globalisation has to be problematised. While the world is more interconnected than ever, some developments suggest that globalisation is perhaps in retreat after a long period of sustained success, as evidenced by the Brexit vote, increased protectionism, trade wars and the various failures of multilateral institutions. Although it is too early to determine the fate of globalisation, TRT World Forum 2019 served as a platform to bring leading figures together to discuss the most pressing challenges ahead.

Closed Sessions are one of the integral elements of the Forum. Held as round-table discussions, they are designed to facilitate in-depth conversation and debate. The information discussed during these sessions can be used publicly, however, the anonymity of speakers and contributors is preserved to promote candid discussion. Individuals may share personal opinions irrespective of their positions or their affiliations, thereby opening the floor to a range of thought-provoking perspectives.

The idea of publishing reports on Closed Sessions dates back to the inaugural TRT World Forum in 2017. These reports have reached wide audiences and

have become a significant part of our post-Forum publications. In addition to the valuable discussions advanced in these sessions, the academic backgrounds, experience and expertise of the writers compiling these reports have also made this publication an important contribution to the academic literature. Accordingly, this book aims to reach both academic and non-academic readers. Moreover, the reports are written in language appropriate for general audiences, another strength of the Forum stemming from its media nexus.

At the 2019 TRT World Forum, Closed Sessions addressed various issues related to globalisation. The 15 sessions touched upon numerous themes: conflict; security; economic paradigms; political legitimacy; liberalism; globalism; environmental issues; humanitarian crises and far-right extremism. The countries which the discussions involved included Turkey, the US, Russia, China, India, Pakistan, Iran, Libya, and Algeria and the regions covered included Europe, Central Asia, South Asia, the Gulf, the Mediterranean, as well as the Middle East and North Africa. Contributors to this book are affiliated with respected think tanks, including the TRT World Research Centre, the Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI), the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), and universities such as Science Po, King's College London, Australian National University (ANU), University of Exeter, Marmara University, Koc University, Social Sciences University of Ankara (ASBU) and many other esteemed institutions. The Closed Sessions reports are as follows:

The New Great Game: China, Russia and the US in Central Asia. This session examined the role Central Asia plays in the strategic calculations of three great powers: China, Russia and the United States. As Central Asia rises, these countries are struggling for influence in the region. Participants suggested that cooperation is the main way forward for these powers engaging in the so-called 'New Great Game'.

Counter-Terrorism in the Post-Daesh Era. Discussions focussed on counter-terrorism policies in the post-Daesh era and how they are being fundamentally shaped by a US-centric paradigm. While it may be too soon to dismiss the Daesh threat, this session scrutinised various dynamics, including support for other terrorist groups such as the YPG, and the lack of an officially recognised definition for terrorism.

Turkish Foreign Policy: Facing Regional and Global Shifts. Dimensions of Turkish foreign policy was explored during this session. It is a matter of fact that Ankara's diplomatic position is going through some changes in various regions, including its relationship with the US, Russia, the EU and the ever-developing conflict in Syria. Speakers analysed how Turkey's policies have evolved in an era of increased geopolitical and global turbulence and how Turkey has an opportunity to seize the moment in the midst of these dynamics.

North Africa's Political Unrest: The Cases of Algeria and Libya. This session's topic was the political transitions in Libya and Algeria. Speakers elaborated on these countries' local contexts and made projections regarding their possible trajectories. It has been nine years since Libya's Qaddafi was violently toppled, while the unrest in Algeria in 2019 was peaceful and took the form of weekly mass protests. While the experiences of the two North African states diverge significantly, this session focused the wider regional ramifications of their respective transitions.

Dimensions of Energy Resources in the Eastern Mediterranean. Participants analysed geopolitical developments vis-à-vis the energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean. Noteworthy developments in recent years were discussed and the undercurrents moving forward were likewise examined. Many countries are vying for resources in the region and it remains to be seen how resource-sharing may be finalized.

Environmental Security: Tragedy of the Commons. In this session, speakers focused on environmental issues, climate change and potential measures to address it. Among others, the treatment of the environment as a common good, applying a multifaceted approach, and the need for collaborative action were discussed.

The Predicament of Political Legitimacy in the MENA Region. Discussions concentrated on the question of legitimacy of rulers in the MENA region, some of whom have resorted to oppressive and autocratic practices to remain in power. A key element of the Arab Spring was widespread discontent with the status quo. Speakers explored the driving factors and potential solutions to a deficit in political legitimacy in the region.

The Decline of Collective Action in International Politics: The End of Multilateralism? Various global trends revolving around this issue were examined, including the implications of the election of Donald Trump and the Brexit vote. While some countries have begun to act unilaterally, speakers discussed how multilateralism tends to be more constructive in a globalised world. Issues such as human security and the refugee crisis require collective action and international institutions may need to be reinforced.

The Future of EU - Turkey Relations. Participants explored the current course of relations between the European Union and Turkey. Trade among these actors and the migration crisis received particular attention from the participants.

Responding to Humanitarian Crisis in the 21st Century: A Failure of the International System? This session addressed and analysed the ramifications of the worst humanitarian and refugee crisis since the Second World War. It also explored the socio-economic pressures facing host countries and the multitude of ways that the international community has abdicated its responsibility.

The Future of the Global Liberal Order: Challenges and Prospects. The speakers discussed the origins of the global liberal order and its potential fate. They examined how the order has changed over the years, with additional countries becoming more prominent players as a result of significant economic growth. The global governance structure and its shortcomings were also discussed in the face of increased globalisation.

The Gulf Crisis Two Years On: What Does the Future Hold? The session focused on an examination of the ongoing Gulf Crisis, its causes and its implications. Speakers analysed the newly developed political coalitions that have emerged. The relevance of the GCC moving forward in its response to this crisis were also addressed. Geopolitical dynamics were explored, as well as the roles played by Turkey and Iran.

The United States and Iran: Beating the Drums of War. The relationship between the United States and Iran, and its trajectory, were at the centre of deliberations. Speakers exchanged opinions on the policies of both countries in the aftermath of the US withdrawal from the JCPOA and the prospects of violent conflict. Tensions are high, and discussion in this session suggested that it is doubtful that de-escalation is imminent considering the respective administrations currently in power.

The New Fault Lines in Turkey's Security Strategy. Speakers explored Turkey's security strategy and how it has evolved in the face of emerging security threats. The participants also discussed how great power conflict plays out in the Middle East. Russia's motivation in filling the power vacuum ostensibly left by the United States was deliberated upon. The relative lack of support from NATO was also addressed, as was Turkish President Erdogan's stance on the irrelevance of the current structure of the United Nations Security Council concerning regional problems.

India and Pakistan: A Case Study in Crisis Management? Deliberations examined the current course of India and Pakistan relations. The primary fo-

cus was the Kashmir issue and the respective crisis management strategies employed by both countries after India's decision to revoke article 370 of the Indian Constitution, ending Kashmir's special status. The local context of the crisis was also examined, as well as the importance of bilateral engagement and attention to humanitarian concerns. It was noted that the rise of Hindu Nationalism in India under Modi has also played a role in inflaming the crisis, with the agency of Muslim-majority Kashmir often overlooked.

This book is a comprehensive collection of the Closed Sessions reports from the 2019 TRT World Forum. Cutting across audience lines, its in-depth analysis and accessibility make it valuable for academics, experts and general audiences alike. We believe this book represents a valuable resource presenting timely and informative issues discussed in one of the world's most preeminent international conferences, the TRT World Forum.

Pinar Kandemir

Founder and Director, TRT World Forum

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The New Great Game: China, Russia and the US in Central Asia

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR GÜROL BABA



INTRODUCTION

Central Asia has become a focal point of Asia-Pacific international relations after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Geographically, the region expands from the Caspian Sea to China, and from Afghanistan to Russia. It canvasses Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. In addition to its significant geographical size, the region is also quite rich in energy resources. Due to these very features, the region has become a geo-economic link, which has been acting like a magnet, drawing the attention of several great powers to the region, e.g. the United States (US), China and Russia. These powers' converging and diverging interests fit well into the conceptual and rhetorical title as the 'New Great Game'.

This session was conducted by four significant analysts/researchers/policy practitioners. Along with 20 esteemed participants, they focused upon the rivalry and cooperation of the US, China and Russia in the region. Rather than stressing the historical background of these powers' relations in the region, the discussions revolved around contemporary issues and developments.

The aim of the panel was to discuss how Central Asia dealt with the US, Russia and China in terms of economy and politico-strategic relations. All three great powers have been trying to exert their national interests in the region. This has required a certain level of cooperation to ensure their success, but has ironically created a more significant level of rivalry. Especially the rise of China has placed this rivalry under the spotlight of increased international attention. The panel discussions revolved around cooperation and rivalry patterns, emphasising that increased cooperation and understanding is required, particularly between the US and China. It was also implied that Russia could act as an interlocutor between these two.

THE RISING IMPORTANCE OF CENTRAL ASIA

At the start of the session, the moderator underlined the importance of the region, and the constant interest of the great powers in this region:

The big power game is back in international relations, and for many centuries the region has been one of the hot spots of international relations. Different interests of big powers of world politics are crossed and competing against each other. In addition to Central Asia there are few other areas where we can witness very similar trends like the Middle East, to some extent Europe, to some extent Africa.

The competition on Central Asia started not straight after the collapse of the Soviet Union but even a bit earlier. 1979 could be taken as a starting point of this competition. That year, the Iranian Revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan contributed to the kick-start of the 'New Great Game' in Central Asia. Competition in Central Asia did not begin with the collapse of the Soviet Union, but a bit earlier. The year 1979 could be taken as a starting point for this competition. During that year, the Iranian Revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan contributed to the kick-start of the 'New Great Game'.

Regarding the general outlook of China towards Central Asia, the first speaker stated that the Chinese attitude is to mix the east and the west. The speaker underlined that globalization is a tricky term for almost all countries, but particularly the emerging ones, which have been suffered by the uncertainties of the industrialization component of globalization. China's outlook is to reduce this by increasing connectivity between the emerging and industrialized nations. This interconnectivity is particularly important for Central Asian countries, which are landlocked. One very significant of them, due to its large gas reserves, is Kazakhstan. Today's international trade's main item is maritime trade, which means trade by the sea. Thus, the first mission of this connectivity is to help Central Asian countries to access the sea, the Indian Ocean. These countries together with India and Pakistan are the members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and they are already institutionally connected. Regarding the general outlook of China toward Central Asia, the first speaker stated that the Chinese focus is to mix the East and the West. The speaker underlined that globalisation is a tricky concept for almost all countries; emerging nations in particular have suffered from the uncertainties of the industrialisation component of globalisation. This interconnectivity is particularly important for those Central Asian countries who are landlocked. One very significant country, Kazakhstan, is especially significant due to its gas reserves. Today, maritime trade, or trade by sea, is particularly important. Therefore, the first mission for connectivity is to assist Central Asian countries to the access the sea, in

this case the Indian Ocean. The Central Asian countries, along with India and Pakistan, are members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and they are already connected through this institution.

The speaker continued that the second meaning of the sea is to provide mutual connectivity. The Central Asian countries are mutually connected. They are not only connected to the sea with the Pakistani-Indian corridor but also mutually connected regarding their facilities. This interconnectivity also aims to bridge the gaps between the members of the SCO. Due to the today's populism in international arena, the gap between the rich and poor is huge, both domestic and internationally. China is also trying to reduce this gap between a lot of countries. China experienced this gap especially during the railway building. In this sense, both Russian Eurasian Economic Union and the Chinese Economic Belt initiatives bring Kazakhstan and many other -stans together via respecting their sovereignty. The speaker went on to say that the sea is also significant in that it provides mutual connectivity. The Central Asia countries are mutually connected. They are not only connected to the sea via the Pakistani-Indian corridor, but they are also mutually connected through their facilities. This interconnectivity also bridges the gaps between the members of the SCO. Due to today's populism in the international arena, the gap between the rich and the poor is huge, both domestically and internationally. China is trying to reduce this gap in many countries. China was exposed to this gap, especially during the building of railroads. In this sense, both the Russian Eurasian Economic Union and the Chinese Economic Belt initiatives have brought Kazakhstan and many other 'Stans together by respecting their sovereignty.

The other significance of connectivity is to provide common development and common security. This is important in reducing the suffering of the poor. The SCO, for example, was initially formulated to fight against terrorism and extremism; now it also focuses on integration and economic cooperation. This does not only concern the energy sectors, but also economic zones and the building of infrastructure and corridors

to reduce the gaps in people-to-people connections. According to the speaker, it is a commitment to a shared future. In the formulation of this shared future, China has taken on an important role in which Chinese culture, which is very inclusive, is an important element, despite China's communist past. First, the most important element of this shared future is that all nations must respect each other so that they can coexist. Second, despite differences in religions, the members of this shared future should respect and not compete with each other. Third, the sovereignty of the members must be respected.

The first speaker added that the current developments in communication via the Internet require this sort of interconnectivity among nations. Today's international relations are not more than the 18th or 19th century's zero-sum game. To establish and develop this interconnectivity, more global platforms and partnerships are required.

US INTERESTS IN THE REGION

Washington's predominant interest is security-related, e.g. maintaining the stability of the region. The US' main concerns in the region are the Islamic fundamentalist groups. This concern surfaced particularly during the post-9/11 era in Afghanistan. Later on, the US tried to develop security relations with Kazakhstan under NATO. Washington expanded its cooperative efforts with Central Asian states under its grand strategy of 'War on Terror' by supporting them for non-proliferations of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and anti-terror programs.

As a natural reaction to the China-Russia alliance's anti-American efforts, Washington has also been trying to prevent a serious increase in Russian and Chinese influence in the region. For this reason, US administrations have attempted to maintain the stability of the Central Asian regimes, as weak or failed regional regimes would open the door for more Russian or Chinese influence. US financial support for these regimes is still continuing, and US cooperation efforts with these regimes

have been presented within the framework of NATO's counter-terror strategy. This became particularly visible in the post-9/11 era, during which Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan provided airbase access to US-led coalition troops.

In these counter-terror efforts, the US strategic calculations place particular focus upon Islamic movements. The US has considered that radical versions of these movements, which are labelled as Jihadist, have the potential to destabilise regional governments. Al-Qaeda, Taliban, Islamic Jihad Union, as well as the Salafi and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, are some of them. Similar to Russia and China, the US naturally has economic aims in the region, which are more liberal. The US in the region acts as a representative of the West by pushing for free-market access to energy resources, namely the Caspian basin's oil and gas fields. The US tries to promote regional economic cooperation for economic reasons.

Another US aim in the region is to promote democracy. As a traditional trend, US administrations promote liberal democracy among their potential partners. This does not only ease their politico-economic cooperation with the US, but also boosts regional cooperation tendencies with other US partners. In Central Asia, this is particularly important since regional leaders are pro-Russian. A liberal democratic transformation in these countries could reduce Moscow's influence.

Democratisation has been the US' foremost means of establishing and developing pro-Western trends and lifestyles in Central Asian countries. To promote democracy in these countries, the US has also instrumentalised NATO, embracing a post-Cold War and human security/international terrorism orientation. Moreover, the US administrations have utilised direct aid via several agencies in their democratisation efforts under the Freedom Support Act: The National Endowment for Democracy; the Agency for International Development; NGOs, including the Open Society Fund; and other voluntary organisations such as Volunteers for Prosperity and the Peace Corps.

The US aim toward democratisation of Central Asian countries was not only to create more fertile ground for a deeper and more effective influence in the region, but also to transform the political elites in these countries. A more Westernised elite structure would be able to cooperate better with the US under more American terms.

For these aims, Washington developed a regional cooperation initiative, called as the New Silk Road (NSR). The initiative was proposed after the US and NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2014 and aimed to promote stability in Central Asia. The NSR aims to end the bottled-up status of Central Asian countries between Russia and China. For this aim, the NSR would link Central Asia to the Indian Ocean via South Asia. In this link Afghanistan plays a key role, not only as a bridge but also a trade hub. With the NSR, Afghanistan's foreign trade with its neighbours will be boosted which would eventually spill over the prosperity in the region. Increase in economic prosperity would build up and sustain peace. The NSR, rightfully, did not propose a comprehensive regional economic integration due to the diverging interests and priorities of Central Asian countries. Instead it promotes American liberal economic values in the region, which projects a deeper and longer-term transformation of the region into a more Western stance. With these aims in mind, Washington developed a regional cooperation initiative under the name of the New Silk Road (NSR). The initiative was proposed after the US and NATO withdrew from Afghanistan in 2014, and it aimed to promote stability in Central Asia. The goal of the NSR is to decrease the influence of Russia and China in the Central Asian countries. The NSR intends to link Central Asia to the Indian Ocean via South Asia. In this link, Afghanistan plays a key role, not only as a bridge but also as a trading hub. With the NSR, Afghanistan's foreign trade with its neighbours would be boosted, which would eventually lead to prosperity in the region. A continuing increase in economic prosperity would lead to sustained peace. The NSR, rightfully, does not propose a comprehensive regional economic integration due to the diverging interests and priorities of Central Asian countries. Instead, it promotes American liberal economic values in the region,

which projects a deeper and long-term transformation toward a more Western model.

RUSSIA'S INFLUENCE AND INTEREST IN THE REGION

Unlike the US, Russia has a historical and geographical proximity to the region. However, like the US, it also aims to maintain stability and eliminate fundamentalist radicals in the area. The above-mentioned 'Islamist' groups are also under Moscow's anti-terror scrutiny. For Moscow, the elimination of radical Islamist groups in the region fits into its aims to protect the status quo, i.e. its close relations with the regions' authoritarian government structures. In protecting the status quo, Russia is not alone. Via the SCO, and particularly with China's support, Russia is attempting to diminish US influence in the region. The US may create challenges to Russia's influence if a liberal democratic transformation occurs in some regional countries, even if this is not likely in the short term.

In its relations with the region, Russia has been utilising several techniques, most of which trace back to the USSR era: language, media, religion, historical legacy, and even family links. In addition, Russia provides employment to a great number of Central Asian workers, particularly from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. This policy reduces unemployment in Central Asian countries and contributes to their economies, as workers send home money earned in Russia. The amount of transferred money is greater than the foreign aid these Central Asian countries receive from Russia or the US.

Another organic and demographic link between Russia and the region is due to the Russians who live in Central Asia, especially in Kazakhstan. The Russian administration does not only scrutinise the citizens of these countries, but it has also developed religion and language policies to keep the people's connection with Russia fresh and functional. Kyrgyzstan is

the second most important country. Many of its inhabitants are Russian, and they are the third largest minority in the country. They are organised under the umbrella of several ethnically oriented associations and foundations which represent and promote their Russian cultural inclinations. In this way, they have been providing a means for the Russian administration to intervene in some domestic affairs within these countries, under the guise of 'protecting' the interests of ethnically Russian citizens.

Russian cultural centres and media have also actively operated in the region, promoting Russian cultural values and lifestyle among the non-Russian inhabitants of Central Asian countries. Russian media broadcasts in particular have led Central Asians to see events through a Russian official lens. Russian language and cultural influence permeate social media in the region.

Unlike the American NSR, the Russian regional integration model is more ambitious. The Russian Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) began as a customs union in 2011, and then became an economic union in 2015. It includes Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The EAEU was modelled on the EU, aiming to develop a single market for goods, services, capital and labour. With this project, Moscow has aimed to be the leading force in the economic integration of the region by means of excluding the US and China.

CHINA'S INTERESTS AND INCREASING RIVALRY IN THE REGION

China, even more ambitious than the US or Russia, has economic and strategic interests in Central Asia. The region's geographic proximity to China poses both security and economic concerns for Beijing. Central Asia is situated along China's western border, which makes the region's

security crucial for China's border security. Central Asia is also an important and very close market for Chinese goods; therefore, its stability is key for Chinese economic revenues.

Similar to the US and Russia, China also aims to curtail Islamic radicalism in the region, which has the potential to reduce China's future expansion and influence. Radical Islamist groups do not have the capability or intention to cooperate with the Chinese agenda. Islamic radicals also pose a threat to one of China's major needs, and uninterrupted energy flow from the region.

Similar to Russia, China has also been applying language and culture-oriented policies toward the region. In its language policy, several language courses are offered under the auspices of the Chinese official agencies. For the implementation of this policy, China utilises Confucian rhetoric, emphasising peace in an effort to allay any possible anxieties about growing Chinese domination. Regarding bilateral and multilateral relations, China has concluded agreements with Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan for the construction of new pipelines, thus increasing the control of gas flow from these two very significant producers. In addition to these pipelines, China has increased its economic and political clout in the region by providing billions of dollars to Central Asian governments as loans and infrastructural investments.

China is perhaps the most ambitious actor in its regional integration project. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) was launched in 2013, which is comprised of two parts: The Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB), leading from China to Western Europe; and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, which extends from China, through the Indian Ocean, and then toward the Mediterranean Sea. BRI is not only an integration initiative, but also targets policy coordination, infrastructural investments, unimpeded trade and people-to-people exchanges. In other words, the Chinese outlook is far greater than Central Asia, aiming to establish an integrated Eurasia under the control of Beijing.

CHINA-RUSSIA 'ALLIANCE'

The alliance is quite deeply rooted, tracing back to the early 1990s. After the collapse of the USSR, from 1991 to 1996, Russo-Chinese relations were transformed into a strategic partnership. In 2001, they organised the Shanghai Five, which expanded their relations from bilateral to multi-lateral. During the same year, the two countries' armies conducted a joint exercise under the sponsorship of the SCO.

Regarding the SCO, the West has diverging interpretations. Some interpretations underline the potential of the organization to limit the US influence in the region particularly with a coordinated Russian-Chinese effort. Some others point out the differing interests of SCO members and therefore downgrade this potential. The interests of members differ particularly due to the rise in oil prices, which increased Central Asian states' clout in international economy and led them look beyond Russia for better commercial deals. Moreover, SCO's statements highlighting that the organization does not aim to establish a military or political alliance or targeting a third party, sort of prove the second claim of the Western analysts. Since, the Central Asian members of the SCO pursue different economic models and see each other as competitors in the energy sector, it seems also difficult that the SCO could establish an efficient economic union.

Regarding the SCO, the West has diverging interpretations. Some interpretations underline the potential of the organisation to limit US influence in the region, particularly with a coordinated Russian-Chinese effort. Some others point out the differing interests of SCO members and therefore downgrade this potential. The interests of members differ especially in respect to the rise in oil prices, which have increased the Central Asian states' clout in the international economy, leading them to look beyond Russia for better commercial deals. Moreover, the SCO's statements highlighting that the organisation does not aim to establish a military or political alliance, or target a third party, seem to prove the second claim of

Western analysts. Since the Central Asian members of the SCO pursue different economic models and view each other as competitors in the energy sector, it seems unlikely that the SCO could establish an efficient economic union.

Apart from the SCO, the China-Russian alliance is an important element, more than a detail of the 'New Great Game'. Although both great powers aim to increase their individual influence in the region, they also cooperate on strategic matters. The key point of this alliance is its anti-American posture. Even if the SCO was established as a security-oriented allegiance, China and Russia utilise it to counterbalance heavy US investments in Central Asian energy sectors. With this coordinated effort, Beijing and Moscow have aimed to achieve more from regional energy sources than the US.

The Chinese-Russian attitude also converges upon their conceptualisation of the domestic transformation of the Central Asian regimes. Both the Russian conception of 'sovereign democracy' and China's 'Beijing consensus' underline similar values. Both attitudes prioritise the non-interference in domestic affairs of SCO members.

The China-Russia alliance also focuses upon combatting the Chinese term 'three evils': extremism, separatism, and terrorism in the region. However, the SCO has not been able to provide a regional approach to deal with these issues, only giving attention to them on a domestic scale. The border disputes and continuing tension among SCO members hinder the formulation of larger-scale plan.

On the other hand, cooperation between China and Russia is not hassle-free. The Russian strategy of developing the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which included Russia, Armenia and Belarus, but excluded China, was opposed by Beijing and other members of the SCO. In regard to economic cooperation, Russian and Chinese priorities differ as well. Still, Moscow and Beijing have not been able to establish multi-lateral economic cooperation. For economic cooperation, the Russian

instrument has been the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEc), established in 2005, of which China is not a member. In other words, Russian has been aiming to restore its strategic and economic influence in the post-Soviet realm, implementing its own multilateralism.

On the other hand, China has also been following a similar path within the SCO. Beijing's attempts to develop a SCO Development Fund were not supported by Moscow as such a fund could facilitate Chinese dominance in the organisation. Similarly, Moscow is hesitant to support the Chinese initiative to establish a free trade zone in Central Asia beginning in 2023; there are similar concerns about potential Chinese domination due to Beijing's assertive export policies. Russian-Chinese rivalry has also surfaced about energy, particularly concerning energy pipelines and transnational energy complexes. China's plans to develop energy transfer routes as alternatives to Russia, especially highlighted by Chinese efforts to conclude pipeline negotiations with Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, have raised serious concerns in Moscow. These alternative routes could reduce Russian influence over the flow of Central Asian energy routes, which could eventually decrease Russian politico-strategic clout in the region as a whole.

CHINA-RUSSIA ALLIANCE VS. THE US?

One of the major motivations in the China-Russia alliance was the increasing US focus on Central Asia during the years 1992-2000. However, due to the disputes mentioned above, Moscow and Beijing could not unite effectively enough to counter US influence in the region, even though this influence was not at a level that could overshadow the clout of Russia or China.

The anti-US coalition between Moscow and Beijing in Central Asia has existed mostly on normative terms. Both Asian powers are against US

values infiltrating into the region. For example, the 'colour revolutions' of 2003-2005 were viewed by both Russia and China as having been stimulated from abroad. Both Russia and China acted as representatives of the non-Western world to protect the independence and national interests of Central Asian states from Western infiltration.

Because of disagreements on some security and economic decisions made by Beijing, Russia considers the US as a counter-balancing element in the 'New Great Game'. US and NATO agreements with Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan have strengthened the West's influence, negatively affecting Beijing's interest. Moscow's relations with Japan, south Korea and the US, although not very substantial, still signal its attempts to develop an independent Asian great power posture. CSTO-NATO activities, although they have not reached a joint operation level, still provide a good example of Russia's attempts to develop strategic links with the US. In this competition, the US has focused on north-south trade, especially in the last decade. The aim is to link Pakistan and India to Central Asia via Afghanistan. In this way, the US is attempting to achieve a sphere of influence in the region and create a path linking Central Asia to the Indo-Pacific, one of the most important waterways. The US would thereby develop its relations with two of the most influential South Asian powers. With the prospective development of trade, the US trade-oriented approach seems profitable to Central-Asian trade elites. Kazakhstan's demands for American technology and investment during the last couple of years is an important sign. In the strategic sense, the US has been counter-balancing both Russia and China. With the help of the European Union, the US has managed to detach the Ukraine from Russia's strict sphere of influence. The IMF and the World Bank are also important supporters of the US in helping the Central Asian states deal with their economic crises. Moreover, US naval capabilities have disturbed China in the South China Sea.

THE CONTEXT AND DYNAMICS OF THE 'NEW GREAT GAME'

The 'New Great Game' aims to provide a rhetorical explanation to contradicting and partially conjoining American, Chinese and Russian interests in Central Asia. In a nutshell, the region is important for the US by virtue of its proximity to Afghanistan. For Russia, Moscow aims to sustain its privileged role in the region. For China, Beijing wants to expand its politico-economic influence in Asia.

Within a more detailed framework, the US continues its anti and counter terror activities particularly against Islamic radicals and aims to develop regional cooperation for these activities. Moreover, Washington is after the democratization of the region which could provide a better collaboration with regional countries for marketing natural resources. Russia is against such a democratic transition in the region, and on the contrary protects the regional status-quo via supporting the authoritarian regimes. Yet, similar to Washington, Moscow is also against Islamic ideological movements, not only for a security reasons but also because of their potential to reduce Russian influence in the region. China heavily focuses on utilizing regional energy resources, maintaining the security of energy transfer routes, and keeping the US influence in the region minimum. Beijing is also against Islamist radical movements. This sketch shows that mainly Central Asian security could provide a cooperation platform for these great powers altogether. It also underlines that all three are conflicting on utilizing Central Asian energy resources. Yet, there is more to add to this sketch. The speakers' comments added many details to it. Within a more detailed framework, the US continues its anti- and counter-terror activities, particularly against Islamic radicals. It aims to develop regional cooperation for these activities. Moreover, Washington is after the democratisation of the region, which could provide better collaboration with regional countries in terms for the marketing of natural resources. Russia is against such a democratic transition in the region; on the contrary, it protects the regional status-quo by sup-

porting the authoritarian regimes. However, similar to Washington, Moscow is also against Islamic ideological movements, not only for security reasons, but also because of their potential to reduce Russian influence in the region. China heavily focuses on utilising regional energy resources, maintaining the security of energy transfer routes, and keeping US influence in the region to a minimum. Beijing is also against Islamist radical movements. This sketch shows that mainly Central Asian security could provide a common cooperation platform for these great powers. It also underlines that all three have conflicts about the utilisation of Central Asian energy resources. However, there is more to add to this sketch: The speakers' comments added many details.

The second speaker focused on the 'New Great Game' from the perspective of the tension between the US, China and Russia in Central Asia, specifically in Afghanistan. He first underlined the difficulty in identifying the current motivations of the states in terms of their geopolitical and security-related interests. The speaker focused on the US military presence in Afghanistan. In the US, the reason for the long-term US military presence is justified as it counters the threat of terrorism. This threat is the element which determines the discussions between the Taliban and the US, with the participation of the Afghan government. Although the US has troops in Germany, Japan and South Korea, the troops stationed in Afghanistan are there for different reasons. When the US established a troop presence in Germany, Japan and South Korea, the US was producing 50 per cent of the global GDP. Today, however, the US produces 25 per cent, which shows that the US relative power has been cut in half.

The Soviet Union also stayed in Afghanistan militarily from 1979 to 1989 due to the same type of threat perception and the need to protect their borders. The Soviet presence in Afghanistan, close to the Persian Gulf, raised the US threat perception that the Soviets were threatening the oil fields of the Persian Gulf.

The speaker further stated that when the US began to station troops in Afghanistan in 2001, it received the support of Russia and passive support from China. However, the understanding between the US and

Russian administrations at that time was that the US troops would stay for a relatively short period and then leave. When US forces continued their stay and achieved a strategic partnership with the government of Afghanistan, Russia's views changed. Iran also helped the US forces in Afghanistan at the beginning of the operation in 2001. Similar to Russia, Iran's perception of the extended stay of US forces in Afghanistan also changed. Also, the US achieved rights for bases in Kirgizstan and Pakistan.

In 2014, the Obama administration, which had a different perspective from that of the Trump administration, decided to withdraw from Afghanistan. The speaker mentioned that when Obama talked with his Russian counterparts about withdrawal, the Russians said, 'We do not believe you.' Therefore, there was a breakdown in cooperation regarding counter-terrorism.

One of the results of current peace negotiations between the US, the Taliban and the Afghan government about the future of Afghanistan has been the development of a fairly significant consensus between the US, China and Russia about the need for a political settlement; this would provide stability after the withdrawal of US troops from the region. President Trump has been able to convince Russia about the US intention to withdraw.

The speaker went on to say that in the mid to long term, the stability of this region depends on the development of connectivity for Afghanistan and Central Asia, as this is a landlocked area. The great powers differ in their viewpoints regarding connectivity. During the US Security Council discussions concerning the mandate for the US mission in Afghanistan, there was a clash between the US and China due to the original text of the draft resolution regarding connectivity via Belt and Road. The US put forth its strategic objections against the Belt and Road Initiative. As a result, the US bilateral policy toward other countries of the region, particularly in regard to connectivity projects in the region, is not aligned with the interests of Afghanistan and the stability of the country. The question would be whether the US would move from the alignment of

a political settlement in Afghanistan toward a more general alignment in terms of connectivity.

The speaker stated that within this context, the US is no longer a major economic power in the region. In 2001, when the US first stationed troops in Afghanistan, its economy was four times larger than the economies of China, Russia and Iran. Today, it is approximately 20 per cent larger. Therefore, should the US retreat from the region or embrace more cooperative efforts?

The third speaker first questioned the existence of the 'New Great Game.' He said that there is a competition among the great powers, but not a game. The interactions between China, Russia and the US are happening on a new type of Eurasian geopolitical space. This space is a testing ground for a new model of world order, where there is no multipolarity, and not even polarity. The US, China and Russia could cooperate, especially in regard to common security. Russia is grateful to the US for having bases in Central Asia due to the common threat perceptions. Russia and China, on the other hand, cooperate for the creation of a Eurasian macro-region. In this macro-region, new types of societies relying on new identities are growing. Also, more multiculturalism is seen in this new region.

The fourth speaker tried to summarise the extremely complex situation of the 'New Great Game' from an American perspective. He stated that President Trump, with his style of communication, has been confusing and puzzling observers. When we look at Central Asia from the American perspective, it is necessary to see how the American elites among the national security elites of Washington feel. The increased perception right now is that the US is surrounded by enemies. By far, the most important bilateral relationship is its relationship with China, and it is no mystery that this relationship is not good. The Americans believe that the current relationship with China is a relationship of 'failed expectations'. At the beginning of the millennia, after China's succession to the World Trade Organization, the US had a naïve idea that China was in the middle of a river: it will cross the river and come to us. The speaker said

that 'us' did not mean America in general, but 'us' was the West, indicating a progressive or incremental conversion into a liberal democracy and free market. Now, the Trump administration is saying that it did not happen that way, it is not the way we thought, and China is not one of us. This is the perception which unites the elites of both political parties in Washington, even if these elites do not agree on any other matter. There is a growing perception in Washington that China is an existential threat to the US. The speaker added that this idea should be corrected because he did not believe that it was true.

The speaker mentioned that President Trump has become the catalyst for these perceptions because of the trade war. The trade war really began for the wrong reasons. The tensions surrounding the trade war have also been increasing due to developments in the South China Sea, particularly because China has been establishing its sovereignty there; the Belt and Road Initiative and an increased Chinese presence in Africa have also contributed to this problem. The perception in America is that China is rewriting the rules, such as the Bretton Woods Agreement, which underlined that the US is the world's most formidable economic power. The IMF, the World Bank and the United Nations are the other actors in this rule-based and participatory system, under the benevolent tutelage of the US. It is a way of describing the US as the *good guy*.

The speaker continued that China, having been a very formidable economic power for more than a decade, is now enforcing its position in the world arena by virtue of this international economic system. The perception in the US was that China would join this participatory system. But now, the idea is that this is not happening, and a prolonged confrontational period is expected. This is worrisome because two major economic powers of the world are not agreeing on the rules of the game. There is now an adversarial relationship between these two major powers.

On the other hand, Russia has aligned itself with China as a legitimate partner. Due to developments in Crimea, and sanctions from the US and the European Union, the logical ally for Russia has become China. The Chinese economy is also much bigger.

The speaker added that this misperception about the intentions of two major powers now affect the opinions of US analysts and policy makers. The reality is that US diplomacy is doing extremely poorly everywhere. In the periphery of Central Asia, the US has 'horrible relations' with Iran and Pakistan, and also significant problems of disengagement with Afghanistan. With India, the US has been trying to improve its relations with some success, but not one hundred per cent. The Philippines, which used to be a US ally, is no more closely attached to the US. The US also has problems with Europe, its traditional ally. Oddly enough, the most shining relationship is with Vietnam, an old enemy. The US does not have many real friends and has not managed to cultivate them successfully.

In this framework, the China-Russia alignment, although is not necessarily anti-American, is creating a new world order. It is different from and probably not compatible with the rule-based system, which was created largely through American agencies after World War II. The current US administration, according to the speaker, is a bit puzzled about its priorities, which is an added element of confusion among Washington political elites. The speaker also mentioned that President Trump could be re-elected, despite the above-mentioned issues of his administration.

The speaker summarised that in order to achieve the connectivity that China has been aiming for, and to create a more organic society in Central Asia, an active American participation is required. In this way, US concerns regarding China and Russia may be resolved, but perhaps they can be reduced through more productive dialogue.

THE TRANSITION OF THE 'NEW GREAT GAME' IN CENTRAL ASIA

Because of the moderator's question, the panel's discussions shifted to the transition of Russia-China and US rivalry in Central Asia. In this transition, two elements were highlighted: One is the withdrawal of the

US from the region; the other is President Xi's vision for China to become the leader in world politics.

The first speaker began with the concept of globalisation. He stated that globalisation has relied too much on the US. If the US retreats, then everybody retreats. There needs to be a more balanced and inclusive approach. In this sense, Russia is very important because of its role in the region, regardless of its GDP. In other words, the China-Russia relationship is not an alliance, but an interdependence. Globalisation in this sense is Americanisation. Therefore, no one can replace the US in globalised Central Asia. China's comparative advantage in the region is the building of infrastructure, economic development and mutual connectivity. With these, China has been building an economic corridor which includes Afghanistan and India, and this is becoming the China-South Asia Economic Corridor. Central Asia is the northern part of this corridor and is connected to the countries of the south. In this connectivity, the US also has a significant role. If the US retreats then everybody will suffer. The US is retreating because of its huge debts, and it does not want to cover any more costs. However, to blame China or to scapegoat China will not solve the problem. Therefore, more cooperation is needed in Central Asia.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS ON THE 'NEW GREAT GAME'

The participants examined the 'New Great Game' from various angles. One participant stressed the importance of people's views about globalisation. Globalisation is not only Americanisation, according to one participant. The Chinese are now everywhere, working toward and becoming a part of global society. This is globalisation at the people's level. In addition to that, the Chinese building of infrastructure in Central Asia is creating interconnectivity and therefore furthering globalisation.

Another participant emphasised the situation in Afghanistan. He said that the problems of Afghanistan are related to the geopolitics surrounding the country. Many people have been victimised for this reason; the suffering of Afghans is a result of this new geopolitical situation. The second speaker commented about the issue of Afghanistan, stating that political solutions require the consideration of victims' testimonies. These testimonies can be seen at the Victims' Museum in Kabul. It is a universal problem that in international politics, victims have little voice. The fourth speaker stated that although he does not have on-the-ground military experience, he has diplomatic experience in Kabul. He has met with top political figures in Afghanistan. According to his experience, at the end of 30 years of war, the US does not seem to have significant achievements in Afghanistan. It is not clear where the billions of US dollars have gone to in Afghanistan, and most of that money still has not been accounted for. People are paying warlords, and suitcases full of cash have disappeared. The US tried to transform Afghan society toward development and democracy. However, there was an enormous disconnect between the means and the ends. The US did not correctly calculate how to transform Afghan society. The problems are still there, and the Taliban controls 50 per cent of the country. Unfortunately, the outcome is still tragic.

Another participant pointed out that none of the speakers are specifically Central Asian experts or representatives. He particularly commented on the Belt and Road Initiative and the views presented about it. The political and economic elite of Central Asia see the Belt and Road Initiative quite positively, but the people in these countries do not. The reason is that the elites benefit from the initiative, but the common people are suffering from it. For example, the Xinjiang-Uyghur people say that the initiative does not create jobs for them. In other words, the initiative has not met people's expectations. Regarding the Central Asian political elites, the initiative maintains a corrupt system. The development that the initiative is expected to achieve should not be only economic. Moreover, the initiative does not create interdependency, but rather dependency

in Central Asia. The Central Asian countries will not and cannot benefit from the outcomes of the initiative; China will be the biggest winner.

Another participant commented on connectivity. Regarding the term, the participant stated that connectivity does not work globally, it works exclusively. It does not touch people's lives. It is mainly bilateral. Another participant commented on connectivity. Regarding the term, the participant stated that connectivity does not work globally; it works exclusively. It does not affect everybody's lives; it is mainly bilateral.

The last participant asked about the Chinese authorities' influence or effect upon Hong Kong. He questioned why both sides are not sincere with each other. The first speaker responded to the question about connectivity and the outcomes of the Belt and Road Initiative in Central Asia. He said that within the Belt and Road Initiative, many contracts were signed in Central Asia. China works with Chinese workers due to the cultural proximity. It is a step-by-step project, and many more contracts are on their way. The initiative does not only target Central Asia, but also connectivity with other regions, including South and North Asia.

Regarding the question of bilateralism, the first speaker underlined that the Belt and Road Initiative is open to everyone. So far, 178 countries have signed agreements within this scheme. Some have not signed because the US is against the plan. Although it currently seems bilateral, it aims to be multilateral. It is a step-by-step process in which China's comparative advantage is in its development of infrastructure. Regarding rule-based relations, no comprehensive rules have been written about e-commerce so far. European and US rules are still in effect. The third speaker commented on the Russian perspective, that Russia-China relations in Central Asia have provided opportunities rather than challenges for Russia.

The fourth speaker commented on the US position regarding China-Russia relations. He stated that a new dialogue is required between the US and China. The role of the US in Central Asia should reply on

China-US cooperation and improved understanding. The US media also covers the negative sides of the Belt and Road Initiative, saying that it is not going to be productive and will fail. The speaker underlined that if the Belt and Road works, it will be good for the US. However, more cooperation is needed. The US is an outsider in this region, and therefore it does not have much to bring to the table right now except criticism; this is not productive.

The second speaker briefly stated that the centre of world economy has shifted to continental Asia. Therefore, connectivity is becoming much more important. The US should therefore become more involved in this region.

CONCLUSION

The 'New Great Game' in Central Asia still has far too many variables which prevent a clear outline of the future. In an economic sense, although all great power players have had a varying degree of success, individually they are still far behind their ultimate objectives. The US aims to open up the region for international trade and investment with a liberal democratic model, and this goal has not yet been achieved with considerable success. Russia's aims are to achieve a competitive advantage by creating a customs union, but this has not helped to protect its faltering industries. China, despite its vast amounts of capital investment in the region, has not yet developed profitable opportunities.

The secondary sources and speakers' statements do not overlap on some matters, such as the level of tension and concerns among the great power actors. More specifically, the speakers did not touch upon the inconsistencies and imbalances between the Russian and Chinese national interests or priorities. Moreover, Russia's strategies for becoming a formidable actor in Central Asia, as well its manoeuvres to use the US against China were not discussed by the speakers. In short, the 'New Great Game' has its deep complexities which generate rivalry between

the great powers. However, at the same time the 'New Great Game' requires cooperation and productive dialogue for a peaceful continuation of this rivalry.

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Counter- Terrorism in the Post- Daesh Era

TALLHA ABDULRAZAQ

SUMMARY

For years, Daesh – otherwise known as ISIS or ISIL – has been at the forefront of global counter-terrorism concerns due to its territorial ambitions and the particularly gruesome and theatrical manner in which it has conducted its attacks (Weiss and Hassan, 2015). However, as dangerous and as brutal as the extremist terror group is, the international obsession with Daesh has arguably allowed for threats posed by other terrorist organisations to be downplayed and minimised, sometimes to the point of global powers such as the United States arming and training terrorist organisations and subsequently justifying such moves by indicating the threat posed by Daesh.

