

*Article*

# Navigating in Strong Winds: Turkey Challenged

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## Abstract

Turkey has been challenged to adjust to several global and regional developments in shaping its foreign policy: the end of the Cold War; secondly, a geopolitical shift in focus by the United States from Europe to the Middle East; and an troublesome uncertainty as to the nature of world order in view of neoliberal globalization, transnational terrorism, rise of non-Western states, and the emergence of civil society. The Turkish government has evolved into a more independent political actor during the fifteen years of AKP governance and Erdoğan leadership, shifting back and forth between an opportunistic foreign policy that contributed to economic development and political stature, and a more ideological approach that emphasized civilizational, ethical, and religious affinities. The article argues that in a regional setting of intense turmoil a global context of indefinite structure, and a demanding domestic agenda, Turkey will adopt a problem-solving and realist approach to the conduct of its foreign policy.

## Keywords

World Order, Middle East, Turkey, European Union, United States, Russia

## Introduction

There are three developments that have deeply impacted Turkey's search for sustainable political stability, rapid economic development, and higher international status in the last twenty-five years. First and foremost, the end of the Cold War gave rise to geopolitical confusion that is exhibited by an increasing fluidity of alignments and a partial reconfiguration of world order that reflects the global and regional power/authority structures that existed after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the rise of China, turmoil in the Middle East (see Huntington 1993, 1996).<sup>1</sup> Turkey has struggled during this period to find a compass that will fulfill

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel Huntington articulated the most basic challenge. It was premised on the expectation that the rise of civilizational identities will supersede statist identities, and provide new fault lines generative of global conflict. If Huntington's conceptions had become dominant, then we would definitely

its foreign policy goals in a manner commensurate with its emergent stature as an important sovereign state with major engagements in the Middle East, Europe, and the rest of the world.

Secondly, the electoral dominance of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) since 2002 has supported the expansion of Turkish foreign policy ambitions and provided a continuity of leadership as best personified by the dominant role political played by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. It remains controversial to characterize the political identity of the AKP, which affirms secularism while being accused of increasing the public role of Islam in Turkish society and weakening the checks and balances of a republican polity. Regionally and globally, Turkey under Erdoğan has been a dynamic political actor, which is notable for efforts to resolve shifting tensions among principled commitments, ideological affinities, and pragmatic adjustments, sometimes accentuating its support of ethical and normative principles and at other times making pragmatic adjustments that seem to ignore or even contradict these principles. What is beyond controversy is the degree to which Turkey has become a more significant regional force and an innovative global actor during the period of AKP leadership.

Thirdly, and most elusively, the framing of world order can no longer be taken for granted and reduced to the interaction of sovereign territorial states (Kissinger 2014). The Westphalian framework of state-centric world order offers a first approximation for comprehending how power and authority are distributed, as well as how mutual interests are protected via the mechanisms of multilateralism.<sup>2</sup> The United Nations embodies this purely statist version of the Westphalian conception of world order, including a geopolitical component consisting of the permanent membership and right of veto vested in the five countries that prevailed in World War II (also known as the P-5).<sup>3</sup> This blend of statism and geopolitics no longer seems either descriptive of the geopolitical landscape or normatively consistent with the ethical and legal principles of the post-colonial era. The rise of non-state actors in the form of transnational extremist networks, market forces, and civil society organizations challenge claims of statist hegemony, while the geopolitical fix represented by the P-5 appears more and more anachronistic, hav-

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re-describe world order as post-Westphalian.

<sup>2</sup> Although not discussed here, it is important to distinguish between Westphalia from 1648-1945 when it was primarily a European, Western framework, given a hierarchical character during the era of European colonialism and Westphalia since 1945 when the state-centric character of world order became universalized as a result of the collapse of colonialism. This has meant that geopolitics in the post-colonial Westphalia has not been as explicit as during the colonial era, but also that its West-centric character has shifted away from Europe, centered in the United States, then shared with the Soviet Union, then asserted in a unipolar format, and now confused by the rise of China, the emergence of the BRICS, and the reassertion of Russia.

