

TURKEY-EGYPT RELATIONS: INCENTIVES TO NORMALIZE

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ABSTRACT

The 2011 Arab uprisings marked a turning point for Turkey's foreign policy toward the Middle East. When the protests erupted in Egypt, former Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan became the first leader to voice support for former President Hosni Mubarak's immediate resignation. However, the months following Morsi's removal marked an historic deterioration of bilateral ties: Egypt's ambassador to Turkey was withdrawn; Turkey's ambassador to Egypt was expelled; both countries declared each other's ambassador persona non grata; and Egypt downgraded its relations with Turkey to chargé d'affaires. This policy brief advocates renewing efforts to revive bilateral diplomatic relations between Turkey and Egypt, both countries of strategic importance. Further, it explores the geopolitical, security, economic, and capacity-building incentives which can facilitate the normalization of Turkish-Egyptian relations.

Keywords: Turkey, Egypt, normalization.

INTRODUCTION

The 2011 Arab uprisings marked a turning point for Turkey's foreign policy toward the Middle East. Late economist and diplomat Mohamad Chatah (Carnegie-MEC, 2011) noted that during this period, Turkey "[moved] from a zero-problem platform to a coordinated regional system" to strengthen its role vis-à-vis the region. Indeed, when the protests erupted in Egypt, former Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan became the first leader to voice support for former President Hosni Mubarak's immediate resignation (Edelman, Cornell, Lobel, and Makovsky, 2013).

Upon the Muslim Brotherhood's ascension to power, Erdoğan and former Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu visited Egypt—on separate occasions—to show an unprecedented level of support for the country's new transition to democracy. During Erdoğan's visit, he notably remarked in an interview on Egyptian television that secular reform is necessary to advance Egypt's social progress and economic development (Flautre, 2011). Thus, Turkey was presented as an Islamic democratic model which can

help guide Egypt through its turbulent transition. This rhetoric was reciprocated by former President Mohamed Morsi's speech in Turkey on the need of Turkish-Egyptian cooperation during the post-Arab Spring era. Accordingly, bilateral relations blossomed with the signing of several agreements and the conclusion of a \$2 billion aid package, indicating good will and strategic cooperation between the two countries (Yezdani, 2011).

The improved Turkish-Egyptian relations came to a sudden halt upon the unexpected, yet popular, ouster of Morsi by the Supreme Council of Armed Forces "SCAF" on July 3, 2013. Erdoğan immediately described Morsi's overthrow as an interruption to the democratic transition and stated that the Turkish government "cannot accept a regime that has undertaken a military coup" (Gulhane, 2014). The months following Morsi's removal marked an historic deterioration of bilateral ties¹: Egypt's ambassador to Turkey was withdrawn; Turkey's ambassador to Egypt was expelled; both countries declared each other's ambassador persona non grata; and Egypt downgraded its relations with Turkey to chargé d'affaires (Fahim and Arsu, 2013). These developments were further amplified by public outbursts in both countries. In Turkey, Morsi's ouster was perceived as a reflection of Turkey's past coups; and in Egypt, the Turkish response was seen as firm support of an Islamist rule, much different from Turkey's own secular model (Meral, 2014).

Though turbulent over the past year, Turkish-Egyptian relations have continuously

improved since the Mubarak era. Renewing efforts to revive bilateral diplomatic relations could offer great regional gains to Turkey and Egypt, as they are both countries of considerable strategic importance (Meral, 2014). This policy brief explores the geopolitical, security, trade, and capacity-building incentives to the normalization of Turkish-Egyptian relations.

THE GEOPOLITICAL INCENTIVE

Turkey

Turkey occupies a geographic position of strong regional influence; one which historically aided its expansion as the Ottoman Empire. It is a predominant Eurasian country, located in the Middle East and Caspian Basin, and bordered by European, Asian, Middle Eastern, and Black Sea countries. Turkey's strategic placement makes it an influential political, economic, and cultural power, with the potential of serving as a development initiator, regional peace hub, and a facilitator for the progressive expansion of democratic values.

