

TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS UNDER
THE SHADOW OF MARCH 1 RESOLUTION

SELİN ESİNLİ NASİ
103605009

İSTANBUL BİLGİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
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SOLİ ÖZEL
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Selin Esinli Nasi
103605009

MA Soli Özel :
Yrd. Doç. Dr.Serhat Güvenç :
MA Mehmet Ali Tuğtan :

Tezin Onaylandığı Tarih :
.....

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- 3)March 1 Resolution
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I was expecting that this journey would be hard and long. I knew that writing would consume my energy and isolate me from the outside world. Since I had rivaling identities such as being a mother and a student, I've had to double my energy and display an extraordinary performance most of the time, not to neglect my responsibilities while writing my dissertation. What's more, from the beginning till the end, I've struggled to convince people around me that studying was a part of my life-long ambition, not a hobby. I've patiently waited them to take what I was doing seriously. At times, I came to a point of giving up everything. Having finally completed my dissertation, I now recall a famous phrase from Friedrich Nietzsche: "Through life's school of war: that which does not kill you only serves to make you stronger."

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This modest work constitutes a baby step in what I would like to attain in the future. Therefore, my journey has actually just started because there is so much to learn ahead.

INTRODUCTION

The political tension between Turkey and the United States which started with the US decision to go for a regime change in Iraq through military force, peaked on March 1, 2003. On that day, the Turkish parliament rejected the deployment of American troops on Turkish territory, thus blocked the opening of the northern front. For many analysts, March 1 has been considered a breaking point in the history of Turkish-US relations. The fact that on such a critical issue, Turkey turned its back on the United States, its most powerful ally-inevitably damaged the relations. What is of more significance, was the fact that behind Turkey's decision lied its resentment and mistrust towards US policies towards Iraq that has been in place for over a decade. The political outcome on March 1 seriously conflicted with the substance of "strategic partnership" between the United States and Turkey which the Turkish policy makers commonly used to define bilateral relations with an emphasis on their compatible interests.

This study aims to offer an analysis of Turkish-American relations with a focus on the impact of March 1 resolution by making an assessment of what went wrong during and after negotiations, what the rejection of the resolution meant for the parties, and what lessons can be drawn to avoid a similar crisis in the future. There have been so many speculations on "March 1 incident. Was this accident a last minute road accident since the majority of the Turkish parliamentarians voted in favor of the resolution, yet the motion failed for technical reasons? To some commentators, the reasons

for this political outcome laid in the Justice and Development Party's (AKP) political inexperience and its lack of party discipline. In contrast, some analysts suggested that the AKP was actually ambivalent about cooperating with the US against Iraq, while others claimed that it was the Turkish General Staff which blocked the government's efforts to pass the resolution. This study aims to show that the resolution was doomed to failure because of Turkey's overriding concerns about a military operation against Iraq. Moreover, it claims that the reasons undermining the US–Turkish cooperation against Iraq actually predated the resolution crisis.

Iraq has been a controversial subject between Turkey and the United States in which the allies differed in their political priorities and threat perceptions. For Turkey, the Gulf War in 1990, particularly the establishment of safe havens through Operation Provide Comfort (OPC), created a “Northern Iraq” problem which has occupied a significant place in Turkish foreign policy since then. The political developments in the post-Gulf War period caused discontent among the Turks towards US policies on Iraq; at the same time led Turkey to shape its foreign policy through the prism of its Kurdish problem. In this context, Turkey's primary concern has been the emergence of a de facto Kurdish state in northern Iraq believing that it might incite separatist tendencies among the Kurds in Turkey. Therefore, since the Gulf War, Turkey has been in favor of protecting the territorial integrity of Iraq in order to prevent the establishment of an independent Kurdish entity in northern Iraq.

However, the picture was perceived quite differently by the United States. When the United States looked at Iraq, there appeared an oppressive

regime which brutalized its own people and posed a threat to world security by seeking weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Especially in the September 11 context, the world's only superpower declared a war against terrorists and "rogue states" which harbored terrorists. It was not surprising that Iraq topped the list of these rogue states, given Saddam Hussein's dictatorial rule and his non-compliance with the United Nations (UN) sanctions regime. Therefore, the US political priority over Iraq was to get rid of the Saddam regime and replace it with a friendly government. Although the dissolution of Iraq was not a desirable outcome by the US policy makers considering the possibility of chaos and even an ethnic civil war, a federal political arrangement in Iraq might well serve the US political interests as long as there emerged a relatively democratic and stable government.

From this perspective, March 1 highlighted the conflict of interests between a revolutionary world hegemon and a pro-status quo power. For the Bush administration, Saddam regime was the main source of conflict and thus a regime change through a military force appeared as the only viable option. In contrast, Turkey was opposed to any kind of regime change in Iraq, fearing that a regime change could lead to political fragmentation and pave the way for the emergence of an independent Kurdistan in northern Iraq. By presenting an analysis of the economic and political impact of the Gulf War in 1990 as well as the political process on the road to March 1 this study intends to provide evidence for Turkey's visible opposition to the US intention of altering the status quo in the region. In the meantime, Turkish-American relations will be examined from a

historical perspective so as to better determine the place (and impact) of the March 1 incident in bilateral relations and compare it with similar crises that took place in the past. By placing the relations in a broader context, this study aims to provide a better understanding of the evolution of Turkish-American alliance parallel to structural and conjunctural changes in the political environment.

Turkish-American relations will be studied under four chapters:

Chapter I The origins and the evolution of Turkish-American relations (1945-1990)

Chapter II The post-Cold War era: The Shaping of a new type of relations (1990-2001)

Chapter III Turkish-American relations in the September 11 context: From Afghanistan to Iraq

Chapter IV The Analysis of March 1 resolution

Chapter One will focus on the formation of Turkish-American alliance and the development of bilateral relations on a security axis against the Soviet expansion throughout the Cold War. Chapter Two will analyze the emergence of a strategic partnership between the United States and Turkey with the Gulf War, following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Chapter Three will discuss Turkish-American relations in the September 11 context, addressing the changing security paradigms in the US foreign policy making as well as Turkey's increasing significance for the United States as a model to be promoted in the Middle East. This chapter also examines what has happened between the United States and Turkey from

the War in Afghanistan to Iraq. Chapter Four, aims to provide an analysis of the March 1 incident with its political, military and social dimensions. The focus will be on the negotiation process, concentrating on the diplomatic failures, misunderstandings, and political miscalculations of both sides.

As for the literature on Turkish-American relations, there are quite a number of sources on the evolution of bilateral relations during the Cold War period. Among these, George Harris' *Troubled Alliance: Turkish-American Problems in Historical Perspective, 1947-1971*, again his *Turkish-American relations since Truman doctrine* and George McGhee's *The United States-Turkey and the Middle East Connection* can be given. These works provide an insight for the formation and evolution of the relations within the Cold War paradigms while concentrate on the problematic foreign policy issues of the era such as the Cuban Missile Crisis or the Cyprus question. As for a relatively neglected period of 1800-1952, Şuhnaz Yılmaz's unpublished PhD dissertation "From Strangers to Allies: Turkish-American Relations," is a valuable source with its extensive use of archival works from the Turkish Foreign Ministry. She offers a comprehensive study on the formation of bilateral relations by going back to the late Ottoman era. There are also many valuable sources on Turkish-American alliance which examine bilateral relations with a focus on Turkish foreign policy. To name a few examples, Baskın Oran's, *Türk Dış Politikası I-II* offers an analysis of the evolution of Turkish-American relations both during and after the Cold War period, by underlining Turkish-US cooperation in the NATO alliance. Again, Oral Sander's *Türkiye'nin*

Dış Politikası studies change and continuity in the Turkish-US relations while questions Turkey's geopolitical importance for the United States throughout the Cold War.

There is a comparatively developed body of literature on the Turkish-American relations for the post-Cold War period. Most of the works focus on the changing security parameters and point at the potential between Turkey and the United States to develop cooperation on a number of areas such as energy transportation, democratization in the Caucasus, preserving peace and stability in the Middle East and the Balkans. Sources like Sabri Sayarı's "Turkish-American relations in the Post-Cold War Era: Issues of Convergence and Divergence," Morton Abramowitz's (*ed.*), *Turkey's Transformation and American Policy* and Heinz Kramer's *Avrupa ve Amerika Karşısında Değişen Türkiye* concentrate directly on the impact of the end of Cold War over the alliance ties. On the other hand, Stephen F. Larrabee and Ian O. Lesser's *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty*, and Barry Rubin and Kemal Kirişçi's (*eds.*), *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power* provide an assessment of Turkey's changing role and significance in the post-Cold War context with reference to a debated "new activism" in the Turkish foreign policy.

There are fewer works on the March 1 crisis since the topic remains quite new. This field is mostly dominated by Turkish journalists who have access to the bureaucratic channels of Ankara and therefore have the opportunity to reflect what has happened on the road to March 1 the behind the scenes. Murat Yetkin's *Tezkere: Irak Krizinin Gerçek Öyküsü* and

Fikret Bila's *Sivil Darbe Girişimi ve Ankara'da Irak Savaşları* can be counted among the most comprehensive works on this subject. While Bila offers an analysis of the Turkish-US tension over Iraq by going back to the period under Bülent Ecevit's leadership, in early 2002, Yetkin provides a detailed account of the negotiation process as well as a general outlook of the bilateral relations in the aftermath the resolution crisis. On the other hand, Mark Parris' *Allergic Partners: Can Relations be Saved* and Michael Rubin's *A Comedy of Errors* are also useful since they present a US perspective on March 1 incident and discuss ways to restore a healthy dialogue between Turkey and the United States.

As stated in the US National Security Strategy (NSS) of 2006, the United States, the world's superpower "is at war" and "seeking to shape the world." With reference to the war on terror, the United States is determined to continue promoting freedom, stability, and peace in the world. However, to achieve these goals, the Bush administration stressed that the US needs strong alliances, friendships, as well as support of the international institutions. From a geopolitical perspective, Turkey remains at the regional crossroads of the US strategic interests and will be directly influenced by the transformative US policies in the region. With regard to over sixty years of security ties between Turkey and the United States, the two countries are to benefit from cooperation rather than confrontation. However, the Middle East and Iraq appear as problematic areas to build partnership upon as this study tries to emphasize.

ABSTRACT

This study offers an analysis of Turkish-American relations with a focus on the March 1 resolution. It aims to provide a better understanding of the reasons which undermined Turkish-American cooperation against Iraq and resulted in Turkey's rejection of the motion on March 1. On the one hand, this study claims that the Iraq has been a problematic area for the US-Turkish cooperation and the roots of these problems actually predated March 1. On the other hand, it concentrates on the mishandling of the negotiation process by the US-Turkish political elites towards the Iraq War, and its impact on bilateral relations. This study aims to situate March 1 incident in a broader context of alliance ties, and therefore presents an examination of Turkish-American relations from 1945 to 2003. With an analysis of the evolution of Turkish-American alliance parallel to systemic and structural changes in the political realm, this study aims to provide a further insight into the relations under the shadow of March 1 resolution.

KISA ÖZET

Bu çalışma Türk-Amerikan ilişkilerinin 1 Mart tezkeresi odaklı bir analizidir. 1 Mart'ta Türkiye'nin ABD askerlerinin Türk topraklarına konuşlandırılmasına izin veren tezkereyi reddetmesiyle darbe alan Türk-Amerikan ilişkilerine tarihsel bir perspektiften yaklaşarak krizin kapsamlı bir incelemesini sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu araştırma, bir yandan Türkiye ve Amerika arasında Irak üzerinden işbirliği kurmanın sorunlu olduğu ve bu sorunların kaynağının 1 Mart'tan çok evvel dayandığını savunmaktadır. Diğer bir yandan, Bush yönetiminin Irak'ta rejim değişikliğine gitme kararını Türk siyasi elitlerine iletmesini takiben, 1 Mart'a giden sürecin Türk ve ABD'li siyasi elitler tarafından doğru şekilde yönetilememiş olmasının ilişkiler üzerindeki etkisini tartışmaktadır.

Bu çalışma aynı zamanda 1 Mart krizinin yeri ve öneminin daha iyi tanımlanabilmesi ve geçmişteki benzer krizlerle kıyaslanabilmesi amacıyla, Türk-Amerikan ilişkilerinin 1945'ten 2003'e dek tarihsel gelişimini sunmaktadır. Bu şekilde müttefiklik ilişkilerinin uluslararası sistemin ve yapısal unsurların değişimine paralel olarak geçirdiği değişimi anlamak ve 1 Martta geline noktaı daha iyi şekilde anlamlandırmak mümkün olacaktır.

CHAPTER I

THE ORIGINS AND THE EVOLUTION OF TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS

With the end of World War II, a new international order emerged based on the confrontation of two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. As Winston Churchill, the former British prime minister declared in March, 1946, “the iron curtain” which descended across the continent paved the way for the informal partition of liberated Europe into pro-Western and pro-Soviet spheres.¹ Each of the two zones was to adopt political institutions, economic practices, and foreign policies that reflected the preferences and influences of its liberator.

One of the consequences of the Second World War was the collapse of Pax Britannica. Owing to the post-war economic difficulties, Great Britain had to abandon her traditional role as the guarantor of Russia’s confinement along Eurasia and gradually decreased her military presence overseas.² In order to prevent Soviet expansion, the United States filled in the power vacuum left by Great Britain in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, and undertook the responsibility of economic and political development of the region.

¹In a speech at Foulton Missouri, Winston Churchill declared: “From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain descended across the continent.” See, Birdsall S. Vialt, *Modern European History*, (McGraw Hill, 1990): 502.

² On February 21, 1947, the British Foreign Office officially informed the American State Department of its intention to terminate all financial assistance to Greece and Turkey and to remove 40,000 British troops from Greece on account of Britain’s own economic crisis. See, William R. Keylor, *The Twentieth-Century World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996): 260.

Following 1945, a series of political developments raised concern among the Western powers over the limit and the scope of Soviet ambitions and forced them to take action against further Soviet expansion. The Communist controlled Tudeh party coming to power in Azerbaijan (then the northern Iran) by a separatist revolt, the Iranian parliament's agreement on Azerbaijan's autonomy and joint oil venture with the Soviets, the Soviet demands from Turkey over the Straits and the Eastern provinces, along with the Greek Communist insurgency were perceived as consequent steps towards reviving the old Soviet ambitions- reaching the Mediterranean.³

In February 1946, the long telegram sent by George F. Kennan from the US embassy in Moscow constituted a warning for the US officials against Soviet intentions and capacity, thus provided the impetus for the US political elites to follow a more active policy against the Soviets. This telegram which was published in *Foreign Affairs* in July 1947 under the pen name of X emphasized the necessity of containing the Soviets rather than compromising with them. Kennan suggested that the United States should follow “a policy of firm containment, designed to confront the Russians with unalterable counterforce at every point.”⁴ Considering the worrisome developments in Eurasia, President Truman declared a speech in March, 1947 which underlined the US determination “to support free peoples who are resisting subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.”⁵ This presidential declaration which later acquired the designation “Truman Doctrine” promised to provide economic resources to support friendly

³ See, William R. Keylor, *The Twentieth-Century World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996): 256.

⁴ See, George F. Kennan, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct” in Fareed Zakaria and James F. Jr. Hoque, *The American encounter* (Basic Books, 1998).

⁵ See, William R. Keylor, *The Twentieth-Century World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.261.

nations under Soviet pressure or those facing a communist infiltration. Accordingly, on April, 3, 1948, the US Congress agreed on Marshall Plan, a \$13 billion program for the reconstruction of the postwar international economic order, aiming at “reconstituting independent centers of power that would balance the Soviet Union.”⁶

The Turkish American relations evolved in this Cold war context, based on common security concerns, containing Soviet expansion in particular and changed its course throughout the Cold war as a result of changes within the East-West tension. For a newly founded republic with a devastated postwar economy, threatened by the territorial demands of a neighboring superpower, it was essential to maintain close relations with the United States and the Western camp. Already in 1945, Moscow had denounced the Turkish-Soviet treaty of friendship, concluded in 1925. On June 7, 1945, at the meeting between Foreign Commissar Molotov and the Turkish ambassador to Moscow, Russian demands were laid on the table including the cession of territory in the Caucasus annexed by Russia in 1878 and the revision of Montreux Convention of 1936. The Soviets were proposing a joint control over the Straits and the opening of Soviet bases for defense purposes.⁷ In this context, the arrival of the battleship Missouri to

⁶ Cited in John Lewis Gaddis, *We now know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998): 197; For the amount of the economic aid under the Marshall Plan see, Şuhnaz Yılmaz, “From Strangers to Allies: Turkish-American Relations,” Unpublished PhD Dissertation, (Princeton University, 1999):192.

⁷The Soviet demands concerning the Montreux Convention were presented earlier at the Potsdam conference where Stalin complained that the Montreux Convention did not comply with the changing realities of the international situation considering the militarily weak conditions of Turkey at the time. Therefore he insisted on revising the Convention and obtaining bases in the vicinity of the Straits. For the text of document presenting Soviet demands over the Straits see, FRUS: The Conference of Berlin, 1945, (vol. II):1427, in Şuhnaz Yılmaz, “From Strangers to Allies: Turkish-American Relations,” Unpublished PhD Dissertation, (Princeton University, 1999):182, endnote 79.

