

Editors' Foreword

Choosing the two topics that are covered in each year's *Journal* is always a process debated at length. It is rare that a single country is chosen as the focus for an entire issue; until this year, only China and Mexico had been awarded this distinction. Yet, as we considered the most current topics in international affairs—from the strains that accompany development in a globalized economy to the rising influence of religion-based politics to the dramatic institutional accomplishments of the European Union—one country kept coming up: Turkey.

Since the founding of the Republic in 1923, Turkey has played a significant role on the world stage, a much larger role, indeed, than its size, population or economic strength would indicate. Turkey's geographic position—at the crossroad of Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East—makes it a pivotal state, one whose development and stability affect countries in several regions. This heightened importance is a mixed blessing; with it come the responsibility and the challenge of interacting with countries of with vastly different political, economic and cultural landscapes. This ideological and cultural melange, combined with the historical legacy of the Ottoman era, make Turkey a compelling and intriguing subject.

Little did we know when we chose Turkey as our topic in May 1999 that Turkey was on the verge of an extraordinarily tumultuous year. In August 1999, horrific earthquakes struck Turkey, taking innumerable lives and causing immense economic losses. Ironically, this devastation helped to bring about a nascent reconciliation between Turkey and Greece, as the two countries generously provided aid to one another after their respective natural disasters. Despite the damage to Turkey's economy in the wake of the earthquake, the EU finally accepted Turkey as a candidate for membership at the Helsinki Summit in December 1999. However, this good fortune did not carry through into the new year: in the spring of 2000, the gruesome Hizbullah murders were uncovered, as were that organization's links to state-sanctioned terrorism. But,

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on a more positive note, elections in May 2000 replaced long-time politico President Süleyman Demirel with Ahmet Necdet Sezer, the former president of the Constitutional Court, known for his liberal stance on ethnic and religious freedoms. Turkey changed even as we were soliciting and editing articles for the issue. A year ago it would have been premature and naïve to state that Turkey was headed toward increased democratization and social liberalization. Today, Turkey is moving in precisely that direction.

We have purposely avoided dedicating entire articles to the topics that the general and academic press typically focus on: Turkey and its relationship with the EU, the conflict between Turkey and Greece and the Kurdish issue. Instead, we have attempted to look at the larger domestic and international context to analyze the roots of these issues. For example, instead of having an article solely on the relationship between Turkey and its Kurdish population, several articles in this issue of the *Journal* examine the roots of Turkish national identity and how this relates to current-day ethnic tensions in Turkey. Another article looks at the multi-ethnic character of the Ottoman Empire and how it influenced Atatürk's restrictive ethnic policies. Yet another explores the differences between Turkish and Kurdish feminism, while another discusses the international dynamic created by a Kurdish population spread across the Middle East.

The theme of this issue, *A Struggle between Nation and State*, conveys the underlying imperatives driving Turkey. Heavily influenced by the French corporatist model, Atatürk created Republican Turkey and erected a state structure that would drive the country into the modern era. However, this state has become unwieldy and unrealistically restrictive, leading to inefficiency, corruption and vocalized rebellion from groups that have been ignored or mistreated by the state. The struggle between nation and state has existed since the very inception of the state, starting with the first Kurdish rebellion in 1925. The struggle continued as the military replaced democratically elected governments with leaders of their choosing in 1960 and 1971, dictated foreign and economic policies and brutally repressed civil society. The combined effect of corruption and the import-substitution model wreaked havoc on Turkey's economy, culminating in a military intervention in 1980 and official support for a free market economy. The economic liberalization of the 1980s gave a voice to previously

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disenfranchised groups, enabling minority groups to be heard for the first time. The end of the Cold War changed Turkey's geo-strategic position significantly and forced it to begin reforming its polity. Turkey's desire to join the EU has spurred it to pay increasing attention to Western standards of democracy and civil rights.

The struggle between nation and state permeates all facets of Turkish life, and is reflected throughout the pages of this issue. Its roots can be found in the conflict over Turkey's national identity, which has stagnated in the elites' faithful obeisance to Atatürk's doctrine. This tension manifests itself in a blossoming civil society, which has emerged independently for the first time since the founding of the Republic. It is present in the corruption that runs rampant in the state bureaucracy and in business conglomerates. Likewise, the press—tied to business and state interests alike—is robbed of its freedom of speech and objectivity. Above all, the tension between nation and state is evident in the conflict between devout religious forces and the secular nature of the Republic. The struggle also affects Turkey's external policies. Domestic political imperatives, such as quelling the uprisings in southeast Turkey or securing a popular mandate, drive economic and foreign policy decisions. And yet, the fact that this struggle is being vocalized confirms Turkey's passage from an adolescent government to a mature, legitimate democracy. This struggle will not end in the near future, but it can be used as a barometer to measure how Turkey will confront its major domestic and international challenges. We hope that this issue will help to elucidate many of these issues and to move beyond the mere headlines about Turkey's political, economic and social development.

In formulating this issue, the editors of the *Journal* are indebted to many individuals for their generous assistance. We would especially like to thank two SIPA students—Yeliz Arat and Arda Karakaya—who helped us better understand developments in Turkey in their historical context and advised us on countless issue-specific questions. We are indebted to Harpreet Mahajan and Leardo Getty for their help with our numerous technical hitches. Lastly, we are always grateful for the support and trust that SIPA's administration and faculty place in the *Journal's* Editorial Board.

Finally, a note on the appendices to this issue: We have provided several additions to the articles that we hope will prove useful to our readers. On pages 335-339, a glossary explains terms and

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names that appear in articles and bear further explanation. On pages 341-346, a chronology details the major events in Ottoman and Republican Turkish history. And, on pages 347-348, there are maps of Turkey and the surrounding region and of the historical Ottoman Empire, as well as a map of the Caspian pipeline region. †