

Summary: Reflecting on the recent discussion within GMF's Trilateral Strategy Group, GMF Senior Transatlantic Fellow, Dr. Ian Lesser discusses the points of convergence and divergence among Turkey, the United States, and Europe in their approaches to regional flashpoints and strategies. Debate in this multi-year series of meetings reflects some important differences in perceptions of risk and preferred responses. Iran and Russia will continue to be key tests. Looking ahead, perspectives on the West and changing power balances on a global basis are set to become even more central to the future of trilateral relations.

## Regional Flashpoints and Trilateral Strategies: Reflections on the Debate

by Dr. Ian O. Lesser<sup>1</sup>

Much of the discussion on evolving American, European, and Turkish foreign policy focuses on geopolitics and grand strategy; the big forces driving the international postures of leading actors—and the prospects for convergence or divergence in worldview across the Atlantic. Our late-January meeting in Stockholm had some of this character, to be sure, but it also attempted to illuminate perceptions and policies toward specific crises and potential crises. Our sessions offered a useful window into some fashionable debates, including challenges to the power and coherence of the “West,” and the implications of more evident multi-polarity in key regions.<sup>2</sup> On some questions, including the Iran nuclear challenge, the Stockholm discussion clearly anticipated policy developments of the last few months.

Turkey's position cannot be taken for granted. Beyond the ongoing—and often quite hollow—question of Turkey's foreign policy orientation between east and west, the Stockholm debate pointed to some more intriguing issues, including the extent to which Turkey's new regional activism is compatible with the EU's foreign policy vision. This is especially relevant on Iran, where Europe has adopted a relatively concerted stance, and on Russia, where a common

European approach is lacking. Looking ahead, it seems clear that convergence with Washington's policy preferences will not be the only—nor perhaps the most important—measure of Turkey's orientation. At the same time, the Barack Obama “bounce” clearly has not removed the potential for significant transatlantic differences in perception and policy. Across the spectrum of pressing regional crises and flashpoints, the open questions with regard to cooperation and conflict are truly trilateral in origin and significance.

### Contours of the Strategic Environment

What risks matter? Where will they emanate from? One category of risk flows from longer-term trends, including demography, shifting power balances, and changes in the nature of conflict. This last includes old and new forms of violence, the persistence of highly lethal terrorism, and the interaction with irregular warfare, as in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq. Conventional state-to-state conflicts are less obvious sources today, but they have not disappeared from the scene (e.g., the Georgia war). Other sources of risk include uncertain leadership successions, from North Korea to Egypt to Thailand, not to mention in many less-prominent settings.

<sup>1</sup>Ian O. Lesser is a Senior Transatlantic Fellow with the German Marshall Fund of the United States. Jonatan Bergstrom Jurisoo served as rapporteur for our discussion in Stockholm, and his notes were essential background for this reflection piece.

<sup>2</sup>See Giles Andreani, Turkey, Europe, and the United States in a Multipolar World (German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2010); another reflection on our Stockholm debate.

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Mistakes and miscalculations are another reservoir of risk. These can take the form of failed deterrence, misadventures along the lines of the Russian-Georgian confrontation, or the misreading of international signals in the proliferation realm—a very real concern in the context of Iran’s nuclear program. It is also possible for leaderships to place mistaken bets on resources and revenue. This seems to be happening in Venezuela. It could well happen where actors have made long-term investments in energy infrastructure (e.g., LNG terminals) only to see new resources such as shale gas transform the picture. In this realm, there are signs that Russia may have over-played its hand in an increasingly globalized gas market. High levels of public- and private-sector indebtedness in the developed economies could be another large-scale bet gone awry, especially in the face of deflation.

Threats are very much in the eye of the beholder, with perceptions shaped by history and public sensitivities. As an example, it was noted that few terrorist threats are “existential,” but terrorism risks can interact with other things, from nuclear proliferation to economic pressures, to magnify the perception and the reality of risk. The threat of terrorism and political violence in nuclear-armed Pakistan offers a case in point. The genuine threats are often the unexpected ones, and here the ability to hedge will be driven by the capacity for effective warning and concerted—and prompt—international response.