For the Telegram to Ambassador Sarper from Turkish Foreign Ministry, July 12, 1945, see *İkinci Dünya Savaşı Yılları* (Dışişleri Bakanlığı Yayınları: Ankara, 1973): 267 in Şuhnaz Yılmaz, “From Strangers to Allies:

Istanbul was more than a symbolic visit for the Turks; it was a proof of US determination to back Turkey against the Soviet threat. Likewise, it was a great relief for Turkish people when Washington responded to the Soviet note of August 7, 1946, reiterating their claims over the Straits, by sending a naval force to the eastern Mediterranean. Following this demonstrative show of force by the US navy, on September 30, 1946, Washington announced that a portion of the American fleet would be permanently stationed there⁸. In this sense, the remarks made by President İnönü over the visit of Missouri: “The closer the ships of American navy to us, the better” reflected the desirability of US support to overcome Turkey’s political insecurity.⁹

However, Turkish-American relations gained momentum with the proclamation of Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. In this process, the friendship between the US and Turkey turned into a formal alliance with Turkey’s NATO membership in 1952. In fact, the US policymakers were divided over the idea of extending military assistance to Turkey. As Feroz Ahmad indicates, the Pentagon regarded Turkey as a key country in the US Cold War strategy and therefore was in favor of the policy of providing military aid to Turkey.¹⁰ In contrast, the US officials from the State Department such as the Secretary of State Dean Acheson and George Kennan, believed that Turkey did not face an imminent threat from the

Turkish-American Relations,” Unpublished PhD Dissertation, (Princeton University, 1999): 182, endnote 77. See also, William R. Keylor, *The Twentieth-Century World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996): 257.

⁸ See, William R. Keylor, *The Twentieth-Century World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996): 258.

⁹ For a similar view and to read on the comments of the Turkish press over the visit of Missouri see also, Yılmaz, Şuhnaz, “From Strangers to Allies: Turkish-American Relations,” Unpublished PhD Dissertation, (Princeton University, 1999): 185-86.

¹⁰ Feroz Ahmad, “The Historical Background of Turkey’s Foreign Policy,” in Lenore G. Martin and Dimitris Keridis, *The Future of Turkish Foreign Policy* (MIT Press, 2004): 28- 30.

Soviets nor was it living through a financial collapse.¹¹ Yet, the US policymakers agreed on the fact that communist take over of Turkey constituted a serious threat for the flank states like Greece.¹² Therefore, Turkey assumed a strategic role in the containment of the Soviets, serving as a buffer state against Soviet expansion.

Nevertheless, Turkey struggled to get involved within the Marshall Plan and to become a NATO member, yet eventually succeeded in convincing Western powers and the US that (under the burden of sharing borders with the Soviet Union,) keeping her economy and military intact was crucial to stand up against the communist threat. In this context, the Korean War was regarded by the Turkish political elites as a test for Turkish solidarity for the US in this fight against communism. Therefore, the dispatch of Turkish troops to Korean War was believed to have paved the way for Turkey's NATO membership in 1952.

As George Harris indicates, Turkey's entry into NATO in February 1952 marked a major advance in Turkish-American relations.¹³ The bilateral relations developed on a security basis in which Turkey obtained from the US economic aids to reinforce her military and economic modernization and in response provided bases for the US power projection.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² On the other hand, Franz Schurmann argued that, Turkey received economic assistance for military modernization under the Truman doctrine mostly because of British concern over Greece. The British advised the US that the communist take over of Greece would have a domino effect in the region. See, Franz Schurmann, *The Logic of World Power: An Inquiry Into the Origins, Currents, and Contradictions of World Politics* (Pantheon Books, 1974).

¹³ George Harris, "Turkish-American relations since Truman doctrine" in Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan (eds.), *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present and Future* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004): 68-69.

In the following years 1954-1962 Turkey received \$ 867.500.000 as economic aid and \$ 1.550.000 for the military.¹⁴

While Turkey's NATO membership signified the realization of a political ideal-becoming a member of the Western world- as one of Atatürk's principles, Ankara perceived NATO as an extension of America and NATO membership as an opportunity to collaborate with the United States.¹⁵ However, this point of view misled Turkish political elites to reach a conclusion that Turkish and American interests were entirely congruent as Harris states.¹⁶ On the other hand, Baskin Oran argues that following an American oriented foreign policy in the 1950s was the political preference of the Turkish political elites, hoping that their cooperation would automatically result in economic aid.¹⁷ In this respect, Turkey had taken bold political steps to prove herself as a faithful ally of the US (despite the harsh criticisms at home for having sacrificed Turkish national interests in the long term for the sake of pleasing the Americans).¹⁸ Subsequently,

¹⁴ Baskin Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası I-II* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2001).

¹⁵ Oral Sander provides an insight for the Turkish-American rapprochement after the World War II with respect to Atatürk's legacy of westernization, geopolitics of Turkey as well as international dynamics of the period. See, Oral Sander, *Türkiye'nin Dış Politikası* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 1994): 71.

¹⁶ George Harris, "Turkish-American relations since Truman doctrine" in Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan (eds.), *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present and Future* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004): 68-69.

¹⁷ Baskin Oran argues that the US economic aid to Turkey following the Marshall plan has resulted in Turkey's economic over dependency on the United States. As a condition to the given economic aid, the United States was determining the scope and deciding on which sectors the aid could be used. Therefore; the United States became the target of criticism for preventing the development of Turkish industrial sectors. By following an active and pro-American foreign policy contrary to the Kemalist principles of the traditional Turkish foreign policy -in favor of status quo and neutrality- the political elites hoped to obtain more credits so that they could finance their budget deficits. When the economic support did not live up to their expectations, they looked for other sources and even approached to the Soviets for investment as the Menderes government and later as the Justice Party did. See, Baskin Oran(ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası I-II* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2001) :496- 498; 552-555; 560. See also, George Harris, "Turkish-American relations since Truman doctrine" in Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan (eds.), *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present and Future* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004): 69. Also, Feroz Ahmad, *Turkey: A Quest for Identity* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2003): 113-115.

¹⁸ Accordingly, both the Republican People's Party (RPP) and the Democrat Party (DP) have been criticized for having betrayed Kemalism. The political developments such as accepting the Truman doctrine, the Marshall plan, joining NATO and the Baghdad Pact were all considered as political maneuvers to make Turkey an appendage of the West. The nationalists and the Leftists began calling for a non-aligned Turkey and suggested that such policies against the national interests had to be abandoned. For the anti-American debates in the

Turkey formally recognized Israel in 1949 as the first Muslim country, participated in the Baghdad Pact, and allowed the use of her military bases for the US reconnaissance flights over the Soviet Union.¹⁹ What's more Turkey was one of the three countries beside Great Britain and Italy which approved the deployment of Jupiter missiles on her soil. This secret arrangement which left Turkey vulnerable to a Soviet attack was revealed by the Cuban missile crisis in 1962.²⁰

In 1962, Cuban missile crisis not only disclosed the presence of Jupiter missiles in Turkey but also brought to light the political bargaining between the Soviets and the US over Turkey's security establishments. In order to prevent a nuclear war with the US, the Soviets agreed to dismantle their missiles from Cuba in exchange for the US removal of the Jupiter missiles from İzmir-Çiğli airbase in Turkey. Despite the US efforts to compensate Turkey's security deficit by sending submarine based Polaris missiles, becoming a matter of bargain between the two superpowers had left question marks in the Turkish public opinion about the reliability of US support in case of a real crisis.

However, the serious blow to the Turkish-US relations came with the Johnson letter of 1964 in which the US warned Turkey about the political consequences of a possible military intervention in Cyprus to protect Turkish Cypriots. In this bluntly written letter, President Johnson stated that

Turkish society see, Feroz Ahmad, *Turkey: A Quest for Identity* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2003): 128-130.

¹⁹ The use of Turkish military bases for non-NATO operations became a matter of debate as the United States used İncirlik air base in the Lebanese crisis of 1958 without Turkish authorization. See, Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası I* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2001): 568.

Turkey's political attitude during the Lebanese crisis and during the Algerian War of Independence in which Turkey voted in favor of France at the UN, alienated the Middle Eastern countries. See, Soli Özel, "Of not being a lone Wolf: Geography, Domestic Plays and Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East", in G. Kemp and J. G. Stein (eds.), *Powder Keg in the Middle East* (Lanham MD: Rowman Littlefield, 1995): 163.

²⁰ Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası I* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2001): 572.

the US did not approve of Turkey's launching a military campaign which might lead to a Russian involvement in the conflict. Under these circumstances Turkey had to face the consequences of a military campaign alone and should not expect NATO to come to aid in case of a Soviet attack. What's more, Washington opposed to Turkey's use of the US military hardware in such a military operation which lacked US consent and warned Ankara that the military supply was given to Turkey only for defensive purposes.²¹

The Johnson letter presented a turning point in Turkish-American relations particularly for the Turkish foreign policy, in the sense that, on a highly critical issue where Turkish national interests were at stake, the Turks were left alone by their strongest ally. Furthermore, the American political stance which seemed to be favoring the Greek side created a feeling of betrayal and disappointment at both official and public levels. This feeling of betrayal inclined Turkey to seek alternatives to the United States in terms of economic and political cooperation. In this respect, Johnson letter signified a shift in Turkish foreign policy towards a multi-dimensional foreign policy line, thus "ended the phase of 'unquestioned cooperation' with the US."²²

Following 1964, Turkey sought to strengthen her ties with the Soviet Union and the Third World and adopted a more distanced political attitude *vis-à-vis* the United States. In 1965 Turkey voted against the US

²¹ For the details of the Johnson letter and its impact on the Turkish public opinion, see Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası I* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2001): 685-690; See also Fahir Armaoğlu, *20.Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi I* (Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1994): 788-791.

²² Cited from George Harris, "Turkish-American relations since Truman doctrine" in Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan (eds.), *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present and Future* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004): 69.

use of force in Vietnam at the UN General Assembly. In 1967 Ankara concluded an economic agreement with the USSR worth a \$ 200 million in cheap credits. This led the US officials to question Turkey's intentions whether she was changing axis or not.²³ Moreover, Turkey withdrew from the Multilateral Force (MLF) which was one of NATO's new security establishments, yet signed a Joint Defense Agreement with the US in 1969. This new security agreement compiled the previous bilateral treaties as well as the informal security arrangements between the two countries and comprised critical changes in favor of Turkey such as the control of the US military bases and the status of the US military personnel in Turkey. In the following years, Turkish American relations would enter a turbulent period with Bülent Ecevit's coming to power and his authorization for the resumption of the opium poppy cultivation in 1974 as one of his campaign promises. However, the Turkish military intervention to Cyprus the same year would overshadow the opium issue and lead to further deterioration of the bilateral relations.²⁴

According to Oran, the underlying motive of following a "relatively autonomous" foreign policy towards 1970s and on was mostly in order to gain political support for the Cyprus issue at the international level and to find alternative sources which would compensate the decreasing US economic aids due to the growing tension over Cyprus and the impact of the ethnic lobbies. The oil crisis of 1973 also had an impact on Turkey's

²³ Philip Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War* (London: Hurst & Co., 2003): 132.

²⁴ The Ecevit government declared a new "National Defense Doctrine" in 1978. This new national defense doctrine emphasized the necessity of finding alternative sources to the US (including the USSR) in order to provide military equipments and weaponry. For the details of the new national defense doctrine see, Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası I* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2001): 674.

rapprochement with the Middle Eastern Countries. Promoting political and economic relations with the oil rich Arab world would enable Turkey to overcome her economic challenges due to the oil shortages and decrease her political isolation over the Cyprus issue. Nevertheless, Turkey did not join the non-aligned movement and remained within the Western defense block despite the growing anti-American sentiments in the society parallel to the rise of the Turkish Left and to the international developments of the period.

As a result of Vietnam War the US had lost a great deal of political prestige. The emergence of new economic competitors like Germany and Japan along with the economic challenges of the Vietnam defeat and the continuing nuclear race with the USSR were among the factors which undermined the economic superiority of the United States.²⁵ Therefore, warming relations with the Soviet Union would provide a breathing space for both sides since the two superpowers reached a nuclear parity which would result in mutually assured destruction (MAD).

However, the rapprochement efforts between the two superpowers which bore their fruits in the Final Document of Helsinki Summit in 1975 loosened the ties between Turkey and the United States (and paved the way for pursuing their own national interests). Since the Turkish-American alliance rested upon the common strategic aim of containing the Soviet Union, it was this sense of unity against a foreign threat which limited the scope of disagreement between the allies. At times when the Soviet threat

²⁵ For an analysis over the economic turbulence the United States during the 1970s see, Giovanni Arrighi, "The Social and Political Economy of Global Turbulence," *New Left Review* 20, March-April 2003.

started to fade away as in the period of detente in the 1970s, their conflicting interests resurfaced.²⁶

In fact, anti-Americanism was already on the rise in Turkey owing to the impact of the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Johnson letter. The Turkish political elites under the leadership of the Turkish Labor Party (TIP) were criticizing the scope and purposes of the given US aids and even suggesting Turkey to quit NATO.²⁷ Besides, the conspiracy theories about the United States carrying out Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operations aiming to destroy the Turkish Left served as a part of the political discourse for the Turkish Left and led to further political polarization.²⁸ In light of these developments, the public discontent towards the United States resulted in attacks which targeted the US military personnel and the diplomats such that the US military decided to *keep a low profile* in Turkey and called back the US ambassador in 1969.²⁹

As Philip Robin states, the Johnson letter was a shocking experience for the Turkish society and the events of 1974 confirmed that there were limits to which Turkey could rely on her superpower ally.³⁰ On July 15, the National Guard of Cyprus, acting on the orders from the junta in Athens,³¹ organized a coup against Makarios. As one of the guarantors of the 1960

²⁶ For a similar view see, George Harris, "Turkish-American relations since Truman doctrine" in Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan (eds.), *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present and Future* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004). See also Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "From Strangers to Allies: Turkish-American Relations," Unpublished PhD Dissertation, (Princeton University, 1999), also Rachel Prager, "The Turkish-American relations: Historical Context and Current Issues", TUSIAD report 2003. <http://www.tusiad.us>

²⁷ Feroz Ahmad, *Turkey: A Quest for Identity* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2003): 129-131.

²⁸ Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası I* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2001): 696,

²⁹ To read on the impact of Cyprus issue and the rise of anti-Americanism in Turkish society, see Feroz Ahmad, *Turkey: A Quest for Identity* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2003): 129-131; for the protests towards the US military personnel see also, Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası I* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2001): 692-696.

³⁰ Philip Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War* (London: Hurst & Co., 2003): 231.

³¹ Cited in see Feroz Ahmad, *Turkey: A Quest for Identity* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2003): 141.

Cyprus constitution, Turkey responded to the military coup against Makarios by launching a military campaign to provide a safe haven for the Turkish Cypriots. Turkish troops landed on the island on July 26 and launched a second offensive on August 14, establishing a Turkish Cypriot zone on the north coast of the island from Famagusta to Morphou.³² While the young and promising Prime Minister Ecevit became a national hero, Turkey had to face the United Nations (UN) condemnation and coercive resolutions demanding her withdrawal from the island. What's more, owing to the pressure of the Greek lobby the US Congress decided to impose a direct arm sales embargo on Turkey.

As Cengiz Çandar asserts, the embargo of 1975 had a more devastating impact on Turkish-American relations than the Johnson letter. Especially, the Turkish military as an institution affected directly from the embargo perceived this political move as an unjust punishment by an ally for an action that was a national cause and in Turkey's interest.³³ In fact, the arms embargo aimed at forcing Turkey to step back on Cyprus issue. In contrast, Turkey responded to the embargo by closing the military bases to the US and by suspending the Joint Defense Agreement of 1969. In 1975 Turkey declared the establishment of Turkish Federated State of Cyprus.

As Stephen F. Larrabee and Ian O. Lesser point out in their analysis of Turkish-American relations, both sides have used security cooperation as a lever in bilateral relations such as suspending the military aid or banning

³² While the first Turkish military operation was regarded as a just and legitimate reaction aiming to protect the rights of the Turkish Cypriots guaranteed by the 1960 constitution, the second military operation initiated during the second round of Geneva Conference, was considered as an invasion by the international community. See, Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası I* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2001): 748.

³³ Cengiz Çandar, "Some Turkish Perspectives on the United States" in Morton Abramowitz (ed.), *Turkey's Transformation and American Policy* (New York: Century Foundation Press, 2000): 134.

the use of military bases as in the case of the Cyprus conflict.³⁴ However, concerned with the international developments which signaled the coming of a “Second Cold War,” the US lifted the embargo in 1978 without getting any concrete results in the Cyprus issue.

With the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the coup in Iran in 1979, the cold war tensions shifted towards the Middle East and Turkey once more became the focus of US attention with her military and strategic importance as a loyal ally located in a troubled region. With the proclamation of Carter doctrine in 1980, securing the energy resources and strengthening American position in the Gulf have become the new strategic priorities for the US.³⁵ The United States approached a number of pro-Western states -including Turkey- in order to obtain military bases for the creation of Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) for use in the Persian Gulf-Red Sea region. However, Turkey refused to take part in the RDF because of concern for the reaction of the Arab states; instead, the US and Turkey concluded the Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement (DECA) in March 1980 as a sign of increasing cooperation. Therefore, it is possible to say that as the cold war tension escalated once more in the 1980s, the Turkish-American relations entered a cooperative phase based on the traditional equation of interests-providing bases in response for aids- and

³⁴ Stephen F. Larrabee and Ian O. Lesser, *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2003): 163-164.

³⁵ In January 1980, in his State of Union Address, President Jimmy Carter announced: “An attempt by an outside force to gain control of the Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America. And such an assault will be repelled by the use of any means necessary including military force.” For the resurgence of tension in the Middle East and the Carter doctrine see, Meliha Benli Altunışık “Turkish-American Security Relations: The Middle East Dimension” in Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan (eds.), *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present and Future* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004): 151-154; see also, William R. Keylor, *The Twentieth-Century World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996): 388-390.

