

## The Dispensable Nation: American Foreign Policy in Retreat

*By Vali Nasr*

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Vali Nasr, a renowned US academic and author of the best-seller *The Shia Revival*, makes an important contribution to understanding the behind-the-scenes subtleties of US foreign policy towards the greater Middle East, a region stretching to Southeast Asia. His argument mainly centres on three points: the internal power play within the US administration, regional power rivalries and global US-China competition.

Nasr's main target is the US foreign policy-making community. Since the launch of the book, he has actually received a significant amount of attention in the US media and journals. As a former member of the Obama administration, his ability to describe the internal battle of ideas and personalities is the primary asset of the book. He portrays Obama and his entourage as political campaigners, lacking the required vision and tools to carry out long-term policies. The short-termist Obama team is thus tuned to public opinion polls and domestic audiences, which have largely gone against the necessity of committing and engaging through the laborious processes of diplomatic conciliation. In other words, Obama is the non-diplomat

who has turned international processes into tools of domestic politicking. Thus, he has sought easy victories to intricate foreign conflicts. After a series of early failures, the President of the United States has shifted to legitimise his case for detachment.

Nasr has a personal story of living through this as an advisor to Ambassador Richard Holbrooke. This distinguished and ambitious US diplomat reportedly had an eye on the post of Secretary of State before Hillary Clinton accepted the post. Assigned to a lesser role, Holbrooke never lost his passion to prove his skills and eligibility for what he deserved. In the beginning, things went right for him. Obama was personally persuaded to the idea that Afghanistan was a war of necessity, while Iraq was a war of choice. This emphasis was what he was looking for and as result his visibility was boosted. Holbrooke's principal contribution to US policy in Afghanistan- or to use the neologism, which has come to be largely loathed in both countries, Af-Pak, was to prioritise diplomatic processes over military solutions. He sought an exit option by building alliances, making compromises and trying to earn the

goodwill of parties with vested interests. His comprehensive approach paved the way for not only engagement with Taliban, but also persuaded neighbouring states to get involved in the negotiations.

This promiscuous opening though failed to make a breakthrough. In that regard, Nasr condemns the Obama team's reluctance, despite Holbrooke's attempts for active diplomacy. He describes how Holbrooke was sidelined, left in the dark, isolated and finally discarded in the corridors of the White House. He explains Secretary Clinton's support for the Special Envoy, which turned out to be ineffectual against the opposition of the President's manipulative advisers. In the end, the processes Holbrooke initiated either died out or withered away, leaving the US with no choice but to prepare for withdrawal from Afghanistan. A certain minus of the book is the author's disregard of Holbrooke's personal agenda. Lionised in this book, Holbrooke was known to have overplayed his hand in Washington, and was finally left out in the cold. I remember attending a meeting with him back in February 2010 when he looked disappointed and concerned not only about Afghanistan, but also about his personal prospects in the administration. Nasr thinks he was up for the job till to the end.

Dissatisfied by Obama's approach, Nasr moves on to propose alternate

policy stances on Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq and the Arab Spring. His case for "what ifs" is powerful as he excels at writing an insider's account. Having organic links with regional countries, he has a distinctive appeal to the US policy makers in Washington. His commandment of both enables him to seek a Venn diagram rather than build on particularistic interests. Erudite in the complex web of relations in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, he warns against sectarianism in the former and security dilemmas in the latter.

Nasr's magic formula for the region-President Obama says he lacks one for Syria- is economic development and the formation of a middle class. In that, he concentrates on the Turkish model, which was actually the gist of his earlier book, *The Forces of Fortune*. Turkey has been able to accommodate a democratic regime and best practices in the market economy with local values, making it an epitome of Muslim modernism. Nasr sharply contrasts this with the anachronistic polities all around the region. He particularly detests the Gulf monarchies, which, for him, have received undeserved attention and support from Washington. He criticises Iraq's downhill slide to sectarian strife with Maliki, Pakistan's and Egypt's securitisation under military rule, Iran's obsolete Third Worldism and the overall US inability to insist on a democratic

and prosperous Middle East. He calls on Washington to invest economically and advocate its political ideals to reclaim its indispensable role. Yet his posture takes into account the dictates of regional dynamics, which are implied to take precedence over the tenets of US unilateralism. His message is to work out diplomatic solutions with the regimes in power in order to have them integrated into the global system in the long haul, a case defended principally by Ankara.