This closed session, held under Chatham House rules, aimed to discuss the counter-terrorism landscape in the post-Daesh era following the organisation's territorial collapse earlier this year. The speakers attempted to place the discussion with reference to Turkey's role in the global fight against terror, while also discussing counter-terrorism dynamics utilised by other powers, particularly the US.

During the session, the two panellists shared their analyses and experiences with other convened experts and stakeholders. The first speaker spoke at length about the threat to Turkey from the Kurdistan Workers Party – better known by its Kurdish acronym, the PKK – and the terror group's sister organisations, such as the Syrian People's Protection Units, or YPG. The first speaker outlined Turkey's approach to counter-terrorism, both as an inde-

pendent actor and as the country with the second largest army in NATO.

The second speaker took a more theoretical approach and discussed the evolution of counter-terrorism strategy at a global level, before moving on to Turkey's domestic and near-abroad approach to combating terror. At a global level, the second speaker argued that counter-terrorism strategy has been weakened by its overreliance on being a US-centric activity. This in turn has influenced the way other countries have used counter-terrorism as a tool without having any normative commonalities state-to-state on how to define 'terrorism'. Turkey's approach has therefore been specifically tailored to its own threat perception rather than following the lead of the United States.

Finally, during the question and answer session, other experts engaged in the discussion, thus leading to further analysis being offered by the two speakers. The session concluded with an acknowledgement that the discussion would have been more rounded had there been experts present who were specialised in the counter-terrorism issues of Iraq, it being the country where Daesh found its roots. Attendance from specialists from other regional countries would also have been welcome. There is a general understanding that the Daesh threat may not actually be over, despite the huge losses the organisation has suffered recently. It may therefore be too early to talk about a true post-Daesh era.

KEY POINTS

- It is not possible to defeat terrorism by supporting one terrorist group over another
- NATO has been undermined by the United States' and European Union's support for the YPG
- The lack of a normative definition for 'terrorism' has harmed global counter-terrorism efforts
- The counter-terrorism theoretical toolkit is disproportionately shaped by the US' counter-terrorism paradigm

INTRODUCTION

Since it burst onto the global scene with such visceral ferocity in 2013, Daesh has been the primary focus of international counter-terrorism efforts. The United States-led global coalition against Daesh was formed in 2014, bringing together dozens of countries to face off against the extremists in what was seen as an existential threat to modern Iraq and Syria as nation-states, and a significant threat to the global population deemed 'non-believers'. Daesh militants would subsequently become targets for their own acts of terror.

It is not hard to see why such a global effort was launched. After all, Daesh's terrorist attacks have been wide-ranging and broad spectrum in nature. Daesh has conducted insurgency in a manner that radically differs from other jihadist groups, including Al-Qaeda, its progenitor. Daesh has attempted to seize and hold territory, and they have also struck population centres around the world. They have been savvy in using the media, inflicting maximum carnage while drawing maximum media attention to further bolster their propaganda efforts.

However, in light of the collapse of Daesh's short-lived and self-proclaimed 'caliphate' following the final capture of the Syrian town of Baghuz in March 2019, it has become apparent that the international community has downplayed the destabilising threat posed by other terrorist organisations, some of whom have enjoyed extensive logistical and military support from the US. Principle amongst these groups – particularly within the Turkish counter-terrorism context – is the PKK and its sister organisations such as the YPG in Syria.

Having forged an alliance with the US administration under former President Barack Obama, ostensibly to fight Daesh, the YPG – operating under the banner of the US-concocted Syrian Democratic Forces – started holding territory in northern Syria, directly threatening Turkey's national security and leading to a chain of events that culminated in Ankara's recent Peace Spring border security operation.

Turkey's national security priorities led to the launching of such an operation despite consternation from European Union member states and mixed messages emanating from the White House under President Don-

ald Trump. Such a blasé approach to Turkey's national security caused a fissure within NATO, and it was within these circumstances and the backlash against Ankara's decision to secure its borders that the closed session took place.

CONTESTED APPROACHES TO TERRORISM AND REVISITING THE ALLIANCE: NATO AND TURKEY

The first speaker began the session by highlighting Turkey's role, as a NATO member, in the international fight against terrorism as part of a wider US-led alliance. As a NATO army, Turkey has fought 'chest to chest' against Daesh, and then again against the PKK/YPG in occupied Syrian cities such as Afrin. The first speaker paid homage to Turkey's role as a coalition partner, stating that it had done 'more than its fair share' in the fight against terror. As a result, the first speaker said that Turkey had paid a high price in the fight against terrorism stemming from Daesh, Al-Qae-da, the PKK/YPG and the Fethullah Terrorist Organisation (FETO).

However, due to bad faith shown by the US and the EU, Turkey has had to reassess its national security imperatives to match its own priorities, taking less notice of the priorities of its traditional allies. Turkish allies within existing frameworks, such as NATO, have struck alliances with the YPG despite the overwhelming evidence that it was an extension of the PKK, which has been recognised as a terrorist organisation by Turkey, the United States and the EU. According to the Turkish perspective, the first speaker said that it made no sense to proclaim a desire to defeat Daesh terrorism by supporting other terrorist groups.

The first speaker then discussed how Turkey took on the initiative to ensure that its own border and national security priorities were defended. Operation Peace Spring was launched primarily to clear the YPG east of

the Euphrates, and to establish a safe zone where Syrian refugees could voluntarily return to their country under Turkish, and what was hoped later to be international, protection. Turkey currently hosts more than 3.5 million Syrian refugees; their voluntary repatriation was touted as a way to both help reduce the burden on Turkey, while also contributing to the rebuilding of Syria.

Ankara also planned to secure Daesh prisoners held by the YPG and ultimately to repatriate them. The first speaker argued that such repatriation efforts for foreign Daesh terrorists must be a multilateral effort, and that Turkey expects its friends and allies to reciprocate and not prevaricate on their international legal obligations. The first speaker said that allied 'states should not shirk their responsibilities,' and that it was unreasonable of them to expect Turkey to shoulder the responsibility of incarcerating hundreds if not thousands of terrorists on their behalf. The EU's failure to honour their obligations to help fund refugee relief efforts was highlighted as being an example of how Turkey felt its allies had previously acted in bad faith. Therefore, they could not be relied upon to absorb terrorist prisoners they did not want in their own countries.

In terms of countering radicalisation, the first speaker said that Turkey was the largest threat to extremist Islamist groups such as Daesh and Al-Qaeda. According to the speaker, this was because Turkey, under the Justice and Development Party (AKP) led by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, had shown the world how a successful Muslim-majority country could be run in a democratic fashion while not abandoning the religion, culture, and customs of Muslims. This posed a threat to the worldview espoused by radicals such as Daesh, as it gave a viable and successful alternative to their ideological outlook which seeks the imposition of a radical and hardline interpretation of Islamic law.

In light of Turkey's position as a bastion in the fight against terror and in countering radicalisation, the first speaker argued that it was 'time for

the international community to stop its double standards when it comes to dealing with terrorism' and to take Turkish concerns seriously. The first speaker highlighted how the PKK/YPG has committed blatant acts of terror; the PKK has been explicitly recognised as a terrorist organisation by NATO, the EU and the US. Ankara has therefore had expectations that its allies would 'work with us [Turkey] on the ground, not just offer words'. As an example of Turkish commitment to fighting terror, the first speaker indicated that 7,000 people had been deported from Turkey for links to foreign terrorist organisations.

The first speaker concluded by stating that 40,000 Turkish citizens, many of them Kurdish, had been killed by PKK terrorist attacks; Turkey had expected that its allies would stand by them. As a result of the double standards employed by Western powers, particularly within the NATO framework, the first speaker said that this had brought NATO solidarity and reliability into question. This was in and of itself deemed to be globally destabilising; the traditional alliances that have propped up the post-Cold War world order have eroded, and allies have lost trust in one another.

COUNTER-TERRORISM APPROACHES AND THE MIDDLE EASTERN DYNAMIC

The second speaker's presentation began by focusing upon the theoretical aspects of counter-terrorism approaches, and how these have evolved and changed over time. The speaker examined the development of theories according to the context of world events, taking into account the prevailing and dominant powers of each era. The speaker then discussed how these approaches applied to Turkey, and how the Turkish approach to counter-terrorism was influenced by the failure of the Arab Spring, particularly in its near-abroad relationship with Syria.

The second speaker began by commenting upon the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the post-Cold War era, defining a new understanding of terrorism. This was explained in the context of the United States having prevailed over the Soviet Union, and how Washington's views on terrorism influenced the formation of a counter-terrorism strategy. Of particular concern were Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) and the rise of so-called 'religious terrorism'. This was perhaps best exemplified by Al-Qaeda and its leader, Osama bin Laden; they grew in power and influence over other jihadist groups, committed to the establishment of a fundamentalist understanding of an 'Islamic state'.

The second speaker then segued into how Al-Qaeda's operations led to the 9/11 terror attacks that claimed thousands of lives in New York City in 2001. This marked a paradigm shift. The US counter-terrorism strategy 'experienced a diversification', as the internationalisation of terrorism had become a global phenomenon. Counter-terrorism was no longer confined to special forces or intelligence operations; it involved regime change in Afghanistan and Iraq under the banner of the 'Global War on Terror', led by the administration of US President George W. Bush. The United States began to more seriously examine and classify nation-states, such as Iran, as state sponsors of terror.

According to the second speaker, the failure of the Arab Spring in several countries then changed counter-terrorism dynamics once again. This time, terrorism was not only internationalised, but terrorist groups attempted 'to physically control territory', as in the case of Daesh controlling large swathes of Syria and Iraq, establishing a short-lived 'caliphate'. The YPG also controlled vast stretches of Syrian territory. These developments necessitated the primacy of hard military methods to preserve the national integrity and sovereignty of existing nation-states, at the same time protecting the borders of other states from spill-over and the instigation of terror attacks within their borders. A prime example of this was Turkey's Operation Peace Spring, which followed similar operations such as Euphrates Shield in 2016-2017 and Olive Branch in 2018.

The second speaker posited that the 'counter-terrorism toolkit' had been disproportionately influenced by the US counter-terrorism paradigm; as threat perceptions vary from state to state, creation of a global counter-terrorism strategy becomes very difficult. As there is no normative definition of 'terrorism', and that commonalities differ from state to state, there is 'no cohesion in defining terror groups'. Instead, states have even abused the US-established Global War on Terror paradigm, justifying some military actions against dissident groups as being 'counter-terrorism' operations. An example is the Russian intervention into the Syrian conflict in 2015.

Turkey's counter-terrorism strategy was assessed by the second speaker in light of the above, where he drew attention to Ankara's threat landscape. This landscape was predominantly defined in the present era as involving both Daesh and PKK/YPG actions and operations, designed to harm Turkey both domestically and in Turkey's near-abroad in Syria. Due to the lack of commonalities, Turkey has therefore had to develop its own homegrown counter-terrorism strategy. This involves using hard power in both these arenas to ensure Turkish national security objectives are achieved.

The second speaker concluded by defining Turkey's counter-terrorism strategy as being influenced by the proliferation of armed groups and violent non-state actors who seek to use terrorism to take and hold territory. The Turkish approach is therefore characterised as follows:

1. Giving the state primacy as the ultimate legitimate authority
2. A multidimensional containment of primarily the PKK; significant security sector reform, particularly following the FETO coup attempt of 2016
3. Attaining and maintaining intelligence superiority

AREAS TO ADDRESS IN FUTURE DISCUSSIONS

While the discussion was centred around counter-terrorism in the post-Daesh era, it was highlighted in the question and answer session that it might be too soon to discuss a post-Daesh environment. At the time the session was held, the Daesh leadership was still at large. (Many senior figures, including self-styled Caliph Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, have since been killed.) Daesh cells have begun to increase their activities, particularly in Iraq, where they had already been declared defeated. In addition, the regional circumstances which initially led to the rise of Daesh have not yet been addressed: rampant sectarianism; Iranian interference in both Iraq and Syria; and weakened states which have become very susceptible to instability.

Recently published scholarly literature indicates that because the circumstances which facilitated the rise have not been ameliorated, Daesh itself could make a comeback, or it might morph into a far greater threat, perhaps by aligning with other smaller jihadist groups (Frantzman, 2019). Experts in the field of counter-terrorism with specific interest in Daesh have warned for years that the perpetuation of Iranian interference and government sectarianism in countries like Iraq will allow Daesh to re-group. It could rebuild its capacities, even after having suffered defeats on the battlefield (Abdulrazaq and Stansfield, 2016).

On the subject of Iran, it would be beneficial for experts in the field to assess Iran's level of support for militant groups. Arguably, Tehran has a disproportionate influence on the operations of non-state actors throughout the Middle East. Iran operates a vast network of proxies, from Afghanistan to Iraq, onward to Syria, and even into territories as far away as Yemen. Iran's relationship with the Lebanese Shia Islamist Hezbollah also bears considerable scrutiny, as Hezbollah has been branded a terrorist organisation by regional Arab powers, the United States and others. Hezbollah has been instrumental in the training of Shia jihadists who fight at the behest of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). Their

involvement in the war in Syria may give an example of how non-state actors may conduct military interventions as if they were state actors.

Future discussions would also greatly benefit from counter-terrorism experts and practitioners who specialise in the various approaches offered by regional state actors: for example Iraq, including its Kurdistan region. The perspectives of international powers such as the United States would also be welcomed, especially in respect to the future of counter-terrorism in light of evolving terrorist organisations. Such discussions would profit from a frank examination at the present state of alliances and alliance building, especially in respect to the efficacy of NATO, which has been called into question in recent years. A combination of regional perspectives and a globalised understanding of terrorism and counter-terrorism would significantly add to understanding.

Finally, it would be very useful to address non-kinetic approaches to counter-terrorism, especially in respect to various countries' approaches to de-radicalisation. As the second speaker highlighted, the current focus is upon hard military power. Softer approaches exist, which utilise mainstream media and social media in countering terrorist propaganda. They offer de-radicalisation programmes for high-risk individuals, build citizenship and encourage 'buy-in' from vulnerable, marginalised and disenfranchised segments of society. These softer approaches, along with other politico-social methods of counter-terrorism, have been side-lined in favour of a more brute force approach.

CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

The closed session on counter-terrorism in the post-Daesh era paid particular attention to Turkey's national security and the application of its counter-terrorism strategy. Specific attention was focused upon the PKK terror group and associated organisations. Turkey's unique counter-terrorism position was assessed from both a policy perspective and a more theoretical approach, taking into account the dominance of American counter-terrorism thinking and the influence of the paradigm in which that thought came about.

Turkey's counter-terrorism strategy was assessed in terms of kinetic aspects, including Ankara's operations on Syrian territory against both Daesh and the YPG, as well as multilateral efforts with the international community to reduce the terror threat. According to the first speaker, the Turkish government, under the leadership of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, was recognised as an example of a Muslim-majority country which posed the most significant threat to groups like Daesh who espouse intolerant worldviews, incompatible with the international system.

The Turkish approach to counter-terrorism was also framed within the wider discussion of the evolution of counter-terrorism dynamics. Three main periods were examined, beginning with the end of the Cold War, moving on to the post-9/11 era, and concluding with the time frame of the Arab Spring.

However, the question remains whether the Daesh era has actually come to an end. Daesh activities have seen a recent uptick in hotbeds such as Iraq, even though the group was officially declared defeated in December 2017. Daesh and organisations like Al-Qaeda have repeatedly shown a great capacity to exploit unrest in countries, taking the opportunity to launch attacks or find breathing space from which they can regroup and rebuild (Lister, 2015).

Iraq, for example, is currently being convulsed by protests against endemic government corruption, as well as the meddling of foreign states like the US, and especially Iran. Security forces and allied militias, many of whom are loyal to Iran's IRGC, have reportedly used excessive force, leading to hundreds of civilian deaths. In retaliation, some demonstrators have taken matters into their own hands and retaliated with actions like the repeated arson attacks on the Iranian consulate in the southern city of Najaf. With security forces busy stamping out dissent among the Shia Arabs, this could lead to less emphasis placed on intelligence operations designed to root out Daesh cells. This could lead to the terror group's ability to restore some of its military capabilities.

Daesh is not the only terror group, but it has proven itself to be the most lethal. It has been the most effective in putting conventional forces to flight, as was demonstrated by its fearsome effect in 2014 when it conquered one-third of Iraq and a large swathe of Syria (Abdulrazaq and Stansfield, 2016). It might therefore be very beneficial to discuss the resurgence of Daesh, or how it could metamorphose into something far worse.

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Turkish Foreign Policy: Facing Regional and Global Shifts

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INTRODUCTION

Foreign policy is a dynamic process and requires adjustments and re-tuning from time to time depending on regional and global shifts of power, alliances, the emergence of new windows of opportunities as well as threats to national interests. Developments in Turkish foreign policy over the decades testify to the fact that tectonic changes in geopolitics, security, defence, conflicts, humanitarian crises and economic competition have transformative effects on foreign policy. Turkey's foreign policy decisions and practice, especially in the last two decades, have demonstrated the adaptive capacity of Turkey as a regional power

to the new realities of the world and its capacity to navigate in stormy waters. The shifts and challenges in global and regional politics were discussed in the Closed Session, including the key opportunities and challenges for Turkish foreign policy in this transition period. According to the panel, which was comprised of academics, researchers, politicians and diplomats, Turkey has become a more potent actor in international diplomacy and has managed to play a key role in several multilateral organisations. Turkey has sought to share the burden of the great powers by contributing to the resolution of some of the more persistent conflicts and crises worldwide. These include the fight against ISIS, the refugee crisis, contributing to the development of African countries and Iran's nuclear development program.

It was argued that the debate about Turkish foreign policy should take note of the changing regional and global context for international relations, including key tectonic shifts and transitions affecting regional and global levels. These include the decline of US hegemony; the retreat of multilateralism; the emergence of new windows of opportunity for emerging states and the rise of populism on a global level. The legitimacy crisis and counter-revolutions in the MENA region, combined with state failure in Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen at the regional level, were mentioned as variables with potential impact on Turkey-West relations and on Turkey's foreign policy decisions, both within the region and beyond.

Still, over the last decade, Turkey has managed to become a central actor within its region and a major regional power in international politics. One speaker mentioned that Turkey has not only become a key power in Middle East politics, but has also succeeded in portraying itself as the voice of oppressed people in the Middle East and the Global South in general, including Palestinians and Syrian refugees.

It remains that the international system and international organisations have been unable to bring peaceful resolutions to many of the pressing issues of our day. Today, the world faces uncertainty at the international level as right-wing populism, nationalism, Islamophobia and far-left

extremism are on the rise around the world. One of the most central international organisations, the UN, seems to be particularly restricted in bringing about or enforcing consensus. As one speaker posited, the world is less safe than it was five years ago. In this broad picture, Turkey finds itself in a troubled local and international environment. It was argued that while addressing multi-faceted challenges in its immediate neighbourhood and beyond, Turkey has established new partnerships with Russia, China and Iran, in addition to its traditional allies, namely NATO and the EU. These alignments were interpreted by some as a departure of Turkey from its conventional foreign policy paradigms. Others, however, argued that Turkey has not gone through a shift of its axis, but had rather re-tuned its policies in the face of new realities on the ground.

HISTORICAL CHALLENGES FOR TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY

Turkey has been regarded as a model Muslim democracy throughout the 2000s. Turkey's foreign policy initiatives toward its neighbours played a key role in conflict resolutions, support for free movement and encouragement of free trade among Middle Eastern countries. However, the so-called Arab Spring in 2011 dramatically changed the landscape of the region; it turned into a conflict zone, and the rise of non-state armed groups caused instability in Turkey's neighbourhood (Keyman, 2017). Significantly, Turkey continues to host more than 4 million refugees and has spent more than \$35 billion on refugees since 2011. The downturn in economic trends combined with the refugee crisis, which affected domestic politics, have put the government in a difficult position. Opposition parties have been pressing the government about the presence of Syrians, seeking to leverage the situation in domestic political discourse.

Historically, there has been significant foreign policy change during the Justice and Development Party (JDP) rule. Broadly speaking, Turkish foreign policy was largely shaped by security concerns and ideological un-

derpinnings during the Cold War. The priority for the founding ideology of Turkey was to have close relations with West as a secular, modern and aspiring democratic state. Security threats, on the other hand, pushed Turkey to have its place under the NATO umbrella. Such an ideological position and perceived security threat coupled with the long westernisation project left its mark on the foreign policy choices of Turkey. In the mid-1980s, and especially in the early 1990s following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkish foreign policy recorded some degree of change. However, the liberation of Turkish foreign policy from its ideological constraints began with the rise of JDP to power. The JDP has embraced neighbouring countries and the nations of the former Soviet bloc, aiming for collaboration and negotiation instead of conflict. During the first decade of the JDP leadership, from 2002-2011, negotiations were made to resolve even long-standing conflicts, for example with Armenia and Syria. During this period, the new approaches in Turkish foreign policy included democratic advances and the mending of relations with Iraqi Kurds as well. Progress with Iraqi Kurds and the Oslo peace negotiations with the PKK were aimed at resolving the Kurdish issue in Turkey, thereby attempting to solve Turkey's chronic problems, including at the regional and international level.

During the second term of the JDP era, the military lost its dominance over civilian government and subsequently over domestic and foreign policy. The JDP followed a more active and open foreign policy when compared to its predecessors. The JDP's engagement with Russia, Iran, the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Egypt, as well as less favourable relations with Israel in 2010, were criticised by Western countries. There were some discussions that there had been a shift in the axis of Turkish foreign policy and that Turkey was turning its face from the West to the East..

REGIONAL INSTABILITY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY

Turkey's neighbourhood was turned into a war zone after 2011. Conflicts in Syria and Iraq impacted Turkey's national security and its relations with global powers. Non-state armed groups, including ISIS and the Democratic Union Party (PYD), raised security challenges for Turkey. Turkey had been following a more liberal policy at that time; it had been engaged with neighbouring countries, supported freedom of movement and signed free-trade agreements with some Middle Eastern countries. However, Turkish policies changed dramatically in the post-Arab Spring era as the region became more volatile and unstable (Aras, 2017).

The uprisings in the Middle East have substantially challenged the mainstream and historical continuity of foreign policy in many countries, including Turkey. Relations between Turkey and Syria have deteriorated, while Iran has sought to increase its influence in the region. Turkey and other regional countries have recalculated their foreign policy goals as a result of these conflicts. Global and regional powers have failed to halt the violence in the Middle East and the chaotic situation has posed great challenges for Turkey. In addition, the PYD in Northern Syria, which is affiliated with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), has gained ground with the help of the US.

The challenges of the Syrian civil war to Turkey are not only from the threat of terrorism issuing from Syrian territory; the more than four million refugees who have crossed the border into Turkey have also contributed to instability. The refugee influx is one of the hottest items in domestic as well as international politics. It has put pressure on the government in elections, and opposition parties have harshly criticised the government's refugee policies.

Following the collapse of the peace process in Turkey, the PYD, the sister organisation of the PKK, began to challenge Turkey's national security. From the beginning of the uprising in Syria, there was collusion between the Assad regime and the PYD so that the regime withdrew its military from northern Syria and the PYD refrained from joining the anti-Assad coalition. This undeclared agreement between the PYD and the Assad regime created room for the PYD to put its ideology into action and train its militias, including PKK militants in Syria. During this period, the PYD forced some Kurds and Arabs who did not share its policies or ideology from their homes in certain territories under the PYD rule. According to human rights reports in 2014, there were human rights violations committed by the People's Protection Units (YPG) against Arabs and local tribes in areas of northern Syria who would not accept the groups undisputed authority (Human Rights Watch, 2014).

The challenges from northern Syria proved that national security is certainly at the centre of Turkish foreign policy. The long-standing conflict between Turkey and the PKK has cost the lives of thousands of people and has developed the a potential upcoming more brutal with the PYD in Syria.

The demise of the central authority and the withdrawal of Syrian soldiers from northern Syria has created an opportunity for the PYD to consolidate its power in northern Syria, creating the potential for the formation of a regional autonomous regime. The PKK's sister organisation, the PYD, and its de-facto autonomous status along the Turkish border has been perceived as a grave danger by the Turkish government. The strengthening position of the PYD has created room for the PKK to implement its ideology in northern Syria. More importantly, the PYD's canton in the region has bolstered possible PKK attacks against Turkey.

After the establishment of the cantons in northern Syria, the PYD has begun to implement its leftist ideology and governance model in schools, community centres and military training centres. The PYD shares the

same ideology with the PKK regarding governance style, leadership and organisational structure (Baykal and Öğür, 2018). This situation clearly produces a national security threat for Turkey.

TURKISH-EU RELATIONS AND THE REFUGEE CRISIS

In the early 2000s, Turkey reached a tremendous point for entering the European Union (EU) membership process. Many reforms were launched during this golden era of Turkish-EU relations, within the context of EU membership negotiations. Although Turkey carried out comprehensive structural reforms and harmonised its legal system with that of the EU, thus meeting the fundamental expectations of the Union for full membership, EU leaders started talking about cultural and civilizational differences between Turkey and the EU. The rise of culturalist discourse disrupted the negotiation process. In this context, Germany and France came out with a 'privileged partnership' proposal instead of full membership for Turkey. The privileged partnership offer slowed the membership process as the Turkish government continued to insist on full membership. However, the picture has become more nuanced and complicated when one looks at the fields of convergence between the two sides: trade; financial flow; knowledge flow; migration; energy and security (Kaya, 2018, cited in Tocci and Aydın-Düzgit, 2015).

In addition, the rhetoric of right-wing political parties in the EU has impacted the direction of Turkey-EU relations. These political parties have increased their voter share in the EU Parliament in recent years, and their anti-immigrant and Islamophobic discourse has had a huge influence on the public. These populist parties and extremist political groups have acted against EU enlargement, diversity, multiculturalism and Islam. Turkish and Muslim minorities in the EU have been targeted verbally and physically by these extremist groups. In total, these occurrences have affected the relations between both sides regarding immigration and Turkey's membership process.

One speaker stated that far-right extremism, increasing anti-immigration sentiments and Brexit have lessened the problem-solving capacity of the EU in regional and global crises. Although the EU still remains an actor for the liberal order in international politics, its liberal-democratic identity has been called into question.

Turkey has historically been a strategic ally of western countries and a NATO member, which means that Turkey occupies a vital place for EU security and is an indispensable partner for the prevention of illegal immigration to the EU, particularly from the Middle East. It was argued that, given the number of immigrants who entered EU countries in 2015, Turkey's pivotal role to stop a large-scale refugee flux into Europe should be better acknowledged.

After the long negotiations between Ankara and Brussels, both signed a deal in March 2016 to prevent refugees flow via Turkey. However, the refugee flow might continue if the civil war in Syria and instability in the region continue unabated.

One of the biggest security concerns for the EU was Turkey's increasing relations with Russia, particularly regarding military arena and the refugee influx from Syria through to Turkish soil. One speaker stated that the EU does not understand Turkey's concerns about Syria and the Kurdish issue and criticised Turkey's close relations with Russia.

TURKISH-US ALLIANCE UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE PYD

It has been argued that US hegemonic power has been questioned in recent years. One speaker stated that the world has been witnessing the decline of US hegemony and the gradual transition from unipolarity to multipolarity. Moreover, there is a global power shift from West to East and North to South.

Turkey-US relations have consisted of a long strategic partnership since World War II. One speaker expressed that the golden era of Turkey-US relations was during the 1950s and 1960s. During the Cold War era, Turkey was a bulwark against Soviet expansionism into the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean. Although Turkey found room to manoeuvre in its neighbourhood during the post-Cold War period, the state elite consistently avoided engagement with Middle Eastern countries. In the early 1990s, foreign policy was redefined by President Özal, who followed an active foreign policy toward Turkey's neighbours, including the Balkans, the Middle East and the Caspian region, which had a potential to be significant for Turkey-West relations. His foreign policy initiatives were not appreciated by the security elite and were interrupted by his death in 1993. During that period, Turkey improved its relations with some neighbouring countries. However, there was no profound change in Turkish foreign policy due to the Turkish army's huge influence, especially toward the Middle East, due to security reasons. Turkey's foreign policy approach remained more or less the same until the JDP leadership. As mentioned above, Turkey embraces its neighbourhood and improved relations. It even took part in some processes of conflict resolution. This policy change has been welcomed by the US and European countries due to its liberal orientation.

Although some problems have occurred between Turkey and the US during the Trump administration, the US did withdraw some of its soldiers from Syria and opened the way for Turkish operations against the PYD. During Obama's second term, relations became tense due to differences regarding approaches to Middle Eastern politics, namely their different stances towards the Arab Spring and the coup in Egypt. Since the beginning of the Syrian conflict, the security of Turkey's borders has been a priority. Turkey followed the open-border policy for refugees. Early on, Turkey suggested the creation of a buffer zone to prevent Syrian regime attacks against civilians along the Turkish-Syrian border. However, Turkey's allies and other countries who initially supported the Syrian opposition did not buy into the buffer zone idea.

US-Turkish relations worsened during the Obama administration. The anti-ISIS coalition was formed by the US in 2014 and under the name of the 'Train and Equip' program, 500 fighters were trained to fight against ISIS. The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) was formed by mainly pro-PKK or PYD militants who took on active roles in this program. Turkey voiced its opposition due to the PYD's organic link with the PKK, which is considered to be a terrorist organisation by Turkey, the EU and the US (Dalay and Keyman, 2019). One speaker stated that Turkey had protested many times against cooperation with a terrorist organisation (PKK) to defeat another terrorist organisation (ISIS). The anti-ISIS coalition provided military equipment and training to the SDF despite Turkey's strong opposition. Within this picture, according to one speaker and also stressed by session participants, Turkish-US relations experienced their most significant low during the Obama administration.

Obama neither brought a solution to the advances of ISIS nor to the broader problems in the Middle East. Within this context, the speakers agreed that US hegemony has been in decline, which was elaborated on by one of the participants in the context of the economy and newly emerging powers. The US no longer acts as a superpower and its foreign policy has been prioritised based on the prevention of immigration and trade wars with China. At the same time, the US has been escalating with China and losing dominance to Russia in the Middle East.

Relations with the US have worsened over foreign policy choices concerning Russia, Syria and Iran. Turkey's close dealings with Russia during the Syrian crisis and the purchase of S-400 missiles have increased their relations as strategic partners. The Turkish government's request to buy Patriot missiles from NATO members was not granted. Therefore, the government decided to buy missiles from Russia. NATO-members, including the US, threatened Turkey with sanctions.

The failed coup attempt on 15 July 2016, organised by members of the FETÖ (Fethullah Terrorist Organisation), further complicated the relations between Turkey and the US. The coup attempt caused the death

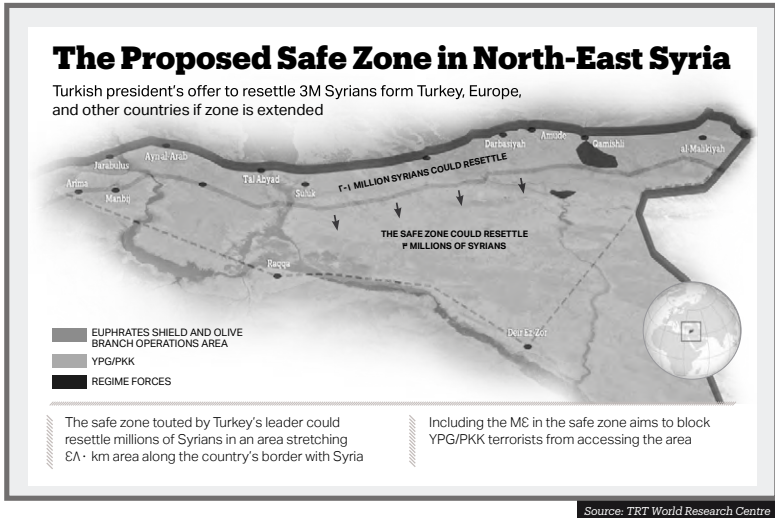
of more than 250 people and hundreds were wounded as a result of the putschists' attacks. Turkey's extradition request for the leader of FETÖ, Fethullah Gülen, was refused by the US and relations between the two countries have worsened as a result.

THE TURKISH APPROACH TO THE SYRIAN CRISIS

The crisis in Syria is one of the most significant contemporary challenges for Turkey. As mentioned above, Turkey opened its borders to refugees in the early days of the civil war, from 2011 to 2015. During that period, millions of refugees crossed the border, leading to criticism from Turkish opposition parties. Currently, there are three main groups that Turkey has aimed to deal with in the Syrian conflict: the elimination of ISIS, which has lost most of its previous capabilities; the PYD, sister organisation of the PKK; the political transition of the Assad regime.

The demise of central authority and the withdrawal of the Assad regime from northern Syria in 2012 created a power vacuum which was filled by both the PYD and ISIS. The Turkish government has supported moderate opposition groups, such as the Free Syrian Army (FSA), against Damascus since the beginning of the civil war. However, Turkey has taken on a more proactive position and launched operations against the PYD and ISIS after the 15 July coup attempt. The increasing instability within its neighbourhood and the risks to Turkish national security have led Turkey to resort to increased military action for building a safe zone in its borderlands, clearly illustrated in the following figure.

The relationship between the Syrian conflict and the PKK is one of the significant topics discussed during the session. The Syrian conflict and its implications for Turkey have played a role in influencing domestic politics, particularly as it relates to the peace process with the PKK (2013-2015). Following the collapse of the peace process in 2015, two police officers were killed by the PKK on 22 July 2015, and the PKK declared



'The Revolutionary People's War' against the Turkish state. Negotiations officially ended thereafter. Turkey launched an official military operation against PKK targets in Qandil, northern Iraq, in the same year. Following the collapse of the peace process, some PKK militants infiltrated into Turkey from Syria and launched urban warfare in what became known as the 'Barricade War', between 2015 and 2016. As a result of the Barricade War, tens of thousands of people left their homes for safe cities in the eastern and western parts of Turkey. Hundreds of Turkish security officials were killed, and thousands were wounded.

At the same time, ISIS appeared in Iraq and Syria. Turkey was targeted by ISIS attacks in various cities. These caused the deaths of over 300 citizens between 2014 and 2017 (Akman, 2019). In 2015, Ankara launched a construction project along its southern border, roughly 785 kilometres in length, to prevent illegal infiltration into Turkey. However, the walls did not prevent either ISIS or the YPG attacks from occurring. Turkey took actions against the threats posed by these two organisations. Turkey launched the cross-border Operation Euphrates Shield against ISIS in August 2016. The operation ended the presence of ISIS along the Turk-

ish-Syrian border. Following the operation, Turkish security officers raided ISIS cell locations in Turkey and arrested hundreds of ISIS members.

After Operation Euphrates Shield, the Turkish army launched another cross-border operation against the YPG in northern Syria, as it perceived a grave threat to Turkish national security. One speaker stated that the PYD-controlled area along the Turkish border posed a threat to Turkey, and some of its militants and PKK members had infiltrated Turkey to attack military positions. The Turkish city of Kilis was targeted by missiles fired from the PYD-controlled town of Afrin. More than 20 people were killed in Kilis. On 18 March 2018, the Turkish army and the Free Syria Army entered Afrin for the second time to eliminate YPG militants who were in control of the city.

Lastly, it was discussed how the PYD challenged Turkish national security and how President Erdogan has criticised the US Syrian policy and military support for the PYD. President Erdogan openly threatened the PYD with a military operation. Following the withdrawal of US soldiers from the Turkish border, Turkey launched a military operation against the PYD on 9 October, 2019. The Turkish army cleared some of its border from the PYD and other are currently being monitored via joint Russian-Turkish patrols.

ROUNDUP: DESPITE CHALLENGES, TURKEY SEEKS STABILITY

In the context of instability and challenges at the global level, Turkey as a middle power has two options: One is to act as a neutral power, which means to avoid any conflict within its sphere. This choice, however, is not feasible for Turkey. The second option, according to one speaker, is for Turkey to follow a proactive foreign policy. Turkey has engaged with regional and global powers to bring an end to the Syrian war and the resulting humanitarian crisis.

It has been said that Turkey has shifted its axis from the West to Eurasia. Over the last decade, Turkey's relations with Israel have deteriorated due to the Palestine issue. Turkey has improved its relations with Russia in terms of energy, security and military cooperation. Along with these developments, one speaker stressed that Turkey's neighbours, Syria and Iraq, are failed states that have impacted Turkey's security, stability and economy. In order to deal with these issues, Turkey must deal with Russia and Iran as they have great influence in Damascus and Baghdad. The speaker also indicated that the EU has not given enough attention to Turkey's security concerns regarding the PKK/PYD and ISIS.

It is important to note that Turkish foreign policy has changed after the uprisings in the region, as explained above. One speaker defined Turkish foreign policy as 'defensive realism', which means that a state must seek power in order to be secure and survive in an anarchical international system.

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North Africa's Political Unrest: The Cases of Algeria and Libya

TAREK MEGERISI



INTRODUCTION

The year 2019 has been turbulent in North Africa, with events in Libya and Algeria emblematic of the wider dynamics at play in the region. The attempts of Libya and Algeria toward political transitions display two distinct representations of a wider revolutionary spirit which has characterised North African politics during this decade. (Laremont, 2013) Although the 2011 Arab Spring surprised the world, the revolts which took place were long in the making. The rentier state model in place was decreasingly able to satisfy growing populations and evolving popular demands. (Altunisik, 2014) Decades of state repression and a lack of social justice compounded these grievances, eventually causing the inevitable sparks that led nationwide demands for change. (Idris, 2016) The revolutions which took place and the transitions which followed were distinguished by each nation's local context. In addition, the machinations of

counter-revolutionary regional states who felt existentially threatened by these developments were also significant. (Kamrava, 2012) Eight years on from the shock of the Arab Spring, the region has largely quieted down, and local politics has recovered some predictability, with the exceptions of Libya and Algeria.

Libya, now in the eighth year of a transition sparked by a violent uprising against Muammar Qaddafi, remains torn between the examples of its neighbours. While the country has sought to emulate Tunisia's more successful Arab Spring revolution and democratic transition, legacy issues and a powerful counter-revolutionary force is leading it closer to a replication of Egypt's backward slide from revolution to repression. Just ten days before a UN national conference was due to take place which would have re-started political transitions, the rogue former military leader Khalifa Haftar assaulted Tripoli, Libya's capital. (Wintour, Beaumont, 2019) This attack has pushed the country to the precipice, and it remains uncertain which way it will fall.

Algeria, which witnessed its own potential civil war beginning to boil at the ballot box some twenty years before the Arab Spring, watched the throes of its North African neighbours with concern that destabilisation could spread. Almost eight years to the day after Libya's protests began, a popular Algerian protest movement dubbed the 'Hirak' began. (Algeriepatiotique, 2020) Despite the memories of Algeria's 1991-2002 Civil War encouraging the population to be cautious, this widespread protest movement has been a popular response to octogenarian and increasingly ill Bouteflika's decision to run for another term in upcoming elections. (Zeraouia, 2020) His was a startling decision, symbolising the regime's unwillingness and inability to change, inciting the population to demand new leadership. The now weekly mass protests may be almost antithetical to the character of Libya's protest, and the type of change taking place is reflective of that. As new leaders are coming to the fore of Algeria's long-standing regime, and new elections are scheduled, the transition to come is being widely watched with suspenseful anticipation. On October 22, 2019, TRT World Forum organised a closed ses-

sion to discuss the experiences of these two Maghreb states. The panel and participants analysed the dynamics that have driven events and explored their wider ramifications upon the region. Turkey's own policies have been affected. It is necessary to try and predict what may come next and also suggest potential solutions toward successful transitions for these two countries.

UNREST IN LIBYA

Panel presentations on Libya have repeatedly pointed to the deep divisions in the social and political landscape as having been a fault line for the current conflict. The Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA), created by a UN-facilitated agreement on December 17, 2015, has been effectively frozen since its inception. The current legislature, the House of Representatives (HoR), located in Tobruk in Libya's far eastern region, has consistently failed to endorse the GNA. The speakers have suggested that the intransigence of the HoR is facilitated by Khalifa Haftar. Similarly, several members of the GNA inner cabinet have been boycotting it since its creation, notably those close to and representing Khalifa Haftar. One panellist suggested that the situation has left the GNA unable to govern, helping to create a context whereby it has become beholden to corrupt forces. In addition, the GNA has been at the mercy of various non-state armed groups in Tripoli. The UN and the Special Representative to the Secretary General for Libya (SRSG) Ghassn Salamé have worked since 2017 to enable an inclusive, widely sourced, Libyan roadmap for a new political authority and its mandate. These changes were meant to be inaugurated at a 'national conference' in the town of Ghadames. However, the April 4 unprovoked assault of Haftar's forces on Tripoli required the suspension of this conference. (Wintour, 2019) Libya's current state of war, as well as the political predicament which preceded it, were considered by panellists to be a contemporary expression of legacy problems rooted in Qaddafi's 42-year rule. Of additional consequence are the revolution which dethroned Qaddafi and the active work of foreign and domestic 'counter-revolutionary' forces.

THE JAMAHIRIYA AND ITS AFTERMATH – A POLITICAL BACKDROP TO THE CURRENT CRISIS

'In 2011, Libyans removed their tyrant, then quickly realised the difficulties of removing the tyranny', said one panellist in his opening remarks. The speaker continued to intimate that after 42 years, Qaddafi had created a system of governance and political culture which posed the greatest obstacles to the revolution. These hindrances have yet to be overcome.

Libya's political system, the 'Jamahiriya', or state of the masses, has 'lacked internal cohesion', according to an audience participant. It was primarily designed to support a patronage network rather than to govern. One panellist agreed, stating that the system had facilitated a factionalised perspective of politics, leaving gaps and animosities that actors have exploited by seeking to dominate governmental appointments. They have also participated in boycotts and blockades that have delegitimised the state. These activities have interfered with successive governments since 2012, preventing them from establishing meaningful control and addressing urgent issues.

Qaddafi's authoritarian system and hostility to any political expression beyond his ideology was also blamed by panellists for creating an immature political culture incapable of dealing with the post-revolutionary situation. One panellist suggested that the notion of political parties being treasonous made it difficult to build political movements, or for them to gain any trust, which fed into the existing fragmentation and de-legitimation of political bodies and actors. This comment was in response to a participant's point that the accompanying lack of unity among Libya's political elite, and an over-reliance on the UN and international actors to provide policy and implementation guidance, effectively represented an

abdication of responsibility from Libyan politicians. This in turn led to a lack of progress, thereby laying the groundwork for the rise of Haftar.

In addition to the political legacy, the war against Qaddafi created an unstable security situation, which also contributed to post-revolutionary political failure. Libya's Arab Spring movement was unique in that it included eight months of 'brutal war', according to one of the panellists' opening remarks, and he claimed that violence has led to present-day ramifications. He went on to suggest that the copious amount of arms throughout the country have remained easily accessible, despite the failed disarmament, demobilisation, and integration (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR) programmes, which resulted in an increase rather than a decrease in the size of Libya's informal security sector. These informal non-state, armed groups are predicted to continue pressuring successive governments to give in to corruption, which the panellist considered a significant obstacle to attempts at political or security-sector developments.

