Is our NATO ally Turkey emerging as a regional power that is hostile, neutral, or can remain a partner to American strategic concerns?

STRATEGIKA

CONFLICTS OF THE PAST AS LESSONS FOR THE PRESENT

From the Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict at the Hoover Institution

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Military History in Contemporary Conflict

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Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict

The Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict examines how knowledge of past military operations can influence contemporary public policy decisions concerning current conflicts. The careful study of military history offers a way of analyzing modern war and peace that is often underappreciated in this age of technological determinism. Yet the result leads to a more in-depth and dispassionate understanding of contemporary wars, one that explains how particular military successes and failures of the past can be often germane, sometimes misunderstood, or occasionally irrelevant in the context of the present.

Strategika

Strategika is a journal that analyzes ongoing issues of national security in light of conflicts of the past—the efforts of the Military History Working Group of historians, analysts, and military personnel focusing on military history and contemporary conflict. Our board of scholars shares no ideological consensus other than a general acknowledgment that human nature is largely unchanging. Consequently, the study of past wars can offer us tragic guidance about present conflicts—a preferable approach to the more popular therapeutic assumption that contemporary efforts to ensure the perfectibility of mankind eventually will lead to eternal peace. New technologies, methodologies, and protocols come and go; the larger tactical and strategic assumptions that guide them remain mostly the same—a fact discernable only through the study of history.

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Turkey at the Crossroads

By Barry Strauss

Turkey is in the midst of an era of dramatic change. That matters in a big way for both American foreign policy and the world, because Turkey is of enormous strategic significance. It is a big and important country. With a population of 74 million people, Turkey is larger than Britain or France, and in area it is slightly larger than Texas. The population is industrious and increasingly wealthy.

No less significant, Turkey occupies one of the world's most strategic locations, between Russia and Iran. Its largest city, Istanbul, literally lies at the crossroads of east and west, with part of the city in Europe and part in Asia. The country is overwhelmingly Muslim but has a long tradition of looking toward Europe. The country sits astride the waterways that connect the Black Sea and the Mediterranean–one of Russia's historic "windows to the west" lies through Turkey. Although not an oil producer, Turkey lies on a key overland route for the transport of energy from the Middle East to Europe. It borders such key countries as Iran, Iraq, and Syria. Its population has cultural, linguistic and ethnic ties with most of the people of Central Asia. In short, Turkey is essential.

The United States and Turkey have been allies at least since Turkey joined NATO in 1952. Turkey has the second largest army in the alliance. What with Turkish military coups, the issue of Cyprus, and the twists and turns in American foreign policy, the course of the relationship has not always run smooth, particularly not of late. The Justice and Development Party (AKP) has been in power in Turkey since 2002, with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan in charge for most of them. With roots in Islamist politics and free market economics, the AKP was elected to bring change to the country and it has succeeded. It has been re-elected twice, each time with a larger share of the vote. The result has been a virtual revolution in Turkey, and foreign policy is no exception, but change begins at home.

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Under the AKP, Turkey's economy has become freer, more attractive to oil-economy investors, and wealthier than ever in its history. Turkey's constitution has become freer too, but only in some ways.

While the AKP has reined in the military and its coup-making potential, the cost has been the jailing of hundreds of senior officers along with journalists, lawyers, and members of Parliament accused of plotting against the government. The government has also tightened its control of the judiciary. Even so, the AKP has gone far toward meeting the liberalization requirements for membership in the EU. The EU countries have not exactly reciprocated with moves to welcome Turkey with open arms. It is questionable whether Turkey will ever become a full member of the EU.

On the other hand, the AKP has moved away from the secular and pro-western positions of the Republic's founder, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, in favor of more religious and Islamic-world-centered positions. Much attention has gone to the position of headscarved women. Formerly unable to attend university, sit in Parliament or hold government jobs, they can now do all three. Erdogan's supporters, who constitute the vast majority of the population in the Anatolian heartland, tend to be traditional Muslims and so support the anti-secularist measures. Erdogan's critics say the moves are signs less of democracy than of Islamization.

