

**THE DEBATE ON DEMOCRATIZATION
IN THE BROADER MIDDLE EAST
AND NORTH AFRICA:
A CIVIC ASSESSMENT FROM TURKEY**

Istanbul Paper # 3

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FOREWORD

The question of promoting democratic reforms in the Broader Middle East and North Africa attracts significant attention in the United States, the European Union and the countries that form this region. The topic has been on the agenda of significant international gatherings including the Arab League Summit in Tunisia, the OIC Foreign Ministers meeting in Istanbul, the G-8 Summit in Sea Island, the EU and EU-US Summits as well as the NATO Istanbul Summit. At the same time, there has been a significant intellectual effort, which culminated in a series of papers produced by the civil society and academia in a multitude of countries.

With the debate thus raging on how best to conceptualize and implement reforms in the region, TESEV has decided to encourage a group of experts to produce a think piece that would set out an original point of view.

The result has been this Istanbul Paper that offers a substantive food for thought contributing to the international debate on this important topic. The paper has been written by a select group of experts who have agreed to provide their personal views irrespective and independent of their institutional affiliations.

The authors challenge some of the themes proposed in the international debate concerning the method of democracy promotion. They argue that stability considerations neither should hold hostage nor be left out of the indigenous and international efforts to promote positive change in the BMENA region. Drawing on Turkey's own successful experience with democratization, they propose that a right mixture of institutionalization and participation be promoted with assistance and support from the international community.

In this context, they emphasize the importance of benchmarking that should nonetheless take due account of the diversity in the region. They also underscore the key factor of the external security environment, which must be made conducive in order for democratization to flourish. The paper also includes recommendations to the international community, including Turkey as a democratic partner.

The ideas that the authors present aim to promote further discussion on the topic. We are proud to have initiated the collaboration among these authors with different but complementary expertise.



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TESEV

THE DEBATE ON DEMOCRATISATION IN THE BROADER MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA: A CIVIC ASSESSMENT FROM TURKEY

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This paper represents the views of four individuals with academic backgrounds in social sciences who are familiar with the new dynamics of world politics as well as the language and practice of democratization.

The authors of the paper are convinced that there is need for change in the direction of democratization in the Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) region. Rejection of this need is unrealistic.

A dilemma in the recent debates of democratization and reform in the BMENA is that the US, the very country that pushed the initiative for democratization to the forefront, suffers from a tide of anti-Americanism in the Middle East.² The sights of torture of Iraqi prisoners further heightened anti-Americanism in the region to unprecedented levels. Such an environment hinders the legitimate discussion of democratization in the BMENA. However, the need for democratization in the region is obvious and increasingly appreciated, and thus should be assessed on its own merits.

The series of initiatives pertaining to the BMENA region were motivated by the desire to unleash and sustain democratization as the panacea of international terrorism. Whether democratization as such would make an effective instrument is

¹ The authors would like to thank Sanem Güner and Sabiha Senyücel for their valuable assistance. The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors alone and cannot be associated with or attributed to any government or institution.

² See the latest survey by the Pew Global Attitudes Project: ***A Year After Iraq War: Mistrust of America in Europe Ever Higher, Muslim Anger Persists***, Released on 16 March 2004, <http://people-press.org/reports>

an open question. Nonetheless, democratization should still be supported for its own sake.

On the other hand, efforts to promote democracy should not be limited to the BMENA region. A perception that regimes are judged in accordance with vested interests would damage the credibility of the democratization push in the BMENA. Moreover, any democratization project in the region should be based on the fundamental principles expressed in the UN Charter and other internationally recognized instruments. It should exclude any form of military intervention.

The suggestion that democracy can be created out of turmoil and chaos is fallacious. Democratization in the region should proceed ultimately with an eye to stability. This is not only a regional and global interest, but also a fundamental humanistic premise. The perceived contradiction between progress and stability is avoidable and can be overcome by sound and consistent policy and adherence to fundamental international norms by both the regional and extra-regional powers. Legitimacy and moral high ground must be preserved in order to remain a credible advocate for change.

Democratization should be supported via benchmarking which can be defined through criteria that a country is expected to meet. The Turkish experience in the process of adoption and harmonization to the Copenhagen political criteria of the European Union is a case that successfully portrays this method.