LIBYA'S COUNTER-REVOLUTION – THE HAFTAR STORY

Panellists mentioned their view that the inspiration for Libya's counter-revolutionary movement is actually based in the Gulf states, who have viewed the Arab Spring revolutions as existential threats that could impact their own countries if they were not pre-emptively addressed. This has led to an extremely hostile policy from the Gulf toward revolutionary movements. The first speaker claimed that this was most effectively witnessed in Egypt with the deposition of Mohammed Morsi, and that Libya had then become their current priority.

He continued to claim that Libya's post-revolutionary authorities were naïve, and as such had not recognised the possibility of a counter-revolution following their victory over Qaddafi. He went on to say that this had

allowed ex-regime affiliates within Libya, along with their regional allies, to exploit the lack of leadership and organisation in Libya's revolutionary movement, thereby advancing their own interests.

The second speaker built on this idea, proposing that this policy had been initiated through the co-opting of the protest movement, calling for an end to Libya's first post-revolutionary parliament, the General National Congress (GNC), during the winter of 2013. He continued to describe the chain of events leading to the division of the country and the rise of Haftar. He began by mentioning that the parliament had initially decided to continue working, despite widespread calls for the members' resignation, with complaints that they had not made enough progress.

In February 2014 the counter-revolutionary camp backed a retired general, Khalifa Haftar, to announce a coup d'état on television, (YouTube, 2014) which was followed by an invasion of the parliament by armed groups from the city of Zintan, who were then affiliated with Haftar. (Press, 2014) Although the coup attempt failed due to the lack of a military which could be co-opted, it did succeed in expediting the election of a replacement parliament, the HoR. The panellist continued to state that despite a turnout of just 16% (compared to the 64% turnout for the GNC elections (Press, 2014), the new parliament was called to Tripoli to officially transfer power. Under the cover of an ongoing civil war, in a ruse orchestrated by affiliates of Haftar, a significant proportion of the HoR membership, as well as to-be speaker of the house, Aguileh Salah, went to Tobruk instead. Those who refused to go east filed a lawsuit, claiming that the house had been illegally inaugurated, which created a de-legitimisation of the new parliament. Eventually there would become a de-facto separation of the country into two rival administrative systems.

The account continued to claim that Haftar then started 'Operation Dignity' in eastern Libya, a military operation ostensibly centred on combating jihadist groups, but which also exploited tribal tensions. The balance of power was thereby reconfigured in Benghazi, and Haftar created a security and political platform for himself and his movement. Haftar's military campaigns in eastern Libya continued until 2018, during which time

the panellist claimed that he destroyed 30% of Benghazi and displaced or killed 25% of the population of Derna. During this time, the UAE facilitated the military operation while constructing a vast media operation to depict the operations as a war on terror. Other Libyan personalities were demonised, which deepened the polarisation in Libyan society.

The UN convened meetings between representatives of eastern and western Libya, attempting to bridge the divide and create a unity government, in what became known as the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA). However, military operations continued. The UAE, although a part of the multilateral effort behind the LPA, was simultaneously constructing an airbase in al-Khadim near Haftar's headquarters. This base was crucial for the continued military expansionism that persisted after the LPA was signed. Although the GNA was formed through the LPA and took its seat in Tripoli, one panellist claimed that Haftar had pressured the HoR, which had remained in eastern Libya under his control, to refrain from officially endorsing the LPA or the bodies it had created. The panellist then continued to explain how this created a political system where all constituent pieces lacked legitimacy. They were incapable of working together, creating a vacuum which Haftar continued to fill militarily.

The continuation of peace talks and attempts to placate Haftar and work him into a wider political system, which the LPA was unable to do, contributed to additional problems: The UAE, France, and more recently Russia became more involved in the process. While SRSR Salamé constructed his bottom-up process, France focused on a top-down solution, bringing Serraj and Haftar to a conference in Paris during May of 2018. (Bloomberg, 2018) This was later followed by meetings between Serraj and Haftar in Abu Dhabi. (France24, 2019) Despite having obtained favourable terms through his international allies, ten days before the national conference was due to take place, which was the final step in the UN process, Haftar decided to attack Tripoli. The panellist claimed that this action supports a viewpoint that Haftar was never interested in peace, as he views himself as the heir apparent to Qaddafi. The country today is divided between those who reject Haftar's counter-revolutionary project and those who either support it as a vehicle toward realisa-

tion of their own interests, or support one of the narratives Haftar uses to justify the operation, such as an attempt to remove non-state armed groups from the capital. The anti-Haftar camp has a numerical advantage, and with the help of Turkey has managed to secure initial successes, most notably in reclaiming the town of Gharyan, which had been used as Haftar's forward operating base. (Reuters, 2019) However, the UAE has endowed Haftar with air superiority which has harmed civilians, destroyed infrastructure and caused a stalemate.

LIBYA'S INTERNATIONALISED TRANSITION

In response to a participant's questions, one panellist claimed that Libya's geostrategic position and its fragility following the revolution have attracted the interest and intervention of many international actors. As the transition progressed, most of these states either worked with the Gulf powers' counter-revolutionary movement or focused in on narrow strategic objectives, eschewing the UN's wider political process. They failed to protect Libya from the malignant influence of the counter-revolutionary camp. Nevertheless, they have all influenced the trajectory of the transition, as well as the war which is currently in progress.

The infamous split in the international community's approach and perspective toward Libya is symbolised by the rivalry between France and Italy. This has been going on since 2014 and was referred to in one of the panellists' opening remarks. France initially supported Haftar's 'Operation Dignity' for a mixture of reasons: these centred around counter-terrorism efforts following Daesh attacks in France and ongoing operations in Mali. In addition, they wished to maintain and strengthen a security partnership with the UAE, with whom France shares an aligned political preference for 'strong man' rule in the Middle East and Africa. Italy, contrary to France, was trying to maintain its political and economic influence over its former colony, and also protect the interests of Eni, the

multinational oil and gas company which has interests in Libya's hydrocarbon sector. From 2015 onward, Libya had become a national security issue for Italy, as large amounts of migrants began crossing the Mediterranean. This led Italy to secure a fragile yet functioning network of deals with non-state armed groups in western Libya. They were responsible for lessening the flow of migrants, at the same time maintaining a close relationship with the GNA, which was necessary for Italy to increase its economic interests. Eventually, the competing interests of France and Italy came to head. France continued to materially and diplomatically support Haftar's military expansionism, while Italy sought to buttress the GNA. However, Italy's internal political strife allowed France to eventually dominate the international conversation and policy. France has continued to shield Haftar and build international diplomatic solutions around him.

Since the ascension of Abdul-Fattah el-Sisi to power in Egypt, Egypt has attempted to project its politics onto Libya through support of Haftar. Sisi was Haftar's first international sponsor, and aside from his ideological alignment and economic opportunism, he has attempted to use Haftar's forces to secure their shared border, a region which had become a thoroughfare for the insurgency in Sinai. (Dentice, 2017) However, as Egypt gradually became supplanted by the UAE, France and Russia, and Haftar became less capable of protecting their mutual interests, they began to explore other solutions. While maintaining military support for Haftar, Egypt is attempting to help manufacture a new political system by sponsoring a meeting of the HoR in Cairo to support Haftar. Egypt is working with Haftar to create a new government that could supplant the GNA, according to one of the panellists. This will complement existing strategies to undermine the work of the UN. They will call for a greater role for the African Union (AU) in mediation, an organisation which Sisi currently chairs.

The internationalisation of Libya's transition has become apparent throughout the course of the conflict, according to the first panellist.

He highlighted how Tripoli is bombed daily by Chinese drones piloted by Egyptians and Emiratis, while Haftar's forces shell the capital. They defend Haftar's forces with ordinance sourced by the UAE and delivered through Egypt. The UAE has also helped to orchestrate the deployment of Sudanese mercenaries to support Haftar. (AFP, 2020)

Russia, which has financed Haftar through printing a parallel currency since 2015, has also supplied technicians to maintain his ageing Soviet-era fleet. Russia has recently sent mercenaries from the Wagner Group to the front lines in Tripoli. (AP, 2019) They had previously been operating in Syria. While foreign interventions have been documented in detail by the UN Security Council Sanctions Committee's panel of experts, there is little international response or accountability. France and Russia have been able to block the mechanism of the UN Security Council.

ALGERIA'S POPULAR POLITICAL PUSH

The year 2019 has been characterised by weekly political protests in Algeria. Millions of civilians have taken to the streets nationwide, imploring the authorities to reform the political system. Although the movement was able to exert pressure on the ruling authorities to postpone elections and commit to personnel and constitutional changes, there has been increasing friction between the two camps because of build-up to the December 12 elections. The peaceful popular movement dubbed the 'Hirak' was clear about the spirit of change it wanted to see, but less clear about the specificities and implementation of that change. These vagaries, the lack of personalities within the Hirak, as well as worsening political and economic imperatives which demanded attention, created a context whereby the ruling party felt more confident that it could reassert itself; it planned to contain the Hirak and call for slow change that would begin at the ballot box and then be controlled.

A LACK OF TRUST

With the memories of Algeria's bloody civil war still prevalent in the minds of many, Algeria was the sole North African nation that did not experience significant upheaval in 2011. However, since 2014, persisting economic stagnation amid depreciating oil revenues have fuelled an increasingly tense atmosphere. Nevertheless, the panellist stated that many preferred to look to the 2019 elections as a turning point, believing that long-reigning Abdul Aziz Bouteflika would inevitably step down. Because he had reached the constitutional term limit, and the effects of his age and ill health had prevented him from making public speeches since April 2013, he was not expected to remain in political life.

However, when he was put forward for a fifth consecutive term in January it sparked outrage. According to the panellist, this became a reckoning of the deficit of trust existing between the people and the civilian and military elite, labelled the 'pouvoir'. Given Bouteflika was hospitalised in Geneva at the time of the announcement, the panellist claimed this announcement was widely perceived as being the product of an out-of-touch elite, incapable of change. The fundamental deficit of trust underscoring the situation is highlighted by the persistence of protests since Bouteflika was officially forced out in April. The demands of the protestors have been clear in calling for an end to the entire system that put forward Bouteflika: it involves military and business aspects of the pouvoir as much as the political leadership. According to the panellist, these have been collectivised by the protestors.

THE HIRAK

The Hirak was depicted by the panellist as the eventual popular reaction to the shock and anger that came from January's announcement. Starting in February, it was the coalescence of a position of rejection against the wider system. The Hirak considered itself a necessary dynamic to confront the pouvoir, who had accumulated considerable popular re-

sentment; the *pourvoir* had been seen enjoying wealth in Europe while the situation grew worse in Algeria. Initially the HIRAK was considered as an attempt to shake the *pouvoir* out of a state of denial that had led them to believe that they could persist with the status quo. But quickly, it evolved into a call for the entire ruling class to leave.

The panellist stated that since February, student protests have occurred every Tuesday. Mass protests had taken place every Friday, drawing millions nationwide without fail. The HIRAK has remained peaceful and socially conscious – even cleaning up after themselves (Guemar, 2019) and although they have extracted concessions from the ruling regime, they remain steadfast and consistent in their original demand for all to leave. While the slogans of the HIRAK provide clarity as to their demands - the example provided by the panellist was the call for a civilian administration governed by rule of law, through the slogan 'this is a republic not a barracks' - they have made their demands without providing a vision or schema for a follow-up system. The panellist described the nature of the HIRAK in making peaceful, collective demands of a ruling elite expected to implement them as distinguishable from the Arab Spring revolutions which often devolved violently.

Nevertheless, the past few months have seen an increase in dynamics that may force the HIRAK to alter its nature. The panellist recounted that arrests against local leaders, media strangulation, attempts to prevent protests from occurring, or angry responses to political rallies were signs of a growing hostility from the regime. The protest movement has failed to wane with the passing of time, even in response to reforms and concessions granted so far. The changing approach from the regime has been related to the presidential elections scheduled for December 12, an event which the HIRAK has met with disdain as their fundamental demands have been left unaddressed. The regime's sterilisation of the candidate selection process, with five regime loyalists on the ballot, has left the HIRAK feeling vindicated. The face of Algeria's military, Qaid Salah, is adamant that these elections represent the only path to change

without plunging Algeria into the unknown. This has conjured up reflections of Algeria's harrowing civil war. That candidates have been met with empty rallies and defaced posters has suggested that despite the regime's growing frustration, the Hirak is unlikely to wane or temper its position. This suggests that just like in January, elections to come might predict further political unrest. The Response of the Algerian Regime

The Algerian military was considered by the panellist to be the real power of the Algerian state, and its protection is the reason that the state survives. This is evidenced by the military's influence behind the selection of presidents and prime ministers. It is a reality at the heart of the Hirak's demands, unaffected by the resignation of Bouteflika or the interim government which has ruled since. The panellist claimed that Qaid Salah has emerged as the face of the regime during the interim period. He made 34 public addresses, compared to four by the President, and none at all by the Prime Minister.

At first, the regime attempted to provide concessions to the Hirak, hoping to satisfy them enough to reduce the size of the protests, and at the same time maintaining control of the overall situation. It was a policy which the panellist claimed was exemplified by the interim government's anti-corruption drive, which resulted in the arrest of current and former officials, including former prime ministers and Said Bouteflika, who managed his brother's inner circle. However, many read this as an attempt by Qaid Salah to reshuffle the regime in his favour. The Hirak felt vindicated when the policy shifted to an attempt to throttle the protests once the regime's initial goal failed.

The panellist explained that over the last few months the state has arrested journalists, activists, military veterans and a party president in an attempt to coerce and contain the Hirak. The panellist further noted that the state has also been comforted by the fact that it has been able to enact this policy shift without attracting international condemnation. Qaid Salah and the five generals who form his inner circle have also expand-

ed control over Algerian media. The recent closure of the Maghribiya television station, which was the last remaining Algerian channel which discussed the Hirak, is seen by the panellist as an attempt to starve the movement of attention and validation. The panellist also considers the continuing Internet cuts as part of this wider strategy to curtail the organising and publicity power of the Hirak.

After having been forced to twice postpone the presidential elections due to pressure from the Hirak, it is clear that Qaid Salah will commit to the December 12 elections despite public outcry. However, despite the regime's careful cultivation of the electoral process, it is unlikely to successfully stabilise the situation. The Hirak's boycott of the election process means that the new president will immediately be confronted with a crisis of legitimacy and huge pressure to enact reforms. Meanwhile, the regime's unwillingness to relinquish control of the political process makes it inevitable that the new President will not have the freedom or authority to mediate between Algerian factions or enact meaningful change.

INTERNATIONAL INTERFERENCE IN ALGERIA

Although Algeria prides itself on maintaining a foreign policy doctrine of non-interference, and it tends to assertively protect its own independence, the panellist and participants considered that developments over the past nine months have strengthened the relationship between the *pouvoir* and various foreign entities.

Although France has largely remained quiet over developments in its former colony, and it has been wary of any overt involvement for fear of provoking anti-French sentiments among the Hirak, it was considered that more tacit support for the *pouvoir* and their attempts to control the situation are forthcoming from Paris. The panellist pointed to a potential

French role in closing the Magharibia television station, and a meeting between French Foreign Minister Jean Yves le-Drian and his Algerian counterpart Sabvri Boukadoum shortly after the closure were seen as indicative of this action.

Through the HIRAK and the fractures that they have created among the *pouvoir*, Algerians have also been able to discover the extent of Emirati economic ties to prominent members of the regime. Responding to a question, the panellist explained that through joint ownership companies, the UAE has been able to develop a significant role in Algeria's import market, an economic strategy in line with Emirati activity elsewhere in the region. He further considered that the UAE is using their commercial links to support the *pouvoir* in resisting and counteracting the HIRAK.

TURKEY'S VIEW

The panellist responsible for this topic considered that Turkey is assuming a long-term perspective for North Africa. Turkey remains interested given predictions that dynamics signify strong growth for the continent over the next few decades. He explained that Turkish involvement is often driven by its merchant class; they are increasingly interested and are investing in the continent, attempting to pursue a model of partnerships that could facilitate larger infrastructure projects to interlink the continent. Therefore, they could boost the value of Africa's markets and any economic partnership.

The interest in deeper partners was considered by the panellist to create an interest in Turkey at the state level. Turkey could support projects that would enforce the rule of law and prevent the current political cycles which close markets and foment instability. Instead, involvement with Turkey could create an environment where business could flourish. To this end, the panellist considered that the economising model established by the AK Party can be replicated in other North African states, representing a stable platform for reform that would satisfy popular demands while averting political unrest.

CONCLUSION

In general, it is becoming increasingly clear that the region is experiencing a period of creative destruction. It is a phenomenon which must be protected and allowed to flourish. The political systems in place, usually established at the time of independence or shortly thereafter, are decreasingly able to provide for their people or facilitate the social and economic evolutions that are taking place. Nevertheless, it is a phenomenon which various regional powers are seeking to contain. It was widely considered by panellists and participants that the UAE sees this as an existential threat, believing that the best possible change would be to weaken the countries of the region, allowing them to be more susceptible to their regional political and economic policies. The participants considered that the strategy for pursuing this end included attempts to make the old regimes of the region dependent on the UAE, either militarily, like in Libya, where they have animated Haftar's campaigns since 2014, or economically, as they have helped the Algerian *pouvoir* offshore the nation's capital. Although it is a region that has usually been within Europe's sphere of influence, participants suggested that European fears for the future are leading to a policy that is predicated on maintaining the region as a provider for energy and a vehicle for European security.

Algeria's future remains increasingly uncertain. The response to the December elections will reveal the character of the next chapter in the interplay between the *Hirak* and the *pouvoir*. At a fundamental level, Libya and Algeria were seen by participants to be dealing with similar problems, although they were expressed in different contexts. For Libya, there remains no clean way for any side to control the country militarily; the longer the war continues, the more difficult it will be to repair the social fabric and address the long-standing political and economic issues. Algeria and Libya were also seen by those involved in the discussion to share many of the same threats, and the manipulation of social and traditional media were considered the most severe of these.

While North Africa may be experiencing unprecedented political unrest, this is the result of transitions taking place which are necessary for the state's ability to adapt and prosper in the changing world. Algeria and Libya exemplify the current unrest which is taking place and the general threats to the region's transition. If they are not protected, the transitions will be prolonged. Destructive consequences will create destabilising dynamics throughout the African continent and across the Mediterranean.

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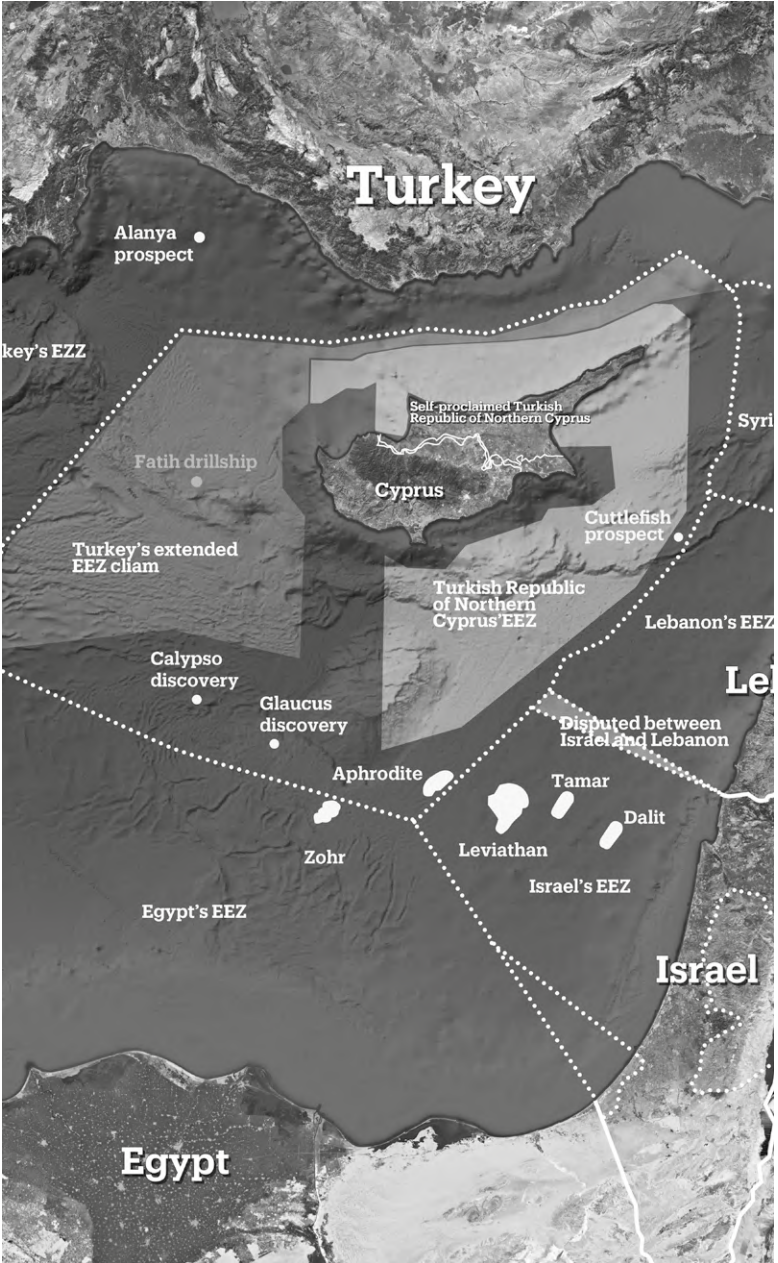
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A Geopolitical Dimension of Energy Resources in the Eastern Mediterranean

DR. ALBERTO BELLADONNA



INTRODUCTION

Recent natural gas discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean have raised hopes for prosperity in the region. However, new tensions have erupted, and the full potential of natural gas is still untapped. The aim of this session is to better understand the major issues which impede further exploration and to relaunch regional cooperation based on a win-win cooperative strategy among all stakeholders involved. Turkey, in particular, has a major role to play, having the potential to become a pivotal actor in this process.

TOWARDS A 'GOLDEN AGE A GAS'?

Until recently, natural gas has been considered costly and difficult to exploit when compared to other hydrocarbon resources such as oil or coal. However, in the past two decades, circumstances have changed significantly, and today natural gas plays an increasing role in the world energy market. Gas now comprises 25% of the world energy mix and is expected to overtake coal as the second leading source of energy by 2040¹. In twenty years, global natural gas production has increased by 60%, driven in particular by rising demand and a subsequent improvement in cost competitiveness. Technological developments in both the extraction and transportation sectors, new environmental legislations, recently discovered abundant resources and the wide geographical distribution of natural gas have contributed to 'a golden age of gas,' as predicted by the International Energy Agency (IEA) in 2011².

However, the full exploitation of gas resources and the development of a global natural gas market face a series of obstacles. Extracting gas requires long-term investment, and because gas reservoirs frequently occur where national borders overlap, political and diplomatic cooperation is essential. The connection of production sites with end-consumer countries requires the construction of costly gas pipelines. There are also strong geopolitical considerations as the linkage of production sites and end-consumer countries necessitates long-term bonds. Although liquefied natural gas (LNG) provides increased flexibility, it does not offer a solution to all gas-related problems, as it still incurs relatively high mid-stream costs. The relative potential volume of LNG is also small when compared to the capacity of pipeline streams.

¹ International Gas Union (IGU), Global Gas Report, 2019. Available at: <https://www.igu.org/research/global-gas-report-2019>

² International Energy Agency (IEA), Golden Rules for a Golden Age of Gas, 2013. Available at: <https://www.iea.org/weo/goldenrules/>

WHAT'S FOR TURKEY?

Turkey, with its geopolitical position as a bridge between Asia, the Middle East and Europe, is a natural regional hub for oil and gas.³ Two oil pipelines cross Turkish territory: the BTC (Baku/Tbilisi/Ceyhan), which begins at the capital of Azerbaijan and crosses Georgia; and the Kirkuk/Ceyhan, which begins in the Iraqi city of Kirkuk. Both pipelines end in the Turkish port of Ceyhan on the Mediterranean, from which oil tankers depart for European ports. Moreover, Turkey is crossed by three gas pipelines: the Blue Stream, which brings gas from the Russian city of Beregovaya, crossing the Black Sea and arriving in Turkey near the city of Samsun; the South Caucasus Pipeline from Azerbaijan, which follows a route parallel to the BTC; and the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP), which brings Azeri gas to Europe by passing through Georgia and Turkey. In addition, two other pipelines are under construction: the Southern Gas Corridor, which will originate in Tabriz, Iran, and pass through to Greece; and TurkStream, which will resume the South Stream route to divert south in the last section, heading to the Bosphorus, and then connecting to the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP). Turkey's ambition to become a Euro-Mediterranean and Euro-Asian energy hub is also justified by its economic dimension and its growing demand for energy.

THE TURKISH ENERGY MARKET

With an average GDP growth of 4.5% since 2002, the energy consumption in Turkey has more than doubled in each segment, from power generation to residential consumption. In 2000, domestic gas consumption was 14.6 Bcm and is projected to rise to 88 Bcm by 2020⁴. In fact, since the early 2000s, the first objective of the Turkish government has been to attract more investment in the energy sector. In 2001, the Natural Gas

³ Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey's Energy Profile and Strategy. Available at <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkeys-energy-strategy.en.mfa> (last access: 27/12/2019)

⁴ World Bank, Turkey's energy transition, milestones and challenges, Report n. ACS14951, 2015. Available at <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/249831468189270397/pdf/ACS14951-REVISED-Box393232B-PUBLIC-EnergyVeryFinalEN.pdf>

Market Law entered into force. By removing subsidies and promoting market economy measures, the reform aimed at changing the market from a structurally vertical, integrated design, dominated by a state-owned company, to a more open platform. It eliminated the state monopoly on import, export, transmission, distribution and sale of natural gas, opening the market to private agents. In this regard, the Natural Gas Law of 2013 introduced fundamental changes in regulation, allowing private companies to enter the market as importers and wholesalers. Competition among private agents in the market has become a central mechanism. The state withdrawn and taken on a regulatory role in the form of a new, independent Energy Market Regulatory Authority, and it holds control of key network infrastructure. Currently, shares controlled by the private sector account for 75% of the market, compared to 25% in 2002, and investment in the power market has increased to \$60 billion.

With energy imports accounting for 70% of consumption, with 93% of oil and 99% of gas coming from imports,⁵ Turkey spends \$40 billion annually for energy. The second main government objective is therefore to make the energy market more resilient based on a 'strong economy and national security'. This is why in 2017 the new National Energy and Mining Policy was launched, composed of the following three pillars: predictability of market reforms; indigenisation; and security of supply.

PREDICTABILITY OF MARKET REFORMS

With an increasing energy demand for both industrial and residential consumption, establishment of a foreseeable market to attract investments has been essential. To this end, the new National Energy and Mining Policy intends to advance with market liberalisation according to

⁵ Export.gov, Turkey - Oil and Gas Equipment – LNG and LNG Terminals, Upstream, Downstream and Midstream. Available at: <https://www.export.gov/article?id=Turkey-Oil-and-Gas-Equipment-LNG-and-LNG-Terminals-Upstream-Downstream-and-Midstream> (last access: 27/12/2019)

international standards, restructure institutions in the energy sector and invest in new energy infrastructure. In 2018 the Natural Gas Trade Platform was also launched to improve and increase the functionality of the energy market, contributing to the establishment of Turkey not only as an intermediary country but also as a trading centre.

INDIGENISATION

The development of indigenous production and national resources is the second pillar of the National Energy and Mining Policy and a major driver in the strategy for the reduction of the country's resource dependency. To that end, greater attention has been devoted toward the increase of investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. In particular, Turkey aims to increase the level of renewable energy to 30% of total energy consumption by 2030. As an example, great attention is dedicated to the development of solar energy, which has the highest potential when compared to other renewables. Turkey's solar energy capacity was 1,000 MW in 2017, and there is estimated growth to 5,000 MW by the end of 2023. In 2018, an energy efficiency plan was introduced which contained 55 actions in 5 strategic sectors. With an investment of \$11 billion, the aim is to reduce energy consumption by 40% and eliminate 66 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions.

SECURITY OF SUPPLY

Although Turkey is relatively poor in natural resources, it is close to many actual or potential energy suppliers (Turkey's neighbouring countries produce 60% of the world's oil and gas.). Turkey is at the crossroads of transit routes between countries which supply energy and those which demand energy resources. Turkey is still dependent, however, upon a few sources of energy supply.⁶ Turkish imports from five countries rep-

⁶ International Energy Agency, Turkey's country overview, 2017. Available at: <https://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis.php?iso=TUR>

resent more than 90% of the country's crude oil imports, with the lion's share coming from Iran and Iraq. Russia, Iran and Azerbaijan provide 70% of Turkey's natural gas imports. For this reason, the new National Energy and Mining Policy aims for diversification, reliability of suppliers' sources, and a cost reduction for imported energy resources. In terms of diversification, Turkish sources for natural gas are from pipelines with Azerbaijan (via the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum Pipeline, BTE), Russia (via the West Pipeline and Blue Stream), and from the new Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP), which adds a new route for Azerbaijani gas to Turkey. Furthermore, Turkey and Russia are planning the construction of the TurkStream Natural Gas Pipeline Project, conceived as an alternative to the West Pipeline. Turkey is also planning a Northern Iraq Natural Gas Pipeline with the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq, and it is also focussing on recent gas discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean. This last issue is central to Ankara's plan, making Turkey the final consumer of newly discovered gas in the Eastern Mediterranean, as well as a transit country for this resource. LNG is also an alternative source of gas, reducing Turkey's dependency on just a few suppliers. Turkey has undertaken several infrastructure investments, for example the 1994 construction of the first regasification terminal in Marmara Ereğli, and the 2006 building of Ege Gaz Aliaga. Major sources of LNG are Algeria, Nigeria, Qatar and the United States. Attention has also been targeted upon upstream drilling activities. In 2016, Turkish Petroleum unbundled to focus on exploration and production both onshore and offshore. Operations have been initiated in the Black Sea, and since 2017 in the Mediterranean. Drilling operations began there in 2018 under licenses granted by the Turkish government and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

NEW GAS DISCOVERIES IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN: A SOURCE OF PROSPERITY FOR THE REGION?

The Eastern Mediterranean has become the stage for a series of complex geopolitical dynamics initiated by recent large gas discoveries in the Mediterranean's Levant Basin. Explorations in the region have been ongoing since 1969, but only minor hydrocarbon offshore fields had been discovered. However, an important breakthrough happened between 2009 and 2011 with the discovery of the Tamar and Leviathan fields off the coast of Israel, and the Aphrodite field off the coast of Cyprus. These discoveries were estimated at a total capacity of about 990 Bcm. Although these discoveries were not significant enough to elevate the region as a pivotal area for the world energy market, they aroused the interest of energy companies willing to explore further for potentially more promising deposits. In 2015, the Italian ENI company discovered the vast Zohr deposit in the Egyptian offshore area 190 km from Port Said, estimated to hold as much as 850 Bcm. A few years later, new deposits in Cypriot water, Calypso, and new reserves adjacent to Zohr, Glaucus, were discovered, with additional, potentially exploitable fields offshore the Lebanese coast and Gaza. The US Geological Survey (USGS) estimates a mean of approximately 3,453 Bcm of recoverable gas in the overall Levant Basin Province. In addition, technically recoverable natural gas exists in Egypt's Nile Delta Basin, most of it in the sea, estimated at around 6,310 Bcm. Although these quantities are small when compared to the estimated 14 Tcm of Iran's South-Pars field, or the 3.9 Tcm of Russia's Shtokman gas field, they are significant for local economies. These new gas discoveries resolve regional energy needs, and they can also turn the area into a regional energy hub, enabling some countries to become net exporters of gas. In order to ensure growth and

development in the region, significant coordination and cooperation among neighbouring countries is required. However, a series of obstacles, political conflicts and border disputes are constraining the full exploitation of this potential.

OPEN ISSUES

One of the main issues related to the full exploitation of gas reserves in the Levant Basin is strictly related to their offshore locations, where the rights of coastal countries often overlap and the exact delimitation of the zone of competence of each state involved is quite complex. According to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), a state has special rights regarding the exploration and use of marine resources, including energy production from water and wind, inside an exclusive economic zone (EEZ). This is a sea zone that stretches from the baseline out to 200 nautical miles from the coast. However, there is no clear way to define the exact area of competence. The UNCLOS affirms that EEZs between states with adjacent coasts must be implemented fairly through agreements between the parties, and, according to art. 59 in cases where this Convention does not attribute rights or jurisdiction to the coastal State or to other States within the exclusive economic zone, and a conflict arises between the interests of the coastal State and any other State or States, the conflict should be resolved on the basis of equity and in the light of all the relevant circumstances, taking into account the respective importance of the interests involved to the parties as well as to the international community as a whole.⁷

For historical and political reasons, most of the countries involved do not have maritime delimitation agreements, making it thus extremely difficult to find an appropriate settlement for the exploitation of gas reserves in border areas. Even when maritime delimitation agreements exist, they are often a source of further disputes. This occurred because of the

⁷ United Nations' Oceans and Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Available at: https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/part5.htm

exact delimitation of the EEZs during the Israel-Lebanon-GCA dispute, which was sparked after Israel and GCA agreed to delimitate their EEZs in 2010. Their settlement, according to Lebanese authorities, absorbed de facto parts of the Lebanese EEZ previously established with GCA. Problems arose between Israel and GCA concerning the exploitation of the Aphrodite reservoirs as they are partially in Israeli waters, and their extent into the Israeli EEZ is under question. Nicosia is indeed at the centre of other major disputes in the area, strictly related to the unresolved political division of Cyprus between the Turkish Republic in Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and Greek-Cypriot Administration. GCA became a member of the European Union in 2004 and acts as the sole representative of the whole island. Negotiations promoted by the United Nations have not yet resulted in a solution. Relying upon international recognition, GCA affirms that it is not contrary to sharing resources with the TRNC as a two-community joint agreement, but only in the event of the reunification of the island. Under these circumstances, GCA has been exploring offshore hydrocarbons since 2006 in a 13-block area south of the island, and it has held two international tenders. The first tender in 2007 licensed Block Number 12, while the second, in 2012, licensed Blocks Numbers 2,3,9,10 and 11.⁸ Turkey and the TRNC have condemned the actions of GCA and have acted against them. Hence, in 2011, Turkey and Northern Cyprus decided to delimitate their EEZs, and offshoring exploration licenses were granted to the Turkish Petroleum Corporation in zones that partially overlap with blocks licenses by GCA, for example Blocks 3 and 12. Turkey also claims that some of the blocks licensed by GCA, such as Blocks 9 and 10, are actually within the Turkish EEZ. International tensions therefore erupted in 2015, 2018 and 2019. In particular, in the beginning of May 2019, the Turkish drillship *Fatih* began its offshore drilling operations 75 kilometres off the western coast of Cyprus. On July 8, 2019, a second drillship, *Yavuz*, arrived south of the Karpas Peninsula on the east of Cyprus, a section of the island that the

⁸ Cyprus Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry, granted licenses. Available at: http://www.mcit.gov.cy/mcit/hydrocarbon.nsf/page16_en/page16_en?OpenDocument (last access: 27/12/2019)

TRNC claims as part of its EEZ. As panellists have underlined, tense relations between Turkey and GCA are among the major obstacles to the exploitation of the full potential of the energy discoveries in the region. Turkey is not only the best market for these resources, but it is also a pivotal actor that can ensure the involvement of large-scale economies in gas exploitation projects.

GAS EXPLOITATION PROJECTS

Apart from the accurate definition of each EEZ, another major issue of tension in the region is strictly related to the most effective methods for the exploitation of gas reservoirs found in the Eastern Mediterranean. Gas exploitation requires long-term investments. In order to be competitive in the global market, gas exploitation must ensure an economy of scale, which none of the single reservoirs can guarantee, especially compared with cheaper Russian and Qatari gas. The best option, therefore, is to sell the gas at the regional level, reducing mid-stream costs and taking advantage of the increasing energy demands in the two biggest markets in the area: Turkey and Egypt. Political tension, especially between the Greek-Cypriot Administration (GCA) and Turkey, has prevented the consideration of Turkey as the best marketing option. Israel attempted to establish stronger energy links with Turkey in 2014 when it proposed to connect the Leviathan Reservoir to Turkey by pipeline. This option was aborted due to the political tensions which erupted between the two countries during the same year. Even if the relations between the two countries were to improve, building a pipeline to Turkey would still require passing through Cyprus due to the ongoing civil war in Syria and a lack of diplomatic relations between Israel and Lebanon. However, because the Turkish option was blocked because of poor Turkish-GCA political relations, the only remaining option was to export to the European Union.

In an attempt to coordinate actions and find a common solution to the energy exploitation of resources in the Levant Basin, several summits

were held: the Egypt-Greece-GCA Summit (Athens, December 9, 2015) and the trilateral Israel-Greece-GCA Summit (Nicosia, January 28, 2016). These summits paved the way for the agreement between Greece, GCA and Egypt for the definition of their EEZs and the recognition by Israel of the Greek and GCA EEZs for the passage of gas pipelines from the Leviathan Field. A final support was given to the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Pipeline Project, the EASTMED pipeline, designed to connect Egypt, Israel, GCA, Greece and Italy, the cost of which has been estimated at 6.2 billion euros. The project was also considered as an opportunity to inaugurate a season of new cooperation, as seems likely between Israel and Egypt. Relations between the two countries have been peaceful since 1978 and have been constantly improving. They have been limited, however, to the diplomatic level. In September 2018, Delek Drilling and Noble Energy, the operators of Israel's largest natural gas fields, Tamar and Leviathan, joined with the Egyptian East Gas Company to buy control of a pipeline to Egypt, paving the way for Israeli gas exports into Egypt. According to a statement by Delek Drilling, the three companies signed a deal to buy 39% of the shares of the pipeline owner, Eastern Mediterranean Gas Company. The buyers would pay \$518 million, with Delek and Noble contributing \$185 million each. The remainder would be paid by the East Gas Company. The creation of the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF) during a summit in Cairo in 2019 strengthened the economic cooperation between Israel and Egypt, and this could be a prelude to the establishment of extended collaboration in several sectors.

On January 14, 2019, the energy ministers of GCA, Egypt, Greece, Jordan and Israel, together with representatives of Italy and the Palestinian Authority, met with representatives of the US and the EU in Cairo in order to discuss how to promote the development of natural gas discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean. The result was the creation of the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF), a platform to develop a regional gas market, cut infrastructure costs, and offer competitive prices.⁹ Egypt,

⁹ Simone Tagliapietra, An opportunity for natural gas in the eastern Mediterranean, Bruegel 2019. Available at: <https://bruegel.org/tag/eastern-mediterranean-gas-forum-emgf/>

with its newly discovered gas fields, geographical proximity to other fields, and its already existing infrastructure for the export of LNG (with an export capacity of 19 billion cubic meters per year) was intended to play a stronger role as a regional gas hub. It would act not only as a destination, but also as a main exporting platform.¹⁰ However, one of the major actors in the area was missing during this discussion: Turkey. Ankara seems to be politically isolated at the present time, at both regional and international levels. In addition to diplomatic tension with GCA, Turkey maintains a cold relationship with Egypt, the other big player in the region, especially after the takeover by Abdel Fattah al-Sisi in 2014, which Ankara condemned.

At the international level, Turkey's isolation is the consequence of a series of circumstances. First of all, the United States supports the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum, considered by Washington as a source of dialogue and common prosperity. Washington is in favour of forging a democratic block in the Eastern Mediterranean, linking Israel, GCA and Greece, and strongly supporting dialogue between Israel and Egypt. The US administration has focused upon Egypt as a future regional gas export hub in the Eastern Mediterranean region. The US is supporting the strengthening of Egypt's energy production, storage and distribution capacity through private/public partnership programs and technological transfer. The United States is also interested in maintaining business opportunities for its companies which are directly involved in gas exploration. Finally, there is also a broader implication, since the Eastern Mediterranean gas can become a geopolitical tool to reduce the increasing European energy dependence upon Russia. The EU is indeed one of the main supporters of the EMGF and of the EASTMED Pipeline project, which was considered as part of the EU Project of Common Interest

¹⁰ Sohbet Karbuz, *Natural Gas Resources in the Eastern Mediterranean: Challenges and Opportunities*, IEMED 2012. Available at: https://www.iemed.org/observatori-en/arees-danalisi/arxiu-adjunts/anuari/med.2012/Karbuz_en.pdf

¹¹ European Union Commission, *Eastern Mediterranean Natural Gas Pipeline – Pre-FEED Studies*, 2015. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/connecting-europe-facility/cef-energy/7.3.1-0025-elcy-s-m-15>

since 2013. The EU financed half of the project's technical, commercial and financial feasibility study, with large European oil and gas companies involved in the exploitation of the gas potential of the region¹¹. Finally, China is also mildly supportive of the EGMF Forum since it is primarily interested in maintaining good diplomatic relations with Greece, GCA, Egypt and Israel. All of these countries have increasingly strategic roles in the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative, while Turkey-China relations might be harmed during this process.

A WAY FORWARD

The isolation of Turkey in the regional cooperation dialogue of the energy sector is a major obstacle for the exploitation of the full potential of the gas resources in the Levant Basin. According to energy experts, exporting gas to Turkey either by pipeline or by tankers is one of the best economic options. First of all, Turkey, with its energy-thirsty market, is the natural destination for regional gas. It also has lower mid-stream costs. Second, Turkey also has the geographic potential to offer an alternative and more economic path for gas pipelines from the Levant Basin into the major Western European markets. In particular, a more technically feasible and economic alternative to EASTMED would be to connect the regional gas to Turkey by submarine pipeline (about 600 km, with shallow water), and from Turkey to Europe through the international pipeline network of TANAP and TAP. The two pipelines are part of the Southern Gas Corridor project, the EU's Southern Gas Corridor designed to transport gas from the Shah Deniz-2 field in Azerbaijan to Turkey via TANAP, and to Europe via TAP. Of the 16 billion cubic metres of natural gas, 6 billion cubic metres will be delivered to Turkey via TANAP, while the remaining 10 billion are to be delivered via TAP to Greece, Albania and the Adriatic Sea on the way to Italy. This was a solution which participants in the sessions proposed for future pipeline connection of Eastern Mediterranean gas with Turkey.

