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T.C. ANADOLU UNIVERSITY PUBLICATION NO: 4003
OPEN EDUCATION FACULTY PUBLICATION NO: 2785

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AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

E-ISBN

978-975-06-3768-1

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Eskişehir, Republic of Turkey, February 2020

3337-0-0-0-2002-V01

Chapter 8 Turkish-American Relations

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

Learning Outcomes

1 Explain the historical background of Turkish-American relations

2 Summarize the structural underpinnings of the US policy toward Turkey during the Cold War and Détente

3 Outline the main problematic areas of the relationship during the Second Cold War

4 Describe the changing geopolitical context of the relationship since the end of the Cold War

Chapter Outline

Introduction
Historical Beginnings of US-Turkey Relations
Relations during the Cold War and Détente
Relations during the Second Cold War
Reassessing Turkish-American Relations Since the End of the Cold War

Key Terms

- Special Relationship
- Strategic Partnership
- Cold War
- Détente
- Johnson Letter
- Cuban Missile Crisis
- Jupiter Missiles
- Incirlik Airbase
- Arms Embargo
- 9/11 Attacks
- DECA
- Rapid Deployment Force
- Iraq
- Syrian Civil War



INTRODUCTION

Despite the inequality between Turkey and the United States (US) from many aspects and disparity in various issues over the years, Turkish-American relations have more than 200 years of history. The heydays of the relations as well as the deepest points were experienced during the Cold War. The relationship at that time were mostly based on a common understanding of external threat perception, and the value of Turkey's geopolitical position to the US.

At the end of the Cold War, however, many analysts questioned whether Turkey could preserve its relevance and importance for the US global policymaking. The fact that Turkish-American relations have transformed into different forms since then attest to both the changing global system and to resilience of the relationship despite these changes. Nevertheless, relations were deeply hurt and strained by the events before and after the US invasion of Iraq in March 2003 to a level that, at some point, even the reliability of both countries as allies came to be questioned by many Turkish and American experts. Although the relationship took a more positive turn later on, recent developments since the Arab uprisings from 2010 onwards once again plunged the relationship into a problematic realm.

Turkish-American relations have experienced various ups and downs over the centuries, and managed at every turn to come out with new areas of convergence. To be sure, it is again passing through a very turbulent period, but this is not a unique experience; the crises such as the Johnson letter, the US embargo imposed on Turkey in 1975, Turkey's refusal to allow American soldiers to be based in Turkey before their move into Iraq, and the Sulaymaniyah incident are fresh in memory. In most of these crises, it took about a decade for the US and Turkey to finally overcome both the difficulties and the distrust and move onto the next stage in their relationship.

It is clear by now that, as the focus of Washington's political calculus gradually shifts away from the Middle East, the two states find less and less to cooperate with in the region. It is also clear that the importance of Turkey's geo-strategic position and value to the US have undergone important changes since the end of the Cold

War. After so many years, Turkey's importance is a qualified one. Turkey is no longer needed to contain Russia, which it has even developed a rapport recently, nor to become a model to the Middle Eastern countries as it has increasingly developed problematic relations with many of them. Moreover, the US reliance and somewhat dependence on Turkish military bases has also been declining with the development of other US bases in various countries in the region. Nevertheless, Turkey still holds one of the more important components of US and NATO missile defense system, i.e, the radar installations at Kürecik, Malatya, which indicates to still existence of areas of cooperation. The history of Turkish-American relations is a complicated one; no doubt the future will also be challenging.

HISTORICAL BEGINNINGS OF US-TURKEY RELATIONS

The visit of the **USS George Washington** to Istanbul in 1800 may be considered as the starting point of bilateral relations between Turkey and the US. Since then, the relationship has witnessed and survived two world wars, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the birth of the Turkish Republic, a score of hot wars, an over-imposing Cold War, the systemic changes (from the 19th century balance of power through the 20th century bipolarity to loose single-polarity of the post-Cold War era to current multipolarity in world politics) as well as many more ups and downs in bilateral relations.

Earlier Ottoman-American Connections

Establishment of Turkish-American relations could be traced as far back as the first official visit of an American officer, **Captain William Bainbridge**, to the Ottoman capital in November 1800 on board of American frigate *USS George Washington* (Ayдын and Erhan, 2004). He was forced by one of the Maghreb regencies of the Ottoman Empire to carry his gifts, together with US annual tribute to them in return for the safety of American traders in the region, to the **Sublime Porte**; he did neither plan nor intend to encounter with the Turkish diplomatic authorities.

Sublime Porte (also called Porte): “the government of the Ottoman Empire. The name is a French translation of Turkish *Bâbiâli* (‘High Gate’ or ‘Gate of the Eminent’) which was the official name of the gate giving access to the block of buildings in İstanbul that housed the principal state departments” (www.britannica.com).

The entrance of a battleship, however, with an American flag to the **Golden Horn**, where imperial arsenal was located, incited curiosity among the Ottoman authorities. Thus, Ottoman Chief of Navy, Kaptan-ı Derya **Küçük Hüseyin Paşa**, visited the *USS George Washington*, where he was extended warm welcome and responded accordingly. This was *the first* ever contact between the officials of the two states.

During the first ever dialogue between the representatives of the two states, Küçük Hüseyin Paşa remarked to Captain William Bainbridge of the US that both countries’ flags had stars and this was a good omen. Later, they communicated to each other their will to establish diplomatic relations and strengthen commercial ties between their countries. Captain Bainbridge’s report to his superiors upon his return gave an impetus to the US Secretary of State **Timothy Pickering** to establish diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire. In fact, he had earlier appointed American *Charge d’Affaires* in Lisbon, William Loughton Smith, as an emissary to İstanbul in 1799, but this initiative had failed. As a result of warm welcome that Bainbridge received in İstanbul, President Thomas Jefferson of the US appointed **William Steward** in 1802 as the first US Consul in İzmir. However, ultimately the Porte did not give official permission to his appointment; therefore, it was never formalized (Wasti, 2012).

Later yet, **George William Erving** established the official diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire as the first US *Charge d’Affaires* sometime before 1831. David Potter became the first official *Charge d’Affaires* in 1831, to be upgraded to the level of “*Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary*” in 1840. In return, the first official Ottoman government visit to the U.S., lasting for six months in 1850, was that of **Emin Bey**, who

toured the shipyards there (Kuneralp 2011: 100). The first Ottoman honorary consulate in the U.S. opened in May 1858. The empire sent its first permanent envoy to the U.S. in 1867 and **Edouard Blacque (Blak) Bey** served as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Washington, D.C. between 1866 and 1873.

The fact that the US diplomatic representation to the Ottoman Empire was not upgraded to *the ambassadorial level* until 1906 and that of the Ottoman Empire to Washington D.C. only in 1912 indicates the haphazard nature of the relationship. In any case, the most important aspect of American diplomacy from the late 19th century until the First World War involved protecting American Protestant missionaries in Anatolia, while there was not much justification for the Ottoman State to seek higher representation in the US. Finally, the Ottoman Empire severed its diplomatic relations with the United States on April 20, 1917, after the the US declared war against Germany on April 4.

The importance of the Ottoman Empire for the United States derived from the following three reasons: 1) to secure free passage for American state ships through the Turkish Straits; 2) to obtain a naval base in the *Levant* to protect American trade in the region; and 3) to ensure safe and continuous transfer of Caspian (i.e. Baku) and Egyptian oil to the West (Erhan, 2004: 7-9). Similar issues have dominated US policies toward Turkey during the Cold War and beyond such as the access of American forces to the Middle East and the Caucasus, keeping the NATO bases and obtaining further US bases in Turkey, and ensuring secure and steady access to Middle Eastern and Caspian energy resources (Kasım, 2004).

Similarly, modern Turkey’s struggle against the attempts of various lobbies to blacken Turkish image in the US had its origins dating back to the Ottoman times. Most of the negative images that Turkey has suffered in the US date back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These negative images had also a lot to do with the works of American missionaries. Armenian and Greek lobbyists took over and used the “*terrible Turk*” stereotype that had been created in the 19th century by the missionaries toward influencing the course of the Turkish-American relations through the US Congress (Erhan, 2004: 17-23; McCarthy, 2004: 26-48).

In the 1830s, the US was trying to obtain the control of a harbor, or an Aegean island, from the Ottoman Empire to use it for effectively monitoring its commercial and political interests in the Mediterranean basin. During the 1970s, it was argued that the former US Secretary of State, **Henry Kissinger**, was trying to turn Cyprus into a NATO base. Moreover, during most of the Cold War, having a number of bases in Turkey to watch over and deter the Soviet Union was extremely important for the US. Following the end of the Cold War, we witnessed the establishment of **Operation Northern Watch**, based in Turkey, to keep an eye on the developments in Iraq and the Middle East in general. Most recently, the NATO's radar installations at Kürecik/Malatya have aimed at monitoring possible long-range missile threats.

On the other side of the coin, in the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire turned to the US to counter the Great Powers of the European system. Also During the 20th century, Turkey turned to the US to balance its imposing northern neighbor, the Soviet Union. Hence, though the context, intensity, and the extent of the bilateral relations have changed over the years, there are number of issues, discernable for their dividing or uniting effects on Turkish-American relations that have remained almost constant.

Through the years, Turkish-American relations have gone over a number of watersheds and its components have evolved to better suit to the underlining necessities of the time. During the early days, the relationship was more of a convenience, encouraged by curiosity on the Ottoman side and need to protect American merchants in the Mediterranean on the US side. The fact that the US was literally “on the other side of the world” and thus could not harbor expansionist designs toward the dying Ottoman Empire, led **Sultan Abdülhamid II**, in 1882, to inquire whether an alliance between the two countries was possible. Afterwards, as a token of goodwill, he sent goods to form “Turkish Village” in the **Chicago World Exposition** in 1893. This meant a search for new openings in the relationship as the Ottoman Empire started to buy surplus guns left over from the US Civil War, which had ended in 1865.

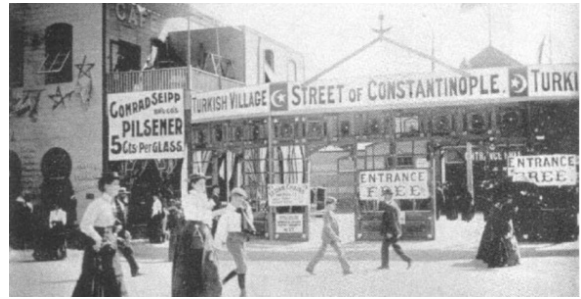


Figure 8.1 Turkish Village at the Chicago World Exposition, 1893.

Source: <https://themaydan.com/2017/09/glimpse-turkey-worlds-columbian-exposition-1893/>

Relations During the First World War

The First World War brought important changes for both states and their bilateral relations: while it marked the end of the Ottoman Empire, it opened the way for the US to ascend to world supremacy. Moreover, in 1919 US President Woodrow Wilson proposed his “**Fourteen Points**” that affected the international system, upsetting Britain and France as colonialist powers because it sought to prevent secret diplomacy and defended the principle of self-determination. Especially Point 12 of the Fourteen Points was employed by Ankara to justify its demands for full independence. Thus, when **General James Harbord** came to Anatolia in the fall of 1919 to explore the question of a possible Armenian mandate, he saw Point 12 featured on banners and posters that Mustafa Kemal ordered to be displayed wherever the general visited.



Figure 8.2 The Courthouse at Erzincan, September 24, 1919.

Source: U.S. National Archives.

Along the way, however, many in Anatolia, while fighting with the invading European powers, contemplated the possibility of American mediation or even American mandate. It seems that Mustafa Kemal eluded such a possibility when he met General Harbord in Ankara as he later reported back to US President Wilson that Mustafa Kemal had “expressed a preference for an American mandate” and that, “if possible, he was ready to accept American aid” (from Helmreich, 1966: 139 in Oran, 2010a: 59). Although the Turkish Republic was finally established without recourse to any foreign mandate, this was in line with the Turkish policy during the **War of Liberation** of trying to use rivalries within the Western camp and playing one Western country against another. As such, France’s Syrian commissioner Georges Picot also reported that when he had stopped in Ankara on his way to Paris on 5-6 December, 1920, Mustafa Kemal had informed him that he was willing “to accept a French economic mandate encompassing all of Anatolia” (Oran 2010a: 59).