Nasr believes that the locus of power in the Middle East has shifted from the Arab core to the northern and southern wings, namely Turkey and Iran. Here he disregards Israel and its unique role in the Middle East while magnifying the largely underestimated dynamics of regional power rivalries. Although the author does not describe what specific route Iran will take to sustain its claim as a regional powerhouse, he hints at its leadership of the Shia bloc. This automatically assigns Turkey a similar role among the Sunnis and Nasr acknowledges his support for Turkish leadership. Overall, the implication is not polarisation. Rather the expectation is that Turkey's economic success story will either persuade others to economically integrate and become more interdependent, or this will lead to national decay, which in the case of the Gulf monarchies is seen as a depressing possibility.

Nasr's commercial peace theory for the greater Middle East runs the risk of Chinese economic prevalence at a time of US disengagement. The author makes his case against the latter in order to stem the looming regional integration with China. He explains the growing economic ties of world's second economic power, particularly with Turkey, Pakistan, and Iran. He underlines that China views the greater Middle East region as "West Asia" and evaluates it as an integral part of its natural sphere of influence. Thus he points to the undercurrent that while the US is pivoting to Asia, China is enlarging the definition of Asia. Nasr argues that to have a sustainable policy in Asia, the US needs to act in accordance with this Chinese approach.

*The Dispensable Nation* fills an important gap in understanding American foreign policy in the greater Middle East, which has lately oscillated from engagement to leading from behind, and now pretends to disengage. The lesson for US and regional policymakers is it takes engagement and dialogue with all possible parties to realise foreign policy objectives in an ever complex battleground of power rivalries.

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## Rusya ve Polonya'da Din, Kimlik, Siyaset (Religion, Identity, Politics in Russia and Poland)

*By Sevinç Alkan Özcan*

Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2012, 334 pages, ISBN: 9786055383176.

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One of the most important consequences of the collapse of communism in the countries of Eastern Europe has been the resurgence of the church as a major political and social actor, after having been kept under strict pressure for decades by the Marxist-Leninist ideology. The revival of the Catholic Church in Poland and the Orthodox Church in Russia have been particular cases due to their traditionally powerful influence in these countries on politics as well as the definition of national identity. It is very meaningful, for instance, that Pope John Paul II became a leading figure in the ending of communist rule in his native Poland, while Patriarch Alexy had built a very close and special relationship between the church and state in Russia until his death in 2008.

In her book, Sevinç Alkan Özcan analyses and compares the dynamics of this new relationship between the church and the state in post-communist Russia and Poland. The book includes a detailed

analysis of the major dynamics that have facilitated the revival of the church as a political and social actor in these two countries. However, this is not an easy comparison when one considers that the historical evolution of religion, as well as its relationship with politics, has been quite different in Russia and Poland. Whereas Russia has been influenced by the Byzantium tradition in which the church is almost identified with the state, the Catholic Church in Poland has retained its relatively independent power despite its historical political struggle with the secular authorities. It is also important to note that when compared with Poland, religion was subject to much more direct control during the communist period in Russia. As also indicated by Özcan, the Russian church was forced to cooperate with the communist regime in order to keep its unity, although this choice eventually turned it into an instrument – or even an agent – of the communist state, unlike the Polish case where the church

became a “proto-civil society” due to its opposition to communist rule (p. 15).

At the same time, however, the author highlights a very significant similarity between Poland and Russia in the post-communist period: the churches in both countries have refused to remain within the limits defined by theories of modernisation and secularisation, which tend to regard religion as a thing of the marginal and private sphere (p. 17). In order to understand the dynamics that shape this process, Özcan begins by providing a historical and philosophical survey of the evolution of Christianity in Europe. Although the chapter touches upon some very interesting details in European religious history, and also includes an extensive discussion on the relationship between the church and state before and after the Reformation period with references to the ideas of philosophers including Dante, Machiavelli, Bodin, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and Marx, it sometimes comes across as a bit too detailed. When the author finally starts to discuss the historical and philosophical evolution of Catholicism in Poland and Orthodoxy in Russia, she tries to show how the church in Poland has remained unaffected by the rise of secularism in the Catholic world and eventually continued to maintain its autonomy from the state. In Russia,

on the other hand, the strong influence of Byzantium Orthodoxy as well as the reforms of Peter the Great seems to have resulted in a much more powerful state control over the church.

The second chapter of the book provides a theoretical framework that focuses on the process of secularisation and especially its influence on the relationship between the public sphere, civil society and religion. Here, the author discusses various concepts that are intrinsically linked with secularisation and how they can be comparatively analysed in the context of Poland and Russia. To this end, she makes significant reference to the works of well-known sociologists of religion like Martin, Madeley, Ramet and Casanova. A major argument here is that secularisation, which has never been a uniform or linear process, followed a completely different course in Russia and Poland compared with in Western Europe (p. 124). The chapter also touches upon the complex relationship between religion and civil society in these two countries in light of the processes of modernisation, nationalism and communism.

