

ENHANCING SECURITY COOPERATION

The Marshall Center signs a historic agreement with the Turkish National Police Academy

BY JOSEPH VANN
Marshall Center Faculty

March 13, 2013, marked a historic occasion for the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies. The Marshall Center and the Turkish National Police Academy (TNPA) entered into a memorandum of understanding to promote high quality research in the fields of regional security and criminal justice. The memorandum was signed during a meeting that included TNPA President Dr. Remzi Findıklı, UTSAM Director Dr. Süleyman Özeren, Marshall Center Director Lt.Gen (Ret.) Keith W. Dayton and German Deputy Director Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Hermann Wachter.

The relationship between the Marshall Center and the TNPA is not new. Many Turkish participants who have attended Marshall Center courses have been sponsored by the TNPA. As a result of this exposure to the TNPA, the Marshall Center has become familiar with the high quality and professionalism of the organization and its international focus and reach. Restructured in 2001, the TNPA has academic autonomy and university status. The TNPA, which offers diplomas for undergraduate and postgraduate programs, trains close to 2,000 students, many of them from other countries.

The memorandum encourages collaboration in areas of mutual interest through the establishment of formal links between the Marshall Center and the TNPA. The arrangement is similar to the degree-granting master's program the Marshall Center offers with the German Bundeswehr University. The TNPA is also an academic degree-granting institution and collaborates with national and international research centers to address global security issues. The TNPA has a number of faculties that are compatible with the focus of the

Marshall Center, including the International Center for Terrorism and Transnational Crime, known as UTSAM. The UTSAM faculty conducts field research and develops policy recommendations in the field of terrorism, transnational crime and regional security.

This agreement is historic and timely because it represents purposeful collaboration with a foreign nondefense institution at a time when threats to collective security are changing significantly. In the past, the ability to compartmentalize military and nonmilitary threats and approach each independently allowed for specialization of institutions.

Today we face a wide array of new security challenges often referred to as hybrid threats. These threats include terrorism, transnational crime, illicit trafficking, and corruption and money-laundering schemes that threaten the stability and national security of affected states. Many of the most affected states are newly developing democracies. These new hybrid threats often incorporate components of traditional conventional threats, but in asymmetrical ways that exploit current conditions. Hybrid threats can impact both military and civilian organizations and evolve at a pace faster than our traditional ability to recognize them and implement counter measures.

During the past several years, the United States has confronted international challenges using a whole of government approach. This memorandum between the Marshall Center and the TNPA embraces and promotes this concept. Over time, both institutions envision the agreement will create an environment that will stimulate high quality research and scholarship aimed at identifying new solutions to new threats. □



Turkey in Transition

Assessing the country's geopolitical role in an era of change

By Dr. Ata Atalay, Marshall Center alumnus, Turkey

The roots of the Turkish republic were based upon the frictions caused by modernization in the second half of the 19th century during the Ottoman period. While new technical schools, mainly for the military, were established by the sultan, the era witnessed early patterns of conflict between the conservative ulema and modern institutions. This rivalry continued until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Before World War I, the capital of the empire was the arena of the struggle for political power between the modernist Young Turks and the conservative opposition. In 1923, after a victory for comprehensive independence under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the new Turkish republic was established. That year marked the end of the clash with modernization, a conflict that had even delayed adoption of printing for decades and contributed to low literacy rates in the empire.

The founder of modern Turkey focused on policies that nurtured basic social, physical and economic infrastructure and rehabilitated history and language,

including the introduction of the Latin alphabet to inspire a literacy revolution. Women, who were not considered official members of society during the census registries of the empire, were given the right to elect and to be elected. Between 1923 and 1950, social restructuring slowed in terms of modern parliamentary democracy, partly because of the global economic crisis and World War II. "Peace at home and peace in the world" was Atatürk's motto for the nation, and it was supported by bilateral and multilateral peace treaties with neighboring nations.

After 1950, single-party rule was abandoned, and Turkey actively took part in the Korean War with its allies of the Free World. NATO membership was another landmark of global political choice that cost Turkey a lot. It undertook vast military investments instead of fulfilling the country's social and economic needs until the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The years 1960 to 1980 were a period of open military interventions in Turkey's democracy.

After 1980, World Bank restructuring policies paved the way for liberalization in Turkey and there were drastic changes and progress in the economy. Efforts accelerated for full membership to the European Union (EU), while close ties were established with the new independent states of the former Soviet Union. Following the economic crisis of 2001, a three-party coalition was replaced in 2002 by Justice and Development Party (AKP) rule. This launched a new era with changes to state structure and tradition that has had international implications.