Turkey has been pursuing full membership of the European Union since 1963. Especially in the aftermath of its designation as a candidate country at the Helsinki Summit in December 1999, the drive for full membership has become the mainstay of its political agenda. Since the victory of the Justice and Development Party in the national elections of 3 November 2002, the Turkish parliament has passed, in addition to other amendments, eight major packages of reform legislation in order to attain the aforementioned benchmark.

The Turkish experience clearly demonstrates the importance of the combination of internal and external inputs for reform. Turkey's transition to multiparty politics in 1946 was a response to internal demands and changes as well as external transformations and incentives. Similarly, the intensification of Turkish reform process in the last decade has been a response to both internal and external pressures. As to the latter, Turkey's EU membership perspective provided a clear impetus for reform and mobilized internal coalitions for that purpose. This is an experience Turkey can share, with its achievements and failures, with the countries in the region.

In fact, the reformers in the area are closely watching the results of this process. On the one hand, successful reforms provide both an inspiration and an example to the reformers in the region. On the other hand, if Turkey faces another rejection by the EU, this will undoubtedly be abused as a proof that substantiates the clash of civilizations argument. The Turkish experience has the potential to defy this rather ascriptive and pessimistic hypothesis. With the clash of civilizations turning into a self-fulfilling prophecy, the advancement of EU-Turkey relations has become a major case for the reform agenda in the Muslim world.

Turkey and Democratization in the Region

Turkey's first public endorsement of the Greater Middle East initiative came shortly after the US President launched it at his speech at the University of South Carolina. While speaking at Bourgas Free University, Bulgaria, on 12 May 2003, Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül "strongly urge(d) all the related parties to carefully examine this initiative and to candidly work on it."³

The Turkish government's emphasis on democratization and good governance in the Middle East even precedes the "Greater Middle East" initiative. The early signs of this idea can be found in Turkish officials' reactions to the clash of civilizations argument. The Turkish thinking appears to have developed from a position against

³ <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/groupa/ai/middleeast.gul.htm>

the clash of civilizations into one that is advocating a proactive policy to overcome the challenges the Muslim world faces.

The genuine turning point towards a proactive policy came at the Foreign Ministers meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in Tehran on 28 May 2003 where Foreign Minister Gül called on the Muslim leaders to “first put our house in order.”⁴ Gül went on to expand on this idea in his subsequent speeches, including the one at Economic Studies Foundation in Istanbul (İAV) and the World Economic Forum’s Extraordinary Meeting in Jordan on 22 June 2003.

The speeches delivered at both of these meetings were important as they went into some detail particularly as regards to the Turkish views on regional cooperative security structures inspired by the Helsinki process and culminated in the OSCE. However, perhaps the most elaborate expression of Turkey’s approach to the question of democratization and development in the Greater Middle East was furnished at a speech delivered by the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan at Harvard University.⁵

The speech, which was published in full in several Arab media, launched a frontal attack on the so-called Middle East *exceptionalism*, which maintains that democracy is neither feasible nor desirable in that geography.⁶ Erdoğan appealed to the Muslim world and the countries of the Middle East to recognize that “Democracy is not particular to a specific group of societies. Democracy is universal and a modern day requirement.”

The Turkish Prime Minister also pleaded the Western world to listen to the voice of the Muslim world with an open heart and support change by setting a good example. He asserted, “The greatest strength of those societies that represent modern values is the attraction they create.” Prime Minister Erdoğan also

⁴ See *Radikal*, 29 May, 2003

⁵ For the full text of the speech entitled “Democracy in the Middle East, Pluralism in Europe: Turkish View” see: <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/Harvard.htm>

⁶ For the Arab media reactions, see for instance, *Bahreyn Tribune*, 18 February 2004; *Sudan Vision*, 24 February 2004.

reminded the Western world of its “particular responsibility to establish a more just global order and seek harmony among civilizations.”

In addition to messages to regional countries, Turkey has been insisting at Western forums on such principles as regional ownership, no imposition, consistency, and gradualism. Turkey has also lent concrete support to the G-8 initiative of *Partnership for Progress and a Common Future with the Region of the Broader Middle East and North Africa*. At the G-8 Summit meeting in Sea Island, the Turkish Prime Minister announced Turkey’s co-sponsorship of one of the G-8 democratization projects, namely the envisaged Democracy Assistance Dialogue.

Turkey also follows a high profile public diplomacy with regard to the Arab-Israeli dispute, the resolution of which is mandatory for peace to be established in the region.