<sup>3</sup> This embodiment of Westphalia in the UN Charter did not at the outset question the legitimacy of European colonialism, nor did it raise issues about the role and relevance of non-state political actors.

ing been established more than 70 years ago at a West-centric time when the global South was still subject to colonial rule. Westphalian notions of problem-solving are also under stress due to the difficulties of promoting *global* public interests or human interests as these are understood in relation to such issues as climate change, nuclear weaponry, and regulation of economic globalization. The absence of stronger central institutions, in the form of a more autonomous UN, makes it virtually impossible to solve such global challenges on the basis of multilateralism, that is, intergovernmental negotiations that are dominated by the interplay of *national* interests.

The underlying conceptual question posed is whether in view of these fundamental changes it would be better to think of the global setting as post-Westphalian rather than as the latest phase of Westphalian world order. Or, alternatively, given the renewed surge of nationalism throughout the world, might it be preferable to acknowledge the reasserted dominance of state-centrism by sticking with the Westphalian terminology or by choosing a hybrid label such as ‘neo-Westphalian.’ (Falk 2016, 2004, pp.3–44). In this respect, classical Westphalianism in the period after the collapse of colonialism was weakened more by the rise of neoliberal globalization, and the growing influence of private sector corporate and financial forces, than by post-colonial geopolitical manipulations.<sup>4</sup>

This article will first consider these three major developments as bearing upon Turkey’s international profile, and then briefly assess specific dimensions of Turkey’s evolving relationship with the United States, Europe, Russia, China, and the Middle East. In this sense, the outlook taken here is late Westphalian, acknowledging the role of non-state actors and identities, but still affirming the statist core of world order as still the best descriptive summary. The Turkish national situation, as well as the regional and global setting, is extremely uncertain and unstable at the present time making the future even more unknowable than in the past, which can be partly appreciated as the failure by political actors to find a sustainable and coherent post-Cold War geopolitical framework that accommodates a wider distribution of power and authority to non-Western political actors and takes due account of the rise of non-state economic and political actors, as well as civilizational identities, in settings of globalization and transnational terrorism. This quality of radical uncertainty has led most governmental actors of sovereign states to exhibit caution and flexibility in their various efforts to navigate the windy seas of global political life. Turkey after some adventuresome initiatives early in the 21st century is no exception as it again pursues arrangements aimed at promoting stability and balance, although in the context of *independence* rather

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<sup>4</sup> By ‘classic Westphalianism’ is meant not only a state-centric world order, but also a West-centric world order.

than earlier during the decades of the Cold War through geopolitical *dependence* and alignment.

### **The End of the Cold War, the Rise of the AKP, and the Search for a New World Ordering Conception**

During the Cold War the geopolitical dimension of international life was dominated by bipolarity, with each pole associated with the two so-called superpowers, the United States and Soviet Union. Alignments were remarkably stable, and when shifts were contemplated as when leaders came to power with a mandate of realignment, war and intervention were almost sure to follow. This was the experience of progressive leaders and movements in the West that dared to question the premises of the Cold War, and equally so for those in East Europe who wanted to leave the Soviet bloc.<sup>5</sup> The exceptions were extremely rare, such as Cuba and Yugoslavia, and these societies paid dearly over time for the audacity of asserting their independence.

Turkey was reliably understood as comfortable during the Cold War decades with its junior partner role as a respected member of NATO, even allowing its territory to be used by the West to make extremely provocative deployments of nuclear weaponry close to the Soviet border.<sup>6</sup> During the Cold War, Turkey pursued a passive foreign policy even within its own region, reacting to neighbors in keeping with Cold War logic, consistently deferring to the priorities of Washington, and accepting its strategic status as a frontline state in implementing the overarching geopolitical priority of the West to contain and deter Soviet expansionism.

Even after the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Turkey maintained its same stance as during the Cold War until the ascent to governing authority of the AKP in 2002. The various secular leaders during this pre-AKP interim period were pre-occupied with national issues, including the control of political Islam, the counterinsurgent war against the Kurdish challenge, and the search for a resolution of the conflict with Greece and Greek Cyprus over the future of Cyprus. There was no significant questioning of deference to the United States or any exploration of the potential for a more activist Turkish foreign policy in the immediate post-Cold War years with the brief, partial, and contested exception of the coalition leadership role as enacted by Necmettin Erbakan, Prime Minister 1996-97, who controversially promoted closer Turkish ties with countries throughout the

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<sup>5</sup> These premises included the ideological postulates of capitalism. US interventions in Iran (1953), Guatemala (1954), and Chile (1973) were directed at nationalist governments that sought to mobilize indigenous resources to benefit the domestic population at the expense of foreign investment. Cold War rationales for these interventions were invoked, but the better explanations of these events relates to the radical nationalist turn in domestic politics.