As a matter of fact, the participants at the session have agreed upon the fact that Turkey should play a major, active role in the region, especially when it comes to energy. To do so, however, Turkey should act as a responsible actor and stand as a regional power that brings solutions to local conflicts and disputes. China can be an example to follow. Beijing is also involved in local and regional territorial disputes, such as those in the South China Sea and the East China Sea. As is similar to the Eastern Mediterranean, the exact delimitation of EEZs and the exploitation of natural resources constitute the main reasons for diplomatic tensions. Tensions persist, and the only way forward is to find a legal settlement to the offshore territorial disputes, as mentioned by a panelist at the session. Beijing is nonetheless trying to lever its economic power in order to become a center of gravity for the region, and it is creating institutions that are promoting a vision of development for the area that do not depend upon external actors. Only with a strong economy and cooperative posture can Turkey exploit its full potential and become a real center of gravity in the region. But how? Panelists at the session concurred that the first and foremost issue of importance is cooperation in order to define each country's EEZs. Once the EEZs are defined, other issues may arise, especially when a reservoir is located in more than one EEZ. In that case, the panelists agree that once the correct location of the reservoir is defined, there must be an approximation of how much is located in each country's EEZ. The best way is to establish joint operations. In disputed areas, joint exploitation can also lead to deeper cooperation among regional actors. In the case of Turkey, however, the main obstacle derives from its problematic relations with GCA. As was mentioned during the session, it is of vital importance to find a common solution to conflict about Cyprus.

CONCLUSION

In the current age of uncertainty, the energy sector is undergoing important and rapid structural changes that will profoundly transform the world we live in. Gas in particular is considered the most promising fuel, as part of a transitional process of decarbonization with a progressive substitution of clean and sustainable energy solutions for hydrocarbons. Still, the golden era of gas is now, and recent discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean can play an important role for the region. They can bring prosperity and promote a deeper cooperation among regional states. It is important, however, that the benefits can be grasped now, while avoiding any delay that could make investments untimely and no longer economically viable. For this reason, as underlined throughout the entire session, it is important that all actors in the region fully cooperate with each other to avoid falling into the most classical game theory, prisoner's dilemma. Individual, short-sighted interests could lead to a suboptimal scenario, detrimental to the entire region. In this regard, Turkey is pivotal. Only through integrating Ankara into the regional cooperation framework can the full potential of energy discoveries be unleashed for the benefit of the region as a whole. The TANAP project can be an example to follow for Eastern Mediterranean gas: It brings gas from the Caspian Sea to the European market, passing through Georgia and Turkey, benefiting all parties involved. To be successful, the panelists have agreed that Eastern Mediterranean cooperation on energy exploitation requires political willingness and commitment from all stakeholders. They must become part of the solution, rather than part of the problem.

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Environmental Security: Tragedy of Commons

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BACKGROUND

The panel presented a fertile environment for environmental scientists, engineers, social scientists, diplomats and politicians from different countries to discuss not just climate change, but also various immediate environmental problems such as microplastic pollution in the oceans as well as ozone depletion. While coming from different backgrounds, through the lively discussions that took place speakers and participants agreed on three main points. The first one is the importance of treating the environment as a common good, where all are responsible for taking proper care of. The first step toward taking proper environmental action is to acknowledge that economic calculations cannot solely guide environmental policies. The second point is the need for a multifaceted

approach to environmental problems; not only immediate environmental implications require attention, but also the negative impact that environmental issues have on security, development, agricultural production, social cleavages and poverty.

While different participants had varying levels of hope with regards to the possibility of finding prominent solutions for environmental problems, the third point that all participants agreed on is the need for collaborative action. The participants emphasised that such collaboration could be realised only if differentiated responsibilities are defined for developed and developing countries in global policy making. While developed countries should take responsibility for the share they have had in creating the environmental problems we face now, developing countries should appreciate the fact that they cannot afford to behave the way that developed countries behaved in the last century.

INTRODUCTION

Both political and academic discussions on security have significantly changed in the last three decades. What constitutes a threat to one's security and what it takes for an actor to feel secure have altered in a number of ways. In other words, security – both as a policy domain and as an academic field of study – has widened and deepened (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998; Krause & Williams, 1996). Widening, on the one hand, refers to diversification of threats to security in such a way that it now includes non-traditional security concerns such as economic security (Schiffman, 2016) and food security (Cavalcanti, 2005); Klare & Thomas, 1994; Wæver, 1995). Deepening, on the other hand, refers to the realisation that in making security decisions, actors other than states (individuals, local actors, regional actors, and international actors) should be taken into account as both subjects with security needs, and also as potential threats to security. (Buzan, 1991; Booth, 1991; Tickner, 1995; Williams, 2003).

As a part of this process, environmental security has become one of the frequently discussed and highly politicised issue areas. One of the discussions surrounding the issue of environmental security is whether framing environment as a security issue contributes to the solution of the problems. On the one hand, some argue that emphasising the security implications of environmental problems would be important in attracting politicians' attention to the issue. Environmental issues could be brought to the forefront of political agendas, and necessary funds could be directed toward solutions for environmental problems (Litfin, 1999; Dalby, 2016; Schilling et al., 2017). However, on the other hand, sceptics warn that emphasising the security implications of environmental issues would push the much-needed scientific expertise aside. This would result in the initiation of security-oriented policies which would in turn have damaging consequences (Deudney, 1990; Kakonen, 1994; Levy, 1995).

The speakers and participants sided with the first approach. They highlighted that placing emphasis on the security implications of environmental issues was the most effective way to address environmental concerns. Building on that understanding, the discussions in the session focused on identifying the reasons for and consequences of various environmental concerns. They also discussed the successes and failures of policies and initiatives that have been taken place so far, incorporating suggestions for the future.

IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEMS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

The first speaker began the discussion by highlighting the connection between environmental security and the retreat of globalisation, which was the theme for this year's TRT World Forum. The speaker reasoned that environmental collapse, which in and of itself is tragic, combined with overproduction, are the main reasons for globalisation's retreat. While climate change gets the most attention, one speaker emphasised retreat. While climate change gets the most attention, one speaker em-

phasised that other environmental problems need to be evaluated together, as they are inevitably intertwined, both in their causes as well as in their implications.

The speakers repeatedly emphasised that the most important aspect of the environment is that it is a global, common issue (Buck, 1998). For this reason, it is not enough for a country to control pollution within its own limits. As the environment is a global common, those who suffer from pollution are not necessarily those who contribute to its creation. However, since no country can escape from the negative impact of environmental problems, 'not being the source of the problem' does not relieve states from the responsibility of taking action to address the issue.

Pollution travels among states, through air, water or land. This is not a distant possibility that scientists entertain; on the contrary, it is something we experience on a daily basis. As one speaker highlighted, green gases stemming from industrial production, energy production and transportation are severely damaging the atmosphere. For example, pollution carried by the Danube River has been polluting the Black Sea for years. As one speaker explained, there is almost no oxygen left at the bottom of the Black Sea. The pollution of the Danube, caused by the activities of developed countries in Europe, is felt by the countries who produce it as well as the states neighbouring the Black Sea (Milenkovic et al., 2005). And the pollution does not stop there. It goes to the Aegean Sea through the straits and eventually on to the oceans. The pollution of oceans has the potential to disrupt and destroy entire ecosystems through food chains: plastic waste goes to the oceans through rain; fish eat microplastics that are filling oceans; humans and other animals consume the fish and face illnesses as a result. In addition to lowered oxygen levels in the oceans, increased ocean acidity also poses a great risk. This is an underrated environmental problem that has the potential to disrupt people's lives directly. Increasing acidity in the oceans would also break food chains. Given the fact that more than twenty per cent of the world population is fed by fish caught in the ocean, this would create challenges for food security as well.

So the question is, as one speaker highlighted, who is going to be responsible for cleaning up the pollution which the Danube River has brought to the Black Sea, the Aegean Sea, or the oceans? Who will take responsibility for addressing the pollution caused in the atmosphere? The difficulty in answering these questions remains at the heart of our environmental problems.

Loss of biodiversity is (and will be) one of the most important environmental problems (Smith et al., 2003). Initial steps were taken in Rio in 1992 with the Convention on Biological Diversity, but as one speaker criticised, no additional steps have been taken in the last twenty-seven years to properly address the issue (Morger & Tsioumani, 2010). To put things into perspective, one speaker reminded the assembly that the asteroid that hit the earth sixty-five million years ago led to the loss of sixty percent of species, and the damage that the human race inflicts on earth today is much worse than what that asteroid did.

Some of the issues that require immediate attention were listed by the participants: loss of forests due to wildfires, as we see in Brazil (The Guardian, 2019); loss of freshwater resources, which has made countries rich in fresh water, such as Turkey, on the verge of freshwater scarcity; as well as problems like the excessive use of fertilisers, which pollute not just land, but also the seas and oceans (Puckett, 1995).

Climate change adds another layer to complex environmental problems. Climate change is going to create a 'butterfly effect', as one speaker put it, which will be felt in all aspects of life (UNFCCC). What is more worrisome is that 'we don't know for sure what kind of reaction nature will give', which makes it even more important to come up with comprehensive environmental policies and do so immediately.

The most worrying aspect of climate change, as was highlighted by all speakers and participants, is the impact climate change has (and will have) on security (Levy, 1995; Podesta & Ogden, 2008; Schwartz & Randall, 2003; Halden, 2007; WBGU, 2007; 2008; Campbell-Lendrum & Woodruff, 2007; Smith & Vivekananda, 2007). Security threats that

environmental problems create are not possibilities for the future, but rather realities that we now live in. These will become even worse if not addressed. One speaker reminded the gathering that 'the UN estimates that 40% of internal conflicts over the last sixty years were related to natural resources'. Another speaker noted that the Arab Spring, which began in Tunisia in December 2010, followed a 35% increase in food prices between September 2010 and December 2010 (Jonstone & Mazo, 2011; Perez & Wire, 2013). While climate change cannot be listed as the only factor behind these developments, it is important in illustrating the security implications of climate change.

The type and severity of the impact that climate change has varies from region to region. The MENA region, as one speaker emphasised, happens to be one of the regions that faces the most severe consequences of climate change (Terink et al., 2013; Gleick, 2014). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimates that by the end of the century there will be a 20-30% decrease in levels of precipitation in this region, which will result in long periods of drought followed by severe rains (Collins et al., 2013). These developments will have the potential to further destabilise an already volatile region.

Speakers also emphasised the climate change/migration/security nexus. On the one hand, conflicts are likely to break out due to worsening living conditions, as well as an increasing scarcity of natural resources (Myers, 1993; Levy et al. 2005; Hendrix & Glaser 2007). On the other hand, these conflicts, along with natural disasters, will lead to waves of migration. This will in turn likely increase migration-related security concerns (CNA, 2007; Gleditsch et al., 2007; Hartmann, 2010). As emphasised by one speaker, displacements resulting from natural disasters are higher than displacements resulting from conflicts. It is estimated that 140 million people will need to migrate by 2050 from Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and South Asia alone. Overall, about one billion people are expected to move by 2050 (Rigaud et al., 2018). The pressure from these migratory moves will be most severely felt by developing countries. However, the developed world will not be immune. Europe, for instance,

will witness a surge of refugees running away from climate change-related conditions (Huysmans, 2006).

Climate change is not just a threat to security, but rather to all aspects of life. As one speaker emphasised, agriculture is one of the fields that is going to be affected directly by climate-related problems (Falkenmark, 2013). Water and soil are two key components needed for agricultural production, and they are both going to be affected by climate change. Too little water, due to droughts, or too much water, due to floods, coupled with the effect of rising temperatures on plant production will lead to food insecurity. As another speaker mentioned, agriculture depends on a very tight balance. Because of this, in the future it will be very difficult to cultivate a number of plants as simple as tomatoes, because the earth will be either too hot, too cold, too dry, or too wet. Industrial production will also be adversely affected by water scarcity caused by climate change (Gosling & Arnell, 2016). An increasing number of hot days will lead to a rise in temperature-related diseases. Coupled with increases in rainfall, rising temperature will likely contribute to the spread of communicable diseases (Greer & Fisman, 2008). Climate change poses a threat to development as well, since those who suffer the most from environmental problems are the ones who are already economically and socially in disadvantaged positions (Chitiga, 2019).

One speaker mentioned that the fundamental reason why environmental security is not getting the attention it deserves is because of the dominant role played by economic interests in shaping national discourses. Another speaker acknowledged the role that the economic implications of environmental initiatives play in shaping public and private actors' reluctance; however, he suggested that to ignore environmental problems also creates a significant economic burden. The speaker supported this argument by reminding the participants that according to the 'Global Climate Risk Index 2019, disasters caused by climate change in Turkey led to an economic loss of 2 billion dollars in 2017.' (Eckstein et al., 2019) These insights further highlight that climate change leads to both future and immediate economic problems.

ATTEMPTS AT ADDRESSING ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

Participants at the session identified major environmental concerns. A number of concrete attempts at collectively addressing environmental issues, however incomplete or inadequate they might have been, were also discussed. The participants also shared their ideas about the reasons for the very limited success that policy initiatives have been able to attain. Although the different ways that environmental problems affect lives were discussed, the picture was not completely negative. On the contrary, speakers underlined the efforts that have been made during the last three decades, especially in relation to climate change. The most important thing that has been accomplished during the last few years, as one participant highlighted, is the almost complete elimination of doubt about the scientific validity of climate change (Oreskes, 2004). This step, in and of itself, has been crucial in prioritising the issue on political agendas.

In terms of policy, following upon the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol was a turning point in prioritising the issue on the global political agenda, and it brought together countries from around the world. The speakers agreed that the relative failure of the Kyoto Protocol in delivering upon its promises can best be understood in light of the tensions between developed and developing countries (Rosen, 2015). Through this framework, the developed countries basically told developing countries that they had progressed by damaging the environment. However, if the developing countries did the same, there would be no world to live in. The mismatch between expectation, willingness and capacity for change led to the failure of the Kyoto Protocol. The problems originated not from the policy-making stage, but from the implementation stage. However, climate initiatives have not come to an end with the Kyoto Protocol, and a number

of promising albeit insufficient steps have been taken. The opening of a Climate Academy in Warsaw, for example, was a positive step toward enhancing cooperation.

The Paris Agreement presented a renewed opportunity to collectively address climate change. However, the withdrawal of the USA has presented a challenge for the future (Zhang et al., 2017; Urpelainen & Van de Graaf, 2018). There are also regional and global efforts through the G20 to address the issue (Kiron & Kokotsis, 2016). However, as the speakers emphasised, even though efforts have been made, scientific studies illustrate that we are still far behind the target policies. One speaker pointed out that even if every country strictly followed the requirements of the Paris Agreement, the world would still be warming up by three degrees, "and three degrees is going to [create] a different world than we have ever lived in as a human race." It must be noted that this presents the best-case scenario. If states do not keep with their commitments, then the world runs the risk of warming up by four-six degrees. What needs to be kept in mind is that the more delayed we are in developing proper policies, the more dire the consequences of climate change will be. As one speaker mentioned, the IPCC used to estimate a rise in sea levels of around eighty centimetres to one metre. However, they have renewed their estimate, now indicating that there could be a rise of up to two metres.

What makes the situation worse is that even in some areas where we thought we had successfully initiated cooperation and collective action we are now observing regression. For example, people are having difficulty in going out into the streets in China due to heavy air pollution (Song et al., 2017). Moreover, though we had thought that the problem of depletion of the ozone layer was improving, in fact this issue still remains. It was recently revealed that a number of companies, especially in Western China, have been using chemicals that were banned about thirty years ago (Fang et al., 2019).

Some positive steps have been taken, for instance in addressing the issue of microplastics (Fendall & Sewell, 2009). One speaker pointed out that Turkey raised this issue at the Fourth Session of the UN Environment Assembly, which took place in Nairobi in March 2019. Since then, Germany has taken the lead and organised a roundtable meeting to which more than fifty countries were invited. As one speaker suggested, however, to successfully address this issue requires that all countries around the world contribute toward the creation of an international agreement. Climate change has been on the global agenda for over twenty-five years, and diplomats, lawyers and environmentalists have been working together to find a solution. The issue of microplastics must first find a place on political agendas, and then be addressed before it is too late. Furthermore, as climate change has illustrated, even if a common understanding is developed and a framework of operation is agreed upon, it is possible that policy initiatives could be less assertive than necessary (Wu et al., 2017). Thus, it is clear that a renewed approach and a revised set of policy tools are needed in order to successfully solve environmental problems.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SOLUTIONS AND PROBLEMS AHEAD

The common denominator for the suggestions and solutions that were emphasised during the session can best be summarised in the words of one speaker: 'The climate already changed; we have to adapt to it'. The participants in the session highlighted the main obstacles to be overcome, emphasising some policy initiatives that have the potential to bring promising results.

The overall risk for future environmental protection, as one participant emphasised, is the growing distrust of multilateralism. One speaker described the environment as 'the most important component of our collective security', and a component that can only be addressed col-

lectively. Solving environmental issues requires cooperation at local, national, regional and international levels. Since coordination and cooperation at each level are the only ways to address issues of global commons, we can only move forward by rebuilding trust in multilateralism, at least for environmental protection. If we were to take the Mediterranean as an example, one speaker emphasised that all twenty-one countries need to come together to address pollution if we want to prevent negative affects to the creatures of this area.

The speakers also highlighted that cooperation must go beyond the organising of meetings. While organising meetings is important, turning ideas into action is even more necessary. As one speaker highlighted, since June 2019, as a part of the Zero-Waste Project, more than 150,000 cubic meters of marine litter were collect by Turkey (Ay, 2019). While emphasising the importance of the leading role that Turkey has been trying to play in this issue, the speaker also reminded the assembly that all countries must get together in addressing environmental issues, such as collecting microplastics from the oceans and seas. This is simply because no country acting alone is likely to produce the desired outcomes. Since all countries are responsible for plastic pollution in the oceans, effective cleaning of marine litter can only be realised by coordination of all the parties involved.

For such collective action to be effectively realised, the first hurdle that must be overcome is to convince politicians about the importance of environmental problems. The causal link between the sources of environmental problems (for example plastic use and carbon emissions), and their consequences (like decreased fish populations and climate change) are not always easy to recognise. For example, last June was the hottest June in recorded history. The pattern was the same for July and September, while August was the second hottest August that has been recorded (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2019). These were temperatures that people personally experienced. However, since climate change is gradual, it is difficult to illustrate the connection between climate change and what people experience.

One speaker gave the example of apricot production in Turkey. In 2008, experts had warned producers that it would not be possible to continue with apricot production in the region. However, as the speaker revealed, the expert advice was not heeded by the producers as there was no threat that the producers could observe with their own eyes. However, after ten years, the producers ended up cutting down two million apricot trees. There is also a problem of uncertainty. We think that we know what kind of security implications might come with climate change, but we cannot be one hundred per cent sure. The long causal link creates a fertile environment for people with economic or political motives to deny, and in some cases silence, scientific evidence. The fact that the policy discussions around climate change are still populated by 'climate deniers' (even though they are decreasing in number) is a testament of this problem (Norgaard, 2019).

The causal link shortens when there is an environmental disaster. For example, as one speaker mentioned, Turkey in the last few years has suffered a number of flood-related deaths and damaging outcomes. The hailstorm that happened in 2017 was a financially devastating episode for Turkey. When such disasters occur, environmental issues find a place in the media. People then become more likely to lend an ear to environmental experts. Climate change increases the frequency and severity of environmental disasters, and this can potentially contribute to the prioritisation of environmental issues on political agendas. However, if we want to effectively address environmental problems, as one speaker pointed out, '...we have to take measures before such disasters [occur]'.

The second hurdle in developing effective environmental policies is the time required for policy initiatives to create observable impact on the ground. As one speaker put it, 'If we start zero carbon emissions now, the effects of it [the damage created so far] would still be felt for centuries'. This time gap makes it difficult for politicians to be motivated to take drastic policy measures that prioritise environment over economic concerns. As one participant stated, the most important problem that prevents states from taking environmental action is the question of

'Who will pay for it?' Many citizens want environmental action to be taken, but not many are willing to sacrifice anything to this end. This leads politicians to hesitate in taking action as they are worried about angering their constituents. Thus, the need for everyone to shoulder their share of responsibility is a necessity for proper policies to be developed and implemented.

Once these hurdles are overcome, then the content and scope of the policies must be properly designed. The first step toward that end is appreciating the fact that (a) environmental issues create different problems for different regions (and groups within regions), and (b) each actor has a different capacity to contribute to the solution of the problem. The experience so far has illustrated that ignoring these realities has led to incomplete and inappropriate policies that neither get the political support they need nor create the desired outcomes.

In developing environmental policies, it must be noted that not every individual or group within a country will be equally affected by the negative impacts of climate change. The urban poor are disproportionately affected by climate change due to their physical, geographical and social exclusion (Roy et al., 2016; Sanni et al., 2019). They live for the most part in informal settlements in the urban periphery, as well as fragile locations which include slopes and coastlines, making them more vulnerable. By 2030, 600 million urban poor will be directly at risk for problems related to climate change. This important issue has been addressed at the Climate Action Summit 2019. However, such meetings constitute only a beginning for the creation of appropriate policy measures. It is estimated that about 15 billion dollars is needed for integrated efforts to increase climate resilience.

One step that must be taken to develop more effective environmental policies is to better appreciate the security implications of environmental problems. Historically, there has been a limited link seen between environment and security; this focused on the possibility of water scarcity leading to wars. However, over time, it has become clear that a whole

range of environmental problems must be addressed if we want to avoid new wars. As one speaker pinpointed, the rising awareness about the link between environment, development and security on the UN Security Council agenda is promising. However, as one speaker noted, 'If we do not want new wars', we must establish a system that would focus upon capacity building for the developing and least developed countries to prevent environment-induced conflicts. Successfully addressing the worsening security implications of environmental problems can only be realised if sufficient finance, technology and capacity-building support is provided by developed countries. The speaker also highlighted that developed countries need to understand that opening their resources and sharing their technology is not only beneficial for the developing countries, but also for themselves; this would help prevent potential refugee flows.

Lastly, while developing effective environmental policies is of crucial importance, taking the environment into account in all policy initiatives is also a much needed approach. All policy decisions, including those unrelated to the environment, need to take potential risks to the environment into account, for example climate change. On that note, one speaker highlighted the need to take climate change into account during urban planning, as well as in construction (Broto, 2017). The speaker stated that in civil engineering schools, students are now taught to consider climate change as a new criterion in designing buildings and to account for possible floods in calculating pipeline capacities. While these are important signs of 'adaptation', attempts to deal with environmental issues will inevitably fall short as long as the root causes of problems are not properly addressed.

CONCLUSION

The speakers and participants from different professions, coming from different countries, all agreed that we are indeed experiencing a 'tragedy', as the title of the session has suggested. The participants further agreed that not only our understanding of national security, but also our views of development, urbanisation, industrial production, agriculture, and poverty alleviation need to be changed for any significant progress to be made in successfully addressing environmental concerns. Addressing a global tragedy requires global action; this is why participants emphasised the importance of international cooperation and collaboration in the face of global retreat. The situation might be dire and the prospects may be gloomy, but increased public awareness and political attention mean that we are more prepared to tackle the problems than we were twenty years ago.

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The Predicament of Political Legitimacy in the MENA Region

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INTRODUCTION

In 1977, Michael C. Hudson claimed that the central problem of government in the Arab world was political illegitimacy. After 40 years, in early 2011, the onset of mass revolts in large parts of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have highlighted the key relevance of the question of political legitimacy in MENA countries. The 'Arab Spring' raised hopes that Arab states were finally on the verge of a democratic awakening, putting an end to decades of authoritarianism, and establishing a new and more legitimate political order reflecting the liberal aspirations of the people. However, nine years later, the region is experiencing a 'counter-revolutionary' wave and a comeback of authoritarianism, as well as state failure and state fragmentation. In parallel, non-state actors are emerg-

ing, such as ISIS, who question the political legitimacy of the Sykes-Picot order and highlight the failures and weaknesses of the artificially-created Arab States which were born on the ashes of the Ottoman Empire. In fact, almost a century after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, one question is still to be answered by Arab leaders and populations: what follows the Ottoman sultan-caliph as the source of political legitimacy?

In political literature, the word 'legitimacy' refers to the unanimous, near-universal agreement by citizens on the rules of the political game within a given state. In that sense, consent of the governed is the source of political legitimacy. Hence, in its most comprehensive definition, political legitimacy goes beyond holding free and fair elections. It is about enshrining the consent of the governed in the parameters and rules of the political game. This means establishing constitutional frameworks and institutions that protect the rights of citizens, guarantee the rule of law and build inclusive societies.

Many leaders across MENA face a crisis in legitimising their rule after having used autocratic practices and methods to sustain their own power during the past decades. In addition, being responsible for terror, violence and human displacement, some of these leaders are no longer capable of implementing a social contract that guarantees peace, security and stability. Moreover, the MENA remains one of the most unstable regions on earth. State failure, wars, civil strife, terrorism and migration flows are all destabilising elements that make managing power and governance in many MENA countries a problematic question. Political legitimacy remains very fragile, even in seemingly stable countries.

This closed session, entitled 'The Predicament of Political Legitimacy in the MENA Region', attempted to explore the driving factors and the solutions to this issue. The panelists, coming from various backgrounds and endowed with different expertise, sought to answer the following questions: What is the status of the legitimacy of Arab governments following the Arab Spring and its aftermath? How is political legitimacy understood in a region comprising states and societies as divergent as Lebanon and Saudi Arabia? What methods are being deployed by the Arab regimes in order to solidify their rule? Can a single model of political legitimacy be applied to the region? Beyond the crisis of political legitimacy, where is the region heading?

THE NATURE OF POLITICAL LEGITIMACY IN THE MENA REGION

The panelists started by setting the parameters of the debate and defining the contours of the notion of political legitimacy in the region. One panelist drew the audience's attention to the choice of wording in the title of the discussion: the use of the term 'predicament', rather than 'crisis', pinpoints the serious difficulties one encounters in finding a solution to this problem of lack of legitimacy in the MENA region.

Political legitimacy is indeed a slippery and multifaceted concept that must be considered with caution, especially given that there is a discrepancy between the internal and external perception of what is legitimate. Often times, as one panelist suggested, the domestic public opinion would consider a state behavior as legitimate, while the international community would view it as illegitimate. The ongoing military operation of Turkey in Northern Syria offers a perfect illustration of this: while many Turks support this operation and view it as legitimate, as it seeks to protect the borders of their country and to guarantee peace and security, a large part of the international community continues to consider Turkey's operation as illegitimate. As no superior authority can solve the problem of the discrepancy between the internal and external perception of legitimacy, it is important, as the panelist highlighted, that leaders and people adopt a 'modest' attitude towards others and respect the genuine differences in perceptions.

Overall, the speakers identified four levels of debate about the nature of political legitimacy within the MENA region. The first level of debate concerns what the people want. While in the West, people want good governance in the sense of decent relations between the state and the society based on international norms, in the MENA region citizens have more basic demands. They need order and stability. As one panelist put it, 'In the MENA region, people prefer a thousand years of tyranny to a single day of chaos'. Whether in Libya, Yemen, Syria or Iraq, there is a

popular craving for order. Hence, order and stability become the prime imperative for legitimacy. A legitimate leader would be one that satisfies the people's longing for peace and security.

The second level of debate concerns the historical roots of legitimacy. In the MENA region, one cannot talk about legitimacy without mentioning the damage of 'peace diplomacy' after World War I. The Balfour declaration created a Jewish state at the heart of the MENA region, while the Sykes-Picot agreement, which paved the way for French and British rule over parts of the lands of the Ottoman Empire¹, imposed artificial borders and created states on an arbitrary basis. One of the consequences of such European colonial practices was the splitting of ethnicities into different states. In the wake of World War I, Ottoman Kurds for instance, once united under the multiethnic Ottoman Empire, were scattered across Turkey and Iraq, which was under British rule. They were therefore deprived of their right to live together. Overall, the panelists agreed that the historical process that led to the creation of independent Arab states caused tremendous suffering and is viewed by some populations of the MENA region as illegitimate, precisely because it was driven by European colonialist powers.

The third level of debate concerns the normative framework of political legitimacy. What determines political legitimacy is the extent to which a government respects the law internally and internationally. This could entail respecting the authority of the United Nations, refusing to adopt 'criminal', violent behavior vis-à-vis a population, or avoiding the use of force in maintaining order. However, one panelist highlighted that in the particular context of the MENA region, the postcolonial order necessarily had to rely on force and coercion as it was an artificial order created by Europeans. It was viewed as illegitimate by a large part of the Arab population. Such order could not rest on consent as the local communities did not feel any belonging or attachment to it.

The fourth level of debate concerns the neglected dimension of political legitimacy: the role of geopolitics in the MENA region. An Arab state or

¹ Lebanon and France became French mandates, while Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine became British mandates

ruler is seen as politically legitimate by Western powers insofar as he respects their geopolitical interests in terms of sustaining Israel, containing Islam, containing nuclear proliferation (Iran) and accessing energy resources (oil). In fact, as Zaki Laidi (2012) highlights in his book *Limited Achievements: Obama's Foreign Policy*², throughout the 1990s and 2000s, Western powers have established a 'pact of silence' with Arab authoritarian rulers. In return for the latter's support in containing Islamist groups and defending Israel, Western powers turned a blind eye to the Arab rulers' autocratic practices and their violation of democracy and human rights. Hence, conforming to the geopolitical agenda of Western powers was a guarantee of 'external' political legitimacy. However, at the domestic-internal level, Arab rulers' accommodation of Western interests contributed to delegitimising them in the eyes of their own populations.

BRINGING IN THE RELIGIOUS DIMENSION

One cannot reflect on political legitimacy in the MENA region without taking into consideration its religious dimension. Indeed, the question of political legitimacy has been one of the most problematic and contentious issues in the history of the region since the death of Prophet Mohammad. In fact, the Prophet's death ignited an open-ended debate: Who has legitimacy to be the successor and to rule? Who has the right to make decisions and to lead? This paved the way for disputes inside the Community of Believers (the Ummah) and led the way to the Shia/Sunni divide.

One of the problems that Islamic thought has suffered from is that the scholars and jurists who addressed the issue of political legitimacy after the Prophet's death were mainly concerned about guaranteeing order and stability, and preventing fitna (civil strife) and chaos. They were therefore willing to sacrifice democratic principles on the altar of political stability.

² See references for the full source

The Ottoman Empire and Caliphate partly answered the question of political legitimacy after the death of the Prophet. In fact, the Sultans managed to consolidate their rule by claiming a religious legitimacy deriving from their status as 'Caliphs', successors of the Prophet. However, the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk opened an era of confusion and political wandering for most Arabs and Muslims: having once been united as one Islamic Ummah under the Caliphate, they were suddenly divided into artificially-created states. Almost a century after the fall of the Empire, some Arabs and Muslims still express nostalgia for the 'golden era' of the past, longing for the unity that existed under the Caliphate.

It is also worth mentioning, as one panelist highlighted, that the Islamic corpus which the jurists produced after the death of Prophet Mohammad is used today to legitimise the nature of political rule in several MENA countries. Saudi Arabia's monarchy hence draws its political legitimacy from being the custodian of the two holy places (Al-Haramayn, Mecca and Medina) as well as from the Wahhabi/Ibn Taymiyya school of thought. The king of Morocco, however, claims a religious legitimacy as a descendant of the Prophet. In a way, political legitimacy in the region has often been intertwined with religious legitimacy.

THE NEXUS BETWEEN STATE-BUILDING AND LACK OF POLITICAL LEGITIMACY

A critical examination of the state-building process in the MENA region shows that political illegitimacy has been an intrinsic feature of Arab states since their inception.

It is worth first recalling that Arab states are postcolonial constructs. As James Barr³ highlights in his book *A Line in the Sand: The Anglo-French Struggle for the Middle East*, Arab states were artificially created by the

³ See references for the full source

British and French colonial powers following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1918. (France imposed a mandate in Lebanon and Syria, while Britain took control of Jordan, Iraq and Palestine). In a sense, they were born out of an 'original sin'.

Second, Arab states, since their inception, have relied on 'hard power' to consolidate themselves. This reliance on hard power is a legacy of European colonialism. In fact, as soon as they established their mandates over Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Palestine, the British and the French powers sought to identify entities and actors in each Arab state who were capable of guaranteeing domestic stability while showing a certain level of discipline and obedience to the West. The military and security forces soon appeared as the most disciplined institutions, and ones that were best-positioned to impose order in a top-down fashion. The support European powers granted to the military ended up empowering the latter. Therefore, in the second half of the 20th century, Arab charismatic leaders, with the support of the army, undertook military coups d'états that served as the 'foundational acts' for building new authoritarian regimes. Gamal Abdelnasser, Saddam Hussein and Hafez al Assad have all established military dictatorships with a 'façade' of democracy. They managed to obtain a certain level of political legitimacy and consent from the governed through the *assabiyya* they claimed ('esprit de corps' / social solidarity of a group, like the Alawites in Syria), or through a generous social contract which offered citizens significant welfare benefits in exchange for their obedience to the state and their non-interference in politics. In addition, these regimes managed to repress dissent through instrumentalising the Arab-Israeli conflict: under the pretext of the necessity to be united in the fight against Israel, Arab authoritarian leaders crushed any form of opposition to their rule. The need to ensure 'unicity of ranks' against the common enemy was a strong argument mobilised in their political rhetoric, and it served as an efficient means to repress citizens.

In other parts of the MENA region, in the Gulf monarchies, the ruling dynasties managed to consolidate their power through relying on oil

wealth. Petrodollars were used to coopt citizens and buy their consent, while at the same time building a strong security apparatus able to repress any form of dissent. Cooption and repression, the carrot and the stick, were the matrix of the political system. In addition, in those oil-rich states, the absence of taxation of citizens freed the ruling elite from the pressure of democratisation and political representation; the motto 'no taxation without representation', which contributed to the rise of democracy in Europe, was reversed in the Arab context and replaced by 'no representation without taxation'. In other words, the fiscal autonomy of the state translated into increased political autonomy and authoritarian resilience. Rentierism hence guaranteed a certain degree of regime stability, despite a lack of political legitimacy.

Last but not least, a major strategy used by Arab autocrats to consolidate their rule has been the promotion of sectarianism to divide their societies and better rule them. In fact, sectarian politics is at the core of authoritarianism: by mobilising the sectarian sentiment or 'assabiyya' of the members of their community, and by nurturing a Manichean vision of politics as a confrontation between 'us', the minority, versus 'them', the majority, Bashar al Assad, Saddam Hussein, Ali Abdullah Saleh and even the Kings of Saudi Arabia have managed to consolidate their power. The rise of ISIS is nothing but the outcome of the injection of sectarianism into Arab societies throughout the past two decades, and Iraqi Sunnis supported ISIS because of their feeling of being rejected and discriminated against by the Shia-dominated regime in Baghdad.

This pattern of sectarianism is nowhere more visible than in Lebanon. In this country, the 'National Pact' established a specific power-sharing agreement that distributed political positions along confessional and sectarian lines. This led to the formation of political parties on religious lines, rather than over policy differences. Voting became an assertion of one's identity rather than a real choice. Such a system created a distorted form of democracy, best characterized as 'communitocracy'⁴. The term refers to a communitarian-based governance structure that rests on the assertion of communitarian differences and on rent-seeking be-

⁴ Imad Salamey, *The Decline of Nation-States after the Arab Spring: The Rise of Communitocracy*, Palgrave, 2017.

tween political parties. Such a system based on the rule of sectarian communities, on clientelism, nepotism and corruption has suffered from a clear deficit of political legitimacy.

THE DEBATE OVER THE COMPATIBILITY OF ISLAM WITH DEMOCRACY

The resilience of authoritarianism in the MENA region has raised a public and scientific debate on the compatibility of Islam with democracy. This debate is intellectually settled with a large majority of Islamic scholars and jurists agreeing that there is nothing un-Islamic about democracy. 'Democracy is Islamic', stated one panelist, observing that 'casting a vote in the ballot box is another form of obtaining consensus', and finding consensus (*ijmaa'*) is at the heart of Islamic theology.

Yet one panelist pointed out that there still exist some societal factions who reject democracy in the MENA context. Among Muslims, two categories of people resist democracy: authoritarian leaders and religious authorities. The former reject democracy as they are the ones who will lose the most from democracy. These authoritarian leaders justify their reluctance to embrace democracy on the ground that democracy may bring chaos, while tyranny guarantees order and stability. As to religious authorities, they are recalcitrant toward democracy because a democratic, secular political system would deprive them of their influence, authority, and power over society.

According to the same panelist, among non-Muslims in the West, it is possible to identify three categories of people who oppose democracy for Muslims: those who adopt racist thinking and believe that democracy is incompatible with Islam, and that there is something in the Muslims' DNA that prevents them from embracing democracy; those who think that Muslims in general, and Arabs in particular, are unsuited for democ-

racy, because they will misuse democracy to bring to power Islamist groups; and lastly, those who prefer to deal with autocrats who show obedience to Western powers and follow their orders. These people fear the popular will of any Muslims who might be tempted to vote for rulers who demonstrate an anti-Israeli and anti-Western sentiment.

ARAB REVOLUTIONS COUNTERREVOLUTIONS AND THE PREDICAMENT OF POLITICAL LEGITIMACY

The MENA region is a postcolonial construct, and as it is characterised by high levels of foreign interventionism, making it a 'highly penetrated regional system'⁵. It is therefore important when reflecting upon political legitimacy in this region to distinguish between the legitimacy of Arab states as defined by the people living in the MENA region, and legitimacy of Arab states as defined by the West.

Political legitimacy, in its contemporary definition, stems from 'the people's belief that the institutions governing them have the right to do so', as one panelist highlighted. Therefore, the key question arises: Do people in the MENA region believe that the institutions ruling them have the right to do so? The answer has been provided by the Arab revolutions. People in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Libya, Yemen and Syria took to the streets with one unifying motto – 'the people want to bring the regime down (*al sha'b yurid isqat al nizham*), a regime they viewed as illegitimate. A new wave of the Arab revolutions, or an 'Arab Spring 2.0', has hit countries like Sudan, Iraq and Lebanon in 2019. People are protesting against the corruption of their rulers and the division of the political system across sectarian/confessional lines.

⁵ Raymond Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, Manchester University Press, 2015.

Another answer lies in the responses of the Arab regimes to the revolutions: the least legitimate the regime, the more brutal has been the response. In Bahrain, the ruling monarchy requested the solidarity and support of the GCC countries in the face of protesters whom Manama immediately portrayed as 'foreign agents' of Iran. On March 14, 2011, 1000 troops from Saudi Arabia and 500 troops from the UAE entered Bahrain and crushed the uprising. The 'Pearl Roundabout' was cleared of protesters and the iconic statue at its center was destroyed. In Syria, Bashar Al Assad's response to the uprising which started in Der-e-Zor was no less problematic: severe violence was unleashed against protesters, showing the worst manifestation of what Nazih Ayubi (1996) coined as the 'fierce state'⁶. In Egypt, the coup d'état by Abdelfattah Al Sissi in July 2013 toppled the democratically-elected president, Mohammad Morsi. In the aftermath of the coup, members of the Muslim Brotherhood movement were imprisoned, and large numbers of them were killed during the Rabaa Square demonstrations in August 2013. One panelist said, 'It is irrelevant how Islamist Mohammad Morsi was; what is relevant is that he was the first democratically-elected president in the history of Egypt, and he was toppled by the army, hence showing how non-democratic the political system is in Egypt'.

Overall, the Arab regimes' responses to the revolutions have revealed that Arab rulers have perceived themselves as illegitimate: their tough repression of protesters is nothing but the symptom of their inner feeling that they lack legitimacy. In that sense, violence is the weapon of the weakest.

What is the other side of the question? How does the West view this issue of legitimacy in the MENA region? One panelist stated, 'The legacy of the Crusaders is not completely dead yet. Turcophobia and Islamophobia still exist in the minds of many Westerners. They exist at the most sophisticated level, at the level of political philosophy and theology, but also at the most basic level, at the level of the public debate and popular culture'. This Islamophobia and Turcophobia push Westerners to deny

⁶ Nazih Ayubi defines the "fierce state" as one that recurses to excessive violence, large army, harsh prisons, torture, and sometimes firing squads to preserve itself by force.

political legitimacy to MENA regimes and rulers who challenge the West. They only grant it to those who show obedience to the West. The panelist hence added, 'While Westerners pay lip service to democracy, they truly do not mean it. They will support the most autocratic Arab rulers as long as the latter defend the interests of the West, largely defined in terms of securing oil and guaranteeing the security of Israel'.

Indeed, the question of the shared responsibility of the West in perpetuating authoritarianism in the region was brought up by all speakers. They all agreed that foreign interventionism in the region has contributed to the resilience of authoritarianism, because Western leaders have supported and endorsed Arab autocrats as long as the latter defended their interests. As one panelist stated, 'One of the main blows to political legitimacy in the MENA region is foreign interventionism to consolidate authoritarian leaders, thus enabling them to perpetuate their dysfunctional and illegitimate political system'. The panelist recalled that Bashar al Assad was for long considered by Westerners as a legitimate leader; for example, late French President Jacques Chirac built excellent bilateral relations with the Syrian regime. In addition, Egyptian President AbdelFattah Al Sissi currently benefits from Western support, despite his illegitimate seizure of power through a coup d'état against the democratically-elected President Mohammad Morsi. As to several late presidents of the region, Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, Zein El Abidin Ben Ali of Tunisia, and Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria, they were all awarded the Louise Michel Prize for Human Rights and Democracy by the French Senate! Hence, at the core of the problem of a lack of political legitimacy in the MENA region is the foreign interference of Western powers. They acknowledge and support Arab autocrats despite their illegitimate practices.

All in all, Arab revolutions have gradually been replaced - as of 2013 - by counterrevolutions, be they in Egypt, Syria, Bahrain or Libya. These counterrevolutions were made possible through three factors: first, Western foreign interventionism in support of autocrats; second, the mobilisation by Arab autocrats (AbdelFattah al Sissi and Bashar al Assad, for exam-

ple) of the 'deep state' (the army, the police and intelligence forces) to repress the opposition; and third, the policies of major regional powers such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE, which boosted counterrevolutionary forces in those Arab countries undergoing popular uprisings. It is worth examining this last point in greater detail. In fact, Saudi Arabia and the UAE were able to boost counterrevolutionary forces in Arab countries through three dynamics: first, through mobilising 'hard power', namely by sending their troops to repress the uprisings in their neighborhood, as exemplified by Riyadh's interventions in Bahrain and in Yemen; second, through resorting to 'checkbook diplomacy' to fund counterrevolutionary actors, as exemplified by Riyadh's and Abu Dhabi's injection of 12 billion dollars into the Egyptian economy after the election of Abdelfattah al Sissi; third, by fueling the anti-Muslim sentiment in Western circles in order to de-legitimise Muslim Brotherhood-inspired groups who emerged victorious from the ballot box in the aftermath of the revolutions (Al Nahdha in Tunisia; the Justice and Freedom Party in Egypt). Indeed, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have systematically highlighted in their political rhetoric the danger of Islamists riding the wave of Arab revolutions to seize power and control the state. They nurtured, in Western circles, the fear of political Islam as a means to de-legitimise and even 'criminalise' Islamist groups who challenge the Gulf monarchies' rule. Islamophobia, therefore, went hand in hand with counterrevolution.