Similarly, the rejected concession demand of retired US Admiral Colby M. Chester from the Ottoman Empire in 1911 to establish a railroad that would link Sivas and Van with Mosul and Kirkuk was revived during the **Lausanne Conference**. In fact, his son was able to sign an agreement with the Anatolian Government for the concession. Under its terms, all investments in the form of railroads, bridges, and ports would become the property of the Turkish government in ninety-nine years; however, in the interim, the concession holder would exclusively exploit all mines within twenty kilometers of the railroad on both sides. Although the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) had approved this concession on April 9, 1922, it was never implemented and the TGNA rescinded the concession on December 18, 1923 (Erhan, 2001: 377; Oran, 2010a: 59).

President Wilson’s declaration in favor of self-determination was also important in terms of the Arab territories of the Ottoman Empire as he proposed during the Paris Peace Conferences to set up a committee to determine the future of Arab territories in the post-World War I era. Britain and France opposed the proposal; however, the US set up **the King-Crane Commission** to report on the situation in the region. Although the report of the Commission was never considered at the

Conference and, because of domestic political problems back in the US, President Wilson had left the conference by the time the document appeared on August 28, 1919, it opened the way to US interest in the Middle East near Turkey’s borders.

The US Congress opposed President Wilson’s interventionist policies and opted for **isolationism** at the end of the First World War. Therefore, the US did not become a signatory to any of the peace treaties that ended the war and did not become even a member of the League of Nations, which was the brainchild of President Wilson. Moreover, although the US attended the Lausanne Peace Conference as an observer and was an active participant in parts of the negotiations, it did not vote or sign the treaty or its annexes, including the Lausanne Straits Convention.

As the US was not a signatory to the **Lausanne Peace Treaty** and there was no relationship between Turkey and the US immediately after the establishment of the Turkish Republic, formal diplomatic relations between the two countries started in 1927. Even then, as the US was too far away to contemplate a closer cooperation for the emerging Turkish Republic. Besides, the fact that the US went back to its isolationist policies after the First World War meant that the two countries had scarce connection in between the two world wars. As such, the US was not part of any of the issues such as the Mosul, Hatay, or the Turkish Straits that kept the Turkish Republic busy until the Second World War. Since the US was not a signatory to the Lausanne Straits Convention, it was not even invited to attend the **Montreux Convention** negotiations in 1936. In a similar vein, the US was not part of Turkish, French, and British negotiations to establish an alliance against the rising German and Italian threat in Europe.

Nevertheless, Turkey’s steady move toward the West and the works of various American archeologists and a number of Turks (such as Halide Edip Adivar, Altemur Kılıç, and Ahmet Emin Yalman) who had written in English for American audience in mind to introduce Turkey to the US had facilitated a closer relationship after the Second World War. Thus, when faced with threats emanating from the other emerging superpower, Turkey found sympathetic ear in the US to back it up against the Soviet Union.

Relations During the Second World War

During most of the Second World War, the US and Turkey did not deal directly even though Turkey benefited from the **Lend and Lease Program** of the US. From the American perspective, the **Near East** was still seen as part of British responsibility. Moreover, since the American public was not keen on involving in another “European Affair,” the US government preferred dealing with Turkey through Britain. In fact, the US supply support to Britain had started in the second half of 1940, even before the US entry into the war following the Japanese attack on **Pearl Harbor** on December 7, 1941. From the Turkish perspective, too, the US was still too distant to be any help, and there existed the **Tripartite Alliance** agreement of October 1939 between Turkey, Britain, and France that stipulated, among others, Allied help to Turkey.

Nevertheless, as the war evolved and Germany got the upper hand in Europe, it became necessary for Turkey to directly deal with the US. Moreover, Britain had tried at several times to enlist the US support in persuading Turkey to follow specific policy lines. For example, when Britain became alarmed over the possibility of Turkey drifting into the German camp, London asked the US to intervene to prevent a possible Turkish-German agreement. As a result, on June 15, 1941, US Secretary of State **Cordell Hull** asked Ambassador **John Van A. MacMurray** to deliver a message to Ankara, pointing out that if Turkey relented in its resistance to the expansion of German aggression and Turkish-British cooperation came to an end, this would have a very negative effect on American public opinion. In such circumstances, Turkey would not be able to continue benefiting from the Lend and Lease Law. Since MacMurray learned from his British colleague that an agreement between Britain and Turkey was scheduled to be signed within a few days, he decided not to deliver the Secretary of State’s message and sought new instructions from Washington (Aydın, 2010: 262). However, before he received new instructions, Turkey signed a Non-Aggression Pact with Germany on June 18, 1941, that prompted the US to distance itself from Turkey and stopped the Lend and Lease support.

Relations became even more strained when Turkey concluded a new agreement with Germany for the sale of **chromium** on October 9, 1941. Prime Minister of Britain, **Winston Churchill**, who had a better grasp of Turkey’s delicate position and believed that Ankara should be strengthened to resist the German pressure, wrote to US president **Franklin Delano Roosevelt** on October 20, urging him to restore the aid to Turkey. Churchill pointed out that Turkey was very important for the protection of the rear of the British army in Egypt. However, his urging failed to produce change in the US position. Nevertheless, Britain kept on transferring to Turkey some of the aid material that it was receiving from the US.

As US-Japanese relations worsened through the summer of 1941, President Roosevelt, worrying about the effects of possible Japanese entry into the war on the side of Germany, declared on December 3, 1941 that Turkey’s defense was important to him. The American position finally changed after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and President Roosevelt ordered the restoration of Lend and Lease Law assistance to Turkey, starting from 1942.



Figure 8.3 Franklin D. Roosevelt, the 32nd president of the US.

Source: www.en.wikipedia.org

As the tide turned against Germany after **Stalingrad** and the US entry into the war, the Allies started putting further pressure on Turkey to enter the war on their side instead of continuing to maintain its neutrality. Roosevelt usually

deferred to Churchill on Turkey, but he was also occasionally active. During the **Casablanca Conference** on January 14, 1943, in addition to their decision to pursue the war until the enemy surrendered unconditionally, Roosevelt and Churchill concluded to renew their efforts to get Turkey to enter the war. They decided that Churchill should undertake this mission on behalf of both leaders. There was a tacit agreement at Casablanca that the US would be responsible for dealing with China, while Britain would be responsible for dealing with Turkey. This also meant that the American military assistance to be provided to Turkey to secure its participation in the war would be delivered through Britain (Aydın, 2000: 266). Although both leaders sent separate messages on January 25, 1943, to Turkish President **İsmet İnönü**, calling on him to meet Churchill, Turkey resisted the pressures to enter the war after the Adana Conference held between İnönü and Churchill in February 1943.

The war reached a decisive turning point in 1943 with the German retreat on the eastern front and the Allied successes in North Africa. This passed the initiative to the Allies to open a second front in Europe that also increased the pressure on Turkey to declare war on the Axis Powers. It was in these circumstances that Churchill and Roosevelt met in Washington D.C. on May 12-25, 1943, to assess the situation. After noting that Turkey's policies were being formulated mostly with Italy in mind, they decided that the circumstances were right to make a new effort to get Turkey into the war. From there, they moved to Quebec to meet with Soviet representatives, who insisted that Turkey must be forced into the war without further delay.

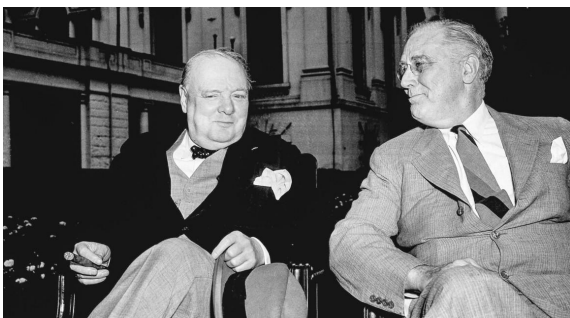


Figure 8.4 Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt talk on May 24, 1943, at the White House.

Source: AP Photo, www.politico.com

When foreign ministers of Britain, US, and the Soviet Union met in Moscow in October 1943, Turkey was on the agenda again. The American position was that forcing Turkey into the war would entail diverting large quantities of arms and equipment to Turkey from the Italian front as well as from the supplies earmarked for the **Normandy** landing. Instead, the US favored asking Ankara to allow the use of Turkish air bases, even if Turkey remained neutral. In addition, the US was stating clearly that it would not provide any arms to Turkey to secure its entrance into the war. In these circumstances, the burden of supplying Turkey with arms to get Ankara to join the Allies in the war effort would rest exclusively with Britain. Later on, when the British and US military planners started to work out the details of the second front to be established in Western Europe, they agreed that the continued Soviet proposal to force Turkey into the war would only be supported on the condition that assistance to Turkey would not be to the detriment of the second front and that it would not involve any diversion of troops.

Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin met at the **Tehran Conference** in November 1943. At Tehran, Roosevelt was against any action that would delay the landing in Europe, and this included providing aid to Turkey to get it into the war (Aydın, 2010: 272). As the negotiations progressed, it was agreed that asking Turkey to enter the war would inevitably be linked to the question of what kind of aid Turkey could expect from Britain and the US. However, the parties were not willing to specify the type and quantity of aid that they could provide if Turkey declared war on the Axis powers. It also became clear that the parties had no intention of sending any troops to Turkey. The Joint Declaration, signed on December 1, 1943, stated that “it would be highly desirable from a military point of view for Turkey to enter the war on the side of the Allies before the end of the current year” and that this was the last chance for Turkey to join the Allies and earn the right to participate in the coming peace conference together with the major powers (Gürün, 1983: 111-113).

Even before the Tehran Conference was over, Roosevelt and Churchill got in touch with İnönü and invited him to Cairo for further diplomatic talks. In Adana, under heavy Allied pressure, İnönü finally agreed “in principle” to enter the

war, but only if the necessary arms and supplies for the country's defense were to be provided before Turkey's declaration of war. He also wanted the joint operational plans to be drawn up before taking any military action. However, the negotiations remained deadlocked over what "preparation" meant. As the Turkish-British negotiations failed to make any progress, Britain decided to freeze its relations with Turkey and requested the U.S. to follow a similar course. On February 7, 1944, the US ambassador in Ankara, **Laurence Steinhardt**, was instructed to cool off relations with Turkey. Britain suspended its military aid to Turkey on March 2, 1944, and the US did likewise on April 1. Turkey's relations with the Allies were now at the lowest point, which indicated to a crisis of confidence. Britain and the US were reluctant to share their war plans with a neutral Turkey, while Turkey refused to get involved in the war without being informed about where, how, and when the Turkish army would have to fight.

At this juncture relations became even more strained because of the question of Turkey's chromium sales to Germany. On April 9, 1944, the US Secretary of State Cordell Hull made a statement where he called on all neutral states to end their trade relations with Germany. The British and the US ambassadors subsequently delivered notes to Ankara, threatening that they would impose a blockade (which was in place against other neutral states) also on Turkey if Ankara kept on delivering strategic materials to Germany. This question was finally resolved when Turkey first agreed to impose a monthly quota on its dispatches to Germany and subsequently, on April 21, 1944, it stopped exports altogether. After the sales of chromium had come to an end, the Allies demanded that the sale of all other strategic materials also be terminated. Following diplomatic negotiations, toward the end of May 1944 Britain, the US, and Turkey concluded a trade agreement, where Britain and the US agreed to make up for any diminution in Turkey's exports and imports and Turkey agreed to undertake to reduce its trade with the Axis countries by 50%.

With the landing in Normandy on June 6, 1944, the allies finally opened the second front in Europe. This signified the beginning of the end of the war in Europe. Toward the end of June 1944, Britain and the US started asking Turkey to sever all

its commercial and diplomatic ties with Germany. As the end of the war approached, there was a certain apprehension in Turkey about the postwar arrangements and the way Turkish-Soviet relations would develop. On July 3, **Şükrü Saraçoğlu** summoned the British and US ambassadors to explain the problems that Turkey would encounter if it severed relations with Germany and let them understand that he was expecting the Allies to assist Turkey on this matter. He also told them that the Lend and Lease Programs for Turkey should also be resumed. Military equipment, and especially aircraft, should be provided to repulse a possible sudden attack.

