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The new issue for the periodical we have started publishing under the name "Foreign Policy Bulletin" since April 2007 now has a more inclusive content parallel to TESEV's expanded foreign policy vision and the wide range of working areas. As Turkish internal politics are closely focused on the elections lately, we wanted to drift away from the heated discussions on the parliamentary elections and shift the focus to issues of external politics which are of equal importance.

In this issue you can find comprehensive analyses and concrete suggestions for the solution of the crisis in Northern Iraq and the Kirkuk question, which are the most intriguing foreign policy matters in Turkey at the moment. With the articles discussing the current situation of Turkey-European Union relations, the EU's Iran strategy and evaluating the political portrait of the changing transatlantic relations, we aimed to give the reader the opportunity to examine the new horizons within the European Union's external affairs agenda.

Apart from these, you will find an article on the current situation in France after the elections, and the outlook on the times to come. A prospective approach on the Armenian-Turkish relations after the elections in Armenia was written from first hand observations. We hope that these and the rest of the bulletin will give the readers food for thought.

Sincerely,

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mensur Akgün
Director/ TESEV Foreign Policy Programme

Has the EU Got Its Iran Strategy Right?

Richard Youngs, FRIDE, Madrid

European governments are right to oppose military action against Iran. There is widespread agreement that strategies of overt confrontation have played and are likely to play into the hands of hard-liners in the Iranian regime. Although the latter is widely disliked by its own people, most Iranians support their country's right to nuclear technology.

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The European Union (EU) has played an important and valuable role in keeping alive negotiations and engagement with Iran. Its delicate mix of dialogue, incentives and pressure has rightly been seen as an archetype of the nuanced and multifaceted presence, the EU's foreign policy can bring to bear. This certainly represents more than the kind of passive 'soft power' invariably (if often inaccurately) attributed to the European Union's international identity.

As further decisions on the tightening of sanctions now approach, the challenge for the EU resides in ensuring that its objectives with respect to Iran's nuclear programme do not undermine longer term aims. There is at least some doubt that the extent of the EU's focus on the nuclear dossier addresses the symptoms more than the underlying roots of tensions between Iran and the West. Arguably, the EU has expended political capital on a policy goal of containment that looks unlikely to be sustainable over the long term, even if modest concessions are won from Tehran in the short term. And it has pursued its nuclear diplomacy in a way that undercuts a focus on factors that might unlock a more firmly rooted degree of engagement and cooperation between Europe and Iran.

One consequence of the EU's (or the 'EU3') diplomacy since the discovery of Iran's nascent nuclear programme in 2002 is that support for

Iran's domestic reform has dwindled. Such support emerged and grew during the initial years of the Khatami government. The EU eschewed any aim of full scale 'regime change', but rather worked usefully at a low level in backing rule of law reforms and civil society actors. After 2002, European governments made the conscious decision to decouple reform issues from nuclear discussions. A common argument was that pushing Iran on too many fronts would increase the likelihood of nuclear cooperation between Tehran, on the one hand, and Russia and China, on the other hand.

By mid 2004, the EU-Iran Human Rights Dialogue had lost momentum and reform projects dried up. EU reactions to democratic reversals remained timid. Manipulation in the run-up to the February 2004 legislative elections, from which the regime banned nearly 4000 reformist candidates, triggered only tepid criticism from European governments. Indeed, a number of member states signed bilateral investment treaties with Iran just as the clampdown against Iranian reformers intensified.

In short, the period 2002-2005 saw a shift in policy from reform-guided geostrategy to a focus on nuclear containment. The increasing influence of Iran's 'pragmatic conservatives' on the nuclear dossier led European governments to the judgement that a trade-off existed between support for reform and security interests.

Events since the election of president Ahmadinejad in 2005 leave the notion of such a trade off looking at best like a chimera. Critics are right to denounce the tendency of some Western governments and commentators to vilify Ahmadinejad, misrepresent his more

colourful pronouncements or simply neglect the domestic-orientation of some of his more hard line positions. But at the same time, it is difficult to deny that many developments since Ahmadinejad's election suggest a deepening process of deliberalisation in Iran. A re-centralisation of presidential powers has been witnessed. Restrictions have increased on civil society groups and the press. This challenge to democracy relates not so much to Ahmadinejad himself as to the bifurcated institutional structure of Iran's political system, embodied in the influence of an unelected strand of power in the Islamic Republic.

While it would be a mistake to assume reformers are 'soft' on the nuclear issue, gradually it has been those conservative politicians frustrating internal reform who have pushed for a tougher line on nuclear cooperation. European governments have increasingly criticised the stifling of what had been one of the Middle East's most vibrant home-grown reform movements. This represents a belated recognition that it is at least sometimes mistaken to assume that a rightful trade off exists between security interests and human rights. Iran's deliberalisation started well before Ahmadinejad's election – his rise was indeed consequence more than cause of this trend. And yet Europe re-focused on the narrowing of political space only when a more direct link could be detected between such deliberalisation and Iran's more assertive nuclear diplomacy. In such instrumentalism lies a lesson for the broader enterprise of human rights support.

European governments are right to oppose military action against Iran. There is widespread agreement that strategies of overt confrontation have played and are likely to play into the hands of hard-liners in the Iranian regime. Although the latter is widely disliked by its own people, most Iranians support their country's right to nuclear technology. A spirit of unity in adversity has made it easier for the regime to clampdown on reform.

But the EU does need to monitor and understand more fully than in the past, the complex links between internal and external policies in Iran. These complexities suggest a need to avoid two extremes: that of thinking that 'regime change' is the secret to ensuring better relations with the West; but also that of thinking that it can be in the EU's long term interest to condone a drift away from reform as a condition for any deal on the nuclear issue. The EU needs to chart a way between these two extremes.

The EU needs to consider how in the current context it can provide oxygen to Iran's embattled reformist movement. It needs to consider how to develop reform-minded engagement, without being overly interventionist; but equally it needs to avoid pursuing a particular line on the nuclear issue – or indeed on the increasingly prominent issue of energy security – that completely subordinates the defence of human rights. In some senses, Iran offers more potential, good quality access points for reform support than other countries in the region that should not be neglected.