Our discussion on the question of risk in the strategic environment highlighted a number of additional, specific issues. First, domestic pressures and internal distractions matter. We will be living with the consequences of the global financial crisis for some time to come. The crisis itself clearly exposed systemic risks embedded in national economies and international finance. On a trilateral basis, the contours of the challenge have been somewhat different in each case. But the problems of uncontrolled speculation, lack of transparency, and high levels of indebtedness are common themes (the Stockholm meeting was held prior to the Greek financial crisis, but developments in the eurozone clearly show that these systemic economic risks are far from contained). In Turkey, the leading manifestation of the crisis has been pressure on export markets and employment. The countervailing expansion of Turkish exports to Eurasia and the Middle East has mitigated these effects, and could also have lasting consequences for Ankara’s political engagement outside the West. The fact that Turkey has been able to avoid the worst consequences of the economic crisis and has seen real expansion

in key aspects of its trade and investment picture has contributed substantially to the country’s confident activism.

Second, the economic crisis underscores the reality that global power balances are not immutable. China and India are likely to emerge from the crisis with greater confidence alongside new emerging actors such as Brazil. Will these countries play by the rules? For the moment, there may be few immediate risks of major inter-state conflict emerging from these dynamics, but will this be true over the longer-term? Europe and Turkey clearly cannot be simple bystanders if the United States and China, for example, are set to become more explicit strategic competitors.

Finally, the growing gap between global challenges and the institutional mechanisms available to assess and manage these problems can be a source of risk in its own right. Europe after the Lisbon Treaty has shown unimpressive resolve in addressing the EU’s own economic troubles. The EU’s performance on the energy front has been little better. The United States, for its part, may recommit to multilateral strategies, but in key areas, from climate to arms control, Washington has had difficulty delivering in the face of congressional skepticism. Over the horizon, even larger questions of global governance, including UN Security Council reform and the form and role of the G20, loom large. The problem of reinvigorating the NPT is a very real, near-term challenge, closely linked to the management of the most pressing proliferation problems. These institutional shortcomings may look somewhat different from each side of the United States-Turkey-Europe “triangle,” but the exposure to the mismatch of challenge and response is shared.

## Dealing with Afghanistan

President Obama came to office asserting that Afghanistan was the “right” war. A year into his presidency, the administration shows signs of following the drift of much of America’s strategic class toward the view that an exit is necessary, preferably sooner rather than later. In this respect, Afghanistan clearly illustrates the limits of U.S. power. The instinct of the administration—widely shared in Europe, and certainly in Turkey—is to “keep a foot on the brake,” and to avoid being drawn into open-ended and costly counter-terrorism, counter-insurgency, and nation-building missions. Our discussion underscored the importance of four tasks: reinforcing the central government, calibrating and scaling-down the counter-insurgency mission, targeted counter-terrorism operations, and better cooperation with

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Pakistan. In some cases, there has been measurable operational success, including the unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) strikes on terrorist targets. Politically, the result of these strikes has been less clear. The “surge” is clearly oriented toward a restructuring and eventual reduction of the counter-insurgency strategy. But the Afghan central government remains weak, and enhanced cooperation with Pakistan is tentative at best.

Many European and Turkish participants felt that the overall approach in Afghanistan was “too little, too late,” with inadequate engagement of neighboring countries, some of which are, obviously, difficult to engage. China, Russia, and India are other key stakeholders, and their interests, and potential roles, are often ignored in the Western debate over Afghanistan. For a number of historical reasons, Turkey has close ties to both Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Ankara is convinced that it can make a substantial soft power contribution to stability. With regard to NATO combat missions, it is clear that Turkey, and the Turkish public, is no more enthusiastic than most Alliance partners.

Regardless of specific national roles, Europe and Turkey will be strongly affected by the outcome in Afghanistan, including the implications of an exit for U.S. power and prestige and the lessons that may be drawn by Iran, Russia, and China, among others. Few questioned the elements of the current strategy but, again, there was little confidence in the ability to bring a successful result in a politically reasonable time frame. Dealing more successfully with the regional drug economy might help, as would an India-Pakistan détente over Kashmir. Afghanistan has a long history as a place of transit, and under more stable conditions, it might resume this regional role in energy and other terms. There was no consensus on the wisdom or practicality of talking to the Taliban, although for Turkey and others, the prospect of an eventual American disengagement might require engagement if not negotiation with elements of the movement.

In bald terms, our debate suggested that Washington and NATO allies are left with three choices: exit now (chaos); stay for decades and try to “win” (costly and intolerable to publics); or create a minimum basis for security and disengage. Not surprisingly, the Obama administration has opted for this third approach. The challenge will be to limit the damage to American and NATO prestige.

