

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION
SAUL/ZILKHA ROOM

TURKEY'S POLITICS AND FOREIGN POLICY:
BRIDGING THE POPULISM/REALISM GAP

Washington, D.C.
Thursday, February 4, 2016

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. KIRIŞCI: We turned it on yet, yes. Alright. I'll give it another try. Welcome. Thank you for joining us this afternoon for our event where we're going to launch the eighth paper in our series, Turkey project policy paper series. I'm Kemal Kirişci, the TUSIAD senior fellow and director of the Turkey Program. And we will have Nora Fisher who is the author of our paper, who will present her views on it. As I am sure you are well aware, not a day goes by without the challenges in and around Turkey chasing each other. There's a lot to talk about. And what this paper is doing is looking at the way in which two forces, political forces appears to be competing with each other in Turkey in its domestic politics as well as its foreign policy, the one driven by populism versus the actual reality of what is unfolding in the region.

I had always thought that one day, Turkey was going to become a boring place and that I could move on to greener grasses and enjoy life a little bit. But today, I think you're going to hear from Nora, as well as the panel that neither Turkey nor Turkey's neighborhood is about to become boring. I hope nevertheless, it does become one day before it's too late for me. The way we're going to proceed is that Nora is going to reflect on the paper for 12, 15 minutes. And Nora is a very good friend and a fellow of the Transatlantic Academy within the German Marshall Fund of which I too was a fellow a few years back. She has her Ph.D. from Oxford, but she's a local girl, if you wish, received her first degree from Georgetown, as well as her master's right from next door, SAIS John Hopkins. She has published extensively, short op-eds, as well as major publications and I think you're going to look forward to hearing her.

Soner Çağaptay, who will be responding to Nora's paper is I'm sure a name that you're very familiar with. He's the Bayer Family Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Studies and he too runs the Turkey program the way I do. He's very prolific. It's very difficult to keep up with what he's writing. But especially a very recent piece of his looking at the Ottoman Empire and the current Turkey and they way the current Turkey wants to be shaped by the Turkish president is really worth a quick read. But he's also the author of the recent book called, "The Rise of Turkey, 21st Century's First Muslim Power." I don't know if he still feels that it's a power, but it's a Muslim one all right.

And then Alan, Alan Makovsky. He doesn't like when I say that he's an old hand on these topics. I get grilled for it. But, but then we're in the same boat I suppose. Alan has had an interest

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in Turkey and has been working on Turkey for a long time, partly for the state department at one point, partly for the House of Representatives, as a staffer, and now he's a fellow at the Center for American Progress. It's great to have you, Alan. But don't grill me, please for the word I used.

Kadir Ustun is a good friend and he's the executive director of SETA, a Turkish think tank that also has its offices here. He's the editor of a journal called, Insight Turkey, and I think the title says a lot about the journal itself. I would also recommend it as a regular publication that you might consider following very closely. Kadir too is a prolific publisher. You can reach his publications on SETA's website and has recently received his Ph.D. from Columbia University.

MR. USTUN: It's been a while.

MR. KIRIŞCI: It's been a while? Okay.

MR. USTUN: I'm getting old.

MR. KIRIŞCI: I'm the only one who doesn't have a Ph.D. from the United States. I think Nora, it's time to turn the floor to you, and we're looking forward to your points.

MS. ONAR: Great. Well, thank you so much for inviting me to write the paper, to all of you for joining us today and to this distinguished panel for so graciously being willing to comment on my work. I think we're all here because Turkey is a fascinating and crucial country for U.S. foreign policy towards the Middle East, towards Europe, and if this means the stakes are quite high in any debate about Turkey, it also means that Turkey watchers, like ourselves, tend to become quite obsessed with a lot of the details, which can sometimes mean that we lose sight of the bigger picture and broader trends in which Turkey is a part of.

And so I thought with this paper, I would take as my starting point a bigger pattern, of which I think Turkey offers a very good case study, and that is of the growing power of populism in politics today and the implications of this heightened style of populist politics for foreign policy making. Because I think it's a challenge not just for Turkey, but for the United States, for France, for Hungary, for Russia, and it's really a fascinating turn. What is populism? It's a style of politics in which an established or an aspiring leader claims to represent the people, the ordinary guy on the street, the supposed majority in order to gain and consolidate power. But they frame this project as a truth telling mission. They're going to show the cynical national elites if it's a domestic politician trying to obtain power, or that cynical

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international community if it's an incumbent politician on a national scene. And even though their missions, you know, those truth telling missions may differ in content, so in that the way Putin does it will differ from the way that Victor Chavez did it in Venezuela. But they use very similar techniques.

And one of those techniques or sort of strategies is to use very dramatic imagery but clear language in order to scapegoat others, to draw clear distinction between us and them. And in the rich world, this means the populous tend to point to poor migrants as the source of the country's problems. In the developing world, it often means the populous point to Western imperialist and their nefarious plans to continue ruling the world as the source of the country's problems. But it can lead to a liberal policy or policy proposals when you frame things in this way.

So we certainly see this in gay bashing in Putin's Russia, in Donald Trump's anti-Muslim stance. And all of this, regardless of normatively how you feel about the content of these platforms, all of this is problematic for foreign policy making. Because good foreign policy requires embracing the gray areas, it requires being able to make compromises as well as being able to do fabulous grandstands. It requires being able to build and sustain coalitions and it requires recognizing in a dispassionate way that your rival in one arena might be your partner in another arena.

So I think Thomas Friedman really captures the gap here between the logic of domestic populism and the logic of foreign policy making when he said that it's like playing by the rules of Go Fish, some of you might remember that from college dorm days. It's like playing high stakes poker with the rules of Go Fish. And it is this gap between sort of a simplifying, polarizing domestic rhetoric on one hand and the complexities of foreign policy on the other that is a trap I believe Turkey has fallen into, especially in the past two years.

But what I do in the paper, and I hope that all of you will take a copy and read it, spend, I know you have nothing better to do this evening than to kick back with a nice cup of tea or a glass of wine and read my paper, but I mean in a nutshell, I basically trace the relationship between domestic populism and geopolitical imperative in Turkey since the ruling justice and development party came to power in 2002. And I show that there have been three basic periods, one from 2002 to roughly 2007, 2008, in which domestic populism was really aimed at discrediting and displacing the then elite and the then political establishment, using a democratizing language in narrative, pursuing the realizing policies, and

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this was accompanied by the EU accession process, of course. So in that period, domestic populism and geopolitical orientation were both pro-Western in effect. They went hand in hand.

Then, from 2008 to roughly 2012, Turkey had its sort of so-called neo-Ottoman turn and this was framed as added value to international audiences in that Turkey was pursuing a sort of manifest destiny in the former Ottoman geography in the Middle East, the Balkans, the Caucasus', and although we were told that we shouldn't read this as a either or proposition and that Turkey's heightened influence in its regions was going to benefit its relationships with the EU and NATO, for example. Especially towards the end of that period, that language and especially just kind of domestic expressions started to take on a more anti-Western thrust.

