

# ORTADOĐU ETÜTLERİ

Siyaset ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi

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*Agah Hazır*



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This issue of *Ortadoğu Etütleri* brings together seven articles and two book reviews.

The first article of the journal looks at the Palestinian issue and the Israeli-Palestinian relations after the 'Arab Spring'. Nicola Pratt of Warwick University firstly analyses the mainstream thinking on the Palestinian issue based on a two-state solution and addresses the debate in the literature questioning whether peace is more likely to be the outcome of the recent developments. Pratt, later challenges this question itself and shows how the emphasis on two-state solution misses an important aspect in the conflict – the increasing settlement activity since the 'Arab Spring'. At a time when the long-stalled peace talks are trying to be revived, the article presents a timely and comprehensive analysis of the issue and makes us think on the main policies and obstacles to peace by taking the settlement issue at its core.

The following three articles mainly focus on Turkey's relations with Iraq. As the Kurdish issue is being discussed domestically in Turkey; the articles are again timely to understand the foreign policy dimension of the issue. Bill Park in his article looks at the developments regarding the Kurdish issue in Iraq and in Syria and argues how the increasingly trans-border nature of the issue puts strains on Turkey domestically and as a regional actor. Ofra Bengio, in her article looks at the relationship between Ankara, Erbil and Baghdad and shows how there has been a significant shift in the relationship. Bengio problematizes how Baghdad as the main traditional partner of Ankara has been replaced by Erbil in the recent years and analyzes the reasons behind this 'paradigmatic shift' in all these three actors. The following article is by Mehmet Akif Kumral. Kumral, by problematizing the deterioration of Ankara-Baghdad relations looks at the discourse in Turkey on Turkish-Iraqi relations, what the author calls as 'partial/non-cooperation' discourse. By looking at three events in 1993, 2003 and 2011 Kumral demonstrates how

the change in time in the discourse towards partial/non-co-operation could be more enduring in Turkey's relations with Iraq in the long run.

Fifth article of this issue, by Işık Gürleyen, looks at how the NATO-led intervention in Libya was framed in the Turkish media and questions the role of media and its impact on decision-makers. By looking at the columns in newspapers, Gürleyen argues that the media has maintained its independent position and analysis during the intervention and although the government's position has shifted in time, the media's position was rather preserved.

The following two articles focus on the issue of Islam and Muslim communities in Europe. Şerif Onur Bahçecik looks at the growing literature on Islamophobia and analyses the anti-Islamophobia practices. Bahçecik by putting the major documents on the issue at the core of his analysis analyses the conceptual framework that defines the anti-Islamophobia and argues that it goes beyond these practices by aiming to govern co-existence. Zana Çitak in her article looks at the Muslim communities in Austria. Analysing the institutionalization of Islam in the Austrian context, Çitak questions the role of the Diyanet in this institutional framework and the opportunities and limitations the Austrian case provides.

As in the previous issues, this issue also concludes with book reviews. In this section, Zeynep Sütalan reviews the book by King Abdallah II of Jordan titled "Our Last Best Chance: The Pursuit of Peace at a Time of Peril". Agah Hazır reviews the book by Ali Ansari titled "The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran". Both books address widely discussed issues in regional politics and will hopefully be of interest for our readers.

**Özlem Tür**





# The “Arab Spring” and the Israel-Palestine Conflict: Settler Colonialism and Resistance in the Midst of Geopolitical Upheavals<sup>\*</sup>

Nicola PRATT<sup>\*\*</sup>

## Abstract

This article examines the implications of the “Arab Spring” for the Israel-Palestine conflict. It draws on a growing field of critical approaches to consider this question in light of a longer historical trajectory of the Zionist settler colonial project, Palestinian resistance to this project and efforts to pacify this resistance, most recently under the banner of the “Oslo Peace Process”. Therefore, the article rejects mainstream interpretations of the implications of the “Arab Spring” for the Israel-Palestine conflict in terms of either increasing or decreasing the prospects for a negotiated, bilateral settlement based on the Oslo paradigm. Rather, the article argues that the “Arab Spring” constitutes both continuities and discontinuities in the Israel-Palestine conflict: on the one hand, Israel continues and has even intensified its project of settler colonialism; on the other hand, the “Arab Spring” has given impetus to a new movement of Palestinians resisting Israeli occupation and Palestinian dispossession that operates beyond the Oslo paradigm of liberal peacemaking. Whilst the “Arab Spring” heralds the end of the already defunct Oslo Peace Process, it simultaneously highlights the necessity for a more just approach to peace making in Israel/Palestine.

**Keywords:** Israel, Palestine, conflict, colonialism, resistance, Arab Spring

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*\* This article is largely the result of observations and discussions conducted during two visits to Palestine, in 2011 and 2012, as part of a British Academy-funded International Partnership Scheme between the University of Warwick (Centre for the Study of Women and Gender) and Birzeit University (Institute for Women’s Studies). I thank Islah Jad, Rema Hammami, Eileen Kuttab and Penny Johnson of the Institute for Women’s Studies, Palestinian activists in and around Ramallah, Nablus, Nabi Saleh, Hebron, Bethlehem and the Jordan Valley, Vanessa Farr, then of UNDP and Mandy Turner, Kenyon Institute, amongst many others, for fascinating discussions and insights. Earlier versions of this paper were presented at seminars at the Kenyon Institute, Jerusalem, al-Najah University, Nablus, the University of St. Andrews, UK, and to a workshop on the “Arab Spring” at Richmond University, UK. I thank all those who provided their feedback and thought-provoking questions. I especially thank Özlem Tür, Middle East Technical University, for her feedback, encouragement and efforts on this article.*

*\*\* Assoc. Prof. Dr., Department of Politics and International Studies, University of Warwick, UK.*

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Nicola Pratt, *The “Arab Spring” and the Israel-Palestine Conflict: Settler Colonialism and Resistance in the Midst of Geopolitical Upheavals*, Ortadoğu Etütleri, Volume 5, No 1, July 2013, pp.9-40.

## “Arap Baharı” ve İsrail-Filistin Çatışması: Jeopolitik Değişimlerin Ortasında Direniş ve Yerleşimci Sömürgecilik

### Özet

Bu makalede, ‘Arap Baharı’nın İsrail-Filistin çatışmasına yönelik olası sonuçları incelenmektedir. Makale bu konuyu Siyonist yerleşimci sömürge projesinin izlediği uzun tarihsel yol ışığında ele almak üzere, giderek artan eleştirel yaklaşım alanlarına; ve son zamanlarda ‘Oslo Barış Süreci’ çerçevesinde ele alınan bu projeye karşı Filistin direnişinden ve direnişi yatıştırma çabalarına dikkat çekmektedir. Dolayısıyla, Oslo paradigmasına dayalı iki taraflı müzakere edilmiş bir uzlaşma beklentisini arttırma veya azaltması bakımından ‘Arap Baharı’nın İsrail-Filistin çatışmasına etkilerine ilişkin yaygın yorumları reddetmektedir. Söz konusu çalışma daha ziyade Arap Baharı’nın İsrail-Filistin çatışmasında hem süreklilik hem de kesiklik teşkil ettiğini savunur: Bir yandan İsrail yerleşimci sömürgecilik projesini sürdürür ve hatta güçlendirirken; öte yandan Arap Baharı da, liberal barış sağlama amaçlı Oslo paradigması dışında işleyen İsrail’in Filistin işgaline karşı direnen yeni bir Filistin hareketini canlandırmıştır. Arap Baharı bir taraftan geçerliliğini yitirmiş Oslo Barış Süreci’nin sona erdiğinin habercisi olurken, aynı zamanda İsrail/Filistin’de barış sağlama amaçlı daha adil bir yaklaşım benimsenmesi gerektiğinin de altını çizmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İsrail, Filistin, çatışma, sömürgecilik, direniş, Arap Baharı

المقاومة والاستعمار : الفلسطيني – الاسرائيلي والصراع «العربي الربيع» الاستيطاني  
في خضم التغيرات الجيوسياسية  
نيكولا برات

### المخلص:

يتناول هذه المقالة بالبحث والتمحيص النتائج المحتملة للربيع العربي باتجاه الصراع الاسرائيلي – الفلسطيني. ويقدم المقال تحليلاً نقدياً للموضوع على ضوء الطريق الطويل الذي سلكه المشروع الاستعماري الاستيطاني الصهيوني، مشيراً إلى الانتقادات المتزايدة يوماً بعد يوم، وملفتاً النظر إلى المقاومة الفلسطينية في مواجهة المشروع، الذي يجري بحثه في نطاق «وتيرة السلام في اوسلو»، ومحاولات إخماد جذوة هذه المقاومة. ومن ثم يرفض المقال التعليقات المتواترة التي تتعلق بتأثير الربيع العربي على الصراع الاسرائيلي – الفلسطيني من حيث زيادة و تقليص توقعات التوافق الميني على المفاوضات الثنائية الخاصة بعملية اوسلو. ويؤكد المقال بصورة خاصة على أن الربيع العربي يمثل وضعا من الاستمرارية والتوقف للصراع الاسرائيلي – الفلسطيني في ان واحد. فمن ناحية، يؤثر الربيع العربي على ديمومة مشروع الاستعمار الاستيطاني الاسرائيلي، بل و يقويه، بينما يحقق الربيع العربي، من ناحية اخرى، إحياء الحركة الفلسطينية الجديدة التي تناضل ضد الاحتلال الاسرائيلي لفلسطين خارج عملية اوسلو التي تهدف إلى تحقيق سلام ليبرالي. و بينما يخبرنا الربيع العربي بنهاية عملية اوسلو للسلام تلك التي فقدت فاعليتها من جانب، فإنه نفس الوقت يؤكد على ضرورة قيام اسرائيل بتبني مبادرة أكثر عدالة تهدف إلى تحقيق السلام في اسرائيل/ فلسطين.

**كلمات مفتاحية:** اسرائيل، فلسطين، الصراع، الاستعمار، المقاومة، الربيع العربي.

## Introduction

Without a doubt, the popular uprisings, protests, and in some cases, armed insurrections that have spread across the Arab world since December 2010 are reshaping the politics of the Middle East. This article examines the implications of what has commonly come to be called the “Arab Spring”<sup>1</sup> for the Israel-Palestine conflict. It begins by providing an overview of the current understandings of the “Arab Spring” as either an opportunity for or as a threat to Israel-Palestine peacemaking. The next section examines the shared assumptions underpinning these evaluations, which characterise the Israel-Palestine conflict as a struggle between two national movements over the same piece of land. In contrast, building on a growing field of critical scholarship that reconceptualises the conflict as one of indigenous resistance against a foreign settler colonial project, I view the current moment in a longer context of Zionist colonisation of Palestine and resistance to this, in addition to Israeli and Western pacification of this resistance. The following sections examine what such a reconceptualisation of the conflict means for reinterpreting the evolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict in the wake of the “Arab Spring”. The article argues that the most significant consequence of the “Arab Spring” for the Israel-Palestine conflict is in challenging, both conceptually and in reality, the liberal peace building model of Oslo and offering a new strategy for a just peace.

## Understandings of the Israel-Palestine conflict in the wake of the “Arab Spring”

Discussions of the implications of the “Arab Spring” for the Israel-Palestine conflict focus on specific events that have unfolded, particularly since the ouster of Hosni Mubarak and his regime in February 2011. Commentators and academics speculating about the impact of these events generally fall into one of two categories: viewing the “Arab Spring” as either an opportunity for peace making or as a threat to peace making. I will briefly discuss both these approaches below.

1 I place the term “Arab Spring” in scare quotes to indicate that this is a contested term. I use it as an easily recognisable short-hand for the popular uprisings, revolutions and protests that have taken place across the Arab world since the end of 2010.

### ***Peace Now?***

Those who view the “Arab Spring” as heralding a new impetus for peace making between Israel and the Palestinians, as well as the wider Arab world, generally emphasise the need to adapt to the rise of people power and respond to its implications for the Palestinian leadership, for the Israeli government and for Western governments. Hanan Ashrawi, speaking at a seminar organised by the US think tank, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, characterised the “Arab Spring” as illustrating a new mood amongst Arab citizens, who are frustrated with the status quo, whether that is oppressive dictators, blatant corruption or continuing indignities and humiliation, including Israel’s occupation of Palestine.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, like their counterparts from Morocco to Bahrain, have been protesting against the failures of their leadership, rising unemployment and costs of living. These protests, in the West Bank, Gaza Strip as well as by Palestinians in other Arab capitals, began as demonstrations of solidarity with the Egyptian uprising in January 2011. Both the Fateh-dominated Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and the Hamas government in the Gaza Strip tried to suppress these protests, fearing the implications of people power for their own governments. There have been no elections in the Occupied Palestinian Territory since the elections that brought Hamas to power in 2006. The term of office of the Palestinian Legislative Council (the PA legislature) expired in 2010 and no elections have been held since (whether in the West Bank or Gaza Strip—except for municipal elections in the West Bank in 2012).

Palestinian demonstrations in solidarity with the Egyptians turned into calls for political reform of the Palestinian leadership. On 21 February, the Palestinian NGO *Network* called on Fateh and Hamas to reconcile “to ‘secure and defend the Palestinian people’s inalienable right to freedom, independence and return to their lands’”<sup>3</sup>. On 15 March, youth groups led organised protests in several Palestinian towns and cities calling for reconciliation, new elections in the

2 Hanan Ashrawi, “Palestine and the Arab Spring”, Summary of discussion hosted by Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC, 27 May 2011. <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/05/27/palestine-and-arab-spring/1qb> (accessed 21 June 2013).

3 “81 NGOs Urge Rival Factions to Reconcile”, *Ma’an News Agency*, 21 February 2011. <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=361995> (accessed 17 June 2013).

Occupied Palestinian Territory and the inclusion of all political factions in a restructured Palestine Liberation Organisation, under the slogan of “End the division. One people against Zionism”.<sup>4</sup>

Pressure from the street, combined with the loss of external patrons (Mubarak, in the case of Fateh and the Syrian regime, in the case of Hamas) undoubtedly pushed Fateh and Hamas to enter into talks. A reconciliation agreement, brokered by the Egyptian Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, newly established as Egypt’s rulers, was signed in April 2011, stipulating that elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council (the legislative body of the Palestinian Authority) and Palestinian National Council (the legislative body of the Palestine Liberation Organisation) should be held no later than one year later. The Carter Center hailed the reconciliation, viewing it as “part of the larger democratic trend sweeping the region” and as increasing “the likelihood of a two-state solution and peaceful outcome”.<sup>5</sup> Despite the EU’s position against Hamas, EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton also cautiously welcomed the reconciliation as a step in the right direction for peace negotiations.<sup>6</sup>

Some commentators see an inescapable logic in the wake of the “Arab Spring” pressuring leaders to respond to popular expectations of peace. As one commentator argues, “Israel signed political agreements with authoritarian regimes. Now the people have a say in politics for the first time, which means that Israel has no choice but to fulfil its responsibilities according to the agreements because the people will no longer be silent or turn a blind eye to Israel’s inability to fulfil its agreements, including the Camp David Accords with Egypt which requires Israel to move on the peace process with the Palestinians”.<sup>7</sup> Along similar lines, the Emir of Qatar told a conference in May 2013 that, “the Arab Spring has today put Israel in direct confrontation with the Arab people, not only with their rulers.

4 P. Bailey, “Palestinians call for unity protest on 15 March”, *Electronic Intifada*, 28 February 2011. <http://electronicintifada.net/content/palestinians-call-unity-protest-15-march/9249> (accessed 17 June 2013).

5 N. Mozgovaya, “Carter Hails Hamas-Fatah Reconciliation”, *Haaretz.com*, 29 April 2011. <http://www.haaretz.com/news/world/carter-hails-hamas-fatah-reconciliation-1.358895> (accessed 21 June 2013).

6 A. Eldar, “EU’s Ashton: With its Changing Neighbourhood, Now is the Time for Israel to Move”, *Haaretz.com*, 24 June 2011. <http://www.haaretz.com/weekend/week-s-end/eu-s-ashton-with-its-changing-neighborhood-now-is-the-time-for-israel-to-move-1.369401> (accessed 21 June 2013).

7 W. Salem, “The Arab Revolutions from a Palestinian Perspective”, *Palestine-Israel Journal*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 2012. <http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=1419> (accessed 21 June 2013).

These people will no longer accept that negotiations are the goal in themselves”.<sup>8</sup> The EU’s Ashton also recognises these new dynamics, telling an Israeli journalist in 2011, “Your neighbourhood has changed [...] Then they [political leaders] have more responsibility than ever for the people of Israel and the Palestinian people to actually do it [make peace]”.<sup>9</sup>

With the assumption that Arab governments would become more accountable to their citizenry and with the rise of more powerful popular (mainly Islamist) movements, some commentators believe that solving the Israel-Palestine conflict is in Israel’s security interests. In the words of one author, “If Israel fails to engage with the new realities in its neighbourhood, it could conceivably find itself in a situation similar to the pre-1979 Middle East, when all of its neighbours were in an open state of war with it”.<sup>10</sup>

In addition, some writers believe that the “Arab Spring” should lead Western governments to also reconsider their policies towards the region. As an Op Ed in the *Financial Times* in 2011, responding to the waves of popular uprisings in the Arab World, argued, “The international community’s old approach was to prioritise stability over democracy and pursue Israeli-Arab peace on a totally separate diplomatic track. This policy proved to be a failure – stability over democracy brought neither and isolated peace efforts went nowhere”.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, William Quandt, a veteran expert on US policy and the Arab-Israeli conflict, writing about US diplomacy towards the Israel-Palestinian peace process, argues that the uprisings actually “make it all the more important that the U.S. aligns itself with both democracy and peace in a vital part of the world”.<sup>12</sup> Another writer warns Western governments that, “an important stumbling block [in a dialogue with the new democracies of the region] could

8 R. Doherty, “Qatar: Arab Spring makes Israeli-Palestinian peace more pressing”, *Reuters*, 20 May 2013. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/20/us-qatar-arabs-israel-idUSBRE-94J0NW20130520> (accessed 21 June 2013).

9 A. Eldar, “EU’s Ashton: With its Changing Neighbourhood, Now is the Time for Israel to Move”.

10 A. Dessi, *Israel and the Palestinians after the Arab Spring: No Time for Peace*, IAI Working Paper 1216, May 2012, pp. 12-13.

11 M. Muasher and J. Solana, “Push Ahead Now For A Solution In Palestine”, *The Financial Times*, 9 March 2011.

12 W. Quandt, “The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Now”, *Cairo Review of Global Affairs online*, 2011. <http://www.aucegypt.edu/GAPP/CairoReview/Pages/articleDetails.aspx?aid=1> (accessed 21 June 2013).

be the Palestinian issue and the role of a growing chauvinist Israel in the region. ... If they do not change their course, the “Arab Spring” could become not only a lost opportunity, but also a source of new tensions”.<sup>13</sup>

### **Peace Later?**

However, for Israel and some of its supporters, the uncertainties of the “Arab Spring” make it unwise to pursue peace with the Palestinians at this moment. Indeed, the Israeli government has watched the so-called Arab Spring unfold with some dismay. In November 2011, PM Binyamin Netanyahu attacked the “Arab Spring”, as an “Islamic, anti-western, anti-liberal, anti-Israeli, undemocratic wave”.<sup>14</sup> It is concerned that Islamist groups have emerged as the strongest political force in neighbouring countries. The Muslim Brotherhood has won elections in Egypt, thereby ending Hamas’s isolation in the Gaza Strip; Islamist groups dominate the opposition in Syria; and, in Jordan, the Islamic Action Front leads calls for political reform.<sup>15</sup> As Daniel Byman argues, “Israel is a status quo power in many ways. [...] So change, even if it means the toppling of regional foes, risks rocking this prosperous boat”.<sup>16</sup>

The most significant consequence of the “Arab Spring” for the Israeli government has been the overthrow of the regime of Hosni Mubarak. The 1979 peace treaty between Israel and Egypt has been strategically important to Israel’s security (by removing the largest Arab army from the Arab-Israeli conflict) and the lynchpin of Western security strategy towards the region. From 2006 until the overthrow of the old regime, Egypt cooperated with Israel to maintain the blockade of the Gaza Strip and agreed with Israel over the need to contain Hamas and to prevent Iran from increasing its influence throughout the region. Israel’s alliance with Egypt became even more important after its relations with Turkey (a long-time ally) became increasingly frosty as a result of the Gaza war—compounded by Israel’s killing of Turkish citizens on a ship carrying aid in May 2010.

13 R. Aliboni, “The International Dimension of the Arab Spring”, *The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 46, No. 4, p. 9.

14 H. Sherwood, “Binyamin Netanyahu attacks Arab spring uprisings”, *Guardian Online*, 24 November 2011. (accessed 4 March 2012).

15 “Gloom and Bloom: Eyeing the Arab Spring”, *The Economist*, 11 February 2012, p. 50.

16 D. Byman, “Israel’s Pessimistic View of the Arab Spring”, *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 3, Summer 2011.

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, which took over power after Mubarak stepped down until presidential elections were held in May 2012, signalled its break with the Mubarak regime and its responsiveness to popular opinion with regard to its policies towards the question of Palestine. It did not cancel the peace treaty but it opened the Rafah crossing, albeit sporadically, (thereby breaking the international blockade of the Gaza Strip) and successfully brokered reconciliation talks between Hamas and Fateh. The Israeli government opposed both of these moves, which effectively ended the political and geographical isolation of Hamas. Netanyahu told Fateh, in May 2011, that it had to choose between peace with Israel and peace with Hamas and withheld \$100 million of taxes collected on behalf of the Palestinian Authority.

Israel has also been concerned by what it regards as a security vacuum along the Egyptian-Israeli border and the Sinai Peninsula more broadly. In August 2011, suspected Palestinian gunmen conducted a cross-border raid into Israel and, in Ramadan 2012, another attack along the Egyptian-Gaza border (which resulted in the deaths of 16 Egyptian soldiers). In addition, there have been repeated acts of sabotage of the gas pipeline between Egypt and Israel since Mubarak stepped down. In 2011, Israel responded to the cross-border raid immediately by pursuing the attackers into Egypt, resulting in 5 Egyptian policemen being killed. This outraged Egyptian public opinion and hundreds of Egyptians protested outside the Israeli embassy in Cairo, and then stormed the embassy, leading to Israeli embassy staff being evacuated.

Yet, it would be erroneous to evaluate the “Arab Spring” as a categorical threat to Israel’s security. Following the Ramadan 2012 attack, the Egyptian government, by then, headed by the newly-elected Mohammed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood, held Hamas responsible for the killings of Egyptian soldiers and began security cooperation with Israel. This illustrates perhaps that, “the reality is that the Arab Spring hasn’t changed Israel’s regional position or strategic calculus to any great degree [...]. Instead, the challenges the Arab Spring poses for Israel are no different from the broader cyclical challenges Israel has been facing since 1948”.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> B. Sasley, “Israel and the Arab Spring: But the Season Doesn’t Matter”, 28 December 2011, Huffington Post on-line (accessed 4 March 2012).

Despite the fact that both the ‘peace now’ and the ‘peace later’ approaches offer different interpretations of the events that have unfolded since the beginning of the “Arab Spring”, nevertheless, both share a set of assumptions about the nature of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Having briefly examined the different interpretations of the “Arab Spring” in this section, the following section discusses and critiques their shared assumptions that the Israel-Palestine conflict represents a struggle between two national movements that can only be solved through the “compromise” of a two-state solution.

### **Zionist Colonisation, Resistance and Pacification**

The main actors in the international community (US, EU, Russia, China, UN, WB, etc.) as well as a significant part of scholarship on the subject, view the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians as a conflict between two national groups (Jews and Arab Palestinians) over a circumscribed piece of territory (historic Palestine).<sup>18</sup> Having characterised the nature of the conflict thus, the solution is identified as a “compromise” between the two conflicting national groups by partitioning the land between them, enabling both national groups to achieve their goals of self-determination within a sovereign state.

The goal of the internationally-sponsored peace negotiations since 1993 has been to transform the Israelis’ and Palestinians’ perceptions of a “zero-sum game”<sup>19</sup> into a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship (i.e. a liberal peace building model). This is the thinking behind the Oslo process, which, most anticipated would result in a “two-state solution”. Even realists believe that a solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict, through the implementation of a two-state solution, is in the interests of the US, Israel and the Palestinians.<sup>20</sup>

Writings in the wake of the “Arab Spring” share these assumptions about the Israel-Palestine conflict and its solution. Their concerns

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18 Among others, for example see, J. Gelvin, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); C. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, (Bedford: St. Martin’s Press, 2010).

19 Gelvin, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict*, p. 256.

20 S. Walt, “The Boston Study Group on Middle East Peace”, *Foreign Policy online*, 15 March 2010. Available at: [http://walt.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/03/15/the\\_boston\\_study\\_group\\_on\\_middle\\_east\\_peace](http://walt.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/03/15/the_boston_study_group_on_middle_east_peace) (accessed 14 June 2013).

revolve around whether the “Arab Spring” renders the necessary compromise more or less likely. Those who regard the “Arab Spring” to be an opportunity for peace making believe that events make a compromise more necessary, not necessarily for the sake of peace but for the sake of regional stability and Israeli and Western security interests. Those who regard the “Arab Spring” as a threat to peace making believe that events make the compromise too risky for the Israelis (and possibly also for the US and its allies) and undermines the sort of trust necessary for peace making. However, they all continue to assume that the two-state solution is the only paradigm for resolving the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

Since 2000, many observers have called time on the Oslo Peace Process. This process was supposed to lead to an end to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians by finding a way to share the land and solve key problems, namely: refugees, Jerusalem, settlements and security. At the end of this process (due to conclude in 1997), it was implied that a Palestinian state would be created, existing side by side with an Israeli state. This never happened. Following the failure of the 2000 Camp David talks between Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat, a last ditch attempt by then President Bill Clinton to reach a negotiated settlement, the Second Intifada broke out. President Bush’s Roadmap to Peace explicitly attempted to create a two-state solution by 2005 by pressuring the Palestinians to reform and stop violence and by requesting that Israel stop military incursions into Palestinian areas and freeze settlement building. This did not happen either. Under the Obama administration, there have been no direct negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians, except under a Jordanian initiative in January 2012, which failed to achieve any progress and was met by popular protests in Ramallah and condemnation by the Hamas leadership in the Gaza Strip.

Jonathan Rynhold has summarised understandings of the failure of Oslo as either, a) a flawed process (because the liberal principles of the Oslo peace process were not implemented); or, b) flawed accords (because the accords contained ‘destructive ambiguity’ regarding the nationalist aspirations of each group).<sup>21</sup>

21 J. Rynhold, “The Failure of the Oslo Process: Inherently Flawed or Flawed Implementation?”, Working Paper, The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, Bar-Ilan University, March 2008.

A growing body of literature on the history of Palestine has reconceptualised the Israel-Palestine conflict, thereby offering an alternative explanation for the failure of the Oslo peace process. A number of scholars view the conflict as rooted in indigenous resistance to the Zionist colonisation and ethnic-cleansing of Palestine, which is not limited to the period before 1948 but continues until this day, under the banner of the so-called peace process.<sup>22</sup> From the dispossession of Palestinians in the 1948 war, the implementation of the absentees property law, the prevention of the return of Palestinian refugees, the appropriation of Palestinian lands inside the Green Line, the 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, to the on-going settlement building project, restrictions on Palestinian home building, the strangulation of Palestinian economic activity through checkpoints and closures, the building of the Wall and the siege on the Gaza Strip, Israel enacts a slow motion ethnic cleansing aimed at driving out as many Palestinians as possible whilst segregating (or “wharehousing”)<sup>23</sup> the remaining Palestinians within Bantustans, behind Walls and under blockade. Joseph Massad, comparing Israel to the United States, South Africa and Rhodesia, argues that “[these states] instituted themselves as postcolonial states, territories, and spaces and instituted their political status as independent in order to render their present a postcolonial era. Yet the conquered people of these territories continue [...] to inhabit these spaces as colonial spaces and to live in eras that are thoroughly colonial”.<sup>24</sup> Unlike other previously colonized countries across the Arab world, Asia and Africa, Palestine has never experienced decolonisation. Therefore, this is not a struggle between two national groups, with equally legitimate rights to the same piece of territory. Rather, this is a struggle between colonizers and colonized.

Amongst those who use a colonial lens to view the conflict, there are some (but not all) who oppose the “two-state” solution as a

22 For example, N. Abdo, *Women in Israel: Gender, Race and Citizenship*, (London: Zed Books, 2011); J. Massad, “The “post-colonial” colony: time, space and bodies in Palestine/Israel”, in Fawzia Afzal-Khan and Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks (eds.), *The Preoccupation of Postcolonial Studies*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); L. Taraki (ed.), *Living Palestine: Family Survival, Resistance and Mobility under Occupation*, (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2006); O. J. Salamanca, et al., “Past is Present: Settler Colonialism in Palestine”, *Settler Colonial Studies*, Vol. 2, No.1, pp. 1-8.

23 Jeff Halper, “Wharehousing Palestinians”, *Counterpunch*, 16 September 2008: <http://www.counterpunch.org/2008/09/16/warehousing-palestinians/> (accessed 27 June 2013).

24 J. Massad, “The “post-colonial” colony: time, space and bodies in Palestine/Israel”, p. 311.

just solution to the conflict, particularly from amongst the Palestinian diaspora/refugees and Palestinian citizens of Israel. This opposition has increased since the release of the “Palestine Papers” in early 2011, where it became clear that the PLO leadership was willing to compromise significantly on the “right of return”—long a central aim of the Palestinian national struggle—as well as to agree to possible land swaps along the 1967 borders that could have included Palestinian citizens of Israel in return for a Palestinian state.<sup>25</sup> This discontent with the two-state solution, as it has been pursued through the Oslo process, has led to a growing movement calling for a one-state solution, in which Israelis and Palestinians would have equal rights within a democratic and secular state.<sup>26</sup> However, it should be noted that the one-state proposal appears to be a project promoted more amongst the Palestinian diaspora rather than amongst Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. As one academic notes, it is unrealistic to expect that Palestinians would be willing to swap the struggle against Israeli occupation for yet another struggle for equal rights in a shared state where Jewish Israelis would have the upper hand.<sup>27</sup>

Whether the end game is two states or one state, the significance of a colonial lens is to reconceptualise the conflict as a product of Zionist colonization. Indeed, the PLO charter of 1968 declared its resistance to Zionist colonization, but this conceptualisation of Israel (and resistance to it) was abandoned by the PLO when it signed the Oslo Accords in 1993. An understanding of the conflict as rooted in the Zionist project eschews both realist and liberal conclusions about the need for a two-state solution, instead, it sees a just solution as the halt to Israel as a project of ‘settler colonialism’.

In addition to enabling Israel’s continued colonization of historic Palestine, the Oslo Accords have succeeded in pacifying the PLO

25 Amongst other articles on Al-Jazeera English’s Palestine Papers pages, see G. Carlstrom, “Expelling Israel’s Arab population?”, *Aljazeera.com, The Palestine Papers*, 24 January 2011 (accessed 4 March 2012); A. Howeydy, “PA relinquished right of return”, *Aljazeera.com, The Palestine Papers*, 24 January 2011: <http://www.aljazeera.com/palestinepapers/2011/01/2011124121923486877.html> (accessed 4 March 2012); L. Al-Arian, “PA selling short the refugees”, *Aljazeera.com, The Palestine Papers*, 25 January 2011 (accessed 4 March 2012).

26 Amongst others see, A. Abunimah, *One Country: A Bold Proposal to End the Israeli-Palestinian Impasse*, New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006; S. Makdisee, *Palestine Inside Out: An Everyday Occupation*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008).

27 G. Karmi, “The One-State Solution: An Alternative Vision for Israeli-Palestinian Peace” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 2, 2011, p. 72.

and led to the further fragmentation of the Palestinian people. Since 1993, there has been a bifurcation of the Palestinian national movement. One wing (Fateh, exercising power as the Palestinian Authority) can be considered to have adopted what Rima Hammami has termed an “earned sovereignty” approach.<sup>28</sup> This approach aims at demonstrating to the international community that Palestine “deserves” sovereignty by abiding by the donor-imposed state-building process. A central element of externally-driven state-building has been the pacification of Palestinian resistance to Israel through reform of the Palestinian security services, whose main job is now to crackdown on Palestinians.<sup>29</sup> The ‘Road Map’ in 2002 ushered in increased donor pressure on the Palestinian Authority to ‘reform’ (that is, bring in neo-liberal and good governance reforms) in order to become a ‘suitable’ partner for peace (that is, as Mandy Turner argues, suitable to the Israeli government).<sup>30</sup> The failure of these reform efforts to address the growing impoverishment of Palestinian society and the continuing Israeli occupation contributed to the election of Hamas in 2006.<sup>31</sup> Whilst there has been discussion over whether Palestinians voted for Hamas because of its anti-corruption stance or because of its resistance to Israel, in effect these two are greatly intertwined because of the link between corruption, state-building and capitulation to Israeli interests within the Fateh-dominated Palestinian Authority.

Hamas, together with Islamic Jihad, as well as some factions of the PLO, represent the resistance approach, and believe that negotiations with Israel have failed to achieve Palestinian rights and, therefore, violence is the only way to achieve Palestinian self-determination. Consequently, following the election of Hamas to the Palestinian Authority, the international community boycotted the PA and supported President Mahmoud Abbas (Fateh). This resulted in the political and geographical fragmentation of the Palestinian national movement—with Fateh taking control of the PA in the West Bank and Hamas forming a new administration and taking control

28 R. Hammami, “Neo-liberalism, Good Governance and ‘Earned Sovereignty’ in Palestine”, paper presented at a workshop, ‘Reconceptualising Gender: Transnational Perspectives’, Institute of Women’s Studies, Birzeit University, April 2011.

29 Ibid; Y. Sayigh, “Policing the People, Building the State: Authoritarian transformation in the West Bank and Gaza”, Carnegie Papers, Beirut: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2010.

30 M. Turner, “The Power of “Shock and Awe”: the Palestinian Authority and the Road to Reform”, *International Peacekeeping*, Vol.16, No.4, 2009.

31 Ibid.

of the Gaza Strip in 2007. Since then, the international community has supported Fateh as the “suitable partner for peace” and continued to support its state-building project in the West Bank, whilst boycotting Hamas and tacitly supporting Israel’s blockade on the Gaza Strip as well as its military onslaught on the Strip in 2008/09.

Oslo has not only led to the bifurcation of the Palestinian national movement and the separation of Palestinians in the West Bank from those in the Gaza Strip. The Oslo Accords contain within them the separation of Palestinians in the West Bank between Areas A, B and C, with only Area A being fully under PA control. This has not only enabled Israel to impede Palestinian freedom of movement, making social and economic activities difficult and costly. In addition, it has created a differentiated regime of occupation across the West Bank. Palestinians in Areas A benefit from the Oslo process to the degree that they are dependent upon the PA for jobs and security and, therefore, have a vested interest in its continued existence. Those Palestinians who protest against the PA or try to hold the PA to account are usually met with repression. Meanwhile, Palestinians in Areas B face continuing settlement encroachment, land grabbing and settler violence without experiencing the benefits of the PA. Their weekly protests are met with repression by Israeli security services. Finally, Palestinians in Areas C face on-going ethnic cleansing, as Israel continuously demolishes homes and denies Palestinians basic services. Palestinians are even dependent upon Israeli settlements as practically the only source of employment. The Palestinian Authority has no presence or jurisdiction in Areas C.<sup>32</sup> The situation in East Jerusalem is different again, although not too dissimilar from Areas C. Palestinians are being pushed out of their homes and face increasing impoverishment, whilst Jewish settlement building continues. In addition, Palestinian Jerusalemites face the possibility of their residency being withdrawn by the Israeli authorities. Palestinians in Hebron also face particular challenges, living in a divided city and in fear of settler violence. Not to mention the specific situation of Gazans living under economic blockade and subject to sporadic military conflict, resulting in a high number of civilian casualties and destruction of civilian infrastructure. This fragmentation of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Territories,

32 Mandy Turner, “The State-building Programme of the Palestinian Authority: Achievements and Challenges”, paper presented to the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, Helsinki, 28 & 29 April 2011.

adding to the different experiences of Palestinians inside the Green Line as well as the diaspora, constitutes a severe challenge to the unification of the Palestinians behind a single strategy.

The Oslo peace process, the Road Map and the reactions of the international community to the election of Hamas have all had devastating consequences for the Palestinian national movement and for the Palestinian people. Israel has been able to further entrench its occupation<sup>33</sup> and apartheid rule.<sup>34</sup> Occupation and apartheid may be considered as a continuation of the conquest and control of land and the transformation of the ethnic structure of society that is central to the settler colonial project of Zionism.<sup>35</sup> How has the “Arab Spring” changed this on-going process of colonization and pacification?

### Israel and the “Arab Spring”: Zionism renewed

The uncertainty thrown up by the “Arab Spring” may be represented by Israeli officials as a serious challenge to the country’s security but, arguably, this uncertainty has been an opportunity for Israel. The “Arab Spring” has provided a pretext for Israel to further its policy of separation and disengagement from the Palestinians and the Arab world. One Israeli writer has characterised Israel’s response to the “Arab Spring” as a form of “winter hibernation”, arguing that, “Like a polar bear, Israel retreated into its cave, withdrew into itself and waited until the rage passed. Building security barriers on the border with Egypt and Jordan, enlarging the security budget and abstaining from any gesture toward the Palestinians have been only some of the steps taken”.<sup>36</sup>

Moreover, events in Egypt, Libya, Yemen and particularly Syria have potentially distracted the international community away from the

33 See for example: J. Halper, “The 94 percent solution: A Matrix of Control”, *Middle East Report*, No. 216, 2000; N. Gordon, *Israel’s Occupation*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

34 O. Yiftachel, “Creeping Apartheid in Israel-Palestine”, *Middle East Report*, No. 253, 2009; U. Davis, *Israel: An Apartheid State*, (London: Zed Books, 1987/2003).

35 M. Rodinson, *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?*, (Pathfinder Press, 1973); P. Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native”, *Journal of Genocide Research*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 2006, pp. 387-409; O. Yiftachel, “Ethnocracy: the Politics of Judaizing Israel/Palestine”, *Constellations: International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory*, Vol. 6, No. 3, 1998, pp. 364-390.

36 B. Ravid, “The Arab Spring and Israel’s winter hibernation”, *Haaretz.com*, 8 December 2011 (accessed 4 March 2012).

Israel-Palestine conflict. This has been to the benefit of Israel's continuing settlement building and colonisation of Palestinian lands. Since 2011, there have been increasing numbers of demolitions of homes in Area C of the West Bank, which represents 60 per cent of the West Bank and is under Israeli control (according to Oslo II), a move that was supposed to be temporary until a full peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinians was reached. This area is considered strategic for Israel's security and also contains the very fertile agricultural and horticultural land of the Jordan Valley, which is home to several Israeli settlement companies, such as, Carmel. The Israeli authorities employ discriminatory planning regulations against Palestinians in Area C. Israeli authorities destroy any structures, including schools, which have not received the required permit. However, they rarely grant Palestinians the required permissions. According to the UN Organisation for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), "the approved planning schemes for Palestinian communities encompass less than 0.6 per cent of Area C. This is in contrast to the 8.5 per cent of Area C where planning schemes have been approved for Israeli settlements and the additional 61 per cent of Area C land which comes under the jurisdictional areas of the settlements' local and regional councils and which can be made available for settlement planning and development in the future".<sup>37</sup> OCHA reports that, in 2012, Palestinian-owned structures demolished in Area C comprised 165 residential structures and 375 livelihood and animal structures, infrastructure and other structures. This resulted in the displacement of 815 people, including 474 children.<sup>38</sup> OCHA states that these numbers "were almost as high as 2011, the highest since OCHA started systematically collating statistics in 2008".<sup>39</sup> In effect, these measures amount to forced displacement for Palestinians living in Area C, many of whom are forced to migrate to other areas of the West Bank in order to secure their livelihoods. Bedouin are particularly targeted by Israeli authorities for forced displacement. This displacement of Palestinians facilitates Israel's possible future annexation of the Jordan Valley<sup>40</sup> as well as the expansion of Maale

37 OCHA, *Fragmented Lives: Humanitarian Overview 2012*, (Jerusalem: OCHA, 2013), p. 20.

38 Ibid, p. 21.

39 Ibid.

40 F. Barat and J. Halper Israel's gone way beyond apartheid: an interview with Jeff Halper", 12 April 2012, *New Internationalist online*. <http://newint.org/features/web-exclusive/2012/04/26/jeff-halper-interview-israel-palestine/> (accessed 19 June 2013).

Adumumin settlement and its linking to Jerusalem, leading to the cutting off of East Jerusalem from the West Bank.<sup>41</sup>

Palestinian Jerusalemites (living under illegal Israeli annexation) also face similar obstacles to those in Area C in terms of difficulties of obtaining permits to build, obliging individuals to build without permits and risk demolitions. OCHA reports that house demolitions in East Jerusalem increased in 2012 compared to 2011.<sup>42</sup> In addition, OCHA reports an increased number of evictions by settlers of Palestinians from their East Jerusalem homes in 2012 compared to 2011 as well as an increased number of revoked residencies in 2012 compared to 2011.<sup>43</sup> Overall, Israeli controls on building as well as under-funding of those municipalities where Palestinians are in the majority is helping Israel to achieve demographic supremacy in Jerusalem (East and West).<sup>44</sup> Moreover, in November 2012, Israel announced new settlement building projects around Jerusalem (in the so-called E1 area and in the south of the city), which threaten to cut East Jerusalem off from the West Bank and to smother Palestinian neighbourhoods.<sup>45</sup>

Settler harassment is also a serious problem for Palestinians and appears to be increasing.<sup>46</sup> In 2012, OCHA recorded 98 settler violence incidents resulting in 150 Palestinian injuries, in addition to 268 incidents resulting in damage to Palestinian private property. This represents a decrease compared to 2011, but still an increase over 2010, in which there were 69 Palestinian casualties and 243 incidents of property damage against Palestinians by Jewish settlers.<sup>47</sup> Settler damage to private property jeopardises Palestinian

41 ICAHD (Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions), *Nowhere Left to Go: Arab al-Jahalin Bedouin Ethnic Displacement*, (Jerusalem: ICAHD, 2011).

42 OCHA, *Fragmented Lives: Humanitarian Overview 2012*, p. 25.

43 Ibid, pp. 25-26.

44 ICAHD (Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions), *No Home, No Homeland: A New Normative Framework for Examining the Practice of Administrative Home Demolitions in East Jerusalem*, (Jerusalem: ICAHD, 2011).

45 ICG (International Crisis Group), *Extreme Makeover? (I): Israel's Politics of Land and Faith in East Jerusalem*, 20 December 2012. <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/israel-palestine/134-extreme-makeover-i-israels-politics-of-land-and-faith-in-east-jerusalem.aspx> (accessed 21 June 2013).

46 Y. Knell, “Bedouin oppose Israeli plans to relocate communities”, *BBC News Online*, 11 November 2011 (accessed 4 March 2012).

47 OCHA, *Fragmented Lives: Humanitarian Overview 2012*, pp. 9-10.

livelihoods, for example, by destroying olive trees, which provide 14% of the agricultural income of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.<sup>48</sup>

Israel has also continued to appropriate Palestinian land through settlement building, despite demands from the PA that a settlement freeze be a prerequisite for re-starting peace negotiations. Indeed, Peace Now reported in 2013 that new constructions in settlements in the first quarter of that year witnessed a 176 per cent increase, reaching a seven-year high, “whilst those in the same period inside Israel decreased 8.9% despite continued public outcry over increasing economic hardship and the cost of housing”.<sup>49</sup>

The spirit of Tahrir Square appeared to spill over into the streets of Tel Aviv in the summer of 2011, as Israelis took to the street in large numbers to protest against their government’s economic policies, which have led to increasing costs of living, squeezing the middle classes.<sup>50</sup> Some protesters made a link between the government’s willingness to spend on the settlements and the lack of funds available for social welfare programmes. However, most protest leaders have limited their demands to socio-economic grievances and avoided what they see as the politically divisive issue of Israel’s occupation of the West Bank.<sup>51</sup> One commentator has accused the protests of failing to go beyond the demands of the Ashkenazim middle class to include the demands of others on the periphery of Israeli society, including Palestinians inside and beyond the Green Line.<sup>52</sup> The tensions within the protest movement over whose justice and what sort of justice was illustrated in a discussion between different Israelis, including a co-founder of the protest movement and a Palestinian-Israeli member of the Knesset, during The Cafe programme on Al-Jazeera English network.<sup>53</sup>

48 OCHA, *Olive Harvest Fact Sheet*, (Jerusalem: OCHA, 2012).

49 Peace Now, “Construction Starts in Settlements Reach 7 Year High”, 9 June 2013. <http://peacenow.org.il/eng/ConstructionStarts1-3-2013> (accessed 19 June 2013).

50 H. Sherwood, “Israeli protests: 430,000 take to streets to demand social justice”, *Guardian Online*, 4 September 2011. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/sep/04/israel-protests-social-justice> (accessed 19 June 2013).