Egypt

Likewise, Egypt's strategically-unique, geographic position has played a central role in global politics. Located in North Africa, watered by the Nile River, and positioned at the center of African, Arab, and Islamic circles, Egypt necessitates satisfactory diplomatic relations with a number of countries in the international arena, to maintain its deep geopolitical, economic, and cultural importance (Nasser, 1952, p. 51). In addition, its Sinai landbridge connects Africa to Asia. As described by Alfred Milner—Under-secretary of Finance from

1 A study conducted by TESEV shows the erosion of affinity for Turkey from 84 percent in 2012 to 38 percent in 2013 (Akgün, M. and Gündoğar S.S., 2014, p. 5.)

1889-1892—Egypt resembles “the very center of the world, the great highway of nations”, which several international economies rely on, for direct and transit trade (Milner, 1899).

Incentive to normalize

Increased collaboration between Turkey and Egypt can boost the benefits derived from the countries’ geographic locations, whether they may be security-, economic-, or politically-related. The combined area of influence covered by both countries is vast and hence, presents the potential for Turkey and Egypt to exercise their roles as regional leaders and facilitators of regional stability, development, and democracy.

THE DIPLOMACY INCENTIVE

Egypt

After signing the Camp David accords and the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty, Egypt and Israel have both maintained peace and cordial relations for over three decades, despite the changes in administration. During the recent Gaza War—which lasted for 51 days and claimed the lives of 2,130 Palestinians, mostly civilians; and 68 Israelis, 64 of which are soldiers (Agence France-Presse, 2014c)—President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi spoke at length with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in attempts to mediate a ceasefire. Eventually, the Egyptian authorities did indeed facilitate a comprehensive ceasefire, which resurrected Egypt’s historical, regional, cultural, and mediatory role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and solidified it as a reconciliatory channel, accessible by Arab countries, the U.S., and Israel. Mousa Abu Marzouk, Senior Member of Hamas, confirmed this, stating that, “Egypt is

the only guarantor of successful negotiations” (Al-Mesryoon, 2014).

The Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that indirect negotiations between Israeli and Palestinian officials are scheduled to start in September, to promote mutual understanding on a range of issues and thereby, strengthen the permanence of the current ceasefire (Agence France-Presse, 2014b). Egyptian-led efforts in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can protect the lives of civilians and prevent further bloodshed, of both parties to the conflict; pave the way for humanitarian relief and aid through collaborative border control; assist in the logistics of reconstruction; help in post-conflict economic planning in Palestinian territories; and contribute to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. These are all goals which Turkey has also aimed to achieve²; therefore, a positive first step would be to harmonize and coordinate the efforts aiming to realize them, with the relevant authorities.

THE SECURITY INCENTIVE

Post-“Arab Spring”, and more than ever before, the Middle East has become a very volatile region that is undergoing several geographic, political, and economic changes.

Turkey

The Syrian War is a clear example of the critical changes, which have spilled over into Turkey, Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan. For Turkey, it has resulted in the influx of approximately 1.6

² E.g., in July, 2004, Turkey signed a Free Trade Agreement with the Palestine Liberation Organization to eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers in trade (Ministry of Economy, 2012).

million Syrian refugees. According to Turkish officials, the humanitarian crisis has cost the country over \$3.5 billion, and is still ongoing (Williams, 2014). It is accompanied by the challenges of effectively integrating the refugees into Turkish society and raising structured donations through the international community; tasks that have not yet been achieved (Sak, 2014).

In further exacerbation of the situation, the Islamist militant group Islamic State of Iraq and Syria “ISIS” proclaimed its own “caliphate” in June after capturing wide stretches of land in both Iraq and Syria, thereby heightening sectarian conflict, spreading extremist ideology, and overall, threatening regional stability in the Broader Middle East and North Africa “BMENA”. Since Turkey shares borders with both Iraq and Syria, it has been a “strategically vital supply route and entry point [for ISIS] to wage their war”³ (Faiola and Mekhennet, 2014). As the new neighbor, ISIS has already engaged in border shootouts, cutoff trade routes, and taken 80 Turkish hostages, which have only recently been released. The crisis in Iraq can soon compound the existing humanitarian crisis if a significant number of Iraqis flee to Turkey for asylum. Furthermore, it risks interrupting billions worth of trade and energy transport and hence, negatively impact the Turkish economic growth (Çelik and Çelik, 2012).