And of course, it depends on where you sit in the West, or among the West allies. From a U.S. perspective, one sort of consequence of this new Ottoman turn during this period was that relations with Israel increasingly became grist of the mill of domestic populism and that created a dilemma for Washington needing to balance its close ties with allies in Israel and allies in Turkey. So there you see the populism, realism gap starting to create some tensions in Turkey's relations with the West.

Then, things became really much more intense after 2013 because this was a period when Turkey entered an electoral cycle of what looked to be three, turned out to be four elections. Municipal, presidential and then two national elections between 2013 and 2015, and during this time, the sort of domestic populous language that involved invoking anti-Western conspiracies and pinning these on the domestic opposition, and I might add that the domestic opposition also very much embraced a populous style and modes of response. So it was, you know, fighting fire with fire. And this led to a very polarized atmosphere. This actually really started to push against the grain of Turkey's regional sort of interests because this was a time period when the Middle East was becoming increasingly more complicated. You had the intensification of crisis in Syria of course. You had the emergence of ISIS. You had a very dynamic developments on the ground vis-à-vis the transnational Kurdish question, and these were all areas where that are vital to Turkey's national interests.

But because of the focus on the domestic agenda and the use of this populous calculus at home, Turkey wasn't really able to address these questions maybe to the extent that it would have been in both its interests and that of its Western allies. So at the end of this electoral cycle in November,

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2015, in principle there should be a moment to reset, right, to re-pivot, to square the circle so that the tone and substance of domestic rhetoric and policies matches up more with this new geopolitical environment in which there's very clear convergent interests between Turkey and its Western partners and the EU and the U.S.

In order for that to happen, and I develop this again in the paper, I think there's three areas that, three sort of domestic issues that were let out of Pandora's box as it were, that somehow need to be resolved and put back. And they're going to be the three big challenges. We can talk about them more perhaps in the discussion or afterwards in the Q&A, but just to name them briefly, there's the conflict between quote unquote seculars and quote unquote Islamists. I've never been a fan of those terms because in Turkey, like everywhere else, people have multiple intersecting and fluid identities. But one consequence of populism is that they tend to harden and so I think one of the casualties of the past few years in terms of the populist playing field has been there was a moment of fluidity maybe in the mid-2000s when there was a chance to really negotiate a post-Kemalist secular post Islamist kind of new social contract, new social consensus. And I feel like that's been, that window may have closed over the past two years.

There is a conflict that has been quite latent for centuries now actually, but it does, the specter of sectarianism in Turkey is starting to rise, especially in the context of the region. And that we see in the increasing tensions between Sunnis and Alevis that have also been exacerbated by the populism of recent years. We can talk more about how to address that and what the implications are, also for U.S. policies towards the region. Then there is of course the Kurdish-Turkish conflict and that's the most immediate and the most intractable. And that too, I mean of course, the reason why the peace process has run aground isn't only domestic populism, but it's certainly one important contributing factor. That has a lot of implications for Turkey, it has a lot of implications for U.S. policy towards the region because of the transnational nature of the Kurdish question. We see this most recently this past week in Geneva, when the U.S. found itself caught between its allies on the ground in Syria, the Kurdish YPG forces in Syria and its allies in Turkey who refused to have the Kurds come to, sit at the bargaining table. So the U.S. has a real kind of, dilemma there in terms of how it's going to address both its regional concerns and its bilateral relationship vis-à-vis the Kurdish question.

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There are a number of other arenas, again we can discuss more in the Q&A but on balance, am I optimistic that this potential window for closing the gap between populism and realism can come to pass? Not particularly and it's not because I don't love Turkey, because I do. But I do think there has been some quite fundamental changes on the Turkish political scene in the past decade. One of them has to do with the way foreign policy is conducted. It has to do with basically the privileging of very kind of dramatic and bold and brinksmanship oriented style of domestic policy making on the foreign policy level as well. And this is because previously foreign policy was the domain of kind of bureaucratic elites, the military with the displacement of these cadres in the past decade. That role has been increasingly taken up the Turkish leadership proper, by President Erdoğan. And he is a consummate domestic politician. He is not known for bringing to bear those compromise brokering, non-polarizing, willingness to work with ambiguity sort of dimensions that one needs to, to be able leverage to be effective in the foreign policy arena. So he's made some unnecessary enemies, Russia's Putin, he's backed Turkey into some corners and this is a function not just of his personality, but also of the increasing role that domestic politicians will have to play in foreign policy making in Turkey in the future.

A second reason I'm a bit ambivalent is I think there's been some real ideological shift over the past decade. The center in Turkey, the sort of de facto steady state used to really involved a pro-Western thread and strand, along with an ambivalent strand sort of sentiment towards the West. I think the populism of the past decade has really pulled the pendulum more to the nationalist Islamist and anti-Western right. And that's kind of the new normal in terms of the political grammar. So that's going to be a challenge to work with in the future. Western policy makers can't simply assume that everything is going to fix itself and Turkey will come back to a staunchly pro-Western sort of ethos and position.

And last but not least, there are the challenges of spillover from an extraordinarily volatile region. Certainly these challenges are not Turkey's fault, or it's you know, a very, very complex situation. But unfortunately the history books are filled with political leaders and movements that thought that they could mobilize populous passions, ethno religious passions, and control them towards their own agendas as leaders, as parties. In highly volatile geopolitical context like we have in the Middle East right now, the history books show that that is rarely the case and that these passions take a life of their own. And we're already seeing this happening vis-à-vis the Turkish-Kurdish conflict. It could, as I alluded to, it could, it

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could lead into sort of some sectarian tensions in Turkey.

So what to do about this? Well, I think we have to be realistic and pursue concrete outcomes and joint solutions in areas of clear common interests in the short term and then in the medium and longer term, we really need to recognize that if we live in a post American Middle East as foreign affairs suggested in its I think November December edition, that a post American Middle East cannot be a Middle East in which the United States is complacent, but where we have to be creative and where we have to be engaged. Maybe not at the—in the same ways that we used in the past, but we really need to reach out to broad sectors of the civil society level to this new generation of bureaucrats and young leaders in Turkey from the ruling party, from the opposition, and establish dialogs and institutional mechanisms to sustain bilateral relations in increasingly uncertain times.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Well, thanks, Nora, especially thanks for having managed to squeeze in such a rich and nuanced assessment of what's going on in Turkey within a bigger picture in a very limited time. I'm sure there will be occasions to go, go into details. I think we're very fortunate that Soner will be responding. Soner also tries to look at that bigger picture and we're looking forward to hearing your perspective on this, Soner.

MR. ÇAĞAPTAY: Thank you, Kemal and thank you for nice words about my book. I think I'm holding off the idea of writing the sequel for now. So still, the rise of Turkey. So I wanted to start of course by commending Nora and complimenting you on this study. I think this is one of the best studies on foreign policy I've read in a very long time. You do a masterful job of bringing what is generally thought to be two separate pieces, domestic politics and foreign policy in Turkey and showing the interaction. And not what most traditionalists would do, showing how domestic politics influences foreign policy, but directly showing to us as well how foreign policy is increasingly shaping Turkish domestic politics, whether it's the Kurdish issue or the fallout of the Syrian conflict in terms of the polarization, the polarized landscape of the country.