“Turkey became a pillar of Washington’s strategy to protect American interests in the Middle East.”³⁶

Another factor which paved the way for close cooperation between Ankara and Washington has been the military coup of 1980. Sharp criticisms from Europe over the role of Turkish military in politics and the human rights abuses which reached their peak during the 1980 military rule distanced Turkey from Europe, whereas for the United States, Turkey presented a reliable ally with her cooperative military regime in a politically unstable environment.³⁷ In order to break this political isolation, the military junta didn’t hesitate to give political concessions to the US as in the case of Rogers Plan in which Turkey withdrew her veto against the return of Greece to NATO’s military command without a *quid pro quo*.³⁸ Also in November 1980 the military regime approved the Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement (DECA) which designed the framework of economic and security cooperation with the US for the next five years. Instead of an outright approval for the RDF, Turkey agreed with the United States on the modernization of its military airbases and construction of two new bases in Muş and Batman according to the Memorandum of Understanding in 1982.³⁹

³⁶ Cited in Meliha Benli Altunışık “Turkish-American Security Relations: The Middle East Dimension” in Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan (eds.), *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present and Future* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004): 154.

³⁷ See, Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası II* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2001): 39.

³⁸ See, Feroz Ahmad, *Turkey: A Quest for Identity* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2003): 150. See also Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası II* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2001): 40-43,

³⁹ Meliha Benli Altunışık “Turkish-American Security Relations: The Middle East Dimension” in Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan (eds.), *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present and Future* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004): 154.

The Turkish-American relations have entered a new phase with the transfer of political power to a civilian government as the Motherland party (ANAP) came to power under the leadership of Turgut Özal in 1983. Özal was a prominent political figure and the architect of 24 January 1980 economic reform program. He had worked in the World Bank and was known to financial circles in the West and within the business community in Turkey.⁴⁰ As a free market economist and pragmatic leader, Özal concentrated on the domestic economic development as well as improving economic ties with all the surrounding regions.

As Hugh and Nicole Pope state, Özal sought above all a change in mentality, converting the Turks into a thoroughly business-minded people. Huge amounts of money were spent on the infrastructure such as building new motorways, dams, bridges, airports, yacht marinas, telephone exchanges. Besides, Özal implemented new economic policies encouraging Turkish businessmen to produce for export and explore new markets in the Middle East and the Caucasus. The economic modernization created a wealthy class in the Turkish society. On the other hand, Özal's cross border activism enabled political actors such as the Turkish Businessmen Association Council (TUSIAD) to increase their political leverage on foreign affairs. Soon, the Turkish businessmen would arrive in Washington to lobby the US Congress on behalf of their own interests. As a result of "the Özal revolution," the Turks emerged tougher and more competitive, far

⁴⁰ In 1980 the then deputy prime minister Turgut Özal was selected as "Man of the Year" by the influential banking magazine *Euro-money*, see Nicole Pope and Hugh Pope, *Turkey Unveiled: A history of Modern Turkey*, (New York: Overlook Press, 2004): 150.

more confident about their place in the world and their future prospects as a regional commercial power.⁴¹

The novelty that Özal brought to Turkish-American relations was not only the political intimacy at the leadership level which urged the US President to cut his press meeting on CNN in the middle to take Özal's phone call or his pragmatic style of diplomacy, bypassing bureaucratic channels to settle the issues right away and at first hand.⁴² By introducing "not aid but trade" policy, Özal sought to improve economic relations with the United States and thus attempted to raise Turkey's status as a trading partner. Instead of asking more dept relief or more aid, he demanded fair trade opportunities and transfer of technology which would enable Turkish economy to stand on her feet and decrease Turkey's economic and military overdependence on the United States. Özal's policies would bear their fruits in time such that, by the 1990s, of the nine F-16 warplanes out of 3000 produced around the world to be awarded a 'perfect grade', three were to be assembled in Turkey.⁴³

Despite Özal's intimate relations with the American President and his close cooperation with the United States, there remained contentious issues between the two countries which created discontent among the Turks. During the Özal period, the US Congress insisted on applying 7:10 ratio⁴⁴

⁴¹ Cited in Nicole Pope and Hugh Pope, *Turkey Unveiled: A history of Modern Turkey*, (New York: Overlook Press, 2004): 171.

⁴² To read on Özal's personality and his political views see, Ergin Güner, *Özallı Yıllarım* (İstanbul: Babıali Kültür Yayıncılığı, 2003), see also, Cengiz Çandar "Some Turkish perspectives on the United States" in Morton Abramowitz "The Complexities of American Policy on Turkey" in Morton Abramowitz (ed.), *Turkey's Transformation and American Policy* (New York: Century Foundation Press, 2000).

⁴³ See Nicole Pope and Hugh Pope, *Turkey Unveiled: A history of Modern Turkey*, (New York: Overlook Press, 2004):175.

⁴⁴ Following the Cyprus intervention and the military embargo, the US tried to put the relations back on track with Turkey and Greece. During the negotiations of a new defense agreement with the US in 1977, the Karamanlis government proposed applying a 7 to 10 ratio in military assistance to Greece and Turkey in return

on the arms sales to Greece and Turkey respectively and continued to attach preconditions to economic and military aids such as bringing a solution to Cyprus question or improving its human rights record. Unfortunately, strategic issues remained hostage to the leverage of the ethnic lobbies due to the absence of a strong Turkish lobby in the US. Nevertheless, Özal chose to work closely with the United States. As Soli Özel indicates, within the context of his cross border activism Özal used the United States as leverage in order to create new international openings-particularly on relations with the Turkic states- and to bring solutions to many contentious issues (i.e. the Kurdish problem).

The international system inevitably changed as the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991. The end of the Cold War brought along the necessity of redefining the bilateral relations while the future of NATO remained uncertain. These uncertainties of the 1990s would bring Turkey and the United States closer to a level of “strategic partnership.” Especially, the Gulf War of 1991 would serve as a defining moment in terms of bilateral relation which gave Turkey the opportunity to reaffirm her geopolitical importance and present herself as an indispensable ally for the United States.

for the US lifting the military embargo on Turkey. Although the US Congress did not approve the agreement, the ratio of 7/10 remained on the agenda of the Greek lobby in the US Congress as a matter of pressure. See, Şuhnaz Yılmaz, “The Impact of Lobbies on Turkish-American Relations,” in Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan (eds.), *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present and Future* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004): 186. See also, Baskın Oran (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikası I* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2001): 709.

CHAPTER II

TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS IN THE POST-COLD WAR CONTEXT

The post-cold war period following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 brought along profound changes as well as uncertainties for the international system. With the collapse of the USSR, the United States emerged as the sole superpower. However, the absence of a common enemy led to a questioning of the *raison d'être* of both the Atlantic alliance and the international institutions which served as the main pillars of this alliance such as NATO. The new international setting due to the elimination of the Soviet threat and the emergence of the new states in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus necessitated a redefinition of the role and responsibilities of the United States in this unipolar world.⁴⁵

The end of the Cold War did not only signify an economic collapse of the Soviet Union owing to the continuous arms race with the United States. It also meant an ideological defeat of communism vs. capitalism. The post-Cold War era promised a new world order based upon American supremacy and American values such as a liberal capitalist economic system, freedom, democracy, and human rights. However, there was an ongoing debate on whether this new world would become as peaceful and rosy a place as Francis Fukuyama depicted in his “End of History” or not.⁴⁶ In contrast to Fukuyama’s optimistic anticipations, many analysts were predicting that a world of chaos would dominate the political scene as

⁴⁵ See for instance, Samuel Huntington, “The Erosion of American National Interests,” *Foreign Affairs* (September /October, 1997), 76(1). Huntington argues that the elimination of the Soviet threat meant “the loss of the other” for the United States which complicated identifying its interests in a unipolar world.

⁴⁶ Francis Fukuyama, *End of History and the Last Man*, (The Free Press, 2006).

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Samuel Huntington claimed in “The Clash of Civilizations” where a clash of ideologies would be replaced by clash of civilizations based on cultural differences.⁴⁷

While the political analysts were looking for new strategies on how to handle the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the technological advances of the 1990s were accelerating economic, technological, political, and cultural integration known as globalization. As the forces of globalization blurred the line between the domestic and the international, the events beyond national borders -such as ethnic strife, terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), drug trafficking, spread of infectious diseases, and environmental degradation- started attracting more attention.

Given its military and economic superiority, the United States appeared to be the only global actor capable of confronting these unconventional threats which required strong leadership and overseas engagement. However, whether the United States would and should assume the role of a world policeman or not was another matter of debate. With no imminent military threat to American interests, the US public opinion was in favor of following a neo-isolationist foreign policy. With candidates focusing on domestic matters, particularly the economy, the presidential campaigns of the 1992 elections reflected this public tendency.⁴⁸

However, as demonstrated by the Gulf War experience and the international developments throughout the 1990s -such as those in Haiti, Somalia, Bosnia, Northern Iraq and Kosovo-, the world looked no safer than

⁴⁷ Samuel P. Huntington, *the Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

⁴⁸ “The US presidential election, 1992,” available at, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._presidential_election%2C_1992.

the Cold War period. The complex security environment of the post-cold war period and the reluctance of the international community to act without American leadership led the US policy makers to make a reassessment of their strategic priorities.

As for Turkey, the end of the Cold War inevitably raised concerns over her declining geopolitical importance for the United States as well as for Europe. The changing political landscape with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the emergence of new neighboring states required a redefinition of Turkey's place and role in the international system. During the integration process of the former Soviet states to the European system with an emphasis on their European identity, Turkey suddenly found herself out of the league. As the 1989 decision of the European Community confirmed, with respect to embracing the core European values such as democracy, civil society, and respect for human rights, Turkey did not live up to European standards. On the other hand, the debates over the future of NATO and the CFE treaty were perceived as early indicators of Turkey's waning military influence. Particularly, the gradual downsizing of the US military installations and personnel along with a decline in the US foreign aid to Turkey were considered as worrisome developments by a flank state whose main ties to the Western world, particularly to the United States have been primarily security related. Therefore with the end of Cold War, Turkey faced the risk of being excluded from the political - security architecture of the new world order with respect to her declining strategic value.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Serhat Güvenç, "Rise and Demise of a "Strategic Partnership": In search of context for Post-Cold War Turkish-American Relations," Unpublished PhD Dissertation (Boğaziçi University, 2003).

However, contrary to the expectations, the change in Turkey's geostrategic environment paved the way for new areas of cooperation for Turkey and the United States parallel to the developments in the Middle East, the Balkans, and the Caucasus. As a key ally located in an unstable region, Turkey assumed a pivotal role in securing US interests as a bulwark against the instability of the Middle East, balancer against Russian interests in Central Asian Republics, and stabilizer in the Balkans.⁵⁰ In this respect, the Gulf War provided an opportunity for solidifying US support and for reasserting Turkey's geopolitical importance in the eyes of the international community. So much so that "strategic relations" of the post-Gulf War environment evolved into a "strategic partnership" as in 1999 President Clinton declared in his speech at the Turkish National Assembly to define Turkish-American relations of the era on the basis of converging political interests.

Gulf War-A defining Moment for the Turkish-American Relations

The Gulf War was the first international crisis of the post-cold war era. A broad coalition of international forces including 34 countries successfully defeated Saddam Hussein's Iraq and forced him to withdraw from Kuwait with a remarkably short operation.. Annexation of Kuwait by

See also, Stephen F. Larrabee and Ian O. Lesser, *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2003).

⁵⁰ Cited in Rachel Prager, "The Turkish-American relations: Historical Context and Current Issues," TUSIAD report 2003. Available at <http://www.tusiad.us>.

Saddam was believed to be a part of a larger plan designated to capture the oil fields of Saudi Arabia and claim the leadership of Arab world by controlling the largest share of the world's oil supplies. However, by depending upon the power vacuum that the disappearance of the Soviets created and the distraction of the United States and Europe, Saddam miscalculated the international response when he invaded Kuwait on August, 1990. Contrary to Saddam's political calculations, the lack of superpower confrontation led to the United States and the Soviets taking part on the same side against the dictator. Furthermore, the annexation of a fellow Arab country by another caused dissent among the Arabs. Therefore, following the invasion, a series of resolutions were passed through the United Nations and the Arab League condemning Iraq and demanding the withdrawal of its troops from Kuwait. The international community backed the United States and tried a number of diplomatic ways from sending diplomatic envoys to applying economic sanctions to force Iraq out of Kuwait but to no avail. On November 29, 1990 the United Nations passed the resolution 678 giving Iraq a withdrawal deadline of January 15, 1991 and authorizing the use of force through the resolution 660. When the diplomatic efforts failed to convince Saddam to retreat from Kuwait, the United States commenced the operation Desert Storm on January 17, 1991.⁵¹

⁵¹ To read on the Gulf War; See, Alberto Bin, Richard Hill and Archer Jones, *Desert Storm: A Forgotten War* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1998). See also, Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict 1990-1991: Diplomacy and War in the New World Order* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993). For further reading; see also, Clawson, Patrick L. (ed.), *Iraq Strategy Review: Options for U.S. Policy* (Washington: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1998).

To borrow a phrase from George H. W. Bush, Gulf War was a defining moment in the post-cold war world. On the one hand, it was a test of US willingness to fulfill its mission of continuing leadership in the post-cold war world in the name of preserving global stability. On the other hand, the Gulf War served as an opportunity for the international community to demonstrate its commitment to the basic tenets of the new world order, i.e. The rule of international law, the sovereignty of nations, democracy and freedom- through the efficient working of the collective security mechanisms such as the UN and the NATO. As Ted G. Carpenter points out in his analysis, in terms of US foreign policy objectives, a vigorous and uncompromising response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was essential to deter other potential aggressors.⁵² In this respect, the Gulf War can be considered as a successful operation for the Bush administration in terms of liberating Kuwait through building a coalition of unprecedented size and providing the international legal basis for US and coalition forces.⁵³ However, to many political analysts, the Gulf War appeared as an unfinished task since President H. W. Bush who was not keen on nation building left the toppling of Saddam to the internal forces within the country, i.e. The Kurds and the Shiite. Analysts like Terry Deibel criticized Bush's decision to terminate the Gulf War before Husseins's fall as sacrificing the US interests for the sake of avoiding international pressures.⁵⁴

⁵² Ted Galen Carpenter, "The New World Disorder," *Foreign Policy* (fall, 1991): 25.

⁵³ Terry L. Deibel, "Bush's Foreign Policy: Mastery and Inaction," *Foreign Policy* (fall, 1991): 7.

⁵⁴ Despite high praise for his competence on foreign policy and his personal conduct of diplomacy, President Bush was criticized for his cautious handling of foreign policy which minimized opportunities as well as mistakes. According to Terry Deibel, Bush was reactive to foreign policy issues and although he was good at crisis, in terms of strategy and forethought he failed to determine the political priorities of the United States and

Turkish-US Cooperation in the Gulf War

Turkey's decision to support the US led coalition in the Gulf War signified a radical departure in the Turkish Foreign policy making in terms of abandoning the traditional policy of non-interference in Middle Eastern affairs. As an ambitious political leader, Turgut Ozal saw the Gulf War as an opportunity to reassure Turkey's geopolitical importance to the West by following a more active and pro-Western foreign policy in the road to war.⁵⁵ According to Özal, Turkey should not remain outside the political developments which reshaped the world map, particularly the Middle East and should have its place at the table of negotiations. As Mustafa Aydın asserts, Özal envisioned Turkey to become a regional power and believed that keeping Turkey away from international conflicts and problems would not help build a powerful Turkey.⁵⁶ On the contrary, what Turkey needed was a powerful and determined foreign policy, able to take calculated risks.

Özal considered Turkey's involvement in the Gulf War as a political investment. Siding with the US would pay off in terms of political and economic openings from the United States and indirectly contribute to

thus failed to formulate an active and coherent strategy for the US in the post-containment years. Aside from the foreign policy issues, analysts like Mandelbaum criticized Bush for ignoring the nation's fiscal problems which would determine the US capacity to lead and engage international conflicts over the long-term. Despite his popularity and high approval ratings during and after the Gulf War, President Bush lost the next elections due to the domestic constraints such as the ongoing economic recession and particularly failure to keep their campaign promises of "no new taxes." See, Michael Mandelbaum, "The Bush Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs: America and the World 1990/91*, 70(1).

⁵⁵ . As Larrabee and Lesser points out the absence of Cold War conditions, the absence of a fear of a Soviet response enabled Turkey to openly align with the West in the conflict. See, Stephen F. Larrabee and Ian O. Lesser, *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2003).

⁵⁶ Mustafa Aydın, *Turkish Foreign Policy during the Gulf War 1990-91* (The American University in Cairo Press, 1998).

Turkey's aspirations for EU membership.⁵⁷ Therefore despite the public opposition to the war, Turkey offered close assistance to the United States during the Gulf War. Other than diplomatic gestures such as closing the oil pipelines a day after the UN resolution, Turkey opened its military bases and its airspace to the coalition forces and deployed Turkish troops on the Iraqi border. However, Özal's handling of the crisis and his attempt to run Turkey's foreign policy as in a presidential system was harshly criticized and led to resignations from his cabinet.⁵⁸ Particularly, the speculations on Özal's intentions which claimed opening a second land front in the Northern Iraq to capture the oil rich provinces of Mosul and Kirkuk led to the resignation of the Chief of General Staff.

The close cooperation of the US and Turkey during the Gulf War, particularly the intimate relations between the two political leaders and their phone diplomacy opened a new page in bilateral relations in the uncertain political environment of the post-Cold War world. However, with respect to the long-term political and economic consequences, the Gulf War left a legacy of distrust and disappointment on the Turkish side. The contradictory outcomes of the war led to an erosion of confidence over the Turkish side towards the US policies in the region which continued to undermine bilateral relations in the following decades.