51 J. Beinon, “The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the Arab Awakening”, *MERIP Online*, 1 August 2011. <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero080111> (accessed 19 June 2013).

52 L. Grinberg, “The success of Israel’s social protest failure”, *Haaretz Online*, 23 January 2013. <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/the-success-of-israel-s-social-protest-failure.premium-1.495740> (accessed on 19 June 2013).

53 “Transcript: The Cafe, Tel Aviv: The enemy within?”, *Al-Jazeera*, 8 January 2013. <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/thecafe/2012/10/20121099127566396.html> (accessed: 19 June 2013).

The failure of Israeli protesters to oppose wider government measures is particularly alarming given that some of these are against Israeli citizens. These discriminatory measures do not constitute a trend emerging only since the “Arab Spring”. Israel has been termed an ‘ethnic democracy’, that is, a democracy with ethnic dominance for the Jews guaranteed.<sup>54</sup> Others have criticised the ethnic democracy label and termed Israel an ‘ethnocracy’, that is, a democracy only for Jews. Adalah, an NGO that addresses discrimination against Palestinians in Israel, reports that there are more than 50 laws that discriminate against Palestinian citizens of Israel, “including their rights to political participation, access to land, education, state budget resources, and criminal procedures”.<sup>55</sup> Arguably, the trend towards the increasing ‘ethnisation’ of Israel is related to a number of factors including the “ethnic security regime” that has emerged as a result of Israel’s occupation since 1967<sup>56</sup>, the right-wing shift in Israeli politics and the growing demands of Palestinians within Israel for equality as citizens of the state since 1967.<sup>57</sup>

This discrimination is obvious in the passage of laws that disproportionately impact upon Palestinian-Israelis or are targeted against those who advocate for Palestinian rights. In 2010, a series of proposed bills in the right-wing-dominated Knesset sought to punish many of the activities of Israeli human rights organisations, such as reporting war crimes, supporting calls for boycotts of Israel, assisting refugees and receiving foreign funding.<sup>58</sup> One of those laws was passed into law in July 2011, punishing any Israeli individual or group calling for a boycott of Israeli settlements in the West Bank. In January 2012 the Israeli Supreme Court upheld a 2003 law prohibiting Israelis from living with their West Bank/Gaza spouses in Israel, a law that almost uniquely affects Palestinians of Israeli citizenship. *The Telegraph* reported that, “The Israeli right has defended the

54 S. Smooha, “Minority Status in an Ethnic Democracy: The Status of the Arab Minority in Israel”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 1990, pp. 389-413.

55 Adalah: The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, “Discriminatory Laws in Israel”, *Adalah.org*.n.d. <http://adalah.org/eng/Israeli-Discriminatory-Law-Database>, accessed 17 June 2013.

56 M. Klein, *The Shift: Israel-Palestine, from Border Struggle to Ethnic Conflict*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

57 S. Smooha, *Arab-Jewish Relations in Israel*, (Washington, DC: United States Institute for Peace, 2010).

58 HRW (Human Rights Watch), “Israel: Withdraw Legislation Punishing Human Rights Activists”, 25 July 2010. <http://www.hrw.org/news/2010/07/23/israel-withdraw-legislation-punishing-human-rights-activists> (accessed 17 June 2013).

moves, saying they are needed to protect the Jewish identity of the state”.<sup>59</sup>

Another on-going trend in Israel has been the appropriation of Arab/Palestinian lands inside the Green Line. This is not a recent phenomenon but dates back to the establishment of Israel in 1948. Then, land was confiscated from Arabs/Palestinians by the Jewish National Fund, to be used exclusively by Jews in Israel. Israeli state controls on land use by Arabs have prevented Arab towns and villages from expanding in line with their population. The Praver Plan, approved by the Israeli cabinet in 2012, threatens to displace up to 30,000 Bedouin by forcibly evicting them from their historic lands and obliging them to move to a handful of towns recognised by Israel. According to the human rights NGO Adalah, “While the Arab Bedouin population in the Naqab stands at around 170,000 persons, or 14% of the total population in the Naqab, the combined areas of the government-planned and newly-recognized Arab Bedouin towns and villages in the Naqab account for just 0.9% of the land in the district”.<sup>60</sup> The Bedouin village of al-Araqib, one of several ‘unrecognised’ Bedouin villages, has been repeatedly demolished by authorities and rebuilt by its residents since 2010. Both the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the European Parliament called on the Israeli government to withdraw the Praver Plan.<sup>61</sup>

It is not possible to establish a causal link between the “Arab Spring”, on the one hand, and Israel’s policies against Palestinians inside and beyond the Green Line, on the one hand. Nevertheless, it can be argued that Israeli political leaders and commentators have framed the “Arab Spring” as a potential threat to Israel (which has thrived on the status quo ante), thereby providing a legitimising discourse for its continuing colonization and ethnic cleansing measures, as well as its military threats against Iran, which fit into a Zionist worldview of the need to secure Israel as a Jewish state at any cost. In other words, the “Arab Spring” represents an opportu-

59 A. Blomfield, “Israel’s Supreme Court accused of racism over residency ban on Palestinians who marry Israeli Arabs”, *The Telegraph online*, 12 January 2012 (accessed 4 March 2012).

60 Adalah: The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, *The Inequality Report: The Palestinian Arab Minority in Israel*, (Haifa: Adalah, 2011), p. 10.

61 J. Khoury, “European Parliament Condemns Israel’s Policy towards Bedouin Population”, *Haaretz.com*, 8 July 2012. <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/european-parliament-condemns-israel-s-policy-toward-bedouin-population-1.449687> (accessed 17 June 2013).

nity for, rather than a threat to, the continuation the Zionist settler colonial project, and the latter poses the biggest obstacle to peace making in Israel/Palestine.

### The Palestinians and the “Arab Spring”

As noted above, the Palestinians have raised demands for reconciliation between Hamas and Fateh and for reform of the PLO. Despite reconciliation agreements between Hamas and Fateh existing on paper, neither side wishes to make concrete moves, which would compromise their respective power.<sup>62</sup>

Notwithstanding the failure to achieve their demands for Palestinian political reforms, the ‘15 March’ movement has evolved. It is leading direct action against Israeli occupation, from campaigning for Palestinians to abide by a boycott of Israeli goods to protesting outside Israeli prisons in solidarity with Palestinian hunger strikers and condemning normalisation by Palestinian politicians and business elites. Although it is not an aim of the movement to oppose Fateh or Hamas, for many of these activists there is little love for either party and their positions against Israel definitely put them at odds with the West Bank leadership. As Noura Erakat argues, “The movement’s horizon may render existing political parties meaningless as invigorated youth activists search for creative ways to shatter the stagnation of their domestic condition in an effort to buttress their ongoing struggle against Israeli colonization”.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, it remains to be seen not only how Fateh and Hamas may put aside their political rivalries but, more significantly, how they will reconcile demands for a new political leadership with their own promises to hold elections, which will surely bring their popularity into question as well as raise questions about which strategies should be pursued to end Israel’s occupation.

One example of creative efforts by Palestinians to resist Israel’s occupation was the declaration of a ‘third intifada’ for 15 May 2011 –the anniversary of the *Nakba*. In line with much of the social media oriented activism of the “Arab Spring”, a group of Arab and Pal-

62 A. Tartir, “Fatah and Hamas: An Elusive Reconciliation”, *opendemocracy on-line*, 2012. <http://www.opendemocracy.net/alaa-tartir/fatah-and-hamas-elusive-reconciliation> (accessed 5 November 2012).

63 N. Erakat, “Palestinian Youth: New Movement, New Borders”, *Jadaliyya.com*, 6 May 2011. (accessed 4 March 2012).

estinian activists created a Facebook page in March 2011 (which was initially removed by Facebook, for allegedly inciting violence). Nevertheless, the page reappeared and attracted hundreds of thousands of followers. The Third Palestinian Intifada called on all Arabs, not just Palestinians, and internationals to protest peacefully outside Israeli embassies and consulates globally against the occupation and for the implementation of the right of return for Palestinian refugees. A number of protests took place in Arab countries, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel. Marches in Egypt and Jordan were prevented by security forces from arriving at the borders of historic Palestine as planned. However, in unprecedented images, protesters from Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza Strip marched towards the ceasefire lines (de facto borders with Israel) and thousands of protesters breached the border between Syria and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.<sup>64</sup> As one Egyptian wrote: “It is very true that the whole Arab spring [...] has nothing to do with Israel as far as motivation is concerned, but that doesn’t mean that Israel is immune from its ripple effect. ... If the Arab people decided to address 60 years of unmet socio-political demands then the Palestinian issue should undoubtedly come on top of that list”.<sup>65</sup>

Until now these acts of resistance have not evolved into a mass movement. Palestinians are aware of the challenges: separation of Palestinians living in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Israel as well as fragmentation within the West Bank as a result of checkpoints and settler only roads; and separation between Palestinians in historic Palestine and those in the diaspora. The militarisation of the “Arab Spring” in Libya and Syria has made Palestinian refugees vulnerable to further displacement. Palestinians in the Gaza Strip face poverty and unsustainable livelihoods as the result of a 5 year blockade. Even West Bank Palestinians are facing threats to their livelihoods as a result of the combination of neoliberal economic policies slavishly followed by the PA and Israel’s continuing control of the economy. In September 2012, thousands of Palestinians protested across the West Bank against rising living costs.

Yet despite these challenges, and despite the efforts of Israel and

64 H. Sherwood, “Thirteen killed as Israeli troops open fire on Nakba Day border protests”, *Guardian Online*, 15 May 2011. (accessed 4 March 2012).

65 Ashraf Ezzat, “Third Intifada Underway”, *Dissident Voice*, 9 May 2011. <http://dissidentvoice.org/2011/05/third-intifada-underway/> (accessed 4 March 2012).

Western donors (and also Gulf donors) to pacify the Palestinians, Palestinian resistance continues. The use of social media is a significant tool enabling Palestinians to overcome geographical dispersion.<sup>66</sup> Whilst protests and other direct action since 2011 have not led to a “Palestinian Spring”, we are witnessing the voicing of different positions within the Palestinian movement and these are no longer along the lines of Fateh vs Hamas. Instead, voices, predominantly from amongst young people independent of these two parties, are calling for non-violent resistance against Israel and greater democracy within the Palestinian movement in order to end the occupation. This is a rejection of the ‘earned sovereignty’ approach of Fateh and the armed resistance approach of Hamas. Both approaches have failed to end Israel’s occupation, whilst both parties are currently without a democratic mandate (which expired in 2010). These new Palestinian voices are potentially supported by a re-energised Arab solidarity movement,<sup>67</sup> as well as a growing international solidarity movement focused around Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS). It is this reinvigorated resistance and the failure of Western countries until now to pacify it that represents the greatest challenge to Israel’s continued colonization.

## Conclusion

The “Arab spring” does not immediately benefit the resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict—at least as the process is currently conceptualised. If we conceive of the conflict-resolution process as one in which two national groups, Jewish and Palestinian, engage in negotiations on how to “compromise” to share historic Palestine, then the “Arab Spring” appears to have thrown up more barriers to this already difficult endeavour. Israel has retreated to its bunker and has not ceased those policies that are damaging to a two-state solution (primarily, settlement building), whilst further eroding the trust of Palestinian citizens of Israel in the democratic nature of the state. Meanwhile, unity talks between Fateh and Hamas have not reconciled the two different strategies of the two parties (diplomacy vs. armed struggle), let alone reconciled the parties themselves, al-

66 L. Alsaafin, “Linah Alsaafin on Social Media and Palestine”, *Jadaliyya.com*, 7 June 2013. <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/12099/linah-alsaafin-on-social-media-and-palestine> (accessed 27 June 2013).

67 R. Abou El-Fadl, “The Road to Jerusalem through Tahrir Square: Anti-Zionism and Palestine in the 2011 Egyptian Revolution”, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol 41, No. 2, Winter 2012, pp. 6-26.

though it may represent a tacit acknowledgement by Hamas of the two-state solution.

However, the “Arab spring” has shaken things up. It has highlighted the need for a new strategy to replace the Oslo process in solving the Israel-Palestine conflict. It has given impetus to new political actors (particularly from within the Palestinian diaspora and amongst Palestinian youth, supported by reenergised Arab and global solidarity movements), creating new ways to resist Israel’s settler colonial project. The new methods of non-violent resistance, including protests against Israeli land expropriation, for the rights of Palestinian prisoners and against normalisation activities by the PA as well as the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign, challenge the legitimacy of Israel’s settler colonial project. Noura Erakat sounds words of caution, arguing that there is a need for the articulation of a political programme and not merely the use of new strategies to achieve Palestinian self-determination.<sup>68</sup> Yet, by challenging Israel’s settler colonial project, Palestinian activists are also challenging the assumptions and parameters of the Oslo peace process and, implicitly, proposing a new paradigm for bringing about a just peace in historic Palestine.

### **Postscript**

Since completing this article, Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi was deposed by the military on 3 July 2013, following massive popular demonstrations against his presidency and his Muslim Brotherhood backers. In addition, the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority announced the resumption of peace negotiations on 30 July. These events pose new opportunities for Israel to continue its project of settler colonialism and new obstacles to the achievement of Palestinian rights.

Despite Israel’s concerns about the instability that the ouster of Morsi may bring, the military-backed Egyptian government will undoubtedly continue, if not strengthen, security cooperation with Israel in the name of waging its declared ‘war against terrorism’. Morsi’s departure is a blow to Hamas in the Gaza Strip as well as potentially undermining Egyptian popular solidarity with the Palestinians, who have been represented in the media as allies of the deposed president and threats to Egyptian security.

68 N. Erakat, “Palestinian Youth: New Movement, New Borders”.

With regards to the resumption of peace talks, these will not lead to a just peace in which the human rights of Palestinians are fully addressed. US Secretary of State John Kerry announced that all final status issues are open for negotiation, meaning that the PA will be forced to negotiate over rights that are already enshrined in international law. These talks can be considered to be a conflict management strategy on the part of Washington, rather than a move towards real peace.

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# Turkey's Multiple Kurdish Dilemmas – Syria, Iraq and at Home; How They Are Related, and Where They Might Lead

Bill PARK\*

## Abstract

With the emergence of the Kurdistan Regional Government of northern Iraq to quasi-statehood, the growing political and economic relationship between it and Turkey, the turmoil in Syria that has led to the establishment of self-governing Kurdish zones in the country, and Turkey's continuing attempts to resolve its own Kurdish problem, Ankara is now grappling with a 'Kurdish issue' that is more transborder, complex, overlapping and interlinked than ever before. This paper traces the relationship between these various and fast-moving dimensions of Turkey's Kurdish dilemmas, and speculates about the range of possible outcomes. It also seeks to locate Turkey's Kurdish policies and problems within the context of wider regional and global dynamics.

**Keyword:** Kurds, Turkey, Syria, Iraq, KRG, PKK

## Türkiye'nin Çok Yönlü Kürt Çıkmazları – Suriye, Irak ve Anavatanda; Nasıl Birbirleriyle Bağlantılıdır ve Ne Yöne Gidebilir

### Özet

Kuzey Irak'ın Bölgesel Kürt Yönetimi'nin yarı-devlet olma yoluna girmesiyle, Türkiye ile arasında artan siyasi ve ekonomik ilişkilerle, ülkede özerk Kürt alanlar oluşmasına yol açan Suriye'deki karışıklıkla ve Türkiye'nin kendi Kürt sorununu çözmek için devam eden girişimleriyle, Ankara şimdi hiç olmadığı kadar daha sınırlar-arası, karmaşık, örtüşen ve birbirine bağlı bir "Kürt Sorunu" ile boğuşmaktadır. Bu çalışma Türkiye'nin Kürt çıkmazının çeşitli ve hızla gelişen boyutları arasındaki ilişkileri izlemektedir ve olası sonuçların kapsa-

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mi hakkında tahminlerde bulunmaktadır. Aynı zamanda Türkiye'nin Kürt politikalarını ve sorunlarını daha geniş bölgesel ve küresel dinamikler içinde saptamaya çalışmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kürtler, Türkiye, Suriye, Irak, IKBY, PKK

المشاكل الكردية ذات الأبعاد المتعددة بالنسبة الى تركيا – كيفية ارتباطها ببعضها في سوريا والعراق والوطن الأم، والى أية اتجاهات قد تسير نحوها  
بيل بارك

### الملخص :

بعد ان اوضحت الادارة الكردية الإقليمية في شمال العراق تتجه نحو كونها شبه دولة مستقلة، ونتيجة العلاقات السياسية والاقتصادية المتزايدة بين هذه النظام وتركيا، والاضطرابات التي تشهدها سوريا والتي فتحت المجال لتكوين مساحات كردية المستقلة في البلاد، والمبادرات المستمرة التي تبذلها تركيا من اجل حل مشكلتها الكردية الداخلية. فان انقرة تتصارع الآن مع "مشكلة كردية"، لم يسبق لها مثيل من قبل من حيث التعقيد وتداخل الحدود وارتباط احداها بالأخرى وتغطية إحداها للأخرى. وتحاول هذه الدراسة تتبع العلاقات المختلفة بين ابعاد المشكلة الكردية المتفاقمة بسرعة في تركيا، والتنبؤ بالنتائج المحتملة لهذه المشكلة. كما تحاول هذه الدراسة، في نفس الوقت، تشخيص السياسات الكردية لتركيا ومشاكلها ضمن ديناميكيات اقليمية ودولية وابعاد اكثر اتساعا وعمقا.

**كلمات مفتاحية :** الأكراد، تركيا، سوريا، العراق، KRG، PKK

## Introduction; Turkey's multiple and overlapping dilemmas

As Ankara embarks on the 'Imrali process' in its latest endeavour to find some kind of resolution to its domestic problem of Kurdish unrest and alienation, it is more evident today even than has been the case in the past that Turkey's Kurdish question is a trans-state one that is by no means confined to, or soluble within, Turkey's own national borders.<sup>1</sup> Although the latest 'Kurdish opening' is surely primarily motivated by Turkey's purely domestic political needs, the emergence of a more or less self-governing Kurdish enclave in Syria has added to Ankara's sense of urgency. This assessment is strengthened by the apparent pre-eminence amongst Syrian Kurds of the PYD (*Partiya Yekitiya Demokrat*, or Democratic Union Party), which is generally presumed in Turkey to be an offshoot of the PKK (*Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan*, or Kurdistan Workers Party). The developing unrest in Syria that followed the Assad regime's crack-down in Spring 2011 was soon accompanied by a withdrawal of government forces from Syria's Kurdish areas in the country's north and northeast.<sup>2</sup> In what might yet prove to be an echo of the consequences of Saddam Hussein's withdrawal of government forces from northern Iraq in October 1991, this provided the opportunity for the PYD to effect a takeover and to introduce autonomous governing structures.

The Syrian Kurdish takeover was preceded and partly accompanied by a spike in PKK violence inside Turkey, in which it was estimated that more than seven hundred people were killed in the fourteen months up to August 2012 – the highest level of PKK-related violence for thirteen years.<sup>3</sup> Turkey feared that it might find itself faced with a two-front campaign by PKK fighters from across both the Iraqi and Syrian borders. This fear is perhaps understandable given that as many as one third of the PKK membership may be of Syrian Kurdish origin,<sup>4</sup> and also in the light of Ankara's conviction that

1 This is the theme running through *The Kurdish question and Turkey: an example of a trans-state ethnic conflict*, Kemal Kirisci and Gareth M. Winrow, (London and Portland, Oregon; Frank Cass, 1997).

2 Scott Bobb, "Syrian conflict gives Kurds new freedom", *Voice of America News*, 20 August 2012, <http://www.voanews.com/content/syrian-conflict-gives-kurds-partial-control-of-north/1491341.html>, accessed 5 June 2013.

3 *Turkey: the PKK and a Kurdish settlement*, Europe Report no. 219, International Crisis Group, 11 September 2012, p.1, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/-/media/Files/europe/turkey-cyprus/turkey/219-turkey-the-pkk-and-a-kurdish-settlement>, accessed 28 May 2013.

4 Nihat Ali Ozcan and H.Erdem Gurkaynak, "Who are these armed people on the mountains?", February 2012 <http://www.tepev.org.tr>, accessed 17 May 2012.

Damascus resuscitated its support for Turkey's Kurds in retaliation for Ankara's support for the Syrian opposition.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, Turkey's sponsorship and hosting of the Syrian National Council (SNC), and the close links it has with the Free Syrian Army (FSA), both of which were headquartered in Turkey until November 2012, in effect made Turkey a party in the fight over Syria's future. Ankara's preference has been that Syria's Kurds commit to the SNC's struggle against the Assad regime. However, most of the diverse and squabbling elements that make up the increasingly Islamic and Arab nationalist Syrian opposition lack sympathy with Kurdish aspirations. In any case Syria's Kurds are almost as divided as the SNC,<sup>6</sup> but most appear to distrust the opposition to Assad as much or more than they distrust Assad, and they have generally kept their distance from it. Notwithstanding clashes between the PYD and pro-government forces in late 2012 and subsequently, and the PYD's demands for Syrian Kurdish autonomy, Ankara suspects the PYD is in an alliance of sorts with the regime. Clashes between PYD and anti-government forces that broke out in late 2012 and early 2013 might give some credence to the Turkish view,<sup>7</sup> although many Kurds - and not a few Turks - believe Turkish-backed Arab forces provoked the exchanges.<sup>8</sup> Iran too has a track record of aiding the PKK as a lever against Turkey, and Ankara's differences with Tehran over both the Syrian crisis and Iraq's evolution may also have prompted Iran to offer sustenance to the PKK.<sup>9</sup> Turkey's role in the simmering sectarian tensions in the region further complicates its Kurdish dilemmas. In short, the region's volatility, and Turkey's response to it, has highlighted its own vulnerability to PKK violence. Hence Ankara's need to initiate a peace process at home.

5 Serkan Demirtas, "Syria supporting PKK, says intelligence report", *Hurriyet Daily News*, 23 March 2012.

6 For analyses of Syria's Kurdish politics, see Denise Natali, "Syria's Kurdish Quagmire", 3 May 2012, [www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2012/5/syriakurd486.htm](http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2012/5/syriakurd486.htm), accessed 3 May 2012; *Syria's Kurds: A Struggle Within a Struggle*, International Crisis Group (ICG), Middle East Report No.136, 22 January 2013; *Who Is the Syrian Kurdish Opposition?: The Development of Kurdish Parties, 1956-2011*, KurdWatch, Report 8, December 2011.

7 For details, see [www.kurdwatch.org](http://www.kurdwatch.org).

8 Statement Regarding Terrorist Attacks on Syrian Kurdish Town Sere Kaniye/Ras al-Ain, National Coordination Body for Democratic Change in Syria, 20 January 2013, [www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2013/1/syriakurd726.htm](http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2013/1/syriakurd726.htm), accessed 22 January 2013.

9 Cengiz Candar, "Turkey claims Iran providing logistical support for PKK", *Al-Monitor*, 30 December 2012.

It is also reasonable to assume that Ankara's apparent readiness to enter into dialogue with the leadership of Turkey's Kurds is connected to the glaring paradox of its ever-closer relationship with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) of northern Iraq. Recent years have witnessed a steadily intensifying crackdown against members of the Kurdish Communities Union (*Koma Civikan Kurdistan*, or KCK) in Turkey, a pro-Kurdish umbrella organisation. Commencing as early as April 2009 and leading to up to ten thousand arrests up to the present time, the detainees include elected officials of the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (*Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi*, or BDP), human rights activists, lawyers, trades unionists, intellectuals and the like. Yet this process, and the increasingly violent struggle with the PKK that paralleled it, has been conducted alongside Ankara's pursuit of deepening economic, political and energy with the self-governing Kurdish entity across the border in Iraq. Trade with the KRG now accounts for well over half of Turkey's trade with Iraq as a whole, which is Turkey's second or third largest trading partner. Tens of thousands of Turkish citizens work or have established businesses in Kurdish Iraq, many of them Turkish Kurds. Indeed, the potential economic benefits to Turkey's impoverished and predominantly Kurdish-inhabited southeast of the KRG's booming economy is not lost on Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, or AKP), which is engaged in a competition for votes in the region with the pro-Kurdish BDP.

The developing energy relationship between Turkey and the KRG is particularly compelling.<sup>10</sup> The estimates of energy reserves in Iraq's north have increased substantially since Erbil decided to enter into its own exploration agreements, a policy regarded as illegal by Baghdad. The problem for the KRG and the companies that operate there – which include such energy 'supermajors' as ExxonMobil, Chevron, and Total – is how to export the oil and gas that has been discovered. Notwithstanding Baghdad's opposition to Iraqi energy trade that it does not itself sanction, Turkey has emerged as a willing destination and transit route for KRG oil and gas. Currently small quantities of oil are being trucked across the border, but pipelines are under construction which could carry the KRG's oil and gas directly across the Turkish border. In addition to the

<sup>10</sup> For background, see "Iraq and the Kurds: the high stakes hydrocarbons gambit", *International Crisis Group* Middle East Report no.120, 19 April 2012.

alleged unconstitutionality of such trade, Baghdad fears that the KRG's autonomous energy policy could result in Erbil's economic independence from the rest of Iraq and threaten the county's territorial integrity. Just a few years ago this was Ankara's position too, and emphatically so, but Turkey now appears either to have altered its assessment of the political implications of an increasingly financially self-sufficient KRG, or to have embraced the possibility of Iraq's further decentralisation and even fragmentation. Even Washington is nervous at Ankara's boldness.<sup>11</sup>

### **Barzani; Turkey's new 'best friend' in the region?**

Figures in both Ankara and Erbil have described their relationship as 'strategic'. Both have poor relations with the Shia-dominated regime of Nouri al-Maliki in Baghdad, have a shared stake in the development of the KRG's energy resources, and once the new pipelines are in operation will also have a shared stake in the safe exportation of energy through Turkey's Kurdish populated southeast. Furthermore, the popularity of Öcalan amongst more radical Kurds, and the example set by the PKK fighters holed up in northern Iraq's Kandil mountains, poses a political challenge to the Iraqi Kurdish authorities, who are also compromised by Turkish military attacks against PKK bases within KRG territory. Unsurprisingly, KRG leaders would prefer to see an end to Ankara's conflict with the PKK. KRG President Massoud Barzani and other leading KRG figures have repeatedly called for the PKK to end its armed campaign, and encouraged both sides to seek a peaceful solution. During his visit to Turkey in April 2012, Barzani declared that he "will not allow the PKK to prevail in the (KRG) region".<sup>12</sup> In Barzani Ankara now believes it has found a Kurdish leader who it can relate to. This is more a paradigm shift than a simple resurrection of earlier tactical alliances, such as that during Barzani's struggle against the Tehran-backed PUK in the 1990s, although both sides retain a wariness borne of earlier periods of mutual antipathy.

11 Sevgi Akarcesme, "Ambassador Tan: U.S. rhetoric at times resembles that of Iran's on the issue of Iraq," *Sundays Zaman*, [www.todayszaman.com/news-303463-ambassador-tan-us-rhetoric-at-times-resembles-irans-on-the-issue-of-iraq.html](http://www.todayszaman.com/news-303463-ambassador-tan-us-rhetoric-at-times-resembles-irans-on-the-issue-of-iraq.html), ; Serkan Demirtas, "Turkey, U.S., to hold intensified Iraq talks," *Hurriyet Daily News*, [www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-us-to-hold-intensified-iraq-talks.aspx?pageID=238&cnID=38575&NewsCatID=338](http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-us-to-hold-intensified-iraq-talks.aspx?pageID=238&cnID=38575&NewsCatID=338), both 8 January, 2013, accessed 27 January, 2013; Turkey defies Washington and Baghdad to pursue Iraqi Kurdistan energy ties," 19 February, 2013, [www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2013/2/turkey4532.htm](http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2013/2/turkey4532.htm), , accessed 20 February, 2013.

12 "Massoud Barzani says won't allow PKK to operate from Iraqi Kurdistan," 20 April 2012, [www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2012/4/turkey3893.htm](http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2012/4/turkey3893.htm), accessed 26 April 2012.



ish National Council (KNC), a more pro-Barzani but divided group of Syrian Kurdish factions.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, his KDP has also been engaged in establishing and training a Syrian *peshmerga* that could form a fighting arm for the more pro-Barzani elements of the KNC and which might also prove more sympathetic to Syria's Arab opposition forces, as is Turkey of course. However, the PYD has sought to prevent them from crossing into Syria from their northern Iraqi bases, which is just one indication of how unsuccessful Barzani's efforts to forge greater Syrian Kurdish unity have been thus far, and of how dominant the PYD remains in Syrian Kurdistan.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, in May 2013 the PYD arrested seventy-four members of an armed pro-KDP faction that apparently did manage to cross into Syria. In retaliation, Barzani closed the KRG-Syrian border.<sup>20</sup> Skirmishes between the PYD and other Syrian Kurdish factions have reportedly occurred on a number of occasions at least since mid-2012.<sup>21</sup> Given that Iraqi Kurdistan's other ruling party, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), appears to favour - and some of its members might even have joined forces with - the PYD, Syrian Kurdish divisions could undermine the unity of the KRG.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, Barzani has expressed his support for the Syrian federation idea,<sup>23</sup> and he recognises the disadvantages that division carries for the Syrian Kurdish cause. The interest Barzani has taken in the possible emergence of an autonomous Syrian Kurdish region has introduced a note of disquiet into Ankara-Erbil relationships. Ankara is uneasy at the prospect of the emergence of an autonomous Kurdish zone in Syria, and seems simultaneously mistrustful of the role Barzani might be playing though supportive of his attempts to

18 David Pollock, "Syrian Kurds unite against Assad, but not with opposition," *Policywatch* 1967, The Washington Institute, 31 July 2012. For more on the KNC, see "*The Kurdish National Council in Syria*," Carnegie Middle East Center, 15 February 2012, [www.carnegie-mec.org/publications/?fa=48502](http://www.carnegie-mec.org/publications/?fa=48502), accessed 25 January 2013.

19 *Syria's Kurds: A Struggle Within a Struggle*, International Crisis Group (ICG), Middle East Report No.136, 22 January 2013, pp.4-5, 25.

20 Wladimir van Wildenburg, "Border arrests reveal disunity, conflict among Syrian Kurds", *Al Monitor*, 21 May 2013, accessed 5 June 2013.

21 Wladimir van Wildenburg, "Danger of Kurdish civil war in Syrian Kurdistan," *Rudaw*, 8 July 2012, [www.rudaw.net/english/science/columnists/4931.html](http://www.rudaw.net/english/science/columnists/4931.html), accessed 25 January 2013. Also see [www.kurdwatch.org](http://www.kurdwatch.org).

22 Eric Bruneau, "Taking the fight to Syria: Kurdish rivalries play out over the border", *Niqash*, 30 May 2013, <http://www.niqash.org/articles/?id=3228>, accessed 5 June 2013.

23 Ipek Yezdani, "Syrian Kurds aim to establish 'federal state'", *Hurriyet Daily News*, 7 February 2012, [www.hurriyetaidailynews.com](http://www.hurriyetaidailynews.com), accessed 27 February 2013.

undermine the PYD.<sup>24</sup> In short, it is a set of circumstances that is shot through with paradox and contradiction.

### Where might these developments lead? The PKK

The 'Imrali process' has been a curious initiative thus far and remains hard to assess. It is of course just the latest of a number of attempts by the AKP government to address Turkey's Kurdish difficulties through non-military means.<sup>25</sup> The AKP enjoys considerable support amongst Turkey's Kurdish voters, especially from the roughly half of them that reside in Turkey's cities. It is in electoral competition with the BDP in Turkey's southeast, and may also be motivated by the aspiration to further limit the domestic political role of the Turkish military, which in the past has been largely responsible for 'securitising' Turkey's approach to its Kurdish question. Furthermore, the drawn out struggle against the PKK has been economically, politically and socially very costly for Turkey, upsetting its western friends, draining the national budget, and pitting citizen against citizen. The AKP government's efforts started with Prime Minister Erdoğan's recognition, in a speech in Diyarbakır in August 2005, that Turkey has a 'Kurdish issue' and that 'mistakes' had been made in the handling of it. His answer to the problem then was more democratisation in Turkey generally. Indeed, reforms did produce a softening of the restrictions on the use of the Kurdish language, notably in the media. However, it wasn't until the 2009 launch of the 'Kurdish opening' that any real progress seemed likely. The way for this had been paved by the so-called Oslo Process, a series of secret talks with Kurdish elements that were led on the Turkish side by Hakan Fidan, now the head of Turkey's National Intelligence Organisation (*Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı*, or MIT).<sup>26</sup>

There were deliberations with civil society and a National Assembly debate, but for a variety of reasons the initiative came to a halt in 2011. The government coupled the initiative with an intensifica-

24 "Turkey warned Iraqi Kurds that autonomy would not be applied in Syria: PM," *Hurriyet Daily News*, 2 November 2012, [www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-warned-iraqi-kurds-that-autonomy-would-not-be-applied-in-syria-pm.aspx?pageID=238&nID=33802&NewsCatID=338](http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-warned-iraqi-kurds-that-autonomy-would-not-be-applied-in-syria-pm.aspx?pageID=238&nID=33802&NewsCatID=338), accessed 20 February 20, 2013.

25 For an overview, see *Turkey: the PKK and a Kurdish settlement*, International Crisis Group, 2012, *op.cit.*

26 Umit Cizre, 'The emergence of the government's perspective on the Kurdish issue', pp.1-12; Cengiz Candar, 'The Kurdish question: the reasons and fortunes of the 'opening'', pp.13-19, both *Insight Turkey*, 11(4), Fall 2009.

tion of its repression of Kurdish sympathisers and a hardening of its language – or, rather, the use of inconsistent and contradictory language – such that in April 2011 Erdoğan claimed ‘there is no Kurdish issue in this country’.<sup>27</sup> More broadly, the government’s democratisation reform programme slowed or even reversed. Publicly, the government ruled out talking to the PKK or its leader Abdullah Öcalan, notwithstanding the insistence on the part of many Kurdish figures that he remained the head of Turkey’s Kurdish movement. Erdoğan also refused to shake the hand of BDP co-leader Selahattin Demirtaş (he still refuses to do so). Turkey’s opposition parties criticised the initiative and withheld their support and participation. Large swathes of the Turkish public shared the scepticism and even hostility. This sentiment was hardened by the PKK’s continuing acts of violence, which intensified in 2011, and by the festive joy with which the homecoming of thirty four PKK militants was greeted as they crossed into Turkey from northern Iraq in October 2009. Kurdish spirits were dampened by the subsequent detention of a number of the returnees. All in all, it seemed there were reasons to doubt the good faith of both the government and the Kurdish movement, the objectives of both sides remained obscure, and neither the public nor the political class had been prepared. The December 2011 Uludere bombing of 34 smugglers who were mistaken for PKK fighters, the subsequent failure to fully apologise or explain the incident;<sup>28</sup> the intensification of the detention of thousands of KCK activists; the continuing harsh rhetoric surrounding the Kurdish issue of the prime minister in particular; and the intensification of violence already noted, all reinforced the impression that Turkey was not at all ready for a breakthrough.

So, does the ‘Imrali process’ suggest that anything has changed in Turkey? Perhaps the most remarkable difference is that the formerly demonised PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan is now central to the process, although Erdoğan somewhat curiously seeks to distance the elected government from the process by insisting that contacts with Öcalan have been made by officials rather than members of the government. The decision to engage with Öcalan seems in part

27 Tulin Daloglu, “Erdoğan’s many positions on the Kurdish issue”, *Al Monitor*, 23 April 2013, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/04/erdogan-kurdish-issue-flip-flop-turkey-peace.html>, accessed 6 June 2013.

28 Amberin Zaman, “AKP report on Uludere airstrike condemned as ‘whitewash’”, *Al Monitor*, 2 May 2013, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/05/uludere-massacre-kurdish-smugglers-peace.html>, accessed 6 June 2013.

to have been inspired by his successful appeal in November 2012 to around seven hundred imprisoned Kurdish activists to end their two month old hunger strike. The appeal appeared to demonstrate both his unmatched influence and also his good will.<sup>29</sup> After a series of consultations with the PKK leaders in the Kandil mountains, Kurdish activists based in Europe, and the BDP – members of which also acted as go-between – a message from Öcalan was read out at the Kurdish new year, or *Newroz*, gathering on 21 March 2013 in Diyarbakır.<sup>30</sup> In his message he referred to the common past of Turks and Kurds, asserted that they live together under the “flag of Islam”, and that they need to create a common future. In particular, he pronounced that “the period of armed struggle is ending, and the door is opening to democratic politics”. He went on to insist that “we have now arrived at the stage of withdrawing our armed forces outside the borders”. On 8 May, PKK fighters did begin to trek through the mountains to their northern Iraqi bases, a process that is expected to be completed sooner rather than later. However, and contrary to Erdoğan’s wishes, they did not first disarm, and in early June a brief firefight broke out between PKK fighters and Turkish soldiers inside the Iraqi border.<sup>31</sup>

Remarkably perhaps, Öcalan’s address made no direct mention of what concessions Ankara had made in return. Nor has Erdoğan been at all forthcoming, although it is for the government to initiate the next phase of the process – at the time of writing, no details of what this might look like had yet emerged. Perhaps it needs time to digest the outcome of the novel although somewhat curious innovation of the sixty-two Erdoğan-approved ‘wise people’ tasked to consult civil society throughout Turkey and organized on a regional basis.<sup>32</sup> In fact there are few indications that the prime minister will be willing or able to meet Kurdish expectations. Although these remain largely unspecified, they are believed to include Öcalan’s re-

29 Jenna Krajeski, “After the hunger strike”, *The New Yorker*, 29 November, 2012, <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/newsdesk/2012/11/after-the-kurdish-hunger-strike-in-turkish-prisons.html> accessed 6 June 2013.

30 For the full text, see <http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2013/3/turkey4603.htm>, accessed 6 June 2013.

31 “BDP hopeful of end to clashes with PKK”, *Hurriyet Daily News*, 5 June 2013, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/bdp-hopeful-of-end-to-clashes-with-pkk.aspx?pageID=238&nID=48228&NewsCatID=338>, accessed 19 June 2013.

32 Kadri Gursel, “Erdogan asks ‘wise people’ to make case for peace”, *Al Monitor*, 15 April 2013, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/04/erdogan-wise-people-commission-peace-process.html>, accessed 19 June 2013.

lease or transfer to house arrest – something that Erdoğan has specifically denied he has agreed to; the winding down of the so-called ‘village guard’ system of government-sponsored and armed Kurdish citizens; the release of the thousands of KCK activists currently held in detention; a reform of Turkey’s notorious anti-terror laws that are frequently used against political activists thought to be sympathetic to the Kurdish cause (and which at the time of writing being threatened against Turkey’s ‘Gezi Park’ protestors);<sup>33</sup> education in Kurdish; establishing Kurdish as co-equal with Turkish as an official language of the Republic; the replacement of the current ethnic definition of citizenship with a civic one; an end to the ten percent electoral hurdle for parliamentary representation; and, above all, some kind of devolution, self-determination, or ‘democratic autonomy’ that would, in effect, introduce something tantamount to a federal political system in Turkey.<sup>34</sup> There appear to be few indications that Erdoğan, his party, the opposition parties, or public opinion is at all ready to concede many, if any, of these demands. Erdoğan appears to think in terms of an Islamic ‘brotherhood’ between Turkey’s Turkish and Kurdish citizens, and appears not to recognize the pressure to adopt a pluralistic approach that is inherent in Kurdish ethnic identity demands.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, the behaviour and rhetoric of the government during the past few weeks and months of protest in Turkey hardly suggests that it is set firmly on a course of further democratisation, reform and inclusiveness – an observation made by PKK and BDP leaders.<sup>36</sup>

Unsurprisingly then, again at the time of writing, there is disquiet amongst some Kurdish leaders. In addition to impatience, voiced by Öcalan among others, at the government’s somewhat tardy response in the wake of the PKK withdrawal to across the border,<sup>37</sup>

33 “Police to consider protestors in Istanbul’s Taksim Square terror organisation members: Minister”, *Hurriyet Daily News*, 16 June 2013, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/police-to-consider-protesters-in-istanbuls-taksim-square-terror-organization-members-minister.aspx?pageID=238&nID=48875&NewsCatID=338>, accessed 17 June 2013.

34 “Kurdish conference ends with list of demands from gov’t”, *Today’s Zaman*, 17 June, 2013, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-318516-kurdish-conference-ends-with-list-of-demands-from-govt.html>, accessed 17 June 2013.

35 Johanna Nykanen, “Identity, narrative and frames: assessing Turkey’s Kurdish initiatives”, *Insight Turkey*, 15 (2), Spring 2013, pp.85-101.

36 “PKK says Turkish police crackdown may hurt Kurdish peace process”, *Reuters*, 5 June 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/05/us-turkey-protests-kurds-idUSBRE95410T20130605>, accessed 17 June 2013.

37 “Government needs to move on: PKK leader”, *Hurriyet Daily News*, 17 June 2013, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/government-needs-to-move-on-pkk-leader.aspx?pageID=238&nID=48932&NewsCatID=338>, accessed 19 June 2013.

PKK fighters in particular, led by Murat Karayılan, have been skeptical from the beginning.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, Karayılan has openly expressed his doubts regarding Ankara's sincerity and the prospect of a renewed and even intensified war.<sup>39</sup> At the June 2013 Kurdish gathering in Diyarbakır, Ahmet Türk, a senior BDP figure, voiced similar doubts about Ankara's intentions.<sup>40</sup> It does indeed seem unrealistic to assume that so long and bitter a conflict can be overcome easily or quickly, and without considerable sacrifice on the government side too. In short, a satisfactory outcome to the process should not at all be taken for granted. The major obstacles are still to be overcome. A case can even be made that neither the government nor the PKK are in great need of a settlement. Each deeply mistrusts the other. The PKK remains able to recruit and raise funds, might reasonably feel that time is on its side in light of the wider development in the region, and will seek to preserve its legitimacy. For his part, Erdoğan runs the risk of incurring the wrath of Turkish nationalist sentiment, of seeming to legitimise Öcalan and the PKK, and of failure. Nor is it necessarily the case that Öcalan, for all the status and symbolic significance he undoubtedly possesses, entertains aspirations that precisely accord with all elements of Turkey's wider Kurdish movement.<sup>41</sup>

### Where might these developments lead? The KRG

No doubt recalling earlier clashes with the PKK, such as during the mid-1990s, Barzani is wary of the expanded PKK presence on KRG territory that is a consequence of the 'Imrali process', seeing it as a potential rival and as posing the risk of intensified Turkish military activity inside KRG territory should the process be derailed.<sup>42</sup> He

38 Patrick Markey and Isobel Coles, "Insight: Hopes, suspicions over peace in Kurdish rebel hideout", *Reuters*, 27 March 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/03/27/us-iraq-turkey-pkk-insight-idUSBRE92Q0J520130327>, accessed 19 June 2013.

39 Tim Arango, "Rebel keeps Kurds' guns close at hand in peace talks with Turkey", *New York Times*, 11 April 2013, [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/12/world/middleeast/rebel-kurd-karayilan-defiant-in-turkish-talks.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/12/world/middleeast/rebel-kurd-karayilan-defiant-in-turkish-talks.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0), accessed 19 June 2013.

40 "Ahmet Turk blames Ankara government, warns the peace talks will fail", *Kurdpress*, 11 June 2013, <http://www.kurdpress.com/En/NSite/FullStory/News?Id=4733#Title=%0A%09%09%09%09%09%09%09%09%09%09Ahmet%20Turk%20blames%20Ankara%20government%2C%20warns%20the%20peace%20talks%20will%20fail%0A%09%09%09%09%09%09%09>, accessed 19 June 2013.

41 For these arguments, see Gunes Murat Tezcur, "Prospect for resolution of the Kurdish question: a realist perspective", *Insight Turkey*, 15 (2), Spring 2013, pp.69-84.

42 Denise Natali, "PKK challenges Barzani in Iraqi Kurdistan", *Kurdnet*, 10 May 2013, <http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2013/5/state7069.htm>, accessed 19 June 2013. ☐

has also expressed his hope that “we are expecting that after the problem is solved, they will go back to their homes”.<sup>43</sup> As we have seen however, the KRG authorities have welcomed Turkey’s attempt to resolve its domestic Kurdish struggle. In any case, Erbil is far more preoccupied with its relations with Baghdad and with Ankara, and developments in neighbouring Syria. In June, Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki paid a visit to Erbil in the latest attempt to patch up the government’s multi-faceted quarrel with the Kurds in the north. Barzani described these talks as the ‘last chance’ to resolve the differences between Erbil and Baghdad, and once again appeared to threaten Kurdish secession should they fail.<sup>44</sup> The visit resulted in the establishment of seven joint committees to address the energy, budgetary, territorial, border crossing responsibilities, and other differences that have brought Baghdad and Erbil to the brink of armed conflict, which even now consists of armed stand-offs around Kirkuk, and which has led to a deepening of the chasm between them.<sup>45</sup>

Again, it is not at all self-evident that much progress will ensue. Within a few days of the meeting, in moves certain to infuriate Baghdad further, Erbil announced that an agreement had been signed to give a Turkish company exploration rights to six blocks within the KRG’s territory;<sup>46</sup> that the US company Chevron has been granted a third exploration block in the KRG;<sup>47</sup> and that an oil pipeline from the KRG to Turkey would be completed by September 2013, that the Anglo-Turkish company Genel Energy would begin exporting oil via the pipeline in 2014, and that gas exports to Turkey would begin in 2016.<sup>48</sup> Alongside the progressive removal of Kurds from the federal government, of Kurdish officers from the federal army, and of Kurdish boycotts of the federal parliament, the KRG appears

43 Isobel Coles, “Iraqi Kurdistan president Massoud Barzani says Baghdad talks last chance”, *Reuters*, 3 June 2013, <http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2013/6/state7108.htm>, accessed 19 June 2013.

