

## CHAPTER ONE

# *Turkey and the West*

## A Troubled Alliance

**AS THE SECOND DECADE** of the twenty-first century moves beyond its midpoint, the transatlantic alliance faces growing instability on multiple fronts. The conflict in Syria has entered a new stage since the Russian-imposed cease-fire in December 2016 and the April 2017 U.S. missile attack on a Syrian air base to punish the regime for its chemical attacks on civilians. Though considerable gains were made against the self-styled Islamic State (IS) in Iraq and Syria during 2016 and 2017, IS continues to threaten not only the future of the Middle East but security in Europe and the United States as well. Iran's gradual reincorporation into the international community has failed to bring an element of order to the region. At the time of completion, the summer of 2017, Yemen and Libya are still in the grip of civil war, while Tunisia, the only success story among the Arab Spring countries, is not yet on solid ground. Russia's actions in the post-Soviet space and its growing military assertiveness in the Middle East and eastern Mediterranean region continue to cloud Moscow's relations with the West. The European Union is trying to put itself back together after the global financial crisis of 2008–09 and is struggling with the consequences of the migration crisis that began in 2015, while nationalism is on the rise in a number of EU member countries. The issue of Brexit remains unresolved more than a year after the referendum and continues to constitute a challenge to the future shape of the EU.

This grim picture is accompanied by growing concerns about the ability of the transatlantic community to confront these challenges together and uphold the international liberal order. A major question clouding

predictions is whether the U.S. president Donald Trump will continue to support the U.S.-led post-World War II global liberal order. Considerable uncertainty persists as to the direction of U.S. foreign policy in the immediate future. This contrasts starkly with the United States that emerged as the “liberal Leviathan” after World War II and fashioned “a world of multilateral rules, institutions, open markets, democratic community and regional partnerships.”<sup>1</sup>

The bulk of the institutions that would form the basis of the international liberal order emerged between 1944 and 1951 in the form of the Bretton Woods institutions—the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank—the United Nations, the Marshall Plan, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Turkey was quick to join all these organizations. Membership to NATO in 1952 was particularly critical and was seen by the then U.S. ambassador to Turkey, George C. McGhee, as a sign the country was becoming “an integral part of Europe and the West.”<sup>2</sup> Regional organizations such as the Council of Europe, founded in 1949, and the European Economic Communities (EEC), the precursor to the EU, all encouraged by the United States, also emerged during this period. Turkey became a founding member of the Council of Europe and applied for associational membership in the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1959. Turkey’s membership in these institutions bound Turkey to the West and was in line with the objective of the founders of the Turkish republic, to orient the new country toward Western civilization, and membership became a part of Turkey’s post-World War II traditional statecraft.<sup>3</sup>

Initially this liberal order remained constrained to Australia, Canada, Western Europe, Japan, New Zealand, and the United States. This picture changed dramatically when first the Berlin Wall came down and then, after decades fraught with tension, an exhausted Soviet Union in the late 1980s began a quiet collapse from the inside. Eastern bloc countries, released from the sphere of Soviet influence, turned to the West for a new chapter in military security and political affiliation. NATO and the EU expanded into Central and Eastern Europe, instilling in the region an unprecedented sense of security and creating a basis for growing economic prosperity as well as liberal democratic governance.

There was hope in some quarters that these developments heralded a “unipolar moment” as the rest of the world, not just the global north,

seemed to be moving toward an international liberal order spearheaded by the United States.<sup>4</sup> John Ikenberry, a prominent scholar of international affairs, argued that this post–World War II U.S.-led order was turning into “a sprawling global system.”<sup>5</sup> Emerging economies such as Brazil, India, and South Africa advanced toward greater democracy and a market economy, and China was expected to follow suit, along with Russia.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, the number of democracies around the world increased substantially in the two decades following the end of the Cold War.<sup>7</sup> In addition to the BRICS—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—a large number of countries nurtured their economies, narrowing the welfare gap between the developed and the developing world.<sup>8</sup> The exception to this trend was the Middle East, where the Arab countries seemed stuck in authoritarian political systems and autarkic economies, as was strikingly exposed in the United Nations Development Program’s *Arab Humanitarian Development Report 2002*.<sup>9</sup> Yet many anticipated that the George W. Bush administration’s Greater Middle East Initiative would eventually break through the exceptionalism of the Middle East and bring the region into the fold of the international liberal order.<sup>10</sup> This did not happen, and the state of world affairs today is starkly different from what was envisioned at the end of the Cold War.

Turkey joining Western institutions might have not occurred had it not been for the fear of Soviet expansionism and territorial demands made by Joseph Stalin on Turkey during the closing months of World War II, as well as the growing domestic calls for democratic reforms. Modern Turkey had emerged from the collapse of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the World War I when Atatürk and his colleagues fought back occupying European powers to win the independence of the country in 1923. Atatürk’s reforms had led to a steady growth of Westernization that was guided by a vision of secularization. However, ruined by wars and population displacements, the country had adopted a Soviet-like planned economy and a one-party political system. During the course of World War II, İsmet İnönü, Atatürk’s successor, followed a policy of neutrality and resisted Allied calls to join the war against Germany until February 1945. This experience would leave an important legacy in Turkey’s relations with the West.

During the course of the Cold War, Turkey’s democracy evolved hesitantly and was interrupted by military coups on a number of occasions. Domestically, its membership in the transatlantic community and especially NATO was periodically questioned. It would not be until the

1980s that Turkey would start transforming its economy from a primarily state-led import substituting to a liberal market economy. A slow and highly contested process of democratization would then follow this from the late 1980s on. Eventually these two developments would open the way in 2005 for membership talks with the EU, and it increasingly seemed that Turkey was becoming solidly anchored in the international liberal order. By the time the EU and the United States had entered into one of their worst economic recessions in 2008, Turkey was being touted as a model for countries aspiring to join the international liberal order. Its rising soft power, constructive foreign policy, and economic engagement of its neighborhood (the Balkans, countries bordering the Black Sea, the South Caucasus, and the Middle East) were seen as assets for bringing this neighborhood into the international liberal order. Yet this did not last long. The international liberal order began to encounter challenges from within, as both the United States and the EU experienced economic difficulties and challenges from outside powers, especially China and Russia, which sought an alternative order. Furthermore, Turkish democracy began to recede, its economic dynamism started to fade, and its leadership, increasingly driven by an Islamist agenda, became embroiled in the conflicts of the Arab Middle East.