## Outlook for the Middle East Peace Process

The Stockholm meeting of the Trilateral included an informal luncheon conversation on the outlook for the Middle East peace process. Debate centered on the likely strategy of the Obama administration on an issue Turks and Europeans view as increasingly critical to their own security. In the Turkish case in particular, this is an issue that engages public opinion and is clearly an animating question for Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and others in the AKP leadership. The early and controversial Turkish opening to Hamas, and the sharp deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations over the past two years, has made peace process diplomacy one of the leading metrics for gauging the new Turkish approach to the Middle East and to the West. From all sides of the triangle, there is now a sense of urgency, and expectations are high—possibly unrealistically high from the perspective of Washington and the parties.

Our debate underscored the obvious fact that the peace process will not start itself. President Obama took office as the crisis in Gaza unfolded, and this compelled the administration to take an early and proactive approach. The appointment of the widely respected former Senator George Mitchell as the president’s lead Middle East negotiator, in particular, raised expectations on both sides of the Atlantic and in the region. Whereas earlier administrations had waited until much later, even to the end of their time in office to become engaged, the Obama administration appeared to set a new pattern of early engagement.

But to what effect? The contours of a potential settlement are well known. The key variable at this point may be President Obama’s willingness to invest his personal political capital in the process. At the time of our debate, pressing and unresolved domestic policy challenges—including the health care package—seemed to make this unlikely. The potential for a wider Israeli peace with the Arab world as a whole could go some way toward satisfying Israel’s historic need for an “end of conflict” involving Syria, Saudi Arabia, and others. This wider geometry to a settlement beyond a two-state solution would have special significance for the United States, Europe, and Turkey. For the United States, it could offer new leverage in dealing with Iran and other regional problems. For Europe, it would reduce security risks that clearly go beyond the unresolved Palestinian-Israeli conflict. For Turkey, a broader program of regional détente would be in line with the all-azimuths nature of recent Turkish foreign policy.

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On other points, there was less consensus. Turkey's leadership (if not necessarily all Turkish observers) believes strongly that a comprehensive peace is not possible without engaging Hamas. The humanitarian situation in Gaza is another potential flashpoint for the region, but also for Turkish-Western relations. The idea that Turkey can play a useful role vis-à-vis Syria and the peace process is widely shared. But Ankara is unlikely to be able to broker—or even effectively facilitate—settlements where the parties themselves are not ready to move. In this context, there is now much less optimism about Turkey's role as a regional mediator.

## Dealing with Iran and Nuclear Risks

In contrast to some other regional challenges, there is now broad transatlantic consensus on the risks posed by a nuclear or near-nuclear Iran, and clear convergence on the need for a new round of containment (even if this term is shunned in the policy discourse). There is less consensus on the potential utility of economic sanctions, although observers agree that a sanctions package of some sort is likely to be approved by the UN Security Council soon. This will be a test for relations with Turkey, where prevailing views about Iran, the nuclear issue, and international strategy are distinctive and somewhat divergent from prevailing transatlantic thinking. Internally, there was a sense that the Iranian scene is becoming ever more difficult to read. The recent unrest has reinforced the position of the Revolutionary Guard, and Iran has arguably moved in the direction of a military authoritarian state in which the commitment to a national nuclear program is widely shared (even among Ahmadinejad's opponents). The United States, and the West in general, has always had difficulty dealing with Iran, even in periods of dialogue, in large measure because of the very different Iranian and Western notions of "strategic time." The regime has a great deal of patience; its adversaries, by and large, do not. Turkey may be somewhat better placed to deal with this problem, but the challenge remains essentially the same. As one participant noted, "the Iranians claim to have invented chess, and they play it without a timer." Even in the commercial realm, Iran can be a difficult and unpredictable partner.

In regional terms, it is clear that a nuclear Iran, or even a near-nuclear Iran, would have a range of effects on geopolitical and military balances, including on conventional and irregular warfare, and on terrorism. The notion of Iranian proxies operating under a nuclear umbrella would be profoundly disturbing to an already unstable regional order. Israel is obviously sensitive to these risks, some of which it regards as existential. The United

States and Europe (already exposed to Iranian ballistic missiles) are almost as concerned.