44 Ibid.

45 Armando Cordoba, “Maliki visit to Erbil results in joint committees to resolve disputes”, *Rudaw*, 9 June 2013, <http://rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/090620132>, accessed 19 June 2013.

46 “Iraqi Kurdistan gives Turkish company six oil exploration blocks”, *Reuters*, 18 June 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/18/turkey-kurdistan-oil-idUSL5N0EU44120130618>, accessed 19 June 2013.

47 “US energy giant Chevron signs oil deal with Iraqi Kurdistan”, *Kurdnet*, 18 June 2013, <http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2013/6/invest921.htm>, accessed 19 June 2013.

48 “Turkey-Kurdistan oil pipeline to be completed September”, *Kurdnet*, 19 June 2013, <http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2013/6/invest922.htm>, accessed 19 June 2013.

to be becoming ever more distant from Baghdad – and ever closer to Ankara. It is very difficult to envisage under what circumstances this trend could now be reversed, although there is clearly a risk to Iraq's Kurds that they might become over-dependent on a Turkish neighbour that has proved unreliable in the past and that has over decades earned a reputation for its hostility to Kurdish aspirations for self-determination. On the other hand, and for all Barzani's occasional bluster, the KRG does not appear ready to declare full independence. It would incur the wrath of its neighbours, including Turkey; would not gain Washington's support; and it is in any case not – yet – in a financially secure enough position to go it alone. Indeed, given its reliance on energy exports, Iraqi Kurdish independence could only sensibly be envisaged if Ankara proved ready to countenance it. This would be more likely should Arab Iraq descend into deeper sectarian conflict, which cannot be ruled out.

### **Where might these developments lead? Syria**

Whatever the outcome of the Syrian conflict, the predicament of that country's Kurdish minority - particularly those that live along the borders with Iraq and Turkey - will constitute a key element of it. One scenario for the country as a whole is a continued and violent process of fragmentation – perhaps on parallel to Iraq's and Lebanon's - in which Alawite, Kurdish and perhaps other groups carve out precarious and fortified self-governing entities. Syria's 'western Kurdistan' is already quite autonomous from the rest of Syria, and it could become dependent on Turkey and the KRG whether it wishes it or not. On the other hand, should the Assad/Ba'athist/Alawite regime emerge intact, it will be interesting to see whether it would be prepared to mount a challenge to a PYD-governed Kurdish zone, or whether it might instead accede to some limited autonomy, including respect for Kurdish culture. The prospects for such a happy accord would perhaps be reduced in the unlikely event that pro-Barzani elements amongst Syria's Kurdish National Council gain more influence in the region. A victory for the SNC would probably be the most challenging outcome for the country's Kurds. Clashes between Kurds and the more Islamist elements within the Syrian opposition have been the fiercest - and Turkey is suspected of enabling these particular elements of the Syrian opposition. On the other hand, some Turkish-supported elements of the SNC could perhaps emerge as more accommodating towards a more pro-Barzani Kurdish entity. Taken as a whole however, the

otherwise fragmented SNC remains impatient with any indication of Kurdish exceptionalism, and a future Arab-Kurdish clash in Syria could well be in prospect, regardless of who eventually emerges as triumphant in Damascus.

Given its relationship with the KRG and the 'Imrali process', it would seem sensible that Ankara prepares itself to work with whatever reality emerges in northern Syria. At the time of writing it is unclear whether Ankara is fully prepared to accommodate itself to Syrian Kurdish autonomy. It is certainly the case that such an outcome might be more palatable to Turkey - and Erbil - if it were under KDP/KNC rather than PYD/PKK control. They are unlikely to get what they want on this score, however, but they need be careful lest they encourage a scenario of internecine conflict among Kurds which could even split the KRG's PUK from the KDP.<sup>49</sup> Such a scenario would appear still more likely if the 'Imrali process' falters, and could pit a PKK/PYD (and perhaps PUK) grouping against a KDP/Syrian KNC faction in a regional intra-Kurdish struggle, with Turkey favouring the latter and Iran (and Russia) the former.

One implication of the Syrian crisis has been the resurgence of sectarian rifts in the region, which have further damaged Ankara's relationship with Baghdad and, indeed, Iran. Iran has stood by its ally in Damascus, while Maliki too has expressed his sympathy for the Assad regime. Given the largely Alawite makeup of the Syrian regime, and the essentially Sunni nature of the opposition, the fact that Iran and Turkey found themselves on the side of their respective Syrian co-religionists has - rightly or wrongly - been interpreted as suggesting that a sectarian undercurrent is now evident in regional diplomatic alignments. Turkey's AKP government's evident preference for the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood faction within the SNC has added further to these rifts.<sup>50</sup> These developments might well encourage Iran, Iraq and Syria to work to undermine Turkish interests, including its approach to the region's Kurdish issues. In particular, Tehran is uneasy at the close relationship between An-

49 Eric Bruneau, "Taking the fight to Syria: Kurdish rivalries play out over the border", *Niqash*, 30 May 2013, <http://www.niqash.org/articles/print.php?id=3228&lang=en>, accessed 21 June 2013; *Syria's Kurds: a struggle within a struggle*, Middle East Report no. 136, International Crisis Group, 22 January 2013.

50 Christopher Phillips, *Into the Quagmire: Turkey's Frustrated Syria Policy*, Chatham House Briefing Paper, December 2012, p.7

kara and Erbil, and might well seek ways to undermine it. In this, some within the PUK might be willing accomplices.<sup>51</sup>

### Turkey's dream or its nightmare?

Turkey's approach to the KRG appears to have undergone a paradigm shift in recent years. In so far as it is driven by a residual 'zero problems', 'soft power' motivation that seeks the lowering of barriers, a reduction of tensions, and economic integration and interdependence, it might be regarded as 'neo-Ottoman'. However, as it strays towards a deeper inclusiveness towards Iraq's Kurds that serves to draw the KRG away from Baghdad, it smacks of a 'National Pact' preference for a Turkish-Kurdish federation based on the notion that there is, or should be, a kind of 'brotherhood' between the two peoples. The 'Imrali process', again with Erdoğan's apparent emphasis on 'brotherhood' rather than ethnic pluralism, can be interpreted in the same way. The Syrian case is more complex, but there is little doubt that Ankara has very particular concerns about how northern Syria evolves and how it interacts with the Kurdish regions of Turkey and Iraq. This extension of Turkish influence into neighbouring Kurdish populated areas does not require a redrawing of the map – in that sense, we may not be witnessing the end of the Sykes-Picot arrangement and the break up the region's states, nor the arrival of a sovereign Kurdish state. Ankara does not want this to happen. However, this scenario does challenge the regional balance of power and influence, and this is its problem. Turkey cannot pacify the region's Kurds without a degree of Kurdish contentment and complicity, and it is as yet too early to say whether Turkey will take the steps necessary for this to emerge inside its own borders. Nor can we be certain how events will pan out in Syria, and to what degree Ankara will learn to live with any autonomous Kurdish zone that might establish itself there.

A resetting of Turkey's relationships with the region's Kurds will also require the acquiescence of Baghdad, Damascus and Tehran. Will Baghdad and perhaps Damascus too, accept a situation in which 'their' Kurds move deeper within Ankara's economic, political and energy trade orbit? Or will they, with Iran and driven by sectarian

51 B. Mohammed, "Barzani's foreign policy risks damaging Kurdistan's interest," *Kurdish Aspect*, 3 February 2013, [www.kurdishaspect.com/doc020413BM.html](http://www.kurdishaspect.com/doc020413BM.html), accessed 22 February 2013; "A PUK leader warns against Turkish 'trap'," *Insight Kurdistan*, 3 January 2013, [www.insightkurdistan.com/tag/tigris/](http://www.insightkurdistan.com/tag/tigris/), accessed 22 February 2013.

considerations as well as Kurdish ones, prefer to undermine Kurdish autonomy and any pacification of Turkish-Kurdish relations that might appear within reach? Will sectarian chaos and conflict in Iraq and Syria ‘deliver’ the Kurdish regions of those countries to Turkey as the only source of stability, economic exchange and even protection? In the meantime, Arab reconciliation to Kurdish autonomy does not look likely, and nor does Tehran’s passivity in the face of its deepened isolation – should that isolation persist. Iran’s hold over its own Kurdish populations is also in the mix,<sup>52</sup> and Tehran has a track record of using the PKK to unsettle Turkey. In the current circumstances, a disaffected PKK might also be useful in obstructing Turkey’s ambition to rely on Kurdish energy supplies in place of Iranian. In short, for Turkey to achieve peace on its Kurdish borders, it may need to both satisfy Kurdish aspirations, and weaken the capacity or inclination of Baghdad, Damascus and Tehran to undermine the benefits to Turkey that this might bring. These are tall orders, and both Turkish policies and regional circumstances could preclude such a happy outcome.

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# Ankara, Erbil, Baghdad: Relations Fraught with Dilemmas

Ofra BENGIO\*

## Abstract

The triangle of relations between Ankara, Erbil and Baghdad has undergone a real revolution in the last few years. While for the greater part of the 20th century Ankara's partner was Baghdad now it has become Erbil. Indeed, the dramatic change covers various economic, cultural and political spheres. This essay seeks to answer the following questions: What was the nature of the relations between Ankara and Baghdad before the shift? What is the explanation for the change among the three partners of the triangle? What is the role of the US in this change? To what extent are the changes tactical and to what extent strategic? This essay argues that there was a paradigmic shift among all players; that in this shift Turkey appears to be the initiator, the KRG the activist and Baghdad the reactive partner; and finally that all players having had to choose between two evils are now on a horn of a dilemma regarding the possible outcomes of their choice. The state of turmoil in the region, the changing alliances among the different players in the Middle East and the rise of the Sunni-Shi'i divide only serve to accentuate these dilemmas.

**Keywords:** Paradigmatic shift, dilemmas, triangle of relations, the 1991 Gulf War and the 2003 Iraqi War, The American withdrawal

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## Ankara, Erbil, Bağdat: İkilemlerle Dolu İlişkiler

### Özet

Ankara, Erbil ve Bağdat arasındaki ilişkiler üçgeni son birkaç yıl içinde gerçek bir devrim sürecinden geçmiştir. 20. yüzyılın büyük bir bölümünde Ankara'nın ortağı Bağdat iken, günümüzde Erbil olmuş-

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tur. Aslında bu büyük değişim çeşitli ekonomik, kültürel ve siyasi alanları da kapsamaktadır. Söz konusu çalışma şu sorulara cevap aramaktadır: Değişimden önce Ankara ve Bağdat arasındaki ilişkiler ne tür bir yapıya sahipti? Bu ilişkiler üçgenin üç ortağı arasında yaşanan değişim nasıl açıklanabilir? Söz konusu değişimde ABD'nin rolü nedir? Yaşanan değişimler ne ölçüde taktiksel, ne ölçüde stratejiktir? Bu çalışma tüm aktörler arasında bir paradigma değişimi olduğunu; görünüşe göre bu değişimde Türkiye'nin öncüsü, KBY'nin aktivisti, Bağdat'ın ise tepki gösteren taraf olduğunu; ve son olarak da kötünün iyisini seçmek zorunda olan bütün aktörlerin tercihlerinin muhtemel sonuçları konusunda büyük bir ikilemde kaldıklarını savunmaktadır. Bölgedeki çalkantılı durum, Ortadoğu'daki farklı aktörler arasında değişen ittifaklar, ve Sunni-Şii bölünmesindeki artış söz konusu ikilemleri ön plana çıkarmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Paradigma değişimi, ikilemler, ilişkiler üçgeni, 1991 Körfez Savaşı ve 2003 Irak Savaşı, ABD'nin çekilmesi

أنقرة، أربيل، بغداد : علاقات مليئة بالثنائية  
أوفرا بنكيو

**المخلص :**

في السنوات الأخيرة خضعت العلاقات الثلاثية بين أنقرة - أربيل - بغداد لعملية ثورة حقيقية.

فبينما كانت بغداد هي الشريك لأنقرة خلال الجزء الأكبر من القرن العشرين ، أصبحت أربيل اليوم هي الشريك لأنقرة. في الواقع أن هذا التغيير الكبير يشمل الميادين الاقتصادية والثقافية والسياسية المختلفة أيضا. إن هذه الدراسة تبحث عن أجوبة للأسئلة التالية : ما نوع بنية العلاقات بين أنقرة وبغداد قبل التغيير؟ كيف يمكن تفسير التغيير الذي حدث بين شركاء المثلث الثلاثة؟ ما هو دور الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية في هذا التغيير؟ ما هو مدي التكتيكية والاستراتيجية في هذه التغييرات؟

وتدافع هذه الدراسة عن الرأي القائل بأن هذه التغييرات عبارة عن تغيير باراديكمي بين الممثلين جميعهم، وأن تركيا- طبقا لما هو ظاهر- هي الرائدة والاتحاد الوطني الكردستاني هو الناشط أما بغداد فهي الطرف التفاعلي في هذا التغيير وأن جميع الممثلين الذين هم مضطرون لإختيار أحسن السينات ظلوا - فيما يخص النتائج المحتملة لإختياراتهم- في ثنائية كبيرة .

إن الوضع المضطرب في المنطقة، والاتفاقات المتغيرة بين مختلف الممثلين في الشرق الوسط وتفاقم الانقسام السني - الشيعي، كل ذلك يجعل الثنائيات المذكورة في المقدمة.

**كلمات مفتاحية :** تغير الباراديكمي، التناقضات، مثلث العلاقات، حرب الخليج لعام ١٩٩١، حرب العراق لعام ٢٠٠٣، الانسحاب الأمريكي.

At the beginning of 2013 a new book was published in Turkey under the title *Yeni Komşumuz Kürdistan (Our New Neighbor Kurdistan)*.<sup>1</sup> This very title represented the revolution that the Turkish-Kurdish-Iraqi triangle has undergone of late. First of all the Turkish author Simla Yerlikaya is not reluctant to use the term Kurdistan which only a few years ago could have sent her to prison in Turkey.<sup>2</sup> Second, by referring to Kurdistan, namely the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) as neighbor it is implied that this neighbor is no longer the Iraqi state but the Kurdistan entity in Iraq. Presented in this manner, this entity does not seem to pose a threat to Turkey any more but rather present opportunities. Though not an official publication, Yerlikaya's book does reflect the changing approach in the higher echelon of power in Turkey towards its neighbor. While for the greater part of the 20th century Ankara's partner was Baghdad now it has become Erbil. Indeed, the dramatic change covers various economic, cultural and political spheres.

This essay seeks to answer the following questions: What was the nature of the relations between Ankara and Baghdad before the shift? What is the explanation for the change among the three partners of the triangle? What is the role of the US in this change? To what extent are the changes tactical and to what extent strategic? This essay argues that there was a paradigmatic shift among all players; that in this shift Turkey appears to be the initiator, the KRG the activist and Baghdad the reactive partner; and finally that all players having had to choose between two evils are now on a horn of a dilemma regarding the possible outcomes of their choice.

### **The cooling of relations between Ankara and Baghdad**

Historically speaking there was a kind of natural alliance between Ankara and Baghdad. Indeed, Baghdad's relations with Ankara were the smoothest and the least troubled of all its other neighbors. These relations were based on various common denominators: Common economic and geopolitical interests; common internal enemies, namely the Kurds and at the time also external rivals such as Syria and Iran; as well as common ideological and political

1 Simla Yerlikaya, *Yeni Komşumuz Kürdistan*, (Istanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2013).

2 In 1995 a female Kurdish human right lawyer, Eren Kesken, was sentenced to three years imprisonment because she had used the term Kurdistan in one of her articles. Heidi Basch Harod, "Kurdish Women of Turkey: Rewriting Their Historical Legacy". (MA thesis, Tel Aviv University, 2013).

affinities. Thus, even though the regimes in both countries declared themselves to be secular and opposed to political Islam there was still strong Sunni bonds between the governments of the two states which were led by Sunnis until 2003. In certain periods, the two states also shared a pro-western orientation.

This partnership found expression among other things in Saadbad Pact of 1937 and Baghdad Pact of 1955. Similarly, during the Iraqi–Iranian war (1980–1988) the two parties signed a hot pursuit agreement against the Kurdish Turkish Partiyê Karkerên Kurdistan (PKK). Economically speaking, Iraq and Turkey built the strategic oil pipeline which became active in 1977 and which was the only outlet to Iraqi oil during the crucial years of the war up until 1991. Iraq's total dependence on the Turkish outlet was due to the closure of the pipeline to the Shatt al-Arab immediately at the flare up of the war in 1980 and the closure of the Iraqi-Syrian pipeline by Damascus in 1982. On the whole, economic relations between Iraq and Turkey flourished during the war and were beneficial to both. On the political level, it can be argued that during the 1980s there were also certain affinities between the two governments that reached power by way of a putsch and militarized their societies in one way or another.

The gradual cooling of relations between Ankara and Baghdad began in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf war after which at each new phase another building block of the ties collapsed with relations reaching their nadir by 2013. The catalyst for this development was the American two wars on Iraq in 1991 and 2003, however, internal processes in each part of the triangle accounted for the tectonic change.

The first component to be severely hit was economic relations. Following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, Turkey joined the allies in their sanctions against Iraq by closing the strategic oil pipeline to Ceyhan in Turkey. In fact Turkish president Turgut Özal took the initiative by cutting off Iraq's pipeline to Turkey even before President George Bush asked him to do so.<sup>3</sup> This move caused a severe blow to Iraqi economy but it hit Turkey as well. At the same time Turkey allowed for smuggled oil emanating from the KRG to

<sup>3</sup> Morton Abramowitz, "Remembering Turgut Özal: Some personal recollections", *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 15, No.2, 2013, p.40.

reach Turkey by way of tankers. Even though economically speaking this was far from compensating Ankara for the loss of dividends from the closed Iraqi pipeline, the move nonetheless necessitated direct ties between Turkey and the KRG thus granting the latter certain legitimacy.

The second building block suffered a blow as a result of the Kurdish uprising, *serhildan*, in the aftermath of the war in 1991 and the concomitant withdrawal of the Iraqi army from the Kurdish region. These two moves brought the Iraqi Kurdish problem to the very door of Turkey. For one thing, as a result of the uprising about half a million Iraqi Kurds flocked to the Turkish borders in an attempt to find refuge in Turkey from the Iraqi army. For another, the withdrawal of the Iraqi army suggested that Iraq was no longer the master of the common borders between the two countries which meant that Ankara had to deal directly with the KRG in order to avert the spillover effects of these developments into Turkey. The direct dealing with the KRG was all the more pressing since the upheavals in the region enabled the PKK to further enlarge its bases inside the Iraqi Kurdistan region while they also helped enhance ties between Iraqi and Turkish Kurds. Little wonder then that Turgut Özal, the Turkish President at the time, was behind the idea of a safe haven for the Kurds of Iraq which allowed for the return of the Kurdish refugees to their home but at the same time gave birth to the Kurdish autonomy in Iraq.<sup>4</sup>

The Gulf war of 2003 and the rise of the Shi'is to power in Iraq, caused gradual estrangement between the governments of Ankara and Baghdad. This was no coincidence as at almost one and the same time the two governments which came to power had unambiguous religious inclinations. Thus, for the first time in modern history the two governments in Ankara and Baghdad had conflicting world view on Islam: The AKP government in Turkey was Sunni and the government in Baghdad was led by the Shi'i majority. The Turkish journalist Semih Idiz described the new development saying that Turkey was witnessing Islamization and Sunnification of its foreign policy.<sup>5</sup> The fact that this trend coincided with the Islamiza-

4 Özal's policy fit in well with his opening towards the Kurds of Turkey. For Özal's being "the forerunner of the Kurdish issue", see, Cengiz Çandar, "Turgut Özal twenty years after: The man and the politician", *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 15., No.2, 2013, pp.32-34.

5 Semih Idiz, *Al Monitor*, 3 March 2013. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/03/akp-sunni-foreign-policy-turkey-sectarianism.html>

tion and Shi'ization of Iraq's foreign policy turned the estrangement between the two parties almost inevitable.

It was true that as late as March 2011 Erdoğan came on a visit to Iraq which included Erbil, Baghdad and Najaf. Though the visit to Najaf was indeed unusual for a Sunni Muslim leader, it still did not manage to bridge the growing gap between the two governments in Ankara and Baghdad. Nor did the policies of Iraqi Prime Minister, Nuri al-Maliki, make relations any easier. Maliki's growing authoritarian tendencies and his ongoing policies to isolate the Sunni community and marginalize the Sunnis in his coalition government only increased the Sunni-Shi'i divide between Ankara and Baghdad. Adding fuel to the fire was Erdoğan's support in the 2010 Iraqi elections to al-`Iraqiyya, the Sunni list, against that of al-Maliki. Erdoğan went on to give refuge to one of the leaders of this party, Tariq al-Hashemi, against whom the Maliki government issued death punishment. This is another example of how Turkey initiated certain moves against the central government in Baghdad to which the latter was mainly reactive.

The two other developments which accelerated the pace of estrangement between Ankara and Baghdad were the upheavals in Syria which started in March 2011 and the final withdrawal of the American forces from Iraq at the end of 2011. Following the withdrawal of the American forces there started a strong competition between Ankara and Tehran to fill the vacuum left by the US. And while Iran deepened its penetration into the Arab part of Iraq, Turkey did so in the Kurdish part. Furthermore, due to religious affinities between the Iraqi and Iranian governments there was for the first time in decades a shift in Iraqi world view and orientation. While until 2003 Baghdad looked at Ankara as a kind of strategic depth against Shi'i Iran, now Baghdad began to view Iran as a strategic depth for facing a hostile Sunni neighborhood which was reluctant to grant real legitimization to a Shi'i-led government.

It seems, however, that the major factor that put Ankara and Baghdad at geopolitical loggerheads were the upheavals in Syria. While Ankara became the pioneer in seeking to oust its erstwhile ally Bashar al-Asad from power, Baghdad joined the Iranian wagon by allying itself with the Syrian Ba`th regime. Here too, the sectarian divide played an important role. While Ankara granted all out support to the Sunni Syrian opposition, Baghdad facilitated support to

the Alawite government in Damascus with its pro-Shi'i tendencies. A Shi'i Iraqi minister even went as far as to declare that the support which Turkey granted to the rebels in Syria was tantamount to a declaration of war on Iraq because the sectarian struggle in Syria might spill into Iraq and endanger it as well.<sup>6</sup> This shift in discourse and practice is all the more ironical since after the 2003 Iraqi war it was Syria who was the main exporter of terrorist activities into Iraq.

To sum up, all these parameters demonstrate severe erosion in the Baghdad-Ankara relationship which shifted the weight of Turkey's foreign policy priorities towards Erbil. Meanwhile, deep changes have taken place in the KRG too which have facilitated Turkey's dramatic shift.

### **Evolution in the Kurdish camp**

While the 2003 War severely destabilized the central government in Baghdad, brought to the surface the Sunni-Shi'i divide and wrought havoc to the economy, different dynamics were at work in the KRG where a quasi state has been emerging. Analyzing the political system in Iraq, political scientist Aram Rifaat suggested that in that country there were two quasi states, the Kurdish and the Iraqi one, with the main difference between them being that the former lacked recognition which the latter did have. Regarding the quasi state, Rifaat mentions four major elements characterizing such entity: a process of nation building; militarization of the society and the establishment of an army independently from the existing state; weakness of the state which brings about a change in the balance of power between itself and the quasi state; and finally the existence of external patronage.<sup>7</sup>

Examining these criteria it is doubtful that one can talk about Iraq as a quasi state, rather it is a failed state. However, the Kurdish entity certainly fits this model because the four elements do exist there. The nation-building process has been accelerated since the 2003 War including all the trappings of an independent entity

6 *Hurriyet Daily News*, 27 February 2013. <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/rebel-win-could-spread-war-iraq.aspx?pageID=238&cnid=41979>

7 Aram Rifaat, "The Kurdish and Iraqi Counter-Quest for Nationhood and the Transformation of Iraqi Kurdistan into a Quasi-State" (PHD Thesis, University of Adelaide, 2012), pp. 226-231.

both on the political level such as an independent parliament and government and on the symbolical level such as an anthem and a flag. Regarding the criterion of militarization the KRG has turned the guerrilla force, the peshmerga, into an army with some 200,000 soldiers<sup>8</sup> and heavy arms which included “a large fleet of Russian-made warplanes left from the Saddam era”<sup>9</sup> as well as tanks which were taken as booty from the two wars of 1991 and 2003.

The weakness of the central government needs no elaboration. Suffice it to mention that Baghdad has lost control altogether on the Kurdish region even though the system is a federal one.<sup>10</sup> Thus, on paper Iraq is still the sovereign in the Kurdish region but in practice it is not. The weakness of the Iraqi government was demonstrated in its recent call on the KRG to hand over the warplanes and tanks at its disposal if it wanted to remain “within a united Iraq”. However, not only did the KRG ignore the call but it even went on to purchase new weapons.<sup>11</sup>

As to patronage it is quite paradoxical that in the last few years Turkey has assumed the role of patron of the KRG or may be better said its main lifeline. Seen from a historical perspective this region which represented the vilayet of Mosul under the Ottomans was indeed naturally linked to the northern part of the Ottoman Empire and the Jazira rather than to the vilayet of Baghdad and Basra.

In addition to the four criteria mentioned by Rafaat one should add two other important ones which highlight the autonomous disposition of the KRG, namely foreign relations and economy. Even though foreign relations should have been the exclusive domain of the central government, in the unique federative system which has evolved in Iraq the Kurdish region is conducting its own foreign relations almost independently from Baghdad. This is evident in the consulates which many countries have established in Erbil and which function as embassies in all but name.<sup>12</sup> The frequent visits

8 *Kurdnet*, 17 January 2011. <http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2011/1/state4537.htm>

9 *Press TV*, 29 April 2012. <http://www.presstv.com/detail/238746.html>

10 Illustrating the loss of Iraqi sovereignty over the Kurdish region are the checkpoints which serve as a kind of border line between the Arab and Kurdish part.

11 *Press TV*, 29 April 2012. <http://www.presstv.com/detail/238746.html>

12 There are 31 such representations in Erbil. For its part the KRG has 15 representations in various countries. <http://dfr.krg.org/p/p.aspx?p=37>

of the President of Kurdistan Mas`ud Barzani to different countries including the US and Russia where he is being accorded a welcome of a head of state, is another indication of this autonomous status. The same is true for all the other Kurdish officials who have become *persona grata* in many of these countries. Similarly, many countries and companies feel at greater ease to cut deals with Erbil rather than with Baghdad because the KRG is more stable, prosperous and secure. In the case of certain Arab countries the antipathy towards the Shi`i-led government in Baghdad adds another incentive for maintaining relations with the Kurds.

The economic realm is even more intriguing because of the huge oil and gas resources which were found in Kurdistan region and which turned them into the main bone of contention between Erbil and Baghdad. The KRG's independent policy is evident in its deals with various firms and companies which more often than not bypass the central government's injunction. Even more dangerous from the central government point of view is the new pipelines which are being built in full steam in the KRG and which, when completed, may grant the KRG economic autonomy and thus accelerate the pace of political independence.

### **Turkey's changing conceptualization**

Under the AKP government which first came to power in 2002 there were dramatic changes in this party's perception of the Kurdish issue in Turkey which in turn had its repercussions on Ankara's ties with the KRG. And vice versa, the dramatic changes in the KRG had repercussions on the domestic Kurdish issue in Turkey, moving Ankara to articulate a new policy towards the Kurds.<sup>13</sup> Generally speaking, the domestic Kurdish issue has always been an important component of Turkish foreign policy but in the last decade this factor was accelerated significantly so that the domestic Kurdish issue became intertwined with the external one in a way that they cannot be separated any more. Anyway, the changing paradigm in Turkey's approach to the KRG can be summarized as follows: while in the past the KRG was perceived as part of Turkey's internal Kurdish problem in the last few years the KRG came to be perceived as a partner to the solution.

13 For the Kurdish angle see, Cengiz Gunes, *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey: From Protest to resistance* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

Paradoxically enough, in its deeds and misdeeds the AKP government contributed immensely to the establishment and flourishing of the KRG. By not permitting the allies to attack Iraq from its lands in 2003 Ankara enabled the KRG to seize this golden opportunity to consolidate its quasi state and put itself on the regional and international map. First, the KRG managed to develop open relations with external powers most importantly the Americans. Second, it proved its loyalty and prowess when it helped occupy the northern part of Iraq and later also in establishing the new Iraqi government. Similarly it proved its importance to the US in comparison to Turkey and forced the latter to accept the KRG as a *fait accompli*. Indeed, the AKP's approach became now the old dictum: "if you cannot beat your enemy, join him."

Concurrently there were important changes vis a vis the Kurds in Turkey itself. In its drive to weaken the military and win the Kurdish vote, the AKP initiated a new approach to the Kurdish issue which was not based solely on military means.<sup>14</sup> The "Kurdish opening" of 2009 which purported to solve the Kurdish issue by peaceful means was just this program. It seems that it was no mere coincidence that the "Kurdish opening" in Turkey coincided with the new opening towards the KRG. Ankara's double track policy was meant to marginalize and neutralize the PKK at home while also using the KRG's good will in order to contain the PKK whose bases are in the KRG. However, while the internal track failed to materialize at least until 2013 the external one succeeded beyond expectations. While until 2008 Turkey perceived the Kurdish entity as a great danger to itself, from that period on Ankara began to tilt towards the KRG at the expense of Baghdad. In other words Turkey forged an unwritten alliance with the KRG while dropping the historical close relationship with Baghdad.<sup>15</sup> An illustration of this shift were Mas'ud Barzani's visits to Turkey in three consecutive years 2010, 2011 and 2012 where he was accorded a reception of a head of state and not that of a tribal leader as before.<sup>16</sup> Thus within one year from 2007-2009

14 For an early stage of AKP's experimentation with the Kurdish issue see, Rabia Karakaya Polat, "The AKP and the Kurdish issue: What went wrong?", SETA, *Policy Brief*, May 2008, No. 14.

15 It should be noted though that MIT started secret contacts with the KRG already in 2006 but they came to fruition only in 2009.

16 One indication of the close relationship is Barzani's participation in the AKP Congress on 30 September 2012 where he delivered a speech. National Turk, 3 October 2012. <http://www.nationalturk.com/en/applause-for-kurdish-leader-barzani-at-akp-congress-condemned-by-turkish-opposition-26421>. On the other hand, Maliki declined to participate. *Today's Za-*

there was a dramatic shift in the relations from near eruption of military conflict between Turkey and the KRG to one of understanding and close relationship. A Turkish commentator described the change saying: "In the past, Turkey and Barzani had very different relations, but today they meet as two close allies."<sup>17</sup> Another commentator had this to say on the new role of Barzani: "Some time ago he was considered as a local bandit. Now he is considered as statesman."<sup>18</sup>

### Turkey's motivations for the shift

Economic interests were the first trigger for the change and only later were they followed by geopolitical ones. Over time the KRG managed to attract Turkish entrepreneurs whose vested interests in the region turned them into the best advocate for strong relations with the KRG. More importantly the rich oil and gas resources in the Kurdistan region were so attractive to the Turkish government that it was willing to sign agreements with the KRG including for the building of two oil pipelines and one gas pipeline from the KRG over the strong objection of Baghdad. A government whose main pillar of power was economic success did not find it so difficult to change partners especially when in the unstable Arab part of Iraq such relations were far from promising. Thus, within a few years Turkey became the main player in Iraqi Kurdistan using soft power as its main tool for increasing its influence in the region.<sup>19</sup> Numbers speak for themselves: 60% of all the companies active in the KRG are Turkish, employing 50,000 Turks.<sup>20</sup> The volume of trade between Turkey and the KRG reached \$ 9 billion in 2012 equaling that between Turkey and Iran.<sup>21</sup> In this sense there is a shift in the roles of Turkey and Iran who was the Kurds' patron during the 1970s and 1980s.

*man*, 2 October 2012. [http://www.todayszaman.com/news-294091-akp-and-iraqi-kurds-the-participation-of-massoud-barzani-in-the-akp-general-congress-by-aziz-barzani\\*.html](http://www.todayszaman.com/news-294091-akp-and-iraqi-kurds-the-participation-of-massoud-barzani-in-the-akp-general-congress-by-aziz-barzani*.html). Barzani came earlier in April of that year to Turkey where he met the highest officials in the state.

17 *Today's Zaman*, 18 April 2012. <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-277894-krg-leader-barzani-visits-turkey-as-alliance-with-iraqi-kurds-deepens.html>.

18 *Voice of America*, 18 April 2012. <http://m.voanews.com/a/179182.html>

19 On Turkey's soft power see, Meliha Benli Altunışık, "The possibilities and limits of Turkey's soft power in the Middle East", *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 10, No.2, 2008, pp.41-54.

20 By 2010 it was reported that 3200 Turkish firms were active in various areas in the KRG. *Today's Zaman*, 6 July 2010. [http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail\\_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=215263](http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=215263)

21 *Today's Zaman*, 2 October 2012. [http://www.todayszaman.com/news-294091-akp-and-iraqi-kurds-the-participation-of-massoud-barzani-in-the-akp-general-congress-by-aziz-barzani\\*.html](http://www.todayszaman.com/news-294091-akp-and-iraqi-kurds-the-participation-of-massoud-barzani-in-the-akp-general-congress-by-aziz-barzani*.html)

Linked to this is the geopolitical consideration. The stable and prosperous Kurdistan region is now performing as a kind of buffer zone between Turkey and the turbulent Arab part of Iraq. It is also a kind of safety valve against the spread of Shi'ism into Turkey. No less important, the fact that it is Irbil and not Baghdad which is controlling the common border with Turkey turns the KRG into a more important partner for security cooperation along the border and beyond.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, the latent and sometimes open competition between Turkey and Iran on spheres of influence in Iraq and elsewhere in the region made the contiguous KRG a natural choice for Turkish influence.

The vision of so-called neo-Ottomanism which was promoted by Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu fits well in the new policy of engaging the KRG. Generally speaking this ideology sets to encourage engagement with regions which had been previously under the Ottoman Empire and indeed Davutoğlu was the mastermind behind the opening toward the KRG.<sup>23</sup> Davutoğlu came on a "historic" visit to the KRG in October 2009 where he declared that Turkey could serve as a bridge to Europe for the KRG while the KRG could serve as a gateway to the Gulf for Turkey.<sup>24</sup> In a way this Turkish move for "integrating" the KRG appears as a vindication for the loss of Mosul vilayet to Iraq back in 1925.<sup>25</sup> Ironically enough, the KRG appears to be the only region where the other pillar of Davutoğlu's foreign policy architecture, the "zero problems with the neighbors", is being realized.

Then there was the religious-ideological consideration. As the Sunni-Shi'i divide between Ankara and Baghdad continued to deepen, the religious affinities with the Sunni Kurds made them appear more reliable or pliant partners than Baghdad. A Turkish professor Tayyar Arı maintained that "especially after Maliki's policies in Iraq, it became compulsory for Turkey and the KRG to be in close contact. Maliki's insincere attitude towards Sunnis led Turkey to take more

22 During Mas'ud Barzani's visit to Turkey in April 2012 the two parties discussed common security issues. *Today's Zaman*, 18 April 2012. <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-277894-krq-leader-barzani-visits-turkey-as-alliance-with-iraqi-kurds-deepens.html>.

23 The Kurds label it "Mr. Davutoglu policy". *Today's Zaman*, 6 July 2010. [http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail\\_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=215263](http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=215263)

24 Kurdistan Regional Government, 31 October 2009. <http://www.krg.org/a/d.aspx?r=223&l=12&cs=02010100&a=32216&cs=010000>.

25 Interestingly, the term "integration" is used by the Turkish but not the Kurdish side reflecting the divergent outlook of the two parties regarding the relations between them.

initiatives towards the Sunni issue.”<sup>26</sup> A symbolical reflection of this approach was that Ankara and Erbil cooperated in granting safe haven to Tariq al-Hashemi. It seems therefore that Ankara had to choose the lesser of two evils and in that point of time Erbil appeared the right choice.

Still, of all the other considerations that of the internal Kurdish one tipped the balance in Turkey’s decision to open up towards the KRG. The fact that Ankara initiated the opening towards its own Kurds and the KRG simultaneously speaks for itself. For one thing, the KRG appeared a factor that may help contain or rather pacify the Kurds of Turkey. Cengiz Aktar described Barzani’s role saying that the Turkish government was trying “to subcontract the solution of its own Kurdish problem to him.”<sup>27</sup>

Indeed the KRG, especially President Mas`ud Barzani has assumed an important role in the mediation between Ankara and the PKK in the new phase of the peace process which started in early 2013.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, contributing its own crucial part to the AKP-PKK deal the KRG agreed to the withdrawal of PKK militants to its own region. This move was vehemently opposed by Baghdad which regarded it as an infringement on its sovereignty and a further boost to the KRG’s independent foreign policy activities. However, its warning that the withdrawal would threaten Iraq’s security and stability went unheeded and the withdrawal took place over Baghdad’s objection as had happened in other cases in the past.<sup>29</sup> Iran too was totally opposed to the Turkish-Kurdish peace process for three reasons: First, it feared that the peace process would inspire its own Kurds. Second, that a bolstered PKK in the KRG would bolster Partiya Jiyana Azad a Kurdistanê ((PJAK), the Kurdish Iranian opposition group which is related to the PKK and which has its bases in the KRG too. Third, that the PKK would assist the emerging Kurdish autonomous enclave in Syria. It was even reported that at a certain point Iran offered military assistance to the PKK if they remained in

26 *Today’s Zaman*, 18 April 2012. <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-277894-krq-leader-barzani-visits-turkey-as-alliance-with-iraqi-kurds-deepens.html>.

27 *Voice of America*, 18 April 2012. <http://m.voanews.com/a/179182.html>

28 The new Kurdish process has emboldened the Kurds in Turkey so that in a conference in Diyarbakır in June they referred to themselves for the first time as “North Kurdistan”. *Radi-ka!l*, 16 June 2013.

29 Ibrahim Karagül, “Maliki ve PKK korkusu,” *Yenisafak.com.tr*, 10 May 2013, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/yazarlar/IbrahimKaragul/malikin-pkk-korkusu/3762>

Turkey.<sup>30</sup> But this did not work either and the PKK began to fulfill their part in the agreement by withdrawing to the KRG.

With the eruption of upheavals in Syria and the establishment of Kurdish autonomy there in the summer of 2012 the KRG assumed another role in the Turkish perception, namely a possible pacifier of that region as well or as a balancing power to the influence of the PKK there. Even before the takeover, Mas'ud Barzani's visit to Turkey in April of that year centered on the topic of the Kurds of Syria and their possible moves in what they described as post-Assad Syria. In fact Turkey was wary that the Kurds of Syria would declare autonomy or even independence.<sup>31</sup> An indication of these worries was the visit of Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu to the KRG immediately after the July 2012 takeover of the Kurdish region in Syria by the Kurds.<sup>32</sup>

All in all the KRG's acceptance of the PKK militants to its region and the role it has been playing in pacifying the Kurds in Syria may in the longer run prove as a balancing tool against possible future Turkish encroachment on the KRG. In other words, its new regional role may grant the Kurds a card vis-à-vis Turkey.

### **The American ambiguous role**

For the greater part of the twentieth century the US kept aloof from the Kurdish issue in Iraq, one of the main reasons for which was the American unwillingness to antagonize Turkey, its main ally in the region. For indeed the US was extremely sensitive towards Ankara's apprehensions of the Kurdish issue not just at home but in the neighboring countries as well which threatened to have spillover effects on the Kurds in Turkey.<sup>33</sup> Another reason was that the American administration has always prioritized the integrity of the nation-states that had emerged after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War over any other ethnonational consideration. However, developments on the ground in Iraq forced the US

30 Lara Vergnaud, *Middle East*, 9 May 2013. <http://blogs.blouinnews.com/blouinbeat-world/2013/05/09/iraq-rejects-pkk-withdrawal-but-lacks-leverage/>

31 *Voice of America*, 18 April 2012. <http://m.voanews.com/a/179182.html>

32 It should be noted that PM Erdoğan threatened to intervene there "since those terrorist formations would disturb our national peace". *The Kurdish Globe*, 31 July 2012. <http://www.kurdishglobe.net/display-article.html?id=E2564C82CB3871AD1E5DA4801448F156>

33 It was this consideration that moved the US to keep secret its symbolical support to the Kurds of Iraq in the years 1972-75. See Ofra Bengio, *The Kurds of Iraq: Building a State within a State*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2012) pp.76-78.

to change its policies, though not its strict concepts. The erosion in the American policy started in the 1991 Gulf War when it decided to establish a “safe haven” region for the Kurds from which then emerged the Kurdish autonomy in Iraq. From that time onwards the US became enmeshed in the Kurdish issue in Iraq, prioritizing this time the ethnolnational group over the Ba`thi Iraqi state with which it was in a state of war. However, the main turning point in the American policy towards the Kurds took place in the aftermath of the 2003 Iraqi war in which the Kurds played a pivotal role in the liberation/occupation of Iraq. The Kurds were rewarded by having been granted a leading role in the formation of post-Saddam Iraq as well as with the entrenchment of their autonomy. This American policy towards the Kurds conflicted with its two other concepts, namely preserving the integrity of the nation-state and assuaging Ankara’s fears regarding the spillover effects of the Kurdish autonomy in Iraq on the Kurds in Turkey. Accordingly, in a policy of eating the cake and having it too the US continued to advocate the integrity of Iraq while further empowering the KRG, as well as playing the pacifier between the KRG and Turkey.

This American ambiguous stance is indeed one of the greatest ironies of the unfolding situation in the Turkish-Kurdish-Iraqi triangle. While for the greater part of the last two decades the United States had played the role of pacifier between Ankara and Erbil, in the last few years it has changed its approach by 180 degrees.<sup>34</sup> Now Washington is trying to put brakes on the ever extending relations between Ankara and Erbil warning both of closer relations. However, while the administration continues to stick to the idea of a unified Iraq, a growing number of voices in American think tanks do encourage the administration to change course and support an independent Kurdistan.<sup>35</sup>

The main cause for the official American stance is that it found itself now between the Turkish hammer and the Iraqi anvil: between Turkey which is one of its closest allies in the region and Iraq whom Washington had hoped to turn into a strategic asset and a model of democracy for all the Arab states. Put differently, the American ad-

34 In his first visit to Turkey in April 2009 President Obama called for closer Turkish cooperation not only with the central government in Baghdad but also with the Kurds. Center for Strategic and International Studies, 8 April 2009. [http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/090408\\_turkey\\_update.pdf](http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/090408_turkey_update.pdf)

35 See for example Michael Rubin’s article quoted in *Press TV*, 14 May 2013. <http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2013/05/14/303540/us-preparing-for-iraqi-kurds-to-split/>

ministration has been endeavoring to balance between equally failing models of democracy which it had hoped to export to the Arab world: that of post-Saddam Iraq sponsored by President George W. Bush and that of Turkey's AKP sponsored by President Barak Obama.<sup>36</sup>

And while Turkey has softened on the idea of a unified Iraq paying it mere lip service, Washington continues to hope and work for this elusive target. Clearly for all the support which the Kurds had granted the United States, Washington does not want to be perceived as the one which had split Iraq. However, for all of the American endeavors and warnings Ankara and Erbil are going their own way building pipelines which might change the geopolitical map of the region. This development is yet another symptom of the weakening clout of the US in the region as a whole. Its withdrawal at the end of 2011 only served to accentuate this weakness.

## Conclusion

The tectonic changes in the region changed the balance of power within the state system as well as between the state system and the Kurdish subsystem. On the whole all the players are on a horn of a dilemma. As far as Baghdad is concerned if it puts too much pressure on Erbil for toeing al-Maliki's line it might push it to declare independence, if it does not it might lose the support of Shi'is and Sunnis who look with anxiety at the vanishing dream of a unified Iraq. As to Baghdad-Ankara relations they are in such a fragile state that should Baghdad strain them further it might push Turkey to increase its support to the KRG even to a point of supporting independence. Such Turkish stance, however, while might be beneficial economically and strategically can sow the seeds of Kurdish separatism in Turkey. Erbil too has its own dilemmas. On the one hand it needs Turkey as its most likely outlet to the sea. On the other hand a too close relationship with Ankara might risk it becoming a Turkish satellite, loose economic assets in Iraq and expose itself to Iranian threats and manipulations. Already now Iran warns Erbil against forging close relations with Ankara or thinking about

36 For Obama's view of Turkey as a model for the Muslim world, see: Ariel Cohen, "Obama's best friend? The Alarming evolution of US-Turkish relations", *Mideast Security and Policy Studies*, BESA, No.100, pp. 16-18. For the failing models see, Ofra Bengio, "Are Iraq and Turkey models for democratization?" *The Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. XIX, No.3, Summer 2012, pp.53-62.

independence.<sup>37</sup> Nor is the US more comfortable with its choices. American oil companies, Turkey and growing number of states and companies seek to do business with the KRG far from Iraqi control but if Washington gives them the green light it will help break Iraq. In fact, however the US is no longer in a position to decide either way.