THE WAY FORWARD: PATHWAYS TO REBUILDING POLITICAL LEGITIMACY IN THE MENA REGION

In a context where the MENA region is currently facing an unprecedented political, economic and social crisis, re-building legitimacy of regimes is crucial to help shape a better future. The speakers identified a series of political principles and conditions that need to exist and to be fulfilled in order for institutions to be legitimate. First, it was highlighted that the

institutions and the political systems must be people-centered: the consent of the governed regarding the rules of the political game is crucial to ensure sustainability and legitimacy of any system. Scholars refer to the 'consent of the governed' as a precondition for democracies; however, there are many forms of democracies that could exist, and Arab elites and populations have yet to agree on what form of democracy is best suitable for their culture, their value system, and their specific historical, social and political context.

Second, political legitimacy must stem from constitutionalism: there needs to exist a social contract between those who govern and those who are governed, and between the citizens themselves, which clearly defines rights and duties of each party. Rule of law is also necessary to guarantee political legitimacy and to ensure that the rights of citizens are respected.

Third, a major condition for rebuilding political legitimacy in the MENA region is the restructuring of the sociopolitical system along civil-secular lines. A close examination of the behavior of Arab populations shows their longing for civilian/non-sectarian politics. An example of this is reflected in the motto the Syrian protesters used in the beginning of their uprising: '*Al sha'ab al suri wahed, wahed, wahed*' (The people of Syria are one, one, one (united)), which revealed the population's opposition to the sectarian division of their society between Sunnis and Alawites.

Fourth, the question of the role of religion in politics and public affairs must be sorted out, and a balance must be found between religion and secularism. One panelist stated that no political party should be exclusively based on religion, and that religion should not be used as an instrument when entering the political realm and partisan politics. The panelist suggested that Islamist movements be free to discuss public affairs, yet they should abstain from practicing partisan politics in the name of religion. This would protect Islam as a holy religion from being politically instrumentalised, while at the same time freeing the political arena from the dominance of religious discourse. The political system would thus be structured along civil rather than religious/ideological lines.

Fifth, it is necessary to find a balance between the rule of the majority and the respect for minority rights. Majoritarian understandings of democracy may lead to violations of human rights, in particular minority rights, thus undermining the political legitimacy of the regime.

Sixth, social justice must be placed at the center of the political system. In many parts of the world, unrestrained capitalism is leading to major inequalities which undermine social justice and the right of all citizens to a decent life. This also undermines the state's political legitimacy. Hence the need to place social justice considerations at the top of the political agenda and ensure a better distribution of resources to guarantee the longevity and sustainability of the political system.

Other conditions and criteria of political legitimacy were identified: equality of all citizens before the law, regardless of their religion, ethnicity or gender; transparency and accountability to avoid corruption and abuse of power; a balance in civil-military relations in a way to prevent military tutelage over politics and the army's dominance over a civilian, democratically-elected government; non-interference of foreign powers in Arab states' domestic politics; free media that are able to inform the public; guaranteeing citizens' rights to dissent and show opposition; and allowing and maintaining a strong civil society with vibrant NGOs and associations that are able to protect and defend citizens' rights.

Last but not least, more than one panelist mentioned that a necessary condition to obtain political legitimacy is for Arab regimes to re-embrace the Palestinian cause. In a way, the road to political legitimacy passes through Al Quds (Jerusalem). One panelist stated, 'When the people took to the streets in Tunisia, Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Syria, they shouted two motos that went together: "the people want to bring the regime down" (*al cha'ab yurid isqat al nizham*) and "the people want the liberation of Palestine" (*al cha'ab yurid tahrir filisin*). This latter motto showed the centrality of the Palestinian cause in the minds of many Arabs, and this revealed that one of the reasons why Arab regimes were seen as illegitimate by their people is because they abandoned the defense of Palestine'.

The intertwining of these two mottos during the Arab revolutions has shown that there is a strong correlation between the status in which Arab populations find themselves as a result of despotism, and the loss of Palestine and their inability to liberate it. In fact, large parts of the Arab populations consider their autocratic regimes as illegitimate precisely because they view them as the outcome of the artificial division of the region by Western imperialist powers. They accuse these regimes of being unable and unwilling to stand against Israel, which they perceive as a Western implant in the midst of their once-united region. A hundred years after the Sykes-Picot agreement, Arab populations continue to experience the establishment of Arab states in artificial territorial borders and the implantation of Israel in the region as a stab in their back and a conspiracy to divide the Ummah. Therefore, an essential condition for Arab regimes to obtain political legitimacy is to reconnect with the Arab nationalist sentiment of Arab populations and to re-embrace the Palestinian cause, including a renewed fight against Zionism. As one panelist stated, 'Once this kind of legitimacy is restored, we will see a different landscape in the MENA region. We will see a region where borders are meaningless, where Arab citizens move freely from one country to another, and where there is no longer any checkpoint that humiliates people. We will see again a united Arab Ummah'.

It is worth noting in this regard that under the rule of the Justice and Development Party, Turkey's initiation for regional integration and reunification has echoed this aspiration of the MENA populations. They wish to have their region reunited as a precondition to achieve a *nahdha* (*renaissance*) of the Arab world. In 2010, on the eve of the Arab revolutions, then-Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan announced from Beirut the establishment of a Şamgen space in MENA, a space of free movement of people and goods, that was conceived to be the Middle Eastern equivalent of Europe's Schengen space. However, the Arab revolutions and the crises and chaos they carried with them, together with Western powers' reluctance to support Turkey's foreign policy, killed Turkey's project of regional integration and reunification from its birth.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Despite the gloomy picture of the MENA region today, it is possible to identify a few positive signals that show the region's progress toward a more politically legitimate and sustainable order. First, the recent events in Tunisia, Lebanon and Iraq highlight the people's continued determination to achieve a more legitimate political order, despite the several obstacles and difficulties with which they are faced. In Lebanon and Iraq, people are taking to the streets to challenge the existing political structure and to demand an end to corruption, nepotism and sectarianism. In Tunisia, the election of an independent president, Kais Saied, is raising hope of the instauration of a solid democracy in the country. As one panelist stated, 'While the West is moving towards a trend of disconnection of the state from societies, the MENA region is moving in the opposite direction, that of a reconciliation of societies with political institutions'.

Second, new actors are emerging in Arab societies who can serve as agents for positive change in the region during the coming years. In most parts of the Arab world, the civil society has managed to consolidate itself, and it has acquired tools to exercise its advocacy role effectively and defend the rights of the citizens. An independent media is emerging with the ability to shape public opinion, reveal the corrupt practices of politicians, and promote a new political order based on transparency and accountability. An educated and empowered Arab youth is demanding democracy, freedom and civil rights. Arabs in the diaspora in Europe and the United States have accumulated financial and human resources that enable them to support their home countries' progress towards democratisation, while at the same time playing an advocacy role in Western capitals to influence the policymaking process. These actors all have the potential to be the instigators of positive transformations in the MENA region, laying the foundations for a more politically legitimate, socially inclusive, and economically just order.

The rebirth of political legitimacy will undeniably happen in the MENA region. After all, legitimacy is an Islamic notion: the 'rightly-guided Caliphs' ('al khulafa' al Rashidun') were unable to rule without first obtaining the consent of the ruled through a pledge (bi'aa); and the notion of "ijma" (agreement, consent) is at the heart of Islamic political thought and jurisprudence. Hence, by finding their way to political legitimacy, the largely Muslim countries of the MENA region will only be embracing something that is at the heart of their identity and civilization, and part of their DNA. Surely, the road to political legitimacy will not be paved with roses, but it is not unattainable.

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The Decline of Collective Action in International Politics: The End of Multilateralism?

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BACKGROUND

On Monday, October 21, 2019, TRT World Research Centre held a round-table meeting entitled 'The Decline of Collective Action in International Politics: The End of Multilateralism?' The session aimed to discuss one of the most vital questions in international relations: How should states act? Unilaterally or multilaterally? Multilateralism requires states to follow international norms and pay respect to international institutions, whereas unilateralism suggests that states can act alone and shape the international order. In our globalised world, issues require collective action. Climate change, the worldwide refugee crisis, transnational terrorism, human security and development are just a few examples that require states to act multilaterally.

- Five speakers shared their expertise on this subject and addressed the following themes:
- Are we heading toward the end of multilateralism?
- Is multilateralism a silver bullet for every problem we have?
- What could be the consequences of the continuation of unilateral policies in today's world?
- How can international institutions be reinforced at this point in time?
- How can the shared interests of international society be addressed so that collective actions might be upheld?

INTRODUCTION

The first speaker examined the contours of multilateral action. He argued that in our globalized world, issues require collective action. Climate change, the worldwide refugee crisis, transnational terrorism, human security and development are just a few examples that dictate multilateral state action. However, today's trend is unilateralism. US President Donald Trump's policies toward multilateral agreements and established international institutions have raised questions of whether we have reached the 'end of multilateralism' in international relations. A significant example of the US tendency to undermine multilateralism under the Trump administration is withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord, an issue which inherently requires multilateral action to achieve a solution. As such, this creates a dilemma for others, whether to follow the US path or keep up with multilateralism and maintain international institutions.

Unilateralism can be defined as 'any doctrine or agenda that supports one-sided action' (Taylan, 2017, p.202). This involves a country upending cooperative norms to 'go it alone' (Fonseca, 2003, p.323), consequently reordering the world's power structure in pursuit of maximum national self-interest. On the other hand, multilateralism involves cooperation and can be defined as 'an institutional form that coordinates relations among three or more states on the basis of generalised principles of conduct' (Ruggie, 1993, p.11). According to one of the speakers, there has been a steady increase in unilateralist action, with countries prioritising their national values and practices at the expense of the more diplomatically intensive, consensus-based approach of multilateralism. In a globalised world, solutions to current issues like climate change, the worldwide refugee crisis, and transnational terrorism require collective action now more than ever.

THE DECLINE IN COLLECTIVE ACTION

The second speaker addressed the causes behind the decline in collective action. Multilateralism has been the prevalent trend post-World War II. Globalism reigned supreme, leading to the current era with 'rapid global connectivity and economic integration, the development of a rule-based international order supported by the rise of the global and regional multilateral institutions' (Linn, 2018, p.87). Prominent examples of cooperative accomplishments range from the establishment of the United Nations (UN) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), to the Addis Agenda and the Paris Agreement of COP21 in 2015. However, 'from Italy to the Philippines to Hungary and now Brazil, a generation of leaders is rising that harbours an active distaste for the United Nations and other parts of the global architecture' (Bosco, 2018, para.2). According to the speaker, the decline in collective action has been steadily crystallising with various factors playing a role. These include a combination of rising populism and scepticism towards expansive multilateral institutions.

Rising populism has been a significant component in the decline of multilateralism. Populism can essentially be 'characterised by emotionally-charged political appeals to addressing crises through neonationalism, masculinism, othering, bordering, xenophobia, racism, phantasmatic ethnic golden-ageism, and a disregard for liberal democratic norms' (Gagnon et al, 2018, p.6). With populist parties tripling their vote in Europe over the past 20 years, and in governments of 11 European countries (Rooduijn, 2018), there is an ostensible anti-establishment trend in international politics. For example, the Brexit vote of 2016 saw the British public vote in a referendum to leave the European Union (EU), a result that shows an upending of the usual strengthening of global and regional institutions towards a more self-centred view. The EU, comprised of 28 countries, was the first-of-its-kind political and economic union with an internal single market and standardised laws, and it is held as a beacon

of multilateralism and cooperation. The United Kingdom voting to leave was, therefore, a surprise and a blow for multilateralism, with Theresa May, the Prime Minister who triggered the article of withdrawal, framing it as a 'vote to restore, as we see it, our national self-determination' (Bennet, 2017).

An expression of nationalism, Brexit exhibits that even in a hyper-connected world, people can feel betrayed by the established global order and diverge on issues like immigration and free trade. The realisation of Brexit for 'Brexiters' meant Britain would be 'liberated from the excessive bureaucratic, economic, and legal regulations of the E.U., and that it would be able to act unilaterally in foreign trade and investment policies' (Taylan, 2017, p.210). Disillusionment with multilateral institutions made a majority of the British public believe going it alone would help them 'take their country back', a populist conception predicated on a unilateralist approach and tribal notions of identity. Populist positions opposed to globalisation also claim that it is the source of inequality, arguing that potential changes to people's jobs, well-being and culture can be reversed with attacks on multilateral institutions. According to UN Secretary-General António Guterres, 'multilateralism is...under pressure from the growth in populist and nationalist voices' (Guterres, 2019, para.16). With populism a threat toward collective action and potentially 'undermining global diplomacy' (Lagat, 2017, para.8), it is now also relatively widespread with populist leaders, including 'U.S. President Donald Trump, President Andrzej Duda of Poland and Premier Giuseppe Conte of Italy along with the foreign ministers of Hungary and Austria' (Lederer, 2018, para.7).

Moreover, the belief that expansive multilateral institutions overreach their authority has also contributed to the decline of collective action; it is contended that these institutions limit sovereignty. For example, the election of Donald Trump in the United States was an unexpected but pivotal moment in the escalation of unilateralism. The Trump perspective sees 'multilateral treaties as straitjackets, sees institutions as traps, sees

allies as free-riders, and proclaims that a doctrine of America First will make America Great Again' (Russel, 2019, para.6). Trump believes that the US should disregard rules established by multilateral agreements in everything from trade to climate. His dislike for multilateralism can be clearly exhibited by the US withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord, where multilateral action was required by signatories. With 195 countries signing that universal, legally binding climate pact, the US is the only country in the world that will not participate after their unilateral exit. This is in addition to the US withdrawing from UNESCO, the Human Rights Council, and the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal, as well as subverting the International Criminal Court (ICC) and cutting funding for UNRWA (Macaron, 2018). There is also the belief held by many populist leaders that these institutions are unaccountable, and that these supra-national officials are 'not responsible to electorates, the public at large, or powerful domestic interests' (Bosco, 2018, para.6). Trump's regular undermining of international cooperation has set up a future where the pursuit of a country's self-interest is prioritised, with other countries taking note. China, India, and Russia also 'pursue principally transactional approaches' (Linn, 2018, p.88), with even Germany in effect pursuing 'an implicit "Germany First" policy in regard to imposing its conservative fiscal stance on its E.U. partners' (Linn, 2018, p.88). Powerful states can attempt to achieve their geopolitical ambitions and policy goals without international support, even though this can come with political costs like erosion of their soft power (Thompson, 2009). The decline of collective action is putting unilateralism at the forefront, with expansive multilateral institutions at risk of renegade nations flouting the rules and institutions that govern global security and economic activity.

THE SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND

The third speaker examined how the international community could create and preserve common platforms. For him, the search for common

ground is crucial to ensure that the benefits of multilateralism are recognised and actualised by important global actors. International society benefits when consensus is reached, as it ensures cooperation is put before self-interest. The shared interest of international society can be addressed by facilitating collective action through two key factors that dovetail: reducing populism and reducing gridlock.

The speaker offered two primary ways for doing so. Firstly, addressing the frustrations that some citizens have due to feeling left behind can be a boon to reversing the tide of populism. The collective angst felt as a result of increased inequality, unemployment rates, social welfare cuts, and automation, among other changes, has been influential to people voting for populist parties that deride multilateralism. The election of Donald Trump relied on 'Americans who felt overlooked by the establishment' (Zurcher, 2016, para.4) and his common refrain was 'drain the Swamp', which suggested the government was out of touch with the struggles of the working class. If the underlying issues fuelling populism and unilateralism are tackled, the global institutions that 'have a proven track record of saving lives, generating economic and social progress and preventing war' (UN, 2019, para.2) may be back in favour. For example, macroeconomic and industrial policies can be revised to ensure people have a safety net, preventing situations that require them to frequent food banks, even while they are employed (Coughlan, 2017). Decreasing inequality and making citizenry feel valued, and not like 'losers [because] of structural and technological changes' (Aiginger, 2019, para.3), can help increase their faith in multilateral institutions. Increased education can also play a role here as the benefits of multilateralism are clear, and education 'emphasises equality, tolerance, and critical thinking' (Norloff, 2019, para.2). Education can also allow some segments of society become aware of the phenomenon of fake news, and it could help them recognise that populist leaders sometimes foment a distrust of experts. To encourage collective action and achieve common ground, the situation could be addressed where the world's richest 1% controls twice as much wealth as the poorest 50% (Barolini, 2017), and many feel neglected due to systemic policies.

Secondly, reducing gridlock by improving effectiveness in multilateral institutions would be a positive step toward upholding collective action. International cooperation is currently limited in the global political system as a result of factors including 'the increase in the number of states who have the power to play a role at the global level...and the inability of international institutions to act' (Bernabo, 2017, para.1). These factors currently hinder effectual multilateralism, and it's often in the most pressing issues that consensus can't be reached. Increasingly, 'in areas such as nuclear proliferation, the explosion of small arms sales, terrorism, global economic imbalances, global poverty and inequality, multilateral and transnational cooperation is now ineffective or threadbare' (Held, 2016, para.3). For example, in the UN Security Council, the veto mechanism has all but ensured that the five permanent members reject any resolution that is ill-fitting with their policy goals, as opposed to a necessary and unwavering commitment to maintain international peace and security. In the Israel/Palestine conflict, the former can rely on the veto of the United States, and in the Syrian conflict, the Syrian regime has relied on Russia's support. The gridlock on many critical disputes requires reform. Many additional obstacles exist in the Security Council, including its anachronistic composition, term lengths and sizable agenda (Martin, 2018). It is in the shared interest of international society that cooperation is prioritised, and there are notable instances that show common ground can be reached. The 2015 Paris Agreement is paradigmatic of how governments have recognised the gravity of an issue and pushed to cooperate for a solution. Additionally, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) dispute settlement mechanism 'maintains its authority and centrality since it has the ability to generate new rules in order to adapt to new issues the WTO is faced with' (Bernabo, 2017, para.3). An increase in collective action can ensure that bedrock principles of multilateralism and a rule-based international order remain intact, and reducing gridlock can be helpful in enabling constructive international engagement.

THE NEED TO REFORM THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

The fourth speaker provided his perspective on the need to reform the international system and its decision-making process. At a time when 'the threats of not only intra-state but inter-state conflicts are higher than at any other time since the worst of the Cold War' (Martin, 2018, para.1), cooperation and collective action are valuable to manage and reduce shared global challenges. There are various consequences of the continued unilateral policies in today's world, and these include less legitimacy and the adoption of aggressive approaches. Multilateralism means that countries contribute to the global good, and international institutions in the Trump era should be reinforced and reformed to prevent further destabilisation of international society.

From the speaker's vantage point, the first consequence of continued unilateral policies is a crisis of legitimacy. Going at it alone undermines the legitimacy of the state carrying out the policy. Consequently, the state's role in the international order becomes questionable as it acted without seeking outside support. For example, when Trump withdrew from the Paris Climate Accord, his 'unilateral decision put one of the world's largest emitters of greenhouse gases outside of the global commitment' (Gibson, 2019, para.2). As the only country to do so, the United States undermined its legitimacy as a global player in an issue which inherently requires multilateral action for a solution. The US status as a hegemon makes that move especially unusual. The fact that 'a hegemon needs legitimacy is undeniable' (Brooks & Wohlforth, 2005, p.517). If established rules and practices are ignored, it serves as a boon to countries who want to carry out unpopular, unilateral action in an increasingly multi-polar world. Global governance requires collective action, and legitimacy is sustained by countries collaborating for issues like climate change and conflict resolution.

Another consequence of continued unilateral policies in today's world is, in the speaker's view, that states are emboldened to adopt aggressive approaches lacking consensus to achieve self-serving goals. 'Third-party mediation and constructive dialogue are sidelined' (Griffiths, O'Callaghan & Roach, 2008, p.322) for approaches rooted in unilateralism, and with the US withdrawing from widely popular treaties and institutions, other nations like Israel, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Russia and China have taken note to increase their backing for one-sided action. For example, in Israel, the curtailing of Palestinian rights has continued with the knowledge that the 'Trump administration will erect no speedbumps to slow down Israeli unilateralism' (Hassan, 2019, para.18). The Israeli government also unilaterally withdrew from UNESCO, having been emboldened by the US withdrawal, following claims of its 'anti-Israel' (Cohen, 2019) bias. Another example is Saudi Arabia, which was emboldened by the Trump administration and their support for a 'unilateral adventurist foreign policy' (Wintour, 2018, para.11). Self-serving and unilateral policies like the blockade on Qatar and the war in Yemen have been detrimental, and they were carried out without the consensus of the international community. Multilateralism, conversely, ensures that diplomacy and cooperation are emphasised to better facilitate the rule-based order of international politics.

The speaker also asserted that international institutions in the Trump era are vulnerable, providing no serious deterrence to unilateral action. These can be reformed and reinforced in a plethora of ways to ensure maximum effectiveness. For example, the 'United Nations remains powerless to resolve the world's most pressing security issues, due to weak enforcement mechanisms and an outdated governance structure' (Painter, 2015, para.4). This is a critical issue, as collective action is prevented even after countries have come together to reach a resolution. Solutions include 'establishing some limitations on veto power, such as a supermajority override provision...or a UN rapid reaction force that could swiftly deploy to halt humanitarian crises' (Painter, 2015, para.8). This would be a meaningful start, as the challenges of the 21st century

require collective action to be resolved. The Trump era has exhibited that these international institutions can, and should, operate more effectively and be reinforced, which would increase the success of multilateralism in the process. Other examples are international financial institutions, which can also be reformed due to 'the changing balance of economic power in the world' (Coffey & Riley, 2006). This can be done by making the World Bank less reliant on the United States, loosening the ideologically-driven policies of the IMF, and reforming the WTO to offer better representation for developing countries and to adapt to China's ascent. Modernising multilateral institutions will improve global peace and stability; countries cooperating in all areas, be it finance or security, ensures that common rules are applied and collective action in international politics is maximised.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The last speaker provided a synthesis of the interventions. For him, the proceedings dovetail and reveal that while there has been a rise in unilateralist policies, multilateralism remains valuable for a rule-based international order which espouses global peace and security.

Firstly, the decline in collective action was addressed. There are many prominent examples of cooperative accomplishments in the international arena, like the United Nations and the World Trade Organisation. These have been threatened, however, by rising populism and scepticism towards expansive multilateral institutions. Brexit and growing populist voices in European governments have supported more self-centred approaches and an undermining of the usual strengthening of global and regional institutions. Moreover, sceptics who worry that international institutions limit sovereignty were pleased to see the perspective of US President Donald Trump, the election of whom intensified unilateralist policies. Trump does not believe in the rule-based international order and withdrew from the Paris Climate Accord, UNESCO, the Human Rights Council, and the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal.

Secondly, the search for common ground is crucial to reverse the decline in collective action. International society benefits when consensus is reached, as it ensures cooperation is put before self-interest. The addressing of the frustrations that some citizens have due to feeling left behind can be a boon to reversing the tide of populism. Citizens need to feel valued, and increased education and awareness against fake news can also play a role. Reducing gridlock in multilateral institutions to improve effectiveness would likewise aid collective action. Gridlock hinders fruitful multilateralism, and it is often in the most pressing issues that consensus cannot be reached.

Finally, there are consequences of continued unilateral policies in today's world, and there exists a strong need for reform to the international system and its decision-making process. Two consequences include less legitimacy and the increased adoption of aggressive approaches. Going at it alone and without outside support undermines the legitimacy of the state carrying out the policy, and consequently the state's role in the international order. States are also now emboldened to adopt aggressive approaches which lack consensus to achieve self-serving goals. Several states, which include the United States, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Russia and China, have all taken note to increase their backing for one-sided action.

Furthermore, international institutions in the Trump era are vulnerable, with no serious deterrence to unilateral action. Institutions like the United Nations need to be modernised with better enforcement mechanisms and governance structure. Solutions could potentially include a supermajority override provision on the veto or a rapid reaction force. International financial institutions can also be reformed, and this can be done by making the World Bank less reliant on the United States, loosening the ideologically-driven policies of the IMF, and reforming the WTO to offer better representation for developing countries and to adapt to China's ascent. The challenges of the 21st century require collective action to be addressed, and the reform of international institutions can ensure maximum effectiveness.

The last speaker ended the discussion by asserting that while there has been a decline in collective action in international politics, the latter is not irreversible, and multilateralism still has a substantial role to play moving forward. Some of the world's most pressing issues necessitate cooperation, and reinforcing the international system is a constructive step in the right direction.

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The Future of EU - Turkey Relations

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SUMMARY

EU-TURKEY RELATIONS SINCE 1959

The future of EU- Turkey relations was discussed during the TRT World Forum in both public and closed sessions, from 22-23 October 2019. Approximately 40 participants were present, including experts, politicians, academicians and bureaucrats in the closed session. The speakers shared their own perspectives and experiences who came from different background as academic, diplomat, bureaucrat from both Turkish and European side. The relationship between the EU and Turkey first began with Turkey's application for membership to the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1959, a short time after the EEC's establishment in 1957. The main points of the session which addressed bilateral relations included the following: The Customs Union Agreement

and its amendment; the Readmission Agreement; the situation involving immigrants; security; the rising far right and nationalism in Europe; and the state of mutual economic relations.

The question of what should be done to maintain a more advanced level of relations between Turkey and the EU was examined during the closed session. Moreover, the crisis between Turkey and the EU was one of the most important issues discussed during the session. Distinguished speakers and participants discussed the following topics during the session:

- Could the modernisation of the Customs Union agreement lead to progress in the improvement of EU-Turkey relations?
- EU-Turkey Refugee Cooperation and Visa Liberalisation Dialogue: What's next?
- What is the significance of Turkey toward EU security?
- What are alternative models for future cooperation between Turkey and the EU?
- What are the effects of Turkish and EU domestic politics on EU-Turkey relations?
- How do increasing nationalism and the far-right impact EU-Turkey relations?

INTRODUCTION

PROGRESS IN RELATIONS

The historical background of EU-Turkey relations has often been debated. The first speaker began by emphasising the fact that EU-Turkey relations have been heavily discussed by both sides for at least fifty years. It was emphasised that the desired progress could not be achieved during this period. Turkey was given Candidate Country status by the EU in 1999

and the full membership negotiation process began in 2005. This negotiation has lasted for 15 years.

Turkey made its first application to the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1959, only two years after the Treaty of Rome established the EEC. This application by Turkey, as a NATO member, was economic as well as strategic given the time period of the Cold War (Kuneralp, 2017). This application period was considered Turkey's first step into Europe, initiated by the Prime Minister of the time, Adnan Menderes (Süleyman Demirel University, 2015). The EEC Council of Ministers, which accepted Turkey's application, proposed an Association Agreement to Turkey. The Agreement, which had the full name of 'Agreement Creating an Association between the European Economic Community and Turkey', known as the Ankara Agreement, targeted full membership for Turkey but tried to sustain economic and cultural convergence. It created a three-stage plan which consisted of preparatory, transitional and final periods (Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Directorate for EU, 2020).

The purpose of the agreement was as follows: 'The aim of this Agreement is to promote the continuous and balanced strengthening of trade and economic relations between the parties, while taking full account of the need to ensure an accelerated development of the Turkish economy and to improve the level of employment and living conditions of the Turkish people' (European Parliament Delegations, 2020).

In the treaty, which was signed in 1963 and entered into force in 1964, Turkey had no obligations. With the Additional Protocol, which was signed in 1970 and came into force in 1973, the preparatory period had ended, and conditions were set for the Transitional Period. During the Transition Period, which was expected to last 22 years, the EEC unilaterally abolished the custom tax. During this period, the free movement of people, as well as industrial and agricultural products, was envisaged (Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Directorate for EU, 2020). As envisaged in the Additional Protocol in 1995, the Transition Period had ended and the Final Period stage had begun. The Customs Union therefore entered into force on 1 January 1996. In around 1999, a turning point in the relations between the EU and Turkey was also observed. As with other Candidate

Countries, Turkey was given Candidate State status at the Helsinki Summit with equal rights. There were no pre-conditions, as with other Candidate States.

During the 2000s, the greatest transformation was observed in EU-Turkey relations. The initiation of accession negotiations took place on 3 October 2005. Unfortunately, since 2005, 16 out of 35 chapters have been opened for negotiations. Only the Science and Research chapter has been temporarily closed.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE EU PROJECT AND VALUES IN WORLD POLITICS AND TURKEY

The European Union project caused an important change in the international political arena. This change was important in two ways. First, nations began to meet on a common basis and with common values, and there was establishment of supranational institutions. Second, if we consider a common dream, we can say that there emerged a European Dream, which took the place of the American Dream (Rifkin, 2013).

In this context, the second speaker mentioned that the European Union has been the most important peace project in the history of humanity, despite all of the problems which it has entailed. He emphasised that all the wars ended between the member states with the establishment of the EU. Wars within Europe had caused the death of millions of people for centuries. There has been no bloodshed among member states so far. It was pointed out that the most important factor has been the economic base, with common values created by the EU. The European market's enormous size contributed to an increased level of welfare and high per capita gross national product (GNP). A high quality of life was created in EU countries, and food, water and air quality added to the comfort of EU citizens. Furthermore, it was stated that one of the most important

advantages was that EU citizens could travel freely within the Schengen Region without visas.

The example was given that the EU was a kind of personal trainer for Turkey. A personal trainer shows the way to better health, giving guidance about what to eat, what to drink, what sports to play and how many hours to sleep. In this context, the EU was going to give Turkey a sort of regimen to make the process go more smoothly: Increase democracy, embrace the idea of rule of law, promote freedom of speech, respect women, children and minority rights. This program had advantages for both Turkey and the EU.

First of all, Turkey has a population of 80 million and it has a young generation which will lead to a great market and human resources. Both parties might have had faults in the membership process, but the promises that were broken were significant in shaking trust in the relationship. Nevertheless, Turkey has been trying to continue with the membership process for sixty years; no other country has had to wait this long. The speaker compared today with the past and emphasised how the EU has repeated itself. He mentioned that arguments about Turkey's membership led by France's former President Sarkozy was the biggest challenge for Turkey. Also, General de Gaulle's rejection of the United Kingdom becoming a member had the same ideas. As a matter of fact, the situation with the UK is a case in point: Brexit. The discourse of rejection and strong critics has been ended with more problems.

According to the second speaker, Brexit opens up a new era in the history of the EU. This process will require the EU to undergo a transformation within itself. The second speaker indicated that Turkey is the only country with which the EU has negotiated alternative membership proposals, and this has never been seen before in the history of the EU. Furthermore, he added that every country which has been carrying on membership negotiations has become a member of the EU, and there is no other alternative.

According to the second speaker, at this point member states are questioning their membership, and this will require the EU to restructure itself. Today, the central decision-making process cannot be continued where the EU is involved. Some member states are a part of the Eurozone, and some are not. In addition, supranational structure of EU for defense and security has been opposed by many. This situation requires the EU to concentrate on alternative memberships and to find ways to reduce the Brussels bureaucracy. Alternative membership models should be created for countries such as Iceland, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Norway. It is necessary to draw lessons from the mistakes of the past and to look for future opportunities.

The speaker referred to the immigration crisis, mentioning that all sides share a multicultural obligation to prevent the war environment in Iraq and Syria from spiralling into increased human tragedy. Turkey and Germany have shown special effort in this regard. Turkey's care for four million immigrants clearly demonstrates the level at which Turkey and the EU share common values.

In recent years, the number of immigrants and refugees coming into the European Union has increased due to civil wars, environmental problems and globalisation. The traffic of immigrants, which started to be felt in 2013, reached its highest point in 2015 as a result of conflicts in Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and South Asia. While the first places where migrants set foot in Europe are Greece and Italy, the target countries are Northern Europe's welfare states, Germany and Sweden. The most important reasons why immigrants choose these countries are that they are economically strong, socially stable, they have experience with immigrants and they accept the most immigrants (Congressional Research Service, 2018).

The event known as Europe's Migration Crisis in the literature began with the doubling of the number of irregular migrants as immigrating to Greece via Turkey in 2015. The majority of irregular migrants consist of

people fleeing the war in Syria. The advantage of this highway route is that it is available during all seasons of the year, in contrast to the Libyan route. The immigrant route through Libya can only be used if the weather makes sea conditions favourable. Although the EU has tried institutionally to find a solution to the immigrant problem, these efforts have been largely inconclusive (Parkes & Pauwels, 2017). The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) has criticised the EU for failing to implement a common immigration policy or a common asylum policy. The EESC stated that the Council and the Commission must force countries to comply with non-EU rules (Dimitriadis, 2018).

In February 2016, the EU decided to end the the 'wave-through'¹ approach (European Commission, 2016). In addition, an 'Implementing Relocation'² policy has been adopted in order to distribute immigrants equally among EU countries, thereby relieving pressure on states such as Greece, Hungary and Italy (European Commission, 2016). According to the Common European Asylum System, any member of EU has the right to send an entering immigrant back to the country where he or she first stepped into the EU. However, it was not possible to implement this system when almost all of the immigrants entered the EU through Greece or Italy. Another EU measure has been to encourage immigrants not to come to the EU. In the face of the increase in the number of immigrants traveling through the Mediterranean Sea, the EU has warned that this journey is very dangerous and has initiated efforts to encourage potential immigrants to remain where they are. While EU member states received 562,680 asylum applications in 2014, this figure increased to 1,257,030 in 2015 and 1,204,280 in 2016. The majority of these applications were made from citizens of Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq, respectively (Eurostat, 2017).

¹ Wave-through expresses mass migration from one place to another. Here mentioned the Mass-Migration to Europe via the Mediterranean and Balkan routes after the Syrian War. EU says: Most importantly, all Member States must commit to ending the 'wave-through' approach to those who indicate an interest in applying for asylum elsewhere. Those who are not in need of protection must be swiftly returned, in full respect of fundamental rights. (http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-271_en.htm)

² Relocation means a fair allocation and placement of immigrants entering the EU into all member states after the country they entered.

The most inclusive precaution taken by the EU towards the migrant refugee crisis is the Readmission Agreement. This Agreement was signed with Turkey on 16 December 2013 and partially enacted on 1 January 2014 (European Union, 2014). In 2015, when the refugee crisis doubled, the EU wanted Turkey to fully enact the Agreement. In accordance with the Joint Action Plan adopted on 29 November 2015 as a result of negotiations, the Agreement was fully implemented on 1 June 2016 (Ekinici, 2017). Pursuant to this agreement, persons who enter an EU country via Turkey, or come to Turkey from an EU country, and who have no legal status to stay, must be turned back to their original location. The EU will have the right to return those without legal status to Turkey, including Turkish citizens, stateless or any other divided and conflict-based countries. The EU also agreed to accept one registered migrant from Turkey in exchange for each illegal migrant returned to Turkey, otherwise known as the One to One Agreement. In addition to this. The EU would provide Turkey with 3+3 billion Euros to support the migrants in Turkey, they would revive Turkey's membership process, and they would lift visa procedures for Turkish citizens. It was decided that 1.3 billion of the first 3-billion-euro portions from the EU would be spent on humanitarian aid, and 1.7 would be spent on education, health, municipal infrastructure, migration management and socioeconomic support projects.

THE ISSUES WITH EU ENLARGEMENT POLICIES AND TURKEY

The EU's enlargement policy was also on the agenda of the session. It was emphasised that proceeding the membership process for some countries without resolving existing problems among EU members or Candidate Countries revealed a significant problem. The third speaker began the speech by emphasising that the Candidate Countries should first solve the problems that they have among EU members or Candi-

date Countries. In this context, it was stressed that the Southern Greek Cypriot Administration (GCASC), an EU member, was continuing to have problematic issues and was blocking Turkey's accession process.

In 2004, within the scope of Eastern Enlargement, the EU's biggest enlargement wave, the GCASC was made a member of the EU along with nine other countries. However, during the accession process of the GCASC, it was assumed that the GCASC represented the entire island of Cyprus, and it was given full membership (Pavlic, 2018) which undermines the rights of the Turkish part of Cyprus. Furthermore, the GCASC has been blocking the following six negotiation titles, including number of articles, by abusing its EU membership advantage against Turkey:

- 2) Free Movement of Workers
- 15) Energy
- 23) Judiciary and Fundamental Rights
- 24) Justice, Freedom and Security
- 26) Education and Culture
- 31) Foreign, Security and Defense Policy

The European Economic Community considered the conflict involving the GCASC as an 'internal problem of Cyprus' (TUIC Academy, 2011) during the first period when problems in Cyprus emerged. However, in 1981, Greece began to be more involved with EU membership (Rat der Europäischen Union, 2020). The Customs Union Treaty, signed in 1995, was expanded with an additional protocol after the EU's enlargement wave.

The third speaker underlined the fact that religion and culture hold an important place in Turkey's membership process. The speaker also mentioned that the cooperation of the EU with Turkey during the immi-

gration crisis of 2015 carried vital importance. He also highlighted that if the EU and Turkey moved together, this would open up new horizons for EU-Turkey relations. In this context, it was stated that the crisis should be turned into an opportunity. It was stressed that actions that Turkey must take for visa liberation are also necessary for the country itself.

With the signing of the Visa Liberation Dialogue Reconciliation Text and Readmission Agreement on 16 December 2013 in Ankara, the visa liberation talks formally began between the EU and Turkey. Pursuant to the Agreement, visa liberation for Turkey was expected to happen in 2018 following the Readmission Agreement. According to the Agreement, Turkish citizens holding biometric passports would have the opportunity to travel to the Schengen region for three months without a visa. Turkey should have fulfilled 72 articles of the Agreement, and Turkey has fulfilled 66 of them.

The third speaker, like his predecessor, underlined that membership alternatives should be developed. It was pointed out that mutual trust is very important for a more stable, safe and sustainable relationship. In an environment of mutual trust, relations can proceed more optimistically.

The most important problem that Turkey encounters at this point is that the EU does not keep its promises to Candidate Countries. This is because of EU internal policies and the right wing. The increasing strength of politicians and parties, especially those with extreme right speech, combined with an increase in immigration, contribute to important problems between the EU and Candidate Countries. The best examples of the EU turning back on its promises are Turkey, Macedonia and Albania. All three countries expect the promises which were made during the candidacy process to be fulfilled by the EU.

DISPUTED APPROACHES IN EU – TURKEY RELATIONS

It has been observed that there are different approaches toward EU-Turkey relations. Although conditions and criterias for EU membership are given as reasons, the speeches of some politicians in the EU, especially from the far-right, which is now at the centre of political activity in many European countries, have created prejudice against Turkey and its culture. The slow membership process, despite the fulfilment of criteria, has created a negative view in the eyes of society as well as among bureaucrats. In addition to the trust issue, it was stated that an important stage in economic relations between the EU and Turkey has now come into question. Despite all of the difficulties which have occurred, it was emphasised that the EU has been a significant project for peace. The speaker, who mentioned that his own family had also been affected by the European wars of the past, reiterated that Europe is now engaged in its most significant peace project.

In addition, the fifth speaker, who highlighted that Turkish students who participate in programs like Erasmus should also be allowed to obtain visas. These students are sometimes forced to forfeit some time in the programmes for which they are enrolled. The purpose of the Erasmus programme is to allow students to gather and learn about various languages and cultures. However, cultural convergence is interrupted when some students must wait to enter Europe and deal with many questions in order to obtain their visas. Although businesspeople who are EU citizens do not require visas to enter Turkey, Turkish businesspeople must still obtain visas. This does not coincide with the principle of Equality. The speaker particularly emphasised that there will be no visa requirement for Turks due to the Association Agreement.

One speaker underlined that economic relations are the most important ties between Turkey and the EU and that the Customs Union Agreement establishes the foundation for these relations. He also stated that the Customs Union Treaty was signed on the basis of a full membership per-

spective. The abnormal amount of time that it has taken for Turkey to become a member has made it difficult for the Customs Union Agreement to be adapted to today's requirements. According to the Customs Union Agreement, Turkey must accept the Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) made by the EU with third countries. However, those third countries do not need to sign FTAs with Turkey. Therefore, those third countries who have signed FTAs with EU countries, but not with Turkey, have created a unilateral disadvantage for Turkey (World Bank, 2014).

In addition, even though Turkey may not contribute to decisions made by the EU, it is required to abide by the agreements which the EU mandates. Turkey is not allowed to sign additional agreements with other countries without permission from the EU. Furthermore, the Customs Union Agreement covers only industrial products and processed agricultural products. Turkey has demanded that the Customs Union Treaty should be updated as described below: (Dünya, 2016)

- Turkey should be allowed to take advantage of the treaties signed by the EU with other third countries
- Turkey should be allowed to take part in the decision-making mechanisms of the Customs Union
- There should be mutual expansion of agricultural production, services and public procurements
- There should be removal of highway quotas and free passage for drivers

At the time the Customs Union Agreement was signed, Turkey was still a developing economy. Today, however, Turkey is the 19th largest economy in the world (International Monetary Fund, 2020; Statistics Times, 2020). In the report about updating the Customs Union of 2014, the World Bank revealed that the agreement between Turkey and the EU was a unique and leading effort, indicating that the scale of trade between Turkey and the EU had enlarged very quickly during the previous 20 years. In addition, it was emphasised that the Treaty, which made an enormous contribution to bilateral relations during the previous period,

included designed deficiencies in the global economic order. Considering the fact that the EU has undergone waves of expansion since the 1995 Customs Union Treaty, including the 2004 enlargement, the World Bank indicated that the Treaty should be updated. It was emphasised that the expansion of the Customs Union to cover agriculture and services is necessary in order to increase trade volume. It was therefore expressed that the asymmetric arrangement in the decision-making mechanism should be corrected (World Bank, 2014).

The fourth speaker highlighted the key role of economic relations, stating that in the past 20 years, mutual economic ties have progressed on very solid ground. Economic relations between Turkey and the EU, despite ups and downs in the political arena, are showing a rising trend in momentum. Turkey is the EU's fifth most important trade partner. With the amount of approximately 100 billion euros in 2008, the EU-Turkey trade volume amounted to around € 153.4 billion in 2018. While the EU exports machinery, transport materials and chemical products, Turkey is also exporting these same goods to the EU. Turkey exports 50% of its total exports to the EU. The amount of EU-Turkey trade is 4% of the EU's total trade (European Commission, 2020).

Direct investments make up an important part of EU-Turkey commercial relations. In 2017, EU countries contributed 67% of the direct investments made in Turkey. Of the top 10 countries, 7 are EU member states. The foreign investments of these 7 countries make up 51% of the foreign direct investments made in Turkey (International Investors Association, 2018). The reasons why the EU makes foreign investments in Turkey can be listed as follows: Turkey has advantages as it is on the border of the EU, making transportation easy; Turkey has a young working class; the value of the euro compared to the Turkish lira is advantageous for trade; Turkey generates trust due to political stability; and facilities are provided for foreign investors.