The advisability of more meaningful sanctions is inevitably difficult to determine. As always, a fine balance exists between the risk of sanctions undercutting reformers on the one hand, and ignoring domestic voices calling for firmer international pressure on the other hand. But if additional sanctions do win EU support they should at least be used transparently and as leverage not only for a nuclear deal but also for greater civil society and press freedoms. There is a growing perception that European views on sanctions are also increasingly coloured by Iran's potential importance as an energy supplier. While there exists no easy or generalisable conclusions on whether sanctions are likely to work, such perceptions are unlikely to contribute positively to the EU's broader and longer term aims.

New Stumbling Blocks on Turkey's Path Towards the European Union

Heinz Kramer, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Berlin

It is impossible to think of EU membership for a country with a socio-cultural and political structure that does not categorically prevent the possibility of a military coup or other form of undemocratic interference in the political process.

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Turkey's European Union accession process has undergone contradictory developments over the past few months. On the surface, the 'technical' processes of screening and preparing for the opening of new chapters have run smoothly under the German EU presidency. On the political level, however, the process has stagnated: the outlook for the future course of events looks rather gloomy.

After the turbulent Finnish EU presidency, which concluded with the provisional suspension of eight chapters from negotiations due to the unresolved issue of applying the Customs Union agreement between the EU and Turkey to the Republic of Cyprus, Germany took over the presidency with the firm intention to redirect the negotiation process into calmer waters. Berlin was rather successful in doing so because all sides refrained from taking up the contentious issues that had tortured the Finnish presidency. Consequently, 'technical' talks in Brussels proceeded smoothly and the EU was able to open the chapter on enterprises and industrial policy in April followed by the opening of two more chapters - statistics and financial control - in late June. Furthermore, the EU and Turkey were able to reach agreement about the programme that enabled the release of a considerable amount of European pre-accession aid. No wonder officials in Ankara and Brussels as well as in Berlin were quite content with how negotiations developed.

Contrary to some initially optimistic declarations from Germany's foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the presidency was unable to unlock the Cyprus impasse. Turkey continued to block the application of the Additional Protocol to the Ankara Agreement to the (Greek) Republic of Cyprus as the EU proved unable to open direct trade relations with the (Turkish) northern part of the island. In this respect, the German presidency's attempts were met with a firm Greek-Cypriot refusal to even consider a development that would remove its administration from the regulation of direct trade between EU member states and Northern Cyprus. Under these circumstances, Berlin avoided lifting the issue above the level of 'technical' debates among officials in the respective working groups of the Council. Nevertheless, the German failure is a clear indication that the Cyprus issue will remain one of the most difficult stumbling blocks on Turkey's road to EU membership.

This situation also indirectly impacts on the broader field of EU-Turkey relations. It impedes a satisfactory development of EU-NATO relations beyond a rather limited understanding of the Berlin-plus arrangements concerning cooperation in conflict prevention and post-conflict operations. Because Turkey is wary of its exclusion from the European security policy process in ESDP, it retaliates by complicating EU-NATO cooperation, often with reference to the fact that Cyprus (a member of ESDP), according to the Berlin-plus agreement, is not in a position to participate in NATO findings. Thus EU-NATO dialogue is prevented from going beyond the superficial to a deeper more substantial analysis and exchange of information. In the last few months, Turkey prevented talks on stronger cooperation

between the EU and NATO with regard to future developments in Kosovo as well as Afghanistan.

Furthermore, Turkey withdrew its commitment to contribute to the establishment of the EU's battle groups, most likely because Ankara saw itself insufficiently included in the ESDP's preparatory and decision-making procedures. All these moves, as much justified as they may be regarded in Turkey's view, do not contribute to the development of a pro-Turkish attitude in European political circles. Open signs of European discomfort with such behaviour are met by reproaches from the Turkish public that the Europeans do not sufficiently consider Turkish sensitivities and interests; thinly disguised mutual dissatisfaction exists where a sense of broad cooperation should prevail.

However, the political environment in which 'technical' accession talks have proceeded has deteriorated even further. The coming to power of Nicolas Sarkozy as the new French President upset the gentlemen's agreement to not openly touch politically sensitive issues regarding EU-Turkey's relations. Sarkozy, from the very beginning of taking office, left no doubts about his intention to change the course of Turkey's accession process. He firmly reiterated his conviction that Turkey is no part of Europe and, thus, cannot become a member of the EU.

Despite hopes that the nomination of the pro-Turkish socialist politician Bernard Kouchner as foreign minister could indicate a mitigation of Sarkozy's rigid position, the realisation that the Elysée and not the Quai d'Orsay will determine France's stance on Turkey-EU relations quickly became apparent. Consequently, the German presidency was forced to accept the French veto to the opening of the chapter on economic and monetary policy. For Sarkozy, this issue is exclusively related to full members of the Union and thus of no relevance for Turkey, for which the French President seeks a different type of relationship.

Such events do not bode well with regard to the debate about the EU's borders; Sarkozy wants to discuss the issue at the next meeting of the European Council in December with the

intention to form a common view among EU member states that Turkey has to remain outside these borders. Although the Portuguese government was quick to declare its opposition to the French president by declaring that in Lisbon's view Turkey should become a member of the European Union, it is highly unlikely that the Portuguese presidency will be able to prevent the issue from entering the agenda if France stays firm.

The best Turkey can hope for at the European Council in December is another confirmation of the deep rift between EU member states concerning the issue of Turkey's membership. However this will not prevent France from continuing to veto each development in accession negotiations that run contrary to its position. This will definitely further slow the already rather limp momentum in accession negotiations. Contrary to what some pundits maintain, it is possible to bring accession negotiations to a factual close by constantly vetoing further steps or by declaring such an intention without necessarily reaching unanimity among EU member states on such a move.

This already rather gloomy picture has been worsened by recent developments that shook Turkey. The political crisis that erupted over the election of a new president and which finally led to early elections in July did a lot to undermine the arguments put forward by Turkey's friends in the EU for keeping the road to membership open. The military's intervention into public life to prevent an outcome that it did not like and the support that this intervention received from certain political parties and other groups clearly revealed that the process of 'civilianizing' the military and of establishing civil control of the armed forces had not proceeded as well as planned during the so-called reform period of the past four years.

Even worse, the AKP government does not see itself in a position to successfully challenge the military and its anti-democratic aspirations and the vast majority of opposition parties tend to support the military's aspiration for acting as the guardian of the Republic of Turkey. This





situation can only be evaluated as a severe violation of the democracy principle in the Copenhagen criteria for membership of the EU.