⁵⁷ The memoirs of Özal indicate that, Özal had warned President Bush about Saddam Hussein's aggressive behaviors long before Saddam invaded Kuwait. See, Mehmet Barlas, *Turgut Özal'ın Anıları* (İstanbul: Sabah Kitapları, 1994): 116; See also Mehmet Ali Birand and Soner Yalçın, *The Özal: Bir Davanın Öyküsü* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2001): 417; Ergin Güner, *Özallı Yıllarım* (İstanbul: Babıali Kültür Yayıncılığı, 2003).

⁵⁸ The Foreign Minister, the Defense Minister, and the Chief of General Staff resigned in response to Özal's handling of Gulf policy. For the background of the resignations see for instance, Mehmet Ali Birand and Soner Yalçın, *The Özal: Bir Davanın Öyküsü* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2001): 440. See also, Güven Erkaya and Taner Baytok, *Bir Asker Bir Diplomat* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2001).

As a neighboring state, Turkey was directly affected by the political and economic arrangements in Iraq. After the withdrawal of the coalition forces from Iraq, Turkey had to live with the reality that Saddam regime was left in power. The Bush administration was anticipating the Saddam regime to be overthrown by the internal forces within the country, i.e. the Kurds and the Shia communities. However, the United States did not deliver support to the Kurdish and Shia uprisings and left them to their own devices when Saddam Hussein launched a military campaign to suppress the rebellions. Eventually, Iraqi Kurds rushed to the Turkish border in 1991. Fearing another refugee crisis similar to that of 1987, Turkish officials appealed to the UN to bring an immediate solution to the problem.⁵⁹

Therefore, in 1991, Operation Provide Comfort (OPC)-Operation Poised Hammer as known in Turkey- was created to conduct humanitarian assistance and return refugees to their home.⁶⁰ The UN enforcement of a security zone in the north of 36th parallel through OPC and OPC II eased the tension to an extent; however it also led to an internationalization of the Kurdish problem, particularly Turkey's own Kurdish reality. Turkey's handling of the Kurdish insurgency in the Southeast Anatolia had become a subject matter of criticism by the international community because of human rights violations. While Ankara often regarded international pressures which urged Turkey to devise a political solution to Kurdish

⁵⁹ First of all, Turkey lacked the economic resources to accommodate those people in the Southeast Anatolia. Halting the cross border trade with Iraq as a part of the economic sanctions worsened the living conditions in the region. What is more, Turkish officials were concerned of the influx of Iraqi Kurds to Turkey which would complicate their struggle against the PKK. See, Mustafa Aydın, *Turkish Foreign Policy during the Gulf War 1990-91* (The American University in Cairo Press, 1998). See also, Ramazan Gözen, *Amerikan Kuskaciında Dış Politika: Körfez Savaşı, Turgut Özal ve Sonrası*, (Ankara: Liberte, 2000): 343-374.; See also, Meliha Benli Altunışık, "Turkish-American Security Relations: The Middle East Dimension," in Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan (eds.), *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present and Future* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).

problem as interference in Turkey's domestic affairs, human rights record of Turkey had become a crucial factor determining Turkish-American relations in the 1990s.⁶¹

The OPC constituted an important part of Turkish-US relations in the 1990s despite its controversial implications on Turkey's foreign policy towards Iraq. Establishment of a Kurdish "safe haven" which initially aimed at protecting Iraqi Kurds from Saddam's military and political harassment led to a power vacuum in the Northern Iraq. This power vacuum was claimed to have given PKK a free hand in the region and advanced the establishment of a de-facto Kurdish state. Emergence of a separate Kurdish entity in the neighborhood was perceived as a threatening development on the Turkish side since it might have an inspiring effect on the Turkish Kurds to follow suit. Thus, the US role as a mediator between the Kurdish leaders to establish a political authority in the region was met with suspicion especially by the nationalist circles in Turkey.⁶² What's more, the alleged news reports about the US soldiers helping the wounded PKK guerillas in Northern Iraq turned Turkish public opinion against the

⁶¹ Improvement of Turkey's human rights record had been used as a political leverage by the US Congress under Clinton administration. The US Congress attached conditions on arms sales and suspended the transfer of arms to Turkey. See, Sabri, Sayarı, "Turkish-American Relations in the post-Cold War Era: Issues Convergence and Divergence," in Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan (eds.), *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present and Future* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004): 103.

⁶² Özal's policy towards the Iraqi Kurds was to establish a "Big Brother" status and maintain close relations with the Kurdish tribal leaders in order to influence the political developments at first hand. As Mustafa Aydın asserts, anticipating the political developments in the Northern Iraq, if some sort of Kurdish entity was going to be established, Özal preferred this to happen under Turkish influence. By the same token, acting as the protector of the Iraqi Kurds would prevent any inter-action between PKK guerillas and Iraqi peshmergas. After Özal's death Turkish foreign policy attained a more nationalist stance and increasing concern for the political transformation of a semi-autonomous Kurdistan to an independent Kurdistan led the political elites to support policies favoring the territorial integrity of Iraq. Therefore, they sought to restore ties with Iraqi regime in order to compensate their losses from the economic sanctions. See Mustafa Aydın, Mustafa Aydın, *Turkish Foreign Policy during the Gulf War 1990-91* (The American University in Cairo Press, 1998); See also Philip Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War* (London: Hurst & Co., 2003): 318-342.

United States and led Turkish political elites to question the US intentions and the aim of military operations under OPC.⁶³

The renewal of mandate for the OPC has been a contentious issue in the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA), every six months till OPC ended with the beginning of "Operation Iraqi Freedom" on March 19, 2003. Due to increasing public pressures, OPC was replaced by a downsized force, Operation Northern Watch during Necmettin Erbakan's coalition government in 1997. Nevertheless, the renewal of the OPC's mandate came to symbolize the mutual dependence relationship between Ankara and Washington. The US use of İncirlik airbase- was essential for the conduct of OPC and for the containment of Saddam. This provided Ankara a bargaining power such as to conduct cross-border operations against the PKK which the U.S. refrained to criticize. Consequently, Ankara avoided alienating the United States and continued to give support for the U.S. air monitoring of *no-fly zones* in Northern Iraq.

Regarding the political and economic consequences of the Gulf War on Turkey, Özal's policies did not produce the outcome he had predicted. As mentioned earlier, what Özal had in his mind was to get political and economic gains from the United States in return for Turkish solidarity

⁶³ On October 1992, the US aircraft carrier Saratoga accidentally fired two Sea Sparrow missiles, killing five Turks aboard the Turkish destroyer *Muavenet*, and wounding 15, during NATO exercises in the Aegean Sea. See, Eric Schmitt, "Navy Seeks Cause of Errant Missile", The New York Times, October 3, 1992, available at, http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/subjects/a/aircraft_carriers/index.html?query=ACCIDENTS%20AND%20SAFETY&field=des&match=exact

The *Muavenet* incident was claimed to be a part of the US plot to intimidate Turkey because the accident coincided with Turkish policymakers' explicit opposition against the OPC. The growing suspicion among the Turks peaked as General Esref Bitlis was killed in a plane accident in 1993. He was one of the leading opposition in the Turkish Military who openly criticized the political implications of the OPC in northern Iraq. See, http://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/E%C5%9Fref_Bitlis. See also, Yalçın Bayer, "Muavenet'i Unutma," *Hürriyet*, (March 25, 2003) available at: <http://arsiv3.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/yazar/0..authorid~42@sid~9@tarih~2003-03-25-m@nvid~247122.00.asp>

during the Gulf War. Specifically, he expected greater access to US markets for Turkish exports, an increase in military assistance, modernization of the Turkish armed forces, expansion of the strategic relationship between the two countries, and the US support for Turkey's aspirations for the European Community (EC). However, Turkey's cooperation during the Gulf War did not alter the Western European attitude to Turkey in general. As Aydın indicates, although Turkey received appreciation from the Western European countries for its close cooperation and solidarity, Gulf War did not pave the way for Turkey's EC membership, unlike the impact of the Korean War on Turkey's NATO membership.⁶⁴

On the other hand, it was true that the United States doubled Turkey's textile quota and provided a 282 million dollars additional assistance for 1991. However, it was far from satisfying the Turks who were expecting a writing-off its total debt as in the case of Egypt with its 7 billion dollars loan. Besides, Özal's initiative to establish a free trade agreement with the United States was stillborn.⁶⁵ Lastly, Turkey received \$3.5 billion worth of slightly outmoded US weapons not as a reward for its support during the Gulf War but through the cascading programme as a result of CFE treaty.⁶⁶ In the following years, Turkey would live through many difficulties during the transfer of US weapons and military equipments to Turkey due to the Congressional constraints.

Most analysts agree on the fact that considering the economic losses from the closure of the oil pipelines and halting of the cross-border trade

⁶⁴ Mustafa Aydın, *Ten Years After: Turkey's Gulf Policy (1990-91) Revisited*, (Ankara: Center for Eurasian Strategic Studies, 2002).

⁶⁵ Stephen F. Larrabee and Ian O. Lesser, *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2003): 167.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

with Iraq, Turkish economy was severely disrupted by the Gulf War.⁶⁷ The economic donations and credits received from the Gulf and the OECD countries failed to compensate Turkey's losses from the economic embargo on Iraq.⁶⁸ Moreover, the ongoing UN embargo was held responsible for the deterioration of the Turkish economy with respect to the rising inflation, rising interests and the decreasing GDP following the Gulf War. Concerned with its own economic constraints as well as territorial integrity of Iraq, Turkey tried to mend diplomatic and economic relations with the Baghdad regime following 1992, while lobbied for a softening of the UN embargo at the international level. Eventually, in April 1995, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 986, establishing "Oil for Food" program, allowing Iraq to sell oil for the purchase of humanitarian goods.⁶⁹

On the whole, the costs of following a pro-American foreign policy in the Gulf War seemed to outweigh the benefits which led to a sense of disappointment and suspicion among the Turks. Especially, the issue of "northern Iraq" caused a lot of stir between the two allies and thus had become a determining factor of Turkish-US relations in the next decade. Nevertheless, it is possible to say that Özal's Gulf War policy accomplished at least one limited goal as having focused the world's attention back on Turkey.

⁶⁷ See, Ramazan Gözen, *Amerikan Kısıkcıında Dış Politika: Körfez Savaşı, Turgut Özal ve Sonrası*, (Ankara: Liberte, 2000): 276-305.

⁶⁸ Turkey's expectations to participate in the reconstruction of war-torn Kuwait were not realized either, since most of the projects was promised to Americans and British companies before the end of the war. See Mustafa Aydın, *Ten Years After: Turkey's Gulf Policy (1990-91) Revisited*, (Ankara: Center for Eurasian Strategic Studies, 2002).

⁶⁹ The program started in December 1996. Accordingly, Iraq was permitted to sell \$ 2 billion worth of oil every six months with two thirds of that to be used to meet humanitarian needs. In 1998, the limit was raised to \$ 5.26 billion. See, Tayyar Arı, "Irak, İran ve ABD: Önleyici Savaş, Petrol ve Hegemonya" (İstanbul: Alfa, 2004): 477; See also, "The Office of the Iraq Program of Oil for Food," available at:

<http://www.un.org/Depts/oip/backgroundindex.html - 9k - 2003-02-19>

Turkish-American Relations in the 1990s

Robert J. Art suggests that what the United States chooses to do or not to do inevitably have profound effects not only on its own interests but also on those of most other states in the world, thus affects the course of world politics to come.⁷⁰ Therefore, it is important to look at the US foreign policy in the 1990s and understand political priorities, interests, and threat perceptions of the United States in order to situate Turkey in the US foreign policy and define the areas of conflict and cooperation between the two countries.

In fact, “It’s the economy, stupid,” the campaign mantra of William Jefferson Clinton gave a hint of the next administration’s foreign policy thinking.⁷¹ Throughout his campaign Clinton criticized Bush for being more concerned with foreign affairs than domestic needs and defined him as a failed leader who refused to take steps to end the economic recession.⁷² Obviously, foreign policy issues were not at the top of his political agenda. Instead, he was promising to “invest in America” and “focus like laser” on the economy to create more jobs and promote economic growth which would eventually increase American competitiveness abroad. His critics claimed that he had no experience in the foreign policy realm and therefore he could not be qualified as a foreign policy president. However, international challenges forced Clinton administration to review its foreign policy goals and develop a strategy in a world where to be safe at home

⁷⁰ Cited in Robert J. Art, *A Grand Strategy for America* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2003): 2.

⁷¹ To read on the presidential campaign of Bill Clinton in 1996 elections; See, “Washington Watch: New Challenges Even before Inauguration,” available at http://www.aaiusa.org/wwatch_archives/120792.htm.

⁷² Ibid.

depended on dealing with the unconventional threats that put global peace and stability at jeopardy.⁷³

Considering American primacy and the challenges of the global era, the remarks of Anthony Lake in 1993 are important to understand both the structure and dynamics of the post-cold war world, and the parameters of the US foreign policy throughout the 1990s.⁷⁴ According to Lake, to the extent that democracy and economics were embraced by other nations, the United States would be more secure, prosperous, and influential, while the broader world would be more humane and peaceful. Therefore, the successor to a doctrine of containment had to be a strategy of enlargement, enlargement of the world's free community of market democracies. The enlargement of the democratic core would secure interests and promote a security zone based on the liberal democratic view that the democracies tend not to wage war. In this respect, the United States should not only engage in the international system but should lead the world based on the following principles:

-Strengthening the community of market democracies,

-enlarging the democratic zone by fostering new democracies and market economies

⁷³ On the other hand, sending military forces to Somalia and Bosnia were among the issues he had taken over from Bush administration. To read on the US foreign policy under Clinton administration; See, Jonathan G. Clarke, "Instinct for the Capillary: The Clinton Administration's Foreign Policy "Successes," available at, <http://www.cato.org/cgi-bin/scripts/printtech.cgi/pubs/fpbriefts/fpb-040.htm>;

See also James K. Oliver, "The foreign policy architecture of the Clinton and Bush administrations," available at http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0KVD/is_1_4/ai_n6142104/print.

⁷⁴ Remarks by Anthony Lake, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, "From Containment to Enlargement" (September 21, 1993) Washington, D.C. , available at <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/lakedoc.html>

-providing humanitarian assistance to help democracy flourish in other regions of the world.

-countering the aggression by minimizing the ability of *backlash states*⁷⁵ outside the circle of democracy and markets to threaten it.

However, it was a matter of debate how to combine the goals and the means in an efficient way to avoid an imperial overstretch. In this respect Chase, Hill and Kennedy offered a new US strategy based on providing assistance to a number of states-pivotal states- rather than spreading its energy and attention over the globe.⁷⁶ The term of “pivotal state” was used to indicate the countries located on an unstable region and whose futures were likely to affect international stability. These pivotal states were Mexico and Brazil; Algeria, Egypt, and South Africa; India and Pakistan; Indonesia; and Turkey.

Turkey as a pivotal state

Turkey was located at a key geostrategic crossroads for U.S security interests not only in terms of geographical proximity to the international conflicts of the 1990s but also as a bridge for the energy transportation and international trade. A prosperous, stable Turkey would be a factor for stability in a number of different areas: the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East, and Europe.⁷⁷ However, the US view of Turkey began to take shape in the second half of the 1990s. Turkey became a truly pivotal state

⁷⁵ Anthony Lake, “Confronting Backlash States,” *Foreign Affairs* (March/April, 1994).

⁷⁶ Robert Chase, Emily Hill and Paul Kennedy, “Pivotal States and U.S. Strategy,” *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 1996.

⁷⁷ Stephen F. Larrabee and Ian O. Lesser, *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2003): 2.

CHAPTER III

TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS IN THE SEPTEMBER 11 CONTEXT: FROM AFGHANISTAN TO IRAQ

The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon marked a turning point for Americans altering their world view and priorities. On September 11, 2001, the United States was hit at home and about three thousand people were killed within two hours. The globalization showed its hideous face through a cyber space of terrorist networks and their plans for taking revenge from the world of modernity. A deadly combination of radicalism and technology were responsible for the change in the threat perception of the United States. In the aftermath of the attacks, Americans faced their vulnerability, and realized that even weak states like Afghanistan could pose a great danger to the national security, and neither the geographical advantage of the two vast oceans nor their unrivalled military power provided safety.

The 9/11 experience changed the common perspective on terrorism. Terrorist activities which used to be perceived as a problem of domestic politics had become a global threat addressing all nations and necessitating collective action. Therefore, following the attacks, international community stood behind the Americans, shared their grief and supported the US efforts to search and punish the responsible. On September 12, the United Nations passed a resolution, authorizing “all necessary steps” to respond the attacks. The same day, NATO invoked its Article 5 of “Collective Defense” -for the first time in the treaty’s history-calling for a joint response to defend a

member under attack. Therefore, when fingers pointed to al Qaeda,¹¹⁹ a terrorist organization operating from Afghanistan under the protection of Taliban regime, the international community was ready to join the U.S-led coalition forces to commence Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).¹²⁰

The traumatic experience of 9/11 inevitably led to a reassessment of many aspects of the US foreign policy, shaping their attitude toward other countries as well as their handling of American power. The state of insecurity enabled more conservative groups-known as the neocons-within the Bush administration to gain influence over the US foreign policy making, and implement the strategies they had been advocating since the early 1990s.¹²¹ Combining democratic ideals with the exercise of pre-

¹¹⁹ Al Qaeda was a terrorist organization under the leadership of Usame Bin Laden. The organization was also responsible for the bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 and of the USS Cole in Yemen in 2000. To read on the aims and structure of the organization, See, Jessica Stern, "The Protean Enemy", *Foreign Affairs* (July/August, 2003).