Egypt

Having been swept by major uprisings and turmoil since 2011, the situation in Egypt starkly contrasts that of Turkey. Following

³ “Isis members are advancing towards the Turkish border in north-west Syria, attempting to secure a valuable supply line that has been the lifeblood of their growth so far” (Chulov, M., 2014).

the ouster of former President Morsi, several Islamist movements, once again, returned to their underground statuses. Subsequently, a surge of terrorist attacks and bombings erupted, continuously targeting security forces, officials, and government buildings (Kortam, 2014) in Cairo, Mansoura, Sharqiya, Suez, and the Sinai (Gold, 2014b). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs estimates the death toll of terrorist attacks since Morsi’s ouster at “252 police and 187 military personnel [...] along with 57 civilians.” (Agence France-Presse, 2014a).

With radical Islamist movements and ideologies gaining momentum in the BMENA region, Egypt is similarly confronting an external terrorist threat from both eastern and western borders, waged by several jihadist groups—including ISIS—who vow to hinder all efforts aimed at achieving political and economic stability.

“Gen. Rifat Abd al-Hamid, an expert in Forensics and Criminology, told *As-Safir*, ‘The conditions on the Libyan border pose challenges that must be seriously taken into account. They represent an imminent danger to Egyptian national security on the levels of law enforcement, politics, diplomacy and the economy. There are terrorist cells located in eastern Libya that possess weapons and materiel left over from the Gadhafi regime’s arsenal, allowing them to easily disrupt Egyptian national security. This is as dangerous as the situation on the eastern border” (Bassiouni, 2014).

For Egypt's eastern border, Major General Mohamed Faraj Al-Shahat set an emergency plan in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, and National Guard to lead an orchestrated counter-terrorism campaign against extremist groups in south Sinai, which aims to weaken national security and the economy.⁴ Various operations are currently being executed by the government to end the arbitrary detonation of improvised explosive devices and firing of rockets in the Peninsula.⁵

Incentive to normalize

There are three key elements which make both Turkey and Egypt key players in any initiative aimed at establishing regional security in the Middle East. First, as aforementioned, geopolitics; this factor has recently revealed its propensity to become a major disadvantage if not well-utilized. Turkey and Egypt's close proximity to crisis-stricken countries has evidently put them in direct confrontation with extremist groups on their borders.

Second, counter-terrorism capabilities; fortunately, both countries possess well-equipped, sizeable forces, that have devised elaborate counter-terrorism strategies involving military, intelligence, law enforcement, and diplomatic efforts. For instance, Turkey has the second-largest army among NATO countries and has, since 1984, fought the Partiya

4 "The [Sinai] pipeline has been attacked more than 10 times since Mubarak's overthrow [...]" (Saleh, Y. and Dziadosz, A. Collett-White, M. (Ed.), 2013).

5 "[D]uring Egypt's recent political turmoil [...] groups such as al-Jihad, [Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis] and Gamaa al-Islamiyya transitioned from taking on the state to taking on the economic pillars of the state: namely tourism" (Gold, Z., 2014a).

Karkerên Kurdistanê "PKK" in the eastern and southeastern regions of the country (Rodoplu, Arnold and Ersoy, 2004). Similarly, Egypt has the largest military force in the Middle East and has, since 1981, targeted budding terrorist groups which aim to threaten its national security (UNGA, 2009).

The final element is diplomatic influence; on one hand, Turkey's ambitious, hands-on approach in the Middle East overlooked the dynamism of regional developments and complex between several existing and emerging state and non-state actors. As a result, its relations with neighboring countries constantly deteriorated following the uprisings. A more balanced execution of the 'zero problems' foreign policy is therefore necessary for Turkey to ease tensions and revive its pre-'Arab Spring' influential status among Middle Eastern countries. On the other hand, despite some turbulence, Egypt has maintained its diplomatic influence and amicable relations within the region.

Turkey and Egypt can utilize their positions to jointly create a regional security umbrella.

In addressing the persistent terrorist threat afflicting the BMENA region, Turkey and Egypt can utilize their positions to jointly create a regional security umbrella. A consistent counter-terrorism strategy involving collaboration of military, intelligence, law enforcement, and diplomatic sectors can benefit the region and help restore its stability through synchronized collective action. The joint initiative can involve building partner capacity; developing professional security

forces; supporting internal defense; and leading special operations (Jones, 2014).⁶

THE ECONOMIC INCENTIVE

Turkey

Turkey's transformation was made possible through the Justice and Development Party's "AKP" political and economic reforms (Kanani, 2014) which brought about stability and credibility, respectively. Since 2002, the government directed its economic, fiscal, and monetary policies towards increasing national capital expenditures, foreign direct investment, trade, and business partners. This allowed both domestic and international business communities to efficiently plan long-term commercial activities within a more predictable environment (Hakura, 2013, p. 2). Gradually, Turkey was able to shift from traditional agriculture and informality to higher productivity and modern industries (Hakura, 2013, p. 3), thus becoming the world's 19th largest economy, an important European Union "EU" trade partner, and a center of economic development.

