



Turkey in Perspective

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Turkey in Perspective: Contents

Chapter 1: Geography	6
Introduction	6
Geographic Divisions	7
Climate	8
Rivers/Bodies of Water	9
Major Cities	9
<i>Havana</i>	10
<i>Camagüey</i>	11
<i>Holguín</i>	11
<i>Guantánamo</i>	12
<i>Santa Clara</i>	12
Environmental Concerns	13
Natural Hazards	14
Endnotes	15
Overview: Chapter 1 Assessment	20
Chapter 2: History	21
Introduction	21
Earliest Cuba	22
The Spanish Colonial Period	23
<i>Early Colonial Period (1492-1800)</i>	23
<i>The Road to Independence (1800-1899)</i>	24
Republic of Cuba (1902-1959)	25
<i>The Early Years</i>	25
<i>The Batista Government</i>	26
Revolutionary Cuba	27

<i>Castro's Rise to Power</i>	27
<i>Bay of Pigs and the Cuban Missile Crisis</i>	28
<i>Post-Revolutionary Cuba (1962-2008)</i>	28
Cuba Under Raúl Castro (2008-Present)	30
Endnotes	31
<i>Overview: Chapter 2 Assessment</i>	36
Chapter 3: Economy	37
Introduction	37
Agriculture	38
<i>Farming</i>	38
<i>Forestry and Fishing</i>	39
Industry	39
Natural Resources	40
Trade	41
Tourism	41
Banking and Finance	42
Standard of Living	43
Employment Trends	44
Public vs. Private Sector	45
Outlook	46
Endnotes	47
<i>Overview: Chapter 3 Assessment</i>	54
Chapter 4: Society	55
Introduction	55
Ethnic Groups and Racial Categories	56
Religion	57
Cuisine	58

<i>Food</i>	58
<i>Coffee</i>	59
Traditional Dress	60
Gender Issues	60
Arts	61
<i>Literature</i>	61
<i>Music</i>	62
<i>Cinema</i>	63
<i>Painting and Poster Art</i>	63
Sports and Recreation	64
Endnotes	65
<i>Overview: Chapter 4 Assessment</i>	72
Chapter 5: Security	73
Introduction	73
U.S.-Cuban Relations	74
Relations with Other Countries	75
<i>Brazil</i>	75
<i>China-Cuba Relations</i>	76
<i>Colombia</i>	77
<i>Mexico</i>	77
<i>Venezuela</i>	78
<i>European Union-Cuba Relations</i>	79
<i>Russia-Cuba Relations</i>	79
Police	80
Military	80
<i>Army</i>	81
<i>Navy</i>	82
<i>Air Force</i>	82
Issues Affecting Stability	83

<i>Government Transition</i>	83
<i>Demographic Change</i>	83
Outlook	84
Endnotes	85
<i>Overview: Chapter 5 Assessment</i>	92
<i>Cuba in Perspective: Final Assessment</i>	93
<i>Cuba in Perspective: Further Reading</i>	96



View of the Bosphorus
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Chapter 1: Geography

Introduction

Turkey is located at the nexus of Asia and Europe. The two continents are separated by the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmara, and the Dardanelles, which together form the Turkish Straits. A small part of Turkey, Turkish Thrace, lies in Europe. The rest of the country is located in Asia, and is called Anatolia (Asia Minor). The seas around Turkey have substantially different levels of salinity. This has resulted in significant aquatic diversity that ranges from different types of seaweed, to numerous varieties of fish and marine mammals, such as dolphin. The topography of the country is equally varied, ranging from snowcapped mountains to sandy beaches.¹

Turkey was once part of the Ottoman Empire, which included much of the Balkans and parts of North Africa. Today, the country extends from southeastern Europe, about 1,609 km (1,000 mi) west to east. From north to south, the country ranges from about

480 to 840 km (300 to 520 mi).² The country's boundaries are defined by its borders with eight countries, and four major bodies of water: the Black Sea on the north, the Turkish Straits on the west, and the Aegean and Mediterranean seas on the west and south.³ Its land borders include Georgia (252 km, 157 mi) and Armenia (268 km, 167 mi) to the northeast; Azerbaijan (17 km, 11 mi) and Iran (499 km, 310 mi) to the east; Iraq (352 km, 219 mi) and Syria (822 km, 511 mi) to the southeast; and, Greece (206 km, 128 mi) and Bulgaria (240 km, 149 mi) to the northwest.^{4, 5, 6}



The Black Sea
© Lucas Bergstrom

Geographical Divisions

Black Sea Region

The Black Sea region is located along Turkey's northern coast. It is the most inaccessible region in the country. This region is lined by mountain ranges that rise to elevations of 1,525–1,800 m (5,003–5,905 ft) in the west, and 3,000–4,000 m (9,842–13,123 ft) in the east. These mountains form an almost continuous barrier between the coast and the interior, except for a few narrow valleys. The coastline is jagged and narrow, except where it widens into fertile deltas that are planted with hazelnut trees, cherry groves, and tea bushes. Some of the higher slopes that are facing the northwest are densely forested. The western

part of the region is a center for coal mining and heavy industry. It is also a center for commercial agriculture, which is supported by the wet coastal climate.⁷

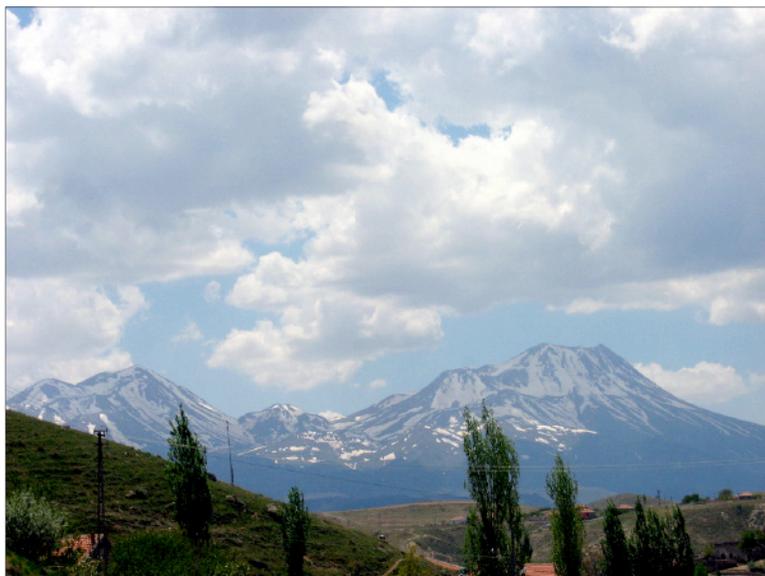
Aegean Region

The Aegean region is located on Turkey's west coast. This region extends from the Black Sea in the north, to the Mediterranean in the south. The area is characterized by a Mediterranean climate, which is characterized by mild wet winters, and long dry summers. About half of Turkey's best farmland is located in the Aegean's broad valleys, such as the Plains of Troy. It is a region of tobacco, olives, citrus, and nut crops.⁸

Mediterranean Region

The Mediterranean region is sometimes called the Turkish Riviera, because of the narrow plains that run along the Mediterranean coastline, and the western and central Taurus Mountains rising dramatically along the coast. The soil and warm climate in this region are well suited to intensive agriculture, with the Çukurova Plain being the most developed agricultural section. The region has many villages and few major cities. It is

a significant cotton-growing center, and the home of the cotton-based textile industry. Summers are often hot and dry, thus there are many excellent beaches and a well-developed tourist industry. Reclaimed floodplains, around the city of Adana, make up the eastern section of the region.^{9,10}



Volcanoes of the Central Anatolian Plateau
© Darcy M / flickr.com

Central Region

The central region lies between the Taurus and Pontus mountain ranges. The Taurus Mountains parallel the Mediterranean coast, and reach elevations of 2,750 m (9,022 ft). They are more rugged, and have fewer rivers, than the Pontus Mountains that border the Black Sea in the north. The Pontus Mountains are sometimes called the North Anatolian Mountains. They rarely rise above 1,500 m (4,921 ft) in the west. The Pontus Mountains reach heights of 3,000 m (9,843 ft) trending eastward, where they converge with the Taurus Mountains. The rivers in the Pontus Mountains flow toward the Black Sea. The northern areas consist of heavily wooded forests, while the southern slopes are more open. Saline

basins also are located throughout the mountain ranges, and on the Anatolian Plateau.¹¹

Anatolian Plateau

The Anatolian Plateau lies in the middle of the country, between the Taurus and Pontus Mountains. This semiarid region receives an average of 300 mm (12 in) of rain a year. The Anatolian Plateau is characterized by low elevations of 600–1,200 m (1,968–3,937 ft) from west to east, where there is a dependence on rain-fed agriculture, with wheat being the principal crop. Conversely, irrigated cultivation only occurs near rivers, and commonly produces barley, corn, cotton, fruit, grapes, opium poppies, sugar beets, roses, and tobacco. Livestock graze throughout the plateau, which is wooded in the northwest and northeast. The Konya Ovasi and the saline Lake Tuz are the largest basins in the area. Frequent dust storms spread yellow powder across the plateau. Locusts can be a problem in the eastern section in April and May.^{12,13}

The Eastern Highlands (Anti-Taurus Mountains)

Higher elevations and greater levels of precipitation create more severe climatic conditions in the rugged Eastern Highlands, where the Pontus and Taurus mountain ranges converge. The region is well known for its cold winters and heavy snowfalls. Peaks have an average elevation of about 3,000 m (9,842 ft).¹⁴ Mount Ararat, where

Noah's Ark supposedly rests, is located in this region.¹⁵ At 5,166 m (16,949 ft), it is the highest point in Turkey. The nation's largest lake, Lake Van, is also in the Eastern Highlands, along with the headwaters of three major rivers: the Aras, which flows east into the Caspian Sea; the Euphrates, which flows south; and the Tigris, which flows south to join the Euphrates before emptying into the Persian Gulf. Historically, much of the Eastern Highlands region has been known as Kurdistan. It contains a few fertile valleys that support a diverse range of agricultural products.^{16, 17}

Arabian Platform

This is a region of rolling hills and broad plateaus, and extends into Syria. It lies below the Eastern Highlands in southeast Anatolia. Elevations are low, descending from 800 m (2,624 ft) in the north, to 500 m (1,640 ft) in the south. Summers here can get extremely hot, with temperatures soaring to 46°C (115°F). This makes it one of the driest regions in Turkey, yet it is still primarily an agricultural area. Traditionally, mostly wheat and barley were grown here. However, new irrigation projects in the 1980s created more agricultural diversity.^{18, 19, 20}



Mount Ararat, eastern Turkey
© Simon Chauvette

Climate

Turkey experiences all four seasons, although this is not true for every region. Weather patterns on the coasts generally differ from those in the interior. The coastlines of the Aegean and Mediterranean seas experience temperate rainy winters, with annual precipitation varying from 580 to 1,300 mm (23 to 51 in), depending on location. Summers are typically hot, and moderately dry.^{21, 22} The coastal areas around the Sea of Marmara have a more moderate climate, with temperatures ranging between 4°C (39°F) and 27°C (81°F) during the summer, and dropping below 0°C (32°F) in the winter.²³ The eastern part of the Black Sea coast is the only region that receives

rainfall year-round. It has the greatest amount of rain, averaging 1,400 mm (55 in) annually.²⁴ The annual temperatures in this area range from 23°C (73°F) in summer, to 7°C (45°F) in winter.²⁵

Mountains that hug the southern coastline bar Mediterranean influences from extending inland. As a result, the interior of Turkey has a continental climate with distinct seasons. The Anatolian Plateau is subject to greater extremes in temperature and weather than the coastal areas. Winters are particularly harsh, with temperatures falling

as low as -30°C (-22°F) to -40°C (-40°F) in the eastern mountainous areas, with an average of -2°C (28°F). The ground may be covered with snow 120 days of the year.^{26, 27} Western Anatolia has a milder Mediterranean climate, with average temperatures of 9°C (48°F) in winter, and 29°C (84°F) in summer. Although the amount of rainfall depends on the elevation, annual precipitation averages around 400 mm (15 in).²⁸ The Konya and the Malatya plateaus are the driest parts of Turkey, with annual rainfall of less than 300 mm (12 in). May is the wettest month, whereas July and August are the driest.²⁹

The Anti-Taurus Mountain region in eastern Turkey has the most inhospitable climate in the country. Summers are uncomfortably hot and very dry, while winters are extremely cold, with frequent heavy snowfall. Snowstorms can isolate villages for several days. Spring and fall are generally mild, yet hot and cold spells are common.^{30, 31, 32}

Bodies of Water

Turkey has eight major drainage basins, six of which are entirely within its borders. Most of the eastern part of the nation depends on the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, which flow south. Two inland basins drain into major lakes. The rest of the country drains into the seas forming Turkey's coastline—the Aegean, Black, Marmara, and Mediterranean.^{33, 34} Of the approximately 250 lakes in Turkey, about 50 have areas larger than 6.4 sq km (2.5 sq mi).³⁵



Lake Van
© John Cumbers

Lake Van (Van G lü)

The lake is more than 119 km (74 mi) across at its widest point. It is Turkey's largest natural lake, and has an area of 3,713 sq km (1,434 sq mi). It is about the size of Rhode Island, it is the second-largest lake in the Middle East, and it is one of the largest saltwater lakes in the world.^{36, 37, 38} Its only sources are mountain streams, and its only outlet is evaporation. When this is coupled with irrigation runoff, the result is an extreme buildup of salt and mineral sediment, making the water unsuitable for drinking or irrigation. Only one species of fish, the Pearl Mullet, can live in Lake Van.^{39, 40}

Lake Tuz (Tuz G lü)