No matter the government, Turkey would always find matters on which its interests diverge from those of the United States. Indeed, some disagreement would be true of any two allies. For example, the long-standing question of Kurdish minority rights in Turkey and the counter-terrorist war against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) strongly shape Turkey's relations with

Iraq, Iran, and Syria, as well as with the autonomous Kurdish region in northern Iraq. The U.S., of course, does not have the same interest in this question. Nor do the Americans look with revanchist longing on northern Iraq, as some Turks do, or worry about the status of the large Turkish-speaking minority in the area.

That being said, Turkey under the Erdogan government has additional areas of dispute with American foreign policy. The reasons have to do with both American behavior and Turkish ideology. Under the Bush administration the U.S. made war on Iraq and Turkey refused to let American troops pass through Turkey into northern Iraq. The Obama administration suffers from the opposite problem, as it is passive and indecisive rather than aggressive. Both administrations, however, have tended to welcome Erdogan as a strong man who has brought economic growth, a measure of liberalization, and political stability to Turkey. The American government has that in common with most Turks. (Not that opposition to Erdogan on the part of many Turks isn't justified–whatever else he is, the man is no liberal democrat.)

Yet, things are not that simple, because both Erdogan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP) have ideologies that clash with American interests. For one thing, the AKP has Islamist origins–some in the opposition claim that it still has an Islamist secret agenda. For another thing, it's no secret that the government has vast strategic ambitions. Its agenda has often been called neo-Ottomanist, with a nostalgic look back toward the lost glories of the enormous empire that Turks once ruled.

Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu has called for Turkey to play a leading role not only in the Middle East but also in the Balkans, the Black Sea, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. To some extent, this compensates for the cold shoulder that the European Union has given Turkey's ambitions for closer relations and eventual membership. At the same time, the two ideologies have led to friction with the U.S. Turkey has walked back its formerly close relations with Israel. As for Egypt,

while the United States offers de facto toleration to the military government in Egypt, Turkey opposed the coup and supports the Muslim Brotherhood. Currently, Turkish-Egyptian relations are at a nadir.

They look good, however, compared to Turkish-Syrian relations. Erdogan broke with his former ally, Syrian President Assad, and now strongly advocates military intervention in Syria on the side of the rebels (over strong opposition from most Turks). He leapt to the support of the Obama administration's decision to intervene militarily, only to be left in the lurch when it changed course. Erdogan was even less happy with the American decision to outsource its policy to Russia.

And so, there is the latest rift. The Americans have expressed their displeasure with Turkey's recent decision to co-produce a $3 billion missile defense system with a Chinese firm under sanction for violating the Iran, North Korea, and Syria Nonproliferation Act. Turkey chose the China Precision Machinery Import-Export Corporation over America's Raytheon, which had been favored. It's an open question whether NATO will agree to integrate its missile-defense system with the new Turkish system.

The last half-year has seen bumps in the road for Erdogan but he remains the dominant figure in Turkish politics. He is arguably the strongest Turkish politician since Ataturk. His proud and sometimes arrogant character wins supporters and engenders opposition. Beginning in May, millions of Turks took part in antigovernment demonstrations beginning in Gezi Park in Istanbul, which the regime eventually put down with tear gas and a show of force on the part of the police.

The Turkish economy has had its ups and downs but it seems to be weathering the storm. Although Turkey's currency and bonds have both suffered, its stock market is up ten per cent in terms of local currency.

Then there has been a series of what Americans would call social issues. The government narrowed the possibilities of alcohol consumption, thereby both making society more Islamic and weakening the alcohol companies, which tend to support the opposition. Recently Erdogan offended liberals by cracking down on cohabitation in college dorms and offended moderates by closing private college preparatory schools. These schools are part of an independent power base allied with Erdogan and his party, but evidently he figures that it's worth losing their support in order to centralize power.

