

**ACADEMIA:
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS,
REPORTS AND EVENTS
JUNE-SEPTEMBER 2008**



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1. “CHRONOLOGICAL REVIEW”

31 October 2008: Turkish Army spokesman General Metin Gürak announced that some 124 PKK militants have defected after Turkish suffering “significant losses” in air raids that targeted PKK sanctuaries in neighboring Iraq over the past month. Gürak also said that six PKK militants were killed in security operations inside Turkey over the past week. (Source: Reuters)

29 October 2008: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) President Thomas Mirow announced that the Turkey is set to receive 1.2 billion dollars in extra financing as part of a decision to expand EBRD programs in Turkey. The new financing, which will provide assistance largely to for municipalities, small businesses and agribusiness, will elevate Turkey to become one of the EBRD’s largest recipients, behind Russia, but roughly equal to Ukraine and Poland. (Source: Financial Times)

28 October 2008: Turkish Prime Ministers Recep Tayyip Erdoğan met his visiting Pakistan counterpart Yusuf Raza Gilani and pledged to strengthen their “traditionally warm ties” and underlined their joint commitment to fighting terrorism. The two leaders vowed to increase the volume of bilateral trade to reach a planned one billion dollar and held talks on a new bilateral defense agreement. The Pakistani premier, on a five-day visit to Turkey, also met with President Abdullah Gül and Parliamentary Speaker Köksal Toptan. (Source: AFP)

27 October 2008: Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan announced that Turkey is willing to do more to train Afghan security forces in response to appeals for more assistance from Afghan President Hamid Karzai. Babacan added that Turkish trainers were prepared to provide specific assistance to Afghanistan’s military and police forces. Some 800 Turkish troops are currently serving with NATO in Afghanistan. (Source: Reuters)

25 October 2008: Senior U.S. military commander in Iraq General Ray Odierno arrived in Turkey to meet with the deputy chief of the Turkish general staff General Hasan Iğsız to discuss U.S.-Turkish military cooperation and to review US efforts to assist Turkey in efforts aimed at fighting the PKK. (Source: AP)

24 October 2008: The Turkish Constitutional Court set out its reasons for a July ruling in which it had rejected a demand to outlaw the Justice and Development

Party (AKP) for Islamist activities but instead fined it for undermining Turkey's secular principles. (Sources: AP, AFP)

24 October 2008: U.S. Democratic presidential candidate Senator Barack Obama has pledged that if elected he will work to restore Washington's strained relationship with Turkey. Obama further proposed a Turkish-Iraqi Kurdish leaders summit that would seek a comprehensive agreement regarding outstanding issues. The candidate's views on relations with Turkey were recently posted on his campaign web site, entitled "Restoring the Strategic Partnership with Turkey," and were part of a broader position paper on major foreign, economic and domestic policies. The statement added that "Barack Obama and Joe Biden believe that a close relationship with a stable, democratic, Western-oriented Republic of Turkey is an important U.S. national interest," adding that the U.S.-Turkish relationship had been deeply strained in recent years, "most importantly by the Bush administration's misguided and mismanaged intervention in Iraq, which has helped revive the terrorist threat posed to Turkey by the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK)." (Source: Ümit Enginsoy, writing for the Turkish Daily News)

23 October 2008: Amid the global economic crisis, the value of Turkish lira hit a 28-month low against the U.S. dollar and Turkish bond yields rose to a four-year high, as worries over the economic outlook and growing global risk aversion undermined market confidence. The Turkish currency has lost around a quarter of its value against the U.S. dollar this month as investors and hedge funds have been selling their assets and demanding U.S. dollar while leaving the emerging market. Turkish Central Bank Governor Durmuş Yılmaz sought to reassure the public by vowing that the bank will double borrowing limits in the forex depot market to 10.8 billion dollars and stressing that there was no problem with foreign exchange liquidity. Reflecting the Turkish government's bid to stabilize markets and restore investor confidence, Finance Minister Kemal Unakitan announced that Turkey would introduce ceilings on the budget deficit and the public debt stock to protect the country from the financial crisis. (Source: Hürriyet)

23 October 2008: A session of the Turkish court sitting at the Silivri prison near Istanbul resumed the trial of 86 people accused of plotting to overthrow the Turkish government. The trial, which began on 20 October, quickly descended into disarray as lawyers protested they could not work in the packed courtroom. The case concerns an alleged ultra-nationalist network called Ergenekon, which the prosecution charges instigated violence to foment political turmoil in the country and topple the Justice and Development Party (AKP). (Source: AFP)