<sup>6</sup> Compared the political panic that the prospective deployment of Soviet missiles in Cuba caused in 1962 that brought the world uncomfortably close to nuclear war.

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Islamic world, and was coerced into resigning from government by an ultimatum of the Turkish armed forces.<sup>7</sup>

Without any indication of disruptive intentions, Turkey embarked on a more independent line of international behavior shortly after the AKP assumed control of the governing process. In fact, Turkey at first accorded a high priority to gaining membership in the European Union while simultaneously reaffirming its NATO ties and overall relationship with the United States. At the same time, the AKP was eager to reestablish Turkey as a major influence and important presence beyond its territorial borders both for material reasons associated with economic development and for cultural and psychopolitical objectives associated with a revived motivation to assert a regional primacy reminiscent of its glorious Ottoman past. More than anyone else in the AKP, Ahmet Davutoğlu articulated this post-Kemalist approach to Turkish identity and its implications for Turkey's foreign policy, which was sometimes criticized by opposition forces as a form of overreaching, projecting neo-Ottoman ambitions and departing from the prudent Euro-American contours of Kemalist statism (Bülent Aras 2009; Davutoğlu forthcoming). Davutoğlu's own ascent to power from Special Advisor to become Foreign Minister (2009) and then Prime Minister (2014) was itself an indication that Turkey had become an independent international player in a manner that departed in some dramatic ways from geopolitical constraints operative during the Cold War. This departure was acknowledged in the West, and at first generally approved of in Washington as a congenial development that helped substantiate US claims that it could cooperate with a government led by devout Muslims.

Under Davutoğlu's leadership Turkey became increasingly active on its own within the Middle East and especially in neighboring areas that had previously been associated directly and indirectly with Ottoman Turkey, but also in new regions that were completely new for Turkish diplomacy. These included peacekeeping initiatives in the Balkans, Central Asia, and Caucuses, and a variety of more innovative outreach initiatives, especially in Africa, but also Latin America and parts of Asia. The independent line being pursued was dramatized for the West by shows of Turkish support for the Palestinian struggle that brought Ankara into direct conflict with Israel, and helps explain the increasingly critical attitude toward Turkey adopted by the world media.<sup>8</sup> This confrontation reached its peak, threatening war, in the Mavi Marmara incident in 2010 when Israeli commandos boarded in international waters a Turkish ship, under the control of a civil society organization, participating in a humanitarian mission to break the Israel blockade

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<sup>7</sup> Turgut Özal, while prime minister in the period preceding the end of the Cold War (1983-1989) prefigured the kind of activism that Turkey embraced after the AKP came to power.

<sup>8</sup> It is notable that the spark that ignited Turkey's tensions with Israel occurred at the World Economic Forum in Davos when then Prime Minister Erdoğan had an angry exchange with Israel's President Shimon Peres about the recent Israeli attack on Gaza.

of Gaza, resulting in the death of nine Turkish nationals.

Even more telling was the American reaction to an attempt by Turkey in cooperation with Brazil to forge an arrangement for the storage of Iranian enriched uranium that would ease the crisis building in the region with respect to Iran's nuclear program. There is some ambiguity surrounding the question of whether Iran and Brazil were acting fully on their own or with prior covert authorization by the United States. In the latter construction of the events, the US expected Iran to be unwilling to reach any acceptable agreement concerning its nuclear program, and thus it was supposed, Iran's rejection of the Turkish-Brazilian proposals would strengthen the US-Israel advocacy of a more coercive approach based on escalating sanctions. When Iran unexpectedly agreed to an arrangement that seemed responsive to proliferation concerns, militarists and think tank strategists in Washington began voicing strong objections, claiming that Turkey and Brazil were operating 'outside their lane,' and thus inappropriately given the unspoken ground rules of geopolitics.<sup>9</sup> In effect, Ankara was being told that salient issues of regional diplomacy, despite the end of the Cold War were to be treated as belonging to a geopolitical agenda to be addressed by policies decreed in Washington.