The fifth speaker also emphasised the Customs Union (CU). Turkey does not see the CU as a target, but as a means of settling commercial activities with the EU on a solid and safe basis. The CU itself is not seen as a process or a stage; it is the third and last step taken by Turkey in order

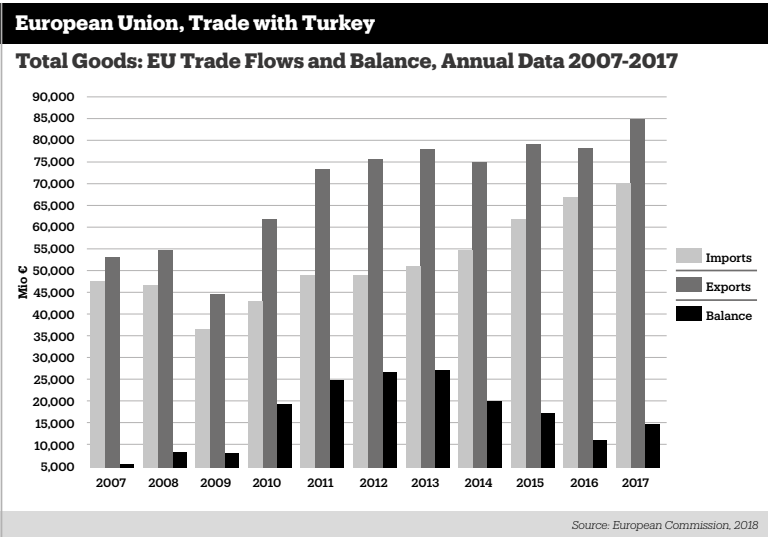
to get closer to the EU. Indeed, the aim of the Association Agreement is not the Customs Union, but full membership for Turkey. Being part of the Association Agreement and the Customs Union allowed Turkey to rise to a level where it could compete with other EU countries in terms of economy and trade. In the meantime, Turkey has to come to a sufficient level where it can compete with EU countries. It has reached a competency level which is greater than expected. However, the visa obstacle interferes with Turkey's ability to compete with EU countries. When Turkish businesspeople want to attend fairs or simply need to make a business trip, they face a bureaucratic process which decreases their motivation and causes losses in time and money.

Total Goods: EU Trade Flows and Balance									
Period	Imports			Exports			Balance	Total Trade	
	Value Mio €	% Growth	% Extra-EU	Value Mio €	% Growth	% Extra-EU	Value Mio €	Value Mio €	
2007	47,378		3.3	52,830		4.3	5,451	100,208	
2008	46,288	-2.3	2.9	54,476	3.1	4.2	8,188	100,764	
2009	36,446	-21.3	3.0	44,486	-18.3	4.1	8,040	80,932	
2010	43,062	18.2	2.8	61,929	39.2	4.6	18,867	104,991	
2011	48,820	13.4	2.8	73,336	18.4	4.7	24,516	122,156	
2012	48,822	0.0	2.7	75,491	2.9	4.5	26,669	124,314	
2013	50,657	3.8	3.0	77,624	2.8	4.5	26,966	128,281	
2014	54,409	7.4	3.2	74,743	-3.7	4.4	20,333	129,152	
2015	61,696	13.4	3.6	78,966	5.7	4.4	17,270	140,662	
2016	66,765	8.2	3.9	77,934	-1.3	4.5	11,169	144,699	
2017	69,760	4.5	3.8	84,490	8.4	4.5	14,730	154,251	

% Growth: Relative variation between current and previous period
 % Extra-EU: Imports/exports as % of all EU partners i.e. excluding trade between EU Member States

Source: European Commission, 2018

On the other hand, it is underlined that the EU has made decisions on the behalf of Turkey under the scope of the Customs Union, but it did not ensure that Turkey would be included in the decision-making mechanism. The speaker mentioned the issue that Turkish people have contributed 500 million euros to the diplomatic representatives of EU countries for visas during the last eight years; on the other hand, Turkey does not require visas for citizens of EU countries. If it is considered that the EU has required visas from Turkish citizens for the past 30 years, the numbers



become enormous. It was also mentioned that this is an injustice. The speaker mentioned that the EU Court of Justice decided that the EU should not require visas from Turks, especially in the 'Soysal Case' (Eu-ractiv, 2009). He stated that the visa fees received were illegal and that they should have been returned. The European Commission, which is obliged to implement the decision of the Court of Justice, has not implemented the decision. The EU is expected to respect the decision of the Court of Justice and implement the decision regarding visas. However, this has not happened for political reasons. This is an example of the EU's own internal contradictions.

While free movement of goods is required by the Customs Union, it is not possible for firms to send personnel to repair and service goods in EU countries. This situation results in the failure of Turkish firms to provide adequate warranties and service for goods sold in the EU; therefore, Turkish firms meet with unfair competition. At the same time, a road quo-

ta is applied to vehicles traveling to EU countries from Turkey. EU countries have been applying quotas to Turkish vehicles since 2001. These quotas are determined by mutual agreements signed by Turkey and the countries concerned. As a result of the applied quotas, Turkish vehicles arrive at the destination country through longer roads. They waste time in this process, have higher fuel consumption and higher road fees. The cost for Turkish companies amounts to 5 billion US dollars annually (Cihangir & Kurtbag, 2015).

Austria is one of the leading countries where Turkish transporters face difficulties. Austria, due to its geographical location, is an area through which Turkish vehicles must pass to reach Germany, Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, Belgium and the Scandinavian countries. Austria provides only 15 thousand transition passes to Turkey, despite the fact that Turkey requires 145,000 of these transition passes. When the relevant passes have been exhausted, the cost of using the Ro-La railway line, as proposed by Austria, is approximately 300 euros per vehicle (Cihangir & Kurtbag, 2015). The number of transition documents which are provided by EU countries to Turkey is far below what is required, as seen in the table below. Therefore, this measure does not comply with the Customs Union's principle of free movement of goods which is one of the significant chapter of EU membership process. This situation creates pressure on Turkish exporters and adds extra costs. As a result, Turkish companies face unfair competition.

The fifth speaker stated that the European Commission asked the

Countries	International Direct Investment Inflow (Million USD)	%
Netherlands	1.768	24
Spain	1.451	20
Azerbaijan	1.009	14
Australia	459	6
Austria	326	4
England	324	4
Germany & Japan	295	4
Belgium	225	3
USA	171	5
Italy	124	5
Others	99	13
Total	7.437	100

Source: Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey

Number of Transition Documents Determined by Bilateral Agreements between EU Member States and Turkey and Number of Transition Documents Required by Turkey

Countries	Number of Transition Document Determined (For the year 2010)	Number of Transition Documents Required (For the year 2010)
Austria	15.000	145.000
Spain	5.260	8.000
Italy	31.000	38.000
Italy	6.000	12.000
Hungary	21.500	45.000
Romania	25.000	50.000
Greece	20.000	30.000

Source: Suer, 2010 (Cihangir & Kurtbag, 2015)

World Bank (WB) to prepare a report on the Customs Union. The World Bank sent ten experts to prepare the report. However, the European Commission did not consider the results of the report and mentioned that they had forgotten about it which had not any political and economic implications to EU-Turkey relations. The report revealed that quotas could not be applied for road vehicles, and that a visa could not be applied to Turkish citizens. For this reason, the Customs Union should be updated, but this update should not be an alternative to the full membership target. The speaker mentioned the coup attempt of 15 July 2016 and added that the EU should be more understanding toward Turkey.

THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF EU – TURKEY RELATIONS

Although EU-Turkey relations have had ups and downs, when analysed overall there has been a positive trend in their relations. In this context, although the problematic areas of today might lead to the interpretation that relations have reached irreversible dimensions, EU-Turkey relations have the potential to improve.

From the perspective of Turkey, the EU seems to have conflict with its own values and behaves ambivalently when it comes to Turkey's mem-

bership. The EU, which is considered the world's biggest peace project, has remained under the influence of populist politicians when it comes to Turkey's membership. The EU has accepted many countries that are far from meeting the Copenhagen and Maastricht criteria, especially during the post-2000 enlargements. However, the case for Turkey has fallen upon deaf ears throughout this process. The EU Member State process for South Cyprus is the biggest example of this.

The refugee problem, which is taken into consideration under Europe's new values, has an important part in EU-Turkey relations today. In this aspect, Turkey has done its part in developing new policies with the EU for solutions to the problem, and it has tried to respond to the plight of millions of refugees. The migration crisis of 2015 has shown Turkey's importance for the EU one more time. Although many EU countries have avoided responsibility for the refugees, Turkey on its own maintained border security and prevented many refugees from reaching Europe. Turkey therefore prevented Europe from experiencing additional internal problems.

The economy is one of the most important aspects of EU-Turkey relations. In regard to the Customs Union's World Bank data, the renewal of the Customs Union for both sides were one of the most important topics of the session. Within this framework, the importance of economic integration to move forward from Custom Union was discussed, keeping in mind that economic integration with the EU establishment has provided institutional and political unity, combined with a supranational structure with a spill-over effect.

In discussing the Customs Union, it was mentioned that the EU must take positive steps toward removing quotas and facilitating visa liberation for Turkey. Consequently, it is important to take into account the political, historical and economic perspective for moving forward to EU-Turkey relations. Rather than focusing upon problems, it is necessary to evaluate the progress that has been achieved throughout last more than 60 years.

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Responding to Humanitarian Crisis in the 21st Century

RAVALE MOHYDIN



BACKGROUND

The world continues to experience the worst humanitarian and refugee crisis since the Second World War. According to the United Nations (UN), war, civil strife and natural disasters have displaced 70.8 million people from their homes. Out of these nearly 71 million people, 41.3 million are internally displaced (IDPs), 25.9 million are refugees and 3.5 million have sought asylum.

According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the top five refugee hosting countries are Turkey (3.7 million), Pakistan (1.4 million), Uganda (1.2 million), Sudan (1.1 million) and Germany (1.1 million). When Palestinian refugees are taken into consideration, the burden being carried by Lebanon and Jordan also becomes apparent with 1.4 million and 2.9 million refugees respectively. As these numbers indicate, the international

response to the refugee issue has been largely ineffective, with particular countries continuing to disproportionately bear the burden of hosting refugee populations. On the one hand, the inability of the international community to stabilise countries affected by conflict has meant a continued flow of refugees to neighbouring regions. On the other hand, the situation has been made more complex by rising anti-refugee sentiment around the world, particularly in Europe and the United States, even as their refugee numbers remain relatively low. As populism continues to rise in Europe and the US and refugee numbers remain concentrated in countries neighbouring refugee-source regions, there is concern that increasing anti-migrant sentiments will result in a declining political will among decision makers to effectively deal with the crisis.

The TRT World Forum, held in Istanbul on October 21-22, 2019, addressed the following themes for discussion in closed session: the main socio-economic pressures being faced by host countries and how the international community can help alleviate them; whether protracted conflicts can be effectively managed by mitigating their human impacts; whether past experience in managing large-scale humanitarian crises can inform current approaches to the ongoing crises; and lessons that can be drawn from the Turkish experience in developing effective approaches to deal with humanitarian crises.

TURKEY'S BURDEN: THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

The international response to the Syrian refugee crisis has been largely ineffective. The discussion started with a recognition of the huge burden that has to be carried by the government and society of host countries such as Turkey, which has more than 4 million refugees of 80 different nationalities, with an eye-opening 3.6 million from neighboring Syria. According to one of the speakers, provision of public services to refugees is difficult for the Turkish state. Turkey's expenditure on refugees for the

past 9 years has exceeded 40 billion USD, while support from the European Union (EU) through NGOs was only 3.3 billion USD. The UN only made available 1.3 billion USD. Additionally, he concluded, the Turkish host communities had to face challenges as well.

venting or intervening to stop the various crimes that were and are still occurring in Syria. One of the speakers highlighted that more than 6.2 million people have been displaced and almost 50 percent of those are minor children. More than a million people, including 360,000 children, are living in areas that are difficult to access. More than 300,000 refugee children have been born in Turkey and know no other home. To provide an illustration of the generosity with which refugees have been treated in Turkey, air ambulance services, which cost upwards of 10,000 USD per trip, have been for Syrian refugees more than 4000 times. It can be easily said that refugees in Turkey have been treated the same as Turkish citizens themselves.

It was discussed that conflict and war lead to displacement of people on a large scale. Despite the international community's insistence that attacks upon innocent civilians in Syria be stopped, the Syrian regime has continued its assault. The international community's failure to stop this is condemnable.

The international community's second failure was the humanitarian fallout and its inability to manage that. As noted above, Turkey's expenditure on refugees for the past 9 years has exceeded 40 billion USD. The United Nations (UN) humanitarian response plan was 3.29 billion USD in value. However, unfortunately, only 1.3 billion USD was made available. More than 60 percent of the planned humanitarian response projects were not funded and thus could not benefit Syrian refugees in Turkey. Support from the EU through NGOs was 3.3 billion USD only. The Turkish state managed 3.6 million refugees in Syria, using predominantly Turkish public funds. This is a tremendous feat, as well as a rebuke of the international community's lack of responsible action when it came to the Syrian humanitarian crisis. It is unclear whether other nations would survive such a strain on their public expenditure.

INEFFICACY OF HUMANITARIAN RESPONSES TO REFUGEE CRISES

According to one of the speakers, the main problem with humanitarian aid for refugee crises is that it is responsive, or curative, and not preventative. A clear pattern that has been observed over the years is that when a crisis or disaster happens, resulting in a full-blown refugee crisis, elected politicians are first people who are expected to manage it. Elected politicians have to attend to their own constituencies and may not be able to effectively address humanitarian disasters. This is unfortunately due to many actors, including political leaders and governments, who use human suffering as a tool or a means to reach their political objectives.

This can deepen human suffering, as innocent civilians are forced to face exceptionally challenging conditions to be able even to survive. Unfortunately, this is clearly evident from the Greek handling of the Syrian refugee crisis, that has now become a major political issue in Greece, with far-right opposition groups blaming the Greek government. The newly elected Greek Prime Minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, claimed that 'Greece has reached its limits'. He has aligned himself with rising nationalist and racist attitudes in Greece, fuelling calls for more anti-refugee policies. Following the July 2019 election, the Greek PM closed the Ministry of Migration and transferred responsibility to the Ministry of Civil Protection, i.e. the Greek police. Unfortunately, there have been dozens of reports of the Greek police and army pushing asylum seekers away from the country's land and sea borders and committing other abuses. In terms of numbers, 11,867 asylum seekers who were traveling from Turkey to Greece were pushed back to Turkey in 2018, and that number has climbed to 25, 404 people in the first 10 months of 2019. These asylum seekers have testified that after being detained by Greek officials, their personal belongings were confiscated without any official procedure, and they were subjected to unacceptable abuse. These testimonies and

images of refugees pushed back to Turkey reveal the severity of the situation as 'all of those interviewed reported hostile or violent behaviour by Greek police and unidentified forces wearing uniforms and masks without recognizable insignia', as indicated by a 2018 Human Rights Watch report. The abuse included beatings with hands and batons, kicking, and the use of stun guns.

Despite the Greek authorities' denials, findings of nongovernmental groups, intergovernmental agencies and media reports are consistent. Inhumane push-back activities have been observed and denounced by a number of international bodies. According to Todor Gardos, the Europe researcher at Human Rights Watch, 'People who have not committed a crime are detained, beaten and thrown out of Greece without any consideration for their rights or safety' (Smith, 2018). Gardos also said that the Greek authorities should immediately investigate the repeated allegations of illegally pushing refugees that were traveling to Greece from Turkey back to Turkey, and that 'despite government denials, it appears that Greece is intentionally, and with complete impunity, closing the door on many people who seek to reach the European Union through the Evros [Meriç] border'. The Council of Europe has registered Greece's push back practices as violations of international law. It has requested that Greece stop this horrific practice and investigate those responsible. However, the pushing of asylum seekers back to Turkey by Greek officials continues.

Once the political actors fail, the military is asked to step in. Then the same problem is observed – human deprivation is used to achieve military objectives. Another outcome is that heavy-handed military action causes more harm than good. Finally, often by the time the situation has become very dangerous, the humanitarian community is called upon. They are expected to fight a wildfire with a few buckets of water, figuratively speaking. The humanitarian crisis deepens, and with that, human suffering. Humanitarian organisations fear the loss of an entire generation of Syrians due to the Syrian Civil War.

Continuing in the same vein, the speaker concluded that humanitarians are doing the work of international organisations. This is not a correct way to manage the problem and leads to worsening conditions. Governments themselves need to take on more responsibility and do more. It is not the fault of the humanitarian community; it is an example of the degradation of humanitarian values by international governments. The speaker went on to clarify that while there is no need for new values or a revamped view of human life, there is a need to democratise and revamp the humanitarian space. Stakeholders should be identified, and the levels of responsibility for these actors should be designated.

The 1951 Refugee Convention is the key legal document that forms the basis of UNHCR's work. Ratified by 145 countries, it defines the term 'refugee' and outlines the rights of the displaced, as well as the legal obligations of states to protect them. A refugee, according to the Convention, is 'someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion' (UNHCR, n.d.).

Even though the 1951 Refugee Convention defines what a refugee is, the speakers believed that there is a need to shift the understanding about who can be called a refugee. For example, there is no clarification in the difference between migrants and refugees. Additionally, the current world system is centered around goals concerning security, rather than upon humanitarian issues. An increasingly security-obsessed world leads to increased scrutiny of applications for asylum, and that is problematic for those seeking asylum or refugee status. By making innocent civilians stay in war and conflict zones, preventing them from leaving, even though they are concerned for their safety, or forcing them to leave areas of safety and return to war zones are acts of criminality. However, even though that is clearly understood, there is very little clear consensus on what the right response is, given that there are concerns for security.

IS TURKEY'S HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS SUSTAINABLE?

The speakers went on to agree that the right response comes down to how the refugee crisis is managed. Particularly, a host state cannot be expected to manage the crisis alone. If the host state is unable to manage it, that cannot be ignored. The refugee crisis, according to the speakers, can have a negative social and economic impact on host communities. This is especially the case for the Syrian refugees in Turkey. Public expenditure on Syrian refugees has put significant pressure on community health and education resources, signalling capacity concerns. While social acceptance levels in Turkey are very high, according to the speakers, they can be tested depending on social and economic factors.

With that said, balancing humanitarianism, development and security, while utilising aid effectively, can lead to good outcomes. Two contrasting examples were provided: South Sudan and Turkey. In South Sudan, aid recipients were reached via airdrop. However, after billions of USD were provided in aid, it was later learned that only a small portion of the aid actually reached those who needed it. In Turkey, however, Turkish Kizilay provided debit cards linked with cash transfers directly to refugees. Syrian refugees were able to use this aid effectively and with integrity, while the local community was also supported. As an example, a Syrian refugee would buy bread from a Turkish bakery.

However, in terms of sustainability of Turkey's humanitarian response to the Syrian refugee crisis, one has to account for the host community's belief in the benefits of hosting refugees. The Centre for American Progress, a U.S. think tank, reported that 78 per cent of Turks believe they spent too much money caring for Syrian refugees (Evans & Dikmen, 2018). According to survey research conducted by the World Food Programme (WFP) in 2017, 'economic issues appear to be a key point of contention for both communities. Perceptions of being undercut in

the labour market are strong among the host community, while the refugees feel underpaid and overcharged (WFP, 2017). The International Crisis Group also reported that most Turkish citizens believe the influx of Syrians has had an adverse impact, while a survey of Turkish citizens in Istanbul published in December 2016 found that '72 per cent felt uncomfortable encountering Syrians and 76 per cent had no sympathy for the refugees' (International Crisis Group, 2018).

Many Turks perceive the costs of hosting Syrian refugees in Turkey to include lower wages, an increase in unemployment, and an increase in rental and food costs. They also worry about deterioration of the Turkish economy, as well as the draining of social aid funding for Turkish citizens. Social media campaigns have cropped up against Syrian refugees who have continued to reside in Turkey. It was also damaging that politicians such as CHP Chairman Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu and IYI Party Chairwoman Meral Akşener both 'adopted a populist and exclusionary interpretation of nationalism in a bid to garner votes' in March 2019. Even earlier, in 2017, in a speech during a rally in northern Giresun, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu (Atlas, 2019) said: There's no money for farmers, but do you know how much has been spent on Syrians? \$30 million. They've become first class citizens. The price of hazelnuts has made people in the Black Sea Region second-class citizens. You will ask for an account of this.

These sentiments emerging from the resentment caused by perceived economic costs can be potentially linked to a threefold increase in intercommunal violence between Turkish host communities and Syrian refugees in the second half of 2017 when compared to the same period in 2016.

Turkish citizens' resentment towards Syrian refugees increased due to perceived (versus actual) changes in employment opportunities, wages and living costs for Turkish citizens. Prior to addressing these particular perceptions, which call the economic contributions of Syrian refugees into question, it is important to highlight the context of the international community's failure to equitably share the responsibility of hosting Syrian refugees. One must also take into account the duration of the

conflict, which exceeded initial expectations. In response to the Syrian refugee crisis, Turkey developed its first asylum law - the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) in 2013 (Mohyidin, 2018). The new law granted temporary protection to Syrian refugees and provided access to some social services, but it did not give refugees the right to work. In January 2016, the Turkish government allowed Syrian refugees to get work permits if their employer applied for them. However, many Syrian refugees accepted informal work, which was more available than formal employment.

An estimated 750,000-900,000 Syrian refugees are employed informally or unofficially. Given the preexisting size of the informal economy in Turkey, with estimates ranging from 7% to 139% of the formal economy, it is clear that there was already a sizeable informal economy in place prior to the arrival of the Syrian refugees (Akalin & Kesikoğlu 2007 in Esen & Binatli, 2017). This is even more so in southeast Turkey, where most of the cities with a significant proportion of Syrian refugees are located. The presence of Syrian social networks, government-sponsored refugee camps and a flourishing informal economy in southeast Turkey – including seasonal work offering employment to unskilled workers – has made it the most viable region of the country for Syrian refugees. Classic economic theory states that if there is an increase in the supply of informal labour, it should reduce the demand for it, leading to either lower wages or the displacement of citizens from the informal sector. Living costs, especially rent, are bound to increase where Syrian refugees continue to reside. This is what Turkish citizens believe is happening and anticipate will continue to happen. It is the cause of tensions between host communities and the Syrian refugees.

At the same time, the very existence of Syrian refugees has led to the creation and sustainability of refugee rehabilitative Turkish industries along the Turkey-Syria border, contributing to the growth of formal sector employment for Turkish citizens. Many have set up businesses to be able to support themselves, resulting in Syrian ownership of one quarter of all foreign businesses established in Turkey. According to Vural Çakır, Chair of the Human Development Foundation (INGEV), 8,100 Syrian

companies were established with foreign capital status in Turkey, employing more than 100,000 people as of October 2017 (Anadolu Agency, 2017). Investors and merchants have also moved operations from Syria, especially from Aleppo, to Turkey. However, according to Turkish citizens' perceptions of Syrians' economic survival in Turkey, more than 85 per cent believe Syrian refugees are utilising services provided by the Turkish state and 65 per cent believe they are making ends meet 'by begging', while only 49 per cent believe that Syrians are economically surviving 'by working' (Erdogan, 2017). About 77 per cent of Turkish citizens 'do not agree at all' or 'do not agree' that Syrians contribute to the Turkish economy.

To ensure that Turkey's humanitarian response to the Syrian refugee crisis remains sustainable, both refugees and host communities must believe they are in a symbiotic relationship inside of Turkey. One of the ways this can be done is to encourage integration.

INTEGRATION POLICIES AND PROGRAMS FOR IMPROVED SUSTAINABILITY

Given that few Syrian refugees are returning to Syria anytime soon, that more than 1 million of them are under the age of 10, and that it is in Turkey's favour to benefit from the demographic window of opportunity as highlighted above, it is important to continue to offer and expand educational opportunities. One of the speakers pointed out that 'if we want to stop children from being recruited as militia soldiers, we need to ensure there is an education system for them to benefit from'. In terms of encouraging integration in particular, it would be important to include the following:

- Turkish instruction and/or Turkish language lessons to facilitate social and economic integration in the country: This will increase the benefits of the demographic window of opportunity highlighted

above. Teacher training can be provided to Turkish citizens who can then be gainfully employed while teaching Syrian refugees.

- Innovative initiatives in education, including family literacy programs where parents and children are taught literacy skills together: This can be more cost effective than educating children and adults separately.

In 2013, female-headed Syrian refugee households constituted 22 percent of the non-camp Syrian refugee population. This is because many women were abandoned, lost their parents or husbands in the war, or their parents or husbands became disabled or could not provide for them (CTDC, 2015). With almost 65 percent of female Syrian refugees being either illiterate or having had primary education only, they do not have the educational qualifications for skilled work. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that many of them do not have the required documentation for legal work permits, or at times even residence permits that might help them gain access to basic facilities. This leaves them economically vulnerable, as they have to engage in informal employment to make ends meet or live entirely without any income source. Informal employment can be unreliable or exploitative, with women reporting incidents and fears of sexual harassment, poor working conditions and discrimination by Turkish employers. This situation could be helped by the following:

- Women-only programs for adult education, and vocational or specialized training which would create a safe environment for refugee women, encouraging them and empowering them toward success: These must be accompanied by Turkish language lessons. Especially in areas with higher refugee populations, these programs can lead to employment in sectors such as teaching and healthcare for refugees, as well as economic consumption.
- Microenterprise training for refugee women to become child-care providers: Not only will this enable refugee women to support themselves, it will also help the Turkish government to integrate more

Turkish women into the workforce by offering subsidised childcare services in underserved areas. Turkey has the lowest rate of female labour force participation among OECD countries. The AK Party government has worked to pave the way for more mothers to remain in the workforce by employing a number of financial instruments, including maternity leave, public provision of childcare services and tax credits based on childcare expenses for wage earners. As female labour force participation is an important driver of growth and development, and as the CHP manifesto for local elections has included providing quality child care (TRT World Research Centre, 2019), this can help create more opportunities for not just refugee women but Turkish women as well.

Increased availability of microfinance for refugees funded by private/public partnerships can help refugees who do not have capital to set up businesses. These businesses could also support the local community. Even though policies have been implemented in the past that encourage financial self-sufficiency for Syrian refugees, engagement from the private sector in the form of microfinance availability is required. This is necessary given the scale and longevity of the Syrian refugee crisis, as well as a lack of formal and reliable employment opportunities for refugees.

EXPLORING POST - CONFLICT MANAGEMENT OF HUMANITARIAN CRISES

One of the speakers believed that the EU would benefit if Turkey continued to host Syrian as well as other refugees. It would be cheaper for the EU monetarily, even if they paid the entire amount which they had previously agreed to. Another speaker said, 'Europeans are outsourcing management of refugees to Turkey'. According to them, the International

Committee of the Red Cross is raising more money for greater intervention now, but more will be needed for effective post-conflict management.

Additionally, the speakers concluded that it is easy to focus on refugees as they are more visible on our television screens and news headlines, but displaced people within conflict zones such as Syria are even more desperate and in need of help. This is another reason why the definition of who is a refugee needs to be updated, as it fails to recognise the complete fallout from a humanitarian crisis, whether it is due to war and conflict or another reason.

Turkey launched Operation Peace Spring on October 9, 2019, to eliminate terrorists from northern Syria, thus aiding in the safe return of 2 million Syrian refugees. As stated above, Turkey's expenditure on refugees for the past 9 years has exceeded 40 billion USD, while support from the EU through NGOs was only 3.3 billion USD (Mutlu & Orkan, 2019). The EU, however, does not support Ankara's safe zone. Alternative solutions such as Turkey's safe zone in Syria must be supported for safe repatriation of refugees. Additionally, resources must be utilised towards job creation within the safe zone so that refugees are able to quickly get back on their feet. Those returning must also be provided with psychosocial support, including access to healthcare, mental health services, affordable housing, food and utility stores, and security. In order to manage this in the case of Syria, countries including Russia and France must mobilise resources and play their role in rebuilding the country. The EU must not lose out on the opportunity to help ensure Syrian refugees are able to rebuild their lives, unless it wants another full-blown refugee crisis at its doorstep.

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The Future of the Global Liberal Order: Challenges and Prospects

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR ŞENER AKTÜRK



INTRODUCTION

ORIGINS OF THE GLOBAL LIBERAL ORDER AND ITS CRISIS

The meeting was attended by high-ranking politicians, diplomats, academics, lawyers, either as panelists or as members of the audience. During the introduction to the session, it was remarked that the European liberals are prone to forgetting their history, including the origins of European and global liberal order. One of the speakers, an active politician, reminded the audience that if it had not been for the United States, and in particular the vision of President Harry Truman, there would be no European Union, the key pillar of the global liberal order. In this context, it was also critically noted that countries can rewrite their own histories, but they cannot rewrite their geographies; therefore, the role of geopolitical location is intrinsic to the understanding of the origins, prospects and challenges of the global liberal order.

RENEGOTIATING GLOBAL LIBERAL ORDER: MULTILATERALISM, NON-INTERVENTION AND EQUAL STATUS

The current global order was founded after the Second World War by the five great powers, the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). At age 70, the global order has become quite aged, as one of the participants commented. He also critically noted that the founding of the UNSC was not based upon equality, even among the great powers, as the United States spearheaded this coalition. One premise of the UNSC was the assurance of US supremacy, and for this reason, among others, many predict and expect the death of the global liberal order, anthropomorphically described by one participant as an 'old man'. It was argued that US supremacy was consistent with the relative size of the country's economy and technological leadership. However, underlying conditions, both material and ideational, have changed significantly since 1945, and the ability of the United States to maintain postwar peace from a position of military and economic supremacy has declined over time.

First of all, the global liberal order is no longer functional in terms of serving the international economic interests of the United States. Therefore, one obvious solution or policy that the United States might pursue would be to undo the global liberal economic order; according to one of the participants, this is precisely what the current US President Donald Trump is seeking to do. There are many indicators which may be cited in support of this claim: President Trump has attempted to alter the structure of global trade through tariffs and other non-tariffs barriers, ostensibly to protect American economic interests, which are in fact reminiscent of 19th century mercantilism. The looming 'trade war' between China and the United States is another noticeable symptom of this development with global repercussions. In short, national protectionism, whether in

economy, culture or politics, challenges the global liberal order. As even the founder and leader of the global liberal order, the United States, has recently resorted to protectionism, it is somewhat unsurprising that other, less powerful and smaller nation-states have followed suit.

Second, alternatives to US-led globalisation have emerged over time, posing both material and ideational challenges. The internal problems of democratic polities have also contributed to the crisis. Citizens are in general dissatisfied. This general unhappiness is to a great degree due to unequal distribution of wealth, argued one of the participants. This leads to widespread resentment, which is then successfully politicised in the form of rising populism and radical nationalism.

Third, many formerly underdeveloped non-Western countries, most notably the People's Republic of China (PRC), have achieved exponential economic growth over the last two decades, and they no longer wish to be on the 'second row' of global governance. Russia, China, and other so-called 'Asian Tigers' all demand equality in global governance. The non-Western polities' aspiration for equal status with Western nation-states is a defining feature of the current crisis of the global liberal order.

Can the United States and other Western countries stop the rise of the non-Western powers? The answer is 'no'; the current status quo is unsustainable. As an instrument to impede the rise of non-Western powers, war is too expensive, not to mention catastrophic from a humanitarian point of view, as one of the participants averred. A renegotiation of the global liberal order using compromise and wisdom is necessary, and the future of the global liberal order cannot be unilateral. Moreover, military interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and other locations did not improve the situation. Therefore, extraordinary care must be taken. In short, a renegotiation of the global liberal order must be based on the principles of multilateralism and non-intervention, and equal status of the various states in the international system is required.

THE NEED FOR A MUSCULAR LIBERALISM FOR THE RULE OF LAW, DEMOCRACY AND THE SUPREMACY OF THE PARLIAMENT

There is a disagreement as to whether the global liberal order is young or old, as one participant explicitly argued that the global liberal order should be considered a very young experiment from the perspective of human history at large. There are different approaches and frames from which the global liberal order can be evaluated, for example in terms of law, business or security. We must also consider what were the alternatives to the global liberal order in the past as well as the present.

Firstly, business at large has become global. We must consider the duties of nation states to guarantee that vulnerable nations are also protected in the otherwise globally competitive environment. Secondly, a rules-based system which the global liberal order implies or presupposes is important not only for global trade; more generally, we must also consider which system is most effective in diffusing threats to our societal and individual well-being. Thirdly, how can individual nation states ensure that future generations will achieve and maintain an increasingly higher standard of living within the global liberal order?

Fourthly, how will we manage the challenges that go beyond the nation-state within the framework of the global liberal order?

A common theme among the speakers was the role of the P5, the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, in the present and future reform of the global liberal order. All the speakers recognized the founding role of the P5, while often also noting the leading role of the United States among the P5. Most speakers also emphasised the need to reform the global order in a way to include states beyond the P5

in a reformed global governance structure, especially the newly rising non-Western powers.

Even in the absence of a constitution, what do nations believe in, and what holds particular political communities together? For example, the United Kingdom is an almost post-multicultural political environment with 'muscular liberalism', British values, democracy, supremacy of parliament and the rule of law ostensibly holding the political community together. But what is remarkable is the fact that often what has been depicted as liberalism consists of those things that the British majority or mainstream have thought of as the norm in their society, qualities which they think others should also adopt. As such, the instrumentalisation of a particular and implicitly particularistic definition of liberalism, at least in the British context, has been a strategy for maintaining the status quo through a process of ideological assimilation of newcomers and/or the societal periphery. Such a strategy is not at all specific to the British context, but rather observable in and generalisable to other Western and even non-Western contexts in relation to discussions around liberalism. Moreover, as it was observable in the British context, such an articulation of political liberalism and British values was in great part motivated by the need to combat an ideological rival that was perceived as threatening British society, namely a particular form of Islamic fundamentalism often associated with and attributed to Saudi Arabia, as one of the participants argued.

NON-WESTERN AND ILLIBERAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE FUTURE OF THE GLOBAL ORDER

Liberalism is not perceived as a positive term or ideology in much of the rest of the globe, especially in the non-Western world. Nonetheless, there are other terms and similar political aspirations that correlate with

and/or are consistent with a liberal political orientation domestically and internationally. In many non-Western societies, 'openness', especially 'openness' to the outside world in terms of business, trade, travel, education, and international interaction is often associated with a liberal orientation, even in the absence of liberalism as an independent or organized political force. For example, the political reforms that were initiated in the late 1980s by the last general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, were not motivated by liberalism. Gorbachev himself would never self-identify as a liberal, but rather as a true democratic socialist and even as a Leninist. His reforms were called *glasnost* in Russia, which can be literally translated as 'openness' or 'transparency' in English. Likewise, political actors in the present-day PRC would not self-identify as liberals, and in fact they are not at all committed to most tenets of political liberalism, such as competitive multi-party politics, freedom of religion and conscience, or freedom of association, expression or information. However, policies of economic and cultural 'openness' to the rest of the world have been pursued at least since the time of Deng Xiaoping and are often interpreted as a kind of liberalisation by Western and non-Western observers of Chinese politics.

The PRC, although fundamentally an illiberal regime, decided to embrace aspects of economic globalisation, almost certainly because China benefitted from a global open market as the largest manufacturing power in the world. One symbolic and substantive indicator of China's orientation as such was its successful bid to enter into the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Perhaps more surprising for a Communist one-party regime, however, was that China also sent many intellectuals, politicians and students abroad, particularly to Western countries, in order to learn from them. In the metaphorically 'roaring 90s' of the Clinton-era United States that spearheaded 'globalisation' at both discursive and programmatic levels, China did not appear as a critic of such a development, unlike many other non-Western nations that objected even to economic globalisation. In this respect, China, as well as other so-called Asian Tigers, and perhaps also India, belong to a category of non-Western nations that have ben-

effitted from economic globalisation and a measure of economic liberalism. However, these countries have rejected political liberalism in part or as a whole in terms of political globalisation. In contrast, for example, there are also non-Western nations that reject both economic and political globalisation and liberalism, as well as other nations that accept both. In rare cases, there are those that accept political liberalism but reject economic liberalism.

China is a particularly important case, precisely because it is universally regarded as the second superpower next to the United States, one that many predict will surpass the United States in the near future, at least in terms of the size of its economy. This significance is compounded by the fact that China has a political system that is almost diametrically opposed to liberal democratic principles. Therefore, many observers understandably predict and/or fear that China will exert an illiberal influence worldwide as an anti-democratic and anti-liberal role model that is nonetheless very successful economically.

Non-Western and illiberal viewpoints were also expressed in the roundtable, and these ideas posed a valuable contribution to the debate regarding the future challenges of the global liberal order. In particular, respect for national sovereignty and a commitment to non-intervention in other nations' internal affairs were emphasised in this vein through the critical comments delivered by one of the participants. Concomitant emphasis was placed on multilateral intergovernmental organisations such as the United Nations, European Union, ASEAN, IMF, World Bank, G-20 and the Arab League as the institutional mechanisms of global governance. These institutions give a voice to all countries, regardless of whether they are large or small, wealthy or poor, strong or weak. China, for example, only accepts external intervention in another country if there is an agreement in the United Nations in favor of intervention, or if the country that is the target of intervention agrees with and in effect invites international intervention to solve its problems. Perhaps the most obvious seemingly contradictory stance within China's position is its advocacy for free trade, lower taxes and a broadly liberal international trade regime, which may be and often is perceived as a deep, transformative,

and often disruptive intervention in economically weaker and poorer nations' domestic affairs by economically powerful, capital abundant, and export-oriented economies.

ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONTRADICTIONS OF LIBERALISM

Members of the audience also actively participated in the discussion about the future of the global liberal order. One such participant poignantly observed that rich countries that used to propagate liberalism around the world, such as the United Kingdom and the United States, themselves are becoming illiberal. Indeed, former paragons of global liberalism such as the United Kingdom and the United States may be part of or even leading an illiberal global wave at present under the leaderships of Boris Johnson and Donald Trump, respectively. Moreover, there are numerous panels and sessions being held around the world at present, where senior and middle-aged bureaucrats and businessmen, along with academics, lament the crisis or the demise of the global liberal order. What is the broader significance of these increasingly common eulogies about the passing of the global liberal order, given by people, who could be described as the (former) elites of that very order? To what extent is this phenomenon a reaction to the passing of a more progressive, egalitarian world order? To what extent is this phenomenon quite the opposite, namely the negative reaction of the former elites of Western states and societies to the rise of the non-Western, non-Christian-heritage nation-states and their representatives, who in turn are seeking and claiming equal status in defining and governing a new global order?

One of the Western participants poignantly noted in concluding the session that for many in the West, liberal order means 'Christian order', and for many in Northern Europe, even more specifically, this means 'Protestant (Christian) order'. The limitation of human rights to Christians only should motivate one to critically scrutinise every invocation of 'human rights' to discern whether it is only being invoked in relation to Christian-heritage individuals, groups, and their interests, or wheth-

er non-Christians such as Muslims are also being protected from harm with this discourse. The same participant also warned against the risk of liberalism leading to economic oppression instead of economic freedom. Somewhat similarly, another participant drew attention to the fact that for any politician facing a situation of active war, as many did and some even still do in Eastern Europe and the Middle East, to bring about and maintain peace is often of paramount importance. Thus, peace and security are (and/or should be) prioritised over all other in effect secondary pursuits, such as economic and/or political liberalism. Enabling the pursuit of a 'good life', which is ultimately what is expected of political and other leaderships in every society, is often only possible in a relatively peaceful environment, defined by the lack of active interstate or civil war, at a minimum. The distinction between liberalism in domestic politics and international relations was also briefly brought up during the question and answer session. These critical comments, coming at the end of the closed session, did not trigger further soul searching about the actual history and inherent contradictions of political and economic liberalism which I attempt to briefly discuss below.

According to one of the participants in this closed session, there are three basic principles of liberalism that can help one in framing the discussion of the global liberal order: individual rights, economic freedom and equality of opportunity. Such an abstract and parsimonious definition indeed focuses the discussion on a few key concepts, but it also sidesteps many other criticisms that have been levied against political and economic liberalism, some of which were already brought up by other participants.

HUMAN RIGHTS OR CHRISTIAN RIGHTS?

Are these individuals who are entitled to rights in liberal theory and practice in fact include all human beings, or only those who are of Christian heritage, Western Christians, or even much more specifically, those of

Northern European Protestant Christian heritage? Starting in the late medieval period, if not earlier, and culminating in unprecedented waves of religious sectarian mass violence and expulsions during and after the Protestant Reformation (Terpstra, 2015), the states and societies that later became the pioneers and paragons of political and economic liberalism were shaped through extraordinary levels of identity-based violence that almost completely destroyed any non-Christian religious minority. In short, empirically speaking, Western European states became liberal democratic only after their non-Christian (primarily Jewish and/or Muslim) subjects were killed, expelled or forcibly converted. Thus, the citizen/subject of non-Christian religious affiliation is an abstract postulate, a hypothesis, for much of the early centuries of Western European 'liberal' experience. Second, the immigration and citizenship regulations of dozens of European-heritage states in the Western Hemisphere, from Canada and the United States in the North, to Argentina and Chile in the southern tip of the Americas, openly discriminated against and often entirely banned non-European and non-white people from immigration and naturalisation (FitzGerald and Cook-Martin, 2014).

In addition to the mass violence in Western Europe, the deliberately mono-religious formation of the Americas is also equally important from an empirical and historical point of view (Akturk, 2020). In fact, as David FitzGerald and David Cook-Martin have convincingly argued with voluminous evidence and examples, liberalism has, or at least historically has had an 'elective affinity' with 'racism' (FitzGerald and Cook-Martin, 2014). Thus, a reasonable litmus test is needed to determine whether current and retrospectively past practices of political liberalism have designated non-Christian human beings as individuals entitled to equal rights. One must check whether the rights of Muslim individuals or groups were successfully defended against infringement and violation by Christian-heritage individuals and groups. This is a reasonable test, as Muslims constitute by far the largest and most significant non-Christian religious minority whom most Westerners have encountered at present and for most of the historical record, as recent critical scholarship on human rights convincingly demonstrates (Moyn, 2015). However, I strongly sus-

pect that the 'human rights' discourse in liberal democratic politics is a thinly disguised substitute for the rights of Christians only, regardless of whether they are in the majority, as in most of Europe and throughout the Americas, or in the minority, as in most of Asia and much of Africa. The religious, sectarian and/or racial limitation of ostensibly 'universal' rights is a major shortcoming of the actual practice of political liberalism, both domestically and internationally.