6 "Building partner capacity and supporting foreign internal defense [...] includes a variety of activities like security force assistance and developing professional, capable, and sustainable foreign security forces. Special operations forces are trained [...] to understand local culture, society, language, economy, history, and politics. [...] [They] can be critical in precision targeting of terrorist groups and their financial, logistical, and political support networks. They can orchestrate covert raids to capture or otherwise target terrorists, seize their supplies, and undermine their finances; conduct air strikes [...] oversee psychological operations to undermine terrorist support; [and] collect and analyze intelligence about terrorist groups [...]" (Jones, S.G., 2014).

Turkey also gained importance as a gateway and energy bridge by transporting large volumes of hydrocarbon resources from the Caspian, Central Asia, the Gulf, and the Eastern Mediterranean to the European Community (Roberts, 2004). Having several international and domestic pipelines⁷ in addition to the Bosphorous and the Dardanelles Straits—which transport an average 3 million barrels per day—Turkey is one of the world's most congested transit points for fuel (Saglam, 2014). Its pivotal role as a transit hub is expected to grow within the coming years due to the country being surrounded by 70 percent of the world's proven oil and natural gas reserves (Saglam, 2014).

Egypt

Egypt is one of the most developed and diversified economies in the MENA region with considerable potential for expansion (UNECA, 2013). Despite the political turmoil following the uprisings, the Egyptian economy maintained activity in most sectors. This is evidenced by the recent, though shrunken, 1.4% growth from 2013 until 2014 (Trading Economics, 2014). Additionally, there are ongoing efforts to stimulate economic growth through more effective developmental, monetary, and fiscal policies. Minister of Planning and International

7 International: Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline "BTC" (Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli-Georgia to Turkey); Blue Stream Pipeline (Russia-Bulgaria to Turkey); Kirkuk-Ceyhan Pipeline (Iraq to Turkey); Tabriz-Dogubayazit Pipeline (Iran to Turkey); Trans Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline "TANAP" (Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey-Greece-Europe); Interconnector Turkey-Greece-Italy Pipeline "ITGI" (Turkey to Greece-Italy). Domestic: Ceyhan-Kirikkale Pipeline (Ceyhan to Kirikkale); Batman-Dortyol Pipeline (Batman to Dortyol) (Saglam, B., 2014).

Cooperation Dr. Ashraf el-Araby confirmed a current thorough revision of investment and labor laws to promote foreign direct investment and facilitate the establishment of small and medium enterprises in Egypt (Al-Nahar, 2014).

With regards to transit trade, Egypt's Suez Canal—completed in 1869—directly links two prime waterways, the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean, via the Red Sea (McGregor, 2006, p. 2). As a gatekeeper between Africa, Asia, and Europe, Egypt plays major roles in global trade and economic stability. Today, approximately 8 percent of the world's container ships transport tons of goods through the Suez Canal, at a lower toll than the Panama Canal (Cole, 2013). This figure is expected to hike upon the completion of the recently announced parallel channel to the Canal, scheduled to be completed in 2015⁸ (Farid, 2014). It is estimated that over 2 million barrels of petroleum pass through Egypt, either through the Canal or by means of pipelines (Cole, 2013). In 2010, Turkey, France, and the United States received nearly 25 percent of their liquefied natural gas imports through the Suez Canal, rendering it a focal point for stability of fuel prices and transportation (Cole, 2013). Accordingly, any potential geopolitical shock risking the operation of Egypt's Suez Canal can have major consequences for international trade, oil production, and prices. For example, when the protests first erupted on January 25, 2011 in Egypt, causing oil prices to spike at their highest prices since 2008 (Schuman, 2011).