### **GLOBAL LEADERSHIP AND THREATS TO THE WORLD ORDER**

The revolving heart of this picture is the question of global leadership, especially the extent and nature of U.S. involvement. Some have advocated that the world continue to be led by the United States as the power that remains “in a class of its own.”<sup>11</sup> Others disagree, adducing in support of their position notions of “the decline of the West” and “the rise of the rest”—China in particular.<sup>12</sup> The greater role of the G-20, whose members account for 80 percent of world trade and two-thirds of the world population, relative to that of the G-7 in steering the global economy through the first stages of the economic crisis of 2008–09 reinforced this broader view of a more dispersed global leadership.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the Chinese economic model of state capitalism and the Russian (Putin’s) political suasion of sovereign democracy have exhibited staying power as alternatives to their Western counterparts. Thus some have espoused the idea that the twenty-first century will not be America’s, China’s, or Asia’s; it will be no one’s.<sup>14</sup>

The question of a continuing leadership role for the United States in the international liberal order has come to be discussed most ardently in

relation to developments in the Middle East. Compared to the depth and scope of U.S. involvement in Central and Eastern Europe in the 1990s and in the Middle East during the 2000s, the country remained relatively inactive during the Obama presidency. The mass protests that erupted in Iran following the presidential elections of June 2009 offered an opportunity for the United States to support the prospects of a democratic opening in the country. Yet Obama remained reticent, fearing that any sort of outside intervention would be regarded as imperialist meddling and would weaken the hand of the reformists in government.<sup>15</sup> It was the Arab Spring uprisings, which erupted in Tunisia in December 2010 and spread to other Middle Eastern countries, that suggested an impending democratic breakthrough. Those hopes also proved short-lived: the situation in Libya, Syria, and Yemen quickly worsened, and the West could not be effective in preempting the violence between domestic actors, who were often supported by rival Arab regimes.<sup>16</sup> In Egypt, the government of Mohamed Morsi succumbed to the “temptations of power,” drifted into majoritarian rule, and was later violently overthrown by the military in July 2013.<sup>17</sup> Some placed the blame at least partially on Washington’s inertness, arguing that the United States had reduced itself to a “dispensable nation.”<sup>18</sup> Interestingly, the only success story, though a fragile one, was Tunisia, where the democratization process was led by local actors (political parties, trade unions, and civil society groups) rather than by Western outsiders. The influential politician and moderate Islamist Rachid Ghannouchi’s unique leadership in devising a power-sharing arrangement in governance—a sure sign of his commitment to reconciling Islam with democracy—also proved critical to Tunisia’s success.<sup>19</sup>

The question of finding the right measure of U.S. involvement in the Middle East has been complicated by the civil war in Syria. The protests against the regime of Bashar al-Assad, which began in March 2011 in the context of the Arab Spring, gradually dissolved into civil war, pulling a growing number of external actors into the fray. The wavering U.S. commitment to hew to its “red lines” in Syria, coupled with the decision to reduce troop levels in Iraq, did not improve the security situation in the region.<sup>20</sup> The rise of IS in 2014 aggravated the chaos in both Iraq and Syria, triggering what the UN High Commissioner for Refugees has described as a protracted displacement crisis.<sup>21</sup> This soon evolved into a security concern for Europe: the IS fighters, in possession of Western passports, became a growing threat, as some masterminded or carried out bomb attacks. In the meantime, Europe became the final destination for some of the millions of Syrian refugees fleeing the chaos in the region.

These developments in turn fueled the rise of xenophobic right-wing groups across Europe and were drawn on to justify calls for stricter border controls. Fearful that extremists might have planted themselves among these flocks of refugees, some EU member states jettisoned the burden-sharing schemes of the European Commission. These developments have raised concerns about the viability of keeping together the very fabric of the EU.<sup>22</sup>

U.S. domestic politics have also been upended by the rise of right-wing populism and anti-immigrant feelings. This exclusionary sentiment has already translated into travel restrictions placed on the nationals of a group of Muslim-majority countries, including drastic limits on the admission of Syrian refugees, by the new administration. The international agreement applicable to refugees, put in place by the United States in the aftermath of World War II, is based on the principle that the protection of refugees is an international responsibility and one that should be shared globally. That these developments occurred despite the disposition on the part of the U.S. public to help Syrian refugees is contributing to the weakening of the very international liberal order the United States once helped to promote.<sup>23</sup>

Finally, Russia has reemerged as a threat to the liberal world order.<sup>24</sup> The first conspicuous manifestation of this threat materialized with the Russian military intervention in Georgia in 2008. The scope of Russia's ambitions and capabilities became clear with the annexation of Crimea and the subsequent support extended to separatists in eastern Ukraine. These actions not only violated the sanctity of the territorial integrity of states in Europe, they also threw obstacles onto Ukraine's path of transforming itself into a stronger democracy.<sup>25</sup> The trade sanctions against Russia put in place by the United States and the EU have been ineffective, attracting instead Russia's own sanctions in a tit for tat, which further disrupted the liberal environment in Europe. Security in Western Europe is also threatened by Russia's infringement on the Baltic airspace and by Russian support for right-wing nationalist movements in European countries.<sup>26</sup> Russian cyber campaigns and allegations of interference in U.S. presidential elections continue to roil U.S. politics, while similar concerns have also been expressed by European countries with respect to their own elections.<sup>27</sup> These policies, reminiscent of the Cold War, seem intended to roll back the achievements of a "Europe whole and free" (called for by then president George H. W. Bush in May 1989) and to introduce fracture lines into the Western association, which had

been united behind a single, liberal U.S. leadership.<sup>28</sup> Last but not least, the inaction of the United States and its European allies in the face of the humanitarian crisis that unfolded after Russia's direct involvement in the Syrian conflict in October 2015 has signaled an erosion of Western power. Initial Russian success in brokering a cease-fire agreement also points to that country having the upper hand in shaping outcomes in the Middle East. It is not yet clear whether the U.S. decision to strike an air base in Syria in April 2017 and send a representative to the Russian-led talks in Astana the following month will evolve into a policy of greater engagement. This could move the focus from the narrowly defined objective of capturing Raqqa from IS to the search for a settlement that would be sustainable for all parties involved. The latter outcome would clearly be much more desirable since it would help reinforce the tenets that still bind the international liberal order at a time of increasing challenges to its viability.