In some respects, Turkish support for the insurgency in Syria fell in between poles of deference and independence. On the one side, Turkey felt betrayed by the Assad regime in Damascus that failed to live up to its promise of political reforms, and on the other side, it was being pushed to take the lead in organizing an anti-Assad campaign by the United States, especially during the tenure of Hillary Clinton as Secretary of State.<sup>10</sup> In any event, the Syrian policy five years later is seen on all sides as a costly failure of the Turko-American interventionary approach. In Ankara much of the blame for this failure is assigned to the United States, especially considering the failure of Washington to appreciate better Turkey's objections to the use of Iraqi and especially Syrian Kurds (YPG) to put pressure on ISIS and Damascus, as well as failing to do more to share the immense burden associated with upwards of three million Syrian refugees that have entered Turkey.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Such a reaction presupposes the legitimacy of geopolitical criteria for determining the appropriate outer limits of foreign policy on the part of ordinary or normal states, that is, those lacking a global geopolitical status.

<sup>10</sup> This American anti-Assad push was part of its post-Cold War 'democracy promotion' geopolitics, centered in the Middle East, that contended that democracies are less inclined to fight one another and are more efficient participants in a neoliberal world economy. In the background, were political forces associated with Israel that seemed intent on breaking up anti-Israel authoritarian regimes in the region, starting with Iraq and Syria. For background see 'Clean Break' proposals. See neocon report prepared by a group working with Benjamin Netanyahu entitled "Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm" (1996) <http://israeleconomy.org/strat1/htm> prepared for Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies in Jerusalem.

<sup>11</sup> There are indications that Syrians are returning to Syria from Turkey to areas that have been cleared of Daesh domination, but it is unclear how extensive this process will be.

The present period, which can be viewed as post-Davutoğlu, is one in which the Turkish government is intent on establishing a new set of diplomatic relations based on bringing Russia in from the cold while not disrupting its strategic, economic, and diplomatic alignments with Europe and the United States. Such equidistance diplomacy seems highly sensible from a Turkish perspective, but it does collide with the anti-Russian stands adopted by Europe and the United States in response to Russian moves in Crimea and the Ukraine (for an analysis suggesting that accommodation with Russia is increasingly favored by European political leaders and governments see: Fisher 2016). With Trump's election as the next American president it may be that Turkey and the US will be on the same page when it comes to accommodating Russia if Trump moves forward substantively with his apparent pro-Putin approach when in the White House and Moscow responds in a responsible fashion.

What seems definite, however, is that Turkey is pursuing a far more independent course of foreign policy than it did during the Cold War. Such independence has probably been further encouraged recently by the 'wait and see' approach taken by the United States and Europe to the failed coup of July 15, 2016, which were regarded as a major disappointment, if not betrayal, by Turkey's elected government. These adverse impressions were reinforced by the harsh criticisms of Turkish crackdowns on those suspected of connections with the coup perpetrators that have led to a freezing of negotiations with the EU over Turkish accession and a very hostile perception of the Erdoğan in the West. These developments have shaken the foundations of Turkish political identity, and have definitely given rise to speculation of a possible Turkish turn toward China as well as Russia, and even membership and active participation in Chinese led economic organizations that do not include the United States.

Without notable effect, Erdoğan's Turkey has for several years taken the lead in expressing objections to the kind of geopolitical structure operative within the UN, being particularly opposed to the privileged position of the P-5, proposing reform of the UN along more strictly Westphalian lines that respects the equality of states by abolishing permanent membership in the Security Council altogether (Sputnik n.d.). Such a stand is more radical than the more frequent call for an expansion of the P-5 to be more reflective of the present geopolitical hierarchy and more geographically and civilizationally representative, with calls to add India, Brazil, Nigeria or South Africa, Japan as permanent members of the Security Council with (or without) the veto. The Turkish proposed reform package challenges the geopolitical dimension of the UN structure in a more fundamental manner.