The religious sectarian and/or racial limitations of liberalism are abundantly observable in the history of allegedly humanitarian interventions as well, another topic that has attracted a significant amount of scholarly attention, particularly since the turn of the 21st century. Various scholars have traced the history of humanitarian interventions, focusing upon Christian European states' interventions against the Ottoman Empire on behalf of Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian and Lebanese-Syrian Christians (Bass, 2008; Rodogno, 2011), starting in earnest with the British-French-Russian joint intervention in 1827, which supported a Greek Christian rebellion in the Morea (1821-1831). This culminated in the founding of modern Greece as the first modern Christian nation-state in the Balkans in 1832. In each and every case, the 'humans' who were being protected through 'humanitarian' intervention were Christians, whereas the culprits of the alleged persecution were non-Christians, and more specifically Muslims (Bass, 2008; Rodogno, 2011). In contrast, there was no 'humanitarian intervention' by Western powers to help Muslim minorities persecuted under Christian rule, of which there were far too many. A large majority of all Muslims in the world, from India to Algeria, from Egypt to Transcaucasia, and from Nigeria to Indonesia were living under European imperial rule by the turn of the 20th century. In fact, up until the very belated and limited Western intervention after the genocide against Bosnian Muslims, which was underpinned by a very strong and overt Christian religious nationalist ideology (Sells, 1998), there has been no other humanitarian intervention of significance in support of a Muslim group facing massacre at the hands of a Christian perpetrator.

THE MYTH OF THE SELF-REGULATING MARKET, THREE FICTITIOUS COMMODITIES AND INEQUALITY

Apart from the implicit and explicit religious sectarian bias favouring Western Christian-heritage individuals, groups and states, both in domestic (e.g. citizenship, religious liberty) and foreign (e.g. humanitarian intervention) policies of self-identified liberal democratic states, there is also a third and much more obvious, better-studied example of the contradictions and shortcomings of liberalism: This relates to the liberal conception of the markets and economic relationships in general. Economic liberalism envisions markets as self-regulating, thus generating a mythical equilibrium that is supposedly sustained by the dynamic of supply and demand in order to maintain economic life. However, as critically evaluated by Karl Polanyi among others, such a conception of the market as a self-regulating mechanism, capable of solving the most fundamental problems of economic life without societal and/or political intervention, overlooks the fact that there are key components of economic production, such as labour, land and money, which are not commodities but are treated as such in the absence of any societal intervention in the market (Polanyi, 1957 [1944]; Akturk, 2006). Therefore, if left unchecked, without any political or societal intervention, the allegedly self-regulating market does not have any mechanism of its own to automatically limit the commodification of labour. This includes the establishment of a minimum wage, minimum age requirements for employment, maximum working hours per day, mandatory holidays (such as weekends), a ban on the sale of human beings, i.e. slavery, and a prohibition of the sale of human organs, even if done on a voluntary basis. These moral limits on the commodification of 'labour' (i.e. human beings) are securely enshrined in most Western and non-Western societies through political

and societal interventions that occurred during the previous 150 years. Therefore, the shortcomings of economic liberalism are no longer obvious to most commentators on the current crisis and future prospects of global liberalism.

However, when it comes to the commodification of the other two otherwise 'fictitious commodities', as Polanyi calls them, 'land' (i.e. the environment) and 'money' (currency), we are still suffering from the fallout of profit-driven commodification and exploitation of the environment and currency speculation. The latter, at least in part, has been implicated in the global financial crisis of 2008-2009, which arguably triggered the populist-nativist-protectionist wave behind the growing debate on the crisis of liberalism. The catastrophic consequences of the unchecked commodification of labour, land and money, which Polanyi has deftly analysed in the context of interwar global order, arguably explains similar problems of even greater magnitude with the onset of what James Mittelman (2000) has aptly discussed as 'the globalisation syndrome'.

In addition to the problem of three fictitious commodities, there is also the very prominent problem of rising inequality of income and wealth. This has paralleled deregulation of the markets and neoliberal economic reforms that have swept around the globe at least since the early 1980s, following the US decision to end the Bretton Woods system in 1971. Furthermore, as more recent scholarship has suggested, liberal democracies may indeed be particularly conducive to very high levels of economic inequality, concentration and accumulation of inherited wealth, and the formation of an 'oligarchy' (Winters, 2011). Similarly, compared to autocracies, liberal democracies may be particularly averse to substantial redistribution of wealth, especially land reform, which is often the most significant form of economic redistribution, especially in postcolonial contexts such as in Latin American and Sub-Saharan African polities (Albertus, 2015).

Deeper domestic contradictions of political liberalism include liberal democratic Western European polities' reluctance and vacillations in

tolerating different conceptions of 'the good life', as evidenced most visibly in the controversies over attempts to ban Jewish and Islamic religious practices, such as ritual animal slaughter (Library of Congress, 2018) and male circumcision (Akturk, 2019). The dilemmas and vacillations in the allowance of different conceptions of 'the good life' are definitely central problems for liberalism, past and present, as they are directly related to its core principles; 'toleration', after all, is arguably the core of liberal virtue (Mearsheimer, 2018). These domestic contradictions of liberalism are amplified with far more disastrous consequences when applied to foreign policy, motivating liberal states to intervene in the affairs of other polities that they deem illiberal or anti-liberal (Mearsheimer, 2018), resulting in a series of humanitarian interventions that are perceived as discursively secularised versions of the Western Christian 'crusades' of the Middle Ages by the non-Western, and especially non-Christian states and societies. Due to these economic and political, domestic and international contradictions, the global liberal order, which can be considered as the 20th century embodiment of Western/European 'universalism' (Wallerstein, 2006), is perceived and criticised as having a Western Christian-heritage bias. It is accused of being fundamentally oppressive and exclusionary vis-à-vis non-Western peoples and non-Christian conceptions of 'the good life'. Any future (re)negotiations of the global order, liberal or not, will have to reckon with these inherent contradictions and the historical legacy of Western European universalism that has shaped the globe over the last five centuries.

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The Gulf Crisis Two Years On: What Does the Future Hold?

DR. TAREK CHERKAOUI



INTRODUCTION

On Tuesday, October 22, 2019, the TRT World Research Centre held a closed roundtable session on the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Crisis. The focus of the session was an analysis of the ongoing Gulf Crisis, a discussion of its root causes, an examination of the multiple dimensions of the conflict, and an observation of the various geopolitical developments that have occurred during the past two years. Although some overtures have been offered lately from among the protagonists, regional tensions still persist and affect the images of these countries in the international arena. The session aimed to explore the outcomes of the Gulf Crisis by focusing on regional tensions and the emergence of new alliances.

A distinguished group of three speakers and roughly 30 participants shared their expertise in discussion of the Gulf Crisis. They addressed the following themes:

1. What is the context of the Gulf Crisis?
2. What are the new political coalitions which have emerged in the post-Gulf Crisis period?
3. Is the GCC still relevant?
4. How does the Gulf Crisis impact the GCC countries' relationships with Iran?
5. What has been Turkey's impact on regional conflicts during the post-Gulf Crisis period?

THE GULF CRISIS

The first speaker examined the origins of the current Gulf Crisis, which dates back to 1995 when Qatar left the umbrella of Saudi Arabia to adopt an independent and open foreign policy. Qatar's emir at the time, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, sought to resist Saudi hegemony and pursued his nation's interest by leveraging Qatar's own capabilities and resources, unencumbered by Saudi threats. Having the world's third-largest reserves of natural gas, the Qatari leaders chose to think outside the realm of conventional pipelines as they would have been hindered by Saudi Arabia, which provided the only land routes. Thanks to the most sophisticated liquid natural gas (LNG) infrastructure in the world, Qatar has become one of the largest gas exporters globally.

Qatar's wealth provided the means for the country's leadership to conduct an independent foreign policy. This divergence obviously frustrated Saudi Arabia, which attempted to organise a coup d'état against Sheikh Hamad in the mid-1990s (BBC News, 2000). A decade later, in the mid-2000s, the Saudis saw Qatar's active diplomacy in such areas as Yemen, Lebanon and Bahrain as a direct encroachment upon their turf. Subsequently, Saudi Arabia refused to attend some summits held in Doha, notably the one on Gaza in January 2009, which was attended by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Hamas political leader Khaled Meshaal (Black, 2009). At that juncture, Saudi Arabia was leading the so-called 'axis of moderation', a de facto alliance which included Egypt, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). They stood closer to the Israeli position in opposition to the so-called 'axis of resistance', which included Iran, Syria, Lebanon and some Palestinian movements. In the summer of 2014, tensions between Qatar on the one hand, and Saudi Arabia and the UAE on the other, publicly surfaced once the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain decided to recall their ambassadors from Doha (ACPRS, 2014: 1-2). Therefore, according to the first speaker, it was no surprise to see matters escalate in the Gulf region, but the magnitude of the Gulf Crisis which began in June 2017 came as a surprise to most observers. At that

time, a Saudi-led quartet, which included the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt, imposed a land, air and sea blockade against Qatar, while also severing diplomatic ties. Allegations put forth by the anti-Qatar quartet accused their neighbour of sponsoring terrorism, betraying the GCC concerted actions, infiltrating on behalf of Iran, and proposing a threat to regional stability. The anti-Qatar coalition subsequently issued an ultimatum of 13 demands to be fulfilled within ten days. The list included paying reparations, shutting down the Al Jazeera satellite-broadcasting network (AJA), curbing bilateral relations with Iran, closing a Turkish military base and submitting to monthly external compliance checks.

The ultimatum constituted an attempt to 'reduce Qatar to a Saudi client state and humiliate the Emir of Qatar and the Al Thani dynasty to the point where their rule would be in question' (Lieven, 2017). There was also the feeling that Qatar had been able to influence the pan-Arab sphere since the launch of AJA in 1996. AJA had been a persistent irritant to dictators in the Middle East and had played a leading role in toppling several tyrants, including Ben Ali in Tunisia, Gaddafi in Libya and Mubarak in Egypt. On the other hand, despite having spent several billion dollars and establishing many satellite television channels to influence the hearts and minds of the Arab World, Saudi Arabia, and to a lesser extent the UAE, gained little success.

The siege of Qatar, which came during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, halted the food supply chain. More than 90 per cent of Qatar's goods had been coming from Saudi Arabia by road, and the rest had arrived through the port in Dubai. As a result, the cost of some imported foods and medicines rose ten-fold (Gorvett, 2018). This move severely impacted the Gulf's economic and trade relations. Moreover, Qatari nationals were declared *persona non grata*, straining tribal and family ties in a region known for intermarriage and kinship. The Gulf Crisis, which began in June 2017, has remained unresolved, with numerous developments having transpired during the past two years. The first speaker affirmed that the key takeaway from the Crisis was that Qatar had held firm in the face of substantial pressure from its neighbours.

RELEVANCE OF THE GCC

According to the second speaker, the GCC, established in 1981 to counter looming Iranian revolutionary fervour, was long seen as an organisation which lacked the necessary mechanisms to enhance cooperation or improve inter-state relations. According to the speaker, the GCC failed to play a meaningful role in mitigating a series of complex crises and three major wars in the region, from the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) to the American-led wars on Iraq in 1991 and 2003.

According to the second speaker, the Gulf Crisis brought the relevance of the GCC into the spotlight once again. While the group managed to achieve some minimal advancements in the past, including a customs union and common electrical grid, it has experienced many failures like the common currency project and the plan for a GCC-wide rail network. The GCC not only failed to mitigate the Gulf Crisis, but in fact made it worse. One of the reasons behind the GCC's ineffectual crisis management was the new generation of leaders in power. The era of the GCC founders had elapsed, and so too the traditional sense of fraternity and common interest which had characterised the alliance. The old-style decision-making that relied upon traditional approaches and tribal customs was no longer in the picture. According to the second speaker, these factors explain the impetuosity and intractability which characterised the conflict, as the younger leaders in Saudi Arabia and the UAE made no efforts toward compromise. Instead, they planned to make Qatar capitulate to Saudi-Emirati dictates.

The GCC has been undermined and has seen its division develop into three groups, with Qatar alone; the trio of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the UAE; and 'Kuwait and Oman [which] have sought to tread a middle ground in the crisis since mid-2017, and to pursue a mediation role' (Kinninmont, 2019, p.27). This has given rise to more bilateral initiatives, which might be seen as the antithesis of the founding principles of the GCC. For example, Saudi Arabia announced a Joint Co-operation Committee (JCC) with the UAE, which has aimed to unite the two countries in 'all military, political, economic, trade and cultural fields' (Dudley, 2018, para. 8).

Saudi Arabia has also announced a bilateral co-ordination council with Kuwait to further their mutual relations (Al Sherbini, 2018). These initiatives may indicate that the multilateralism of the GCC is in dire straits, with the stated purpose of achieving unity having been neglected for self-serving policies.

The GCC has stopped cooperating at the highest level, which may cause its demise as a multilateral institution. Moreover, even if a 'cold peace' is negotiated to end the current status-quo, the accumulation of mistrust and resentment will not be resolved anytime soon. Feelings of bitterness deepened as a result of a series of humiliating actions which affected ordinary Qatari citizens. While there is a 'belated realisation in the Saudi capital that the self-inflicted rift in the GCC is counterproductive and that the Gulf is more powerful together than divided' (Krieg, 2019, para.13), the series of symbolic and face-saving moves undertaken by the quartet, such as their respective teams' participation in the 2019 Arabian Gulf Cup in Doha, will do little to convince the Qatari leadership to relinquish their national sovereignty, independent foreign policy or dynamic public diplomacy. Therefore, as the GCC continues to display minimal functional or low-level cooperation, significant doubt remains about the organisation's relevance in the long run.

NEW STRATEGIC ALIGNMENTS

The third speaker tackled new political partnerships that have emerged in the post-Gulf Crisis period. These included the Qatar-Turkey, China-UAE, Russia-Saudi Arabia and Russia-UAE alignments. According to the speaker, the Qatar-Turkey strategic partnership has been strengthened, with Turkey proving to be an extremely reliable partner in times of need. Two days after the blockade, 'Turkey fast-tracked two pieces of legislation to allow more troops to be deployed to a military base in Qatar' (TRTW, 2018, para.4). This allowed Qatar to deter any potential use of military force by the blockading countries and it reinforced its leverage. Turkish cargo planes also flew in food products, helping Qatar sustain its needs during a period of substantial supply-chain upheaval.

Additionally, 'the value of projects handled by firms from Turkey crossed over \$14 billion by January 2018' (TRTW, 2018, para.11). This shows that the alliance was beneficial for both parties, especially considering that Qatar pledged to bolster Turkish currency during the recent financial turbulence, vowing to inject \$15 billion in investments in Turkey (Gokoluk, 2018).

From the third speaker's perspective, another significant development has been the 'look east' policy that seems to be in vogue in Riyadh and Abu Dhabi as a counterweight to the United States, which is perceived as increasingly in retreat from the Middle East. New bilateral partnerships are being shaped between Saudi Arabia and the UAE on the one hand, and with China on the other. The Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a comprehensive connectivity and cooperation plan that spans three continents and has the potential to boost global trade routes. The BRI includes the establishment of dozens of railroads in countries across the MENA region, such as Saudi Arabia. China's maritime Silk Road also passes through the Arabian and Red Seas via the Suez Canal to the Mediterranean.

In April 2019, Dubai's leader Al Maktoum announced a deal as part of the BRI that would 'potentially boost existing \$53 billion bilateral trade to \$70 billion in 2020' (Murphy, 2019, para.3). This followed Xi Jinping's visit to the UAE in July 2018, when 'the diplomatic relations turned from mere bilateral cooperation to a comprehensive strategic partnership... and the two nations announced 13 agreements and Memorandums of Understandings' (Salles, 2019, para.16). These developments exhibited a palpable strengthening of relations between the UAE and China, and both countries are also working together on military affairs. UAE defence spending grew by 10.8% from 2017 to 2018, as Chinese weapon systems were bought and used in the Yemen War (Salles, 2019). The UAE also became the first Gulf nation to incorporate the Chinese language into their national education system (Salles, 2019).

Russia has also increased its footprint in the Middle East, and its enhanced cooperation with the UAE is noteworthy. Crown Prince Moham-

med bin Zayed visited Moscow in 2018, and the 'two nations also signed a declaration of strategic partnership in all domains, including political, economic, cultural and security' (Salles, 2019, para.32). Russia, too, has been supplying weapons to the UAE, and in 2017 Moscow signed an agreement to sell multiple fighter jets to Abu Dhabi (Majumdar, 2017). This was in addition to the UAE awarding a \$708 million anti-armour contract to the Russian agency Rosoboronexport in 2017 (DW, 2019). Commerce has also been a focus of this alliance. Trade between the two nations has increased by nearly 36% year-on-year, to reach \$3.4 billion in 2019 (RBT, 2019).

What these new alignments reveal, according to the speaker, is that rather than relying solely on the GCC as their primary platform, or on the United States as their protector, the various constituents are branching out to find other partners. The Gulf Crisis has been both a bane and a boon in this regard, as even though the GCC is no longer united on critical issues, countries like Qatar are more self-determining and have increased opportunities to develop other ties.

RELATIONS WITH IRAN

The three speakers have concurred that the Gulf Crisis has impacted the GCC countries' relations with Iran in numerous and varied ways. These include Iran's relationships with Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait and the UAE. The relationship between Qatar and Iran has been irritating Riyadh for decades. According to the first speaker, Qatar shares the world's largest gas field with Iran, known as North Dome in Qatar and South Pars in Iran, and 38% of the gas field lies under Iran's territorial waters (Erdbrink, 2010). While the quartet aimed to downgrade Qatar's ties with Iran, their actions led instead to a rapprochement between the two countries, with Iranian President Hasan Rouhani criticising the embargo and announcing that Iranian airspace, land and sea would remain open to Qatar (Majidyar, 2017). In addition, there was a 'significant missed opportunity for the quartet to stoke up dissatisfaction with Qatar's foreign policy... [not exploiting] the traditionally widespread negative views of

Iran among the Qatari intelligentsia and media' (Kinninmont, 2019, p.26). Qatar re-sent its ambassador to Iran three months after the embargo began. He had been earlier recalled when Qatar had displayed solidarity with GCC ally Saudi Arabia during a schism in Iranian-Saudi relations in 2016 (LAT, 2017). Additionally, Iran began sending resources like food supplies to Qatar, Qatar was allowed to use Iranian shipping routes, and trade increased substantially between the two nations. As Qatar and Iran share the large South Pars gas field, their relationship has continued to strengthen throughout the Gulf Crisis. However, the Qatar-Iran relations faced some obstacles, such as the current U.S. sanctions against Iranian banks, which prevented the exchange of currencies (Cafiero & Paraskevopoulos, 2019, para.6).

The second speaker emphasised that Saudi-Iran relations have continued to deteriorate during the self-inflicted Gulf Crisis. Tensions have existed for several years, with both blaming each other for critical developments. For example, Iran believes that Saudi Arabia 'played a role in the withdrawal of the U.S. from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear activities' (Vakil, 2018, p.6). They also rival each other for regional dominance, which has led to a clash of disparate policy objectives. For instance, a war with Yemen has been waged by Saudi Arabia against the Houthi movement due to a brash crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and his adventurist policies. These have increased the 'risks of miscalculation and overstretch' (Kinninmont, 2019, p.21).

As the Houthis are allied with Iran, 'successive reports from a panel of U.N. experts have demonstrated significant assistance for the Houthis from Tehran in terms of both technology and weaponry' (Marcus, 2019, para.16). The rise of proxy conflict has defined relations during this post-Gulf Crisis period, whether in Syria or Yemen. The rising tensions could lead to a much broader conflict (Marcus, 2019, para.12). Furthermore, the US has also accused Iran of being 'behind [the] attacks that set ablaze two major oil installations in eastern Saudi Arabia' (AJ, 2019, para.26), which debilitated half of Saudi Arabia's oil production output. The Gulf Crisis and embargo on Qatar have placed GCC mediation ef-

forts with Iran on hold and have even strengthened Iran. Saudi Arabia's relations with Iran are in danger of further decline.

The third speaker discussed the other GCC countries' relations with Iran, which are wide-ranging. For example, Oman was the only GCC country not to downgrade its relations with Iran. In fact, it has positioned itself as a mediator, trying to bring Saudi Arabia and the Houthis into talks (Vakil, 2019, p.9). Kuwait also used its position to mend fences between the GCC on the one hand, and Iran and Qatar on the other hand (Vakil, 2019, p.10). Lastly, the UAE's relationship with Iran is more nuanced; Dubai has long-established relations with Tehran. In contrast, Abu Dhabi 'publicly supported the withdrawal of the US from the JCPOA and has been co-operating to constrain Iran financially by closing down money transfers and sanctioning companies operating out of the emirates' (Vakil, 2019, p.13). This has strained the UAE-Iran relations over the past two years. Recently, however, Abu Dhabi has been negotiating behind the scenes with the Iranian leadership to smoothen the bilateral relationship. As a result, the Emirati leadership freed millions in frozen funds to Iran (TOI, 2019) and signed a joint security Memorandum of Understanding in 2019 (Jansen, 2019). This has constituted a departure from the more hawkish stance adopted by Saudi Arabia and the Trump administration.

TURKEY'S IMPACT ON REGIONAL CONFLICTS

All three speakers have agreed that Turkey has increased its strategic footprint during the post-Gulf Crisis period. This process has included engagements in Syria, Libya and Somalia. Firstly, Turkey has been involved in the Syrian Civil War, supporting the Syrian opposition against Bashar Al Assad's regime and its allies. Ankara's primary concern has included 'the security of Turkey, the return of the Syrian refugees and the security of Syrian civilians living in Syria' (Ataman, 2019, para.1). For example, in October 2019 Turkey launched Operation Peace Spring, aiming to establish a safe zone for Syrian refugees, and this was the third in

a series of cross-border anti-terror operations in northern Syria targeting terror groups, such as Daesh and the PKK's Syrian branch People's Protection Units (YPG) (DS, 2019, para.3). This operation was initiated in the post-Gulf Crisis period to address Turkey's security concerns and to establish the right of return for its nearly four million Syrian refugees who were displaced during the civil war. Saudi Arabia and the UAE have been critical of Turkey's operation, wanting instead to affirm and normalise relations vis-a-vis Bashar Al Assad's regime; the UAE has gone so far as to re-establish its diplomatic relations with Syria, reopening its embassy there (Baloch, 2019, para.4).

Another regional conflict that Turkey has impacted during the post-Gulf Crisis period has been in Libya. Turkey has supported the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) in a war-torn Libya during this conflict. For example, Ankara has signed Libyan-Turkish security agreements with the GNA (Megerisi, 2019). The main threat is General Khalifa Haftar, a warlord backed by countries which include Saudi Arabia and the UAE; Haftar has waged an illegal struggle for 'consolidation of a de facto partition of the country' (Mezran, 2019, para.6). Turkey has sent shipments 'involving a wide range of weaponry suited to confounding Haftar, including drones and air defence systems' (Megerisi, 2019, para. 44), attempting to reinforce an anti-Haftar war effort to avoid protracted instability in the country. Turkey's main objective has been to help de-escalate the conflict and to potentially manufacture a 'multilateral group of regional actors... to push for a political settlement' (Megerisi, 2019, para.45). Turkey also aims to secure a long-term relationship with Libya rooted in cooperation during the post-Gulf Crisis period.

Turkey had been involved in Somalia before the Gulf Crisis in humanitarian efforts. In 2017, however, Ankara set up a large military facility in Mogadishu. The primary aim was to help Somalia 'in terms of restructuring, equipping and training the Somali armed forces' (Paksoy, 2018, para. 12). Turkey has appreciated Somalia's strategic location, and the latter's issues with terrorism and domestic fragility have meant that Turkey's contributions have been well received. In the interim, humanitarian and development aid to Somalia is ongoing (Vertin, 2019).

RECENT PROGRESS IN MEDIATION

Recent media reports suggest that the Qatar blockade may end soon as mediation gears up, and recent events could prove to be significant developments for the future of the region. The blockade has allowed Qatar to become more independent and develop new trade relations. At the same time, the blockading countries may have come to the belated realisation that the Crisis is counterproductive and that the United States is an unreliable partner (Krieg, 2019). For example, 'athletes from Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the UAE are taking part in the Gulf Cup Tournament, to be organised by Qatar this month' (MEM, 2019, para.3). This would indicate significant progress, and it could lead to the beginning of the normalisation of relations. Moreover, a Qatari delegation is thought to have paid recently an official visit to Saudi Arabia (MEM, 2019, para.4). Constructive diplomacy, good-faith communication, and a decline in the 'war over narratives' (Krieg, 2019, para.3) could see the embargo finally come to an end. The Kingdom could also be more open now to Kuwaiti mediation. For example, the Kuwaiti Emir recently sent a message to the Saudi King, advising him to end the Crisis (MEM, 2019, para.5).

While relations between Saudi Arabia and Qatar are thawing, a similar move could take place with Bahrain. Conversely, such a momentum would not include the UAE, as the divide with Abu Dhabi seems too wide to bridge at this juncture (Krieg 2019, para.20). The lifting of a travel ban would mean that Qatar Airways could regain overflight rights, whereas Saudi Arabia could benefit from Qatari capital inflows (Krieg, 2019, para.17).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, all of the above interventions dovetail, revealing that there have been numerous developments two years on from the Gulf Crisis. Firstly, the new political alignments have been addressed. These have included the Qatar-Turkey, China-UAE, and Russia-UAE alliances. The Qatar-Turkey strategic partnership has been strengthened to an unprec-

edented extent, with Turkey proving to be an impressive partner. There has also been a palpable advance in relations between the UAE and China, with both countries also working together on military affairs. Russia has also increased its footprint in the Middle East with its significant enhanced cooperation with the UAE.

Secondly, the Gulf Cooperation Council has demonstrated little relevance. The GCC has had some successes, like a customs union and common electrical grid, but there have been many failures, including a common currency and a GCC-wide rail project. The GCC has been undermined in this post-Gulf Crisis period due to its lack of influence in the remediation of the Crisis. However, mediation efforts are being rekindled which may prove consequential for the future, despite the inadequate relevance of the GCC. Thirdly, the GCC countries' relations with Iran have been impacted during the Gulf Crisis. They include Iran's relationships with Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait and the UAE. While the blockading countries have aimed to downgrade Qatar's ties with Iran, the Crisis has instead led to a rapprochement between Doha and Tehran as Iranian air, ground and sea space has been opened to Qatar during the embargo. Saudi-Iran relations have continued to deteriorate during the self-inflicted Gulf Crisis. Saudi Arabia and Iran are rivals for regional dominance, which has led to a clash of disparate policy objectives. Oman has been the only GCC country to avoid downgrading its relations with Iran, and Kuwait has used its position to promote mediation. The UAE's relationship with Iran is more multidimensional, with contrary views in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, but there are signs that these ties are improving, and that the UAE is distancing itself from Saudi's sphere of influence.

Fourthly, Turkey has had an impact on regional conflicts during the post-Gulf Crisis period. Turkey's involvement includes engagements in Syria, Libya and Somalia. Turkey has been involved in the Syrian Civil War, supporting the Syrian opposition against Bashar Al Assad's regime and its allies. Turkey launched Operation Peace Spring in October 2019, aiming to establish a safe zone for Syrian refugees and to target terrorists affiliated with Daesh and the PKK's Syrian branch, the People's Protection Units (YPG). In Libya, Turkey has supported the UN-backed GNA against

warlord Khalifa Haftar. Turkey has signed security and defence agreements and has also been active on the diplomatic front to de-escalate the conflict. Turkey has also been involved in Somalia, a strategic location. Turkey has provided substantial development aid. In 2017, Turkey also set up its largest overseas military base in Mogadishu to help Somalia in terms of restructuring, equipping and training the Somali armed forces.

Lastly, there have been developments in the mediation of the Gulf Crisis. Recent media reports suggest that the Qatar blockade may end soon as mediation gears up. The blockading countries may come to the belated realisation that the Crisis has been counterproductive and that the United States as a partner has been unreliable. Athletes from Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the UAE are taking part in the 2019 Gulf Cup Tournament, and a Qatari delegation is planning to pay an official visit to Saudi Arabia soon. The Kingdom could also be more open to Kuwaiti mediation at this point, with the Kuwaiti Emir recently sending a message to the Saudi King urging him to end the Crisis. The United States, as the pre-eminent security ally of all the GCC countries might also flex its diplomatic muscle to bring the quartet together. These developments could prove to be significant for progress in ending the embargo and remediating the Gulf Crisis.

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The United States and Iran: Beating the Drums of War?

PROFESSOR MEHMET AKİF OKUR



INTRODUCTION

THE FRAMEWORK OF THE RECENT EPISODE IN THE LONG CONFLICT BETWEEN THE US AND IRAN

On May 8, 2018, Donald Trump announced that the United States would unilaterally withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) (Martellini and Zucchetti, 2016). Along with accusing Tehran of failing to live up to its part of the deal, the US re-imposed economic sanctions that had been previously lifted as part of the agreement. As a result, Iran's economic situation continues to deteriorate and the risk

of conflict in the region has increased. Attacks against oil tankers in the Persian Gulf, blamed on Iran by the US, the downing of an American surveillance drone over the Strait of Hormuz in June 2019, and Tehran's decision to restart the uranium enrichment process have only served to increase the likelihood of conflict. On September 14, 2019, the last great steps were taken on the path toward escalation with the attacks on Saudi Aramco, Saudi Arabia's state-controlled oil company. In an effort to reduce rising tensions, Iran's trading partners, including Turkey, China, Japan, South Korea and India, are seeking to find a constructive way out of the impasse. Moreover, the EU has sought to establish alternative mechanisms meant to bypass sanctions imposed by the US. All of these efforts, however, have so far neither relieved the economic pressure on Tehran, nor have they reduced tensions in the region. So long as conflicts remain unresolved, the possibility of a confrontation between the US and Iran will continue to have ramifications beyond the Middle East.

During this closed session of the TRT World Forum 2019, three presenters and numerous discussants engaged in a vivid debate on the future course of the relations between the US and Iran. Multinational backgrounds and diverse perspectives of the attendees affected both the character of asked questions and defended arguments about the root causes of the problems which exist among those two countries. The questions below summarise the themes which were examined:

- What is the likelihood of war between the US and Iran, and what are the issues and mechanisms that could lead to direct confrontation?
- How would a confrontation between Iran and the US play out on the ground? Who would gain and who would lose?
- How would regional and international geopolitical alignments be affected by a direct confrontation between Iran and the US?
- Can China, along with Europe, play a constructive role in resolving the crisis?
- What is the global economic impact resulting from the isolation of Iran, and what are the potential effects on energy and trade in particular?

THE LONG CONFLICT WHICH HAS SHAPED THE MINDS AND FEELINGS OF GENERATIONS

International crises do not emerge in vacua. They usually have a history which reaches beyond the limited time frame of actual crises. The interpretations concerning the narrow context of a crisis and perceptions of the actors about the situation rise over this memory. Unpleasant personal experiences related to long conflicts feed the rigid mental images built on such memories. Some of the attendees' comments and questions were a confirmatory reflection of this phenomenon. Multiple times, presenters and discussants referred to the past three-quarters of a century in US - Iranian relations. The US influence over the Shah's regime was recalled as a reference point. For Washington, this period was not just a past golden age, but inspired a desired future that motivated intervention scenarios in the region. From the viewpoint of the Tehran establishment, the Iranian people gained their independence by overthrowing the Shah through revolution. They paid a heavy price and in order not to return back to those "dark days" unimaginable sacrifices were made. They paid a heavy price; in order to avoid a return to the 'dark days', unimaginable sacrifices were made.

MISCALCULATIONS OF THE US POLICY TOWARDS IRAN

One of the presenters argued that the US policy on Iran was build upon miscalculations. Because Washington has not understood the real vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the strategy aimed at overthrowing the current regime is still operational. No new attempts have been made toward a new style of relationship. The designers of the US hegemonic strategies look upon Iran as a rebellious country located in an important

region, and all of their strategies have been designed under the shadow of the Zionist lobby. Because of its Zionist character, Iran cut its ties with Israel after the revolution.

This presenter claimed that there were similarities between the Iranian Revolution and the Arab Spring protests (Curzman, 2012), although it is not easy to understand Iran's current policies in Syria in the light of this interpretation. It was mentioned that the US invasion of Iraq and the deposal of Saddam Hussain cost the lives of 250,000 Iraqis. However, this type of policy has been unsustainable. Because Obama understood this reality, he tried to change the direction of the US policy in the Middle East. JOAC was the result of this new approach (Okur, 2014). However, Trump has decided to reverse the course of US policy, thus gratifying hardline Zionists while disturbing regional peace.

IS THERE A POSSIBILITY FOR A NEW WAVE OF NEGOTIATIONS UNDER THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION?

One of the presenters underlined that in the eyes of Iran, US President Donald Trump is an unreliable actor. He is both untrustworthy and unpredictable. Therefore, the US cannot be trusted anymore, especially when Trump has ignored the agreement between the P5+1 and Iran. Trump has tried to build a system of regional alliances that may be able to increase pressure upon Iran. He has tried to use regional cleavages and tensions. Saudi Arabia has been a key actor in this strategy. Although Iran has been fruitfully communicating with Saudi Arabia behind the scenes for the past seven years, this has not been enough to bring both countries closer. To solve the crisis, the EU might play a role. Iran's approach to the EU differs from their relations with the US, and they have not yet made a decision whether or not to trust the EU.

The presenter also shared his prediction for the near future as related to the current crisis. He expects the continuation of pressure upon Iran. Despite this pressure, however, Tehran will not agree to negotiate about what Iran considers as fundamental to its national security. Chief among these concerns is Iran's missile program, which was the result of Iran's hard-learned lesson during the war against Saddam. The presenter believes that there will be no war. Neither Iran nor the US wants war. However, this crisis might produce other results. For example, if the EU cannot endure harsh US sanctions, and if members of the P5+1 do not keep their promises, Iran will eventually leave the JCPOA, and even the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Other presenters also made similar comments about the core theme of the session, the possibility of war between the US and Iran. One of the presenters directed the attendees' attention to the general characteristics of Trump's way of handling diplomatic negotiations. There are two simple phases: Firstly, the US president bluffs by proposing threats, then softens the rhetoric to make some concessions through give-and-take bargaining. Trump's relationship with the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un is just one example. In many instances, the American president's strong words simply mean less than they would appear to say. Therefore, Trump's real aim is not to attack Iran or begin a new regional war in the Gulf.

It seems that in the eyes of Donald Trump, the effects of Middle Eastern matters on US politics have primacy over the real nature and characteristics of the issues. As a result, the Israel lobby has significant leverage over Trump. He wants to use the power of the lobby in the personal fight against his adversaries. The lobby's well-known ability to influence the general framework of foreign policy debates inside the US should be taken into account. In addition, Trump's personal relationship with Netanyahu is sometimes cited among the reasons for his Iran policy. The role of Gulf monarchies' financial importance in terms of Trump's election campaign promises for more manufacturing jobs should also be

considered. The bottom line is that Washington's harsh rhetoric does not imply an immediate military campaign against Iran. Donald Trump is a businessman, and he is aware of the fact that a war of choice would incur many costs and burdens. Rather, his purpose is to force Iran to accept a new deal, one more favourable to the demands of the US and Israel.

PETRO-POLITICS AND THE UNITED STATES

Petro-politics was one of the main discussions which articulated by first speaker. The perspective was that to understand the root causes of the conflict, which is gradually becoming more tense in the Gulf, one needs to analyse the US perspective on oil, during the past and at present. The last cycle of US elections must also be taken into account in examining the current context.

Since his election campaign, President Trump has talked about 'America First', has imposed tariffs on imports, has taken the US out of international agreements and has initiated other policies described as unilateral, isolationist and protectionist. This stance stands in stark contrast to the multilateralism, free trade and open markets of recent decades.

One of the premises of this new approach can be summarised as such: the US is projected to become a net oil exporter. The implication of this in terms of foreign policy is that there is a perception that America is becoming self-sufficient in oil and will no longer be dependent upon the Middle East. To verify this perception, which is significant toward the fate of tensions in the Gulf, one must look briefly at the history and the significance of oil in the US.

The beginning of the 'Oil Era' in the US (Painter, 2012) is popularly considered August 27, 1859, when Colonel Drake drilled the first US oil well in Titusville, Pennsylvania. US oil production increased in the years and

decades after that. It reached its maximum rate of about 10 million barrels per day (mbpd) in 1970, when it was realised that oil production could not be increased and further. This was in spite of all the efforts by investors in an open market with welcoming regulatory terms, and the availability of the latest innovative technologies for oil exploration and field development.

After 1970, US oil production began to decline, and four decades later, it had fallen to half of its maximum rate. In 2008 it was 5 mbpd. The conventional wisdom at the time was that after 100 years of oil industry activity, all US oil resources had been discovered, and that further exploration would result in the discovery of small fields. The country as a whole would experience a slow production decline, though 'tail end' production would last a few more decades.

However, contrary to such expectations, US crude oil production began to increase after 2008. It reached 11 mbpd in 2018 and was more than 12 mbpd mid-2019. This rapid production increase was unprecedented. Based on technology, it has been described as a revolution in exploration/production operations. It is interesting to note that this breakthrough was by entrepreneurs. Since the early- to mid-2000s, they took risks, provided capital and applied new technology, resulting in the now-famous 'fracking'. They found a way to obtain natural gas and oil from shale and tight rocks in the subsurface. The major oil companies, on the other hand, were late to this technological revolution. As an anecdote, it is said that the ExxonMobil CEO, sitting on the top floor of his company's Houston head office, could see from his window, yet ignored, the activities of shale fracking and the oil installations by those 'minions' working not far from the Exxon building. Later, ExxonMobil paid \$41 bn to purchase one shale company, TXO Energy.

The production figures above were for crude oil only. According to the US Department of Energy (EIA, 2019), the consumption of total petroleum and other liquids in the United States is projected to be 20.9 mbpd in

2020, while the production of petroleum and other liquids is estimated to be 21.3 mbpd. In other words, the United States will become a net oil exporter in 2020, and it is projected to remain so for a number of years. In fact, the US began to export crude oil in 2016, the first time since crude oil export was banned in 1975. According to Rystad Energy, with improvements in export pipelines and loading facilities, US crude exports could double, from the recent volume of nearly 3 mbpd to 6 mbpd by 2022. Becoming a net oil exporter is a major achievement for the United States oil industry, but one might argue that this triumphant feeling could be short-lived.

Becoming net-oil exporter is a major achievement for the United States oil industry, but one could argue that such triumphant feeling could be short-lived. In examination of the United States, the country would not actually become self-sufficient in oil, and it could not close its borders to oil imports. As part of normal oil operations, any oil-exporting country continues to import oil, although of different qualities, depending upon the pattern of its domestic petroleum product consumption, the configuration of its refineries, the characteristics of its own crude, and many other factors.

More importantly, the oil market in the US is closely integrated with the global oil market; it will be closely impacted by the up and down movements in the price of oil in the world. A recent example was the disruption of operations in Saudi Arabia on September 14, 2019. It caused an immediate increase in the price from about \$60 to about \$70 for Brent, an international evaluation of crude oil prices. The price rise happened before any actual reduction of Saudi oil export, and before any reduction of loading from Saudi oil terminals would have been noticed in the physical market four to six weeks later, the steaming time for oil tankers from the Persian Gulf to East Asia, Western Europe and to the Americas. Yet there was an immediate increase in the price by the Brent as internationally pricing the crude oil, as well as a jump in the price of petroleum products in the Western US. The United States, therefore, would not be

shielded from the rise and fall of prices or other vagaries of the international oil market.

In addition, remaining a net oil exporter is a 'projection' based on modeling computations by the US Department of Energy (Energy Information Administration, 2019). The actuals could be very different from the projections or forecasts. The figures quoted above were from the Reference Case. The other cases from the modelling projections indicate a wide range of uncertainty: 5-8 mbpd for production and 3-4 mbpd for consumption. One could argue that future US oil production might actually be less, and that oil consumption could be greater than the projections. For example, banks and equity investors are reducing their exposure to fracking companies, and also to oil in general. Future oil production would then be less. As another example of the possible factors adversely influencing future US oil production, a new administration under Senator Elizabeth Warren, the leading Democratic candidate, would ban fracking completely and end the issuing of oil exploration licenses (Egan, 2019). US oil production would then be lower. Warren also plans to encourage oil conservation. However, one should note that governments can order oil companies about in various ways, but the general consumer is not that obedient! For example, the less efficient sport utility vehicles (SUVs) still constitute 45% of new US car sales.

Examining the global oil market, the current excess supply might not last and the price of oil could rise. Unforeseen events anywhere in the world could at any time cause disruption in the flow of the oil supply into world markets.

Oil demand will increase when the global economy improves, and in the medium- and long-term, demand will continue to increase. With world population increase, there will be continued growth in consumption of energy and oil will be its main component. As with the US, consumers in other countries still prefer oil. SUVs constitute about 42% of new car sales in China, 23% in India and 34% in Europe. The European car industry is moving towards increase manufacturing of 'crossovers' and SUVs.

Furthermore, the actual impact of electric cars is not very significant, as indicated by exciting news headlines. Electric vehicles in world are currently below 8 million (0.7%) of the 1.1 billion vehicles with internal combustion engines. It is also widely stated that world oil demand could reach a peak in the coming decades. However, reaching the peak does not mean 'the end'. World oil consumption might remain flat or decrease, but oil demand will continue for decades into the future. It is also often said that oil will have the same fate as coal, no longer needed and left behind in abandoned mines. Some say the 'Oil Era' will end as did the 'Coal Era'. This, however, is too simplistic. Although the end will ultimately come, the time horizon will be much longer.

The 'Coal Era' dates back many centuries. Coal was the backbone of the industrial revolution in the Western World. It is commonly believed that the beginning of the end of coals was before World War I, when Sir Winston Churchill decided to change the fuel of the British Navy to oil rather than coal. Since then, for more than a century, all countries have been replacing coals with oil, natural gas, nuclear energy and 'renewables' for production of electricity, bulk heat generation and for other uses. In spite of all this, in 2018 coal was the second largest fuel consumed in the world. The 'Coal Era' is not yet over and the 'Oil Era' will not be over soon. The world demand for oil will grow, but the supply may not.

Looking at supply prospects again, international oil companies are being forced to move away from oil and fossil fuels due to pressure from public opinion, environmentalists, and even from their own shareholders – institutions and individuals. The public debates around the recent court case against ExxonMobil in New York is one example (Schwartz 2019). As another example of anti-oil sentiments, the Norwegian sovereign wealth fund will no longer invest in oil, although the money that built up the fund in the first place was derived from oil! Many endowment funds are also divesting from oil in their investment portfolios. The future world supply will be produced less by international oil companies and more by national oil companies that have large resources of relatively low-cost oil. However, those resources might remain undeveloped or under-devel-

oped due to budget constraints, domestic and global politics, conflicts, wars and most importantly sanctions. In particular, the United States have been using sanctions as foreign policy tools and imposing them on many countries, most recently on Turkey in mid-October 2019. President Trump threatened to destroy the economy of Turkey in the wake of the Turkish military entering Northern Syria. US sanctions have curbed the activities of the national or semi-national oil companies in a number of countries, such as Venezuela, Iran and Russia. Such policies may reduce oil production through upcoming developments in the future. Finally, whether we like it or not, globalisation cannot be reversed, particularly for oil. The world oil market is interconnected, and market response is immediate across the world. Lastly, when examining data from 2018, the Middle East contributed 34% to world oil production and held 48% of world oil reserves. Iran contributed 5% to world oil production and held 9% of world oil reserves. The Middle East and Iran will play vital roles in the world for decades to come.