The unipolar world order has brought political changes to Turkey's region. The country no longer has land borders with the former Soviet Union, but the energy potential of the Russian Federation has led to closer economic, commercial and political ties. Considering Turkey's role as a consumer and transit country via the Black Sea, a new energy politics picture has emerged for Turkey and Europe. Other elements of the energy equation in the region include Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq, and recently Israel and Cyprus. Within this framework, Turkey has done quite well with the countries of its region. Turkey did not get directly involved with the political changes taking place in Iraq, maintained good relations with Armenia, supported United Nations peace guidelines for Cyprus and served as a trustworthy mediator between Israel and Syria during peace negotiations. There has been a considerable progress on bilateral issues with Greece and accelerations in the EU accession process.

Expectations for more democracy, freedom of expression and social participation flourished internally as legal amendments formed parallel to the EU accession efforts. As demonstrations began in Tunisia, it was soon apparent that anti-democratic governance would no longer dominate the people of the Middle East and North Africa. While landmark changes were observed from Egypt to Libya, Turkey was closely affected by the process on its southeastern border in terms of security. A new strategy was announced by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs: "Zero conflict strategy with the neighbors in the region."

But that strategy hasn't always been fulfilled in practice. Relations with Armenia are not as promising as in the earlier days of détente. It is doubtful if Azerbaijan still sees Turkey as a "big brother." The Iraqi administration often and openly complains about neglect from Turkey, though Turkey has direct contacts with northern Iraqi Kurds in many fields, especially energy. The Syrian opposition is openly backed and logistically supported by Turkey nowadays. The Russian Federation and Turkey follow contradictory policies related to intervention in Syria, and Turkey's logistics support for the opposition in Syria is a matter of diplomatic questioning by Russia. Since the Israeli attack on a Turkish humanitarian support fleet in international waters of the Mediterranean Sea, diplomatic relations between the two countries have been at the lowest possible level. Turkish-Greek relations remain strained at times, including the issues of minority rights in western Thrace, the reopening of a Greek Orthodox theological school in

Istanbul and the partition of Cyprus. Very recently, the EU and NATO have strongly criticized Turkey about the clear violations of basic rights regarding communal gatherings, political demonstrations and general freedom of expression related to the Gezi Park protests in Istanbul that started May 31, 2013.

The United States and Turkey have better diplomatic relations than they did a decade ago. Even a dispute in Erbil in the Kurdish section of Iraq didn't create a lasting Turkish-American rift in 2003. The future is unclear about open violations of basic democratic principles, such as long lasting political court cases against academicians, journalists and a considerable number of military staffers. Dozens of journalists are still under arrest, and serious doubts exist about political interference in the courts and police forces. Many Turks follow evaluations from the U.S. secretary of state and the White House with great interest.

Existing imbalances within the region and conflicts of international power preclude a radical change of political order and boundaries around Turkey in the short run. But increasing conservatism and Islamic influence may have adverse impacts, starting with Turkey and spreading to the region. The EU is troubled with a slowing economy, aging population, energy and resource dependence, and harsh competition from rising Asian markets. The U.S. has already made the strategic decision to shift its center of gravity from the Atlantic region to the Asia-Pacific.

Turkey established reliable economic growth while Western economies faced an international financial crisis. In the past 10 years, Turkey's economy grew more than 60 percent in real terms, and the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality's annual budget alone exceeds the total budget of 17 European countries.

More than a dozen multibillion-dollar projects continue in sectors from transportation to defense. However, the overall unemployment rate is still around 10 percent, and for the younger generation it is about 20 percent. The military's role in governance continues to weaken. Relations with the EU seem to have been hopeless from the beginning, owing to double standards applied to Turkey. But there are positive and promising signals of social awakening that seem to trigger the internal dynamics of the country for more real democracy. A strong, liberal and democratic Turkey will contribute more to reducing international political tension while contributing to comprehensive development by bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

Genuine democracy and unrestricted freedom of expression seem to be key issues. If government officials consider Twitter and social media to be evil elements, the effect could resemble the Ottoman attempts to ban print technology, a process that will surely end up nowhere in the information age. Economic development and youth employment will certainly contribute to a decline in social unrest in the Middle East, which seems to be a prerequisite for permanent social reforms. The West can maximize its interests by supporting peace, stability and energy security in the region centered on Turkey. □