Local elections in March 2014 will test Erdogan's popularity. In August 2014 Turkey will, for the first time, choose its president via direct elections. Erdogan is expected to run. However, he has not succeeded in his attempt to enhance the powers of the presidency via constitutional change, so he is unlikely to end up with the power of, say, Russia's Vladimir Putin.

The Gezi Park protests rallied opposition to Erdogan. Although his political problems continue to grow, it's not safe to bet on his losing. The reasons are his shrewd management of the political seams in Turkish society, the continuing strength of the economy overall, and the weakness of the opposition. What is safe to say is that while Turkey and the U.S. will remain allies, friction and disagreement will only increase.

Barry Strauss (Cornell University) is a military historian with a focus on ancient Greece and Rome. His *Battle of Salamis: The Naval Encounter That Saved Greece—and Western Civilization* was named one of the best books of 2004 by the *Washington Post*. His books have been translated into nine languages. His latest book, *Masters of Command: Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar and the Genius of Leadership* (Simon & Schuster, May 2012), was named one of the best books of 2012 by *Bloomberg*. He has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the German Academic Exchange Service, the Korea Foundation, and the American Academy in Rome. In recognition of his scholarship, he was named an honorary citizen of Salamis, Greece.

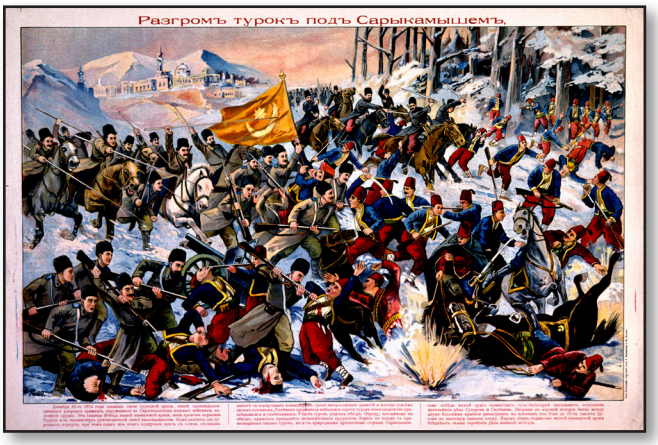
Turkey's Struggles Point to the Need for Allies

By Walter Russell Mead

The Republic of Turkey is geographically, politically, and culturally, an odd-looking member in an alliance known as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Turkey has a long coastline washed by the Black Sea, the Sea of Marmara, the Aegean Sea, and the Mediterranean, but it is hundreds of miles from the Atlantic. Turkish democracy for most of NATO's history could best be described as an aspiration rather than a reality. Military coups, suppression of religious and ethnic minorities, and strict limits on free speech were the norm rather than the exception for most of Turkey's modern history. Even now there are wide gaps between freedom as understood in most of the alliance and governance in Turkey. And of course Turkey, despite its formal commitment to a Jacobin form of aggressive secularism in the Kemalist period, was the only Muslim-majority nation in an alliance composed of Christian or, as time went on, post-Christian countries.

Despite these problems, and despite frequent flare-ups of tension between Turkey and another NATO member (Greece), Turkey remained firmly committed to NATO and the western alliance throughout the Cold War. Fear of the Soviet Union ensured that Turkey would look westward for aid, and as a way of demonstrating its solidarity with Washington, Turkey sent troops as far afield as Korea during the conflict there.

For Kemalist Turkey, NATO was not just a military alliance. It was an expression of the modernizing, westernizing orientation of the Kemalist republic. Ataturk's republic saw its future in joining the West; membership in NATO, like the hoped-for membership in the European Union, was a way for Turkey to escape the risks, divisions, and backwardness associated with the Middle East and to become a member in good standing of a club of advanced industrial powers who shaped the world.



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With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Kemalist republic, a new Turkey had to make its way in a new world. The rise of the AKP broke the Kemalist mold that had shaped modern Turkey. Turkish leaders and commentators began to speak of "neo-Ottomanism," meaning, among other things, a shift from viewing Turkey as a western-oriented power on the periphery of the West to Turkey as the central power in the geographic region surrounding Istanbul. (One could call this neo-Byzantine as well as neo-Ottoman; it is the dream of a power center in the Eastern Mediterranean world that can defy pressure from Moscow, the West, and Iran.)