The Obama administration may well be committed to opening a strategic dialogue with Iran. But on the specific question of the nuclear program, it was noted that this administration could prove just as hawkish as its predecessor. There are few foreign policy issues capable of making or breaking the Obama presidency—Iran's nuclear program is one of these. And from the Iranian perspective, only the United States is capable of delivering the assurances that might dissuade Tehran from acquiring nuclear weapons or proceeding to the nuclear threshold. Seen from Iran, Europe is simply not as significant in this regard, although Europe's economic significance for the regime should not be underestimated. Apart from energy trade, Turkish-Iranian economic ties are largely potential ones, at least for the moment.

Turkish divergence with the United States and Europe on the Iran issue has multiple sources, and these were illustrated in our Stockholm debate. First, it is unclear that Ankara shares the prevailing American and European assessment regarding the pace and status of the Iranian nuclear program. Second, while a nuclear-armed Iran would clearly not be in Turkish interest, Turks appear far less worried about Iranian capabilities and intentions. If anything, Turks are more worried about the regional consequences of open conflict and the use of force against Iran by the United States or Israel. Third, the growing ties and high-level interactions between Turkey and Iran, along with commercial incentives, have given Ankara new stakes in positive relations with Tehran. Finally, in discussing the Iran issue, Erdogan and the AKP leadership have been inclined to refer to Israel's nuclear arsenal, "double standards," the need for a nuclear free region, etc.—all arguments common across the Middle East but rarely heard in Washington or Brussels. In this sense, the Iranian nuclear issue has become the most visible manifestation of the new, regionally based approach in Ankara's policy. The contours of this policy were heavily debated at this and other points on the Stockholm agenda. The notion that Turkey might use its positive relations with Tehran to mediate on nuclear matters was understood and even applauded. But there was also considerable skepticism about the prospects.

On all of these points, our discussion anticipated many of the issues raised during the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington in April 2010 and after. In the wake of the summit, which Erdogan attended with a substantial Turkish delegation, the

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looming UN Security Council vote on Iran sanctions has been widely cited as a test for relations with Turkey. Our debate noted this, with the acknowledgment that differences in perspective between Turkey and its Atlantic partners are unlikely to be fully bridged. With Russia and China agreeing to a sanctions package, however minimal, this will obviously increase the pressure on Ankara (and some Turkish partners in the Gulf may also press quietly for a tougher Turkish approach on Iran). But our debate highlighted another aspect of the problem. To what extent can Turkey afford to distance itself from European policy on one of the few foreign policy issues where there is a visible EU consensus? Critics of Turkey's EU candidacy would surely seize on a Turkish "no" vote or abstention in the Security Council to question Ankara's convergence with European strategy. In this regard, the Iran nuclear issue may turn out to be a more significant test of Turkey-EU relations than of relations with Washington, where such differences are now taken for granted in many quarters. This reality was underscored by the dramatic developments of May 2010, with a fuel exchange agreement brokered by Brazil and Turkey, accepted by Iran, and promptly rejected by the United States and the permanent members of the Council. Turkish-Brazilian alignment on the Iran question also suggests a parallel trend toward affinity with the BRICs and the global south in Ankara's international thinking—a new and more complex twist on the standard debate about Turkey's orientation between East and West.<sup>3</sup>

## Dealing with Russia

The problem of dealing with Russia is central to all three sides of the "trilateral" as postures toward Moscow have become emblematic of what each has and has not been able to do in foreign policy terms. As Washington endeavors to reset its relationship with Russia on various fronts, including arms control, Europe continues to struggle with a common approach. Here, the inability to produce a shared European energy strategy is a critical impediment. For Turkey, the deep economic links and growing political cooperation with Moscow have been at the core of the AKP government's "zero problems" approach to the neighborhood. Overall, the Turkish and European (Italy is the exemplar) approach to Russia has been driven by energy security and broader commercial interests. For the United States, strategic issues and security stakes continue to be at the core. This has made for an uneasy Euroatlantic debate over Russia, punctuated by real policy challenges in the form of the Georgia war and the open question of further NATO enlargements in the east.

Russia is not an easy partner, although the challenge of dealing with a country "in angry decline" has a different texture when seen from Brussels, Ankara, and Washington. Demographic realities suggest that the problem of decline is structural and not episodic, and Moscow seems to lack the vision and strategy to deal with other looming problems, including the challenge from China. But Russia remains a significant player on critical issues, from energy security (where, it was suggested, the Russian leverage over the gas market may actually be declining) to questions of nuclear proliferation, regional security, and arms control. Beyond the troubling inclination toward authoritarianism and persistent corruption in Moscow, Russia "broke the cardinal rule of Helsinki" by changing borders through the invasion of Georgia. The quality of Georgian decision-making during the crisis was also questioned by some members of the group. Without question, the potential exists for further clashes between a Russia bent on asserting its influence over the political and security order around the Black Sea, and the United States, the EU, and NATO, all with a stake in consolidating the independence of actors in the neighborhood.