Lake Tuz is the second-largest lake in Turkey; it has no outlet, and few surface streams feeding it.^{41, 42} This lake is located on the Anatolian Plateau, northeast of Konya. It is saline and shallow, with a depth of only 1–2 m (3–6 ft). It has an area of 1,500 sq km (580 sq mi), with an average width of 50 km (30 mi), and an average length of 80 km (50 mi). The lake recedes in the summer, which makes extracting encrusted salt from the

lake bed possible.⁴³ About 70–80% of Turkey’s salt is extracted from Lake Tuz.⁴⁴

Lake Beyşehir

Lake Beyşehir is also known as Kireli Gölü. It is the largest freshwater lake and reservoir in Turkey. The lake is relatively shallow, reaching depths of only 10 m (33 ft). It contains thirty-two small islands, and it is teeming with aquatic life. It is the most important water source on the Anatolian Plateau for consumption and irrigation. Heavy water usage has seriously reduced the lake’s water levels. This has led to the loss of numerous fish species (more than 90%) that once populated the lake. Some worry that continued water depletion will degrade its quality, and that water from Lake Beyşehir will no longer be suitable for drinking.^{45, 46}



Atatürk Dam on the Euphrates River
© Bora Gurel

Euphrates River (Firat Nehri)

The Euphrates River is 2,800 km (1,740 mi) in length, making it the longest river in Southwest Asia. Its headwaters flow from the confluence of the Karasu and Murat rivers, located in the Eastern Highlands.^{47, 48} The river flows south into Syria, and then into Iraq where it converges with the Tigris River, before emptying into the Persian Gulf.^{49, 50}

The water level of the Euphrates River is high in April and May, but dry from July through February (8 months). Three major dams on the river provide electric power to the nation.⁵¹

Tensions with Syria and Iraq have arisen because of the Turkish government’s plan to increase the number of dams on the Euphrates and Tigris. The government’s energy plans also include building 19 hydroelectric power plants along the rivers, which will be diverted through a tunnel to the Harran field for irrigation.⁵²

Tigris River (Dicle)

The Tigris River is 1,900 km (1,180 mi) in length, making it Asia’s second-longest river. The Tigris also begins in the Eastern Highlands of Turkey. It flows southeast, and then merges with the Euphrates River in Iraq, before emptying into the Persian Gulf.^{53, 54} Melting mountain snows provide about 52% of the river’s water. The Tigris River is the last major river system in Turkey to be developed, because of its remote path through mountainous terrain. Only the lower parts are presently used for irrigation.⁵⁵

Kızıl River (Kızıl Irmak)

The Kızıl begins on the Anatolian Plateau, and is the longest river (1,182 km, 734 mi) located wholly in Turkey.⁵⁶ This shallow red river initially flows southwest, from an elevation of 1,980 m (6,500 ft), past the towns of Zara and Sivas, before turning north between Sinop and Samsun, and then emptying into the Black Sea. The river channel swells and shrinks with the seasons, because it is fed by rainwater and melting snow, thus making it unsuitable for navigation. The Kızıl is an important source of drinking, agricultural, and industrial water in the Black Sea region.⁵⁷ Two large hydroelectric operations at Hirfanlı and Kesikkopru, along with a smaller plant at Kirikkale, provide electricity to the Black Sea, Marmara, and Aegean regions. Tobacco is grown on the Kızıl river delta, near Bafra on the Black Sea.⁵⁸

Others

The Yeşil River (Green River) is located in the northeast, while the Sakarya River is located in the northwest. Both rivers flow into the Black Sea.⁵⁹ The Yeşil river course is 418 km (260 mi), and is an important source of drinking and irrigation water in northern Turkey.^{60, 61} The Sakarya River begins southwest of Ankara on the Anatolian Plateau. It is also an important water source, although dams and other developments have reduced the river's flow.^{62, 63} Another important river is the Aras. It begins south of Erzurum in the Eastern Highlands, and flows east—marking the international boundaries between Turkey and Iran, and between Armenia and Azerbaijan—before emptying into the Caspian Sea. The Aras River is fast moving and non-navigable.⁶⁴

Major Cities

Istanbul

Istanbul is the second-largest metropolitan area in Europe. It is also the financial, cultural, and economic center of Turkey. In the past, it was the capital of the Roman Empire (330–395 C.E.), the Byzantine Empire (395–1204 and 1261–1453 C.E.), the Latin Empire (1204–1261 C.E.), and the Ottoman Empire (1453–1922 C.E.).^{65, 66} It has a population of approximately 14 million, it is the largest city in Turkey, and it is home to the country's main port.^{67, 68} Istanbul is a hub for transportation, trade, manufacturing, and tourism.⁶⁹ The city is bisected by the Bosphorus Strait, and it is the only city in the world built on two continents – Asia and Europe.⁷⁰

Migrants are drawn to Istanbul from all over Turkey. Between half and two-thirds of Istanbul's population now live in squatter settlements called, *gecekondu* (literally, “built in the night”).^{71, 72, 73} Kurds represent the largest ethnic group in Istanbul.^{74, 75}



Ankara

Ankara is Turkey's second-largest city, with approximately 4.5 million people.⁷⁶ The city is located about 200 km (124 mi) south of the Black Sea, on a strategic east-west road network and rail line cross the Anatolian Plateau. A new administrative center was built alongside the old city, after it became the capital in 1923, on a site inhabited since the Stone Age. Alexander the Great conquered the city in 334 B.C.E.⁷⁷ Today, Ankara is home to medical centers and international embassies, in addition to government ministries.⁷⁸ It is Turkey's second-most important industrial center. Here, factories produce construction materials and machinery,

Ankara
© rogiro / flickr.com

food products, and wine and beer.⁷⁹ Many suburban residents are rural people seeking the opportunity for a better life.⁸⁰

Izmir

Izmir is Turkey's third-largest city, with a population of about 3 million.⁸¹ It is located in one of the most densely populated areas of Turkey, on the west coast at the head of the Gulf of Izmir on the Aegean Sea.⁸² Modern tourist resorts and numerous ancient sites are nearby, including the presumed birthplace of the Greek poet Homer and the final resting place of the Virgin Mary. Known as Smyrna throughout much of history, Izmir is the site of one of the first Christian churches.^{83, 84}

Modern Izmir is a major port and manufacturing center, producing foods, textiles, construction materials, and petrochemicals.^{85, 86} It is the gateway to the Aegean region, and is situated on a gulf that has some of the best anchor points along the Black Sea.⁸⁷ The city was once the headquarters for NATO Command in southeastern Europe, until its deactivation in 2013.⁸⁸

Bursa

Bursa has a population of about 2.6 million.⁸⁹ The city was the first capital of the Ottoman Empire in the 11th and 12th centuries. It was here that the famed Ottoman architectural style first developed.⁹⁰ This bustling city is located south of Istanbul, on the Anatolian Plateau in northwestern Turkey, in the foothills of the Uludag Mountains.^{91, 92} Bursa was once surrounded by forests and was famous for its silk-weaving. However, the modern city is characterized by urban sprawl and the rise of the automobile industry, which has transformed it into the "Detroit of Turkey."⁹³ Most residents work in automobile factories, or in the textile industry.⁹⁴



Adana

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Adana

The ancient city of Adana has a population of about 2 million. It is located in south-central Turkey, near mountain passes that lead through the Taurus Mountains to the Syrian plains—a strategic point along the old Anatolian-Arabian trade routes.^{95, 96} Adana is also an important agriculture and manufacturing center, and is located just 10 km (6 mi) west of Incirlik Air Force Base. The United States built Incirlik at the beginning of the Cold War, and shares the base with the Turkish and British air forces. Incirlik is home to the 39th Wing of the U.S. Air Force.^{97, 98, 99}

Just south of Adana is one of Turkey's most agriculturally productive areas, and the center of its cotton industry.^{100, 101} Products manufactured in this area include textiles, cement, agricultural machinery, and vegetable oils.¹⁰² The northern part of Adana is surrounded by the Seyhan Reservoir, which generates electricity and irrigates the lower part of the Çukurova Plain.¹⁰³

Environmental Concerns

Turkey faces a number of serious environmental issues related to pollution, water availability, and biodiversity. Toxic emissions are rapidly increasing, even though air quality has improved somewhat in the major urban centers. This has led some to claim that air pollution is the most serious issue facing the nation. Seventy-nine of the nation's 81 provinces are threatened by air pollution, which is mostly caused by the emissions from home heating and cooking fuels.^{104, 105}

Water resources have also been strained by population growth, mostly relating to increased use of irrigation in agriculture. Other environmental issues concern endangered or vulnerable species, destruction of natural habitats, and soil depletion caused by overgrazing and deforestation.¹⁰⁶ Water pollution is also significant. In Istanbul, water is heavily polluted with industrial and human waste entering city water sources. In many areas of the country, water quality is decreasing.^{107, 108} Additionally, oil tanker traffic in the Bosphorus Strait has increased – it is now one of the world's busiest maritime passages – raising fears of catastrophic oil spills and their impact.^{109, 110}



Ships in the Marmara Sea
© rogiro / flickr.com

Natural Hazards

The most common natural disasters affecting the country are earthquakes and floods.¹¹¹ Nearly 92% of Turkey is subject to severe earthquakes.¹¹² This is particularly true in the northern regions, extending from the Sea of Marmara to Lake Van.^{113, 114} Two earthquakes in 1999 affected 100,000 sq km (38,610 sq mi) and 15 million people.¹¹⁵ There have been a number of major earthquakes in recent years, including a 5.7-magnitude quake in western Turkey in May 2011, a 7.2-magnitude quake in the Lake Van area in October 2011, and a 5.8-magnitude quake of the Antalya coast.^{116, 117, 118}

Floods and landslides also pose threats, which are only exacerbated by human settlement and farming practices. Floods are the second most destructive natural disaster in Turkey.¹¹⁹ In 2009, the nation experienced its worst flooding in decades. This was followed by 3-days of flooding in October 2011, devastating the Mediterranean and Aegean regions.¹²⁰ Massive floods inundated Muğla in July 2014, killing at least two people.¹²¹ Torrential rains also create a risk of landslides. Several people were killed by landslides in northern Turkey in 2010.¹²² In 2012, several communities in the region were again affected.¹²³ The province of Trabzon in the northeast near the Black Sea is especially prone to landslides.¹²⁴

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Overview: Chapter 1 Assessment

1. The Aras River marks the international boundary between Turkey and Armenia.

FALSE

The Aras River marks international boundaries between Turkey and Iran, and between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

2. Istanbul is the largest city in Turkey.

TRUE

Istanbul is Turkey's largest city, with a population of nearly 14 million. It is a hub for manufacturing, trade, transportation, and tourism.

3. Lake Van is a salt lake, from which 70–80% of the nation's salt is extracted.

FALSE

Lake Tuz is both saline and shallow. It is Turkey's second-largest lake. About 70–80% of the nation's salt is extracted from the lake, which recedes in the summer.

4. Regions across Turkey have similar climates.

FALSE

Turkey is climatically diverse, depending on region and elevation. As a general rule, weather patterns on the coasts are different from those in the interior.

5. Earthquakes are a major hazard in Turkey.

TRUE

Nearly 92% of the country is subject to severe earthquakes.



Amphitheater at Ephesus
© V / flickr.com

Chapter 2: History

Introduction

Turkey has been described as “a new country in an old land.”¹ The ancient Turks called Asia Minor by its Greek name, Anatolia, which means “sunrise.” This strategic peninsula, which today makes up most of the Republic of Turkey, has been controlled by various states and empires throughout history, including the Hittites, Greeks, and Romans.^{2, 3, 4}

The first of these civilizations, the Hittite Empire (3000–2000 B.C.E.), was based east of Ankara. It fell when the Hittites were unable to repel the mysterious “Sea People,” who were possibly Achaeans from the Aegean Sea.⁵ Alexander the Great, the warrior of Macedonia, gained control of Anatolia in the fourth century B.C.E. He was followed by the Romans, whose colonies along Turkey’s western coast endured through the Christian and Byzantine eras. The rise of the Ottoman Empire, in the 14th century C.E., introduced a force that was to shape European and Middle Eastern political geography for 600 years.^{6, 7}

Origins of the Turkish People

Before the founding of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, numerous Turkish states existed in Asia, Europe, and Africa.⁸ Chinese records from 220 B.C.E. refer to Turks as the Tagar, who as far back as the 7th century B.C.E. lived on an island at the northern foot of the Kogumen Mountains. The same records also identify the Huns, another Turkic group, as one of the nomadic tribes who established an empire from Mongolia to the Black Sea.^{9, 10}

It was not until the appearance of the Göktürk Kingdom (552–740 C.E.) that a level of administrative organization was achieved. Turkish tombstone inscriptions from this

period indicate that the Göktürks developed a written language. Their kingdom collapsed because of internal fighting and Chinese encroachment.^{11, 12, 13}

The Seljuk State

The Oghuz Turks, who had embraced Islam in the 10th century, migrated into Anatolia between 1100 and 1300. Their ranks included settlers and warrior-raiders, *gazi*, who were dedicated to expanding the reach of Islam and defending the caliphate.¹⁴ The Oghuz *gazis*, a subgroup of the Seljuks, could not be persuaded to adapt to the administrative confines of the Seljuk state, to which they were obligated to pay taxes. Instead, they sought new territory, which offered the prospect of riches, as well as the opportunity to spread Islam. The Seljuks pursued the *gazis* into Anatolia to exert authority over them. In 1071, Byzantine forces were routed, by the Seljuks near Lake Van, opening the way for Turkish control of all of Anatolia. This location enabled them to control the lucrative east-west trade on the Silk Road and to levy taxes on everything that passed through. It also meant that they faced enemies on all sides, from whom they had to protect themselves. By 1300 their authority was crumbling.^{15, 16, 17}



Architecture of the Seljuk period
© Mehmet Günce Akkoyun

The Ottoman Era

Founding of the Empire

An Oghuz Turk named Osman founded the Ottoman Empire. By 1299, he had established a small state in a remote area of western Anatolia that was engaged in continuous battle for survival with other similarly sized states. By 1400, the Ottomans had extended their influence through Anatolia and beyond, into Byzantine-controlled parts of Eastern Europe. In 1402 they moved their capital to Edirne, across the Bosphorus in Europe. Yet the Byzantine capital of Constantinople (present-day Istanbul) resisted conquest, no matter how much surrounding territory fell to the Muslims. Constantinople came to represent a prize that would put the Ottomans in control of east-west trade. In 1453 Sultan Mehmed, also known as the Conqueror, captured Constantinople and renamed it Istanbul. It became the new Ottoman capital and, under rule of the sultan, it became one of the wealthiest and most cosmopolitan cities of the early modern era.^{18, 19}