Finally, the government obtained parliamentary approval and informed the Allies that relations with Germany would be severed, effective August 2, 1944. Britain and the US expressed their pleasure with this decision. However, to the Turkish proposal to confirm the friendship between the two countries, the Soviet Union replied in a chilly tone. The Soviets communicated that Ankara had resisted the calls made since November 1943 to enter the war to shorten it and that at the time the Turkish proposal to exchange letters to confirm the friendship between the two would be useless, because it would not have the effect of shortening the conflict.

Ankara could see the hardening of the Soviet position as the end of the war approached. Ankara was also uncomfortable with the notion that Britain and the US no longer needed Turkey. Turkey's hitherto policy of staying out of the war was now turning into a liability as the war drew to an end. In these circumstances Turkey's postwar foreign policy concerns would be largely determined by Soviet demands for amending the Montreux Convention and by how Britain and the US would react to these demands.

Turkey was on the agenda on February 10, 1945, when Stalin raised the issue of the Straits and the status of the Montreux Convention at the **Yalta Conference**. As Roosevelt and Churchill were favorably disposed toward the Soviet position at the conference, it was decided that the Soviet proposals regarding the Straits would be submitted to the forthcoming meeting of the foreign ministers of the three countries. However, before this meeting took place, Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov had summoned Turkish ambassador **Selim Sarper** to

his office on March 19, 1945, and handed him a note, informing him that the **Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality (Nonaggression)** of 17 December 1925, which had been the basis of Turkish-Soviet relations for twenty years, would not be extended. When the Soviets informed Turkey on June 7, 1945, that to renew the treaty, it would be necessary to settle the following outstanding questions: (1) the revision of Turkey's frontier with the USSR (the ceding of the region of Kars and Ardahan); (2) the granting of military bases to the USSR in the Straits to ensure the joint defense of the waterway; and (3) the revision of the Montreux Convention (Aydın, 2010: 279). Naturally, Turkey sought support from both the US and Britain.

In the period leading up to the **Potsdam Conference**, in regard to the Straits Ankara also sought to align the US position with Turkey's own position though the former, still entertaining hopes of maintaining harmonious relations with the USSR. However, at this time, the allies were reluctant to openly confront Moscow on the issue of the Straits. Yet the Allied position started to change after Potsdam; Britain informed Turkey in February 1946 that it considered the Tripartite Alliance of 1939 still binding and, therefore, it would come to Turkey's aid in the event of an attack. Subsequently, on April 5, 1946, the US battleship **Missouri** anchored in the harbor of İstanbul, carrying back the body of the former Turkish Ambassador to Washington, **Münir Erteğün**, who had died at his post on November 11, 1944. This was an unusual gesture, going well beyond the customary courtesies shown to a deceased envoy.

These events signified that Turkey's wartime isolation was coming to an end. When the Soviet notes of August 8, 1946, and of August 22, 1946, reiterating the Soviet claims, reached Ankara, Turkey rejected the Soviet demands, this time with full British and American backing. The Soviet demands were formally submitted one last time on September 24, 1946, without, however, being further pursued. The threat perception these demands created in Ankara became, however, the defining feature of Turkey's domestic and international policies after World War II, and Turkey moved to counter the perceived Soviet threat by courting US support in the post-World War II era.



Figure 8.5 Ambassador Erteğün at work at his desk, the Turkish Embassy, Washington D.C.

Source: www.en.wikipedia.org



your turn 1

Explain the historical foundations of Turkish-American relations.

RELATIONS DURING THE COLD WAR AND DÉTENTE

The ensuing Cold War brought about enticements for ever closer Turkish-American relations. The rule of the game was simple: Turkey provided the US with bases to monitor and encircle the Soviet Union. In return, the US provided economic aid and defense umbrella. As a result, the US obtained several bases in Turkey during the 1950s through various intricate bilateral agreements, while Turkey received 1.6 billion US dollars between 1948 and 1964 in economic aid. The “honeymoon” between the two countries, however, did not survive the 1962 Cuban missile deal. During the crisis US President John F. Kennedy secretly and without consulting Turkey entered a deal with the Soviet Union, agreeing to remove the Jupiter missiles based in Turkey in exchange for withdrawal of the Soviet missiles from Cuba. Harmel Report of January 1963 signaled the ensuing détente between the two blocks.

Most importantly, with the Johnson Letter, the US threatened to leave Turkey to its fate against the Soviet Union, if Turkey carried over its plan to intervene in Cyprus on behalf of the Turkish minority in an effort to protect them from the aggression of the Greek majority.

Coupled with the world-wide anti-American sentiments in the wake of the Vietnam War, these complaints led to a reassessment of Turkish-American relations. Most of the little-known bilateral treaties were abrogated and a new set of rules for the Turkish-American cooperation was formulated in 1969 with the **Joint Defense Cooperation Agreement**.

Even this revised relationship could not withstand the storm created by the Turkish intervention in Cyprus in 1974 and the American response in the form of an arms embargo. It took five years to create a new set of rules to delimit Turkish-American relations: **The Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement (DECA)**, signed in 1980, set new parameters for the new period. It included economic and defense industry cooperation component for the first time and signaled that Turkish-American relations were slowly passing beyond “aid in return for military bases” equation.

The Truman Doctrine and Relations During the 1950s

Turkey's main concern at the end of the Second World War was to ensure its security and territorial integrity on the face of perceived threat from the Soviet Union. The US on the other hand, under the mistaken belief that the US and the UK could continue to work with the USSR, was more interested in setting up a global security system through the UN rather than being excessively concerned with Soviet policies against Turkey.

In fact, President Truman told Stalin at the Potsdam Conference that the question of territorial exchange between Turkey and the USSR was “a matter that had to be settled between Turks and Russians,” though he was also clear that “the question of the Straits was of concern to the U.S. and the whole world” (FRUS: 302 in Erhan, 2010a: 311). This was precisely where the US/UK relations with the USSR soured in coming months

as the USSR moved, in violation of the agreement reached at Potsdam according to the US, to convey in a unilateral way its requests for change of the Montreux Convention to Turkey.

As the US objectives evolved after the war, Turkey, together with Greece, received greater attention. As the Soviets became involved in Greek civil war, threat to Greece and Turkey provided the background to President Truman's announcement on 12 March 1947 that Greece were to receive \$300 million in military aid and Turkey \$100 million to counter the Soviet threat that they were facing.

Turkey welcomed the **Truman Doctrine** essentially for two reasons: 1) the persistent Soviet demands could only be resisted with international support, especially the US support; 2) the US was the only country at the end of the war that was able to provide Turkey with funds, much needed for both economic development and military modernization. Though the US had provided \$95 million worth of military equipment during the war, this aid was ended as the war came to an end. In fact, the Turkish military needed modernization in the mid-1940s. As a result, Turkey signed the **Agreement on Aid to Turkey** on 12 July 1947 to benefit from the Truman Doctrine (Armaoğlu, 1991: 162–164) and received \$400 million worth of US military equipment and other aid to increase the defensibility of the country over the next five years (Erhan, 2010a: 318).

Receiving this aid not only helped develop better relations between Turkey and the US but also affected Turkey's foreign policy in a fundamental way. It was the beginning of Turkey's overly pro-Western foreign policy, which in the longer run alienated Turkey from the non-Western world in general. Another long-term problem with the agreement was that the spare parts for the equipment received by Turkey without payment under the US aid program could only be obtained from the US. Therefore, the costs of maintenance and spare parts quickly became a serious problem, increasing Turkey's imports from the U.S. rapidly and derailing its balance of payments as well as creating economic and political dependency on the US. The **Marshall Plan**, following the Truman Doctrine, accelerated the process of change and, as a result, Turkey witnessed impacts of the US on its domestic politics, economy, and foreign policy.

In addition to the agreements signed to receive aid under the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, Turkey also signed several bilateral security and political agreements with the US during the 1950s. While their added value to Turkey's security were questionable after Turkey had become a NATO member, various provisions of these agreements, especially when American military personnel stationed in Turkey were perceived by the public as enjoying judicial privileges and immunities reminiscent of the former capitulations, and also because some of them were hidden from Parliamentary oversight, became problematic in Turkish-American relations during the 1960s.

Moreover, various conditions put forward by the US when the Turkish government asked for more US aid because the country's economy started to falter toward the end of 1950s caused dismay in governing circles. The conditions put forward by the US to extend further loans to Turkey included ending inflationary policies, curbing agricultural credits and price supports, conducting tax reforms, and devaluing the Turkish Lira. As the economy continued to deteriorate and the government realized that the US aid was not forthcoming, the Turkish lira was devalued on August 3, 1958, and other measures were put in place, which then opened the way for \$359 million worth aid package by the US, the World Bank, the IMF, and the European Payments Union (Sezer, 1996: 452–59). Although this briefly alleviated the government's economic concerns, it also heralded the end of a period when the US supplied unconditional economic aid. The changing circumstances were soon reflected in open criticisms directed toward each other in both countries in a sharp contrast to early 1950s when only praises found place in public domains. As a result, while the American media became critical of Turkish government's censorship of the press and of the working conditions of workers, the opposition parties in Turkey were highly critical of the economic privileges granted to US firms in Turkey.

The Eisenhower Doctrine and Turkish-American Relations

With President Eisenhower's **New Look** Strategy from 1953 onwards, calling for massive retaliation against possible Soviet military actions, using psychological warfare and covert operations

in countries "threatened by communism" and establishing military bases in countries geographically closer to the USSR (Erhan, 2010a: 335), Turkey-US relations entered a new phase. As one of the US priorities was the containment of the Soviets, the construction of American bases in Turkey became an important part of the new strategy.

Similarly, the creation of the **Baghdad Pact** in 1955 by Turkey, Iraq, Great Britain, Pakistan and Iran with the US encouragement behind the scenes was linked to this policy. In fact, the US declared on November 29, 1956, at the Baghdad Pact meeting, where it was attending as an observer, that "it would consider any attack on the territorial integrity and political independence of any member state as an aggression directed at the US." Later came the declaration of the **Eisenhower Doctrine** by the President during his address to the Congress on January 5, 1957. This became a turning point for the US policy in the Middle East as well as in Turkish-American relations. As the Congress authorized the president on January 9, 1957, to start cooperation with and assistance to Middle Eastern countries, including the use of US armed forces, Turkey, alongside with Iran, Pakistan, and Iraq, welcomed the doctrine on 20 January. While Lebanon and Libya also indicated their positive response, other Arab countries, notably Egypt, remained cool that affected Turkey's relations with them in the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s.

With the implementation of the Eisenhower Doctrine, the US started to construct additional military bases in Turkey as well as upgrading and enlarging the ones that had already been built. Also, US military aid to Turkey was increased substantially as a result. In return, Turkey for the first time allowed these bases to be used for non-NATO purposes. The first such case was the use of the **İncirlik Airbase** in 1958 to intervene in Lebanon and Jordan. Moreover, in connection with the doctrine, a new "Turkish-American Security Cooperation Agreement" was signed on March 5, 1959, that included a US commitment "to furnish all kinds of assistance and cooperation, including the use of armed force...in the event of an attack on Turkey and upon the request of the Turkish government." As the preamble of the agreement stated, the assistance would be

provided in the event of either a direct or an indirect attack (Armaoğlu, 1991: 259-260). This led to an acrimonious public debate over the concept of “*indirect attack*,” which was interpreted by the opposition as a promise of support to the DP government against popular opposition in the country.

Disagreements in Bilateral Relations During the 1960s

Under such conditions, the Turkish-American relations went from one crisis to another during the 1960s, though proved resilient on the face of shared external threat perception from the Soviet Union. However, some fissures created by these disagreements were to bring about a complete breakdown in the relations during the 1970s.

One of the earlier issues that proved crucial later on was the deployment of the American **Jupiter Missiles** in Turkey in early 1960 in reaction to the Soviet effort to develop a technology for medium- and long-range ballistic missiles, which prompted NATO to increase its first-strike capability against the USSR as a deterrence. Toward this end, in 1957 the US proposed to its allies to deploy medium-range Jupiter missiles with nuclear warheads. Since their deployment entailed a possible Soviet retaliation, only the UK, Italy, and Turkey among the allies agreed to the deployment of missiles on their soil. Turkey, because of its continuing threat perception and in an attempt to increase its strategic importance to its Western allies, signed a secret agreement with the US on October 25, 1959, agreeing to the deployment of 15 Jupiter missiles in Turkey. As the agreement was not submitted to the TGNA for ratification, the Turkish public was unaware of the possibility of massive increase in threat to Turkey as a result of the deployment of these missiles. However, as the missiles became operational in July 1962, the USSR decided to respond with deploying its own missiles in Cuba. This led to one of the most serious crises of the Cold War and also opened up Turkey’s eyes to both the dimension of the danger they created for Turkey and the carefree attitude of the US when it came to Turkish interests and security.