As to the question if these changes are tactical or strategic I tend to think that they are strategic because of the economic interests involved, the deepening Sunni-Shi'i divide and the sweeping changes in the geopolitical map in the region. The paradigmatic shifts are also very apparent. Turkey's changing stance towards the KRG can be summed up as follows: While the KRG was considered as part of the Kurdish domestic problem in Turkey, now it is considered as a partner to the solution. As for Iraq while in the 20th century it perceived Turkey as its strategic depth against Iran, after the 2003 War the Shi'i-led government in Baghdad perceives Iran as its strategic depth against a hostile Sunni neighborhood which includes Turkey as well. Regarding the Janus-faced Kurds, in the last twenty years they have been distancing themselves from their Iraqi past while accelerating their movement towards a Turkish oriented future.

The Middle East is now in a state of flux. The upheavals which have engulfed many countries in the region, including its closest neighbors Iraq and Syria did not stop at Turkey's doorstep but came to include it as well. The Taksim-Gezi Park demonstrations which were unleashed in Turkey at the end of May 2013 may prove to be a watershed not just for the future Turkish-Kurdish relations but for the very structure of alliances and axes in the Middle East. The old Turkish-Iraqi alliance has collapsed and so did the decade long Turkish-Iranian-Syrian axis, leaving Turkey with only the KRG as an ally of sort in the Fertile Crescent. If and when Assad's regime falls Turkey might want to further strengthen its relations with the KRG as a counterbalance to probable growing Iranian penetration into Iraq.

The great Arab poet of the tenth century, Al-Mutanabbi, wrote in one of his poems: "The winds blow not to the liking of the ships". Indeed this metaphor suits wonderfully the situation in the Middle East. The winds of change are so strong that the governments in these states cannot but wait patiently until the storm is over. Survival is the name of the game.

<sup>37</sup> Pakistan Defense, 17 February 2013. <http://www.defence.pk/forums/middle-east-africa/235610-iran-iraq-s-kurds-don-t-think-about-independence-closer-ties-turks.html>

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# Denaturalizing the Deep Dilemma: An Episodic Analysis of Partial/Non-Cooperation Discourses in Turkey's Iraq Policy

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## Abstract

Full rather than partial cooperation seems to be the more desirable, if not natural, option for foreign policy makers. The current state of Turkey's partial/non-cooperation with Iraq challenges this conventional wisdom. The Turkish Government officials have not yet fully achieved their goal of comprehensive cooperation with their Iraqi counterparts. In the recent years, Ankara and Baghdad have come closer to political confrontation, rather than institutional coordination. International, regional and other external causes could be held accountable for the miring of these relations. Yet, this argument does not help us delineate the deep dilemma still Turkey encounters. Once again, Turkey's vision of long-term strategic partnership with Iraq dissolved in less than five years. It seems that Turkey's discourse of strategic cooperation with Iraq began to lose its ontological meaning and rhetorical power. As Ankara got closer to Erbil, it began to fall apart from Baghdad. The weakening of political co-operation with the Central Iraqi Government might prove to be costly for the Turkish Government. Thus, Ankara would most likely need to coordinate its local and regional policies with Baghdad. Along these lines, the article provides a narrative inquiry into the lingering paradox of partial/non-cooperation discourses in Turkey's Iraq policy. Overall, the paper offers a contextual-discursive explanation to denaturalize partial/non-cooperation in Turkish-Iraqi relations. The episodic analysis is based on three key events, i.e. the re-opening of Turkey's Baghdad Embassy in 1993, the US Invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the official inauguration of Turkey's Erbil General Consulate in 2011.

**Keywords:** Turkey's Iraq Policy, Partial/Non-Cooperation, Political Discourse and Context, Political Frames, Episodic Analysis.

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## Derin Dilemmanın Doğasını Dönüştürmek: Türkiye'nin Irak ile Kısmi İş Bir(likesiz)liği Söylemlerine İlişkin Dönemsel Bir Analiz

### Özet

Dış politika yapımcıları açısından, tam iş birliği kısmi iş birliğine nazaran daha çok istenen, belki de daha doğal görünen, bir opsiyon olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Türkiye'nin Irak ile kısmi iş birliksizliğinin günümüzdeki durumu, bu yaygın kanaate tam olarak uymamaktadır. Türkiye hükûmeti yetkilileri, Iraklı meslektaşlarıyla kapsamlı iş birliği hedeflerini henüz tam olarak gerçekleştirilememiştir. Son yıllarda Ankara, Bağdat ile ilişkilerinde kurumsal koordinasyona değil, siyasi gerilime daha fazla yakın hâle gelmiştir. İlişkilerin kötüye gidişi uluslararası, bölgesel veya diğer dışsal sebeplere bağlanabilir. Ancak bu argüman, Türkiye'nin hâlen yaşamakta olduğu derin çelişkinin çerçevelenmesine yardımcı olmaz. Daha önce de olduğu gibi, Türkiye'nin Irak ile uzun erimli stratejik ortaklık vizyonu, beş yıldan daha az bir zaman içinde çözünmeye başlamıştır. Türkiye'nin Irak'a yönelik stratejik iş birliği söylemi, ontolojik anlamını ve retoriksel gücünü kaybetmeye yüz tutmuş görünmektedir. Ankara, Erbil ile yakınlaştıkça, Bağdat'tan ıraklaşmıştır. Merkezî Irak Hükûmeti ile iş birliğinin zayıflaması, Türk Hükûmeti açısından maliyetli olabilecek sonuçlara yol açabilir. Yüksek olasılıkla Ankara, yerel ve bölgesel politikalarını Bağdat ile koordine etme ihtiyacını duyabilir. Anılan bağlamda, bu makale Türkiye'nin Irak ile kısmi iş bir(likesiz)liği söylemlerindeki süregelen karmaşıklığı anlatsal bir yaklaşımla incelemektedir. Sonuç olarak bu çalışma, Türkiye-Irak ilişkilerinde yaşanan iş bir(likesiz)liği dinamiklerinin doğallaştırılmamasına yönelik bağlamsal-söylemsel bir açıklama sunmaktadır. Dönemsel olarak yapılan analizde, üç önemli olay temel alınmıştır: Türkiye'nin Bağdat Büyükelçiliğinin 1993 yılında tekrar açılması, 2003 yılında Irak'ın ABD tarafından işgal edilmesi ve Türkiye'nin Erbil Başkonsolosluğunun 2011 yılında resmî olarak açılması.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Türkiye'nin Irak Politikası, Kısmi İş Bir(likesiz)liği, Siyasi Söylem ve Bağlam, Politik Çerçeveler, Dönemsel Analiz

تحويل طبيعة المعضلة العميقة : التحليل المرحلي للمقولات الخاصة بالتعاون  
(عدم تعاون) الجزئي التركي العراقي  
محمد عاكف كومرال

**ملخص:**

من وجهة نظر واضعي السياسة الخارجية، أن التعاون التام مرجح دائما على التعاون الجزئي ، بل قد يبدو خيارا أكثر طبيعية. إن حالة عدم التعاون الجزئي القائمة بين تركيا العراق اليوم لا تتفق تماما مع هذا الرأي الشائع. إن المسؤولين في الحكومة التركية لم يتمكنوا حتى الآن من تحقيق اهدافهم فيما يتعلق بالتعاون المشترك الشامل مع نظرائهم العراقيين. و في السنوات الأخيرة أن أنقرة اوضحت في علاقاتها مع بغداد تقترّب من حالة التوتر السياسي أكثر منها الى التنسيق المؤسسي معها. ومن الممكن أن يعزى سير العلاقات نحو الأسوأ الى أسباب دولية او إقليمية او الى غيرها من الأسباب الخارجية، غير ان هذا المنطق لا يساعد على تأطير التناقض العميق الذي تعيشه تركيا حاليا. وكما كان الحال في السابق أيضا، فإن رؤى الشراكة الاستراتيجية بعيدة المدى لتركيا مع العراق، بدأت تنهار خلال فترة تقل عن خمس سنوات. ويبدو ان مقولة التعاون الاستراتيجي لتركيا تجاه العراق بدأت تتجه نحو فقدان معناها الوجودي وزخمها البلاغي. وكما تقترب أنقرة مع أربيل، فإنها قد ابتعدت عن بغداد. إن ضعف التعاون مع الحكومة المركزية في العراق قد يؤدي إلى نتائج مكلفة للحكومة التركية. ومن المحتمل جدا أن تشعر أنقرة بالحاجة الى التنسيق مع بغداد في سياساتها المحلية والإقليمية. ومن هذا المنطلق، فإن هذا المقال يعتمد على التحليل السردى للتعقيدات المستمرة في مقولة التعاون (أو عدم التعاون) الجزئي لتركيا مع العراق. والخلاصة إن هذه الدراسة تقدم توضيحا تحليليا سياقيا واستطراديا عن عدم تطبيع ديناميكيات التعاون (أو عدم التعاون) الذي يشهد في العلاقات بين تركيا والعراق.

وفي التحليل المرحلي أخذنا ثلاث وقائع كأساس في التحليل وهي : إعادة فتح السفارة التركية في بغداد عام ١٩٩٣، واحتلال العراق من قبل الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية عام ٢٠٠٣، وافتتاح القنصلية العامة التركية في أربيل بشكل رسمي عام ٢٠١١ .

**كلمات مفتاحية :** سياسة تركيا تجاه العراق، التعاون (عدم التعاون) الجزئي، المقول والسياق السياسي، الإطار السياسي، التحليل الدوري.

## Introduction

It is widely accepted that Turkey has always been interconnected to Iraq in many respects. Material (border trade, oil-water exchange) and non-material (socio-cultural interaction) factors establish strong ties between the two countries. Given this interconnectedness, one expects the prevalence and continuity of cooperation in Turkish-Iraqi relations.<sup>1</sup> On the contrary, the ongoing state of affairs between Ankara and Baghdad does not neatly fit into this picture. Making sense of the recent deterioration in Ankara-Baghdad relations have presented a theoretically puzzling picture, even for the established scholars and experienced observers.<sup>2</sup>

In recent years, governments in Ankara and Baghdad have come closer to political confrontation, rather than institutional coordination. International, regional and other external causes could be held accountable for the miring of these relations. Yet, a daunting paradox still remains. Despite its growing cooperation with Erbil, Ankara has begun to fall apart from Baghdad, at a time of urgent need. Weakening of political/inter-governmental co-operation (if defined as “policy co-ordination”<sup>3</sup>) with the Central Iraqi Government (CIG) might prove to be costly for the Turkish Government in its efforts targeted towards disarming of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers’ Party) militants, including the top cadres located in northern Iraq. In order to better implement its Syrian policy and possibly reach to the desired end state (change of political leadership) in Damascus, Ankara would also need to coordinate its policies with Baghdad.

Given these likely prospects for the foreseeable future, it becomes all the more ironic if one revisits ambitious goals of co-operation put forward in the “joint political declaration”<sup>4</sup> signed on 10 July 2008 by the Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and the Prime Minister of Iraq, Nouri al-Maliki. In less than five years, it seemed that Turkey-Iraq “High-Level Cooperation Council” began

1 See for instance, Ramazan Gözen, *İmparatorluktan Küresel Aktörlüğe Türkiye'nin Dış Politikası*, (Ankara: Palme Yayıncılık, 2009), p. 212.

2 Henry Barkey, “Turkey-Iraq Relations Deteriorate with Accusations of Sectarianism,” 30 April 2012, <http://www.al-monitor.com> (accessed 11 October 2012).

3 Helen Milner, “International Theories of Cooperation among Nations: Strengths and Weaknesses,” *World Politics*, Vol. 44, April 1992, p. 467.

4 “Türkiye Cumhuriyeti ile Irak Cumhuriyeti Hükümetleri Arasında Yüksek Düzeyli İşbirliği Konseyi'nin Kurulmasına İlişkin Ortak Siyasi Bildirge,” <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/>, 24 April 2011.

to lose its *raison d'être*. Why did Turkey's viewing of "long-term strategic partnership" with Iraq die down in such a short time? Is Turkey, entering into another episode of intended but failed cooperation with Iraq? Or is Ankara, once again, moving towards equilibrium of partial/non-cooperation with Baghdad? Time will exactly tell which one of the paths actually holds.

Against the backdrop of these questions, the aim of this article is to critically analyze the recent episode of partial/non-cooperation in Turkish-Iraqi relations. The episodic analysis is based on three key events, i.e. the re-opening of Turkey's Baghdad Embassy in 1993, the US Invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the official inauguration of Turkey's Erbil General Consulate in 2011. The article is divided into three parts. In part one (episodic beginning), I will lay out the contextual background of partial cooperation in Turkish-Iraqi relations. The second part (episodic middle) covers the period between the commencement of US air bombardment on 20 March 2003 and the fall of Baghdad on 9 April 2003. In this section, I analyze political frames that were published in the pro-government daily *Yeni Şafak*.<sup>5</sup> In addition to official discourses of foreign policy figures—Turkey's Presidents, Prime Ministers, Ministers of Foreign Affairs—political frames of Fehmi Kuru<sup>6</sup> (the chief columnist of *Yeni Şafak*) are incorporated into the analysis for complementary purposes. Also using the pen name of Taha Kivanç, Kuru made a considerable discursive contribution to the public construction of Turkey's Iraq policy during the Iraq War. Analysis of political-intellectual framings helps to make better sense of Turkey's ambivalent non-cooperation discourse. Turkey's discursive position during the war implied a mixed reasoning, which attempted to uphold security and economic interests without relinquishing identity matters. It was this sophisticated discourse that provided the conditions of possibility for gradual embracing of northern Iraq in the post-2003 period.

After the episodic middle, contextual dynamics of comprehensive cooperation are examined in part three. The official inauguration of Turkey's Erbil General Consulate on 29 March 2011 marked the episodic end of Turkey's post-war Iraq policy. In other words, this incident bears sufficient significance to close this episode. In the con-

5 Electronic archive was available at <http://yenisafak.com.tr>, accessed on 1-30 April 2012.

6 Fehmi Kuru has been a close friend of Abdullah Gül. Kuru staunchly defended that Turkey should not get involved in the Iraq War whatsoever. See Murat Yetkin, *Tezkere: Irak Krizinin Gerçek Öyküsü*, (İstanbul: Remzi Kitapevi, 2004), p. 113.

clusion, episodic findings are presented. Overall the article argues that Turkey's Iraq policy discourse has changed quite dramatically over the recent years. Ankara's cooperative and non-cooperative approaches to Baghdad and Erbil have become more salient than ever before. Finding a reasonable solution to the Kurdish question on both sides of the border has still formed the major predicament for Turkey's discourse of comprehensive cooperation with Iraq.

### **Part One (Episodic Beginning): Contextual Background of Partial Cooperation**

In the post-Gulf War era, implementation of military and economic measures against Baghdad has created severe consequences for Ankara. Governments of Turkey seemed to have almost no choice, but extend their support to the US for the implementation of UN-mandated northern no-fly zone over Iraq. As a result of the Operation Northern Watch (ONW)—initially Operation Provide Comfort (OPC)—launched from the Turkish territories, the Central Iraqi Government (CIG) had to cease its tight military grip over northern Iraq. Regional power vacuum was filled by emergent Kurdish groups. Without further ado, “the embryo of a Kurdish state” has been sown by Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). Besides, the region had turned out to be a safe haven for the PKK terrorist activities. Between 1991 and 1993, “the PKK was to find it easier than ever before to operate from northern Iraq.”<sup>7</sup>

Turkey could not break the cross-border impasse by only resorting to military power. As President Turgut Özal saw, the military solution was not in the offing on both sides of the border. Hence he opted for political-economic measures in dealing with northern Iraq.<sup>8</sup> In February 1993, Turkey's Baghdad Embassy was re-opened. Then, the two capitals were continuously visited by various delegations.<sup>9</sup> In this period, Turkish-Iraqi relations displayed a return towards the security cooperation discourse.

7 Philip Robins, “The Overlord State: Turkish Policy and the Kurdish Issue,” *International Affairs*, Vol. 69, No. 4, 1993, p. 674.

8 Tarık Oğuzlu, “Turkey's Northern Iraq Policy: Competing Perspectives,” *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 2008, p. 10.

9 Robert Olson, “The Kurdish Question and Turkey's Foreign Policy, 1991-1995: From the Gulf War to the Incursion into Iraq,” *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1, Fall 1995, pp. 13- 14. See also Gül İnanç, *Türk Diplomasisinde Irak (1978-1997)*, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2008), pp. 104-107.

## Returning to Security Cooperation Discourse

Özal engaged with the leaders of KDP and PUK, Masoud Barzani and Celal Talabani. By doing so, he attempted to drive the head of PKK Abdullah Öcalan towards a ceasefire, which would be declared as of 20 March 1993. After the sudden death of Özal on 17 April 1993, the ceasefire was put on a backburner. The killing of 33 Turkish army recruits in the PKK ambush broke the ceasefire on 25 May 1993.<sup>10</sup> In almost rest of the 1990's, the Turkish army had sustained its upper hand in national security and foreign policy making processes. Turkey was driven towards more militarily oriented policies, particularly in northern Iraq.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, this state of mind led Turkey to enhance its security cooperation with Iran and Syria. After the trilateral meeting held in Damascus, on 23 August 1993, Turkish, Iranian and Syrian foreign ministers “expressed their unalterable opposition to the fragmentation of Iraq”, presumably by the US.<sup>12</sup> The fear of Iraq's partition provoked “the Sèvres syndrome”<sup>13</sup>. This age-old phobia has created havoc in Turkish domestic and foreign policy up until the capturing of Öcalan in 1999.<sup>14</sup>

On the other hand, consecutive Turkish governments, including the one led by Necmettin Erbakan in 1996, allowed the US Air Force units—stationed in Turkey—to continue their operation (Northern Watch) over northern Iraq by using the air space of Turkey. The existence of northern-no-fly-zone gave a free hand to the Turkish military to devise intermittent operations against the PKK strongholds in northern Iraq. Paradoxically, however, Iraqi territory in the

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- 10 Henri J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller, “Turkey's Kurdish Question: Critical Turning Points and Missed Opportunities,” *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 51, No.1, Winter 1997, pp. 68-72. See also Melek Fırat and Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, “Orta Doğu'yla İlişkiler, 1990-2001,” in Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası: Kuruluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar (Cilt II: 1980-2001)*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed., (İstanbul: İletişim, 2008), pp. 557, 558.
- 11 İlhan Uzel, “Ordu Dış Politikanın Neresinde?,” in Ahmet İnsel and Ali Bayramoğlu (eds.), *Bir Zümre, Bir Parti: Türkiye'de Ordu*, (İstanbul: Birikim Yayınları, 2004), pp. 311-318. See also Erol Kurubaş, “Etnik Sorun-Dış Politika İlişkisi Bağlamında Kürt Sorununun Türk Dış Politikasına Etkileri,” *Ankara Avrupa Çalışmaları Dergisi*, Vol. 8, No.1, 2009, pp. 39-69.
- 12 Olson, “The Kurdish Question and Turkey's Foreign Policy, 1991-1995: From the Gulf War to the Incurion into Iraq”, op.cit., 5.
- 13 Dietrich Jung, “The Sèvres Syndrome: Turkish Foreign Policy and its Historical Legacies,” in Bjørn Møller (ed.), *Oil & Water: Cooperative Security in the Persian Gulf*, (London and New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers 2001), pp. 131-159. The republished version of this chapter was accessible [http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/archives\\_roll/2003\\_07-09/jung\\_sevres/jung\\_sevres.html](http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/archives_roll/2003_07-09/jung_sevres/jung_sevres.html) (accessed 25 March 2010).
- 14 Baskın Oran, “Dönemin Bilançosu, 1990-2001,” in *Türk Dış Politikası (Cilt II)*, p. 219, 235, 236.

north of the thirty sixth parallel, which was dominated by the Kurdish population, became more autonomous. The autonomy might be regarded as a step towards federal status.<sup>15</sup>

By 1996, the Turkish General Staff (TGS) was designated as the coordinating institution for Turkey's northern Iraq policy.<sup>16</sup> In the same year, the former Chief of TGS retired General Necip Torumtay argued that the PKK presence and the proto-federation of Kurds in northern Iraq would create serious security problems and social repercussions for Turkey. In this regard, Torumtay proposed a three-fold strategy: elimination of the PKK, protection of the Iraqi territorial integrity, normalization of political-economic relations.<sup>17</sup> This three-tiered strategy more or less defined the parameters of Turkey's Iraq policy up until the US invasion. It seems that the so-called 'red lines', outlined by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) long before the Iraq war, was an extension of this strategy. The red lines were about the establishment of an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq,<sup>18</sup> the status of Kirkuk and Mosul and the safety of Turkmen population living in Iraq.

### **Moving towards the Invasion**

When the Justice and Development Party (AKP/AK PARTİ<sup>19</sup>) came to power on 3 November 2002, Iraq war was still at the top of US foreign policy agenda.<sup>20</sup> As of 3 December 2002, the US Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz. and Under Secretary of State

15 İlhan Uzgel, "ABD ve NATO'yla İlişkiler," in *Türk Dış Politikası (Cilt II)*, p. 265, 266. See also Michael Gunter, *The Kurds Ascending: The Evolving Solution to the Kurdish Problem in Iraq and Turkey*, (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 53.

16 İlhan Uzgel, "Dış Politikada AKP: Stratejik Konumdan Stratejik Modele", in İlhan Uzgel and Bülent Duru, (eds.), *AKP Kitabı: Bir Dönüşümün Bilançosu*, (Ankara: Phoenix Yayınevi, 2009), p. 373. Uzgel cites Fikret Bila, "Özel Siyaset Belgesi ve Rumsfeld," *Milliyet*, 20 July 2003. See also Uzgel, "Ordu Dış Politikasının Neresinde?", p. 314.

17 Necip Torumtay, *Değişen Stratejilerin Odağında Türkiye*, (İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1996), pp. 58-60, 226-232, 242-251.

18 Baskın Oran, "Türk Dış Politikasının Teori ve Pratiği," in Baskın Oran, (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar (Cilt I: 1919-1980)*, 14<sup>th</sup> ed., (İstanbul: İletişim, 2009), p. 26. Oran quotes from an official MFA report, which was leaked to *Cumhuriyet* on 13 May 2001.

19 Throughout the article, AKP (common scholarly reference) and AK PARTİ (institutional reference) are taken as co-acronyms of the Justice and Development Party. For the institutional reference, see "AK PARTİ Kurum Kimliği Klavuzu (2006)," <http://www.akparti.org.tr/AKPARTİ%20Kurumsal.pdf> (accessed 24 March 2008).

20 Raymond Hinnebusch and Rick Fawn (eds.), *The Iraq War: Causes and Consequences*, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006).

Marc Grossman were in Ankara. They had talks with Prime Minister Abdullah Gül. This was the first official meeting when the US side offered a military cooperation plan, which involved three incremental stages, i.e. “site inspection, site preparation and actual operation.” Both sides agreed to go with the plan.<sup>21</sup> On 10 December 2002, AKP leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan visited the White House. During the visit, Erdoğan hinted the serious predicament for the US coalition building efforts. Participation of regional (Arab-Muslim) countries, like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, was deemed important by Erdoğan.<sup>22</sup>

While AKP officials went on negotiating with the US, Turkish people, by and large, were getting wary about the situation. Almost 90 percent of Turkish public was opposing to any kind of war against Iraq. AKP was wedged between enormous US pressure and rising popular opposition. For AKP, US political and economic support was crucial. Total debt was around 250 billion dollars. International Monetary Fund (IMF) program had to be sustained. AKP government needed US financial and diplomatic support. Therefore, it could not reject US war demands in an open and more direct way. Ignoring domestic public opinion would also be too costly.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, AKP opted for continuation of status quo and buy some time. Prime Minister Abdullah Gül, Minister of Foreign Affairs Yaşar Yakış and their adviser Ahmet Davutoğlu sought for diplomatic solutions. In this regard, Turkish government led the formation of “Iraq’s Neighbors Group” in order to prevent invasion and/or protect territorial integrity of Iraq. On 23 January 2003, Turkey hosted the first of these regional diplomatic consultations in İstanbul.<sup>24</sup> The chief

21 Ali A. Allawi, *The Occupation of Iraq: Winning the War, Losing the Peace*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 87, 88. See also Yetkin, *Tezkere: Irak Krizinin Gerçek Öyküsü*, pp.,99-105.

22 Yetkin, *Tezkere: Irak Krizinin Gerçek Öyküsü*, p. 109.

23 Meliha Altunışık, “Turkey’s Iraq Policy: The War and Beyond,” *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 2, August 2006, pp. 187-189. Altunışık provides a long list including Washington’s overtly ambitious demands from Ankara. Among those demands most significant were opening of several air bases and seaports without any notification requirement, deployment of 120,000 US and British combat troops, troop contribution of around 35,000 to 40,000. In exchange, the US offered six billion dollars in aid, in addition to some 26 billion dollars in loan guarantees.

24 Nuri Yeşilyurt, “Orta Doğu’yla İlişkiler,” in Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar (Cilt III: 2001-2012)*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2013), pp. 405, 406.

columnist of pro-government daily *Yeni Şafak* Fehmi Kuru was also supportive of policies directed towards the prevention of war.<sup>25</sup>

Given his intellectual credentials<sup>26</sup>, Davutoğlu could well be regarded as the master mind, who had been trying to orchestrate AKP's foreign policy making process behind the scenes. Davutoğlu strongly opposed Turkey's concrete contribution to and direct involvement into the war. The US war against Iraq could not serve Turkey's own interests.<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, AKP government did not have the wherewithal to thwart war ambitions of the Bush administration against the Saddam regime. The unfolding of events also reiterated the fact that Ankara could not prevent the war between Washington and Baghdad. Therefore, Turkey's state (political-military) bureaucracy sided with the idea of opening the northern front. Their decision was based on security reasons, like eliminating the PKK threat and balancing the Kurdish ambitions in northern Iraq.<sup>28</sup> However, President Ahmet Necdet Sezer took a normative stance and argued for a multilateral military action only if it is based on international legitimacy. TGS also would have preferred to act on the basis of a UN mandate or some kind of a NATO umbrella or even a regional initiative. These options waned by the end of January 2003, when significant amount of US and British troops completed their deployment into the Persian Gulf.<sup>29</sup>

To a certain extent, it was security interests that had driven AKP towards cooperation with the US for pre-war arrangements, i.e. site survey and base modernization. On 6 February 2003, the first motion was passed with a 308 to 193 margin. AKP suffered 53 against

25 Yetkin, *Tezkere: Irak Krizinin Gerçek Öyküsü*, 113.

26 Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu* (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001).

27 Gürkan Zengin, *Hoca: Türk Dış Politikası'nda "Davutoğlu Etkisi"*, (İstanbul: İnkılâp Kitapevi, 2010), p. 142, 143. Gürkan Zengin, *Editör Programı*, CNN Türk, 12 February 2002. This interview was reprinted in Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Küresel Bunalım: 11 Eylül Konuşmaları*, ed. Faruk Deniz, 14<sup>th</sup> ed., (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2013), pp. 197-207. See also Derya Sazak, "Sohbet Odası," *Milliyet*, 13 January 2003. This interview is reprinted in Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Teoriden Pratiğe: Türk Dış Politikası Üzerine Konuşmalar*, eds. Semih Atiş-Sevinç Alkan Özcan, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2013), pp. 89-94.

28 Fikret Bilâ, *Ankara'da Irak Savaşları: Sivil Darbe Girişimi ve Gizli Belgelerle 1 Mart Tezkeresi*, (İstanbul: Güncel Yayıncılık, 2007), pp. 160-165, 277-279, 283-307. Deniz Bölükbaşı, *1 Mart Vakası: Irak Tezkeresi ve Sonrası*, (İstanbul: Doğan Yayıncılık), pp. 36-51.

29 Mim Kemal Öke, *Derviş ve Komutan: Özgürlük-Güvenlik Sarkacındaki Türkiye'nin Kimlik Sorunsalı*, (İstanbul: Alfa, 2004), pp. 360-369.

votes from its own ranks.<sup>30</sup> Despite strategic interests and military considerations, the situation in northern Iraq was also a matter of identity for AKP officials. As the leader of AKP, Erdoğan articulated a dual position in mid-February 2003. Even though he was morally against the war, the government would do whatever necessary in order to protect Turkey's interests. While dealing with the issue of war in Iraq, he opted for a mixed approach in order to achieve economic and security interests without frustrating socio-political and ethno-religious concerns.<sup>31</sup>

President Sezer's normative attitude became influential during the National Security Council (NSC) meetings, including the last one on 28 February 2003. NSC did not take any binding decision and did not recommend any specific course of action either. The second motion, which would virtually open up the northern front, was voted on 1 March 2003. Of 533 parliamentarians in that session, 19 abstained and 250 voted against the motion. The number of advocates reached 264 but fell short of meeting the constitutional requirement of 268. In a sense, the motion crisis marked the key moment after which Turkey's discursive framings began to shape the episodic middle. The next part helps substantiating this point.

## **Part Two (Episodic Middle): Discursive Framings of Non-Cooperation**

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan read his government program on 19 March 2003. The program stipulated that Turkey's policy towards the Iraqi problem was rationalized around political, military and economic interests. Protection of interests was the most salient political frame. At this point, the new government was ready, if not eager, to renew the second motion. No sooner had the US President George W. Bush declared 48 hours ultimatum—for Saddam Hussein and his sons Uday and Kusay to leave Iraq—the Istanbul stock-exchange faced a sharp decline. Financial collapse of 17 March 2003 was called as “the Black Monday.”<sup>32</sup> In order to eliminate the volatility in domestic market, the third motion had to be passed, even before the new government would seek the vote of

30 Yetkin, *Tezkere: Irak Krizinin Gerçek Öyküsü*, pp. 116-119, 128-130, 149. See also Öke, *Derviş ve Komutan*, pp. 187-189.

31 Altunışık, “Turkey's Iraq Policy: The War and Beyond”, p. 189, 195.

32 “Küresel Kriz Çıkar,” “Piyasalar Sakin,” “Borsa Normale Döndü,” <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/19/> (accessed 26 March 2012).

confidence on 23 March 2003. Notwithstanding the domestic public opinion,<sup>33</sup> the AKP officials were certain that this time the motion, with the minor changes only in its wording, could be approved by the majority of AKP deputies.<sup>34</sup> Staying out of the game in northern Iraq seemed to be too risky for Ankara. Hence, the Turkish diplomacy kept open its contact channels, with almost all players of the coming war in Iraq. In this regard, the indispensability of Turkey for the US war effort was one of the major frames deployed by Turkish policy and opinion makers.

### ***Deployment of Indispensability Theses***

Fehmi Kuru (Taha Kıvanç) argued that “all of the US war plans depend on the opening of a front in the north (i.e. in Turkey); Washington does not have a Plan B; if it does, Plan B as well as Plan C included Turkey”. As Ankara took a tougher line against joining the war, diplomatic position of the US, especially in the UN platform, had been weakened. In fact, this was the second thesis of Kıvanç. The third thesis was built on the first and the second. Without the UN blessing and the Turkish support, “the US could do nothing” to instigate an illegitimate war.<sup>35</sup>

Like Kıvanç, Turkey’s former Minister of Foreign Affairs Yakış formidably believed in the indispensability thesis: “I think that the US has not given up stationing of soldiers in Turkey’s lands. In case this happens, a new motion might come to the agenda.”<sup>36</sup> By the beginning of war, Turkey’s foreign policy discourse was primarily imprisoned by a pervasive geopolitical vision that is predetermined by the indispensability assumption: without Turkey’s indispensable support, the US could not instigate the war on Iraq. As a political frame, the indispensability thesis largely rested on Turkey’s geopolitical position.

33 “Halk, Irak’a Saldırısında ABD ile İşbirliği İstemiyor”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/19/e4.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

34 Nevzat Demirkol-Bilal Çetin, “Hükümet Tezkereden Emin”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/19/p5.html>; Veli Toprak, “ABD’nin ‘Mali’ Baskısı Tezkerayı Erkene Aldırdı”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/19/p7.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

35 Taha Kıvanç, “Savaş Üzerine Tezler”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/20/TKIVANC.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

36 “Kuzey Cephesiz Olmaz”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/22/>; “ABD Kuzey Mahkum”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/22/p2.html> (accessed on 26 March 2012).

Kıvanç also reiterated that economic downturn could not provide a good excuse for the AKP government to incline towards a pro-war stance. Turkey should not be a country that appeared to “count money as a cause of war.”<sup>37</sup> Kıvanç’s negative framing of US economic assistance was almost echoed by Prime Minister Erdoğan. At his first in-country visit in Çorum, he asserted that they did not “speak [in terms of financial] numbers” with the US. “Now, all of our calculation is political and military.” With regard to the new motion, there is no “uncertainty.” Two things have been clarified. First and foremost, the motion would allow “the entry of Turkish military into northern Iraq.” Secondly, “the air corridor (over flights)” would be opened for the US war planes.<sup>38</sup> In a sense, framing of the third motion demonstrated Ankara’s discursive desire to construct reasons for re-entering into northern Iraq.

### ***Constructing Reasons for Re-Entering into Northern Iraq***

Gül and the US Secretary of State Colin Powell made it clear that economic dimension of the Turkish-US bilateral negotiations almost collapsed. On the other hand, the US government remained quite conducive to Ankara’s political-military demands, i.e. the stationing of Turkish troops in northern Iraq and the acceptance of Turkmen as constituent elements of Iraq. Turkish soldiers were expected to “enter into Iraq as part of international coalition” under the leadership of “Turkish commander.” In exchange, the Turkish government agreed to provide air access for transit purposes.<sup>39</sup> According to Turkey’s President Ahmet Necdet Sezer, the “process” at the UN Security Council had to be finalized. Without the conclusion of that process, the US took a “unilateral” action. He reasserted that the US decision to wage war against Iraq was not “right.”<sup>40</sup> Nonetheless, the motion that handed authority to the government for six months was accepted by the Parliament. The motion included the opening of Turkish airspace to the foreign (read US) military forces and the sending of Turkish troops to contingencies in abroad (read

37 Taha Kıvanç, “Savaşta Yuvarlanıyor muyuz?”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/19/tkivanc.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

38 “Erdoğan: ABD ile Para Konuşmuyoruz”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/20/politika.html>; Veli Toprak, “ABD ile Anlaşma Sadece Siyasi ve Askeri”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/20/> (accessed 26 March 2012).

39 “Powell’dan Çirkin Oyun”, “Powell’den Çirkin Diplomasi,” “Tezkere Genişleyebilir”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/20/> (accessed 26 March 2012).

40 “ABD’nin Savaş Kararı Doğru Değil”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/21/politika.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

northern Iraq). Among the present 535 deputies, 1 abstained and 202 voted against. The motion passed with 302 votes. The number of defectors among the AKP was around 15. Both Erdoğan and Gül put personal pressure on their own ranks to keep the impact of defections at a marginal level. This time, their arguments might have seemed to be more convincing. Erdoğan asserted that Turkey had done its best for peace. As he put, the acceptance of motion was a requirement with regard to enhancement of border security by the Turkish Armed Forces and sustenance of good relations with the US.<sup>41</sup> The US support for the economy was still critical, especially in terms of managing the IMF program. Due to the Iraqi crisis, additional economic measures had to be taken.<sup>42</sup>

The motion had passed even before the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was drafted. The first MoU for the site surveys and base modernizations was signed and put into effect. Based on a full-scale military cooperation, including the use of Turkish air space, the second MoU was drafted and negotiated. Nevertheless, it was not signed due to the rejection of the second motion. To delineate new modalities of cooperation, Robert Pearson, the US Ambassador in Ankara, and Uğur Ziyal, Undersecretary of the Turkish MFA, started a new round of talks.<sup>43</sup>

In stark contrast to the Gulf War, Turkey decided not to close the Kirkuk-Yumurtalık pipeline, so long as it remains unharmed. Interestingly enough, Turkey sought assurances from the US in order to increase the capacity for oil flow.<sup>44</sup> Unlike the oil issue, the Kurdish question proved to be a major predicament for Turkey's cooperation with the US. Kurdish groups in northern Iraq have pledged full and unconditional support to the Coalition Forces. Under this pretext, primarily KDP, and to a lesser extent PUK, was against any Turkish military involvement into the war.<sup>45</sup>

41 "Tezkere Kabul Edildi", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/21/politika.html>; Bilal Çetin-Veli Toprak, "1 Milyar Dolarlık Teklif", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/21/p2.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

42 "Milli Direniş", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/21/e2.html>; Hüseyin Özyay, "Ek Tedbirler Alacağız", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/21/ekonomi.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

43 Kaan İpekçioğlu, "Mutabakat Sözde Kaldı", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/21/p4.html>; "İngiliz 'Hava' Peşinde", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/21/p5.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

44 "Yumurtalık'tan Petrol Sevkiyatı Devam Ediyor", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/21/e7.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

45 "Türkiye'yle Dostuz Ama..", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/21/p6.html>; Kaan İpekçioğlu, "Ankara'da Türkmen ve Asker Pazarlığı", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/19/p6.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

As of 23 March 2003, the status of Turkey's military involvement in northern Iraq has yet to be coordinated with the US.<sup>46</sup> For the US side, the picture was slightly different. The US President Bush acknowledged that "currently, Turks had no reason to enter into northern Iraq. We are keeping up constant contact with the Turkish army as well as the Turkish politicians. They know our policy. This is a strict policy. We have told clearly that we expected them not to enter into northern Iraq. They know that we work together with the Kurds in order to prevent any incident that would create a pretext for [the Turkish] entry into northern Iraq."<sup>47</sup>

Turkey's insistence on re-entry into northern Iraq brought serious ramifications. An intense international pressure has been mounted against Turkey's entry into northern Iraq, not only by the US but also by the EU. In order to address the disinformation in the international media, TGS issued a public statement to explain the reality on the ground. The international news that claimed around one thousand Turkish soldiers' entry into northern Iraq was farfetched.<sup>48</sup>

In addition to the rising of international tensions, Ankara's relations with Baghdad were also at risk. The Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs Naci Sabri stated that "Turkey's assistance to the US-led war would give a great damage to the [bilateral] relations...We hope that our Turkish neighbors would realize what their real interests are. Whoever attempts to give damage to Iraq, would [inadvertently] incur a huge damage on itself."<sup>49</sup>

On 22 March 2003, the US began to use the Turkish airspace in order to transport troops into northern Iraq.<sup>50</sup> Turkey's permission was quite important for the US war effort.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, the US

46 "Gül: ABD ile Görüşmeler Sürüyor", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/24/p3.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

47 "Bush: Türkiye'nin K.Irak'a Girmesi İçin Bir Gerekçe Yok", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/24/dunya.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

48 "Dünya ABD'yi Bıraktı Türkiye'yi Tartışıyor", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/23/politika.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

49 "Irak: Türkiye'nin ABD'ye Desteği İlişkileri Zedeler", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/24/politika.html> (accessed 26 March 2012).

50 "Türkiye'nin Zaten K.Irak'ta Askeri Var", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/25/p3.html> (accessed 14 April 2012).

51 "B Planı Bozgunu Bush'u Madara Etti", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/29/politika.html> (accessed 15 April 2012); "Ensar'a İki Cepheden Saldırı", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/25/dunya.html> (accessed 14 April 2012); "Amerika ve Kürtler Ensar'a Saldırıyor", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/27/d3.html> (accessed 15 April 2012).

side was against Turkey's unilateral military actions in northern Iraq. These actions should not give the "impression of occupation."<sup>52</sup> This was the crucial predicament causing ambiguity in Ankara. More than anything, the discursive ambivalence reflected the liminal meaning of Coalition for Turkey.

### ***Discursive Meaning of the Coalition***

Ambivalent public statements on the issue of entering into northern Iraq began to challenge the credibility of the AKP government. Thus, Gül had felt the need to acknowledge that their public explanations were true and "all of them have to be believed. On this issue [of entering into northern Iraq], of course Turkey will itself take the decision it needs. Within war conditions, it is only natural that we have been in coordination with our allies." The opening of Turkish airspace was aimed to "build peace, provide security and prevent threatening postures." Based on three intentions, i.e. border security against terrorist infiltrations, control of mass migration and humanitarian assistance, Turkey might decide to enter into northern Iraq. Ankara had no desire for annexation. According to Gül, the Government had been pursuing an active policy in line with "national interests", rather than passively watching the developments unfolded in the region and the globe. With this policy, Turkey assumed "a central position."<sup>53</sup>

In fact, Turkey had wanted to reinforce its military presence already existing in northern Iraq,<sup>54</sup> under the pretext of the prevention of terror and the control of mass migration. Nevertheless, Ankara's intentions towards northern Iraq have been targeted by the international media. Cornered by international media allegations and political pressure, the Turkish MFA assured the EU, NATO and Arab League members that Turkey has "no intention of military interference" or intervention into northern Iraq "other than the aims of prevention of humanitarian disaster[s] and humanitarian assistance."<sup>55</sup>

52 "ABD: Girin Ama İşgal Görüntüsü Vermeyin", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/25/politika.html>; "Kuzey İçin Pazarlık", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/25/index.html> (accessed 14 April 2012).

53 "Gül: K.Irak Kararını Türkiye Verir", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/26/p8.html> (accessed 14 April 2012); "Gül: Gayet Açık Söyledik", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/27/p2.html>; "Gül'den AB'ye: Niye Heyecanlanıyorsunuz?", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/29/p4.html> (accessed 15 April 2012).

54 See İlhan Uzgel, "ABD ve NATO'yla İlişkiler," in *Türk Dış Politikası III*, p. 277.

55 "AB'nin Kriterler[i] Türkiye İçin Geçerli", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/26/p6.html> (accessed 14 April 2012).

For either security or humanitarian reasons, the Turkish side wanted to preserve, reinforce military presence in northern Iraq. At the same time, Ankara insisted that their units remain outside of Coalition control and hence had to be commanded by a Turkish general. In order to address the disinformation campaign in the US media, the Turkish side assured that the Turkish military would not be a force of occupation in northern Iraq and stay there until the completion of their designated mission.<sup>56</sup>

Nonetheless, the Turkish government remained cautious in order not to give the impression of an opportunist country. Gül acknowledged that “on the issue of protecting Iraq’s territorial integrity” Turkey has been “the most sensitive country.” From the very outset, Ankara has pursued a clear policy towards northern Iraq. Two conditions—the development of mass migration and the rise of PKK terrorist activities in cross-border areas—were set to assess the need for Turkish military intervention. As of that day, the government was in a better position to look after three major priorities. Contrary to the general presumptions, relations with the US were developing. Secondly, Turkey managed to remain out of the war. Most importantly, the Turkish economy was kept to float on a right track.<sup>57</sup>

Like Gül, Erdoğan expressed his content with Turkey’s Iraq policy. Despite all governmental efforts, Ankara could not prevent the onset of war. Nonetheless, the three motions were not issued to give support to the initiation of war. Those motions were requirements emanating from “the alliance relations of our state and our [national] security.” In this regard, the AKP government did not fall into a dual trap. On one side, it did not accept to take a pro-war stance just for the sake of money. On the other side, it did not act against the world realities. Faced with this double-sided trap, the government was driven towards political and military, rather than economic, priorities. As envisioned by Erdoğan, Turkey’s approach to the Iraq problem was multi-dimensional. Turkey has not had an intention to

56 “Mehmetçiğin Komutası Görüşmeleri Kilitledi”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/26/politika.html> (accessed 14 April 2012). See also “Zalmay Halilzad Kürt Grupları İkna Edecek”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Mart/27/p7.html> (accessed 15 April 2012).

57 Mustafa Karaalioglu, “AB Bize Söylüyor ABD’ye İşittiriyor”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/30/p2.html> (accessed 15 April 2012).

occupy or annex northern Iraq.<sup>58</sup> Turkey's military goal could only be threat prevention not occupation. As for the post-war Iraq, Erdoğan disclosed Turkey's desire for "building of peace and free and democratic government." He seemed wishful to restore good economic relations with Turkey's longtime, second largest trading partner.<sup>59</sup>

By helping to end the war, the AKP government would contribute to prevent more bloodletting and hence more losses in human lives.<sup>60</sup> Prime Minister Erdoğan succinctly framed Turkey's precarious straddle between war and peace: "Turkey, together with the US—its strategic partner and more than fifty years old ally—is determined to maintain close cooperation in order to provide peace and durable stability in the region. Yet, at the same time, we hope and pray for the sooner end of humanitarian disaster in Iraq."<sup>61</sup>

Gül (and Powell) reverberated: "Turkey has been in the Coalition." All of the logistical aid would be provided under "the guise of humanitarian assistance." Erdoğan publicly explained that arms and ammunition could not be included into the logistical support.<sup>62</sup> Gül explained that "Turkey is not a belligerent country which had entered, [and] has been actively contributing to the war. Turkey is not in the war. Turkey does not give active support to the war."<sup>63</sup>

Koru argued that the emphasis on Turkey's being in the Coalition implied AKP government's inclination for finding a better place in post-Saddam regional designs. In his wording, "the concept of 'Coalition' carries this kind of meaning." Another strong signal of being inside the Coalition was the government's latest decision

58 "Tuzaklara Düşmedik", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/30/politika.html> (accessed 15 April 2012).