Turkey and Russia have been on the same page with regard to the primacy of regional actors in assuring regional stability, and both have taken a sovereignty-conscious approach to issues such as the proposed extension of NATO's Operation Active Endeavor from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea. But this policy convergence is not comprehensive and may not be durable under all conditions. The two countries remain competitors for long-term influence around the Black Sea, but also in the Middle East, where Ankara's new activism could pose problems for Russia's own interests. Russian arms transfers in the Middle East, especially the proposed sale of S-300 surface-to-air missiles to Iran, could well undermine Turkish security and compel Ankara to make additional costly defense investments. In broader geo-economic terms, the deep uncertainty regarding the future of the Turkey-EU project will leave relations with Russia as one of a number of valuable hedges for Ankara. Ultimately, "zero problems with neighbors" is more consequential in this sphere than in most others.

The Stockholm discussion took place before the U.S.-Russian agreement on new strategic arms reductions and the most recent twists in the negotiations over UNSC sanctions on Iran. Our debate pointed to declining trilateral confidence in Russian political and economic reform; the internal evolution of Russia is no longer a viable pole for Western strategy toward Moscow as

<sup>3</sup>See Lesser, Ian O., "Turkey, Brazil, Iran – A Glimpse of the Future," GMF Blog. <http://blog.gmfus.org/2010/05/21/turkey-brazil-and-iran-a-glimpse-of-the-future/>

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it might have been even a few years ago. At the same time, there is now less risk that Russia policy will be the victim of strategic neglect, either as a result of post-Cold War triumphalism or as complacency about the implications of a more competitive relationship with Moscow. Whether headed for greater friction, or closer cooperation—or as most likely, a mixture of both—much of this future in relations with Russia will be played out in regions such as the Black Sea, where trilateral stakes and presence are shared.

## Dealing with Allies

Not all the challenges facing the trilateral partners emanate from regional flashpoints and adversaries. Alliances and alliance partners can pose their own dilemmas for national and institutional strategies. This is especially true in a period of strategic flux on both sides of the Atlantic. Looking toward the Lisbon summit in November, NATO is engaged in a debate over its strategic concept. Many of the concepts and missions that will be reinforced in this process will be concentrated on or near Turkey's borders, or will shape the global engagement of the Alliance.

The post-Lisbon Treaty EU poses its own opportunities and challenges. Over the longer term, there will be important new prospects for European activism on foreign and security policy. For the moment, the level of confusion and uncertainty is high not only in Europe but also among Europe's Turkish and American partners. In Washington and Ankara, there is now very little debate on the desirability of a more active and concerted Europe—and this was not always the case. But as one participant noted, the canonical question for Washington is no longer “what number to dial” in Europe, but rather “who is answering the phone?” The new foreign policy leadership in Brussels is not yet a recognizable force for Americans, or for Turks. The more or less concerted European approach to Iran is a reassuring sign. The slow and ineffective response to the Greek financial crisis—a crisis that deepened dramatically in the wake of our Stockholm meeting—is much less encouraging.

Our debate underscored the significant opportunity costs imposed by the lack of movement on NATO-EU cooperation, largely as a consequence of the Cyprus problem and Turkish objections. There is an evident gap between the range of challenges on the international scene and the capacity of institutions,

even the capable ones. Under these conditions, it is clearly better to reinforce existing institutions rather than to create something new. A rational EU-NATO division of labor and close cooperation on strategy is essential, even for Turkey, whose own defense perspectives are lost in the current impasse. Several participants saw this as a key area for American leadership, even if the Cyprus problem itself is hardly high on Washington's crowded agenda. With both NATO and EU strategies in flux, this is clearly the time to forge a closer linkage between the two institutions.

The opportunity costs of entrenched thinking are also evident in the status of Turkey's EU candidacy. The negotiations—a misnomer, as they are not negotiations in the conventional sense at all—have moved forward in an uncertain fashion since 2005. The problems, large and small, are well known. The long-term nature of the process is obvious. But our discussion highlighted a growing sense of risk and disillusionment. In the near term, there is a risk that the negotiations will suffer a sudden death as a result of unresolved disputes: Cyprus, failure to implement the Ankara protocol, even the course of Turkish-Armenian relations.