As it is stated in the negotiation framework of September 2005, progress in accession negotiations will depend on progress in political reform in Turkey: the EU simply cannot ignore what is happening in Turkey. The European Commission will have to give a severe warning to Turkey in its next Progress Report that a continuation or even confirmation of this democratic defect will have negative consequences on negotiations. It is impossible to think of EU membership for a country with a socio-cultural and political structure that does

not categorically prevent the possibility of a military coup or other form of undemocratic interference in the political process.

Following the upcoming elections, it is up to the Turkish political class to effectively show that such fears are unsubstantiated. A declaration that the general staff is under the surveillance of the prime ministry may not be enough. Much will depend on the outcome of parliamentary elections and on the following presidential election. However, even a satisfactory development of affairs in Turkey may not change the French President's attitude, who seems committed to destroying EU-Turkey relations for some time to come.

Turkey, Northern Iraq and Kirkuk

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The government and the security elite have been inclined to disregard the Kurdish regional government.

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Following the US intervention in Iraq, Turkey's Iraq policy has shifted from the fear induced Northern Iraq-dependent policy, dominant in the 1990s, to a totally new approach that encompasses the whole of Iraq. Turkish foreign policy makers have proven that they could contribute by bringing together Iraq's neighbours more frequently than ever and becoming actively involved in the efforts to persuade Iraq's Sunni groups to take part in political processes. Indeed, such strategies vis-à-vis Iraq have resulted in Turkey's recent appearance as an accredited partner by other Middle Eastern countries. In fact, Turkey has been recently invited to meetings of the Arab League - the most influential regional institution in the Arab world - despite the fact

that the country is often seen as the enemy of the Arabs within the US-Israel axis.

Despite Turkey's regional profile improving, the conflict in Northern Iraq still looms large, directly affecting the country's Middle East policy and indirectly affecting Turkey's relations with the US and the EU. Much as it is a foreign policy issue, it is important to emphasize the fact that Northern Iraq has also become a domestic issue. Although Turkey is extending its perspective on Iraq, why does the Northern Iraq question pose a challenge for Turkish foreign policy? Another important question is, despite Turkey's expanding horizon, brought about by the political, economic and legal reforms encouraged by the EU accession process, how can issues in Northern Iraq still play an important role in domestic politics? A thorough answer to these two questions, considering both foreign and domestic politics as well as their transitivity, will help us better understand the Turkey, Northern Iraq and Kirkuk balance.

DOMESTIC POLITICS

Domestic politics can be considered part of the equation in two different contexts. The first axis consists of the focus directed at Northern Iraq, the possibility of a Kurdish state in the region and the negative implications of such a scenario would have for Turkey's security and PKK's subsistence. The second axis revolves around concerns with the current situation and the future of the Turkomans in Northern Iraq, especially in Kirkuk. It would not be wrong to claim that these two separate issues are regarded as two parts of the same problem due to the internal policy making ways of the government, political leaders' attitudes and the approach of the security elite.

The government and the security elite have been inclined to disregard the Kurdish regional government that has come into existence with the federal structure in Iraq; and much like in the 1990s, they have the tendency to perceive the two most influential parties in this structure - the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) - as tribal formations and thus their leaders as tribal leaders. On the other hand, political leaders have been more complex in their comments. Whereas rightwing parties, along with the new Democrat Party leader Mehmet Ağar, have been able to voice analytical proposals that differ from traditional solutions, they have also sided with the government and the security elite on issues relating to the PUK, KDP and Kurdish regional government. The main opposition party however has taken a firmer stance, defending plans for military intervention or the idea to establish a security region in Northern Iraq. If rumours are to be believed, then President Ahmet Necdet Sezer knowingly refuses to talk with Iraqi President Jalal Talabani. All of these actors therefore have been clear in their belief that a Kurdish formation in Northern Iraq will negatively affect the Kurdish problem in Turkey. The attacks by the terrorist organization PKK, and the martyrs killed in these terrorist attacks, have resulted in political elites, and the public, holding the Kurdish regional government, not the PKK, responsible for the recent turmoil. Northern Iraq has therefore become a central part of Turkey's currently intense domestic politics, where the security elite continue to struggle with the political elite.

Turkey's Northern Iraq policy is going through a rather ambiguous phase due to the possibility of military intervention, various threats, putting forth all stakes from both sides, and the atmosphere of constant tension.

Kurdish politics in Turkey has to be assessed from such a perspective. The systematic elements on which Kurdish politics are based also define the vicious circle that constrains this movement's progress. The extreme nationalistic and ideological attitude that marks the issue means that any need or desire to find solutions or show interest in it is, at best, irrelevant. War, violence, bloodshed, disappearances and immigration, used as tools of legitimization in Kurdish politics, are also the instruments used to rip the parties apart. Kurdish politics should have its own respondents and it should address a definite audience; no importance should be given to those organizations or formations that have been involved in corruption, bloodshed or violence both domestic and abroad. In a century defined by the war on terror, legitimate contact with a terrorist group is impossible. Progress in the areas of democratization and the extension of rights and freedoms may be able to help decrease support and display the outmodedness of Kurdish politics. However, when considering the current situation, Kurdish politics seems to prolong the future of certain groups and support for them. Remarks made by leading figures in Kurdish politics enabling communication between Northern Iraq and Southeastern Turkey cause the abovementioned actors to evaluate the domestic Kurdish issue in terms of security.

In the 1990s, the Turcoman problem in Northern Iraq, which Turkey was particularly interested in, reemerged in 2003 over the status of Kirkuk. The preservation of the rights of Turcomans has become a foreign policy priority and the close relationship procured with the Iraqi Turcoman Front has signaled that the Turcomans are under the auspices of the Turkish government. However, the electoral process and the preparation of the Iraqi constitution have revealed the variety of Turcoman opinion and how distant some Turcomans feel from Turkey. After a period characterized by little activity, the status of Kirkuk has now become very much of interest. The referendum that will determine Kirkuk's future will be held in November 2007. However, bearing in mind the current situation, these elections may



well be postponed. The recent nationalistic attitudes from both rightwing and leftwing parties in Turkey view the policies favoring the Turcomans in Kirkuk as sine qua non of any Iraqi policy. It is also possible to state that the Turkish public is deeply sensitive of groups at the center of Turcoman politics. Many expect Kirkuk to remain independent in order to guarantee the Turcomans' future as well as to hinder the building of a completely autonomous Kurdish state and to prevent the Kurds from obtaining the rights to Kirkuk's oil.