59 "Avrupa'ya K.Irak Mesajı", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/mart/31/politika.html> (accessed on 15 April 2012). See also "Erdoğan Wall Street Journal'e Makale Yazdı", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Nisan/01/p8.html> (accessed 15 April 2012).

60 Fehmi Koru, "Savaş Üzerine Düşünceler...", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Nisan/01/fkoru.html> (accessed 15 April 2012).

61 "Erdoğan Wall Street Journal'e Makale Yazdı", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Nisan/01/p8.html> (accessed 15 April 2012).

62 Veli Toprak-Bilal Çetin, "Musul ve Kerkük'e Kimse Göz Dikmesin" <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/nisan/03/p2.html>; "Halilzad'ın Görevi Ankara'yı Oyalamak" <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Nisan/01/p7.html> (accessed 15 April 2012).

63 "Savaşın İçinde Değiliz", <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/nisan/05/p4.html> (accessed 20 April 2012).

to deport three Iraqi diplomats from Turkey.<sup>64</sup> This event almost came towards the fall of Baghdad.<sup>65</sup> On 9 April 2003, the US forces “reached Firdos (Paradise) Square, dominated by one of the many statues of Saddam Hussein...The fall of the Saddam statue on 9 April, televised across the world, was taken by its media to mark the fall of the Saddam régime.”<sup>66</sup> The repercussions of Saddam’s fall for Turkey’s Iraq policy discourse are analyzed in part three.

### Part Three (Episodic End): Contextual Dynamics of Comprehensive Cooperation

In the aftermath of war, regime change did occur in Iraq. Paradoxically however, Iraq turned into a failed state living on the verge of virtual civil war. Particularly central and southern areas of Iraq were drawn into chaos. The complete collapse of security institutions paved the way for sectarian (ethno-religious) strife and hence militant insurgency.<sup>67</sup>

Under chaotic circumstances, PUK and KDP followed a provoking policy. As early as 10 April 2003, the Kurdish militias began looting first in the oil-rich city of Kirkuk and later in Mosul. The alarm bells began to ring for the national security establishment in Turkey. Ankara was utterly disturbed by the enhanced military cooperation between the US and the Kurdish groups in northern Iraq. The “hood incident” of 4 July 2003 has added an insult to the injury.<sup>68</sup> On the same day, Suleymaniya based Turkmen political and cultural institutions were also targeted. Detained Turkish soldiers were interrogated for fifty five hours in Baghdad. Upon Prime Minister

64 Fehmi Kuru, “Koalisyon Üyesi”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/nisan/06/fkoru.html>; “Iraklı 3 Diplomat Sınırdışı Ediliyor”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Nisan/06/p4.html>; “Dışişleri’nde Delil Var!”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Nisan/07/p4.html> (accessed 21 April 2012).

65 “Bağdat Boşalıyor”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Nisan/07/g7.html>; “Bağdat Direniyor”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/Arsiv/2003/Nisan/07/dunya.html> (accessed 21 April 2012).

66 John Keegan, *The Iraq War*, (NY: Vintage Books, 2005), pp. 201- 202. See also “İşgalciler Bağdat’ta” <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2003/nisan/10/d2.html> (accessed 21 April 2012).

67 Keegan, *The Iraq War*, pp. 204-212.

68 As acknowledged by the Chief of TGS General Hilmi Özkök, the “hood incident” constituted an unforgettable event for the Turkish Armed Forces. It was a deliberate act committed by “friendly and allied” US forces against a Turkish military unit stationed in northern Iraq. The incident was provocative since Turkey’s 3 officers and 8 non-commissioned officers were taken into custody just like insurgents. Detention measures were quite unprecedented and disturbing, went as far to put hoods onto the heads of Turkish soldiers. See Bilâ, *Ankara’da Irak Savaşları*, pp. 233-246.

Erdoğan's request from US Vice President Cheney, Turkish soldiers were released.<sup>69</sup>

Since Kurdish aggressions have not been prevented, PUK and KDP came close to annex Kirkuk by the beginning of 2004. "The issue was at the top of Turkey's agenda during the January 2004 high level visit to Washington. Prime Minister Erdoğan warned the Kurds not to play with fire."<sup>70</sup> Political-military anxiety has risen after 2005, when the PKK terrorist organization began to reinforce its strongholds in northern Iraq and began to target security forces in Turkey. Without local support from the Kurdish authorities, this region could not be a safe haven for the PKK. Between 2005 and 2007, the deepening relationship between PKK, KDP and PUK was perceived as a serious threat for security interests of Turkey. The discursive position of Ankara indicated a dual desire, i.e. conduct of cross-border operations into northern Iraq and (to a lesser extent) gradual renewal of bilateral cooperation with Baghdad.

### ***Cross-Border Operations and Renewal of Bilateral Cooperation***

During the political campaign for the general elections of 22 July 2007, the conduct of cross-border operations became a dominant theme. On 13 June 2007, Prime Minister Erdoğan explained that the primacy should be given to military operations inside the borders. The election results showed that AKP read the socio-political circumstances quite well. In eastern and south eastern electoral districts, while the independents supported by DTP (Democratic Society Party) received almost 25 percent of the votes; AKP's percentage was around 55. Behind the electoral success of AKP, Erdoğan's political discourse became quite influential.<sup>71</sup> In this regard, Erdoğan's Diyarbakır speech on 12 August 2005 has to be noted.

Kurdish issue belongs to the whole nation, not only to one part of it. For this reason,...that issue is my problem prior to anyone

69 Uzgel, "ABD ve NATO'yla İlişkiler," in *Türk Dış Politikası III*, pp. 277, 278.

70 Bill Park, "Between Europe, the United States and the Middle East: Turkey and European Security in the Wake of the Iraq Crisis", *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2004, p. 502. See also Gunter, *The Kurds Ascending*, pp. 15-16.

71 "AKP'li Kurt: DTP'nin Oy Kaybında Başbakan'ın Konuşması da Etkili Oldu", *Milliyet*, 30 June 2007, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2007/07/30/son/sonsiy18.asp> (accessed 24 March 2008).

else. We are a great state and we handle each question with more democracy, more law for citizenship, and more well-fare; we will continue to do so. We do not deny any issue of the country, we accept that every question is real and we are ready to face (with these problems).<sup>72</sup>

By looking at Erdoğan's framing, one could easily realize that Erdoğan first and foremost internalized the Kurdish question, without making any clear reference to the situation in northern Iraq. Erdoğan's discursive stance vis-à-vis the Kurdish question and by extension towards Iraq may further be delineated from his Şemdinli speech on 21 November 2005. In that speech, Erdoğan suggested that Kurdish ethnicity should be recognized as a "sub-identity".

We have three red lines. First we said that there would not be a nationalism based on ethnicity. We will eradicate this...Turks, Kurds,...we are all going to unite under the supra-identity of Turkish Republic citizenship. We will respect the sub-identities as such...a Kurd would be able to say s/he is a Kurd...Anyone should not be offended by this, would not do so, because this is our Constitutional citizenship. It is not possible to act according to ethnic identity within this country.<sup>73</sup>

Furthermore, AKP government skillfully pursued a comprehensive policy in order to outreach all parts (Baghdad, Mosul, Basra and Erbil) and segments (Sunni/Shi'i Arabs and Kurds) of Iraq. With the personal effort of Davutoğlu, Ankara had managed to integrate the alienated Sunni Arab groups (including Tariq al-Hashimi who would later become Vice President) into the domestic political process in Baghdad. Consequently, the new Iraqi Constitution was promulgated on 15 October 2005 and the Parliamentary elections were held on 15 December 2005.<sup>74</sup>

In addition, low-profile political contacts have been maintained with the local Kurdish authority of northern Iraq, i.e. the KRG (Kurdistan Regional Government) which was established in May 2006.<sup>75</sup> By the

72 Cengiz Çandar, "Başbakan ve Diyarbakır, 12 Ağustos 2005-21 Ekim 2008", *Radikal*, 22 October 2008.

73 "Başbakan Şemdinli'de Konuştu", <http://www.haber7.com/haber/20051121/Basbakan-Semdinlide-konustu.php> (accessed 1 January 2009).

74 Zengin, *Hoca: Türk Dış Politikası'nda "Davutoğlu Etkisi"*, pp. 265-271.

75 Gunter, *The Kurds Ascending*, pp. 17- 18.

same month, Baghdad had a new central government too. Nouri al-Maliki, a Shi'i Arab, was chosen as prime minister and Kurdish (PUK) leader Talabani emerged as the president. While cautiously watching the Kurdish ascendance in the CIG and the federalization of relations between Erbil and Baghdad, Ankara has kept military pressure over the PKK strongholds in northern Iraq.<sup>76</sup>

In the economic front, Turkey's ties with the KRG began to develop in 2006. "Turkish trade and [other] economic relations with the KRG were expected to reach \$3 billion in 2006."<sup>77</sup> In spite of the economic developments, the relations between Ankara and Erbil remained under the dusk of uncertainty emanating from the future status of Kirkuk. The new Constitution "provided that a referendum be held by the end of 2007." In this regard, "al-Maliki promised that Baghdad would accept the outcome of the referendum to be held before the end of December 2007." By the end of 2006, none of the Iraqi groups demonstrated "willingness to compromise on their maximal demands." Under those circumstances, the "Baker-Hamilton" report "recommended that the referendum be postponed in order to prevent further conflict."<sup>78</sup>

In spite of the Kirkuk stalemate, Ankara did not hesitate to pursue its comprehensive policy towards Iraq. Turkey's Mosul General Consulate was re-opened in February 2007.<sup>79</sup> Within the same month, the US sent extra combat troops to Iraq to implement the surge security strategy in Baghdad. After the surge became successful, the US and Iraq signed an agreement that pledged the withdrawal of US combat forces from Iraq between June 2009 and December 2011.

In this period, the first Turkish high-level visit to Baghdad was paid by Gül on 23 October 2007. During Maliki's Ankara visit on 7 August 2007, the two sides expressed mutual intentions for the opening of their second general consulates in Basra and Gaziantep. In a draft "Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)", both sides agreed to enhance bilateral security cooperation in the fight against terrorist organizations (including the PKK). Pledges for the boosting of

76 Ibid., 54. Gunter cites and quotes "Nechirvan Barzani: Iraq Will Not Be Used as a Base for Attacking Neighboring States," *The Globe*, 22 July 2006.

77 Ibid., 42. Gunter cites the *Turkish Daily News*, 23 January 2006.

78 Ibid., 45, 48. Gunter cites James A. III Baker and Lee H. Hamilton (Co-Chairs), *The Iraq Study Group Report: The Way Forward—A New Approach*, (NY: Vintage Books, 2006).

79 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/data/DISPOLITIKA/Bolgeletir/>, 30 April 2011.

economic cooperation, particularly in the oil and natural gas sector, have been made. In terms of their planning for regional policies, Ankara and Baghdad have reached an understanding to enhance their joint standing for the “Broadened Neighbors of Iraq.”<sup>80</sup> Kirkuk-Yumurtalik oil pipeline was re-opened by the beginning of 2008.<sup>81</sup> These developments were clear signs of comprehensive changes in Turkey’s formulation of Iraq policy.

### **Policy of Comprehensive Engagement**

AKP’s comprehensive engagement policy with northern Iraq had positive repercussions over the Kurds living in Turkey. In parallel, domestic policies based on respect for the socio-cultural significance of Kurdish identity have had a positive impact on Turkey’s northern Iraq policy. As a result of rising economic investment and the boosting of social services available to the local population, ordinary people on the street felt that they were treated decently. As AKP nurtured the feeling of dignity among the Kurds, political fruits naturally ripened. In contrast to AKP’s active policy at the municipal level, the performance of municipalities run by DTP remained quite low. Since they were primarily busy with ethno-nationalist and ideological concerns, they paid the political price heavily within the Kurdish constituency.<sup>82</sup>

Socio-political cleavage among the Kurdish community has been more apparent in the voting for the motion, which was designed to authorize the Turkish Armed Forces to conduct cross-border operations in northern Iraq for a period of one year. On 17 October 2007, only parliamentarians from the DTP voted against. The motion passed without any significant defection from the AKP.<sup>83</sup> Despite the fact that the Parliament had given authority for cross-border operations, the incursion of PKK terrorists into Dağlıca province of Hakkari on 20 October 2007 put serious pressure on the AKP government. In response, Erdoğan sealed the military-intelligence

80 <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/data/DISPOLITIKA/Bolgeler/>, 30 April 2011.

81 Yeşilyurt, “Orta Doğu’yla İlişkiler”, p. 409.

82 Rabia Karakaya Polat, “The AKP and the Kurdish Issue: What Went Wrong?,” *SETA Policy Brief*, No.14, (Ankara: SETA, May 2008). Mustafa Akyol, *Kürt Sorununu Yeniden Düşünmek: Yanlış Giden Neydi? Bundan Sonra Nereye?*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2007), pp. 14-25. “Erdoğan: Öncelik Yurt İçi Mücadelede,” *Sabah*, 13 June 2007, <http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr> (accessed 23 June 2008).

83 “AKP Milletvekili Abdurrahman Kurt: Kuzey Irak Bataklıktır”, <http://www.haber5.com> (accessed 20 April 2008).

cooperation deal with the US on 5 November 2007. Cross-border air strikes started in December 2007. The cross-border land operations proved to be successful in early February 2008.<sup>84</sup>

On 12 March 2008, Erdoğan had disclosed AKP's comprehensive package for the southeast region. He acknowledged that the southeast problem has socio-economic, psychological and cultural dimensions. Therefore, his plan included the opening of a Kurdish broadcasting channel in the official state television, namely TRT. In order to further develop relations with Iraq, opening of a Turkish consulate in Basra was also on AKP's agenda.<sup>85</sup> Erdoğan went on to follow policy of full cooperation with Iraq. Minister of Foreign Affairs Ali Babacan reaffirmed that contacts with northern Iraq will be extended and diversified.<sup>86</sup>

On the first of May, Erdoğan's foreign policy advisor Davutoğlu and special representative for Iraq Murat Özçelik were in Baghdad to meet with the Iraqi officials, including the Prime Minister of KRG Nechirvan Barzani. On the same day, Deputy Iraqi President Tariq al-Hashimi flew to Ankara for diplomatic meetings. In exchange, Erdoğan's historic visit to Baghdad on 10 July 2008 proved to be successful. Security, economy and cultural issues were all discussed during the bilateral talks. PKK terrorism, by implication the Kurdish question, dominated the agenda. By reconciling their major differences, Turkey and Iraq signed a "joint political declaration"<sup>87</sup> to form a "High-Level Cooperation Council," which would be tasked with the improvement of bilateral relations in many respects.<sup>88</sup>

84 "AK Parti ile Ordunun Flörtü", 7 Mart 2008, <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/news/438254.asp> (accessed 24 March 2008).

85 "Erdoğan'ın Yok Dediği Güneydoğu Paketi 12 Milyar" *Milliyet*, 12 March 2008, <http://www.milliyet.com> (accessed on 3 January 2009); "İşte Başbakan'ın NYT'ye Açıkladığı Güneydoğu Paketi," <http://www.nethaber.com> (accessed 3 January 2009).

86 "Babacan: K.Irak'la Temaslar Sıklaşacak", *Milliyet*, 29 April 2008. On 2 January 2009, Babacan was the guest speaker of *Enine Boyuna* at TRT-1. During that program, he declared that Turkey was at the very early stage of security cooperation with the regional administration in northern Iraq. Referring to the report prepared by Sönmez Köksal—who served as the ambassador in Baghdad between 1986 and 1990 and later became the chief of National Intelligence Agency—Babacan stated that there would be a possibility for Turkey to open a consulate in Erbil when political conditions were met.

87 "Türkiye Cumhuriyeti ile Irak Cumhuriyeti Hükümetleri Arasında Yüksek Düzeyli İşbirliği Konseyi'nin Kurulmasına İlişkin Ortak Siyasi Bildirge", <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/>, 24 April 2011.

88 "Irak Politikasında Kırmızı Çizgiler Değişti", <http://www.dunyabulteni.net/>, 24 October 2008. Information is based on Devrim Sevimay's interview with Haşim Haşimi in the *Milliyet* daily. "Erdoğan'dan Irak'a Teşekkür", *Milliyet*, 11 July 2008.

In parallel, Turkish air strikes have continued intermittently until PKK's Aktütün incursion on 3 October 2008. The Parliament voted for the motion on 8 October 2008 to extend the authorization for cross-border operations for one year. In order to eliminate PKK militants, Ankara enhanced security cooperation with Erbil.<sup>89</sup> By then the Turkish domestic political stage has been set for the local election campaigns of 29 March 2009. Erdoğan intensified his vocal bid for winning the election in Diyarbakır municipality, which was held by the DTP. Again, Diyarbakır became a spatial symbol of Kurdish question. The political battle between AKP and DTP over the eastern-southeastern municipalities has created implications for Turkey's Kurdish problem.

In this respect, Erdoğan's controversial speech in Hakkari on 1 November 2008 has to be noted, notwithstanding the fact that its main target audience was domestic. "A Kurd can say that s/he is a Kurd. But we have united under one flag. What we have said is one nation, one flag, one county; one state...There is no place in this country for the one who oppose this (view). S/he may go wherever desired."<sup>90</sup> Since Erdoğan's discursive frames gave signs of security rationale, he was indirectly accused of accommodating the military bureaucracy.<sup>91</sup> According to the journalistic account of Cengiz Çandar, Erdoğan received a tacit consent from the military, before the opening of TRT-6 (Kurdish broadcasting channel of official state television) on 1 January 2009.<sup>92</sup> The broadcasts of TRT-6 created important ramifications both internally and externally. The most striking reaction came from the PKK who accused all of the Kurds working either in AKP or in the TRT-6 with betrayal.<sup>93</sup>

In the post-2003 period, Ankara's particular diplomatic and military moves between 2009 and 2011 gave important signs of a new chapter in Turkey's Iraq policy. After the opening of Basra General

89 "PKK Attacks Prompt Security Cooperation between Turkey and Iraq's Kurdish Regional Government," *Terrorism Focus*, Vol. 5, No. 36, 22 October 2008. (accessed 6 August 2011).

90 "AK PARTİ Genel Başkanı ve Başbakan Erdoğan Hakkari Merkez İlçe Kongresi'nde Konuştu", <http://www.rte.gen.tr/> (accessed 10 January 2009).

91 Mehveş Evin, "AKP'nin Dili Değişti," *Akşam*, 18 November 2008.

92 Cengiz Çandar, *Mezopotamya Ekspresi: Bir Tarih Yolculuğu (Türkiye-Kürtler-Ortadoğu-Batı)*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2012), pp. 38, 44, 45.

93 Cevdet Aşkın, "TRT 6 DTP'de Kafa Karıştırdı, Kandil'e Askeri Baskı Arttı," *Referans*, 6 January 2009, <http://www.referansgazetesi.com/> (accessed 10 January 2009). "TRT'nin Yeni Kürtçe Kanalı TRT 6, PKK'yı Şişledi," <http://www.ekoayrinti.com/> (accessed 10 January 2009).

Consulate on 18 March 2009, the Turkish-Iraqi bilateral military co-operation (framework) agreement was signed on 9 June 2009.<sup>94</sup> Erdoğan's official inauguration of Erbil General Consulate on 29 March 2011<sup>95</sup> marked the episodic end of Turkey's post-war Iraq policy. Given the pre-war historical background and discursive context, occurrence of this event was almost unimaginable. In those days, Turkish foreign policy makers were trying to make reasons for (re)establishing military, rather than diplomatic, presence in northern Iraq. After the war, Ankara began to fully embrace Erbil, despite the dismay of Baghdad.<sup>96</sup> As a consequence of its official engagement with the KRG, the Turkish Government began to face serious challenges in its relations with the CIG.

Ankara-Baghdad relations have further strained by the beginning of 2012, as the Iraqi body politic had been embroiled with a fierce ethno-sectarian power struggle. Turkey was declared as an "enemy state" by the (Shi'i Arab) Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki on 21 April 2012.<sup>97</sup> This was mainly due to the stepping up of economic cooperation between Ankara and Erbil, especially in the energy (oil) sector. Moreover, the Turkish government did not hesitate to protect their (Sunni Arab) political protégée, Deputy Iraqi President Tariq al-Hashimi, after he had been indicted and sentenced with a capital punishment.

The political rift between Ankara and Baghdad has been further widened by the repercussions of the civil war in Syria. While Ankara opted to side with the (predominantly Sunni-Arab) Free Syrian Army attempting to liberate at least the north of Aleppo from the rest of country, Baghdad fell victim to the Shi'i influence of Tehran and covertly cooperate with the ruling (Alawite/Nusayri) regime in Damascus. In midst of the regional instability aroused by ethnic (Arab-Kurd) and sectarian (Sunni-Shi'i/Nusayri) violence, the KRG could turn into a security partner for the Turkish government.

94 "Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Genelkurmay Başkanlığı ile Irak Cumhuriyeti Savunma Bakanlığı Arasında Askeri Alanda Eğitim, Teknik ve Bilimsel İş Birliği Mutabakat Muhtırası (İmza Tarihi)", <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sub.tr.mfa>, 25 April 2011.

95 "Erdoğan, Erbil Başkonsolosluğu'nu Açtı," 29 March 2011, <http://www.dunyabulteni.net/> (accessed on 25 May 2012).

96 "SC-8, 21 Nisan 2012, Dışişleri Bakanlığı Sözcüsünün Irak Başbakanlığı İnternet Sitesinde Ülkemize İlişkin Olarak Yayımlanan Basın Açıklamasına Dair Görüşümüz Hakkındaki Soruya Cevabı", <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/> (accessed 4 August 2012).

97 Henry Barkey, "Turkey-Iraq Relations Deteriorate with Accusations of Sectarianism," 30 April 2012, <http://www.al-monitor.com/> (accessed 11 October 2012).

Partial cooperation, if not non-cooperation, in Ankara-Baghdad relations have become more controversial on 2 August 2012, when the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu paid an unprecedented visit to northern Iraq.<sup>98</sup> Davutoğlu did not receive diplomatic clearance from the CIG for this visit and did not hesitate to make it with the diplomatic services provided by KRG. Davutoğlu held talks with the President of KRG Masoud Barzani in Erbil. In their joint public statement, dated 1 August 2012, political commitments for the sustenance of bilateral economic cooperation, especially in the energy (oil and natural gas) sector, were highlighted. Both sides declared that emergent “power vacuum”, ensuing of ethnic-sectarian violence and the activities of terrorist groups in Syria posed a “common threat” for Turkey and KRG. Hence they agreed to work together in order to prevent instability emanating mainly from northern Syria.<sup>99</sup>

### Conclusion: Episodic Findings

In the post-Gulf War period, Turkey’s discourse of cooperation with Iraq was based on security rationale. This reasoning was largely a response to the dyadic contextual changes that emerged in the aftermath of the Gulf War. The implementation of northern no-fly zone over the thirty sixth parallel and its enforcement by the ONW created a power vacuum in northern Iraq. Since Baghdad lost most of its military control over Erbil, KDP and PUK found more favorable environment to realize their political aspirations. They moved in the direction of achieving federal governance and/or regional autonomy. In addition to dealing with this political challenge, Ankara had to address the military threat posed by the PKK in northern Iraq. Based on the balance of threat rationale, Ankara sided with Baghdad and KDP against the rapprochement between Iran, PUK and PKK. Up until the US invasion in 2003, reshuffling of alliances and contextual moves have marked the logic of cooperation and non-cooperation in Turkish-Iraqi relations. Yet, security reasoning did not help Turkey to strengthen its cooperation with Iraq. Quite the contrary, it prevented Ankara to take and implement well-coordinated political decisions.

98 “Davutoglu’s Kirkuk Visit Ignites Rage in Baghdad”, 3 August 2012, <http://www.al-monitor.com/> (accessed 11 October 2012); “Davutoğlu’dan 75 Yıl Sonra Bir İlk”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/02.08.2012> (accessed 17 September 2012); “75 Yıl Sonra Kerkükte”, <http://yenisafak.com.tr/03.08.2012> (accessed 17 September 2012).

99 “Dışişleri Bakanı Ahmet Davutoğlu ile IKB Başkanı Mesud Barzani Arasındaki Görüşmeyle İlişkin Ortak Basın Açıklaması, 1 Ağustos 2012, Erbil”, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/> (accessed 4 August 2012).

Before the US invasion, Ankara was mainly concerned about protection of political, military and economic interests. Balancing of the PKK threat and elimination of the Kurdish statehood were two dominant frames that rationalized the utility of cooperating with Washington against Baghdad. To a certain extent, Ankara was also interested in hindering of military cooperation between Washington and Erbil. In this regard, predominantly security rationale has provided the discursive basis for the Gül government to initialize military cooperation (parliamentary approval of the first motion for site survey and base modernization) with the US, notwithstanding the domestic public and political opposition emerged even within their own ranks. In terms of Turkey-US cooperation, the crisis of 1 March 2003 (parliamentary disapproval of the second motion for land-air transit rights) was clearly a bargaining failure. One of the main reasons of this incident was misrepresentation of Turkey's bargaining position. Despite the grave domestic financial problems, discursive framing of economic interests did not constitute a good reason to enter into war together with the US side. That is to say, the motion crisis demonstrated the difficulty of cooperating with Washington against Baghdad. It re-presented the significance of both domestic veto players and audience costs for Turkey's discourse of non-cooperation with Iraq.

By the beginning and in the midst of war, the indispensability frame dominated Turkey's foreign policy discourse and implied geopolitical thinking. This predetermined logic dictated that the opening of northern front was indispensable for the US. In this rationale, it was presumed that support for the US would also alleviate Ankara's security concerns emanating from northern Iraq. In exchange for the opening of its airspace, Turkey would enter into northern Iraq in order to prevent rise of PKK terrorism and mass migration. This could be regarded as a major reason that made the third motion discursively defensible, and perhaps politically possible, for the AKP government. After the third motion, "alliance with the US" and "national security interests" have been re-deployed into the governmental discourse as basic political frames. In this instance, Ankara faced both coordination and credibility problems. On the one hand, the Turkish political-military officials ought to resolve command-control issues with their US counterparts. On the other hand, Turkish military should not give the impression of occupation or annexation by acting alongside the Coalition forces. As framed by Erdoğan, Ankara faced a "dual trap" after the US-led war in Iraq. Turkey could

not take the risk of neither active involvement nor passive non-intervention during the US invasion of Iraq. According to him, Turkish government acted along the realities on the ground. They did not take an opportunistic pro-war stance, but took a position to protect Turkey's security interests. In the end, Turkey's security cooperation with the US and probable entry into northern Iraq was justified by discursive framing of humanitarian reasons. Towards the end of war, the significant frame was "being both in the Coalition and out of the war," which reflected the double-faced nature of Turkey's Iraq policy discourse.

In the post-war period, comprehensive cooperation with Iraq became part of Turkey's governmental discourse. Nonetheless, the implications of this discourse for the dyadic context still remain elusive. That is to say, discursive change has created lingering (both positive and negative) influence on the actual dynamics of Ankara-Baghdad, Ankara-Erbil and Baghdad-Erbil relations. As Ankara got closer to Erbil, it began to fall apart from Baghdad. Primarily due to the uncertain nature of the Kurdish question on both sides of the border, the impasse of partial/non-cooperation in Turkish-Iraqi relations might prove to be an enduring and unnatural phenomenon. As Turkey's historical relations with Iraq move towards the first centennial, there is still an unending need for deciphering and denaturalizing the contexts and the discourses of partial/non-cooperation.

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# Turkish Media Framings of the NATO-Led Intervention in Libya

Işık GÜRLEYEN\*

## Abstract

There is a general consensus among the scholars that foreign policy making in Turkey is traditionally an elite-driven process, which is largely immune to public opinion influences. In this context, the role of Turkish media in foreign policy processes conforms to the elitist model, which restricts it to transmitting information from political elites to the masses, rather than to the pluralist model, which cites a wide-array of media impact on the processes of foreign policy. This study questions the validity of such contentions by analyzing the arguments of foreign policy columnists in a remarkable case; Libya in 2011. Turkish foreign policy dramatically shifted during the 2011 crisis in Libya, particularly on the question of military intervention against Qaddafi forces. The AKP (Justice and Development Party) government first resolutely opposed to the NATO-led military intervention in Libya, but a short while after stepped back. Such dramatic change presents an opportunity to analyze whether the media maintains an independent position from the government, which is necessary but not sufficient condition for media impact on decision-makers. In this context, the article presents a content analysis of selected foreign policy columns within the Turkish media regarding the AKP government's Libya policy before and after the NATO intervention in 2011. The article aims to contribute to our understanding of the nature of media's role in Turkish foreign policy and addresses the following question: Is the effect of media limited to transmitting information from policy-makers to the masses, or is it an active effort to influence foreign policy decision-makers?

**Keywords:** Turkish foreign policy, Libya crisis, media, elitist model, pluralist model

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## Türkiye’de, NATO’nun Libya’ya Müdahalesinin Medyada İşlenişi

### Özet

Akademik çevrelerde, Türkiye’de dış politika yapımının geleneksel olarak kamuoyu etkilerinden geniş ölçüde muaf seçkin-merkezli bir süreç olduğuna dair bir fikir birliği mevcuttur. Bu bağlamda, Türkiye’de medyanın dış politika süreçlerinde oynadığı rol, medyanın çeşitli etkileri olduğunu ifade eden çoğulcu modelden ziyade, bu rolü, siyasi seçkinlerden kitlelere bilgi aktarımına sınırlayan seçkinci modele uymaktadır. Bu çalışma, dış politika yazarlarının dikkat çekici bir vaka olan 2011 Libya krizi konusundaki savlarını inceleyerek sözkonusu kanaatin geçerliliğini sorgulamaktadır. Türk dış politikası Libya’daki 2011 krizi esnasında, özellikle Qaddafi güçlerine karşı NATO müdahalesinde yeralma konusunda kendisiyle çelişen bir görünüm arz etmekteydi. AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) hükümeti, NATO’nun Libya’ya askeri müdahalesine önce kararlı bir şekilde karşı çıkıp kısa bir süre sonraysa geri adım attı. Bu keskin değişim, medyanın dış politika konusunda hükümetten bağımsız bir pozisyona sahip olup olmadığı konusunu inceleme fırsatı sunmaktadır. Bağımsız pozisyon medyanın karar-alıcıları etkileyebilmesi için gerekli ancak yeterli olmayan bir koşuldur. Bu bağlamda, makale NATO’nun 2011 müdahalesi öncesi ve sonrasında yayınlanan ve AKP hükümetinin Libya politikasını konu edinen dış politika köşeyazılarının içerik analizini sunmaktadır. Makale medyanın Türk dış politikasındaki rolünün doğasını anlama çabalarına katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır ve şu soruya yanıt aramaktadır: Medyanın etkisi politika-yapıcılardan kitlelere bilgi aktarımı ile mi sınırlıdır, yoksa dış politika karar alıcılarını etkileme yönünde etkin bir çaba mıdır?

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Türk dış politikası, Libya krizi, medya, seçkinci model ve çoğulcu model

## كيفية تناول موضوع تدخل الناتو في ليبيا في وسائل الإعلام التركية ايشيك كورلايان

### الملخص :

يوجد ثمة اتفاق في وجهات النظر لدى الأوساط الأكاديمية التركية على أن هيكل السياسة الخارجية التركية هو عملية مركزية- نخبوية بعيدة بشكل كبير عن التأثيرات التقليدية للرأي العام وفي هذا الإطار فإن الدور الذي يلعبه الإعلام التركي في عمليات السياسة الخارجية التركية، هو اتباع للنموذج النخبوي الذي ينحصر في نقل المعلومات من النخبة السياسية الى عامة الناس، أكثر من اتباعه للنموذج الشمولي الذي يعبر عن التأثيرات المختلفة للإعلام وتقوم هذه الدراسة بمناقشة مصداقية الرأي المذكور وذلك عن طريق تحليل وجهات نظر الكتاب المتخصصين في السياسة الخارجية حول موضوع مثير للإنتباه وهو الأزمة الليبية في عام ٢٠١١. قدمت السياسة الخارجية التركية صورة للتناقض مع النفس خلال الأزمة التي عاشتها ليبيا في عام ٢٠١١ ، وبالأخص فيما يتعلق باشتراك تركيا مع قوات حلف الناتو التي تدخلت ضد قوات القذافي. ففي البداية اعترضت حكومة حزب العدالة والتنمية بشكل حازم وجاد على التدخل العسكري لحلف الناتو في ليبيا، ولكنها تراجعت عن هذا الموقف بعد فترة قصيرة. إن هذا التغير الحاد يتيح الفرصة لمناقشة قضية كون الإعلام صاحب موقف مستقل عن الحكومة، في مجال السياسة الخارجية أم لا. إن الموقف المستقل للإعلام شرط ضروري لإمكان أحداث أي تأثير على صانعي القرار، غير أنه غير كاف أيضا في هذا المجال. وفي هذا الإطار، فإن هذا المقال يعرض تحليلا لمحتويات المقالات المحررة من قبل محرري السياسة الخارجية في الصحف في الفترة السابقة لتدخل حلف الناتو في ليبيا عام ٢٠١١ والتالية له والتي كان موضوعها سياسة حكومة حزب العدالة والتنمية حول ليبيا. ويهدف المقال الى المساهمة في فهم طبيعة دور الإعلام في السياسة الخارجية التركية، اضافة الى محاولة الاجابة على هذا السؤال : هل يقتصر تأثير الإعلام على نقل المعلومات من صانعي السياسة الى الجماهير، أم انه جهد فاعل في مجال التأثير على صانعي القرار في السياسة الخارجية؟

**كلمات مفتاحية :** السياسة الخارجية التركية، الازمة الليبية، الإعلام، الموديل الانتقائي والموديل التعددي.

## Introduction

Turkish foreign policy making has traditionally been an elite-driven process, largely immune to the influences of domestic actors and factors. Consequently, their impact on foreign policy decision-makers has remained considerably under-researched, although more recently, domestic factors, such as public opinion and civil societal organizations, have been more widely studied in the context of Turkey's integration with the European Union. Nonetheless, the impact of domestic actors in other areas of foreign policy is still rarely studied, and the role played by the Turkish media in foreign policy has been neglected as well.

This article aims to contribute to our understanding of the role played by the media in the foreign policy-making process in Turkey by analyzing media framings regarding policy change during the popular unrest in Libya in 2011. More specifically, the article aims to analyze foreign policy columns on the issue of NATO-led military intervention against Qaddafi to determine the model that the Turkish media adhere to, whether elitist or pluralist. On the basis of the Libya case, this article argues that Turkish news media do not display a monolithic configuration on foreign policy issues, and that ideological differences might explain the dividing lines. That is, while some foreign policy columnists play a more limited role, such as transmitting information from government officials to the masses, others actively try to influence foreign policy decision makers.

The article is divided into four parts. The first discusses how realist and liberal theories of international relations perceive the media's role in the foreign policy decision-making process. The second explains the AKP government's Libya policy within a broader foreign policy framework to demonstrate the challenges it faced in shifting its policy from a Qaddafi-friendly stance to a hostile one after the outbreak of popular protests. Such a shift in the government's position was also observed regarding the NATO-led military operation in favor of Qaddafi's opponents. The third part considers the arguments presented in the Turkish media regarding the possibility of a NATO-led intervention in Libya and classifies them in line with elitist and pluralist models. This part also addresses the question of whether there was a change in media framings following the shift in the Turkish government's position to support NATO intervention in Libya. The last section presents the findings and suggestions for further research.

## The Media's Role in the Foreign Policy Decision-making Process

The literature on political communication focuses on the question of how media pressure on the government influences its foreign policy. Research shows that the media plays a crucial role in democratic societies as a mediating actor between the masses and the decision-making elites. The media has various functions in a democracy which help the public to determine their policy preferences, both domestically and internationally. Scholarly attention to the media's influence in the foreign policy decision-making process has been increasing since 1990, when CNN emerged as an influential actor in international politics. This attention has gained momentum with the current uprisings in the Arab Spring. Among the various media instruments, newspapers are still seen as playing a significant role, despite the rise of new media forms.

There are two fundamentally different perspectives on the significance of the media for understanding foreign policy processes: the elite model and the pluralist model. The elite model argues that the media depend on political elites for information on foreign policy issues, and therefore have little independent influence. The media are therefore viewed as being largely subservient to foreign policy makers, tending to perceive international politics "through the cultural and political prisms of their respective political and social elites".<sup>1</sup> There are various studies that demonstrate how the media can function as a sophisticated tool for conflict resolution in the hands of officials.<sup>2</sup> In this view, because of the close relationship between journalists and official sources, the media functions solely as a communicator of policy makers' views, with journalists deferring to official sources out of an awareness of the risks of offending powerful economic and political interests.<sup>3</sup>

In contrast to the elite model, the pluralist model views the media as a constraining factor for decision-makers, emphasizing that the

- 1 Piers Robinson, "Theorizing the Influence of Media on World Politics: Models of Media Influence on Foreign Policy", *European Journal of Communication*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 2001, p. 525.
- 2 Eytan Gilboa, "Media-Broker Diplomacy: When Journalists Became Mediators", *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, Vol. 22, No. 2, 2005, pp. 99-120.
- 3 Piers Robinson, "The Role of Media and Public Opinion" in Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield and Tim Dunne (eds.), *Foreign Policy: Themes, Actors, Cases*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 138, 143.

media can, like other domestic actors, remain independent from political influence. Scholarly work suggests various media effects, ranging from limiting the policy alternatives available to decision-makers, to stronger influences, such as forcing a certain policy on political leaders.<sup>4</sup> Overall, this perspective argues that the media performs two main functions in the foreign policy decision-making process. First, they play a role in educating and informing the public by providing objective information and facilitating debate. Secondly, they hold decision-makers accountable by scrutinizing their decisions and representing public opinion.<sup>5</sup>

Regarding the media's first function, there are three mechanisms through which they shape public opinion, namely agenda setting, priming and framing. These three mechanisms refer to different abilities of the media. Agenda setting mechanism is the ability of media to direct people's attention on certain issues by focusing on some issues rather than others. While, priming means media's ability 'to prepare and direct publics to the issues by which they should judge their leaders', and 'framing refers to the way solely in which the actual presentation of news information influences how people perceive specific issues'.<sup>6</sup> Firstly, studies focusing on agenda setting search for correlations between the amount of coverage of a foreign policy event and the importance that public opinion attributes to that event. Secondly, studies that focus on priming explore news content, assuming that publics use specific issues as benchmarks to evaluate the foreign policy performance of their governments. Finally, the concept of framing analysis is used to understand how foreign policy issues are characterized in the media, and how such characterizations influence public opinion.<sup>7</sup> In all such studies, the main aim is to analyze the media's indirect influence on decision makers via public opinion. That is, the literature assumes a triangular relationship between media coverage, public opinion and policy making.<sup>8</sup> The following broad issues are addressed: How do certain international political issues become a priority for the public? How are citizens primed to judge the ability of political leaders to handle

4 Gilboa, "Media-Broker Diplomacy: When Journalists Became Mediators", p. 37.

5 Robinson, "The Role of Media and Public Opinion", pp. 138-142.

6 Ibid, p. 145.

7 Dietram A. Scheufele and David Tewksbury, "Framing, Agenda Setting, and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models", *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 57, 2007, p. 11.

8 Gilboa, "Media-Broker Diplomacy: When Journalists Became Mediators", p.37; John E. Richardson, *Analyzing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

international crises? Is framing more event-oriented, focusing specifically on military matters (e.g. military technology, the progress of a war), or thematic, dealing with broader diplomatic issues and matters related to the rationale and justification for a war?

The media's direct influence on decision-makers is considerably under-researched. However, as recognized by various scholars, this line of research faces a major obstacle, namely the difficulty of accurately measuring media influence. Specifically, "researchers cannot directly observe influence occurring within the minds of policy makers and the multitude of factors influencing any given decision complicates efforts to measure the precise impact media has".<sup>9</sup> In addition, such an analysis requires the assessment of many factors involved in the actual decision-making process, but these are often not accessible for reasons of national security. Furthermore, technological advances mean there is now a wide array of media types (newspapers, television, internet, etc.), which adds to the difficulties of ascertaining the specific effect on decision-makers of particular media forms.

In order to overcome such methodological difficulties, Robinson proposes distinguishing media impacts at two different levels: substantive and procedural. At the substantive level, media influence is related to the initial phases of the foreign policy decision-making process, in terms of media evaluations of the justifications and rationale of foreign policy decisions. In contrast, the procedural level is related to media influence on the actual implementation of any foreign policy decision. The literature provides evidence that the media are more influential at the procedural than substantive level,<sup>10</sup> although media influence on foreign policy decision-makers is also possible at the substantive level. Robinson, for example, argues that media influence is more likely in cases of humanitarian crises, as long as this does not go against well-established government policy.<sup>11</sup>

In short, the elitist model rejects the idea of a media independent from the political elites shaping public opinion and/or pressuring

9 Gilboa, "Media-Broker Diplomacy: When Journalists Became Mediators", p. 39; Robinson, "The Role of Media and Public Opinion", p. 146.

10 Robinson, "The Role of Media and Public Opinion", p. 146.

11 Robinson, *The CNN Effect: The Myth of News, Foreign Policy and Intervention*, (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 25-35.

policy makers, while the pluralist model accepts the media's influence on foreign policy, but makes two important distinctions. First, it distinguishes between the media in democratic societies and authoritarian regimes, where the media are strictly controlled. Second, it differentiates between two levels of media influence, substantive and procedural, and between the various mechanisms through which the media exert their influence.

Based on the literature, it might be expected that the media would have some degree of influence over foreign policy decision makers in Turkey, assuming that it is a democratic country, particularly in cases which require the involvement of the armed forces. However, it is particularly difficult to examine the media's impact in Turkey as the Turkish foreign policy-making process remains 'a black-box' for analysts. For this reason, this study is limited to revealing the media's priming and framing effects on the government's foreign policy by focusing on the case of Libya.

To do this, it first identifies the news media framings concerning the Libyan crisis. Then, it investigates how the media in Turkey were able to prepare and direct public opinion regarding the issues on which AKP foreign policy was to be judged. Such data are useful for testing the elitist model in order to demonstrate whether or not the role of Turkish media is in fact limited to transmitting information from policy makers to the public. As for the pluralist model, there may be various effects of the media on decision-makers as this perspective assumes that media having an independent position from policy makers in democracies. Among these multiple effects in this case, priming and framing effects are analyzed because independence is a necessary but not sufficient condition for media influence, it also requires in-depth analysis of decision-making process. Thus, future studies can build on the findings of this study by measuring the media's influence on the foreign policy decision-makers in Turkey and can demonstrate whether it limits the policy alternatives available to decision-makers or has stronger influences, such as forcing a certain policy on political leaders.

### **2011 Libya Crisis and the Attitude of the Turkish Government**

Turkey's relations with modern Libya have been fluctuated since 1969, when Colonel Qaddafi took power. Despite deep-rooted

historical relations and socio-cultural affinities,<sup>12</sup> bilateral relations were quite unstable, sometimes leading to serious crises.<sup>13</sup> There are various factors that might account for these unstable relations, such as Turkey's alliance with Western countries, particularly its close relations with the USA, Libyans' resentments regarding the Ottoman past, and the personal traits of Qaddafi. Nevertheless, economic cooperation was fruitful during periods of rapprochement, and Turkey's conservative politicians in particular sought to improve political and economic relations by referring to common religious values.<sup>14</sup>

Similarly to the concerns of the Turgut Özal governments of the 1980s, economic considerations once again became the driving force of Turkish foreign policy in the aftermath of the severe crisis in 2001.<sup>15</sup> As economic ambitions dominated the AKP's foreign policy after it took power in 2002, the countries in the Middle East were regarded as an alternative destination to Western markets, particularly by the conservative business community, which formed the voting base of the AKP.<sup>16</sup> However, there were political and cultural components as well, particularly after Ahmet Davutoğlu became the Minister of Foreign Affairs. As Kahraman notes, there are similarities between AKP's current activism and engagement in the Middle East region with the foreign policy of the 1990s, in that AKP has a strategic vision with "a long-term regional (hegemonic) project".<sup>17</sup>

12 The Ottoman Empire ruled Libya from 1551 to 1911, although this was not always direct rule. For a detailed historical account of bilateral relations between Turkey and Libya, see Orhan Koloğlu, *500 Years in Turkish-Libyan Relations*, (Ankara: Center for Strategic Research, 2007).