The BMENA is hotly debated in the Turkish media and academia as well. The overwhelming majority of views thus expressed categorically reject outside intervention in the region, with clear reference to the Iraqi experience. As long as the BMENA appears like an imposed initiative, it is very likely that the public opinion in Turkey would turn markedly against it. However, a great majority also appears to submit that change is necessary and democratization is desired in the region.

Turkey clearly has an interest in seeing its neighborhood transformed into a zone of peace, prosperity, and democracy. As a predominantly Muslim country with a secular system, having a democratic experience since 1946, an economic transformation since 1980 and long institutional links with Europe and the United States, Turkey has a lot to contribute to the debate.

What is the Debate?

The need for political, economic, and social reform in the BMENA has been carried to the international agenda via the shifts in the political strategy of the US towards this region. Although the Bush administration initially defined its response

to 9/11 in solely military terms and refused to discuss the suggested root causes of terrorism, military strategy was soon amended by a political and socioeconomic one, at least at the discursive level.

The new strategy identified a geography that stretches from Morocco to Pakistan as the main source of threats to the United States. The involvement in the attacks and within *al-Qaeda*, of citizens from countries that are close regional allies of the US, led Washington to rethink its longstanding policy of prioritizing stability in this strategic part of the world over other goals.

Accordingly, the new perspective argues that the BMENA region suffers from socioeconomic and political crisis and the regimes in this region fail to meet the challenges of modernization and globalization. This political, social and economic crisis in turn has led to radicalism and anti-Americanism.

In order to meet this challenge, the US has adopted a new strategy that aims to transform the BMENA through encouraging democracy in the region and promoting social and economic reform. Therefore, what US President Bush called “forward strategy of freedom” aimed ultimately to eradicate the appeal of extremism.

The US government began to unveil its new policy through different initiatives and major speeches. The proposal for a US-Middle East Free Trade Area within the coming decade or assistance programs under the umbrella of Middle East Partnership Initiative of December 2002 were the initial efforts to build a more comprehensive policy.

The initiative was developed by the US President at the 20th anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy in November 2003 and further elaborated in his State of the Union address in 2004. Finally, the working paper prepared for the G-8 Summit, which was published in *al-Hayat* on 13 February 2004, was based on the “deficits” identified in the UNDP’s Arab Human Development Reports of 2002 and 2003.

Therefore, the draft plan included measures to promote democracy and good governance, building a knowledge society, and expanding economic opportunities. The working paper called for the assistance of the developed countries in establishing or strengthening independent election commissions that could monitor elections, in sponsoring exchanges of parliamentarians to discuss legal reforms and sponsoring training for women interested in running for elected offices. The plan also underlined the necessity for direct funding to the NGOs in the region for the promotion of democracy.

The draft initiative has proven to be highly controversial. It was argued that reform cannot be imposed from without and that the initiative did not take into consideration the differences between the countries in the region. More importantly, the initiative was criticized for not addressing the Arab-Israeli conflict. The final document adopted at the G-8 Summit appeared to remedy these shortcomings to a large extent.

Several aspects of the new US strategy had already been on the agenda of regional and extra-regional actors for the last two decades. The EU through the Barcelona Process of 1995 launched one of the earliest efforts in that respect. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) initiative, as it has come to be known officially, was based on the analysis of new kind of security threats the EU was facing in the post-Cold War era, such as immigration, drug trafficking, people smuggling, organized crime and illegal trade.

The EMP aimed at building a zone of prosperity, stability, and peace in EU's southern neighborhood. The initiative however, was effectively exhausted due to the problems in the Arab-Israeli peace process.

Recently the EU has launched a new initiative, the New Neighborhood Policy⁷, opting for setting out a new framework for relations, which include the Southern Mediterranean countries. The policy calls for a "privileged relationship" with these

⁷ http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/enp/index_en.htm

countries based on the promotion of the rule of law, good governance, respect for human rights, promotion of good neighborly relations, market economy, and sustainable development.

In this new policy, the EU offers positive incentives to those countries that make progress towards demonstrating effective implementation of political, economic and institutional reforms. The main advantage of the EU's approach has been that it defines a set of priorities together with partner countries and prepares an Action Plan to become part of the process of benchmarking.