#### **THE CURRENT ANGLE OF TURKEY'S GEOPOLITICAL AXIS**

Turkey's deteriorating relations with the United States and the EU and its dramatically weakened commitment to liberal democracy and a market economy have been a source of concern to many observers. Turkey has been part of the international liberal order since the end of World War II, and any signs of its moving away from this engagement are cause for alarm. Turkey has also been an important player in the defense of the U.S.-led global order in its neighborhood, and its "crossing the floor" into a realm populated by countries such as China, Iran, and Russia would undoubtedly chip away at the effectiveness of its longtime Western allies. That this is happening at a time of growing challenges from the rise of populism and right-wing politics in Europe further complicates matters. Turkey sits in a geography where various arcs of turbulence—humanitarian, geopolitical, economic—intersect dangerously. Ensuring Turkey's cooperation and support will be critical in addressing such issues as managing the Syrian refugee crisis, fighting IS, finding a sustainable diplomatic solution to the war in Syria, stabilizing the wider Middle East, strengthening NATO, and countering Russia's growing assertiveness.

Turkey's relationship with its Western allies with respect to Syria has been a difficult one. Initially, both sides seemed keen to see the replacement of the Assad regime and a transition to a more democratic form of government. However, as the conflict in Syria persisted, major differences

of opinion on what should be given priority in Syria—whether to overthrow Assad first, or defeat IS, or prevent the Syrian Kurds from dominating the northern part of Syria—kept the sides from uniting around a concerted effort.<sup>29</sup> The ongoing fight against IS has also locked the partners into a conundrum as the Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, reacted sharply to the cooperation that formed between the West—the United States in particular—and the Kurdish opposition groups in Syria, actors the Turkish government considers terrorists. Erdoğan even blamed the United States for turning the region “into a pool of blood” and demanded that the United States choose between a NATO ally and the Kurds—all of which has produced a dire predicament.<sup>30</sup> The reality is that Turkey and the United States need each other to bring the broader conflict in Syria to a successful resolution, yet it is not clear whether they will be able to work out a basis for cooperation.<sup>31</sup> Time will tell whether both sides will be able to rise above their differences and pave the way to a more harmonious partnership in Syria and elsewhere. The bigger unknown is whether the two countries will be able to reengage each other over an agenda supportive of democratization in Turkey. Democratic regression in Turkey accompanied by a lack of interest on the part of the U.S. administration in supporting democracy is not very promising in terms of the future of the international liberal order.

Turkey’s relations with the EU have also been strained to the breaking point. This is partly because of the mutual recriminations over the implementation of the March 2016 deal to address the European migration crisis, whereby Turkey agreed to accept the rapid return of migrants from Greece in exchange for its EU membership bid being “reenergized.” It is also partly driven by simmering Turkish resentment at the EU’s failure to express solidarity with Turkey after the coup attempt in Ankara in July 2016. These events have occurred against the background of longstanding criticisms by the EU of the shortcomings of Turkish democracy, especially with regard to the Kurdish minority. Their cultural rights and economic well-being had improved considerably with reforms made in the early years of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), mainly as part of the effort to start EU accession negotiations. Erdoğan’s later outreach to the Kurdish Workers’ Party (PKK) was most welcome as a step that would finally bring an end to the violence, destruction, and displacement that had shaken the country since the 1980s.

The hopes have fast been eroding with the start of clashes again between the state forces and the PKK insurgents beginning in the summer



of 2015. The antiterror laws introduced by the government and the arrest of several Kurdish politicians, including Selahattin Demirtaş and Figen Yüksekdağ, coleaders of the Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP), marked a return to the repressive policies of the 1990s. Another major source of concern for European observers has been the imposition of restrictions on the freedom of expression, which played an important role in the European Parliament's November 2016 call to freeze EU accession negotiations with Turkey. The decision of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) to reintroduce a monitoring process for Turkey in the aftermath of a contested referendum in April 2017 that granted enhanced powers to Erdoğan has been a significant blow to the relationship. The measure was met with indignation by the AKP, the very same government that had succeeded in getting a similar monitoring process lifted in its early years in power.<sup>32</sup>

Turkey's once highly praised "zero problems with neighbors" policy was considered an "engine of convergence" that could help bring its neighborhood into the fold of the international liberal order.<sup>33</sup> By employing its soft power, observers thought, Turkey could mediate conflicts in the region (for instance, by holding proximity talks between Israel and Syria), and this was a quality that made Turkey invaluable in efforts to achieve greater stability and security in the region. Public opinion surveys conducted in various Middle Eastern countries only a few years ago demonstrated solid support for Turkey's leadership and policies.<sup>34</sup> The exuberant welcome extended to Erdoğan when as prime minister he visited Cairo in September 2011 cannot be easily forgotten.<sup>35</sup> Also noteworthy was his speech, delivered to an enthusiastic audience, emphasizing the virtues of a democratic and secular form of government. His speech was also a gentle nudge to the Egyptians to ensure their embrace of the international liberal order—a feat no Western politician could have undertaken in that part of the world.

Today, Turkey is far from enjoying the same clout in the region. Its policy of zero problems with neighbors is in tatters, drawing sarcastic comments such as "zero neighbors without problems."<sup>36</sup> There is no dearth of animosity in Turkey's relations with many states in its proximity as the leadership has found itself in serious conflict with the governments of Armenia, Cyprus, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Libya, Russia, and Syria. No diplomatic relations exist with Armenia and Cyprus to this day, and the Turkish government frequently resorts to recalling ambassadors from countries with which it disagrees—a diplomatic practice sparingly

employed otherwise.<sup>37</sup> An unexpected U-turn in Turkey's relations with Israel and Russia in July 2016, on the other hand, has raised the prospects of Turkey reviving stronger relations with these two countries.<sup>38</sup> Time will tell whether this reorientation toward a zero-problems policy and greater pragmatism can be sustained. On the whole, however, Turkish foreign policy has lost credibility and the admiration it once enjoyed.<sup>39</sup>

Turkey's diminished influence and reputation became particularly apparent at the United Nations. Turkey's failure to be reelected as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2014, when it lost out to Spain by a margin of 60 to 132 votes, was sobering.<sup>40</sup> Six years earlier, in 2008, Turkey had received 151 votes out of 193, garnering decisively the right to hold a seat on the UN Security Council during 2009–10. The subsequent downward trend was interpreted by a senior adviser to Erdoğan as a sign that Turkey now occupied a position of “precious loneliness”—a term intended to imply the administration's preference for upholding noble ethical standards over realist and pragmatic considerations.<sup>41</sup> Yet for many pundits, Turkey's state of loneliness is no more than the dismal result of an orientation in foreign affairs that substituted ideologically driven policies for realistic ones.<sup>42</sup> This has set Turkey in conflict and competition with its traditional allies and shows how dramatically Turkey has lost its positive international standing compared to 2010.<sup>43</sup>