So I think it's a great study and I would also recommend this as your bedtime reading tonight. So if you have difficulty falling asleep and you don't do yoga, this will be very useful. So I wanted to take off a couple of the points you've raised, one of which is the gap between idealism and realism, which I think has existed and still does in Turkey's foreign policy. And I'll take a slightly different tact,

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angle at it. And I think the gap could also be seen as a gap that's whereby Turkey's foreign policy did indeed succeed in the last decade to make Turkey a stand alone, at most times, stand alone regional power with significant amount of clout.

So in this regard I think the test of the foreign policy was the Arab Spring, specifically when it became a war at Turkey's doorstep in Syria. That's where I think Turkish foreign policy elites have failed to react to the developments which put forward a number of challenges. I think the idealists, or as you said, the realists and the populists strains in foreign policy, the slightly tact I want to take a look at this would be say that at times Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East has been and is idealist, and at times it has been and is ideological. And sometimes, it's both.

So it's idealist because it really wants to do good. And I think this is very sincere in this regard. It's not guided by realistic aspirations. It wants to do good for the (inaudible) region. And I think part of that is of course driven by previously foreign minister, now Prime Minister Davutoğlu's own political philosophy, which you can find in his writings. And part of it is the Neo-Ottomanist rhetoric. I think Turkey's idealism is often couched in its Neo-Ottomanist rhetoric. The Ottomans were benevolent, absolutely. They were more progressive compared to their contemporaries. They invented religious tolerance when the concept did not exist to the East and south of Iran, or to the west in Christian Europe. They, it was not only a tolerant society, it was a welcoming society. You had Spanish Jews and Hungarian protestants and various other groups who had the kind of existence that they could not have anywhere else.

And I think this is carried into the present that the Ottoman tolerance can now be a model for the region, Turkey can re-establish this sort of an order, carrying out a legacy. But as all revivalists movements, I think Ottoman revivalism is at least in part imagined. And while the Ottomans were tolerant for their contemporaries, the Ottoman system would not be considered liberal for today. So there is one gap I think in terms of the idealist take of Turkish foreign policy and the reality that it faces.

Another tension I think is that as you again masterfully raised is the ideological aspect of the foreign policy, in the sense that—maybe the better word is partisan. That Turkey is often, or the foreign policy elites in Ankara often fail to build bridges with various actors in a given country in the Middle East, oftentimes siding with just one actor. And that actor is usually the Muslim Brotherhood Party, as

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you've raised, in Egypt, in Syria, in Libya. Now, the issue with putting all your money behind one horse in foreign policy is that if that horse wins, you win big. The problem is that if that horse loses, you lose everything. And I think the counterpart of Turkey's foreign policy doctrine in the region is Iran, which in my view, bets money on all horses. So it always wins, small or big, but ultimately gets something out of it.

So Turkey has been mostly and singularly aligned behind Muslim Brotherhood in the region. So it therefore failed to have clout, although first rising in Libya and Egypt and elsewhere. It's been isolated in those countries across the pretty much across the spectrum of the Arab world. But the most significant, of course, case of I think decline of Turkish power since the beginning of the Arab Spring is in Syria. Not only has the gap between idealism and the partisan attack left Turkey sometimes unable to respond to developments on the field. But also I think Turkey has been unable to react to the entry of new actors into the field, Iran and then Russia. What was a pro-democracy uprising in Syria turned into a pro-democracy rebellion, which then morphed into a jihadist state. And Turkey's foreign policy is still supporting a pro-democracy uprising.

So it needs to move forward two generations at least in terms of accepting the reality that unfortunately that's not the case in Syria anymore and that's not where Syria is heading. And I think Iran's, of course, entry into Syria, a county with significant proxies, intelligent assets and regional allies that Turkey lacks in Syria and in the region. And Russia is entering into the theater, a country that has a nuclear arsenal, veto power at the U.N., again none of these tools are in Ankara's hands, has really undermined Turkey's foreign policy. So I think that's where the partisan or the ideological aspect of it has left Turkey with some challenges.

The entry of Russia I think is very significant and I'm really glad that you raised that also in this great paper. I would actually say Turkey's foreign policy in Syria and in the Middle East, it could be called as BPI, and I'm just making this up now, API. Is that before the plane incident and after the plane incident. Everything has changed after the plane incident and nothing will be the same. Russia's entry as an antagonistic force against Turkey clearly is going to undermine Turkey's further aspirations, undercut Turkey's efforts to oust Assad, as well as force Turkey to pull back to its traditional allies. Everybody in Ankara including President Erdoğan that the reason why Putin did not treat Turkey after the plane incident the way he treated Georgia or Ukraine is because Turkey is in NATO. I think NATO's

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value in Turkey has gone up significantly, ergo the value of the U.S. So that bodes well I think, Kemal, and I hope that my other panelists will disagree with me on some of these issues, but maybe not on this one, that you're going to see a pivot of Turkey, both to NATO and U.S. as stronger alliance.

So in the long term, in terms of Turkey's foreign policy trajectory, I think after the plane incident, API is a good period in terms of Turkish foreign policy. It suggests a general alignment of Turkish, U.S. and NATO interests in the region. But there are challenges at home. And these are some of the challenges that you raise that I want to end up with. And maybe I'll take the point you raised and take it one step further in terms of how Syria, a foreign policy issue, in my view, is affecting Turkish domestic politics in ways that we could not have imagined only a couple of years ago.

So among the, in the analytical community here when we have discussions in U.S. government and elsewhere, but on media, I think one of the most frequent questions that we would get is, you know, whether the refugee issue would impact Turkey and how it would so and how we can prevent this from happening. And I think Turkey has done so far a really good job of handling the refugee crisis. It has two and a million refugees. The migration crisis in Europe right now is over 200,000 refugees and where they should go. Turkey is handling ten time of that on its own with little international assistance. So it's done really well. But I think where Turkey is unprepared and caught therefore, by the fallout of Syria, is how those issues in Syria are boomeranging just into Turkey. One of that is, as you discussed, the Kurdish issue. I think part of the reason the PKK has vigor in fighting inside Turkey is because it's found energy coming from PYD. Not necessarily weapons and personnel but energy coming from PYD success in establishing a territorial base, cantons and a hold onto Syrian territory, which is a model that PKK now wants to replicate inside Turkey. It's not a coincidence that the PKK now wants to set -- as they call it, as they are called in Syria as well, cantons inside Syria and Turkey because that's also worked inside Syria. So, you know, unexpectedly I think that is one area where that issue is coming in.

The other issues that I think are making their way into Turkish politics, and I hope that Turkey does a really good job of preventing them from becoming mainstay. One of them is the entry of Russia into Turkish domestic politics. Again, you raised this issue and as I said, I want to take it one step further. I'm, so those of you who are old enough, will remember Turkey went through a near civil war in the 1970s in which hard leftists, backed by the Soviet Union fought hard rightists, mostly nationalists, but

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some Islamists. And that ended with the coup of 1980 and it was a near civil war that killed thousands of people.