There is also a risk of slow death as a result of stagnation and the progressive narrowing of the scope of negotiations. The current pace of “one chapter per EU presidency” may simply be too slow to be sustainable. This last risk is underscored by the evident loss of patience, even on the part of those Turks traditionally supportive of the EU process. Our debate on this point was especially vibrant and left many participants wondering if we had now entered a higher-stakes game in which Ankara is less inhibited in making its views clear (and to be sure, the same has happened in Europe, especially in Germany and France). Clearly, public opinion on both sides is not going to carry the process along in the absence of political leadership and real progress. The ability of the United States to press the issue with Europe and Turkey has declined over time, and this continues to be true even for the Obama administration.

In transatlantic terms, the “Obama bounce” reflected in key opinion polls (a bounce much less evident in Turkey) reflects a great improvement in the atmospherics of transatlantic relations, but big substantive questions remain.<sup>4</sup> For many participants, the looming “meta” question is whether Europe can retain its privileged position in American strategy. The rise of Asia as competitor and partner calls this into question and is a view

<sup>4</sup> See Lesser, Ian O., “Turkey, Brazil, Iran – A Glimpse of the Future,” GMF Blog. <http://blog.gmfus.org/2010/05/21/turkey-brazil-and-iran-a-glimpse-of-the-future/>

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shared by many Turkish and European observers. A European embrace of Turkey might add to the EU's strategic weight. But this can hardly be decisive in the face of much larger geopolitical forces and economic trends.

The open nature of these questions contributes to anxiety on all sides of the United States-Turkey-EU triangle, even, perhaps especially, among those inclined toward multilateral approaches in the face of nationalist pressures. Americans worry about Europe's willingness and ability to share global burdens.

Europeans worry about an America distracted by internal debates and more pressing challenges in Asia. Turks share both of these concerns. And Turkey's European and Atlantic partners worry that Turkey will simply opt for a more independent strategy on key issues. Under these conditions, the demonstrated effect of a coordinated, trilateral approach to regional crises and flashpoints can be substantial. Iran is the critical near-term case, and there will be others. All of which suggests that there could be utility to copying the format of our trilateral discussions at a more official level.

## **Dr. Ian O. Lesser, Senior Transatlantic Fellow, GMF**

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Prior to joining GMF, Dr. Lesser was a public policy scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and vice president and director of Studies at the Pacific Council on International Policy (the western partner of the Council on Foreign Relations). He came to the Pacific Council from RAND, where he spent over a decade as a senior analyst and research manager specializing in strategic studies. From 1994-1995, he was a member of the Secretary's Policy Planning Staff at the U.S. Department of State, responsible for Turkey, Southern Europe, North Africa, and the multilateral track of the Middle East peace process.

He is also currently a senior advisor to the Luso-American Foundation in Lisbon, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the International Institute for Strategic Studies, the Atlantic Council, and the Pacific Council on International Policy. He serves on the advisory boards of the International Spectator, Turkish Policy Quarterly, and Insight Turkey, and has been a senior fellow of the Onassis Foundation in Athens.

## **About the Trilateral Strategy Group**

The Trilateral Strategy Group is a core convening activity of GMF's Mediterranean Policy Program, and is conducted in partnership with TUSIAD (the Turkish Businessmen's and Industrialists' Association), Koç Holding, and the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The group meets roughly twice each year, and brings together policymakers, experts, and opinion shapers from Turkey, Europe, and the United States to discuss a changing menu of strategic topics in "trilateral" perspective. Group was held in Stockholm, January 28-30, 2010.

## **About GMF**

The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) is a nonpartisan American public policy and grantmaking institution dedicated to promoting greater cooperation and understanding between North America and Europe. GMF does this by supporting individuals and institutions working on transatlantic issues, by convening leaders to discuss the most pressing transatlantic themes, and by examining ways in which transatlantic cooperation can address a variety of global policy challenges. In addition, GMF supports a number of initiatives to strengthen democracies. Founded in 1972 through a gift from Germany on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Marshall Plan as a permanent memorial to Marshall Plan assistance, GMF maintains a strong presence on both sides of the Atlantic. In addition to its headquarters in Washington, DC, GMF has seven offices in Europe: Berlin, Bratislava, Paris, Brussels, Belgrade, Ankara, and Bucharest.