20 October 2008: Russian President Dmitry Medvedev arrived in Armenia for his first state visit as president and met with senior Armenian leaders to discuss regional developments and the recent breakthrough in Turkish-Armenian talks. (Source: Hürriyet)

15 October 2008: Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev was re-elected with 88.73 percent of the vote in the country's presidential election. International observers noted that the contest marked considerable progress, but stated that the election did not meet all of the country's international standards. (Source: OSCE)

9-10 September 2008: Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev met with visiting Turkish President Abdullah Gül in Baku, one day after receiving Hilmi Güler, Turkey's minister of energy and natural resources. Polls show that a majority of Azerbaijanis have a negative view of Turkish President Abdullah Gül's visit to Armenia and believe that his appearance there will have a negative impact on any resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. (Source: www.day.az)

4 September 2008: Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev met with visiting US Vice President Dick Cheney and discussed regional and bilateral energy and security issues, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and Turkish-Armenian relations. Aliyev received a telephone call from Russian Federation President Dmitry Medvedev only hours after the meeting. (Source: www.day.az)

30 August 2008: Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan met with his visiting Azerbaijani counterpart Elmar Mammadyarov and announced that they have reached a common position on Ankara's proposal for new security arrangements in the Caucasus. (Source: Hürriyet)

20 August 2008: During the course of a meeting with visiting Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev reiterates his support for the territorial integrity of Georgia. The two also discuss other regional security matters. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was in Baku for a three day visit. (Source: ANS)

3 July 2008: Following talks between Azerbaijani and Russian delegations chaired by Presidents Ilham Aliyev and Dmitry Medvedev, the parties sign several intergovernmental documents, including a joint declaration on friendship and strategic partnership between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation. (Source: www.president.az)

2. REPORTS OF INTEREST & NEWS FROM THE “THINK THANK” WORLD

New Reports: *Jamestown Foundation.* The Washington-based Jamestown Foundation released a new Occasional Paper entitled “Who’s Who in the Azerbaijani Opposition” on 15 October 2008. Authored by Fariz Ismailzade, the Director of the Advanced Foreign Service Program at the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy (ADA) in Baku, the report examines the dynamic domestic political situation in Azerbaijan on the eve of the presidential election and profiles the major opposition candidates. An earlier report, “Arming for Asymmetric Warfare: Turkey’s Arms Industry in the 21st Century,” written by Andrew McGregor, was released in June 2008. Both reports are available at: www.jamestown.org.

New Reports: *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and the Silk Road Studies Program.* The Central Asia-Caucasus Institute (CACI) and the Silk Road Studies Program released two new reports in Washington, available at: www.silkroadstudies.org. The October 2008 issue of “The Turkey Analyst”: includes an article by Svante Cornell entitled, “Turkish Constitutional Court Sets Framework for Politics,” and an article by Halil Magnus Karaveli entitled, “Ergenekon Trial” Breaking with the Deep State Past, or Are the Tables Simply Turned?”

A new Silk Road Paper was also released in October 2008, entitled “Prospects for a ‘Torn’ Turkey: A Secular and Unitary Future?” by Svante E. Cornell and Halil Magnus Karaveli. The paper argues that “Turkey’s role as a regional force will depend on whether the country will be able to overcome its two existential divides – the issues of religion and ethnicity” and contends that “only a Turkey at peace with itself is likely to assume the role of a regional power,” adding a warning that “such a role is complicated by the essentially reactive nature of Turkish foreign policy, itself a result of the multitude of developments in highly varied bordering regions that affect Turkey, and make it difficult for Ankara to pursue a proactive policy based in a coherent strategy.”

New Commentaries: *CSIS Turkey Project.* The Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies’ (CSIS) Turkey Project released two new publications: “Turkey and the Crisis in the Caucasus,” by Bülent Alirıza, published on 9 September 2008, and “Another Long, Hot Summer in Ankara,” by Bülent Alirıza and Seda Çiftçi, released on 9 July 2008. Both publications are available at: www.csis.org

New Report: *RAND Corporation.* The US-based RAND Corporation released a new report in June 2008, written by Angel Rabasa and F. Stephen Larrabee entitled, “The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey.” Prepared for the Prepared for

the U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense, the 135-page monograph “describes the politico-religious landscape in Turkey and the relationship between the state and religion, and it evaluates how the balance between secular and religious forces –and between the Kemalist elites and new emerging social groups– has changed over the past decade, particularly since the AKP came to power in 2002.” The study also “assesses the new challenges and opportunities for U.S. policy in the changed Turkish political environment and identifies specific actions that the United States may undertake to advance the U.S. interest in a stable, democratic, and friendly Turkey and, more broadly, in the worldwide dissemination of liberal and pluralistic interpretations of Islam.” The report is available at: www.rand.org