With Istanbul secure, Ottoman influence spread to distant lands. Powerful tribal chieftains were replaced by loyal servants to the empire. Religious scholars (*ulama*) were organized under a “Sheikh of Islam.” The borders were expanded significantly under Sultan Selim I (1512–1520) and then again under his son, Sultan Suleyman “The Magnificent” (1520–1566). During Suleyman’s reign, the empire achieved its greatest territorial size, stretching across Asia and Europe, as well as into North Africa.^{20, 21} At its height, the Ottoman Empire included Anatolia, the Balkan states (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, and Macedonia), Bulgaria, Greece, the Middle East, Hungary, North Africa up to the Moroccan frontier, Kurdistan and Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq), Armenia, and Azerbaijan.²²

The perception of legitimacy among Muslim subjects formed the basis for Ottoman longevity. The Ottomans created a society that included educational institutions and Islamic courts. Military force was aimed at spreading Islam, defending Islamic law, and protecting the interests of Muslims. Local leaders were often selected from prominent families. These leaders exercised virtual autonomy in the daily administration of local affairs. In return, they were expected to pay taxes, maintain order, and acknowledge the sovereignty of the Ottoman court.²³



*Janissary Drawing
Courtesy of Wikipedia*

An Empire in Decline

The Ottomans had a formidable military that included elite, foreign-born infantry troops (Janissaries).²⁴ Originally Christian converts to Islam, these troops were subjected to rigid rules including celibacy. The celibacy rule and recruitment rules were eased late in the 16th century. But the Janissaries became increasingly unreliable and began mounting numerous palace coups in the 17th and 18th centuries. One such revolt occurred in 1826, and led to their ultimate dissolution, with most being killed or exiled.²⁵ About the same time, the balance of power was shifting toward the European powers. The Europeans began carving out pieces of the Ottoman Empire for themselves, further diminishing Ottoman power and influence.²⁶

By the 19th century, the Ottomans confronted multiple threats: European designs on their territory, Christian uprisings in the Balkans,

and internal reformist demands. As the Ottomans tried to maintain their empire, they promoted the doctrine of Ottomanism—an attempt to secure the loyalty of a diverse population by inserting Islamic ideas into a Western enlightenment package. It called for loyalty, not to one's sultan or *millet* (ethno-religious community), but to an Ottoman *vatan* (homeland) that was to supersede all other forms of identification.^{27, 28}

Ultimately Ottomanism did not succeed in thwarting subgroup identity among the Balkan Christian population. But while non-Muslims chafed under Ottoman control, Arabs remained committed to maintaining the state. To them, local grievances were something to be addressed within the political order, not grounds for breaking away. For most Muslims, membership in the multiethnic Muslim order was in keeping with their sense of identity.²⁹

During the 1860s and 1870s, a group of Western-oriented Turkish intellectuals, referred to as the Young Ottomans, issued a call for reforms that would create the basis for a strong state.³⁰ This included the establishment of an elected parliament and a written constitution. When Abdul Hamid II became sultan in 1876, he implemented several key elements of the reformist program. But within a year the new constitution was suspended and the first parliament was dissolved.³¹



Memorial to the Young Turks
© Daniel C. Griliopoulos

Nationalism and World War I

On 24 July 1908, a nationalist group known as the Young Turks, consisting mostly of military officers who had infiltrated the Turkish 3rd Army, led a bloodless coup.^{32, 33} Descendants of the Young Ottomans, they were intellectuals of varying ideological outlooks who had formed the Committee of Unity and Progress (CUP). Their objective was to overthrow the absolutist rule of the Ottoman sultanate, which had grown corrupt and politically weak.^{34, 35} One of its major legacies was a rise in nationalism, although it proved short-lived, in part because of World War I.³⁶

When war broke out in Europe, Turkey signed a secret treaty of alliance with Germany. Following the defeat of the Axis, Allied troops from Britain, France, Italy, and Greece occupied Istanbul. Plans to partition Turkey among the Allied powers had been made during the war, but the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres, which outlined the partition conditions, was never enacted.^{37, 38, 39}

Mustafa Kemal, who rose to power during World War I, was a fervent nationalist since his days as a cadet in military school. He adamantly opposed

plans for the postwar partitioning of his nation. He was sent to the east to supervise Ottoman demobilization, where he rallied support for his nationalist cause and raised an army. In 1919, Kemal presided over a nationalist congress that endorsed the National Pact, which called for an independent Turkey.^{40, 41}

Negotiations between the Ottoman government and the nationalists failed, and Kemal resigned from the army. In 1920, the Ottoman parliament met again, and this time endorsed the National Pact. Alarmed by these developments, Allied occupational forces entered the capital, took over buildings, and arrested or deported several nationalist leaders. These actions so incensed the nationalists that they convened an assembly in Ankara and elected Kemal president. In 1921 nationalists declared their sovereignty.⁴²



Mustafa Kemal Atatürk
© Zeynep Kanra

The Founding of the Turkish Republic

Mustafa Kemal, called “Atatürk” (Father of the Turks), shaped modern Turkey in many ways. After a distinguished military career, he wanted to establish a secular state capable of holding its own against European nation-states.⁴³ To do this, it was necessary to disband the traditional religious elite. Accordingly, the extensive landholdings (*evkaf*) of religious scholars (*ulama*) were appropriated, which destroyed their institutional source of economic power. This enabled the state to extend control over all aspects of religious institutions and practices, as well as personnel recruitment and advancement.^{44, 45}

During his 15-year presidency, Atatürk introduced legislative reforms that adopted European legal systems and civil codes, replacing Islamic jurisprudence. Friday, the Muslim day of worship and a public holiday, was decreed a regular workday.^{46, 47} Perhaps the most significant act was the abolition of the caliphate. Although Atatürk was trying to effect change only in Turkey, this act reverberated throughout the Islamic world.⁴⁸

Atatürk is credited with creating a breach with Turkey’s Islamic past.⁴⁹ He established a nation-state that drew legitimacy solely from Turkish ethnic nationalism. In doing this, he fashioned a new national historical narrative, which suggested that Turkish history began not with the introduction of Islam, but long before. Even the language was reworked; words of Arabic or Persian origin were purged and replaced by new words that had demonstrably Turkish roots. The Arabic alphabet was replaced with Latin script. Within a generation, Turkish society was reoriented from Ottoman and Muslim traditions to Western traditions.⁵⁰



*Roosevelt, İnönü & Churchill at Cairo Conference, 1943
Courtesy of Wikipedia*

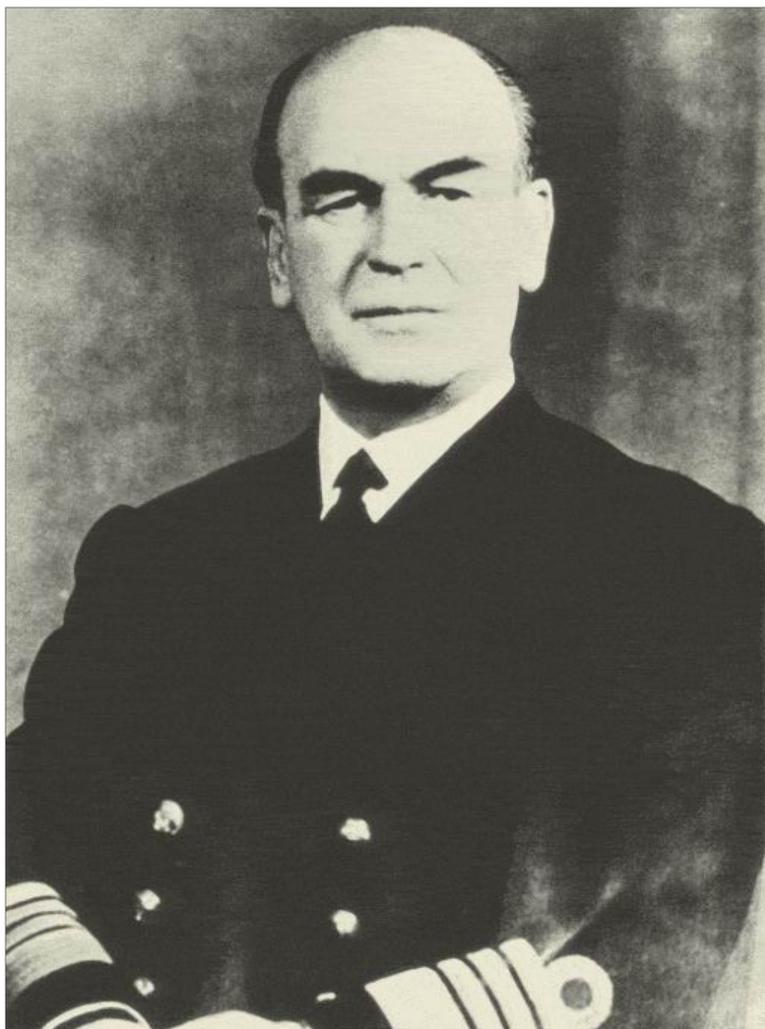
Post-Atatürk Governance

During his presidency, Atatürk governed Turkey through its sole party, the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*—CHP), which continued to dominate Turkish politics after his death in 1938.^{51, 52} Atatürk implemented sweeping changes that impacted Turkish politics, economics, and society through authoritarian rule backed by military force.^{53, 54, 55} Throughout the 20th century the Turkish military, which viewed itself as the guardian of the state's secular order, forcibly intervened in politics to protect the nation from perceived domestic

threats and subversion.^{56, 57} Although the military's influence has weakened somewhat, the army still sees itself as the guardian of Kemalism and secular politics in Turkey.^{58, 59}

At the end of World War II in 1945, Turkey became one of the 51 original members of the United Nations.⁶⁰ Disgruntled members of the CHP established the nation's first opposition party, the Democratic Party (DP), in 1946 to extend to Turkish law the rights and liberties guaranteed by the UN Charter.^{61, 62, 63, 64}

In early 1960, the DP-controlled government imposed martial law following outbreaks of violence associated with a tour of Anatolia by the CHP leader, Ismet Pasha İnönü. In April of that year, several students were killed by police while protesting government policies. Responding to these incidents, and to earlier DP reforms to the civil service and state-run enterprises, the military took control of the government via coup and arrested about 600 DP members. This arrest included Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, on charges of abrogating the constitution and instituting a dictatorship. Menderes was subsequently found guilty and hanged. Although a new constitution was drafted in 1961, establishing a bicameral parliament to further protect the secular state, the Turkish military has continued to oust elected governments perceived to challenge Kemalist values.^{65, 66, 67, 68}



President Koruturk & General Sancar
© Takabeg / Wikimedia.org

The Country in Crisis

In 1971, the military intervened again in domestic political affairs. It forced the resignation of Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel, following an escalation of political violence resulting from social and economic strife.^{69, 70} Despite the military intervention, the 1970s were a time of great instability and political upheaval, complicated by the urbanization of a largely agrarian society.^{71, 72} In addition, triple-digit inflation, industrial production operating at only partial capacity, and an inability to meet interest payments on foreign loans in the wake of the 1973 energy crisis wreaked havoc on the Turkish economy.⁷³

In September 1980, the Turkish military intervened again, via coup, and imposed martial law.⁷⁴ The final impetus was a mass rally that month organized by the Islamist National Salvation Party (NSP), in which party officials called for the reintroduction of Islamic law. Fearing civil war and reacting to a “state of anarchy”, during which acts of domestic terrorism were perpetuated by both leftist and rightist militants, the Turkish military dissolved the government and parliament.^{75, 76} Led by Kenan Evren, who was subsequently elected president, the military outlawed political parties and banned their leaders from political activity for up to 10 years. But the parties reappeared under new names. They established the practice whereby banned parties are simply reconstituted. To prevent a proliferation of parties, a new constitution in 1982 stipulated that any party receiving less than 10% of the national vote would not be represented in parliament. It also vested more power in the president at the expense of parliament.^{77, 78, 79}



*Özal & Schwab at the 1986 World Economic Forum
Courtesy of Wikipedia*

The Reemergence of Islam in Politics

The near collapse of the economy in the 1970s had forced Turkey to drop its policy of substituting industrial development for imports. It also forced the country to open its economy to the world. In this regard, the impact of Turgut Özal cannot be overstated—first as economic czar, drawing on his years at the World Bank, then as prime minister in 1983, and finally as president. Özal’s presidency lasted from 1989 until his death in 1993. Özal promoted foreign investment and trade, particularly with the wealthy Gulf States,

creating closer ties with Turkey’s Muslim neighbors. These expanded contacts led to the growth of Islamic magazines, radio, and TV programming. It also expanded translations of classic works that ushered in a reappraisal of the role of Islam in public life.⁸⁰

An Islamist political party, the Welfare Party (RP) gained a plurality of votes in national elections in 1995.⁸¹ Its popularity at the ballot box has been credited to its social welfare programs, which filled a gap in Özal’s market-oriented economic reforms.⁸² When RP leader Necmettin Erbakan emerged to head the coalition cabinet, it became clear how far the secular establishment had come in accepting Islamist participation in politics.⁸³

Erbakan was driven from power in 1997 and the RP was banned, on the grounds that the republic’s constitutionally decreed secularism had been violated.^{84, 85} After a successor party was likewise banned, the Islamist movement eventually split into two parties, the moderate Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) and the hard-line Happiness Party (*Saadet*).^{86, 87}

Recent Developments (2002-2010)

In 2002, the AKP won 35% of the vote and formed a single-party government. The secular establishment was wary of the Islamic party. Massive street demonstrations followed the 2007 nomination of Abdullah Gül to replace President Ahmet Necdet Sezer, a secularist. The opposition boycotted the first round of voting in parliament.⁸⁸

The army threatened intervention. The generals, backed by the Kemalists, insisted that a Turkish president must guard the secular order.⁸⁹ For them, Gül, an observant Muslim, lacked that qualification. Possibly to defuse the threat of a military coup, the

constitutional court cancelled the first-round vote.⁹⁰ After a 2007 victory by the AKP, Gül became president.⁹¹

Although Gül is widely regarded as an effective foreign minister, secularists view him with suspicion, because of his prominent positions in two banned Islamic parties and because his wife wears a headscarf.⁹² Turkish secularism regards religion as an obstacle to progress.⁹³ Turks now face the task of forging a redefinition of secularism that recognizes individual rights and those of believers, rather than protecting the state from being co-opted by religious interests.