FOREIGN POLICY AND THE REGIONAL CONTEXT

Although Turkey has decent relations with the central region in Iraq, where a majority of Sunnis live, and the southern part, where many Shiis live, it cannot save itself from the vicious circle that relations with the North have become. The tense atmosphere may result in Turkey losing the advantages it has accrued in Iraq over the recent years. Turkey's Northern Iraq policy is going through a rather ambiguous phase due to the possibility of military intervention, various threats, putting forth all stakes from both sides, and the atmosphere of constant tension. This tense atmosphere, that has become an integral part of Turkey-Northern Iraq relations, has also started to affect Turkey's relations with the central Iraqi administration.

The most important barrier to military intervention in Northern Iraq is seen as American presence in the region. The comparison with the Syria case - that is to say the process that ended with Syria deporting the head of the terrorist organization - is not very accurate, since it overlooks certain differences between Syria's situation at the time and Iraq's present situation. Besides America's presence in Iraq, two other dynamic processes in Northern Iraq have to be taken into consideration. As state and nation building continues in Northern Iraq, Kurdish leaders are unlikely to be willing to cooperate in the elimination of a Kurdish group, including the PKK. The PKK, which is a stranger to Hafiz Asad, no matter how problematic it is, is a part of Kurdish politics. Apart from the excuses to not to destabilize Northern Iraq, choosing to avoid action against the PKK is of symbolic significance.

The establishment of a Kurdish state in Northern Iraq will upset the regional status quo and will be perceived as a development towards the abovementioned security problems. PKK terror will become a problem that needs to be solved

immediately and without further turmoil. The abovementioned domestic tension within Turkey may result in radical policies, including a possible military intervention. On the other hand, in the era of the war on terror, it is assumed that an intervention's legitimacy will be questioned less by the international community. The discussions about the necessity of an intervention should be put aside and attention should be directed to how the internal and external dynamics will change or how the regional administration will change in case of an intervention.

I believe serious lessons should be drawn from the Kosovo process in 1999 when Germany deployed troops. The time frame, starting with the prohibition to station troops in Central and Eastern Europe, the bad memories from the two world wars and the deployment of combatant troops in Kosovo, should be carefully analyzed. The question of the presence of Turkish troops in Northern Iraq and what they will trigger within the broader regional context should also be kept in mind. The troops sent to Lebanon will help to normalize the Turkish presence in the region but the long term procurement of this normalization is a must.

Another issue is to ensure that the Kurdish regional government understands the costs of constructing its future alongside the PKK. The threat-tension spiral that worked in the case of Syria can be implemented in this case if and only if Northern Iraq is fully aware of the mentioned cost. However, it would be too optimistic to expect Kurdish groups in Northern Iraq to fight the PKK. The point causing discomfort within the administration is the fear that military intervention would target them. If this fear is eliminated, an intervention may be acceptable for all parties, and an agreement achieved between Turkey and Northern Iraq will place the US outside such a context. Good relations with the US in both the Balkans and the Caucasus are in fact in the state of high tension in Northern Iraq. However, taking Turkey's potentially constructive role into consideration such doubts could be eliminated.

The step that will take the Kirkuk issue out of the picture is decoupling the Kirkuk and PKK issues. By its nature, the Kirkuk issue should be dealt within a different perspective, through multitrack diplomacy and by considering the international and regional concerns as well. The Kirkuk problem is

part of the whole Iraq issue and those who frame it with the PKK issue should be prevented.

Finally, this process has to be dealt with in harmony by both the political and security elites. On the eve of Presidential and Parliamentary elections and as the Northern Iraq problem has become an area of domestic political gain, questions are emerging about the management of the intervention process. The problem has gone beyond an issue of simple permission; it has actually become the question of building mutual trust in an era where power struggles are a common occurrence.

CONCLUSION

The discussions about Turkey, Northern Iraq and Kirkuk are placed in the center of Turkey's domestic

and foreign politics. On the one hand it is perceived by politicians as a vote and ratings winner within the electoral process, and on the other hand it has become a tool for the security elite to interrogate external political orientations and even longer term alliances. More recently domestic politics has become a determining factor in Turkey's foreign policy. On the eve of an intervention in Northern Iraq, I believe that it is really important to evaluate the risks of such an intervention with extreme care.

Compromising national security should not be even considered. However, among all the other factors I have touched upon, it is the only way to manage the process successfully and ensure the least damage.

The Beginning of the End of an Era – or Light at the End of the Tunnel?: The Changing Political Landscape of Trans-Atlantic Relations

*Ronald Asmus, The German Marshall Fund, Brussels**

The beginning of the 21st century has been bad for trans-Atlantic relations. The past seven years have been among the worst since World War II. Yet, there are now signs that this time of troubles may be drawing to a close. The wheels of history and political change are turning in a number of key countries, producing new leaders and a potential fresh start. Are we witnessing the opening of a new window of opportunity which could bring the US and Europe closer together?

What has changed? The first and most obvious is the changing of the guard taking place in several key West European countries. The key European leaders involved in the Iraq debacle are now all gone. The first to depart was

German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder. It is hard to find anyone who really misses him. While the former Chancellor enjoys his lucrative lobbyist salary from a Gazprom subsidiary, Chancellor Merkel and her diplomats are still contending with the consequences of his policies.

But now she is no longer alone in trying to rebuild bridges across the Atlantic. Nicolas Sarkozy's electoral victory portends a fresh start for both Europe and the trans-Atlantic relationship. For the first time in decades, we have a French President who has a non-ideological and normal view of the United States. Sarkozy's decision to appoint Bernard Kouchner – perhaps the closest thing in France

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** The views presented here are his own, and do not necessarily represent those of the GMF*

Sarkozy's decision to appoint Bernard Kouchner - perhaps the closest thing in France to a liberal hawk - as Foreign Minister is a bold one and could add a moral and pro-democracy dimension to future French policy.

to a liberal hawk - as Foreign Minister is a bold one and could add a moral and pro-democracy dimension to future French policy. Whereas *Realpolitik* may be a German word, it is in France that its practitioners have thrived. That may now start to change.

The chance to remake the US-French relationship is real. Some of us remember Jacques Chirac's short-lived flirt with Washington in the mid 1990s which came within a sentence or two of bringing Paris fully back into NATO. To be sure, that one sentence masked some important differences. No one knows this better than Chirac's then negotiator, Jean-David Levitte, who has returned to Paris to head a newly created National Security Council. Nonetheless, rarely have the stars been in better alignment for relations to improve between Washington and Paris.