However, the main challenge the EU faces is to initiate and sustain democratization through benchmarking without a membership prospect. Moreover, EU policies have also been geographically limited to the Mediterranean. The policy towards the Gulf region has rather been constrained. One can only talk about a EU policy towards Iran in that respect. That policy has moved from a "critical dialogue" to a "constructive dialogue". Through these policies, the EU has argued that by engaging with Iran, it can encourage reformers and improve human rights.

Similarly, the OSCE and NATO had also launched their Mediterranean initiatives in the 1990s. OSCE's Mediterranean policy focused more on human rights issues, whereas NATO hoped to develop security dialogue and cooperation with the countries in the region.

More significantly, the reform has been on the agenda of regional actors. There were initial reform efforts in the region in the late 1980s and 1990s. The regional countries had to adjust to the impact of a wave of democratization largely coming from Eastern and Central Europe.

In addition to the demonstration effect of the transformations in Europe, the end of bipolarity and the political fallout from the Gulf War created a favorable atmosphere for reform. Yet, ultimately the domestic crisis of governance that was in the making for the last two decades unleashed political and economic reform policies in the region as a survival strategy. The advent of elected parliaments in Jordan, Kuwait and Morocco and more limited political liberalization efforts in

several other countries in the region increased expectations that domestic and foreign context might open up authoritarian regimes towards democratization.

These earlier efforts were short-lived and by mid-1990s they were suspended and in most cases reversed. The problems in the Arab-Israeli peace process and the Algerian civil war were used by the regimes to justify the suspension of limited efforts at political liberalization.

More importantly, the external powers, particularly the US, also seemed to share the concerns about stability and quickly dropped political reform from their lexicons. Still, one important consequence of these earlier reluctant reform efforts has been that they had unleashed the reformist potential in the region. It paved the way to the proliferation of political opposition, despite the high price they were paying,

The Iranian reformists continue to press for more democracy and respect for human rights and use different means including the media to make their voices heard. The parliaments in Jordan and Kuwait had become increasingly vocal in their quest for further enhancing their power. Citizens in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Syria collected petitions for reform.

In February 2004 over 1,000 Syrian intellectuals signed a petition urging President Bashar Assad to implement political reforms. Such pressures led to new wave of reforms in some countries such as Bahrain, Kuwait, Morocco, Qatar, Yemen and at a more limited scale in Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

In addition to these efforts in individual countries, some region-wide initiatives on the part of both the governments and the civil society proliferated. In January 2004, the *Inter-Governmental Regional Conference on Democracy, Human Rights and the Role of the International Criminal Court* held in Yemen produced the *San'a Declaration*, which emphasized the importance of dialogue with civil society in furthering democracy and human rights.

At the meeting in the Alexandria Library in Egypt in March 2004, several civil society institutions in the Arab world adopted the *Alexandria Declaration*, which stated that reform was necessary and urgently needed. The declaration demanded the lifting of restrictions on freedom of speech and association, initiation of judicial reform, transfer of authority from executive branch to elected legislatures as well as ending of emergency laws.

In response to these external and regional pressures, the Arab League Summit in Tunisia on 23 May 2004 adopted a 13-point blueprint for political and democratic regional reforms. The Arab League statement urged greater political freedom, good governance and transparency, civil liberties and human rights, rights for women and judicial reform.

The depth of commitments of some of these governments to change is yet to be tested. As the recent arrest of petitioners in Bahrain shows, there will clearly be setbacks. However, once the process of reform is underway it creates its own dynamics.

In June 2004, more than 100 civil society activists, journalists, political party members from across the region met in Doha, Qatar leading to the adoption of the *Doha Declaration for Democracy and Reform*. The declaration calls on all the Arab countries to adopt democratic constitutions; hold free, fair and regular elections; place limits on executive power; guarantee freedom of association and expression; permit the full participation of women in political life. It also calls for the creation of a body to monitor Arab governments' progress on these issues. The declaration maintains that "hiding behind the necessity of resolving the Palestinian question before reform is obstructive and unacceptable".

It is encouraging to see that the declaration adopted at the G-8 meeting addresses some of those concerns raised by both the regional states and the EU. G-8 declaration envisages a longer term view by institutionalizing the project through establishment of a *Forum for the Future*, which will provide a framework for regular ministerial level meetings on reform processes with the participation of business and civil societal leaders; a *Democracy Assistance Dialogue* whereby a civic

interaction will be provided; as well as a *Microfinance Initiative* and a regional *Network of Funds*. Furthermore, the G-8 Statement on *Partnership for Progress and Common Future* underlines the importance of resolving the Palestinian problem based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the Road Map.