For the contributions of the coalition forces within the framework of OEF; See, <http://web.archive.org/web/20021014181846/usinfo.state.gov/911/020815contribute.htm>
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/10/20011007-8.html>

¹²⁰ However, the United States preferred not to carry out the OEF under NATO command. Instead a coalition of forces joined the United States in Afghanistan. See, The United States Central Command,

<http://www.centcom.mil/Operations/Coalition/joint.htm>

See also, <http://www.cdi.org/terrorism/isaf.cfm>,

ii. President Bush targeted Bin Laden responsible for the terrorist attacks. See, "Remarks of President Bush to the US Congress" (September 20,2001), available at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>

¹²¹ Neo-conservatism emerged as a reaction against the left-wing counterculture of the 1960s, particularly against the romantic, pacifist sentiments and increasing tendency of the Left to condemn Israel. The key members of the neoconservative group consisted of mostly well-educated Jewish immigrants belonging to the middle class such as Irving Kristol, Daniel Bell, Seymour Martin Lipset and Nathan Glazer. They have built a network of institutions, publishing and think tanks to spread their ideas. American Enterprise Institute, the Heritage Foundation, the Public Interest which later became the National Interest can be counted among the products of neoconservative movement.

The current generation of neoconservatives are in favor of asserting American power in a more unilateral way, skeptical of international institutions and entanglements of multilateralism. With reference to the US policy in the Middle East, they call for the US use of force to spread liberal democracy. In other words they try to achieve realistic goals by giving it a moral dimension with an emphasis on American values.

Neoconservatives in the first Bush administration were represented by a group of intellectuals and professionals. Among the prominent figures were Paul Wolfowitz, the deputy secretary of defense; Douglas Feith, number three at the Pentagon; Lewis Libby, Dick Cheney's chief of staff; and John Bolton from the State Department. The group also included Jim Woolsey, Richard Perle and Ken Adelman from Donald Rumsfeld's Defense Policy Board. In 1992, Paul Wolfowitz, as the Undersecretary of Defense for policy prepared a paper in which he defended increasing America's military superiority and the case of preemptive strikes.

emptive power, the National Security Strategy (NSS) of 2002 reflected a shift in the US foreign policy towards a more unilateralist and assertive line.

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The Grand Strategy of the United States after 9/11

The NSS of 2002 which set the US foreign policy framework in the post-September 11 environment, identified terrorists groups, weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and rouge states¹²³ as the main threats to US security. It was a matter of concern that terrorist activities could gain a more lethal dimension once the terrorist groups acquired WMD and the “rouge states could provide WMD to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred.” Therefore, the threat facing the United States were to involve rouge states such as Iran, Iraq, and North Korea that were seeking WMD. As President Bush stated in his State of the Union address in January 2002, “States like these and their terrorist allies constituted an axis of evil.” However, confronting these unconventional threats required going beyond the traditional defense policies of deterrence and containment and in

See, John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge, *The Right Nation: Conservative Power in America* (Penguin group, 2004).

See also, Anatol Lieven, *America Right or Wrong?: An Anatomy of American Nationalism* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

¹²² The NSS Document indicated that war on terrorism would involve a battle of ideas in which the United States would defend liberty, justice and peace against terrorists and tyrants for the sake of humankind. Since these principles were right and true for all people, the United States would also extend peace by encouraging free and open societies on every continent. Therefore, American power would be used to make the world safe for freedom to flourish. See, *The US National Security Strategy of 2002*, available at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nssall.html>

¹²³ Common features of these rouge states are identified as states which brutalize their own people, display no regard for international law, threaten their neighbors, violate international treaties. They are determined to acquire WMD. They sponsor terrorism around the globe. See, George W. Bush, “President Bush Delivers Graduation Speech at West Point”, (June 1, 2002), West Point, New York, available at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html>.

some cases necessitated acting preemptively before the danger emerges.¹²⁴ Although the NSS document emphasized the importance of strengthening alliances to defeat global terrorism, it also underlined the US right to act unilaterally if necessary to protect the nation and the country.

As G. John Ikenberry argued, the NSS formed a neo-imperial vision in which the United States assumed a global role of setting standards, determining threats, using force, and meting out justice.¹²⁵ In fact, neither unilateralism nor the right of preemption was a new theme for the US policy makers. Within the first eight months in office, the Bush administration showed disdain for international commitments and tended towards unilateralism. In May 2001, President Bush declared the U.S interest in developing a national missile defense system.¹²⁶ This was followed by the US withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol and the ABM Treaty while the Bush administration continued its campaign against the International Criminal Court. Besides, the United States also blocked the international efforts to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention at a time when reports of anthrax mailings¹²⁷ demonstrated how the biological materials could be used for terrorism.

¹²⁴Cited in Sherle R. Schwenninger, "Revamping American Grand Strategy," *World Policy Journal* (fall 2003): 24-45. Unlike the nation states, terrorist groups lacked a stable location which made retaliation impossible. Moreover, the fact that they were determined to die for their cause and adapted suicide bombings as a method proved defensive strategies as outdated.

¹²⁵ John G. Ikenberry, "America's Imperial Ambition," *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2002).

¹²⁶ In a speech at the National Defense University, President Bush said it was time to leave behind Cold War nuclear strategies and develop a missile defense system. See, "Remarks by the President Bush to Students and Faculty at the National Defense University" (May 1, 2001), Washington DC, available at: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/military/jan-june01/nmd_5-1.html

¹²⁷ For the details of the anthrax attacks in October 2001 See, Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound: the Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2003): 118.

As for the right of preemption, the United States always had the option of using force preemptively and experience from the past¹²⁸. However, the Bush administration was criticized for having turned the right of preemption into a doctrine by publicizing a mere policy option.¹²⁹ By declaring it publicly, the United States not only drew/has drawn an arrogant and unilateral image but also provided a pretext for other countries to claim the same right in order to pursue their own agendas. What's more the borders of this preemptive strike doctrine were so vague and elastic that it was left to the mercy of the United States to decide what constituted a threat, serious enough to wage a war.

Transatlantic Split

International solidarity for the US *war on terrorism* gradually faded in time as policy divergences and changes in threat perceptions surfaced on both sides of the Atlantic parallel to the changes in the US foreign policy. While the process of extending the war on terrorism from Afghanistan to Iraq exposed the pre-existing structural differences between the United States and Europe, rigid rhetoric and diplomatic mistakes on both sides exacerbated the growing rifts, and led to a transatlantic crisis. As Robert Kagan asserted in his famous essay "Power and Weakness", "when it came to setting national priorities, determining threats, defining challenges, and fashioning and implementing foreign and defense policies, the United States

¹²⁸ T read on the Cuba Missile Crisis, See, Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2003): 122.

¹²⁹ Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2003).

and Europe had parted ways”. According to Kagan, the underlying reasons for the transatlantic divide stemmed from the growing disparity of power between the United States and Europe.¹³⁰ The US military power provided a propensity to use it, unilaterally if necessary. Europeans, by contrast, due to their lack of military capacity tended towards cooperation through the international institutions to prevent conflicts. They preferred to deal with problems through economic integration, foreign aid, and multilateral institutions, using carrot over stick.¹³¹ Kagan claimed that, the unparalleled military power of the United States provided security for the Europeans by confronting challenges beyond Europe’s capacity, thus enabled the Europeans to live in a “Kantian” paradise -a postmodern world of “laws and transnational negotiation and cooperation”. However, at the same time, the US willingness to use that strength and its growing tendency to act unilaterally posed a threat to the foundations of this European world order.

With regard to the diverging threat perceptions of the transatlantic allies on the road to Iraq War, Andrew Moravcsik claimed that since the terrorist attacks were not directed against them, Europeans found the threat less pressing. Instead, they were more concerned of a possible spillover of the Middle East instability, considering large Muslim populations at home and their relations with the Middle Eastern countries. Moreover, most Europeans felt that the war in Iraq, unlike the War in Afghanistan was not really connected to the “war on terrorism. Instead, the United States seemed to be launching a war of choice in Iraq in order to complete an unfinished

¹³⁰ To Kagan, the transatlantic divide was not an end product of the Bush administration’s policies. The essence of the transatlantic split lied in the clash of values between Europe and America. While the United States became stronger, European values underwent a transformation parallel to the unification process. See, Robert Kagan, “Power and Weakness,” Policy Review (June/July, 2002) 113.

¹³¹ Andrew Moravcsik, “Striking a New Transatlantic Bargain”, *Foreign Affairs*, 82(4): 76.

task since the Gulf War by toppling Saddam Hussein. It is therefore interesting that on September 20, 2001, the Project for the New American Century (PNAC)) presented a letter to President George W. Bush, advising a regime change in Iraq “even if evidence does not link Iraq directly to the attack.”¹³²

As Zbigniew Brzezinski points out, the evident reluctance to see a connection between Middle Eastern terrorists and the political problems of the Middle East, fueled suspicions in the international community that the U.S. was exploiting the campaign against terrorism for regional political ends.¹³³ The most popular theory on the true motive behind the US toppling of Saddam Hussein suggested that the US intention to invade Iraq was actually to control the large oil fields of Iraq.¹³⁴ From a broader geopolitical perspective, controlling Iraqi oil fields would provide the US control of oil lands of the Middle East and Central Asia. By controlling an important supply of oil for the world, the United States would strengthen its hand against the potential rivals challenging the US global dominance, i.e. Europe and China.

¹³² “It may be that the Iraqi government provided assistance in some form to the recent attack on the United States. But even if evidence does not link Iraq directly to the attack, any strategy aiming at the eradication of terrorism and its sponsors must include a determined effort to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq. Failure to undertake such an effort will constitute an early and perhaps decisive surrender in the war on international terrorism. The United States must therefore provide full military and financial support to the Iraqi opposition. American military force should be used to provide a “safe zone” in Iraq from which the opposition can operate. And American forces must be prepared to back up our commitment to the Iraqi opposition by all necessary means.” See, <http://www.newamericancentury.org/Bushletter.htm>; See also, Jim Lobe, “The Bush Team Reloaded”, *Middle East Report* (spring 2005) 234.

¹³³ Cited in Zbigniew Brzezinski, “Iraq and US leadership,” *New Perspectives Quarterly* (Spring 2003) 20(2). In the hours following the terrorist attacks, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld pointed Iraq as a target in the war against terrorism. See, Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (London: Simon & Shuster UK, 2004). The 2001 edition of the Department of State’s annual *Patterns of Global Terrorism* presented no evidence of global terrorism linked to the government of Iraq. See Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of the Empire* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004).

¹³⁴ See for instance, Vassilis K. Fouskas, “US Macht-politik in Eurasia and the Refashioning of the Greater Middle East” in Bülent Aras (ed.), *War in the Gardens of Babylon: Middle East After the Iraqi War* (İstanbul: Tasam Publications, 2004)

Besides such claims that geopolitical objectives drove US action, analysts/academics like Chalmers Johnson pointed at an Israeli factor referring to the impact of the Jewish lobby on the US politics. Johnson argued that one of the reasons of the US invasion of Iraq was to protect Israel's security and its regional military superiority. The strongest argument supporting this theory was that the key figures in the (second) Bush administration -such as chairman of the Defense Policy Board Richard Perle, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, and Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith -maintained close relations with Ariel Sharon, then Prime Minister of Israel and the Likud Party. Moreover, through the publishing of the think tanks and sometimes through letters to the US President they have advocated policies favoring Israeli geo-strategic benefits.¹³⁵

In response to these claims, the Bush administration emphasized that Saddam Hussein was a dictator who brutalized his own people and posed a threat to international security by his seeking of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). With respect to the deep split of the allies over Iraq, Philip Gordon and Jeremy Shapiro argued that Europeans did not deny that Iraq was a problem, but they disagreed about the solution.¹³⁶ Considering the ethnic and sectarian divisions in the country, Europeans regarded a regime change through military intervention without a concrete plan for the post- Saddam Iraq as a strategic mistake. However, the United States

¹³⁵ See Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of the Empire* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004): 235.

¹³⁶ Their main argument is that despite the existing structural differences, the transatlantic split is neither irreparable nor inevitable. See, Philip H. Gordon and Jeremy Shapiro, *Allies at War: America, Europe and the crisis over Iraq* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004).

underestimated European and world opposition to the war and failed to engage key players such as Germany and France.¹³⁷

In many aspects, the U.S. public diplomacy failed to explain Washington's concerns to the world on Iraq. Partly, the diplomatic style of the U.S Secretary of State Colin L. Powell was responsible- his preference for making phone calls instead of traveling and establishing face to face contact.¹³⁸ On the other hand, it is true that by adapting a rhetoric which divided the world between good and evil, the United States alienated its allies and left no room for moderates. Moreover, the Bush administration's "the mission will build the coalition" approach led to a conviction that the United States was determined to overthrow Saddam regime no matter what. Only a week before the UN Security Council's resolution 1441¹³⁹, in an interview with the BBC, the US Secretary of State Colin Powell stated that: "The US continues to believe that the best way to disarm Iraq is through a regime change."¹⁴⁰ Besides, the tactical maneuvers of Iraq-its half

¹³⁷ The growing anti-war sentiments in Germany and France brought these two countries closer representing the European voice of opposition against the US management of world affairs. Especially the coming elections in September 2002 led German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder base his election campaign on the opposition to the US policy on Iraq. Gordon and Shapiro argued that France's opposition was not simply a result of traditional French resistance to American hegemony but a combination of factors pushed France taking part in the opposition camp. Among these a desire to reestablish Franco-German leadership of the EU by taking a stand in accordance with the anti-war public opinion in Europe deserves significance. See, Philip H. Gordon and Jeremy Shapiro, *Allies at war: America, Europe and the crisis over Iraq* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004).

¹³⁸ James P. Rubin, "Stumbling into war", *Foreign Affairs* (September/October, 2003).

¹³⁹ By the unanimous adoption of resolution 1441 (2002), the Council instructed the resumed inspections to begin within 45 days, and also decided it would convene immediately upon the receipt of any reports from inspection authorities that Iraq was interfering with their activities. It recalled, in that context, that the Council had repeatedly warned Iraq that it would face "serious consequences" as a result of continued violations. Within 30 days, Iraq, in order to begin to comply with its obligations, should provide to UNMOVIC, the IAEA and the Council a complete declaration of all aspects of its programs to develop chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, including chemical, biological and nuclear programs it claims are for purposes not related to weapons production or material. Any false statement or omission in the declaration will be considered a further material breach of Iraq's obligations, and will be reported to the Council for assessment. See, the UN resolution 1441, available at: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2002/SC7564.doc.htm>

¹⁴⁰ "US stands firm on ousting Saddam," 25 September 2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/middle_east/2279758.stm.

compliance with the UN inspection regime confused the world public opinion towards Saddam regime. Due to the domestic opposition from its allies i.e. The United Kingdom and Spain, Washington tried to push for a second UN resolution authorizing the use military force. Meanwhile, the reports of the UN Chief Weapon Inspector Hans Blix ¹⁴¹ presented no concrete evidence on WMD program of Iraq. Eventually, the War in Iraq started in March 2003 with no further UN resolution, lacking international legitimacy.

Turkey and the United States from 9/11 towards the 1st of March

At first glance, the terrorist attacks had an impact of drawing the United States and Turkey closer. As a country having suffered from terrorist violence for decades, Turkey shared a common concern with the United States in fighting global terrorism and therefore granted full support for the US efforts to curb off the terrorist cells in Afghanistan. As Steven A. Cook observed, the Turkish government adopted a supportive/constructive approach towards Washington's presentation of evidence linking Bin Laden to the attacks.¹⁴² On October 3, 2001, the then Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit stated on Sabah daily, "The fact that the US found the evidence persuasive persuades us also."¹⁴³ Moreover, in the early hours of October 8, as the United States and Great Britain started launching attacks on Taliban and al

¹⁴¹For a transcript of Blix's March 7 presentation to the UN Security Council, See, <http://cnn.usnews.printthis.clickability.com/pt/cpt?action&title=CNN.com+-+...>

¹⁴² Steven A. Cook, "US –Turkey Relations and The War on Terrorism," analysis paper #9, p.1, http://www.brookings.edu/views/articles/fellows/2001_cook.htm.

¹⁴³ "Son Ültimatom", *Sabah*, (October 3, 2001) available at: <http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2001/10/03/d01.html>

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF MARCH I

On March 1, 2003, the Turkish Parliament turned down the motion which would have allowed U.S. troops to be based on Turkish soil and open a northern front against Iraq. In essence, the outcome was a product of the democratic process in a parliamentary system. However, Turkey's decision after long and exhausting negotiations disappointed the U.S. side, forcing them to change their war plans in the last minute.¹⁵⁹ Since the US officials held the Turkish military responsible for not using its political leverage to pass the resolution, the defense partnership- widely considered as the main pillar of the US-Turkish relations- was severely damaged.¹⁶⁰ After March 1, Turkey opened its airspace and later in the year approved a motion to send Turkish troops to Iraq for cooperation. However, Turkey's attempts to mend the relations, failed to compensate for having disrupted the US war plans with the loss of the northern front.

To many analysts, the March 1 incident signified a watershed in terms of Turkish-Americans relations, burying the so-called "strategic partnership" in history. It is true that Turkey's decision on March 1 left the Turkish-US alliance on sensitive ground. However, in many aspects Turkey's opposition to the US- led Iraq War had surfaced at both official and public levels since the beginning of 2002, as the U.S. demands of

¹⁵⁹ "Turkey lets US use its airspace," available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/2871817.stm>.