Domestic politics is another area in which the luster of Turkey's record has dimmed. The intricate relationship between domestic affairs and the conduct of foreign policy in Turkey, a phenomenon made all the more striking during AKP rule, calls for a close look at these dynamics together. Signs of growing authoritarianism at home gradually undermined the democratic credentials the AKP had been careful to build during its early years in power, though it is difficult to pinpoint an exact time or event signaling the beginning of the trend. The issue has often been discussed in Turkey around the question of whether Erdoğan and the AKP leadership had any genuine intentions of steering the country toward greater democracy. To use a Turkish expression, they were suspected of performing *takiye* (disguising their true intentions) even as they seemed to act in accordance with the principles of democracy and to adhere to the values of the international liberal order. A frequently cited remark in this context comes from 1996, when Erdoğan compared democracy to a tramcar, to be disembarked once it has served its purpose. He would

disown these words four years later, saying they had been misconstrued and he had indeed internalized democracy.<sup>44</sup> The situation today contradicts him unless he had been professing all along a majoritarian form of democracy. Recent developments, such as restrictions on the media, massive purges after the coup attempt of July 2016, and the controversial referendum of April 2017 that granted him vast powers, have led to several commentaries that profess to have uncovered through hindsight some early signs betraying an underlying authoritarian streak within the AKP all along, with the typical lamentation that they should not have been overlooked or ignored.<sup>45</sup>

The resounding victory that the AKP achieved in the 2011 parliamentary election can also be seen as a point when the weakening of democratization became increasingly more visible.<sup>46</sup> The strong electoral performance coincided with the emergence of an increasingly majoritarian understanding of democracy that was much more willing to disregard diversity and minority views. This led one observer of Turkish politics to remark that Erdoğan evidently took his 50 percent vote share in 2011 “as a mandate to refashion the country according to his values.”<sup>47</sup> This was also the point at which restrictions on the freedom of expression, increasing state penetration into citizens’ private lives, and the reconstruction of a judicial edifice along lines more palatable to his political ambitions began to be unmistakably visible. These developments caused grave concerns in Turkey as well as abroad, validating the similarities that had been drawn between Erdoğan and Vladimir Putin and reinforcing the perception that Turkey was becoming another Russia.<sup>48</sup>

The resentment that was building against the government for this step-by-step centralization of control erupted with the Gezi Park protests of May and June 2013. What started as a peaceful demonstration against a construction project in one of the few remaining green spots in central Istanbul grew in scope and spread across the country before being violently repressed by the AKP government. The crackdown caused loss of life, the participants were harshly prosecuted, and businesses that supported the protesters were harassed by tax inspectors.<sup>49</sup> Censorship was imposed on the internet and social media. In hindsight, the leadership’s reaction to the Gezi Park protests can be seen as a harbinger of the AKP’s new mode of governance.

Erdoğan’s becoming Turkey’s first popularly elected president in August 2014 after campaigning for an executive presidency to replace the parliamentary system marked another step toward greater authoritarian

control.<sup>50</sup> In April 2017, as president, Erdoğan succeeded in obtaining the approval of the Turkish electorate—with 51.4 percent of the votes—for a series of amendments to the constitution that gave him vast powers with few checks on it. The referendum results remain contested, and the number of commentaries calling him “effectively a dictator” has been increasing by the day.<sup>51</sup> But this state of affairs is unsurprising in light of the damage inflicted on democratic institutions in Turkey, notably the media and the judiciary, over the past decade. Turkey’s performance in Freedom House’s *Freedom in the World* reports has steadily weakened with respect to civil liberties, and its media have been listed as “not free” since 2014. Ironically, it was under the AKP’s reign, between 2004 and 2011, that Turkey achieved its best freedom rating of 3 (1 being most free and 7 least free); the rating has been slipping since then.<sup>52</sup> Reporters Without Borders also placed Turkey in its “bad” section for 2016, citing media censorship and massive purges since the coup attempt; Turkey now ranks 155 among 180 countries, “just four ranks ahead of Brunei, Kazakhstan, Iraq and Rwanda, while lagging behind countries such as Russia, Belarus, Singapore and South Sudan.”<sup>53</sup> More disturbing is the growing number of reports on the use of torture against detainees since the coup attempt, a practice that again the AKP governments had eradicated, which earned them great praise.<sup>54</sup>

These domestic developments have called into question Turkey’s commitment to the values central to an international liberal order. There exists a widening gap between Turkey’s foreign policy pursuits and those of its traditional allies, a gap that to an important extent is a function of the decline in its democratic credentials at home. The rise of authoritarianism in Turkey has conspicuously coincided with its growing involvement in the Middle East in the aftermath of the Arab Spring.<sup>55</sup> Initially, Turkey was expected to constitute a model for several Arab countries in their aspirations to transition to democracy. As Turkey increasingly found itself in the grip of an authoritarian streak and rapidly undermining its own democratic reforms, however, its soft power status in the region began to suffer as well. This also meant a decline in Erdoğan’s popularity among Turkey’s Arab neighbors and their leadership, a position that had afforded him abundant leverage before.<sup>56</sup> More strikingly, all this was happening at a time when Turkey was carrying most of the burden of looking after an ever-increasing number of Syrian refugees.

Turkey’s involvement in the Syrian civil war, the efforts it has made to ensure a regime change, has been most troubling. The very fact that

Turkey supported the radical groups—factions outliers to the moderate opposition—led to doubts about its credentials as a dependable NATO member; its slow response to preventing the flow of foreign fighters and the logistical help that it extended to the extremists came to be challenged heatedly.<sup>57</sup> The words of a former U.S. ambassador to Turkey, Robert Pearson, and his co-author describe the situation well: “Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s flirtation with radical Islam in Syria and march from liberal democratic reformer to illiberal populist authoritarian have confused Americans trying to deal with Turkey.”<sup>58</sup> This picture became further complicated when Turkey sent its military into northern Syria in August 2016, ostensibly to fight IS but more with the aim of striking the Kurdish groups allied with the United States, which was then followed by close cooperation with Russia for a cease-fire agreement.