13 For instance, Qaddafi apparently insulted Turkey in 1996 during an official visit by the then Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan. Stephen Kinzer "Tirade by Qaddafi Stuns Turkey's Premier", *New York Times*, 9 October 1996. <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/10/09/world/tirade-by-qaddafi-stuns-turkey-s-premier.html> (accessed 15 May 2013).

14 Official visits were paid by political parties with conservative and/or Islamist roots. Turkish Republic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey\\_s-political-relations-with-libya.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-political-relations-with-libya.en.mfa) (accessed 17 May 2013).

15 Kemal Kirişçi explains this process with the concept of 'trading state' and argues that Turkey's process of becoming a trading state started in the 1980s, but was interrupted by prevalence of traditional factors, such as military-political and territorial ones. Kemal Kirişçi, "The Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy: The Rise of the Trading State", *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Vol. 40, 2009, pp: 29-57.

16 Özlem Tür, "Economic Relations with the Middle East under the AKP—Trade, Business Community and Reintegration with Neighbouring Zones", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 4, 2011, pp. 591-595.

17 Sevilya Kahraman, "Turkey and the European Union in the Middle East: Reconciling or Competing with Each Other?", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 12, No.4, 2011, p. 701.

In line with these changes to Turkey's traditional foreign policy in the Middle East that had an imprint of its Western alliance<sup>18</sup>, the AKP government also adopted an economically-oriented policy that envisaged stronger ties with Qaddafi's Libya when it first came to power in 2002. This friendly relationship peaked during the third EU-Africa Summit in 2010, when Turkey's Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan received the Qaddafi Human Rights Award as the guest of honor.<sup>19</sup> Altunışık and Martin argue that AKP's attempts to change Turkish foreign policy had to be tested in order to "see whether Turkey under the AKP has acquired the power to influence the direction of developments in the [Middle East] region".<sup>20</sup> The Libya crisis and the NATO military intervention have provided such test and it proved that Turkey is not ready to meet the challenges stemming from the region and to control the course of events.

When the popular unrest of the Arab Spring shook the existing authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and North Africa, Turkish foreign policy-makers were slow to support the protesters demanding the overthrow of their governments.<sup>21</sup> Such a hesitant reaction was clearly evident following the outbreak of protests and subsequent violence in Libya. Probably dictated by political and economic concerns, the Turkish government not only was hesitant to support the uprisings but also strongly opposed military operations urged by NATO allies, most of all by France.

These operations were carried out under the authority of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1973,<sup>22</sup> dated 17 March, 2011, in reference to Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. This justified the authorization of enforcement measures and imposing a no-fly zone over Libya. Explaining the reasons for NATO military action in Libya, the Secretary General of NATO, Anders Fogh Rasmus-

18 Altunışık and Martin argue that the alterations that the AKP government made in Turkey's foreign policy towards the Middle Eastern countries were largely products of domestic factors. Meliha B. Altunışık and Lenore G. Martin, "Making Sense of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East under AKP", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 4, 2011, pp. 569-587.

19 İbrahim Varlık, "Erdoğan receives Gaddafi Human Rights Award", *Today's Zaman*, 1 December 2010 [http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail\\_getNewsById.action?newsId=228386](http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?newsId=228386) (accessed 17 May 2013).

20 Altunışık and Martin, "Making Sense of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East under AKP", p. 584.

21 Ibid, pp. 583-584.

22 United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973, 17 March 2011, [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1973%282011%29](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1973%282011%29) (accessed 30 March 2013).

sen, stated that “We took action in Libya because we have a strong mandate from the Security Council and solid support from countries in the region. That is a unique combination which we have not seen elsewhere”.<sup>23</sup> However, this statement was at odds with Turkey’s position during the earlier phases of the crisis in Libya when some NATO members first brought the Alliance’s involvement on to the agenda. Turkey, in contrast to some of the allies, argued against the necessity of military operations towards Libya in general, or a possible role for NATO in particular.

The AKP opposed an international military intervention in Libya from the beginning of the uprisings until the mid-March 2011. Erdoğan boldly declared his opposition to any military involvement in the Libyan crisis, emphasizing the difference of opinion with other NATO member leaders. As he argued,

(...) what has NATO to do with Libya? NATO’s intervention in Libya is out of the question. NATO can bring such a thing to the agenda in case of an intervention against one of its members. Apart from this, how can there be intervention against Libya? (...) As Turkey, we are against this; such a thing cannot be discussed, cannot be considered.<sup>24</sup>

The Turkish government stated its concerns that a military intervention would exacerbate the situation in Libya and would generate negative reactions in the Middle East and North Africa. However, in the subsequent phases of the crisis, Turkey was forced to shift its position and to change its opposition to military intervention, later even deciding to take part in NATO-led humanitarian operations in mid-March 2011. It has been argued that Turkish government was compelled ‘to shift its priorities from ties with the existing regimes to popular demands and expectations’.<sup>25</sup> Two factors may account for this shift in position. Although UNSC Resolution 1973 was given as the official reason, it was also claimed that a ‘French *fait accompli*’

23 Anders Fogh Rasmussen, “NATO and the Arab Spring”, *New York Times*, 31 May 2011, [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/01/opinion/01iht-edrasmussen01.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/01/opinion/01iht-edrasmussen01.html?_r=0) (accessed 02 May 2013).

24 Benitez, Jorge, “Turkey rules out NATO intervention in Libya”, 28 February 2011, <http://www.acus.org/natosource/turkey-rules-out-nato-intervention-libya> (accessed 21 June 2012).

25 Kahraman, “Turkey and the European Union in the Middle East: Reconciling or Competing with Each Other?”, p. 712.

had caused tensions within NATO<sup>26</sup> that had had to be overcome by other members, in particular the United States, who had convinced the Turkish government to change its position.

Regardless of the causes of such policy changes, the decision to intervene in the Libyan crisis provides a valuable opportunity to understand the role played by the media in the foreign policy decision-making process in Turkey. This study makes use of the opportunity presented by the shifting positions of the AKP government on Turkey's participation in the NATO-led intervention in Libya and analyses media framings in order to reveal whether the Turkish media maintained an independent perspective from the government. To do this, the following section identifies the positions of various columnists in the most widely distributed newspapers before and after the change in the government's Libya policy. The analysis focuses on four alternative policy options: active support for Qaddafi, non-involvement, mediation between the opposition and Qaddafi, and support for the insurgents.

### **Media Framings Regarding NATO-led Military Operations in Libya**

On the substantive level, the AKP government had the four policy alternatives mentioned above. Active involvement included arms supplies to the insurgents, training, or the direct use of force in military operations against Qaddafi forces. Although it was never overtly expressed and considered morally unacceptable, supporting Qaddafi was another possible policy preference. The AKP government could have chosen to provide military assistance to help Qaddafi suppress the rebels. On the procedural level, the alternatives relate to the technical aspects of military operations: whether they should be restricted to a no-fly zone, or extended to include bombing the military headquarters of Qaddafi's forces or even a full-scale intervention.

26 Immediately after the French efforts to carry out air strikes against Libya, Egemen Bağış, Minister and Chief Negotiator for EU Talks, criticized French President Nicolas Sarkozy for exploiting Libya for political gains. Referring to the air strikes on Libya, Bağış stated that 'a European leader began his election campaign by organizing a meeting that led to a process of air strikes against Libya. He has acted before a NATO decision and his act was based on his subjective evaluation of a United Nations resolution'. Egemen Bağış, 22 March 2011, <http://www.aa.com.tr/en/news/30711--a-leader-of-an-eu-country-tries-to-begin-a-process-that-is-against-international-laws--bagis> (accessed 21 June 2012).

This section analyzes media framings regarding these policy alternatives at both levels. First, it focuses on how the Libyan crisis was framed: one contrast is between framing the crisis as Libya's internal affairs, meaning that Turkey's role should be either non-involvement or mediation, versus invoking the responsibility of the international community (including Turkey), meaning Turkey should take part in any military intervention. Second, it focuses on the extent to which the media implied that, if Turkey's involvement is supported, it should engage in full-scale or restricted military operations. These media framings are also evaluated in relation to the sources' ideological positions, whether Islamist or secular, in terms of their likelihood to support Turkey's involvement in Libya. After identifying the media framings on these issues, the priming role of the media is analyzed to identify the kinds of criticism directed against AKP policy on the crisis, and the criteria that the media offered for the Turkish public to judge the government's foreign policy.

In order to determine the positions of the columnists, all articles related to the Libya crisis were analyzed, before and after the dramatic change in the Turkish government's position. All relevant articles between 1 February and 31 March 2011 were analyzed for the following daily papers: *Radikal*, *Milliyet*, *Hürriyet*, *Zaman* and *Yeni Şafak*. Regarding the secular-Islamist division, the first three newspapers are secular and maintained initially antagonistic, or at least a distanced, position suspicious of a hidden Islamist agenda of the AKP, while *Zaman* and *Yeni Şafak* are known as strong supporters of the AKP government.<sup>27</sup> At least one foreign policy columnist was identified for each newspaper: Cengiz Çandar from *Radikal*, Sami Kohen and Kadri Gürsel from *Milliyet*, Ferai Tınç from *Hürriyet*, Abdülhamit Bilici from *Zaman*, and İbrahim Karagül from *Yeni Şafak*.

Overall, the selected columnists agreed that the Qaddafi regime was a brutal dictatorship that ought to be ended; and they all sup-

27 The Turkish media reflects the main political polarization between secular and Islamist actors. While the secular media were strong opponents of the AKP foreign policy in the first period of AKP rule (2002-2007), this opposition was suppressed in the second and third periods. There have been unprecedented heavy fines on oppositional media conglomerate (Doğan Media Group) on alleged tax dodging. [http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/domestic/11336001\\_p.asp](http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/domestic/11336001_p.asp) (accessed 21 June 2012) There has been massive self-censorship as well as firing of anchormen and women, mainly critical of the AKP policies. Certainly, such claims of government censorship cannot be verified, however, there are domestic and international concerns. For instance, European Commission in its annual Progress Report in 2012 states that '(...) freedom of media continued to be further restricted in practice. The increasing tendency to imprison journalists, media workers and distributors fuelled these concerns.' European Commission, Turkey 2012 Progress Report, 10.10.2012, pp.21-22.

ported the popular uprisings to topple his regime. However, they disagreed on both the legitimacy of intervention and on the AKP government's performance in dealing with the crisis. If the following analysis shows that the Turkish media's position changed in line with shifts in the AKP government's position, then this will indicate that it played a role consistent with the elitist model, i.e. transmitting information from the officials to the masses rather than the pluralist model, i.e. acting as an influence to change government policy.

### ***Non-involvement versus military intervention***

The Turkish media was divided on both the form and context of Turkey's involvement in the Libyan crisis. On the one side were columnists who framed it as a humanitarian issue that the international community had a responsibility to respond to, and praised the UNSC resolution on humanitarian grounds.<sup>28</sup> In their view, this resolution was analogous to earlier decisions on Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo more than Afghanistan and Iraq. Thus, they equated opposition to military operations as taking sides with Qaddafi because ending operations would provide an opportunity for him to strengthen his position. They also argued that non-involvement and non-participation in NATO's operations would work against Turkey's national interest as they considered its strength to stem from its membership of the Western alliance.<sup>29</sup>

At the same time, however, such positive arguments were also accompanied by caution over idealistic expectations. One columnist, for example, distinguished between the humanitarian and political motives of military intervention, in terms of preventing catastrophic civilian losses versus over throwing Qaddafi. For this columnist, the legitimacy of the operations would become doubtful in case of prolonged resistance by Qaddafi.<sup>30</sup> Other columnists contrasted the Libyan case to the West's general indifference to previous humanitarian crises in order to suggest that the Western countries' interest

28 Ferai Tınç, "Libya'da kuru kabadayılığın anlamı yok", *Hürriyet*, 28 February 2011; Sami Kohen, "Yaptırımlar neye yarar?", *Milliyet*, 28 February 2011, "Çelişkiler dünyası", *Milliyet*, 22 March 2011; Kadri Gürsel, "Bu savaş başladığı gibi bitmeyebilir", *Milliyet*, 21 March 2011.

29 Cengiz Çandar, "Türkiye, Kaddafi'nin 'utanç müttefiki' mi?", *Radikal*, 22 March 2011, "Türkiyeve Bölgede 'özgürlük alevleri'...", 26 March 2011.

30 Kadri Gürsel, "Bu savaş başladığı gibi bitmeyebilir", 21 March 2011.

in Libya could be explained in terms of their oil-related economic interests.<sup>31</sup>

However, not all writers supported intervention by the international community. Some rejected international intervention under the UN umbrella on the grounds that it would be an abuse of the UN that would lead to a Western invasion of Libya. Those columnists who perceived the Arab Spring as a means for realizing what they viewed as Western imperialist designs in the Middle East and North Africa praised the Turkish government's initial position of non-involvement in military operations. They argued that any intervention, including an economic embargo, would solely serve the interests of the United States, Israel and other Western states. In strong support of the government's position, they reformulated Erdoğan's question asking what business NATO has in Libya as 'what business the United States and Europe have in Libya'. They considered that, based on the previous experience of Iraq, the decision to create a no-fly zone over Libya merely represented an excuse to mask the West's objective of occupation.<sup>32</sup> For example, Karagül suggested that Libya would become another Iraq, arguing that the United States, the United Kingdom and France were exploiting the need for humanitarian assistance as a pretext to implement imperialist policies to control Libya's energy resources, claiming that UN decisions could not provide legitimacy in this case.<sup>33</sup> He therefore opposed Turkey's participation in the NATO-led operations.<sup>34</sup> Another columnist opposed to military operations, Bilici, argued that France had undermined the legitimacy of the UNSC resolution, and claimed that the West's "one-sided and unprepared" operations had put at risk the lives of millions of people.<sup>35</sup>

The choice between limited or full-scale involvement received the least attention among Turkish foreign policy columnists. Some of

31 Sami Kohen, "Dünya Libya için ne yapabilir?", *Milliyet*, 26 February 2011, "Çelişkiler dünyası", 22 March 2011.

32 İbrahim Karagül, "Petro-dolarlar ve silahlar sizi nasıl kurtarsın şimdi!", *Yeni Şafak*, 24 February 2011, "Akdeniz'de aç kurtlar dolaşiyor, dikkat!..", 25 February 2011, "Libya'yı işgal: Öfke Avrupa'yı vuracak!", 2 March 2011, "Libya'yı işgal: Yeni bir Ömer Muhtar çıkacak..", 3 March 2011.

33 İbrahim Karagül, "Çekiç Güç: Libya Irak mı olacak?", *Yeni Şafak*, 10 March 2011; "Bizi aptal mı sandınız siz?", 22 March 2011.

34 İbrahim Karagül, "Bu öfke Fransa'yı çok kötü çaracak!", *Yeni Şafak*, 23 March 2011, "Yüzyıllık hesap bu, farkında mısınız?", 24 March 2011, "Türkiye, çok acil bir müdahale gücü kursun!", 29 March 2011, "Aynı utancı bir kez daha yaşamayalım", 5 April 2011.

35 Abdülhamit Bilici, "Sarkozy'nin Şovu, Türkiye'nin Kaygısı?", *Zaman*, 22 March 2011.

those in favor of military intervention discussed the technical aspects of this option, arguing that the UNSC's decision to impose a no-fly zone over Libya had been invalidated because Qaddafi's forces were also targeted. The failure of the no-fly zone policy also raised the issue of assisting the rebels, which would also be against the UNSC decision.<sup>36</sup> Finally, there were also criticisms regarding civilian losses during the international air operations.<sup>37</sup>

### **Priming**

The priming role of the media in this case is related to their criticisms of AKP's foreign policy in Libya crisis. In addition to the above framings, columnists evaluated the advantages and disadvantages of the AKP government's policy towards Libya. These indicate the benchmarks presented by the media to evaluate the government's foreign policy performance.

Media reporting on the Libyan crisis provided both justifications and criticisms of government decisions, employing two basic performance criteria. The first was its success in defending Turkish nationals and investments in Libya, while the second was strengthening Turkey's regional leadership role. The government was generally praised for its successful evacuation of Turkish citizens from Libya.<sup>38</sup> The only exception to this was Kadri Gürsel, who claimed that the successful evacuation could not be attributed to the government itself, but was rather the success of the bureaucracy.<sup>39</sup> Regarding other aspects of the government's Libya policy, however, there were diverging perceptions. One of the main differences concerned the implications of the Turkish government's inconsistent stance.

Contradictions in government policy towards Libya were noted by the majority of columnists, with three different contradictions being

36 Sami Kohen, "Libya'da ucu açık belirsizlik dönemi", *Milliyet*, 21 March 2011; "Libya ikilemi", 1 April 2011.

37 Sami Kohen, "Libya'da ucu açık belirsizlik dönemi", *Milliyet*, 21 March 2011; "Çelişkiler dünyası", 22 March 2011.

38 Ferai Tınç, "Libya'da kuru kabadayılığın anlamı yok", *Hürriyet*, 28 February 2011; İbrahim Karagül, "Petro-dolarlar ve silahlar sizi nasıl kurtarsın şimdi!", *Yeni Şafak*, 24 February 2011; Sami Kohen, "Libyalı çocukların sesi...", *Milliyet*, 10 March 2011; "Ortadoğu'daki değişim Türkiye için fırsat mı sıkıntı mı?", 28 March 2011; Abdülhamit Bilici, "Türkiye Kaddafi'nin Yanında mı?", *Zaman*, 05 March 2011.

39 Kadri Gürsel, "Şahiden, sizin Libya'da ne işiniz var?", *Milliyet*, 23 March 2011.

highlighted in particular. The first concerned contradictory statements by different cabinet members: ‘In his speech in Ankara yesterday, the Prime Minister argued that this position [the unified international position on the UN Resolution] and the Security Council resolution was scathing. However, Foreign Minister Davutoğlu has said that Turkey will take part in the implementation of the Council’s decision, which also reveals a contradiction in the government’s attitude on this issue’.<sup>40</sup> Secondly, the government was criticized for following an inconsistent policy towards Libya and other Arab countries in that, although Turkey was taking a pro-change position on the Arab Spring in general, this was contradicted by its Libya policy.<sup>41</sup> The final criticism concerned the inconsistency of policy over time, which became a media prime for judging government policy. For instance, Gürsel claimed that the Libya policy contained contradictions despite government statements about following a principled foreign policy. He also argued that a principled foreign policy required condemnation of Qaddafi before the international operation decision was taken in order to be consistent and influential.<sup>42</sup> “However, by opposing the intervention initially, the AKP government sided with the status quo.”<sup>43</sup> Gürsel noted that the Turkish government took a strong moral position against Israeli suppression of Palestinians, but apparently forgot this regarding the repressive policies of Arab regimes towards their own citizens.<sup>44</sup>

Although the columnists agreed that government policy was inconsistent, there were differences of opinion on the causes and implications of this inconsistency. On the one hand, a minority of columnists offered rationalizations for this. First, there was an attempt to explain that the cautious stance in Libya had been motivated by a wish to protect Turkish workers and investments.<sup>45</sup> However, it

40 Sami Kohen, “Yaptırımlar neye yarar?”, *Milliyet*, 28 February 2011.

41 Ferai Tınç, “Libya’da kuru kabadayılığın anlamı yok”, *Hürriyet*, 28 February 2011; Sami Kohen, “Libyalı çocukların sesi...”, *Milliyet*, 10 March 2011, “Ortadoğu’daki değişim Türkiye için fırsat mı sıkıntı mı?”, 28 March 2011; Kadri Gürsel, “Sahiden, sizin Libya’da ne işiniz var?”, *Milliyet*, 23 March 2011.

42 Kadri Gürsel, “Bu savaş başladığı gibi bitmeyebilir”, *Milliyet*, 21 March 2011.

43 Kadri Gürsel, “Boşluktaki Türk dış politikası”, *Milliyet*, 30 March 2011.

44 Kadri Gürsel, “Sahiden, sizin Libya’da ne işiniz var?”, *Milliyet*, 23 March 2011.

45 Cengiz Çandar, “Libya: Osmanlı dominosu...”, *Radikal*, 22 February 2011, “Kaddafi’yi dinlerken, Türkiye’yi (ve İran’ı) izlerken...”, 23 February 2011; Ferai Tınç, “Libya’da kuru kabadayılığın anlamı yok”, *Hürriyet*, 28 February 2011; Sami Kohen, “Libyalı çocukların sesi...”, *Milliyet*, 10 March 2011, “Ortadoğu’daki değişim Türkiye için fırsat mı sıkıntı mı?”, 28 March 2011; Abdülhamit Bilici, “Sarkozy’nin Şovu, Türkiye’nin Kaygısı?”, *Zaman*, 22 March 2011.

was also argued that this inconsistent or cautious policy was only justifiable until the evacuation of Turkish nationals from Libya had been completed in order to avoid possible retaliation against them by Qaddafi.<sup>46</sup> Another argument was that the inconsistent policy was natural as part of a case-by-case approach. While the government opposed an embargo because it predicted that it would have a negative impact on Libya's population, it also opposed military operations because of the insurgents' opposition, Western interest in Libyan oil, and lessons learnt from previous cases like Afghanistan.<sup>47</sup>

On the other hand, the majority of columnists criticized such inconsistencies. However, they did not comment much on the impact of this, whether as the necessary result of a case-by-case approach or as a factor that could undermine Turkish foreign policy in general. Overall, the government's inconsistency was mainly criticized for its own sake rather than for its perceived negative implications for Turkish national interests.

Columnists also criticized AKP's inconsistent policy for undermining Turkey's moral leadership aspirations,<sup>48</sup> arguing that the Arab Spring provided an opportunity for Turkey to play a more active role in the Middle East and North Africa. They claimed that the government's inconsistent policies were making it difficult for Turkey to play that desired role of regional leadership.<sup>49</sup> For example, Tınç argued that AKP's inconsistent policies were undermining Turkey's potential role in post-Qaddafi Libya as the AKP government was opposing international operations even while Libyan insurgents were demanding external assistance.<sup>50</sup>

Some columnists criticized the government's Libya policy from a humanitarian perspective. For instance, Kohen stated that government had been too pragmatic in Libya, rather than conforming to

46 Ferai Tınç, "Ne isyancılara ne Kaddafi'ye yaranabildik", *Hürriyet*, 25 March 2011; Sami Kohen, "Libyalı çocukların sesi...", *Milliyet*, 10 March 2011, "Ortadoğudaki değişim Türkiye için fırsat mı sıkıntı mı?", 28 March 2011.

47 Abdülhamit Bilici, "Türkiye Kaddafi'nin Yanında mı?", *Zaman*, 5 March 2011; "Ortadoğu'nun BOP'u?" 26 March 2011.

48 Cengiz Çandar, "Türkiye, Kaddafi'nin 'utanç müttefiki' mi?", *Radikal*, 22 March 2011.

49 Sami Kohen, "Ortadoğudaki değişim Türkiye için fırsat mı sıkıntı mı?", *Milliyet*, 28 March 2011.

50 Ferai Tınç, "Ne isyancılara ne Kaddafi'ye yaranabildik", *Hürriyet*, 25 March 2011.

the principle of supporting all popular uprisings against dictators. Writing as one favoring involvement in the crisis, Kohen criticized Erdoğan's opposition to an embargo.<sup>51</sup> Commenting on Erdoğan's opposition to international intervention, Kohen conceded that the best regime change happens through domestic dynamics, but added that, in countries like Libya, the aim of foreign intervention should not be regime change, but rather humanitarian aid to protect the local population against the atrocities of dictators. Kohen noted the change in international perceptions regarding the traditional concept of national sovereignty,<sup>52</sup> suggesting that delaying humanitarian intervention once the Turkish workers had been rescued was unjustifiable.<sup>53</sup>

A further objection was raised against the Prime Minister's criticism of Western countries' supposed indifference by noting that both the UN's embargo decision and NATO's no-fly zone plan had both been rejected by Turkey.<sup>54</sup> According to Kohen, for example, the West's decision to intervene militarily and its willingness to take action despite the risks were further proof of the international collective conscience. Kohen also noted that the Turkish government had changed from its cautious position following the UN decision to authorize military operations.<sup>55</sup>

A final inconsistency primed by the media concerned Syria. The fact that Assad had begun to act in a similar way to Qaddafi was seen as having negative implications for Turkey.<sup>56</sup> At the same time, critical media voices argued that Turkey's Libya policy might also damage Turkey's recent good relations with Syria.<sup>57</sup> Gürsel, correctly predicted that Syria would become Turkey's next critical foreign policy issue, arguing that, due to Syria's proximity to Turkey and its important role in regional affairs, it would represent a serious challenge.<sup>58</sup>

51 Sami Kohen, "Yaptırımlar neye yarar?", *Milliyet*, 28 February 2011.

52 Sami Kohen, "Karışmalı mı, karışmamalı mı?", *Milliyet*, 24 March 2011.

53 Sami Kohen, "Libyalı çocukların sesi...", *Milliyet*, 10 March 2011.

54 Sami Kohen, "Ülkeye göre politika", *Milliyet*, 17 March 2011.

55 Sami Kohen, "Kaddafi şimdi pes edecek mi?", *Milliyet*, 18 March 2011.

56 Cengiz Çandar, "Türkiyeve Bölgede 'özgürlük alevleri'...", *Radikal*, 26 March 2011, "Ortadoğu'nun özgürlük şafağında (Türkiye-Suriye)", 27 March 2011.

57 Sami Kohen, "Ortadoğu'daki değişim Türkiye için fırsat mı sıkıntı mı?", *Milliyet*, 28 March 2011.

58 Kadri Gürsel, "Boşluktaki Türk dış politikası", *Milliyet*, 30 March 2011.

## Conclusion

It can be argued that, although there is an extensive literature on Turkish foreign policy, there has been insufficient research on the actors who play a role in the foreign policy decision-making process. Among many reasons for such a lack of analysis is the opaque nature of the decision-making processes in Turkey, in that there is little available data regarding the factors and actors influencing foreign policy decisions and decision-makers. For these reasons, this article focused on media framings and their potential impact on the decision-making process.

In this context, this study determined the differing interpretations of selected commentators within the Turkish print media regarding the AKP government's contradictory and shifting policies towards the crisis in Libya. The analysis focused on the positions taken by key foreign policy columnists on two issues. The first was whether Turkey should intervene in Libyan crisis on humanitarian grounds. The second concerned the success (or not) of the AKP government's foreign policy.

The columnists framed the Libyan crisis in sharply contrasting ways in the period from 1 February to 31 March 2011, when the case became one of the top items on Turkey's foreign policy agenda. Regarding the secular-Islamist spectrum, there were clear differences in judgments of the success of the government regarding the crisis. The columnists in the secular mainstream media supported an international responsibility to intervene and prevent mass killings by Qaddafi forces on humanitarian grounds, while the Islamist media strongly opposed any intervention, on the basis that Western states were motivated by self-interested imperialist goals.

The above analysis provides some insights regarding media impacts on government in the foreign policy decision-making process. Identifying the positions of the media is the first step to understand whether they have any influence on foreign policy decision makers in Turkey. The analysis shows that the elite model was not supported in that the media didn't change position following shifts in the government position, thus it can be concluded that certain segments of the Turkish media preserved their independent position from the government in the case of Libya. Given that the government subsequently changed its position, this suggests that the

media may have had an impact on the decision-makers, although the reality of such an impact cannot be verified at this stage. The next step would be to analyze the decision-making process and explore the media's effects on foreign policy makers. For now, it is possible to conclude that the critical stances of the secular Turkish media may have had only a limited influence on Turkish foreign policy making led by Islamist-rooted AKP.

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# Internationalizing Islamophobia: Anti-Islamophobic Practices from the Runnymede Trust to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation\*

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## Abstract

Especially since the September 11 attacks, the position of Muslim communities living in Western countries has become under focus. Many Muslim political leaders, activists as well as scholars have pointed to the existence of Islamophobia, or an irrational fear or prejudice towards Islam and Muslims, as the cause for discrimination against Muslims. The literature on Islamophobia has grown, various governmental programs have been implemented to repress it, while scholars developed means to measure it as an attitude. Rather than focusing on Islamophobia itself, this paper seeks to shift the focus on anti-Islamophobia practices of various organizations, especially the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. It looks at the emergence of anti-Islamophobic discourse in the 90s, how this discourse isolates and problematizes Islamophobia by redefining what Muslims stand for. This paper argues that anti-Islamophobic practices cannot be simply taken as a strategy to combat Islamophobia. While it drives its legitimacy from repression of xenophobia and discrimination, it simultaneously seeks to govern by promoting certain ways of social co-existence.

**Keywords:** Islamophobia, International Organizations, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Governance, Discourse

## İslamofobyayı Uluslararasılaştırmak: Runnymede Vakfından İslam İşbirliği Örgütü'ne İslamofobyaya Karşıtı Pratikler

### Özet

11 Eylül saldırılarından beri Batı toplumlarında yaşayan Müslüman toplumların konumu üzerine yapılan çalışmalar artmıştır. Pek çok bilim insanı, Müslüman siyasi lider ve eylemci; Müslümanlara yönelik ayrımcılığın nedeni olarak İslamofobyaya, ya da İslam ve

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Müslümanlara yönelik akıl dışı korku ve önyargının varlığına dikkat çekmiştir. Bir yandan İslamofobyaya üzerine olan yazın büyüyüp, hükümetler bu sorunu ortadan kaldırmak için çeşitli programlar uygulamaya başlarken diğer yandan da bilim insanları bir bireysel bir tutum olarak İslamofobyayı ölçmeye girişmişlerdir. Bu çalışma ise, İslamofobyaya üzerine odaklanmak yerine çeşitli örgütlerin ve özellikle de İslam İşbirliği Örgütü'nün İslamofobyaya karşı pratiklerine dikkati çekmeye çalışmaktadır. Çalışma, 90'lı yıllarda İslamofobyaya karşı söylemin ortaya çıkışını, ve bu söylemin Müslümanların neyi temsil ettiğini yeniden tanımlayarak İslamofobyayı nasıl izole ettiğini ve sorunsallaştırdığını incelemektedir. Bu çalışma İslamofobyaya karşı pratiklerin basitçe bu olguyla mücadele etmek için uygulanan bir strateji olarak görülemeyeceğini iddia eder. İslamofobyaya meşruiyetini yabancı düşmanlığı ve ayrımcılıkla mücadeleden alırken aynı zamanda belirli toplumsal bir arada yaşama şekillerini öne çıkartmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İslamofobyaya, Uluslararası Örgütler, İslam İşbirliği Örgütü, Yönetişim, Söylem

فوبيا؛ الإسلامو لمواجهة تطبيقات : (الإسلام من الخوف) فوبيا الإسلامو تدويل  
الإسلامي التعاون منظمة إلى رونيميدي وقف من بدء  
شريف أونور باعجه جيک

#### الملخص:

منذ أحداث الحادي عشر من ايلول/ سبتمبر زاد عدد الدراسات التي اجريت حول وضع المجتمعات الاسلامية التي تعيش داخل المجتمعات الغربية. وقد أشار العديد من رجال العلم والزعماء السياسيين والناشطين في هذا المجال الى الاسلاموفوبيا او الشعور بالخوف والانعياز غير العقلاني كسبب من أسباب التحيز ضد الإسلام والمسلمين. فمن ناحية بدأت الكتابات التي تتناول الاسلاموفوبيا بالزيادة، مما دعا الحكومات الى تطبيق برامج مختلفة بهدف حل هذه المشكلة، ومن ناحية اخرى بدأ رجال العلم تحليل وتقييم الاسلاموفوبيا كجهود منفردة من قبلهم. أما هذه الدراسة فإنها تسعى الى لفت الأنظار الى جهود المؤسسات المختلفة، خاصة منظمة التعاون الإسلامي، في تناول التطبيقات التي تواجه الاسلاموفوبيا، بدلا من التركيز على الاسلاموفوبيا نفسها. وتبرز هذه الدراسة ظهور الأفكار والمقولات التي كانت تواجه الاسلاموفوبيا في التسعينيات من القرن الماضي وتقيم هذه المقولة الموقف الجديد للمسلمين، وتبين كيف عزلت هذه المقولة الاسلاموفوبيا وجرّدتها من كونها مشكلة ما. وتتبنى هذه الدراسة فكرة ان التطبيقات الحالية التي تواجه الاسلاموفوبيا لا يمكن النظر اليها على انها مجرد استراتيجية يجرى تطبيقها لمواجهة فكرة ما. بينما الاسلاموفوبيا تأخذ مشروعيته من الكفاح ضد العداء تجاه الأجانب والتمييز العنصري، وتبرز في نفس الوقت طرق إمكانية التعايش المجتمعي.

**كلمات مفتاحية:** الاسلاموفوبيا، المنظمات الدولية، منظمة التعاون الإسلامي، الإدارة والمقول.

Since the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, Muslims living in European and North American countries have increasingly become the focus of discourses and practices of discrimination, securitization and stigmatization. Their presence, religious, social and political identities have been problematized not only by opinion leaders and the media, but also by governments. In a sense, this has not been an unprecedented phenomenon. Discrimination towards the “Other” has unfortunately been a recurring feature of human societies around the world for centuries. Muslims and Asian populations living in “the West” have been subjected to stereotyping and prejudice for many decades. These practices have long been justified on religious, social and cultural grounds. Religious identity and the ensuing “lifestyles” have been scrutinized long before the September 11 attacks. The Rushdie Affair in the late 1980s, the Gulf War in the early 1990s, Oklahoma Bombing in 1995 and similar incidences have led to periodic increases in the frequency of hostile practices towards those who have been perceived as Muslims. Nevertheless, September 11 attacks have become a significant turning point in the intensification of such practices. In the face of such challenges, opinion leaders, scholars, politicians and others have come to employ the term “Islamophobia” to counter negative representations of Islam and Muslims, and to describe what they have seen as the motivation behind attacks on religious and cultural identity. Islamophobia simply defined as “fear towards Islam and consequently Muslims”, have moved from being a word that was used in scholarly discourses towards a term frequently employed in political and media discourse. It has become the main diagnosis of those seeking to describe and combat discrimination against Muslim populations in the West.

However, Islamophobia had its critics as well. Some have argued that not only the term was inappropriate for what it tried to describe; it was abused by some radical figures who wanted to silence different points of view in the Muslim community.<sup>1</sup> Some argued that it was an exaggeration. Arguably, it was not possible to gauge whether the attacks on Muslims were due to their religious identity or due to a more general hostility towards “foreigners.” Critics have also pointed out that it is not possible to “measure” Islamophobic attacks because often the motivation of the perpetrators was not certain. Such interventions in the formation of the term of

1 Kenan Malik, “Are Muslims hated?” *Index on Censorship*, 34, No. 2, 2005, pp. 167-172.

Islamophobia generated debates that centered on what we can call the ontology of Islamophobia. That is to say, scholars and others have often concentrated their discussions on problems like whether Islamophobia existed, the accuracy of the term for the phenomena at hand, the features of Islamophobia and how it can be credibly defined and stabilized as a term. These discussions have produced insightful and significant studies on the situation of Muslims living in the West.

While these discussions were most welcome, in this paper I would like to change the terms of debate on Islamophobia by analyzing the anti-Islamophobic discourses and practices from a different perspective. In studying these phenomena, rather than limiting ourselves to the search for a robust definition of Islamophobia, one could adopt a radically empirical attitude and look at how the term is being deployed in different meanings, for different purposes and what the actors are carrying out when they are using this concept. This requires accepting that there are multiple Islamophobias. We should focus not on excluding the false definitions but on the multiple uses that this term has been put to. We should recognize that Islamophobia is not only a descriptive term used to define scientifically a set of events in society. It is at the same time a device operated to make possible the government of individuals in a certain manner. In other words, we should see “Islamophobia” and the practices that seek to fight against it, such as monitoring, reporting, lobbying for policies, convincing others, making statements, etc as practices comprising an anti-policy. The discourse on Islamophobia and practices that people are engaged in to counter it (i.e. anti-Islamophobia) are not only practices of negation or rights claiming. They do not simply seek to stop, eradicate and oppose Islamophobia but while doing that they encourage certain behaviors. They encourage the audiences of their statements to view the world in certain ways; they prioritize certain political and social subjectivities over others; they constitute the social and the political in certain ways. That is to say, we should look at not only what is being opposed in the anti-Islamophobic discourse but also how it is opposed.

In what follows, I will first provide a discussion of some theoretical and conceptual tools that will be employed throughout this paper. This will be followed by a short history of the term Islamophobia.

After that, I will proceed to an analysis of the popularization of the term Islamophobia by the Runnymede Trust. In this section I will try to show how a term employed by some to describe their experiences in (mostly) northern London came to be established as a trope in multiculturalism discourses and then employed to describe situations in the UK. Third, I will look at the adoption and deployment of this term by international organizations such as the United Nations, European Union agencies, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.<sup>2</sup> By following the term Islamophobia in different contexts I show not only that there are multiple Islamophobias but also that when different actors adopt this term they understand different things from it, but perhaps most significantly, they modify its content in accordance with their own projects of governance.

### Conceptual Tools

Conventional theories of International Relations view global politics mostly as an interplay of utility-maximizing states where power is understood as something that can be accumulated and possessed. Global political norms are often dictated by the most powerful states in the international system, and the international institutions reflect the distribution of power within the system.<sup>3</sup> Recent post-structuralist contributions inspired by Michel Foucault, however, challenge this conceptualization of power by showing that modern power is not solely exercised by central institutions such as the state. In Foucault, power is not a capacity that could be possessed but rather understood as the “conduct of conduct”.<sup>4</sup> Modern power is often exercised not through the use or threat of violence by a sovereign state but by a range of institutions that seek to encourage certain sorts of behavior. Modern power is exercised not through violence but by acting upon the actions of others, and not by direct control of individuals but by defining a field of possible action.<sup>5</sup>

2 The Organization of the Islamic Conference changed its name to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in June 2011.

3 G. John Ikenberry and Charles A. Kupchan, “Socialization and Hegemonic Power,” *International Organization*, Vol. 44, No. 3, 1990, pp. 283-315 and John J. Mearsheimer, “The False Promise of International Institutions,” *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 3, 1994, pp. 5-49.

4 Michel Foucault, “Governmentality” in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (eds.), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 87-104.

5 Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999).

This novel way of conceptualizing political power has significant implications for the study of world politics. When power is understood as the conduct of conduct, it becomes apparent that certain discourses and practices conventionally considered as unrelated to political power are indeed part of the governance of individuals, states or other organizations. With regard to the study of international organizations, this approach makes their micro-physical powers more apparent. As Merlingen argues, international organizations “exercise a molecular form of power that evades... the material, juridical and diplomatic limitations on their influence.”<sup>6</sup> For instance, in the case of neoliberal economic governance, the neoliberal conduct of states are secured through constituting them as competitive actors with the help of competitiveness indexes prepared by the World Economic Forum.<sup>7</sup> To give another example, the construction of a security community in Europe is accomplished by the application of disciplinary techniques to states. Their security policies are constantly observed by the OSCE and compared to a golden standard of responsible statehood.<sup>8</sup>

When anti-Islamophobic practices of non-governmental and international organizations are analyzed from this perspective it becomes apparent that these practices cannot be taken simply as negations of Islamophobia or rights-claiming. These practices not only seek to exercise power over other actors but they seek to constitute persons as religious subjects and help construct a post-secular world order. As such, anti-Islamophobic practices can be considered as anti-policies or what can be briefly defined as “schemes to govern unwanted things.”<sup>9</sup> Anti-policies involve the constitution of subjectivities and the exercise of power. As much as anti-terrorism or anti-poverty practices are political, anti-Islamophobic practices are political as well.

6 Michael Merlingen, “Governmentality: Towards a Foucauldian Framework for the Study of IGOs,” *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 38, No. 4, 2003, pp. 361-84.

7 Tore Fougner, “Neoliberal Governance of States: The Role of Competitiveness Indexing and Country Benchmarking,” *Millennium - Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 2, 2008, pp. 303-326.

8 Merlingen, “Governmentality: Towards a Foucauldian Framework for the Study of IGOs”.

9 William Walters, “Anti-policy and Anti-politics: Critical Reflections on Certain Schemes to Govern Bad Things,” *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 2008, pp. 267-288.

## Islamophobia: A Short History of the Word

The Oxford English Dictionary defines Islamophobia as “hatred or fear of Islam, esp. as a political force; hostility or prejudice towards Muslims”.<sup>10</sup> According to this source, one of the earliest recorded use of this term is in 1976 in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. In a discussion piece, Anawati uses this term without really defining it, and without using inverted commas.<sup>11</sup> He uses the term in a negative way: He argues that if a scholar of Islamic studies, in the course of his studies, arrived at conclusions that would contradict the precepts of Islam, he could well be accused of Islamophobia. Anawati implies that the “penalty of being accused of Islamophobia” makes the dissemination of certain sort of scholarly studies very difficult and amounts to self-censure.<sup>12</sup> The manner that Anawati employs the term suggests that it has been established as a word for some time, and the reader does not need any explanation as to what it means. Another use of term is found in Edward Said.<sup>13</sup> In a polemical article based on his book *Orientalism*, Said points out to the similarities between anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. He too refrains from giving a clear definition of the term but it is understood that he uses it to mean “hostility to Islam in the modern Christian West”.<sup>14</sup> Said points out that anti-Semitism and Islamophobia are very similar in terms of the “cultural mechanisms” they use and they stem from the same source. These uses of Islamophobia by Anawati and Said have some similarities and contrasts. While the former uses it in a negative sense to disapprove the timidity of Muslims towards studies of Islam from an academic perspective, Said approves and adopts the term to describe some racist phenomena.

Anawati and Said’s use of the term, however, were by no means the first use of the term in the English language. Both Bravo Lopez and Allen report earlier uses of the term in their studies.<sup>15</sup> Bravo Lopez indicates that one of the first recorded use of Islamophobia was by

10 Oxford English Dictionary, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/248449?redirectedFrom=islamophobia#eid>, (accessed June 7, 2013).

11 Georges Anawati, “Dialogue with Gustave e. von Grunebaum,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 7, No: 1, 1976, pp. 123-128.

12 Ibid, p. 124.

13 Edward W. Said, “Orientalism Reconsidered,” *Cultural Critique*, Vol. 1, 1985, pp. 89-107.

14 Ibid, p. 99.

15 Fernando Bravo Lopez, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 34, No: 4, 2010, pp. 556-573 and Christopher Allen, *Islamophobia*, (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2010).

Etienne Dinet and Slimane ben Ibrahim. Dinet was a French painter who later converted to Islam. Their book, *L'Orient vu de l'Occident*, published in 1925 is devoted to the criticism of some orientalists' views on Islam and its Prophet. They employed the term, according to Bravo Lopez, to criticize those who had a skewed notion of Islam and attacked the religion simply to discredit it and its Prophet. That is to say, for Dinet and Ibrahim, Islamophobia was not due to a simple lack of knowledge about Islam and Muslims, it was also an attack of defamation. Islam was deliberately shown as a series of backward customs and the messages of the religion were deliberately misrepresented. Dinet and Ibrahim did not see it necessary to define Islamophobia, but their usage suggested that they viewed it as efforts to "do away with Islam all together".<sup>16</sup> It is also apparent that Dinet and Ibrahim located Islamophobia in the studies of orientalists, rather than in the social and political sphere. These Islamophobic discourses, Bravo Lopez argues, were directed towards the colonial administrations and aimed to show that governments should combat against Muslims and Islam if they wanted to implement their colonial projects. In this way, some Christian missionaries tried to present themselves as allies to the colonialist project. If the "native" populations could be converted to Christianity, Western states could more securely control these territories. Yet, one should also appreciate the multiplicity of the discourse on Islam, Bravo Lopez warns. There were other figures, for instance, Louise Gustvae Binger, a director at the French colonial office, wrote against misrepresentations of Islam in his book *Le péril de l'Islam*, published in 1906. He argued that Europeans should not see Islam as the obstacle to their expansion in the Middle East and Africa. The opposition of the population living in these regions was not due to Islam, but patriotism.

Dinet, Ibrahim and Binger's studies were early instances of the discourse on Islamophobia. After their studies, this discourse was laid dormant for some time. There were some references to Islamophobia in the 1960s and 1980s, but as I have indicated in the opening of this section, these were some passing references rather than studies aiming to explicate and disseminate the concept. The most significant development came in 1997 with the Runnymede Report, which we will turn in the next section.

<sup>16</sup> Bravo Lopez, "Towards a Definition of Islamophobia: Approximations of the Early Twentieth Century", p. 6.

## Runnymede Report and the Dissemination of anti-Islamophobic Program

The most significant moment for the rise of the discourse on Islamophobia came in 1997, when a British think-tank known for its work on multiculturalism published a report titled "Islamophobia: a Challenge for Us All." This report, which will be analyzed in greater detail below, established Islamophobia as a term that was accepted by many as the accurate description of a series of phenomenon experienced by the British Muslims. It was embraced by opinion leaders, including Muslims, and came to be used by the media as a descriptive term. Soon, the quotation marks around this word would disappear and it would be naturalized as a term indicating a challenge for the multicultural society in not only the UK but around the world.

