

Unlike in the 1827 Battle of Navarino during the Greek War of Independence — at which time the naval forces of Russia, Britain, and France destroyed the Tunisian fleet along with the Ottoman squadron — Tunisia's Bey Husayn II refused Sultan Mahmud II's pleas three years later to come to the aid of Algiers; instead, the former signed a treaty with the French, a document written in Arabic in which the bey was referred to as a "king," but which made him and his successors "dependent on France" (p. 267). While military, fiscal, and some political and educational reforms were subsequently implemented, the Tunisian economy was still very agrarian and could not compete with the Europeans even in the textile industry, in part due to capitulation treaties.

The French established a protectorate over Tunisia in 1881 with the support of Britain and Germany, and with the promise to the French public that it would not be an economic or military burden like Algeria. As in many other places in the Middle East, the events following World War I encouraged Tunisian nationalists, who were inspired and influenced by Western ideas in their case learned through the bilingual school system. Abadi devotes a great deal of attention to the development of the Néo-Destour Party and Habib Bourguiba's place within, and influence over, that movement, as well as important political and social changes that contributed to and facilitated Tunisia's road to independence. Abadi also provides a very thorough summary and analysis of the Republic of Tunisia's politics (including Bourguibism) and political institutions, the armed forces, the media, the importance of secularism and the challenge of Islamism, the situations of women and of the Jewish population, the economy, and especially, foreign relations.

This book is well-researched and well-written. It is quite useful for both academics and the general public in providing a better understanding of the historical evolution and development of a Middle Eastern country that is both Westernized and Muslim like Turkey, but does not receive adequate attention.

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## TURKEY

**Turkey-Syria Relations: Between Enmity and Amity**, edited by Raymond Hinnebusch and Özlem Tür. Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2013. 256 pages. \$119.95.

*Reviewed by Birgül Demirtaş*

Over the past decade, the redefinition and reactivation of Turkish foreign policy has drawn the increasing attention of scholars. Within the literature on Turkey's foreign policy, the changing nature of the relationship between Ankara and Damascus has emerged as one of the most popular topics. The main argument of *Turkey-Syria Relations* under review can be summarized as the following: In order to give meaning to the cyclical transformations in Turkish-Syrian relationship, we need to focus on the interaction of identity and interests, external and internal dynamics, regional and global factors.

Consisting of 14 chapters written by Turkish, Syrian, and international scholars, the book looks at the impact of systemic factors, changing regional alliances, and the two actors' domestic circumstances upon Turkey-Syria relations. Although some of the authors take an historical perspective, most of them focus on the contemporary period. The chapters cover a broad range of topics, including the issue of water, the Hatay dispute, the Kurdish problem, and the instrumentalization of soccer.

Contributing authors Marwan Kabalan, Samir al-Taqi and Raymond Hinnebusch, and Zeynep Özden Oktav emphasize that systemic factors help explain the changing state of relations between and among Middle Eastern countries. The fact that the US occupied Iraq in 2003 without any legal authorization from the United Nations Security Council led to a fundamental realignment in the Middle East region, since this situation was considered as a security threat. In relation to that there was also the fear that if Iraq were divided and a Kurdish state were to have been established in the northern part of the country, it would directly threaten the interests of the regional countries in general, but mainly Turkey, Iran and Syria. Hence, a common threat percep-

tion led to a reformulation of foreign policy toward the neighboring countries.

The contributors also discuss regional factors. Zeynep Özden Oktav, for example, examines the nature of the quasi-alliance that developed among Iran, Turkey and Syria, describing this relationship as an informal security partnership based on a tacit common understanding and analysis of the impact of the new global order upon them. In contrast, Meliha Benli Altunışık argues that the relationship among these three regional countries can be seen as “resisting, changing and countering” the global order (p 178). According to Altunışık, the combination of history, political relations, and material dynamics at the regional level determines the nature of the relationships. In that framework, the regionalization of the Kurdish issue and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) problem are important dynamics affecting the relationship.

Based on the constructivist literature, some of the articles emphasize the importance of identity of the agency in the reconstruction of bilateral ties. According to this approach, the Justice and Development Party’s (AKP) reconstruction of Turkish identity against the Kemalist establishment led to a redefinition of the Middle East in Turkish foreign policy. In addition to that, As Reem Abou-El-Fadl emphasizes in the chapter on Turkey’s policies toward the 1957 crisis, Turkey is a good example to study the impact of foreign policy on nation-building. At the time, the government in Ankara used its approach toward Syria to make Turkey part of the Western security community.

Similarly, the AKP used foreign policy to gain legitimacy in internal politics and weaken domestic opponents, such as the Kemalist establishment. As Ahmet K. Han shows in his study — a neoclassical realist analysis of Turkey’s Syria policy — the AKP instrumentalizes foreign policy in order to make changes in Turkish political culture in harmony with its ideology (p. 57).

Many of the book’s contributors also stress that the political dimension of the bilateral relationship has had a tremendous impact on other issues. For example, the Hatay (Alexandretta) issue comes to the surface only when there is tension between the two countries. Hence, during the period of rap-

prochement (1998–2011), Turkey and Syria agreed to disagree over the status of the province. Emma Lundgren Jörum explains the salience of the fact that the 2003 Arabic version of the Syrian Foreign Ministry website did not show Hatay within Syrian borders (p. 118). A similar point was elaborated by Ayşegül Kibaroglu with regard to the water issue. When Turkey-Syria relations progressed during the AKP government, a kind of “bureaucratic learning process” (p. 157) occurred, leading to a change in emphasis from water rights to water needs. With respect to economic ties, Özlem Tür argues that political relations have determined their scale and scope, not the other way around, as neofunctionalists would have expected. Another interesting point is that even the articulation of the Ottoman past by the state elite depends on the political relationship. When Turkey-Syria relations began to flourish, the Syrian public TV channel was careful not to broadcast anything negative about the Ottoman past. However, when relations worsened, the same TV channel in 2012 did not hesitate to air a program on the use of violence by Ottoman soldiers during World War I.

*Turkey-Syria Relations* is a comprehensive, engaging and important contribution to the literature on Turkish foreign policy. For all of the many insights about Turkish foreign policy that the book furnishes, it nonetheless fails to provide convincing answers to some vexing and important questions: Why did Turkey remain silent with regard to open support by Hafiz al-Asad to the PKK for so many years? It has been argued in the book that only in 1998 did the Turkish military become powerful enough to be able to use the threat of force against the Damascus regime. However, Turkey had a comparative military advantage even in the previous period, but shied away from using coercive diplomacy. Second, what made Turkey change its traditional foreign policy of non-involvement in Middle Eastern conflicts after the Arab Spring reached Damascus? Why did it support the Syrian opposition movement openly and cut off all diplomatic ties with the Asad regime?

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