These events marked a stunning reorientation from the AKP’s earlier days, when Barack Obama lauded Turkey’s now erstwhile democratic achievements in his address to the Turkish parliament in April 2009 and expressed confidence in a future U.S.-Turkey partnership.<sup>59</sup> As late as 2012, Erdoğan was among the top five world leaders whom Obama cited as trustworthy.<sup>60</sup> Four years later, however, Obama sounded very bitter when he referred to the same Erdoğan as “a failure and an authoritarian.”<sup>61</sup> In turn, Turkish resentment of Obama went so deep that an analyst close to the AKP government accused him of being “white in his ideas, behavior and policies” and suggested Obama had delivered Syria to the Russians on a golden platter.<sup>62</sup>

Yet none of this changes the reality that Turkey remains, at least in the formal sense of the word, a member of the main institutions of the transatlantic alliance and is still a candidate for EU membership. Turkey is deeply integrated into the global, and especially European, economy. It is a long-standing member of NATO, where it plays a critical role in a number of operations and participates in UN peacekeeping efforts. The current challenges in its neighborhood only add to its importance. Turkey may today appear at loggerheads with its Western allies, yet this was not the case until a few years ago. Hence it is important to understand this dramatic change in Turkish politics and foreign policy to determine whether and how the U.S. administration may reengage its erstwhile ally. The EU can also benefit from a similar exercise, especially as recent elections in some key member countries ended with pro-European politicians prevailing over their right-wing opponents. The nature of this

reengagement will be instrumental in bringing a degree of order to Turkey's neighborhood. This in turn will also depend on how the U.S. administration crafts its future policy toward Turkey, not to mention the broader transatlantic alliance.

The results of the April 2017 referendum in Turkey offer important possibilities. Despite the absence of a level playing field during the run-up to the vote and allegations of fraud at the ballot box, close to half of the Turkish electorate objected to a constitution that undermines Turkish democracy and promises a one-man rule. Hence it will be very important for Turkey's transatlantic allies to adopt policies that continue to support democratic reform in Turkey. The advice of *The Economist* ahead of the referendum, that Turkey should not be abandoned, regardless of the result, is therefore apt.<sup>63</sup> Turkey's geographic location and long-standing relationship with the Western alliance will remain critical in addressing the challenges to the international liberal order. Turkey still holds the potential to evolve, once again, into a robust promoter of the liberal order in its region. The risk of seeing the fault lines with its traditional allies widening even further remains serious, however, and should be addressed carefully. With this in mind, this book explores the following questions:

What factors are driving the deterioration in Turkey's ties with its traditional allies? Why was it not possible to anchor Turkey solidly in the transatlantic alliance, a country that had been part of this partnership ever since the arrival of USS *Missouri* in the Istanbul harbor in 1946 as a gesture of support against Soviet territorial demands on Turkey? How did Turkey's foreign policy of zero problems with neighbors turn into the dismal state of zero neighbors without problems? What kind of "order" are the rulers of contemporary Turkey seeking? How compatible is it with American and broader Western preferences? Can the current rift with the West be overcome? What would be the advantages of reengaging Turkey?

### **TURKEY: AN IDENTITY CAUGHT BETWEEN EAST AND WEST**

Turkey's deviation from its trajectory of a long and slow process of convergence with the international liberal order is deeply connected to the larger and heavily charged issue of identity. It is now commonplace for political scientists to refer to Turkey as a "most obvious and prototypical torn country," but when Samuel Huntington introduced the term in

1993 he was describing a country trapped between rising Islamist sentiments and the secular republican elite, a divide that fed European reluctance to engage Turkey as an eventual member of the EU.<sup>64</sup> The historian Selim Deringil's observation that Turkey is a country in constant search of its identity also dates from a period before the AKP's rise to power.<sup>65</sup> The period of successive AKP governments beginning in 2002 brought its own set of complications to an alliance with the West that has never quite flourished. The AKP's espousal of liberal, economic, and political principles in its early years was a source of inspiration for many, who hoped that stance would finally ensure Turkey's place in the Western community. The term "Muslim democrats," in clear reference to the Christian Democrat parties in Europe that emerged after World War II, was frequently used to define the AKP's leadership. The AKP itself shied away from the term, preferring "conservative democrats," which in the view of the party leaders better conveyed the message that they did not approve of involving religion in politics. Indeed, for most of the first decade of the twenty-first century the AKP was a conglomeration of political views, ranging from political Islam to conservative nationalism and liberalism.<sup>66</sup> The leadership also seemed at ease in its relations with the United States, the EU, and even Israel.

The diversity in the AKP's makeup began to disappear with its third election in 2011, however. A number of founding members of the party, including some of the most prominent advocates of liberal policies, lost their positions both in government and in the party over the years. The party has over time changed into a coalition of Islamic-leaning parliamentarians, mainly the remnants of the *Millî Görüş* (National Outlook) tradition, and champions of religious nationalism. Loyalty to Erdoğan has been a major cohesive factor binding these groups together.<sup>67</sup> In conjunction with the change in the party, the old elite, the class of Western-oriented politicians adhering to the Western vocation promulgated by the founders of the republic, was displaced by a new elite, a class of more conservative politicians who problematized Turkey's identification with the West. This shift was accompanied by policies and actions, such as controversial court cases brought against high-ranking military officers and government employees, that sought to weaken the role and influence of bureaucrats, thus dealing a blow to the continuity of the state.<sup>68</sup> Pro-government media played an important role in this transition, sometimes going so far as to question the suitability of democracy for Islam.<sup>69</sup>

The AKP's successive victories at the ballot box since 2002 have brought a more majoritarian understanding of democracy, a trend that can be tracked in Erdoğan's pronouncements over the years. The calls for unity that marked his early postelection speeches have become less frequent, just as his promises to engage the electorate in its entirety, irrespective of party affiliation or lifestyle, have disappeared. The tone has become more divisive as Erdoğan has increasingly sought to distinguish "us," meaning his unquestioning followers, from "others"—anyone who disagrees with him, especially Turkey's former elites.<sup>70</sup> Erdoğan's grudge against the latter, in particular the military and the judiciary, has become more pronounced: he has repeatedly targeted them as the enablers of a "tutelage regime" that had long disregarded the AKP's right to exercise *millî irade* (national will), phraseology indicating the party's control of a large electorate, with little respect for pluralism.<sup>71</sup> As resentment against the tutelage regime was broadly shared, the growing disregard for diversity aggravated a polarization between Erdoğan's political base and the secular opposition and liberal circles.