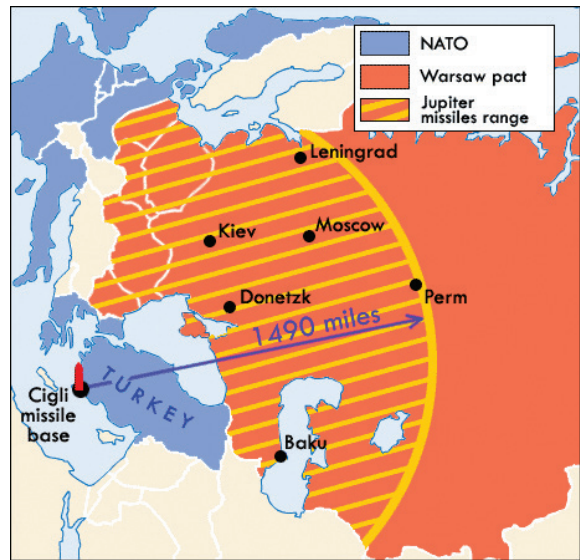


Figure 8.6 Range of Jupiter Missiles Based in Turkey.

Source: www.orientalreview.org

While Jupiter missiles were being stationed in Turkey, another crisis shook the world and strained both Turkish-Soviet and Turkish-American relations. When an American **U-2 spy plane** was shot down over the USSR on May 1, 1960, the USSR accused Turkey hosting it. According to the Soviets, the countries that allowed the plane to use their bases were as guilty as the US. Turkey rejected the accusation with a statement on 8 May, saying that it did not grant permission to any American aircraft to fly over the Soviet territory from its soil and in fact no such aircraft had crossed the Turkish-Soviet border. After the US admitted that the aircraft was on an intelligence-gathering mission but took off from a base in Pakistan, the USSR dropped the issue. In a sense, Turkey was lucky because the US had earlier flown U-2 planes from Turkey over the Soviet Union, but not the one that was shot down on May 1. Nevertheless, possible US activities in Turkey, directed against the USSR, without Turkish government’s control continued to create tensions throughout the 1960s and after another shooting down in 1965, this time a plane took off from the İncirlik Airbase, Turkey officially asked the U.S. to stop flying them from Turkish soil (Erhan, 2010a: 341).

Most of these tensions came to a head when the Soviet Union began installing medium-range missiles in Cuba from spring 1962 onwards. The Soviets' reasoning was that they were countering the US Jupiter missiles based in Turkey. As the US declared a blockade on Cuba on October 22, 1962, to prevent delivery of launch mechanisms for the missiles and the USSR declared that it did not recognize the US blockade, the world came to the threshold of a nuclear war. The standoff was finally averted on 27 October when **Nikita Khrushchev**, after receiving assurances from the Kennedy Administration that the US was to remove the Jupiter missiles from Turkey, announced that the Soviet Union would not install missiles in Cuba.

The Cuban missile crisis affected Turkish-American relations negatively as it later became clear that the US had agreed to remove the Jupiter missiles from Turkey without informing Turkey, which actually owned the missiles though not their warheads. The realization that the US negotiated over Turkey without consulting its ally or considering its national interest on an issue that made Turkey a likely target in a nuclear standoff, severely undermined the credibility and the image of the US in Turkey. It also inflamed the already existing anti-Americanism in Turkish public. Moreover, the crisis also demonstrated to Turkish decision makers that their one-dimensional foreign policy was fraught with dangers and that Turkey needed to balance its relationship with the US and various countries. Thus, although the withdrawal of the Jupiter missiles from Turkey by the US led to a delivery of **F-104** and **F-100** fighter aircrafts as compensation, Turkey gradually moved toward a multidimensional foreign policy that did not prioritize East-West rivalry but Turkey's own national interests.

By this time, the Turkish intervention in **Cyprus**, a crisis whose full extent would become clear after 1974, affected the already fragile Turkish-American relations. When the intercommunal strife intensified in Cyprus and the Greek Cypriots increased their attacks on the Turkish Cypriots from December 1963 onwards, Turkey sought for international support to put pressure on the President of the Republic of Cyprus, **Archbishop Makarios**, to stop the attacks. When Turkey's attempt failed to produce any result, the TGNA adopted a resolution on March 16, 1964,

authorizing the Turkish government to intervene militarily in Cyprus. In response, President **Lyndon B. Johnson**, who remained silent until then despite the Turkish requests to intervene in the crisis, sent a letter on June 5, 1964, to Prime Minister İnönü. Although the content of the letter was kept secret at the time, the full text was leaked to the Turkish press on January 13, 1966, which caused a storm in Turkish-American relations.

In **the Johnson Letter**, as it came to be known, President Johnson argued that the possibility of a military engagement between the two NATO members, i.e. Turkey and Greece, as a result of a Turkish intervention in Cyprus was completely unacceptable. Johnson wrote as follows: "I hope you will understand that your NATO allies have not had a chance to consider whether they have an obligation to protect Turkey against the Soviet Union if Turkey takes a step which results in Soviet intervention without the full consent and understanding of its NATO allies" (Erhan, 2010b: 414). In effect, this was equal to saying that the mutual defense article of the NATO Treaty (**Article 5**) might not be used to protect Turkey against possible Soviet aggression. This led Turkey to question its rationale for joining the NATO alliance and the Western camp at the end of the Second World War.

Moreover, in a paragraph that was ignored at the time but would cause a more serious problem ten years later, President Johnson explained that, according to Article IV of the Agreement on Aid to Turkey of July 12, 1947, Turkey "is required to obtain U.S. consent for the use of equipment and material provided through military assistance for purposes other than those for which such assistance was furnished" (Erhan, 2010b: 414). Johnson further announced that the US does not agree to the use of US supplied military equipment in Cyprus.

Beside the abrupt and diplomatically crude character of the letter, the content was also disappointing to the Turkish leaders. Prime Minister İnönü's reply on June 13 showed this: "Both the tune and the content of your letter addressed to an ally like Turkey that has always shown great concern for its relations of alliance with America have caused profound disappointment...I sincerely hope that the divergence of views that has emerged and the general tone of your letter are the

result of well-intentioned efforts based on views put together in great haste at a moment when time was of the essence” (Armaoğlu, 1991: 270-276). Moreover, İnönü questioned the value of NATO, arguing that “the main pillars of the NATO alliance will be undermined and the alliance will lose its *raison d’être*” if the allies “start debating whether the member under Soviet attack is justified or not and whether the member has brought the attack upon itself by its own actions, and then decide on whether they will undertake their responsibilities to help the victim.”

Although the Johnson Letter was effective in deterring Turkey from a military intervention in Cyprus at the time, it also has had a lasting effect on Turkish-American relations. Especially the suggestion that Turkey might not be defended in the event of a Soviet attack led to a public outcry and calls for Turkey to leave the NATO alliance. It also accelerated Turkey’s search for a multidimensional foreign policy as it led Turkey to look for ways to develop economic and political relations with both the Developing (Third) World and the Eastern Bloc countries, including the USSR. As an indication of its displeasure, Turkey opposed the use of force by the US in Vietnam when it came for a debate at the UN General Assembly in September 1965 (Erhan, 2010b: 415).

Finally, opposition against the **US military presence** in Turkey gained strength and various bilateral agreements were opened up for debate. Part of the discussion was about the behavior and privileges of American military personnel based in Turkey. As the US became aware of the growing restlessness, the American installations were moved to relatively isolated places and the number of US military personnel stationed in Turkey was reduced from 24,000 to 16,000. However, this did not prevent further irritation of the Turkish public as it became clear by this time that American military personnel enjoyed various judicial privileges based on the principle of extraterritoriality. Although some of the Turkish grievances were addressed with a revision of **Status of Forces Agreement** in September 1968, the public perception of the US presence in Turkey continued to worsen.

At the forefront of the critics were the left-wing political movements that gathered strength from the mid-1960s onwards and strongly opposed to Turkey’s NATO membership and its hosting of US military in Turkey. By this time, alleged covert operations conducted by the **US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)** in Turkey and the activities of the **US Peace Corps**, which were came to be seen as an extension of the CIA, were all over the Turkish press. Therefore, Turkey stopped the activities of the US Peace Corps in late 1966, and the US had to recall its ambassador, Robert Komer, back to Washington D.C. in May 1969 after some left-wing students had set his car on fire while he was visiting the Middle East Technical University in Ankara. While his withdrawal did not end anti-American demonstrations and attacks on US personnel, the two countries finally decided, at Turkey’s request, to review all the bilateral agreements that had been signed between the two countries since 1947 and to consolidate them into a single document, which became the **Joint Defense Cooperation Agreement (JDCA)**, signed on July 3, 1969.



your turn 2

Describe the main doctrines that defined the US policy towards Turkey at the beginning of the Cold War.

RELATIONS DURING THE SECOND COLD WAR

Turkey’s relations with the US especially during the 1960’s were overloaded with various disputes and disagreements. This became increasingly evident as the détente process evolved and the common threat felt from the Soviet Union diminished. Turkey’s attempts to reach out to non-aligned countries and eventually to the Eastern bloc countries started to pay off in the early 1970s. Moreover, the domestic polarization in Turkey made it more difficult for the subsequent weak coalition governments to follow the Western lead more or less blindly. These developments inevitably affected Turkey’s relations with the US as well. However, another Cyprus-related development eventually broke the relations.

Breaking and Repairing the Relations During the 1970s

The Joint Defense Cooperation Agreement (JDCA) streamlined many of the agreements, memorandum of understandings, protocols, and other documents signed between Turkey and the US since the end of the Second World War. Some of these had not been made public or were sometimes not even submitted to parliamentary approval, since they were classified as “technical attachments” to the already signed and approved agreements.

The JDCA first put an end to the speculation that the US was conducting military operations out of Turkish territory without the knowledge of the Turkish government by openly stipulating that “no operation would be conducted against a third country from the US bases without Turkey’s prior consent” (Erhan, 2010b: 420). Moreover, ownership of all the bases were transferred to Turkey, together with the right to oversee all US activities on the bases. Moreover, it was agreed that the bases could only be used for defense purposes approved by NATO. Thus, the allegations that the US was using bases for its out-of-area operations were countered.

The JDCA responded to another public anxiety by binding the US to negotiate a separate implementation agreement every time it was going to use the bases, so that Turkey’s approval would be obtained in each case separately. In contrast to earlier periods and agreements, the JDCA also stipulated that the Turkish government would have to give “prior approval to the purpose, nature, location, duration, and composition of joint defense installations, the composition of the permitted personnel, and the overall category and type of the equipment to be supplied by the US,” thereby restricting the movement of the US personnel and equipment without prior Turkish consent. The restriction for the equipment and supplies were inserted to prevent a repetition of earlier incidents such as the Jupiter missiles crisis (Erhan, 2010b: 420).

With several other articles, the JDCA finally consolidated most of the earlier bilateral agreements into a single document in an attempt to remove the tension that was surrounding the bilateral relations because of conflicting interpretations of these

agreements. Though it seemed satisfying for both sides, the JDCA was short-lived as the US imposed an arms embargo on Turkey and, in return, Turkey denounced the JDCA on July 25, 1975.

Three issues preoccupied the Turkish-American relations during the 1970s were as follows: the opium poppy question, the 7:10 ratio in military aid to Greece and Turkey, and the arms embargo imposed by the US following the Turkish intervention in Cyprus in 1974. In the context of the political atmosphere of the 1970s, all three issues were interconnected.

From the Opium Poppy Question to the Arms Embargo Over the Cyprus Issue

Turkey was one of the traditional and, after the Second World War, the UN-sanctioned legal opium poppy producers in connection with the **Geneva Opium Convention**. As the illegal use of narcotics increased in the US during the 1960s, President Nixon came under pressure to do something to stop the entry of illegal drugs into the US. Although most of the heroin entering the US came from countries that were illegally producing opium poppy, especially Thailand, Burma (Myanmar), and Laos, the Nixon administration started to put pressure on Turkey in 1969 to reduce its production, claiming that some 80% of the heroin illegally entering the US came from Turkey.