I see some trend lines. I hope that I'm wrong, that you're now seeing a polarization of the country along the lines of left and right, hard left and hard right. Issues that you raised in the fault lines, that you identified in which Russia is so eager to exploit this fault line. So following the plane incident, API, after the plane incident, Putin's commentary on Turkey was not that he targeted Ankara or Turkey, right. He targeted everyone and his family and knowing that if he did, the half of Turkey that did not vote for Erdoğan would of course embrace these arguments. And it worked. So I think Russia will increasingly try to mobilize anti-government forces from leftists to secularists to Kurds to all of these, to opposition groups. Under its fault, I'm not suggesting that this will happen necessarily, but Russia will try -- I hope that it fails -- but it will try to mobilize, exploit this fault line expecting that the deeply polarized nature of Turkish society will allow them to of course have a support base inside Turkish politics. Not only Russia I think Syria will also try to exploit and finishing.

Coming at the polarization from another angle, from the other side of the spectrum, and I think ISIS attack in this regard is that so far Turkey had four unfortunate ISIS terror attacks that have killed nearly 200 people and wounded hundreds of others. Whoever is planning ISIS attacks I think is very strategic because the attacks have targeted entirely and exclusively opposition rallies. The first three that is, they targeted the Kurds, Socialists, Leftists, Alevis and the last attack, which took place in Istanbul, which was of course receive wider coverage, it's in Turkey's bigger city, even then I think the group was strategic. It targeted Istanbul's Old City. The Old City has a lot of mosques and churches and shops and restaurants but few Turks. If you blow up a bomb in the Old City, you're almost sure that you're going to kill more foreigners than Turks, and in this case, over foreigners and tourists. And I think this is definitely calculated.

The group is trying to create the image that it's not really interested in hurting this half of Turkey, it's only interested in hurting the other half of Turkey. And I could see this in the media reactions to the ISIS attack where grief was not universal, unfortunately, as was the case after the Ankara attack. You didn't see an outpouring of sympathy for the victims. Rather it was a polarized sympathy of victims, depending on which side of the spectrum you are at. So I think those are some of the unexpected

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challenges. ISIS, Russia and the broader fallout of the Syrian conflict and why it's getting important to Turkey. These are some of the unexpected challenges through which Turkey's foreign policy is shaping Turkey's domestic politics.

And I think you've done an excellent job in bringing these up for us because most of us, including myself, not necessarily my colleagues, we focus on how domestic politics drives foreign policy and I think that's much easier to do than of course doing the other way around, looking at how foreign policy shapes domestic politics. So looking into the future, I hope of course that Turkey's rise continues. That's obviously an aspiration for the country. But at the same time, I think Turkey has a number very serious challenges ahead of it. And I think the most significant I would say is Russia. Obviously, this is a country which is Turkey's historic nemesis. It's, Turks and Russians fought 17 campaigns against each other from 1470s when they became neighbors until the end of the Russian empire in 1917 with the Bolshevik Revolution.

The Ottomans and Russians became neighbors in 1417 when the Crimean Khanate joined the Ottoman Empire as part of a commonwealth. Crimean Tatars, that is. So when Putin invaded Ukraine and Crimea said he should go back to Russia because that's Russian, I wanted to say well, it's really Tatar. But anyhow, that neighborhood brought the countries together, 17 times they fought. Guess who started all these wars? Russia. And guess who lost all of them? Turkey. So obviously that's why I think the post-plane incident is really a different landscape in Turkish foreign policy and a good take away of it is that it will inevitably align Turkey closer with the U.S. Western Alliance, including NATO. There's even an angle for the EU here, which I'm happy to look at to Q&A as Nora has touched as well. But thank you again.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Thanks, Soner. As always, this is brilliant, but you managed to speak more than Nora did.

MR. ÇAĞAPTAY: Okay. So I'll end, please.

MR. MAKOVSKY: (off mic)

MR. KIRIŞCI: Yeah, I know you're full of (inaudible) all right. I'll do that. It's yours.

MR. MAKOVSKY: Anyway, (inaudible) almost sum it up. Gee whiz, it's a great job. You're not getting the—want me to move this up, got it? Okay, great. I think most of you—my voice

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tends to carry. I think most of you heard my initial comment. It's a terrific piece. Kemal used the term rich and nuanced and I think that says it very well. —it's pretty remarkable in 14 pages, I think you did a masterful job of showing what the AK period has been all about, how it has changed and particularly the interplay with the U.S. and the West and the Middle East. If I were recommending to a policy maker who is new to Turkey, this happens all the time, people who are new to Turkey become policy makes on Turkey in our system. I can't think of a better piece than this to give them for a concise, for a quick, concise read. And I would say read it tonight no matter what, whether you're tired or not tired, it's a great read. And that's, you know, I'm afraid I have only more compliments here. It is, I think it's beautifully written. I mean I have to say you have an enviable way of really finding the right nuance for describing things. In addition, sometimes it almost reaches to the poetic, and I have to quote a very alliterative phrase here from page five, "The personalization of power and the projection of partisan preferences." That was a very nice touch. But look, primarily it's very insightful.

And before getting into some of the specifics, I also just wanted to call attention to the fact that I think your experience in Turkey really shines through. You know, I know a lot of us do political analysis based on what happened yesterday and what might happen tomorrow. But I think this paper is not only about the AK Party years but it really contains some deeper insights about Turkish politics. And I'll just cite one on page 12, I think it is, where you talk about why it's difficult for Turkish politicians to back down. And that's something that's more general and goes well beyond the AK Party years.

I think the use of the term populism is very apt, including in foreign policy where it was clear particularly when Mr. Davutoğlu became foreign minister that Turkey really saw the Middle Eastern street, particularly the Arab street as on its side. And so populism wasn't only domestic factors, you point out, but it was a foreign policy factor. Sadly, I think Turkey has emerged in recent years, has moved from being a country where foreign policy was very much based on institutions, once upon a time, foreign ministry and as you point out the military having been the most dominant for many decades, up until the past decade.

It's become now very much a foreign policy that is at the whim of one person very much in the Middle Eastern tradition. And that is an unfortunate development. I'll use the Syria policy as an example. There's never been much support in Turkey for intervention in Syria. But Erdoğan has

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continued to pursue that policy, no doubt Davutoğlu was the mastermind. But it's Erdoğan's policy and now he has, he's really embraced it. And I don't think there's really anybody in Turkey who's word countermands Erdoğan's. A year and a half ago at the UNGA, at the U.N. General Assembly meeting, a meeting was scheduled between the Turkish foreign minister and the Egyptian foreign minister. Erdoğan, without letting anyone know apparently, on his own team, gave a speech in which he ripped in to General Sisi and causing the Egyptians to cancel the meeting. So that was certainly a clear example where Erdoğan was acting on his own. He is the dominant player in all aspects of Turkey.