THE FUTURE ROUTE TOWARD MANAGEMENT OF THE CONFLICT: OBAMA'S WAY OR TRUMP'S WAY?

Therefore, the last present, whose analysis was summarised above, opened up another area for discussion: Despite the rhetoric about a general withdrawal from the Middle East, Israel's security and its ability to control the oil flow of the region will continue to be one of the top priorities for the US. In light of this assumption, the manner of the relationship with Iran certainly gains more significance. However, the way to best manage the geopolitics of oil in the Gulf is still open to debate. More cooperation or more sanctions? Obama's way or Trump's?

Discussants asked multiple questions related to this dilemma. According to the debates during the closed session, the US perspective has

been built upon the belief that the sanctions are working and weakening Iran. Washington's expectation is that once Iran is weak it will be easier to renegotiate the nuclear deal. However, some of the attendees did not share this assumption. For them, Iran is not Saudi Arabia; it has a diverse economy, and therefore it can survive. Additionally, since the Iranian people have been living under 40 years of sanctions, they are accustomed to hardship – it is not a shock for them. However, sanctions create different kinds of problems, like corruption. In addition to sanctions, the possibility of the indirect conflict between parties, the proxy side of the probable asymmetrical warfare was also discussed. The questions were numbered. Are Iran's ties with Hezbollah essential or instrumental? (Akbarzadeh, 2016). Could Iran terminate this association for the sake of dialogue with the US? The answers indicated that from the perspective of Iran, Hezbollah forms part of its deterrent against the United States and Israel. Hezbollah has been supporting Iran regarding Palestinian affairs. As a result, it seems that Iran will not let Hezbollah down. Iran's ties with Hezbollah are not on the negotiation table with the US.

CONCLUSIVE REMARKS: IRAN'S POLICIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Some of the other issues that the attendees discussed were Iran's policies toward Iraq and Syria. One participant expressed his critical comments on Iran's regional politics in the form of a question: 'What [if] Syrians and Iraqis ask for revolution? Is Iran taking revenge against [the] Iraqi people?' The same types of questions were raised by other attendees. Khamenei's fatwa regarding the prohibition of nuclear weapons was among them: 'Is it forbidden for [production] or for [use]?'

In addition to Iran's disputed relation with Iraq and Syria, some of the participants criticised the reaction of Iran toward Turkey's Peace Spring operation. Iran has always tried to legitimise its military expansionism in the Middle East as a defensive step against the imperialistic plans of the

US-Israel axis. PYD/YPG is the Syrian arm of the PKK terrorist organisation which has openly declared its position in the region as a US proxy. The target of Turkey's Peace Spring operation was this proxy force. It is ironic that both Iran and Israel were among the regional powers which showed strong reactions against Turkey's incursion. Why? Iranian and pro-Iranian attendees could not offer satisfactory explanations for this question.

Turkey's role was on the agenda of the debate from another angle. Can Turkey play a facilitatory role to ease tensions in the triangle of the US, Iran and the Gulf? Although the presenter who answered this question was not very optimistic, he still referred to Turkey's past initiative in the UN Security Council. In 2010, Turkey and Brazil, then non-permanent members of the UN Security Council, opposed the sanctions upon Iran.

At the same time, the role and rationale of decision-makers in the current crisis were also part of the discussion: Who has the real authority in Tehran? Unelected Supreme Leader or elected President? On the other side of the coin, the rationale of the Trump administration was questioned. One of the comments described Trump as a poker player rather than a chess player, indicating that inconsistencies are not the exception but rather the new normal of existing American leadership.

At the end of the session, a sort of convergence upon the central theme of the meeting could be observed. None of the attendees expressed an opinion or shared any analysis giving credit to the possibility of a direct war between Iran and the US in the near future. Aside from this point, however, there was little consensus about the causes, core dynamics, or future trajectories of the crisis between the US and Iran. The attendees held different actors and power networks responsible for the current rise of tensions in this decades-long conflict, with the share of responsibility for the conflict varying from time to time.

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The New Fault Lines in Turkey's Security Strategy

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INTRODUCTION

THE MAIN PILLAR OF TURKISH NATIONAL SECURITY: NOTES ABOUT THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

When the actors are blended in the strong memory of history, international crises are probably the best teachers of destiny of geography. This is especially true for Turkey, as unprecedented volatile circumstances have been unfolding in the Levant since the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923.¹ The more Turkey becomes aware of its past, the bet-

¹ This point is strongly indicated in the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' official web site: 'Established in 1923, following a costly war of independence against the occupying powers, the security of the Republic of Turkey has been dictated by two main elements: geography and longstanding ties with the neighbouring countries.' http://www.mfa.gov.tr/t_-turkey_s-security-perspective_-historical-and-conceptual-background_-turkey_s-contributions.en.mfa.

ter adjustments and calibrations it can make to secure a favourable position and defend its national interests. In doing so, Turkey has added a new dimension of national security strategy to its foreign policy.

The contemporary geopolitical map of the Middle East indicates that it is a shatter belt region. It is an area which has been destroyed by internal conflicts, and whose destiny has also been affected by the intervention of the external great powers. These interventionist powers have increased their sphere of influence over their clients in the region through military, political and economic assistance. The compression zones are located in the narrower subsections within or in-between geopolitical regions. These zones, which are under intense pressure, are shattered through a combination of civil war and the interventionist actions of neighbouring countries. As a traditional geopolitical concept, the shatter belt refers to a geographical area where local tensions turn into serious conflicts between great powers which are outside the region. The great powers intervene into local conflicts because they believe that they have significant interests in these areas (Cohen: 2015).

On the other hand, local conflicts prepare the ground for the great powers to make alliances with neighbouring countries, especially in the area where the conflicts dominate (Kelly, 1986: 161-180). Cohen points out that as a shatter belt, the Middle East has begun to shatter even more. While one edge of the compressed area extends to Iran, Iraq, Bahrain and the eastern region of Saudi Arabia, the other end extends along the line of Syria and South Lebanon.

Shatter belts have a structure of two layers. In the first layer, political turmoil, social and economic pressures and divisions dominate. The second layer is at the international level; the turmoil which prepares the ground for the intervention of regional powers is paired with the emergence of international actors who benefit greatly from ongoing pressure and division. The US and regional countries who acted alongside the US backed oppositional groups against the Syria regime. Soon, Russia intervened into this compressed zone of the Middle East, siding with the regime. Russia has begun to increase the amount of military supplies

that it has been providing to the regime since January 2012, and it has announced that it is against the forcible change of the Syrian regime. Russia decided to prevent the kind of regime change that had happened earlier in Libya with the support of the US. One year after the US active military intervention in Libya, on September 30, 2015, Russia carried out its first military operation in Syria. Since then, Turkey has been dealing with two great powers: the US, which supports the Syrian Democratic Forces, mainly composed of the Kurdish terrorist PYD/YPG organization, and Russia, which supports the Syrian regime. Turkey has been trying to bring stability to the region. However, it has realised that the two powers are not responding to Turkey's insistence that instability in Syria is an existential threat to Turkey's national security.

Since the foundation of the Turkish Republic, Turkey has always been a security-minded state, with international security concerns often at the top of its agenda. This tradition has emphasised the protection of territorial integrity, political independence and non-intervention in regional conflicts. This foundation, which is closely tied to issues related to sovereignty, continues to shape the Turkish strategic and national security debate until today.² The Turkish approach to national security issues has been traditional, nationalistic and pro-NATO/Atlantic-centric.

The Turkish Republic has a strong tradition of strategic and national security, shaped largely by the Ottoman Empire era. The founders of the Republic had already experienced the harsh reality that they had not been free to choose their side in the First World War. Because the nation was not able to manoeuvre well in the troubled waters of global politics, Turkey paid a high price: a shrunken empire and the danger of losing political independence. The 'fear of loss of territory' (Bilgin, 2005) is without a doubt the sword of Damocles in terms of Turkish national security understanding. As President Erdoğan explicitly declared in his Victory Day speech on August 29, 2019, 'Turkey pursues [the] same determination to protect its national survival as it did 97 years ago' (www.aa.com.tr). Hence, Turkish national security understanding is conservative and

² For example, press release of the Turkish National Security Council meeting held in 30 July 2019 states that 'The Council was briefed on the fight waged at home and abroad against all terrorist organizations, especially the PKK/PYD-YPG, FETO and DAESH, which threaten Turkey's national unity...'

geopolitical in nature, solely revolving around territorial unity and political independence. The shadow of the Sèvres Complex³ has continued to haunt the Turkish political elite since 1920 (Karaosmanoğlu, 2000: 199-216). The primary concern of Turkish political elites and top decision-makers is to keep the state as a stable territory surrounded by a volatile milieu.

Recent regional and global threats in Iraq, Syria and the Mediterranean base have forced Turkey to re-structure its national security architecture. The 2009 discovery of huge natural gas resources in the Eastern Mediterranean was a game changer, altering regional geopolitics. As President Erdoğan stated in January 2020, 'Turkey will continue defending its rights and interests... The country's future and security begin far beyond its borders'. The decision to send troops to Libya was seen in the New York Times as Turkey 'flexing its muscles' and an attempt 'to be a power broker in a volatile region'. For Erdoğan, the decision was a means to 'upside-down the Sevres [Treaty] (www.aa.com.tr). Though Turkey's concerns for survival are still valid in the context of the Sèvres Syndrome, the contextual framework of Turkish national security has reached a new dimension beyond its borders. In using Saul B. Cohen's terminology for this study, Turkey is located in a strategic position on this very historical 'shatter belt' line. With three trans-boundary military operations underway in Syria, combined with military assistance to the UN-recognised Libyan Government of National Accord, Turkey has become a powerhouse in a shatter belt and compression zone area. Cohen describes problematic regions of geopolitics according to an analytical level. In this context, the security policies of Turkey, associated with both the internal and neighbouring geography, are located at the conflict points of the geostrategic spheres of influence of the great global powers. Turkey has carried out cross-border military operations for the purpose of establishing security in war-torn Syria. At least for the time being, Turkey has established itself as a dynamic force on the global scale by virtue of its military interventions in the Levant and East-Med region. Military interventions have added a new dimension in the coun-

³ Sèvres complex: The Sèvres complex is an expression used in Turkish political life to describe the paranoia of the Turkish civil/military bureaucracy and almost all political spectrum that foreign powers are inclined to destroy and dismantle Turkey as the severe Treaty of 1920 indicates (Robins, 2003: 161-206).

try's new national security architecture, more powerful than it has been for the last ninety years.

Turkey's proactive approach of dealing with troubles directly at their sources aims to create room for its national interests, enabling it to manoeuvre more independently within disputed zones and diplomatic corridors. Yet Turkey's new, relatively independent policy raises questions about its Western-oriented foreign policy having already departed from its traditional base. As foreign capitals have begun to question Turkey's proactive course in foreign policy, they seem consciously to have neglected a crucial point. Turkey's political leadership has been using strong political language, stressing that the country has been under attack since the 15th July coup d'état attempt. The attack originated from separatist and extremist terrorist groups from inside the homeland, and also from Iraq and Syria.⁴ While Turkey could not get enough support from its traditional strategic partners to suppress these close and immediate threats, Turkish decision-makers determined that it was Turkey's natural right to cope with these hazards. Literally, there was an existential threat to Turkey's national security, far beyond the scope of any criticism of Turkey's have moved away from its traditional foreign policy stance.

The Turkish political leaders' risk assessments for Turkish national security still include its historical adversaries and geopolitical competitors. Turkey's future security posture will probably reflect these vital concerns, whether in a transatlantic, European or unilateral context. Turkey remains in fact a part of the Western mainstream in terms of the changing debate about functional security issues. From territorial security to energy and human security, the very definition of security is evolving to encompass unconventional challenges which diverge from traditional, regional lines. Whatever the conclusion, Turkey will try its best to remain independent in its national security issues and realise its national interests, even though it is very difficult to proceed through the current challenges. It is vital for Turkey to overcome its national security concerns.

⁴ President Erdoğan said in a video message to the nation, marking 29 October 2019, the 96th Republic Day that 'We are waging another war similar to the War of Independence, which we started a century ago and climaxed with the establishment of our republic... the nation was faced with another historical fight" to protect its present and future.' (www.aa.com.tr)

TURKEY' RESPONSE TO SEPARATIST MOVEMENTS

The presentations and discussions of the panelists have revolved in general around the theoretical framework of Turkey's national security issues as described above. The first speaker, a veteran politician, shared his policy-making experiences which were directly related to Turkey's struggle with separatist/ethnic terrorism in Turkey since the 1980s. Turkey's problem with ethnic separatist terrorism can be traced to non-state actors operating in the region. However, one of the most important aspects of non-state proxies is that they are an important investment for superpowers, and these actors are useful tools for the advancement of their policies. This assessment is compatible with the concerns of the Turkish national security apparatus. For example, the following were the issues discussed in the first monthly meeting of the 2020 Turkish National Security Council: 'national unity and survival; [the] PKK/PYD; [the] FETÖ terrorist organisation; military operations in Syria; Turkey's assistance in [the] ongoing Libyan internal conflict; Turkey's interests and rights in the East Med' (www.hurriyet.com.tr).

The speakers mentioned that the competing agendas of the superpowers engaged in reshaping the Middle East in the post-American era were reflections of another Turkish national security issue, the Sèvres Complex. One speaker also added that Turkey's recent military operations, Euphrates Shield, Olive Branch and Peace Spring, are indications that Northern Syria is the main object of Turkish security concerns.

To state that Northern Syria is a matter of survival for Turkey clearly fits into the theoretical shatter belt conceptualisation. In an historical context, the influence of outside powers during and after World War I created compression zones whose spill over effects have created the current turmoil in the region. The artificial borders drawn by the European powers are among the sources of international disputes which exist today. According to the speaker, the picture of the Middle East is grim due to many fragmentations, oppressions and military problems. All panellists

agreed on the point that militarism has failed for a long time to solve the problems of the Middle East, and it is continuing to fan uncertainty in the region.

The alliance between the terrorist PKK/PYD organisation and the US is a good example of this uncertainty. Although the PKK/PYD has a Marxist ideology, the US has aligned itself with this group even though it is an arch enemy. It should be remembered that the US officially declared the PKK an illegal and terrorist organisation, and it still remains on the list of terrorist organisations. In Northern Syria, the US is allied with the YPG/PYD, which is the Syrian branch of the PKK. This situation creates uncertainty in the Middle East. Turkey was obliged to intervene militarily in Northern Syria with the Peace Spring Operation. Turkey called upon the international community to confront this terrorist organisation, but there was no meaningful, positive response. The controversial partnership between the YPG/PYD and the US is considered a life-and-death issue. The PKK has been active in Turkey for the past forty years. Strategic cooperation between the US and the PKK/PYD terrorist organisation is a prime example of the increasingly probable intensification of tension which might lead to considerable friction between the great power and its ally of many years.

CONFLICTS IN WORLD POLITICS AND REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The second panellist, a leading expert in international relations in Turkey, began with an observation of the international situation from an academic perspective: What we are facing in the Middle East is a clash of global powers. We cannot find any local solutions to global problems which stem from global disputes. Regional dynamics, which include the compression zone conceptualisation, are important in tackling these problems. According to the speaker, the world international system has been changing every hundred years. Hegemonic power is challenged by other rising powers. In an historical transition, the US is being challenged

by another international hegemonic power, China. International power is shifting toward China. Therefore, the historical political turmoil in the region is the effect of hegemonic power politics.

The speaker opened an eye-opening subject that the US is struggling to have a coherent policy toward Turkey. We do not know who decides the US foreign policy with regard to Turkey. We do not know how the impeachment process will end in the US. The domestic political instability of the US is a new phenomenon which we must face. Indecisiveness in the American foreign-policy decision-making process creates a power vacuum. Hesitation in Washington forces other countries to search for a reliable great power to tackle tensions in the region. The inability to reduce uncertainties or to predict what will happen in the near future only increases the power struggle. We cannot predict what will happen in the US.

On the other hand, Russia sees the opportunity to fill the power vacuum in the Middle East. As an alternative, Moscow pours all of its available resources into the toolbox to change the balance of power in its favour. Because of its direct military involvement in the Syrian Civil War since 2015, Moscow has proved to the world that Russia today is not the same as it was twenty years ago. The Russians are now in the Middle East. As for the EU, they are no longer a foreign policy giant in this regard.

TURKEY'S SECURITY FAULT LINES

The speaker made an important point in describing the fault lines in Turkish national security. Putting Turkey in the centre, we can easily draw four lines:

- **Diagonal Fault Line: South/Southeast to North/Northwest.** This diagonal line stretches from the Sub-Sahara to Afghanistan. All of the important human trafficking routes lie along this line, and Turkey stands in the middle of the gates of passage.

- Energy Fault Line: Northeast to South, extending from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. The energy transfer from north to south is problematic, and the energy equilibrium has changed since Russia entered the line of the South.
- East-to-West Fault Line: This fault line consists of the regions of the Balkans, the Middle East and North Africa. Terrorism, drug trafficking and organised crime are important in this line.
- Multidimensional Fault Line: The state/citizen relationship has dramatically changed from Baghdad to the Ukraine. Political unrest is directly affecting our region. This multidimensional line accounts for sudden shock to the region's capitals and a source of instability in the Middle East

These four fault lines reveal how the shatter belt conceptualisation is important in comprehending the current waves of multiregional tension which surround the Anatolian peninsula. How we can overcome these problems, and how we can find a solution for the PKK/PYD issue, are crucial questions that must be answered. The speaker at this point proposed and underlined the policy resolutions that follow:

- As President Erdoğan repeated many times, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) must be restructured and the UN system should be renewed. The UNSC is the result of World War II, and the question should be asked why India, Turkey, Brazil and other large countries are not represented in the UNSC.
- According to UN Charter Article 47, 'The Military Staff Committee', composed of the chiefs of staff of the five permanent members of the UNSC, was given responsibility for the strategic coordination of forces placed at the Council's disposal. However, the Military Staff Committee has had limited significance in practice. It is necessary to promote Article 47 to find solutions to international problems.

- NATO and the EU should respect the interests of other states in our region, and we should find a solution for the Syrian problem at a global level.

The second speaker's presentation gave to some extent an inclusive approach to the Turkish national security fault lines, both at the theoretical and practical levels. This was a coherent approach to solving the problems which Turkey faces.

The third speaker, a retired army officer from the Turkish Armed Forces, presented the technical details of the three transborder military operations which Turkey has been conducting since 2016. These military operations are in fact conspicuous examples of President Erdoğan's contribution to a new dimension of the traditional Turkish national security strategy, '[the] problem should be solved at its source'. The speaker then emphasised that the PKK was first associated with the Soviet Union, until 1991, and then with the US. The US decided to use one terrorist organisation against another in Syria, i.e. the PKK versus DAESH, while Turkey struggled to defeat all terrorist organisations in Syria, without any distinction. According to the speaker, Turkey's new security doctrine is a good example to other states because it uses elements of national power. Turkey's new approach is dynamic and fluid in nature. These dynamic and fluid characteristics derive their power from strong political leadership. A distinctive way that Turkey uses its national power against terrorism is in its human-centric approach. The speaker indicated that Turkish security strategy relies upon 'first diplomacy, then military options'.

CONCLUSION: OPEN DISCUSSION ON TURKEY'S SECURITY PARTNERS AND CHALLENGES

The question and answer session gained momentum when the issue was brought up about the lack of confidence between some NATO members and Turkey. Turkey's other potential options, aside from NATO, were also discussed. These discussions highlighted the traditional Sèvres Complex, and that the Western powers have historically aimed to disintegrate Turkey. For decades, Turkey has rightfully complained that some NATO members have backed ethnic separatist terrorism in Turkey. This is another example of why Turkish elites are so sensitive about the so-called 'hidden agenda' of Turkey's Western allies. To some, 'The Western countries have preferred to collaborate with some anti-Turkish regional actors that threaten Turkey's national security' (Ataman, 2019: 5). The Turkish political leadership has often questioned the core principle of NATO, that the organisation should protect any member from armed attack, and whether the member states do support Turkey in its life-and-death struggle against terrorist organisations. To some, the answer is very clear: The West is supporting terrorist organisations instead.

The panel reminded the audience that the US has accepted the truth that the PYD/YPG is the Syrian branch of the PKK terror group.⁵ The US support of the PKK's Syrian branch, the PYD/YPG, has become an important point of friction between Turkey and the US, as the PKK is listed as a terrorist organisation by the US, the EU and by NATO. This

⁵ The American Special Representative for Syria James Jeffrey, who is the former US Ambassador to Turkey, said the US' local partner since 2014 has been the PYD, which is the Syrian offshoot of PKK. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/ypg-is-syrian-offshoot-of-pkk-terror-group-us-envoy/1312862> The same acknowledgment was clearly mentioned by then the US Defense Secretary Ash Carter that U.S. Backed Syrian Kurdish Group Shares Ties with Terror Group PKK. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4591976/user-clip-def-sec-carter-us-backed-syrian-kurdish-group-shares-ties-terror-group-pkk>

inconsistency and the lack of a coherent policy toward Turkish national interests have created new challenges in the form of distrust among NATO member states. As a result, Turkey struggles not only with its own enemies, but with NATO members as well. This does not mean that Turkey has no other alternative than NATO. However, Turkey does have a place in NATO and does not need to look at other security mechanisms.

The question and answer session concluded with President Erdoğan's proposition that Turkey's new global scenario indicates two pillars: The first is Turkey's humanitarian foreign policy, and the second is the territorial and political integrity of its neighbours. The panel's common understanding of Turkish national security policy can be summarised as follows: Turkey simply wants a stable region, not only for Turkey, but also for the entire Middle East, achieved through peaceful solutions to the current issues.

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India and Pakistan: A Case Study in Crisis Management

UMER KARIM



BACKGROUND

INDIA – PAKISTAN RELATIONS AND KASHMIR ISSUE

Under the auspices of TRT World Forum 2019, a closed session was held to debate 'India and Pakistan: A Case Study in Crisis Management'. The discussion during this session primarily remained focussed on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir particularly in the backdrop of India's decision to end the special status of the Indian Administered State of Jammu and

Kashmir on 5th of August 2019. The debate helped in understanding the historical development and political context of the issue, while also deliberating upon the crisis management strategies employed by both South Asian neighbours.

The workshop panel included authentic voices from Pakistan, India and the Kashmiri community who have worked on the Pak-India relationship. They also have first-hand knowledge of crisis management processes and mechanisms employed by both countries. Additionally, they were able to shed light on differing historical perspectives on the Kashmir issue between India and Pakistan, and to also talk about the agency of the Kashmiri people themselves. The panellists were able to give their estimate of the current crisis in Kashmir, how it has been playing out domestically within both India and Pakistan, as well as on the International political scene. The deliberation between three esteemed voices on the issue also echoed the sharply differing conceptions of reality and truth held by both sides. The panellists representing Pakistan and Kashmir remained in agreement on most of the points discussed during the session, while the Indian panellist disagreed with most of these assertions and gave an alternative perspective of the discussion.

The workshop was dominated by the following themes

- Kashmir as the unfinished agenda of Indian partition.
- Bilateral engagement between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, and Kashmir's importance in domestic politics.
- Confidence Building Measures and the importance of Track Two Initiatives
- The rise of Hindu Nationalism under Modi and the Abrogation of Kashmir's Special Status.
- The humanitarian side of the conflict and the agency of Kashmiris.

INTRODUCTION

The Indo-Pak relationship, from the very time of independence, has been plagued by multiple political issues. As Stanley Wolpert has eluded, both countries seem to have been born into the conflict (Wolpert, 2010). This conflict has contributed toward the orientation of foreign policies, internal politics and the national identities of both nations. Although the leadership from both sides have engaged in resolution of the issue through dialogue and negotiations, a peaceful conclusion to the Kashmir issue remains elusive. The dialogue between experts on this panel also painted a similar picture, with both sides engaging in endless arguments in attempts to undermine the political and legal status of the other side vis-à-vis Kashmir. This report will give a detailed account of the themes touched upon by the session panellists during their debates, and it will also try to point out points of agreement and divergence in their discussions.

KASHMIR AS THE UNFINISHED AGENDA OF INDIAN PARTITION: A HISTORICAL DEBATE A POLITICAL BACKDROP TO THE CURRENT CRISIS

The princely State of Jammu and Kashmir has an intriguing history, and even before the Indian partition the state had been at the forefront of politics among various political players. Kashmir has been under the territorial control of Mughals, Afghans and then the Sikhs, yet a political episode of more enormous implications began in 1846. As the British East India Company defeated the Sikh Empire in the First Anglo-Sikh War, Kashmir was sold to the Dogra ruler of Jammu, Maharaja Gulab Singh, for 7.5 million rupees, along with its population which was barely considered a commodity. Kashmir was henceforth controlled by the Dogra rulers of

Jammu, and this state of affairs only ended with the announcement of the British plan to partition the Indian subcontinent, creating two new states of Pakistan and India (Huttenback, 1968, p. 81).

The panellists disagreed in their assertions regarding the political developments that followed the partition plan. One viewpoint echoed mainly from Kashmiri and Pakistani side, arguing that the Maharaja Hari Singh Dogra, the ruler of the state at that time, was reluctant to sign the document of accession in favour of India, wishing for Kashmir to be free and autonomous. However, the new Indian government did not want the existence of an autonomous state along its geographical frontier, and it believed in creating reality on the ground by the use of force. This strategy was applied in the case of Kashmir. As the law and order situation in the valley began to deteriorate, the Raja acquiesced to Indian pressure and signed the document of accession (Lamb, 1994). For other such states, where the local rulers wanted to maintain their independent status, the Indian government also used force. A case in this regard was the invasion and annexation of the State of Hyderabad in 1948 (Benichou, 2000).

The argument from the Indian side stated that according to the terms of the partition plan, it was at the discretion of the rulers of these princely states to join the state they liked, even if this step was unpopular with their citizens. It was also argued that once tribesmen supported by the government of Pakistan and its military began entering Kashmir, the equation then changed. The Raja then asked for India's help (Mahapatra, 2017). However, the response from the Pakistani side countered that the tribesmen only entered the state when reports of the killing of Muslims in Jammu began to emerge.

These historical contestations from both sides make it abundantly clear that both stakeholders have a very different view of history, and that they consider the opposite side responsible for the conflict in Kashmir. Both groups tend to vilify the moves taken by the other side and frame them as a breach of the partition plan. However, a unique agreement remains

across the board, that the conflict was the fault of the British colonial administration. They did not foresee that the contestation of Kashmir could jeopardise bilateral ties between the two states, subsequently leading to armed conflict which locked them into an unending security dilemma.

Eventually the panellists agree upon the following issues:

- The complicity of the British colonial administration in the development of the political crisis in the State of Jammu and Kashmir
- The existence of alternative historical narratives that have been used by both sides to prove the legality of their stance on Kashmir.

BILATERAL ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN OVER KASHMIR

The panellists agreed on the fact that Kashmir has been an issue that has enormously impacted the bilateral ties between India and Pakistan since independence. From a Pakistani perspective, the logical resolution of the conflict can only take place once the United Nations resolutions regarding Kashmir are implemented. These resolutions eventually suggest holding a plebiscite, which would allow the Kashmiris residing within both Indian- and Pakistani-administered areas to decide about their future themselves. It is pertinent to note here that this issue was taken to the United Nations by India, not by Pakistan. Therefore, India has a greater responsibility to implement the UN resolutions regarding Kashmir (Yasmeen, 2002).

The Indian side of the argument remains that UN has called for the withdrawal of forces from the region. The responsibility rests upon Pakistan to withdraw its forces first, and only then will India be obliged to remove

its military from Kashmir. Since Pakistan is reluctant to implement this condition, the UN resolutions cannot actually be applied in letter and in spirit. The view from the Pakistani side remains that it was not the Pakistani army which moved its forces into Kashmir, but that in reality it was the British military, led by British military officers. For this reason, the demand to withdraw the Pakistani army first from the disputed territory is unrealistic. In any case, as Pakistan joined US-sponsored defence pacts in the 1950s, the Indian leadership has started to backtrack from its promises regarding settlement of the conflict according to the UN resolutions. The Indian leadership announced that ground realities had changed after the intervention of external powers, so India had no reason to abide by its previous commitments to the UN (Deo, 1995).

The next major milestone that also impacted the Kashmir issue was the Simla Accord of 1972. In July 1972, the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and her Pakistani counterpart Prime Minister Zulifigal Ali Bhutto signed an agreement in the Indian town of Simla. Both countries agreed to put an end to the conflict and confrontation that had hitherto marred bilateral relations, and they agreed to work for the promotion of a friendly and harmonious relationship. They wanted to establish a durable peace in the subcontinent. Both sides agreed to settle any disputes 'by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations'. The Simla Agreement designated the ceasefire line of December 17, 1971, as being the new 'Line of Control (LoC)' between the two countries, which neither side would seek to alter unilaterally, and which would 'be respected by both sides without prejudice to the recognised position of either side' (Crisis Group, 2003).

The argument from the Indian side has consistently held that it was emphasised that the Simla Pact had paved the way for a mechanism where the Kashmir issue could only be resolved through bilateral means, and not by third-party mediation (Katju, 2018). The panellist of Pakistani origin, who is an esteemed veteran politician considered as an authority on the subject, considers this a misrepresentation of the Simla Accord, adding that the accord does not bind both sides to resolve the matter bilaterally. It was argued that the agreement has provisions that encourage

both sides to look for other options in addition to bilateral mechanisms. From a Kashmiri perspective, the negotiations in Simla were focused on ending the war between the two nations and should only be considered a guideline when it comes to resolving older conflicts like Kashmir.

The next major escalation within Kashmir happened in 1987, when Kashmiri separatists tried to have their voice heard by contesting elections and using the ballot to proceed with their demands. As the results poured in, it was alleged that the polls had been rigged by the Indian government. This resulted in some political parties' rejection of the political process and taking up arms, and in 1988 a campaign of militant violence began. It was started mainly by the pro-independence Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) in the Valley of Kashmir, but later on other groups joined as well. Pakistan's support for this new movement was primarily along moral, political and diplomatic lines. Later, material support was also provided to some of the pro-Pakistan militant groups. Indian security forces responded with a counter-insurgency campaign that was marked by grave human rights violations. From 1987 to 2005, these military operations resulted in the killing of at least 40,000 Kashmiris (Grare, 2008).

The 1990s was a period when both sides had excessive political engagement but could not reach a breakthrough on the issue owing to the ongoing violence within Kashmir. An attempt was made by the Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his Indian counterpart Atal Bihari Vajpayee, but with the hostilities erupting in Kargil, negotiations did not move forward. Under General Musharaf's reign in Pakistan, another attempt was made in 2001 to engage with Indian Premier Vajpayee to resolve the dispute, resulting in the Agra Summit. Both sides failed to move forward during this episode of bilateral engagement, falling short of securing a mutually acceptable outcome. Afterward, back channel negotiations were held between General Musharaf and the Congress government of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (Dulat & Sinha, 2017).

Some points were particularly important to the panellists when it came to the bilateral engagement between the two countries about Kashmir:

- The nature of the relationship and the personalities on both sides have had an impact on the state of bilateral ties.
- In order to achieve a comprehensive change in the nature of Pakistan-India engagement, both sides need to resolve the Kashmir issue.
- Security institutions on both sides remain essential stake holders, and without their involvement, any peace initiative will not last long.

CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES AND THE IMPORTANCE OF TRACK TWO INITIATIVES

Track Two diplomacy pertains to the policy-oriented discussions that are non-governmental, informal and un-official in nature. They are quite close to governmental agendas and often involve participation of people who are influential in policy matters, such as retired diplomats, retired civil and military officials, public figures and policy analysts (Mazari, 2005).

The first prominent Track Two initiative between India and Pakistan was the Neemrana Dialogue that took place under the auspices of the United States Information Services (USIS) in 1990. It was later joined by American foundations and German nongovernmental organisations (NGOs). Its first meeting was held in Neemrana Fort in Rajasthan, India, in October 1991. The group was comprised of former diplomats, former military persons, media personalities, NGO workers and academics from India and Pakistan. Since then, there has been a significant increase in the number of Track Two initiatives between India and Pakistan. Of late, some new initiatives have started, such as the Chaophraya Dialogue, the WISCOMP Annual Workshop, the Pugwash Conferences, Ottawa

Dialogue, and so on. There exist more than twelve highly institutionalised Track Two groups, as well as over twenty other people-to-people exchange programmes operating between the two nuclear powers, with both external and internal funding (Ahmad, 2016).

This workshop and the audience were particularly fortunate as one of panellists hailing from Pakistan has remained a very active participant in most of the Track Two initiatives between India and Pakistan. He was of the view that regardless of the worsening ties and failure of both nations to find a solution for the Kashmir conflict, still a lot of progress has been made by the two sides on various issues, eventually solving some of them. He took the audience on an historical tour and argued by citing numerous examples that both countries have of political crises handles through suitable forums, and that they have behaved in a very mature manner.

A most interesting case in this regard has been the signing of the Liaquat-Nehru Pact in 1950, where, in spite of the opposition of his colleague Vallabhbhai Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, concluded a pact with Liaquat Ali Khan, Prime Minister of Pakistan. Refugees were thereby allowed to return unmolested to dispose of their property, abducted women and looted property were to be returned, forced conversions were unrecognised, and minority rights were confirmed. A further example is the signing of the Indus Water Treaty between India and Pakistan in 1960, with the mediation of the World Bank, that ended the water dispute between the two nations in an amicable manner. Furthermore, both sides exchange the lists of their nuclear facilities in order to avoid any accidental attack from each side on such sensitive installations. The political engagement between General Musharaf and Prime Minister Vajpayee managed specifically to achieve the opening up of trade and travel across the LOC. This paved the way for Kashmiris from both sides to interact and meet up with their relatives. Bilateral trade has also progressed, while both countries have been facing each other in

sport competitions as well. A most recent example in this regard has been the opening up of the Kartarpur Corridor, which has enabled not only Sikh pilgrims, but all Indian nationals to enter Pakistan and visit the Kartarpur Sahab Gurdwara without any visa. However, from the panelist's point of view, the negative attitude of the current Indian government toward such overtures remains a major obstacle in achieving any breakthrough between the two sides.

All panellists agreed upon the utility of these confidence-building measures and Track Two initiatives, and they suggested the following proposals:

- The need to effectively utilise diplomatic channels and re-activate Track Two initiatives.
- A need for bilateral dialogue between the Indian and Pakistani militaries.
- Putting a stop to the venomous media campaigns on both sides.

THE RISE OF HINDU NATIONALISM UNDER MODI AND THE ABROGATION OF KASHMIR'S SPECIAL STATUS

On August 5, India unilaterally breached the fundamental conditions of the Instrument of Accession, by which the former princely State of Jammu and Kashmir acceded to India in 1947. It was announced that the government had decided to repeal Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which provided the state 'special' autonomous status. The state would be bifurcated into two successors 'Union Territories' with more limited indigenous administrative powers. This was done by turning Kashmir into a giant prison camp with seven million Kashmiris barricaded within

their homes, Internet connections cut and their phones going dead (Filkins, 2019).

The Pakistani and Kashmiri panellists both contended that this step was entirely unsurprising, as for some years they had seen posturing from the Indian government that had indicated a change in its approach to Kashmir. After the elections of 2014, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government at the centre did manage to get into a power-sharing agreement with the People's Democratic Party (PDP). This development ushered in a new era within the political demography of the state. For the first time, BJP was ruling Jammu and Kashmir State. Still, this new political settlement came with its own complexities. BJP had swept across the Hindu-dominated Jammu region of the state, while PDP had emerged as the largest party within the Kashmir Valley. This meant that both partners catered to entirely different sets of constituents, and their political goals within the state did not overlap either.

In the wake of the death of militant leader Burhan Wani, a new wave of anti-India sentiment rocked the Kashmir Valley. It is important to note that from a Pakistani perspective, Wani was a totally indigenous actor. Allegations of a Pakistani role in propping up Wani remain untrue. However, the Indian side has been consistent in its rhetoric that militancy in the valley consistently happens due to infiltration from the Pakistani side and with Pakistan's material support. When a non-partisan Concerned Citizens Group (CCG) led by veteran BJP leader Yashwant Sinha visited Kashmir in 2016 after the death of Wani, it found the valley's youth full of anger toward the security forces for their excessive use of force, and in particular the use of pellet guns. The report pointed out that the Indian ruling circle's decision to employ force as a strategy to deal with this wave of unrest further politically disenfranchised the population of the Kashmir Valley. In its last visit in 2017, the CCG observed wide-scale dismay and despondency among the people of the Kashmir Valley toward the Indian state that was not only engaging with them militarily but was also bent upon altering their special status guaranteed in the Constitution (Express, 2017).

For Kashmiris, after these developments the writing on the wall has been quite clear. The Indian government is paving the way for the implementation of a new governance paradigm within the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The revocation of Kashmir's special status is just one critical step in that direction.

The Indian liberal perspective on these developments in Kashmir has been rather interesting. The panellist, while contextualising an Indian liberal perspective, urged that the intellectual elite within the country has been visibly perturbed by the state of affairs in Kashmir. They have been critical of the government's political steps in the form of repealing Article 370 to scrap the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, as well as demoting it from a state into two union territories. They argue that there has been a consensus between the liberal and non-liberal elements of Indian polity that Pakistan has used militant groups in Kashmir to sabotage law and order. Additionally, agreement also remains that until the Pakistan establishment's hold over its foreign policy is not weakened, Pakistan's support for these elements will continue. This essentially brings a unique agreement within the Indian political spectrum when it comes to Pakistan, and there is also concurrence that there is reason for the Indian military to be deployed within Kashmir (Zutshi, 2019).

This has emboldened the BJP government to bulldoze its way into issues like Kashmir, regardless of the criticism of rather liberal segments of Indian society. It is clear that the civilian leadership remains at the helm of decision-making and the armed forces enter the fray only at the implementation level. This decision-making circle is limited specifically to Prime Minister Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and the National Security Advisor, Ajit Doval. They remain the principal authorities when it comes to taking decisions related to national security. The security apparatus, which consists of intelligence agencies and the armed forces, are responsible for keeping the leadership informed about the developing security situation and threat perception throughout the nation. These institutions, however, do not have the power to enforce their preferred options.

At the end, the panellist agreed upon the following points:

- The current crisis in Kashmir is an entirely unique one, and it has the potential to completely alter the nature of Indo-Pak ties.
- Changes within the Indian domestic fold, the rise of Prime Minister Modi and Indian nationalism have a direct bearing on the conflict.
- The state of affairs in Kashmir after the repeal of Article 370 remains unstable, and the actions of the Indian government are in no manner justified.

THE HUMANITARIAN SIDE OF THE CONFLICT AND THE AGENCY OF KASHMIRIS

During the panel debates, the panellist representing Kashmir raised a specific point, emphasising the dire human rights situation within Indian-Administered Kashmir. The constant firing and shelling across the LOC have imperilled the lives of Kashmiris, resulting in a huge number of civilian casualties. A UN report has indicated that in 2018, around 160 civilians were killed due to ceasefire violations in Kashmir and across the LOC (Commissioner, 2019). This invariably means that it is ultimately the Kashmiris who are paying the highest price for the continuation of conflict. This already dire situation has been further aggravated by the Indian government's decision to repeal Kashmir's special status.

The everyday lives of Kashmiris are now increasingly policed and regulated due to the deployment of more than half a million troops into the Kashmir Valley and the enforcement of a security lockdown. The other aspect of the new paradigm of governance has been the complete silencing of the valley's political voices. The Indian government has not only arrested and jailed most of the prominent separatist leaders, but it

has not allowed discussion from even the pro-Indian political fraternity of the valley who have ruled it for more than seventy years. This shows that regardless of political loyalties, the voice of Kashmiris from all walks of life has been muted (Donthi, 2019). There was to some extent unanimity about this point from among the panellists. The Indian State has acted in a most brutal manner, imposing its will on the people of Kashmir by eliminating their agency.

This theme also reappeared as the floor was opened to the audience for a round of questions and answers. Some participants in the audience were themselves Kashmiri refugees, mostly from Jammu, and living in Pakistan or other parts of the world. They asked the panellists if there remained a chance that one day they could go back to their homes, or in most cases to their parents' ancestral towns and villages within the Jammu region. The panellists were unable to give definite answers, as no one realistically thinks there remains any chance of a return of these refugees. Their hometowns and villages have changed in every way, and they themselves have also gone through a process of identity transformation.

The following are points that were discussed about the humanitarian side of the conflict:

- Kashmiris have paid a heavy price for the political whims of India and Pakistan.
- The agency of Kashmiris and their human rights remain severely curtailed.
- The Kashmiri refugees who were displaced as a result of wars between India and Pakistan may never be able to return to their homes.

CONCLUSION

The session which discussed the bilateral ties of India and Pakistan, and how much of a role the Kashmir conflict plays in setting the trajectory of this relationship, was insightful in many ways. The comprehensive discussion which included differing historical perspectives increased the audience's awareness and added information about the origins of this conflict. The debate outlined in detail how the situation in Kashmir has had a direct impact upon the security dynamics of the region. If the participants agreed on one hand about the need for restarting diplomatic engagement and Track Two or back channel engagements, they also conceded that after the abrogation of Kashmir's special status by the Indian government, such a course of action remains extremely unlikely. Ultimately, it is the Kashmiris who are at the centre of this whole debate, and it is their perspective that deserves the most attention.

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As part of TRT World Forum 2019, 15 Closed Sessions were held in parallel to the 6 Keynote Speeches, 3 Exclusive Talks and 8 Public Sessions with participating politicians, policy makers, journalists, NGO representatives and leading global experts on politics and security. The Closed Sessions were held as private roundtable discussions and conducted off the record. Neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speakers, or that of any other participant, will be revealed in the Closed Session Book or any other public document from TRT World Forum.

The purpose of the Closed Sessions was to promote in-depth and intellectually engaging discussions based on TRT World Forum 2019's theme, "Globalisation in Retreat: Risks and Opportunities". Through a comprehensive examination of a range of key international issues, including developments in Turkey's foreign and security policy orientation; critical issues in the Middle East, such as the Gulf Crisis, the prospect of conflict between the US and Iran and the issue of political legitimacy; developments in Central Asia and the Eastern Mediterranean; as well as issues related to the environment and the future direction of the international order itself – the Closed Sessions sought to advance a range of possible solutions and approaches to critical political and security issues facing the world.

This book is a collection of the Closed Session reports written by experts and academics on the basis of the speeches and discussions that took place in the session. In addition to the valuable discussions advanced in these sessions, the academic backgrounds, experience and expertise of the authors have also made this publication an important contribution to the academic literature. Accordingly, this book aims to reach both academic and non-academic readers. Moreover, the reports are written in language appropriate for general audiences, another strength of the Forum stemming from its media nexus.