

THIERRY DE MONTBRIAL

President and Founder of the World Policy Conference

We are going to have a mini-session, a half-hour session, with Ali Babacan. Ali Babacan is a member of the leading party in Turkey. He is a Member of Parliament and he has occupied some of the most important functions within the Turkish government. He was Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of European Union Affairs. He has extraordinary experience, and I can tell you that I was one of those who has had the privilege of having known him for something like 10 years or perhaps even more now.

He is highly respected worldwide, in particular in the United States and in the European Union. It is a great privilege, Ali, to have you here, and I must repeat, it was also a great privilege to have a former Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ahmet Davutoglu. I hope that we can go a little bit deeper in this session, to understand what is going on in Turkey, now and in the future. This is regarding the relations between Turkey and particularly the West, the United States and Europe. Ali, if you allow me, I think we could start with a very simple question. It probably does not have a simple answer, but it is a simple question.

Can you enlighten us a little bit more about what is going on in Turkey? How should we understand what happened regarding the failed coup last July? What exactly were the stakes of the Gülen sect, which very few people in the West know and understand. What about the request of President Erdogan for the extradition of Mr Fethullah Gülen? I think perhaps we could start with some clarification on this fundamental domestic issue, and then we will widen the discussion to some foreign policy issues. The first question has been put and we are listening to you very carefully indeed.