Although the term Islamophobia was not coined by the Runnymede Trust, their report published in 1997 became the most successful and oft-cited study on this topic. Before looking into the details of this report, we should contextualize in the UK in the 1990s. The Runnymede Trust was founded in 1968 to counter racial discrimination and promote multiculturalism. It defines itself as the UK's "leading independent race equality think tank".<sup>17</sup> It seems that the think tank was founded at a time when anti-racist initiatives were developing in the country. As Lentin puts it, in the 1960s, there were two basic strands of anti-racism in the UK.<sup>18</sup> One was the "solidaristic" anti-racism of left and trade union activists, and the other was the "self-organization" of the Black communities, that is to say groups who have been subjected to discrimination.<sup>19</sup> As Modood argues, anti-discrimination initiatives in the UK were shaped by this anti-racialism agenda, which was in turn borrowing from the experience of the United States.<sup>20</sup> That is to say, discrimination was perceived to be a race, color and ethnic issue. Runnymede's foundation date of 1968 is also significant in this regard as it coincides with the civil rights movement on the other side of the Atlantic. Religious discrimination was not perceived as an issue in these years, and this approach was apparent in the Race Relations Act of 1976,

17 Runnymede Trust, *Impact Report 2010*, <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/pdfs/ImpactReport2010FINALWeb.pdf>, (accessed on March 3, 2011).

18 Alana Lentin, *Racism and Anti-Racism in Europe*, (London: Pluto Press, 2004).

19 Ibid., p. 130.

20 Tariq Modood, "Muslims and the Politics of Difference" in Peter E. Hopkins and Richard Gale (eds.), *Muslims in Britain* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2009), pp. 193-209.

which, as can be guessed from its title, did not cover discrimination due to belief. Except Northern Ireland, religious discrimination did not have any legal existence in the UK. This not only created a gap in the legislation but also shaped the way human rights claims were made. Indeed, Muslims, when they were discriminated due to their religious identity or practices, articulated their grievances in racial terms.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, in media and political discourses Muslims were included in the group of Asians, with hardly any reference to their beliefs.

All of these started to change in the 1990s. As Birt points out, the Rushdie Affair can be taken as the starting point of Muslim identity politics and the emergence of a Muslim community that increasingly became aware of its religious identity.<sup>22</sup> This identity helped constitute British Muslims as discrete from the Asian population and created a community through suffering, according to Birt. The suffering that Birt mentioned was due to the way Satanic Verses and the Islamic Republic of Iran's reaction to it was handled by the media in the UK. Muslims not only regarded the novel highly offensive but they were also disturbed by the manner they were represented as dangerous subjects. Besides, this formation of Muslim community tended to "overcome" national differences like being a Pakistani or Bangladeshi.<sup>23</sup> Muslims were coming together on the basis of religious affiliations rather than through their distant homelands.

This development provided the background to the Runnymede Report. But the report had more recent triggers as well. After the Rushdie Affair, geopolitical events such as the Gulf War and the Oklahoma Bombing, Muslim presence in Western nations were problematized in the media. The mass protests that some Muslims made in 1991 in reaction to the Gulf War were reported in an alarmist tone (e.g. "Trouble at the Mosque") while the Oklahoma bombing which had no links to the Muslims was seen as an Islamic fundamentalist attack on the US, and led to harassment of Muslims.<sup>24</sup>

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21 Ibid.

22 Jonathan Birt, "Islamophobia in the Construction of British Muslim Identity Politics" in Hopkins and Gale, op. cit., pp. 210-227.

23 Allen, *Islamophobia*.

24 The Economist, "Trouble at the Mosque; the Gulf War Reveals the Growing Determination of Britain's Muslims to Find a Political Voice", January 26, 1991, pp. 51-52 and Human Rights Watch, "We are not the enemy", *Hate Crimes Against Arabs, Muslims, and Those Perceived to be Arab or Muslim After September 11*, Human Rights Watch Report, 2002, Vol. 14, No: 6, (available at <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/usa1102.pdf>)

In this environment, Runnymede published a report on Anti-Semitism.<sup>25</sup> Although this was a report on the attitudes towards the Jewish community in Britain, it had a section on Islamophobia as well. However, more significantly, the report conceded that the founding philosophy of the Runnymede was now insufficient for multicultural Britain. The think-tank had to take into consideration, the report suggested, that discrimination was not only taking place on the basis of color and race but also culture, language, custom and religion.<sup>26</sup> In the course of its work, the Trust's Commission on anti-Semitism found that prejudice against British Muslims was an equally "alarming" issue. Runnymede Trust suggested that a more comprehensive approach should be adopted towards all kinds of "racisms" (including cultural racism) so that "the benefits of cooperation, coordination and shared energy" could be deployed by those concerned.<sup>27</sup> The report did not provide a full-fledged definition of Islamophobia, but limited itself to pointing out that it was synonymous with "anti-Muslim feeling".<sup>28</sup>

So, what were the implications of the report in terms of the government of the conducts of British subjects? The prescription that the report made was a synthesis of liberal democracy and cultural pluralism. It was recognized that there was a tension between the freedom of expression that liberal democracy provided and the cultural values of communities. The latter could be harmed by the former, as can be seen from the Rushdie Affair. The report recognized this as a challenge but did not bring forward direct and concrete suggestions. Rather it suggested that society had to be prudent and avoid such conflicts between liberal democracy and cultural pluralism. Runnymede Trust in its report imagined a democratic polity influenced by two basic forces of the media and opinion leaders. Both were given the task of upholding liberal and multicultural values and manage the conflicts between them. For the media, this would happen through the appointment of "a specific individual within the organization... to be responsible for developing expertise on matters relating to racism in general".<sup>29</sup> The opinion leaders, especially those who are influential, were also tasked to intervene in times

25 Runnymede Trust, *A Very Light Sleeper - The Persistence & Dangers of Antisemitism*, (London: Runnymede Trust, 1994).

26 Ibid., p. 9.

27 Ibid., p. 13.

28 Ibid., p. 55.

29 Ibid., pp. 58-59.

of tension. Thus, the report suggested governing at a distance, in Foucaultian terms: The role given to the state and sovereign law was minimal. Islamophobic conduct would not be banned or persecuted but discouraged. Law was only a “safety net” to be deployed in the last instance, while the state’s role was limited to training the teachers to render them sensitive towards discrimination issues. The Report entertained a quite different notion of legislation, which in a sense did not have the force of law, traditionally understood. To quote at length:

Changes in the law would not necessarily guarantee that Britain, or, indeed, any society, would in practice be more just. But some changes would be valuable in providing safety nets, so to speak, at times of anxiety or conflict, and would thus have considerable value in educating public opinion and in signaling the government’s commitment to pluralism.<sup>30</sup>

As seen from this quotation, to a great extent, law was relieved of its enforcement function but construed as a different kind of knowledge that would govern the population not through penalties or legal violence but through “education” and political signals. The report had a second effect as well. This was the fact that Runnymede Trust distanced itself from a certain type of democratic politics while emphasizing liberal democracy. Instead of democratic forms such as protests, letter writing, and demonstrations the report encouraged a policy-making approach. The problems would be solved not through “mass democratic participation” but through opinion leaders, media, and the policy proposals, which the Runnymede report constituted an example.

Runnymede Trust did not end its work on Islamophobia with this report on anti-Semitism. In 1996, the Trust which now defined itself as “an independent research and social policy agency” established a Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia.<sup>31</sup> It had a multi-ethnic and multi-religious composition. The Commission prepared a consultation paper and distributed it to councils, city authorities, police departments, Muslim community organizations, universities, etc. In line with the responses to the consultation paper, The Run-

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30 Ibid., p. 60.

31 Runnymede Trust, , *Islamophobia, a Challenge for Us All, Summary*, <http://www.runnymede-trust.org/uploads/publications/pdfs/islamophobia.pdf> (accessed on March 1, 2011).

nymede Trust prepared the report “Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All.” The report defined Islamophobia first “as shorthand way of referring to dread or hatred of Islam—and therefore, to fear or dislike of all or most Muslims”.<sup>32</sup> This definition was later changed into “phobic dread of Islam... the recurring characteristics of closed views.” The closed views indicated series of views that described Islam as a homogeneous, static, monolithic bloc. This was counterposed with an open view of Islam that described the religion as progressive, multiple, worthy of respect, etc. Thus the report evaluated Islamophobia as a religious issue, as a reaction shown towards Islam itself, rather than Muslim subjects principally. This aspect of the report would prove to be highly controversial. Halliday, for instance, argued that discrimination and similar practices towards Muslims in the UK did not necessarily emanate from a hostility towards the religion.<sup>33</sup> He argued that these phenomena should be thought within the greater context of racism and immigration. What was observable, for him, was not anti-Islamism per se but an anti-Muslim attitude.

The emphasis on the religious dimension in the conception of Islamophobia was apparent in the formation of the Commission as well. As Allen points out, the Commission was very much designed as an inter-faith group.<sup>34</sup> In this way, British citizens were constructed primarily as religious subjects. The way they would relate to each other would be through the recognition of religious identities and the open view of Islam would be the model for this respect. In line with the 1994 report, opinion leaders and media were seen as pivotal actors in the government of religious subjectivity. In this way, grass roots anti-racist struggles were excluded.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, the analysis of Islamophobia through the lens of open vs. closed views of Islam necessitated that emphasis be put on Islamic identities which were acceptable for the liberal democracy. While British Muslims who are prone to violence were a fact, they were ignored so that Islam could be shown as an “open” religion.<sup>36</sup> The open view of Islam also made possible interfaith dialogue. As the report put it, open view meant that Islam would be “seen as an actual or po-

32 As cited in Allen, *Islamophobia*, p. 15.

33 Fred Halliday, “‘Islamophobia’ Reconsidered,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 22, No: 5, 1999, pp. 892 - 902.

34 Allen, *Islamophobia*.

35 Ibid..

36 Compare Allen, *Islamophobia*.

tential partner in joint cooperative enterprises and in the solution of shared problems".<sup>37</sup> As an anti-Islamophobic measure, open view of Islam implied dialogue and this in turn would neutralize radicalism and confrontation between the state and larger British society on the one hand and Muslim subjects on the other.

### Islamophobia as an International Problem

Runnymede's *Challenge for Us All* report was a success in terms of media coverage. Many British newspapers reported the work of the Commission, and mostly in a positive light. The discovery of Islamophobia by the Runnymede Trust was quite convincing for the media outlets.<sup>38</sup> Many Muslim groups also lauded the report and saw it as a significant milestone for the British Muslims.<sup>39</sup> The favorable reception of the report became an important asset for those who wanted to express their grievances towards harassment of Muslims and hence made the message of the report more mobile across international sphere. An important turning point in this regard was the deployment of the term, Islamophobia by the United Nations World Conference against Racism.<sup>40</sup> The conference, infamous for its debates on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, took place in 2001 in Durban, South Africa. At the end of the conference, a declaration was adopted. Article 61 of the declaration read: "we recognize with deep concern the increase in anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in various parts of the world, as well as the emergence of racial and violent movements based on racism and discriminatory ideas against Jewish, Muslim and Arab communities." Similar to Said's point, the article linked anti-Semitism and Islamophobia and essentially regarded the latter as a form of racist discrimination.<sup>41</sup> Interestingly, when the draft documents of the conference are studied closely it is seen that the delegates considered Islamophobia not necessarily as a problem experienced by Muslims living in Western societies but a problem in the Middle East. This is apparent from the fact that

37 Runnymede Trust, *Islamophobia, a Challenge for Us All, Summary*.

38 Clare Garner, "The British 'Are Becoming Muslim-Haters'," *The Independent*, February 21, 1997, p. 7; Paul Myirea, "Laws Needed to Protect British Moslems-Report," *Reuters*, October 22, 1997; The Scotsman, "Prince Urges Tolerance for Islam," March 1, 1997, p. 3; Alan Travis, "Ban on Religious Discrimination," *The Guardian*, June 12, 1997, p. 9.

39 Allen *Islamophobia*.

40 United Nations, *Report of The World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (No. A/CONF.189/12)*, (Durban: United Nations, 2001).

41 Said, "Orientalism Reconsidered".

article mentioned here was listed under the subtitle “paragraphs on the Middle-East and related issues”.<sup>42</sup> This indicates a significant move on the part of the drafters of the declaration. Islamophobia, which was discovered and inscribed as a phenomenon in Britain, was transferred to the Middle East. This draft implied that Islamophobia was not only a factor in the relations between British Muslims and other British citizens. It was also experienced in the geopolitics of the Middle East, presumably in the conflict between Israel and Palestine. The report included another indicator that showed that Islamophobia was related to this geopolitical problem: In the report itself, anti-Semitism was always mentioned alongside anti-Arabism and Islamophobia. It seemed that the drafters wished to “balance” anti-Semitism with Islamophobia. Indeed this can also be confirmed from the speeches of some Western diplomats in the report. They were critical of the declaration because there was no “independent” reference to anti-Semitism in the declaration.

A second move that internationalized or rather Europeanized the term Islamophobia came with its adoption by the European Union Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC). The EUMC was officially established in 1997, but in 2007 its mandate was widened and it was renamed as the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.<sup>43</sup> After the September 11 attacks, the EUMC asked its “National Focal Points” to monitor the situation of Muslims and other minorities in 15 EU states. The focal points were asked to monitor “acts of violence or aggression and changes in the attitude of the EU populations [...], good practices for reducing prejudice, violence and aggression, [and] reactions by politicians and other opinion leaders”.<sup>44</sup> The term Islamophobia was employed throughout the national reports, but a definition of the term itself was not provided to the national focal points. The definition of their task was monitoring acts against and attitudes towards Muslims, which seemed to exclude acts against the religion itself as an issue to be monitored. In that sense, the report departed from the definition of Runnymede Trust. The national reports differed in the way

42 United Nations, *Report of The World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance*, p. 108.

43 EUMC, “Frequently Asked Questions,” [http://www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/faq/faq\\_en.htm](http://www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/faq/faq_en.htm), (accessed on January 5, 2011).

44 EUMC, *Summary Report on Islamophobia in the EU After 11 September 2001*, [http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/199-Synthesis-report\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/199-Synthesis-report_en.pdf), 2002, (accessed on February 28, 2011), p. 12.

they employed the term Islamophobia. Portugal and Austria used “Islamophobia” (with quotation marks) while Sweden used the term without quotation marks.<sup>45</sup> The “synthesis” report however used the term Islamophobia in its title.

The reports of the EUMC was not uniform in terms of the resources available to the national focal points, or the methodology and sources used in monitoring the situation of the Muslims in Europe.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, the establishment of a monitoring procedure for Islamophobia was significant. This phenomenon, which was initially thought as an occurrence in Britain was turned into a Europe-wide issue by these monitoring reports. This not only improved the credibility of the term itself, but also made it more mobile and applicable to other places by separating it from its national and local context. In terms of the governance of the Islamophobia, the EUMC initiative was again significant. The monitoring of Islamophobia meant that the term was being attached to a surveillance mechanism in the Foucaultian sense.<sup>47</sup> The EUMC functioned as a surveillance mechanism where potentially all acts of Islamophobia appear on its radar. Nevertheless, the normalization effects of this surveillance were not powerful. That is to say, the surveillance function’s capacity to compare the conduct of the individuals and the government according to an established norm was weak. This was both because Islamophobia was represented as a societal issue and because the definition of Islamophobia was not clearly established. The acts of Islamophobia were seen as rather autonomous acts of the population, and the accountability of the governments in these acts was not clear.

The fact that the EUMC gave the task of monitoring to national focal points, and focused on the media, governments and opinion leaders had implications in terms of governance of Islamophobia as well. While the initiative Europeanized the problem, the distribution of monitoring to national entities constructed national governments and publics as the main sites of intervention in Islamophobia. Despite the weakness of its surveillance, the EUMC affirmed the circulation of Islamophobia in international discourses. Its monitoring

45 EUMC, *Anti-Islamic Reactions in the EU after the Terrorist Acts against the USA*, [http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/216-Nat-Report-291101.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/216-Nat-Report-291101.pdf), 2002b, (accessed on February 28, 2011).

46 EUMC, *Summary Report on Islamophobia in the EU After 11 September 2001*.

47 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish, The Birth of the Prison*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

initiative was also significant and inspired other international agencies. Prime among these agencies was the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the activities of which we now turn to.

### The OIC: A Hybrid anti-Islamophobia Program

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) was established in 1969 in Morocco and aimed to combine the “efforts and speak with one voice to safeguard the interests and secure the progress and well-being of [Member States’] peoples and of all Muslims in the world”.<sup>48</sup> The OIC has come to the attention of the media and scholars especially after the September 11 attacks through its initiatives against Islamophobia. Its initiatives to install international legislation to prevent what it saw as blasphemy against Islam and discrimination against Muslims proved to be controversial. On the one hand some argued that this initiative was a demonstration of the OIC’s “determination to suppress critical commentary on Islam-related themes”.<sup>49</sup> On the other hand, the organization itself came to project an image that was increasingly embracing democratic governance and human rights. For instance, in its 2008 Summit in Antara, Indonesia, a new charter that underlined human rights and democracy was adopted.<sup>50</sup>

What was significant for our purposes was the establishment of a monitoring body by this organization in 2005. This took place in the 3rd Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Summit Conference that came together in December 2005 as a reaction to the infamous cartoon controversy. The Summit adopted the OIC Ten-Year Program of Action, which included the establishment of an observatory to track Islamophobic acts.<sup>51</sup> There was no geographical limit to the activities of the observatory, but in practice, its monitoring was limited to European and North American countries. Its sources information were the media and studies by think-tanks, scholars, international organizations and NGOs. By utilizing these sources, it

48 OIC, “About OIC,” [http://www.oic-un.org/about\\_oic.asp](http://www.oic-un.org/about_oic.asp), 2009, (accessed on January 5, 2011) The Organization has 57 members and the headquarters are located in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

49 Arch Puddington and Christopher Walker, “Saying the Unsayable: Revisiting International Censorship,” *World Affairs*, Vol. 173, No: 4, 2010, pp. 75-83.

50 Asia Pulse, “OIC adopts new charter with Focus on Human Rights,” March 15, 2008.

51 OIC, *The updated Report of the OIC Observatory on Islamophobia to the 35th Session of The Council of Foreign Ministers for the Period of May 2007-May 2008*, [http://www.oic-un.org/document\\_report/observatory\\_report\\_final.doc](http://www.oic-un.org/document_report/observatory_report_final.doc), 2008, (accessed on January 2, 2011).

produces an annual report that summarizes acts of Islamophobia and the activities of the OIC to combat this phenomenon.

The OIC seemed to adopt a definition of Islamophobia that was similar to the one found in Runnymede Trust report. It was “an irrational or very powerful fear or dislike of Islam” but it also had dimensions like “racial hatred, intolerance, prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping”.<sup>52</sup> The OIC monitoring report referred to issues like immigration, racism and xenophobia and recognized these as problems that exacerbated the problem of Islamophobia. However, it insisted that Islamophobia was essentially a “religion-based resentment”.<sup>53</sup> The resentment had its roots in the historical relations between the Muslim world and the West, and in this context, “historical reconciliation” was seen as an important aspect of the resolution of the Islamophobia problem.<sup>54</sup> The report also indicated, “apologizing to Muslims for the Crusades and the repercussions of America’s so-called war on terror is also a positive development towards fostering tolerance among religions and cultural beliefs and countering Islamophobia”.<sup>55</sup>

One of the main concerns of the authors of the report was enrollment of other, especially Western actors in the anti-Islamophobia program. The monitoring reports put emphasis on convincing their interlocutors of the existence of the phenomenon of Islamophobia. To accomplish that, reports adopted two basic tactics. First, they based their claims of the existence of Islamophobia not on the studies of Muslim scholars but on the reports of Western organizations like the Runnymede Trust, the EUMC, the Council of Europe and the UN. They frequently quoted the texts produced by such authoritative bodies. The second tactic adopted by the OIC was articulation of the global legitimate discourses of the West with acts of Islamophobia. One of these discourses was the fight against terrorism and the maintenance of global security. It was argued that Islamophobia fostered exclusion of Muslim populations from mainstream society as a result of discrimination and harassment. This weakened the identification of the Muslims with their adopted

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52 Ibid., p. 8.

53 Ibid., p. 8.

54 Ibid., p. 26.

55 Ibid., p. 26.

country and rendered them easy preys for terrorist recruitment.<sup>56</sup> The second legitimate discourse that OIC took advantage of was that of human rights. Especially in the 3rd monitoring report, OIC adopted a human rights framework to combat Islamophobia.<sup>57</sup> This meant, on the one hand, mobilization of international human rights legislation to combat attacks on Islam and definition of the problem as an abuse of human rights. On the other hand, the new framework pointed out to the OIC strategy of carrying Islamophobia to human right venues like the Human Rights Council. In this context, the OIC came to define Islamophobia as a hate crime and took initiatives to ban this through anti-blasphemy legislation.<sup>58</sup> In recent years, the OIC expanded its utilization of human rights framework to combat Islamophobia. As a result of the initiatives the organization, in 2011, the 16th session of the Human Rights Council of the United Nations adopted the Resolution 16/18 which called on the states to take necessary precautions to prevent the discrimination of persons on the basis of religion.

The OIC's adopted task of combating against Islamophobia was a challenge for the organization. Until the mid-2000s, the OIC was not a very active international body. For instance, it began to liaise with other international organizations and NGOs only very recently, mainly under its new Secretary General, Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu. Its toolbox was very much limited to declarations and extraordinary summits. In addition to these challenges, the OIC was combating Islamophobia in the Western countries where for many freedom of expression had to be interpreted broadly. In other words, it was trying to make a case of human rights to a group of states who saw themselves as the pioneers of human rights and democratic governance. The freedom of expression issue also limited its options in terms of combating Islamophobia through legal means of blasphemy laws.

In the face of these challenges, the OIC had to adopt a strategy that synthesized disciplinary and liberal techniques of government. The monitoring practices of the OIC were explained above. The liberal aspect of the OIC's anti-Islamophobia program was based on the

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p. 13.

<sup>57</sup> OIC, *3rd OIC Observatory Report on Islamophobia (May 2009 to April 2010)*, [http://www.oic-oci.org/uploads/file/Islamophobia/2010/en/Islamophobia\\_rep\\_May\\_22\\_5\\_2010.pdf](http://www.oic-oci.org/uploads/file/Islamophobia/2010/en/Islamophobia_rep_May_22_5_2010.pdf), 2010, (accessed on January 5, 2011).

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, pp. 22-24.

governance of Western populations through awareness raising and dialogue. The OIC constituted Western subjects as essentially liberal subjects and sought to conduct their behavior by influencing their mode of self-government. This entailed the exercise of “freedom of expression... linked with a sense of responsibility”.<sup>59</sup> The liberal subjects could not be constrained from the outside with penalties and similar measures. As long as the Islamophobic acts were considered as expressions of opinion but not discrimination of persons on the basis of religion, legal intervention in the issues was not possible. However, their conduct could be modified by instilling a sense of responsibility in them. This responsibility entailed not only the recognition of Muslims’ religious identity but also an awareness of the repercussions of the individual acts for global peace and security. This awareness should be created through training, education and intercultural dialogue. The OIC argued that one of the tasks were to: “Revise educational syllabi at all levels on both sides, particularly in key disciplines such as history, philosophy, social and human sciences with the aim of presenting a balanced view of other cultures and civilizations”.<sup>60</sup>

The OIC hoped that discrimination and harassment of Muslims could be prevented through the dissemination of accurate knowledge of Islam. The OIC aimed to do this, not through direct government of the Western populations by international legislation but through an intervention in the education of Western subjects. In this way, the OIC hoped to secure the self-government of Western subjects in line with intercultural understanding.

Another tactic of liberal governance of Western subjectivities was cooperation with the media. The OIC saw the latter’s coverage of Islam and Muslims in a negative light as one of the causes of rise of Islamophobia. In line with this, in 2007, a workshop was organized by the OIC in Azerbaijan. “Political leaders, academics, media personalities, international organizations, and representatives of leading NGOs and civil society participated in that Conference”.<sup>61</sup> In this workshop, the OIC sought to influence those active in the formation

59 OIC, *2nd OIC Observatory Report on Islamophobia (June 2008 to April 2009)*, [http://www.oic-oci.org/uploads/file/Islamphobia/Islamphobia\\_rep\\_May\\_23\\_25\\_2009.pdf](http://www.oic-oci.org/uploads/file/Islamphobia/Islamphobia_rep_May_23_25_2009.pdf), 2009, (accessed on January 5, 2011), p. 4.

60 Ibid., p. 30.

61 OIC, *The updated Report of the OIC Observatory on Islamophobia to the 35th Session of The Council of Foreign Ministers for the Period of May 2007-May 2008*, p. 23.

of opinion in the West. The logic was that if these personalities and institutions could be enrolled to the anti-Islamophobia project, the problem of discrimination and harassment of Muslims and attacks on Islam could be reduced. In this workshop, too, the participants were encouraged to exercise their freedom of expression responsibly. In the Western and Muslim Countries' Forum in Astana in 2008, the OIC furthered this agenda of responsabilization by calling on the journalists to establish a group "to act as advocates for promoting the inter-civilizational dialogue".<sup>62</sup>

### Concluding Remarks

This paper brings a radical empirical perspective on the activities of those who sought to counter Islamophobia. My objective was not to "deconstruct" Islamophobia by exposing its instabilities as a concept. Rather I treated Islamophobia as a mobile "token" that was taken up by multiple actors in various ways. Each adoption of the term Islamophobia did not necessarily mean that the original meaning of the term found in early 20th century was carried forward by new agents. On the contrary, each adoption meant a transformation in the term itself and in its networks. The way Edward Said employed the term was highly different than the way Runnymede Trust did. When the latter took up Islamophobia, it translated it into a concept of anti-racism and multiculturalism and established links with media, government, housing authorities, municipalities, etc. In Runnymede's rendering, Islamophobia was something to be taken into consideration when public funds were being distributed or decisions on urban housing made. The OIC translated it into an issue of geopolitical significance and linked it with discourses of human rights, anti-terrorism, and civilizations. Throughout these modifications, actors alternatively came to emphasize racial and religious aspects of Islamophobia.

While following these translations, I have also demonstrated the programmatic character of anti-Islamophobic activities. These efforts did not merely wish to stop or suppress Islamophobia. They endeavored to accomplish this through different means. While the Runnymede Trust imagined a multicultural society where different identities expressed themselves freely while respecting the other,

<sup>62</sup> OIC, "About OIC," [http://www.oic-un.org/about\\_oic.asp](http://www.oic-un.org/about_oic.asp), 2009, p. 43 (accessed on January 5, 2011).

the EUMC constituted a geography where different manifestations of Islamophobia could be linked. The OIC, on the other hand imagined a civilizational space of co-existence in peace. While the Runnymede prioritized policy making and sought to liaise with pro-multiculturalism groups, the OIC engaged with governments, diplomats and international organizations.

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# The Institutionalization of Islam in Europe and the Diyanet: The Case of Austria

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## Abstract

The management of religious diversity has become one of the most significant issues facing European societies in the last few decades. The increasing use of religion as an instrument of immigration policies in Europe since the late 1980s has led to various trajectories of institutionalization of Islam in European countries. In an increasing number of cases, institutionalization of Islam entails, among other things, the establishment of Muslim representative institutions. On the other hand, as it has transformed itself, since the early 1980s, from a domestic instrument of control over religion to an external instrument to consolidate national unity among indigenous or immigrant Turkish communities beyond its borders, the organizations linked to the Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs (the Diyanet) has become an important actor in various Muslim representative institutions in Europe. This article examines the case of the institutionalization of Islam in Austria with a particular focus on the role of the Diyanet in the Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich-IGGiÖ (Islamic Religious Community in Austria). An analysis of the Diyanet's role in and its perception of the institutionalization of Islam in Austria demonstrates both the advantages and difficulties that the Diyanet faces in promoting 'Turkish Islam' in Europe.

**Keywords:** Institutionalization, Islam, Austria, Turkey, Diyanet

## Avrupa'da İslam'ın Kurumsallaşması ve Diyanet: Avusturya Örneği

### Özet

Dini çeşitliliğin yönetimi meselesi son birkaç on yıldır Avrupa toplumlarının en önemli gündem maddelerinden biri olmuştur. Avrupa ülkelerinde 1980'lerden beri dinin göç politikalarında gittikçe artan bir şekilde bir siyaset aracı olarak kullanılması İslam'ın farklı kurum-

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sallaşma biçimlerine yol açmıştır. Kurumsallaşma pek çok durumda aynı zamanda ve artarak Müslüman temsil kuruluşları kurulması anlamına gelmektedir. Öte yandan, içerde kullanılan bir kontrol aracı olmanın yanısıra Türkiye'nin sınırları ötesinde, özellikle Türkiye kökenli göçmen toplumlarındaki milli birliği güçlendirmeyi amaçlayan bir dış kontrol aracı haline de gelen Diyanet, kendisine bağlı kuruluşlar aracılığı ile Avrupa'daki Müslüman kuruluşlarında önemli bir aktör oldu. Bu makale, Avusturya'da İslam'ın kurumsallaşmasını, özellikle de Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft-IGGiÖ'de (Avusturya İslam Dini Toplumu) Diyanet'in rolünü incelemektedir. Diyanet'in Avusturya'da İslam'ın kurumsallaşmasındaki rolü ve bu sürece bakışı Diyanet'in Avrupa'da 'Türk İslamı'nın sponsorluğunu yaparken sahip olduğu avantajları ve aynı zamanda karşılaştığı zorlukları örnekleme açısından önemlidir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İslam, kurumsallaşma, Avusturya, Türkiye, Diyanet

## النظام المؤسسي للإسلام في أوروبا ورئاسة الشؤون الدينية : النمسا نموذجاً زانا جيتاك أيتورك

### الملخص :

إن قضية ادارة التنوع الديني اوضحت في العقود الأخيرة من السنين واحدة من أهم الموضوعات التي تتناولها المجتمعات الأوروبية. إن استغلال الدين كأداة سياسية في مجال سياسات الهجرة، والتمتامي منذ التسعينات من القرن العشرين في البلدان الأوروبية فتح المجال لتكوين أشكال متباينة للمؤسسات الإسلامية. ويعني مفهوم النظام المؤسسي – غالباً- زيادة تشكيل المؤسسات التي تمثل المسلمين ومن ناحية اخرى، فان رئاسة الشؤون الدينية، بجانب كونها تستعمل كأداة للرقابة في داخل تركيا، فانها اوضحت أيضاً أداة رقابة خارجية في خارج حدود تركيا تهدف الى تقوية الوحدة القومية لدى المهاجرين من أصل تركي، فأوضحت بذلك أداة فاعلة مهمة لدى المؤسسات التي تمثل المسلمين في أوروبا. ويتولى هذا المقال دراسة وتمحيص نظام المؤسسات الإسلامية في النمسا، وبصورة خاصة دراسة دور رئاسة الشؤون الدينية في «المجتمع الإسلامي في النمسا» (Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft-IGGiÖ). إن دور رئاسة الشؤون الدينية في نظام المؤسسات الإسلامية في النمسا ونظرتها الى هذه العملية، مهم جداً لكي تصبح هذه المؤسسة نموذجاً بما تملكه من امكانيات وما تواجهه من مصاعب عندما تقوم برعاية "الإسلام التركي" في أوروبا.

**كلمات مفتاحية :** الإسلام، المؤسساتية، النمسا، تركيا، رئاسة الشؤون الدينية.

The management of religious diversity has become one of the most significant issues facing European societies in the last few decades. The increasing use of religion as an instrument of immigration policies in Europe since the late 1980s has led to various trajectories of institutionalization of Islam in European countries. Defined broadly as the accommodation and recognition of the religious rights and practices of Muslims within the framework of the established church and state relations models in Europe, institutionalization of Islam involves in many cases the establishment of Muslim representative institutions. On the other hand, the Turkish government, too, has extended its long standing use of its Directorate of Religious Affairs (the Diyanet hereafter)<sup>1</sup> from a domestic instrument of control over religion to an external instrument to consolidate national unity among indigenous or immigrant Turkish communities beyond its borders. The transnational dimension of this use of religion replicated almost exactly the Diyanet's domestic mission and activities. In Europe, as in Turkey, the Diyanet aims at providing religious services, 'enlightening' people about 'true religion', and demonstrating that Islam is compatible with democracy and modernity. It also promotes a version of Islam that is still rooted in Turkishness, and one that is perceived as a source of national unity. While the Diyanet has been actively engaged in various processes of institutionalization of Islam in different European countries, its aim of promoting 'Turkish Islam' in Europe creates a dynamic of tension when faced with official governmental initiatives to create European Muslims.

This article will examine the case of the institutionalization of Islam in Austria with a particular focus on the role of the *Diyanet* in the *Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich-IGGiÖ* (Islamic Religious Community in Austria). The Austrian case is important for a number of reasons: First, while many other European countries such as Spain, Belgium, France and Germany have engaged in establishing various kinds of Muslim representative bodies<sup>2</sup> only in

1 For the Diyanet, see İřtar Gzaydın , *Diyanet: Trkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Dinin Tanzimi* (İstanbul: İletiřim Yayınları, 2009); İřtar B. Gzaydın, "Diyanet and Politics", *The Muslim World*, Vol.98, No.2-3, 2008, pp. 216-227; İsmail Kara, *Cumhuriyet Trkiyesi'nde Bir Mesele Olarak İslam* (İstanbul: Dergh Yayınları, 2008); Amit Bein, *Ottoman Ulema Turkish Republic: Agents of Change and Guardians of Tradition* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

2 For the institutionalization of Islam and establishment of Muslim representative bodies, please see Silvio Ferrari, "The Secularity of the State and the Shaping of Muslim Representative Organizations" in Jocelyne Csari and Sean McLoughlin (eds.), *European Muslims and the Secular State*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 11-23; Veit Bader, (ed.), "Governing Islam in Western Europe: Essays on the Governance of Religious Diversity", Special issue, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol.33, No.6, 2007, pp.871-1016; Brigitte Marchal,

the 1990s, IGGiÖ was established in 1979, the first of its kind long before the challenge of religious diversity pressed itself on many European societies. This, as this article shows below, was due to the historical legacy of a multi-cultural Austro-Hungarian Empire. Secondly, as many scholars have observed, Austria is interesting also for the paradoxical nature of the intertwined relationship between immigration and governance of religious diversity. While the immigrant integration policies of the Austrian state are very restrictive, its policies of religious accommodation are exceptionally inclusive.<sup>3</sup> Thirdly, although the Diyanet, as in many other European countries, has been the largest Muslim association in Austria, the main Diyanet-linked umbrella organization of mosques, ATIB-*Avusturya Türk İslam Birliđi* (Turkish-Islamic Union in Austria), remained outside of IGGiÖ until recently, with no representatives in it, though this situation has changed recently. IGGiÖ is in fact headed, since 2011, by a president, Fuat Sanaç, who is an affiliate of the Milli Görüş, another Turkish-Muslim network.<sup>4</sup> This situation stands in sharp contrast to the Muslim representative bodies in France (*Conseil Français du Culte Musulman-CFCM*) or in Belgium (*L'Exécutif des Musulmans de Belgique-EMB*) in which the Diyanet-led Turkish associations can be said to have secured a disproportionately high significance and representation.

This paper will first examine the institutionalization of Islam in Austria and what role the Diyanet-linked ATIB plays within this process, as well as the current transformations in the attitude of ATIB towards IGGiÖ, based on field research in Turkey and Austria conducted between March and June 2009, including interviews with Diyanet officials and representatives of other Turkish-Muslim associations as well as Austrian government.

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“Mosques, Organizations and Leadership” in Brigitte Maréchal, Stefano Allievi, Felice Dassetto and Jorgen Nielsen (eds.), *Muslims in Enlarged Europe*, (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp.151-82; Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Tyler Golson, “Overhauling Islam: Representation, Construction, and Cooption of ‘Moderate Islam’ in Western Europe”, *Journal of Church and State*, Vol. 49, Summer 2007, pp. 487–515.

- 3 Julia Mourão Permoser and Sieglinde Rosenberger, “Religious Citizenship versus Policies of Immigrant Integration: The Case of Austria” in Paul Bramadat and Matthias Koenig (eds.), *International Migration and the Governance of Religious Diversity*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009).
- 4 Milli Görüş (National Outlook) is a political Islamist movement of Turkish origin, with intimate links to the line of political Islamist movement and line of political parties, led by Necmettin Erbakan.

## Institutionalization of Islam and Austria

According to the 2001 Census, there were approximately 335.000 Muslims, constituting 4.2 % of the Austrian population (335.000).<sup>5</sup> The estimates for 2009 are 500.000 Muslims, or 6% of the population.<sup>6</sup> Turks make up the largest group, more than one third, while the Bosnian Muslims are the second largest group.<sup>7</sup> About half of the Muslim community have Austrian citizenship.<sup>8</sup> Austrian Muslim community is predominantly Sunni; Shi'is and Alevis constitute the second and third largest groups.<sup>9</sup> Although most Austrian Muslims are of immigrant origin, Austria's encounter with Islam and Muslims is relatively old, going back to 1878, that is, the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina from the Ottoman Empire, and the eventual annexation of these territories in 1908.<sup>10</sup>

It is, therefore, possible to talk about three historical turning points in the emergence of a Muslim community in Austria: The first is, as mentioned previously, the annexation of predominantly Muslim-majority Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The second is the wave of labor force originating mainly from Turkey in the 1960s. While the flow of guestworkers was discontinued in 1970s, Muslim community of immigrant origin continued to grow with family reunification after this date. The third is the arrival of a large number of Bosnian refugees fleeing from the war in Yugoslavia in the 1990s.<sup>11</sup> While the disintegration of a multi-national Austro-Hungarian Empire left few Muslims in the emerging Austrian nation-state, the imperial legacy manifested itself in various laws dating back from the empire and proved to be a juridical legacy for the eventual institutionalization of Islam and a Muslim community in Austria.

5 Sabine Kroissenbrunner, "Islam and Muslim Immigrants in Austria: Socio-Political Networks and Muslim Leadership of Turkish Immigrants", *Immigrants and Minorities*, Vol.22, No.2&3, 2003, p. 188; Nora Gresch et al., "Tu Felix Austria? The Headscarf and the Politics of 'Non-issues'" *Social Politics*, Vol.15, No.4, 2008, pp. 411-432.

6 Thomas Schmidinger, "Austria" in Samim Akgönül et al., (eds.), *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe*, Vol. 4 (Leiden and Boston: E.J.Brill, 2012), p. 28.

7 Kroissenbrunner, "Islam and Muslim Immigrants in Austria", p. 188.

8 Schmidinger, "Austria", p. 28.

9 Permoser and Rosenberger, "Religious Citizenship versus Policies of Immigrant Integration", p. 260.

10 Ibid, p. 259; and Schmidinger, "Austria", p.27.

11 Permoser and Rosenberger, "Religious Citizenship versus Policies of Immigrant Integration", p. 260.

Established in 1979, IGGiÖ has been the first Muslim representative authority of national scope in Western Europe, long before such recent examples as *Comisión Islámica de España* (1992), *L'Exécutif des Musulmans de Belgique* (1999) and *Conseil Français du Culte Musulman-CFCM* in France (2003).<sup>12</sup> In the case of Austria, unlike in Spain, Belgium, Germany or France, it is above all the imperial legacy, and not immigration, that made possible this official institutionalization. While the demands of Muslims in Austria for the establishment of a Muslim representative body started in the 1960s, as a result of the influx of migrant workers from predominantly Muslim countries, under the leadership of the Bosnian Muslims (Muslim Social Service), these demands themselves were based on the Law of Recognition from 1874 and the Islam Law of 1912.<sup>13</sup> While the former brought the general standards for the recognition of a religion or a religious community by the state and the principle of equal treatment of all recognized religions, the latter extended this recognition to Islam in 1912, with the annexation of Bosnia Herzegovina by the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1908. Combined, the two laws make the state-religion relationship an “inclusionary” one,<sup>14</sup> which entails the inclusion of all recognized religions in the public realm.

Thus, the establishment of the IGGiÖ in 1979 was a natural result of the Austrian legal structure of church and state relations and the historical legacy of an imperial policy.<sup>15</sup> As such, IGGiÖ has acquired the status of public corporation<sup>16</sup> like other religions, which is accompanied by some rights and privileges. These include first material rights, such as the financing of religious instruction in schools with the state salaried religion teachers all the while leaving the IGGiÖ the autonomy to design the curriculum as well as to

12 Other well-known examples are *Contactorgaan Moslims en Overheid* (CMO) (2004) in Netherlands, and *Consulta Islamica Italiana* (2004) in Italy. The *Deutsche Islamkonferenz* (DIK) (2006), as a platform of dialogue between the representatives of the Muslim community and the German government should also be included within the framework of institutionalization of Islam in Europe.

13 W. Wieshaider, “The Legal Status of the Muslim Minority in Austria” in R. Aluffi and G. Zincone, G., (eds.), *The Legal Treatment of Islamic Minorities in Europe*, (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), p. 31; Permoser and Rosenberger, “Religious Citizenship versus Policies of Immigrant Integration”, pp. 264-265, 278.

14 Julia Mourão Permoser, Sieglinde Rosenberger and Kristina Stoeckl, “Religious Organizations as Political Actors in the Context of Migration: Islam and Orthodoxy in Austria”, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol.36, No.9, 2010, pp. 1463-1481.

15 Kroisenbrunner, “Islam and Muslim Immigrants in Austria”, pp.191-192; Wieshaider, “The Legal Status of the Muslim Minority in Austria”, p. 31.

16 Wieshaider, “The Legal Status of the Muslim Minority in Austria”, p.37.

hire, train and supervise the religion teachers.<sup>17</sup> Thus, instruction of Muslim religion in schools began in 1982-1983 and since 1998-1999, an Islamic Pedagogical Academy (IRPA) was established in 1998-1999 for the training of religion teachers. Secondly, also political rights emanate from the recognition of Islam and IGGiÖ as the representative of the Muslim community in the form of political consultation in the policy-making process in relation to issues concerning religion.<sup>18</sup>

Officially, IGGiÖ became the representative of the whole Austrian Muslim community as it was recognized by the bureau of religions (*Kultusamt*) of the Austrian Ministry of Culture and Education. However, this official monopoly has been challenged by a variety of factors: IGGiÖ can be said to represent a very small percentage of Muslims in Austria. In 2011 elections, a mere 5% of all Muslims were eligible to vote due to age, record of payment of registration fees or residency requirement for voting. At the same time, the growing diversity within the Muslim community has led to various demands on the part of some Muslims, most notably the Alevis, for official recognition of their community as a religious community on equal footing with the IGGiÖ.<sup>19</sup> Lastly, as in the case of Diyanet-linked ATIB, IGGiÖ's claim of monopoly of representation has traditionally made the ATIB uncomfortable, as the latter emphasizes the significance of ethnic weight of Turks.<sup>20</sup>

As such, though not the only one, IGGiÖ has certainly established itself as the most important actor in relation to questions and issues related to Islam<sup>21</sup> and claims, despite various challenges, to be the only interlocutor for the Austrian state in matters related to Islam and Muslim community. There are several reasons for the centrality of the IGGiÖ: First, the Austrian legal structure allows only the representative body of a recognized religious community the rights and privileges that accompany the recognition. Thus, other Muslim

17 Permoser and Rosenberger, "Religious Citizenship versus Policies of Immigrant Integration", p. 271.

18 Ibid.

19 One success for official recognition has been obtained by one Alevi association, which is now recognized as *Religiöse Bekenntnisgemeinschaft*, which entails fewer privileges than that of "public corporation" but which nevertheless brings an official status. Schmidinger, "Austria", pp.29-30.

20 Author's interviews with ATIB officials, Vienna, June 2009.

21 Kroisenbrunner, "Islam and Muslim Immigrants in Austria", p. 200; Permoser and Rosenberger, "Religious Citizenship versus Policies of Immigrant Integration", p. 273.

associations and organizations are dependent on the IGGiÖ for the recruitment of religion teachers and issuing of visas for the imams, except for ATIB which, on the basis of a special treaty between the Austrian and Turkish governments, can recruit its imams on its own.<sup>22</sup> In the same way, the political consultation in the policy-making process recognizes only IGGiÖ, hence making this body as *the* partner for the Austrian government in its relations with the Muslim community.