Prime Minister Erdogan's neo-Ottoman fling began as a triumph and ended in tears; three years of frenetic activity in the Levant left Turkey with few gains—and also brought home the bitter truth that Turkish engagement in the religious politics of the region exacerbates instability at home. Turkey's Alevi minority resents the aggressive Sunnism that provided Erdogan's ideological link to Arab groups like the Muslim Brotherhood, and Turkey's internal Kurdish question becomes more difficult as an eastward-looking Turkey gets engaged with Kurdish movements and governments in neighboring countries.

Other factors complicate Turkey's quest for an independent, major power role in the neighborhood. The resurgence of Russian military power, however limited its consequences in Eurasia as a whole, weigh more heavily on Turkey than on most other powers. Long-term access to the ex-Soviet naval bases in Crimea, for example, means that Russia will remain a formidable Black Sea power. More, Russian success at taming Georgia and bringing Armenia into its nascent cus-

toms union forces Turkey into a defensive posture and sharply limits its options in the Caucasus region.

Turkey must also worry about the prospective development of closer relations between Israel, Russia, and Greece. Such an alliance would serve Russia's interest in controlling as much of Europe's hydrocarbon supply as possible; for Greece and the Greek Cypriots, it is an opportunity to escape their diplomatic and political isolation as the "bad boys" of the EU while improving their hand against their traditional Turkish opponents.

Erdogan's neo-Ottoman failure is not the first Turkish setback since the Cold War. An earlier, Kemalist vision saw the collapse of the USSR as opening the door to a Turkish surge in the culturally and linguistically related regions of Central Asia. Heady visions of a pan-Turkic revival swirled through late-Kemalist Ankara until reality intruded. Turkey lacked the geopolitical and economic heft to fight Russia and China in Central Asia, and its once-grand ambitions have had to be scaled back.

The Turks must face the unhappy reality that their Byzantine predecessors learned to their chagrin: Constantinople can no longer be the center of its own world. Turkey cannot thrive without allies and its foreign policy must be based on choosing alliances rather than on carving out a great power position of its own.

This does not mean that Turkey is inevitably going to choose a western orientation. Russia, Iran, and perhaps one day India or China offer alternative paths for Turkish foreign policy. But Erdogan's neo-Ottomanism missed one of the major lessons of Ottoman history. In the 19th century, the Ottomans, no longer able to stave off outside pressure without external allies, repeatedly turned to an alliance with the western maritime powers. Despite the ups and downs of the rela-

tionship, the British and their sometime French allies were more reliable partners for the last Sultans than any of the alternatives.

The Young Turks reversed the foreign policy of Abdulhamid II and sided with Germany rather than Britain in 1914. The result was catastrophic and led to the breakup of the empire and almost to the destruction of Turkey. Turkey's neutrality in World War II and its firm adhesion to NATO afterwards were less a departure from late Ottoman policy than a return to it. Ataturk understood that once it had divested itself of its imperial, non-Turkish territories, Turkey had little to fear and much to gain from an alliance with distant, stability-seeking maritime powers.

Nothing is certain in international politics, but it seems reasonably likely that when the dust settles in Ankara once again, Turkey is likely to feel more secure with a good relationship with the maritime West.

Walter Russell Mead is the James Clark Chace Professor of Foreign Affairs and Humanities at Bard College and editor at large of the *American Interest*. Until 2010 Mead was the Henry A. Kissinger Senior Fellow for U.S Foreign Policy at the Council on Foreign Relations; until 2011 he was a Brady-Johnson Distinguished Visiting Fellow in Grand Strategy at Yale University. He is the author of *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World* (2002, winner of the Lionel Gelber Prize and nominated for the 2002 Arthur Ross Book Award); *Power, Terror, Peace, and War: America's Grand Strategy in a World at Risk* (2005); and *God and Gold: Britain, America, and the Making of the Modern World* (2007). His blog, Via Meadia, appears at the *American Interest* online.