The issue of personal rights was evident in 2008, when President Gül amended the constitution to lift the ban on wearing headscarves on college campuses. To appease opposition, the government decreed that only headscarves tied below the chin—a style Turks view as more traditional than Islamic—would be permissible.⁹⁴

Conflict between secularists and Islamists emerged again in 2010, when prominent members of the military were arrested for plotting a coup. Constitutional changes were made to allow parliament greater control over the judiciary and the military. Secularists claimed this was an attempt to undermine the nation's secular foundations.^{95, 96}

Turkey Since 2011

The AKP won the 2011 national elections, retaining Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as prime minister. Following mass resignations by the military elite, Gül appointed new top military leaders, marking the first time a Turkish civilian government named military commanders.⁹⁷ Since 2011, the AKP has taken a less reformist approach in its policies. The AKP has emphasized its Islamist principals while at the same time becoming increasingly authoritarian. This led to widespread protests in the summer of 2013.^{98, 99} The government responded by introducing legislation to abolish the separation between the judiciary and executive branches of government. This helped cement the divide between the nation's Islamic and secular citizens.^{100, 101}

Anti-secularism is on the rise in Turkey, but the government must still walk a careful line.¹⁰² Not only have the secularists raised concerns about recent government actions, tensions between Islamists and the government have also heightened with the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Turkey is carefully defending itself against the spread of the fundamentalist ideology of the insurgents currently fighting in Syria.¹⁰³

Whether Turkey's grand experiment of combining moderate Islam with secular democracy will succeed is uncertain. Some see a weakening of the rule of law within the nation, suggesting that Prime Minister Erdoğan seems more interested in protecting himself and his position than maintaining democratic principles.^{104, 105} Turkey may also be losing interest in joining the EU. The government's rollback of some political and

social reforms, along with Erdoğan's increasing authoritarian hand, may have weakened Turkey's bid, at least in the near term.^{106, 107} Erdoğan made history when he became the nation's first directly elected president in August 2014. He received 52% of the vote in an election marked by lighter than normal turnout.^{108, 109} How the AKP and Erdoğan will deal with the rising demands of the conservatives in Turkey, and the Kemalist influences, remains to be seen. Politics in Turkey have become more polarized since the last elections in 2011. The 2014 presidential and 2015 parliamentary elections are likely to clarify Turkey's direction and determine its future.^{110, 111, 112}

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Overview: Chapter 2 Assessment

1. The AKP is a hard-line Islamist party.

FALSE

The AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi/Justice and Development Party) is a moderate Islamist party. Hard-line Islamists established the Happiness Party (Saadet).

2. Numerous Turkish states existed in Asia, Europe, and Africa before the founding of modern Turkey in 1923.

TRUE

Chinese records from 220 B.C.E. refer to ancient Turks known as the Tagar, who lived as far back as the seventh century B.C.E. Other Turkic groups of the past include the Huns and the Göktürks.

3. An Oghuz Turk named Osman founded the Ottoman Empire.

TRUE

Osman, an Oghuz Turk, established a small state in Anatolia—the beginning of the Ottoman Empire—at the end of the 13th century.

4. The Turkish Republic was instituted as an Islamic state.

FALSE

Because Atatürk sought to establish a secular state, he confiscated landholdings of the religious elite, replaced Islamic law with a European-style legal system, and abolished the caliphate.

5. The Turkish military views itself as the protector of secularism in the Turkish state.

TRUE

Throughout the 20th century, the Turkish military viewed itself as the guardian of the state's secular order, forcibly intervening in politics to protect the nation from perceived domestic threats and subversion. Today, it still sees itself as the main guardian of Kemalism.



*Ships unloading goods at Istanbul port
© akpt / flickr.com*

Chapter 3: Economy

Introduction

Turkey's economy has generally been a huge success story. Since 2002, the Turkish economy has practically quadrupled.¹ By 2011, the Republic of Turkey had the fastest-growing economy in Europe and the second-fastest in the world.^{2, 3, 4} Along with a boom in the industrial and service sectors, economic growth in Turkey has been driven by increasing privatization and the rise of small businesses. Although the agricultural and textile/clothing sectors still employ a significant percentage of the workforce, the automotive, construction, and electronics industries are beginning to yield more export revenues.^{5, 6} By 2014, however, the economy slowed and inflation was on the rise.⁷

Turkey has expanded political and cultural engagement and free-trade agreements with its Arab, Balkan, and Russian neighbors.^{8, 9, 10, 11} In 2014, the success of their trade diversification was clearly apparent. Germany was Turkey's largest trading partner followed by Iraq. The biggest importer of Turkish goods was Russia, followed by China.¹²



Dried Fruit
© Christopher / flickr.com

Agriculture

Agriculture was once the backbone of the Turkish economy but over the years, it has been less important. Nevertheless, it still accounts for approximately 9% of national GDP (gross Domestic product) and employs about 26% of the labor force.¹³ Wages are generally, low with women making less than men. The average monthly wage for female agricultural workers is TRY 1,032 (USD 488) and for males it is TRY 1,262 (USD 597).^{14, 15}

The nation's favorable climate and geography have allowed Turkey to achieve self-sufficiency in food production, and become a major food exporter.^{16, 17} Nearly 50% of the nation's land is arable, allowing for the production of a variety of food

crops.¹⁸ Turkey is one of the largest exporters of agricultural products in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa.¹⁹ Main exports include hazelnuts, dried apricots, sultanas, and dried figs.^{20, 21} Other important crops are tobacco and cotton.^{22, 23}

Livestock is an important subsector. Sheep, goats, and cattle are all produced in significant numbers.²⁴ Since 2005, the number of livestock in the country has increased yearly, and in 2012, market value similarly increased.²⁵ Aquaculture, centered mostly in the Aegean region, is a new part of the Turkish economy. The fisheries subsector is expected to grow by 65% by 2023, and most of that will come from aquaculture. Rainbow trout, sea trout, sea bream, and carp are among the most commonly bred fish. Some seafood, particularly mussels, is also grown. Fish farms now account for about 25% of all fishery production.^{26, 27} Conventional fishing takes place mainly in the Black and Mediterranean Seas.²⁸



Turkish tobacco
© Stephen Bryde

Industry and Manufacturing

Turkey's industrial sector is becoming increasingly important to the economy, accounting for nearly 27% of GDP and employing nearly 26% of the labor force.²⁹ Overall, the industry is continuing to grow and is expected to perform well, at least in the short term.³⁰ Turkey's economic minister recently said that Turkey needs to increase its industrial production at a much faster rate, and increase its share of national GDP. The country appears to be placing a significant portion of its economic future on the success of the manufacturing sector.³¹

Turkey's textile and clothing industry represented one quarter of national exports in 2010.³² Although the textiles and clothing sector is still strong, automotive, construction, and electronics are displacing textiles as the most significant exports.³³ The nation's automotive industry is the 16th-largest manufacturer in the world.³⁴ Turkey expects automotive export values to exceed USD 40 billion by 2015, although there are some signs of a slowdown due to decreased domestic demand.^{35, 36} Many industry experts remain optimistic and believe that the industry will continue to grow in the short term, especially since Turkey and China have agreed to collaborate.^{37, 38}

Turkey is one of the leading manufacturers of home appliances in Europe, and fifth in the export of household products to the world.³⁹ Although smaller than the textile or automotive sectors, electronics generated about USD 5 billion in 2009. The industry is expected to experience greater growth, particularly in Europe.⁴⁰ Turkey also is an important manufacturer of chemical products. In 2013, nearly 13% of all Turkish exports derived from the chemical industry. Products include fertilizers, pharmaceuticals and soaps, soda, chromium and boron chemicals, and paints.⁴¹



Power lines near the Bosphorus
© Dimitris Kilimis

Energy

Most of Turkey's electrical power is generated by natural gas and coal, while hydropower and oil generate smaller amounts.⁴² Nearly one-fifth of imports are energy related, with Russia being the main supplier.⁴³ Turkey is dependent on fossil fuels, but only coal is widely available in the country.⁴⁴ Only 30% of the nation's needs are met with domestic products.⁴⁵ There is some oil and gas production in the southeastern section of the country, and several oil-exploration projects are underway in the Black Sea region.⁴⁶ Proven oil reserves were estimated at 270.4 million barrels as of 1 January 2013. Estimates for natural gas, issued at the same time, reported reserves of 6.173 billion cubic m (218 billion cubic ft).⁴⁷

Because of its strategic location, Turkey is an important transit point for energy from Central Asia and the Middle East to the West.^{48, 49, 50} Each year thousands of tankers carry millions of barrels through the Turkish Straits.^{51, 52, 53} To help ease the pressure on this chokepoint, numerous oil and gas pipelines have been built, or are in the works.^{54, 55, 56}

The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) Pipeline bypasses Russia, and runs from Azerbaijan and Georgia to Ceyhan on Turkey's Mediterranean coast.^{57, 58} The BTC Pipeline became operational in May 2006. It brings about 1 million barrels a day from the Caspian, primarily to Europe.^{59, 60} The Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) Pipeline transports natural gas. The Trans-Caspian Pipeline also transports natural gas, and links the world's fourth-largest reserves in Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan to Europe via Turkey.⁶¹ The strategic Arab Gas Pipeline pumps Egyptian gas through Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria into Turkey, carrying it on to Europe.⁶² Turkey recently signed agreements with several European nations to cooperate in the construction of the Nabucco Pipeline, designed to carry natural gas along a 3,219 km (2,000 mi) route from Erzurum in Turkey to Austria.⁶³ In 2014, the Kurds in Iraq's autonomous region built an oil pipeline to Turkey, in defiance of the Baghdad government.⁶⁴

Proposed projects include building a pipeline beneath the Caspian Sea, from Turkmenistan to Turkey, a pipeline from the Caspian to Turkey via Iran, and the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline.^{65, 66}



Oil Pumping Station
© Robert Thomson

Natural Resources

In addition to an abundance of arable land, Turkey's natural resources include coal, iron ore, copper, chromium, antimony, mercury, gold, barite, borate, celestite (strontium), emery, feldspar, limestone, magnesite, marble, perlite, pumice, pyrites (sulfur), clay, and hydropower.⁶⁷ The nation also has significant mineral deposits of chromite, manganese, zinc, lead, and bauxite.⁶⁸

Turkey has control over much of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which begin in the mountains of Turkey and flow through Syria and Iraq, before emptying into the Persian Gulf.^{69, 70} Disputes over water rights have been ongoing since the 1960s,

when the three countries began ambitious projects to develop dams on the rivers for irrigation and hydropower.^{71, 72, 73, 74}



Cargo Ship
© rp72 / flickr.com

Trade

Turkey has signed free-trade agreements with Serbia, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, European Free Trade Association (EFTA) states, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Macedonia, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, and Tunisia.⁷⁵ During the late 1990s and early 2000s, agreements between Turkey and the Euro-Mediterranean Association promoted economic integration and strengthened free trade between Turkey, its Mediterranean neighbors, and Europe.⁷⁶ Turkey's participation in the Euro-Mediterranean Association has led to the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean Bank to promote direct foreign investment in the region.⁷⁷

The primary military importance of these free-trade agreements is to provide “permanent security and stability in the region.”⁷⁸ The integration of the Middle East, Central Asia, and North Africa into the Western economic system is also of particular interest to the EU and the United States.⁷⁹ From the perspective of Turkish business interests, the expansion of Turkish exports underlies free-trade agreements, and the

development of transportation links throughout the Middle East, Central Asia, and North Africa.⁸⁰

In 2013, Turkish exports totaled about USD 13.121 billion, only a slight increase over 2012. Imports equaled USD 20.623 billion.⁸¹ Germany (10.1%) is the biggest importer of Turkish goods, followed by Iraq, the United Kingdom, and Russia. Vehicles, machinery and appliances, electrical machines and equipment, and clothing and textiles comprised the largest exports.⁸² The main import partners were China, Russia, Germany, and Italy.⁸³ Top imports included mineral fuels and oils, machinery and mechanical appliances, iron and steel, electrical machines and equipment, and vehicles.⁸⁴

Turkey has carried a trade deficit every year since 2009. In May 2014, the deficit was only slightly smaller than in 2013.⁸⁵ For the last several years, Turkey has been amassing large amounts of foreign debt. Its debt grows every year and, in 2013, Turkey had a massive foreign debt load of more than USD 388 billion. That amount is more than 47% of national income.^{86, 87}



Tourists in Istanbul
© Mike Atherton

Tourism

Tourism and travel is growing faster than even the automotive industry, mining, and chemicals. Tourism is Turkey's second largest employer, lagging only behind the public sector, and accounts for 9% of all employment in the nation.^{88, 89} International travel to Turkey is on the rise, and the country is now the sixth most popular destination in the world.⁹⁰ Revenues from inbound tourists made up 3.6% of national GDP in 2011.⁹¹ Two important subsectors include Halal tourism and medical tourism.⁹² But the fear of terrorism threats and the ongoing violence in Syria have led to volatility in the industry. Major draws for tourists are Turkey's vast historical sites and coastal beaches.^{93, 94}

Most international travelers come from Germany, Russia, and the United Kingdom.⁹⁵ The most popular cities are Antalya and Istanbul, annually receiving about 60% of all tourists. Other major tourist destinations included Muğla, Izmir, and