In the following two chapters, Özcan analyses the contemporary relationship between the church and state in Poland and Russia. In the case of Poland, the

Catholic Church seems to have become quite influential on constitutional debates as well as on issues like religious education, anti-abortion laws, Christian values in the media and anti-semitism. For Özcan, this strong influence blurs the line between a “state church” and a “church state” in the post-communist period (p. 204). In Russia, she argues that the relationship between the church and state evolved from “cooperation and mutual support” during the Yeltsin years into an outright “alliance” under the rule of Putin (p. 254).

At a time when issues related to culture and religion are on the rise in contemporary international relations studies, Özcan’s book is a very timely and valuable contribution to the field. This is most probably the first book in Turkish that explores and compares the Polish and Russian cases in terms of the relationship between religion and politics. It is also based on very arduous

and meticulous research. However, general readers might find the book a little difficult to read. Apart from the academic language that prevails in the book, this is also mainly because the chapters on European religious history and secularisation theories are too detailed and perhaps require a sort of reorganisation in order to eliminate the doctoral thesis feel. Also, the book would also have benefited from a greater number of Polish and Russian-language sources in terms of authenticity. All in all, however, Özcan’s study is a very valuable source, particularly for the students and scholars in Turkey and abroad who are interested in the relationship between religion and politics in post-communist countries.

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## Trials of Europeanisation: Turkish Political Culture and the European Union

*By Ioannis N. Grigoriadis*

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This book is a comprehensive and informative study that has a strong potential to demonstrate transforming power of regional and/or global actors on domestic politics. Its objective is to assess the impact of Turkey's EU accession process on Turkish political culture between 1999-2004 when Turkish authorities had to meet the EU's Copenhagen Criteria before starting accession negotiations. The author insists that "notwithstanding the impact of Turkey's economic situation, the Cyprus question, Greek-Turkish disputes, Turkey's illiberal political system has so far been the biggest domestic obstacle to its membership in the European Union" (p. 4). To the author, illiberal values and concerns have shaped Turkish political culture regarding state-society relations, civil society, public position of religion (secularism) and national identity formations. Political liberalisation is hence expected to remove the most serious obstacle for Turkey's EU membership by bringing its authoritarian, state-centred

and monolithic political culture closer to European standards.

Political culture in the volume is understood as "a set of citizens' orientations toward political objects based on their knowledge, beliefs, opinions, and emotions" (p. 15). Borrowing from Almand and Verba, liberalisation is viewed as a gradual shift from a *subject political culture*, in which citizens are treated by political authorities as passive objects, to a *participant political culture*, where active and effective popular involvement in political organisations and processes are desired and promoted. The introductory chapter grounds this liberal transformation on theories of Europeanisation. While the *two-level game model* uses the interactive nature of Turkey's EU accession process in which negotiations take place among and between actors at both the EU and the domestic levels, the *path-dependence theory* is employed to explain the step-by-step liberalisation in Turkish political culture under the constraints

of the accession process. The third theory, *historical institutionalism*, puts the emphasis on the capacity of EU institutions in setting and enforcing policies within and outside the EU independent of member state concerns. Since it is related to the EU's law-based institutional procedures rather than member state positions, the latter seems to be significant in the context to assess the continuity of accession process.

Chapter two outlines the historical evolution of Turkish political culture by associating it with a strong state tradition and subject political culture that was inherited from the Ottoman past. To deploy the legacy of this illiberal political culture, the author states that republican modernisation and nation-building processes have kept this authoritarian political culture intact and reproduced it by enforcing a top-down modernisation project under the complete control of a single party, the Republican People's Party (RPP), which held political and social monopoly up until the end of the Second World War. The author observes that despite Turkish politics opened to democratic competition with the post-War international situation, Turkey could not have gone beyond a procedural democracy which relegated democratic processes to periodic free elections. What is more is that the civilian-military

bureaucracy periodically re-established its firm control over state and society through military coups in 1960, 1971 and 1980, which constitutionally institutionalised elite control and military tutelage on the one hand, and put severe restrictions on civil liberties on the other. To show the impact of the EU process, the author argues that the authoritarian characteristics of Turkish political culture came to be reduced in the 1990s as the EU put its emphasis on liberal political standards in its relations with the prospective member states, strengthening the position of social groups in Turkey in their search for a new definition of state, national identity, secularism and state-society relations.