The coup attempt of July 2016 and the government's reaction in its aftermath have further aggravated polarization. The general view in Turkey holds the Gülen movement, a former ally of the AKP leadership, responsible for the uprising, which started in the military on July 15.<sup>72</sup> The Gülen movement became identified in recent years with a series of schemes aimed at eliminating supporters of the secular establishment from key institutions, such as the army, the police, and the judiciary. Named after the cleric Fethullah Gülen, the group was known for a long time as a charitable organization and so received support from successive governments beginning in the 1970s. The Gülen community shared with the members of the AKP a worldview based on Islamic principles, and acquired prominence over the years by building a large network of high-quality schools at all levels, both in Turkey and abroad. The extent of their reach and their human capital are generally recognized as having benefited the AKP during the decade in which the two organizations operated as close allies.<sup>73</sup> The coalition gradually eroded, however, and they eventually found themselves locked in a fierce power struggle. Since the coup attempt the government has introduced draconian measures in an attempt to eliminate Gülenist sympathizers from state institutions and civil society.

The language adopted by the AKP administration has also become increasingly imbued with Islamic motifs. The religious mission that the



AKP claims to have taken on itself has been repeatedly invoked through the use of such terms as *kutlu yolculuk/yürüyüş* (holy march) and *dava* (mission).<sup>74</sup> Gestures such as long-winded salutes to the Islamic world at the beginning of speeches have become common. The absence of the usual EU contingent and the presence of several Arab leaders, mostly from the Muslim Brotherhood, at the 2012 AKP party congress can be interpreted as the party carrying out *dava* and uniting preferentially with the *ummah*, the broader Muslim community—which, especially in the Arab world, is represented by the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>75</sup> It is hard to believe that the same party was in power in 2007 when both Shimon Peres, the Israeli president, and Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president, addressed the Turkish parliament together.<sup>76</sup> The strong Muslim Brotherhood orientation at the 2012 party congress suggested the AKP was moving away from its embrace of diversity and pragmatism, the bedrock of the regional cooperative approach it had previously upheld. Instead, a politically divisive and religiously sectarian dimension began gaining ground in AKP circles, shaping not only domestic politics but also the conduct of foreign policy.<sup>77</sup>

The emphasis on close relations with the Muslim Brotherhood has been most evident in post-Arab Spring policy orientations. This marked a major shift from the traditional statecraft that had guided Turkey's foreign affairs for more than seven decades.<sup>78</sup> Championing the cause of the Muslim Brotherhood largely aligned with the “strategic depth” doctrine launched by Ahmet Davutoğlu, a former academic who served as minister of foreign affairs and then prime minister from March 2009 to May 2016.<sup>79</sup> Now largely discarded as overly ambitious, even mocked as manifesting “strategic shallowness,” Davutoğlu's aspiration was to seek an ideologically and religiously motivated political leadership for Turkey in the post-Ottoman space.<sup>80</sup> The *Büyük Restorasyon* (Grand Restoration) project that Davutoğlu initiated to reunite the Muslim *ummah* of the Middle East never materialized in the quagmire that the region has turned into with the civil war in Syria.<sup>81</sup> The vision of an Ikhwan (Muslim Brotherhood) belt stretching from Tunisia to Libya, Egypt, and Syria also fell victim to the ousting of Egypt's Mohamed Morsi in 2013, which provoked Turkey's anger toward the United States in particular for failing to defend a democratically elected leader.<sup>82</sup> This was further complicated by the rise of IS and other extremist groups and unclear signals from Turkey as to the role it might expect to play in the fight against them.

The shift in the pendulum toward the Middle East marked a major departure from the AKP's earlier emphasis on the pursuit of EU membership. Erdoğan had seemed committed then to ensuring that Turkey met the Copenhagen political criteria, a list of conditions candidate countries were expected to fulfill before starting accession negotiations. The AKP certainly deserves credit for the reforms it initiated in its early years and for starting accession negotiations in 2005. It was during this period that the then minister of foreign affairs, Abdullah Gül, worked closely and constructively with the Turkish bureaucracy and in particular with those ambassadors and Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials responsible for handling relations with the EU.<sup>83</sup> However, the lukewarm response from the EU curbed the enthusiasm, which was further weakened by the realization that Turkey's admission would face strong resistance from the European public. Not surprisingly, Turkish support for EU membership dropped steadily from its peak of 73 percent in 2004 to its lowest level of 38 percent in 2010.<sup>84</sup> The trend was not only a reaction to the EU's reluctance to accept Turkey; it also derived from the diminished value of membership after the euro crisis. The Turkish economy had grown around 9 percent in 2011–12 while the EU had barely maintained a 2 percent growth rate. Meanwhile, the Turkish per capita income also moved from about 26 percent of the euro area average in 2006 to 30 percent in 2014.<sup>85</sup> The "Eurosarcasm" that emerged as a result was certainly a new phenomenon, a sentiment only aggravated by events since then, adding further doubt as to whether Turkey would maintain its Western orientation.<sup>86</sup>

**TURKEY TODAY IS RUDDERLESS.** The coup attempt of July 2016 and the much-contested referendum of April 2017 that all but secured a one-man rule for Erdoğan have further widened the gap between Turkey and the West. The political gamble in the Middle East did not bring about the leadership position that Davutoğlu had envisioned for Turkey. The recent rapprochement with Russia and Israel, in light of Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım's poignant remark that Turkey needed "to increase the number of friends and reduce the number of enemies," points to a return of some pragmatism but fails to assure observers that it is the result of a well-thought-out policy.<sup>87</sup> The earlier hopes invested in the BRICS as a potential compass for Turkey did not last long either as an economic downturn undermined the prospects of "the rest" reshaping the international order. The AKP also seems to have missed the point that a correla-

tion exists between the adoption of democratic principles and the political and economic gains that follow thereafter. It is a sad irony that Turkey's regression today occurred under the AKP, the very party that had propelled Turkey closer to the EU and deeper into the transatlantic community.