Then there is Tony Blair's departure in London and the onset of Gordon Brown. Many believe that Brown will try to distance himself from the United States. In reality, Brown's arrival may also end up being good news for trans-Atlantic relations - if for no other reason than Tony Blair had become a spent force. Brown is even more knowledgeable about the United States than Blair and knows that a close relationship with Washington is compulsory for any British Prime Minister. And while the need to show he is different than Blair is real, he is likely to do so by emphasizing his domestic agenda and focus. It would be folly for Brown to distance himself from Washington precisely as Paris moves closer and the Bush era draws to a close. Brown will gain little with Democrats in the US if he distances himself at this juncture. So his own interest lies in reviving the trans-Atlantic relationship, not walking away from it.

Beyond these leadership changes, there are additional forces nudging America and Europe back together. The world is becoming a more dangerous place. Wherever one looks, the West - if one dares to still use that old-fashioned word - seems to be on its heels or losing ground. In Iraq, the United States is fighting what often seems like a losing battle. In Afghanistan, NATO appears caught in a stalemate. Barring a pleasant surprise, it is doubtful our current course on Iran will prevent it from acquiring nuclear weapons. The rise of an authoritarian and assertive Russia, pursuing its own version of democratic rollback along its borders backed up by its energy clout, threatens Western interests on Europe's periphery. On each of these issues, the lack of a unified West, able to bring its weight to bear in a positive fashion, is hurting the US and Europe.

There is also a growing awkwardness about our public estrangement on both sides of the Atlantic. America and Europe are like the couple who, having had a tremendous row, both wake up a bit embarrassed about their behavior and look for ways to make amends without admitting fault. In the United States, nearly all the Presidential candidates for 2008 are campaigning on the need to better relations with allies and improve America's image abroad. In private, many European leaders admit that relations have been on the mend during President Bush's second term. But thus far, no one in Europe - with the partial exception of Frau Merkel - has been willing to reassociate himself or herself with an American President whose standing continues to slide to historic lows.

All eyes are on Washington where the final and most important leadership change is now on the horizon. Without doubt, many Europeans - as well as Americans - wish that the US elections were this and not next year. It is still 18 months until November 2008 and two years until a new President and his - or her - team are actually in place in the spring of 2009. Can the West afford to wait that long? Is this President and Administration capable, in its

last eighteen months in office, of using this new lineup in Europe to begin to lay a foundation for a new relationship for his successor? If we were sitting in Las Vegas and had to place a bet, we would all probably wager that he is not. Yet, two years are a very long time in international affairs, a fact that has undoubtedly been noticed by America's adversaries.

There is one key country in Europe, however, that views many of these political changes with growing concern. And, it too is about to have a major election. That country is, of course, Turkey. The same political changes that give Americans and Europeans hope that better times may be on the way are seen differently in Ankara. The reason is simple. Whereas both Merkel and Sarkozy are more trans-Atlantic than their predecessors, they are also less supportive of Turkey's EU aspirations. And it is questionable that Brown will be as forceful or eloquent an advocate for Turkey either.

The stakes in Turkey's own parliamentary elections this summer are as high as in any election in Europe. And the campaign itself is likely to be, if anything, even more intense and dramatic. As Turkey's external environment is changing, the stresses within Turkey itself have also become more evident to the outside world. The country's future orientation on key issues, including democratic governance, modernization and the proper role of Islam in society are all being fiercely debated. There is a growing sense, both in Turkey and abroad, that the country is at a pivotal point in its history and in its internal and external orientation.

If we are honest, the prospects in Turkey for a positive breakthrough are far less apparent. Whereas the rest of the trans-Atlantic community may be starting to come back together, there now appears to be a real risk

The upcoming Turkish elections are an important test of the maturity of Turkish democracy.

that Turkey is drifting off in another direction. Its simultaneous estrangement with the US over the Iraq war and with the EU over its fading prospects for membership - coupled with the intense, increasingly polarized and nationalistic debate at home - are a volatile and worrying mix that outsiders find harder and harder to comprehend. At a time when the West should be embracing Turkey even closer to keep it anchored to the West, these changes are leading many in the West to hesitate or step back, unsure of what policies make sense or who to even support.

The upcoming Turkish elections are an important test of the maturity of Turkish democracy. Turks are wrestling with some profound issues and real differences exist in Turkish society over how to resolve them. But democracy - and more democracy - is undoubtedly the best way to resolve those differences and we can only hope that the elections will clarify, both for Turks as well as the outside world, which direction this crucial country will take in the years ahead. For the new leaders that have come to power in Europe, and for the next President of the United States, Turkey is likely to be an issue that will keep them more rather than less busy in the years ahead.

We are witnessing the beginning of the end of a phase in US-European relations. Trans-Atlantic love is not about to break out across the Atlantic, but the wheels of history are turning and a new window of opportunity is beginning to open. It is time to start laying the ground work for a new start in trans-Atlantic relations that will exploit that window. That new start should and must include a fresh start with Ankara as well.



The French Presidential Elections: Inconsistencies From the Left and Uncertainties From the Right

François Bafaïl, CERI, Paris

Neither socialist Royal nor centrist Bayrou were able to promote a consistent program.

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For at least three reasons, the French presidential elections have been crucial: first of all, for determining the place of the extremist right wing - the Front national - within the political scene. During the previous presidential elections, on April 21st 2002, Le Pen challenged Chirac with almost 20% of the votes. That sad day for French democracy questioned both French democrats and foreigners about the country's capacity to avoid xenophobia and compulsive sovereignism. From this point of view, one of the major lessons drawn from May 6th 2007 is the wide defeat of Le Pen who came fourth with only 12% of the vote, far from the other candidates. It is an important signal that extremism can be and has been rejected in France. This conclusion has been reinforced by the very low results achieved by other candidates from the extreme left wing, from the communist party and from the Greens. None of them passed 5% of the vote. In 2002, combined they represented almost 20%.

The second reason concerns the Socialist party. It was profoundly concerned by its rejection 5 years ago when it won 16% of the electorate's support. In addition to that, this defeat widened in 2005, when important socialist leaders pleaded against the European Constitution, although they had been themselves members of the socialist governments of the 1980s which promoted the European Union. For both reasons, it was an absolute necessity for the socialist party to be present at the second round of balloting this year. The last reason concerns Sarkozy's capacity to be considered different

from Chirac and his leadership. His whole strategy was to make a break with Chirac's legacy, although he has been a very influential member of the government during the past five years. Nicolas Sarkozy, as a candidate, has really succeeded, since he won the elections with more than 53% of the votes, thanks to the conviction that he could solve the numerous issues in a very different manner from his predecessor.