In Turkey, populism I think inevitably means religion. It's 99 percent Muslim. And Erdoğan has—and you bring this out, I think could even be brought out a bit more, that part of Erdoğan's populism is a religious vision. He's talked about, particularly in the educational realm, but I think you can extrapolate from it that his goal is to develop a pious generation (inaudible) in Turkish, religious generation, pious generation. And we've seen that in his legislation which has led to expansion of the religious school system, expansion of the religious affairs bureau he has done. There's been, I think particularly at the local level, seen pressure so that it's very difficult for women who don't cover their heads to get jobs in many localities. It's very difficult to have a nice cold one because pressure is put on local restaurateurs not to serve booze. That I think is part of his populist vision. But I think it's largely, largely of a popular vision in Turkey, which in many ways is a religious country. And that's how the party pulls down 50 percent of the vote, as it has done in two of the last three elections. That's not the only way. But it's a significant element.

You, Nora, you talk about how the U.S. promoted Turkey as a role model, and I think you really nailed that how the elements that caused that to change, particularly the Gezi Park and particularly Turkey's alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood. Now at one point, the U.S. thought, I believe, the U.S. policy makers thought the Muslim Brotherhood was indeed the wave of the future, and that Erdoğan would be a good horse to ride into that future. But that idea went sour with the demise of the Morsi government in Egypt, the fall of Ennahda in Tunisia and the disaster in Syria.

Erdoğan stayed on the Muslim Brotherhood hobbyhorse for even as the U.S. and its allies soured on it. I'll—a lot of points to mention. Look—in your recommendation section, and this may be where I would go a little further than you, you make some good recommendations which you've

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reiterated here about building bridges on areas of specific interests and then longer term, working with civil society to build up a long term investment. I think that's, and long term mutual interest—I think that's all terrific. I agree with all of that.

But I think one area where I would have to fault U.S. policy somewhat is I feel we could be speaking out, and should be speaking out more strongly on human rights issues. This is a very dark time in Turkey on human rights. Three editors-in-chief are either in jail or under indictment. Countless journalists have been fired. There's, you know, it's all anecdotal but it's widespread anecdotal that, you know, there's a tremendous amount of self-censorship out of fear that goes on in Turkish newsrooms and editorial boards. And, I think one of the most appalling things in Turkey relative to the amount of attention it gets is the number of cases of people who have arrested or fined for insulting the president. That is a real law in Turkey, Article 299. But it's not one that's been so frequently invoked in the past as it has been under Erdoğan. I'm taking these numbers from an NGO, but it sounds right to me just impressionistically. Two presidents ago, President Sezer invoked this law 26 times. It seems like 26 times too much to me. But nevertheless, relatively, you'll see, it wasn't so much. Abdullah Gül, who was Turkey's first Islam oriented president, but is always seen as very moderate invoked it 139 times. Erdoğan, who became president in August 2014 has invoked it over 1,300 times.

I mean it's hard to reconcile insulting the president, particularly a president who is so political with democratic practice. I wonder how many cases Barack Obama could bring for that. Anyway, I think it's something we really need to speak out on more. Vice President Biden I think did try to do that in his recent trip to Turkey when President Obama was in Turkey for the G20 last year, he did not, when he met with Erdoğan in Paris again, he did not.

I think one thing that Soner underscored, since the -- since we're in API, after the plane incident, since November 24th when Turkey shot down the Russian SU-24, I don't think the United States needs to worry that strong talk about human rights will lead Turkey to expel us from Incirlik. In wartime, protecting our guys and winning the war always comes first. And yes, it's critical that we use Incirlik and the other installations that the Turks let us use. But I think right now, it's clear that Turkey needs the United States, needs the Western Alliance, needs NATO. And the clash with Russia I think is something that's very, very worrisome and we need to talk about more. I'll just say I think you probably agree with

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most of these points on human rights. I'm just underscoring them and I know it's my time, so I'm going to wrap up here.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Thanks a lot.

MR. MAKOVSKY: And just say (inaudible) on a really terrific paper.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Thanks, Alan. I really wish we had more time and you could all expand more. But I do, oh, you beat Soner, definitely. Good job.

MR. ÇAĞAPTAY: My problem.

MR. KIRIŞCI: I'm keeping an eye on there, and my concern is really to protect the rights of our audience here too. And I'm sure that Kadir is going to make an effort in that direction. But don't feel obliged that you have to compliment Nora to the extent that Soner and Alan have done.

MR. ÇAĞAPTAY: He did it, not me.

MR. USTUN: Well, congratulations on the paper. It really—thank you for invitation Kemal, to join. I think it really focuses on a very important topic. It can appear abstract somehow and maybe not—it does reference various policy instances, various issues, Russia, Syria, Kurdish issue and then tries to give it a sort of theoretical framework. But I think it's very relevant, this, the relationship between populism and foreign policy in the case of Turkey because part of it, of course, I'm going to have to now play the devil's advocate here, but part it, a lot of things that are being written in recent months and a couple of years during the Arab Spring especially, I think there has been an overemphasis on the rhetoric of Turkish leaders, and I sense that in the paper as well.

Somehow if Turkish leader, more specifically President Erdoğan says X and then Turkey does the Y the next day. So I think that's a bit overemphasized and this is not just for the paper, but in general, a lot of the editorials and op-eds we read these days have that. And I think populism as you pointed out as well exists everywhere and there is a dynamic interplay between populism and domestic political considerations but also foreign policy. But in the paper the figures cited are Chavez and Lepain and Trump and Putin, somehow populism appears to be necessarily and consistently a negative political reality.

We have varying degrees of that. The opposition does it, the opposition in this country does it. President Obama, everybody does it to a certain level. But the question you raise is important.

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How much that really determines, defines foreign policy actions from policies themselves. So I would raise question on that in the case of Turkey. The picture appears a bit recurrently okay, President Erdoğan has rhetoric somehow are policy itself. So I think we do need to make a distinction and see how, what is being done on the ground. We can actually, in all the examples you gave, Russia, Syria, others, I have comments on them, we need to sort of subject those issues to that test. Where does populism start, how does it translate to specific policy step that the leadership took and how that damaged Turkish interests.

I think that needs to be done a bit more thoroughly case by case. And I would take issue also with the dichotomy between anti-Western rhetoric and pro-Western realism. I think that's a bit problematic because Turkish politics in general has set an undertone of suspicion against Europe, suspicion against the West, ever since the first World War, if not before. And then on the other hand, Turkey's aspirations to become a fully European developed westernized country has existed all along. Those two existed since the established of the republic and you can go even beyond that. And if you're able to call Turkey some predictable ally during the Cold War, for instance, that means that, that doesn't mean during Cold War, Turkey did not have an anti-Western attitude while also having a staunchly pro-Western foreign policy.

In the specific example of the downing of the Russian jet, as I said, I don't see where populism starts and ends in this example. Actually, Turkey had very strong relations with Russia before the incident. And after the incident, before the incident or after the incident, we didn't see President Erdoğan use strong language against Russia. He sought reconciliation and that continues to today. So, I have, I mean maybe you can respond to that where you see the specific instance of populism and then that be. Yes you do mention that Putin and Erdoğan, they want to become regional king makers. That's the expression you used. But they also manage to have their economic and energy relationship going while disagreeing on Syria. So how did this instance really fit into the picture of, you know, the interplay between populism and foreign policy.