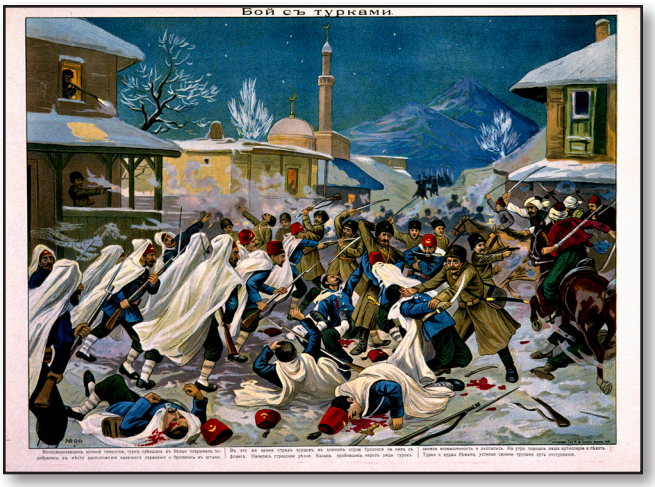
The U.S. Should Be Thankful for Turkey

By Williamson Murray

The emergence of Turkey as the most powerful regional player in the Middle East should not surprise Americans. Of all the Middle Eastern Islamic nations, it is the only one that has adapted to the modern world with any degree of success. The revolution carried out by Kemal Ataturk in the 1920s and 1930s provided a crucial division between religion and politics in Turkey, which even with an Islamic party in power today in Istanbul remains largely intact. By so doing, Ataturk created the possibility for Turkey to become a modern nation in the Western sense. The economic explosion of the past decade has carried the Turks toward a new level of power, especially if the movement toward a deal with their Kurdish population in the east reaches fruition.

Only Americans would ask this question about the relationship between Turkey and the United States because gazing myopically toward China and the Pacific much of Washington is focusing on short-term rather than long-term strategic factors. In the short term, of course, one can complain about supposed Turkish support for of jihadists fighting Assad in Syria, Turkish annoyance at the army's overthrow of President Morsi in Egypt, as well as a number of biting political attacks on Israel by Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan. These trends certainly do not suggest that the Turkish regime is particularly friendly to American interests. But one must remember that the Turks, and whatever party rules them, are not in the business of defending American interests; rather their top priority is the defense of their own interests, at least as they perceive them.

In 2003 the Turkish government eventually decided not to allow the U.S. 4th Infantry Division to disembark in Turkey to invade Saddam Hussein's Iraq from the north. Quite simply most Turks did not view the American adventure into the Middle East as in their interest. In spite of the egre-



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gious American efforts to bribe the Turkish government with billions of dollars, the Turks sensibly decided to remain on the sidelines. The reaching out of the Turks to Muslim Brotherhood parties in what were at one time the provinces of the Ottoman Empire before the First World War also appears to be a disturbing sign that the Turks are gravitating away from American interests, narrowly defined. But viewed from the perspective of the Turkish government and people, we are clearly dealing with the fact that the Turks believe this engagement with their co-religionists furthers what they perceive as Turkish interests in the region.

In strategy it is the long term that matters. First of all, one must not lose sight that Turkey–unlike other nations in the Arab Middle East, which are a collection of tribes–is a nation with a common language, common national traditions, and the influence that Ataturk still wields over much of the nation. Turkey's transition to democracy from army rule has admittedly brought an Islamic party to power. Yet, it is also significant that Erdogan and his party have provided a period of unparalleled growth and prosperity to Turkey and its people. Moreover, there appears a considerable possibility that the Turks and the Kurds will finally settle their decades smoldering war in Eastern Turkey.

That possibility has increased in probability, given the close relations that have developed between Turkish businessmen and the Kurds lying across the border on Iraqi Kurdistan. And that, of course, brings the oil on Kurdish land close to the Turkish economy. The Turkish economy has hit a period of significant slowdown with increased inflation over the past year. Nevertheless,

whatever economic problems the Turks are having are nothing in comparison to those being suffered by the weak sisters of the EU, namely Greece, Italy, Spain, and Portugal.