Despite Turkey’s counter arguments, the Nixon administration continued with its pressure and threatened to suspend all aid to Turkey if opium production did not cease. As a result, the Turkish government decided to restrict poppy cultivation in October 1970, though this did not satisfy the US and the pressure continued while suspension of aid to Turkey became a congressional topic. Turkey eventually banned the poppy production after the March 12, 1971 military intervention in return for \$30 million compensation from the US to the Turkish farmers affected from the ban. While the US only paid one-third of what was promised, the Turkish government learned that the US asked India to increase its production of poppy to close the gap that emerged in global legal opium production because of the ban on Turkey. As more than 100,000 families were affected by the ban, the new government lifted the ban on July 1, 1974,

immediately after the return to civilian government. The Senate and the House of Representatives in the US adopted a joint resolution the next day, suspending all aid to Turkey.

While further calls for imposing an **embargo** on Turkey were made in Washington, a coup took place in Cyprus in mid-July 1974, which prompted the Turkish military intervention to protect the Turkish community on the island. The intervention caused powerful Greek-American lobby to join forces with the proponents of total embargo on Turkey that resulted in several congressional bills calling for arms embargo on Turkey because of the use of American military material during Turkey's Cyprus intervention. Despite the opposition from the State Department and two vetoes by President Ford (Uslu, 2000: 200), the Congress finally succeeded in getting the President to sign its third joint bill on December 30, 1974, suspending all sales of defense articles and services to Turkey. When its warnings ignored, Turkey rescinded the JDCA on July 25, 1975, and stopped all the activities of US forces in Turkey, except NATO-related undertakings at the İncirlik Airbase.

As the President and all his administration, including the Pentagon and the State Department, opposed the embargo, they immediately started to search for ways to end it. Although the embargo was finally lifted on August 4, 1977, by the Congress, which also authorized \$175 million in military sales to Turkey, military grants were not restored. The related law also contained provisions that called for the US involvement in finding a lasting solution to the Cyprus question as well as asking the Administration "to ensure that the materials... being provided... would only be used for defensive purposes" and to maintain the military balance between Turkey and Greece. While final restrictions were also lifted on September 12, 1978, a **7:10 ratio** for military aid to Greece and Turkey was established by this Congressional intervention in policymaking and became integral part of the US policy until the end of the Cold War (Armaoğlu, 1991: 297-299).

Although the embargo failed to force Turkey to back down on the Cyprus issue, it harmed the modernization of the Turkish army and weakened the NATO's southern flank. Moreover, it strengthened anti-Americanism in Turkish public and intensified the calls to develop a domestic

defense industry toward avoiding a repetition of the embargo experience (Erhan, 2010b: 428), which in the long run has helped Turkey to create its national armaments industry.

The Signing of the DECA and Bilateral Relations in the 1980s

After the lifting of the embargo, a new agreement was needed to replace the JDCA of 1969, but negotiations became stuck on Turkey's insistence that the agreement should go beyond mere intentions and specify the assistance that the US would provide to Turkey over a number of years in an attempt to bypass the Congressional yearly oversight. However, since the US Constitution required the Congress to approve the budget and all governmental expenses, including foreign aids, on an annual basis, the US administration was not able to sign an agreement with such a provision.

This was finally overcome with an article, stating that the US government "shall use its best efforts to provide Turkey with defense equipment, services, and training in accordance with programs to be mutually agreed upon" (Quoted in Erhan, 2020b: 430). Yet this did not mean much in reality. Therefore, the new **Defence and Economic Cooperation Agreement** (DECA) was signed on March 29, 1980 (Armaoğlu, 1991: p. 300). For the first time in US-Turkey relations, the DECA brought military and economic cooperation together in the same document and also committed the U.S. to assist Turkey in developing its national defense industry, which later led to Turkey's production of F-16 combat aircraft under the US license.

The DECA repeated the JDCA's restrictions on the use of the bases and installations on Turkish soil, including their availability only for NATO purposes as well as the limitations on American military personnel's movements and behavior at and out of the installations. Moreover, it was agreed that the arms, munitions, and main items of equipment needed for the operation of installations could not be removed from Turkey without a prior notification and that the lands allotted to bases and all structures built on these lands would become the property of Turkey. Finally, it allowed Turkey to suspend some of its articles and impose restrictions on the use of installations and the movement of US personnel in Turkey (Erhan, 2010b: 428-430).

While Turkey and the U.S. were negotiating the DECA, an Islamic revolution took place in Iran in February 1979, pushing the U.S. to withdraw from Iran. While the US insistence on its allies to comply with its sanctions on Iran briefly strained bilateral relations, the “loss” of Iran, coupled with the occupation of Afghanistan by the USSR in December 1979, reinforced the “value” of Turkey’s geostrategic position for the WHAT? (should be checked with the original text). Therefore, when the military had taken power in Turkey in September 1980 and immediately declared that Turkey’s commitment to its obligations to NATO and its allies, the US welcomed the change of government and Turkish-American relations improved markedly afterwards. During the 1980s, the US considered Turkey not only as a barrier to the spread of radical Islam in the Middle East but also as an important country in the cold war between the USSR and the US.

Apart from the declaration by the military junta on the first day of the coup that Turkey would honor its commitments to NATO and its allies, one of the earliest signs that the new regime was going to be closer to the US was the ratification of the DECA on November 18, 1980, which the civilian government was withholding as a bargaining chip. Another early issue was the **return of Greece to the military structure of NATO**, which was again opposed by the civilian government before the coup.

Although in 1976 Greece wanted to return to the military structure of NATO, which it had left in protest for the “unwillingness” of the NATO countries to stop Turkey’s second Cyprus operation, Turkey conditioned this with a redistribution of the command and control responsibilities in the Aegean on an equal basis. Because Greece’s absence created difficulties in the defense of NATO’s southern flank as well as the developments in Iran and Afghanistan increased the allies’ security concerns, the US became keen on Greece’s return to the NATO’s military structure and started pressuring Turkey. While the Turkish government before the coup resisted these pressures, the campaign conducted by Andreas Papandreou in the run-up to the Greek elections scheduled to take place in late 1980, with anti-US and anti-NATO themes, alarmed the allies and brought an urgency to efforts to resolve the question of Greece’s return to the NATO’s

military structure before the Greek election. Thus, following the September 12 coup, the US and NATO officials intensified their efforts.

Eventually General Kenan Evren, the leader of the junta, was persuaded by a message from **President James (Jimmy) Carter** and a personal promise by the **NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe**, General Bernard W. Rogers, who visited Ankara on 17 October. As a result, Turkey withdrew its veto and Greece returned to the NATO’s military structure on October 20, 1980.

As the perceived threats to US interests in the wider Middle East increased in the early 1980s, the US moved to strengthen its ability for action in the region. Especially, **President Ronald Reagan** argued for closer cooperation with Turkey and Pakistan in an attempt to both pressure the USSR from its south and monitor the developments in the Middle East. Turkey became a relatively more important country for the US in the wider Middle East and this was in agreement with the US plans in the region during the 1980s, except for the establishment of a **Rapid Deployment Force (RDF)** for the Middle East.

While the US attached great importance to the RDF and considered Turkey as a suitable country to host the force because of its NATO membership, developed military bases, and geographical position bordering the Middle East, Turkey did not wish to host US forces on its soil that might be used in future American unilateral out-of-area operations in the Middle East. Hosting the RDF was deemed problematic both in terms of domestic and international politics, as Turkey had a difficult time in establishing closer relations with its Middle Eastern neighbors because of its role in the creation of the Baghdad Pact in the 1950s as well as following a Western-dependent foreign policy. As a result, the Turkish government rejected the US approach when it first approached Turkey before the coup. It was not easy for the military regime to reject such a proposal at a time when it was striving to normalize its relations with many European countries and was extremely accommodating toward the US; however, the regime found it very difficult to commit Turkey to such an ambiguous and adventurous idea. As the RDF plan was received with suspicion in the Middle East, Turkey was concerned that such a cooperation could harm its regional policies as well as its newly developing economic connections.



Figure 8.7 Four Presidents (Reagan, Ford, Carter, Nixon).

Source: www.commonswikipedia.org

Eventually, under the constant US pressure, Turkey only agreed to provide storage facilities and installations for the RDF with several restrictions. **The Memorandum of Understanding**, signed on November 29, 1982, to facilitate Turkey's support, provided for the modernization of the ten existing bases and the construction of two additional air bases in Turkey whose expenses would be covered by the US. However, this clearly limited Turkey's obligations with regard to the NATO Treaty and stated that Turkish airspace could not be used to support an operation to intervene in a country outside the NATO area of responsibility. An additional limitation was that supportive air operations from the Turkish bases could only be conducted in case of NATO-approved plans, thereby ensuring Turkey's pre-approval (Uzgel, 2010: 543-546).

The way Turkey dragged its feet and the several limitations it inserted in the final agreement clearly indicated Turkey's uneasiness and distrust to the US regarding RDF's possible missions. Turkey obviously did not wish to be caught in between the US and its neighboring countries in the Middle East. Nevertheless, Turkey's acceptance to upgrade its airbases to be able to handle long-range bombers and heavy-cargo aircrafts, made it easier for the US to reach to the Persian Gulf and the Caucasus if and when Turkey agreed, thus provided a much-needed strategic advantage over the USSR in the political atmosphere of the 1980s. Eventually they became useful during the 1991 Gulf War with Turkey's cooperation when the US operated from the İncirlik Airbase and used refueling facilities at the Turkish bases in southeastern Turkey.

Özal Period in Turkish-American Relations (1983–1991)

Upon Turgut Özal's coming to power with the general elections held on November 6, 1983, Turkish-American relations received a boost. Because Özal was a firm believer in the benefits of an active cooperation with the US to improve Turkey's regional and global standing, Özal wanted Turkey to have a say in world politics and, according to him, this could be best achieved by becoming a leading country in its neighborhood and associating closely with the world's leading countries. Since he perceived the US as the leader of the world, there was no question in his mind about leading Turkey to a closer economic and politico-strategic cooperation with the US.

He was especially eager to develop Turkey's relations with the Middle Eastern countries and to turn Turkey into a key actor in the region with the US support, especially after the end of the Cold War. To convince his American interlocutors, Özal argued that an influential Turkey in the Middle East would be in the interest of the US. His approach to relations with the US was based on his assumption that friendly relations with the US would bring dividends to Turkey in its region. Confrontation with the US, on the other hand, would harm bilateral relations, Turkey's regional interests as well as economic reforms he was interested in pursuing. Noting how the US employed economic pressures on Turkey, especially during the embargo period, Özal once warned his associates that the US "has long arms and could create inconveniences on all fronts." Therefore, "while dealing with the US, we should calculate all the pluses and minuses. It's not easy to amend relations with the US once you have broken them" (Daily Güneş, 25.03.1985).

In Özal's foreign policy thinking, Turkish-American relations attracted a great deal of attention and the economic side of it was the most essential. He strove to develop an economic component for the relations. His emphasis shifted from seeking additional aid from the US to demanding greater trade on equal terms. One of the ways to push for this was using Israel as a stepping stone to increase the sale of Turkish products to the US, as Israel enjoyed free-trade agreement with the US for various products.

Therefore, Özal sought to expand Turkey's trade with Israel first. In fact, this was in line with the US thinking that a closer cooperation between its two allies in the region would strengthen its position in the region. Özal also knew that "America supports Israel in the Middle East and the Israeli lobby has a considerable weight in the US Congress," and therefore he concluded "relations with Israel should be kept cordial without attracting much attention from the Arab World" (Daily *Güneş*, 23.03.1984). However, it was difficult at the time for Turkey to improve its relations with Israel because of Turkish public's negative view of Israel's various actions in the region.

This line of thinking and Turkey's transformation in the 1980s helped move Turkey and the US to a more mutually dependent policy line. However, bilateral relations continued to be marred by numerous issues such as: a) the Congressional attempts to involve itself in Armenian and Cyprus issues; b) trying to link the US aid to Turkey on the solution of the Cyprus problem or the withdrawal of the Turkish troops from Cyprus or, failing both, tying part of the aid to such ideas so that it could not be used by Turkey, d) the tense situation in Iraq with regard to US policies in connection with the Kurds after the Gulf War of 1991.

