

PREFACE

This issue of Perceptions marks the completion of our first year of publication. For the editors of this periodical and for all the staff of the Centre for Strategic Research, it has been a valuable and satisfying twelve months. Perceptions, as we explained at the start of our first issue, is intended as a vehicle by which concepts and ideas circulating in both governmental and non-governmental circles in Turkey can be conveyed to interested parties in the rest of the world, and as a forum for debate on issues which are likely to shape Turkey's future.

When our first number appeared, we did not know how much of a response we would enjoy. In the event, our circulation has risen sharply with each number and we are now printing 2000 copies per issue.

The basic formula remains to include articles in each issue by senior Turkish officials, academic specialists, and academics from other countries, as well as one 'celebrity' contributor and to try and organise each issue around a particular theme relating to an aspect of Turkey's geo-strategic situation.

We have never made any attempt to impose editorial uniformity where the views of our contributors are concerned. Perceptions is intended to be a forum in which ideas are heard and tested. It would not succeed in this aim unless it offered a variety of genuinely different ideas.

Our readers are heartily encouraged to contribute as much as they can to this debate. Your contributions, whether formal or informal, are very welcome. We can be contacted both through our telephone and facsimile numbers given on our masthead, and also on e-mail at Strategy@mfa.gov.tr. Our home page address on the Internet is: www.mfa.gov.tr, under 'Perceptions'.

During the coming months we shall be expanding the amount of space given to book reviews and we shall try and publish special papers on particular topics where appropriate. Publication of these has already started as SAM Papers in our English language series and SAM Notlar_ in the Turkish series. SAM Notlar_ is intended, among other things, to make the full texts of speeches and articles by international specialists available to Turkish readers, whether students or civil servants.

We are conscious that we are carrying out our work at a time when the world stage is going through a rapid series of unpredictable transformations. Many of these are full of hope for Turkey and for humanity as a whole, but in the region around us we see many instances where hopes have proved to be tragically false. We cannot make headway against the problems threatening peace, security, and prosperity in regions like the Balkans, the Caucasus, and the Middle East, unless we understand them fully and clearly and identify what our options are and what are the merits and costs of each of them. This task is the one which Perceptions is trying to perform in all humility.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone, our publishing board, staff, and those who contributed articles and ideas, for helping us in our work over the last year. Working together with you all has been a most fruitful and rewarding partnership for us. We look forward to continuing our contact in future issues.

The Editors