In the long-term the stability of the Middle East looks anything but sure. With a massive growth in the population–3 percent per year, the second highest in the world–virtually no jobs, and the rise of radical fundamentalism, the troubles in Syria may well be only the harbinger of worse times to come. In this sea of troubles, Turkey appears to be the one area in the Middle East where substantial political troubles will not occur. And one should not forget that the Turkish military is clearly the most powerful in the Middle East, outside of perhaps Israel. If its deal with the Kurds stands up, not only with its own Kurds, but those outside its borders, Turkey will represent a crucial rock that could help in preventing events in the region from getting out of hand. Make no mistake about it, the Turks–whatever political party is in control–will follow their own interests as a major actor in the region rather than what those in Washington perceive as those of the United States. But they will stand on the side of political and economic stability in the Middle East, which one assumes will also be the focus of American policy in the region as well.

Williamson Murray serves as a Minerva Fellow at the Naval War College. He graduated from Yale University in 1963 with honors in history. He then served five years as an officer in the US Air Force, including a tour in Southeast Asia with the 314th Tactical Airlift Wing (C-130s). He returned to Yale University, where he received his PhD in military-diplomatic history under advisers Hans Gatzke and Donald Kagan. He taught two years in the Yale history department before moving on to Ohio State University in fall 1977 as a military and diplomatic historian; in 1987 he received the Alumni Distinguished Teaching Award. He retired from Ohio State in 1995 as a professor emeritus of history.

Language is Ataturk's Cultural Anchor

By Angelo M. Codevilla

Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan's packing of the government's apparatus and major social institutions with his own supporters is a major challenge to Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's legacy: turning Turkey from the seat of the Muslim Caliphate into a secular democracy. But Ataturk's reform of the Turkish language—the cultural anchor of his reforms—remains out of the Islamists' reach.

As Machiavelli taught, imposing "new modes and orders" on any people requires making sure that the people be rendered unable to remember the laws and ways under which they had lived prior to the new regime's conquest. Making that happen is less the work of arms than it is about the establishment of what the Marxist Antonio Gramsci called "hegemony" over the people's cultural life. Language is the key to culture because it contains standards and memories. Your language makes it possible to think certain things and impossible to think others.

The Turkish people originally got their literacy from the Arabs, along with Islam. Until 1928, Turkish was written in Arabic script. This ill-fitted spoken Turkish, but tied literate Turks to the intellectual world of Islam. Learning to read and write was laborious for Turks. Some 80% of the written language's words were of Arab or Persian origin.

Ataturk forced adoption of the Latin alphabet, which replaced Arabic script with 8 vowels and 21 consonants. Moreover, it replaced vocabulary: words of foreign origin with wholly new ones, built out of Turkish popular language. Now, people could learn to read in a few months and feel at home in their written language. Adult literacy went from circa 15% to near-universal.

But this cut Turks off from the Muslim classics in the original, and opened them to ideas embedded in the Western languages that they could now learn much more easily than they could Arabic.

Prime Minister Erdogan's Islamic party is trying to establish "modes and orders" that are radically new in modern Turkey. But he is pulling against the heavy anchor of Ataturk's language reform.

Angelo M. Codevilla, a native of Italy, is a professor emeritus of international relations at Boston University. He was a US naval officer and Foreign Service officer and served on the Senate Intelligence Committee as well as on presidential transition teams. For a decade he was a senior research fellow at the Hoover Institution. He is the author of thirteen books, including *War Ends and Means, Informing Statecraft, The Character of Nations, Advice to War Presidents*, and *A Students' Guide to International Relations*. He is a student of the classics as well as of European literature; he is also a commercial grape grower.