Özal tried to remove the Congressional influence on Turkey's relations with the US by such policies as aligning with the Jewish lobby through improving Turkey's relations with Israel. However, his efforts ultimately failed, since the Congress repeatedly created difficulties in furthering the development of Turkish-American relations at the time. For example, a 45% cut in aid to Turkey in 1987, just after the exchange of letters extending the DECA agreement, annoyed Turkey intensely (Uzgel, 2010: 549-558). Similarly, during most of the 1980s, either side of the Congress attached conditions to the US aid to Turkey, calling for a reduction of Turkish troops in Cyprus, forbidding the transfer of US arms to Cyprus, or asking the Administration to find a fair solution to the Cyprus problem. Similarly, there were constant bills during this period in either part of the Congress dealing with the Armenian events of 1915 or later about the Kurds in both Turkey and the north of Iraq.

Although Özal tried to isolate Turkish-US relations from the negative aspects of these interventions, they inevitably caused reactions

from Turkey; at best, forcing the administrations on both countries to find a roundabout way to continue their cooperation or, at worst, halting the relationship for lengthy periods until a solution is found. In any case, the US, under the Congressional guidance, continued to strictly adhere to the 7:10 ratio in the allocation of aid to Greece and Turkey. This immensely annoyed Turkey, especially because Greece was an intransigent actor at the time when Turkey, under Özal's direction, was trying to be an accommodating and cooperative regional ally.

It should be noted that there was a difference between the approaches of the US administration and the Congress regarding relations with Turkey. The Congress, under the influence of various lobbies, was quite critical of Turkey whereas various American administrations, guided relatively by strategic concerns, were more understanding toward Turkey during most of the 1980s and early 1990s.

Generally speaking, the US involvement in Turkey's relations with Greece or in the Cyprus question annoyed Turkey. However, the US involvement was well received at least in one case; in March 1987, when Turkey and Greece found themselves face to face with a dangerous escalation in the Aegean Sea. As the two countries were sending warships to northern Aegean, the US intervened directly, calling on both sides to exercise restraint and providing much needed break to deescalate the situation.

Another area where the Congress regularly involved in bilateral relations during this period was the the issue of how to refer to 1915 events in the Ottoman Empire. While the US administration had supported the Turkish position until the mid-1980s that this had been considered a "historical issue" to be decided by historians and not by the Congress, the Armenian lobby made important gains afterwards and various bills were brought to the Congress. While Turkey officially objected these bills each and every time and reacted sharply, Özal's personal view appeared to be that the Congressional maneuvering around Armenian bills were a "one-off thing," and that, once used, would lose their "nuisance value" and could not hurt Turkey anymore (Uzgel, 2010: 555). It was argued that Özal, when conveying Turkey's uneasiness about these proposed Armenian resolutions in the Congress, gave the impression to the US administration that Turkey could live

with a compromise solution if the Congress were to close the issue forever. Therefore, the US Administration did not see any reason to oppose various resolutions when they came to the floor in late 1980s (Güldemir, 1986: 260-293).

In any case, the Armenian lobby kept up its efforts. When a bill was adopted in one of the subcommittees of the US House on April 23, 1987, and was sent to the floor of the House, Turkey reacted by calling back its ambassador in Washington to Ankara for consultations and postponed the forthcoming presidential visit to the US. When another bill was introduced in 1989, at a time when Turkey's strategic importance was being questioned because the Cold War ended, Turkey reacted by barring US naval units from visiting the Turkish ports and indefinitely postponed the meeting of the Turkey-US Defense Council, which was going to discuss the extension of the expiring DECA. As the voting date approached, Turkey also suspended military contacts and stopped U.S. flights out of the İncirlik Airbase. In the end, as the bill was finally filibustered in the Senate before the second vote in February 1990 by a prominent senator, **Robert Byrd**, Turkey, in an attempt to normalize the relations as soon as possible, lifted its measures on 1 March (Uzgel, 2010: 556-557). However, shortly after this, **President George H. W. Bush** issued a written statement on April 24, 1990, in which he marked the day for the first time as the “*day of remembrance*” for the Armenians “who perished in massacre 75 years ago” (Güldemir, 1991: 282). While President Bush's statement caused disappointment in Turkish public, Turkey kept its official reaction limited to verbal retort and avoided further sanctions, possibly reflecting Özal's understanding that this would stop the Congress from further engaging in the issue.

Another issue that caused consternation in Turkey at this time was the US approach to “the Kurdish issue” after the Gulf War. There were two aspects of this in Turkish-American relations. First, the US State Department started to publish “country human rights reports” from the late 1970s onwards and Turkey appeared there with the 1980s coup. With the emergence of *the PKK as a terrorist organization*, the Kurdish issue also started to emerge in these reports. Whereas the 1982 report had only two sentences on the Kurds, the 1987 report talked about a “rebellion” in southeastern Turkey and the 1988 report referred to the Kurds

as “minority” for the first time. In addition to these reports, the US criticism of Turkey in bilateral contacts on human-rights violations also increased throughout the 1980s (Uzgel, 2010: 557-558)

Apart from the Kurdish issue in Turkey, the Kurds also become a source of tension in Turkish-American relations in the context of the **no-fly zone** established in the north of Iraq after the Gulf War. Establishing a no-fly zone was originally suggested by Turgut Özal when Turkey faced an immense number of Kurdish refugees who were fleeing from the attacks of Saddam Hussein following the Gulf War. However, the no-fly zone established in the north of Iraq to protect the Kurds became one of the biggest sources of long-term distrust in Turkey toward the US, because it came to be seen as a sign of US support to set up a *de facto* Kurdish state there (Yavuz, 1993: 149-2018). The American attempt to balance its interests in the region through careful pronouncements about the need to maintain Turkey's territorial integrity did not ease Turkey's concerns. However, the continuation of the security zone was practically dependent on Turkey's cooperation, because most of the enforcement overflights were done from the Turkish airbases by the coalition forces. The discussion to extend the mandate every six months in the Turkish Parliament became part of a domestic political bickering, accompanied with increased public criticism of the supposed American support to the PKK terrorist organization by its forces stationed in Turkey to contribute to the maintenance of the no-fly zone. This became one of the more acrimonious issues between Turkey and the US in the 1990s.



your turn 3

Outline the main problematic areas of the relationship during the Détente period.

REASSESSING TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS SINCE THE END OF THE COLD WAR

Although punctured by constant Congressional intervention and consequent tensions during the 1980s, Turkish-American relations reached the end of the Cold War in a markedly mature state. With the end of the Cold War, when Turkey's

continued strategic importance to the West in general was being questioned, bilateral relations surged ahead with new areas of cooperation and with a completely new set of arrangements. It was clear that, although Turkey's significance in containing the USSR was no longer an issue, it became indispensable for the US as a stable and reliable ally in a very turbulent neighborhood. On the other side, cooperation with the US was still important for Turkey for political, economic, and security reasons.

The disappearance of the USSR in 1991 changed the basic geo-strategic parameters of both the alliance and the relationship between the two countries. During the Cold War Turkey played a major role in containing the USSR. The end of the Cold War significantly altered this. As Turkey's geo-strategic reach was no longer limited to its role in the NATO's southern region and poised to play an increasing role in a wider geography, covering the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Middle East (Aydın, 1996: 158), Turkey-US connection became **strategic partnership** by the early 1990s. While Turkey emphasized its special position in the middle of very insecure region, the US increasingly came to regard Turkey as one of the *pivotal states* that could either upset or enhance American interests within its region. This, then, required a new set of rules and policies from both sides.

Pivotal State: The pivotal state was defined by Zbigniew Brzezinski, former US National Security Advisor, as a state “whose importance is not derived from its power and motivation but rather from its sensitive location” and “which is able to deny access to areas or resources to a significant player”.

Source: Brzezinski, 1997: 41.

Although the two countries continued to cooperate in number of issue areas in the post-Cold War, the changing security perceptions of both countries also led to the emergence of divergences in the outlook of the two allies on a number of important issues. Especially, the future of Iraq and later Syria, with complications related to the emergence of *de facto* Kurdish entities in Northern Iraq and Northeastern Syria have created tensions.

Nevertheless, cooperation between the two countries during the 1990s went beyond most predictions, so much as it surpassed the ‘honeymoon’ period of the 1950s. Turkey not only became one of the closest allies of the US during the Gulf War, but also changed its long-established policy of disengagement from regional problems (Aydın, 2002). In return, Turkey received cooperation and support from the US for its endeavors to become influential in the territories of former Soviet south, to become a regional power, and to join the European Union. Open support for Turkish bid for EU membership and for **Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline** project for Caspian oil, and covert support in capturing the head of the Kurdish terrorist organization, PKK, in addition to continued economic and security partnership as well as encouragement for Turkish-Israeli cooperation made the U.S. an indispensable ally for Turkey in the 1990s.

The discussion at this time over the new European security architecture that might leave Turkey out also affected Turkey's move toward the US for its security arrangements. As Turkey's place in the emerging European security arrangements were ambiguous, bilateral security relationship with the US, the NATO link, and cooperation with Israel became more important for Turkey (Aydın, 2003: 175-181). The visiting US President William (Bill) **Clinton** talked about the emerging ‘Turkish century’ in the Turkish parliament in November 1999; this was taken as a clear indication of the emerging ‘strategic partnership’ for the first time in two hundred years.

One of the areas that produced convergence for Turkish-American relations at the time was the energy resources of the **Caspian Basin**. The vacuum created by the collapse of the USSR in the region attracted regional and non-regional actors to a dangerous competition, aiming to control the transportation routes of the region's energy resources. While the US supported East-West energy corridor, passing through Turkey, Turkey heavily relied on the U.S. support to become a regional hub for energy transportation (Aydın, 2000a: 37-40, 56-70).

Turkey's potential role vis-à-vis the newly independent countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia also created an area of cooperation between the two countries with US presenting Turkey as a model to be emulated by the regional countries. Turkey, too,

turned to the US when it faced a deepening rivalry with Iran and the Russian Federation in the region (Aydın, 2000b: 37-42). The US support to Turkey received renewed impetus after the **September 11 attacks**, with Turkey being as the only secular, democratic, and economically developed Islamic country to be presented as a model.

Furthermore, the end of the Cold War also opened new areas of cooperation between the two states in the Middle East, where the United States needed Turkish consent, if not open support, to shape its future. Accordingly, while Turkey's strategic role was redefined in the region after the Cold War and again after the 9/11 attacks, various cooperation opportunities emerged, marred with a number of diverging viewpoints that led to tension and mistrust. Iraq's future was the main knot in the relationship during the second part of the 1990s, while Syria and relations with Israel became main points of contention in the 2010s.

Although the new era required a new set of rules for the relationship, it became clear shortly that neither country was prepared to go to the next stage of cooperation. While Turkey clearly preferred a balanced relationship where internally economic component was as important as the military one and externally Europe was to become as important, the US, especially after the 9/11 attacks, came to look for more of a client-state relationship, rather than a strategic partner. Under such circumstances, the US occupation of Iraq in the spring of 2003 became a test case for the partnership, demonstrating the strains the relations had been accumulating since the beginning of George W. Bush's presidency in January 2001.

Turkish-American Strategic Partnership

Even before President Clinton made his speech at the Turkish Parliament, urging both sides to further their strategic relationship, the "strategic cooperation" rhetoric was frequently employed by the former Turkish Prime Minister and later President, Turgut Özal, since the late 1980s. In fact, the discussions to extend the Defence and Economic Cooperation Agreement (DECA) in 1988 between the two countries were later marked as the beginning of a "strategic partnership" (Güvenç, 2004: 12). While the parameters of

Turkish-American cooperation in the Middle East were defined by DECA during the last ten years of the Cold War, strategic cooperation rhetoric became more pronounced immediately after it. During the Gulf War, Turgut Özal decided to ally the country with the US closely, talking at the same time about the emergence of a strategic cooperation between the two countries (Aydın, 2002).

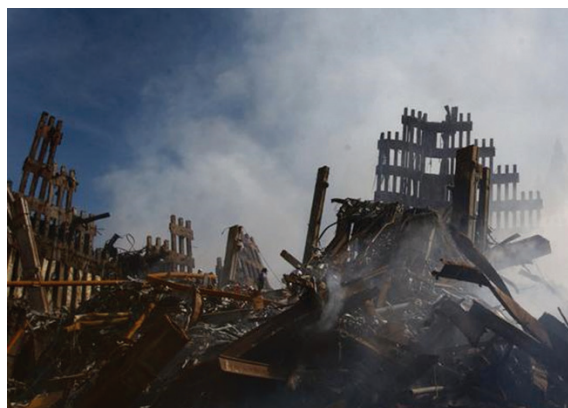


Figure 8.8 The rubble of the World Trade Center, after the 9/11 attacks.