In the EU era section, I thought that your treatment of the military tutelage, it was almost like we had a strongly pro-Western institutional memory that was sort of, that was with clever plan of the Turkish leadership was kind of dissected or you know, it was sidelined. And that was with the help of the

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EU. And in the picture that comes out of that, it's not only in the paper, I'm also talking about broader debates that we've been having. In that picture, Erdoğan seems to be able to kind of trick the EU to help him to overcome the military. And that downplays the fact that in 2007, we had a presidential crisis. Erdoğan could not become, could not run for the highest office.

MR. ÇAĞAPTAY: Hmm.

MR. USTUN: Erdoğan couldn't run.

MR. ÇAĞAPTAY: Oh, yeah. True.

MR. USTUN: Gül ran because Erdoğan couldn't run.

MR. ÇAĞAPTAY: Yeah.

MR. USTUN: In 2008, we had the closure case, and in those instances, Erdoğan went back to the ballot box. So I think there is a bit of an underestimation of the power of that establishment, the tutelage regime continuing well into even our day in many ways. The, and when you talk about that establishment being pro-Western, they actually openly disagreed with the EU about civilian control of the military. They said, you know, if that means being European and Western, we are actually not so interested. So that was also part of the debate between the leadership and the military. And again, there, we need to be favoring civilian control, right. It used to be that the military and foreign ministry defined foreign policy. But that's not necessarily a positive thing, right. So maybe you can clarify that.

In the Neo-Ottomanism argument, it seems sort of Turkey tried, Turkey got EU's help and AK Party got EU's help and overcame the military and then once it was done with the EU, it sought other paths. But I think if we -- one of them most critical turning points in Turkish foreign policy in the past decade or a bit more is 2003 when Turkey didn't allow the U.S. military to use Turkish territory for the invasion and the consequences afterwards.

And that decision I think forced Turkey to devise a foreign policy, devise its foreign policy on its own in, arguably in many ways, for the first time, right. It's not simple anymore. We can't simply say yes to America, yes, whatever. That was also anti-invasion feeling in Europe, but that was a moment that things were not simple any more. Turkey had lost in the first Iraq war with the spike of violence, PKK violence in its southeast. So this time, it wasn't going to just simply go along with what the West wanted. But it also was willing to make some sort of deal. It didn't work out. And Turkish parliament said no. I

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would say that somehow we need to include that and if you're talking about Turkish foreign policy, specifically AK Party's foreign policy, 2003 is very critical.

With respect to Israel, 2008, I'm coming to, yeah.

MR. KIRIŞCI: I like to lean on you.

MR. USTUN: Yes. If we are, if we are going to talk about populist rhetoric by the Turkish leadership, I would say it only started after the Gaza War of 2008 and 2009. Right before then, Turkey was still trying to broker a deal between Syria and Israel and you didn't hear Erdoğan, you know, saying negative things about Israel in public, the way that it happened afterwards. And then even then, even after the fallout of Marmara, economic relations remained and even strengthened. So I would just say that bad relations between Turkey and Israel was not simply the result of Turkish populism in that sense.

In the case of Syria, again we have this idea that Erdoğan somehow got mad at Assad, Turkey ditched its relationship with Syria and then pushed for a regime change in Syria. And there you go, you have your sort of populism resulting in a disaster. And I think the picture is much more complicated than that. And the refugee flows that were already starting to appear, border security issues, as well as the economic relations with Syria but also the broader Middle East, those were also -- and then Turkey saw it coming at that time, talked about the danger, potential terrorism, Assad become just like the Libyan leader Gaddafi, et cetera. Anyway, my point is also PKK, PUIDs activities in Syria, those were real interests that drove Turkey's decisions at that point. I don't think it was heavily dominated by populism.

Lastly, maybe on the Kurdish peace process, I don't think it's dead despite the fighting right now. In some ways these peace processes take a long time and you may not have a final outcome but they take a long time and you often have fighting and negotiations back and forth over a long period of time. But what we saw in this case also that the process was hampered by regional developments that gave PKK a lot of incentives, both in Syria, and in terms of getting itself legitimized in the international arena by fighting ISIS. Those were real interests for PKK. So peace with Turkey was not that interesting at that point. And then they wanted to wait and see if AK Party would survive over the electoral process.

So I think here, I'm not denying populism is not a driver. I definitely agree it has, it is one of the drivers. But I think it is kind of frowned upon the security interests, socioeconomic realities as well

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as strategic considerations. And I don't think it's just because Erdoğan said so Turkey does this. So that's my only sort of big argument with it. But it's—congratulations for the paper.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Thanks a lot, Kadir.

MR. USTUN: Did I stick to the time?

MR. KIRIŞCI: I think you did a great job in raising a series of questions and playing the devil's advocate, but at some price. Nora, I think the way we're going to have to proceed is you have to allow me to turn to the floor, and then maybe respond to some of the comments and especially the questions that Kadir has raised. So, yes, sir. Yes. I think you're going a microphone, here. Please mention your name too.

MR. COOPER: My name is Robert Cooper. My wife is Turkish and I'm interested in what the panel thinks the role and impact of HDP and their new position in parliament will be in the upcoming debates over amending the constitution.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Thank you. Rafi, I think I saw you. First Raffie and then -- I'll take four.

MR. DANZIGER: Thank you. I'm Rafi Danziger, and I consult to AIPAC, so naturally my question is about Israel. And there's been a change recently in Erdoğan's rhetoric and policy toward Israel and maybe Nora wrote about it, I haven't yet had the pleasure of reading your paper. But there's been a change especially since Erdoğan said that Turkey and Israel need each other. It was totally unexpected I think. Is it part of what Alan was talking about, Turkey turning more to NATO that's part of the West, is it energy, what -- is it an API, what exactly explains what seems to be the beginning of a possible shift towards Israel. Thank you.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Gift from Putin, I think. Warren and there in the back, I'll come for another quick round. Here in the front. Yeah.

MR. MERRY: Wayne Merry, the American Foreign Policy Council. Forgive me, but I'm going to introduce the subject of Cyprus, which has not been raised. At the moment, the correlation of forces on that island is as positive as at any point in my lifetime. It's an extraordinary set of developments to the extent that I think it now may rest entirely in the hands of President Erdoğan. What will he do?

MR. KIRIŞCI: All right. Thanks Wayne, you know, looking at the clock, I have a feeling the best way to go is to take Mateo and there was one more question in the back, yes, there. And then

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we'll take, we'll proceed.

MR. MAKOVSKY: Sorry, Mateo, it's all ours. It's been a long day.

MR. KIRIŞCI: You look very different actually, from—

MR. GARAVOGLIA: I'm a visiting fellow from the European Union at Brookings.