A deep-seated skepticism where the United States is concerned continues to motivate Turkey in its search for new alignments. The United States had supported Turkey's bid for EU membership through several steps in the process: from the EU-Turkey Customs Union agreement in 1995 to Turkey's appointment as a candidate country in December 1999, and later to open the accession negotiations in October 2005. Backing Turkey's bid was a strategic component of the U.S. policy to anchor Turkey in the transatlantic community. The United States even became the target of criticism from some EU leaders for its aggressive advocacy of the Turkish cause. An illustrative incident was the rancorous spat between French president Jacques Chirac and the U.S. president George W. Bush at the 2004 NATO summit, Bush arguing that as a European power, Turkey belonged in the EU, and an openly frustrated Chirac accusing the American president of wading into territory that was not his.<sup>88</sup>

This U.S. enthusiasm for Turkey's EU membership did not shield the U.S.-Turkish relationship from being adversely affected when the United States invaded Iraq in 2003. The many warnings from the Turkish government and diplomatic corps against such an undertaking, along with the havoc it created in the region, brought the relationship to a state of crisis. Public skepticism toward the United States has been on the rise ever since: as shown by Pew opinion polls, the people of Turkey have grown more anti-American than the populations of other Muslim countries, with the exception of Jordan, primarily since the intervention in Iraq.<sup>89</sup> The resentment has persisted: a Turkish national survey conducted in 2016 found that 52.9 percent of respondents "[had] a problematic outlook on Turkey-USA relations." More strikingly, the U.S. approach to Turkey was characterized as "untrustworthy, colonialist, hostile, opportunistic, and hypocritical" by 67.1 percent of respondents.<sup>90</sup> The United States is regularly seen as perpetrating, if not confecting, conspiracies in Turkey and in the region. For Turkish leaders, launching such charges has traditionally served as propaganda to drum up domestic support, but skepticism has been a part of Turkish attitudes at least since the 1960s. Skepticism was also on display after July 15, 2016, when many officials, including a cabinet minister, openly accused the

United States of being involved in the coup attempt.<sup>91</sup> Subsequently, Turkey's persistent requests that the United States extradite Fethullah Gülen, who has been in self-exile in Pennsylvania since 1999, became another thorny issue.

Turkey's future trajectory depends on how its relationship with the EU and the United States develops. National elections in Austria, France, and the Netherlands in 2017 have suggested pro-European integration centrist leaders prevailing over populist and nationalist leaders. Should a similar result follow Germany's elections in September 2017, it is likely that regardless of policies and actions Erdoğan may pursue, the EU may continue trying to engage Turkey and strengthen EU-Turkish relations. (This is not set in stone, and much depends on how well these leaders also manage the challenges that the EU faces from within.) The greater challenge emanates from a U.S. administration that so far appears in its foreign policy to have put more emphasis on Realpolitik and transactional relations with authoritarian leaders than on shoring up the international liberal order.<sup>92</sup> The lack of consistent messaging from the American White House additionally leaves a question mark over the United States' continuing commitment to anchoring Turkey in this liberal order.<sup>93</sup>

### **FLUCTUATING RELATIONS: ENGAGEMENTS AND FAULT LINES IN THE TRANSATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP**

Going forward, at least three structural factors are likely to deflect the Turkish leadership from its anti-Western ideological trajectory and move its foreign policy more in the direction of pragmatism. First, Turkey is deeply integrated into the politico-military institutional structures of the transatlantic community: it is part of NATO and the Council of Europe, and also participates in economic organizations central to the international liberal order, such as the World Bank, the IMF, and the World Trade Organization. This level of integration is a leading factor distinguishing Turkey from many other emerging economies and the BRICS.<sup>94</sup> These economic, political, and security connections linking Turkey to the transatlantic community are likely to persist. Despite a deep-rooted anti-Westernism, Turkey's current governing elite is ill prepared to bear the cost of severing these bonds. As a close observer of Turkish foreign policy has noted, Turkey "is tied to the Western order by bonds that are thicker than the sometimes adventurous impulses of Turkey's elites."<sup>95</sup>

Second, the loss of important export markets as a result of the turmoil in the Middle East and the sanctions by Russia enhances the value of Turkey's economic relations with the transatlantic community. The EU has remained one of the few major destinations for Turkey's products, somewhat offsetting the drop in Turkey's exports to the Arab Middle East and Russia in 2015–16. More important, Turkey's membership in the EU-Turkey Customs Union, besides offering Turkey preferential access to the EU's internal market, has also led to the adoption of EU standards for Turkish industrial export goods, which has increased their competitive value outside the EU as well. And despite the distance, Turkey's exports to the United States have in the last two years been more than twice the volume destined for Russia, its neighbor across the Black Sea. By and large these exports have included industrial goods, which have greater value added than the agricultural products that Turkey exports to Russia.

Similarly, around 62 percent of foreign direct investment in Turkey originated from the EU in 2016. This influx of investment is critical to the Turkish economy, which is notorious for failing to generate enough savings and technological knowhow of its own. Traditionally, tourism has been an important source of income, amounting to 3 percent of Turkey's GDP at its peak in 2014. More than half the nationals visiting Turkey that year came from European countries other than Russia. The negative impact that the collapse of tourism in 2016 had on the Turkish economy as a result of growing insecurity and instability speaks for itself. The fall in revenue from almost U.S. \$28 billion to around \$17 billion has adversely affected employment levels and living standards along the Aegean and Mediterranean coastal regions of Turkey.<sup>96</sup> Government efforts to mobilize tourism from the Gulf countries, Iran, and Russia have fallen well short of compensating for the loss of European tourists. Russia's ability to hurt Turkey with economic sanctions, especially in the tourism sector, as it did after Turkey's downing of Russia's jet, is well recognized.<sup>97</sup> Hence all indications are that Turkey will have to turn its attention to the West once again to revive its sluggish economy.

Security considerations are a third factor pushing for a reorientation of Turkey's policies. The mayhem in Syria has gravely affected Turkey's security over the last two years—more than 410 lives have been lost in numerous terrorist attacks since June 2015.<sup>98</sup> Some of the attacks are known to have been led by IS, while others were perpetrated by the PKK. Additionally, a number of separate attacks have been carried out by the

PKK-affiliated splinter group known as the Kurdistan Freedom Falcons. The PKK's close alliance with the Democratic Union Party (PYD) and People's Protection Units (YPG) in Syria is another major issue threatening Turkish national security. Turkey's relations with Russia seem to have taken an upturn since Erdoğan's apology for the downing of the Russian warplane, but Putin's sanctions and aggressive language have caused Turkey to remember the usefulness of NATO membership.<sup>99</sup> This may also be the explanation for Erdoğan's enthusiastic participation in the Warsaw NATO summit in July 2016 and his determination to strengthen Turkey's commitment to NATO.<sup>100</sup> Despite close Russian-Turkish cooperation on Syria, there is nevertheless a recognition on the Turkish side that the relationship has become deeply asymmetric in power terms and that the two countries' longer-term interests in Syria do not necessarily converge.<sup>101</sup> The meaning of the "accidental" killing of three soldiers in Syria in February 2017 by a Russian air strike is well understood as signaling the harm that Russia can inflict on the Turkish military.<sup>102</sup> The annexation of Crimea by Russia and Russia's role in undermining the territorial integrity of Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia have also been duly noted by Turkish officials, who remain wary of the potential threat from the north. Most Turkish officials, in other words, are conscious of the danger of getting too close to Russia.<sup>103</sup> The prevailing argument seems to be that Turkey's "anger at the United States and its Western allies notwithstanding, it needs the protection the alliance offers. Without it, the Russians would be able to intimidate Ankara at will."<sup>104</sup> This appears to be borne out by the Turkish public that maintained almost 62 percent support for continued NATO membership.<sup>105</sup>

These three structural realities are likely to create the circumstances that prevent Turkey from further slipping away from its transatlantic allies (the West) and encourage closer engagement among the United States, the EU, and Turkey. They are offset, however, by at least three major divisions, or fault lines, that currently hold sway in Turkey's relations with the West.