Aydin. The government is actively seeking to increase the number of international visitors, by providing incentives to the industry.^{96, 97}



Koc Bank Headquarters
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Banking and Finance

Banking

The Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey, which enjoys complete autonomy, is charged with achieving and maintaining price stability and determining the nation's monetary policy. New regulations prohibit the Central Bank from financing the treasury and granting loans to the treasury, or public institutions. Members of the governing board are appointed for terms of 3–5 years.⁹⁸

Turkey has two broad categories of banks: commercial banks and investment/development banks. The four largest banks control over half of all banking sector assets. Three of those banks are state owned and control about 29% of all assets.⁹⁹ Commercial banks issue loans and provide a number of financial services, such as checking and savings accounts. Many privately owned commercial banks are located in major cities, and are owned by wealthy families or industrial entities.^{100, 101} State-owned commercial banks also subsidize specific economic sectors, such as agriculture and construction.¹⁰² There are numerous foreign banks, but they control only

about 13% of market assets.¹⁰³

A major restructuring in 2001 attempted to strengthen the banking system. The main changes included the establishment of a new autonomous banking agency (BRSA) with more authority. Other measures addressed exposure to foreign currency and risk, improved auditing and accounting practices, and revised rules for lending. These had the immediate effect of reducing the number of private banks.¹⁰⁴

Turkey has four Islamic banks, also known as participation banks.¹⁰⁵ In the last ten years, they have become increasingly popular and their assets have grown six-fold. They control only about 5% of the banking sector and are prohibited from charging interest, in accordance with Islamic law. As a result, making loans and providing dividends involves alternative forms of risk- and profit-sharing. Most activity in such banks is related to the real estate sector, although Islamic banks also fund construction, trade, and industry.^{106, 107}

The Turkish lira (TRY) is the official currency of the nation. From November 2010–November 2011, the value of the TRY depreciated by 25.44% against the USD, and in June 2014, the lira hit an all-time low.¹⁰⁸ By late July, however, the lira began to regain strength against the dollar.¹⁰⁹

Foreign Investment

The Turkish government officially promotes foreign investment, and, since 2012, foreign entities enjoy the same legal status as Turkish companies. Most sectors of the economy are open, and receive tax incentives to promote investment.¹¹⁰ Historical barriers to investment include red tape, but recent reforms have significantly reduced the problem. The government enacted a series of new incentives designed to attract more investment dollars, particularly into the more underserved regions of the nation.¹¹¹ Because of inconsistent legal enforcement, some concerns about corruption exist.¹¹²

Turkey's efforts to attract foreign dollars have been successful, and the nation has received significant foreign direct investment (FDI) funds. In 2013, for example, nearly 7% of all FDI money destined for Europe ended up in Turkey. That translated to over USD 9 billion.¹¹³ The services sector received the most FDI money in 2013. Within that sector, financial services took the lion's share. The industrial sector was also popular among investors, particularly manufacturing and electricity.¹¹⁴ In the first six months of 2014, the industrial sector was the most popular investment choice for foreign entities, especially the refined petroleum subsector. The services sector was the next most popular investment choice, but little FDI found its way to agriculture.¹¹⁵ The Netherlands was by far the greatest foreigner investor, followed by Russia, Italy, the UK and Germany.¹¹⁶

To promote business, the Turkish government has established three types of special investment zones: technoparks (TDZs), organized industrial zones, and free zones. There are 50 TDZs, only 34 of which are operational. These technoparks support research and development activities. Most are located in Ankara, Istanbul, and Kocaeli. The organized industrial zones (OIZs) provide an existing infrastructure, making it relatively easy for businesses to operate. There are 276 such zones throughout the country, but only 181 are fully functional. Free zones are designed to increase export businesses; 20 such zones (19 are currently operational) exist primarily in the major port cities on the Mediterranean, Black, and Aegean seas.¹¹⁷

Standard of Living

Since 1980, the standard of living in the country has improved dramatically. According to the Human Development Index (HDI), Turkey's HDI rating improved 52% placing Turkey in the high human development category. In 2012, the nation ranked 90 out of 186 countries included for assessment in 2012.¹¹⁸
¹¹⁹ Life expectancy (74 years) and per capita income (USD 15,300) have increased

steadily.^{120, 121, 122} The average household income is about USD 24,000 annually, lower than in other OECD nations.¹²³ Turkey has worked hard to reduce poverty, and has been able to share the benefits of its economic growth across the entire population. Approximately 22% of the population lives below the poverty line, and about 5% live in extreme poverty.¹²⁴ Long-term poverty is on the rise and traditional institutions, such as family, are no longer sufficient to remedy the situation, giving rise to increased demand for social services.^{125, 126} Approximately two out of every three children in Turkey live in extreme poverty. This figure is far below the OECD average, including Romania (36%) and Hungary (30%).¹²⁷

Poverty is unevenly distributed, with the highest levels occurring in the eastern and southeastern regions, the lowest rates in the west. People living in rural settings are much more likely to be poor (40% vs. 18%).^{128, 129, 130} Except for life expectancy, women in all parts of the country tend to experience more negative impacts of poverty than men. The problem of female poverty is especially acute in rural areas.¹³¹



Unemployment Protest
© Orçun Can Yücel

Employment Trends

Approximately 49% of people between the ages of 15 and 64 work in a paid job. Men have a much higher employment rate than women (69% vs. 29%).¹³² Among the registered workforce about half work for the minimum wage of TRY 900 (approximately USD 420) per month.¹³³ In April 2014, approximately 21% of the labor force worked in agriculture, 21% in industry, 7% in construction, and 51% in the services sector. Unemployment in April 2014 stood at approximately 9%.¹³⁴

The Turkish government has worked hard to create new and better jobs for its workers.¹³⁵

Most of the jobs created were in the formal sector (87%). About 40% of the new jobs created

between 2005 and 2011 were filled by university graduates. About one in five of the jobs that were created and filled by women were in the services sector.¹³⁶ Several trends are likely to play out in the near term. First, more women are likely to enter the labor force, especially as efforts improve to reduce barriers to work. Second, jobs are likely to require higher levels of skills. Third, jobs in agriculture are likely to decline even further, as employment opportunities grow across other sectors.¹³⁷ More jobs are expected to be created in the retail, banking, construction, health, and telecommunications sectors.¹³⁸



Workers in a textile factory
© Travel Aficionado / flickr.com

Outlook

Turkey's GDP is expected to grow between 2% and 4% in 2014 and 2015.^{139,}
¹⁴⁰ Consumer spending now accounts for 70% of Turkey's GDP, and is now the main engine of economic growth. However, most of that spending has been financed by easily attained credit or loans. The personal savings rate is about 12.6%, far below what is average for countries in a similar state of development.¹⁴¹ Rising interest rates are likely to stall the economy. Much of Turkey's international debt comes due in 2015, and repayment could also hinder further growth.^{142, 143} Other factors

which could stall sustained economic recovery and growth include rising levels of inflation, continued high unemployment, and local political tensions.^{144, 145} Yet, in spite of these risks, the OECD expects the Turkish economy to average an annual growth rate of 5.2% between 2012 and 2017, making it one of the fastest growing economies among the OECD member nations.¹⁴⁶

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Overview: Chapter 3 Assessment

1. Turkey's economy has generally been successful.

TRUE

Turkey's economy has generally been a huge success story. Since 2002, the Turkish economy has virtually quadrupled. By 2011, the Republic of Turkey had the fastest-growing economy in Europe, and the second-fastest in the world.

2. Agriculture employs most of the labor force in Turkey.

FALSE

The agricultural sector accounts for approximately 9% of national GDP (gross Domestic product), and employs about 26% of the labor force.

3. Turkey remains largely closed to foreign investment.

FALSE

The Turkish government officially promotes foreign investment. Beginning in 2012, foreign entities enjoyed the same legal status as Turkish companies. Most sectors of the economy are open and receive tax incentives to promote investment.

4. Turkey's automotive industry is one of the strongest manufacturing subsectors.

TRUE

Automotive, construction, and electronics are displacing textiles as the most significant exports. The nation's automotive industry is the 16th-largest manufacturer in the world. Turkey expects automotive export values to exceed USD 40 billion by 2015.

5. Turkey's largest foreign investor is Russia.

FALSE

The Netherlands was by far the greatest foreigner investor, followed by Russia, Italy, the UK and Germany.



Turkish Welcome
© Charles Roffey

Chapter 4: Society

Introduction

Turkey's 81.2 million inhabitants are a mix of many ethnic groups. The Turks have been influenced by the myriad empires and invaders that have left their mark on the region.^{1,2} Turkey spans two continents and the Turkish people seem to embrace the duality of their European and Asian identities.³ Although an overwhelmingly Muslim country, the modern republic was founded on principles of secularism. Religion is less of an issue in Turkey than in many other countries and its influence less immediately apparent.^{4,5} Nevertheless, the country and the people

struggle with balancing the requirements of secularism and religion.^{6, 7, 8}

Turks are duly proud of their long and storied history and their rich culture. They have an undeniable gusto for life and a willingness to experience new things. Turks are inquisitive and humble. They often have a smile on their face and are very sociable. Hospitality is a key component of daily life. Outgoing and friendly, Turks welcome visitors and enjoy turning almost any event into a celebration.^{9, 10, 11}

Ethnic Groups

Subgroup identity has historically been a threat to the Turkish state, which was founded in 1923 after World War I and the collapse of the multiethnic Ottoman Empire. Nationalism is a basis for the modern republic's legitimacy.^{12, 13} The constitution provides a single-nationality designation for all Turkish citizens. Yet, demonstrated cultural autonomy for ethnic minorities is a requirement for membership in the European Union (EU). This stipulation has forced the Turkish government to confront the issue to come into compliance.¹⁴

About 75% of the people in the country are Turks, 18% are Kurds, and 7–12% are identified as other minorities.¹⁵ Ethnic minorities include the Laz, Hemsin, Armenians, Greeks, Circassians, Assyrians, Tatars, Yoruk, Arabs, Roma, and Jews.¹⁶



Kurdish men

© *Andrea Giudiceandrea*

Kurds

The Kurds make up the primary minority group in Turkey. Kurds number about 25–30 million people worldwide, with half that number residing in Turkey.^{17, 18} The majority of Turkish Kurds are Sunni Muslims but there is a significant Alevi population. Their historic homeland, Kurdistan, mostly spans territory of the former Ottoman Empire in what is today Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Armenia, and Syria. Formerly nomadic herders of sheep and goats, the Kurdish people were prohibited from roaming the Mesopotamian Plains and highlands of Turkey after World War I, when the region was divided into new nation-states.^{19, 20}

Relations with the Turkish government are strained.²¹ Kurdish resistance to “Turkification” is strong. This is evident on two levels: the peaceful effort to gain official recognition of Turkish Kurds’ basic civil rights, and an armed insurgency aimed at creating a separate Kurdish state, which has been active for 25 years and has claimed the lives of tens of thousands of combatants.^{22, 23, 24} After

the outbreak of armed hostilities with the government, over a million Kurds were forcibly evicted from their homes in eastern and southeastern Turkey. Most resettled in the major urban centers such as Istanbul.²⁵ Kurds were forbidden to speak Kurdish in schools and other government buildings until the prohibition was rescinded in 1991.²⁶



Couple in Istanbul
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Laz

The Laz are a Caucasian people who are divided into two main groups within Turkey.²⁷ The first group lives in the provinces of Rize and Artvin in the Black Sea region. The other group is composed of descendants of immigrants who fled to Turkey to escape the war between the Ottomans and Russians in the late 1800s. This group settled primarily in the western and eastern parts of the Black Sea and Marmara Sea regions.²⁸ Originally Christians, the Laz have converted to Sunni Islam.³⁰ The women are identifiable by their colorful red-and-maroon shawls. As with the Kurdish language, public usage of the Lazuri language was banned by the Turkish government

until 1991. Lazuri was committed to a written form only recently.³¹ The group is quickly rediscovering its ethnic roots. Although only about one-third of the Laz speak their native language (Lazuri), interest in learning the language is growing. In 2013, the first Laz newspaper in Turkey launched in an attempt to keep the language alive.³²

Armenians

About 70,000 Armenians live in Turkey, primarily residing in Istanbul and near Lake Van and the city of Antakya. They count themselves among the ancient people of Anatolia. Unlike most Turks, the Armenians are mostly Eastern Orthodox Christians. Relations between the Armenians and the Turkish government have been strained since World War I, when atrocities are alleged to have been committed, including mass killings of Armenians in 1915. Because of this controversial past, relations between Turkey and Armenia, which borders Turkey in the northeast, were not normalized until 2009.^{33, 34, 35}

Religion

Although 99.8% of the people in Turkey are Muslim, the government (since the establishment of the modern state in 1923) has outlawed religious practices and enforced secular values—often by fatal military force.^{36, 37} Most Turks (85-90%) are Sunni Muslims, although some Shi'a live in the vicinity of

Kars and Iğdir.^{38, 39} About one-third of the Kurdish population is Shi'a and belongs to the Alevi group. The Alevis live mostly in the east and southeastern parts of the country.⁴⁰ Most of Turkey's faithful pray in mosques when possible. Women are not obligated to pray in public, but they can attend worship services at mosques if they wish. Sunni mosques have separate sections for men and women.⁴¹

Islam

All Muslims, regardless of sect, are obliged to follow the Five Pillars of Islam which capture the essential beliefs and rites of the Muslim religion. These include the declaration of faith (*shahada/ sahadet*), "There is no god but God and Muhammad is the messenger of God;" ritual prayer (*salat/namaz*); fasting during the holy month of Ramadan (*sawm/oru*); making a pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*); and the giving of alms (*zakat/zekat*).^{42, 43} Islam is a monotheistic religion whose followers believe in a single deity. The Muslim community, or *umma*, calls this deity Allah (God). The Arabic term *islam* means "submission" or "surrender." Therefore, a Muslim is one who submits to the will of Allah.⁴⁴ Muslims believe that Allah revealed his message to the Prophet Muhammad, a merchant who lived in Arabia from 570 to 632 C.E. They consider Muhammad as the last in a long line of prophets including Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. Allah's message, as relayed by Muhammad, is delivered in the Quran, the sacred text of Islam. Additional doctrinal guides include the *Hadith*, a collection of the words, sayings, and deeds of Muhammad; and the *Sunna*, which describes the practices of Islam by way of Muhammad's example.⁴⁵