Chapter three elaborates the impacts of improving Turkish-EU relations on Turkish civil society. Since it promotes active citizenship participation in social and political processes, the author takes civil society as an integral component of a participant political culture. The lack of an effective civil society in Turkey is accordingly regarded as one of the reasons for Turkey's illiberal democracy and political culture. To the author, the republican regime, following the Ottoman legacy of all-controlling state, incorporated corporatist policies which obliged civilian actors and associations to follow a state-defined political and



social agenda. Military coups have expanded the state at the expense of civil society. The EU accession process is therefore expected to enlarge the scope of rights and liberties concerning the organisational and operational capacities of Turkish civil society. In this sense, the 1990s is seen as a turning point in that Turkish civil society started to grow relatively stronger as the post-Cold War liberal hegemony has been accompanied internally by ethnic and religious revivals with effective channels and networks at societal level. The author also takes the Manisa and Susurluk incidents, the 1999 earthquake and the 2000-2001 economic crisis, events which deeply shook public image of the state, as catalysts in the rise of a participant civil society. To the author, it has been in this vein that the EU accession process has actively promoted the development of Turkish civil society by providing financial resources to civil society associations and activities, and by initiating legislative reform as a part of the political conditionality principle.

Chapter four examines how the EU accession process has affected the position of the state in Turkish society. In doing this, the study finds a continuity between the Ottoman and republican understandings of state. The author argues that the republican authorities retained a transcendental understanding

of the state that was inherited from the Ottoman past which finds socio-political dissidence and opposition incompatible with the long-term interests of the state and society. Democratic political processes and popular participation in political life have therefore invoked a deep distrust among state elites, prominently military and judicial bureaucracy, who have kept a firm control over civil society and politics through a series of constitutional modifications following military coups. The National Security Council (NSC), State Security Courts (SSC) and constitutional prerogatives granted to civilian-military bureaucracy are presented in the volume as examples of the manifestations of this persisting strong state control. The reform process which took place in the period under the guidance of the EU Commission reports as a result has focussed on the tutelary role of civilian-military bureaucracy. To this end, the volume addresses that military personnel was eliminated from civilian public institutions, the role and composition of NSC was amended, and the NSC General Secretariat was relegated to the position of a consultative body and its secretariat was civilised. Concerning the judicial system, the supremacy of international treaties was recognised and a series of constitutional and legislative amendments were

adopted with an intention to liberalise human rights policies. Most significantly, the SSCs were abolished in 2004 to meet EU and the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) standards in the Turkish judicial system. The author at this point concedes that while such reforms have weakened tutelary role of Turkish bureaucracy, he also points out the position of the general society, intellectuals and of political leaders who have played very crucial roles in liberalising Turkish political culture concerning its state tradition.

Chapter five discusses the emergence of a small movement in republican secularism towards a more liberal treatment of religion and religious groups. In doing this, the author moves his analysis to a distinction between secularism and laicism. While a secular state is identified with rights and freedoms conducive to expressing religious beliefs and practices, a laicist state is associated with effective and restrictive state control over religion. Notwithstanding the fact that Turkish laicism advanced at the expense of social and political manifestations of religion, it is argued that Islam has often been employed by the state as an instrument of social integration and an integral element of national identity so long as it remained subjected to the control of a public institution, the Directorate

of Religious Affairs (DRA), and was based on Sunni Islam. Consequently, the author argues that the public sphere was closed to religious beliefs, practices and associations outside the Sunni-based DRA. In this context, the author points out that the EU has been critical not about secularism itself but about such restrictive interpretations and practices of secularism in Turkey. Though very limited steps have been taken in the period to liberalise Turkish secularism, and without underestimating the effect of the EU process, the study claims that the liberal turn in Turkish secularism came from within the country in the aftermath of the “soft” coup of 28 February 1997, as Islamist intellectuals and political parties, particularly the AKP, ceased to be critical of Western civilisation and started to employ Western liberal values to open a free room for Islamic life and practices. The author hence hopes to see an ongoing process of liberalisation in Turkish secularism under AKP rule.