Another challenge to Cold War arrangements is the rise to prominence of the BRICS, seen as a deliberate geopolitical move to upgrade the role of non-West-

ern major states in directions at odds both with the UN structure, Cold War bipolarity, and neoliberal unipolarity. China has taken the lead here with such institutional innovations as the Asia Infrastructural Development Bank with 46 members (including Germany, France, Brazil, and Iran) established in 2015.

It seems evident that a new geopolitical order has not assumed a definitive shape as yet, although it also clear that the ‘unipolar moment’ that followed the Soviet collapse has passed, and that many countries now enjoy considerable space for political, economic, and diplomatic maneuver. There may ensue a period where there is no coherent geopolitical structure, with various tendencies present, ranging from a continuing global war on terror to a second Cold War to a new set of alignments and rivalries associated with a rising China and newly assertive Russia (Kupchan 2012). How Turkey responds in such an atmosphere of radical uncertainty will challenge the political imagination of its leaders, and is likely to encourage adherence to Turkey’s turn toward pragmatism and away from ethical principles and ideological affinity.<sup>12</sup>

Legitimizing a new world order depends not only on the actual relations of power and authority, but also on the degree to which such an arrangement is perceived as fair and reflective of existing power relations by leading political actors. Whether Westphalian type thinking that reduces order to relations among territorial sovereign states can adequately capture the present historical moment in which a wide variety of non-state actors and networked relationships strongly influence behavior seems problematic over time (for global implications of networking see Slaughter 2004, 2016).<sup>13</sup> It is also a period in which earlier democratizing and globalizing expectations are being modified, if not displaced, by the rise of right-wing populism and ultra-nationalism throughout the world.

### **Principal Relationships Reconsidered**

*United States.* The possible repositioning of Turkey’s relationship with the United States casts a shadow of uncertainty over any assessment of what to expect in the coming years. At one extreme is a rather radical triangular relationship between

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<sup>12</sup> It can be argued that the Turkish approach to the Arab World after the uprising of 2011 epitomized a turn toward principle (anti-authoritarianism) and ideological affinity (sectarian support for the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Gaza, and Syria; solidarity with the Palestinian struggle). In the last several years Turkish has followed a more pragmatic line, including normalizing relations with Israel at the partial expense of the Palestinians and even making overtures to Egypt despite the crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood by the Sisi government. The pragmatic orientation does not pertain across the board. Erdoğan has recently reaffirmed his affirmation of the Palestinian struggle, and supported UNESCO’s criticisms of Israel’s failures to protect Muslim sacred sites in Jerusalem.

<sup>13</sup> Contrast Kissinger, who insists that there is no viable alternative at present to a universalized acceptance of the Westphalian framework with Falk, who argues that there is emergent for a variety of reasons, especially the declining historical agency of military power and the rise of non-state actors and transnational market forces, a ‘new geopolitics’ that cannot be usefully fit within the Westphalian framework.

Russia, the United States, and Turkey that strikes compromises on the difficult persisting challenges in the Middle East, especially as pertaining to Syria and Iran. With Trump's seeming flexibility and Putin's definite bid for a working relationship with the United States based on mutual interests, Turkey would be a natural partner in working out an arrangement that successfully achieves a cease-fire in Syria, coordinating efforts against both Islamic extremists and political transition, and agreeing on a plan to uphold the Iran P-5 + 1 nuclear deal (Higgins 2016). Such cooperative diplomacy would undoubtedly be opposed by some sections of the national security establishment in Washington, by the powerful Israel lobby, and by the dogmatically anti-Erdoğan Turkish diaspora. Whether such a diplomatic process emerges will be an indicator of how contradictory pressures toward Middle East security policy are likely to be resolved within the Trump presidency. Of course, efforts to move in such accommodationist directions could encounter obstacles as these three political actors view the contours of acceptable compromise in incompatible ways.