Sufism

Part of the development of Islam in Turkey involved the mystical branch of Islam known as Sufism. Most Sufis are organized into orders or brotherhoods (*tarikatlari*) and follow a particular Sufi master. Two of the largest Sufi orders in Turkey are the Naksibend and Kadiri groups, which originated in the 14th century. Folk Islam, which derived many of its practices from Sufism, is practiced in many parts of the nation. This brand of Islam allows for the veneration of saints, a common practice throughout Turkey. Although the practice has been widely discouraged by the government, it remains an important tradition in the lives of many Turks.⁴⁶



Waiting for Alevi Singer
© Veyis Polat / flickr.com

The Alevi

Nearly 20% of the nation is Shi'ite.⁴⁷ Many Shi'ites, including a third of the Kurdish population, belong to the Alevi group, which accounts for 70% of all Shi'ites in Turkey.^{48, 49,}⁵⁰ Significant differences exist between the Alevi and their Sunni counterparts. The Alevi have a more liberal view of women and allow men and women to worship together.⁵¹ The Alevi do not pray five times a day nor do they face Mecca when they pray. They rarely observe the Ramadan fast and they do not honor prohibitions against alcohol.⁵² Instead of worshipping in a mosque, the Alevi worship in a *cemevi*.⁵³ Following the sermon, men and women engage in a whirling ritual dance known as a *sema*, often associated with the whirling dervishes of Turkey.^{54, 55}

For many years the Alevi have been viewed as heretics and have consequently been persecuted. There are several instances in the history of modern Turkey in which Alevi have been killed in uprisings.^{56, 57, 58} Debate still focuses on the sect and how it fits into contemporary Turkish society. Tensions between the majority Sunni and the Alevi is growing.^{59, 60, 61, 62}

Cuisine

Food in Turkey is local, seasonal, and fresh.^{63, 64} Like the nation, Turkish cuisine has been influenced by many cultures including Greek, Iranian, Arabic, and Central Asian.⁶⁵ The main components of the Turkish diet are bread, vegetables, meat, rice, yogurt, and pastries. In the Black Sea coast region, fish plays a significant role.^{66, 67} Pork is generally not eaten, in compliance with Islamic law. Sauces are not common in Turkish cooking; key spices are used to enhance the flavor of ingredients.⁶⁸

Bread is ever present on the Turkish table: the average family consumes 2–3 loaves a day.⁶⁹ Simple white bread (*ekmek*) and pita (*pide*) are freshly baked twice daily in Turkish bakeries. A flatbread called *lavaş* is baked in a clay-lined pit similar to the *tandoor* ovens in India.⁷⁰ *Yufka* is very thin bread often seen in villages. Other common types of bread include an unleavened dough-filled bread cooked on a griddle (*g zleme*) and its counterpart (*ebeleme*), a leavened bread cooked on a griddle.⁷¹

Common Turkish dishes include kebabs grilled over an open fire, often containing chunks of lamb or other meat; grape leaves or other vegetables stuffed with meat



Turkish coffee
© sadece oguz

and rice or vegetables (*dolmas*); and meatballs called *kofta*.^{72, 73} Soups or stews (*orbas*), stuffed dumplings (*manti*), and a filled pastry called *b rek* are also popular.^{74, 75, 76} Common desserts include baklava, a phyllo dough layered with honey and pistachios or other nuts.⁷⁷

Although devout Muslims abstain from alcohol, it is served throughout Turkey. The national drink, *raki*, is an alcoholic liqueur made from anise seed.^{78, 79} Banned during the Ottoman Empire, coffee has become a staple in social relations among adults. When meeting with others, whether for business or pleasure, the host always offers guests a cup of coffee. No serious conversation transpires until coffee has been served.^{80, 81}

Traditional Dress

Turks primarily wear Western-style clothing. Fashion from Europe is particularly popular among the young. Although Muslim women may wear a headscarf, religious clothing cannot be worn in state-run institutions, government buildings, or public schools.^{82, 83, 84}

Outside the main cities, people are more conservative. Visitors to these regions should dress modestly. Women should cover their arms and legs and wear relatively loose-fitting clothes. Shorts are not acceptable for either gender in these areas, where it is still common to see men and women in traditional baggy pants.^{85, 86} Women in rural areas commonly wear skirts, aprons, and headscarves. Rural people often wear traditional costumes on special occasions.^{87, 88}



Rural Women
© Ian Scott

Gender Issues

Changes to the Turkish Civil Code since 2001 have granted new rights to women in the areas of gender equality and marriage.⁸⁹ In January 2002, changes to the law declared that men are no longer the legal head of all Turkish households.^{90, 91} In spite of these changes, however, tension between traditional and modern values underlies most interactions.^{92, 93, 94} Women continue to face discrimination in employment and education. The rates of female participation in the labor force, schooling, and politics are subpar.^{95, 96}

Although there have been gains for women, a 2010 report asserted that progress had been slow and uneven.⁹⁷ Issues of continued concern include the continuation of honor killings and high rates of domestic violence and child marriages.^{98, 99, 100, 101}

Despite the increased focus on the problem, one in three women is a victim of violence, most commonly perpetrated by the husband.^{102, 103} Recent data suggest that female deaths from domestic violence have risen sharply in recent years.¹⁰⁴ Honor killings, which increased 14-fold between 2002 and 2009, constitute one form of violence against women. Almost 1,000 honor killings are known to have occurred between January and July 2009.¹⁰⁵ Although Turkey's new Penal Code mandates more severe sentences for perpetrators of honor killings, including life in prison, an unintended effect of the stricter laws has been family insistence that female transgressors of family codes commit suicide.^{106, 107} Most honor killings occur in conservative families and in the rural southeastern part of the country, or among rural migrants who have moved to the cities.¹⁰⁸

In 2013, nearly 3% of legal marriages involved underage girls. In the Mediterranean, Northeast Anatolia and Central east Anatolia regions, this number increased to 20%.¹⁰⁹ Other data, however, show that the rate of child marriages is much higher. In 2006, nearly 32% of women were married before reaching the legal age.¹¹⁰ A study in 2013 showed that nearly 40% of all marriages involved under-aged girls. Only 18% of these girls were literate.¹¹¹



Young adults in Istanbul
© Charles Roffey

Music

Music is popular among Turks, and many varieties are heard throughout the country. Classical music (*sanat*) is a vibrant part of the Turkish music tradition. Folk music is performed in villages and at celebrations such as weddings and traditional festivals. *Ozan* is the music of folk poets who travel from village to village. Popular songs are played on a *saz*, or three-stringed lute. Unique-sounding Kurdish music is played on wind instruments. *Ozgun* is a type of protest music often heard in cities. Folk music based on Turkish themes and blended with pop music is

very popular.¹¹²

Literature

The Ottomans had a long tradition of literature in a variety of forms. Poetry with themes of love and religion was particularly popular. Folk literature evolved and included epics, legends, and riddles. Many of these tales are retold in villages with shadow puppets.¹¹³ European literary forms—such as the novel, short story, and play—developed in the 19th century. Many writers of the time emphasized Turkish nationalism and unity. During the time of independence in the early 20th century, writers frequently focused on the political and social issues of the day. In the 1950s, a new form of Turkish literature emerged. The village novel focused on the hardships of daily life in rural Anatolia and spoke of love, oppression, and freedom. Turkish authors—such as Bilge Karasu, Sevgi Soysal, and Leyla Erbil—have achieved international fame for various novels.¹¹⁴ Orhan Pamuk, whose works have been widely translated, was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2006. His writings, including the well-known *My Name Is Red* and *Snow*, depict the cause-and-effect relationship between the Ottoman past and Turkish present, East versus West, and the role of Islam in a secular political order.^{115, 116}



Whirling Dervishes
© Vladimer Shioshvili

Dance

Whirling Dervishes

Commemorating the life of 13th-century poet and Sufi mystic Rumi, the Whirling Dervishes perform in white robes and wear cone-shaped hats. The *sema* ceremony, or spiritual rebirth, consists of seven parts. Each represents a person's journey through the spiritual stages of human development, culminating in a union with the divine.¹¹⁷ Accompanied by drums, the entranced dancers chant and spin in graceful fashion, their arms held high. The Mevlevi Order, which was founded in Konya in 1274 after Rumi's death

and over time spread to other parts of the Ottoman Empire, institutionalized the dance.¹¹⁸

The order, along with its whirling dance, was outlawed after the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923.¹¹⁹ In the 1950s, the Turkish government legalized the Mevlevi as an association instead of allowing it to operate as a religious group. The Whirling Dervishes are permitted to perform annually in Konya on 17 December, the anniversary of founder Rumi's death. This occasion attracts many pilgrims as well as tourists. Since legalization, the Whirling Dervishes have become a popular cultural export.¹²⁰

Oriental Dance

The sinuous body movements Westerners call belly dancing (but known as Oriental dance in Turkey) emerged from dance traditions of the Ottoman Empire.¹²¹ Formerly performed only by foreigners (Roma, Albanians, Greeks, and Jews), the dance combines erotic and symbolic elements, with the dancer demonstrating sophisticated pelvic movements while her feet remain on the ground.^{122, 123} Props include snakes, swords, veils, and candles. These items were traditionally accorded supernatural as well as protective functions.

The traditional Turkish belly dance is distinct from belly dancing as it is popularly understood in the West. In the Turkish dance, one performer is dressed as a male and the other a female, although both are male.¹²⁴ The faces of the characters portrayed in the dance are painted on the performers' abdomens. Two other features of the dance distinguish the Turkish form: the backbend and the drop.¹²⁵

Sports

Article 59 of the Turkish Constitution requires the state to protect successful athletes and to encourage the physical health of all citizens by promoting sports. Officially supported by the state, sports clubs are flourishing in Turkey.¹²⁶ Football (soccer) is the most popular sport in the nation.^{127, 128} Turks also enjoy basketball, volleyball, handball, track and field, and boxing. In recent international competitions, Turkish athletes have achieved much success.¹²⁹ In addition to contemporary sports, some uniquely Turkish sports remain popular.

Cirit

Cirit (javelin game) is part of the nomadic cavalry tradition designed to prepare men and horses for battle. It became a sport in the 16th century under the Ottomans. The present-day game is played between 2 teams of 7–10 men on horseback. Each man carries a wooden javelin, usually made of poplar wood to avoid serious injury.¹³⁰ The opposing teams line up facing each other across a distance of about 128 m (139 yd). The mock combat begins when one rider gallops to the other side and throws his javelin down in front of one of the players. He flees back to his own side with the rider he challenged in pursuit. The rider must strike the challenger with his javelin before he crosses the safety line.¹³¹

In quick succession, each team member executes similar movements. A hit counts for 6 points, while forcing an opponent's horse to deviate from the shortest retreat route is worth 3 points. Falling garners a 3-point penalty, while striking an opponent's horse instead of the rider results in disqualification from the game. Experienced players avoid being hit by bending low, hanging off one side of the horse, or utilizing maneuvers similar to Cossack vaulting. Bonus points are awarded to players who catch the javelin instead of being struck.¹³² The game is refereed by retired players.



Oil wrestlers
Courtesy of Wikipedia

Oil Wrestling

Oil wrestling (*yaglı gures*) is a popular sport. Contestants are clad in tight trousers that weigh 13 kg (28 lb) and are made of animal skin.¹³³ In preparation for a 30-minute match, wrestlers slather their bodies with olive oil. Unlike other forms of wrestling, a match can be won by one wrestler securing hold of his opponent's trousers.¹³⁴

Although oil wrestling is a national sport, the most famous tournament takes place annually in Edirne. It is said to be the oldest competition in the world, after the Olympics. The winner takes home a cash prize as well as lucrative product-endorsement opportunities. To explain the roots

of Turkish exuberance for oil wrestling, some point to the legendary wrestler Rostam, who repeatedly vanquished evil forces in 1065 B.C.E. Others credit Ottoman warriors who began wrestling to break the monotony of the long trek while en route to the conquest of the Dardanelles.¹³⁵

Camel Wrestling

Camel wrestling, which probably began during nomadic times, is popular in Aydin, some parts of the Aegean, Marmara, and the Mediterranean regions of the country. Rules vary from region to region, but only male camels born to mothers with a single hump can compete. Often, camels are bred expressly for wrestling. Most contests take place between December and March. Camels are dressed in traditional garb and paraded through the streets. A carnival atmosphere engulfs the town where matches take place. After two camels enter the ring, a match lasts no longer than 10–15 minutes. Victory is achieved by making the camel retreat, making the camel scream, or making the camel fall. Winners receive a rug.¹³⁶

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Overview: Chapter 4 Assessment

1. The Kurds are the largest ethnic minority in Turkey.

TRUE

Kurds represent 18% of the total population, while all other ethnic groups combined account for 7–12% of the population. Half of the 25–30 million Kurds around the world live in Turkey.

2. Because of the secular nature of the modern Turkish state, less than half the population is Muslim.

FALSE

Although the Republic of Turkey has been a secular society since its inception in 1923, 99.8% of the nation is Muslim. Most Turks are Sunni Muslims; about 20% of the population is Shi'a.

3. The Alevi are a Sunni sect.

FALSE

Many Shi'ites, including a third of the Kurdish population, belong to the Alevi group, which accounts for 70% of all Shi'ites in Turkey.

4. Alcohol is rarely served in Turkey.

FALSE

Although devout Muslims abstain from alcohol, it is served throughout Turkey. The national drink, rakı, is an alcoholic liqueur made from anise seed.

5. Visitors to rural areas of Turkey should dress modestly and avoid wearing shorts.

TRUE

People are more conservative in rural areas. Visitors to these regions should dress modestly. Women should cover their arms and legs and wear loose-fitting clothes. Shorts are not acceptable for either gender.