The need for reform in the region has been recently reiterated in the *Istanbul Declaration* produced at the Organization of the Islamic Conference's ministerial session held on 14-18 June 2004. The *Istanbul Declaration* has expressed the objective of "strengthening the representative character of the democratic practices" of the OIC governments as a common goal.

Notwithstanding the rhetoric of sovereignty, the governments acknowledged the possibility of mutual assistance in their reform "which should come from within" the region. The OIC was designated as an institution, which will develop ways and means for progress in a collaborative framework. The election of the Secretary General for the first time in the history of the organization constitutes an important step in this direction.

Our View of Democratization

In the mid-1970s, a wave of democratization was unleashed in Portugal and spread to Greece, Spain and Latin America. In the mid-1980s, it embraced the Philippines, South Korea, and Taiwan. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the wave of democratization, again containing the adoption of a system of government based on free and competitive elections of leaders at regular intervals, spread to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The prospect of democratization in the Middle East and North Africa promises to be yet another wave.

Institutionalization/Participation: Democratization in the Middle East and North Africa should be viewed in the context of the axis of institutionalization and participation. Institutionalization contains the principle of the rule of law. The actors in this realm are the appointed representatives of the national elite. They are

largely concerned with the continuous, secure existence of the state. Institutionalization paves the way to the establishment and sustenance of constitutional liberties and prevents the tyranny of the majority.

Participation, on the other hand, has to do with representation. It is about the choices of the majority. The actors of this realm are the elected representatives of the national elite, namely the members of parliament and political parties. Since politics involves participation via means other than the ballot, civil society organizations are also important actors in this realm.

Democracy is in fact about striking of a *modus vivendi* between the processes of institutionalization and participation. Participation prior to institutionalization does not necessarily lead to democracy. Institutionalization and participation should co-exist.

The establishment of constitutional liberties is the *sine qua non* of liberal democracy. In cases where political participation via elections takes place prior to the establishment of such liberties, illiberal democracy would be the outcome.⁸ Such a view may be disillusioning for impatient demands from below for democratization. Nevertheless, it contains viable “transitional” suggestions for the region in achieving sustainable democracy.

Yet, rather than emphasizing a dilemma and a necessity of establishing sequences between institutionalization and participation, we should focus on the coexistence of these two dimensions of the democratization processes. The parameters of this coexistence would differ from one society to another. Universal democratic minimums involve the achievement and securing of constitutional liberties via institutionalization, the functioning of free and competitive elections as well as the establishment of functioning channels between civil societal organizations and political parties.

⁸ Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*, New York, London: W.W. Norton and Company, 2003.

Parliament/Civil Society: A push for the participatory dimension of democracy prior to the achievement of constitutional liberties is laden with fears of dictatorships from below. Dictatorships from below are not specific to the Middle East. They were rather made in Europe. European experience in fascism and National Socialism portrayed in no uncertain terms that not every wave that comes from below is necessarily democratic.

In order for such waves prompted by civil societal organizations to lead to a democratic disclosure, there has to be a functioning political realm. A functioning political realm refers to a strong parliament with effective political parties. What is significant in the Middle East is not necessarily the establishment of more civil society organizations but rather the strengthening of the channels of communication between civil society and the parliament. Consequently, democratization initiatives in the region should strengthen the parliament while lending credence to civil society.

Democratization via catchwords like civil society and women's empowerment is misleading. In fact, too much focus on women's empowerment represents an Orientalist gaze; namely, a stereotyping of the Middle East by utilizing a manufactured image made in Europe. It is reminiscent of the colonial feminism of the British in Egypt. British white males of the colonial establishment who were the champions of the unveiling of women in Egypt were trying to justify their colonial ambitions. While they were advocating the unveiling of women in Egypt, they were at the same time opposing English women's demands for suffrage.

The American governing elite, while pushing for democratization in the region with the pretext of women's deplorable position in the Middle East do not have the legitimacy to voice such feminist claims since they are leading strong and rather fundamentalist anti-abortion movements within the US. You cannot be fighting the feminists at home while using their language abroad. Women in the region are subservient to men and this is a problem. Thus, any democratization project should empower women towards voicing their own demands.