Ineffectual Turkey

By Edward N. Luttwak

Under its present leaders, Turkey would be emerging as both a partner and a force hostile to American interests in the duplicitous Pakistani manner, if it were a "regional power," or indeed any power, at all. As it is, in spite of its government's "neo-Ottoman," Regional Power or even pro-Great Power pretensions, today's Turkey is not even a Small Power in spite of its 75 million inhabitants, million men in uniform, trillion-dollar economy, and evident geographic advantages.

The partnership part derives from Turkey's status as a long-standing member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which Westernized the culture of Turkish military officers, and which is supplemented by American use of the Incirlik air base near Adana in S.E. Turkey.

The hostility part derives from the intensely though covertly Islamist ideology of the ostensibly democratic-conservative ruling AKP (Justice and Development Party), expressly created by the AKP's founding leader and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan to repackage the openly and violently Islamist ideology of the MSP (Nationalist Movement Party) in which he entered politics, in order to win power without provoking a military intervention in defense of secularism. An ostensibly "pro-American" and "Pro-European" stance is Erdogan's and the AKP's shield as it de-secularizes Turkey bit by bit—complete with creeping Shari'a restrictions—with much success in leveraging European influence to marginalize the armed forces, whose essential role in defense of secularism has ignorantly been ignored by European officialdom. The stridently anti-Western *Milli Gazete* daily, the AKP's truest voice, Erdogan's recurrent outbursts, and such

major episodes as the 2003 reversal on U.S. transit to Iraq, have all repeatedly breached the veil of duplicity, though without much effect.

As for Turkey's nullity as not even a Small Power, it derives from its exceptionally crippling internal divisions, of which the political opposition of the CHP (Republican People's Party) and other secularist parties is the least important; while they are energized by the Islamization that advances each day, they are inescapably outnumbered by the less educated Turkish-Islamic majority, the 50% whose females are headscarved and which votes for Islamization and the AKP. Much more important is Turkey's Alevi-Bektashi community, numbering at least twelve million, which is vaguely Shi'a but more properly Turkic/animistic (and humanistic) under a thin Islamic veil (no pilgrimage, no fasting on Ramadan, etc). Long cruelly persecuted by Turkey's Sunni rulers, they oppose any policy that would favor the Sunni interest (i.e., any policy likely to be favored by the very Sunni AKP, such as help for Syria's rebels at present). In the province of Hatay subtracted from Syria under French rule, there are also a million or so Alawite Arabs—entirely unrelated to the Alevis and indeed rebranded in the 1920s as Nosairi heretics from Ismaili Sevener Shi'ism. They vehemently support their compatriot Assad, naturally enough. Then there are the fully identified Kurds and Zaza, both Alevi and Sunni, who account for at least 20% of the population, and strongly oppose any action by the Turkish armed forces that they have so long resisted, with tens of thousands killed since the 1970s. The prevalence of Kurds, Zaza, Turkish Alevis and Alawite Arabs in Turkey's eastern provinces adjacent to Iran, Iraq, and Syria has its own significance.

Even more immediately crippling of Turkey's ability to operate as a power in its conflicted region is the military paralysis caused by the AKP's long-term effort to humiliate and marginalize its military leadership, whose staunch, and socially liberalizing secularism it depicts as merely authoritarian and undemocratic. Within that broad AKP effort (foolishly endorsed by European

officialdom) top generals and more colonels have been accused, tried, and convicted on conspiracy charges, arising from the supposedly vast and certainly nebulous Ergenekon plot to take over the government to protect Turkey's still secular constitution. Given the acute mistrust that divides them, the AKP leaders will not and could not order the Turkish armed forces into action, and that makes Turkey impotent in a bellicose part of the world, without even a Small Power's influence over Syrian villages near its borders.

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Resetting Turkish Reset

By Victor Davis Hanson

The common interpretation of Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan's agenda—curtailing individual freedoms and democratic institutions at home, an anti-Israel world view, the (failed) dalliance with the Iran-Hezbollah bloc, overt support for the Muslim Brotherhood—is that by rejecting the secular traditions of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk that led to the modern Turkish nation, he is internally refashioning Turkey as an Islamist and not-so democratic state. Secondly, Erdogan envisions the new Turkey as an ethnic and religious nexus of the greater Muslim world. His so-called neo-Ottomanism would make Turkey the Middle East concierge between the West and Islam. By now few in the West—except the present U.S. administration—are taken in by Erdogan's blowhard evocations of everything from the battle of Manzikert to the 16th-century Ottoman Islamization of the Balkans.