The first major divide concerns popular opinion with respect to seeking closer ties in the first place. Advocates of a closer partnership with the non-Western world—"the rest"—are likely to continue to push back against proponents of maintaining tighter bonds with the transatlantic community. The "Eurasianists" in Turkey are likely to continue to seek closer relations with Russia and China. Their influence over the government has increased since the coup attempt and may well be reinforced

by the outcome of the referendum. The long-standing Eurasian voice in Turkish politics has now merged into Erdoğan's notion of a "new" Turkey, along with its emphasis on authoritarianism and Islamization. Together they are poised to shore up Turkey's perennial status as a "prototypical torn country" whose identity remains caught between East and West. Nevertheless, this new Turkey will continue to enjoy strategic importance in the eyes of the West; its cooperation will be needed in tackling a catalogue of issues. Common interests are expected to provide the foundation for a transactional relationship that could be effective in the areas of regional security architecture, foreign trade, energy, and the provision of humanitarian assistance to Syria and Iraq.

Another fault line with the West lies in Turkey's diminished commitment to democratic values, a deficit that has become particularly conspicuous since the July 2016 coup attempt. The ensuing purges conducted by the government, the attack on the judiciary, and the numerous detentions and arrests that were carried out raised serious questions about the rule of law in the country. The imposition of emergency law has also laid the groundwork for a number of practices, such as the detention of Kurdish members of parliament, the extension of detention periods without trial, and the alleged widespread use of torture, that sharpen this concern. It remains to be seen whether Turkey will return to the days when its democracy was on the rise, when it contributed favorably to the fate of the international liberal order, especially by promoting accountable and transparent government and improving human and minority rights at home and in its neighborhood.

This steady deterioration in Turkey's democratic credentials is reflected in a recent study examining the role of five rising democracies; the study is not particularly hopeful about Turkey.<sup>106</sup> The adoption of the constitutional changes sought by Erdoğan to increase his powers in the tightly contested April 2017 referendum may further distance Turkey from the prospect of returning to the days when great hopes were entertained about the quality of its democracy. Under these circumstances, it is difficult to envisage a relationship of the kind that was assumed in Obama's "model partnership," while the nature of future relations with the U.S. administration cannot be predicted.

The final fault line is the result of the conflicting interests of the EU, the United States, and Turkey on a range of specific issues. The separation is likely to deepen if the sides cannot reconcile their differences even in the transactional sense of the word. The exclusion of Turkey's trading

concerns from the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations was a bitter source of grievance for Turkish leaders. Also, the disagreements with the United States over co-opting the PYD, an entity critical for the United States in the fight against IS but posing a threat to Turkey's national security, will strain bilateral relations if a compromise arrangement cannot be found. Nor is it clear how Erdoğan's policy of courting Russia will play out in the near and more distant term, with respect to both Turkey's bid for EU membership and finding a diplomatic solution to the conflict in Syria.

Turkey's relations with the EU are in no better state. The accession process is at a standstill. The migration deal between the EU and Turkey continues to cause deep consternation on both sides over its implementation. This impasse leaves only trade relations as an area that may enjoy some improvement because of the economic interdependency of the two sides and the ongoing discussions on upgrading the EU-Turkey Customs Union. Improving economic relations between the United States and Turkey could provide room for cooperation if the shadow the U.S. administration has thrown over free trade agreements can be dispelled. This may be possible in Turkey's case because Turkey runs a trade deficit with the United States and is keen to institute a more "fair" trade with the United States.

In sum, the future state of an already troubled alliance between Turkey and its traditional transatlantic partners does not seem promising. Possibly the best outcome might be one that prevents the existing fault lines from widening.

What is quite evident is that Erdoğan's new Turkey will be caught between structural factors that pull it toward the West and the fault lines in the transatlantic relationship that push it away. This dynamic is consonant both with Turkey's liminal identity and with the fluctuations that have historically characterized Turkey's relations with the West: in some periods Turkey's Western vocation has come to the fore, only to be countered by a domestic wave of anti-Westernism that puts into question Turkey's ties to NATO as well as to the EU. The attempt in the 1970s to develop closer relations with nonaligned countries and the Soviet Union illustrates one excursion of the pendulum. The immediate aftermath of the Cold War was also a difficult period when questions emerged about where Turkey belonged, and Turkish leaders sought to unite in what they called a Turkic world, stretching from the Adriatic Sea to the Great Wall of China. Deep distrust crept into Turkey's relations with the West,



then, before the tension eased somewhat with the start of a reform process, which was at least partly nudged into being by the United States and the EU.

Turkey's integration into the transatlantic community and the Western-led international liberal order reached its peak in the early years of the AKP and Erdoğan's reign. This outcome owed as much to the AKP's readiness to cooperate with the existing bureaucracy in Turkey as it did to the policies laid out by earlier governments. The Turkish economy during this period also benefited from the reforms that had been put in place before the AKP's rise to power. That this transformation mostly occurred on the watch of an elite with deep roots in political Islam raised hopes that Turkey would indeed be able to marry democracy and Islam. Had the attempt been successful, Turkey would not have had to sail the choppy seas of international relations like a rudderless boat. The country might now be at a point where it could draw strength from the unique position of being a predominantly Muslim democracy. Unfortunately, Turkey could not live up to the expectations that arose in the early years of AKP rule and turned away from the principles of the international liberal order. The new Turkey that Erdoğan is pursuing appears at times to be trying to make a break with the West, as manifested in Erdoğan's threat to hold a Brexit-like referendum on Turkey's EU membership bid and his periodic calls to Putin to help him join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. All of that might well be posturing, however. Only the passage of time will reveal whether a major rupture with the West does or does not occur. A number of possible scenarios might unfold under Erdoğan's reign as Turkey moves toward its centenary. These are described in the concluding chapter of the book, which also offers some brief recommendations for overcoming or at least mitigating the impact of the fault lines on the troubled alliance.