But does analysis of this election simply extend to the fact that the extreme right no longer represents an important aspect of political life in France, that the left remains a force and that the right has overcome 12 long years of Chirac's presidency? Some other lessons must be drawn. The first of them is about democracy, in which 85% of the electorate reaffirmed their faith in on both April 23rd and May 6th. Three days before the second round, on May 3rd, 23 million French citizens watched the live TV debate between the two candidates, which lasted for 2 hours 40 minutes and until late into the evening. For a country often portrayed as apathetic, it was a first and absolute success. Such political mobilization has crossed boundaries, particularly among the youth and in the suburbs, which have been said to be radically hostile to politics. The second reason is the lack of unity among the French electorate, and more precisely the socialist party's lack of consistency and the evanescence of the centre.

Among the surprising features of the presidential campaign were both the emergence of a socialist leader who was never a major player within the Socialist Party itself (Ségolène Royal) and the resurgence of the centre, represented by François Bayrou. Nevertheless

neither the “popular democracy”, promoted by Ségolène Royal, nor the new hope, supported by Bayrou, succeeded. The so called “popular democracy”, based on direct contact between the people and their leader, was revealed to be something of a marketing ploy without real consistency. Indeed, the socialist party's inability to accede to the Elysée is certainly because she too often appeared very imprecise on some sensitive debates, ignored the right data and avoided difficulties. Very often she simply did not want to provide precise answers to some important questions, like on foreign policy, including the place of Turkey in the EU and the role of Iran, etc. During a long initial period, she always said that she would follow what the people would say. On being asked by a journalist how she would stimulate growth, she answered “growth will be because I am convinced of it”. Once, she appeared angry, arguing that such a question would not be asked to a male candidate and on another occasion she even disappointed her supporters by praising the Chinese judicial system. She also tried to compete with Sarkozy on topics considered to be the prerogative of the right wing of French politics, like domestic security and nationalism. Royal wanted to appear free of, or unrestricted by, the party and other socialist leaders (called “the elephants”) as well as the media. Completely absorbed by her direct contact with the people - something like a mystic or psychic link -, she seemed not to understand that such an election cannot be won without a clearly identified project, embedded in a party that has the capacity to win an election. Basing her speeches only on her self-confidence, she failed to attract wider popular support from the left. Instead of being the legitimate manifestation of support for the socialist project, the 47% she won seems to have been motivated by a fear of Sarkozy's project.

In this context, the success of the centrist candidate was made possible when he realized that he could appear as a new challenger, different from Sarkozy (despite being a member of Chirac's governments). Nevertheless Bayrou failed to understand that even if France was to

From the international perspective Sarkozy's campaign spoke of a reinforcement of French–American friendship as well as the European Union, by fostering the French–German association and limiting the borders to the current EU and thus halting further enlargement.

be ruled from the centre, a unified camp is a prerequisite; a presidential election can be only won when based on clearly defined projects. Neither socialist Royal nor centrist Bayrou were able to promote a consistent program.

Undoubtedly, Sarkozy's project is legitimate as it is based on 53% of votes. The content of his campaign was clear, strong and based on some simple messages. On the domestic front, Sarkozy pledged full employment in 5 years, the liberalization of the workplace and dismantling of the 35 hour week; on the issue of domestic security he spoke of controlling immigration and reinforcing borders; on national identity he supported an active policy of “accepted migration”, fostering qualified individuals and avoiding non-speaking migrants; on education, he promised to give authority to teachers. From the international perspective his campaign spoke of a reinforcement of French American friendship as well as the European Union, by fostering the French German association and limiting the borders to the current EU and thus halting further enlargement. This project has been assessed by well-known economists who say it can solve the long unresolved issue of unemployment. It can also restore French authority in a very skeptical EU. Finally, the President will be able to push the country towards a new path of both growth and employment. The challenge of his politics is to combine the strong French centrist tradition, which he has never rejected, and a new one, inspired by “Blairism” and based on liberalization. In this sense, Sarkozy is the successor of Gaullism, based on strong public champions and national foreign policy. Simultaneously, he is the child of a new epoch immersed in globalization, which calls for more liberalization.

But liberalisation has never been a successful experience in France. Giscard d'Estaing failed



to implement it in the 1970's. Thus, the first risk of such politics is that liberalism is often linked to the centre yet Sarkozy's current trajectory has been right wing. The second risk concerns foreign policy and particularly his EU policy. If domestically, the new president is in favor of liberalizing economic markets, abroad he is perceived as a strong French sovereignist as he is opposed to too much international markets. Hence the position vis-à-vis Turkey, which is strongly rejected not only for religious and geographical reasons, but mainly because the country represents a political problem due to the lack of EU political force. In this sense, Sarkozy is similar to his predecessors who have never considered the EU being based on anything but the French model. The challenge is that now the EU is fully globalized and Sarkozy

is expected to modify his view, unless he wants to remain isolated within the EU, which could hinder his liberal vision. The last risk is linked to his personality. A British journalist once wrote, if Mrs. Royal has a problem it is because of her politics, but if Mr. Sarkozy has a problem it is because of himself. Uncertainty about his politics is, certainly, linked to his character, often described as a blend of frank, if not brutal, mode of speaking and a tendency to authoritarianism. Some observers speak, therefore, of a new "bonapartism". Under such conditions, what convinced the French people in the first place could in fact become a liability if difficulties arise in the uncertain but nevertheless fascinating blend of liberalism and "bonapartism" to be implemented in a country that has long faced domestic problems.

Post-Election Prospects for Armenian-Turkish Relations

Tigran Mkrtchyan, European Regional Academy, Yerevan

The year 2007 may prove to be crucial in the relations between Armenia and Turkey, as elections in both countries are underway. Armenia held its parliamentary elections in May and Turkey will have its elections for the Parliament in July 2007 which will be followed by the Presidential elections.

The first question, which could rise after those elections, is whether we should expect any positive shifts or any amelioration in relations between Armenia and Turkey.

The elections in Armenia reasserted the Republican Party as the dominant party in Parliament. This means that the said party will have an equally great chance of asserting itself in power during Presidential elections due in February 2008. As such, Armenia's foreign policy is likely to continue, albeit with minor changes, for the foreseeable future. After all, it was under the supervision of the current Prime Minister of Armenia and the leader of the Republican Party, that Armenia's National Security Strategy was formulated and confirmed.