Imposition vs. Benchmarking: The key to democratization in the region is to ensure that it is not imposed. It can nevertheless be “encouraged” from outside. Democratization needs of every country in the region are different. Therefore, the goal of a democratization project should not be imposed from above, but should opt for opening up the channels that would allow people to tailor the projects that are congenial in their particular contexts.

To do this, a balance or rather a *modus vivendi* should be maintained between institutionalization and participation. This *modus vivendi* has been struck in Western Europe by tradition. The experience of democratization, on the other hand, in Eastern and Central European countries in the 1990s were supported by international organizations like the EU, Council of Europe, OSCE and NATO. The creation and maintenance of this *modus vivendi* in the Middle East and North Africa is only possible with the support of similar institutional international mechanisms.

Recommendations

In view of the above framework, we suggest the following specific measures:

1. In order for democracy to flourish in the region, a hospitable regional environment should be created.
 - a. This requires, foremost, the settlement of the Palestinian problem.

The Arab-Israeli conflict may not be the real reason for the persistence of authoritarianism in the region. Yet it has helped to spark militancy and used by the governments as an excuse not to reform. Moreover, it has challenged the credibility of the extra-regional actors with a reform agenda. We, therefore, fully endorse the conclusions of the June 2004 G-8 Summit pertaining to the settlement of this intractable conflict.

- b. Peaceful transition to a fully sovereign, territorially intact and democratic Iraq is also an absolute necessity for the creation of a hospitable environment.

Iraq now has an interim Government that will assume sovereignty by the end of June. We expect this Government to prove that it serves the collective interests of the Iraqi people in their entirety and remain conscious that the source of legitimacy ultimately lies with the entire Iraqi people.

The international community should support Iraq in this difficult transition process. This is both a moral obligation as well as an investment in regional peace and stability. In this respect, we welcome the unanimously adopted UN Security Council Resolution 1546 as well as the joint initiative of the neighboring countries. We hope the UN will be able to play an effective role in assisting the Iraqis in institution-building and election preparation in the months ahead.

- c. An environment conducive to the creation and consolidation of democracy in the region necessitates the elimination of all the programs and the physical capabilities of WMDs.

To achieve this, we certainly recommend non-coercive measures and suggest further consolidation of the non-proliferation regime, namely the NPT, by taking into account the root causes of the proliferation and the legitimate security concerns of the countries in the region.

- 2. Democratization in the BMENA region particularly requires the establishment and maintenance of aforementioned *modus vivendi* between institutionalization and participation.

In the Western democracies such a *modus vivendi* is maintained with the lubricants of state traditions, and popular consensus on the nature of legitimate political action and discourse. Lacking democratic state traditions

and popular consensus, the Eastern and Central European countries achieved democratization and even consolidated it to a large extent with external assistance.

International actors such as the EU, NATO, Council of Europe, and the OSCE played important roles in this process. Turkey's progress towards a consolidated democracy is another contemporary example of the benefits of external stimuli. We believe, external involvement will be necessary for igniting and maintaining the spark of democracy in the BMENA countries. The external stimuli should provide the following:

- a. **Benchmarking:** The process of benchmarking should have three dimensions.
 - i. First of all, **the criteria for benchmarking should be based on universal principles** similar to the EU's Copenhagen Political Criteria, which proved to be effective in boosting democratization in the candidate countries.
 - ii. Secondly, they **should be flexible enough to allow incremental progress**. This is particularly important in the BMENA countries due to the fact that they lack a membership perspective.
 - iii. Therefore, we recommend the **establishment of a monitoring mechanism** in order to avoid being sidetracked from the ultimate objective. It is to this end that we welcome the establishment of the *Forum for the Future and Democracy Assistance Dialogue* in the recent G-8 Summit, both of which could be a platform for the realization of the monitoring mechanism.
- b. **Security Framework:** The legitimate security and stability concerns of the countries in the region should be addressed. There are three

theoretical options to achieve this aim: collective security, collective defense and cooperative security.

Collective security has proved to be inherently inadequate. Collective defense is inevitably divisive. We believe **cooperative security is the only viable option for the region**. The establishment of a cooperative security mechanism akin to the OSCE will not only provide a security framework but also a normative structure for the region.

Even the acceptance of the Decalogue in the first basket of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act will significantly improve the security environment in the region. However, the countries of the region should decide among themselves whether they want the extension of the OSCE structures into their region or to establish an indigenous cooperative security structure that should at any rate be inclusive of all willing regional countries.