Chapter six draws attention to the pluralisation of Turkish national identity under the EU accession process. In doing this, the author first outlines the policies and practices that shaped Turkish identity formations until the 1990s. On the basis of the grand categories of German ethnic and French territorial nationalisms, the Turkish case was seen to represent an amalgamation of the

two policies. It is argued that though a civic and territorial national formation, defined on the basis of common citizenship, has constitutionally been formulated and promoted, Turkish state discourse and practices have made latent references to Turkish ethnicity and Islam as the building blocks of Turkish national identity. Consequently, the public visibility and official recognition of minority groups have been conceived of a threat to the unity and integrity of the Turkish nation and have accordingly been suppressed. It was only in the 1990s that the Kurdish question, Alevi sectarian claims and political Islam at the domestic level, and the emergence of a liberal conjuncture in the post-Cold War world at the global level, came to pose challenges to monist definition of Turkish national identity. In this vein, the EU accession process, with its pluralist framework in the Copenhagen Criteria, is seen to have intensified pressures on Turkish governments to take measures for a more inclusive definition of Turkish national identity. Apart from the rights and liberties granted in the process to linguistic groups, particularly to the Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin, the rise of an official concern about non-Muslim minorities are presented in the book as examples of the attempts deemed to redefine Turkish national identity in a more inclusive way by removing its ethnic connotations.

The concluding chapter draws attention to elements of continuity and change in Turkish political culture. Here, the author argues that Turkey has seen the gradual replacement of a subject culture with a more participant political culture as citizens have come to take a more active stance against political institutions and processes during and after the reform process. This is not to say, for the author, that Turkish political culture has fundamentally and essentially been transformed, or that many authoritarian practices and attitudes have continued. Despite this, depending on the predictive precepts of the path-dependence theory, the author takes an optimistic position regarding the future of liberalisation in Turkish political culture. The volume clearly and plausibly concludes that accession process reforms opened the “Pandora’s Box” in Turkey that would not have been achieved without the EU’s incentive. Yet the author concedes that since it eventually has created its own social and political forces, liberalisation will continue to determine Turkish social and political life independent of the EU process.

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## Migration Around Turkey: Old Phenomena, New Research

*By Ahmet İçduygu, Deniz Yüksek and Damla B. Aksel (eds.)*

Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2013, 476 pages, ISBN: 9789754284744.

## Countries of Migrants, Cities of Migrants: Italy, Spain, Turkey

*By Marcello Balbo, Ahmet İçduygu and Julio Pérez Serrano (eds.)*

Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2013, 270 pages, ISBN: 9789754284744.

## Borders under Stress: The Cases of Turkey-EU and Mexico-USA Borders

*By Ahmet İçduygu and Deniz Sert (eds.)*

Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2012, 192 pages, ISBN: 9789754284690.

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The literature on migration has evolved rapidly in recent decades as a result of the diversification and growing extent of migration flows and the new patterns and types in various parts of the world. The magnitude and increasing complexity of migration in today's world necessitate a multi-dimensional analytical approach and a comparative perspective. In line with the need to improve the understanding of the complexities of migration along this line, three recent books published by the Migration Research Center at Koç University (MiReKoc) constitute a comprehensive and illuminative assessment of the

migratory kaleidoscope of Turkey and its position in the international migration scene. With its sending, receiving and transiting roles in international migratory regimes and high rates of internal migration, Turkey provides an interesting setting for migration studies. These three books, *Migration Around Turkey: Old Phenomena, New Research*, *Countries of Migrants, Cities of Migrants* and *Borders Under Stress*, highlight the distinct migratory characteristics of Turkey in a comparative manner and present an extensive overview of Turkey's position in the migration scene.

The novelty of *Migration Around Turkey: Old Phenomena, New Research*, edited by Ahmet İçduygu, Deniz Yüksek and Damla B. Aksel, lies in its integrated perception of internal migration and emigration in Turkey which have traditionally been assessed as two distinct types of “migration traditions” with incomparable features and patterns. For a more complete understanding of migration in Turkey, the book suggests bridging the divide between internal migration and emigration, and it offers an overview of migration in the country through the discovery of conceptual and empirical links between these mobilities. With this aim, the first part of the volume concentrates on different aspects of internal migratory flows in Turkey, such as the relationship between migration and unemployment, the return of internally displaced people, the effects of the Europeanisation of Turkish agricultural policy on the internal migration dynamics of agricultural labour and the impact of internal migration on natives’ educational and labour market outcomes. The second part of the volume turns to the topic of emigration from Turkey and concentrates on various topics, such as Turkish migrants’ claim-making in Austria and Germany, marital strategies of Turkish families in France, intercultural relations among Turkish migrant youth in Belgium and

identity and citizenship among Turkish immigrants in Northern Cyprus. The introduction and conclusion compare the dynamics of internal migration and emigration and point to possible linkages between the two processes. Within this framework, the significance of remittances, informality in employment and migrant networks and the questioned concept of cultural integration are highlighted as some of the comparable components of both internal migration and emigration. While the reader may expect to find a more detailed assessment of these intersection points between internal and international scales, the book still illuminates the pathway for an integrated perspective for future research.