¹⁶⁰ See, "Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz Interview with CNN Turk," available at: <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2003/tr20030506-depsecdef0156.html>; See also, "Rumsfeld denies blaming Turkey for Iraq insurgency," *Hürriyet*, <http://www.hurriyetim.com.tr/haberler/0,,sid~381@tarikh~2005-04-02-t,00.asp>

cooperation in Iraq started to take an official form. Considering the ongoing policy divergence over Iraq between the United States and Turkey since the end of the Gulf War, March 1 was indeed an accident waiting to happen.

Yet, on the other hand, the inability of the two countries to find a common language to share their concerns and resolve their conflicting priorities had an undeniable impact on bilateral relations. Mutual misperceptions and false expectations undermined the negotiation process on the road to March 1. What's more, Turkey's rejection of the United States on such a vital issue led the US side to reconsider Turkey's strategic role as a partner.¹⁶¹ Although the Parliament's decision received praise from the Europeans as well as from Americans who were opposed to the war in Iraq, Turkey was seriously concerned about the consequences of having turned down the United States. As the post-war developments in Iraq unfolded, these problems grew and formed a crisis of confidence in bilateral relations, already shaken by the March 1 incident.

However, it is not entirely correct to explain the tension between Turkey and the United States in the aftermath of the resolution solely by Turkey's decision on March 1. Turkish-American relations further deteriorated due to the emerging regional dynamics within the course of the Iraq War. The differing political priorities between Turkey and the United States over Iraq, particularly Turkey's fixation on the Kurdish issue and the status of northern Iraq prevented the allies from setting a common agenda on the post-war developments. In this context, the changing security

¹⁶¹ "The US pulls nearly half of personnel, jets from İncirlik airbase," Turkish Daily News (April 21, 2003), available at: http://www.tusiad.us/specific_page.cfm?CONTENT_ID=337; See also, Sedat Ergin, "Türkiye'yi Pas Geçmek," Hürriyet (May 5, 2003) available at: <http://www.hurriyetim.com.tr/koseprinterversion/1...00.html?nvid=263359>. See also, Jonathan Eric Lewis, "Replace Turkey as a Strategic Partner?" *Middle East Quarterly* (spring, 2006) 13(2).

paradigms in Iraq complicated cooperation between Turkey and the United States, and exacerbated Turkey's fears of an independent Kurdish entity.

In the months following the fall of Baghdad, the US policymakers realized that they were facing a harder task than the war in Afghanistan. Amid the growing insurgency, Iraqi Kurds emerged as the new allies of Washington, since they were representing a relatively peaceful and stable area in a volatile region. In time, Iraqi Kurds gained political leverage over the United States due to their role of balancing ethnic-sectarian political struggles within Iraq and even succeeded in their efforts to block the Turkish offer to send troops to help the peacekeeping forces into the country.

On the other hand, the rejection of the resolution left Turkey out of the U.S. war plans and therefore limited its capacity for political maneuver in Iraq. Consequently, Turkey's so-called red lines faded away as the Kurdish tribal leaders made declarations one after the other, claiming the control of Mosul and Kirkuk, and rose to the top governmental posts in the Iraqi government.¹⁶² Meanwhile, as the Iraqi Kurds maintained the control of northern Iraq it became harder for Turkey to counter infiltration of the Kurdish Worker's Party (PKK) militants over the border.¹⁶³ The post-war

¹⁶² Before the elections in 2005, Iraqi Kurds erected settlements in Kirkuk and repatriate Kurds to the city to change the ethnic balance in favor of the Iraqi Kurds. Meanwhile, it was also claimed that the official documents relating to the Turcomans living in Kirkuk and Mosul were destroyed and several Turcomans were abducted and put in prison by the Iraqi Kurds on the same purpose. See, Sedat Ergin, "ABD neden seyirci kaldı" *Hürriyet* (April 11, 2003), available at: <http://www.hurriyetim.com.tr/koseprinterversion/1,..00.html?nvid=254092>

See also, "Talabani: Kirkuk is the sacred city of Kurds just as Jerusalem is for the Jews and Arabs" <http://home.cogeco.ca/~kurdistan2/1-4-04-talabani-kirkuk-jerusalen.htm>.

See also, Meliha Benli Altunışık, "In Turkey's Interest," available at: <http://www.bitterlemons-international.org/previous.php?opt=1&id=69>.

¹⁶³ The US officials as well as Kurdish tribal leaders warned Turkey several times not to launch a cross-border operation to northern Iraq on the grounds that such an attempt would constitute a breach of territorial integrity of the Kurdish region which was from then on under control of Iraqi Kurds. See, "Türkiye Kuzey Irak'taki

developments enabled the PKK to consolidate its power in the north of Iraq and encouraged it to end its ceasefire in September 2003.¹⁶⁴ In this context, Turkey's worst-case scenarios over Iraq and the Kurds seemed to be materializing, especially when a federal system in Iraq emerged as the most plausible political option rather than just a contingency.

These new political realities inevitably eroded the confidence between the United States and Turkey. Particularly, the inability (or for the Turks unwillingness) of Washington to initiate operations against the PKK militants in the mountains of northern Iraq caused deep resentment among the Turks and fueled suspicions that the US was actually punishing Turkey for rejecting the opening of the northern front. To make matters worse, the Süleymaniye Incident has dealt a serious blow to the military relations. The US humiliation of the Turkish soldiers by putting sacks over their heads left bitter marks in the minds of the Turkish people. Moreover, the break-out of scandals such as the Abu Ghraib and the US military operations against the Sunni Iraqis in Talafar and Fallujah drew reactions from the Turkish society where a majority of the population consists of Sunni Muslims. In light of these developments, the growing mistrust towards the US intentions and strategy over Iraq triggered a rampant anti-Americanism and fed nationalism as well as the resurgence of the Sevres syndrome.¹⁶⁵ According

gelişmelerden dolayı ABD'yi Kınadı," Dış Basında Türkiye, available at:

<http://www.byegm.gov.tr/YAYINLARIMIZ/DISBASIN/2003/07/08x07x03.HTM#%204>, See also,

"Pearson'a Söz Yok," *Radikal*, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=68491>

"Kuzey Irak gergin bölge," *Radikal*, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=69614>

¹⁶⁴ The PKK declared to end ceasefire both in September 2003 and in June 2004. See,

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/kurdistan-turkey.htm>.

See also, <http://www.strategypage.com/qnd/kurdwar/articles/20030904.aspx>

¹⁶⁵ For the Sevres Syndrome, See, Cengiz Çandar, "Some Turkish perspective on the United States," in Morton Abramowitz (ed.), *Turkey's Transformation and American Policy* (New York: Century Foundation Press, 2000); See also, Henry Barkey and Ömer Taşpınar, "Turkey: On Europe's Verge," in *Great Decisions 2006* (Foreign

to a Pew Survey a conducted in 2004 the US favorability ratings in Turkey fell from 52% to 30% in four years time.¹⁶⁶ In 2005, opinion polls indicated that 65% of the Turks viewed the United States as a military threat to their security.¹⁶⁷

Retrospectively, the US –Turkish relations have not really been so problem-free up till today. Nor is anti-Americanism a new phenomenon for the Turkish society. Bilateral relations have gone through several ups and downs in history as in the case of the Cuban missile crisis, the Johnson letter, or the arms embargo after Turkey’s intervention in Cyprus. Even within the Cold War context, anti-American sentiments were embraced by either leftist groups or the religious circles in the past for a variety of reasons. However, today Turkish-American relations face a serious challenge stemming from the war in Iraq. Parallel to the global rise of anti-Americanism in the international arena, the US policies in Iraq and the Middle East led to a formation of an opposition block in Turkey that brings together various segments within the society. At the heart/root of the problem lies the clash between the US strategy in the Middle East and Turkey’s own security dilemmas particularly regarding the future of the Kurds and northern Iraq. Therefore, the starting point of the analysis should be the differing perspectives of the United States and Turkey over Iraq since the Gulf War which may have been responsible for the predicament of the Turkish –American alliance on March 1.

Policy Association, 2006), available at: <http://dusuncekahvesi.blogspot.com/2006/03/turkey-on-europes-verge.html>.

¹⁶⁶ <http://pewglobal.org/commentary/display.php?AnalysisID=1001>.

¹⁶⁷ <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?PageID=804>

In addition to this, BBC opinion surveys reported that 82% of the Turks viewed the reelection of President Bush as a threat to global security. See, http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2005/01_january/19/bush.shtml

The issue of Iraq: Looking through different lenses

Turkey followed a balanced and at times pragmatic foreign policy towards Iraq's Baath regime which came to power after a coup d'état in 1968, with the help of the Soviet Union.¹⁶⁸ Throughout the Iran – Iraq War (1980-1988), Iraq has become a lucrative market for Turkey's manufactured goods. The combined share of Iran and Iraq in total Turkish exports increased from 5.5 percent in 1980 to 26 percent in 1985.¹⁶⁹ However, during the same period, engagement of the Iraqi troops on the southern border created a power vacuum in northern Iraq which paved the way for the rise of a Kurdish problem between Iraq and Turkey.¹⁷⁰ Starting from 1983, Turkey occasionally launched cross-border operations against the Kurdish militants in Iraq belonging to the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK). Owing to the economic interdependency relations, Iraqi government supported Turkey's cross-border operations to northern Iraq against the PKK militants for a while. However, following the end of the Iran-Iraq war, the Saddam regime started to follow a more assertive foreign policy in the region. Bilateral relations gradually soured as the Iraqi government began to use the Kurdish issue –particularly the PKK- as a political leverage over Turkey by providing support/accommodation for the militant camps in northern Iraq.

¹⁶⁸ See Ramazan Gözen, *Amerikan Kışkacında Dış Politika: Körfez Savaşı, Turgut Özal ve Sonrası* (Ankara: Liberte Yayınları, 2000); See also, Mustafa Sıtkı Bilgin, "Türkiye –Irak ilişkilerinin tarihsel boyutu," in Ümit Özdağ, Serhat Laçiner and Serhat Erkmen, *Irak Krizi (2002-2003)*, (Ankara: ASAM, 2003).

¹⁶⁹ Mustafa Aydın and Damla Aras, "Political conditionality of economic relations between paternalist states: Turkey's interaction with Iran, Iraq, and Syria," *Arab Studies Quarterly*, (Winter/Spring, 2005), available at: http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2501/is_1-2_27/ai_n15694704/pg_5.

¹⁷⁰ Kemal Kirişçi and Gareth Winrow, *Kürt Sorunu: Kökeni ve Gelişimi* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2000); See also, Henry Barkey and Graham Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998); See also, Robert Olson (ed.), *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990s* (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996).

Aside from the Kurdish issue, the two countries were in dispute over the flow of waters of Tigris and Euphrates Rivers since Turkey initiated the Southeast Anatolia Development Project (GAP) in 1983.¹⁷¹ Especially in January 1990, tensions between the countries escalated as a result of Turkey's decision to hold back some of the flowing water for a month in order to fill the Atatürk Dam. Meanwhile, Ankara was worried about the increasing military capabilities of Iraq parallel to Saddam Hussein's assertive political discourse in foreign affairs. As Sami Kohen indicated, in the summer of 1990, when Turkish Prime Minister Yildirim Akbulut visited Iraq to discuss regional conflicts, Hussein warned Turkey that "NATO was dying and that Turkey's interests were not served by staying in it."¹⁷² Therefore, it is possible to say that the bilateral relations between Iraq and Turkey were already strained before the Gulf crisis erupted.

Yet, as Meliha Benli Altunışık argues, there was no consensus among the Turkish political elites as to what extent Turkey should get involved in the crisis.¹⁷³ Kohen points out that the critics of Turkey's active involvement in the Gulf War on the US side were concerned about alienating Iraq as a trading partner and a neighbor. They were also worried about a possible military retaliation from Iraq as well as being concerned

¹⁷¹ To many analysts, Turkey used this water issue as a political leverage against Iraq and Syria in response their support for the PKK. See, Konuralp Pamukçu, "Su sorunu ve Türkiye, Suriye / Irak İlişkileri," in Faruk Sönmezoğlu (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikasının Analizi* (İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 1998); See also, Ali Carkoğlu and Mine Eder, "Water conflict: The Euphrates-Tigris Basin" in Barry Rubin and Kemal Kirişçi (eds.), *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power* (İstanbul: Boğaziçi University Press, 2002); See also For further reading on Water conflict, see also Joyce Starr, "Water wars", *Foreign Policy* 82 (Spring): 17-36. Available at <http://www.ciesin.org/docs/006-304/006-304.html>.

¹⁷² Sami Kohen, "Özal Counting On Closer US Ties," *Washington Report On Middle East Affairs* (April 1991), available at: <http://www.washington-report.org/backissues/0491/9104014.htm>

¹⁷³ Meliha Benli Altunışık, "Turkish-American Security Relations: The Middle East Dimension", in Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan (eds.), *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present and Future* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004):155.

about drawing political reaction from the Arab world. However, despite domestic opposition, Turkey supported the US led coalition against Iraq in the Gulf War. Accordingly, Turkey closed the oil pipelines in compliance with the UN Resolution 661, allowed the US forces to use Turkish airbases for non-NATO operations, and even deployed more than 100.000 Turkish troops along the border of Iraq for tactical reasons.¹⁷⁴

Many analysts considered the Turkish-US cooperation during the Gulf War as a departure from Turkey's traditional policy of non-interference.¹⁷⁵ Since the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East rested on the principle of non-interference in intraregional conflicts.¹⁷⁶ Remaining faithful to the Kemalist principle of "Peace at home and Peace Abroad," Turkey tended to follow policies in favor of maintaining the status quo in the region and avoided active involvement in Middle Eastern affairs. In fact, Turkey's political position during the Gulf War was shaped by the late President Turgut Özal who insistently advocated an active involvement in the Gulf War even though this entailed confronting Turkish security and foreign policy establishment. Özal believed that cooperation with the United States against Iraq would serve as an opportunity for Turkey to reassure its position and role in the Western world given the uncertain environment of the post-Cold War.

¹⁷⁴ For details of Turkish support during the Operation Desert Storm; See, Ramazan Gözen, *Amerikan Kışkacında Dış Politika: Körfez Savaşı, Turgut Özal ve Sonrası* (Ankara: Liberte Yayınları, 2000); See also, Mustafa Kayar, *Türk-Amerikan İlişkilerinde Irak Sorunu* (İstanbul: IQ Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2003).

¹⁷⁵ See for instance, Kemal Kirişçi, "The Future of Turkish policy towards the Middle East," in Barry Rubin and Kemal Kirişçi (eds.), *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power* (İstanbul: Boğaziçi University Press, 2002): 132.

¹⁷⁶ See, Philip Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War* (London: Hurst&Co., 2003); See also, Şule Kut, "The Contours of Turkish Foreign Policy in the 1990s" in Barry Rubin and Kemal Kirişçi (eds.), *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power* (İstanbul: Boğaziçi University Press, 2002); For further reading; See, Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik*, (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001): 65

Yet, Turkey's conservative foreign policy line nonetheless remained intact both during and after the Gulf War. Özal's active foreign policy vision was criticized as political adventurism by Turkish political and military elites. Consequently, the Foreign Minister, the Defense Minister, and even the Chief of the General Staff resigned in response to Özal's handling of the Gulf crisis. What's more, opposition in the Parliament succeeded in blocking Özal's proposal to dispatch Turkish troops to Iraq. Besides, his bold attempts to alter Turkey's pro-status quo foreign policy line, in relation to the Kurdish issue, were met with stiff opposition at home. His initiatives to establish a political dialogue with the Iraqi Kurdish tribal leaders were abandoned by his political successors soon after his death.¹⁷⁷

Since the Gulf War, Turkey has shaped its foreign policy towards Iraq primarily in relation to its own Kurdish problem and thus the political status of northern Iraq.¹⁷⁸ Turkey's main concern has been to prevent the emergence of an independent Kurdish state in the neighborhood since it might inspire the Kurds living in its Southeast Anatolia region to demand secession. In this respect, establishment of free zones in northern Iraq through the Operation Provide Comfort (OPC)¹⁷⁹ in 1991 was one of the most criticized political outcomes of the Turkish-US cooperation in the Gulf

¹⁷⁷ Özal believed that by assuming the role of a guarantor in Kurdish political process, Turkey could control northern Iraq. Therefore, Jalal Talabani, the leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and Muhsin Dezayi, senior aide of Barzani of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) came to Istanbul and met with officials from the Turkish Foreign Ministry and Turkey's National Intelligence Organization. It was claimed that they were given Turkish passports to enable them to travel to the USA. See, Mustafa Aydın, *Ten Years After: Turkey's Gulf Policy (1990-91) Revisited*, (Ankara: Center for Eurasian Strategic Studies, 2002); See also, Philip Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy since the Cold War* (London: Hurst&Co., 2003): 312-337.

¹⁷⁸ See, Bülent Aras (ed.), *War in the Gardens of Babylon: Middle East after the Iraqi War* (İstanbul: TASAM Publications, 2005): 166.

¹⁷⁹ OPC was claimed to have provided Iraqi Kurds a de-facto independence from Saddam regime and therefore encouraged Iraqi Kurds to establish their own political institutions. On the other hand, the power vacuum in northern Iraq was believed to benefit the PKK. See, Kemal Kirişçi, "Huzur mu Huzursuzluk mu: Çekiş Güç ve Türk Dış Politikası (1991-1993)," in Faruk Sönmezoğlu (ed.), *Türk Dış Politikasının Analizi* (İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 1998).