Currently there are two issues which serve as the main hurdles to the restoration of Armenian-Turkish relations: the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, with the ensuing Turkish embargo of Armenia (with closed borders and no diplomatic relations), and the 1915 Armenian Genocide issue.

Officially, Armenia has ascertained that relations with Turkey have no pre-conditions whatsoever. The Armenian security strategy mainly concerns the provision of Armenia's independence and territorial integrity, the

The elections in Armenia reasserted the Republican Party as the dominant party in Parliament.

survival of the Armenian people in and outside of Armenia, the development of a free market and its successful democratization. A similar approach is adopted by almost every state, because every state seeks to ensure its survival. Thus 'survival is a prerequisite to achieving any goals that states may have'.

Having said that, we should underline that Armenia has viewed the issue of 1915 from such a survival-ist prism. It is assumed that rejection might mean the possibility of recurrence. In addition, and even more importantly, this is a moral issue and it will likely be on the foreign policy agenda of a newly formed Armenian government - though not as a precondition - in the foreseeable future. Indeed there could be various political views in Armenia about the nuances of the Genocide recognition issue. For example, its priority (whether it should be the most important aspect of the country's foreign policy, one of the issues or not a foreign policy agenda issue at all), the pressure exerted (whether recognition should come from within Turkish society or due to external pressure) and its timing (whether Turkey should recognize it before EU membership or in due course) - but there is an overall consensus that Turkey should recognize that the Armenian massacres committed by the Young Turks equate to an act of Genocide as defined by international law sooner or later.

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In economic terms, the Turkish embargo has lost its efficiency as Armenia has re-adapted itself to the set conditions and has experienced good economic growth rates in the past few years.

Nevertheless, I would think that the issue needs to be more precisely presented. The lack of precision on the Armenian side has created a sense of misperception in Turkey. This precision lies in forming or having a clearly stated doctrine of Genocide policy. It should clearly state what is expected from recognition, whether a moral, material, territorial, or some other issue is at stake, how those claims are justified, and whether it is the Armenian state or the Diaspora who is responsible for that policy. The lack of a clear approach further complicates the nature of this issue. Indeed, after the change in government in Armenia in 1998, the new elites were much tougher in their relations with Turkey compared to the previous ones. But it is a positive sign that the Armenian government constantly stated that it had no preconditions for establishing relations with Turkey. Also one can notice an improvement in approaches towards Turkey in the National Security Strategy document released recently, where the vocabulary regarding Turkey is more careful and leaves room for an improvement in relations. Otherwise, the guidelines of the same Strategy, which were under discussion from early 2005, were much more critical of Turkey, indirectly terming it as an 'enemy state'.

So positive movements are evident but that is not satisfactory and much more needs to be done in this regard.

The elections in Turkey on the other hand are to be held in July. It may seem that the results of those elections are even more significant for the amelioration of relations between Armenia and Turkey. The positions of political forces in Turkey regarding Armenia are not as similar as it might initially seem. The AKP has had a more positive stance in this regard.

In its 2002 election campaign, the AKP promised to take a fresh look at Armenia, to encourage trade and to include active politicians from the Armenian community to create a larger alliance of minorities for upcoming elections. The AKP were partially successful in fulfilling its promise. Also, the initial preconditions made by Turkey were several - such as the withdrawal of Armenian forces from territories under the control of Armenian forces after the war of Nagorno-Karabakh, the returning of Shushi, recognition of Turkey's and Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and their borders, the provision of a communication corridor for Azerbaijan and Turkey via Meghri, the reconfirmation of the treaties of Kars and Moscow, 1921 and the deletion of the phrase Armenian Genocide from the Declaration of Independence.¹ Now there are the above mentioned two preconditions.

In economic terms, the Turkish embargo has lost its efficiency as Armenia has re-adapted itself to the set conditions and has experienced good economic growth rates in the past few years. Therefore, while some in Turkey might view this embargo as a 'punishment' towards Armenia for the war in Nagorno-Karabakh, in reality the main losers of this situation are the local communities in the northwestern regions of Armenia and the eastern regions of Turkey. Politically however it hurts Turkey far more as such a stance does not cohere to any European perspectives which Turkey currently pursues. Also the international community accepts that the OSCE Minsk Group has the mandate to mediate peace talks on Nagorno-Karabakh, which recently it has been doing successfully. Turkey has not objected to this. Therefore, in terms of international politics it is unacceptable to support one process multilaterally and implement the contradictory policies on a bilateral level.

It may seem that this is a mistaken Turkish policy that lets Azerbaijan dictate Turkish

¹ *The Turkish General Staff has held a much tougher position in this regard; the web site of TGS identifies the "Armenian Issue" as one of Turkey's key security concerns. Likewise, the TGS can by no means question any issue, which puts under question the purity of their forerunners, the Ottoman officers corps, out of which the Young Turks and Kemal Ataturk came. And the "Armenian Issue" in this context is perceived to be one of the threats to the survival of the form of state and ideology (Kemalism - the army being its staunch defender) on which the country is currently based. Therefore, only changes from within Turkish society would lead to open debates on this issue and further recognition. However, this will require patience and even support from the Armenian side.*

national interests and that the Turkish national interest of reopening the border is still “hostage” to Azerbaijan (it should be noted that no state in the world, including Greece, has conditioned the establishment of any relations with Turkey upon Turkey's withdrawal of troops from Northern Cyprus).

But here we should underscore Turkey's new role as a key country providing Caspian oil and gas to the Western world. The gas and oil pipelines from the Caspian, bypassing Armenia, have the same trajectory of going via Georgia to Turkey where from they are delivered to the outside world. Thus, we cannot ignore Turkey's new role as a station for energy distribution, which brings great economic benefits to the country (the annual transit fee for Turkey from the oil pipeline Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan only is \$1.5 billion). The 'dictate' of Azerbaijan is in the best geo-economic interests of Turkey, though it is harmful politically. By opening its borders with Armenia, Turkey would indeed indicate that European perspectives remain in its priority, that it is not pursuing a zero-sum politics in the region, but rather a more inclusive policy of “both...and” and not “either...or”, and, following its National Defense Policy, stands for 'developing positive relations' and 'reducing all kinds of international tensions'. Otherwise, the current Turkish stance towards Armenia merely exacerbates the tensions in the region, isolates Armenia and spirals the security dilemma in the region by further forcing the formation of rival alliances.

