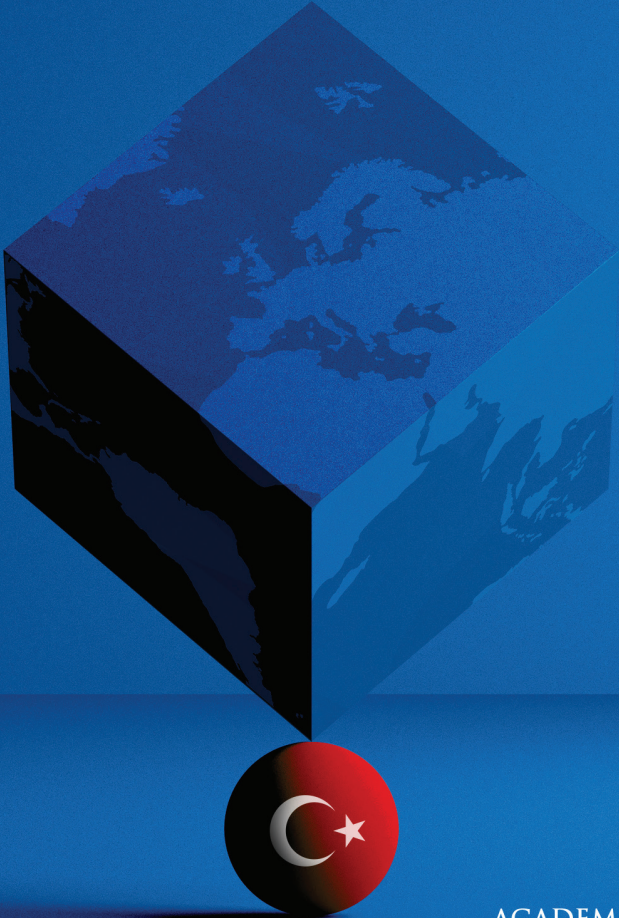


Türkiye as a
Stabilizing Power
in an Age of
Turmoil

FAHRETTİN ALTUN



ACADEMICA PRESS
WASHINGTON~LONDON

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Altun, Fahrettin (author)

Title: Türkiye as a stabilizing power in an age of turmoil | Altun, Fahrettin

Description: Washington : Academica Press, 2021. | Includes references.

Identifiers: LCCN 2021946303 |

ISBN 9781680537581 (hardcover) | 9781680537598 (e-book)

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFAD, Disaster and Emergency Management Authority

AK Party, Justice and Development Party

BBC, British Broadcasting Corporation

COVID-19, Coronavirus disease 2019

DI, Development Initiative

EU, European Union

GDP, Gross Domestic Product

GNA, Government of National Accord (Libya)

HIV/AIDS, Human Immunodeficiency Viruses/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

IDPs, Internally Displaced Persons

ISAF, International Security Assistance Force

JMP, Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) for Water Supply and Sanitation

KRG, Kurdistan Regional Government

NATO, North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NRF, NATO Response Force

OEF, Operation Enduring Freedom

OPCW, Chemical Weapons Convention

OSCE, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

P5+1 Group, The UN Security Council's five permanent members (P5); namely China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States plus Germany.

PKK, Kurdistan Workers' Party, a terrorist organization. The PKK is listed as a terrorist organization internationally by numerous countries, including the members of the European Union and others such as United States, Canada, and Australia.

PPE, Personal Protective Equipment

PYD, Democratic Union Party. The PYD/YPG was set up under the control of the PKK terrorist organization in 2003.

R2P, Responsibility to Protect

SARS, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome

SETA, Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research

UNSC, United Nations Security Council

TIKA, Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency

TRT, Turkish Radio and Television Corporation

UNHCR, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF, United Nations Children's Fund

UNRWA, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

WHO, World Health Organization

YPG, People's Defense Units, set up under the control of the PKK terrorist organization in 2003.

P R E F A C E

Plato, the great classical philosopher, once said, “The measure of a man is what he does with power.” As contemporary political leaders are faced with global challenges that threaten our world, how they use their power will determine humanity’s collective future. Future generations will remember this moment distinctly and evaluate our endeavors and our failures based on what we could have done but did not. They will likely say that we could have come together around a common response in the face of a global pandemic, but we did not. They will be amazed how little effort we have spent in preserving the environment and slowing down climate change. They will hold us responsible for the plight of millions of displaced persons and refugees around the world. Yes, they will judge us and do it harshly because, honestly, we will have deserved it.