Taking a step back to view the bigger picture of migration patterns in the region, *Countries of Migrants, Cities of Migrants: Italy, Spain, Turkey*, edited by Marcello Balbo, Ahmet İçduygu and Julio Pérez Serrano, concentrates on the Mediterranean region, which operates as a gate for immigration flows to the European core. The book uses extensive data obtained from the “Managing International Urban Migration: Turkey, Italy, Spain” project, which was implemented in order to combine the expertise of Turkish and European universities for a comprehensive analysis of irregular migration flows in the

region. Based on the project's results, *Countries of Migrants, Cities of Migrants* highlights the past migratory experiences in the urban cities of Spain and Italy and compares differences and commonalities of European cities in their different national and local contexts with the case of Turkey. Topics such as international migration and its effects on local policies and practices, contrasts in migration policy and practice, changing trajectories of migration, migrants' networks and integration in Italy, Spain and Turkey provide an extensive assessment of the migration situation in the region within a multi-methodological framework. In this light, these three EU border countries, Italy, Spain and Turkey, have undergone similar migratory transformation processes and moved from being countries of origin to countries of transit and destination. While the continuous growth in the migrant inflows from developing nations and the Europeanisation of the discourse on migration management are shared experiences in the three countries, the varied migration policies in Italy, Spain and Turkey provide an opportunity to discuss the structural needs of the Mediterranean region. The policy-related lessons learned through the comparative perspective adopted by the volume towards the three cases, which are at different stages of the

transition process, with Turkey being the most recent, and which may be applicable to future cases of transition. Yet, the significance of the subject matter necessitates more systematic research in this line of thought.

Complementing the areas covered by the former two edited volumes, *Borders Under Stress: The Cases of Turkey-EU and Mexico-USA Borders*, edited by Ahmet İçduygu and Deniz Sert, studies the issue of migration management by exploring the comparable cases of Turkey and Mexico, which as countries of immigration and transit are the most widely known cases of irregular border crossing. The chapters in the book focus on different aspects of migration through the Turkey-EU and Mexico-US borders, including the demographic growth of Mexican cities along the border, the effect of the global economic crisis on migration trends from Mexico to the US, the conflicting border policies of Greece and EU, migration management issues on the Turkish-EU border, commonalities in Turkey's and Mexico's transformation to transit countries and migrant perspectives on crossing a border. The book then offers an expansive comparison of the two cases and underlines interesting similarities and contrasts between the social and political concerns surrounding the migratory patterns in the two cases. A crucial

finding is that while securitisation seems to dominate the Turkey–EU irregular migration debate, the economisation of irregular migration systems similarly shapes the agenda on the Mexico-US border. Moreover, based on empirical findings it is assumed that the security concerns of the migrant-receiving countries make their immigration policies and practices more restrictive, while their economic interests make such policies more selective. Within this context, *Borders under Stress: The Cases of Turkey-EU and Mexico-USA Borders* offers policy recommendations which advocate less securitisation and more economisation. While the findings in the volume open new venues for further research on migration management, the subject requires more parallel research conducted on the two cases.

Overall, all three volumes provide the reader with a thorough insight into

migration-related issues surrounding Turkey, including internal migration, emigration, irregular migration flows and border management. The richness in this collection of three books comes from the juxtaposition of multi-question, multi-theoretical and multi-level perspectives and a mixed methodological approach towards the field of migration. The contributions of distinguished authors from different countries and disciplines add to the richness of the multi-perspective stance. Each of these books, by emphasising a distinct migratory character of Turkey and comparing the country with similar cases where possible, illuminates a different research track for the reader to follow.

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## Arap Baharı (The Arab Spring)

*By Turan Kışlakçı*

Istanbul: İlimyurdu Yayıncılık, 2011, 248 pages, ISBN: 9786055793494.

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History has been a witness to many revolutions that have integrated every society and left an impression on world politics. In the Arab world, society has faced the same challenges under dictatorial regimes. The recent uprisings that have rapidly transformed into revolutions have differentiated the Arab Spring from previous revolutions. There is one common voice coming from all Arab societies, saying such slogans as “The people want the regime to fall” and “The people want the dictators to fall.” The author, Turan Kışlakçı, examines the formation of the Arab World, its societies that are longing for regime change, the atmosphere the streets and the causes of the uprisings.

This book is not written in an academic style, and is more journalistic. Kışlakçı has clearly tapped into his journalist background. He has extensively written analyses on the Arab Spring in Turkish, Arabic and international media. He has included columns by Arab journalists in his book, and has also made use of Turkish publications.