- c. **NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative to be launched at NATO Istanbul Summit should be pursued in full vigor**. Building on the successful example of NATO's Partnership for Peace program, these two initiatives offer the participating countries ample opportunities to establish one on one relationship with NATO on a broad array of fields pertaining to defense and security.⁹

In addition to the modernizing influence of these programs on the participating countries, they also have the indirect function of increasing transparency and thus confidence building between NATO countries and the regional partners. However, NATO's own

⁹ For a discussion of PfP's influence see: Burak Akçapar, "Partnership for Peace's Influence as an Agent for Stability and Change in the Euro-Atlantic Region", in Gustav Schmidt ed. **A History of NATO: The First Fifty Years**, vol. 1, Houndmills and New York: Palgrave, 2001.

dialogue activities should remain clearly distinct from the other democratization initiatives.

Recommendations for Turkey

This paper was written for a meeting that takes place in a city that defies the inevitability of a clash of civilizations. Istanbul has long been a city challenging the dual categories of modernity. It is not the East nor the West but both. It is not the Orient and the Occident but both. It is not just traditional or modern but both. This city like the country itself represents the articulation and conciliation of differences blended throughout the history. Turkey is not a torn country but rather a country beyond conceptual borders transcending any imagined regional categorizations.

Given its unique position, Turkey has to take upon itself certain responsibilities:

1. For the creation of a hospitable environment:

- a. **Turkey should play a facilitating role in the settlement of the Palestinian problem.**

Due to its relations with both parties, Turkey is well situated to play this constructive role.

- b. **Turkey should also be active in the resolution of other trans-border conflicts, particularly in its immediate neighborhood.**

Turkey's boosting relations with Syria since 1998 Adana Agreement and special ties with Israel provide opportunities for first and second track diplomacy.

- c. **As a neighboring country with high stakes in the developments in Iraq, Turkey should intensify its efforts to project soft power and engage in a dialogue with all the parties advocating democratic Iraq in finding modalities for assisting democratization and peaceful coexistence in a territorially intact Iraq.**

Turkey cannot and should not face the consequences of a failed Iraq. Both official and civil Turkey should play an active role in this transition process.

- d. **Turkey having been part of the Helsinki process since its inception should promote first the notion of cooperative security in the region and then play an active role in its establishment.**

This is not and must not be construed as a repeat of the experience with the abortive Baghdad Pact in the 1950's.

- e. **Turkey should concretely support the implementation of the offers made at the Istanbul Summit and work for its extension to all willing countries in the BMENA.**

In particular, Turkey should offer its *PfP Training Center* and the proposed *Centers of Excellence* to Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative partners. On the other hand, NATO's initiatives should in principle be open to all countries in the BMENA that are willing and able to participate in activities led by NATO.

- 2. **For the promotion of democratization:** We welcome Turkey's participation in the recently established *Democracy Assistance Dialogue* whereby the democratization process in the region can be legitimately monitored.

- a. As a co-chair of this group, **we expect Turkey to promote the idea of monitoring and benchmarking.** We believe Turkey, with its recent experience with the Copenhagen Political Criteria, is well placed to play an important role in the region.
- b. Furthermore, **Turkey should facilitate the creation of venues with the participation of civic organizations and bureaucracy to transfer its experience** with democratization and modernization.
- c. To play this role, the Turkish government should establish a **Democracy Fund** to support civic organizations in Turkey in establishing regional networks for democracy.

Conclusion

Many of these issues will be on the agenda of the upcoming NATO Summit. Collaboration on the democratization of the BMENA region is likely to contribute to revitalization of the transatlantic partnership. Although we appreciate such an outcome and believe in its importance, we would like to see the concrete results of this collaboration in the transformation of the BMENA region.

Whereas this external support is necessary and welcome, ultimately the regional governments should remain on the driving seat of change and be encouraged effectively to assume regional ownership of progress supported by the international community.

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About TESEV

Established in 1994, the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV) is an Istanbul-based, nongovernmental think tank supported by private sector funding from Turkey and abroad.

Since its establishment TESEV expanded its research and agenda range to include a more active interest in international affairs, with a particular focus on Turkey-EU relations and regional economic and security questions.

TESEV focuses on the most important policy questions facing Turkey and the region in the new century. Its areas of work are grouped under three titles: Governance and Transparency, Democratization of Turkey, Foreign Policy and International Relations.