Still, it is not too late. The world’s problems and challenges are monumental, and they require a global effort sustained over multiple generations. The ever increasing rate of interactions between human beings from many different backgrounds is creating a hyperconnected world. The speed of change is so extraordinary that it is simply impossible for one leader or one nation to keep up with and address the

global challenges facing us. New problems and difficulties with global implications are born every second in different corners of the world. Within the last decade, the world faced critical challenges, including a major financial meltdown and global recession, the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II, the rising number of unending conflicts in different parts of the world, the emergence of new threats for international security, and the worst pandemic of our lifetime that cost the lives of millions and crippled economies across the world. The barrage of new challenges is unsettling societies around the world and today's leaders constantly find themselves in a difficult situation to address these problems. The fractured and dispersed nature of today's challenges is precisely the reason why humanity has no choice but to shape the future together.

This book is an effort to outline the overarching problems of the international system that is constantly failing humanity, especially the poorest and the most disadvantaged. It is a study not only to diagnose problems, but also to offer concrete solutions. The solutions presented here are clearly not exhaustive; however, they embody important principles such as the need to steer clear of exclusionary and nativist approaches. I intend to contribute to a constructive dialogue around the failures of the current system in the face of the most difficult challenges of our time. An honest conversation must acknowledge the fact that the failures of the international system undermine and destroy the lives of the least developed nations around the world. This is precisely why Türkiye under President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has demonstrated its commitment to reforming the international system to make it more equitable and fairer for the world's most disadvantaged populations.

As the French scholar Michel Foucault once said, "I don't write a book so that it will be the final word." I obviously do not claim finality in any of my diagnoses or proposals. I provide my observations combined with my experience in government where I have witnessed firsthand some of the international community's biggest successes and simultaneously some of its worst failures. I hope that the result

is a thoughtful exercise in meaningfully addressing the root causes of global paralysis, providing actionable solutions, and highlighting Türkiye's exemplary role.

My analyses and approach in this book will certainly be the subject of criticism, but I hope this criticism is constructive since that is the only way we can confront the global challenges of our time in a good faith effort and with our intellectual honesty intact. I hope that my attempt to provide a frank assessment of the global challenges facing our world will be received well and taken as a contribution to the debates on the future of the global system. If I can remind enough people of the perils of inaction, I will have accomplished the main goal of this endeavor.

President Erdoğan's lifelong struggle for our country has been the inspiration behind this book. His unique vision of Türkiye's development and his courageous leadership in the face of adversity continue to inspire us every day. His relentless pursuit of global justice and fairness must be an example for us all to follow.

I remain in deep gratitude to my family from whom I have been separated for long hours due both to my work and to the effort required to complete this study. I hope they accept this book as a token of my appreciation as I strive to contribute to a better future for our world.

INTRODUCTION

Today, the world continues to suffer from the shortcomings and failures of the international system. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated some of these failures including the lack of cooperation in the international arena to fix global challenges. In a short period of time, we have witnessed the absence of coordination across nations to tackle common problems, the ineffectiveness of international institutions to handle a global health crisis, and inequality in sharing the necessary equipment and vaccinations, among others. These challenges have been present in the international system and generated humanitarian crises across the world. The COVID-19 pandemic made them more visible and more recognizable for the international public. In numerous instances, some wise policymakers and observers of global politics offered solutions to deal with them. One of the boldest proposals to fix the system and create a more equitable world order has been put forward by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.¹ This book is inspired by his vision and courage for a more sustainable and just future for our world.

More than three decades after the Cold War ended, the debate about a new international order, which essentially would revamp international institutions established during and following the end of World War II, has yet to reach a practical consensus. Existing institutions had already been proven insufficient to respond to the Cold War challenges. These institutions have often not been able to provide accountable, credible platforms for resolving regional conflicts, identifying and implementing a panacea for international crises in general, and organizing and distributing humanitarian aid to people affected the most in zones of international conflicts and hostilities. Nevertheless, despite such unresolved challenges in the international community, many remained optimistic about the future of an enlightened international system. Liberal internationalism was considered the invincible dynamic that would become the bastion of the new world order. In part, this optimism and the high expectations from a post-Cold War world caught the global community unprepared for the fresh challenges that began to unravel the existing world order.