War aside from the economic losses of Turkey. Thus, in a couple years following the Gulf War Turkey tried to normalize its relations with Iraq and sought for political alternatives that would loosen the economic embargo and compensate for its economic losses. On the other hand, since political liberalization of the Iraqi Kurds constituted a threat regarding its own domestic security concerns, protecting the territorial integrity of Iraq had become a political priority.

Considering the difficulties of handling a possible ethnic sectarian clash in Iraq which might end up in total disintegration of the country, Turkey did not welcome the US war plans to topple Saddam Hussein. The first signals of an alteration in the US foreign policy towards Iraq came in the second term of the Clinton administration as the possibility of a regime change was ever more frequently mentioned. The US government came to realize that the UN economic sanctions had a contradictory result of impoverishing the ordinary Iraqis and strengthening Saddam Hussein's oppressive rule.¹⁸⁰ Therefore, in 1998, the US Congress passed a law, which authorized up to \$97 million in military assistance to Iraqi opposition forces "to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein" and "promote the emergence of a democratic government."¹⁸¹ Towards the end of the same year, Washington decided to launch its Operation Desert Fox since

¹⁸⁰ "Clinton remarks to the Arab World" (December 18, 1998), available at:

<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/clinarab.htm> ^ | 18 Dec 1998 | The White House.

For Madeline Albright's statement about a regime change in Iraq, on December 16, 1998, available at:

<http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/news/830743/posts>

See the remarks by Secretary of State Madeline K. Albright on Airstrikes against Iraq, available at:

<http://www.meij.or.jp/text/Gulf%20War/1998121602.htm>

¹⁸¹ See, "Iraq Liberation Act of 1998," available at:

<http://www.iraqwatch.org/government/US/Legislation/ILA.htm>; See also, Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2004): 10.

diplomatic pressures on Iraq failed to provide Iraq's cooperation with the UN weapons inspectors.

As evident in Murat Yetkin's analysis of a dialogue between the then President Süleyman Demirel and the US Secretary of Defense William Cohen in 1998, Turkey considered a U.S.-led military operation in Iraq as a misguided and perilous policy, which might shatter the present balance of power in the region.¹⁸² When the Bush administration targeted the Saddam regime as their next destination in the war against terrorism, Turkey once again had to face the inevitable question of how to reconcile the conflicting interests of preserving the territorial integrity of Iraq and overthrowing a dictatorship desired by its most powerful ally. Since Ankara was concerned of a possible spillover effect of developments in northern Iraq, preserving the territorial integrity constituted a higher political priority than the democratic nature of the Iraqi regime.¹⁸³

Diplomatic Traffic Begins

The Bush administration's mission was almost shaped by early 2002. The U.S. intention to start a military campaign in Iraq was first mentioned to the Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit during his visit to Washington in January 2002. As Fikret Bila observed, in Washington, Ecevit tried to explain to the US officials Turkey's concerns about a possible military operation which might destroy the territorial integrity of Iraq and later reiterated his case when Dick Cheney came to Ankara in March 2002, as part of his Middle Eastern tour.

¹⁸²For the details of the meeting in Ankara on November 6, 1998; See Murat Yetkin, *Tezkere: Irak Krizinin Gerçek Öyküsü* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2004): 14.

¹⁸³For a similar view; See for instance, Bülent Aras (ed.), *War in the Gardens of Babylon: Middle East after the Iraqi War* (İstanbul: TASAM Publications, 2005).

The Ecevit government was reluctant to get involved in a military operation in Iraq because of political, economic reasons. Recovering from one of the worst financial crisis in Turkish history, a war in the neighborhood was the last thing the government wanted, considering its possible impact on the revenues from trade and tourism. However, Ecevit was also aware that the Bush administration was determined to change the Saddam regime and thus Turkey did not have the power to prevent the US from attacking Iraq¹⁸⁴. As Bila points out, in case of an attack, Turkey did not want to stay outside the operation and watch the establishment of an independent Kurdistan. Such a development was considered a *casus belli* by both the government and the Turkish military staff.¹⁸⁵

Throughout 2002, the issue of Iraq was placed on the top of the agenda of Turkish- American relations. However, due to the instability of Turkish domestic politics arising from the illness of Prime Minister Ecevit and the internal struggles within the government, the US officials were unable to find a counterpart to set up a healthy dialogue and proceed with their plans over Iraq. It was exactly the situation Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz faced when he came to Istanbul in the middle of July to participate in a conference organized by TESEV-a Turkish think tank.¹⁸⁶The Deputy Prime Minister Hüsamettin Özkan's resignation on July

¹⁸⁴ Nevertheless, Ecevit wrote a letter to Iraqi government to inform them about the serious situation they would face unless they complied with the UN resolutions. However, the harsh tone and style of Saddam's reply frustrated Ecevit who was trying to preserve peace in the neighborhood. See, Murat Yetkin, *Tezkere: Irak Krizinin Gerçek Öyküsü* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2004); See also, Fikret Bila, *Sivil Darbe Girişimi ve Ankara'da Irak Savaşları* (Ankara: Ümit Yayıncılık, 2004).

¹⁸⁵ Fikret Bila, *Sivil Darbe Girişimi ve Ankara'da Irak Savaşları* (Ankara: Ümit Yayıncılık, 2004): 34-35-55. See for instance, "Ecevit: Kuzey Irak'ta fiili devlet askeri müdahale nedeni," *Hürriyet* (October 6, 2002), available at: <http://arsiv3.hurriyet.com.tr/haber/0,,sid-1@w-2@tarih-2002-10-06-m@nvid-182591,00.asp>.

¹⁸⁶ During the conference Wolfowitz tried to assure the Turkish side that the US government shared Turkey's concerns over the Kurdish issue and that they also respected territorial integrity of Iraq.

8 which triggered other resignations from the Democratic Left Party (DSP), was followed by the Turkish Foreign Minister İsmail Cem's (also from the DSP) decision on July 11 to set up his own political party.¹⁸⁷ When Wolfowitz later on, went to Ankara to discuss Turkey's possible role/cooperation in the war against Iraq, the coalition government's credibility was already on a freefall and a date was called by one of the coalition partners for early elections as November 3, 2002.¹⁸⁸

Yet, the US side needed to concretize their demands of full cooperation from Turkey in the Iraq war as soon as possible. Therefore, the diplomatic traffic continued increasingly through military channels. In September 2002, before Assistant Secretary of State Elizabeth Jones's visit to Ankara¹⁸⁹, the US officials from the Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC) sent a message to the deputy Chief of Staff, General Yaşar Büyükanıt through the European Command (EUCOM). According to the message, the US demands from Turkey included the following:

Aside from the TESEV conference, Wolfowitz's visit to Istanbul deserved special attention. Before heading to Ankara, Wolfowitz attended a private dinner hosted by Mustafa Koç-one of the most prominent businessmen in Turkey- where he got together with Minister of State Kemal Derviş, the leader of Party of Democratic Turkey Mehmet Ali Bayar, TUSIAD Chairman Aldo Kaslowski, Cem Boyner and Cem Duna, and discussed the current situation of Turkish politics. See, Murat Yetkin, *Tezkere: Irak Krizinin Gerçek Öyküsü* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2004): 53; See also Fikret Bila, *Sivil Darbe Girişimi ve Ankara'da Irak Savaşları* (Ankara: Ümit Yayıncılık, 2004): 144-145.

¹⁸⁷ In almost two days, the number of resignations reached to 33 and the total number of ministers in the parliament representing Democratic Left Party (DSP) fell to 95. See, "DSP eriyor," *Milliyet*, available at: <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2002/07/10/siyaset/siy02.html>.

¹⁸⁸ On July 15, 2002 one of the coalition partners, the leader of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) called for early elections on 3rd of November in a press meeting. The date would be approved by the Turkish Grand National Assembly as November 3, at the end of July 2002. See, Remarks by Devlet Bahçeli, http://www.belgenet.com/2002/bahceli_150702.html

¹⁸⁹ On September 28, Assistant Secretary of State Elizabeth Jones came to Ankara. She met with bureaucrats from the Ecevit government and with the Turkish Chief of General Staff to discuss military cooperation against Iraq. Consequently, the US demands of cooperation were officialized at the military level and the details of the US request became an explicit topic to be handled in the National Security Council meetings. See the press releases of the National Security Council Meetings, <http://www.mgk.gov.tr/basinbildiri2002/30eylul2002.html>. See also, <http://www.mgk.gov.tr/basinbildiri2002/27aralik2002.html>.

- Opening of a “Northern Front” on Turkish soil for the use of the US forces in the military operation against Iraq
- Allowing the deployment of US land forces-80.000 U.S. soldiers in total- and 250 U.S. warplanes.
- Opening of airports and seaports to the use of United States and to the US-led Coalition forces including Adana-İncirlik, İstanbul-Sabiha Gökçen, Batman, Antalya, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Balıkesir, Erzurum, Erzincan, Muş, İzmir-Çiğli, Konya, Malatya airports; İskenderun, Mersin, Samsun, Trabzon and İzmir seaports.
- Allowing the United States to initiate a modernization process which aimed to reconstruct and renovate the existing airbases and seaports to meet the U.S. standards for military operation

In fact, the authority to allow the deployment of foreign troops in Turkey belonged to the Turkish Grand National Assembly not to the Chief of the General Staff. However, Washington preferred to communicate directly with the Turkish military bureaucracy before discussing the details of cooperation with the Ecevit government. It is possible to interpret this exchange of messages at the military level as a US attempt to bypass the civilian government which openly expressed its opposition to get involved in any kind of military operation against Iraq. With the Justice and Development Party’s (AKP) coming to power in November, not only the political uncertainty in Turkish domestic politics would disappear but also the bargaining and compromise between the United States and Turkey would gain momentum.

The AKP on the scene

After over a decade of coalition governments, the AKP emerged as the winner of November 3 elections, strong enough to form a one-party government.¹⁹⁰ Although the party owed its victory to its westward looking and moderate image, the fact that it came from the Islamist tradition led many people in Turkey to doubt the sincerity of the party's democratic and secular orientation.¹⁹¹ However, since the beginning, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as the AKP leader strongly rejected any kind of Islamist labeling on his party, and described his party's vision as conservative, democratic, and committed to secularism.¹⁹²

At first glance, it seemed less likely for Washington to receive cooperation from the AKP over Iraq, considering the reaction of the party's conservative base to an attack against a Muslim state. However, the AKP government appeared to be relatively responsive towards the US demands, especially when compared to the Ecevit government. As Henry Barkey and Philip Gordon claimed, for the AKP the war in Iraq in a way provided a means to establish dialogue with the Bush administration.¹⁹³ In other words,

¹⁹⁰ With the help of the 10 % threshold, AKP succeeded in securing 363 out of 550 seats in the parliament although it actually received one third of the overall vote. The only other party, which represented the opposition in this unicameral parliament, was the Republican People's Party (CHP). For the evaluation on the AKP's victory at the polls, See Soli Özel, "Turkey at the Polls: After the Tsunami" in *Islam and Democracy in the Middle East*, Larry Diamond, Marc F. Plattner, and Daniel Brumberg (eds.), (Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); See also, Ziya Öniş and E. Fuat Keyman, "Turkey at the Polls: A New Path Emerges," in *Islam and Democracy in the Middle East*, Larry Diamond, Marc F. Plattner, and Daniel Brumberg (eds.), (Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

¹⁹¹ See, Gencer Özcan, "Turkey's Foreign Policy under AKP: If only luck stays on their side," (November 17, 2003), available at: <http://www.tusiad.us/content/uploaded/TURKISH>; See also, Henry Barkey and Philip Gordon, "Turkey's Elections and the United States: Challenges Ahead," *Euro-Focus*, 8(7)(2002); See also, Ömer Taşpınar, "AKP rejimle sorunu olabilecek bir parti," Derya Sazak-Sohbet Odası, *Milliyet*, (June 27, 2005).

¹⁹² "AK Parti, islamcı değil muhafazakar democat", *Zaman*, available at:

<http://www.zaman.com.tr/?hn=119997&bl=politika&trh=20041210>

"AB elçisinden tatsız sorular," *Sabah*, (June 16, 2005), available at:

<http://www.sabah.com.tr/2005/06/16/siy105.html>.

¹⁹³ Henry Barkey and Philip Gordon, "Turkey's Elections and the United States: Challenges Ahead," *Euro-Focus*, (2002):8(7).

facilitating the US action on Iraq might help the new and inexperienced government to win Washington's trust and support, which in return would boost the AKP's prestige at both domestic and international levels.¹⁹⁴ It is therefore significant that a week after the new government secured a vote of confidence in the Parliament; Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz came to Ankara on December 3, 2002 to discuss the US agenda of cooperation with Turkey.

According to Murat Yetkin, Wolfowitz was demanding from Prime Minister Abdullah Gül to get an authorization for the US team of engineers and technicians to initiate site surveys in the Turkish military bases. In return, he was giving reassurances to Turkey in terms of protecting the territorial integrity of Iraq which meant that they were not in favor of an independent Kurdish state in the north. As Yetkin points out, the permission for the site surveys were regarded as a positive signal from the government, although, Prime Minister Gül stressed that giving authorization for the site surveys would not mean an automatic consent for taking part in the further steps of the US war preparations. Yet, Wolfowitz told the press before leaving that the United States would spend huge amounts on the modernization of Turkish military bases; therefore it was necessary to clarify the limits of cooperation with Turkey as soon as possible.¹⁹⁵ According to Yetkin, this was an implicit warning to the Turkish side that, if they were not in favor of supporting the US to the end, they should not let them to go in for the investment in the first place.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ "Wolfowitz:Sıra Üs Seçiminde", *Hürriyet*, (December 14, 2002), available at: <http://arsiv3.hurriyet.com.tr/haber/0,,sid~1@w~356@tarih~2002-12-04-m@nvid~204366,00.asp>;

On another front in Ankara, the government officials were giving out confusing messages over the state of cooperation between the United States and Turkey against Iraq. After the Turkish Foreign Minister Yaşar Yakış met with Wolfowitz, he stated to the press that they did not desire a war in the neighborhood; yet, if a military operation became inevitable, they would allow the US forces to use Turkish airspace as well as military bases.¹⁹⁶ The remarks of the Foreign Minister led to a virtual panic among the Turkish military and political elites, because there was no consensus over the Iraqi issue yet; and Yakış was promising unconditional support for the United States without taking advice from the Foreign Ministry. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs immediately made a declaration correcting Foreign Minister Yakış¹⁹⁷, however, the public statements of the Foreign Minister were perceived by the US side as a green light for future cooperation against Iraq.¹⁹⁸

In the evening of the same day, Paul Wolfowitz, the US ambassador Robert Pearson, the Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, Marc

¹⁹⁶See, “Üsler yenilenecek,” *Milliyet*, (December 5, 2002), available at:

<http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2002/12/05/siyaset/asiy.html>; See also,

“Ankara’da Üs Krizi”, *Hürriyet*, (December 4, 2002), available at:

<http://arsiv3.hurriyet.com.tr/haber/0,,sid~1@w~3@tarih~2002-12-04-m@nvid~204301,00.asp>;

See also, Murat Yetkin, *Tezkere: Irak Krizinin Gerçek Öyküsü* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2004).

¹⁹⁷ According to Murat Yetkin, Yakış also corrected himself and made a declaration to the press saying he only laid out the political options in front of Turkey and the United States and added that his statements did not mean any political commitment. See, Murat Yetkin, *Tezkere: Irak Krizinin Gerçek Öyküsü* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2004): 104.

¹⁹⁸See “Wall Street Journal: TÜRKİYE, ABD’YE ÜSLERİNİ AÇACAK,” *Dış Basında Türkiye*,

<http://www.byegm.gov.tr/YAYINLARIMIZ/DISBASIN/2002/12/05x12x02.HTM#%204>

According to the NY times, Wolfowitz said he was satisfied with his consultations with the Turks but declined to provide details about the cooperation. Also one senior official told the NY times that “We’re not convinced that this represents their final position.” See, “Turkey Saying No to Accepting G.I’s in Large Numbers”,

<http://select.nytimes.com/search/restricted/article?res=F40714FF3F5F0C778CDDAB...>

See also, “Wolfowitz:Sıra Üs Seçiminde”, *Hürriyet*,

<http://arsiv3.hurriyet.com.tr/haber/0,,sid~1@w~356@tarih~2002-12-04-m@nvid~204366,00.asp>

“Ankara’da Üs Krizi”, *Hürriyet*, <http://arsiv3.hurriyet.com.tr/haber/0,,sid~1@w~3@tarih~2002-12-04-m@nvid~204301,00.asp>

See also, “New York Times: Askere İzin Yok, Üsler Açılacak”, *Hürriyet*,

<http://arsiv3.hurriyet.com.tr/haber/0,,sid~1@w~356@tarih~2002-12-04-m@nvid~204368,00.asp>.

Grossman, and a US official from the Pentagon had dinner with the AKP leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and his advisors, Cüneyd Zapsu and Ömer Çelik. As the content of this private meeting was later publicized by Stephen Hayes from the Weekly Standard and then by Ertuğrul Özkök from *Hürriyet* daily, the agenda of cooperation was presumed to be set during this unofficial dinner. Accordingly, the US side expected the Turkish General Staff to give a briefing to the Turkish government on the US war plans on December 9 and by the late December the conduct of site surveys would be completed so that the United States would start construction within the scope of modernization of the Turkish military bases.¹⁹⁹ It is noteworthy that on such a vital issue the United States was trying to secure cooperation through back-stage diplomacy as it is obvious that the representatives of the Turkish side had no official titles *vis-à-vis* their American counterparts, except for Ömer Çelik being MP from Adana. Another point which deserves attention is that, during this private dinner, Erdoğan was claimed to have received an invitation to the White House.²⁰⁰ Before the Copenhagen Summit, the US support would strengthen Turkey's hand as well as the AKP who was struggling to get a date for the start of negotiations with the EU.²⁰¹

On December 10, 2002, Erdoğan went to Washington. He was welcomed at the White House even though he had no official title to represent Turkey other than being the leader of the governing party -he was not even elected to the Parliament yet. It was alleged that during this visit,

¹⁹⁹ See, Ertuğrul Özkök, "Yemek Masasından gelen ilginç not," *Hürriyet*, available at: <http://arsiv3.hurriyet.com.tr/koseprinterversion/1.,nvid-206339,00.html>.

