

Commentary

Institute of Diplomacy and Global Affairs

Regional Security Complex Theory and Turkish Foreign Policy: NATO Missile Shield, Eurasian Energy Politics and the Arab Spring

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At the Woodrow Wilson Center International Center for Scholars

European Studies Center

Turkish foreign policy is coming under increasing scrutiny since the election of the ruling Justice and Development Party in 2002. Critiques state that Turkish foreign policy is becoming 'neo-Ottoman' or 'Islamist', arguing that Turkey is moving closer to the Middle East than Europe. The underlying hypothesis of **Akin Unver's** lecture however, argues that Turkey's foreign policy is not becoming more Islamist; it is becoming more British, following a pattern of external affairs in which identity is becoming increasingly more pronounced. By focusing on three case studies: Turkey's self-appointed role as an energy hub between Europe and Russia, its role in NATO and its recent installation of the missile defense shield, and finally, its changing stance against Iran and Syria following the Arab Spring, the lecture will discuss how identity (as it relates to the narratives of history and culture) shape Turkey's foreign policy understanding and patterns of cooperation and conflict.