**Introduction: Change and Stability**

It is not hard to notice the name of Turkey being mentioned frequently in the international media and in most major daily newspapers in many parts of the world. Turkey was mentioned in the press and media in the recent years when she applied for full membership in the European Union in 1987, or when the Turkish troops took part in the Stability Force in Bosnia-Herzegovina that came to serve as a peace mission since 1996. Indeed, Turkish troops have been similarly serving in Macedonia to sustain the peace efforts there. Turkey participated in the military campaign of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) against the Yugoslav army in Kosovo in 1999. Turkey was one of the first countries to condemn the attacks of September 11, 2001 in New York City, Washington, DC. and Pennsylvania, and declare allegiance with the United States in the “war against terror.” Turkey took over from Britain the command of the 5,350-strong International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan on June 20, 2002 for a period of six months, and again in January 2005. Soccer fans would also recall that the Turkish national team came only third to Brazil and Germany in the World Cup finals in Japan and Korea in 2002. Indeed, whenever the Iraqi crisis recurred from 1990 until 2003 Turkey’s name reappeared in the press and the media around the globe. More recently, on November 15 and November 20, 2003 four bombs exploded in the city of Istanbul, Turkey, which devastated parts of two ancient synagogues, the British Consulate and the headquarters of the HSBC bank in Turkey. More than 60 people died in those ominous attacks, hundreds were wounded, and some were crippled for life. Turkey and its main cultural and industrial metropolis Istanbul in particular, thus became the target of attacks of some al-Qaeda cells in Turkey. As a NATO member democracy with a large Muslim population, and also as a member of the Islamic Conference Organization (ICO) the Turkish involvement in peace and/or stabilization missions, and especially in the last case of its participation in the war against terror have been considered as a critical move by the United States, Britain, and their allies.

**A Closer Look at the Turkish Society**

World Development Report of 2005 reports the most recent population figure for Turkey for the year 2003 and as 70.7 millions, and in 1990–2003 it...
grew by about 1.8 percent per annum. The population of the country grows by more than one million per year in the early 2000s. However, the demographers indicate that the population growth rate is following a dropping trajectory. Indeed, in the 1980s average annual growth rate of the population was 2.3 percent, which dropped to 1.5 percent per annum in the 1990s. Demographers project that the Turkish population growth rate will eventually drop down to 0 percent per annum by about the middle of the twenty-first century. The same projections indicate that Turkey will have a population of about 84.4 million in 2020 and 88.0 million by 2025. Of that population approximately 97 percent indicate some degree of affiliation with Islam. Very small numbers of Greek Orthodox, Armenian Catholic, Gregorian, Roman Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Assyrian, Yazidi, agnostics and atheists constitute the rest of the 3 percent of the population. Ethnic composition of the country is no less mixed, yet most consider themselves as Turks (reliable surveys report that anywhere between 60 and 75 percent identify themselves as Turks), among the rest Kurds (about 12 percent of the population), Abkhaz, Chechen, Albanian, Arab, Laz, and so on emerge as other ethnic groups, which constitute the rest of the 3–5 percent of the Turkish society.

Turkey had a Gross National Income (GNI) of $473 billions in 2003 and the Gross National Product (GNP) of Turkey for 2004 is estimated as $273 billions, which places Turkey as the twenty-second largest economy in the world, with a per capita income of about $2790 (or GNI measured at purchasing power parity (ppp) of $6690 per capita). Owing to a severe financial crisis in the country the Turkish economy went through a severe meltdown in 2001, and the GNP per capita fell down to $2.190 (and GNP measured at ppp per capita fell to $6012). The economy started to recover in 2002, and hence the most recent statistics indicate considerable variations in those figures for 2001, 2002, and 2003. Although the financial crisis of 2001 was an unprecedented event in the history of the Turkish Republic, the Turkish economic growth pattern has always been somewhat erratic (see figure I.1). Indeed, a closer look at figure I.1 gives the impression that the Turkish economy lurches from one crisis to another. Nevertheless, by most accounts Turkey demonstrates the characteristics of a newly industrializing country, or if we adopt the terminology and use the indicators of the World Development Report Turkey is a lower middle-income economy.

Interestingly enough Turkey has been a member of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) alongside with Japan, United States, Germany, Britain, France, Canada, Italy, and other postindustrial economies. Turkey has also been a member of Council of Europe since 1949 and of the NATO since 1952.

Turkey has also been seeking full membership in the European Union (EU) since its early days (1959–1963), when it was only a humble Common Market of six countries of Western Europe, established only in 1957. In 1963 Turkey established associate membership with the Common Market, which evolved into the European Economic Community (EEC), the European Community (EC), and eventually into the (EU). In 1995 Turkey established