Congratulations. I actually read your paper over lunch. Very good analysis. I concur completely with the panelists. I was just wondering though about this connection between populism and foreign policy. I think I would side more with the last speaker that the tie is not so direct and it's a little bit less obvious, especially looking at the record of the AKP over the last few years. I mean if you look at some of the main foreign policy directions there have been some amazing turnarounds. I mean on aspect of the policy in the beginning was this no problems foreign policy where they rapprochement with Syria, with Iran. If you look at where we are now with Syria and Iran, it's complete an about turn, as we just heard from one of commentaries, Israel as well, now you see a very interesting turnaround taking place, perhaps also spurred by the threat of a cutoff of Russian gas, who knows. But my question would be regarding another possible turnaround, which we haven't really seen let's say digesting in Turkish politics but it certainly has been very apparent. Just today there was an announcement from Brussels about a new deal with Turkey between the EU and Turkey. We saw kind of an estrangement between Turkey and the European Union because of the slowdown of the accession process and also partly because of the Turkish and Turkey felt more independent and didn't need Europe anymore. Can we predict, and I would ask you and the other panelists also that now with the European Union suddenly finding that Turkey is a useful ally on the issue of migration and Turkey also looking for new friends and seeing itself being confronted by a newly resurgent Russia in the neighborhood, can we see some return? I think this would be the most positive inference, return to the EU reform path in order to really bolster the accession process which is supposed to be one of the parts of the package with the EU. Thank you.

MR. KIRIŞCI: I wish that question was directed to me, but Steve, very quickly please.

MR. LARRABEE: Steve Larrabee, RAND. I'd like to congratulate you on—

MR. KIRIŞCI: I think the microphone is not on.

MR. LARRABEE: -- very fine paper. I have the same problem that—I don't think the (inaudible) in any way attribute—

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MR. KIRIŞCI: Can you try the other microphone, it's still not working.

MR. LARRABEE: I don't think you can—

MR. KIRIŞCI: Yes, well done.

MR. LARRABEE: -- attribute any of the main themes of Turkish foreign policy to populism. Populism has not been a driver of let's say Turkish policy towards the EU. It's not been a driver of Turkish policy and recent problems with Russia. It's not been a driver of U.S. policy. So that's a basic problem. And quite frankly, it is not a major driver in my view of policy, of domestic politics. Erdoğan's presidential ambitions and his strategy is not driven by populism. So therefore, I think the paper, the main thesis is I think not really substantiating some of the suggestions you make. Thank you.

MR. KIRIŞCI: All right, Steve, that was a bit harsh I thought. We'll survive it. Nora, I think we'll start with you, but we have literally 12 minutes.

MS. ONAR: Yeah.

MR. KIRIŞCI: And then we'll go in reverse order.

MS. ONAR: First, so I mean I think I'll take up the last point or last two points that's been raised that also map on nicely to what Çağaptay raised. I mean I think I fundamentally disagree that populism has not had an impact and has not been a driver of domestic politics. And if the paper under specifies the mechanism by which that translates into foreign policy, I think in, you know, if we had more time, but I'm also happy to write a follow up paper specifying the way that it has domestic political impact which plays into foreign policy priorities and positions taken in ways that have manifestly affect the EU accession process, that have manifestly affected regional policy towards the transnational Kurdish question and towards Syria more broadly and towards the Muslim Brotherhood as we, as was alluded earlier. And that have had a problematic impact on bilateral relations with the United States. I'm sympathetic to say to the argument that okay, well, let's look at what Turkey does but what Turkey says, but then why say those things in the first place if you're not -- if you're acting in patently pro-Western fashion that is serving mutual interests. So if there is a dissonance, if there is a disconnect between the populist rhetoric and the foreign policy imperatives, the responsibility for that lies with those who are articulating those positions. And so in that regard, I mean when it comes to some of the specific issues, we can look at more. I think at the end of the day though, the dilemma that we're faced with and that

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maybe all of us can, this could be the take away as we leave the room, is to what extent is this sort of new set of structural sort of geopolitical concerns that have been raised vis-à-vis the Kurdish question, vis-à-vis Cypress, vis-à-vis rapprochement with the EU, so the various topics that have been brought up by the audience and also by the panelists, you know, the post, what was it, post airline incident.

MR. ÇAĞAPTAY: API.

MS. ONAR: API, so the API era, how much will the structural imperative towards re-pivoting towards the West, towards consolidating Turkey's Western relationships. How much will this indeed drown out the tenure of populism? I very much hope it does. I would love for Steven Larrabee to be right and for populism to prove irrelevant and for bilateral relations and relations with the West to, you know, to prove enduring and revitalized by this new set of geopolitical challenges that we see in the fight against ISIS, that we see in the refugee crisis, very much relevant to the EU. But I think the onus is on Turkey's leadership to put their money where their mouth is.

MR. KIRIŞCI: All right. Thanks, Nora. I mean we are all dealing with substances when we're looking at, it's very difficult to establish that causal relationship. So this kind of debate could go on forever. And it's done it in the past, it will keep going on. Kadir, let me turn to you and if you might be able to address Wayne's especially Cypress, maybe Israel and HDP very quickly.

MR. USTUN: The, in terms of going back to the pro-Western outlook assumes Turkey left that outlook. So that's a problem, but I don't see a Western position on Syria for instance that we can say Turkey is not aligning with it, so it's not pro-Western. And we have many disagreements within the EU about itself, forget about what its policy is going to be on Syria, but its own identity internally, U.K. wanting to leave, et cetera. So that we need to think about more. I think the Cyprus, Turkey, Israel, I think those might be actually -- this is my speculation -- that might be a package deal. I mean you need Cyprus for a better relationship with the EU, and EU needs you for refugees and then you need energy and Israel has energy, and Israel is threatening to bypass you, so maybe, you know, so this actually is an example of how Turkey is considering these things and if necessary, making these changing, and sometimes rather abruptly. And we, we, it's not a done deal but I think Turkey has prepared some sort of, you know, its reconciliation with Israel, they've were—they've been talking for a long time. And it seems they have some sort of blueprint. But when it's going to happen and how it's going to benefit both sides,

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that's going to be a matter of timing and strategic timing in that sense. So let me just leave there.

MS. ONAR: One second.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Yes, Nora.

MS. ONAR: And I think that would be a wonderful litmus test if Turkey and Israel are able to move forward with this rapprochement. I think it would do wonders towards sustaining the argument that you've been making that Turkey's policies have always been oriented in the right direction and we shouldn't be distracted by the theatrics.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Thanks, Nora. Alan, I know you have a lot of expedience background. Maybe you could reflect on, I'm very interested in Wayne's question too. Is this one going to be the real one?

MR. MAKOVSKY: Can I go down them all quickly and—

MR. KIRIŞCI: All right. I have no authority.

MR. MAKOVSKY: No, because I just wanted—

MR. USTUN: You're a nice guy, but—

MR. MAKOVSKY: Cut me off in three minutes.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Well, that thing there has authority.