New Publication: *Journal of Energy Security*. The Institute for the Analysis of Global Security (IAGS), based in Washington, launched the *Journal of Energy Security*. The journal is a public service of IAGS and is the only global, professional journal dedicated to exploring the national, regional and global aspects of energy, and includes a focus on Turkey and the Caspian region. The journal is available at www.ensec.org and welcomes contributions from Turkish scholars, students and analysts.

Address Change: *The Azerbaijan, Turkey, America Foundation U.S.* The Azerbaijan, Turkey, America Foundation U.S. (ATAF) has moved its Washington office:

Louette Ragusa
ATAF U.S.
777 7th St. NW, Apt 719
Washington, DC 20001
Phone/Fax (202) 639-2049

3. “ACADEMIC NEWS”

WASHINGTON, 29 October 2008: Jamestown Foundation Event: “Turkey & the Caucasus after Georgia.”

Event Overview: The Russia-Georgia war this past summer has had tremendous regional repercussions for Turkey’s role in the South Caucasus. Since the war, Ankara has taken steps to play a wider regional role by appearing to work in concert with Russia, which culminated with the announcement of the Caucasus Stability Pact. As the anchor of NATO’s eastern flank, Turkey maintains historic ties to the Caucasus and its ties to Abkhazia, Azerbaijan and Georgia make Ankara an important player in regional security. However, Turkey’s deepening ties to Russia raise questions about the geopolitical orientation of Turkey in light of U.S. support for Georgia during the recent war as Ankara struggles to play a delicate balancing act between the regional powers. At stake for Washington is America’s continued strategic access to the Black Sea via the Bosphorus and Russian territorial aspirations to Crimea. Join us for a full day discussion on Turkey and the Caucasus after Georgia as we address Ankara’s changing ties to the South Caucasus and its implications for regional security. For conference details, go to: www.jamestown.org.

Participants and their presentations included:

Mitat Çelikpala, “Turkey’s Reaction to the War in the Caucasus”
Associate Professor, Department of International Relations
TOBB University, Ankara

Şaban Kardaş, “Turkey and the Caucasus Stability Pact”
Department of International Relations, Sakarya University, Turkey

Igor Torbakov, “The Impact of the War on Russia-Turkish Relations”
Senior Researcher
Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Helsinki, Finland

John C. K. Daly, “The Strategic Implications of the Montreux Convention for Non-Black Sea Powers”
Fellow in Eurasian Defense and Security Affairs
The Jamestown Foundation

Paul Goble, “Caucasian Diasporas and Turkish Foreign Policy”
Director of Research and Publications
Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy

Graham Fuller, “Turkey and Georgia in the Changing Landscape of Eurasia”

İbrahim Kalın, “The Internal Dynamics of Turkish Foreign Policy”
Director General SETA
Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research
Ankara and Georgetown University

Dato Soumbadze, “A Georgian Perspective of Turkey’s Role in the Caucasus”
Central Asia-Caucasus Institute

WASHINGTON, 15 October 2008: Jamestown Foundation Event:

“Are Turkish-Armenian Relations About to Take Off?”

Event Overview: In early September Turkish President Abdullah Gül made a historic visit to Armenia becoming the first Turkish President to ever visit that country. After years of enmity and mutual suspicion the two countries are moving closer to establishing diplomatic relations as ‘soccer diplomacy’ has sparked a major warming in dialogue between the two countries. Turkey-Armenia rapprochement has important implications for regional peace and stability in the Caucasus, particularly the Armenia-Azerbaijan dispute over Karabakh and talks to resolve this conflict. Improving relations may yield a major change in the geopolitical orientation of the South Caucasus and bolster Armenia’s Euro-Atlantic aspirations. Please join us for a two hour discussion on this important topic. For conference details, go to: www.jamestown.org

Participants included:

Diba Nigâr Göksel
Senior Analyst, European Stability Initiative and
Editor-in-Chief, *Turkish Policy Quarterly*

Armen Kharazian
Washington-based Security Consultant on the South Caucasus and former
member of Armenia’s diplomatic service

Paul Goble
Director of Research and Publications
Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy in Baku