

From the Desk of the Editor

In this issue of TPQ, we look at some of the pressing questions on the foreign policy agendas of countries stretching from Europe to Eurasia. Dynamics of the wider Black Sea region, which lies at the center of this geography, figure particularly high. To foster a deeper understanding of ongoing debates about the region, we reflect on both the human dimension and geo-strategic considerations.

While Europe searches for a security architecture that accommodates both the transatlantic alliance and the position of Russia, Turkey finds itself in an ambiguous position. The depth of Turkey's relationship with Russia, Turkey's pivotal role for Europe's energy security, and the need for an EU anchor for Turkey's sustained democratization are some of the issues our authors explore.

Since our Winter 2009 issue of TPQ, Turkey's agenda has continued to be ridden with tension. Our authors touch upon a number of developments in Turkey's foreign affairs; some of the more recent debates are not covered, however.

For example, Turkey chaired the UN Security Council meeting at which tougher sanctions on North Korea were unanimously adopted (in response to its recent nuclear test). Turkey will be a member of the UNSC until the end of 2010. This raises the question of its stance in case of a UNSC debate on measures regarding Iran's nuclear program. Turkey lost no time in congratulating Mahmoud Ahmadinejad after the presidential elections in Iran. Subsequently, Foreign Minister Davutoğlu stated that the election controversy was Iran's internal affair. Critics of the Turkish government argue that Ankara's lack of concern for the safety and rights of the Iranian protestors contradicts the Western position.

Another heated debate in recent months was the "election" of a new NATO Secretary General. Statements from Ankara objecting to Anders Fogh Rasmussen's candidacy created tensions in relations with a few European governments. On the other hand, the fact that the Turkish government eventually conceded on the issue was criticized at home by the leading opposition parties.

The visit of President Obama was by and large a success. However, a shadow once again cast itself over Turkish-American relations when on April 24, Armenian Remembrance Day, the White House statement referred to the 1915 events as "Meds Yeghern" ("Great Calamity" in Armenian) and commemorated "the 1.5 million Armenians who were subsequently massacred or marched to their death in the final days of the Ottoman Empire." Reactions from Turkish political leaders were harsh; many Armenian counterparts were also bitterly dissatisfied. The battle over the G-word continues. We are happy to include a fresh perspective on this struggle in this issue of TPQ.

The month of April was fitful. Relations with Azerbaijan became strained over Turkey's rapprochement with Armenia. Turkish policy appeared unpredictable as Ankara scrambled to prevent the recognition of 1915 as 'genocide' in Washington by increasing the profile of talks with Armenia while—at the same time—trying to maintain solidarity with Azerbaijan. Breaking out of the status quo, from which all sides lose, now seems possible only if progress is made in overcoming the deadlock over Nagorno-Karabakh. Such progress cannot be taken for granted, however. Realistic expectations need to be set on all sides; each disillusionment makes moving forward more difficult. The story of a family in the Armenian village of Lusarat on the Turkish border—included in this issue of TPQ—portrays the interplay between the three countries' policies and their peoples' memories of the past, as well as their dreams for the future.

Many of the themes that TPQ tries to shed light on were close to the heart of our advisory board member, Nelson Ledsky, who we are deeply saddened to have lost this month. We dedicate this issue of TPQ to his memory. Ambassador Nelson C. Ledsky managed the democratic development programs of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) in the former Soviet Union from 1992 onwards. He previously worked both for the U.S. Foreign Service and the White House, and had a deep understanding of Europe and Eurasia. He was a valuable friend of Turkey, of ARI, and of TPQ, as well as a personal friend of many of us. We will miss his insight, passion, and determination.

We would like to express our gratitude for the support of Beko, Garanti Bank, Unit Group, and Finansbank for this issue of TPQ.

Diba Nigar Göksel

This issue is dedicated to the memory of Ambassador Nelson Ledsky who was also an advisory board member of Turkish Policy Quarterly.