Kışlakçı divided his book into four main parts: the history of rebellions in Arab societies, the background of the revolutions, people’s reflections on the rebellions and the distinctive features of the Arab Spring. Under these four main categories, the book focuses on issues such as the situation of the Arab countries after they seceded from the Ottoman Empire, and how the maps of these countries were drawn.

The author first explains development of revolutions (p. 57). As an example, he argues that the US’s interference in the Arab World during the first Gulf crisis was a reason for the Arab people to have a critical outlook towards their leaders. This made it possible for people to realise that their futures were bleak. However, in the early 2000s, Arab societies re-evaluated and saw in the Second Intifada a potentially brighter future. Then the US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq squashed these hopes. The Arab people waited for the right time, as if the Gulf crisis and the Second Intifada had never



happened. Hezbollah defeated Israel in 2006, and this victory was followed by Hamas's success against Israel in 2008. Relief workers for Gaza become a beacon of hope in 2010. The world lapsed into silence for a while, but the uprisings demonstrated that Arab societies were willing to take the risk to build "a new world" and that change is possible.

Arab societies sought to explore their identity after the collapse of the Ottoman Caliphate (pp. 63-65). In searching for their identity, educated youths lead the opposition movements and demanded regime changes. This led to the downfall of a number of dictatorships across the Arab world. Kışlakçı's remarks about the background of these revolutions and the period of change offer relevant examples in the second part of the book. These uprisings have been civil rebellions that are seeking a new identity on the basis of Islam. The protests in Egypt and Tunisia initially were met with resistance or repression by their authoritarian leaders. But the protestors pushed back and resisted. In Cairo, Tahrir Square transformed into a tent city, where protestors slept, ate and lived. This created a social foundation to the revolution. All of Egyptian society, including Christians, participated in the Tahrir protests. A spirit of community emerged, which took on a social dimension of its own, as if Tahrir Square

had its own soul (p. 68). A common trait in Tunisia and Egypt was the anger against the opulence and luxury in which these dictators' families lived. The streets' distress came from the gap between the rich and poor, which became untenable for both Tunisian and Egyptian societies. Young university graduates led these revolutions and they used the internet and social media as effective means of organisation and communication during the uprisings (p. 80). The graduates could no longer tolerate the despotism of the political systems of their countries. The organisers and protestors garnered their support from different opposition political parties, civil society, legal and professional trade associations and student groups.

The book depicts the atmosphere and developments of the revolutions, and aims to explain the causes of revolutions, the symbols encouraging all Arabs to rebel and the role of opposition groups in international forums. The book divides the causes of the rebellions into several categories: political, social, economic and extrinsic parameters. Political and social causes include the lack of political participation and disenfranchisement of the younger generations, delayed reforms on the part of new Arab regimes, fraudulent elections, unemployment and the proliferation of bribes and corruption. The economic causes were high taxes and

the high costs of social services. Yet, the author points to the reaction of Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan at Davos on the Israeli occupation of Gaza as one of the most significant external factors of the Arab Spring (p. 113). The book lists a number of other important factors, such as Islamic movements, blog writers and women's organisations for the revolutions (p. 117).

When it comes to symbols of the Arab Spring, there have been two important symbols. One is when the young Tunisian man Buazizi immolated himself, which then became the symbol and "call to arms" for the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia. The second was in Egypt when Khalid Said was tortured by the Egyptian authorities and became the symbol of its revolution. The most interesting feature of the Arab Spring is that the rebellions are without a significant leader and an ideology. What's more, they have been attended by all groups and classes. In Tahrir Square, people carried pictures of

Che Guevara, and at the same time they chanted "Allahu Akbar." Kışlakçı argues that the Western powers had no direct influence on the Arab Spring. However, they made many indirect efforts to steer the protestors towards their long-term interests. The book also debates the relationship between Turkey and the Arab World, and possible scenarios about what will happen in the next decade in Libya, Syria and Yemen (pp. 193-218).

Turan Kışlakçı supports a union of Arab societies that would take a common peaceful position against Israel, develop common access to natural resources and draft new constitutions. In his analysis, the author draws a picture of people-centred revolutions and he tends to take an optimistic view of the final outcomes. However, one criticism is that there is also no detailed analysis on the international aspects of the Arab Spring, which would have enriched his analysis.

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## Aiding and Abetting: Foreign Aid Failures and the 0.7% Deception

*By Jonathan Foreman*

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The amount of foreign aid given by the wealthiest and the most enthusiastic countries is increasing. Since there are many motivations and results of foreign aid, the process which starts from arranging the budget to allocation is controversial. Jonathan Foreman adopts a critical approach in *Aiding and Abetting* and forces us to rethink Britain's foreign aid policies. The standpoint of the author is that there is no correlation between development aid and economic growth due to corruption while the aid is being allocated. Sometimes the aid cannot reach the right places, and sometimes even if it can, it may not promote economic growth. However, though the book is exposing implicit and less well-known obstacles to effective humanitarian aid, as well as the failures of development aid, it never supports the idea of ending all British aid.