⁸ The Chairman of the Suez Canal Authority, Mohab Memish claims, “the new canal will be established to increase the absorptive capacity of the Suez Canal to 97 passing ships per day, up from the current rate of 49.” [...] “the project would see canal revenues increase by 259%, up from current annual revenues of \$5 billion” (Farid, D., 2014).

Incentive to normalize

Cooperation between Turkey and Egypt presents the opportunity to strengthen their roles as regional leaders. On the policy planning level, Egypt can benefit from Turkey's economic policies, which have focused on increasing the predictability of fiscal policy, effectiveness of monetary policy, and security of the financial system (Gönenç, Sahinöz and Tuncel, 2010). Over the past decade, Turkey has:

“improved competitiveness, employment, human and social development, the efficient provision of high-quality public services, and energy security and efficiency, with an emphasis on the reduction of regional disparities” (Ibrahim, 2013, p. 34).

Prime Minister Davutoğlu affirmed that the Turkish government is continually improving its economic policies (Daily Sabah, 2014). This can provide Egypt with a reference for long-term planning of sustainable development projects, directed towards raising the overall development and living standards.

On the commercial level, Egypt currently retains its position as one of Turkey's largest trading partners in Africa. In 2012, Turkish businessmen invested \$2 billion in Egypt in over 440 companies and 60,000 employees, most of which are in the industrial sector (Egypt Independent, 2012). Furthermore, Turkish exports to Egypt in the same year totaled \$3.6 billion (TUİK, 2014) and the average annual trade volume stood at \$4.5 to \$5 billion (Today's Zaman, 2014a), indicating that reorienting economic activity in both countries can maximize the existing economic potential.

Reorienting economic activity in both countries can maximize the existing economic potential.

Through one another, Turkey and Egypt could benefit from accessing new, less traditional markets, thereby improving their integration with the global market. Vice President of Cairo's Chamber of Commerce "CCC", Ibrahim el-Araby confirmed that, "increased commercial activities in Egypt directly impact and reflect the rate of trade in the entire Arab region" (Akhbarak, 2014).

In the energy sector—due to the rapid social and economic development—Turkey has sought more sources to address its increasing demand for energy. Sustainable development is dependent on the sustainable supply and security of energy resources. Among the recent projects considered is a gas pipeline project aiming to transport natural gas from Egypt to Turkey through Syria and Jordan (Saglam, 2014). The initiation of this project can help diversify Turkey's fuel sources and further consolidate Egypt's role as a transit hub.

In the renewable energy sector, Turkey has utilized several hydroelectric power schemes, which can, upon further development, meet 33 to 46 percent of the country's electric energy demands by 2020 (Yüksek, Kankal, Kömürcü, Önsoy, and Akpınar, 2007, p. 731). Contrastingly, Egypt's energy dilemma has intensified during the past three years and more so following the aggressive, yet necessary, subsidy cuts announced by President el-Sisi. Today, Egypt faces an immense energy crisis, with frequent power shut-downs due to the lack of ability to import the raw materials

necessary to produce power (Butler, 2014). Consulting with Turkey, the United Nations, and other international renewable energy experts—as Turkey has done—Egypt can plan many large-scale renewable energy projects, to improve energy security, agriculture, irrigation, education, and health systems.

THE DEMOCRATIC-GOVERNANCE INCENTIVE

Turkey

On September 1, 2014, Prime Minister Davutoğlu presented the aspirations of Turkey's 62nd government to the Parliament. The newly-formed government has, inter alia, prioritized democratic reforms, human-oriented development, and public welfare. Turkey's new roadmap aspires to achieve full EU membership by 2023, also its 100th anniversary (Today's Zaman, 2014b). Davutoğlu's announcement publicized the objectives for drafting a new constitution, based on rights, freedoms, and the rule of law; bringing people into social life and strengthening social legitimacy; paving the way for democratic policies; meeting faith and culture-based demands; and increasing accountability, transparency, and anti-corruption policies (Daily Sabah, 2014). He emphasized that in the past decade, Turkey rose from the 77th position to the 50th on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (Today's Zaman, 2014b).

Due to its increasing importance as a global transit hub and economic power, Turkey has also heightened its involvement with international organizations among which are, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization "NATO", to maintain stability in the Euro-Atlantic and Mediterranean areas; the Organization for

Cooperation and Development “OECD”, to oversee economic development and determine sound economic practices; and the Organization of Islamic Conference Organization “OIC”, to help promote solidarity and cooperation in political, economic, cultural, scientific, and social fields among 56 member countries (Ministry of Defense, 2014).