Turkish NATO Soldier
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Chapter 5 Security

Introduction

Straddling the continents of Europe and Asia, Turkey serves as the literal and figurative bridge between the regions. Turkey has long been a U.S. ally, and is a member of NATO. It applied to join the European Union, but concerns about its human rights record have stalled its accession. As Europe delays allowing Turkey to join, the nation has turned its eyes eastward and formed a stronger alliance with its Muslim neighbors.^{1,2} The ruling Islamist-leaning Justice and Development Party (AKP) has shifted its foreign policy to strengthen Middle Eastern ties. Turkey is mindful of Russian influence in the Caucasus and Turkic-speaking states throughout Central Asia. Turkey has carefully sought to create stronger economic ties in that region while avoiding more sensitive political involvement.^{3,4,5} Turkey appears to want to continue positive relations with the West, but those relationships require nurturing to maintain the alliance.^{6,7}

Since 2002, the nation has increased its focus on democracy as a cornerstone of its foreign policy, and has provided significant financial aid to fund democracy projects throughout the region. Yet, problems at home and with what some see as the decline of democracy in Turkey, have limited its foreign policy effectiveness.^{8, 9, 10, 11} Internal power struggles between Turkey's secularists and conservative Islamic factions have increased national tensions. The current prime minister is generally regarded as promoting a more Islamist agenda at the expense of secularism.^{12, 13}

Noninterventionism was a hallmark of Turkey's original foreign policy, and reflected a desire to avoid problems with its neighbors. This meant that Turkey was relatively passive to what was happening in the countries surrounding it.^{14, 15} Recent developments in the Middle and Near East, however, have pushed Turkey's hand, forcing it to frame a more aggressive policy. Turkey is rumored to be indirectly involved in efforts to remove the Syrian president, including providing arms to the Syrian rebels. It remains to be seen whether Turkey will be able to retain its position as a regional power, how it will engage in regional politics, and whether it can balance its interests in the east and the west.^{16, 17, 18, 19}



Portrait of Atatürk
© DIREKTOR / Wikipedia.org

U.S.-Turkish Relations

Turkey's proximity to Israel and other strategic regions in the Middle East, Central Asia, and North Africa make it vital to U.S. national security and provides support in the region.^{20, 21} The strategic alliance between the United States and Turkey began after World War II, when the United States provided military and economic assistance in exchange for establishing military bases in Turkey.^{22, 23} Turkish bases today support U.S. military operations in Afghanistan, the Middle East, and North Africa.²⁴ U.S. military bases in Turkey—such as Karamursel southeast of Istanbul, Belbasi near Ankara, and Kargaburun near the Black Sea—have been important for monitoring troop movements and missile deployments in the region.²⁵

Relations between the United States and Turkey rest on trade and investment, security, counterterrorism, regional stability, energy, and human rights. Relations were strained during the second Gulf War of 2003, when the Turkish

Parliament refused to allow U.S. forces to launch a ground assault from Turkey on Iraq and only authorized overflight rights for the United States.²⁶ Relief began in 2006 when President George W. Bush pledged greater assistance to Turkey in its struggles against domestic terrorism. The administration of President Barack Obama has adhered to a similar path, promising greater economic and commercial support.^{27, 28} In 2010, after meeting with Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated that “Turkey and the United States have one of the most important bilateral relationships in the world.”²⁹

In 2011, Turkey’s strong resistance to Syria’s president warmed U.S.-Turkish relations even further. Tensions heightened in 2012-2013 when the U.S. expressed concerns that Turkey’s porous border with Syria allowed easy entry for extremists. The ruling AKP accused the U.S. of instigating anti-government protests within the country in 2013 and corruption investigations against high-ranking members of the AKP in early 2014.³⁰



Turkey-Armenia Border
© Onnik Krikorian

Relations with Neighboring Countries

Armenia

Turkish-Armenian foreign relations remain strained by events related to what many regard as genocide perpetrated upon Armenians by the Ottoman Turks. During World War I, an estimated 800,000–1.5 million Armenians died while being deported within the borders of the Ottoman Empire. Because the events surrounding the deaths are unclear, the incident remains controversial.³¹ The official Turkish position is that the people who died were the unfortunate victims of a chaotic

civil war. The Turkish government, while acknowledging that the situation was regrettable, disputes the number of casualties and believes the Armenians brought the tragedy upon themselves by collaborating with the Russians during the war.^{32, 33}

In 2008, Turkey and Armenia were pressured by the European Union (EU) and the United States to begin reconciliation. Late in 2009, both countries signed a protocol agreement setting a timetable for normalization of bilateral relations. This included the establishment of diplomatic relations and opening their border, which has been closed since World War I. Despite continuing proclamations about the reopening of the border, it remains closed.^{34, 35, 36} Tensions remain high between the two. The Turkish support of Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict remains a major issue. In 2012, the

Turkish government said there would be no restoration of diplomatic relations without a resolution to the problem with Nagorno-Karabakh.^{37, 38} The two nations are not completely out of contact, however. Two direct air links continue to operate.³⁹



Azerbaijan Oil
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Azerbaijan

Turkey was the first nation to recognize the independent state of Azerbaijan in 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union.⁴⁰ The country has a majority-Turkic and a majority-Muslim (Shi'ite) population.⁴¹ Despite the historical division between Shi'ite and Sunni Muslims (the majority in Turkey), Turkey and Azerbaijan share a strong linguistic and cultural history.⁴² Yet the heart of the present-day relationship is primarily economic.^{43, 44} Each nation has about 1,000 companies operating across the border, with cross-border investments reaching billions of dollars. Economic cooperation is expected to increase as the Azeri economy strengthens. Two oil pipelines have been built between the countries, and Azerbaijan hopes to capitalize on these to reach larger markets in the West.⁴⁵

Although diplomatic relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan are generally cordial, tensions have been fueled by issues related to Turkey and Armenia. Since the 1920s, Azerbaijan has claimed the primarily Armenian-populated region of Nagorno-Karabakh, going to war with Armenia over the territory from 1988–1994. After a 1994 ceasefire, Armenian forces were in possession of the territory, which Moscow had recognized in the 1920s as part of Soviet Azerbaijan.⁴⁶

Because of this history, Azerbaijan was deeply angered by the 2009 protocol to normalize Armenian-Turkish relations, and threatened to raise the price Turks pay for natural gas imports. Azerbaijan also threatened to bypass Turkey with its oil and gas pipelines. Turkey pacified the Azeri government by delaying the submission of the protocol for ratification.⁴⁷ But Azerbaijan remains suspicious of Turkey's softened stance toward Armenia and their willingness to open the border and resume trade. The status of Turkish-controlled Cyprus represents another stumbling block. Azerbaijan's failure to recognize the Republic of Northern Cyprus (the Turkish-held area) and related issues have angered Turkish officials.^{48, 49}

Bulgaria

For most of the 20th century, relations between Turkey and Bulgaria focused on the rights of ethnic Turks in Bulgaria to retain their separate identity.⁵⁰ This group makes up about 10% of Bulgaria's population.⁵¹ Increasingly, severe repression in the 1980s prompted 320,000 Turks to flee to their homeland, overwhelming Turkey's ability to assist them. This sparked a diplomatic crisis that contributed to the fall of Bulgaria's Communist government.⁵²

After elections in the 1990s, a Muslim party representing Bulgarian Turks competed at the ballot box. Since then, relations between Turkey and Bulgaria have emphasized economic cooperation. But the low standard of living in Bulgaria has prompted a continuing exodus of ethnic Turks to Turkey.⁵³ Although not without obstacles, relations between Turkey and Bulgaria are the best they have been in decades.^{54, 55} In 2014, the Turkish foreign minister cancelled a scheduled visit to Bulgaria after discovering he would not be meeting with the Bulgarian president. One reason raised for the failed meetings is the situation in the Balkans and the Syrian crisis. Another problem area concerns Turkey's trade with the EU. Trucks filled with goods bound for Europe often do not have official clearance certificates (*dozvola*). Truckers have started moving to the Greek border in order to get the goods moving. In February 2014, the Turkish Ministry of Transportation, angered by this action, closed the border to Bulgarian trucks at Kapikule. Bulgaria moved quickly to close its crossing at Kapitan Andreevo. Both borders were reopened in February 2014.^{56, 57}



Georgia Border
© Joe Coyle

Georgia

After Georgia declared independence in 1991, Turkey immediately established diplomatic relations with the new government.⁵⁸ A regional security agreement among Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Georgia in 2002 included a provision that Turkey provide assistance to modernize the Marneuli Air Base, near the capital of Tbilisi. Turkey has provided assistance in developing Georgia's United Military Academy. All of these signify strengthening political ties between the two nations.⁵⁹ Despite all this, Ankara remains wary of forging closer security ties for fear of alienating Moscow.⁶⁰

On the economic front, bilateral trade and investment relations have been expanding since 2003. A free-trade agreement and transport-infrastructure projects enhanced joint cooperation.^{61, 62} A new policy allowing transborder travel without passports is being

drafted, further signaling stronger ties.⁶³ Turkey is now Georgia's most important trade partner. Many Georgian laborers also migrate to Turkey in search of better jobs. However, Turkey has recently introduced regulations that make it harder for Georgians to stay for longer periods of time.⁶⁴

Nevertheless, the region has not been without incident. Russian military support for the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in 2008 temporarily stopped the flow of oil from Georgia to Turkey. This led to a diplomatic incident with the United States when Turkey briefly blocked U.S. ships en route to the Black Sea.^{65, 66} During the 5-day incident, Russian forces bombed the capital of Georgia, deployed warships in the Black Sea off the coast of Georgia, and sent tanks into South Ossetia.⁶⁷

Current relations between the two nations are generally good. One issue highlights the religious differences between the two states. Some Turkish companies are moving into Georgia and bringing their own workers. The generally Orthodox Christian Georgians are opposed to the building of mosques in the country.⁶⁸

Greece

The Turks and the Greeks are historical rivals.^{69,70} After a decade of fighting, Greece gained independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1829.⁷¹ At the end of World War I, Greece invaded the Anatolian peninsula, but was eventually driven out by Turkish troops. In 1974, the rivalry flared when Turkey intervened militarily to stop Greece from invading the Mediterranean island of Cyprus, which subsequently was divided, with Greece occupying the south and Turkey keeping control of the north.^{72,73}

Relations between Turkey and Greece have improved in the 21st century because of Athens' decision in 1999 not to oppose Turkey's candidacy for membership in the EU.⁷⁴ Despite political disagreements, trade between the two countries is robust.⁷⁵ There are 390 Greek companies operating in Turkey, including 2 banks. Two branches of Turkey's Ziraat Bank have opened in Greece.⁷⁶

Cyprus remains the unresolved issue. A Greek majority inhabits this island, located off the southern coast of Turkey, yet 18% of its population is Turkish.⁷⁷ The unresolved issue dates to 1974, when the Greek majority expressed its desire to unify with Greece. This prompted Turkish troops to occupy the northeastern part of the island to protect the Turkish minority. In 1983, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus declared independence, although it has only been recognized by Ankara.⁷⁸ Years of negotiations, including two UN-sponsored referendums in 2004, have failed to resolve the stalemate.^{79,80} A U.N.-administered buffer zone with six crossing points separates the two halves of the island. In March 2008, the Turkish government reiterated its commitment to keep troops on Cyprus "until a just and permanent peace is established there."^{81, 82}

The issue is complicated by the plans of Greek-controlled Cyprus to develop rich

offshore natural gas fields. It is estimated that these gas fields contain 708 billion cubic m (25 trillion cubic ft) of gas. Further, they would be developed for the benefit of Israel, which is dependent on energy imports.^{83, 84} Greece is increasingly concerned about illegal immigration. Many of the illegal immigrants passing into eastern Greece come via Turkey. Greece has stated that Turkey's ascension to the EU depends on the republic's ability to control its borders.⁸⁵



Turkish-Iranian border
© Nice Logo / flickr.com

Iran

Relations with Iran strengthened in 2002 when the Islamist-leaning AKP took power in Turkey. Since that time, bilateral trade agreements have been reached and high-level diplomatic visits have become regularized.^{86, 87, 88} Relations between the two nations are based mainly on hydrocarbon imports from Iran.⁸⁹ The ongoing crisis in Syria, however, has increased bilateral tensions. Turkey has hosted U.N. negotiations aimed at reaching an international diplomatic solution to Iran's claimed pursuit of nuclear energy. Yet Turkey has attempted to expand economic and cultural ties with Iran.^{90, 91} These efforts have included opening a third border crossing between the two countries and signing a free-trade agreement that could

generate USD 30 billion over 5 years.^{92, 93}

In June 2010, Turkey voted against UN sanctions on Iran.⁹⁴ The move worried the United States, which questions Turkey's loyalty to NATO. Shortly thereafter, bilateral relations worsened with Turkish fears that Iran was supporting Shi'a dissidents in Bahrain. Turkey's diminishing support for Syria's Bashar al-Assad also heightened tensions. Iran actively supports the Assad regime. Relations warmed only slightly by 2013 and the continuing crisis in Syria prevents full scale rapprochement between the two countries.^{95, 96}

Recent Arab Spring events have also angered Iran, which has threatened to bomb U.S. and NATO bases in Turkey if the government allows anti-Syrian attacks to be launched from Turkey.^{97, 98} But despite recent tensions, diplomats from Turkey and Iran downplay the political rhetoric and remind the public that there has been no serious armed conflict between the two nations for centuries.^{99, 100}



*Oil well in northern Iraq
© jan kurdistani / flickr.com*

Iraq

Turkey's interest focuses on maintaining regional stability, containing the spread of Kurdish nationalism and insurgencies, protecting the 2.2 million Turkmen minority in Iraq, and thwarting a fundamentalist Islamist government from coming to power in Iraq.^{101, 102} Since the ouster of Saddam Hussein, relations with Iraq have been volatile. Concerns often center on Kurdish PKK members who take refuge in the mountainous areas of northern Iraq. In 2007, Turkey began a focused effort to improve Turkish-Iraqi relations. In 2009, the two nations signed more than 40 cooperative agreements.¹⁰³ Despite these positive moves, however, relations headed south in 2011 when the Iraqi prime minister enacted increasingly sectarian policies. This prompted Turkey to cultivate closer ties with the Sunni Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in 2012.¹⁰⁴