In the 1990s, the world witnessed a more frequently occurring trend of civil wars, ethnic conflicts, and humanitarian disasters. This included the genocide in Rwanda, ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, and civil wars in different parts of the world. Contrary to expectations, there was no sign of waning of wars and international conflicts. Instead, there were an increasing number of bloody conflicts in different parts of the world. The humanitarian tragedies that occurred because of these conflicts could not be prevented by the international community. In addition, while many were expecting globalization to bring economic parity and equity to the developing world, the promises of fair distribution of its benefits went mostly unfulfilled. There was little sincere effort to assist developing nations in keeping pace with advances in business development and entrepreneurship as well as digital technologies fueling knowledge-based and service-focused industries. In addition to the north-south gap in the world, the new digital divide started to generate new forms of inequalities, such as inequality in accessing knowledge and information.

The international institutions formed in the 1940s were not suited to the far more rapid cycles of conflicts and hostilities around the world. The United Nations has failed, time and again, to respond in a timely manner to civil wars, exposing the inability of the UN Security Council to implement, much less enforce, its resolutions. In the absence of such enforcement, many belligerent actors took the opportunity to undermine the international order by destroying peace and stability. Moreover, the veto power of the Security Council's permanent members has become an impediment to achieving short-term solutions as a pathway to long-term sustainable peace and reconciliation in numerous disputes. In the words of Türkiye's President Erdoğan, the United Nations "has evolved into an institution that looks out for the interests of powerful nations instead of the entire world."² These institutions also failed to establish a framework and cooperation to fight poverty, underdevelopment, and economic inequalities.

In the first decade of the 21st century there was no time or breathing space for such issues, with the September 11 terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C. But, for the first time after World War II, countries around the world united in fighting against a common threat. The United States, for the first time in the history of the NATO alliance, for example, invoked Article 5, in assembling a diverse, multinational coalition to combat the global terrorist threat. Many countries around the world considered this period an opportunity to revitalize cooperation and coordination in national security policies and strengthen multilateralism. According to many, it could be possible to mobilize a truly global coalition that would bring together countries from all regions. At the end of the day, terrorism was a universally condemned phenomenon that had just proven its unprecedented global reach.

However, this optimism to confront global terror through a common strategy and shared solidarity proved to be short lived. Although countries around the world expressed solidarity and mobilized to provide support against terrorism, the main architect of the post-World War II international system, the United States, pursued a different

path. Instead of revitalizing international institutions and strengthening corresponding initiatives, the U.S. set out to act unilaterally by dividing the world into “those who are with us or against us.”³ The 2003 invasion of Iraq by the United States and the behavior of U.S. foreign policymakers before, during, and in the immediate aftermath of the war, persuaded the international community that the world would never be the same again.

During Iraq’s invasion, international institutions once again proved to be insufficient in stopping war or the fallout from it in its aftermath. The UN Security Council proved to be futile in stopping a war between UN member states. As terrorism became the primary focus of the major world powers’ security establishments, nations paid less attention to finding points for global cooperation and adopted unilateral strategies and tactics. In addition to the difficulty of establishing a framework of cooperation in the fight against terrorism, the lack of a consensus about which groups to fight against generated significant challenges in this process. Several countries decided to be more selective in their fight against terrorism. While fighting against some terrorist organizations, their governments opted not to pursue specific organizations that they viewed as not being a terror threat to their nations. In the absence of a collective, globally organized, and clarified effort against the most serious common threats, global terrorism continues to be a specter, haunting nations, in every region of the world.

Two other crises solidified this emerging sense of unilateralism in the international realm. The SARS public health crisis of the 2000s was a major test for the international community in establishing a sustainable and functioning structure to deal with a public health crisis around the world, a point that would become painfully evident in early 2020. Today, every country has paid the price for missing an earlier wake-up call. Nations turned away from international cooperation, information sharing, and capacity building, and decided to deal with SARS with their own means. While questions remained about how the SARS virus originated, no mechanisms were enforced to make countries more transparent about such major public health risks. When the