The title of the book, *Aiding and Abetting*, shows us the author's bi-directional point of view. The idea behind this title is that in multiple ways a country can hinder the receiving

country while thinking that it is assisting it. This situation and the ambiguity of it have many variables, as seen in the book.

In the first chapter the author argues that the UK is seen as a "development superpower" and that it is also trying to increase the portion of its aid budget to 0.7% of GDP. The expected amount of foreign aid is also increasing from £8 billion to £11 billion in the next three years. However, since the effect of development aid is marginal, which is the main argument of the book, increasing the aid budget makes little sense.

While the 2011 revision of UK's aid regulations removed some residual regulations, there remained some questions that could not be asked regarding the taxes of citizens, the efficiency of aid on the wealth of recipient and the extension of aid. The lack of scrutiny and honesty on aid makes aid vulnerable to corruption and waste. Despite such shortcomings, aid has the ability to make the country giving the aid more prestigious by positively changing the citizens' point of view. Another

criticism of the UK the author makes is in terms of considering their own citizens' wealth in the aid budgeting process. The reasons why aid is not efficiently allocated are indicated in another part of the book: aid undermines the notion of development and governance. Moreover rising inequality is another result of aid. When it comes to the UK, the spread of British aid through Africa and Asia has been for one reason: to reduce the influence of China and Islamist extremism in these regions. However the common reasons lying behind aid are historical links, absolute need, a sense of guilt or obligation, strategic imperatives and political fetishism (p. 143).

Situations that may lead to corruption and negative results can be summarised as follows. Firstly, if the primary financial resource is aid, this causes corruption in the receiving nation. Secondly, if the countries give bribes to get the aid, it decreases the accountability of the country.

Foreman suggests some solutions to the problems of aid he identifies. One solution is a sustainable trade system, which can achieve what development aid wants to achieve: a "fair trade system." With a system like this, regional barriers can directly be eliminated. Closing down the foreign aid and sending remittances can be other solutions to the existing system (pp. 88-90). According

to the author, another shortcoming of development aid is empowerment. Development aid should help poor people build their own capacity. Such capacity building includes infrastructure development as well as governance, education and institutional reform (p. 92).

A lack of checks and balances system also poisons growth and development. A reason why development aid fails is due to the poor planning of the aid. If development aid were designed by researchers rather than planners, it would be more efficient.

Another section of the book looks at the critics of humanitarian aid, or which is sometimes called in the literature "emergency aid". While humanitarian aid seems more valuable and less complicated than development aid, this is not the reality. Actually humanitarian aid is difficult to organise. For instance, giving people inappropriate and not useful materials to protect themselves may cause worse results, such as fire-related casualties, due to the use of nylon material in the tents and for the clothes. To deliver humanitarian aid safely requires aid workers who are educated in this field-the right materials must be in the right place at the time. In order to complete this process properly, aid agencies need leaders. The logic here is straightforward: aid should not

empower the wrong people. However even international organisations cannot prevent this.

India is the largest beneficiary of UK foreign aid. Since India accepts British aid, the UK receives international credit. The areas that India takes foreign aid for are for supplying clean water, education and public health. There are historical, business and diaspora reasons why there are strong ties between India and the UK. However the real objectives of the aid are questionable since the aid is also seen as a justifying the UK's presence in India. In contrast, British aid to Brazil has failed since it could not set up friendly and influential ties. While in Ethiopia only the people who have close ties with ruling party can benefit from any aid.

There are two main chronic problems of foreign aid: the effectiveness of aid cannot generally be evaluated, and when it can be evaluated the methods are often poor. The best implementation of aid requires five criteria: agency transparency, low overhead costs, specialisation of aid, selectivity (countries which have well-designed economic policies) and effective delivery channels.

In conclusion the author maintains that British aid has ideologically conditioned ideas and delusions which still persist. The author further argues that the Foreign Office should have a greater role in the future on aid spending since it considers the Britain's interests more than the Department for International Development, which may take party interests into considerations. The success of foreign aid should not be measured by the amount of money given to the poor countries, and the government should not spend taxes to justify its aid programme.

Foreman concludes his book with suggestions which are quite helpful for the future development of the British aid. In his view, there should be many more realistic regulations on foreign aid policies and he advises us to critically rethink the efficiency and motives of foreign aid.

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