Even European Union grandees long ago sized up Erdogan's agendas and concluded that if Turkey once had some potential for EU membership, it most certainly does not any longer under the forces that brought Erdogan to power. For all practical purposes, Erdogan's idea of an Ottoman and Islamist Turkey is incompatible with its traditional NATO membership; indeed, in the post-Cold War it is difficult to envision any crisis scenario—even the present Syrian mess—in which Erdogan could be a muscular and reliable U.S. ally. His present cachet is predicated on Barack Obama's romance with supposedly authentic and grass roots Middle East Islamists of the Mohamed Morsi and Hamas sorts. Because Obama is intrigued by Erdogan's boutique anti-Western and anti-Israeli rants, the latter's hostilities have not yet earned the snubs they deserve. The post-Obama State Department will probably have to reset with Turkey or Turkey with us, if any semblance of the old relationship is to survive.

Paradoxically, common skepticism about Erdogan is creating a strategic partnership in the Eastern Mediterranean between Greece, Cyprus, Israel, and some Balkan states that, by any historical or cultural ties, should be our more natural allies than an Islamist Turkey, much less looking to Russia for guidance. In sum, ossified institutions like NATO and the special American relationship have not caught up with Mr. Erdogan. But it is only a matter of time.

Victor Davis Hanson, the Martin and Illie Anderson Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, is a classicist and an expert on the history of war. He is a syndicated Tribune Media Services columnist and a regular contributor to National Review Online, as well as many other national and international publications; he has written or edited twenty-three books, including the New York Times best seller Carnage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise of Western Power. His most recent book is The Savior Generals: How Five Great Commanders Saved Wars That Were Lost - from Ancient Greece to Iraq (Bloomsbury 2013). He was awarded a National Humanities Medal by President Bush in 2007 and the Bradley Prize in 2008 and has been a visiting professor at the US Naval Academy, Stanford University, Hillsdale College, and Pepperdine University. Hanson received a PhD in classics from Stanford University in 1980. is the Martin and Illie Anderson Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution and the Chair of the Military History Working Group.

Discussion Questions

Is our NATO ally Turkey emerging as a regional power that is hostile, neutral, or can remain a partner to American strategic concerns?

1. To what degree can contemporary Turkey be called a democracy?

2. How does Turkey's NATO status pose problems for the U.S. and its Western allies?

3. Is there any danger that Turkey could find itself in a war with Greece, the Kurds, Israel, or Syria—and how would the U.S. react?

4. Will there be much of a Kemalist legacy in Turkey in another ten years?

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Suggestions For Further Reading

Is our NATO ally Turkey emerging as a regional power that is hostile, neutral, or can remain a partner to American strategic concerns?

- Zeyno Baran, *Torn Country: Turkey between Secularism and Islamism* (Hoover Institution Press, 2010), examines in detail the ongoing struggle between Turkey's Islamist and secular factions.
- Andrew Finkel, *Turkey: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford University Press, 2012) offers a basic and up-to-date introduction.
- The CIA fact book is useful and contains good background information, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tu.html.
- Birol Yesilada and Barry Rubin, eds., *Islamization of Turkey under the AKP Rule* (Routledge, 2013), contains an introduction and six expert essays on contemporary Turkish politics and society.
- The journal *Turkish Studies* often contains valuable articles, sometimes in special issues. For example, Volume 12, Issue 4 (2011) is on "Turkey and the Middle East" and Volume 13, Issue 2 (2012) is on "The Issues and Consequences of the 2011 Turkish Elections."
- Among English-language editions of Turkish newspapers available on the Internet, Sabah is pro-AKP, *Hurriyet* is usually anti-AKP, and *Zaman* has a moderate Islamist viewpoint.

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