There is also a distinct possibility that the probable refusal of the United States to grant Turkey's request for the extradition of Fethullah Gülen could lead to serious tensions in the near future between the two countries. Especially, if Erdoğan and his associates are convinced that the US Government played an active role in July 15th failed coup, and the West continues to feature strident criticism of Turkish internal policies toward opposition elements, a real break in the alliance relationship would become a distinct possibility. If these tensions arise in a context where Russia, the United States, and China have moved in accommodationist directions, then a Turkish turn toward Asia, especially China and Russia could be expected. Yet there are reasons to believe that a recalibration of US and Turkish relations in the Middle East will yet be able to produce a coordinated approach. In an important interview, the Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu somewhat optimistically insisted that “..we can again become two allies motivated by a common vision.” (‘FM Çavuşoğlu: Turkey, US can once again become allies motivated by common vision with Trump administration’ n.d.)

*Europe.* Unless Europe's present posture toward Turkey, epitomized by official EU criticism of Turkish violations of human rights leading to the suspension of EU accession talks, is soon reversed, there is a strong prospect of a further deterioration of relations, although not a disruption of trade and investment that remains vital for both Europe and Turkey. This deterioration would be further aggravated if the 2016 migration agreement between Turkey and the EU collapses, and large numbers of migrants again cross Turkish borders to reach European destinations. As with the United States, there are strong strategic and economic reasons for the EU to do its best to avoid allowing strained relations with Turkey to be an occasion for a real break that would weaken NATO and worsen the economic

situation in Europe. At the same time, European hostility to immigrants, especially those from Muslim countries, could push the EU toward an even more confrontational posture with respect to Turkey.

*Russia.* It is possible that if the hardliners in Washington prevail, and US relations with Russia do not improve, Turkey would be in a stronger position to maneuver, possibly either seeking continuity with the US or cooperative problem solving with Russia. If relations with the US (and the EU) worsen, then it will be increasingly plausible for Turkey to think in terms of realignment, featuring Russia and China. Such a development would amount to a major modification in geopolitical structure even if no major rupture occurs. As Mr. Çavuşoğlu made clear, Turkey gains leverage elsewhere in the world to the extent that it establishes positive working relations with any of the major political actors.

*China.* If relations with the US and the EU deteriorate, a turn toward China by Turkey is quite likely, with important strategic, economic, and diplomatic consequences. A closer relationship with Turkey would help China make its own transition from being a regional power in Asia-Pacific to becoming a global power. From Turkey's perspective an upgrading of its relations with China would both give it more negotiating leverage in the West, and help fulfill Turkish ambitions to be more active internationally beyond its immediate neighborhood. It is possible that conflict patterns will lead Turkey to create positive relations with Iran as well as with China, creating a cooperative triangular set of relations among Ankara, Tehran, and Beijing. Such a scenario envisions a new geopolitical balance that is formed on the one side by the US, Russia, and EU, and on the other side by a reconfigured BRICS grouping with Russia dropping out by achieving a primary identity as its positive relations with the West, and several countries, including Turkey, being included.

The opposite dynamic is also possible, stemming from growing tensions between China and the United States, exerting pressure on Turkey to make a difficult choice. This kind of development has become more relevant given the Trump presidency, with its expected warming of relations with Russia and chilling relations with China over trade, monetary policy, and South Asian island disputes.

These speculations are admittedly highly speculative, but take account of the likely seismic changes in geopolitical identity brought about by the tsunami wave of right-wing populism sweeping the planet, climaxed by the electoral triumph of Trump. Such views reflect a belief that world order is almost certain to experience important discontinuities in the years ahead, although their precise character is impossible to predict with any confidence.

*Middle East.* Turkey seems currently to have three overarching objectives in the

Middle East: First, to rely on diplomacy to lessen turmoil, especially near its borders, giving priority to agreeing on a Syrian ceasefire followed by a political transition process; so far, the diplomatic sticking point, pitting Russia and Iran against Turkey and the United States, relates to the role and treatment of Bashar al-Assad; secondly, to work with both Russia and the United States to defeat the Islamic terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq without discrimination, which means for Turkey the inclusion of the Syrian YPG as terrorist adversary along with Daesh (ISIS), al-Nusra, PKK; here the obstacle relates to the US support for the YPG as aspects of its anti-Assad and anti-Daesh policies; and thirdly, to establish as strong economic, cultural, and political links throughout the Middle East, and to bolster its leverage in such other settings as Europe and Asia. Turkey's optimal foreign policy goal is to work out cooperative arrangements with all major players in the region, including Russia, the United States, and Iran, on the basis of mutual interests, that is, in pursuit of a pragmatic foreign policy that is seemingly devoid of ideological priorities. If Turkey succeeds in implementing this approach to the Middle East it is expected to have payoffs in other regions where it will be taken more seriously as an effective political actor.<sup>14</sup>