MR. MAKOVSKY: Cut me off in three minutes. HDP, lamentably I think they can do precious little when there is violence going on. I think sadly we're seeing the support for HDP also eroding, both on the Kurdish or the Turkish side. It's a party would thrive in peacetime and I think it would have had Erdoğan pursued the peace process instead of junking his own creative policy. Israel, I agree with Nora. This is really one of the litmus tests anyway, of whether he's pursuing—whether AKP is pursuing a populist policy or not. I think the Israel policy has been very populist-oriented. Why the change, yes, it's the isolation and the potential need for energy in the wake of the shoot down of the Russian plane, API. On whether Israel is interested and whether Israel's—some of the parties that Israel has crucial relationships with in the region, like Egypt and Russia, which is now right smack in Israel's region, Cyprus and Greece, with which Israel has productive relations, whether they will advise Israel on how they feel about it, I think that could be, that could be telling in terms of how Israel looks at it. Cyprus, I think Erdoğan will not be the obstacle to a Cyprus solution. I'm not sure—I agree with you, I've also

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been following Cyprus a long time. And this is one of the most optimistic times, but I'm not sure we're quite there yet, that we're going to get there in 2016. But I do not think Erdoğan will be the obstacle. I think he'll score points. If everything is lined up and it meets all the tests and he's not selling, that's not appearing to sellout the Turkish Cypriots as was the case back, I mean in 2004 also he supported the referendum. I think he would do it again. He would score points back here. And just, I'll just say on the Turkish EU question, I think there are still a lot of questions on what the EU has offered. I will be very surprised if Turks really get visa free access to the European Union as was promised. And I'm not—and on opening some of the chapters, Cyprus is going to have a say too. They'd like access to Turkish ports first as you know. I'll stop there.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Well, thanks Alan, though I can't help say one quick word on Cyprus. I'm not sure it all depends on what position Erdoğan takes in terms of an output or—

MR. MAKOVSKY: Absolutely.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Yeah, and I'm wondering, I know he has a lot on his plate, Putin, but I wonder if he may have tentacles and ways of—

MR. MAKOVSKY: Absolutely. I'm just saying if he gets to Erdoğan's (inaudible) yes, or no, he'll check the yes.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Thank you. Soner.

MR. ÇAĞAPTAY: Let me also start with Cyprus. I think that stars look aligned. Turkey needs Israeli gas, Turkey wants to normalize, Israel wants to normalize. Maybe that will happen. Resolution of the Cyprus issue will bring Turkey Greece together, eliminate the major roadblock out of Turkey's EU accession. So while stars are aligned I think if you find out in a year that the deal hasn't happened, I know that we won't be able to find fingerprints, but the culprit is going to be Russia. How it does it, it's of course Russian foreign policy is usually through instruments of deniability asymmetrical versions of foreign policy instruments as well as unconventional stuff. So hard for me to see what they'll do, but I think Russia has a deep interest in making sure that this deal does not happen, because it will eliminate Turkey's energy dependency on Russia. It will also eliminate the need for Russia to be an actor as well as bringing Turkey and NATO and the Western Alliance close together.

On Israel I also want to weigh in. I agree with you guys that this will be litmus test of

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Turkey's commitment to a realistic foreign policy and one that's not ideological or populist. I'm less upbeat so we'll see if that happens or not. I'll believe it when I see it. But I hope it does because I think it will serve as Turkey's coming to maturity as a foreign policy actor. I am more upbeat on Turkey's, as Nora calls it, great Western calibration on regional policy with U.S. and NATO, somehow agnostic on Israel and less upbeat on a great recalibration with the EU. Although I'm a strong proponent of Turkey's EU accession, I think that the dynamics will not really shift that relationship compared to what we have today. For one reason, Erdoğan's commitment to liberal democracy as Alan mentioned. I agree with you on that. I think that's of course a (inaudible) for EU entry in the long term. But even in the short term, what I think will undermine the Turkish EU relationship from going what it is, a transactional one, to what it could become, a strategic one is that the refugee issue is going to be a big issue of 2016. Putin has zero interest in solving the refugee crisis because this is how we make sure that Turkey fights Greece, Greece fights Macedonia, Macedonia fights Serbia, Serbia fights Austria, Greece, Denmark, Sweden, all the way up.

MR. MAKOVSKY: Good point.

MR. ÇAĞAPTAY: It's a way of undermining Europe's integrity, stability, both NATO and the EU, so most of the refugees coming from Syria are coming from government controlled areas, they're bombed by Russia, so obviously there's a direct correlation between Russian bombing and flow of refugees and expect more of them unfortunately, to flow out.

Finally, on the broader debate, I agree with Nora. I think you're really to the point in making the argument that this is a populist, or as Alan put it religion or ideology driven foreign policy which is at times out of touch with reality. I think at its core, to be fair, Turkey's foreign policy is not ideological, it's idealistic. It really wants to do good. Now, part of that, as I said earlier, is imagined because it wants to bring in Ottoman benevolence, meaning if the Ottomans could come back, everything would back to running well and it doesn't always work like that. I think if you are familiar with Arab historiography, it's not much different than Balkan historiography, meaning generational Arabs grew up learning that Turks were colonial overlords as its serves in Greece, so Turkey coming back to the region has not, and will not be a welcome factor. And I think in that regard the Ottoman benevolence is the part of foreign policy where it's out of touch with reality.

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But the bigger part is that it's at its core idealistic, it wants to do good, it really does. And at times, it's ideological, meaning it's partisan, it supports Muslim Brotherhood or Hamas, but it still thinks that it's idealistic. So its support for the rebels in Syria, its support for Hamas in the Palestinian theater is seen as support for doing good, not seen as support for a partisan good. And I think it's that confusion that keeps Turkish foreign policy down. So in Syria for example, Assad is a dictator, I think he should go to the war crimes tribunal, he's a horrible guy. But Turkey's foreign policy in Syria is still saying Turkey is with the Syrian people. About a third of Syrian people are supporting Assad, for whatever reason, however he built that majority. And I think because Turkey is still in that idealistic thinking of the region, it's unable to come to terms and say maybe my line has been partisan because I have supported certain groups in Syria and not others, and therefore I am a side to a conflict, but not necessarily a broader king maker in Syrian politics. But I think to the extent that it continues to be idealistic and taking ideological stance for idealism, Turkish foreign policy will continue to come to short ends where it realizes that it's not able to make Turkey a great regional power.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Thanks, Soner. I've just been under pressure for one more sentence here.

MR. ÇAĞAPTAY: I just wanted to say it could be perceived as ideological and idealist but that doesn't mean it doesn't serve Turkey's interests. So I think it's a matter of gauging where it ends and where it starts. And then those interests, the investments you make can turn out to be junk bonds at the end, but every country, every power does that.

MR. USTUN: Can I have ten seconds? (Laughter) I'll disagree just ten seconds. Look, I four of the five biggest terror attacks in Turkey's history have taken place in the last three years and they're all connected to the fallout of the Syrian war. How is that in the interest of Turkey? I'm sorry.

MR. KIRIŞCI: Nine seconds you managed. (Laughter) I would like to thank the panel, every member of it. Nora, I am hoping that your baby will grow into a world where Turkey is boring. Thanks to you all.

(Applause)

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