Egypt

Upon former President Morsi’s removal, then-Commander-in-Chief and Minister of Defense el-Sisi announced a roadmap to help ease the turbulent democratic transition and undo the failings of the Islamist-led, Morsi government.⁹ During this phase, the 2012 Constitution was entirely rewritten; Chief Justice of the Supreme Constitutional Court, Adly Mansour, was appointed as acting president; temporary policies were issued; an interim government was instated; and finally, presidential elections were conducted, bringing el-Sisi to the Presidency. The government’s progress on democratic reform has been interrupted by the strong prevalence of instability, fuelled by arbitrary violence and terrorist activities. Nevertheless, el-Sisi has vowed to build a system based on socioeconomic justice, human dignity, and the rule of law (Abdallah, 2014). Additionally, he announced the government’s prioritization of fighting institutional corruption in all its forms through improved accountability and anti-corruption policies (Abdallah, 2014).

⁹ Morsi’s Islamist government alienated nearly all segments of Egypt, including Al-Azhar leadership, the Christian church, the conservative Salafists, the judiciary, several opposition parties, business leaders, and the military.

Egypt has, time and again, assumed the role of being the epicenter of the MENA region. With a populace exceeding 90 million, it maintains the status of being an opinion leader, broadly representative of regional trends in arts, media, law, education, and theology (Daragahi, 2011). Cases in point can be made by examining Egypt’s involvement with three bodies: first, Cairo is home to the Headquarters of the Arab League—the regional organization comprising 22 Arabic-speaking countries—which serves as a platform for the increased coordination of foreign policy and the facilitation of political, economic, cultural, scientific, and social programs, in the Member States (UNESCO). Second, despite Egypt’s current status of suspension from the African Union “AU”, it has contributed positively to developments in Africa and the formation of the AU, to achieve collective political, economic, and social goals (Souare, 2008). Third, Egypt is the birthplace of Al-Azhar University, the Arab World’s most influential Islamic institution, which aims to support a modern, democratic state; embrace the fundamental human rights; and guide theology towards moderate Islamic thought (State Information Service).

Incentive to normalize

Turkey and Egypt are witnessing a new era of public awareness, keen for political, economic, social, and cultural development. Officials on both ends have, in response, frequently expressed their political will to march towards achieving the above-mentioned goals and further their respective countries’ stance nationally, regionally, and globally. Considering that Turkey and Egypt are two key pillars in the BMENA region, collectively pushing forward democratic reforms

can influence a series of positive developments in neighboring and global political systems: first, countries of the ‘Arab Spring’ can follow successful reform examples set by Turkey and Egypt; second, a much-needed regional stability can result, thereby enhancing the overall status of fundamental human rights in the region; and third, global interests pertaining to commercial, trade, and energy activities in the Middle East will be more secure.

Turkey and Egypt are also deeply integrated in global politics. Accordingly, they can use their political and economic influence to build and develop more efficient and reliable structures that can positively affect the BMENA region. Before the end of the second World War, Winston Churchill envisioned a regional organization, which later became the Council of Europe “CoE”. Similarly, the growing vacuum left after the ‘Arab Spring’ revolutions necessitates the establishment of ad-hoc initiatives comparable in capability, competence, and swiftness to the CoE, NATO, and OECD. Doing so can have the potential to strengthen the elements of security, economic development, democracy, and harmonization across the member states.

IN LIEU OF CONCLUSION

As indicated above, there are multiple strategic incentives which signal the need to boost diplomatic relations between Turkey and Egypt. Although there has been a difference in perception of the post-Arab Spring developments, it should not occur at the cost of diplomatic relations. Instead, both countries should prioritize the importance of their combined potential and utilize it to positively impact the region. As a result, Turkey

and Egypt will be able to: first, benefit from their geopolitical influence and exercise their roles as regional leaders; second, play a reconciliatory role and contribute to regional diplomacy; third, develop existing counter-terrorism capabilities to create a regional security umbrella; fourth, strengthen economic cooperation to trigger social and economic development; and finally, build efficient ad-hoc international structures envisioning long-term regional developmental and security goals.

Turkey and Egypt can use their political and economic influence to build and develop more efficient and reliable structures that can positively affect the BMENA region.

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