## Conclusion

It seems fitting to end by again quoting from Çavuşoğlu's comprehensive interview. Mr. Çavuşoğlu asserts that Turkish foreign policy should be "...multi-dimensional, proactive, economy-dominated and based on strong humanitarian principles." The stress on economy and humanitarian concerns does seem to echo the earlier Davutoğlu approach of 'principled realism' as the most desirable orientation of Turkey toward the outside world. Of course, as always, the devil is in the details, and the test of such an approach will be its treatment of concrete policy challenges. Given the rise of populist autocrats throughout the world, it may be increasingly difficult to give real meaning to humanitarian goals if priority is accorded to evolving a maximum range of positive relations with political actors near and far.

Çavuşoğlu also stresses, with a certain originality, the interactive importance for Turkey of working out a multidimensional agenda in its relations with critical regions bearing on global policy: "The better relations we have with Asia and the Middle East, the more powerful we become in our relations with the EU. Similarly, the better relations with the EU mean a more powerful Turkey in the Shanghai Five."<sup>15</sup>

Of course, such guiding principles will have to cope with the radical uncertainty

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<sup>14</sup> This is the central thrust of the Çavuşoğlu interview, stressing inter-regional impacts of establishing positive relations in any important regional domain. See Note 16.

<sup>15</sup> The Shanghai Five are China, Kazakhstan, Kirgystan, Russia, Tajikistan.

of this period where there is renewed pressure on earlier expectations associated with economic globalization. The populist surge, with its nationalist form of identity politics, is skeptical about the present global economic and security arrangements, seeking a greater protection for high wage national economies and a smaller geopolitical investment in seeking to control the internal political development of foreign countries. If Trump follows through on his renunciation of interventionist diplomacy, it may lead to reduced political violence in the Middle East and elsewhere. It could also lead to a degraded willingness to help countries confronted by poverty or harms arising from global warming.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, Turkey has been slow to give attention to such issues as nuclear disarmament and climate change. In this sense, it has emphasized Westphalian logic that does not appear to have the capacity to address post-Westphalian global challenges. In this century, these challenges are integral to the foreign policy of a responsible international political actor, and it is to be hoped that the Turkish leadership will accord more emphasis to issues of what might be called 'global citizenship' as well as to the opportunities generated by the changing geopolitical context.

## **Bio**

Richard Falk is Albert G. Milbank Professor of International Law Emeritus at Princeton University where he was a member of the faculty for 40 years (1961-2001). He is Chair of the International Board of Advisers of POMEAS. Between 2002 and 2013 he was associated with Global & International Studies at the Santa Barbara campus of the University of California, where he continues to direct a research project on 'Climate Change, Human Security, and Democracy' in his role as Fellow of the Orfalea Center. He was the Special Rapporteur on Occupied Palestine for the United Nations Human Rights Council between 2008 and 2014. He served as Chair of the Board, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, 2004-12 and is now its Senior Vice President. In 2008-09 he was appointed expert advisor to the President of the UN General Assembly. He has published more than 50 books. The most recent are (Re)Imaging Humane Global Governance (2014) and Power Shift: On the New Global Order (2016).

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<sup>16</sup> Overall, Trump's 'America First' apparent withdrawal from present levels of global involvement would likely be first felt in the Middle East where the failed post-Cold War diplomacy of 'democracy promotion' and accompanying regime changing intervention has been most tested. One major shift in American management of geopolitics after the Cold War was a renewed strategic emphasis given to the Middle East as the region where energy resources, proliferation prospects, and Israeli security posed threat to vital interests of the West. In this regard, Europe, the former nexus of geopolitical commitment, was left to evolve on its own. This may change in coming years as the European Union seems likely to be confronted by a series of difficult challenges.

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