Secondly, representation in the IGGiÖ is based on individual membership, unlike other Muslim organizations which are quite often of ethnic nature. This means that even though, according to the Austrian law, all Muslims are natural members of the Muslim community and can thus benefit from all the services provided by the IGGiÖ, representation, in terms of right to elect and to be elected, is reserved for 'registered members' only.<sup>23</sup> The principle of individual membership also limits associational membership in that various Muslim associations are represented only in the Advisory Council, and not in the Shu'ra Council, the legislative organ or the Highest Council, the executive body.<sup>24</sup>

Thirdly, because the Muslim community of Austria is predominantly an immigrant community, consisting of non-citizens or citizens of immigrant origin, and because the majority of immigrants are Muslim, the IGGiÖ has become also an organization representing immigrants, concerned with immigration-related issues.<sup>25</sup> Given the restrictive immigration policy of Austria<sup>26</sup> with rigorous standards for the acquisition of citizenship and which limits political rights such as voting and standing for elections to citizens only, political representation becomes possible almost only through religious organizations. Thus, both the state and the Muslim immigrants find in IGGiÖ a vehicle for dialogue.<sup>27</sup>

22 Kroisenbrunner, "Islam and Muslim Immigrants in Austria", p. 196.

23 Author's interview with Amina Baghajati, Member of the Shu'ra Council of the IGGiÖ, Vienna, 15 June 2009.

24 Kroisenbrunner, "Islam and Muslim Immigrants in Austria", p. 193.

25 Permoser, Rosenberger and Stoeckl, "Religious Organizations as Political Actors in the Context of Migration", pp. 1466, 1469.

26 For an analysis of the contrast between a restrictive immigration policy and a pluralistic and generous policy of religious accommodation, see Permoser ad Rosenberger, "Religious Citizenship versus Policies of Immigrant Integration", pp. 259-289.

27 The IGGiÖ, like other religious organizations, was consulted by the government in 2007 within the framework of *Integrationsplattform* to formulate new policies in relation to im-

Besides these what can be called as legal/structural reasons, there are also more contingent reasons for the central role played by the IGGiÖ: The process of Europeanization has transformed the role of the IGGiÖ. First, there has been a broadening of the issues subject to political consultation. Hence, IGGiÖ has been increasingly solicited for its mediating role in a wider number of issues.<sup>28</sup> Different governments, including the Austrian one, have found it valuable to demonstrate their respective form of religious governance as a model for the rest of Europe.<sup>29</sup> In doing that, the Austrian authorities have increasingly resorted to the consultation with the IGGiÖ. Secondly, rather than traditionally an almost always government-initiated political consultation process, one could increasingly see IGGiÖ taking the first step in initiating dialogue with the government in order to influence, in its turn, the values of what can be called as an emergent 'European Islam'. Hence, the activism of the IGGiÖ in relation to the question of headscarf, which emerged in 2004, can be understood within this framework.<sup>30</sup>

### The *Diyanet* and the IGGiÖ

As immigrant workers came to Austria in 1960s and 1970s mainly from Turkey, the immigrant community of Austria consists overwhelmingly of Turks, constituting the largest group within the Muslim community – about one third. Established in 1990 ATIB,<sup>31</sup> in turn, represents the largest cluster of mosques within the Turkish community, again, about one third of all the Turkish mosques<sup>32</sup> or some 62 mosque associations,<sup>33</sup> as opposed to about 26 of Milli Görüş and some unknown number of Islamic Cultural Center

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migration. Permoser, Rosenberger and Stoeckl, "Religious Organizations as Political Actors in the Context of Migration", p. 1470.

28 Permoser, Rosenberger and Stoeckl, "Religious Organizations as Political Actors in the Context of Migration", pp. 1467-1468. A good example is when the IGGiÖ was consulted by the Commission established by the EU on the assessment of the needs to implement sanctions against Austria following Haider's anti-Semitic and xenophobic right wing party joining the ruling coalition in 2000. Ibid.

29 The two conferences of imams in 2003 and 2006, the latter during the Austrian presidency of the EU, organized by the Austrian government can be seen as an example of this attitude. Ibid., p. 1471.

30 For the activism of IGGiÖ in the headscarf issue, see Gresch, Hadj-Abdou, Rosenberger and Sauer, "Tu Felix Austria?", pp. 1-22) and E. Holzleithner and Sabine Strasser, "Troublesome Issues: Current Debates on Tensions between Gender Equality and Cultural Diversity in Austria", Working paper node cmc. (2006), pp. 6-7.

31 [www.atib-hohenems.at](http://www.atib-hohenems.at). (accessed 19.12.2008),

32 Kroisenbrunner, "Islam and Muslim Immigrants in Austria", p. 195.

33 Author's interview with an ATIB official, Vienna, 17 June 2009.

(Süleymançı).<sup>34</sup> Despite its importance within the Muslim community, ATIB remained aloof from IGGiÖ for a long time. The legal status of IGGiÖ as the representative of the whole Muslim community as well as IGGiÖ's own claim to represent the Muslims of Austria have been challenged, until recently, also by the striking absence of ATIB in this institution until June 2011 elections.

The status of public corporation gives the IGGiÖ all the due rights and privileges. This limits the political consultation between the government and the Muslim community to the mediating role of IGGiÖ only, hence excluding other Muslim associations although these associations of different ethnic groups or religious tendencies still are more important at the local level than IGGiÖ.<sup>35</sup> While this may be, however, true for all organizations including ATIB, the latter's particular absence, until the adoption of a new constitution in 2010, in IGGiÖ has been the result of IGGiÖ's pre-2010 constitution, limiting the representation of any ethnic group to at most 30% of the High Council (four seats)<sup>36</sup> no matter what the size of a given ethnic community is. This explains the disfavoured representation of Muslim Turks as a whole in this institution. On this, ATIB has fundamentally disagreed with IGGiÖ and has considered such a condition and form of representation, based on individual membership at the expense of ethnic/demographic representation as 'anti-democratic',<sup>37</sup> resulting in its self-isolation for a long time.

ATIB has also been disturbed by the increasing monopoly of IGGiÖ in the recruitment of religion teachers as well as imams. While ATIB can still recruit religion teachers from Turkey through some bilateral agreements signed between the Austrian and Turkish governments, it has disapproved of Islamic Pedagogical Academy's theological education of religion teachers. ATIB does not see this education as qualified as the theological education of religion teachers coming from Turkey.<sup>38</sup> Again, in terms of the recruitment of imams, ATIB has

34 The chair of the ICC gives the number of ICC mosques as 45. Author's interview with the ICC representative, Vienna, 18 June 2009. As Kroisenbrunner also suggests, this number seems exaggerated. Kroisenbrunner, "Islam and Muslim Immigrants in Austria", p. 199. *Süleymançılık* is an Islamic order established by Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan.

35 Ibid., p. 198.

36 Ibid., p. 196 and Author's interview with Amina Baghajati, Member of the Shu'ra Council of the IGGiÖ, Vienna, 15 June 2009.

37 Author's interview with an ATIB official, Vienna, 17 June 2009.

38 Kroisenbrunner, "Islam and Muslim Immigrants in Austria", p. 196. In the same way, IGGiÖ argues that religion teachers coming from Turkey are ill-qualified to teach as their language ability in German is rather limited. Ibid.

been uneasy of IGGiÖ's issuing of certificates and visas for imams coming from Turkey outside the Diyanet ticket. In fact, most Milli Görüş and Süleymancı imams have been recruited from Turkey by IGGiÖ certifying them and issuing visas. For ATIB, most of those imams recruited outside the Diyanet ticket have a religious education –from various religious centers in the Arab world such as Al-Azhar<sup>39</sup> - not compatible with the kind of Islam as the Diyanet has claimed to represent.

In that, ATIB is similar to other Diyanet-linked organisations in European countries in its claim to represent 'Turkish Islam', defined as harmonious with modernity and democracy, with a potential of presenting a model for the emergent 'European Islam'.<sup>40</sup> According to an official of the ATIB, there are in fact three understandings of Islam in the world: the understanding of Turkey, the Iranian one and the Salafi one represented by Saudi Arabia.<sup>41</sup> The Diyanet-linked organizations such as ATIB or DITIBs or Diyanet foundations thus try to monopolize the Turkish representation, as they consider themselves the rightful representative of a rational and moderate Islam of the secular Turkish state. Diyanet's self-image is also one of an institution that has proved itself in carrying out religious services, which makes it uncomparable to other institutions in terms of historical experience.<sup>42</sup> Thus, the Diyanet, both in terms of its understanding of religion and its institutional mission and capability, claims to be the true representative of Turkish people as well as an institutional model for European countries in their search for accommodating Islam in their existing state-religion structures.

It can be said that the Diyanet has both advantages and disadvantages in its claim to monopolize Turkish representation in Europe in general and in Austria, in particular. On the one hand, the Diyanet's position is one of embracing everyone as it claims to stand above

39 Ibid, p. 202. In fact, in Europe, including Austria, Milli Görüş recruits its imams in an important number from among the former Diyanet employees. As for the Süleymancı, Kroisenbrunner notes that they only recruit imams trained in their own religious training institutions. Ibid., pp. 202-203.

40 For an example of a similar attitude, see Zana Çitak, "Between 'Turkish Islam' and 'French Islam': The Role of the *Diyanet* in the *Conseil Français du Culte Musulman*", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 36, No.4, April 2010, p. 619-634.

41 Author's interview with an ATIB official, Vienna, 17 June 2009.

42 For a study of the Diyanet's self-image, see Zana Çitak, "D'acteur national à transnational: La Diyanet en Europe", *Cahiers de l'Obtic*, No.2, December 2012, pp.9-14. www.obtic.org.

all political ideologies and sects.<sup>43</sup> At the same time, it also appeals to the not very religious people, those who only seek for a minimum level of religious service.<sup>44</sup> The Diyanet-linked organizations like ATIB bring also the financial and organizational support of the state,<sup>45</sup> and hence preserving continuity.<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, however, this organic link of ATIB with the Diyanet, and hence, the Turkish state has led to a strongly entrenched and widespread image of the ATIB as an organization of the Turkish state. Thus, one could talk about a certain suspicion and fear on the part of both the other Turkish associations as well as non-Turkish associations that ATIB would act like the official spokesperson of the Turkish state in what is seen as an Austrian institution. At the same time, while other Turkish associations such as Milli Görüş and ICC have to train and mobilize their followers in order to survive, ATIB lacks in mobilization as it relies on the continuity of the state as a symbolic power and state support as material power.<sup>47</sup>

Recently, ATIB has changed its long-standing self-isolation from IGGiÖ. It thus decided to actively participate in IGGiÖ by taking part in the 2011 elections. It even supported the election of an affiliate of Milli Görüş, Mr. Fuat Sanaç as the president of the IGGiÖ. This recent change in ATIB's long-standing attitude was due, according to a Diyanet official, to an increasing recognition by the Diyanet that isolation leads to a loss of any chance for shaping crucial processes which are under the legal monopoly of IGGiÖ due to Austrian constitution, such as designing the curriculum of religion courses in schools. At the same time, through negotiations, ATIB has also succeeded in changing that provision of IGGiÖ's constitution limiting the representation of any group to one third of the seats of the Highest Council to half of the seats, which ATIB considers as an incomplete but nevertheless considerable improvement from the previous 'anti-democratic' situation.<sup>48</sup> In fact, it seems like the Diyanet has markedly come to a realization that IGGiÖ is constitutionally the only interlocutor for the Austrian state and that it might have

43 Author's interview with an ATIB official, Vienna, 17 June 2009.

44 Author's interview with an official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Austria, Vienna, 18 June 2009.

45 Nicole Landman, "Sustaining Turkish-Islamic Loyalties: The Diyanet in Western Europe" in H. Poulton, H. and Taji-Farouki, S. (eds) *Muslim Identity and the Balkan State*, (London: Hurst & Company, 1997), pp. 214-231.

46 Author's interview with the president of a Turkish organization, Vienna, 16 June 2009.

47 Author's interviews, Vienna, June 2009.

48 Author's interview with an ATIB official, Vienna, 17 June 2009.

been a mistake to remain outside for such a long time. In fact, one interviewee stated that while the Diyanet used to think that “without Turks, nothing is possible”, it has realized that IGGiÖ can exist without it.<sup>49</sup> It is also aware of its image as the official representative of the Turkish state. In this context, one interviewee stated in relation to the representation of ATIB in IGGiÖ that “[it is true that] we don’t need a second ATIB after all”.<sup>50</sup> In that, ATIB also tried to smoothen its image and eliminate the fears of other Turks in particular and Muslims in general that it wants to dominate the IGGiÖ and hence emphasized that the new president after the elections does not have to be an ATIB member, but hopefully a person of Turkish origin.<sup>51</sup> This compromising attitude itself, however, reflected ATIB’s caution that if it were to insist on an ATIB candidate, it might not get the support of the rest due to the image of the Diyanet. In other words, ATIB did not want to undermine its own position.<sup>52</sup>

Similarly, Milli Görüş and ICC also point out that regarding the presidency of the new IGGiÖ, ability is more important than associational membership.<sup>53</sup> In emphasizing that an able Turkish candidate, no matter what his/her association might be, ATIB, Milli Görüş and ICC seemed to be more in solidarity with each other rather than in competition, in striking contrast to the situation in CFCM in France and the Exécutif in Belgium where competition especially between the Diyanet-linked organizations and Milli Görüş has been more explicit.<sup>54</sup> The impression of solidarity was reinforced also by their common emphases on the recent rapprochement among these different groups as in the example of the celebration of the Prophet’s Birth (*Kutlu Doğum Haftası*), which have been organized together by all three organizations or as when they underline the fact that they don’t mind going to one another’s mosques. Except for the ICC which does not refrain from putting accent on the existence of differences in their understanding and practice of Islam and the rest, there is also a deliberate effort to underplay any religious differences and to put on the forefront commonalities.<sup>55</sup>

49 Author’s interview with a an ATIB official, Vienna, 18 June 2009.

50 Author’s interview with an ATIB official, Vienna, 17 June 2009.

51 Author’s interview with an ATIB official, Vienna, 17 June 2009.

52 Author’s interview with an ATIB official, Vienna, 18 June 2009.

53 Author’s interviews, Vienna, June 2009.

54 Çitak, “Between ‘Turkish Islam’ and ‘French Islam’”, pp. 619-634; Zana Çitak, “Religion, Ethnicity and Transnationalism: Turkish Islam in Belgium”, *Journal of Church and State*, Vol.53, No.2, 2011, pp. 222-242.

55 Author’s interviews, Vienna, June 2009.

It is possible to explain this solidarity by two factors: In the first place, the Austrian legal structure, by prioritizing one single interlocutor in terms of rights and privileges, seems to suppress open competition. There is a recognition on the part of all three major Turkish organizations that they have to act with and within the IGGiÖ. In the words of one interviewee, “there is in fact nothing to gain or lose”<sup>56</sup> as the IGGiÖ has increasingly monopolized the field of religious instruction and, even to some extent, the recruitment of imams.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, one could only hope to have a greater influence in, for example, shaping the curriculum of religious instruction. In the second place, a factor related to Turkish domestic politics –the coming to power of the Justice and Development Party in 2002 with roots in the Milli Görüş movement— seems to have brought about a rapprochement,<sup>58</sup> similar, in fact, to that taking place in other European countries as well.<sup>59</sup>

## Conclusion

The study of the institutionalization of Islam in Austria highlights particularities of as well as similarities between different examples of institutionalization of Islam in Europe and of the Diyanet’s activism in these processes. As this article tries to show, the Austrian case demonstrates that the role of the Diyanet in the IGGiÖ as well as its perception of the institutionalization of Islam in Austria demonstrate that there are two main factors that determine this role and perception. First, the institutional structure of the church-state relations in Austria. Second, the Diyanet’s self-image and its willingness to promote a ‘Turkish Islam’, whose contours it traditionally has claimed to represent. In that, the Diyanet has both advantages and disadvantages. As this article has argued, on the one hand, its claim to represent an Islam compatible with modernity and democracy has an important appeal both for the Muslim community and the Austrian state. On the other hand, however, its official status becomes a liability in the Austrian context of promotion of an ‘Austrian Islam’.

56 Author’s interview with an Austrian state official, Vienna, 18 June 2009.

57 It can be said that ATIB has realized that it was wrong to believe that most Turkish pupils won’t follow religion classes in schools taught by non-Turkish teachers recruited by IGGiÖ as that did not happen. Author’s interview with an Austrian state official, Vienna, 18 June 2009.

58 Author’s interviews, Vienna, June 2009.

59 Çitak, “Religion, Ethnicity and Transnationalism”, p. 241.

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# BOOK REVIEW

## Our Last Best Chance: The Pursuit of Peace in a Time of Peril

King Abdullah II of Jordan, (New York: Viking,  
February 2011), 346 p.

Zeynep SÜTALAN\*

The book by King Abdullah II of Jordan is an autobiography which can be regarded as a follow-up of a family tradition in reference to the King Hussein's autobiography named *Uneasy Lies The Head*<sup>1</sup>. Like his father, King Abdullah has written the book in the tenth year of his reign. The book as an autobiography provides the reader with an insight into the King's life, including his childhood and adolescence, his marriage with Queen Rania, and his ascendance to throne after the death of King Hussein. At the very same time, the book is a political history since the King well portrays the national and regional dynamics as a background. In addition, despite his personal account, King Abdullah II devotes a significant portion of his book to his experience and thoughts about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Although the book was published just before the Arab Spring, and the King neither includes nor predicts the revolutionary changes of the Arab Spring, he gives a strong message about the urgent need to solve the Palestinian-Israeli question. This message could be no better timed than ever and is still relevant for the region which has changed considerably with the winds of the Arab Spring. In special reference to the King's reflections on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the book is worth reading in understanding the Middle East peace process and foreseeing its possible future.

The King attributes high importance to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that he underlines as a "political conflict over land and rights" rather than a religious struggle (p.xiii). According to the King, Palestinian-Israeli question lies at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict, but its impact is not limited to that. In contradiction to the Western approach that conceives the challenges in the Middle East like "Iranian expansionism, radical terrorism, sectarian tensions in Iraq and Lebanon and a long-festering conflict between Israel and the Palestinians" as separate issues, King Abdullah II views them as in-

<sup>1</sup> King Hussein, *Uneasy Lies The Head: The Autobiography By His Majesty King Hussein of Jordan*, (Bernard Geis Associates, 1962).

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terconnected through the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (p.xii). Besides, the King asserts that the persistence of the conflict is playing into the hands of the extremists, radicals and the terrorists. They manipulate the conflict for their own interests and try to justify their illegal acts in the eyes of the people by adopting the rhetoric of liberating Palestine, Jerusalem from the Israeli occupation and defending Islam. Therefore, he underlines that resolving the conflict with a just and lasting peace will deprive the extremists and terrorists from a tool for mobilization. It may not resolve every kind of extremism, but at least “transform the playing field”. Hence, the King says that establishing peace between Palestinians and Israelis should not only be an Arab, but also an American priority (p.xiv). Furthermore, for King Abdullah II, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, is not merely a regional issue, but is a global concern since it “resonates among all the world’s 1.5 billion Muslims” (p.xiii).

In addition to the significance of the Palestinian-Israeli question for the Middle Eastern regional context and dynamics, the conflict is an influential factor in the domestic and foreign policy of Jordan. According to the data of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine refugees, there are around 1.9 million registered refugees in Jordan.<sup>2</sup> However, this number does not include all Jordanians of Palestinian origin. Although King Abdullah II, in his book, states that the Palestinian population constitutes the 43 % of the Jordanian population, different research points out different numbers ranging from one half of the population to two third.<sup>3</sup> Whatever the reality about the demographics may be, the Palestinian population in Jordan has been viewed as a challenge to the *raison d’etat* of the Hashemite Kingdom by the Jordanians of East Bank origin and the regime. Such perception has fuelled by the argument advocated by the rightist Israeli politicians as ‘Jordan is Palestine’. The Hashemite regime has strongly opposed the argument. Nevertheless, Jordanian nationalists have started opposing the policies of providing the Palestinians in Jordan with citizenship and political rights. In order to appease the Jordanian nationalists in fear, the Hashemite regime promoted ‘Jordan First’ policy in 2002 which called for unity among the Jordanians for supporting

2 UNRWA, In Figures, as of 1 January 2013, available at [http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2012\\_0317152850.pdf](http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2012_0317152850.pdf)

3 For the discussion, see Mudar Zahran, “Jordan is Palestinian”, *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2012, pp. 3-12.

the regime in its policies.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, by signing the peace treaty with Israel in 1994, Jordan wanted to ensure its recognition as a sovereign state in the eyes of Israel and put an end to the claims of 'Jordan is Palestine'. After the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) entered into direct talks with Israel in 1993 with the Oslo process, and Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994, Jordan is no more a party to the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. However, the Hashemite Kingdom has vested interests in the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state and the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Therefore, it is fair to say that the development about the Palestinian-Israeli peace process has direct effects on the Jordanian public opinion and survival of the Hashemite regime.

When it comes to the failures in the peace process, King Abdullah II criticizes the past peace efforts by claiming that postponing the most difficult and problematic issues to a later date such as Jerusalem, refugees, borders and security, have not brought any benefits. Although this criticism has a right in it, it should be noted that the 'gradual approach to peace' has become the predominant paradigm that is applied to the entire Arab-Israeli conflict so far. The gradual approach, in its basic premises, means the breaking up of the Arab-Israeli conflict into 'negotiable pieces' on a step-by-step basis to peacemaking. When the complexity of the Arab-Israeli conflict is considered, adopting a gradual approach seems to be the most appropriate way of dealing with the conflict. However, the opponents of the gradual approach assert that it is buying time for Israel to continue settlements in the occupied territories as long as it delayed and in the end postponed the final-status talks in the Palestinian-Israeli track. Within this framework, the Jewish settlements issue turns out to be the biggest impediment in the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Since freezing the Jewish settlements in the occupied territories as a precondition to start negotiations has not been achieved, the road to progress for the resolution of the conflict has been blocked. In this respect, the King accuses Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for not keeping up with his commitments on peace and being excessively preoccupied with Iran rather than making peace with the Palestinians. For him, whereas Netanyahu is not a man of peace, Ariel Sharon was no better (p.196, 206).

<sup>4</sup> Beverly Milton-Edwards and Peter Hinchcliffe, *Jordan: A Hashemite Legacy*, Second Edition, (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp.130-132.

Recognizing the United States as the only country in the world that can put pressure on Israel, the King believes in the role of America as an honest broker in the peace process. In the book, King Abdullah II gives account of his interactions with the three presidents, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barrack Obama. Whereas he gives credit to the Clinton administration for trying to make peace, he is critical of the Bush administration. After the Palestinian-Israeli peace process is stuck without reaching an agreement on the final status issues at Camp David in 2000 and the process deteriorated with the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada, it has not gone any further. The King does not explicitly accuse the Bush administration for not showing any interest in revitalizing the peace process, but he tries to explain how the Bush administration did not get his calls that a peace between Palestinians and Israelis is in the interest of the United States. What is more, he also underlines that even though he insisted that the invasion of Iraq would be a big mistake, President Bush turned a deaf ear to his warnings. Therefore, the invasion of Iraq in 2003 has not only unleashed the extremist forces in the region, but also changed the priorities of the United States for almost a decade and resulted in the suspension of the peace negotiations. Besides the Iraqi issue, following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001, the Bush administration has become obsessed with the global war on terrorism, and has viewed any issue from that perspective. Then, the United States prioritized the security of Israel and refrained from seeing the Palestinian Authority under the leadership of Yasser Arafat as a viable partner for peace. Accordingly, the King narrates the opinion of the President Bush about Arafat as follows:

He (President Bush) insisted that Arafat had to do a better job in controlling extremists; otherwise the United States would not spend political capital trying to resolve the conflict. “We can’t be hypocrites on terror”, he said, and then made it clear that he felt Arafat was siding with terrorist organizations. As I feared, he began to elide his own struggle to tackle Al Qaeda with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. (p.201).

After the frustration with the Bush administration for not having taken any decisive steps about the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, King Abdullah II seems to pin his hopes on President Obama. Regarding him as a man who is speaking the language of peace, the King expects Obama to lead America to take its decisive leadership in the peace process. However, during his first

term, Obama's efforts to bring the parties to the negotiation table remained inconclusive. Even the efforts for direct negotiations in the absence of total freeze of Jewish settlements, which was a precondition by the Palestinian side, did not lead to progress since Netanyahu "insisted that any security arrangement must ensure a continued Israeli presence on future Palestinian eastern and western borders to guard against potential threats" (p.322). Mahmud Abbas, the president of the Palestinian National Authority, said that he could concur with the presence of international forces, but could not accept Israeli presence on Palestinian land. In this respect, hopes for a positive breakthrough in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations seem to be left for the second term of the Obama administration.

Against this background, King Abdullah II is afraid that the failure to solve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict today will inevitably lead to a war in the region with catastrophic results in the future. He believes in the two-state solution as the only viable option to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and advocates the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. With Oslo Peace Process as already dead, he thinks that the Arab Peace Initiative is 'the last best chance for peace' in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Endorsed on 28 March 2002 by the Arab League, the initiative envisages the Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Territories, meaning turning back to the pre-1967 War borders, the establishment of the sovereign Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, the resolution of the Palestinian refugee question on a just and mutually agreed basis, and the recognition of the East Jerusalem as the capital of the sovereign Palestinian state. In return, 22 Arab League states will recognize the state of Israel and establish peaceful normal relations (p.204-205). When the initiative was also endorsed in the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Countries (OIC), the solution is enlarged to include the 57 members of the OIC. Even though Israel has not shown any interest in the Initiative since it was proposed, King Abdullah II sees it as the only framework to consider and work on, but emphasizes that the initiative is living on borrowed time.

When the current situation in the Middle East is considered with regard to the Arab Spring, the immediate focus of the states in the region has turned to the calls for reform by the people. A second concern for regional states has become the overwhelmed regional

balance of power. Furthermore, the prolonged crisis in Syria, which has already been regarded as a civil war, has become the highest priority on the global and regional agenda. How much attention Obama administration as well as the regional actors that can have a mediating role like Egypt, Saudi Arabia and even Jordan can draw on the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is highly questionable. Despite the dynamics brought by the Arab Spring, the case of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has become more complicated with the developments in past few years. The division of the Palestinian leadership between Hamas in the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian National Authority in the West Bank makes it highly difficult to achieve a possible breakthrough in the peace negotiations. Hamas is considered to be out of the equation since it refuses to negotiate with Israel and the Palestinian National Authority seems to be the only viable partner for peace not only in the eyes of Israel, but also the international Western community. However, what kind of a peace can come out of negotiations without Hamas is a matter of great concern. Without doubt, these facts should not jeopardize the necessity to resolve the conflict and turn a blind eye to the urgent need to revitalize the peace process.

As a consequence, it is fair to say that the main objective of the book by King Abdullah II of Jordan is to call for action in terms of the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. No matter how uncertain the political climate in the Middle East has become so far, such call necessitates attention more than ever with the time passing to the detriment of the peace in the region.

# BOOK REVIEW

## The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran

Ali M. Ansari, (Cambridge: Cambridge University  
Press, 2012) 327 p.

Agah HAZIR\*

Iran continues to occupy a special place in the hotly debated world agenda. Nuclear crisis, the future of the reform movement and elections, in addition with Iran's role in the ongoing Syrian civil war has dominated global news. Turkey, as a neighboring country, is no exception to this fierce foreign interest in Iranian affairs yet it cannot be claimed that this interest stems from a solely academic point of view. Iran occupies a unique role within global political discourse, and especially so for Turkey. Iranian politics capture the attention of both Turkish academics and the Turkish public, but original works in Turkish on Iranian politics are scarce. Curious parties are essentially forced to rely on English literature to learn more about Iran. As can be seen in the popular debates of "Will Turkey be Iran?" which emerged after the National Security Council decisions on 28 February 1997, Iran has been brought to the attention of the Turkish masses by means of popular political movements. The naming of the newest Istanbul Bridge as the Yavuz Sultan Selim (Selim I) Bridge, in honor of the Ottoman sultan famous for his wars with Safavid Iran, and the alleged Iranian involvement in the recent Gezi Park protests are two particularly popular subjects that have brought Iran back into the attention of Turkish readers.<sup>1</sup> Within this context, *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran* has special significance for Turkish readers as well as for international readers, since it makes a profound contribution to our understanding of contemporary Iran and the history of Iranian modernization<sup>2</sup>

1 For a good example of this line of thought see Abdullah Bozkurt, "Iran Plays Subversive Role in Turkey" Today's Zaman, 21 June 2013.

2 In fact, relations with Iran have always been double-sided. On one hand, Iran has been seen as a close ally of Turkey since the Seljuq period. The famous cooperation between Seljuq vizier Nizam ul-Mulk and sultan Malik-Shah is the quintessential example of such alliance. On the other hand, Iran is often seen as a political conspirator, most usually within Turkish borders. Inspection of the famous work of Mahmud al-Kashgari, *Dīwānu l-Luġat al-Turk*, can show us the dichotomy within these relations. Mahmud quoted two consecutive sayings: No Turk without a Persian, No head without a helmet (*Tātsiz Türk bolmaz Bassiz bork bolmaz*)- Be aware of Persian, dig up the thorn-bush (*Tatıg közre tikenig tüpre*).

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Professor Ali M. Ansari of University of St Andrews, in *The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran*, analyzes the idea of Iranian nationalism through the modern period. Contrary to popular readings of Iranian history, which place primary emphasis on religion, Ansari stresses the role of nationalism. Indeed, this point is presented in the very first sentence of the book. According to Ansari, nationalism is the determining ideology of modern Iran, which united Iranians across all political fractions. He goes on to assert that four main intellectual groups can be distinguished in modern Iran, three of which are derivatives of the nationalist line of thought. These groups comprise the secular nationalists, religious nationalists, dynastic nationalists, and the left. Any understanding of the history of modern Iran should thus analyze the role of nationalist ideas. Starting from the early twentieth century, Ansari strives to expose how nationalism was born and thrived within the context provided by modern state-building on the one hand and collective historical memory on the other. In Iran, cultural history is often intensely political, and Ansari depicts the ways in which politics evolved through the use of history. He shows us how the ruling elite claimed legitimacy through the creation of myths and historical symbols. By doing so, he allows us to comprehend the role of nationalism as background ideology, operating throughout the course of the modern history of Iran.

Ansari starts his book with a very lucid theoretical discussion on nationalistic ideology. His emphasis is heavily placed on the ideological relations between the western world and Iran in the post-1789 era. More specifically, he provides a contextual framework for the impact of western thought on the development of Iranian nationalism. Contrary to common explanations of Iranian nationalism that juxtapose it against European thought, Ansari shows the reader the ways in which Iranian nationalism forged its own path in a process of bargaining with the European line of thought. This was not an antagonistic relation; it was rather defined by vocabulary born of a European context. Ansari argues that European concepts such as constitutionalism, law, and rights were taken from Europe but were nonetheless interpreted within the limits of the Iranian political agenda. His conceptualization of the Enlightenment, the topic of his first chapter, can also be considered as a valuable contribution to the literature. In this schema, the Enlightenment, as an international and cosmopolitan process, paves the way for a more robust mutual interaction between European and Iranian social structures. He first starts by briefly discussing the ways in which Persia has

been perceived and imagined in the West. He then proceeds to an analysis of these common myths, such as the Aryan myth, which is considered as another symbol of European interaction with Iranian culture (p. 13). He proposes that Iran, or more specifically the ability of “Iranian identity” to integrate itself within a European frame of reference, is unique among non-western countries due these specific points. He also highlights the cosmopolitan nature of the Enlightenment by describing the early interest of European enlightened thinkers in Manichaeism as an alternative line of thought in contrast to mainstream Christianity.

The second part of the book makes further valuable contributions to the field with the author’s novel periodization of modern Iranian history. Borrowing from Gramsci’s conceptualization of historical blocs, Ansari divides Iranian history into three historical blocs: an Iranian Enlightenment, The Age of Extremes, and the Age of contestation. Clearly, this Gramscian conceptual framework enables him to focus on ideas of domination and recognize the pervasive fuzzy character of temporal borders, leading to their amalgamation when needed.

Ansari frames the “Iranian Enlightenment” between the early 20th century and the first part of the 1960s. Accordingly, this period is crucially important in terms of state building and also in terms of the production of a nationalist ideology. Not only were concepts such as rule of law, rights of citizens, and mass education first being articulated in these years, but the very roots of basic Iranian popular identity-building, in the modern sense, lie within this period. Discussing the intellectual debates most clearly in regard to the famous myths of the *Shahnameh*, Ansari shows the relations between political developments and the utilization of these myths. The mythical war between *Kaveh* and *Zehhak* was construed in order to build a strong national identity in the face of a foreign tyrant.<sup>3</sup> According to Ansari, Iranian intellectuals create and utilize the collective memory emanating from the *Shahnameh* so as to build a nationalist ideology (p.51-65). This nationalist ideology employs myths and narratives and successfully socializes them into the greater cultural fabric. Ansari then goes on to describe how this socialization resulted in

3 The tale of *Kaveh* and *Zahhak* is one of the most popular myths in Iranian-and Kurdish-historical memory. It is about a rebellion of a blacksmith (*Kaveh*) against a cruel ruler (*Zahhak*).

the transformation of “lateral” to “demotic” nationalism through the course of 20th century Iran. In this section of the book, his most valuable contribution lies in showing the ways in which these myths and narratives are pursued and reconstructed through the history of Iran in the 20th century, particularly in relation to the political power structure of the country. By undermining the standard periodization that clearly differentiates between the constitutional period and that of Reza Shah, Ansari demonstrates that the dictatorship of Reza Shah, to a large extent, stemmed from the intellectual framework of the Constitutional Revolution. Ansari shows the ways in which the weakness of the state of Qajar paved the way for an “enlightened nationalism”, which then turned into an “enlightened despotism”. In other words, Ansari indicates how the intellectual fathers of Iranian nationalism hailed Reza Shah as the awaited savior of the nation. They positioned him as the most probable candidate “to secure political framework for the pursuit of reforms and cultivation of a reinvigorated nation state” (p. 66). Ansari clearly demonstrates here how these political developments were made possible by employing, producing, and reproducing collective historical memory.

The second part of the book, “Age of extremes”, focuses on the period from the wake of the “White Revolution of Mohammed Reza Pahlavi to until the death of Khomeini. According to Ansari, what characterizes this period is the waning of constitutionalism and the rise of a new sort of governance. The years following Reza Shah’s departure continued to witness a particular understanding of “nation” and a ruler based on constitutionalism.. Only after Muhammad Reza consolidated his power did a new form of relation between the ruler and the nation emerged. The line of thought supporting the constitutional monarchy of Reza Shah was transformed into support for a sacral monarchy. This new type of monarchy had a different relationship with the divine. Mohammad Reza himself did not feel constrained by constitutional concepts such as the rule of law. Without a constitutional limitation, according to Ansari, Mohammad Reza Shah’s rule was a different form of ruling, with a different relation to the divine. Shah emerged as a mediator between the divine and the nation. That said, Ansari claims that Mohammad Reza Shah’s way of ruling and his relations with both the nation and the divine were very similar to those of his successor, Ayatollah Khomeini: “both conceptualized the ruler as the guardian and protector of the nation with a divine mandate and access to esoteric knowledge” (p. 195). In this context, Khomeini emerged as the

better candidate to rule since, as man of religion, his relations with the divine had more credentials. Indeed, the authority that Khomeini finally claimed was far greater than that of any previous monarch of Iran had ever claimed. Khomeini went as far as to claim: “[*ve-layat*] the most important of Divine commandments and has priority over all derivative Divine commandments... [it is] one of the primary commandments of Islam and has priority over all derivative commandments, even over prayer, fasting and pilgrimage to Mecca” (p. 215).

The period was also marked by the marginalization of the *Shah-nameh* as the source of Iranian national identity. The cult of Cyrus the Great was mobilized against the *Shahnameh* myths. As epitomized in the famous 1971 celebration of 2500 years of the Persian Empire, Cyrus the Great was employed as the quintessential example of an enlightened monarch. In contrast, the age of extremes was the period in which new myths were utilized. These new myths originated in particular from an Islamic vocabulary. Shariati and other intellectuals of ‘the Age of Extremes’ employed the history of Islam so as to define a new understanding of Iranian identity. Moreover, a new language was articulated for resisting the existing rulers. In this context, *Kaveh* has been replaced by *Husein* as the new savior. After the foundation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, it became difficult not to claim that this newly Islamic-oriented language did not culminate in further extremities. The Islamic Republic had heavier emphasis on its Islamic heritage, yet still with an acknowledgement of the secular Iranian contributions.

Within the third period, the Age of Contestation, Ansari engages with the post-Khomeini era. This era was a new phase in Iranian nationalism in terms of the relation between the nation and popular ideas. For the first time in the history of modern Iran, with the help of the new media and mass education, Iranians imagined their community for themselves. They contested new forms of identity and debated about what a “nation” entails. Khomeini’s death, according to Ansari, revived areas of contestation such as the nature of the state, constitutionalism, and the role of religion. The ideological sphere, which was suppressed due to Khomeini’s personal charisma and the above-mentioned political relation with the divine, opened avenues for the embracement of new myths and transformation of the old. Additionally, the fall of the Soviet Union and the newly emerging neighbors of Iran further complicated the debate. On the one

hand, Islamic identity continued to dominate the ideological sphere, but on the other hand, common historical heritage with the new neighbors, only one of which was Shiite while others often lacked any interest in religion, began to be emphasized. Competition with the Republic of Turkey for influence in Central Asia resulted in a cultural interpretation of identity in which both Iran and the Turan have a common cultural heritage. Obviously, this common heritage can be seen in the *Shahnameh*. In the following Khatami period, a constitutional understanding of Iranian identity re-emerged. Old concepts of rule of law, rights, and enlightenment were again employed by Khatami, and the reformist line of thought was contested to build an Iranian identity in relation to these concepts. Unfortunately, Khatami failed to fulfill his political promises, paving the way to new populist leader Ahmadinejad. Ahmadinejad's position within this realm of conflict has leaned towards counter-enlightenment. Ansari argues that Ahmadinejad has built a new multi-sided narrative that offers something for everyone: an amalgamation of anti-Americanism and anti-capitalism merged with Shiite eschatology and national exceptionalism (p. 275). Ahmadinejad's understanding of Iran is a mix of all of these.

*The Politics of Nationalism in Modern Iran* is of equal interest for scholars specializing in the history of Iran and for those who study nationalism in general. Ali Ansari paints a brilliant portrait of the relationships of history, myths, and nationalism. He is successful in introducing new approaches to the conceptualization and periodization of an extensively studied area of nation-building. His contribution is also important for the Turkish reader, who usually encounters Iran in terms of strategy and nuclear issues. The book is of great value to go beyond the biased and sometimes essentialist accounts of Iran that consider the Iranian (Islamic) Revolution as pivotal and often read the nation's history retrospectively. Ansari reminds us of another important factor that lies behind the history of modern Iran: nationalism. However, he explicitly focuses on mainstream nationalism and only considers non-Persian nations in relation with mainstream line of thought. In other words, non-Persian minorities are seen within the framework of the mainstream nationalism. The relationship between politics and history in non-Persian nations, and their own understanding and employing of myths, could have been included in the analyses. Considering the rise of minority nationalism all over the world, it could have been a further contribution to the literature. In addition, although attentive to an

array of primary and secondary sources, some of which are still untapped at this time, Ansari's writing style remains uncluttered. In an effort to appeal to the general reader, the book does not give enough background information on all relevant characteristics and events, however at times this makes it hard for the general reader to understand some important details. Despite these caveats, however, it is an intellectually stimulating work, one of the most detailed and masterful analyses of 20th century Iran.



# ORTADOĐU ETÜTLERİ

## **Genel Hususlar**

Ortadođu Etütleri, Ortadođu çalıřmalanna yođunlařmıř bir düşünce kuruluřu olan Ortadođu Stratejik Arařtırmalar Merkezi (ORSAM) tarafından basılı ve e-dergi olarak yayınlanan hakemli bir siyaset, uluslararası iliřkiler ve fikir dergisidir.

Editörlüğünü ORSAM Danıřmanı Doç. Dr. Özlem Tür'ün yaptıđı dergi, yılda iki kez yayınlanmaktadır.

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Ortadođu Etütleri'nde yayınlanan çalıřmalardaki deđerlendirmeler, ORSAM'ın kurumsal görüşünü yansıtmamaktadır.

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Makalelerde anlatım dilinin düzgün olması, düşüncelerin dođru bir mantık örgüsü içinde ifade edilmesi, referansların uygun biçimde kullanılması, varsayımların güçlü biçimde desteklenmesi, konuyla ilgili literatüre nüfuz edilebilmiş olması gerekmektedir.

Kitap deđerlendirmeleri/incelemeleeri, makale biçiminde hazırlanmış olmaları halinde kabul edilmektedir. İncelenen kitabın bir kopyasının, makul bir sürede iade edilmek üzere, Editör'e ulařtırılması gerekmektedir.

Makaleler yayınlanmadan önce yazarlarla eser sözleşmesi akdedilmektedir.

Telif ödemeleri, derginin yayınlanmasından en geç bir ay sonra yapılmaktadır. Ayrıca, yazarlara dergiden 5 kopya verilmekte, derginin ulařtırılmasında fayda gördükleri kurumlar/kiřilerle ilgili sundukları notlar dikkate alınabilmektedir.

### **Biçimsel Esaslar**

- Makalelerin dili Türkçe ya da İngilizce olmalıdır. İngilizce makalelerde imla ve noktalama kuralları açısından İngiltere İngilizcesi'nin kullanılması tercih sebebidir. Yazıların uzunluğu 4000-8000 kelime aralığında olmalıdır.
- Çalışmanın hazırlanmasında takip edilmesi gereken sıra şöyledir: Başlık, öz (abstract), anahtar kelimeler, asıl metin, ekler, notlar, referanslar (kaynakça), tablolar (başlıklarıyla birlikte müstakil sayfalarda), şekil açıklamaları (liste halinde), özet (summary).
- Öz bölümü (abstract) ortalama 150 kelime uzunluğunda olmalıdır. Türkçe makalelerin İngilizce özeti de sunulmalıdır.
- Makalelerde 6 ila 10 anahtar kelime bulunmalıdır. Türkçe makalelerin İngilizce anahtar kelimeleri de sunulmalıdır.
- Özetler (summary) 400 kelime uzunluğunda olmalı ve yalnızca İngilizce hazırlanmalıdır.
- Makale sahiplerinin, Editör aksini belirtmedikçe bir özgeçmişlerini sunmaları istenmektedir.
- Görsellerin yüksek çözünürlüklü olması ve siyah-beyaz baskıya elverişli olmaları gerekmektedir. Renkli görsellerin siyah-beyaz baskılarında ortaya çıkabilecek tutarsızlıklar dikkate alınmalıdır. Materyalin en uygun çözünürlükte olduğundan emin olunmalı ve metin içine yerleştirilmeden bilgisayar ortamında ayrı bir dosya olarak olarak iletilmelidir.
- Anadili İngilizce veya Türkçe olmayan yazarların makalelerini göndermeden önce, metinlerini dil konusunda ehil bir uzmana okutmaları ve düzelttirmeleri gerekmektedir. Yoğun dilbilgisi ve anlatım hatası olan metinler değerlendirmeye alınmamaktadır.
- Latin alfabesi kullanılan dillerde isim orijinal haliyle verilmektedir. Diğer dillerde yazılan isimler ise İngilizce veya Türkçe transliterasyonuyla kullanılmalıdır.

### **Dipnot Yazım Kuralları**

Dipnotlar açıklayıcı olmalı ve mümkün olduğunca sık kullanılmalıdır. Dipnotlar makale içinde birbirlerini takip edecek şekilde artan rakamlar ile numaralandırılmalı ve metin sonunda yer alan ve açıklamaları içeren liste ile örtüşmelidir. Söz konusu listelerde kitap, makale ve metinlere dair verilen referanslarla uyumluluk ve isimler ile önemli sıfatların baş harflerinin büyük harf ile yazılması önemlidir. Aşağıdaki uygulamalı örneklerin dikkatle incelenmesi tavsiye edilir:

#### *Kitaplar*

Norman Stone, *Kitabın Adı*, (London: Basic Books, 2007), s. 67.

Norman Stone (ed.), *Kitabın Adı* (London: Basic Books, 2007), s. 67-9.

Norman Stone ve Sergei Podbolotov, *Kitabın Adı* (London: Basic Books, 2005), s. 99.

Takip eden referanslar: Kıvrımlı, *Kitabın Adı*, s. 99.

*Dergiler ve Makaleler*

Norman Stone, "Makale Başlığı", *Dergi Adı*, Cilt. #, Sayı. # (Ay, Yıl), s. #.

Takip eden referanslar: Kıvrımlı, "Makale Adı", s. #.

*Derleme Kitap Makaleleri*

Norman Stone, "Makale Adı", Hakan Kıvrımlı, "Kitap Adı" (London: Crimea Publishing Co., 2000), s.100.

*Resmi Belgeler*

Meclis Zabıtları: TBMM Yayınları (Meclis Yayınları, 1988, V), 111.

*Tezler*

E. Beytullah, "The Crimean Khans' relations with the Arab Amirs", yayınlanmamış doktora tezi, Bilkent University, 1999, Bölüm 5, s.44.

*Tekrarlar*

Dipnotlarda uygun yerlerde "ibid." ibaresi kullanılmalı, ancak bu ibare önceki bilginin birden fazla kaynağa dayandığı durumlarda kullanılmamalıdır.

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Yazarların çalışmalarını elektronik posta yoluyla adresine göndermesi tercih edilmektedir.

Makaleler ve diğer sorular, Ortadoğu Etütleri Editörü Doç. Dr. Özlem Tür'e tur@metu.edu.tr adresinden ulaştırılabilir.

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