By the end of 2012, relations between the Turkish and Iraqi government had soured further. Turkey looked actively for ways to support the Iraqi Kurds, much to the consternation of the Iraqi government. Baghdad refused to allow the Turkish energy minister permission to enter the country to attend an international energy conference. In

2013, several high-level visits took place with the intent of strengthening relations which have been damaged by internal strife within Iraq but relations again deteriorated in 2014 when Turkey proceeded with plans to support the KRG attempts to transport oil through a pipeline bypassing the Iraqi government.¹⁰⁵ The KRG announced plans to sell its oil directly to Turkey, forcing Baghdad to warn that such an action could seriously threaten bilateral relations. A shipment of Kurdish oil bound for Europe left from Turkey's Ceyhan port in May 2014, prompting Baghdad to launch legal actions against Turkey. The action prompted criticism from the U.S. government, who sees the Kurdish action as potentially damaging to Iraq's stability.^{106, 107, 108, 109, 110}

Syria

Relations between Syria and Turkey have been tense since the creation of the Turkish republic in 1923. The countries came close to war several times.¹¹¹ Although relations improved after 1998, conflict arose in 2011 because of events in Syria associated with

the Arab Spring. Following Syria's crackdown against the protestors, large numbers of Syrian refugees crossed into Turkey and more than 800,000 Syrian refugees had crossed into Turkey by July 2014. Syria was also angry about Turkey being a supply station to the rebel forces, including the Free Syrian Army (FSA).^{112, 113, 114, 115}

Turkey's support for Syria's government ended in 2011. Turkey has allowed an armed insurgency group to launch attacks in Syria from a camp in Turkey that is guarded by the Turkish military.^{116, 117} In September 2011, the Turkish prime minister condemned Syria and pledged to support the Syrian people's opposition to the Assad government. In November 2011, the Turkish government stated that it had no confidence in Syria's government, demanded apologies for attacks on its diplomatic missions, and halted oil exploration in Syria.¹¹⁸ Turkey supported Syria's suspension from the Arab League on 12 November 2011, and threatened to cut off electricity to the nation.^{119, 120} Turkey stepped up its military posture against Syria shooting down a helicopter in 2013 and a fighter plane in 2014. Turkey has become increasingly concerned with the rising strength the Islamic State in Syria and the Levant (ISIS).¹²¹ In 2014, the Turks began constructing a wall along the border to stop illegal migration and border crossings by Syrian rebels.¹²²

Control over regional water supplies has sparked additional tensions. Turkey's control over Syria's water supply and its dam construction projects along the Euphrates is a serious cause for concern in Damascus. Although some agreements on these issues have been reached in the past, there still exists no comprehensive agreement.¹²³



*C-130s, Incirlik Air Base
DoD Image*

Police and Internal Security

The 230,000 National Police are charged with enforcing the law in cities, airports, and other locations. Another 20,000 civilians are contracted work with the agency, mostly in clerical and administrative positions. The National Police are under supervision of the Ministry of the Interior. Governors (*vali*) and district governors (*kaymakam*) command the provincial police forces. Political duties, including the protection of the state and the maintenance of constitutional law, are part of their role.^{124, 125, 126}

The gendarmerie (*jandarma*) is a 200,000 person paramilitary force responsible for public safety and order in rural areas. The general command headquarters is located in the capital, Ankara. The force is technically under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Interior, but traditionally, the commander of the force has been an active duty four-star general. This unit operates outside

municipal boundaries in the countryside and may be assigned to assist in military matters as needed, including counterinsurgency and antiterrorist activities. It has its own intelligence section, used mainly for gathering information on the PKK. Tensions between the National police and the gendarmerie often results in a failure to share intelligence information. The gendarmerie identifies more with the Turkish military and frequently accused the National Police of being infiltrated by Islamist sympathizers.^{127, 128}

The village guards (*korucular*) are a 58,000-strong paramilitary force established to act as local militia for small towns and villages. Often targeted by Kurdish insurgents, the village guards are charged with protecting residents from terrorism.¹²⁹ In addition to age requirements, tribal affiliation plays a major role in determining membership in the force. The village guards have often been criticized and condemned for alleged human rights abuses.^{130, 131, 132}



*Turkish Soldiers
DoD Image*

The Military

The Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) includes land, naval, and air force personnel working under the General Staff. The Chief of the General Staff is appointed by the president and subject to the approval of the Council of Ministers. Until recently, the Chief of Staff reported to the prime minister, but a restructuring has placed the General Staff under the auspices of the Minister of Defense.¹³³ The ruling AKP has worked consistently to reduce the Turkish military's grip on power, including the constitutional changes in 2010 that effectively brought the military under tighter civilian control.^{134, 135} Once highly regarded by the public, the military's image has become tarnished.

Military failures and investigations of an alleged coup plot against the government led to the arrest, imprisonment, and resignations of many high ranking officers. In 2013, one general and 16 other officers were sentenced to life imprisonment for their role in the alleged coup attempt.^{136, 137}

Changes in Turkey's strategic and military posture since 2002 have led to changes in defense strategy and organization. The military now focuses on territorial defense. Land forces have moved from a divisional structure to a brigade-based design with emphasis on rapid reaction and mobility.¹³⁸

Turkish Armed Forces (Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri: TSK)

The Army, also referred to as the Turkish Land Forces Command (TLFC), has 381,710 members in four armies. The 1st Army is deployed in Thrace, Turkey's European region. It has a strong armored unit designed for operations along the border regions with Bulgaria and Greece. The 2nd Army is deployed in southeastern Anatolia with its headquarters located in Malatya. Its main role is defensive and its charge is to protect against threats from Syria, Iraq, and Iran. The 3rd Army watches over the border with Georgia in the mountainous regions of eastern Anatolia. Headquartered in Izmir, the 4th army, sometimes referred to as the Aegean Army, is deployed along Turkey's western border and the Aegean islands of Greece. According to a new strategic plan, Turkey plans to reduce its total troops 20-30% . Turkey plans to make special-forces units more agile, allowing for faster response to terrorist activities.¹³⁹

All Turkish men between the ages of 20 and 41, with some exceptions, must serve in the military. Those with university degrees may serve either 12 months as a reserve officer or six months as a private.¹⁴⁰ Since the arrest, prosecution, and conviction of numerous officers for allegedly plotting a coup, morale within the corps has fallen.¹⁴¹

Air Force (Türk Hava Kuvvetleri - THK)

The Air Force has 60,100 troops manning two tactical air commands, one transport command, and one air-training command. Twelve combat squadrons are among the country's 7 air bases. The F-16 fighter jet is among the most preferred planes in the Turkish arsenal. Pilots receive extensive and high-level training in operating the F-16; because of their proficiency, Turkish pilots provide training to pilots outside the country.¹⁴²

Although the main mission of the Turkish Air Force is to gain air superiority over Turkish airspace, an ancillary mission is to develop the capacity to operate in enemy territory to protect against terrorist threats. Turkey has recently acquired advanced missile armaments, including air-to-air and air-to-surface weapons.¹⁴³

Navy

The Turkish Navy Forces Command (TNFC) has 44,250 sailors. Their primary role is to defend and control Turkey's territorial waters. Other responsibilities include keeping the Sea Lanes of Communication open, avoiding disruption of major ports, combating drug smuggling, and preventing illegal immigration and trafficking in persons. The navy has 14 submarines, 23 frigates, 27 fast attack craft, and a number of mine warfare vessels, landing ships, and patrol craft.¹⁴⁴ Naval headquarters are located in Ankara but there are four main sub-commands. Fleet command controls all operations of the war fleet, fast patrol boat fleet, mine and submarine fleets, as well as the air defense wing of the navy. The Northern Sea Area Command is responsible for the Black Sea region, including the

strategic Bosphorus straits, the Marmara Sea and the Dardanelles. The Southern Sea Area Command is responsible for the Aegean and Mediterranean Sea regions. The Naval Training (and Education) Command is based at Karamusels on the southern coast of the Sea of Marmara.¹⁴⁵

Turkey also has a coast guard with 2,200 personnel. It is responsible for maintaining the security of the coastline and territorial waters. Its main mission includes guarding against smuggling and enforcing anti-pollution regulations.¹⁴⁶



*Anti-PKK demonstration in Kadiköy
Courtesy of Wikipedia*

Issues Affecting Stability

One of the biggest threats to the internal security of Turkey is the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which has been waging a civil war against the Turkish government since the 1980s. Its focus is to establish a sovereign Kurdish nation.¹⁴⁷ The PKK has been carrying out a rural insurgency campaign in the southeastern part of the country, while engaging in a bombing campaign in the western sections. Current estimates place the number of active militants, well supplied with arms and explosives, at about 4,500 troops.¹⁴⁸ A peace plan reached with the rebels in 2013 appears near collapse.^{149, 150} Armed and violent confrontations between the Turkish government and PKK troops are ongoing.^{151, 152} In July 2014, the government took a step toward ending the conflict by approving more peace talks with the PKK. Several other radical groups operate in Turkey including Turkish Hezbollah and ISIS.^{153, 154, 155}

Growing tensions between the secular and Islamic forces within Turkey also threaten internal stability. Internal struggles for control of the ruling AKP have fueled civil unrest within the nation.^{156, 157, 158} Corruption scandals have rocked the government, including close associates of the current prime minister. Following arrests of several government officials allegedly involved, the government removed hundreds of police officers and attempted a restructuring of the entire police force. The divide between conservative Islamists and the urban secularists appears to be on the rise which could, at least in the short term, cause political turmoil.^{159, 160, 161}



Keban Dam

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Outlook

Turkey is rated at medium risk for political instability.¹⁶² The political situation within the country appears to have stabilized and the economy is poised to grow, although at slower rates than in the past. The military has been significantly weakened making it unlikely that they will offer any serious threat to the current government. Nevertheless, some issues on the horizon are cause for concern. A balance is required between the Islamists and the secular forces in the nation.^{163, 164, 165} Long-standing distrust between religious conservatives and secularists continues. Secularists fear a move from pro-

Western sympathies toward a more overt Islamist agenda. Failure to resolve the Kurdish issue also holds the potential for political disruption.¹⁶⁶ The influx of refugees into Turkey has increased unemployment, stressed national resources, and created interethnic tensions. The ongoing crisis threatens national unity particularly as ISIS has gained power in the region.^{167, 168, 169, 170, 171}

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Overview: Chapter 5 Assessment

1. Turkey's current foreign policy includes building stronger relations with its Muslim neighbors.

TRUE

Turkey has turned its eyes eastward and formed a stronger alliance with its Muslim neighbors. The ruling Islamist-leaning Justice and Development Party (AKP) has shifted its foreign policy away from Western interests to strengthen Middle Eastern ties.

2. Turkey's border with Armenia has been opened as a sign of warming relations.

False

The border between the two countries has been closed since World War I, when up to 1.5 million Armenians died while being deported within the borders of the Ottoman Empire. Despite continuing efforts, the border remains closed.

3. The Turkish government enjoys warm diplomatic relations with Iraq.

False

Since the ouster of Saddam Hussein, relations with Iraq have been volatile. Turkey's support and dealings with the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq has angered the Iraqi government and prompted a lawsuit against Turkey.

4. The village guards (korucular) are a civilian police force.

False

The village guards (korucular) are a paramilitary force established to act as local militia for towns and villages. Often targeted by Kurdish insurgents, the village guards are charged with protecting residents from terrorism.

5. Turkey enjoyed positive relations with Syria before the Arab Spring uprisings.

TRUE

Prior to the Arab Spring, regular meetings between leaders of Syria and Turkey took place but Turkey's view of the Syrian crisis changed in 2011 when the Turkish prime minister condemned Syria and pledged to support the Syrian people's opposition to the Assad government.

Final Assessment

1. Turkey is bordered by one major body of water, the Caspian Sea.
True or False?
2. The Euphrates River is dry most of the year.
True or False?
3. The most inhospitable climate is along the eastern Black Sea coast because of the year-round rainfall.
True or False?
4. Ankara is the capital of Turkey.
True or False?
5. The Republic of Turkey extends from southeastern Europe, into parts of North Africa.
True or False?
6. Turkey was part of the Axis alliance with Italy and Germany during World War II.
True or False?
7. Osman established Constantinople as the capital of the Ottoman Empire.
True or False?
8. The Ottoman Empire was the largest empire in Islamic history.
True or False?
9. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk became president following a military coup.
True or False?
10. The Young Turks conspired to overthrow the sultanate of the Ottoman Empire.
True or False?

11. Turkey meets 90% of its energy requirements from domestic sources.
True or False?
12. Most of the jobs created in the last decade were in the formal sector.
True or False?
13. Islamic banks control about half of the nation's banking assets.
True or False?
14. Turkey's foreign debt is a serious threat to sustained economic recovery.
True or False?
15. Turkey is an important energy hub serving the interests of Central Asia, the Middle East, and Europe.
True or False?
16. The constitution provides a single-nationality designation for all Turkish citizens.
True or False?
17. Turkey is a patriarchal society in which men always head up the household.
True or False?
18. Changes to the law in January 2002 specify that men are no longer the legal head of all Turkish households.
True or False?
19. Honor killings are becoming increasingly rare in Turkey.
True or False?
20. Cirit is a form of wrestling in which competitors slather their bodies with olive oil.
True or False?
21. The Alevis do not face Mecca when praying in mosques.
True or False?

22. Turkey's relations with Greece remain frayed, especially over Cyprus.

True or False?

23. The leader of the Turkish Armed Forces reports to the prime minister.

True or False?

24. The gendarmerie is responsible for maintaining law and order in rural areas.

True or False?

25. Several radical Islamist groups operate within Turkey's borders.

True or False?

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