So what are the further steps to be taken by the Turkish and Armenian states and societies, and other interested parties, to put the progress in relations on a more positive track and make them more predictable and precise?

The Turkish and the Armenian governments should:

- Initiate meetings and discussions of the key issues, which serve as impediments to

the normalizations of their relations, at bilateral and multilateral levels. It is positive that the positions regarding one another are softer than they were 5-6 years ago, but direct talks are the best means of solving problems. The Armenian issue, in various forms, has become an internationally debated topic and it can be used for internal purposes by other states as well. Therefore, the sooner the leadership in both countries understands that they are the key players able to solve all problems facing them, the better for both societies. No international forum or conference should be a missed opportunity for such meetings. Due to the decisive impact of the Turkish General Staff on political processes in Turkey, the Armenian government should simultaneously try to engage with the TGS as well.

- With the support of international observers, the occasional running and monitoring of TV and other mass media programs in both countries would lessen the propaganda of hatred, revenge and threat towards one another. The societies should be prepared for co-habitation. We are destined to live next to one another and we must live so in an honorable manner. There is nothing more dangerous than centrally directed public attitudes. Such social misperceptions concerning the neighborhood have often had tragic outcomes in history.

- The European vision should be the common ground for moving ahead with the re- establishment of relations between Turkey and Armenia. Armenia should be more specific with its policies of Genocide recognition and solve this issue together with Turkey. Several commissions and joint work-groups could be established which could discuss the political, social, demographic and other aspects of the issue in order to encourage public diplomacy and create all the incentives for that as well. On the other hand, Turkish membership of the EU should be supported wholeheartedly and





unconditionally. The sooner Turkey is in the EU, the closer Armenia is to the EU and the more trustful Turkey is. Therefore here we need a more genuine approach. The same European vision and international commitments should drive Turkey to revise

its relations with Armenia beyond *machtpolitik* (power politics) and by opening the borders and establishing diplomatic relations with Armenia, support the process of establishing peace in the Caucasus as soon as possible.

TESEV Foreign Policy Program

Cyprus Projects

Expert Meeting: Legal Aspects of the Republic of Cyprus' Accession to the European Union
24 May 2007, The Hague

TESEV organized an expert conference in the Hague in May 2007. A group of international law and European Union law experts participated in the meeting along with a team from TESEV to discuss the legal aspects of the accession of the Republic of Cyprus to the European Union. The talks focused on the background of the Cyprus problem, the representation problem of Turkish Cypriots within the European Union, economic isolation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and relevant legal norms with respect to the resolution of these problems. As a result of this meeting, participants decided to publish a position paper including the different views of the various law experts.

Democracy Assistance Dialogue Workshop

The Empowerment of women: The Case of Algeria
20 June 2007, Alger

As part of TESEV's work on contributing to the dialogue on democratization in Middle Eastern and North African countries, a workshop was organized in Algiers in cooperation with CIDDEF (Centre d'Information et de Documentation sur les Droits de l'Enfant et de la Femme). During one day event, more than 60 experts representing NGOs, international organisations, ministries and the parliament discussed the opportunities and obstacles in women's empowerment with a specific focus on women's legal status as well as participation in both public life and the labour force. The workshop was the second of a series of events that aim to tackle how the enhancement of women's rights contributes to the development of democracy in the Middle East and North Africa.

Round Table Meeting

The Alliance of Civilizations Initiative
25 June 2007, Istanbul

On 25th June 2007, TESEV's Foreign Policy Program held a meeting on the "Alliance of Civilizations" with Special High Representative of the UN Secretary General for the Alliance of Civilizations, and Former Portuguese President, H.E. Jorge Sampaio's participation. H.E. Jorge Sampaio commenced by emphasizing that the alliance of civilizations initiative was intended as a dialogue in various realms of international politics. He stated that its main aim is to reduce cross-cultural crises and to establish projects that build bridges, respect and understanding, solidify intercultural relations, promote dialogue among different nations and prevent global polarization. He outlined the Alliance's four priority areas: Youth, Education, Media, and Immigration. Sampaio described the Alliance's objective as to forge the political will to solve global conflict.

TESEV Events

Expert Meeting: “Legal Aspects of the Republic of Cyprus' Accession to the European Union”
(TESEV Foreign Policy Program)

■ May 24, The Hague

International Workshop: “Democracy Assistance Dialogue: The Empowerment of Women in Algeria”
(TESEV Foreign Policy Program)

■ June 20, Algiers

Discussion and New Publication Presentation Meeting: “The indivisible unity of the nation: Nationalism(s) that tear us apart in the democratization process”
(TESEV Democratization Program)

■ June 20, İstanbul

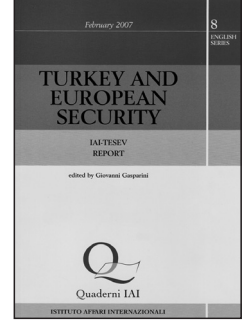
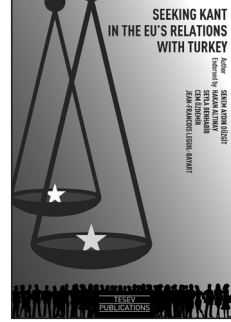
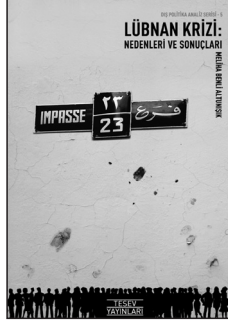
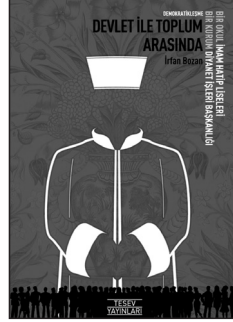
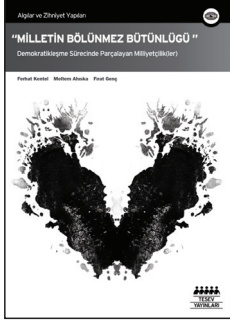
XVIII. NGO Symposium, “The Role of Civil Society in Local Administration Reform”
(TESEV Good Governance Program)

■ June 22-23, İstanbul

Roundtable Meeting: “Alliance of Civilizations, Special High Representative Jorge Sampaio”
(TESEV Foreign Policy Program)

■ June 25, İstanbul

TESEV Publications



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