Source: www.reuters.com

There was no agreement at the time about what this new strategic partnership covered. Yet it is generally agreed that it was an attempt to position Turkey within the context of the "new world order" of President George H. W. Bush. It also came after the negative report produced by the EEC Commission in 1989 about Turkey's application for full membership. Moreover, as Turkey was looking for an anchor to attach itself at the end of the Cold War, the new partnership meant more of a Washington-leaning foreign policy than Euro-centered relationship network. It was also an attempt to go beyond security-defined relationship in Turkish-American relations. Nevertheless, though used frequently, the concept remained without a clear definition, reflecting ambiguities that emerged after the end of the Cold War. In a sense, in the absence of a coherent concept to define the US-Turkey relationship in the post-Cold War era, the strategic partnership was used more of an expression of expectations rather than a well-thought out conceptual framework.

The concept was often used, though, in the period when the Turkish-EU relations were passing through a difficult patch, such as the times after

the 1997 Luxembourg Summit. In fact, Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz conveyed the message that Turkey would improve its strategic partnership with the US in response to the negative answer from the EU. From the US perspective, however, the strategic partnership clearly supported and complemented the Turkish-EU relationship, but not replaced it.

One of the high points of US credibility in the eyes of the Turkish public came at this juncture when its role was revealed in capturing the head of the terrorist organization PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, in Kenya on February 14, 1999. The US involvement in the capture allowed it to play a relatively active role in finding a solution to the so-called “Kurdish question” and to pressure Turkey for extending further cultural and political rights. Nevertheless, this did not last long as Turkey entered into a domestic political turmoil, which only ended with a change of government in late 2002.

In the meantime, the world was shocked with a sudden terror attack in New York and Washington on September 11, 2001. Turkey was among the countries that strongly condemned the attacks and actively cooperated with the US afterwards when the US tried to enlist international and NATO support for an operation in Afghanistan. Turkey opened its bases to the US for logistical support, contributed to the **International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)** with a contingent, twice assumed the command of the Force, provided security and economic assistance to Afghanistan, and Hikmet Çetin, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, became the NATO Senior Civilian Representative in Kabul.

Turkish-American Relations after March 1, 2003 Decision

In contrast to Afghanistan, where the Turkish public support for the operation and Turkey’s involvement was high, the atmosphere changed rapidly when the US decided to move against Iraq in 2003. As Turkey bordered Iraq and hosted several important airbases as well as American fighter planes and troops, it came to be seen by the US military planners as one of the entry points (the other one was Kuwait) to start occupying Iraq. However, Turkish public strongly opposed the operation, which was not seen as a justified action by many in the world. Nevertheless, the coalition

government of Bülent Ecevit, under constant US pressure, entered into negotiations to host up to 62.000 American soldiers in Turkey.

Turkey’s initial position was lukewarm with various conditions; Iraq’s territorial integrity must be preserved, the Kurds should not be allowed to take control of Mosul and Kirkuk, and Turkey’s economic losses should be compensated (Oran, 2010b: 916). After months of acrimonious talks, various details of which were leaked to the press by both sides in an attempt to portray the other side negatively, the US formally asked in January 2003 to deploy its troops to various Turkish bases and other locations. When the two countries finally signed a Memorandum of Understanding after lengthy negotiations on February 27, 2003, everything looked settled though public opposition in the country was heightened to such an action.

Along the way, Turkey allowed the US to inspect its various facilities and even upgrade some of them to accommodate forthcoming US forces. However, on March 1, 2003, the Turkish Parliament rejected the government’s request (**tezkere**) to allow US troops to be stationed in Turkey in their way to occupy Iraq. As a result, many analysts in Turkey and the US argued that this was the end of the strategic partnership in Turkish-American relations. Indeed, that date marked the beginning of a very turbulent era in Turkish-American relations although the Parliament approved another government motion on 20 March to authorize the deployment of Turkish troops to the north of Iraq and the opening of Turkish air space to foreign air forces for six months (Oran, 2010b: 919). This was “too late and too little” as the US had changed its occupation plans and started its operation on the same day only from the bases in Kuwait.

Although the Turkish government allowed the use of Turkish bases and ports for supplies and the transit of US troops in June 2003, it still declined to send Turkish troops to Iraq to help the US to deal with the rising insurgency in the center of the country. A fateful event took place at this juncture, whose effect was to be felt for years to come in Turkish-American relations. On July 4, 2003, a small group of Turkish special forces were detained by the US soldiers at Sulaymaniyah for more than 50 hours with their heads covered with hoods. This caused outrage in Turkey (Oran, 2010b: 920).

Later on, despite various Turkish attempts to get involved in some way in Iraqi developments, the US adopted an opposite position and did not wish to have Turkish forces in Iraq for fear of complicating the already very complicated situation as its main ally in Iraq, the Kurds, strongly opposed Turkish presence. Eventually, this led to Turkey's inability to enter Iraq even to pursue members of the PKK terrorist organization, something it had been doing since the late 1980s. This further added to public suspicion that the US was actively cooperating with the Kurds in Iraq to create an independent Kurdish state and the PKK to weaken Turkey.

Despite damages caused by these events, the two countries in time found a way to keep their connection intact in changed circumstances, though the parameters of the relationship were fundamentally changed. A number of reasons account for the continuation of the partnership, however flawed it was. From the American perspective, Turkey was still one of the few countries in the world whose importance to the US did not diminish with the end of the Cold War; in fact, its importance has increased in some ways. For the US, Turkey was a Western-oriented and a stable country in a very difficult and problematic region of the world. While the Middle East emerged as the leading troublesome region in the **post-September 11 world**, Turkey's importance, too, increased. In such a world, although Turkey refused to allow US soldiers to be stationed in Turkey, it became clear in a short time that Turkey was still the main logistical backup for the US army in Iraq. It was also poised to play an important role in political and social reconstruction of Iraq and its infrastructural build-up after the US operation ended.

Moreover, as the US also wished, in addition to Iraq, to contain both Iran and Syria in the region Turkish support was still considered indispensable. Just as the US needed Turkey to contain Iran from outside, it also needed Turkey to restructure Iran from within, both using Turkish moderate Islam as a model against the Iranian-type radical Islam and also occasionally pointing to the Turkish-Azeri minority in Iran and their connection to Turkey. Turkey was also seen at this time as a counter to further Iranian involvement in Iraq. As far as Syria is concerned, improving Turkish-Syrian relations were important for keeping dialogue channels open, guiding Syria toward a relatively cooperative mould and, if all fails, circling it between Turkey, Israel, and the US-dominated Iraq.

Beyond these, the US was still interested in promoting "Turkish model" to the Arab-Islamic world. Moreover, especially in the context of Central Asia, Caspian Basin, and the Caucasus, Turkey still played an important role in establishing east-west energy corridor that the US favored against the Russian and Iranian alternatives.

From the Turkish perspective, on the other hand, in order to realize its rhetoric to become a regional power in the Caucasus and the Middle East, Turkey still largely needed US cooperation and backing, not only in political but also in economic terms. Turkey's fragile economy was not powerful enough to play such a role by itself. Moreover, Turkey's cooperation with the US was also important with regard to its EU membership quest. The US backing had been important, if not critical, in various occasions both to further Turkish bid and to keep Turkey in the Western world when its relations with the EU were not exactly on track. Furthermore, to realize the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline project, which Turkey attached utmost importance, the American political backing as well as funds and expertise of the US financial and petroleum companies were needed.

These clearly showed that the requirement of both countries from each other for cooperation did not disappear in the post-March 2003 world, but the relationship needed a fine-tuning to the realities of the new circumstances. Especially the suspicion and distrust between them over Iraq had substantially shaken the relationship and highlighted the need for reassessing its parameters, better suited to the realities of the post-September 11 world.

Syria Conundrum and Turkish-American Relations in the 2010s

When the Arab uprisings started from 2010 onwards and turned into a civil war in Syria, neither side could have guessed that this would evolve into one of the most intricate problematic eras of Turkish-American relations. Especially because it seemed at the beginning of the decade that the two countries had mollified some of the acute problems of the 2000s and were even poised to cooperate in the Syrian theater in addition to the wider Arab Middle East.

In fact, several underlying problems were left unsolved since the end of the Cold War. First, the global political scene had been changing rather rapidly since the end of the Cold War, and both countries had differing perceptions and understandings of the scope and particulars of the systemic changes. During the Cold War, Turkey's regional interests were moulded within the US global considerations. However, Turkey started to attach priority to regional interests and problems at a time when the bipolar world system ended and the US (within a somewhat uni-polar structure of the late 1990s and the early 2000s) became more insistent on its sub-regional projects, which sometimes clashed with and contradicted Turkey's own regional plans.

Second, Turkish and American interests and expectations diversified specifically in the Middle Eastern sub-section of the emerging global system. Especially, their relations were tested by the developments in, and related to, Iraq in the 2000s and Syria in the 2010s. For Turkey, both countries could (and still can easily) turn into a survival problem. Since both countries housed Kurdish populations that became interested in self-governance, if not independence from their host countries, in two consecutive decades, their future in connection with Turkey's territorial integrity became critically important for Turkey. For the US, however, both Iraq and Syria have been far away regions that have needed order and stability. There is clear material difference in Turkish and American approaches toward these countries and related questions. In short, their priorities do not match.

For the US, the priority after its military intervention in Iraq was to attain and hold on to a somewhat stable situation in the country. Similarly, in Syria, it aimed at defeating the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (**ISIS**) and containing the influence of Iran in the country. All other issues were secondary. Therefore, the US, when necessary, could and would cooperate with almost every state and group (i.e. Kurds and the others) that could help its forces to bring a desired end in both countries. For Turkey, however, though the stability has also been important, it has not been the first priority, which has been preventing the emergence of a situation whereby Turkey's own territorial integrity could be jeopardized such as empowering PKK-related Kurdish terrorist groups

in Syria or encouraging the Iraqi Kurdish groups to carve up a *de facto* independent territory from the central government.

There has emerged strong suspicion among Turkish decision-makers regarding US plans in the Middle East in general and in Syria and Iraq in particular. Although the US has explained its close relations with Kurdish groups in both countries with tactical reasons, its connections with them have grown beyond simple tactics, especially after the Turkish decision not to enter Iraq together with the US forces in 2003 and again not to play the role of US ground forces in Syria in 2014. Then, the Kurds in both countries became the main ally of the US on the ground, which, together with US material military support, further fueled Turkey's suspicions.

Third, there has been a clear divergence between the two states regarding the concept of international terrorism. Major part of the problem related to the status of the PKK, the Kurdish terrorist group operating against Turkey since 1984. Although the US declared the PKK as a terrorist organization, it did not move against it in the north of Iraq nor did the US allow Turkey to conduct operations against it while it was an occupying power in Iraq. Moreover, the US has not accepted the connection between the PKK and its offshoot in Syria, the **PYD** (Democratic Union Party of Syria), and between the PKK and the PYD's military wing **YPG** (People's Protection Units) despite very open connection between them. Therefore, the reluctance of the US to move against the PKK terrorist organization in the north of Iraq in the 2000s and its active cooperation with the PYD/YPG in Syria in the 2010s unsettled Turkey, pushing it to doubt the US intentions and sincerity.

Differing positions regarding Palestine and relations with Israel has been another major problem. As Turkey's relations with Israel went from bad to worse from 2010 onwards, the US expectation that its two close allies in the region could come together fell through. Moreover, various US moves since **President Donald Trump** came to office in January 2017 in connection with Israeli-Palestinian dispute have found Turkey on the other side. Turkey's falling out with Egypt after the July 2013 coup in that country weakened another cornerstone of the

ideal Middle East picture of the US from the 1990s; i.e., bringing together Israel, Egypt, and Turkey in a closer cooperation. Given the current status of Turkish-Israeli diplomatic relations, the fact that Turkey and Egypt broke off diplomatic relations has made Turkey “the odd man” out in the Middle East plans of the United States.



Figure 8.9 Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, King Salman, and President Trump, May 21, 2017.