²⁰⁰ See, Murat Yetkin, *Tezkere: Irak Krizinin Gerçek Öyküsü* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2004).

²⁰¹ See, Michael Gordon, "Bush will meet a leading Turkey on use of bases," *The New York Times*, (December 9, 2002).

President George W. Bush reached an agreement with Erdoğan on the outlines of the US-Turkish cooperation in the Iraq War.²⁰² However, later on, Erdoğan told the press that they did not get into the details of a military operation during the meeting, but he got the impression from the US side that a military option in Iraq seemed likely in the near future.²⁰³ Following the White House meeting, the diplomatic bargaining between the US and Turkey intensified. Towards the end of December, the two countries set up their delegations and started negotiations to settle the details of cooperation over Iraq.

On his way back to Turkey, Erdoğan gave hints about the bargaining axis that would define the negotiations in the next two months between Turkey and the United States in Iraq. He stated that Turkey would be hurt by a possible military operation in Iraq whether it participates in the operation or stays outside. Therefore, the main question should be how to reduce the loss of Turkey in case of a war in Iraq. In this respect, he pointed at the economic difficulties Turkey faced after the Gulf War as well as the future of northern Iraq. As the delegations started working, these two topics determined the course of negotiations.

Negotiation Process

The negotiation process constituted one of the turbulent periods between the United States and Turkey towards the March 1. The previous

²⁰² İsmet Berkan, "Semboller ve gerçekler," *Radikal*, (December 11, 2002), available at: <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=59278>; See also, Aslı Aydıntaşbaş, "Perde Arkası," *Sabah*, (December 16, 2002); See also, See also, Turan Yavuz, "Çuvallayan İttifak," (Ankara: Destek Yayınları ,2006).

²⁰³ See, "Savaş ihtimali ağır basıyor," *Hürriyet*, (December 11, 2002); See also, "Irak konusunda referandumda gideriz," *Sabah*, (December 12, 2002), available at: <http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/arsiv/2002/12/12/s16.html>.

statements of the Turkish political elites which seemed to have encouraged the Bush administration did not result in a firm commitment for immediate political action. Parallel to the anti-war movements in the international arena, Turkish public opinion started to put pressure on the Turkish government not to take part in a war which lacked legitimacy. On December 26, 2002, the Human Rights Commission of the Turkish Grand National Assembly issued a declaration which indicated that they were opposed to Turkey's involvement in Iraq War as well as Turkey's opening of a Northern Front.²⁰⁴ This was followed by anti-war public demonstrations from all across the country. On the other hand, the Bush administration was already behind its schedule in terms of war preparations. The site surveys which were planned to be completed by the end of December, 2002; finally started on 13th of January, 2003 due to the delays in the Turkish decision making process. The meticulousness of the Turkish delegation- its examining of every detail within the scope of cooperation- complicated moving ahead in the negotiations, thus created a disappointment over the US side. In this context, discussions between the head of delegations turned into tactical wars as the US deadline for the Iraqi operation drew near.

The bargaining process involved political, military, and financial dimensions which the delegations carried out simultaneously. At the political level, the most contentious issue was the control of northern Iraq, both during and after the operation. The fact that the US side lacked concrete plans for the post-war Iraq increased Turkey's concerns over the dissolution of the country and establishment of an independent Kurdistan

²⁰⁴ See the statements of the Head of the TGNA Commission on Human Rights, Mehmet Elkatmış, "TBMM İnsan Hakları Komisyonu: 'Savaşa Hayır,'" *Hürriyet*, (December 26, 2002).

that included the rich oil fields of Mosul and Kirkuk.²⁰⁵ While, the United States tried to convince the Turkish side that they would support the territorial integrity of Iraq, declarations from the Iraqi opposition groups were indicating that the post-war constitutional arrangements might give way to a federal political establishment.²⁰⁶ Therefore, the Turkish military wanted to enter northern Iraq along with the US forces so that they would be able to check the presence of the PKK in the region while, on the other hand, prevent empowerment of the Iraqi Kurds at the expense of Turcomans²⁰⁷-a Turkic speaking ethnic minority- living in Mosul and Kirkuk.

At the military level, the two sides had difficulty in reaching an agreement over the details of the combat such as the command of the Turkish military forces, the law by which the US military would abide on Turkish soil and the like. Particularly, the negotiations came to a breaking point because Turkey opposed to the US supply of weapons to the Iraqi Kurds. As Fikret Bila pointed out, the United States was preparing to send anti-aircraft artillery to Iraqi Kurds as a part of building an army of

²⁰⁵ See, Soner Çağaptay, "The State of US-Turkish relations," *Testimony Before the Subcommittee on Europe and Emerging Threats of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives*, available at: http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/intlrel/hfa21205.000/hfa21205_0.HTM.

²⁰⁶ On December 17, 2002, the Iraqi opposition in exile held a conference in London Opposition groups at the They agreed on the outlines of a constitutional arrangement for the post-Saddam Iraq. The group agreed on a united but federal Iraq, yet the details of how this federalism would work remained ambiguous.

See, "Iraqi opposition plots post-Saddam future," http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2518925.stm.

See also, "Der Standard: Kürtler için riskli durum," *Dış Basında Türkiye*, <http://www.byegm.gov.tr/YAYINLARIMIZ/DISBASIN/2002/12/25x12x02.HTM#%202>.

²⁰⁷ Turkey was concerned about the political status of the Turcoman population living in northern Iraq. The Turkish government was in favor of a constitutional arrangement which would provide equal representation to the Turcomans along with the Kurds in the administrative body. To read on the Turkish Foreign policy towards Turcomans, See for instance, Mustafa Kayar, *Türk-Amerikan İlişkilerinde Irak Sorunu, IQ Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık*, 2003; See also, Gökhan Çetinsaya, "Müdahalenin üçüncü yılında Irak - 2 Türkiye'nin Irak politikasında revizyon ihtiyacı," *Zaman*, <http://www.zaman.com.tr/?bl=yorumlar&trh=20060322&hn=268160>.

opposition against Saddam.²⁰⁸ However, it was not clear against whom this heavy weaponry would be used since there was a no-fly zone, established over the 36th parallel years ago. In this respect, Turkey appeared to be the only target. In addition to this, the United States was avoiding to set a date for collecting these heavy weapons back from the Iraqi Kurds. Besides, the US side was trying to limit the capabilities of the Turkish military in northern Iraq. The US delegation was suggesting limits on opening fire in northern Iraq except for acts of self-defense. This was another issue which the Turkish delegation strongly objected to since it meant that in case of confrontation with the PKK groups in northern Iraq, the Turkish military had to wait for the PKK to attack them first in order to respond.

Throughout the negotiations, the slow pace of the Turkish decision making process was perceived by the US side as an attempt to raise the sum of financial package in the bargaining. In fact, Turkey still carried unpleasant memories from the Gulf War. The disappointment due to feeling financially undercompensated in the aftermath of the Gulf War led the Turkish delegations to get solid assurances from the US side in terms of material support. However, it is also true that by setting a high limit, the Turkish government relied on Turkey's strategic indispensability to the United States in the Iraq War. The US decision to dispatch its warships to the Mediterranean as the bargaining continued, convinced the Turkish political elites that the United States could not initiate the operation without Turkey's support. As Mustafa Balbay claimed, Turkish political elites determined the amount they would ask from the US administration

²⁰⁸ Fikret Bila, "Uçaksavarlar Kime?" *Milliyet*, <http://www.milliyet.com/2003/02/26/yazar/bila.html>.

according to the estimated cost of the “Northern Front” to the US military.²⁰⁹ In this respect, the Turkish side was demanding from the United States an economic package worth \$28 billion including donations and credits. In addition, Turkey was asking from the Bush administration to get a Congressional approval for the economic agreement. However, the United States was offering Turkey \$6 billion in donation or four to five times that amount in loans.²¹⁰ Furthermore, the Bush administration regarded the future projections of the Turkish side-illustrating their economic losses in the next five years as \$80 billion - as unrealistic.

Turkey’s insistent position in determining the amount of the economic compensation package led to a misunderstanding that the economic deadlock was the chief obstacle between the delegations. The remarks by President Bush likening negotiations to a “horse trading” as well as the offensive cartoons in the American press, depicting Turkey as a belly dancer over the negotiation table with dollars over her body drew reactions from the Turkish public opinion and complicated the efforts of the delegations in reaching a conclusion. The focus on the economic aspect of the negotiations also led to a discontent among the Turkish military staff. Therefore, a senior military official told Fikret Bila, following the National Security Council meeting on December 29, 2002: “The Turkish Military is not a mercenary force. The Turkish Military would serve to protect Turkish

²⁰⁹ According to Balbay, Cüned Zapsu-one of the political advisors of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan – calculated the US cost entering Iraq solely from the south as \$ 600 billion. This cost would decrease if Turkey agreed to open the Northern Front. Therefore, the Turkish government calculated Turkey’s future losses as eighty billion dollars to round up. See, Mustafa Balbay, *Irak Bataklığında Türk-Amerikan İlişkileri*, (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Kitapları, 2004): 124

²¹⁰ In case, Turkey accepted the US payment in credits, the limit would increase five times and reach about \$15 billion. However, the credit option would impose additional tax burden over Turkish investors. See, Sedat Ergin, “Düğüm Para,” *Hürriyet* (February 20, 2003), available at: <http://www.hurriyetim.com.tr/koseprinterversion/1,,00.html?nvid=233504>.

national interests whether the United States compensates Turkey's economic losses or not.”²¹¹

On March 1, the news reached to Ankara that Turkey and the United States finally agreed on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which set the details of the military operation in Iraq. The same day, the Turkish Parliament accepted the proposal which would provide the deployment of the foreign troops in Turkey, with a slim margin of 3 votes. However, due to a technicality the motion failed to pass. The months-long discussions were wasted. The agreement would not enter into force because the resolution failed to pass. When Fikret Bila later published the document of the MOU, it was understood that the Turkish delegation succeeded in getting concrete guarantees from the US side with regard to the most sensitive issues. Then why did the resolution fail when Turkey seemed to have secured its interests?

Analysis of Turkey's Decision on March 1

In retrospect, Turkey was opposed to the war in Iraq from the beginning. The liberals tended to see the war as illegitimate and unjust; the conservative and religious groups regarded the war as an attack against a Muslim state by a non-Muslim country.²¹² As for the nationalists, the Iraq war would open Pandora's Box with respect to the Kurdish problem. With the dissolution of Iraq, ethnic sectarian struggles could pave the way for an

²¹¹ Fikret Bila , “Paralı Asker Değiliz,” *Milliyet*, (December 29, 2002), available at: <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2002/12/29/yazar/bila.html>.

²¹² See for instance, Soner Çağaptay, “The State of US-Turkey Relations,” *Testimony Before the Subcommittee on Europe and Emerging Threats of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives*, available at: http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/intlrel/hfa21205.000/hfa21205_0.HTM.

CONCLUSION

From a historical perspective, March 1 was a turning point in Turkish-American relations. However, the crisis it engendered was not unprecedented as Turkey and the United States experienced similar crises in the past, too. Yet, during the Cold War, common security concerns prevented their conflicting interests going to the fore and damaging the alliance ties. Following the end of the Cold War, the emergence of multiple areas for cooperation enabled cordial relations between Turkey and the United States to evolve into a “strategic partnership.” A pivotal role was attributed to Turkey for its assistance to the United States in confronting the regional challenges of the period.

However, the concept of strategic partnership led to a misunderstanding as if the political priorities of Turkey and the United States were entirely congruent. In fact, throughout the 1990s, policy divergences between the allies continued on several issues, such as Cyprus, human rights, and arms transfers. Particularly, in the aftermath of the Gulf War, Turkey had difficulties in tolerating the US policies on Iraq. The economic sanctions against Iraq caused disruptions for the Turkish economy. On the other hand, the controversial aspects of Operation Provide Comfort (OPC) caused a stir in Turkish-American relations. A majority of the Turks believed that creation of safe havens in northern Iraq paved the way for the Iraqi Kurds to politically institutionalize. Moreover, the power vacuum in this autonomous zone was believed to encourage the PKK’s activities. Therefore, the renewal of the OPC’s mandate has been a contentious issue in Turkish domestic politics due to the growing mistrust

and resentment against the US enforcement of the no-fly zone in northern Iraq. Yet, the political and economic instability of the 1990s prevented Turkey from alienating the United States. Turkey could not risk a political isolation by losing the US support, especially when the doors of the European Union remained at best half open.

The terrorist attacks of September 11 led to profound changes in the US foreign policy making, by altering threat perceptions of the Americans. Following the attacks, the United States immediately declared a “war on terrorism.” However, fighting global terrorism involved a battle of ideas as well as a battle of arms. While trying to overcome the shock of September 11, the US policymakers tried to understand the reasons which inclined “a group of middle-class and reasonably well-educated Middle Easterners to fly three airplanes into buildings and another into the ground.”²²⁵ Eventually, they had come to a conclusion that the absence of democracy and representative institutions was fostering religious radicalism. From this perspective, oppressive regimes in the Middle East appeared as the root cause of terrorism. Therefore, the Bush administration undertook a broader task of promoting democracy in the Middle East.

The change in the US foreign policy thinking elevated Turkey’s strategic importance beyond its geo-strategic value, as a democratic, secular, and Muslim country. However, at the same time, the US policies following September 11 touched upon one of Turkey’s identity problems which the Turkish policymakers were avoiding to face for decades, i.e. the secularist-Islamist tension. Being promoted as a moderate Islamic country drew

²²⁵ Cited in John Lewis Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience* (Harvard: 2004): 89.

criticism both from religious and secular segments in the Turkish society. On the other hand, the US transformative policies in the Middle East which entailed a reshaping of Turkey's neighborhood worried a pro-status quo power like Turkey. Particularly, the US decision to go for a regime change in Iraq exacerbated Turkey's fears of an establishment of a Kurdistan in northern Iraq.

Shaping its foreign policy towards Iraq through the lens of its Kurdish problem, Turkey failed to realize that the Iraq War was just a phase in the US revolutionary project. Turkey's focusing on northern Iraq limited the scope of cooperation between Turkey and the United States in the Iraq War. This even prevented the allies from developing a common agenda on the political stabilization and democratization of post-war Iraq. March 1 indeed highlighted this policy divergence between Turkey and the United States over Iraq which had its roots in the Gulf War. By underlining limits of cooperation between Turkey and the United States, March 1 unearthed the truth about their conflicting strategic priorities over regional issues and thus marked the end of strategic partnership.

From many aspects March 1 will be regarded as a reference point in the history of Turkish-American relations. Considering the conflicting of strategic priorities of Turkey and the United States, the relations were prone to living such a crisis on March 1 at any time since the Bush administration decided to topple Saddam Hussein. Yet, the impact of March 1 could have been limited if the AKP government could give an outright negative response to Washington's demands rather than postponing what in retrospect can be considered an inevitable outcome to the end of negotiation

process. Turkey's disapproval of the deployment of the US troops at the last moment, while the US logistic equipments waited on board in the Mediterranean Sea, certainly caused a feeling of betrayal on the US side.

The risk of alienating the United States prevented the AKP government from spelling out the real opposition (within their parliamentary group). The government chose to go through bargaining with the United States while on the other hand, sought for ways to prevent the war. This ambivalent position, however, sent mixed messages to Washington. Especially, the Parliament's approval of the first motion on the modernization of bases encouraged the US policy makers to think that the AKP government was on their side. Therefore, when the second motion failed in the Parliament, it was at first, regarded as a technical mishandling of the voting process due to the AKP's political inexperience. In fact, the AKP did not want to carry the burden of decision of war. That was the reason which drove the AKP to postpone the voting in the Parliament after the National Security Council (NSC) declarations from the Turkish General Staff. Such political maneuvers provided political relief for the AKP as the Parliament turned down the motion. However, the AKP's efforts to refrain from taking full responsibility in the March 1 crises damaged the relations between the Turkish Military and the Pentagon in the long term.

The Parliament's decision surprised the US policy makers who had relied on their ties with the political elites, worked through informal and unauthoritative channels, and disregarded the voice of public opinion. When looked closely, Turkey's unwillingness to get involved in a military operation against Iraq was obvious. The public demonstrations across the

country as well as the results of the opinion polls reflected this truth. In this respect, the failure of the resolution on March 1 confirmed that the foreign policy issues were not in the monopoly of the Turkish political elites and that the public opinion has become an important source of pressure in the Turkish foreign policy making.

The March 1 incident and the challenges of Iraq War cast a shadow over Turkish-American relations. The Middle East, particularly Iraq appears as a problematic area to build partnership. Yet, there are a variety of issues which necessitate US-Turkish cooperation such as global terrorism, nuclear proliferation, the energy security, stabilization of the Caucasus and the Black Sea, and Afghanistan. With respect to the enduring alliance ties, the United States and Turkey will find it easier to work together addressing these challenges. In order to overcome what has happened on March 1 and restore a healthy dialogue, both countries should develop a common agenda based on shared interests. By concentrating less on the policy divergences, and more on common interests, each of the two countries were to benefit from cooperation in the long term.

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