Source: www.en.wikipedia.org

In fact, the evolving Middle East policies of the United States that support Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in an attempt to create a solid pro-US grouping in the region against the increasing Iranian influence have also become problematic for Turkey, as its interests and policies in the region have increasingly become confrontational with Saudi Arabia and the UAE not only in Syria, but also in Qatar and Libya.

Another complicating issue for the already complicated relationship has been the refusal of the US to hand over Fethullah Gülen, the head of the FETÖ terrorist organization, or to exile him from the US where he has been residing since 1999. Turkey has tried hard to extradite him without success after the **failed coup attempt of July 15, 2016**, by a group of military officers and their civilian supporters, all of whom were linked to the FETÖ terrorist organization. The US, on the other hand, have complained to Turkey about the detention and imprisonment of US citizens or Turkish citizens working for the US diplomatic offices in Turkey.

Finally, all these came to a head when Turkey decided to buy **S-400** long-range missile defense system from Russia. The US reacted to this decision by freezing Turkey’s participation in the joint production of the fifth generation fighter aircraft (**F-35**), which has been developing by a consortium of states, including Turkey, as well as threatening Turkey with heavy sanctions if it operationalize the missiles. Various mutual accusations aside, Turkey has been trying to buy a missile defense system since the mid-1990s when it concluded that the threat perception in the region necessitated such a move. There have been several rounds of talks with the US to acquire **Patriot missile** systems since then without success, as different segments of the US system have years opposed such sales. The end result is both a deadlock where Turkey felt it had to move on with the purchase of S-400s from Russia and the US threat that Turkey might face even more dire sanctions.



your turn 4

Describe the changing geopolitical context of the relationship since the end of the Cold War.

LO 1

Explain the historical background of Turkish-American relations

The history of Turkish-American relations goes back to the 1800s when the first contacts were established. The main issues that affected the relationship such as the arms trade and the safe passage of natural resources are still important. Even though the relationship was disrupted during WWI, the Anatolian government used one of President Wilson's famous points, i.e., self-determination, in its attempt to convince the world for the Turks' right to independence. Much closer relations date back to the end of the Second World War when Turkey, in need of allies and economic support, opted for the US and Western alliance system in the newly emerging Cold War that became the basis of Turkish-American relations in the next 45 years.

LO 2

Summarize the structural underpinnings of the US policy toward Turkey during the Cold War and Détente

As the international system has turned to bipolarity and political, military, and ideological competition between the US and the USSR intensified, Turkey became an important ally and outpost for the US in its containment policy vis-à-vis the USSR. The US support to Turkey, on the other hand, especially against the threats posed by the USSR paved the way for the Turkish governments to move closer to the Western alliance system. The US policy of supplying military and economic aid through the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan at the beginning of the Cold War was instrumental in jumpstarting the relationship. To facilitate its policies, the US, in addition to the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, devised several political, technical, economic, and military bilateral agreements to be signed with its allies, including Turkey. Moreover, the NATO membership of Turkey was an important underpinning of this approach. Finally, the Eisenhower Doctrine fine-tuned the security-political response to the USSR in the Middle East region.

LO 3

Outline the main problematic areas of the relationship during the Second Cold War

There were several areas of discontent, some of which merged in time to disrupt the relationship. One of these issues was the opposition by the US to Turkey's opium poppy production, which, with the involvement of the US Congress, evolved into a rather disruptive problem. Second issue was the involvement of the US in the Cyprus problem and finally enforcing an arms embargo on Turkey in 1975 that led to Turkey's suspension of US military activities in Turkey. Other problematic areas included the declining level of US aid to Turkey, which was tied to 7:10 ratio for Greece and Turkey in later years, increasing anti-Americanism in Turkish public, growing discontent in Turkey for American activities in the country and suspicions for possible US intervention in political affairs.

LO 4

Describe the changing geopolitical context of the relationship since the end of the Cold War

While Turkey's geopolitical importance to the West in general was questioned at the end of the Cold War, the resilience of Russia and the widening influence of Iran provided additional geopolitical impetus to Turkey's standing in the eyes of the US. In this sense, the US envisaged Turkey as a pivotal country and a strategic partner in the Caucasus, the Balkans, Central Asia, and the Middle East, aiming at double containment of Russia and Iran with Turkey's contribution. Turkey's ambition to become a regional power at this time also brought Turkey and the US closer, since Turkey needed the US to realize its ambitions. The "strategic partnership" rhetoric was developed in this context, though the invasion of Iraq by the US in 2003 and later developments linked to the Arab uprisings have damaged the political side of the relationship while economic side continued expanding.

1 Which of the following statements is true about the Ottoman-American relationship?

- A. The formal diplomatic relations between the Ottoman Empire and the US was established in late 16th century.
- B. The Ottoman State received economic aid from the US.
- C. The USS Missouri brought the body of a deceased Ottoman diplomat to Istanbul.
- D. The USS George Washington visited Istanbul and it was welcomed by the Ottomans.
- E. Sultan Abdülhamid II visited the US during his reign.

2 Agreement on Aid to Turkey refers to -----.

Which of the following completes the blank above?

- A. the document signed between Turkey and the US to implement military aid in connection with the Eisenhower Doctrine.
- B. MOU, signed between the two countries for the compensation for removing the Jupiter missiles from Turkey.
- C. the document signed to make Turkey a full member of the NATO alliance.
- D. the document signed between Turkey and the US to implement American aid to Turkey in the context of the Truman Doctrine.
- E. the text signed to facilitate US economic aid to Turkey through the "Lend and Lease" program.

3 ----- may be considered as a problematic area in Turkish-American relations during the 1980s.

Which of the following completes the blank above?

- A. Soviet intentions on the Turkish Straits
- B. Arms embargo against Turkey due to its Cyprus intervention in 1974
- C. US intention to station its Rapid Deployment Force to Turkey
- D. Turkish-Iranian rapprochement after the Iranian Revolution
- E. Gradual increase in opium production of Turkey

4 ----- is an agreement signed between Turkey and the US during the détente period.

Which of the following completes the blank above?

- A. The Geneva Convention
- B. The Defence and Economic Cooperation Agreement
- C. The Joint Defence Cooperation Agreement
- D. The Montreux Convention
- E. The SALT-I Treaty

5 Turkish Model was promoted by -----.

Which of the following completes the blank above?

- A. the US during the détente period
- B. the US during the 1960s
- C. Turkey as a contribution to its EU process
- D. the USSR to counter the instability in the Turkic Republics
- E. the US in the post-Cold War era

6 "No operation would be conducted against a third country from the US bases without Turkey's prior consent."

Given the statement above, which of the following information is true?

- A. It is a part of the agreement signed between Turkey and the US following the 9/11 attacks.
- B. It is a part of the agreement signed in connection with the Eisenhower Doctrine.
- C. It is a part of the "Lend and Lease" agreement during the Second World War.
- D. It is a part of the Joint Defence Cooperation Agreement between the US and Turkey.
- E. It is a part of the Strategic Partnership Convention.

7 The Jupiter Missiles crisis -----.

Which of the following completes the blank above?

- A. negatively affected the Turkish-American relationship
- B. resulted in the US embargo on Turkey
- C. resulted in Turkey's joining the NATO alliance
- D. empowered the Turkish-American relationship
- E. resulted in expelling US soldiers from the bases in Turkey

8 Which of the following is true about the prohibition of the opium poppy production in Turkey?

- A. It was banned by the Turkish government in 1974 due to intense pressure by the US.
- B. Turkey banned the opium production because it was becoming a health problem for the Turkish citizens.
- C. Banning of opium production in Turkey resulted in the Johnson Letter.
- D. The prohibition was lifted in 1974.
- E. It resulted in the isolation of Turkey in the international community.

9 Which of the following issues was not one of the reasons for strained US-Turkey relations in the 2010s?

- A. The detention of Turkish soldiers in Iraq by the US forces.
- B. The policies that the US followed in Iraq and Syria.
- C. Turkey's decision to purchase S-400 missile defense system from Russia.
- D. US cooperation with the Kurdish groups in Syria that are connected to terrorist organizations.
- E. Allegations of the US involvement in the coup attempt in Turkey in 15 July 2016.

10 Which of the following statements is true about the March 1, 2003, decision taken by the Turkish Parliament?

- A. It strengthened Turkish-American relations.
- B. It recognized the importance of the US for Turkey's Middle East policies.
- C. It approved the agreement with the US to lift its embargo on Turkey.
- D. It allowed the use of Turkish bases and ports for supplies and the transit of US troops.
- E. It rejected the government's request to allow US troops to be stationed in Turkey.

1. D

If your answer is wrong, please review the "Historical Beginnings of US-Turkey Relations" section.

6. D

If your answer is wrong, please review the "Relations during the Second Cold War" section.

2. D

If your answer is wrong, please review the "Relations during the Cold War and Détente" section.

7. A

If your answer is wrong, please review the "Relations during the Cold War and Détente" section.

3. C

If your answer is wrong, please review the "Relations during the Second Cold War" section.

8. D

If your answer is wrong, please review the "Relations during the Second Cold War" section.

4. C

If your answer is wrong, please review the "Relations during the Second Cold War" section.

9. A

If your answer is wrong, please review the "Reassessing Turkish-American Relations since the End of the Cold War" section.

5. E

If your answer is wrong, please review the "Reassessing Turkish-American Relations since the End of the Cold War" section.

10. E

If your answer is wrong, please review the "Reassessing Turkish-American Relations since the End of the Cold War" section.

Explain the historical foundations of Turkish-American relations.

your turn 1

Although formal relations between Turkey and the US started in 1927, the history of Turkish-American relations goes back to more than 200 years. The connection during the late Ottoman period was based on the US commercial interests in the Mediterranean and the US demand for secure passage of natural resources. The relations were strained as the two countries were on the opposite sides during the First World War, though there was not any direct military confrontation. However, during the Turkish War of Independence, President Wilson's "14 Points" became a source of inspiration for the nationalists in Anatolia. The American military aid reached to Turkey through the "Lend and Lease" program during the Second World War. The US support to the Turkish cause after the end of the war against the USSR regarding the Turkish Straits helped to jumpstart a long-lasting strategic cooperation between the two countries.

Describe the main doctrines that defined the US policy towards Turkey at the beginning of the Cold War.

your turn 2

The Truman and Eisenhower doctrines were instrumental in laying the ground for the Turkish-American relationship during the Cold War. Although they addressed different geographies, both doctrines were directed against the perceived Soviet threat. The Truman Doctrine aimed at deterring the Soviet influence in Greece and Turkey with a supply of military equipment and other aids. The Marshall Plan that aimed at stabilizing the economies of the European countries so that they would be able to resist the Soviet encroachments may also be considered in connection with the Truman Doctrine. The Eisenhower Doctrine, on the other hand, had a more comprehensive approach than the Truman Doctrine; it aimed at not only containing the Soviet influence in the Middle East through military, economic, and political support to the countries in the region but also providing some guarantees against possible Soviet threats.

Outline the main problematic areas of the relationship during the Détente period.

your turn 3

Turkish-American relations were affected by détente as Turkey tired to expand its international connections. While the relationship has experienced disagreements such as the Jupiter Missile crisis before the détente era, conflictual areas between the states gradually increased during this period. The opium poppy production and Cyprus-related disputes were the most prominent problematic areas. The US pressure on banning the opium production in Turkey, otherwise threatening Turkey with embargo, and finally imposing an embargo following Turkey's intervention in Cyprus were the low points of the era. Moreover, imposing a 7:10 ratio to aids to Greece and Turkey, and the US Congress, involving in American Administration's deals with Turkey, ingrained itself into bilateral relations with negative consequences.

Describe the changing geopolitical context of the relationship since the end of the Cold War.

your turn 4

After the collapse of the USSR, Turkish-American relations went through periods of intense cooperation and increasing complications. Although the disappearance of the common threat proved to be problematic for the relationship, the two countries were also able to enhance their partnership during the 1990s with similar policies toward the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Middle East. While Turkey was a flank country during the Cold War, the opening of new areas promised more cooperation in economic and political aspects of the partnership. The global changes since the 9/11 attacks in the US and the regional fluctuations in the Middle East since the Arab uprisings, on the other, caused problems for the relations. Differing priorities and especially the emerging differences in the policies of the two countries regarding Iraq and Syria have come to dominate the problematic aspect of the relationship in the 2010s.

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